

**INSIDE AND OUTSIDE: CONCEPTUAL CONTINUITIES FROM
HOUSEHOLD TO REGION IN KUMAON, NORTH INDIA**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an ethnographic study of the social organisation of a Central Himalayan village. Fieldwork was carried out between 1989-1991 in Almora district of the Kumaon region in the hills of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Kumaoni villagers conceptually organise their social world on segmentary principles, locally expressed by the opposition between the inside (*bhiter*) and the outside (*bhyar*). The conceptual opposition of 'inside' and 'outside' is replicated at various levels of society. In this study it is examined with regard to intra-household, inter-household, affinal and inter-caste relations, and to interactions with the gods and spirits and plains society. Insiders and outsiders are ordered hierarchically such that insiders consider themselves morally superior to outsiders. At every level of identification, outsiders are constructed as greedy, dangerous and untrustworthy.

Disorder and harm are presented as originating from 'outside', and are associated with 'outsiders'. The 'inside', as contextually defined, is vulnerable to these outside forces, and must be protected. Accompanying this presentation is the ideological stress on the separation, regulation and containment of social categories. This is most clearly elaborated on the household level, but is also pertinent on the levels of caste and region.

Men and women's contrasting experiences of marriage, kinship and residence inform their representations of the household and supra-household relations. Although the inside/outside dichotomy and its associations are shared by both genders, men and women apply them differently. Men express the inside/outside opposition in terms of broader levels of community, be it lineage, caste, village or region. For women the inside/outside distinction, though significant on these broader levels, ultimately begins at the household level and extends outwards from there. The immediate 'community of insiders' for women is the household whereas for men it is the lineage. At the same time, however, the category of 'women' is not a homogeneous one: depending on their interests, status, role, age and so forth, women give different representations of the same social reality. Thus, men and out-married women (daughters and sisters of the village) talk about social relations in terms of harmony and cooperation. In-married women (wives of the village) present the village as a tense, conflict-ridden place where deceit and rivalry between households represent normal social relations.

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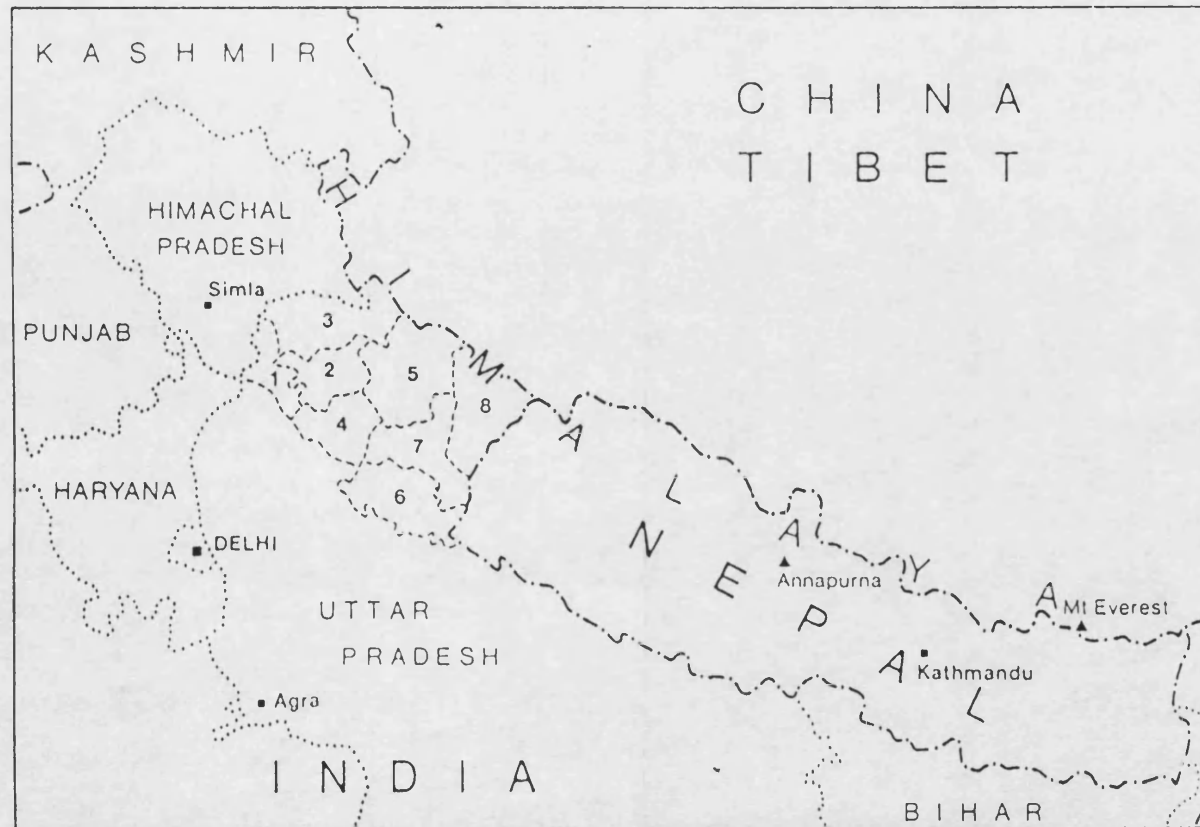
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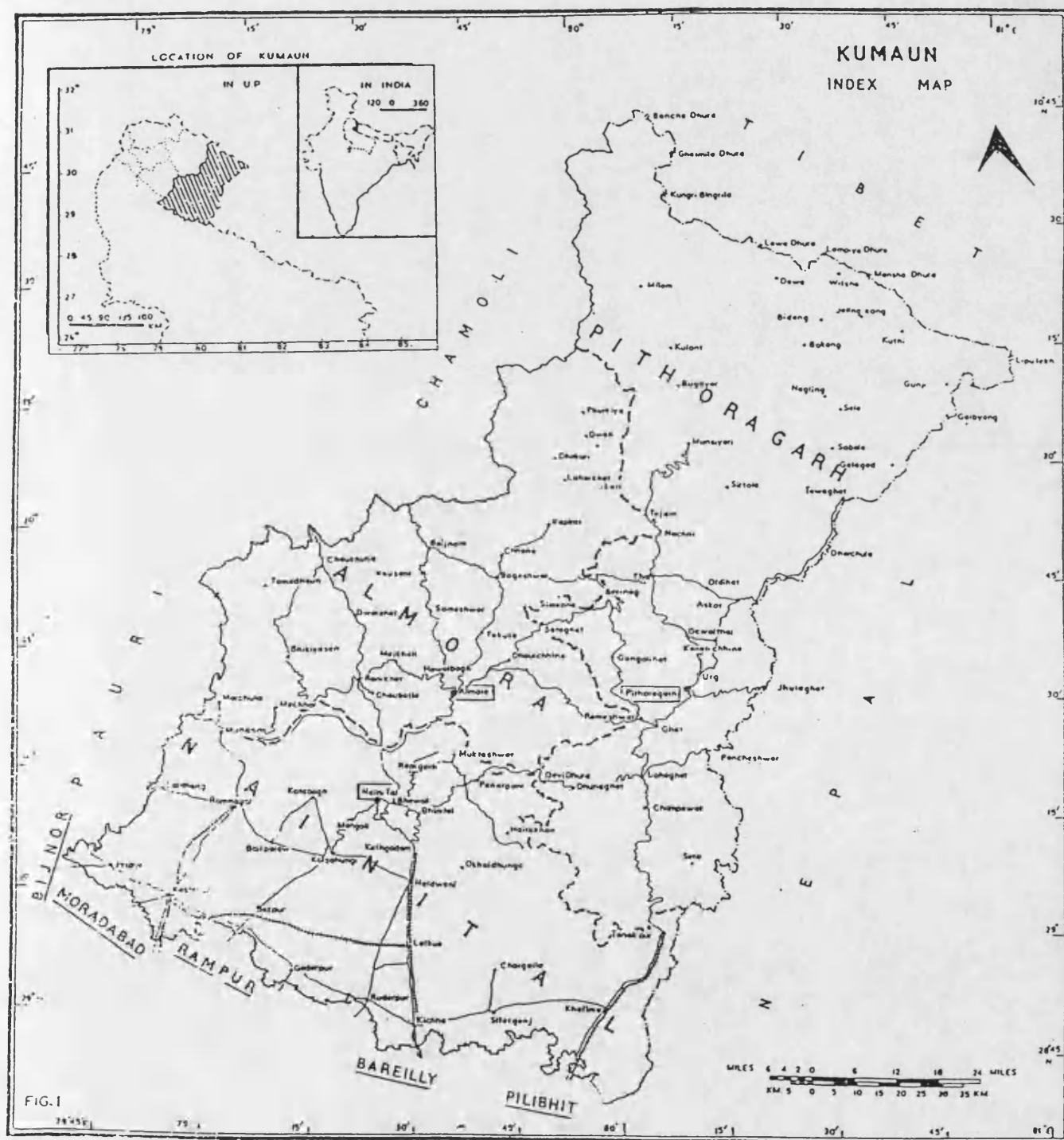
Map 1



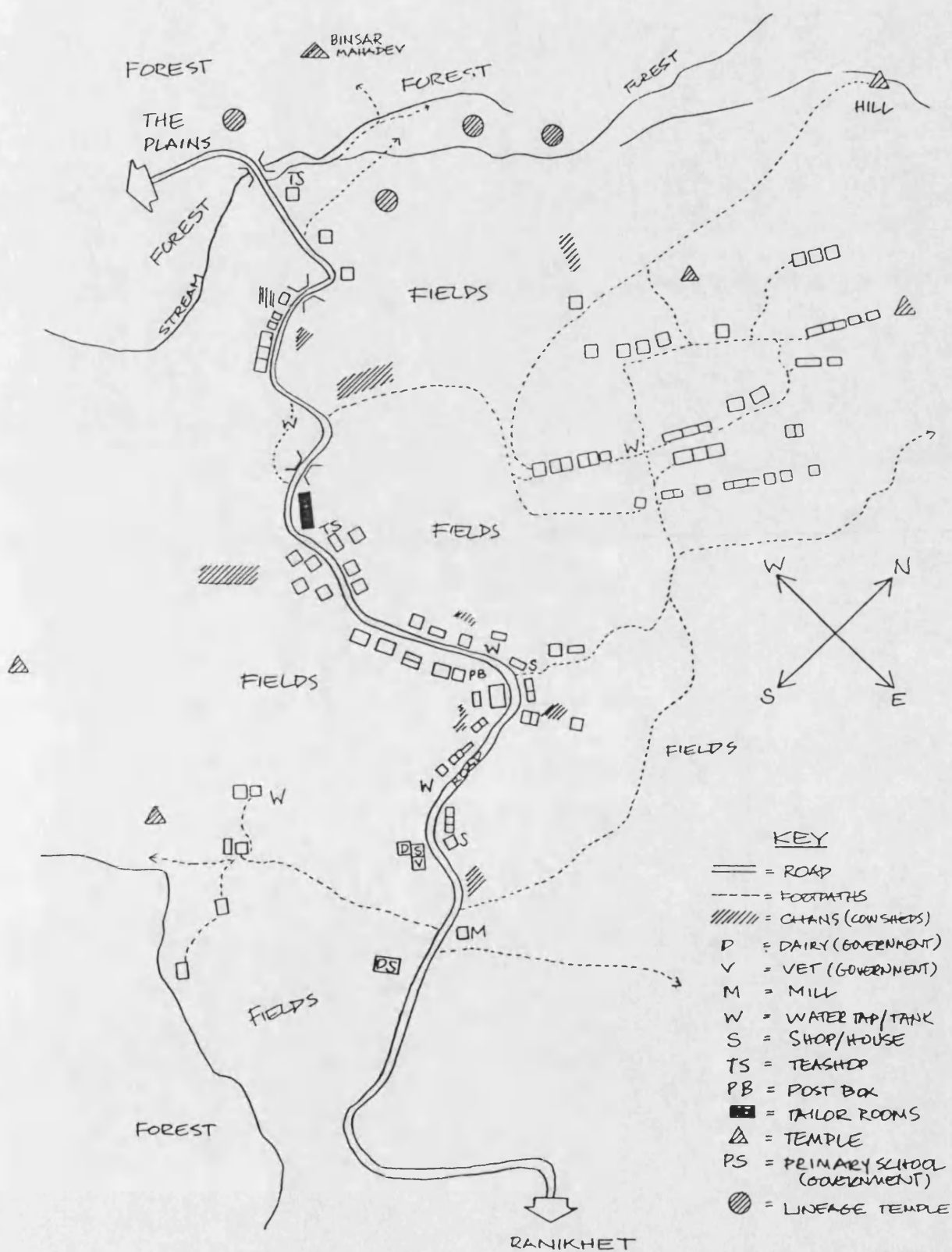
Mountain districts in Uttar Pradesh, India: 1. Dehra Dun, 2. Tehri Garhwal, 3. Uttarakashi, 4. Pauri Garhwal, 5. Chamoli, 6. Nainital, 7. Almora, 8. Pithoragarh.

(From Berreman 1979)

Map 2 Kumaon Region



Map 3 The Village



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an ethnographic study of the social organisation of a Central Himalayan village. Fieldwork was carried out between 1989-1991 in Almora district of the Kumaon region in the hills of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Kumaoni villagers conceptually organise their social world on segmentary principles, locally expressed by the opposition between the inside (*bhiter*) and the outside (*bhyār*). The conceptual opposition of 'inside' and 'outside' is replicated at various levels of society. The segmentary logic means that the inside/outside dichotomy is flexible, and has shifting boundaries which are themselves a function of context. Therefore the 'inside', and those who are 'insiders', does not always mean the same thing. Who 'outsiders' are (and hence who 'insiders' are) varies from context to context and depends on the level of identification. On every level of identification the 'inside' represents a moral community with its own mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. In this study the conceptual opposition of 'inside' and 'outside' is examined with regard to intra-household, inter-household, affinal and inter-caste relations, and to interactions with the gods and spirits and plains society.

People are hostile and suspicious of outsiders and strangers. In Kumaon we find that outsiders are an unsafe category of beings; they are hungry and needy and threaten to prey upon insiders, and they stand outside of the proper moral order which is represented by the inside. Outsiders are believed to be motivated by self-interest and personal gain, and are seen as a threat to the health, wealth and well-being of insiders. Similar attitudes towards outsiders and strangers have been described for other parts of North India and Hill societies in particular (Wiser and Wiser 1963; Rosser 1955; Berreman 1962, 1972; Ortner 1978; Gray 1983, 1989). However, these authors, save Berreman, have not made this the focus of their analysis. In this study it is the focal point.

The distinction between the inside(r) and the outside(r) is not a neutral one. Insiders and outsiders are ordered hierarchically such that insiders consider themselves morally superior to outsiders. At every level of identification, outsiders are constructed as greedy, destructive and untrustworthy. Moral categorisations of space are also part of the system, such that those spaces considered to be 'outside' have an ambivalent significance and are potential sources of danger.

Disorder and harm are presented as originating from 'outside', and are associated with 'outsiders'. The 'inside', as contextually defined, is vulnerable to these outside forces, and must be protected. Accompanying this perception is the ideological stress on the separation, regulation and containment of social categories.

This is most clearly elaborated on the household level, but is also pertinent on the levels of caste and region.

Men and women's contrasting experiences of marriage, kinship and residence inform their representations of the household and supra-household relations. Although the inside/outside dichotomy and its associations are shared by both genders, men and women apply them differently. Men express the inside/outside opposition in terms of broader levels of community, be it lineage, caste, village or region. For women the inside/outside distinction, though significant on these broader levels, ultimately begins at the household level and extends outwards from there. The immediate 'community of insiders' for women is the household whereas for men it is the lineage. At the same time, however, the category of 'women' is not a homogeneous one: depending on their interests, status, role, age and so forth, women give different representations of the same social reality. Thus, men and out-married women (daughters and sisters of the village) talk about social relations in terms of harmony and cooperation. In-married women (wives of the village) present the village as a tense, conflict-ridden place where deceit and rivalry between households represent normal social relations.

This thesis is primarily an account of high caste Kumaoni villager's ideas, perspectives and conduct. When I refer to Kumaoni villagers, I am referring to high caste Kumaoni villagers. I do not claim to speak for, or represent, low caste views. More specifically the account is informed predominantly by females with whom I developed a special rapport. Inevitably I was, and my data are, more closely associated with high caste people and females than with other social categories, a fact which determined the information I acquired and my portrayal of Kumaoni village life.

1.1 Methodology

I lived in the fieldsite for 15 months between November 1989 and January 1991. I chose to conduct fieldwork in Kumaon for several reasons. My original intention was to study explanations of illness and misfortune, with particular attention to ideas of inauspiciousness, and how these are connected to categories such as sin and fault. This was to be achieved through an examination of qualities attributed to, and ideas about, the agents and forces recognised as active in causing conditions of misfortune. The purpose was to gain insight into the concepts of the evil and well-being in

popular Hinduism. The sources I had consulted all noted a strong belief in witchcraft, the evil eye and evil spirits in the Uttar Pradesh hill region. They also reported considerable reliance on non-Brahman practitioners, such as diviners, mediums and exorcists among all castes, whereas in the plains the demand for such services is often caste specific. This region seemed ideal for my intended research. However, as often happens, my research took a different line of inquiry, as the inside/outside distinction seemed more pertinent than notions of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.

Prior to fieldwork I completed eight months of language training and as fieldwork progressed I gained confidence in conducting the research in Hindi. In fact, Kumaoni, and not Hindi, is the local language, although most people, especially young people and men, are bilingual to varying degrees. Women over 30 years old understand but do not speak correct Hindi. As the months went by my understanding of Kumaoni increased. Nevertheless, I continued to talk to my informants in Hindi. All of the fieldwork was conducted alone, without the use of interpreters or research assistants. In many ways not having an assistant or interpreter was an advantage. Being alone made it slightly easier for me to be integrated into and tolerated by, not only my landlord's family, but the village in general.

I rented a room at the top of a family house. Their's was a new three storey house, each storey being accessible without having to enter into the family's main living area. My quarters were independent from the family's living area. At the same time, since the stairway to my room passed by their main door and sitting room, they could keep an eye on who went up and down the stairs. As the months went by I became increasingly part of my landlord's family, eating the evening meal with them on a daily basis, unless I chose to do otherwise. I was adopted by my landlord and landlady as an honorary daughter. This incorporation and intimacy I had with my adopted family was extremely valuable to me, not only personally, but to the success of my fieldwork. At the same time as enjoying this familiarity, I had to ensure that I did not publicly appear intimate with or loyal to my landlady's family, for this may have prevented me from developing relationships with other households, especially those with whom there was conflict.

In my landlady's house I gradually learned the basic codes of conduct and assumptions which enabled me to socialise correctly within and beyond the house. This not only helped me learn their customs, but also served to protect my landlady's household from wider community sanctions. I was told not to tell anyone anything about my own or my landlady's family affairs and should deny eating meals there (which would be taken as a sign of intimacy); I should become skilled in secrecy and deceit; never volunteer information; not visit any one house more than any other, nor should I become close and intimate with anyone outside the house. In fact, I came to see society from the inside out; from the perspective of the household looking out

onto a hostile and malicious world. The household proved a most significant locus and focus for fieldwork. It was within the household that I first became sensitive to the concern about, and importance of, the inside/outside distinction and related attitudes. My sensitivity to these and other issues was simultaneously enhanced by the difficulties I encountered during fieldwork; they were pivotal to the direction my research ultimately took.

Field research, by its nature, involves infringing upon other people's privacy, however that is defined. As is to be expected, people were very suspicious of my motives, and wanted to know why I wanted the information I did, and who was going to benefit from it. However, people were not willing to divulge just anything, however uncontroversial. Obtaining any kind of information, in a formal or planned way, from people was a genuine problem. I did attempt a house to house survey, but I had to supplement it with information provided by my landlord and landlady, and from other people, gathered through informal and indirect questioning. I could not write notes in front of them and I could not tape conversations. Both were potentially threatening; informants were reluctant to give me information when they did not know to whom it would be given and for what ends. Faced with this reticence I abandoned direct questioning and signs of interest in any particular issue. When I realised that things were not going to change, and that people behaved towards each other in the same sort of way, I decided to discard my initial line of inquiry. Then I began to actually hear what people were talking about, what their concerns were, and that they mirrored my landlady's.

In view of the above, my methodology depended less and less on formal methods of data collection as time went by. Participant observation and informal conversations yielded many of the data for this study. I attended name ceremonies, weddings and household and village spirit possession sessions. I accompanied women to the fields and forests where they worked, and joined in during the harvest seasons. I conducted one village-wide census. The main means of recording data was note-taking. I did not note-take in front of people; I memorised conversations and main points and waited for an opportune moment to return back to my room to make brief notes, which I then wrote up in the evenings.

1.2 Synopsis of the Thesis

The chapters are organised so as to take the reader from specific social contexts and categories outwards to more general and broader levels of social life. In Chapter Two the main substantive ethnography begins. This chapter provides background information regarding the economic circumstances of Silora villagers, with particular reference to agricultural activities and migratory employment. Attitudes towards land

and its distribution in the village are discussed. This is followed by a description of the agricultural cycle, production methods and the division of labour. Finally, income sources and migratory employment are examined as are villager's attitudes towards different kinds of employment and different job locations.

Chapter Three considers the household and agnatic kinship. A working definition of the household is given and statistical data on household type and composition are tabulated. The economic and kinship principles of the household are considered alongside intra-household relations, both ideal and actual. The layout and spatial organisation of the house is discussed in relation to the inside/outside distinction. Particular attention is given to the kinds of people and activities associated with the various spatial divisions of the house. The principles and values of the house as a moral community of insiders are then presented. This involves an examination of the significance of house milk as a symbol of the morality of the household as the 'inside'. Finally I discuss the levels of agnatic kinship, the ideology of brotherhood, and examine the connection between agnatic kinship, property and the moral order.

Chapter Four gives an account of the kinds of activities and obligations which connect the household to the larger village community. These consist of various patterns of exchange and cooperation, both within the confines of particular social categories, such as the neighbourhood, lineage or caste, and between villagers in general. This is followed by a discussion of inter-caste relations in daily village life.

Chapter Five examines inter-household relations, and considers how the inside/outside dichotomy shapes people's attitudes towards each other, and how these relations are perceived and spoken about in terms of this dichotomy. This chapter illustrates most clearly the ambivalence of social relations by describing the deep sense of distrust, hostility and suspicion which characterises most forms of inter-household interaction. Central to this antagonistic condition is the ideological stress on sameness or equality and the pervasiveness of envy. This negative, competitive egalitarianism is examined in relation to consumption patterns, women and work, and men and wealth. Envy is discussed with particular reference to the evil eye. Various threats are thought to originate outside of the house and I discuss the measures taken by a household to ensure its own protection and survival.

Chapter Six extends outwards to consider relationships which occur on a broader social map, that is between affines. This chapter offers a thorough presentation of the Kumaoni kinship system, including a discussion of kinship concepts, kinship terminology, marriage patterns and ideology, affinal relations and gift exchange. The following chapter concentrates on those people who serve to link affinal groups together: women.

Chapter Seven concerns gender and experiences of kinship roles. It focuses on men's, and in particular, women's life cycles and experiences of kinship, marriage and locality. These experiences inform men's and women's representations of the household and inter-household relations within the village.

Chapter Eight discusses the different kinds of gods and spirits who also form part of the villager's world. Relations between humans and these supernaturals are examined particularly with regard to human misfortune and suffering. How such conditions are explained and dealt with are detailed, and a full description of the *jāgar*, a spirit possession séance, is presented.

Chapter Nine examines attitudes towards, and interaction with, plains society. The hostility shown towards plains people is considered as yet another expression of villager's mistrust and suspicion towards outsiders in general. The threads of the thesis are drawn together in Chapter Ten, the concluding chapter.

1.2.i Note on Transliteration, Names and Abbreviations

Most of the Indian words given in the text are Kumaoni, though some are Hindi and some are modified English words. The system of transliteration used here is the standard one for South Asian languages as outlined by Basham (1985) and Snell and Weightman (1989). The system is not used for informant's first names which appear in the text. I transliterate only the first appearance of an Indian word with diacritics, and include a select glossary. Indian terms are pluralized in the English way by adding an 's'. Throughout the thesis the real names of places are used; however, pseudonyms are used for the field village itself and individual informants.

Where letters are used as abbreviations for kinship types, the system used is that referred to as 'system A' by Barnard and Good (1984). Most abbreviations are self-evident. Therefore:

F = Father	M = Mother
B = Brother	Z = Sister
S = Son	D = Daughter
H = Husband	W = Wife
e = elder	y = younger

Therefore, FBW is father's brother's wife; eZHM is elder sister's husband's mother. Sometimes ego's sex is relevant in defining a relationship. Different relationship terms are used by male and female speakers. In such cases, (m.s) and (f.s) are added to indicate either a 'male' or 'female' speaker, and are placed after the genealogical symbols (Barnard and Good 1984: 3-5).

In the rest of this chapter I shall give basic background information to the region and village. This includes an account of the region's history and its present economic and social condition. This is followed by a brief introduction to the field village itself.

1.3 Research Area: General Setting

The regional focus of this study is the Himalayan region of Uttar Pradesh, North India. This Central Himalayan region incorporates eight mountainous districts which are collectively referred to as Uttarakhand (see Map 1). The region covers about one sixth of the state of Uttar Pradesh. At the southern tip the great plains of North India begin. Separating the hills from the North Indian plains is a thickly forested water-less zone called the *bhābar*, below which is a marshy belt of swampy jungle land called the *terai*. The region's eastern limit is formed by the Kali river and the international boundary with Nepal, the northern limit by the Indo-Tibet international border and the western one by the state boundary of Uttar Pradesh, coinciding with the river Yamuna.

This Himalayan region has vast reserves of natural resources and provides a perennial source of water to the state of Uttar Pradesh. The mountains in this area are mostly forested and rivers flow across the range through deep gorges. Forests are a dominant feature and provide the most valuable natural wealth of the region. Areas devoid of forests include snow-covered areas and those which have been cleared in the processes of development and biotic deterioration (see Melkania and Pandey 1983; Rawat and Shastri 1983; Ashish 1983). A number of parks and sanctuaries have been established to protect the flora and fauna. Soils in the region are usually thin-layered, stony and poor in fertility. Soil erosion has further decreased the economic value of the land save for the cultivation of potatoes and horticulture.¹

The region's economy is predominantly agrarian. Important occupations include horticulture, forestry, sheep rearing, livestock farming and cottage industries (Sharma 1977; Rizvi 1981: 101-140). Dependency on agriculture, un-economic cultivation of crops and environmental limits create food deficits and unemployment. Most agriculture is carried out in small terraced fields, save in low lying areas. The government has established several horticultural centres. Livestock is plentiful though of poor quality.

The economic development of Almora and the two other eastern districts is more established than the western districts due, in part, to more favourable topography and older and more established trade routes and greater agricultural productivity (Kumar 1983). Industries are few and far between in the region as a whole and most of the industrial development has been disproportionately concentrated in Nainital district and the non-mountainous area of the region near Haldvani. Urbanisation in the region is a post-Independence phenomenon. The present degree of urbanisation is low, save in Dehra Dun and the Nainital districts. In

¹For more on the physical and ecological profile of the region see Akhtar (1980) and essays in Valdiya (1988) and in Vidyarthi and Jha (1986).

other areas the bulk of the population lives in rural areas. Tourism, pilgrimage and mountaineering provide most of the region's income (Kayastha and Singh 1983).

The distribution of population is uneven and sparse (Kumar 1983). About 70 percent of the region's population is concentrated in the four southern districts, one of which is Almora. During the period between 1901-71, the regional population has grown by 113 percent. In the southern areas immigration and rehabilitation have encouraged this. Growth is slower in hilly regions than the plains due to emigration for jobs, the restricted amount of cultivable land and slow urbanisation. The region has a high sex ratio, due mainly to male out-migration for employment and greater longevity of females in the hills (Kumar 1983; Siddiqui 1984). About 40 percent of the population is under 15 years of age and 94 percent is below 60 years. Forty-one percent of the population constitute the work force. Eighty-two percent is dependant on agriculture due to the less developed secondary and tertiary sectors. There is a high rate of migration in this area which has influenced many aspects of social organisation.

Uttarakhand includes two old kingdoms Garhwal and Kumaon. Although the Uttar Pradesh Himalayas is a well recognised geographical and socio-cultural regional entity (Singh 1983), and although Garhwal and Kumaon may comprise a single "culture area" (Berreman 1970) to some degree, there are significant differences which set them apart. Kumaon, as an administrative unit, is divided into three districts, Almora, Pithoragarh and Nainital (see Map 2). Fieldwork was carried out in Kumaon, in Almora district. The research village is near Ranikhet town, in Pali subdivision of the district.

Almora district lies in the centre of the Kumaon region and mainly within the sub-Himalayas. Altitudes range between approximately 2,800 feet and 10,000 feet. The eastern border is formed by Nepal, the southern, western and northern, respectively, by the Himalayan districts of Nainital, Garhwal, Chamoli and Pithoragarh. The district is highly forested, mainly with sal, evergreen pine, and oak trees, and is home to a wide variety fauna, including panthers which enter villages in search of prey. The district's climate ranges from tropical to polar types (Joshi and Joshi 1983). Kumaoni people distinguish three seasons. The first is *rūrī*, the hot season, which runs from the beginning of March through to the middle of June or so. Before the weather gets too hot, short, strong hail storms occasionally occur. The hottest weather begins in April and increases until the rains arrive in June-July. Highest temperatures can reach up to 40 degrees Celsius in the lowlands and up to 22 degrees Celsius in higher areas. *Caumās*, the rainy season, lasts from June to September. *Hyū*, the cold season, starts in September and ends in February. The first

half of the season is dry and cool; the colder, wetter weather begins in mid-December with regular morning frosts and intermittent snow-fall.²

Almora district covers an area of 5,385 square kilometres. The population in the 1981 census stood at 757,373, constituting just 0.68 percent of the state's population. This shows a 16-17 percent increase since 1971. Of the 56 districts of Uttar Pradesh, Almora is the 22nd largest in area size but only 50th in total population with a population density of 141 persons per square kilometre. The district is overwhelming rural (94 percent) with 3,165 villages (of which 3,019 are inhabited) and five towns. The majority of villages have a population of under 200 people (56 percent), and there are no villages with more than 2,000 people (see table 1). The average population per inhabited village in the district is 251. In the wider valleys and gently sloping uplands, rural villages are of a dispersed and scattered type; in others the houses are arranged in neat rows. The five main towns are Almora (20,758), Ranikhet Cantonment (18,190), Bageshvar (4,368), Dvarahat (2,333) and Almora Cantonment (1,947). Demographic data in this section is derived from the 1981 district census.

Table 1. Distribution of villages by population range.

Range of Population	No. of villages in each range	% of villages in each range
Less than 200	1,703	56.41
200-499	1,005	33.29
500-1,999	311	10.20
2,000-4,999	-	-
5,000-9,999	-	-
10,000 and above	-	-
Total	3,019	100.00

The district is populated by Hindus, with a few pockets of Muslims and Christians in urban areas. Kumaoni is the chief language in the district, being the mother-tongue of the majority. Kumaoni is classified as a Central Pahārī language, closely related to Rajasthani and shares the same origin as that of Aryan languages (Grierson 1968). Kumaoni itself is internally divided into numerous dialects. The literary and polite standard dialect comes from the Almora town area but is spoken all over the district in formal contexts. Local dialects are spoken in informal contexts in the home and neighbourhood.³ Most people, especially males, speak Hindi as a second language.

²For details of the districts topography, geology, climate, fauna and flora see Rizvi (1981: 5-29)

³For more on the pronunciation and grammar of Kumaoni, see Grierson (1968).

The literacy rate of the region is comparatively high, standing at 38 percent compared to the State figure of 27 percent.

1.4 Historical Sketch

I shall give only a brief sketch of Kumaon's history. Detailed accounts and reconstructions of Kumaon's history from archeological, paleographical and official written sources are available, in particular Nautiyal (1969), Atkinson (1973, 1974a), Sanwal (1976), Fanger (1980) and Joshi (1990) Joshi and Brown (1990).

Our knowledge of the first rulers of Kumaon, the Katyuris, is based on legends and inscriptions worked onto copper and stone (Atkinson 1973: 469-481; Gaborieau 1977: xxvii). It is likely that the Katyuris were a small Khasī tribe from the Alakananda valley in Garhwal (Oakley and Gairola 1977: 12).⁴ Though it is not known when exactly they came to power, it is known that in the seventh century A.D. the Katyuris moved their capital from Joshimath in the Alakananda valley to Karttikeyapura in the Katyur valley of Almora district, Kumaon, from whence they reigned (Atkinson 1974a: 467-468; Joshi 1929: 28). It is said that at the time Buddhism was quite strong in the Kumaon-Garhwal area. However, the Katyuris pushed for the Hinduisation of the region and Buddhism disappeared. The Katyuris are believed to have had a preference for Brahmanical culture and during this time, in which a revival of Hinduism throughout North India was underway, large numbers of migrants (pilgrims, traders) visited and settled in the region (Joshi 1990: 50-62). Sanwal (1976: 23) says that the Katyuris encouraged learned Brahmins from the plains to settle in Kumaon, offering them land grants. Some present day Brahmins claim to be the descendants of these Brahmins of Katyuri times.

It has not been ascertained exactly when their power began to wane, but it would seem that the Katyuri dynasty was in decline in the tenth century. Legends collected by Atkinson (1974a: 493) suggest the Katyuri's decline was caused by their tyrannical tendencies. The Katyuri's centralised political authority decreased and the area ultimately broke up into a number of independent regional principalities. Kumaon was broken up into several small kingdoms, ruled by different tribes, such as Katyuri, Khasiya and others (Atkinson 1974a: 494,497). In the twelfth century A.D. all of Kumaon and much of Garhwal was invaded by the Mallas of Western Nepal.

Prior to the Nepali invasion, and during the period of the Katyuri's decline, the Cands, a Rajput family from the plains town of Jhusi, near Allahabad, entered Kali-Kumaon in the south west of the region and set up a dynasty in Champavat

⁴In the Sanskrit texts the Uttar Pradesh hills population was identified with the Khasi peoples who were seen as heretics and inferiors (Atkinson 1974a: 283, 375-441).

around 953 A.D. (Atkinson 1974a: 502).⁵ The seeds of the next central kingdom were sown through the alleged marriage of a local Katyuri princess with prince Som Cand, in which the latter received part of the remaining kingdom of east Kumaon in dowry (see Atkinson 1974a: 497-499).⁶ Brahmans from the plains were brought in to act as priests and administrators and plains Rajputs formed their armies. The Cands sponsored and maintained orthodox Hinduism. By the fifteenth century, the Cands had expanded their territorial foothold out of south-eastern Kumaon and into the north and west of the region. As the Nepali's power declined the Cands extended their rule relentlessly and drove out the Mallas. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Cands had secured firm control over all of Kumaon and had moved their capital from Champavat to Almora in central Kumaon. At this time, they set their sights on Garhval which had, since the fourteenth century, been under a separate rule of Ajay Pal (Atkinson 1974a: 448). Almost two hundred years of border fighting then ensued between Garhval and Kumaon. Even today, the last victorious war against Garhval is celebrated with bonfires on a day in autumn. Gradually, Cand power decreased. Dynastic infighting, power struggles and assassinations divided and weakened the Cand's position and in 1790 the Gurkhas marched on Kumaon, meeting little resistance.⁷

The period of Cand rule was characterised by rapid successive reigns and numerous wars with local Khasi *rājās* (kings). In the eighteenth century Muslim bands made periodic invasions into Kumaon. However they never established a secure foothold and Kumaon was left relatively free from the Moghals and Islamic influence. A main feature of Kumaon's history is that under the Cands the region formed, for several centuries, a central, autonomous and relatively isolated kingdom.

The Gurkha occupation of Kumaon led to a restructuring of land and revenue management. This resulted in the elimination of long standing rights of several groups of people, leading to the loss of their socio-political status (see Sanwal 1976: 122-126). The Gurkha rule has been characterised, but not impartially, as oppressive, imposing devastating taxes and enslaving those who, due to impoverishment, were unable to pay (Atkinson 1974a: 623-630). In 1815 the British gained political authority over Kumaon. The British were interested in Kumaon and Garhval primarily for commercial and economic reasons, since these hill regions border on, and had important trade routes with Nepal and Tibet (see Pant 1988: 215-224).

⁵These dates are contested. For example, Nautiyal offers 1,000 A.D. as the date (1969: 67). For a full historical sketch see Atkinson (1974a: 497-606).

⁶Atkinson himself is doubtful as to the actual existence of Som Cand. See also Joshi (1990: 70).

⁷The Gurkhas conquered Garhval in 1804.

Kumaon had for centuries been characterised by geographical, political and cultural isolation. The area had been sealed off on the north by the Greater Himalayas, and from the plains of North India by the marshy *terai*, and Silvak hills to the south. Under the Cands, Kumaon was an autonomous political entity. With the arrival of the Gurkhas this changed. British rule made Kumaon a specific political division within a wider framework of India and the British empire. Kumaon became a dependant political unit. The British stopped some traditional practices of the region. For example, the sale of children, wives and widows and slavery were abolished Atkinson (1974a: 573). The British also destroyed the Cand system of land tenure. Tenants were given permanent interest in the land they held. Among other changes, proprietary rights were given to the actual cultivator, which meant that Dūms (low caste people) could own land for the first time. A new centralised uniform system of administration was introduced by the British.⁸ This administration, with its rules and laws which directed Kumaon and its people, derived from a power base external to Kumaon.

In order for their administrative authority to work, a large and efficient communications network was needed. The British set in motion an extensive programme of road and bridge construction. The dangerous *terai* was cleared and brought under cultivation and many dangerous animals were hunted down. Roads were built, linking Kumaon to the plains of North India. Minerals and resources could now be extracted from the hills and transported to the plains. Imports also moved in the opposite direction. Employment opportunities were created for local people in forest management, public works, tea plantations and small metal industries (Mittal 1990). Nainital became the summer headquarters of the provincial government; hill stations emerged and tourism developed, bringing a continuous flow of plains people and culture. Kumaonis also began to descend into the plains in search of work. Kumaon had been irrevocably integrated into a larger politico-economic entity.

During colonial rule, the British government developed great interest in the commercial potential of the Kumaon hill forests. They were earmarked to provide timber and fuel to the local administrative centres, and official interest in these forests increased when the profitability of resin production became evident. There was a progressive diminution of the villager's rights in the forests in Kumaon between 1815 and the early twentieth century. New legislation curtailed villager's rights over the forests, and threatened the considerable autonomy and control they had once enjoyed. Simultaneously, the British introduced to Kumaon a system of forced labour, known

⁸For specific details see Mittal (1986).

as *coolie utar* or *begar*.⁹ Combined, these government policies constituted an unprecedented level of state intervention. At the same time, they challenged the villager's notions of economic and social justice and morality (Guha 1985: 97-98). Locals keenly resented their loss of control over the forests particularly as they could observe the government exploiting it for commercial gain. Protests against the early forest settlement reports erupted at the beginning of this century as peasants directly challenged the state authority. The end of British rule was marked by the near total antipathy between the state and the peasant population (Guha 1989: 137).

Post-Independence governments have continued, if not increased, the exploitation of Himalayan forests to meet the needs of rapidly growing industrialization. Commercial forest operations have intensified to meet these demands. More roads have been built to transport this timber out of the hills to industries elsewhere while the hill economy and local population have been materially neglected. Indeed, improved communications has seen the arrival of tourists and the concomitant ecological degradation. The eagerness of the state to extend commercial forestry and reap the benefits has entailed further restrictions on villager's use of forests. Distress and anger over state policies culminated in the Chipko movement in the early 1970s. This represents the most sustained challenge to date against the advance of commercial forestry, environmental degradation, and economic neglect of the region by the government.¹⁰

1.5 Social Groupings

In this section I consider the main social groupings found in Kumaon. Although most sections of the population can be considered in terms of caste divisions, one section of Kumaoni society, the Bhotiyās, does not fall neatly into these categories. An historical account of land tenure and agrarian relations is then presented.

1.5.i Caste in Kumaon

The 1931 Indian census was the last to report data concerning caste in the region. It reports that of the Hindu population of Almora district, 76 percent is comprised of 'twice-born' high castes. Furthermore, the range of castes found in Kumaon is very limited when compared to the vast range which exists in the plains of North India. Of the district's Hindu population, Brahmans constitute approximately 24 percent,

⁹For more information on this system of *coolie utar* see references in Guha (1985, 1989)

¹⁰The literature on the Chipko movement is extensive and includes Guha (1985, 1987, 1989), Bahuguna (1987) and Bhatt (1987).

Rājputs 50 percent, and the low caste Dums 21 percent.¹¹ Thus, 95 percent of Almora district's Hindu population belongs to one of the three large caste categories. The other categories represented include Vaiśyas at 0.57 percent and Bhotiyas at 1.6 percent.

There have been several studies on the caste system of Kumaon, of which Sanwal's book (1976) is the most renowned. Sanwal gives a full description of the political and economic changes which have taken place in Kumaon from the Katyuri dynasty through to the present post-Independence period. He argues that caste was a later introduction to Kumaon by high-caste plains immigrants. Like Sanwal's, Fanger's (1980) diachronic analysis suggests that Kumaoni social stratification has changed from a relatively open class-like hierarchy to a relatively closed *jāti* (caste) system of stratification. I have used their accounts as my main sources for the reconstruction of the history of Kumaoni social structure, but do not debate their theoretical stance and conclusions.¹²

In Kumaon only three *varṇa* (caste) categories are represented, each of which are internally divided. These are: the Brahmans, locally referred to as Bāman or Paṇḍit; the Kṣatriyas known as Thākurs or Rajputs; and the Untouchables, termed Harijan, Dum or Śilpakār. The Vaisya and Sūdra castes are not represented, though some Dums have gained Sudra status (Fanger 1980; Sebring 1972).

Historically, Kumaoni Brahmans and Rajputs have been divided into two broad categories. Those Brahmans and Rajputs who claim to originate from the plains and who are not agriculturalists, have been referred to in the literature as Thul-jāts. These immigrants were given high positions such as administrators, priests, astrologers and soldiers by the Katyuri and Cand kings in the latter's royal courts (Sanwal 1976: 23-27). They were given land grants from the Kings but did not engage in agriculture because of their assigned courtly functions. Other people were needed to cultivate their land in their absence and perform domestic and other chores. These Thul-jats had administrative power and controlled the most important economic resources (Sanwal 1976: 58).

The Thul-jats distinguished themselves from the predominantly indigenous agricultural population of Brahmans and Rajputs known collectively as Khasi or Khasiya.¹³ Both were mainly small owner-cultivators. They were hired by the Thul-jats to perform agricultural and other duties. Culturally, the Khasi groups differed

¹¹According to the most recent 1981 census data approximately 21 percent of the population belong to scheduled castes (Dums-Silpakars).

¹²See Joshi and Brown (1990) for a critique of Sanwal's 'immigration theory'.

¹³Sanwal (1976: 54) says that the Khasis were originally in the Sudra category and were admitted by the Cand Kings to twice-born status. See Fanger (1980: 99-105) also for a discussion on rise of Khasi to twice-born status.

very little from one another (Sanwal 1976: 45) and this is still the case today. While both Thul-jat and Khasi had Brahman and Rajput segments, the Thul-jat as a whole ranked higher than the Khasi; a Thul-jat Rajput was considered ritually superior to a Khasi Brahman and would not eat the latter's cooked food. The main opposition was between the immigrant-settlers (Thul-jats) and the indigenes (Khasi) and this distinction cross-cut caste categories to produce a unique ranking system (Leavitt 1992: 31-32). Khasi and Khasiya are derogatory terms and are now not used: people are simply referred to as Brahmans or Thakurs. British rule brought an expanding economy, new opportunities, wealth and status mobility, and over time the Khasis merged with the Thul-jat and vice versa. The number of Thul-jats has diminished and as a group has lost significance in the rural areas (Fanger 1980: 49). Nowadays the following distinctions are important to rural people: Brahmans distinguish between those who plough (*hali*) and those who do not. The former are of lower status. These two categories do not intermarry. Thakurs are subdivided into high and low ranked lineages. They maintain their distance through various means, including endogamy.

The third caste division is that of the Dums who are in general regarded as untouchable. Like Khasi, Dum is a derogatory word and is replaced by Harijan or Silpakar in daily public life. Many writers view the Dums as the indigenous peoples of the hills who were conquered and subjugated by the Khasi. They are thought to have been slaves, servants and menial workers of the Khasi race (Joshi 1929: 12). The Dums do not correspond entirely or exactly to the untouchables of the plains. This category includes artisans who practice trades and skills which in other parts of India are associated with Sudras. Most of the occupational groups found among plains Sudras and untouchables are included with the category of Dum (see Berreman 1972: 201). A few however are not represented. In Kumaon there are no washermen or barbers. Dums often refer to themselves as *bhyār jāt* (outside caste) and are often referred to as such by the high castes (Sanwal 1976: 61). The basic ritual distinction between the impure 'outside' castes (Dums) and the twice-born 'clean castes' (Bith) is fundamental and continues to influence people's attitudes and behaviour in daily social life (see Chapter Four).

Dums are internally differentiated into three major endogamous divisions.¹⁴ The first consists of the artisans such as blacksmiths, carpenters, masons and the watchman.¹⁵ The second incorporates Dholis (ritual drummers) and Darjīs (tailors). Historically, both groups have performed both occupations. The third division and lowest strata of the Dum caste are the Hurkiyas, players of the *hurkā*, an hourglass-

¹⁴Atkinson (1974a: 444-446) divides the Dum into four strata. See Sanwal (1976: 168-170) for a discussion on this.

¹⁵Sanwal (1976: 73) says that the *pahauri* (village watchman) was 'owned' collectively and was managed by the village headman.

shaped drum. Traditionally they have been singers, dancers and beggars and so forth. All of these divisions maintain their separateness and do not intermarry. In the past Dums had a lowly servile status and were dependant on their high caste masters for everything. They were not allowed to own any property, which compounded their dependence. As we shall see, nowadays many Dums own land and some live from agriculture alone. Rigid adherence to their traditional occupations is no longer practised and many are gaining access to high status government posts.

1.5.ii Bhotiyas

There is not much literature on the Bhotiyas though Srivastava (1966) and Brown (1984, 1987) are among the more recent studies of which I am aware. The Bhotiyas are originally border tribes found between Tibet and India and are of Tibetan origin. 'Bhot' refers to the country which lies within the snowy range south of the Tibetan frontier (Atkinson 1974a: 368), where Bhotiyas live. They have been characterised as a Mongoloid people by Pant (1988: 42) and Atkinson (1974a: 369) though Srivastava indicates that there is considerable variance among them (1966: 177). Their dialects belong to the Tibeto-Burman family. Traditionally Bhotiyas were traders and shepherds (Upreti 1903: 2; Pant 1988: 51-52, 57, 221; Srivastava 1966). Over the last few decades many have left their high altitude dwellings to live in the towns of Kumaon. Bhotiyas have claimed Rajput status but this has not been readily accepted by their non-Bhotiya neighbours. They are Hindus and share the same marriage ceremonies and ritual activities as their fellow Kumaonis. In the 1950s and 1960s, after the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the Bhotiya trade ceased. Many have moved out of their traditional settlements to the towns of Kumaon. The Bhotiyas are now classified as a "Backward Caste" (Srivastava 1966: 211).

1.6 Land Tenure in History

There are several detailed historical accounts of the Kumaoni land tenure system: Stowell (1966), Sanwal (1976), Fanger (1980), Atkinson (1973), Traill (1980), Walton (1911) and Upreti (1903).

Under Cand rule a 'feudal' system of government was developed. All the land was ultimately owned and controlled by the sovereign. The Cand kings gave gifts of land and revenue grants to high caste immigrants, the Thul-jats. These Thul-jats became the main large landowners in the region; they were superior to their Khasi and Dum tenants, serfs and slaves, mainly because of their monopoly on political and economic power. Though they controlled the land, the Thul-jats did not actually cultivate it. They performed administrative and ritual duties for the king, work which

was considered clean and pure, and worthy of high status. They were forbidden to plough their land; the status of these Thul-jats prohibited this and other physical labour. Other, inferior people were required to perform the polluting work of land cultivation on behalf of the landlord.

Cultivation and other agricultural tasks were carried out by the Khasis as undertenants. The Khasis were, previous to Cand rule, *thatvāns* (proprietors by right of original and long occupation) and small owner-cultivators. When the kings redistributed the land to the Thul-jat's, they did so at the expense of the Khasi cultivator and many *thatvans* were reduced to tenants and obliged to cultivate the Thul-jat's land.

There were three kinds of tenants. The different tenancies were classified on the basis of the relationship with the land and specific obligations imposed with regard to payment of rent and performance of services to an overlord who held the land under a royal grant (Sanwal 1976: 95). The *khaikar* and *kaini* tenants had semi-permanent occupancy rights to the land. They also owed certain feudal obligations and dues.¹⁶ The landlord had no obligations to the *khaikar* and a *khaikar* could abandon his tenancy. The *kaini* were hereditary, servile tenant cultivators and they were unable to abandon or terminate the tenancy. A *kaini* was attached to the land and was passed on with the land to each successive landowner (Sanwal 1976: 100). Though they had occupancy rights, they had no rights to alienate the land. The third kind of tenant was the *sirtan* (tenant at will). The tenancy was contracted with a landowner to use the land on a seasonal basis, with renewal of the occupancy for each new crop. This was not a hereditary tenancy and the *sirtan* owed no obligations to the lord save the *sirti* (fee to use the land on a seasonal basis).

The basic social distinction between the Biths and the Dums was maintained. Thul-jats were the main landlords and did not cultivate; Khasis were undertenants, but the Dums had no rights to the land and only cultivated the land as ploughmen if no Khasi was available to do the work (Sanwal 1976: 84,88).¹⁷ The Dums were the landless labourers, the agricultural menials and artisans to the landowners and cultivators (i.e., the Biths).

During the Cand period a highly developed system of privileges and sanctions was enforced. The Dums held the lowest place in the social and ritual hierarchy; their lives were controlled by their high caste masters on whom Dums were totally dependant. Sanwal (1976: 71) says that those Dums attached to Biths either as agricultural labourers or artisans were collectively owned by those Biths of the village

¹⁶See Atkinson (1973: 458,461) for further information regarding these duties.

¹⁷The *hali* was owned collectively but attached to specific families who had preferential rights over his services (Sanwal 1976: 73).

where they lived. Dums had to live on the lowest part of the village, on the outskirts, well away from the high caste settlement area. The Dum residential area is known as *dumaur*. Dums had their own water holes, cremation grounds and their own path leading to their settlement. Aside from their agricultural and artisanal tasks, Dums were obliged to perform additional services which were demeaning. They had to, among other things, bury their master's dead cattle, carry Bith palanquins at the latter's weddings and play music on ceremonial occasions.¹⁸ Dums, though collectively 'owned', were attached to specific households and received a portion of the harvest and gifts on all important ritual occasions.

When the Gurkhas came to Kumaon and ruled, they destroyed the political authority and undermined the foundation of the Thul-jat's political dominance. Some were jailed, exiled and some turned to cultivation thus reducing themselves to Khasi status. The power structure was challenged but not the ritual hierarchy of Thul-jat, Khasi and Dum. However, the Gurkhas did not change the system of Thul-jat landholders and subordinate tenants and servants (Sanwal 1976: 124). These Thul-jat landholders retained their power and influence over the peasant and menial population. Political and economic status was dissociated from ritual status (Sanwal 1976: 123) but ritual purity became a powerful means of legitimatizing economic dominance and high rank (Fanger 1980: 118).

The British government's actions effectively destroyed the land tenure and utilisation system as it had existed during and since the Cand period. The old system of land revenue grants and land rights transfers was destroyed. Dums were given the right to property ownership, and serfdom and slavery were officially abolished. Tenants (*khaikars* and *kainis*) were given an almost permanent interest in the land they held as tenants; propriety rights were given to the actual cultivator which enabled Dums (i.e., *halis* and those who had been given small plots) to also become landowners. Feudal land taxes and dues were abolished and replaced by a uniform land tax. Owner-cultivators prospered from this system and status distinctions between different kinds of tenure disappeared. Traill, the first British commissioner, remarked in the early nineteenth century that about 75 percent of the villages were cultivated wholly by the actual proprietors (1980: 203). At the end of the nineteenth century, most hillmen were considered to be *hissedārs*, cultivating proprietors enjoying full ownership rights.

Though there were no class distinctions with regards to land (among the twice-born castes), people began to go elsewhere to earn money, partly because of the new economic opportunities and communication systems introduced by the British, and partly due to the growing disintegration of the land.

¹⁸See Fanger (1980: 94-99) and Sanwal (1976) for more details.

British rule also brought opportunities to earn cash wages. Opportunities of outside income sources plus the acquisition of proprietary rights meant Dums and Khasi people were not so dependant on servile tenancy relationships. Dums with specialised skills (e.g., carpenters and blacksmiths) could often earn a better wage than the non-skilled Khasi. This helped to mitigate the existing inequalities. However, only the artisan Dums had access to these opportunities, and associated improvements in wealth and status. The majority of rural Dums still had a weak economic and political position. Despite the various improvements, rural Dums were not able to become independent of the Bith cultivators. Though slavery and serfdom had been abolished, Dums entered into quite rigid *jajmāni*-like relations, locally called *khauki-gusai*, with the high caste villagers.

The artisan Dums benefited from the British, the commercialisation of the economy and the new economic opportunities. A labour shortage ensued in the villages and high caste people had to give competitive rates to ensure they retained access to the artisan's skills and labour. These artisans or Silpakars, received good wages from the British. At the beginning of this century many Dums joined the Aryā Samāj movement which stimulated Dum social mobility.¹⁹ Sanwal says that the movement began in and around the urban centres of Almora, Nainital and Ranikhet, where members of major artisan groups had congregated because of the demand for their specialised skills (1976: 175).

Arya Samaj-trained Silpakar priests led fellow Dums to change their life-style. Dums abandoned demeaning and defiling tasks such as the transportation of their high caste masters' dead cattle and ceased to eat buffalo meat. Dums adopted the sacred thread and observed Sanskritic life-cycle ceremonies officiated by their own Silpakar priests. They refused to carry the palanquin and banners at high caste weddings and provide music for the latter's ceremonial occasions. However, it was mainly the wealthier and educated artisans who managed to attain total independence from the agricultural high castes. The lower ranked Dholis took to tailoring and have come to be known as Darji or '*māstar*'. Though they imitated the artisans and became Arya Samajists, they did not manage to dissociate themselves so quickly from the demeaning *khauki-gusai* relationship.²⁰ The artisans are at the top of the Dum hierarchy and they and Darjis are recognised as Silpakars, and therefore Sudras. This did not really affect their position in the local hierarchy (Fanger 1980: 182). More

¹⁹For details regarding the Arya Samaj movement and practices in Kumaon see Sanwal (1976: 75-76); Fanger (1980: 150-161); Sebring (1972). Sebring says that the Arya Samaj came to Kumaon in the 1930s. Many Dums then took on the name Arya.

²⁰One old man said that a village Silpakar, the village watchman and therefore high status Dum, first put on a sacred thread in 1939. One Brahman couple who were married in 1946 said that Dholi-Darji people were still carrying their wedding palanquins at that time.

substantive issues relating to caste will be discussed in Chapter Four. I shall now provide a brief description of the research village.

1.7 The Village Setting

Fieldwork was carried out in Silora village. Silora is situated on the crest of a ridge between 5,500 and 6,000 feet high. The village is surrounded by pine, oak and rhododendron forests, save on the east slope which descends into a valley below. The fields are terraced and there are five village temples. The village commands an excellent view of the Himalayan peaks to the north and east.

Silora lies on the Ramnagar-Ranikhet road, which is one route joining the plains to the Kumaon hill region. This is an old road, recorded by Walton in 1909 as a cart track (1911: xxiv). About eight passenger buses travelling to other parts of Kumaon, and one Delhi bus, pass through the village daily. The road is not much used for commercial lorries since most heavy vehicles enter the region from Haldvani, passing through Bhavali and Khairna, near Nainital.

As Map 3 shows, there are two main residential areas: one comprising houses adjacent to the road, and one which is at some distance from the road. A few houses lie scattered to the southern edge of the village. People speak of Silora as divided into 'the village' (*gāū*) and 'the road' (*sarak*). The former refers to dwellings situated on the hill slope away from the road. Here the houses are arranged in neat rows. This is the original site of the Silora settlement, where all of the village's old, ancestral houses are situated. Most of the roadside houses are relatively new, though one or two were built at the beginning of this century.

The road has a particular significance for the villagers. It is associated with 'modernity', and people say with pride that Silora is a roadside village, and that the villagers are 'modern', unlike other 'backward' villages. However, although in general this is a positive attribute, women say it is because Silora is a roadside village that people are "alcohol- and money-minded".

The village has a number of facilities, some of which serve Silora villagers, and some which also serve neighbouring villages in the vicinity. Most houses have electricity, although this is often unreliable, and the village has five water taps. More general services include: a mill, post-box, primary school (which was built in 1904), and a government run dairy where milk is collected and sold each morning. There is also a vet, a small ayurvedic dispensary and there are several village shops and tea-stalls. Government employees rent accommodation in the village. These include: teachers, health workers, and the government officer in charge of land records and the administrative unit of the Silora area (the *paṭavāri*). Many of the resident teachers

work at the government secondary school which is one mile to the north of the village, and which Silora children attend.

The Block Development Office in Tarikhet is approximately five miles from Silora. Apart from a government health clinic and bank, Tarikhet mainly serves to house government employees who work in Ranikhet.

Ranikhet is approximately 10 miles from Silora by road. It is the administrative centre of the Ranikhet district sub-division (*tahsil*). Revenue and land records offices and courts are based here, as is the sub-division police station. Ranikhet is a cantonment town, and also a popular domestic tourist spot. The bazaar area itself is not very large but most foodstuffs and utensils can be found there. Several schools and colleges, one cinema, a civil and a military hospital, banks and other services are also to be found in Ranikhet.

CHAPTER TWO

LAND, AGRICULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT

This chapter provides background information regarding the economic circumstances of Silora villagers, with particular reference to agricultural activities and migratory employment. A description of the agricultural cycle, production methods and the division of labour as well as an examination of income sources and migratory employment and villager's attitudes towards different kinds of employment and different job locations are given.

2.1 Land

According to the 1981 census figures obtained from the local Block Development Office in Tarikhet, the total land area of Silora is 93.08 hectares.¹ This is divided into the categories displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Land type division in Silora.

Land Type	Hectares	<i>Nali</i>
Forests	3	148
Agricultural land	30	1483
Fallow land	15	741
Wasteland	10	494
Pasture land	15	741
Other use	20	988
Total area	93	4595

2.1.i Land Holdings

There are single and joint land holdings in Silora as well as common village land. People often do not know the exact land area size of the holdings they own, though of course they know which plots are theirs to work on. There are 103 names given in the

¹The local land records held by the officer in charge of the *patti* administrative unit (*patavari*) are registered in *nali* and *muthi*. There are approximately fifty *nali* to one hectare. One *nali* is equal to 16 *muthis* (handfuls) of seed. A *nali* is the amount of land that can be sown with a litre (or two seers) of seeds. It is about 240 sq. yards. Twenty *nalis* (4,800 sq. yards) is almost equivalent to one acre. A new policy requires that the records will be converted and kept in hectares in the future.

village land records.² Of these, 41 are those of the eldest brother, with *ādhi* (etcetera) written next to them. In these 41 cases the land is not formally partitioned; the brothers own an undivided share which is recorded in the name of the eldest brother only. In practice the land is usually held and cultivated separately by each brother under a private partition or division. The land is divided by private arrangement into shares made up of specific plots. People tend to be lax in ensuring the proper recording of transfers of property. If a member wants to have his share formally separated and so recorded, he may do so by applying to the courts for partition. According to Stowell (1966: 36-37) the other joint co-sharers are known as *sikmī hissedars*. I never heard this term, but the system described by Stowell seems the same as found in Silora. This joint holding system can be a cause of disputes, and sometimes arguments and quarrels finally lead people to formally divide their common holding (see Stowell 1966: 46).

The average field size is approximately 0.9 of a *nalī* and the average land holding is approximately 24 *nalis* (just over an acre and about half a hectare).³ Table 3 shows the distribution of land holdings.

Table 3. Land holdings per registered name.

<i>Nalis</i>	Names	Snr Brother
up to 10	29	9
10 to 19	28	7
20 to 29	17	8
30 to 49	18	10
50 to 100	8	5
Over 100 ⁴	3	2
Totals	103	41

Ninety two names are registered as owning less than 50 *nali* (1 hectare or 2.5 acres) and only 11 as having more than this. Some villagers who have very little land in Silora have substantial holdings in a neighbouring village, Saunkhola. Of the 58 names on Saunkhola village land register, at least 20 are Silora people, primarily

²There are in fact 105 in total. I have removed two from the calculations since they include one in the name of Civil Forest (50 *nali* and 13 *muthi* and 20 fields) and another in the name of District Board (10 *nali* and 1 *muthi* and 9 fields).

³However, the real average is probably lower than this since 40 percent of the holdings are registered under the eldest brother's name, and are legally joint-holdings with at least two coparceners. Individuals, or individual households will actually hold less. If all of these jointly registered holdings were made into the minimum of two brothers' names, then the average would be approximately 17 *nalis* per name.

⁴The joint holding case is a holding registered under the present share-holder's grandfather's name. Only in 1990, spurred on by growing tensions and arguments, did they formally and officially divide their shares.

members of one lineage.⁵ Most of the Silora residents' land holdings in Saunkhola are of more than 100 *nali*. Most of this land is far from the owners' houses and is not used for crop cultivation but as a source of grass. Previously this land was used for orchards, which have not been maintained.

There are 162 *nali* 13 *muthī* (122 fields) of common village land (*gāū sancāyat*). Some of this land has been used by individual households who managed to secure private leases offered by the state in the past. One such case went to court with a petition signed by the whole community to prevent two brothers from re-situating a main water tank, so that they could build a house in its place. Some of this common land was apparently given to a Silpakar family in the past, because a member of the latter was the village watchman.

There are no large landholders in the village. The size of land holdings has been steadily reduced by population growth and partition, such that very few, if any households today are able to live solely from subsistence farming. All households have at least one male member involved in either seasonal wage labour or some form of salaried employment. This is discussed below.

2.1.ii Attitudes Towards the Land

Land, or the amount of land a man or household owns, is no longer the most important indicator of wealth and prestige. As one male informant said: "Before a rich man was a man with a lot of land. Now it is a man with a lot of money." When looking for a groom, apart from considering his genealogical history and pedigree, he must be educated and have a salaried job, that is, he must be in *sarvis*. I was told that 20 years ago the question was "how much land do you have (*kheti katuk chai*)?" Nowadays it is "what is your job and how much do you earn?"

The economic importance of land in terms of productive capacity has also decreased. Plots and holdings are smaller than they were a generation ago. The land could never be cultivated profitably and people know this. One man said, "all this work and still we have to bring stuff by the sack-full from the shops." People are quick to compare their situation to that which pertains in the plains. They complain how disadvantaged they, as hill people, are with their 'postage-stamp' sized plots, simple unmechanized technology and dry, unirrigated terraced land. They think that,

⁵Saunkhola was previously a Muslim village, although nowadays all the residents in Saunkhola are Silpakar people. Four Upadhyay brothers bought a lot of the land from the Muslims. When villagers failed to pay their debts these shop-owners took the debtor's land into their possession. This apparently resulted in some people being made landless, causing them to leave the village. That, I was told, is why this lineage has land in Silora, for originally they were Saunkhola landholders and did not have land on the Silora side. The offspring of these men own four of the seven shops in the village today.

in contrast, the yields in the plains are high and people can sell large quantities of surplus produce and can afford to pay for labour.

Despite low productivity, people insist on maintaining their fields in good condition. If people are absent, or unable to cultivate all of their land, they rent out plots to other villagers for cash on an annual basis. The tenants will have exclusive rights to all the produce and grass grown on the rented land. This system of renting was referred to as *rakam* (land revenue or rent).⁶ The reason given for renting out land was to prevent the land from falling fallow or going to waste (*bhāj*). People do not leave their fields to fall fallow for fear that owners of neighbouring fields will gradually encroach on their land, ploughing and eating into the fallow field. Cultivating a field is one way of ensuring that it remains intact.

Road-side land is considered to be valuable. It is desirable and profitable because it is a prime site for a shop. On the whole, the value of roadside land is thought to be approximately double the value of other land types. According to land sales records in Ranikhet Registrar's Office roadside land is sold at the rate of approximately Rs.1,250 per *nali*. This land is valued for the business potential it represents.

People say that the land and its harvests are not important any more. However, the grains and vegetables it produces can sustain a family for several months. They are a significant supplement to the incomes earned by male household members. As long as there are basic staples in the house, less money will be spent on food. Grains and vegetables grown on one's own land (*gharak anāj* and *khānnā*) are also considered to be better and tastier than purchased food. Food from outside is only bought with reluctance. Land gives people security; one can always fall back on, or return to one's land and family house. To sell ancestral land is regarded as a somewhat shameful act, undertaken as a last resort in conditions of financial desperation.

⁶One woman told me that there is another renting system known as *adhei*. In this the renting persons will clear, cultivate and cut the grass from the land. However, they will keep only half of the harvested crops. The other half will go to the landowner. I was not aware of any one renting land on this basis in Silora. An old tenancy system no longer in practice is the *khaikar* system, as described in Chapter One.

2.2 Agriculture

2.2.i Land Types

Cultivation in Silora is subsistence oriented. Crops and vegetables are grown on terraced fields. In addition, most households have their own 'kitchen garden' (*bārī*) in which seasonal vegetables and fruits are grown in small quantities. There are two types of field in Kumaon: the *uprāñ* type of unirrigated, upland terraces, and the *talāñ* type of irrigated lowlands fields. In Silora all fields are of the *uprao* type and hence dependant on rainfall for irrigation.⁷

2.2.ii Crops and Crop Seasons

There are in fact three groups of crops sown throughout the year, but people refer to them as *rabi* and *kharif* harvest crops. *Rabi* crops are sown in September-October and grow over the winter months to be harvested in May-June. The main *rabi* crops are wheat, barley, chickpea (*chanā*) and lentils (*masūr*). Potato and radish are also sown. *Kharif* crops are sown in two sessions, the first in April and the second in May. *Kharif* crops are dependant on the monsoon for growth and are harvested all together in September-October. The main *kharif* crops are rice and *maḍuvā* (dark millet). Rice is sown in April along with millets (*jhūñūr*, *cū*)⁸ and field vegetables (potatoes, taro (*pināū*) and radish). *Maduva* is sown in May along with pulses.⁹

Throughout the year seasonal fruits and vegetables are grown in the kitchen gardens, and include garlic, coriander, cucumber, pumpkin, gourds, corn, chillies, peppers, aubergines, peas, mustard and a green leafy vegetable. Fruit appears on the trees between April and October. Local fruits include apricots, plums, grapes, pears, apples, oranges, lemons and a few walnuts. *Kāphav*, a wild juicy mountain berry, appears at the beginning of the hot season in April and provides an enjoyable pastime for children who climb high and low in the forests and shrubbery in search of this delicacy.

⁷See Pant (1988: 95-119) for full descriptions of dry upland and wet lowlands cultivation.

⁸*Cu* (*Caulāi* in Hindi) is a stunning bright red-pink fronded amaranth. It is not considered a vegetable but a fruit, its tiny seeds are used to make a sweetmeat which can be eaten on fast days. In the house I lived in it was prepared as a treat on *Siv-rātri* day. *Cu* is usually exchanged for sea salt crystals. Some households are able to gain a year's worth of sea salt in exchange for their *cu*. Salt is a vital ingredient in all Kumaoni food.

⁹Hemp (*bhang*) is also grown as a *kharif* crop in the vegetable garden near the house. The seeds are used in cooking as a herb/spice in vegetable dishes and the leaves are prepared as hashish (*caras*) for smoking.

2.2.iii Crop Rotation

In Silora, a two year crop rotation system is practised.¹⁰ On highland, unirrigated fields (*uprao*), fallow phases are part of the rotation system. The agricultural year begins in March-April with the sowing of rice and is followed by the planting of *maduva* in April-May. These *kharif* crops are harvested in the autumn. Rice harvesting is performed first, the *maduva* being cut slightly later. The *rabi* crops of wheat, barley and vegetables are then planted in the now emptied rice fields, and the *ex-maduva* fields lie fallow during the winter months, to be ploughed and sown in spring with rice. This can be illustrated as:

rice --> wheat --> *maduva* --> fallow --> rice -->

2.3 Animal Husbandry

Animal husbandry is a significant supplement to the household's agricultural production. In Silora, cattle comprise the major form of animal husbandry. People distinguish between hill (*pahārī*) and non-hill cattle. In comparison to other types, hill breeds are rather small. This is advantageous with regards to oxen (*bail/bald*) since, being small and nimble, they are good at negotiating the small terraced fields. Not every household possesses its own oxen.¹¹ Those people who do not own oxen have the following alternatives in the ploughing seasons: either they hire a fellow villager's oxen on a daily basis and plough the fields themselves, or a fellow villager along with his oxen are hired to do the work. The first alternative costs Rs.25 a ploughing day, and the second Rs.50 a ploughing day. Due to the absence of able-bodied adult males, many households are obliged to hire someone to plough their field. People feel that this is a lot of money to pay for land which yields no profits, but they pay anyway because if they did not the fields would turn into wasteland.

Hill cows, though considered prettier and daintier than other breeds, are in general poor milking animals and yield about one to one and a half kilos of milk a day. People hold the view that *pahari* cows are pure and that their dairy products are

¹⁰See Pant (1988: 136-140), Fanger (1980: 250-252), Kregel (1989: 54) for explanations of the various crop rotation systems.

¹¹I was told that in the past there were about 25 bullock carts (*bail gāri*) driven by Silora people. Villagers used to buy clarified butter from Almora and transport it down to Ramnagar and bring home *gur* (sugar cane lumps), salt, grains and cloth. Later on a couple of men opened up their own shops. People had large numbers of cattle and I was told that up to 30 years ago people would migrate with their cattle and carts down to the warmer *bhābar* areas of Ramnagar for the winter months. They would walk with their cattle down to Ramnagar in November to return to the village in early spring (see Pant 1988: 175-186).

the most refined and pure of all. As one man said, "*pahari* cows are pure; they do not eat shit and rubbish, and their milk is pure."

Buffaloes are preferred to hill cows and are raised primarily for their milk. Buffaloes can produce two to three times as much milk as hill cows. Buffalo milk has a higher fat content and a richer flavour, and buffalo produce milk over a longer period than do cows. Five years ago a government dairy was opened in Silora: villagers from elsewhere come to sell milk there, and milk is also sold by the dairy. Within the last five years, milk selling has become a useful source of money. At four rupees a kilo, Rs.1,460 a year could be made from selling one kilo of milk every day. Not all villagers sell milk and some think that the milk one produces from ones own cattle should be put only to domestic, and not commercial use. Milk is used as an offering to the gods, in rituals and as an important ingredient in ceremonial feasts, as well as for household consumption.¹²

Maintaining cattle, especially milking cattle, is a labour and time intensive activity. In the day time, male and non-milking female cattle are usually taken out to the forests to graze. After the harvests they are allowed to wander and graze on the stubble in the empty fields.¹³ Milch cattle are kept tied up outside the cattle byre. They must be given good fresh green grass or foliage at least once a day and since they consume a great deal, a woman spends much of her time collecting it.

Cattle provide manure. The floor of the cattle shed is lined with dried pine needles which serve not only as bedding for the animals, but also to hold the dung and urine. A fresh supply of dry bedding is spread on top of the wet, old litter daily. In time, the lower layers decompose into a natural fertiliser. Periodically, the decomposing litter is removed and placed onto a large compost heap near to the cattle shed. Manure is also used to plaster the house walls, floors and courtyards. It is mixed with water and red loam soil, and is believed to be a purifying agent. This mixture is called *lipan*.

No one in Silora keeps or raises goats, though people in a nearby Thakur village do. Goats are purchased by villagers primarily for ceremonial and sacrificial occasions. They are valued for their meat only. A goat can cost around Rs.200-300. Female goats are not offered in sacrifice, and certain deities are particular as to the

¹²Krengel reports a more strict attitude to the sale of home milk. She says that Thakurs near Almora tend to marry with people from the north-west and not to those in the south-east of the district due to various cultural differences, such as clothing and dialect. Furthermore, Krengel's informants said that people in the south-east (where Silora is) drink a lot of alcohol and sell their milk, "both of which are considered to be disgraceful behaviour" (1989: 210).

¹³To ensure that cattle grazing on fallow fields do not wander onto cultivated fields, a cattle watchman has been installed. This man will supervise cattle during the day and night. He receives one *nali* of rice and one of wheat from each household every year. During the research year, this watchman was a Brahman villager. In theory this is a rotating system and another man should do this in one or two years' time.

colour of goat they will accept. Three or four families keep or have kept chickens. Cockerels too are used as sacrifices, in particular they are offered to ghosts. One family keeps rabbits for the sale of fur.

2.4 Annual Work Cycle

The agricultural year begins with the onset of spring in Cait (mid-March to mid-April), after the frosty winter months. Fields which have lain fallow over the winter, are ploughed and prepared for the sowing of rice. A wooden plough (*hauv*), with a steel ploughshare (*naśyur*) is drawn by oxen. On the first day of ploughing, the man (or men), the oxen, the plough and the woman who sows the seeds are all given a *ṭikā* for the land has been empty for six months and it is good to say 'may the crops be good!' A *tika* is an auspicious mark on the forehead comprising red paste and whole rice grains. A *thāli* with *til* (sesame), *ghī* (clarified butter), *gur* (molasses), whole rice grains and *tika* paste is taken to the field on this day. The manure has already been spread over the fields and is duly ploughed in. As the land is ploughed one or two people, usually women, follow behind, breaking up the clumps of soil with a small pick. The soil is then levelled and flattened out. *Kharif* vegetables are also sown during this period.

At the end of April barley is cut and in May the wheat harvests begin. Harvesting is exclusively women's work. Barley and wheat are cut at the middle of the stalk, tied into bundles and transported home and lain out to dry on the *khāv* (flag-stoned courtyard/threshing place).

There are two threshing methods. In the first, a small wooden bat/club (*muñar*) is used to beat the ears of wheat, causing the grains to separate. The other method requires the use of oxen. The wheat is lain out on the courtyard and bullocks or oxen walk round in circles trampling the wheat and separating the grains as they go. This action is known as *dāi*.¹⁴ People who borrow cattle for this purpose will give the owner some stalks from the trampled wheat as fodder rather than money.

Women clean the wheat grains from the chaff by shaking *sups* (flat shovel-shaped basket) of grains into the wind. The grain is then spread out in the sun to dry before being stored in sacks or containers. The wheat stalks are then given to the animals as fodder or are dried out to be stored later. These activities continue and are repeated for a month or so. At the same time the vegetable fields are weeded. This is usually done by hand by women.

¹⁴In preparation, the courtyard is pasted over with earth-dung plaster (*lipan*). Only then can the threshing occur. No one is allowed to walk on the area wearing shoes, and menstruating women must avoid the grains and the area.

Towards the end of May, and well into June, the now empty wheat fields are prepared for *maduva*. Manure is laid down, the land is ploughed once and the *maduva* is sown. At the same time the vegetable fields are continually weeded and corn is planted in the house gardens. In July the fields are green and lush and after the first rains the *maduva* fields must be weeded. In Śrāvaṇ (July-August) women launch into the back-breaking chore of weeding the rice and *maduva* fields. This work must be done as quickly as possible. Sudden and heavy rainfall can disrupt this work, but as time passes, women will endure the rain to complete their tasks. Potatoes are also harvested at this time. When they have the opportunity, women will go off into the woods to collect grass.

As August proceeds, the women set off to the forest early in the morning for wood, grass and *pirūv* (dry 'grass' or straw of pine needles). Grass is also cut from the *maduva* and rice fields, simultaneously clearing these fields of grass and unwanted weeds. The rice harvest begins in the second half of August.

Rice threshing is carried out in the fields. Families set off early with *chaṭāīs* (reed mats), a *sup*, sacks and sticks. Each household goes to its own separate fields. With a rubbing, grinding action of the feet the grains of rice are separated from the stalk. The stalks are then struck with a stick to separate remaining grains and then laid out in the field to dry in the sun. This is referred to as *parāv* (paddy straw) which is later stored on the haystacks (*luṭ*) and serve as food for the cattle during the winter months. I did not ever see a man or boy use a *dātuli* (sickle) or cut grass or harvest crops, nor did I observe any inter-household cooperative or communal harvesting.

Rice harvesting continues in September, and by the end of the month the *maduva* is ready to cut. This, Asoj (September-October), is the busiest month of the year. There is an expression to convey when someone is very busy in their work: 'Asoj *lagan*'. The *maduva* heads are cut off and placed in a basket and taken home. Later on the stalks are cut, dried and stored as fodder for cattle in winter. Some fresh stalks are given as fodder too. At the same time as the harvests, women cut and dry out grass in nearby and fallow fields. As the grass and harvest stalks dry, they are stacked up in haystacks. Meanwhile, ploughing recommences. Throughout October wheat and barley are sown, and manure is transported and spread over the fields.

By the second half of October the *maduva*, pulses and millets will have been cut and are processed on the house terrace. By early autumn all the grass in the fields nearby is exhausted, and by November some women walk up to six or seven kilometres to find fresh grass. They then have to carry the large loads on their heads back to the village.

Although the harvesting, ploughing and field preparation is complete by December, women, especially younger women, enjoy no respite. They make long journeys into the forest for wood, pine cones (used as fuel), *piruv* and any available

grass. Only frost and winter rains halt this work. At these times women stay at home, knitting and exchanging information. The forest work continues until February when manure is again transported and spread over the fallow fields, in preparation for the ploughing and planting of rice in spring.

Processing of Harvests

I have described the harvesting and threshing methods of most of the main crops. Here I shall detail the processing of the various crops. *Maduva*, and some pulses are beaten with a long pole, which is swung back over the shoulder then pounded down onto the crops. Some people use the oxen yoke trampling method for some lentils, especially soya (*bhaṭ*). Grains are winnowed and *maduva* is also cleaned by sifting the grains through a large metal sieve known as a *ruṇar*. Rice and *maduva* are husked by being pounded rhythmically by two or more women with long pestle poles in the *ukhav* (mortar). Chaff and husks are mixed with cooked rice and curd-water and made into a soup-like animal feed called *jauv*.

Straw is prepared after the monsoon and the autumn harvests in anticipation of the long lean winter months. Grass becomes increasingly difficult to find in the winter months. Well into April women are climbing trees to cut fresh foliage for their cattle. Kumaonis distinguish between three types of dried fodder: 1) *parāv* (paddy straw); 2) *gājyo* which is rapidly cut, fresh forest and wild grass cut from the forest or fallow fields, which can be dried and stored; and 3) *naūvā*, which is other cut and dried harvest stalks, for example *maduva*. The first two types are said to be good for milch cattle.

2.5 Division of Labour

A middle-aged widow explained to me the respective roles of men and women when she said, "women work their own fields, men do *sarvis*." This is what is expected of men and women. In fact, although most of the work is carried out by women, men also participate in agriculture. In this section I shall consider agricultural work and the division of labour. Men and employment are discussed in the following section. Agricultural work is divided into 'men's work' (*ādim ka kām*) and 'women's work' (*śāñi ka kam*). Agricultural work is done on a household basis and labour and tasks are divided on the basis of gender and generation.

2.5.i Women's Work

Women identify two kinds of work. *Gharak kam* (house work) includes chores within the house itself, as well as work in the vegetable garden and fields.¹⁵ The second type, *jangal* or *bañ ka kam* (forest work), involves the cutting, collection and transportation of fodder and fuel, and entails crossing the village boundary.

Women do most of the agricultural work. They do the back-breaking chores of sowing and weeding the fields, harvesting, threshing and processing crops. Women follow after the plough breaking up the clumps of earth; they carry huge head-loads of heavy compost from the cattle sheds to the fields, which can be quite some distance; women care for the cattle, visiting the forest to collect vast quantities of pine needles, grass and foliage for the cattle bedding and fodder; they clean out the cattle sheds and wash down the animals, especially milch animals. Fuel (pine cones and dead branches) collection is also a task done by the women. This can be a dangerous task since it often involves climbing up high into a tree and scaling steep slopes while carrying a heavy head-load. Accidents do occur, and during my stay a young woman fell from a tree and severely damaged her back. Some people have died from such falls.

I calculate that between 90-95 married women engage in full-time, regular agricultural work. To this number about 35 adolescent daughters and returned married daughters-sisters should be added. Lastly, some elder women may participate occasionally in light tasks.

In addition, women have responsibility for domestic work. Women collect water, cook meals, clean the house and care for the children. Water collection has been made easier by the installation of five covered water tanks and water taps around the village. There is no real season of leisure for a woman, and she is expected to perform her tasks without complaint.¹⁶

Of course not all women do the same tasks. Age and generation are important considerations in the organisation and distribution of work. Agricultural work is organised on a household basis. The active senior female, or mother of the household, organises and makes decisions regarding most of the agricultural and all of the domestic work. If there are several adult women in the household, they will form a work group under the direction of the senior woman. Very old women of

¹⁵The household's estate, comprised of the gardens and fields, is considered as an extension of the house (Sharma 1980: 43).

¹⁶For more details on the position of women in Almora see Pant (1988: 189-192). During the winter months of December, January and February, a young woman may be allowed to go and visit her husband who is living and working in the plains. It is the decision of the parents-in-law, and I was unable to discern any strict pattern. For example, some parents-in-law would send the girl for the first few winters of married life, until the girl was pregnant; others would not send the girl regularly, because a close affectionate relationship between son and daughter-in-law is not to be encouraged.

grandmother status usually relinquish their role as work organiser. The burdens of work and its organisation are heavy. Women often said "we have to work, otherwise where will we get bread from? I will only get rest (*arām*) when I die."

The active senior woman rules the female sphere of the household. She stands as mother and mother-in-law to the household's female work-force. As well as dividing up work tasks, she controls the distribution of food. Usually the eldest woman in the household serves the daily meals: she will ensure that food stores are sufficient and should inform the male household head when new stocks are required.

The unmarried girl, from the age of six or so, becomes an active participant in the household work. The adolescent daughter makes a significant contribution to the household in terms of the work she does. Daughters help collect water, do the laundry, wash the dishes, collect wood and grass, help in harvesting and knit sweaters and scarfs. Nowadays most girls are educated until eighth grade and a growing number actually complete secondary school. When a girl returns from school, she changes out of her uniform, dons her work clothes and sets off to the fields or forest to work. When on school holidays, daughters work full time. As a girl enters her adolescence she is 'trained' to be a hard and efficient worker, and to go about her tasks without making a fuss. This is in preparation for her status and position as daughter-in-law in her marital home. Mothers must ensure that their daughters do not grow up to be lazy and insolent. It is the mother's responsibility to train her daughter to be an obedient and efficient worker. In her *saurās* (in-law's place), not only the *bvāri* (daughter-in-law) is judged, but her mother is too: if the daughter-in-law is lazy or disobedient, this is seen as a fault of her mother. If she is a good cook, an efficient worker, obedient and docile, then the mother is praised for the training she gave. Many educated daughters express dislike for the prospect of a life of sweat and toil after marriage, and dream of the perfect husband, the '*sarvis-vālā*', who will take them away to live a life of ease. As one 19 year old Brahman said:

The work here is *gandā* (dirty) especially for those who have studied; we do not want to do this work, and what is the use of studying if all you are going to do is carry this stuff (compost) around on your head. If one has a good husband then he will take you away with him on service; if not then you have to do what the *sāsu* says.

When a girl marries and leaves her natal home, her help and companionship is sorely missed by other female members, in particular her mother. On return to her natal village, a married daughter is relieved of any obligation to work. For the *celibeti* in the natal home, working is a matter of choice. The only woman to be seen in the village relaxing is the visiting *celibeti*. In stark contrast to this image of the retiring *celibeti* is that of the young *bvari* in her husband's village.

The more physically demanding work is parcelled out to and performed by younger women, in particular the daughters-in-law, who are the main workers in the

household. In many ways the daughter-in-law is treated as a servant and is allowed little say in her daily routine and activities. She must do what her *sasu* commands and is not free to go wherever she wishes. Only on their *sasu's* orders will a *bvari* visit another house or go to the forest. Women work throughout pregnancy and may have to resume work within a week if there are no other young working women in the house. *Bvaris* complain that nobody cares for their health; "As long as we can work nobody pays any attention" said one woman. When one *bvari* whom I knew caught a feverish cold, her *sasu* said she had fallen ill on purpose. *Sasus* complain that *bvaris* are lazy and would prefer to wear nice sarees and nail varnish, sit around looking pretty and being useless.

The elder woman, who stands as mother/mother-in-law and grandmother, retires somewhat from the demanding agricultural tasks. If there are young children in the house, she will supervise and tend to them. In general she will tend to work in and around the house, in the kitchen garden and sometimes go to a field to cut grass. These elder, senior village women do go to the *jangal* but not as frequently as the younger women. A few elderly women go to the fields and forest to supervise grazing cattle. Grandchildren usher in a new phase in the woman's life and provide a legitimate reason not to engage in agricultural work. For those ill-fated women who, as they age, do not have any grandchildren, there is less of an excuse not to work. It is even worse for the woman who has no resident *bvari* either.¹⁷

Almost all agricultural work is performed on a household basis. There are no large-scale inter-household cooperative tasks as reported for the wet-rice transplanting in the valleys (see Quayle 1981: 69-72; Pant 1988: 113-115), nor any exchange of working personnel between villages (affinal relatives), as reported by Krengel (1989: 58). When there is work to be done in the fields, often all or some women from the house will work together, that is, the female head, her daughter(s) and daughter(s)-in-law. For certain seasonal tasks, however, women from different households may cooperate. The main tasks which require mutual assistance include transportation of manure from the cowshed to the fields, grass cutting in the autumn, and transferring hay from distant stacks to ones nearer the cattle shed. Such cooperative work is referred to as 'being in *palt*'. The dictionary definition of *palt* is: 'assistance in return for assistance, anti-*dān*, the idea of return' (Paliwal 1985). For example, three women will agree to work in *palt* for three days. On day one they will transport and distribute dung onto A's fields; on day two they will do the same for B and on day three, for C. On the day when work is being done for A, the other women will be given a snack, usually of cooked potato, *roṇi* and tea, at A's house. The next

¹⁷My landlady, 60 years old and suffering from high blood pressure, had no choice but to do all work on her own. Her eldest son though married for 16 years, had given no offspring. After a big argument, he and his wife left for three years. My landlady even had to climb trees to cut wood.

day B will do the same and so on. This snack-giving will rotate until all the work has been done and duly reciprocated. There is no fixed *palt* group composition and participants are not selected on the principle of kinship. Of course, it may turn out that one is in *palt* with one's kinswomen, but I was told that one chooses to work with those people one likes. *Palt* groups are usually made up of same-generation women who consider each other as sisters-in-law (*bhauji-guśyāñi* or *jeṭhāñi-dyorāni*) either real or classificatory. The *palt* system, is very similar to the *parma* system described by Gray (1983: 60-61) and Bennett (1983: 23,25) in Nepal. Apart from these work groups there is no other form of cooperative agricultural labour organisation outside of the household unit.

Women's work is gruelling and physically exhausting. During some seasons women must walk up to 10 kilometres in a return journey to collect grass. Women continually refer to the *kaṣṭ* and *dukh* (pain and suffering) of a woman's life in the hills. There are, however, aspects of work which women do enjoy. Though their activities and chores are home oriented, women are not restricted to the house. Work gives a woman mobility and freedom. One woman said "we women here are not restricted: we go to the forest, the house, here and there. We are not confined, we are free (*ājād*)." During daylight women spend very little time at home, save those older women who must care for the grandchildren. One woman said: "Our work is good; we go out, we do not stay in the house all day. We go to the *jāngal* (forest)." I remember whenever there were a few days of continual rain, women would complain of being bored, and of having no work to do. As one girl said: "It is not good to stay inside (the house); I like going outside (into the fields and forest)." There is very little inter-household visiting in the village and work provides the context for most informal socialising. Women meet in the fields and forest, where they sing as they work, chat and exchange gossip during their breaks.

Work which takes place further afield from the house and residential area is usually carried out by women from different houses who are of the same generation. Mainly young women who may or may not be working in *palt*, do *jāngal* work. Collecting fuel and fodder requires journeying to the *jāngal*. The *jāngal* is a lonely and dangerous place. Women admitted to being afraid of the forest and do not venture there alone. Not only are there tigers but the *jāngal* is thought to be haunted by ghosts and spirits. Men from other villages sometimes go hunting in the forest and government employed wood-cutters work there. On trips into the forests women would tease me saying that I had better watch out for a man may abduct me. Women have been mugged for their jewellery in the forest and there is also the fear of rape. Stories of illicit love-affairs and elopements always refer to the *jāngal* as the context for such goings-on. The *jāngal* therefore is represented as a wild, immoral and

dangerous place. At the same time it is a place of spiritual power, and a major temple presided over by a local *sādhū* (yogi/ascetic), is hidden deep in the woods.

For some women, in particular *bvaris*, the *jāngal* is a place where they can find *aram* (rest). *Aram* here refers not only to physical repose but mental ease too. Women work hard in the forests but they also stop for breaks, share snacks, gossip and joke and laugh. In the village and house one is surrounded by men, parents-in-law and senior kinspersons. A certain restraint and etiquette is required there. The *sasu* is always giving orders and a young woman cannot sit down and rest when she is in the house and village. One woman said: "In the forest (*jāngal*) all one's suffering and worries go far away. In the house (*ghar*) there is always something to do." The conceptual opposition here is between the *ghar* and the *jāngal*. This is not to say that these young women look forward to going to the forest every day. When it is cold and wet they would much prefer to stay at home. However, it is important to acknowledge that their attitude towards going to work in the forest is a stark contrast to that of older women. When I said naively that women liked going to the *jāngal*, my 60 year old landlady retorted:

Who likes going to the *jāngal*? Who likes getting up and dashing off in the rain and cold? Those who do not find peace (*aram*) in the house, they are the ones who like going to the *jāngal*.

Senior women find *aram* in the house whereas young wives do not.

2.5.ii Men's Work

All ploughing and other work requiring the use of oxen, is performed by men. Men prepare the fields for the *rabi* and *kharif* planting. For those households which do not possess any cattle or plough, there are men of all castes available in the village who are willing to hire out their labour. Repairs of any kind in the fields, house or to the water pipes, are done by male villagers. Several men have started up tree nurseries either to sell the saplings or in order to revitalise their once opulent orchards. Such work is organised by the male household head, though women may be expected to help in small chores. Adolescent boys often go off to the forests to collect wood, and men may also do so. However, the actual number of men who do this is small. Boys and men are in charge of taking cattle out to the more distant fields and forest to graze and making sure they have all returned by dusk. The life of a male villager is relatively leisurely. The local tea-shops and shops are the main places where men meet up for a chat and smoke.

The local resident male population is made up of school-going sons, unemployed men who will do daily wage labour, local shop-owners, men with salaried employment who commute to and from work daily, and old men, some of

whom receive pensions. Able bodied pensioners, unemployed and daily wage earning men will do agricultural work (including tending orchards the house may own), hire their services as ploughmen to co-villagers, and take on seasonal work. Salaried workers rarely assist in agricultural and domestic tasks. Almost all households have at least one salaried male. I shall now turn to consider income sources and kinds of male employment.

2.6 Employment and Income Sources

There are 135 persons from 84 households who receive an income.¹⁸ The following table demonstrates how many households are dependent on one kind of earning and how many on a combination of specified income sources.

Table 4. Household income sources.

<u>Income source</u>	<u>Households</u>
Single income source:	
Salary from employment inside Kumaon ^a [1]	15
Daily wage in Kumaon ^b [2]	18
Private in Kumaon ^c [3]	6
Pension ^d [4]	7
Salary from employment outside Kumaon ^e [5]	15
Combined income sources:	
Private & salary outside Kumaon [3]+[5]	2
Private & salary inside Kumaon [3]+[1]	3
Pension & salary outside Kumaon [4]+[5]	4
Pension & salary inside Kumaon [4]+[1]	4
Salary inside & outside Kumaon [1]+[5]	5
Daily wages & salary outside Kumaon [2]+[5]	3
Daily wages & salary outside & inside Kumaon [2]+ [1]+[5]	2
Total	84

Notes:

^aincludes salaried jobs in government services (i.e. teachers, basic health workers, gardeners, clerks and so on) and in private companies (i.e. local factory) in Kumaon.

^bincludes employment for government agencies (Forest Department or Public Works Department) on a temporary and daily wage basis.

^cincorporates a mill-owner, a commercial tree nursery owner, shopkeepers and tea-shop owners.

^dincludes military and government service and widow's pensions.

^eincludes salaried jobs in government services and in private companies outside of Kumaon, predominantly in the *des*, the plains.

¹⁸There are three households whose income sources I do not know, which I am not including in these data. Two are single person, widow-headed households, and the other consists of a village daughter and her husband.

The following table records income sources on an individual basis.

Table 5. Employment and income source per person.

			No.	%
Working outside Kumaon			46	34
Working inside Kumaon ¹⁹	No.	%		
a) daily wages	25	19		
b) salaried jobs	37	27		
c) private/shops	11	8		
Sub-total		73	54	
In receipt of pensions			16	12
Total			135	100

Of the above 135 income-receiving persons, 129 are men. The other six consist of widows who are in receipt of widow's pensions (5), or receive money from private funds and selling fruit (1). Of the 129 income earning men, 65 (50 percent) reside on a daily basis in the village. These 65 males are from the 38 households in the village which do not send male members to work and live outside the locality. That is to say, these households' incoming earnings are made without having to send a man away from the village to live elsewhere. The following table shows the breakdown of occupations amongst this group:

Table 6. Kinds of employment of resident village males.²⁰

Income source	Households
Salaried employment (daily commuters)	8
Daily wages	18
Pension	4
Private	5
Salaried employment and pension	2
Salaried employment and private	1
Total	38

Several of the younger men receiving military pensions are beginning to branch out into private enterprise. One has set up a tree nursery, another has opened a roadside shop/tea-stall and yet another has purchased a jeep and now runs a taxi service. There are other income generating opportunities for these resident men. I only ever saw one village man sell his labour to other villagers for such tasks as transporting stones and

¹⁹Kumaon includes a significant lowland plains area including the towns of Ramnagar, Haldvani and Kashipur.

²⁰There are 42 households in total which receive an income without having to send a male member out. However, four of these are single person headed households in which the household head is a widow, three of whom are in receipt of widow's pensions. They are not included in this table.

slates for the construction of a building. All the other manual labourers were women. The daily wage for female field help or manual labour is Rs.20 per day. However, males working in the fields of others in an all-male group would be paid Rs.25 per day. Though manual labour is viewed as demeaning, ploughing has no derogatory connotations, and can sometimes be a lucrative way of earning money. A man may earn up to Rs.50 a day for his and his animal's labour. Pension receivers, daily wage workers and unmarried, unemployed sons, may do this. The ploughman is in a strong position. Demand is relatively high and competition low so he can earn a good sum, and maintain his independence and pride. An established ploughman will probably have several households' fields to plough in any one season. He is not dependant on others for a living, but those who are unable to plough their own fields are dependant on him to prepare their land: if their land is not ploughed, they cannot eat. Being unable to plough and prepare one's own fields, and having to pay for such a service, undermines the expressed ideal and value of household self-sufficiency, independence and autonomy. Those men who do not work spend much of their time sitting in the tea-stalls or shops, smoking and chatting.

2.6.i Migratory Employment

The rest of the male population live and work outside in other areas of Kumaon and Garhwal, and in the towns and cities of the plains of North India. The total number of income-earning adult men (fathers/sons/husbands) who live away for employment purposes is 64 (50 percent of total 129 male earners). Of these 46 (36 percent) work outside of Kumaon (almost all in the plains) and 18 (14 percent) inside Kumaon. Forty-three households in Silora have at least one male member engaged in migratory employment.

Table 7. Number of absent male members per household.

	1 man out	2 men out	3 men out	4 men out	Total Houses
Households	29	8	5	1	43

Migratory employment is not new to Silora and the Kumaon region as a whole. Fanger (1980: 269-284) has shown, by studying census demographic data, that this has been a regional trend for many years. Sex ratio data of Almora district from 1901 to 1960 show that migratory patterns have been growing since 1911 (Fanger 1980: 278). During the years 1911-1961 the district's population expanded tremendously, almost doubling itself over this fifty year period (Almora District Census Handbook 1966). Cumulative population explosions and pressure on the land

is one of the factors contributing to employment migration, as people in Silora themselves acknowledge. There is just not enough productive arable land to feed the local population.

There are also very few employment opportunities in this hill region. There are very few industries and government and private jobs are scarce. In order to subsist and supplement their household income, men must therefore go further afield in search of employment. People emphasise the 'push factors' which they say force them to leave their beloved mountains and families for the plains (see Chapter Nine).²¹

2.6.ii Local Attitudes Towards Types and Place of Work

Local people make two main distinctions with regard to income sources and employment types. These concern: first, the difference between salaried and unsalaried employment; and second, whether or not employment is in Kumaon.

Those with salaried, usually white-collar, jobs are known as *sarvis-valas*. Within this category, there is a further division identifying people who have government, public sector posts and those who have private sector jobs. The former type of post is more highly valued and deemed more solid and secure, with a pension in old age to look forward to. Private sector posts do not carry so much status. They are viewed as somewhat unreliable, insecure and temporary. Nevertheless, such jobs are ranked higher than running one's own business and daily wage work. A 29 year old shop-owner with an Economics M.A. pass, who is also probably one of the wealthiest men in the village, still says that he is '*khāli M.A*', a mere 'M.A man'. In his and other people's opinion he has no real employment or financial security; he is not a *sarvis-vala*. Nowadays the *sarvis-vala*, symbolised by a suit, tie and attache case, is the groom par excellence.

The other distinction made is between those who work inside Kumaon, and those who work outside Kumaon. There is still a slight element of 'prestige' attached to a man who works away from home. He is seen as being somehow more worldly, although this is not as pronounced as it may have been in the past (see Fanger 1980: 267) or as it still is in other areas of Kumaon (see Krengel 1989: 110). Within the category of migrant workers, irrespective of their actual employment, another and much more important distinction is made; this is between those men who work in

²¹D.C. Pande and H.C. Joshi (1987), in their study of occupational migration in rural Kumaon, suggest that there are broadly four factors explaining migration. Higher levels of education has raised people's expectations for interesting and rewarding employment, accounting for 27 percent if the migrant population studied. Severe economic pressures caused by unavailability of work and so forth accounted for 52 percent; the attractions of a more luxurious city life-style accounted for 10.5 percent, and six percent migrated due to "social factors" such as family conflicts.

Kumaon, or more generally in the mountains, and those who go to the plains to earn their living.

Any area outside of Kumaon, save Garhwal, is generally referred to as *des*, the plains. Inhabitants of the plains are called *Deśis* (of the plains). If a man works in the hills, he continues to live in a familiar cultural environment and among people similar to himself. However, the plains are thought to be populated by a different kind of people with a different culture. One major danger of having sons and brothers working in the plains is that they may, through contact with plainsmen, adopt some of the latter's attitudes and ways, and so become less Kumaoni. I consider the nature and significance of the hill-plains distinction in Chapter Nine.

2.7 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have seen that land is distributed relatively evenly, and that there are no large landlords. Despite its low yields, land is still an important economic resource with roadside land providing valuable business opportunities. Ties to ancestral land continue to be strong. A variety of crops are grown and production is labour intensive. Women are the agricultural workers, but important divisions exist between junior and senior women, with *bvaris* carrying the heaviest burden. Agricultural work is organised on a household basis, though some labour exchange between households occurs for specific tasks. Work gives women mobility and an opportunity to socialise. Women frequently visit the forest and young wives in particular see it as a place of freedom from the constraints and demands of the house and village. At the same time, however, the forest is a threatening place while the village area is safe. The *jangal* is of ambivalent significance and represents a potential source of danger.

Men do agricultural work, wage labour and migrant work. Half of the adult male population are migrant workers. This section introduced us to the *sarvis-vala*, the white-collar (preferably public servant) worker, who is the epitome of the successful modern man, and to the distinction between the plains and the hills, not only as locations for employment, but as places populated by different kinds of people. Both the *sarvis-vala* and the plains/hill distinction will be significant in future chapters.

Having provided a picture of the general economic and environmental context in which Silora people live, in the following Chapter I shall consider the internal order of the household and the structure and principles of agnatic kinship.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HOUSEHOLD AND AGNATIC KINSHIP

The first part of this chapter provides background information on the household in Silora. Economic and kinship principles of the household are examined; the spatial organisation of the dwelling itself is described and the notion of the house as a moral community of insiders is discussed through an analysis of the symbolic significance of 'house milk'. The last part of the chapter examines the lineage and principles of agnatic kinship.

3.1 What is a Household in Silora?

The term for household, both the dwelling and the group of people who live in it, is *ghar*. Another word used is *mau*. In Silora, a household counts as a separate entity when a new *cul* (hearth) has been set up. At this moment, members of what was a common household no longer share the hearth or pool their incomes. The division or partition of a household into households is referred to as *nyār hāṇ*. One man explained: "Nyar means eating from two separate hearths; it is when two brothers live separately." Subsequent to the separation of the hearths, the house(s) and moveable property are divided and distributed among the brothers. However, in spite of these separate units, brothers often continue to hold (though not work) land in common, as we saw in the previous chapter. Moveable goods are fought over and divided, as are plots of land. Plots of land are informally separated and distributed to each brother, but the formal division of land is continually postponed.¹ The postponement of legal land partition results in arguments and conflict. Therefore, though a house does share the ownership of various properties, there are other coparceners in the land who are not recognised as members of the household.

Co-residence is usual, although it is not a useful criterion for household membership (McC.Netting, Wilk and Arnould 1984). Long term and temporary migrants, though non-resident, contribute to the financial pot and retain full

¹This is useful in one way. When a brother becomes a widower, he may choose to join his brother's *cul* group. Whereas in the past they were two hearth groups eating off their own informally arranged plots of land, when they join up, they have no land registers to change, and can unite their plots and harvests. Kregel (1989: 99) says that this is not the norm among Thakurs near Almora, but she noticed that Brahman villages in the area practice such a system.

inheritance rights. Among permanent residents co-residence is not obligatory. In one case, a man and his family live in one house, and his 96 year old father lives in one room of a house elsewhere in the village. However, the father is fed from his eldest son's *cul*, even though they do not share the same dwelling, and even though the father's room is located in a large building in which his three other sons and his estranged second wife live. In one building there may be up to four or five different *cul*, household units.

A household is made up of kinspersons who have ownership rights to common property, are usually co-resident, (ideally) share a common store of wealth and food, and eat together from the same hearth. In addition, the household functions as a single unit with regard to ritual and ceremonial matters, and defines itself through the exchange of invitations, foods and gifts. Before examining economic and kin relations within the household, I present a classification of household types in Silora.

3.2 Household Classification

By classifying households into types or 'structures' (Carter 1984), we are freezing a moment of the household's life-span. As Goody (1958) points out, every family moves through a developmental cycle. Over a few days, a household in Silora transformed from a one *cul* group into five *cul* groups; from a three generation, 14 person (permanent residents) household into several much smaller units. A household of brothers have children, and sooner or later they divide. Increasing numbers, arguments and conflict means that households continually move through the process of growth and division.²

I have followed Kolenda's system (1968: 149-150) in tabulating household types and composition, but have changed her category of sub-nuclear family to include a married couple, either an elderly or a childless couple. In my table I present only 87 households, since by my calculations this was the number of active households during the research year. There are many absent families and empty

²I am aware that there are limitations in my presentation and that recent discussions call for more rigorous analyses of household form and constitution. Wallman (1986) considers households as resource systems. Sharma (1989) follows this idea and says households in India can be understood in terms of the interacting interests of individual members. She also considers how cultural values interact with economic trends to affect the various household forms. Freed and Freed (1983) look at the various factors and influences which generate less organic and predictable domestic developmental cycles than posited by Goody's model. Through the use of diachronic census data they find that there is no single or typical developmental cycle but several. Carter (1984), in his call to move beyond static structural household studies, also advocates the use of household histories for a better understanding of the processes which transform a household. The 'household system' (consisting of rules and strategies) should be studied since this is what generates 'household structure' (size, composition and development). According to Hammel (1984), individual decisions which give rise to particular household forms should be investigated.

houses or sections of houses. It is difficult to know exactly how many families are absent, since many have not actually formally divided their land. I work on the basis that those males of the village who live permanently outside with their wives and offspring operate their own hearth and budget in their place of residence. These families have no financial duties to their resident kin (brothers/cousins) in Silora, though they may all be coparceners in joint land-holdings. These absent families, or members of them, may return to the village occasionally but not necessarily annually. I calculate that there are approximately 40 absent families. Of these I know that 29 have their house or portion of the ancestral house locked up and unused. In 11 cases, a brother(s) is living in all of the house at present.

Table 8. Household composition and classification.

Categories	Households	%
Nuclear Family	38	44
Supplemented Nuclear ^a	10	11
Sub-Nuclear Family ^b	5	6
Single Person Household	5	6
Supplemented Sub-Nuclear ^c	-	-
Collateral Joint ^d	1	1
Supplemented Collateral Joint ^e	10	11
Lineal Joint ^f	12	14
Supplemented Lineal Joint ^g	2	2
Lineal-Collateral Joint ^h	3	3
Supplemented Lineal-Collateral Joint ⁱ	-	-
Other ^j	1	1
Total	87	99

Notes

^aNuclear family & a widowed, divorced or unmarried relative.

^bParent and child(ren), or married couple.

^cSub-nuclear family & a widowed, divorced or unmarried relative.

^dTwo or more married brothers, their wives and unmarried children.

^eCollateral Joint & a widowed, divorced or unmarried relative.

^fParents, unmarried children, plus one married son, his wife and unmarried children.

^gLineal Joint & a widowed, divorced or unmarried relative.

^hParents, their unmarried children, and at least two married sons, their wives and married and unmarried children.

ⁱLineal-Collateral Joint & others.

^jThe 'other' household consists of one aged man (A) and his wife, their sons and grandchildren, and A's widowed brother (B), B's unmarried daughter, and unmarried son. When B's wife was alive, apparently there were two hearths within the building, but since B was widowed, the two brothers and hearths joined to become one.

There is one house which I have not included in these figures due to insufficient information. It includes a married couple, their three married sons and children, and three unmarried sons. As such, it would be classified as a lineal-collateral joint type household. However, only one married son, his wife and children live there. The parents and all other brothers and families live in Ramnagar and

Delhi. On the 'active' basis it is a nuclear household. I do not know how to classify this group. For more details regarding household composition see Appendix One.

Nuclear households, which comprise 44 percent of the 87 households, represent the dominant type in Silora, at least for the time being. In total, 67 percent are non-joint household types, and 33 percent are joint household types.³

3.3 Migration in Households

As I mentioned in the Chapter Two, there are 43 households out of 81 sample households in Silora, which have at least one male member (son/husband/father) living away from home for employment purposes. Here I tabulate the number of migrant workers per house according to household type.

Table 9. Number of migrant male workers per household type.

Type of Household	1 man out	2 men out	3 men out	4 men out
Nuclear	13	1	1	-
Supplemented Nuclear	4	-	-	-
Sub-Nuclear	1	-	-	-
Single Person	-	-	-	-
Supplemented Sub-Nuclear	-	-	-	-
Collateral Joint	1	-	-	-
Supplemented Collateral Joint	2	5	-	-
Lineal Joint	5	1	2	1
Supplemented Lineal Joint	2	-	-	-
Lineal-Collateral Joint	1	1	1	-
Supplemented Lineal- Collateral Joint	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	1
Total	29	8	5	1

I have not included two households, which are single widow households, in the above figures. I do not know from where one widow derives her income. Before her daughter's wedding she lived with her HBWs and their children and grandchildren in a large household. When her daughter married this household divided into five separate hearth groups and this widow is now alone. The other widow is given money by her three sons, who, though they have a large house in the village, live

³These figures are similar to those recorded for other villages in Kumaon. Fanger (1980: 300), whose data relate to the 1960s, found 27 nuclear households (33 percent) out of a total of 82 households. Of these, non-joint household types totalled 50, that is 61 percent, and joint type households totalled 32, that is 39 percent of the total sample. Krengel (1989: 103) found 35 nuclear households (34 percent) from a total of 102 households. Of these, non-joint household types totalled 69, that is 68 percent, and joint type households totalled 33, which is 32 percent of the total sample.

permanently away. Two have very high government service jobs in Delhi where they live with their wives and children, and one son is a professor at the University of Chicago, USA, where he resides with his family.

In Chapter Two I explained that there are 38 households which do not send any men away for employment purposes and I detailed the kind of employment these resident village men are engaged in. Here I tabulate the type of households in which no member is engaged in migratory employment.

Table 10. Type of households in which no man earns income from migratory employment.⁴

Household Type	Households
Nuclear Family	23
Supplemented Nuclear	6
Sub-Nuclear Family	3
Supplemented Collateral Joint	3
Lineal Joint	3
Total	38

From the two tables taken together we find the following. Of the migrant worker sample of 81 households, 53 percent (43 households) have at least one member in migrant employment and 47 percent do not. Of those 43 households, non-joint type households (20) and joint type households (23) have, in almost equal proportions, at least one migrant worker. Although there are a large number of nuclear households which send at least one man away to work (15), this is only 39 percent of the total number of nuclear households (38). Whereas, of the total number of supplemented collateral joint households (10), 7 households (70 percent) have at least one man living out for employment purposes. From the total of non-joint household types (52), 20, that is 38 percent have at least one migrant worker. Of the total number of joint type households (29), 23, that is 79 percent have at least one male migrant worker. The larger type houses have more than one migrant worker.

Having provided some basic statistical data and a working definition of the household, I shall consider relations within the household and the norms and ideals associated with it. The household is the principal economic and kinship group. Household self-sufficiency and autonomy are culturally valued. Within the household the emphasis is on the sharing of resources and produce, of interdependence as well as hierarchy and unity.

⁴These figures do not include six households. Five of these are single person (widow) households. Of these, two are in receipt of widow pensions and one has private means through selling fruit and so forth. Two others and a household consisting of a village daughter and her husband are excluded since I do not know their income details.

Firstly however, I shall give a brief account of the daily routine of the household. The women of the household rise before daybreak, which is four o'clock in the summer and five o'clock in the winter. The fire is lit, and water boiled for morning tea. Water is collected, the cows milked and food prepared. In winter breakfast is eaten between eight and 10 o'clock. The senior woman usually prepares *dāv-bhāt* (lentils and rice), the first meal of the day. Younger women of the household go to the forest or field to collect grass, gather firewood and so on and in summer they return at mid-day to eat their breakfast. Children are either at school or tending the grazing cattle. For most of the day the houses are empty and doors are closed. Only a few old people and young children are to be found sitting out on the courtyard warming themselves in the sun. During summer months people stay indoors during the mid-day hours to avoid the heat. Women move between the house, fields and forest. When not at work, men spend time at the tea-stalls and shops scattered along the roadside. At dusk, the cattle return from grazing and household members reunite. Water is collected, the cows milked and fed, and the evening meal is prepared. Supper consists of vegetables and *roṭi* (flat unleavened bread). After eating, people sit and talk around a fire during winter, and retire early to sleep.

3.4 Relations Within the Household

3.4.i Kinship Principles and Behaviour

Kin relations within the household are characterised primarily by hierarchy (see Gray 1983, 1989; Bennett 1983; Parry 1979). Differences in status are based on the criteria of generation, age and/or gender. Younger persons should show respect and deference to their seniors. In general, females should show respect and deference to males. Deference is expressed in several ways. Gestures such as joining the hands or bowing and touching the feet of another are expressions of deference. One should eat after the person to whom deference is due, and speech and behaviour should be restrained and guarded in the company of a superior. Below I describe kinship relations as they ought to be in the context of a joint household.

First and foremost, one should show deference and obedience to one's father (*bābu*, or respectfully *bājyū*). The father is a figure of authority and love. His affection is not indulgent but concerned and corrective. This is particularly so between a father and son. The father has the final say in any decision, and sons should not contradict or argue with him. The relationship is marked by distance and restraint. Such behaviour is also due to one's fathers' brothers and other males of one's father's generation and lineage. Males who are older than one's father such as

FeB (*ṭhulbājyū*) are treated with great respect, while a slightly more familiar and playful relationship can be enjoyed with men younger than one's father, such as FyB (*kākā*). One's elder brother (*dād*, or respectfully *dājyū*) is to be treated with respect similar to that given to the father. A man should not smoke or drink alcohol in front of his elder brother or men of his father's generation.

Relations with the mother (*ijā*) are less hierarchically marked than with the father. There should be respect and obedience, but the relationship is in general quite familiar and affectionate. A mother is affectionately indulgent with her young child. At the same time, the child is not encouraged by other family members to spend too much time with the mother. A child should not grow too dependant on its mother, otherwise it will be forever calling for her.⁵

Young mothers work very hard and are often absent from the house for hours on end during the day. They return to feed the child and then set off again to the fields or forest. In her absence the grandmother and grandfather (*ām* and *bub*) look after the children. A grandmother will happily offer her breast to comfort her grandchild. Nevertheless, nobody can replace a mother. I was told, "if a child's mother dies, then the child might as well die since no one will care for the child. A step-mother does not care about her step-children." The mother, as creator and nurturer, has god-like associations. One man said to me:

Mother and god are the most important and special of all beings. A mother worries for her children and keeps them in her stomach for 10 months; she gives life and milk, this is why she is so important.

The very strong feelings of affection and respect accorded to mothers and motherhood, are extended to the cow (or buffalo) who, like the mother, gives milk. Mother's breast milk is the love, affection and care that a mother gives to her child. Milk (*dūd*) and all that has to do with bearing, protecting and nurturing the child, comes from the mother's side.⁶

Relations between brothers are marked by status asymmetry based on age. The elder brother is like a father and should be shown due respect. He should act in his younger brother's interest. However, brothers are also equal. They are of the

⁵Das (1976) suggests that the strong intimate and biological bonds which exist between mother-child and husband-wife are not given open expression because they are dangerous and disruptive to the larger group to which these persons belong; the facts of biology binding a mother and child are 'backstaged' in social life.

⁶It is believed that children partake of their mother's moral make-up, that the children will be like their mother. If she is sinful or flawed (*doṣṭ*) then so too will her children be. This is particularly so with regards to daughter's pre-marital sexual behaviour. The mother is blamed for her daughter's misdemeanour; the attitude is 'like mother like daughter.' *Dosi* women are not only women who have extra-marital affairs, but also women who leave their husbands to elope with another man and 'marry' a second time. Such women are known as *dhātis*.

same generation and are equal in relation to their father and as his subordinates. Inheritance rules give sons an equal share of the father's estate.⁷ By virtue of their common father and shared property interests, brothers should enjoy a relationship based on mutual aid and solidarity. However, this is often not the case (see Mandelbaum 1987: 63). Economic and other factors can lead to conflict and competition between brothers and ultimately to the fission of the joint household. Even after separation relations between these households are competitive and contentious (see Chapter Five).

The relationship with an elder sister (*didi*) is respectful and affectionate. She is a friend and usually an adviser and confidante. Relations with the younger sister (*bāñi* or *bhuli*) are also affectionate but more protective. Irrespective of age, the adult brother enjoys an easy and mutually supportive relation with his sister. The brother has important life-long duties towards his sisters, and ultimately to their families.

In the husband-wife relationship, gender marks the status difference. The usual words for husband and wife are *māiś* and *saini*, man and woman. A woman will never speak her husband's name and both will refer to each other as 'the eldest child's (name) mother/father'. The wife should behave with deference and obedience to her husband. Such respectful deference is also due to any member of his lineage who is older than her husband. In the early years of marriage, husband and wife should not show any signs of familiarity or affection in public. They should not even speak to each other in public (see Bennett 1983: 173; Madan 1989: 118-120). Any sign of affection is not only seen as potentially threatening to the solidarity of the patrilineal joint household but is simply immodest behaviour. Nor should a man indicate any preferential treatment towards his wife. If he wishes to give her a gift, he will do so in secret. When asked where her new saree comes from, rather than admit it is a gift from her husband, a wife will always reply, 'it is from the *mait* (natal home)' (Bennett 1983: 178).

As they mature, and their children grow up, the husband-wife relation may become slightly more familiar in public. The husband's nominal authority and dominance may give way to the wife's increasing influence over her husband and the decisions he makes (see Wright 1981; Das 1990). However, the wife's influence should not be exhibited in public. Even if she does dominate the house and her husband too, the image presented to the outside world should be of the man's authority and the wife's subordination.

⁷In cases where there are no sons, a daughter will inherit her father's estate. The land will then be transmitted to her sons, who will carry the father's name. I know of no cases of adoption in Silora.

A daughter-in-law (*bvari*) should show extreme deference to her father-in-law (*saur*, or in address *bubjyū*) and mother-in-law (*sasu*, or in address *gyū*). One *bvari* said to me "*bvaris* should fear their *sasu* and *saur*, because only then will there be any work." If the *sasu* gives some order or criticism, the *bvari* should not answer back. However, the *sasu-bvari* relationship is one of the most contentious of all household relationships.

The term *bvari* is also used for one's brother's son's wife and younger brother's wife. The *bvari* owes deference, respect and avoidance to her husband's elder kin, that is, to her husband's father's brother (*saur*) and his wife (*sasu*), and husband's elder brother (*jeth*, or in address *jārjyū*). In front of one's husband's elder brother and husband's father's brother a woman should pull her saree slightly over her face. The husband's elder sister (*pāñi*) is to be treated as the mother-in-law and often the relationship is just as conflict ridden. The address term for husband's elder sister is *nanjyū*, which means 'little mother-in-law'. When the *bvari* bears a child, especially a son, her situation changes considerably. She is given more respect. She should, however continue to display deference to her husband's elder kinspersons. Relations with one's husband's brother's wives (*jethani* and *dyorani*) should be like those between elder and younger sisters. However, this relationship is well known for the tensions and conflicts which exist. Sisters-in-law share the house's workload and under the mother-in-law's authority they are equals. Initially they may be quite friendly but with time they become competitive. Quarrels over who works more, over their children, and regarding whose husband contributes more to the household funds, develop and flourish.

Relations with the husband's younger siblings and the elder brother's wife are usually more jocular and relaxed. This is usually the case between the husband's younger brother (*dyor*) and elder brother's wife (*bhauji*) than it is between the husband's younger sister (*gusyaini*) and *bhauji*.

If the above norms are respected, unity results. Harmony and unity are highly valued. In the above, I have presented the normative character of certain kin relations within the household. However, the basic principles of hierarchy and people's status are not always respected. In the following section I consider the notion of *sevā* (service, duty) and inter-generational relationships within the household.

Inter-generational Relations and the Idea of *Seva*

The most important aspect of hierarchical kin relations is *seva*. *Seva* is the care given to a person's body and mind which ensures comfort and well-being. These include the provision of shelter, food and clothing given with loving concern. Respect, obedience and deference are aspects of *seva* (see Vatuk 1990). *Seva* should be

performed out of devotion; *seva* should be performed selflessly and unmotivated by personal gain (see Mayer 1981). In Silora some people spoke of *seva* as *dharam* (virtue, code of conduct or duty). It is a woman's *dharam* to serve her husband and children; it is a son's *dharam* to serve his mother and father. *Seva* was also equated with *ach kam* (good work) and *pun* (righteous action, merit). *Seva* also enters relations between humans and deities. It is human's *dharam*, their duty, to offer *seva* to the deities through *pūjā* (worship). For the present I am concerned with *seva* as an aspect of relations between kin within the household.

Having at least one son is important to most Hindus. A son connects the past and the future of the father's household and lineage: he is needed to perform the parent's death rites and the annual *śarād* ceremonies (feeding of ancestral spirits). The son has daily responsibilities towards his parents during their lifetime. As the father ages, the son (or eldest son in cases of joint household) is expected to play a more active role regarding household business matters and decisions, and so gradually relieve the old father of such concerns. A son should show concern for his mother's well-being and ensure that her life is as comfortable as possible. A mother expects her son to be loyal to her and to consider her needs above all others, even before those of his own wife. One woman expressed the attitude held:

A son is very important. When he gets married he will live with the parents or if he has a job outside, perhaps his old parents will go to live with him. He will do *seva* for them. The son's duty is to take care of the parents just as the parents have looked after the children for so long.

The above quotation expresses very clearly the concept of inter-generation relations of reciprocity and interdependence discussed by Vatuk (1990). Old people feel that it is their right to receive service from their sons and juniors. Indeed that is the natural order of things. The son is in debt to his parents for the nourishment, protection and affection they have shown him (see Madan 1987: 26-29). In their old age people expect to be able to reap the fruits of their hard work. To have, or appear to have, a caring considerate son is a mother's pride and the envy of all. To have a son who does not care, who does not contribute to the household funds, who drinks too much and who argues is shameful. Conflicts and disputes between parents and sons are hidden and socially denied.

It is the son's moral duty to serve his parents.⁸ He shares this duty with his wife. The daughter-in-law should behave with obedience and shame and should do whatever her parents-in-law request of her. However, sons and daughters-in-law

⁸Inden and Nicholas identify *seva* as an important aspect of what they call 'hierarchical love' which exists between parents and children. Parental love is nourishing and protecting, filial love is characterised by obedience and service (1977: 27-29).

frequently fall short of their duties. Old people complain that due respect is not given. "Sons do not listen to their father s any more and even grandfathers are told by their grandchildren to shut up" said one man. The lack of respect is blamed on alcohol and the influence of tea-stall society. An old man said: "They drink and gamble and disregard their parents' requests. With alcohol men's minds have changed." Sons who do not drink are referred to as obedient. I was told that in the past fighting between husband and wife occurred frequently. The wife would flee back to her natal home and perhaps 'remarry.'⁹ However, nowadays, the conflict is between the son and *bvari* versus the parents/parents-in-law. Juniors, especially daughters-in-laws, are supposed to fear and respect their elders, but according to many old people, nowadays things are upside down: "A *sasu* fears her *bvari*, a father fears his son." Fathers complain that sons no longer show respect to their elders, and that daughters-in-law have no modesty or shame.¹⁰

If a son should behave disrespectfully towards his parents, and if he should act against their wishes, then such 'unnatural' behaviour is either blamed on the influence of alcohol or money, or the machinations of a manipulative and spiteful daughter-in-law. In some cases, his aberrant behaviour is said to be caused by *jādu* (spells, magic or charms) sent by the *bvari*'s mother and conveyed either by the *bvari* herself or with her dowry at the wedding (see Chapter Six). For a daughter-in-law to act disrespectfully is terrible, but perhaps is not so surprising considering she is an outsider and an 'unnatural' daughter. To complain about one's *bvari* is accepted and almost institutionalised! Women tend to complain about relations with their *bvaris* in terms of role reversals. For instance one woman said: "Nowadays everyone has to give *bvaris khuśāmad* (flattery, attention) otherwise there will be arguments. Her mother and father-in-law and husband must keep her content." The conflict and tension characteristic of the *sasu-bvari* relationship is culturally elaborated all over North India.

As reported by Vatuk (1990), old people expressed fears of losing their physical capacities and the consequences of such loss. To be incapacitated and dependant on one's son and daughter-in-law bring fears of neglect and maltreatment. Ageing persons feel more or less abandoned, reduced to dependents, neglected and resented (see Ortner 1978: 46-47). One day, as I was talking to a few old ladies, one

⁹See Sanwal (1966) who associates the instability of the marriage alliance in Kumaon to the practice of bride-wealth. Under this system, he says, women are never ritually incorporated into their husband's agnatic group. Only in *kanyā dān* marriages is this achieved. He also comments on how easily the marriage union is dissolved (see also Joshi 1929: 150). However, ultimately "it is the existence or non-existence of children which is the most important single determinant of the stability or instability of any particular Khasi marriage" (Sanwal 1966: 53), an idea shared by Joshi (1929: 157).

¹⁰One man said to me: "a *bvari* should cover her head in front of her *saur* but now she even combs her hair in front of us!" As I observed, this was indeed sometimes the case.

of their *bvaris* came along and said "do not sit around, let's go and cut grass." The old women turned to me and joked "*bvari* will not give her *sasu* any bread if she does not do any work!" Though this was said in jest, it reflects many old people's perception of the treatment they receive from young people, and their real fears of becoming physically weak and dependant. On another occasion an old woman said to me: "If I do not do any work *bvari* will think 'she is a waste, she just sits around and eats the food'. I will only get peace and rest (*aram*) when I die." Young productive family members often resent the old because they do not contribute financially or materially to the house; all they do is sit and eat. One young woman said about old people:

Their children will take care of them as long as they are earning, but once they have gone past it, weak and old, unable to do any work, then they do not care and are just waiting for them to die.¹¹

Towards the end of my stay, an old man fell very ill. His wife said that she would see to his treatment and ensure his full recovery. The *bvari* said "who is going to spend money on him?" implying that it would be a waste of resources. The old woman said that she would, even if it meant selling all her jewels. This gave rise to a long-standing argument between the two: the *bvari* was particularly concerned since she wanted to inherit the jewels when the mother-in-law dies.

The fears of the elderly concerning being neglected seem to be particularly strong among widows. Partition in the mother's life-time is quite common. If she has several sons, she will live with the son who will treat and serve her well. One old lady said: "I have said to my sons that I will give my jewellery only to that son who does my *khusamad* until my death." She had told her husband not to give her jewellery to her sons. This was her insurance, she said, against abandonment and maltreatment. The situation is usually worse for a widow without a son. She will usually keep some land aside to give to the nephew who is good to her and performs her death rites. I heard of one case in which a sonless widow's father-in-law had secretly taken her land share and registered it under his other sons' son's names, to prevent her from selling the land to outsiders. I was told:

It should not be like this; nephews should give *seva* (service) to their aunt and then on that basis she can decide who she wants to give her property to. Now they have no obligation to look after her.

It would seem, despite the idea that *seva* is given selflessly, out of love and a sense of moral duty, that in reality this is not so. Some sons will look after their parents because and only if they get something in return. Property is regarded, and may be

¹¹Berreman (1972: 166) says almost the same thing: "An old and inactive man tends to be ignored or actively resented by other family members and he himself often resents their attitudes towards him, so that everyone looks forward to his death."

used by the elderly, as a means by which to ensure *seva* in old age from the younger generation.

Failure to perform *seva* and to honour one's *dharam* is *adharam*. Failure by a man to serve his parents and failure by a woman to serve her parents-in-law are considered breaches of kinship morality and are blameworthy. Disregard for the kinship principles and obligations of respect and obedience to one's elders is faulty and sinful action, and can lead to supernatural retribution and sanctions.

Elder people are able to punish a disloyal junior with a curse, *śarāp*. In one case a six month pregnant *bvari* had a big argument with her *sasu*. Apparently the *bvari* even went after her *sasu* with a sickle. The next day the *bvari* was rushed to hospital. Her baby had died in her stomach. Village people were saying that it was the mother-in-law's *mukh* (mouth, words) which had caused this misfortune, otherwise why did the baby die that day and not before? In this case the mother-in-law's curse, or spoken words of abuse were seen to have had an immediate effect. In most cases, however, the effects of an unspoken or spoken curse do not manifest themselves immediately.

If a *bvari* does not respect and serve her *sasu* well, the *sasu's ātmā* (soul or spirit) will become dissatisfied and upset. When there is pain in the soul and when the heart-mind (*man*) cries, then the heart's curse is attached to the offender. If the *bvari* were to ask for forgiveness, then the *sasu* may retract her cursing utterances or feelings. However, this does not usually occur and the *sasu* dies insulted, offended and hurt.

The *sasu's* initial thought or utterance made in anger by the *sasu* will stay with the offender. Sometime in the future, misfortunes will occur to the *bvari* or in her household, and the cause may be found to be, what people call, 'the crying of the dead soul'. The soul's feelings of sadness, anger and pain are referred to as *hank*. It then becomes an ancestral curse and one which is to be dealt with and removed through ritual action of worship. I shall discuss these issues in more detail in Chapter Eight.

3.4.ii Economic Principles and Behaviour

The household is the basic economic unit in the village. Small-scale mixed agriculture and animal husbandry are the traditional subsistence activities and are household enterprises. The household is the unit of common economic interest, and the fundamental unit of production. Ownership and access to land, the division of labour and the distribution and consumption of produce are functions ideally carried out by household members. The household's resources, organisation and functions are structured by the afore-mentioned kin relations.

Men who live locally make decisions regarding ploughing and field preparation in conjunction with their wives. Some houses sell milk, fruit and vegetables. If there is a man in the house, he will take care of these tasks. If there is no man, if women live alone most of the year, then the eldest woman in the house will sell vegetables to contractors who purchase crops straight from the village. The money made from such sales goes towards household expenditure. Though men may be the actual transactors of cattle, women often play an important part in choosing the animal to buy, or choosing an appropriate purchaser. Knowledge of the caste and village of the seller or purchaser seems to be very important. Women are particularly interested in such matters. Those men who have initiated cash-oriented tree nurseries or orchards take full responsibility for their upkeep and make all decisions regarding them.

Men ultimately hold the household purse strings and control any cash earned. The senior male is in charge of the household budget. He will calculate and give his wife the amount he considers necessary for basic household needs. She must then manage this amount and make it last. Men do most of the shopping both locally and outside the village. Children and old women also do local shopping. Pubescent daughters and women do not visit the shops, and generally avoid the road. The road, shops and tea-stalls are male spaces, and ones in which these females feel uncomfortable (see Chapter Seven).

Self-Sufficiency and Autonomy. Sharing and Cooperation

Household self-sufficiency and autonomy are highly valued. The model of the household given by villagers is one of autarky, containment and separateness. Ideally the household should be able to satisfy all its labour needs from family members within the house; ideally a house should be able to subsist entirely from its harvests; and ideally one should not need to borrow or be in a position of asking for help. The house therefore should be an economically self-sustaining and functioning entity, independent from the wider outside social world.

However, this ideal is hardly ever met by any household. As we have seen with the system of *palt*, various stages of production necessitate collective effort and the participation of non-household members. Such relations contradict the ideal of the economically autonomous household (see Ortner 1978: 23) and very few households meet the ideal of subsistence from their own harvests. Land-holdings are insufficient both in size and quality to satisfy basic subsistence needs, and every household requires a wage earner: as we have seen, many men are migrant workers. This, again, contradicts the model of the autarchical household. Men must go outside to earn money which will then sustain the household. However, once this is accepted, the ideal once again of independence re-asserts itself. A household should be able to

subsist from the crops and cash produced by its own members and should not be in a situation in which it should need financial or other assistance from another house. To borrow food and money for one's own consumption (as opposed to food needed for the unexpected arrival of guests), in particular, is shameful. To show to others that one is lacking, or needy, is to show weakness, and to put oneself in an inferior position of potential dependence. To borrow money, to be in debt, is an undesirable and uncomfortable position to be in (see Ortner 1978: 65,68). Dependence and subordination are shameful and to be avoided where possible. Conversely, giving is also problematic, and people are reluctant to agree to help others.

The idea of *apan*, 'one's own', of doing things for oneself and by oneself, is highly stressed and emphasises the values of self-sufficiency and autonomy. For example, when I first arrived in the village, my landlord arranged for a young boy to bring several buckets of water from the tank to my room every morning: for this service I was to pay him two rupees a day. I felt uncomfortable with this situation for several reasons. Some women commented on the arrangement and suggested that perhaps I could fetch my own water. They also asked repeatedly how much I was paying. When I finally decided to put an end to the arrangement, the women with whom I had spoken smiled and emphasised how much better it is to do things *apan ap*, oneself. One piece of wisdom and advice offered to me by my landlady was: "Remember you are always alone; no-one is really there for you." Ideally, households should be self-reliant and independent from people outside of the house.

General reciprocity, that is the sharing and pooling of all economic resources, functions and produce, are the norms and principles of the household. Practical reciprocity illustrates members' shared economic interests. For example, agriculture is a household enterprise. Agricultural work, as we have seen, is organised and performed by household members, in particular women. Women should contribute equally to the upkeep of the land and house. In return they expect an equal share of the produce of their labour. Produce from land and livestock is shared and distributed for consumption to all household members. Cash incomes are also ideally pooled into the communal purse to be used for the benefit of all members of the *cul* group.

The ideology of the house is of solidarity and the subordination of individual member's desires to the interests of the house in general. The emphasis on sharing and cooperation, and the ideology of mutual support and reciprocity between household members resembles the model of the moral economy discussed by Cheal (1989), which is opposed to the political economy model in which relations are based on exchanges motivated by self-interest.

Ideally members share a common store of wealth and there should be no private property within the household. However, it is difficult to gauge how much a

man earns. Sons earn private incomes, mostly away from home and away from the authority of the parents, and keep their own insurance policies and bank accounts. They are able to build up their own invisible savings. Some parents and siblings are not sure how much their sons/brothers earn, nor what proportion of their money they are pooling. One man suggested that wage earning and financial self-interest is incompatible with joint household living. He said, "separation is the new desire. In the past, however much a son earned, it went into the general pot. Nowadays they all have their own bank accounts." Just as women in a joint family may fight over who is working more than the other, so too tension between brothers over their relative financial contributions exists.

With the emphasis on dowry weddings, parents, who in the past did not give their daughter jewellery, are now doing so on their daughter's marriage.¹² The groom's family will also offer jewels to the bride. These jewels remain the property of the groom's household. Jewels given to the bride from her natal kin, are her own (see Joshi 1929: 304). This is particularly so with regard to jewels which duplicate those offered by the groom's house. A girl may also receive jewels from her mother on the latter's death. These are her own personal belongings. In the past all the family jewels and wealth were stored away together. Now many *bvaris* keep their own items locked away separately, from the outset. On these bases, it would be misleading to say that all wealth, such as money and jewellery is pooled, or that everyone has access to these types of property. I would say that ideally and conceptually the household model is one of a moral economy, but that in practice actions and decisions within the household can also be directed by self-interest and personal gain (see Sharma 1989). As Wilk (1989) says, many households are in fact a mixture, with some communal or conjugal funds, and some which are individually managed. Such private forms of wealth within the household can cause tensions (Sharma 1989: 41-42). The very economic resources and functions which are an important part of the household's unity and definition, are also frequently the cause for hostility and rivalry and the ultimate division of the household into smaller units.

3.5 The Joint Household Ideal

Ideally, sons should remain with their father in a joint household, though this ideal is not always shared by members of different generations (see Barlett 1989). Pressure for half-brothers to remain united in their father's house is not as strong as it is for full-brothers. Filial obligation and respect are highly valued and a father is granted absolute authority over his sons. Although conflicts in interests and tensions usually

¹²See Appendix Two for more on marriage prestations.

exist between brothers, fights are unlikely to break out as long as the father is alive and in control. In fact, due to migratory employment there is often little opportunity for fathers to exert their authority on a daily basis, and less for brothers to fight with each other. It would be a matter of shame were a man to request partition from his father during the latter's life-time. Partition in the mother's life-time is not problematic, and is not socially condemned. Of all the Silora households, there are eight nuclear households and seven collateral joint households which are supplemented by a mother. Partition before the father's death nevertheless does occur. The expressed preference or rule is that it is the elder son's duty to care for the parents, though parents will usually live with the son (and daughter-in-law) they like most or who is most willing to support them. In return, the parents will keep a piece of land for themselves and give it to the son and daughter-in-law who served them well.

Brothers are equals in their subordination to their father and in their rights of inheritance of land and moveable property. All sons have equal inheritance rights from birth, though they remain dormant until the death of the father, or until partition with the father's consent takes place (Joshi 1929). Brothers receive equal property shares. Half brothers who share the same father but not the same mother have equal inheritance rights. Stowell refers to this system of succession as *bhai-bant* (1966: 55). This is distinguished from *sautia-bant* which is inheritance division according to the number of mothers. I was told that the *sautiā-bant* system was practised in the village until Independence.¹³ No extra portion is given to the eldest son. This custom called *jethon* is not practised in Silora, and according to Stowell the custom is not widespread in Kumaon (1966: 52). The son of a *dhāṭi*, a remarried woman who was either a widow or divorcee, is recognised as legitimate and inherits equally with other sons. Though adoption appears to take place in other areas of Kumaon (see Krengel 1989: 129-30), I knew of no cases in Silora.

Once the father dies, the ideal is for brothers to remain together. However, at this time, the potential for conflict increases drastically (Madan 1989: 144). Joshi says that "family organisation after the death of the father is weak and individualistic among the Khasas" (1929: 191). Brothers tend to separate their hearths and cultivation soon after the death of their father, even though the land continues to be entered jointly in the revenue records for some time thereafter. Joint property is, he says, not well looked after (Joshi 1929: 190).

In-marrying women are often regarded as potentially dangerous to the solidarity and unity of the household (see Sharma 1978b: 226; Bennett 1983). The

¹³In one case, a man died leaving his first wife's son, his second wife and her daughter. The second wife gave all the land to her daughter, leaving a small cowshed to her step-son. Most agree that the step-son should have inherited the land.

division of collateral households is usually blamed on bickering co-wives. It is true that women have conflicting interests and argue but so too do men. After the division of the collective household, brothers are ready and able to expose and act upon conflicting interests. Brothers are in most direct competition over access to limited resources. Competition may be one of the reasons for the tensions which often exist between brothers in the joint household. Wright says of the Doshman Ziari of Iran that, in fact, arguments between women were often "a reflection of tensions already developing between men" (1981: 149). Bennett suggests that when a conflict between women is to a man's advantage, he may use it to separate from his brother, for example, and that the high value on the ideal of agnatic solidarity casts the in-married woman as the cause of tension and conflict within the house (1983: 179). Since brothers are supposed to get along well with each other, it is more socially respectable to blame strife on the wives and thereby preserve the image of brotherly cooperation and unity (see Berreman 1972: 175). Women, however, have a very different view of relations between brothers (see Chapter Seven).

The hierarchy of age is counterbalanced by the division of property in which the principle of equality over individual gain is emphasised (Krengel 1992: 8). Brothers, despite the junior-senior asymmetry, one day become structural equals as heads of their own households (Stone 1988: 69). Having separated, brothers are expected to work together, and remain mutually supportive and display fraternal solidarity.

In addition to being a kinship and economic unit, the household has symbolic significance particularly in relation to the conception of the house in spatial terms, as *bhiter*, the inside. The household cannot be fully understood if the ideas that people have of the domestic group as a home are not taken into account (Wilk and McC. Netting 1984). Next, I consider the principles and values of the house as a moral community of insiders.

3.6 The Spatial Organisation of the House

The spatial organisation of the house is such that distinctions between the inside and the outside are constantly expressed. Certain people and activities are associated with particular spatial divisions of the house. The internal core of the house is protected from contacts with the outside world and interaction with 'outsiders', as contextually defined, is kept to the outermost parts of the house.

The typical Kumaoni house is made of stone with a sloping flat-stone tiled roof. Large timber beams are also used. In front of each house there is a courtyard-terrace called the *khav*. The *khav* is where the majority of daily life occurs. Here grains are dried, clothes and pots washed, children play and people - household

members, neighbours and passers-by - sit, rest and chat, warming themselves, and often their bedding, in the sunny winter days. Weddings also take place on these courtyards. Low stone walls mark off one set of terraces from the next. A wall also marks off the length of the *khav*, on the other side of which there is usually the *bari*, a kitchen garden where vegetables are cultivated, or else a footpath.

The traditional-style house has two storeys. All of the houses are whitewashed. A new coat of white-wash is given annually before Divali and in preparation for a wedding. Many of the old houses have very low doorways, obliging one to bend down on entering, and very small windows with wooden shutters. In some cases the wooden frames are carved with traditional designs and images. Inside the building the walls and floors are plastered with a manure-earth-water mixture called *lipan*. This provides, amongst other things, an insulating layer serving to retain any warmth produced by the coal and wood fires in winter, and maintaining a cool temperature over the summer months. At least once a year the whole house is replastered, and on every *sankrānti* (the first day of a Hindu sun month) the floors are given a fresh coating. Every day after the morning meal, the kitchen floor and hearth are swept and plastered.

New houses, which have been built within the past five years or so, have a slightly different style. Though some of the traditional features are maintained, they are combined with features from houses found in the plains. The low doorways and small windows are maintained and the inside walls and floors are still plastered with *lipan*. Most of the new houses are two-storied buildings, though there are a few three-storied ones.¹⁴ The main differences are that the new houses are made of brick and cement and the old-styled sloping slated roofs have been replaced with flat cement ones (all of which is not very appropriate for the cold season). These roofs are, of course, very useful as 'verandas' where people can sit, children can play, or where clothes, grains and pulses can be lain out to dry. Two of these new houses have been painted yellow, a departure from the traditional white-wash.

The ground floor of the house is called the *goth* (cow shed).¹⁵ The *goth* is divided into two parts: the rear (*mal*) and the front (*tal*) *goth*. In some houses the rear *goth* is used as a store room or to lodge cattle. The front portion of the *goth*, which opens directly out onto the *khav* may be used for cattle, but in many houses it has been made into a bed/guest-room or lodgings for tenants. Compared to the rest of the

¹⁴There is one new house which is the exception. It has only one floor as well as large doorways and windows. This family have not plastered the inside, something which others have commented upon as being to do more with *phaiśan* (fashion) than with practicalities.

¹⁵There is another cowshed which is usually a little distance from the house, in the fields, called *chān*. Those who have several animals which cannot fit into the *goth*, or for those households which do not use their *goths* to house cattle, will lodge them in the *chan*. Some families own or rent *chans* in the village area - therefore using these as cowsheds and not using their *goth* as such.

house the front *goth* is often the best decorated and furnished room. In several households a bed, sofa-chair, tea-table set, a clock, an upright sideboard and various ornaments and family photos, all crowd this small space. These 'luxury' items are usually those which a daughter-in-law has brought with her in her dowry. The objects are not really necessary for daily life and are rarely used. In many houses this room will remain locked most of the time. It is here that many visitors and guests, and other people one may not like to invite into the core of the house, are received. It is also a place where men may gather to drink alcohol together at night or to gamble. In general the *goth* is where outsiders, such as affines and visitors are often entertained and lodged. Temporarily impure people reside in the *goth* for the duration of their impurity. For example the main death mourner of the house will stay in the front *goth* for the full duration of his impurity and a menstruating woman will sleep in the rear *goth* with any cattle for the first two nights of her menstruation.

A steep stone stairway leads up into the first floor which is the main living area. This part of the house is known of as *bhiter* (the inside). The *goth* is referred to as *bhyar* (the outside) in comparison to the first floor, the 'inside'. The first floor is divided into three spaces. The outermost room is called the *cākh*. Here visitors, such as visiting co-villagers, as well as unfamiliar guests, are seated. There is usually a reed mat, a bed or an old sack to sit on. Low caste people may sit in this room, usually against one of the outermost walls or just inside the main door/entrance. Dums will never go past this room and further into a high caste house. A menstruating woman may also sit and sleep in an outside corner of this room on the third and fourth days of her menstrual cycle.

The *bīchau khān*, the middle room, in many houses, is not completely cut off from the kitchen and is where most people sleep during the cold months, if there is enough space. Otherwise, the female members of the house will sleep here. Most of these rooms are sparsely furnished with perhaps one or two framed string bed. Affinal guests may sit here. Low caste people and menstruating women, until the fourth day, are not allowed into this room.

The ground floor *goth* and the outermost room of the upper storey are referred to as 'outside' in relation to the other rooms in the upper storey of the house. They both serve as veranda-like spaces where various 'outsiders' are entertained and sometimes lodged. These outsiders include temporarily impure people, such as the main mourner and the menstruating woman, as well as affines/visitors, co-villagers, low caste people, and drinking and gambling sets. As we move to the interior of the house we find that more intimate and pure people are welcome. At the rear of the house, the kitchen represents the innermost part of the house. Here food, secrets and affection are shared.

The kitchen (*raśāy* or *raśyā*) is the innermost part of the house. In relation to the *cakh* the kitchen is called *bhiter*, the 'inside'. It is usually a dark and smoky room with one tiny window on the back wall. Very few have a chimney above the hearth to allow the wood smoke to escape. Large wooden trunks and old oil canisters are used to store grains, flour and pulses as well as *bartan*, old brass pots, plates and tumblers.¹⁶ In some houses there is, under the roof, a raised platform, supported by wooden columns, which serves to house smaller storage vessels and utensils. Many families have small kerosene stoves and three to four families have gas stoves. A number of households use pressure cookers, a utensil of the 'sarvis' classes, as well as the old styled vessels. Most rooms have make-shift cubby-holes and cupboards. In the kitchen these cupboards are used to store tea, sugar and milk as well as sweets or other snacks and delicacies. In one corner of the kitchen most household shrines (*mandir*) are situated, and in another one finds the hearth (*cul*). This inside space of the kitchen is one of purity.

It is in the kitchen that the most private and intimate household conversations and arguments take place. Household members spend time in the kitchen sitting and chatting during the preparation and consumption of tea and meals. At these times, there is an atmosphere of ease and intimacy between household members, especially in the evenings.

Affines are allowed inside the kitchen, though they will usually be served in the middle or outside rooms, appropriate to the somewhat distant and restrained relations characteristic between affines. Only intimate and close kinspersons go into the kitchen. One may sometimes find two or three women huddled around the kerosene stove whispering across the steaming kettle. It is very rare that men will sit in groups in the kitchen; they have other meeting places. Menstruating women cannot enter the kitchen until the fourth day of their cycle when it is said "she comes inside (*andar*) today", whereas before she was outside (*bhyar*) and separate (*alag*). Women in *nātak* (birth pollution) and main death mourners cannot enter either. No low caste people may enter and strangers are not welcome. It is a place of intimacy, secrecy and purity.

3.7 The Household as the Inside

Women often refer to the house as *bhiter*, the inside. *Ghar* and *bhiter* are, in many instances, interchangeable. In opposition to this is the reference to the wider social environment as *bhyar*, the outside. The outside begins on the other side of the main

¹⁶These brass utensils (*bartan*) are not usually exposed for anyone to see, but are hidden away as part of the household's wealth.

door. From the household's point of view, all non-household members are *bhyarak*, 'outsiders'. Relations with 'outsiders' will be discussed in due course (see Chapter Five). I shall now consider the nature of relations amongst insiders, that is between household members.

The household is presented as a place of strong emotional ties, where relations are characterised by loyalty and mutual support. The values of the house are of mutual affection, trust and sharing not only of economic interests, but of information and secrets. The house is a place of warmth, and a secure and stable inner world. Insiders can enjoy relaxed and unguarded intimacy and behaviour with each other, which is in total contrast to relations experienced outside of the house. Relations in the outside world and with outsiders are hostile, competitive and instrumental in nature. The house in many ways represents a place of protection, a sanctuary and haven from the outside world.

In order to understand more fully the representation and conceptualization of the household and the nature of relations between household members, I would like to consider the mother, milk and the mother-child relationship. The mother, in my opinion, is the symbol and guardian of the household. By extension, the milk-giving animal and house milk, and the relationship between the milk giver and milk receiver may be seen to represent the morality of the household as a community of insiders.

3.7.i Mother, Milk and the Mother-Child Relationship

Almost every house has a cow or she-buffalo. Milk is a highly valued substance. As milk, *ghi* or buttermilk, it provides variety to an otherwise simple menu. It is pure, cool and nourishing.¹⁷ People are not generous with their milk. There is no idea that a family with milk should give milk to families whose buffalos or cows are dry (cf. Krengel 1989: 75). Tea is made with the minimum of milk and the maximum of sugar or *gur*. One woman said that her parents-in-law had told her not to give milk to people of the outside, and to keep it inside the house: "You can distribute buttermilk if you want but not milk" they said.

Milk was not often sold in the past. More recently people began to sell small quantities to a local shop and to *sarvis* class lodgers resident in the village. Now, as already mentioned, there is a government run dairy in Silora. Local people and people from surrounding villages sell milk to, and buy milk from, there. People also sell milk directly to other villagers.

¹⁷A distinction is made between cow and buffalo milk. Buffalo milk, which is rich and has a higher fat content is good for the body, whilst cow milk is thinner and good for the mind (see Hershman 1977).

3.7.ii Milk

House Milk

In Silora people distinguish between various kinds of milk. First, there is milk from one's own domestic cattle, *gharak dūd* (house milk), and milk which comes from the outside, be it other village houses or the local dairy. House milk is not given to any menstruating woman for two days. Menstruation lasts for a total of five days. On the third day, after washing and changing her clothes, she may have house milk. Until then she drinks black tea, which the women often refer jokingly to as *ram* (rum). She may, of course, have 'outside milk', that is, milk from other households and from the dairy, during these first days of menstruation. A woman who has just given birth, and who is in *natak* is not given house milk until the child's name ceremony is performed on the eleventh day. When his mother dies the mourning son cannot drink house milk for twelve days.

Gharak dud is differentiated into morning and evening milk, and finally into calving milk. There are particular restrictions and rules regarding the distribution and consumption of these various milk types. I shall deal with each individually.

Evening Milk

Evening milk is said by some to be for Bhumiya, it is 'in his name' and is 'offered' to him.¹⁸ This milk is considered to be *achut*, 'not to be touched'. Evening milk is for god and in the past it was not consumed at all but was made into *ghi* and curds. Nowadays people do drink it, but it may not be consumed with food; it must be drunk alone. If it is consumed with food, then the cow will not give milk. People told me stories of breaches of this rule. For example, a man had a lot of buffalos in the past and used to take them grazing in the forest. One night his son made *khīr* (rice pudding), from the evening milk of these buffalo, and ate it. The next day the son went off to the woods to tend the grazing animals, but when it came to rounding them up, he had great difficulty. He heard their bells ringing and headed off to the spot from which the sound was coming. But arriving there he found the area empty. Then he saw them from a distance, and rushed down to the glade where they were grazing, but they were not there either. Baffled by the disappearance of the buffalo, he returned home and told his father about the day. His mother said "you made and ate *khīr* yesterday with evening milk so Bhumiya is angry." She did a *puja* and asked

¹⁸Though Bhumiya is the god of the land and not of milk or domestic cattle, he is quite strongly associated with milk and protection. I was told a story in which a young boy went missing for a day and a night. The next day he reappeared. When asked where he had been, he said he been up in Bhumiya's shrine where an old white-bearded man dressed in white had held him in his arms and looked after him. This old man had fed him with milk, curds, *ghi* and cream.

Bhumiya for forgiveness and said that her household would do a *puja* to his temple. The next morning the boy found the buffalo herd near to Binsar temple, and there a big old man dressed in white stood, his hands held over the buffalos.

Whereas in the past evening milk was not consumed, nowadays it is enjoyed by 'insiders' only. Women told me that evening milk is not given to 'outsiders'. Who are outsiders in this context? Firstly it means impure people, that is Harijans. Evening milk is never given to a Harijan.¹⁹ Evening milk is 'in god's name' and reserved for god. To offer it to an impure person would offend god. If it is given to a Harijan, the cow will give blood not milk. Otherwise it is not very clear who these outsiders are. Women, usually the active senior household female, distribute milk, and they said that evening milk should not be given to non-household members, but conceded that if a member from an immediate brother or even a co-lineage household visited, evening milk would be given to him in his tea. However, there is very little inter-household visiting at night and so the opportunity to offer tea to such non-house members does not really arise. Men agree that women are stricter about these rules and that they (men) do not really care. Although women say this milk is not given to outsiders, this is more an expression of an ideal rather than the real situation.

Some special 'outsiders' are given this evening milk. I have seen evening milk being given to a husband's sister's son and his new wife. When the old woman offered them milk she countered their refusal by saying "come on have some. Now you are of the inside (*bhiterak*)".

Morning Milk

Milk which is collected in the morning may be eaten with food at any time of the day or night. It may be given to anyone save menstruating women and those in birth or death pollution.

Calving Milk

A cow or buffalo which has just given birth its known as *lāñi*. The first milk produced by cattle after delivery is called *lavād*. When the liquid is boiled the water separates from the clotted milk solids. This clotted milk is *lavad*. A buffalo calf's 'name ceremony' may be performed when milk, and not *lavad*, results from the boiling process. The name ceremony for a cow and her calf however must be

¹⁹During my stay I purchased milk from my landlady. One night my landlady's son came to my room and asked if I had any morning milk or milk powder to spare because a tailor friend had come to the house and they wanted to offer him tea. However, they could not put evening house milk into his tea, and at the same time they could not tell him this. They had wanted to avoid the discomfort of giving him black tea, but finally told him apologetically that they had no milk in the house with which to make proper tea.

performed on the eleventh day after delivery. The cow is more closely identified with the human mother than a buffalo. Some women criticise those who sell cow's milk: cow's milk is not to be sold but is fit for household consumption only.

There are rules about the consumption and distribution of calving milk. Calving milk is said to be impure. I was told that some adults will not consume this milk for up to 11 days after calving (see Fanger 1980: 374; Oakley 1905: 223-224). I did, however, see adults eat this milk. Children are given *lavad*; if one feeds *lavad* and calving milk to children then the cow will prosper and produce more milk in the future. Calving milk must be consumed alone: food cannot be eaten with it and it cannot be put in tea. Nor are curds and buttermilk made from this milk. When the glasses from which this milk is drunk are washed, they are rinsed over a *thali* or *parāt*. The milky water which collects in the dish should be poured away in a field, preferably under a fruit or flower tree. Calving milk is never given to Harijans or *bhyar vāle* (outside people). Once again, a woman will say that it should be kept in the house, but in practice this is not the case. Close family, such as brother and cousin brother households, expect good fortune such as the birth of a calf and availability of milk to be shared. Once again I saw some outsiders, the husband's brother's married daughter and one's own married daughter, being given calving milk.

On the eleventh day after the birth of a calf, *bhādaṇ puja* is performed in the *goth* of the house (see Atkinson 1974b: 830; Pant 1988: 238). Bhadan is another tutelary god of cattle. People also referred to this ritual as a *nāmkaṇ* ceremony. The person who performs the ritual can be a village boy or a male household member. He must have a *janyo*, and wears a yellow *pithyā* on his forehead. A little shrine is constructed in the *goth*, and incense, raw milk, flowers and yellow *pithyas* are offered to the shrine, cow and calf. *Ārati* (worship with lamps) is performed in front of the cow, calf and shrine, and the calf is then given a name which is usually chosen by the household's senior woman. Pennies, referred to as *dāchin*, are given to the person who performed the ritual.

It is said that the cow is considered impure, 'just like a woman', after giving birth. Just as the *namkaran* purifies the human mother and child so the calf's name ceremony purifies the cow and her milk. People said that the *namkaran* is performed so as to make the household members pure, to purify the cow and the milk, and in order that milk products may be offered to god. Thereafter the milk is pure and the restrictions cease. On the twenty-second day after the calf's birth, raw milk, referred to here as *dudyāṇi*, must be offered at Bhumiya's temple. Only then, I was told, may the milk be sold. Certain people, especially *ḍanriyās*, observe strict restrictions with regards to calving milk. Only after the *dudyāṇi carāṇ* (offering of milk) to Bhumiya has been completed, on the twenty-second day, will *danriyas* drink the cow's milk.

I have found only one significant reference to the milk-related practices described above. Atkinson reports similar practices under his discussion of the tutelary god of cattle, Chaumu (1974b: 828-830). He says that there is a special Chaumu temple near Ranikhet which was set up in the fifteenth century (Atkinson 1974b: 828). According to Atkinson, Chaumu cannot be offered milk of a cow for 10 days after she has calved nor can he be offered milk taken from a cow in the evening (1974b: 829). He also says that people may not drink milk drawn in the evening from a cow dedicated to Chaumu, but that they may consume evening milk from cows which are not dedicated to Chaumu (1974b: 829-830).

3.7.iii The Mother and the Cow

In Hindu India the cow is recognised as a mother figure, the Mother Goddess, and in ritual contexts as 'the mother of man' (Hershman 1977: 269-270). In Silora the *dudyāv*, the milk-giving cow or she-buffalo, can be viewed as a symbolic member of the household: a mother. As a domestic animal living almost within the house, the *dudyav* provides household members with milk. The people in the house can be seen as her 'children'.

Hershman (1977: 283) points out that cows and calves are often treated as human beings in ritual contexts concerning birth and motherhood. Data from Silora illustrate this clearly. When the cow or she-buffalo gives birth the strict rules or restrictions are applied to the consumption and distribution of her milk. This, I suggest, is because she actually is a mother. Ideally her calving milk is not to be distributed outside of the household for whom the *dudyav* is the 'mother'. The calf and these 'children' share in and contain her impurities; both her birth impurities and her impure milk. Calving milk may also be given to village children. This parallels the situation in which food prepared by a woman in birth pollution is not accepted by any, save young children. With the 'name ceremony' the cow mother, all of her children and her food (milk) are purified. Her milk can now be distributed more widely and consumed with less strict restrictions. The calf becomes a 'social being', and another member of the household, with a name and identity. With the *namkaran* the human mother's food is accepted and all restrictions are lifted. There is yet another parallel. *Danriyas* will not drink a *dudyav*'s milk until 22 days after the calf's birth; nor will they accept food prepared by a woman who has given birth until the twenty-second day after the delivery.

Sax (1991: 137,158) draws the parallel between the cow and the mother by considering food taboos. He says that the consumption of cow or buffalo meat is considered sinful because both are the givers of milk and are like mothers, since people drink their milk, and therefore to eat their flesh is sinful. Underlying these

prohibitions is the great value placed on milk both as a pure food and as a foundation of the mother-child relationship.

3.7.iv Milk and the Mother-Child Relationship

Milk is the foundation of, and symbolises, the mother-child relationship. The consumption of the mother's milk "establishes an asymmetrical relationship of mother over child" (Sax 1991: 158-159). A mother should protect and nourish her children. A child should honour its mother. In Silora milch cattle should be pleased and honoured. The day after Divali the active senior female householder honours and worships the house's milch cattle: their hooves are washed with water and oil is rubbed onto their heads and horns. Circular imprints made by the rim of a cup dipped in rice paste are put into the animal's body. Some people garland the animal.

On a daily basis the milch animal must be well attended. As long as a cow or buffalo yields milk it is kept tied up outside the house or *chān* (cowshed away from the house) and food is brought to her. Non-milking cattle are sent off to the forest to graze and find food for themselves. The *dudyav* is washed daily, given a morning meal of food prepared in the house (*jauv*), fed fresh green grass (washed if necessary) and offered water collected from a village tank. Just as a son should give *khusamad* (honour) to his mother, so too one must please one's own *dudyav*. If the *dudyav* is taken good care of she will produce good milk and feed her children well. If she is neglected and fed bad grass she will give little or no milk at all.

Female household labour goes into caring and providing for the household *dudyav*. The senior woman's association with the cow is not just practical but also emotional. These women often develop a strong attachment to their milch cattle. My landlady reluctantly sold her cow because without a *bvari* in the house to help her, the work of collecting fresh grass had become too demanding. She felt so miserable without a cow in the house that a few weeks later she bought a buffalo, despite the extra work it would entail. Selling a cow or buffalo is difficult for a woman and I often saw women cry and sob as their cow and calf were led away by their new owners. Though men may be the actual transactors, women usually play an important part in choosing which animal to buy, or an appropriate purchaser to whom to sell one. Knowledge of the caste and village of the buyer or seller seems to be important. Women are particularly interested in these matters. In addition, women are more skilled at assessing the good and bad features of an animal - degrees of ugliness and beauty are attributed to milch cattle. People appreciate having a pretty cow or buffalo, but not too pretty or else people will give it the evil eye.

There is a very clear and direct connection between the *dudyav*, the household and its members who feed and care for her, and for whom she is 'mother'. The quality of milk depends on the care given to the animal. Attention given and

milk quality are thought to differ from house to house. Therefore, although milk is considered to be a most pure substance, it is not accepted or consumed by anyone. Though milk is produced by the cow it is also the product of women's attention and labour. Milk is thought to retain part of its human producer and owner: the milk's quality and nature partake in the character of the household which owns and cares for the *dudyav*. Most high-caste women will not accept milk from a Harijan house. They will not consume milk produced by an anonymous or unknown person. Many will refuse milk from the large milk urn at the local dairy. This contains Harijan house milk as well as the milk of houses and owners unknown to the buyer. High caste women will request milk which has come from a local Brahman or Thakur house, which has not yet been poured into the milk urn.

The mother-child tie is "the moral bond of love *par excellence*" (Madan 1987: 27). Milk symbolises this mother-child relationship. It represents the strong and unique emotional bond which exist between a mother and her child.²⁰ But milk also, more importantly symbolises the mother's love. One Silora woman said to me: "Breast milk is the love, affection and care that a mother gives to a child." Maternal love, "the true love of the mother" is altruistic love; the ideal mother is one who provides selflessly for the child (Madan 1988: 146). Maternal love represents compassion, purity of motive and lack of self interest (see Ortner 1978: 43). I suggest that house milk is an apt symbol for the values and morality embodied in the household and the ideal nature of relations between household members. The mother, and by extension milk, is a symbol of altruistic social relations and of the household itself (see Ortner 1978: 57). Milk, like love, is freely and altruistically given by a mother to her children (Madan 1987: 27). House milk symbolises this altruistic giving and sharing which is the epitome of non-instrumental giving and the quintessence of the 'inside' itself.

To end this chapter I briefly discuss levels of agnatic kinship and the ideology of brotherhood. This will serve to situate the household within the broader kinship context. I then proceed to examine the nature of the link between agnatic kinship, property and the moral order.

²⁰This emotional bond between the milk-giving mother and her child is thought to be so strong that, according to Sax, "Garhvali and Kumaoni men universally abhor the thought of fondling their lover's breasts. When informed that men in my culture often do so, the men with whom I shared these intimate details were aghast. "But then . . . you are making love to your own mother!" was the reaction" (1991: 137).

3.8 Levels of Agnatic Kinship

For Kumaonis there is an essential distinction between agnatic kin and non-agnatic kin which is expressed in the terms *brādar* and *pāñ*. *Paun* refers to affinal kinship and will be discussed in Chapter Six. *Bradar* means brotherhood. The category of *bradar* is internally divided to incorporate different degrees of agnatic relationship. The main units identified are (in theory) the seven generation *paravār* (lineage); the four generation *bhaicyal*; and the *ghar* (the household). In Silora, the term *bradar* is frequently used to refer to ego's localised sub-caste and to co-villagers.

Agnates who share a common ancestor in the tenth ascending generation are bound by ritual commitments. They observe each other's *sūtak* (death pollution) to varying degrees. According to Sanwal (1966: 48), this 10 generation category is known as *swar*. Those agnates related beyond seven and as far as 10 generations, in theory, observe three days death pollution. These agnates are three-day *bradar*, and in Silora, are simply referred to as *bradar*. Agnates related within and up to seven generations reciprocally observe 10 days of death pollution. These are 10-day *bradar* and are normally referred to as *paravar* (family/lineage).

Persons included as *paravar* are close agnatic kin related over and up to seven generations distance. In practice, most *paravars* in Silora, at present, stand at four to five generations deep. This *paravar* group of kin share several ritual obligations and social responsibilities, and is a socially important group. On the death of one of its members, the *paravar* forms the close mourning community. The category of close relatives who are made equally impure by the death of a member is called *sapinda* (see Dumont 1983a). *Paravar* members observe *sutak* (death pollution) and *natak* (birth pollution) together for 10 days. Each *paravar* has its own *paravar mandir* (lineage temple/shrine), *paravar dyapts* (lineage deities) and *danriyas* (spirit mediums). They share common ancestor worship, which is expressed in the *sarad* (rite of confidence), performed for the well-being of the ancestors (see Nicholas 1981). Lineage households cooperate on ritual occasions and in life-cycle ceremonies. They help in the preparations and reciprocate invitations for these events (see Chapter Four). Mutual obligations are more binding at social and ritual occasions. On these occasions, lineage solidarity and unity are expressed. The next distinguished kin level, encapsulated in the wider *paravar* group, is the four generation group known as *bhaicyal*.²¹ *Bhaicyal* persons basically share the same ritual and social responsibilities as does the *paravar*. In Silora this group is not strongly emphasised or actively differentiated from *paravar*.

The next level is that of household heads who have a common father. These brother households are often spoken of as if they were of the same house. Members

²¹Here *bhaicyal* is equivalent to Sanwal's *sank-swar/paravar* (1966: 48).

of these households reciprocally call each other *gharak* ('of the house'). In particular, these households share responsibilities to each other's immediate affines. The male household heads will share their sister(s) (and FZs) in common, and the obligations of gifting and hospitality to her, her in-laws and her children (see Chapter Seven). The same holds for BDs(m.s). A BD is *celi* (daughter) as is one's own girl. They will treat their BDH and BDHF as their own affines, offering them respect and the appropriate gift of money when they depart after a visit. Once again a BDH is like DH a *javāĩ* and his father (BDHF) ego's *samadi* just like DHF. The *ghar* or *cul* (household/hearth) is the smallest agnatic group.

3.9 Brotherhood and Ideology

Bradar means brotherhood. The ideology of brotherhood is of fraternal solidarity, equality and harmony, and this underlies the lineage ideology of unity through kinship (see Gray 1983: 258). The principles found inside the house of hierarchy and unity should also pertain to relations with kinspersons outside of the house. Men may hope to present a united image, not only of their own household, but of relations with their immediate brother households too. As descendants of a common ancestor, lineage brothers should, like real brothers, enjoy solidarity and mutual cooperation, concern and trust. The term *bradar* is also used to refer to fellow high caste co-villagers. Agnatic kin terms are extended to almost all villagers, "creating the fiction that the entire village is a kind of family group, related through its males" (Sharma 1980: 19). So too the ideology and image of fraternal cooperation is extended to all lineage and village 'brothers'. For men the home village is peopled by real or fictive brothers. Men told me that brotherly love and cooperation existed and was the character of the village. However, we shall see that such ideals are hardly attained and that the most serious form of dissension occurs between brothers of separate hearth groups (see *kaś* in Chapter Eight) and that supra-household kin relations are characterised by envy and mistrust (see Chapter Five).

3.10 Agnatic Kinship, Ancestral Land and Moral Conduct

Ancestral land is inextricably linked to agnatic kinship, the moral social order and with the supernatural agents who uphold that moral order. When people ignore property rights and try to get property which is not rightfully theirs, conflicts between people develop, and as one man put it, "god gets angry." Some such conflicts cross several generations to be concluded only once the property is shared out fairly and normal relations resumed (see Chapter Eight). Offenders against property rights are

sanctioned by eternal justice (Krengel 1992: 7). The local gods, in particular Gwel, are often involved in land disputes and function as eternal judges in matters of property violations and alienation. They can mete out powerful sanctions to any member of the offender's family. These supernatural sanctions are often expressed in the form of illness, misfortune and/or spirit possession.²² Disputes over land are a theme in many *jagars* (spirit possession seance) which serve as a platform and context in which household, property and other kinship disputes are confronted (see Chapter Eight).

The moral code associated with property and the moral order upheld by the gods, are not based on modern property laws, but on what is known as 'customary law'. I shall present the main principles of this law regarding ancestral land as discussed by Joshi (1929).²³ The most important tenet seems to be that land should not be diverted from the agnates.

1. Succession is strictly agnatic. Daughters and daughter's sons are excluded. A widow can however represent her husband in the absence of a male issue and hold the estate for the rest of her life or until remarriage.

2. The inalienability of ancestral land is emphasised. Ancestral land should not be sold. Ancestral land is only sold in times of absolute necessity. Joshi says that it has been considered a crime to sell ancestral land, for "land is one's mother and to sell it is to sell a mother" (1929: 201). Selling ancestral land is also associated with misfortune. A Brahman woman in the village has married a Thakur man and as such has left her community. This was explained to me as the result of selling ancestral land. The woman's father had in the past sold ancestral land. Both acts are considered in some way against the moral order of things. To sell ancestral land for personal or commercial gain is immoral, and leads to immoral and socially disastrous consequences.

3. Brothers/sons have rights to equal shares from the moment of birth. No distinction with regard to inheritance is made between full-blood and half-blood brothers.

4. The land of a man who does not marry or who has no male descendants reverts to immediate parent stock and is divided equally among close agnates. One solution to the situation where a house has no sons is the practise of taking in a *ghar-javāi* (resident son-in-law). The daughter can take her father's inheritance if the son-in-law agrees to live in his wife's house as a *ghar-javai*. In this way, non-agnates enter the village. A daughter and her sons can inherit her father's estate only if she resides in her father's home, "but the right of inheritance is lost if she goes away with

²²See Stone (1988) for more on property conflicts and spirit possession.

²³For more discussion on Kumaoni customary law see Lall (1931).

her husband to his village" (Joshi 1929: 237). If the daughter has no male issue then the property reverts to the male agnates of her father (Joshi 1929: 240, 287). In the past people felt that their rights were violated when property was alienated by giving it to a daughter and *ghar-javai*. The feeling was that land should be kept among agnates. Such situations have caused disputes and conflicts which have extended across the generations and continue until this day (see Chapter Eight).

According to modern law, ancestral land may be sold and daughters may inherit it (see The Hindu Succession Act, 1956). These contradict the spirit of the customary law. The relationship between these two laws is a tense one. Villagers still see violations of customary laws as immoral and reprehensible. Kregel says:

If a single family sells ancestral land or equips a married daughter with it this is not seen as a private decision but as an offence against the lineage and the proper order (1992: 12).

Nowadays a daughter can inherit land from her father without having to bring in a *ghar-javai*. In addition, she does not have to reside in the natal village where her ancestral land is. Just as people felt their rights were violated by the transmission of land to a daughter and *ghar-javai* in the past, so do they feel the same when a daughter inherits that land for herself under modern law.

Under modern law these women may sell their land to outsiders should they fail to have any children. Under customary law, in such circumstances a daughter's land should revert to the male agnates of her father. The morals of customary law remain strong and pressure is informally applied to ensure that people act in accordance with them. Ideally a daughter should sell the land to a close relative of her father at a reasonable price. She has no real choice, and such a transaction is not regarded as one of free and profitable enterprise. This is the same for a sonless widow who has the right to sell her land. However, the moral obligation and expectation is that she should sell the land to her husband's brother and his sons even if she could get a higher price from an outsider. Other village people, in order to avoid arguments with the close male agnates of the seller, do not usually bid for land put on sale by a village daughter. One woman said to me "if we were to buy the land, her father's brother people would say to us 'why did you buy my land?'"

I know of one case of an out-married village daughter who has in fact sold land to non-agnates despite the fact that her father's brother and his family feel that the ancestral land should be given to them. This woman has no brothers and when her father died he put the land, including a large roadside house, into her name. Since then she has sold some roadside land to a man from a nearby village. Her father's brother is furious. Her uncle's plots lie next to the land she sold. The uncle and aunt are angry that the ancestral land, to which they feel they have rights, was sold and not offered to them to be kept in the family. She has failed in her moral duty by not

selling the land to them. During the summer the uncle sponsored a *jagar* in conjunction with a cousin brother. Many issues and problems were addressed in the session. The niece was also involved: the presiding deity told this woman to ask her uncle and aunt for forgiveness in front of him and all those present. She did so. Here we see the gods presiding over the correction of immoral acts and restating the link between agnates and property, and condemning personal gains accrued through the immoral sale of ancestral land for commercial profit.²⁴

3.11 Concluding Remarks

The household is the most important and fundamental social and economic unit in Silora. It is, to use Ortner's term (1978: 39), the "atom" of Silora's social structure. The villager's model of the household stresses autarky, containment and closure. The ideology of the household emphasises the following: economic independence from the wider social environment; sharing and economic interdependence within the house itself; mutual trust and intimacy between members and an emphasis on unity and solidarity. The house's cohesive internal structure is sustained by the strong protective and intimate bond between a mother and her children which is culturally valued and elaborated. In my view, milk represents this unique mother-child emotional bond. The uniqueness of this bond also serves as a representation of the household as an insular, exclusive and contained entity.

The house is spatially organised according to the inside/outside distinction. Certain people and activities are associated with the particular spatial divisions of the house. As we have seen, contact with 'outsiders' such as visitors, impure and low caste people, is kept to the peripheries of the house. The inside, the core of the house, is protected from contacts with the outside world.

The house is referred to by women as the 'inside', and household members as 'insiders'. On this level of identification, the 'outside' refers to any place beyond the household and 'outsiders' to non-household members. Interpersonal relations between household members are presented as affectionate and altruistic. Wilk (1989) says that anthropological models tend to stress altruism over self-interest as fundamental to household behaviour. I would suggest that Silora villagers, and in particular women, themselves also stress these values and ideals in their model of the household as a principal social and moral unit. These ideals are, I propose, symbolised by house milk. In turn house milk and the mother-child bond represent the household both as

²⁴However, it would seem that she has not learned her lesson, and she is now plotting in secret to sell the rest of her land and the house to the highest bidder. I asked her if her uncle would argue and she said "he will say 'give me, give me', but he does not have that much money"; she is making sure that her asking price exceeds her uncle's assets.

the 'inside' and as a moral community of 'insiders'. Relations between insiders are conceptually associated with altruism and the moral economy, whereas extra-household relations, that is relations with outsiders, are associated with self-interest and personal gain.

The ideology of brotherhood indicates that the same ideals of cooperation and unity should pertain to relations between agnatically related households. The lineage represents, at another level of identification, and particularly for men, yet another moral community of insiders. Correct and fair behaviour between lineage agnates is upheld by the divinities. Just as breaches of kinship morality with regard to *seva* and moral conduct between generations within the household may lead to supernatural sanctions, so too breaches in moral conduct with regard to kinship and property between households lead to supernatural involvement (see Chapter Eight).

Despite the emphasis on autonomy and detachment, every household is part of wider social networks including the neighbourhood, kin group, caste, and village in general. Each household does have to stretch out to the wider community in its activation and fulfilment of obligations and duties. In order to satisfy these commitments, the household must overcome its basic isolation (see Ortner 1978: 41). This will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL DIVISIONS AND PATTERNS OF EXCHANGE WITHIN THE VILLAGE

Lineages, neighbourhoods and caste are the main social divisions within the village. The lineage has already been introduced in Chapter Three. In this chapter I consider neighbourhoods and then describe the types of local cooperation and gift exchange which occur within the village. Lastly, caste and inter-caste relations and attitudes within the village will be discussed.

4.1 Neighbourhoods

A neighbourhood normally coincides with the string of houses locally referred to as *bākhai*. For those houses along the roadside, one's neighbours include those four or five houses closest to one's own. Due to consecutive partitions over the generations, new houses have had to be built and the tendency was to build new houses near to the ancestral home. About 40 years ago people started to build new houses along the roadside at some distance from the old village cluster. This continues. Houses which make up a *bakhai*, as well as neighbouring houses along the road usually belong to closely related agnates.

Neighbourly relations usually consist of small gestures of mutual aid.¹ If a visitor arrives unexpectedly and one has run out of milk or sugar, a neighbour may be approached for half a glass or so. Small quantities of raw food may be borrowed and later repaid. There is, no matter how tenuous, an obligation to help a neighbour on request. In general, however, people do not like to humble themselves by having to ask for things from neighbours. Only in emergencies will they do so. Neighbours rarely visit each other unless there is some specific reason or purpose (*kam*). A visiting neighbour is usually thought to want something. As Bennett says, just dropping in is "an undignified thing to do" (1983: 2). Ideally one maintains a positive neighbourly relationship, for the practical benefits of such a situation are obvious. However, neighbourly relations are not always conflict-free. A close neighbour is also usually the most keen observer and eavesdropper (see Du Boulay 1974: 12-13, 174, 216), and, if prone to gossiping, also a potential enemy. Therefore, though

¹See Sharma (1980, 1986) and Vatuk (1972) for more on neighbourhood relationships.

one may call on one's neighbour's services, one does not trust them, for they are most likely to hear one's arguments and one's secrets.

Reciprocal obligations of formal visiting (*āṇ-jāṇ*) and the exchange of gifts on formal ceremonial occasions (*liṇ-diṇ*) are important expressions of sociability between kinspersons, neighbours and villagers in general (see Vatuk 1972: 178). These are in addition to the mainly informal types of exchange and cooperation which occur between households on a daily basis.

4.2 Local Exchange and Cooperation

Most of the exchanges I discuss in the following section are of a similar type to the *bhaicara* category of gifts described by Vatuk and Vatuk (1976: 225-226) which are given with the expectation of a later equivalent return.

4.2.i Invitations

There are five kinds of invitations: 1) for the *cul nyāūt* all household members are invited; 2) for the *bhāi nyaut* one member of a co-lineage household is invited; 3) with the *mauvāsi nyaut* one member from a village household is invited; 4) *mitur nyaut* is given to affines; and 5) *sarvis nyaut* is an invitation given to a colleague or professional acquaintance. Some men may give a non-kin co-villager a *sarvis nyaut* instead of a *bradar nyaut*. In this case it is the individual *sarvis-man* who is invited and not just any member of his household. In practice the second and third types are both referred to as *bhai* or *bradar nyaut*.

Invitations to life-cycle and *gharpāis* (consecration of a new house) ceremonies are exchanged between high-caste villagers. At weddings, village-wide invitations are given to eat a feast of *dav-bhat* cooked on the third day of the wedding, after the bride's departure from her *mait*, and on arrival of the bridal couple in the groom's village. A *bhai* or *bradar nyaut* is given to every village household. One man from every high caste village house is invited by the groom to accompany him in the *barāt* to his bride's house for the wedding ceremony. On the first day of the wedding preparations village women will be called to come and help make *sungāv* (paper-thin *puris*). Having made the *sungav* the women will sing and dance together for several hours (see Appendix Two). For the newborn child's naming ceremony, the sacred thread and *gharpais* ceremonies, village-wide feasts are not always held. However, in some cases holding a feast depends on one's economic position and on social expectations. A wealthy Thakur man built a new 'modern' (flat-roofed, square, cement plains-style) house. He is a very well-educated secondary school headmaster in Kumaon. He has four young children and has never, as a householder, had the

occasion to offer a feast to the whole village. I asked a man if the Thakur man would invite villagers. He replied:

They have to give an invitation to all the village households at least in *badal* (return). This is his first invitation since none of his children have married yet so he must give to all. Others have given invitations and he has attended. Now he must return them.

People thought that it was now time for him to offer a feast in celebration of his new home. This was expected of him and he had no real choice. He also invited the principal and teachers from the nearby secondary school, the local primary school and officers from the bank in Tarikhet.

Villagers feel that those men they consider to be wealthy should share their good fortune on ceremonial occasions. The local primary school's headmaster is a Silora man. On the *namkaran* of his first grandson he did not invite village people, but only co-lineage households and some *sarvis* people. Despite the fact that no-one ever feeds the whole village on the *namkaran* of a son or grandson, people felt that he should do so because he was, in their opinion, wealthy. One woman said with bitterness:

They are only interested in those who can be of some benefit (*phaid*) to them. Why invite village people? Village people won't give any gifts for the baby; they will only eat. So why give when you get nothing in return?

On the thirteenth day after the death of a villager, the core mourning household will provide a feast of rice and lentils. A *bhai nyaut* will be given to all village households.

Lineage households reciprocate invitations and cooperate on ritual and in life-cycle ceremony occasions. If a family holds a *namkaran* feast each *paravar* household will be given a *bhai* or *bradar nyaut*.² At a wedding, *paravar* people will receive a *bhai nyaut* for up to three days.³ For the feast which takes place at the end of the 12 days mourning period, *paravar* people will again receive a *bhai nyaut* to attend the feast. Those classified as *bhaicyal* kin receive slightly different invitations. When a couple have their first child, especially if it is a boy, the house may give each of its *bhaicyal* households a *cul nyaut* on the day of the name ceremony. This may also occur at the *pipāṇ* (peepul) feast, which marks the end of the mourning period.

²A *namkaran* feast is held especially if the child is a son. No feast is necessary for subsequent children.

³A wedding will last for three days in all. On the first day the bride/groom is washed and various *pujas* are performed, on the second the groom and his wedding party (*barat*) arrive and the marriage takes place: on the third day the bride leaves her natal home with her husband, and the bride/groom's household feeds the whole village with *dav-bhat* (lentils and rice). For details see Appendix Two.

Of course, not everybody may be able, or want to extend such generous invitations. The point is that *cul nyauts* are usually never extended to non-*bhaicyal* households. Brother households are given *cul nyauts* most frequently out of all of the agnates. If a house holds a household ritual, such as the name ceremony of a new calf, immediate brother houses will be invited to eat a special meal in celebration.

4.2.ii *Tika*

Tika has two meanings. Firstly it is an auspicious mark on the forehead of saffron and/or sandalwood paste, and secondly, it refers to a present given at an engagement or wedding ceremony, which consists of cash and/or a *thali*, pot or other kitchen vessel. In this context *tika* refers to the gift. A *tika* gift is also referred to as *tika-pithya* and to offer such a present, as *tika karan*. Each *paravar* household is expected to offer *bartan*, usually a *thali*, to every *paravar* D/Z on her wedding night. Other invited friends and affinal relatives may also make a *tika* offering (see Chapter Six). In addition, when a girl is married, each of the bride's FB households are expected to offer her a *parat* (large brass plate) on the occasion of her *duragun* (post-marital return of the bridal couple to the bride's *mait*). Neighbours and co-villagers with whom one has such a reciprocal exchange relationship will offer a *tika* of money, usually in between Rs.1 to Rs.5. A list of *tika* offerings made is kept by the bride's house. This *tika* offering will then be reciprocated, either exactly or with an increment, on the next possible occasion.⁴

4.2.iii Assistance

When someone is building a house, they are entitled to request or invite co-villagers' assistance for one day. One person from each household is asked if they would help transport wood from the forest to the house. In return they are given tea and *gur*. When there is a death in a high caste family any high caste man from the village may go to the cremation ground to help chop wood for the pyre.⁵ On return from the cremation ground the participants are sprinkled with cow's urine and offered *gur* and tea.

Other kinds of assistance are generally expected to be provided by one's lineage members. In preparation for life cycle ceremonies, *paravar* people are expected to help: a few weeks before the wedding takes place, one woman from each

⁴Elgar (1960) says that precisely balanced reciprocation terminates the relationship.

⁵Low caste people may not accompany high caste people to the cremation ground. If they wish to offer something they may give some incense and flowers, for example, to a high caste man who is going to the cremation ground.

paravar household will go to the threshing-floor (*khav*) of the family who is to hold the wedding, and there they will clean the rice which has been purchased for the wedding feasts. They will also grind and prepare the spices which will be used in the cooking. *Paravar* people are also expected to help collect wood for the cooking fires for the three days of wedding celebrations. However, I do not think that this is always observed. If immediate brother households have enough able-bodied people capable of collecting the wood, then more distant *paravar* kin will not be called upon. On the day preceding the marriage, and on the marriage day itself, *paravar* men will usually help set up the awning and coloured lights used to decorate the courtyard in front of the house, where the *barat* will be welcomed and where the wedding ceremony is performed. They will also peel, cut and chop up vegetables for various meals. On weddings and other public ceremonial occasions, contrary to daily life, men cook. A man will be designated as the main cook on the day the *barat* come to feast. This can be a *paravar* man, but he will be paid about Rs.100 for his services. There is one middle-aged Brahman man in the village who seemed to cook at most non-*dav-bhat* feasts, and his nick-name was '*purohit*', family priest.

4.2.iv *Bartan*

Bartan (kitchen utensils) are rarely borrowed in daily life. People usually have sufficient utensils for themselves. On ceremonial occasions, when large pots and vessels and large quantities of *thalis* and cups are needed, *bartan* are hired from a commonly owned store of utensils. A fee is paid according to the items hired and payment must be made for the loss of any articles. This system was set up five or so years ago by some village sons who are migrant workers. Prior to that, various families owned the required utensils and would lend them to co-villagers and lineage-mates.

4.2.v *Pain*

Pain is the term which refers primarily to fried delicacies, known in Hindi as *pakvān*, such as *puris* and sweets, but which may also include fruits and uncooked vegetables. These are exchanged between village households and also between affinal homes. When a married daughter returns home to her *mait* she will bring sweets with her from her conjugal house. A daughter-in-law will bring the same to her *sauras* from her *mait*. In the past *puris* and *bar* (ground soaked lentils made into a ball and fried) were exchanged between *mait* and *sauras*, but nowadays shop-bought sweets or home made *gurpāpari* (biscuit-sweets made from flour, *gur* and water fried in fat) are

exchanged as *pain*.⁶ A portion of these sweets will be kept by the house and shared among its members. Another portion will be distributed to close kin and neighbours. *Pain* is distributed to brother households and to those neighbours from whom one receives it. One woman said: "*pain* is *gharak* (of the house) and we give it to those who give it to us." Having given portions to those to whom it is owed, the box of sweets or fruit is usually hidden away to be brought out and enjoyed when there is no one else around.

Pain also refers to *puris* and *bar* made on special ceremonial or festive occasions. *Puris* are distributed around the village on certain occasions. When a household holds a feast for kin on the *namkaran* day of a son or grandson, two *puris* are given to every high caste household in the village who has not been invited to the feast proper. *Puris* are symmetrically exchanged. Since they are fried and are considered pure (*cokh*) food, *puris* can be given and taken between Thakurs and Brahmans (see Marriott 1968, 1976). *Puris* are associated with auspicious occasions and are made at the *namkaran*, *janyo* and marriage ceremonies. On the arrival of one bridal couple to the groom's house after the wedding, I saw the bride line the steps leading up to the doorway on the first floor with a leaf, dough and pennies. One woman said that the stairs and first rooms of the house are lined with *puris* which the new bride walks on as she enters the house. I never saw this happen in Silora. On the first night that the bride and groom sleep together in the latter's house, *puris* are cooked in the house. The first time that a newly married couple visit, *puris* must be made for them for good luck and well-being (*śakune liji*).

When there has been a death in the household, one festival day is said to be foregone and given to the *pret*. All those people who are in *sutak* should not celebrate the next festival day and this means that they should not cook festival foods, which includes *puris* and other fried foods. In most cases only the deceased person's household respect the rule. Lineage members usually celebrate the festival and offer *puris* to the main mourning household, who can receive them from other houses. If there is a death just before a *sankranti*, lineage members will not celebrate the festival. However, on the day of the mourning feast, each lineage household will make *puris* and put on a new coat of plaster (*lipan*) to their floors, both acts being characteristic of a *tyār* day. If they forget to do this then they will never be able to celebrate that particular *sankranti* day until there is a birth in the house or lineage.

On monthly solar *sankranti* festival days and festivals like Divali, special *cokh* food of *puris*, vegetables, *khir* (rice pudding) is prepared, and brother households will usually exchange dishes of food and *puris*. This kind of food which is reciprocally exchanged is also called *pain*.

⁶In some area of Kumaon large-scale exchanges and distributions of *puris* still go on (see Kregel 1989, 1990).

4.2.vi *Paraśād*

On certain occasions one household may distribute *parasad* (god-blessed offerings) to each of its lineage households. For example, a family did a *puja* and offered a goat sacrifice to the god of domestic cattle, Chammu. The goat meat was cut up and cubed, and a small portion of raw goat distributed to each lineage house. The head of the sacrificed goat is offered to the god and given as *parasad* to the god's *pujāri*. Goat head curry is made in the *pujaris* house, portions of which must be distributed to his immediate brother households. At Divali time *parasad* is distributed and exchanged between neighbours with whom one has such an exchange relationship and with close brother households.

4.2.vii *Śakun*

When a household offers a goat to a village god in thanks for good fortune, *sakun* is distributed to every household in the village. *Sakun* is a piece of goat's hide, rolled up and put in a leaf, and pinned closed with a toothpick-sized splinter of wood.

4.2.viii Foodstuffs

At weddings when *sungav* is made, some women may take some milk to the bride's house. This will be used for tea which all the women are served with. In return they will be given two *puris* in their *loṭā*, since pots cannot be returned empty. When a child is born in the village, women who visit to see the new child will usually take some milk or a *roti* to the new mother. It is not good to go empty handed.

4.2.ix Village-Wide Responsibilities

All village members, irrespective of caste, status or standing have particular obligations to the village gods and temples. After both harvests, *pujas* are performed at all of the village temples (with the exception of *paravar* (lineage) temples). Bhumiya and Gwels' *pujas* are performed in the autumn, after the *kharif* harvests. A *puja* is held at the Devi and Dhuṇi temples in the summer months after the *rabi* harvests (see Chapter Eight). Every household in the village contributes ingredients and items for the ritual. In the morning on the *puja* day, village people go to the temple *pujari's* house to make contributions of flour, oil, *ghi*, *gur*, milk, sugar, coins, incense, flowers and white sweets. The contributions are assembled and packed up to be transported to the temple along with water, wood and pots. *Puve* (flour, *gur* and water dough, made into small balls and deep-fried in oil) is made at the temple and then distributed, as *parasad*, to every household in the village.

The water system in Silora is owned and run by the villagers themselves. The water comes along underground pipes from the forest some half a dozen kilometres away. All village members contribute towards the upkeep of the water pipe and tank and when there is a problem, young village men will repair the fault.

4.3 Those With Whom Various Exchanges Do Not Occur

4.3.i Factions

People in opposing *pālṭis* ('factions') do not exchange invitations. Since invitations are given only on life ceremonies, the existence of *pālṭis* is demonstrated only on these occasions. A faction does not consistently command its members' loyalties (see Chapter Five). In day-to-day life, factions are of no consequence, and people in opposing factions talk, drink tea and socialise together. Neighbours, even if they are of the opposing faction, will be given *pain*, and *parasad* and so forth. One adolescent boy told me that in some villages *pālṭi* people do not even talk to each other.

4.3.ii *Kas*

The most serious form of faction-like behaviour occurs between brothers of separate hearth groups. This situation involves the complete cessation of all forms of communication between the members of the respective houses. Water is not exchanged, nor are words. These houses are in *kas*. *Kas* is an oath which is taken in front of the gods by at least one of the parties involved in a conflict, and which carries supernatural sanctions. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Eight.

4.3.iii Houses of Fallen Reputation

Invitations and *pain* and so forth are not given to, nor accepted from, a woman who has a child from a man other than her husband. There is one such woman in the village. This Brahman woman's youngest son is, as rumour has it, the illegitimate son of a Thakur man who lives in the village. At her eldest son's wedding nobody was invited, and no village men went on the *barat* to collect the bride. One man said that if the illegitimate boy's prospects become good in the future, that is, if he were to get

a good job and become wealthy, then people may find reason to 'forget' his origins and the restrictions of exchange with him and his household.⁷

4.3.iv *Dhatis*

We have seen that *puris* and other fried foods may be exchanged with almost everyone of the twice-born castes. This is not so for boiled foods, in particular rice. While I discuss the exchange of food and castes in the following section, here I would like to indicate that members of one caste, or even of one lineage, do not necessarily accept each other's boiled *dav-bhat*. This is because not all caste or lineage members consider themselves to be of the same ritual status.

Within a caste, status differences are made between remarried women, referred to as *dhatis*, and their offspring, and other women and their offspring. *Dhati* denotes that the woman was either a young widow or a 'divorcee' when she remarried.⁸ The category of *dhati* also includes those widows who live as a wife with their deceased husband's brother. A second marriage for a woman is called *dhati byā*. Informants said that remarriage was frequently practiced in the past and did not have the negative connotations it has today.

Dhati marriages were usually arranged. The interested party would go to the woman's *mait* to ask her father's permission to take his daughter away. With the father's consent a small group of men would go to collect the bride and escort her to her new husband's home, usually at night. A payment of money was usually given to the former husband. This payment is said to compensate the first husband for the marriage expenses with the now abandoned woman. In the case of levirate and widow marriages no price was necessary (see Lall 1921: 5). No ceremonies are necessary when taking a *dhati*. Joshi (1929: 136) says that non-payment of the price to the former husband meant that the new husband's lineage would not assign rights enjoyed by a regularly married woman to the *dhati*. Neither would lineage and village people accept rice cooked by her. Lall, however, says that the repayment of a price for a woman became less rigidly insisted upon, and that a *dhati's* inclusion into her new conjugal community did not depend upon the payment of a price (1921: 67,84). A *dhati* marriage was equal to, and as legal as, any other form of marriage. A *dhati* shares equal rights of maintenance and inheritance as non-*dhati* wives, and her offspring share equal inheritance rights to their non-*dhati* brothers (see Joshi 1929:

⁷There is also one Brahman village daughter who has remarried a Thakur man and has three children from him. She lives in Silora, her *mait*, but she is completely ostracised from the rest of the village.

⁸By divorcee I mean a woman who was abandoned by or who abandoned her conjugal home. A divorcee usually flees back to her natal home.

129,164,169,302; Lall 1921: 70; Stowell 1966: 55-57). Nowadays, however, *dhati* marriages are greatly disapproved of and I know of no recent cases.

In Kumaon, *ācav* (tying of the marriage couple) is the essential and principal ceremony in a wedding. *Acav* includes the following actions: the bride's father raises the bride's right hand before the groom, who takes hold of her thumb; simultaneously, one end of the long yellow piece of material draped over the bride's head is knotted to an identical piece which is lying in the groom's lap. When the groom releases her thumb the father leads his daughter to sit next to the groom. At this point the bride's female natal kin cry as does the bride. She is no longer a member of their group (the *mait*) but has gone 'to the other side' (see Lall 1921: 86; Joshi 1929: 118).

A woman who remarries is referred to as a *pāpī* (sinful) or *doṣī* (faulty) woman. As Sax says, a woman who remarries is "permanently sullied" (1991: 80n47) and so are her offspring. Some villagers referred to *dhatīs* and their offspring as those who are not '*saf-pak*' (pure). People say that without the *acav* ceremony a woman is not 'pure' and therefore not *saf-pak*. This echoes Lall's explanation that the object of the *acav* ceremony is "to purify the wife for social and ceremonial purposes" (1921: 6-7). Such women and their offspring do not share the same ritual status as non-*dhati* persons. Therefore the latter will not accept boiled rice from the hand of a *dhati* nor from her children and grandchildren's houses. One adolescent boy said: "There are so many people like that here. That is why the *purohit* cooks *dav-bhat* at ceremonies. Only the *purohit*'s food is eaten by everyone." Those of equal ritual status will eat each other's rice and will marry each other. *Dhati* people will eat other *dhati* people's rice and will marry other *dhati* people's children. All other kinds of exchanges (invitations, other foods and so on) are entered into by non-*dhati* persons and *dhati* people.⁹

4.3.v Caste

Most of the above mentioned exchanges do not occur between the twice-born castes and the low castes. Both categories belong to different communities and there is little formal or informal exchange on a household basis. Caste is an important social division within the village. In the remainder of this chapter I consider in detail the nature of relations between people of different castes. I freely admit that my data are biased insofar as the opinions represented are those of high and not low caste people.

⁹It would seem that in the past some people did not respect the full mourning period for *dhatīs*. They were cremated but no other rituals were performed and no feasts were held.

4.4 Caste in Daily Life in Silora¹⁰

At present, Silora is made up of 75 percent ploughing, or low Brahmans, 20 percent Thakurs and about five percent Harijans.¹¹ According to the village history the village was originally a Thakur (now called Bist) village. They invited two Brahmans to be their priests. One of these Brahmans was said to be an Upadhyay and the other a Pant. They are said to have been affines, that is, they stood as MB to ZS, but no-one seems to know who was the maternal uncle and who the nephew. In the past these two village Brahman groups have intermarried (see Chapter Six). The other Brahmans entered the village through marriage, that is as *ghar-javais*. Most of the Thakurs in Silora are Bists though there are two unrelated Negi families.¹²

4.4.i Caste and the Division of Labour

Purohit-jajman

In Kumaon the term *jajmān* is limited to the person who sponsors the ritual sacrifice. The Brahman priest he sponsors is known as *purohit*. The *jajmani* system refers only to the relationship between a household priest and his client, and the term *jajman* is not extended to refer to the sponsor of services rendered by the lower castes. The Brahman does not function as a priest in his own village, and his clientele is always found outside his village. Silora's *purohits* come from a village one to two miles away. Villagers' contact with their *purohits* is limited to the most necessary of occasions. A Brahman only comes to the village when he is called. Even then, one cannot rely upon them to turn up: on the third day after an old Silora man's death, and when the *purohit* still had not turned up, a lineage brother with a knowledge of Sanskrit was called to lead the ceremonies.

The family priest's professional qualifications are his knowledge of the sacred texts, written in Sanskrit, and their ritual usage. The *purohit's* duties are to provide ritual services and astrological consultation, and advice to his *jajman*. On

¹⁰The literature on caste is diverse and vast. I have not entered into a debate on caste issues, although I do indicate some literature for comparative purposes. For more on caste hierarchy and inter-caste transactions and interaction see Mayer (1960), Marriott (1968, 1976), Dumont (1970) and Parry (1979). For an interesting discussion on caste rules concerning purity and pollution and on the correspondence between the hierarchy of status and the hierarchy of privilege and dominance see Marglin (1977).

¹¹Of the Harijans, two families are not original Silora villagers. One family are lodgers, the other have their own house and land, and the elder brother owns and runs the local mill.

¹²One family is a non-Silora Bist. This man is a *ghar-javai* who married one of the Negi daughters. There is another Thakur house, consisting of a Silora Brahman woman who remarried a Thakur. I do not know her husband's family name.

some occasions, such as the last day of a wedding when food is prepared for the whole village, the *purohit* will act as a cook. The priest officiates at all the major rites of passage (*sanskārs*) of his *jajman's* household. The *sanskars* performed in Silora include the name ceremony for a new born child, the investiture of the sacred thread, marriage and death rites.¹³ In addition he may be called to perform a *puja* on certain festivals (*sankranti*) or annual holy days. On these days he is given *nisrau* (gift of grains) and *dachin* (gift of money).¹⁴ Even if he does not appear on a festival day his *nisrau* and *dachin* are put aside and given to him when he next visits. On some occasions he may be given raw foodstuffs which he may cook and eat in his *jajman's* house. *Purohits* are also called to officiate at non-Sanskritic occasions such as at the Chammu *puja*, the making of a shrine or place (*thān*) of an ancestor after a *jagar* and on a boy's birthday.¹⁵

There is much resentment towards the *purohit*. People complain of having to continually give to *purohits* who, in their opinion, do not do any work. As one man said:

For them the *jajman* people are fields. They (*purohits*) do not do any work on them but they reap the harvests for themselves. Sometimes at death there can be a Rs.2,000-2,500 *dan*. Nowadays *purohits* have fallen down. In their own houses they smoke hashish, eat meat, hot foods and drink alcohol. But outside they just act as if they do not and say 'we do not accept this or that'. They are really no different from us. But *puja* work has to be done. They are like vultures.

Despite inflation with regard to how much a Brahman should receive for his services, there has been no significant change in the *purohit-jajman* relationship.

Khauki-gusai

In Kumaon the hereditary system of economic and ritual exchange between households of different occupational castes is known as the *khauki-gusai* relationship. The system has undergone continuous change over the last decades due to changes in wider economic and political circumstances. The *khauki-gusai* relationship is similar to what is known as the *jajmani* system elsewhere in India. *Khauki* apparently derives from the word for courtyard/threshing place, *khav*. One who receives grain payments from the *khav* is known as *khauki*. The *khauki* is someone who works in return for

¹³Nowadays many people perform their son's sacred thread ceremony in conjunction with a marriage, or alternatively go to a major pilgrimage site such as Bageshvar or Haridvar to have it performed.

¹⁴I was told that a *purohit* is never given *maduva*, black grains, in *nisrau*, only wheat or rice.

¹⁵I know of only two families which have celebrated their son's birthday. Such celebrations are rare.

grain payments which he receives at harvest times. *Khauki* people mainly consist of members of the artisan castes of Or (mason), Lvār (blacksmith) and Darji (tailor). The *khauki's* employer is known as the *gusai* (master). The system is based on the hereditary principle, with the sons of both parties continuing the client-patron relationship held by their fathers. A *khauki* could have dozens of *gusai*, thereby spreading out his dependency. The *khauki* is expected to provide his services whenever the *gusai* requires them. They are also expected to do some more demeaning servile tasks as mentioned above. On important ceremonies held in the master's house, the *khauki* is offered gifts. Kregel (1989: 31) mentions reciprocal wedding invitations between *gusais* and *khaukis*.

Hai-gusai

In the past some high caste household's had a ploughman and semi-permanent field-hand (*hai* or *hali*) attached to their house. The *hai* ploughed another man's fields on a perennial basis. The *hai-gusai* relationship is a form of debt servitude or bonded labour. At the outset the *hai* was given a certain amount of money (around Rs.100) on credit and the right to use some of his master's land for his own purposes. The *hai* had to work for his *gusai* until he had returned all the money he had initially borrowed. One old man said:

The *hai* was *hamar adim* (our man) until he returned the money he had borrowed. If he died and still had not paid us back, the responsibility fell onto his son. When he had paid back the money he was no longer ours.¹⁶

A formal contract stating the arrangement was written and signed. The master provided the oxen and plough. In return the *hai* received food from his master's house: he received grain at each harvest and periodic gifts on ritual occasions. When ploughing the *hai* was fed and given tea. The *hai* usually had only one or two masters. Most did not survive on their *hai* work alone.

Majuri

Fanger, conducting fieldwork in a village near Almora in the 1960s, and Kregel in the 1980s, both report the persistence of *hai-gusai* relationships and a very weak form of the *khauki-gusai* system. Both systems are no longer practised in Silora. Some villagers said that these systems were phased out completely about 10 to 15 years ago.

¹⁶See Corbett (1989: 152-157) for a similar situation of a field labourer in debt to a village shopkeeper.

Nowadays everything is done on a contractual and cash basis.¹⁷ Village people told me that with Independence came changes in agricultural relations. Since the 1960s, in particular, the low castes have received preferential treatment and moved into good jobs. Thakurs then started to do the ploughing work and now Brahmans do it too on a fixed rate, daily wage basis. I was told that Brahmans will plough a Thakur's land but not a Harijan's land and a Thakur will plough a Brahman's land but not a Harijan's land.

Most sons of *khaukis* have now rejected this work. Low caste people now enjoy stable land rights. Many sell their services for cash and many have gained jobs outside traditional occupations. They send their sons to good schools and receive government grants and assistance in education. With the government of India's reservation policies for the lower castes, high caste people feel disadvantaged with respect to obtaining public sector jobs. All labour is remunerated on a wage basis (*majuri*) and high caste people complain that labour is difficult to find and expensive. High caste men receive a daily wage of Rs.25 whereas a low caste carpenter receives Rs.60 for a day's work. This breeds bitterness.

High caste people continue to be dependant on low caste people for various ritual services. Silpakars, those from the lower Darji-Dholi caste, continue their drumming and bard-like skills necessary for *jagar* performances. For such work they may receive between Rs.150 to Rs.200 for a night's performance. There are, in fact, high caste *jagariyās* (bards) but the majority, and certainly those local to Silora, are from the low castes.¹⁸ The *jagariya* will take and consume the sacrifices made (goat or coconut) in connection with a *jagar*. Low caste people are also the *bhūt puja* (ghost worship) specialists, work which high caste people will not do.

4.4.ii Brahman-Thakur Interaction

The Brahmans and Thakurs interact easily. Berreman says that in Sirkanda the Thakurs are "a close second to Brahmans in ritual status" and that "in most situations they interact as equals" (1972: 211) and that "... Rajputs and Brahmins are closely allied castes in the region, who do not regard their interests as conflicting significantly and who join forces far more often than they compete" (Berreman 1985: 121). This holds true for Thakurs and Brahmans in Silora. They exchange invitations to each other's feasts and ceremonies. In the realm of food, however, there are a few stated

¹⁷In the past housebuilders were given various items (pitchers, pots and cloth) often referred to as *dan*. This is no longer done and contractors do the work. People carry their own sedan-chairs and hire Muslim bands for their weddings.

¹⁸I saw a Thakur *jagariya* playing the *dholi* and a Brahman *jagariya* play the *hurka* in Silora.

restrictions. Thakurs may accept any food from a Brahman. I was given different accounts of what Brahmans could and could not accept from Thakurs. The differences in the accounts result from some people telling me what in principle should be done and others telling me what actually happens. One person told me that, in principle, a Brahman will not take rice and lentils from a Thakur's hands. Another told me that Brahmans will take rice, lentils, vegetables and *roti* from Thakurs. This was qualified by someone else who said "low Brahmans will not eat (Thakur) vegetables, *roti* and rice outside in front of others, but they will eat these indoors." Brahman women are more rigid with regards to food transactions than men. Many will not eat Thakur's food at all, though they will drink their tea, milk and water. When women work in *palt* together they often eat a snack at one of their houses. For example, if Brahman women are doing work for a Thakur woman in *palt*, then a Brahman *bvari* will cook the food in the Thakur's kitchen even though all the foodstuffs are provided for by the Thakur woman's house. Some women will not even eat other women's food because the latter have lived 'outside', and, as one woman said "who knows whose food she has eaten, with whom and where?" Women adhere to the food rules and prohibitions more than men, and women who stay in the village are even more conservative.¹⁹ There have been cases of inter-caste marriage. One Brahman woman in the village has married a Thakur. She and her children are now Thakur but they have been ostracised from the high caste village community.

Purohits, I was told, do not eat any Thakur food, though they will take water and tea. I was also told that they will accept salt-less vegetables from the Thakur's hands and *rotis* made with milk and *ghi*. The same rules apply to *purohit s'* acceptance of low Brahman's food. *Purohits* will accept fruits, curds, milk and some sweets from low Brahmans and Thakurs. On ceremonial occasions the *purohit* will cook his own food in the *jajman's* kitchen with raw foodstuffs provided by the *jajman*. A *purohit* is given the whole *hukkā-cilam* (hubble-bubble). He will remove the stem (*cilam*) and smoke directly from the base. A Brahman will give a Thakur the *hukka* without the stem and he will smoke from the base. The stem is given to the *purohit* but not to the Thakur.

4.4.iii High Caste - Low Caste Interaction

The binary opposition between the clean, upper castes and the Harijans or lower castes has been evident in Kumaon for many years. According to historical sources, there was initially the division between the indigenous Dums and the Khasi. With the

¹⁹Unmarried Brahman girls and boys without sacred threads may eat Thakur food. Among the male and female adults there are of course different degrees of strictness and laxity regarding inter-caste food transactions.

arrival of the Katyuri and Cand dynasties, and the accompanying 'immigrants', the division, though apparently three-fold (i.e., Thul-jat, Khasi and Dum), was fundamentally between the Bith and the Dums. Despite the changes which have occurred in political and agricultural relations, and in particular the transformations which have taken place among the lower castes this century, the two-fold division between the high caste Brahmans and Thakurs and the low caste Untouchables is still of great importance if not in behaviour, then in attitudes (see Berreman 1972: 202). Though Silora has very few Harijans, there are several almost all-Harijan neighbouring villages.

The significant social and ritual barrier is between the twice-born and ritually clean castes and the Dums (see Berreman 1972: 212). Though Brahmans are aware of the internal differences among the low castes they are irrelevant to them. Dums are *achut* (defiling, impure). They are regarded as outsiders (*bhyarak*) and known as the *bhyar jat* (outside caste). Though Rajputs will refer to Brahmans as outsiders and vice versa in so much as they are not caste members, the most important opposition is between the inside community of the clean castes and the outside community of the impure low castes.

The Dum traditionally had a segregated and separate residential area known as *dumaur*. In most Kumaoni villages the *dumaur* is situated below the high caste settlement area. However, in Silora, the *dumaur* has always been placed above the high caste area and furthest away from the road. Nowadays, low caste families (four in total) also live along the roadside.

In the past, Harijans were not allowed to enter a high caste house. They were fed and given tea outside and were expected to wash their cups outside. Harijans used to have to ask for water to wash out the glass they had used. The high caste householder would then wash the cup again. A Harijan was not supposed to sit or stand higher than a high caste person. If a Thakur sat on a chair or cot the Harijan would sit on the floor. It is said that nowadays some old Harijans will still stand and give up a chair if a Brahman man should come into the tea-shop. In the past contact with a Harijan required action. One was sprinkled with water or cow's urine. Nowadays none of the above rules are observed. Harijans are still not allowed inside a high caste house. They may sit at the doorway, on the steps or in the outer-most room, the *cakh*. Though this is inside the house it is in another way referred to as outside in relation to the more inside rooms of the house (see Chapter Three). Women are more rigid regarding Harijans and space, especially household space. One day I was talking to a Brahman man in the front room (*cakh*) of his house. He had just had an operation and was convalescing. A Harijan man appeared with a large sack slung over his shoulder. He entered and hesitated. He was going to put the sack on the ground since in theory he is not allowed past the front room. But the Brahman

looked to the next room and nodded his head. The Harijan deposited the heavy sack next door. When the Brahman's wife returned she noticed that the sack was in the second room and not in the *cakh*. She was surprised and somewhat angry. Her husband turned to me and said: "She is more traditional than me."

Silpakar people are not allowed into the local village temple; they worship from outside. If a *puja* is held they will give their things to the Brahmins who will do the *puja* and distribute *parasad* to them afterwards. I was told that they have a separate cremation ground from the high castes. I was also told that Harijans are not allowed to share open, uncovered water sources with high caste people. However, in Silora the five water sources are covered and so people of all castes share the water tanks. One woman said to me:

Harijans would take our names to court if we did not allow them to use the water pipes with us. But in other villages the old system goes on. Silora is a roadside village.

In a Brahman-Harijan village down the hill, Harijan *barats* are not allowed to pass through the village, near the high caste dwellings or near village temples. But in Silora "such things are not said. We are a roadside village."

Invitations are not given to Harijans from high caste persons and vice versa. Of course they may watch each other's ceremonies from outside. However, it is more usually the Harijans who observe high caste functions than the reverse.²⁰ High caste people say that Harijan *sanskars* are different, and that though nowadays they may be of the same type, the details are different. The Harijans have their own *purohits* and texts. Sebring (1972) says these texts tend to be more in Hindustani than Sanskrit. High caste villagers joke about the Harijan's new rituals and *purohits*. One unmarried girl said "our *purohits* read from Sanskrit texts, theirs read from maths books!"

High caste people do not accept any foods from Harijans except for raw vegetables and whole fruits. Tea, water, milk and *ghi* and so forth are not accepted. An old man said to me that Harijans do not even offer tea to high caste people because it is understood between them that the offer will be declined. The answer is a foregone conclusion.²¹ One young Brahman villager used to own a restaurant in Allahabad. The cook was a Camar (cobbler). They would drink tea together and the Brahman would eat the Camar's food. But in the village he would not do that:

²⁰During the fieldwork year there was a Harijan girl's wedding in the village. Some Brahman girls and women went to watch. They sniggered and giggled as they watched the ceremonial proceedings.

²¹A Silora woman who lives in Ranikhet bazaar told me that her neighbours are Harijans and that they go in and out of each other's houses. Her adolescent children will drink their tea but the Harijan family will not invite the elders to have tea or eat anything. "It is understood in a way that it is not worth asking because the answer will be no and we will be uncomfortable" she said.

Yes, if a Harijan came to my house I could take tea and we would drink together. Who sees what happens inside our kitchens? But I would never go to his house to drink tea. That would be very badly looked upon and I would be boycotted. Everybody knows that we eat other people's food in the city but here in the village '*kamyūnīṭi*' (social opinion) is strong.

A woman reiterated this by saying:

Of course outside of the village we eat theirs (Harijan's) or other people's food but not in the village because people will talk. People observe these food restrictions from fear of community sanctions (*samājak dar*).

Such caste rules are honoured so as to maintain one's household's status (see Berreman 1972: 236-237). Alcohol however is accepted. Harijans in nearby villages manufacture home-made alcohol. Some, especially women, will not even take *kach rāśan* (raw provisions) from Harijans. Having said this two women said "do not tell anyone; they'll put handcuffs on us and send us to jail!" High caste people have the idea that the Harijans are on guard and ready to bring the law on their side if they are discriminated against because of their caste. One man told me not to use or publish the word Dum in my work because if I did then the Harijans would fight and take me to court because they are, he said, "ready to kick back."

4.4.iv High Caste People's Views of the Low Castes

Reservation and Economic Success²²

High caste people comment bitterly about the Harijan's changed and changing position. In the past they worked for and served the high castes; they were dependent and subordinate. Now Harijans enjoy independence and wealth and they receive preferential treatment from the government. They are helped in education and job opportunities and aid is given to build paths and other conveniences in their villages. The Harijans in Silora are quite poor but those from neighbouring villages, especially in villages in which Harijans are the majority, are quite well off. In one neighbouring all-Harijan village Saunkhola, many houses are new and expensive-looking. They have televisions and other comforts. High caste people say of Saunkhola residents: "In the past they were house-builders, blacksmiths and tailors. Now they are *patavaris* and teachers." Harijans receive education stipends from schools, colleges and the government. Government jobs are reserved for the low castes and promotion possibilities are good for them. One Brahman man in Silora said to me:

²²For a discussion on the issue of reservation and the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes in India see Beteille (1992).

The scheduled castes are now treated like gods. If a scheduled caste boy with a third class high school pass applies for a post and a Brahman boy with a first class applies, the scheduled caste boy will get it. Now there are many unemployed Brahmans.

Brahmans also express resentment at other perceived perks. I was told of Rs.11,300 government grants given to Harijans to purchase Jersey cows. Of this sum Harijans have only to repay Rs.5,000. Similar grants given to other castes total only Rs.6,000 and the grantees must repay Rs.3,000. I do not know if the details are correct, but they illustrate the kind of perceived inequalities and injustices high caste villagers resent and deplore. One man said with exasperation, "everything, education benefits for children, job reservation for adults and now this cow facility for the uneducated and old people!"

The binary opposition of Harijans versus the upper castes has possibly worsened with the recent events in India. Even if discrimination against Harijans is in some degrees less than it used to be, actual hostility between Harijans and non-Harijans may have increased. One young Brahman man explained: "Now there is tension between Harijans and Brahmans, but that is the government's fault due to the reservation for government jobs and such like. Are we any better off than Harijans?"

High Caste Attitudes Towards Harijans

Despite the Harijan's better economic and material conditions and their obvious career successes, they remain for high caste people, Dums:

The Harijans have the sacred thread ceremony and they have their own *purohits*. Harijans watched high caste weddings and then started their own ceremonies based on ours . . . Despite the changes, they are still untouchable; we do not drink tea with them.

The old attitudes held by high caste people persist.

Harijans are conceived of as a different kind of being from the high castes. They have a different past and ancestry. One man explained: "Their ancestor's work was to kill cows and carry the bodies of dead cattle. They are impure and their houses are also considered impure." High caste people say that Harijans have different principles and rules (*niyams*). They claim to be able to spot a *pahari* Harijan from far away. There are certain features which 'indicate' a low caste person. People told me that in the plains people are black whereas in the hills they are all fair skinned, except for Harijans, who according to high caste people, are black.

Harijans are, according to high caste people, an inferior and lesser type of being. Blackness has many associations (see Inden 1986). A black person is considered ugly and dirty. Black people are dangerous, they are greedy and give the evil eye (see Chapter Five). Ghosts are spoken of as being black. Harijans are thought to be ghost and demon worshippers (see Chapter Eight) and only Harijans are

bhut-pujaris. Many high caste women believe that Harijans do not have shrines in their houses, although most have never entered a Harijan house. One Brahman mother and son said, regarding a village Harijan's wedding, "we will not go to look at the wedding; we are *pakkā* Brahman. We pray to god." Harijans are thought to be immoral, dishonest, devious, liars and cheats.²³ They are base, dirty and unreliable (see Selwyn 1981). They make hot substances such as alcohol, and are thought to have particular skills and powers of sorcery and spell-casting. They are thought to be wilful, uncontrollable and somewhat threatening. One rarely hears of a 'good Harijan'; they are exceptional.

High caste people say they can tell a Harijan by the way he walks.²⁴ Harijans also talk differently: they tend to exaggerate. They are uncivilised and lack manners. Their characteristics as seen through high caste eyes are considered to be immutable. They are physically and socially different. They have a different history and different ancestors and neither of these can be changed. One Brahman man said to me: "No matter how well dressed they are, no matter how big a *sarvis* post they have, you can still tell that they are Harijans."²⁵ Harijans may have become Block Development Officers, teachers and ministers, but they will always be Harijans.

Harijans are thought to be arrogant. The low castes are supposed to be subservient, humble and dependant, after all, as one man said, "Harijans were made to serve Brahmins." However, the high castes comment on the Harijan's growing arrogance, disrespectfulness and independence. Many Harijans living near Silora have visibly benefited from the government's policies and better economic conditions. In Silora people do not display their wealth. Such expressions of economic difference are rigourously denied and people practice "conspicuous nonconsumption" (Berreman 1972: 219; Gell 1986) (see Chapter Five). Young high caste men identify Harijan youths as show-offs. For Harijans to flaunt their wealth is unacceptable to the high castes, and it causes jealousy and resentment. This display of economic security and often superiority, as well as a new found confidence, is attributed to arrogance, stupidity and being '*prāudī*' (conceited). *Praudi* people are those who 'put on airs' and such people are disliked in Silora (see Berreman 1972: 218,129,241).

²³A young Brahman man told me that Harijans elope and 'marry' Brahman or Thakur girls. "They do this", he said, "in order to raise their status. They lie and say that they are Thakur or Brahman and do not specify their village but will mention a place nearby. That is the sort of thing they do."

²⁴The Darji tailor, who usually has back problems and walks with a slight limp from sitting down all day, is used as an example.

²⁵Sebring (1969: 201-202) mentions similar combination of features which indicate a person's caste. He includes verbal and non-verbal behaviour, skin colour, height and nose structure.

Despite dislike of the display of wealth and airs, Harijans do not really care what the high castes think or say. They do not allow themselves to be 'put in their place' by the high castes. Meanwhile the high castes see the low castes' growing independence, confidence and wealth as a threat. They also feel that it is they themselves who have had to pay and suffer for the Harijan's privileges and security.

Within the village high and low caste people interact amicably. The discriminatory and hostile attitudes are usually kept at bay in daily life. It is fine for unmarried high and low caste men to enjoy a close and open friendship though less acceptable for this to continue in the same form after marriage. Men from different castes sit and talk outside shops and at the tea-stalls in the village. The tailor's work-room is a place where men of all castes gather and chat. Alcohol drinking and gambling groups are inter-caste in nature. Women may meet up and work in mixed caste work-groups in the forests though they will not do *palt* together. Members of all castes contribute to the annual celebrations at the village temples and receive *parasad*. At the annual *dhuni jagar* members of all castes watch the proceedings. All of these inter-caste occasions and situations take place outside of the house and usually consist of single-sex situations.

4.5 Concluding Remarks

As we have seen, households are connected to each other through various ties of exchange and cooperation. At the same time there are social divisions within the village community, the most significant of which is caste. The most important distinction is between the inside community of clean castes (Bith) and the outside community of impure low castes (Dums). The discussion of caste in this chapter illustrates three points. First, caste categories, as household and lineage, also represent moral communities of insiders. Second, Dums are thought of as 'outsiders' and are referred to as the 'outside caste'. They are considered to be dangerous, and are associated with ghosts and evil spirits, greed and the evil eye. As such they are wilful and threatening to high caste people. They are also constructed as morally inferior. High caste attitudes towards this set of outsiders are discriminatory and hostile. Furthermore, Dums (as outsiders) are perceived to benefit, or 'eat', at the expense of high caste people (insiders). This is demonstrated, for example, by the resentment felt by high caste people over the rising economic status of low caste people fuelled by governmental job-reservation policies and financial assistance. Lastly, as with the household, the ideological stress at the caste level, from the high caste point of view (or as Marglin (1977) says, in the ascending order of castes), is on containment, closure and separation. This is particularly so with regard to the two 'clean' castes, on the one hand, and the Dums, on the other. Dums threaten to deprive high caste people

of economic opportunities and to weaken high caste purity. As agents of disorder and harm, they must be kept at bay. This is achieved mainly through limited (formal) interaction and exchange with them.

Despite the various obligations between houses and the hostile feelings about the lower castes, attitudes towards social relations between houses, and especially within high caste sections are themselves contentious. The following chapter examines the equivocal nature of village social interaction.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTER-HOUSEHOLD RELATIONS: ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

This chapter is concerned with inter-household relations within the village context. In Chapter Three I explained how relations within the household are ideally altruistic and based on sharing. In this chapter I discuss how relations with non-household members, that is with outsiders, are seen to be instrumental and based on self-interest and personal gain. Inter-household relations are in many ways hostile and competitive. This is, I suggest, due in part to the ideological stress on equality, the pervasiveness of envy, and the deep sense of distrust and suspicion of outsiders.

5.1 Equality

In Silora the value of equality is important in the context of inter-household relations. The emphasis within the village is that people should be, or at least should appear to be, *barābar*: even, on the same level, equal. By equality I mean sameness and non-difference, particularly with regard to economic standing, and secondarily to political authority, life-style and social conduct (see Foster 1965: 303). Silora villagers' attitude is one of opposition to such differences. Such egalitarianism is heavily stressed in the village even though economic differences exist, and could be called a "pragmatic egalitarianism" which "leads people to mute expressions of difference to which they are nevertheless sensitive" (Cohen 1985: 33). The equality referred to in this chapter is not that of ritual status. Inter-caste relations are, with regard to various activities and contexts, informed by the principle of hierarchy, as are relations between women and men, juniors and seniors and humans and the deities. In this section I shall consider what 'being equal' means in Silora in the context of relations between members of different households.

Parry (1974) and Standing (1981) point to various systems of land tenure as expressing and being based upon the principle of equality. In Silora moveable as well as immovable properties are in theory divided equally among a man's sons. The land tenure system in Silora seems to be *pattidari*. Therefore brothers have equal rights and shares in their father's property. However, depending on the number of sons, first cousins often have different land-holding sizes. The two sons of one brother may find themselves with larger holdings than the three sons of the other brother. *Bradar*, the

notion of brotherhood indicates "the bond between siblings as the paradigm of relations of equality" (Parry 1974: 114). Brothers are, by definition, equal and equality is the premise of relations between brothers (see Standing 1981: 236). The idiom of brotherhood also underlies the lineage's, the high caste community's and the village's ideology of cooperation and unity. The term *bradar* is used to refer to lineage co-members, more distant kin related to ego by a common ancestor 10 generations back, and is also used more generally in reference to co-villagers (see Chapter Three). From the high caste people's point of view, Dums stand just outside of this community. They are not addressed by kin terms, but usually by their name. This parallels the behaviour between a senior and junior.

Another fact which fosters the emphasis on 'being the same' is that, among the Brahmans and Thakurs at least, there has been and remains a relatively equal pattern of land distribution (see Berreman 1962: 6). Kumaoni villages are not sharply stratified as they are in the plains: there are no large landlords as exist in the plains of Uttar Pradesh, and Silora local owner-cultivator households have not been in a position of owing a landlord or master allegiance. As far as I am aware, these high caste villagers have, in recent history, been small owner-cultivators. In addition no landowner is free from working the land. Every household still cultivates its fields with family labour. These owner-cultivators have enjoyed a degree of economic autonomy, control and security.¹ This, I think, does contribute to an "independence of spirit", as Berreman says (1972: 353), and to the general dislike of any local form of leadership.

Village-wide acceptance of formal leadership and authority is absent in Silora. Old people said that in the past the village headman (*padhān*) and elder village men (*seāni*) were listened to and respected at village meetings. This is not the case now, if it ever was. People resent others trying to tell them what to do (see Berreman 1972: 283). One man said to me "as many hearths there are, that is how many leaders there are." The self reliant and independent attitude among these high caste owner-cultivators sounds similar to those proprietary families in "landlord" villages described by Baden-Powell who "were too jealous of the equal rights to allow any degree of authority residing in one head" (1892, I: 153 in Berreman 1972: 283).

The independence of spirit and social atomism of households in the village does not encourage the formation of factions. In Silora people very rarely form followings as they do in other parts of India (see Nicholas 1968; Wadley 1975: 20-21;

¹Randhawa, writing about Kumaon in the 1930-1940s, refers to this when he says: "it is a pleasure to talk to Kumaon villagers as they do not cringe and crawl like the tenants of Oudh and have no inferiority complexes" (1970: 30-31). Berreman likewise says "The fact that villages have been occupied primarily by owner-cultivators has contributed to self-reliance and an independent attitude among high caste Sirkanda residents quite in contrast to the alleged ma-bapism . . . reported for some peoples of India" (1972: 353).

Sharma 1978). There are no stable or well delineated factions, a situation similar to that found in other Himalayan societies (see Furer-Haimendorf 1966: 40; Berreman 1972: 265; Ortner 1978: 26,76,78). In fact, there is only one situation of factional conflict in the village, and even this is very mild.² These qualities, and the dislike for external sources of leadership and authority, are also related to the frequent eruption of arguments between households. People will argue and neither will draw back, apologise nor ask for forgiveness. One adolescent boy said to me "people do not apologise." The result is that they do not speak to one another. Both sides believe they are right.

The ideal of equality is perhaps strongest between closely related kin and within the lineage itself. Kinsmen, as 'brothers' and heads of their own households are, or should be, equals. It is also an important ideal within the wider village community itself. However, despite this premise of equality, real brothers, kinspersons and village 'brothers' are not equal in material terms. In addition, every household is concerned to seek the best for its own members (see Pocock 1973: 2). This desire to pursue one's own self-interest and to succeed economically is adverse to the ideal of equality (see Foster 1965: 310).

Displays and expressions of wealth and economic difference are socially condemned and negatively valued in the village context. Social pressures exist to ensure that people conform to the recognised norms of behaviour. There seems to be an unspoken and accepted level of display and behaviour beyond which no-one should step. Those who do go beyond the norm are teased and criticised for trying to be bigger and better than anyone else (see Berreman 1972: 218; Stirrat 1989: 103). People who put on airs of superiority are considered arrogant and are scorned and mocked. Underlying this is the emphasis or objective of keeping everyone 'even' (*barabar*). People should not be visibly differentiated by material wealth and life-style. I shall consider these issues with particular reference to consumption patterns and *phaiśan*, and then women and work and men and income.

²The initial dispute concerned a water pipe: the lower roadside water tap was blocked and the water tank was dry while the one in the village was overflowing. When someone diverted a water pipe to take water from one tank to another through Dharmanand's field, the latter was ruined. Subsequently, Dharmanand threatened to take seven to eight men to court. On the wedding day of Dharmanand's eldest son, one man, a main enemy, went around the village telling people not to attend it. Twenty-seven houses boycotted the wedding.

5.2 Expressions of Difference: Social Control and Conformity

5.2.i Consumption and Display

Within the village, apart from differences based on caste and ritual status, households are differentiated from each other in terms of wealth. As we have seen, there are no vast differences in land-holding. Silora high caste people are traditionally small owner-cultivators and there is not a history of any large scale landowners. Differences in income and wealth do exist, and although they are not extreme, people are aware of them. This holds true for the twice-born castes, whom I shall treat as one bloc.

Differences in wealth and income between the majority of high and low caste households in Silora are considerable. In Silora the Silpakar community represents only six to seven percent of the total village population. Most of them are considerably less well off than their high caste co-villagers. However, two of Silora's neighbouring villages are Silpakar villages - the Silpakar populations total 77 percent and 87.5 percent respectively (Almora District Census 1981). Low caste people in these neighbouring villages seem to have prospered well, and many are in good government posts.

People are very interested in other villagers' business deals, and this is a main topic of private conversation and gossip. People attempt to estimate other households' revenue and expenditure. However, on the surface, and going by appearances, it is very difficult to tell who is wealthy. Women wear the same shabby *dhotis* day in and day out until they are almost in shreds.³ Womenfolk from the more wealthy households work in the fields and collect fuel and fodder from the forest just like other women. The furnishings and decorations of the houses are relatively uniform. People rarely purchase a radio or item for the house, but will usually wait to get these things from affines or in the dowry at a son's wedding. Berreman says of Sirkanda villagers that "some are honestly poor, some learned to make a show of poverty" (1972: 219) and this applies to Silora too.

Nevertheless, there are various ways by which a household's wealth and standing can be expressed and measured. A household's economic standing is spoken about in terms of its *tāgart*, 'strength', in relation to other households. Indicators of a house's economic strength include: a new large house, how many and what kind of cattle a house owns, how many sons receive education outside the village and how many men in the household are in employment; the women's jewellery which they

³Traill, over 150 years ago, remarked that hill people in general are "extremely indifferent in regard to the state of their everyday apparel, and continue to wear their clothes till reduced to mere shreds and tatters" save on festive occasions (1980: 212).

wear on ceremonial occasions, and the number and quality of kitchen utensils. In general, moveable wealth items are kept locked away in large wooden trunks deep inside, at the back of the house. Money, jewellery and utensils are stored and hoarded. Nor are crops, milk and cash produced by a household readily displayed. The fundamental attitude is that these things, which constitute a house's strength, should be contained, concealed and protected from the outside world.

Phaisan

One of the easiest and most obvious ways of expressing one's economic standing is through clothing and appearance. It is assumed that one must be relatively wealthy to be able to afford such luxuries over and above basic daily necessities. Nice clothes and up-to-date styles and materials as well as hairstyles and beauty accessories are generally referred to as *phaisan* (fashion). The trend and style-setters for young people in particular, are the Hindi film stars, locally referred to as *hiaros* (film actors) and *heroins* (film actresses). *Phaisan*, I was told, is based on imitating *hiaros* and *heroins* on the television and films. Boys will copy those *hiaros* who are, or who represent, *sets* (wealthy men) and not the poor *hiaro* image. In so doing they want to say to others, "I come from a good, wealthy house (*thīk ghar*).\" By extension, these styles are inextricably associated with the 'service class', urban lifestyle and in particular with plains society. Along with styles and fashions come sets of attitudes and behaviour which are considered by most adults, especially the older people, to be alien and inappropriate to village life and hill society in general (see Chapter Nine).

Dressing up, or showing off one's *phaisan*, is permitted on certain special occasions (e.g. weddings), but is not appropriate for daily living (see Pocock 1972: 68). 'Dressing up', that is wearing clothes which are considered above the level of normal daily wear, is considered pretentious and concomitant with putting on airs of superiority and difference. I was told by a young woman that if she were to put on a nice saree, other women would comment sarcastically "become big have you? Showing (off) your *phaisan* are you?" (*twīl baṛi hai gai chai? Apan phaiśan dikhā ha chai?*).⁴

When young migrant workers return to the village they must be sure to rapidly re-adapt to village life if they are not to invite comment and criticism. A young '*sarvis-vala*' who wears nice smart clothes around the village is criticised by men and women alike. I remember one young man telling me how, in many ways, he did not like coming back to the village. He said he knew that people commented about his appearance as he walked by, and that this was because people are so easily

⁴For a girl or woman to take too much interest in her physical appearance is not good. There are sexual overtones associated with females who put on make-up and dress smartly just for attention. Such females are considered flirtatious and promiscuous.

envious. He said "here people are selfish. People think, 'how I am so other people should be. No one should be better'." Public criticism and hostility are also expressed toward low caste people who display their new-found wealth (see Berreman 1972: 241). They are labelled as *hiaros* and *praudi*, that is, arrogant and conceited. A young Brahman man told me that the Silpakars always show off their *phaisan*. Brahman boys, he said, dress simply.

Ideally, people should practice restraint and control over their vanity and desire for superiority and authority, which wealth is assumed to bring. People should not be ostentatious, but humble and respectful. From a high caste person's point of view, low caste people should stay put, be humble and respectful to their caste superiors, and those who have airs of superiority are criticised.

There are of course acceptable ways of showing one's wealth. As in many parts of India, the most acceptable time to display the full extent of one's economic standing is at weddings (see Berreman 1972: 218; Pocock 1972, 1973; Stirrat 1989; Fanger 1987, 1991). Large quantities of food are cooked and distributed, women of the house wear their valuable jewels and their special sarees. The bride is made up to look like a beauty queen in her shimmering saree and glittering jewellery. She wears make-up and nail varnish and special shoes. She is the centre of attention and admired for her good looks and modest poise. In fact, she is the *heroine* showing off her *phaisan* and her family's wealth in a socially acceptable context. The groom arrives dressed in a three-piece suit and tie wearing a gold tinselled garland of two, 10 and 20 rupee notes. He represents the employed and reliable man, the successful *sarvis-vala*, what every young bride (and her parents) dream of.

This kind of consumption and display of wealth is acceptable because such occasions involve the loss of material wealth and strength, and the sharing of some of a household's wealth with others, through invitations to the feast and so forth. Otherwise, a man is not allowed to enjoy his wealth publicly because only his household gains the reflected glory - good fortune and its benefits are not shared with one's village brothers. Keeping the wealth and fortune to himself the householder thus strengthens his own house while nobody else benefits. However, at weddings invitations are distributed and people are invited to share in the feast. Non-household members are able, momentarily, to enjoy another's wealth and generosity.

I shall now consider similar issues in relation to women and work, and men and wealth. A specific type of life-style and modes of behaviour are expected of women by other women within the village. Strong social pressures exist to ensure that individuals do not steer off course into behaviour considered atypical and unacceptable.

5.2.ii Women and Work

In Silora, and the Kumaon region in general, women are of central importance, not only as the bearers and carers of offspring, but also as workers. As one local lady said to me: "Here woman is everything. Without women there is nothing here" (*Yā śāñi sab ch*). We saw in Chapter Two the nature and organisation of women's work in the village. Their load is very heavy. Women always look busy. It is not good for a woman to wander around aimlessly, she must have a purpose in her movements. We should also examine the social value ascribed to work for particular kinds of work activities. As Wallman notes, 'work' has a number of different meanings within any one society and "not only what is done, how it is done and who does it, but also how and by whom it is evaluated" (1979: 1) should be considered, as well as what kinds of work are thought to be socially worthy and fulfilling (1979: 2), and for which social categories. In the following account of women and work these issues are central.

Life in the village for a woman means work. Work is central to a woman's life and self-worth. A woman is judged by other women by how well she works, how efficient and skilful she is, and how strong she is. Someone who is a good and efficient worker is referred to as *kiraśāñ*. A mother aims to train her daughter to be *kirasan* and therefore a good bride for another house. A mother-in-law will try to make her son's wife into a hard worker. Even if the *bvari* is a good worker her *sasu* will never admit to this. *Sasus* continually complain to each other about their lazy *bvaris* regardless of their actual performance. Every woman competes with women from other households to be as, if not more, efficient and skilful. A woman who is considered by others to be *kirasan* is respected and admired, but perhaps also envied. In the following section when I refer to women I am referring mainly to married women, the wives of the village.

Women work out of necessity. They are responsible for ensuring good harvests with which to nourish household members. However, women are in another way 'forced' to work. There is an enormous amount of social pressure placed on women, by other women, to work, or to look as if they are working. A woman who does not work, or who does not work well, or who does not work as much as others think she should, is teased and mocked.⁵ I shall illustrate these points with particular examples.

It is important to keep pace with women from other households. The senior female of a house is more likely to keep her eye on the progress firstly of her immediate sister-in-laws and secondly of her neighbours. How many rice fields have they harvested, and what stage are they at in processing its yield? How big is their

⁵Krengel mentions this briefly when she says: ". . . every woman tries to work at record tempo. It is not primarily the men but rather the women who give the stigma 'she can't work, she is too slow'" (1989: 58). However she does not investigate this further.

harvest? Are they weeding their fields yet? Have they made their haystacks? And so on. If people with fields next to X have collected the paddy straw from their fields and X's are still lying in her field, this does not reflect well on X. One 60 year old Brahman woman said, "we have to clear and till our vegetable garden. Everyone else has done so." According to one Thakur woman this competition and desire to be at the same level as other (close) people is one consideration which makes women work so hard in Silora:

A woman sees that other women's daughters and daughters-in-law have brought two bundles of grass, and they say to their own daughters: 'so-and-so's daughter or daughter-in-law has collected two bundles of grass. What about you?'

Even if a woman wanted to ease her work load, by purchasing wood, for example, other women would mock her. One 50 year old Brahman woman said to me:

I get tired and worn out from carrying wood from the forests, but if I were to buy wood for my stock, women/people would say 'can't you even manage to carry a bundle on your head?' People would tease and give me names.

She may have been pre-empting a comment not only on her inability to collect wood, but also a comment upon showing her household's economic strength.

A woman who is not living up to her domestic responsibilities will become the focus of gossip. The social pressure can go so far sometimes as to prevent people going on holiday. A Brahman woman who had wanted to go on holiday to Delhi during winter said she would not go because people would say she had neglected her buffalo to go off to Delhi to stroll around (*ghuman*). They would, she said, call her names. A stoppage in work is not permitted by the in-laws, nor by the daily and seasonal work demands. Young women in particular are not allowed even to be sick. When it rains, when she is sick or in the last stages of pregnancy, the woman works.

A woman, as a wife of the village, is expected to work. I recall one Brahman woman's discomfort when she visited the village. Her husband is employed with a private bus service in Ranikhet, where she and her family live. They visit Silora very rarely. On this occasion she and her husband had returned to the village for several weeks to observe mourning for her father-in-law's death. This woman has never worked in the fields and forests and has lived in the bazaar ever since marriage. When she returns to Silora she says she feels embarrassed and spends as much time as possible indoors, out of sight of her '*jethani* and *dyorani* people' (her sisters-in-law). She said to me "it doesn't look good if while they are working they see me sitting around." Other women tease her when they walk by saying "*baiṭhi chai?*" (sitting are you? No work to do?). For a village wife not to work is somehow not acceptable; it

gives cause for comment. The only married woman seen sitting around without any work, and who is not teased for it, is the *celibeti*.

The most stark and obvious example of mockery I witnessed concerned a new *bvari* and her inability or unwillingness to do any field work. A Silora Brahman had recently married a Kumaoni woman from Lucknow. He too was living in Lucknow, where they had had their wedding. They returned to the village in the autumn, around harvest time. The new wife was obviously a university educated and city woman: she was always well dressed and wore make-up. One day, during their visit, the husband took his new wife out to the fields to do some work, which involved the harvesting and transporting of *maduva*. Whilst in the field she said she could not do the work, and that she did not know how to hold and use the *datuli* (sickle). Some older women were watching and listening from a courtyard just above the field. On hearing and seeing her they started to mock her: "You don't know how to use a sickle? Haven't you ever cut vegetables before? You use it like a knife!" they jeered. The young woman was never to be seen again in the fields. For the rest of their stay her husband harvested the *maduva* with his mother. Other women criticised the young wife's behaviour and labelled her a *heroin* (actress/film-star).

Heroins

A *heroin* is identified with the superior beauty and perfection associated with the legendary Hindi film movie-star. In certain contexts to be called a *heroin* is a complement. When the young *dulahāñi* (bride) appears dressed up in her wedding finery people may comment "doesn't she look like a *heroin* in her new saree" or "look at the *heroin*!" The new bride is allowed, and indeed expected, to wear make-up, special sarees and her gold jewellery for a little while when she first arrives in her *sauras*. One old woman said "a new daughter-in-law's work (*kam*) is to show us her *phaisan*, what else!"⁶ When travelling between her *sauras* and *mait* soon after the wedding, the new bride will travel dressed up in her wedding finery. During the summer wedding season one sees many *dulahainis* on the buses and walking between villages with their new husbands. A *dulahaini* is considered to be auspicious and women always stop to watch one pass by. In this context the *heroin* is positive, and auspicious. Calling the new bride a *heroin* clearly illustrates the parallel between the bride, the actress and the goddess. In the context of the wedding the *heroin* is, I think, an ideal. However, the new *bvari* is permitted to enjoy this role for a limited period only. When it is time, the *bvari* will slip into her *dhotī* (cotton saree). Soon this

⁶I was told that in the past this was not the case and that the new *bvari* was set to work immediately.

becomes tatty and worn and she is just another village wife, another pair of working hands in the fields.

Heroin can also be a derogatory term. A *heroin* is a woman who wears nice sarees, nail-varnish and make-up and who sits around looking pretty, or strolls (*ghuman*) with her husband. On the face of it, these may seem to be desirable and enviable qualities, the stuff that dreams, and movies, are made of, and women may actually dream of living such a life. However, a *heroin* is a female, in particular a married woman, who does not work and who spends all of her time tending to her appearance. *Heroins* live lives of leisure and luxury. According to Silora women, *heroins* are lazy, conceited and arrogant. In Silora it is simply not socially acceptable for women not to work; woman as worker is the celebrated and socially desirable female role and purpose. The *heroin* is the polar opposite of the much praised and valued *kirasan*. The *heroin* is an ideal in the context of the wedding, but is rejected and used as a device by which to denigrate other women in daily life. *Heroin* is a comment on what is not valued in a woman in Silora, and is used as a sanction on diversions from the norm and acceptable behaviour. It is also a comment on display, consumption patterns and economic differentiation. In other parts of India, to go outside the house to work in the fields is associated with low economic, and usually low caste status. This is associated with the seclusion of women which is often seen as a mark of prestige and economic security (Sharma 1978a: 271-272). Here, however, not to work in the fields and forest is taken as an attempt to try to set oneself apart as perhaps being of higher economic and social status, and as such is condemned.

Pari-lekhi

According to some people a woman is 'educated' if she has completed five to eight years of schooling. However, nowadays and more usually, it means someone who has obtained at least a high-school pass, if not a B.A. or more. As mentioned above, an increasing number of girls are completing secondary education. Silora men take pride in the fact that their daughters are educated (*pari-lekhi*) and good workers.

To have an educated daughter is a matter of pride and reflects well on the household's standing. This is particularly relevant when it comes to marrying a daughter. Customarily, the groom should be more educated than the bride. If one's daughter has attained a high level of education then one can aspire to marry her well into a wealthy and high status house. If she has a high-school pass, her husband should at least have a B.A. or some other diploma. If the groom has a B.A. or M.A. it is assumed that he will have a good job, or good job prospects and that his family is wealthy enough to have enabled their son to study so far. I know of at least one case in which a family lied to the prospective groom's family by saying that their daughter

had a high-school pass, where in fact she had only a fifth-grade pass. This did not appear unusual since her father was a senior teacher in Sanskrit, a very talented man. She married a man with an M.A.⁷ Education is linked to social standing and prestige.

Nowadays people want their wives and daughters-in-law to be educated, or at least literate. This is good not only for one's own status (her educational background will reflect back onto her family and the marriage union made) but also because it is a desirable quality for a mother: she can help her children in their education and so make for a brighter future. Adolescent girls are taught to do everything, from crochet, to making clothes, knitting sweaters and working well, for these are vital selling-points when it comes to finding an appropriate husband.

Increasingly, young men prefer educated women as wives. Twenty years ago Vatuk remarked upon the preference for educated brides which she associated with the shift in the perceived role of a wife to a companion in marriage (1972: 80). However, although this may be the husband's preference, it is not necessarily his parents'. From their perspective, although having an educated daughter-in-law reflects well on one's family standing, it is not always, or in all respects, the best choice. The bride's mother-in-law-to-be wants her daughter-in-law above all to be a good and efficient worker. She wants someone who will work the land, feed the cattle well, and keep the kitchen hearth burning. In short, she wants a *bvari* who is modest, obedient and malleable. The groom's parents want her to be *kirasan*, not a *heroine*. A well educated girl is thought to have a strong will of her own and to be sharp and outspoken (*tej*), qualities which may curtail a mother-in-law's control and authority. Educated women are also thought to be a little arrogant and proud. A woman with a B.A. pass will not, people said, want to carry compost on her head. Vatuk describes a similar stereotype of the educated young woman (1972: 78). As one woman said to me: "Before most women were illiterate but now educated girls are wanted, but not too educated."

Women are bitter towards *pari-lekhi* women who use their educated status to set themselves apart from other women, especially by not engaging in work. As with women referred to as *heroins*, *pari-lekhis* think themselves to be bigger and better than other women, and somehow too superior to participate in agricultural work. *Pari-lekhis* are often called *heroins* because they are likely not to work, and to use their educational standard to set themselves apart. They are also more likely to be more urbanised. When the Lucknow *bvari* mentioned above expressed her inability to use a sickle, one woman turned to me and said "I don't know what it is about these

⁷Recently this woman has, 10 years after her wedding, been angry with her parents for not having allowed her to study more. Now her husband's business has collapsed and she would like to get a respectable job to ease their financial situation. Her parents are upset by her resentful letters. All they can say in reply is 'but we married you well'.

pari-lekhis; they do not want to do this work, as if they are somehow above it." Referring to *pari-lekhis*, one young woman said, "shouldn't they have *śāram* (shame) not to do any work?" and a young man said, "it makes me angry when people say they cannot do the work. Everyone can do manual work. You use your hands." Much of the resentment voiced by other young women stems from bitterness and envy. Other women feel resentful if their educated *dyorani* refuses to work. Not only is she denying her *jethani* her rightful authority as a senior, but they have to work and do not see any reason why such inequities should exist. After all, it is thanks to their hard work that the common, yet undivided ancestral land is maintained in cultivable condition. Also, when the common property is finally partitioned, these *pari-lekhi bvaris* will start working on their own holding, when previously they had done none. Such situations are more likely to arise in households with several *bvaris* but no mother-in-law.

5.2.iii Men and Money

Sarvis-Valas and Praudi People

Men, apart from doing basic agricultural work, are now mainly interested in getting employment. Though agriculture is important, most men have rather little to do with it. As we have seen, most houses have at least one male member in employment and many men are migrant labourers. A job gives the individual the opportunity to accumulate money. This wealth can be accumulated *en caché*, in a bank account, and nobody need know how much is owned. At the same time, within the village, there is a stress on non-conspicuous consumption and non-display of financial means and strength. For those men who have no regular employment, there is no risk of doing this. However, those men who have stable, especially white-collar government jobs, do have the means: the temptation may be there to prove to their co-villagers that they are the biggest and the best.

There is a pervasive assumption that when a person becomes well off, or financially comfortable, s/he will become *praudi* (arrogant), argumentative and think him/herself to be socially superior to the point of not even greeting others with a *namaskār*. Women used to say to me:

When you have finished your studies, passed your exams, got a good job and become rich, then you will be (think yourself to be) 'big' and you will not talk to us (*baṛi ban jalai, ham baṛi na bol jalai*).

Greeting somebody or exchanging some amusing comment as you meet on the road is an important part of day-to-day life and interaction. People will not talk to each other only if they have had an argument, or because they think the other is beneath them.

Those who are wealthy but who do greet and speak to village people are not *praudi* despite their standing, and are respected.⁸

The *sarvis-valas*, and especially those men who go down to the plains, are liable to becoming smug and arrogant. They may become more like plains people. Plains people are thought to be vulgar and repulsive, to put on airs of superiority and authority. They are seen to make ostentatious displays of wealth; their smart clothes and fancy large houses demonstrate and flaunt their economic power (see Chapter Nine). Furthermore, migrant workers may speak in Hindi. A man who speaks in Hindi in the village, among family and friends, is reprimanded for assuming airs of superiority. Such behaviour is considered presumptuous and contrary to the ideal of equality. Such expressions of difference invite informal sanctions such as back-biting, gossip and slander.

Drinking, Gambling and Male Equality⁹

No part of the house is considered as a visiting area where four or five men may socialise; it is unusual for men to go visiting others inside their house (at least in daylight), unless for some important business. Men can be found in groups at the tea-shops, on benches outside village shops or at a tailor master's workshop. These are "neutral spaces" (Berreman 1972: 266-267). The tea-shop is a place of leisure and recreation for men. They are frequented by men of all ages, though usually at different times of the day.¹⁰ During the day-time, these tea-stalls are hives of male-only gossip, joking and socialising. At certain times of the day, they are crowded, and at others, they are almost empty save one or two old men smoking a cigarette and enjoying a quiet chat. In the tea-shops, men may associate freely with each other, often across caste boundaries and with outsiders (for example travellers) who may stop for a tea on their journey.

⁸Many of the villagers think the government employees (teachers, health workers and so on) who rent accommodation in Silora are *praudi*. The latter tend not to mix much with the villagers, keeping to themselves. These service families, in turn, complain that Silora people do not honour or respect (*ijat karāṇ/diṇ*) them or each other.

⁹Almora district was declared a dry zone in June 1984. According to Pathak (1985) the history of alcohol dates from the British period. He says that liquor became more available and its consumption increased with the advent of army and other government departments and the establishment of military cantonments and hill stations (1985: 1360-1361). Prior to that, liquor consumption was limited to the Bhotiya traders and *terai* populations. Traill, soon after the commencement of British rule in Kumaon, comments upon the virtual absence of alcohol in settled areas, stating that it was an activity confined to the lower classes, the Dums (1980: 213-214). Alcohol was, for the British, and is for the present day governments, a valuable source of revenue. Pathak considers alcoholism to be a "means by which state commercialisation has sapped the vitality of hill society" (1985: 1360) and contributed to its social and cultural disintegration.

¹⁰A father and son will not frequent the same tea-shop at the same time. They do not socialise together and to do so would be uncomfortable and contrary to expectations.

The tea-shop is associated with alcohol consumption (*śarāb*) and gambling (*jū*). At night several of the closed tea-stalls are used as drinking rooms and gambling venues. Here men aged mainly between 20 and 50 may converge towards the end of the day and also at night. Towards dusk and after nightfall the only voices to be heard outside are those of drunken men either arguing or laughing.

Drinking liquor, as well as gambling, is considered to be a manly activity. When I was in Almora town I commented upon the amount of drunken men in the streets at and after dusk. My walking companion, a local business man, said "they don't drink as much as they appear to." This mirrors Kapur's comments on hemp smoking which he says is "looked upon as a manly activity, and smokers tend to exaggerate their daily consumption to enhance their prestige" (1988: 36). This I think is applicable to alcohol consumption levels of some, though not all, men in Silora.

Drinking and gambling are competitive activities. Alcohol consumption and gambling are, to my mind, similar activities. Following Mitchell's (1988) essay on gambling in Sepik society, I see gambling and drinking as systems which work against the construction of difference and hierarchical statuses. One of their aims is to prevent the accumulation of wealth and the power which that wealth may bring. Though men may not want others to prosper economically, at the same time they themselves want their own wealth. In the process, gambling acts as a form of levelling device which inhibits an individual from rising above his fellow men, and which, at the same time, allows someone to profit at another's expense. Like gambling, alcohol consumption acts as a levelling device. Money, which could otherwise be hoarded to contribute to the house's economic strength and standing, is instead drained away by alcohol consumption.

Within the tea-shop the emphasis is on 'sameness'. Interaction is not based on the hierarchical status markers and principles found in the house. Formalities are dropped and the ideals of respect and deference appropriate in the household, and between kinspersons, are disregarded. When gambling and drinking collapses boundaries (and inhibitions), distinctions become blurred or irrelevant and are not observed. 'Drinking together' suggests social equality and inhibits status differences (Foster 1972: 180).

Men gamble and drink together as 'friends' and peers, not as elder and younger 'brother', uncle and nephew, or Brahman and Dum. As Loizos and Papataxiarchis say of the Mediterranean coffee shop, in the tea-shop "the sentiments of male solidarity focus on voluntary, open, deeply egalitarian relatedness that is incompatible with kinship" (1991: 24). The effect of drinking itself produces an "artificial heightening of feelings of comradeship" (Ortner 1978: 73). Gambling and drinking defeat the principle of hierarchy and maintain male equality (see Mitchell 1988: 639).

The Jokar

The opposite of the *praudi* man and *hiaro* is the *jokar*. The *jokar* mixes well, can laugh at himself and makes others laugh, speaks to people and has no social pretences. He does not take himself seriously and gives no indication of suffering from any superiority complex, and he is amusing and good company. A man who is referred to as a *jokar*, and who is known for his *jokaring*, is liked by many. Though *jokaring* may be vindictive at times, it is, I think, applauded mainly for its wit and entertainment value.¹¹

The *jokar* is connected to the tea shop insofar as there is no room for a *praudi* man in the tea shop. In the tea shop a man may learn and test out his *jokaring* skills. The *jokar* is associated with gambling and drinking and I do not recall hearing a non-drinker being referred to as a *jokar*. The *jokar*, in a sense, is the ideal man in a society which stresses equality. He avoids appearing presumptuous; he does not dress up or show off his *phaisan*; he does not behave with arrogance and self-importance; he speaks Kumaoni not Hindi, and he does not appear to be rich. The *jokar* does not differentiate himself in economic terms. He gambles and drinks, activities which ostensibly reinforce equality between men.

5.3 Envy

Much of the above behaviour, attitudes and social pressures stem from the notion of being *barabar*, equal. However, envy is equally significant. Moreover, equality and envy are closely related. An emphasis on equality is bound to give rise to quite intense feelings of envy if a supposed equal shows signs of superiority and difference. As Standing says (1981: 234,236), when the principle of equality is stressed and positively valued in a society or social group, envy is always just around the corner and comes to the fore when the principle of equality is negated. At the same time, and as part of this process, envy itself, in its various expressions, acts as a mechanism for social control and actually helps maintain the principle of equality itself. For example, fear of the destructive and harmful effects of envy define and delimit the ways in which wealth and success may be enjoyed (Pocock 1973: 39). That is, people enjoy them with modesty.

Many of the sanctions mentioned above, of mocking, teasing and back-biting, are, as well as being effective methods of social control, expressions of envy and "potent weapons for dissuading people who seek to rise above their level" (Foster

¹¹However Paliwal, in his Kumaoni-Hindi dictionary (1985), also gives a negative interpretation of *jokar*. Of two meanings given, the first is simply 'joker', the second is 'an unreliable/untrustworthy person'. In Silora, I heard *jokar* used in the first sense.

1972: 172). Gossip and the desire to dishonour or deprive another of success and well-being (*girāṇ*) are other expressions and weapons of envy.

In the next section I consider the nature of envy and some of its cultural expressions in Silora life. I firstly approach envy through a consideration of *hak*, the evil eye, and then proceed to consider gossip and defamation, as well as perceived efforts to actually sap a house of its economic strength.

5.3.i The Evil Eye

In Silora *hāk* (the evil eye) is rife and people readily admit this. People become envious over things and conditions which are highly valued in society. These are usually signs and sources of well-being and good fortune. *Hak* is sparked off by beauty, health and wealth.

Milk, milch cattle and grain harvests are some targets of the envious person. Milk is a highly valued substance. If someone should enter the kitchen when one is heating a pot of milk, a cover is put on the pot, or if there is time, the pot is removed from the fire and slid out of sight. If someone were to see a pot full of milk then *hak* will surely go onto the *dudyav*. When a milch animal is milked the milk container is never left uncovered. One does not want other people to know how much milk one's *dudyav* gives, and how much milk one's household enjoys. One woman said to me "we never make *ghi* and butter when outside people are here." If an outsider were to arrive the pots would be covered and utensils hidden. *Dudyavs* are cherished and prized animals. Some people tie a piece of string around the animal's head. Attached to this is a piece of black leather which rests on the animal's forehead. *Dudyavs* are often 'going dry' and *hak* is identified as the main cause. It is generally assumed that women put *hak* onto another's *dudyav*. Large grain harvests and stores are liable to provoke envy when sighted thus people keep their stocks well concealed and never admit to a good or abundant harvest. A man who owned a tree nursery, once the plants had begun to germinate, put a leather shoe on a stick, with the sole of the shoe facing the footpath so that people's glances would immediately go onto the shoe and not the plants. This reversed shoe and the leather strip on the *dudyav* are thought to deflect *hak*.

Women returning from the forest or fields with huge head-loads of grass or wood often claimed to be suffering from *hak* on arrival to the house. After having someone remove the *hak*, as well as enjoying a brief pause from work, they claim to feel better and ready to work again. There is, as Pocock (1973: 33) suggests, an element of vanity involved. A woman will only accuse someone of giving her the evil eye if she thought she had worked very well, brought back a large load of grass and therefore deserved to be envied.

A fat and healthy baby or little child is prone to *hak*. The baby will become ill and is said to 'dry up'. A pretty, well-groomed child is vulnerable to *hak*: one woman said "a woman will think 'how can they have such a pretty well-kept child when I don't even have enough time to clean my mouth after eating nor keep myself tidy?'" To have a well groomed child means one has the time to spare on attending to one's children's appearances.

To remark upon something or to compliment someone is taken to be motivated, albeit unconsciously, by envy and is interpreted as a hostile act (see Foster 1972: 172-173). For example if someone says "look at how much wheat they have!" then *hak* will go onto the crops. One evening I was sitting in the kitchen watching my landlady churn milk and make butter. I had never seen butter made and was fascinated and surprised by the amount produced. I said "wow! What a lot of butter!" at which point my landlady briskly and brusquely said "don't say that, your *hak* will go onto it!" I was taken aback and a little upset. Seeing my expression of shock she said "good; now you feel bad your *hak* won't go onto it." My shocked reaction to her words had counteracted my unintended envy.

Only outsiders, that is non-household members, are thought to give *hak* because they do not share in those envied goods, qualities or conditions of another house. Household members share in the milk its *dudyav* provides, in the *ghi* made from it, in the grains harvested, in the efficient work of the *bvari*, in the income generated by an employed son, and in the pride a beautiful baby brings. Outsiders are not in a position to share these good things nor other fruits of success and good fortune enjoyed by another house (see Pocock 1973: 33). Between household members, sharing is the morality and norm. The house produces and must contain and defend any good fortune it may enjoy, and protect this from the machinations of envious, greedy and spiteful outsiders (see Ortner 1978: 40).

It is believed that anybody can afflict *hak* onto another person or household. Everybody has the potential to give the evil eye; envy is an aspect of human nature. A woman said "everyone has eyes and eyes are all the same." At the same time, certain people are thought more likely to be envious and give *hak*. One woman said that only the *hak* of those who have nothing goes onto other people. This may be so, but there is also a competitive element involved. A woman said "people here look at others and get envious. I have a little and I want more. He has a lot, why can't I have just as much. This is how people are." Women see how much grass or wood other women's *bvaris* and daughters have brought from the forest and compare them to their own *bvaris* and daughter's efficiency. One woman, explaining to me what she thought *hak* was, said:

People think 'she bought two bails of grass, wouldn't it be good if I bought three. He is earning Rs.1,500, wouldn't it be good if I could earn Rs.1,600.' I do not believe in *hak*; it is just envy and people wishing they had what others have, and more.

This mirrors Pocock's assertion that we envy those things and situations which are just better than those we have, and with which we can compare (1973: 28). The above quotations indicate that envy and the evil eye are to be feared from those who are inferior to oneself, but also those with whom one is essentially equal. Or, as Foster says, "envy in general is of superiors, or between equals" (1972: 171).

5.3.ii Equals and Envy

Pocock considers that the evil eye is "apprehended more from those with whom one is, in most other respects, equal, or has reason to expect to be" (1973: 28). The evil eye, he says,

. . . need not be feared between equals, such as brothers, nor between people whose status is clearly different and defined. It is most to be feared when those who should be equals are not so in fact (Pocock 1973: 39).

Therefore the evil eye, he argues, is a sanction against presumptuous people of one's own status who are rising above themselves, and not so much against people of a different status. Envy occurs between equals who are going up, but not against those who are plainly already higher or lower. By equals, Pocock seems to mean people of the same caste. The caste system puts limits on the range of the evil eye (and envy) and Pocock concludes that the evil eye "bites deepest within the caste" (1973: 39).

I would not deny that the evil eye probably 'bites deepest' within the caste, however I would like to take issue with Pocock's, to my mind, rather limited understanding and use of 'equals'. For example, why need one not fear the evil eye from equals such as brothers? Those who are more likely to be competitive and envious of each other are people who think they should be equal, as Pocock says. But this includes brother and lineage brother households and extends to villagers in general. Though real brothers may be equal to some degree, and at least as structural equals as heads of their own households, and though the ideology of brotherhood encourages the notion of equality, brother households are often not equal in standing. It would seem to me that there is indeed most pressure on brothers and close kinsmen to be equal, and most chance that they will not in fact be materially equal. Therefore one would expect envy to be most rife between brother households and *paravar* (lineage) members.

As we shall see, though in theory and ideology *bradar* kinspersons should enjoy mutual concern and cooperation, in reality there is distrust and envy. The idea

that one's closest kin are likely to be most envious and one's staunchest rivals was openly expressed to me by women (see Chapter Seven). To refer only to caste equals is, I think, too restricted.

I find Foster's term 'conceptual equals' (1972: 170) very useful in understanding the relationship between equals, envy and the evil eye. To my mind, conceptual equals includes a whole spectrum of persons. It includes brothers and close kinsmen and extends out to fellow caste members and even to embrace members of the Bith castes in opposition to the Dums. However, conceptual equals also includes the social categories of women, men, mothers, household heads, farmers and so on. Therefore, a woman is most likely to be envious of another woman, a man of a man, a mother of a mother and so on. A woman may put *hak* onto a baby because he is so healthy and pretty. However, this *hak*, though it affects the baby, seems to be indirectly aimed at the child's mother. All mothers fear the envy of others, but of other mothers in particular. A woman's *hak* can go on a neighbour or sister-in-law's son. If the son is a *sarvis-vala* and sports nice clothes and other signs of wealth, the *hak* of an envious neighbour, who wishes her own son were also earning a good wage as a *sarvis-vala*, is likely to strike. In such cases caste may be irrelevant. For example, Kamla is a Harijan woman who is a qualified primary school teacher. During the research year she married a high-ranking government officer in a district Block Development Office. One woman said to me "*hak* could fall onto Kamla's parents because she is from a poor family but has made a very good marriage to a high officer with a good salary." Kamla married one of those highly valued resources, the *sarvis-vala*, and one of particularly good standing and with good prospects. People would be envious of her parents having such a wealthy *sarvis-vala* as their son-in-law. Kamla also works. Her parents are thought to be reaping the benefits from their daughter's good marriage. I heard one woman say snidely, "Kamla's mother is getting fat!", they are doing well.

Attention needs to be directed at two questions when examining *hak*: first, what is the object or subject of envy? *Sarvis* and the benefits it brings, beauty and health, a milk-giving cow, good crops, efficient women in the house? Second, the role or position of the envious person must be considered: is a mother envious of another's healthy children or successful son, is a *dudyav* owner envious of another's sturdy, healthy cow, a senior household woman envious of another's efficient and hard working *bvaris*? and so on. In the process we see that a woman's evil eye can go onto a man but that it rarely goes the other way. Gender does not seem to be a barrier to *hak*, but there does seem to be a unidirectional flow of *hak* from women onto men.

5.3.iii Caste, Gender, Envy and the Evil Eye

Pocock says that the hierarchical principles in a caste society place some people in more favoured positions than others and that such natural superiority is not seen as a deprivation (1973: 28). I am not very clear as to what the naturally favoured positions Pocock refers to actually are. Currently, it seems to many high caste people that Harijans are, in some contexts, in a naturally favoured position. High caste people view the Harijan's increasing employment successes and economic equality and superiority as a deprivation.

In the past high caste people were the more privileged people; they owned their own land and were in a position to have *khaukis* and labourers working under them. High caste people in Silora were not in direct competition with the Dums for valued things such as land, property, wealth, education and jobs. However, as we saw in Chapter Four, high caste people definitely see themselves as being in competition with Dums for education and jobs, and in particular government posts. With the government's policies of reservation for scheduled castes and tribes and so on, high caste people in the hills feel doubly underprivileged both as hill people living in a backward economy, and as high caste people. Year by year they complain they see more and more Dum children get scholarships to attend first class schools, get government training places and jobs as well as promotions. They watch Dums in neighbouring villages build new modern houses, buy televisions and wear flashy clothes. High caste men may joke about Harijan boys and their fashion, but their mockery is tinged just as much with envy as it is by resentment and anger.

Naturally given attributes such as fair skin and health are also valued and envied qualities. In Silora, it is believed that one's skin colour is in a way governed by one's caste. Dums are black and a relatively light-skinned Dum is an exception to the rule. Brahmans and Thakurs are fair and a dark Brahman is considered unlucky. Dums may accept that blackness is their natural lot and may therefore compare themselves only with other Dums, being jealous of the fairer skinned Dum. Nevertheless this does not mean that she may not be envious of a fair high caste woman, as a woman. Caste is significant but not a barrier to *hak*.

Silora data suggest that the evil eye does cross caste lines and particularly in the ascending and upward direction from Dums to twice-born 'clean caste' people. A high caste woman said, "our *hak* doesn't go onto low caste people's babies." This is because they are black and therefore ugly. There is nothing to envy. In the case of culturally defined beauty, fair skin, good complexion and pretty babies, low caste people's *hak* will go onto high caste people and never the reverse.

Greed and Desire: Dums and Women

There is an implicit association with *hak* and greed, dissatisfaction, desire and the colour black. One means of ridding someone of *hak* involves the recitation of a certain mantra. I asked my landlady, who knows such a mantra, whose evil eye the mantra is thought to remove. She mentioned the following beings: a black Brahman (*kāv bāman*); a brown Thakur (*bhur Khasiy*); a black woman (*kāv nāri*); one with a black tongue (*kāv jībh*) which she said means a Dum; a woman with thick muscly calves (*ghopā mūgārī*); someone with fang-like front upper teeth (*dantā dvārī*); one whose eye-brows meet in the middle of the forehead (*bhō sanhārī*) and lastly, a woman with legs as hairy as a man's.¹²

I do not know the significance of all of these, but shall offer some suggestions as to why these persons should be thought to inflict *hak*. In the mountains Brahmans and Thakurs are really quite fair skinned. They pride themselves in being, in their opinion, fairer than the average high caste plains person. A dark skinned or black Brahman or Thakur therefore feels s/he has been dealt an unfair deal and cannot help but be dissatisfied and envious of those more fortunate, and more 'beautiful' than himself. Very hairy legs on a woman is a sign of excessive sexual appetite. She is believed to be in a semi-permanent or permanent state of dissatisfaction and unquenched desire. Black things and persons in general are thought to be dangerous or inauspicious. Dums are the blackest of all and are thought to be devious, greedy and generally unreliable. Women, black women, Dum women and female ghosts (*bhūtani* or *dānkinī*) also feature strongly in those presumed to be more envious and hungry with desire.¹³

The associations of *hak* with Dums and women or female beings implies that *hak* comes from those lower down in the social scale. Both Dums and women are accredited with low status in relation to high caste persons and men. At the same time Brahmans and Thakurs are mentioned, and so all castes and men seem to be implicated to some degree.

Unlike some other forms of envy, the evil eye can be deflected, turned away and its ill effects removed. The effects of *hak* were described to me as fatigue, weakness, nausea and bodily aches and pains. Young children wear black eye liner, black wrist bands, iron bangles or anklets as preventative measures against *hak*. There are various means of removing the effects of *hak*. One involves waving a handful of salt and red chillies over the victim's head, which is then thrown in the fire.

¹²A *hak* mantra is given in Joshi (1982: 402) in which several other beings are mentioned: for example, a widow (*rāṇī*), a witch/female ghost (*dānkinī-sānkinī*), black creatures and so on. Oakley and Gairola say that the evil eye of a black Brahman is much feared (1977: 28).

¹³Female ghosts and witches are thought of as being consumed by jealousy in many parts of North India (see Babb 1975 and Carstairs 1983).

In another, salt, red chilli and mustard seeds are put into a ladle with burning coal, waved above the victim's head three times and then taken by a non-household member and thrown away at a crossroad and stamped on three times. Having done so he must not look back at the spot. Some take a handful of red chilli, salt and mustard to someone who recites the *hak* mantra over the contents while stirring them with her finger. Finally, people go to a woman who knows the *hak* mantra. She recites the mantra while moving her hand in a downwards stroking movement from the victim's head to their feet. If she should yawn while doing this it is taken to mean that *hak* is on the person and is being successfully removed.

5.4 Expressions of Envy: Gossip and Defamation

Non-household members are often referred to by women as *bhyarak*, 'of the outside'. Where relations between 'insiders' within the house are represented as being characterised by compassion, concern and altruistic motives, outsiders are spoken about as being motivated by impure intentions, self-interest and personal gain. The following quotation illustrates this:

People here have no care or concern for others. They do not have any idea, nor do they care, whether or not you have any food to eat tonight, but they are always ready to listen to (or hear about) your *bār* (affairs/business).

5.4.i Gossip

Villagers are insatiably curious about other households' affairs and are eager to discover any lapse and flaws in behaviour. They are always asking each other what they are doing, where they are going, and for what purpose (*kam*). As Du Boulay says (1974: 188), everyone is suspected of hiding faults and of lying about their situation. People will ask questions of one person to find out information about another. Several people would ask me questions in order to gather information about my landlady's household. If some misdemeanour is discovered, the details may be communicated along gossip channels, thus exposing the extent to which the house has fallen short of, or deviated from, a particular principle or ideal. The faulty house is then exposed to social criticism and humiliation. In this way, gossip may act as an important means of social control.¹⁴

¹⁴See Du Boulay's discussion on gossip and lies (1974: 210-213, 192-4).

The idea, therefore, is to find out the faults and secrets of others while simultaneously hiding and protecting one's own.¹⁵ A man said to me "people are very willing and ready to ask you about your family but they are not so ready to tell you about their own affairs."

Gossip, like lying, can also be a vindictive device. Gossip can also be a way of 'pulling down' a house either through exposure of weakness and inadequacies or else through fabrication and the spreading of rumours. One woman said to me:

People will listen to your conversation and agree with you (to egg you on) as you are speaking. But as soon as you are gone, they will say something about you behind your back to someone else. For example: I tell A about the woes of my son, or my daughter-in-law, or I say that my son is a *sālā* (term of abuse) or something, and A will agree with you and so on. Then after a while they will tell someone else and so on and say this and that about you, and perhaps twist the contents a bit in the process: 'she said this and that about her own son, called him a *sālā*' etcetera. Then finally, the son will be told: 'your mother said this and that' and obviously the original words will have been altered. Then this leads to a battle between mother and son.

You should not volunteer information about your internal household affairs nor should you express your feelings about your own family members. In addition, people should be wary when they hear gossip about what a member of their own house is reported to have said. If you believe what people say this could lead to an argument inside the house. If people know there are tensions and difficulties in certain relations, between a mother and her son, for example, they may play on this in order to provoke the people involved into anger and more conflict. Lies and gossip are seen as tactics used by outsiders to cause trouble inside the house, and to pull a house down through exposure of weaknesses and flaws in behaviour. Before looking at defamation itself, I consider the constitution of a house's reputation.

5.4.ii Household Reputation

The term locally used for reputation most frequently is *nām* (name). It can be interchanged, in relation to the house, with the word *ijat*, honour. Honour, according to Mandelbaum, refers to "how a person carries out the group's values, how he or she realises them in actual behaviour" (1988: 20). A household does not objectively possess or not possess honour, it is conferred by public opinion. Honour is a vulnerable thing, and it must be preserved and increased if possible (see Mandelbaum 1988: 20-23). Community relations are highly competitive and it is believed that

¹⁵As Berreman says, "... people did not reveal facts or secrets which directly contradicted the impressions they wished to convey of themselves or members of their household. Many kinds of back region secrets were revealed by people who were not members of the groups whose secrets they were" (1962: 18).

others will try to take one's reputation away or weaken it. It is a fierce battle to preserve household honour and to avoid its antithesis, shame (*saram*).

A household's reputation or honour (*ijat*) is based in part on adherence to, and achievement of, the ideal of household solidarity. Household solidarity is highly valued. Unity and cohesion depend upon the observance of the core principles of hierarchy and sharing. If the principle of hierarchy is respected within the home, a father will have authority over his sons, and a husband over his wife. If the principle of sharing is observed, all members will pool their labour and resources and all produce, be it cash or crops, will be enjoyed and shared by all. If a father and son are seen to argue, or if they should separate into different hearths, shame will be cast onto the house. A house which seems to function with ease and efficiency is admired and envied by all. This is the image which male and female household heads ultimately want to put across to the wider public. A house's honour, in terms of its moral standing, also depends to a large degree on the behaviour of its female members (see Das 1990: 134; Mandelbaum 1988). People will readily cast aspersions on and attack a woman at her weakest point: her moral reputation. If an unmarried daughter or a wife of the house is found having an affair, the reputation of the house is at stake.

A house's reputation is related to the correct observance of socially determined and acceptable rules of behaviour. For example high caste people should not accept low caste people's (or the anthropologist's) food. However, principles are often disregarded; household members do not always live in harmony, women are not always chaste and righteous, and people often indulge in inter-caste meals. With regard to household solidarity, what really matters is not actual cohesion and consensus, but the concealment of differences and the projection of a unified front to the outside world (see Berreman 1962: 18). People do not tell others about their own intra-household disputes, nor do they reveal overt dissatisfaction about a son's behaviour and alcoholism. To admit that one's son maltreats one, or to display anger or distress about him, would damage the house's self-esteem and reputation (see Vatuk 1990: 73). One night a friend's son returned home drunk. The next day she wept as she told me how much pain and worry he causes her. She said, "when he is away at his work place we can breathe a sigh of relief . . . we cannot see if he is drunk or not." At the end she said "don't tell anyone I told you this; they will say 'his mother is saying such and such about him, her own son!'"

With regard to women's morality and inter-caste eating and so forth, as Du Boulay (1974: 109) remarks, an individual and a house will lose its reputation when the wider community discovers the wrong-doing, and not because of the act of wrong-doing itself. This point was made by a woman when she said to me, "people will eat

with any and everyone, no matter what their caste. Don't they eat in the bazaar? What goes on inside and what happens outside are quite separate".¹⁶

People are concerned to protect their reputation. At the same time they are eager to pull other households down by observing and remarking upon any fault or misdemeanour which may be committed. Of course, nobody would admit to thinking or behaving in this way. It is always 'the other' who is said to think like this. One man said to me, "people here are very ready and quick to find a blemish on someone else. Even if you do not have any they will give you one. But they themselves have many black spots."

5.4.iii Defamation

Villagers perceive that people actively want to prevent their co-villagers from getting ahead (see Banfield 1958; Standing 1981: 223; Foster 1972) and to deny them the fruits of their success. Banfield says: "No family, they think, can stand to see another prosper without feeling envy and wishing the other harm" (1958: 121). Women used the words *giran* (to pull down, destroy), *nukaśān diṇ* (to harm, damage) and *dabāṇ* (to press down, suppress) to describe people's intentions towards one another. *Giran*, I was told, means to weaken people, to make people lose money and to get people in trouble.

Someone who seems to be doing very well will often be accredited with success through immoral behaviour such as cheating and fraud. Several young village men sat a district-wide examination for selection onto a government run teacher-training course. One young man from the village was later called up for an interview and finally succeeded in securing a place. Village people said that he had only succeeded because his father had 'fed' the interviewer - his father, the local primary school headmaster, is considered successful since all four of his sons are employed, and he is seen as one of the most affluent men in the village. I was told that he is rich because he has fraudulently diverted, or 'eaten', monies allocated by the government for the payment of children's school outings, into his own pocket (see Standing 1981: 234). People assume him to be corrupt since he is successful.

We have seen that household solidarity is highly valued and is the precondition for a well functioning and successful house. Arguments inside the house, for example between a parent and a son or between husband and wife, are the outcomes of the non-oberservence of the principle of hierarchy. They lead to disunity and directly contravene the ideal of cohesion. If conflict becomes public knowledge the household and its members will be gossiped about and shamed. Conflict-ridden

¹⁶I take inside in this context to refer to the house and outside to mean 'in public'. However, this is also applicable to inside and outside of the village itself.

and disunited, the household is no longer an effective and strong unit (see Mandelbaum 1988: 120). An important basis of its successful performance has been damaged. Therefore, if someone can manage to stir up trouble within another house, they may succeed in publicly humiliating that house. (In addition it would seem that people actually quite like or find it amusing to see others having problems.) In response to my request for a definition of *giran*, one woman gave me the following examples. In the first she referred to extra-marital affairs between village men and women. When a man has a lover it is thought that he gives her money and gifts. A wife does not receive these luxuries from her husband, instead she must work hard all day in the fields. She said:

Women will say to a woman, 'your husband goes with her and her. You too should eat from sitting (i.e. without working). Why should you work so much?' The clever woman does not listen to this chat but keeps up her work and her face. For those who listen it only leads to fights between husband and wife.

The second example refers to the weakening of a house's economic strength:

Somebody, in a friendly way, will get you into bad habits. First they will introduce you to alcohol, marijuana or gambling at their own expense (*karj*). Then they will get you addicted and then you get to the stage where you play with your own money, drink and gamble on *udhār* (loan, credit) until you end up drinking and gambling away all of your money. Then you must seek other ways of getting money.

I have many examples of the sorts of schemes people are said to set up against other households. One, however, in which I was involved, may serve to illustrate the point. A few weeks after my arrival in Silora, Intelligence Officers visited the house where I was living, and after several conversations, I was ordered to report to the Superintendent of Police's office in Almora, the district headquarters. Only much later did I discover the reason. A letter, posted from Moradabad (a large town on the way from the hills to Delhi), had been sent to the Intelligence office in Ranikhet stating: 'there is a foreigner living in so and so's house, in Silora village, she has AIDS and is a danger to the community. Get rid of her.' If the accusation had been true, then, according to my landlord and landlady, the result would have been appalling.¹⁷ I would have been told to leave and my landlord would have been sent to jail. Apart from being socially disgraced, the family would have lost a lot of money bribing the police to release my landlord from prison. However, as my papers were in order and I had registered at the police station well in advance, the Superintendent of Police did not question me further. I was told by my landlord, that the author of the letter did

¹⁷The possibility that the accusation was true could not have arisen since I had to present a certificate to prove I was not HIV positive prior to receiving research permission from the Indian government.

not want me to stay because my residence gave him benefits. The author probably believed that I was paying a very high rent, and probably resented the wealth (and status) that my residence may have given my landlord. My landlord and landlady knew the author to be a fellow villager, and more specifically a member of their *paravar* (my landlord's FFBSS). As indicated, if the letter had had the desired effect, my landlord would have lost the wealth and status my residence afforded. To boot, he would have lost a large sum bribing the police, as well as his honour.¹⁸

The quotations and the above example illustrate what is meant by *giran*, and indicate those things which non-household members are concerned to disrupt and deny. Such rivalry, which hopes to bring someone down, is fuelled by envy.

To sum up, Silora society is highly fragmented. Each household owns its own land and asserts itself as a self-reliant and autonomous entity. There is a general dislike for leaders and the social bonding between the respective houses is too minimal to encourage the formation of factions. Expressions of economic difference are shunned and the prevailing ideology is that of equality. There is a general reluctance to accord superior social status to people who are economically superior. Envy and competition are rife.

In the section on envy we obtained a clear view of how Silora people see social relations. An instrumental attitude towards social interaction and relations is dominant. When people visit it is assumed they have come to ask for some favour. Visitors' motives are suspect and thought to be geared by self-interest and gain. This is informed by the view held of outsiders, that is, non-household members. Outsiders are greedy, envious, spiteful and destructive. Outsiders are not to be trusted.

5.5 Kin, Cooperation and Trust

One would expect relations to be more trusting and cooperative among kinspersons. As we have seen, kinship relations are founded on the reciprocal nature of mutual obligations and assistance rendered. Madan expresses the situation well:

After partition the supremacy of self-interest is openly recognised, and the chulahs of brothers deal with each other in terms of it and on a reciprocal basis (1989: 177).

Relations between classificatory brothers of separate household enterprises are founded on exact and balanced reciprocity (Gray 1983: 258). Any help given must be

¹⁸Wiser and Wiser describe a very similar example in which a man tries to get a better off man to court. In so doing it is assumed to be inevitable that the latter will lose money and the former, although he does not benefit from this, has the satisfaction of pulling the richer man down nearer to his own level (1963: 221).

repaid over time, in kind. However, although lineage kinspersons have certain responsibilities to each other, in practice they very rarely unite in concerted action.¹⁹ For example, there are no *bradar palti*, factions based on lineage membership. Kinsmen cannot be depended upon to offer political support. In Silora the 'faction-like group' does not involve a synthesis of kinship with politics. In the case mentioned earlier Dharmanand did not call on his lineage brothers to back him and they did not volunteer their support. His two brothers stood by him. However, his own uncle and first cousins did not offer their support and most of his lineage brothers remained neutral. Solidarity and unity among *paravar* kin is mainly expressed at times of tragedy and on ritual occasions.

Though in theory relations between close kin should be of mutual affection and loyalty, it is precisely between brother and lineage brother households that rivalry, competition and envy is most rife (see Banfield 1958: 119). Furer-Haimendorf reports that this is readily apparent, and openly admitted among Chettris of Nepal. He says:

It is a common saying that a man's worst rivals are his agnatic collaterals, i.e. the members of his own patri kin-group whom he addresses as 'brothers' and for whom he observes birth- and death-pollution. Identification on the ritual level does not exclude competition, and there is rivalry between classificatory brothers . . . (1966: 41).

Brothers vie with each other not only for social standing and prestige, but for resources and even marriageable women (Stone 1976: 50 in Bennett 1983: 179). My landlady and landlord recounted examples to illustrate such relations. The first case involves two first cousins. Jivan, a retired army officer, was planning to construct a small building by the road which he hoped to make into a small shop. However, the land he required for the building was not all his and he had to purchase adjacent plots from other people. These plots belonged to five different owners, of whom Jivan's first cousin, Lakshaman, was one. Jivan managed to secure four land shares, except that owned by Lakshaman. He refused to sell Jivan the land and so Jivan had to make do with a smaller shop. Lakshaman did not want Jivan to have this whole stretch of land next to the road and therefore did everything to try to prevent him from getting the land and building his shop. The second case refers to marriageable women. Suresh had been trying to find a wife for his eldest son. He had made contact with a

¹⁹For example, during fieldwork a Silora man, who had suffered previous episodes of mental illness, began to display ever more extreme behaviour indicative of psychosis. However, none of his lineage kinsmen were willing to do anything to help him. After a week or so, two unmarried village men went to every village house and asked for a cash donation. The money collected paid for the bus tickets for the disturbed man and two village men who would escort him to Delhi where his brother lived. I heard some people say how awful it was that his 'brothers' did not help the man, even though some of them were well off.

family and was expecting the girl's father to visit for discussions. One night the prospective father-in-law arrived in Silora with the intention of visiting Suresh whose home he had never visited before. However, somehow he was redirected to Bala's house, without the knowledge of Suresh. Bala was Suresh's uncle (FB). There, Bala discussed the possible marriage of the visitor's daughter with his own son. The next day Bala went to the girl's village and 'reserved' her for his own son.

Where love, affection and mutual trust are thought to exist only inside the house, and where household members attempt to protect their house's reputation, those who are beyond the house's control are beyond trust (Berreman 1972: 339; Du Boulay 1974: 189). This includes close kin. In some cases certain information and secrets are kept even from immediate kin. As non-household members these kinsmen are 'outsiders' and should therefore be approached with caution and reserve.

5.6 Survival Techniques

In such a hostile environment the household must be safeguarded from the curiosity and malice of the outside, and protected from envy and claims on its resources. This is achieved through several means which include secrecy, concealment and deceit.

Though the household belongs to several larger social units such as the neighbourhood and kin group, another important distinction, which overrides other social distinctions, is made within the village between the *ghar* (house) and *sasāṭi* (social community). I heard this for the first time when my landlady was informally socialising me into village life. She sensitized me to the fact that there are certain kinds of behaviour which are necessary and appropriate in relations outside of the house and those suitable for inside the house, among insiders. In *sasaiti* one should be circumspect, wary and guarded. It is not good to be *sid* (straight), or trusting, with outsiders. To be *sid* in this context carries the connotations of stupidity and unworldliness. It is considered stupid to be frank and open about one's *gharak bat* (home affairs) and about one's feelings and concerns. A *sid* person is naive and guileless.²⁰

5.6.i Lies and Secrecy

People outside of the house are not to be trusted. Issues and concerns of the household (*gharak bāt*) are to be concealed. Outsiders are assumed to be interested in one's affairs for their own gain only, and not out of care or genuine concern. I was

²⁰*Sid* is also used to refer to girls who are morally pure, shameful and modest. For an unmarried girl to be *sid* is a positive, and the desired state, and reflects well on her family. Another positive aspect to being *sid* refers to someone who is reliable, trustworthy and faithful.

told never to tell people about my house and family, nor about my landlady's household matters. I was taught how to behave in public, how much information to give and when to stop. My landlady gave me the following advice: "Never tell anyone your plans/programme, and you have to lie a bit. Only then will work get done."

Villagers are curious and eager to have something to talk about and they suspect each other of concealing faults. The art of deception is well refined. Children are brought up to be suspicious towards outsiders and economical with the truth about their own household matters. One must be on guard all the time since people do ask questions so as to confuse you, to trip you up and to make you admit something you did not want to; something which they can then use as ammunition against you or someone else in the future. I too had to develop the skills of deceit and secrecy. Over the months, I became very close to my landlady and her family. My living quarters, though in the same building, were independent of their living area. Initially I cooked and ate alone, but after a few months I started eating with my 'uncle' and 'aunt'. With this intimacy I heard many of their conversations and knew of some of their household secrets. My landlady set to work on me to instil the attitudes of suspicion and deceit. I was encouraged not to tell people that I ate with my landlady's family; to profess that I held a large degree of distance from them; and to pretend ignorance of their household matters. These precautions were taken for my landlady's household's own safety. People did, in fact, try to extract information about my landlady's family from me. I feigned ignorance and said I knew nothing since I was only a lodger. My skills in lying and secrecy were, like those of a child, often tested. Children are unlikely to be as wary as adults and are seen to be potential sources of information as to the goings on in other's houses (see Du Boulay 1974: 188), and, insofar as I was a newcomer to the village, I too was regarded as a child. Nevertheless children are trained in their upbringing in lying and secrecy.

Lies and secrecy apply to both good and bad news. Positive projects, and not just disputes and difficulties in the house, are also concealed. For example, one day I was talking to my landlady's son and taping our conversation. At the end of my questions we started to talk about other things. I mentioned how his mother had been looking quite miserable since she had sold the cow, and he said that this would soon end since they were planning to buy a buffalo. His voice lowered as he told me this, and then, as if suddenly aware of having said something he should not have, he told me to switch off the tape-recorder. It was obvious that this information should not go beyond the house. A few months later this same young man was applying for jobs. Since he regarded me as his 'elder sister' and confidante, he told me about one he hoped, in particular, to get and then said, emphatically, "don't tell anyone!" He asked me if I could lend him something in which he could put his application form. I

offered him a transparent plastic folder. He refused this saying it would not do, for people would be able to see what was inside. He left my room and bumped into his cousin (FyBD) and when she asked what the papers in his hand were, he stuffed them under his arm and said gruffly, "Oh nothing." When this man finally did get a job his family told nobody at first. He said to me, "you don't tell anyone about your *kam*. You don't tell anyone about your successes or your failures." A few days later his uncles (FBs) were told. After he had left for his place of work, nobody else knew where he had gone. Nothing had been said. Once again I was put in the uncomfortable position of people asking me where my 'brother' had gone. I had to conceal the truth and admit to knowing nothing about him. Wedding preparations are also usually concealed and denied until the last minute.

People guard their household matters and make every attempt to avoid leakages of information into the outside world. At the same time, households do allow certain information to seep out, but this is usually comprised of distorted facts. For example people will never admit to how much grain they harvested in any given season and will usually under-estimate their incomes. Wealth and property are indications of a household's strength. This strength, and hence wealth and property, must be stored and hoarded. People often give the impression of having less than they actually own, and of being poor.²¹

I shall illustrate this with an example of loaning. One young man, Naresh, was having a house built. The house was to cost him Rs.45,000. When I asked him if he was borrowing any money to finance the construction he replied sternly: "No, it is not good to do work on loans."²² However, when I visited him a few months later he volunteered the information that he had been obliged to take out a loan of Rs.15,000. When talking to my landlord one evening, Naresh's new house came up in the conversation. I mentioned that Naresh had taken a loan to complete the house. My landlord and landlady denied this. I asked why Naresh would say he had taken a loan when in fact he had not. My landlord replied, "he is quite wealthy enough to build a house from his own pocket but he does not want other people to know this, so he puts

²¹Foster (1965: 302) speaks of peasant people's "extreme caution and reserve" and "reluctance" to reveal their true position or strength.

²²We have seen that borrowing money is associated with dependence and inferiority (see Chapter Three). People also do not like taking loans from villagers because "it just leads to arguments and problems." The general opinion is that nobody can be trusted to return a debt. Older people compared the past and present day situations. In the past, they said, people were willing to give loans which were referred to as giving *maddad* (help). A loan was a written and signed contract. One man said, "in the past 90 percent of the people were *imānadār* (honest), now 98 percent are *bemān* (dishonest)." Nowadays loans must be made on trust. A written statement has no value and is of no use in a court case unless the money-lender is a registered creditor. People say that most loans are taken from banks or outside sources such as friendly affines. I know of people borrowing money from their son-in-law for house building and weddings. I was told that the government rates of interest are four to 14 percent, and that in private they are 25 to 50 percent a month.

himself across to be a poor man." Another young man building a house told people that his father-in-law was contributing to the building costs. Behind his back people said, "he has stored and hidden all of his grandfather's money. He is *callāk* (cunning). Why should his father-in-law give him money? Doesn't he have his own house to build?"

Lying and being secretive are ways of defending and protecting the house, not only from the sanctions of the outside community, but also from its greed. A house will give the image of being poor to minimize claims that outsiders may make on the household. Wiser and Wiser report similar attitudes. Villagers say that dilapidated mud walls better protect the household from strangers, "the greedy ones", who are usually agents of authority: "Dilapidation makes it harder for the covetous visitor to tell who is actually poor and who simulates poverty" (1963: 120). The same goes for old tatty clothing, another example of justifiable deception as a means of self-protection (Wiser and Wiser 1963: 120-121). The assumption is that people want to deprive you of your wealth, well-being and security and to deplete your reserves and strength. Therefore, people tend to give the impression of being impoverished and luckless (ill-fated). The actual extent of a house's strength is kept secret and hidden (see Wiser and Wiser 1963: 122).

5.6.ii Attitudes Towards Friendship

Another way in which to defend the house's good fortune is by not having friends (see Banfield 1958: 121-122). My landlady once told me, "the more distant (*dūr*) you are from someone, the better. Getting familiar and close is bad." Having friends is discouraged. Berreman quotes a Sirkanda villager who said:

There are no special friends here. People talk occasionally to everyone - whoever they meet at the water source, at work, or around the village. They don't talk a lot with anyone outside of their joint family excepting the young men of the village, who often sit around and talk together (1972: 266).

This reflects the situation I observed in Silora.

Social relations in general are regarded in an instrumental way and friendships are no exception. They are relationships constituting the exchange of one favour for another; they are relations of practical expedience (Du Boulay 1974: 213,218). Friendships are based on a union of self-interests, not mutual affection (Du Boulay 1974: 85). Like all relations between non-household members, a central ingredient of friendships is distrust and suspicion. As a result they are highly tenuous, fragile and impermanent relationships. Even with friends one should be careful of what one says, for friends can turn into enemies overnight. At the same time, friendships are seen as being in competition with an individual's relations in, and

loyalties to, the house. I shall illustrate these points by examining the friendships of women and men.

Unmarried Girls and Friendship

An unmarried girl's friends (*saheli*) may come from her natal village or be from other villages sharing the same school. Village friends will often work together, although almost always accompanied by at least one married woman. At ceremonies and celebrations, such as weddings and Holi, these girls will sing together. When a girl gets married, she is allowed to personally invite her girl-friends to attend the wedding night when the *barat* (groom's wedding party) arrives. A girl will give a ribbon, a pair of earrings or some other small gift to her girl-friend as a wedding gift.

On the night of the wedding, the bride will sit inside surrounded by her girl-friends, kinswomen and other village women, as they await the *barat's* arrival. Once the *barat* arrives, girl-friends will peep out of the window to look at the groom. They will tell the bride what he is like, and how big the *barat* is. Whilst the *barat* is feasted, the bride's girl-friends will lead other unmarried girls with music and song, which are sung mainly in Hindi. They sing 'sweet abuse' (*pyārī gāli*) to the *bareti* as the latter eat their meal. With their songs the girls enthusiastically tease and 'flirt' with the *bareti*, some of whom will give money to these young singers. In response, these young women act obstinately, refusing the money they are offered, demanding larger and larger sums.²³ As the evening unfolds these girl-friends either retire or sit quietly as they watch their girl-friend being given away to another village. They do not sing the melancholy-sounding auspicious songs (*śakunākhar*) which must be sung at certain important stages in the wedding ceremony (cf. Narayan 1986).

Marriage brings with it many changes, among which the loss of friends is one. Friendship is socially acknowledged for unmarried girls only. The bride moves into the new social environment of her husband's village. In some instances women from the same natal village find themselves in the same village after marriage, and may remain or become friends. In Silora there are several such cases. In addition there are cases of real, as well as cousin sisters, being married into the same village.

Women, Work and Friendship

Friendships between married women are not socially recognised and are disguised as kinship and work relationships depending on the activity and its context. Friendships between married women are not recognised and as such do not socially exist. The concept of friendship in Silora is associated with men and male social life. Men have

²³These gifts involve haggling by the girls performing the ritual service of singing abuse, and resemble the *neg* category of gifts described by Vatuk and Vatuk (1976: 223-224).

'brothers' and friends (*dost*) but women have only 'sisters' and affines. The wide application of kinship terms outside of the house gives the impression that women do not have friends (see Sharma 1980: 186).²⁴ According to Sharma (1980: 190) it is in terms of her position in the kinship system that a woman's social identity is formulated. It is for this reason that female friendships are not socially recognised whereas men's are. This is not, in my opinion, the whole story. Friendship implies a certain social exclusivity and such relationships are seen by some to compete with relationships in the house. A woman is expected to have her loyalties firmly focussed on her house. It is therefore not seen as desirable for married women to engage in friendships.²⁵

In Silora it is not acceptable for women to visit other women in their homes just to chat. If they do visit, it is usually under some pretext of having some particular purpose (*kam*), such as borrowing or returning something. If women have some message they wish to convey to another, they will do so when they meet at the water tank, or as they walk to the fields or forest. Indeed, due to the kind of work women do, there are in fact lots of opportunities for women to meet and talk, albeit under the guise of 'work' (see Chapter Two). This is very important. It is when a woman is working, especially when her work takes her some distance from the residential part of the village, and into distant fields or the forest, that she may meet up with a friend. In addition, women do not go far afield alone; they usually go off with a companion (*dagaṛī*). *Dagari* is perhaps the nearest word there is for 'friend' which is used for women. However, it is used, as far as I know, exclusively in relation to women who go off to work together.

Within the village, sociability between women is permissible only if it is related to work of some kind. Work in this case may also include preparations for ceremonial and ritual occasions. Mature women who want to talk alone will do so during the day when the village is empty and always under the guise of some work-related or house-related reason. Younger women, *bvaris*, who will only go to another's house if they are sent there by their *sasu*, are able to relax and enjoy the company of a friend or two when they set off to collect grass or fuel, far away from the house and village centre. Extra-domestic relationships can be cultivated in the context of work, with domestic activities and responsibilities providing a "social

²⁴Sharma presents three fictive kinship types: village kinship, courtesy kinship and ritual kinship (1980: 186-188). In Silora there is no system of ritual kinship. Vatuk says that neither village nor ritual kinship describe adequately the use of kin terms among unrelated urban neighbours. She says that women will use 'natal kinship' because it is conducive to the kind of easy, more loosely structured behaviour associated with relations in the natal place (Vatuk 1972: 170-1).

²⁵Uhl, writing about female friendships in Andalusia, Spain, explains that this is so, not only because friendship is so strongly associated with men, but also because female friendship is associated with "the deterioration of home life and social status" (1991: 102).

cover' for otherwise suspect interactions" (Uhl 1991: 99) thus 'veiling' female friendship in domesticity (Uhl 1991: 102).

Male Friendships, Alcohol and the Tea-Shop Versus the House.

As we saw earlier, much of male social life occurs in and around village shops and tea-stalls. The idea of friendships and relations between outsiders being instrumental is, I suggest, symbolised in alcohol. It was implied to me by women that there was some type of transactional relationship among drinking partners. For a bottle of rum a man will do you a favour. Alcohol symbolises the morality of transactional utilitarian relationships, of which friendship is a prime example. Ortner (1978: 68) describes the manipulative power of food and beer in Sherpa society. Though there are many differences between Kumaoni and Sherpa society, one point seems relevant and applicable to both. Beer, among the Sherpas, is used to manipulate others on a basis of its 'naturally' corrupting powers, forming the archetypal prestation of manipulative giving (Ortner 1978: 68,73). I would suggest that this is the same for alcohol in Silora.

In another way, such male activities and friendships are seen, particularly by women, to be contrary to the interests of the house. The house is a closed and bounded unit. Household members are required and expected to invest all of their resources into the well-being and strength of the house. Household membership is ascribed through kinship and is associated with a particular morality and kind of behaviour. A man should stand, in relation to his ageing parents, wife and children, in the role of provider. The tea-shop is a place where men meet up with personally selected friends. Here men spend money, drink and gamble. Such activities are in sharp opposition to, and threaten, the welfare of the household (see Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991: 18,23). Resources which should be committed to the house and to fellow household members, are being diverted to outsiders. In addition, in a drunken stupor, one cannot be sure what information a son or husband will spill. Alcohol consumption and gambling are contrary to the good of the house. These activities weaken the house as money is pulled away into the outside. The house however demands retention of its strength, both material (economic) and immaterial (information).

5.7 Concluding Remarks

This chapter brings out most strikingly the ambivalence concerning social relations shaped by the inside/outside dichotomy. In this chapter non-household members are identified as outsiders, and as in Chapter Three, household members as insiders. On

this level of identification, even lineal kin are absorbed into the undifferentiated category of outsiders. Social relations are presented as competitive and hostile. This is based on the underlying assumptions about outsiders. People are suspicious of one another's motives. Outsiders are thought of as a threat to the house's strength and well-being. They are envious, greedy and spiteful, and therefore morally inferior. Envy is a very dangerous, hostile and harmful emotion and can be the reason and motivation of much destructive action. Only outsiders inflict the evil eye, which saps its victim's freshness and life, causes beauty and health to fade and spoils milk and food stores by causing cow's udders and crops to 'dry up'. The evil eye is only one expression of envy. Other expressions of envy such as gossip, pulling another down and back-biting, are thought to 'weaken' the social and economic fabric of the household with potentially disastrous effects. Outsiders are thought to 'eat' and get strong only at the expense of insiders. Relations with outsiders are presented as instrumental. Alcohol, I suggest, can be used as an analytical device to represent the morality of the outside and of relations with outsiders.

In a society where economic equality is highly valued but personal gain is seen as the main motive for social interaction, and where outsiders are constructed as rapacious, the economic strength, honour and social boundaries of the house must be protected and maintained. Although there are no obvious "antipenetration symbols" in Silora, such as the ferocious dogs and massive padlocks used by Sherpas (Ortner 1978: 40), or the high mud walls of the plains, which protect the villager's family and possessions from a covetous outside world (Wiser and Wiser 1963), certain practices and attitudes do serve to reinforce the model of the bounded, separate and closed household unit. These include villager's attitudes towards friendship and loans; the attention given to looking poor, and the value placed on the art of skilful deception. These are further strengthened by the defiant self-reliance demonstrated by households in relation to agents of authority.

In the next chapter we move beyond the village bounds to consider relations with non-village members, that is with the affines. The chapter also gives a comprehensive account of the Kumaoni kinship system in general.

CHAPTER SIX

THE KINSHIP SYSTEM

The Kumaoni kinship system shows the principles of hypergamy and isogamy.¹ It would seem that most North Indian kinship systems generally represent some sort of a compromise between these two principles, which is regionally worked out. The dominant literature on kinship in North India reports on hypergamy (Parry 1979; Pocock 1972; Vatuk 1969b, 1975). However, in the Kumaoni system I describe here, the principle of hypergamy is encompassed by isogamy which is the dominant ideological stress. However, these isogamous marriages have hierarchical consequences, though they are not wide-ranging. Hypergamy exists only in relations within a very small range, that is with immediate wife-taking and wife-giving affinal households. This kinship system shows marked similarities with those reported by Krause (1980) and Gray (1980) for Nepalese groups. I shall demonstrate how symmetry and hierarchy are both expressed and acted out in the kinship terminology, marriage patterns, affinal relations and gift exchange and on ritual occasions. The demonstration of this argument will necessarily be rather technical and dense at times. I present the ethnographic facts in the following pages, and provide a clear and detailed resume of the findings at the end of the chapter. The second main argument in this chapter is that affines, as an undifferentiated category, are considered to be outsiders. Although certain obligations exist between wife-givers and wife-takers, as outsiders affines are potentially dangerous people.

6.1 Kinship Concepts

In Chapter Three agnatic kinship was discussed. Agnates are called *bradar*, whereas non-agnatic consanguines and pure affines are included in the category of *paun*. In general *paun* refers to affinal as opposed to agnatic kinship. We saw that all sub-caste members and co-villagers are 'brothers' and therefore not marriageable persons. As *bradar* these people are 'insiders' and marriage partners must come from, and daughters must go to, other lineages and villages, that is 'the outside'. Patrilocal

¹These patterns have been thoroughly studied in the large debate on the differences between South Indian and North Indian kinship systems to which, among others, Dumont has contributed enormously (1953; 1961; 1964; 1966; 1983b).

residence and lineage and village exogamy mean that *bradar* and *paun* have a spatial dimension as well as a kinship significance (see Majumdar 1962: 97). Ego's own village is populated by agnates, is a kin place whereas all other places are potentially affinal places.

From the point of view of the *bradar*, all wife-taking and wife-giving affines form an undifferentiated category of outsiders, of *paun*. On the lineage, clan and sub-caste levels, there are no apparent status distinctions between wife-takers and wife-givers. Both are subsumed into the general and inclusive category of *paun*. Between *paun*, women are exchanged and, as people who inter-marry each other, *paun* consider each other equals (see Krause 1980: 183). A *bradar* is usually a co-villager of ego, and a *paun* is an outsider related to ego by an affinal tie. On this broad level of kinship concepts there is a basic opposition between those who are agnates and co-villagers, that is insiders, and those who are non-agnates and non co-villagers, that is outsiders.

This category of *paun* is however sub-divided into *saurās*, and *makot*. One further section is the *bur makot* which refers to the natal place of ego's paternal grandmother. *Sauras* is ego's spouse's place of origin; the place of the in-laws. *Makot* is the natal place of ego's mother. In Kumaoni, as in parts of Garhwal (Majumdar 1962: 127), there is no separate term for wife-takers (cf. Vatuk 1969b: 110). One's son and daughter's *sauras* are referred to as *cyalak/celik sauras*. The same applies to ego's siblings' *sauras*. From this general category of *paun*, immediate wife-takers and wife-givers are distinguished, on the household level.

A married woman has a unique term to refer to her natal family and house, which is *mait*. It is the place of her parents and brothers. From the household's point of view, these kinship categories are all significant: a woman's *mait* is her husband's *sauras* and their children's *makot*.

For a male and an unmarried female, *paun* consist of the wife-takers and wife-givers of the household. A married woman takes on her husband's *paun* as her own (by virtue of household membership). When asked, however, she will specify that her *paun* are the people from the *mait*. On marriage, she leaves her *mait* (her husband's *sauras*) and joins her husband to live in his house and village (*ghar*), which is her *sauras*. After marriage, a woman classifies her biological kinsmen as *paun* and she herself is classified by them as *paun*. She is no longer classified as *bradar*, but as an outsider, a *paun*. At the same time, from her in-law's point of view, the woman enters as a stranger but is classified as an insider, a member of the household and village *bradar*; a married woman classifies her in-laws, her affines, as *bradar*.

6.2 Kinship Terminology

The terminology system presented here is a peculiar compromise between what have generally been reported as the North Indian system and the Dravidian system. For example, like the North Indian system, the kinship terminology displays hypergamy and asymmetry. Wife-takers and wife-givers are distinguished across the generations. Like the Dravidian system, however, there are only two terms in ego's +2 and -2 generations and the affine of one's affine is a consanguine. Symmetry is an important principle expressed in the terminology. For example: MB = FBWB = FZHB; MZ = FBW = FZHZ; FZ = MZHZ and FB = MZH. I shall return to the stress on symmetry and equality when I discuss the ideology of isogamy. In this section I shall demonstrate these principles with a presentation of the ethnographic facts. The terminology system I found in Kumaon is very similar to systems reported by Berreman (1972) for Garhwal and by Krause (1980) for Western Nepal.

Table 11. Kinship terms of reference.

Term	Genealogical Referent	Other Referents Include
Ego's 2nd Ascending Generation		
<i>bubu</i>	FF/MF	FFB,FMB,FFZH,FZHF MFB,MMB,MMZH,MFZH FFZ ²
<i>am</i>	FM/MM	W of any <i>bubu</i> Z of any <i>bubu</i> , FFZ
<i>bur saur</i>	HFF/WFF/HMF/WFM	any <i>bubu</i> of H/W
<i>huri sasu</i>	HFM/WFM/HMM/WMM	any <i>am</i> of H/W
Ego's 1st Ascending Generation		
<i>bajyu, babu</i>	F	
<i>ija, ij</i>	M	
<i>thulbajyu/kaka</i>	FeB/FyB MeZH/MyZH	FFBS,FFZS,FMBS FMZS,MFBDH,MMBDH MMZDH ³
<i>thulija/kaki</i> ⁴	FeBW/FyBW/MeZ	W of any <i>thulbajyu/kaka</i> save MyZ = <i>kainj</i> ⁵
<i>mam</i>	MB	MFBS,MFZS,MMZS

²Here FFZ could be called *bubu*, and often is by Brahmans, though *am* is also used.

³These are also used for ego's HBWF/WBWF. Krause (1980) includes MZHB, WZHF, HZHF, FBWB and H of any *thulijā/kāki/kainj* which are also true for Kumaon, but unlike Krause, MMZS, MFZS and FZHB are not FB/MSH but MB.

		MMBS,FBWB,FZHB
<i>mami</i>	MBW	W of any <i>mam</i>
<i>bu, bubu</i>	FZ	FFZD,FFBD,FMBD
		FMZD ⁶
<i>bhin</i>	FZH	
<i>saur</i>	WF/HF	HFB,WFB,HMB,WMB HMZH,WMZH,ZHF,ZHFB BWF,HFZH,WFZH
<i>sasu</i>	WM/HM	W of any <i>saur</i> Z of any <i>saur</i>

Ego's Generation

<i>mains</i>		H
<i>saini</i>		W
<i>dad/bhula</i>	eB/yB	FBS,FZS,MBS,MZS WZH,HZH,ZHZH,WBWB H of <i>bhauji/bvari</i>
<i>didi/bhuli</i>	eZ/yZ	FBD,FZD,MBD,MZD WBW,BWBW,HZHZ,HBW W of <i>bhin/javai</i>
<i>bhin/javai</i>	eZH/yZH	ZHB, H of <i>didi/bhuli</i> BWB (f.s)
<i>bhauji/bvari</i>	eBW/yBW	BWZ (f/s), W of <i>dada/bhula</i>
<i>jethu/sav</i>	WeB/WyB	WFBS,WMBS,WFZS WMZS, BWB (m.s)
<i>jethau/sai</i>	WeZ/WyZ	Z of W ZHZ (m.s) BWZ (m.s)
<i>jeth/dyor</i>	HeB/HyB	HFBS,HMBBS,HFZS HMZS
<i>jethani/dyorani</i>	HeBW/HyBW	W of <i>jeth/dyor</i>
<i>pauni/gusyaini</i>	HwZ/HyZ	HMBD,HFBD,HFZD HMZD, ZHZ (f.s)
<i>samadi</i>	SWF/DHF	F of <i>javai</i> or <i>bvari</i>
<i>samadeni</i>	SWM/DHM	W of any <i>samadi</i>

Ego's 1st Descending Generation

<i>cyl</i>	S	BS,WZS (m.s) ZS,HBS (f.s)
<i>celi</i>	D	BD,WZD (m.s) HBD,ZD (f.s)
<i>bhatij</i>		BS/HBS
<i>bhatiji</i>		BD/HBD
<i>bhanj</i>	ZS (m.s)	HZS
<i>bhanji</i>	ZD (m.s)	HZD
<i>bhadya</i>	BS (f.s)	

⁴Krause (1980) includes the following kin connections in the category of FBW/MZ: MFZD, MMZD, FZHZ, FBWZ, WZHM, HZHM, WBWM, HBWM. The same is found in Kumaon. However she gives no separate term for MyZ.

⁵The terms *thulija* and *kainj* are also used to refer to one's step-mothers, depending on whether they are one's mother's senior or junior co-wife. These terms are extended to ego's HBWF/M and WZHF/M.

<i>bhadye</i>		BD (f.s)
<i>sav</i>		WBS
<i>sai</i>		WBD
<i>javai</i>	DH	SWB,DHB, BDH,H/WBDH ZDH,H/WZDH
<i>bvari</i>	SW	SWZ,DHZ BSW,H/WBSW ZSW,H/WZSW

Ego's 2nd Descending Generation

<i>nati</i>		SS/DS
<i>natini</i>		SD/DD
<i>javai</i>		SDH/DDH
<i>bvari</i>		SSW/DSW

6.2.i Analysis of the Terms

Ego's Second Ascending and Descending Generations

These two categories are quite extensive and generalised. There is no distinction made between paternal and maternal grandparents or between the children of sons and daughters. All of these kin are ego's consanguines. There is only one set of terms for grandparents and one set for grandchildren (cf. Parry 1979: 298; Vatuk 1969b). This is similar to the South Indian system (see Dumont 1983b: 15). A distinction between consanguines and 'pure' non-consanguineous affines is made insofar as *bubu/ām* are distinct from *bur saur/buri sāsu* and *nāti/nātiṇi* from *javai/bvari*.

Ego's First Ascending and Descending Generations

The terms for mother and father are unique and are not applied to any one else. *Bradar* terms are used for one's parent's same-sex siblings and their spouses, who return, refer to their own and their spouse's same-sex sibling's children with *bradar* terms. These relatives are contrasted to ego's parent's cross-sex siblings and their spouses who have *paun* terms, as do ego's own and ego's spouse's cross-sex sibling's children.

Mother's and father's same-sex siblings and their spouses are not significantly distinguished. They have the same terms of reference, save MyZ who is *kainj*. In Hindi the couples FB/FBW, MZ/MZH, FZ/FZH and MB/MBW all have distinct pairs of terms (see Parry 1979: 298, Vatuk 1969b: 98-99). In Kumaoni, there is a core set of 'parents' who share the same terminology. The MZ is like the FBW and the FB is

⁶As Vatuk (1969b) and Krause (1980) say, MZHZ and FZHBW are also included.

like the MZH. Within this category of 'like parents' there is the distinction of senior and junior mothers and fathers. In accordance with this parent-like status, the above persons reciprocate by classifying their own same-sex and their spouses' same-sex siblings' offspring with their own children. Therefore, all those who are a senior or junior parent to ego will refer to ego as son/daughter.⁷

Where an age distinction is made between Me/yZ and Fe/yB there is only one term for parent's cross-sex siblings and their spouses, MB/MBW and FZ/FZH. Here wife-takers and wife-givers are terminologically distinguished. These persons do not have *bradar* but *paun* terms. Where Parry (1979) and Vatuk (1969b) report that sibling's children are classified along matrilineal and patrilineal lines, Kumaoni terminology shows marked differences. In Hindi classification FB, FBW, FZ and FZH use *bhatij/i* and MB, MBW, MZ, MZH use *bhānj/i*. In Kumaoni however, FB, FBW, MZ, MZH use *bhatij/i* or *cyal/celi*; MB, MBW use *bhanj/i*; FZ uses *bhadyā/e* and FZH uses *sāv/sāi*. One's (and one's spouse's) cross-sex sibling's offspring are also given *paun*, that is non *bradar* terms.

The cross-sex sibling's offspring are differentiated both for the female and male speakers. Male ego's ZS/D is *bhanj/i* and ego's spouse uses the same terms of reference, which as HZS/D are *bhanj/i*. Female ego's BS/D are *bhadya/e* but ego's spouse does not apply the same terms but refers to WBS/D by the same terms as WyB/YZ, that is as *sav/sai*. The spouses of any of these nieces and nephews are referred to as *javai* and *bvari*.

Finally, I would like to point out that Vatuk (1969b) reports FZHZ to be FZ, but in Kumaon she would be MZ and MZHZ would be like FZ. Secondly, although FBWB is classified in Kumaon as MB, MBWB is not. When I asked some women how they would classify MBWB they said they would classify him as *bharuā* (pimp) and laughed. Women said, 'he is a distant relative and so we don't think about him'. Brahman men said he was *thulbajyu/kaka* and therefore FB (or MZH).⁸ One Thakur man said that for them MBWB is not important but that Brahmans always extend kin terms to such distant relatives because it may be useful to them to do so. Thirdly, MBW could be FZ.

In the Kumaoni system the category of *saur* (HF/WF) and *sasu* (HM/WM) is much more inclusive than that reported by Parry (1979) and Vatuk (1969b). In their cases, the parent-in-law terms are used exclusively for spouse's father and mother. All of the relatives recorded by Vatuk and Parry under six distinct pairs of terms, are

⁷These terms are quite broadly used. FB/MZH = HBWF, WBWF, WZHF, HZHF, MZHB, FBWB and FBW/MZ = HBWM, WBWM, WZHM, HZHM, MFZD, MMZD, FZHZ, FBWZ.

⁸Krengel (1989: 199) reports that amongst Thakurs to the north of Silora most male informants hesitantly classified MBWB as *mām*, several women classified him as *bhin* and young girls referred to him as *cācā*, the Hindi for FyB.

in Kumaoni subsumed under the single pair of terms of *saur/sasu*. If necessary, collateral in-laws may be qualified by the prefixes of *puṣi/puṣiyā* or *mām/māmiyā* and lateral in-laws by *ṭhul/nan* (see Krause 1980: 172).⁹ In this category no strong distinction is made between wife-taking and wife-giving affines.

Ego's Generation

One's parent's siblings children (cross and parallel cousins) constitute the immediate core members of ego's sibling category. They are all e/yB/Z. The affinal ties and asymmetry of the previous generation dissolve into ties of consanguinity in the subsequent generation (Parry 1979: 297,302). Wife-taker and wife-giver distinctions disappear. Apart from this core of non-agnatic siblings, there is in the Kumaoni terminology schema a large number of other relatives classified as brother and sister. It is the case that all those persons to whom ego refers by a *paun* term have a spouse who is a classificatory sibling and to whom the *bradar* term of brother or sister may be given. These are 'quasi-consanguines' (Vatuk 1969b: 101; Parry 1979: 308).

Included in this category are a) ego's sibling's spouse's sibling's spouse (ZHZH/ZHBW/BWBW/BWZH) and their siblings and b) ego's spouse's sibling's spouses (WZH/WBW/HZH/HBW) and their siblings. In accordance with Vatuk, in Kumaoni ZHBW is Z and ZHBWB/Z are B/Z; BWZH is B and BWZHB/Z are B/Z; WZH is B and WZHB/Z are B/Z and HBW is Z and HBWZ/B are also Z/B. This expresses the situation in which two sisters are given to two brothers. Cases of actual marriage alliances between real (as well as classificatory) sisters and real brothers do exist.

Vatuk (1969b: 101) says that quasi-siblings are those of ego's siblings' spouses' same-sex siblings spouses and their siblings as well as ego's spouse's same-sex sibling's spouse's siblings. In Kumaon however, quasi-sibling terms are also given to those people linked through a cross-sex connection. There are two main consequences of this.

The first consequence is that these classifications negate the unidirectional, hypergamous logic of the former cases. ZHHZ/B(m.s) are not ZH in Kumaon but are classified as brother; ZHHZ is classified as sister and this is the case for both sexes. Secondly, in Kumaon BWBW and BWBWZ are included as sisters and not BW as Vatuk reports, and BWBWB is B. These people are classified as B/Z.

In the category of affines connected via ego's spouse the differences are as follows: in Kumaoni not only is age difference of importance, but the WBW and the WBWZ/B and HZH and HZHB/Z are classified as sister and brother. Vatuk (1969b:

⁹ Among Thakurs near Almora town HFZ/WFZ are classified with HeZ/WeZ and HFZF/WFZH with eB. Since FZ=eZ which is *didi*, so HeZ=HFZ which is *pāṇī* (Krengel 1989).

107) describes the WeBW as enjoying a sexual joking relationship with ego similar to that which occurs between eBW and HyB. This does not occur in Kumaon since here these people are one another's 'siblings'. In Kumaon there is no inferiority implied in the WBW and WBWB terms as there are in Parry's classification of WBW with junior yBW and SW and of Vatuk's classification of WBWB with WB and part of the inferior wife-giving category. Additionally, Vatuk and Parry report an affinal term for HZH/B and Vatuk says HZH is HZ.

The second consequence is that in ego's generation the affine's of one's affines are one's consanguines (see Krause 1980). This is similar to the South Indian classification system (see Dumont 1953: 39, 1983b: 17). Vatuk's assertion that "the *jija* of a *jija* is a *jija* to Ego . . . and the *sala* of a *sala* is a *sala* to Ego" (1969b: 106) does not hold for Kumaon. In Kumaoni ZH/ZH/B are not members of an undifferentiated class of wife-taking superiors and WBW/B are not members of an undifferentiated class of inferior wife-givers as they are in Kangra and parts of Uttar Pradesh. Both are classified as brothers. Therefore:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{ZHBWB} = \text{B (W-G of W-T)} & \text{WZH} = \text{B (W-T of W-G)} \\ \text{ZH/ZH} = \text{B (W-T of W-T)} & \text{WBWB} = \text{B (W-G of W-G)} \end{array}$$

This suggests that Vatuk's idea that WZH is classed as a consanguine because, like ego, he is "a bride-taker in relation to a given bride-giving group" (1969b: 102), does not hold for Kumaon because WBWB is also a brother and he, unlike ego, is a bride-giver in relation to a given group. They stand as brothers because they have taken a woman from, or given a woman to, the same group and apply *paun* terms to members of that group. On this level it is not the threefold opposition of agnates, wife-takers and wife-givers which is important. The opposition is a dyadic one between those who are referred to by *bradar* terms and those referred to by *paun* terms, that is between one's own people, *bradar*, and those whom one has given sisters to or taken wives from, *paun*.

Non-Consanguines and Affines

Those non-consanguines and affines in ego's own generation include ego's sibling's spouse and their siblings (BW, BWZ, BWB; ZH, ZHB, ZHZ) and ego's spouse's siblings (WB, WZ, HB, HZ). As with ego's siblings, age differences are of great importance with regards ego's same generation non-consanguines and affines. The specification of these kinspersons as younger or elder is important as it informs the character of the relationship between the two individuals concerned. Here we see that the wife-taker and wife-giver status is overshadowed by inequalities and status based on age difference (see Krause 1980: 184).

yZH *javai*
yZH *javai*

WeB *jethu*
WeZ *jethau*

yBW *bvari*
yBW *bvari*

HeB *jeth*
HeZ *pauni*

eZH *bhin*
eZH *bhin*
eBW *bhauji*
eBW *bhauji*

WyZ *sai*
WyB *sav*
HyB *dyor*
HyZ *gusyaini*

Therefore the first four relationships are characterised by respect, avoidance and restraint. One's spouse's elder siblings are treated as if they were one's parents-in-law and one's younger sibling's spouses as if they were one's son and daughter-in-law.¹⁰ The latter four relationships are characterised by affectionate familiarity and joking. For example, whenever my landlady's eB visited the house, my landlord's behaviour was restrained and subdued. My landlord's *jethu* enjoys his alcohol. When he came one day to enjoy the meat of a goat sacrificed in his yZH's house, he made no effort to hide his drinking and drunkenness. As a senior he could take such liberties. However, yZH would never have behaved like that in the company of his WeZ. The relationship between WyB and eZH however is quite different. It is an easy-going relationship. The WyB may become a fond and familiar friend (see Madan 1989: 211-212). My landlady's yB was having trouble finding a groom for his daughter. He used to pass by now and then and asked his eZ and eZH for advice about finding a groom and preparing for his daughter's dowry.¹¹ With regards to cross-sex affinal joking relationships, Vatuk's (1969b: 108-109) suggestion that these joking partners are potential sexual partners is valid in Kumaon.

The wife-giver/wife-taker status distinction is superimposed by that of age in greeting behaviour as well. The junior affine should greet his/her senior affine, irrespective of wife-giving or wife-taking status, with respect and deference. Furthermore, the general equality of *paun* is illustrated by the fact that two *samadis* (DHF and SWF) and *samadenis* (DHM and SWM) will greet each other simultaneously. *Samadis* usually greet each other with a *namaskār* or a hand-shake. *Samadenis* bend down to touch each other's feet. However, a *samadeni* will greet her *samadi* with deference, by touching his feet, confirming the gender asymmetry and a female's inferior status.¹² The relationship between co-parents-in-law, I was told, is

¹⁰In fact when I asked for the term for WeZ one man said *sasu* (WM). This is basically how she is conceived of and her address term *nanjyu*, small mother-in-law, illustrates this well. Krengel (1989: 204) reports that WeZ is also referred to as *pauni*, the term for HeZ.

¹¹There is one case of a WyB living with eZ and eZH in Silora. The *sav* resides there and attends the local government college two kilometres away. I know of several other cases where a son has been sent off or invited to live with his eZ and eZH for employment or educational purposes. These sisters usually live in large towns or cities. In the family I lived with, one son received an invitation from his eZH to join him in his shop to earn money, and the other eZH has offered to help his WyB to enter the navy, in which he himself works.

¹²When I asked people who showed respect to whom I was told two different things. Some said that the girl's parents should bow to touch the feet of the boy's parents because "the *javai* (DH) is

distant and respectful. Nevertheless, in actuality the relationship may at times be characterised by a rather sharp, peppery joking. This starts with the wedding when a couple of amusing and insulting figurines of the bride's mother- and father-in-law-to-be are sent with the bride, packed in her trunk, to her in-law's house. These figures are made of brown *lāru* (sweetmeat) and depict the face of the *samadi/samadeni*. I saw one *samadeni* made up wearing a *bindī* on her forehead and a nose ring, but with a cigarette in her mouth. This is insulting and risqué because, as the saying goes, 'women do not smoke'. A woman who smokes (at least in public) is shameless. I was told that more 'joking' is put on the bride's future *sasu*. The *samadeni's* figurine was not so outrageous. He had a big curly, bushy moustache and a *bīḍī* (indian cigarette) in his mouth. Just as the bride's house send these to her new *saur* and *sasu*, so too her parents will receive figurines from the groom's house. They are sent "so that the *samadi* and *samadeni* people will laugh." The figurines are made by the bride/groom's senior kinswomen.

There is another context in which the *samadeni* is the target of joking and embarrassment. The night the *barat* leave to collect the bride, the women of the groom's village gather together in the groom's house to hold an all-night party called *jāgaran*. A *jagaran* is, in this case, when women stay up all night singing and dancing and an occasion also known as *ratyai*. Much singing and dancing occurs, as does the joking and suggestive sexual play-acting and teasing. Invariably one woman will dress up as a man and do an amusing sketch. At one *jagaran* I attended the main performer was a middle-aged woman: at one point in the evening she took off her saree to reveal a pair of underpants into which she had stuffed a light bulb. She then proceeded to dance around the room singing the chorus of a popular Hindi film song, 'I am a disco dancer', her pelvis gyrating, as she shuffled towards a seated visitor, the mother of the groom's eBW, a *samadeni*. Amidst the laughter and excitement, this affinal woman was the focus of sexual jokes and was made to suffer much embarrassment.

The terms for siblings' spouses are similar to those reported elsewhere. For example, ego's yBW is classified with SW (see Parry 1979; Krause 1980). The terms for e/yZH are extended to all ZHB. A female extends eBW/yBW terms of reference to all BWZ. However, a male does not extend the terms for BW to BWZ. He refers to her as WZ. These all suggest that two brothers can marry two sisters, real or classificatory. However there is a latent alternative which is thrown into light by the two kinds of relations of ZHZ(m.s) and BWB(f.s). We see that ZHZ(m.s) is also classified with WZ and BWZ, and that BWB(f.s) is classified with ZH/ZHB. These suggest that ZH could be, or is, WB and that BW could be HZ. Here one's wife-giver

like a *purohit* to us." However, I also heard it said that the wife-takers should bow to touch the feet of the wife-givers because "givers are big, takers are small" (*dyāṇi bar ch, lyaṇni choṭ ch*).

becomes a wife-taker and vice-versa. It is here that the unidirectional flow of women ceases and the direction is reversed.

Vatuk (1969b: 106) points out the absence of reciprocal terms for BWB(f.s) and ZHZ(m.s) in the Hindi terminology system. However, as we have seen, such terms do exist in the Kumaoni system. The BWB(f.s) are *bhin/javai* and the ZHZ(m.s) are *jethau/sai*. We can see here that terminologically and conceptually BWB=ZH and ZHZ=WZ. As Vatuk notes, in Kumaon there is a joking relationship between BWB and ZHZ but only in the case where BWB is the senior and ZHZ is the junior. As we have seen, ZHZ as *jethau* (WeZ) and BWB as *javai* (yZH) have a relation characterised by distance and restraint. When ZHZ is *sai* (WyZ) and BWB is *bhin* (eZH) they enjoy a joking relationship. The type of sexual joking which may pass between these two kin is indeed similar, as Vatuk reports, to that which occurs between HyB and eBW and ZH and WZ (1969b: 107), and in fact these are also acceptable marriage partners. In Kumaon WyZ and eZH may become marriage partners. Such cases are known where a man has married his deceased wife's real (and classificatory) younger sister as his second wife. In addition, the practice of levirate in which a man assumes his deceased elder brother's wife as his own, was once practiced.

In Kumaon ZHZ as WyZ is not an unmarriageable woman; she is not "an ineligible female of another kind: a woman who cannot be taken because she is of the group to which one gives and must continue to give" (Vatuk 1969b: 107). For example, ego's yB could marry ZHZ. In this case the familiar and joking relationship between ego as BWB (*bhin*) and ZHZ (*sai*) would transform into the distant and avoidance relationship which exists between HeB (*jeth*) and yBW (*bvari*).¹³ The Kumaoni terminological system does not repudiate sister-exchange. In fact it directly suggests that such a union is possible. Where in Meerut the possibility of sister-exchange and hence ZHZ/BWB marriage is "hinted at elliptically in the context of stereotyped joking" (Vatuk 1969b: 109), in Kumaon the possibility is not hinted at, it is stated and made a reality. One fifth (21 percent) of all marriages recorded were alliances in which the spouses were related to each other as ZHZ/BWB.

A basic point is that ego's affine's siblings are wives/husbands and non-siblings, and that ego's affine's spouses are siblings. In equating BWZ=WZ=ZHZ(m.s) these females are identified with, and conceived of as, potential wives of male ego's house, agnatic group and indeed of his village of

¹³This is directly implied in western Nepal where ZHZ=BW(m.s) and BWB=HB(m.s) (Krause 1980: 180). With or without such an alliance BW=WZ and HB=ZH. In the case of BWB as yZH (*javai*) and ZHZ as WeZ (*jethau*), who have a relationship of avoidance and distance, marriage seems unlikely. However, if it were to occur, role and relationship reversals would also occur. *Jethau* would become eBW (*bhauji*) and *javai* would become HyB (*dyor*) and would enjoy a joking relationship.

'brothers'. These women, like wives, are all affinal; they can be brought into the group through marriage. No distinction is made between the sisters of wife-takers and those of wife-givers. All are actual or potential wives. From a man's point of view, these females are opposed, both conceptually and in behaviour, to sisters. For a man his male affines (ZH/B, DH/F, WB) are actual or potential immediate wife-takers and wife-givers, and are conceptually opposed to all other males who are 'brothers'. A woman makes no distinction between her husband's house's wife-takers and wife-givers. His male affines (HZH, HBWB) are her 'brothers'. For a woman, the equation of BWB=ZH=HB suggests that her immediate male affines are conceptually opposed to her 'brothers'. They are all 'husbands' and takers of sisters. All those women who stand as wives to her conjugal place are her sisters. For a woman sisters (Z, HBW) are opposed to non-sisters (HZ).

In the above I have emphasised that in ego's own generation there is no strong distinction between wife-givers and wife-takers, and that both are part of the broader category of *paun*. I have also explained that wife-takers can become wife-givers and vice versa, and therefore ego's *paun* are his equals from whom he takes and to whom he gives women. However there are certain aspects of the terminological schema which suggest hypergamous tendencies.

In Kumaon the assimilation of different generations into one term occurs in the classification of wife-givers and wife-takers. Wife-takers and wife-givers are separated and distinguished vertically. For example the term for FZH and eZH is the same (*bhin*); yZH and DH terms are one and the same (*javai*); and the term for WyB and WBS is the same (*sav*). These suggest that a) the wife-takers of ego's own, -1 and +1 generations should remain the same and that the direction of marriage should not be reversed, and b) that the wife-givers of ego's own and -1 generation should remain the same and that the direction of marriage should not be reversed. In the terminology of FZH/eZH/yZH/DH and WyB/WBS we have prime representatives of the opposing categories of wife-taker and wife-giver and this division is perpetuated on a household level.

The assimilation of FZH and eZH is paralleled among Thakurs with the assimilation of the term for eZ and FZ in one term, *didi* (see Krengel 1989). This highlights the fact that the FZ and eZ are conceptually equal kinds of women, and deserve the same treatment and respect, and that the various gift-giving and other obligations are transmitted from a father to his son.¹⁴

We see an inter-generational identification of wife's brother's sibling's offspring with wife's younger siblings. Therefore just WyB=WBS, so too WyZ=WBD. Both WyZ and WBD are 'wives' as opposed to the category of sisters;

¹⁴There seems to be another such assimilation: FZ is referred to as *bubu* as is FFZ.

they are affines who can be transformed into an agnate's wife and produce agnates. All affine's sisters (WZ, WBD, ZHZ, BWZ) are 'wives' and all affines wives are sisters.

Terms of Address

Kumaoni kin terms of reference are in the main also used as terms of address.

However, as is standard in North India, a junior kinsperson may be addressed by their first name or the kinship term. In general senior kinspersons may be addressed by the kin term, or a slight variation of that term, suffixed by the honorific term *jyū*.

Therefore father is *bājyū*, eB *dājyū*, eZH *bhinjyū*, HeB is *jārjyū*, HeZ is *nanjyū*, HM is *jyū*, HF is *bubjyū*, and WF *saurjyū*. The only senior kin not to be so addressed are M, eZ, FZ, MB, MBW, FyB and MyZH and their wives, and of course ego's grandparents. I suggest that those kin who are addressed with *jyū* have a somewhat distant, restrained or more authoritarian relationship with ego whereas those which do not require *jyū* enjoy a more affectionate and intimate relationship with ego.

One also finds that in some contexts the exact kin term is not adhered to. For example, my landlady's DH and his yZ, who was only about 10 years old, visited the house. The DHyZ addressed her eBWZs as *bhauji* but addressed her eBWM/F not with the address terms for *saur* and *sasu*, but as *am* and *bubu*, thereby making what in fact was a relationship across two generations into one which crossed three generations. I was not aware of cases in which address terms were consistently 'wrongly' used as Vatuk (1982a) has shown so well.

To summarise, the Kumaoni terminological system articulates asymmetry and hypergamy but it also, at least conceptually, displays symmetry and sister exchange. In ego's generation the affines of one's affines are one's consanguines. This supports or is supported by villagers' statements that "we marry our equals." My data do not confirm the importance of a rule forbidding the exchange of women between wife-givers and wife-takers (cf. Vatuk 1969b). In the Kumaoni system it is not the case that wife-takers and wife-taker's wife-takers, and so on, are a disapproved source of wives for one's own males. The notion of a conceptual schema consisting of "a series of hierarchically ordered kin groups, with one's own group in the centre, from which girls go up and to which girls come up from 'below'" (Vatuk 1969b: 110), along with the prohibition of any second marriage reversing the flow, is not applicable to the Kumaoni system. The exchange of women does occur and so wife-takers become wife-givers and vice versa. What is important is not the conceptual division between wife-takers and wife-givers and agnates but the distinction between agnates and affines.

Any separation and distinction of wife-takers and wife-givers is expressed vertically across generations. In Kumaoni terminology the gender of the speaker is

important especially regarding ego's own and first descending generation kin. In addition we find that age distinctions in ego's own and +1 generations are of prime importance. Differences between wife-takers and wife-givers are expressed in ritual situations and prestations, but age status is of great importance in everyday life and informs the relationship irrespective of wife-taking and wife-giving status.

6.3 Marriage Patterns

6.3.i Rules, Prohibitions and Principles

Caste Endogamy

Marriage must occur within one's own caste. Caste endogamy is strongly adhered to. Failure to do so results in being ostracised and outcast. There is one such case in Silora. The woman concerned had been married to a Brahman man. However, when the marriage broke down, she returned to her natal village and married a Thakur man.

Gotra and Lineage Exogamy and the Sapinda Rule

A person is prohibited from marrying within his or her own *gotra* (clan, a patrilineal category named by reference to a mythic sage) or lineage. I was told by some people that marriage with anyone from one's father's line up to the seventh generation, and up to three generations on one's mother's side is prohibited (see Joshi 1929: 132). This seems to mirror the *sapinda* rule, though the term *sapinda* was not used locally and the rule is difficult to enforce. I was told that ego cannot marry into his/her M, MM, MMM, FM, FFM or FMM's lines. That is, one cannot marry with anyone from one's own, one's parent's or one's grandparent's *makots*. However, I think this represents an ideal or theoretical view, for I am not sure if people actually remember the distant kin of MM's natal kin or of their grandparent's *makots*. There are no exchange relations with them and so they may be easily forgotten. I was told that the bride or groom's MMB people are not invited to the wedding whereas those who must be invited include the following: the bride or groom's FZ, FFZ, FMB, FFMB, Z¹⁵, FBW *mait* people, BW *mait* people¹⁶, and MB people. However, if the mother's *makot* and *sauras* are one and the same village, then those *bur makot* (MMB) people will be given a slightly special invitation. They will not receive a villager's invitation just for

¹⁵Includes FBD people.

¹⁶Includes FBSW *mait* people.

the last day, but perhaps for two to three days. My landlady's mother's *mait* is Silora and her MB people live in Silora: at the wedding of her son or daughter, her full/real MB's offspring would be invited as quasi-*pauns*. However, the rest of her MB's lineage people, who are more distant relatives, would be given a normal village, *bradar* invitation.

Marriage with full parallel and cross-cousins is prohibited. The terminology indicates this. These people are ego's consanguines and their spouses are affines, *bvari* and *javai*. Marriage to FBS/D is prohibited since they are one's co-lineage and *gotra* members, and to MZS/D because MZ is 'like a mother'. At the same time, as one man told me, brothers share the same milk and so their offspring cannot marry each other. This explanation given in terms of the sharing of milk is applied to all parent s'siblings and their offspring. Brothers and sisters share the same milk connection, and through them so do their offspring. Cousins cannot intermarry because they share milk, if not blood. However, if their mothers are different women, where does this shared milk come from? It comes on A's side from the FM and on B's side from the MM. A's FM and B's MM is the same woman.

A man shares milk with his sister because of their mother, and shares milk with his sister's children due to that maternal milk link which the sister passes on. So brothers and sisters share milk through sharing the same mother, and the sister passes on this milk substance to her children, and so MB and ZD/S share milk reckoned back to the MM. Similarly, the alternative case is the same in which FZ shares milk with F through FM, and so FZ and BS/D have a milk link reckoned back to the FM. In the same way, FZD/S and MBD/S also share milk through the FM/MM. Just as brother and sister share milk, so do brothers. Therefore, FB and BD/S share milk as do FBS/Ds as reckoned back to the FM. The same holds for MZ and ZD/D and MZS/Ds. The milk relationship seems to span three generations or so (see Krause 1980: 182-183). As we have seen, in theory ego cannot marry his MMB's (or MMZ's) offspring. Though these relatives may have been forgotten, the principle still stands and is reflected in the assertion that ego cannot marry his FFZ offspring either.

Though these kin are affines they share a milk relationship and are therefore consanguines. It is their consanguineal and not their affinal nature which is culturally emphasised. For this reason ego does not marry his cross-cousins. However, classificatory parallel and cross-cousins do not share any substance and their marriage is permitted.¹⁷ This may, of course, lead to some terminological discrepancies. For

¹⁷For example, ego may marry MBWBS/D, MBWZS/D; MZHBS/D, MZHZS/D; FZHBS/D, FZHZS/D; FBWBS/D, FBWZS/D). Ego's FBSS and FZSS can marry ego's MBSD and MZSD. Ego's brother's offspring may marry his WBS/D. At the same time, one woman said that her conjugal *paravar* kin, that is, people who all observe *sutak* together for 10 days, should not marry her own close natal kin. Those with whom *sutak* is not observed may marry her close *mait* kin. Perhaps

example, there is one village woman for whom Silora is simultaneously her *sauras* and *makot*. Her MZ is one of the cases of village endogamy. Her MZS is her husband's lineage brother (HFFBSS). This woman's MZ stands as her husband's F'BW'. Her husband is her MZH'BS'. Therefore this lady is married to her MZ'S' and she herself is her husband's classificatory MZD.¹⁸ The kin terms for a MZ and FBW are *thulija/kainj/kaki* and for ZD and HBS the terms are *celi/cyal*. So WMZ=FBW (or WMZH=FB). The young bride and groom therefore were, prior to marriage, classificatory cousins. The MZ/FBW continued to call her ZD *celi* (and not *bvari*), and her HBS *cyal* (and not *javai*).¹⁹

Sister-Exchange Marriages

There is no rule prohibiting such alliances. However, people emphasise that exchange marriages between two sets of full siblings is undesirable. The reason given does not refer to the fact that such a marriage would reverse the marriage direction nor that it would result in confusion over wife-giving and wife-taking status. Such alliances are undesirable because the two women involved, the two sisters exchanged, would fight and insult each other. This is because there would be tension and conflict over their respective roles as BW and HZ in their conjugal and natal homes. X's *mait* would be Y's *sauras* and vice versa. Therefore in her *mait* X would be HZ to Y who would be X's BW. The situation reverses when Y is in her own *mait* where it is her turn to be HZ to X who is BW. The same reason is given for avoiding an alliance in which a man's SWB marries a D or BD. Therefore we see that sister exchange marriages are allowed but that there is a preference for these marriages to be made between sibling sets, when at least one is a set of classificatory siblings.

Village Exogamy and Regional Distribution of Affines

The general principle is that wives must come from another village. It is not good for affines to live in close proximity. It would seem that in the past women came from up to one day's walk away. Some were only eight kilometres away, others 25. I would imagine that the Brahman marriage radius is slightly larger than the Thakur one, since

there is a preference being expressed that ego's lineage brothers and sisters should not marry his close *makot* kin.

¹⁸I have calculated this in the following way: male ego's wife is his FFBSSWZD, which means she is his father's lineage brother's wife's sister's daughter (FBWZD). Since FBWZ=MZ, then FBWZD=MZD.

¹⁹The same would happen with classificatory cross-cousin marriage. For example, female ego marries her FBWBS ('MBS') and male ego marries his FZHBD ('FZD'). In this case the female ego's FB and FBW, for whom she is D, will refer to her husband as *sav* (WBS) and *bhadya* (BS) respectively. Neither will refer to him as *javai* (DH). She herself will be referred to as D and not as *bvari* (BSW, WBSW).

Brahmans are a minority in the region, which is a predominantly Rajput area. Nowadays, of course, people rarely go by foot. Since Silora is beside a road, buses, Maruti vans, jeeps and taxis may be hired for the wedding procession. This means that they may be able to marry further afield, but often they do not do so; the villages are still within a day's walk away, but people nevertheless will use public and private transport for such occasions.

Due to the principles of caste endogamy, village and *gotra* exogamy, marriage partners must be found from outside groups. However, the outside is finite and excludes Desis, plains people. Silora Brahmans will not marry *desi* Brahmans. I was told this was because "we don't know their [the plains people's] customs, habits or anything about them."

There are a few cases of village endogamy. As far as I know there are six (recent) cases. Five are cases of alliances between the local Silora Pantis and Upadhyays and the other between the Upadhyays and the Kargetis. Of the five Pant-Upadhyay alliances, two Pant women were given, and three Upadhyay women were given. I am not quite sure why these endogamous alliances occurred. One older man said to me: "One generation ago, people did not go far, they married nearby. Nowadays the dowry system is increasing. It was not so two or three decades ago." These, I think, are exceptions. In general, people told me that it is not good to marry within the village because affines should live separately from one another.

6.3.ii The Ideology of Isogamous Marriages and the Hierarchical Consequences

When I asked people about who they make marriage alliances with, the most frequent statement was "we marry people like us" and "we marry our equals." Equality seems to be a necessary precondition for marriage. What exactly does this equality entail?

When a family looks for a spouse for their son or daughter they take many things into consideration. Firstly, the two families who are to be joined through marriage should be of equal ritual status. The spouse must be a Brahman. As co-caste members their general purity is assumed to be broadly equal. In addition, s/he must be the right kind of Brahman. People distinguish between 'small' and 'big' Brahmans. 'Small' Brahmans plough the land whereas 'big' Brahmans, that is Brahmans of priestly status, do not. Since Silora Brahmans are ploughing Brahmans they will marry their own kind of Brahman, that is other 'small' Brahmans.²⁰ The ancestral pedigree and moral quality of the prospective spouse's family is

²⁰However, this is a matter of emphasis. There seem to be slight differences in what the younger and the older generations consider to be important in finding marriage partners for their children. Several young men I spoke to said that their considerations would be mainly economic, though the spouse would have to be a Brahman: one young man said if he were looking for a husband for his daughter he would not worry about whether the son-in-law was a ploughing Brahman or not.

investigated. From the household upwards it must be confirmed that the marrying parties are, on all levels, of equal purity. It is said that a girl will marry into the same kind of house from which she comes. If a boy's mother (or grandmother) was a *dhati* then he will marry a girl who also comes from similarly tainted parentage.²¹

Ritual equality can be gauged by whom one can reciprocally smoke and eat with. I was told "I can eat from people to whom I can be an affine." Therefore non *saf-pak* people would not marry *saf-pak* people. This is reflected in attitudes towards smoking too. In this quotation we find the distinction being made between different kinds of Brahmans, as well as castes:

Those with whom marriage can occur, we can smoke with them from the same *cilam*. My relatives and my agnates will smoke from my *cilam*; we are *barabar*. *Purohits*, Thakurs and Harijans will smoke from the *hukka* but without the *cilam*.

However, the above are not the only considerations; economic considerations are also important. When looking for a groom for one's daughter, not only is his moral and ancestral make-up important, but so is his employment situation and prospects. In fact, in some cases, economic status overrides concern for the family's history and pedigree. If the alliance is favourable and prestigious, other 'inconveniences' can be ignored. One man said to me:

In every section there are faults and defects, but when in favour of the wife-givers these defects will be ignored, they will disappear in favour of considerations of economic status and power.

The opposite may be the case for the wife-takers. Horoscopes are usually consulted and compared when considering a prospective groom or bride. However, these can also be manipulated according to the party's interests. Wife-takers will often refuse a woman, ostensibly because the horoscopes 'do not match'. This is rarely the real reason, but serves as an inoffensive excuse for other, more fundamental disappointments.

Although some marriages may be made between families of slightly different economic positions, most people stress the importance of marrying with people of one's own economic standing. Therefore the second main consideration is that the two families who are to be joined through marriage should be of equal economic status, or of equal 'standing' (Pocock 1972: 52). Approximate economic 'sameness' is, among other things a practical concern. One man told me that he would not marry his daughter to a rich family because he would not be able to satisfy the required level of gifting which rich people would expect. The gift-exchange process

²¹When there is a case of adultery and the woman involved came from a non *saf-pak* family other village women will invariably say, "well, her mother was like that. What do you expect?". The fact is, this woman's own mother-in-law was probably also 'like that'.

would be too demanding or impossible. Therefore he will marry his daughter to people who are on the same economic level as he is. On the other side, wife-takers do not necessarily want to marry their son to a girl from a poor household for there is no direct economic interest in doing so. In cases of a man's second marriage, however, a girl from a poor house is likely to be an appropriate partner. A poor family may not be able to marry their daughter 'well'. A large dowry is not usually demanded if this is the groom's second marriage, especially if he has a child or children from his first marriage. In this way, the wife-givers are able to marry their daughter into a 'good house' (better than their own) without undue expense. However, marrying one's virgin daughter to a widower with children is regarded as a lowly thing to do and people say of the bride, "poor thing, she must be from a poor house." There is also an underlying suggestion that, as in the past, money is still given to the girl's family.

To summarise, we see that the stated ideology of marrying equals, those of one's own class and rank, refers to marrying those who are equals in standing and ritual status. People make thorough enquiries to find the most appropriate affines since, as one man said, "after marriage we are relations for life."

In the expressed ideology of isogamous marriage preferences equality is a precondition for marriage. However, status consequences do result from such marriages. Although relatively mild, status differences exist between immediate wife-takers and wife-givers and are expressed in various ritual contexts and through affinal prestations which are discussed below. It would appear that the superiority of the groom's people is a consequence of marriage (Gray 1980; Bennett 1983: 145,147). Therefore, hypergamy, rather than being a marriage rule, is a principle which indicates "the status consequences of marriage and the structure of relations between those kin connected by marriage" (Gray 1980: 16).²²

Furthermore, the status differentiation resulting from marriage is confined to the household of an in-marrying woman's siblings and parents and to the households of the out-marrying woman's husband's siblings and parents. The bride's father washes the groom's feet at *dhuiarag* and the bride's parents worship the bridal couple

²²Gray argues that this situation can only be understood in relation to indigenous ideas about women and gifts. He concludes that the superiority of the groom and his kin, and the transformation of a non-kin relationship of equality into a kin relationship of inequality are realised due to "the divinity of the *celibeti* who is the bride and the fact that she is offered as a *dan* gift." (Gray 1980: 21). Thereafter, as the *celibeti* has the right to be worshipped, so upon marriage this right extends "through kinship contagion" to her husband and his parents and her children (Gray 1980: 22). This idea of kinship contagion also works the other way. Just as a wife is an inferior kind of female so her natal kin are inferior people (see Gray 1980: 17). Bennett gives a similar argument when she says that hypergamy is associated with the sacredness of consanguineal women, and that the 'filifocal model' deeply affects affinal relations (1983: 145). I find these arguments very convincing and applicable to Silora where similar ideas are held about daughters and sisters. However, I shall not develop this discussion due to lack of space and because it would detract from the main theme of this thesis.

during the wedding. The bride's father offers his daughter in *kanyā dān* to the groom. If the status consequences of a marriage are not to be confused or destroyed, a house should not receive a woman in *kanya dan* from people to whom it has previously offered such a gift. It is because of these status consequences of marriage between two households that marriages tend not to be reversed at the household level (see Gray 1980: 23-24). We will see that these account for only four percent of all alliances recorded. Men must look beyond the limits of their immediate wife-taking affines to find a wife (see Gray 1980: 13).

These status differences do spread, to a lesser degree, to the households of the out-marrying woman's husband's father's brothers. At *duragun* time, the bride's uncles will give one *parat* each to the groom's people. They will also receive coconuts from the groom's father when the *barat* leaves. Whenever a brother's immediate wife-takers visit the village, ego will offer hospitality and give a small gift of money to the affine on his departure. The wife-giver/wife-taker distinction is still to some degree relevant at this level since only eight to nine percent of marriages made across these close agnatic kin ties actually reverse the marriage direction.

Immediate wife-takers and wife-givers' lineages are not affected by the status consequences of marriages made by more distant patrilineal kin. This means that ego may return a woman from his own lineage, or village sub-caste, to his immediate wife-givers without affecting his status as a wife-taker. Therefore, on the lineage and local sub-caste levels, there are no fixed categories of wife-taking and wife-giving people and marriage direction reversals occur. The status consequences of marriage which are significant and relevant on a household level are negated at larger social levels. Other villages and localised sub-castes are not rigorously differentiated or ranked as wife-takers or wife-givers, but represent affinal opposites (Krengel 1989: 216), constituting a category of equal status outsiders from whom and to whom women are received and given. They are *paun*.

6.3.iii Marriage Alliance Statistics

I recorded 141 marriage alliances from one of the Upadhyay lineages (Brahman). The marriage alliances recorded give details of the origin and destination of in-marrying and out-marrying women over five generations. There are two or three alliances which remain somewhat uncertain and I am aware that I was perhaps not told of all alliances made. Thus, I do not claim that the figures I present are any more than estimates.

Of 141 recorded marriage connections, 66 percent involve repetition of some kind, including intermarriage with the same village (though with different sub-castes within that village) and intermarriage with the same localised sub-caste. I am concerned primarily with the latter cases. Of all marriage alliances recorded, 56

percent involve repeated marriages with localised sub-caste clusters.²³ Of the total, 21 percent constitute unidirectional repetitions. These include both same-generation (i.e. in which the marriage connection was that of 'eZHB' and 'BWyZ') and inter-generational repetitions. The Upadhyay lineage in question stands as wife-takers to six localised sub-caste groups and as wife-givers to seven localised sub-caste clusters. A further 35 percent are of repeated alliances which reverse the wife-giving and wife-taking directions. These include both same generation and inter-generational reversals. Of these, 21 percent are same-generation reversals of marriage direction. In these cases, the marriage connection is that of 'BWB' and 'ZHZ'. These figures show that both unidirectional and sister-exchange marriages occur.

Previously, we saw that people gave economic standing, ancestral pedigree and moral standing of future affines as the main grounds for choosing a spouse. However, despite these expressed concerns, the figures below show that a large number of marriages are established with people with whom previous kinship links exist. This is supported by one man's response to my questioning about how one could be sure the prospective spouse's people were telling the truth about their standing and status. He said: "We choose our marriage partners from close relatives' relatives so that we can find out about them and their background." Marrying people with whom prior kinship links exist is perhaps also preferable because the criterion of equality is most easily guaranteed by precedent. People also prefer to repeat previous marriage ties in the case of a man's second marriage. A widower will often marry a real or classificatory sister of his deceased wife as his second wife. This I was told is good because visiting and gift-exchange (*āṇ-jāṇ* and *liṇ-din*) with the original affines continues and the kinship link is not broken.

Connections are made with people with whom ego's own lineage and local sub-caste members have previously married. Of all recorded marriages, 15 percent involve repetitions of alliances made by immediate household members.²⁴ They can be broken down as follows: 10 percent are alliances in which same-sex siblings marry people from the same sub-caste who are full/classificatory siblings; four percent involve exchange marriages between a full brother-sister pair marrying a full/classificatory brother-sister pair; one percent are marriages where a father and a son have taken wives from the same sub-caste. Another 41 percent however do not involve repetitions of marriages made by immediate family-household members. The figures can be further broken down as follows. Eighteen percent involve repetitions by male ego and his sister of marriages made by ego's own FB/Z and FBS/D. The

²³The marriage repetition figures do not include three cases of village endogamy.

²⁴Immediate family here means ego's real brother, sister, mother and father. 'Real' siblings are those who share a common father.

cases show alliances where wives and married daughters-sisters (taken and given women) have come from, or have gone to, the same sub-caste, and indicate the frequency of these repetitions: FBW & Z (six); FBD & Z (six); FBD & W (two); FBSW & Z (two); FBSW & W (four); FZ & Z (four); and two cases for FZ & W(x2).²⁵ Finally, 23 percent involve repetitions of marriages made by more distant kin within ego's lineage.

In general the tendency is not to repeat marriages made by one's own household members. If alliances are renewed, they tend to be made in the same direction. This, at the same time, permits the return of women from one's own or other local lineages to one's own wife-givers. As we move beyond the household level we find that repetitions increase and reversals of the direction of marriage occur more frequently. Up to one third of intermarriages are made across immediate family and close agnatic kin ties (FB/Z and FB's offspring). Of this 33-34 percent, 13 percent actually include marriage direction reversals. As we move beyond to more distant *paravar* kinsmen, and indeed local sub-caste degree, we find that marriage repetitions are high, and that direction reversals do occur.

To summarise, we find that in some marriages wife-givers and wife-takers are separate, and in others they merge. The figures show that a fifth (21 percent) of all recorded alliances involve unidirectional marriage repetitions with the same local sub-castes (see Vatuk 1969b: 112). The same amount, 21 percent, consists of same generation 'sister' exchange marriages. Exchange marriages occur between a full sibling pair and a pair related as classificatory siblings as well as between two classificatory sibling pairs. Overall, a third (35 percent) include intermarriages in which both same-generation and cross-generation marriage reversals occur. These figures demonstrate that the principle that women should flow in one direction is not the only principle in this village. Though direct exchanges between households are avoided, a few cases do exist. There is no strict prohibition rule against returning one's own sister or daughter to those who have given a wife. Actual marriage cases show that giving women from one's own lineage back to the wife-givers is tolerated. It is often, for example, ego's classificatory (lineage or village sub-caste) sister who is supplied to the wife-givers. In this way, ego's household is able to maintain its rank as wife-taker. The individual household connection is not necessarily maintained but an alliance with a particular localised lineage/sub-caste is. On the lineage level, the same direction of marriage is not maintained.

²⁵W(x2)' means where two full siblings from FZ's (conjugal) sub-caste were taken as wives for two full brothers.

6.4 Affinal Relations and Gift-Exchange

All affines are entitled to receive gifts on their departure after a visit to their immediate wife-givers or wife-takers. However, wife-takers and wife-givers are distinguished by the kinds of gifts they receive. The main distinction is between those who receive ritual gifts of money and those who receive coconuts. I shall illustrate this by considering the kinds of gifts offered by wife-givers and wife-takers at the wedding of their affine's children. We shall see that the wife-giving and wife-taking affine's contributions are almost identical.

Everyone who is invited by the bride's side must give a present of some kind. These gifts will be added to and included in the *daij* (dowry). We have seen that village people may offer *tika* (small gifts of money) and *paravar* kin will offer *tika* and/or *thalis* to a girl at her wedding. The basic gift which visitors from outside, that is *paun*, offer is a *thali* and a *dhoti*. However, close *paun*, that is the bride's household's immediate wife-giving and wife-taking affines, will give more substantial gifts. A large piece of *bartan* is often given as well as, or in place of, the *thali*. Mirrors, clocks, shiny metal tea-sets and even radios have been offered by the FZ and the MB. There is no sharp distinction between the gifts offered by the wife-taking and wife-giving affines (cf. Parry 1979: 304).

At the wedding of a *bhanji* (ZD) the *mam* (MB) must give a good gift. He may give a *gāgari* (large water pitcher), some money and a saree or *dhoti*. He can give a set of clothes, gold jewels, a clock or a cow. It was sometimes the case that the *mam* was not the most generous gift-giver. However, the *mam* cannot expect, at his own daughter's wedding, to receive the same in return from his ZH as he gave for his ZD's wedding. He should at least give as much as his ZH has given for his own daughter's wedding. Sometimes the gifts given and received are carefully calculated. One woman told me the following:

Our HyZ gave our daughter a *thali* at her wedding, but gave my HyBD a watch, sewing machine, saree and so on. So when we went to her daughter's wedding (HyZD) we gave a *thali*. You give as you have been given.²⁶

The *mam's* gift is placed with all the other gifts. I was told that nobody's gift is special or different. The *mam's* role in Silora is underplayed. He is very much a background figure and does not play a crucial role in the wedding ceremonies. One woman offered a comparison to the position of the MB in a plain's wedding.

²⁶In this case ego's husband is the half brother of HyZ. The HyB is the full brother of the *gusyaini*, and therefore the full *mam* of the HyZD. This may be the reason for the diminished gift, though I am not certain of this.

Here in the hills we will invite *mam* to the wedding and he will offer gold jewels, or some saree or outfit. In the plains if the *mam* doesn't give one *lākh* (a hundred thousand) rupees the marriage cannot go ahead!

The bride's eZ and FZ will give her a *dhoti*, a large pot or another large item and some money. Though they are gifts from the eZH and FZH too, they are usually referred to as coming from *didi* or *bu*. The MZ, if she is invited, will give a modest gift. At one marriage, where the bride's father had died before she was born, the MZ offered her ZD a piece of gold jewellery. However, this is exceptional and not a fact to be publicised. When the *paun* leave, the bride's father will offer them either a coconut and a *dhoti* or money and a *dhoti*, depending on their status as wife-givers or wife-takers..

People who are invited by the groom's side do not have to give any presents. Those immediate relatives who do give something will offer money. The *mam* will, for example, give his *bhanj* (ZS) a *tika* of Rs.51. If there are several maternal uncles then one may go to the wedding on behalf of all taking with him his brother's gifts to offer in their absence. I noticed this in particular where the maternal uncles were not full siblings of the groom's mother. One family declined an invitation to go to their *bhanj*'s wedding which was to take place in Dehra Dun: to outsiders they made the excuse that there were only three people in the house and that there was a buffalo to look after. Amongst themselves they complained of how it was just too expensive to attend since there were bus fares to pay and gifts they would have to give to all of their *bhanjs*, *bhanjis* and their children. The *mam* and *mami* will be given a coconut and a *dhoti* in return when they depart.

From his eZ and FZ a boy will receive *tika*. If, for example, the FZ gives a *tika* of Rs.11, then when she leaves she must be given double the amount of her original gift. Though this is the ideal, sometimes people do not actually give double: if FZ gives a *tika* of Rs.20 then she will be given the Rs.20 plus a small increment of five rupees. One person called this increment *dachin*. She will also receive a *dhoti*. On a son's wedding, parents will give married daughters a set of clothes (a *dhoti* and blouse material), but if they say they would like a *thali* or *parat* as well, then an item will be removed from the dowry which comes with their younger brother's new wife and will be given to them with the *dhoti*. If one can afford it, it is also preferable to give new sets of clothing to one's daughter's and sister's small children.

At a girl's wedding the immediate wife-takers will receive *dhoti*, money and clothing for children from the bride's father. The wife-givers will be given a *dhoti* and a coconut. The bride's FBs will also give gifts to the visiting guests. They will give *dhotis* and money to their visiting *celibetis*. One family complained how expensive their HBD's wedding was for them. They themselves spent Rs.1,000 on gifts for *paun*. At a boy's wedding, those guests who stand as direct wife-givers to the

house will give *tika* and will receive a *dhoti* and a coconut. Those who stand as immediate wife-takers of the family will receive a *dhoti* and twice the amount of money they gave.

Finally, I would like to point out that the immediate affines of one's wife-givers are, in ritual contexts, treated as wife-givers and the affines of one's wife-takers are treated as wife-takers. At the end of the wedding, the groom's father gives a coconut to all of his wife-giver's *paun* who contributed to the dowry. They are thereby subsumed in the category of wife-givers. The same occurs in the engagement, when the groom's MB and his eBWF receive a gift of money along with the groom's father.

In both cases of the girl and boy's wedding, we see that there is no significant difference between the quality and quantity of gifts given at a wedding by both wife-giving and wife-taking affines. In addition, all affines receive gifts. The difference is expressed in the kind of gifts they will receive on departure.²⁷

The unidirectional flow of money from wife-givers to wife-takers and of coconuts from wife-takers to wife-givers must be maintained. This distinction persists over time and across the generations. To accept money from any of one's *bhin* or *javai* people to whom one has given *kanya dan*, would be tantamount to selling one's own daughters and sisters. This extends upwards to male ego's FFZH and downwards to include ego's ZS and ZDH. Therefore as the FZZH, FZH, ZH and DH receive a ritual gift of money so does ZS. Similarly, as the WF and WB receive a coconut so does the WBS.²⁸

It could be argued that these male affines receive money because their wives, ego's sisters and daughters, are given money (see Vatuk 1975: 193). A man may give money to both his senior and junior female agnatic consanguines (FFZ, FZ, Z, D). He should however never accept any money from these females. Therefore a BS can give money to his FZ but should not receive any from her in return. One Silora woman's three nephews (BS) are local taxi drivers. Whenever she made a journey to Ranikhet they would take her free of charge. There are also restrictions between women. Elder women will not accept money from their younger female kin. A woman may give money to her yZ, BD, BSD or ZD but not to her eZ or FZ. A

²⁷This is also the case regarding the following: at the marriage of ZHyZ, male ego (as BWB) will give *bartan-dhoti*; for the wedding of WyZ male ego (as ZH) will give *bartan-dhoti*; for the wedding of ZHyB, male ego (as BWB) will give *tika*; and at WyB's wedding, male ego (as ZH) will give *tika*. As BWB he will receive *dhoti-coconut* and as ZH he will receive *dhoti-money*.

²⁸The money and coconuts are usually accompanied by a *dhoti* which is for the wives of these men. Therefore, as a SWF or MB receives a coconut, so SWM or MBW will be given a *dhoti*. Just as FZH, ZH and DH are given money, so FZ, Z and D are given clothing. The difference between wife-takers and wife-givers is expressed in the gifts given to these male affines. Women on either side will receive clothing. These male affines' wives are, like sisters, given clothing.

woman's husband follows suit. He may give money to those women his wife may give money to, and may receive money from those women and men from whom she is entitled to receive money.

Status differences do exist between immediate wife-givers and wife-takers. Asymmetry is expressed mainly in ritual interaction and through gift-exchange. Affinal gift exchange commences at the engagement and wedding ceremonies (see Appendix Two).²⁹ In total, it is the bride's family who give more to the groom's family. During the engagement ceremony the wife-takers and groom are given *bartan*, in particular a *parat*, money and sweets. At the welcoming ceremony of *dhuirag*, the groom receives several special gifts, as does his *purohit*. The groom may then be offered some money and *bartan* during the evening. Then *kanya dan* is performed followed by the gifting of the dowry. Throughout the evening and at the time of their departure, the wife-givers offer small gifts of money to the *bareti* and larger offerings to the groom's immediate male kin. Once again, at the time of *duragun*, one or several *parats* are offered to the wife-takers. The wife-takers offer clothing and jewels and other gifts to the bride during the engagement and wedding rituals. Throughout the whole event, the wife-givers receive only foodstuffs and, at the very end, coconuts.

From this time on, the onus of giving lies with the wife-givers. Wife-givers are expected to be generous. They are obliged to offer gifts when they visit their sister's or daughter's house. Visiting wife-taking relatives is expensive. As one man said to me: "When I go to my daughter's house, I will give *dachin* to all the little girls and boys of her family that I meet. When I next feel rich, then I will go again. Until then I will not. It is too expensive." When a wife-taking affine visits, they are to be treated as a special guest and offered a *tika* when they depart.

It is generally understood that one may call on one's wife-givers for financial, and other kinds of assistance in times of need. A man will ask his wife to ask her father or brother for financial help. This places the latter in a difficult situation since they will find it hard to refuse to help their sister or daughter. Women act as the vital go-betweens.

However, this does not preclude gifts, assistance and hospitality from flowing in the opposite direction (cf. Vatuk 1975: 185; Vatuk and Vatuk 1976: 217). As we saw in the wedding, prestations flow in both directions. During the series of exchanges which constitute *choi*, wife-takers and wife-givers exchange identical items in near equal quantities. Whenever a sister or daughter returns to her *mait* for a

²⁹I have given a full description of the wedding ceremonies in Appendix Two. Complete details of the various exchanges made and their sequence are given and should be referred to prior to reading the following section. I shall draw on some episodes described there to illustrate points I wish to make.

visit she will bring some sweets or *gurpapari* with her from her *sauras*. These will then be divided and distributed as *pain* to neighbours and close kin. Although wife-takers do not have to offer any gifts when they visit, they can if they wish. In fact they rarely arrive empty handed and usually bring some sweets with them. In Silora I never heard it said that one cannot or should not eat or accept hospitality in one's daughter's or sister's house. Though the wife-giver may feel uncomfortable in his wife-taker's house, and will studiously avoid staying overnight, he will be welcomed as a guest and treated with respect. He will be honoured by being fed first, and all those who are his juniors will greet him with *pailāg* (the respectful touching of a superior's feet; also a verbal greeting).³⁰

Ultimately the only thing the wife-giver will not accept from his sisters and daughters and their *sauras* people is money. However, one man told me that he would ask for and receive money from his DH as a loan but not in the form of *tika*. Loans can be requested but not gifts of money. This man borrowed quite a lot of money from his DH to build his house. I also know of people receiving assistance from their DHs so as to finance their own children's weddings. In fact, here again, women play an important role. A woman retains a strong emotional bond to her natal home and if in need, she would want to help her parents and brothers if she could. If parents tell their woes to their daughters she may try to help and will appeal to her husband to do something.

Daughters and sisters are not only bestowers of spiritual well-being and embodiments of auspiciousness and prosperity (Madan 1988: 140). In some circumstances they act as conduits for the provision of material support. One Thakur man in the village suddenly fell critically ill. He was taken to hospital in Ranikhet where his treatment consisted of daily injections costing Rs.500 each. These, as well as other expenses incurred, meant that his treatment was very expensive. The costs were met by the sick man's *paun*, in particular his sisters and fathers' sisters who had travelled from as far as Delhi to visit him.

³⁰In general wife-takers and wife-givers will meet up mainly on ceremonial and festive occasions. However, in the first years of a couple's marriage contact may be more frequent since the bride will make frequent visits to her *mait*. A young married woman is not allowed to travel alone. She must be chaperoned by a man from her natal or conjugal home. In Kumaon it is the girl's parents-in-law who decide whether or not to allow a woman to visit her *mait*. The *mait* people may invite her but they will not collect her from her *sauras* (cf. Sax 1991). When she returns to her *sauras* she may be accompanied by a brother. However, men are often reluctant to do this and in many cases it is the girl's father- or brother-in-law who collects her from her *mait* and accompanies her back to the *sauras*. There the wife-taker is treated as an honoured guest. In general therefore it is wife-takers who visit wife-givers.

Affinal Exchanges at Other Life-Cycle Ceremonies

In order to fill out the general picture of affinal obligations I shall briefly describe the other ceremonial occasions at which affines are likely to meet.

Namkaran. On the birth of the first child of a woman it is imperative that her *mait* people, the new-born baby's *makot* people, be invited for the name ceremony. The relative whose presence on this day is most desired and stressed, is the baby's maternal grandmother. For the first child the baby's *makot* people should appear. For all subsequent babies *makot* people are invited but they usually do not come, and they are not expected to; their presence is not vital, though in the case of a first son they may come. The new father's sisters (the baby's FZs) are also invited. In one case the new baby's FMBD (classificatory FZ) came for the name ceremony. The baby's FFZ is often invited for the first child's *namkaran*, especially if the child is a boy. On the birth of the second and third child the *namkaran* will be a small affair.

The maternal grandmother will bring a *daliyā* (large basket) with her as a gift. In Kumaon small babies sleep in these baskets which serve as cots. During the day the baby is placed in the basket, over which a thick blanket is draped. The basket is then left outside in the sun on the courtyard and the baby keeps warm. The maternal grandmother also brings two iron bracelets, anklets and a thin necklace for the baby. These are protective amulets. She will bring a *dhoti*, blouse and *petikoṭ* for her daughter on the birth of her first child. Lastly, she will bring a *parat* filled with sweets, fruit or vegetables, flowers and *gurpapari*. These items are the basic necessary gifts expected to be given by the baby's mother's mother. If possible, she will give new clothes for the child too. Other invited guests will bring or send new clothing for the baby.

The *namkaran* is most probably the first occasion for the two mothers-in-law to meet. This meeting is called *dikhoi bhiṭoi*. The two *samadenis* sit opposite each other, touch each other's feet and then put a five piece *dhoti* set onto each other's heads. It is necessary for the women to exchange *dhotis*, I was told.

Janyo. The sacred thread ceremony is now performed in conjunction with another large ceremony, usually marriage. During the fieldwork period one man had his thread ceremony the day before his wedding, and two had theirs on the day before their sister's wedding. Alternatively, people take their sons to a pilgrimage site, Badrinath, for example, and have the thread ceremony performed there. As one man said, "when they get married then we shall give a feast for everyone."

Death. Kregel reports that in the north of the district, affinal relatives will gift foodstuffs (wife-takers) and money (wife-givers) on the third, seventh and ninth days after death (1989: 262). I was not aware of such principles in Silora. On the 12th day, when the main mourner's household hosts a large feast, affinal relatives are invited to partake in the feast. Wife-givers however will not attend. Daughters and

sisters and their husbands will attend if possible. Daughters and sisters receive clothing and money and perhaps a cow (see Vatak 1975: 171). If their children attend they too will receive gifts. A daughter may receive jewels if her mother, before she died, specifically requested that certain jewels be given to her daughters.

6.5 Paun as Outsiders

If we accept that *paun* constitute another category of outsiders, both in terms of agnatic kinship and locality, then we might expect them to be associated with danger and negative qualities. In fact we find this is so. I would suggest that affinal people and places are considered to be potential agents and sources of misfortune.

One set of outsiders, the wife-givers, are particularly associated with danger and negative influences. In Chapter Seven I discuss the negative qualities associated with the *bvari*, the outsider who joins the household. Just as she is suspected and may be accused of sorcery, so too are her natal kin, in particular her mother, who is herself an affinal outsider (see Gray 1989: 147). I was told that a woman may cast *jadu* onto her son-in-law in the hope that the daughter will eat well and get a lot of land and wealth too. These affine's negative influences are thought to travel on the *bvari* herself, or on the objects or money which she brings with her from her *mait* (see Parry 1989: 72). For example, a young Brahman man of 21 years old told me of the restless nights spent sleeping in his brother and sister-in-law's bed while the latter were away. He said that he had had some very unpleasant dreams. In these dreams he saw mediums dancing in possession seances, and one night he dreamt there was a *maśān* knocking at the door, wanting to come in. When I asked him why he had slept so badly, he said that he thought it was because the bed had a spell (*jadu*) on it. The bed came with his *bhauji* (eBW) in her dowry, and he thought that someone in her *mait* had charmed the bed, "so may my son-in-law be and remain under my daughter's authority" (see Madan 1989: 118). This young man then went on to say that this was true because ever since his sister-in-law had arrived, his elder brother has always done what she wanted, as if he had no mind or will of his own. I was told of one old woman in the village who it is said, put a spell on her son-in-law so that he would do as her daughter wanted, and so that he would treat her well in her new home. People said that the spell was so strong that the son-in-law died, leaving the daughter a widow.

However, badness and misfortune does not flow only in one direction: they can also come from the wife-taker's place. The following case illustrates this particularly well. During Asoj, the busiest agricultural month of the year, a *bvari* and *sasu* had an argument. The *bvari* had recently given birth, but since there was no other *bvari* in the house, she had to go back to work only three days after giving birth,

and had to do most of the harvesting work alone. She complained that she was tired and was not getting enough to eat and said she wanted to go to her *mait*, but her *sasu* said she could not go until after Divali, when most of the work had been done. So the *bvari* ran away to her *mait*. Two days later the woman's parents-in-law learned that their *bvari*'s father, their *samadi*, had died the day before. I was told that the parents-in-law were worried, and I was told not to tell this to anyone since people might link the *samadi*'s death with the argument between the *bvari* and *sasu*, and say that the mother-in-law's *gali* (abuse) had gone with the *bvari* to her *mait* and caused the death of her father. It would seem, therefore, that there is a notion that misfortune and danger can originate from any affinal place, be it from the wife-givers or the wife-takers.

6.6 Concluding Remarks

The Kumaoni kinship system gives expression to both equality and hierarchy. In addition, on the broadest conceptual level, a fundamental distinction is made between insiders and outsiders.

Equality is expressed in the isogamous ideology of marrying equals. In the kinship terminology symmetry and sister exchange are conceptual possibilities and are most clearly articulated in ego's generation. Marriage alliance statistics show that reversals of the marriage direction occur. Symmetry and sister exchange are indicated in the terminological equivalence of the affine's affine with consanguine and the existence in Kumaoni of kin terms for BWB(f.s) and ZHZ(m.s) and their potential marriageability. These in turn reinforce the notion that *paun* are an undifferentiated category of equals to whom one gives and from whom one takes women. *Bradar* are unmarriageable people whereas *paun* represent an affinal opposite. During the wedding rituals, and thereafter, prestations and hospitality flow in both directions, both to and from wife-givers and wife-takers. No distinction is made between the kinds of gifts offered by immediate wife-giving and wife-taking affines and all *paun* are entitled to receive gifts on their departure. No rigid status differences between immediate affines are expressed in greetings, save that of age which also informs relations between *paun*.

At the same time the system displays hierarchy too. This is particularly relevant on the household level. Despite the general conceptual distinction between *bradar* and *paun*, the existence of the terms *sauras* and *makot* indicate that there are different kinds of affines. The kinship terminology also articulates asymmetry and hypergamy. Wife-takers and wife-givers are distinguished vertically, across the generations. Marriage results in status differences between wife-taking and wife-giving affines. There is a one-sided emphasis on wife-givers to be generous to wife-

takers. Wife-taking affines receive gifts of money, as do the *celibeti* and the Brahman priest, and this unidirectional flow of money should be maintained. However, the status distinctions exist most strongly between the households of the immediate wife-takers and wife-givers only. The bride's father washes the bride-groom's feet and the bride's parents honour the bridal couple as deities. Each household has its own particular wife-taking and wife-giving affines and the status differences between them are maintained by the tendency not to repeat or reverse marriages made on the household level, and through the permission of classificatory cross-cousin and exchange marriages.

On the broader conceptual level, *bradar* and *paun* indicate a basic classification into those who are members of the agnatic descent line and who are village co-residents, that is 'insiders', and those who are members of another agnatic group and place. *Paun* are not one's own people, they are outsiders. As an undifferentiated category of outsiders, *paun* are thought to have a negative mystical potential. The wife-giver's spells (*jadu*) and the wife-taker's abuse (*gali*) can have devastating, if not fatal consequences. On this general level, *paun* are equally dangerous. At the same time, however, on the household level, it would seem that the wife-givers are identified as particularly wicked, since their spells and harm are deliberate and calculated. In the following chapter I shall consider the women who are exchanged and continue to move between these two affinal sets.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXPERIENCES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF KINSHIP, MARRIAGE AND LOCALITY

In this chapter I examine the position of men and women in the kinship system. Men do not change residence or group membership at marriage whereas women do. In this way, men's and women's experiences of kinship and place are quite different. These different experiences, I suggest, inform the way in which men and women talk about both the household and inter-household relations in Silora. In addition I shall consider the different roles and statuses which women enjoy during their life-cycle. For, although men's and women's experiences and representations differ, so do different kinds of women's experiences and representations. Some issues can be understood by considering gender alone, but others require an examination of kinship and social roles and statuses as well.

That men and women have different perspectives and interpretations has been clearly documented and argued by several authors. Sharma argues that men's and women's different perspectives of locality are based on their different life experiences (1980: 19-20); Sax describes how men and women have different perspectives on residence and alternative models of place and person (1990, 1991); and Wright (1981) discusses and compares male and female perspectives on kinship and residence in Iran.

However, to explain different models in terms of gender alone is sometimes insufficient. Moore questions the existence of 'a woman's point of view' since it presupposes some underlying 'sameness'. She calls for the deconstruction of homogenising categories such as 'woman' and 'female' (1988); as Sharma has also noted, women do not form an undifferentiated social category (1978a: 273). Bennett (1983) shows how important the distinction between women as sisters and women as wives is to understand women's position in Nepal (cf. Kondos 1989). Sharma's essays on dowry (1984) and segregation (1978a) illustrate clearly how senior and junior women's interests are often opposed. My data show that there is, in fact, no single female perspective but that different kinds of women have different interests, attitudes and perspectives. To impute a gender explanation to something which is more than just a gender issue is misleading. We should also investigate women's own actual experiences and consider the actor's model of the world (Moore 1988: 38-39). Women are not only seniors and juniors but they are also daughters, sisters, mothers

and mothers-in-laws to other women as well as to men and these social roles, and women's experiences of these roles, should be considered alongside gender.

This chapter details the female life cycle, experiences of kinship, marriage and locality. It starts with the unmarried girl in her natal home, and explains the changes in residence, status and attitudes which occur as the girl marries, becomes a wife and mother, and finally a senior woman in the community.

7.1 Daughters and Sisters in the *Ghar*

The unmarried daughter is brought up to be given away to strangers in another household in another village. She is teased about this when she is young, and as her girl-friends and elder sisters begin to marry and leave the village, she too realises that this is her destiny. The fact that she will be given to another house informs the treatment and training the daughter receives as she matures. The unmarried daughter is taught agricultural and domestic skills. She works hard under her mother's direction and must show respect to her seniors (see Sharma 1978a: 266). Indeed, as she matures, the daughter becomes a very important household work-hand and labourer, especially if her mother has no other adult females in the house to work with. The mother and daughter become work partners, and develop a very strong and affectionate relationship. In her natal village the unmarried girl does not veil herself in front of anyone. Relations with her kinspersons, male and female, are relaxed and affectionate. Like father and brother, the unmarried girl refers to her natal home as *ghar*. She uses *ghar* in the same way as men; it refers to her natal house, lineage and village. It is a place of friendship and love and a young girl enjoys much freedom in her natal village. Nevertheless, there are certain kinds of feminine modesty behaviour which an adolescent girl must observe; these are associated with seclusion and *purdah* behaviour.¹

The adolescent girl no longer spends much time playing near the roadside. While the younger girl is often sent out to do the shopping in the shops situated along the roadside, the adolescent girl will not go there. With great discomfort, she will walk past the shops and tea-stalls alone but prefers to do so with other girls. Within her own neighbourhood, of course, she moves about with considerable ease and freedom.

As a girl reaches puberty her comportment and movements are closely watched and judged. Though relatively informal relations with male kin and villagers may continue, particular behavioural standards are required for the adolescent girl.

¹See Vatuk (1982b) and her call for a broader, less restrictive definition and understanding of '*purdah* behaviour'.

Their behaviour inside and outside of the house must be distinguished. The outside can be a threat to her honour and she can be a threat to the honour of her house. Men outside of the house are seen as potentially dangerous to a young woman, and she is seen as a vulnerable and potential victim. At the same time, doubts are held about her attitude towards men outside of the house.² It is thought that once a girl has reached puberty she becomes 'hot' and liable to want to satisfy her new found bodily urges and desires (see Kakar 1988: 60). A girl should develop a sense of shame and modesty.

Since girls are given away in marriage after the onset of puberty, the daughter's body and pre-marital sexual behaviour is of increasing concern. Her behaviour has serious consequences for the household's reputation and for her marriage prospects. Any misdemeanours of the daughter will affect the household's status as a whole. However, the mother is often held personally responsible for her daughter's conduct.³ Daughters are now married at the age of 18, or as soon as possible thereafter. It is not good to have a daughter around the house, since the longer she remains unmarried the more doubt is shed as to her and her family's moral conduct and worth. A girl of 22 years and over is considered 'old' and may not have the opportunity of making a 'good' marriage.

In the past, girls were married before they had reached puberty and so the issue of menstruation before marriage never arose. This, I was told, is why girls do not have to observe menstrual restrictions even though they marry later nowadays. The unmarried daughter or sister, though she may menstruate, acts and is treated as though she has no menses. The pubescent unmarried girl does not observe menstrual seclusion (cf. Bennett 1978, 1983). Thus the 'virgin' daughter's sexuality and fertility, and the impurity they bring, are socially denied. Whereas married women are encouraged and expected to announce the condition, menstruation is a matter of great shame for the unmarried girl and is to be concealed at all costs. An implication of this is that a female is only socially recognised to menstruate, and therefore to be a potential mother, as a married female.⁴ As a female agnate can only be married to *paun* people, she is a fertile but non-sexual woman to her *bradar* people (see Gray

²For discussions on sexuality in India and for ideas about the woman as temptress and victim see Kakar (1989). For discussions on the subordination of female sexuality to male control see Wadley (1975, 1986, 1988), Babb (1975) and Allen (1982).

³The mother is blamed for her daughter's misdemeanour. The attitude is one of 'like mother like daughter.' If the daughter is dishonoured, then so too is her mother, and other women will make life difficult both for the mother and daughter in question.

⁴Any married woman, married daughters-sisters included, must observe menstrual seclusion. The unmarried girl is not 'pure', for relative to married females (and males with the sacred thread), she is, as an unrefined being, impure (*aśudh*). People will not eat rice and lentils cooked by an unmarried girl.

1982: 220). At the same time, real concern for her privately known ability to reproduce means certain constraints must be made on her behaviour.

When the girl has reached the right age, and a suitable husband found, she is married. As the wedding day approaches the bride-to-be often takes on an air of resignation. Marriage may mean the possibility of a better life materially; many girls wish to be married to a '*sarvis-vala*', preferably a teacher, health worker, or other government employee. They often express the hope that their husband will take them with him on service, and that she could live a life of leisure where carrying head-loads of cow-dung, grass and wood would be unnecessary. However, she is also aware that this romantic idea is far from the impending reality. Most of the families in Silora are not wealthy enough to marry their daughters to high status, high income earning-husbands. Instead, the girl looks forward to a life in which she will rarely see her husband, who, likely to be a migrant worker, will spend most of his time in one of the towns or cities of the plains. She will live with her parents-in-law and their offspring in a mountain village, and she will work and work.

7.1.i From *Ghar* to *Mait*

The daughter is given in marriage as *kanya dan*, and is taken, along with the wedding gifts, by her husband and wedding party to her new home. Marriage is usually a distressing and traumatic experience for the bride, as well as her agnatic kin. She is wrenched from her friends and family with whom she has spent all of her life, and goes to live as a stranger among strangers. On marriage she ceases to be a member of the natal village '*bradar*'. Her pre-marital *ghar* now becomes her *mait*. She is classified by her biological agnates as *paun*, a guest. However, she is simultaneously a *celibeti* to her *mait* people, and as such the most welcome guest.

7.2 Women and the Natal Place

7.2.i *Celibeti* as Divine Being

Daughters and sisters are associated with the divine. She is 'like a god' and compared with the Brahman priest as one to be honoured, respected and 'worshipped' (Bennett 1978, 1983; Sax 1991; Gray 1980, 1982; Furer-Haimendorf 1966; Vatuk 1975). Her special status is expressed in various ritual actions throughout her life, though mainly once she is married.⁵ During the wedding, I saw the bride's father 'wash' her feet.

⁵There is, however, one annual occasion when unmarried 'daughters', as *kumāris*, are honoured and fed as special guests (see Allen 1982; Gray 1982). This occurs on Durga *puja* day in

Her father put water on his daughter's feet and then drew his hands to his head. He applied a *tika* on her forehead, and then placed a ritual gift of money at her feet. This act was followed by her parents performing *arati* in front of her.

The married daughter-sister, referred to as *celibeti*, is particularly associated with fertility, divinity and auspiciousness. The newly wedded daughter and her husband are specially invited to her *mait* to 'eat Harelā'. It is said that both man and wife should eat the Harela feast from their mother-in-law's hand. Harela, the summer solstice, is a *sankranti* festival celebrated in Kumaon, which falls on the first day of the month of Śrāvaṇ, July to August (see Appendix Three). I was told by villagers that Sravan is a pure month and a month in which to worship the gods. Fanger remarks that Harela:

[To the Brahman priest and sophisticated Thakur] is the day that Siv and Parvati were married. However, to most of the villagers, this is a celebration of the rainy season which is responsible for bringing fresh grass for their cattle and needed rain for their crops (1980: 422).

Ten days before the special feasting, various seeds (barley, wheat, corn and rice) are sown in soil which is placed in a container. The pot of soil is then kept inside in a dark room and watered daily. Green-yellow shoots appear. Then the Harela is cut, and Harela shoots are given to the village *pujaris* who will then offer them in *puja* to all the respective village temples and gods. The family priest may come to perform a *puja*, for which he will receive his *nisrau* (gift of grains) and his *dachin*. Harela shoots are also sent off in envelopes, with money, to the household's *celibetis* (including FZ). The newly wedded daughter and son-in-law's presence for Harela is, I think, a celebration of the divine, auspicious married couple. However, the annual acknowledgement of *celibetis*, through sending Harela shoots and money, suggests a more enduring association of the daughter with fertility, prosperity and well-being; with divinity and purity.

Celibetis are directly associated with the Brahman priest, as recipients of *dan*. The *celibeti* should be honoured and respected. On the death of a woman's brother, father or mother, she will be invited to attend the mortuary feast which marks the end of the mourning period. Daughters and sisters will receive clothing and money. In addition, the second cow given as *dan* after a death is given to the

Asoj (September to October). Nine pre-pubescent girls are invited to eat in the household. These may include one's own daughters and those of close family and neighbours. The girls are seated and given a *tika*, a red hair ribbon, festive foods, *parasad*, milk, curds, *ghi* and sugar. They are served first, like guests, and provided with whatever they request. I saw young girls treated like this at another occasion, the ritual to celebrate the consecration of a new house (*gharpais*). On completion of the ceremonies, nine children, referred to as *kumaris*, were seated; their feet were washed and then they were fed with the festive food. Only after they had been served could the householders and other guests eat.

deceased person's daughter or sister (male ego).⁶ If she is not given the cow or its equivalent value in money, she will be given an article of *bartan*, a *thali* for example.

In the month of Māgh (January to February) we see that the *celibeti* is associated with the Brahman priest; she is a recipient of *dachin*, and the conveyor of spiritual merit. During Magh several important festivals occur: "Magh is the month for merit (*punya*). It is also the month of *dan* and *dachin*. These things are important this month." During this month the family priest will come to 'eat a meal of *kichri*' (lentils, rice and spices cooked together) at his *jajman's* house. This is also a month when daughters and sisters are especially welcome to return to their *maits* for at least one of the two main feast days of Ghugutī and Basant Pancami (see Appendix Three). Kregel says the month of Magh is dedicated to the sister-daughter (1989: 304).

It is particularly important that *celibetis* visit their *maits* for the festival of Basant Pancami, which marks the beginning of spring and the Holi season. Just before the beginning of Magh many wives, mothers and *bvaris* leave *en masse* to visit their *maits*, to celebrate the festivals of Ghuguti and Basant Pancami. This also provides a good opportunity for children to visit their *makot*. A *celibeti* will usually be given *dachin* (a gift of money) and a *dhoti* from her natal house on departure.⁷ The *purohit* (family priest) comes to bless the house. On this day barley, which is used in *śakun kām* (auspicious work), is picked from the fields and placed on the head. People send pieces of barley, some whole rice grains and a few rupees in envelopes to the *celibetis* who are not present. From this day onwards people are supposed to wear a yellow article of clothing. In this month of Magh, the most important visitors are the Brahman priest and the *celibeti*.⁸

From all of the above we may say that the daughter-sister as *celibeti* is associated with the divine, Brahman priests and purity as well as fertility, prosperity and auspicious days and occasions.

I have discussed the 'sacred' and positive aspects of the out-married daughter for her natal kin. However, Sax reports that in Garhval a *dhyani*, the out-married woman, can curse her *maït* and thus has a destructive potential too (1990: 502-504; 1991: 92-103). He also mentions that the tears of a neglected *dhyani* are especially efficacious in cursing her natal people (Sax 1991: 98). I was not aware of this in Silora. However, there was some notion that the *celibeti's* tears of sorrow and anger

⁶The first cow is given to the family priest. The second cow may, of course, be given to the priest but preference is given to the female agnate.

⁷Fanger comments: "A returning sister makes it a particular point to offer a prayer of health and safety for her brother and she applies *pīṭhya* to his forehead. In return he gives her some money or a nice present" (1980: 429).

⁸Majumdar reports a special festival which is held for married daughters-sisters exclusively and which is held in Magh (1962: 272-274).

should not be shed in her *mait*. A widowed FZ came to stay with her BS in her *mait*. She was at the time very worried about her daughter who was very ill. Later I found out that her BS people knew that her daughter had actually died, but they had not told her. I asked why they had not told her and was told that they did not want her to stay and cry in the home, and that she should go to her own home. She could not only have become a burden, but perhaps her crying would bring some *nukasan*, harm.

In addition, as we saw in the last chapter, it is also thought that the daughter-sister can carry negative influences from her *sauras* into her *mait*. This would suggest that the *celibeti*, although primarily a benevolent and positive influence, can inadvertently and unintentionally bring misfortune from the outside into her *mait*.

7.2.ii *Celibeti* as Welcome Guest

The out-married daughter-sister is incorporated into the category of *paun*. This is clearly illustrated with regard to formal ceremonial occasions. A daughter may only attend ceremonial functions in her *mait* if she receives a formal *nyaut* (invitation) to attend. As a *paun*, and outsider, her *mait* people do not observe *natak* or *sutak* of a married daughter-sister.

The general attitude towards *paun*, is one of respectful distance. A *paun* will be welcomed and offered hospitality as a guest. However, a guest is not tolerated for long. The following local saying illustrates the general attitude towards guests and affines:

<i>Ek dinak pāñ</i>	First day guest
<i>Dusar dinak pāñ</i>	Second day a guest
<i>Tisar dinak nimakhāñ</i>	Third day shameless
<i>Chauth din bai bhiśāñ</i> . ⁹	From the fourth day 'evil spirit'. ¹⁰

The daughter-sister however is a special kind of guest, and this attitude does not extend to her. As well as being classified as *paun*, the married sister-daughter is, as long as she lives, a *celibeti* in her *mait*. *Celibetis* are out-married daughters and sisters of the lineage and village.¹¹ As Sanwal explains:

⁹*Nimkhāñ* was explained to me as someone who is familiar but without love or affection. It is a shameless person; someone who overstays their welcome, and just goes from house to house to get food and drink, and to talk about themselves. *Bhiśāñ* is associated with *masan* and *bhut*, which not only frighten, but attach themselves onto and harm human beings.

¹⁰I found another such saying which parallels the one given here. "*Ek dinak pāñ, dusar dinak nibaṭāñ, tisar dinak tarakāñ*" (K. N. Joshi 1982: 382). The explanation of this is: "On the first day the visitor is thought of as a guest; on the second day he is thought of as something to be disposed of; and on the third day one thinks of some device to drive him away."

¹¹*Celibeti* has similar connotations to Vatuk (1975) and Sax's (1990, 1991) *dhiyani* and Majumdar's *dhyanti* (1962). Unlike Raheja's (1988) report where as receivers of gifts they are containers of inauspiciousness, this is not the case.

The daughters of the lineage are classed as *celibeti*, literally daughters, and daughters, even after their marriage, continue to be labelled as daughters of the group they agnatically belong to (1966: 48).

A *Celibeti* is treated with affection and generosity. She is welcome and encouraged to stay in her *mait* for as long as possible. A married woman will continue to visit her *mait* to varying degrees throughout her life. This seems to be widespread throughout the Uttar Pradesh hill region. Sax notes that "visits by females to their places of birth are a salient feature of the social life of Uttarakhand" (1991: 120). During the first year of married life, the tradition is for newly married daughters to visit as frequently as possible, and her presence is particularly required on specific annual festivals. In some areas of Kumaon and Garhwal, daughters may spend up to six months in their *mait* during the first year of marriage (see Kregel 1989: 270; Majumdar 1962: 72). Those married in the summer months must return to the *mait* for the summer solstice feast day of Harela, and those married in the winter should visit to share in the feast of Basant Pancami. Newly married *celibetis* are welcome to attend any *sankranti* feast throughout the year. During the first year of marriage it is said that the newly married *celibetis* must visit and stay in her *mait* for the whole month in Cait and Bhāḍṇ. In fact, the newly married woman is not supposed to move between her *mait* and *sauras* at these times but nowadays she usually stays in the *mait* for the first 10 to 15 days of the month only. No matter how long she stays, I was told that it was important that she visits her natal home. As time goes by and she has her own children, the *celibeti* will make fewer visits to her *mait*. Nevertheless, she continues to be welcome at the larger feast days of Ghuguti and Basant Pancami, Harela and Divālī. Most of her visits are in connection with feast days and life-cycle ceremonies, and therefore often have a festive, and somewhat extraordinary quality.

It is, to my mind, the woman's *celibeti* aspect which, in the *mait*, overrides her classification as *paun*. The *celibeti* is a special kind of guest. For example, in the case of a girl's wedding, all those *celibetis* who have returned to visit their *mait* are fed as special guests the night before the wedding party arrives. Though in practice they are often fed on the wedding night, the point is stressed that *celibetis*, as a special category of guest, must be fed during the wedding period. These *celibetis* also include those widows and 'divorcees' who are living in their *mait*.

7.2.iii *Celibeti* as Recipient of Gifts and Assistance

These female agnates are the recipients not only of hospitality, but also of gifts and assistance throughout their lives. At her wedding the flow of gifts to the daughter-sister commence. Thereafter, this gift-giving remains a major aspect of a woman's

relations with her *mait* people. Daughters are *lyanī/pagaṛṇī* (takers) from everyone's hands. One man said to me:

When a woman goes back to her *mait* it is necessary for her *mait* people to give her clothes, whether she goes there five times a year or only once in five years.

An old woman said:

Parents must give to daughters. It is the daughters' right (*hak*). If there are no parents, then it is her brother's responsibility.

On leaving her *mait* any male family member (F, FB, B, BS) will give her money and a *tika* (auspicious mark of red paste and grains of rice on the forehead). Whenever natal kin visit the daughter they must come laden with gifts not only for the *celibeti*, but also for her children.

Throughout her life, the *celibeti* is entitled to receive an annual gift which is called *bhitoi* or *āv*. *Bhitoi* usually consists of clothing (*dhoti*, petticoat and blouse material) and sweets or *gurpapari* for the sister. In some parts of Almora district sisters are given hundreds of *puris* to take back to distribute in her *sauras* (see Kregel 1990: 281), but this no longer happens in the Silora area. The gift of *bhitoi* is 'from the brother' and is given every year in the month of Cait (March to April). In the first year of marriage however, I was told that *av* is given to the newly married sister in Phāgun. It is a gift for the daughter-sister only, and not for her conjugal household. If the sister does not visit her *mait* the brother will either take the gift to her in her *sauras* or send it to her. This obligation to give *bhitoi*, as well as other gifts to the sister, is passed on to the son, and to the grandson. Therefore female ego as daughter-sister and FZ may expect to receive gifts from the houses of her F/B and BS.¹² Additionally, if ever in need, a woman should be able to call on her father or brother for help. If she should experience hardship in her conjugal home, the *celibeti* may return to her natal home for refuge, subsistence and protection.

7.2.iv Behaviour in the *Mait*

In the *mait* a *celibeti*'s movements are not minutely observed, nor is her behaviour checked or criticised. The daughter's sexuality is no longer her natal family's concern, and affairs do occur. There are two Silora *celibetis*, who in the absence of brothers, inherited their father's property. Though they are not permanent residents, they frequently visit Silora to manage their property. These women are renowned for

¹²The FFZ is, however, a distant kinswoman, and in practice is no longer considered an insider. As Krause says: "After three generations the relationship between siblings from *dudh* ceases and it is said that then people become *arko manche*, other people, as opposed to 'our own people'" (1980: 187).

having affairs with village 'brothers'. No sanctions have or can be enforced upon them.¹³ This is not to say that visiting or resident *celibetis* enjoy public affairs, but that such behaviour is only quietly commented upon and is apparently tolerated.

She may visit neighbours of her own accord, laugh and joke in public. On return to her natal village a married daughter is relieved of any obligation to work. In the *mait* woman may work if she wishes (see Majumdar 1962). This is in stark contrast to her position as *bvari* in her conjugal home. The *celibeti* receives affection, protection and attention in her *mait*. Especially in the first few years of marriage, the *mait* is a refuge and a place of love and comfort. Women often talk about their *maits* in an idealised and romantic way, reiterating the ideology of brotherly affection, cooperation and harmony expressed by men.

7.2.v Enduring Links to the *Mait*

A woman is not fully transformed at marriage despite men's view (as wife receivers) that she "changes nationality." Although a daughter is given away to others as a gift at marriage, from her own and her natal people's perspective, she never ceases to belong, in some way, to her natal place. She maintains enduring links there. This bond is reaffirmed every time a woman visits and through the gifts she receives from her *mait* (see Vatuk 1975: 193) and as we have seen, the married woman maintains economic and ritual ties with her natal place. The effect of the natal village on a woman is so strong that, though it may weaken over the years, it never disappears entirely. As Sax notes, for a girl: "Marriage does not replace one set of relations with another, but rather adds a new set of relations to a pre-existing one" (1991: 126).

Although she becomes a member of her husband's group, the affective ties to the *mait* are very important to her (see Madan 1989: 111; Sax 1990, 1991). The principal link for a woman to the *mait* is her mother and it is usually the case that the affective tie to the *mait* fades on the death of the mother. The *celibeti* is also bound to her *mait* by shared substance. The unmarried girl shares blood and milk with her brothers. At marriage her shared substances do not change, but she is socially recognised as no longer being a *bradar* co-member but a *paun*. As Krause says, while a married sister and brother are affines from the point of view of the agnatic descent line, from the point of view of the shared substance of milk from the mother, they are consanguines. This dual quality of affine and consanguine is passed onto the next generation to include FZ and her children and MB and his children (Krause 1980: 186). Blood comes from and is passed on by men only. A married woman cannot pass on her natal blood to her children. She does however pass on the substance of

¹³See Majumdar (1962: 77,124,132,318-9) for the type of behaviour and leniency a married daughter (*dhyanti*) in Jaunsar enjoys in her *mait*.

breast milk, *dud*, to her children. A person shares blood with his/her father and his kin, and shares milk with the mother and her natal kin.¹⁴

For a married woman therefore it is the shared substance of breast milk which is emphasised in the bond with her natal home. Women as FZ, Z and D are blood and milk relatives to the *mait*, but the *celibeti's* link to her natal home is represented through milk. By extension, the milk link is passed onto all *celibeti's* offspring who are milk relatives to the *makot*. This milk link allows these kinspersons to receive certain types of house milk which are said to be given only to 'insiders' (see Chapter Three). To be given such milk is a sign of inclusion and intimacy extended to very few persons. Those 'outsiders' who are given these special types of milk are then represented as 'insiders'. The *celibeti's* milk tie makes her an insider in her natal house while at the same time being a non-member and outsider to her natal *bradar*.

The symbolic representation of the link to the *mait* by household milk, and the association with the mother, is an apt one. If milk symbolises altruistic giving and love then this is exactly the kind of nurturing treatment and support which is supposed to be given to the *celibeti* and to her children. The imagery of milk sums up the kind of uncalculated, selfless and spontaneous affection and assistance a *celibeti* is supposed to enjoy in her *mait* and from her natal kin.

7.3 Women in the Conjugal Place

In contrast to the woman as daughter-sister, the woman as wife is both an auspicious provider of progeny, labour and wealth, and at the same time potentially disruptive and a carrier of inauspiciousness. Where sisters and mothers are assigned relatively high status, and where the brother-sister and mother-child relationships "are among the most idealized relationships in Khasi society", as wives, women have a low status, and "are thought of more as property" (Sanwal 1966: 48).

7.3.i The Wife and Daughter-in-law as Outsider and Stranger

The woman enters her husband's house and village as an outsider and stranger. She is classified as a member of her husband's agnatic lineage and village but addresses her husband's agnatic kin, and is addressed by them, with affinal terms. Her outside and affinal status and origin are continually reaffirmed via these kinship terms of address. Vatuk reports that a woman "normally addresses her HM by whatever term her

¹⁴At the same time, we have seen that male and female ego are also thought to share milk (as well as blood) with the father and father's immediate brothers and their offspring through the shared link to FM (see Chapter Six).

husband uses or by any other variant of the mother term" (1982a: 81).¹⁵ Such behaviour in Kumaon is regarded as absolutely deplorable. In Kumaon, the relationship with the mother is considered so intensely particular and special that the term for mother is never applied to anyone else (see Sharma 1980: 135-136). A woman would never use her husband's terms of address for any of his agnatic, non-agnatic consanguineal or affinal kin. Such incorrect and disrespectful behaviour is associated with the modern ways of the plains and the towns, where women are thought to be less modest and shameful anyway.

In addition, a woman's natal village name will stay with her and it can be used both in address and reference, especially for a childless woman. For example, a mature childless widow will be referred to as Manan *am* (grandma from Manan village). This form of address emphasises the woman's outside origin both to the village, the *bradar* and lineage (see Gray 1982: 218).

Despite being classified as an insider, the incoming wife is seen as an outsider, and brings with her the dangers associated with outsiders. She retains strong emotional and ritual ties to her natal home and her loyalty to her husband's house and kin is seriously questioned and monitored. And as an outsider she is distrusted by household members, especially the mother-in-law. As an outsider she is thought to be greedy and selfish. Many senior women keep the kitchen and food cupboards in the house locked so that their *bvaris* cannot help themselves to tea and snacks during the day. Daughters-in-law are often suspected of 'stealing' household articles and food.

As many scholars have noted, the wife/daughter-in-law is seen as a threat to the stability and cohesion of the ideal joint family. Initially her loyalties are seen to lie elsewhere, with those people of her *mait*. Another worry is that as the new couple become more familiar, the daughter-in-law will try to attract her husband's attention and concern onto her and away from his parents and siblings. In this way, the *bvari* is seen as a threat to the unity and stability of the joint patrilineal household unit (see Madan 1989: 219; Das 1976; Vatuk 1982a; Bennett 1983; Sharma 1978b). Men and senior women explain household conflicts and the break up of the joint family as caused by the wives/daughters-in-law.¹⁶ In addition, the in-married woman's sexuality and procreative capacities are, if not contained, a threat to the house's reputation. If an in-married woman of the house has an adulterous relationship with a man, she will be severely reprimanded both socially and in her house. One case involved a woman and her husband's lineage brother. Village women said that such a

¹⁵See also Vatuk (1969a: 261,266).

¹⁶Gray suggests another way in which the wife is disruptive: in fulfilling her function of perpetuating the household through bearing sons, the wife sows the seeds of the house's dissolution and fragmentation. Her sons will compete for common economic resources causing the land to be partitioned and the joint household to dissolve (1982: 217-218).

woman should be thrown out of the village because she was setting a bad example for younger women. I was told that this woman would definitely be beaten when her husband returned from the plains (see Majumdar 1962: 124). The husband would not beat or fight with his wife's lover because, as one woman told me, "he is his 'brother'". By fighting, the husband would be confirming general opinion and making the conflict public. The attitude here contrasts with that towards a *celibeti's* extramarital affairs in her *mait*.

The in-marrying woman, especially the younger daughter-in-law, is seen to be 'dangerous' in another way. The *bvari* is seen as a conveyor of inauspiciousness and misfortune, and an agent of supernatural danger (Bennett 1983; Gray 1982, 1989; Parry 1989). As Gray says, the wife in her conjugal home is not only an inferior, but an outsider:

. . . rendering her potentially malevolent and dangerous . . . from the point of view of the household members, it is only in-marrying women - the inferior outsiders - who are considered to be potential witches (1989: 147).

The daughter-in-law is often suspected of having cast a magic spell (*jadu*) on her husband. For example, during my stay a village man and his wife went off together to visit the wife's *mait*. However, they went without asking the man's mother's permission, and worst of all, without having respectfully touched her feet on departure. The old woman was convinced that her daughter-in-law had cast a spell on her son since, as she said, he was never like this before. A *celibeti*, on the contrary, is never accused of sorcery. The *bvari* is also thought to act as the carrier of such magic spells (*jadu*). *Jadu* is sometimes thought to have been put on the *bvari* herself, or on the dowry objects which accompany her, by her natal kinspeople and in particular by her mother (see Chapter Six).

The new *bvari*, in particular, is a grave danger to her husband's senior agnates at certain times within the first year of marriage. For example, a *bvari* is not supposed to stay in her *sauras* during the black months of Bhado and Cait. It is said that she should not see the face of her husband's elder male kin or her mother-in-law since this may bring them misfortune.¹⁷

If there is an illness in the new bride's husband's household, or if livestock should die or some other misfortune should befall the house after the *bvari's* arrival, the new *bvari* is often as responsible (see Bennett 1978: 127). The new bride is *bhyarak*, of the outside, and as such is a threat and a danger, but she must be transformed into a loyal member and insider of the household.

¹⁷In the first year of marriage a woman's father must not visit her *sauras* in the two black months of Cait and Bhado.

7.3.ii A Woman's Status as *Bvari* and Behaviour in the *Sauras*

On entering her husband's house and village, a woman's status is, as Kakar (1988: 62) suggests, not that of wife but daughter-in-law. Whereas in her *mait* a woman is a revered and honoured *celibeti* worthy of gifts and respect, in her *sauras* she is seen as an inferior kind of woman. She enters at the lowest rung of the ladder, occupying the most inferior position. As we saw, seniority is an important organising principle in the house and a *bvari* must submit to the authority of her mother-in-law and her husband's elder brothers' wives. Her mother-in-law is demanding. She keeps a close watch on the *bvari's* movements and conduct, and ensures that she acts appropriately (see Vatuk 1972: 164).

The *bvari* should behave with respect, obedience and shame in her *sauras*. Self-effacement and deference should be observed in the presence of any person, both in the house and outside it, who address her as *bvari*. This category includes both men and women. The most important of these are the mother and father-in-law, the husband's elder brother and the visiting husband's elder sister. In the presence of her husband's senior male kin, who stand as *saur* and *jeth* in relation to herself, she should pull her saree slightly over her face. In addition she should not face them straight on but at an angle. This action, it has been suggested, serves to distance the parties involved, and is seen as respect-avoidance behaviour and yet another example of the *purdah*-seclusion complex (Sharma 1978b; Vatuk 1982b: 57-58; Bennett 1978: 128; Gray 1982: 221).¹⁸

The husband's sister is another case in point. As a *celibeti* of the household the husband's sisters in general are given special treatment. Some may take advantage of the situation to order their brother's wife around at their every whim (see Madan 1989: 116). The brother's wife should not show resistance. Tensions and conflicts do occur between a resident unmarried husband's younger sister and the elder brother's wife. The husband's sister is, as Wadley says, "an unreliable ally in the husband's home" (1988: 34).

A distinction however is made between the husband's younger and elder sisters. Different behaviour is required for each. The husband's elder sister is referred to as *pauni*. In address, however, husband's elder sister is *nanjyu* (little mother-in-law) and she commands the same respect as does the *sasu*. When the *pauni* visits, the *bvari* will bow to touch her feet in greeting. The husband's younger sister does not require such deference. When she visits, it is more usual that she and her elder brother's wife will bow to touch each other's feet at the same time. In some cases I saw the husband's younger sister bow to the elder brother's wife a fraction of a second

¹⁸Vatuk (1982a: 71) also mentions the mutual and reciprocal nature of such behaviour, as well as men's role in facilitating such avoidance practices.

before the latter bowed to touch the former's feet. They may also give each other a small hug.¹⁹ The husband's unmarried younger sister may be addressed by her name, but a husband's married younger sister is not addressed by her name but as *gusyaini*, or more affectionately, *lali*.²⁰

The above attitudes and practices seem to be examples of "modesty codes" concerned with maintaining the hierarchy and harmony between the sexes and affines within the house and larger kin group (Vatuk 1982b: 56,58,62-63,73). Other restrictions are placed on the young wife in her *sauras*. These refer mainly to her use of space and her conduct outside the house, particularly in relation to men. These restrictions have to do mainly with her as a woman/female, and not as particular kin or affinal woman.

7.3.iii The Daughter-in-law as Auspicious Provider of Progeny and Labour

The daughter-in-law presents an auspicious potentiality as the bearer of future generations and progeny for the household and patriline. The in-coming wife's fertility, sexuality and reproductive potentials are positive contributions to the household as long as they are contained and transformed for the household's benefit. A *bvari*'s fertility, sexuality and potential as a mother are celebrated while at the same time, the impurity her fertility and sexuality brings, is contained and distanced.

Menstruation. Though an unmarried girl's menstruation is socially denied, when a newly married woman has her first menstrual period in her *sauras* the condition is celebrated. For the first menstruation after marriage the bride should not be in the presence of her brother and natal kin. For 11 days the new bride will stay in seclusion. She will bathe on the third, fifth, seventh, ninth and eleventh days. During this time she cannot perform *puja* and nobody will eat her food. Ideally the secluded *bvari* is fed *puris* for the entire 11 days. However, though the idea remains, people have improvised on this matter. The young bride is given *rotis*, for as one man said "who makes that many *puris* nowadays? Oil is expensive, and anyway, *bvaris* don't have their first menses in their *sauras*. It is not such a big thing now." However, these *rotis* are not cooked in the usual manner. Instead of being cooked on the iron griddle (*tāṇ*) they are cooked in the frying pan, as imitation *puris*, but without the oil.

On the eleventh day the family priest visits. The young bride is given a coconut (her 'baby') which she holds in her lap. The *purohit* recites some *mantras* and

¹⁹This is in contrast to customs in Jaunsar Bawar, Garhwal. Majumdar reports only one term for husband's sister and one for brother's wife. No age distinctions are made. In addition all husband's sisters, irrespective of age, are treated with equal respect (1962: 125).

²⁰The more formal relationship with the *pauni* is probably due as much to unfamiliarity as it is to seniority. A woman is very unlikely to have lived at all with her *pauni*, whereas the husband's younger sister is often still living with her parents and brothers.

performs a ritual of worship (*puja*). The young *bvari* is usually teased thereafter by her *dyor* and *gusyaini* who call her *nāriyal ki ijā* (coconut's mother). Special food is then made. After the cleansing ritual the *bvari* touches her father-in-law's plate, and is from that time on considered a cook of the house. In the past, *puris* were distributed throughout the village, but nowadays this is rarely done and people are usually unaware that the ritual has even occurred.

This small ritual is referred to as '*namkaran*'. The 11 day seclusion period, followed by a mock name-giving and cleansing ritual, directly mirrors birth pollution (*natak*) seclusion and the *namkaran* ceremony which follow childbirth. Thereafter, all subsequent menstrual periods are marked by the five day seclusion pattern.

Menstrual impurity lasts for five days and is accompanied by various rules and restrictions. During this time a menstruating woman is *achut* (untouchable) and is referred to as *bhyar* (outside) and *alag* (separate, apart).²¹ For the first three days the menstruating woman is considered to be particularly untouchable and impure. She is not, however, untouchable to children. A menstruating woman informs others of her condition, thereby warning them not to touch her, and also makes jokes and laughs about it.

For the first two days of the menses a woman must stay outside of the house. At night she sleeps in the *goth*, the ground floor of the house, usually in the back half of the *goth* which, in most houses, serves as a cattle byre. On the third, fourth and fifth days she will bathe and wash her clothing and bedding.²² On the third day, after having bathed with hot water and cows urine, she is allowed to enter the outside and middle rooms of the house. She cannot enter the kitchen or the house's shrine. On the third and fourth nights she sleeps in a corner near to the door in the *cakh*, the outside room. The next morning she will cleanse the spot with a fresh mixture of cow dung and earth paste. On the fourth day of her cycle she may enter the kitchen, and it is said that on this day "she comes inside." She may not, however, touch the water or cook any food. On the fifth day, after bathing, she may fetch water and prepare food for most adults. *Danriyas* (mediums) however, have to observe more strict avoidance of menstruating women. If a *danriya* is touched by a menstruating woman, or by a child who has touched such a woman, then s/he will feel severe bodily aches and pains or have a skin rash. If this happens the *danriya* must drink some cow's urine. *Danriyas* will not accept food from a woman for the entire five day menstrual period.

²¹People say that such a woman must stay separate and outside or else the *dyapts* (deities) will get angry.

²²In some households, separate bedding and eating utensils are kept for menstruating women's use only. A menstruating woman sleeps under, or on, wool bedding only. If the blankets are sprinkled with cow's urine after being laundered, then they can be used by other people.

Several other restrictions are observed during this time. For example: (a) A menstruating woman cannot consume milk in any form which is produced by her own house's cattle for the first two days of her cycle. *Gharak dud*, house milk, is not given to menstruating women. It is said that if she were to drink her own house milk the god of cattle would be offended and angered. They may drink 'outside' milk, that is, milk from other houses or purchased from the dairy. One woman warned me not to approach her when she was drinking her tea by saying humorously "*māi bāman chū!*" ("I am a Brahman priest!").²³ (b) A menstruating woman is not allowed to collect water for use inside the house until the fifth day, after her bath. (c) She cannot do *puja* at any shrine or temple until the fifth day of her cycle nor can she accept any *tikas*. (d) Menstruating women are not allowed to participate in the cutting, threshing and pounding of the rice and wheat harvests. This, it is said, is because rice and wheat are offered to god. (e) Menstruating women are not permitted to participate in any feasts, ceremony or ritual event. At weddings the menstruating woman will stand aside at some distance from the general crowd. Menstruating women are not allowed to participate in *jagars*. Their very presence is said to cause the medium physical pain or illness and hinders the arrival of the gods in their mediums' bodies and angers them. On one occasion at the beginning of a *jagar*, the presiding god Śaim suddenly became irate and shouted at two women to leave the room. It was thought that they had touched a menstruating woman that day and were therefore not pure enough to be present.

A menstruating married woman is impure and untouchable. However, a female's first menstruation as socially defined, that is, as a wife in her *sauras*, is at the same time a very auspicious occasion for her conjugal family. She is put into seclusion but at the same time she is fed imitation *puris*, which are in themselves associated with auspicious occasions only. With the 11 day seclusion period and the mock '*namkaran*' ritual, the new wife's procreative potential is being taken, through ritual comparisons and devices, to its socially desired purpose and conclusion: the production of a mother and a child.

Pregnancy, Childbirth and Birth Pollution. Women make public their condition whilst menstruating. However, a pregnant woman will not speak of her condition. The connection between pregnancy and sexual intercourse makes pregnancy a condition about which a woman should have shame. People may guess she is pregnant, and the pregnant woman may confide in her special girl-friend whilst working in the fields. Pregnancy lasts 10 lunar months in total. For the first five months a pregnant woman can lead a fairly normal life; she can worship and offer water to the gods. After the fifth month she is considered to be more polluting. She

²³When the priest cooks, eats or drinks there is an invisible but recognised boundary which separates him from less pure persons. This boundary is not to be overstepped.

will continue with all of her daily tasks. She can still collect water and people will eat her food until she gives birth. However, as of the sixth month she is not allowed to visit temples or participate in *puja*. For example, she will sit in a corner at a distance from the main participants in a *jagar*. Her husband, however, continues to participate fully in all of these activities (cf. Kregel 1989: 253). *Danriyas* will not eat any food prepared by a woman who is five months or more into her pregnancy.

When her pregnancy becomes obvious, a woman will not visit her *mait*, nor engage in any other visits outside the locality.²⁴ A woman gives birth in her *sauras*. Some women have given birth in hospital, but all of the childbirths during my stay occurred in the village. Although there is a government employed midwife (and her assistant) resident in the village, women in general prefer to ask a senior village woman, usually a kinswoman or a widow, to deliver the baby. Pregnancy brings no respite from work. A pregnant woman works up until the day she gives birth and returns to the fields five or six days after her delivery.

Having given birth the new mother and baby are restricted to the portion of the room in which the baby was born. In small houses, a blanket is hung up so as to mark off the mother and child's space from the rest of the room. The woman gives birth on a bed of straw which is laid out on the floor. Thereafter, she and the baby will sit and sleep on a new clean bed of straw. The mother will bathe on the third, fifth, seventh, ninth and eleventh days. On the eleventh day the *namkaran* is held in which both she and the baby are cleansed and the child is named. During the 11 day period of birth pollution (*natak*) nobody will eat food prepared by the new mother. She is not allowed to go to the water hole or tank. Water is brought to her and she washes her clothes outside. During this 11 day period she may not go into the kitchen nor to a temple. From the fifteenth day onwards, small children will eat food prepared by her and some adults may also do so. However, many people, in particular *danriyas*, will refuse her food until the twenty-second day after childbirth.

Bvari as worker. The *bvari*'s productive abilities and skills are also highly valued and necessary. The woman as *saini-bvari* is thought of primarily as a bearer of children and a worker.²⁵ She is the prime labourer in the household and her labour is a most important resource for ensuring the fertility and productivity of the

²⁴Extra-village visits are avoided during the menses period and pregnancy. However, I was not aware of any strict prohibition against a menstruating or pregnant woman meeting her brother (cf. Kregel 1989: 249). In fact I was told that a menstruating or pregnant woman may visit her *mait* and that if she does she will return with a *parat* from her natal home. In practice, however, women rarely visit or see their natal kin in these conditions.

²⁵The following situation illustrates starkly how the *bvari* is perceived as a worker by her husband's kin. Some urban relatives (ZS and ZSW) came to visit my landlord's house. The young woman (ZSW) asked her HMBW (the only woman in the house of her age), to sit and join her for a chat. Before the latter could respond, her mother-in-law, the visitor's HMBW sternly proclaimed, "*bvari* is not sitting down; *bvari* is for working (not for sitting and talking)" (*bvari kāmē lijī chā*).

household's estate. The *sasu* directs the *bvari* daily as to what work to do. The *bvari* is assigned the most tiring and physically demanding work tasks (see Majumdar 1962: 125). She spends most of her day in the fields or forests away from the house and village centre. A *bvari* may only go to another house if her mother-in-law has requested her to do so for some particular errand or purpose. She is the first to rise and the last to bed. She is chided for being slow and inefficient and never praised for her efforts and achievements. There is almost no respite for the *bvari*, though work does slacken in the agriculturally quiet winter months (see Chapter Two).

7.3.iv The *Mait* Versus the *Sauras*

Initially the *bvari* has no acquaintances and her life is a lonely one. No one in this house of strangers offers support and affection to the new *bvari*. She looks outside of her house to find friends. For a woman her *sauras* is, for many years, a place of strain, loneliness and hardship. Though classified as a member of the *bradar* and husband's *ghar*, she is often treated and regarded as a potentially disruptive and dangerous outsider and stranger. The *bvari* feels like an outsider in her husband's home. In the *sauras*, relations are not based on affection, whereas the *mait* is a warm, loving place of intimacy. At this stage in her life she contrasts her *sauras* to her *mait* and the quality of relationships and life she has in these respective places.

7.3.v Motherhood and Senior Status

When the *bvari* gives birth to children, especially sons, her position in the household becomes more solid and her status rises. In addition, it is thought that having children is an important stage in the transformation of a woman from an outsider into an insider (see Madan 1989: 117). She is now referred^{to} and addressed as 'mother of (eldest child's name)'. In giving birth to children and in particular to sons, a woman reproduces her husband's agnatic line and strengthens her position as a permanent household member (see Gray 1982: 218). With children the woman's loyalties towards her husband's kin and house increases perhaps because "her bond to a natal member of the household is considered stronger than her links to her brothers" (Gray 1982: 223).

When the daughter-in-law has a child she acquires status in the patriline. After she has borne several children a woman develops a new interest in her conjugal home. With motherhood, the woman becomes less of an outsider, both in her in-law's eyes and in her own perception. She has reproduced the agnatic line, the inside of her husband's household. Woman as a mother is revered and accorded relatively high

status within the agnatic group. She is the nurturer and creator and as such is associated with the divine.²⁶

However, as long as the woman is living with her parents-in-law, she continues to be treated as a *bvari*. As long as she is a *bvari* to household and lineage members, no matter how many children she has, she must continue to observe respect behaviour to her seniors. It is at this stage that the more open and tense relations between a *sasu* and *bvari* (and sisters-in-law) are likely to erupt (see Madan 1989: 117-118). As Bennett says:

... after the shy little bride has become the mother of one or two children ... she may feel that the authority of the mother-in-law no longer has to be accepted without question (1978: 130).

She no longer wants to have her movements and actions dictated by another's will (Davis 1976: 198) and she no longer wants to share her home with her husband's brothers' wives. She is more concerned with her own children and husband's well-being and arguments over work and income contributions and so on develop between co-wives. A woman resents doing more work if another woman and another's children are to benefit from her efforts, though when she becomes the head of her own household she will work and work for her own children and their future. She seeks the independence which being the mistress of one's own household brings (Madan 1989: 150). Sharma asserts that with regard to the agnatic core of a house, in-marrying women "have the lowest investment in this solidarity, at least until they have acquired a measure of authority as mothers and mothers-in-law themselves" (1978b: 226).

Either through separation from the HM/F or on the death of one or both of them, she takes over as active senior female householder. As a mother and mistress of the house in her conjugal place, a woman looks less and less to her natal home for support. At this time her need for outside friendships also decline as she invests more into her relationships with her children (which she can now openly enjoy) and seeks, and often finds, support from them (Sharma 1978a: 276). A senior woman is more confident and at ease in her conjugal place. In a very definite sense her loyalties and affections are concentrated inwards towards her children and husband. It is at this stage in her life that a woman will speak of her conjugal home as *ghar* and not *sauras* (see Madan 1989: 205). Visits to the *mait* become less frequent and her relationship to her *mait* less intense. One 58 year old Brahman woman said to me:

Before I cried when leaving my *mait* to go back to Silora. Now I like going to Silora. Silora is my home (*ghar*). Before I couldn't think of it in this way.

²⁶The mother is also destructive, and she may curse her sons and their offspring. However, it is usually woman as mother-in-law who harms her sons indirectly, by putting a curse on her *bvari*.

Though there is a decline in the number of visits made, a woman's relationship with her *mait* kin does not deteriorate in form or quality. However, once her parents and brothers and their wives have died, a woman feels less inclined to visit her *mait*. Though initially a woman may be said, and consider herself to be more part of her *mait*, she gradually becomes incorporated into her *sauras* (Sax 1991: 119; Madan 1989: 111). One Brahman woman in her late thirties to early forties explained this to me:

A girl remembers and misses her parents, especially if they are poor and in difficulty and vice versa. Otherwise, especially after having children, one wants to stay in one's own home; it feels good. You have your own fields to take care of. You belong somewhere that you can call your own.

As a woman's senior kin pass away there are fewer people in the village to whom she should show respect, fewer who regard her as an outsider and more people who regard her as an insider - as mother, mother-in-law and grandmother. Her increasing seniority brings authority and commands respect from juniors. It is ultimately when she dies that she finally becomes a full member of her husband's agnatic group (see Madan 1989: 111). She becomes one of the ancestors, who uphold the morality of the house and lineage, and should be worshipped and fed at the annual *sarad* ceremony (see Hershman 1977: 172).

7.4 Talking About the *Mait* and *Sauras*

Women as daughters and sisters have different ways of talking about the village than women as wives. Women tend to talk about their *maits* in positive terms of affection and cooperation and about their *sauras* in negative terms of conflict and rivalry.

For a female, her pre-marital *ghar* and post-marital *mait* is a place of comfort, love and abundance. There she enjoys considerable freedom, she works if she wants to, has intimate and informal relations with her natal kin and is showered with gifts and affection. In talking of their natal place, women emphasise the cooperative, harmonious, and affectionate nature of the whole *mait* village locality. As women talking about their *mait* in which they are *celibetis*, their discourse or representation of the natal village closely resembles that of men's representation of their own village. Their discourse closely resembles that of the males (a woman's brothers and fathers). Women speak of their *maits* in the idealised terms of peace, love and solidarity. In the *mait* there is love, freedom and ease. One young *bvari* said to me: "Here women work to keep up with others, but in my *mait* they work when they feel like it." I am sure that a woman living in this woman's *mait* as a *bvari* would not give the same image, but in turn would herself say this of her own *mait*.

In the *sauras*, however, she is an affinal outsider. She has a low status initially and is under the authority and direction of her husband's senior kin. In the *sauras* there are many constraints on a woman's behaviour and life is characterised by drudgery and hard work. For many years very few relations, if any, are based on love and affection.

Although the interests of different women, such as *sasus* and *bvaris* differ, all of these women talk about life in the conjugal place in the same way. Even elder women who enjoy more influence and status in their *sauras* talk about a woman's life in Silora as one of suffering and complain about the amount of work they have to do. One woman said, "men here don't do any work - only women. Morning to night just like labourers work; I have become a servant." I remember asking my landlady if women receive any special treatment after childbirth. I had just received a letter from a fellow researcher who was conducting fieldwork in Kerala telling me that women there receive massages after having given childbirth. My landlady said that women did not enjoy any special treatment and that in her opinion "a woman's life here is like that of a buffalo which lives in the *jangal*." When I asked her to explain what she meant she said that women get no *khusamad* (attention/flattery). She made the comparison with buffalos, which are kept tied up near the house or at the cow sheds for as long as they give milk. During this time they are washed daily, given good food which is prepared in the house, fresh green grass and water. However, as soon as they stop giving milk they are sent off into the forest in search of grass.

In addition, these conjugal women present Silora as a tense, conflict-ridden place where deceit and rivalry between brother households represent normal social relations. Women do not expound the ideology of agnatic solidarity and harmony. They do not uphold the 'front' of the peaceful and harmonious male group (extending from brothers to cousins and other patrilineal kin). Women draw quite a different image of Silora life. They present a particularly tense, conflict ridden image of inter-household relations. These are characterised by the rivalry, and envy, the malicious destruction of others, and mistrust, suspicion and deceit. In women's view, even brother households are to be treated as outsiders, that is with suspicion and mistrust (see Chapter Five). As one woman said to me, "the most obvious enemies, the most dangerous people, are one's own close kin (*apan najik*)." Brotherly relations are not, by women's accounts, harmonious and cooperative but competitive and destructive in nature. These kinsmen are identified as being the most likely to try to defame and pull you down (*giran*). The main conflicts in the village, according to women, exist between brothers and other close lineage kin. For women, these kinspersons are not seen as reliable allies, but as perhaps potentially one's most pronounced enemies. The following quotation illustrates these views.

One's *paravar* are the most dangerous. They do not want anyone else, especially their brothers, to have *bhalai* (well-being, success). You must keep all your plans secret and not let them out because someone, perhaps an enemy, may try to put a stop to it or ruin your plans. I know who is good and who is bad for my family; I know what people want out of us and what they want to happen to us. People will flatter you and say how clever you are, but this is just *pālisi* (policy). Then later on, or at some other time, they will try to *dhoko* (fraud, cheat) you.

7.5 Women, Space and Conduct

I think it is useful to distinguish, as Sharma (1978a: 263), Vatuk (1982a) and Mandelbaum (1988) have done, between respect and avoidance behaviour which is specific to certain roles, and behaviour which separates (and protects) women as women from men as men, in general, and from non-household men, in particular. The former is concerned with the maintenance of harmony within the house and lineage, the second with the female's sexual vulnerability both as a victim and as a seductress. Both are linked to the honour and reputation of the individual woman and her household members, for as Vatuk says, ". . . one observes purdah with reference to the social approval of persons whose opinions about one's respectability really matter" (1982a: 68).

7.5.i *Purdah* behaviour in *Mait* and *Sauras*

We have seen that the unmarried girl and the *celibetis* do not need to veil themselves in front of men in the natal village or house. Her behaviour towards her seniors, though respectful, is affectionate and informal in nature. A woman in her conjugal house however must dutifully observe avoidance-respect behaviour. These rules apply most stringently to the young *bvari* in her *sauras*. She must act respectfully, submissively and obediently in the company of her senior male and female affines, including her husband's elder sister. As she matures and her seniority increases there are fewer and fewer people whom she should avoid and to whom she should show respect. She herself becomes worthy of such treatment.

7.5.ii *Purdah* Behaviour For All Women

There exists a whole set of general constraints on a woman's behaviour, which she must observe because she is a woman, irrespective of her social role and whether she is in her *ghar*, *mait* or *sauras*. The main constraints a woman faces concern her use of space and her conduct with people outside of her house, and are similar to those detailed by Sharma (1980: 41-47). The constraints and rules apply to women with

different degrees of intensity. In general they are more stringent for young women, both unmarried and married, than they are for older, more mature women.

Within the village, there are certain places which a woman does not, and should not frequent. The road for example is a place where men stroll leisurely as they visit a shop or tea-stall. Women do not visit the tea-shops, nor do they shop at the local stores. Men, old women or pre-pubescent girls will do the errands. Shops and tea-stalls are single-sex, all male environments. Women do not pass along the road unless it is necessary to do so for work purposes. This is true of almost all female movement within the village (see Sharma 1980: 43; Vatuk 1972: 164). Women rarely visit the *bazaars* in Tarikhet or Ranikhet, and if they were to do so they would almost never go alone, and only if chaperoned by a kinsman.²⁷ As we have seen, women need to go to the forest to collect fodder and fuel. However, they will never go there alone, for the forest is where ghosts and evil spirits reside, and where women are likely to meet strange men. Women may go to their own fields since the family estate is seen as an extension of the house.

In public, a woman should act with shame and modesty. In this context, 'public' refers to any space outside of the house and to cross-sex contexts. A woman should dress modestly, covering her body from head to toe. She should not express her emotions or points of view in public. A woman should not laugh with her mouth open nor should she speak loudly. She should behave in a demure and modest way and avoid eye contact with any adult man who is not a close kinsman.

The distinction of conduct appropriate for a woman within her house and that which is appropriate outside is very important. The house is fundamentally opposed to the outside. Beech found this opposition of house-outside in Bengal. Discussions of women's place in Bengali society are apparently "couched in terms of *ghare-baire*, in the house and outside" (Beech 1982: 111). The walls of the house provide boundaries which separate the inside from the outside; they also mark normative areas (Beech 1982: 113). The walls of the inside protect and shelter women, and as Beech notes:

Inside the walls one is safe and secure. Outside there is a lack of protection, a sense of potential danger, an insecurity. One takes risks in going outside (1982: 112).

Therefore the outside, that is the area beyond the house, is constructed as, and perceived to be, a threatening place, and one in which women must be on their guard.

²⁷ Travelling on buses and going to the town are seen as dangerous activities for a single female. Although there is a direct 40 minute bus ride to Ranikhet, nobody would send their daughter to the Kumaon University college there. One young Brahman girl who obtained a first in her final year exams is now studying for a B.A. from home since she is not allowed to go to the college alone.

7.5.iii Male-Female Segregation In Daily Life

In order to complete the picture, I would like to illustrate the general ways males and females are segregated in daily life. At religious and ceremonial occasions, males and females sit in different areas, forming two single-sex groupings. In the home and at public feasts, males and females eat separately, with males eating first and females second. Females will not dance and sing in front of males, only alone in a single-sex gathering. Women prepare and cook household food, whereas men prepare and cook feast food and *parasad* at large-scale gatherings. Men and women rarely visit the temples together save on their first post-marital visit to the woman's *mait*. In most, though not all houses sleeping arrangements separate the sexes.

7.6 Men in the Ghar

A man is born and dies in his *ghar*, his natal place. At marriage a man does not undergo changes in group membership. Gray, referring to the household level says:

Unlike an anomalous married woman who is an insider and outsider, the husband is unambiguously an insider and central to the agnatic descent group at the core of the household structure (1982: 218).

This can be extended to the broader levels of lineage, *bradar* and village. A man's membership of the agnatic and local *bradar* is lifelong. For him the most significant social environment is this natal household and village. Though he has ties to affinal places, he has little direct contact with his *sauras* people (in-laws) and other *paun*. For him they are outsiders and of little relevance to his daily life.

Men emphasise the household as the core agnatic patriarchal group in the village. The father-son relationship represents this group. The ideology of the patrifocal household is of agnatic solidarity and harmony. The term *ghar* is used not only for the household, but also to refer collectively to a man's patrilineal household, lineage and village. Agnatic kin terms are extended to almost all villagers "creating the fiction that the entire village is a kind of family group related through its males" (Sharma 1980: 19). Thus, the ideology of fraternal cooperation is extended to all lineage and village 'brothers'. Since everyone in the *ghar* are 'brothers', all households in the village are 'brother' households. They are all *bradar* and belong to male ego's *ghar*. For a man, *ghar* refers to his own specific household, but also to brother and lineage brother households and to the *bradar* and village community in general. This comprises his community of insiders.

Silora males do not represent other households in the village as being 'of the outside' since they are brother households. I suggest it is precisely because men remain members of the same one village and *ghar* throughout their lives that they do

not talk of their immediate and close social environment in terms of 'the inside' and 'the outside', or in terms of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. This inside/outside opposition, and particularly on the household level of reference, is not central to a male's social and life experience. The significant oppositions for a male villager are between *paravar* and non-*paravar* members, *bradar* and *paun*, co-members of his own village and the outside world in general (see Sharma 1980: 19) and between the hills and the plains.

7.7 Concluding Remarks

Men and women have different representations both of the household and of the nature of inter-household relations in the village. Men present social relations as marked by brotherly love and cooperation; they present the image of the patrilineal ideal of brotherly solidarity. For reasons of simplicity I have misrepresented this somewhat as a solely 'male perspective'. However, on closer examination we find that females as daughters and sisters share some of this so-called 'male perspective'. Unmarried females share the same idea of *ghar* and outsiders. The unmarried girl shares the same house, *bradar* and *paun* as her father and brother. As with men, her *paun* are also outsiders to her natal *bradar* and village. However, whereas these continue to be so for a man, the daughter-sister will marry, become the member of another house and *bradar* and will assume her husband's *paun* to be her own. Nevertheless, the out-married sister-daughter remains a member, and insider of sorts, to her natal home. A woman as a married daughter and sister, that is as a *celibeti*, continues to speak of her *mait* in terms of harmony and love. The *celibeti* reiterates the ideology of brotherhood in talking about her *mait*; that is she uses the same ideology which her own brothers, and men in general, use in representing their *ghar*. Consequently, this is not a male perspective, but one shared by men and women who stand as father-daughter, brother-sister and brother's son-father's sister to one another; that is, male and female agnates.

An in-married woman, as an outsider to her husband's house, lineage and village, represents her conjugal place in very different terms to her husband. A woman who has married into Silora will talk about the village in quite a different way to how her husband and his sister talk about it. We have seen that these conjugal women's representations of Silora directly oppose the ideology of brotherhood. But why do they talk about Silora as they do? I will suggest two partial explanations.

The first is related to the opposition, on both conceptual and experiential levels, between a married woman's *mait* and her *sauras*. Whereas a man may distinguish between two different kinds of women, that is as the natal *celibeti* and the conjugal non-*celibeti*, for a woman the important distinction is between two social

contexts in which she is conceived of and treated differently, and which she herself conceives of and experiences differently; that is the *mait* and *sauras* (see Bennett 1978, 1983; Sharma 1980; Vatuk 1982b: 95; Gray 1982; Majumdar 1962: 132,318-319). I would like to suggest that in-marrying women give a tense, conflict-ridden, disharmonious image of their *sauras*, whereas married sisters-daughters of the village talk about their *mait* in the same way as their brothers do; that is, in correspondence to the ideology of agnatic cooperation, harmony and affection. Women have a tendency to talk negatively of their *sauras* and positively of their *maits*. Silora 'wives' speak of their *maits* in idealised terms of peace, love and cohesion and, in contrast, speak of Silora in critical and negative ways. These ideas are based on their experience in these two contexts.

A second possible explanation is similar to one given by Berreman in his essay on impression management (1962). Berreman says that 'back region' information is more likely to be disclosed by members of low status groups in society. In Sirkanda high caste male active household heads were anxious to project an image of *pahari* life as orthodox and respectable. In so doing they concealed certain 'secrets', information, which would contradict the image they had manufactured and hoped to present to the outside world. High caste Sirkanda men were eager to prove themselves to be worthy Hindus and to refute the stigmatised stereotypes of the backward and uncivilised hill man. Contrary to the high caste men, low caste people have no prestige or status to lose. As members of the village they know much about the secrets of the high status group. But, they "do not feel obligated to protect village secrets to the extent that high caste people do . . . They do not share, or are not heavily committed to the "common official values" which high caste people affect before outsiders" (Berreman 1962: 15-16). They are not so concerned with outsiders' views of the *pahari* way of life.

Sirkanda low caste people and Silora women as wives are identical in that their positions are regarded as degraded and fixed. They occupy socially inferior categories. Just as high caste Sirkanda men are eager to prove themselves to be orthodox Hindus equal to their co-caste persons in the plains, so too Silora men may be concerned to give an image to the outsider of brotherly harmony and consensus; that is, to present the ideal as reality. Just as low caste people are not concerned with their status, so too conjugal women in Silora have no investment in the ideal of brotherhood and agnatic solidarity. They are not concerned with, to use Berreman's words, concealing the brotherhood's skeletons (1962: 22). There is great rivalry and conflict between agnatically related houses, but men would not openly admit to this. Women, however, do.

Linked to the way in which in-married women talk of their *sauras* is the representation by women of the household as 'the inside'. As we saw in Chapter

Three women refer to the house as *bhiter* (the inside) and to household members as *bhiterak* (of the inside) and to non-household space and members as *bhyar* and *bhyarak* (outside and outsiders). I think this distinction is of particular importance to more mature women who stand as mistress of the house in ~~their~~ conjugal place. I said that ~~the~~ need for outside friends decreases as ~~they~~ invest more attention, and receives more support from, her husband and children. As she matures and gains influence in her own house, a woman may more openly express the priority and importance of the self-interest of the household, which seems at odds with the ideology of brotherhood. Self-interest of the house is the main principle on which inter-household relations are based. This principle is generally seen to motivate the actions of all other households. Though in practical terms men may see the house as an independent and separate unit, and though they too are suspicious of non-household members' motives and intentions, since they too were raised as children to tell no secrets, on the level of representations they do not talk about the house as 'the inside'. Although men know that households interact on the basis of self-interest and exact exchange, perhaps they do not so readily admit to this because it goes against the idea of brotherhood.

Women's interests differ from men's vis-a-vis the importance of fraternal solidarity. Having divided into separate hearth groups, brothers are expected to express mutual support and fraternal solidarity. However, there is no equivalent social pressure or incentive for sisters-in-laws to do the same (see Madan 1989: 150). The idiom of brotherhood which should structure relations between real brothers and which underlies and stresses the ideology of lineage unity does not apply to women in the village. Women are able to, and actively assert the priority of the household and self-interest of the house.

In addition, women deny the ideology of brotherhood by presenting conflict between brothers as the norm. Since brothers in conflict is the norm, so mutually hostile households is the norm. Indeed, women's extreme view of the inside and outside, or the fact that they emphasise the household as the inside, may be their response to viewing brothers as the cause of conflict. Though these in-marriage women are, as they mature, increasingly part of that fraternal group, it is their own households which they are concerned to sustain and protect.²⁸

²⁸As a young *bvari* a woman may not enjoy it when her HZ's visit the house. As a mature woman and household head, she regards this female affine with considerable suspicion. Though the HZ is her parent's-in-law, husband's and her sons' *celibeti*, for a woman she is not a real *celibeti*. For a woman it is only her own daughter who she really regards as her *celibeti*. The HZ or HFZ who visits is seen as a danger. The HZ has undeniable access to each of her brothers' houses. She can go inside, listen to the family matters, gather information and then move onto another brother's house and tell them what had just been said in her other brother's house. The visiting, and especially older HZ has no loyalties to any one house in particular, only affection for all her brothers. She moves around the village, visiting houses without any purpose, save, according to her BWs, to gather and disseminate information and gossip.

When a woman is a mother and senior female household member, *ghar* refers to the *cul* group. As mothers, women elaborate the consanguineal link between a mother and child as the foundation of *ghar*. It is the specificity of the child-mother link which is emphasised. The mother-child relationship, as we saw in Chapter Three, is symbolised by milk. The mother-child relationship and the symbolism of milk are important to how women conceive of the household as a community of insiders. For these women, altruistic giving, sharing and affection are the qualities of relations between insiders, that is, within the house. Milk symbolises the 'inside' as women define it; it symbolises the house (*ghar*). Milk is the key symbol of nurturing and solidarity, and relations within the house are both represented by, and based on, 'the milk'. Relations with outsiders are presented as instrumental, manipulative and calculated. It could be said that for women, relations with outsiders are symbolised by alcohol, the antithesis of milk (see Chapter Five).

For men, though altruism should be the quality of intra-household relations, the ideology of brotherhood prescribes extra-household relations, that is relations between brothers and brother households, as being altruistic too. Relations with outsiders, with non-brothers/agnates as contextually defined, are represented as problematic.

At the same time, however, I think this distinction between the house and the outside is of significance to women in general. From pubescence onwards, the young female learns that the house is a place of security, and that the outside is one of potential danger. The house/outside opposition takes on particular significance for females, and, though its meaning may change as she matures, nevertheless remains an important distinction.

When Silora men speak of outsiders they are referring to non co-villagers, non-caste members, Harijans, plains people and so on. Men speak about plains people as outsiders in a similar way to that which women speak about outsiders of the household. The inside/outside dichotomy is shared by men and women. The associations of the outsider with moral inferiority, danger, suspicion and mistrust are present when women talk of non-household members, and when high caste men and women talk of the plains people or the Dums. What is important is that men express the inside/outside opposition in terms of broader levels of community, be it caste, village or region. This supra-household level, and the perhaps male-derived village-hills/outside-plains opposition has been subject to study by Berreman (1972). Berreman refers to the outside and outsiders as those places and persons who are not in, or of, the village, or the marriage network or the hill region in general. These are of great importance, but his analysis overrides not only women's discourse, but also the notion of the household as an important community of insiders.

I noted earlier that the significant oppositions for a male villager are between *paravar* and non-*paravar* members, *bradar* and *paun*, co-members of his own village and the outside world in general, and between the hills and the plains. They are also significant oppositions for women too. However, for women the inside/outside distinction, though pertinent and important on these broader levels, ultimately begins at the household level and extends outwards from there.

In the next chapter we move onto yet another plane to investigate relations with the gods and spirits. The most popular gods and spirits are concerned with the house, lineage, village and region in general.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GODS AND THE SPIRITS

In this chapter I consider the various supernatural beings that constitute an important part of Silora people's world. I describe and discuss the *jagar* (spirit possession session) which provides an important context in which humans and the spirits may communicate directly with one another.

Much of what I present is replicated in other parts of India and Nepal. However, specific to the Silora data is the fact that certain supernaturals are spoken about as being 'of the inside' and 'of the outside': the inside/outside distinction is maintained in relation to supernatural beings. This is most clearly expressed in relation to the category of ghosts (*bhuts*), which are spoken of as 'outside' and 'inside' ghosts. Demons and evil spirits are referred to as 'of the outside'. As with other outsiders, they are considered to be dangerous, immoral and greedy beings. Spirits of kinspersons whose death ceremonies were not completed are called 'inside' ghosts. Ancestors are also spoken of as 'of the inside', as are the curses they and 'inside' ghosts send.

While the above constitutes the major theme of this chapter, a number of secondary points are made in relation to the supernaturals. Firstly, any breach in kinship morality and rules is not simply a private matter, but a breach of the general moral order; it brings supernatural sanction and involves the deities. Secondly, the *jagar* acts, among other things, as a platform on which tensions, conflicts and breaches of kinship morality between kin and between the living and the dead, are exposed, confronted and, ideally, resolved. The *jagar* serves both as a 'positive' ritual of devotional worship, and as a 'negative' ritual of appeasement and exorcism, often involving a sacrificial offering (see Fuller 1988: 22-24). *Jagar* performances provide insight into the kinds of problems which exist in the society by exposing and addressing them. Lastly, all afflicting spirit agents are dealt with in very similar ways. In order to effect their removal, or an end to the misfortune and suffering which they have caused, sacrifices are performed.

8.1 Gods and Spirits

Gods and spirits, of which there are several kinds, form another category of beings with whom villagers interact. All have different forms and attributes. The latter include particular features, places, names and for some, stories. Gods and spirits are approached and dealt with in manners considered appropriate to their nature. Ultimately all gods are united in one form, but this unity does not deny diversity.¹ As one woman said to me: "God is one, but has many forms and faces (*rūp*): we pray to one for this and to another for that." The supernatural world of Silora people can be divided into several broad categories. I describe each category in turn and demonstrate their characters and place in the daily lives of village people.

8.1.i Pan-Hindu Sanskritic Gods

The first category consists of the Pan-Hindu Sanskritic gods such as Śiv, Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu. They are sometimes referred to as *dyapt* (deity). More generally they are addressed and referred to as *bhagvān*, or *īśvar* ('Lord'). These 'big gods' of the Sanskritic texts have a broad focus of concern, are extremely powerful and benevolent. They are however too powerful and important to be involved with the problems of daily human life. They are concerned with the movement and workings of the cosmos as a whole and not with particular villages, households or people (see Fuller 1992: 32). They are not approached by humans for assistance. This is not because they are considered the purest and most powerful in the divine hierarchy as Wadley (1975) suggests, but because deities are conceptualized in terms of their domain of power (the universe, a local unit or an intermediate realm) and in relation to their specificity, accessibility and use (whether a general concern with the order of the universe or a specific concern with some people, a particular disease or other problems) (Babb 1975: 192,199,216,238-244). There is no unequivocal hierarchy of divine power as Wadley suggests. There are axes of differentiation.

Sanskritic gods do not possess people. They never dance or speak through mediums or oracles.² Sanskritic gods are not offered meat sacrifices. They only accept flowers, fruit, water, cow's milk and incense. Worship of these gods usually requires the Brahman priest and Sanskrit texts. Local people often speak to, or about, them in Hindi. There are no village temples dedicated to any of these big gods. There is a Binsar Mahadev temple in the forest two kilometres from the village. This

¹Leavitt says that there is "divine indifferentiation" (1992: 28) and that in Kumaon, the gods as a whole are never referred to as a divine hierarchy (1992: 26).

²There is one exception in Silora. One Brahman villager claims to be Hanuman's medium. He dances and speaks in *jagars*.

is a Siv temple and is situated next to the cremation ground used by Silora and other villages. Many other Pan-Hindu gods and goddesses are represented there. At Śiv-*rātri* some village women will visit the Siv temple to wash the *linga* (aniconic phallic emblem of Siv), and in the summer months a modest *melā* (fair)³ is held there. Worship of these gods is mainly restricted to major all India festivals, important holy days and life-cycle ceremonies. At Divali, Lachami, the goddess of good fortune, is worshipped in each house. All household ceremonies are opened with worship to Ganeś. Most households have a picture of Siv in their household temple. In some, other gods are also represented. Siv is worshipped daily along with the household gods and other deities. None of the villagers worship any of the big gods as their *ghar dyapt* (household deity). In general, these Sanskritic gods are worshipped outside the village.

8.1.ii Regional and 'Dancing' Gods

The next category of deities are the local or regional divinities. They are referred to as *dyapt* and are more assiduously worshipped in the villages than they are in non-rural areas (Leavitt 1992: 24-25). Most of these regional deities are believed to have a non-divine origin and to have lived in Kumaon in the past. Each one has its own unique legend in which its particular life story, deeds and abilities are recounted and exalted (see Oakley and Gairola 1977). Their breadth of focus is limited to Kumaon in particular. They are more active and involved in local human affairs. Most people hold the view that *dyapts* do not harm people. *Dyapts* do not 'catch' or attach themselves (*lagaṇ*) onto humans. Such words, *lagaṇ* and *pakaṇ*, are primarily used with reference to the attachment of ancestral curses or malevolent spirits on a human. The regional *dyapts* 'come into the body or limbs' of a person (*dyapt āṇ mē nācaṇ*). A *dyapt*, I was told, is an *acch atma* (a good spirit) and is also *gharak*, of the house.

These *dyapts* can possess people, and are often referred to as *nācaṇī dyapt* (dancing gods). This is a "good" possession (Fuller 1992: 231) which does not bring illness and misfortune as does possession by demons and evil spirits. To be possessed by a god means that the deity has chosen a certain human body through which to communicate. The human body is the deity's *ghvaṛ* (horse). Those people in whom *dyapts* take form may become a *danriya* (medium or oracle) or a *puchyār* (diviner).

Although they are generally thought to be benevolent local deities may act malevolently and cause harm if they are neglected, or as punishment for some unjust action particularly between agnatic kin. If household members act immorally, the god

³The reason for the *mela* is the performance of a *yagy* (religious sacrifice) at which many priests chant all day around a large fire. Myths of the large Pan-Hindu gods are recounted in Hindi to large audiences. Berreman (1972: 385) reports a similar event in a Garhvali village.

may inflict trouble (see Pfeleiderer and Lutze 1979). They can send ghosts and demons to 'catch' people. Therefore, when someone is suffering from the afflictions of an evil spirit-ghost, it could be the result of the actions of a deity (Fuller 1992: 226).

Regional deities are worshipped at their temples, and also in the context of *jagars*. Every principal local god is thought to be accompanied by a band of ghostly assistants and companions. These lesser spirits are also incarnated and worshipped alongside the main gods. They are worshipped aside the god so as to keep their malevolence at bay. Worship does not require the Brahman priest. *Dyapts* are addressed and worshipped in Kumaoni. Most *dyapts* accept animal offerings (usually male goats), and all will receive offerings of coconut or cucumber. These regional *dyapts* appear as village, lineage (*kul* or *paravarak dyapt*) and household gods (*gharak dyapt*).

In Silora there are five village temples. The *dyapts* represented in these temples include Gwel, Bhumiya, Devi Dhuni (Harju) and Chammu. Every village temple has a *pujari* (temple priest). Ceremonies and offerings can only be performed at these temples under the guidance of the temple priest. The *pujaris* are distributed amongst the various Brahman Pant and Upadhyay lineages. The position is transmitted from a father to the eldest son. Each village god is worshipped annually after one of the two harvests (see Chapter Four). The village gods may be called upon for advice or help.⁴ If a couple do not have any children they may approach a village deity to request help and if their wishes are fulfilled they will, as promised, offer a goat to the god in thanks. The priest will officiate at these rituals. The goat is decapitated and the right leg and the head, with the tail in its mouth, is given to the god. The goat cutter receives one leg and the *pujari* is given the head. The *pujari* then prepares goat-head curry, a very spicy and warming broth. The rest of the goat is kept and consumed, as *parasad*, by the family which sponsored the offering. Married daughters and sisters of the village may also return to make offerings to their *mait* gods. I now consider the main features of these *dyapts* since they are regularly worshipped and propitiated in Silora.

Gwel's temple is old and small, strung onto one end of a row of houses at the higher, northern end of the village. Gwel receives goat offerings and prefers red goats. An annual *puja* is performed for Gwel at his temple on a Sunday in the month of Kārtik (October-November) after the rice and *maduva* harvests.

⁴In all parts of India people worship gods, and journey to shrines to obtain some boon from the presiding deity or to seek some physical and material attributes of happiness (Fuller 1992: 71). Such pilgrimages and worship are motivated responses to problems of physical and mental anguish. People hope the deity will produce mental ease and well-being (see Gold 1988: 134,147-149; Morinis 1984: 22-24). The same pertains to visits to local village shrines in Silora.

Gwel (also known as Golu, Goriyā) is concerned with Kumaon as a region. His focus is also specific enough to be involved with household worries. He is perhaps the most important god in the village. He is called upon to dance and to control malevolent beings during *jagars*. Gwel is a benevolent figure, concerned with justice and fair punishment. He is often asked for his assessment regarding disputes between agnatic kin, especially land disputes. Some people accept Gwel's judgement and direction in favour of taking a case to court. The latter is not always believed to yield a fair result, and certainly involves far more expense (see Atkinson 1974b: 824).⁵ One village man said to me: "Gwel is like a judge. He is the 'head of department'." Gwel is angered by injustice and breaches of the right order of things and his anger is always justified. He is believed to have been a Katyuri prince and a just King in Kumaon's history: he is a King, a judge and a protector.⁶

Bhumiya is the god of the land. He watches over the growth and prosperity of the land and fields. Bhumiya's temple is the largest in the village, and there are plans to enlarge it. The temple is situated on the top of a hillock over-looking the village and the valley below. Bhumiya receives goat offerings and prefers white goats. An annual *puja* is held at Bhumiya's temple on a Tuesday in the month of Kartik. During the fieldwork period, Bhumiya's was the most frequently visited temple for boon-related requests and offerings. Although he may be called upon for house *jagars*, this did not occur during this period. Gwel is usually called upon at house *jagars*. Gwel and Bhumiya share the association with the colour white, and their roles as protectors of the village and its people.

The Devi temple is situated at the southern boundary of the village, on top of a hill. It is infrequently visited or used. An annual *puja* is held during the summer months, after the *rabi* harvests. The temple priest is a male, but the *danriya* is female. Devi as a village deity does not seem to be very important in Silora. Her temple is neglected and almost empty. However, as a household god she is very active. The Goddess is both a high, big god and a dancing god. In Asoj, every household worships Durga Devi.

As a regional *dyapt*, the Goddess is very important. Nanda Devi, the daughter of the Himalayas, is a great regional Goddess with major shrines in both Kumaon and Garhwal. According to oral tradition, Nanda was the sister of a King during the Cand period. There is a Nanda Devi temple in Almora town. Every year

⁵There is a very famous Gwel temple known as Citai, near Almora town. It is inundated with petitions to Gwel to help people redress injustices which they have suffered (see Randhawa 1970: 18-26.) There are thousands of bells of all sizes hanging in and around the temple area. These bells are offered in thanks to Gwel by satisfied petitioners.

⁶For Gwel's legend see Atkinson (1974b: 821-823), Oakley and Gairola (1977: 156-159) and Gaborieau (1975b: 152-153).

in the month of Bhado, a large two-day fair and festival is held in Almora, in which buffalo and goats are sacrificed.⁷

The Dhuni temple is the second largest in the village. Dhuni means sacred fire but the temple is also referred to as the temple of Harju (or Haru). This is the most centrally positioned of all the temples. Haru was a former king of Champavat, who in his old age devoted himself to religion. Once a year a large Dhuni *jagar*, which the whole village attends, is performed in the open air. In 1990 this occurred on 15 June, in the month of Asāṛ.

Lastly comes Chammu, the benevolent protector of domestic cattle. The temple is far away on the outskirts of the village and has been abandoned. There are no *pujari* or *danriya*. There is, however, one man who claims to know how to do a Chammu *puja*. If Chammu is to be worshipped, people will usually do so in their houses. A small temporary shrine and *puja* area is erected in the *goth*, where the household's animals are kept. Raw milk, curds and *khir* (rice pudding) are offered to Chammu. My landlord offered a white goat when he performed a Chammu *puja*. This was in thanks for receiving healthy milk-giving cattle for many years. Though a Brahman priest is not necessary to worship Chammu, people seem to feel reassured if one comes to officiate. In one case I heard the Brahman priest mutter: "What is there for me to do? Just say a few *mantras* and give *pithya*." He seemed to have been invited as a precautionary measure more than for any other reason.

Other *dyapts* represented in the village through *danriya* are Narsingh and Saim, the ascetic *yogis*. They do not ask for blood sacrifices, and are not village deities. For details of other Kumaoni gods see Fanger (1980: 368-369), Krengel (1989: 267-276), Atkinson (1974b) Oakley (1905).

Apart from the village temples there are four *paravar mandirs* (lineage temples). All are temples devoted to Gwel, who is both the house and lineage god of almost all Silora households. Men usually regard their lineage deity as their household god. However, as Fanger reports (1980: 366), women often bring their lineage deity with them at marriage to their husband's household. Children will usually maintain the father's deity, though women tend to retain their mother's lineage deity. In Silora, one *paravar* god is originally the deity of the lineage's ancestral grandmother's natal lineage; that is, the present *danriya*'s great grandmother's brother's (FFMB) lineage Gwel. Not all of the lineage gods currently have *danriyas*, but for those which do, the *danriya* also acts as the temple *pujari*. Rituals are rarely held at these temples. In every household shrine various gods such as Siv, Devi, Gwel and Bhumiya, are gathered to protect the household.

⁷See Sax (1990, 1991) for detailed studies of the Goddess Nanda Devi and her oral legends and songs in neighbouring Garhwal.

8.1.iii Ancestors

Ancestral spirits form another category of spirits with whom villagers communicate. Ancestors are referred to as *gujāre* or *pitṛ log* and their focus of power and influence is very specific. Their concerns are with the households of their direct offspring. They may bring good fortune, fertility and well-being to their descendants and are the guardians of moral and correct conduct expected between close kin and between humans and the ancestors. When angry, they can afflict suffering on their descendants. Most often, they will curse the latter for their wrong-doings. The curse is referred to as *hank* which is always 'of the inside', and never 'of the outside'.

8.1.iv Ghosts, Demons and Evil Spirits

Ghosts are primarily the spirits of people who met 'bad' deaths.⁸ This includes those who had untimely or violent deaths, or who died in a state of resentment over the division of property and land disputes, or whose funerary rites were incorrectly performed. If a body is not cremated or given the full death rites, the restless and dissatisfied soul is bound to remain uncontained, wandering around and intervening in human affairs. Within this broad category of ghosts (*bhuts*) Silora people distinguish between those which are 'of the inside' and those which are 'of the outside'. Spirits of deceased kinspeople whose mortuary rites are incomplete and who have not been properly constituted as ancestors, are *bhuts*, but they are not outside, strange ghosts. To distinguish these ghosts from other kinds of ghosts, these *bhuts* are prefixed by the qualifying word *bhiterak* which specifies that these are 'inside' ghosts.⁹

Another category of spirits are referred to as *jāngalak* or *baṇ baṇi* (from the forest) and *bhyarak* (of the outside). These 'outside' spirits include *chal* ('deceit' or ghostly shadow), *masan* (spirit of the cremation ground) and *bhūt-pret* (ghosts). The above were described to me as 'wicked' or 'vicious' spirits. The *chal-masan* are depicted as black, dirty and horrific-looking. They are believed to be greedy and deceitful, and catch people to satisfy their own desires. These evil spirits lurk in wastelands, forests, lonely gullies, crossroads, cremation grounds, burial areas, and places where people have died violently or accidentally.

My high caste informants told me that *chal-masan* are worshipped by the Dums; they are their gods. I cannot say whether Silora Dums still do worship *chal-masan*, but just above the Dum living area there is a small 'shrine' of rocks and stones,

⁸For more discussions on 'good' and 'bad' deaths see Madan (1987), Parry (1982), Gold (1988).

⁹These kinds of ghosts are found all over India (Gold 1988) and Nepal (Stone 1988; Gray 1987; Gaborieau 1975a).

which is said to be for the *masan*.¹⁰ Dums and evil spirits are nevertheless closely associated in high-caste peoples' minds. The image of these evil souls are projected by twice-born castes onto their worshippers, the Dums (see Kapur 1988: 75). Descriptions of *chal-masan* as being greedy, dirty, black and ugly closely mirror their descriptions of low caste people (see Chapter Four).

Both 'inside' and 'outside' ghosts are said to 'catch' (*pakaṛaṇ*) or 'attach' (*lagaṇ*) themselves to their victims. They cause disturbances, obstacles and interferences which may take the form of ill health, infertility, bad luck and madness, threatening a person's and family's well-being (see Gold 1988: 68). The most common and least extreme physical indications of their presence are trembling, unconsciousness, fits and paleness in the face.

8.2 Misfortune and Suffering Caused by Spirit Beings

There are various explanatory theories of suffering and misfortune available to and invoked by Hindus. When speaking in general and abstract terms the distribution of fortune is explained by villagers in terms of karma (Sharma 1973: 351). However, the karma theory never functions in isolation in popular Hinduism. It is only one of a number of explanations people use to account for or respond to the experiences and vicissitudes of life. The various explanations range from natural causes, anger of the gods, malign astrological configurations, spirit possession, witchcraft, the evil eye and disequilibrium of the bodily humours. These non-karmic theories are explanatory and therapeutic (Kakar 1982: 80-88) and indicate remedies and corrective action.¹¹ However, in Silora misfortunes of various kinds are most frequently explained in terms of the work of angry and neglected gods and ancestors, or of greedy evil spirits.¹² What is interesting is that all of these agents inflict suffering onto humans in the same way, either through a series of misfortunes, or through spirit possession. As people say, *dyapts* and ancestors afflict people in the form (*rūp*) of, and in the same way as, *bhuts*.

¹⁰Kapur (1988: 67) reports that Dums in a more isolated area in the north of Almora District still worship evil spirits.

¹¹For discussions on karma, fate and free-will see Sharma (1973), Obeyesekere (1968), Keyes and Daniel (1983), Kolenda (1964); for discussions on Ayurveda see Zimmerman (1980, 1988). On astrology see Pugh (1983a, 1983b, 1984) and Raheja (1988: 37-67) and on witchcraft see Babb (1975) and Carstairs (1983). A general and thorough discussion is given by Fuller (1992: Chapter 10).

¹²Bererman suggests the same is true for Garhvali villagers. He says: "Traditional Pahari religion is focused on anxiety about the difficulties which afflict people and which are assumed to be the result of the machinations of supernaturals" (1964: 67). Other subsidiary explanations given by villagers refer to omens, 'bad' land and such things.

8.2.i *Dyapts*, Ancestors and Inside Ghosts

Regional deities and ancestors uphold the moral order, *dharam*, and protect human beings. However, this divinely sustained order depends on proper relations between deities and their human worshippers, and between humans, especially agnates. Correct relations between humans were outlined in Chapter Three. The anger of the deities and ancestors is "a sanction against human misconduct and a significant dimension of their protective role" (Fuller 1992: 224). 'Inside' ghosts, however, cannot directly protect their living kin since they are unrecognised and unincorporated; they are neither ancestors nor fully-fledged vicious wicked ghosts. They remain in limbo, able to punish but not to protect.

Dyapts

Deities, though generally considered to be benevolent, may act malevolently in cases where injustice has occurred, mainly between agnatic kinsmen. As noted in Chapter Three, the ideology of brotherhood represents agnatic kinship as based on cooperation and brotherly concern. Disregard for the ideals of fraternal solidarity and mutual support, and the development of enmity between brother households is considered to be a breach in the moral order and offensive behaviour. Nevertheless, in reality, the most serious form of dissension occurs between brothers of separate hearth groups. Enmity and rivalry, if prolonged and unresolved, can lead to a situation in which all social relations between the two households are severed.

When some malpractice occurs and one person is unjustly treated, he will, in his distress, call upon a god for help. The god, seeing the injustice done, will protect the supplicant and punish the wrong-doer. A vow, carrying supernatural sanctions, is made to cease all forms of communication and interaction with the offending party. This vow or oath is known as *kas*.¹³ Thereafter the two parties will not speak to each other, nor will they visit each other. No water, foodstuffs or invitations are exchanged. When food exchanges cease, social relations are broken off. The sudden and total refusal to offer or receive food can symbolise social conflict and expresses anger (Stone 1988: 101). All *āṇ-jāṇ* and *liṇ-diṇ* (visiting and exchange) is ceased. They will not eat or drink at the same place nor will they put on a *pithya* at the same ceremony. If both parties are invited to a village wedding, one group must not accept a *pithya*, tea or food if members of the other household have already accepted them.¹⁴

¹³This sounds very similar to '*chhinga*' or '*barjan*' reported by Majumdar (1962: 91-92), which he says are the customary ways of expressing tension and social disapproval (1962: 255).

¹⁴Sometimes a vow is taken by an individual alone, without the knowledge of the other party. The latter will find out that they are 'in *kas*' with the first party if, for example, *pain* given to a brother house is returned.

However, if anyone, including the original supplicant, should break the vow, he too is liable to supernatural punishment (see Majumdar 1962: 255).

If any of these rules are not observed, *nukasan* (harm, trouble) will surely befall one, if not both parties. This situation of enforced separation and avoidance will stretch across the generations until the situation is resolved. Though the *kas* may have originated a generation or two ago, the offspring must abide by the rules. Sometimes the descendants are unaware of the *kas* and unwittingly break the rules and bear the price for their acts. If A and B were in *kas* and both are now dead, then if their offspring eat together misfortune will result. People will discover that this is the case when they go to see a diviner or when they hold a *jagar* in times of illness and misfortune. There they may be told that the reason for the illness or misfortune is that a man's grandfather and his grandfather's brother were in *kas*.

Usually quarrels and disputes over land and property between brothers are the cause for households being in *kas*. *Kas*, I was told, only occurs between agnates. I shall give examples of *kas* situations of which I was aware:

1. The first refers to a young Brahman widow who now lives in Silora, which is her *mait*. Her parents died when she was a child; she was a poor girl and was married to a man many years her senior. After one year of marriage her husband died. Her husband's brothers then appropriated her *hisse* (shares) of the ancestral land and property although, as a widow, she should have received this land (see Chapter Three). Deeply distressed, she returned to her *mait* where she lived for a few years with her brother and his wife. Over the years she has moved from place to place, teaching sewing to earn some money, but now lives in Silora, where she rents accommodation.

She heard that her husband's brothers and their families had been experiencing problems. They had visited a diviner who said that she (the young widow) was causing them difficulties because her soul was so sad, and because she had cried. The widow told me that her crying, her *doṣ* (blame), and her curses had 'gone onto them'. She had called the gods and told them of her sadness, had taken a *dyapt ka kas* (deity's vow), and now she and her *sauras* people were in *kas*. Her husband's brothers sent her food but she returned it. If she had accepted it she would have broken the oath and then her *doṣ* would return onto herself. The brothers-in-law contacted her and told her to return to take the house and land which is rightfully hers. She refused. Now her brothers-in-law have let her land go to waste. She is pleased that they are suffering. In order for the situation to be resolved a *jagar* must be performed, a goat killed and a feast made and shared.

2. Of two brothers, one was a migrant worker who had been absent from the village for a long period. The other started to encroach upon his absent brother's land. This was a breach of the moral duties between brothers as regards equal property

shares. They could not resolve the ensuing dispute over the *var* (boundary) and so they went into *kas*. Finally they performed a *puja* in the disputed field and removed the *kas* between them.

3. This example refers to two grandfathers who separated their hearths and property. One of them, Anand, did not have any sons. When all his daughters were married off, he and his wife rejoined his brother: living from a common hearth, they worked the land and shared the harvests. Then one day, Anand decided to give his land to one of his daughters and so the two brothers separated again. His brother Bissan was upset because he and his family had been working on and eating from Anand's land which had now been given to the latter's daughter and son-in-law. Bissan died angry and hurt at what his brother had done. Anand's buffalo died shortly afterwards only to be followed by Anand himself and then his wife. These were taken as inauspicious signs by the offspring. They now do not communicate with each other, and have not yet resolved the legacy of the property dispute.

4. This case concerns conflict between a woman, who, with her son, are in *kas* with her step-children. This woman was her husband's first wife. A few years after her wedding, her husband told her he did not want her any more, and so she returned to her *mait* with her son. They lived there for about 16 years. Meanwhile her husband took on a second 'wife' and had five children. When the husband died, the mother and son returned to Silora to claim their share in the property. The woman had been very sad and angry about her husband's treatment of her and had told the gods of her pain and suffering. However, when she returned to the village she or her son must have eaten with the second wife's children. The result was that she and her daughter-in-law fell very ill. The situation has not been resolved and *kas* continues into the second and third generations.

Deities will also become enraged and express their wrath if they are not duly thanked for any protection or help given in the past. If a household has enjoyed healthy cattle and abundant supplies of milk over the years, then Chammu should be duly thanked. If Bhumiya was asked to help a family find a husband for their daughter or to give them a son, and these demands have been fulfilled, he must be worshipped and offerings made.

Ancestors

The living have duties and obligations to their ancestors. For example, they perform their annual *sarad* ceremonies for the maintenance of the deceased forefathers during the dark half of the month of Asoj. The ancestors are also propitiated and asked for their blessings at the beginning of most major ritual work, such as a wedding. They should be remembered and worshipped as other divinities are.

The living are expected to serve their ancestors with respect and worship. Ancestors are thought to exercise a benevolent and healing influence on their descendants, but if they are not fed and honoured correctly by living kin, they can be dangerous. One summer a young man was suddenly overcome by nausea, fainting spells and bed-wetting. He was also very afraid of the dark. One night he started to 'dance'. A grandmother (*am*) from five generations back was said to be in the man's body. Her spirit was angered because she had not been worshipped for a long time. She was making herself and her distress known through the young man. In this case responsibility lay on all of her descendants to rectify the situation and to install her as a recognised Devi god in the ancestral house, where she would be regularly worshipped along with the other deities.

Ancestral benevolence is ensured by continued good works of their descendants. Failure to give *seva* to one's ancestors and to live a life within the limits of *dharam* is faulty behaviour and provokes ancestral anger (see Selwyn 1981: 389). Failure by a man to serve his parents and failure by a woman to serve her parents-in-law are considered breaches of kinship obligations and hence blameworthy. Disregard for the kinship principle of respect to the elders and failure to meet kinship obligations such as *seva*, are contrary to moral conduct and therefore sinful and can result in severe supernatural retribution.

If a *sasu* and *bvari* argue and the *bvari* does not serve her *sasu* well, then after the *sasu*'s death the *bvari*, or someone in her household, will suffer some illness or misfortune. The deceased and offended *sasu* will probably be identified as the agent of misfortune. Some people refer to the afflicting agent as a *dyapt* (deity) since ancestors, or *gujāre log*, are absorbed into the general category of the gods. Equally, people may say that the *burī* (old woman), *sasu* or *sasu's atma* (spirit) is on the sick person. However, I often heard the word *sanskar* used in place of *atma*. For example: "If I hadn't served my *sasu* well then her *sanskar* would have come onto us (*lagan*)." Another example is: "If we do not do good works, our ancestor peoples' *sanskars* will come onto us. *Sanskar* is attached in subsequent generations." This is a rather unusual use of the word *sanskar*. *Sanskar* usually refers to rite, ceremony or the process of refinement. Here *sanskar* seems to be associated with action (*karm*) and the soul/spirit (*atma*). The equations were quite clearly stated by one man:

He whose *sanskar-karm* is alright will take birth in a good house. This is how the word is used. For example, in an accident two people live and one dies, then people will say that the two survivors have a good *sanskar*, the one who died a bad one.

One man said that *sanskar* means 'the fruits of one's action' and that if one had done something bad and regretted it, then in order to make one's *sanskar* alright, one would

do a *puja*. Another person said, "*sanskar* equals *atma*. If the spirit is made sad then it will go onto another."

More generally, people would refer to 'the crying of the dead spirit'. The spirit's feelings of sadness, anger and pain are referred to as *hank*. People emphasised that *hanks* are only *bhiterak* (of the inside); a *hank* is always of one's ancestors. There are no outside (*bhyarak*) *hanks*. Though people speak about *hank* as if it were an ancestral curse or spirit, in fact *hank* means fault, blame, conceit, pride and vanity (see Paliwal 1985). If the ancestral deities are insulted or disgraced, either in speech or action, then they will put *hank* onto the offender. Such blame or moral fault, like sin and *karma*, can be transferred and transmitted across the generations.¹⁵ In order to remove the *hank* and the suffering (*dukh*) which it has brought, one must worship or honour the *hank*, known as *hank pujaṇ*. This is done in the context of a *jagar* in which the *hank* will 'dance'.

Inside Ghosts

Related to the ideas of blame and fault are those ancestors who never received complete death rites. Although these spirits are opposed to the ancestors who died properly and received full death rites, both claim a right to be offered food and worship. Their spirits wander uncontained and afflict their descendants in the hope of reminding close kin of their predicament. These 'inside' ghosts are the unappeased spirits of a potentially benevolent deceased kinsperson. Such ghost affliction is also often referred to as *hank* affliction. Because the spirit does not have a home, as such, it curses its offspring.

One *bvari* is afflicted by her husband's great aunt's spirit. This *bvari* suffers from sudden fits and her elder sister-in-law has had a series of still-births, and her husband died a few years ago in his early forties. The afflicting spirit died widowed and without sons. Her last rites were not performed correctly and in her lifetime she was hit by her nephew and generally maltreated. Since she was without sons, her land went to her nephew. Now his offspring are working and eating from what used to be her land. She has returned to afflict her descendants as punishment for neglecting their kinship duties.

The second case concerns all the households of an entire lineage (*paravar*). Many of the lineage households are experiencing misfortunes of various kinds. One senior woman has said she has seen an old woman come to her in her dreams. It is believed that some ancestral grandmother (*am*) is 'on' the woman and is the cause of

¹⁵Inden explains how sin or the results of a sin committed, can be physically transmitted to appear in a later generation (1986: 157-162). For discussions regarding the conceptualization of Karma in a substantive way, and as transferable, see Marriott (1976); O'Flaherty (1976: 28-37); Daniel (1983: 28); Sharma (1973: 351-352).

everyone's distress. The deceased *am* had no sons and died a widow. Apparently nobody really cared for her and she was neglected by even her close kin. She became ill and died, but nobody noticed her absence. After a few days someone went to her house and found her dead, her body infested with worms and maggots. Her corpse was hurriedly prepared for cremation and burned. Her land went to her (undeserving) nephews. Now her nephew's offspring are happily eating from her land with no thought for her. Because of the neglect she experienced during her life, and the incomplete death rites performed for her, she has made her presence known. It is now the whole lineage's responsibility to appease the *bhut*, to remove the *hank* and to put an end to their collective suffering.

The third case is of another *bvari* possessed by such a *bhut*. The young woman is very thin, suffers from fatigue, and enters nauseous fits followed by apparent unconsciousness. Though she has been married for several years, she still has not become pregnant. The possessing spirit is believed to be the *bvari*'s father-in-law's aggrieved first wife. The (now deceased) father-in-law had two 'wives'. His second wife is still alive. The father-in-law brought the second woman to the house without any marriage ceremony. Together he and his wife abused and mistreated the first wife and threw her out of the house. She had no children and fled back to her *mait* where she died. Her last rites were not performed by her *sauras* people. Now she has come upon her husband's descendants.

In all the above cases, the word *bhut* may be replaced by *atma* or *hank*. *Bhut* is an uncontained soul and may be referred to simply as *atma*. In addition, failure to perform a kinsperson's last rites is a breach of kin obligations and therefore immoral and blameworthy. The neglected kinsperson's disembodied spirit (*atma*) and 'fault of conceit' or blame (*hank*), are simultaneously attached to the afflicted descendants and their households.

Deities, ancestors and 'inside' ghosts afflict because some moral fault has been committed. Their attacks are motivated by fair play and are morally justified. However this is not the case for evil spirits and demons. They attack to satisfy their own desire and greed. They are often motivated by hunger and envy.

8.2.ii *Masan-Chal* and *Bhuts*

'Outside' ghosts (*bhyarak bhuts*) harm people by possessing them. They attack to satisfy their insatiable hunger and are said to 'eat' their victims. *Masan-bhut* usually attack at night, or when someone is passing through an area known to be inhabited by ghosts. This is usually a site where someone died or where an accident occurred. Someone walking through such an area at night may become scared, and the ghost will go onto him. There are four such areas all situated at the boundary of the village. These ghosts are particularly attracted to blood, excrement and other impure

substances as well as people who are 'alone' and 'weak' (see Babb 1975: 207; Reynolds 1980: 45; Fuller 1992: 240).¹⁶ Menstruating and pregnant women, as well as women who have just delivered a baby are considered polluting and are considered to be vulnerable to ghosts when in these conditions. Women and children are considered particularly vulnerable to spirit afflictions. One man told me: "Evil spirits go onto women and children because they are fearful, 'tender' and delicate (*kauv*)."
Men are not. If a woman has been working in the woods and gets scared, a *bhut* will go onto her. When she returns home, breastfeeds her child and puts it in her lap, then the *masan-chal* will go onto the child. The child will then get a fever, or appear to be having a fit with his teeth tightly clenched and his eyes rolled back with only the white of the eyeballs showing. Evil spirits can give suffering (*dukh*) and troubles to females especially in the black months of Bhado and Cait.

Young pubescent girls are prone to *masan* attacks. A *masan* will go onto a girl if she falls while carrying wood or grass through the forest. She will not be aware of having been caught. However, if she is sitting at a *puja* and she starts to cry or 'dance' in front of the deities, then this is taken as a sign of ghost affliction. If a spirit medium should grab her hair, it is because an evil spirit is on her. Deities and ancestors do not 'ride' unmarried girls. In general a girl's ghost possession is not usually discovered until after her wedding. I heard of one Silora girl who, on stepping out of the palanquin on arrival in her *sauras*, started to 'dance'. This behaviour is taken to mean that the woman has an evil spirit from her *mait* on her. This was spoken about as a *mait masan* or *mait bhut*.¹⁷

Ghosts are attracted by the colour red. Red is the auspicious colour of the newly-wedded bride and symbolises the auspicious state of a woman whose husband is alive. People, in particular women, are also thought to be vulnerable to ghost attachment when travelling. One newly-married daughter returned home to her *mait* dressed in a bright red saree. As soon as she arrived she rushed over to pick up and hug her baby nephew. That night he was ill. It was said that a bad spirit had been transferred from the woman onto the child. This could have been avoided if the woman had been in contact with some thistle bush, water or fire on arrival as whatever had attached itself onto her during the journey would have moved on.

Life-cycle rituals are dangerous times (see Babb 1975; Kaushik 1976: 287). Death is polluting, and such a condition incites the ghost's interest and appetite. The

¹⁶'Alone' has a different meaning for Silora people than it does for us. I remember walking off to the forest with three adolescent village girls. As we approached the edge of the village, the girls stopped. I asked why we were not going on into the forest. They said, "we can't go alone (*eka*l)." We waited until two young married women joined us. We were no longer alone, and could set off into the forest.

¹⁷On the propensity of evil spirits to follow the bride in marriage see Parry (1989) and Opler (1962: 23) and see Chapter Seven.

burning of a body excites evil spirits. It makes them happy and dance. Only men may attend a cremation, which takes place in the forest near to the Binsar temple and the stream which flows alongside it. When the cremation has been completed, and the men have 'washed' themselves in the stream, they set off back to the village. When they arrive at the bridge just at the boundary of the village, which is also an area said to be inhabited by ghosts, a little fire is made. A clump of pine-needles, branches of a thorny prickly bush and a stone are placed on the ground. All the men must step over the fire (see Atkinson 1974b: 832). This is said to prevent the *bhuts* from following the men back into the village and their homes and to ensure that these unwanted outsiders stay out.

The wedding, though not necessarily an impure or polluting occasion, is a time of danger for particular participants. During marriage the bride and groom become 'divine' and are ritually treated as deities. Marriage is a time when the bride and groom are considered especially vulnerable to danger, harmful beings and influences. Evil spirits are said to like the music, movement and bright colours of a wedding. The bride is particularly vulnerable. Precautions are taken just in case the girl has been caught by an evil spirit either before or during the wedding. When the *barat* departs from the bride's village, the groom is given a handful of black lentils and rice known as *khicari*. As the *barat* crosses the village boundaries and passes by one of the areas thought to be inhabited by ghosts, a *barat* member is supposed to wave this handful of *khicari* above the bride's head and throw it away, behind the procession. This is so that any evil spirit which may have been on the girl, or which was considering following her, would be removed or appeased. When the bridal couple arrive at the groom's home, *khicari* and hot coals are waved over the couple's heads. This is said to remove any bad things which may have come onto the couple during the wedding or their journey.¹⁸

Before deciding how these agents and their afflictions are appeased or removed, they must be correctly identified. It is important to know, for example, if the *bhut* is an 'inside' one, or an unrelated 'outside' evil spirit from the forest. To discover the cause of the illness or misfortune, two main options are open to people, either to visit a diviner, or to invite a *danriya* to the house and perform a *jagar*. During the latter, the god will be asked questions and reply through the mouth of his 'horse' the *danriya*. I shall only describe what happens at a divination session involving a diviner and clients.

When a household is experiencing problems, a diviner will usually be consulted. *Puchyars* are necessary to 'open up the secret/mystery' (*bhed khulaṇe lijī*).

¹⁸In some cases a cake of cane sugar (*gur bheli*) is waved above their heads and then given to the band of musicians who accompanied the wedding procession.

They may be male or female and of any caste.¹⁹ Most, however, are Silpakar people. People usually have to go to the *puchyar's* home, though some will visit the client's house. On arrival the clients offer some money, incense, fruit, flowers, cloves and tobacco to the *puchyar*, who places them in the god's shrine. The clients will also take with them a handful of rice bound up in a piece of cloth with a penny inside. This has previously been circled above the head of the patient and is given to the diviner. A *puchyar* has a tutelary god, an *iṣṭ dyapt* (favourite god) and is able to initiate his own possession, making the god enter his body unaided. Having done so he will perform some painful act, such as licking red hot iron rods, to demonstrate that the divinity has entered his body and that it is the god who will speak. He picks up the rice, looks at it and 'reads' it. He trembles, breathes heavily and talks in broken speech. This is the voice of the divinity. The patient's symptoms and illness are described and the cause of the problem identified. The clients ask questions and he replies. When this is over, he returns the remaining rice and some sacred ash to the clients. Then the deity leaves the *puchyar's* body. They converse a little and then the clients leave.

Having identified the type of afflicting agent, deity, *hank* or *bhut*, the *puchyar* suggests which 'path' to take. Only with the exact identity of the afflicting agent, and the exact cause of the attack, can effective action be taken to remove the suffering and its cause. Sometimes he will send the clients to see a medical doctor. The diviner usually suggests a *jagar* but in some cases, for example if he is absolutely convinced that the cause is a *masan* or an outside *bhut*, the *puchyar* will suggest the direct performance of a *masan* or *bhut puja*. If the afflicting agent is a *bhut*, but he is uncertain of what kind, a *jagar* must be held.

During the *jagar* the afflicting agent will be made to dance and to speak through a human being. It will be forced to reveal its identity, whether it is a deity, ancestor or outside ghost and it will be asked to reveal its reasons for causing the suffering. Then, it will be invited to make its demands known, so that the victims may know the correct action needed to appease the agent and remove the suffering. The *jagar* is of great importance in the identification and appeasement of the malevolent agent and in the ultimate removal of the suffering.

8.3 The Jagar

The *jagar* is a vigil or waking (Gaborieau 1975a; Leavitt 1984, 1986; Pfleiderer and Lutze 1979) late in the night. Fanger offers a definition of the *jagar*:

¹⁹When speaking about *puchyars* I shall use the male pronoun, 'he', since the people I observed were all men.

A *jagar* is essentially a spirit possession seance in which a designated deity or deities (*devatas*) is induced by ritual drumming and the singing of traditional *devata* legends to possess a prearranged oracle/medium of the spirit (1990: 173).

In the ritual a bard (*jagariya*) calls upon the regional gods. He recounts their own myths and sings their praises. This is said to please the gods and is seen as an invitation to the gods to dance. The divinities join the human community by becoming embodied in oracular mediums (*danriyas*). Embodied in their human mediums, gods and humans may communicate.

A *jagar* may be performed in public in a village temple for the benefit of the entire village, or it can be performed inside a house on behalf of one or several households or even an entire lineage. The former is referred to as an 'outside *jagar*' and the latter as an 'inside *jagar*'. I referred earlier to the large annual *jagar* performed outside at the Dhuni temple. This is performed for "Haru and his companions" and the village deities in general.²⁰ It is performed to make the gods happy, and for the well-being of the village.²¹ The inside *jagar* is generally performed when a social group has suffered from illness or bad luck, or in order to prevent such misfortune and suffering. I limit my description and discussion to the inside, household *jagars*.

People distinguish between two kinds of *jagar*. The first, and most common, are *jagars* performed *dukh baṭi*, out of sadness. A sad *jagar* is provoked by suffering and misfortune. Sad *jagars* are performed to make the afflicting agent reveal itself, and in the cases of gods and ancestors, to make it explain the reason for the anger or curse, and most importantly, to find out what it wants. *Jagars* are often followed by sacrifices demanded by and made to the god, ancestor or ghost. As such the sad *jagar* resembles a ritual of appeasement or exorcism.

The most common reasons for ancestral anger are: the failure of people to serve their parents and parents-in-law during their lives; failure to give deceased kin complete and proper funeral rites; and general neglect of the ancestors. Such conduct can make the *dil* (mind-heart) *mail*, dirty. People perform *jagars* to ask for forgiveness and to do whatever the spirits demand so as to appease them. By

²⁰Fanger says Haru's companions include Śyūr, Pyūr, Šaim, and Gwel (1990: 190). In the Dhuni *jagar* I observed, all village and household deities were dancing. This included Bhumiya, Hanumān, Narsingh and so forth. However, no female *danriya* (i.e., Devi) danced. The military advisers and warriors who are considered companions of Harju known as *Syur* and *Pyur* are no longer frequently worshipped in the village. It is said that in the past they performed extraordinary feats. These two would climb up poles holding a goat in their mouth. However, this no longer happens, because as one man said: "the *shakti* (force/power) is weakening because people do not believe and worship them any more."

²¹In some areas of Kumaon this outside *jagar* can last up to 22 days, during which time one or two men live abstemiously in the temple, bathing twice, eating once daily, and dancing around the fire at night. For details of such events see Fanger (1980, 1990) and Kapur (1988).

performing a *jagar*, and by making the required sacrifice, this dirt and one's mistakes are removed. As such, the *jagar* could be seen as a ritual of atonement. At the same time, disputes, usually land disputes, between kinsmen are exposed and dealt with in the *jagar*. One god, usually Gwel, will preside over the proceedings to ensure that justice is done, and harmony restored. The *jagar* may serve as a platform on which blame is given and confessions are made about improper behaviour between kin and between the living and the dead. Conflicts are revealed, confronted and ideally resolved. Demands are made by the offended and the accused must promise to comply with and satisfy the requests.

The second kind of *jagar* is performed *khuś baṭi*, from happiness.²² The 'happy' *jagar* is usually performed after a 'sad' *jagar*. One woman said:

If we do not or did not do *seva* to our ancestors then they could have cursed us. If a couple has no children it could be caused by the angered ancestors. If this is so, we will hold a *jagar* and we will ask the ancestors for their protection and if things get better we will give a happy *puja* of thanks.

If the sad *jagar* was successful and the suffering removed, a happy *jagar* should be performed as a 'thanksgiving ceremony' (Pfleiderer and Lutze 1979: 111). Sometimes a goat is offered to the god in thanks, just as Bhumiya is offered a goat at his temple if some wish has been granted. Such a *jagar*, in addition to being a ritual of thanks, is also performed as a preventative and precautionary measure; happy gods are reaffirmed and future displeasure is avoided. The happy *jagar* often doubles up as a divination session and as a platform for solving minor problems. In these *jagars* no malevolent spirits are involved and only *dyapts* are present. The expressed aim of such a ritual is to maintain the family's present condition and for the household to remain *sukhī*, happy and prosperous.

8.3.i Participants in the *Jagar*

The *Saunkār*

The household and not the individual holds a *jagar*. If a household member is ill, or acting strangely, this can be taken as a sign that trouble exists between a supernatural agent and the household as a whole. The suffering caused by the illness, and the responsibility to relieve it is shared by all household members. The house's senior male member represents the household in the *jagar* and in the ritual he is referred to as *saunkār*. Ordinarily *saunkar* means a money-lender but in the context of a *jagar* it means he who sponsors and is responsible for holding the ritual.

²²Pfleiderer and Lutze (1979) also identify these different varieties of *jagar*.

The Jagariya²³

The *jagariya* is a professional musician, an invocation specialist (Pfleiderer and Lutze 1979) and bard (Leavitt 1984). I shall use the term bard, since the person's main skill is the recitation of verses and ballads about the legendary feats and exploits of the local gods. Some *jagariya* play the *hurka*, an hourglass-shaped drum made of goat's stomach which gives a range of sounds. The *hurka*-playing *jagariya* is accompanied by a two man chorus who repeat the last line of each stanza, and one man who beats a metal plate (*thali*) with sticks. Some *jagariya* play the *dhol*, a flat sounding horizontal drum, also made of goat skin, and are usually accompanied by a man playing the *damau*, a kettle drum. All of the other *jagariyas* who performed in Silora were *dhol* players and were Silpakar men of the tailor caste.²⁴

During the ritual the *jagariya* is called *guru* both by the human participants and by the gods and it is he who controls the *jagar*. He entertains and pleases the gods by recounting their legends and by singing their praises. This pleases the gods and causes them to 'dance' in a human body. He induces the supernaturals to enter their victims or oracles and to make their demands known. The *jagar* is a time for 'making the gods dance' (*dyapt nācāñ*). The rhythm of the *jagariya*'s drum directs the deity's arrival and its dancing. The *jagariya* plays a central role in questioning the deities: he asks the divinity questions on behalf of the sponsor and clarifies the god's utterances and conveys its answers. The *jagariya* is also an exorcist of sorts (see Gaborieau 1975a: 155; Fanger 1990: 178). The *jagariya* will usually receive up to Rs.100 for a night's work. He does not rely solely on this work for subsistence. Most combine *jagariya* work with a day-time job.

The Danriya and the Deity

Danriya means someone in whose body the divinity comes or dances (*ñ mē dyapt nācañ*). The *danriya* is a human vehicle of a divine entity. A *danriya* may be male or female. *Danriyas* should observe certain restrictions in their daily lives. If a *danriya* comes in contact with a menstruating woman s/he may become ill. Some people said they get pains in their neck, joints and head. They will sprinkle themselves with cows' urine.²⁵

²³The Kumaoni *jagariya* sounds very similar to the Garhvali *pujari* described by Berreman (1964: 57-58).

²⁴For further information on the different kinds of legends and ballads sung, and the instruments used, see Gaborieau (1977).

²⁵I once saw a man have a fit; this appeared to have been caused by not observing a restriction. He seemed to be in great physical discomfort and was calling out '*chūt chūt*'. He was sitting in the kitchen with his mother at the time. He told her to get Rs.1.25 and to offer it to his deity, Bhumiya. She put the money in a leaf and waved it over his head, sprinkled some water on it and

During the *jagar* the *danriya* embodies the divinity. It is the divinity who dances, speaks, and to whom the questions are addressed, not the *danriya*. The *ghvar*, 'horse', of the divinity is not an active subject in the ritual context; the *danriya* serves as a passive vessel to receive the god. The oracle speaks in the voice of the divinity. The god's language is hesitant and broken, quite unlike normal speech. The *danriya* may serve the same purpose as a diviner. However, unlike the *puchyar*, the *danriya* cannot initiate the divinities' embodiment but requires a musically accompanied recitation of the god's particular legend to be given in the context of a *jagar*. *Jagars* are often sites of conflict resolution. Oracles, and therefore the gods, play an important role in exposing and helping to resolve tensions and disputes both within and between families and kin (see Chapter Three).

8.3.ii The House *Jagar*²⁶

The *jagar* should be performed on an auspicious day. In Silora most *jagars* were performed during the *śukrapakṣ* (the bright half) of a lunar month. The most auspicious times to hold *jagars* is during the Naurt (Nine Nights) of Asoj and Cait.

I shall briefly describe the basic format of a 'happy' *jagar* in which no evil spirits are involved and in which only one *dyapt* dances. People often refer to the *jagar* as *puja*. The *jagar* shares the same structure as the *puja*. Humans make offerings to the divinity, such as incense, light, water, flowers, music and stories; the divinity is pleased and in return offers protection and blessings (Fuller 1992: 66-69).

On the day of the *jagar* the house is cleaned and a fresh layer of dung is applied. The household members, the *danriya* and *jagariya* are supposed to fast on that day. The *jagar* is held in the front room of the house (*cakh*). A fire, the *dhuni* or sacred fire, is lit in a metal box, and this will burn all night. After nightfall, curious neighbours and interested kin arrive at the house and fill the room. Small clay oil lamps are lit and placed in niches around the room. In one corner of the room is a folded blanket: some money is placed underneath it, rice is placed in between the folds, and a *thali* of rice and pennies is placed on top. This is where the presiding god, manifested in the human form of the *danriya*, will sit. The *saunkar* performs *arati* in front of the household shrine and then in the main room. *Pithyas* are applied to the shrine, the lamps, the *danriya* and the *jagariya*. The *danriya*, wearing a *dhoti*, takes his place and the householder performs *arati* in front of him. In all but one of the *jagars* I observed, Gwel was the presiding deity. As an act of purification, the room and all present are sprinkled with water and cow's urine. Coals and ash from

offered the bundle to the house shrine. He said he had been feeling strange for a while but that now the *galti* (mistake) had been removed.

²⁶For full descriptions of the *jagar* see Fanger (1990) and Gaborieau (1975a).

the *dhuni* outside are placed in a *thali*, acting as a substitute *dhuni*, and placed in front of the *danriya*, who from now on is identified with the divinity. The men sit at one end of the room, women and children at the other.

The *jagariya* begins to chant slowly, softly and rhythmically, gently hitting the drum. His voice gradually grows louder. This drumming and chanting continues for about 20 minutes. During this time the *jagariya* recites the names of the major Sanskritic gods, invoking their blessings. Then he recites legends of the above mentioned gods. This is a very calm, relaxing and mesmerisingly monotonous sequence of the session. To mark the end of it he hits the *dhhol* very hard. Then there is an interval. During the drumming people have been chatting and smoking. The *jagariya* resumes the drumming, but this time the legend he recounts is for and about the specific deity they have come to propitiate.²⁷ In Silora the most popular deity propitiated in household *jagars* is Gwel.

The *jagariya* starts off slowly. Gradually the pace quickens and the volume rises. Meanwhile, the *saunkar* performs *arati* in front of the *jagariya*, the *danriya*, and in front of all other potential *danriyas* in the room.²⁸ As the recitation proceeds, indications of the god's arrival in the medium's body are given. Gwel's *danriya* begins to jerk and tremble. The trembling increases, the breathing becomes heavy and the body sways backwards and forwards. The *jagariya* drums faster and louder and shouts at the divinity to come and dance. The *danriya* gets up and starts to dance violently throwing rice over those in the room, shouting '(may you) remain happy'. By this time the audience is silent. Gwel has arrived. The god dances, his breathing heavy, as he leaps around the room screaming and shouting. There is no space in the room which is packed with movement, noise and suffocating heat. After several minutes, the music and dancing stop and Gwel speaks. The deity's speech is often difficult to understand. The *jagariya* will often 'translate' the god's words to the audience.

Some people take the opportunity to ask the god questions in order to resolve their problems. A woman who has had several miscarriages, whose only son died, and who is presently ill asked the god what the cause of her illness was. He said that the woman's husband had mistreated his mother and that his mother's *hank* was on the woman, causing suffering for the whole house. The deity said that a coconut should be offered as a *hank bali* (sacrifice) to remove the suffering and its cause.

²⁷For details on the kinds of chants and stories recited at the different stages of the session see Fanger (1990: 183-185), Leavitt (1986: 74-75) and Gaborieau (1975a: 150-154).

²⁸Although there is one main *danriya*, some people in the audience may also be *danriyas*, and their gods may, at the sound of the music and the *jagariya*'s ballads, decide to dance in the *jagar* too.

Before the deity departs, the participants will go forward to receive ash from the sacred *dhuni* fire. The deity usually applies the ash onto the participant's forehead with a blessing such as: 'may all worries and troubles go away'. At this stage in the *jagar* men and women can become very emotional and often cry. These sessions can be very moving indeed.²⁹ Having given his blessings, the deity dances again before leaving the oracle to return home to Mount Kailāś. Once the god has departed, the *danriya* is no longer in a trance. He stands up, bows to the folded carpet on which he was seated, and sits on the floor.

The above description is of a happy *jagar*. *Jagars* performed to install a new *danriya* follow a similar pattern. In addition, the *danriya* is given the objects which are associated with his particular deity. For example, a newly installed Śaim *danriya* was given a red bag, a walking stick and a pair of tongs, the accoutrements of a *yogi*.

If a *jagar* is performed out of sadness, the basic pattern described above is followed, but with a few additional aspects and sequences. The aim of the *jagar* is for the presiding *dyapt* and *jagariya* to force the malevolent spirit to reveal its identity and make its wishes known. I describe two cases of *jagars*; both were performed by houses because a daughter-in-law was ill. In the first case a diviner had already diagnosed the cause of the illness to be an 'inside' ghost and *hank*. The first stages of the *jagar* leading to the arrival and manifestation of Gwel, as described above, were performed. Meanwhile, the young *bvari* crouched in the kitchen, out of sight of Gwel and the *jagariya*. It is most important that Gwel arrives and dances first, before any other deity or spirit. Only then may other spirits manifest themselves and dance. During a period when the *jagariya* was playing and Gwel was dancing, the young woman suddenly flung herself into the main ritual area and began to dance wildly. As she danced, her hair came loose and she cried and laughed in a high shrill voice. This was the afflicting ghost's voice. Thereafter, Gwel and the *jagariya* shouted at the *bhut* demanding it to make its identity known and to explain its reasons for causing the *bvari* and her household such distress. Sometimes the spirit does not reveal itself in which case another *jagar* is arranged for a later date. Usually the afflicting spirit requires a great deal of coercion to make it speak. In this case the ghost identified itself to be the dissatisfied spirit of the household's deceased female kin. She pointed to concrete faults committed by her descendants. She claimed she had been neglected and abused during her life and that her funeral rites had not been performed. In other words, fundamental kinship obligations and duties had not been met. She was then asked to say what it was she wanted her kinsmen to do in order to make her happy and calm again. Having made her wishes known, the *saunkar* promised to fulfil her request within the year and asked her to have patience and to leave the *bvari* alone.

²⁹For a study on the role and significance of affectivity in understanding the effectiveness of the *jagar* ritual see Leavitt (1984).

In the second case, the *bvari* was known to be possessed by an 'outside' ghost. However, during the session it failed to reveal itself and to make its wishes known. In such cases, in an initial attempt to exorcise the ghost, the oracle shouts at the ghost to leave the girl's body. To appease the ghost, he may promise the ghost an animal sacrifice and other items, which the victim's kin will have to provide in due course. Finally, the oracle applies some ash from the *dhuni* to the *bvari*'s forehead while shouting at the ghost to leave the woman alone.

8.4 Dealing With Evil and Angry Spirits and Removal of Suffering

I now consider the various ways in which malevolent spirits are dealt with, and how misfortune and suffering are removed. In all of the examples to follow, afflicting agents are removed through rituals of sacrifice, which serve to distance the worshipper from the angry or malevolent being and in which no *parasad* is produced (Fuller 1988: 23). If this sacrificial offering is successful then a ritual of worship is performed in the case of *dyapts*, ancestors and 'inside' ghosts; in these rituals another sacrifice or offering is made and *parasad* is produced for human consumption. In these cases, as Fuller says, exorcisms and worship are not diametrically opposed, but shade into each other (1992: 231-232).

8.4.i Outside Ghosts

Various initial measures are taken to dislodge 'outside' ghosts. *Bhabhūti* (ash) is applied by an oracle of a local god to the forehead of someone who stumbles over in a ghost-inhabited area. Ash is thought to contain the deity's power, and will scare and push (*dūr karan*) away the *chal* or *masan*. At the same time, *khicari* placed in a green leaf is waved over the victim's head and discarded at a cross-road. Another method is to beat the victim with stinging nettles (*śiśāñ*) while reciting mantras.

If the suffering persists more elaborate measures are taken. A *jagar* may be held where the deity and *jagariya* force or persuade the spirit to leave. Often it is bribed to leave, being pacified by offerings made to it in a certain place. A small simple shrine of stones may be constructed for the ritual. The *chal-masan* is given what it demands to ease its anger and so that it will leave the suffering people alone. One villager said: "If we please the *masan* and give what he has asked for, then we will calm down his desire and make him leave the body." Among other items, the ghost usually demands a cockerel. The head and legs of a coloured (not white) cockerel is offered in sacrifice to the ghost. Usually the chicken's blood is poured into a pit. The head and legs along with seven handfuls of seven different grains and

pulses, are also placed in the pit and all are covered up and buried.³⁰ If it is identified as a male ghost, *pān* (betel-leaf), cigarettes and tobacco are also offered to the ghost. If it is a female spirit women's things such as bangles, ribbon, mirror, comb and other female items are offered. In both cases black or red cloth, raw *khicari* and a quarter of a rupee and sweets are offered. These items may be left in front of the stones. The *puja* is usually performed at a spot similar to where the ghost is thought to have come onto the victim. If the oracle said that the girl fell near a stream or gully and that the *bhut* caught her there, then the *puja* should be performed next to a stream. If the *bhut* came upon its victim on a hill-top, then the *puja* must be performed on such a site. The *puja* is performed late at night by a low-caste *puchyar*. The sponsors for the ritual do not attend, thus laden with the various offerings, the *puchyar* and his helpers go alone to the spot. It is assumed that they, as outsiders and low-caste people, will cook and eat the sacrificed cockerel.³¹

8.4.ii *Dyapts*, Ancestors, *Hanks* and Inside Ghosts

Dyapts

In order to resolve *kas* situations the oath must be formally removed before normal relations may commence. This is usually done in the context of a *jagar*. Many of the *kas* examples described above are property related. When the *jagar* is ultimately performed, the disagreements will be discussed under the direction of the deity, and the land will ultimately be fairly shared. However, the main problem concerns getting the parties to come together to settle the conflict. Household heads of all the households concerned must be present for the ritual performed to remove *kas* (*kas uthārṇ*). Every household involved must contribute to the cost of the ritual, and to the cost of any animal sacrificed and any feast given. In most cases a *jagar* will be held

³⁰For a very detailed description of one kind of *chal-masan puja* in Kumaon see Quayle (1981: 245-265). I never witnessed a *chal* or *masan puja* and informants did not know the details of its performance.

³¹When an unmarried girl has a *masan* on her it can be removed by the recitation of *mantras* and brushing over the girl's body in downward strokes. A specialist in this treatment will 'brush' the girl and say, "I will give you black grains, black beans, black cloth and black cockerel." The spirit is *kacc* (weak) and its removal is easily achieved. The longer the spirit is left unattended to, the longer it takes for it to be separated and removed. Once the girl marries, the spirit is said to become *pakk* (firm, strong). This makes it more difficult to dislodge. It is said that ghosts give women more suffering after marriage. In the case of the *mait bhut*, the woman's *sauras* people must sponsor a *puja* to appease and remove the ghost. The woman will return to her *mait* for a few days, during which time she must stay within the village bounds. The ghost worship will be performed just on the boundaries of her *mait*, usually on the top of a hill overlooking the village (see Sax 1991: 122). Once the *puja* has been performed, her *sauras* people and any people who performed the *puja* must not visit the girl's home nor enter her *mait*. She too must return to her *sauras* and not return to her *mait* for several months at least. I do not have any more details of this *puja*.

in which at least one *dyapt* will dance. Water from a *thali* will be waved over the *kas* party's heads and then sprinkled onto a goat. As the water is sprinkled, the goat shivers, and at this time it should be killed. I was told that the *gussā* (anger) between the conflicting parties must be beaten. The anger is transferred onto the goat in the water and removed with the death of the goat. The shivering of a goat is also a sign of the goat's willingness to serve as a sacrificial victim. This goat is not eaten.³²

Hanks and Inside Ghosts

In the case of *hank* affliction the victims, or the guilty party, must worship the *hank* (*hank pujaṇ*). A *jagar* is performed and the spirit is honoured by *arati*, invited to dance and made happy. The spirit reveals the cause for its anger and makes its demands known. Then the *hank* is 'killed' (*hank māraṇ*) through the slaying of a black male goat. A handful of water is waved over the heads of the *jagar* sponsors. In some cases the sponsors are members of only one household, in others, of households of an entire lineage. The water is then thrown onto the goat's head, 'so that the *dukh* may go onto the goat'. The goat is then killed outside and nobody, save the goat slayer, looks at the goat when this is done. The dead animal's body is wrapped in a blanket provided by the *jagariya*, and taken away by him. Nothing of the *hank* goat is offered to the house shrine and nobody of the household will eat the meat. It may be eaten by the *jagariya*; he is both master of the ritual and an outside person.

If the case is one of an 'inside' ghost, the *bhut* demands to be enshrined inside the house where it can be worshipped by its descendants; it demands to be incorporated, through deification, into the category of ancestors. The spirit is appeased by providing it with a home through enshrinement, just as the spirit at mortuary ceremonies are provided with a body (see Nicholas 1981: 374; Parry 1987: 84). One such ghost, having made this request, said, "then I shall no longer be of the outside (*bhyarak*) but of the house (*gharak*).". This statement is extremely important: if its kin had fulfilled their responsibilities and obligations and had performed the last rites, the spirit would have been incorporated as a spirit 'of the house' as it should have been. As an identified ancestor and household deity it should be honoured, remembered and served. However, until now it has been neglected and ignored. As an uncontained and marginalised spirit (*bhut*), it has been left to hover between worlds. As a spirit of the outside, it was owed no service or respect, but as a spirit of the inside its descendants have a moral duty to serve it.

³²I was told another slightly different solution. Water is waved over the heads of both parties and then poured into a *thali*. Both parties drink the water, and from this time on the conflict is resolved. Sharing the water sets all other forms of exchange and social contact into action.

In most cases the *bhut* also demands that its medium, the victim, and any other adult household men go to Hardvar. Before leaving for Hardvar, a goat, referred to as *hank bali* (sacrifice), is killed. Those going to Hardvar will set off immediately without going into or even looking back at the house. There they must perform the ghost's *kvavār* (death rites) for three hours and shave their heads. They must also bathe there. By taking the *bhut's* medium to Hardvar, performing *kvavar* and bathing in the Ganges, the *bhut's atma* is purified. On their return home a place for the ancestor must be made in the home temple. Through the above mentioned rituals, the *bhut* will be transformed from a marginal, uncontrolled malevolent power into a controlled, protective divinity, worthy of regular worship.

After the instalment of the spirit's shrine, a second goat is killed and offered to the inside ghost out of happiness.³³ The second goat is ideally killed on return from Hardvar but it may be offered after a period of time. This time the goat is killed in the house and is offered to the house temple and then eaten inside as *parasad*. This second goat is said to be *ghar chokhyane lijī* (for cooking in the house), and is referred to as *bakar carhāṇ* (to offer a goat) or *puja diṇ* (to worship) and not as *bali* (sacrifice). I was told that those who go to Hardvar do not have to kill a second goat. They may offer *haluvā* instead.

8.5 Concluding Remarks

People talk about *dyapts*, ancestors, ghosts of deceased kin and *hanks* in terms of *gharak* or *bhiterak* (of the house and of the inside). In opposition to these divinities stand the evil ghosts, which are *bhyarak*, 'of the outside'. This implies that the 'inside' divinities must share something in common which also distinguishes them from the 'outside' spirits. The 'inside' does not mean good or benevolent here, for as we have seen, these divinities can inflict harm. All divinities are ambivalent; if they are treated well, they are benevolent, if treated badly, they seek vengeance (Gaborieau 1975a: 80).

What these spirits share in common is the fact that they uphold the moral order of the inside, be it the lineage or the house, and are themselves incorporated into the inside, excepting the 'inside' ghosts whose position is a little more ambiguous. Co-lineage and co-household members should care for and feed one another. Interdependence and altruism ideally characterise relations between insiders, be they household members (especially important for (in-married) women) or agnates (especially important for men). Divine sanctions are a potent force of social control and emphasise some of the fundamental values of the society which these deities

³³A Brahman priest is often called to install the ancestral deity and perform a *puja*.

guard and preserve (see Rosser 1955: 87). If these are not followed, insiders are treated as outsiders, which is a violation of the moral order. As insiders, the living and the divine have obligations to each other. Just as the living should treat each other correctly, so too the living should treat the divinities correctly.

Inside ghosts, like ancestors, are angered by the neglect they have been shown. However, these spirits have been left unincorporated and, as such, they are rather dangerous. They have been treated like outsiders, with neglect, whereas by rights they are insiders and eligible to the treatment which that entails. Therefore they are not described as being full of desire or greed, but as hurt, offended and in pain. Their afflictions are morally justified. It is the duty of the living to incorporate them into the inside by inviting them to take their places among the other household divinities in the household shrine. When incorporated, they expect the attention and treatment due to insiders. Once installed, they must be regularly fed and worshipped.

In contrast, attacks by outside ghosts do not follow individual breaches of the moral order. These ghosts hover on the edges of organised moral society, which is spoken about here as 'the inside', and as such they are dangerous outsiders. They are hungry, greedy spirits; they 'eat' their victims, and inflict suffering as a means of extracting food from the living, from those who represent potential sources of nourishment. In satisfying their own interests and desires, their victims suffer, become weak and vulnerable. Their attacks are not protective, but are motivated by pure selfish desire and craving. They make claims on their victims with disastrous consequences. In order to pacify them temporarily they are given food. They are placated, not honoured. Once they have been expelled no long-standing obligations exist. The relationship is instrumental and contractual. Whereas *puja* is performed after a sacrifice given to 'inside' spirits, serving to unite human actors and the spirits, the exorcisms and sacrifices performed for 'outside' ghosts are not followed by worship. Sacrifices serve to separate and distance the actors, that is, the malevolent outside agent from the victim. As is the case on the levels of the household and caste, separation and detachment from outsiders is the ideal, and the way to protect the inside.

Finally, the situation of *kas*, and the notion of total withdrawal of contact with close kin supports the ideological priority given to the independence of the household. In the following chapter attitudes towards, and interaction with, plains society are explored in relation to the inside/outside dichotomy.

CHAPTER NINE

THE PLAINS AND THE HILLS

The Desis, the people of the plains, constitute another category of outsiders with whom Silora people, as Kumaonis and Paharis, have contact. Any area outside of Kumaon, save Garhwal, is generally referred to as *des*, the plains. Kumaonis use the term *desi* not to mean native, indigenous or local, but 'of the country' or 'of the plains' (cf. Berreman 1972: 298). *Des* refers primarily to the western Gangetic plains of North India. The plains population is economically and politically dominant. *Desi* is opposed to *pahari*, that which is local, indigenous and 'of the mountains'. Kumaonis consider themselves to be Paharis, an ethnically distinct people, and are considered by others as such (see Barth 1969). As Leavitt notes: "People of all castes and classes in the region consider being Kumaoni, or Pahari, as an important identifying characteristic" (1992: 5). Although *pahari* has derogatory connotations for plains people, for a hill person, to be a Kumaoni Pahari is a matter of pride. This *pahari-desi* distinction covers many aspects of life, including types of cattle, language, rituals, festivals, social structure, customs, ecology and standards of morality. Not only is this distinction important with regards to how Silora people view, and behave towards, this particular category of outsiders, but it also seems to inform their own self-definition.

In this chapter I refer specifically to the representations of Kumaoni people, and in particular Silora villagers. What I report may mirror sentiments and ideas held by other *pahari* peoples. Kumaon constitutes just one part of a larger *pahari* "culture area" which Berreman suggests incorporates the lower Himalayas stretching from Kashmir and into Nepal (1970, 1983b). Berreman maintains that this common *pahari* culture is one of significant commonality which encompasses significant diversity. The commonality he suggests derives from "common origins, shared history, long interaction and similar environment" and the internal differentiation from "relative mutual isolation as a result of barriers of topography, distance and culture" (1983b: 241).

Just as differences exist between sectors within the larger *pahari* area, say between Kumaoni and Garhvali language and culture, so too differences exist between localities within Kumaon itself. Kumaon is by no means a unified and homogeneous region. It is populated by many sub-groups who have their own

cultural peculiarities.¹ Nevertheless, these internal differences are backstaged or become insignificant in opposition to the plains people. Hill people do not like the plains people and Silora people are no exception.

Many authors have taken note of the suspicion and antipathy felt by hill people towards the people of the plains. Traill wrote over 150 years ago: "All mountaineers unite in an excessive distrust of the natives of the low country, whom they regard as a race of swindlers and extortioners" (1980: 217-218). One hundred years later, in the 1930-1940s, Randhawa (1970) presents a similar picture. He describes people in Almora town as very politically conscious and aware and mentions the "exuberant democratic tendencies" which exist there in spite of the factionalism which divides its population. He says, however, that when their interests come into conflict with those of the plains, "the people of Almora develop a surprising sense of solidarity" (1970: 129). Randhawa explains this attitude as "a relic of their former isolation" and predicts its disappearance in the future when hill men and plains people will understand each other more (1970: 129). Despite his prediction, the hostility and distrust persist. Berreman's studies of Sirkanda and Garhval (1962, 1972, 1983a, 1983b, 1985) discuss in detail the kinds of feelings and ideas which the hill and plains communities hold for and about each other. Finally, Kapur, in a more recent study, says that the Kumaoni villagers of Devagiri have a "xenophobic attitude" towards plains Indians (1988: 18). This hostility towards plains people is, I suggest, an expression on a different level, of Silora villagers mistrust and suspicion towards outsiders in general.

9.1 Plains People's Views of the Hills and Hill People

The Himalayan area of Uttar Pradesh comprising the Garhval and Kumaon regions is called Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand is the source of great holy rivers, the abode of the gods and saints, the site of the shrines of Badarinath and Kedarnath and the land of medicinal plants and herbs. It is the "Holy Land of Hinduism" (Berreman 1985: 111), a place of beauty and purity.² However, plains Indians regard the hill people as rather less than pure and holy.³ Though the Himalayas are sacred and holy, the mountain

¹Villagers told me that every five kilometres or so slight differences of speech can be detected. Newly married village daughters, on return from their *sauras*, told me how strangely their husband's people spoke and how they had to learn new words. Women told me of certain customs which exist in their *maits* but which are not found in Silora and vice versa.

²For an enthusiastic and romanticised account of Kumaon and Garhval, see Fonia (1977).

³See Bharati on the difference between the actual and ideal Himalayas. He says that "to all Hindus, except those who live there, the Himalayas tend to be ascriptive rather than actual mountains . . ." (1978: 78).

people are "unholy in the eyes of many plainsmen" (Berreman 1983a: 298, 1985: 112). To the average plains person the hill people are considered to be backward, uneducated, uncivilised simple country bumpkins (see Berreman 1962: 6, 1972: 322). Paharis are consistently thought to be morally inferior. Practices which were common in the past but which are no longer so evident, such as bride-price marriages, widow remarriage and so on, continue to be referred to as proof and justification for the hill persons' lower moral standards. Their form of Hinduism, and in particular that of the higher castes, is deemed to be less orthodox and rigorous than the 'normal' Hinduism purportedly practised by the peoples of the Western Gangetic plains. Pahari Brahmins eat meat, drink alcohol and sacrifice animals. Indeed these and other practices, such as a great reliance upon mediums and diviners, are shared by all castes (see Berreman 1970).

The stereotype of the hill person projected by plains people is an unwanted stigmatised identity which Kumaonis bitterly resent and actively refute. Many *pahari* people feel a combination of inferiority and superiority in relation to the plains people. Explanations are given to justify some of their customs which plains people claim to be backward and unorthodox. For example, hill people claim that they eat meat because it is necessary in the cold mountain climate. Some claim that their form of Hinduism is naturally purer than the *desi* people's since, after all, this is Uttarakhand, the holy land of the gods! They pride themselves in their educational and literary standards, quoting famous *pahari* scholars and politicians. They refute the label that they are uncivilised or culturally backward, though they feel economically neglected and constantly emphasise how 'hill people are poor people'. The feelings of inferiority which Paharis feel in relation to non-Paharis may, to a large degree, account for their hostility (Berreman 1962: 8). Hill people's stereotypes and attitudes towards Desis are as demeaning as the latter's characterisation of Paharis.

9.2 Hill People's View of the Plains and the Plains People

The plains of North India are considered an undesirable place to live. Villagers say the *des* is dirty, violent, dangerous, crowded and noisy. The water and air are polluted, unlike the pure mountain springs and breezes. In the plains Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus all live together, side by side in a mixed environment. People are thought to engage in mixed, cross-caste marriages and eat with people of lower castes. Caste boundaries, in hill people's opinion, are not clearly marked or observed.

One important factor which contributes to the image hill people have of the plains is hill people's equation of *des* (plains) with *śahar* (city-town). People will interchange the one for the other when they speak. In conversations people make the

distinction or contrast between *des* and *gāṛ* (village). In this thought process *pahār* is equivalent to village, and *des* equivalent to town and city. Berreman touches upon this unwittingly when he makes the implicit equation of city with the plains and the 'non-*pahari* world' (1972: 299,305,308). For example, Berreman says, "the city is an exciting, but in many ways a mysterious and dangerous place for most Paharis" (1972: 308). In this quotation 'the city' could easily be replaced by 'the plains' and it would still ring true.⁴

The view that hill villagers have of the attractions and dangers of cities is similar to that of villagers elsewhere in India.⁵ However, these *pahari* villagers' equation of city with *des* is a distinctive feature. Hill people know very little about the villagers in the plains. The association of the plains with the urban suggests limited awareness of village life in the *des*. This is not too difficult to imagine or believe. When village men go to the plains in search of jobs, they usually go to the large towns and cities of North India, to Lucknow, Delhi, Moradabad and so on, where, more often than not, some relative already resides. Women (wives and mothers) and old people go to the plains to visit close kin or to attend weddings. They usually go to the cities. They board a bus or train in the Kumaon-village area and go straight to the big cities in the *des*. They do not see, and are not aware of, the villages which lie beyond and away from the main roads. They do not know any kin who live in a plains village. *En route* to Delhi all they see are large, fertile farms, tractors and well-stocked, busy town bazaars. Once in Delhi or Lucknow, the eating habits, moral behaviour, styles and fashions observed there are referred to as *desi* customs. If we see through their eyes, *des* broadly equals the urban town or city, a very different environment to the one they know, the *pahari* village.

According to people in Silora, plains people are dishonest, cunning, arrogant, exploitative, unreliable and cheats.⁶ Plains women are, according to Silora women, shameless and immodest because of the short, brief tops (*coli*) they wear under their

⁴When considering the history of Kumaon, Leavitt says that Sanskrit Hinduism, supposedly brought to the hills from the plains, is found mainly in the towns. The plains settlers stayed in urban areas and have maintained contact with developments in the plains and practice a highly Sanskritised Hinduism. The countryside, on the other hand, has generally been inhabited by the indigenous hill people who worship local gods and have a less Sanskritised Hinduism. Leavitt states that "Kumaonis still tend to equate the rural with the specifically regional and the urban with pan-Hindu civilisation" (1992: 24). Here again, though in the context of religious practices, the rural-*pahari*/urban-*desi*-dominant society distinction is being made.

⁵Wiser and Wiser report that villagers see those in the bazaars and towns as people waiting to cheat villagers of their precious money (1963: 124).

⁶Berreman mentions that for the Garhvali villager "the plains person is considered to be sophisticated and well off, to have a superiority complex, and to be arrogant, untrustworthy, avaricious, and immoral" (1972: 298).

sarees.⁷ Any new 'bad' trend or habit is usually attributed to having come from the plains. Plains people are considered to be fat and therefore physically weak.⁸ There are very few fat people in the hills. Being fat is incongruous with living in the mountains in which long, and often steep, journeys are made by foot and where life in general is harsh. Desis are also 'fat' in another way. People use the same word for fat, *moṭ*, to refer to Desis as rich (*moṭ*) people. Rich people are disliked by hill people because of the power, authority and arrogance with which the wealthy are associated. Wealth in Kumaoni society does not give an individual authority over others in the community whereas in the plains it might. Hill people resent wealthy plainsmen who think they can dominate hill men; just because someone is wealthy does not mean they are special. Prestige does not accrue from having money but from how it is used (Pitt-Rivers 1971: 60-62). Plains people are said to show off their wealth and position, behaviour quite repugnant to hill people (see Chapter Five). In addition, villagers express great dislike and suspicion towards people in positions of authority. Those in such positions in Kumaon are well-paid government officers who are usually also plainsmen. Government and state officials are seen as fraudulent and corrupt. They and their programmes are viewed with suspicion; the government, the state and their various agents are seen to 'get fat' at the expense of the local *pahari* population. 'Fatness', therefore, is a negative quality for quite different reasons: in one sense to be fat implies physical weakness, in another, it implies arrogance, economic strength, and power over others.

At the same time, however, there is an ambivalence towards plains society and what it represents. This is illustrated well in the attitudes towards *hiaros*, *heroins* and *sarvis-valas*, all of which are associated with the urban and particularly plains life-style, values and society. The behaviour and attitudes which these characters represent are considered by most villagers as inappropriate to village life and hill society in general. They are well-off, prone to flaunt their wealth, smug, arrogant and lazy. The *hiaro* and *sarvis-vala* are opposed to the *jokar*, and the *heroin* is opposed to the efficient hard-working *kirasan* woman (see Chapter Five). At the same time however, these are not totally negative images: the *sarvis-vala* is the groom *par excellence* and the *heroin* is the auspicious bride-goddess. Their wealth and beauty are resented and envied, but also desired. Though their advantages are considered

⁷*Pahari* women wear a long sleeve *coli* (blouse) which also covers the woman's middle, allowing almost no flesh to be seen.

⁸I am aware that in other contexts in the hills fatness and plumpness are associated with good health, fertility and youthfulness, and thinness with weakness and vulnerability (see Stone 1988: 106-108, 147). Plumpness is desirable in young people, especially the bride and groom. As people age and women have children their bodies become thin, dry and tough-skinned.

wrong, few people would not admit to wanting them if they had the chance (see Pitt-Rivers 1971: 62).

The *des* is seen as a place of wealth and opportunities. In the plains one can earn a good living and live a good life. In the hills life is tough and things are expensive. In the plains, life is easy and goods are cheaper. Unemployment is high in the hills and there are very few government or private job opportunities in Kumaon. One young unemployed man with an M.A. in economics and a good command of English estimated that 80 percent of migrant workers from the village had jobs in Delhi. However, despite the attractions of life in the plains, people do not want to live there. Many young unemployed men with whom I spoke do not want to go to the plains to work. They would prefer to find a job in the hills near home.⁹ Various reasons were given for this; some simply said they did not like the *des* or *desi* people; others complained about the cost of living in the plains, particularly in Delhi, where accommodation is cramped and expensive; some complained about the treatment they had received from superiors and employers there. Several of these men left their jobs because they were unwilling to tolerate subordination and humiliation of this kind, or so they said. Berreman gives an apt example when he quotations a Sirkanda Rajput's views on emigration in which the Rajput says that a Pahari in the hills (village) is a king but in the plains he is a slave (1972: 305).

Plains people think that hill men are naive simple country bumpkins and therefore good, humble workers. Hill men resent this and think of the plains man as a cunning cheat. To work in the plains is, in a way, to work for the enemy. Men emphasise that they do not want to leave their homes but that they are obliged to go to the plains to get money to sustain their families in the hills. One man, a qualified physical education teacher said that even if he wanted to get a job in the plains he could not because to do so he would have to give bribes, which, he said "we hill people cannot afford"; in his opinion the posts were already allocated before the interviews and will be given to a local plainsman. He said, "there is preference, a sort of reservation for plains people which works against Paharis."

This general feeling of discomfort in the midst of plains society, and of subordination and ridicule by *desi* people is connected to the perceived economic and political domination of hill people and their way of life by plains society. People, especially men, expressed resentment towards what they perceive to be a situation of 'internal colonisation' of the hills by plainsmen, other outsiders and central government. Berreman discusses this aspect of the *pahari* situation and asserts:

⁹Some older people who resent the urban influences of the plains on their young people hold the view that the pull factors lure their sons to the plains: "No one wants to work the land. They prefer to stay out. People who get *sarvis* outside stay out (in the plains) if possible; their wives want to be beautiful and to stroll around all day."

... one might say that Uttarakhand has become a colony within the state and nation which administers it. It is an internal colony, a domestic colony, but a colony none-the-less, exploited by and for outsiders (1985: 110).

People complain that their mountains are treated by outsiders as an unlimited and exploitable source of raw materials, while local Paharis receive little recompense. They say that the *pahari* people and land are being drained in favour of the plains: hill people are or feel economically disadvantaged. Men complain that the government has not paid enough attention to developing the region for the local populace. The 'development' which has occurred has benefited the government and entrepreneurs. Projects emphasising small-scale industries and skills were identified by locals as potential programmes which would bring employment and better living standards to the hill population.¹⁰ As one man said:

People here feel cheated - they want their own state government and administration because money from here is put to use in the plains. Our money should be administered by our own local hill government to better our conditions. We want food prices to fall and jobs and employment to be available here.

Even though there are administrative and government posts in the districts of Nainital, Almora and Pithoragarh, most of the high-grade posts are filled by well-educated high class plainsmen, the more menial lower scale offices are filled by Paharis, local hill people. Locals feel unable to compete for high jobs and remain at the lower end of the social and economic ladder.¹¹

Kumaoni people feel politically marginal. Men express resentment over the fact that they have very little say in the running of Uttar Pradesh and of their hill region. They resent being governed by Lucknow, the state capital, which lies over 500 kilometres away. In practice, the administration of Kumaon is in the hands of non-Kumaoni, non-*pahari* civil servants. There is a small regional party called U.K.D. (Uttarakhand Kranti Dal) which advocates regional self-determination and an autonomous state, to be called Uttarakhand, made up of the eight Uttar Pradesh hill districts. Many high caste people in Silora voted for the U.K.D. candidate for M.L.A.

¹⁰See Berreman (1979) for a discussion of the forms of development which have overtaken the Uttar Pradesh hills in general.

¹¹A new complaint voiced by the local twice-born caste members refers to the reservation policy with regards government jobs and promotions for the scheduled castes and tribes. As members of an already backward economy, they feel even less hopeful of getting a secure public post irrespective of their qualifications. They see themselves as doubly disadvantaged, both as hill people and as high-caste members, and as being dominated if not by the plainsman then by the low, 'outside' Dum caste. The new Block Development Officer and District Magistrate were, in 1990, both Harijans, the first a Kumaoni, the other a South Indian.

(Minister of the Local Assembly) in the 1989 general elections.¹² The values of autonomy, self-reliance and independence are reiterated and stressed in these issues. Hill people feel dominated by a set of outsiders who do not share their language, culture or interests. However, despite these expressions of desire for autonomy, and despite the distrust and resentment held against *desi* people, villagers are dependent on the plains world for money, food and other basic necessities.

9.3 Hill People's View of the Hills and Themselves

Villagers take great pride in their countryside and in their way of life. People continually drew my attention to the purity of the air and water, and told me how peaceful, safe and clean the hill region was. These qualities are believed to be unique to Uttarakhand, the source of the great rivers and the land of the gods. People consider themselves lucky to live in the region, and there is an implicit assumption held by hill villagers that their hearts and souls, like the Himalayas themselves, are pure and good.

The Kumaon region is often spoken of as if it were one large kin unit. When comparing the hills and the plains, people would comment on how nice it was travelling in the hills, among one's own kind, so to speak. Paharis meet each other on an equal footing. They share a certain amount of common cultural ground. As Berreman says, despite their differences, "a Pahari is a more congenial stranger than is a non-Pahari" (1972: 298). Meetings between a Pahari and a non-Pahari are more distant, formal and uneasy. A friend who is a widow once said:

If one day I meet somebody for the first time, then the next time we meet we can feel easy and familiar and joke with each other. With fellow hill people you can stand around and chat. For example, when I go to Haldvani I am bound to meet some kind of relative in the market and I feel at ease. This is so in the hills.

Contrary to what is believed to happen in the plains, where people are said to intermarry with 'outsiders' (cross-caste, cross-religion), Kumaonis will only marry with other Kumaonis. Therefore, Kumaon is associated with kinship, and not with anonymity and strangers. Kumaon is spoken about as if it were populated by one kind of people, Hindu Paharis. In the *des* people are not of one kind. The *des* is populated by unknown people. The general attitude held by those who live in the

¹²With regards voting patterns: in the general election of November 1989 many high caste villagers did not vote for the Congress party. Some young men stuck the Congress (I) campaign stickers onto the soles of their flip-flops, an expression of their opinions of that party. High caste people suggested that Harijans were keen supporters of Congress (I). For further information on the U.K.D. and on regional politics see Berreman (1979, 1983a, 1985).

village is that the plains are populated by a different kind of people with a different culture. Those who go to work in the plains are therefore susceptible to the values and habits there, and in danger of becoming less Kumaoni as a result. While in the plains the hill man may feel subjected to an "alien sub-culture" to which he feels inferior (Fanger 1980: 267), but when he is in his village, in the hills among his own people, "he sees the *pahari* way of life as superior" (Berreman 1972: 356). Those who work in the plains and those who have set up home there, are, in some ways, pitied by fellow villagers. One elderly Brahman woman claimed:

We are better off than those who live outside because they are all alone, like a *ghar-javai*. Among one's own close kin one can fight and laugh. Among one's kin there is *śāṇ* (love/affection). Tourists can enjoy our wind and air for a few days. We 'eat' it all the time! Those people who have moved and set up home elsewhere (i.e., in Delhi) . . . only come back as tourists, staying for a day or two and then they go away.

The derogatory attitude of the plains people towards hill people informs hill men and women's own self-definition. It could be argued that many of their attitudes are elaborated in opposition to the social values of plains society. There are many features which these Kumaonis see as distinctive to themselves; which they feel they share among themselves, and which mark them off from the plains people.

Language. The Kumaoni language is one of the most important indicators of the hill people's distinctiveness not only for outsiders, but for Paharis themselves. They are proud of their language and say that it is 'sweet' (*mīṭh*). Kumaoni is the familiar home language; it is the language of the home, tea-stall and village shops. Kumaoni is also the language used in the worship of regional divinities, particularly in the context of *jagars*.

Hindi is the language of the *des*, the North Indian plains. Hindi is also the language of authority represented by the government; it is the language of administration, business and education. Hindi is used in formal contexts, for it constructs a distance between the speakers. When the Block Development Officer visits he is spoken to in Hindi even if he is a Kumaoni man. I also noticed teachers or service class people often switch from Kumaoni to Hindi and back again during the course of a conversation, as if they were unsure as to whether the context was, or should be, a formal or an informal one.

Hindi is associated with the plains, with *sarvis* (employment) and the official world in general. In short, Hindi is inextricably associated with *desi* people. Those men who go to work in the plains are in contact with plains people and have to speak in Hindi for much of their working hours. Hindi may be seen by some as a status symbol, a marker of superiority, just as being able to speak English is for many people in India. However, for the majority of rural Kumaonis, this is not a positive

symbol. Speaking in Hindi means one has become less Kumaoni; that one has taken on the ways and attitudes of the plains. Regardless of whether life in the plains is a comfortable experience, these men should leave that part of their identity behind them as soon as they enter the village again. Plainsmen are thought to be arrogant and conceited. Returned and visiting migrant labourers may also have adopted these attitudes, viewing their village relatives as backward and inferior. Men who speak Hindi in the village, especially in the tea-shops and with co-villagers, are criticised for thinking themselves bigger and better than everyone else, and of putting on airs of superiority. One will hear the sarcastic jibe: "He has become a big man now!" (*ũ bar hai go*). In order to avoid this kind of sharp-edged teasing one should speak Kumaoni. The owner of a sweet shop in Ranikhet bazaar made the following comment as he watched passengers disembark from a bus arriving from the plains:

People do not want to speak Kumaoni here; they return from the plains and speak Hindi. It isn't good. They should speak their mother-home language. It is as if they feel embarrassed to speak Kumaoni, as if they would be putting themselves down if they did.

Rituals. Kumaonis hold *jagars*, in the dead of night to deal mainly with misfortune and illness. Like Leavitt (1992: 20-21), I too found that Kumaonis consider these rituals to be peculiar to the mountains, and a distinctly *pahari* thing to do. *Jagars* involve regional gods; they are performed in the Kumaoni language; the legends and narrative songs sung by the bard to induce these gods to dance refer to events which took place in the Katyuri and Cand dynasties before 1795 when Kumaon ceased to be an independent kingdom (Gaborieau 1977: xl). Not only are the rituals seen as unique to the region, but so are the reasons for their performance, that is, the causes of their misfortune. Paharis think they are particularly affected by such agents. One man said:

In the Plains people feed and educate their children and then say to them, 'you are on your own, make your living and lead your own life on your own feet'. But here in the hills, people feed and educate their children and then say to them 'now you give to us, you take care of us'. If they don't then these ancestral curses (*hanks*) multiply.

This man's contrast between plains and hills society on this point is spurious, and is a misconstruction of plains social life. Such notions of *seva* and inter-generational reciprocity and interdependence also exist in the plains (see Vatuk 1990) and that ancestral curses are part of social life. The attribution of distinctiveness extends to the calendars and annual ritual cycles. The solar ritual cycle is "regional in content and associations" and its festivals "refer solely to the cycle of hill seasons and the specifics of hill agriculture" (Leavitt 1992: 22-23).¹³

¹³For more details on the annual cycle of rituals and festivals see Appendix Three.

Morality. In contrast to *desi* people, Paharis are said to be honest, generous, compassionate, good natured, innocent and fair. According to my high-caste informants, plains people are black whereas *pahari* people have light, wheat-coloured skin. Not only is this a comment on their relative beauty but also on their respective moral make-up. Hill people are thin (*patāṇ*) and therefore physically strong. Paharis are, according to themselves, also poor people. When I first arrived in Silora, people told me repeatedly "we are poor people." This was reiterated particularly in relation, or in opposition, to plains people. Plains people are fat, rich, powerful and immoral. Hill people are thin, poor, marginal and moral.¹⁴ Although most people try desperately to improve their economic standing and life-style, and although they, in a way, envy the wealthy for their riches, being poor is given a positive value, and almost treated as something essential to being a Kumaoni hill person.

Women and Work. Women in the village would often volunteer comments of comparison between their situation and that of plains women. They are aware that they contribute much more than plains women do to the local agricultural economy. One woman said: "Hill women do everything: they look after children, do the cooking and work in the fields. In the plains, women do house work and men work on the land." Despite what any one woman may feel, and many in other contexts complained about how much work hill women have to do, when speaking about themselves in relation to plains women they represent and talk about their situation as the better of the two. In the plains, women who work outside and in the fields are thought to come from households low in economic or social status. In the hills, however, it is celebrated as a positive aspect of the Kumaoni woman's life. Village women take pride in their physical strength and regard being thin as good, and equate fatness with weakness. In addition, they consider their mobility as a kind of freedom not enjoyed by their sisters in the plains. Though women generally consider themselves to be suppressed (*dabā*), they value the fact that they are not confined to the house all day. Going out to the fields or forest, for young *bvaris* in particular, is a relief and release (see Chapter Five). On one trip to the forest a young woman said: "Our way of life is better than that of the plains women. We go out; they just sit around in the house; they are not very strong in the body." On another occasion a woman said proudly: "Here women work, not as they do in the *des* where they just sit around."¹⁵

¹⁴Bererman alludes to this rich/poor-plains/hills opposition. Sirkanda villagers see city life as "easy, entertaining, sinful, and expensive. For well-to-do plains people it is fine, but it is not suitable for poor paharis" (1972: 305).

¹⁵At the same time, however, women will comment upon the village girl who marries into a 'good house'. A 'good house' is one where she will not have the *kaṣṭ* (suffering) of the hill woman's work.

Relations of Production. Another case pertains to the social relations and methods of production. People complain about the difficulties they face in ploughing and farming their terraced land. The land is not profitable, it does not yield surplus produce of any significance, and labour costs are high. One old lady said to me:

Here in the hills there is a lot of suffering. If we don't work where will we find food? We earn just enough to feed and clothe ourselves. In the plains they earn more and have more money.

However, despite these complaints, people speak almost boastfully about the *pahari* people's way of farming. "People do their own work (*apaṇ kām*) and there is no shame (*saram*) in this." This is the view of most people today and it is positively asserted (see Chapter Three). Men speak with pride about their women and daughters who are not only good workers but are literate and as able as any. The phenomena of large individualised land holdings, of landlords and the accompanying inequalities so characteristic of the plains system, do not exist in Silora or Kumaon in general. People express approval of the fact that the social relations of production are more fair and egalitarian than in the plains. The following statement elaborates on this point:

Here there are two kinds of people: the rich and the poor. If people are rich in the plains then they will not do the field work but will hire *naukars* (servants). Here in the hills, be they rich or poor, they do their own work; they are *barabar* (equal).¹⁶

As we saw in Chapter Five there is a stress on egalitarianism in the village, even though economic differences do exist. This putative egalitarianism is presented by Paharis as a means of expressing their difference from plains society. This is, of course, a simplified image, but one which can become a rhetorical expression of Pahari virtue, and one which can also feed back into their own sense of self. As Cohen remarks, a community's members "may denigrate the disparities of wealth and power, or the competitiveness which they perceive elsewhere, to justify and give value to their espousal of equality" (1985: 35).

9.4 Concluding Remarks

Plains people constitute yet another category of outsiders. Paharis distrust and are hostile towards plains people. Desis stand beyond and outside the *pahari* economic, ecological, moral and kinship systems. The *des* is thought to be polluted and violent,

¹⁶While the division of agricultural labour may, in the men's opinion, contrast favourably (as more egalitarian and fair) with that in the plains, as we have seen, men do relatively little farm work and the main inequalities lie not among men or between the castes, but between men and women.

and populated by a different kind of being. *Des* is an immoral, all-engulfing and dangerous place. The hills in comparison are pure, peaceful and divine. Plains people are said to be dishonest, unreliable, shameless and cheats; they are also fat, rich and powerful. Rich people are thought to be morally corrupt, wicked and responsible for the hardships of the poor (see Pitt-Rivers 1971: 62); these fat plains people 'eat' and get fat at the expense of Paharis. They drain the hills of its minerals, timber and labour and deny it prosperity and strength. However, to be fat and rich is not equated with moral superiority, and poverty is not equated with moral inferiority. Rather, in this context, poverty denotes moral superiority. Thus, to be thin and to be Pahari, though it may mean political and economic weakness and subordination, is to be morally superior. Fat, rich people are denigrated, and as such they cannot be identified with the Pahari, but must be one of 'them', an outsider.

However, the attitudes of hill people are also ambivalent: alongside the deep antipathy for plains society, there is also envy. This is illustrated in the peoples' attitudes towards *sarvis-valas* and *heroins*; they represent that which is unworthy, but also that which is enviable and desirable.

The ideology of autonomy and contained separation found on the household and caste levels, is again elaborated on the regional level. Claims for a politically independent state, and resentment over economic exploitation by outsiders demonstrate this. Paharis define themselves as having unique linguistic, social, moral and cultural patterns which serve to distinguish and separate them from plains society. At the same time however, the hill region is dependant on the plains for money, food and other basic necessities. It must stretch out beyond its limits and engage with outsiders in order to survive.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The social universe of high caste Kumaoni villagers is organised in terms of the 'inside' and the 'outside'. The segmentary model is such that the 'inside' and the 'outside' refer to different social categories depending on the context and level of identification. In some circumstances the household is the 'inside', and is opposed to other households in the village; in other contexts these households are united as brothers and agnates in opposition to affines; in some instances high caste households are opposed to the Dum population; and in yet others they are all united as Kumaonis and Paharis. There is hostility and suspicion of outsiders, but who these are varies from level to level. We saw in Chapter Five that there is rivalry within the village and that people complain about their fellow kin and villagers. However, in Chapter Nine, these very people, that is, kin, as well as affines and Dums, are idealised as friendly and moral. In this segmentary model, the interests and enmities of the lower levels are subordinated at broader, more inclusive levels.

This thesis has demonstrated that relations between households, castes, affines, humans and the supernaturals and between regions, are shaped by, and spoken about in terms of, the inside/outside dichotomy. This distinction is not neutral, but outsiders are presented as impure and morally inferior. This moral categorisation extends to the definition of space.

Outside spaces are associated with moral inferiority and danger. The house itself is spatially organised according to the inside/outside distinction. Less pure and less familiar people and activities are associated with the extremities of the house; the core and innermost areas are associated with pure and intimate activities and people. Secondly, the house, in relation to non-house spaces, is a pure, moral and safe place. Moving outwards again, the village area is also safe, but the forest, which lies just beyond the village boundaries, represents a source of danger. The *jangal* is a wild and immoral place, thought to be haunted by ghosts and evil spirits. Moving further away beyond the hill region lie the plains which are thought to be polluted and violent. They represent an immoral and hazardous space. The hills, in contrast, are pure, peaceful and divine.

Just as 'outside' spaces are defined as dangerous and evil, outsiders are also attributed with similar characteristics. In all cases, outsiders are constructed as greedy, destructive and untrustworthy. They are thought to be motivated by self-

interest and personal gain, and are seen to make predatory claims on insiders. Outsiders are thought to 'eat' and get strong at the expense of insiders; they represent a threat to the well-being of insiders. There is much distrust of outsiders, however they are defined. Outsiders stand outside of the proper moral order which the 'inside' represents, and as such are an unsafe category of beings.

At this point it may be useful to review the various categories of outsiders in the order in which they have been discussed in this thesis, beginning with non-household members and concluding with plains people. In Chapter Three we saw that women refer to non-household members as *bhyarak*, outsiders, and that this category includes close agnatic kin. Social relations within the village are competitive and antagonistic, and a deep sense of distrust and hostility characterises most forms of inter-household interaction (Chapter Five). Non-household members are malicious and are suspected of harbouring base motives. Outsiders are covetous and inflict the evil eye; they try to sap the house of its economic, moral and social strength. The assumption is that these outsiders want to deprive insiders of their wealth and well-being and deplete the house's reserves and security.

According to high caste people, Dums are outsiders. In Chapters Four and Five we saw that Dums are associated with ghosts and evil spirits, greed and the evil eye. They are defiling, black and morally degraded. The notion of Dums (as outsiders) 'eating' at the expense of high caste people (insiders) is illustrated in the latter's bitterness over low caste people's rising economic status, and government job-reservation and preferential treatment.

Affines form another category of outsiders, who, as was shown in Chapter Six, are attributed with negative mystical capacities which can have devastating consequences. In general, affines are equally dangerous. However, the house's immediate wife-givers, the more inferior affines, are attributed with the most threatening powers. The new *bvari* is also a potentially dangerous outsider (Chapter Seven). Not only is she a threat to the stability of the household unit, but she is also thought of as a conveyor of misfortune. She is said to transport and cast magic spells, and if any misfortune should occur in the house soon after her arrival, she may be held responsible.

'Outside' ghosts and evil spirits hover on the edges of organised moral society, which is the 'inside'. In Chapter Eight we saw that they are depicted as black, dirty and ugly, and as lurking in impure places. They are said to be greedy and deceitful. Their attacks do not follow breaches of the moral order but are motivated by pure hunger and desire. In satisfying their own self-interest and needs through 'eating' their prey, outside ghosts weaken their victims by depriving them of their health and vitality.

Finally, plains people, as outsiders, are presented as dishonest, untrustworthy and corrupt (Chapter Nine). They are said to be black-skinned and crafty. Plains people exhaust the hills of their natural resources and undermine the region's economy. In so doing, they 'eat' and get fat at the expense of the hills and hill people. Paharis, though politically and economically marginal, are morally superior.

Just as outsiders are constructed as acquisitive and greedy and attributed with selfish motives and behaviour, so too relations with outsiders are presented as utilitarian and pragmatic. The instrumental attitude towards relations with outsiders is most clearly expressed with regard to interaction between households in the village (Chapter Five). Relations with non-household members and friends are manipulative and instrumental. I suggest that alcohol symbolises the morality of the outside and of relations with outsiders. In addition, people claim they work in the plains out of economic necessity. The plains represent a source of income and wealth, and people's attachment to the plains is purely instrumental; people work there to earn a living, not to mix with plains people. The emphasis on the instrumentality of social relations is also pertinent to interaction with 'outside' ghosts. These ghosts are given food and forced to leave. They are not honoured, and once they have been successfully sent away, no long-standing obligations to them remain; the relationship between humans and the 'outside' ghost is contractual and instrumental.

The characterisation of relations with outsiders contrasts sharply with the representation of relations between insiders. These are portrayed as compassionate, caring and altruistic. At all levels of identification, the 'inside' constitutes a moral and ordered community.

At the same time, however, there are differences in what constitutes the inside and the outside depending on the gender, and to a lesser degree, social role, of the individual. We saw in Chapters Three and Seven that men and women apply the inside/outside distinction differently. For women, the inside/outside distinction ultimately begins at the household level extending out to broader levels of society. The household represents, at the lowest level of identification and particularly for women, a moral community of insiders. Women refer to the household as 'the inside' and to household members as 'insiders'. They present the household as a place of love and mutual support. Relations between these insiders are presented as affectionate and altruistic. These ideals, I have argued, are symbolised by household milk and the mother-child bond. House milk symbolises the values and morality embodied in the household and the ideal nature of relations between household members. Milk represents altruistic giving and sharing, which is the epitome of non-instrumental giving and the essence of the 'inside' itself, as women define it. Milk is the symbol of nurturing and of solidarity and is diametrically opposed to alcohol, which represents transactional utilitarian relationships, which, in principle, only pertain to relations

with outsiders. For women, and in particular in-married women, non-household members are untrustworthy outsiders, and relations with them are hostile and problematic. In-married women of the village do not adhere to the ideology of brotherhood.

Men express the inside/outside opposition in terms of broader levels of community. For men, the ideology of brotherhood prescribes altruism between brother households. On the level of representations, men do not talk of the house as 'the inside', partly because this runs against the ideology of brotherhood and partly because at marriage they do not leave their natal village to live elsewhere. The lineage represents, at a different level of identification and particularly for men, another moral community of insiders. When men speak of outsiders they are referring to non co-villagers, non-caste members, plains people and so forth, and it is relations with these categories of outsiders which men present as problematic.

Despite the different definitions of what constitutes the primary community of insiders for men and women, the genders do share the grammar of the inside/outside dichotomy. The associations of the outsider with danger and distrust are present when women talk of non-household members, and when high caste men and women talk of the Dums or plains people. Relations between insiders, however they are defined, should, in principle, be based on sharing, interdependence and cooperation, affection and harmony. These ideals, as we have just seen, are applicable to relations within the house and between lineage kin. They also extend, in accordance with the segmentary model, to relations between villagers and between hill people in general, and are elaborated with regard to interaction with the gods, ancestors and 'inside' ghosts. These supernaturals not only uphold and oversee the morality of these various social categories, they are also owed treatment deemed appropriate to insiders. As such, they should be cared for and regularly fed. Worship serves to bring the human and divine insiders together for their mutual benefit and protection.

The ideology of regulation and separation emphasises the containment and closure of social categories. This ideology is heavily stressed in Silora. The outside world and outsiders are attributed base motives and are seen to cause harm and disorder. The inside, as contextually defined, is presented as vulnerable to outside agents and must be protected. People must take care not only to regulate what flows out across the boundary, but more importantly to what flows in across the boundary from the outside. Boundaries which divide the inside from the outside should be strengthened. I suggest that the characterisation of relations with outsiders as instrumental also serves to reinforce the closed and bounded model of social categories and to protect them from the outside.

The ideology of regulation is most clearly demonstrated on the levels of the household, caste and region. The villagers model of the household stresses containment and closure. As we saw in Chapter Three, the emphasis is on autarky, independence and detachment. The house's cohesive internal structure is sustained by the strong protective and intimate bond between a mother and her children. I argued in Chapter Seven that it is women, and in particular in-married senior wives of the village, who emphasise the separateness of the household. Women actively assert the priority and self-interest of the household. As mothers, women elaborate the consanguineal link between a mother and child, and stress the uniqueness of the mother-child emotional bond. This bond is symbolised by milk. The uniqueness of this bond serves as a representation of the household as an insular, exclusive and contained unit. In addition, the notion of total withdrawal of contact from kin expressed in *kas* situations, described in Chapter Eight, reinforces the priority given to the autonomy of the household.

If outsiders are grasping; malicious and destructive, the household must protect its good fortune and wealth from the outside world. Certain practices and attitudes serve to safeguard the house from envy and claims on its resources. They also serve to support the model of the closed, separate and bounded household unit. For example: household wealth and property is hoarded and concealed; lying and secrecy defend the house from community sanctions and from outsiders' greed; and leakages of information on household affairs to the outside world are avoided, though distorted facts are allowed out. Contact with outsiders, such as visitors, impure and low caste people, is kept to the peripheries of the house. The inside, the core of the house, is protected from contact with the outside world. The ideology of regulation is also relevant in relation to the separation of 'outside' ghosts from the body of the individual victim, and from the social body of the household which also suffers from the evil spirit's affliction. Exorcism and sacrifice serve to separate and distance the human actors from the menacing outside ghost. Once again, separation and detachment from outsiders is the ideal, and the way to protect the inside.

This ideal of containment, which is so important at the household level, is replicated on the levels of caste and region. The ideological stress at the caste level is on closure, containment and separation: particular emphasis is given to the separateness and distinctiveness of the high-caste Brahmans and Thakurs from the low caste Dums. Low caste people threaten to deprive high caste people of their economic opportunities and to weaken their purity. Dums are kept at bay through limited formal interaction and exchange described in Chapter Four. The ideological stress on the household as an autonomous, self-sufficient, bounded and contained entity is elaborated in the general ideology of the region. On this level, claims for a politically independent state and resentment over economic exploitation by plains

people demonstrate this. Paharis define themselves as linguistically, socially, morally and culturally distinct from plains society.

To close, it may be appropriate to consider whether Kumaoni's use of the inside/outside opposition, and their corresponding concern with containment, is replicated at yet another level: that is, at the level of the body. For example, to what extent is the body cast as the 'inside', in the same way as the house is? Do similar concerns with regulating what flows across the body's boundary arise? Are these concerns more important to females than to males? And do age and gender inform constructs of the body? Further field research would perhaps generate answers to these questions.

APPENDIX ONE

Household Composition: Supplementary Details.

In this appendix I give further details regarding household composition as tabulated in Table 8.

1. Supplemented nuclear households. The extra kin were:

Male household head's (HH's) widowed mother	4
HH's widowed mother and married sister	1
HH's widowed mother and unmarried brother	1
HH's widowed mother and WyB	1 ^a
HH's unmarried brother	1
HH's unmarried brother and married daughter	1 ^b
HH's mother	1 ^c

Notes:

^aThis wife's younger brother was living in the house, and attending the government secondary school two kilometres away from the village.

^bThe brother is in his forties and is mentally disturbed; he has never married.

^cThis mother is not widowed. Ego's father lives in the same building as ego. This building is a roadside one. The father does not live with his wife, ego's mother. The father is fed and looked after by his eldest son (his first wife's son and hence ego's half brother) though the latter lives with his own family in another house. The father in question is 97 years old and virtually immobile. He died during the field work year.

2. Sub-nuclear Households. The various compositions are:

A married couple	3 ^a
Mother (widowed) and son	1
Mother (widowed) and children	1

Notes:

^aOne of the married couples consists of a village daughter-sister and her husband. I do not know their source of income, and I heard that the husband had sold and drunk away all of his and his brother's common ancestral land and properties. They have nowhere else to live.

3. Single person households. All are composed of widows, and one of these widows is an elderly village daughter-sister.

4. Supplemented Collateral Joint. Supplementary kin in the houses are:

Male household head's (HH's) widowed mother	4
HH's widowed mother and unmarried sibling	1
HH's widowed mother and ZS	1
HH's mother	1 ^a
HH's widowed father and unmarried siblings	3

Notes:

^aIn this case, the mother is not a widow; she is the first and 'estranged' wife of a man in the village who lives with his second wife and offspring in his village house.

5. Supplemented Lineal Joint. Of these, one is supplemented by the household head's father who was mentioned under sub-nuclear households in the explanatory note 'a'. One is supplemented by a married daughter-sister.

Daughters-sisters living in the village

In total, 11 village daughters-sisters reside and/or own property in Silora. Several have been referred to above. The above deconstructions of various household types show that three households are supplemented by a returned married daughter-sister of the household head. These three share the same hearth with their father/brother. Five are cases of daughters who have inherited property: two do not live in the village, though they own land and a house there. They rent out their buildings to lodgers. Three live in Silora with their husbands and families. They are all members of nuclear households. One of these women has remarried, but to a man of a lower caste. She is effectively not a full member of the village.

Two village sisters have their own separate hearths. In both cases the brother has, however, offered shelter, in the form of a room or two in the *goth* (domestic animal byre) on the lower floor of the building. The last woman, is a widow who was ruthlessly denied her rightful property by her HBs on the death of her husband. Since his death, she has stayed with various maternal relatives, and at one point stayed in the ground floor of her brother's house. However, she and her BW did not get along, and after some time, she has returned to Silora, and rents a room in one of the above-mentioned properties, but absent, village daughters. This woman is not included in my household census material, as she is a lodger in the village.

To summarise:

Z-D sharing hearth with F/B	3
Z-D not sharing hearth with F/B	2
Z-D with inherited property living in village with her husband and children	3
Z-D with property not living in village	2
Z-D not sharing hearth with F/B, but <u>resident in village as a lodger</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	11

APPENDIX TWO.

The Wedding.

Marriage patterns and marriage prestations have undergone considerable changes over the past 50 years or so in Kumaon. The Thul-jat castes have always practised the orthodox dowry marriages, while the lower Brahmans and Thakurs traditionally practised bride price marriages although they shifted to dowry marriages in recent years. I shall not give a description of these changes or of the various practises which existed in the past and which exist today. Details on the marriage traditions of lower ranking Brahmans and Thakurs are given by Joshi (1929) and Lall (1921), and more recent practises and trends are described by Sanwal (1966), Fanger (1980, 1987, 1991) and Kregel (1989, 1990). In this appendix I shall provide a full descriptive account of the marriage ceremony as it is currently performed in Silora.

Kumaoni weddings last three days. During the first day the appropriate *pujas* are performed, the groom and bride are washed, and the household's immediate *paun* are greeted and fed. During the second day the *barat* feasted at the bride's house, where the marriage ceremony takes place. On the third day, the bride leaves for her husband's house. In both villages there is a village-wide feast on this day.

The First Day

1) Preparations in both groom and bride's houses.

Similar activities occur at both the groom and bride's respective homes on the first day. By eight or nine o'clock in the morning preparations begin. Two large fires are set up outside for heating water for tea and making *puris*. Men knead huge lumps of dough and two old women may sing auspicious songs as this is done. Lineage men help to cut vegetables. Every extra-household person who comes to help is welcomed with a *pithya*. There is a *pithya* tray with red and yellow paste, *gur*, sesame, flower petals, rice and coins in it. It is said that in the case of a boy's wedding, it is auspicious for women to take a penny from the tray, but on a girl's wedding it is not. Inside the house, in the kitchen, *puris* are made, milk heated and soya beans ground. The family priest arrives and sets up the shrine ready for *pujas*.

Meanwhile, in an interior back room of the house, a *kalaś* (water pot) and a very large *parat* containing a leaf, *dūb* grass, pennies, turmeric and rice, are laid out. Identical items are also laid out beneath the *parat*. The bride-to-be squats in the *parat*. All of her senior female kin (M, FBW, eBW) wear their gold nose-rings and yellow and red patterned cotton veils. Five such women stand around the *parat*. The girl is wiped down with a water and turmeric mixture. Over her head a large yellow cloth pouch is held. This cloth pouch is referred to as *acav* which literally means a veil or the border of a lady's cloth. In this case it refers to a large piece of yellow cloth which is knotted at each end and filled with rice, a coconut, coins and sesame. It is auspicious and is said to protect the bride. Water, *dub*, pennies and rice are drawn over the girl and fall into the *parat*. When the bathing is complete, little girls, 'sisters' of the bride, are given all of the pennies which are inside and underneath the *parat*. They then take the *parat* and empty it outside pouring the water at the roots of a fruit tree. The bride wears a *dhoti* and her hair is left loose. From this time on she is not allowed to do any work, nor to go beyond the confines of the house and courtyard.

Outside, the bride's married female kin roll out dough into five paper thin circles. These are placed in a *thali* and an auspicious *svāstikā* symbol is added to

each, as well as a *pithya*. Then a man calls out across the village "*āo, sungāv banāo*", "come and make *sungav*." This is an invitation to all the village women and girls to come to make *sungav*, a paper thin *puri*. The women arrive, some with their little rolling boards and pins. The first to arrive are usually women of the bride's lineage. Some women bring a little milk to contribute to the tea which is served. They set to work rolling out the *sungav* from the large mounds of dough which the men have kneaded. This is a time for chatter and fun. As soon as the women roll the dough out, the *sungav* are laid out in the sun to dry. At a later stage they will be put in oil and quickly deep fried. Gradually women arrive and are served tea; when they have made enough *sungav*, they sing and dance. When they leave, those who brought milk are given a *puri* or *roti*.

Inside, the bride, her father and mother perform the Ganes *puja*. Outside, lineage men cook food (rice, lentils and potatoes). Inside the house, *roti* (flat bread) is made for those people who will not eat rice. Affinal guests arrive and are taken care of.

In the afternoon, the dried *sungav* is fried and *laru* (a ball shaped sweetmeat) is made. *Laru* and *sungav* will later be distributed to each village household. Part of this *laru* is put aside to make figurines of the bride's parents-in-law to be. In the evening, food is cooked for those affinal guests who have come from outside. The meal usually consists of vegetables, *roti*, *puri* and tea and this evening, *celibetis* (daughters of the lineage) who are in the *mait* from their conjugal villages are, in principle, fed. This group of women also includes widowed lineage daughters who have returned to their *mait* to live, and women who have returned permanently to their *mait* because of maltreatment in their conjugal homes. One person from each lineage house is also fed this evening. However, more often than not, in practice both *celibetis* and lineage people were invited to eat on the second night, the night the *barat* arrives. Whenever they are fed, it is important to feed the *celibetis*, not only of the household, but of the whole lineage.

The Second Day.

1) The *barat* and the wedding ceremony proper.

The groom awakes, washes and a Ganes *puja* is performed. He then dresses for the wedding. The groom is dressed in a three-piece suit and a tie, and wears a garland (*māṇṇ*) made with two rupee notes and tinsel. His face is decorated by the priest with thin lines and dots of sandal paste which go across his forehead and down to his temples. The act of decorating the face is called *kuramū lekhaṇ*. On his head he wears a *mukuṭ* (a decorated cardboard crown) with a curtain of beads which fall to conceal his face. I was told that in the past, grooms wore a yellow *dhoti* and long white or yellow *kuratā*. During my stay I saw only one groom dressed as such. He came from a village on the border with Garhwal (see Kapur 1988: 145).

Village men assemble outside in their best clothes, ready to set off as *bareti* (members of the groom's party) to the bride's village. One man from every high caste village household is invited to join the *barat* (wedding party), and those immediate male kin and affinal kin of the groom will all attend. A band consisting of Muslim or Harijan men, accompanies the wedding party. Before he leaves the house the groom's eBW applies black charcoal eyeliner under his eyes. The groom is then offered his mother's breast, so that he may 'drink' of her milk for the last time. This signals the end of the son's dependence on the mother, and the end of the nurturing relationship. The son now moves into his new role as householder (see Bennett 1983: 254). The mother now expects to be provided for and attended to; she moves steadily into a position of dependence. The groom is then led out of his house backwards by his senior female kin. Married wives of the household and family, in their coloured veils and nose-rings, draw rice from his feet to his head. The act of drawing rice up over the head of another as a blessing is known as *achet nilāgaṇ*. *Achet* refers to whole, unbroken grains of rice. The band starts to play and *barat* men dance down the path to the bus. Currently, most *barats* travel by hired bus, taxi or Maruti van. Village and *paravar* kin go in the bus, and the groom's most immediate kin and affines will go in the taxi or van.

Meanwhile, at the girl's house preparations for the wedding party and feast will be under way. Work collecting water and decorating the house starts early. Inside the house the bride is again washed in turmeric. On one occasion I noticed the bride's mother giving some money to those women who helped her in the washing. The bride wears a yellow saree, and, as a large *acav* is held over her head, she is lead backwards into the *puja* room where she is given a *pithya* from her *purohit*. Ganes *puja* is performed: during this a lamp is lit, which must not go out until after the *barat* and bride have left the next day, after the wedding ceremonies. The bride's father performs a *puja* inviting the forefathers to join the living and to bless them and this work with success. A *thali* with coconut, rice, spices, pulses, potatoes, *ghi* and salt are offered to the ancestors. Then the *purohit* ties a piece of yellow string with a knot of yellow cloth containing a penny in it, onto the left wrist of the bride and her mother, and on the right one of the father. This is said to represent 'the protection of the forefathers'.

The house is decorated and a coloured cloth awning is erected from the roof of the house, to extend across the courtyard. A large circle decorated with red and white patterns is painted onto the courtyard. Here the groom and his *purohit* are welcomed. Two Brahman villagers, who are paid for their services, cook. The bride sits inside, and her hands and feet are decorated with nail varnish and henna. The visiting *paun* will have already given their gifts, and will have put them in a ground floor room of the house, - normally the *goth* - where they are displayed. A list is kept of the items gifted and of their donors. Shiny metal dishes, *thali*, tea-sets, *parats*, *dhotis*, money and so forth are offered by various guests. As dusk draws near, the bride, her household and friends anxiously await the arrival of the *barat*.

There are five major parts to the marriage ceremony which I describe below.

- i) *Pithya lagan*. 'Reserving the bride', or the engagement.
- ii) *Dhuiarag*. Welcoming the groom and his *purohit*.
- iii) *Choi*. Gift exchange between wife-takers and wife-givers.
- iv) *Kanya dan* and *acav*. The gift of the virgin and the tying of the cloth.
- v) Circumambulation of the sacred fire.

i) *Pithya lagan*. 'Reserving the bride', or the engagement.

In the past, the engagement took place several months, or even years, before the wedding. Presently, however, the most common practice is to have the engagement on the night the wedding party arrive for the marriage ceremony. Thus, the *barat* arrives and is served tea and sweets at a distance from the bride's house, on the border of the village. Meanwhile five men from the groom's side make their way to the bride's house to perform the engagement ceremony. The groom's father and *purohit* will be among these five men. They are led into a room where a shrine is situated. The bride's *purohit* puts a *pithya* onto all of the groom's men present. The bride's father gives these guests some money. The groom's *purohit* places rice, flowers, a leaf, anklets, yellow bag, yellow saree, petticoat, blouse and sweets into a *parat*. The bride sits down near her *purohit* and opposite the *barat* men. The groom's *purohit* is given a *lota* of water into which he drops some coins. He then places the *lota* onto the bride's head. Holding it there, he applies a *pithya* to her forehead. He then touches some flowers to the bride's body and offers them to the shrine. The *lota* is removed and each of the assembled *barat* men sip some water from the *lota*. The groom's *purohit* touches the bride with the bananas, oranges, Rs.51 and a gold ring (which the bride's mother then takes and puts aside) and then places the clothes set, bag and anklets onto the girl's head and gives the *parat* to the girl. All of these items, which are for the bride's family, are then put aside. A *parat*, *thali* and money is given to the groom's *purohit*, that is, the groom's representative, by the bride's father. The money is for the groom. The five men present are all given money. These *bartan* and cash are for the wife-takers. The men are then served tea and sweets.

The gifts given by wife-takers to the bride were not fixed; there were variations, but the point is that five items should be given. At some engagements I saw a saree, petticoat, blouse, gold ring and anklets given. Otherwise a full set of clothing is given. This set consists of five items: the *dhoti*, *petticoat* (underskirt),

blauj (material for a top), vest and *rumāv* (handkerchief). The saree does not have to be yellow, though it often is, but can be red.

If the engagement occurs a few weeks or months before the wedding, the *parat* given to the groom's side must be filled with *puris*, *gurpapari* or *haluva*, and sweets. There should, if possible, be five articles in the gift. How much is given depends, of course, upon the household's economic standing. One family gave five pieces of *bartan*: one *parat*, two *thalis*, and two little bowls, along with Rs.51 for the groom, and Rs.25 for each of the men present. Some people give vegetables too. The trend is now to give shiny new pots and *bartan* to one's wife-takers. In the past, old *bartan* was given (see Krenzel 1990). These items are part of the household's moveable property wealth. In engagements performed a few weeks before the wedding, at least two men from the groom's side must be present. In one case the groom's father and the groom's mother's brother represented the groom's side. In another case the groom's father and eBWF attended the engagement. This ceremony can be completed without a Brahman priest.

The *sauras* people then return to the groom and *barat*, who are, by now, making their way to the bride's house. The band plays raucous Hindi film music and the groom's party (*bareti*) dance vigorously as they approach the bride's house. The bride's co-villagers, neighbours and guests assemble in the courtyard, waiting in anticipation. Ideally the procession is ordered in the following way: heading the *barat* is the person who carries a *theki*, a wooden vessel in which yoghurt is set. A green vegetable, and sometimes also a piece of turmeric, are laid on top. This vessel, known as the *lagan-ṣaguṇi theki*, is wrapped in yellow material. The person carrying this is followed by a man who carries the *byaul pitār*, a trunk which contains the clothes and ornaments for the bride and all the gifts to be given during the marriage. The trunk is covered with a red piece of cloth. The groom and *barat* are lead by a young boy, a 'brother' of the bride, to the courtyard. The groom walks or is carried to the bride's house in a *ḍoli* (palanquin). He will carry a multi-coloured umbrella in his right hand. Large gas lamps are carried so that the procession is well lit.

ii) *Dhuiarag*. Welcoming the groom and his *purohit*.

As the *barat* arrives, two young girls stand at the entrance of the girl's house or courtyard. Either they hold glasses of water in which the petals of flowers float or the sides of the path leading to the courtyard are lined with cups of water. The *bareti* are supposed to drop coins into these, as they pass. After the *barat* has arrived, the *bareti* continue to dance to the music of the band. When the party reaches the courtyard the bride's girl friends and 'sisters' start to sing. As the groom steps out of his *doli*, his shoes are 'stolen' by young village girls, the bride's younger 'sisters'. He will not get them back until his departure time, when he will give them some money in return. When he reaches the courtyard, the groom places a handkerchief between his lips. This is done so that he does not talk: "It is not good for him to talk during the wedding. If he does then it is believed that the baby or child will be deaf or dumb." He keeps the handkerchief between his lips only on his arrival.

The bride's father and *purohit* greet the groom and his *purohit* and the bride's *purohit* gives a *pithya* to the groom and his *purohit*. The groom's *purohit* gives a *pithya* to the bride's father. The groom and his *purohit* are then led to stand on two *chaukhs*, small low yellow-coloured square wooden seats. Beside each stool, is an attache case and a pair of white plimsolls. The *dhuiarag* ritual is then performed: the groom and his *purohit* are greeted and 'worshipped' by the bride's father, who touches and then washes (*khudhōn*) their feet. A *thali*, fruit and money are given to the groom and *purohit*. The bride's father puts a *pithya* on the groom's *purohit* and bows to touch his feet. The attache case is opened, shown to and then given to the *purohit*. The bride's father offers a garland and gold ring to the *purohit*. Finally, he bows to the *purohit's* feet and gives him some money. This is repeated for the groom. However, after the bride's father has given the groom a *pithya*, the groom may bow to touch the bride's father's feet. An attache case, ring and watch are given to the groom. The bride's father gives money to the *purohit*, groom and the groom's father and other immediate male kin. Finally, the bride's father performs *arati* (worship of lamps) by circling a *thali* of earthen lamps in front of the groom and *purohit*. During this time,

mantras are recited by both the bride and groom's *purohit*s. The groom and *purohit* each receive a garland, ring, suitcase, suit cloth, shoes, socks, a *thali*, a glass, a *chaukh* and money. At the end of this ritual there is a break, as people rest and wait for the wedding feast. The groom will then go inside the house to the shrine, and will worship the *ghar dyapt*, the gods of the bride's household. This is known as *jyōti puja*. Then he will retire with his friends downstairs in the *goth*.

The bride will have been absent all this time: she would have been 'inside' the house, surrounded by her female kin and girlfriends waiting for the main ceremony. Outside the house, the meal begins. The *bareti* are served first and sit in two long lines. As they eat, young unmarried *ghareti* females (bride's village sisters and girl-friends) sing songs. These are usually Hindi film songs mixed with the girls' own words. In their songs they tease and give *gali*, in this case mild and flirtatious verbal abuse, to the *bareti* men. Some of the *bareti* will offer the singing girls some money. Often the girls will complain about how stingy these men are, and will not accept small offerings, moaning and insulting them until they are given more. A large number of women usually assemble nearby these young singers, to watch the *barat* eating and to have a good look at the groom. However, married women will sit together and will not join in the singing. After the *bareti* have eaten, guests of the bride's house are fed followed by village men and lastly village women. The food usually consists of *pilau*, *puris*, vegetables, mango and coconut chutney, and *haluva* as a sweet. *Pilau* (fried rice mixed with vegetables) can be served since this rice is fried and not boiled in water. Leaf plates are provided. On this night those village people who have helped in the various preparations - food, decorations and so forth - are also invited and fed. Other eating guests may include special friends, colleagues and 'contacts' of the household, and particular close *paravar* people. Ideally the *paravar* people should all be fed, but people say that now there are just too many people, and it all becomes too expensive. These agnates are fed on the third day.

The main ceremony begins when everyone has finished eating. Because not everyone is interested in watching this, the girls' house may hire a television, video player and several Hindi films from Ranikhet to entertain the *barat* and other guests. This is usually set up outside on the courtyard, at some distance from the marriage area. At one Thakur wedding I attended a team of itinerant actors performed: they sang and did sketches, all in Kumaoni.

The main ceremony usually begins around midnight. The exact and auspicious time (*lagaṇ*) at which the bridal couple are to be married will have been calculated by the groom's *purohit* in advance. However, this is not always strictly adhered to. In Silora, all of the major marriage ceremonies are performed outside on the courtyard, under a large coloured awning. Kapur (1988), Fanger (1980) and Krenzel (1989) all say that the wedding occurs in the byre, that is inside. Old Silora people say that they too used to do this, but that there is not enough room any more, so they do it outside.

The marriage parties sit opposite each other, with their *purohit*s and trunk-boxes at their sides. The groom's side is a all-male contingent, whereas the bride's side is made up primarily of females. Most *ghareti* and some *bareti* men disappear to have a drink or a nap. The bride is lead out of the house and onto the courtyard backwards, with an *acav* held above her head by two senior female kin. Her face is completely covered by her saree. The bride's parents must both be present: if one is dead, then either FB and FBW or eB and eBW will take over these roles.

The ceremonies open with the *gotrachār*, the recitation by the priests of the respective families' genealogies. Then some money is given from the groom to the bride's *purohit*. This *kalaś* prestation from the wife-takers to the girl's *purohit* will occur before the marriage proper begins, for only then will the wedding proceed. This gift is given as a sort of payment to the *purohit* for having performed the bride's name ceremony at her birth. The *purohit* made her 'clean' and gave her a name, and now the husband's family is giving her a new name and identity. The money is given to the bride's *purohit* by the groom's father, though the gift may start with the bride's family. It is not compulsory for the bride's parents to contribute but the groom's must do so, be it five rupees or Rs.500. One lady told me that one of her *samadis* gave five rupees and it was up to her husband to bring the total up to the appropriate level. The

second reason for giving this money is so that the bride's natal kin can eat at her house.

A penny is touched to the bride and her parents and then given to the groom. A *thali* and a small metal bowl are given to the groom, and Rs.40-50 are put at his feet. The groom's *purohit* is given some money. The father places a yellow and red *ghūṅṡūṡ* (bridal veil) in front of the bride. It is then held so as to touch her hands, then the groom's hand and then it is put back at the bride's feet. A piece of yellow material is placed on the bride's right shoulder. Another is put on her left shoulder. During this time the priests recite Sanskrit mantras and the bride's village sisters sing. The veil is then put over the girl, more pennies are put against the bride's body and then given to the groom. The bride's father then washes his daughter's feet: he bows down, pours water onto her feet, then draws his hands up to his head and gives his daughter a *pithya* mark on her head. He then places five rupees at her feet. The bride's mother and father then rise to do *arati* in front of their daughter. The priests blow conch shells and shake bells as the parents wave the *thali* laden with lamps in front of the bride. They resume their places.

iii) *Choi*. Gift exchange between wife-takers and wife-givers.

The exchange of gifts, the *choi*, follows the main ceremony. *Choi* (*cholikā* in Hindi) is the giving of sweets, dry fruits and fruit as *bhēt* (presents or offerings) by the groom's people to the bride's people and vice versa. A large *parat* is used to transport the offerings from one side to the other. The wife-givers' *purohit* pours some rice into the *parat* and the bride's father places five rupees in it. Pieces of fresh fruit and a box of dry fruit are placed on top. The *parat* is given to the groom and it is emptied, except of the rice and money. The wife-takers then fill the *parat* with fruit and dry fruit and the groom's father adds five rupees into the *parat*, which is handed over to the bride's side. It is emptied and the wife-givers fill it with the figurines of the bride's mother and father-in-law-to-be, *sungav* and sweets. These are given to the wife-takers who remove these objects and fill the *parat* with the same items which they have brought with them, and return it to the wife-givers. The *parat* is emptied and returned to the groom's side. This marks the end of one phase of gifting.

The groom's people then place a complete set of clothing in the *parat*. This consists of a fine red saree, underskirt, blouse, bridal veil and a handkerchief. The *parat* is passed to the bride's side. The bride's female kin inspect these articles, the saree in particular. The clothing is put back in the *parat* and returned to the groom. The bride is then taken inside the house by her eZs and changes into a red saree and set. This set is from her parents. For the wedding, the bride wears the clothes given to her by her *mait* people, her father's house. She returns to the place of the main ceremony. Meanwhile the wife-takers remove the clothing and fill the *parat* with items such as a make-up case, gold jewellery, shoes, silver anklets and toe rings. The *parat* is then placed in front of the bride. The quantity of jewellery given varies. In one wedding I observed, the wife-takers gave two gold bangles, a *galoban* (a black cotton necklace on which hammered pieces of gold are attached), a gold *nath* (nose ring) and gold *kāṡphūl* (earrings) and a *caryau* (a black beaded necklace which is the sign of a married woman). Married sisters of the bride will then put the jewellery on the bride. The bride will wear all the jewels given to her from her father, and add any from the wife-taker's contribution which she has not been given by her father. In this same case, the bride's father gave a nosering, earrings and a *caryau* and glass bangles. All those jewels she does not put on, are returned, with the make-up case and shoes, to the groom's side.

Throughout the ceremonies two women are engaged as singers of auspicious songs. In all cases I observed in Silora, they were widows. Their songs are variously melancholy, humorous, and sexually provocative, but all are sung in a monotone. During main breaks, they tease the groom's father. They are given offerings of money, and perhaps fruits and sweets by the wife-takers as a sign of thanks and appreciation.

iv) *Kanya dan* and *acav*. The gift of the virgin and the tying of the cloth.

After the above, preparations are made for the *kanya dan* ceremony. A thick deep-rimmed brass *thali* is placed in a *parat* and put in front of the bride. The bride's father distributes money to the two *purohit*s and to some of the *barat* men. He then gives one rupee to every *barat* man watching the ceremony. The priests begin their recitations. The bride's father bends over next to the bride, and holds his hands, in which there is some *dub* grass and a tiny piece of gold. The bride's hands are cupped under his. The mother stands behind the bride and slowly pours some milky liquid from a *lota* down over the father and bride's hands and into the *thali*. After this, the bride's right hand is raised over the milk-filled *thali* and the groom takes hold of her thumb. The bride's father places coins in the *thali*, the priest recites mantras and the bride's father gives the *parat*, *kanya dan* milk-filled *thali* and *lota* to the groom. A sister of the bride puts a long piece of yellow material onto the bride's head. This material is knotted to another piece, which is lying in the groom's lap. The father then leads his daughter to sit next to the groom. At this point the bride's *mait* women cry as does the bride herself. She is no longer a member of their group, but has 'gone to the other side'. It is this act which signifies that the marriage has been accomplished. A *mukuf* is then fastened onto the bride's head. The bride's mother waves some rice and flowers in a circular motion above the bride's head and puts them onto both bride and groom's heads. This action is then repeated by the bride's father and her eB, eBW, yB, MB, FZ, MZ, eBWF and so on. The yellow cloth is then placed on top of both the heads of the bride and groom and they are led to the room where the dowry is laid out. At this stage the dowry is handed over to the couple and a small *puja* is carried out with the bride's *purohit* and her parents. The parents bow before the bridal pair and circle a *thali* of lamps above the bridal couple's heads.

v) Circumambulation of the sacred fire.

A fire is lit outside the house. The bride and groom circle the sacred fire, near which the *purohit*s are already seated, seven times. Offerings are made to the fire. Finally the couple rise, and the groom places his hands on the bride's shoulders. The bride is given a leaf full of rice. They walk round the fire, the bride gently scatters the grains of rice in front of her as she walks. At the end of each round, she throws the remaining rice into the fire and is given a new leaf full. This is repeated seven times. The couple then sit down. The groom then stands up behind the bride and puts his hands on her sides: he bends forward over her and draws rice up over her twice. The bride then washes the groom's left foot but then stops. The groom gives her some money but she is obstinate and refuses. At this point it seems more a battle of wills between the groom and the bride's sisters/girlfriends who shout at the bride not to give in for so little! Finally, when an acceptable amount is given, she proceeds to wash the other foot. Then the bride tugs on the yellow sash and pulls the groom down, and I was told she says, or is supposed to say, 'what ever I say, you will obey'. She then gives him a *pithya* and draws rice up over his head. He also gives her a *pithya*. The bride and groom then change places: the bride moves from the groom's right to his left hand side. The bridal couple then hold hands, each holding a flower. The bride's elder sister then presents them with some curd and sweets. The groom offers the bride some sweet, and she may reluctantly take a small bite. The bride then serves the groom, and he should finish the sweet off in one gulp. At this point in one marriage there was laughter and 'coo-cooing' from the *bareti* onlookers. With this, the ceremony is over and everyone retires to rest for a few hours. The bride sleeps in her parent's house and the groom with his companions.

Meanwhile in the groom's village, the women gather at the house of the groom for a *jāgaran*. Tea and food is prepared outside and there is much ribald joking. After the meal, the women gather to sing and dance. The women sing and clap as a woman stands in the middle of the group and dances. When she has danced, another woman will take her place and display her elegance and skills. This continues late into the night.

The Third and Final Day.

- i) Farewell and departure of bridal couple.
- ii) *Duragun*.

iii) Arrival at the groom's house.

i) Farewell and departure of the bridal couple.

The bride and groom are awoken very early. I was told that it is early in the morning that the *gau dān* (gift of a cow) is made. I never saw this, but was told that the bride is often no longer given a cow, but cash equivalent to the cost of a cow. The priests decorate the couple's faces, a *puja* is performed for them and they are fed curds and sweets inside the house. A small breakfast snack of tea and spiced potatoes is made for the *barat* men and household guests, and is served on the courtyard. As the time for the *barat* to leave approaches, the band starts up. The bride's father gives *tika* (a small gift of money) to all the *barat* men. A larger *tika* is given to those *bareti* who are close relatives of the groom. Kapur (1988: 148) says that with the money given to the groom's close relatives, sarees are gifted to the groom's female relatives, through these male relatives. I am not aware that this happened in Silora. At this time a coconut is given by the groom's father to the bride's father: it is said to be left at the doorway of the bride's house, and is 'for the house'. Coconuts are also given to other people who have offered gifts to the couple. These include the bride's FB's houses and her natal house's immediate wife-giving and wife-taking affines. Sometimes these coconuts are handed over on the *barat's* arrival.

The dowry is assembled, packed and loaded onto the top of a bus. The bride and groom say goodbye to the bride's relatives and touch their feet. As she does so she receives money from all her elder kin. The groom too is likely to receive money. At this point most of the females present are sobbing and wailing. The bride's elder female kin, her mother, FBWs, eBW's will send off the couple by performing *achet nilagan*, blessing them five times with water, flowers and rice. If the bride is to leave in a sedan chair, rice is thrown onto the seat before she sits down. The couple are then supposed to depart.

ii) *Duragun*.

In theory, the couple are supposed to return to visit the girl's natal home a few days after the wedding, having stayed two or so days in her conjugal house. This is known as *duragun*. However, currently, the *duragun* occurs on the same day as the girl leaves to her husband's village with the *barat*. The formal farewell is done. Then the bridal couple, having gone a small distance away from the house towards the bus, turn around and return to the bride's house. It is said that they have gone 'half way' to the groom's house. Thus, in effect, the *duragun* takes place. At *duragun* more gift exchange occurs. The couple go into the house and *achet nilagan* is performed: they are again fed curds and sweets, and again will be bid farewell. The bride's household will give the groom a *parat*. If the bride's father and FBs do not share the same cooking hearth (being of separate households), each of these households must give a *parat* too. If they live together as one joint extended household, then only one *parat* is given by the father on behalf of the house. For every *parat* received, the wife-takers give a set of clothing (*dhoti*). Finally, the couple will set off again, having received another *pithya* and more money. They board the awaiting bus, and join the *bareti*.

The girls' parents now must feed the village with a wedding feast. Ideally all family members of one's own lineage are invited. However, this is rarely the case, and only *bhaicyal* members or brother house members will receive such an invitation. One person from each village household is fed *dav-bhat* (rice and lentils). They either eat at the host's courtyard, or take their *thali*-full back to their own house. This food is cooked by the bride's *purohit*. Though all other food for the wedding is cooked by male kin of the bride, this food must be made by the Brahman priest. This is because people will not eat boiled rice from those who are non *saf-pak* people.

iii) Arrival at the groom's house.

The groom's family and village eagerly await the return of the groom and his new wife. As the new couple arrive they are greeted and blessed with *achet nilagan* by the groom's elder female kin. The couple touch their feet in return. The bride gives them money. This money comes from her *mait* people. In one case I saw the

new bride line the stairs up to the house with a leaf, dough and pennies. A *gur bheli* (lump of molasses) is waved over the couple's heads five times so that "any *bhuts* (ghosts) or *mail* (dirt) attracted by the colour will go away, will go outside". This *bheli* is then given to the *barat* band musicians. The bride and groom go inside and a *puja* is performed. I was told that the bride will give her groom's unmarried sisters some money. I also heard that when the couple arrive, two unmarried sisters standing at the entrance hold pots of curd, and will not allow the couple to enter until the groom has given them some money. The bride is taken into a room and seated. It is here and at this time that all the females from the family, interested village women and guests come to look at the bride. Any of the groom's female kin (M, FBW, eBW) and invited guests (FZ, Z etc) will now, if they have not already, look at the girl's face. For this, they will give her a present, either a piece of jewellery, but more often some money. This is for the first sight of her face. Some women go up to her and lift up her veil, study her face, and her jewels. People want to see her face, what has come in her dowry and how much and what kind of jewellery she has. The women comment about her face, her clothes and jewellery openly, in front of the girl. In all likelihood she cries as she sits there with her head down. In one case I observed, the women jibed and prodded the bride to dance. Apparently the bride responded with the retort, "is that what you have brought me here for? To dance?" This is not how a bride is supposed to behave, and people thought her '*tej*', strong-willed. The bride is supposed to be quiet and full of shame and modesty.

After all the *pujas* have been carried out, all the *puja* items are placed into a *chāpari* (small basket). Both the bridal crowns are tied onto the bride's head and she is then escorted to the nearest water source used by the household. She will leave the headpieces and *puja* things there, will fill up a *lota* with water, and return to the house. There she serves all of her husband's elder male kin (HF, HeB etc) with water, and each takes a sip.

The marriage is complete, and the meal is served. Throughout the afternoon village people come with their own *thalis*, which are piled up with food, and usually taken back to their homes to share with their family. They may eat on the groom's courtyard. One person from each village household is entitled to partake of food. The villagers are served with rice and lentils, cooked by a Brahman priest. It was often the case that the groom's affinal guests were cooked food made inside by the household women.

A few days later, the new bridal couple will return to the girl's *mail* to stay a night at least. As we saw, on the wedding night the girl will wear clothes given to her by her parents. However, when she returns to her natal home for the first time after her wedding, she will wear the red saree outfit she received from the groom's house. During her stay the bride will tell her female relatives and girlfriends about her *sauras* and husband. This visit enables the young couple to visit the village temples together and is the first occasion when the bride's household may honour her and her husband as special guests.

APPENDIX THREE

Festivals in Kumaon

In Kumaon two calendars are followed simultaneously. They are the luni-solar and solar calendars (for more details on the Hindu calendars see Fuller 1992: 263-266). The lunar year is divided into 12 months, each month being divided into dark and bright halves known as *kṛṣṇapakṣ* and *sukrapakṣ* respectively. In Kumaon the dark half, the half of the waning moon, is considered to be the first. The new moon falls in the middle of the month and the full moon at the intersecting point between months. In the plains of North India the festival year is a predominantly lunar one (see Freed and Freed 1964, Wadley 1975) and the solar calendar plays a relatively secondary role. People in Silora celebrate only a few of the main lunar festivals. The solar months and regional festivals ordered by the solar calendar run alongside the lunar calendar and festivals. These solar festivals are celebrated on the first day of the new month when the sun moves from one constellation into another, called *sankranti* (see Atkinson 1974b: 869). For many of these festivals no particular god is sought to be honoured, which perhaps explains why Pant chose to refer to the *sankrantis* as "Nature festivals" (1988: 231). These solar festivals refer to regional particularities, such as Himalayan seasons and historical events of the area, and, as such, are distinctly *pahari*: they are autonomous from, but concurrent with the larger and more Sanskritic lunar festivals (see Leavitt 1992). The *sankranti* feast days are very important to villagers and may even have existed before the arrival of more orthodox observances (Atkinson 1974b: 846).

On every *sankranti* festival day the house is cleaned, a new layer of cow-dung plaster is applied to the floors and everyone in the house bathes. In contrast to the usual rice and lentils, special food, such as *puris*, *bars*, *khir*, vegetables, curds, *haluva*, is cooked. On *sankranti* and other festival days the family priest should be given gifts of grains and money. There are four main festivals during the year, Holi and Divālī (spring and autumn), which are said to be men's festivals, and Ghuguti and Harela (winter and summer), which are said to be women's festivals. The latter are also thought to be uniquely Kumaoni celebrations.

Cait (mid-March to mid-April). Cait is the first month of the year and marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It is a black month (*kāv mahāin*) and is unsuitable for auspicious works such as weddings and so forth. In Cait the annual gifts of *av* or *bhitai* are given to sisters and daughters by their natal kin. The Cait *sankranti* is called Phūl Dai, "Flowers on the Threshold" (see Pant 1988: 231-232; Atkinson 1974b: 869; Berreman 1972: 388). Children rise early, bathe and collect flowers which are in abundance around the village. They go through the village dispersing petals onto the thresholds of the houses they visit. In return they are given *gur*, rice or coins. The first nine days of the bright half of Cait are called Naurt, which is a particularly sacred time for the worship of the Goddess (see Atkinson 1974b: 847-848). It is also considered a particularly good time for *jagar* performances.

Baisākh (mid-April to mid-May). With Baisakh the main marriage season commences. There was no *sankranti* celebrated this month though *puris* are made. In **Jeth** (mid-May to mid-June) there are no major festivals. The tenth day of the light half of the month marks Ganga Dassahrā. The family priest visits and attaches a sacred *mandal* (ritual diagram) on the door frame of the house. This is said to

protect the house from lightening. In *Asar* (mid-June to mid-July) an outside village-wide *jagar* is held at the *dhuni* temple (see Chapter Eight).

Sravan (mid-July to mid-August). *Sravan* is said to be a very holy month and a good one in which to worship the gods. The first day of the solar month is the *sankranti* of Harela, "Greenery". Harela celebrates the marriage of Siv and Parvati as well as the rainy season, and the grass and crop growth which it brings. Harela is the summer solstice. Ten days before Harela itself every household will fill a pot or other vessel with earth and plant corn, rice, wheat, barley and pulse seeds in it. This pot is kept in a dark place and watered daily. The seeds sprout into yellow shoots. On the night before Harela this little 'garden' is weeded and then hoed with five thin splinters of wood. These pieces of wood are subsequently put in each corner of the pot and in the centre. Cotton thread is tied around the sticks forming a kind of fence. It is said that after this weeding, the shoots will double in height overnight. In some houses a special food is made which resembles a thin sweetened pancake known as *chavū*. On the *sankranti* day itself, the yellow shoots are cut, offered to the household gods, and worn in the head tucked behind an ear or on a hat. Harela shoots and *pujas* are offered and performed in the village temples by their *pujaris*. The *purohit* will usually visit, may do a *puja*, and is given gifts of grain and money. Shoots will be sent in envelopes to the house's close affinal kin, especially its *celibetis*.

Towards the end of the lunar month, on the full moon day, *Upa Karma* is performed (see Atkinson 1974b: 849-850). On this day all males in the house who have a sacred thread (*janyo*) should bathe and change their thread. The *purohit* will visit his *jajman's* home, give a brief *puja* and tie a thread bracelet around their wrists. The priest is given ritual gifts. The festival of *Rakhibandan* which emphasises and celebrates the brother-sister bond also occurs at the end of this month. Sisters tie on, or send, protective bracelets to their brothers, and brothers will often give some money to their sisters.

Also in this month, *aganāv* is offered to the household gods (see Pant 1988: 236-237). During the *rabi* harvest in May a man from each household collects the first grains of the wheat harvest and scoops them into a large brass pot. Some special grasses and an ox tail hair are placed on top of the grain. As he gathers up the wheat he must have a piece of cloth covering his head, body and the grains. He then takes the grain-filled vessel inside the house. Females cannot do this. This heap of grain represents the first grains of the harvest which will be given to the gods.

This grain is then divided into *aganav* and *acchūt*. *Aganav* is offered only once a year, inside, to the household shrine. On a Tuesday or Saturday in the bright half of *Sravan*, 12 handfuls of flour from this wheat are measured. At least 12 *puris* and two *baris* are made. They are placed on a leaf and covered with another leaf and offered to the household shrine. I was told that 12 *puris* are made because there are 12 months in a year. These 12 *puris* which are offered to the household shrine can only be eaten by males of the house. Other foods such as *haluva*, vegetables and rice pudding are put in a separate pot and also offered to the shrine. Another 12 handfuls of this flour are also given to the family priest when he next visits. On the day when *aganav* is offered, plain boiled rice is not cooked though rice may be cooked with other things such as milk. On this day some people make *rotis* made of flour, milk and *ghi* for the gods.

All of the remaining wheat flour from the heap of first harvest grains is then referred to as *acchut* and is offered outside, to the village temples. A batch of the first rice harvest is also ground and kept aside as *acchut* to be offered to the village gods. *Acchut* flour, rice and wheat, can also be used on *tyār* and *sankranti* days to make *puris* and *haluva* and other festival foods.

Bhado (mid-August to mid-September) *Bhado* is considered a black month as is *Cait*. It is an inauspicious month. I was told that in the month of *Bhado*, *masan* and *chal* give women suffering (*dukh*) if they are not worshipped. During this month newly married women return to visit their *maits*, and usually stay there for the first 10-15 days of the month. The first day of the solar month is celebrated with *ghi* *sankranti* (see Atkinson 1974b: 871; Pant 1988: 233-234). On this day people will put on *pithyas* and apply some *ghi* to their foreheads. In addition, one should ideally cook some delicacies in *ghi*. *Janamāṣṭami* (the eighth day of the dark half of *Bhado*)

is the birthday of Kṛṣṇa. Some people will fast on this day and in some houses there is a *puja* in the evening. Apart for these, it is not a very special day in Kumaon, save perhaps in Brahman priest villages. Nand-Astami or Nanda Devi (the eighth day of the light half of Bhado) is not a very important day in the village, though some people may fast for the day. However, in Almora town there is a large fair which attracts tens of thousands of people each year. For three days, Brahmans perform *pujas* and Silpakars hold *jagars* in which the Goddess's story is recounted. The third and final day of the fair culminates in the sacrificial slaying of several goats and a male buffalo outside the Nanda Devi temple (see Atkinson 1974b: 851; Fanger 1980: 424-425). Nanda Devi fairs are held in other towns in Kumaon (see Pant 1988: 225-226).

Asoj (mid-September to mid-October). The first day of the solar month is the Khatoruvā festival. At nightfall small bonfires are lit throughout the village, and cucumber slices are thrown into them and offered to anyone who is standing nearby. Some boys and men jump over the fires shouting "Khatoruva". It is true that from this month on winter is on its way, and this festival could be said to mark the approach of the colder weather. However, the main explanation I received for this festival was that it commemorates the anniversary of a Kumaoni victory over neighbouring Garhwal in an ancient war (see Atkinson 1974b: 871-872; Pant 1988: 234).

The dark half of the month is known as the *pitṛpaks*, the fortnight of the ancestors. This period is given over to the commemorative rituals to one's deceased forefathers, called *sarad*. During this whole period people should not eat 'hot' foods such as onions, garlicks and so forth. No auspicious work is performed during the period.

The ninth day is set aside for the deceased mother's *sarad*. Those who have neither mother nor father usually perform the father's *sarad* on the eighth day and the mother's on the ninth. If the mother is living but the father is dead, his *sarad* can be done on the same date as that on which his death occurred. Thus, if he died on the fifth day of the light half of Phagun, his *sarad* will be performed on the fifth day of the *pitṛpaks*. The last day of the dark half is the *sarad* for patrilineal ancestors in general. For each special day the *purohit* performs a ceremony and balls of rice (*pinḍ*) are made and offered to the ancestors (see Atkinson 1974b: 853-854).

The second half of the month is an auspicious and active one. The first nine nights of the light half are called Naurt. As with the Cait Naurt, these nine nights of Asoj are specially devoted to the worship of the Goddess and are very auspicious, especially for the performance of *jagars*. During this period, performances of the Rām Līlā are held in villages and towns throughout Kumaon and India. Silora has put on Rām Līlās in the past, but not in recent years. This, I was told, is because of the absence of *prem* (love) which means that people of different households no longer want to unite in common activities like this. On the tenth day of the light half of the month, Dassahrā is celebrated. On this day Durga *puja* is supposed to be performed. The main rooms in the house are given a new layer of plaster, every household members bathes and lengthy food is elaborately prepared. On this day nine young girls, referred to as *kanyas*, are fed with the festive food in every house.

From the day of the full moon of this month onwards, gambling of the Divālī season begins (see Atkinson 1974b: 854).

Kartik (mid-October to mid-November). The first dark half of this month leads up to the festival of Divali, the festival of lamps, which occurs on the new moon night. During the period leading up to Divali many men spend their time playing cards, gambling and drinking. Divali is held to worship Lachami, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. In preparation for the day, those who can, will put paint their house in a fresh coat of whitewash and make long flower garlands which they hang on the front of their houses and above the main door entrances. The whole of the inside of the house, (floors, walls and ceilings) is given a new coat of dung-earthen plaster. It is important to do this moving from the outside rooms into the interior. (To do it in the other direction is *ulṭ* (reverse), and is done only when there has been a death in the house). Women decorate the doorways with rice paste designs. Young women of the house (daughters or *bvaris*) make Lachami's footsteps with rice paste too. This is done by dipping the side of the hand in the paste and applying it to the ground, adding the

toe-prints with the fingertips. These footsteps start either from the courtyard threshing-hole, or else from just outside the main entrance. On Divali night itself little lamps known as *dīpās* are lit inside and outside the houses in honour of Lachami. In Silora many men stayed up all night on Divali gambling (see Atkinson 1974b: 855). Women say that Divali, like Holi, is a man's festival. Just before Divali many men return from the plains to spend Divali at home in the village. It is a great time for visiting and merry-making.

The day after Divali, on the first day of the light half of the month, Godhan *puja* is celebrated. On this day cows and she-buffaloes are worshipped (see Chapter Three). On this day women also pound soaked, and heated unhusked rice grains in the threshing-hole to make *chūr*, rice-flakes. The first batch of this *chūr* is offered to the household shrine and the rest is eaten throughout the year as a snack.

During the research year village-wide offerings to the village temples of Devi, Bhumiya and Gwel were made during this month, after Divali.

In the months of *Mahsir* (mid-November to mid-December) and *Pūs* (mid-December to mid-January) there are no festival or feast days. However, in preparation for the festivals of Magh, women set off at the end of Pus towards their *maits* to join in the festivities.

Magh (mid-January to mid-February). The first day of the solar month is Uttaraini, the beginning of the winter solstice. A large fair is held at Bageshvar in the north of Almora District. Older women said that in the past they used to sit up all night singing and dancing, going on to the village spring before dawn. Having taken wood with them they would build a fire, laugh and joke as they bathed there, returning to the village at the beginning of the day, blowing on conch shells as they went. This no longer happens, because according to my informant, "before people got along well; there was *prem* (love)." In the morning children, freshly bathed and wearing clean bright clothes, visit every house in the village saying *namaskār* (greetings) and receiving *gur* in exchange. Every house is given a new coat of cow-dung and a special festive meal is cooked. On this day large quantities of *ghugut* is prepared: dough, made from *gur* and flour, is plaited and cut into short lengths which are deep fried in oil. The next day children get up early in the morning and put some *ghuguts*, along with some other food from the day before (*parasad*), outside on a wall and shout "come and eat crow." The crows come down and take the *ghuguts*. Children also enjoy eating these *ghuguts*, and as Pant says, Ghuguti is the festival of feasting children and birds (1988: 17,234-235). *Ghuguts* last a long time, and if *celibetis* cannot visit her *maits* for the feast *ghuguts* are sent to them or kept aside for when they visit next.

On the fifth day of the light half of Magh is Basant Pancami which marks the beginning of spring and the Holi season (see Pant 1988: 230-231; Atkinson 1974b: 857). On this day people are supposed to wear a yellow item of clothing and yellow barley shoots are picked and worn on the hair or hats. Some people stick five sprigs of barley on the frame of their main door. Women will also try to stay in their *maits* for the Basant Pancami feast.

Phagun (mid-February to mid-March). On the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month *Siv-ratri* is celebrated. People will fast on this day, eating only fruits and milk. Many will visit Binsar Mahadev temple a few kilometres from the village. A special meal may be cooked in the evening. Holi activities really only start a few days before the last day of the month which is the Holi day itself. For descriptions see Fanger (1980: 430-432) and Atkinson (1974b: 867). The year I was in Silora Holi was not celebrated. The primary school headmaster's mother had died just before Holi and people seemed unsure whether or not they should celebrate it or not. In the end they did not.

GLOSSARY

Ācav. Veil; end/border of a veil. Also refers to the ritual act of tying together the bride and groom in the wedding.

Achet nilāgaṇ. Whole grains of rice strewn over the head of another in a gesture of blessing.

Achet. Whole grains of rice.

Achut. Not to be touched, untouchable. Defiling, impure

Adharam. Unvirtuous conduct; the opposite of the moral order.

Aganāv. Wheat from the first harvest which is offered to the gods in the bright half of the month of Sravan.

Ām. Grandmother

Ārati. Display of oil lamps before a deity's image or medium; worship.

Asār. Mid June to mid July. (Sanskrit Asadh).

Asoj. Mid September to mid October. (Sanskrit Asvin).

Ātmā. Soul or spirit.

Āv. Annual gift for sisters and daughters.

Baisākh. Mid April to mid May . (Sanskrit Vaisakh).

Bājyū. Father (term of address)

Bākhai. Row of houses.

Bar. Ground lentil fried delicacy.

Barābar. Equal, even, the same.

Barāt. Groom's wedding party.

Bareti. Members of groom's wedding party.

Bārī. Kitchen-household garden in which seasonal vegetables and fruits are grown in small quantities.

Bartan. Kitchen pots, pans and other metal utensils.

Basant Pancami. Spring Fifth. Festival in honour of spring.

Bhābar. Waterless and boulder country at the foot of the hills.

Bhādō. Mid August to mid September. (Sanskrit Bhādrapad).

Bhadyā. Brother's son (f.s).

Bhadye. Brother's daughter (f.s).

Bhaicyal. Sons of brothers; close agnatic union.

Bhānj. Sister's son (m.s.) and husband's sister's son (f.s).

Bhānji. Sister's daughter (m.s) and husband's sister's daughter (f.s).

Bhāt. Boiled rice.

Bhatij. Brother's son (m.s) and sister's son (f.s); spouse's same-sex sibling's son.

Bhatiji. Brother's daughter (m.s) and sister's daughter (f.s); spouse's same-sex sibling's daughter.

Bhauji. Elder brother's wife.

Bhin. Father's sister's husband. Also elder sister's husband.

Bhiter. Inside.

Bhitoi. Annual gift for sisters and daughters.

Bhoṭ, Bhoṭiyā. Ethnic group in the north of Kumaon of Tibeto-Burmese stock.

Bhulā. Younger brother.

Bhulī. Younger sister.

Bhumiyā. Local god of the land and fields.

Bhūt. Ghost. Evil spirit.

Bhyār. Outside.

Bith. The twice-born, 'clean' castes (Brahmans and Thakurs).

Brādar. Lineage co-member. Agnate. Brotherhood.

Bubu. Grandfather. Also term for father's sister.

Buṛī sāsū. Mother- and Father-in-law's mother.

Buṛ saur. Mother- and Father-in-law's father.

Bvāri. Daughter-in-law. Also younger brother's wife.

Byā. Marriage or wedding.

Cait. Mid March to mid April. (Sanskrit Caitra).

Celi. Daughter.

Celibetī. A married daughter and sister. Out-married female agnate.

Cākh. The front room of the house.

Chammu. God of domestic animals.

Chān. Cattle shed at a distance from the residence, usually in the fields.

Choi. Gift-exchange between wife-givers and wife-takers at the wedding.

Cilam. Stem of the hubble-bubble or water-pipe.

Cul. Cooking hearth.

Cyal. Son.

Dāchiṇ. Ritual gift of money. Daksina in Hindi.

Dād. Elder brother.

Dān. The unreciprocated (religious) gift.

Ḍaṇṛiyā. Oracle or medium.

Dātuli. Sickle.

Dāv-bhāt. Meal of cooked lentils and boiled rice.

Dāv. Cooked lentils.

Deś. The plains; in particular the Western Gangetic plains of North India.

Deśi. Of the country or of the plains; plains people.

Devī. The goddess.

Dharam. Religious duty, law, code of conduct; the total socio-cosmic moral order in toto. *Dharma* in Hindi.

Ḍhāṭi-byā. Second marriage for a woman.

Ḍhāṭi. A twice-married woman.

Dhol. A flat sounding horizontal drum made of goat skin.

Dholi, Dās-dholi. One who plays the drums; the drummer caste.

Dhoti. A cotton saree.

Dhuiarag. Greeting ceremony for the groom and his priest at a wedding.

Dhuṇi. Sacred fire or fireplace; village temple.

Didi. Elder sister.

Ḍoli. Sedan chair for the bridal couple; palanquin.

Doṣṭ. Faulty, blameworthy, defective.

Dūd. Milk.

Dudyāv. A milking cow of buffalo.

Dulahāñi. Bride.

Dūm. The old and now derogatory term for the untouchable Harijan and Silpakar castes.

Dumaur. Residential area for Dum people.

Duragun. Return of the bridal couple to the bride's house after marriage.

Dyapt. Deity or god; usually refers to household, lineage, or village deities.

Dyor. Husband's younger brother (f.s).

Dyorāni. Husband's younger brother's wife (f.s).

Gāli. Abuse, insult; abusive language.

Ganeś. Elephant-headed god, Siv's first son and god of beginnings and obstacles.

Ghar-javāi. A man (son-in-law) who lives in his wife's village.

Ghar. House; household.

Ghareti. Members of the bride's party at the wedding.

Gharpāis. Consecration of a new house.

Ghī. Clarified butter.

Ghugut. Special fired biscuits distributed at Ghuguti.

Ghugutī. Winter solstice feast day. Otherwise known as Uttaraini.

Girāṇ. To pull down or destroy.

Goth. Ground floor of the house which is traditionally used as a cattle byre.

Gur. Coarse brown sugar (molasses).

Gurpāpari. Biscuit-sweets made from flour, *gur* and water fried in fat.

Guśai. Master or Lord.

Guśyāñi. Husband's younger sister (f.s).

Gwel. Famous local god; god of justice.

Hāk. The evil eye.

Hali, haī. Ploughman.

Haluvā. A sweet.

Hank. Fault, blame, conceit; ancestral curse.

Hanumān. The 'monkey-god'. A god of immense strength.

Harelā. Greenery; summer solstice feast day.

Harijan. Low caste category.

Heroin. Indian female movie star, film actress.

Hiaro. Indian male movie star, film actor.

Hukkā. Hubble-bubble; water pipe.

Huṛkā. An hourglass-shaped drum made of goat's stomach.

Ijā. Mother.

Jādu. Magic, charm, spell.

Jāgar. A spirit possession seance; vigil.

Jagariyā. Specialist who invokes the gods at *jagar* ceremonies. A bard.

Jajmān. A Brahman priest's client.

Jangal. Forest.

Jāt, jāñi. Caste, sub-caste.

Javāt. Son-in-law. Also younger sister's husband.

Jeth. Husband's elder brother.

Jeth. Mid May to mid June. (Sanskrit Jyesth).

Jethāñi. Husband's elder brother's wife.

Jethau. Wife's elder sister.

Jethu. Wife's elder brother.

Jokar. The joker.

Kākā. Father's younger brother. Also mother's younger sister's husband.

Kāki. Father's younger brother's wife.

Kam. Work, purpose.

Kanyā dān. The gift of the virgin.

Kārtik. Mid October to mid November. (Sanskrit Kartik).

Kaś. Oath or vow.

Khaikar. A kind of tenant.

Kharīf. The autumn harvest and crops.

Khasī, Khasiyā. Previous term for indigenous Brahmans and Ṭhākurs (in contrast to immigrant Ṭhul-jāts).

- Khaukī*. One who receives grain in return for his work.
- Khāv*. Walled courtyard. Threshing ground.
- Khicari*. Lentils and rice cooked together.
- Khīr*. Rice pudding.
- Khuśamad*. Flattery, attention.
- Kiraśāṇ*. Efficient in work.
- Lachami. Goddess of good fortune. (Lakṣhmī in Sanskrit)
- Lāru*. Sweetmeat.
- Lavād*. The first, clotted milk after calving.
- Lipaṇ*. A manure-earth-water mixture used as plaster in houses.
- Loṭā*. Small round metal pot usually used for water or milk.
- Maḍuvā*. Dark coloured grain.. (Eleusine Coracana).
- Māgh. Mid January to mid February. (Sanskrit Magh).
- Māĩś*. Man, husband.
- Mait*. Married woman's natal home and village.
- Makoṭ*. Mother's natal place of origin.
- Mām*. Mother's brother.
- Māmi*. Mother's brother's wife.
- Maṅsir. Mid November to mid December. (Sanskrit Margasirs)
- Maśāñ*. Evil spirit which lurks around cremation grounds.
- Mukuṭ*. Decorative cardboard crowns for bridal couple.
- Nalī*. Standard for measuring land; approximately 240 sq. yards.
- Nāmkaṛaṇ*. Name-giving ceremony of a new-born child.
- Nātak*. Impurity following a birth. Birth pollution.
- Nāti*. Grandson.
- Nātiṇi*. Granddaughter.
- Nukaśān*. Troube, harm.
- Nyāūt*. Invitation.
- Pahār*. Mountain, hill.
- Pahārī*. Of the hills, and of the mountains. Also refers to hill people.

Pāñ. fried delicacies (*pūris*, sweets), fruits and uncooked vegetables exchanged between village households and also between affinal homes.

Paṭ. Labour exchange work groups; assistance in return for assistance.

Pālṭi. Faction, party, alliance.

Paraśād. Sanctified food or other substances (i.e., ash) distributed to worshippers at the end of *puja*.

Parāt. A large brass plate.

Paravār. Family; more usually lineage.

Paravati. The goddess; Siv's principal wife.

Pari-lekhi. Educated.

Paṭavāri. Officer in charge of the *patti* administrative unit and land records.

Pāñ. Visitor-guest; affine.

Pāñi. Husband's elder sister.

Phāgun. Mid February to mid March. (Sanskrit Phalgun).

Phaiśan. Fashion; style or trend.

Piṭhyā. An auspicious mark on the forehead made of red paste and whole grains of rice.

Pitrpakṣ. Fortnight of the ancestors.

Prāudī. One who is arrogant, conceited and proud.

Puchyār ,Pūch. Diviner.

Pūjā. Worship; Devotion; Religious ceremony.

Pujyāri. Temple priest.

Puri. Flat bread fried in oil.

Purohit. Family priest.

Pūs. Mid December to mid January. (Sanskrit Paus).

Rabī. Spring harvest and crops.

Roṭi. Flat unleavened bread.

Sāf-pāk. Pure; relating to people of pure breed and ancestry.

Śakun, śagun. Auspicious.

Sāi. Wife's younger sister.

Śāñi. Woman.

Sālā. Wife's younger brother in Hindi; used as a term of abuse.

Samadeṇi. Son/daughter-in-law's mother.

Samadi. Son/daughter-in-law's father.

Sankrānti. First day of the Hindu solar month.

Sanskār. Life cycle ceremony; process of refinement; soul.

Śarād. Ceremony for the maintenance of the ancestors; rite of confidence.

Śaram. Shame, modesty.

Sarvis-vālā. Employed man, usually white-collar employee.

Sarvis. Salaried employment (not daily wage work).

Sāsu. Mother-in-law.

Saunkār. Money-lender; he who sponsors and hosts the spirit possession ritual.

Śrāvaṇ or *Śauṇ*. Mid July to mid August. (Sanskrit Sravan).

Saur. Father-in-law.

Saurās. Home of the parents-in-law.

Sāv. Wife's younger brother.

Sevā. Service, duty, respect, obedience and deference.

Śilpakār. Low caste or scheduled castes; word now used in place of Dum.

Śiv. One of the most important important great gods of Hinduism.

Śukrapakṣ. Bright half of a lunar month.

Sungāv. Paper-thin *puris*.

Sūtak. Impurity following a death. Death pollution.

Thāli. Metal plate.

Thul-jāt. Brahmans and Rajputs who claim to originate from the plains.

Thulbājyū. Father's elder brother. Also mother's elder sister's husband.

Thulijā. Father's elder brother's wife. Also mother's elder sister.

Tikā. An auspicious mark on the forehead made of red paste (sometimes with yellow paste) and whole grains of rice (see *pithya*). It also means a gift of money or an auspicious token.

Tyār. Festival or feast day.

Uttarakhaṇḍ. The eight hill districts of the Uttar Pradesh hills.

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