

# India and Dual Organisation [Concluded]

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# India and Dual Organisation.

(Concluded.)

By W. KOPPERS.

## 6. *The system of "right-hand" and "left-hand" groups as found in South East India.*

### *a) Introductory Remarks.*

Among the inhabitants of South East India there exists a form of dual grouping which has long been known to students as the right-hand and left-hand system, and the question whether this organisation shows traces of ethnological dual classification has been raised at repeated intervals. We have already had occasion to refer to VON EHRENFELS' recent re-examination of the problem and to point out that our conclusions differ from his. His representation of the case is, in our opinion, somewhat one-sided inasmuch as he, like his predecessors, has regarded it too exclusively from the ethnological and not sufficiently from the indological point of view. Here as in the case of so many other Indian questions both aspects must be borne in mind. The following inquiry has, to the best of our ability, been conducted along these lines. We are fully aware that it can have no claim to completeness, if for no other reason than because many of the relevant publications are not for the moment available. The conclusions arrived at would, however, appear to be so firmly established that no substantial change is to be expected from further evidence.

The division into right-hand and left-hand groups is to be found chiefly in the Madras Presidency and in Mysore State. Dravida tribes speaking Tamil, Telugu and Kanara are the principal ones to be considered. Towards the West, in Malabar, this classification is to be found only in one group of tribes, the Châliyans, who are known to have come from the East and to have moved West at a comparatively recent date <sup>48</sup>.

### *b) G. OPPERT on the Problem.*

Already fifty years ago GUSTAV OPPERT <sup>49</sup> inquired pretty ex-

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<sup>48</sup> E. Thurston and K. Rangachari, "Castes and Tribes of Southern India." Vol. II, p. 11. Madras 1909.

<sup>49</sup> "On the original Inhabitants of Bharatavarṣa or India." Westminster 1893. p. 57-66. We find no mention of *Oppert* in *von Ehrenfels'* study of the "Dual System in India" but it figures in the bibliographical list attached to his book on "Mother-Right in India", Hyderabad, Deccan, 1941.

tensively into the problem of right-hand and left-hand classification and we owe it to this author who, all things considered, saw fairly clearly in the matter, to give his exposition due study and attention.

It appears that the right-hand and left-hand system of classification is limited to South India. It has its centre at Kāñcīpuram (= Conjeeveram), "seat of so many religious and political dissensions," situated about forty miles West South West of Madras. The date of its origin is unknown. There are, however, serious reasons for assuming that it is not of great antiquity. Its introduction and propagation were probably connected with the restoration of Brahmanism in South India and may therefore in the main be referred to the eleventh century of our era. At that time the decline of Jainism offered to Brahmanism (Hinduism) an opening of which it availed itself with cleverness and zeal. OPPERT sees a further reason for assigning a not too early date to the beginnings of right and left hand classification in the following fact: "As the Pallar and the Pariahs belong to different hands and Velluvar are the priests of both, the division into right-hand and left-hand castes must very probably have taken place after the Velluvar had obtained this position <sup>51</sup>." The author concedes, however, that the right-hand and left-hand system "was already an acknowledged institution <sup>52</sup>" in the time of the great reformer Rāmānujācārya whose activity also falls within the eleventh century.

OPPERT tells us more particularly of two attempts to explain the origin of this classification. The first connects it with the great Brahmin, *Veda Vyāsa*, who is said to have suppressed the fifth (more of this anon!) Veda to the disadvantage of the Pancālar or Kammālar and to have worked upon the king to have them grouped with the left hand castes. The other version describes the division as having been inaugurated at Kāñcīpuram and tells us "that, when the two opposed parties brought their complaints before the Pallava king reigning over the Cōla country, the Kammālar, Beri Cetties and their friends were sitting on the left hand of the king and the Vellālar and their adherents on the right hand. The right hand is regarded by the Kammālar as the place of honour <sup>54</sup>."

As regards the allusion to the suppression of the fifth Veda, we should like to draw attention already now to the fact (passed over by OPPERT) that the Tantras are sometimes designated by this

<sup>50</sup> l. c., p. 61.

<sup>51</sup> l. c., p. 61.

<sup>52</sup> l. c., p. 62.

<sup>53</sup> l. c., p. 58.

<sup>54</sup> l. c., p. 59.

name<sup>55</sup>. Other connections between Tantrism and Śaktism on the one side and the division into right-hand and left-hand castes on the other, are by no means lacking, as will be shown in detail later on. OPPERT, however, very rightly points out that the reference to any connection with a fifth Veda is in itself sufficient indication of a comparatively young institution<sup>56</sup>. That the left-hand side could also be accounted a place of honour was, as we have seen, known to OPPERT, at least where the Kammâlar were concerned, and that "in Madura the Chakkili women belong to the right-hand and their husbands to the left-hand<sup>57</sup>" seems also to have come within his ken. Finally he was aware of the fact that among certain castes, a number of the members can belong to the right-hand and the others to the left-hand group<sup>58</sup>.

OPPERT's relatively excellent knowledge of the facts is shown by the long lists in which he gives the names of the various right-hand and left-hand groups<sup>59</sup> at the same time drawing attention to the peculiarities and privileges which distinguish the rival groups from each other. It is usually a question of the possession and utilisation of certain emblems, banners, instruments, etc. as also of the right to use certain routes for their processions, to enter certain temples and such things. That causes for ever recurring differences and quarrels were in this way given, is evident. "The quarrels and actual fights which occurred between these hostile parties have given rise to much litigation before Magistrates and Judges, especially in the Chingleput and North Arcot districts<sup>60</sup>."

Large masses of the population thus came to be separated by a considerable gulf, owing to this division into right-hand and left-hand castes. That it was not merely a question of opposition between farmers on the one side and traders and craftsmen on the other (as had formerly been sometimes suggested and in more recent times repeated by THURNWALD<sup>61</sup>) was clear already to OPPERT. There is often quite considerable overlapping between the two categories of workers and the two factions. OPPERT<sup>62</sup> was also able to point out the remarkable fact that the Brahmins are in no way involved in this classification but stand aside (or perhaps at

<sup>55</sup> A. S. Geden, ERE, XII, 1921, p. 192: "They [the Tantras] are also known as a fifth or the fifth Veda by those who regard them as authoritative and observe the ritual which they enjoin."

<sup>56</sup> l. c., p. 60.

<sup>57</sup> l. c., p. 66.

<sup>58</sup> l. c., p. 62.

<sup>59</sup> l. c., p. 59 ff., p. 64 ff.

<sup>60</sup> l. c., p. 59. Cf. also p. 63 f.

<sup>61</sup> "Die menschliche Gesellschaft", II, Berlin 1932, p. 152.

<sup>62</sup> l. c., p. 58.

the back of it all?). It is, however, true, he tells us, that Brahmanism has found a certain support among the agricultural castes, thus forming a contrast to Jainism whose sphere of influence is, or at least used to be, more limited to the traders and workers of the towns of South India <sup>63</sup>. Under these circumstances no one will deny that there are grounds for assuming that it was the Brahmins (Hindus) who, with a view to furthering their own ends, called into being, or at least favoured the growth of the right-hand and left-hand factions. OPPERT never puts this conclusion expressly into words but his way of setting forth the facts points strongly in this direction. We shall soon see that other evidence can be brought forward in favour of this assumption, which will also serve to show that OPPERT's rejection of any possible relation between right-hand and left-hand organisation on the one side and the śaktic "right-hand way" and "left-hand way" <sup>64</sup> on the other is by no means such a matter of course as he thinks.

*c) The Problem in the Light of more Recent Research.*

New material with regard to the right-hand and left-hand system of classification to be found in South India has, since OPPERT's time, been brought to light chiefly in the well-known publications of F. THURSTON <sup>65</sup> (and K. RANGACHARI) and of (H. V. NANJUNDAYYA and) L. K. ANANTHAKRISHNA JYER <sup>66</sup> to whom, like VON EHRENFELS, I am of course primarily indebted for information. The fact that the really primitive tribes, such as the Kadar, Irula, etc., are not affected by this system of classification has already been brought forward by VON EHRENFELS. Recent research has also confirmed OPPERT's opinion that the Brahmins, as such, have nothing to do with this form of organisation which affects the broader masses of peasants, workers, craftsmen and tradesmen and which is confined to the districts already specified by OPPERT.

As regards VON EHRENFELS' endeavour to reconstruct out of the confused mass of relevant phenomena relics or features typical of old exogamous grouping, we can only acknowledge that he has

<sup>63</sup> l. c., p. 58, p. 62.

<sup>64</sup> "The division of the Śakti worshippers or Śāktas in Dakṣinācāris and Vāmācāris has nothing in common with the right- or left-hand caste. This difference concerns merely the pūjā, inasmuch as the *dakṣinācāra*, the right observance, allows only milk, fruit cakes made of black-gram, and other sweetmeats and sweet drinks, while the *vāmācāra*, the left or adverse observance, permits, besides the mentioned eatables and drinks, meat and liquors also." (l. c., p. 66.)

<sup>65</sup> "Castes and Tribes of Southern India." Vol. I-VII. Madras 1909.

<sup>66</sup> "The Mysore Tribes and Castes." Vol. II-IV, Mysore 1928-1931.

extracted from the given material all that was humanly possible. That the result, in spite of his efforts, remains meagre and unsatisfactory is recognized by the author himself although he very pardonably seeks to stress the positive value of his research. If we assign somewhat less importance to his conclusions than does VON EHRENFELS himself, it is above all because we are at pains to view the problem not merely from the ethnological but also (at least considerably more so than VON EHRENFELS) from the indological side. The phenomena which VON EHRENFELS interprets, or would fain interpret as survivals of the dual classification known to ethnology admit of this interpretation, it is true, but might also, in our opinion, in every single case be traced back to Hindu influence. I am confirmed in this opinion by the very marked degree to which all the tribes practising right-hand and left-hand grouping have evidently since time immemorial been subject to this influence. Within the wide domain of South Indian right-hand and left-hand classification there is not one example of clear and incontestible dual organisation such as we find among the Garos<sup>67</sup> of Assam. On the other hand we have seen in the case of the Bhils, Bhilalas, Mundas, Bhûiyâs and Gonds how pseudo-dual systems or similar classifications are envolved under the influence of Aryan Hinduism. It should be remembered in this connection that generally speaking Hindu influence is, or must have been, considerably stronger among those peoples of Southern India who are characterised by right-hand and left-hand grouping, than among the above-named tribes of Central India. It is therefore evident that the nature and extent of the influence of Hinduism upon the right-hand and left-hand groups of South India needs to be studied with careful attention before any definite conclusions can be drawn.

*d) Hindu Influence in General.*

When re-examining the sources treating of the tribes and castes affected by right-hand and left-hand grouping, I made a special note of such cultural phenomena as immediately strike a familiar cord in the mind of the student conversant with Indology. It would be a waste of time and space to give the illustrative quotations in full. A short résumé of constantly recurring features will suffice to show how deep-rooted and how extended is the influence of Hinduism upon the peoples divided into right-hand and left-hand factions. Thus we constantly read of "highly organized tribes (castes)," of "infant marriage," of widows being forbidden to remarry, of Brahmins who act as chaplains to the different tribes

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<sup>67</sup> A. Playfaire, "The Garos." London 1909, p. 64-66.

and castes. Members of the right-hand and left-hand factions wear the Brahmin cord and certain groups aver that they belong to the Brahmins or even stand above them. In the myths and legends which are supposed to throw light upon the origin of the tribes and castes in question, it is Hindu gods and goddesses (*Śiva*, *Pârvatî*, *Viṣṇu*) who frequently play the principal part. *Devadasi* (temple prostitution) is also relatively wide-spread among these groups, who are often described as being by religion Śaivites, Lin-gâ-yats and Viṣṇuites.

*e) Relics of Tantrism and Śaktism in the Left-Hand Group.*

Besides these more general affinities with Hinduism we find phenomena directly recalling Tantrism and Śaktism. It is a known fact that the cult of the mother-goddess plays a great rôle in South India and that she is particularly revered under the form of female village deities, known as *Grâma Devata*. It would of course be misleading to assume Śaktic influence in all these cases, but it calls for attention when this divinity appears under the name of *Kâmâkṣi*, because the central shrine of Śaktism at Gauhati (*Kâmârûpa*) is dedicated to *Kâlî-Durga* under this title of *Kâmâkṣi*<sup>68</sup>. There are serious grounds for thinking that the ancient and celebrated temple of *Kâmâkṣi* at Conjeeveram<sup>69</sup> (*Kâñcîpuram*) is in some way connected with the temple and cult of *Kâmâkṣi* at *Kâmârûp*. This would fit in well with the fact that there is evidence of direct relations between Assam (*Kâmârûpa*!) and South India during the period preceding the activities of Śaṅkara<sup>70</sup>.

The rôle played by Conjeeveram in the rise of right-hand and left-hand grouping will be described in greater detail later on. For

<sup>68</sup> Cf. *Koppers*, "Probleme der indischen Religionsgeschichte." *Anthropos*, XXXV-XXXVI, 1940-1941, p. 761-814. Cf. p. 775.

<sup>69</sup> *J. H. Maclean*, article on "*Kâñcîpuram* (Conjeeveram)" in *ERE*, VII, 1914, 644-648. *Maclean* derives the name *Kâñcîpuram* from the Tamil *Kachchi* and rejects the usual explanation: *Kâñcîpuram* = 'Golden City'. "The attempt to connect it with *kâñc* ('to shine') is fanciful." Conjeeveram is a clumsy European version of the name. *Kâñci* signifies "A woman's zone or girdle." In a legend contained in the *Vâyupurâna* there is mention of an incarnation of "*Kâñci* in the organ of generation." (*Ramâprasâd Chanda*, "The Indo-Aryan Races. A Study of the Origin of Indo-Aryan People and Institutions." Rajshahi 1916, p. 178.) Seen in this light, *Kâñci* would of course appear even more intimately connected with the whole *Kâmâkṣi* complex and the change from Tamil *Kachchi* to *Kâñci* would be more comprehensible.

<sup>70</sup> *B. Kakati*, "The Kalitâ Caste of Assam." *New Indian Antiquary*, II, 332 to 339. Bombay 1939. "That some sort of cultural intercourse existed between Assam and Southern India is shown by the presence of ancient Assamese scholars in the south" (p. 335). The author subsequently mentions two such 'Kâmârûpa scholars'.

the moment it suffices to point out that no less a personage than Śaṅkara, the great Hindu philosopher and reformer of the 9th century A.D., opened a campaign at Conjeeveram against the offering of human sacrifices to the goddess *Kāmākṣi*. It is believed that the statue of Śaṅkara, which is still to be seen in the temple of *Kāmākṣi* at Conjeeveram, is a memorial to his victory <sup>71</sup>.

The temple of *Kāmākṣi* at Conjeeveram is not, however, the only point of contact. A closer examination of the relevant data shows that *Kāmākṣi* is expressly mentioned as the chief divinity of a number of our groups and castes and that her cult is in many cases associated with features which are typical of Śaktism and Tantrism. To my great surprise I was also able to collect evidence that *all groups and castes who are reported as worshipping Kāmākṣi belong to the left-hand side, a fact which, so far as I know, has not yet been remarked by anyone.*

Foremost among these is the great group of the goldsmiths, or Kammālans, so called in the Tamil speaking districts. Among the Telugus they have their counterpart in the Kamsâlas while in Mysore they go by the name of Pâñchâlas. They all belong to the left-hand group. Of the worship of *Kāmākṣi* among the Kammâlans THURSTON writes as follows: "The caste, however, has its own special goddess *Kāmākshi Amma*, who is commonly spoken of as *Vriththi Daivam* . . . The exact connection of the goddess *Kāmākshi* with the caste is not known. There is, however, a vague tradition that she was one of the virgins who committed suicide by throwing herself into a fire, and was in consequence deified." There is further mention of animal sacrifices in honour of *Grâma devata* (and certainly also of *Kāmākṣi*) although the Kammâlan ordinarily claim to be vegetarians <sup>72</sup>. Of the Kamsâla we read: "The Kamsâlas are either Mâdhvas, Saivites, or Lingâyats. All revere the caste goddess *Kāmākshi Amma*, who is represented by each sub-division in a special manner. Thus the Kanchâra [Malabar caste, manufacturers of brass vessels] represents her by the stone on which he

<sup>71</sup> Maclean, l. c., p. 646. According to *H. v. Glasenapp* ("Heilige Stätten Indiens." Munich 1928, p. 89) Śaṅkara's relation to *Kāmākṣi* was a different one. "Śaṅkara, whose image is still venerated in the temple, is supposed by performing certain special rites to have renewed the declining magic powers of the goddess." It might prove difficult to decide which interpretation is the more correct. Possibly both can be justified, inasmuch as each originated independently in a different mental and religious atmosphere. Maclean, by the way, qualifies his own version by the remark: "The legend is only one out of innumerable stories which cluster round the temples of *Kāñchi*, and may be of no more historical value than any other." Be this as it may, the importance of the cult of *Kāmākṣi* as once practised at Kāñcīpuram is sufficiently clear.

<sup>72</sup> Thurston, l. c., III, 111 f., 109.



beats his metal work, the goldsmith by one of his implements, and the blacksmith by his bellows <sup>73</sup>." Of the Pânc'hâlas THURSTON tells us: "There are both Śaivas and Vaishnavas among the Pânc'hâlas. Of the Śaivas, some are Lingâyats . . . *Kâlîka devi* or *Kâlamma* or *Kâmâkshi Amma* and *Kapardesvara*, their tribal gods, are worshipped both by Śaivas and Vaishnavas, though they belong to the Śaiva group of gods <sup>74</sup>."

Another similar group is that of the Mâdigas, the workers in leather of the Telugu country, and their fellow craftsmen among the Tamils, where they are called Chakkiliyans. Both Mâdigas and Chakkiliyans belong to the left-hand group. The chief divinity of the Mâdiga is *Mâtangi* or *Durgā*. ". . . the Mâdigas call themselves Mâtangi Makkalu or children of *Mâtangi* or *Durgā*, who is their goddess <sup>75</sup>." It is well to note in this connection that in tantristic Buddhism the chief goddess is known as *Mâtangi* and this name is there also given to *Śiva*'s wife <sup>76</sup>. The name *Kâmâkṣi* does not appear to be used by this group, but, besides the above mentioned name *Mâtangi* we find various features of religious worship which point directly towards Tantrism-Śaktism. Among the Mâdigas young girls are consecrated to the goddess *Mâtangi* and a sort of incarnation of *Mâtangi* is spoken of in this connection. Girls who have been so consecrated or "initiated" ("possession" by the goddess also plays a rôle) form a special class of prostitutes. "We are informed that there was an old palmyra-leaf manuscript in existence describing the institution and the ceremonies (mostly tantric and phallic) in detail <sup>77</sup>." Male individuals also undergo a similar "initiation" among the Mâdigas. They are then known as Asâdis, "musicians who sing songs and recite stories about Ellammâ", the mother-goddess who, we are further told, "is the cause of the universe, and the one *Śakti* in existence <sup>78</sup>." "The employment of Chakkiliyans and Mâdiga women in *Śakti* worship <sup>79</sup>" points to ancient relations with the cult of *Kâlî-Durgā* and classic Śaktism. The Chakkiliyans are, as we have already mentioned, distinguished by the peculiarity that the men belong to the right-hand castes, the women to the left-hand ones. Other differences are also described as existing

<sup>73</sup> Thurston, l. c., p. 147.

<sup>74</sup> L. K. Ananthakrishna Jyer, l. c., IV, p. 464.

<sup>75</sup> Thurston, l. c., IV, p. 298.

<sup>76</sup> L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Bouddhisme. Opinions sur l'Histoire de la Dogmatique". Paris 1909, p. 386.

<sup>77</sup> Thurston, l. c., p. 305.

<sup>78</sup> Thurston, l. c., p. 305 f.

<sup>79</sup> Thurston, l. c., p. 317. Cf. also II, 2. "Their (Chakkiliyan) women are considered to be very beautiful, and it is a woman of this caste who is generally selected for the coarser form of *Śakti* worship."

between the Mâdigas in the North and the Chakkiliyans in the South. Were the remoter Chakkiliyans perhaps only superficially affected by the institution of right-hand and left-hand grouping?

It is worth mentioning in this connection that the left-hand groups are reported as having in the course of their incessant quarrels with the right-hand castes repeatedly accused the latter of robbing them of their mother-goddess. This reproach is, for instance, raised by the left-hand Mâdigas against the right-hand Kômatis. "The Mâdigas claim *Kannika* [= *Kanyaka Amma* of the Kômatis] as their goddess, worship her under the name of *Mâtangi* and object to the Kômatis taking their goddess. The Kômatis stoutly deny that there is any connection between *Mâtangi* and *Kanyaka Amma*, and it would seem that they are independent goddesses<sup>80</sup>." A similar accusation is brought against the right-hand Padma Sâles by the left-hand Devângas. "The Padma Sâles belong to the right-hand, and the Devângas to the left-hand faction, and the latter aver that the Padma Sâles took away the body of the goddess Chaudeswari, leaving them the head<sup>81</sup>."

*f) Peculiarities of the Right-Hand Group.*

If we next consider the features peculiar to the right-hand group we are at once struck by two phenomena: first the special control exercised over many of the right-hand castes by the so-called Desai (Desâyi) and on the other the badge of office by which the Desai is known: a large cup-shaped spoon with a bell attached to it. The best account of this matter is given by THURSTON<sup>82</sup> (who is indebted to S. M. NATESA SASTRI for his facts). We shall content ourselves with giving the substance of his remarks. "The word Desâiyi means 'of the country'. For almost every tâluk in the North Arcot district there is a headman, called the Desâyi Chetti, who may be said in a manner to correspond to a Justice of the Peace. The headmen belong to the Kavarai or Baliya caste, their family name being Dhanapâla—a common name among the Kavarais—which may be interpreted as 'the protector of wealth'. The Dhanapâla Desâyi Chetti holds sway over eighteen<sup>83</sup> castes, Kavarai, Uppara, Lambâdi, Jôgi, Idiga, Paraiyan, etc. All those that are called *Valangai*, or right-hand caste, fall within his jurisdiction<sup>84</sup>." The Desâyi Chetti has his assistants who aid him in the exercise of his call-

<sup>80</sup> *Thurston*, l. c., III, p. 331.

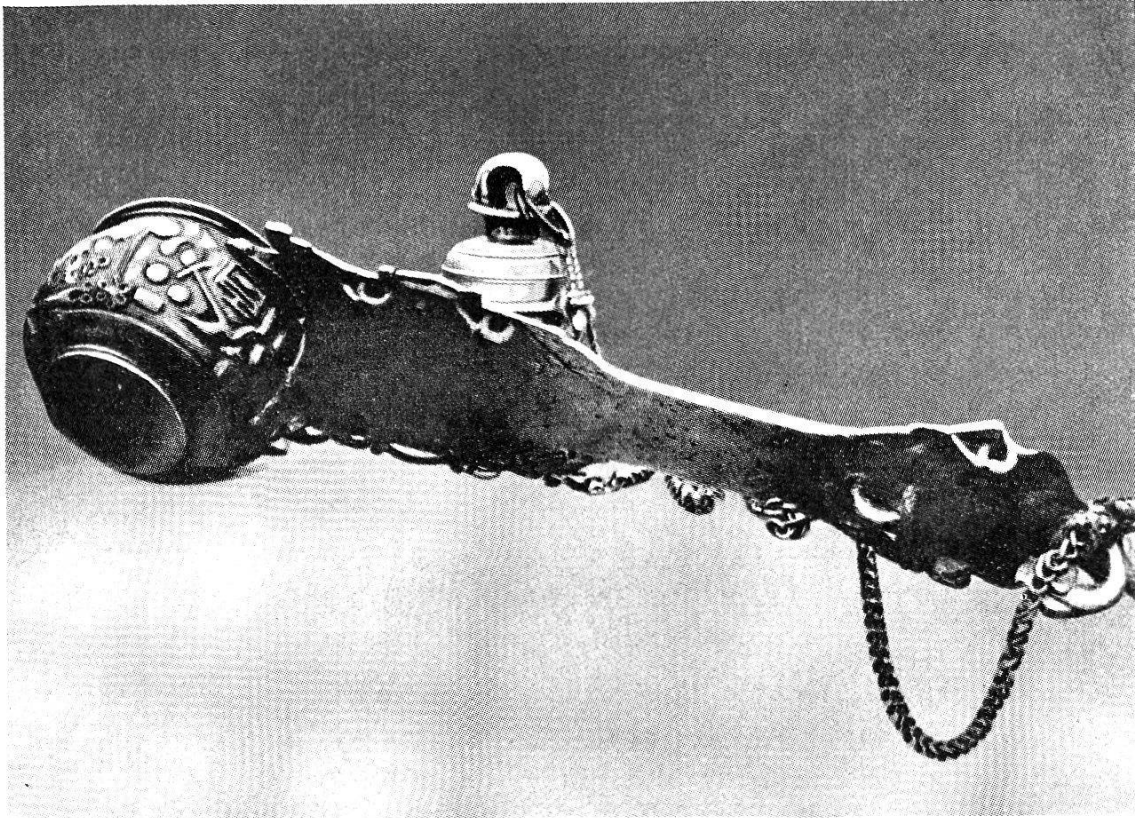
<sup>81</sup> *Thurston*, l. c., V, 449 f.

<sup>82</sup> l. c., II, 121-124.

<sup>83</sup> We shall have more to say later on of the significance of eighteen as the number of right-hand castes. *W. K.*

<sup>84</sup> *Thurston*, l. c., p. 121.

ing, among others a horn-blower who announces the coming of the Desâiyi when the latter visits a village. We are told that on these occasions all the personal needs of the Desâiyi are most carefully looked after (he is liberally supplied with articles of food). His emblem is then described as follows:



*Fig. 9.* Desaiy's ceremonial spoon with bell attached.  
(E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, vol. II, p. 123.)

“A large cup-shaped spoon is the ensign of the Desâiyi. On the outer surface, all round its edge, are carved in relief eighteen figures, each one being typical of one of the castes of which the Desâiyi is the social head. Under each figure is inscribed in Tamil the name of the caste which that figure typifies. The figures are smeared with red powder and sandal, and decorated with flowers. The menial, taking up the cup, rings the bell attached to it, to summon the parties. As soon as the sound is heard, the castemen amongst whom any offence has occurred, assemble, each house in the village being represented by a member, so as to make up a panchâyat (council).” After hearing and examining the case or cases the Desâiyi gives his decision. For this he is always rewarded, and with money. If he is not personally able to deal with all the cases, then he may sell a part of his jurisdiction to a relative for hundreds or even thousands of rupees <sup>85</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> *Thurston*, II, p. 124.

The office of Desâyi is, as we have seen, regarded as a prerogative of the Baliya caste, which is to be found in the Telugu country. It is composed of traders and peasants and has, from all appearances, once known better days and been of higher rank. (Ksatriya?) In describing the Baliyas THURSTON<sup>86</sup> brings further data bearing upon the question we are examining. "In former days they had very great influence, and all castes belonging to the right-hand faction would obey the Desâyi Chetti. Even at the present day the Oddes and others refer their disputes to the Desâyi, and not to their own caste headman<sup>87</sup>." Formerly there were three important Desâyis who had their respective headquarters at Conjeeveram and two smaller places more to the South, Cuddalore and Walajapet (= Valajabad). "The head Desâyi possesses a biruthu (insigne of office) in the form of a large brass ladle with a bell attached to it<sup>88</sup>." This emblem is entrusted to the custody of the Desâyi's attendant, a Paraiyan, called Chalavathi (= Châlâvadi) who carries it round and rings the bell.

In his article on the "Banajiga" ANANTHAKRISHNA IYER<sup>89</sup> tells us that the Banajigas are identical with the Baliyas, the former name being used in Mysore State while the latter is general in the Madras Presidency. In the Tamil district the same people are known as Kavarais. As regards their religion these Telugu Banajigas are Viṣṇuites, but also worship *Śiva*. "It is written of them that they were originally Buddhists (meaning perhaps Jains), and then adopted Vaiṣṇavism and Saivism, and built many temples for these gods<sup>90</sup>." That Buddhism (or Jainism) is here mentioned as an earlier form of their religion is a point to be noted.

The Mâlas are looked upon as the pariahs of the Telugu country and consequently correspond to the Paraiyans of the Tamil region. "Both Mâlas and Tamil Paraiyans belong to the right-hand section." It is members of the Mâla caste who are chosen as servants of the Desâyi, carrying his brass spoon and also acting as Châlâvadi (or caste messengers<sup>91</sup>). They therefore correspond to the Mâdiga described above. We find further mention of the activity of the Desâyi and of his emblem in connection with the following right-hand castes: Agasas<sup>92</sup>, Kambaras<sup>93</sup>, and Upparas<sup>94</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> *Thurston*, I, p. 134-145.

<sup>87</sup> l. c., p. 138.

<sup>88</sup> l. c.

<sup>89</sup> *Ananthakrishna Jyer*, l. c., II, p. 99-122.

<sup>90</sup> *Ananthakrishna Jyer*, l. c., II, p. 120.

<sup>91</sup> *Thurston*, l. c., IV, p. 330.

<sup>92</sup> *Ananthakrishna Jyer*, l. c., II, p. 11.

<sup>93</sup> l. c., IV, p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> *Thurston*, l. c., VII, p. 651.

Before drawing the necessary conclusions from this résumé of facts connected with the possible origin of right-hand and left-hand grouping, it may be well to take a closer look at the rôle played by Kâñcîpuram.

*g) The Rôle of Kâñcîpuram (Conjeeveram).*

We have already referred to the tradition that the division into right-hand and left-hand castes originated at Kâñcîpuram in the eleventh century under one of the Cola kings. A good summary of the history and special character of Kâñcîpuram is to be found in an article by I. H. MACLEAN<sup>95</sup>. Aryan colonisation set in early here, certainly no later than the second century B.C. Over two thousand years of interesting Indian religious history have followed. Leaving aside the question of indigenous elements, we can trace the succeeding waves of Buddhism<sup>96</sup>, Jainism, Śaivism and Viṣṇuism. In the year 640, when the Chinese traveller HIUEN TSIANG visited these parts, "Kâñci was still a stronghold of the Buddhists". HIUEN speaks of a certain Dharmapâla, "a renowned Buddhist teacher who is said to have flourished shortly before the time of his visit as a native of Kâñci." Beside Buddhism, Jainism also flourished.

The great Hindu philosopher and reformer, Śaṅkara, appears to have lived and worked at Kâñcîpuram at the beginning of the ninth century. We have already mentioned the episode of his "victory" over another Kâñcîpuram celebrity, the goddess *Kâmâkṣi*. Her presence proves that the tide of Tantrism-Śaktism had also reached the city. The Hindu movement of reform, which began in the ninth century, reached its fullest development in the eleventh. It was supported and encouraged by the Cola kings<sup>97</sup> and its principal effort appears at that time to have been directed against Jainism. Râmânuja, the great apostle of Visnuism in South India, may be mentioned as a particularly zealous and respected leader in this attack. His birthplace is situated some twenty miles to the East of Kâñcîpuram. In the light of these facts it is easy to understand

<sup>95</sup> ERE, VII, 1914, p. 644-648.

<sup>96</sup> We have already seen that *Mâtangi*, the chief goddess of tantristic Buddhism, is honoured by the Mâdigas up to the present day (cf. p. 104).

<sup>97</sup> "The explanation of this predominance of Brahmanism probably lies in the influence of the great Cola kings, to whose religious fervour are due the fine temples numerous in this district" (*W. Crooke*, ERE, VI, 1913, p. 692). Further details concerning the Cola rulers are to be found in the Imperial Gazetteer of India, new edition, Oxford 1908, X, p. 326, p. 377 f. It is definitely established that the name Coromandel (Coast) is "a corruption of *Choloman-dalam*, 'the country of the Cholas'" (*ibid.* XI, p. 52). *Kâñci* was subject to the dominion of the Pallava for a very long period.

that the eleventh century in particular is described as a period of intense religious conflict, one of which MACLEAN writes: "The Cola period, as we see from this outline, was a period of controversy and sometimes of persecution . . ."

After the death of Râmânuja his disciples split into two groups, the *Tenkalais* or Southern Sect and the *Vadikalais* or Northern Sect. "One of these parties, the *Tenkalais* or adherents of the southern school, teach that man can be saved by faith alone without any need of contributing to his own redemption by good works. The northern school of the *Vadikalais* is on the contrary of opinion that the grace of God must be merited by moral effort. The former school is said in Hindu parlance to follow the "cat's way" because the cat carries her young in her mouth, without any movement on their part, while the northern school follows the "ape's way" because the baby ape clings with its arms round its mother's neck when she takes it with her<sup>98</sup>." There are further differences between the two schools, which need not, however, be gone into here. What has been said suffices to show that as far back as man can remember, life at Kâñcîpuram was characterised by the struggle between various religious currents and parties. Small wonder if the religious disputes which raged in leading Hindu circles had some repercussion on the lower orders, a repercussion encouraged from above and directed into what were considered suitable channels. It would indeed be difficult to imagine a more ideal setting for such a phenomenon as the dual division into right-hand and left-hand factions than this city of Kâñcîpuram.

*h) Conclusion: Right-Hand and Left-Hand Grouping Offers no Convincing Proof of an Older Exogamous Dual Organisation.*

It is during the great period of controversy, or more accurately in the year 1013 A.D.<sup>99</sup> that tradition places the famous dispute, held under the auspices of the then reigning Cola king and ending in the final division into right-hand and left-hand factions. We read of copper tablets on which the rights of the different castes were engraved and which were deposited somewhere in the temple of *Kâmâkṣi* to serve as a kind of covenant. I do not know whether incontestable proof of the actual existence of these tablets has ever been forthcoming. This point as well as the numerous legends giving different explanations of the origin of right-hand and left-hand grouping (some of which we have quoted on page 98) need,

<sup>98</sup> H. v. Glasenapp, "Heilige Stätten Indiens." Munich 1928, p. 90.

<sup>99</sup> W. Francis, Census of India 1901, Madras. Part I. Report. Madras 1902, p. 159.

however, not be examined in detail, for the actual facts which we have gone through leave no doubt as to the value of a historic substratum behind all the legendary embellishments, a residue of fact which will have to be reckoned with. We can, in other words, assume with tolerable certainty that right-hand and left-hand grouping as found in South India goes back to the period we have described and that its roots are to be sought (as OPPERT correctly supposed) in the Hindu reform movement. At the time of the division, all the elements that were in any way infected by Tantrism-Śaktism were declared to belong to the left-hand group, while the others, whose outlook was perhaps naturally more akin to that of the reformers (Viṣṇuism) were allowed to constitute the right-hand faction.

The well-known division of Śaktists into Dakṣinâcâris and Vâ-mâcâris thus seems after all to have formed the background of the right-hand, left-hand division. OPPERT (cf. page 100) was clearly at fault in this respect while another older author comes into his own, W. H. CORNISH, who already in 1874, when treating of right-hand and left-hand organisation, spoke of a "similar division among the Śakti worshippers"<sup>100</sup> and evidently perceived some connection between the two sets of phenomena. Following this line of reasoning we should see in the system of right-hand and left-hand grouping found in South India a growth similar to, and deriving its first impetus from, the famous division among the Śakti worshippers, without, however, being identified with that division.

In the light of these explanations the fact that the Brahmins themselves stand outside the right-hand and left-hand grouping becomes clearer<sup>101</sup>. They were the natural leaders in the restoration of Hinduism. In the social life of the community they found themselves opposed to the broader masses of peasants, artisans, workers

<sup>100</sup> *W. R. Cornish*, Report on the Census of the Madras Presidency, 1871. Vol. I, Madras 1874, p. 129. The author tells us of a certain *M. Pasquier*, who spent much time and trouble trying to elucidate the origin of right-hand and left-hand grouping. He applied to learned Brahmins in Pondicherry, Chidambaram and Tanjore—and even in Benares—for information on this subject without being able to obtain a clear answer anywhere. A similar disappointment awaited the Abbé *Dubois*, of whom we also hear from *Cornish*. Anyone conversant with Indian conditions will scarcely be surprised at the failure of such attempts: where historical matters are concerned, lucidity is not the strong point of the Hindu.

<sup>101</sup> Detailed information concerning the parts of the population not included in the right-hand and left-hand factions is to be found in the *W. R. Cornish's* report quoted above (p. 130). "Certain castes take no part in these feuds, and occupy a neutral position. These are Brahmans, Kshatriyas, shepherds and the mixed castes (Satani) who have practically foresworn caste observance."

and traders who had, however, already for many centuries come more or less under the influence of the Aryan conquerors and the religious trends represented by them. The division, when it came to be effected, bore the unmistakable stamp of the Hinduistic solution of such problems. The population is divided into two groups, preferential treatment being accorded to those whom the ruling classes feel to be more akin to themselves, while all the elements which strike them as more remote and alien are branded as inferior and given a lower rank in the social scale.

The fact that the right-hand castes are repeatedly designated as the *eighteen*, the left-hand as the *nine*<sup>102</sup>, should also be mentioned in this connection, the real number of tribes and castes being in both cases considerably greater. Insistence upon the number eighteen is surely referable to Brahminism (Hinduism), whose own system of exogamy, evolved in the time of the Sutras and Brahmanas<sup>103</sup>, distinguished precisely eighteen exogamous groups. That the number eighteen was actually derived from Hinduistic, Brahmin sources may moreover be gathered from an account given by J. CHARTRES MOLONY<sup>104</sup>. It is, however, also well to bear in mind that eighteen is a number for which Indians, as Professor ABEGG kindly pointed out to me, have a special predilection: the Mahāb-

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *L. K. A. Jyer*, l. c. Compare also the spoon described on page 106 which is decorated not only with the symbols but also with the names of the eighteen right-hand castes.

<sup>103</sup> *K. A. Padhye*, "Presidential Address on the Importance of Gotra and Pravara among the Hindus." *JASB* (1933-1934), XV, Bombay 1936, 452-479. Cf. p. 456.

<sup>104</sup> Census of India, 1911. Vol. XII. Madras. Part I. Report. Madras 1912, p. 164. "In his 'Prospectus of the Scientific Study of the Hindu Law', Mr. *J. H. Nelson* has put forward an explanation which assumes an ancient and sharply marked distinction between the artificers of the country and the agricultural, mercantile, and other classes. In proof thereof he quotes the *Mutravansi*, that 'King Vijeve, who landed on the day of the death of Buddha, sent an embassy to Madura, which brought back a princess with 700 female attendants, a train of men of 18 different classes, and also five different classes of workmen'. The number 18 is significant, inasmuch as in later days a petition dealing with the existence of the quarrel, though not with its cause, was presented to the Government of Madras by the '18 sorts' of people of the right-hand castes of *Chennapatnam*'. An element of religious exacerbation is then introduced by the supposition that the '18 sorts of the right-hand accepted the spiritual supremacy of the Brahmans, which the artificers, principally the goldsmiths, ironsmiths, copper-smiths, carpenters, and masons, denied; as, in theory at least, they still do.' The contrast between artificers and agricultural classes as brought out in this passage reminds us of a similar distinction made by *Oppert* and quoted on page 99. The closer connection between Brahmans and peasants on the one hand and Jains and artificers on the other mentioned in that context is evidently reflected in the respective numbers: eighteen and nine.



hārata contains eighteen Parvans, the Bhadavad-Gitā eighteen Adhyāyas, Kṛṣṇa boasts eighteen thousand wives, etc.

There can be no doubt that the originators of the division regarded the right-hand group as the more privileged one and that this notion of its superiority has on the whole been maintained. The Brahmin overlords showed themselves past masters in the art of “*divide et impera*,” for the idea of inequality involved in the grouping was bound to irritate the less favoured and so prove an occasion of perpetual quarrel. It was of course in the interests of the ruling classes that the natives should exhaust their superfluous energy in the discussion of such “vitally important” questions of prestige.

We are confirmed in our inclination to assign a later date to the introduction of right-hand and left-hand grouping by the consideration that this explains in the most satisfactory manner why this dual division does not coincide with differences of language, of sociological structure (matrilineal and patrilineal rights), with distinctions of tribes and castes or even of professional groups. On the contrary, the presence or (comparative) absence of tantristic-śaktic elements was the only point of difference which seemed to bear the test of closer investigation; as also the peculiar institution of the Desāiyi on the right-hand side with his typical emblem of cup-shaped spoon and bell. The acceptance of a later date is further corroborated by the general impression which we receive from a repeated study of the phenomenon of right-hand and left-hand grouping: namely that the division does not strike deep but appears rather to be superimposed from outside. As a final confirmation of this line of argument we might cite the fact that amongst the Chakkiliyan who live far to the South in the Madura district the men belong to the right-hand, the women to the left-hand side. We may safely conclude that the institution penetrated to these parts only at a later date when its nature and significance were no longer recognized and it had deteriorated into a kind of play.

In spite of all that has been said we do not of course deny the possibility that this right-hand and left-hand grouping, as also other forms of dual classification to be found in India, may in some way or other contain traces of ethnological dual organisation or at least reveal what VON EHRENFELS describes as “two class mentality.” We only wish to show that so long as they deal with mere possibilities no practical use can be made of these hypotheses.

We think we are justified in assuming that the foregoing study has thrown light on the problem presented by the right-hand and left-hand system of grouping to be found in South India. The result

of our examination is negative as regards any clearly proved survival of exogamous dual organisation <sup>105</sup>, but it has also its positive side in so far as it has served to give a clearer idea of the institution of right-hand and left-hand grouping. There remain, however, certain special questions to which we are for the moment unable to suggest any solution: those connected with the Desâiyi and his emblem (cup-shaped spoon and bell).

Should we see in them Buddhistic (or Jainistic) elements? Among the Banajigas, from whom the Desâiyi is in the first place chosen, there exist, as was pointed out on page 107, traces of possible relations with ancient Buddhism or Jainism. Then there is the designation Dhanapâla, quoted as a family name for the Desâiyi among the Kavarais or Baliyas (= Banajigas) <sup>106</sup>. Finally there is the question of the bronze cup-shaped spoon and bell as emblem of the Desâiyi; should we perhaps see in it a relic of the begging bowl of the Buddhist or Jainist monks? May we, although the reason why spoon and bell combine to form the emblem of the Desâiyi is as yet unknown to us, take for granted the highly probable connection between these symbols and Hinduism? GEORGE C. M. BIRDWOOD's book on "The Industrial Arts of India <sup>107</sup>" gives illustrations of both the bell (*ganta*) <sup>108</sup> and spoon (*surwa*) <sup>109</sup>, used for purposes of the cult. In the accompanying text (p. 123) we find the following description: "No. 4 is the *ganta* or bell, which is rung to call its attention to the worshipper." "No. 2, plate O, are two *surwas*, or spoons, the larger generally of brass, being used for lustrations, and the smaller, generally of copper, for offering water to the idol to drink. These spoons are often very beautiful in form and decoration, being ornamented with the figures of the gods to

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<sup>105</sup> Referring to *Gait, von Ehrenfels* tells us that this author saw in the right-hand and left-hand grouping of South India a survival of the ethnological dual organisation. We should add that this conception was challenged already by *J. Chartres Molony* (Census of India 1911, XII, Madras, Part I, Report, Madras 1913, p. 164: "A theory has been propounded that this distinction is the survival of exogamous grouping precedent to the institution of the caste system. But exogamous principle will hardly account for scenes of frenzied bloodshed, which it needed the strong rule of the British Government to suppress; and such accounts as I have been able to procure point rather to some underlying idea of social, racial or religious difference." *Molony* then proceeds with reference to *Chokkalingam Pillai* to suggest that the division into right-hand and left-hand factions may after all have had its origin in the famous dispute which we have already described.

<sup>106</sup> *Ananthakrishna Jyer*, l. c., II, p. 115.

<sup>107</sup> Piccadilly 1880.

<sup>108</sup> Plate N, 4.

<sup>109</sup> Plate O, 2.

whose worship they are consecrated <sup>110</sup>." Whether the sacred buffalo bells of the Todas <sup>111</sup> should also be mentioned in this connection remains an open question.

7. *The "Demon and Padzi" Grouping of the Solor Archipelago and the Problem of Dual Classification in India.*

Baron VON EHRENFELS in the course of his study repeatedly refers to P. PAUL ARNDT's well-known treatise on "Demon and Padzi, die feindlichen Brüder des Solor-Archipels <sup>112</sup>" adducing ARNDT's conclusions in support of his own hypothesis concerning ethnological dual classification in India. ARNDT's analysis undoubtedly shows the existence of an interesting dual organisation among the inhabitants of the Solor Archipelago but the proof that this is based on old exogamous dual classification is not forthcoming. ARNDT, as a matter of fact, never touches on this point, but EHRENFELS is of opinion that, particularly in view of the mythological background, the possibility of ancient dual classification should be considered. In his eyes the fact that the matter is founded in mythology indicates the great antiquity of the institution. We cannot, however, consider this argument conclusive, having received the definite impression that, especially where India is concerned, even relatively recent phenomena are apt to take on the cloak of mythology. We need only remind our readers of the various attempts to explain the origin of the right-hand and left-hand system of classification in South India or of the story quoted on page 79 f. which is supposed to account for the differences between the two groups of Mundas. This case is particularly instructive, because we know that the division of this tribe into two moieties was effected under Hindu influence and so is naturally of later date.

It is of decisive significance that ARNDT himself traces the origin of dual classification in the Solor Archipelago back to India and attributes its beginnings to the influence of Hinduism. Although I would not subscribe to all the points of ARNDT's explanatory argument, yet I think that he is on the whole right in bringing the phenomena under discussion into relation with the wider issue of the Munda tribes. This leads us to the further assumption that Hindu influence had effected the Munda group of peoples the extent of

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<sup>110</sup> I. c., p. 123 f. The Ethnological Museum at Basel also possesses a number of such Indian spoons intended for religious purposes. They are listed under II a 561-565. My thanks are due to Professor *F. Speiser* for this information.

<sup>111</sup> *W. H. R. Rivers*, "The Todas." London, 1906, p. 424 and passim.

<sup>112</sup> *Anthropos*, XXXIII, 1938, 1-58.

causing and developing dual division already at an extremely early date, before these peoples had anything to do with the East Indian Archipelago.

We see that ARNDT's conclusions bring us quite close to the point of view which I have been stressing in this exposition: that the dual classifications to be found in India must, at least in a number of cases, be attributed to the influence of Hinduism. As the "Demon and Padzi" grouping in the Solor Archipelago has been shown to be connected with India proper, there remains the same element of uncertainty regarding its connection with a dual organisation in the ethnological sense of the word.

### 8. Conclusion.

As final result of our analysis we therefore reach the conclusion, that ethnological dual classification is not to be found in India proper, or that it is at least impossible to bring forward convincing and incontestable proof of its present or former existence in these regions. It may at first sight appear surprising that not only Dravidian but also the Austro-Asiatic primitive tribes should have to be excluded, but on the other hand this fits in admirably with the complete absence of a dual system among the Khasi, as contrasted with the Tibeto-Burman speaking tribes of Assam where this form of social organisation flourishes<sup>113</sup>.

Everything points to the fact that we have here an important parting-line as regards ethnological dual classification. While the whole of India proper is free from this sociological phenomenon we find it fully developed to the north-east of India, at the point where the Tibeto-Burman languages begin to be spoken. If we take into consideration that practically no examples of dual classification are to be found in Africa, while not only Assam but also wide stretches of South-Eastern Asia and the South Sea, together with both the Americas (more especially North America) appear to be more or less dominated by this form of social organisation, then we realize still more fully the significance of that line of demarcation. We might even be tempted to assume a division of the world into two great halves, as far as this question of social structure is concerned.

It is natural that in view of this situation we should incline to associate the origin of ethnological dual classification in some way with the mongoloid (or pre-mongoloid?) races. This is not, how-

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *J. K. Bose*, "Dual Organisation in Assam." *The Journal of the Department of Letters*, vol. XXV, 1-29. Calcutta 1934. *Chr. v. Fürer-Haimendorf* (cf. p. 85, Note 25).

ever, the place in which to follow up lines of thought suggesting themselves in this connection. Such an enterprise could be undertaken with profit only if the other regions of the earth had also been subjected to a detailed analysis as regards the existence or non-existence of dual organisation, and this work has so far been accomplished only in part. It is clear that ultimately the question of the type of culture associated with dual organisation (*Zwei-Klassen-Kultur!*) would also have to be newly examined and investigated.

### *Zusammenfassung.*

Als grundlegendes Merkmal des ethnologischen Zweiklassensystems gilt bekanntlich, daß der Stamm in zwei exogame Heiratsklassen eingeteilt erscheint. Die vorliegende Studie verfolgt das Ziel, zu sehen und zu zeigen, ob auf indischem Boden angesichts des derzeit gegebenen Forschungsstandes ein ethnologisches Zweiklassensystem einwandfrei nachzuweisen ist oder nicht.

Zu diesem Zwecke wird das Prinzip der Zweiteiligkeit untersucht, einerseits bei Primitivstämmen wie Bhil und Bhilala, die der Autor selbst in Indien erforschen konnte, andererseits bei Gruppen, über die entsprechende Literaturberichte zur Verfügung stehen (Munda, Bhûiyâ und Gond). Zur einwandfreien Feststellung eines Zweiklassensystems im ethnologischen Sinne kommt es in keinem dieser Fälle. Dasselbe gilt in bezug auf das in Südost-Vorderindien weitverbreitete Linkshand- und Rechtshand-System. Der Autor führt, wie er glaubt, entscheidende Momente dafür an, daß diese Doppelaufteilung eines großen Teiles der Bevölkerung letzten Endes von den Brahmanen oder Hindus ausgeht und mit der großen Reformbewegung des südindischen Hinduismus, die im 11. Jahrhundert unserer Zeitrechnung ihren Höhepunkt erreichte, im Zusammenhange steht. Ein starker Beweis für diese Auffassung ist mit der Tatsache gegeben, daß tantristisch-śaktistische Elemente (Göttin Kâmâkṣi und anderes) vor allem bei Linkshand-Gruppen in die Erscheinung treten, während die Rechtshand-Gruppen an Stelle dessen über andere Eigentümlichkeiten (z. B. über die brahmanisch-hinduistische Zahl 18) verfügen. So liegt in der Rechtshand- und Linkshand-Einrichtung offenkundig eine vom Brahmanentum geschaffene Aufteilung vor, bei der das, was in den Augen der Herrscherschicht dieser näher stand, die Vorzugsstellung erhielt, wohingegen das, was vom gleichen Gesichtspunkte aus niedriger war, sich mit einer minderen Abstempelung und Einordnung begnügen mußte. Also ein Prozeß, der in solchen oder ähnlichen Formen auf indischem Boden sich in ungezählten Malen wiederholt und schließlich zu den Tausenden von

(endogamen) Kasten geführt hat. Wenn die vorstehende Untersuchung einen ursprünglichen Zusammenhang der Rechtshand- und Linkshand-Einrichtung mit einem ethnologischen Zweiklassensystem nicht als erwiesen anerkennen kann, sie also insofern negativ endigt, so steht dem doch andererseits positiv die Klarstellung des so lang und heiß umstritten gewesenen Problems des Rechtshand- und Linkshand-Systems gegenüber.

Aber auch das negative Gesamtergebnis der Untersuchung, das also darin besteht, daß das eigentliche Vorderindien das ethnologische Zweiklassensystem nicht kennt (jedenfalls erscheint es als nicht möglich, sein heutiges oder früheres Vorhandensein einwandfrei und überzeugend nachzuweisen), eröffnet trotz alledem kulturgeschichtlich bedeutsame Aspekte. Es mag zwar auf den ersten Blick überraschen, daß dabei nicht nur die dravidischen, sondern auch die austroasiatischen Primitivstämme auszuscheiden haben. Mit dieser Tatsache harmoniert aber andererseits gut das Fehlen des Zweiklassensystems auch bei den Khasi, während gleich die tibeto-birmanisch redenden Stämme Assams sozusagen voll davon sind.

Alles spricht so dafür, daß wir uns hier, was das ethnologische Zweiklassensystem betrifft, an einer wichtigen Grenzscheide befinden. Während ganz Indien frei davon ist, beginnt es im Nordosten von Indien, dort, wo bereits die tibetisch-birmanischen Sprachen geredet werden, in voller und reicher Ausbildung uns entgegenzutreten. Hält man dabei nun weiter im Auge, daß auch Afrika so gut wie über kein Zweiklassensystem verfügt, daß aber andererseits nicht nur Assam, sondern auch weitere Gebiete Südostasiens und der Südsee, wie auch der beiden Amerika (besonders aber Nord-Amerika), davon mehr oder weniger beherrscht erscheinen, so wird man der Bedeutung der erwähnten Grenzlinie wohl noch mehr inne. Es möchte einem so vorkommen, als hätte man es hier (unter der gegebenen Rücksicht natürlich) mit einer Aufteilung der Welt in zwei große Hälften zu tun. Es liegt dabei zutage, daß man angesichts der vorliegenden Situation den Ursprung des ethnologischen Zweiklassensystems irgendwie mit den Mongoloiden (oder Prämongoloiden?) in Zusammenhang bringen möchte. Diesen wie auch anderen sich aufdrängenden Gedanken (Problem der Zweiklassenkultur!) konnte und sollte aber in dieser Studie nicht mehr weiter nachgegangen werden.

#### *Résumé.*

La caractéristique fondamentale du système ethnologique dualiste, c'est le fait que la tribu apparaît divisée en deux classes

exogames (c'est-à-dire dans lesquelles le mariage est interdit). La présente étude a pour but d'établir si, dans l'état des recherches, on peut ou non démontrer sans conteste l'existence d'un tel dualisme ethnologique sur le sol de l'Inde.

A cet effet, l'auteur examine le principe dualiste d'une part chez des tribus primitives telles que les Bhils et les Bhilalas, qu'il a pu étudier lui-même en Inde, d'autre part dans les groupes pour lesquels on dispose d'études documentaires sérieuses sur ce point (Mundas, Bhûiyas et Gondes). Dans aucun de ces cas il n'a pu constater l'existence incontestable d'un tel dualisme ethnologique. Il en va de même du système de la main droite et de la main gauche, très répandu dans le sud-est de l'Inde antérieure (en deçà du Gange). L'auteur avance des arguments, décisifs à son avis, en faveur de la thèse que, finalement, cette division d'une grande partie de la population en deux classes provient des Brahmanes ou des Hindous, et se trouve en rapport avec la grande réforme de l'hindouisme méridional, qui atteignit son apogée au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère. Un fait qui corrobore fortement cette conception, c'est que des éléments tântrico-çaktiques (déesse Kâmâksi et autres) apparaissent avant tout chez des groupes de la main gauche, tandis qu'en compensation les groupes de la main droite se distinguent par d'autres particularités (par exemple le nombre 18 des Brahmanes et Hindous). Ainsi, l'institution des classes de la main droite et de la main gauche constitue évidemment une séparation créée par le brahmanisme, avantageant les éléments que la classe dominante estimait plus rapprochés d'elle, et reléguant les autres, en les stigmatisant, dans une catégorie inférieure : mesure qui, sous des formes identiques ou analogues, s'est répétée un nombre incalculable de fois sur le sol Hindou et a finalement abouti aux castes endogames. Si, d'un côté, la présente enquête ne permet pas d'établir, entre l'institution des classes de la main droite et de la main gauche et celle du dualisme ethnologique, un rapport d'origine, et aboutit ainsi à une conclusion négative, d'un autre côté elle présente un résultat positif en élucidant le problème si longtemps et si ardemment débattu du système de la main droite et de la main gauche.

D'ailleurs, le résultat final négatif de l'enquête, établissant que l'Inde antérieure proprement dite ne connaît pas le dualisme ethnologique — ou qu'en tous cas il paraît impossible d'en démontrer avec évidence l'existence présente ou passée — ouvre cependant d'importantes perspectives dans le domaine de l'histoire de la civilisation. Sans doute, au premier abord, peut-il sembler surprenant qu'il faille ici éliminer non seulement les tribus primitives dravidiennes, mais aussi les austro-asiatiques. Mais d'autre part,

ce fait s'harmonise parfaitement avec l'absence du dualisme ethnologique chez les Khasis, alors que, tout près, les tribus de l'Assam, parlant le birmano-tibétain, en sont complètement pénétrées.

Ainsi, tout nous amène à penser qu'en ce qui concerne le système ethnologique des deux classes, nous nous trouvons ici sur une importante ligne de partage. Tandis que toute l'Inde en est exempte, il se manifeste d'abord, complètement et pleinement développé, au nord-est de l'Inde, où l'on parle déjà les langues birmano-tibétaines. Si l'on considère en outre que ce système est pour ainsi dire inconnu en Afrique, tandis que d'autres vastes territoires du sud-est de l'Inde et du Pacifique ainsi que des deux Amériques (surtout celle du Nord) en sont plus ou moins imprégnés, on comprendra encore mieux l'importance de cette ligne de démarcation. On pourrait croire, en faisant naturellement les réserves nécessaires, qu'il s'agit ici d'un partage du monde en deux grandes moitiés. Il s'en suit que, dans l'état actuel des connaissances, il faudrait mettre l'origine du dualisme ethnologique en rapport avec les Mongoloïdes (ou les Prémongoloïdes). Mais l'étude de ce dernier problème, comme d'autres qui se posent avec insistance (celui, par exemple, de la civilisation de ce système dualiste, «*Zweiklassenkultur*»), ne pouvait ni ne devait être poussée plus avant dans le présent travail.

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