

LAND AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN EAST NEPAL

Lionel Caplan

Thesis presented for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of London

1966

ProQuest Number: 10731604

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10731604

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines some economic and political concomitants of a system of land tenure - called kipat - associated with the Limbus, one of the peoples indigenous to East Nepal. It considers some of the ways in which this system affects social relationships both among the Limbus and between them and members of other groups, especially Brahmins. Particular attention is paid to the changes which have followed from alterations in the tenure system. The analysis is based on data collected in a cluster of settlements, inhabited mainly by Limbus, in the district of Ilam.

Chapter I describes the environmental and historical background of the area, as well as certain cultural features associated with the principal groups inhabiting the settlements. Chapter II considers the nature of Limbu descent groups and their relations to land. The following chapter indicates how Government policy affected the availability of kipat land, and led to the emergence of the household - dealt with in Chapter IV - as the group with the greatest interests in this land. Two subsequent chapters deal with economic ties resulting from heavy mortgaging of kipat land and the growth of commercial sources of income outside the agricultural economy. Chapter VII then considers the political configuration in the settlements with

particular emphasis on leadership and the settlement of disputes. Factions, and their implications for Limbus are also dealt with. Finally, Chapter VIII analyzes the structural cleavages between Limbus and Brahmins based primarily on the confrontation over land, and views its effects on relationships both within and outside the settlements.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT.....	2
PREFACE.....	7
TRANSLITERATION.....	9
<u>Chapter</u>	
I. INTRODUCTORY.....	11
The Problem	
The Background	
Ilam District	
The Indreni Cluster	
The People	
Land Tenure	
II. LAND AND DESCENT GROUPS.....	57
The Clan	
The Lineage	
Limbus Without kipat	
Individual Kipat Rights	
III. LAND AND GOVERNMENT.....	92
IV. THE HOUSEHOLD.....	107
Composition	
Separation and Inheritance	
Women's Rights in Land	
Relations within the Household	
Household as a Ritual Unit	
V. THE ECONOMY: CREDIT AND TENANCY.....	166
Mortgages	
Distribution of Mortgages	
Loan Credit	
Tenancy	
The Manipulation of Ties	
VI. THE ECONOMY: SOURCES OF WEALTH.....	213
Agriculture	
Recurrent Obligations	
Contingent Expenditures: Mortuary Rites	
Contingent Expenditures: Marriage	
Commercial Sources: Within the Cluster	
Commercial Sources: Outside the Cluster	
Military Service	

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
VII. POLITICS IN THE SETTLEMENTS.....	299
The Leadership Hierarchy	
Disputes over Compensation	
Intra-Cluster Disputes	
Informal Mediation	
The Panchayat	
The Administration	
Factions	
VIII. CULTURE AND KIPAT: THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF POLITICS.....	383
Ties Outside the Area	
Ties Within the Area	
The Subba	
Limbu-Brahmin Relations	
Limbu Notables: Intercalary Role	
IX. CONCLUSION.....	440
APPENDIX.....	452
GLOSSARY.....	455
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	459

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter I:	
1 Indreni Cluster: population breakdown.....	31
2 Population of Syawa Village.....	42
Chapter II:	
3 Population of local clan segments.....	64
4 Lineage land ownership and population.....	71
5 Pattern of kipat dry land distribution.....	72
Chapter IV:	
6 Attached members of Limbu households.....	108
7 Household composition.....	110
8 Non-Limbu household composition.....	111
Chapter V:	
9 Kipat mortgages by land type.....	169
10 Kipat mortgages by lineage.....	170
11 Kipat mortgages by household.....	171
12 Distribution of mortgages among Limbu landholders.	173
13 Distribution of mortgages among non-Limbu landholders.....	174
14 Distribution of mortgages among Main landholders..	176

Chapter V (continued)	<u>Page</u>
15 Linkages to landholders.....	178
16 Comparison of mortgage and loan credit.....	185
17 Linkages to lenders.....	187
18 Comparison of mortgage and loan credit distribution.....	188
19 Distribution of cultivation rights on mortgaged lands.....	196
20 Linkages to landlords.....	197
21 Comparison of distribution of mortgage, tenancy and loan credit linkages.....	198
22 Mortgage capital increases due to <u>bard</u>	209
 Chapter VI:	
23 Agricultural income.....	218
24 Production of food requirements by 'deficit' households.....	219
25 Shops in Ilam Bazaar.....	221
26 Two annual household budgets.....	230
27 Distribution of marriages involving men married once.....	239
28 Distribution of marriages involving men married more than once.....	239
29 <u>Rit</u> payments at one marriage.....	246
30 <u>Costs</u> of wedding festivities.....	251
31 Comparative wedding costs.....	255
32 Earnings from commercial sources.....	295
33 Income from commercial sources expressed as a percentage of agricultural income.....	296
 Chapter VII:	
34 Ownership of kipat land by Subbas.....	304
35 Kipat mortgaged by Subbas.....	312
36 Holdings of Indreni Tharis.....	333
 Chapter VIII:	
37 Comparison of mortgage distribution (in units and cash value).....	427

LIST OF MAPS

East Nepal.....	10
Ilam and new administrative divisions.....	16a
Indreni settlement cluster.....	31a
Distribution of dry lands in the Indreni Cluster.	87a

PREFACE

The data on which this thesis is based were gathered during the course of a thirteen-month field study in 1964-65. The research was made possible by a grant from the London-Cornell Project for Chinese and South-east Asian Societies. The Quebec Government, Canada, provided a supplementary grant to finance the preparatory stage prior to my departure for Nepal. I am deeply indebted to those responsible for making these awards.

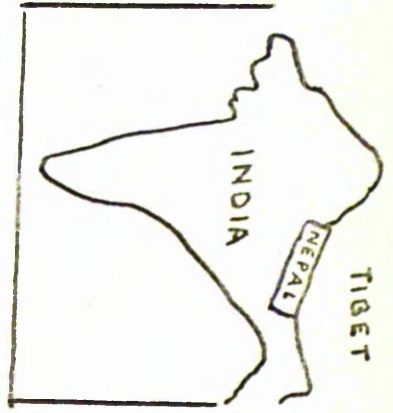
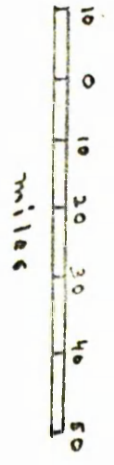
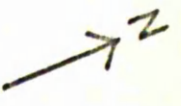
I must also express my gratitude to the representatives of His Majesty's Government of Nepal. Especially helpful were the officers of the Protocol Section of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu and the members of the district administration in Ilam. My thanks are also due to Sri Mahesh Chandra Regmi for allowing me to read his manuscript on the kiptat system before its publication, and to Sri Damodar Sharma and Sri Lakshmi Prasad Kaphle, who acted as my assistants at various stages of the work. Whatever proficiency I was able to achieve in Nepali owes much to Mr. T.W. Clark, who gave generously of his time to enable me to begin learning the language before I left London. I express my gratitude to Professor C. von Füller-Haimendorf who first stimulated my interest in Nepal and later acted as my academic supervisor.

There remains the pleasure of recording my obligation to the people about whom this essay is written. The experience of living among them has enriched me more than I can say.

TRANSLITERATION

Some Nepali words are treated as though they are English, are given a plural version where necessary, and are not underlined. Certain proper names are also left in their English version. All other terms in the vernacular are rendered as close to their proper pronunciation as possible and underlined in the text; they are then transcribed in the Glossary according to the system devised by T.W. Clark in Introduction to Nepali.

East Nepal



CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

The Problem

This thesis is about the social relations of land tenure, and the changes in these relations which follow from modifications in the tenure system.

Despite the great variety of tenure forms found on the Indian sub-continent, most anthropologists who have worked in India and other parts of South Asia have neglected their study.¹ This is not to suggest, of course, that the importance of land tenure has not been appreciated.

Generally, however, consideration of the problems connected with land has been subsumed in the analysis of caste and its various attributes. Not unnaturally, then, studies of social change have concentrated on the ways in which the traditional relations between castes have altered in response to a variety of external stimuli. Thus, accounts by Bailey, Rao, Gough and Cohn have described changes taking place at the village level as a result of the introduction of a cash economy and new economic and political opportunities created by Government.² If we can extract a single theme from these and other recent studies it is that the pattern of involution or role summation which formerly integrated the caste structure has begun to come

1. There are of course, exceptions. See, for example, Mayer 1952; Leach, 1961b.

2. Bailey, 1957; Rao, 1957; Gough, 1955; Cohn, 1955.

asunder under the impact of industrialization.

In the context of east Nepal society, however, to achieve an understanding of the social changes which are taking place the observer must regard land tenure as the key to these changes. Indeed, Marriott's observation that 'as far back as we are able to look, the social structures of little communities (in the area of Indian civilization) must have been profoundly affected by state land policy' is nowhere more applicable than in east Nepal.¹

In the latter half of the 18th century Limbuan, the country of the Limbus, occupying the easternmost portion of present-day Nepal, was incorporated into the Gorkha state.² Since that time the Government has sought to extend and secure its hegemony over the Limbus by means of a land policy designed to reduce - and, presumably, eventually to abolish - an area of land held under a customary form of tenure, called 'kipat'. This policy has wrought a number of changes in the internal structure of Limbu communities, as well as shaped their relations with other sections of the population.

My fieldwork was conducted in a cluster of four contiguous settlements situated along a ridge in the Ilam-Darda sub-division of Ilam district in East Nepal. They are referred to throughout the text as the Indreni Cluster. Elevation, terrain and a salubrious climate allow

1. Marriott, 1955, p.187.

2. See p. 26.

for a fairly dense settlement pattern in most parts of the district. There are no nuclear villages of the kind found in the plains, only a continuous flow of homesteads along the main ridges and the spurs which extend laterally from these ridges. Clusters of homesteads - which I call settlements - are usually named after a well-known peculiarity of the landscape around which they are situated, but except where distinctive geographical features divide these settlements from their neighbours, the boundaries between them are vague and, for the people themselves, quite unimportant. Indeed, it is possible that giving names to settlements is a recent phenomenon. Until about fifty years ago, communications from the administration to inhabitants in the Indreni Cluster, for example, referred to the individual's place of residence either as Ilam or Ilam-Darda, but never to the settlement names in use nowadays.

Given the settlement configuration how then was the unit of study to be defined? The great majority of anthropological accounts of social life in India have centered on the village. True, even the most physically isolated village cannot be treated as a social isolate, so that the factors bearing on it from the outside must be taken into consideration.¹ But a village study has the advantage of being able to concentrate on a clearly defin-

1. Opler, 1956, pp.5-10.

able face-to-face community within which the external forces can be seen to affect the internal structure.

In the absence of such an arena, the choice of a focal unit must be determined by the interests of the study. Since the problems in which I was most interested concerned in crude terms, the social concomitants of kipat land tenure, I chose to study a cluster of settlements inhabited mainly by Limbus. The Indreni Cluster is not a definitive geographical unit, surrounded as it is on three sides by other settlements into which it merges. Nor is it a unit in any administrative sense. It has sociological significance, however, in that it is recognized by people in the surrounding area as the place where the Limbus live, and is referred to as 'Limbu gaon'.¹

There are many such Limbu clusters situated throughout Ilam. The location of their settlements in the midst of non-Limbu populations reflects both the manner in which the district came to be settled and the effects of Government land policy. Since this is dealt with in some detail in the following chapters, only a brief outline need be given here.

During the years prior to the absorption of Ilam into the Gorkha state Limbu settlements had been established throughout the district. These settlements were generally situated on the tops of ridges, and the settlers laid claim

1. 'Gaon', normally translated as 'village', is in fact used in a variety of contexts. See below, p. 39.

to large tracts of forest and uncultivated bush surrounding the areas they inhabited. Following the Gorkha conquest large-scale migrations of non-Limbus from the west entered the district and the Limbus made generous grants of land to accommodate the immigrant settlers. Towards the end of the 19th century the Government changed the system of tenure under which these lands had been granted, thus effectively removing them from Limbu control. By and large, the Limbus were left only the lands they had not granted the immigrants, which in effect meant those which they were cultivating and living on themselves. This historical process is mirrored in the settlement pattern, which finds the original Limbu settlers now living on lands held primarily under kipat tenure, and surrounded by settlements of non-Limbus who enjoy rights to land under a different tenure system (raikar). To a limited extent, the Limbu settlements contain some non-Limbus as well - indicating that some of the lands in their midst are held under raikar tenure. About one-fifth of the inhabitants of the Indreni Cluster, for example, are members of other groups settled interstitially among the Limbus.

Although the locus of this study is the Indreni settlement cluster, it is the Limbu sector within the Cluster which provides the focus for my analysis. I can not, of course, ignore the existence of the non-Limbus living within or for that matter in the area surrounding

the Cluster. But the relations between the Limbus and their neighbours as well as the changes which are taking place in these relations are presented essentially from the standpoint of the Limbus. In a similar vein, I make no attempt to disregard the presence of Government - of 'commanding heights' as Worsley puts it¹ - or the new opportunities which exist for earning cash in and outside the area. These are treated as factors of greater or lesser import influencing the social scene.

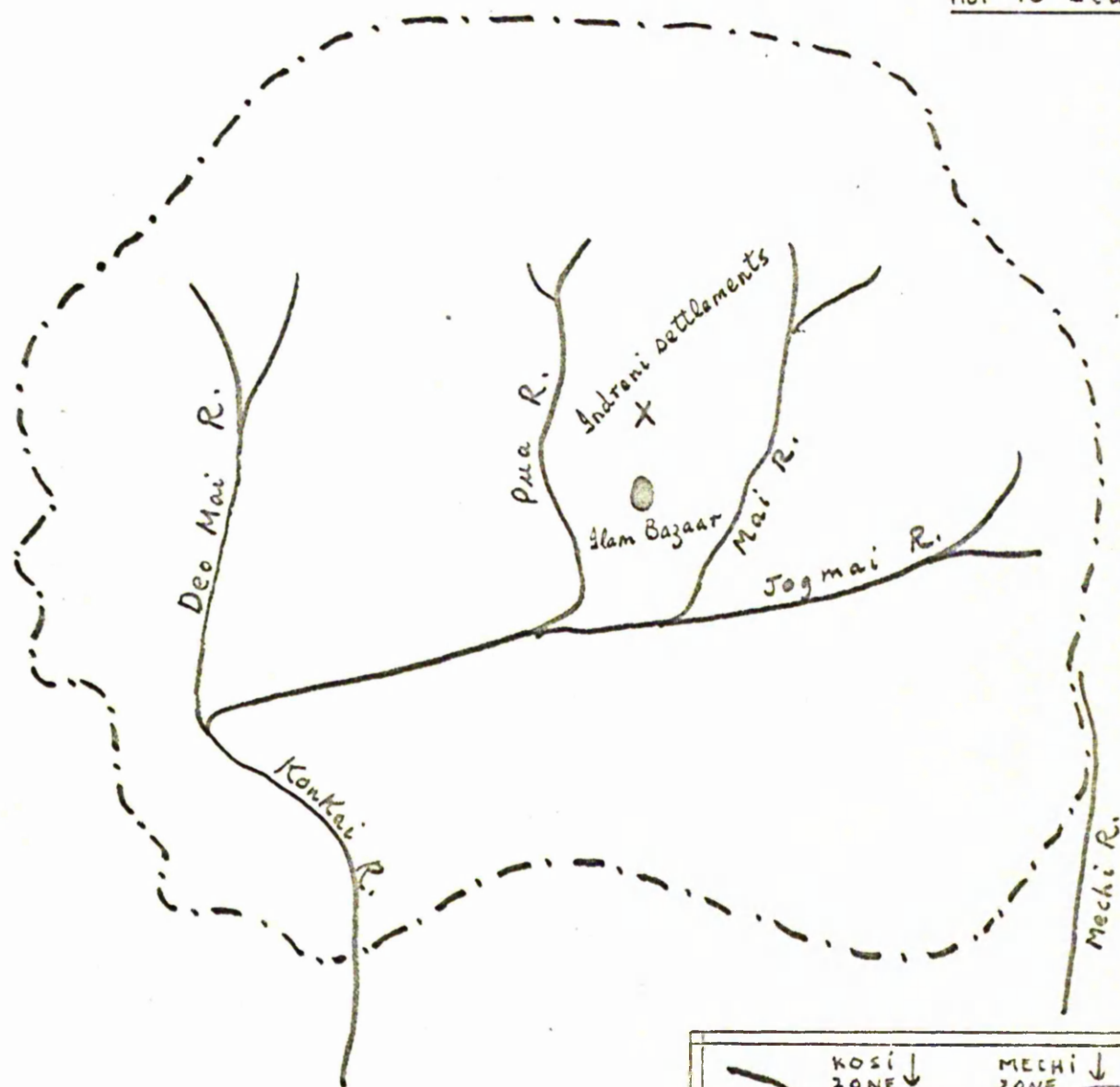
I am not prepared to say that the detailed changes recorded in this study of Indreni Limbus are representative of other settlement clusters in Limbuan or even the district of Ilam.² Factors such as the ratio of Limbu to non-Limbu population, the availability of land or the existence of alternatives to agriculture vary from one locality to another and influence the extent and pace of change in any one settlement cluster. Nevertheless, from the documents and writings I have seen,³ and from superficial observations made during visits to other parts of the region it is abundantly clear that Government land policy has contributed to bring about far-reaching changes in the

1. Worsley, 1961, p.219.

2. As Cohen points out, from the sociological point of view, the question of typicality is of no real significance. (1965, p.176.)

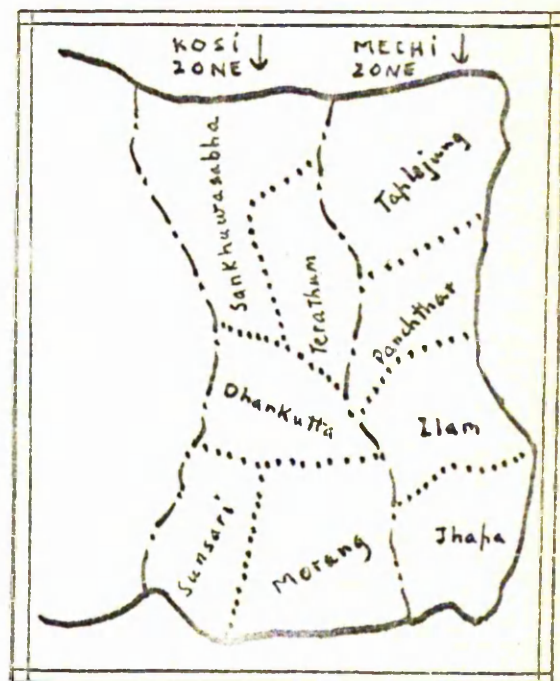
3. Unless otherwise indicated, the historical material presented in this thesis is based on documents or on published works which refer to primary sources.

ILAM
not to scale



New Administrative Divisions (inset)

- International boundary
 - - - Zonal boundary
 - District boundary
- Scale: Approx 1" = 40 mi.



economic and political spheres of Limbu social life throughout east Nepal. The process may differ from place to place, but the substantive pattern is discernible everywhere.

The remainder of this chapter presents an environmental, historical and cultural background to the problems with which the thesis is concerned.

The Background

Ilam District

The settlements of Angbung, Bharapa, Chitok and Dorumba - which for shorthand purposes I call the Indreni settlement cluster - are situated in the district of Ilam in East Nepal. The greater part of the district falls in the middle ranges of the country, a strip of rugged hills reaching to heights of 12,000 feet above sea level and stretching from east to west along the 500 mile length of the country. The hills of Ilam rise sharply from the Terai to the south, a 20-mile wide belt of low-lying flatlands which is a continuation of the Gangetic plain of India.

Ilam encompasses an area of 540 square miles. It is bounded on the east by Sikkim and the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, while to the west and north lie the districts of Dhankutta and Panchthar.

The area is mainly characterized by irregular terrain and poor soil, necessitating the use of terraces for cultivation. The principal crops are paddy, grown in irrigated fields (khet) at altitudes of up to 5000', maize and millet, which latter are grown in dry fields (bari) up to 8000' above sea level.

The district of Ilam experiences a moderate climate, temperatures seldom rising above 85 degrees F. during the warm season from April to September, or falling below 45 degrees F. during the cool months of January and February. From mid-June to mid-September the south-west monsoon rains persist, and leave a precipitation of some 60". Ilam contains a small basin, drained by four rivers - Mai, Pua Mai, Deo Mai and Jog Mai - which dissect the district into four main sub-divisions (thum).¹

The Indroni settlements lie in a contiguous belt along the eastern slope of a 4500' ridge in the Ilam-Darda sub-division of the district. Ilam-Darda, with an area of 55 square miles, comprises about 10% of the total area of Ilam district. It is bounded on the east by the Mai River and on the west by the Pua River, which rivers meet south of Ilam Bazaar, the district capital, and join with the Jog Mai and Deo Mai Rivers to flow southward into the plains as the Konkai.

1. Ilam is often referred to as 'Char Khola' (Four Rivers).

Ilam-Darada sub-division contains a population of approximately 16,200 or roughly 13% of the total population of the district. This makes Ilam-Darada the most densely settled of Ilam's four sub-divisions with a ratio of 294.5 persons per square mile as against 235.2 for the district as a whole.

These are net figures, however, and take no account of the emigrants who have left the district to settle mainly in West Bengal, in Sikkim, Bhutan, and as far east as Assam and Burma. Although there are no statistics available on emigration from Ilam, nor, indeed, on the flow of emigrants out of Nepal, the movement of population across the borders has been going on for almost a century. An official of the administration mentioned an emigration figure of four millions. One author¹ remarks that there are three million people of Nepali origin regularly resident in North Bengal and North Assam alone, while another estimates that two million Nepalis live in India, Sikkim and Bhutan.² According to the 1941 census of India, Nepal provided 45% of the foreign immigrants into India. As early as 1891, over half the population of Darjeeling was of Nepali origin, and one-third had been born in Nepal.³

1. Patterson, 1962, p.193.

2. Rose, 1963b, p.117.

3. O'Malley, 1907, p.43.

Nepalis have provided the greater part of the labour force for the tea estates of Darjeeling.

To take Sikkim alone, Nepali immigration into that State began in the latter half of the 19th century and reached such proportions that laws had to be promulgated to check the flow.¹ Still, by 1951, 77.2% of the people spoke one of the languages of Nepal as their mother tongue.²

The primary reason for this emigration is the growing pressure on land. In the area of the Indreni Cluster, as in many regions of east Nepal, there is little new jungle to break, or virgin land to bring under cultivation. Land shortage was apparently a problem as early as the 1890s. One visitor to Sikkim at the time remarked of the Nepalis: '....it is because every bit of the land in their country is taken up that there is such a steady emigration into Sikkim.'³

Given the existing level of technology and pattern of agriculture, the land is unable adequately to support the growing population. Nevertheless, the fact that over 95% of the population of Ilam depends for a substantial part of its living on agriculture, the need to obtain land or to retain lands in one's possession, assumes the

1. Nakane, 1966, p.260.

2. Davis, 1951.

3. Donaldson, 1900, p.208. The extent of land shortage in fact varies considerably from one part of the country to another. In a community in west Nepal studied by Hitchcock the problem is apparently not serious. (Hitchcock, 1966, p.61).

proportions of a constant and unrelieved struggle. When there is insufficient land to cultivate, supplementary or alternative sources of income must be sought. A number of opportunities for wage labour do exist both within and outside the rural areas. But for those who are unable to take advantage of these opportunities, the threat of emigration looms large. The decision to emigrate is not taken lightly. It means severing ties with kin - although many retain links with their kin for some years - and can lead to even greater difficulties than those left behind, especially for the first generation of immigrants. Nakane describes some of the hardships faced by Nepalis who come to Sikkim. Many become coolies in bazaar towns and hope in this way to earn enough to purchase land and settle down in a hamlet as peasants. In her words: 'It normally takes many many years from the time one leaves home until the final place for settling down as a peasant is found... Some fail to become peasants and remain as coolies all their life.'¹

This study will not concern itself with those who have left their homes in Ilam. But no examination of social life in this part of Nepal can be fully appreciated without taking into account the ever-present possibility of having to emigrate.

Ilam is one of six districts in east Nepal

1. Nakane, 1966, p.255.

which constitute what is known as Limbuan - the country of the Limbus. Limbuan, lying east of the Arun River, between the high Himalayas and the plains, comprises an area of approximately 4500 square miles, or about 8% of the total area of present-day Nepal.

The Limbus, constituting 1.8% of the total population of the country,¹ are generally regarded as among the first inhabitants of east Nepal. Together with the Rais, who, like the Limbus, are a Mongoloid people, they are thought to be the descendants of the ancient Kiratis.² In the Mahabharata, the Kiratis were said to dwell in the eastern Himalayan regions. In many contemporary government documents the area of east Nepal is still referred to as 'Kirat'. The country inhabited mainly by Rais lies in the mid-region of east Nepal between the Dudh Kosi and the Arun Rivers and is termed 'Middle Kirat', whereas the Limbu country east of the Arun River i.e. Limbuan is called 'Far Kirat'.

Nothing is known of the early history of the Kiratis beyond what is found in the Nepalese Chronicles which are by and large based on myths and legends. One

-
1. Based on the census report of Nepal, 1952-54.
 2. There is some disagreement over the proper designation of the term 'Kirati'. Although most writers include both Rais and Limbus as Kirati, Vansittart (1915:7) says that it belongs properly to the Rais, but because of intermarriage between the two peoples, he includes the Limbus within the 'kirati group'. Campbell, on the other hand (1840:95), observed that 'Limbu' is a generic term for Rais, Bakas (a branch of the Rais) and 'Kerautis'. Finally, I.S. Chemjong (1952) suggests that all Mongoloid peoples inhabiting the Himalayas and parts of South-East Asia as well are descendants of the Kiratis.

Chronicle, dating from the mid-18th century, speaks of the Kiratis 'who came from the east' and, after conquering the Ahir rulers, established a dynasty which ruled the Valley of Nepal through twenty-nine generations until they were driven out by the Somabansi rulers.¹ A Nepali historian dates the Kirati conquest sometime during the 7th century B.C.² As opposed to Levi and Kirkpatrick, who estimate that Kirati rule of the Valley extended over 1000 years, D.R. Regmi believes that they may have ruled for a period of 725 years.³

Limbu mythology attests to their early settlement in the Himalayas. A Limbu Chronicle relates that during the 6th century B.C. ten brothers and their kinsmen came from Assam to Kashi (Benares). Driven out by Hindu kings, they went north into the Himalayas and arrived at Phedap in east Nepal. Five of the brothers, having gone directly from Kashi to Phedap are called Kashi 'gotra', while the remaining five, who went via Lhasa in Tibet are known as Lhasa 'gotra'.⁴

1. Wright, 1958, pp.65-7.

2. D.R. Regmi, 1960, pp.59-60. Regmi also suggests that the Kiratis conquered not the Ahirs but the Neminites.

3. Ibid, p.62.

4. Limbus still maintain this distinction between Lhasa clans and Kashi clans, although the term 'gotra' here has no implications as regards marriage.

At that time in Phedap, the Chronicle relates, there were eight kings, and the ten brothers and their followers were given refuge in those kingdoms. After some generations their descendants came to be known as Limbu or Yakthumba (as the Limbus refer to themselves). A series of repressive measures designed to thwart the growing power of the Limbus soon led to rebellion. The eight kings were defeated and the victorious Limbus renamed the area Limbuan. The descendants of the Ten Limbus chose their rulers, and each was given a portion of Limbuan over which to rule. The erstwhile subjects of the eight Phedap kings either fled to Sikkim or 'became Limbus' and followers of the victorious Limbu rulers.¹

Historical sources on east Nepal, although still scanty, become more reliable from the middle of the 18th century. By that time a number of small chiefdoms which had grown up in Limbuan were subject to the Rajput-ruled kingdom of Bijayapur.² Both the Rai area of Middle Kirat to the west, which had a separate capital at Chaudandi, and Bijayapur, with its capital at Morang, were ruled by separate branches of the Sen dynasty of Muckwanpur.

Limbu leaders held the office of prime minister

-
1. Quoted in Vansittart, 1915, p.101. I.S. Chemjong, (1952) includes almost the same account. Only a handful of educated Limbus who have access to these printed sources, can relate this myth in coherent fashion. All Limbus, however, are aware of their descent from the legendary Ten Limbu brothers.
 2. I.S. Chemjong, 1952 argues that there were a number of independent Limbu chiefdoms which were not subservient to Hindu kings.

under the Sens and their followers in the hills formed the main strength of these Rajput kings. Limbu chiefs were apparently not averse to playing off competing Hindu kings to gain their own ends. Hamilton recounts how the shift of allegiance from Bijayapur to Muckwanpur by one chief enabled the Muckwanpur ruler to absorb the other kingdom into his domains. He notes that the power of the kings and their Hindu adherents was very much limited by the Kiratis. The prime minister signed all commissions and orders, while the king merely applied his seal. Furthermore, the former could appropriate 10% of the total revenues of the Kingdom.¹ Another writer comments: 'the last word lay with the Kirati chiefs who more than once cast down the Rajput king of Bijayapur and set up another in his place.'² The tenuous control of the Sen rulers over their hill subjects led one missionary resident in the Valley of Nepal in the middle of the 18th century to refer to the 'independent' nation of the 'Ciratas' lying to the east of Kathmandu.³

There appears to be some uncertainty about the extent of Bijayapur's influence in the hill country. The Nepali historian, D.R. Regmi, apparently following Hamilton, suggests that until the late 18th century the Bijayapur kingdom included all of Limbuan and that part

-
1. Hamilton, 1819, p.147.
 2. Tucker, 1957, p.42.
 3. Giuseppe, 1790, p.308.

of Sikkim west of the Tista River.¹ Some writers imply that until the Gorkha conquest, all of Limbuan had been a part of Sikkim,² while Chemjong notes that during the 17th century the Sikkimese had extended their domains westward and subjected many of the chiefs of the northern parts of Limbuan.³ Whichever the correct view, what is certain is that Ilam was a part of Sikkim at the time of the Gorkha invasion.⁴

By 1772 the Gorkhas, having subdued the Valley of Nepal, began their conquest of the Kirati country. In 1774 Ilam fell.⁵ The Gorkhas erected there a series of forts to secure communications with the plains and from which to launch an eastern offensive. By 1810, they reached the banks of the Tista in Sikkim. Only the intervention of the British stopped the Gorkha advance, and in 1817 Nepal's eastern boundary was put back to the Mechi River, where it has remained since.

From the time of its conquest by the Gorkhas, Ilam, largely because of its natural boundaries and strategic location, has remained a distinct unit of administration. During the quarter century following the

1. D.R. Regmi, 1961, p.37; Hamilton, 1819, p.132.

2. See for example, J.C. White, 1909, p.17.

3. I.S. Chemjong, 1952, Chapter 6.

4. Gorkha was one of the petty kingdoms which had arisen in west Nepal following the large migration of high-caste Hindus fleeing from north India in the wake of the Moslem invasion of the 13th century. The reigning Shah king of Gorkha took advantage of wars between the Newar rulers in the Valley of Nepal to further his own political ambitions.

5. D.R. Regmi, 1961, p.96.

conquest, although Dhankutta became the 'largest and most important place in eastern Nepal, and the headquarters of the civil and military administrator' for the area, Ilam was administered separately by its own military authorities.¹

In the early years of the 19th century Chainpur was made a separate division to administer the hill areas east of the Arun River. Until 1890, Ilam was nominally a part of the Chainpur division, although the district continued to be administered by the military, who collected customs and revenues and dispensed justice.² According to Hodgson, the head of the Ilam garrison 'is a captain and has a hundred soldiers under him, with eight artillerymen and one cannon of small calibre. This officer is also the civil authority of the arondissement, and raises the extraordinary revenue thereof to meet the local expenses, sending the balance, if any, to Kathmandu. The land revenue is wholly assigned to his troops in pay.'³

By the end of the 19th century, at which time the country was divided into thirty-eight administrative districts, the civil authority had largely replaced the

1. Hodgson, 1880, p.204.

2. A former governor of Ilam claims that the first civil Governor of the district was appointed in 1817, although there is every likelihood that at least until the latter half of the 19th century military men were assigned the post. (Cf. Lama, 1959, p.27).

3. Hodgson, 1880, p.204. I have seen a receipt for taxes given by the revenue department of the Ilam militia, dated 1873, in which it is specifically stated that taxes submitted 'will be spent as salary for the militia.'

military in Ilam. In 1890 Ilam was removed from the nominal control of Chaitpur and the Governor (Bada Hakim) was made directly responsible to the Durbar in Kathmandu. In that year a magistrate's court was established in the district capital, Ilam Bazaar. Only revenue matters continued to be handled by the militia until about 1910 when a branch of the treasury office (mal) was set up in the district.

1951 marked a turning point in the political life of the country. Until that time, Nepal remained virtually isolated from the rest of the world. Between 1790-1950 diplomatic relations were maintained only with Britain and Tibet.¹ Foreigners were not permitted to travel in the hills, and only a few privileged westerners were on occasion allowed to hunt in the Terai, or were invited to visit the Valley of Kathmandu. The country's isolation was reflected in the almost total lack of schools and of health care, the paucity of roads and other means of communication, and the absence of industry.²

In 1951 the Rana Regime, which had ruled the country for over a century, was ousted and the powers of the Monarchy restored.³ In 1952, the Government made its

-
1. In 1912 formal links with China were severed. See Maron, Rose and Heyman, 1956, pp. 241-247.
 2. In 1950 about 3% of children of school age were in school; there were fewer than a dozen doctors in the country; there were 120 miles of motorable roads and 63 miles of railway.
 3. For a good account of the events of 1950-51 and following, see Driver, 1963.

first attempt to establish a Panchayat system of local committees and courts. In Ilam, the Panchayat lasted four years in the first instance, and in 1962, under a reconstituted system, was reintroduced and was still in effect at the time of fieldwork.

The various committees established by the Panchayat system were grafted on to but did not replace the traditional administrative structure. At the national level, the locus of power in the country remains the Monarch and his appointees who head the various departments and ministries in the Government. Administration in the hill districts is still effected under the supervision of a Governor appointed by the Crown.

The Governor is primarily responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the district, and retains command of the militia and police. He also co-ordinates the activities of the various local administrative departments and initiates such programmes and activities as may fall outside the scope of district departments.

Traditionally, due to poor communications between Kathmandu and Ilam, the Governor's authority extended to all matters of local administration. And since most appointees to the post were close kinsmen of the ruling Ranas, their de-facto powers were virtually absolute.

Recently, the boundaries of jurisdiction between the office of the Governor and the various departments have

become more clearly defined. Since 1951, the administration has been reorganized to cope with the expansion of Government services and activities throughout the country. Some district branches are now required to report directly to wider regional branches or even to the central department in Kathmandu. With the gradual improvement of communications between Kathmandu and the districts, central departments are tending to exercise firmer control over their local branches than in the past. As a result, the role of the Governor is more and more restricted to 'general supervision' of the various departments.¹

To coincide with the establishment of a Panchayat system in 1962 administrative boundaries were redrawn. The country is now divided into 14 'development zones'. Each zone is divided into a number of 'development districts' - there are 75 throughout the country - which are further sub-divided into administrative 'Villages'. Together with the districts of Jhapa in the Terai and Panchthar and Taplejung to the north, Ilam became part of the Mechi Zone, easternmost of the country's zonal divisions. The establishment of new districts, however, did not affect Ilam's boundaries. Although the 1962 re-organization foresees the eventual emphasis on zonal rather than on district programming and administration, in 1964-65 the primary development entity was still the district, which continued

1. Malhotra 1958, pp. 455-56.

to be the effective unit of government. Ilam as we know it today has remained a constant administrative unit since its incorporation into the Gorkha State some two hundred years ago.

The Indreni Cluster

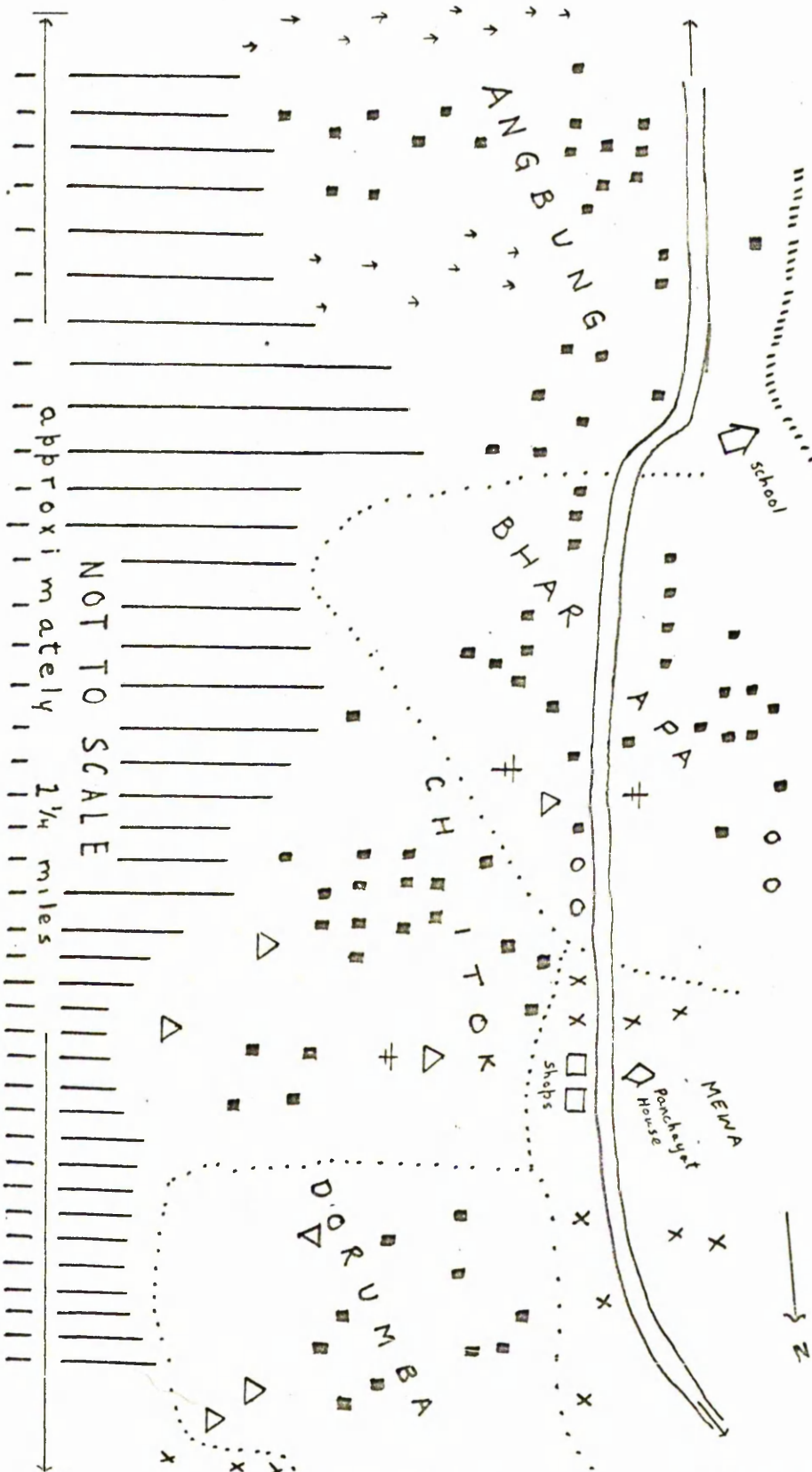
At the time of fieldwork the Indreni settlements contained a population of 511. The population breakdown is shown in Table I.

TABLE I
Indreni Cluster: population breakdown

	<u>Brahmins</u>	<u>Jaisis</u>	<u>Limbus</u>	<u>Magars</u>	<u>Blacksmiths</u>	<u>Total</u>
Angbung			120			120
Bharapa	12		115	24	11	162
Chitok	22		112		3	137
Dorumba	<u>23</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>62</u>	—	—	<u>92</u>
	57	7	409	24	14	511

The Indreni settlements are located between three and four miles north of Ilam Bazaar, the district capital. They straddle a road which leads from the Bazaar to a point about four miles north of the settlements where the district's only lake is situated. Although vegetation in the area is lush, especially during and immediately following the rains, there is a conspicuous dearth of woodland. The dense bamboo forests which once covered the greater part of the ridge slopes have been denuded leaving only sparse groves dotted sporadically around the hills.

Indreni settlement cluster



	Honesteads
	Limbu
	Brahmin
	Magar
	Blacksmith
	Houses in other settlements
	crest of ridge
	fields
	settlement boundary
	Forest

NOT TO SCALE

approximately 1 1/4 miles

There is no central meeting place where large numbers of local residents can gather to exchange news or relax after the day's work. At one point on the main road to the west of Chitok there are two small shops and a tiny hut where the Panchayat Committee holds its meetings. At any time of the day a few men are to be found trading jokes with the talkative and witty young proprietress of one of the shops, but only when the Committee meets are the numbers who come together more than a handful.

About a mile south of the shops, beside the main road on a small rise is the only school for the children of the Indreni Cluster and settlements to the north of it. Built of mud and stone, with a thatched roof, the school has three teachers for its five grades. Beside the school there is a large playground, the only flat spread of land to be seen in the area, but only the school children use it for exercises or games. None of the adults in the surrounding settlements are ever to be seen playing on the field.

The Indreni settlements suffer from no shortage of water for drinking or bathing and every house is within easy reach of at least one water source (dhara). Water is usually tapped from a spring and run through a split bamboo 'pipe' to an area which has been cleared and laid over with stones. At such water sources women are usually found washing clothes or filling copper or earthen jugs with water, and passing the time by exchanging gossip.

Although several houses in the Cluster are situated alongside the main road, most are set back a distance and can be reached only by a series of narrow footpaths. The houses are constructed on unirrigated plots along the crest of the main ridge at altitudes between 3500 - 4500' above sea level. Vegetable gardens growing spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, etc. are located on small plots adjacent to the houses and an occasional banana or guava tree will be situated nearby.

An area in front of each house is cleared and levelled to provide a courtyard, in which most domestic chores are carried out. Often a raised platform on which the household's maize crop is stored is placed in the centre of the yard. During the dry season, men weave wicker baskets, repair ploughs or pass the time away in the open courtyard. Here women pound and polish rice, wash utensils or brew millet beer. Grains are left to dry on long mats of split bamboo and rice for the daily meals is winnowed in the open air.

Unlike the practice followed in some parts of Nepal, cattle and domestic animals are not kept inside the main house. Cattle byres, pig and goat pens are constructed on the edge of the courtyard, while chickens are kept under baskets or in other containers out of reach of preying jackals.

Houses are of varying construction; they can be

roughly classified into four main types. The simplest and least expensive consists of one stone and mud wall with the remaining three walls made of bamboo strips and mud filling. There is only one room measuring approximately 10' x 12' which is used both for cooking and sleeping. A tiny attic provides just enough space for storing millet and paddy, which are usually kept in large rectangle-shaped baskets made of bamboo strips. The roof is thatched with hay or occasionally a more durable grass (khar) grown especially for the purpose.

A second type is slightly larger than the first, and here all four walls are of stone. It is constructed on a stone foundation about three feet in depth. In this house, too, there is only one room although if there are many people living in the house the attic may be used for sleeping as well as storage. The roof is thatch and there is a partly enclosed verandah at the front of the house facing the courtyard.

The third type of house is larger than the first two (perhaps 20' x 30') and consists of two storeys in addition to a storage attic. The kitchen is normally on the ground floor, but the inhabitants sleep on both floors. There may be ad hoc partitions separating the sleeping quarters of various persons but this is not the rule. In addition to the front verandah there may be a narrow

balcony on the second floor. Here, too, the roof is of thatch.

The fourth type is the largest of all (approximately 25' x 40'). Inside, wood partitions divide the space on both floors into several rooms and perhaps a separate kitchen. The porch is completely enclosed in wood to provide shelter against the weather. There is a tin roof.

In none of these houses are chimneys or proper ventilation found. Windows are the exception and are usually covered by wooden shutters. As a consequence houses are generally dark and smoke-filled. The lower part of the outside walls are covered with red earth and the top may be whitewashed with lime. The floors of the inner house and the verandah are covered with a mixture of red earth and cow dung and replastered at the beginning of each Nepali month and on other special ritual occasions.

Even in the most well-to-do house furniture is minimal. Beds are uncommon; people sleep on hay or bamboo mats laid out on the floor. While some of the wealthier houses have chairs, most people sit on small round mats made of maize coverings or on locally woven blankets. Meals are taken seated on such mats and food is placed on the freshly cleaned floor in front of the person eating.

Since the Panchayat system is a recent creation the notion of belonging to a demarcated political unit such as a statutory village has not yet become an accepted part

of social life. Traditionally, because of the nature of the terrain and the settlement configuration, there was no concept of belonging to a geographically or socially distinct unit. The characteristic residential pattern is one of wide distribution of dwellings, a pattern broken only occasionally by small clusters of houses. Instead of nucleated villages, we find dispersed settlements which merge into one another. The settlement is never accurately defined. Its name locates a man's place of residence, but boundaries are vague in the fringe areas between settlements. I have seen documents referring to the same man, living in the border area between settlements and written with his knowledge, citing his place of residence as Angbung on one occasion, Bharapa on another, and a third settlement outside the Cluster on yet another. A brief description of settlement boundaries in the Indreni Cluster will illustrate the residential pattern.

Angbung, the southernmost settlement in the Cluster, is the most compact of the four, so that every house is within easy reach, via a network of footpaths, of every other house in the settlement. Angbung has also the most definitive boundaries of any of the settlements in the Cluster. It is bordered on the west by the main road to Ilam Bazaar (only one house is situated on the western side of the road, atop a small rise). On the north and east Angbung is bounded by fields, and on the south by a wood.

It is not completely isolated, however, for the houses of Bharapa continue along the ridge, on both sides of the main road, from where those of Angbung leave off.

There is a wider distribution of houses in Bharapa than in Angbung, save for one cluster of six houses to the west of the main road. Whereas the ridge top to the west, and fields down the eastern slope of the ridge bound the settlement on two sides, it 'fades' into Angbung on the south, into Chitok on the north-east, and into yet another settlement outside the Cluster - Mewa - on the north-west.

The residential pattern in Chitok is similar to Bharapa; again with the exception of one cluster of four houses and another of five, most houses tend to be widely dispersed. Residents of Chitok have clear ideas about the boundaries of their settlement to the east (fields extending down to the Mai River) and to the north (a glen between two hills). The boundaries with Bharapa to the south, and with Mewa to the west, however, are ill-defined.

Houses in Dorumba are more widely spaced than in any of the other settlements in the Cluster. Although the boundaries are clearly demarcated to the south (the glen north of Chitok) and to the east and north-west (fields) there is no clear boundary between the houses of Mewa which extend westward up the ridge to the main road and those of Dorumba, nor between those of the latter and the dwellings

of yet another settlement to the north-east.

Settlements are neither exogamous nor endogamous units. Nor are the inhabitants of any one settlement bound together by common rituals. Because of the necessity of sub-dividing scarce plots, sibling groups tend to live on adjacent lands and thus to inhabit the same settlement. In several cases, however, siblings do live in different settlements. Moreover, links to kinship units beyond the siblinggroup extend regularly into neighbouring settlements within the Cluster. Those persons who pay taxes to a headman are linked across the vague boundaries of settlement. Similarly, mourning obligations on the death of an agnate crystallize groups without reference to settlement.

In day-to-day contexts, the persons with whom one interacts most frequently are neighbours. A household which runs short of salt or cooking oil borrows from a neighbour; these without a foot pestle for pounding rice or millet use their neighbour's. During the agricultural season neighbours exchange labour. They are the first to be invited to weddings or funeral rites. On warm evenings neighbours gather in each other's courtyards and tell stories or trade gossip. But because of the settlement pattern, a man's neighbourhood does not always coincide with his settlement. Those in the fringe areas between settlements count neighbours on both sides of the 'boundary'. In a sense, then, neighbourhoods are ego-

centred and must be conceptualized as a series of overlapping circles which transcend **settlement boundaries**, especially when these are not clear-cut geographical features.

There is no Nepali word which specifically denotes those units here called settlements. The word 'gaon', usually translated as village, is employed in a variety of contexts. It may denote the named unit of residence, i.e. what I have meant by settlement. Gaon can be employed when referring to the general area, so that a man out for a walk will say simply: 'I am going to the gaon'. The area subsumed by the new Panchayat Committee is called a gaon although it includes a number of settlements. Finally, within the area of any settlement, a small cluster of houses may be called a gaon. Similarly, because the Indreni Cluster contains a majority of Limbus, it is often referred to as 'Limbu gaon'.

What has to be stressed, then, is the fact that the settlement is not a discrete social or political entity. Nor is it a unit in the administrative hierarchy seen from above. The notion of the settlement as a self-aware entity does not exist either in the conceptual notions of the inhabitants or 'on the ground'.

The People

Prior to and for some years after the Gorkha conquest Ilam was inhabited mainly by Lepchas.¹ Limbu migration into the area certainly took place before the Gorkha conquest, but was evidently catalyzed by the political and military unrest in other parts of Limbuan following the invasion.² In addition, occasional migratory waves from Sikkim swelled the Lepcha population of east Nepal. The migrations led to intermarriage between the two peoples. Campbell, writing in 1840, remarks that 'during the last twelve years, since the great migration of the Lepchas from Sikkim to the westward has been in progress, the mixture of these two tribes has greatly increased in frequency.'³ The almost total disappearance of the Lepchas as a separate group in Ilam would seem to support the notion of large-scale intermarriage. Although some informants insist that the Lepchas were driven out of Ilam by the Limbus migrating from other areas of Limbuan, others suggest that many Limbu clans are in fact hybrid.

While the Limbus tended to absorb or drive out the Lepchas, other migratory movements have given Ilam,

-
1. Cf. Rock, 1953, pp. 938-39; Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1956, p.124; O'Malley, 1907, p.22. In the Limbu Chronicle cited above, it is stated that at the time of the division of Limbuan among the descendants of the Ten Limbus, the Ilam area was inhabited by Lepchas.
 2. Cf. Phago, 1843.
 3. Campbell, 1840, p.596.

like other regions of east Nepal, a highly heterogenous character. Although each of the main tribal groups is identified with a particular area in the hills, in most parts there is to be found an admixture of peoples, generally with the tribe indigenous to a particular area predominating in that area. Since the direction of movement has tended to be from west to east, it is more common to find members of groups associated with the western part of the country living in the east than vice versa.

In addition to the migration of tribal populations, large-scale immigration of Brahmins, Jaisis and Chetris from the western regions of Nepal followed in the wake of the Gorkha conquest. These immigrants settled among the indigenous Limbus, thereby creating a multi-ethnic society in Ilam. In the Panchayat area of Syawa, (which contains the Indreni Cluster) whose heterogeneous population is typical of Ilam's villages, there are thirteen different groups.¹ Their numbers are shown in Table 2.

1. Throughout the text, the word 'Village' is used to refer to the area under the jurisdiction of the newly established Panchayat Committee.

TABLE 2
Population of Syawa Village

	<u>Households</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Percentage of Village Population</u>
Brahmin	159	929	32.5%
Jaisi	63	359	12.6
Chetri	38	223	7.8
Limbu	106	523	18.3
Rai	36	220	7.7
Sunwar	16	90	3.2
Gurung	10	62	2.2
Magar	7	42	1.5
Tamang	3	23	0.8
Newar	25	158	5.5
Blacksmith	21	95	3.3
Tailor	11	68	2.4
Cobbler	<u>9</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>2.2</u>
	502	2856	100.0%

The linking together of these many groups resulted in the establishment of a caste hierarchy.¹ Each caste - with the exception of the Newars - is associated with one of three main tiers in the hierarchy.² This is not to suggest that members of caste groups belonging to one tier always see those in other tiers as undifferentiated, but only that in certain contexts people are viewed as belonging to classifications larger than castes. Moreover, these are objective divisions in the sense that until 1963, the law

1. This switch in terminology from 'tribe' to 'caste' requires a word of explanation. Bailey (1961) has argued that the two represent polar opposites along a continuum of structural types. In this sense, the Limbus are no longer a tribe and not quite a caste. The latter term is used for the sake of consistency, and as a direct translation of the term jat, which is used indiscriminately of all groups.

2. The Newars are generally classified separately, since they are internally ranked. See Fürer-Hamendorf, 1956.

was applied differentially on the basis of castes which were for most purposes classified into three tiers.

In the old Legal Code the Brahmins, Jaisis¹ and Chetris were designated as 'twice-born' (tagadhari) castes. In common parlance, Brahmins and Jaisis, and, less frequently, Chetris as well, may be referred to as 'Bahuns'. More frequently, the three groups are termed 'Khas-Bahuns'. However, whereas Jaisis will generally refer to themselves as 'Bahuns', Brahmins normally prefix the term 'Upadiya', denoting a status superior to both Jaisis and Chetris. All three groups wear the sacred thread, a symbol of their high ritual status. Brahmins serve as priests to the three 'twice-born' caste groups, but aside from this, no specific occupation is associated with each group: all are cultivators.²

Below the twice-born castes in the ritual hierarchy come the various 'tribal' groups. Limbus, along with Rais, Gurungs, Magars, Sunwars and Tamangs are termed (both in the old Legal Code and in everyday conversation) 'drinking (matwali) castes'. This refers to the fact that they drink beer and liquor, a practice forbidden to orthodox Hindus. Each of these castes assigns to itself a position in the middle stratum of the hierarchy not always in accord with the position it is assigned by other groups. So that

-
1. These are the issue of unions between Brahmin men and Brahmin widows.
 2. Brahmins in east Nepal, unlike those in some parts of the country, plough.

although it is generally accepted that drinking castes rank below twice-born groups in the ritual hierarchy, how the former are arranged is a matter of some uncertainty.

None of these groups in the middle tier wears the sacred thread. Nor does any follow a specific occupation with which it is associated by tradition. Like the twice-born groups, those in the middle stratum of the hierarchy are primarily cultivators.

Finally come the menial castes - the 'untouchables' (pani na calne) - who rank lowest in the hierarchy. Regarded as occupying a status below the pollution 'barrier' they are not allowed to enter the homes of those in the higher strata. Although some Blacksmiths, Tailors¹ and Cobblers live in symbiotic relationship to the higher ranked groups, and perform services for the latter, the majority do not follow their traditional occupations. Again, like most others in the area, they are mainly cultivators.

This three tier hierarchy of twice-born, 'drinking' and untouchable caste groups was the social basis for and became crystallized through the old Legal Code of the country, abolished only in 1963. The law protected the interests of the Brahmins and other twice-born castes by making an infringement of their exalted status a crime. Thus an offence against what was regarded as the sanctity

1. Tailors are also musicians.

of the caste hierarchy was equated with an offence against the state.

The hierarchy is bolstered by rigid rules of commensality, such that a person can accept ritually significant foods only from members of groups accorded equal or higher status. No member of a twice-born caste will accept such food from a member of one of the drinking castes in the middle stratum. And no member of a group considered ritually pure will take any food - cooked or otherwise - or water from an untouchable.

Certain cultural distinctions serve to emphasize the differences among the principal strata in the hierarchy. Since the majority of inhabitants of the Indreni Cluster of settlements are Brahmins and Limbus, I will only indicate some of the distinctions between these two groups.

The main cultural criteria differentiating Limbus and Brahmins are race, language and religion. Limbus are of Mongoloid racial stock and have a language of their own which, in the Linguistic Survey of India is classified as part of the Tibeto-Burman family.¹ In addition, they speak, with varying degrees of fluency, the lingua franca of the country, Nepali kura - an Indo-Aryan tongue. Because of the high admixture of castes in Ilam, all Limbu men and most women born and raised in the district are required to know Nepali kura and so speak it with ease. It is not uncommon,

1. More precisely, Limbu kura is one of the Eastern Pronominalized Group (Austic Influence), Himalayan Groups of the Tibeto-Burman Family. (Cf. Chatterji, 1950).

however, to find women married into the Indreni settlements from Limbuan areas outside Ilam where there is a greater concentration of Limbus, unable to converse in Nepali kura with any degree of fluency.¹

The Brahmins are associated with the Caucasian or Indid racial category and speak Nepali kura as a first language. This latter fact, aside from contributing to differences in fluency and styles of speech between the two groups, enables Brahmins to communicate more easily with members of the administration, most of whom are members of twice-born groups. Moreover, since most Brahmins have some knowledge of Sanskrit, the language of Hindu ritual, they are better able to cope with written and spoken Nepali 'officialese' which contains a considerable amount of Sanskrit words.² Some of the implications of this difference in language facility are discussed in the last chapter.

Although Limbus claim to be Hindus they are, as Bailey remarks of the Konds of Orissa, 'Hindus of a different kind'.³ Some of the differences between the forms of worship of Limbus and Brahmins are immediately apparent in certain diacritical features surrounding their respective dwellings. The courtyard of a Limbu house will not contain

-
1. According to preliminary figures for the 1961 census, approximately one quarter of the population of Limbuan claims Limbu kura as its mother tongue. The figure for Ilam is about 10%.
 2. Limbus speak of 'Bahun kura' i.e. the language of the Brahmins when they mean to refer to Sanskrit.
 3. Bailey, 1960, p.4.

a shrine for the worship of a Hindu deity. The presence of such a shrine, usually a small mound of earth, or even an empty kerosene tin filled with earth and topped by a few branches of a tulasi bush, identifies the home as that of a Brahmin. Nor do Limbus follow the Brahminic practice of propitiating an ancestor god (kul deota) which requires the setting aside of a special place of worship within the Brahmin home.

The differences in the ritual significance attached to the taking of meals is expressed in the kinds of kitchen constructed by each. The Brahmin kitchen consists of a platform of mud raised several inches above the floor and to which only ritually qualified members of the household or their Brahmin guests have access. The cooking stove, too, is of special mud and stone construction and both stove and platform (which individually and jointly are called 'chulo') are required to be re-plastered with a mixture of mud and cow dung after each meal. Brahmin men take their meals only after ritual bathing and while wearing a special white loin cloth (dhoti) which replaces their ordinary clothes.

Limbus, on the other hand, cook on a simple stove consisting of several stones or an iron tripod. They eat in their ordinary clothes after washing only their hands and face and no special platform is built for eating purposes.

Distinct dietary practices are associated with each caste. As already mentioned, Brahmins are teetotalers, whereas Limbus are free to drink intoxicating beverages. Although some Brahmins are strict vegetarians by choice¹ most eat the meat of goats and sheep. Limbus also eat buffalo, chicken and pig meat, which are forbidden to Brahmins.² Although Brahmins do not raise chickens or pigs, they do keep buffaloes for their milk, curd and clarified butter products.

Whereas Brahmins worship the universal Hindu pantheon, Limbus worship, by means of blood sacrifice, a host of deities which have no place in traditional Hindu belief. Limbu mourning practices also differ significantly from those of the Brahmins. To mention only two features: the Limbus bury their dead whereas the Brahmins cremate theirs; and Limbus observe a period of three or four days of pollution (depending on whether the deceased is female or male), while Brahmins consider pollution to extend for thirteen days after death.

Marriage practices, too, differ considerably. Limbu marriages are performed by Limbu ritual specialists (phedangma) and require a blood sacrifice. Costs of marriage are borne by the bridegroom's family, and the ceremony itself takes place at the home of the bridegroom,

-
1. Vegetarians and non-vegetarians are sometimes found living in the same Brahmin household.
 2. All informants claim that beef was eaten by Limbus prior to the incorporation of Limbuan into the Gorkha polity.

before and after which a series of payments are transferred from the groom's to the bride's family. Limbu widows are re-married in essentially the same ceremony as are new brides. Brahmin women, by contrast, are married at their natal homes in ceremonies conducted by Brahmin family priests (purohit) and the marriages thereby made are considered indissoluble. The costs of the marriage are borne by the bride's family. Brahmin widows are not re-married.

Other differences contribute to the identification of two distinct cultural groups in the region of the Indreni settlements. Limbus greet one another quite distinctly from the way in which Brahmins greet their caste fellows. Greeting practices thereby express not merely differences in kinship norms between the two castes but their cultural 'apartness.'

There are also distinctions in the ways in which members of each caste dress. All eastern hill men wear the same basic costume: a double-breasted upper garment which falls below the waist, and a pair of trousers loose at the waist but tapering gradually so that it is tight-fitting from the knees down. A European style jacket is worn above this costume on dress-up occasions and a cap which is high on one side and low on the other, is worn on the head. All men wear these component units of the dress, but the distinction is in the manner in which the dress is

worn. Limbus tend to prefer the upper garment to be knee-length, while Brahmins wear the garment six or eight inches above the knees. The result is a distinctive Limbu 'style' despite the similarities in the component parts of the costume. Limbu women are even more set apart from Brahmin women. Like the latter, their head is covered by a shawl. Women of both castes wear a blouse and a sari as a lower garment. Limbu women, however, prefer their blouse to be made of velvet - usually black - while Brahmin women generally wear multi-coloured cotton or silk blouses. Limbu women also wrap a bright red cloth around their waists in the style of an apron back-to-front, a feature which Brahmin women omit. The result is that the caste affiliation of most people is readily apparent by the manner of their dress.

Finally, a word might be said about differences in the 'pleasure complex'¹ of the two groups. The most important aspects of this complex among the Limbus are drinking and dancing. Millet beer (jar) and liquor distilled from millet (raksi), the two main kinds of intoxicating beverage made and consumed in the settlements constitute an integral part of Limbu social life. Obeisance to headmen is expressed in the presentation of liquor; the request for a girl's hand in marriage is preceded by the offering of liquor; marriage payments

1. Orans, 1965, p.8.

include large quantities of liquor; the settlement of a dispute between Limbus is symbolized by the sharing of liquor. Indeed, there is hardly a social event which does not in some way involve the sharing of drink.

The importance of drink is especially evident during rituals which bring together large numbers of people. **Marriages** and funerary rites are characterized by the consumption of vast quantities of beer. The norms of hospitality, too, demand the serving of beer. A visiting kinsman or other guest is made welcome by offering beer in a bamboo container (tongba). I have heard one old Limbu remark: 'Tongba is the Limbu god'.

On the weekly market day in the nearby bazaar town it is not unusual to see a number of Limbus drinking together in ad hoc stalls set up along the main road. Those intent on arriving at the market early will have a hard time avoiding the invitations from kinsmen and friends to share 'one for the road'.

Another form of recreation which marks off the Limbus from the Brahmins is the formers' enjoyment of dancing. The Limbu 'paddy dance' (dhan nac) involves a line of men and women, hand to hand, in a series of musical challenges and rebuttals, danced and sung in lugubrious rhythm over many hours and even days. Since certain categories of kin - especially agnates of the opposite sex - are barred from dancing together, dances are usually held

when visitors arrive from another settlement cluster. In the Indreni settlement dances take place weekly on market day for the benefit of young men who want to spend a few hours dancing with the local girls before returning to their homes. The hosts or hostesses are expected to serve beer or liquor to their guests at intervals during the dance. Limbu weddings and other occasions for large gatherings invariably include dances for the young men and women.

A number of major Hindu festivals provide additional opportunities for Limbus to indulge their delight in dancing. One such occasion is a large four-day fair which takes place at the confluence of the Mai and Jogmai rivers beginning on the first day of the Nepali month of magh (January/February). The distinction in 'pleasure complex' between the Brahmins and Limbus is made manifest in the various ways in which the two groups regard the fair. Although the main purpose of the festival is sacred, viz. the worship of the Mai River, the Limbus gather in one section of the fair ground and spend the better part of the time dancing and drinking. For the Limbus this is primarily a secular event enabling the young people to meet others from every part of the district at the dances which continue for days.

For the Brahmins the festival's importance is in its sacred content: the ritual purification obtained

by bathing in the holy river, and the spiritual duty discharged by propitiation of the River Goddess. Consequently the recreational or pleasure value of the festival is inseparable from the sacred value.

This sacred aspect is the focus of all recreational activities in which Brahmins participate. Informal groups organized by wealthy Brahmins gather occasionally to sing religious songs. Brahmin weddings feature stylized singing competitions (silok) - usually recitations of passages from the sacred literature - between the camps of the **bride** and groom. Women from the groom's settlement gather on the night of his wedding (which takes place at the bride's home) to indulge in songs and play (ratauli) - mostly of a lewd nature - at the expense of the bride's relatives. These and other ritual occasions provide the framework for the Brahmin 'pleasure complex'. The dearth of secular occasions for recreational activity and the prohibition on drinking and mixed dancing set the Brahmins apart from their Limbu neighbours.

Despite their sharing of a common environment and their fusion into a single social system, each caste thus maintains a distinct 'style of life'.

Land Tenure

These cultural differences are emphasized by the fact that each group is associated with a separate kind of land tenure. The Limbus are identified with the 'kipat' tenure system, and only Limbus can own this kind of land. All other castes, including Brahmins, possess land under the 'raikar' system, which is the dominant form of tenure in the country.¹ Both systems exist side by side in the Indreni settlements, as in the entire area of Limbuan.²

The raikar system may be described as one of 'state landlordism' under which the rights of an individual to utilization and transfer of the land are recognized by the state so long as taxes are paid.³ Possession of land under this system has no reference to the caste affiliation or place of residence of the individual.

It is unlikely that the Gorkhas who established the Kingdom of Nepal actually created the kipat system. As Regmi suggests, the system is probably 'a relic of the customary land tenure that the Mongolian communities established in the areas occupied by them prior to Indo-Aryan penetration.'⁴ The first rulers of the new state,

-
1. A variety of land tenure forms have been noted for Nepal. Most were abolished after the overthrow of the Ranas. See M.C. Regmi, 1963, 1964, 1965, for a description of these systems.
 2. Limbus can, but on the whole do not, hold land under raikar tenure. See Chapter II.
 3. M.C. Regmi, 1963.
 4. M.C. Regmi, 1965, p.86.

however, confirmed the rights of these groups over their lands.

The term 'kipat' itself seems to have originated in the western part of the country and only reached Limbuan some years after the imposition of Gorkha rule.¹ Although today only the Limbus possess this kind of land, other indigenous groups have held land under the kīpat form of tenure. What is significant to note is that the Government of Nepal abolished the kīpat system in all areas of the country save Limbuan. The kīpat associated with members of other groups was thereby also abolished. The reasons for this differential treatment of Limbus, as I show in Chapter III, appear to be largely political.

The Government's adoption of a special policy for east Nepal derives from the relations between the Gorkhas and the semi-independent Limbu chiefdoms of the pre-1770 period. The incorporation of Limbuan into the Nepal state was as much a result of negotiation as of conquest. Gorkha expansion eastwards in the 1770s resulted in a series of alliances with potentially troublesome Limbu chiefs flanking them on all sides. In a royal declaration issued at the time by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the right of the Limbus to enjoy their traditional privileges and customs was

1. This view contradicts the argument put forward by some writers (Pradhananga, 1953; I.S. Chemjong, 1961) that the term 'kipat' applies to land cleared and brought under cultivation by Limbus. In fact these writers imply, as some Indreni informants insist, that 'kipat' is a Limbu word.

recognized. In return for their support the Limbus were assured a measure of internal rule under their chiefs and guaranteed their rights to ancestral lands.¹

1. Royal Order to the Limbus of Far kirat, 1774. Quoted in Regmi, 1965, pp. 151-2.

CHAPTER II
LAND AND DESCENT GROUPS

How does an individual obtain rights to kipat land? In this chapter I attempt to answer the question by first describing the structure of Limbu groups and their relationships to land. It is then shown how growing land shortages brought about two kinds of changes in these relationships. The first was a concern on the part of descent groups to define their criteria of membership more rigidly in order to defend their interests in scarce land. The second was the tendency for groups of lowest genealogical depth in the nesting hierarchy i.e. the households to stress their rights to land against those of the wider group.

The Clan

The Limbus are divided into a number of named units which have been referred to as tribes or sub-tribes. This is a translation of the term 'suhang' or 'swang', although Limbus in the Indreni settlements normally refer to this sub-division as thar, which is the same word they use for the exogamous unit, or clan. Vansittart lists over eighty such suhang among the Limbus.¹ Most, but not all, contain a number of clans, although no single informant can

1. Vansittart, 1915, pp. 117-123.

name more than a few. The suhang Tamling is represented in the Indreni settlements by two clans, the Chongbung and the Kambo. These Tamling clans recognize descent from a common ancestor with other clans in the suhang, but here again they know of only six others, although Vansittart names thirty-eight.¹ Some Chongbung informants claim not to marry with several other Tamling clans, but they contradict one another about which ones. It can be assumed that the clan and not the suhang is the basic unit of exogamy.

Other suhangs, such as the Nembeke found in the Cluster, have no sub-divisions and so constitute both a suhang and a clan.

Clan members explain the rule of exogamy in terms of the belief of agnatic descent from a common ancestor. But there is no occasion on which clan members meet for a common purpose. Nor is the clan a corporate group insofar as maintaining a continuity of possession to kipat land.

Over the years the clan has become dispersed, and its segments have cleared and laid claim to virgin lands in a number of areas of east Nepal.

In much of Limbuan, certainly in Ilam, rights to occupy particular areas of land under kipat tenure derive not from direct royal grants nor from 'estates

1. Ibid.

of holding' conferred by superior authority, but by virtue of being 'first settler'.¹ These first settlers, migrating from areas of relatively high population density, or for political or military reasons, led small groups of kinsmen into what was mainly jungle and staked out claims to vacant areas. Even following the Gorkha conquest the Government allowed that Limbuan was a kiptat area, hence Limbus who cleared the land and brought it under cultivation 'by their own hoe' could legitimately claim the land as their own kiptat. In some regions, as in parts of Ilam, they may have driven off previously settled Lepcha inhabitants or perhaps intermarried with them. The legitimization by a royal decree of these claims to land by first settlers usually came much later, sometimes generations after the fact.

The Chongbungs of the Indreni settlements express clan dispersion in a kinship idiom which designates each settlement cluster known to harbour some members of the clan as the place where one Chongbung sibling founder settled after leaving the original (unspecified) clan territory in the district of Panchthar. Thus, the second Chongbung brother is said to have gone to Jidhpur, a settlement cluster to the south-west of the Indreni settlements; the third son ended up in Phungetapa, a cluster of settlements in the western part of the district, and so on. The

1. This notion of 'first settler' also exists in parts of Zambia. Cf. C.M.N. White, 1958, p.127.

Indreni Chongbungs reserve for their own apical ancestor - whose name, Sai Kemba, can be cited by only a handful of the more articulate Chongbungs - the position of senior sibling (jetha) of the original group which staked out lands in various parts of east Nepal.

The justification for the presence of Kambos in the Indreni settlements presents something of a problem for the inhabitants. Since no other Kambo groups are known to exist outside the Indreni settlements, the Kambos cannot claim that they are part of a wider clan. Several varieties of explanation are offered for their presence. One suggests that the Kambos are in fact the descendants of the fifth Chongbung sibling who came to the Indreni settlements with his eldest brother. Another legend relates that the Chongbungs and Kambos were one clan until a severe famine came upon the land. Some members of the clan ate a species of stinging nettle found in the hills and these people came to be known as Chongbungs. Others ate soil and they became kambos.¹

A third legend, more commonly heard, ties together elements of the first two with the early presence of Lepchas in Ilam. I quote the version of one Chongbung informant: 'This was the place of the Lepchas. There was a fish-trap

1. 'Kam' is the Limbu word for soil. The word for nettle (sikya) bears no similar relation to 'Chongbung'.

at the confluence of the Pua and Mai Rivers. Some Chongbungs from Panchthar arrived there and asked the Lepchas if they could borrow the fish-trap since they were hungry. The following morning the Lepchas came to ask for the trap. "We won't give it back", the Chongbungs said. "Why not?" the Lepchas asked, "We'll teach you to make one and you can go somewhere else." But the Chongbungs would not leave. So they fought there. Many Lepchas were killed, but they fought on. They came to Bharapa (in the Indreni Cluster) and still they fought. Then the Lepchas said: "We won't leave until you eat this soil." What to do? So the Chongbungs sent for a kinsman and one came from Dharan.¹ He ate the soil, and his descendants became kambos.'

This last legend, like the first, emphasizes the seniority of the Chongbungs in the Indreni settlements. They are recognized as the first arrivals, the conquerors of the Lepchas, and as such the most prestigious of the clans in the Cluster. This position of seniority is expressed in a kinship idiom. They are jetha in the Cluster. The appellation 'jetha' attaches to the first-born, who is entitled to the respect and obedience of his younger brothers. This status is bolstered by the fact that the majority of the Limbu population of the Cluster are Chongbungs. That the Kambos ate soil is a damning commentary on their prestige as compared to that of the Chongbungs.

1. Dharan is in the eastern Terai just north of Biratnagar.

The third legend also points to the fact that the Chongbung who did eat the soil could not have been the apical forefather of the Indreni Chongbungs. On the contrary, it was an 'outsider' who was imported for the unsavoury task of soil eating. And since he lived in the Terai, which is not a part of Limbuan, he was probably a migrant who had lost contact with his ancestral kibat lands.

This tends to support the private speculations of some informants that the Kambos were probably outsiders who came to the Indreni area after the Chongbungs, and were granted kibat land by the latter.

The Nembekes, with the second largest Limbu population in the Indreni Cluster, have links with a wider clan unit, but I have not heard any legends dealing with their arrival in Ilam. The two clans with the smallest population in the Indreni settlements, the Phatras and Syelings, originally settled uxori-locally in the Cluster as affines of the Chongbungs. The latter conferred on them kibat grants which are now inherited in the male line by members of the two groups.

I refer to a group, the members of which share the same clan name and who believe in patrilineal descent from a common 'first settler' in the Indreni Cluster as a 'local clan segment'. A case could be made for using the term 'maximal lineage' to describe such units since in all likelihood members of such a group are descendants of a

common ancestor. The notion is strengthened by the fairly wide spatial distance separating the members of one of the local groups from others bearing the same clan name. There are no occasions on which clansmen in other localities are invited to participate in the social functions of clansmen from the Indreni Cluster. In other words, there is no attempt on the part of residents to maintain active ties with agnatic clansmen living in different areas of Ilam or other parts of east Nepal. This is true of the smaller groups as well, who might be expected to make such an attempt in view of their domination by the more populous groups.¹

Nevertheless, use of the term 'maximal lineage' to describe such local units would seem to imply ability to demonstrate links to a common ancestor. Most Limbus in the Indreni settlements can remember only the names of their grandfathers. While some are able to remember ties beyond two generations, none can demonstrate agnatic links to the first settler. Indeed, there is some uncertainty among the Indreni Chongbungs about the identity of their founding ancestor. As pointed out earlier, the consensus among the more articulate minority is that his name was Sai Kemba. One literate member of the group, however, has suggested that one Sanagimba was in fact the first Chongbung settler. The informant who suggested this name, however, had come into possession of a document written at

1. See Mayer, 1960, pp.167-69.

the beginning of the 19th century giving Sanagimba and his descendants rights to hold land under kipat tenure in perpetuity. The incorporation of the recipient of such a royal decree into a Chongbung genealogy was very politic in view of constant pressures on contemporary kipat owners to present documentary evidence of their rights to land.

Given the fact that beyond three or four generations genealogies tend to become obscure, it seems preferable to distinguish between local clan and lineage in terms of stipulated and demonstrated descent.¹ For this reason I adopt the term 'local clan segment' for the groups described above.

The population of the five local clan segments with rights to kipat land in the Indreni settlements are shown in the following table:

TABLE 3
Population of local clan segments

<u>Local Clan Segment</u>	<u>Population</u>
Chongbung	256
Kambo	37
Nembeke	48
Syeling	5
Phatra	<u>5</u>
	351

By virtue of membership of such a local clan segment a Limbu obtains rights of ownership² to kipat land in

-
1. This is the basis for Kuper's distinction of the two kinds of groups (clan and lineage). Cf. Kuper, 1947, p.11.
 2. The term 'ownership' refers to the 'possession of a certain quantum of rights in respect of land'. (Lloyd, 1962, p.66). What these rights are in the context of the kipat land system will emerge during the course of the essay.

the territory with which it is associated. While members of a particular local clan segment share in the belief of descent from a common ancestor with local segments of the same clan in other parts of east Nepal, rights to a share in the kipat land of one local group do not accrue to members of another local group. The bearing of a particular clan name, in other words does not of itself entitle a Limbu to attach himself to any local clan segment whose members happen to have the same name. The importance of locality is borne out by the following instance.

In 1953 a man came to the Indreni Cluster and asked to speak to a Chongbung headman. He stated that he was a Chongbung and wished to settle in the Cluster on kipat belonging to the Chongbungs. He was questioned closely about his kinsmen and it became evident that the man was not a descendant of an Indreni Chongbung. Later the man admitted that his forebears had migrated to India many generations before and that he no longer knew where his kipat was located. He only knew that he was a Chongbung Limbu, and when he heard that there were members of his clan in the Indreni settlements, he had come in the hope of being given land. The man was refused and went away.

This instance highlights the fact that clan membership is not sufficient credential for pressing a claim to kipat land. It is membership of a localised clan which validates a Limbu's right to land.

In the sense that a local clan segment retains a 'continuity of possession'¹ to kipat land and also confers (or withholds) membership of the group, it can be said to act as a corporation. As long as agnatic links can be remembered and traced a member of a local clan segment, even if living away from the territory of the group, can exercise his rights to a plot of land. Thus the local clan segment must be seen to include those who are not in fact permanently resident in the group's territory.²

The Lineage

When segmentation occurs within the local clan segment, the unilineal descent groups which emerge can be called lineages. No special term is used for the four to six generational unit which traces genealogical links to a common ancestor; it is referred to by the same name as a clan i.e. thar or occasionally as 'brothers' (dajyu-bhai) although the latter term can refer to the wider agnatic unit as well. The corporateness of the lineage is expressed through the rights it possesses in kipat land as against

-
1. See Fried's definition of 'corporate group'. (1957, p.23).
 2. Fried speaks of corporate functions of a unilinear kin group which 'lie dormant... but continue to exist if strangers who can identify themselves as members of the kin may move in and enjoy the benefits of unilinear kin group membership.' Ibid, p.25.

the rights of the local clan segment.¹

The lineage is the core of and to a large extent synonymous with the tax-paying unit. Kipat taxes are levelled not on the amount of land owned or cultivated but on households.² Kipat-owning Limbus therefore pay tax without reference to the amount of land they cultivate or have registered in their names. Instead, a Limbu pays tax as a member of a kipat-owning group provided he builds a homestead and establishes a right to a plot of the corporate land. Kipat taxes are paid to Government-approved tax-collectors or headmen (Subba).

The Gorkhas did not create Subbas among the Limbus. They only absorbed the traditional headmen into the administrative structure of the new State. As pointed out earlier, first settlers had staked out claims to land and later their patrilineal descendants sought confirmation of their rights to hold these lands as kipat. Authentication by Government automatically absorbed the Subba into the tax-collecting machinery and made him responsible for taxes due from lineage members.

The first written evidence of Limbu rights to hold kipat in the Indreni Cluster dates to the first half of the 19th century.³ The Chongbung Subba was the first to receive

1. The lineage is also corporate in certain ritual contexts. See Chapter VI.
2. The first Gorkha King Prithvi Narayan Shah refrained from taxing the Limbus. Their immunity, however, lasted only until the end of the 18th century. Cf. M.C. Regmi, 1965, p.105.
3. The dating tends to confirm the statement by a former governor of Ilam that only after 1820 were such written decrees issued to Subbas in the district (Lama, 1959).

a royal decree (lalmohar) in 1825; this was followed by similar decrees to the Nembeke Subba in 1832, and the Kambo Subba in 1852. Each 'lalmoharia Subba' - as they are termed - was able to choose a number of lesser functionaries from among his lineage mates to assist him in his duties, including those of tax-collection, and the functionaries were granted a measure of tax relief by the Government.¹ With the growth in numbers of a lineage, some of these functionaries were able to secure Government approval to submit the taxes they collected directly to the revenue office. In this way, new lineages emerged as separate entities. Thus, for example, in 1872 the Chongbung Subba applied to have subordinate titles granted to three of his father's classificatory brother's sons. The eldest of the three later became recognized as the first in a line of new tax-collectors for what is now a separate Chongbung lineage.

By this dual process of segmentation and validation of new tax-collectors by Government, five Chongbung lineages have emerged. Because of a dispute, however, the details of which I was unable to learn, the headman of one of these lineages was dispossessed and attempts to replace him apparently were not sanctioned by the Government. Instead, his tax-collecting duties were assigned to the Subba of another Chongbung lineage - the one genealogically closest.

1. These functionaries are called 'rai', 'karta', 'karbari' and 'budyauli'.

The members of the first lineage now recognize the latter Subba as their own headman. As a result, the Chongbungs now have four recognized tax-collectors, each of whom is regarded as a Subba, although in fact only one holds the title by official grant of a decree. No special status accompanies either the officially-appointed Subba or his lineage.¹ The differences between the latter kind of Subba and the lesser functionaries is known, but rights and obligations attending all those called Subba are identical. There is also the fact that all enjoy Government approval. The Limbus themselves make no point of emphasizing the distinction although the fact may be remembered when it seems worthwhile to do so. In the remainder of the text 'Subba' will be used to refer to all Limbu headmen regardless of the circumstances surrounding their initial appointment.

The Nembeke have not experienced fission as have the Chongbungs. Their apical ancestor is traced back only five generations, so that the lineage has remained coincident with the local clan segment. The Nembeke consequently recognize only one Subba.

The kambo group is divided into two lineages, each with its own Subba.

The Subba, then, articulates the fissiparous tendencies of the wider clan segment. I have heard it stated

1. To receive a decree (lalmohar) a Subba had to make certain payments. See pp.95-96.

that 'kipat belongs not to a thar (clan or clan segment) but to a Subba.' This remark stresses the corporateness of the lineage as a land owning group.

Lineages vary considerably in size and extent of kibat ownership. The smallest Chongbung lineage (4) with 5.7% of the kibat owning Limbu population in the Indreni Cluster owns 4.2% of the kibat land,¹ while Chongbung lineage (3), with 26.5% of the population owns 14.2% of the land and Chongbung lineage (5) contains 18.5% of the Limbu population and owns 21.2% of the kibat land.

The average kibat owning lineage contains only 35.1 members (including inmarried wives), although if we disregard the population of the two lineage groups recently settled in the Cluster (see following pages), the average number would be 42.6 per lineage. Chongbung lineages average 51.2, Kambo lineages 18.5 and the Nembeke group totals 48 persons. The percentage figures for lineage land ownership and population are given in Table 4.

1. This lineage lost half its paddy lands in a court case about 35 years ago. See p. 408.

TABLE 4

Lineage land ownership and population

Lineage	Percentage of Kipat land owned	Percentage of Kipat-owning population
Chongbungs		
Lineage 1	12.1%	11.1%
Lineage 2	11.0	12.5
Lineage 3	14.2	26.5
Lineage 4	4.2	5.7
Lineage 5	21.2	18.5
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	62.7	74.3
Kambos		
Lineage 1	11.5	8.2
Lineage 2	7.8	2.8
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	18.3	11.0
Nembekes	15.1	11.1
Phatras and Syelings	2.6	3.1
	99.7%	99.5%

Lineage lands, especially irrigated fields for paddy, are scattered over an area of several square miles. Dry plots, situated on higher ground and on which inhabitants construct their houses, though not as widely spaced as paddy lands, tend to be distributed through more than one settlement in the Indreni Cluster. Table 5 shows that Chongbung Lineage (1) owns dry land in three settlements, while kipat dry lands belonging to Chongbung Lineages (2), (3) and (5) are found in two settlements.

TABLE 5Pattern of kipat dry land distribution

in Angbung	-	Chongbung Lineages	(1), (2), (3), (4), (5)
in Bharapa	-	Chongbung Lineages	(1), (2), (5)
	-	Syelings	
in Chitok	-	Chongbung Lineages	(1), (3)
	-	Kambo Lineages	(1), (2)
	-	Phatras	
in Dorumba	-	Nembekes	

The pattern of kipat dry land distribution indicates that members of more than one kipat-owning lineage are usually neighbours within a single settlement. However, lineage land in a particular settlement is not distributed haphazardly among all lineage mates, but is likely to belong to a branch of the lineage. So that siblings and extended families incline to sub-divide adjacent holdings and thus to occupy the same settlement. In some cases land associated with a particular lineage or lineage branch extends across the vague boundaries of settlements, so that members of one lineage branch might live in the same neighbourhood but in different settlements.

Limbus Without Kipat

The distribution of kipat dry land on which homesteads are erected must not be construed as a complete picture of the distribution of the Limbu population in the Indreni settlements. The Cluster is also inhabited by a number of Limbus who are not members of kipat-owning

lineages and so possess no ownership rights to kiptat land. The existence in the Cluster of non-kiptat-owning (NKO) Limbus has created a situation in which two sections of the population enjoy unequal status on the basis of differential rights to land.

The presence of NKO Limbus urges us to consider the relationships between kiptat-owning lineages and 'outsiders.' Formerly, in conditions of land abundance, lineages owning land either absorbed outsiders into the group or enabled them to acquire land in other ways. More recently, however, outsiders have been denied access to kiptat land ownership as qualifications for lineage membership have been more stringently defined. In the following paragraphs I demonstrate how various outsiders were accommodated in the past and how the lineages owning kiptat became less willing, indeed less able, to do so when land shortages reached acute proportions about the turn of the century. Underlying the analysis is the implication that the lineage, by exercising its prerogatives to grant or deny land to outsiders reiterates its corporateness in respect of that land.

I have already alluded to the uncertain origins of the kambos.¹ Perhaps due to these uncertainties, or because of their small numbers and high ratio of land to population, the kambos tended in the past to absorb outsiders into their ranks. Prior to the turn of the century

1. See above pp. 60-61.

kipat paddy lands were granted to outsiders by the then incumbent Subba of Kambo lineage (1). It is uncertain if or how the outsiders were related to the grantors, but in any event the genealogy was arranged to accommodate the new lineage members (see diagram).

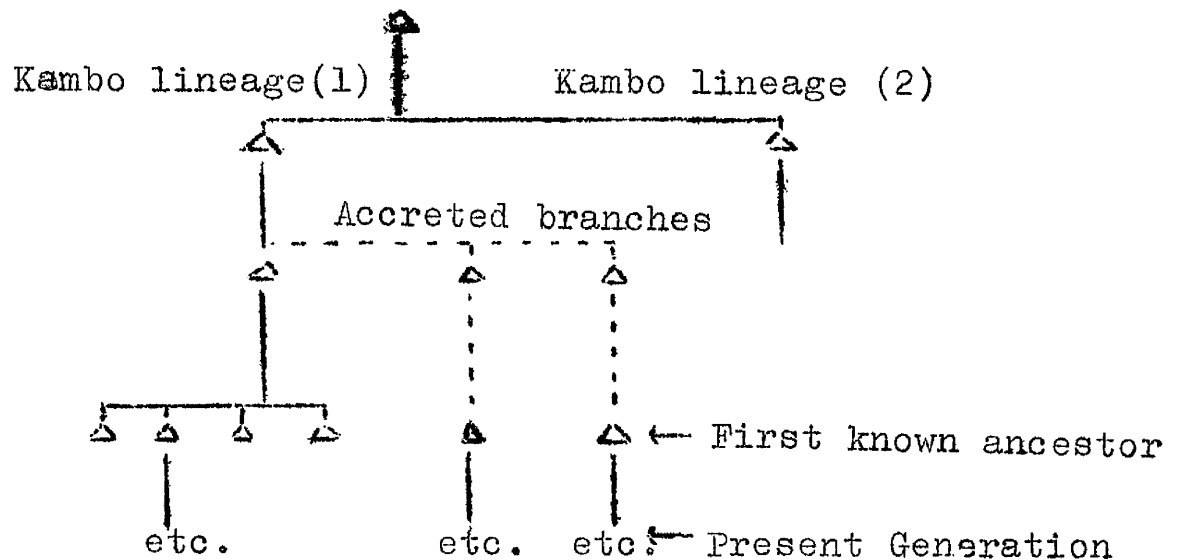


Fig. 1.

Today, their descendants cultivate these lands as Kambos and pay taxes to the present Subba. They also observe pollution on the death of a lineage mate and in every way act as members of the lineage. The only diacritical evidence of their uncertain pedigree is the fact that they possess no dry plots as part of their kibat estates. Only their paddy fields on the ridge slopes below

the residential areas are under kipat tenure.

There is no attempt to deny the fact that two branches of Kambo lineage (1) are accretions to the original lineage. On the other hand the other members of the lineage make no attempt to isolate or in any way embarrass the absorbed branches. One reason may be that due to death and migration the senior branch of the lineage is now outnumbered by the two accretions. Another reason may relate to the severe impoverishment of the entire lineage so that no crisis has arisen which might test the structural cleavage. Such a crisis, however, did arise among the Nembeke.

A dispute erupted in 1944 when the consequences of a similar (alleged) absorption threatened the landholdings of lineage members.

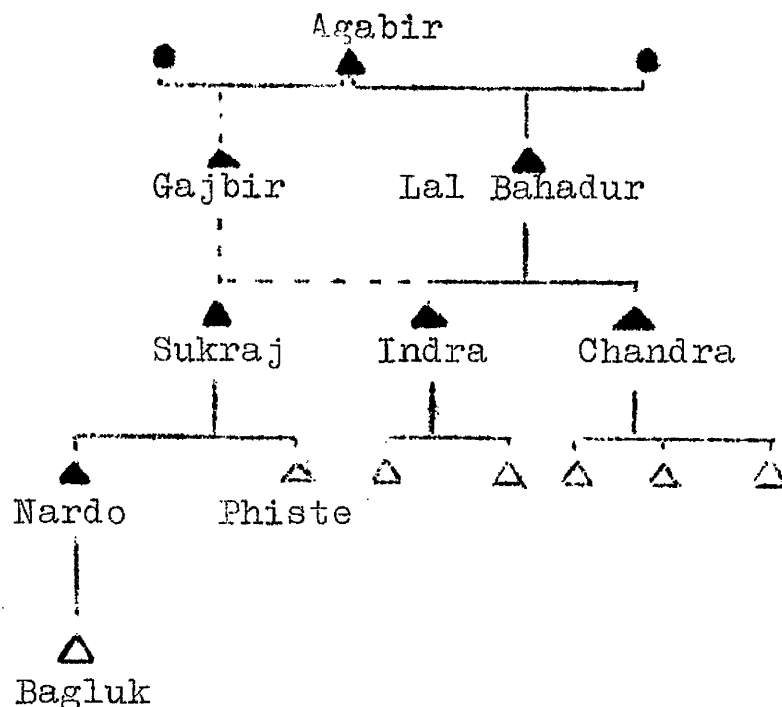


Fig. 2

In that year Phiste, the son of Sukraj returned to the Indreni settlements after spending 23 years in India. He claimed that his father's lands had been registered at the time of the 1936 revenue settlement in the names of his father's brothers Indra and Chandra and their sons. He demanded the return of the lands. He then went on to argue that since his father had been the only son of Gajbir, who in turn had been the only son of the first wife of Agabir, the lineage founder, his (Phiste's) branch of the lineage was entitled to one half of all lineage lands. He claimed that Sukraj had not inherited his due share because a final division of property had still not been made at the time of his death. Phiste also pointed out that since his branch of the lineage was descended from Agabir's first wife, it should claim the title of Subba as well. But since his father Sukraj had refused the headmanship because his duties as a diviner took him away from home constantly, Phiste would not claim the title. He demanded only the lands which he claimed were rightfully his.

Since Indra and Chandra had both died, their five sons came together to defend their interests against the interloper. Their lands together represented the great majority of lineage holdings and Phiste's claim to half, if successful, would have constituted a blow of the severest kind. But they did not attempt to deny that Phiste had a

right to the lands of Sukraj. Indeed, they proved that the lands of Sukraj had not been registered by Indra and Chandra, as Phiste claimed, but were in fact in the name of Phiste's brother's son Bagluk.

The problem with which the defendants concerned themselves was Phiste's claim to half of Agabir's lands i.e. half the lands of the lineage. They argued as follows: that, indeed, Agabir had two wives. But that the first was barren. The second then had a son Lal Bahadur and they are his descendants. Lal Bahadur died before the revenue settlement of 1890 which recorded his lands in the names of Chandra and Indra, and the headmanship in the latter's name. About this time, they then stated, Sukraj had come from Sikkim and in searching for a place to settle had come to Dorumba in the Indreni Cluster since he was related distantly to the Nembekes there. Sukraj had pleaded with Indra to give him some land to cultivate. Indra did grant him some kimat and made him a Nembeke (lit. 'built a Nembeke'). But even so, they concluded, neither Sukraj nor his son Phiste could now claim to be the co-heir to all the lands of Agabir. 'They are not real (pakka) Nembeke.'

After a number of attempts to settle the matter within the Indreni settlements had failed the dispute went to court. The court faulted the plaintiff (Phiste) on a technicality and when he appealed the case, the higher court threw it back to the lower court and asked for a decision

on the crucial question of descent. Litigation costs prevented Phiste from pursuing the matter, and shortly thereafter he returned to India.

From the viewpoint of the defendants it would have been folly to concede the point that Phiste was a lineage member by descent (even if he had been one), and then seek to avoid his claim to a share of lineage lands. They were constrained to attack the very basis of his status in the lineage. Only in this way could they hope to deny him the rights which would have accrued to him as a bona fide member. They could not deny him membership of the lineage since they had observed pollution on the death of Sukraj and acted in every way as lineage mates to the accreted branch. But they could suggest (or remind him, whichever it was) that he was a lineage member by absorption and not by descent.

A different way of accommodating outsiders was to grant them kibat lands, without attempting to incorporate the recipients into the kibat owning lineage. The Chongbungs appear to have preferred this method to outright absorption. In the 1890s the Syelings and Phatras, who now possess kibat land in the Indreni Cluster, were given grants in this way. The Syelings received theirs from Chongbung lineage (2) when the sister of the lineage Subba married a Syeling man who then settled uxorilocally. The original Phatra recipient came to the Indreni settlements as a boy

with his mother, a widow, who married the Subba of Chongbung lineage (4). In both cases these lands have been registered in the names of the recipients and are inherited through the male line. The descendants of these recipients recognize the Subbas of the grantor lineages as their headmen and pay taxes to them.¹ But the grantor lineages have no right to repossess the land, although if a group which received the grant were to die out, the lands would probably revert to the original grantor - unless patrilineal kinsmen of the deceased could exert a prior right.

It is impossible to presume a single attitude by host lineages to requests for land from outsiders. Decisions as to whether such grants would be made undoubtedly depended on factors such as the need for labourers or supporters, the degree of kinship between the host and the outsider, and perhaps on the need for capital, since some of these grants might in fact have been made for financial gain. But the chief determining factor would have been the availability of land.

Since rights to kibat land were held by kinship units smaller than the lineage group, kibat grants were in fact made by households and not lineages. In the Indreni Cluster, in most instances of land grants having been made to outsiders, the grantors were most often Subbas. This is

1. Only in these two cases, as in the case of the Chongbung lineage without a Subba, is the tax-paying group not synonymous with the lineage.

not unusual in view of the fact that Subbas, because of the rights attached to headmanship, were able to accumulate more lands than their lineage mates.¹ Nevertheless, because all lineage mates were potential co-heirs of any one lineage member, no individual or group could alienate kipat lands without the consent of the entire lineage. Prior to the turn of the century, when land was relatively plentiful, a decision to grant land to an outsider would have met with little opposition on the part of the lineage. The fact that the lineage could deny the right of any one of its members to make such grants, however, supported the corporate character of the group vis à vis kipat. During the past 70 years no lineage in the Cluster has been in a position to make land grants. Land shortage has led to a more stringent definition of criteria for lineage membership and rights to alienate kipat.²

The result is that there exists in the Indreni settlements today a category of persons without ownership rights to kipat. There are 58 persons in the NKO category comprising 12.7% of the Limbu population. Less than one-fifth are attached to kipat-owning households. Most, however, are the descendants of men who came to settle

1. See Chapter VII.

2. In a somewhat analogous situation, Colson notes that the Makah have become concerned to define membership in the tribe more rigidly since such membership brings with it political and economic privileges on the reservation (Colson, 1953, p.80).

uxorilocally in the Cluster, and have established independent households. Four household heads are members of a NKO lineage (Angu) whose founder, the father of one household head and the grandfather of three others, came to Bharapa to marry the sister of the Chongbung lineage (2) Subba. The father of another household head married the granddaughter of the same Subba. In Dorumba, the Nembeke Subba's daughter was married to a Limbu who, after a decade of virilocal residence accepted the invitation of his father-in-law to settle in the Cluster. His sons are another of the NKO groups.

But not all NKO Limbus in the Indreni settlements are the patrilineal descendants of men who came to reside in their wives' natal settlements. Two are the offspring of women who married Indreni men and brought their sons by previous marriages with them. One example will illustrate how reluctant kipat owning lineages have become since the turn of the century to alienate land to outsiders. The case is especially interesting since it involves a Kambo man who was himself the descendant of an outsider absorbed by the Kambos into their lineage and given a kipat grant.

While Gabe, whose father was accreted to Kambo lineage (1), was in the army during the First World War his wife went away with another man. Meanwhile, Gabe married another Limbu woman he met in Burma where he was stationed and had a son by her. Shortly after, the woman died, and

when Gabe was given leave he brought the boy home to the Cluster to be cared for by kinsmen. On learning that his first wife had gone away Gabe went to her natal settlement to claim compensation. When he arrived he was met by the woman who was at the time visiting her natal home. After some pressure by the woman's kinsmen Gabe agreed to waive his claim for compensation and instead to take the woman back with him. He agreed also to allow her to bring with her the son she had had by the other man. In the ensuing years she produced two more sons for Gabe.

Although the son of his wife by the other man became a part of Gabe's household and was addressed by the kinship reference for eldest son or brother, he was not absorbed into the Kambo lineage. The lineage affiliation of the boy's genitor was remembered and his rights to kipat land were considered to exist where those of his genitor did, but not in the Indreni settlements. When the boy grew up he chose to remain in the Indreni Cluster and not to return to his kipat. Today, his son, Dhanman, is head of a household in the Cluster, but, like his father is not a Kambo and has no ownership rights to kipat land in the Indreni settlements. The position was dramatised when a member of Kambo Lineage (1) died in 1964. Dhanman took as full a part as any lineage member in the various activities consequent upon the death of an agnate. But when it came time

for the purification rite to be performed Dhanman had to stand aside. Lineage members bunched together facing the ritual specialist, and, at a particular time, came forward to touch salt and oil which rendered them de-polluted. Dhanman could only stand close to the group but not mingle with it, nor could he touch the holy foods.

'He isn't polluted when one of us dies, and we won't be polluted when he dies. His own 'brothers' would have to mourn him,' stated a Kambo spokesman.

Ideally, every Limbu knows where his kipat is situated. Several NKO groups, only one generation removed from their kipat lands still retain links with agnates and even visit these kinsmen on occasion to take advantage of financial benefits accruing to kipat owners.¹

But links to kipat fade as prolonged residence away from ancestral lands leads to the severance of contact with agnatic kinsmen. Some NKO groups in the Indreni settlements have no precise knowledge of where their kipat land is located and have lost contact with patrilineal kin. The Angus for example, are aware that their ancestral home is in a region some three or four days away from the Cluster, but have dropped all ties and probably could not exercise a claim to their kipat even if it could be located.

The ownership of kipat carries with it prestige and members of NKO lineages in the Indreni settlements are

1. See Chapter V.

quick to refer to the fact that they too have kibat somewhere, even if they have none in the Indreni Cluster. During the early period of my fieldwork, when I was collecting genealogies, on several occasions members of NKO groups attempted to conceal their lineage or clan affiliation. In every case they insisted that they were Chongbungs and only later admitted that they were members of NKO groups whose kibat lands were in fact somewhere else.

For a member of a NKO group, there are two ways to obtain land for both a homestead and cultivation. The first is to provide credit to an owner of kibat land in return for which rights to cultivate a plot of land are granted. This kind of usufructuary or possessory mortgage (bhog bandhaki) is the most common method used by NKO inhabitants to gain access to land, especially irrigated fields for paddy. Five NKO homesteads have been built on kibat dry land taken under mortgage in this way. A certain degree of security attends the homestead on this kind of land, since once it has been built the owner¹ could not easily evict the inhabitant. But the security extends only to the area on which the homestead stands, and not to the cultivable plots which may surround it, so that both irrigated and unirrigated lands on which homesteads are not constructed can be re-possessed at any time (after the

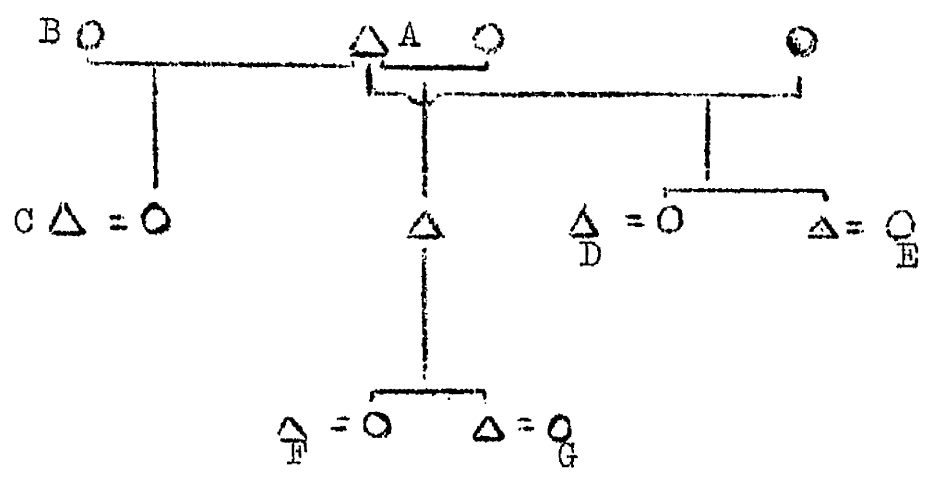
1. Usually, but not always, a descendant of the host household which enabled an outsider to settle uxoriocally on **its** land.

annual harvest) by repayment of the mortgage. For the NKO Limbu this means an almost continual state of insecurity on the land. One Angu put it this way: 'They (referring to some Chongbungs) are owners of kipat (kipatiya) but I am only a Limbu. My kipat is in another place. Here I live with my maoli (mother's natal group). I have no land of my own, only land taken under usufructuary mortgage. If my debtor returns the money to me and takes his land back I would have only my homestead plot (ghar bari) left. I would have nothing.'

This insecurity renders those without kipat land, as I show in Chapter VI, economically the most vulnerable section of the Limbu population. The almost total lack of land to spare by KO groups, even to give under mortgage, would seem to be affecting uxori-local residence. It appears to be significant that all NKO residents living in the Cluster are at least one generation removed from the first uxori-local settler. In other words, during the last quarter of a century, no outsider has been accommodated in the Indreni settlements in any manner whatsoever. Land shortage has virtually obviated any possibility of uxori-local residence.

One of the ways in which NKO groups have attempted to reinforce their position is by arranging marriages within the Cluster. Although marriages with KO groups is preferable, the degrees of prohibited marriage and considerations of

status do not always make such matches possible. As a result, many marriages are with similarly placed NKO groups in the Indreni settlements. Of seven extant intra-Cluster marriages, five involve partners who are of NKO status. Although the numbers are too small to be of any statistical use, they do point to the possibility that intra-NKO group marriage is one way of fortifying a shaky position in the settlements. The following diagram shows how one NKO group, the Angus, have married with other groups in the Cluster.



Angu - part genealogy

- A married B, a Chongbung woman of Bharapa; settled uxori locally in Cluster.
- C - a kiptat-owning Phatra of Chitok
- D - a kiptat-owning Chongbung of Angbung
- E - a Chongbung woman of Bharapa
- F - a non-kiptat-owning man of Chitok
- G - daughter of a non-kiptat-owning man of Angbung.

Fig. 3

In the part genealogy shown above, within two Angu generations, excluding that of the first uxerilocal settler, the Angus have married within the Cluster five times. They have given women to KO groups twice, to a NKO group once, and have taken one woman from each kind of group themselves.

I have referred to one way in which NKO Limbus can gain access to land. There is another way as well, and this is to purchase raikar land in the open market. Raikar land can be bought and sold in a manner akin to western freehold. Moreover, raikar land has no reference to the caste affiliation of its owner. Unlike kipat, which can only be owned by Limbus, raikar can be owned by anyone, including Limbus.

None of the NKO residents in the Indreni settlements have been able to afford irrigated raikar fields, although several own small raikar plots on which homesteads have been built. Descendants of the first Angu settler in the Indreni Cluster, for example, now live on raikar land which he purchased with monies earned from service in the local militia in Ilam. Only one other NKO household, in Dorumba, lives on a tiny plot of raikar land purchased by the Nembeke Subba and given to the present household head's father when he came to settle in the Cluster after marrying the Subba's daughter.




Several KO households have, in addition to their kipat holdings, a few dry land raikar plots. The outsiders

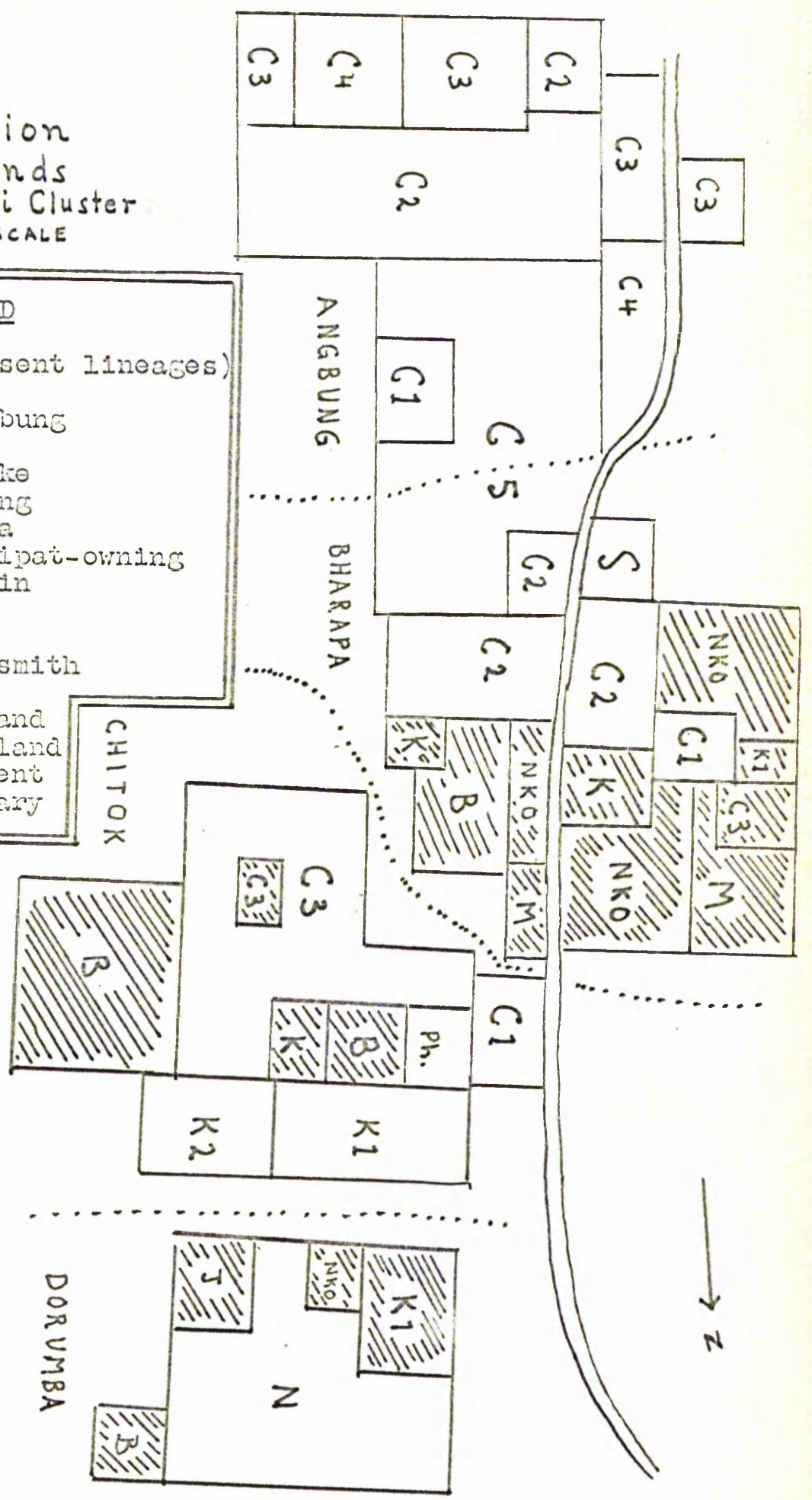
Distribution of dry lands in the Indreni Cluster

NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND
(Nos. represent lineages)

C	-	Chongbung
K	-	Kambo
N	-	Nembeke
S	-	Syeling
Ph	-	Phatra
NKO	-	non-kipat-owning
B	-	Brahmin
J	-	Jaisi
M	-	Magar
K	-	Blacksmith

 kipat land
 raikar land
 settlement boundary



who were absorbed into a hambo lineage and given kipat paddy lands but no dry fields have built homesteads on raikar plots purchased by their forefathers.

By and large, the high costs of raikar land, and the high taxes paid on this kind of land as compared with those for kipat place it out of the reach of the great majority of Limbus in the Indreni settlements. As a consequence, with few minor exceptions noted above, raikar land tends to be associated with non-Limbu sections of the population. The map on p.87a gives a general picture of the distribution of homestead sites in the Indreni settlements. It will be seen that the non-Limbu residents of the Indreni Cluster are settled interstitially among the Limbus, although of course only on raikar land.

Individual Kipat Rights

As we have seen, an individual obtains rights to kipat land by virtue of membership in a patrilineal descent group. These rights are secure if the individual continues to recognize his lineage membership and alternatively, to be recognized as a kinsman by lineage mates. As long as agnatic links are remembered a man retains his right even if he resides away from the kipat territory. In this sense, then, the kipat land can be said to be 'owned' by individuals who enjoy complete security of tenure, subject only to

certain overriding rights of the descent group.¹ The individual's prerogatives are reinforced by the fact that for the past seventy years the boundaries of estates have been fixed and titles registered. This has further obviated the individual's responsibility to reaffirm constantly his membership in any group wider than the household.

Formerly, there were obligations to reassert lineage affiliation by demonstrating allegiance to the Subba. It was necessary to do so because of the latter's greater command of land resources than his dependents.² Most lands which had been vacated or on which taxes had not been paid tended to revert to the Subba. Although co-heirs could claim the right to take these lands, the tax burden which they would have to assume at the same time prevented many from exercising their claims. Moreover, since the Subba had access to local officials by virtue of his position as headman and was usually in a financial position to afford the taxes himself he was favourably placed to assume rights to these lands. In such circumstances, an attentive kinsman might hope to be granted a plot when the need arose, or perhaps be assisted to pay his taxes by the Subba in the event of possible default and so retain the lands in his possession.

-
1. The system (called 'raibandi') whereby lineage land was redistributed periodically to lineage members was apparently practiced by kipat owners in some parts of Nepal, but never in Linbuan. (Cf. M.C. Regmi, 1965, p.83).
 2. A detailed description of the Subba's changing rights and obligations appears in Chapter VII.

Land shortage has dissipated whatever advantages the Subba enjoyed in respect of land. In the unusual case of land being abandoned nowadays there is no question of its reverting to the Subba. Taxes are no longer an obstacle to potential co-heirs, so that these lands pass directly from one individual to another without any intervening authority. And since the individual is, first of all, a member of a household, this means that the latter unit has become the group with the greatest interests in land. Stated otherwise, there has occurred a shift to the household of rights previously monopolized by the lineage.

The foregoing analysis of land-owning groups, and of the changes in their modes of accommodating outsiders as well as of the shift of importance away from the wider kin group towards the household as a kīpat-owning unit has been predicated on the transition from abundance to scarcity of kīpat land. By scarcity of land, three things are implied. Firstly, population growth has increased the pressure on land resources. Although figures for the period prior to 1952 are based on unofficial estimates, they indicate that between 1920-61 the population of Ilam increased by approximately 40%.¹ Between 1952-4 and 1961 the increase was 8%. Although no separate statistics are available for the Limbu sector, there is no reason to suspect that their

1. Landon, 1928 (vol. 2), pp.256-257.

rates of growth have not kept pace with those of the remainder of the population.

Secondly, the amount of kiptat land owned by Limbus has diminished over the past century. And thirdly, Limbu access to the productive capacity of their remaining kiptat lands has been reduced due to heavy mortgaging. The latter manifestation, itself an outcome of the first two, will be discussed in some detail in Chapter V. The second trend has come about largely as a result of the Government's kiptat policy. It is therefore necessary to consider this policy in order to understand the background to the land shortages which developed towards the end of the 19th century and which had the kinds of social repercussions already noted. It will then be appropriate to consider the structure of the Limbu household in the Indreni settlements.

CHAPTER IIILAND AND GOVERNMENT

By confirming the rights of Limbus to hold land under kiptat tenure, the Government by no means abrogated its own rights to determine the course of events in its easternmost region. The policy which came to be followed by successive administrations in Kathmandu was based on the containment and reduction of lands under kiptat tenure and a corresponding conversion of these lands into raikar tenure. The results of this policy are evident in Ilam. In the district today, only 39.7% of irrigated lands (khet) are under kiptat tenure, with the remaining 60.3% under raikar tenure. In the Ilam-Darje sub-division of the district the figures are 40.5% under kiptat and 59.5% under raikar¹.

Following the incorporation of Limbuan into the Gorkha state, Kathmandu's policy vis à vis the Limbus became double-edged. On the one hand, it sought to

1. Since dry lands are not measured, there is no way of knowing whether the proportions of raikar and kiptat are the same as on irrigated lands. There is no reason to believe that the proportion of raikar to kiptat is any different for dry lands.

placate the Limbus, ever jealous of their rights, by providing safeguards of their land holdings. On the other hand, Kathmandu lost no opportunity to reduce the area under kipat tenure and concurrently increase that under raikar tenure. The first moves to reduce the amount of kipat land took place soon after the pacification of Limbuan. The Gorkhas apparently dealt severely with those sections of the Limbu population which had opposed them during their march eastwards. One Limbu writer estimates that some 32,000 Limbus fled in the face of cruelties perpetrated by the Gorkhas on those suspected of having aided the Sikkimese¹. Buchanan also mentions that large numbers of hill people fled as far as Purnea in India to escape the invaders². Many returned after assurances were given by the Government that the exiles could come back to their homes and lands, to enjoy the same privileges as those Limbus who had not fled. But they discovered on their return that in their absence the Government had confiscated their kipat lands and allowed them to be taken up under raikar tenure by non-Limbu immigrants from the west and the plains of India who had entered Limbuan in the wake of the Gorkha army. Some of the lands were restored to the

1. Phago, 1843.

2. Buchanan, 1928, p.257.

returning Limbus as kipat, but the immigrant settlers could not be turned off the major portion of the lands they had begun to cultivate¹.

The arrival of non-Limbu settlers was part of a policy instituted by Kathmandu encouraging the immigration of other peoples into Limbuan. Limbu Subbas, for their part, were urged to settle these immigrants on their lands. Since Limbu land holdings were extensive and there was a need for settlers to provide both labour and a following, the Limbus gave away land grants called 'soranni'² to these immigrant settlers. Recipients of these holdings gave away sub-holdings to other immigrants out of lands which they could not themselves cultivate. Until 1886 these lands continued to be regarded as kipat. In that year the Government introduced legislation which in effect allowed non-Limbu settlers to convert into raiker tenure all kipat lands which had been or would in future be granted to non-Limbus by their Limbu owners³. Thus

-
1. Order Regarding Restoration of Kipat Lands in Pallo-Kirat, 1881. See M.C. Regmi, 1965, pp. 88-89; 97.
 2. The term 'soranni' is a contraction of 'sora anna' meaning sixteen annas or one Indian Rupee. Most Limbu informants insist that their forefathers gave their lands to immigrant settlers for this meagre amount.
 3. M.C. Regmi, pp. 97-98.

at a time when land shortages were beginning to be felt by the Limbus the Government effectively dissolved whatever rights still remained to the Limbus in the sorenni holdings they had given away. These conversions were regarded by the Government as immutable. Once registered as raikar, land formerly held under kipat tenure could not be made kipat again. On several occasions Limbus petitioned the Government suggesting that any kipat lands which had been converted into raikar and later re-purchased by Limbus should be occupied again under kipat tenure. The argument was that in any case the land had once been kipat¹. These requests were turned aside by the Government which would entertain no reversal of the kipat-into-raikar trend they had initiated.

Other aspects of Government policy designed to reduce the area under kipat tenure concerned the appointment of Subbas and the registration of land titles. An official Subba, on appointment by royal decree was required to pay an initial fee of Rs 52²,

-
1. Petition of the Subbas of Ilam, 1951. Also, Report of the Muluki Office, 1947.
 2. One Nepali Rupee equals approximately one shilling.

which represented a considerable sum in the past. He was also required to surrender sixty muris¹ of paddy land to the Government as raikar. If the claimant could not afford this amount he could choose a lesser title (rai) which would be granted after the surrender of half the amount taken from a Subba. Although these regulations still exist, the dearth of land to convert in this way makes the creation of new Subbas an extremely rare thing. In the Indreni settlements the only Subbas who surrendered land in this way (and are thus 'official' Subbas) were the three original grantees of royal decrees in the first quarter of the 19th century².

Government insistence on documentary evidence of title to kipat land provided the climate for further conversions of kipat into raikar tenure. At first the Government allowed that actual possession and the concurrence of local dignitaries would suffice for proof of ownership in the absence of documentation. But in the 1888 edition of the Legal Code, and, indeed, in all subsequent legislation, failure to produce evidence

-
1. One muri is equivalent to 1369 sq. ft. It is also a volumetric measurement equal to 2.40 bushels.
 2. See Chapter II.

of title was decreed tantamount to an admission that the kipat owner had encroached on raikar land. In such an event the kipat land would have to be converted to raikar tenure.

This led to further losses of kipat since, in most instances, documentary evidence was either totally lacking or at best vague and open to conflicting interpretations. Although in some cases Subbas had received royal decrees stipulating the exact boundaries of their domains, in most cases, certainly in Ilam, the decrees merely confirmed that the Subbas could go on using the lands of their forefathers. In one such decree given to the Kambo grantee in the Indreni Cluster, for example, it is merely stated that '.....you may use your ancestral property, whatever your forefathers used.....'

With such manner of evidence to title, it is obvious that kipat owners have always been vulnerable to accusations of encroachment on raikar land.

In other ways, too, Government policies led to a retreat of kipat boundaries. Revenue settlements, postal services and army maintenance were partially financed by the surrender of kipat lands, but the subsequent reliance on alternatives for raising such revenues did not result in the restoration of the kipat

lands. Their conversion to raikar was judged to be irrevocable¹.

Likewise, concerning the manner of expiation for offences of caste pollution, after surrendering 1000 muris of kiptat land as raikar the Subbas of Limbuan were assured by the Government that they could deal with such offences themselves. Yet at the same time the Government imposed a tax for the very same purpose, and the courts ruled that the Subbas had no authority to expiate these offences. The land, however, remained raikar.

The courts and administrative offices in Limbuan apparently did little to redress the balance in favour of the kiptat owners. On the contrary, they tended to find against Limbus even when the law appeared to be on the side of the latter. When the owner of a plot of kiptat land dies heirless his nearest co-heirs are entitled to claim the land. This is the law. Even if the land has been given under usufructuary mortgage to a non-Limbu creditor, the death of the kiptat owner confers no special rights on the person holding the usufruct as against the co-heirs. Nevertheless, in

1. Report of Deva Man angdembe to the Shahi Commission, 1960.

cases where the non-Limbu creditor sued for full ownership rights, the courts often found in his favour, and of course the land then became raikar¹. In addition, the basis of the contractual system of tax-collection is that any homesteads built or lands brought under cultivation by the Limbus need not be reported to the authorities until a revenue settlement is held. But complaints of land or homestead concealment were continuously being entertained by the courts and government offices between the holding of such settlements and the 'guilty' party would have his land confiscated and converted to raikar tenure².

By the turn of the century the rate of kipat conversions into raikar had reached alarming proportions. Limbus could not rely on land mortgages to meet growing demands for credit, since their non-Limbu creditors insisted on outright purchase of Limbu lands. The Government therefore executed a partial reversal of their policy and in 1901 banned the permanent alienation of kipat lands to members of other castes. They decreed that henceforth no Limbu could give his kipat

1. Report of the Muluki Office, 1947.

2. Ibid.

by grant or sale to a non-Limbu. Two years later the decree was modified to include under the ban only those kiptat lands under cultivation. But since by that time there was little wasteland the legislation had the effect of freezing the distribution of land in Limbuan. Kiptat lands ceased to come under raiker tenure through contractual arrangements between Limbus and members of other castes. Conversions did occur on a small scale, however, as a result of court decisions or by occasional Government directives aimed at specific areas of Limbuan. Although the turn of the century saw the growth of an ever more cautious kiptat policy in Kathmandu, where the Government felt that it had little to fear from the Limbus, anti-kiptat measures continued to be bold.

Between 1912 - 1917 Ilam district, where the Limbus no longer formed a majority of the population, was the locus of a concerted effort on the part of Kathmandu virtually to abolish the kiptat system¹. The circumstances which gave rise to this severe course concerned

1. Since Ilam was the most vulnerable part of Limbuan due to its smaller proportion of Limbu population, Kathmandu would often test its kiptat proposals there to gauge the reaction before applying them in other kiptat areas.

the widespread pledging of kīpat lands. The restrictions of 1901 on permanent alienation of kīpat had intensified an already growing practice by Limbus of giving their kīpat lands to creditors of other castes under usufructuary or possessory mortgages. The creditors assumed the rights of usufruct for a specified period of time or, under other forms of agreement, until such time as the mortgage could be repaid. But the Limbus continued to sink further into debt and as they did so, they were forced to allow more and more land to come under mortgage. In circular fashion, as they lost access to their kīpat, their chances of earning enough to repay the mortgages and repossess their lands grew dimmer. Even those diminishing waste lands brought under cultivation by the Limbus had to be mortgaged almost as soon as they were reclaimed.

As a consequence, the Government in 1913 sought to freeze the amount of kīpat land in Ilam by ruling that any new lands brought under cultivation by Limbus between the revenue settlements of 1890 and 1912 would be converted into raikar tenure. The rule was then amended to allow that 10% of these reclaimed lands

could remain under kipat tenure and the amount in excess of that figure would become raikar. The Limbus, alarmed at the new proposals, suggested that the key to the whole problem lay in those types of mortgages which prevented the Limbu debtor from re-possessing his kipat lands until the stipulated period of the mortgage had expired, even if the monies for repayment were available before that time. They then offered to refrain from mortgaging their lands, and take back those already pledged if the Government would alter the regulation on fixed periods for mortgages and also agree to abandon its scheme to convert lands reclaimed between revenue settlements into raikar.

These somewhat bizarre negotiations reached a climax in 1917 when the Government introduced legislation ruling that the conditions offered by the Limbus were to be accepted provided that they redeemed all kipat mortgages within six months. Failure to do so would result in the lands under mortgage and any lands pledged in future being registered as raikar¹. If

1. Order regarding Kipat Land in Ilam and DasMajhia, 1917. This attempt to do away with agricultural indebtedness by threats assumed that the phenomenon was a Limbu device to embarrass and annoy Kathmandu. In the same vein, Lord Hailey cautioned Colonial governments concerning the problems they would call upon themselves if they allowed 'the misuse by inexperienced peasants of the power of transfer or encumbrance of land.' (Lord Hailey, 1952, p.7.)

the pattern in the Indreni settlements was anything like typical of the situation in Ilam, it is unlikely that less than half of all kipat lands were under mortgage at the time. The enforcement of such a law would have virtually abolished the kipat system in Ilam. Although the order was promulgated in 1917 and re-stated as late as 1934, there was no attempt to enforce it in Ilam. Indreni informants suggest that local officials realized that if they had tried to enforce such regulations, there would likely have been widespread unrest in the district.

The underlying motives behind the Government's kipat policy, as I have already suggested, were mainly political. But fiscal considerations undoubtedly were of great importance as well. By increasing the amount of land under raikar tenure the Government could increase its income considerably. When the Government was contemplating the conversion into raikar of kipat lands brought into cultivation between the 1890 and 1912 revenue settlements, it was estimated that over Rs 60,000 would accrue in increased revenues. This figure represented over half the district's income from land taxes at the time.

The Government has more than once made explicit

its concern that whatever moves it makes in regard to kiptat should not result in any loss of revenues. When the Limbus suggested that raikar land purchases by a Limbu should be convertible into kiptat tenure, the Government refused on the grounds of the decreased income from taxes which would result¹. Again, as a prelude to the introduction of the 1917 legislation to turn kiptat lands under mortgage into raikar the Government called on Limbus to offer their opinion and advice on Government proposals to a touring commission. The only caution was that whatever the Limbus proposed 'should not result in any loss (of taxes) to the Government'.²

The need for funds to finance Government in the Limbu areas of the country was a constant problem. And taxation from kiptat land contributed little to the general income. In Ilam, for example, although 39.7% of all paddy lands in the district are under kiptat tenure, tax revenues from kiptat owners constitute only 10.6% of the total land revenues. Moreover, because of the peculiar characteristics of the taxation system

-
1. Report of the Muluki office, 1947.
 2. Order to the Officers and Clerks of the Ilam Administration, 1913.

as it applies to kipat, a decrease in the proportion of kipat lands brings no corresponding decline in revenues from kipat owners.

Still, despite the obvious importance of fiscal considerations it is doubtful if they were of paramount importance in determining the Government's kipat policy. It would appear that the main concern of the administration all along has been the reduction of Limbu hegemony in East Nepal and the control and decrease, not to say abolition, of kipat tenure was the first priority in effecting such a goal. Successive governments felt themselves compelled to reverse those policies adopted by the early Gorkha kings granting Limbus a large measure of autonomy and security on their lands. The initial policy of support for the kipat system soon changed to one of encouraging a reduction of land under kipat tenure and a corresponding increase in raikar lands. But the process was gradual and characterized by a series of seemingly petty encroachments often accompanied by minor Government concessions to the Limbus¹. Generally speaking, kipat was nibbled at, not swallowed whole. Even the prohibition on the

1. Cf. M.C. Regmi, 1965, pp. 123-5.

permanent alienation of kipat land must be seen as an attempt to check the too rapid loss of kipat lands which had resulted from the Government's earlier course.

Kathmandu had to take into account Limbuan's strategic location on the borders of Tibet, Sikkim and India. The Government's policy, therefore, while clear and consistent, was continually subject to the mitigating considerations of a volatile area which, because of its location and distance from Kathmandu, could prove difficult to control¹. The authorities were aware that, in their own words, 'Far Kirat (i.e. Limbuan), a distant and extensive territory, must be governed through a conciliatory policy.'²

-
1. In some parts of Limbuan the Government has been unable to hold a revenue settlement since 1893 because of the intransigence of the Limbu population.
 2. Order to the Dhankuta District Court, 1880. Quoted in M.C. Regmi, 1965.

CHAPTER IV
THE HOUSEHOLD

Composition

By a 'household' I mean a group of relatives sharing a common kitchen and budget. The same word - ghar - is used to refer both to this group and to the dwelling it occupies. Although the tendency is for each household to occupy a separate dwelling not all, in fact, do so. In the Cluster there are two examples of more than one household sharing a common roof. In one instance, the widow and children of a Limbu whose father had settled uxori locally in Chitok live on the verandah of their host's dwelling, which has been partitioned off to allow for privacy. In the other, two brothers, after separating from their father's household, reconverted an old house on the far side of the courtyard. Each lives with his spouse on a separate floor. A special door and staircase was built so that the occupants of the top floor could have direct access from the outside.

The great majority of Limbu households - 90.6% - can be classified as of 'simple' type. By this is meant that the core is an elementary or simple family.

Such households may consist only of a core and include no other persons. Over half of all Limbu households are of this latter kind (see Table 7). Others may include widowed mothers or unmarried brothers of household heads. Because of the stress on virilocality and patrilineal inheritance, households tend to be composed of agnatic kinsmen along with in-married women. Just over a tenth of Limbu households, however, include other kinds of relatives as well. Table 6 notes their relationships to the household head and the reasons for their residence in the Cluster.

TABLE 6
Attached members of Limbu households

<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Relationship to household head</u>	<u>Reasons for residence</u>
a. 2 women	Sister's daughters.	Raised from childhood.
b. 1 boy	Wife's brother's son.	To attend school in Bazaar.
c. 1 women	Sister's daughter.	Separated from husband.
d. 1 boy	Wife's son by previous marriage.	Brought by mother.
e. 1 girl	Wife's daughter by previous marriage.	Brought by mother.
f. 1 man	Sister's daughter's son.	Came for support.
g. 2 women	Wife's sister and mother.	Came for support.
h. 1 women	Sister's son's daughter.	Father recently emigrated.
i. 1 boy	Class. maternal grandson.	Father recently emigrated.

In six of the nine cases above, the attachment of affinal or matrilineal kinsmen is regarded as a temporary expedient until the persons involved join their husbands (in the cases of women a. and e.) or their agnatic kinsmen outside the Cluster (cases b, d, h and i). By and large, economic difficulties rule out the permanent incorporation of non-agnatic kin.

Table 7 lists six kinds of simple type household found in the Indreni settlements. 'Joint' type households are those which include a married couple or widower and at least one of their/his married sons and spouse¹. As the Table shows, 9.4% of Limbu households containing 13.7% of the population fall into this latter category.

1. I have classified as 'joint type' two households headed by widowers because in both cases the senior male is still able to work and to direct the activities of the group.

TABLE 7 ¹
Household composition

<u>'Simple' type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Popu- lation</u>
a. Husband and wife and their child(ren).	43	208
b. Husband and wife and their child(ren), and husband's widowed mother.	4	22
c. Brothers, one married with child(ren), other(s) unmarried or without wife (wives) with them.	3	13
d. Brothers, one married with child(ren), other(s) unmarried or without wife (wives) with them, and brothers' widowed mother.	4	23
e. Widow or widower and unmarried children.	9	28
f. Man or woman living alone.	4	4
g. Other kinds of simple type household.	<u>10</u>	<u>55</u>
	77	353
<u>'Joint' type</u>		
h. Husband and wife or widower and their/ his married son(s) and spouse(s).	<u>8</u>	<u>56</u>
Total households -	<u>85</u>	<u>409</u>

It is to be noted that simple type households contain an average of 4.5 persons while the number for joint households is seven persons. The Limbu household thus tends to be a small unit.

The low proportion of joint type households among the Limbus might be compared with the proportion among other castes. As Table 8 shows, of the six

1. See Mayer, 1960, p.180.

Brahmin households in the Indreni Cluster, four are of joint type. Two contain married brothers and their widowed mother, one a husband and wife and their two married sons and spouses, and another a husband and wife and one married son and his wife.

TABLE 8
Non-Limbu household composition
(Indreni Cluster)

<u>Type</u> ¹	<u>Caste</u>	<u>Number of households</u>	<u>Population</u>
a.	Brahmin	1	12
	Magar	1	8
	Blacksmith	1	5
b.	Jaisi	1	7
	Magar	2	12
e.	Blacksmith	1	3
g.	Brahmin	1	11
h.	Brahmin	4	35
	Magar	1	4
	Blacksmith	1	5
		<u>15</u>	<u>100</u>

This tendency among Indreni Brahmins towards a higher proportion of joint households is supported by figures from the Syawa Panchayat area. Of 153 Brahmin

1. Refer to Table 7.

households in other parts of the Village 17.6% are of joint type¹. Jaisi households, too, show a similar distribution of joint and simple types, with 19.3% being of the former kind. Among the other caste groups only Chetri and Gurung households based on extended families exceed 10% of the total. The latter, whose numbers in the Village are small, nevertheless control large landholdings, and the wealthiest Gurungs maintain large joint households.

There is, then, a correlation to be discerned between wealth and household type. As I will show in Chapter V, there are a number of non-Limbu households, both within and in the immediate environs of the Indreni settlements on whom the Limbus rely for a substantial portion of their credit. Of the fourteen most important non-Limbu creditor households, nine are organized on the basis of extended families².

This correlation, however, appears to be borne out only partially when applied to the Limbu joint

1. These household figures for the Village are based on census data gathered by Panchayat representatives. I accept their usefulness in indicating trends or tendencies, but would not vouch for their complete accuracy.

2. See p. 176.

households in the Cluster. Seven of the eight rank among the wealthiest 30% (23) of Limbu households. Most other households in this economic bracket, however, including several of the wealthiest in the Cluster, are based on elementary families, even though there are married sons who might have remained under a single head. They chose not to do so.

The absence of this kind of correlation points up the need to distinguish between division of land and separation of hearth and budget.

Separation and Inheritance

Separation from the main household (mul ghar) is generally sequential, with the eldest son leaving first, followed by his younger brothers as they marry and bring wives to join them. It is not unusual for youngest sons, after marriage, to remain with their parents or widowed mother once their elder brothers have separated. In the three cases of widows having more than one married son in the Cluster these women live together with their youngest.

At the time I conducted a census, there was not a single Limbu household in the Indreni settlements containing two married brothers and their wives. This

was true for joint households as well. In each case where there was more than one married brother in a sibling group, the elder brother(s) did not reside with his/their parents or widower father and younger brother in a joint household.

There is evidence to suggest that the incidence of joint-type households was higher in former times. Some older informants state that in their youth young men remained in their father's household until their own children approached the age of puberty. Several insist that in only rare instances would a son seek to separate from the main household before his father's death. It would appear certain that the partition of households occurred at a later stage of the developmental cycle since young men, who were married around the age of puberty, could not hope to establish new households until they and their wives were sufficiently mature. This process would also correlate with the greater economic viability of households before the turn of the century, and with the absence of alternative sources of income for the young men, so that the older men wielded greater sanctions to keep the household group intact than is the case today. Unfortunately, my data is insufficient to support these speculations

in any concrete fashion.

The tendency towards early partition is usually rationalized in terms of the strained relations among the wives of brothers within a single household. One informant, two of whose sons had recently established their own households described the process of separation in these words: 'When our eldest daughter-in-law first came to the house seven years ago she was quiet and obedient. She did her work as her mother-in-law told her to do. Then two years later the second son was married and the two daughters-in-law were brought together. They worked without troubling each other for a time. Then the younger one had a child, and she had to stay home and take care of it. So she did less work, but she needed the best food. At first the eldest daughter-in-law understood, but soon she complained to her husband that she worked too much, and that her sister-in-law did nothing. When another child was born to the younger one, the daughters-in-law quarrelled often, and then even their husbands began to have bad feelings. The eldest son repeated the words of his wife that the younger brother's family was getting more to eat even though they contributed less to the household. So last year they

both said they wanted to build separate kitchens (chulo) and we did this. It is better now, they do not fight anymore.'

This description traces the growth of separate nuclear units within the larger group, and the strains between these units which lead to the partition of the household.

Although household partitions are most frequently attributed to disputing daughters-in-law, another, not uncommon, explanation is the tension arising out of the co-residence of wives and married sisters. The latter, since they are not co-perceners in the household's lands, are not structurally opposed to their male siblings. Moreover, since they go to live in their husbands' settlements shortly after marriage, they do not represent a threat to the status of their brothers' wives. However, when women leave their husbands and return to reside, sometimes permanently, in their natal homes - a not infrequent practice - conditions are created which can lead to strains between sisters and brothers' wives and, ultimately, to the break-up of a household. Daughters are indulged to a much greater extent by their parents than are the latter's daughters-in-law. It is commonly admitted that a woman, however

kindly she may be disposed to her son's wife, will invariably favour her own daughter in any intra-household squabble. Arguments often arise when married daughters living in their natal households are allowed the customary privilege of earning a private income over which their fathers can exercise no claim. As will be explained below, although in-married wives also have certain rights to possess property outside the household estate, it is not until they are mistresses of their own households that they can fully exploit their rights. As long as their activities continue to be controlled by their mother-in-law, little time is available for personal business. As a result, daughters-in-law see themselves as contributing their time and energies for the benefit of all household members, while their husbands' sisters are free to spend much of their time accumulating a private equity, and thereby neglecting obligations to the household unit. In such circumstances, the pressures for partition are strong. It was generally acknowledged, for example, that when the only son of a Bherapa man established a separate household in the spring of 1964, the determining factor was the constant quarrelling between the young man's wife and his two

married sisters who were living in their natal household.

Finally, in addition to the disputes among brothers' wives and between the latter and their husbands' sisters, the strains inherent in mother-in-law - daughter-in-law relations also contribute to household partitions. Indeed, the belief in the inevitability of hostility among the women of a single household occasionally leads the parents of a recently married girl to refuse to allow her to join her husband until arrangements have been completed for the establishment of a separate household by the young couple.

The creation of a new household usually, but not invariably, implies its independence as a land-owning unit. The rules of inheritance practised by the Limbus resemble those prescribed by the Mitakshara system found in north India. Under this system, a household estate is conceived as being shared equally by a man and his descendants - in the case of the Limbus his male descendants - and each male offspring secures his rights at the time of birth¹.

1. Vijnaneshwar, who expounded the Mitakshara system, spoke of 'the principle of ownership by birth'. This is the opposite of the Dayabhaga principle whereby rights are acquired by the sons only on the death of their father. Thus, 'the principle of ownership by death'. Cf. Karve, 1965, p.344.

In effect, this means that a man's sons can claim their share of the property at any time, although in practice such claims are pressed only after marriage¹. When the partition of a household is accompanied by a final property settlement, the son who sets up a separate household renounces any claims on property accumulated at a later stage by his father's household. His rightful inheritance may be augmented after the death of his parents by a portion of the property (jiuni) which a father puts aside for himself and his wife to sustain them in old age. A father can determine who is to inherit this property after his death and that of his wife². Generally, it is decided to share it out equally amongst the sons, but if the youngest son lives with and helps to support his parents in their old age, he may get the entire jiuni after their death.

The exercise of inheritance rights by Indreni Limbus occasionally proceeds by stages, so that the separation of a son from the main household may not

-
1. According to Karve, under the Mitakshara rules 'the proper time for the division of property was any time the co-sharers in the property wished to effect a partition.' Ibid, p.345.
 2. Claims to jiuni constitute a frequent cause of quarrels among brothers. See for example, pp. 327-28.

coincide with a final division of property. He might take only a temporary settlement pending the marriage of his younger brothers. Frequently, only sons establish households away from their parents. The heads of four households in the Indreni settlements are only surviving sons whose parents are still alive. In such cases the son takes only that amount of property necessary to provide an adequate living, since the entire inheritance will, in time, come to him.

Occasionally, the partition of a household results in the division of only certain kinds and limited amounts of property, with the rest left undivided and under the supervision of the head of the main household. This arrangement satisfies the desire of a young couple for a separate household and yet the unit remains only partially independent in terms of property. In this, as in all stages of the process of division, the kitchen and budget of the new household are quite separate from the main household. All income remains the property of the household and its expenses and debts are its own responsibility. Nevertheless, in the early stages of separation, especially where certain types of property (such as cattle, for example), are left undivided, the amount of cooperation between the

main and the new household can be extensive. The two households maintain a continuous interdependence and an interest in each other's affairs not usually found between households where the division of property is more complete. Indeed, in many respects they continue to act as a single unit. In the Indreni Cluster this kind of relationship tends to exist between the agnatically related households of the few wealthiest Limbus. In other words, the wealthier households can be seen to prolong the division of property more so than the less affluent Limbu households. In the case of the latter, the household head can apply no sanctions to forestall the early division of the group's estate, so that household separations usually coincide with the division of household property.

But the sons of wealthy men are reluctant to force a division of what may be an expanding estate. In questions of inheritance, no rigid distinction is made between ancestral and self-acquired property, since a household head is not expected to maintain a private estate separate from that of the household. This is especially true of wealth which has been converted into land. Thus, for example, when the sons of a Chitok man who enjoyed a regular cash income

from non-agricultural sources received a partial settlement upon a partition of the main household, each son was given land which had been pledged to their father against loans made with the latter's cash income. As long as the income remains in the form of liquid assets, however, the sons could not demand a share during their father's lifetime. By holding out the prospect of a larger inheritance in the future, a man can hope to delay the final division of his property despite the partition of his household.

The term 'separate' household thus disguises the various kinds of relationship which can exist between a new household and the main unit. When this is recognized we note that the ties among some - usually the wealthiest - households liken them to a joint type household. In this regard, the correlation between wealth and type of household tends to follow the pattern found among Brahmin and other caste groups. Stated differently, the wealthiest Limbu households in the Cluster are either of joint type or cooperate as if they were¹.

1. In this regard it is worthwhile noting a remark by Freedman: '...Co-operation between closely related households of a kind to make them seem to resemble one household was more likely to occur among the better-off.' (Freedman, 1958, p.30).

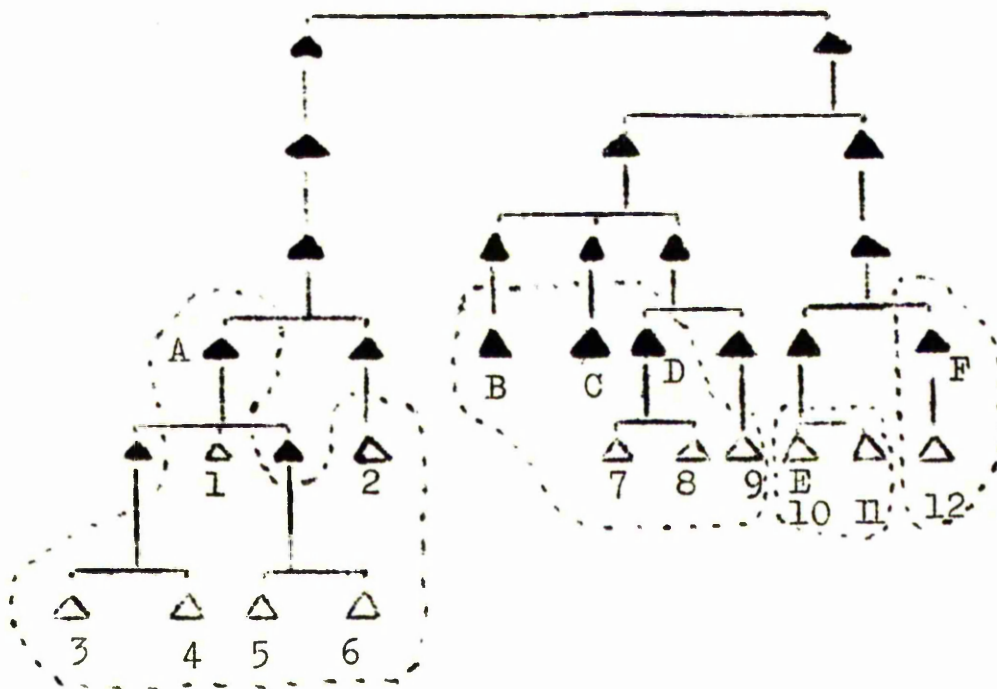
Although, as pointed out, a division of the estate can be arranged on a variety of bases within the household, a final property settlement, to be valid in the eyes of the community (and the law) must be effected in the presence of several respected elders. Such settlements generally occur after all the sons of a man have married and established separate households, and occasionally it is delayed until after their father's death. At this time, a written document is usually prepared, setting out the terms of the agreement, and it is then signed and witnessed by the elders. Fifty-eight of the 85 Limbu households in the Cluster have made what can be regarded as a final property settlement, and 37 of these have prepared documents attesting to the agreement, while the rest have relied on verbal settlements, backed up by customary knowledge of boundaries. Many in the latter category suggest that a written agreement will someday be made.

But even a final settlement may leave some lands undivided so that more than one household head would have a stake in the same fields. The inclusion of tracts of undivided property in a settlement is a function of the heavy mortgaging of kipat lands to obtain credit. Lands to which the Limbu owners have long lost

usufructuary rights are passed on from fathers to sons, sometimes with only cursory attempts to define the boundaries of each parcel. Thus, it is not entirely uncommon to find sons of one father sharing some undivided lands, and descendants of a common grandfather sharing others. These questions are usually clarified at the time of a revenue settlement when households and their irrigated fields are registered, and the boundaries of the latter defined.

The definition of the household group is also influenced by the system of tax collection on kipat land. As mentioned earlier, the contractual system of tax-collection prevalent in Limbuan requires that kipat owners pay taxes according to the number of households and not in relation to the amount of land owned or cultivated. But households are counted and registered only at the time of a revenue settlement, and no amount of increase or decrease in the number of households between settlements need be reported. The last revenue settlement in Ilam in 1936 registered thirty-nine households in the Indreni settlements. Today there are 75 kipat-owning household units. The taxes assessed on a registered household are shared amongst those households which separate off and divide the lands

of the former after the revenue settlement. Thus, in the case of Chongbung Lineage (5), twelve households share the tax burden on six registered households in the manner indicated in Figure 4.



Registered households are lettered
Existing households are numbered

Fig. 4.

The tax burden on Chongbung Lineage (5) households are distributed as follows: households 1 - 6 share the tax on A; households 7 - 9 share the tax on B, C, and D; households 10 - 11 share the tax on E; household 12 pays the tax on F. Within each

section the distribution is not necessarily equal as between households of different generations. Thus, for example, the tax on A would be distributed in the following manner: household 2: $\frac{1}{2}$; household 1 : $\frac{1}{6}$; households 3 and 4 : $\frac{1}{12}$ each; households 5 and 6 : $\frac{1}{12}$ each. And so on.

Alternatively, where the existing households now outnumber the registered units, the tax burden on the former is proportionately greater. In the case of one Kambo lineage, for instance, the household population has decreased due to a number of household heads dying heirless. As a result, two existing households must pay the taxes assessed on five households registered at the time of the last revenue settlement.

It would seem that traditionally the method of taxing kipat-owning households might have put a brake on the partition of households. Because all households registered at the time of a revenue settlement would have been taxed without regard for the size of the estate, a conflict arose between the desire to establish an independent household and the realization that such a step would mean a heavy tax burden for the household. Since the turn of the century, however,

with the drop in the value of the rupee¹, taxes no longer represent a significant expenditure² and so this is no longer a serious consideration in the calculations of potential householders. Even so, I have been told that at the time of a revenue settlement some households 'merge' together in order to avoid being registered³.

The system of kipat taxation also serves to stress the links among closely related households within the same agnatic lineage or lineage branch. Despite the tendency towards early partition and the fragmentation of estates, the very persons who are the protagonists in such divisions are potential heirs of one another's property. The eclipse of a household whether through emigration or the absence of male heirs results in the transmission of its tax assessment to the nearest agnatically related household, which also assumes ownership rights in the former's estate.

-
1. Since 1914, the price of paddy has risen approximately fourteen-fold in Ilam.
 2. See p. 224.
 3. During a Panchayat-instigated household count in 1963, the census-taker, a Brahmin, was astonished when he was told that the only Limbu households in the Cluster were those registered by the revenue settlement of 1936.

In Figure 4 the heads of households B and C died without sons to inherit their property and obligations, which then passed to the nearest collateral line, represented in the Cluster by the patrilineal descendants of their father's brother.

Women's Rights in Land

The foregoing discussion of property division has suggested not only a stress among Limbus on the patrilineal transmission of land but on the exclusive inheritance rights of males. Even the word 'aputali', which indicates one who is childless, is used to refer to a man who has daughters but no sons and implies that he is without heirs. What rights, we might ask, do women have in kipat lands?

On marriage, a woman forfeits all rights to the lands of her natal household. As I suggested in Chapter II, when land was in greater supply uxori-local residence was a not infrequent practice. Until about fifty years ago daughters or sisters whose husbands settled in the Cluster were occasionally given small plots of land as part of their dowry, which lands were then inherited by their sons. But these grants were never regarded as a customary or legal right of lineage

women to a share of the patrimony. When a married woman or widow resides in her natal household she expects to receive support, but can exercise no claims to land. In the case of an elderly woman who returned to the Cluster after the death of her husband and chose to live alone in a separate household, she was allowed to live on and cultivate a small plot belonging to a Syeling man, although she was a Chongbung. Her lineage agnates were under no obligation to provide her with land.

Unmarried daughters, however, on reaching the age of thirty-five, have a claim to a share in the estate, equal to one-half the inheritance of each male sibling. In the event of the woman being an only child she assumes rights in the entire estate following the death of her father. These rights, however, are hedged by three main stipulations. In the first place, a daughter can only press her claims if she establishes a separate household. As long as she resides with her father or brother her status is similar to that of an unmarried brother, and her share remains in the custody of the household head. Spinster daughters, in fact, seldom urge their prerogatives since the difficulties of managing a household and an estate alone are

considered formidable. Besides, property divisions among sons take no account of the possibility that a female sibling might remain unmarried. By the time a woman reaches the age of thirty-five the estate has usually been allocated to her brothers and she could, only with the greatest difficulty, obtain her rightful share. I have heard of no cases of such a redistribution to accommodate an unmarried sister actually taking place. In the Indreni settlements there were three spinsters in this age bracket and one, an only child, inherited rights to the lands of her father, from which she maintained a separate household. The other two were residing with their brothers.

A second condition concerns rights of transmission. The land cannot be gifted or in any way transmitted permanently to anyone other than the male agnatic heirs¹. When the spinster mentioned above died in the early part of 1965 her mourning rites were performed by three agnates of the nearest collateral line who were to divide her lands. A young married

1. Before 1901, when kipat was alienable by sale, a spinster daughter could not sell the lands. Similarly, if land is raikar it cannot be sold by unmarried women.

women, who was the dead person's sister's daughter, and who had been living in the same household, was regarded as having no claims whatsoever to the spinster's lands.

Even to pledge lands to a third party, an unmarried woman must have the permission of the potential male heirs. Her rights, by and large, are restricted to the use of the land during the course of her lifetime provided - and here a third condition applies - she remains unmarried. On marriage her rights would be forfeited.

In some respects, the rights of a wife to land are similar to those of an unmarried daughter. While she remains part of her husband's household she is entitled to support, but cannot demand a separate share of the estate. Nor can she choose to establish a separate household without her husband's permission. If a man takes a second wife, however, the first then has the right to claim half his estate and to establish a household for herself and her children, if she has any. There is some disagreement about the pattern of inheritance following on such a division. Some informants maintain that land would be divided equally among all a man's sons, while others suggest that the

sons of each wife would inherit only that portion of the estate held by their mother. Although the two contradictory ideals exist side by side what in fact appears to happen when a man has sons by more than one wife is that the wife who establishes a separate household is allocated an amount of property according to the number of her male heirs. In one instance I was able to record, the four sons of a man by his first wife each inherited an amount of property equal to that given a fifth son born to his second wife.

The existence of contrary notions about inheritance is partly a reflection of the lack of precedents in such matters due to the low incidence of polygynous unions¹. Men seldom marry for the second time while their first wife is still alive unless she has produced no sons, goes away with another man, or returns to live in her

1. I was surprised to learn that the lack of clarity about the rights of half-brothers did not lead to a spate of quarrels. In addition to the dearth of polygynous unions, it is probably due also to the fact that most kipat lands have been pledged away (see Chapter V) so that half-brothers would have only titles to quarrel about, unless of course the household was rich and had managed to retain full use of its lands. In one dispute, however, the descendants of an only son by a first wife did claim half the lands of her husband. See pp. 75 ff.

natal home because of failure to get along with her husband or other members of the household. Only eight Indreni men have two wives. In four cases a second wife was married because the first was barren; in one case because she had borne only daughters; in another case an only son had died after his mother was beyond the age of child-bearing; and in two cases because the first wives, neither of whom had had any children, returned to their natal homes shortly after marriage and had no intention of returning to their husbands.

Certainly, an important reason inhibiting multiple marriages relates to their high costs¹. On the other hand, prestige does not attach to a man with more than one wife, and the wealthiest Limbus in the Cluster are monogamous. Indeed, a man with two wives is often regarded with a mixture of pathos and amusement. While co-wives remain together (two Indreni households contain both wives) quarrels are considered inevitable, and a husband who must mollify his spouses is little envied. The quarrels almost invariably lead to separation, with one of the women, usually the senior

1. See pp. 240 ff.

wife, either leaving the Cluster and returning to her natal home - as did the wives of two men -- or moving into a separate homestead within the Cluster and becoming custodian of part of her husband's estate. Such a division has been effected in two cases where first wives have moved away from their husbands¹. When a wife claims her rights to a part of her husband's lands, she becomes, in effect, the head of a separate household. She controls the income and expenditure of the unit, and directs the labour of its members. Although her husband continues to enjoy sexual rights, he does not command her labour or that of her household, and can assert no claims to its income. But he does retain a veto over the transmission of his lands by his wife to third parties. He also continues to take a strong interest in the affairs of her household, and a husband would be considered remiss in his duties if he did not try to help in every way he could. The husband of one woman who had established a separate household with her daughters arranged a lucrative tenancy agreement for his wife and agreed to act as guarantor of the rent.

1. There have been instances of a husband continuing to reside with his first wife and allotting a separate homestead and estate to his junior wife but this happens rarely.

Some informants suggest that the division of a man's estate does not merely confer rights to a portion of his lands on the wife who separates, but leaves the remainder of the estate under the control of the other wife. Thus, it is said that 'when a man has two wives he has nothing'. The husband in such a situation is viewed as a pauper dependent on the goodwill of his spouses for his subsistence, and discussions of polygyny often include a joke about 'the man who starved to death between the homesteads of his two wives'. In fact, a husband resides permanently with one of his wives, and is the effective household head, in control of its estate and in complete charge of its personnel.

The point has been stressed that the right to establish a separate household accrues to a woman only if her husband takes another wife. But it is also contingent upon her continued residence in the Cluster. If a woman resides in her natal household she forfeits her claim and if she leaves after having already established a separate unit, her husband re-assumes control of her portion of the estate. The fact that this usage is sanctioned by both custom and law, however, did not prevent one wife living in her natal home from pressing - successfully - for half her husband's lands. The case

is worthwhile recounting because it presents a good example of norms being enunciated and clarified at the very time they are being disregarded.

In 1953, a wealthy and much respected ex-army serviceman of Chitok arranged the marriage of his eldest son to the daughter of a man of similar status resident in a settlement cluster about fifteen miles west of the Indreni settlements. About a year later the young woman came to live in the Cluster, but unable to get along with her husband, returned to her natal home after a few months. Her husband made no attempt to persuade her to return, and in 1958 he married for the second time. In 1963, he established a separate household and received a partial property settlement. In January, 1965, the first wife, her mother, father's brother - her father had since died - and several other kinsmen came to Chitok to demand a divorce. They accused the young man's father of allowing his son to marry another wife without first using every possible means of persuasion to have the first wife rejoin her husband. The boy's father and his supporters (with the latter carrying the burden of the discussions) reminded the girl's family that it was not contrary to Limbu custom for a man to take a second wife, but that they still regarded the

girl as their daughter-in-law. As such, she had every right to claim the prerogatives of a wife and demand a half-share of her husband's estate. The girl's representatives were adamant in their demands for a divorce, but the young men's side were equally firm in their refusal to grant one. Although the reasons were never made explicit, it was clear to everyone that to acquiesce in a divorce would mean waiving their rights to recover at least a portion of the marriage expenses if and when the girl re-married. After about two days of conversations, the girl's family agreed to accept the offer of half the husband's estate, but on condition that the woman would continue to live in her natal home. This shocked the Indreni men (and the many women who had gathered to enjoy the spectacle) even more than the demand for a divorce. In the end, however, after protesting that such an arrangement was contrary to all custom, the young man, with the support of his father, agreed to the condition of their in-laws. An agreement was reached whereby the husband would cultivate those lands over which his first wife now had usufruct, and pay her a fixed amount as rent.

Privately, the boy's father and other observers rationalised the decision by surmising that the girl's

family had really come to 'raise their prestige' and that sooner or later the young woman would marry another man, whereupon her Indreni husband would receive compensation and at the same time resume full rights in his lands again.

Finally, the rights to land of widows without sons should be mentioned. Following the death of a man who leaves no male heirs his property is inherited by his nearest agnatic kinsmen. Their claims, however, are held in abeyance during the lifetime of his widow. Like spinster daughters and wives who have separated the widow enjoys rights to the usufruct of the land, but cannot alienate or pledge it without the expressed permission of her husband's potential heirs.

Thus, we have seen that certain women have well defined rights to land and its products during their lifetime, subject to specific restrictions on their freedom to dispose of these rights. The categories for which these prerogatives are prescribed include women who for a limited phase of their lives are faced with a loss of economic support from their husbands or fathers and brothers. The rights granted these women thereby enable them to achieve a measure of security when it is most needed, yet maintains the patrilineal

pattern of land ownership and inheritance practised by the Limbus.

Relations within the Household

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Limbu household tends to be a small unit based on a simple family. In effect, this means that relations within the household are synonymous with those between members of an elementary family.

I may have given the impression earlier that the Limbu household is a scene of continuous squabbling as younger members press their claims to independence. In fact, these stresses emerge gradually and undramatically, and characterize a particular phase in the developmental cycle of the group. For the greater part of its lifetime, relations within the household are amicable and co-operative. To govern these relations a body of traditional rules offer guidelines for behaviour.

A father's attitudes towards his male offspring cannot be summed up by a single term. They can be seen to change through time as a son proceeds through the various stages of the life cycle. A man without sons is much pitied. 'A man must have a son to inherit his property and mourn him when he dies' is how the

Limbus invariably explain the desire for male children. The remarks of one Limbu following the birth of his first son after twelve years of marriage had given him only daughters illustrate the depth of a man's feelings about male offspring. 'The birds were sleeping previously. Now they are awakened. They are chirping and flying to and fro. All living beings are awakened. Now the sun is risen. All the rivers, streams and fish are awakened. Trees and hills are awakened. All are awakened now.'

The early years of a child's life are free of any responsibilities. He is regarded as an infant (balak) and indulged by his parents and other members of the community. At this stage, he is an object of affection and fathers are frequently to be seen walking or visiting others with their young sons in their arms or on their shoulders. There is no shame attached to such display of fondness for a small boy.

A gradual change in the character of a father-son relationship occurs when the child is reckoned old enough - around six or seven years of age - to assist in various tasks outside the homestead. When the boy begins tending cattle and helping in the fields his father assumes the role of instructor and disciplinarian.

The affection and familiarity of the early years dissolve as the relationship becomes more formal.

When asked to state the ways in which a youth should behave towards his father Limbus usually refer to the dominant pattern evident amongst their Brahmin neighbours. They suggest that a son must be reticent in the presence of his father, must not share the same bench or sit on a level above the latter, must speak quietly and with respect, and never interrupt or contradict his father. In practice, however, Limbu behaviour falls short of these ideals. Certainly, a father is treated with deference and it would be a rare Limbu son who joked with or behaved towards the former with disrespect. But after heeding the degree of restraint in a Brahmin household, the observer cannot help but remark on the comparative lack of inhibition which characterizes the father-son tie in a Limbu family. Limbu sons, for example, smoke freely in the presence of their fathers, join in their conversations with others, express opinions without hesitation and behave in ways which no Brahmin father would countenance from his sons. This permissiveness does not alter the superordinate-subordinate principle underlying the father-son relationship among the Limbus, but mitigates

considerably its implications for behavior.

Although puberty is not marked in any formal way, it is recognized as the phase during which membership of the community is attained in the sense that full mourning rites would be performed by members of a youth's household and lineage in the event of his death¹. Formerly, a pubescent boy was thought to be near ready for marriage, but nowadays little thought is given to finding a wife before the age of seventeen or eighteen. Even so, new sexual awareness and a growing sense of independence encourages a youth to spend a good deal of his spare time away from his parents, usually in the company of age mates of the same sex. Often, they do not sleep in their own dwellings, but circulate amongst those homesteads in which there are no males of the next ascending i.e. their father's generation.

As a boy approaches the age of marriage, tensions between he and his father increase. He senses his growing importance in the economic activities of the

1. Some informants state that these rites are often performed after a boy cuts his second teeth, but that at this stage it would not be obligatory to do so.

household. As his father grows older, heavy agricultural tasks are increasingly assigned to the young man and he regards himself as the mainstay of the unit. He is also able to earn a cash income from agricultural labour and a variety of other sources both within and to an extent outside the region of the Indreni settlements. But as long as he is part of his father's household, his labour is at the command of the latter. And whatever cash income he earns by his own efforts must be channelled into the household budget over which his father retains complete control¹. Some young men find the situation intolerable and run away from home, usually to a town in West Bengal where they attempt to find work. Occasionally they try to join the army. While I was in the Indreni Cluster four young men left home without informing their parents where they were going; all four returned within eight months. When they were asked their reasons, each indicated a desire to 'see the world', but two then pointed out that 'here we work and in the end have nothing'. The fact that they almost always do return, however, reveals the

1. There are certain exceptions to this rule in the case of the salaries of young men serving in the army. See Chapter VI.

other side of the young man's dilemma. For, despite the strains in the relationship with his father, there is the realization that he is dependent on the latter not only for day-to-day support, but for the means to enable these tensions to be resolved. In other words, he is beholden to his father for the monies to make a marriage, which first step must be taken before a separate household can be established and a division of property effected. Since the costs of marriages are borne entirely by the household, it is only by fulfilling his obligations to this unit - which include the acceptance of a father's authority - that he can hope in time to win his rights.

Until they marry and become full co-parceners in the patrimony, brothers live amicably within the household¹. As children, they play together and except for the fact that the eldest is usually made responsible for the safety of his younger siblings, no special importance attaches to age differences. As they grow

1. It is sometimes said that the eldest son belongs to his father, and the youngest to his mother, but few parents would admit to having favourites.

older, however, each develops friendships with others in his own age bracket, so that the intimacy of the early years gradually diminishes. Although ideally an elder brother is his younger's master, in practice the relationship is marked by a lack of obsequiousness on the part of the latter. If a father should die before his sons have all separated, the eldest son living in the household succeeds to his father's position and authority as household head, provided he is married and provided his mother is advanced in years. In such circumstances the importance of seniority is stressed, and an elder brother dominates the affairs of the household and controls the same sanctions as did his father.

Throughout this analysis the patrilineal bias of Limbu descent, succession and inheritance has been stressed. It is obvious that the sons of a marriage are incorporated fully into their father's lineage. The status of a daughter, however, is less clear. Until her marriage she too is considered a member of an agnatic group which exercises full control over her person. Are these rights, we might ask, ever surrendered? What claims over a woman are retained by her agnates after she is married, and how do they compare with the

prerogatives of her husband's group?

A husband has undisputed sexual rights in his wife, and if these rights are violated, he is entitled to compensation, which transaction signifies the dissolution of the marriage¹. But a man's death leaves his widow free to re-marry. If she chooses to do so, the bridewealth and other marriage payments demanded of the new husband are given not to her late husband's agnates, but to her natal kinsmen². 'A widow is a virgin (kanya), explain her agnates, and bridewealth must be paid anew for sexual access. When the widow of a Chongbung decided to leave the Cluster in 1965 to marry another man, the father of her late husband made no attempt to dissuade her since, on her husband's death, his group retained rights only to her children - although it still had the obligation to support the widow while she remained in the household. In this sense then, marriage can be seen to confer on the husband rights to the reproductive powers of his wife, but does not transfer to

1. See Chapter VII, pp. 313 ff.

2. 'A test of the married women's absorption into her husband's group was her fate on widowhood....whenshe chose to get or was given another husband the rights over her in second marriage lay largely with her first husband's people.' Cf. Freedman, 1958, p. 31.

him or his agnates complete and permanent rights to her person¹.

A woman's attachment to her agnatic group is also symbolised in the custom of putting aside a token quantity of the production of each paddy field for the daughters and sisters of a household, including those who have married out. This custom is said to please the deities controlling rainfall and to assure an abundant monsoon in future.

The obligation to perform the mortuary rights for a woman resides with her own agnatic kin unless and until a special payment -- called 'saimondri' -- is made by her husband or sons to her natal household. This payment transfers the mourning obligations from the woman's lineage to her husband's group. I have heard it said that a woman is not a wife until saimondri is given². The decision about when to pay

1. Leach speaks of procreative rights to a Lakhmer woman being 'rented' by her husband. (1961a, p.119).
2. The traditional implications of saimondri might very well have been significant. One of the Limbu texts (undated) in the Hodgson Collection at the India Office Library states that the children of a divorced Limbu couple would be 'illegitimate' if the fee were not paid. A Limbu informant in the Cluster suggested that formerly failure to pay saimondri would give a woman's agnatic kin the right to claim the children of her marriage.

the fee rests with the husband, and it cannot be refused by the woman's agnates. But it is almost never offered until the woman has had children or until she receives a dowry, and the belief exists that if it is given too soon after marriage it will hasten a wife's death. Occasionally, saimondri is delayed until after a woman has died. If this is done her agnates are not bound to accept the offer, although in practice they seldom refuse. Thus, for example, when the wife of a Kambo man died her parents, who had come to visit during the final stages of her illness, agreed to accept saimondri which had not previously been paid and arrangements were quickly concluded for the amount to be handed over by the dead woman's husband.

Failure on the part of a husband to pay saimondri - which is only a nominal amount - leaves with the woman's natal group not only the obligation to perform the mourning rituals, but the right to reclaim her personal possessions. These are of two kinds: her dowry and other self-acquired property (pewa). Some years following the marriage of a woman her lineage must provide a dowry. The obligation falls most heavily on her natal household which

furnishes the major share - usually jewellery, or money or, less frequently, cattle - while lineage members who received a part of the marriage payments contribute a variety of household utensils. With her dowry as initial capital, she might then make interest-bearing loans or earn other income from petty trade.

Generally, the women who engage most actively in earning a private income are married or elderly spinster daughters living in their natal households. Wives, on the other hand, spend most of their time working around the homestead or in the fields, and so have little opportunity to pursue private interests.

Besides, a woman who neglected her household obligations to increase her personal property would be upbraided by her husband and much maligned by other members of the community. Nevertheless, over the years, many wives manage to accumulate some private property in addition to their dowry, and a husband has no legitimate rights to this wealth. A woman often allocates some of her belongings - in particular jewellery - to her daughters and less often, distributes cash or cattle to her sons. After her death, however, that portion which has not been allocated can

be claimed by her natal kin - unless saimondri has been paid¹.

In sum, then, what emerges from the foregoing outline of differential rights to women enjoyed by agnatic and affinal households is a picture of a weak marriage bond and, alternatively, of an enduring link between a woman and her natal group. Such a structural representation, however, must be balanced by a description of the affective aspects of the marriage relationship.

Relations between a husband and wife, like those between a father and son, undergo changes over time. Following the wedding, the new bride spends several weeks in her new household - at this juncture this would mean the household of her father-in-law - during which time she is introduced to her duties and begins to know the members of the group. The young couple would scarcely speak to one another out of shyness, and it is unlikely that they will have sexual

1. Consequently, some Limbus weigh the costs of funerary rites, which are quite high, against the value of the possessions their wives have accumulated before deciding whether or not to pay saimondri.

relations. At the end of this brief period the girl returns to her natal household where she remains for about one year, although the husband would visit her on one or two occasions during this time¹. When she returns to live with her husband, the relationship is still tentative, and depends for its success on a number of factors. I have already suggested that ties between a wife and her husband's mother and brothers' wives can lead to strains and disputes. But the marriage tie itself can be affected by the attitude of a husband in these matters. A husband has always to balance the obligations towards his parents against his interests in the nuclear family in which his wife will play an essential role. Several Indreni women have returned to their natal homes in the Cluster because their husbands would not support them against their mothers- and/or sisters-in-law.

After a wife becomes mistress of her own household the ties with her husband become less fragile, but a man who is inconsiderate to his wife risks driving

1. This is true only for arranged and 'theft' marriages. When a man abducts another's wife, the latter would not return to her natal household after the wedding rite. For a detailed account of marriage, see Chapter VI, pp. 238 ff.

her back to her natal household. Women not infrequently take refuge in their natal homes, where they are always welcome, and if her husband is the cause of her flight, he will have to face an angry group of affines when he comes to fetch her back. If the pattern is recurrent, a woman may be persuaded to remain permanently in the household of her birth, and even be encouraged to run away with another man.

The birth of a child, particularly if it is a boy, gives the wife new status, and puts the conjugal relationship on a firmer basis, thus increasing its chances of persevering.

A woman is said to regard her husband as her master, and to clothe her every attitude towards him in respect. Although a wife's behavior in public would not belie this ideal, the situation inside the household can be quite different. Some men are known to be 'henpecked' and snide anecdotes occasionally circulate to point out the victims. But in the majority of instances, a husband is recognized as the authority figure, and a woman will seldom dispute her husband's decisions. Even so, a wife exercises a strong influence on these decisions by virtue of her relationship with the children. A woman's role

includes the instruction and disciplining of her daughters, but she is also their closest confidante before they marry, and few ties are considered as close as that between a mother and daughter. But mothers feel no less affection for their sons. Since a boy seldom discusses matters of a personal nature directly with his father, he will reveal his feelings, address complaints or make requests through his mother, who is then counted on to intercede on his behalf to her husband. Thus, a wife and mother is the dominant object and source of affection, and this enables her to exercise a not inconsiderable influence on household decisions.

By the time a married couple approaches middle age, and the vicissitudes of the early period have been successfully overcome, their relationship has settled down to a comfortable routine, and is characterized by affection, informality and mutual dependence.

One theme which might be isolated from this discussion of the household thus far is that the group acts as a self-contained economic unit. Through the custom of early property division it assumes, almost from the moment of its establishment (with the notable exception of the wealthy few) primary rights of

ownership in land. Although other groups may have some residual and/or potential claims, a household is essentially master of its own estate. Thus, it controls its own income from agriculture and other sources, is responsible for meeting the expenses of sons' marriages and daughters' dowries, as well as recurrent expenditures. It also maintains a jealous hold on its labour resources. Because of the nature of relations within the simple family, the father assumes responsibility for household decisions and his authority serves to underline the corporateness of the group.

Household as a Ritual Unit

The household is also the most important ritual unit among the Indreni Limbus. The deities whose annual worship is regarded as obligatory are propitiated by, and for the benefit of, a household group. Roughly, they can be classified into two categories: domestic and forest gods.

The numbers and identity of the former vary from one household to the next, but at least four are worshipped universally. The Grandmother goddess

(Yuma-samang)¹ is regarded as the mistress of all Limbu deities, and the most ubiquitous and powerful of supernatural beings². A second, the Grandfather god (Theba-samang) is thought of as a kind of consort to the Grandmother goddess. Although the implication of affinity seems obvious, not all Limbus regard him as the husband of the former. Some hold the view that he is unrelated, while others suggest that the two are sister and brother. A third domestic deity (Misek) is worshipped as a Hunter god, responsible for the protection of and the procuring of food for all the other domestic deities, while the fourth, (Him-samang), is described as the Caretaker of all the lesser domestic gods or, in the words of one ex-soldier, 'a sergeant major'.

-
1. She is sometimes called 'Maherani' (Queen) and propitiated under this name by members of other castes.
 2. Despite her primacy in the Limbu pantheon the Grandmother goddess is not generally credited with the creation. The majority of Limbus employ the Nepali term for God (Bhagwan) when referring to the creator. A few articulate Limbus state that one deity, Tagera Ningma-phuma, was responsible for creating the world of nature, while another, Puromi-Yambabi, created all living beings. In a Limbu text in the Hodgson Collection a reference is made to the former as the 'mine of knowledge' and to another deity, Porok-miha (which may be the same as Puromi) as the 'instrument of creation', deriving its power from the former.

Domestic deities are associated with women.

'Men have no gods' say the Limbus. 'Just as a man inherits his father's lands, a woman inherits her mother's gods.' Thus, when a woman marries and comes to live with her husband she brings her deities along, and these become recognized as the gods of the household in which she resides. But because the anger of the gods affects men, women and children equally, the welfare of the household is believed to depend on the assiduousness with which the group propitiates its deities.

If a woman bears no daughters, then her eldest son should worship her gods after her death, although these would not be inherited, in turn, by his daughters. In practice, few Indreni men without sisters do so, claiming as their excuse both the expense and the fact that the household is well enough protected by the worship of their wives' gods. When the gods of more than one woman inhabit a homestead, each set is propitiated ~~separately~~ separately, although generally on the same day. Thus, for example, if a household includes a woman and her daughter-in-law, two separate rites will be conducted. Excluding the four principal deities, every woman is vulnerable to the influence of several

lesser gods in the pantheon, and so the total set she worships is likely to differ from that of any other woman.

Like humans, gods require nourishment and propitiation consists in offering a variety of foods, including blood sacrifice, depending on the preferences of any particular deity. The Grandmother goddess is especially partial to pork, and one of any litter born to a sow should be offered to the goddess. There are a number of occasions on which domestic gods should be worshipped, but one annual ritual is obligatory. Most Limbus perform this rite in early November, at the commencement of the paddy and millet harvests, when they offer the first fruits of the harvest to the gods. At one ritual offering (nowangi) I witnessed, two sets of deities were worshipped, since the household included the second wife of a Kambo man, and his daughter by an earlier marriage. The wife's gods were dealt with before those of the latter. First to be propitiated were the Hunter god (Misek) who was offered rice, flowers and an egg, and a lesser goddess, given millet and a cock. This part of the ritual was held in the courtyard, since it is believed that these deities reside outside the dwelling.

Inside, the first to be propitiated was the Grandmother goddess, who was offered cooked rice, millet and fish. The Grandfather god was then given rice, millet, fish and a cock, followed by an offering of the same ingredients to a lesser goddess with whom the woman was associated. Finally, the Caretaker deity (Him-samang) received a similar variety of food. The process was then repeated, although the second woman's lesser deities were substituted for those of the first.

Despite the relationship of domestic gods to women, men play a key role in these rituals. In addition to the ritual specialist (phedangma) who conducts the rite and who is always a male, any sacrifice must be performed by one of the men in the household, since women are prohibited from ritual slaughter. Thus, if a household contains only women, a neighbour, usually an agnate of the woman's husband, will be asked to participate in these rites. Ordinarily, however, aside from the ritual specialist, only household members are present when domestic gods are worshipped. Other persons are not invited to participate. The exclusion of outsiders is represented in the rule that after a homestead has been purified for

the offering - by re-plastering the floor with a mixture of earth and cow dung - no one other than the household members may enter the dwelling.

Although the household worships as an independent unit, it must still take account of its place in a wider agnatic group. Harmonious relations among members of a lineage are deemed necessary to ensure the efficacy of household worship. If a man has caused ill-feeling to exist, whether intentionally or otherwise, it is said that he is considered by the domestic deities to be in a state of impurity (jhutto) and until he is purified he cannot properly effect their propitiation. One ritual specialist explained that 'the bad feelings and disputes of the (lineage) brothers must be driven away, or the deities will not heed the ritual'. For this reason, each occasion for the placation of domestic gods is preceded by a ritual 'to wash away bad feelings' (sarap begaunu) in the lineage. Prior to the commencement of the nowangi rites referred to above, members of the household recited the names of their Kambo lineage 'brothers', while the ritual specialist poured water on the ground. Morsels of various foods to be offered were then buried to symbolize the end of the state of impurity, and

thereby enable the homestead deities to be worshipped.

In addition to domestic gods there is also a complex of forest deities who require annual propitiation. These are thought to inhabit the area permanently and to have no special association with women. Nevertheless, their appetites are similar, and the manner of their worship is the same as for domestic gods, except that the rites are conducted in a field away from the dwelling. Here, too, each household worships as a unit and assumes that its offerings will benefit only the household group. Alternatively, it is this group alone which will suffer the consequences of a deity made angry by neglect. Indeed, the rationale of worship is to ward off the malevolence of dissatisfied gods. Each is believed to bring several kinds of misfortune, most frequently in the form of illness, and to strike only when a household ignores its demands or is stingy in its offerings. Propitiation is not necessarily considered to bring good fortune, but at best to postpone or mitigate bad fortune. The attitude of Limbus to their deities (domestic and forest) is suggested by the following legend. 'Some gods were angered by men and set out to kill them.

But they were met by God (here the Nepali term 'Bhagwan' was used to imply the creator) who said: "If you kill people what will you gain? If you want to be respected by them bring them illness and trouble. Then you will be respected. They will give you offerings; they will perform rites; they will always fear you." So the gods did this and now people placate them.'

The range of homestead and forest gods does not exhaust the realm of the supernatural. There are other deities which possess malevolent powers, but are conciliated only if they victimize a household. For example, all Limbu women are said to 'own' a monkey god, a potentially violent deity, but that these are only 'active' in rare instances, and when such a one exists, a permanent shrine must be erected and offerings made annually by the household.

Limbus also share a number of deities with members of other castes. One, the River goddess (Thakureni) is usually given an offering in gratitude for special favours received. Thus, when the daughter-in-law of one man was ill he promised the River goddess a pigeon if she recovered, which promise was fulfilled several months after the woman regained her health.

Although Limbu ritual specialists are called to officiate at these rituals, concessions are made to the Nepali character of the Goddess by conducting the rite in the Nepali language, and by not offering sacrifices (e.g. pigs) which are thought will offend her susceptibilities.

Hindu gods, too, are worshipped by some Limbu households, but for these rituals, Brahmin priests are called.

In addition, a variety of evil spirits inhabit the supernatural world, and pose a constant threat to the well-being of all inhabitants of the area. To a lesser extent witches (boksi) intrigue to bring about misfortune, and even the most innocent people can fall victim to their powers. The propitiation of these malevolent forces, however, is not effected as a matter of course, on a regular and obligatory basis. Their implication in a household's misfortune must first be determined by divination, and only then can steps be taken to put the matter right.

Again, the point to be noted is that the conciliation of the various deities and spirits is the task of a household group, which seeks to protect its members from the harmful forces of the super-

natural world. Since these forces are seen to affect households, it is the latter and not any wider unit which acts as a corporate group in these ritual contexts.

There are circumstances in which a household may join with others to worship particular deities. Occasionally, a goddess is 'discovered' (usually by divination) to inhabit the banks of a stream or a small wood near some paddy fields. Just prior to harvest time, to ensure a successful crop, those cultivating the surrounding fields make offerings to the goddess individually or in concert. At one such offering I observed, eight men - one an Angu, the rest members of four different Chongbung lineages - contributed a total of Rs 20 to purchase a goat for the sacrifice. None of the individuals was obliged to contribute or to take part in the ritual, and it is most unlikely that the same men would join together the following year for the same purpose since, for one thing, cultivation rights to at least some fields would probably change hands.

On the morning of the full moon of Baisakh (April-May) Indreni inhabitants gather at five shrines in the Cluster at each of which resides a different

goddess. Angbung, Chitok and Dorumba each contain one, while two are found in Bharapa. Although these are conceived as settlement deities in fact their worship does not crystallize permanent ritual groups. Each household is free to worship at the shrine of any of these deities and though most participate only in the rite of the goddess nearest their homestead, some households attend two or even three rites, while others choose to propitiate a different goddess each year. The itinerant worshippers explain that several of the goddesses were revealed in the recent past and so are not believed to possess the same powers as the more established deities. Others, with dry fields in more than one area of the Cluster, attempt to please the goddesses who are most likely to affect, by reason of propinquity, the fertility of their lands. Some commend the healing powers of certain goddesses. A Limbu of Dorumba, who regularly attends the rite in Angbung, pointed out that his wife had recovered from a serious illness after he had brought a sacrifice to the goddess in Angbung. A few households without means to contribute to these sacrifices simply opt out of the propitiation rites altogether.

In sum, then, even rituals performed on behalf

of large collectivities do not constrain the household to regard itself or act as part of a wider ritual group.

The Limbu household, despite its 'encapsulation' in a lineage, has been shown to be a self-contained unit in certain economic and ritual contexts. The 'individuation' of the household, in economic terms at least, is partly the result of land pressure and Government policy which, as pointed out earlier, led to the virtual disappearance of the lineage as a corporate group in respect of land, and a corresponding emergence of the household as the group with the greatest interests in that land. But self-containment and individuation do not imply self-sufficiency. The universe of social relationships does not begin and end with the household. This will become evident in the remainder of this essay. One theme I have been concerned to emphasize in this chapter is that the decisions Limbus make in the course of their daily lives are affected not so much by the interests of wider structural groupings as by those of the household itself.

CHAPTER VTHE ECONOMY: CREDIT AND TENANCY

As I showed in Chapter III, Government policy resulted in the reduction of the amount of land under kipat tenure. At the same time, population pressures were increasing on those lands still under Limbu control. By the turn of the century the majority of Limbus found it impossible to maintain their level of consumption and meet minimal social obligations without resort to borrowing from the immigrants to whom they had originally granted a portion of their lands. These latter, whose numbers had increased, were in need of additional lands and demanded, as security for their loans, that the kipat lands of the Limbus be given them under possessory mortgage. In other words, the creditors assumed the rights of usufruct pending repayment of the loan. The circle was as cumulative as it was vicious. As they went further into debt the Limbus were forced to mortgage more and more land; and as they lost access to their lands, they could not earn enough to repay the mortgages.

Mortgages

There are two types of mortgage. The first - bhog bandhaki - leaves unchanged the amount of capital and enables the mortgagor to repossess the land upon repayment of the amount. The second type (masikatta) reduces the mortgage capital by a specific sum each year. This latter type, which applies to 85% of all mortgage transactions in kīpat land, derives from a kind of mortgage prevalent until 1914, when it was abolished by the Government. Such mortgages enabled the contracting parties to stipulate a period of time during which the amount of the mortgage would be reduced by an agreed sum annually, and at the end of which the mortgagor would resume the land without further payment. However, such agreements did not allow the mortgagor to repossess the land before the end of the period, which could extend for as long as 100 years or more.¹ The masikatta mortgage enables the kīpat owner to repossess the land at any time upon repayment of the original capital less the fixed annual reductions².

1. See pp.100-02.

2. Masikatta has certain features in common with the kanam system prevalent in Malabar. Cf. Mayer, 1952, pp. 79-81; Kumar, 1965, pp. 23-25.

In both kinds of mortgage agreement the mortgagee exercises rights of usufruct in the land as long as the loan is outstanding. If the mortgagor repays the loan after the seed has been sown he must allow the mortgagee to take the harvest of the land. For his part, the mortgagee may not charge interest on the capital. The former is prevented from taking the land back piecemeal, by paying back the capital in installments. Once pledged, a field is regarded as a unit, which can only be returned as a unit when the entire capital is repaid as a lump sum¹. Only when the field has been sub-divided among the heirs of the mortgagor, each of the latter can repossess his own share individually.

Of the kiptat owned by the Limbus in the Indreni settlements, 68.2% is under mortgage. The percentage of irrigated land pledged is much higher than that of dry lands. 82.8% of the former, which comprise two-thirds of all Indreni lands under kiptat tenure, have been mortgaged; only 38.6% of dry lands have been pledged. This is due mainly to the fact that a fair

1. This practice does not derive from any mystical notion about the unity of a field, but relates to the increasing costs of cultivating a field which is diminishing in size as a result of piecemeal repossession.

proportion of dry lands are homestead plots which are not mortgaged.

TABLE 9
Kipet mortgages by land type

<u>Type of land</u>	<u>No. of units¹</u>	<u>Amount mortgaged</u>	<u>Percentage mortgaged</u>
Irrigated	91,462	75,790	82.8
Dry	45,222	17,490	38.6
Total	<u>136,684</u>	<u>93,280</u>	<u>68.2%</u>

We see from the figures in the above table that Limbus in the Indreni settlements have unrestricted rights of usufruct to just under one-third of their kipat lands. The extent of mortgaging varies from one lineage to the next (see Table 10).

1. See Appendix.

TABLE 10
Kipat mortgages by lineage

<u>Lineage</u>	<u>Percentage of Land Mortgaged</u>
Chongbung Lineage (1)	60.3
Chongbung Lineage (2)	66.5
Chongbung Lineage (3)	56.3
Chongbung Lineage (4)	76.9
Chongbung Lineage (5)	62.7
All Chongbungs	62.4
Kambo Lineage (1)	90.2
Kambo Lineage (2)	96.5
All Kambo	92.7
Nembekes	61.0
Phatras	7.5
Syelings	84.5

Among the Chongbungs the comparatively high percentage of lands pledged by Lineage (4) can be explained by the loss of almost half the lineage's paddy lands in a court case half a century ago¹. Lineage members were forced to mortgage a good part of their remaining lands to meet the heavy fines imposed at the time, and to maintain subsistence since. The relatively low figure of mortgaging by Chongbung Lineage (3) is largely the result of repossession of lands which were in fact previously mortgaged. The repossession

1. See Chapter VI.

has been made possible by the importation of monies from outside the Cluster. By and large, however, the fact that land mortgaging is a cumulative process which has been going on since the late 19th century, makes impossible any precise explanation of the differences in extent of mortgaging among the various lineages.

TABLE 11
Kipat mortgages by household

<u>Percentage of Kipat Lands Mortgaged</u>	<u>No. of Kipat-Owning Households¹</u>	<u>Percentage of Kipat-Owning Households</u>
None	7	10.3
1 - 9	1	1.4
10 - 24	-	-
25 - 49	16	23.5
50 - 74	19	28.0
75 - 89	16	23.5
90 - 99	8	11.7
100	1	1.4
	<u>68</u>	<u>99.8</u>

Table 11 shows us that almost two-thirds of

-
1. I include here only households which are potential mortgagors of kipat. This excludes by definition households which own no kipat. But also excluded are households which, though kipat-owning, are not in a position to mortgage these lands. Two household heads have not yet inherited their kipat lands, but have been given, as their (as yet incomplete) inheritance lands taken under mortgage by their father. Three other households are headed by women who have been granted the use of kipat during the course of their lifetime but cannot transfer these rights to others. I have excluded these five households from the table.

kipat-owning Limbu households (64.7%) have pledged more than half their kīpat lands. The figure of only one household having mortgaged all its kīpat lands stresses the tendency for Limbus to hold on to home-stead sites. Since the figures are for all kīpat lands, they obscure the fact that 39 households (57.3%) have pledged all their irrigated lands.

Distribution of Mortgages

To whom do the Limbus pledge their kīpat? By far the great majority of mortgaged lands (72%) are held by non-Limbus. Thus, the first point to note is that kīpat landowners and landholders¹ are, to a large extent, members of different caste groups. A second point to note is the residential spread of the landholders. Just under two-thirds (64.6%) of mortgaged lands are in the hands of landholders resident outside the Cluster. Settlement boundaries, then, do not define the spatial limits of mortgage relationships. Nevertheless, only a few landholders live beyond a radius of

1. Henceforth, I use 'landholder' to refer to the mortgagee or pledgee and distinguish this person from the 'landowner' and the 'tenant', or person who actually cultivates the land.

two miles of the mortgaging household. In this category are several kinsmen of Indreni Limbus. One is a shopkeeper living in Ilam Bazær, who is the sister of a non-kipat owning resident of the Cluster; another is the brother of a woman married into the Cluster from a settlement across the river to the west. A third is a wealthy Limbu from the district of Panchthar in the north, who has interests throughout east Nepal. But these rank as exceptions in that Limbu kipat owners prefer to have their landholders nearby. Indeed, as I point out below, mortgage ties tend to be formed within 'neighbourhoods' - even if these extend beyond Cluster boundaries.

TABLE 12
Distribution of mortgages among Limbu landholders

<u>Limbu Landholders</u>	<u>Percentage of Kipat Land mortgaged</u>
Kipat-owning Limbus resident in Cluster	17.2
Non-kipat-owning Limbus resident in Cluster	4.1
Limbus resident outside the Cluster	6.7
All Limbus	28.0

Table 12 gives the distribution of mortgaged lands among Limbu landholders. It is shown that 21.3% of all kipat mortgaged is pledged to Limbus resident in

the Indreni settlements. This leaves just under four-fifths in the hands either of Limbus resident outside the Cluster or members of non-Limbu groups.

Turning to this latter category, it is to be noted that members of non-Limbu groups resident in the Cluster hold 14.2% of mortgaged lands, while 57.8% are pledged to non-residents. Table 13 gives the distribution of mortgaged lands among non-Limbus.

TABLE 13
Distribution of mortgages among non-Limbu landholders

<u>Non-Limbu Landholders</u>	<u>Percentage of Kipat Land Mortgaged</u>
Brähmins resident in Cluster	11.3
Jaisis resident in Cluster	2.9
Others resident in Cluster	-
Brähmins and Jaisis resident outside Cluster	35.6
Others resident outside Cluster	<u>22.2</u>
All non-Limbus	72.0

These figures illustrate several points. The first is that members of the highest twice-born castes (Brähmins and Jaisis) have taken by far the largest proportion of kipat lands under mortgage. Brähmins and Jaisis between them hold half of these lands, while members of other castes hold slightly over one-fifth. Secondly, Brähmins and Jaisis resident in the Cluster

have a much higher proportion of landholdings in relation to their numbers than those resident outside the Cluster. Whereas Brahmins and Jaisis in the Cluster represent only 3% of the total number of Brahmin and Jaisi households in the Village area, they have 14.2% of the kipat landholdings. Finally, none of the other non-Limbu households in the Cluster - there are seven: four Magar and three Blacksmith - have taken any kipat under mortgage.

I proceed now to consider by the use of quantitative data the linkages formed between Limbus and those to whom they pledge their lands. My focus in the discussion will be the individual kipat-owning Limbu household and the pattern of mortgage relationships in which it is involved.

The majority of kipat lands pledged are concentrated in the hands of less than a score of landholders¹. These (nineteen) 'Main Landholders' - as I shall call them - who have taken 68.8% of all lands mortgaged, are

1. I ignore the fact that several of these landholders outside the Cluster may have spawned a few households of sons or younger brothers. The landholding households within the Cluster, however, are households in terms of my earlier definition of the word.

resident mainly in the Cluster or in its immediate environs. Of the nine Indreni landholders, six are Brahmins, one is a Jaishi, and two are Limbus. Five of the Main Landholders living outside the Cluster are Brahmins, three are Limbus -- the only ones living at some distance from the Cluster -- while one is a Gurung and one a Newar.

TABLE 14
Distribution of mortgages among Main Landholders

<u>Main Landholders</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Percentage of Mortgaged Lands</u>	<u>No. of Linkages to Landowners</u>
<u>in Cluster</u>			
Brahmin a.	Dorumba	1.6	2
Brahmin b.	Dorumba	1.1	2
Brahmin c.	Chitok	2.9	3
Brahmin d.	Bharapa	1.0	2
Brahmin e.	Chitok	2.6	6
Brahmin f.	Chitok	2.3	5
Jaishi g.	Dorumba	2.6	7
Limbu h.	Chitok	6.2	16
Limbu i.	Chitok	3.9	8
<u>ex-Cluster</u>			
Brahmin j.	1 mi. E of Angbung	2.7	3
Brahmin k.	1 mi. E of Angbung	3.6	13
Brahmin l.	1 mi. S of Angbung	4.7	13
Brahmin m.	1 1/2 mi. S of Angbung	9.6	17
Brahmin n.	1 1/2 mi. W of Chitok	2.4	4
Gurung o.	1 mi. W of Dorumba	10.6	17
Newar p.	1 mi. S of Angbung	3.6	9
Limbu q.	Ilem Bazaar	3.2	4
Limbu r.	3 mi. W of Cluster	1.8	3
Limbu s.	Panchther district	2.4	3
		<u>68.8%</u>	

Table 14 shows that the Main Landholders are linked in mortgage relationships with an average of 7.2 Limbu households¹, although the range extends from a minimum of two to a maximum of seventeen households. Landholders with the greatest amount of pledged land tend to be tied to the largest number of kipat land-owning households. I have given the residential location of each of the Main Landholders because geographical propinquity appears to be a factor in the formation of mortgage relationships. The kipat owning households tied to the three Dorumba landholders (Brahmins a. and b. and Jaisi g.), for example, are confined to Dorumba and that area of Chitok adjacent to Dorumba. Similarly, the landholders resident to the east and south of Angbung have mortgage ties almost exclusively with Limbu households in that settlement and Bharapa, its neighbour to the north. Only two landholders (Limbu h. and Gurung o.) have links to kipat-owning households in all four Indreni settlements, while another four (Brahmins e., f., and l. and Limbu i.) are

1. I am forced to ignore what might be called the relative weight of each linkage. A landowner may give one field or several to a landholder; the mortgage capital may be great or small. 'Linkage' obscures these differences.

linked to households in three settlements. The majority of thirteen hold land owned by Limbus whose residence is localised in one or two (adjacent) settlements.

Limbu landowners, for their part, are linked to an average of four landholders. This includes linkages to others as well as to the Main Landholders. The range of ties per household is shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15
Linkages to landholders

<u>No. of Linkages</u>	<u>Limbu Kipat-owning Households</u>
To: 1 landholder	18 households
2 landholders	6
3 landholders	6
4 landholders	8
5 landholders	10
6 landholders	3
7 landholders	2
8 landholders	2
9 landholders	1
10 or more landholders	4

The tendency is for Limbu households to disperse their mortgages, especially if they are heavy, among several landholders. The eighteen households which are linked to only one landholder (see Table 15) are those which have pledged few lands or conversely, have only few lands to pledge. These eighteen households,

while they represent 30% of Limbu households which have mortgaged kipat, account for only 6.6% of all lands pledged. Twenty-five of the sixty Limbu households pledging land have concentrated their ties among the Main Landholders and have formed no mortgage ties with others. Alternatively, only three households have no links at all to these Main Landholders, but these are among the households which have only single mortgage links. An additional twenty-five households have links with landholders other than the Main Landholders resident outside the Cluster. Moreover, twenty-two households have mortgaged lands to other Limbu households in the Indreni settlements, excluding the two Limbu Main Landholders resident in the Cluster. Some of these latter landholder households may at the same time pledge their own kipat to other landholders.

Taking the total number of linkages (236) between Limbu households and their landholders, we find that 59.4% (138) are with the Main Landholders, 21.6% (50) are with other non-Limbu landholders, and 19% (48) are with other Indreni Limbus.

The picture, then, is of a series of prongs emanating out from Limbu kipat-owning households, linking them to a wide assortment of landholders.

Most households have ties to several landholders, others to a single one. Many have ties to Limbu landholders who are themselves mortgagors of kipat. These linkages can be expressed diagrammatically as follows:

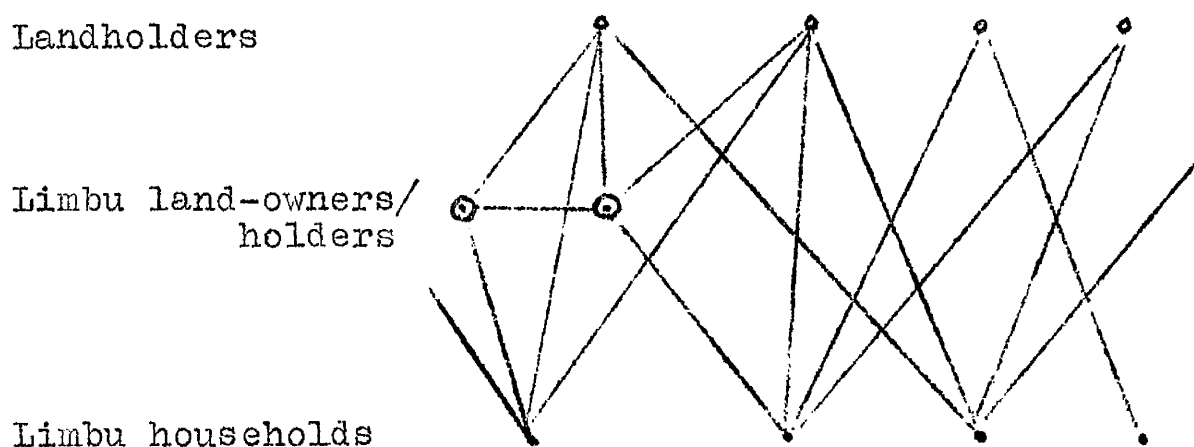


Fig. 5

Is the pledging of land the only means whereby Limbus can obtain credit? It is necessary to consider this question in order to discern the range of credit choices available, and the relative importance of mortgage credit as compared with loan credit¹.

1. To avoid confusion in terminology, 'loan' will imply interest-bearing loans only, and not loans against which lands are pledged, and usufruct transferred to the creditor.

The discussion will also attempt to indicate the extent to which loan credit linkages 'converge' with those formed on the basis of mortgages.

Loan Credit

Loans can be obtained without the necessity of transferring rights of usufruct to land. Short-term, non-interest bearing loans of small amounts (sapat) are occasionally given to close kinsmen or neighbours. They require no security and generally no documents are written to attest to the loan. However, these loans account for only a minute proportion of loan credit given or received, and for the purposes of this discussion, this type of loan can be ignored.

Generally, land or other property is put up to secure a loan, but unlike possessory mortgages, the borrower retains possession of the property, forfeiting it (if kipat land, its usufruct) only if he defaults on the payment. Loans (rin) of this sort bear interest at anywhere from 15 - 35%, although the law stipulates a maximum of 10%. A substantial proportion of loans are made in grains, and both interest and capital would generally be repaid in kind. Even where cash loans are made, creditors almost always state the interest

and require its payment in quantities of grain. This has tended to work against the interests of the debtor, since grain prices have been rising steadily, so that, for example, a loan negotiated ten years ago at 20% interest on the basis of a stipulated quantity of grain, would now bear 30-35% interest at the present price of the same grain.

The amount of loan credit available is obviously limited by the property which Limbus can put up as security. Other than land only jewellery and cattle are available to secure loans. Jewellery usually enters a house as part of a dowry at the time of or soon after a new wife joins her husband in his settlement. Later, if the husband can afford it, she may receive an additional gift of gold or silver ornaments. But any jewellery given a woman by her natal household remains her personal possession and her husband exercises no claim to this property. The rights of the husband to gifts given by him to his wife is less clear. Most informants suggest that once given, a gift of jewellery could not be taken back during the wife's lifetime. But they add that a good wife would allow the jewellery to be put up as security if the household were in

serious economic difficulty. However, a man's prestige would suffer if it were known that he offered his wife's ornaments to secure a loan.

In any case, few Limbu households manage to store any substantial wealth in the form of jewellery. All women would possess silver bracelets; a few would have silver anklets; but only the wealthiest are able to afford a splendidly carved silver charm box. The value of silver ornaments in the Indreni settlements amounts to an average of approximately Rs 80 per household. Ownership of gold jewellery averages about Rs 200 per household although perhaps half the Limbu women have no more than a gold nose ring and a nostril piece worth about Rs 50 together.

Loans are frequently obtained by offering cattle as security. In March, 1964 a Subba, after collecting taxes for submission to the tax office, flitted away the money during a trip to the plains. In danger of losing his title, he borrowed Rs 115 against the security of his bullocks. He was given until November to repay the loan, and when he was unable, the lender added another Rs 100 and kept the cattle. A fully grown pair of draught animals can

fetch up to Rs 500 on sale, and a milch cow is worth in the region of Rs 350. The paucity of cattle, however, partly a function of the dearth of grazing land in the area of the Indreni settlements, limits the amount of credit available on such security. Despite the fact that draught cattle are essential for farming in the Indreni settlements, only 56 out of 85 Limbu households (65.1%) possess a pair of bullocks. Sixty-one additional head of cattle are distributed among 35 households, while eight households share 19 buffaloes. Thus a total of 192 head of cattle are available in the Limbu community, the majority of them already offered as security.

The Limbus have outstanding interest-bearing debts of approximately Rs 28,000. When compared with the value of mortgages which total about Rs 318,400, it is seen that loan credit is a very small proportion (8%) of the total outstanding debt¹.

1. Ten households of non-kipat-owning Limbus have outstanding debts of Rs 2980, but since, by definition, they have no kipat land to mortgage, I have omitted these figures for purposes of comparison.

TABLE 16
Comparison of mortgage and loan credit

	<u>Interest-bearing loans</u> <u>(aver. per household)</u>	<u>Mortgage loans</u> <u>(aver. per household)</u>
Chongbung		
Lineage (1)	Rs 760	Rs 6160
Lineage (2)	518	4302
Lineage (3)	238	2090
Lineage (4)	150	2328
Lineage (5)	511	5590
Kambo		
Lineage (1)	493	10048
Lineage (2)	328	15616
Nembeke	553	5405
Syeling	50	3298
Phatra	160	24

Table 16 compares average mortgages outstanding with loans outstanding by households in each lineage. These figures convey little meaning in themselves without being set against annual incomes per household. For the present purpose what is significant is the ratio of the two categories of debt. In no case is the average credit obtained from interest-bearing loans more than 10.9% of the average household's total credit (this in Chongbung Lineage (1)). For the Syeling households the figure is as low as 1.5%. Clearly, then, mortgages are by far the primary means of raising money in the Indreni settlements. I have suggested

that a scarcity of security other than land may be part of the reason for the rather lopsided proportions of mortgage and loan credit. But another factor might be mentioned as well. Once land has been mortgaged, a Limbu can continue to obtain mortgage loans on the security of the same land, thus obviating the pressures to seek credit elsewhere. This will be discussed in greater detail at the end of this chapter. The next step in the analysis, to which I now turn, is a consideration of the linkages formed by loan credit, and the extent to which they are convergent with those based on mortgages.

It has been shown that only 8% of all outstanding credit in the Cluster is based on interest-bearing loans. We would expect, then, that the average number of ties between a borrower household and its lenders would be fewer than its ties to landholders. The fact that the borrowing household has an average of 2.5 linkages to lenders bears this out. Table 17 gives the breakdown of linkages.

TABLE 17
Linkages to lenders

<u>Number of Linkages</u>	<u>Limbu Borrower Households</u>
To: 1 lender	13 households
2 lenders	13 households
3 lenders	12 households
4 lenders	4 households
5 lenders	4 households
6 lenders	2 households

To what extent do linkages made with creditors providing interest-bearing loans converge with those formed on the basis of mortgages? A comparison of the distribution of the sources of these two kinds of credit gives us an indication of the degree of overlap. From Table 18 we note that Brahmins resident in the Cluster provide almost no credit unless it is secured by land mortgaging. This suggests that Limbus must seek loan credit outside the Cluster, especially from members of other castes to make up for the lack of non-Limbu lenders in the Indreni settlements.

TABLE 18
Comparison of mortgage and loan credit distribution

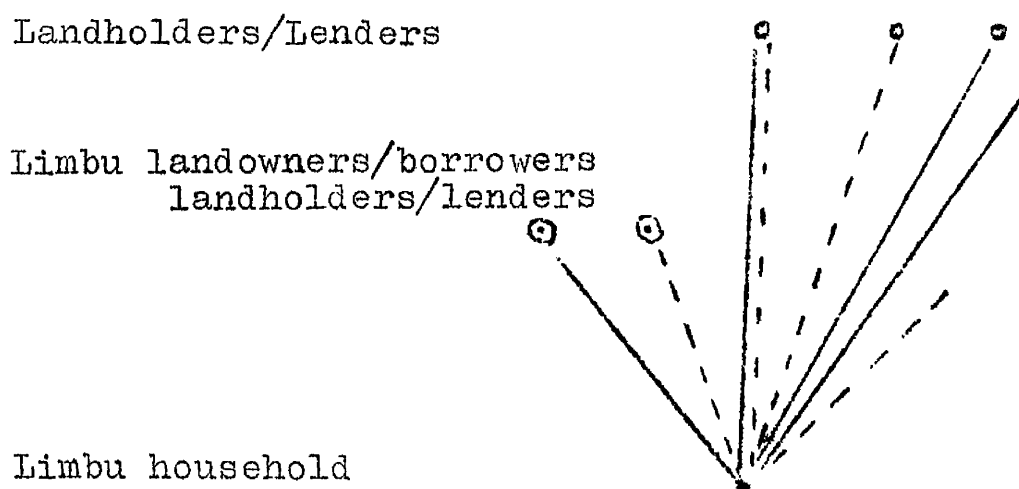
	Percentage of Mortgage Credit Provided	Percentage of Loan Credit Provided
Limbus in Cluster	15.5	16.9
Limbus ex Cluster	6.9	6.1
Brahmins in Cluster	12.1	.3
Jaisis in Cluster	2.4	2.8
Brahmins/Jaisis ex Cluster	41.3	44.3
Others ex Cluster	21.8	29.6

Since Brahmins in the Cluster are part of the Main Landholder category distinguished earlier on, it is essential to know how the category as a whole, which holds approximately 70% of all kipat mortgaged, fares as a source of loan credit. Whereas the nineteen Main Landholders provide 71.1% of all mortgage credit, the same category yields only 40% of loans to Limbu borrowers. Nine of these Main Landholders, who together provide 20.7% of the mortgage credit, supply no loans whatsoever. Six of these persons - five Brahmins and one Limbu - are resident in the Cluster. The impression given by these figures is that the two kinds of credit sought by Limbus are available only to a limited extent from the same sources. The impression is borne out by an examination of the total number of

linkages formed between Limbu households and ~~borrowers~~^{those} supplying loan credit. Only 39.3% of these linkages are with Main Landholders. This is to be compared with 59.4% of mortgage linkages formed with the same category. Linkages with other Limbu lenders in the Cluster account for 19.6% of the total - which compares favourably with 19.0% of mortgage ties. Ties to non-Limbus (other than the Main Landholders) account for 40.9% of all loan credit linkages, while only 21.6% of mortgage ties were with this category of creditor.

There is some convergence of the two kinds of credit ties with those Main Landholders who provide loan as well as mortgage credit. Of 50 loan credit linkages formed with these Main Landholders, almost 40% converge with those formed for mortgage purposes. Put another way nineteen Limbu households are related to some Main Landholders both as kipat mortgagors and as borrowers of interest loans. Outside the Main Landholding category, convergences of this sort occurred in only two cases between Limbu households and other Limbu lenders. In brief, given a small area of overlap between the two sources of credit, providers of mortgage credit and of loan credit are essentially

different sections of the population in and surrounding the Indreni settlements. The credit links emanating from a Limbu household might be represented diagrammatically as below.



Solid line represents links to landholders
Broken line represents links to lenders

Fig. 6

I began the chapter by a consideration of social relationships created by the mortgaging of kipat land. To determine the relative importance of other forms of credit it was then necessary to discuss the sources of and linkages based on loan credit. The next part of this chapter returns to the examination of social ties created by other rights in land.

Mortgages transfer rights of usufruct from the landowner to the landholder. But there still remains the question of who cultivates the land?

Tenancy

The person to whom land is pledged may choose to cultivate the land himself, or transfer the rights of cultivation to a tenant in return for a share of the crops. Two kinds of tenancy arrangement can be made. The first is an agreement to share equally all the production of a field, including any subsidiary crops. On an irrigated field, for example, the contracting parties would divide not only the paddy crop, but the lentils which are usually grown in the levees of the terraces. They would even share the straw of the paddy. With such an arrangement, the landlord¹ provides at least half the seed. The second kind of tenancy, which is the one more commonly practised, is the stipulation of a fixed rent to be paid by the tenant at the time of harvest. The rent is generally a part of the main crop, but where a

1. I use 'landlord' as a generic term for the person who transfers the rights of cultivation to a tenant. He may be the landowner, or the landholder.

tenant cultivates a dry field, the agreement may specify payment in either millet or maize. The landlord has no claim on subsidiary crops or straw, although he has first right to the produce of the land, so that he has a measure of insurance against a poor harvest. The landlord does not provide the seed but he normally pays the costs of transporting the rent from the field to his home.

Whether or not a landholder cultivates a field he takes under mortgage depends on a variety of factors. If the land is near his homestead, the time saved in going to and from the field, and the ease with which manure can be transported to, and the harvest brought from the field will likely make it worthwhile for the landholder to cultivate the land himself¹. As well, if the land is adjacent to a field he is already cultivating he will almost certainly cultivate it himself. The additional expenditure of resources required to encompass the adjacent field is considerably less than the commensurate gains he can expect. One factor likely to weigh in favour of giving the land to

1. There is also the problem of guarding dry fields, especially against monkeys who sometimes destroy a substantial portion of the maize crop.

a tenant is the shortage of available labour in the household. But a wealthy man, especially a Brahmin, even with adequate labour resources at his command, is reluctant to send the women in his household to the fields. In either of these situations, agricultural labourers would have to be hired. In such circumstances, the landholder might decide to transfer the cultivation rights to a tenant.

If a landholder chooses to give the kipat land he has taken under mortgage to a tenant, the Limbu kipat-owner is considered to have the right of first refusal. The kipat owner may waive these rights or may accept the tenancy and then transfer cultivation rights to a sub-tenant. The latter pays the kipat-owner a small part of the crop over and above the agreed rent payable to the landholder. Nowadays this practice is rare, and I have recorded only a dozen instances involving such double tenancy¹.

Occasionally, the kipat owner's right of first refusal is reaffirmed in the mortgage document. In most instances the landholders honour the rule and, as

1. To avoid confusion, in any statistics on tenancy which follow, the person actually cultivating the land will be regarded as the tenant.

I shall point out presently, the kipat owner is often in a position to enforce his claim. Landholders are seldom reluctant to allow the kipat owner to cultivate the land as a tenant unless he is slow to pay the rent.

Some informants state that kipat-owners usually pay less rent when cultivating their own land as tenants than when cultivating land belonging to someone else. My own data on rents do not bear out this statement. Rents vary considerably from as 'little' as one-quarter of gross production to as much as one-half, and the range applies equally to owner-tenants and stranger-tenants. No single reason can explain the variation. One Limbu explained that he had accepted to pay a rent amounting to 50% of the main crop because the field was adjacent to another he was already cultivating. There is also the personal factor to be considered: some landholders are known to charge higher rents than others, and tenants of those charging lower rents seldom give up their contracts. When it is found that a Limbu kipat-owner is in fact paying a low rent as tenant on his own land, the explanation may lie in the size of the mortgage. A Limbu may be forced to pledge a field to

meet an unexpected obligation, and accepts far less than the actual land value in the hope of repaying the amount quickly and resuming his land. In such a case, the rent would probably be a comparatively small proportion of the harvest. The evidence indicates that rents will have the same variation whether the contracting parties are both Limbus or members of different castes. But the relationship of the individuals can affect the rent. In the only three cases in which the Limbu landlord and tenant are siblings or father and son, the rents have been in the range of 25%, and in two of these cases the tenant was not in fact cultivating the land he owned.

How are cultivation rights to land mortgaged by Indreni Limbus distributed? Over half (52.5%) are being worked by the landholders themselves, while the remaining 47.5% have been let to tenants. The distribution of mortgaged kiptat land among various categories of tenants is shown in Table 19. Just over 15% of mortgaged lands are being cultivated by their owners as tenants. Approximately the same amount is being share-cropped by kiptat-owning Limbus who are not, however, the owners of the land they work as tenants. Limbus who are not kiptat owners and other

Indreni residents (Magars and Blacksmiths) are tenants on 3.1% of mortgaged lands. The remainder - 15% - are worked by non-Limbu tenants resident outside the Cluster.

TABLE 19
Distribution of cultivation rights on mortgaged lands

<u>Cultivators</u>	<u>Percentage of Mortgaged Land Cultivated</u>
Limbu landholders	15.1
Non-Limbu landholders	37.4
The kiptat-owners as tenants	14.3
Other kiptat-owning Limbus as tenants	15.1
Non-kiptat-owning Limbus as tenants	1.3
Non-Limbus resident in Cluster, as tenants	1.8
Non-Limbus resident outside Cluster, as tenants	15.0
	<u>100.0%</u>

To complete the figures on tenancy, we must also mention how cultivation rights to unmortgaged kiptat are assigned. It will be recalled that 31.7% of all kiptat lands are unmortgaged. Of these, 5.2% are given to non-Limbu tenants outside the Indreni Cluster, while kiptat-owning Limbus cultivate 4.2% as share-croppers. The remaining 90.6% are worked by the kiptat-owners themselves.

We might now examine the linkages based on tenancy. Fifty kipat-owning Limbus cultivate kipat land as tenants. Table 20 shows how many landlords they are linked to.

TABLE 20
Linkages to landlords

<u>No. of linkages</u>	<u>No. of Limbu Tenant Households</u>
To: 1 landlord	24 households
2 landlords	19 households
3 landlords	5 households
4 landlords	2 households

Limbu tenant households are linked to an average of 1.5 landlords. Again, the greatest proportion of linkages between tenants and landlords are with Main Landholders (76.4%) while 12.9% are with other kipat-owning Limbus in the Indreni Cluster and 10.7% with other non-Limbus. These figures can be compared with those of linkages formed on the basis of mortgages and loan credit mentioned earlier.

TABLE 21
Comparison of distribution of mortgage, tenancy and loan
credit linkages

Linkage Type	Percentage with Main Landholders	Percentage with other KO Limbus	Percentage with other non-Limbu
Mortgage	59.4	19.0	21.6
Tenancy	76.4	12.9	10.7
Loan Credit	39.3	19.6	40.9

The comparatively low figures for tenancy linkages with landlords other than the Main Landholders suggests, on the one hand, that the latter, who are by definition the wealthiest landlords, cannot cultivate themselves all the lands they have taken under mortgage. On the other hand, the remaining landlords, to a much greater extent, take lands under mortgage in order to cultivate these lands themselves, and so are not as able to transfer cultivation rights to Limbus.

A high proportion of tenant households - thirty-three out of fifty - cultivate as tenants lands which they own themselves, and which have been mortgaged to Main Landholders. As well, eleven of these households have borrowed monies from these same landholders. In such instances, we might speak of double and triple 'convergences', since these households are linked to the same individuals as landowners

to landholders, tenants to landlords, and in some cases as borrowers to lenders.

Another kind of linkage might be mentioned. It is that between a kibat owner and the tenant on his land which has been pledged to a landholder. I have shown in Table 19 that 33.2% of mortgaged kibat is cultivated by tenants other than the kibat owner himself. In such cases a tie is created between the kibat owner and the tenant working the land. There are 34 linkages of this nature between kibat owners and other Limbu tenants on their land, and a similar number with non-Limbus. The tie is not a direct one in the sense that no payments are made by one to the other. The relationship is based on different interests in the same land. For one thing, since the kibat owner is considered to have prior claims to tenancy, the rights of a tenant who is not the owner are dependent to a considerable extent on the kibat owner's desire and ability to exercise his claims. For another, any change of landholder can influence the security of a tenant, and, as I shall show presently, the Limbu kibat-owner is in a position to effect such a change.

In the foregoing paragraphs I have attempted to use quantitative data on mortgages, loan credit and tenancy to illustrate the complex pattern of relationships which links Limbu households both to each other and to members of other castes in the Indreni settlements and the surrounding area. It was found that for mortgages and tenancy the Limbus are linked to a wide range of landholders and landlords. Many of these linkages are concentrated within a small wealthy class - whose members represent under 4% of the total Village household population - and most of whom are Brahmins. For credit other than that obtained by pledging land the Limbus rely on this class to a lesser extent, casting their net wider, as it were, and creating other linkages to obtain the loans they require.

The Limbu household has been viewed as the central point from which emanate several series of linkages. Each series relates to a specific context or purpose. The Limbu household establishes relationships with one or more households from which it obtains loan credit: this is one series. It establishes another on the basis of mortgages, and a third when it contracts tenancy agreements. There is yet another

series created out of the latter two: that between owners and tenants. When superimposed on one another these series of linkages give a picture (at one moment in time) of the range of a household's relationships in, let us say, an economic context. The superimposition reveals a certain amount of convergence in the linkages, so that some kipat-owners are mortgagors, tenants and borrowers to the same individuals. Some are tied to landlords as tenants, and at the same time to other tenants as landlords.

The point I am concerned to establish here is that the basic unit in Indreni society - the household - is the focus for a number of linkages each of which arises in a particular context (mortgage, tenancy) by means of dyadic contracts between the focal household and the individuals or households which compose the series. Some Limbu households are liable to have the same terminal points in a particular series as have other households. Even where the series are not identical there is bound to be a continuous overlapping of linkages emanating from the various Limbu households because of the concentration of much wealth in few hands. Still, it is unlikely that the totality of relationships based on a number of linkages around any

one household would be identical with those of any other.

Does the totality of linkage series, once formed, show signs of becoming a persistent entity? The question might be directed primarily to series based on mortgage links, since the crucial relationships, from which those of tenancy and loan credit follow, are based on mortgages. It has been established that few Limbus are able to repossess their mortgaged lands. Most have inherited kipat already pledged to landholders, and as I will show in the next chapter current income is barely enough to meet 'normal' obligations, let alone provide enough to repay heavy mortgages. The majority of Limbu households remain permanently indebted and their lands permanently under mortgage. Given such conditions, the above question might be phrased in another way: is the relationship between landholder and kipat-owner one in which power resides overwhelmingly with the former at the expense of the latter?

The Manipulation of Ties

Since 1901 kipat land has not been alienable by sale. Members of other castes with monies to invest

in land can purchase only raiker land, which is in short supply. As a result its costs have been driven to almost prohibitive heights. For many, taking kibat under pledge is the only practical alternative. But since most kibat land is already pledged, the potential landholder is forced to offer the kibat owner a higher mortgage than that given by the existing landholder. 'Kibat is like a goat', Brahmin landholders remark, 'it goes to the highest bidder'. Since the kibat owner can repossess his lands upon repayment of the mortgage capital, the new landholder supplies this amount, and an increment (bard) for the owner. The increment is not a gift, but is added to the mortgage capital. Rights of usufruct are transferred to the new landholder, where they remain - until the process is repeated. In this way, many kibat lands change hands every few years, so that the security of kibat landholders is at best tenuous. This process can be documented by several examples.

a) In 1954, Loftane pledged a kibat paddy field to a Brahmin in a nearby settlement outside the Indreni Cluster. The mortgage capital was Rs 960. In 1958, the land was repossessed by the Limbu and re-pledged to

a Rai landholder who had added another Rs 960 bard bringing the mortgage capital to Rs 1920. In 1963, the first Brahmin landholder offered to let Loftane have another Rs 960 bard for the right of the usufruct on the same land. The latter took the field back from the Rai and re-pledged it to the Brahmin. The mortgage capital is now Rs 2880.

b) Bire mortgaged a paddy field to a Brahmin from a nearby settlement outside the Cluster in 1955. Five years later a Jaisi offered Bire bard of Rs 240 more than the mortgage capital. The land was taken from the first landholder and transferred to the second.

c) In 1926 Suk Bahadur, a Kambo, mortgaged a paddy field for Rs 80 to a Cobbler. Six years later, the younger brother's widow of the deceased Suk Bahadur repossessed the land and transferred it to a Brahmin who gave her bard of Rs 50, bringing the capital to Rs 130. Five years later the landholder was again changed to a Chongbung Limbu, who offered Rs 70 bard, thus bringing the capital to Rs 200. The present landholder, a Jaisi, took possession 15 years later by adding Rs 200 to the capital in the form of bard given to Suk Bahadur's heir.

The decision to transfer kipat from one landholder to another is taken only after the kipat owner is satisfied that the existing landholder will not meet the new offer. Since all mortgage holders recognize the potential threat to their security of tenure, the practice has taken root in the Cluster whereby landholders accede to Limbu requests for bard on a regular basis, without waiting until another potential landholder forces their hand.

The Limbus are thus able to use the ownership of land and their rights of repossession as a wedge to obtain interest-free loans. The Limbu who owns kipat long since mortgaged relies on periodic visits to his landholders for bard to meet contingencies. The most common reasons cited for asking bard are household expenses which generally means food requirements. Funerals, weddings and compensation demands from aggrieved husbands are also occasions for requesting bard. For example, we might follow the history of one mortgage on land given to a Brahmin in 1938 for Rs 128 to cover household expenses. For the next ten years two Limbu brothers took an average of Rs 90 per year for similar expenses. In 1948 the elder brother died and Rs 80 bard was taken to help

meet the costs of his funeral. During each of the five years following an average of Rs 40 was added to the mortgage capital for household expenses. In 1953 the son of the younger brother was married and Rs 144 was borrowed, the amount added to the capital. An average of only Rs 32 was taken each of the following five years for the household and in 1959 the widow of the elder brother died. For her funeral expenses Rs 80 was added to the mortgage. During the next five years, until 1964, an average of Rs 63 per year was taken for the household. The total value of the mortgage is now Rs 2009.

Limbus attempting to keep mortgages to a minimum in the hope of repossessing their kipat, of course do everything they can to avoid running up the debt. In such cases mortgage capital may remain level for years, and no attempt is made to play off landholders for the purpose of obtaining bard. But these Limbus represent a very small minority of the Indreni population.

For most, bard represents an important source of capital to close the gap left by insufficient agricultural production. One Limbu, for example, an old Subba, collected Rs 576 from seven landholders in

1963 and, in addition, transferred a large paddy field to a new landholder who gave the Limbu bard which increased the mortgage capital by Rs 1600. The example is atypical of the amounts usually obtainable from landholders; but it is representative of the despairing attitude on the part of most kipat-owners towards ever reclaiming their lands. Few entertain the hope of repaying their mortgages, but realize that in their ownership rights lies the only opportunity to benefit from kipat. A variety of practices have been devised to exploit these rights.

Limbus with more than one field pledged to a single landholder might request one of these fields as bard, and distribute the capital on this field among the mortgages on the remaining fields. Some who are tenants on kipat lands they own will withhold the rent and regard it as bard to be added to the capital. Others desirous of becoming tenants on their kipat will use the threat of repossession and transfer in order to pressure an otherwise reluctant landholder.

Placed in such a position, landholders must balance the demands of the Limbu kipat-owner against the benefits they derive from continuing to hold the land under mortgage. Unlike the Limbu owners, many

of whom are unaware of the extent of their indebtedness¹ and hence unable to establish a rational basis for their continued demands, most landholders determine approximate limits beyond which additional payments would bring diminishing returns. Even so, the 'cut-off' point is constantly changing as pressures on land increase. In a sense, bard can be seen as a built-in cost index for kipat land. For as its value rises the landholders recognize the increase by giving the kipat-owner these additional loans against security of the land they have already taken under mortgage.

An analysis of 75 kipat histories based on land documents reveals the pattern of increases in mortgage capital due to bard increments. Taking the initial mortgage capital as index 100, twelve histories show that during the first five years a mortgage is held the capital increases by an average of between 20 - 30% (median value 5 - 10%). Another eleven histories of

1. This is partially due to the traditional practice of making only one document which is kept by the landholder. For three years now both parties have been required to keep a copy of mortgage agreements, but bard receipts are still kept only by the landholder.

kipat land held between 6 - 10 years indicate that by this period the capital has risen to an average index of 140 - 150 (median index 120 - 130). Eighteen histories indicate that the mortgage capital will have risen to an average of just over double the initial capital between 11 - 15 years after the land was mortgaged (median index 140 - 150). Between 16 - 20 years after the initial transaction the average index will be 310 - 320 (median 190 - 200) - based on thirteen histories. Twenty-one histories of land held for the unusually long period of over 20 years shows bard to have driven the capital up to an average index of 470 - 480 (median index 330 - 340). Table 22 summarizes the data.

TABLE 22
Mortgage capital increases due to bard

<u>Period After Initial Mortgage</u>	<u>Average Index</u>	<u>Median Index</u>
Within 5 years	120 - 130	105 - 110
6 - 10 years	140 - 150	120 - 130
11 - 15 years	200 - 210	140 - 150
16 - 20 years	310 - 320	190 - 200
Over 20 years	470 - 480	330 - 340

Based on 75 mortgage histories

The practice of bard is made possible by the nature of the kipat system of land tenure. Because kipat land is inalienable by sale, the Limbus retain the final right of repossession of lands however transferred to others. By retention of this right the kipat owner is able to play off competing interests for scarce lands to his own advantage in a kind of institutionalised extortion. It is not surprising that on more than one occasion I was told that if it were not for bard the Limbus would have to leave the Indreni Cluster and emigrate to India.

In this chapter I have attempted to show how the Limbu household is the focus of several series of relationships based on mortgages, loan credit and tenancy. Each linkage represents a dyadic contract entered into between the Limbu household and a partner it has chosen from a fairly wide range of possibilities. Because of the nature of kipat tenure the persistence of these contractual ties depends on the balance of advantage to be gained by both parties to the contract. In other words, despite the fact that Limbus usually fill the subordinate roles in these economic linkages, they are not trapped in the vice of clientage by those with whom they are linked. The linkages formed around

a household are thereby changing or poised to change. This can be attributed to Limbu ownership of kipat land.

I have stressed the element of choice in the contracting of mortgage relationships, and as a by-product of the latter of loan and tenancy ties as well. But I do not want to create the impression of the Indreni settlements as an open market place where land is freely bid for and continuously transferred in response to market factors. There are, of course, restrictions on the freedom of choice to sever existing and form new linkages. The most obvious of these limitations is the fact that the Limbus are an economically depressed group and as such, depend for a large part of their subsistence on these relationships. The second limiting factor has already been touched on: it concerns the fact that of the wide range of linkages formed by any household, many are convergent. Put another way, it might be suggested that the more multiplex the linkages, the less freedom of choice for the kipat-owner to manipulate relationships based on land. When the range of relationships is extended to include those of kinship, neighbourhood and

politics, the number of convergences multiplies. As the Limbu household becomes 'hemmed in' by these relationships, of contract and status, its capacity for choice is curtailed.

Before discussing the nature of some of these other ties, still another aspect of the Limbu household's license in contracting social relationships must be considered. It pertains to the extent of the household's independence of the agricultural economy and, alternatively, its dependence on outside sources of wealth.

CHAPTER VITHE ECONOMY: SOURCES OF WEALTH

The growth of new opportunities for earning wealth outside the traditional agricultural economy affects social relationships within the Cluster in two ways. In the first place, it has given rise to a small class of wealthy Limbus who, to the extent that they invest this wealth in land, are displacing Brahmins and members of other castes as landholders. Secondly, the exploitation of opportunities outside the agricultural system serves further to weaken the ties of dependency on all landlords, which ties, are, as I have shown, in any case mitigated by the prerogatives of kipat ownership. In the beginning of this chapter I consider whether the agricultural economy meets the basic food requirements of the household. The various recurrent and contingent expenses which it must meet are then discussed. Finally, the sources of 'commercial' income are reviewed and compared with income from agriculture.

Agriculture

Paddy, maize and millet are the principal crops grown in the Indreni settlements¹. Paddy - there are

1. According to one economist 80.4% of the total cultivated area in the country is given up to these crops. (Pant, 1965, p.12).

as many as twelve varieties grown - is planted in irrigated fields along the terraced slopes of mountainsides, mainly in the lowlands close to river valleys. A comprehensive system of irrigation channels directs the mountain streams into the paddy terraces which store the water. During the first two weeks of May, prior to the commencement of the monsoon rains, seed beds are ploughed, inundated, and levelled after which they are seeded and fertilized with green leaves. Five to six weeks later, when the seedlings are about 12" high, they are transplanted into the paddy fields which have in the meanwhile been prepared as were the seed beds. During September, the fields are weeded and the paddy is ready for harvesting in November. Indreni Limbus, like most cultivators in the district grow only one paddy crop a year. There is little attempt to plant winter crops for fear of its effects on the paddy yield. A few wealthy Limbu households in Chitok follow Brahmin neighbours in planting small quantities of wheat in paddy lands at higher elevations. But they have been able to do so only because of adequate livestock holdings which enable them to manure the fields.

Maize is the chief crop grown in dry fields generally situated on higher ground, and mainly on plots

surrounding homesteads. The fields are first fertilized with a mixture of straw, leaves and manure, which is then ploughed into the soil. In March, with the onset of the brief and intermittent spring rains the seed is broadcast. About eight weeks after planting and again four or five weeks later the fields are weeded. The maize is ready for harvesting in late August or early September.

Millet, the third most important crop grown in the Indreni settlements is sown in dry seed beds in July, and transplanted about four weeks later. Some cultivators plant the seedlings in the shade of the maize stalks, while others prefer to clear a small plot beforehand. One weeding, in September, is sufficient, and the crop is reaped in November.

Households also reserve a small section of their homestead sites to grow mustard seed, potatoes, squash, cabbage, cauliflower, spinach, pumpkin, cucumbers, tomatoes, etc. Bananas are the most commonly kept fruit, while two households have small mandarin groves.

Are Limbus able to depend entirely on the production from the fields they cultivate to meet food requirements? By this term is not meant an objective measure of minimal demands of nutrition. Instead, it emerges from the estimates given by household heads of

the quantities of grain required daily to feed their families. Of course, this does not mean that the Limbu household is always able to provide for its members what it recognizes as their requirements. When stocks are running low, especially during July and August, before the maize is ripe, they may be forced to cut down their food consumption. On the other hand, since the period of greatest shortage comes in the midst of the most demanding agricultural season, the household will usually borrow if necessary to see itself through the few weeks to the maize harvest. As a result, the estimates of food requirements are a fairly accurate reflection of what the household actually consumes.

The statements about food requirements made by informants vary little. Adults (aged 14 and over) consume one unit per day or 365 units per year. Children from 10 - 13 years are half-consumers, while those between 2 - 9 are quarter consumers. The requirements of children under two years are insignificant and can be ignored¹.

The 85 Limbu households in the Indreni Cluster require 102,600 units of grain per annum or an average

1. These consumption figures accord almost exactly with those given by Bailey (1957, pp. 277-78).

of slightly more than 1200 units per household. Kipet lands in the Cluster have a productive capacity of approximately 136,860 units, more than enough to meet food requirements. In addition, Limbus own raikar land with a productive capacity of 8290 units. However, as was shown, a large proportion of kipat land has been mortgaged. Even so, many of these lands are being cultivated by Limbu tenants. To arrive at the total of agricultural income from lands owned or cultivated by Indreni Limbus, we must add together production figures from (a) unmortgaged kipat lands cultivated by the owners; (b) raikar lands owned and cultivated by Limbus; (c) mortgaged kipat lands cultivated by Limbu landholders; (d) mortgaged kipat lands cultivated by Limbu tenants; (e) raikar lands cultivated by Limbu tenants. To these figures must then be added (f) the rent received by Limbu landlords from non-Limbu tenants. Finally, from the total of all these we subtract (g) the rent paid by Limbu tenants to landlords other than Limbus resident in the Cluster. Table 23 gives the appropriate figures.

TABLE 23
Agricultural income

	<u>Units</u>
a) from unmortgaged kipat lands cultivated by owners	41,150
b) from raikar lands cultivated by Limbu owners	7,522
c) from mortgaged kipat lands cultivated by Limbu landholders	14,096
d) from mortgaged kipat lands cultivated by Limbu tenants	28,732
e) from raikar lands cultivated by Limbu tenants	2,425
f) rent received by Limbu landlords from non-Limbu tenants	<u>1,739</u> 95,664
g) rent paid by Limbu tenants to other than Indreni Limbu landlords	- <u>8,507</u>
Agricultural income (after rent)	87,157

Leaving aside the costs of cultivation, agricultural income after rent amounts to 84.9% of the food requirements of Limbu households. This is an aggregate figure for the whole population in the Cluster. The degree to which each household produces its own food requirements varies considerably. Twenty-two (25.9%) households produce more than their minimal food requirements. Another eight households (9.5%) produce just enough to meet these requirements, while the remaining fifty-five households (64.6%) produce less than they require. Table 24 gives the breakdown of households in the latter category.

TABLE 24
Production of food requirements by 'deficit' households

<u>Percentage of Food Requirements Produced</u>	<u>No. of Households</u>	<u>Percentage of Households</u>
Under 25% of requirements	5	5.9
25 - 49% of requirements	19	22.3
50 - 74% of requirements	22	25.9
Over 75% of requirements	9	10.5
	<u>55</u>	<u>64.6%</u>

By way of comparison, of the non-Limbus in the Cluster, all six Brahmin and one Jaisi households produce more than their food requirements. The four Magar and three Blacksmith households, on the other hand, like the majority of Limbus, produce less than their requirements. Two Blacksmith households produce just over a quarter, while a third yields slightly more than half. One Magar household produces 38%, another 52%, a third 65% and a fourth 89% of household food requirements for consumption purposes.

Aside from feeding its members, the Limbu household must meet other expenditures. Beginning with recurrent obligations, some of these expenditures are considered in the following paragraphs.

Recurrent Obligations

Before considering the household budget and the kinds of consumer items imported into the Cluster,

it will be worthwhile noting the number and variety of retail facilities in the area, and the kinds of goods they offer for sale. The two shops situated on the main road to the west of the Cluster are hardly to be considered major commercial ventures. Their combined inventory of under Rs 500 only allows for a few items of stationery for local schoolchildren, religious articles, kerosene, tobacco and paper, sweets and a few staples such as spices, sugar and salt. They are visited by Indreni Limbus only to replenish unexpected shortages and then usually by persons living in the settlements in the immediate vicinity. Most people prefer to combine their shopping with the excitement of market day in Ilam Bazaar.

The Bazaar is only a one hour walk - about three miles - south along the main road from Angbung, the southernmost settlement in the Cluster and just under a two hour walk from the northernmost - Dorumba. On Thursdays, and to a lesser extent Sundays, hundreds of petty traders from the surrounding settlements set up 'shop' in the main square, squatting on blankets and bamboo mats, to sell their wares. Shoppers can buy from these small traders as well as from the permanent shops and stalls situated along the main street of the Bazaar. There are about ninety such shops and stalls

offering a wide variety of consumer items - imported mainly from India - and services.

TABLE 25
Shops in Ilam Bazaar

- 28 cloth shops, most carry other goods, such as kerosene, sugar, metals, as well.
- 21 tea stalls, most sell cigarettes and sweets; some also sell liquor clandestinely.
- 29 general shops carrying both western and Ayurvedic medicines, stationery, toys, torches, lanterns, batteries and food staples.
 - 1 hardware shop, selling various copper, iron and aluminium cooking vessels.
 - 1 shoe shop.
 - 1 watch and torch repair shop.
 - 1 'pharmacy', carrying mainly western patent medicines.
- 12 stalls for shoe repairs, tailor, smith, barber, laundry, etc.

It is sometimes argued that exposure to western-type consumer goods will create an immediate demand for these articles. To find the means of acquiring these 'targets', the argument goes, potential consumers will bring about profound changes in their work and investment patterns. This is certainly not true of the Limbus. An inventory of homesteads attests to their indifference to the great variety of merchandise on display each week in the Bazaar. There are perhaps three torches and the same number of hurricane lanterns in the Cluster. Medicines, Ayurvedic or western, are not bought, umbrellas are only infrequently seen, cosmetics are

never used. The apparent disinterest in acquiring these goods is undoubtedly related to their costs and/or costs of upkeep. Still, even the wealthiest men seem to prefer investing their monies in land and other socially valued perquisites..

I should not give the impression that all goods available in the Bazaar have gone unnoticed by Limbus. Copper and aluminium cooking vessels have replaced the earthenware of their forefathers. The women have taken to the brightly coloured beads and glass bangles sold in the Bazaar. Moreover, in all the household budgets I collected a number of non-durable goods appear regularly. Kerosene, for one thing, is a standard item of expenditure. This fuel is used in the crude lamps - a small tin can containing a wick - which provide the only source of indoor lighting. Since few households produce their requirements of mustard seed, cooking oil must be purchased regularly in the Bazaar. Some of the poorest households gather discarded nuts from the tea plantation on the outskirts of the Bazaar and crush them for oil. But the amount obtainable in this way is slight and the taste very bitter. Tobacco and paper count as regular expenditures for most households. Some of the old men remember when they smoked earthenware water pipes, but nowadays all

roll their tobacco in small strips of paper. Spices, soap and tea, only the latter item grown in Ilam, are regularly purchased on market day.

Since large quantities of salt are required both for cooking purposes and for cattle, households which can afford the cash outlay for bulk purchases go as far as Sanisare, a market town in the Terai about two days' walk from the Indreni Cluster. Several household heads, who spent part of the winter of 1965 labouring in the Terai, each purchased out of earnings their annual needs - a maund (80 lbs.) - of salt for Rs 16, thereby saving themselves as much as 40% on the retail price in the Bazaar.

Meat is the most expensive item in the food budgets of most households. Pork is purchased at least twice a month, and by some, weekly. At the time I conducted a census, four-fifths of all households had at least one pig, so that part of the demand can be satisfied from within the Cluster. The sacrifice of a pig to the domestic gods is usually accompanied by the sale of its meat to neighbours. But such sacrifices are intermittent, so that a regular supply is available only from traders who sell meat on market day.

Food items constitute one category of expenditure by the household. For those with children in school

there are fees and other school expenses to pay. Fifteen Limbu children from twelve households were enrolled at the primary school situated between Angbung and Bharapa. These represent about one third of Limbu boys aged 6 - 13 years. No Limbu girls have as yet attended school. Most boys who were registered in fact attended sporadically, when they were not required to mind cattle or work in the fields. During March, 1964, for example, only ten of these children appeared at all at the school and only half that number attended with regularity. Still, enrollment requires the payment of fees which range from Rs. 0.80 per month for students in their first year to Rs 1.60 for those in the fifth (and highest) class. Additional expenses for the parents of school children are for copy books and pencils, and the contribution of a bundle of thatch and a day's labour for re-roofing the school house each year.

Households require cash to pay taxes. Limbus in the Indreni settlements pay a total of Rs 327 in kipat taxes each year, which means an average of Rs 4.35 per kipat-owning household. Nine households pay Rs 29 on raiker lands owned, an average of Rs 3.25. Kipat owners who have mortgaged some of their lands, however, are entitled to claim a proportion of their

taxes (damasahi) from the landholders. The amount is determined at the time land is pledged and is written into the deed. The greater the amount of land mortgaged and the more numerous the number of landholders to whom it is given the larger the damasahi collected. Many Limbus with lands mortgaged have thus not only had their tax burden eased, but have in fact been able to turn a profit from this regulation. Eight households with taxes of up to Rs 5 to pay receive more than Rs 10 in damasahi payments, one as much as Rs 18.40. With total taxes of Rs 327 assessed, Limbus collect approximately Rs 380 in this way. On an aggregate basis, then, taxes do not constitute an expense. But not all households receive damasahi, and the amounts received by those who do, are not equally divided. In all, 35% of Limbu households must set aside cash to meet annual tax obligations.

Budgets allow for substantial expenditure on clothing. Each member of the household expects to be provided with a new set of clothing at least once a year, generally at the time of the Dasain festival in autumn. Although many Limbus in the northern parts of the district, and in Panchthar, still weave much of their own cloth by hand, Indreni Limbus purchase Indian made cloth in Ilam Bazaar. Despite the appearance of some

ready-made western style clothes in the Bazaar, Limbus still wear the traditional costume of the hill peasants. To sew their clothes they engage members of the Tailor caste.

Traditionally, the Tailor's service was supplied within the context of a relationship of interdependence between client and craftsman. The latter received a fixed amount of grains (bali) at harvest time in return for the services he provided. Moreover, the relationship between Tailor and client was permanent in that it was transmitted from one generation to the next.

Nowadays, all but two Limbu households engage Tailors from settlements in the surrounding area or Ilam Bazaar on a piece-work basis, and pay in cash for the services received. With such an arrangement, the household is free to shop around for a Tailor whose craftsmanship and prices are most suitable. Two households prefer to pay their Tailors annually in fixed quantities of grains. But even here the relationship between client and craftsman is unlike the traditional one in that it must be renewed each year and the payments determined on the basis of the estimated requirements of the client. In one case, the relationship is maintained because it is to the financial

advantage of the client who has a very large household. Another Limbu client severed such a tie with a Tailor two years ago because he preferred the craftsmanship in the Bazaar to that of his erstwhile Tailor in a neighbouring settlement.

Households also require constant repairs to and replacement of a variety of farming implements and other metal wares. This work is reserved to members of the Blacksmith caste. As with Tailors, the traditional relationship between Blacksmith and client was one of interdependence - a proportion of the harvest in return for services provided. Nowadays, the majority of households engage Blacksmiths on a cash for piece-work basis¹. This even applies to the nine clients of one of the Blacksmiths resident in the Cluster.

But whereas only two households retain tailoring services in return for a fixed amount of grain, ten households enter this kind of arrangement with Blacksmiths. The reasons given by the households for preferring an annual payment in grains vary. Some state that payment in a lump sum at harvest time precludes the

1. Relationships with service castes are similar to those described by Harper for the Malnad area viz. the alliances are easily broken; payments are mainly in cash; the prices of services fluctuate. (Cf. Harper, 1959).

necessity of finding ready cash which may not be available on each of the occasions when a Blacksmith's services may be required. One informant insisted that it was less expensive to pay a fixed quantity of grains, while several others admitted that the expense was probably greater, but that it was worthwhile if the craftsman gave good service. The insistence of some Blacksmiths on this form of payment and the dictates of tradition were other reasons offered.

It is the wealthiest households which tend to maintain a relationship based on payment in grains. This is to be expected since only these households are able to commit in advance a fixed quantity of agricultural income. There is, too, a question of prestige involved in maintaining the traditional type of relationship. It does not escape the Limbus that all Brahmin and Jaisi households in the Cluster prefer this kind of arrangement with both Tailors and Blacksmiths¹. Why more Limbu households have such ties with the latter than with the former is difficult to

1. Gould points out that 'the capacity to retain traditional ties with (service castes) marks a household as socially important.' (1964, p.18).

explain. It may be that the Tailors themselves prefer to be paid cash for specific work done, for I have heard that Tailors who accept an annual grain allotment are difficult to find.

To the extent that a relationship based on grain payments does exist, it is not akin to the Jajmani tie found in most multi-caste villages of India. For one thing, in a society with only two operative service castes¹ it seems impossible to speak of a 'jajmani system'. Secondly, the alternative to payment in grains is everywhere available, and by and large adopted. This latter factor makes even the relationship based on grain payments one of contract, since it can be broken with impunity by either party². Finally, the establishment of a client-craftsman relationship does not radiate out into other spheres. Rights and obligations begin and end within the context of the specific contract. The relationship is single-purpose.

-
1. There is a third caste of untouchable Cobblers, but their services, when required, are paid for on a cash basis only.
 2. 'Beidelman reminds us that both Marx and Weber pointed out the importance for the jajmani system of the lack of outside markets for labour or products.' (Kolenda, 1963, p.18).

In the foregoing paragraphs some recurrent expenditures of Limbu households have been considered. Wealthier households may spend more on a wider assortment of commodities or services, but all allow for the purchase of essential consumer needs. The budgets of two households are given in Table 26. Household 'A' contains two adults and produces only 57% of its food requirements. Household 'B' contains three adults and six children aged 1 - 14 years. It produces 152% of its annual requirements of food.

TABLE 26
Two annual household budgets

	<u>Household 'A'</u>	<u>Household 'B'</u>
Kerosene	Rs 20	Rs 52
Salt	10	16
Cooking oil	34	80
Soap	3	4
Tobacco and paper	20	36
Spices	10	16
Tee	40	52
Meat	75	150
Cloth	60	160
Tailor services	6 (cash)	16 (cash)
Metals	10	12
Blacksmith services	15 (cash)	32 (grains)
School expenses	-	6
Taxes	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	Rs 314	Rs 634

Contingent Expenditures: Mortuary Rites

There are a number of contingencies which arise, inevitably, in the lifetime of a household. Those which involve the greatest expenditures are marriages and mortuary rites.

The death of a Limbu renders lineage members ritually polluted for a period of three days if the deceased is a woman, or four if a man. During this period they are required to refrain from eating foods cooked in oil or seasoned with salt. At the end of the period a ritual of 'touching oil and salt' (nun tel chunu) is performed to remove the pollution. At this time the principal mourner (kiriya putra) must give a feast for those who assisted in the burial rites. However, neither the mourning sequence nor the expense ends there. Lineage members are prevented from propitiating household deities or making marriages until a second ritual is held to signify the cessation of further intercourse between the living members of the lineage and the deceased, and to indicate the return to normal relations between the lineage and the rest of the community. This latter ritual, which is also accompanied by a feast for as many people as the principal mourner cares to invite, may be held at any time from nine days to a year following the death.

To avoid the costs and inconvenience of holding two rituals some Limbus prefer to combine them by refraining from eating prohibited foods for only one meal following the death and then observing the period of pollution from the seventh to the ninth day after the burial. Both rituals are then held at one time.

The quality and variety of food served at mortuary feasts varies little, being confined to buffalo meat, rice and millet beer. Thus the precise costs of the rites depend mainly on the number of guests. Participation in these rituals is a function of spatial, kinship and status distance between the principal mourner or host and his potential guests. The interplay of these three factors becomes evident on consideration of those to whom invitations (nimto) are given and their response, measured by attendance.

Persons resident in the same neighbourhood as the host are invariably invited to attend mortuary rites and feasts. The host of a rite to be held in Angbung, for example, would expect other residents of the settlement to attend, as well as some from the adjoining settlement of Bharapa. Inhabitants of the two northernmost settlements would not be invited on the grounds of propinquity.

The spatial proscription on attendance at mortuary rites is, however, mitigated by kinship ties. Since lineage members are required to be present for ritual reasons the degree of their spatial separation from the host is irrelevant. Thus, a rite held following the death of the wife of a Kambo man living in Bharapa was attended by neighbours in Bharapa, most of whom are Chongbungs and Angus. But his lineage mates, all of whom reside in Chitok and Dorumbe also attended, even though members of other groups living in the latter settlements were not invited. Ties of agnation outside the lineage are of some importance in determining the range of invitees. Other than lineage mates, those who share membership of a local clan segment are not ritually affected by a death. Nevertheless, many recognize the loss of an agnate (or his wife) by refraining from eating ritually relevant foods for a single meal. The tie is generally recognized by the invitation of at least some agnates who live beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the host, provided, of course, he can afford it. A wealthy Chongbung man of Angbung, for example, extended invitations to a mortuary rite as far as Chitok, the northernmost limits of Chongbung residence in the Cluster.

Other kinds of ties within the Cluster may be acknowledged as well. These result from the practice of taking wives from groups with which affinal ties have already been established. Of the 145 women married into the Indreni Cluster, 62.7% belong to 30 different local clan segments from 19 settlement clusters within a radius of six miles. The result is that few women marrying into the Indreni Cluster are not already related agnatically to at least some wives of Indreni men. For example, six women of the same local clan segment from one settlement cluster three miles away are married into four Chongbung and one Kambo lineages. The death of an Indreni woman, therefore, obliges the host to invite the dead woman's agnates resident in the Indreni settlements, even if ties of agnation do not already exist between the host and the husbands of these women.

Are members of other castes invited to attend Limbu funerary rites? Aside from a prohibition on the handling of a dead body by non-Limbus, there are no ritual restrictions preventing the attendance of other castes at such rites. At the three rites I witnessed the only non-Limbus present were a few Blacksmiths from the neighbourhood who had come, uninvited, to enjoy the feasts. At one rite, in Bharapa, only

Limbus were present, although the settlement contains one Brahmin and four Megar households. When questioned, the host explained that no Brahmins or Megars were invited because they would not accept cooked food from a Limbu. Other informants state that members of other castes, excepting Brahmins, have been known to show up at mortuary rites if the Limbu is a close neighbour with whom they have friendly ties. Brahmins will attend, however, only if the Limbu is a man of comparable status. This suggests the existence of what might be called a status barrier to certain kinds of social intercourse, fortifying the existing cleavage along caste lines.

Do distinctions of status similarly affect relationships within the Limbu community? Wealth differences alone have little bearing on social ties among Limbus. These differences are irrelevant to the formation of work gangs for cultivation, or friendships, or in attendance at one another's rites. This may be due to the realization that wealth differences are ephemeral and that the fortunes of a household can change, figuratively speaking, overnight. But it also accords well with the view which Limbus have of themselves as an egalitarian people. However, where wealth is seen to be more than temporary, and,

moreover, where it is accompanied by other qualities which are universally hailed and which lead to recognition of the wealthy person as a 'Notable' (bhaladmi)¹ the status differences which emerge can produce a 'discontinuity' in social ties.

Status distinctions are expressed in the absence of a social superior from the mortuary rites of his inferiors. Attendance implies recognition of the superiority or equality of the host. The conflict of this principle with that of egalitarianism is resolved by excluding women from the conceptual hierarchy. Thus, one Limbu who would not attend any of the feasts to which he was invited because the hosts were 'small men' would allow his wife and daughters-in-law to participate while he remained away with his sons. In sum, the greater a man's status the higher the numbers likely to attend the rites he sponsors.

The participation of affinal relatives is essential for both prestige and ritual reasons. The consent of affines is required to remove the pollution of death from a lineage. In addition, whereas no other Limbu ritual enjoins the ritual specialist to be related in any special way to the host, rites following

1. See pp. 325 ff.

a death are thought to be more efficacious if the person officiating is an affine. The Limbus say that 'with an affine (officiating) we are certain that the mourners will be rid of their pollution.'

The essential expenditures for a mortuary rite are the costs of the feast and a new set of clothing for the principal mourner. One household spent Rs 73 to purchase a young male buffalo which was sufficient to feed 100 - 125 people adequately. The guests consumed 65 units of rice at a cost of Rs 78. An additional Rs 20 were expended on rice to feed eight affines who attended the ritual and were the guests of the host for two days. Since two of the guests were related as elder sister's husband to the host, it was also expected that a goat would be sacrificed in their honour. This cost the host an additional Rs 18. The expenses for beer were only Rs 39 since guests brought gifts of fermented millet, thus providing a substantial proportion of millet needs for the ritual. A new set of clothing for the host, which is put on following the removal of pollution, cost Rs 18. Finally, a member of the Tailor caste was paid Rs 1.60 to provide music for the occasion. The total expenditure on the mourning rite was in the region of Rs 250.

Another rite, attended by about half the number of guests cost the host Rs 203, while a third, which attracted the same number of guests as the first cost Rs 298, mainly because the host did not have time to search around for a smaller buffalo and so ended up buying one larger than he in fact needed. In the latter two instances the entire costs were borne by the household head whose daughter-in-law, in one case, and wife, in another, had died. The expenses in the first instance were shared among three brothers whose classificatory sister, a spinster, had died.

Since the pattern of mortuary rites is standard, costs tend to vary only moderately in accordance with the number of guests attending. This is apparent from the examples above, where the cost of the second rite was only 17% less than the first, despite the fact that half the number of guests attended. Expenditures on marriages, on the other hand, display a much wider range due to variations in the kinds of marital unions effected.

Contingent Expenditures: Marriage

Limbus marry in three ways: by arrangement (magi biha); by the 'theft' of an unmarried girl (chori biha); or by absconding with another man's

wife (jari). No stigma is attached to the latter two forms. Children of arranged, theft or jari marriages inherit equally. Nevertheless, arranged marriages are the most prestigious and consequently the most frequent. Of 172 virilocal marriages in the Indreni settlements, 58.7% were by arrangement, 21.5% were by theft, and 19.8% were jari marriages¹. Two-thirds of all married men in the Cluster have been married only once. Their marriages are shown in Table 27.

TABLE 27
Distribution of marriages involving men married once

By arrangement	66.6%
By theft	20.0%
By <u>jari</u>	13.3%

The following Table gives the distribution of marriages involving twenty-eight men who have married more than once.

TABLE 28
Distribution of marriages involving men married more than once

	<u>First Marriages</u>	<u>Subsequent Marriages</u>
By arrangement	68.4%	44.0%
By theft	18.4%	25.5%
By <u>jari</u>	13.2%	30.5%

1. I count only those marriages of which at least one spouse is still alive.

Clearly, what emerges from these figures is that a significant majority of Limbus marry their first wives by arrangement, but that subsequent marriages are more frequently effected by theft or jari. There is no indication that the proportion of first marriages by arrangement is higher among eldest sons than among their junior siblings. Of 33 eldest brothers (excluding only sons), 63.7% married their first wives by arrangement, while of 39 younger brothers the proportion is 64.1%.

Altogether of 113 married men in the Cluster, twenty-two have married twice, eleven men have had three wives and five men have married four times. But despite the fact that one third of Indreni men have had more than one wife, only four men have more than one wife living with them in the Cluster. Four others have two wives but in each case one has separated and is living in her natal settlement.

The low incidence of polygamous unions can be related directly to the high cost of marriages¹. Arranged marriage is the most expensive of the three forms. Traditionally, because marriage took place at an early age, the task of finding a wife had been the responsibility of the boy's guardian, usually his father. However, during the lifetime of a single generation the average age at which young men tend to marry has

1. See also p. 133.

increased by about four years - to eighteen. This has resulted in greater pressure by the young men on their elders to negotiate for partners they have already seen and chosen for themselves. Young men frequently have occasion to visit the settlements of their relatives and at such times mix freely at dances with the local girls. In 1964 a young Chongbung man was married to a girl he had first seen in 1962 when he attended the wedding of his father's brother's wife's brother. Since that time he had made a number of visits to her settlement in the company of other Indreni boys. When it came time for him to marry he informed his father of his choice. The latter agreed and set in motion the machinery for marriage negotiations. The elders tend not to disagree with the preferences of the young men so long as the household of the prospective bride is of approximately equal status to that of the groom. According to the wealthiest Limbu in the Cluster: 'The character of a big (i.e. rich) household differs from that of a small one, since there is much housework to do, many guests to feed, visitors who must be given tea, and so on. For these reasons the people of a big household do not like to take a daughter-in-law from a small household. And a boy from a very poor family does not come to ask for the daughter

of a rich man, since he could not make the necessary payments or provide for her in the way she has known before. She would soon run away.'

Before taking any formal initiative in marriage negotiations the boy's side will make discreet approaches, often through persons related to both sides, to determine the attitudes of the girl's family to the proposed union. Having ascertained what amounts to a tentative agreement from the other side, the young man's representatives travel to the home of the girl to conduct the formal, detailed negotiations.

It is considered proper for the marriage of a young man to be made by his agnates, more specifically, the senior agnate in whose household he resides. This is not always what in fact happens. Circumstances may lead to a boy being brought up in his mother's natal home. In such cases, the costs of the marriage will be borne by the mother's brother, although this tends to compromise the young man's prestige, and that of his close agnates. Because of this a young man brought up in his mother's natal home will strive in every way possible to find the monies needed for the marriage himself. In one instance, outside sources of income enabled an Indreni man raised by his mother's brother

to provide the costs of his own marriage, a fact he was most anxious to stress.

Bridewealth (sunauli) is paid to the girl's household immediately the marriage proposal made by the groom's representatives has been accepted. The size of the payment depends on two main factors. The first pertains to the wealth and status of the groups being united. The average of bridewealth payments made during the past decade by households in the lower half of the economic scale amounts to Rs 110 which is approximately 68% of the average payments - (Rs 160) - made during the same period by those in the top half of the scale. Although I could not bear this out statistically, it appears that if a young man succeeds in his proposals of marriage to a girl from a household which is far better off economically than his own, the bridewealth he will be obliged to pay will be at least as high as that demanded of a household on the same economic level as the girl's. In the only two instances of this nature which I was able to document, the bridewealth payments were Rs 192 in one case and Rs 224 in the other. Thus, in both cases they were above the average paid by households in the highest economic bracket. This would suggest that where the bride belongs to the economically

better off household, bridewealth payments are related to the wealth of her household and not the groom's.

The second determinant of the size of bride-wealth payments relates to whether or not the bride has already been married. Limbus allow widow remarriage and there is no difference in status within the household or community between a wife married as a virgin and one taken in widowhood. The natal household of a widow, however, receives a smaller bridewealth. One wealthy Indreni resident paid Rs 128 in bridewealth for a widow who four years earlier had been given as a virgin to her first husband for Rs 176. Another was married for the first time to a nubile girl for whom bridewealth of Rs 150 was paid. Later the same year he was married again, this time to a widow for whom Rs 80 was asked.

If a widow wishes it, she may, but is not obliged to marry her late husband's younger brother. If she does no bridewealth need be paid by the second husband although certain other marriage payments (rit) would be demanded (see following pages). There were two such cases of widow inheritance in the Indreni settlements. The rule applies only to real and not classificatory younger brothers who would have to pay bridewealth anew.

Marrying a dead wife's younger sister is also

permitted. However, there is no obligation on the part of the woman's group to provide another wife following the death of the first. The first marriage of a Chong-bung man in 1935 came to a rapid end when his wife died only a month after he had paid Rs 40 bridewealth to her father. He could neither claim the return of the money nor her replacement by another woman from her natal household. Still, some groups seek to reinforce their fledgling relations by arranging for the provision of a younger sister of the dead woman as a new wife. In such cases, bridewealth is paid for the second wife, as well, although the amount demanded by the woman's household for the second would be less than for the first. Two Indreni men married their dead wife's older sisters, which is considered to be an unsavoury practice. To neutralize the 'sin' (pap) a special payment, regarded as a fine, is given by the groom to her household.

Apart from paying bridewealth, the groom is required to make a number of other payments (rit) in cash, meat and liquor¹. Some of the rit payments, like bridewealth, are retained entirely by the household of

1. For reasons of convenience I distinguish, as do the Limbus, between bridewealth (sunauli) and other payments (rit).

the bride. The remainder is shared among her lineage mates and their wives, while the tie to her mother's brother is also recognized. These payments are sent to the bride's home the day following the wedding festivities which are held in the groom's settlement. The quantities transported require three or four young men to carry them and the journey can take up to two days. To present the payments an elder must accompany the party and act as its spokesman on their arrival at the bride's home. The groom's father must undertake to pay the road expenses of the entire party. Table 29 records the rit payments made by an Indreni groom in 1965.

TABLE 29
Rit payments at one marriage¹

a)	Fee to bride's father on arrival at his home	Rs 1.60
b)	Whole pig for bride's father, plus Rs 1.60	81.60
c)	One thigh of buffalo for bride's paternal grandfather	10.00
d)	One thigh of buffalo for bride's father	10.00
e)	For bride's father's brother	1.40
f)	For bride's father's mother	1.40
g)	For bride's grandfather's sister	1.40
h)	For bride's mother's brother	1.40
i)	For Subba of bride's lineage	2.00
j)	For four other lineage agnates	4.00
k)	For wives of above lineage agnates	1.60
l)	Fee to bride's father on entry of groom into house	2.40
m)	Costs of meat (<u>perengo</u>)	12.00
n)	Costs of liquor	40.00
o)	Costs of transporting <u>rit</u>	15.00
	Costs of rit	Rs 185.80

1. Each of payments (c-k) is accompanied by a small wicker purse (perengo) containing about one-half pound of pig meat. The equivalent of about one pint of liquor (raksi) would also be added to each payment. The bride's household received twenty pints. The costs of meat and liquor appear as separate items (m) and (n).

The rit payments recorded in the above Table are about average. The range is from Rs 150 to Rs 225.

Marriage payments extend over a period of three years. The Limbu husband returns to the bride's natal settlement each year during the festival of **Dasein** to make obeisance to his wife's father and his lineage mates. On each of these occasions he brings meat - a whole pig plus perengo - and liquor on a scale equal to the initial rit payments made at the time of the marriage. The fees to lineage agnates and their wives need not be paid again, although these relatives continue to receive perengo and liquor. The expenses of transporting the payments are of course recurrent. The costs for each of these three annual payments for the husband whose expenses are listed in Table 29 would thus amount to Rs 168.60 (items b, c, d, m, n, o) or a total of Rs 505.80 over the three year period. This would mean that all rit payments amount to Rs 691.60 (i.e. Rs 185.80 plus Rs 505.80).

Bridewealth and rit payments for a theft marriage follow the same pattern as those in arranged marriages and amount to approximately the same. The husband of a woman married without the prior consent of her guardian also continues payments over a three year period. One

additional and non-recurring payment is made to the bride's household at the time bridewealth is transferred. Theft of a wife calls for a fine of Rs 10 - 20 because, say the girl's kinsmen, 'our roof has been broken'.

Marriage by theft eludes the costs of wedding festivities, which constitute the heaviest item of expenditure in arranged unions¹. As with mortuary rites, attendance and hence costs are related to factors of residence, kinship and status. Members of other caste groups do not, as a rule, attend Limbu weddings. At one wedding witnessed in Dorumba only Limbus were present, although Dorumba runs into a settlement which is heavily populated by other castes. At another, in Angbung, a Newar, the ritual friend (mit) of the groom's father was the only non-Limbu present. The host in the first instance was a poor man; in the latter a man of above average wealth.

Only in Chitok, at the wedding of the grandson of the Cluster's richest Limbu, were all castes, including the area's most distinguished Brahmins, in attendance. Their presence attested to the prominence of the host, not merely because of his wealth, but because his status transcended both caste and

1. Almost without exception, men give as their reason for stealing a bride the high cost of wedding festivities.

settlement boundaries. He is recognized as a 'notable' in the wider community.

To feed his 300 Limbu guests from every part of the Cluster and the dozen or so specially invited kinsmen from other settlements necessitated the slaughter of a buffalo costing Rs 288. The presence of about 25 members of other castes who do not eat buffalo meat required that a goat priced at Rs 30 be slaughtered. Rice and millet beer added another Rs 285 to the expenses. Fees totalling Rs 45 were given to the musicians and the Tailor who prepared the bride's clothes and whose blessing (asik) is thought to be auspicious for the couple. The cloth he sewed for the bride, which was a gift from the groom, amounted to Rs 55, while the new tunic required by the latter cost another Rs 30.

A variety of minor payments were also made to the twelve women accompanying the bride to the wedding. These women (lokanti), who are both agnates and lineage wives, represent the bride's household and kin group and must be treated with great deference throughout the festivities. The initial hostility of the two groups being united is symbolized in the spatial separation of the bride and her party of women from the groom's house on their arrival. They spend their

first night in a specially constructed shelter (dera) out of sight of the house where the wedding is to take place. Here they are fed and entertained and indulged their right to insult the groom and his relatives in a highly formalized manner, which brings only abject pleas for forgiveness from the latter. Entrance to the shelter demanded a payment of Rs 3, and on their removal the following day to the groom's house for the wedding rite an additional payment of the same amount was given. Following the wedding rite the women, now classed as affines, were entitled to the respect relatives by marriage must be given. In lieu of a special feast for the women, they received Rs 8 in addition to a payment of Rs 12 for their expenses on the return trip.

The actual wedding rite (lagan) necessitated the sacrifice of a cock and hen (Rs 8) and the presentation by the groom of Rs 2 in cash and a necklace of glass beads (Rs 5) to the bride. Another Rs 3 was given to the officiating ritual specialist who was the groom's classificatory grandfather.

Immediately following the wedding rite the deity which watches over the welfare of the household must be placated. This is effected by men beating on

goatskin drums in a set rhythmic pattern while circumambulating the main post of the groom's house, at the base of which the deity resides. These drummers, who are Limbus¹, come, uninvited from settlements as far as eight to ten miles away, to express the interest of all Limbus in the union of the young couple and their respective kin groups. Seven drummers from as many settlements appeared at the wedding in Chitok. For their attendance a fee totalling Rs 10 in cash and meat was paid. The itemized costs of the wedding festivities were thus as follows:

TABLE 30
Costs of wedding festivities

Buffalo	Rs 288
Goat	30
Rice	175
Millet	110
Fees to Tailor (and musicians)	45
Bride's clothing	55
Groom's clothing	30
Marriage rite	18
Payments to Limbu drummers	10
Payments to women escorting bride	26
Total	Rs 787

Because of the status of the host the number of guests attending was far higher than the average for

1. They are to be distinguished from the Tailors who are musicians (and drummers) hired to provide entertainment at weddings.

Indreni weddings. Consequently, the costs of wedding festivities in this case were about 20% higher than the average expenditure. Still, once an arranged marriage has been decided upon, there is a minimum standard of largesse expected from the host, however humble his means or status. The lowest cost I have recorded for wedding festivities during the past decade is Rs 335, for the marriage of an Angu of less than average wealth and with a narrow range of kin ties, thus making possible a comparatively low attendance figure of just under 100 guests.

To help meet the costs of wedding feasts, guests bring contributions of cash (chanda). The amounts are recorded and reciprocal donations are expected from the host when he is invited to attend the weddings of his guests' sons and brothers. Eighty-three households contributed Rs 240 to the costs of the wedding in Chitok. This is slightly higher than the average volume of contributions, which normally cover about 15% of the expenses.

The least expensive way of obtaining a marriage partner is by absconding with another man's wife. The costs of a jari marriage are, by and large, confined to the amount of compensation (jarikal) the new husband pays

to the cuckolded husband. Compensation must be paid for violation of a man's monopoly of sexual rights to his wife. A husband can, of his own accord, dispose of these rights by taking part in a ceremony in which he symbolically removes the red powder (sidur) from the forehead of his wife, and thereby signifies an end to the marriage. In the only case of this nature in the Cluster, the woman was barren and her husband was anxious to be rid of her so that he could take another wife. He wrote a document in the presence of witnesses claiming that if she became another man's wife he would make no demands for compensation. Divorce is extremely unusual since it involves renunciation of sexual rights and the companion rights to claim compensation¹.

Compensation rates are to a large degree determined by the negotiating skills of those representing the offended and offending husbands². The former try to recoup as large a proportion of the marriage costs as they can. A Limbu who had spent a total of Rs 1280 on his marriage was able to get only Rs 480 when his wife went off with another man three years later. In another instance a woman married by jari left her Indreni

-
1. For the case of a woman who attempted - unsuccessfully - to obtain a divorce, see pp. 136 ff.
 2. See pp. 313 ff.

husband two years later to live with another man. The Indreni husband, who had paid compensation of Rs 640 in 1959, collected Rs 400 when she left him in 1961. This process of 'devaluation' of women is recognized in compensation claims. The greater the number of men with whom a woman absconds the lower the compensation that need be paid for her. Indeed, the old Law Code stipulated that a woman who absconds for the third time is considered a whore (besye) and no compensation can be claimed by the last cuckold¹. The least amount of compensation paid for a woman married by jari into the Indreni Cluster amounted to Rs 40. The Indreni man is her third husband, and the second she has married by jari. The average amount of compensation paid by Indreni men for their jari marriages during the past ten years amounts to Rs 435.

After compensation has been paid the new husband makes token obeisance to his father-in-law by presenting the latter and his lineage mates with some meat and liquor, the costs of which seldom amount to more than Rs 40 - 50. He does not pay bridewealth or other rit payments. Nor are visits to his in-laws during Dasein obligatory for the three year period, although most

1. Law Code (Muluki Ain), 1935 edition. This has been replaced by a revised Code introduced in 1963.

Indreni Limbus do make the trip along with small offerings at least once.

TABLE 31
Comparative marriage costs

<u>Type of Marriage</u>	<u>Range of Costs</u>
Arranged Marriages	Rs 950 - 1400
Theft Marriages	650 - 950
<u>Jari Marriages</u>	300 - 500

In sum, then, jari is the least expensive form of Limbu marriage. Roughly, its costs amount to one-third of those for arranged marriages and half those of theft marriages (see Table 31). The considerable costs of marriage are made evident when we note that the average annual income from agriculture of the lowest 50% of Indreni Limbu households amounts to Rs 500, while the figure for the top 50% is Rs 1900. The new Law Code, introduced in 1963, in an attempt to discourage jari practices, sets a compensation figure of up to Rs 1000 or five years' imprisonment if the cuckold chooses to bring charges. So far, Limbu reluctance to use the courts in dealing with compensation claims has left unaffected the amounts transferred. But this law is one of the few in the new Code with which the Limbus are conversant and the threat of court action could yet

become a potent weapon in the hands of the aggrieved husband.

One other kind of marriage expenditure, the dowry given married daughters, should be mentioned. A dowry (daijo) is usually given several years following a marriage, after all the marriage payments have been completed, and when one or two children have been born. In the case of a wealthy household several hundred rupees or their equivalent in cattle or jewellery may be given. Mostly, however, dowries to Indreni women are small, consisting of some household utensils and between Rs 25 - 50 in cash. Since lineage agnates receive a share of marriage payments given for a girl, they also contribute to the cost of her dowry, thus relieving what little burden there is on the girl's household. In consequence, the marriage of a daughter is regarded not as an economic disaster, but as an event bringing the household temporary but much welcomed gains. 'We Limbus', they say, 'sell our daughters in order to eat.'¹

The costs of a son's marriage, on the other hand, must be borne entirely by the household in which the boy resides. Only the contributions of wedding

1. In contradistinction, a Brahmin with many daughters is a much pitied man.

guests relieve the burden slightly. The lineage, or even the sibling group - unless it constitutes a single household - does not share in the expenditure. As with mortuary rites, marriages of sons emphasize the independence of the household as an economic unit.

In the preceding section I have discussed a few of the obligations which a household must be prepared to meet during its lifetime. Some are recurrent, to be discharged weekly, monthly or annually. Others, like mortuary rites and marriages, are contingencies, and impose a temporary but considerable financial burden on the Limbu household. To meet these expenditures and to fill the gap between agricultural production and food requirements, the great majority of Limbu households must rely on income from sources other than the fields they cultivate themselves. Wealth can be earned locally, from 'commercial' sources both within and in the vicinity of the Indreni Cluster, and externally, through military service.

Commercial Sources: within the Cluster

A primary source of income within the immediate area of the Indreni settlements is agricultural labour for wages. To determine the need for this kind of labour it is first of all necessary to inquire into the

ability of the household to manage its cultivation tasks unassisted.

The household can handle most stages of maize and millet cultivation on its own. Since the fields are usually within easy reach of the cultivator's homestead, the work can be done at a leisurely pace. The growing of maize and millet is further simplified by the fact that men and women can perform the same labour, except ploughing. Only if the household possesses no bullocks for ploughing or if it works many lands does it require more than a few outside hands to help in the various tasks. The typical scene between March and June, when maize is planted and weeded, and again in late August and early September, during the maize harvesting and millet planting season, is of household groups working with only a minimum of assistance in their separate fields.

The picture changes radically in June and July, and again in November, for the cycle of paddy cultivation. Because of the pressures of a limited planting and harvesting season, a great many tasks must be performed in a short span of time. During the days prior to a planting, the field has to be ploughed and the terrace walls cleared of grasses and weeds so that

they will attract no insects or mice, and so that the grasses act as fertilizer, since no other is used. The latter work is performed mainly by women. When it is completed the terraces are flooded. On the day prior to the planting, women remove the paddy seedlings from the seed bed and tie them in bundles which can be easily carried or thrown to the planters.

At planting time, the ploughmen first turn and level the flooded terraces. They are followed by men whose job it is to complete the levelling of the mudded terraces with hand-hoes and repair and reinforce the levees broken by the ploughs and levellers. Women then plant the seedlings, working in clusters of two or three to a terrace. Several other women are required to keep them supplied with seedlings.

At harvest time, a fairly rigid division of labour is again evident. Members of both sexes share the job of cutting the paddy stalks which are left to dry in the sun for about four days. The stalks are then bundled by men and carried, mainly by women, to a terrace which has been cleared and levelled for threshing. The stalks are piled in a mound and left to dry for about a week. The job of threshing and winnowing is left to the men, who are assisted by the women in

bringing the grain to their homes. Transporting the bundles of straw is left mainly to the women.

In view of this elaborate division of tasks and the pressures of time, the household requires a labour force which it is unable to provide from its own resources. To produce the 790 units of paddy which is the average for the 63 Limbu households cultivating this crop requires approximately 46 male and 50 female labour days for planting and harvesting alone. The household obtains the assistance it needs to cultivate its fields through the recruitment of labour gangs. Each of the gangs is formed for the performance of a particular task and dissolves upon its completion. Planning in advance is necessary because commitments to join a gang on a specific date are on a 'first come first served' principle, and no man can claim prior rights to command the labour resources of any other household than his own. Since there is a potential Limbu work force of only 257 persons (12 - 60 years) the need for coordination is evident.

The great majority of these gangs are recruited on the basis of mutual exchange of labour (pareli). The system is preferred by all who have labour to exchange since it obviates the need to transfer scarce cash. Labour exchanges are strictly reciprocal, however,

and each household keeps its account of the number of labour days it is owed and owes¹. There is a recognized scale of job equivalents, so that, for example, a household without draught animals will have to exchange three days of planting for one day of ploughing. These equivalents, however, relate only to jobs and not to the ability of the individuals performing them. So that a young girl can be sent to repay the labour given by a strong young man, as long as the jobs are considered on a par with each other. Labour exchanges need not be immediate: a labour debt incurred at the time of paddy planting may be repaid at harvest time. The sanctions for fulfilling labour obligations are the need to depend on others for similar assistance and failure to meet labour debts would mean no further help for the recalcitrant household.

Despite the fact that paddy fields are scattered and situated at some distance from homestead sites, labour is exchanged not with those who cultivate adjoining fields, but with settlement neighbours. Only seldom are the two coincidental. Linkages among households exchanging labour only occasionally extend far beyond the boundaries of settlement. So that labour

1. In times of illness or other crisis neighbours will help each other without expectation of an equivalent return. But the practice (guhar) occurs infrequently.

gangs formed in Angbung, for example, are recruited mainly from households in the settlement and partly from adjacent households in Bherapa.

The restricted radius of recruitment also tends to exclude members of other castes from Limbu work gangs. Only a handful of households in Bherapa exchange labour with Megars and a few poor Brahmins living in an adjacent settlement, and a similar practice is followed by some households in Dorumba. Labour is never exchanged with wealthy Brahmins in the Cluster. This is mainly due to the reluctance of the latter, for reasons of prestige, to send members of their households to work on the fields cultivated by others.

The labour pool on which households can draw is limited not only by factors of settlement and neighbourhood, but by considerations of kinship as well. One brother tends not to participate in another's labour gang. The reason is seen by Limbus as relating to the fact that male siblings inherit from a single source. In one instance, relations between two brothers were strained to the point of a complete severance of day-to-day ties. In others, structural strains were expressed largely in avoidance of one another's work gangs. Where relations among brothers are amicable,

exchanges of labour will involve members of their households, but the brothers themselves will not join the gangs. This does not prevent them, however, from working together in the labour gangs of third persons. Of 27 such gangs observed working on the fields of men with married brothers in the Cluster, only one gang contained a male sibling group.

Seventeen Limbu households do not partake of mutual labour exchanges because they cultivate insufficient lands to require help from other households. The work they have to offer, therefore, is for payment only. Along with 57 other households, which combine exchanges with labour for wages, they form a pool of labour for wealthy Brahmins within and surrounding the Cluster as well as for a number of Indreni Limbus. The eight Limbu households regularly hiring labour are compelled to do so because the hands they require to cultivate their lands are not obtainable through mutual exchanges alone. The labour gangs recruited by these households, then, are apt to contain both paid and exchange labour. But whereas the recruitment of the latter type is confined to neighbourhoods, agricultural labour for wages is sought from within a wider circumference. Residents of Angbung, for example, who never exchange labour with Chitok Limbus, do work for wages on the fields of the

latter.

It is impossible to speak of a free market for labour in the region of the Indreni settlements. Limbus can earn more by working for Brahmins in settlements to the south of the Cluster than by labouring for Limbus or Brahmins in the Cluster. For hoe work the daily rate in the Cluster is Rs 0.80, while Brahmins outside offer up to Rs 1.20. Similarly, a ploughman receives Rs 1.60 if he works on Indreni fields, and up to Rs 2.40 if he ploughs for outside Brahmins. Limbus, of course, do work for the latter, but not at the expense of withdrawing their labour from the former. Here again, explanation must be sought in the multiplicity of ties within the Cluster binding labourers and those who hire them.

How important is agricultural labour for wages? It would be impossible to estimate the amount of income earned by Limbu households from this source. Of 74 households engaged in casual labour of this sort, six rely only on this source to supplement income from fields they cultivate. They earn an average of about Rs 250, but most other households depend only perfunctorily on agricultural wage labour. This is because a number of other opportunities for earning cash are available. Some of these, like agricultural labour, can

be exploited within the Indreni settlements.

Fishing provides four households with an average annual income of Rs 105. Only one man uses a net, while the rest must employ cruder techniques to make their catch. A series of stone dams are first erected, jutting out several feet from the river bank. A grass is then spread over the slowly moving pools created by the blockage and this has the effect of stunning the fish so that they can be caught by hand. A number of wicker baskets are also placed at the foot of the dams and some fish are caught in this way. The process is labourious but between October and March an assiduous fisherman can trap up to ten pounds a week. These sell in the market and the Cluster for Rs 2 per pound.

Two households have mandarin groves producing about 7500 fruit a year between them. The mandarins are transported to Sanisare, a market town about 25 miles away in the Terai where they fetch more than double the local price. The two households earn an average of Rs 310 annually from this source.

Five Indreni household heads earn a regular income by performing ritual services in the Cluster. A Limbu ritual specialist (phedengma) discovers his

powers through dreams or, as is more often the case, by becoming possessed. He then seeks the guidance of a teacher from whom he learns the secrets of his calling. Households choose their phedangma on the basis of utility. Some try and discard several before finding one they believe to be efficacious. Others alternate between two or more phedangma. Kinship is not a serious consideration in the choice of a ritual specialist. The two most popular phedangma in the Cluster have among their clients representatives of all the main lineage groups. Nor is neighbourhood an important criterion of choice. Three phedangma have clients in three different settlements and a fourth in all four of the Indreni settlements.

Fewer than one third of all Limbu households ever utilize the services of a Brahmin priest. For those that do - and they are mostly the better-off households - the occasion is an annual Satya Narayan ritual. Limbus choose this particular rite because for one thing it is brief and relatively inexpensive and for another, because Satya Narayan is the Hindu deity which is believed more than others to affect the fortunes of a household. But the employment of Brahmins stops there.

It is the phedangma whom all Limbus employ to officiate at the important rites de passage at the time of birth, marriage and death. A phedangma is also required to conduct the worship of domestic deities and in addition, is one of a variety of specialists who may be called to treat illness. Since the household propitiates its deities on an average of three times yearly, the phedangma's minimum annual income from this source can be estimated. The fee generally paid for the performance of a ritual is Rs 1.60, a pint of liquor (Rs 1.) and enough rice for a meal (Rs 0.60). The phedangma can thus expect to earn a minimum of approximately Rs 10. per client per year. One specialist, with twenty-seven household clients, relies only on his income from this source to supplement his meagre production from a household plot. The most popular specialist, with thirty-three clients, combines his work as phedangma with agricultural labour. At a minimal estimate, then, eighty households pay Rs 800 annually for ritual services, which monies are divided among five phedangma.

Four extremely poor households earn small incomes by providing more affluent households with 'domestic service'. The most common practice is for

young boys from poor families to live in wealthier homes. They are treated like members of the new household and, as with other members, their labour is at the disposal of the household head. They are referred to as herdboys (gothalo) although they work in the fields as well as tend cattle. For these services they are fed and clothed, and paid an annual salary of from Rs 15 - 50. The relationship seldom persists over a lengthy period, the herdboys generally returning to their own homes after a year or two. Three households earned an income of Rs 100 from providing this kind of service. In another instance, the wife of a poor Chitok man did domestic chores for a wealthy neighbour whose own wife was chronically ill. The arrangement enabled the former to spend only a few hours each day at her chores, returning daily to her own home. For her assistance she was paid about Rs 40 over the year.

Finally, one household earns Rs 110 a year from the sale of clarified butter to a Jaisi in the area who markets it in Ilam. The son of another household head, although only a fifth former himself, earns Rs 420 as a teacher in the local primary school.

Commercial Sources: outside the Cluster

Since the turn of the century, and especially during the past two decades, Indreni Limbus have been turning to income sources outside the Cluster. These opportunities come under three main headings: government service; portering and petty trading; and casual labour.

The Government has been a potential employer since the establishment of an administration in Ilam. Indreni Limbus have been employed for years as minor functionaries in Government offices in the Bazaar. Three household heads spent a total of thirty-six years in the local militia, while three others served for two to four years in regular army units stationed in Ilam. At present two household heads are in Government service. One is a policeman, earning Rs 740 per annum while another is in the militia with a salary of Rs 580. The former is able to return home regularly, but the latter, since he is posted to a border station about fifteen miles away, can visit only during his leaves.

Opportunities for petty trading and portering have grown apace with the commercial development of Ilam Bazaar. At the turn of the century, the Bazaar

contained only half a dozen shops, enough to cater for the few resident Government employees as well as those visiting the town on market day. By 1964 there were ninety shops and a resident population of approximately 5000¹. The size of the market, too, has grown. On any Thursday upwards of 2000 inhabitants of the surrounding area make their way to the Bazaar, and provide a substantial buying public for the permanent shopkeepers and petty traders.

Women of the Indreni settlements distill liquor (raksi) from millet and sell this to 'tea' stall owners in Ilam Bazaar who retail it on market day. Some of the women also sell liquor on the main road through the Cluster to persons going to or returning from the market. Three households situated beside the main road offer hospitality to trading expeditions, providing cooking utensils and sleeping arrangements free of charge, and profiting from sales of liquor. Despite a Government ban - never enforced - on the sale of spirits without a licence, thirty-seven households earn an annual profit of about Rs 6840 from this trade. It

1. Under Panchayat regulations, to qualify as a 'town' there must be a population of 10,000. Ilam Bazaar has thus absorbed a number of surrounding settlements to make up the difference.

is the most important commercial source of income earned locally by Indreni Limbus.

Indreni women also regularly bring for sale in the market a kind of yeast loaf (marca) used in the preparation of liquor. From this trade, eleven households clear Rs 2195 annually. Another household head has a permanent stall set up each Thursday in an area of shops at an important crossroads between the Cluster and Ilam Bazaar. From the traffic generated by market day he is able to earn a profit of Rs 160 over the year from the sale of meat, beer and liquor.

Since the revolution of 1951, Ilam Bazaar has enjoyed an unprecedented growth. The expansion of existing and establishment of new Government services (including two secondary schools and a college) and a growing population have led to a surge of building activity. Since road communications in the district, as in most hilly regions of Nepal, are extremely primitive, goods can only be transported by horse caravans, or on the backs of men. For residents of the Indreni settlements, this has meant new opportunities to porter the increasing volume of raw materials required for building. Chief among these is wood.

Over the past five years alone the amount of wood coming into the Bazaar has increased fourfold. During

the dry season from November to May, the porters carry planks from the forests south of Ilam Bazaar, where the wood is cut and trimmed, to the district capital.

Indreni men usually work in teams, contracting to carry up to 1000' at an average rate of Rs 192. Some men carry six days a week throughout the season, others porter only occasionally, as their cash needs demand or strength allows. The twenty households engaged in portering earned a total of Rs 5300 in 1964-65.

Another three household heads, who are skilled sawyers, contracted to cut some of the timber carried by the porters. They brought home a profit of Rs 350 for a month's work.

Portering wood is confined to households in the two southernmost Indreni settlements, Angbung and Bharapa. This is partly because these settlements are closest to the forests. By leaving their homes in the early morning, the porters are able to return, after carrying a timber load, the same evening. But the confinement of this enterprise to households from one section of the Cluster also attests to the strength of neighbourhood ties. Porters like to travel in company with others, and neighbours are preferred company.

Tin sheets for roofing, water pipes, cement, kerosene - indeed a whole range of capital and consumer

goods needed to sustain the Bazaar's growth - are also carried by porters. For these items, however, the men must go to Sanisare, a market town in the Terai to the south. But unless they can carry a load both ways, the journey is not worthwhile. Porters therefore transport mandarins to Sanisare from groves north of the Indreni Cluster. Some accept a fixed rate - about Rs 3.20 per 100- to porter the fruit. Others assume the role of middlemen. They purchase the mandarins from the orchard owners and transport them to Sanisare, where they can fetch from two to three times the hill price. The capital required is small and the profits earned are re-invested in consumer and capital goods needed in Ilam Bazaar. The profits from these trading and portering ventures, which take up to five days, can be substantial. The eight households - again all from Bharepa and Angbung - engaged in this enterprise earn about Rs 900, most of it during the six week mandarin season.

Another source of income is casual labour in the Terai or in bordering areas of India. The agricultural lull around January and February, before the maize is planted, finds a number of Indreni residents working for wages out of the district. During the

winter of 1964-65 eight household heads spent from two to six weeks employed as unskilled labourers on a variety of building projects in the Terai and Darjeeling district. The eight brought home a total of Rs 1150. The head of another household is a skilled carpenter and relies regularly on work in the Terai - and, when he can find it, in and around the Cluster. His annual earnings amount to approximately Rs 300.

Military Service

The most lucrative source of income for Limbu households is service in foreign armies. The history of military service by Indreni men goes back to the establishment, in the first decade of this century, of two Gurkha regiments composed exclusively of Rais and Limbus¹. Prior to this time members of the two groups had been admitted to various para-military forces stationed in Burma and Assam. But their service in the Gurkhas, created a century and a half ago, had been limited. The Limbus, particularly, were considered to be inferior soldiers, apparently having acquired a reputation for lack of discipline². Following the

-
1. To avoid confusion with previous references to 'Gorkha', I spell the term for servicemen as 'Gurkha'.
 2. Jackson, 1940, p. 434.

creation of the two eastern regiments, however, an average of 221 Limbus were recruited annually from east Nepal. As the prejudice against them gradually receded, their numbers rose. During the next decade an average of 283 were recruited each year¹.

The acceptance of Limbus into the Gurkha forces coincided with the growth of large-scale mortgaging of kiptat lands in the Cluster. The Limbus were compelled to find other sources of income. Possibilities were limited, since Ilam Bazaar was still in its infancy and could not offer opportunities for trading and portering described above. After the first two Indreni men were enlisted in the Gurkhas prior to the First World War, military service was seen to be a viable means of earning income lost as a result of land mortgaging. During the War, when recruiting was intensified and standards of induction considerably relaxed, eleven Indreni men were accepted in the army. Since then, a substantial proportion of the Cluster's male inhabitants has served in the Gurkhas².

1. Vansittart, 1915, p.8.

2. By and large, Brahmins do not serve in the Gurkha regiments; nor are they encouraged to do so. Although members of other castes, such as Magars, are recruited, none resident in the Indreni Cluster is in the army.

The reason most often cited for joining the army is the need to earn money because of economic hardship (dukha). Linked to the financial inducements is the respect accorded a returning soldier, especially one who manages to rise above the ranks. Prospective volunteers speak of 'making a name' (nam kamaunu), and each of the recruiting forces is graded according as how it is believed to allow for promotion¹. Young men also admit to an urge to travel and, occasionally, to the fact that personal squabbles within the household may drive them away from the Cluster. Still, economic motives must be seen to underlie the widespread attachment to military service. Despite the fact that Ilam district has never been a prime source of recruits², 43.8% of all living Indreni Limbu males aged eighteen or over either have served or are at present serving in the army. Those in the forces at present constitute 11.5% of the adult male population.

-
1. In 1947, the Gurkha regiments were divided between the Indian and British armies, each of which now recruits separately. There is also the Assam Rifles, whose recruiting efforts are closely coordinated with those of the Indian Gurkhas. For convenience I include the Assam Rifles with the Gurkhas.
 2. Apparently, it still is not. Out of approximately 180 Limbus recruited in 1964 at Dharan, the British recruiting depot for eastern regiments, only 16 were from Ilam district.

As might be expected, the more depressed sections of the community turn most frequently to Gurkha service. Members of groups without ownership rights to kīpat in the Cluster are a case in point. In Chapter II it was shown how the accommodation of 'outsiders' by Indreni kīpat-owners varied in accordance with the availability of land. Once the shortage had reached a critical stage, affinal or cognatic kinsmen who settled in the Cluster could not expect to receive kīpat grants. At best, they were able to occupy small plots of kīpat belonging to their hosts or, as in some instances, to purchase some raikar land. But these lands were invariably insufficient to support their descendants. Whereas impoverished Limbus with ownership rights to kīpat had first refusal on tenancy offers, in addition to rights of berd, non-kīpat owners could claim no such prerogatives. In consequence, males of the first succeeding generation of outsiders tended to join the army. A few examples will illustrate the pattern which repeated itself almost without exception.

A man from the district of Panchthar settled uxori-locally in the Cluster after marrying the sister of a Chongbung man. During his lifetime he cultivated a small piece of kīpat land taken under mortgage

from his father-in-law. The land was not sufficient to support two additional families which his sons would soon create. On reaching adulthood, both joined the army.

In a replica of this instance, all four sons of a man who married the daughter of the Nembeke Subba joined the army.

Sometimes, the process is delayed a generation. The first Indreni Angu settled in the Cluster after marrying a Chongbung woman. Since he was a Government servant posted to Ilam, he had an income with which he was able to purchase some raikar land in Bharapa. There was sufficient land to divide among his three sons, although one fell on bad times and enlisted in the Gurkhas. When the lands were divided again among the grandsons, the estates proved to be inadequate. Four of his six grandsons served in the Gurkhas.

A similar train of events follows on those who are raised in the Cluster through matrilinear ties. When a Kambo absconded with the wife of another man, he also brought along the woman's son from her first marriage. When the boy grew up he chose to remain in the Cluster rather than return to where his kipat rights lay. To accumulate the capital necessary to obtain land

he joined the Gurkhas.

The army is still the most important income source for Limbus without ownership rights to kipat land. Six of the twelve men in the army at present are members of non-kipat-owning households. They account for 42.8% of Limbu males without kipat between the ages 18 - 40 years. The six who own kipat, on the other hand, represent just over 11% of kipat-owning males in the same age bracket.

Military service, of course, is not entirely a matter of the individual's own choosing. Firstly, acceptance into the army depends on physical and intellectual criteria over which the volunteer has no control. Secondly, his chances vary in accordance with the annual quotas accepted by the various forces. Thousands of hopeful candidates are turned away each year at the recruiting camps or by special recruiting agents in the hills. But once accepted into the army, a number of factors may still militate against long service. During both World Wars, for example, standards were lowered to allow for maximum enlistment. But at the conclusion of hostilities, most of the wartime recruits were discharged. Sixteen of the thirty Indreni men who have completed their service were wartime

volunteers who spent an average of 5.4 years in the military. Most were released at the end of their service, others chose not to re-enlist. Some, like four Indreni men who were in the Gurkhas between the Wars came home on leave and never returned.

The need to return home to manage an estate is a common reason for the failure of Indreni men to complete the minimum service required for a pension¹. Those who are away rely on fathers and brothers to protect their interests during their absence. The death of such a person, then, might require a man to leave the service. Quarrels over division of property are also causes of premature resignation from the army. But personal inability to adjust to army life also counts as an important reason for leaving. The early years are the most difficult, and desertions or resignations occur most frequently in the formative years. None of the Indreni servicemen, however, left the army after serving eight years without first qualifying for a pension. The investment of so much time is thought to be worthwhile only if it leads to a pension, so that during the latter half of the period of service, the

1. The period of service required to receive a pension varies. By and large, to receive a private's pension, 15 years of service is mandatory.

pressures of obligations at home are resisted more assiduously than during the first years.

Eight of the thirty ex-servicemen are receiving long service pensions totalling Rs 6110 per year. Two others, who were discharged on medical grounds, are paid Rs 1250. Three households receive pensions paid to immediate descendants of servicemen killed in action. These amount to Rs 710 each year. The total income from pensions therefore amounts to Rs 8070 each year.

Service salaries account for a substantial proportion of current income. Twelve soldiers earn a total of Rs 14,250 annually in pay. Based on past remittances and on estimates of average savings, it can be assumed that about 60% of a soldier's pay eventually reaches the Indreni settlements. This would mean a net income of Rs 8550 from army service. Not all these monies enter the Cluster on a regular basis. No arrangements exist for the transfer of funds to homes in the hills. Remittances can be sent to the recruiting centres and fetched from there, much as pensions are collected. Servicemen returning on leave often bring monies for the families of soldiers with whom they are serving.

There is little pressure on unmarried sons or

brothers to send money. Even when they return on leave they are not expected to hand over all their savings to the household head. An unmarried soldier who had saved close to Rs 2000 brought home only Rs 500 on his first leave. Even though the serviceman who is not formally separated is a part of his father's or brother's household, and recognizes his membership by token remittances, his position is somewhat ambiguous. Throughout his army career he enjoys a special status, not entirely consistent with membership of a household. This is best understood by considering the typical sequence of goals to which his army savings are applied.

The young man who enters the army as a bachelor first of all saves for his marriage. Following his marriage, for as long as he remains part of a joint type household, he contributes to it a part of his savings, but holds back the greater proportion for the time he decides to establish a separate household. This usually comes several years later when he has saved enough for a small estate. Occasionally, he puts off separation until completion of his service. One Gurkha soldier who was pensioned off in late 1963 separated from his father's household three months later.

He used monies accumulated over a number of years to obtain land, build a house, purchase cattle, and so on. These monies, strictly speaking, should have been turned over to his father while he was a part of his father's household. The extent of remittances will depend somewhat on the size of the soldier's nuclear family. As its numbers grow the greater the obligation to aid in their support. There is also the matter of residence. If they are part of his father's or brother's household, or remain in the wife's natal settlement as part of his father-in-law's household the serviceman is expected to contribute accordingly. On the other hand, now that facilities exist for wives to join their husbands for at least part of the period of service, some soldiers do bring their families with them, and correspondingly reduce their remittances. Clearly, the serviceman who remains part of a joint type household retains a special status unlike that of other household members. He tends to act as if he were the head of an independent household even if he is in fact nominally part of a larger unit. Just as clearly, members of the latter have little power to coerce him into placing his entire earnings at their disposal.

When a soldier becomes the head of a household, the situation changes drastically. He assumes not only the responsibility for his own wife and children, but for younger siblings as well. Here, too, there is discernible a set pattern of priorities in the expenditure of monies earned from army service. Firstly, food shortages must be made up and recurrent or contingent debts met. For example, in 1965 a soldier returned on leave with Rs 1500 designated for the marriage of a younger brother. Following his own marriage, his savings had been deployed towards the repayment of interest-bearing loans and the purchase of food. When his brother approached the age of marriage, monies were set aside to meet these costs.

Investment in land generally occurs only after these initial obligations are met. For this reason, short term service seldom has any real effect on the overall economic position of a household. It is only the cumulative effect of long service which allows for an alleviation of the poverty which may have driven the Limbu to enlist in the first place. Those who remain in the army for long periods stand a better chance of promotion with its attendant pay increases, and of course derive the financial security provided by a lifelong pension.

Long service provides the opportunities to accumulate savings which can be invested in land. The procedure described in Chapter V is repeated, but bidding for kiptat are no longer only members of other castes, but Limbus with funds earned by military service. The following examples will illustrate the process.

a. Between 1948 - 1961 a Limbu of Chitok without ownership rights to kiptat took under mortgage four different kiptat fields, now valued at Rs 4560. Two fields had previously been pledged to Brahmins living outside the Cluster, one field to a Blacksmith of Chitok, and the fourth to a Limbu widow living alone in Bharapa. The Chitok man was only able to become a landholder because an annual pension of Rs 425 was being paid to his mother following her husband's death in Burma during the Second World War.

b. In 1962, a Chongbung of Bharapa with eight years of service in the army returned on leave from the Assam Rifles with Rs 960 which he had saved to repay a mortgage on a paddy field. The land, his own, had been pledged by his grandfather to the father of a Newar resident in a neighbouring settlement. The members of his household, which included his mother, brother and sister repossessed the field and resumed its cultivation,

which added 400 units to their paddy income.

c. In 1964, a non-kipat-owning resident of Bharapa, in his tenth year with the Gurkhas, came home on leave and took under mortgage a paddy field which had previously been pledged to and worked by a Brahmin from outside the Cluster. The mortgage capital was Rs 1280 which he had saved during the last two years. Since his household contained only his wife and a young daughter, he gave the land to his mother's brother on tenancy for an annual rent of 190 units.

d. An Angu of Bharapa, without ownership rights to kipat recently completed fifteen years of service in the army. With Rs 3200 of his savings over the last three years, he paid bard to the kipat owner (like those in the first and third cases above) and took under mortgage a field producing 1200 units of paddy. The field had previously been pledged to a Brahmin who had cultivated it himself.

These cases have two things in common. In the first place they involve monies earned from army service being used to gain, or regain, landholding rights to kipat. Secondly, virtually all the lands repossessed or taken under mortgage with these funds had previously been

pledged to members of other castes, mostly to Brahmins resident outside the Cluster. This is of course inevitable since these other castes have been the main source of mortgage credit for the Limbus. What is significant is that only during the past twenty years or so service in the Gurkhas has made it possible for Limbus to obtain and regain landholding rights to kipat which for decades has been in the hands of these other castes.

From the point of view of the owners of kipat, the inflow of monies earned in military service provides added opportunities for them to obtain bard in the process of transferring landholding rights. However, it has already been suggested that the freedom to manipulate rights of land ownership can be restricted by the pattern of multiplex ties. This would certainly apply to relations between Limbus - more especially, between neighbours. A dispute which arose following the transfer of a kipat mortgage from one Limbu to an ex-soldier neighbour suggests the kind of reaction forthcoming upon an attempt to disregard these ties.

In 1960 Kabir Hang borrowed Rs 600 from his classificatory brother's son Ram. Kabir Hang in return gave the latter a small plot of unirrigated land to cultivate under possessory mortgage until the loan could be repaid. The plot adjoined one of Ram's own fields

near his house so he could cultivate the entire stretch of land at one time. In 1964, Kul Bahadur, an Angu, and a recently retired soldier (see above, case d.) offered Kabir Hang the mortgage price and an additional increment (bard) of Rs 350. The landholding rights to the plot which Ram had been cultivating were then transferred. The maize was sown by Kul Bahadur in March but Ram said nothing at the time. In August, shortly after Kul Bahadur had transplanted his millet seedlings, Ram confronted Kabir Hang in a rage and demanded to know why the latter had allowed Kul Bahadur to plant his millet on Ram's land. A boundary dispute then ensued although the total amount in question was perhaps thirty square feet. The matter was composed by a number of onlookers who had heard the shouts, the most instrumental being a Newar ritual friend (mit) of Kul Bahadur, who happened to be passing by. Kul Bahadur did not appear himself. The disputed area was divided in equal parts.

When I asked Ram about the dispute, he did not refer to the disagreement over the boundary, but instead was vexed about the fact that Kul Bahadur had offered Kabir Hang bard. He was equally annoyed with Kabir Hang for taking the land away from a neighbour and an agnate and giving it to Kul Bahadur, an affine who has no kipat (but who is also a neighbour). Ram then went on

to say how being in Malaya (where a large contingent of British Gurkhas are stationed) and earning a lot of money had gone to Kul Bahadur's head. He cited a number of examples of the latter's impertinent and haughty behavior. What had begun as a boundary dispute was in fact a grievance over having lost landholding rights to a plot of land. It was also a general statement about the fact that servicemen are at a distinct advantage in bidding for lands pledged to others. Ram was giving vent to his anger, and since Kul Bahadur is not only an ex-serviceman but a member of a group without rights to kipat as well, he chose to attack along the lines of an already existing structural cleavage.

Such a dispute is atypical insofar as the great majority of lands taken under mortgage by soldiers and pensioners were previously pledged not to Limbus, but to Brahmins and other castes. I did not learn of any instance where a soldier attempted to bid for lands held by Brahmins resident in the Cluster. The people most affected by the growth of this formidable source of income have been those landholders of Brahmin and other castes resident outside the Cluster.

How much of this movement of kipat lands away from members of other castes and into Limbu hands can be attributed to Gurkha service? In Chapter V it was shown

that 21.3% of all mortgaged kipat lands have been taken up by Limbu resident in the Cluster. Of this amount, 14.8% has been pledged to ten ex-army pensioners.

This represents an investment of Rs 37,800 during the past fifteen years and a transfer of just under 14,000 units to Limbu landholders and away from those of other castes. These figures do not represent the entire picture since they exclude monies expended by kipat-owning soldiers and pensioners to repay mortgages and repossess their own lands. Thus, six of the seven Limbu households which today enjoy the unimpeded usufruct of their own kipat lands can attribute their position to monies earned from service in the Gurkhas¹. In addition, men serving in the army at present have invested close to Rs 8000 to take over 1000 units of kipat land under mortgage (1.2% of mortgaged kipat) and purchase 500 units of raikar land.

In some measure, this tendency for funds earned in the army to be reinvested in land is to be explained by reference to alternative opportunities. There is no industry in Ilam which might attract investment funds. Nor is there any other outlet which could offer the prestige and security that land provides. The only

1. See Table 11, p. 171.

likely alternative is the provision of interest bearing loans. This is in fact exploited and four pensioners between them provide Rs 2000 in loans, equal to 48% of the credit provided by all Limbus in the Cluster.

But lack of alternatives is only part of the explanation. The system of kipat tenure, which ensures that rights to land can never be alienated, provides a strong incentive for men serving in the army to maintain their ties to home and land. For as long as they are away, ownership rights remain intact. The system, moreover, benefits not only those who own kipat. The fact that kipat is inalienable means that Limbus without ownership rights themselves, but with sufficient funds, can always obtain lands through mortgage, by employing their ties of kinship and neighbourhood to keep open this avenue of investment, and of course by their ability to provide bard to the owners.

The effect of the inflow of pensions and salaries, therefore, has been to improve the agricultural economy of those households benefitting from external income sources. It is worth noting that four of the seven Limbu households with the largest income from agriculture are headed by ex-servicemen receiving the largest pensions in the Cluster.

Does income from local sources provide an investment fund for land in the same way as do pensions and army salaries? As I have shown, opportunities for earning cash have increased substantially over the past fifty years in the areas to the south of the Cluster. Sixty-five households regularly engage in a variety of commercial activities. The available opportunities are not, by and large, mutually exclusive. About half of all Limbu households earn income from more than one of these sources. Even a household whose head is in the army can add to its revenue by petty trading, since it is engaged in mainly by women.

Earnings from commercial activities in the area, however, serve only to maintain the status quo. Households which do not have sufficient agricultural production to meet their varied requirements, recurrent and contingent, rely on alternatives available locally to fill the gap. Others with adequate agricultural resources sustain their viable economic positions by availing themselves of the opportunities for earning extra cash. In general, the inflow of cash from sources around the Cluster enables Limbu peasants to hold the economic line. But these injections of cash, unlike the monies earned by military service, are not adequate to bring about any lasting improvement in the overall

economic position of the Limbu households which exploit them.

Nevertheless, certain advantages are seen to attach to economic activities in the area. Such activities, unlike army service, do not require a man to be away from his home and family for long periods at a time. Certain kinds of trading are confined to weekly market days. Others, like wood portering require the adoption of a commuter schedule. Some long distance portering involves absences of only a few days at a time. Moreover, the commercial activities can be taken advantage of without neglecting the demands of agriculture, so that a household can manage its tasks in both sectors with a minimum of conflict.

There is an indication that as local opportunities for earning cash have expanded, fewer Indreni Limbus are turning to military service. This is especially noticeable among those Limbus who have ownership rights to kipat land. Whereas 71.8% of living males over 40 years of age who own kipat served in the army, only 14.8% of those between 18 - 40 years have served or are doing so at present. The corresponding figures for Limbus without kipat are 75% and 50%, which is to be expected for reasons already cited. The figures are undoubtedly biased since the over-40 category subsumes those who

joined during the two world wars when recruiting was less selective. Still, the trend away from military service appears evident, when it is noted that seven of the eight kipat-owning servicemen in the lower age category are resident in Dorumba and Chitok, the northernmost Indreni settlements, where local cash earning opportunities outside the Cluster are of only incidental importance. None lives in Angbung, and only one in Bharapa, from which settlements the local sources of income are most fully exploited.

How do earnings from all other sources compare with income from subsistence agriculture? Translating the net income from agriculture into monetary terms at the current rate of Rs 1.20 per unit of paddy and maize, and Rs 0.80 per unit of millet, the value of net agricultural income is Rs 99,420. Earnings from commercial sources are detailed in Table 32. The number of households engaged in each activity appears in the column on the left.

TABLE 32
Earnings from commercial sources¹

<u>Local Sources: within Cluster</u> ²	<u>No. of Households</u>	<u>Annual Income</u>
Domestic service	4	Rs 140
Fishing	3	420
Sales of mandarins, butter	3	730
Ritual services	5	800
Teaching	1	420
		<u>2510</u>
<u>Local Sources: outside Cluster</u>		
Government service	2	1320
Sale of liquor in market	39	5950
Trade in liquor, meat	1	160
Sale of yeast bread in market	11	3085
Portering wood, wood-cutting	23	5650
Trading, portering mandarins, etc.	8	900
Labour in Terai, India	9	1100
		<u>18165</u>
<u>External Sources</u>		
Pensions	13	8070
Army salaries, remittances ³	12	8550
		<u>16620</u>
	Total	Rs <u>37295</u>

The above Table shows that commercial sources provide an income equal to approximately 38% of net agricultural income. Table 33 gives the proportions for

-
1. It is necessary to stress that some of these figures are only estimates.
 2. Income from agricultural labour proved impossible to estimate and is omitted here. It should also be remembered that bard provides another source of unearned income.
 3. As I explained, remittances from servicemen are not made regularly or in full. The figures, then, are for potential, not actual, income.

individual Limbu households. The breakdown is given by settlement, since proximity to local sources of income is a determining factor in their utilization.

TABLE 33
Income from commercial sources
(expressed as a percentage of agricultural income)

<u>Income Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>				
	<u>Angbung</u>	<u>Bharapa</u>	<u>Chitok</u>	<u>Dorumba</u>	<u>Total</u>
None	1	2	5	3	11
1 - 49%	13	12	12	5	42
50 - 99%	4	3	3	1	11
100% or over	9	8	3	1	21
	<u>27</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>85</u>

Eleven households earn no income from commercial sources. Most of these households (eight) are in the two settlements situated farthest from Ilam Bazaar. Seventy-four households, therefore, have some income from commercial sources. The majority (43 households) earn funds amounting to less than half their income from agriculture, while another eleven households have commercial incomes which amount to between 50 - 99% of their earnings from agriculture. Approximately one quarter of Indreni households earn more from commercial than from agricultural sources. Again, it is worth noting that seventeen of the twenty-one households in this category are resident in Angbung and Bharapa. Four

of the eight households in Bheraps are in the category because of remittances from men presently serving in the Gurkhas. But the four remaining households, like the nine in Angbung, earn their commercial income from local sources. Two Chitok and Dorumbè households are in this category because of pension earnings, while the other two have local sources of commercial income.

The growing commitment to commercial sources of income can be seen to affect social relationships within the Indreni settlements in two ways. In the first place, the agricultural system no longer represents the sole means of livelihood for the Limbus. To be sure, the origin of, and, indeed, the motive sustaining their reliance on commercial activities turns on economic necessity. But as opportunities for earning wealth outside the agricultural system have expanded, the household continuously reappraises its own alternatives and makes new choices based on economic self-interest. The effect, evidenced in the fact that 25% of all Limbu households earn more from commercial than

from agricultural activities, has been to confer on the Limbu household a greater freedom to opt out of relationships of dependence on those who tend to dominate access to the land.

In the second place, that wealth earned outside the Cluster which is reinvested in land redounds to the benefit of the Limbus and, conversely, to the detriment of the chief landholding castes. Thus, Limbu exploitation of commercial income sources poses a constant threat to the economic ascendance of these other castes. The kipat system of land tenure, by guaranteeing Limbu ownership rights in perpetuity, keeps ajar the portal of economic change. So that while agriculture is less important in the overall economy of the Limbus, land is still the basis of Limbu security, and the Cluster still the focus of their social ties.

CHAPTER VII
POLITICS IN THE SETTLEMENTS

In this and the following chapter I consider the political configuration in the Indreni settlements. Any description of political life in the Cluster must take into account the factor of Government presence. Since the absorption of Ilam into a national polity in 1774, Kathmandu, first through the militia, and later through the civil administration, has exercised a monopoly of coercive force. Settlements, however remote, have been encompassed within a wider political system.

The influence of the Centre is evident at the lowest political levels. Government-approved headmen exercise leadership roles, the definition and scope of which are largely delineated by the national authorities. The first task, then, is to describe the role of Subba. This is done by outlining the hierarchical framework of leadership which existed until the latter part of the 19th century, at which time the hierarchy collapsed as a result of both Government policy and changes in the pattern of landholding described earlier. I then consider contemporary contexts of leadership and relate these particularly to the settlement of disputes in which

Indreni Limbus are involved. The emergence of new leaders who derive power not from traditional ascriptive criteria but from wealth and status earned through military service is noted. Finally, the nature and composition of factions formed around two Brahmin residents in the Cluster are described. The question which underlies the latter analysis asks whether or not factional strife mitigates the freedom of alignment maintained by Limbu households in other contexts already noted?

The Leadership Hierarchy

In Chapter III I pointed out how Subbas gave grants of kipat land to non-Limbus immigrating into Limbuan from the west of Nepal. The recipients of these grants were appointed by the Subbas as political underlings (Thari)¹. These latter, were, in turn, encouraged to settle their own Holdings by offering land to the immigrants who followed. In the region of the Indreni Cluster, for example, the extent of land grants was considerable. The Chongbung and Nembeke Subbas between them granted forty-four Holdings out of

1. Although there would seem to be no logical reason why Limbus could not be made Tharis, in fact this did not happen. All Tharis are non-Limbus.

which further allotments were made by the recipient Tharis¹. The Holdings encompassed an area of some twelve square miles and included, by the time of the last revenue settlement in Ilam in 1936, approximately 1000 registered households.

Thus, a political hierarchy was created which mirrored the hierarchy of land Holdings. This was symbolised in the annual payments of tribute made by dependents (rāiti) to their Tharis, and by the latter to his Subba. During the festival of Dasein Tharis were obliged to bring gifts of parched rice, curd and fruit, and in return received a tika from their Subbas. Again, at the beginning of the Nepali year, during the lunar month of Baisakh (April-May), Tharis were constrained to bring further offerings of cash (Rs 1) as well as clarified butter and curd, at which time they would request the renewal of their land grants for the coming year². Tharis were also expected to provide five days of unpaid labour or their equivalent in cash. This was

-
1. I was unable to ascertain the exact number of grants made by the Kambo Subbas, though they were probably fewer than either the Nembeke or the Chongbung grants.
 2. It is unlikely, however, that Subbas could evict their Tharis without sufficient cause. See below.

usually obtained from among their own dependents, who owed their Thari a similar tribute. The Limbu dependents of the Subbas, most of whom were his lineage mates, offered similar quantities of tribute. The Subbas also had the right to demand a percentage of the price of land sold by those settled on the Holdings he had granted. The fee usually amounted to about 10% of the sale price, and was shared with the Thari concerned.

Chief among the duties of the Subbas was tax-collection. This role placed him in a position from which certain economic advantages could be derived. Due largely to administrative problems in the far corners of the country, a contractual system of tax-collection was established in Limbuan. Under this system the amount of tax due was determined during the course of a periodic revenue settlement. Moreover, Limbus were taxed not on land holdings but on the basis of a flat rate per kipat-owning household. Although new households established between settlements were not liable for tax, Subbas were prone to collect taxes from these unregistered households and appropriate the revenue for themselves. The use of both Nepali and Indian currency in Ilam also enabled some Subbas to assess the taxes in Indian currency and pay the revenue in Nepali coinage,

thereby pocketing the difference in exchange.

Another feature of the tax-collection system accrued to the advantage of the Subbas. Once registered, a Limbu household was liable to the tax fixed at the time of the settlement. The tax was payable even if the kimat-owner died without heirs or emigrated. In such circumstances, if no other co-heir came forward to assume the liability of the vacant homestead, the obligation fell on the Subba. But the law, by obligating the Subba to pay taxes for lands vacated by his lineage mates, also recognized his right to re-allocate or keep for himself such vacated lands. These rights enabled the Subba to accumulate more lands than his lineage agnates. In Table 34 landownership by the Subbas is contrasted with the average landownership of households in his lineage - taken as a basic index of 100¹.

1. Chongbung Lineages (1) and (2) pay taxes to the same Subba. Phatras, Syelings and Kambo Lineage (2) are omitted because in the first two cases they pay taxes to Chongbung Subbas while in the latter instance, there are only two households in the lineage.

TABLE 3 Land by Subba
Ownership of kipat land by Subbas

<u>Lineage</u>	<u>Ownership of Land by Subba*</u>
Chongbung Lineage (1)	270.0
(2)	298.9
(3)	378.1
(4)	239.0
(5)	174.0
Kambo Lineage (1)	435.1
Nembeke	213.4

* The average landownership per lineage household is taken as index 100 in each case.

The differences between the amount of land owned by the Subbas and the average for households in their lineages are evident in the above Table. These figures, of course, refer to present-day ownership and do not necessarily reflect with accuracy the ownership ratios almost a century ago, since they take no account of inheritance patterns. But the trend indicated by the figures seems more than coincidental. Moreover, it is likely that the differences in landownership between headmen and dependents arose before the turn of the century, since after that time land shortages encouraged co-heirs to press strongly their claims to vacated lands so that fewer lands accrued to the Subbas unless they were related as co-heirs themselves.

Tharis collected taxes from the dependents on

their own Holdings and passed these on to the Subbas for submission to the land revenue office in Ilam Bazaar. If the Tharis attempted or, indeed, were implicated in attempts by their dependents to avoid taxes, the Subbas were entitled by the Government to 'fine (the Thari) one year's production and eat (i.e. keep) the fine.' In cases of persistent attempts to avoid tax obligations, a Thari could be dismissed by a Subba, acting in council with other Limbu headmen¹. By and large, however, as long as the Tharis submitted their taxes, behaved fairly to their dependents, and respected their Subbas, they enjoyed security of tenure on their Holdings. The Subbas could not arbitrarily evict either the Tharis or their dependents once they had been granted land.

The Subbas were the main channels of Government control in the settlements. A judicial council of Subbas (amal) acted as a court of original jurisdiction, with rights to hear cases of a civil nature involving damages not exceeding Rs 100, and with authority to impose fines of up to Rs 25². Their responsibility for the

-
1. Order regarding failure to register lands and homesteads in Far Kirat, 1868.
 2. The amal was not authorised to hear certain kinds of cases, called 'panchkhat': broadly speaking, those relating to caste or offences punishable by death or life imprisonment. (See Regmi, 1965, p. 118).

maintenance of law and order extended even beyond the boundaries of their Holdings. When granted their titles, Subbas were instructed to 'arrest any person who crosses the border (into Ilam) without our (Governmental) permission.'

Subbas were also held accountable for the maintenance of the main roads through their territory and all dependents were required to contribute labour, usually after the monsoons, to keep the roads in good repair. They recruited the porters required by the administration for the transport of essential foods and other materials. The Subbas were the earliest foresters and their permission had to be requested before anyone in the area under their jurisdiction could cut down heavy timber. They rounded up buffaloes and goats from the herds of their dependents for the Dasein sacrifice at military headquarters in Ilam. Obligatory contributions were imposed on the population at the time of such special occasions as the marriage of a princess or a royal coronation, and the Subbas were charged with the responsibility for administering the

collections¹.

The first chink in the political hierarchy which had evolved from the system of land grants appeared in 1886. In that year, the Government decreed that all Holdings granted to non-Limbus out of kipat land could be converted to raikar tenure by the Tharis. In consequence, the Subbas lost all rights in these lands. A dispute in 1954 illustrates the immutability of this regulation.

Shortly after 1912 the Nembeke Subba Indra granted some kipat lands as a Holding to a Jaisi neighbour and appointed him a Thari. During the revenue settlement of 1936 the Jaisi registered the lands within the Holding as raikar. In 1954 Jahare, the son of Indra, sent his son Dharam to cut some leaves for their cattle from a nearby wood which was within the Holding given by his father to the Jaisi. When the sister of the present Thari (the son of the original grantee) saw Dharam she

1. Sometimes, the Subbas were called upon for assistance of a more personal nature. Found among some old papers belonging to a resident in the Cluster was a note, written in 1876, and addressed to a subba from a member of the administration in Ilam Bazaar. The correspondent, who was building a house, requested a few bundles of thatch for his roof, which he suggested might be forthcoming from the Subba's dependent households.

became angry and told him he had no right to cut the leaves in this wood without her brother's permission. The young man cursed her and it is alleged that he struck her. When the Thari heard the commotion which ensued he came running and asked what had happened. Dharam told him that he was only a 'cowherd' (gothalo) on the land and did not own it since it belonged to the Subba who had made the grant. As such, Dharam insisted that he had every right to cut the leaves of the trees. When the matter was brought before a mediation panel Jahare was held to be at fault for sending his son into another man's wood. Even if the land had once been kipat, they pointed out, it had become raiker and the Subba or his descendants who made the grant no longer had any rights in it. Jahare was made to promise that in future he would seek the permission of the Jaisi if he wished to cut leaves from the wood.

Jahare had set out to test the immutability of the grant which his father had given the Jaisi. He did this by sending his son to cut leaves without asking permission of the Jaisi, since ownership rights are recognized by requests for such permission. When Dharam used the term 'gothalo' he was repeating a word used frequently by Limbus when referring to the relationship

of the Tharis to the Holdings granted them by the Subbas. A gothalo tends the cattle of his master, but does not own the cattle. Likewise, the Tharis were supposed only to mind the lands entrusted to them by the Limbus and take their products. The Limbus insist that the grants were given in good faith, and only the treachery (jal) of the recipients led to the conversion of these lands to reikar tenure.

Another development followed from the regulation of 1886: Tharis began to rely directly on the Government for their security of title. The Government, which had previously only guaranteed the Tharis a measure of security after appointment by the Subbas, began to take a direct hand in their assignment. Although succession to the title by primogeniture was usually accepted, the authorities reserved the right of confirmation. If a Thari died without heirs or emigrated, leaving his Holding without a headman, the Government and not the Subba would make a new appointment, usually after consulting the dependents. For a brief period, Tharis were even allowed to sell their Holdings, subject only to the approval of the new Thari by the Government¹.

The rights and responsibilities of the Tharis

1. This right was abolished in 1911.

no longer devolved from the Subbas. Channels of communication led straight from the administration to the Tharis. The latter became answerable directly to the Government. The final collapse of the leadership hierarchy came at the turn of the century when the Tharis of Ilam began paying the taxes they collected from their dependents to the revenue office instead of to the Subbas¹. Thus the Subbas were left to collect only the taxes assessed on their own Holdings of kipat. This rearrangement of the tax-collecting system relieved the Tharis of traditional financial obligations to the Subbas. They were no longer bound to make mandatory contributions of labour to the Subbas, even though they retained the right to demand this labour from their own dependents. The fee payable by a purchaser of land, which had previously been shared with the Subbas, became the sole prerogative of the Tharis. Such income bolstered their economic position, not only vis à vis their dependents, but vis à vis the Subbas as well.

Even so, these new advantages only strengthened the trend towards the economic ascendancy of the Tharis which had begun even before the conversion into raikar

1. I was unable to discover the exact year when this regulation came into effect. In other areas of Limbuan, Tharis still submit their taxes to the Subbas.

of Holdings granted by the Subbas. I have already shown how Government kipat policy and population pressures had combined to bring about large-scale mortgaging of kipat lands. The Tharis, because of the singular advantages gained through their position, were those most likely to provide the mortgage credit and become landholders of kipat pledged by Limbus. Thus, for example, all fourteen non-Limbus who are among the Main Landholders of mortgaged kipat, are Tharis¹. It seems possible to project this correlation back to the last decades of the 19th century, and to infer that the leadership hierarchy initially based on the system of land grants was already on shaky economic foundations when the raikar regulations of 1886 were introduced. The lack of coincidence between the political status conferred on the Subbas by the hierarchy and their economic status is demonstrated by a consideration of their land mortgages. Table 35 shows the percentage of lands owned by Subbas which have been mortgaged. The figures have changed little since the turn of the century.

1. See p. 176.

TABLE 35
Kipat mortgaged by Subbas

<u>Lineage</u>	<u>Percentage of Land Mortgaged by Subba</u>
Chongbung Lineages (1) & (2)	91%
(3)	30
(4)	63
(5)	60
Kambo Lineages (1)	98
(2)	97
Nembeke	87

These figures support the contention that the economic base on which the leadership hierarchy was originally built was eroded by the turn of the century. The Government's restructuring of the tax-collection system was fundamentally a recognition of this fact.

The Subba's role as Government tax-collector on kipat holdings remains unaltered, and constitutes the basis of his formal authority. But most of his other traditional duties have been usurped either by the Tharis or, more recently, by new administrative bodies such as the Panchayat Committee, described below. Still, the Subba remains a much respected figure among the Limbus, and the fact is recognized even by the Panchayat Committee which channels many of its instructions to the Limbus through their Subbas. Thus, for example, when each ward¹ in the Village was required to

1. The Village is divided into nine wards, each of which chooses a representative to the Panchayat Committee.

provide labourers for a road-building project, it was the Subbas and not the ward representatives who were asked to prepare a list of 'volunteers' from those wards containing the Indreni settlements.

There are two main reasons for the continued prestige enjoyed by the Subba. The first, which I consider in the next chapter, concerns his role as symbol of the unity of Limbus in their opposition to the outside. The second relates to his dual role as mediator in minor disputes between Indreni Limbus and as a leading figure in negotiations over compensatory claims arising out of jari marriages. I consider the latter context first.

Disputes over Compensation

In an earlier chapter I alluded to the high rate (almost 20%) of marriages by abduction of other men's wives. Such marriages precipitate crises on three counts. Firstly, they give rise to the possibility of violence. Secondly, they involve the severance of existing linkages between affinal groups which is potentially disruptive since the groups in question are often related in a number of ways. Finally, they require the settlement of compensation claims and so have economic

consequences which seriously affect the fortunes of the households involved.

Although the use of force by a cuckolded husband is no longer recognized in law, attempts to employ violence to gain redress for marital grievances are not unknown. When a Limbu of Bharapa abducted the wife of another man, the latter's attempts to take revenge on the adulterer led to an outbreak of fighting between supporters of both men and resulted, in the words of one participant, in a number of 'broken heads'. Such occurrences are rare since steps are taken to ensure that the new husband and the cuckold do not meet. Thus a Kambo man of Dorumba spent the best part of three days in hiding while the man he had cuckolded conducted negotiations for compensation with the former's representatives. The explanation for the disappearance was that 'if the cuckold meets the man who has seduced his wife he must "cut" the latter.'

However, in the great majority of cases compensation is sought directly from the new husband only if the woman has been abducted from her marital home. This is an uncommon eventuality since both a husband and his kinsmen keep a close watch on the woman's activities and woebetide the man who is discovered attempting to seduce the woman under their very eyes. Most abductions take

place while a woman is at her natal home. I have shown that the ties between a woman and her natal group remain strong after marriage, with sisters and daughters visiting frequently and for long periods of time, and with many marital separations leading to permanent residence of women in their natal settlements. This situation provides both the climate and the opportunities for the formation of liaisons with married women. When a woman is seduced while resident at her natal home, the aggrieved husband generally seeks compensation from her natal household, which then reclaims the amount from the new husband.

To negotiate the terms of compensation and, in general, to effect the severance of existing or the establishment of new marriage ties are the tasks of representatives chosen by the households directly involved. I have been told, though this is impossible to verify, that traditionally this role fell to lineage groups led by the Subbas. The latter continue to justify their right to claim a special portion of any bride-wealth in terms of the obligations they are prepared to accept on behalf of lineage mates during negotiations over compensation. The Subbas indeed play an essential part in the discussions, although more in their role as

figures of influence within the community than in their capacity as lineage headmen. The lineage group, if it ever was, is no longer a corporate unit in so far as negotiations over compensation are concerned. The households involved in these disputes must mobilize supporters on principles more varied than, although including, lineage agnation. It is important to stress that the strength of a household's support depends not on the number of persons it is able to recruit, but on what might be called the strategic qualities of those recruited. Although the numbers taking part in discussions vary from instance to instance, indeed, from hour to hour during a single case, the effective supporters of a household seldom number fewer than four or more than eight for any compensation dispute.

What are the chief criteria for recruitment? Of first importance is seniority. Although young men and women are invariably the partners in jeri marriages the responsibility for dealing with the consequences of their actions falls on their elders. Young men may observe the deliberations of their elders, or answer questions of fact if asked, but none would presume nor be invited to participate in the talks. Seniority implies a number of qualities. To wrangle over compensation and to handle the delicate task of severing old

affinal links requires patience, and a facility for self-expression, which latter suggests an ability to converse in the idiom of Limbu tradition and customs. Such qualities come only with age and experience. The importance of seniority is highlighted by an instance in which an Indreni Limbu found himself negotiating for compensation without the benefit of support from his elders. When a young Chongbung man went to fetch his wife who had been visiting her natal settlement for a few months, he discovered that she had gone off with another man several days before his arrival. Instead of returning to the Cluster (a three day walk) to muster support he allowed himself to be persuaded by the girl's father to settle compensation immediately. His only supporter was another young man from the Cluster who had come along for the trip. He was able to collect Rs 300 but he would have received much more, he insisted, if there had been some older men with him. 'We were two babies (balak) against their elders (burdo).'

Not all elders possess the qualities usually associated with elderhood. In the Cluster men with the required talents are few and much sought after. In information obtained about twenty-eight cases of compensation disputes, the names of eight men appear constantly

among the supporters recruited by households from every part of the Cluster. All but one - who is 65 years old - are between 45 - 60 years and possess the ability to present an argument forcefully and tactfully. They are all of above average wealth, although the richest Indreni men are not amongst them. These men command considerable prestige and influence among the Limbus.

During talks, one supporter on each side acts as chief spokesman, carrying the main burden of the discussion. Although any elder with oratorical talents can assume this role, ideally it should fall to a Subba, since it is felt his title alone commands respect.

'All men talk but a Subba must be listened to.' In 70% of the cases recorded a Subba did act as spokesman, although in the majority of instances the household for which he spoke was not a dependent (raiti). In those cases where households were, by virtue of owning kipat land, linked to Subbas as dependents, only 40% were actually represented by their own Subbas. Because most Limbu headmen were either too young or did not have the necessary qualifications to be spokesmen another 40% of these households were represented by a Subba other than their own. In one case, for example, a Kambo man whose elder brother was a Subba, but still young and

inexperienced, invited a Chongbung Subba to be his spokesman.

The Subba performs another important function in providing the channel through which negotiations can be inaugurated. The residents from another settlement cluster who arrive to negotiate for compensation are expected to make the first formal statement of their intentions to a Subba. If this is neglected, as it sometimes is, the Subba could refuse to allow discussions to begin and certainly threaten to withhold his participation. By adhering to this custom, which includes the payment of a bottle of liquor to the Subba, the visitors ensure that the discussions will commence with haste and in an atmosphere of cordiality.

Neighbourhood is another important consideration when gathering support, since neighbours are first of all dependent on one another in a number of contexts and therefore thought to be reliable allies. Secondly, neighbours are expected to know the intimate details of the circumstances they are being called upon to discuss. Since most Limbus are neighbours to at least some of their lineage mates, we might distinguish between the latter and neighbours who belong to other lineage groups. Thus, 60% of the households in the cases recorded mobilised non-lineage neighbours to support them, while 75%

included lineage kinsmen. This latter figure is of some significance since it indicates that one quarter of the households did not muster their lineage agnates even though such were available. Most households recruited both categories of neighbour.

Close to half the households recruited non-lineage supporters from other neighbourhoods in the Cluster and even from settlements outside the Cluster area. These persons were brought in to negotiate for one of two main reasons: either they fulfilled some of the criteria already discussed, or because they could trace links in the opposing camp. If neighbours or lineage mates had similar links the need for 'outside' recruitment would have been unnecessary. The importance attached to the inclusion of supporters with matrilineal or affinal ties to the opposition is illustrated by the following examples.

After Alahang, a Kambo of Chitok had seduced the wife of another man and brought her to be his own wife, the woman's father and his supporters came to demand compensation¹. Of the four supporters recruited by

1. It is not uncommon for the father of a woman who has gone off from her natal settlement to seek compensation from the new husband before the cuckold comes to claim from his ex-father-in-law.

Alahang one, another Kambo belonging to a different lineage, was related affinally, through his third wife, to the father of Alahang's new wife. A second supporter, a Chongbung of Bharapa, was also mobilized partly because he had matrilineal ties in the same settlement cluster as the woman's father. By continually stressing the importance of these ties, Alahang's supporters were able to dispel the initial hostility of the woman's father and his allies caused by Alahang's abrupt abduction of their daughter, and to reduce a first demand for Rs 1500 compensation to a final figure of Rs 600.

In another instance, the married daughter of Sandu, a Chongbung, disappeared after a dancing party in Angbung which was attended by some young men from the district of Panchthar. Her husband, whose home was about four miles away, heard of her disappearance and came with his father and two other supporters to demand the payment of compensation. Here again, two of Sandu's supporters traced affinal links to Sandu's in-laws. The first two wives of one had come from the same settlement cluster, and the present wife of the other was a lineage sister of the opposition spokesman. Since Sandu could not pay the compensation, it was essential to postpone the discussions for as long as possible to give him the time to look for his daughter

and her abductor, who had indeed disappeared, and to raise the compensation payments from his new in-laws. After a number of refusals, the husband's supporters agreed to a postponement of one month on the basis of a personal guarantee from the husband of their lineage sister (and a supporter of Sandu) that at the end of the stipulated period the compensation would be paid.

Persons linked to both camps, even when not taking as crucial a part in the discussions as those in the two cases cited, do tend to bridge the gulf between the negotiators and so ameliorate the bad feelings which jari marriages can cause, while exerting a strong force for compromise.

Since virtually all jari marriages are between partners in different settlement clusters there are no universally recognized mediators such as there would be in intra-cluster disagreements. To an extent, the presence of Subbas and the common vocabulary of tradition and custom provide a framework within which discussions can proceed. But it is unlikely that any compromise could result from such negotiations without the inclusion on each side of supporters with interests in maintaining their links to both sides. Still, this is not the stated purpose for their recruitment. The household means to

mobilize supporters and not mediators. One householder involved in such a dispute remarked: 'we want men who will carry us, not men who will compromise.' In this sense, the household musters an 'action-set' - to help it achieve a specific goal viz. the settlement of compensation on terms favourable to itself¹.

In the process of their confrontation, however, these sets are gradually 'transformed' into a panel of mediation because of their interests in maintaining relationships which transcend in importance the immediate subject of their dispute. This becomes evident when it is noted that once recruited, a set will negotiate without the direct guidance of the household it is meant to represent, and will reach decisions which the members of both sets feel serve their own or the general interest. In the latter case cited above, for example, Sandu was entirely without control of his supporters, and did not wholly concur in the compromise they reached.

The inclusion in the household's set of Subbas and elders who are men of influence thus ensures that its case will be well represented, and at the same time guarantees that compromises reached will be respected.

1. For a discussion of 'action-set' see Mayer, 1966.

Even the most powerful Limbu households, although able to exert a greater measure of control over the sets they recruit and thus in a better position to influence the final decision of the mediation panel, would be reluctant to disregard this decision for fear of alienating the support of the Subbas and elders in future¹.

Intra-Cluster Disputes

Informal Mediation

The Subba's statutory authority no longer extends to the maintenance of law and order. The council of Subbas (amal), which existed until about 50 years ago, is now defunct.² In consequence, most disputes between Limbus within the Indreni Cluster are mediated

-
1. These mediation panels are unlike the 'councils of reconciliation' described by Cohen in that the mediators are not chosen by each side because they are neutral. In the sense that the sets which ultimately reach agreement regard themselves, at least in the initial stages of the discussions, as opponents representing different sides of a dispute, they resemble what Bailey refers to as an 'arena council'. (See Cohen, 1965, pp. 142-45 and Bailey, 1965, pp. 9-15.)
 2. This is due partly to the fact that Subbas have lost much of their traditional power and partly to the spread of Government courts which usurped many of the functions of the amal.

informally by men who are regarded as Notables (bhaladmi). A man achieves notability with age, wealth and, increasingly, with literacy. He is expected to be fair and impartial when hearing disputes, and to possess the influence to make his decision acceptable to both parties. Still, the term is a vague one and depends not only on the context in which it is being used, but on the identity of the disputants. One man's Notable, so to speak, may not be another's. We might distinguish two categories of Notable. On the one hand there are the local variety, men who are regarded as Notables in each settlement or neighbourhood and who invariably help to compose minor quarrels between their neighbours. The Subbas and elders referred to above, for example, are regularly called upon to mediate in disputes involving individuals who recognize the higher status of the former.

To deserve the appellation of Notable on a Cluster-wide basis, however, demands validation by a status recognized in a wider context than the neighbourhood and even the Cluster. It accrues only to individuals with high status in the wider community. For reasons mainly connected with their economic impoverishment, none of the Subbas today enjoys the status of Notable in this sense; and to avoid confusion, it is in this latter sense only that I will employ the term.

In the Cluster today those who are regarded universally as Notables are army pensioners, more particularly, pensioners who combine literacy, age and wealth with 'high' military rank. Of these qualities it is only wealth, of course, which once attained, can be dissipated and lead to a loss of Notable status. To sustain a viable economic position over the years requires a combination of skill in managing a farmstead and a favourable balance of good fortune. That this is not always achievable can be illustrated by reference to one Chongbung ex-serviceman. As a result of the eighteen years he spent in the army he was able to repay a number of debts incurred prior to enlistment, to repossess his own mortgaged kibat lands and to take some other lands under mortgage. During the first three years following his return to the Cluster with the rank of a Hævildar¹ and a pension of Rs 40 per month, he invested in more land. Within ten years, however, by a combination of unfortunate circumstances, chief among which were eight young children and a penchant for drink, the Hævildar's household was among the poorest in the Cluster. The status he imported from the Gurkhas is irrelevant in the context of Indreni leadership because of his present

1. A Hævildar is roughly equivalent to sergeant.

economic circumstances.

Another ex-soldier, a Nembeke, who attained the same rank and pension, has been able to maintain a viable estate, although with increasing difficulty because of his own involvement in expensive litigation. Nevertheless, now in his early sixties, he is recognized as a Notable in the Cluster, and disputes are frequently taken to him for mediation. Thus, a quarrel between two brothers over the division of property retained by their widowed mother (jiuni) prior to her death was brought before the Havildar even though he was a Nembeke of Dorumba and the disputants Chongbungs of Bharapa. The brothers threatened to take the matter to court but were assured by the Havildar that a fair solution could be found which would be satisfactory to both and moreover, which would save them undue time and costs. The procedure, as in most instances of mediation was informal, with each disputant presenting his argument in turn and answering questions put to him by the mediator. Others joined freely in the talks and witnessed the signatures on the document setting out the terms which were finally agreed upon - the division of the land into equal shares. The return to harmonious relations was signified when everyone present was invited to share a bottle of liquor.

The dispute did not require the attention of a gifted mediator. The solution was obvious at the outset and could have been foretold by any Indreni man with an average amount of experience in these matters. Why, then, was it brought to a Notable? When the question was put to one of the disputants he replied: 'Why should we bring it to a Subba? He is no bigger than we are. If there is any quarrel about the decision in future, then others will tell us: "this is the work (decision) of a Notable; why do you quarrel about it?"' The acceptance of mediation by men who are universally recognized as Notables thus ensures that the decision is not likely to be disregarded.

The most widely acknowledged Notables in the Cluster are two ex-soldier brothers of Chitok. Both are known and addressed by their ranks: the elder, Lejaheng, was a Lieutenant; the younger, Parsade, a Subedar¹. Their pensions amount jointly to Rs 2280 annually. Between them they have taken under mortgage 10.1% of all kipat lands pledged by Indreni Limbus².

-
1. Under the system of ranking in the Gurkha Brigade prior to 1947, a Gurkha Lieutenant was referred to as an Indian Commissioned Officer, while a Subedar was a Viceroy C.O. The latter ranked slightly below the former.
 2. They are among the Main Landholders (h. and i.) distinguished in Chapter V. See Table 14, p.176.

Lajahang also owns raikar lands in the Terai, purchased with his earnings during service, and from which he derives an income of approximately Rs 2500 per year. Both are considered to be among the wealthiest men in the area. Since their return from army service in the early 1950s their assumption of leadership has seemed both inevitable and welcome. As the most important Notables they have to mediate in the greatest number of disputes. One quarrel, involving a Subba's son, is worth recounting since it illuminates the established trend away from mediation and, more generally, from political leadership by the Subbas, in favour of that provided by Notables who have achieved status as a result of army service.

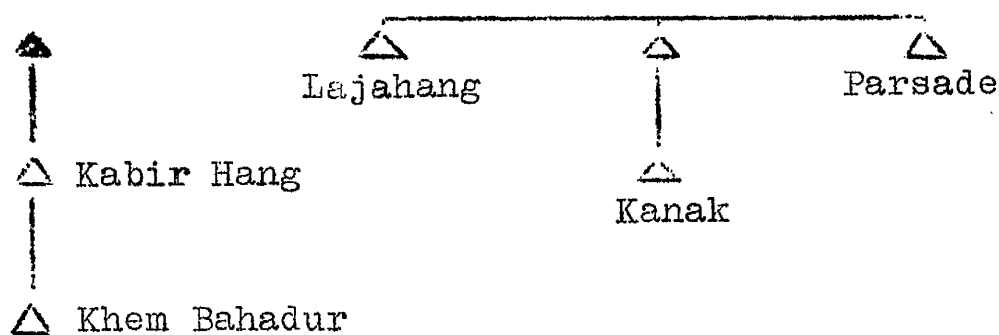


Fig. 7.

In October, 1964 Kanak, the brother's son of Lajahang and Parsade loaned Rs 1 to Khem Bahadur, the son of Subba Kabir Hang, so that Khem Bahadur could remain in a game of cards some boys were playing. The following January, Kanak asked for the return of the money. It is alleged that Khem Bahadur refused, and that there ensued

an argument during which the Subba's son was beaten. When Kabir Hang heard what had taken place he discussed the matter with another Subba and both decided to hold a moot (in their 'amal', as they put it, using the term for the traditional Subba's court). Both Kanak and his father's brothers - but not his father, who is a poor man without influence - were summoned to the house of Kabir Hang where the moot was to be held. After some time a representative arrived saying that both Lajehang and Parsade preferred that the meeting be held at the former's house. Those who had gathered in Kabir Hang's courtyard then walked the half mile to the new meeting place.

Kabir Hang regarded the beating as a deliberate insult to the dignity of a Subba. He insisted that 'the Subba is a king, and to beat the son of a Subba, is to beat a king's son' (and future king). The purpose of the moot for him was to seek redress for this affront. The incident was regarded in quite different terms by the ex-army Lieutenant. He pointed out that it is against the law to gamble and that both boys were wrong to do so. He then reminded Kanak that it is also against the law to beat another, and that a court would deal severely with such an offence. Kanak was then made to present a

bottle of liquor to the Subba, and to signal his apology by making obeisance to the latter and to his son.

Two points are worth noting. Firstly, Lajahang, by insisting on holding the moot in his own homestead, established his own right to mediate as against that of the Subbas. Secondly, the different value frameworks within which each interpreted the misdemeanor illustrates the divergent bases of the two kinds of leaders. Stated crudely, it is the distinction between, on the one hand, ascribed leadership founded on traditional norms and, on the other hand, achieved leadership validated by the norms of the wider society.

Although it is often said of Limbus that their disputes are never aired before members of other groups, in fact mediation is sometimes provided by another category of Notables who are not Limbus. The status which most often leads to the recognition of a non-Limbu as a Notable is headmanship on raikar Holdings i.e. the title of Thari. Until recently it was unlikely that a non-Limbu could achieve the qualities demanded of a Notable without the status and prerogatives enjoyed by a Thari. In rare instances, a local Brahmin or other high caste man could rise to a position of prominence in

the administration in Ilam Bazaar. When this happened, the prestige he imported into the settlement would generally be supplemented by the grant or purchase of a raikar Holding, thus providing him with a base from which to sustain his externally-derived wealth and influence. Nowadays, in theory at least, a man can gain prominence through the new administrative structures, such as the Panchayat Committee. But in fact, as I will show, this is highly unlikely. In the region of the Indreni settlements, while not all Tharis are Notables, there are no non-Limbu Notables who are not also Tharis.

The nature of the relationship between a raikar headman and his dependents relates, to a large extent, to the spatial distance between the Thari and his Holding. Because of the early practice of sale and purchase of Holdings as well as the introduction of a category of Government-appointed headmen, a Thari's residence often does not coincide with the location of his Holding. Of the six Tharis resident in the Indreni Cluster, only one, a Jaisi of Dorumba, actually resides on his own Holding. The other five Tharis - all Brahmins - have their Holdings anywhere from one to six miles away from their homes. As can be seen from the following Table, three of the Tharis resident in the Indreni settlements

have more than one Holding.

TABLE 36
Holdings of Indreni Theris

<u>Thari</u>	<u>Thari's Residence</u>	<u>Location of Holding (distance from residence)</u>
Brahmin (1)	Bharapa	1 mile
Brahmin (2)	Chitok	(a) 6 miles
		(b) 1½ miles
Brahmin (3)	Chitok	6 miles
Brahmin (4)	Chitok	(a) 6 miles
		(b) 2 miles
Brahmin (5)	Dorumba	1 mile
Jeisi (6)	Dorumba	(a) Dorumba
		(b) 3 miles

The raikar lands within the Indreni settlements are divided amongst four Theris, three of whom - the Jeisi being the only exception - live outside, but within a three mile radius of the Cluster.

Due to the nature of raikar land, the Thari is separated from his dependents in more than a spatial sense. Other than the fact that Holdings could be transferred by sale, raikar lands themselves can be alienated so that, over time, the composition of the Holdings' residents may change substantially. Thus, in contradistinction to the Subba, the Thari is unlikely to be a kinsman to more than a few, if any, of his dependents. The result is a relationship between dependents and Theris

quite distinct from that between Subbas and their dependents.

For a number of reasons it is to a Thari's advantage to keep in close touch with his Holding. For one thing, he is able to exact the traditional five days of labour, despite the fact that such exactions are now outlawed. For another, he can ensure that dependents turn up at Dasein with their tributary payments. Thirdly, since a fee following the sale of any land within his Holding is still paid to the Thari, it is in the latter's best interests to be in touch with all developments, so as to know if the price mentioned in the documents of sale is in fact the real sale price.

Still, it is not in a Thari's interests to emphasize his prerogatives to the exclusion of his responsibilities. A Thari should be ready to offer financial and other kinds of assistance to his dependents during times of distress. He should also be prepared to help his dependents in their occasional dealings with the administration. And he must be ready to offer his services in mediating disputes. The Jaisi headman in Dorumba, for example, has on several occasions attempted to seek a solution to a bitter antagonism existing between two Kambo brothers and their wives, who reside

on the Jaisi's raiker Holding. In the most recent incident, the wife of the older brother was severely beaten during a drunken quarrel by the younger brother and his wife. Since the case was one of assault, it was cognizable by the court, but the Thari convinced the injured party that an official complaint would only involve everyone in endless appearances in court and untold expense, and stressed that 'brothers should not show their quarrels in public'. He then held a moot where it was decided that the aggressors would pay the injured woman Rs 1.60 to 'raise her head' i.e. prestige (sir uthaune).

A Thari who is known to be fair in his demands and generous in his assistance earns not only the accord of his dependents but of his peers and neighbours, even if the two categories of persons are spatially quite distinct. Thus the reputation earned by a Thari through his relationships with his dependents gives him Notable status in the area of his Holding as well as in the settlement region where he resides.

Two cases serve to illustrate the foregoing remarks.

A poor Brahmin from a settlement just west of Bharapa, had asked a Limbu widow of Angbung if he might take some bamboo from a small wood belonging to her son.

While he was cutting down a tree he was apprehended by the woman's son who threatened to beat him. At that point a Brahmin Notable returning home from the Bazaar heard the two men quarreling and suggested that they explain the matter to him. The three retired to the courtyard of the Limbu's mother where the matter was clarified. The Notable exacted an apology from the Limbu for his hasty accusation and a promise from the Brahmin that in future he would seek the Limbu's permission directly if he wanted to cut bamboo from the wood.

The Notable, a Brahmin Thari of Chitok, had no specific kin or political relationship with either of the disputants. His Holding was situated about six miles to the north of the Cluster, but his status in the Indreni area derived from his reputation as a man of wealth and influence, and his mediation attempts were both welcome and effective.

In another instance, the mediator was a man with similar Notable status, who was headman of a raikar Holding within the Indreni settlements, though he was resident several miles away from the Cluster. The dispute involved a Chongbung of Chitok who had cut off the ear of a goat belonging to a Brahmin from a neighbouring settlement because the animal had come unattended

into the Limbu's potato field and destroyed part of the crop. The Thari, who was asked by the owner of the goat to settle the matter, upbraided the Limbu for not tying up the animal and then claiming compensation for the crop damage. It was decided that the Limbu would pay the owner Rs 32 and keep the goat. The owner demanded a promissary note from the Limbu, but the Thari insisted that this was unnecessary and that he would guarantee the payment, since both men owned a plot of reikar lend in his Holding.

Thus Notable status within the Cluster can accrue, on the one hand, to Indreni Tharis who exercise at least a part of their leadership roles in Holdings removed from the Cluster, and, on the other hand, to Tharis resident outside the area but whose political base, as it were, is within the boundaries of the Indreni settlements.

In sum, then, there are a variety of informal mediators available to settle disputes in which Limbus are involved. The decision as to which category of mediator to choose depends partly on who a man is quarrelling with, and partly on the disputants' personal assessment of their own status. The first is of importance because Limbus prefer, but as is obvious from some of the examples cited, do not always succeed, in having

their quarrels mediated by other Limbus. The second determines the 'level' at which mediation will be sought. The higher an individual perceives his own status, the higher will be the level to which he turns for mediation. Thus, 'small' men turn to Subbas and other men of influence in their neighbourhoods; 'bigger' men seek mediation from one of several categories of universally recognized Notables. This explains the tendency for the decisions of informal mediators to be respected. The acceptance of their superior status is at the same time the strongest sanction of their mediation.

But informal mediation is only one area of choice open to disputants. There are also formal bodies to which men can turn for the redress of their grievances. They are the statutory Panchayat and the various administrative offices, including the court, in Ilam Bazaar.

The Panchayat

The first attempts to introduce statutory Panchayats in Nepal date back to 1926¹. In that year, experiments in local government were carried out in the region of Kathmandu Valley and in 1930, were expanded to include

1. For a good discussion of Panchayats in Nepal see Rose, 1963a.

four districts in both the hill areas and the Terai. It was not until 1948, however, that legislation was introduced allowing for the establishment of Village Panchayats throughout the country. At that time a Panchayat Committee was formed of representatives from settlements in the Ilam-Darada sub-division of the district, which was constituted as a single 'village'. However, the revolution of 1951 aborted the Panchayats before they could begin functioning properly.

In 1953 the system was re-introduced, but this time Ilam-Darada was divided into three 'Villages'. All Village inhabitants over twenty-one years of age became members of a Village Assembly (sabha) which met twice annually to approve the budget and discuss the development programmes before it. The members of the Assembly also chose nine men to represent them on a Panchayat Committee, and the latter in turn, selected their own chairman and vice-chairman. The Government appointed two prominent men of the area to act as president and vice-president, responsible for the proper conduct of the Panchayat Committee's business and, generally, to oversee its functioning. Additional supervision was provided by a District Panchayat and a specially created Government department which audited the accounts of the Committee, approved its programme and had

the power to suspend the body or any of its members.

The main aims of the Panchayat, as set out in the Panchayat Law, were to implement Government programmes for welfare and development, collect essential census records and maintain law and order. The greatest emphasis was placed on the latter responsibility, and a Panchayat Court was established whose jurisdictional boundaries were defined by a special Act. The Court was empowered to settle cases involving damages up to Rs 100 and for which fines of up to Rs 25 or imprisonment for up to three months could be meted out. In addition, it could offer mediation facilities for all cases regardless of the amount of damages involved, provided they were not cognizable by Government courts. The Panchayat Court consisted of five men chosen by the chairman of the Panchayat Committee, two of whom had to live in or nearby the settlement of the litigants and so be familiar with them. Members of the Court had also to be rotated on a regular basis, with no member serving more than one month at a time. The chairman or vice-chairman of the Committee was required to attend all sessions of the Court.

In the four year period during which the Panchayat was in existence, the Court entertained

approximately 200 cases. It seldom used the powers given it by the Law. Instead, the Court sought to effect a cooling of tempers and to promote compromises. Acceptance of Court mediation of one dispute did not necessarily mean that the same litigants would not reappear before the Court under a different pretext. Where factional issues were involved Court mediation afforded only a temporary lull in the storm of litigation.

Indreni Limbus tended not to bring their disputes to the Panchayat Court. In three of the cases in which a Limbu was involved, the litigation was initiated by a member of another caste. In one instance, a Kambo man was accused of beating a Brahmin over an irrigation dispute. In another, a Chongbung was alleged to have deliberately damaged a Blacksmith's crops, while a third case involved a Limbu who had purchased a bullock given as security to a third party. In only one case did a Limbu prefer charges; against a Brahmin whom he alleged had cheated him over repayment of a loan. The reluctance of Limbus to bring their quarrels to the Panchayat Court is explained partly by their preference for informal mediation by other Limbus, as I have pointed out, and partly by their opposition to

the Panchayat system in general¹.

The present Panchayat Committee, established in 1962 under a reconstituted system of Panchayat Raj, retains many of the structural features of the previous body². But the area under its jurisdiction i.e. the Village - called Syawa - has been reduced to about one-third of its former size. The Village has been divided into nine wards. The settlements of Bharapa and Chitok together constitute a single ward, while households in Angbung and Dorumba are bunched together with those in neighbouring settlements to form two other wards.

The posts of president and vice-president have been abolished so that the effective head is now the Chairman chosen, as in the past, from among the members of the Panchayat Committee.

Under the present system, the emphasis is laid on the encouragement of 'self-help' development schemes, and involvement in judicial matters is actively discouraged. Not only has a Panchayat Court not been established, but a Panchayat Committee which seeks to utilize the powers previously held by the Court must

1. See Chapter VIII.

2. Another Panchayat Act was introduced in 1956, but no measures were taken in Ilam to set up Panchayat Committees.

request special authority from the Government. The Panchayat Committee, however, retains the right to offer its good offices to effect compromises when both disputants voluntarily seek mediation. Obviously, the distinction between Court and mediator is not as finely drawn in practice as in the Panchayat Law. The main result of the emphasis on development work, however, has been to shift the mediation platform from the Committee meetings to the courtyard of the Committee Chairman where, sometimes alone, and occasionally together with other representatives, disputes are heard and composed. The mediation is not informal because the Chairman acts with the full authority of his position, and there is all but the force of law in his decisions. This will be evident from the following examples.

In 1963, following the death of his wife, Budibal, a Nembeke of Dorumba, brought an Angu woman of Bharapa to live with him. The woman was separated from her own husband, whose whereabouts were not known, and so since Budibal had paid no compensation, he did not consider her his wife, although she was referred to as such by everyone in the Cluster. The woman was subject to periodic moods of depression and sudden

outbursts of violence. After one incident, during which she threw a khukuri knife, narrowly missing one of Budibal's young children, he decided that he could no longer allow her to stay in the house. Budibal and his two brothers met with several Angu men to seek a solution to the dilemma. The Angus insisted that this was a domestic quarrel and should be settled within the household. If a wife is troublesome, they pointed out, a man cannot send her away, but must take the good with the bad. The Nembekes, on the other hand, stated that a wife is brought to make a house happy, and if she is unable to do so, she must be sent away, or at least another house must be built for her to live in. Budibal, however, was adamant about being rid of her, and based his determination on the danger to his children, thus shifting the nature of the dispute from a domestic quarrel to a public offence. Several representatives from each side were chosen to present the case to the Chairman. At this point, Budibal enlisted the support of Lajahang, the ex-army officer, who was the father of Budibal's late wife, and the grandfather of Budibal's children who were alleged to be in danger from the uncontrollable anger of the woman. The Chairman agreed that the woman constituted a danger to the children. He suggested that she be given Rs 50

to 'lift her prestige' and that she return to her natal home in Bharapa. This is in fact what was done.

The case provides an interesting contrast between what might be called the 'domestic' dimension of the dispute, in terms of which the supporters of both the husband and wife sought a solution, and the 'legalistic' dimension, which approach Budibal adopted, probably in anticipation of the Chairman's own view. This is not to suggest that the first is a traditional approach, while the second a modern, since the presence nearby of police and court has long ago brought the law into the Indreni Limbus' perception of their surroundings. But it does indicate a more immediate and effective presence, in the form of a Panchayat Committee, of the force and authority of Government. Indreni Limbus are increasingly encouraged to take advantage of this stress by the Committee mediators on the legalistic dimension of disputes.

A Chongbung of Bharapa, for example, had borrowed Rs 180 and agreed to pay interest of 20% per annum. When it came time to collect the interest the creditor, a Brahmin from a neighbouring settlement approached the Limbu but the latter refused to pay, claiming the interest was too high, and suggested the matter be brought to the Chairman. The latter scolded the Limbu for refusing

to meet his obligations, but conceded that the law set a limit of 10% on interest payments. The initial document was torn up, and a new one made stipulating the legal rate, and the Limbu was instructed to pay the amount within a month.

The Administration

The administrative offices in Ilam Bazaar provide additional avenues for settling disputes. In addition to the Government court, both the treasury department (mal) and the office of the Governor have traditionally provided facilities for the settlement of disputes. This is partly due to the blurring of jurisdictional boundaries between various branches of the administration and probably also a manifestation of the jockeying for power among the top officials. Other reasons are the high costs of court litigation as compared with disputes taken to the Governor or treasury and the relative speed with which these branches dispose of cases as compared with the time taken by the courts. Decisions from all these sources have the force of law. In consequence, inhabitants of the settlements of Ilam view the administration as undifferentiated. Dealings with the Governor or his representatives, with the

treasury officials or the court are seen as dealings with the 'office' (adda). And it is not uncommon to seek redress for grievances concurrently in more than one branch of the administration.

I was not able to discover what proportion of disputes brought to Ilam Bazaar go to each branch, or what was the nature of the disputes submitted. From a perusal of court records since 1951, however, several facts emerge¹. Firstly, the majority of disputes taken to court are over land. Of forty-eight cases involving litigants resident in the Indreni settlements, twenty-three cases concerned land disputes. Another ten were complaints about assault. Secondly, Limbus were litigants in only five of the court cases; three of these dealt with assault on other Indreni Limbus, while two were land disputes with Brahmins. Thirdly, in forty-two of the forty-eight cases, at least one member of a single Brahmin lineage in the Cluster was implicated. This latter fact relates to the existence of factional cleavages in the Cluster, the nature and leadership of which are now considered.

Factions

For most Notables, the display of leadership

1. Most records of the court prior to 1951 were destroyed.

qualities is confined to contexts of mediation. Some, however, become political leaders by gathering about themselves a core of followers whose ranks are augmented on particular occasions by additional supporters. The immediate purpose for their recruitment is generally the waging of a dispute, but the underlying goal is the pursuit or maintenance of power or influence by the leaders. The followings such men muster will be called factions¹.

Factional divisions bearing on the Indreni settlements are not confined to the Cluster, but extend throughout and, to an extent, beyond the Village area. The activities of factions, however, will be considered only insofar as they concern political alignments within the Indreni Cluster. The background to factional struggles will be discussed first.

Factions in the Indreni settlements are based on a schism within a single Brahmin sibling group. The origins of the split can be traced to 1925 when Loka Nath (see Fig. 8) purchased some raikar land in Chitok

1. The definition of faction which I prefer is eclectic: a leader-based quasi-group, recruited on diverse principles, and operating in the political field. This combines the definitions of factions given by Nicholas (1965) and Firth (1957) with Mayer's use of the term 'quasi-group' to indicate an egocentred, non-corporate collectivity of individuals. (Mayer, 1966).

and Bharapa and moved with his wife and four of his five sons into the Cluster. The eldest son remained in the house where he and his brothers had been born, and which was situated in a settlement on the outskirts of Ilam Bazaar. The move corresponded with a division of property among the three eldest brothers Ram Chandra, Narad Muni and Gobindra and their establishment of separate households. Gobindra came to Bharapa, while Nerad Muni and his father Loka Nath built their homes on neighbouring plots in Chitok. The two youngest sons, Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath, who were only 17 and 12 years, continued to live for a time with their parents.

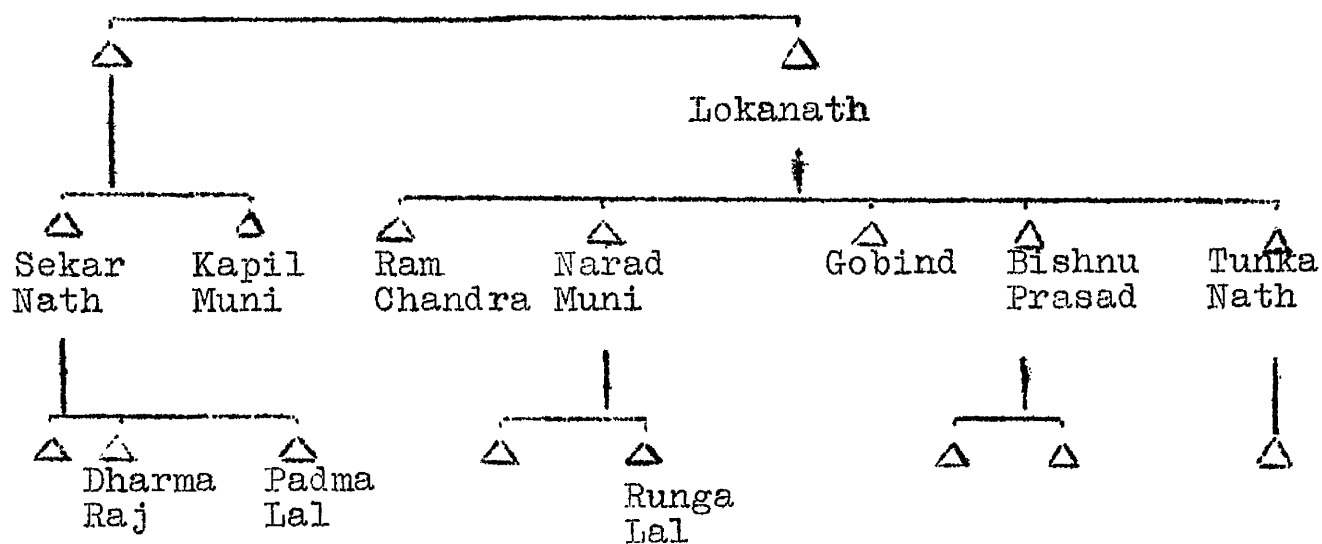


Fig. 8

As is customary, not all the property was divided amongst the sons. A portion (jiuni) was kept by the parents to guarantee their own security in old age.

The jiuni consisted mainly of forest and grazing lands as well as title to a Holding on other cultivated lands, all of which were situated about six miles north of the Cluster. The lands and headmanship had all been acquired by Loka Nath as a result of his attaining a high position in the district administration. At the time the division of property agreement was prepared, it was stipulated that following the death of both parents, Narad Muni would succeed to the title of headman and receive the income from the Holding. The remaining forests and grazing lands were to be divided amongst Narad Muni, Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath. But a further stipulation required that the son who cared for his parents in their old age would, following their death, receive a larger share of these lands than the others.

In 1931, Loka Nath died. Shortly after, Bishnu Prasad established a separate household in Chitok. Loka Nath's widow lived with her youngest son Tunka Nath until her death about ten years ago.

The death of Loka Nath set the stage for a series of disputes among the sons stemming initially from disagreements over the division of the jiuni, and then becoming generalized in a wide range of contexts. Within the sibling group, the brothers formed a series of

temporary alliances which dissolved with the settlement of a particular dispute or series of disputes, or upon the death of one of the brothers. Still, over a period of time, alliance patterns are discernible. The earliest disputes, following the death of Loka Nath, concerned mainly Ram Chandra and Narad Muni. Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath were still young men, while Gobindra spent most of his time in the Terai where much of his inheritance was situated, and so was never involved in his brothers' disputes. At the time of the revenue settlement of 1936, Narad Muni succeeded in registering in his own name all the jiuni lands which he was to share with his brothers following their mother's death. This led to prolonged court action which eventually ended with a Supreme Court decision in favour of Ram Chandra, who had pleaded the case on behalf of his mother and his other brothers.

From 1940-1950 Narad Muni was aligned against each of his brothers in turn, although occasional disputes broke out between Ram Chandra and Bishnu Prasad as well. By this time, the contexts for strife were not only their own disputes, but quarrels concerning others as well. Thus, when Narad Muni's first wife brought him to court for selling her own private property, she was supported by Bishnu Prasad.

After the death of Ram Chandra in 1950, both Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath quarrelled separately with Narad Muni and, on occasion, allied themselves against him. By this time, moreover, the sons of Narad Muni and Bishnu Prasad has become protagonists as well. In one case of assault, each accused the other of instigating a beating because of a dispute over rights to an irrigation channel.

In 1956, following the death of Narad Muni, the only two remaining brothers, Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath, became the principal protagonists. When I arrived in the field, these two men were the leaders of factions which ramified throughout the area of, and, to an extent, beyond, Syawa Village.

How were factions composed? Each faction had established a 'core' of adherents, who tended to support their faction leaders whether the immediate dispute concerned them directly or not. The core included, first of all, the members of a leader's household. This is not as obvious a statement as it may seem. The ethic which exhorts a father to distribute his property (and his love) equally amongst his sons is occasionally ignored in practice. Fathers often favour particular sons or the sons of a particular wife. Since property

divisions are frequently determined before the sons establish separate households, such practices can result in a disenchanted son joining an opposing alliance against his father while still a member of the latter's household. Thus one of the sons of Narad Muni became an adherent of his father's elder brother Ram Chandra because of grievances against the former over property division.

As long as an estate remains undivided, a father can count on the support of members of his household. Both Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath head joint-type households, with two sons and one son respectively, who constitute part of their factional cores. One son in each household plays a key role both as advisor and as a highly important link with the administration where the two are employed.

Aside from household members, factional cores also include men who, in the furtherance of their own ambitions, find it expedient to seek the support of faction leaders. Absorption into factional cores may also have a basis in a history of disputes. Those led by Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath included two brothers of a collateral line in the same lineage who had been at loggerheads for almost fifteen years. The initial

antagonism developed at the time of their division of property. The elder, Dharma Raj, alleged that his younger brother Padmalal had received a larger share of the estate than he did. The hostility between the brothers was exacerbated by the fact that their father, Sekar Nath, lived, during his old age, with his youngest son and was commonly known to favour the latter. Alignment with the primary faction leaders came about in 1952. At that time Padmalal was discovered to have impregnated the wife of an older brother who had emigrated to India. To cover up the scandal one of the dependents of Sekar Nath, who was a Thari, was paid handsomely to take the woman away from the area. The arrangements were made by Tunka Nath in return for support given by Sekar Nath during an earlier dispute. Dharma Raj refused to retain commensal relations with his younger brother, as did a number of other men in the area. Padmalal, to save caste, was forced to distribute much of his wealth in the form of bribes, and had to sell a number of his lands to meet the costs. Tunka Nath was one of those who agreed to interdine with him (even if at some profit to himself) and since that time the latter has supported, and been supported by, the faction leader. In consequence, Dharma Raj was brought,

somewhat inadvertantly, into the core of Bishnu Prasad's faction.

When Sekar Nath died in 1961, the two brothers, after observing a mourning period of one year, began campaigning for their father's title of Thari, along with Sekar Nath's younger brother, Kapil Muni. Each had in fact been sharing the income from a designated number of households within the Holding, but the title itself could not be shared i.e. the Holding could not be formally divided. The treasury office, which makes the formal appointment, decided at one point to seek the 'advice' of the dependents on the Holding. In preparation for the visit of the treasury representatives, each candidate enlisted the support of the faction leaders. Although Bishnu Prasad, by this time a Panchayat Committee executive, could not campaign openly in favour of Dharma Raj, his support was commonly known and another member of his faction core conducted the campaign. Tunka Nath himself spoke in favour of Padmalal and, in an attempt to impress the treasury office of the strong opposition to Dharma Raj, who was the favourite by virtue of being the eldest son, Tunka Nath encouraged another member of his faction core to bolster the claim of the third candidate, Kapil Muni. The meetings only ensured that each candidate would have the

support of those households already paying taxes to him, since no dependent attended the meetings of his rivals.

In the end the treasury office heard only a few mild speeches in favour of each candidate without bringing the matter to a vote. Although nothing had been decided when I left the field, the general consensus was that the contest was a facade since the authorities generally follow custom in choosing the eldest son - in this case Dharma Raj - to succeed to a headman's title. The campaign continued behind the scenes by intermittent visits to the treasury office made by the competitors and their faction supporters.

Two other men resident in the Cluster belong, together with Dharma Raj and Padmalal, to the core of the factions recruited around Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath. Here again, alignment on a regular basis has resulted from the growth of intense hostility between a Jaisi and a Nembeke of Dorumba. The rivalry stems from a dispute over rights to land which the father of Jahare, a Subba, had granted as a Holding to the father of the Jaisi, Bhagi Rath¹. The latter allied himself with Bishnu Prasad, who had already been at odds with Jahare in a number of minor squabbles.

1. See above, pp. 307 ff.

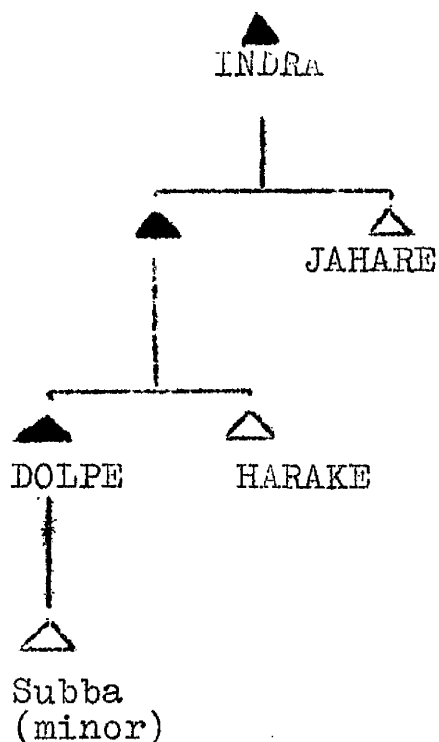


Fig. 9

The first major test of the coalition came in 1961 when Jahare attempted to claim the title of Subba after the death of his brother's son, Dolpe, who had inherited the title while Jahare was in the army. Although both customary and legal rules stress succession by primogeniture, Jahare challenged the right of the late Subba's son to succeed on the grounds that the latter was a minor. With the help of Tunka Neth he was able to convince the treasury office that the dependents on the Holding should be allowed to decide the issue. They then went on to 'pack' the hearing by recruiting seventeen supporters from all parts of Syawa Village, including five Indreni Limbus, to appear before

the treasury representatives, who subsequently ruled in Jahare's favour.

Bishnu Prasad and Bhagi Rath then persuaded Harake, the late Subba's brother, and also a dependent on Bhagi Rath's raiker Holding, to appeal against the decision. They pointed out that the hearing, on which the treasury office decision was based, could be shown to be illegal, since most of Jahare's supporters who appeared before the hearing were not in fact dependents on the kipat Holding, but men resident on other Holdings. They then suggested that Harake emphasize that a minor's rights had been violated by the decision. If Harake would agree to act as the boy's regent until he came of age, the responsibilities of tax-collection on the Holding would be properly discharged. Harake agreed to appeal and documents were prepared by the faction leader and his core adherents. Capital to fight the case in an appeal court in Kathmandu was supplied by Bhagi Rath, who took some of Harake's kipat lands under mortgage. The original decision was eventually reversed, and the boy appointed Subba, with the stipulation that Harake would act on his behalf until he came of age.

In addition to their own households, Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath can count regularly on the support

of four other households (between them) within the Cluster and perhaps another six in settlements outside the Indreni area. Factional cores, then, are small. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, unless a man has political ambitions, the risks involved in commitment to a faction core are too great. These risks are mainly financial. A core adherent may have to invest substantial sums of money in long drawn out struggles without any certainty of success. The costs to Jehare of his battle for the title of Subba, for example, were in the region of Rs 1200. Hence few men are able or prepared to commit themselves to a faction leader unless they are regularly in need of support. There are circumstances when a politically ambitious man has no choice but to align himself with the core of a faction leader: as, for instance, when a traditional enemy gives his support to one leader, and forces his opponent to seek the security of the other.

A second reason for the limited size of cores is that faction leaders seek adherents who are more than mere syncophants. Core supporters must possess attributes which redound to the benefit of a faction. In addition to wealth, literacy is an essential criterion of core membership. Literacy in this context refers

especially to a capacity to comprehend the Legal Code, a formidable document of immense complexity, and a total mystery to all but a few. Since most disputes involving substantial amounts of property or other wealth find their way to court, someone with a facility for supplying legal stratagems is a major asset to any faction¹. Men with ability to comprehend the written word and to prepare petitions and counter-petitions based on legal arguments are of prime importance to a faction leader. Indeed, these are essential qualifications for faction leadership itself.

The term core suggests, of course, that a faction leader does rely in his political activities on other occasional supporters as well. Both leader and core adherents generally possess the means to recruit supporters through relationships established in other contexts. Dependents on Holdings are one such source. Faction leaders Bishnu Prasad and Tunka Nath are both Tharis, as is Bhagi Rath; while Dharme Raj and Padmalal, who were disputing over their father's title, had nevertheless established headman-dependent-like ties with a number of households within the Holding of their father.

1. Until recently, court officials were political appointees without legal training, so that the court itself was less than capable of coping with the highly complicated law.

When Bishnu Prasad and Bhagi Rath opposed the claims of Jashare to the title of Subba, Bhagi Rath was able to bolster his faction's case by recruiting several of his dependents to sign as witnesses on the petition presented to the appeal court.

Mortgage and loan credit, as well as tenancy provide additional ties which faction leaders and core adherents can manipulate to recruit supporters. All, for example, are among the Main Landholders listed in Table 14 (p. 176). When the sons of Narad Muni and Bishnu Prasad accused each other before the Panchayat Court of assault each presented a number of 'eye-witnesses' to the event testifying to their opponent's guilt. Several of these witnesses were Limbus dependent on the faction leaders for credit or tenancy rights who were recruited to the factions for the duration of the case.

Relationships of kinship, occasionally of agnation, but more frequently of affinity, provide another fund of potential recruits. Because Brahmins and Jaisis comprise the majority of the population in the region, members of these castes, especially wealthy families, are able to find spouses in nearby settlements, and so tend to have at least some of their affines and matrilineal kinsmen close at hand. Moreover, ties to certain kinds of relatives are bolstered in a ritual

context since, for example, sisters' husbands or sons, fathers' sisters' sons or daughters' sons can perform services as ritual priests (purohit). At one Shiva ritual sponsored by a core adherent of Tunka Nath, eleven relatives in the category of purohit to the host were invited to participate in the ritual, and were appropriately fed and paid. Such men constitute an additional fund of occasional faction support.

Finally, the status of Notable enjoyed by faction leaders places them in a position to do a variety of favours for others which accumulate as political debts to be collected at some future date¹. Thus, a Limbu who had been accused of injuring a Brahmin in a quarrel sought advice from Bishnu Prasad who prepared his counter-petition to the Panchayat Court. Some time later, a witness was required by Bishnu Prasad to attest to the latter's presence in a particular location and at a particular time to belie a charge that the faction leader had instigated an assault on a member of the opposing faction. The debt owed by the Limbu was collected, and the charge against the faction leader was dismissed.

1. Faction leaders act both as 'patrons', when allocating favours to clients directly, and as 'brokers', when obtaining these favours as intermediaries. (Cf. Meyer, 1963).

Notables also accumulate a store of favours because of their role in mediating disputes. A man who has sought and received justice at the hands of a Notable would be reluctant to refuse his support when called upon.

On the other hand, those from whom support is sought by faction leaders are often placed in a dilemma by overlapping claims to their allegiance. 'Debts' based on economic, political or kinship ties often link potential supporters to both faction leaders.

When a man finds himself in such circumstances he attempts to disengage completely from factional struggles. The dispute over the title of Subba provided one such occasion. Several of Jahare's affines were also dependents on Bhagi Reth's raikar Holding in Dorumba, and efforts by both sides to enlist their support were assiduously and successfully avoided. Where this is impossible, however, a man tries to shift support from one faction to another as personal advantage or short-term obligation dictates.

Faction leaders usually search out, or even instigate disputes and make them a context for factional strife. In six of the nine cases involving Indreni residents which were brought before the Panchayat Court, faction leaders supported opposing litigants. The

motives are often personal gain for the faction leaders and their core adherents, who charge for their various 'services', such as preparing petitions, and hope to share in the proceeds of any victory. Faction leaders themselves are quick to point this out, at least of their opposition. Thus, when a Limbu brought a petition against one faction leader the latter, in his counter-petition, noted that the Limbu was being 'carried' (boknu) by the opposing faction leader whose 'tactics are to seek out two persons who are quarrelling and incite one side; and by this he hopes to gain something.' Support may be offered gratuitously only when failure to do so could result in economic or political loss to one faction or, alternatively, gain for its rival.

To what extent are disputes involving Indreni Limbus absorbed by factional rivalries? The bulk of cases in which Limbus are the disputants concern matters from which little profit is to be gained. This is to be expected because of the poverty of most Indreni Limbu households. But when a Limbu, especially one who is poor and illiterate, becomes implicated in a dispute where the stakes are high, allies with the necessary contacts, knowledge of law and court procedure are required to ensure any chance of success. To refuse the support

of a faction in any important dispute would be to court defeat and financial loss. Major disputes are thus fed into the existing factional cleavage.

The process is best illustrated by documenting a dispute over kiptat land which has been smouldering for almost a half century and which has exercised two generations of faction leaders.

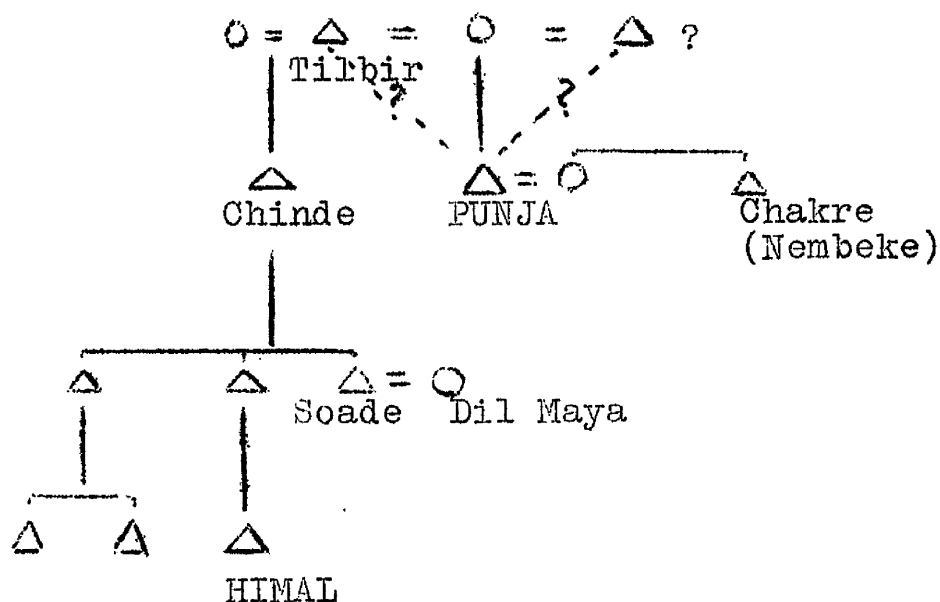


Fig. 10

Following the death in 1922 of Tilbir, a Kambo of Chitok, Chinde, his son by his first wife and Chinde's own three sons opposed the right of Punja to inherit a portion of Tilbir's lands. Although Punja's mother had become Tilbir's second wife, it was widely believed that the woman had come to the Cluster in early pregnancy,

and that Tilbir was not in fact Punja's genitor. Chinde and his sons were successful in their dispute and so, without adequate means to get a living, Punja migrated to Assam in 1923, where he worked on a tea plantation. He continued to return on occasion to the Cluster, since he had married the sister of Chakre, a Nembeke of Dorumba.

On one of his visits in 1945, he was approached by Ram Chandre, who was at the time leading a faction against his brother Nared Muni, and urged to prefer charges against the latter for illegally encroaching on kiptat land¹. Punja realized that if he could prove the case against the Brahmin, then he might finally get the lands he had been denied as a young man. Moreover, there would be no-one to contest his right since by 1945 the sons of his half-brother Chinde had died, as had all their sons but one, Himel, who was in any case in India at the time. Of all those with rights to Tilbir's lands, only Dil Maya, the wife of Chinde's youngest son Soade, was resident in the Cluster, and she was old and sick. In any case, Ram Chandre pointed out, Dil Maya would not

1. See Fig. 8, p. 349. According to informants, Ram Chandre probably knew that Punja had returned from Assam with Rs 500 in savings and hoped to get some of this money for preparing the case.

stand in his way since she had herself been victimized by Narad Muni on several occasions. Ram Chandra was certain that Punja could win his case, and offered to prepare the necessary documents.

In his petition to the court, Punja argued: 'When I came back (from Assam) I found that my old house, and the house of my brother's sons were no longer there. And there was a large house and there was Narad Muni. I said to him: "What is the matter that you have built a house on our kiptat, and who gave it to you? You are a wicked person." Then I went to Dil Maya and asked her. She said that Narad Muni had driven away all the descendants of Chinde by his treachery. Narad Muni, she said, called her time and again to sign papers which he then displayed to prove that the land was raikar and not kiptat. Dil Maya had been afraid to refuse so great a man and anyway she is simple, so she signed.'

Narad Muni's reply to the accusation was brief. He challenged the plaintiff to show that any of the transactions he had engaged in over kiptat was illegal. He also brought up the fact of Punja's uncertain parentage and stressed that since Punja had not received an inheritance of kiptat land he had no business inquiring about the lands. Narad Muni then spent the greater part

of his defence attacking Ram Chandra and Tunka Nath who was at this time aligned with his eldest brother. He accused them of bringing Punja back to the Cluster just to bring a case against him. 'They seek to destroy my property, and when they are through, they will send Punja back to Assam.'

Beside this explicit statement of the manner in which faction leaders instigate disputes, the alignment of support behind each faction leader throws some light on the pattern of faction formation. Ram Chandra recruited his support for Punja on three bases. The first was hostility to Narad Muni. A father and son of the same Kambo lineage had recently quarrelled with Narad Muni and could be counted on to support a grievance against the latter. It should be noted, however, that the two were from an 'adopted' line and so had no claim on Tilbir's lands. Consequently, Punja represented no threat to their own interests. A second basis was affinal ties. Three Nembeke men, among them the brother of Punja's wife, lent their support to the faction leader for the sake, as one put it, 'of our sister'. Thirdly, and to an extent this criterion subsumed the other two, was the feeling of hostility shared by all kipat-owning Limbus towards landholders of other castes. The kinds

of accusations thrown at Narad Muni by Ram Chandra and Tunka Nath through the mouth of Punja, echoed the common Limbu experience. On this basis four Chongbung elders, one of them a much respected Subba, joined in support of Ram Chandra's faction.

Narad Muni recruited the kind of support which was meant to achieve two main purposes. The first was to attest to his status as a Notable, and mutatis mutandis his reputation as an honest man who accomplished his ends by legal means alone. This required several 'character' witnesses, whose own reputations were immaculate. To this end eleven Notables were recruited from every corner of the Village area. Three were affines, while another six, all Brahmins and Jaisis, were themselves landholders of kiptat and undoubtedly saw in this case the threat of a precedent which could affect their own economic positions.

Of perhaps greater importance was the necessity for Narad Muni to present his opponents with a denial of Punja's right to kiptat, and this could best be effected by recruiting the support of Himal, who was at the time working in India. The letter was sent for and brought to the Cluster where he confirmed the denial of Punja's rights to kiptat, and hence protected his own inheritance. On the basis of this latter evidence, and

the lack of firm proof to back up Ram Chandra's allegations of dishonesty, the case was decided in favour of Nared Muni.

Another dispute over the same lands erupted in 1964, shortly after Himal's resettlement in the Cluster after a long residence in India. To build a house and re-establish an estate in Chitok, Himal required capital, only some of which he could supply from savings accumulated during his residence abroad. He proceeded to raise the money by taking interest-free loans (bard) from those to whom his lands had been pledged and adding the amount of the loan to the initial mortgage capital. The kipat lands of Tilbir which Nared Muni had taken under mortgage had been 'inherited' after his death by his son Rungalal. When Himal came to request bard from Rungalal, the latter refused. At first Himal sought to transfer landholding rights from Rungalal to someone else willing to take these lands under mortgage. But the mortgage capital was out of proportion to the value of the lands, and Himal could find no takers¹. In a rage, Himal requested the support of Tunka Nath, who suggested

1. Informants, including Rungalal, agree that the figures on the documents did not correspond with the amounts actually paid by Nared Muni.

a re-opening of the case which had defeated Himel's classificatory grandfather, Punja. Tunka Nath welcomed the opportunity to involve his brother's son in expensive litigation since the latter had recently been making some embarrassing accusations about Tunka Nath to Government officials and furthermore, had established good relations with the opposing faction of Bishnu Prasad.

The matter was brought to court but before a decision could be reached several influential men in the district, all resident outside the Village area, succeeded in convincing both disputants that by becoming involved in factional strife, they were courting financial disaster. Subsequently, a compromise was reached out of court - and against the wishes of the faction leaders - which enabled Himel to repossess some of his lands.

This case indicates how attachment to faction leaders is temporary and lasts only as long as there is advantage to be gained. A Kambo man who had supported Ram Chandra and Tunka Nath in the earlier dispute, found himself urging mediation in this one because of dual ties to both Himel, as classificatory brother, and next door neighbour and to Runglal, as tenant on the latter's land. The case also shows that it is possible to transfer

alignments from one faction leader to another. Himel, for example, first allied himself with Narad Muni against Ram Chandra and Tunka Nath who were supporting his classificatory grandfather Funja and later joined forces with Tunka Nath against the son of Narad Muni. The basis for alignment in both instances was Himel's own interests.

The great majority of Limbus are able to avoid involvement in factions. The sanctions which a faction leader can bring to bear on those whose support he solicits are mitigated by several factors. One is the nature of the land system which, as I pointed out in Chapter V, enables Limbus to manipulate land rights and so retain a measure of economic and political independence. Thus the 24 Limbu households which are linked by ties of mortgage or loan credit or tenancy to faction leaders and their core adherents are not conspicuous supporters of factions. Another factor is the nature of homestead and settlement dispersion¹. The inhabitants of Bharapa and Angbung, in particular, seldom have occasion to meet faction leaders and so are easily able to avoid becoming involved. It is not surprising that the few

1. Residence patterns also bear on faction formation in Indian settlements in Fiji. See Mayer, 1957, p.324.

Limbus who on occasion have supported factions have been resident in Chitok and Dorumba where faction leaders and their core adherents reside.

But important as land tenure and environmental factors may be in explaining the ease with which Limbus can opt out of factional strife, they are peripheral to a third factor: the nature of the political arena. By this I mean the contexts within which factional struggles are waged. By engaging in disputes, their own, and those of others, faction leaders compete for economic prizes as well as power and influence. To wage disputes, supporters are of course essential, but their effectiveness is not in numbers. As I have shown, faction leaders solicit core adherents who possess specific qualities which can be utilised in the furtherance of their interests in disputes. Similarly, other supporters are mobilized to lend credence to an argument, act as witness to an event, sign documents or attest to firmness of character.

There is no context, however, in which the numerical strength of a faction is relevant. Although physical assault may lead to or result from factional strife, it is confined to two or three individuals, and does not lead to large-scale violence between factions. In brief, leaders do not attempt to employ

coercive force as a means of achieving their ends, a practice which if followed could lead to the importance of sheer numbers as a measure of faction strength.

Both Meyer and Benedict suggest that an emphasis on numbers might result from the establishment of an arena, defined by statute, within which elections for office can be held¹. The inclusion of the Indreni settlements within an administrative Village and the creation of a statutory Panchayat Committee has provided a new context for factional activity, but has not, as yet, brought about a concentration on numbers.

The Panchayat Committees established in 1953 and again in 1962 did not, strictly speaking, absorb the existing factional conflicts. The first Committee administered an area and a population considerably larger than that within which any faction leader could exert his influence effectively. Also, the purpose and authority of the Panchayat system could not be readily understood at the time of its inception. It was, and to an extent still is perceived as an instrument of Government, created not to innovate improvement schemes, but to implement the instructions of district and Central authorities. The appointment by the Government of a

1. Meyer, 1957, p. 322 and Benedict, 1957, p. 340.

president to oversee the day-to-day workings of the first Panchayat Committee further served to prevent the use of the Committee as an arena for factional dispute. The man chosen to fill the position was a Brahmin Pandit highly respected for his learning and impartiality in mediating quarrels. He and the vice-president, another Brahmin of similar status, were largely responsible for the formation of the nine man Committee, although in theory the choice was that of the adult population. One faction leader, Tunka Nath, was chosen to be a member of the executive, but being only one Notable among many on the Committee, most of whom were neutral to any faction, he had little opportunity to transform the Committee into an instrument for strengthening his faction.

Circumstances connected with the establishment of a new Panchayat system in 1962 changed the attitude of faction leaders to the Committee. For one thing, the area under its jurisdiction came within the purview of their own circumference of influence. Secondly, the post of Government appointed president was abolished so that the choice of the Committee would be entirely an internal matter. Thirdly, those who had controlled the previous Committee were either outside the new Village,

too old to assume the responsibilities of running the Committee, or refused to participate on the grounds that the responsibilities were not matched by commensurate gains. All these factors weighed on Bishnu Prasad's decision to represent his ward composed almost entirely of households in Bharapa and Chitok. No attempt was made by Tunka Nath directly to oppose the candidacy of his brother. Informants I asked about this stressed the fact that Tunka Nath had been on the previous Committee and so 'had his chance'. Also, the idea that elections should be held to choose a representative was felt to be bad as they would 'show our quarrels'¹. Tunka Nath, however, tried to persuade one of the ex-army pensioners to join the Committee, knowing that if he did Bishnu Prasad would stand down. Although there was some feeling in the ward that it should be represented by a Limbu, the ex-servicemen refused and deferred in favour of Bishnu Prasad. Once it was known that the latter was to enter the Committee it was a foregone conclusion that he would be its Chairman. He was able to ensure that the majority of representatives were men of no consequence, and that they were either his own supporters or men not attached to any faction. The notion that the Committee

1. No elections were held in any of the wards.

should reflect a cross-section of the various castes resident in the Village limited the choice somewhat. It was felt, for example, that at least one representative should be a Limbu. Since Bishnu Prasad was himself from a Limbu-dominated ward, Jahare was chosen to represent the ward which includes Dorumba. This was the only successful attempt by Tunka Nath's faction to place one of their adherents on the Committee.

When the Committee came to elect its Chairman, Jahare suggested that he might seek the office. It was thought that a contest would leave bad feelings and Jahare, realizing that he would have no support in any case, made no attempt to carry out his threat. Bishnu Prasad was then chosen by acclamation. Shortly thereafter, Jahare became involved in a court case with the district administration - which, he alleged, was instigated by Bishnu Prasad - and ceased attending Committee meetings. He was replaced by another Nembeke of Dorumba, considered an occasional supporter of Bhagi Rath and Bishnu Prasad in their factional disputes.

Thus Bishnu Prasad succeeded in packing the Panchayat Committee with men who would not oppose his will and who are, by and large, ready to rubber stamp his actions. But the fact that one faction leader monopolizes the statutory authority which resides in the

Committee does not preclude the existence of opposition on the level of policy making. This is because decisions are arrived at by consensus of a body wider than the Panchayat Committee.

Meetings are seldom held, and important issues never broached, without the participation of at least some Notables who are not in fact members of the nine-man Committee. Except during the rainy season, meetings are held regularly, so that anyone interested in attending knows where and when to come. Although the Committee has the authority to initiate a wide range of actions, when an important decision is to be taken, invitations are sent to influential men in the area requesting them to be present. Committee deliberations thereby take on the character of informal gatherings of Notables. This 'comprehensive committee', as Mayer calls a similar body in Ramkheri, is not given formal recognition and has no fixed membership or existence outside the framework of Committee decision-making¹. It is also to be distinguished from a formally constituted sub-committee, with an executive and determinate membership which may be established to deal with special

1. Mayer, 1960, pp. 116ff. The 'Comprehensive Committee' in Ramkheri, however, was a more formal body, itself having officers.

projects. Thus, for example, when it was decided to build a Panchayat House, a sub-committee consisting of twenty-four of the wealthiest residents in the Village area was set up to collect monies.

The Panchayat Committee, then, is subsumed by a plenary body composed of men who are traditional leaders. Members of the former, other than Bishnu Prasad and one or two other articulate persons, voice no opinions in the presence of these men of influence. In such a setting, members of the faction opposed to Bishnu Prasad - who attend meetings regularly - participate in decision-making and are able, on the whole, to neutralize the possible advantages Bishnu Prasad could derive from control of the Panchayat Committee. There is room for factional hostility to be expressed in opposing views of various Committee projects, but a middle way can be sought under the guise of working for 'national development'. Matters are never taken to a vote. Discussions which cannot be resolved at one meeting, are carried over to the next until a suitable compromise is reached¹. Often a decision taken at one

1. Commenting on the nature of consensus in a committee, Bailey states: '....everyone knows that if the decision is not the result of an agreed compromise, then it cannot be implemented.' (1965, p.8).

meeting is countermanded at the next, when news of the decision reaches the ears of Notables who were not present at the previous meeting. Minutes are kept, but they mention only those in attendance, and what the Committee eventually decided.

Thus the established procedure of seeking consensus achieves the dual purpose of containing factional strife and enabling the Committee to carry out its tasks of local government. When the Committee attempts to ignore the wider consultative body on important matters it risks bringing factional opposition out into the open. This happened when Bishnu Prasad attempted to win the approval of the Village Assembly - which must ratify the Committee's annual budget - for a tax plan which had been prepared without the prior approval of the plenary body. The faction opposing Bishnu Prasad gathered sufficient support to stage a walkout and so broke up the meeting before the required number of signatures could be gathered to legalize the proposal.

There are signs of a growing realization on the part of faction leaders that control of the Committee is an essential prerequisite for building a strong political following. Kathmandu's emphasis on the development of a viable Panchayat system has meant that Government officials at the district level are especially sensitive

to anything they regard as an attempt to hamstring the work of the Committees. Opposition to proposals of the Committee, or to its manner of implementing Government programmes, thus tends to be equated with opposition to the Panchayat system. A faction leader in control of the Committee can increasingly disregard the traditional methods of achieving consensus and pressure others to conform to his policies under the veiled threat of denunciation as 'opponents' (birodhi) of the Panchayat system. Several men who have been vocal in their disagreement with certain Committee proposals have been called to Ilam Bazaar for a browbeating by various Government officials.

Ultimately, of course, a determined Committee could exercise its statutory powers to take all necessary decisions without reference to a more comprehensive body. Thus, a new coercive weapon has been added to the arsenal of the faction leader entrenched in the Committee, and could lead to a shift in the delicate balance between the two factions. Given the continued development of this trend, it is possible to foresee the Committee becoming the principal arena for factional strife. In such circumstances, formal election procedures could replace the hitherto consensual methods of choosing

representatives. It would then follow, logically, that new emphasis would be placed on the large-scale recruitment of factional following and, alternatively, on the need for residents of the Village area, including Limbus, to take sides to a greater degree than they now need to do. Until such time, however, there is no circumstance in which it is necessary for a faction leader to measure his strength in numerical terms.

CHAPTER VIII
CULTURE AND KIPAT:
THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF POLITICS

In the previous chapter I described certain kinds of political choices open to Indreni Limbus. There is, however, another aspect of the political configuration - which might be termed its 'external dimension' - to be considered. This has to do with the cultural distinctiveness of the Limbus and the manner in which the kipat system of land tenure is fused with and articulates the culture.¹ Many Limbus believe that 'kipat' is a term in the Limbu tongue and, having been granted only to Limbus, is symbolic of their exclusiveness. Thus, 'our social, cultural and religious beliefs, way of life, and administration under the kipat system are completely different from those prevalent in the rest of the country.'²

Indreni Limbus see themselves as part of a historical cultural unit with a special relationship to land, and which unit is both exclusive and in opposition to the outside. Such a relationship tends to define the nature of Limbu social contacts outside the immediate area of the Cluster and absorbs them in political activities on behalf of the wider group. Inevitably, their apartness also affects and is affected by relationships both to non-Limbus

-
1. For a description of some cultural differences between Limbus and Brahmins see Chapter I.
 2. B.B. Chemjong, 1957 (quoted in M.C. Regmi, 1965, p.131).

in the area of the Cluster as well as to other Limbus within the Indreni settlements.

Ties outside the Area

Exclusiveness is fostered by the dual regulation of caste endogamy and clan exogamy which envelops Indreni Limbus in a widespread web of kin ties beyond the Cluster. These links are strengthened and expanded through a continuous process of interaction demanded by the norms of kinship. For one thing, the custom of visiting during Dasein provides the occasion for a renewal of ties between daughters and sisters who have married out and their natal kinsmen, as well as between the husbands of these women and their affines. During the three years following a marriage, a son-in-law is expected to pay his annual respects to his father-in-law. Since a variety of payments in meat and liquor must be transferred on each visit the couple is accompanied by anything from three to six young men from the husband's settlement cluster who carry the payments. Such visits, obviously, not only discharge the obligations of kinship but enable fledgling affinal ties to be bolstered. The presence of so large a number of guests also requires the provision of hospitality which absorbs the attentions of a circle of affines wider than members of the bride's household alone.

Marriage and mourning rites are other important occasions for the renewal of ties. The former rites, in

particular, bring together large numbers of kinsmen not normally resident in the groom's settlement area. The marriage of a son calls for invitations to be sent to the groom's mother's brother and other close matrilineal kinsmen, to the groom's sisters and their husbands, and to the sisters of the groom's father and their spouses. In addition, the bride is accompanied to the wedding by a number of women from her settlement area, some of whom may already be related to residents in the settlements of the hosts.

There are also less formal contexts for the maintenance of external kin ties. Visiting among relatives is encouraged and requires little prompting. A man knows he is always welcome at the home of his mother's brother, and often takes the opportunity provided by a slack agricultural period to pay a visit. When a woman is ill her father or brother are usually notified and someone from her natal household will be despatched to report on her condition. If the illness is traced to supernatural causes which cannot be treated by local specialists a ritual expert from the woman's natal settlement, 'who knows her deities' might be summoned to treat her.

But kinship provides only one channel through which Indreni Limbus establish a widely ramifying range of ties to other Limbus beyond the area of settlement.¹

1. In one sense, any relationship between Limbus can be subsumed within a framework of kinship. A superficial inquiry about clan membership enables two complete strangers to establish a pseudo-kinship tie.

Shared culture and the notion of common identity is another basis. Language forms an instant bridge between all Limbus, just as it provides a barrier which can be erected at any time between themselves and members of other groups. Language serves to overcome the initial reserve with which any strangers are regarded. Moreover, the situations in which Limbu strangers are apt to come together possess certain structural attributes which contribute to ease the establishment of rapport. For example, the market in Ilam Bazaar provides a regular occasion for Limbus from settlements in the area to come together. Limbu petty traders tend to occupy one section of the market square and mix little with members of other castes except to engage in fleeting commercial transactions. The social concomitants of market day - renewal or creation of friendships, exchange of gossip, flirtation - take place within a geographically and socially distinct area. Limbus frequent certain 'tea stalls' selling liquor, thus demonstrating their preference for the company of other Limbus and easing communication with those who are unfamiliar.

A number of annual fairs held in various parts of the district bring together large numbers of mainly young Limbu men and women. Here again, the pattern of separation is evident. At two such events I witnessed, attendance was not confined to Limbus, but brought together a large mixed population for as many as four days at a time.

In each instance, Limbus segregated themselves in one section of the grounds and had virtually no contacts with members of other groups. Through the medium of Limbu mixed dances, Indreni residents dispersed easily among the crowds, renewing old and establishing new friendships. Members of other groups who sought to join the dances were not turned away, but neither were they made welcome. Embarrassment at not knowing the dance steps or the language of the songs soon encouraged them to return with their friends to another area of the fair grounds.

Long distance trading ventures provide another context in which Limbus from the Indreni settlements make contact with others from various parts of Limbuan. During the mandarin season, in particular, the main road leading to the town of Sanisare in the Terai carries a heavy traffic of porters bringing the fruit from areas to the north. Since the trip takes several days, Limbus make camp at night in one of a number of shops where they can buy beer or liquor and find a place to sleep. Here they pick up the latest gossip and exchange information on prices with those returning from Sanisare. In the town itself, they seek out the company of other Limbus, share drinks and make up parties to return together to the hills. On their return to Ilam Limbus from settlements to the north of the Cluster are often invited to spend a night in the Cluster, where a dancing party is organised in their honour.

Friendships created in this way are sustained beyond the portering season and a pattern of mutual visiting may endure for years, or eventually lead to the formation of affinal links.¹

When Limbus travel long distances for any purpose, be it trade or visiting, they invariably seek out Limbu households or wayside inns run by Limbus at which to spend the night. When I trekked for several weeks in parts of Limbuan my Limbu travelling companion would speed up or delay the daily journey in order to arrive at dusk in an area of Limbu settlement so as to be certain we would receive hospitality.

In a variety of ways, then, Indreni Limbus recognise their exclusiveness as a culture group. In a sense, this group is more important than any local community which includes members of other castes. Opposition to the outside is conceptualized not merely in local terms but in the context of wider group membership. When an Indreni man refers to 'we Limbus' he identifies with all Limbus, not only those in the Cluster.

Cultural identity becomes political identity in the context of the confrontation over kiptat land. Insofar as the land tenure system is included under the rubric of

1. The persons involved in these friendships do not become ritual brothers (mit) since this would eliminate the prospect of affinal links being created between members of their immediate families.

culture, any assault on kīpat is seen as a threat to the very existence of the Limbus as a separate unit within Nepal society. The struggle for kīpat has therefore provided the framework for common action against those forces threatening Limbu hegemony over their lands.

Since at least the late 19th century there have been sporadic attempts to organize opposition among the Limbus to stem the tide of kīpat conversions to raikar tenure and to redress the balance of power which weighed heavily against the Subbas as a result of the Government's kīpat policy. There is no indication that any permanent political association to represent Limbu interests was ever set up. Instead, ad hoc committees of Subbas and elders on a district- and even Limbuan-wide level were established from time to time, usually to protest against adverse legislation or the threat of such legislation. Thus, in 1913, when the Government was contemplating the conversion into raikar of all kīpat lands in Ilam mortgaged to members of other castes which could not be redeemed within six months, it invited the opinion of the Limbus to this proposal. Meetings were held in settlements throughout the district and 330 men, most of them Subbas, were delegated to present the Limbu case to the district officials who were conducting the inquiry. The Government was apparently impressed by the intensity of Limbu opposition to the proposals and withdrew them after receiving vague promises - which it must have known could not be fulfilled - that kīpat lands

would in future not be mortgaged to members of other castes.

Disparities between the Legal Code and special regulations enacted to deal with the problems of Limbuan led to the formation of another ad hoc committee of Subbas in 1946. Several Ilam headmen, including one from the Cluster, were invited to join the committee, consisting of forty-five members, to make recommendations for the avoidance of contradictory rules pertaining to kipat land. The Subbas pointed out that in cases where the law of the State conflicts with laws relevant only to kipat the courts tended to ignore the latter. They urged that a Subba familiar with the 'customary rules' be attached to the court as a consultant, since the officers of the court were not always aware that differences in the laws did exist.¹ They also urged that a special law be written for Limbus.² None of the latter suggestions was adopted but the authorities did issue an Order (sanad) reaffirming many of the regulations issued in the past and promising to resolve some of the discrepancies in the law. Whether any concrete action was in fact contemplated is doubtful since similar promises had been made in the past. Shortly after the issuance of the Order the Government released its plans for a Panchayat system which the Subbas regarded as inimical to their interests. Before the plan could be effected, however, the Rana Government was swept out of office.

-
1. The 'customary rules' they spoke of were in fact the special regulations dealing with the problems of Limbuan, which were introduced by the Government over the years.
 2. This was not as bizarre as it might seem, since the old Law Code had a special section applying to Newars.

In the interval of several months between the collapse of Rana authority and the firm establishment of the new Government the Limbus sought to organize themselves for more effective political action. A meeting (chumlung) was held to which representatives from all areas of Limbuan were invited. The more moderate voices felt that the meeting should limit its purpose to the formulation of proposals for presentation to the incoming Government. They sought only firm guarantees for the maintenance of the kipat system and a greater voice for Limbus in the affairs of Limbuan. This was to be assured by the appointment of Limbus to senior posts in the administrative bodies in the area.

More extreme elements, however, taking cognizance of the temporary hiatus of power in the region, demanded the establishment of an independent Limbu state.¹ Several Indreni Subbas who were present at the meeting stated that these elements spoke of storming the administrative offices in the Limbuan districts and establishing independence forthwith. Some of those in attendance are even alleged to have set about designing a Limbu flag. In one area of Limbuan where relations between Limbus and local Brahmins had been particularly strained there were some outbreaks of violence, and it appears that a number of Brahmins were killed and much property destroyed. That

1. One author claims that in January, 1951 a 'Free Kirat State' was actually declared; none of my informants could confirm this and I have seen no documents to back up this statement. See Driver, 1963, p.85.

these acts of violence were in any way connected with the meeting is very doubtful.

There is no evidence to suggest that even the mild proposals suggested by those responsible for organizing the gathering ever got beyond the talking stage. 'They drank and boasted of what they were going to do' was how one Limbu who had been present summed up the meeting.

In Ilam, following the transfer of power which was swift and uneventful, a number of Subbas sought to test the attitude of the new regime towards kiptat by drawing up a list of demands. It is worthwhile listing them here since they are, by and large, typical of those presented to the authorities over the years. They illustrate how kiptat tenure has been the focal issue in all these rather diffuse and on the whole abortive attempts at political pressure. There were seven proposals prepared by 195 delegates - including three Subbas and two elders from the Indreni settlements - from thirty-five settlement clusters throughout Ilam. Two Chongbung Subbas in the Indreni Cluster were in the special committee of three chosen to present these demands to the district Governor. The proposals were as follows:

1. Most of our kiptat lands have been pledged to landholders. One-third of these lands should be returned to their Limbu owners (without repayment of the mortgage capital).
2. At present, a kiptat owner must repay the mortgage in full before he can repossess his land. Landowners should be allowed to repay mortgages piecemeal and repossess their lands piecemeal.

3. Any raikar land purchased by a Limbu should be converted to kipat tenure and the tax on the land included within the household tax already paid by the kipat owner.
4. At present, when a new household is registered at the time of a revenue settlement, it must pay a fixed tax assessment. But the number of households increase while the amount of tax remains the same. Henceforth, the amount of tax paid by newly registered households separating from one main household should not exceed in total that paid previously by the main household.
5. At present, Tharis submit taxes collected from their dependents directly to the treasury office. Henceforth, they should be made to submit these taxes to the Subbas who would then pass them on to the office.
6. The Subba's court (amal) should be given the right to hear disputes (and to collect fines).
7. If these proposals are introduced we will accept responsibility for the maintenance of law and order in our areas.
8. Limbus are 'backward'. Something should be done to bring them up to the level of the other castes.

Seven of the eight proposals are concerned directly with kipat land and the special position of the Subbas as a consequence of their traditional relationship to that land. Numbers 1 - 3 suggest ways of altering the balance of control of land, while the fourth proposal seeks to alleviate the tax burden on the land. Numbers 5 - 7 aim to re-establish the power of the Subbas which grew out of their initial roles as custodians of kipat, as grantors of estates to immigrant settlers and as the principal channels of administration at the settlement level. Proposals 6 and 7 are also veiled attempts to forestall the establishment of Panchayats in the area, which were regarded as additional threats to the few remaining prerogatives of

the Subbas. The last proposal is meant to refer to the specific educational needs of the Limbus and, more generally, reminds the Government that Limbus are a distinctive group requiring special consideration.

In Ilam, this was the last organized attempt to bring pressure on the Government to alter its kiptat policy, although attempts to organize opinion on a Limbuan-wide basis continued. When a series of demands similar to those prepared by Ilam Subbas were presented to King Tribhuvan in 1951, a statement was issued reminding the Limbus that east Nepal was inhabited by many castes and that only the wishes of all the people could be taken into account in determining policy. This represented not so much a change in the Government's attitude to kiptat as the adoption of a more blunt method of treating Limbu demands for special consideration. The Limbus continued to make representations to Kathmandu and at least one more major effort to co-ordinate political action was attempted in 1958. It is significant that of the seven organizers of this meeting, two were Brahmins and another a Chetri. This was not merely an attempt to give voice to all sections of the population, as the Government had recommended, but an expression of the interests which rich non-Limbu landholders of kiptat had in maintaining the kiptat system. For as providers of mortgage credit, they had access for lengthy periods of time to lands on which the taxes were minimal and at a cost considerably less than that required

to purchase raikar land.

The outcome, however, was similar to that of previous meetings: proposals were put forward and promises were received that they would be considered.

At the approach of elections in 1959 kipat threatened to become an issue when the Congress Party came out in favour of abolition while another party, the Gorkha Parishad, supported its retention. Perhaps it is an indication of the numerical strength of non-Limbu residents in Limbuan or a reflection of the tactful exclusion of its kipat plank from the Congress campaign in the east that the Congress party won all eight seats it contested in the region.¹ In any case, the threat of abolition was not implemented even after Congress formed a Government. In December, 1960, after only fifteen months of rule, parliament was dismissed and the Monarchy resumed control of the Government. The 'traditional rights and privileges' of the Limbus were again guaranteed by a royal decree, although again this meant no basic alteration of the Government's kipat policy.

For more than half a century then, Limbus have attempted to protect their interests in land. Their political activity, by and large, has been unco-ordinated and ill-organized. Their demands have often been

1. None of the Limbus in the Cluster was aware of the Congress attitude to kipat, and apparently did not hear of it from the opposition candidates.

unrealistic, occasionally irrelevant and, more recently at any rate, far from effective. But by circulating petitions, holding mass meetings and sending delegations to present their views to Government, the Limbus have cultivated a widespread awareness of their special position vis à vis the rest of the population. The land tenure system thus blends with and adds a structural dimension to the fact of cultural exclusiveness.

Ties Within the Area

The Subba

The development of a strong Limbu identity has affected the position of the Subba within the local community. I showed earlier how the Subba's traditional role as custodian of lineage land gave him certain powers over his lineage mates. Additional authority, of course, devolved on him in his role as tax-collector and representative of the Government. In a sense, the Subba expressed not only the unity of the lineage, but the importance of this group in the ownership and allocation of land resources. Its unity was bolstered by ritual functions vested in the Subba and his position was recognized by members of the lineage through the system of tributary payments.

His role has changed as a result of two linked developments. First of all, the land shortages which developed at the end of the 19th century brought about

an emphasis on the rights of the household against those of the lineage. As the importance of the household, based on elementary-type families, increased, the lineage structure ceased to function as an economic or political unit. The role of the Subba as head of a land-owning unit correspondingly declined. Secondly, the collapse of the leadership hierarchy, evolved through the system of land grants to immigrant settlers, and the subsequent usurpation of many of the Subba's powers by the Tharis and the Government (including, more recently, the Panchayat bodies) further eroded his traditional powers as Government representative to the lineage.

Yet despite the removal of the bases of his power, the Subba remains a figure of importance in the community.¹ This is especially evident during the festival of Dasein, when tributary payments are made and the Subba discharges certain ritual functions. Although Subbas no longer have the authority to exact tribute, few Limbus make any attempt to avoid what they regard as obligations. In October, 1964, approximately 80% of kibat-owning Limbus visited their Subbas during Dasein, bringing gifts of liquor, meat and Rs.1.60 which latter, it was explained, replaced the traditional labour exaction to which Subbas were entitled. In one presentation I witnessed, the Subba sat in the middle of his room and as

1. Headmanship apparently still carries sufficient prestige to have brought about a dispute over succession to the title among two Nembeke men. See pp. 357 ff.

each dependent approached, the gifts were placed on the floor beside the headman, following which the dependent bowed to the other's feet and received a tika on the forehead. The liquor was then shared among those assembled. Only members of Chongbung lineage (3) did not honour their Subba, since the latter was still a young man in his late teens. Even so, some gave their tribute to one of the other Chongbung Subbas, explaining that it was necessary to honour a Subba, and that it mattered little if he was the headman of another lineage.

This same attitude manifested itself on the ninth day (naumi) of the Dasein festival. This was the occasion for a ritual display of the Subba's diacritical trappings of power as well as of his generosity. Since each Subba is believed to hold his title by direct appointment of the King of Nepal, he is entitled to surround himself with the accoutrements of office. These are a sacrificial post which stands in a fixed spot near the homestead of the Subba and which attests to his 'rule' in the area; a drum, traditionally beaten to warn people in the area of impending danger; and a sword, which symbolized the Subba's concern for the defence of his followers.

On the morning of naumi each Subba combined the ritual display of office with the practice of blood sacrifice. Following the ritual, the Subbas gave tika

to those attending and the meat, provided by the Subba himself, was then cooked and eaten.

Of particular interest was the pattern of attendance at these rituals. Lineage was only an incidental criterion, despite the fact that the Subba is traditionally associated with a lineage. For example, a number of Chongbungs and members of non-kipat-owning groups from neighbouring homesteads attended the rite at the sacrificial post of the Kambo Subba in Chitok and shared in the feast. One of his lineage mates from Bharapa also attended, but several others resident in Dorumba attended the ritual of the Nembeke Subba in that settlement. No division of followers took place at rituals conducted by three Chongbung Subbas whose sacrificial posts were situated in Bharapa and Angbung. There the three rituals were held consecutively, enabling all participants, some of whom came from Chitok and some of whom were not owners of kipat land, to move from one rite to the next, thus honouring all three Subbas equally.

By cutting across lineage boundaries, these rituals stress the point that the Subbas have come to symbolize a wider collectivity. In other words, there is a shift in emphasis away from the Subba as representative of a lineage towards the notion of him as a symbol

of the unity of the local community.¹

The nature of his role emerges more clearly in the context of the Limbu struggle to preserve the kipat system. I pointed out how the Subbas were in the forefront of the activity to protect Limbu interests in land. Locally, this has added to the prestige of the headmen as a category, even though of the seven Subbas in the Cluster, only two have engaged in these activities on a district- or Limbuan-wide level. The Subba is also seen as the embodiment of Limbu tradition and exclusiveness, and as a force of conservatism against the likelihood of change. Since 1952, Subbas have led the opposition to the establishment of a Panchayat system. When the district authorities invited the Subbas to organize support for Panchayats among their dependents, several Indreni Subbas were instrumental in the preparation of a letter calling on the Government to withdraw its intentions to establish such a system. Indeed, Subbas are often given credit for the fact that the Panchayats were abolished in 1956.

During the time I spent in the field the issue which most exercised their antagonism to the Panchayat was a project to erect a building for the Panchayat

1. Among a number of African peoples, the chief performs a similar function. Among some, as for example, the Mambwe, he also retains his traditional rights to allocate land. Cf. W. Watson, 1958.

Committee. About 80% of the financing was to be raised from Village residents. For the purpose of apportioning contributions, members of the Committee placed everyone in one of four categories on the basis of impressionistic (though fairly accurate) assessments of wealth. Although about 90% of Limbu households were placed in the two lowest categories (contributions of Rs. 20 and Rs. 6) the consensus was that the level of contributions was too high. For months, whenever Limbus gathered in some numbers, the topic of conversation turned immediately to the Panchayat Committee and the financial burden it had imposed. Resentment at having to pay what for most amounted to a considerable sum was directed mainly at the Panchayat system as such. The Committee was seen to have replaced what for the Limbus was a far superior system based on the traditional ties between Subba and dependent. At one funeral rite, an elder, (who had been placed in the Rs 20 category) spoke at some length about how the Committee only makes demands for money, but never seems to accomplish anything. 'What kind of Committee is this which takes monies from the Government - (which contributed 20% of the costs) - and from the people, but shows nothing for it?' He went on to compare the Committee to the Subbas, 'who did everything for the people and who returned whatever they took.' The allusion was to the traditional balance of rights and obligations which

characterized the Subba's relations with his dependents. By implication, he accused the Committee of emphasizing only its rights at the expense of its obligations.¹

Brahmins, because of their close identification in Limbu eyes with the Committee, come in for a fair share of the general hostility to Panchayats.² Protests were voiced about the lack of consultation at the time everyone was categorized for the assignment of contributions. The Limbus were not satisfied with the explanation that the ward representatives had made the assignments. Residents of the two wards in which Limbus are a majority and which are both represented by Brahmins complained bitterly that they had played no part in choosing their representatives and did not feel that their best interests were being served by these men. Following a threat by the Committee that the police would be called in if contributions were not forthcoming, a meeting of Angbung residents was held. One of the Subbas suggested bringing a complaint to the Government against the Brahmins 'who because they are so rich and educated run the Committee and think they can do anything they want to do.' There was much talk

-
1. To be fair, not only the Limbus complained about having to pay. But members of other groups did not express their anger in quite the same terms.
 2. Five of the present Committee members are Brahmins, three of them, including the chairman, are members of an extended family. See below for a discussion of Limbu-Brahmin relations.

of refusing to pay, and of fighting the matter in court, or, if necessary, resisting with force.

In the face of the Government-backed authority of the Panchayat Committee, the Limbus knew from the start that resistance would lead nowhere. When I left the field the building was nearing completion and the rate of payment of Limbu contributions was keeping pace with that of the rest of the Village population. The occasion had provided an opportunity to express hostility to the Committee regarded both as the instrument of the Brahmins and a usurper of the powers of the Subba. The emotional flare-up over contributions to erect a building for the Committee thus served to bring together the local community behind the figure of the Subba who, in turn, symbolizes its unity.

Limbu-Brahmin Relations

The identification of Brahmins with the Panchayat Committee stresses that local relationships with members of other castes has been affected by the wider question of Limbu opposition to the outside. It is now time to examine the nature of these ties. On the level of local interaction Limbu antagonism is directed primarily against the Brahmins. This is mainly because local Brahmins have derived most advantages from the Government's kipat policy and, at the expense of the Limbus, have

become the most powerful group in the area. It seems necessary to ask why Brahmins were able to benefit more than other non-Limbus?

Three factors would seem to suggest possible explanations: numbers, literacy and Government service. In the area under the jurisdiction of the Panchayat Committee the Brahmins constitute the single largest caste group with 32.5% of the population. They are 39.8% of the non-Limbu population in the Village, and 50.4% of this category within the Indreni settlements. Thus, by weight of numbers alone Brahmins would be expected to be favoured by any legislation designed to benefit non-Limbus.

Literacy is another factor which has worked to their advantage. Most Brahmins were able to acquire the ability to read and write despite the almost total lack of formal educational facilities in Ilam until the 1940s. Traditionally, young Brahmins were instructed by religious teachers individually, or attended informal 'schools' (pathshala) organized by learned men in the area where, through the medium of Sanskrit, they became literate in the Devanagari script. Some of the wealthier men sent their sons to Benares, Darjeeling or Kathmandu for schooling. A few Indreni Limbus were able to acquire literacy through friendships established with Brahmin tutors, but on the whole, until they began serving in

the army, Limbus remained illiterate. In consequence, they were forced to rely on Brahmins, as were most other groups, to prepare the documents required at the time of property division, land transactions, disputes, etc. And, as I have mentioned, only a few Brahmins with a high degree of literacy could manage the skills required in drafting petitions to various branches of the administration and the courts.

Ability to read and write was also one of the qualities demanded for Government service. Although the top posts in the district administration tended to be filled by Kathmandu appointees, some senior and most intermediate and junior positions were open to local candidates. As a result, Brahmins were able to play a key role in the local administration in Ilam. Government service was actively sought by ambitious Brahmins from settlements in the vicinity of Ilam Bazaar. Wealthy men were able to widen their range of contacts and to use their positions to secure for themselves and their followers some personal advantage. For men without means, service in the administration was perhaps the only avenue of advancement and on their return to their settlements they were able to utilize the prestige and more concrete benefits of service to enhance their wealth and status. Some of the most prominent Brahmin families in the Village have a history of Government service. The father of the

faction leaders for example, was a senior official in the administration for many years.

These factors, then, undoubtedly provided the wherewithal for Brahmins to attain ascendancy in the politico-economic life of the area. Largely because local Brahmins were the chief beneficiaries of the Government's kipat policy, they are regarded by Indreni Limbus as the prime instruments of that policy.

Following the establishment of Kathmandu's authority in Ilam members of various non-Limbu groups were encouraged by the Government to settle and take up land. During the first century following the pacification of the district there was adequate land for settlement and cultivation. In these circumstances the Limbus accepted the immigrants, the majority of whom were Brahmins, and made land grants to them. Gradually, in a number of ways catalogued in Chapter III more and more lands came into the hands of Brahmin immigrant settlers. By the last part of the 19th century, land pressures were beginning to be felt and there was a dearth of barren land to bring under cultivation. It was at this time that Kathmandu converted kipat grants already made to non-Limbu settlers into raikar and introduced a number of policies making it possible for members of other castes to bring kipat lands under raikar tenure.

The Holdings granted by Indreni Subbas have all been converted to raikar and the Subbas no longer have any rights whatsoever in these lands.¹ Limbus are adamant about what they allege to be the deception perpetrated on the Subbas by their erstwhile dependents, the Tharis, whom they accuse of responsibility for conversion of the Holdings. Since the great majority (70.4%) of recipients of land grants given by Indreni Subbas were Brahmins, the latter receive the brunt of Limbu hostility. When discussing Brahmin 'treachery' (jal) one Limbu informant summarized his views in the following rhyme.

Tip of the sugar cane, root of the radish,
 Keeping a servant is the ruin of a house,
 Left in the barn he drinks the cream,
 Left in the home, he takes your spouse.

The Brahmin is thus regarded as an 'ungrateful servant' who, trusted to watch over the land he was granted, 'stole' it by converting it to raikar. The fact that the Government provided the legislation necessary to enable the Brahmins to effect the transfer is disregarded in the face-to-face situation.

In a number of other ways, Brahmins in the area of the Cluster took advantage of regulations to improve their economic position at the expense of the Limbus. A Government ruling that possession of kipat land had to be supported by documentary evidence of title proved lucrative ground for ambitious non-Limbus. Since the Government

1. See the case of Jahare and the Jaisi Thari, pp.307 ff.

did not possess the apparatus to enforce this ruling, it relied on, indeed encouraged, informants (polaha) to bring these matters to the attention of the local authorities. The reward to these informants for successful prosecutions of land 'concealment' was the land itself. Immigrant settlers were thereby encouraged to contest the flimsy evidence of ownership rights held by their Limbu neighbours. Residents of the Indreni settlements did not escape these challenges to their rights to occupy kibat land in the Cluster.

In 1913, for example, a Brahmin from a settlement one mile south of Angbung petitioned in court in Ilam to be awarded about 4,000 units of paddy land registered as kibat in the names of five members of Chongbung lineage (4). He argued that the Limbus did not possess proper documentary evidence of ownership rights to these lands. The defendants cited a number of written assurances given by the Government that uncultivated lands converted into paddy fields and brought under cultivation by the Limbus could be held as kibat. They also produced copies of several documents attesting to Chongbung rights to cultivate their ancestral lands as kibat. But the court agreed with the petitioner that the documents presented as evidence by the Limbus did not in fact prove sufficient title since for one thing there was no mention of boundaries and, for another, they were granted by local officials and not by the Crown. The members of the Chongbung lineage were

fined Rs 1570 for false registration, and the lands, representing approximately one half of the total lineage paddy area, were converted into raikar tenure and given to the Brahmin.¹

Another facet of the relations between the two groups concerns the fact that Limbus must rely mainly on Brahmins for the bulk of their mortgage credit. This has given rise to the notion, backed to an extent by readily cited experiences, that all Brahmin landholders engage in sharp practices to the detriment of the Limbu kīpat-owners. For example, at the turn of the century kīpat landholders were, for the first time, required to share in the tax burden of those Limbu kīpat-owners whose lands they had taken under pledge. Shortly after the regulation was introduced the Limbus began to complain that many landholders were attempting to claim ownership of the lands on the grounds of having paid the required tax share (damasahi). The Government was obliged to assure the Limbus and the landholders belonging to other castes that it did not intend this to happen.

Another ruse was employed in land pledging transactions whereby the landholder would provide a small amount

1. Another Brahmin from the same settlement, encouraged by this case, brought a petition in 1929 against all the Subbas of Ilam, contesting their rights to hold kīpat. The case was thrown out on the grounds that the petitioner did not specify which lands were being cultivated as kīpat.

of mortgage capital and after obtaining the signature - or, more likely, thumbprint - of the kiptat-owner, would then add 'a few zeros' to the amount, thus making it impossible for the kiptat-owner ever to raise the required capital to repay the mortgage and resume his lands. One old Limbu, referring to a Brahmin with whom he had had such an experience, related how the landholder 'would invite me to his home and offer me rice and meat. Then he made me put my thumbprints on papers. He would give me a few Rupees and then when I came some months later to return the mortgage and take back my land, he would say: "this is not enough. Why do you bring me a few rupees and ask for your land back? The document says the mortgage is five hundred and you bring me five! What am I, a fool?" What can you do to such a man? They are all like that, the Brahmins, they are all treacherous.'¹

When the registration of land transactions became wide-spread after 1945, such abuses were less frequently perpetrated. Even so, according to one Brahmin informant, clerks in the treasury offices could usually be bribed to register amounts which had not in fact been transferred to the kiptat-owner.² Still, registration

1. At first I was under the impression that this was only a local habit of a few unscrupulous landholders. But the practice is mentioned in several references as being common throughout Limbuan. Cf. Bhandari, 1959; Report of the Muluki Office, 1947.

2. In one survey of agricultural conditions in the eastern hills, the author blames petty officials for their complicity in aggravating the conditions of agricultural indebtedness. '...one can say that the Government officials are the worst exploiters of farmers in the hills.' (Gurung, 1949, p.9)

has apparently alleviated the problem of mistrust between the contracting parties. It is worthwhile noting that on the whole only land transactions involving Indreni Limbus with members of other castes are registered. Treasury office records list only four cases where land transactions in kikat between Indreni Limbus were recorded. The explanation offered by Limbus and Brahmins alike is that 'Limbus trust one another; they do not have their transactions registered at the office.'

Although the numbers of Brahmins with whom the Limbus have any kind of links represent only a small proportion of the total number in the area, the attitudes and stereotypes are generalized and applied to the whole group. A legend related by a Limbu ritual specialist expresses the nature of the antagonism. 'A Brahmin and his wife came from the west and arrived at the Mai River. They told the River Goddess that they had nothing and were hungry. She gave them rice, lentils, vegetables and spices. Then she gave them fire, and some vessels in which to cook. They ate and rested, and when it became dark they went away, taking everything with them. When she saw what they had done the River Goddess thought it would have been better not to give such people anything. So she cursed them and said that she would produce no more fish. Since that time men cannot fish in the river and harvests have also been reduced.'

The hostility felt towards the Brahmins is overtly expressed in the legend. The themes of theft and deceit which occur here follow the stereotypes held of the Brahmins by the Limbus. The River Goddess, worshipped by all castes, echoes the antagonism and gives it universal and supernatural sanction. Moreover, production deficiencies in fish and agriculture are referred directly to the stereotypical qualities and behaviour of the Brahmins. The latter, the Limbus would argue, who have abused the kindness and generosity of the River Goddess, have behaved in like fashion towards their erstwhile Limbu benefactors.

The hostility occasioned by land grievances is reinforced by Brahmin attitudes towards Limbus. The term most often applied by the former to the latter is 'simple' (lato). Brahmins claim that because Limbus are simple they care only for the present. A Brahmin informant observed that if Limbus had thought of the future, the Brahmins would never have been allowed to remain in Ilam since.. they would have had no lands on which to settle. Brahmins express their annoyance with and fear of their precarious position as landholders of kipat, emphasized in continuous Limbu demands for bard. But, on the other hand, they regard the practice as symptomatic of the Limbu lack of concern for the future. A Brahmin landholder pointed out that when a member of his own caste is forced to pledge raikar land he would never allow his debt to

increase by adding to the mortgage capital as do the Limbus, since a Brahmin would be concerned first of all with repossessing his land as soon as possible.

Brahmin attitudes towards Limbus are also conditioned by the special treatment the former traditionally received at the hands of the Law. Punishments and fines ~~was~~^{ere} related not merely to offences but to caste as well. Thus, for example, a member of a lower caste who was cuckolded by a Brahmin was prohibited from killing the latter, a right which he could exercise under certain conditions against members of any other caste. Brahmins, too, were exempted from compulsory labour for Government and from paying certain kinds of taxes, which obligations others, including Limbus, were required to meet.

The special position of the Brahmins was protected in local conditions as well. In 1957, a quarrel ensued between a Brahmin and a Limbu when the former diverted an irrigation channel into his own paddy field after a Kambo Limbu of Chitok had already begun flooding his own terraces situated below. The Limbu struck the Brahmin and the matter was brought to the Panchayat Court. At three separate points in his petition the Brahmin repeated the words: 'I, a Brahmin, was beaten by a Limbu.' When the court, whose members were all Brahmins, fined the Kambo, they too concentrated not on the morality of physical violence, but on the contravention of a ritual code embodied in the

caste hierarchy. 'You should not have beaten him because he is a Brahmin.'

Brahmin feelings of superiority are occasioned by differences in the religious practices of the two groups. To the extent that we can speak of two systems, it should nevertheless be stressed that the boundaries are not clear cut. For one thing, there is an awareness by members of each group of the religious beliefs and customs of the other. Members of one group may profess belief in the efficacy of certain deities associated with the other. Thus, for example, many Brahmins placate the Limbu Grandmother goddess although the form of worship is adapted to the brahmanic pattern. Limbus, in turn, often rationalize their own religious customs in terms of Hindu beliefs.¹ Both groups also enjoy a set of convictions regarding certain forms of divination associated mainly with illness, and share a common pool of ritual specialists for this purpose. Finally, along with the rest of the population Limbus observe the principal Hindu festivals such as Dasein and Tiwar since these have become national holy days.

Nevertheless, despite the overlap, we can distinguish analytically, as do the Limbus and Brahmins in practice, between two distinct religious systems. The feature most often stressed by members of both groups as symbolizing the distinction is the fact that the 'religion of the

1. Cf. Benedict, 1962, p.1237.

Brahmins' is a written tradition while the indigenous religion of the Limbus is not. The following legend, which I heard repeated on several occasions by Limbus, illustrates the relative value they assign to the two systems.

'Some ancient Hindu sages wrote the scriptures and covered the books with deer skin for their protection, and floated them in the rivers so that men would find them. Many Brahmins and Limbus found these books. The Brahmins kept them safely, but the Limbus ate the skin and used the pages for their fires. So the Brahmins learned how to marry and mourn and conduct their daily lives from these books. But the Limbus who didn't obey these scriptures made their own customs which are not written down, but are handed on by their forefathers.'

This legend suggests the fact, expressed in other contexts as well, that Limbus have conceded the superiority of the written tradition of Hinduism adhered to by the Brahmins. This is not surprising considering that Nepal is officially a Hindu state and remembering the super-ordinate status enjoyed by the Brahmins. The latter, too, hold in contempt many Limbu customs which they regard as 'jungalee' ways. They point to the Limbu habit of eating buffalo and pork and drinking spirits and to their pre-conquest traditions of beef-eating, which they consider responsible for the low ritual status of the Limbus.

To sum up, then: antagonism between Limbus and Brahmins has emerged mainly as a result of a historical confrontation over land. This confrontation has given rise to stereotyped attitudes held by each group about the other. These are both related directly to historical experiences and expressed in terms of cultural differences between the two groups. Moreover, the differences are conceptualized as hierarchic in order. In other words, Brahmins and Limbus are not merely distinct and opposed groups, but opposed in a hierarchy based on ritually assessed attributes.

We might now examine how the hierarchic nature of Limbu-Brahmin relations is expressed in and reinforced by interaction between members of the two groups. There is, first of all, the question of intermarriage. Although the overall caste structure provides for the accommodation of offspring of hypergamous marriages into the (Khatri) Chetri group, both Brahmins and Limbus express distaste for such intermarriages. The union of a Limbu woman and a Brahmin (or any higher caste) male would place her outside the matrix of her natal group. On economic grounds alone, her marriage could not be welcomed since her group would receive no bridewealth and consequently would give no dowry. Her kinsmen would take no interest in her well-being and would not offer the protection and support usually given a daughter or sister even after

marriage. Such marriages, in any case, are a statistical rarity. In one instance I have recorded, the widow of a Kambo man of Chitok married a Brahmin from a neighbouring settlement. In another a Brahmin of Bharapa who spent ten years as a policeman in a town about five miles west of the Cluster took a Limbu wife resident in the town. On his return to the Cluster - where he has a Brahmin wife - he did not bring the Limbu woman, although he continues to visit her occasionally and provides for her support. The marriage drew wry comments from Brahmins and Limbus alike, and the husband himself admitted that such unions are regarded with disdain and pointed out that if he had brought her to live in the Cluster both he and the woman would have been scorned by everyone.

Since hypogamous relations until recently were violations not only of caste but of the Law, they cannot be considered as instances of intermarriage. A Brahmin woman (or any other of higher caste) who forms a liaison with a Limbu, automatically forfeits her caste status and assumes that of her partner. But despite the fact that she is regarded as a Limbu in the eyes of the Brahmins and the Law, she is not considered as such by the Limbus themselves. The only circumstance in which such a relationship could survive would be if both partners fled to a town where they were unknown or, as is usually the case for hypogamous couples, if they settled

in India. In the only case of this nature involving an Indreni Limbu, which occurred about forty years ago, the couple fled to Assam, severing all ties with their kinsmen. The man, who was a kambo, forfeited his share of the household property since he never returned to Chitok. That the burden of the stigma falls most heavily on the woman is illustrated by another example involving a Limbu from a settlement a few miles from the Cluster. After the seduction of a Brahmin widow from the same settlement, both went to the Darjeeling area where they remained for several months. The Limbu then returned alone to Ilam. He was accepted back by his kinsmen and his Limbu wife as a matter of course, but it was clear that the Brahmin woman could never join him. The Limbu's prestige was not at all compromised and as long as he made no attempt to introduce the union into the settlement he suffered no personal disadvantage.

The virtual absence of intermarriage between members of the two groups provides what is perhaps the most important measure of social 'segregation'. I have already indicated other contacts in which interaction is minimal. Attendance at marriage and mourning rites tends to be restricted to members of a single caste group. Wealth and the pattern of residence are partly explanative factors. Numbers in attendance are limited by the ability of the host to provide the necessary feasts. Then, the

obligation to consider bonds of neighbourhood ensures that guests are drawn primarily from surrounding households which, in most cases, means members of the host's own caste group. But even where neighbours are members of another caste, the additional factor of status differential between host and potential guest contrives to exclude Brahmins from the rites of the great majority of Limbus. But factors of wealth, status and residence are supported by the overriding opposition of the two groups which, though largely a function of these factors, assumes a reality sui generis. Brahmins who can afford a large wedding feast, for example, do not invite Limbu neighbours to attend unless they are Limbu Notables. Limbu hosts, in consequence, explain the absence of Brahmins from their rites in terms of their own exclusion from the rites of the Brahmins. The result is a virtual absence of interaction in most of the important social contexts.

In economic matters, the ties are more widespread, but here too status differentials determine the nature of the interaction. As shown in Chapter V Limbus rely on Brahmins for the greater part of their mortgage credit. They are also dependent to a large extent on Brahmin landholders for tenancy rights by which they earn a substantial proportion of their agricultural income. The same landholders hire Limbu agricultural labour to work on fields they do not give to tenants. Brahmins also

extend a substantial amount of loan credit to Limbu borrowers. Economic necessity thus links together members of the two groups. But the principal characteristic of these relationships is their contractual basis. Because Limbus are invariably in the subordinate position the ties are not reciprocal. By contrast, economic links among Limbus, at least until the emergence of a small wealthy class, tended to be reciprocal and non-contractual. Limbu households still recruit work gangs on the basis of labour exchanges. The difference, as I have explained, is related to scarce cash resources among the Limbus, to the fact that only wealthy Brahmins traditionally had sufficient lands to require labour they could not repay in kind from their own household, and the reluctance of wealthy Brahmins to send their women to work in the fields of others. Thus labour practices both express and derive from status differentials among the two groups. The distinctions have begun to blur with the rise of newly wealthy Limbus, but even the latter exchange labour with other Limbus, and then hire for wages whatever labour they still require.

Daily, in a number of other ways, the hierarchical basis of relations between Limbus and Brahmins is reflected in interaction. There is, for example, the pattern of deference which symbolizes their respective statuses. The manner in which greetings are exchanged

reflects the relative status of the persons meeting. Unless they are kinsmen, when specific forms are called for, it is usual for a subordinate to incline his forehead to be 'tapped' by the super-ordinate. The criteria of relative status are not easy to isolate. Between members of the same caste they are usually a combination of wealth and age. Across caste lines, ritual rank becomes an additional criterion, so that Limbus almost always are the subordinate greeting partners of Brahmins. I have seen a sixty-year old Subba go along a row of Brahmins to be 'tapped' and only a small percentage of these were his seniors in age, although most were his economic betters.

Only those ex-army pensioners who, because of their age, wealth and overall status as Notables, are greeted as equals by the most prominent Brahmins. But it is significant that even young Brahmins of inferior wealth do not assume a subordinate greeting posture when meeting these men; they either avoid greeting them at all, or exchange the equalitarian namaste salutation.

The same pattern applies to verbal forms of address. Brahmins use the lowest honorific grade (ta), which an elder generally uses to a junior, when addressing Limbus, regardless of their relative ages. Here, again, the exceptions are the ex-army Notables, for whom are reserved the highest honorific grade (tapai) as a sign of respect.

Commensal relations reflect both the ritual and secular statuses of the two castes. Ritually defined norms proscribe the acceptance by Brahmins of certain foods prepared by Limbus. Thus foods labelled bhat (rice, maize, millet), dal (lentils) or tarkari (vegetables or meat) which are cooked in water by Limbus cannot be eaten by Brahmins. Moreover, such foods, even when prepared by Brahmin cooks must not be eaten unless members of the two groups are seated in separate lines. Violation of these rules can lead to a loss of caste. A Brahmin who willingly disregards commensal regulations would cease to be welcome in the kitchens of other Brahmins, would not be able to offer any hospitality to fellow caste members, and would not be likely to find a Brahmin spouse for his child.

Considerations of secular status, however, can lead to a widening of commensal rules such that acceptance of even ritually unimportant foods from Limbus is not countenanced. Some Brahmins, for example, in attempting to validate high secular status, insist that commensal prohibitions extend to all types of food. Such attempts to restrict all commensal interaction are often the cause of bitterness and resentment among Limbus. They argue, as do poor Brahmins, that foods prepared in oil or clarified butter, or beverages such as tea, are ritually neutral and can be shared by all, save untouchables. When I

asked several Limbus in Angbung who make an annual Satya Narayan ritual why they prefer a particular Brahmin priest, the reply was that the latter willingly accepted tea and the doughnut-shaped breads (sel roti) prepared - in clarified butter - for the occasion. One Limbu changed his Brahmin priest because the latter refused to accept even tea.

Such Brahmins tend to sanction their behaviour by reference to ritual interdictions, but explanation must be sought in terms of secular status. As I have shown in a different context, a man who accepts hospitality admits the equality or superiority of status of his host. This is true no less of Brahmins than of Limbus. For example, most of the wealthy and important men who attended a Brahmin wedding at which I was present left before the wedding feast was served to the guests. One poor Brahmin guest explained sardonically that 'big men come and look, then they leave; only the poor eat.'

In the context of Limbu-Brahmin relations the extension of commensal restrictions becomes a means of validating in ritual terms the existence of politico-economic distinctions. The ritual - secular dichotomy is evident when we regard the position of ex-army Notables. Here, commensal relations are proscribed only by focal i.e. ritual limitations. Brahmins recognize the equality of secular status of these Limbus by accepting

all foods not prohibited by ritual considerations.

Limbu Notables: Intercalary Role

From the foregoing discussion we note that the rise of a small wealthy class among the Limbus has begun to alter the traditional relationships between Brahmins and Limbus in the Indreni area. Since the end of the 19th century, when Brahmins gained control of access to the productive resources of kiptat land, their politico-economic ascendancy has coincided with superior ritual status. Relations between the groups were thus seen to exist in a single hierarchical order. Moreover, cultural factors tended further to emphasize the structural cleavages. The growth of status differences within the Limbu community, however, has led to the emergence of what might be called an intercalary category in the society. On the one hand, these Limbu Notables have interests in maintaining the unity of the Limbus as a group in opposition to the Brahmins. On the other hand, they have an equal, though contradictory welfare in stressing association with the dominant section within the wider community. In the following paragraphs I consider each role in turn.

Although Limbu Notables are treated as a special category by Brahmins, there is no question of these Limbus validating this new secular status in ritual or marriage terms. Commensal relations, as I have stressed, are

immutable insofar as certain foods are never accepted by members of ritually higher groups. In addition, inter-marriage with members of higher castes is not an avenue through which socially mobile Limbus in the Indreni area can hope to express rising status. They tend, therefore, to create marriage links with Limbus of similar status in other settlement clusters, so developing a far reaching network of affines who constitute an elite sector of the Limbu population.

But other kinds of ties to Limbus in the local community cannot be ignored. Ex-servicemen who have achieved prominence require, certainly no less than others, the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours in a number of contexts. The proper rites following on the death of a Limbu must be performed by his lineage mates. Crises arising out of marriages, as shown in the previous chapter, require the recruitment of supporters to act on an individual's behalf. Since the marriages and funerary rites of ex-army Notables are grander than those of most less affluent Limbus, the former must enlist more assistance to carry out the manifold tasks involved in entertaining large numbers of guests at their feasts. They too, require witnesses to sign the many documents they write over land transactions, and in the event of their involvement in disputes, may need to call on support from within the local community.

Economic considerations also motivate Limbu Notables to maintain amicable relations within the local community. The wealthiest among them have taken a substantial amount of kiptat land under mortgage. That portion not given to tenants which they cultivate themselves requires the hiring of some labour from within the Cluster. As I have pointed out, Limbu households which hire out labour accept less than 'market' rates from those to whom they are linked in other social contexts. By accepting the obligations imposed on them by kinsmen and neighbours the Limbu Notables thus guarantee their supply of a relatively cheap source of labour.

Of even greater importance is the fact that these Limbu landholders can employ their ties of kinship and neighbourhood to keep open their access to land at a minimum cost. When a serviceman or pensioner enters the market for kiptat land he utilizes his relationships within the Limbu community to obtain landholding rights to kiptat previously held by members of other groups. By diligent attention to his obligations he can expect the kiptat-owner to co-operate in transferring the landholding rights away from the present landholder. Once installed as landholder himself, the ex-soldier seeks to hold the mortgage capital at the lowest possible level and at the same time obviate the possibility that the land will be transferred to yet another landholder. In Chapter V I explained how Limbu households can employ their rights of kiptat ownership to obtain what amounts to

interest-free loans which are added to the mortgage capital (bard). These demands are sanctioned by the threat of transferring landholding rights. It was suggested that an important brake on the owner's freedom of action relates to the extent of his involvement in a multiplicity of other ties with the landholders.

Table 37

Comparison of mortgage distribution
(in units and cash value)

	<u>Percentage of Mortgaged Land Held</u>	<u>Percentage of Mortgage Credit Provided</u>
Limbus Resident in Cluster	21.3%	15.5%
Brahmins Resident in Cluster	11.3%	12.1%
Brahmins Resident outside Cluster	35.6%	41.3%

Table 37 compares the percentage of the total amount of land held under mortgage by various categories of landholder with the percentage of mortgage credit provided. It will be noted that Limbus resident in the Cluster have provided only 15.5% of the cash value of all mortgages on Indreni kipat while holding 21.3% of the land mortgaged. The proportion is equally favourable for the two ex-army Notables who are the largest Limbu landholders. Between them, they hold 10.1% of the land and have provided only 6.5% of all mortgage credit. A relatively greater multiplicity of ties with Limbus would also provide at least a partial explanation for the fact that Brahmins resident inside the Cluster have provided a lower amount of mortgage credit in

proportion to the lands they hold under mortgage than those resident outside the Indreni settlements.

These figures support the contention that if a landholder is a Limbu, he can, by actively cultivating his ties within the Cluster, keep the kipat-owner's demands for bar to a minimum, while successfully neutralizing the latter's potential rights of transference of the usufruct. Limbu Notables, in particular, because of the strong economic and political sanctions they can bring to bear to reinforce their kinship and neighbourhood links, are seldom if ever deprived of landholding rights by transference. I know of only one case where a kipat-owner transferred land away from a Limbu Notable and in this instance there were mitigating circumstances since the former needed the land to trade off to an Indreni Brahmin with whom he was involved in a complicated transaction.

The overall importance of Limbu Notables in the economic life of the Cluster is evident in the numbers of households which are in one way or another dependent upon them. The two wealthiest ex-servicemen, Lajahang and Parsade, for example, are linked as landholders to 30% (22) of all kipat-owning households in the Cluster. Eight of these households are also tenants of one of these Notables while an additional two Limbu households cultivate as tenants the kipat of others given in mortgage to the two men. Seven households, three of them already linked by

mortgage or tenancy ties, are beholden to them for monies borrowed on interest. Their economic relationships extend to all four Indreni settlements and extend beyond the boundaries of lineage or clan segment.

Their wealth confers on them prestige and considerable influence within the Cluster. I have already pointed to the role of Notables in the mediation of disputes. Their help is also sought in a variety of other matters. On most mornings men from every part of the Cluster are to be found in the adjacent courtyards of Lajahang and Parsade. They come to seek advice on the wording of a document, on the advisability of giving a daughter to a suitor, to report the latest gossip or merely to enjoy the company of men from other parts of the Cluster whom they otherwise seldom meet. In a very real sense, these ex-servicemen have become the focus of social life in the community.

This suggests that the existence of a nucleus of very wealthy men among the Limbu serves an additional, latent, function: the exertion of a centripetal influence on social life in the Cluster. This tends to counteract the centrifugal forces of the terrain, settlement distribution and the highly individuated character of the household. Because of their wealth and status, Limbu Notables bring together at such important occasions as weddings and funerals residents from every part of the Indreni settlements. At the wedding of Lajahang's grandson, for example, (which Lajahang financed

since the boy was a part of his household), every Indreni household was represented. In the absence of other Cluster-wide rituals, these events serve as an important means of stressing the links among all residents of the Cluster, and bolstering their awareness of themselves as a solidary community.

The importance to Limbu Notables of identification with the Limbu community derives also from their interests in maintaining the kiptat system. Indeed, wealthy Limbus benefit most from the system. They obtain access to land at a reasonable cost and on a relatively secure basis. The share of taxes they pay to the kiptat owners is a negligible sum compared to the taxes they would be assessed on comparable raikar land. Moreover, the guarantee of perpetual ownership rights enables men to serve in the army for lengthy periods of time in the knowledge that the lands they and their kinsmen own will still be intact and, if mortgaged, available for redemption on their return to active social life in the community. Thus, ex-army Notables share, in common with all Limbus, a fundamental interest in kiptat and in combatting any attempts to compromise their rights. Although none of the Indreni Limbu Notables was able to be active in the political activities led by the Subbas before the overthrow of the Ranas, they did begin to participate in the meetings following their retirement from service in the early 1950s.

Lajahang, the Cluster's wealthiest Limbu, was on the organizing committee for a mass meeting held in 1958 to draw up a series of proposals on kipat for the Government's consideration.

Wealth and high military rank earned by Gurkha service also confer on Limbu Notables a high status within the wider community. I have noted how Brahmins must adjust their attitudes and behaviour towards a traditionally undifferentiated Limbu population to take account of this newly emergent category. The Notables, in turn, seek to validate their new role by adopting some of the cultural practices usually associated with the higher caste groups. With greater frequency than their less affluent kinsmen they employ the services of Brahmin priests for a variety of ritual occasions.¹ They assume some brahmanic dietary practices by giving up eating pork or buffalo. Lajahang does not drink beer or spirits. Language, too, has become a symbol of differentiation. Both Lajahang and Parsade prefer to speak only Nepali to the exclusion of Limbu kura, which both understand without difficulty. The familiar process of 'sanskritization' thus has led to a blurring of cultural boundaries which traditionally converged with the structural cleavage.

1. A frequent topic of gossip is how some Limbu Notables in other areas of Limbuan have begun to marry off their children by Vedic ritual and to adopt brahmanic mourning practices. This has not yet occurred in the Indreni Cluster.

Notable status within the wider community places these Limbus in a structural position at which conflicting role expectations occasionally intersect. As Limbus, they are expected to uphold the norms and values of the group, which stress opposition to the Brahmins. As Notables, however, they share interests in common with wealthy Brahmins, the protection of which imposes co-operation between affluent sectors of both groups. The intercalative nature of their position was dramatized in the spring of 1964 when rice prices in the area rose in response to seasonal shortages. The District Panchayat offered to import rice from the Terai and sell it to the Panchayat Committee for resale in the Village at Government-controlled prices. In common with other poor sections of the population Indreni Limbus supported the idea. But at the meeting of the Committee where the matter was discussed the 'comprehensive committee' composed of Notables opposed the scheme. The argument put forward by the opposition was the difficulty of transporting the rice to the Village and the problem of distribution. Informants, however, were quick to note that the Notables, most of whom sold rice in the area, were concerned about the threat to their own commerce. The Limbu Notables, who sell very little rice, at first supported the plan since they realized that the Limbus would be among those benefitting from controlled prices. Under pressure from other Notables, however, they agreed to 'further investigation', which effectively shelved the idea.

The nature of Limbu antagonism to Brahmins conflicts with the desire of Limbu Notables to maintain good relations with Brahmins, especially those in the Cluster. The manner in which one minor dispute was settled indicates how highly such relations are valued. When cattle tended by Parsade's son destroyed some wheat growing in (the faction leader) Tunka Nath's fields, the latter tied up the cattle and asked both Parsade and Lajahang to assist in estimating the crop damage. Tunka Nath reminded them that this was the third time such a thing occurred and that if someone other than Parsade's son had been responsible he would have 'tied him to a post and beat him.' The entire procedure of negotiation over the amount of damage was quite unlike any similar occasion I had witnessed. It was characterized by extreme politeness and constant reassurances on both sides that there was no quarrel between them, only a need to arrive at a fair figure for compensation, so that Parsade's son would realize that he had to be punished for endangering the good relations which had always existed between these men. Tunka Nath addressed both Limbus in high grade honorific terms and referred to them as his elder brothers (dajyu). Agreement was reached (over tea) without the need for mediators. Several passersby were asked only for their opinion of the amount of damage since wheat is a new crop in the region. The only note of discord was sounded by one of these observers who inquired if a promissory bond was not required.

He was turned on by both the Limbu and the Brahmin who reminded him that the word of a Notable is sufficient bond.

Limbu Notables are of two minds about their relations with the Panchayat Committee. On the one hand, prominent men are expected to associate themselves with the aims of the Committee and they are continually pressured by other Notables (and now by the Government) to participate in its deliberations. There are advantages to be gained from such association since the Committee provides the opportunity for a periodic display of Notability. On a variety of holidays the Village's most influential residents are given the platform for several minutes during which they comment appropriately on the significance of the particular occasion for the gathering. The order of speech-making reflects the assessment of status, and the right to speak is usually awarded those who attend Committee meetings with some regularity. There is another advantage to be gained by attending meetings: the opportunity to influence decisions taken by the Committee. When one Notable complained about the amount he was being asked to contribute towards the erection of the Panchayat building he was reminded that he was invited to attend but had not shown up at the meeting at which the assessments were decided. Thus a Notable who refuses to associate with the Committee invites criticism from his peers, forfeits the opportunity to display his prominence and risks being left out of decisions

which might affect him.

On the other hand, if Limbu Notables were to be too closely identified with the Committee, they would be regarded as working hand in hand with the Brahmins against the interests of the Limbus. Since the Committee is seen by Limbus as a direct challenge to the traditional rights and privileges of the Subbas, the ex-servicemen could well jeopardize their ties within the Limbu community by becoming too involved in Committee affairs. Since the Panchayat's inception in 1953, they have assiduously avoided serving as Committee members. When the present system was established in 1962, Tunka Nath sought to encourage Lajahang to represent the Chitok-Bharapa ward instead of Bishnu Prasad who had announced his intention of becoming the candidate. Lajahang refused on two main grounds. Firstly, he was determined to avoid becoming involved in factional strife and it was obvious that an overriding motive for Tunka Nath's suggestion was to keep his brother out of the Committee. Secondly, despite the support of the Limbu residents in the ward, Lajahang realized that he would be highly vulnerable to accusations of being in league with the Brahmins if he did accept the position. As he explained: 'They (the Limbus) begged me to be a representative, but if I had, then whenever the Committee would decide anything, they would murmur amongst themselves that I was working with the Brahmins against them.'

The same reasoning was behind the Limbu Notables' decision not to serve on a special sub-committee established to collect assessments for the building project. Both Lajahang and Parsade were elected to the sub-committee's executive at a Committee meeting which they did not attend. At the following meeting they resigned their posts pleading impending absence away from the Cluster on other business. The level of assessments was deeply resented by the Limbus, a fact of which the Notables were aware. The sensitivity of the latter to any suggestion that they were in any way responsible for categorizing the Limbus for purposes of assessment is illustrated by the following incident. During a meeting with several members of the Committee a number of Limbus demanded to know the person responsible for deciding how the Limbus were to be differentiated for purposes of assessment. In an attempt to assuage their resentment, the Committee members stated that Lajahang had been present at the meeting in question (which he was) and had taken responsibility for assigning the Limbus to the various categories (which he had not). The Limbus thereupon met with Lajahang, who assured them that not he but the Brahmin representative of the ward had suggested the categorization.

What can be described as the balance of conflicting expectations on the small class of wealthy ex-servicemen thus defines the limits of their political activities based on the Committee. Recently, however, new associations

have been created under the aegis of the Government, which provide a framework for political expression by Limbu Notables. What is more, by participation in the new associations, they avoid the conflicting demands inherent in their intercalary positions. This is because these bodies, by their very nature and definition exclude anyone other than ex-servicemen.

The primary school in the Indreni Cluster was built in 1958 with funds provided by the District Soldiers' Board, an organization of ex-Gurkha servicemen with branches throughout those areas of Nepal which contain heavy ex-army populations. The Board was established in 1952 to administer a fund given by the India Government to the Government of Nepal for the benefit of Nepalis who had served in World War II.¹ The monies have been used to build dispensaries and schools throughout the country. The District Soldiers' Board provided an initial grant of Rs 750 to build the Indreni school, and continues to pay the salaries of its three teachers.

The organization of the Board in Ilam provides for a three-man district executive to administer financial allocations and to handle matters of liaison with education authorities. The executive appoints a representative in each of the district's four sub-divisions who is responsible for working with the local school committees. Bajhang is

1. The fund is called the Central Co-ordination Board post-war Reconstruction Fund. Cf. Hitchcock, 1963, p.80.

vice-president of the District Soldiers' Board in Ilam and Parsade, his younger brother, is the Board's representative for the Ilam-Darda sub-division.

The former has been president and the latter treasurer of the Indreni school committee since its creation in 1958. Because the curriculum of the school is laid down by the national education authorities, the committee has a largely administrative and watchdog function. Meetings discuss payment of school fees, employment of teachers and maintenance of the building.

In contradistinction to their attitude to the Panchayat Committee, Indreni Limbus regard the school committee as representing their own interests. Because it is effectively controlled by Limbu Notables, other Limbus attend its meetings and accept minor responsibilities if asked to do so by the executive. Of the twenty members excluding the president and treasurer, nine are Limbus from the Indreni Cluster, though only four of these have children attending school. The remainder are mainly Newars and members of other non-high caste groups.

The ex-Servicemen's Association provides Limbu Notables with yet another framework for political activity. The Association is one of seven 'class' organizations created along with the Panchayat system in 1962, and is designed to serve the interests of veterans of the Indian, British

and Nepal armies.¹ The organization of the Association parallels the four-tier Panchayat structure with executive bodies at the village, district, zonal and national levels, and sends two representatives to the National Panchayat.

Lajahang and Parsade are chairman and treasurer respectively of the Village executive, and Jahare, the only other Limbu who can be termed a Notable, is its secretary.² Parsade is also treasurer of the district executive, while Lajahang is a member of the zonal executive. The Association concerns itself with improving pension-paying facilities and money transfer arrangements for servicemen, so that its activities are conducted outside the arena of settlement politics. Recently, however, the district executive obtained a grant of land in the Terai adequate for the resettlement of 200 families of ex-servicemen in the first stage. Conceivably, membership on the Village executive, hitherto a post conferring prestige but little other advantage, could become important for dispensing patronage. But this is still in the future.

-
1. The other six 'classes' similarly organized are peasants, labour, women, students, youth and children. By 1964 only the ex-Servicemen's Association had established an organization in the settlements of Ilam.
 2. To establish a 'Village' executive there must be 100 ex-servicemen who are paid up members of the Association. For this reason areas under the jurisdiction of more than one Panchayat Committee may be amalgamated as a Village for the purposes of the Association. There are thirty-eight such units in Ilam.

CHAPTER IX
CONCLUSION

One way of approaching the study of social change is to focus on the causal interdependence and co-variation among certain events.¹ This necessarily involves a process of selection. Even if we make no attempt to attribute change to single causes, we nevertheless ignore many conditions precisely because the phenomena are so complex, and we cite only the most important causes.² In this thesis, I have identified the kīpat system of land tenure and the effects of Government policy on that system as the principal catalysts of social change in the Indreni cluster of settlements.

Implicit in the analysis was the distinction of two historical periods within each of which certain economic and political institutions were seen to be interrelated in a systematic way. No single dramatic event allows us to pinpoint a specific moment in time before which a certain social pattern obtained and after which it was replaced by a different pattern. But the facts suggest that towards the end of the nineteenth century the introduction by Government of certain policies related to kīpat land set in motion a number of processes which, both singly and in combination with other developments such as those related

1. J.B. Watson, 1953.

2. Ginsberg, 1958.

to military service and the commercial growth of Ilam Bazaar, brought about the social changes which I have described. For the purposes of this summary I refer to the time before the effects of these processes became evident as the Early Period.

This Period was characterized, first of all, by a subsistence economy, in the sense that agricultural requirements were met within the Cluster. Some of the produce was undoubtedly traded in the region to acquire the few goods which could not be made or grown locally, and to find the cash needed to pay taxes, but by and large the economy was self-sustaining. Mair has argued that 'in such an economy there could be no commodity more valuable than land, no circumstance in which it would be profitable to dispose of land.'¹ I think this is true of the Early Period in Ilam, but I would stress also that an abundance of land was as much a reason for this fact as the existence of a subsistence economy per se. Land had no exchange value because it was a free good. This meant that production was limited primarily by technological know-how and the supply of labour. Availability of land explains the readiness of the Limbus to make generous grants of Holdings to the non-Limbu immigrants who entered the district in the wake of the Gorkha army. Regmi has suggested that the lands may have been given for financial gain,² but it seems possible to speculate

1. Mair, 1957, p.46.

2. M.C. Regmi, 1965, p.97.

that the immigrants were unlikely to have had sufficient resources to invest in land; certainly, the story as the Limbus tell it is very different. In any case, what is clear is that land was given in return for economic and political support, so that in Gluckman's terms the 'series of estates in land'¹ mirrored the political hierarchy of Subbas, Tharis and dependents. The hierarchy was bolstered by the various prerogatives enjoyed by persons in superordinate positions vis à vis their subordinates and symbolised in the system of tributary payments. The Subbas, then, stood at the summit of a political structure based on differential rights to land.

Their political roles had another dimension as well. As lineage headmen they were the dominant leaders within the Limbu community. Here, too, control of land provided the basis of their power. The right to allocate kipat constituted a principal sanction of headmanship and emphasized the corporateness of the lineage. Households obtained secure rights to an estate by virtue of membership in a patrilineage which implied, among other things, allegiance to a Subba. It was shown how, in conditions of land plenty, the lineage appeared not overly concerned with defining membership criteria too narrowly. As a result, outsiders were occasionally absorbed into the lineage or 'accommodated' in other ways. The desire to enhance a political

1. Gluckman, 1943, p.45.

following would seem to have motivated this practice.

But even in the Early Period the political organization could not be expressed in terms of the relations between Limbu descent groups. Whatever the system existing in Ilam in pre-Gorkha times, the imposition of rule by the Kathmandu Government left no doubt where the monopoly of power resided. Yet, by incorporating the existing hierarchical structure into the administrative apparatus of the state, the Government, for a time at least, crystallized the authority of the Subba and the strength of the lineage he headed. In their roles as tax-collectors and the main instruments of administrative control in the settlements the Subbas' powers were sanctioned by the authority of the state.

The politico-economic conditions existing today follow from several interconnected developments. One kind of development relates to land shortages caused by the pressures of population growth and exacerbated by a Government decree converting into raikar tenure all land grants made by Limbus to immigrant settlers. In the course of the analysis several effects have been noted.

Firstly, the criteria for lineage membership have become more stringently defined in order to limit the numbers with rights to kipat. As a result, the Cluster is now inhabited by a number of Limbus without ownership rights to kipat land within the Indreni settlements.

Secondly, in the absence of surplus lands to allocate, the Subbas have lost the economic sanction for their power and influence in the lineage. In rare instances where lands are abandoned or become vacant through the absence of lineal heirs, households related as co-heirs are quick to press their rights to the vacated land. Lineages have lost their corporate functions in respect of land, as households have acquired and exercise greater rights against the former. Moreover, with the introduction of a rule requiring the registration of land titles on an individual basis, the household no longer need reassert continuously its membership in a wider kin group. The fact that the household is the most important corporate group in the Limbu community presented certain problems of method and analysis.

Traditionally, anthropologists have equated the study of small-scale societies with the study of relations between structural groups of varying depth. In many areas undergoing change this orientation is no longer useful. Even Bott's guarded statement that 'in a small-scale, relatively closed society, the encapsulating (viz. local or kin) groups have a great deal of control over the family' is clearly not appropriate to the Limbu context.¹ To use Bott's own term (in a qualified way) the Limbu household is a comparatively 'individuated' unit.² The household

1. Bott, 1955, p.374.

2. By 'individuation', says Bott, 'I mean that the elementary family is separated off, differentiated out as a distinct, and to some extent autonomous social group...' Ibid, p.375.

exercises a wide measure of choice in the formation of social ties. Through its control of an estate, which is further secured by the rule prohibiting the permanent alienation (i.e. sale) of land held under kiptat tenure, the household is able to manipulate its rights to gain the maximum advantage for itself.

I have not tried to suggest that a household is completely unhampered in its freedom to enter into or opt out of social ties. There are restraints, of course, but these are not, by and large, the restraints of encapsulating groups. The limitations on a household's freedom of choice are referable, rather, to the restrictions of poverty, which necessitate the establishment of credit and tenancy links with wealthy elements in the population; to the requirements of agriculture, which compel the household to rely for assistance in cultivation tasks on its neighbours; to those situations which induce it to call on others for support or to mediate in its disputes; and so on. Thus, from the point of view of any household it is the multiplex pattern of ties in which it is ensconced which dictates the boundaries of choice.

Precisely because of the smallness of scale of rural communities many of those on whom a household relies for assistance may share membership with the focal household and with each other in ongoing groups. But the reasons for which they are recruited may have nothing whatever to do with this fact. It is not necessarily because they are

lineage or clan mates that a household seeks their help; it may be because they possess certain qualities or attributes which the focal household requires at a particular time to press its own advantage. In other words, the alignment of households in groups may be distinguished from and irrelevant to their alignment in ego-centred 'networks' or 'action-sets'. In such circumstances it was thought best to concentrate in the analysis not on the relationships between kinship groups, but on the nature of the ties emanating out from individual households and the ways in which they are utilized in social situations.

A third outcome of the land shortages which occurred around the turn of the century relates to their effects on household composition. Even as household estates have become smaller and less viable, the tendency has been for young men to press for partition and a division of property shortly after marriage. The trend has become even more pronounced with the growth of new commercial opportunities outside the agricultural economy. As young men begin to recognize their importance as earners of wealth in the cash economy, they are more reluctant than ever to share these earnings with a large family group.¹ This is especially evident in the case of some army servicemen who, even before marriage, act as heads of potential households

1. This kind of trend has been noted in areas where labour migration is an important part of economic life. See Firth, 1954.

by retaining a substantial proportion of their earnings against the time they will marry and establish an independent unit. The efforts of their elders to keep the household estate intact for as long a period as possible are rendered ineffective, and only the wealthiest households can hope, by holding out the prospects of an expanding estate, to delay the process of division. Thus, as the rate of land fragmentation has increased, household size has become smaller and these groups progressively less able to support themselves from the land.

Fourthly, in the absence of alternative sources of income during the latter part of the nineteenth and early part of this century, a dearth of land meant that household obligations could only be met by mortgaging kīpat land to non-Limbus. There emerged the familiar syndrome of agricultural indebtedness: as more and more lands were pledged to raise non-productive capital, the Limbus gradually lost the means to repay these debts and resume their lands. Thus, the economic foundation on which the political hierarchy of the Early Period had been built eroded with the general impoverishment of the Limbus - Subbas and their lineage mates alike. The twice-born castes, especially the Brahmins, became the economically ascendant sector of the population, and the chief source of credit and tenancy for the Limbus. Moreover, the conversion of their land grants into raikar tenure in the 1860s secured the

rights of the non-Limbus to these lands and freed them of any further economic or political dependence on the Limbus. Thereafter, the Tharis were beholden to the Government and not the Subbas for their titles and authority. When the system of tax-collection was re-arranged so that Tharis paid taxes directly to the treasury office instead of to the Subbas, the last remnants of the hierarchy were dissolved in Ilam.

Another development which had a profound effect on the social pattern relates to the Government decision of 1901 to prohibit the permanent alienation of kiptat land to non-Limbus. Since pressures on raikar land have been growing steadily, non-Limbus have been forced to compete for access to the usufruct of kiptat lands. This has placed Limbus in a position from which to exploit their ownership rights by demanding interest-free loans (bard) against the security of lands already pledged. In addition, they retain the right of first refusal of tenancies in the event that the mortgagees can or will not cultivate the lands themselves. These rights, moreover, are sanctioned by the threat of transferring the usufruct to new landholders. The effects of impoverishment are thereby mitigated so that the pattern of total economic dependence which characterizes the relations between, for example, landlords and non-Limbu landless has never developed. And the fact that now Limbu

households can get at least a part of their living from commercial sources has reduced further their dependence on the non-Limbu landholding class.

The retention of ownership rights to kīpat is especially important in the context of military service. Because land rights remain intact during their lengthy absences, servicemen are able to accumulate substantial savings and pensions which are used to regain usufruct to their own lands or to take the lands of other Limbus under mortgage. This means that the proportion of lands to which the Limbus now have 'unrestricted' access has begun to increase at the expense of the Brahmins and other non-Limbus. It means, too, that monies earned in the commercial economy contribute to slowing down the rate of kīpat mortgaging. Moreover, as these monies find their way back to the Indreni Cluster, the agricultural sector of the Limbu economy improves accordingly.

The political effects of these new alternatives have been no less far-reaching. Service in the Gurkhas has given rise to a small class of affluent Limbus, who through their wealth and status earned in the army, have usurped much of the power and influence of the traditional Limbu headmen. Of equal importance is their assumption of leadership within the wider community - the all-Nepal arena, so to speak - expressed in their control of new political associations created by the Government.

Colson points out that the existence of the Makah 'as a distinct group' is due mainly to 'the creation of a separate status for the Makah by the reservation system.'¹ The Nepal Government's ban on the sale of kiptat can be seen in a similar light. By halting the trend towards abolition of this form of land tenure, the Government inadvertently provided a new impetus for the Limbu struggle to defend their lands against encroachment.

The kiptat system blends with and adds a structural dimension to the fact of cultural exclusiveness. Limbu relations with and attitudes towards their Brahmin neighbours are influenced by the fact that the latter have benefitted most from the Government's land policy; indeed, they are seen as the instruments of that policy. In a different direction, the continuing influence and prestige of the Subbas are explicable, too, in terms of the confrontation over land. Their traditional importance as lineage headmen has given way to their roles as symbols of Limbu unity. Not only have they been in the forefront of the political activity over kiptat, but express the opposition of the Limbus to the Panchayat system, which is seen both to be controlled by the Brahmins, and to represent the greatest obstacle to a resurgence of the traditional powers of the headmen.

1. Colson, 1953, pp.144-5.

In 1964, a comprehensive series of land reform measures were announced by the Kathmandu Government, and the intention is to introduce the programme in all areas of the Kingdom not later than 1967. Although nowhere in the legislation is specific reference made to the future of the kiptat system, the successful implementation of such a scheme would seem to be predicated on the prior conversion of all lands to raikar tenure. Whether or not this will be done remains to be seen. In the light of this study, however, it is safe to assume that the abolition or fundamental alteration of the kiptat system of land tenure would bring about further changes in the existing pattern of social relations.

APPENDIXThe Measurement of Land

The problem of measuring land arose early in my fieldwork and proved something of a problem. The last revenue settlement in Ilam took place in 1936 so that the records were out of date and of little value. Moreover, only irrigated lands were in fact surveyed, but dry fields were not.

Hill peasants themselves have no exact knowledge of the size of the fields they cultivate. They speak only of the amount of seed they sow in the case of paddy lands, and of the number of hul they own when referring to dry plots. A hul means a pair of bullocks, and in this context implies the number of mornings it takes to plough a dry field. This gives no indication of its size since the figure varies with the condition of the soil, the time of year, the strength of the bullocks and the skill of the ploughman.

Under these circumstances the only alternative was to use the figures for production. A 'unit' therefore, is not, strictly speaking, a measurement of land, but of its productivity. The figures given in the text are for the year I spent in the field. There is nothing to suggest that 1964-65 was a year of abnormal yield - either below or above par.

There are two weaknesses in this approach which become immediately apparent. The first is this: how was I to know whether the production estimates given me by my informants were accurate? Limbus, like peasants everywhere, are never happy to speak about their yields. But the fact that the great majority of their fields were mortgaged made them less reluctant to give me the information I asked for, and at the same time made it possible for me to check their statements. Since in most cases two and often three persons had rights to the same plot of land I was able to verify the production figures by relying on more than one source. Then again, certain areas were known to yield a determinate quantity of grains per seed planted. So that, for example, most cultivators knew that fields along a specific ridge produced twenty times the amount of seed sown, while others in another area produced twenty-five or thirty times the amount. This provided an additional means of verification. Finally, I was present on a number of occasions when grains were counted at harvest time, and was able to check personally the statements I had taken.

Perhaps a more serious drawback of attempting to employ production figures as an objective measurement of land relates to the fact that yields can vary from year to year. In this regard I can only point out that any significant variations in production would occur 'across the board' and so would not substantially alter the land pattern I present.

Because agricultural techniques are standardized the skills of individual cultivators would have little bearing on yields. The figures given in this thesis are therefore presented as a reasonably accurate estimate of the production of Indreni kipat fields.

To enable me to compare production with consumption requirements I have defined the 'unit' as the amount of food an adult (aged fourteen and over) eats in one day (two meals). With the husks removed two measures of paddy will give one measure of rice. A measure of maize on the cob will give three-quarters of a measure of edible grain. Millet, on the other hand, is reckoned to give full 'measure for measure'. The figures used, then, are for net edible grains.

Crops are normally measured in muri, pathi, and mana. One mana is equivalent to about one pound. There are eight mana in a pathi and twenty pathi in a muri. One muri corresponds to a volumetric measure of 2.4 bushels. An adult eats one mana of meal (whether rice, maize or millet) at a single meal.

GLOSSARY

aḍḍā	office
amāl	Subba's court or council
aputāli	childless person
āsik	blessing
baḍ	lit. increment. An additional loan taken against security of land already pledged.
baḍā hākim	Governor of a district
bālak	infant
bālī	annual payment in grain made to a member of a service caste
bārī	dry (unirrigated) land
beḥyā	whore
beysākh	first month of Nepali year
bhalāḍmi	notable, important person
bhāt	cooked rice, maize or millet
bhog bandhaki	possessory mortgage
birodhī	opponent
boknu	to carry, to support (in a dispute)
boksi	witch
buḍeuli	spokesman
buḍo	an elder
candā	contribution
chumlung [L]	mass meeting
cori bihā	theft marriage
culo	hearth
dāijo	dowry
dājyū-bhāi	brothers
dāl	lentils
dāmāsāhi	a proportion of tax paid by landholder to the owner of kipat land.
ḍerā	a temporary shelter
dhān nāc	Limbu paddy dance
dhārā	water source
dhoti	loincloth
dukha	hardship

gāū	settlement, village, cluster of houses
ghar	home, household
ghar bārī	homestead plot
goṭhālo	cowherd
gotra	an exogamous unit usually wider than clan
guhār	help
hal	amount of land ploughed by a pair of bullocks in one morning
jāḍ	millet beer
jāl	treachery
jāri	marriage by abduction of another man's wife
jārikal	compensation paid to a cuckolded husband
jāt	caste
jeṭhā	eldest sibling
jiuni	property kept by parents for support in old age
jūṭho	ritually impure
kam [L]	soil
kanyā	virgin, unmarried girl
kartā	functionary appointed by Subba
kārbāri	functionary appointed by Subba
khar	kind of grass used for thatching
khet	irrigated land
khukuri	curved knife
kipaṭ	form of land tenure associated with Limbus
kiriyā putra	principal mourner
kul deutā	ancestor god
kurā	language
lagan	wedding ceremony
lālmohar	decree bearing the royal seal
lāṭo	simple, stupid
lokanti	women accompanying bride to her wedding
māgh	Nepali month
māgi bihā	arranged marriage
māl	treasury office
mana	unit of measure (about one pound)
marcā	yeast loaf used in making liquor

māsikāṭṭa	kind of possessory mortgage whereby capital is reduced annually by a fixed amount.
matvāli	member of a 'drinking' caste, ranked below twice-born castes
māuli	mother's natal family
mit	ritual friend
mūl ghar	main house (from which sons divide)
muri	unit of measure (2.4 bushels, also 1369 sq. ft.)
namaste	popular form of greeting
nāū kamāunu	to make a name, earn a reputation
navamī	ninth day of the festival of Dasein
nimto	invitation
nūn tel chunu	touching salt and oil (a ritual lifting pollution after a death)
nvāgi	ritual offering at harvest time
pāc khat	certain offences which can be dealt with only by Government courts
pakkā	real, genuine
pānī na calne	untouchable (caste)
pāp	sin
pareli	mutual labour exchange
pāthi	unit of measure (equal to eight manas)
pāṭhālā	religious school
perengo [L]	small wicker purse containing meat (given as part of marriage payments)
pevā	a woman's private possessions
phedangma [L]	Limbu ritual specialist
polāhā	informer
purohit	Brahmin priest
rāi	functionary appointed by Subba
raksi	liquor
ratyewli	performance by women of a groom's settlement on the night of his wedding (practised by high castes only).
reybandi	system of periodic re-distribution of land
reykar	form of land tenure (akin to freehold)
reyti	dependent of a headman
rin	interest-bearing loan
rit	marriage payments made by groom

sabhā	assembly of Village adults
saimondri [L]	fee paid by man to wife's natal kin to enable former to mourn wife
sanad	Government order
sapat	short-term loan without interest
sarāp bagāunu	ritual performed to 'wash away' ill feelings within a lineage
sel roṭi	kind of doughnut made on special occasions
sīdur	red powder worn by bride to signify marital status
sikya [L]	nettle
silok	verse competition engaged in by relatives of bride and groom at a high caste wedding
sir uṭhāune	raise one's head i.e. prestige
soranni	land grants given by Subbas to immigrant settlers in Limbuan
subbā	Limbu headman
suhang [L]	sub-division of the tribe
sunauli [L]	bridewealth
tā	low grade honorific form of 'you'
tāgādhāri	twice-born caste
tapāī	high grade honorific form of 'you'
tarkārī	vegetable or meat curry
thar	clan
thari	headman on raikar land
thum	sub-division of a district
ṭikā	ritual mark on forehead
tongba [L]	bamboo container with millet beer
tulasi	a sacred plant (ocimum basilicum)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bailey, F.G.

1957. Caste and the Economic Frontier. Manchester, University Press.

1960. Tribe, Caste, and Nation. Manchester, University Press.

1961. '"Tribe" and "Caste" in India', Contributions to Indian Sociology, 5, pp.7-19.

1965. 'Decisions by Consensus in Councils and Committees' in Political Systems and the Distribution of Power. (ASA Monograph 2) edited by M. Banton. London: Tavistock Publications.

Benedict, B.

1957. 'Factionalism in Mauritian Villages', British Journal of Sociology, 8, pp.328-342.

1962, 'Stratification in Plural Societies', American Anthropologist, 64, pp.1235-1245.

Bhandari, K.P. 1959 (in Nepali).

'Kipat', in Samyukta Prayas, Kathmandu, 13th and 20th September.

Bott, E. 1955.

'Urban Families: Conjugal Roles and Social Networks', Human Relations, 8, pp.345-384.

Buchanan, F. 1928 (see Hamilton, 1928).

Campbell, A. 1840.

'Note on the Limboos, and other Hill Tribes hitherto undescribed', Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 9, pp.595-615.

Chatterji, S.K. 1950.

'Kirata-Jana-Krti', Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 16, pp.143-235.

Chemjong, B.B. 1957 (in Nepali)

Pallo-Kirat Limbuan Ka Mag Haru (Demands of Limbuan Far-Kirat,) Kathmandu.

Chemjong, I.S. (in Nepali)

1952. Kirati Itihas (History of the Kiratis). Gangtok.

1961. Introduction to Limbu-Nepali-Angrezi Shabda Kosh (Limbu-Nepali-English Dictionary). Kathmandu: Nepal Academy.

Cohen, A. 1965.

Arab Border-Villages in Israel. Manchester, University Press.

Cohn, B. 1955.

'The Changing Status of a Depressed Caste' in Village India, edited by M. Marriott, Chicago, University Press.

Colson, E.

1953. The Makah Indians. Manchester, University Press.

Davis, K. 1951.

The Population of India and Pakistan. Princeton, University Press.

Donaldson, F. 1900.

Lepchaland. London: Sampson Low, Marston.

Driver, J.E.S. 1963.

'Party and Government in Nepal' in Politics in Southern Asia, edited by S. Rose, London: Macmillan.

Eisenstadt, S.M. 1961.

'Anthropological Studies of Complex Societies', Current Anthropology, June, pp.201-222.

Firth, R.

1954. 'Money, Work and Social Change in Indo-Pacific Economic Systems', International Social Science Bulletin, 6, pp. 400-410.

1957. Introduction to 'Factions in Indian and Overseas Indian Societies', British Journal of Sociology, 8, pp.291-295.

Freedman, M. 1958.

Lineage Organization in Southeastern China. London: Athlone Press.

Fried, M.H. 1957.

'The Classification of Corporate Unilineal Descent Groups', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 87, pp.1-29.

Fürer-Haimendorf, C. von. 1956.

'Elements of Newar Social Structure', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 82, pp.15-38.

Ginsberg, M. 1958.

'Social Change', British Journal of Sociology, 9, pp.205-229.

Giuseppe, Father 1790.

'An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal', Asiatick Researches 2, pp.307-322.

Gluckman, M. 1943.

Lozi Land and Royal Property. Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 10 London: O.U.P.

Gough, K. 1955.

'The Social Structure of a Tanjore Village' in Village India, edited by M. Marriott, Chicago, University Press.

Gould, H. 1964.

'A Jajmani System of North India: Its structure, magnitude and meaning', Ethnology, 3, pp.12-41.

Gurung, C.B. 1949.

Report on the Study of Agricultural Conditions of the Eastern Nepal Hills, East No. 1 to Ilam. (mimeographed).

Hailey, Lord 1952.

'The Land Tenure Problem in Africa', Journal of African Administration (special Supplement), pp.3-7.

Hamilton, F.

1819 An account of the kingdom of Nepal, and of the territories annexed to this dominion by the House of Gorkha. Edinburgh: Constable.

1928. An Account of the District of Purnea in 1809-10. Patna: Bihar and Orissa Research Society.

Harper, E.B. 1959.

'Two Systems of Economic Exchange in India', American Anthropologist, 61, pp.760-778.

Hitchcock, J.T.

1963. 'Some Effects of Recent Change in Rural Nepal', Human Organization, 22, pp.75-82.

1966. The Magars of Banyan Hill. New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston.

Hodgson, B.H.

1880. 'Route from Kathmandu, the Capital of Nepal, to Darjeeling in Sikkim', Section XI in Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects. Vol. II, London: Trubner.

n.d. Hodgson Collection. Miscellaneous texts presented to the India Office Library. Unpublished.

Jackson, R.D. 1940.

India's Army, London: Sampson Low, Marston.

Karve, I. 1965.

Kinship Organization in India (second revised edition). Bombay: Asia Publishing House.

Kolenda, P.M. 1963.

'Toward a Model of the Hindu Jajmani System', Human Organization, 22 pp.11-31.

Kumar, D. 1965.

Land and Caste in South India. Cambridge, University Press.

Kuper H. 1947.

An African Aristocracy: Rank among the Swazi of Swaziland. London: International African Institute.

Lama, S.B. 1959 (in Nepali).

Iiam Darpard (Mirror on Ilam). Darjeeling.

Landon, P. 1928.

Nepal, 2 vols. London: Constable.

Leach, E.R.

1961a. Rethinking Anthropology. London: Athlone Press

1961b. Pul Eliya. Cambridge, University Press.

Lloyd, P. 1962.

Yoruba Land Law. London: O.U.P.

Mair, L.P. 1957.

Studies in Applied Anthropology. London: Athlone Press

Malhotra, R.C. 1958.

'Public Administration in Nepal', Indian Journal of Public Administration, 4, pp.451-464.

Maron, S; Rose, L; and Heyman, J. 1956.

A Survey of Nepal Society. Berkeley: University of California.

Marriott, M. 1955.

'Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization' in Village India, edited by M. Marriott. Chicago, University Press.

Mayer, A.C.

1952. Land and Society in Malabar. London: O.U.P.

1957. 'Factions in Fiji Indian Rural Settlements', British Journal of Sociology, 8, pp.317-328.

1960. Caste and Kinship in Central India. Berkeley: University of California.

1963. 'Some Political Implications of Community Development in India', European Journal of Sociology, 4, pp.86-106.

Mayer, A.C.

1966. 'The Significance of Quasi-Groups in the Study of Complex Societies' in The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies (ASA Monograph 4), edited by M. Banton, London: Tavistock Publications.

Nakane, C. 1966.

'A Plural Society in Sikkim' in Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon, edited by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. von 1956.

Where the Gods are Mountains. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Nicholas, R.W. 1965.

'Factions: A Comparative Analysis', in Political Systems and the Distribution of Power (ASA Monograph 2), edited by M. Banton, London: Tavistock Publications.

O'Malley, L.S.S. 1907.

Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling, Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot.

Opler, M.E. 1956.

'The Extensions of an Indian Village', Journal of Asian Studies, 16, pp.5-10.

Orans, M. 1965.

The Santal. Detroit: Wayne State University.

Pant, Y.P. 1965.

Economic Development of Nepal. Allahabad: Kitab Mahal.

Patterson, G.N. 1962.

'Recent Chinese Policies in Tibet and towards the Himalayan Border States', The China Quarterly, 12, pp.191-206.

Phago, J.S. 1843.

see Hodgson, (n.d.).

Pradhananga, G.B. 1952 (in Nepali).

Limbuan Ko Kipat Samasya (The Kipat Problem of Limbuan).
Kathmandu.

Rao, M.S.A. 1957.

Social Change in Malabar. Bombay: Popular Press.

Regmi, D.R.

1960. Ancient Nepal. Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhyay.

1961. Modern Nepal. Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhyay.

Regmi M.C.

1963. Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal. (Vol. I)
The State as Landlord: Raikar Tenure. Berkeley:
Institute of International Studies, University of
California.

1964. Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal. (Vol. II)
The Land Grant System: Birta Tenure. Berkeley:
Institute of International Studies, University of
California.

1965. Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal. (Vol. III)
The Jagir, Rakan and Kipat Tenure Systems. Berkeley:
Institute of International Studies, University of
California.

Rock J.F. 1953.

'Excerpts from a History of Sikkim', Anthropos, 48,
pp. 925-948.

Rose L.E.

1963a. 'Nepal's Experiment with Traditional Democracy',
Pacific Affairs, 36, pp.16-31.

1963b. 'The Himlayan Border States: "Buffers" in
Transition', Asian Survey, 3, pp.116-121.

Tuker, Sir. F. 1957.

Gorkha, the story of the Gurkhas of Nepal. London:
Constable.

Vansittart, E. 1915.

Gurkhas. Calcutta: Superintendent of Government
Printing.

Watson, J.B. 1953.

'Four Approaches to Cultural Change: a Systematic Reassessment', Social Forces, 32, pp.137-45.

Watson, W. 1958.

Tribal Cohesion in a Money Economy. Manchester, University Press.

White, C.M.N. 1958.

'Terminological Confusion in African Land Tenure', Journal of African Administration, 10, pp.124-130.

White, J.C. 1909.

Sikkim and Bhutan: Twenty-one Years on the North-West Frontier. London: Edward Arnold.

Worsley, P. 1961.

See Eisenstadt, S.N.

Wright, D. 1958.

History of Nepal. Calcutta: Susil Gupta. (Indian reprint. First published by Cambridge in 1877).

Primary Sources

Royal Order to the Limbus of Far Kirat, 1774.

Order regarding the failure to register lands and homesteads in Far Kirat, 1868.

Order to the Dhankutta district court, 1880.

Order regarding the restoration of kiptat lands in Far Kirat, 1881.

Order to the officers and clerks of the Ilam administration, 1913.

Order regarding kiptat land in Ilam and Das Majhia, 1917.

Report of the Muluki office, 1947.

Petition of the Subbas of Ilam, 1951.

Report of Deva Man Angdembe to the Shahi Commission, 1960.