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Chapter 2. Human Sacrifice in Colonial Central India:

Myth, Agency and Representation

Crispin Bates

The sanguinary nature of early contacts with the tribals, or adivasis, of central India did not bode well for their future reputation. The first expedition into Bastar by Captain Blunt, in 1795, was attacked and expelled from the country, from which experience may be traced some of the more fearful accounts of the savagery of tribal Gonds.¹ The already established reputations of the predatory Bhils of Gujarat and the rebellious Santhals and Kols of Bihar also served to colour the expectations of early travellers in central India. Hindu informants often reported the adivasis to be practitioners of human sacrifice and this was widely believed, although no evidence of this was ever uncovered.² The density of the jungle and the prevalence of malaria made any expedition into the interior something to be greatly feared. The first such attempt, that of Alexander Elliot and four other officers, who endeavoured to march a route from Cuttack to Nagpur and thence to Hoshangabad between August 11th and December 9th 1778, ended in the death of Elliot and three of the other four. Only Thomas actually made it to Hoshangabad, and on the return journey was considerably harassed by tigers, robbers and 'a treacherous Naig [sic]'.³ In later expeditions, however, expectations were not always confirmed. The large number of Hindus, including Rajputs and 'agricultural Brahmins' resident in Chhattisgarh and the surrounding tracts was noted with surprise, and the customs and practices of the Gonds were discovered to be not always as bizarre as previously described. One expedition of the early 1830's reported:

It has been suspected by many that the Gonds do not scruple to perform human sacrifices and devour the flesh, but the Hindoo inhabitants whom we questioned exonerated them from the charge of cannibalism. The Gonds whom we met with, far from showing any symptoms of cannibalism, even abstain from beef. The lower classes have no objections to other kinds of animal food, although the chiefs and better sort of folk have adopted the prejudices of the Hindu in this respect.⁴

Richard Jenkins, in his report on the Nagpur territories, formed the impression that while the wildest of the Gonds, the Murias of Bastar, engaged in human sacrifice, the majority of

Gonds 'class themselves under the second cast [sic] of Hindoos'. This, he wrote, 'is a stretch of complaisance in the Marhatta [sic] officers, owing, probably, to the country having been so long under the Rajahs of the Gond tribe. They, however, term themselves Coetoor (a corruption of Khutriya).'⁵ This account, attributing Gonds with the status of Kshatriyas, almost certainly arose from Jenkins' encounter with the Gond Rajah of Deogurh in Nagpur, a Hinduised 'Raj Gond', who was then still nominally sovereign over a large part of the Rajah of Nagpur's territory and still received a share of the state's revenues.⁶ Jenkins' confusion well illustrates the uncertainty of many writers in this period, but his distinction between more 'civilised' tribals and those 'others' of whom little is known but who were suspected of the most heinous savagery is also to be found in the account written by Vans Agnew at this time, concerning the Subah or Province of Chhattisgarh:

The only tribes I heard of that are peculiar to this part of India are the Kaonds, or inhabitants of Koandwana [Gondwana], Kakair [Kanker], and Bustar, and Binderwa and Pardeea casts found in the hills North-East of Ruttunpore....The Koands are Hindoos and not particularly distinguished from the wild inhabitants of other jungles, except by the high character they are reputed to possess for veracity and fidelity... They appear to be so seldom seen by the other inhabitants of the Country [so] that there is much reason to doubt the truth of all that is reported respecting them. They are, however, said to have scarcely any religion; but if they regard any idol, Daby [Debi] has the preference. They go entirely naked; are armed with Bows and Arrows; never build any huts or seek other shelter than that afforded by the Jungles; but sometimes cultivate small quantities of the coarse grains; are said to destroy their relatives when too old to move about and to eat their flesh, when a great entertainment takes place to which all the family is invited. Their enemies, and the travellers they may slay, they are also said to eat. It is doubtful that they have the ceremony of marriage.⁷

The Concept of Sacrifice in India: myths and realities

There have been numerous studies of sacrifice by Indologists, including a book by Jan Heesterman (1993), and discussions of its role in contemporary Hindu society (Fuller, 1988 & 1992). A collection of essays entitled *Criminal Gods and Demon Devotees*, edited by Ralph Hildebrandt (1989) is one of the most useful. In it, Madeleine Biardeau describes the ritual of buffalo sacrifices to village gods in southern India, including an extraordinary example in Thanjavur district, at the Valattur temple, of a ritual referred to as 'human sacrifice'. The dominant caste here are Kallars, who are sudras, but see themselves as Kshatriyas (since there are Kallar kings). They are non-vegetarian, but the gods, in the temple are vegetarian, and in the ritual of 'human sacrifice' offerings of milk are dragged to the temple by men with hooks in their backs, the hooks being removed immediately outside the

temple entrance in deference to the god's vegetarian diet. There is also an 'impalement stake' outside the village, whose purpose again is mythological rather than practical, it being the stake upon which was impaled the demon king who stole a Brahmin woman according to folk legend. Goat sacrifices are offered occasionally to the demon guardians of the gods, but never to the gods themselves.

In another essay in the same volume Biardeau points out the similarities between the buffalo sacrifices of dussehra and the Vedic royal sacrifice or horse sacrifice, an expiatory rite for the King's sins - pointing to some instances where the two ceremonies have been fused - an instance of which is described in an essay by Waghorne on the kingly rituals of Pudokottai. Biardeau suggests that the rapport seen in these examples between Brahmans and meat-eating gods, effected by means of the opposition between 'criminal gods' and their 'demon devotees', is worked out through rituals and symbols ultimately derived from Vedic ritual: most notably the Vedic horse sacrifice and the Vedic sacrificial post, or *yupa*.

Anncharlott Erschmann goes on to describe parallels between the Navakalevara ritual of renewal, the rituals of worship at Jagannath and various tribal antecedents. In particular she sees parallels between log worship and buffalo sacrifices among the Konds of Orissa and the carved figures and form of worship of Ballabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath at Puri. The continuity in the element of sacrifice she considers especially important, as also the ritual of renewal of the log gods in the villages - since, as she claims, 'rituals of renewal are not a common feature in tribal and folk religion'. In Khond villages worship is usually by non-Brahmins but there are examples of Brahmans being involved, and of the log gods being worshipped with milk instead of blood. Numerous other 'symbolic sacrifices' elsewhere are described in the book, but the only blood ever spilled is that of buffaloes and goats. The spilling of human blood amongst the Konds, Erschmann says, is unknown, at least in the present day.

A further parallel can be seen in the practice of hook-swinging (known as the *charak puja* in Bengal), described along with other forms of self-torture, such as fire-walking, in a number of first-hand accounts from the colonial period. According to these accounts, volunteers, usually paid and seasoned practitioners drawn from amongst marginal groups in village society, were swung from poles by means of hooks piercing the flesh of their backs and sometimes legs. Wealthier landlord families were the patrons of such festivals. Eye-witnesses described how a cloth wrap was often employed to bear some of the weight and to protect the hook-swinger from falling in case the hooks should rip through the flesh - although this rarely

happened. There were many motivations for this rite, most commonly the propitiation of Shiva (in Bengal and Maharashtra) and of female goddesses, commonly Durga/Kali, or Mariyamman, the goddess of smallpox, in the south. The desire for children by women was another motive cited. Propitiation in this ritual seems to have been associated with the endurance of pain: mortal injury was exceptional, and although links with human sacrifice have been suggested, Geoffrey Oddie has not found any nineteenth century evidence of this, nor of death in a hook-swinging ceremony.⁸

There are few nineteenth century accounts of hook-swinging from the Central Provinces of British India apart from an alleged 'Santhal' ceremony in Chhattisgarh and instances described in the gazetteers of Betul and Seoni districts⁹, but it is likely that rituals of buffalo sacrifice similar to those of South India and Orissa were associated with the celebration of the Goddess Danteshwari at Dussehra in Bastar. Thus the accounts we have of the dussehra ceremony, the earliest of which date from 1911, describe largely 'symbolic sacrifices' and the offering of milk and ghee to the god. Goat and buffalo sacrifices take place, but the latter are never offered near the shrine itself but in the forests, and at night. Whether or not 'human sacrifice' in any shape or form may also have taken place, and how and why such claims came to be believed in a literal sense, is the subject of this paper.

'The invention of perdition': human sacrifice and British relations with the Indian kingdom of Bastar in the 19th century

Bastar was a tribal state, the largest and one of the most isolated in central India. Socially and politically it was divided into forty-eight 'parganas', each with their own chief (Pargana gaita, referred to as 'Majhis' in British records), while the rulers of the state as a whole were a Kshatriya royal family who had migrated to the region from Warangal in Andhra Pradesh in the sixteenth century and established their capital at Jagdalpur. They brought with them a family deity, which they attempted to incorporate into the local religious pantheon, and an armed body of retainers, who acted as their bodyguard and as tax collectors. Formally, the Raja of Bastar was a tributary of the Raja of Nagpur, although the annual tribute (of Rs. 5,000) was not very regularly paid. Communications with the British first occurred when the East India Company was given administrative control of the neighbouring Chhattisgarh region after 1818. When the Nagpur kingdom escheated to the East India Company in 1854, Bastar was amongst those who became tributaries, a formal Sanad being granted to the Raja in 1862.

The key tribes of Bastar were/are firstly, the Bison Horn Marias, who were known for their allegedly homicidal proclivities.¹⁰ Then there are the so-called Hill Maria living in the Abujmar hills in the very centre of the state, who are called the 'Meta Koitur' by the Koitur and described as existing 'in the last stage of Barbarism, perfectly naked and beyond anyone's control'.¹¹ Finally there are the Murias, who call themselves 'Koitur' (the people): known for their institution of the *gotul* (a dormitory where adolescents sleep together prior to marriage) and their ostensible practice of human sacrifice. Those living adjacent to Jagdalpur call themselves the Raja Muria. These formal names are adapted, possibly from the Khond word 'Mervi' (meaning sacrifice), much as the Khonds called themselves 'Kui', the name 'Khond' itself being a British term probably deriving from the Telugu word 'Konds', meaning 'small hills'.

Other tribal groups found in Bastar include the Bhattra, Halbas, Dhurwas and Dhorlas. The Halbas formed the Raja's native militia. Their non-Dravidian language has become the lingua-franca of Bastar, whilst the Dhurwa were once royal retainers who accompanied the Kakatiya (*Karkateeya*) kings from neighbouring Warangal. While Hill Maria clans are only found one to each village, the Bison-Horn and Muria are found in plural clan villages, usually with one clan dominant.

Apart from ancestral deities, the original being Barha Pen, according to Popoff (1980), all of the Maria and Muria Bastar tribes worship an earth goddess, Tallur Mutte, also known as 'Tallin Ochur' among the Bison-Horn and 'Talo dai' among the Hill Maria, or 'bhum' or 'mati'. The Earth includes 'the spirits of the forest and rivers' who must be separately appeased, according to Sundar¹². It is a form of this god that is supposedly to be found in the shrine at Dantewada (sometimes also referred to as 'Danteshwara' or 'Danteswara' in historical records). Although there is a supreme creating male deity, Ispuriyal, Tallur Mutte is in practice the most important god, since she is regarded as responsible for the continuance of the life cycle. In addition to Tallur Mutte there are also village mother goddesses (Mata or Devi), who have names and distinct personalities, and are represented by a stone or tree or by a flag when moving about. There are also lineage or clan deities: amongst Marias and Murias witches and evil spirits are exorcised by groups of young men in ceremonial dress carrying *anga deo*, the clan god, from village to village. *Anga deo* is represented by three parallel logs tied to three cross logs, carried aloft by four men. Its arrival is greeted with festivities in every village at which considerable quantities are drunk of *silpi* (palm toddy) and *mahua* (a spirit or beer made from mahua flowers). Doubtless because of its social aspects this ceremony is still enthusiastically practised day.¹³

The State deity, Danteshwari, is said to be the family deity which accompanied the Kakatiya kings of Warangal when they settled in Bastar. Some of the stones of the Danteshwari temple are said to have originated from Warangal. Danteshwari is seen by the Hindus of Bastar as an incarnation of Durga (Kali) and as a Shakti Pitha, one of the 52 parts of the dead body of the goddess Sati which according to legend fell to earth after she was cut up and the pieces scattered by Lord Vishnu. It is likely that the Gonds themselves regarded her as a sort of supra village goddess, infinitely more powerful, but ultimately comparable to the *anga* (log-gods) and other local deities which they habitually worshipped.

The Jagannath-style celebrations involving Danteshwari are held at Dantewada in the south of the country each year during Dusshera and were initiated, it is believed, sometime around the middle of the fifteenth century by King Purshuttamdeva. A highly Hinduised ceremony (held in the month of Arshara), which begins with worship at the Mahar shrine of Kachin, it nonetheless includes a ritual where the King is captured by the Muria, Maria and Bhattra tribals and carried off into the forest, where offerings are made to him, the king only being restored to the Palace the next day by the same tribals, thus symbolising his election.¹⁴ The celebrations are followed by a feast and Durbar attended by all the clan chiefs, at which grievances are addressed.

Unlike Hindu ceremonies elsewhere in central India, sacrifices (mostly of goats) take place throughout the dussehra festival, mostly away from the shrine itself. Alfred Gell, in a recent paper,¹⁵ has argued that this ceremony implies the relative powerlessness of the Raja, and the dependence of his authority on this form of annual re-investiture by the Gonds. The dussehra celebration itself is described as a mock revolt, which underlines the autonomy of the various tribal groups within the State. In other words the Hindu raja was a king by sufferance rather than by right. Whilst this interpretation has been criticised as two-dimensional and excessively abstract by Sundar¹⁶, the comments of the Diwan about the Hills Marias of Abujmarh (below), certainly lend weight to the idea that there was a gulf between the rulers and the ruled, at least by the mid nineteenth century. At the same time, it should be emphasised that such rituals of re-investiture and legitimation are not uncommon in mixed tribal kingdoms of this sort and occur in a variety of religious rituals.¹⁷ Nandini Sundar is therefore certainly correct in critiquing the alleged 'exceptionalism' of the Bastar state and society as being at least in part a product of colonial discourse and in arguing that tribal revolts of the colonial period were a reaction to economic and social change and to the

material distress brought about by the imposition of colonial policies, particularly those relating to the extraction of forest produce.

Human Sacrifice as Colonial Justification – Bastar Deconstructed

From about 1837 onwards there were increasing rumours of ritual human sacrifice in Bastar. Undoubtedly this was connected with the Madras Government's first expedition into the Khond Zamindari of Ghumsur in 1836 to enforce the payment of land tax. In 1842 the Diwan of Bastar state, Lal Dalganjan Singh, was summoned to Nagpur to be questioned, following the communication of allegations of human sacrifice amongst the Khonds to the British resident there, Major Wilkinson. The Raja was represented by his uncle, the Diwan (or Prime Minister) Lal Dalganjan Singh, and a detachment of police was subsequently sent to the Dantewara temple to stand guard and prevent further such incidents.¹⁸ A special agency, the Meriah Agency (so called after the name of alleged sacrificial victims¹⁹) was soon after established by Government of India Act XXI of 1845. Sir John Campbell was appointed to head this Agency with instructions to endeavour to suppress the rite of human sacrifice throughout the Khond territories of central and eastern India. Meanwhile Khond resistance from the hills of Ghomsur continued, culminating in a general uprising in 1846-47.

Allegedly the uprising was in part a response to the prevention of sacrifices and the famines that followed, although loss of land and the payment of land tax were probably at least as important. Once again an expeditionary force was sent to re-impose the East India Company's control, at a considerable cost in human lives. Rebellion and the rite of human sacrifice were thus closely associated in the minds of British officials, and renewed allegations from Bastar led to an investigation by John MacVicar in the 1850s, followed by another by A.C. McNeill, and a further expedition sent to Bastar from Sironcha under the command of Colonel Glasfurd in 1862. Allegations surfaced again in the wake of the Khond uprising in Kalahandi in 1882. By this time Lal Kalendra Singh, Dalganjan Singh's son, had become Diwan to the Raja Bhairamdeo, following an uprising in the Bastar state itself in 1876. Lal Kalendra Singh, considered untrustworthy by the British, was replaced by an Assistant Commissioner in 1886 at the conclusion of this last phase of investigations into the rite of human sacrifice, and the Bastar state's tribute to the British Raj was raised to Rs. 15,000 per annum. But what, it must be asked, was at stake in all this? By looking in detail at the investigations of the 1850's and the 1880's, and the legal and court proceedings that followed, a number of answers can be suggested.

1. The British Civilising Mission

To begin with, there is a clear functional explanation for the above mentioned events, an explanation both personal and imperial. The careers of men such as John MacVicar, the Officiating Agent to the Hill Tracts of Orissa, were founded upon the very existence of the phenomenon of human sacrifice. MacVicar was appointed as an assistant to Sir John Campbell and took command of the Agency whilst Campbell himself was on medical leave, and was the first to extend the operations of the Agency from Kharonde and Jeypore into Bastar. There are parallels to be seen here with the phenomenon of Thuggee: the alleged religious conspiracy in central India by which travellers were supposedly strangled in propitiation of the goddess Kali, uncovered by a newly appointed and ambitious officer. Thuggee was likewise established upon the uncorroborated evidence of a handful of individuals claimed as witnesses, whilst its suppression brought fame and career success to William Sleeman, the officer in charge of the specially created ‘Thuggee and Dacoity’ Agency. In a similar fashion, the Meriah agency was set up to put an end to Human Sacrifice in Orissa, and was given the additional responsibility of suppressing female infanticide.²⁰ Hook-swinging, due to its rather less fatal effects was not included and was not prohibited in Bombay until 1856, British Bengal in 1865, and in Madras not until 1894.²¹

In both the Thuggee and Meriah agencies, the rhetoric of the responsible officers is tinged with a fervour that must have been designed to win approval from an audience beyond that of the officer’s immediate superiors. Since the Thuggee and Meriah commissioners reported to either the Governor-General (in the case of Sleeman), or to a senior Commissioner (in the case of Campbell), the audience they sought to impress most probably lay at home, in Britain. In both cases, Sleeman and Campbell claimed by their own estimate to have saved the lives of hundreds and went on to write best-selling memoirs of their achievements, Campbell himself emphasising the parallels between the two ‘civilising missions’.²² Above all, the investigation of the agencies justified the drafting in of considerable additional police and military forces in order to more firmly establish, or extend, British rule. Inevitably these expeditions were usually further associated with a more effective collection of land tax and/or a rise in the payments of tribute.

In one aspect Thuggee and human sacrifice significantly differed, in that Thuggee was recognised as existing within the East India Company’s own territories, albeit those wrested only recently from their former Maratha rulers. To explain its persistence therefore it was necessary to conjure up the notion of a widespread conspiracy, which accounted for the lack

of, or difficulty in obtaining evidence. By contrast, although it was claimed that human sacrifices were sometimes carried on in secret, allegations of widespread conspiracy were uncommon, since the misrule of individual native authorities could always be blamed for the absence of evidence and the failure to apprehend those responsible²³ Hence the following description from John MacVicar in 1855:

I gather from various quarters that four or five years ago...there was some kind of bond given by the Bastar ruler to the Resident with respect to *their rite* of human sacrifice and the Nagpore raja sent down a guard to Dantewaddy to prevent its further performance. Of the guard which has ever since remained, two men incurred the displeasure of the deity and miserably perished; one was struck dead whilst on sentry at the temple, the other was destroyed by fever; such is the fable... The consequence I believe has been that not a year has passed without the immolation of human beings, the victims being either kidnapped from the villages or selected from amongst the prisoners in confinement in Jugdulpoor. A man now in my camp was set upon by a gang of rascals whilst ploughing his field. He happened to be more powerful than his assailants and struggled successfully until his shouts attracted the villagers and brought relief. He said he thought his life was gone, for he knew they meant to sacrifice him, it being the season. He added that it was determined at first to lodge a complaint with the Lal Sahib, but the idea was subsequently abandoned as only likely to bring further trouble upon him, the local authorities having undoubtedly sanctioned the outrage. I am informed that is the invariable custom, whether with villagers or prisoners, to seize and sacrifice those only who have no kindred and are not generally known in the countryside, whereby disagreeable murmurings and complaints are suppressed. I am pursuing my enquiries amongst the people at this place; when I have finished I propose following the Lal Sahib to the temple of his idol.²⁴

MacVicar went on to claim that the people themselves had no affection for the rite, its continuance being entirely a whim of the local aristocracy.²⁵ This too mirrored the claims of Sleeman, who maintained that many of the Thugs enjoyed the protection of local zamindars and aristocrats – a sentiment in tune with the anti-aristocratic prejudices of utilitarian reformers influential within the Company's administration at this time.²⁶ The cure, as MacVicar saw it, was the removal of Lal Dalganjan Singh, whom he described as the evil genius behind the throne of Bastar.²⁷ MacVicar also expresses, however, an ulterior motive, that by such actions the people should be taught to look up to the Supreme Authority of the Government of India, represented in the person of the newly arrived Deputy Commissioner in Raipur.

The time is most favourable for the measures I propose. This district is just now for the first time coming under the British rule. [In fact it was still a nominally independent though tributary state and was to remain so - CB] As yet the people know this only from report and have not yet heard of the

arrival at Raepore of the Deputy Commissioner. In order that all should look to this officer (which is very important in their present transitional state) the removal of the Lal Sahib would be best effected through him, by order of the Commissioner in Nagpore. The reason of the removal would [then] be made known by proclamation, not only throughout Bastar, but in all the adjoining districts.²⁸

This then, it could be argued, was a principal function of the Meriah agency: to provide evidence that justified the displacement of indigenous rulers and their advisers, and which enabled either direct British control or else a government more sympathetic to British paramountcy, to be put in its place.

Interestingly, the situation in Bastar was to change dramatically after 1859, when the escheat of the Nagpur state and the rebellion of 1857 led to a new relationship being established with the Princely states. As already mentioned, a Sanad was granted (in 1862), and an Oath of fealty was taken in 1870.²⁹ The Meriah agency itself was abolished in 1861³⁰: after this date 'Perdition' was far less desirable and for a while rumours of sacrifices, instead of being investigated, began simply to be covered up.³¹ Thus rumours were peremptorily dismissed by the District Commissioner of Chanda in 1868.³² A similar report concerning Human Sacrifices, forwarded to the Government of India (GOI) by the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces (CCCP) was received from the District Commissioner, Bhandara, in 1868, in which it is said:

No instance is reported to have occurred within living memory in any district of the Central Provinces, except D.C. Chanda who says that a party of Gonds once came down in a village which had enjoyed 'singular irritations' from plunderers invoking the supposed power of the village god and seized three inhabitants and slew them before 'his shrine'. ... This however looks like a bit of defiance of the boasted power of the God. D.S.P. Raipore says that sometimes a man cut his finger into a new tank and there are other rumours of sacrificing a black cat. D.C. Bhundara says the most horrible thing done in his district was the murder of a cow by the Gonds, which was done with great mystery for fear of the Marathas. D.S.P. says Bhundara people occasionally go so far as to dress up a goat like a woman and make it walk like a sacrifice on his [sic] hind legs. D.C. Upper Godavery district thinks that the idea of murder having been human sacrifice was a horse's/mare's neck. One man killed was [in fact] a debt collector to a village trader and had been quartered on the murderer who was one of his employer's debtors...

According to a custom in this area, it was said, creditors combined the dunning of their debtors with the use of their servants free of cost, which must have aroused considerable resentment. The District Commissioner observed that this latter murder was claimed to be a sacrifice for the purpose of mending a broken tank, but that if so, it had not worked, for

the tank was still broken and the murderer clearly had little faith as he was currently growing rice in it. A more likely explanation was that the murderer began the day with 8 annas and ended it with 7, having spent 13, whilst the victim, began the day with 12 annas in his pocket, and ended the day with nothing. This was, perhaps, a more immediate and overriding benefit, he argued, than the hoped -for repair of the tank.³³

The autonomy of the Bastar State was in subsequent years reduced, however, and when rumours of sacrifice surfaced again in the 1880s and later, they were used not as a weapon of territorial conquest, but simply as an excuse for further administrative interference. The mythology was last invoked in 1910, when it was alleged (quite arbitrarily) that a failure to carry on the customary rite might have been a cause of unrest amongst the Gonds. There were in fact far more practical reasons for revolt, as described by Sundar (1997), but the practice of sacrifice was never again mentioned since following the uprising of that year, direct British administration of the State was established. In the Khond territories in Orissa, however, a British administration was never effectively established, so myths of sacrifice there seem to have persisted far longer.

For adivasis as a whole the myths of human sacrifice also persisted as part of their identification by Christians and Hindus, especially reformist Hindus. For Christians a clear strand of theological interpretation evokes the issue of sacrifice in order to distinguish Christianity from Judaism and earlier Greek and Roman faiths. In the nineteenth century this was a lively subject of debate: any encounter by a devout Christian (as most Company servants were in this period) with a barbarian and unknown community would be accompanied by a presumption that human sacrifice was present. Common cause could then readily be found between Christians and radical Hindu reformers who used such issues for quite different purposes in disputes with traditionalists.³⁴ Finally, traditional as well as popular Brahminical learning had a special place for adivasis within Hindu cosmology, often associating them with magic and bizarre ritual, not to mention sexual excess.³⁵ Real sacrifices may of course have occurred - particularly in the consecration of tanks (these sacrifices being known as 'Buldan').³⁶ However, even these could be misinterpreted by impressionable British officials, one of whom mistook a stump in the middle of a tank for a human 'sacrificial post'.³⁷ The usual practice was to bury gold or cowries at the bottom of poles set in the middle of tanks - not the bodies of recently slaughtered humans. In reality, sacrifices of animals are carried on throughout the dussehra festival in Bastar, but there is no evidence of regular human sacrifice in the nineteenth century, despite persistent rumours to this effect.³⁸

2. The 'Evangelical' Perspective

In addition to the East India Company's strategic aims (of which he was keenly aware) and his own personal ambitions, MacVicar, as Campbell's assistant in Bastar in the 1850's, seems to have had a special missionary zeal, and to have been more than willing to believe the worst of the Bastaris. He claimed that he had proof of the existence of human sacrifice even before he arrived in the state, having received a verbal account of a kidnapping allegedly for this purpose. As if this were not enough, one of his earliest letters assured the Secretary to the Government of India that '*Amongst other atrocities of this land is the crushing of human beings under the wheels of the idol's car, at the Dussehra festival*'.³⁹ Clearly he had been influenced by pamphlets written by the missionary J.C. Peggs and others describing the alleged 'atrocities' at the shrine of Jagannath at Puri, published and distributed in Britain in the 1830's by the 'Coventry Society for the Suppression of Infanticide, Human Sacrifice and other such Barbarian Atrocities'.⁴⁰

MacVicar insisted that '[i]t would not perhaps be impossible to prove that the victims were not victims, although from what I have heard I am very confident that these pretended martyrdoms are the result of violence and coercion'. This he concluded from information received before he had even crossed the border into the State. One wonders as to the veracity of his sources. According to John Campbell, on more than one occasion his subordinates were duped by their native informants.⁴¹ MacVicar also enquired during this tour into the custom of Sati (the self-immolation of widows). He was assured by his informants at Biersingapore in Jeypore that they were too 'low caste' for such customs, although the same informants claimed, probably ingenuously, that 'it obtains at Naurangpoor [Narainpur - in northern Baster] where there are high caste people'.⁴²

It is clear that this was a country riven with innuendo and powerful superstitions, though many of them had equally obviously only recently arrived from Scotland. When MacVicar eventually reached Dantewada, he was of course unconvinced when the priests at the Danteswari temple denied the practice of human sacrifice, even though they admitted their forefathers may have practised it: 'they were of course the very last men from whom there was any likelihood of arriving at the truth', he wrote in his notes.⁴³

It must be said, that the views of the more experienced agent, John Campbell, were often equally unsubstantiated and inconsistent⁴⁴ MacVicar, however, was recklessly ambitious.

Unfortunately, his investigations were cut short by ill health, soon after a visit to Abujmarh. His last and most hysterical report, reads as if he were aware that not only his health but also his career were slipping away from him. Referring again to the case of a kidnap victim, supposedly intended as a sacrifice and seized with the knowledge of the Diwan Dalganjan Singh, MacVicar reported the Diwan's denial of the allegations against him (three months previously) in the following terms:

I have not the remotest doubt that he was so destined [to be sacrificed]. The whole country believed the same thing. Every witness that dare speak asserted plainly that it was for sacrifice he was carried away... [I]n no part of the district was it attempted to be denied that the system of kidnapping was rife throughout Bustar in order to provide men for Pooja. There is no doubt that last year two victims were crushed to death under the wheels of their idol car, and how much human blood washed to propitiate Dunteshwaree it will be impossible ever to discover. On one occasion, Capt. Hill reports, no less than 27 men were sacrificed at the same time. This was called 'the great sacrifice'.⁴⁵

MacVicar's diary reveals in fact that the Diwan merely questioned the authority of MacVicar to adjudicate in such matters. This probably aggravated rather than helped his case.⁴⁶ It can easily be inferred from MacVicar's observations, however, that the undoubted prevalence of witchcraft, associated in particular with the ceremonies of marriage, as well as rumours of sacrifice, even of black cats, was probably a more potent reality than the practice of sacrifice itself, and that MacVicar had become a victim of this superstition.⁴⁷ This is apparent from the sharp difference between his views, and those of the last Agent, A.C. McNeil.

McNeil was appointed Agent, immediately prior to the abolition of the Meriah Agency, in 1859. Both he and Colonel Glasfurd, the District Commissioner of Sironcha, who conducted an investigation in 1862 to decide on the need for the establishment of a separate police force for Bastar and Kharonde, concluded just a few years later that human sacrifice was not a problem. MacNeil even said that the practice of human sacrifice was absent by then amongst the Khonds (contrary to everything he was reported to have told MacVicar in 1854), although he did say that the lesser crime of '*temple infanticide*', as he described it, was 'universal'.⁴⁸ This view may have been forced upon him by the lack of evidence, although McNeil's reluctance to absolve the Bastaris entirely from the taint of barbarism may have been partly due to the fact that his powers of joint magistrate in the locality (conferred in 1854) depended on one or other of these offences being found in some form or other.⁴⁹

3. Indigenous Political, Symbolic and Ideological uses of sacrifice

Quite apart from evangelical and imperial zealotry as a factor in the mythology of human sacrifice, for many Indians a belief in sacrifice, if not the actuality of it, was useful, perhaps even necessary. To begin with, sacrifice could play an important role in struggles for succession and in local political disputes. For example, in one case detailed in the records of the Nagpur secretariat, the Raja of Karonde, Futy Narian Dev, effected the deposition of the chieftainship of Tooamool and Cassimore, Shri Lutchunsing, and his replacement by his brother Ramchundar Singh in 1853, by resorting to allegations of sacrifice.⁵⁰ This dispute arose from the payment of tribute for the zamindari, which Lutchunsing says was given to his family as dowry, whilst the rajah claimed it was a *jagir*. Ramchundar Singh agreed to pay the tribute and was therefore placed in charge of the chieftainship on the justification that the previous ruler practised human sacrifice. This was unproven, and John Campbell was forced to admit that 'the charges and counter charges of encouraging human sacrifices' were 'mere recrimination'. Ramchundar Singh only took control of Tooamool after burning the capital and fort to the ground. An uprising of the adivasis nonetheless still threatened, and Campbell was therefore persuaded to effect the restoration of the previous ruler, Lutchunsing, after the detention of his brother in Nagpur.

It is apparent that allegations of sacrifice could also play a part in power struggles between the Diwan and Pargana Majhis of Bastar State, or alternatively between the Diwan and the Raja. In regard to the former witness, the oral testimony of Eyar Mohamed Khan of Jagdalpur concerning the first fully documented kidnap victim is most revealing:

Offerings of human beings were made formerly. It was a servant to the Raja Mahipal Deo who was grandfather to the present Raja, during his time once in every three years, the great Poojah was celebrated to the devota, Danteshwara, when five or 600 goats, 400 or 500 buffaloes are offered, then I heard that during the night the three or four men are offered also, but this I have not seen with my eyes. About this time for the Poojah in all the frontier villages of other districts bordering on this district, men would be robbed and brought to this place for the Poojah. But as the victims were many, and the rumour in consequence generally spread abroad, it was known at Nagpur, and the Raja was sent for to that place, and orders were issued to prevent the future sacrifice of human beings, and a Mochilka taken from him. ... It was then that guards were stationed as Jagannath and at Dantewada, and a manager to report affairs to Nagpur. Although all this had been done, the seizing of human beings was carried on every year, and when strangers could not be procured, there would be a degree of agitation from fear of kidnapers in the villages of the district. Last year Dalganjan Singh returned from Tooamool to this place, and after a stay of about two months the following case occurred: a

Soonda's son-in-law of Dhumpoonjea, formerly a resident of Jeypore and of about 16 or 18 years old was one night robbed from his village by some people of the village of Rokkapoul, Thoongapoul, and Joongahanee in the month of Jaisht (May and June). He was taken away and secreted in the jungle near a river when this young man fortunately extricated himself and ran away to his village where he gave all the information of his capture, and as he knew some of the names of the kidnapers mentioned them to Dachin Majee, the chief of his village. Dachin Majee collected some of his people and went at night to the three villages of the kidnapers and seized five men whom he confined. Dalganjan Singh Lal Sahib hearing this sent for Dachin Majee etc. but they would not come and sent a message saying that the Lal Sahib had only to do with him in matters connected with revenue, which he would readily obey, but for his seizing and killing people of his village to attend on that account they would not obey. The Lal Sahib, finding that they would not, deputed some of his people to the villages neighbouring to the Majee's, who by good means through the villagers induced Dachina Majee, Soomar Majee etc to attend. On arrival of these before him they were immediately placed in strict confinement and Dachina Mejee and Somae Majee were fettered. The Panneen hearing all this wrote to Raipure and it is said that instructions were received to send these prisoners to that place for investigation. Eight days before this event occurred, at cultivator at Kcokopoul was seized by 10 or 12 men, but on his making a loud voice, the people of his village ran to his assistance. The kidnapers immediately decamped. At this time there was a great stir in all the country, the people of many villages entertained the greatest fear from been seized by kidnapers and at night all the males of the villages would be armed and be watchful. In these days a complaint was preferred by a Soondev of what village I do not know, to the Lal Sahib that his two sons while ploughing fields were seized and taken away by somebody and what had become of them he did not know. The Lal Sahib became enraged, and drove him away saying that as he did not catch those who caught his sons he had no business to come before him thereby disgracing him. The Soondev returned much downhearted at the conduct of the Lal Sahib. Reports of people being kidnapped not been taken notice of by the Rajah, the people of the country consider that it is he that require human beings for the Poojah, and found it not beneficial bringing their losses of human beings before him. It is also said that the Lal Sahib departs particular individuals for the express purpose of kidnapping human beings for the Pujjah, but to test it, it is impossible. The Kokapaul and adjoining villages about seven or eight in number do not paid any tax to the sircar and the Raj is only supplied with wood when he requires it, as these are the only villages excused taxation, it would appear and it is expressed as an indulgence by the Rajah, for the express purpose of kidnapping. The chief Davota of the Raj is 'Danteshwara' before whom for a length of time human beings are sacrificed, to omit this sacrifice now would be a very great difficulty.⁵¹

In this case, Datchena Majee may have been imprisoned by the Diwan not for alleging his complicity in the seizing of a 'Soonda's son-in-law', as is stated, but for undertaking a reprisal raid on a neighbouring village. Datchena Majee then further defied the Diwan's authority by saying that he and others were responsible to the Diwan for the payment of revenue and for nothing else, doubtless thereby making retaliation inevitable.

On the other hand, mysteriously, the Diwan, Lal Dalgangan Singh, and he alone, is said to have officiated at ceremonies at Dantewada, suggesting that he might have been practising

a form of human sacrifice either on the behalf or in order to subvert the authority of the young (16 year old) Raja, Bhairamdeo, who has acceded to the throne in 1853. All of the witnesses,⁵² including the victim himself, spoke of the prevalence of the myth and/or the revival of the practice itself. The testimony of the kidnap victim, Biswanath of Korkopoul of Bastar, is as follows:

In the month of Jaist/May and June/ name of day or date of month I do not know, one morning 2 hours after sunrise about 200 yards from my village of Korokopaul, I was ploughing by myself my fields, which are situated in an easterly direction from my village when two tall and able men, apparently of the Oriya caste came, from I do not know, one of them caught me on the back of my waist and the other by my shoulder – when I asked them why they seized me and they replied in the ‘Banthee’ language that as you have eaten well and as don’t you have plenty of blood in your body, we shall therefore give you to the Davota. Hearing these words, I became greatly afraid that my life would be lost in this manner, I prayed to my God and cried aloud and fear immediately subsided and having wrestled with those who had hold of me, I extricated myself and laid hold of the staff with which I drove my bullocks and struck one of the men when 10 or 12 able men who had escorted themselves in the jungle ran from it to seize men, whereupon I threatened them with a loud voice, that if they came near me I would kill them with the Tangee which I took from my waist and shook at them, they therefore stood aloof, the people of my village hearing my voice ran towards me and the people that endeavoured to seize me decamped..

Q: Why did they catch hold of you?

A: To offer me to the ‘Devota’

Q: To what Devota and by whose order were you seized?

A: The Davota who requires to eat human beings is the ‘Dantewara’ for whom they seized me, and I must have been seized by order of the rulers of the country.

Q: Do Rulers of this District at times seize people for sacrifice?

A: I have heard so from sensible people of the District that the rulers are of this practice. ...

Q: In this District, after you were caught, were any other person caught?

A: Eight days having elapsed after I was caught was a man caught at the Gamal village.

Q: In what year in what month was the festival celebrated to ‘Danteswara’

A: Month Ashada / June and July

Q: At what period generally is the festival celebrated of offering of human beings?

A: In the month Palgun and Ashad, the festival taken place, but when human offerings are made I do not know. In the Dussera festivals in Ghyatrom month, the festival is celebrated in the fort.⁵³

A common feature throughout these testimonies is that the alleged sacrifices were always said to be committed at night and in secret. Why this should be so is difficult to say: the implication is always that it was because they were illegal: but then who was there to object? A more likely explanation is that any form of tribal sacrifice would be considered

shameful and un-Hindu by Brahmins at the Rajahs courts (animal sacrifices take place in the forest and away from the temple in present day dussehra ceremonies). Or perhaps it was because they did not really happen at all.

The 'Lal Sahib' (Dalganjan Singh) was said to have been in dispute with the Raja 'Macpaul Deo' in 1849, six years before MacVicar's (1855) report, and was alleged then also to have carried out a human sacrifice at Dantewara.⁵⁴ The actual names of the Rajas at that time were Mahipaldeo (1800-1842) and Bhoopaldeo (1842-1853). Those complaining to MacVicar in 1855 said that once more the Lal had taken to 'sacrificing men instead of animals'.⁵⁵ With considerable imagination (and casting doubt on the veracity of some of his evidence), MacVicar described his investigations as follows:

My suspicions were very naturally awakened by the strange way in which answers were given, 'I know nothing', was the fancied reply, 'but ask so and so, he or she can tell you'. Thus we were handed from one to another until our different scraps of information resulted in this: that human beings were offered in sacrifice, that there was a class of men who made these victims, and that they did so by order of the Raja. Lal Sahib is always meant, though the Rajah's name is used.⁵⁶

The wiliness of the Diwan could of course have derived from his innocence. Then again, the Lal Sahib may have gained access to some of the witnesses to dissuade them from giving evidence - quite sensibly.⁵⁷ It is certainly clear from his views on the Hill Marias of the Abujmarh tract that he was happy to dissociate himself from his subjects whenever he feared they may cause him trouble.

The Lal Sahib told me how they were in the last state of barbarism, perfectly naked and beyond any man's control, that they would permit no-one into their fastnesses and would pay no tribute. When I asked him if he had ever seen any of them he answered, 'no, who would go near such savages'.

On 9th Feb. 1854, MacVicar reported an encounter with the chiefs of Kattupandee. This account suggests that the Diwan may indeed have carried out a sacrifice, or at least claimed to do so, for political reasons:

The chief of this old fort paid their respects; they stated that there were seven paiks stationed there. They do not know of the sacrifice of human beings, animals alone are sacrificed and have been offered for many years. On being questioned regarding the abduction of a man from Bagodery by Biswasserar Mazees and others for the purpose of sacrifice, they said it was true and that the man was killed, but whether as a sacrifice or not they did not know; it occurred nearly three years ago. The mazee paid a fine for having taken away

and killed the man. There were great rumours of the Lall sahib, on his return from Nagpur having ordered men to be seized for sacrifice, but they did not know if it was true or not.

No-one was taken away from Kootapandee after more conversation, [but] a proclamation was given to the chiefs and its contents made known, prohibiting, by order of government and under the severest penalties, the sacrifice of human beings under any pretext whatsoever. All were then dismissed.⁵⁸

On this occasion, the Raja of Bastar ordered the drawing up of a diplomatic petition (or *urzee*), translated into Persian by one of the Palace secretaries and almost certainly written by Lal Dalganjan Singh, which pleaded the Raja's innocence.

In 1859, the District Commissioner of Raipur reported that there were no sacrifices, but much abuse of the police party and 'newswriter' at Dantewada (including the denial of provisions) by Dalganjan Singh.⁵⁹ The attempts by the British to impose their Police to regulate the custom thus appears to itself have become the cause of dispute, given the implicit and very real threat to the Diwan's authority.

The second case of kidnapping reported to the District Commissioner of Raipur in 1855 was most likely simply an attempt by the supposed victim to escape the custody of the Diwan.⁶⁰ According to Captain Elliot, the D.C. Raipur, his examination of the witnesses revealed the following:

The reason for his [the alleged intended victim Mookond] having been imprisoned by the Rajah, he states, [was] ... adultery with a woman named Dummee, with whom he had fled and lived in Kotepur of Jeypore [in Kotpad?] for one year, and that on his return Lall Dulgunjun Sing had imprisoned him on the complaint of the husband of Dummee. No fine was taken from him, but the sepoy of the guard beat him and nobody interfered, so that when he came out of the jail one day to cook his food (he) ran to where government thannah is, where he claimed protection... no-one ever threatened or said that he would be sacrificed to the goddess, nor did he ever make such a statement.⁶¹

The D.C. Raipur himself doubted the authenticity of the accusations made, although the police party (all Hindus, with a Brahmin newswriter) to whom the victim fled, reported that his fear was of being made a sacrifice. This was quite contrary to what the victim himself said to the District Commissioner, stating that he only feared being 'beaten up' - a case perhaps of the police being overzealous in an effort to perpetuate their jobs.⁶²

The final case, of which details are available in the records of the Nagpur secretariat, was reported in 1886 and seems to have been the most politically motivated. It is also the most celebrated and detailed, since the case proceeded as far as the High Court in Raipur, where the prosecution's case was to collapse ignominiously. The Case began with a reported kidnapping of one Jadik, whose family reported his disappearance to the authorities:

Musamat Kandri (widow of Jadik): I am certain that my husband was not eaten by a tiger, nor was he drowned. I think that he was carried off to the deo. Ever since I can remember I have heard of the Melliahs of Kachrapati and Baugpali; they catch people and take them to Dantawara.

Kula (son of Jadik): I do not know how my father was lost. He certainly was not eaten by a tiger, nor was he drowned. He may have been seized by some one, but how can I know this?

Sukra Parja: At the time I could not imagine how he (Jadik) was lost, but afterwards I heard that the Kachrapati Melliahs go out to catch men, and I suspected that they must have caught Jadik.

Karanji Parja: He (Jadik) was certainly not drowned or eaten by a tiger. If he had been, we should have found some trace of him. I have heard of the Kachrapati Melliahs since my childhood. They catch people for sacrifices at Dantewada.⁶³

A number of other disappearances were reported and the Political Agent, H.H. Priest, proceeded to Dantewada to investigate. Soon after arriving he was able to obtain from Munda Pundari, the chief priest, a graphic description of a sacrifice in 1876, which he said was carried out upon the orders of the Rajah and Jia, a local zamindar. Jia himself admitted to the political agent that Lal Dalganjan Singh, the previous Diwan, had sacrificed an Oriya man. Later on he retracted this claim, insisting that sacrifices had not occurred since 1842, and that in the present case he was merely repeating the testimony of others because it was 'expected'. The names of various kidnapers were mentioned, and when seized, were told by the Jeypore police to admit to kidnapping for the purpose of sacrifice, or otherwise (amongst other things) they would be hanged.

A case was ultimately brought in the High Court in Raipur against Sham Sundar Jia, the local Zamindar, but it fell apart under the overwhelming evidence of coercion⁶⁴ There was indeed evidence of torture of the prosecution's witnesses, but this only came out once the case came to trial.⁶⁵

When Ramchander [the key witness amongst the alleged kidnapers] was examined in this court he said:

' I do not know about "Melias". I do not know if they seize people. I have never seen them do so nor have I ever heard of their doing so. ... I did write

before that “Melias” seize men for their sacrifice at Dantiwara but that is not true. The fact is that from the time I came from my village I have acted as I was told to do by Raghunath Manji. he said that unless we said that sacrifices were made of human beings, and people seized, that we should be beaten, so I was in fear, and said what I said from fear of being beaten. It is not true. I know nothing of “Melias” really, or of victims being seized. Raghunath impressed on me there was a gallows ready at Kotpad for those who denied knowing anything.....I was never ordered by the Rajah to seize a victim. I said so because I was pressed to name the Rajah by Raghonath, who declared that unless one of us named the Rajah we would all be kept in confinement.'

The second witness, Raghonath Manji, when examined said, ' I wrote what I did from fear. It is not true. I was very badly treated by the Jeypore police. I was taken from my village to a Sahib in Nagarnar, and after that I was raced with a horse through rice fields and taken to Kotpad. There in his tent the Jeypur Saib [Inspector] threatened and pushed me and had me taken away to the thana, where I was kept tied up for four days, being only loosened when necessary and for my meals. I was ironed and hand-cuffed, a stick was passed through my legs, and my hair was tied to a post from behind. On the fourth day I was shown a gallows and told I would be hung if I did not speak out. After this I was taken to the Political Agent. I said nothing to him of what had been done to me. He did not ask me and I was under fear then. I did speak to Ramchandar as he says: I said that we should mention the Rajah's name, or we would not get off. I mentioned certain men as seizers. I cannot say why. ... I never heard the name of Jadik. I never saw him. I mentioned the name to the Political Agent out of my head. I never made any man over to the accused at Dantiwara. What I said about this is quite false. I have said so in fear. I said whatever came into my head. I was about a month in Kotpad.'

Another witness, Kana said:

‘I denied all knowledge of human sacrifices being made. Then the Inspector showed me a pole in the ground with a cloth at the top of it., and told me that if I did not speak out and say all I knew I would be hanged on that pole at 9 o'clock that night. I got thoroughly alarmed. I then said whatever the Inspector wanted and told him what was untrue. ...My detailed narrative is based on what the Jeypore Inspector had us all tutored to say at Kotpad.. He had got hold of Matha and Marka Katiar [also] and they made a detailed statement of what was done at Dantiwara on occasions of human sacrifices, and what we were all to say in regard to specific cases. We all heard this and decided to say the same.’

Even the chief priest, Munda Pundari, who claimed he had conducted the sacrifices said that his victims were actually goats, and occasionally buffaloes, and that he had said they were human beings since everyone insisted this was so. ‘If I had made any denial before, I had no hope of it being listened to’, he told the court.

Clearly the confessions had been assembled by the Jeypore police, with the assistance of a large measure of coercion, but with what motive? Was it merely a case of overzealousness? A key factor in the trial, arguably was the place in which the offences originated. It was

alleged by the Jeypore police that victims were kidnapped in the Kotpad taluqa, and carried off to Bastar for sacrifice. This was probably not a coincidence, since Kotpad was a disputed territory.

The dispute between Bastar and Jeypore dated from a succession dispute in 1774, when assistance was rendered to the successful claimant by the Jeypore Raja. Although control of the territory was then ceded to Jeypore by way of thanks, the Bastar rajas later claimed that this done under duress, that it was merely a zamindari, and that the sovereignty remained theirs. In return they demanded an annual tributes of Rs. 17,000, which the Jeypore Raja refused to pay. One might speculate that a motive for raiding by Bastar into Jeypore therefore existed, as well as a motive for attempts by the Jeypore raja to make false accusations against the authorities in Bastar in an effort to discredit them. By the 1880s the Jeypore state had come under the control of the Madras Presidency, but it is reasonable to assume that the influence of the Jeypore raja himself over the local police, was considerable. There were rivalries too between the Central Provinces and Madras police and political authorities. It hardly seems a coincidence therefore that this disputed border area figured so largely in allegations and counter allegations over the years.

The Nagpur government's enquiry into the 1886 'Jia' case ultimately turned into an enquiry into the enquiry itself, with H.H. Priest, the political agent, attempting in an official report to excuse his own naivety and that of his subordinates. Naivety there certainly was, and in retrospect, the original accusations of the family of the disappeared 'Jadik' can be seen to have been not only equivocal, but to have shown very clearly the impact of rumour.

4. The Power of Rumour

Rumour was perhaps the most important factor in all of the cases above mentioned, and was indeed a potent currency, capable of purchasing any number of advantages for those involved. In 1886, there were rumours of a planned sacrifice, rumours which had clearly been circulating since 1883 when a similar 'disappearance' was reported⁶⁶. Lal Kalendra Singh was then ordered to Nagpur, after which, more rumours followed. Rumours arose again in 1886 because the naming ceremony of the new Raja was due to take place. Whatever the truth of the matter, the impression undoubtedly seems to have persisted in the minds of the population that sacrifices normally accompanied state events. This may be either a cause or a consequence also of their involvement in succession disputes. We cannot be sure, of course, that there were succession disputes at this time - the Raja himself

normally officiated in the puja ceremonies at Dantewara, but what would be more natural than for the Diwan (a relative) to officiate during the minority of the ruler, as occurred in 1908? However, this does not explain the involvement of the diwan in the ceremonies in 1883, when the Raja himself was ageing, but adult. Likewise note the following rumour, reported by the wife of Gopal Das to McNeill in 1855 in a village near Dantewada:

About six years ago the Lal Sahib was on bad terms with the Macpaul Deo, the then Rajah, and in consequence he ordered the sacrifice of the man at Duntewadah, when there was a rebellion in the country. My husband told me this and that is the way I know it.⁶⁷

Clearly there were internal political dynamics here, which cannot be ignored.

Paradoxically, human sacrifice may have become more widespread as a result of British interference and enquiries. Thus the Lal Dalganjan Singh was rumoured to have carried out sacrifices after returning from his highly publicised visit to Nagpur in 1842, where he had been called to answer for rumours that sacrifices had been taking place. It is possible that the issue 1850's proclamation by John MacVicar 'to all the chiefs' calling upon them to give up the practice, served only to confirm in their minds that the alleged sacrifices had indeed actually occurred. Nothing could be guaranteed to give rumours more credence than a government proclamation, especially since evidence or witnesses of the alleged sacrifices could never be traced.

Conclusion

Rumours of sacrifice take many shapes and forms and can be accounted for in a variety of ways. It is easy to dismiss them entirely as myth, as fabulous examples of judicial error in the manner of inquisitional reports of the middle ages, or as examples of a conflict of cultures, perceptions, and discourses (as commonly used to be said of the opium wars in China). It is satisfying, moreover, to mourn the loss of a tribal culture, in which the idea of human sacrifice had a meaningful role to play in religious ritual (Padel, 1995), rare or non-existent, but perhaps comparable in symbolic importance to that of crucifixion and martyrdom amongst the early Christians. It would be a mistake however to deny altogether the political economy and instrumentality in the events that unfolded in Bastar, at least, in the nineteenth century. Myths of sacrifice were clearly perpetuated and elaborated by both British officials, missionaries, the rulers of Bastar and neighbouring states, and their subjects themselves, for a variety of reasons and motives, as continues to be the case to this

day. Whilst judicial proceedings are but interpretations, the same can be said of many sources employed by anthropologists and historians, no matter how empirically 'pure' they may appear. The bulk of the evidence quoted here was unpublished, and unavailable to a wider audience. The hints at conspiracy therein could simply be a mirage created by the English judicial method and the interrogations of officials. . Not all shared the same preconceptions and foreknowledge, nor did the events described occur within the same time frame. Perhaps therefore, the encounter was not entirely structured by colonial discourse. Individual volition had a role to play. The Lal Sahib and others may have exploited the idea of sacrifice to their own ends, as some at the time indeed alleged: to do down their enemies whilst winning favour amongst their followers, some of whom sincerely believed in the sacrificial rite. By echoing that most heinous of sins in the minds of good Christians, by inventing the possibility of perdition, Bastar's very own 'Black Hole', the local rulers may well have attempted, more than once, to turn the tables on their colonial adversaries and to manipulate the British presence for their own purposes. To some extent they succeeded. Although, Lal Kalendra Singh was for a while banished from the state, compensation was received from Jeypore in exchange for the Kotpad taluka as part of the British settlement of this dispute. Some respect at least for the autonomy of Bastar persisted, and the British did not ultimately take complete control of the state for another fifty years. During this time, not a single victim or perpetrator of sacrifice was ever identified, sentenced or imprisoned, despite the very best efforts of British officials, who themselves sought to benefit from the rumours, allegations and events.

In an article by Robin Law (1985) on human sacrifice in Dahomey, Asante and Benin in West Africa, it is persuasively argued that human sacrifice was integral to state ritual in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and indeed seems to have increased during and immediately after the abolition of slavery. Similar examples are to be found in Eastern and Southern Africa, victims sometimes being killed by the bare hands of the king.⁶⁸ The occasion for such sacrifices were the investitures and funerals of state dignitaries, the greatest number of sacrifices usually occurring upon the death of a king and upon the investiture of his successor. The victims were often captive prisoners of war, of whom there were many. Occasionally the king himself might be the victim following some great calamity or at the close of a prescribed period of rule. It was widely believed that failure to carry out an appropriate number of sacrifices would bring ill fortune upon the monarch or his successor, but with few exceptions the rituals seem to have been more practical than religious in origin, born out of a desire to instil fear into foes and subjects alike. Whether or not this has any relevance to the case of Bastar it is hard to say, but Hermann Kulke in *The*

Cult of Jagannath & the Regional Tradition of Orissa (1978) argues that the British were well aware that 'whoever holds the shrine of Jagannath holds Orissa' (the words of Richard Wellesley). For this reason the British made various diplomatic attempts to take over the Puri temple complex from Raghuji Bhonsle, the Raja of Nagpur, between 1765 and 1803. Missionaries too perceived the importance of such shrines. J.C. Peggs, for one, was personally convinced that 'a blow at idolatry here, will prove a blow at the root' of Hinduism. He failed to win any converts at Puri, but later campaigned successfully against the Pilgrim tax and British support for Jagannath and other temple complexes. Overall, Kulke concludes that the effect of these campaigns merely heightened the fame of Jagannath and its 'first servitor', the Raja of Puri, especially when the whole matter of temple dues went to court in the 1880's. The same logic here could certainly be applicable to the case of Bastar.

One thing is certain: as in the myths of cannibalism described by Arens (1979), not a single bone was ever discovered in, or anywhere near, the shrine of Danteswari in Bastar. Purported victims always seemed to escape, and they and their kidnapers then to disappear, whilst tales of the sacrificial rite could never be found at less than third hand, at best. In this, the human sacrifice scares of Bastar are comparable to the witchcraft crazes of late medieval Europe. As analysed by historians,⁶⁹ these were not simple cases of hysteria or misunderstanding. There was a political economy to them: an attempt by the Church to reassert its authority in the wake of the reformation, not only over the localities, but in reaction to the growing influence of the bureaucratic state. They were also an attempt to restore patriarchal hierarchy as Europe recovered from the plague, as rural economies began to prosper, and as gender balances shifted. There was a secondary side to them as well: allegations of witchcraft, like any other, could be manipulated by individuals to their advantage. In the process they asserted their own agency and resisted becoming either the victims or villains in the representations of others.

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NOTES

The bulk of the evidence is drawn from Judicial Compilation no. 164 of 1851 to 1870: 'Human Sacrifice' [hereafter JDHSC] and a Foreign/Judicial Compilation on Human Sacrifice of 1886 [hereafter FJHSC 1886], found in the Madhya Pradesh Record Room in Nagpur. The court proceedings and evidence quoted therein was originally given in either local Gond dialects, Halbi, Hindi or Oriya and is mediated by official interpreters or translators in court.

¹ J.T. Blunt, 'Narrative of a route from Chinargur to Yentrageodum...1795', in *Early European Travellers in the Nagpur Territories*, (Nagpur: Govt. Press, 1930).

² Dr. Henry Spry firmly believed that in the 'wild and unreclaimed hill jungles' of central India '...they sacrifice and eat their fellow-creatures. The fact of their doing so is so well attested that there can be no doubt of its correctness': H. Spry, *Modern India*, vol. II, (London, 1837), p. 138.

³ NAI, Survey of India memoirs and field books: M320, Elliot Mission; M272, Route from Cuttack to Nagpur and thence to Hoosingabad, by Wm. Campbell 1778; M163, Route from Nagpur to Cuttack 1782, by Thomas (diary of events). See also C.U. Wills, *British relations with the Nagpur State in the 18th century*, (Nagpur, 1926), which contains extensive quotations from Survey records and embassies of this period.

⁴ IOR (Map Room), Routes in the Central Provinces, MSS 36: Report on the route from Chunargarh to Amarkant by Lts. Waugh and Renny (1833).

⁵ R. Jenkins, *Report on the Territories of the Rajah of Nagpore*, (Calcutta, 1827), p.29. Jenkins also noted that 'the different tribes divide themselves, like their Hindu neighbours, into twelve and a half

castes; and these, again, branch out into subdivisions, denominated according to the number of the Penates, or household gods' (p.30).

⁶ See Jenkins, *Report on the Territories of the Rajah of Nagpore*, p. 140 et seq. Apparently the Gond Raja still gave the Tika, or mark of royalty, to the Bhonsla princes on their accession to the Gaddi (or throne) and was entitled to put his seal on certain revenue papers.

⁷ P. Vans Agnew, *Report on the Subah or Province of Chhattisgarh*, written in 1820, (Nagpur, 1920), p.5.

⁸ See Oddie 1995. J.H. Powell in 'Hook-Swinging in India', *Folklore*, xxv, June 1914, whilst writing about the Santhals in Chota Nagpur, is the sole author to have speculated about links between hook swinging and human sacrifice.

⁹ Oddie, 1995, p. 61.

¹⁰ V. Elwin, *Maria, Murder and Suicide* (London: OUP, 1943)

¹¹ JDHSC no. 1448: Extract from letter of Capt. MacVicar, offg. Agent in the hill tracts of Orissa to the GOI, 10th April 1855. This was the description of 'Lal Sahib', Diwan of the kingdom of Bastar. For the description of Capt. J. MacVicar himself see Appendix 1.

¹² Nandini Sundar, 'Divining Evil: the State and Witchcraft in Bastar', *Gender, Technology & Development*, 5 (3), 2001, p. 432. The fascinating examples of witchcraft accusations given by Sundar are (unfortunately for the purposes of this essay) all contemporary. Popoff's 1980 account is unpublished and the matter of Muria Gond beliefs and attitudes to death, remain a matter in need of further anthropological research.

¹³ I was fortunate to witness such an Anga Deo festival in Parasgaon in 1986.

¹⁴ The king was restored to the Palace the next day by the tribals according to Popoff (1980) three days or more later according to J.C.K. Menon's description of Dussehra in the 1930s: Hyde Papers, Cambridge Centre for South Asian Studies, Box 8, file C.

¹⁵ Alfred Gell, 'Exalting the king and obstructing the state: a political interpretation of royal ritual in Bastar District, central India' in A. Gell, *The art of anthropology* (1997 & 1999).

¹⁶ Nandini Sundar, 'Debating Dussehra and reinterpreting rebellion in Bastar district, central India', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 7, no. 1 (March 2001), pp. 19-35.

¹⁷ Singh, 1995; Fuller, 1988.

¹⁸ JDHSC no. 83, no. 83, Lt. C. Elliott to Capt. E.K. Elliot, Offg. Commissioner Nagpur, Balllonde 13 June 1855.

¹⁹ Muriah, Maliahs, Meriah: worryingly the word 'Meriah' seems to have had a number of other uses as well, and may have been derived simply from the name of the so-called 'Muriahs' – one of the tribes with which the practice was associated. According to Gautham Bhadra, Meriah meant 'spy' or go-between in the language of the Kols of Chota Nagpur – see R. Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II* (Delhi, 1988), p. 261, whilst many used the word 'Meriah' or 'Melliah' to describe not the tribe but the kidnapped sacrificial victim. See also A.C. McNeill on 'Joonas' below fn.48. According to Campbell, there was also a large class of captured prisoners, who became domestic serfs, many of them being ultimately absorbed into the families of their owners, in the manner described by Indrani Chatterjee (1999). These serfs Campbell called 'Possiapoos' and were never, he says, used as sacrifices. Overall there appears to be a number of confusions between anthropology and linguistics in this period, as well as disturbing instances of dialectics between the two.

²⁰ JDHSC no. 4621: J.W. Dalrymple Undersec. to GOI to Capt. E.K. Elliot, Commissioner Nagpore, 24 October 1854: informs that the agents are vested with joint magisterial powers 'as in the case of thuggee officers' with respect to Meriah sacrifice and female infanticide. For good measure the officers also reported on cases of Sati.

²¹ Oddie (1995) offers several examples of ambitious DC's stepping beyond the bounds of policy (and the law) and attempting to prohibit hook-swinging within their districts, only to be restrained by their superiors. It was not until the later 19th century that more radical westernised Indian elites began to side with missionary opinion to pressurise the government to ban the practice altogether.

²² William Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, (London, 1915); *Narrative by Major General John Campbell of his Operations in the Hill Tracts of Orissa for the suppression of human sacrifice* (London, 1864), p. 158-160.

²³ J. MacVicar described the Rajah of Jeypore as 'a deaf, imbecile old man quite incapable of taking any part in administrative duties and completely at the mercy of the men who surround him.' (JDHSC no. 1429, letter no. 144 to GOI, 16 Feb. 1855).

²⁴ JDHSC no. 1071: extract from a letter from the Offg. Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa, 22 Jan. 1855, no.14.

²⁵ JDHSC no. 50: Capt. MacVicar to Govt. of India [GOI], Camp Godavary 5 March 1855. MacVicar wrote: 'I am confident that the public removal of the Laull Sahib will be attended with the happiest results. The country will rejoice...'

²⁶ See J. Majeed, 'James Mill and the *History of British India* and Utilitarianism as a Rhetoric of Reform', *Modern Asian Studies*, 24, 2 (1990); Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992).

²⁷ JDHSC no. 3671: Extract from letter of Offg. Agent in the Hill tracts of Orissa, 21 May no. 86 of 1855, para 17. 'MacVicar wrote 'I believe there is nothing good about this man... Laull Sahib is the very head and front of the offending as regards human sacrifice. He is superstitious to the last degree and confides in the power as he fears the wrath of his idol god Duteswaree and thinks no harm can befall him if that divinity shields and protects him. To secure that protection no price too high no sacrifice too precious, hence human blood has never ceased to flow...'

²⁸ JDHSC no. 50, Capt. MacVicar to GOI, 5 March 1855, Camp Godavary, para 23.

²⁹ Elliott report, W. Huber, MA thesis, p. 104.

³⁰ JDHSC no. 2491: extract from the Proceedings of the Governor General in Council, Home Dept. 18 December 1861.

³¹ JDHSC no. 123, J. Strachey, Judicial Commissioner to Sec. to Chief Commissioner Central Provinces [CCCP], 29 Jan. 1863: 'Mariah sacrifice is stated to have existed in the Bustar dependency many years ago but from oft repeated enquiries... the practice would appear to have ceased'; JDHSC no. 466, Correspondence relating to a murder supposed to have been a sacrifice and reports from DCs: Lt. Col. Insp. Gen. of Police to CCCP Nagpore 17 Feb. 1868: 'The absence of all suspicion or evidence.. that sacrifices are still practiced in any part of the C.P. leads me to believe that they are not practiced and that the case which occurred in Upper Godavary last year should be regarded as an isolated incident..'; Ibid. 14th April 1868: CCCP to Sec. to CCCP: 'It will be as well in the report [to the GOI] not to dwell very much on the particular case which gave rise to this correspondence, but rather to point out that there is a strong mass of testimony... to show that Human Sacrifices are at least not common to any degree'.

³² JDHSC no. 466: CCCP Nagpore to GOI, 13th April 1868.

³³ See Wright (1863) and Strack (1909). Randle Jackson, *Substance of the speech of Randle Jackson, Esq. at a general court of the proprietors of East-India stock, on Wednesday, March 28th, 1827, on the following motion; "that this court, taking into consideration the continuance of human sacrifices in India, is of opinion that, in the case of all rites or ceremonies involving the destruction of life, it is the duty of a paternal government to interpose for their prevention; and therefore recommends to the Honourable Court of Directors to transmit such instructions to India as that court may deem most expedient for accomplishing this object, consistent with all practicable attention to the feelings of the natives"* (London: J. L. Cox, 1827).

³⁴ See Oddie (1995), chapter five.

³⁵ The Muria Gond institution of the ghotul, the dormitory club for adolescent teenagers in which they learn to become independent of their parents and enjoy their first experiences of sex (studied in S. Gell, 1992), continues to excite the imaginations of middle class Hindus, who for more than a century now have wedded themselves (in public at least) to a Victorian ideal of abstinence and sexual restraint.

³⁶ JDHSC no. 404, Commissioner Nagpur Division to Registrar, Judl. Commissioner's Court C.P. 1 July 1867: regarding murder on the tank of a village called Kondapilly.

³⁷ JDHSC no. 466, Lt. Col. Inspector Gen. of Police, 26th Feb. 1868. The same credulous official wrote: 'During my late tour in Bustur [and Jeypore]... I was appraised that after the British raj had taken the territory no human sacrifice has been offered. I was also told that in places where human sacrifice used too prevail now a goat is is dressed up like a woman, and made to walk on his hind legs is thus led up to the sacrificial post and decapitated...'

³⁸ See J.C.K. Menon's account of dussehra from the 1930's, Hyde papers, Cambridge SASC, Box 8, file C.

³⁹ JDHSC no. 1429: J. MacVicar to GOI, Camp Joorapdro, 18 Feb. 1855.

⁴⁰ Republished in a single volume as J. Peggs, *India's Cries to British Humanity* (London, 2nd edn. 1830) pp v-vi.

⁴¹ With his usual confident racism Campbell commented: 'Only let a sharp Hindoo or Mahomedan mind ascertain what kind of information you want, and that it will be for his interest to procure it, and

you may rest satisfied the supply will fully equal the demand' and then explains in detail how, in his view, a junior British official was led completely up the garden path. Of course, opportunistic cunning of this sort was not a 'Hindoo' monopoly, and it is equally possible that in both instances, MacVicar and the official concerned knew precisely what they were doing, and were wilfully naive, secure in the knowledge that any blame for misinformation uncovered would invariably fall on others, whilst any credit would be solely theirs alone. Campbell, *ibid*, p. 161.

⁴² JDHSC no. 1429: Diary of J. MacVicar, entry for 13 Feb. 1855.

⁴³ JDHSC no. 1429: J. MacVicar to GOI, Camp Godavary, 28 May 1855.

⁴⁴ Thus in the Tooamool case (see below fn. 50) Campbell dismisses the accusations of human sacrifice as 'mere recrimination' in a letter to the Nagpur resident of 1 Feb. 1853 but on 15 August describes Tooamool as the only Khond chiefdom he has not visited where human sacrifice is 'now exists' and writes of his desire to visit there.

⁴⁵ JDHSC no. 3671, extract from letter of Offg. Agent in the Hill tracts of Orissa, 21st May 1855. MacVicar was subsequently sent back to Europe on sick leave and A.C. McNeil took charge on Sept. 20th.

⁴⁶ JDHSC no. 1429: Diary of J. MacVicar, entry for 3 Feb. 1855: MacVicar describes the Diwan's denial as follows: 'The Lall Sahib and the Rajah paid a visit to the agent to take leave. Much conversation took place, the Lall Sahib persisted he knew nothing of human sacrifices. He was asked again to explain the seizure of Bisanant and the Saundee but he replied the Kangers who seized them can best tell them why. ... He was told the Kangers had distinctly stated that it was by his order, although they afterwards denied it, why this assertion and this denial? He could not say, but he expressed astonishment that the agent was enquiring into a subject enquired into seven or eight times by Wilkinson, Agnew, etc. and disposed of.... Much other unsatisfactory talk took place touching his relations with Jeypore, and eventually he and the Rajah took leave'.

⁴⁷ JDHSC no. 466. Details of local superstitions are given in letter 1767, 7 Aug. 1867, from DC Bilaspur to Comm. Chattisgarh division: 'From Dhumterry and Rajini I gather that when a tank is formed a pole surmounted by a trident is erected in the centre of the tank and at the bottom of this pole are buried gold or pearls or silver... In Saloda the practice in constructing a new tank or on the water of a tank going bad, is for [a man] to cut his finger and allow the blood which flows to fall into the tank. About Raepore, I am told that a black cat was occasionally offered... The marriage ceremony is the same as that for human beings: the tank is looked upon as the bride and the bridegroom is represented by the statue of a man in wood, silver or gold... Brahmins are feasted for five days. The relatives or friends of the owner are invited and feasted and on the fifth the presiding [priest] "porohit" fixes the horoscope and the "Khumba" or pole is hoisted up and fixed in the centre of the tank... at its base is buried under masonry small images of gold and silver to represent Juchuree and Narayanee while the trident which surmount the pole is the symbol of Mahadeo...'

⁴⁸ JDHSC no. 44: 14 March 1862 Camp Godavary, letter to G.J. Forbes, Agent to the GG. A.C. McNeil described those intended for temple sacrifice as 'Joonas' in Jeypore in 1855. The youthful 'joonas' he encountered he assumed were those intended for sacrifice as no middle-aged 'joonas' (the normal victims) could be found. The account is very bizarre, but upon hearing that allegations were being made, the Raja of Jeypore wisely denied all knowledge and begged that his territory be taken under the 'care and administration' of the Company. Suspicion of any sort of sacrifice in Jeypore seems thereafter to have evaporated.

⁴⁹ Fn. 11.

⁵⁰ JDHSC no. 584 of 1851, Lt. Col. Campbell to C.G. Mansel, Resident Nagpore, 1 Feb. and 5 Feb. 1853.

⁵¹ JDHSC, Off. Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa, 22 Jan. 1855 to GOI, no. 14: Deposition of Eyar Mahomed Khan of Jagdalpur.

⁵² *Ibid*. Depositions of Biswanath of Korhopou, Raghonath Bania, Mohepathee Rao Puneen.

⁵³ *Ibid*. fn. 51: Oriya deposition of Biswanath of Korhopoul. Interesting features in this testimony include the description of Danteshwari 'eating' her victims (as mythologically does Kali), the somewhat sophisticated rendition into English by officials (intended presumably to inspire confidence in the testimony), and the use of dates from the Hindu calendar by someone who was not ostensibly Hindu. Unfortunately in this and all other transcripts we do not have the original vernacular testimony by which to judge the accuracy of the translation.

⁵⁴ JDHSC no. 1429: Diary of J. MacVicar, entry for Feb. 14th, Jugganadpoor (nr. Duntewada): evidence of Manick Das, wife of Gopal Das.

⁵⁵ JDHSC no. 1429: Diary of J. MacVicar, entry for Feb. 3rd, Narainpore: deposition of (Teli?) Dadoo of Byraghur.

⁵⁶ JDHSC, MacVicar to GOI, Camp Godavary 5 March 1855.

⁵⁷ Ditto, para 13: 'Several days after these inconclusive depositions and just as we were making preparations for leaving Jugdalpor the Kanagars to a man retracted all they had sworn to and pleaded ignorance to everything... The last thing Kangar Majee said when taxed with his equivocation was "you know all our circumstances, what can we do"'.
⁵⁸ JDHSC no. 1429: Diary of J. MacVicar, entry for Feb. 9th 1855, Kattupandee: deposition of the chiefs of the fort.

⁵⁹ JDHSC, no. 111 of 1859, Capt. C. Elliot, DC Raipur to G. Plowden, Commissioner, Raipur, 23 June 1859.

⁶⁰ Ibid; also Urzee of Mahipatrow Bhikajee Phurnaveese (sic), Newswriter, Jagdalpur, 25th (March), translated and conveyed by DC Lt. Charles Elliot to Capt. E.R. Elliot, Offg. Commissioner Nagpore, 7 April 1855.

⁶¹ JDHSC, no. 111 of 1859, Capt. C. Elliot, DC Raipur to G. Plowden, Commissioner, Raipur, 23 June 1859 (referring to evidence of Mookoon Poojaree taken in Jagdalpur 19 April 1856).

⁶² There are parallels here with the numerous and probably exaggerated reports of 100's of 'liberated sacrifices' made by John Campbell from Goomssoor in the hill tracts of Orissa in the 1850s.

⁶³ FJHSC 1886 p. 260-261.; Special Report on Alleged Kidnapping of Victims for Human Sacrifice in Bastar, J.W. Chisholm, Commissioner Chhatisgarh Division to CCCP 17.2.1886, Proceedings of Sessions Trial against Sham Sundar Jia of Bastar, para. 81.

⁶⁴ FJHSC p.180, Empress Versus Sham Sundar Jia, Committed by Pandit Waman Rao, Superintendent of Bastar & Magistrate 1st Class, 28/12/1885, Judgment passed by J.W. Chisholm, Commissioner and Sessions Judge, Chhatisgarh, Political Sessions Trial no. 17.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Page 2 of the Judgment lists the evidence of torture.

⁶⁶ FJHSC 1886 p. 261-262, Proceedings of Sessions Trial against Sham Sundar Jia of Bastar, paras. 84-87.

⁶⁷ JDHSC no. 1429: Diary of J. MacVicar, entry for Feb. 14th, Jugganadpoor: evidence of Manick Das, wife of Gopal Das.

⁶⁸ Luc de Heusch (1997).

⁶⁹ Thomas (1973); Harris (1975, 1977); Ankarloo & Henningsen (1990); Larner (1984).