3.4 LEADERSHIP AMONG PANDAS

There is within the community what we could call elite. These elite are composed of Pandas who are usually fairly senior and who are known throughout the community. They have various claims to prominence—wealth and hereditary position being the most obvious, but others include organizational ability, education and oratory. There is no single characteristic or prerequisite necessary for leadership, but it is advantageous to come from a good lineage and to exhibit all the forms of deference and respect present in Panda society. One Panda leader is a political sufferer, several are prominent in local politics, and others possess great property or jajman viti. The most respected, however, are those who have inherited some hereditary position but appear reluctant to hold office. They are seen as altruistic and without ambition.

These leaders are frequently seen in Ganga Sabha offices and discuss issues and events on a day-to-day basis. They chat together informally outside the main meetings and feel out the climate of opinion. Sometimes, younger men possess superior ability and are closer to the machinations of office. They create factions under the aegis of an older respected leader and these are generally kin-based and owe their existence to the younger man’s manipulation or cultivation of the loyalties of those near him. In this respect, charisma has considerable importance also. These factions are not clearly observable since Sabha meetings are infrequent, but they are felt as an undercurrent of Panda life. Pandas lament that it is the desire for office and the clash of personalities that motivates factionalism rather than policies.

A strong correlation exists between Ganga Sabha politicking and that of the local municipal board. The leaders of Ganga Sabha groupings are often prominent in different political parties (for example, the Old Congress of the
New Congress) and divisions between them involve office seeking on a political platform. Those most successful in municipal elections exercise a sort of backroom influence, helped by their power of patronage while in office and their ability to mediate between political and legal institutions and the Panda society. The Panda society, which has an economic interest in the decisions of the railway committee, the irrigation department, the municipal board, etc., cannot discount such influence. Even on an individual level, Pandas expect those in power to exercise their influence on their behalf and a popular leader is one who uses his position to accomplish some 'work' for those attached to him.

Within Ganga Sabha, it is the office holders who make the crucial decision and it is in their interest to be supporters of Congress. While they sometimes carry the Sabha with them against the government and the municipal board, the solution of problems is easier and swifter if they have local political influence.

Moreover, the community as a whole is increasingly drawn into party politics and trade union activities rather than internal politics, and the political and social status is seen both as more exciting and turbulent and as offering greater rewards. This means that the dharas are losing their judicial effectiveness and social importance and that Ganga Sabha is regarded as increasingly an administrative rather than a law-making body.

Ganga Sabha was founded and registered in 1927 and the constitution formulated. It was decided that large lineages should send two representatives to Sabha meetings and that small lineages should send one. In addition, each dhara is entitled to elect representatives and the families of a few local 'householder sadhus'. All these representatives from the General Committee, which is elected every ten years and which, in turn, every third year elects the
Working Committee of 25 members and the office bearers. If a member of the General Committee dies, resigns or retires, the Working Committee issues a letter to his lineage and they elect a replacement. If a member of the Working Committee dies, resigns or retires, then the Committee elects a replacement.

The General Committee then is a large body of Pandas (150 to 1927 and 167 in 1992) elected principally at the level of the lineage. Its function is to review the rules and budget prepared by the executive and which can only go into effect when passed by the General Committee. This body meets officially twice a year and more often if called. In this case, the Working Committee issues notice of a week. In general, the majority of representatives attend (for example, at a meeting of the Sabha on January 15th, 2002, 121 members and 24 visitors were present).

The Working Committee elects the officials of the Ganga Sabha every three years. They are General President, President of the Working Committee, 7 Vice-President, General Secretary, 2 Assistant Secretaries, a Cashier and Auditor who is also a chartered accountant. The General President is the most respected of all Pandas and the constitution of Ganga Sabha lays it down that this office is a hereditary one within the Phirahediyan thok (Lineage). The sardar of sardars is Sardar Sitaram of Jwalapur, a man renowned for his simplicity of character and life-style. He is the ultimate authority of arbiter of community affairs and his advice is sought when there appears to be a deadlock or when interpretation of the constitution is required. For example, in 1992, he decided that it was proper for the existing officials to stay in office for several months more when many Pandas felt that, according to the constitution, they should have ended their term, and he himself nominated certain officials when agreement could not be reached. This was a crucial decision as Kumbh Mela
was approaching. The President of the Working Committee and the Vice- 
Presidents are involved in the organization of the Sabha and are deputed to 
attend meetings or ceremonies in Hardwar and outside. The General Secretary 
checks the daily running of the Sabha offices.

There are also an office secretary, an accountant clerk and a manager 
of Hari-ki-pauri, who are paid. Most of the responsibility for the running of Ganga 
Sabha falls upon the office secretary, who is Panda who has only one khata. 
There are also about twenty paid volunteers who look after the cleanliness of 
Hari-ki-pauri and who see the rules are observed. These are not Pandas but 
paid servants.

The working committee meets at least four times a year and discusses 
the management of Hari-Ki-Pauri, Brahmkund and the Sabha offices, the 
sanitation of Hardwar, facilities for pilgrims, relations with the municipal board, 
extc. It sends representatives to police, railway, and district authorities.

The Sabha is financed by donations, by subscriptions (members pay 
two rupees annually), and by income from the umbrellas and wooden platforms 
hired out to ghatiyas and from the arti and katha held under its auspices. This 
is distributed as pay to employees and ‘voluntary’ assistants, for annual repairs 
to Hari-Ki-Pauri, painting, construction, etc.

Ganga Sabha has the power to decree rules and exercise a controlling 
function within the community. On the other hand, it is not certain whether it will 
be obeyed. For example, several years ago it decreed that the impure (och) 
lineages should be allowed to marry with the pure suddha lineages. Up to now, 
however, no such marriage has taken place. What Ganga Sabha does do 
effectively is to act as the mouthpiece of Panda and sanatani opinion and 
to defend the professional interests of the community against third parties—
eg. the Mahabrahmans, the various local government departments, etc. It can also protect the Pandas jajmani interests by appointing arbitrators to look at the signatures in the register books.

It is not a suitable mechanism for resolving conflicts, which require a very specific local knowledge, nor can it act effectively to put an end to functions deemed dishonourable. For example, many Pandas what that Ganga Sabha could discipline those Pandas who deceive pilgrims and take away the income of the rightful ‘owner’, and those who bring the whole community into disrepute by offences against its status. Such offences would include offences against vegetarianism, against norms of commensality, etc. Punishment is difficult because Panda leaders are often trying to be ‘enlightened’ and to be ‘orthodox’, the two being incompatible. It is also difficult because, necessarily, it would bring about feuds and counter-attacks. Few lineages are without scandals which are discreetly ignored by those about them, but which could be used effectively. There is also a feeling or growing individual responsibility among Pandas, as the collapse of the Samaj Sudhar suggests.

Some fifteen years ago, a sub-committee of Ganga Sabha was formed to take action against those Pandas that went against the rules of Brahman or Pandaeism (drinking wine, gambling, visiting prostitutes, etc.). This sub-committee, the Samaj Sudhar, existed only for about a year and was then abandoned. Many Pandas held that its failure was because the committee members would not take punitive action against their own relatives and so lost the respect that would have enabled them to discipline others successfully. They tried to punish offenders by depriving them of their income for a period (fifteen days, thirty days, etc.), and by making them perform prayascitt (expiation) as defined by Sastras. However, there was some uneasiness about the rightfulness of punishment as this account shows—
"There was a widow who became pregnant and after some time a child was born. This was against community rules and so she was punished. Her hair was cut off before the sub-committee of Ganga Sabha and she was made to perform the religious rites of purification. Then she was disregarded by the whole community and later died. She sinned, and the Samaj Sudhar sinned, because, by their punishment, she was compelled to die. The child also died. In similar cases, the relatives of the sub-committee were not punished. And even in this case, only the woman was punished while the man kept silent”.

The same Panda followed this up by suggesting that it was better to take responsibility for transgressing norms than by furtive behaviour—

“In the community, the number of illegitimate children is very few; such a child is very exceptional. Women destroy the children after the birth or in the stomach. However, it is a man responsibility. Those persons who do not are kayar—they cannot stand before others because of their sin”.

In general, the deference to elders and to custom is strong within the community but there are a growing number of instances where a man is prepared to flout both and to justify himself in terms of a different morality. These instances in turn reflect the changed economic circumstances in which education has given a younger man some independence of both his family and community.

The Lik maryada, although of little importance today, is older than the system of dharas and is a hereditary register of those Panda lineages and families among whom donations made to the community as a whole were to be divided. It is, therefore, a record of those who constitute the official community. Thus, the offerings of rajas and maharajas were distributed among only Lik members by the sardars of the dharas. The Lik maryada contains not only
Pandas and their family priests, the Misras and Suklas, but also certain Mahants, Vyas or Bhattas and a few other Brahmans who have been in long association with the community. Nowadays, only a few small lineages (recent arrivals) remain outside the Lik maryada, and technically, they can only be included when the dhara authorities grant permission.

The dhara organizations are much more ancient than that of Sri Ganga Sabha and correspond much more to the village or caste panchayats known to anthropologists. They are groupings of several lineages within Kankhal and Jwalapur and, in previous times, were the most important social units within the community, inspiring great loyalty. Traditionally, they were presided over by a hereditary sardar who came from the largest or most influential lineage (frequently the title of sardar is given to all the adult males of that particular lineage as a sign of respect). A generation ago, and even to some extent today, the dhara fellows were accepted as close kin and invited to all important functions and ceremonies. Since the constituent lineages usually owned nearly adjacent property in the same mohalla or one close by, there was daily interchange of news and gossip. It was customary for men (and even women) to meet in the dhara chaupal in the evening to talk, play games such as caupar and drink bhang and smoke. To most Pandas the dhara was more meaningful then the community. It represented a face-to-face society in which the ties of kinship were predominant and in which identification with the locality and with Kankhal or Jwalapur could be expressed.

It is said that, in previous times, the Pandas were grouped together into one organization called Panchayat Brahman but that at some point it divided into several dharas. Until recently, there were five in Jwalapur and two in Kankhal, all with hereditary sardars.
One story was that, about two hundred years ago, the Jwalapur Pandas formed three dharas named after particular lineages—Phirahediyan, Ramcandrakan and Adhyaryan. The number of their members later knew them also. Phirahediyan dhara was known as Barah sau dhara (1200 dhara) and Ramcandrakan as Chah sau ikyavan (651 dhara). Adhyarayan dhara split into three parts. One part was called Ek sau dhara (100) and the other two were each known as Do sau dhara (200). The social functions of the three were separate, but they held some property in common and, although they had panchayats of their own, they also sent representatives to a central panchayat. In 1952, they were registered jointly as the Tirth Purohit Samyukt Dhara.

Another story was that there was originally one dhara, the Phirahediyan. A grievous murder caused the lineages of Ramcandra and Srotiya to become bitter enemies: all relationships between the two ceased and girls from both sides were sent back. Two parties came into being and two dharas—the Phirahediyan and the Ramcandra. Later on, the large dhara of Phirahediyan divided again.

It is not always the case that a whole lineage belongs to one particular dhara. There are a few instances where some families belong to one dhara and others to another. This is thought to be for historical reasons, which have been forgotten. It is said, for example, that politically minded Pandas from the large Phirahediyan dhara split from their own dhara in order to maintain its influence in the others. In Kankhal, there are two dharas named after the two fore-most lineages—Myanin and Misrapur—and they exhibit anomalies. In the very small dhara of Misrapur, there are four lineages and, of these, the Misra lineage feasts with Misrapur but owns property in Myanin, while the Sarayvala lineage feasts with Misrapur but is economically independent and does not own joint property.
The latest organization to be founded based on the dhara system shows a tendency towards re-integration. It is called the Tirth Purohit Kendriy Pancayat and was founded during 1940 and 1941 because of the Government's demand that the community contribute towards the war loan. A new association of JKalapur Pandas was then formed and it was decided that a committee of nine members should be set up and re-elected every three years. Three of these members came from Barah sau dhara, three from Chah sau ikyavan and one each from the three smaller dharas. Today, the income of the panchayat derives mainly from the rent paid by ghatiyas for the platforms on the ghats, which are owned by the Pandas collectively. The main function of the panchayat is to spend the money for the good of its members (i.e., in providing books for school children, loans for college students, loans for Pandas whose property is threatened or mortgaged).

All the dharas now, save one, have become registered societies and are run by committees. Nevertheless, hereditary sardar families are still given respect and are frequently elected as officials of the dhara. Traditionally, the sardar was installed by the whole dhara at a pagari or turban ceremony, for example, when the present sardar of Misrapur was sixteen years of age, he was elected sardar in succession to his father as the eldest son (thus combining, the Pandas say, democracy with the hereditary principle). All the dhara members (dharavalas) came to the pagari ceremony and each presented the sardar with a turban. They then carried him in procession to Daksha temple. Traditionally, no marriage or funeral can go forward without the sardar's participation and still today, he commands great respect and has several times been elected President of Ganga Sabha—the last time being in 1974, when he presided over Kumbh.
The principal functions of the dhara committees today are economic and social. They manage the dhara property (lands, houses, temples) and organize communal feasts and meetings.

In discussing property arrangements, we take the example of Misrapur dhara, one of the smallest dharas. This dhara owns jointly with the other Kankhal dhara, Myana, platforms (pattas) used on the ghats and Pret sila and Narayani sila, which are places where spirits of the dead are propitiated. Narayani sila, in particular, is in a good position with much land attached and there are vague plans for utilizing the land for a hotel or for industry. Some Pandas, however, think that the land belongs to Narayani sila and that the god will be angry if it is used. The separate dhara property consists largely of the chaupal (the old meeting place), and a house which is rented out to Pandas. The sardar has temporarily given the caupal to the Municipal Board for use as a dispensary. The sarayvalas, who were at one time joint with the Misrapur lineage, sold their chaupal and divided among themselves their own share of the property. At present, the dhara remains unregistered because of a quarrel over the illegal selling of panchayat property, and it is therefore unprotected by law.

Income from the dhara property (like that of all dharas) is spent on helping with the education of Panda boys, on loans of Pandas who cannot afford to marry their children or who have had to mortgage their property.

Traditionally, feasts and feast making were of major importance in the dhara and members used to discuss the arrangements at the panchayats. After marriages, births, sacred thread investitures and adoptions, it was usual to give a feast to the entire dhara and whenever any Panda completed a pilgrimage to Badrinath, Gaya, Allahabad, etc. Since each dhara possessed common property, adoption was a matter of general concern. Permission has
still to be granted from the dhara and, until it is granted, an adopted son is not a member of the dhara and is outside the Lik maryada, (this is so even where the adopted boy is a brother's son). After the adoption, a feast is given to the entire dhara or, at the very least, some sweets is given to all the members according to the dhara rules. On all-important occasions, one parosa (either four kacauris and four laddus or eight kacauris and eight laddus) is given to each dhara member and to relatives and friends. Thus, when a widow in Candraman lineage adopted Laksmiprasad as her son, she called together all the dharavallas for a feast and, before they took food, she arranged to adopt the son of Bhavansimh Candraman before the panchayat. Rasam (money) was distributed to the nearest relatives, friends and neighbours. One rupee to some, two rupees to others.

Dharâ members must also give during important ceremonies. At a marriage (either of a boy or girl), members of the same dhara are bound to give money (tika). A record is kept of the exchanges, and serves to remind those who receive of what they must give when their turn comes. It is also the dhara, which collectively contributes to wars, good causes, etc, and donates to Pandas from Mathura, Brindaban, Allahabad, Jaganath, etc. For example, if a Panda in Mathura is trying to marry his daughter, the Hardwar Pandas are expected to give in cash and kind.

The amount to be given is decided and it is then divided among the dharas according to their size. Thus, three quarters will be donated by the Jwalaapur dharas and one quarter by the Kankhal dharas. In Kankhal, two thirds will be given by Myanin dhara and one third by Misrapur dhara.

Today, the dhara panchayat is of little importance. The dharas are rarely called together for feasts and the influence of the sardars has decreased. The
dhara camps are no longer the centre of all gossip and entertainment and, today, most houses contain separate rooms for talking (baithak). Another change has occurred because of the traditional dhara servants, the Bhattas, leaving this work and going into the professions or business.

Previously, the dhara had effective disciplinary powers and powers to make rules binding on its members. It set the limits of the payment to be made to servant castes, the amount of dowry to be paid, the content of various donations, etc. The panchayat could out-caste if the rules of marriage or commensality were infringed and it could punish or fine less serious offenders. For example, a well-known Panda, Surji Babu, brought prostitutes with him in the marriage procession of his nephew (bhatija), thus continuing an ancient custom but one, which the community had voted to end. He was, in consequence, excommunicated by his dhara, and his dhara fellows would neither marry with his family nor eat with them. After a while, however, he began to support the Phirahediyans on a party basis and was accepted into their dhara. Today, the disciplinary powers of the dharas exist only technically and the only effective one is the residual power to stop membership of the Lik maryada.
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The Pandas have ancient links with the tirtha, which they serve and are, as a community, dependent on what is known as jajman vrti, the pilgrimage or jajmani trade. It is also known humorously as akas vrti, the sky trade, because it is entirely unpredictable and depends on the will of the gods. The work of the Pandas is the practical and spiritual service of this Jajmans. They see to their comfort and lodging and perform whatever rites they require.

3.1 TRADITIONAL STATUS OF PANDAS

An understanding of the Panda / jajman relationship, and of the ritual network surrounding the pilgrimage centre of Hardwar, would be depend on and enriched by a clear comprehension of what was happening within the community. In particular, the main concern is with the political and economic changes which have occurred since Independence and which might have appeared to threaten their own priestly authority and prestige.

The Pandas of Hardwar are numerous, disciplined and possess bahis (record books) which go back many centuries. Their links with their jajmans are even more ancient and they have been performing ritual and receiving donation for hundreds of years. Moreover, the jajmani system and the ritual network which the Pandas function is very complex.

The permanent residents of Hardwar mostly depend on the pilgrim trade for their livelihood but there are other sources of income. Pilgrims travel along various networks. They may come and go from their homes directly or they may make a tour and come from Brindaban, Mathura, Kurukshetra or some other pilgrimage centre. Sometimes, they come to sell their goods. For example, the Pahari pilgrims who come at Lohari (a festival taking place annually in March and associated with Nepalis, Paharis, etc.) bring with them blankets and woollen goods to sell.
The character of Hardwar as an exchange mart, which extends for beyond
the immediate hinterland, is particularly illustrated on great religious occasions.
The Pandas, who speak the local language of their pilgrims and whose duty it
is to advise them in everything that concerns them, play an important role in the
bartering and selling that goes on through the year. As a result, they are able to
act as patrons of various shopkeepers, stall owners, etc., and to have influence
with them as with their own jajmans.

Several Pandas work in nearby towns—for example, as advocates in
Roorkee or technician in the Antibiotics Factory at Rishikesh. (A few works
much further a field in Bombay, Madhya Pradesh, etc.). Many Panda families
have visited Simla, Nainital or Mussories and it is common for young men to
seek amusement in Roorkee or Dehradun. Such towns are more “Westernised”
and sophisticated than Hardwar and have no restrictions against the
consumption of alcohol and meat.

The ritual work of the Pandas is conducted, in the main, in Hardwar but
some ceremonies are performed for Punjabis at Satighat, Kankhal. Some
Panda boys also take pilgrims to Kankhal to bypass the real Panda and to
obtain donations. Generally, the Pandas remain near the centre of Hardwar by
they occasionally take a jajman home with them or guide them to Kankhal for
darsan and holy bath. Thus, the Pandas get to know all three towns of Panchpuri
will but unequally. They go, in general, to known areas for a particular purpose
and do not wander about in low-caste bastis.

The Panda refer to their community as the titha purohit or 'Panda Samaj'
and as a biradari (brotherhood). They generally think of the community as knit
by webs of kinship and, in the words of one Panda, as "grass which has separate
roots but tangles stalks." The usual form of address from one Panda to another
is 'bhai' or 'bhaiji' and some kin term is always employed.
Within Hardwar municipality, the working Panda is easily recognized by his traditional dress and bearing. His clothes cannot recognize a Panda lawyer or engineer, but he will be identified nevertheless as a member of the Panda community. The Pandas are greeted with deference as Brahmans and called ‘panditji’. Others are given inherited or bestowed titles such as ‘Sardarji’ or ‘Sethji’. ‘Guruji’ is often said affectionately or jokingly. Whatever the opinion of other castes and communities, all recognize the ‘Panda Samaj’ as the oldest and most important community in Hardwar. Jwalapur and Kankhal are described as their ancient dwelling places and Hardwar as their place of business. Many are uncertain of the exact nature of their work, but all know that they are the priests of Hardwar and that they take donation and act as guides.

Pandas are classified with other Brahmans who follow a priestly function (eg. Kul purohit, Pujari, Jyotisi, Kathavacak, etc.) with this difference: they are a whole community living together and inter-marrying. This means, indirectly, that wealth and property do not go outside the community and that the local significance of the community is immense. The traditions and way of life of the Pandas remain unchanged and distinct from those of others.

The Pandas frequently assert that they are brothers and they stress the unity of the community in the same way that they stress the unity of the family. Nevertheless, it problem is principally within the community that the struggle for status takes place and the conflict between the official norms of equality and the fact of hierarchy is recognized by many Pandas.

Within the community, there are also traditionally prestigious lineages and families—those, which have attached to them some, title of respect (eg. sardar) or which occupy a hereditary position within the community or segment of the community. The lineages of the Misras and Suklas, the hereditary family priests (Kul purohit) of the Pandas, are also highly respected.
Individually, Pandas attain status in a variety of ways and their immediate family and relatives nearly always benefit by such status. A good karmakandi is respected more than one who knows his mantras parrot-fashion. A Misra, or vaidya or astrologer who is learned is respected more than one who merely trades on the reputation of his father or grandfather. Those Pandas who are hard working and serious-minded are respected more than those who serve their jajmans perfunctorily and spend the afternoon stretched out on a cot, under the influence of bhang.

Traditionally, Pandas also gained status from their prominence in leisure time activities, such as musical recitals, Ramlilas, wrestling matches and various community organizations. Today, many Pandas have some position within local political parties or trade unions or even within new cultural societies, such as the Indian-Russian society or the club at B. H. E. L. One or two belong than of their caste of community. All these interests and activities concern a different section of the local populace and usually involve different hierarchies. As the number of choices multiply, the community becomes increasingly open to the outside and its authority as a whole less.

There is also a strong distinction between the Pandas of Jwalapur (Jwalapurnalas) and those of Kankhal (Kankhalvalas) and, in the part and even today, they have on occasion acted as separate communities. Each lineage owns ancestral property, primarily in Jwalapur or Kankhal (although there is some mixing due to adoption or inheritance through wives). Each Panda is considered as 'belonging' to either Jwalapur or Kankhal. This loyalty is reinforced by the importance of the dhara as a social organization and by the importance of the neighbourhood (mohalla) in the lives of the inhabitants. Both in their public life on the ghats and in their private lives at home, Pandas mix in
the main with Jwalapurvalas or Kankhalvalas. There is a joking rivalry between them. Here is a Kankhal Panda talking:

"Kankhal Pandas are not after money. They prefer simple living and high thinking. For Jwalapur Pandas, it is a business. Kankhal Pandas live near Gangaji and 80 per cent speak pure Hindi. 60 per cent of Jwalapur Pandas speak pure Hindi. Jwalapur Pandas are more rude. Kankhal Pandas, even if less educated, can express themselves better. Jwalapur Pandas live among Muslims and share their habits."

The Pandas, at the highest level, identify themselves as the gurus of all India and as the worshippers of the Ganges—as Gangaputra and Gangaguru. They feel linked historically with the long line of rishis and Pandas who lived in this holy region.

They feel by birth privileged. Firstly, they are spending one of many lives by the Ganges bank and in a town and region sanctified by gods and Puranic heroes. This is, in itself, a result of past action. Secondly, they have taken birth in a community ritually superior to those around them. Thirdly, they are able to spend their time worshipping—in performing rites for their pilgrims, in caring for cows, reading the scriptures, bathing in the Ganges, etc. They verify of justify all actions and ideas by the Saastras and try consciously to follow Saastriy admonitions. Their language is traditional and in terms of sanskar, varnasram, tirtha, vrat (fasting), dharma, moksa, karma, maya, renunciation, non-attachment, etc.

In a wide sense, the term Gaur or Adigaur is used to refer to all the Brahmins who live in the North, just as Dravir refers to all from the South. In practice, Gaur Brahmins are those who live in certain parts of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana and who intermarry. The Pandas, sometimes jokingly, sometimes
seriously, claim that Gaur Brahmans, that all others take food from them, that they are strict vegetarians, that they live in the heart of Aryavarta, etc. Such claims are common to many castes and communities. In general, it is the familiarity of custom and expection within the sub-caste and its function as the largest acceptable endogamous unit that gives it has taken place outside the Gaur sub-caste.

The profession of Panda is referred to as 'jajman vrti' or 'vrti jajman'. Dumont 1970 says that the worked 'jajman' comes from the sanskrit 'yajamana' a Participle having reflexive force, and meaning "he who has a sacrifice performed". Etymologically, the jajman's the master of the house who employs a Brahman to perform the sacrifice. This connotation has importance for the Pandas today. Since they regard themselves as 'sacrificers' and as continuing the ancient Vedic yajnas. The nearest equivalent to what is generally meant by jajman, however, is the 'client' or even patron.

Let us look first at the nature of the Panda jajman relationship. The Panda renders his jajman services or both a ritual and secular nature in return for payment in cash and kind. This payment is set partly by custom. Partly by consideration of the donors affluence and partly by the Panda's skilful persuasion.

The jajman gains assurance and comfort (particularly if he is a villager and from some distance) from the knowledge that his Panda will meet him and will ensure that he and his family will have somewhere to sleep, and will not be cheated, either in the bazaars or within the ritual complex. The Panda guides his pilgrims not merely geographically, but through the network of ritual specialists, beggars, hangers-on, etc. He will tell the jajman what do give to the mahabrahman, the ghatiya, the barber, the sweeper, etc., the jajman will also
be reassured by the fact that his Panda knows his language, customs, fellow villagers and the whole history of his family. Once he arrives at the room of his available in bathing, performing good works and sightseeing. He does not have to worry about anything else.

Pandas gain much from the jajmani network, although few are wealthy. come Panda described his community as "lower, middle class". Their jajmans donate much of the food and most of the clothes required by their entire families for the whole year. Their houses are furnished through donations, their daughters' dowry provided, their education aided. Indeed, the entire Panda community as such subsists through donation.

Panda are also traditionally the purohits of an entire running estate or town, as well as of villager. Thus, the Heman linkage owns Udaipur estate (Rajasthan). Nahan estate (Himachal) and Karoti estate (Rajasthan). They serve both rulers and subjects. The Ina linkage owns the whole district of Montgomery (mostly Aoros) and the city of Panipal (except the Scheduled Castes).

In this section, a short description is given of some of the rites most frequently performed by the Pandas. Among these are the puja which precedes bathing in the Ganges and the ritual immersion of the ashes of the dead at Hari-ki pauri or Kankhal.

Both these are usually brief. The length and complexity of a rite depends on factors such as the time and money jajmans have at their disposal, the conviction and persuasiveness of their Panda, the degree of faith and learning of the jajman and the customs of the locality or sub-caste from which he comes. Religiously speaking, there is a minimum, which will satisfy requirements, but, for maximum merit or spiritual reward, the ritual will become longer, donation greater and expenses more.
All Pandas know how to perform the simplest ceremonies, although they may recite the sloks imperfectly and not understand them fully. They also know how to perform those rites most generally required by their own jaimans. If they are asked to perform something different, they may have to ask some other Panda more proficient in karmakand. As has been noted already, some Panda employ gumastas to perform ceremonies on their behalf.

Immediately a pilgrim arrives in Hardwar, he makes sure of his accommodation, either in a dharmashala or lodging house or with his Panda. Then, without stopping to eat, he goes to bathe in the Ganges—generally with the assistance of a Brahman, who is usually his Panda. After a prayer of intention (sankalpa) and a brief form of worship, in which flowers, coconuts, sweets, milk, fruit, etc., are offered to the Gangas, the pilgrim bathes, together with his family and friends.

The Pandas say that, if a pilgrim is able to bathe together with his wife, it is very auspicious. Man and wife are often likened to the two wheels of the family cart and, in another context, are regarded as indivisible, each owning half the other’s body. Only when they perform a religious function together, do they obtain its full benefit. If they are both present, the Panda will ask the husband to take off his clothes for bathing and to sit facing the Gangas. The wife sits on her husband’s right side. The Panda then takes the corner of the wife’s sari and asks her to give at least 125 rupees, and more if she can. He puts the money with flowers, rice, roff, etc., in the sari and ties it to the towel or dhoti of the husband and puts it over the wife’s left shoulder. The Panda tells the husband to take water in his right hand, together with rice, flowers and daksina, and the wife puts her right hand on her husband’s wrist. The Panda reads the sankalpa for bathing and for the removal of the sins committed in this and previous lives, and his jaimans then bathe in the Ganges.
S. M. Bhardwaj (1973) asserts that every religion has its sacred foci to which men of faith periodically converge, and he concludes that pilgrimage is a panhuman phenomenon, albeit one of declining importance in the industrial and commercial nations of the West. In India, the custom of pilgrimage to holy places (Tirtha-yatra) is an ancient one and one, which, due to modern methods of mass transportation, is increasingly popular.

Agehananda Bharati (1970) points out that this must often be understood metaphorically. Tirtha-yatra means not only the physical act of visiting the holy places but it implies a mental and moral discipline (Bhardwaj, 1973).

He considers that perhaps the earliest allusion to the practice of pilgrimage in Indian literature is to be found in the Aitrey Brahman of the Rigved, and he notes that the Aryan peoples of Vedic times revered rivers. He suggests that at least two strands of the concept of pilgrimage, that is, the merit of travel and reverence for rivers, can be considered continuous from Vedic times.

3.2 STATUS OF PANDAS IN HOUSEHOLDS

Concerns the domestic lives of the Pandas, and, in particular, the lives of the women who remain within the house. Panda houses are, by comparison with those of other committees in Kankhal and Jvalapur, large. The older houses are said to be about one hundred and fifty years old, or older, and are distinctive because they are built of small bricks. Panda houses have usually only one storey and some have a lower half made of stone and an upper of brick. The poorer houses have a flat beamed ceiling (Kari) and Kacha roof; the better houses have a curved ceiling made of bricks and lime (dat) and a pakka roof. New houses are supported by iron girders have a flat brick, and cement roof and ceiling. The number of rooms contained by each house varies considerably, but there are usually between four and ten and many Pandas let some of these to tenants.
Most houses are built around a compound (cauk) which is often the centre of all activity. Here the women sit and gossip, life on coals, oil and braid their hari, knit and sew. In the past, it was customary for most Panda families to keep cows in the compound—generally, those, which had been donated by jajmans. Today many Pandas would like to keep cows but are deterred by the high price of fodder and the poor milk yield. Nevertheless, in some homes there are still one or two cows or a buffalo. Pandas, in general, consider that cow's milk has greater spiritual power, and that caring for a cow is more meritorious than caring for a buffalo.

Previously there were only a few flowers and plants in the compound—usually roses, jasmine and basil. Today, there are often others such as amvala, tamarind trees, banana tree, bilva, pipal (fig tree), bargad (banyan), etc. Many have a sacred meaning and tulsi (basil) is grown in every house.

Outside all the doors of a Panda house there are written phrases much as “Ram Ram”, “Sri Krsna”, “Radha Krsna”, “Om”, “Jay Mata”, “Jay Durga”. These are usually written originally on the festival of Raksabandhan. The women first wash the wall with a liquid rice mixture and, when it is dry, draw on it with red ochre (geru) which is itself considered sacred. For other festivals, decorations are painted on the floor or doorstep (dehali). In particular, a small star or face from the festival of Ahol usually remains upon the wall all year round.

Traditionally, the house consisted of one large room and, even today, such an arrangement is sometimes found. Within the room there are usually slightly protruding walls which create an inner storeroom (kothari). Here, clothes, boxes, pots, bags, grains, etc., are kept while the outer room is kept clear and clean. Now most Pandas have separate rooms for separate purposes—eg. a store room, bedroom, receiving room etc. The usual rooms found in a Panda house are—
1. Baithak

2. Receiving room

3. Ghar

4. Room for sleeping (this is a particular use of the term ghar). Usually the husband and wife sleep in one room with the younger children. As the children grow up, they are given a separate room.

5. Rasoi

6. Kitchen

7. Pakhana, tatti, Latrine, which is often situated on the roof and is nearly always dry. Water is carried in a lota to the latrine from a nearby tap or well. The latrine is usually enclosed on three sides and sweepers come twice daily to clean it. In Hardwar there are flush laboratories, but these too are emptied by the sweepers.

   The baithak is the room where the men sit and talk. It is whitewashed and contains framed pictures of the gods and goddesses (often garlanded), business calendars (also of gods and goddesses), furniture (usually a cot, but nowadays, in the wealthier houses some chairs), tables, sometimes a settee, shelves with perhaps a few books, radio, fans, etc. Some houses are now fitted with electric table or ceiling fans, which have often been donated by a jajman (in the Panda rooms near the ghats, this is much less usual and hand fans are used). The Pandas say that, in their fathers' time, there were only beds and some pictures and, perhaps, in a good house, one or two chairs. Gossip and chat took place not in the home but in the dhara caupal.

   There is a place for worship in every Panda's home. It can be in a cupboard (almirah) or recess (ala) in any room, and usually contains stone or
metal images of gods, religious books, beads (mala), sandalwood (candan), bell (ghanti), conch (sankh), puja pots for arti and incense (dhup, agarbatti). All Panda families have the necessary puja material for the correct worship of their particular deities (istadev) and daily act as pujaris, bathing, feeding and worshipping the images. A few Pandas own temples where the public can make offerings.

The sleeping room contains a charpai or cot, which has a wooden frame upon, which is stretched ropes of grass, jute or cotton. Four or five of the wealthier Pandas own ‘board’ beds for use with ‘Dunlop gaddas’ (mattresses). The beds are generally covered during the day and only opened at night.

The kitchen is usually a small area or room set apart with a sloping floor for water to run away. It contains a culha (oven), which burns firewood or dried dung, and is built of bricks, which are covered with mud and dung and recoated with mud or clay daily after cooking. A double oulha (ulha) can be used to cook two things at the same time. Pandas today use other types of oven or stove. Perhaps the most common are buckets (angithi), which are coated with mud, and dung and which burn soft and hard coke. Other variations burn sawdust (burada). A few households own pakka cemented angithi—the kind which are found in hotels. Some Pandas use kerosene oil stoves and a very few gas stoves (the gas cylinders are brought from Roorkee or Dehradun). Also in the kitchen is the hara in which milk is warmed for butter. It is made of mud and dung and sometimes mixed with straw. The heat from it is very slight and milk placed there overnight loses water through evaporation and becomes reddish in colour. In the evening, the milk is cooled and curd added. The next morning it is churned and butter and whey (mattha) separated. Some Pandas to boiled milk prefer sour milk (karha dudh), and this is milk warmed in a hara. In some houses, the hara is constructed in the walls and smoke goes up the chimney.
Some Pandas employ all these methods of cooking and the smoke is sometimes great. In the older houses, there were no chimneys, although there was sometimes a ventilator in the roof. New houses are always built with chimneys.

In the typical Panda kitchen, there are wooden seats close to the ground (patari) on which the Pandas sit to eat or cook, many types of utensils, pots and spices. In the old kitchens, there was simply a table to keep the pots on or a big basket in which they were collected. Today, there are shelves and cupboards.

The lives of women are divided into two—their childhood, which is spent in the house of their parents, and their maturity which is spent in the house of their husband's parents. Marriage is the dividing point, the culmination of their childhood and the initiation into a new social environment. Retrospectively, the period spent in the natal home is usually considered one of great sweetness and love. Although a girl at marriage takes on the gotra and sapinda group of her husband and worships his ancestral gods, she maintains some ties to her natal lineage. For example, when a Panda woman is very old, she will still talk of her parents' house as her own ("anna ghar") and of her parents' mohalla as her own ("anna mohalla"). She will talk of her husband's house as that of her mother-in-law, even if she is dead ("anne saas ka ghat"), or, less frequently, she will make reference to her husband ("anne pati ka ghar"). There is a strong contrast made within the community between wives (who are strangers) and daughters. Daughters of the lineage are much freer, and do not 'respect' elders in the same way. Once they are married, the indulgent relationship remains.

Male children, unlike girls, are always by their parents and family. If the particular Panda family is wealthy, however, and the baby girl is the first child,
then the parents will not be disappointed and will say that she is "not only our daughter but our son". The second and third daughters will not always be so welcome, but this does not affect the love given to them. In growing up the son may be given a superior education, better food and a greater degree of attention, but the daughter is generally much loved—particularly because her stay is regarded only as temporary.

Mothers and other close relatives are usually extremely indulgent with small babies and seldom correct them. They are continually held and carried around. Mothers nurse their babies themselves for about two years or even longer if they have sufficient milk. They and other members of the household help the children to defecate and urinate until they are about three years old. At first, the child urinates in the house and this is accepted easily. Sometimes the floor is washed but otherwise little notice is taken. If the child defecates, the mother or sister will clean up afterwards. When the child is somewhat older, he or she is encouraged to use the drains either inside the house or outside in the street (as to adults) and then to graduate to the latrine. After the age of five, the child will generally use the latrine.

Before the babies can walk, they are usually put in a wooden baby walker (gadliya) so that they can move about. As soon as they walk, they have to be guarded constantly by a sister, cousin, etc. A great preoccupation of the mother at this time is to prevent her small children eating dirt and dust (mitti). She mixes her grumbles with kisses and hugs or tries to eradicate the habit with lime tablets.

The period of teething is regarded with anxiety, as it is believed to cause pain and lead to serious illness. Some families give the child not only medicine, but tabiz or yantras, which are thought to allow the teeth to grow easily and to
stop the child suffering. Tabiz are generally made of copper or silver and sometimes contain yantras drawn on bhoj patra (leaf or bakc paper). Mantras are said over them and they are covered with a cloth and hung round the neck of the child. This is a custom which is becoming rarer. Some Pandas still go to noted religious specialists (sayanas) to ensure the safety of the baby. They are usually given threads (bedis) to tie around his or her ankle. In the past, these bedis were frequently brought from Muslim tombs (pirpaigambars). Those in charge of the tombs have these yarns as a form of blessing in return for gifts. When the period of danger to the child was over, the parents returned to the tomb with more gifts and cut off the yarns (bedikatvana). It was thought that the messenger of death could not carry the child away while the threads were still tied.

This sort of practice is now regarded with derision by some Pandas. One commented: “If they do not believe in their own sacred books and saints what kind of priests are they? They should believe in their own gods and mantras”. Some of the most famous Muslim tombs were situated between Kankhal and Jwalapur and were destroyed in the troubles of 1947. This has also contributed to making such customs less frequent.

When the children are three or four years of age, the parents like them to go to an ‘English-type’ nursery school if possible. Few, however, can afford the expense (nursery schools then charged 15 rupees per month per child). The children play and are expected to learn some control—how to dress themselves, how to walk, sit and eat properly. A few learn some of the letters of the devnagari script. Both sexes play with boxes and balls and enjoy hide and seek (daidukka, amkh-micauni). Girls generally own several dolls.

There is free education for all children in Uttarakhand as well as Uttar Pradesh up to high school. Nevertheless, parents have to buy books, slates,
inkpots, pens, and they sometimes find it difficult to manage. When the children come back from school, they are usually welcomed with great affection and much grumbling by their mothers. They are given food, sometimes bathed, and made to rest. If the family is moderately well off, they may then do no more than tidy their books. Girls who come from wealthy families are sometimes given private tuition (the practice of going to the home in order to get money is common among the teachers in Jwalapur and Kankhal, and often results from poor school conditions). In families, which are more needy, the girls may be made to clean the pots or to go on errands to the bazaar. From the time that they are about six years of age, girls start to help their mothers and, in poor Panda families, they work hard. Only about fifty families in Jwalapur, etc., as no Panda will employ untouchables). As the girls grow older, they are taught more about domestic life—how to sew, cook, prepare the, boil milk, etc. After the age of ten, all do work that is more domestic—they bring articles from the shops or from the houses of relatives and cook and clean.

Girls of this age usually have a strong interest in jewelry and clothes, and on festivals, they expect to be given both. While they are under the age of ten or so, they are summoned by other Panda families and neighbours and given food on festivals. It is believed that they are the living forms of Almighty Goddess, and that they should be worshipped by offerings of food, ornaments and daksina.

The parents of girls do not have to pay high school fees, but there is considerable expense involved in buying copybooks and educational material (books are sometimes made available by community organizations). Domestic science is usually compulsory for girls and parents have to spend money on articles used for embroidery, sewing and cooking. There are also many incidental expenses.
During primary school, both sexes study and play together. Later, there is a choice, some families permit their children to go to co-educational high schools and others do not. In either case, parents do not like girls of this age to meet boys who are not relatives, and at school, they are not allowed to play together.

It is during this period that girls generally menstruate for the first time. Up to then it is not usual for mothers to talk about such things in front of their children. When a girl has her first menstrual period her mother will give her a cloth, and show her how to use it, and her: “This is menstruation. You must take care”. Most of the girls would still not know why they menstruates. They merely know that it happens to all women and girls. The terms used for menstruation (masikdharma) are mahvari, kapre hona, hath nahim lagana. Another word is rajasvala. One Panda told me that for two or three days, raj comes out of the women’s vulva as dirty or impure blood, and described raj as “the liquid of women at the time of orgasm”. Women said that young girls in general know little about sex or its connection with processes of reproduction.

It is difficult for Panda girls to control the flow of blood, so that some girls do not go to school at this time (others do). For three days, they do not bathe and they sit in a separate room. They may not touch the kitchen utensils or equipment. On the fourth day, they bathe completely and wash their hair. All clothes and bedclothes are also washed. Religiously, menstruating girls are impure and cannot go into temples. Physically, they sometimes are in pain and take medicine. Menstruation is a time, which is regarded with some concern and anxiety.

During this high school period, girls are generally kept within the house while their brothers roam freely. Parents do not allow them to walk in the bazaar
or go there alone. A relative, a small boy or an older neighbour must always accompany them. They go to school (or college) with girl friends and must return immediately it finishes. If they are late, the parents will question them at length. All within the household try to guard their girls and their anxiety makes them suspicious. When the girls are fourteen or fifteen years of age, their parents are always on the lookout for a suitable match, and they become increasingly concerned to marry them off as they grow older. Should a girl fall in love with a boy and manage to meet him (this does happen very occasionally), her parents feel great shame. If the parents of a marriageable boy hear about such an incident, they will break off negotiations. I never knew of an unmarried girl getting pregnant and it would seem totally impossible, so strict is the guard of the family over her. Nevertheless, one Panda said that if this happened the parents would try to procure an abortion, although the chances of keeping it secret would negligible. (He claimed that turmeric [haldi], which is very ‘hot’, is efficacious in bringing on a miscarriage and for reducing menstrual pain). Should a Panda husband get to know of a previous attachment of his wife before marriage, it is thought right that he should leave her. All Pandas require that their wives be virgins at marriage, and even a Panda who dared public opinion to marry a child widow, maintained that her first marriage had been sexless. Virginity has great emotional significance.

One of the great trails for the parents of girls is felt to be the length of time for which they are the guardians of their purity. In the previous generation, gauna was celebrated at a very young age (eight or nine) and marriage was generally before the time of puberty. Today, when girls are married later, the protective function of the parents continues much longer. All boys are felt to be ‘dangerous’ to girls. Whereas sexual pollution for a male is external and can be
purified ritually, the pollution of a girl goes much deeper, since the ‘purity’ of the caste-community is ensured and preserved through women rather than men. They are the fields within which the seed is sown and it is the duty of their families to marry them ‘upwards’. Yalman (1963, p. 48) notes that it is the Brahman castes (who are understandably most anxious about purity) who take drastic measures to preserve the sexual purity of their women. The shame of pollution reflects not only upon the lineage but also potentially upon the community.

The girls living within the house prepare articles (saman) which will be given as part of their dowry (dahej)—pillows, covers, handkerchiefs, sheets, etc. Very often, they present these articles for domestic science examinations in schools and colleges (parents usually want them to learn to sew and embroider so that they can if necessary, support themselves).

At this age, if the girl is doing well at school and the parents can afford it, she will continue to study. If the parents cannot afford it, they will marry her as soon as possible, settling on the first suitable boy they can find. Most girls leave school after high school or after intermediate school when they are fourteen or fifteen. Girls are educated within Hardwar and are not sent away to schools in Dehradun (as are some boys). Few go on to Degree College although the number is increasing.

In exceptional cases, if the girl is grown up and well educated, and wishes to marry a boy other than the one chosen by her parents, she may get her way. The parents may agree for feat of greater scandal. However, the boy must be a Panda boy, or at least a Brahman, and must be able to provide well for her. If the boy comes from another caste, then the girl cannot hope to convince her family. We have already cited the instance of a Panda girl who made a love
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They comment on her beauty, ornaments and costliness of the sari. The bahu then 'respects' the older women of the family by giving them rupees exactly as she has been advised by her parents (pamv parna, per chuna). Her mother-in-law in return gives her some sweets with a coconut and some rupees (godbarna). Afterwards she feeds her and, if it is summer she fans her because the bahi will feel too shy or ashamed to do so herself. The whole of the night is spent in singing, dancing and merriment and, nowadays, the husband may even try to glimpse the face of his bride. Now that vivah and gauna are celebrated at the same time, the boy and girl may be left together at night if the parents of the boy have no objection.

For one year, the new bahi will be called "nai bahu". When she delivers a child, or a new bahu comes into the house, she will be referred to as bahu rani or bahu. Her elders address her as bahu, bahu rani or by her name of the name of her child.

Many relatives go to the house of the mother-in-law upon the arrival of a new bahu, and give rupees to the bahu or to her saas, with the remark that it is for "mumh dikhai" (seeing the face), and they give sweets for the lap (god). Soon afterwards, the bahu returns to her father's house accompanied by the women barber. In previous times, she went by a doli or pinas (sedan chair) carried by four Jhimvars (water-carriers), but today she goes by tonga, car or rickshaw. She now spends some days with her mother and some with her mother-in-law. After a few days, she knows her husband is wearing precious saris, etc. Sometimes, the relatives joke that the boy is in the hands of the new bahu and that he keeps looking at her. Sometimes the parents grumble. It is said that couples are bolder together now, and that previously they did not speak to each other or show awareness of each other's presence.
After a week or so, the mother-in-law chooses a special occasion for the bahu to cook for the first time. She tells her to cook sweet things—khir, halva—and anything else she likes. All the members of the family give some money to the new bahu for her first attempt at cooking. The parents of the boy or the boy may also give her a sari or ornament. From then on, she will occasionally cook.

The new bahu sweeps the floors, washes the clothes, and when she has spare time will, if she is prudent, sews, embroiders or knits sweaters. She will never go out of the house except at the invitation of relatives and friends. She may go with her husband to the cinema, to bathe or to walk in the evening on Hari-ki-pauri wearing beautiful clothes and ornaments. She may shop with her husband, but will not go to the bazaar to buy vegetables.

Generally, she will wear ghunghat for her father-in-law and relatives senior to her husband in generation or relative age, and at first, she will not speak to them. However, the new generation of wives is beginning to ignore these customs and some do not wear ghunghat or observe silence before their elders.

The new bahu must be obedient and fit into the household. At this time of transition, she may or not be unhappy. Her happiness will depend upon the affection she receives from her husband's family and how well she is able to adjust to her new life. For a girl from outside, it may be even more difficult as she has to eat different food, observe different and live in a different 'atmosphere'.

Sometimes, if a quarrel breaks out, the other women may grumble at the lack of dowry, and demand why the bahu's parents did not give more—

"Kya Khak pathar diya teri mam ne?"

"Why has your mother given so precious little (only ash and stone) ?"
If the bahu then becomes very unhappy or complains to her parents, the relations between the two families become strained. Even so, the parents of the girl will seldom interfere except through an intermediary. They are conscious of their inferior status and do not want their girl to get even worse treatment.

The bahu has very little independence. For example, the mother-in-law and her husband decide whether she may stay with her own family or visit other relatives. Sometimes the bahu wishes to live alone with her husband but, unless her father-in-law has other property, her wishes remain unrealized. It is almost impossible to construct new houses in Jwalapur of Kankhal because space is so limited and building so expensive. The only alternative is for the young couple to live in one room in the same house and to live and cook separately. If there are several bahus in the joint family and their husbands are economically dependent on the father, then they will have to adapt to their circumstance however unhappy they are.

Up to the time a woman becomes a mother-in-law (saas), she is called bahu, even if she is the mother of many children. The main duties of the bahus are to care for the children, to worship, to cook food, wash clothes, sweep and grind. Women do not do sandhyabandan, but they do go into Hardwar from Jwalapur to bathe sometimes. In Kankhal, many Panda women bathe daily in the Ganges. A few visit temples daily for darsan.

Thus, the principal function of a woman is to serve her husband, children and house. Women sometimes earn a little money by sewing and embroidery if they have the permission of their husband and elders. A few work outside the home. The only acceptable occupations for women are teaching and medicine, although one Panda girl with a liberal-minded father works as a clerk in a local girl's college. One woman is a midwife and another works in the dispensary of
B.H.E.L. About four teach, but these are wives of Pandas rather than daughters. The woman with the highest qualifications has been married into the community from outside and is now a teacher in the Government Girl’s Inter-College. Many girls are now educated to M. A. standard (which is often far from rigorous in local colleges and may be attained will before the age of twenty), but they do not work. It is the qualification alone that is important, since it raises the prestige of the girl and her family, and enables her father to marry her well.

Within the community, the women are regarded as more traditional and more pious than men. They are for example, always fasting. During fast days, they may eat fruit and milk preparations and drink milk and tea, but they may not eat grain. In general, the fasts are made for the long life of the husband and the health and prosperity of the family. Sometimes the man and women quarrel about the degree of ritualism needed for the bringing up of children, daily living, etc., but women are, and are expected to be, more punctilious about religious observance than men. In general, they worship the household gods of their husbands but it is not necessary that the istadevs of both are the same.

Many women fast regularly at least once a week. For example, they may fast on Monday in honour of Shiva, or Tuesday in honour of Hanuman or on Friday in honour of Santosi Mata. If they worship the sun particularly, they will fast on Sunday (this is thought to cure freckles and spots, provided one never urinates towards the sun). Women also fast on particular days of the month, for example, on ashtami, trayodasi (prados), caturdasi, on purnima and ekadasi. There are also general days of fast, among which are Janmastami (the birth of Krishna), Ramnavami (the birth of Ram), Navratra, Haritalika, Karvacauth (special day for married women), Ahoi, Dipmalika, Saktacaturthi (in honour of Durga), sraddha days of the ancestors (pitar).
Pregnancy is thought to depend entirely on god. After marriage, the families of both the girl and boy eagerly await a child—particularly the parents of the boy who want a son. When there is certainty of pregnancy (after the third month), the women of the family try, by continual advice and careful feeding, to keep the bahu contented. She is urged to work less, not to jump, not to lift heavy weights, to be happy, to enjoy walking, to go to different places and to see good films. Above all, the bahu has to listen to much advice about worshipping, and reading or hearing good books. If she cannot read herself, others will read religious stories to her. After four or five months, it is said that here stomach becomes the signboard of her state. At about this time, elders begin to look after the bahu very carefully. They show her much love and try to please her as much as possible. Her mother shows the greatest concern. She calls her frequently to her own house and sometimes goes to the house of her daughter's husband. If the daughter is ill, there is great anxiety that the baby may be affected or that a miscarriage may take place. The women make her rest and give her ayurvedic medicines, almonds, ghi, milk, etc. Some pregnant women wish for very light food such as mung ki dal (particular kind of lentils). Lauki (a type of vegetable) and fruit. Others want only sweets and cat (type of potato relish). A few eat mitti (mud and clay, pieces of clay pots, etc.) and may try to conceal this craving. If the bahu's mother-in-law or husband's sister find out, they will grumble at her. The husband at this time is usually very attentive to his wife. Some Pandas said that those husbands who continue to have coitus cause pain and abortioj. It is to guard against this that Hindu custom prohibits the husband from making love to his wife for some months. It is said that when the child grows in the stomach sexual intercourse is dangerous. The head of the baby is believed to be downwards and it is thought that the penis will touch and possibly hurt it. Despite all these dangers and prohibitions, however, one Panda admitted making love almost up to the time of the actual birth.
During the sixth or seventh month, the women of the family worship some gandharvas who are described as "small type of devtas, low class gods". This is to ensure the safety of the baby in the pregnancy period. Seven elderly Panda women are fed with karhi, roti, lapsi and puras and given daksina. In some families, worship and donation continue throughout the nine months of pregnancy, and sometimes the women obtain yantras and tabiz to protect the child in the womb.

In the eighth and ninth month, the mother’s house begins the customary donations of food to the girl. Firstly, then donate sweet rice prepared in milk with sugar (bura) and this is distributed among all the boy’s relatives so that they know the girl is pregnant. The girl’s brother starts the gift giving and relatives follow his example on both sides (they give sweets, salty dishes [namkin] and cat). A part is kept for the ancestors (pitras) and gods (devtas) and the rest is divided among relatives. If there are many relatives, then something will come almost every day.

The delivery is usually a time of great happiness. In the past, the midwife (dai) delivered the baby; nowadays a doctor in a maternity hospital. The women are sent there a few days previously, or she is sent in a taxi when she starts to feel contractions. The actual birth considered very painful and difficult and it is usual for the women to cry out. They are previously given advice by the older women and sometimes by the doctor. Birth generally takes between two and three days but can take longer. One Panda said that it was difficult if “the vagina was too small for the baby”.

Formerly, the women lay on dirty bedclothes but this is no longer so. However, they still do not leave the room for ten days after the birth. During this time, the new mother feeds the baby regularly every two or three hours or
whenever it cries. When she has bathed at the end of the tenth day, and the namkaran sanskar of the child has been performed, she is pure and may go out. A few of the older women will not allow themselves to be touched by her for forty days not will they allow her to cook kacci roti for them. During this lying-in period, everyone wants to see the baby, and little girls and boys go into the impure room or hospital and want to hold the baby.

The mother is allowed to keep the baby with her and to attend to him before all else. If she has some spare time, then her mother-in-law asks her to work in the house. If the baby cries, the father-in-law or mother-in-law may grumble if she is not looking after him. Sometimes the mother-in-law keeps the baby and the mother may get upset. In all cases, however, the bahu gains a little more independence. This is show even in the kitchen where the mother-in-law will cook for some days or even months. After this, saas and bahu share the cooking.

The bahu who gives birth to a daughter will be treated in the same way as one who bears a son but with somewhat less honour and rejoicing. Sometimes, the birth of a girl is considered her fault but, more often; it is thought to be the gift of god or fate. Orthodox women say: "If you sow a seed of wheat then wheat will grow. Whatever is in our fate will happen." However, the mother of a daughter feels bad. If she could only bear a son, the would be the mother-in-law of a bahu and the family would continue. A son would give water and food to the ancestors (pitars).

Stock are frequently quoted to show the helplessness of man before his fate, including this one from Tulsidas—

"Hani, labh, jivan, maran, yas, apyas, vidhi hath" ("Loss, profit, life, death, regard, disregard. These are in the hands of god").
The second pregnancy is less interesting than the first and the third than the second is. If however, a son is born after several daughters, then again there is great rejoicing. The women get very anxious if a child is not born soon after marriage. According to the Atharvaved, the pipal tree is good for barren women, and they take domestic remedies given by older women and by the dai, and the medicine prescribed by the doctor or vaidya.

Spiritual treatment will also be tried. Through their daily worship and prayer, the women ask a particular god for a child. If this is not successful, they ask the advice of a pandit, or of a knowledgeable relative. The jan of Sanatan Gopal Mantra is often done that Visnu may be pleased and give the blessing of a son. Sometimes, the katha of Srimad Bhagvat is recited or some Puran (eg., the Harivams Puran and the Navanha Puran of the Ramayan, the nine days' reading of the Ramayan). There is also the Navanha Parayan of Devi Bhagvat, and other tantric remedies and mantras, which are thought to be more effective than any others are. In addition, women bathe daily in the Ganges and perform their daily worship for this purpose alone. Some make the journey to the temple of Mansa Devi in the jungle. They tie threads there, and vow to donate or perform some tasks if only their prayer is fulfilled.

If the problem is one of importance, then warm medicines such as ras and bhasm (juice and ash) are taken. If it is one of frequent miscarriage, then ayurvedic remedies, such as gular ka dudh (milk of a wild fig tree) are put in the vagina.

If the case seems hopeless and proper treatment not known, the women may go to sayanas (wise men). These sayanas are often thought to be evil and to have power through the grace of evil spirits huts, pretas, vaksaas, etc. Sayanas are reckoned to keep these spirits with them by means of mantras. A bhut is
thought to be lower than a pret and a pret then a yaksa. The pret knows how he
may achieve salvation the bhut does not. Bhuts are believed to live near burning
ghats and trees. Many Pandas now think that sayanas rob the women who come
to them, and today few women have complete faith in such specialists. In
Hardwar, there is a man who is reputed to have a yaksini spirit in his control
and some women seek his advice. Panda women formerly went to sweeper
sayanas and to Muslim sayanas, preferring their advice to that of the Brahman
pandits or astrologers. Today, this custom is very rare.

Finally, Pandas will try to have sexual intercourse on the days
recommended by Saastras—the fifth and ninth day after the beginning of
menstruation. They will also avoid making love on special festivals such as
purnima, amavasya and ekadasi, and during menstruation. However, I was told
that the new generation does not always take notice of such prescriptions and
that it is only learned Pandas who keep such Sastriy advice in mind.

If her husband is alive and does not depend on his sons, the position of
a mother-in-law is a pleasant one, and is further improved if she is young,
beautiful, and healthy and has enough money for her needs. Her bahus,
particularly if their husbands are dependent on their father, will be a subservient
position. This is in some ways, the happiest time of a women’s life when she
has money, children, bahus and house. One Panda commented that such a
mother-in-law considers that “she has everything by the grace of god and
constantly worships for this grace to continue”. A mother-in-law with one bahu
will take her wherever she goes—to relatives, on pilgrimages, excursions, etc.
She will probably allow her son to take the bahu to see creation films and, with
her husband, will try to give the some whatever he asks—clothes, ornaments,
domestic articles—for his wife. She will allow the bahu to go our for walks or to
visit the houses of her friends. The bahu for her part should consult her saas about everything and conceal nothing from her.

There may be tension between the two women if the saas thinks that the bahu has too much influence over her son or is too forward. She may become "irsalu" (jealous). The saas may feel that the new bahu is not sufficiently affectionate to her husband's sisters or that she prefers her own sisters. The bahu may want to go to a film when her saas forbids it or leave off ghunghat. These are minor causes of quarrelling. More serious are the beatings or abuse the saas sometimes gives the bahu. Very occasionally, if the bahu has an independent income of her husband is independent, she will retaliate and the saas will become very upset. This can happen if the saas has no close relatives and is dependent upon her son but cannot stop grumbling at her daughter-in-law. There may then be a wounding partition between them, with the saas cooking for her and the bahu cooking for her husband and children. This is particularly likely in a situation where the mother-in-law is widowed and has handed everything over to her son. The son may become independent of her and turn increasingly to his wife.

In the Panda community, it is a common saying that the habit of grumbling is ingrained in mothers and old women. This is emphasized by the fact that deference is due to elders. A junior member of the household should not speak before his or her seniors. If the bahu argues, the mother-in-law may say—

"Your father-in-law is sitting in the room and you should not speak like this. You should honour and regard elders."

The bahus, for their part, get upset by continual grumbling or by the saas' abuse of their paternal relatives of her withholding of what they consider necessities. If her saas is pleasant, then the bahu's life is also pleasant. She
will have company, someone to talk to, and help with all the work. She will also have a guardian which the Pandas consider essential for all young women. Many bahus show great affection for their saas and for their husband's brothers, wives, who often welcome them into the household with embraces and much comforting. In a large household, it is possible to see young bahus laughing and joking together or with their husband's younger brothers, and making common cause against some elder. They let their veils slide down when she goes out and with whispers and giggling put them on when she appears again with her grumblings.

It is the duty of the bahu to look after her saas when she grows old. If she does not, the saas will think her the most unfortunate of women. In the joint family, the bahu will have to do everything for the saas. If the families are separate, then it is still the duty of sons to look after their parents in old age. However, it is the general opinion among Pandas that sons may sometimes neglect this filial duty but daughters never, and that daughters lived more ready than the bahus to serve old people. The daughters lived in their parents' house, were married by them and received many gifts from them. Despite this, the parents can live only with their son or alone. They can neither live with their daughter nor eat at her house (they may, exceptionally, if their grandson is earning). If they are helpless, then they may take from their daughter, but they will feel great shame.

The newly widowed Panda wife cries and weeps continually. This weeping is customary but the husband's death is felt as the worst fate that could befall her. The widow breaks her curis (ouri torna), takes off her anklets and toe rings (pajeeb and bichua) and all the ornaments from her hands, nose, ears and neck. She can no longer wear glass bangles and, after some time, she may choose to wear gold ones. Nowadays, if she is widowed while very young, she
may try to wear glass curis later. They have great significance for Panda women who feel naked without them. The custom of shaving the hair is no longer prevalent, but widow continue to wear white saris.

Although the widow is today legally owner of part of her husband's property, she is frequently dependent on her son or on her husband's father or brother. A few Panda widows manage their own property and jajman yrti, but only if they are wealthy and have independence. Widows cannot go outside the house for one year except to visit relatives. They are expected to cry for a year, to eat less, etc. Even after a year is up, they cannot go to films or marriage parties and the wife, in the husband's death, is expected to have lost all enjoyment. There is no possibility of remarriage and sometimes widows, who are treated as servants, and as inauspicious, pray to die. Younger widows have to guard their behaviour closely, as it is easy for scandal to touch them and to make their lives intolerable.

Even today, many Panda women are influenced by the idea of sati and revere those who gave up their lives. They think that those who committed sati performed a great religious act and gained great merit for themselves and their family. There are claims of quite recent satis, including one, which was accomplished by intensity of devotion. In one house in Jwalapur, a Panda dealing with Kashmiri pilgrims has erected in a separate room a small temple in honour of his mother. His father died leaving his wife with very young children. She was grief-stricken and prayed very fervently to die also. Although she had been, up to that time, completely healthy, she died and was burnt on the same funeral pyre. Her husband's brother's wife then looked after the children.

Of the duties performed by women, the preparation and cooking of food is one of the most important, and the most time-consuming. In most houses, food is cooked three times a day while tea, milk, or snacks may be prepared at
almost any time. It is the role of the women to safeguard the purity of the cauka and to maintain the ritual that surrounds the act of eating. In this section, I describe firstly some of the principal household chores connected with eating, and secondly its symbolic aspect.

In Panda families, which keep cows, it may be the responsibility of either the men or the women to look after them. The care of a cow is accepted as a way of devotion, bhakti, and the cow is often adorned and served as a goddess. Sometimes, the women milk and feed them and dry their dung for burning (upla, goha, gosa). The cows are milked twice a day and yield, on average, about four to five kilos of milk daily. Cow’s milk is believed to be very good for the health and is often likened to nectar (amrt). Some Pandas boil the milk before using it, but many hold that milk straight from the cow is more beneficial and more powerful (dharosn).

A few women still grind their own corn (ata pilsna), but most get it from the bazaar. Traditionally, this was one of their heaviest tasks but today only the older women regularly grind their corn on the domestic cakki. Wheat is generally bought ground from the market. Maize is considered difficult to grind, but some women still grind it in the house. Millet and some pulses are also ground in the cakki. Gram is shelled and used as a vegetable or it is bought as flour (besan) and used extensively in cooking. It is considered more useful than any other flour.

Women remove the shells of pulses by pounding them (kutna) in a mortar (imamdasta or okhli). Chilis are first put in the mortar and then ground in the cakki.

It is common to see women on the roof or in the courtyards with a threshing basket (chai), with which they remove the thick dust and dirt from the grains of wheat, etc. (This process is called phatkana). They then use a wire mesh sieve (chali) for dal, wheat, gram and finely ground flour (maida). This is
known as chanana. They also can typically be seen with a large tray examining grain, pulses and rice for impurities. They do this slowly and methodically by hand. Most try to clean a bag of wheat at a time and store it in a box or earthen pot (matka) to keep it safe from the rats.

In general, Pandas eat bread (roti) with different vegetables and lentils (dal) two or three times a day. Curd (dahi) often serves as an accompaniment. Just as the women use wheat, maize, millet and gram flour, so they cook many different types of dal. Among those most liked are urad, mung, arhar, masur and moth. Vegetables vary with the season and climate (and with different festivals). The most appreciated made with gram flour and much seasoning. Some Pandas now realise the value of eating uncooked vegetables and fruit and, when they can afford it, do so.

Some ‘modern-minded’ Pandas eat biscuits with their tea and a few richer ones cake, risen bread (dabbal roti), horlicks, canned food, cheese, butter, etc. Dabdal roti is assumed to have the same significance in the Western diet that roti has in the Indian and is regarded as suitable for invalids.

Food appropriate to the season an day is prepared by the women. For example, khicari is cooked on Sankranti and some dishes, such as khir (rice cooked in milk) or halva, are special treats and are eaten on auspicious days.

The women make stocks of papar (thin crisp cake), phulbari (chips), acar (pickles), catni (chutney), murabba (jam, made generally from mangoes, tamarind and apples) and halva (generally of carrots). They only buy these things from the bazaar if they are caught unprepared. They also make many different kinds of sweets, which are very heavy and very sweet by Western standards. They are used particularly during festivals and celebrations, as part of the complex exchange of food between household. All women can prepare besan
ka laddu (round sweets made of gram), panjiri (wheat and rice powder fried in ghi and mixed with sugar), and these can be kept for many days. Only those with some expertise can prepare barphi (a sweet made from milk and very popular), rasgullas, gulab jamuns, etc. All can make gajar ka halva (halva made from carrots) and matthi during winter.

It should be noted that, as well as making a distinction between 'hot' and 'cold' foods, Pandas distinguish absolutely between salted and sweet foods. Thus, salted matthi is called matthi or suhari and sweet matthi is called mithi matthi or phal. A Panda offering hospitality will automatically in pure whether his guest would prefer sweet or salted biscuits, snacks, etc.

Until recently, the Pandas as a community drank only milk as a daily custom but, today, due to the efforts of the tea companies, the tea habit is strong. Coffee (to be had in one Westernized cafe in Hardwar only) is not drunk in the homes except by the very modern-minded, and is regarded as an urban and westernized during with some romance attached to it. Very orthodox Pandas still drink only Ganges water from the river or wells rather than the tap water (which also comes from still prefer sherbet, lassi, milk flavoured with crushed almonds and sikanjai (lemon juice).

It is not only the manner of eating and drinking that is important to the Pandas but the actual diet. The preservation of the purity of the community and its high ritual status still depends very much on the absolute ban on eggs, meat, fish and wine. Their vegetarianism and total prohibition of alcohol are the most tangible signs of their superiority to other castes, and important aspects of their dharma as Brahman. Gossip about the community often concerns real or mythical deviations from these prescriptions, and the Pandas are very sensitive about such charges. It was precisely on this subject that they felt they had most
to fear from anthropological exposure. However, since Hardwar and Kankhal are, by law, vegetarian, it was difficult to discover patterns similar to those obtaining in many villages, where the men go to a town to indulge in pleasures not permitted in the home. It is probable that youths do break these heavy prohibitions in Bharat Heavy Electricals of Dehradun or Simla but the expense, as well as the emotional deterrent, is great. For many older Pandas, the idea of eating meat arouses feelings of nausea as strong as those felt by local Jains. One 'secualr' Panda said that, when he was young, he felt that these prohibitions were superstitious and tried to force himself to eat an egg. He vomited violently. Many Pandas do not feel the same repugnance for alcohol, although it is not compatible with the purity of a Brahman and his obligation to eat and drink only, that which is satvik. Several Pandas said that alcohol was necessary in a cold climate (for example, England), and I witnessed an aberrant Panda who had been drinking on one occasion and knew of several more who indulged.

It is not only meat that is repugnant but also foods associated with it. For example, Pandas generally do not eat dal of masur; it becomes reddish in colour. There is no harm in it but people do not like it as it looks like meat or blood. Many eat the actual masur. It is claimed that, previously, no pana are sugar because it was whitened with ground bones, and even today a few Pandas avoided it. There is a story that about thirty years ago, all the citizens of Hardwar, Kankhal and Jwalapur refused to buy sweets from the halvai shops on Diwali and, instead, made their own with raw sugar (gur). Again, Pandas previously refused to take allopathic medicines, suspecting that they might contain wine or animal blood or some meat product. Today, the only deterrent is usually the high cost or a belief in some alternative system such as ayurved, homeopathy or astrology.
To older Brahmans, the taking of meat and liquor is a sign of degeneracy. They teach that there are three types of food: Satvik food, which keeps the mind calm and is often associated with green vegetables and cow's milk. Rajsik food, which is often red in colour and especially includes meat, alcohol, fish, eggs and those vegetables which are thought to cause excitement, for example, certain kinds of lentil and even carrots. (Until a few years ago most orthodox Pandas did not eat carrots). Rajsik food is that which excites the brain and causes emotions such as anger and the desire for power. Tamsik food is that which leads to indolence and sloth, to lethargy and dullness. It is rotten or stale food.

It should be noted that the Pandas feel that they wish to eat only satvik food in order to achieve calmness of mind and as a form of tapas or asceticism. Many spontaneously decide to abandon certain foods when they are older or to fast frequently. The denial of food or the detachment from it is an expression of the transcendence of worldly needs. On the other hand, many Pandas have a tremendous interest in rajsik foods such as meat, eggs and liquor, in the belief that they cause a man to be extremely virile and passionate. The qualities of the Kastriys are thought to be stimulated by their diet to no small degree, and some Pandas fascinate a more extrovert, worldly life. Lower castes can indulge more openly than Brahman in meat of liquor as it is not so bad for business. Thus, the Kayasth manage of a Panda family could admit to eating meat. Sometimes, the Pandas attribute the power of the British to the food they ate—it made them marital and energetic. It is interesting that the tapas of the ascetic stores up great virility for him, which is diminished if it is used. The power engendered by eating inferior but exciting food also leads to passion, which, however, is of a lower a temporary order.
Many Pandas, who saw or read about highly caricatured accounts of present-day Western life, undoubtedly equated the debauched drinking habits with a frenzied sex life and promiscuity, and their attacks quite definitely contained the idea that their own life style was restrained and equivalent to that of the ascetic. Although they rate dharma much higher than artha and kam, many Pandas would wish to enjoy all their desires despite the fact that their culture emphasizes their divergence and polarity. It is only in bhakti and in the marriage relationship that sexual metaphors can properly penetrate those of devotion and from a bridge.

It is interesting to note that the Pandas often hold simultaneously contradictory opinions about the eating of meat and the drinking of wine in the context of the varna system. They say that Ksatriyas, for example, are permitted to eat meat and to drink by virtue of their dharma but, at the same time, they maintain that abstinence is a higher ideal and one enjoined by Saastras. There is a conflict within the texts mirroring this ambivalence, which indicates, perhaps, a difference between svadharam and universal dharmas. Again, many Pandas know of the meat eating discussed in the Vedas, and the non-vegetarian sacrifices performed by Brahmans. They usually explain these passages either as interpolations or as reflecting the conditions in which the rishis brought enlightenment to a simple-minded people. They could proceed only by stages. Many Pandas are also aware that other Brahmans sometimes eat meat or fish—some Sarasvat Brahmans, for example, or the Brahmans of Bengal. Such Brahmans are regarded as inferior, but the Pandas’ acceptance of their habits as customary, conflicts with the heinousness of meat eating within their own society. The eating of an egg is believed by many Pandas to much reduce their chances of attaining a good heaven or a pleasant rebirth.
In order to explain these ideas, we would look to the dynamism of the Hindu tradition and the divergence between the teachings of different gurus. We would also look to fundamental ambiguities within the mainstream of orthodox Hinduism and regional and historical inconsistencies. Certainly, however, the prevalent view is that purity in taking food results in good karmas, and this concept in turn is related to the caste hierarchy, and reinforces it. Many Pandas were however, puzzled by the paradox of westernness who enjoyed a high material standard and yet who indulged in gross food habits. Some accounted for this anomaly by spirituality found in India.

In addition to discussing food in terms of the three guns, which are hierarchically ordered, the Pandas make a distinction between the comparative ‘heat’ and what they eat. This may have a relation with actual temperature or appearance, but it is much more allied to the food’s potency, and its ability to invigorate the senses. ‘Cold’ foods are thought to be calming and good for the mind. ‘Hot’ foods excite the senses. As the Pandas individually incline towards both extremes but put greater stress on the pole of asceticism as a community, ‘cold’ foods are generally favoured. Many Pandas regard ‘hot’ foods as giving energy, particularly sexually, and since feeling ‘weak’ (kamzor) is a typical complaint, some are attracted towards then secretly. Pandas also regard their own diet as pure, but they have an ambivalent attitude towards it. Pandas assured me that such a diet would increase my spiritual and bodily health, but they also worried about the debilitating effect it might have. They thought I might waste away or develop anaemia or lose my previous vitality. Here again, we appear to find a swinging between two models which are irreconcilable.

Let us look then at particular distinctions made between ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ foods. Garlic and fish are thought to be very hot. Meat, eggs and cheese are all
hot. If crushed and drunk, almonds are cold and powerful for the mind. If they are eaten by themselves or in laddus (a type of sweet), then they are very hot.

Bhang, which is drunk, is cold. It is hot if it is used in other ways. Caras is exceedingly hot, and it is said that a man taking caras needs no clothes even in winter. Wine is very hot.

Let us look at some vegetables and roots. Garlic is one of the hottest and is regarded as both a vegetable and as a medicine. Onions are also hot. A great many Pandas do not eat onions and few eat garlic. Sometimes, however, such self-prohibitions are cunningly circumvented. For example, women take garlic cloves for their violent indigestion (wind) but swallow them whole. Ginger is regarded as hot but as less hot than garlic. A certain type of lentil (urad ki dal) is regarded as very hot and as very powerful. If a man who is important eats this dal, he becomes potent. It is cooked in all Panda houses, and all the women know of its strengthening qualities for their men. Other 'hot' vegetables are sag of mustard and gram, carrots, cauliflower and cabbage. Cauliflower and cabbage are also considered to contain vayu (wind), which is very common in Panda women.

There are certain vegetables, which are regarded as neither hot nor cold, and among these are tomatoes, potatoes, peas and mung dal. Others regarded as 'cold' are, for example, sag of palak, bottle gourd (lauki), mustard plant (tori), radish, cucumber. Rice is also considered cold. The plants grown in water are generally considered hot (for example, the roots of the lotus, bhis) but water chestnuts, which are grown in water, are as cold as sweet potatoes which are grown in the ground.

Most fruits are cold. Sweets are, in general, neither hot nor cold. Curd separated from water is hot and with water is cold. Lassi, the drink made from
curd, is cold. Coffee is hotter than tea. Milk is cold, but some say that it is hot if boiled. Ginger, black pepper, lemon and mint are in a class of their own, being regarded as ‘digestives’.

In general, more but things are eaten in the winter than in the summer and it is harmful to drink hot and cold things together. Food must match both the weather and the state of health. For example, Pandas think that it is harmful to drinks lassi during the rainy season. They also think that those suffering from a cold should only take hot food. They should not, for example, eat rice, lassi or curd, or bathe in cold water. A person suffering from fever should take nothing except milk and tea. If he eats anything made of grain, the fever will increase. During pregnancy, no woman should eat hot food or there is a danger of miscarrying. For example, Khicari with curd should be eaten (khicari is a mixture of lentils and rice), for constipation, vegetables like lauki, mung dal, milk and ghi.

Few Pandas retain the traditional rules governing cauka purity in their completeness. There is great variation. It has already noted that a few of the older men are extremely orthodox, while others are moving towards an urban model. There is a family which is famous in the community for sitting around a table together (this family is regarded as very advanced or ‘modern’, since its late head is the only Panda to have gone abroad and since his sons studied at the Doone school in Dehradun).

In general, however, behaviour in the cauka reflects fundamental notions of purity and impurity both within and between castes. It is clear, for example, that hierarchical principles of caste intrude within the family both in regard to the order of eating and in regard to the notion of jutha. Again, we find a conflict between the greater act pollution of women (eg.m as regards their jutha) than
that of men, and the fact that husband and wife are often treated as a single ritual unit.

The norm is one of relaxed orthodoxy. Only a woman who has bathed completely and who is wearing a fresh sari may cook in the cauka. Younger women sometimes also wear brassieres but the older women do not. They sit upon a patari (low stool) and prepare the food. If they are cooking kacci roti, then no one will be allowed into the kitchen wearing their ordinary clothes and shoes. They must be wearing a clean dhoti (of silk or, if it is washed daily, of cotton) and kharaum or pavadi (wooden sandals). These sandals are not worn outside the house and never in the latrine. Those who eat within the cauka may wear only a dhoti and, in the winter, a woollen wrap.

The chief member of the household usually eats first but in his absence of with his permission, the children may do so. The women of a joint family will always ask the most senior man to take his food first, and after him to other man and then lastly the women. The children can eat with either the men or the women, before all, or after all. The cook feeds all the members of the family first and she herself eats last. If she has happened to eat before, she will still take a little out of etiquette.

It should be noted, however, that there may be informal family practices that are not seen by the outsider—particularly where the family is a two-generation one. I found that there were all kinds of anomalies. In one family, for example, the husband cooked for his wife so that the could have her roti hot from the stove or to help her when she was menstruating and her daughters were busy.

There are separate thalis and katoris for all, but children can eat from the dishes of elders and the wife can use the husband’s utensils. The big thal
is, according to custom, given to the chief male. Each person has not only separate utensils but a separate place to sit. Nowadays, some of the younger Pandas and particularly husbands and wives, like to eat together. This was previously unheard of, and many Pandas dislike the new practice of eating together or sharing utensils.

Food left after a meal is jutha and that touched by hand becomes juthi. If the hands are washed, then the food becomes suthar but he would not eat hers. The wife could eat from the husband’s utensils but the husband would not eat from the wife’s. A child can eat its parents’ jutha but parents will not eat the child’s. To eat another’s jutha is the greatest of impurities. Thus, the lowest of the untouchables eat the food remaining after a feast and accept bread from all castes.

An increasing feature of social life is the acceptance of china plates, which, according to orthodox beliefs, become jutha after use. Traditionally clay pots were used and thrown away, and at marriages and feasts leaf, plates were used. Many Pandas maintain the old customs but, increasingly, china tea services are used and, like tables and charis, are even regarded as status symbolic. They are commonly given at the time of marriage.

When everyone has eaten, the cooking utensils are placed where no one can touch them in almirahs and the used pots are collected and cleaned. They are scrubbed with ash and the metal pots rubbed with bhabhar grass, which is formed into a scourer (kuncha). When everything has been put away, the kitchen is washed, with water if the floor is pakka and with water and clay if it is kacca. The culha and angithi (bucket filled with coke, sawdust, etc.), are also washed and coated with water and clay. They then become pure whereas before they were jutha. This process has several names—culha potana, pocha
View of Har Ki Pauri

Panda doing Pooja for his Jajmans
A Panda Conducting Funerary Ritual
Panda at Work
Pandini at her Daily Devotion
pherna, pochna. After the kitchen has been washed, it is closed until the women cook again.

If there is a cauka system, then generally only Pandas (both men and women) are allowed to enter the kitchen when food is being cooked or eaten. Other Gaur Brahmins who are intimate friends may be allowed to enter. All must have bathed and be wearing a fresh dhoti whether they belong to the samaj or not.

Kacchi roti to the Pandas implies phulkas (the popular name for roti or capatis), boiled rice, dal (lentils), karchi (curry) and with them all the foodstuffs cooked at the same time in the same place. Khir, a very popular pudding made of rice, is kacchi if water has been poured into the milk and if it is cooked without ghi.

All other foods are pakki—puris, parathas, kacauris, vegetables, sweets, khir (if it is prepared without water and with ghi). Anyting prepared at the same times as pakki roti will be pakvan (i.e., pakka food). For pakki roti, men and women from the three dvij castes can enter the kitchen after first washing their feet.

To sum up, it may be said that the traditional status of Pandas has been very high not because of higher caste, but also due to sacred profession. They were regarded in high esteem and were not always after money. Their relations with their patrons were very cordial. Their traditional role has been to perform last rites of the deceased and to keep records of the deceased. They also performed pooja on behalf of their jajmans who visited the holy city of Hardwar. The Pandas perform all their ritual duties near the bank of the Ganges. They conduct the death ceremonies in general at Kusghat, and Ganga pooja and the immersion of the ashes at Har Ki Pauri. Other rites (mundan, yajhopavit, sughnitari, godan, etc.) take place at both ghats.
3.3 NEW TRENDS AMONG THE PANDAS

Today, young Pandas may allow into their kitchen those whom they like, and they realise very well that no one wishes to be discriminated against, whatever their caste. However, there is still little social visiting for food (except at feasts, marriages, political gatherings, etc.) which does not take place between Pandas and, more usually, between relatives. This is despite the fact that many Pandas, through their work, school or college, mix with people of many castes. There is a tendency for the kitchen to be regarded as the focus of domestic purity and for Pandas who have friends from other castes, to bring them food in the baithak (sitting room) or to eat in a cafe outside.

It is felt, however, (sometimes fatalistically), that, since the Government is a secular one for which caste does not exist, this sort of system with its emphasis on ritual purity will soon disappear.

A Panda will go to the house of a Ksatriy or a Vaisya and eat pakki roti, but all local inhabitants know that Pandas eat only kacci roti at the hands of a family member of perhaps another Brahman. If they want Pandas to eat kacci roti with them, they will call a Brahman cook.

Where there is great intimacy, custom does not weigh heavily and the individual Panda makes his own decisions. Young boys at school generally eat with whom they like and do not worry about kacca / pakka. And even if they would inwardly like to maintain the distinctions observed by their elders, they will feel shame to do so before others. Those who are friends will disregard eating restrictions, but even young Pandas do not usually eat with Sudras.

3.4 HIERARCHY AND COMMENSALITY AMONG PANDAS

Although the norms of Panda society regarding the acceptance of food are well known, they are too broad to indicate any kind of detailed caste...
hierarchy. The Pandas associate all the twice-born castes together as persons from whom they may take pakka food. In practice, there is widespread difference from family to family and individual-to-individual over the acceptance of food, (women are usually expected to be much more orthodox than men). Pandas wish to please and to impress their pilgrims and they will judge for themselves how to act within the traditional guidelines. A Panda who eats roti from a caste which claims Ksatriy status, but is usually regarded as Sudras, will thereby gratify his jajmuns enormously. Similarly, in the circumstances of modern life, individual Pandas will be offered food in variety of settings. How far they preserve their orthodoxy is a matter of degree, although few would contravene the rules very far. Faced by hospitality, which is unacceptable, a Panda will find many ways of politely refusing what he does not wish to eat or drink. He can plead indigestion or a recent meal or he can take the food and not eat it. For some Pandas, his acceptance of food provides an instance of conflict in their own values. Some who are orthodox allow themselves latitude with friends or colleagues now and again. The few who believe to some extent in equality and count caste prejudice as superstition often find the practical expression of such beliefs personally difficult, and they conceal such expression from their community brothers. They then become confused about their own hypocrisy and inaction.

Thus, whatever the position of the Panda and however simple or "advanced", the interactional analysis advocated by Marriott cannot be wholly successful in a Panda setting. The criteria of the Pandas are too general and their actual practice so complex. It is probable that Hardwar is too large and too heterogeneous for such a matrix to be useful. Many communities simply never come into contact while immigrants to the town think in terms of the local hierarchies of their natal region. In Kankhal and Jwalapur, the ritual superiority
of the Pandas means that they have little interest in precise hierarchical rankings. To those in the centre of the hierarchy, the scale based on commensality might be of more significance.

One of the duties and pleasures of the women is to sing at important functions. Relatives, neighbours and friends congregate separately from the man and sit on the ground, sometimes for hours, to sing and play the tabla and dholak. Sometimes, the younger women are encouraged to dance and special anklets are passed from one to another. They dance only in front of each other and, if men happen to see them, they feel great shame and at once stop dancing. Occasionally, boys hide themselves and try to watch.

The women sing particularly at times of great happiness, (eg., the birth of a son, the celebration of a marriage, etc.,) and on important festivals. They also sing at katha and kirtan, and a few sing individually at the request of others who want to hear religious or devotional songs (bhajan). On each occasion, different songs are sung. Some are traditional, others are chosen by the women. Today, songs from films are also popular. Those which are customary and which accompany life-crisis ritual and festivals are frequently repetitive. Each stanza mentions a different relative and the song is prolonged until all the relatives have been named. The women often interpolate their own comments and joke among themselves.

Two types of song are sung which are locally called byahi (badhai) and ghor. When a son is born, the women go every day for ten days to sing, although only the nearest relatives sit throughout the day. Professional singers (women) also sit and play the dholak and lead the singing.

The women gather only for one or two days. Sometimes, when a great feast is given, they make more elaborate arrangements for singing and dancing.
(khora). They sing songs of blessing and songs from popular films, during 'namkaran sanskar'.

Some families celebrate mundan when the child is six months, others much later. The timing depends mainly upon the family tradition, but occasionally women make vows to a god or goddess to perform the mundan of their child at a particular time (for example, some Panda women before or during pregnancy make vows at the temple of Mansa Devi). The women sing only for one or two days at this time.

Fewer Pandas today celebrate 'anaprasan' rite and it is one of the sanskars that are becoming rarer. After this rite, the young child may eat grain and it signifies the transition from a milk diet to one that includes solid food. The father generally provides a feast for his guests who, in turn, bless the child and give him money (tika, tilak). Close friends and relatives give toys, clothes and ornaments. The women gather for two or three days to sing and enjoy themselves.

Some parents celebrate their children's birthday by inviting relatives to take food or tea with them. They can give a party, which is either traditional or more 'modern', but in both cases the child will perform puja and donate to a Brahman or to a temple. The women go and sing if they have time and their singing usually takes the form of kirtan. Sacred thread investiture is an important celebration for Panda families and the women gather to sing and rejoice for two or three days.

Singing begins from the day of sagai or rokna in both the girl's and boy's houses. Formerly, the women sang daily but now they sing only on special occasions such as rokna, sagai and teva. Before the actual ceremony of marriage, they sing from the day of ban and haldi, which may be celebrated
eleven, nine, seven, five or even three days before. In exceptional circumstances—for example, if the boy is in service outside Hardwar—it may be fixed for the day before. The women sing at the times fixed for religious ceremonial—for example, ban at 2 p.m., haldi at 4 p.m. They may simple sing one song and depart or they may continue together for several hours.

On the day of the marriage, the women sit inside and sing songs of blessing and good fortune. When the boy’s party (barat) is being served with food, they sing songs of abuse (sithna). On the day after the marriage, the relatives of the boy gather to sing and dance in anticipation of the arrival of the girl and women from the sweeper community are particularly invited. It is a time when the Panda women arrive in gorgeous saris, ornaments and elaborate hair styles (most Panda women adopt a very high hair style in which the hair is tucked under or plaited around a bun). On the girl’s side there is juhari or milai which takes place after vida, the departure of the girl with her husband. Friends and relatives of the boy (women) come to the girl’s house in the evening or night and are honoured by feasting and offers of milk and almond milk. They are also presented with some rupees according to the closeness of their relationship to the boy. Mother’s brother’s wife gives to mother’s brother’s wife, sister to sister, father’s sister to father’s sister, etc. At this time also, the women sing—sometimes peaceably and sometimes provocatively.

The work attached to the marriage is now over and some time is given over to worship, to katha and to kirtan. There is a day on which both sides in their own houses give thanks to the goddess Annapurna and worship her by feeding some Brahmans and relatives (with kacci, roti, karhi and rice). They also generally sing devotional songs. The last day on which katha and kirtan are sung is called Curbur. This is the day when the women gather up the food
left over from the marriage and take it to the temple of Daksa in Kankhal. They worship Ganges, Shiva and Sitala Mata and present them with the food. As they go from Jwalapur to Kankhal and back again, it is traditional for the women to sing holy songs. Previously, they went by bullock carts and tongas but now rickshaws and taxis are as common.

When an old man with grandsons and great-grandsons dies, leaving behind property and money, then the heir and the women connected with the heir try to treat the death as a time of rejoicing. On the day of the death, the women weep according to custom and they sing what are locally known as 'ulahni' (laments). They speak of the death as a marriage "Buddhi / buddhe ka pyah hai". The dead body is decorated and the arthi (the bamboo frame on which the body is carried) is often made into the shape of a viman (chariot) and adorned with fruits, flowers and balloons. On the death journey or manjal (manzil or, in Sanskrit, Savyatra), the phrase "Ram nam satya hai" or some similar phrase (eg. "Gopal nam satya hai") is chanted.

For thirteen days, the women collect in the dead man's house to lament—they praise the dead man and exclaim how much property he had, what a great family, etc. The twelfth or thirteenth day is the most important day for this purpose and relatives and friends gather together and sing special songs. Sweets, malas of sweets and flowers, dry fruits and rupees are presented to the chief women of the house (a custom called pinni). At this time also, the women sing.

The women also gather to sing or many festivals. I will only describe two very briefly. Holi is thought of as the most pleasurable festival in Hardwar (or indeed India), though several Pandas find it too extrovert and undisciplined. In the Panda community, songs are sung for about six or seven days before Holi and for one after (which is known as Phag or Dhulemri). The women sit together
and sing Holi songs. On the night of Holi and the day of Phag, they go about in parties stopping at each house to throw coloured water and powders (gulal) and to kiss each other. Any joke is permissible but quarrels also occur. The women sing special songs about Holi, about Lord Krishna, the gopis, Sita-Ram, Shiva, Parvati, etc. Sravan Suklatij is another great day of enjoyment and fun. The women spend much of the day swinging in the houses in Jwalapur or Kankhal, or in Hardwar across the Ganges where swings are erected. His mother does this in honour of Lord Krishna who was swing in such a way. Neighbours and friends in the mohalla come to enjoy the Jhulas and the women sing special songs and sometimes dance.

Women frequently sing in kathas and kirtan. These may be arranged on any day and at any time, but they usually take place on a festival or fast day or puja function. Satyanarayan is the most popular katha and is usually performed on auspicious days, such as purnima and ekadasi. During this katha, the women pray to Visnu, and before and after kirtan, devotional songs are often sung. The Srimad Bhagvat Katha (Saptaparayan) is also popular. The first half of each day is usually given over to the Sanskrit reading, and the second half of the Hindi. Seven functionaries are needed—one to read the Sanskrit, another to translate and five to perform jap (usually of the Gayatri mantra). This katha is thought to be very effective if performed in the correct way. Other katha of ten read are those of the Harivams Puran and Navanhaporayan (nine days' reading of the Ramayan).