Review: 137
Reviewed Work(s): Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan Period. by Ralph Pieris
Review by: Nur Yalman
Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2795271
Accessed: 26-12-2022 14:29 UTC
a Gujerat village may, today, be associated with the complex of mother-godlings in the village and the fieldworker will not learn from his informants that such stones have a long historical association with the royal and warlike. But having learnt this from the student of Sanskrit in 1855, starting with the question of why the grandfathers of the present generation thought it worthwhile to erect such stones, make profitable observations upon the process of caste today.

Short of studying the original texts, such accounts as are provided by Professor Ghurye, particularly in his chapters on Indo-Aryan culture, are many ways more useful than the accepted translations of such works by scholars whose main interest is philological. Ghurye's sociological interest gives him an eye for significance and relevance and since the number of Sanskrit scholars who have that qualification is few, one hopes that he will continue to further this integration of past with present in our understanding of Indian society.

D. F. POCKCOCK

The Santal: A Study in Culture Change. By Nabendu Datta-
Majumder, with a foreword by Melville J. Herskovits. Depart-
ment of Anthropology, Government of India, Memoir No. 2,
Price Rs. 6.60

The author defines his aim as follows: 'The present study is an attempt to investigate the forms and processes of cultural change among the Santal, a Munda-speaking aboriginal people inhabiting the forest-covered upland regions of the provinces of Bihar, Orissa and Bengal in India, as a result of their continuous contact with alien cultures represented by the Hindus, British Government and Christian missionaries. Only a section of the Santal, who form the second largest aboriginal group in the country, has been selected for investigation.'

The fact that the manuscript was completed in 1947 explains why there is no but a cursory reference to recent changes. British Santal culture is adopted as a 'cultural base-line.' As the writer points out, this was the result of integration between Santal and Hindu cultures. In discussing the oliha, the Santal medicine man, he tries to disentangle the processes of interaction between the two. He speaks as if the institution of oliha training described previously by Bodding is alive today. Evidence on this point, based on fieldwork, would have been welcome. He notes the fact that the Santals have 'rejected' the doctrine of karma but does not discuss it.

When considering the impact of the British Government, it seems strange that no reference is made to McAlpin's Report to the Bengal Government (1955), especially as the report deals with Bir:

Dr. Pieris must be bewitched by footnotes. He appears to be a Gujerat village may, today, be associated with the complex of mother-godlings in the village and the fieldworker will not learn from his informants that such stones have a long historical association with the royal and warlike. But having learnt this from the student of Sanskrit in 1855, starting with the question of why the grandfathers of the present generation thought it worthwhile to erect such stones, make profitable observations upon the process of caste today.

Short of studying the original texts, such accounts as are provided by Professor Ghurye, particularly in his chapters on Indo-Aryan culture, are many ways more useful than the accepted translations of such works by scholars whose main interest is philological. Ghurye's sociological interest gives him an eye for significance and relevance and since the number of Sanskrit scholars who have that qualification is few, one hopes that he will continue to further this integration of past with present in our understanding of Indian society.

D. F. POCKCOCK

The Santal: A Study in Culture Change. By Nabendu Datta-
Majumder, with a foreword by Melville J. Herskovits. Depart-
ment of Anthropology, Government of India, Memoir No. 2,
Price Rs. 6.60

The author defines his aim as follows: 'The present study is an attempt to investigate the forms and processes of cultural change among the Santal, a Munda-speaking aboriginal people inhabiting the forest-covered upland regions of the provinces of Bihar, Orissa and Bengal in India, as a result of their continuous contact with alien cultures represented by the Hindus, British Government and Christian missionaries. Only a section of the Santal, who form the second largest aboriginal group in the country, has been selected for investigation.'

The fact that the manuscript was completed in 1947 explains why there is no but a cursory reference to recent changes. British Santal culture is adopted as a 'cultural base-line.' As the writer points out, this was the result of integration between Santal and Hindu cultures. In discussing the oliha, the Santal medicine man, he tries to disentangle the processes of interaction between the two. He speaks as if the institution of oliha training described previously by Bodding is alive today. Evidence on this point, based on fieldwork, would have been welcome. He notes the fact that the Santals have 'rejected' the doctrine of karma but does not discuss it.

When considering the impact of the British Government, it seems strange that no reference is made to McAlpin's Report to the Bengal Government (1955), especially as the report deals with Bir:

Dr. Pieris must be bewitched by footnotes. He appears to be