DAVID G. MANDELBAUM

Society in India

VOLUME ONE

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

VOLUME TWO

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

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To Ruth

his work has taken a long time to complete not only because of the e of the task and because of personal vicissitudes, but also because me of the key concepts were developed as the work progressed. As ese new ideas took shape, some parts of what had already been writn had to be recast.

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DAVID G. MANDELBAUM

Berkeley, California

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VOLUME ONE

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

CHAPTER 9 The Interdependence of Families and Jatis

To carry on any civilization, men must specialize their work in complex ways and exchange their products and services in a regular manner. That is, they are interdependent and they follow a characteristic order of interdependence. This is scarcely a new revelation, but in studying the peoples of India it is especially important to clarify the actual as well as the purported interdependence.

The traditional specialization of a villager, as we have noted, follows the specialization assigned to his jati, which covers preferred, permitted and forbidden occupations. The traditional modes of exchange are the counterparts of this specialization; in village society they entail both contract and status relations, as Maine first used these terms (1861).[1] That is, they involve a range of relationships along a scale from purely contractual, individual, impersonal, temporary, limited transactions at one end to broadly supportive, group-oriented, long-term, multiple bonds at the other.

Contractual and Jajmani Relations

The broader, more durable relations are essentially those between a food-producing family and the families that supply them with goods and services. These are called "jajmani" relations, the Hindi

[1] Students of Indian society can benefit, not only by Sir Henry Maine's still useful writings, but also by the example of his life. In 1856 he was offered an appointment in India as legal member in council. His doctors told him then that if he went to India "his life would not be worth three months' purchase." But after a few years' delay he accepted the appointment and went to Calcutta. He stayed for seven years and returned "a much stronger man than he had been at his departure" (Stephen 1921).

word for them as used in William Wiser's study of the subject (1936). While contractual exchanges have become increasingly important in almost all villages, usually displacing some of the jajmani arrangements, commercial transactions have been part of the traditional economy for many centuries. Villagers in the region of Totagadde in western Mysore, for example, have been engaged in the production and export of a commercial crop, areca nuts, for at least six centuries (Harper 1959b, p. 776). Local, regional, even overseas markets have existed throughout the course of Indian civilization (cf. Thapar 1966, pp. 109–135); markets of a traditional kind are still important, as we shall note in a later chapter, for village economy and society.

Moreover, certain traditional occupations were, in many places, on a contractual rather than a jajmani basis. The weaver, Baines observed, "is not entitled to a customary share of the harvest, but is paid for what he makes and sells" (1912, p. 62). Finally, even in jajmani relations there are some products or services that have to be contracted and paid for separately. Thus in a village of Poona district, the ropemakers supply the farmers, under jajmani arrangements, with all necessary rope manufactures except for well ropes, which are specially long and thick and for which special payment must be made (Orenstein 1962, p. 304). I have known village barbers who provided their services in the traditional jajmani ways, except when a young man wanted a haircut in the city style. That had to be paid for in cash (cf. Sharma 1956a, pp. 128–130).

Cash or barter transactions have long been integral elements of village economy. Yet the traditional jajmani relations are more conspicuous in village life because they entail ritual matters and social support as well as economic exchanges. The whole of a local social order, the people and their paramount values, are involved in such jajmani links.

These links are between families rather than between jatis. Thus a family of farmers gets its metal tools from a particular family of the blacksmith jati and in return the blacksmith family gets a share of the farmer's crop at harvest. The relationship is supposed to be—and often is—durable, exclusive and multiple. It is durable in that the link may be inherited on both sides. A blacksmith serves the same farmer family that his father and grandfather served, and the

farmer family gets its tools and repairs from the descendants of the blacksmith family whose men made tools for their forefathers. If one of the associated families dies out, another of its lineage may take its place in the relationship. If a blacksmith family has more sons than its clientele can support, some seek other associates in places where there is a shortage of smiths. Some take up other employment, often in farming, since men of any jati may work on the land.

Jajmani relations are exclusive in that the farmer family is supposed to carry on such relations with only one blacksmith family, and those blacksmiths should make tools only for their own farmer families. They may make some things for sale at a market as well, but they may not poach jajmani associates from other blacksmiths. Jajmani ties are multiple in that more than economic exchange is involved. There is much more to the association than just the exchange of shaves for rice or sickles for wheat.

The families of village officials or village servants, the watchman for example, maintain jajmani relations with the whole village rather than with particular families. Each watchman family gets a contribution at harvest time from every farmer family's crop. The village officials and servants may also have the tax-free use of village land. In some parts, especially in the Maharashtra region, the artisan and service families maintain jajmani relations with a segment of the village rather than with individual families. Such families there have rights to serve all who live in a particular section of the village, or who cultivate a certain section of land (Orenstein 1962, pp. 310–314; Baines 1912, p. 28).

In all jajmani relations, the right to provide goods or services to particular associates is vested in the family, inherited through the family or lineage, and enforced by the jati. If one blacksmith family attempts to take over the farmer associates of another, then the injured blacksmiths appeal to the council of their jati to call off the intruders. And if the blacksmiths of a village believe that the farmers are unfair to them, they may try to have all blacksmiths of the locality boycott the farmers until they give up their unfair practices.

The term "jajman" originally referred to the client for whom a Brahmin priest performed rituals, but it is generally used to refer to the patron or recipient of specialized services and the term "jajmani"

refers to the whole relationship. The provider of goods or services is called by a variety of terms, "kamin," "parjan," "pardhan." "Balutedar" is the Marathi word (cf. Beidelman 1959, pp. 6–7).

Specialized Jatis and Multiple Functions

A patron family must carry on jajmani relations with those whose services are required for ritual purposes, especially concerning the family's pollution, and also with those whose services and products are materially useful (Pocock 1962, pp. 82–87). A family requires the services of a priest, often of a Brahmin jati, to maintain or restore the state of ritual purity suitable for its members. Even more, it must have the services of specialists of lower jatis to perform those necessary tasks that pollute those who do them—the washing of dirty clothes, the cutting of hair, the delivery of the newborn, the sweeping away of excreta, and similar defiling chores. All such tasks fall within the basic notion of pollution; all are ritually required in the traditional order.

The ritual specialists do not work for everyone in the village. Although washermen and barbers are not ranked among the higher jatis because their jati occupation involves work polluting to those who do it professionally, they will not ordinarily wash the clothes or cut the hair of the lowest villagers. Even they would be defiled and their jati status degraded by doing so.[2]

This is also true of a Brahmin jati of priests, whose services villagers see as on an entirely different plane from those rendered by the ritual specialists who absorb pollution (M. S. A. Rao 1961). They will not usually minister to families of the lowest jatis. Hence most Harijan families cannot get the services of these ritual specialists and so some of them perform these tasks for their jati fellows. When low-ranking families prosper, however, and are able to discard defiling practices, they try to get ritual specialists to serve them and, as we shall see later, they often succeed.

[2] In some places, there are different jatis of washermen to serve different blocs of the local hierarchy. In the south of Kerala, there is a special jati of barbers who serve Harijans (1931 Census, Vol. 28, Part 1, p. 382). Among the lowest of Kerala jatis are the Nayadis whose jati occupation is begging. The right to beg within a certain territory is held by a Nayadi family which can mortgage or sell this right to another Nayadi family (Aiyappan 1937, p. 29).

The other kind of jajmani workers are the artisans and the unskilled laborers. Artisans generally exchange their products with anyone in the village (cf. Harper 1959b, p. 772). They tend to be more independent of the patrons than are the laborers, because a laborer family usually has its jajmani relations with a single family of landowners or cultivators, while artisans deal with a number of patron families and so are not totally bound to any one of them (cf. Bailey 1960b, p. 169).

Economic exchange is only one facet of jajmani relations. A landowner family may have only occasional transactions with some of its associates, as with a goldsmith family in another village, but with others there is more frequent and many-sided interchange. A family of cultivators expects help on its ceremonial occasions from most of the associated families. There is also an expectation of mutual personal support in family emergencies or factional quarrels. Sometimes the specialist families are pressured to support the jati of their patrons when that whole jati is embattled.

Such reciprocal services are often formally stipulated, especially for life-cycle rites. In a village of Lucknow district, for example, a marriage in a family of Thakurs, the dominant landowners, involves the formal participation of families from ten of the fourteen jatis represented in the village (Majumdar *et al.* 1955, pp. 197–204; Majumdar 1958a, pp. 43–49).

A principal ceremonial role is taken by the associated family of the barber jati. The barber's wife cleans and refurbishes the house; she massages the bride, helps her bathe and dress. She joins in the wedding songs and in the stylized derisions with which the groom's party is met. The barber himself accompanies the marriage party in the ceremonial round, doing for the members of the wedding whatever tasks need to be done. He is present through all the ritual, helping the priest, performing such bits as the formal tying of the groom's shirt to the corner of the bride's dress. In return, the barber and his wife are given a sum of money and tips of a rupee or two when they perform some special service in the course of the rite.

At the birth of a Thakur child, the associated families also help. The household priest prepares the child's horoscope to guide in auspicious planning for its development. A woman of one of the low jatis helps with the delivery, cuts the cord, cleans and attends the mother for several days after the birth. Then the barber's wife takes

over as attendant, bathes and massages the mother, cleanses the room, helps with the household tasks.

A man of the barber's family hurries about, delivers invitations to the birth feast, helps with the chores at the feast. The household servants of the Pasi jati also carry the good news to friends and relations. Iron bangles for the baby and other metal requisites are provided by the blacksmith family. The washerman family launders the clothes of mother and infant, a special task because these have to be cleansed of the extraordinary defilement of childbirth (Majumdar *et al.* 1955, pp. 193–195). All who help receive gifts in return—of food, of money, of clothes. The amount given is partly set by custom and partly by considerations of the donor's affluence and the recipient's entreaty.

Jajmani associates are expected to be, and some are, broadly supportive of each other, with the quality of ready help that close kinsmen are expected to show. Villagers tend to be nostalgic about such supposed support in the past. One farmer of Shamirpet village near Hyderabad reminisced about his family's relations with their barber family. As Dube translates his comment, "In many cases they were just like members of our family, and although both parties maintained the traditional caste distance, we could always take each other into confidence even on matters of a delicate nature" (1955b, p. 61).

Barbers often do have a privileged relationship, for one reason because they frequently are used for reconnaissance and to make preliminary feelers in arranging a marriage. They are commonly the stage managers and technical assistants at ceremonies. Their women act as midwives. Because their nonbarbering functions are so useful, there are even jatis of Sikh barbers in Sikh villages where the cutting of hair is forbidden but where the traditional managerial, midwifery, and communications functions of a barber jati are needed (Patnaik 1960b; I. P. Singh 1958, p. 481).

Even when a patron's jati is at odds with a client's jati, personal relations between the two families may well remain friendly, even covertly supportive, despite the antagonism between their groups (cf. Bailey 1960b, p. 138). In personal emergencies, as when a farmer needs help quickly to save his crop, he is likely to call on his jajmani associates for help. And when a worker is in dire need, he expects his patron to do something to help him, whether by loans

or by supporting him before government officials or in the village council (Wiser 1936, pp. 112–116).

In factional contests each side usually tries to rally its jajmani associates. This occurred in Senapur, a village not far from Banaras, in 1957. The Noniyas, traditionally low-ranking earth workers, had prospered enough by then to build a primary school in their hamlet. The dominant landowners, the Thakurs, viewed this as a threat to their dominant position. When the Noniyas tried to get the village carpenters, tile-makers (potters), and bamboo workers to help in constructing the school, they failed because the Thakur patrons put pressure on these jati-groups. The Noniyas next tried to hire such workers from other villages and again they failed, because the Thakurs of Senapur had enlisted the support of the Thakurs in these other villages. In the end, the Noniyas did succeed in building the school by buying construction materials from a place adjacent to Banaras city and hiring carpenters from a distant village (Rowe 1963, p. 44).

Jajmani Payments and Obligations

The relation usually involves multiple kinds of payment and obligations as well as multiple functions. This is illustrated in a study of an artisan jati, the Lohars, of the same village of Senapur in Jaunpur district of eastern U.P. (Reddy 1955). The traditional work of the Lohars is with iron as blacksmiths. In Senapur they also work in wood, because there are no carpenters in the village. They make and repair agricultural implements for the landowner-farmers, the Thakurs.

This work is apportioned among the Lohars according to hereditary shares. Each family has an exclusive and inalienable right over its share of work, which is not encroached upon by others. The Thakurs too are bound by the same fixed tenure. "When a Lohar family multiplies and divides the work, each share comes to compass the work of fewer agriculturists unless they also multiply at the same rate" (Reddy 1955, p. 130).

A Lohar family's right to a certain set of clients is treated as a property right; at the father's death, his clients are divided among his sons or his sons-in-law. Should one family have more clients than it can handle, its men may—after proper consultation with

other Lohars and with the patrons—transfer some of their clientele to another family. As in other kinds of property, there is uneven distribution among Lohar families. One may have a larger, more lucrative practice than does another.

Lohars cooperate to maintain adequate service for all patrons. When one of the Lohars fell ill during a busy season, another took on the sick man's work in addition to his own. He asked for no recompense for the extra work, either from his jati-fellow or from the Thakurs. In the 1950s, there had been no encroachment within living memory by one Lohar on another's jajmani rights. When there was such a case in a nearby village, the jati council "came down with a heavy hand and fixed the offender in his former place" (Reddy 1955, p. 138).

The amount of work a Lohar family is expected to perform for an associated Thakur family is reckoned according to the amount of cultivated land. A standard measure is called a yoke of cultivation, the land which can be cultivated with one pair of bullocks. This is about fifteen *bighas*, some ten acres. For a Thakur family of one yoke cultivation, the Lohar family puts in about sixty to seventy man-hours of work each year and receives about 40 *seers* (about 80 pounds) of grain.

Certain kinds of work, as on new types of agricultural implements, are not clearly included in the customary arrangements. Some patrons own mechanical chaff-cutters and sugarcane presses. Minor repairs on these are treated as part of the jajmani work, but a patron who adds extra payment for these jobs is apt to get better service (Reddy 1955, pp. 138–139).

Lohars also make ritual accessories for their clients—bridal seats for weddings, tables for household worship, litters for funerals—and receive suitable gifts in return. When minor repairs are needed in a patron's house, his Lohar makes them—without charge if it takes a matter of minutes, paid with extra foodstuff if he must spend a few hours at it.

Here end the obligations of jajmani relations; work of other kinds is a matter of daily hire and wage competition. When a Lohar works at building a new house, or making a cart, or on major repair of a sugarcane press, he works for an agreed daily wage or at a piece rate. Some Lohars are known for special skills. Two brothers of Senapur are good at press repair; another Lohar specializes in making carts. A Lohar who takes on a large job shares the work with his jati-fellows. They share capital equipment too. "It is also a day-to-day occurrence that the few Lohars who have installed bellow furnaces freely offer their equipment to be made use of by other Lohars" (Reddy 1955, p. 138).

The distinction made by these Lohars between work in the jajmani relation and that in a more contractual context is often made in village economy. It is the difference between regular services in the traditional round and work on occasional jobs or on new varieties of equipment and service. Sometimes, as has occurred in Senapur, work on new equipment begins to merge into the regular jajmani account.

The traditional method of payment, in all regions, is made dramatically at harvest time when each farmer family hands over some newly cut sheaves to its jajmani families, or measures out a pile of grain on the threshing floor for each of them (Wiser 1936, pp. 65–67; Srinivas 1955b, pp. 14–15; Neale 1962, pp. 20–27). These harvest payments are only part of what the worker family receives. Where the cultivators own most or all the land of the village, all sorts of rights are under their control. An artisan or service family may be dependent on a landowning family for their house site, for places where their animals may graze, for wood and cow-dung fuel, for the loan of tools and draft animals, even for a plot to use for funeral pyres. In addition, the patron family gives them clothing and other gifts on ceremonial occasions, gives small tips for special service, and may help with loans of money in emergencies and with protection against predatory neighbors (cf. Wiser 1936, pp. 10–11).

Supply, Demand, and Flexible Payments

In some areas, the administrative land records for the village, through the British period, stipulated the precise obligations and payments that were to be met under jajmani arrangements. Even the gifts each associated family was entitled to receive at a wedding in the patron's family were specified (Wiser 1936, pp. 14–15; Lewis 1958, pp. 60–61, 163). But whether there were such officially re-

corded codes or not, the actual exchange varied with the bounty of the harvest, the respective claims of the associates, and conditions of supply and demand.

This still obtains where jajmani relations are kept up. During a lean year a farmer simply cannot share out as much as he normally does, but when the sheaves are heavy and the granaries full he does not begrudge some extra measures to those who have given good service. But even in the best of years, a farmer is not likely to parcel out more than the minimum amount to, say, a carpenter who has repeatedly put off doing the farmer's repairs or to a washerman who has lost and torn clothes beyond ordinary endurance.

Similarly, a worker family adjusts the measure of its service according to the payment and treatment its members receive. In Rampura in Mysore, for example, those who pay in grain are favored over those who pay only in money; grain payments imply enduring, reliable relationships. "The quality of the service rendered by the Smith, Potter, Washerman, and Barber depends on whether the customer pays annually in grain or not, on the quantity of grain paid, and on the customer's general social position" (Srinivas 1955b, pp. 11, 13).

There seem to be villages where jajmani payments are made quietly, without demur or harangue by any party. But in my own observation, at least some of those who pay feel themselves bedeviled by their importunate workers and they proclaim so loudly. And some of those who are paid argue vigorously against the miserable, miserly amounts that they say are offered; they may not feel strong enough to voice their complaints loudly, but they do so frequently, as though to accept the patron's payments too meekly and silently might invite a smaller payment next time.

Payments also fluctuate according to the available supply of skills and labor and the demand for them. If there is a shortage of blacksmiths, the farmer who is most liberal with extra gifts is likely to get the best service from a blacksmith family. Specialists are imported into a locality where there is need for them. Brahmins have been enticed to settle in places where previously there were no Brahmins, when some of the residents had become prosperous and ambitious enough to require their services. Leading villagers of Totagadde in Mysore recruited a barber from another village when their village barber died and left no successor (Harper 1959b, p. 770). In another Mysore village, all the local sweepers had taken other employment at the time I visited the village. The village leaders brought in a family of a Harijan jati from another linguistic region to do the sweeper's menial work.

Another means of alleviating a local shortage in a particular craft is to have men of another, similar jati do it in addition to their traditional profession. The Lohar blacksmiths of Senapur do carpentry because there is no family of a carpenter jati in the village. Conversely, when there are too many men in a jati-group for employment in their traditional occupations, some of them have to migrate or turn to work on the land. Agricultural labor is open to all, insofar as such work is available.

Supply-and-demand adjustments in traditional jajmani relations are, to be sure, less flexible than those provided through contractual and market transactions. A jajmani patron cannot abruptly discharge a superfluous or inefficient worker or quickly hire new workers, but there was and is a considerable degree of economic adjustability even in the traditional arrangements (Beidelman 1959, pp. 53–56; Orenstein 1962, p. 313; Pocock 1962, p. 91; Kolenda 1963, p. 22; Bose and Jodha 1965, p. 117).

The actual amounts paid to each participating family in a jajmani relation can vary according to differences in size of clientele. In a village of Poona district, the largest amounts are received by carpenters, blacksmiths, and menial workers of the untouchable jatis. A family of Brahmin priests gets lesser amounts from each patron (Orenstein 1962, p. 305). But though a Brahmin priest may get less from any one family, he may collect from more families and may have other sources of income.

In some Mysore villages that Alan Beals has studied, men of the lowest jatis are employed as village servants, as watchmen and irrigators. This gives them a more assured income than that enjoyed by families of several other jatis which rank higher in the local hierarchies. But overall, men of the higher jatis generally receive a higher rate of pay for their services than workers of the lower groups. Unskilled workers are most dependent on the good graces of patron families and are usually least able to exert leverage to better their condition. In Gould's tabulation of actual jajmani payments in Sherurpur village (Faizabad district, U.P.) "the washermen received the lowest average remuneration, the barbers next lowest,

and the carpenters and blacksmiths the highest—an order of precedence which accords perfectly with their relative traditional statuses" (1964, p. 20).

Those who provide specialized skills and services themselves need the goods and services of others. A carpenter family requires a barber, a shopkeeper family needs its washermen and other service workers. In Senapur, the landowner family tended to manage the whole set of their workers; the carpenter, barber, and washerman families who served them also served the Noniyas who were their tenants, and each of these provided services for the others (Rowe 1963, pp. 42–43). But landowners in most other places did not manage their associated families so tightly; each specialist family made its own jajmani arrangements, either through direct exchange of labor or by paying in cash or kind (cf. Gould 1964, pp. 33–34).

Few villages hold a complete array of specialist families. The people of Sherurpur, for example, use the services of thirty-five households of specialists who live in a number of the nearby villages. Each of these villages has its own network of jajmani affiliates. Thus jajmani ties establish a web of relationships among villages across the land in which there are few complete breaks. Gould comments on jajmani affiliations radiating from Sherurpur, "Taken to its logical conclusion, therefore, such a network as this ultimately reaches to the borders of a linguistic region and perhaps to some extent even beyond" (1964, p. 34).

Enforcement of Jajmani Relations: Coercion and Consensus

Jajmani interchange is between families of a locality; jajmani counterchange, however, devolves on the jatis. The enforcing of jajmani rules rests with the jatis that are involved in an issue about them. These rules can be flexibly interpreted in various ways but certain minimum standards are maintained at any given time in each jajmani relation. Thus a shift in service arrangements between a blacksmith and a landowner family in Senapur village could not be done only by the families involved, but had to be approved by the elders of each jati-group. And when a blacksmith usurped clients from another blacksmith family, their jati council punished the offender.

If the dominant landowners of a village become convinced that one of their service or artisan groups is derelict in its obligations or threatens the power and status of the landowners, the patron families are likely to bring collective pressure on them by withholding payment, by beating their men, or through any number of other means of harassment. The attacked jati-group may retaliate through a boycott, refusing to provide their services until the landowners retract or compromise.

Such clashes are apt to spread from one village to others in the locality where jati-fellows of the opposed groups live. Both sides have the general village audience to their quarrel very much in mind because what is often at stake is not merely a demand for higher pay or fewer duties, but the insignia and prerogatives of higher rank within the whole local order.

Collective action by either side has to overcome loyalties to jajmani associates in favor of the interests of the jati (cf. Gough 1960, p. 27; Orenstein 1962, p. 710). Yet when jati fellows really become convinced that their jati status is in danger, jati solidarity prevails. Then the united strength of the landowners is usually greater than that which any artisan or service jati can muster. Historically, however, some artisans have maintained their stand quite well. We shall note later that a loose confederation of five artisan jatis pressed their claims for higher status over much of South India for several centuries until the present time. They did not overcome the resistance of higher jatis, but by the same token they were not beaten down. Landowners could not dispense with their services nor shatter their general unity.

But jatis whose men are mainly landless laborers have no such resources and can wage no such struggle. The vast differential in power between the richest and highest in a village and the lowest and poorest has been taken by some authors as the central element in jajmani relations. It is the main reason for their scathing critiques of jajmani relations (Beidelman 1959; Lewis and Barnouw 1956). These authors excoriate jajmani arrangements as the means by which the rich and powerful exploit the poor and coerce the workers into sustaining the power of those who have the upper hand and the higher rank.

Other students of Indian village life have replied to these critiques, saying that there is consensus as well as coercion in jajmani relations, that jajmani exchanges bring solidarity and mutual bene-

fits as well as conflict and exploitation. These observers note that, in their own observations of jajmani interchange, artisans and service workers are not totally helpless against the landowners; all jatis seek to maximize their gains, all wield as much power as they can, all villagers want to avoid pollution insofar as they can, and some coercion and exploitation are inevitable in all societies. They argue that to condemn jajmani arrangements as brutally exploitative is too sweeping and obfuscating a generalization (Rao 1961; Orenstein 1962; Berreman 1962b, p. 393; Kolenda 1963, pp. 21–29; Gould 1964, pp. 29–39).

This exchange among anthropologists parallels the controversies among sociologists about stratification in which some writers stress the conflicts and disruptions that are involved in a stratified order and others emphasize the integration and effective action that orderly stratification makes possible.

Clearly, however, all these forces and elements are involved. At one stage in the development of a society conflict and disruption may be in the ascendant and at another period internal concord and unity will be more characteristic. Those who now decry jajmani arrangements as exploitative may be justified in doing so in order to arouse remedial action. But objective understanding of a traditional relationship is not much advanced through the use of polemical terms.

Change and Continuity in Jajmani Relations

The jajmani relationship has by now been largely supplanted in many villages, although in relatively few has it completely disappeared. It has been supplanted mainly because more money is now used in village economy and because modern transport makes market transactions more feasible. Cash crops are usually not included in jajmani arrangements. A worker or artisan who is paid with a load of sugarcane can only try to sell it, and he prefers to get the money in the first place. Where food grains are raised for sale, as in irrigated villages in Maharashtra, the cultivators who have money may prefer to pay for their shaves and pots with cash at a market center. Many artisans and specialists have moved to market centers and towns and do their work there (Orenstein 1962, pp. 313, 316; Karve and Damle 1963, p. 37).

Moreover, the power of a local dominant jati has been reduced in many places because their village dependents can move away more easily than was formerly possible, can get some income from outside the village, and can better summon political help for their complaints. With less isolation and reduced concentration of political power, the coercive element in jajmani relations has also been reduced (cf. Orans 1967).

Yet the advantages of jajmani for economic stability and security are still sufficiently great that many villagers want to continue with at least some such arrangements. The cultivator gains from them in that he gets better credit and a more certain labor supply than he usually can through cash transactions. Artisans and service families work for him through the year without much pay and then are given a large payment at the time when the farmer can best afford to do so, at harvest. At times of peak demand for labor, a farmer is more likely to get help from jajmani associates than from those who can charge whatever the market will then bear. The workers, in their turn, get more assured employment, and a variety of gifts and concessions, which together may amount to more than money wages could buy in the village. In recent decades, when grain has regularly been scarce and the value of the rupee whimsical, payment in grain is often preferred.

In a questionnaire survey in five Maharashtrian villages, over two-thirds of the respondents (222 of 326) answered that they thought the *balutdari* (jajmani) arrangements were convenient, mainly because of the credit facility. Only some 10 percent of the respondents thought that these arrangements were unprofitable. Others approved of them either because they were traditional or because of the general security they provided (Karve and Damle 1963, pp. 28, 151–152).

In addition to the economic benefits, the ritual services that jajmani associates provide are still in demand. Some landowners in villages of Poona district keep up jajmani relations mainly so that they may have ritual services readily available, as when a washerman must cleanse polluted clothing after a death, or when a messenger of low jati must be sent around to relatives with the news of a death, or when a goldsmith must purify the household deities (Orenstein 1962, p. 312). Presumably all such services can be obtained for hire but hired persons may not readily be available when

needed nor can they be trusted to do their ritual work thoroughly if they do not have long-standing ties with the family served. Further, in villages where factional struggles are common, a landowner likes to have dependable support from at least some in other jatis, and worker families like to have a patron's protection.

This is not to say that jajmani relations are on the increase, but rather that this mode of traditional interdependence still has its uses as is shown in three villages where jajmani relations have been studied, one in Mysore, one in Rajasthan, and one in Uttar Pradesh.

Totagadde, in Shimoga district of northwestern Mysore, is the village in which the growing of a cash crop, areca nuts, has been the main productive enterprise for centuries. The relations between a landowner-horticulturalist and those who work for him are more limited, temporary, and contractual than are traditional jajmani relations where subsistence agriculture is the mainstay. Yet even in this village many persistent relationships exist between cultivators and workers. Some service workers serve for a year; some artisans keep the same customers for many years; many workers and artisans are under obligation to a landowner for the kinds of favors that are in his gift, such as lending money without interest, helping in litigation, lending tools, giving building materials and garden produce. In this village "the concept of obligation gives a greater measure of stability and permanency to economic relationships than otherwise might exist" (Harper 1959b, p. 773).

Jati separation is as sharp in this village as it is elsewhere in the region. The commercial economy did not undermine jati organization or the ranking of jatis. It did affect the nature of interdependence, but did not cancel out the inclination toward relationships more durable than monetary market dealings alone.

In a village of Barmer district in western Rajasthan, there have been notable changes, but when Bose and Jodha studied the villagers in 1963, many of them still maintained some jajmani relations. This is a village where subsistence agriculture is carried on under semi-arid conditions. Before independence, it was part of a princely state and the demesne of a feudal overlord. His departure opened the village to new influences and in their train jajmani relations have become more voluntary. Families that prefer to do so may contract for services, and some service families no longer perform their traditional occupations. But many keep up certain jajmani relations. Of a sample of 129 households out of a total of some four hundred, about 75 percent maintained jajmani ties with families of the low leatherworker jati. About 60 percent maintained such ties with carpenter families (Bose and Jodha 1965, p. 111).

Leatherworkers do the ritually polluting work of preparing hides and making leather goods; they also do such defiling chores as removing dead animals from the fields and such menial tasks as collecting fuel and carrying messages. Because the jati council of these leatherworkers had ruled against such degrading work, thirteen of the seventeen households of this jati in the village had stopped doing it. But four families have ignored the council's ruling and gain most of their income from carrying on their jati's traditional service. Of the fourteen carpenter families in the village, eight participate in jajmani relations but get only about half their income in that way. Both the blacksmith families maintain jajmani arrangements but get less than half their income from them (Bose and Jodha 1965, p. 117).

Not much of the village economy is now carried on through jajmani arrangements; however, we do not know whether very much more was so managed in earlier years. Some ritual services are still carried on within jajmani arrangements, especially in matters concerning death pollution. Many express favorable opinions about jajmani. Of 129 patrons questioned in this study, 126 replied that jajmani relations were useful in providing cheap and dependable labor and 111 agreed that another benefit was in cheap and assured ritual services. Only 24 agreed that social support was one of the benefits of jajmani relations.

Among those who provide jajmani services, 12 of the 14 questioned replied that assured income was one benefit and 10 agreed that gifts and concessions were important. Payments are made in both cash and kind but most patrons (76 percent) replied that payment in kind gave better returns to the workers (Bose and Jodha 1965, pp. 118–123).

The situation in this village is repeated in many others. Villagers are generally favorable toward the real and supposed benefits of jajmani, but relatively few carry on complete jajmani relations. Those who provide services are now reluctant to accept any overall stigma of inferiority, those who receive services hesitate to take on multiple obligations. But many carry on some jajmani relations

and even more give a jajmani-like quality to their economic and ritual exchanges with people of other jatis, gaining some stability of relations without the full roster of jajmani obligations.

Similar conclusions emerge from Gould's close study of contemporary jajmani relations in Sherurpur-Naktipur, adjoining hamlets in a densely populated area south of Faizabad city in U.P. Families of six specialist jatis maintain regular jajmani relations with the cultivators and other villagers. Washermen have the largest proportion of their clientele, 77 percent, on a fixed grain-payment basis. Here also it is the ritual, pollution-absorbing aspect of the service that is important.

Carpenters and blacksmiths are next highest in jajmani clientele with 69 percent and 67 percent respectively of their custom in such arrangements. This is not only because of the importance to a cultivator of having secure relations with these artisans but also because "the capacity to retain traditional ties with carpenters and blacksmiths marks a household as socially important" (Gould 1964, p. 18). The barbers in the village have 62 percent of their clientele on a jajmani basis; despite the easy availability of commercial barbering and its lucrativeness for barbers, this jajmani arrangement tends to be maintained because of the ritual importance of the barber. Two other specialist jatis, potters and plowmen, have only minor jajmani ties.

Among patrons of Sherurpur, the two highest jati-groups, Thakurs and Brahmins, have the highest proportion (70 percent) of jajmani relations. These families maintain "no relationships that do not retain at least some traditional flavor" (Gould 1964, p. 19). Even the families of "menial-impure" jatis carry on a considerable proportion (43 percent) of their dealings with the service jatis through jajmani arrangements. Among all jatis, families with the greatest proportion of cash income tend to rely least on jajmani arrangements while those who have grain but little cash use jajmani services most (Gould 1964, pp. 19, 35).

Though jajmani relations are clearly important in the eyes of these villagers, they are of minor consequence in the village economy. The most valuable and productive crop is sugarcane and this cash crop does not enter into jajmani. The harvest of grain and peas in 1960 for the 70 households that engage in jajmani relations came to 221 tons. Of this production, a little over three tons was disbursed as fixed payments to jajmani specialists. Only about 1.5 percent of the relevant harvest was distributed in the jajmani pattern (Gould 1964, pp. 30–31).

This figure does not include the many exchanges that are not fully on a jajmani basis but that are also not completely contractual or commercial. Thus the people who do the polluting tasks of removing dead animals, of working in leather, of assisting at childbirth are here paid in both cash and kind, with both wages and gifts, for a single job and over an extended period. But even if these payments were taken into account, they would add up to only a small part of total village production.

In the past, a greater part of village economy in this region was probably carried on through jajmani arrangements, but it is not at all clear that a major part of production and distribution was so channeled. What is clear, however, is that jajmani relations were and, to a degree, still are important for the ritual and social order. The jajmani pattern, Gould concludes, "arises from a religious dichotomy between pure and impure whose implications work themselves out as a complex system of religious and economic relationships embracing, and indeed in large part defining the dimensions of a locality" (1965, pp. 17, 38–39). Jajmani interchange, in this and many other villages, still provides a measure of economic credit and stability; even more, it helps to define the local social order by defining those who can secure ample ritual services.

Solutions to the Problems of Interdependence

All peoples who maintain a civilization must establish effective interdependence among specialist groups. Such relations should be reliable, enduring, and trustworthy, but they should also be flexible, manipulable, and adaptable. The two kinds of qualities militate against each other. If a relationship is easily begun and readily terminated, it is not likely to be enduringly reliable. If it is endowed with an aura of durability, it cannot readily be adapted to changing circumstances.

Indian villagers have traditionally included both kinds of interdependence in their societal repertoire. Some relationships have been contractual, limited, and flexible through the use of money, barter, and markets. The other relationships have been broad and

durable. Villagers define kinship relations as more broadly supportive and enduring than are most others and see jati as a unit whose members are or could be kinsmen. Jajmani relations provide for nonkinship interdependence in ways that nevertheless have some of the same qualities of reliability and perdurance. These relations are guided and enforced by villagers acting in their capacities as jati members, but the actual exchanges are made between villagers acting as members of their respective families.

We shall note later that tribal peoples in India remained in smaller, less productive groups because, for one reason, they did not have as effective ways of relating to nonkinsmen. The solution that was developed in Indian civilization remained in use for many centuries, until the impact of modern influences became felt. One response to these influences was to shift more exchanges to contractual relations and so to amplify that traditional side of economic activities. But villagers have been inclined to continue with at least some jajmani-like relations for the broader, more personal and supportive bonds that many villagers want to keep.

Villagers, moreover, tend to see social relations as hierarchically ordered. In those jajmani relations that involve ritual services, underlying ideas about hierarchical relations are symbolized. These ideas provide a rationale for the order of village society; they indicate who should be higher and who lower, and why it should be that way. We next examine the criteria that villagers use in explaining and calibrating their social order.

CHAPTER 10 Criteria for the Ranking of Jatis

INTERDEPENDENCE among families and jatis is more than an order of precedence for particular transactions: it is taken as an order of life. In each person's dealings with his neighbors of other jatis, their rank relative to his prohibits some kinds of interchange and sets limits on others.

The social order is made manifest in a thousand and one details of daily life. For the most part, these details are so commonplace that a villager is hardly aware of them. Thus, when men gather to talk, whether in gossip session or serious council meeting, they generally seat themselves with consideration to jati rank. A cot is often used as a bench; some sit on it, others sit on the ground. The upper part of the cot, the part where a sleeper puts his head, is reserved for those of higher rank in the assemblage. The seating order described for a village of Kanpur District is this: Brahmins must precede all others on the upper cot, Thakurs precede all but Brahmins. Those of next higher rank sit at the foot of the cot, those of quite inferior status sit on the ground. When only men from the lowest jatis are present, say Chamar leatherworkers and Dhanuk pigkeepers, men of the two jatis may sit on the same cot, but a Chamar will allow a Dhanuk to sit only at the lower part (Sharma 1956a, p. 259).

Seating arrangements are more than polite distributions in space, they symbolize authority arrangements and power relations. The Brahmins sitting at the head of the cot and the Thakurs next to them are expected by all to take the lead in the talk and then to express for all whatever consensus may be reached. The Dhanuk pigkeeper, from his place on the edge of the ground-sitters, is not expected and does not usually expect to be heard prominently,