CHAPTER VIII

OTHER MINOR SCHEDULED TRIBES

There are few other tribes in Himachal Pradesh which have been classed as Scheduled Tribes. These are Gujjars, Jad, Lamba and Khempa. Gujjars are generally nomadic and as such have no settled home in any particular part of Himachal Pradesh. However, their concentration is recorded in Chamba, Mandi, Bilaspur, Sirmur and Shimla districts. Jad, Lamba and Khampa are of Tibetan origin and are generally found in Lahul-spiti district and the adjoining areas of the Kinnaur district. Exact tribe-wise population of these communities is not known as these tribes have been clubbed together with Bhots at census enumerations. In their socio-cultural aspect there is not much difference between them and the Bhots. Since these communities have been declared as scheduled tribes by the Act of 1976\(^1\) promulgated under Presidential Order throughout the State, we shall discuss in the following pages about the socio-cultural aspect of their way of life.

The Gujjar Tribe

It is generally held that Gujrat was the original homeland of the Gujjars. The word Gujjar implies a native of Gujrat. Contrary to this view, it may be that the land called Gujrat derived its name from the name of the inhabitants. Gujrat implies "the country or tract of the Gujars." Certain unforeseen reasons made them migrate from Gujarat-Kathiawar to Jammu and Kashmir and later to Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. During the field investigation when a group of Gujjars was asked about their migration, they simply told that their forefathers had come from Gujrat. They, however, could not tell the year when they migrated from their homeland.

Availability of pastures for grazing buffaloes seems to be main reason for Gujjars' migration to Himachal Pradesh. They entered Himachal Pradesh from three different places. Some migrated from Punjab Plains while others came from Jammu and Kashmir. Whereas some nineteen families of Gujjars migrated to Sirmur in

the wake of the royal matrimonial tie between Punchh and Sirmur. Besides these three main directions and sources of Gujjar induction into Himachal Pradesh numerous stray infiltrations went over the generations. At present Gujjar population is scattered almost in every district of Himachal Pradesh. However, they have been concentrated mainly in Chamba, Sirmur, Mandi and Bilaspur districts. At many places they have made their permanent settlements with the help of the State Government.

In Himachal Pradesh some Gujjars are Hindu while other are Muslim by religion. Majority is however, those of Mohammadans. The Hindu Gujjars entered Himachal Pradesh from the neighbouring areas of the plains in isolated and stray migrations and opted for settled lives. Hindu Gujjars are generally found in Mandi and Bilaspur districts. Contrary to this, Muslim Gujjars have first set foot in the princely states of Chamba and Sirmur of that time from Jammu and Kashmir. To the Chamba State they were attracted by the green pastures as in the neighbouring parts of Jammu and Kashmir the

5. Ibid., p. 118.
6. Ibid., p. 124.
grazing resources were inadequate. During field investigation when a group of Gujjars was asked about their place of origin, they replied that their forefathers migrated to Chamba State from Jammu about six generations back. Now these Gujjars have acquired some proprietary and grazing rights over land in Chamba district. Some Muslim Gujjar families also migrated to Sirmur district in the wake of the royal matrimonial tie between Punch and Sirmur.

The Gujjars following settled lives particularly the Hindu Gujjars, have, among them, quite a number of well educated and well placed persons as distinguished from the Muslim Gujjars who lead a nomadic life generally. Majority of the Gujjar population in Himachal Pradesh belongs to the later category numbering about 20,000.²

Muslim Gujjars are sub-divided into two groups—Bhatariye and Bhanariye both do not normally inter-marry. They also have exogamous gotras which indicates that they were originally a hindu population, got converted to Islam during the reign of Aurangzeb.

Majority of Muslim Gujjars lead a nomadic pastoral life moving with the herd of buffaloes from high hills to low hills during winter and from low lands

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to uplands during summer months. They have grazing
rights in forests for which they require a permit.
Since some of them have also been rehabilitated in
colonies, they have taken to other pursuits namely
agriculture, business and service. However, majority
of them still subsist through the sale of milk and
milk products in the nearby towns and thus lead the
life in poverty.

Generally speaking, Gujjars are monogamous,
patrilineal and patrilocal people. Economically
well off tribals have two or more wives in some
cases. Though believing in reality of the blood ties
in the patrilineal line, they neither have any localised
clans nor possess any tendency towards local exogamy
or endogamy. In this sense, the Gujjar tribe can be
described as agamous. The prohibition against clan
endogamy, a special feature of clan customs, is lacking
these days. This may, to some degree, be attributable
to the Islamization of the Gujjars. Islam in fact
permits marriage between cousins of all shades and
degrees. However, among Muslim Gujjars cross-cousin
marriages are performed but parallel cousins do not
inter marry.

8. G.P. Murdock, World Ethnographic Sample,
For the settlement of social and personal disputes the help of the community is taken. Such disputes are never taken to the law courts. They have their own biradari councils to settle any social matter. The parties to such disputes refer the matter to the council. The decision of the biradari council is normally binding on the people.

The Hindu Gujjars usually follow the marriage customs of the locality where they have settled down for some generations. But the marriage is performed within their own community and the gotra exogamy is observed. Marriage of a girl is performed when she attains the age of puberty. Marriage is settled by the parents or guardians through negotiations. When the parties agree to the marriage proposal, betrothal is settled by drinking liquor at the house of the bride's father.

Among the Muslim Gujjars child marriages are common. These are instances of marriages between suckling babies. Parents normally select the brides for their sons. There is no choice or selection of a spouse by the boy or a girl. Thus love marriage is unknown to the tribe. Cases of elopement for marriage
are also not known among the Muslim Gujjars. Bride price is a common practice. It is very difficult to get a good wife unless one pays a heavy amount to the bride's kinsman. However, in some areas this practice is abhorred and condemned. In a regular marriage negotiations for the marriage start invariably from the side of the bridegroom. Some elder member of the family visits the house of the would-be-bride and gets the consent of the girl's parents. After this, a day is fixed for a re-visit when he takes with him ghee, gur or sugar in a quantity according to his means. Generally three or five persons go on this occasion. On this day one ornament and a garment are given to the girl. Some relatives of the girl's parents are also present to whom a feast is given. Sometimes dancing also takes place. This rite is called mangwali. The party returns on the same or the next day according as the distance may suit. After this (on the marrying parties coming of age. If they happen to be minors) a day is fixed for the marriage, in consultation with the maulvi (Muslim priest). This date is made known to the parents of the girl. A day

before marriage, the hands of the bridegroom are smeared with mahndi. This is called the rite of mahndi. The same day mahndi is sent to the girl's parents for smearing her hands. The next day the bridegroom, accompanied by about fifty-sixty persons, mostly on foot, occasionally on horse back or in a palanquin or, sometimes, on the back of a man, starts for the bride's house preceded by tom-toms. The marriage party is not allowed to enter the village until and unless some customary performance, for testing valour and courage of bridegroom's partymen, are not fulfilled by them.

At the outskirts of the village, on the top-end of a tall tree, an aim, called "taman," is set. The bridegroom's party which comes well-equipped with muzzle-loading guns and axes marks its arrival by firing shots in the air when it approaches the village. The party is detained there and challenged to shoot the "taman" before proceeding further.

In the hazy darkness of dusk, young Gujjars aim at the "taman" with all patience and care. Young lads from the bride's party try to distract them. If they fail, they are teased by bride's relations.

Entering the village without hitting the target is forbidden and to complete the ritual many
gunmen from both sides set themselves to shoot it. The atmosphere becomes heavy with suspense. All eyes are centred at the "taman." Just at the twinkling many guns go off together. The "taman" is hit. The young and the old cry out with joy. Random shots are fired. Axes are hoisted in the air.

The bridegroom and his party are then escorted to the bride's house where, another ordeal awaits them—lifting of weights. Cylindrical stubs called "mugdars" are rolled into the field. The bridegroom's companions are called to the weight-lifting contests. Young people tighten their grips on the mugdars' and the 'mugdars' are ejected into the air. Every one tries his strength in many odd ways until all are totally exhausted. The party is then received by the bride's father and other elderly persons. A feast is given at night by the girl's parents.

Before the performance of the nakkah (wedding), another rite known to be haq-mehar is performed. The guardian of the bride asks the bridegroom or his father or his caretaker to give haq-mehar in the form of money amounting to Rs. 36-6-9 (Rs. 36.42) in the least. It may go up to any amount, but the Muhammedans
in Chaurah have not yet exceeded three hundred rupees in this payment. In lieu of this cash payment an ornament of equal value may be demanded. The **hag mehar** is either paid then and there or a bond is executed by the bridegroom to make this payment later. Resort may be had to the courts for the enforcement of this payment if the bridegroom fails to make the same. If the **hag-mehar** is paid in the form of ornaments, the ornaments are given to the bride to put on while, in the case of money, it remains with her father till she becomes capable of taking charge of it. Even if a girl divorces her husband or leaves him for good, the **hag-mehar** remains her property.

The next morning, **nakkah** takes place in the presence of the **mulvi**. The bridegroom puts on **sehra** (veil) and **kalig** (crest). After **nakkah**, again a **dham** (feast) is given to the marriage party and thereafter the party proceeds homeward. Generally, the bride is brought by more or less the same mode of conveyance as was adopted in carrying the bridegroom. On return a feast is given to the friends, relations and those persons who come from the bride's side. The latter are generally below twenty in number. In the feast, a goat or a sheep is killed if the economic position of the family permits. On the last day of the
feast i.e. on the second day of return of the bridegroom to his house, tambol (cash presents) is given by the relatives to the bridegroom. The tambol consists of money, ranging between twenty-five naya paise and ten rupees. A list of the receipts is prepared, which serves as a record not only of the money received on the occasion but also of the persons making the gifts as also the amounts gifted, to serve as a broad guide for return-gifts on the occasion of marriages in which the givers of the gifts will have their turn as the receivers. After about five or seven days of the marriage, the rite of herferi (the return visit of the couple to the bride's parents) takes place when the bride and the bridegroom go to the house of the bride.

Bata-Sata or marriage by exchange is also common among Gujjar. But this type of marriage is practised only when mutual convenience dictates it. Thus in one such marriage Zahur Baksh could marry Rehman's sister in exchange of his sister to Rehman. Widow remarriage is also permissible. 10

Among Muslims divorce is the prerogative of the husband. A husband can divorce his wife without any reason. She is entitled for her *Mehar* at the time of dissolution of marriage. Among Muslim Gujjars, a wife, can seek divorce with the intention to remarry. In such cases she is required to pay the marriage expenses to the divorced husband.

**Jad, Lamba and Khampa:**

Jad, Lamba and Khampa denote a person of Tibetan origin. In some folk tongues Jad is the equivalent of 'Tibetan' and Lamba is simply a mispronunciation of Lama. The earliest Lamas were usually Tibetan by nationality. This implies that Jad and Lamba are words both meaning 'Tibetan'. Few centuries ago, there was no political organisation in Tibet and there was a state of anarchy. Petty officials were at the helm of affairs. People in West Tibet were fed up with the reign of terror let loose by these petty officials. As a result few Tibetans crossed over to the adjoining Indian territories to live in peace. With the passage of time some of these Tibetans settled permanently under

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the patronage of contemporary rulers of Bushhar and Tihari Garhwal states along the boarders with Tibet while others adopted the nomadic life visiting Tibetan and Indian territories frequently. Those Tibetans who opted for settled life were called Jad by the Indians living in the boarder land and those who opted for the nomadic life were called Khampa. Meaning of Khampa is resident of eat Tibet. Thus Khampa at present implies the descendants of those Tibetans who at one time or the other during the past centuries crossed over to Indian territory and were leading the life of nomad. Jad, Lamba and Khampa of Himachal Pradesh have been declared as scheduled tribes by the Presidential order issued under the Art. 342 of the Constitution of India. 12

The Jad Tribe:

Generally speaking 'Jad' implies the people who do not follow Verna System. In Himachal Pradesh Jad are generally found in Hangrang valley of Kinnaur district. This region in the east forms international boundary with Tibet. The face of the valley presents a very sterile and barren picture. There are only eight villages in the valley and its population is

only 3125, which is lowest in all the river valleys of the district. Thus it is clear that the region is barren and desolate. It has always been the case with this region as witnessed by the account given by Hutton:

The country is seen to bear a sad and sombre air of cheerless desolation, not a tree to be seen and the blank crumbling hills are either wholly barren, or clothed with nothing of larger growth than the dwarf willow and the rose dog villages are situated at wide intervals from each other.  

Inhabitant of Kinnaur is known as Kinnaura to the outside world. But every Kinnaura need not belong to Kinnaur Scheduled Tribe. Jad belong to Kinnaur district and as such are generally mixed with the Kinnaura tribe. But in fact socially and culturally the two tribes are quite different. Jad are considered socially inferior to Kinnauras. There cannot be matrimonial alliances between Jad and Kinnaura. But the Jad definitely consider themselves superior to the Tibetan and as such do not take water from them.

Before the sealing of the Indo-Tibetan border in the early sixties, there were frequent visits by the people on either side of the border to the other side. But after the Indo-China war of 1962, and consequently the sealing of the border this facility does not exist now. The customs and traditions of the people living in Hangrang valley clearly show that there had been cultural relationship with the people living across the international border since time immemorial. Because of extreme inaccessibility, it was not difficult for the inhabitants of Hangrang valley to preserve their age old customs and traditions. Ethnically they seem to be purely Mongoloids and perhaps for this reason the people of lower Kinnaur do not enter into matrimonial alliances with them.

It appears that for a long time in the ancient past people along the international border with Tibet were following the deity type of religious beliefs. At a later stage in 10th century the Lamaism made inroads into the Hangrang valley lying in the close vicinity of Western Tibet. As a result the

original form of animistic faith and worship is not
the sole occupant of the religious arena any more.
Lamaic Buddhism is the predominant religion of the
people.¹⁷ Lama priests are scattered throughout the
Hangrang valley and perform all the religious rites.
During field study it has been observed that Lama
is not merely the religious priest but a friend,
philosopher and guide of the people. In fact he rules
the scene in this part of the region. The Lamas who
were originally educated and trained at Lhasa have
played a major role in preserving the primitive tradi-
tions in this area.

Different forms of marriage are prevalent among
Jad tribe. These forms are similar in nature as are
found among the Kinnaura tribe. But the marriage
rituals among Jad differ from those of Kinnaura community.

Marriage customs of Jad are akin to those of
Tibetan marriages. This is because of the geographical
proximity of the area with Tibet and hence the
Tibetan impact in one or the other form. As in Tibet,

¹⁷ Edward Thornton, A Gazetteer of the Territories
Under the Government of East India Company and
the Native States in the Continent of India,
p. 518.
the mode of marriage among Jad is nearer to primitive. They have nothing to do with either love or affection. Marriage to them is mere a contract of convenience and matter of bargain by the parents of the young.

Rehja, as marriage is popularly called here, is settled much earlier while boys and girls remain very young. Settlement of the marriage is done by offering a piece of cloth and a bottle of liquor by the father of the bridegroom to the bride's father. If these offerings are accepted by the later, the marriages is considered as settled. When both boy and girl attain the marriageable age, the bridegroom's father along with some other persons goes to the prospective brides house and fixes the date of marriage with the help of Lama who also helps in performing the marriage rites and rituals. The parents of the boy and the girl also agree upon how much money the bridegroom's side will give to the bride's family. This money is paid before the date of the marriage and is used in the purchase of clothes and ornaments for the bride. This expenditure is accounted and taken note of. In the event of wife leaving her husband and going with another man, this money has to be returned.
**Gnanon** is a common tradition followed in the marriages solemnised among Jads. It is based on **Gnarape** which is the Buddhist book of marriage. Gnanon are now the singers used in marriages by the people here. They are well versed in the Buddhist marriage traditions and general knowledge. These singers accompany the marriage party which is called **Pachlen**. On the outskirts of the bride's village the marriage party is confronted with lamas who put many questions through recitations in Tibetan language. The Gnanon came to the rescue of the marriage party. A long debate through recitations starts and continues till the Gnanon satisfy the Lamas. Once the Lamas are satisfied they allow the party to proceed to bride's house. All the members are made to pass beneath a banner of white cloth held by two oracles. It is believed that while passing underneath the banner, the evil spirits accompanying the marriage party are being warded off.

The ceremony of **dolangchim** i.e. introduction of the bride's relations with the bridegroom, is called as **chhakpecha** and is observed with little variation. Here the groom instead of bowing to the mother-in-law addresses her by saying **Joo** meaning
salutation. During this ceremony sister-in-law of the groom try to give a fall to him through pushes and kicks.

Rest of the ceremonies are similar to those observed among Kinnaurs in their regular form of marriage locally known as *Janetang* and has already been described in the chapter dealing with Kinnaurs. In short it can be said here that marriage is an occasion for eating, dancing, singing and marry making among the Uad'also as in the case with Kinnaura tribe.

Another Type of marriage is known as *Namkuza*. It is similar to *Darosh* type of marriage i.e. marriage by capture, prevalent among the Kinnaura tribe in other parts of the district. The only difference between *Darosh* and *Namkuza* is that in the later case only the friends of the prospective groom capture the girl. The boy himself does not accompany the capturs as is the case in *Darosh* form of marriage.

**Polyandry Among Jads:**

Polyandry is widely practised among Jads. Polyandry among them differs from the polyandry practised among the Kinnaurs. Unlike Kinnaura
polyandry, the eldest brother marries and leads a family life and the other brothers may go to a monastery as monk or stay with their parents who retire to a new house after the marriage of the eldest son. Younger brothers may marry in their own right and have a common wife among themselves while staying with their parents. Alternatively they may stick to the eldest brother in his house and sharing the wife. All the children the common wife produces are considered to be the offspring of the eldest brother. In the event of the death of the eldest brother, the next brother takes his place as the head of the family. If there is no lay brother to succeed the deceased, a monk brother might revert to worldly life after taking permission from the monastery. As a consequence to this form of polyandry, we find large numbers of unmarried woman in the area. Many of them remain spinsters throughout their lives and depend for a living upon the parents and the brothers. Some of these girls become Jomo i.e. Buddhist nuns and live in the nunneries. At times when some Jomo

10. See Chapter IV.
finds a suitable person to marry, she leaves nunnery and leads the life of a housewife.\textsuperscript{19} The life of Jomos is extremely miserable, not withstanding the apparently higher rung accorded to them on the social ladder who can gauge the emptiness and frustration of these lives.\textsuperscript{20} Till such time as education among women does not spread in this areas, their existing economic as well as social condition is not likely to improve appreciably. It is pleasant to note that this social system which has been in long usage is being challenged by the younger population and thus the region is slowly and gradually undergoing a socio-economic change.

\textbf{Divorce:}

Like other tribal communities of the region, divorce is customarily allowed among Jads also. The symbolic snapping of a twig in token of the severance of matrimony as a ritual that must originally have formed an essential part of the divorce proceedings, is rarely carried out now-a-days. Divorce proceedings are usually conducted through village panchayats.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Dharamdev Shastri, \textit{Himachal Pradesh Ki Aadim Jatian}, (1958), p. 23.
\item \textsuperscript{20} M.S. Gill, \textit{Himalayan Wonderland}, (1972), pp. 144-145.
\end{itemize}
Recourse to law court is seldom taken. An effort is made to apportion the blame for the failure of the marriage and this factor is borne in mind when settling accounts. The factum and the terms of the separation are usually reduced to writing.

The Khampa Tribe:

As has already been mentioned that Khampas are the descendents of those Tibetans who crossed over to the Indian territory a few centuries ago from Western Tibet and opted for nomadic life. It seems that Khampa is the corruption of the word 'Khanjapa' which implies a person who carries his home with him and leads a nomadic life. 21 They have been described as itinerant traders who came to India about a century back from their original homeland in Tibet. 22 They are referred to as Gakhhar Khampa by their brethren across the Himalayas. In Himchal Pradesh they inhabit the Kinnaur and Lahul-Spiti districts mainly. They are divided mainly into the following territorial groupings, after the name of the places they inhabit.


i) PitKhampa — Those who belong to Spiti region.
ii) Khunnu Khampa — Those who belong to Kinnaur.
iii) Chiarja Khampa — Those who belong to Lahul region.
iv) Nekhor Khampa — Those who do not belong to any permanent place and are nomadic.

They are also often referred to as Bodhas and as Negi by some people.

Demographic figures regarding the Khampas are not available because of their nomadism.

The Khampas are Buddhist by faith. They also have family deity known as Chang Tar Kut and are represented by stone slabs. Animistic deities in the form of boulders, caves, trees and bushes are also worshipped. Their religious specialists are the Lamas who also act as sorcerer.

The traditional occupation of sheep rearing in Tibet, changed to trading in India. They are very enterprising. To-day they are working as agriculturist, orchardist, labourer and businessmen. Though most of them are still landless. With their taking of diversified field of occupation they have come in contact with other communities and as a result their traditional restrictions of community in social matter are giving way to the modern ideas in this respect.
The Khampa community is sub-divided into exogamous clans or septs which derive its origin from a common ancestry. For matrimonial purposes, patriclans should differ. Immediate relations of the mother's side are also avoided. Parallel and orthocousin marriage are prohibited, but cross cousin marriage is practised. Phaktun i.e. marriage by negotiation, is the usual form of acquiring mate. In this form the marriage is solemnised by the exchange of desil among the bride and bridgroom. Widow re-marriage is also permissible.

Khampa society has a homogenous traditional council known as Shuzam Chunqi which is headed by a chief known as qova. The council settles family disputes, divorce and penalises in cash for infringement of traditional norms. Divorce with the consent of the traditional council is permitted on grounds of maladjustment, adultery and barrenness. In the event of divorce, compensation is to be paid to the girl but children remain with the father. After divorce parties are free to remarry with other persons.