



8. The Country and Peoples of Nepal.

C. J. Morris

Man, Vol. 35. (Jan., 1935), pp. 11-12.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0025-1496%28193501%291%3A35%3C11%3A8TCAPO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>

Man is currently published by Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/rai.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

through which a leather noose runs. Two knots are tied in this, on either side of the loop, which act as stops to prevent too great a movement through the loop. The noose itself consists of a narrow strip of leather, some two feet long, doubled over on itself and stitched together on the edges with some fibrous looking thread. The completion of the loop is carried out by a knob of leather at one end, being passed through a small loop on the other end.

An interesting point regarding this instrument lies in the method of wearing it. The noose is slung over the left shoulder and the dagger and sheath tucked under the left armpit. The upper arm being kept close to the side, keeps the weapon in position and also has the advantage of concealing its existence. By an easy motion of the right hand across the body, the dagger can be quickly extracted from its sheath and plunged into the victim.

It is possible that the use of a weapon of this type would be facilitated by the presence of the narrow cavity, for the latter would permit the outlet of air when the dagger was forced into a body.

For comparative purposes a reference to plate 26, Vol. LXII, 1933, of the *Journal* of the Royal Anthropological Institute will provide an illustration of bone implements somewhat similar in character, though in this case the leather sheath and its appendages are absent. In the text (p. 272) they are described by Mr. F. Turville-Petre as "borers or daggers" and were obtained during the excavations in the Mugharet-El-Kebarah.

The bone dagger, complete with sheath, has been deposited at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford.

R. P. WILD.

ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE: PROCEEDINGS.

Exogamous Rules among the Nuer. *Summary of a Communication presented by Dr. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 20th November, 1934.*

The Nuer word for incestuous relations is *rual* and the same word means syphilis, which **7** is the most frequent consequence of incest to both offenders and their kinsfolk. A Nuer man must observe the following rules:—

(1) He may not marry any woman to whom he is closely related genealogically; (2) If he is an adopted Dinka he may not marry into the lineage of his adopted father; (3) He may not marry his wife's sister or any close relative of his wife unless she has died childless; (4) He may not marry the daughter of an age-mate. It is also considered incestuous (5) if a man has sexual relations with wives of his father or of other close relatives during their lifetime; (6) if a man and a close male relative have sexual relations with the same woman; or if a woman and a close female relative have sexual relations with the same man. Breach of the different prohibitions is not equally serious, nor are the consequences uniformly severe. The consequences of incest can be prevented if a bullock or goat is cut in half in a certain manner. Some people possess magic which renders incest with more distantly related persons innocuous.

The lecturer then discussed the extent to which incest is committed, the central position of the mother in the ideology of incest, and the way in which Nuer define rules of exogamy and incest in terms of cattle. Finally, he considered what light is thrown by Nuer practice upon the nature of the clan and upon current theories of incest. He discussed the relations between incest rules and group cohesion, between incest rules and political structure, and incest rules as a means of defining and differentiating status.

The Country and Peoples of Nepal. *Summary of a Communication presented by Major C. J. Morris, 4th December, 1934.*

Nepal is situated on the Southern slopes of the central Himalaya, which mountains **8** separate it from Tibet. The country is unique in that within its borders are found every variety of climate from damp tropical heat to the dry cold of the summit of Mount Everest, the bulk of which is within Nepal. It naturally follows that the country contains also many different types of people, although all the inhabitants of Nepal are nowadays generally referred to as Gurkhas, a term which should rightly be confined to the descendants of the conquerors of the country, who came originally from the little hill-State of that name. The principal tribes of Nepal are the following: Thakur,

Chetri, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu and Newar; but there are many more, too numerous for mention here. Most of these tribes are very Mongoloid in appearance and have many affinities with adjacent Tibet, although Hinduism is the official religion of the country. They are composed of a number of exogamous clans and kindreds, and there are several varieties of cross-cousin marriage; but this custom is not universal. Nepali is the *lingua franca* of the country, but many tribes also speak their own Tibeto-Burman dialects. The country, which is completely independent and forms no part of India, is entirely closed to foreigners, which includes also Indians, except at the personal invitation of the Maharaja. This permission is only very occasionally given and is generally confined to the Valley of Nepal, where is situated Kathmandu, the Capital. Apart from the fact that Nepal is politically secluded, the country is also naturally difficult to reach and has few communications; for these reasons it is perhaps one of the most promising fields for ethnological study on the Indian Continent.

Some characteristic Legal Institutions of Nepal. *Summary of a Communication by Dr. Leonhard Adam, 4th December, 1934.*

9 I. The law of the various tribes of Nepal is comparatively little known. The main source is still Brian H. Hodgson's classical work *Miscellaneous Essays relating to Indian subjects* Vol. II (London, 1880). But Hodgson did no field work on tribal law in Nepal. Though he lived in the country many years he had no personal experience of the practical law as applied in the remote districts. He could only refer to experts in the country, educated men in the Nepalese sense of the term, whose detailed answers he noted. Among valuable details, there is almost complete lack of notes on civil law.

II. It was, then, an exciting event for German orientalist when Gurkha soldiers were made prisoners on the West Front. Prof. *Heinrich Lüders*, and Prof. *Wilhelm Schulze*, were requested by the Prussian Academy of Sciences to study their languages and dialects, and Dr. Leonhard Adam was appointed in 1918 by the Prussian Minister of Justice, Dr. Peter Spahn, to record customs and tribal law and located in Roumania, where the climate and conditions were more suitable than in Germany.¹ Individual Gurkhas were carefully selected, who had spent a considerable part of their lifetime in the village where they were born and were really familiar with its inhabitants, their manners and customs. Individual intelligence was also important. But the only way to obtain trustworthy information is to persuade the man to talk about his own life, and personal experiences, and about the life of his relatives, friends, and neighbours.

The paper then dealt principally with the following topics:—

Family Law: (i) *Artificial Brotherhood*.—The description of the Gurkha *mīt* and *mītnī* (literally "friend") in Major Morris' book *The Gurkhas* (London, 1928) is confirmed. This relationship, between men or women, has a religious basis, and initial ceremonial in presence of a Brahman or *bahun*, by exchange of personal belongings; establishing incest barrier, obligation to help, and other characteristics of natural kinship, including the fathers and mothers, *mīt bā* and *mīt amā*. One witness stated that a man may become *mīt* of a woman, or one married couple with another. Difference of tribe, too, is no obstacle. Functionally the *mīt* bond strengthens intertribal intercourse.

(ii) *Remarriage of Widows*.—Sylvain Levi in 1898 found widows under Brahman influence in Nepal: but Major Morris' statement that widows may remarry though without the *byāhā* ceremony, is confirmed, and in the Army a remarried widow has a pension claim, *i.e.*, is no concubine.

Law of Property, especially *loans and securities*.—While in ancient Indian law actual possession of a security was required, this is unusual in Nepal. Money is lent in four different ways: (1) without written instrument or witness, if creditor thinks debtor trustworthy: default is here without remedy; (ii) with written agreement and a witness, the debtor promising to give specified security *ḍik* on default, in which event the creditor moves the *mukhiya* to order the *ḍik* to be surrendered; (iii) for larger amounts there is a second witness *gawahi* who signs the *damsuk* and guarantees the surrender of the *ḍik*; (iv) the creditor may require the debtor *bandā* to refund the debt by field work. Typically Nepalese is the promise of security in event of default: but under Indian influence unpaid debts haunt the debtor in his future existence, so that the merits of his sacrifices and prayers are set down to

¹ For the Indian camp in Morile-Marculesti, see L. Adam, MAN, 1934, 23.