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RTUALS OF HIERARCHY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

IN AN ANDHRA VILLAGE

by

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ABSTRACTRITUALS OF HIERARCHY AND INTERDEPENDENCE IN AN ANDHRA VILLAGE

The purpose of the thesis is to examine the relationship between social structure and ritual. It is based on data collected in a peasant village in Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, South India, over a period of twenty-three months (1970-1972). In this village, in which Gavara farmers are the dominant caste, the formal organizing principles of the society are hierarchy and interdependence. A detailed statistical survey of the realities of the society reveals that these principles, while on the whole upheld, are constantly under challenge. Women constantly challenge male dominance in domestic economic affairs and disputes and also play a major role in the high degree of marital instability and divorce. Brothers pursue their own households' interests to the detriment of their interdependent co-operation with each other. Between castes, economic relations do not always conform to a strictly hierarchical pattern. The caste hierarchy itself is a mass of discrepant unreciprocated claims.

In the face of these violations and contradictory pressures it is ritual activity and its symbolism which define and uphold the formal conventions of social hierarchy and interdependence. This is achieved through the constant repetition of symbols of respect and in the principal ritual act, puja. This symbolic acting out of hierarchy is thus presented through rituals as the epitome of morality itself. The subordinate role of women is similarly defined by ritual concepts. The woman who is subordinated to her husband is

virtuous and auspicious. A woman who becomes a widow is no longer subordinate to an elder male and is inauspicious. Performances of rituals of the major agricultural festivals foster ideal models of inter-caste cooperation by activating responsibilities for castes to participate interdependently. They are, however, also occasions through which numerous political and economic rivalries find expression.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between social structure and ritual. It is structured in the following manner. First, the ideals of the society are outlined. Against this are juxtaposed actualities of competition and rivalry, in which the ideals are challenged or are seen to conflict among themselves. We then examine the significance of the ritual life of the village and see how it is actively engaged in defining and reinforcing the social ideals. We also examine how it deals with these when they are manifestly contradictory or ambiguous. We then turn to consider the way in which rituals are sometimes used as tactical weapons in competition.

A. Relationship to related work by other anthropologists:

Other anthropologists have dealt with related issues and I wish first to place the argument of this thesis in the perspective of their work.

1. Ideals: hierarchy and interdependence

We begin with the definition of the central ideals of the society as the complementary principles of hierarchy and interdependence. The fact that Indian society operates with hierarchy as its basic distinguishing structural feature has been extensively demonstrated by Dumont among others. He also establishes the importance of understanding hierarchy as a concept of relative positions. However, my own definition of hierarchy does not rest on a concept of an opposition of pure and impure as found in Dumont's

formulations (Dumont 1970: 43). Rather, it is based on inequality of social status as such. The Telugu word used to describe status is antastu and vividly conveys this notion of vertical hierarchy in social status since it is the same word which is used to describe the floors of a multiple storey building (e.g. nālugu antasulu 'four storeys'). Similarly, the Telugu way of expressing differences in relative hierarchical status is with the following words which lack any reference to purity or impurity:

<u>pedda</u>	big, elder, superior
<u>cinna</u>	small, younger, inferior
<u>yekkuva</u>	more, greater, excessive, dominant
<u>takkuva</u>	less, lesser, deficient, inferior

A concept of hierarchy based on purity is insufficient to explain the greater part of everyday social relations. Andhra Shudras do not conceive of the large number of gradations in status between themselves as having the least thing to do with ritual pollution inherent in social groups. A father is not purer than his son though he is definitely superior to him. People denied that their refusal of food was based on an idea of lower people being polluted. Lower status in itself was sufficient reason for them. This is not to deny that concepts of pollution were totally absent, but rather to assert that an understanding of hierarchy cannot be based on the concept of pollution and purity.

"Even understood in their relativistic uses, considerations of pollution and purity do not seem to underlie all or most of the several kinds of transactions on which villagers say that caste rank is based."

(Marriott: 143)

"If a theory of pollution offers an incomplete understanding of the values involved in food transfers, it also fails to account fully for the hierarchy of services."

(Marriott: 144)

Srinivas tells us that pollution is:

"Absolutely fundamental to the caste system... every type of inter-caste relation is governed by the concept of pollution. Contact of any kind, touching, dining, sex, and other relations between castes which are structurally distant results in the higher of the two castes being polluted."

(Srinivas: 26)

But, in the same breath, he has to admit that, in fact, pollution does not account for all contacts between those of hierarchically differentiated statuses:

"Ordinarily, contact between members of the same caste, or between members of castes which are structurally very near each other, does not result in pollution."

(ibid.)

For this level of interaction, which is undeniably hierarchically structured and which forms the greater part of social relations, we require a concept of hierarchy which is not dependent on a concept of ritual purity.

2. Actualities: (shifts in economic and political power, ambiguities in social hierarchy, competition of brothers, problem of the status of women, indistinctness of hierarchy in economic relations)

When we turn to the aspect of the actualities of social life, conflicts with the ideology of hierarchy and interdependence, we find numerous parallels in the existing literature. The rise of the Gavara caste and the declining influence of the Twice-Born

castes in Aripaka Revenue Village, the village described in this thesis, is an occurrence familiar to us from Bailey's description of the Boad Distillers in the village he studies in Orissa (Bailey: 191). In both cases, social and economic changes coincided. Twice-Born castes, previously dominant landowners, were forced to partition their land through the weakening of joint-families. This coincided with the rise of lower castes who benefitted from the new market economy and bought up the land of the higher castes which was coming on to the market. Evidence of a similar process of partitioning of joint-families and decline appears in Epstein's description of the Karnataka village of Wangala (Epstein 1962: 322). In all three cases, the Boad Distillers, the Wangala peasants, and the Aripaka Gavaras under study here, economic changes left the structure of their respective villages intact. Only personnel within the structure were altered (Bailey: 198, Epstein 1962: 316).

Epstein describes other effects of the decline of the joint family such as the decline in the subordination of sons to fathers (they no longer had authority as heads of joint estates), increased conflicts between competing brothers, and a decline in the subservience of wives (Epstein 1962: 322). Such features are clearly present in my material on the Gavaras of Aripaka though it is not certain that they are due to the decline of a previously more widespread joint-family structure. There is evidence that such competitions and rivalries are inherent in the social structure. It is thus not surprising to find other anthropologists describing the rivalry of brothers as an inescapable structural paradox:

"A man is inescapably bound to his kinsmen as brothers and equals, and he is no less inescapably bound to seek the best for himself and his family."

(Pocock: 3)

Hiebert similarly reports on the widely different personal statuses of individuals based on criteria on achievement (Hiebert 1969: 434) in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh.

Not only are individuals engaged in rivalry and competition, so are whole castes. Evidence of this in the existing material is abundant and has been the inspiration for many an investigator to formulate complex techniques to discern "the real" caste hierarchy in the face of massive evidence of indeterminacy and contradictions:

"Caste rank was not a completely clearcut matter... There was uncertainty in ranking and this can result in intense conflict over rank among people in close contact. When individuals were present who represented castes being rated, the raters were circumspect. For example, a Goldsmith ranked Sagar Rajputs fifth from the top when he was alone, but third from the top in the presence of a Rajput. Similarly, Rajputs ranked Goldsmiths much higher when the village Goldsmith was present."

(Orenstein: 136-7)

"The caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially in the middle regions of the hierarchy."

(Srinivas: 30)

"Difficulties involved in the fact that the main criterion for caste ranking, the commensal hierarchy, is not a purely symbolic ranking, but is contingent on features such as size and location of castes. This means that there is no cut-and-dried system of showing caste rank, as there would be if there were diacritical distinctions. And this is a major factor in the flexibility of the caste hierarchy."

(Mayer 1956: 143)

My own material on the problem of the position of women in society is echoed in other writers' observations. Epstein describes Wangala peasant women who have independent sources of income and are less subservient to their husbands (Epstein 1962: 323). Harper describes how women among Brahmans in Karnataka are believed to pose a potential threat to male dominance even though they lack the extensive economic independence of farmer women.

As for ambiguities in the sphere of economic relations, far from finding a clear-cut jajmani system, economic relations between castes in Aripaka are potentially ambiguous in hierarchical structuring. Pocock has remarked on an even more pronounced paucity of jajmani relationships among the Patidar of Gujarat (Pocock: 7) and remarks on the "element of romanticism" which he suspects has crept into others' accounts of the jajmani system. Even an historian is driven to remark on the lack of straightforward hierarchical patterns in material on relationships involving land:

"So complex could land relationships become that one person could be both landlord and tenant to another person. This blurring of distinctions in the relationships of one man to another and of both to the land has remained one of the most perplexing enigmas to students of agrarian India."

(Frykenberg: xv)

3. The significance of ritual symbols

Some of these ambiguities and rivalries can proceed from conflicts in the ideals of the society itself. This notion is well developed in the writings of Turner on the Ndembu of Zambia which view rituals and ritual symbols as centrally concerned with the resolution of built-in structural problems.

"It is one of the major theses of my studies of the Ndembu that the very norms of the social structure themselves produce disputes. In fact, there can be no such thing as 'structural integration' for Ndembu society"

(Turner 1968: 271)

"Contradictions, which may not be resolved on the level of politico-kinship relations among the Ndembu, may yet be resolved, or rather transcended, on the plane of ritual."

(Turner 1968: 283)

"If unity, then, must be regarded as the product, and not the premise, of ritual action, it must further be supposed that a ritual sequence arises out of some condition of social disunity, actual or potential."

(Turner 1968: 270)

Beals has demonstrated that the hosting of village jattras in Karnataka is correlated with internal village conflict. Such conflicts were found to be related to unresolvable ambiguities in social structure, i.e. 1. controversies between castes which are roughly of the same status and size (ambiguity of hierarchy) or 2. conflicts between clans of a dominant caste which are roughly equal in power and compete with each other (competition between equals) (Beals 1964: 112, 1969: 42).

In my material, built-in structural problems concern getting people to accept subordinate positions to their superiors in the higher interests of mutually beneficial cooperation and interdependence. A related structural problem is the maintenance and justification of the subordinate, inferior status to which women are consigned. In Aripaka we find that ritual activities are very much concerned with these problems. The central ritual act, pūja, is based on mariyāda, the code of behaviour associated with the showing of respect through expressing self-subordination. Such

behaviour is elevated to the plane of the highest morality since puja is demonstrated in ritual to be the source of all personal and social well-being. Through it, despite the ambiguities over who has what place in the hierarchy, little doubt is left over the existence and propriety of hierarchy as an ideal.

Also central to the ritual system is an ideology about the impulsive, emotional character of women and an elaborate series of symbols concerned with the inauspiciousness of the widow contrasted with the auspiciousness of the pēraṇṭālu, the subordinate virtuous wife with her husband still alive. As Babb has shown, notions about deities themselves are interpenetrated by and serve to support ideals about the character of women in the society at large. Such symbols as the auspiciousness of "non-widowhood" are so persuasive and so interwoven with various rituals that women themselves internalise this means of their own subordination.

4. Use of ritual as a tactical weapon in competition

Recently, Cohen has focused attention on the way in which symbols are central in the organisation of interest groups and of competition between them. In my Aripaka material there are two issues in which we find ritual used as a "tactical weapon" in competitive strategies. The first involves rivalry between Gavara clans and the second involves the changed position of the Gavaras as a caste in the village. Both these instances have similarities to material in the existing literature. Epstein describes the phenomenon of duplicate celebrations of rituals as the result of lineage factions (Epstein 1962: 132-4). These, she tells us, are the result of the recent economic changes which brought

about an imbalance in the previous configuration of lineages in economic, political, and ritual status. Similarly, we shall show that in Aripaka there were cases of duplicate ritual celebrations which were the result of changes in the economic relations between the three major Gavara clans, Saragadam, Rapeti, and Malla. The Saragadam are the most numerous and have a number of ritual prerogatives though they are rather poor. The Rapeti are of medium size, have political prerogatives and are rather well-to-do. The Malla were previously not in a competitive position with relation to the other two clans. Their recent economic success and political assertion appeared also to take expression in their performing a separate version of the Gairamma Festival.

Our second instance concerns the general rise of the Gavaras in the village and their response to this by ritual means. The writings of Srinivas on the Coorgs describing the process of Sanskritization is relevant here. Gavaras have been attracted to more prestigious forms of Hinduism to enhance their newly risen status in the village vis à vis the Twice-Born castes. This is most clearly evidenced in their banding together to build a new and architecturally sophisticated Rama temple to replace the rudimentary one in their section of the village. Another way they have shown interest in prestigious forms of Hinduism is their playing host to a guru, called by them a sādhū. This man became the convenient figurehead for the organization of the building of their new temple. They have also taken to performing rituals more elaborately now that they can afford to invite a Brahman priest to officiate more frequently. It should be stressed however that such opting

for more prestigious religious forms is not a whole-hearted imitation of Brahmans or Brahmanical ways as might be suggested by the term "Sanskritization". (See similar sentiments in Pocock: 90). Gavaras show no intention of curbing the economic participation of their womenfolk or of changing their diet.

B. The region

1. Social and Cultural Regions of Andhra Pradesh

Contemporary Andhra Pradesh (1971 population: 43,502,708) consists of three distinctive regions, Telangana, Rayalaseema, and Coastal Andhra. Each of these has its own characteristic terrain, history and Telugu dialect. Telangana, the most economically depressed region, was heavily influenced by the Urdu-speaking Muslim elite which formerly administered it as part of the erstwhile Hyderabad State. Rayalaseema, south of Telangana, suffers from lying in a region of chronically low reliability of rainfall. It seems to have done rather better than Telangana in terms of economic development apparently because of its long ties with the British administration in Madras.

Coastal Andhra, also formerly part of the Madras Presidency, is the most economically developed region of the state. It owes much of this prosperity to the irrigation works of the Nineteenth Century in the deltas of the Krishna and Godavari rivers. These areas were transformed from drought-stricken backwaters into populous and lushly fertile tracts. Behind the deltas and extending the entire length of the coast is the tank-irrigated "upland" area. Visakhapatnam District, the focus of this study, lies entirely within this upland region.

Within Coastal Andhra, the geographical insulation of the Eastern Ghats facilitated the separation of the two northern districts of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam from the rest of the region for several centuries. The effects of this historical separation linger on in the local Telugu dialects which change rather abruptly around the border between the present Visakhapatnam and East

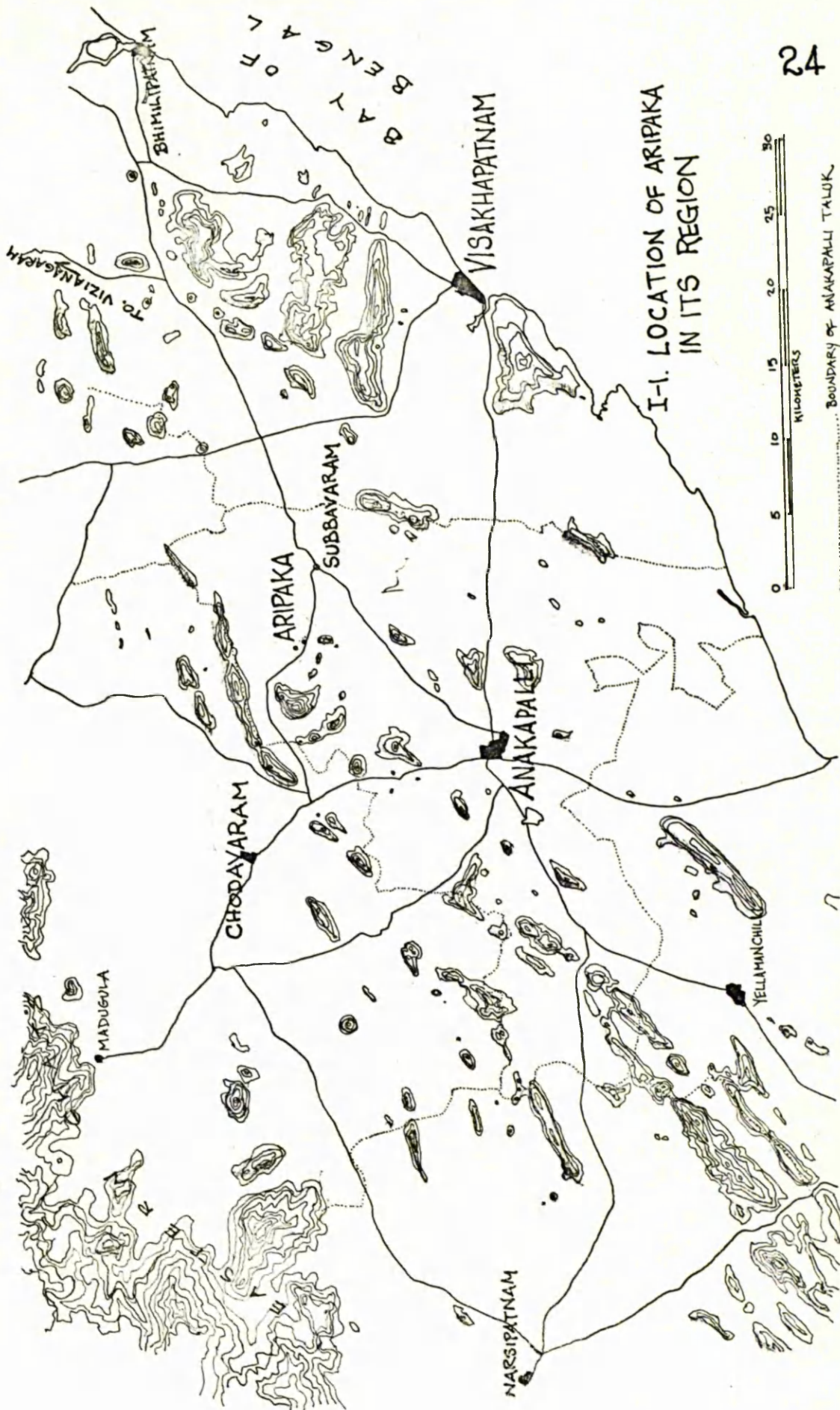
Godavari districts (Krishnamurti: 127). Local inhabitants continue to refer to each other as "westerners" and "easterners" on the basis of these differences.

Notwithstanding, northern Coastal Andhra Pradesh is notable for its linguistic and religious homogeneity. While the percentage of Telugu speakers for the state as a whole is 86⁰/o, in Visakhapatnam District the percentage is 99.9⁰/o. The rural areas of Visakhapatnam District similarly have the smallest percentage of Muslims of any district in the state (Hindus 99⁰/o, Muslims 0.7⁰/o, Christians 0.3⁰/o) (Sekhar 1966: 182).

The configurations of dominant caste regions differ considerably within Coastal Andhra. Reddys, found elsewhere throughout the state, and prominent in southern Coastal Andhra and the Krishna Delta, hardly appear at all in the rural areas of Visakhapatnam. Kammas, frequently dominant in villages of the Krishna delta and surrounding regions, seem primarily localised in those areas. By contrast, Kapus and Velamas are often found as dominant castes in both the deltas and Visakhapatnam-Srikakulam. The Gavaras resemble the Kammas in being concentrated in one particular region. It is possible that further investigations might reveal that if endogamous sub-castes were distinguished within Velamas, Kapus, or Reddys that their effective sizes might approximate that of the Gavaras or Kammas who stand out because they have no equivalent block of associated castes.

2. Geography and Economy of Visakhapatnam District

Visakhapatnam District, the locale of this study, consists of a terrain of gently sloping plains interspersed with hills. Striking



features of the landscape are the irregularly shaped hills, the red soil, the villages of conical palm-leaf thatched huts, and the extraordinary abundance of palmyra palm trees. Rainfall in the district is fairly reliable and the prosperity of the district's agriculture ranks midway in the State between the less fertile Deccan and the river-irrigated delta regions. The main source of irrigation here is the tank, a type of reservoir which is formed behind an earthenwork dam. Complex systems of dams skilfully collect rainwater which would otherwise flow off the hills or down the sloping plains unutilised. Higher ground rising up near the base of the hills tends to be green and appear forest-covered all year round. The heavily forested ridges of the Eastern Ghats, which lie in the interior in a line parallel to the coastal plain, contain low density tribal populations who are racially and linguistically distinct from the Hindu villagers of the plains.

On the plains, the driest areas are used for the cultivation of groundnuts, beans, and gram crops as well as the occasional grove of mangoes or cashews. Lower lying sparsely irrigated areas are used for the staple millet crops (ganti, cōlu). Once the millet crops are harvested these same plots are utilised for vegetables (onions, aubergines, ladies fingers, chillies etc.) and tobacco for domestic consumption. The highly prized lands lying below irrigation dams, the so-called wet lands, are used for growing rice and the major cash crop of the region, sugar-cane. The sugar-cane producing region of the district is a clearly defined region centring on the towns of Anakapalli, Chodavaram, and Yellamanchilli where there is a concentration of sugar refineries and a large wholesale inter-state exporting market for jaggery.

Towns in Visakhapatnam District

Small towns are scattered throughout the district and few villages are more than an hour or two from an urban centre by a fairly dense network of local bus lines. There is a great deal of travel between the towns and villages and hardly any area on the plains could be considered isolated or insulated from each other. Visakhapatnam is the metropolis of the district, a major administrative and industrial centre with a rather cosmopolitan population due to its importance as a Naval base, ship-building and oil refining centre. In addition, one of the three main educational institutions of the state, Andhra University, is located there and draws its students from throughout the Coastal Districts. Vizianagaram and Anakapalli, by contrast, are important urban centres which are far more directly dependent upon the rural populations in their vicinity. These are the two main marketing and wholesale centres of the district and are in some respects more important for the villagers than Visakhapatnam. After Vizianagaram and Anakapalli the smaller towns are more localised in their influences and economic importance.

Table I-1.

Population of towns in Visakhapatnam District (1971 Census)

1. Visakhapatnam (including Malkapuram)	363,467
2. Vizianagaram	86,608
3. Anakapalli	57,273
4. Narsapatnam	17,417
5. Chodavaram	17,319
6. Yellamanchilli	15,318
7. Bheemunipatnam	14,291
8. Srungavarapukota	13,177
9. Madugula	8,376

(Vedantam: 222ff)

Table I-2.

Urban and Rural Components of the Population

<u>Visakhapatnam District:</u>	
Rural Plains	1,897,073
Urban	625,503
Tribal ("Agency")	<u>282,790</u>
	<u>3,805,366</u>
 <u>Anakapalli Taluk</u>	
Rural	221,320
Anakapalli town	<u>57,273</u>
	<u>278,593</u>
 Taluk area: 787.4 Square Kilometres	
Number of villages: 136	

(ibid.)

4. Villages in Visakhapatnam District

The villages of Visakhapatnam District tend to be nucleated settlements with closely clustering houses. Settlements are often associated together as a single "revenue village" with a shared body of political officers. The focal point of most main villages, as opposed to subordinate satellite hamlets, is a Rama temple. This usually has a roofed open platform which is the site of numerous public gatherings ranging from festival celebrations to government tax collection.

The villages of Visakhapatnam District are remarkable for a distinctive style of house construction with a steeply pitched conical palm-leaf thatch roof which reaches down to the ground. Most typical settlements combine this house-type with two others, free-standing single family dwellings with rectangular floorplans, and long houses which are strings of adjacent single family dwellings

under a single roof. Wealthier villagers live in cement versions of these long houses which are sometimes built with two rows of rooms facing each other to form a central enclosed courtyard. Though the various types of houses are found interspersed at random, the lay-out of village streets and the placement of house entrances are strictly determined by conventions which are believed to prevent the trapping of evil eye.

Census of India statistics show that the greatest proportion (72%) of the rural population live in villages with a population range from 1,000-5,000. It is unfortunate that the statistics are not presented in comparable units of 1,000 in order to give a full picture of the population spread. The existing figures are, nevertheless, informative.

Table I-3

Range of Village Sizes in Visakhapatnam District (1971)

Population of Villages	Percentage of number of villages in this class to total number of villages in the District	Percentage of population in this class to total rural population of the district
Less than 500	24.00	4.0
500-999	24.3	13.2
1,000-1,999	29.2	30.2
2,000-4,999	20.4	42.2
5,000-9,999	1.8	7.9
10,000 and above	.3	2.5
	100.0	100.0

(The above figures are only for plains, villages and exclude villages in tribal 'agency' areas, ibid. 100 ff)

5. Administrative and Political Structures in the District

For administrative purposes Visakhapatnam District is subdivided into ten taluks, each of which is named after the town in

which its headquarters is located. In each taluk town there is a land record and revenue office, presided over by a tahsildār. There is also a magistrate court and a police headquarters. It is with these offices that villagers and their leaders have the bulk of their contacts with the government bureaucracy. Only judicial appeals or business of an unusually important nature are referred to the district headquarters in Visakhapatnam town, the seat of the district Collectorate. The number of villages under the jurisdiction of a single taluk is remarkably small, 136 in the case of Anakapalli Taluk. This means that the Headman (munsif) and Record Keeper (karnam) of each village maintain fairly frequent personal contact with the administrative officers of the central government.

A second bureaucratic hierarchy, autonomous from the Taluk-Collectorate system, links the villages with the central government. This is the Panchayat system. In addition to having a Headman and Record Keeper, responsible for collecting annual revenue and maintaining the peace, each village has a Panchayat President (presidentu sarpanc) and Vice President (vaisu-presidentu, upa-sarpanc) intended to democratically represent the village and administer development programmes. These men are chosen by a vote taken among those elected to represent the various wards in the village (always an odd number) on the village panchayat or council. For administration of the Panchayat system each Taluk is divided into two Blocks. Subbavaram (1961 population 3,610) is the Block headquarters for the village in which data were collected for this study. In Subbavaram, as in all block headquarters, there are

offices of the Block Development Officer (B.D.O.", bīḍīyō) and the Panchayati Samiti, a council of all the heads of village councils. The Panchayati Samiti elects a President from among its members to represent them at the district level council in Visakhapatnam town, the Zilla Parishad.

Though the Panchayat System, introduced after Indian independence, was intended to encourage village self-government it has tended to overlap ambiguously with the older headman system. As we shall presently see in our study, its principal effects have been to introduce new loci of political power and recurrent possibilities of competition for them. The Panchayat hierarchy is also an important line of communication in the mobilization of political support at the time of State and National elections.

6. The Gavara Caste in the Visakhapatnam District

The Gavara caste is found in greatest concentration in the region of Anakapalli town and is roughly coextensive with the sugar-cane cultivation belt which stretches west to Yellamanchilli, north to Chodavaram, and northwest to Madugula and Narsipatnam. There are particularly dense concentrations along the Sarada river which is an important local irrigation source supporting unusually large prosperous villages along its banks. Gavara urban neighbourhoods are found in Anakapalli in the quarter known as Gavarapalem, and in Visakhapatnam town in the quarters of Alipuram, Marripalem, and Gopalapatnam. There are also small communities of Gavaras in the towns of Vizianagaram and Srungavarapukota. A remarkable feature of the areas of heaviest Gavara rural concentration is that Gavaras by no means control or dominate all the villages.

Villages in which Kapus and Velamas are dominant are interspersed with the Gavara villages. In addition there are villages where particular castes dominate which are not normally found to do so on any wide scale, such as weavers or shepherds (Sali, Golla, respectively). Despite this pattern of demographic heterogeneity of castes which are dominant in individual villages, the Gavaras unquestionably dominate the region as a whole. This seems to be the product of their overall economic dominance in the sugar-cane economy and their strategic influence in the largest most prosperous villages.

7. Other Influential Castes of Visakhapatnam District

The influence of the Twice-Born castes was previously far more extensive and has declined since Independence. This is due to the government's deliberate democratization of political and economic opportunities. While those policies may have been intended for the most depressed, Harijan castes, it was the farmers who have been best placed to benefit from the new opportunities. The Twice-Born castes are nevertheless still active on the political scene. For instance, the former Maharaja (zamindār) of Vizianagaram of the Raju caste (ksatriya) ran successfully for the post of Member of Parliament in the Mid-Term Poll for the national Lok Sabha in March 1971. Subsequently, a prominent local politician who is a Brahman, was elected Member of the State Legislative Assembly in the 1972 General Election. Soon afterwards he was appointed Minister for Education in the State Government. While it would be a misrepresentation to imply that electioneering and voting runs along caste lines it is nevertheless true that members of the higher

Twice-Born castes begin in the political competition with the advantages of higher levels of education and experience in dealing with governmental structures.

C. The village

1. The Settlement of Yatapalem in the Aripaka Revenue Village

The settlement of Yatapālem was chosen as the village for study because of its average size, typical appearance, multicaste composition, dominant Gavara caste, and economic ties with the town of Anakapalli. It lies between two ridges of hills in a funnel-shaped valley which gradually slopes eastwards down towards its wider end. A main road runs along this plain and frequent bus services running on it link the village to the towns of Chodavaram (16 km.), Anakapalli (22 km.), and Visakhapatnam (40 km.). The village is irrigated in the customary fashion by a series of irrigation reservoirs, tanks, fed by intermittent streams when rain flows down the gradually sloping plain and off the nearby hills. These sources of water are supplemented by a number of large open wells and together they irrigate some 350 acres of wet lands of the total of 930 acres cultivated. Uncultivated wastelands around the hills and other barren uplands comprise an additional 1,667 acres within the village boundaries.

While Yatapalem, whose population is 904, appears geographically as a distinct settlement, it is actually only one component of a grouping of settlements associated together as the "revenue village" of Aripāka. This unit, whose composite population of 1,713, is a single entity from the point of view of the government administration. It shares a single set of village officers (Headman, Record Keeper, Village Servant, Panchayat President, Panchayat Vice President) and in numerous ways its inhabitants share a feeling of belonging to the same village. The issue is complex since there remain ways in which the settlements evidence individual identities as well.

I-2. THE SETTLEMENTS OF
ARIPAKA REVENUE VILLAGE

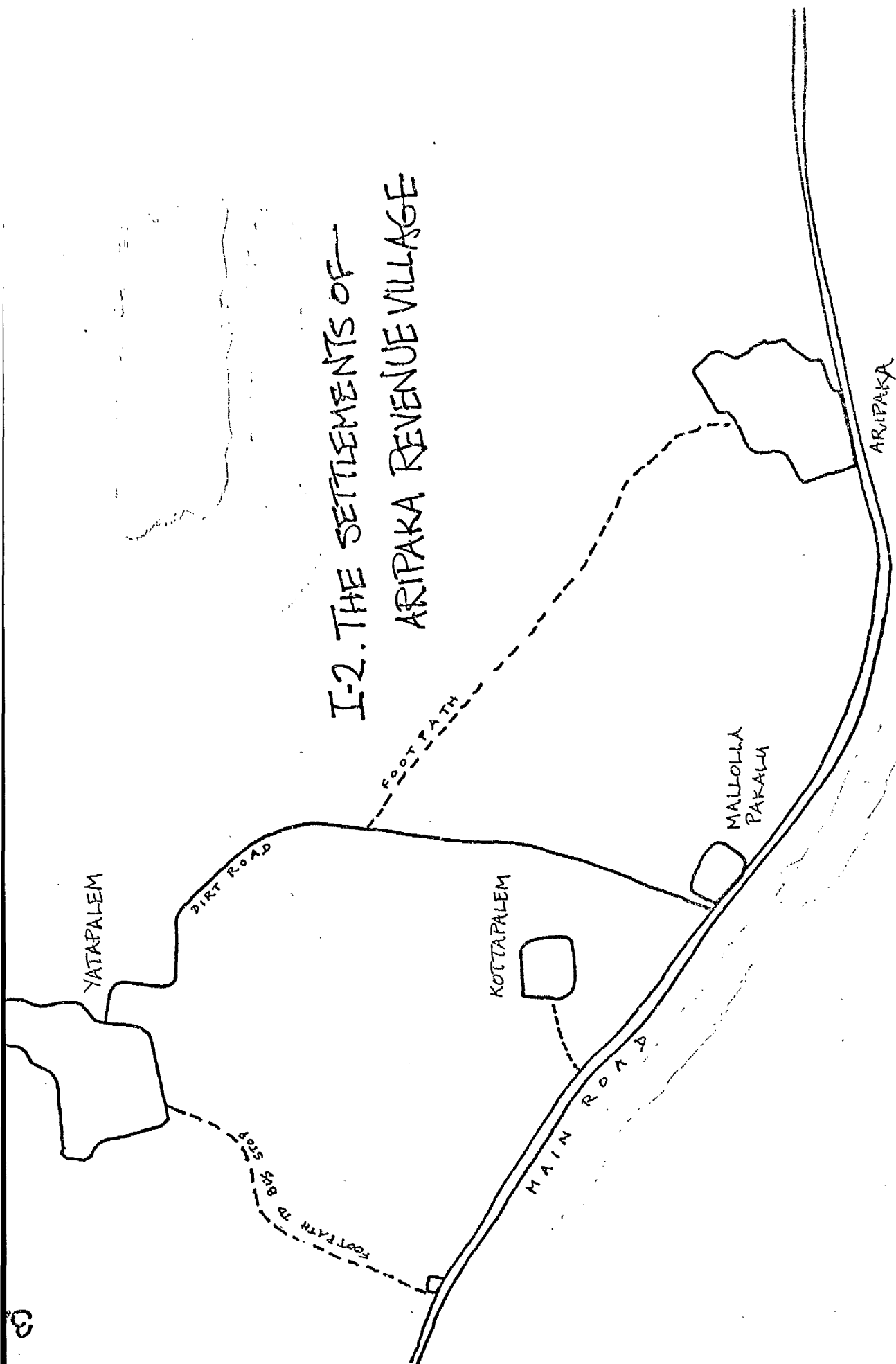


Table I-4.

Castes of Aripaka Revenue Village (including Yatapalem)

1. Brahman live entirely in Aripaka, are landowners and village bureaucrats, are not from Brahman sub-castes which perform priestly functions (who have to be brought in from outside)
2. Rāju local "Kshatriyas", are landlords who live exclusively in Aripaka
3. Kōmaṭi "Vaiśya"s, are traditionally merchants and shopkeepers, some own lands, reside primarily in Aripaka but there is a family which maintains a shop in Yatapalem that lives there
4. Golla traditional shepherds, and farmers, this caste is represented by only a school teacher who lives in Aripaka
5. Gavara the "dominant" farmer caste of the village, almost all are small landowners, live primarily in Yatapalem, and the roadside satellite settlement of Mallōlla Pakalu, but a few families also reside in Aripaka.
6. Kāpu another major farmer caste of the region, here represented only in Aripaka
7. Pedda Kāpu a Kapu sub-caste (which does not intermarry with the Kapus of Aripaka), represented by two households in Yatapalem
8. Velama the third major farmer caste (besides the Gavaras and Kapus) of the region, reside primarily in Aripaka but also in the outlying satellite settlement of Nālamōlla Kampalu
9. Kamsāli carpenters, blacksmiths, and goldsmiths of the village, who live equally divided between Yatapalem and Aripaka (with more carpentry and heavy blacksmithing in Yatapalem and more goldsmithing in Aripaka)
10. Jangam the traditional occupation associated with them is the job of pūjāri (ritual officiant) of village Rama temples and the performance of shaivite funerary rituals, nowadays they frequently make their living as tailors, they reside mainly in Yatapalem but there is one household in Aripaka too
11. Telukula mainly practice their traditional occupation of oil-pressing but in between they work land of their own or do labour for the farmers, they live in both Yatapalem and Aripaka but the larger contingent is in Yatapalem

12. Sāli (also called Padmasāli), were traditionally weavers (and in other villages in the region they still practice that occupation, in Yatapalem they provide agricultural labour for the farmers).
13. Vaḍram only one household of this caste is found in Yatapalem and serves as pujari for the rituals connected with the village goddess, do labour for the farmers for most of the time
14. Mangali the barbers of the village, live exclusively in Yatapalem
15. Cākali the washermen of the village, live mainly in Yatapalem but also a few households in Kottapalem and one in Aripaka
16. Yāta ("Seṭṭigollu") traditionally toddy tappers making palm wine, prohibition led to abandonment of that craft though its lifting has led to their distilling of rum from local cane produce, depend mainly on labouring for the farmers, supplement this by basket and mat weaving, largest population in satellite settlement of Kottapalem but also live in Yatapalem (which bears their name)
17. Māla one of the two major Harijan castes of Andhra Pradesh, live primarily in Aripaka though also some in Yatapalem, and one of the main sources of labour for the farmers
18. Mādiga the other major Harijan caste, live exclusively in Yatapalem, are labourers for the farmers, occasionally they tan leather

Table I-5.

Caste Distribution in the Various Settlements:

Caste	Households:					Total	Population:
	Yatapalem	Aripaka	Mallolla	Kotta- Kampalu	Nalamolla Kampala		Total
Brahman		8				8	44
Raju		10				10	47
Komati	1	9				10	40
Golla		1				1	6
Gavara	148	6	19			173	795
Kapu		23				23	100
Pedda Kapu	2					2	5
Velama	1	16			12	29	162
Kamsali	6	6				12	60
Jangam	3	1				4	16
Telukula	4	2				6	23
Sali	4					4	11
Vadram	1					1	3
Mangali	7					7	24
Cakali	6	1		3		10	46
Yata	13			36		49	169
Mala	6	22				28	121
Madiga	12					12	41
Mixed (Brahman + Gavara concubine)		1				1	4
Total	214	106	19	39	12	389	1,713
	pop: 904	pop: 513	pop: 108	pop: 132	pop: 60		

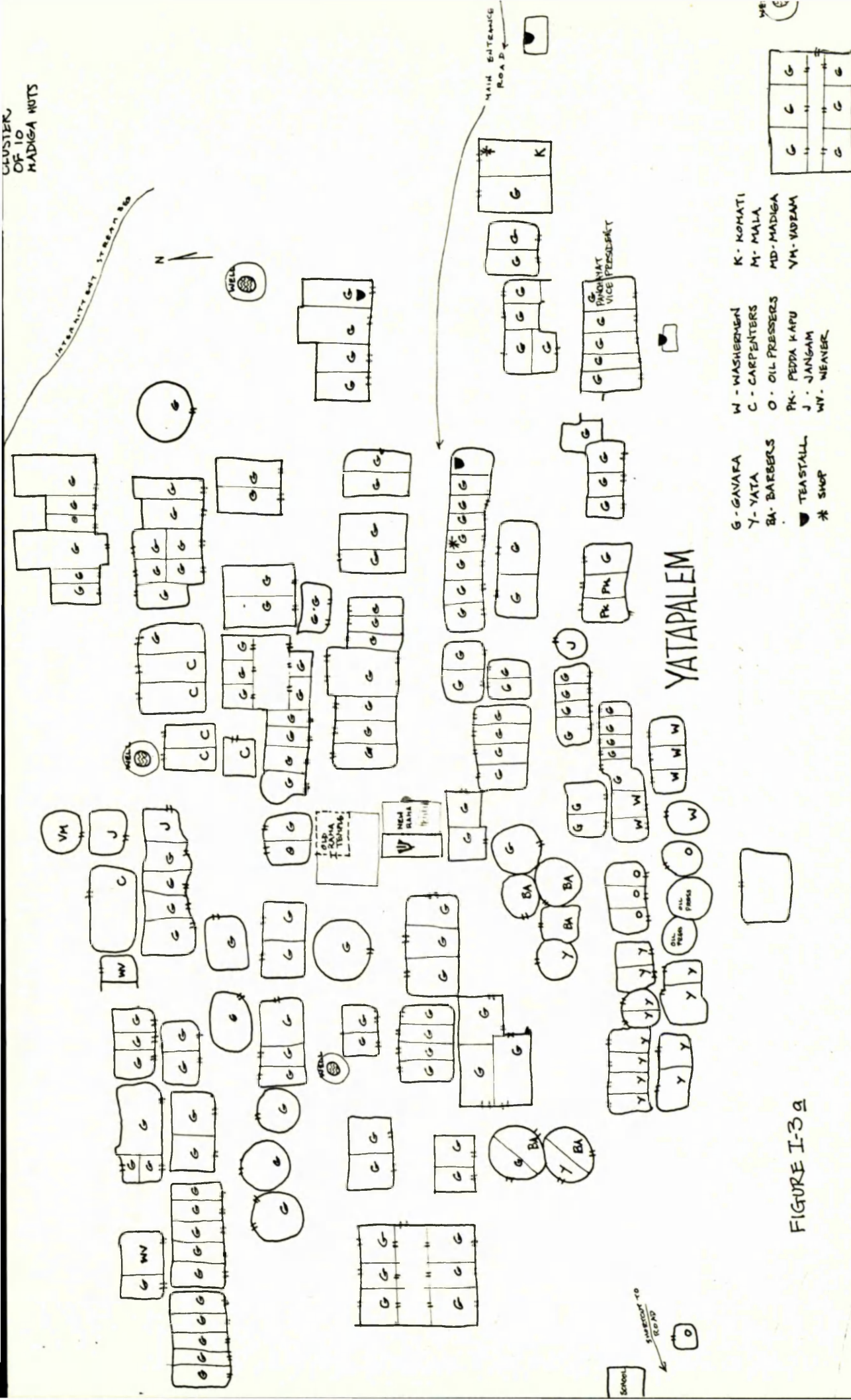
YATAPALEM

* shop

WV - WEAVER

W77-14

FIGURE I-3a



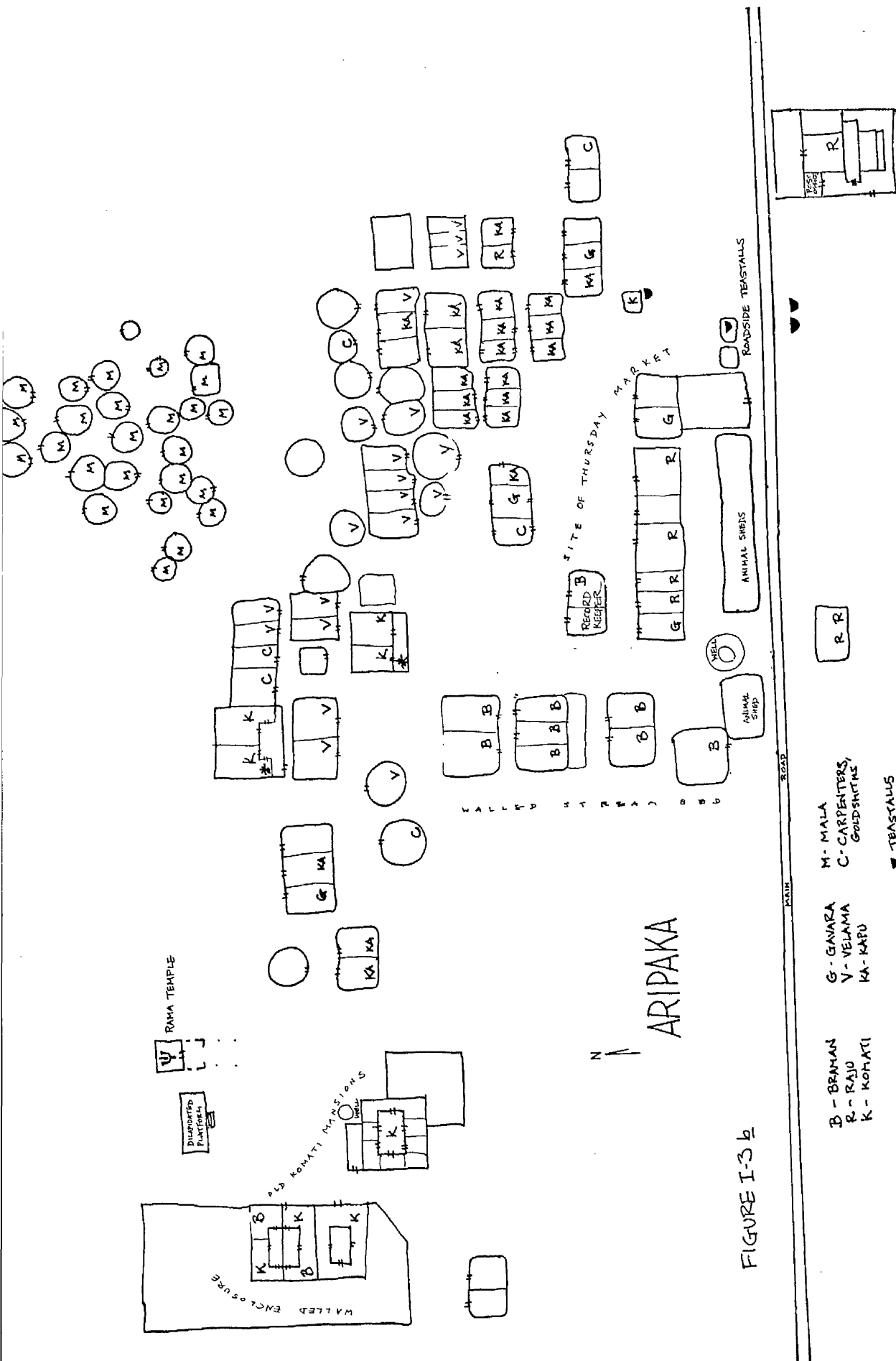


FIGURE I-3 b

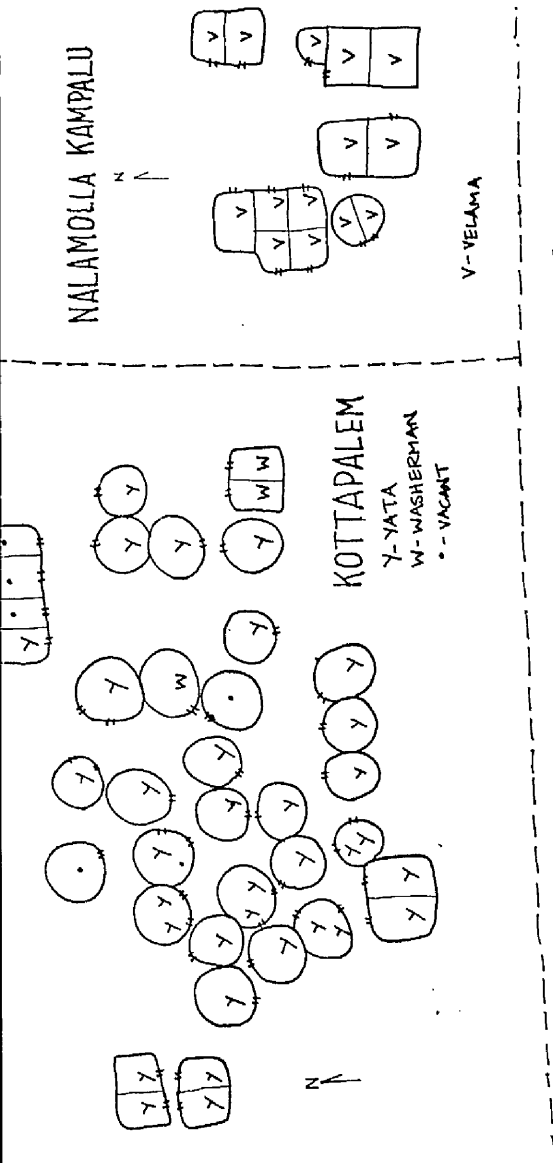
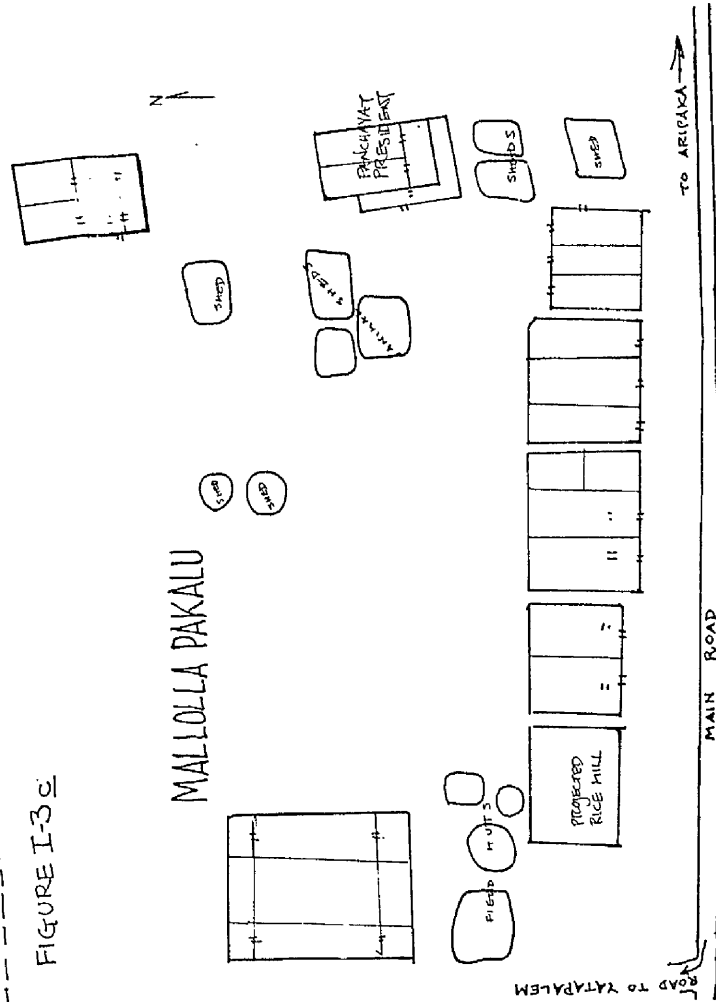


FIGURE I-3c



The Gavaras form 65⁰/o of the Yatapalem population and only slightly less than 50⁰/o of the population of the composite Aripaka Revenue Village. In addition, the Gavaras are more than four times the size of any other caste in the total population. They also own 64⁰/o of the coveted wet lands (223 out of 348 acres) and 51⁰/o of the dry lands (297 out of 581 acres), or 55⁰/o of both taken together.

Table I-6

Comparison of Landholdings by Caste:

(figures are for all castes of all settlements of Aripaka Revenue Village)

Caste	Population	No. of house-holds	Landownership: (in acres)	
			Wet lands	Dry lands
Brahman	44	8	11.5	33.0
Raju	47	10	30.4*	72.0
Komati	40	10	8.5	35.0
Golla	6	1	-	-
Gavara	795	173	223.0	297.0
Kapu	100	23	18.7	25.7
Pedda Kapu	5	2	.2	.7
Velama	162	29	37.7	53.7
Kamsali	60	12	3.7	.5
Jangam	16	4	-	.4
Telukula	23	6	1.0	.8
Sali	11	4	-	1.8
Vadram	3	1	-	2.4
Mangali	24	7	.5	6.0
Cakali	46	10	2.8	.2

(Table continued on next page)

*have additional lands in another village (6.5 wet, 12.0 dry)

Table I-6 (continued).

Caste	Population	No. of house- holds	Landownership: (in acres)	
			Wet lands	Dry lands
Yata	169	49	7.0	47.4
Mala	121	28	2.8	3.5
Madiga	41	12	.1	1.3
	1,713	389	347.9	581.6

2. Relationships between the Settlements of Aripaka Revenue

Village in the Past

The historical development of the various settlements is the story of the relationships between castes. In particular, the pattern of settlement fission is associated with tensions in the village social hierarchy. Groups seem to drift into separate settlements as part of an attempt to establish autonomy from groups who dominate them.

Yatas, for instance, have a tendency throughout the region to found satellite hamlets outside of main villages. They are one of the three lowest Shudra castes but unlike Barbers and Washermen of similar status they are not dependent upon the higher castes in long-term service relationships. Among themselves they openly discuss their resentment of being dominated by higher castes (e.g. being coerced to yield their seats on raised cots and sit on the ground if farmers should arrive at a public performance). Without openly challenging the caste hierarchy they simply move away to form suburbs in which they are the majority. There they are not so frequently confronted with having to act submissively to higher castes. (Though

it should be noted that they are hardly averse to the tribute which the Harijans pay them.)

The foundation of Yatapalem has its origins in a Yata satellite settlement associated with the original main village of Aripaka. The name Yatapalem literally means "Yata village". After some time, Gavaras began moving to Yatapalem from Aripaka. Their motivation was similar to that of the Yatas. They disliked being dominated by the Rajus. Though this explanation is remembered by many, the usual rationalization for the shift was that they wanted to be "closer to their fields". By a process of natural growth and immigration, the Gavaras soon came to outnumber the original Yatas.

The Yatas again formed a satellite settlement, this time outside of Yatapalem. It came to be known as Cinna Yātapālem, "lesser Yatapalem". This is a common pattern where the Yata satellite hamlet takes the name of the main village with the prefix "cinna" in front of it (e.g. Bangarampalem's Yata hamlet is called Cinna Bangārapālem). Recently, the residents of Cinna Yatapalem have begun to use the name Kottapālem, "new village". This is presumably a further expression of their bid for autonomy. In addition the name Cinna Yatapalem has a negative connotation in that cinna means 'inferior in status' as well as 'smaller in size', hence one reading of the village name would be 'village of the inferior Yatas'. It is significant that few other castes have cooperated in using this new name. Similarly, few castes use the Yata's new caste name of Seṭṭigōllu, except perhaps when it is useful to be polite to them in their presence. The fact that Yatas have a more dignified notion of themselves than others are willing to accord to them is a symptom of the structural motivation for the foundation of

such satellite settlements.

In the 1940s members of the Malla clan in the Gavara caste began moving out "to be near their fields", founding a new settlement at the roadside, Mallōlla Pākalu, 'field huts of the Malla'. This move should be viewed in the same terms as the foundation of Yata satellite settlements. In this case it is associated with the relatively sudden rise in the economic and political fortunes of the Malla clan. They obviously seem to be asserting a mild autonomy from the numerically preponderant Śaragaḍam clan and politically predominant Rāpēṭi clan. Significantly, the recently created post of Panchayat President has been captured by the Mallas.

The relationship between the settlements of Yatapalem, Mallōlla Pākalu, and the main village of Aripaka has primarily concerned the relations between the Gavaras and two Twice-Born castes. The first, the Rajus, have already been mentioned and are still a political force to be reckoned with. The second are the Komatis who migrated into Aripaka around the beginning of the 20th century. In the 1930s the world economic depression forced many Gavara farmers to mortgage their lands to Komati loan-givers. Many Gavaras and lower caste people migrated to work in Rangoon, Burma. This was the heyday of the Komatis who used their new income to build elaborate cement and tile mansions. In the 1940s and 1950s the Gavaras began recovering their lands and the Komatis went into a decline from which they have not recovered. Their splendid mansions are now dilapidated and some of the rooms rented out to school teachers.

The change in Gavara fortunes was partially due to the new found power of electoral politics in post-independence India as well

as to money remitted from Burma. Surplus money derived from migrant labour is still occasionally a factor which enables farmers to build cement houses and buy agricultural land. However, the expulsion of Indians from Burma in the 1960s ended the most accessible of these opportunities.

Most recently the economic and political rise of the Gavaras has expressed itself in the building of a new Rama temple in Yatapalem in 1969. Though Aripaka Brahmans, Rajus, and Komatis were honorifically involved in the dedication ceremonies, the temple construction was entirely financed and engineered by Gavaras. This new Gavara-sponsored temple in Yatapalem far outshadows the small dilapidated Rama temple in Aripaka which was financed by Komatis at the height of their prosperity.

3. Events during the Period of Fieldwork

The broad shifts in economic and political power over the past decades have been sketched above to place the village in an historical context and explain its complex settlement pattern. In addition it will be helpful to note certain developments during the period of fieldwork. From the point of view of the political structure of the village, the most important event was the death of the village headman in December 1970. The prolonged uncertainty over the appointment of a new Headman coloured numerous events during the subsequent year.

The succession to the headmanship is no longer unconditionally hereditary. The incumbent must first pass a government inspection which is open to all. Thus, Gavara rivals and even members of other castes were in competition with the son of the deceased headman.

This is not the only way in which the government has impinged upon the authority of the Headman. It has also created the post of Panchayat President which ambiguously overlaps with the headmanship, at least from the point of view of the villagers.

A further factor undermining the authority of the headmanship is that it is now easier for a younger man to become Headman. Due to the declining prestige of the headmanship, elder men who would have been eligible were in more remunerative government jobs. In addition, the government ignores the factor of age in determining the eligibility of candidates for headmanship. Thus, the man who finally became Headman was younger than most of the traditional elders over whom he was supposed to hold authority. This led to the development of a generational rivalry which was evidenced in controversies over the running of certain festivals. Political office had shifted out of the hands of the elder generation into those of the younger Gavaras who had grown up in the new climate of cash-crop prosperity and political opportunity of post-Independence India.

We now proceed to look in detail at the social organization of the Gavaras and the inter-relations of castes in the village. We first outline the normative ideals of hierarchy and interdependence against which we then contrast the actualities of rivalry and disunity.

Chapter II

THE FORMAL ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES OF SOCIETY:

HIERARCHY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

A. Within the Gavara Caste

In this chapter we describe three basic principles which are fundamental to the structuring of age, sex, and kinship roles. These are: the principle of elder having authority over younger, the principle of males having authority over females (especially husbands over wives), and the principle that kinsmen share an innate connection and mutual responsibility to each other.

1. Descent

In the caste, descent is reckoned patrilineally and marriages are generally patrilocal. The household, gadapa ('household', literally 'threshold') is the chief residential and property holding unit. It is composed of the residents of a particular dwelling unit who are all under the authority of a single household head, ijamāni. This head is ideally the eldest male, accompanied by his wife and children.

2. Age and sex

The basic hierarchical principles on which the family is based are age and sex, with elder people superior in authority to younger ones, and with males superior to females. Generally the househead is the eldest male of married status, i.e. a full adult. At various stages in the growth of families, the househead can also be a widow with her unmarried children. Once one of her sons marries, however, he comes to be considered as the household head,

though she may continue to live with him. The system of kinship terminology with its associated statuses and roles is reducible to three distinctions: elder/younger (relative to the speaker), male/female, and marriageable/unmarriageable (relative to the speaker). Hierarchical principles are fundamental in the subordination of the wife to the authority of her husband, of children to their parents, and of younger siblings to their elder brothers and sisters. Here, we do not discount the intense emotional ties linking them to each other but merely stress the element of ideal hierarchy. These relationships are particularly evident in the decision making process involved in negotiating marriages. In these, parents and family elders have full authority over the choice of spouse for their children. Furthermore, the tendency for the new wife to leave her own family to go to live with her husband (taking his clan name, intipēru) and also often his family, creates and reinforces her subordination to her husband, his parents, elder brothers and their wives.

3. Husband-wife relations

The importance of the subordination of the wife to her husband, which hinges on an ideology of ideal sex roles, is reinforced by the practice of maintaining a large age difference between prospective brides and grooms. One rationalisation of this age difference between man and wife is the notion of female sexual drives. Numerous villagers hold the view that older men can last longer in intercourse and hence satisfy the great sexual appetites of their women. Female sexual drives are also cited as a reason why women did not accompany men who migrated to Burma in the 1920s-30s. If they

ate the healthier food there they would supposedly have become practically uncontrollable. Hierarchical control and subordination in sex roles is the essence of these rationalisations. By citing women's sexual drives the men justify their restrictions on their women.

4. Widowhood

An elaborate ideology centring on the inauspiciousness of widowhood directly follows from the ideal position of women in the hierarchies of sex and age. A widow is a woman who is not subordinated to the authority of an elder man and is elder in age herself. Thus her position is anomalous since it contradicts the ideal hierarchies of age and sex in which she should be subordinate. The degree to which widows are believed to be sexually uncontrollable is seen in the degree to which Twice-Born castes restrict widows' dress and even diet, all with the aim of decreasing their sexual attractiveness and sexual desires. While Gavaras permit widows to remarry, there is an unmistakeable aura of inauspiciousness which surrounds a woman whose husband has died before herself (vedava, munda 'widow'). This is further emphasised by the auspiciousness of non-widows which is a constantly recurring theme in ritual activities. Non-widows (pēraṇṭālu 'virtuous wife with her husband still alive' and bāla-pēraṇṭālu 'young unmarried virgins') have the prerogative of wearing the auspicious forehead mark, boṭṭu, formed of a turmeric smear with a vermilion dot in the middle. Widows are not permitted to wear a forehead boṭṭu and the ceremony in which a recently widowed woman has her boṭṭu wiped off for the last time is a sorrowful event indeed. There

is no question that, from the villagers' point of view, widowhood is bad by definition. They do not have ready explanations why this is so, though the constant negative connotations of widowhood in ritual make them sure of it.

5. Brothers

Coexisting with a hierarchical authority structure is the principle of interdependence of family members whose emotionally charged ties of affection, love, loyalty, and duty make kinship ties the greatest social bond between people. Brothers are expected to contribute and share equally in the economic activities of the household. Upon his death, a man's property is partitioned into equal shares among his sons. After the death of their father, brothers also share the obligation to provide financial support for their mother and siblings and, in particular, provide for their sisters' marriages.

6. Clans and sub-clans

Associations of kinsmen beyond the immediate family are based on principles of patrilineal descent. These are internally differentiated into groups (tega, kōva 'descent group segments', 'sub-clans') whose common descent is assumed to be directly traceable even if this is not actually possible in all cases. These groups are not formally named entities though some do have informal nick-names which designate them by their common apical ancestor. The principle context in which these sub-clan units exhibit shared responsibilities is in the sphere of ritual. Ritual pollution, resulting from the death of a member of this traceable descent group

is transmitted exclusively to its members and not to others even within the same clan, intipēru. Other obligations which are shared by members of sub-clans are mandatory attendance at each other's celebrations of life cycle rituals such as first haircutting, first menstruation, weddings and funerals.

Informal ties exist between various members of these sub-clans. For instance, houses in the village tend to cluster along sub-clan lines because of the tendency of brothers and children of brothers to live together. This brings about an informal association of families in everyday life though it is not a mandatory principle according to which people must construct their houses. Expressions such as kālla doḍlō 'in the street of the Kalla clan', or naillu doḍlō 'in the street of the Naidu sub-clan of the Saragadam clan' are designations of neighbourhoods by clan and sub-clan which are in common usage.

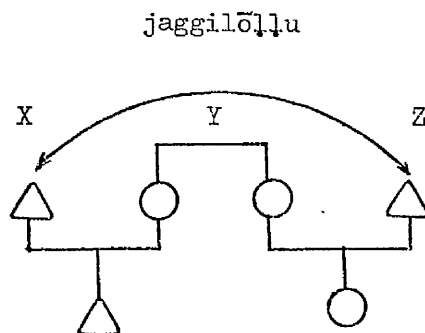
Male members of closely related families also associate with each other at their kallam, clusters of cattle sheds and jaggery ovens out in their fields. Brothers and their descendants tend to remain side by side and maintain contact, informally chatting and exchanging assistance, even after they no longer hold land in common.

a. Exogamous moieties: "brother clans"

In matters of marriage, clan membership ideally determines the unit of exogamy within the endogamous boundaries of the caste. Even if their relationship is not traceable, members of the same clan may not marry each other. In addition, from the point of view of each clan all other clans are considered as belonging to one of two categories, bāvamaridulu 'in-laws', i.e. marriageable, and

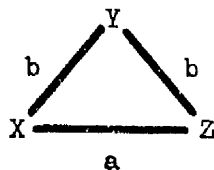
annatammulu 'brothers', i.e. unmarriageable. It is not a gōtram system, such as practised by the Twice-Born castes, in which a number of clans are grouped together into exogamous categories which hold throughout the caste regardless of locale. The two categories of bāvamaridulu and annatammulu hold only within the village and do not apply outside. They are thus a pragmatic system designed to prevent certain kinds of confusion that can arise from close inter-marriage of a number of clans. The rationale for the annatammulu-bāvamaridulu divisions is that if men of two separate families marry sisters of a third family then their children will be related to each other as classificatory brother and sister, i.e. parallel cousins, and hence unmarriageable despite the fact that ordinarily, coming from different clans, they would be marriageable. (Men married to actual sisters are called by a special term, jaggilōllu). In the case of only three families being involved, the kinship terminology itself would make it clear that particular people are parallel cousins. However, a problem arises when classificatory kinship ties are considered. This means that it could be perfectly possible not to be an actual parallel cousin while at the same time there might be a parallel link somewhere through classificatory kinsmen.

Figure II-1.



The annatammulu- bāvamaridulu categories (reckoning these is spoken of as 'determining vāyuvārūsa') then prevent people of marriageable families from the danger of being classificatory parallel cousins, since if clan X marries clan Y, and if clan Z marries with clan Y, then clan X should be unmarriageable to clan Z. (Phrased differently it can be stated that if clan X is bāvamaridulu to clan Y, and if clan Z is bāvamaridulu to clan Y, then the relationship between clan X and clan Z is one of annatammulu.)

Figure II-2.



X,Y,Z = three different clans

a = annatammulu, relationship of 'brother' clans, unmarriageable

b = bāvamaridulu, relationship of 'in-law' clans, marriageable

On the basis of these marriageable-unmarriageable categories, members of whole clans apply fictive kinship terms to the members of other clans in the village accordingly, regardless of whether actual marriages have taken place between them and third parties. The implications of these fictive terms are as follows. Women of brother clans are treated with respect of affection as classificatory grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and daughters, while men are classificatory grandfathers, fathers, brothers, and sons. Women of in-law clans, particularly younger ones of marriageable age, are treated with a degree of joking and flirtation associated with sexual licence and potential marriage.

b. Funerary sects

Funerary practices contrast with marriage customs in a number of ways. Marriage customs are uniform for the entire caste though exogamous groupings of clans vary with the locality. In contrast to this, two sets of funerary customs are practised within the Gavara caste. Adherence to one set or another is ascribed to clans and does not vary with the locality. One set has loosely Shaivite sectarian associations, employing a Jangam as a pūjāri, ritual officiant. The other set has Vaishnavite associations and is conducted by a non-Brahman Sri Vaishnava pujari. Clans which perform the ceremony conducted by a Jangam are designated pākrutōllu, while those which perform the ceremonies presided over by a Sri Vaishnava are called cakradārulu (cakra - seems to be an allusion to the cakram, discus weapon and attribute of Vishnu). There is no correlation between funerary sect adherence and marriage alliance patterns which could in any way imply sectarian exogamy or endogamy.

The existence of these sectarian funerary divisions poses interesting questions of their origin and previous functions. At the present time no sectarian divisions or distinctions are recognised in other aspects of life. There is nothing resembling the self-conscious sectarian split known in Tamil Nadu, and even the Brahmins who serve the local Shudras are quite indiscriminate in the types of ritual they perform. One clue for future investigation is the pattern of sectarian funerary customs among different castes. Most castes exhibit a split along clan lines resembling the Gavara pattern, though others are exclusively pākrutōllu. Velamas employ no funerary specialists and have a conspicuous lack of elaboration

of funerary customs. Data are inconclusive as to the existence of castes having exclusively cakradārulu funerary rituals. Twice-Born castes (Brahman, Ksatriya, and Vaisya) have their own type of funerary rituals utilising the services of Brahman priests exclusively. Harijans have no external specialists though they do occasionally call in an exorcist, cukkēṅgādu, when a death occurs under unusually inauspicious circumstances.

7. Authority of the elders

There are two sides to the internal authority structure within the Gavara caste in the village. On the one hand, age hierarchy is emphasised in that the caste's internal authorities are termed peddalu, 'elders', 'big men', 'superiors'. On the other hand interdependence and unanimity are emphasised. This is seen in the lack of specifically designated individuals to fill the role of elders on the occasions of dispute-settlement. There is always a strong degree of randomness in the collection of older respected men who appear. The apparently fluid informal composition of a group of elders emphasises the ideal of unanimity of authority of those of greater age. Judgements made by them represent a combined putting-together-of-heads ideally representing the community as a whole. As such, no particular individual or clan has an explicit right to pre-eminence over any other.

B. The formal organizing principles of society:

hierarchy and interdependence - Between castes

In the previous section we discussed the formal organizing principles of the internal structure of the Gavara caste in terms of hierarchy and interdependence. Here, in this section, we present a similar description of the external relations between castes of

the village. The material is arranged into four topics: categories and customs of caste hierarchy, economic interrelations of castes, political interrelations of castes, and the new ideology of the State. In discussing these topics we describe the basic principles which are fundamental to the structuring of relations between castes and settlements. These are: the principle that castes are in a hierarchical and interdependent relationship with each other, the principle that superior castes are the employers of inferior castes and are economically dominant, the principle that superior castes have authority over inferior castes, and the principle that the various settlements of the Revenue Village are closely interdependent.

1. Categories and customs of the caste hierarchy

a. Categories

From the point of view of each caste, each of the other castes is categorised relative to it as superior, roughly equal, or inferior. Ideally considered, this system of relative ranking should produce a linear hierarchy of castes. This expectation is reinforced by the concept of varna, which are four hierarchically ranked categories into which all castes supposedly fall. The Brahman varna is at the top, followed by Kshatriya then Vaishya and finally Shudra. In terms of the castes of Aripaka Revenue Village the various Brahman castes (Niyogulu, Telanganyulu) are identified as the Brahman varna, Rajus as Kshatriyas, Komatis as Vaishyas, and save the bottom two, all the other castes as Shudras. The two bottom castes are considered to be in a category known as Panchama or Harijan which is below the sanskritic four varna scheme.

It is obvious that the varna ideology originated among the

members of the top three varnas since it carefully distinguishes between them while lumping the vast majority of the population into a sort of residual category, Shudra. Members of castes categorised as Shudra accept and use the varna category terms. The local caste names of Raju, and Komati are used interchangeably with the varna designations of Kshatriya and Vaishya. (Brahman sub-castes are not distinguished by name among non-Brahmans.) From the point of view of a Shudra (e.g. a Gavara) the top three varnas tend to be lumped together and are thought of as having many shared characteristics which contrast with their own. Throughout this thesis the term "Twice-Born" will be used to indicate this grouping of the top three varnas. In the Aripaka Revenue Village context it means Brahmans, Rajus, and Komatis. The term "Twice-Born" alludes to the upanayanam, ceremonial second birth, which entitles males of the top three varnas to wear the 'sacred thread', jandhyam. Though Twice-Born is not a term used by the villagers, Shudras constantly pointed out the differences between their customs and those of the three top varnas, whom they lumped together. So, from a Shudra point of view, society is roughly conceived of as consisting of categories of much higher (Twice-Born), relatively similar (Shudra), and much lower (Harijan) castes. It should not be overlooked, however, that within the Shudra category numerous individual castes of widely differing gradations of status are clearly distinguished.

b. Customs

To inhabitants of the village, caste customs are the principle properties which distinguish one caste from another. Caste endogamy assures a caste's ultimate preservation of its own set of customs but it is the nature of those customs themselves which explain the

hierarchical quality of caste differentiation. Apart from the presence or absence of the rite of upanayanam which distinguishes Twice-Born castes from others, sets of caste customs differ with respect to a number of important criteria, 1. treatment of women, and 2. dietary customs. The attribution of the contents of these customs with implications of hierarchical status seems to be based on the underlying assumption that the more restrictive the customs, the higher the status of their practitioners.

i. Treatment of women:

Let us look, for example, at customs relating to the treatment of women which centre on marriage. Twice-Born castes have the custom of prohibiting the remarriage of widows, who are considered to be inauspicious and somehow guilty for their husbands' death. By contrast, almost all Shudra and Harijan castes permit widows to remarry, though widow status still has elements of inauspiciousness attached. Twice-Born castes strongly prohibit divorce of any kind while most Shudra and Harijan castes permit it. A number of higher status Shudras do not permit it and there is a connection between higher status and this prohibition.

Married women of the Twice-Born castes have numerous prohibitions on their going out from the areas of their homes at least not without being accompanied by other women. They are also not permitted to do any form of labour other than chores directly connected with cooking and household tasks. By contrast, most Shudra and all Harijan women are much more free and independent. It should be pointed out that even within the Shudras there is a gradation of permissiveness and independence of women. For instance, Golla woman

are not permitted to work in the fields and tend to look down on Gavara women as garrulous and of loose morals.

This imputation of looser morality to castes lower than one's own is a consequence of the view that strict control is necessary to maintain higher morality. Based on the premise that women have a natural propensity for sexual promiscuity, it follows that the higher the caste, the greater is the control that it must exert over its women.

ii. Dietary differences:

Customs relating to diet resemble the above patterns. In the village, the Brahmans and Komatis are the only castes which adhere to the "restrictive" discriminating diet of vegetarianism. Virtually every other caste in the village eats meat. There are, however, gradations in the types of meat different castes eat. From the chart below it will be seen that there are four dietary groups. The general pattern is that each lower group of castes eats a less restricted diet (i.e. includes a further type of food which is not permitted to those in higher categories).

Table II-1

Caste dietary customs - four divisions

	Caste:	Diet:
Twice Born	Brahman Komati	Vegetarian (no meat)
	Raju Kamsali Jangam Gavara Kapu Pedda Kapu Velama Telukula Sali Vadram	Permitted meats: chicken, mutton, goat, fish, eggs, wild pork Prohibited meats: domestic pork, water-buffalo, beef
Shudra	Mangali Cakali Yata	Permitted meats: chicken, mutton, goat, fish, eggs, and domestic pork Prohibited meats: water-buffalo, beef
	Mala Madiga	No restrictions on type of meat
Harijan		

The division of the Shudras into two dietary groups should be noted. Further gradations can be seen in restrictions on women smoking. Farmer castes and Twice-Born castes do not permit their womenfolk to smoke but the rest of the Shudra and Harijan castes do. Smoking has to be considered along with classifications of food since the Telugu verb meaning 'to smoke' is the same word that means 'to drink', tāgu.

The Rajus are an exception to the pattern of gradations in descending hierarchical order since they are considered to be superior to the Komatis in status despite the fact that they eat meat. This exception, however, followed a certain underlying logic of the system. One of the characteristics of diet differences is that lower castes have less restrictive customs. Less restrictive customs are associated with less restraint on passions, as in the case of customs concerning the restrictions on women. The Raju's place in the varna category "Kshatriya" identifies them as warriors and thus their reputed traditional profession derives from their strength and passion. Thus their meat-eating is part of their warrior ideology, a rationalisation of their strength over other castes in former times. Rajus are famed for the spiciness of their food and this reinforces this interpretation since the local belief is that spices induce passion. (To reduce their passion and sexual drives, Brahm widows are forbidden to eat onions, garlic, or other strong spices.)

iii. Food acceptance patterns:

Another aspect of dietary customs which links "restrictiveness" with higher gradations of status is the ideology of food exchange. By this, a caste prohibits itself from accepting cooked food

prepared by castes which it categorizes as inferior while it will hypothetically accept food prepared by castes which it concedes to be superior to it. The permutations of the system can be seen in the chart below:

Table II-2.

Permutations of the principles of food acceptance

If one's caste ----- another caste's food, and their caste ----- one's, then								
1.	"	"	accepts	"	"	"	rejects	" they are superior
2.	"	"	rejects	"	"	"	accepts	" you are superior
3.	"	"	accepts	"	"	"	accepts	" both are equal
4.	"	"	rejects	"	"	"	rejects	" status unclear (controversial)

Though there are only two choices of action (acceptance or rejection) the factor of reciprocation by the other caste leads to four possibilities each with a different status implication. Ideally, only the first two patterns should exist, for a clear-cut hierarchy. These are actually a single hierarchical relationship viewed from two directions. The complications introduced by the latter two patterns will be discussed later.

The above system exhibits similar patterns to the customs of restrictions on women and dietary differences. Theoretically, the higher the caste, the more restricted the number of other castes whose food it is willing to accept. Similarly, the lower the caste's status the less discriminating it appears to be in accepting food from others.

The gradations in this system of caste ranking are finer than

the hierarchical blocks of castes in various varnas or dietary groups (see p. 57). It must be borne in mind however that the number of actual situations when food might be offered for exchange are far smaller than the theoretical possibilities. Most caste members know which castes refuse to accept their food and simply would not offer it, or if they would offer, it would only be to show hospitality (without any expectation of the offer being accepted).

The rationale behind rejecting a particular caste's food is based on a combination of criteria. If the food is offered by a caste from a lower dietary grouping then there is some disgust expressed, indicating that such food is completely out of the question by virtue of its having been prepared by those who customarily eat food not fit to eat (e.g. domestic pork to a caste in the non-pork eating dietary grouping, or meat to a vegetarian). However, within a dietary group, between castes closer together in status, the rationale is based on considerations of status. To accept food prepared by an inferior caste (takkuva = inferior, yékkuva = superior) would be beneath their dignity. When asked whether aspects of ritual pollution entered into prohibitions of eating food prepared by lower castes, Gavara informants insisted that they had never heard of such an idea. The only explanation they could give was that it was rivāju, simply the accepted custom and rule.

2. Economic interrelations of castes

We have now briefly scanned some of the ideologies of caste hierarchy as they are expressed in social categories (the varna

system) and differing caste customs (concerning women and diet) and have seen how these form an essential part of caste inter-relations. We now turn to the economic side of these relations, the essential feature of which is the correlation of economic and social hierarchies. The economically independent employer castes (Brahman, Raju, Komati, Gavara, Velama, Kapu) coincide with those who are superior in caste status. Lower castes are economically dependent on the higher castes for whom they provide services and agricultural labour. While it is true that post-Independence changes have broadened the base of the economically independent castes to include the farmer castes (Gavara, Velama, Kapu) the overall hierarchical patterns have been maintained.

Alongside hierarchy there are strong elements of interdependent unity of the castes, who all share a similar economic fate if the crops should fail or epidemic illnesses break out. If the farmers' income is affected, the Barbers and Washermen (for example) suffer too. The field of economic interchanges between castes in Aripaka Revenue Village is far more intensive and sustained than any such ties with neighbouring villages. The internal cohesion of the village, in all its settlements, is further reinforced through sharing a single set of political leaders and participating in common ritual activities. A vivid expression of this community feeling between the castes is the use of fictive kinship terms between villagers which completely disregard differences in caste status.

a. Gavara Centrality as source of income and employment

The Gavaras centrally dominate the village economy because

of their control over land (see Table I-6). Landowners' income of food grains and cash place them in a position of controlling others who depend on them to gain employment for cash or food. Compared to land, other sources of wealth such as employment outside the village are of secondary importance. In the past, the principal controllers of land were the Twice-Born castes of Aripaka (Brahman, Raju, Komati). Farmers were dependent for three-quarters of the land they tilled upon these Twice-Born castes who never did any agricultural labour themselves. They employed and oversaw the farmers who worked their land or else gave it in return for a large share of the yield. Nowadays, with the farmers in more autonomous positions of ownership, the Twice-Born castes have declined in importance. They remain at the apex of hierarchical ties to service and labourer castes but more or less independently of the Gavaras.

Gavaras employ service and landless labourer castes (i.e. non-farmer Shudras and Harijans) in large numbers for house re-thatching and major agricultural operations such as irrigating, transplanting, and harvesting rice, millets, and sugar cane crops. On a single day in a harvest season one farmer might employ thirty to forty labourers. These are mainly drawn from the Yata, Mala, and Madiga castes but also include members of other castes who might be available such as Barber and Washerman caste (Mangali, Cakali) women and Gavaras as well. For this and other work in the fields the farmers pay daily wages in cash (called "cooly labour", kūli-pani) Rs. 3 for a man, Rs. 1.50 for a woman, or a rupee less when a rice meal is provided. Operations requiring fewer workers are sometimes commissioned on the basis of a particular

amount for the job to be completed (regardless of the length of time required or number of people participating).

Farmers with more lands frequently engage labourers on a yearly basis to work with them (pālēru 'annual basis field-hand', from pālu 'share'). They are paid an amount of food grains which is negotiated annually and are paid around the times of the various harvests or at other times of need. In addition, two daily meals, tobacco for cigars, and a new set of clothes are provided. Labourers who most frequently work in this arrangement come from the largest castes which have no craft or occupational specialisations, the Yata, Mala, and Madiga. In everyday work situations the Gavara farmers, their wives, and children, frequently work alongside their fieldhands though the latter's subservient position is never forgotten.

Wives of the more well-to-do Gavara farmers employ poor Gavaras, other Shudra, or Harijan women to help them with various household tasks such as pounding rice or sesame, grinding flour, or preparing chillies or tamarind for commercial sales. These relationships take the outward form of friendship and much gossiping and joking go on. However, the hierarchical nature of the relationship reappears when angry squabbles arise over adequate payment (which is most frequently for food grains or a share of the commodity being processed).

Aside from employing labourers on their lands, the Gavara farmers are the principal employers of the castes who provide specialised services and crafts. The Gavaras are thus the primary source of the food grains and cash which then circulate in the village economy between the lower castes themselves. Of all the

specialised service castes, Barbers (Mangali), Washerman (Cakali) and Carpenters (Kamsali) stand out as having particularly stable relations with specific employer families. These arrangements have been called the "Jajmani System" in anthropological writings on India. (The Telugu form of the term jajmani is ijamāni which we have encountered as a term for household head and caste elders.) Although these ties are thought of as annual arrangements with the pay calculated by the year, they tend to be permanent and hereditary. The twelve Carpenter families (see Table-I-5) of the village (6 in Yatapalem, 6 in Aripaka) are each attached on the average to fourteen landowner families (mainly Gavara but also Raju, Komati, Velama, Kapu etc.). The seven Barber households (all live in Yatapalem) have an average of thirty-eight households which they serve. Ten Washerman households (7 in Yatapalem, 3 in Kottapalem, 1 in Aripaka) service some thirty households each. It is a feature of the shared economic field of Aripaka Revenue Village that the Barber families who live exclusively in Yatapalem have the barbering rights and duties for inhabitants of Aripaka and all the other affiliated settlements.

Carpenters, Barbers, and Washermen are generally paid in kind by most Gavara farmers and other landowning castes. Poorer Gavara individuals who do not have regular dealings with carpenters pay in cash for odd jobs such as the construction of a bed-frame. Forms of payment made by other castes to these specialist service castes is more varied. Some pay in cash for each job done, or in cash on an annual basis, in addition to the annual payments in kind mentioned above.

Relationships of the farmers with service castes other than Carpenters, Barbers, or Washermen are less frequent and less regular. The farmers' money also finds its way into the village economy through the Oil Pressers (Telukula), the liquor shops (run by Yata, Telukula, and Gavara), the ritual specialists, Jangam and Vadram, and the shops of the village merchants (Komatis).

Though their main source of wealth is derived from the Gavara farmers and other landowning castes, the service castes have several independent sources of income. These are, by comparison, of secondary significance. Among the examples of such supplementary income is the arrangement of some Kottapalem washermen who do laundry sent to them by bus by their relatives in Visakhapatnam town. Yatas occasionally sell their pigs to vendors at weekly markets or to members of other pork-eating castes for ceremonial feasts of various kinds. Yatas and Harijans cut firewood on the nearby hills for sale in the village. Yatas and Madigas work in Visakhapatnam on cycle-rickshaws and one Yatapalem Mala is in the merchant marine. Barbers, Washermen, and Yatas of Yatapalem have relatives who are temporary labour migrants in Orissa. Many Kottapalem Yata males work in Visakhapatnam and Cuttack, Orissa. There are a total of sixteen able-bodied male labour migrants absent from Kottapalem (14 work in Visakhapatnam and 2 in Cuttack) from 10 households out of the 36 in Kottapalem:

Table II-3Labour Migration of Kottapalem Yatas

		Number of Households	Total of Migrants
Number of Migrants per house- hold	1	6	6
	2	2	4
	3	2	6
		<hr/> 10	<hr/> 16

To sum up, economic relations between castes typically take a hierarchical form with inferior status service and labourer castes dependent upon superior status landowning-employer castes. At the same time, the castes are greatly interdependent for the smooth functioning of the village in which all have a stake and common fortune.

3. Political interrelations of castes

We shall consider here two aspects of the political interrelations of castes 1. The pattern of "informal" intercaste dispute settlement by elders and 2. the configuration of formal political officers in the village. The former is a further example of the hierarchical structuring of authority in village society while the latter is an expression of multicaste political interdependence.

a. Dispute settlement between castes: informal politics

All instances of intercaste dispute settlement are cases of Shudra or Harijan castes, clearly subordinate to Gavaras, appealing to Gavara elders. Gavaras are never appealed to by

Velamas or Kapus, who are considered to be roughly equal in status. Though Aripaka Kapus occasionally appeal to Rajus, Gavaras never appeal to any caste higher than themselves. Unsolvables cases can be referred to god in a trial by ordeal.

There were basically two situations in which disputes came under the jurisdiction of a higher caste. The first are cases of disputes which occur within a particular caste but reach deadlock. The second are disputes between several castes.

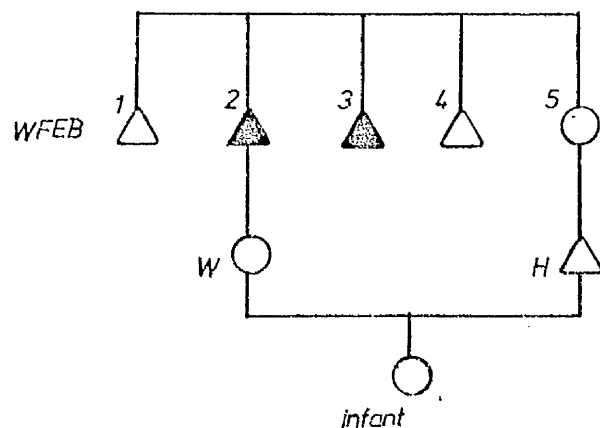
i. Marital dispute of Kottapalem Yatas: Gavara elders reinforce authority of elder Yata males

Gavaras were asked to mediate for some Kottapalem Yatas in a tagu (dispute settling session) which took place under some trees near Mallolla Pakalu. A woman had gone to her mother's house and had refused to return to her husband. She insisted that she wanted a divorce. Since they had a child, it was unlikely that the elders would grant a divorce. It appeared as though the request for a divorce was the wife's way of applying pressure to force her husband to form a separate household from his mother.

At the meeting there were four Yata 'settling men' (tagu manusulu), and seven Gavara elders (peddalu, tagu manusulu) including the Panchayat President and Vice President. Also present were many Yatas of Kottapalem.

The Gavara elders resolved that the couple should be kept together. They placed their authority and weight behind the woman's father's elder brother (her own father was dead) and instructed him to inform them within the month as to his decisions. If any of the concerned relatives did not comply and send the woman back to her husband, they threatened to hold another meeting and impose punishments.

Figure II-3



ii. Competition between affines and agnates of a Yatapalem Washerman: Gavara elders stress consensus because of their mutual interdependence

A woman's arm allegedly had been broken in a violent fight between Washermen families. The issue concerned a recently returned relative who was working for his wife's family rather than his agnates. The injured party threatened to report the matter to the police but first they went to have the opinion of the Gavaras.

The Gavaras, sitting up on raised verandahs, listened to the Washermen plead in the courtyard in front of them amidst frequent interruptions by emotional yelling. Several Washermen who had been drinking had to be held back from attacking each other. The Gavaras offered their opinions somewhat informally in turns. Their final advice was against anyone going to the police. One summed up their views, "it is only a matter of time before the other side will have some grounds for a counter-complaint to the police, and after all, you are kinsmen".

iii. Rivalry between two Yatapalem Mala families: Gavara elders support the traditional caste head

Another example of an internal caste dispute which was referred to Gavara elders was a fight between Yatapalem Malas (Harijans). It was ostensibly only a fight incited by name-calling in which one younger man (who is normally outside the village working in the merchant marine) hit his next door neighbour, the Mala 'caste headman' (*ijamāni*). When the fight broke out numerous Gavara big-men were called and hurried over to the Harijan quarter to break up the fight and arbitrate.

A hundred rupee fine was imposed on the younger man, half to be given to the Rama temple and half to be given to the caste head who had been hit. The caste head said he did not want any of that money and that it should all be given to the Rama temple. This gesture masked the fact that the conflict was the result of economic competition over buying a plot of land. The caste head had been paying a Gavara family in instalments when the fellow who worked in the merchant marine and had a large outside income took the land right out from under the nose of his caste elder by paying triple the amount.

There had been other incidents of quarrels over the ownership of tress between their adjacent houses. The seaman had also defied the caste headin arranging a divorce and remarriage without the consent of the caste elders. (Fellow caste members consequently boycotted his second marriage ceremony.) The fact that the fine had been a hundred rupees seemed to reflect censure of the seaman using his money to defy the traditional caste authorities.

iv. Insoluble case of a poisoning accusation within the Gavara caste: resort is made to a trial by ordeal

The one instance in which a conflict within Gavaras was insoluble was handled by a trial by ordeal. The case concerned an accusation that a relative had poisoned a water buffalo (there was competition for between relatives of a wealthy man who were each seeking his allegiance and favours). When nothing could be determined from witnesses and evidence the elders of the caste decided on holding an ordeal. The accused woman had to enter the village Rama temple and put out a lamp after swearing before god that she was innocent. If she were lying, and the villagers seemed convinced that she was, it was expected that she or close members of her family would become stricken by some dire illness and die. That this did not immediately happen prompted some to comment kali yugam!, a reference to the current era in Hindu mythology, a time of corruption, and declining morality.

To sum up, the decisions in these cases always backed the hierarchical authority of elder males, or, in cases of tit for tat reprisals, stressed the need for consensus between interdependent kinsmen. The case of the ordeal was similarly an appeal to higher powers to back the moral order. However, by resorting to the god Rama rather than a higher caste, the Gavaras aimed to ensure their autonomy and superiority of authority.

b. The formal political officers of the village

There are two ways of looking at the aspect of interdependence of castes and hamlets in the formal political structure of the village. The fact that the officers come from all the main settlements and principal caste blocks means that the dispersed hamlets work effectively as an integrated political unit. At the same time, the continuing exercise of authority by those office holders reasserts their integration and assures its perpetuation.

In the bureaucracy linked with the Tahsildar and District Collectorate the Record Keeper (karnam) is a Brahman of Aripaka, the Headman (munsif) is a Gavara (of the Rapeti clan) of Yatapalem, and

the Village Servant (bārki) is a Mala, Harijan of Aripaka. These three are always seen working together as a team. Their job specialisations reflect structures of caste interdependence which underlie the varna ideology of caste hierarchy. The Brahman does the clerical tasks, the Gavara is the ruling authority, and the Mala does the physical labour and footwork. When collecting taxes in Yatapalem, the Record Keeper and Headman sits on the covered verandah (mandapam) of the temple and the Village Servant (bārki) is sent, authoritatively with bamboo staff in hand, to summon farmers to them.

The fact that the Record Keeper is a Brahman, and lives in Aripaka seems to be significant for the residents of Aripaka not to feel that they are totally dominated by Gavaras from what they consider to be an outlying hamlet. The Record Keeper's house in Aripaka is a centre of activity and communication for the entire Revenue Village. Aripaka Rajus and Komatis keep close contact with the affairs of the village through their friendship with the Record Keeper, a fellow Twice-Born caste member. For his part, the Record Keeper manages to maintain an apparently neutral stance, intermediary between the Gavaras and Rajus. A further tie of Yatapalem and the Gavaras to Aripaka is the Headman's habit of frequently going to Aripaka to sit and gossip at the roadside teastalls or to consult with the Record Keeper. There is no doubt, however, that the headmanship and its prerogative is in the hands of the Gavaras (of Yatapalem and Mallolla Pakalu).

The role of the Village Servant in terms of integrating the Harijans of Aripaka to the rest of the village is not insignificant. Malas appreciate the authority vested in one of their

members, and even occasionally give an alternative name of their caste as bārkiṭlu, the caste of the bārkiṭis, in an apparent attempt to imply that the importance of this post attaches to all the caste's members. (This parallels the reference to the farmers as naillu, naidus, 'bosses' or 'big men'.) Harijans might be low in the status hierarchy but nevertheless have their own important role.

The posts in the panchayat system give further opportunities for groups and settlements to express their integration. Both the President and Vice President are Gavaras, but the former lives in Mallolla Pakalu and is of the Malla clan, while the latter lives in Yatapalem and is of the Rapeti clan. The President spends much time in Aripaka with the circle of people who gather at the tea-stalls there which include Rajus, Komatis, certain Velamas, as well as the Headman and Record Keeper. His conspicuous absence from Yatapalem is the cause of some criticism.

The integrative aspect of the village officers is not necessarily planned or intentional. However, it highlights the fact that the several hamlets of the village operate more or less effectively as a single unit with a single set of political authorities. At the same time, each successive exercise of power and authority strengthens and reinforces their legitimacy and is viewed by the villagers as proof of the interdependence of the settlements. Disregarding the historical background of the development of the various settlements, their integration into a single unit is sustained by their designation as a single revenue village by the government authorities.

4. Influence of the state on intercaste relations

Basically the State has a profound influence on village life in two spheres, 1. the ideological and 2. the economic-political.

a. New ideology of the state: egalitarian, anti-caste

Since Independence, the State has increased its influence as a source of new educational, economic and political opportunities. As such, the ideology according to which it functions exerts increasing influence in the village. On numerous occasions, villagers express opinions that rural village life (palleṭūru) is inferior by contrast with the sophisticated 'civilised' ways of the towns (nāgarikata, nāgarikam), though they also criticise the crowds and dirtiness of towns. Of particular interest is the State's emphasis on egalitarianism and its ideological opposition to the caste hierarchy associated with restrictions on interdining and intermarriage. Interdining restrictions seem to be the customs which have weakened most under the impact of this new ideology. Interdining restrictions are now violated by villagers when they go to towns and surreptitiously in contexts outside the home.

b. New economic and political opportunities

The equality of opportunity to which the State is ideologically committed has resulted in the cracking of the monopoly of wealth and power of the traditional Twice-Born elite. The extension of elective politics (e.g. in the village Panchayat system) has given new groups influence which they previously lacked. Removal of caste restrictions has opened the door to employment and educational opportunities. Shudras and Harijans now have access to the coveted jobs

in the government bureaucracy (Post Office, Railways, educational system, health service, Visakhapatnam, harbour authority).

Chapter III

ACTUAL BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE GAVARA CASTE:

RIVALRY AND DISUNITY

Contrasted with the ideals of hierarchy and unity among various kinds of kinsmen (households, pollution-sharing-groups, clans, and castes) there is the actual state of affairs, under-currents of rivalries between competing and conflicting individuals, generations, descent groups and clans. These fissiparous divisive tendencies have always been present in village society but new economic opportunities and political structures have given further outlets for these tendencies. In this section we shall deal with the challenges to the ideal of hierarchical authority within the household and divisive, competitive tendencies which challenge the ideal of interdependent unity of family, clan, and caste.

A. To what extent is male authority over females maintained?

While there is an ideal of male dominance over women in family life, there are numerous aspects of daily life in which this principle is challenged and contradicted. Although husbands are heads of families, there are numerous ways in which wives influence their decisions through economic influence and forms of coercion.

1. Women's economic participation and influence

Unlike the women of the Twice-Born castes who are prohibited from working for reasons of status, Gavara women participate in the economic life of their families to a significant degree. Gavara women play an important role in numerous agricultural operations

(transplanting, weeding, harvesting, carrying cane and fodder, husking rice) in addition to their domestic tasks of providing meals for the family and looking after their children. Gavara women are also strikingly active in economic activities autonomous from their husbands. Gavara women form the majority of sellers at the weekly market (santa) in Aripaka on Thursdays. They deal mainly in vegetable produce from their own family plots. This means that the cash realised from the plots cultivated by their men passes through their hands. A large number of Gavara women also engage in entrepreneurial activities buying vegetables, spices, fruits, chickens etc. at some village markets and selling them for higher prices at other markets in the rotating weekly cycle. There is a hard core of women who regularly attend markets who predominantly depend on their income from market sales. They are mainly widows or divorcees. Their number (17 women out of a total of 175 households) are much smaller than the many Gavara women who casually engage in supplementing their incomes from sales in the weekly markets. These women come from even the wealthiest families. Some of the money from such sales often remains in their hands and in their control. There are numerous instances of Gavara women independently giving out petty loans for as much as Rs.50.

Table III-1

Market Sellers at a typical Aripaka Thursday Market:

	women	men	total
Gavaras	59	4	63
Other Castes	43	32	75
Total	102	36	138

Table III-2Market Sellers at a typical Aripaka Thursday Market:

	From Aripaka-Yp	Outsiders	Total
Gavaras	36	27	63
Other Castes	10	65	75
	46	92	138

Gavara women exclusively of Aripaka-Yatapalem form 26⁰/o of all market sellers. Gavara women of all villages combined from 42⁰/o of all market sellers.

Table III-3Caste and Sex of Aripaka Thursday Market Sellers:

Caste	Women	Men	Caste Total
Gavara	59 (27)*	4	63
Kapu	21 (20)	3 (3)	23
Velama	8 (8)	1 (1)	9
Yata	7 (3)	4 (4)	11
Sali	2	6 (6)	8
Komati	-	9 (7)	9
Mangali	-	3 (1)	3
Golla	3 (3)	-	3
Iingabaliya	-	3 (3)	3
Dasari	1 (1)	1 (1)	2
Kummari	-	1 (1)	1
Saibu	-	1 (1)	1
Vadabaliyi	1 (1)	-	1
Totals	102 (63)	36 (28)	138

*Figures in brackets are the portion of the unbracketed figure who originate outside Aripaka Revenue Village.

Table III-4

Village origins of Gavara women market sellers:

Yatapalem	27
Mallolla Pakalu	3
Aripaka	2
Bangarampalem	20
Adduru	5
Nallaregula-	
palem	1
Rayapuram	
Agraharam	1
	59

One of the cases of suicide which occurred in the village illustrates some of the stresses in family life in which women's economic leverage challenges family stability and its internal authority hierarchy. The man who committed suicide had been known in the village as an unassertive personality (ammāyakudu, 'womanly one') though he was also a very diligent farmer (his nickname bīrakāyala appā rāvu 'Aubergine Appa Rao', derived from the great care he lavished on his vegetable plot). His wife and her widowed mother who lived with them had particularly aggressive personalities which seemed to go unchecked because of the circumstances of his marriage. He had married his wife in an arrangement known as illarakam whereby a man comes to live in his wife's village on land of her father. The land passes on to his sons and thenceforth in the male line. However, the husband himself has no inherent rights in the land which belongs to his wife's family. (The strategy of illarakam is resorted to by a man who has no male heirs and does not want his land to revert to his brothers' families when he dies.)

The husband in an illarakam arrangement is in the difficult position of being a male household head but lacking economic rights. In addition, he often is not living in his natal village where he can rely on support from his agnates. In the case of Appa Rao, these circumstances combined with his own, his wife, and his wife's mother's personalities to produce a situation in which he failed to maintain dominance over his womenfolk. An incident occurred in which he called in an itinerant curer to relieve him of chronic abdominal pains. When it came time to pay the curer for some medicine, he requested some money from his wife who customarily sold the vegetables he raised. She refused and scolded him for wasting money. With that, he went and drank a quantity of insecticide. As he was dying he said sarcastically to his wife "You can take the land now, ... why are you crying for me? ... while I was alive you did not want to spend money for medicine for me."

2. Female sanctions through public quarrels and outcries

In more usual circumstances women exert pressures in family matters most commonly through the numerous quarrels which punctuate the course of social life. Women chide their husbands to repair an irrigation pump, or brothers' wives fight over the sharing of their husbands' incomes, or complain of their husbands' wasting money on liquor. The nature and form of these quarrels throws light on the role of women and in particular the kinds of pressures they exert to influence decisions.

While men could be said to have numerous formal avenues for expressing their authority in society, women tend to exert pressure in more informal ways. These usually take the form of public displays of emotion or sentiment. Women have a particular type of

stylized crying and lament which they employ if they are dissatisfied. Typical occasions on which this occurs are instances of wives objecting to their husbands' drinking, or husband's beating them, or dissatisfaction with a son's laziness. This same stylized moaning lament is associated with other situations of stress and is a way of expressing deeply felt emotions, e.g. at a family member's severe illness or death.

Emotional outbursts are manipulatively employed in quarrels. In these, women go into rages which usually include a form of stylized verbal abuse, tittulu, and a listing of grievances. The abuse is delivered with a vertical motion with the left arm with exaggerated emphasis on the last syllable. Common forms of misfortune wished upon the adversary concern widowhood and death: "widow!"; "remove your forehead mark" (widows are not allowed to wear this mark); "snap your waist cord" (a funerary practice for widowers); "do your karma" (a karma is a funerary ritual); "take your ashes and throw them out"; "put your three leaf plates" (funerary offering); as well as "son of a whore". These curses are shouted very loud, and intended for neighbours to hear. As such, they are a form of public denunciation and an opportunity to publically air grievances.

These neighbourhood quarrels exhibit a fairly consistent structure which tells us about the function of these commotions and public outbursts. A typical flare-up over an incident which has already taken place begins with yelling by one of the offended women. Neighbours gather and eventually begin to intervene. Supporting relatives arrive to join in the fight while bystanders

on the periphery discuss what has happened. Newcomers are rapidly briefed on the state of affairs shortly after their arrival.

Much obscene cursing is exchanged between the one side and the relatives of the other. Typically, other relatives who are related to both of them restrain and separate them.

Such public commotions are appeals for the general public to solve disputes. The outcries and anger inevitably rise to a pitch which the surrounding society cannot maintain or tolerate, and mediation is quickly begun. The fight is often broken up by those with close ties with both the parties, though in some circumstances such people "lay low" and try not to identify with one side or another. This is another feature of open controversies and fights. Not only do they give an opportunity for the injured party angrily to air his complaints and list his grievances, but they also give him the opportunity to assess the strength and composition of his support.

3. Beliefs about women as emotional and attached: āśa

Linked to the association of women with emotional outbursts of anger or lamentation is the widely held belief that women are generally more emotional and impulsive than men. The key concept involved in this notion of women's character is āśa. In its various connotations it means love and attachment (as of a woman to her children), jealousy (of a female ghost against a subsequent wife taken by her husband), hope, and worldly attachments. Wandering holy men, sādhus, by contrast, are said to be totally devoid of āśa. In ritual activity as well as everyday life, women are encouraged and expected to express āśa. Women are idealised as

intensely attached to their children as loving mothers. They are also encouraged to express hysterical grief at funerals in contrast to men who are expected to act stoical and self-controlled.

4. Female sexuality

Sexual promiscuity is an area where women are perceived as challenging the dominance of their men. The approximately twenty affairs that were common knowledge in the village only served to reinforce men's suspicions about the threat of women's sexual drives in general. Men are highly concerned with women's sexuality since it is one of the rationales they use to justify their domination and authority over their women. Such notions are related to the idea of women's asa, their compulsive emotionalism and passion. Men believe that if they do not satisfy their women sexually that they will run off in the night for secret meetings with "boy friends". Adultery and suspicions of adultery are often given as grounds for divorce.

5. Marital instability

In contrast to the ideal of the successfully married couple, in reality, divorce, vidudala, and marital instability are not uncommon. For instance, out of a total of 173 Gavara households, 45 had at least one member who had been divorced. This means that divorce is a personal reality for members of one out of every four Gavara households. While divorce is said to be permissible only in cases where no children had been born, this is not always the case. Barrenness is not usually cited as the main ground for divorce though it must greatly contribute to the other kinds of tensions which are said to lead to divorce: adultery, husband and wife

not liking each other, irregularities over payments of dowry, physical disability, illness leading to impotence, too great an age difference between man and wife, conflicts of wife with her husband's mother.

Tables based on the census of all Gavara households reveal that divorce is most likely to occur in a marriage to a non-relative from outside the village (particularly if it is a first marriage). This appears to be the result of less interconnecting kin and village ties to hold the husband and wife together if something goes wrong. Another tendency is for divorced women not to remarry as readily as divorced men.

What is particularly significant is the evidence of conflict with the ideals of hierarchy and unity in family organisation given by this pattern of unstable marriages. In situations of marital breakdown there is a challenging of the hierarchical authority structure. The wife refuses to obey her husband either in daily activities or in sexual fidelity. A common pattern of marital breakdown is the failure of a wife to return to her husband from a visit to her parents' village. While this entails collusion of the woman's parents, it seems to be based on the initiative of the woman herself. If her parents do cooperate with her, even grudgingly, it is because she is able to convince them that she is not being properly treated by her husband.

The process of marital breakdown is often a long series of failures of a wife to return to her husband, of unfulfilled obligations, and unaccepted invitations. It can often be a gradual, slow process though there are cases of women suddenly running off

with other men and vice versa. Divorce is decided upon by a meeting, tagu 'dispute settlement session', or series of meetings between the elders of the wife's family and village and those of the husband. When the terms are agreed upon each side exchanges a vidudala patram, 'letter of release'. This states that the families have given back any dowry or money they exchanged at the time of the wedding and that they have no objection if the spouse decides to remarry. The paper is signed by the elders of each side giving their release. The person who actually writes the vidudala patram is always someone without a family, "without āsa", with nothing to lose, such as an old divorced man with no children. This is because it is a highly inauspicious task which might affect the well-being of the writer.

6. Widowhood

It might seem odd to include widowhood as a female challenge to male dominance but this is in fact the case. It has already been mentioned that there is an elaborate ideology centring on the inauspiciousness of widowhood which directly follows from the ideal position of women in the hierarchies of sex and age. A widow is a woman who is not subordinated to the authority of an elder man though she is elder in age herself. Society destines a high proportion of women to become widows by using the principle of age to reinforce the hierarchy of the sexes. Since brides are always substantially younger than their husbands, demographic forces make a high incidence of widowhood inevitable. More than twice as many marriages were terminated by the death of the husband than by the death of the wife (Table III-9). Furthermore, despite the fact that widowhood is considered inauspicious and negative, one

in four Gavara families live with a widow in their household (40 in 161, not counting the 14 widows who live alone). Out of 173 Gavara households there are 54 with a widow residing in them as opposed to 2 with a widower. Of these 54, 14 live alone, 30 live with married sons, 5 live with married daughters, and 5 live with unmarried children.

Table III-5

Widows in Gavara Households:

Total number of Gavara households	173
Households with widows	54
Households with widowers	2

Table III-6

Widows who are Household heads:

Total of households headed by widows	24
of which 14 live alone and	
10 with their family	

Table III-7

Residence of Gavara Widows:

Widows living alone	14
Widows living with married son	30
Widows living with married daughter	5
Widows living with unmarried children	5

Marriage Information on all Gavaras of Aripaka Revenue Village
(173 households)

Table III-8

Current Marriages

Marriages of males to a relative		77	(*40)	
First marriage	67	(*36)		
Subsequent marriage	10	(* 4)		
Marriage of males to a non-relative		91	(*26)	
First marriage	63	(23)		
Subsequent marriage	28	(* 3)		
Total of currently married Gavara couples		168	of (*66) of Aripaka which Revenue Villag Origin	

*Portion of women of Yatapalem, Mp., Aripaka origin
included in the main figure

Table III-9

Marriages Terminated by Death (incidence of widowhood):

Total of deaths of married males	61
(Termination of marriage by death of male partner, leaving a widow)	
Total of deaths of married females	25
(leaving a widower) (N.B. multiple deaths of one man's wives appear here as separate figures, i.e. one man who had 3 wives who died one after the other count as 3)	

Table III-10

Current number of unremarried widows	56
Current number of unremarried widowers	2

Table III-11

Marriages Terminated by Divorce

Divorces experienced by males married to a relative		10	(* 5)
First marriage	9	(* 4)	
Subsequent marriage	1	(* 1)	
Divorces experienced by males married to a non-relative		30	(* 7)
First marriage	21	(* 6)	
Subsequent marriage	9	(* 1)	
Total of divorces experienced by males		40	(*12)

*Portion of Women of Yatapalem, Mp., Aripaka origin included in the main figure

Table III-12

Current number of unremarried divorced women	7
Current number of unremarried divorced men	1

Table III-13

Males Experiencing Multiple re-marriages (causes include both death and divorce):

Twice married	27
Three times	3
Four times	3
Five times	<u>1</u>
Total	34 males who have experienced multiple marriages.

N.B. simultaneous marriage to more than one wife does not occur.

B. To what extent is household unity maintained?

1. Tensions within families

The roles of step-mothers and mothers-in-law create other problems and tensions in family life which involve women. These are basically structural conflicts of interest. Step-mothers assume the position and authority of mothers but are not believed to have

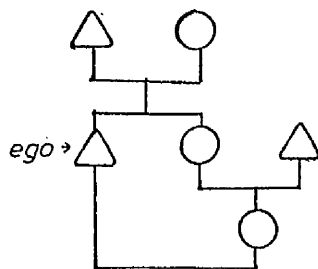
the same love and emotional commitment to a former wife's children as to their own. For this reason, a newly born infant of a woman who dies in childbirth is likely to be entrusted to a relative when the husband remarries. The emotions of attachment, āsa, and jealousy, anumānam, are essential elements in these relationships. The second wife is believed to be jealous of the influence of the former wife's children over her husband, while the deceased wife is jealous of the position the new wife has taken in her former home. If ritual precautions are not taken, the ghost of the first wife can cause harm to the new wife. To avert such harm, the cakradārulu, vaishnavite funerary division of the Gavaras, perform an elaborate ritual, muśānam (muśivāyanam), for appeasing a deceased wife's claims over her husband.

Mothers-in-law are similarly foci of conflicting attachments and jealousies centring on men. A new wife often finds herself at odds with her husband's mother particularly if they live in the same household. The husband's mother covets her influence over her son and behaves domineeringly towards her son's wife, over whom she has hierarchical authority based on her superior age and position of husband's mother. Wives resent this and try to influence their husbands to live separately. Since mother-in-law problems are frequently cited as rationalisations for divorces and divorces occur usually only when there are no children it is likely that barrenness weakens a wife's position with relation to her husband's mother. While, on the other hand, having children strengthens and cements the position of a wife in her new family. In any event, household fission is often related to conflicts between women.

The preferred pattern of uncle-niece marriage offers a

convenient solution to potential mother-in-law conflicts. In it, a man's WM is his sister whilst his wife's HM is her MM, maternal grandmother.

Fig. III-1.



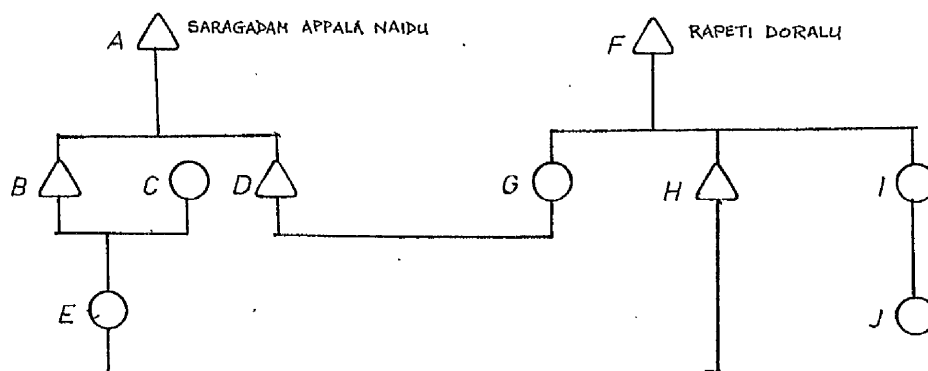
Since the relationships to elder sister and maternal grandmother are ones of innate affection and closeness, there is little scope for "mother-in-law" tensions to arise. It should be noted, however, that the actual occurrence of this form of marriage is less frequent than its classificatory equivalent.

a. Conflict of motives in marriage: kin loyalty and economic advantage

An example of a conflict between opting for the preferred form of uncle-niece marriage or choosing a marriage partner who offers economic advantages is seen in the family of the Gavara farmer, Saragadam Appala Naidu. Attention should be paid to the role of female defiance of male authority.

Over the period of a year three noisy fights occurred in the neighbourhood of Appala Naidu. The issue centred on a woman objecting to the marriage of her brother to her husband's sister rather than to her sister's daughter.

Fig. III-2.



G had already been married to D when the marriage of H to E was performed. Supposedly H did not want to marry J (a preferred match) but in addition F (and therefore H) had land adjacent to A's and his sons B, D (and five other sons). B had gone mad a number of years before this (he wandered about aimlessly, speaking incoherently) and his affairs were being managed by his wife C and father A.

In the first fight (which I knew of, in July 1971) G argued with C about G's brother H having been married to E rather than J. (The structural tension of elder brother's wife C with younger brother's wife G should be noted here.) G threatened A (who had joined in on the fight of G and C) saying she would get her brother H to not keep his wife E. A replied "if you do not keep my granddaughter than I will send you back to your parents". The next day F had G apologise for her threats.

Five months later there was another public flare-up in which G insolently told A to "shut up" using an insulting phrase used usually to inferiors intended to emphasise her defiance of his authority. The incident seemed to involve G's attempting to influence H to

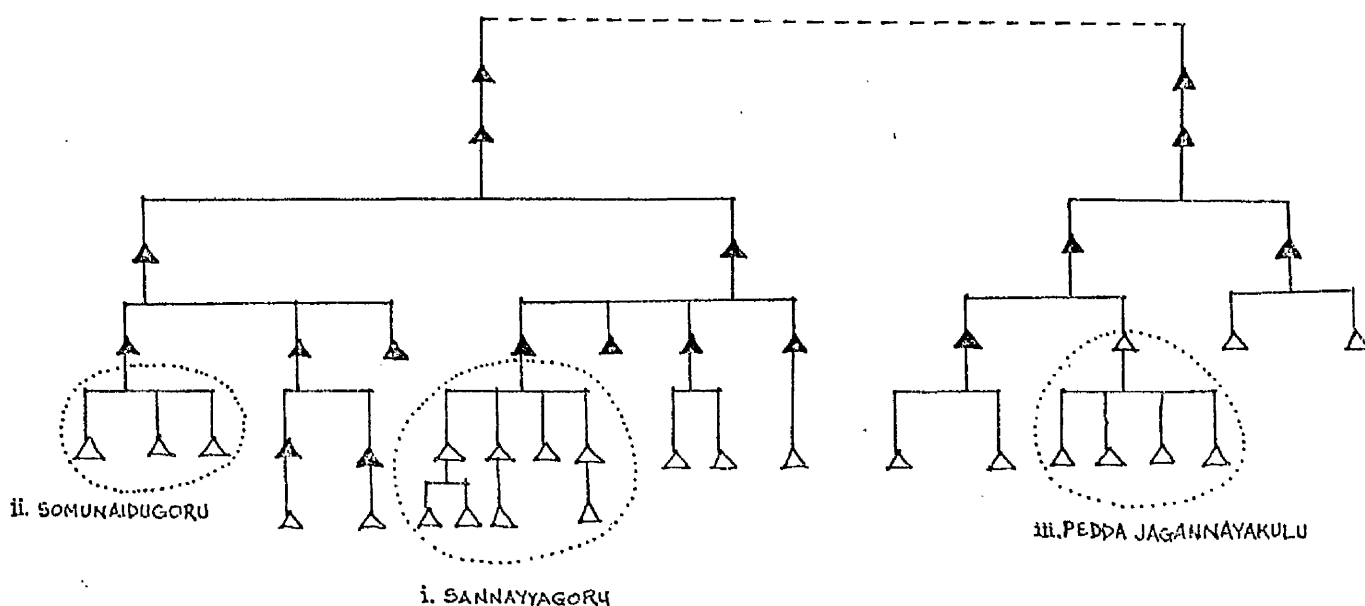
split up from E. Seven months after this there was another outburst in which A was angry at H for failing to help out in the fields of B's son whose lands were adjacent to his. This revealed that one of the motivations for the match had been to get H to help out with their land, especially in the circumstances where B was mentally disturbed and unable to participate in agricultural labour.

2. Rivalry of brothers: three case histories

Apart from family tensions and conflicts involving women, tensions are also evident in the relationships between men. Since land and property is held by men and is inherited through males, it is not surprising that conflicts and tensions between brothers most commonly involve economic issues. One of the

Fig. III-3

The Rapeti Clan



main problems that arise in the natural growth of a family is the contradiction of the principle of hierarchical authority of age (elder over younger) with the principle of unity of brothers.

The ideal is for brothers to remain united (aikyamatam 'unity') under the authority of their father even after they have married.

Actually observed cases of undivided 'joint' families are rare.

What usually happens is that brothers separate from their parental household some time after their marriage. There seems to be a pattern that several of the oldest brothers marry before the splitting-up process begins. Splits between brothers are the result of competitive rivalries which negate the age hierarchy, disrupt the co-operative unity, and defy the authority of the father.

Since there is no institutionalised mode of structuring this natural fission, the rationales for household partition are fairly diverse. The reasons range from fairly amicable divisions upon the father's death to accusations of one brother not contributing his fair share of labour and quarrels breaking out between brothers' wives. Basically, what happens is that once a man starts having children, he develops a loyalty to them which begins to conflict with his loyalty to his brothers. Ultimately, either through consensus or outbreaks of fights (resulting in mutual accusations of slackness in common work), division becomes inevitable. It is worth remarking that wives play an important part in this process.

Household division itself is not a clearcut matter. It is a continuum of degrees of separation. The first step is when brothers remove to different house sites and eat meals prepared at different hearths while at the same time keeping all their lands in common.

The next is where they divide their richer wet lands but retain dry lands in common. Another step is where all their land is officially divided but they share field shed sites (kallam) and cooperate in agricultural operations. A further degree of division is where they move away and set up altogether separate field hut complexes.

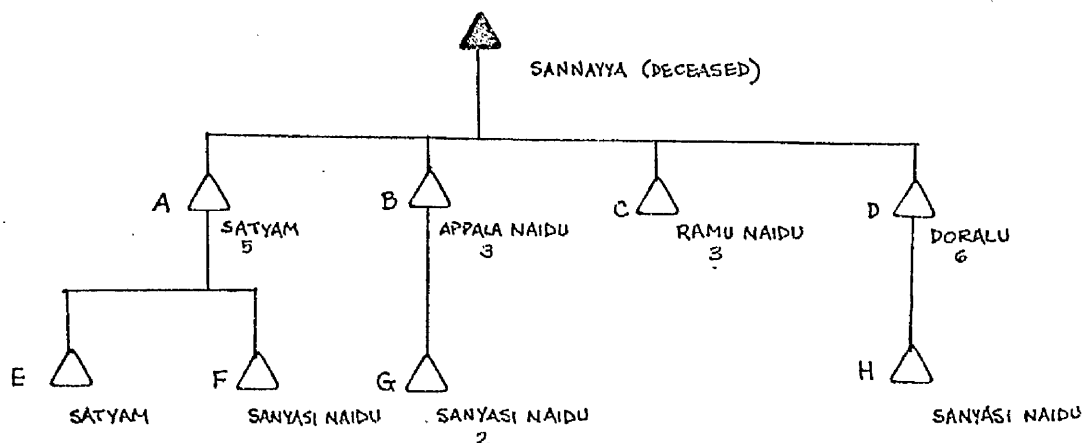
Some of the tensions in the relationships between brothers are seen in the following three sets of brothers in one of the Yatapalem Gavara clans, the Rapeti (rāpēti). The three examples represent differing degrees of cooperation, strain, and divergence of economic interest between brothers. In general it could be stated that the degree to which the ever-present divisive tendencies between brothers are inhibited seems to be related to 1. overall family wealth, and 2. the presence of a living father.

a. Sannayyagoru Rapeti

The first instance is the Sannayyagoru branch of the Rapeti family, the four sons of the deceased Rapeti Sannayya.

Fig III-4.

Sannayyagoru branch of Rapeti clan: (Total of 19 acres wet land)

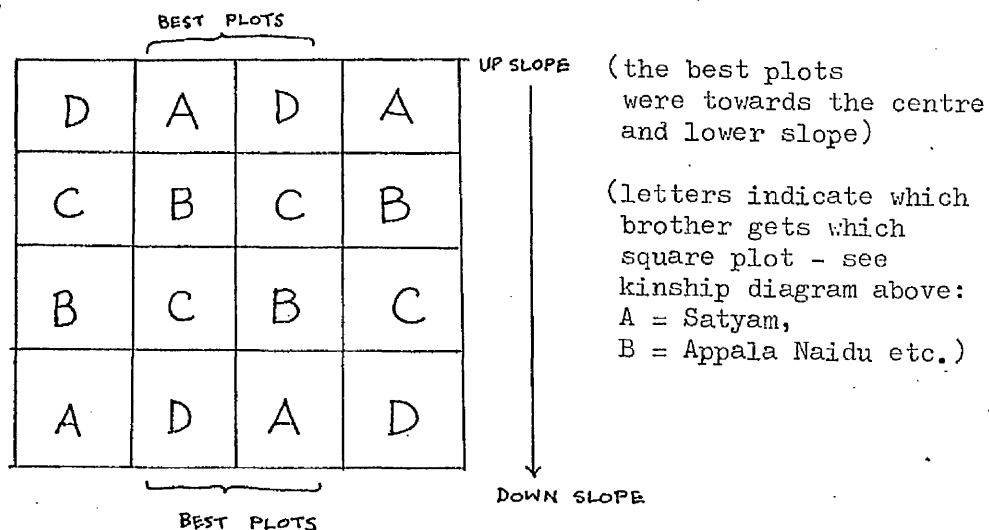


(numbers indicate ownership of wet land in acres)

The Sannayyagoru branch of the Rapeti family are the four sons of the deceased Rapeti Sannayya. This group of brothers is conspicuously cooperative with each other. They are all economically successful and command respect of the Gavaras of the village at large. The eldest, A, commands great respect in the informal dispute settlement sessions, tagu, though he does not hold any formal leadership post. B is a combination Headman and Record Keeper of a small neighbouring Yata hamlet, Sirsipalli. He also temporarily served as Headman of Aripaka Revenue Village after the death of the previous Headman, a fellow Rapeti clansman of the Somunaidugoru branch. C is the elected Vice-President of the village panchayat and is the most prominent elder at dispute settlement sessions. Probably because of his younger age, D has been less politically active than his elder brothers.

These brothers' land holdings are relatively large. Their holdings are also less subdivided than those of most families. Two of the brothers, A and D, hold land jointly with their sons who are already married and living separately. The degree of their close economic cooperation and harmony can be seen in the following scheme which they devised to partition a particular dry field for cultivating casuarina for firewood. The system stresses both their equality, none was to have more of the better lands, and the confidence they had that they would remain in close cooperation in the future.

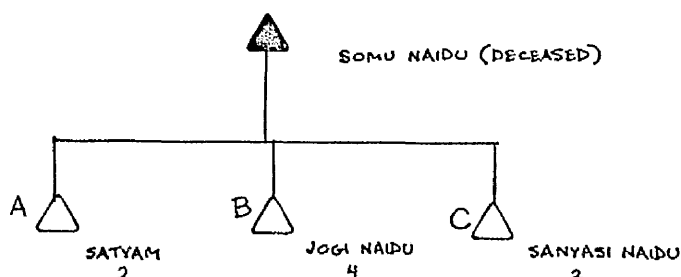
Fig. III-5.

b. Somunaidugoru Rapeti

The second group of brothers are the sons of the deceased Rapeti Somu Naidu.

Fig. III-6

Somunaidugoru branch of the Rapeti clan: (Total of 8 acres wet land)



In contrast to the Sannayya brothers the two eldest of these brothers, A and B, are clearly in a state of competition with each

other. A, the eldest, never had any children but adopted the infant son of his brother B when the latter's wife died in childbirth. This provided A with a male heir and helped B "get rid" of his son by his first wife, freeing him to remarry. It will be recalled that step-mothers are not believed to take very good care of their husband's children from previous marriages.

B's second marriage was one which brought him great economic benefits. His wife's father and brother both work as migrant labourers in an industrial project in Kandla port, Gujarat. One works as a crane operator and receives a very good salary. Periodically they send back money which is entrusted to B to invest in land on their behalf. With some of the money, B built himself a substantial new cement house, said to cost Rs. 15,000. In order to enable his daughter to benefit from this new wealth and retain a say in it himself, B arranged a marriage between his ten year old daughter and his wife's younger brother of thirty. Villagers commented that from the point of view of the couple such a great age difference between them was not the best arrangement. However, it was recognised that it was in B's best interest to keep his wife's family's money interconnected with his own family. Since inheritance is strictly patrilineal it might seem peculiar that this should be considered as a method of keeping wealth in the family. However, parents' bonds of emotion and authority tend to be cognatic, particularly in such cases of close inter-marriage.

B had political ambitions in the village and ran unsuccessfully for Village Panchayat President. This put him into direct competition with Rapeti Ramu Naidu of the Sannayagoru branch of the Rapeti family, described above. He lost because Ramu Naidu had a much firmer kinship

base and wider general following than B. B's interest in politics can be traced back to his father having been a Headman of the village. On his father's death the headmanship shifted to his father's elder brother's son. Thenceforth the line of succession would not return to the Somunaidu branch of the Rapeti. B continued to emulate his father in a number of ways, aside from standing for the Panchayat election. He often advised villagers on matters concerning the astrological almanac regarding auspicious timings for beginning agricultural operations or for performing religious ceremonies. This was a skill he had learnt from his father. B also maintained a rather unconventional friendship with an influential Raju in Aripaka, a man whom most Gavaras felt was opposed to Gavara political interests. B also had connections with the head of the council of panchayat presidents of the villages in Subbavaram block.

B's elder brother, A, has reacted to B's success with a mixture of dismay and competition. He privately bemoans his economic and political inferiority to his younger brother who does not cooperate with him or share the fruits of his success. The contrast between the two brother's households are no more apparent than in the types of houses they live in. While B lives in a big cement house with a compound wall and electricity, A lives in a single segment of a thatched mud longhouse. A has made his own bid for advancement when he attempted to set up a rice mill in Mallolla Pakalu to rival one run by a Komati in Aripaka. Unfortunately, the loan he got was not sufficient to launch the project and the mill room now stands empty. A then became active in the government-

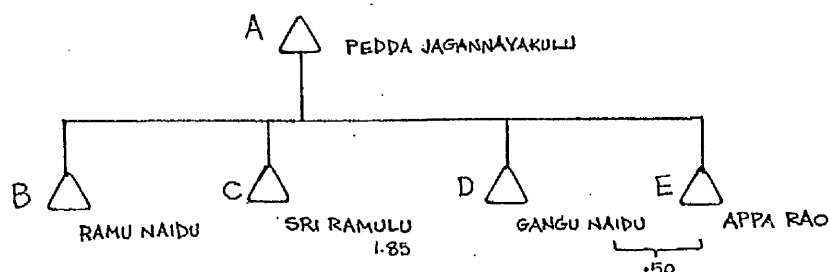
sponsored cooperative bank in Subbavaram, becoming an important member of its board of directors. This earned him contacts with local politicians in Subbavaram but did not seem to give him access to further funds for his own mill project. In the political sphere of the village, he entertained the idea of competing for the vacant post of Headman. In the end, more realistically, he encouraged his son to study for the government headmanship examination.

The youngest brother, C, is an example of the special position of the younger brother in many families where there is a large age difference between elder and younger brothers. The particularly weak position of the youngest brother is recognised and special provisions are often made for him to live with his father and take over the family house upon the father's death. This protection of the interests of the youngest son is a recognition of the tendency for brothers to compete with each other once the restraining influence of the father is removed. Sometimes such special treatment of the youngest son engenders just that jealousy which it is designed to counteract.

During the course of fieldwork C became politically active in a youth faction which advocated the performance of the Gairamma festival against the opposition of the elders who did not want to spend the money for it. Thus, after being overshadowed by his elder brothers, C seemed to be going through a period of political awakening and competition in his own right.

c. Pedda JagannayakuluFig. III-7.Family of Pedda Jagannayakulu in the Rapeti clan:

(Total of 2.35 acres of wet land)



The third family to be considered, a man and his grown sons, shows how a father's authority restrains the divisive tendencies between brothers. The family is, nevertheless, remarkable for the degree to which the brothers have cooperated with each other economically. Since there are signs of considerable repressed conflict between the brothers this cooperation seems to have been the result of the father's continuing leadership.

In contrast with the other two families discussed, members of this family exercise less authority in gatherings of elders and is not active in the formal politics of the village. This seems to be correlated, in part, with its weaker economic position, as reflected in its holdings of wet lands.

The eldest brother, B, had been married and had a son before he fell ill with chronic bronchitis. This debilitated him to the point that he could no longer work. Before he got sick he used to give loans in the village with some of the money which his wife's family remitted from Burma while they were migrant labourers there. Eventually he dissipated all of that money by living on his capital

once the remittances stopped. His illness and weakened economic position were the background to the breakdown of his marriage which ended in a hotly contested divorce. His wife took him to court where she got a settlement which placed their son in her custody along with a substantial portion of land in the son's name.

The second brother, C, is the only one of the brothers leading a normal home life in the village with his wife and child. His economic condition is not particularly healthy since, like his brothers, he is trapped in a downward spiral of economic decline, selling off land to meet his current expenses. He is already deeply in debt to a town jaggery merchant to whom he owed sizeable repayments on an agricultural loan.

The third brother, D, had been sent by the family to get an education and vocational training. He married a girl from Visakhapatnam and got a job in the Naval Stores through her relatives. The youngest brother, E, had been in the midst of an affair with a Gavara girl in Yatapalem whom his father did not want him to marry. It was arranged for D to take E to Visakhapatnam to remove him from his girlfriend and to "teach him the value of money". E's wedding was negotiated and supervised by D who is regarded as the family expert on town customs. The marriage was arranged with a view to secure a steady job for E through his new wife's relatives. E lived with his new wife in a house together with D and D's wife's relatives. After E's marriage, his father, A, began spending increasingly more time with them in town. The father began complaining about the way his sons were treating him in town and eventually convened a meeting of caste elders in the village in order to air his grievances.

Though the dispute settling session (tagu) was ostensibly about A's not being sufficiently maintained by his sons, numerous tensions between the brothers came to the surface at the same time. Essentially, the conflict was between the two middle brothers C and D where the superior status of C (by virtue of his age) was challenged by the prestige of D's town education and job. B was somewhat detached from the competition and this seems linked to his divorced status. He did not display the competitive rivalry which attachment to one's own wife and children seems to engender in brothers. The brother E was not present and was hardly taken into consideration, still being thought of as the 'baby brother'.

The first issue discussed at the gathering was the sale of the mother's dowry gold. A quarter of the money was used to finance D's education and half of it to pay the court expenses for B's divorce. The remaining quarter of the money was unaccounted for and C was accused of embezzling it. Then there came the counter accusation by C of D. D had mortgaged family land to a local government cooperative bank society to pay for E's wedding expenses. D was accused of pocketing the amount that was left over. Another source of tension between C and D involved the mortgaging of .4 acre of jointly owned wet land (to a Harijan, a Mala of Aripaka). This was used to pay off an alleged fine of Rs. 1500 imposed on D for repair of a machine he damaged at work. This fine seemed to be of dubious authenticity though the family did not openly question it.

Other areas of tension between C and D included a clash over the rightful ownership of the family house in the village, where C was currently residing. Supposedly the house was D's but C was

living in it in his absence. D claimed his father's marriage bed which he had at one time been promised. C had taken it out of storage, repaired it, and was currently using it. C countered with accusations that D had sold certain brass vessels. These were part of the common family property which D had taken to town and sold without prior consent from the others.

The meeting finally dealt with the original purpose for convening the gathering, A's dissatisfaction with his treatment by D in town, and in particular, not being given enough pocket money. A and his wife's brother, among others of the elders, questioned the sons B, C, and D on the use and disappearance of joint family funds. They tried to apply pressure on C and D by making a public issue of the dispute. The net result of the meeting was an indictment of D for his shabby treatment of his father and his mismanagement of joint funds and unauthorized sale of communal possessions. We might well ask ourselves to what extent the tensions between the brothers C and D could have gone were it not for the restraining influence of obligations to their father. Had he not been alive, their anger at each other might well have been unreconciliable.

C. To what extent is clan and caste unity maintained?

1. Questions of descent

a. Fission of sub-clans

While the ideal is that families are unified groups, the demographic realities of expanding population exert pressures for families to divide. One way that these pressures are minimised is through the phenomenon of telescoping the depth of the genealogy. Telescoping is made possible by the classificatory kinship terminology

which equates children of parallel relatives with brothers and sisters. B = FBS, MZS; Z = FBD, MZD (just as with own siblings, the actual terms used are determined by the criterion of age relative to the speaker: tammudu = younger brother, anna = elder brother etc.). It follows that the children of one's classificatory brother and sister are called by the same terms as the children of one's own brother and sister. Since only classificatory terminology is used, it is easy for the distinctions of own vs. classificatory siblings to become obscured when previous generations are recalled. The relationship which is spoken of in classificatory terms as in Figure III-8 is seen to be genealogically as Figure III-9. Further probing reveals that elder members of the family remember ties going back further (Figure III-10). The latter connections are not known by the younger generations so the process of telescoping, of minimising the genealogical distance to a common ancestor, is a constant on-going process. It follows that even the deepest genealogies which the older people remember are likely to be telescoped versions of the actual kinship ties.

Fig. III-8

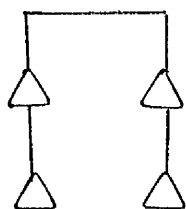


Fig. III-9

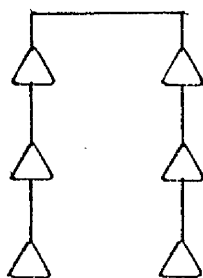
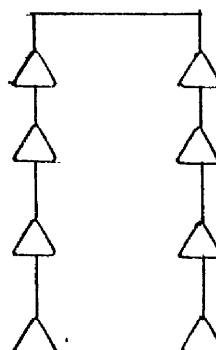


Fig. III-10



In the case of the Rapeti clan, illustrated in Table III-3 the Sannayagoru brothers and the Somunaidugoru brothers speak of their fathers as having been brothers of Pedda Jagannayakulu, which is true in classificatory terms. They are well aware that the actual connection lies further back. Most of them think their grandfathers had been brothers. With difficulty, the oldest people can trace back as far as their FFF. Nevertheless, this "knowledge" is considered irrelevant and is not passed on to younger people.

Despite this corrective tendency to de-emphasise genealogical distance, there seems to be a maximum size at which a sub-clan can function efficiently for ritual purposes. After this, fission occurs. The sharing of death pollution, maila, upon the death of a member is the main distinctive feature of shared genealogical interconnectedness. When the descent group has expanded and branched out very widely it becomes unwieldy for all its members to observe restrictions on performing rituals. The group gets so large that they are constantly prevented from performing rituals and festivals. This coincides with the feeling by many sub-clan members that the genealogical connection to the person who died is remote and no longer traceable. Since death pollution is transmitted along lines of actual and theoretically traceable descent, they reason that hardly any pollution can be transmitted.

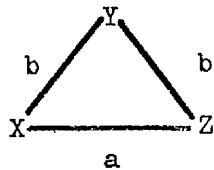
Such a situation occurred some fifty years ago. A man of the Saragadam clan (Gavara) died just before the dīpāvali festival. This rendered almost the entire Saragadam clan unable to perform the festival (except for a small sub-group which had originated elsewhere and did not share pollution with the others). This became the pretext for splitting up the Saragadam clan unit into three separate pollution-sharing groups. Elder men of the Saragadam clan gathered and a new

shoulder cloth was tied into three knots. The cloth was cut and a knot symbolically given to each of the three newly-created groups. Though they share clanship they no longer acknowledge a direct genealogical tie.

b. Violations of "brother clan" exogamy

It was observed earlier (in Chapter II.A.6.a.) that, ideally, members of a Gavara clan conform to a unified policy of marriage with other clans in the village, categorizing them as "marriageable" (bāvamaridulu 'in-laws', bāvamaridi = WB, FZS, MBS) or "unmarriageable" (annarammulu 'brothers', anna 'elder brother', tammulu, 'younger brothers'). This was explained as a means of preventing men of a hypothetical clan X from marrying women of clan Z if both of them have marital ties with a clan Y.

Fig. III-11.



a = annatammulu,
unmarriageable
"brother" clans

b = bāvamaridulu,
marriageable
"in-law" clans

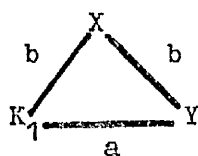
The categories of this system were assumed to apply to all members of a clan and be designed to prevent the paradox of otherwise marriageable clansmen (the principle of exogamy from one's own clan) turning out to be parallel relatives through classificatory links.

Actual practices do not conform with this ideology, however. Detailed enquiries of each Gavara clan reveal a lack of clarity as to whether the annatammulu-bāvamaridulu principle applies at all times for all members of a particular clan or whether it applies

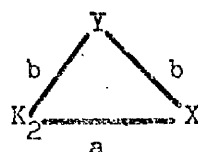
only when ties are close and traceable. Informants are apologetic about the apparent paradox that two separate sub-clans in the Kalla clan give consistently opposite characterizations of the clans they consider to be "brothers" or "in-laws". There is the notion that the categories should apply to clans as wholes. This can be understood when it is realised that sub-clan divisions are a matter only concerning members of a particular clan. (Death pollution is only transmitted within the sub-clan.) In the case of the Kalla clan, the confusion arises because one Kalla sub-clan entered the village on an illarakam matrilocal marriage. Since the categorisation into "brother" and "in-law" clans is a pragmatic one involving the closely intermarried clans of the village, a member of a different village is not bound by these categories. In the Kalla case, such a family married into the village and found itself in the opposite category of its fellow clansmen who had long been residents of the village.

Fig. III-12

How it is that K_1 and K_2 , two sub-clans of the Kalla clan can be in opposite sides of the exogamous moieties of the village:



K_1 (native to the village) marry X, who in turn have members who marry with Y. Hence K_1 cannot marry Y.



K_2 (originate outside the village, hence are not in the 'a'/'b' system of the village) come to the village on illarakam matrilocal marriage, to the members of clan Y. Since Y marry X, K_2 cannot marry X.

Thus, we get a situation where K_1 can marry X and K_2 cannot. However, members of K_1 and K_2 are not distinguished in their names. Both bear the clan name Kalla.

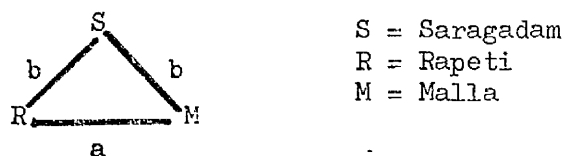
There is another sort of violation of the principle which is more difficult to explain away. These are cases where individuals violate the accepted clan relationship in order to form advantageous ties with economically or politically prominent families. The most significant among the numerous inconsistencies is the relationship of the three most numerous and wealthy Gavara clans in the village, Saragadam, Rapeti, and Malla.

Table III-14

Clan	Number of households	Percentage of all Gavara households
Saragadam	56	32
Rapeti	28	16
Malla	19	10
	103	58

Traditionally, Saragadam families have married both Rapeti and Malla families, categorising them as "in-law" clans, bavamaridulu. According to the system, Rapeti and Malla must thus consider each other to be "brother" clans, annatammulu, and should not intermarry.

Fig. III-13



However, in fairly recent times a Rapeti man married a Malla woman. They justified themselves saying that the system of exogamy is a means of preventing prohibited ties by their link with third parties.

Since their two families were not linked by third parties, they justified the breaking of the convention. But this was in disregard of clan unity and threw off the calculations for other members of their respective clans who did have ties with third parties. It is this type of violation which the villagers feel particularly loath to admit and embarrassed to talk about.

Such sporadic violations of the "in law"/"brother" system seem to be evidence of shifting patterns of alliance and power between clans. Previously the Saragadam clan, traditionally the first founders of the village, had maintained marriage ties (as 'in-laws') with 12 of the other 15 clans in the village while the members of those 12 clans were prohibited from intermarrying among themselves (being 'brother' clans). This seems to have had the effect of consolidating the central position of the Saragadam clan, preventing the formation of a counter alliance of the other clans. But now the Malla clan which relatively recently is rapidly rising to economic and political prominence, and the Rapeti clan which has traditionally held political office in the village (as headmen) are making new alliances among themselves in a way, challenging the pre-eminence of the Saragadam clan. In this regard, it is significant that the first case of Rapeti-Malla marriage took place between important families in the village. The Rapeti man was the village Headman and the Malla woman was the sister of one of the wealthiest Mallas, the founder of the Mallolla Pakalu settlement and the father of the current village panchayat President. Since we discuss the differing relationships of wealth and power of Gavara clans further on, what is important to note here is the aspect

of clan unity under challenge. Clan-wide adherence to exogamous categories is violated and challenged by competitive, self-interested aims of individual families.

Fig. III-14

Gavara Clan Exogamy

(categories apply only within the village)

	KALLA ¹	SURISSETTI	DODDI	SARAGADAM	RAPETI	MALLA	KALLA ²	ADARI	ALLA	DADI	KONATALA	BHIMARASETTI	BODDETI	BODDEDA	POLIMERA	SADARAM	POLIMERASETTI
KALLA ¹		A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
SURISSETTI	A		B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
DODDI	A	B		A	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
SARAGADAM	A	A	A		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	B
RAPETI	B	B	B	B		A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
MALLA	B	B	B	B	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
KALLA ²		B	B	B	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
ADARI	B	B	A	B	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
ALLA	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
DADI	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A
KONATALA	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A
BHIMARASETTI	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A
BODDETI	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A
BODDEDA	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A
POLIMERA	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A		A	A
SADARAM	A	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A		A
POLIMERASETTI	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	

A = BROTHER CLANS WHICH DO NOT INTERMARRY

("ANNATAMHULU")

B = IN-LAW CLANS WHICH CAN INTERMARRY

("BAYAMRIDULU")

(DISCREPANCIES ARE CIRCLED)

(NOTE CONTRAST OF KALLA-1 TO KALLA-2)

c. Matrilocal marriage strategies

Another area in which the competitive strategies of individual families conflict with wider principles of clan unity is the practice of matrilocal marriage, illarakam. Illarakam marriages are arrangements resorted to by men without male issue. A man is "brought" into their house to marry their daughter. The daughter's husband takes over the management of his wife's father's land. Though he has no rights to it himself, i.e. if he dies it does not revert to his agnatic kinsmen, his son inherits rights to it. In effect, the property is allowed to pass through the female line. The motivations for performing such a marriage are the desire to keep one's land from reverting to one's brothers and a cognatic attachment to one's daughter. Similar cognatic ties have been observed in the case of the man who married his daughter to his wife's wealthy brother "in order to keep the money in the family" (see case of the man designated as 'B' in Chapter III.B.2.b.).

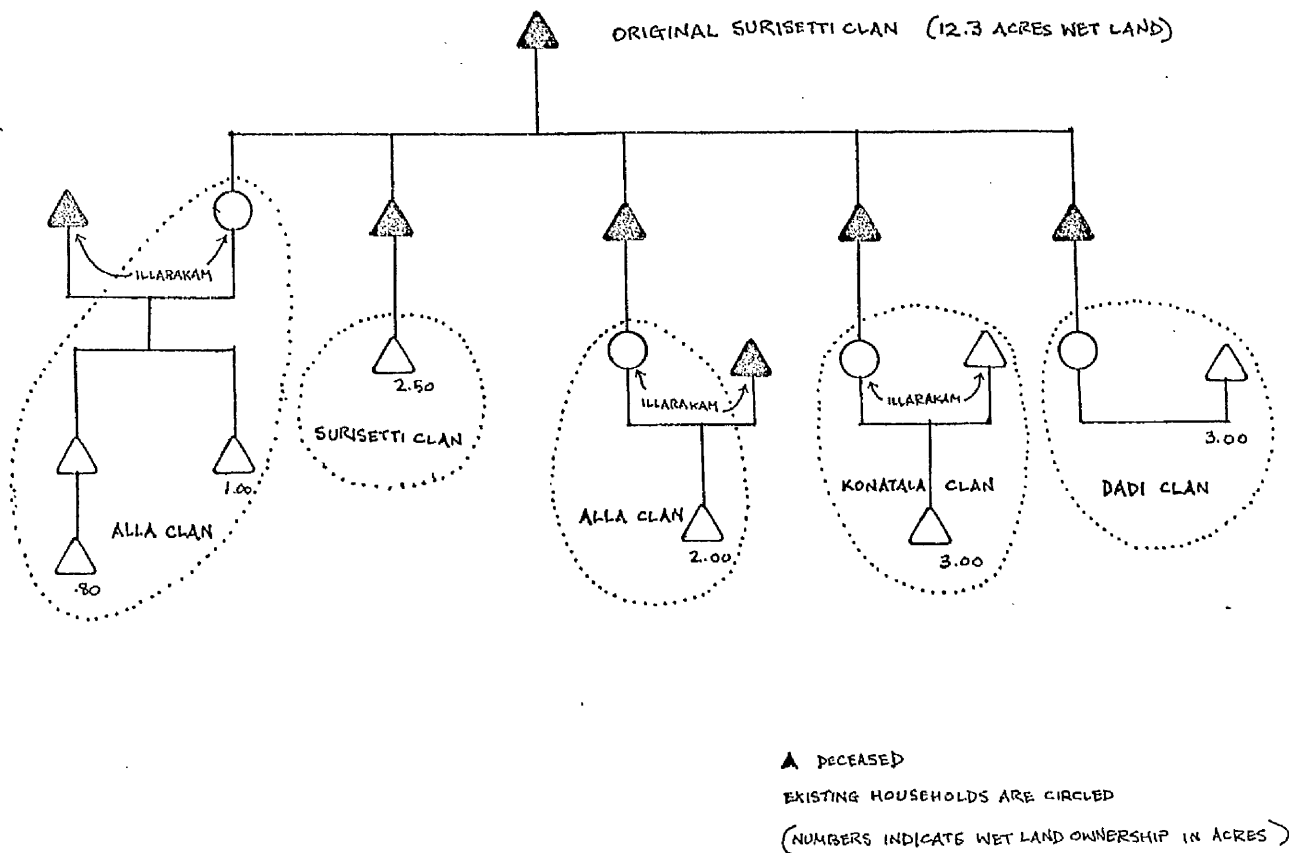
A woman married to a man under an illarakam arrangement becomes his wife in the conventional way. She becomes a member of his clan and takes his clan name. This means she might observe different funerary rites from those of her natal family and also that she does not become ritually polluted by the death of her father or agnates. Her children are also considered to be members, in full standing, of their father's clan. There are thus two long-term effects of illarakam marriage. The first is the undermining of a clan's existence through time if its members are forced too frequently to resort to illarakam due to lack of male heirs and lack of males for adoption. The second is the introduction of new clans

into the village. In fact, illarakam has been the principal process in the historical migration of new Gavara clans into Yatapalem.

The Suriseti clan in Yatapalem is a good example of the "trojan horse effect" of multiple illarakam on the strength of a clan. The following diagram illustrates how a wealthy Suriseti family with five sons and one daughter was succeeded in the next generation by only one male descendent bearing the clan name. The majority of the family property had passed out into four families of three other clans. At the moment these families live in the cement house of their Suriseti ancestors, cultivate adjacent lands, and informally associate together in the performance of certain festivals. However, their links must inevitably weaken through time and diverge far more rapidly than those of closely related members of the same clan whose kin ties undergo the constant process of telescoping. Illarakam transmits wealth cognatically and in doing so dissolves the clan itself over time. While short term interests of individual families are served in this way, the political potentials of a unified large clan are sacrificed.

Fig. III-15

Diagram of the long-term effects of illarakam marriage
on clan membership:



2. Questions of alliance

a. Marriage alliances: aspects of manipulation and competition

While the field of possible marriage choices is regulated by clan group membership, specific marriages are the result of individual decisions. The range of choices available permits a variety of strategies by which economic advantages can be procured or strengthened.

Using the ideology of innate loyalty and cooperation of kinsmen, some people try to arrange marriages with a view to establishing themselves as kinsmen of those who might influence their getting employment or other financial support (see case of "E" in Chapter III.B.2.c.). Others cement an already existing economic partnership by arranging the marriage of their children. Conflicts and tensions arise when such economic ties change or break down and people go back on their previous commitments.

The prominence of economic factors in marriage ties is particularly clear in the wedding ceremony itself. Immediately after the Brahmanic ritual which lasts several hours, there is an equally lengthy exchange of money and gifts, katnam, from the relatives and friends of the groom's parents to the bride and vice versa. Relatives from both families carefully record the name of each donor and the amount he gives. When they have a wedding in their family it is customary to return the gift with a small additional amount.

3. Questions of clan rivalry: an assessment of the differences in wealth of Gavara clans and sub-clans

The purpose of this section is to examine the realities of differences in wealth and power within the Gavara caste. The data on which the following analysis is based were collected from every Gavara household (173). They throw considerable light on the background to the prominence of certain individuals and families in leadership and decision-making. They have the additional value of providing an explanation for the rivalries between certain clans which became apparent when controversies arose over the timing and

conduct of village festivals.

The relative wealth and power of Gavara clans will be examined below in five topics: a. population size, b. landholding, c. quality of dwelling, d. employment of annual-basis field labourers, and e. involvement in the sugar cane cash crop economy. As the data are presented, we note that none of the three principle clans, Saragadam, Rapeti, and Malla, has a consistent advantage over the others in all five criteria. Saragadam is by far the largest clan but is the most internally segmented and has the lowest average holdings in wet lands per household. Rapeti is the biggest kin unit if only sub-clans are considered. Rapeti also have the largest net holdings of wet land for any clan. While ranking third in terms of numbers of households, Malla rank consistently highest in terms of wealth: proportion living in cement houses, employing annual field hands, and having a high cash income. The way in which these differing competitive advantages are manifested in the political life of the village will be examined in the next section. To anticipate that discussion we might mention that the Rapetis hold the traditional headmanship while Mallas hold the Panchayat Presidency though they compete for this with the Rapetis. Saragadam hold certain ritual prerogatives but are rather inactive politically.

a. Population

The following is a chart showing the strength of Gavara clans ranked in terms of numbers of households. From the chart it can be seen that the three largest clans, Saragadam, Rapeti, and Malla, comprise 58% of the total number of households of the

caste (with Saragadam accounting for 32⁰/o of all Gavara households). The size of these relatively large clans strongly contrasts with the large number of clans with five households and less. Many of the latter are present in the village as a result of illarakam, matrilocal marriages. The six clans with ten or more households each account for 74⁰/o of the total number of Gavara households while the remaining thirteen clans account for only 26⁰/o.

Table III-15.

Table of Gavara Clans Ranked by Numbers of Households:

Clan Name	Number of Households
Saragadam	56
Rapeti	28
Malla	19
Kalla	15
Adari	10
Konatala	10
Suriseti	5
Doddi	5
Alla	5
Boddeti	4
Bhimarasetti	3
Polimarasetti	3
Dadi	3
Boddeda	2
Polimera	1
Sadaram	1
Mariseti	1
Pentakota	1
Yellapu	1
(19 Clans)	173

Table III 16.

Table of Gavara Sub-Clans (Pollution-Sharing-Groups) by
Numbers of Households:

Clan Name and Sub-Clan Designation	Number of Households
Saragadam 1	26
Rapeti 1	25
Malla	19
Saragadam 2	16
Adari	10
Kalla 2	8
Kalla 1	7
Konatala 1	7
Saragadam 3	7
Saragadam 4	7
Suriseti	5
(Saragadam 5	1)

The above chart shows only the top 11 sub-clans (with the exception of Saragadam 5 for comparison). There are a total of 33 mutually exclusive pollution-sharing groups in the 19 Gavara Clans of Aripaka Revenue Village.

However, in the average course of daily affairs, Saragadam do not exhibit any advantage of power over the other clans. We must thus conclude that political prominence of certain clans' members is not a function of overall clan size. When household population figures are broken down into units of sub-clans, i.e. groups which share death pollution (Table III-16), and lineage segments within these (Table III-17) a very different picture emerges. Saragadam's internal segmentation places it at a disadvantage when compared with similar sub-groups within the Rapeti and Malla clans. These lineage

segments maintain closer, more immediate ties and hence are a more effective base for political influence.

Table III-17

Household size of named lineage segments within Gavara sub-clans:

Name of the division of the sub-clan	Number of Households
Rapeti 1.C (Cinna Rapetollu)	19
Malla P (Pedda Mallollu)	13
Saragadam 2.N (Naidoru undi)	14
Saragadam 1.1 (Ayyappagari tega)	10
Malla C (Cinna Mallollu)	6
Rapeti P (Pedda Rapetollu)	6

b. Landholding

To explore why numbers alone do not account for the political prominence of Rapeti and Malla clan members we now examine the factor of landholding.

Table III-18Net Holdings of Wet (irrigated) Land by Gavara Clans (in acres):

Clan Name	No. of HH	Acres Wet Land
Saragadam	57	69.9
Rapeti	28	55.8
Malla	19	41.9
Kalla	15	9.6
Adari	10	8.6
Konatala	10	8.5
Suriseti	5	7.0

Table III-19.Net Holdings of Wet Land by Gavara Sub-Clans (Pollution-Sharing-Groups) (in acres):

Clan Name	No. of HH	Acres Wet Land
Rapeti 1	25	54.8
Malla	19	41.9
Saragadam 1	26	31.8
Saragadam 2	16	21.1
Saragadam 3	7	11.7
Adari	10	8.6
Konatala 1	7	8.2

(Only the clans with the seven largest landholdings have been listed above.)

The second chart points up Saragadam fragmentation and Rapeti strength at the sub-clan level.

Further calculations of average wet landholdings per household show that Mallas slightly surpass Rapetis and that both of them have far greater average landholdings (and, it is assumed, wealth) than Saragadams.

Table III-20.

Average wet landholdings by household

Gavara Clans:

Clan Name	Average Wet Land per household (acres)	No. of HH
Malla	2.2	19
Rapeti	1.9	28
Saragadam	1.2	56

Table III-21.

Average wet landholdings by household

Sub-Clan	Average Wet Land per household (acres)	No. of HH
Malla	2.2	19
Rapeti 1	2.1	25
Saragadam 5	2.5	1
Saragadam 3	1.6	7
Surisetti	1.4	5
Saragadam 2	1.3	16
Saragadam 1	1.2	26
Saragadam 4	.7	7

In estimating the importance of clans and sub-clans the two factors large numbers of households and high average landholdings should be considered together. A single family having a large landholding is not likely to be as influential as a large number of closely related families with large landholdings. Similarly, a large group of households in a clan which has less than average landholdings (e.g. Saragadam) is less likely to be as powerful as a somewhat smaller group with greater holdings.

It is significant that the two lineage segments with the highest average landholdings in the village (i.e. Pedda Rapetollu and Cinna Mallollu) are the very families which violated the conventions of "brother" clan exogamy (Chapter III.C.1.b.):

Table III-22.

Details of Landholdings of Lineage Segments - Rapeti and Malla Clans:

lineage segment (separate named descent lines within a single pollution-sharing-group):	Number of Households:	Average holding of wet land per household:	Total of group's wet land holdings:
RAPETI			
Pedda Rapetollu	6	2.55	15.35
Cinna Rapetollu	19	2.07	36.50
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Rapeti 1 sub-clan as a whole	25	2.19	51.85
MALLA			
Pedda Mallollu	13	1.96	25.55
Cinna Malollu	6	2.73	16.42
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Malla sub-clan as a whole	19	2.20	41.97

c. Quality of dwellings

We now turn to another index of wealth, the ownership of cement houses. There are three basic house types to be found in Aripaka Revenue Village, 1. conical mud hut with leaf roof (gudisillu), 2. long-house of mud with leaf roof (vāsillu) and 3. cement house with tile roof (penkutillu). (There are two versions of the mud huts 1 and 2, the first version only has the leaf roof while the second has a mud roof underneath the leaf roof. The latter version is a protection against fire and costs more to construct). These three house types are listed in ascending order of the cost to construct and maintain them. Mud huts cost from Rs. 50 to 200 to build while the price of cement houses can run into thousands since they require town-bought materials. The cement house is the most desirable and as a sign of conspicuous spending it confers greatest prestige on its owner.

The different settlements of Aripaka Revenue Village exhibit different combinations of these housetypes in consonance with the wealth of the castes and families living there. For instance, the Yata hamlet of Kottapalem and the Harijan quarters of Aripaka and Yatapalem are built most exclusively of conical mud huts (type 1). Yatapalem and Aripaka consist predominantly of mud long-houses (type 2) with a few scattered cement houses owned by the wealthy members of the Raju, Komati, Velama, and Gavara castes. the wealthy members of the Raju, Komati, Velama, and Gavara castes. Mallolia rakalu consists almost entirely of large cement houses (type 3).

An examination of cement house ownership among Gavara clans is revealing:

Table III-23.Gavara Households Living in Cement Houses (by Clan):

Clan Name	Total no. HH.	Total Number of households living in cement houses	Percentage of households of this clan living in cement houses
Saragadam	56	22	39
Malla	19	15	79
Rapeti	28	4	14

Table III-24.Gavara Households Living in Cement Houses (by Sub-Clan):

Sub-Clan	Total no. HH.	Total Number of households living in cement houses	Percentage of members of this sub-clan in cement houses
Malla	19	15	79
Saragadam 2	15	12	80
Saragadam 3	7	6	86
Saragadam 1	26	4	15
Rapeti 1	25	3	12
Rapeti 2	3	1	33
(Saragadam 4 + 5)	8	0	0

The second chart shows that while Saragadam clan members have a larger total number of cement houses (Table III-24), Malla are very strong when only sub-clans are considered. Only Saragadam 2 sub-clan approach Malla in having a combination of large total numbers of cement houses and high percentages of sub-clan members residing in cement houses. We note again that the Saragadam clan

is splintered into sub-clan units which display great variations of wealth between and within them. These correlate with the differences in wet land ownership (see Table III-19).

Using cement house ownership as an indication of the wealth of a kin group has its limitations. Sources of money for house-building are highly diverse. Some families have used money they earned as migrant labourers to invest in a solid cement house. The expulsion of Indians from Burma and other economic setbacks have left some with little else to show for their money. One man in Saragadam 2 sold a large quantity of firewood which he cultivated for over a decade on a large plot of dry land. This accounts for eight households living in cement houses in his sub-clan statistics (Table III-24). This same sub-clan ranks significantly behind five others in terms of average wet land holdings per household (Table III-21). The Mallas live in a large number of cement houses but at the same time their average landholdings are high. This reflects the much stronger economic position of the Mallas whose ability to finance cement housebuilding has been based more firmly on their large annual agricultural income rather than on single windfall sales or outside remittances of money.

d. Employment of annual-basis fieldhands

A fourth index of the relative wealth of Gavara clans and sub-clans is the employment of annual-basis fieldhands, pālēru. There are two factors involved here, the necessity to employ extra full-time labourers (to meet the requirements of intensive wet cultivation of the sugar cane cash crop), and the agricultural surplus which enables their support. Figures of the employment of

annual basis fieldhands are particularly useful as a means of pin-pointing concentrations of wealth which are otherwise disguised by the nominal parcelling out of land among different households.

A typical annual arrangement with a pālēru fieldhand commits a farmer to supply a designated amount of grain (rice and two varieties of millet, ganti and cōlu) and a set of new clothes as well as two meals a day. The amount of grain varies greatly with the age and abilities of the labourer, from 55 kgs. for a young boy of ten to 550 kg. to a man of thirty. The payments are not made all at once but are made piecemeal in amounts of 15-20 kgs. at the time of harvests.

A typical example is the arrangement a Saragadam has with a Mala young man of 25 from Aripaka. The farmer cultivates 2 acres of wet land and 2 of dry land and has an income from selling jaggery of approximately Rs. 3000-5000. He also supplements his income from the sale of milk to a town contractor. His arrangement with his labourer is to pay him 446 kgs. of grain over the year (8 puṭlu = 160 kuncālu = 446.4 kgs.). In return, the labourer is expected to arrive from Aripaka at dawn, milk the buffalo, and work the entire day, taking breakfast and a mid-day meal with the farmer. He returns to his own home for dinner in the evening. When there are jobs to be done in the evening or all night long, the labourer has to be on hand. Arrangements such as this offer the advantage of security of employment and regular meals and an assured income of grain for his family. The alternative source of agricultural labour is daily wage labour, kūli pani, 'cooly work'. The rates for this fluctuate with the seasonal work requirements but are usually Rs. 2 per day for men and Rs. 1 for women.

Table III-25.Gavara Clan Members with Annual-Basis Field Hands:

Clan Name	Total No. of HH	No. of its HH with fieldhands	Total No. of fieldh. employed	% of HH in the clan who employ fieldhands
Saragadam	56	12	16	21
Malla	19	11	16	57
Rapeti	28	9	12	32

Total number of Gavara households with annual basis fieldhands: 39

Total number of annual basis fieldhands employed by Gavawas: 51

Table III-26Gavara Sub-Clan Members with Annual-Basis Field Hands:

Sub-Clan Name	Total HH.	HH with fieldhands	Total of fieldh. employed	% of HH in the sub-clan employing fieldh.
Malla	19	11	16	57
Rapeti 1	25	7	10	28
Saragadam 3	7	5	7	71
Saragadam 2	15	4	5	26
Saragadam 1	26	3	3	11
Rapeti 2	3	2	2	66

In the above tables it is possible to see further evidence of the wide range of differences of wealth between Saragadam sub-clans. The Malla clan emerge as the most prosperous farmers with Rapeti

following them.

e. Involvement in cash-cropping

The above figures on employment of annual-basis fieldhands reflect differing degrees of successful involvement in the cash crop economy. Ability to benefit from selling sugar cane is largely determined by ownership of suitable amounts of wet land.

Table III-27.

Rough Estimate of Cane and Jaggery Production and Income -

Gavara Clans:

Clan Name	House-holds	Annual Jaggery Production (in kgs.)	No. of HH supplying cane to coop factory	Amt. of cane supplied to coop factory	Est. Rupee equiv. of sales of jaggery and cane
Saragadam	56	41,150	1*	65 tons	Rs 48,940
Malla	19	17,850	3	124	32,720
Rapeti	28	28,400	2*	16	30,310

* Factory shares jointly owned by several brothers (Rapeti, Saragadam).

Table III-28.

Rough Estimate of Cane and Jaggery Production and Income -Gavara Sub-Clans:

Sub-Clan	House-holds	Annual Jaggery Production (in Kgs)	No. of HH supplying cane to co-op factory	Amt. cane supplied to fact. in tons	Est. Rupee equiv. of sales of jaggery and cane
Malla	19	17,850	3	124	Rs 32,720
Rapeti	26	26,500	2*	16	28,410
Saragadam 2	15	18,500	-	-	18,500
Saragadam 3	7	6,300	1*	65	14,090
Saragadam 1	26	13,900	-	-	13,900
Saragadam 4	7	2,300	-	-	2,300
(Saragadam 5	1	150	-	-	150)
(Adari	10	4,850	-	-	4,850)

*Factory shares which are jointly held by a number of households.

(Note: Jaggery production figures were arrived at by a survey of the number of moulds, dimma, which each household estimated it sold in the most recent year. 1 dimma = 10 kgs. approx., price of a dimma fluctuated between Rs. 6 and Rs. 15, in the above chart the figure of Rs. 10 was used. If this was too high it would still not affect the relative places of the various families. Values of raw cane are even more approximate - estimating the yield of one ton of cane to be 12 dimma = 120 kgs.)

(The sub-clans are listed in descending order of income with the exception of the last two entries, Saragadam 5 and Adari, which are included for purposes of comparison.)

There is a continuum of involvement in the cash crop economy. Those at the top produce more cane for the mill while smaller producers concentrate on jaggery production. Since the Malla families have the highest concentration of good wet land, they can undertake an annual commitment to supply cane to the cooperative sugar mills.

The Rapetis have to combine their efforts to even approach a similar level of production. Their cooperative factory shares are held jointly (these are the brothers discussed in Chapter III.B.2.a.). Apart from the Saragadam sub-clan, Saragadam 3, no other family has factory shares. All the remaining sub-clans concentrate on jaggery production to the degree which their wet landholdings permit.

In comparing the above table of "net income of sub-clans" with "average income per household" in the tables below, we again see the economic strength of the Mallas. Saragadam 3 makes a strong showing (as their participation in the cooperative factory indicates) but lack the power of numbers and net income of the Rapeti and Malla groups.

Table III-29.

Average Income per Household (Clans):

Clan	Ave. Income/HH
Malla	Rs. 1,722
Rapeti	1,082
Saragadam	873

Table III-30.Average Income per Household (Sub-Clans):

Sub-Clan	Av. Income/HH	Total of HH
Saragadam 3	Rs. 2,012	7
Malla	1,722	19
Saragadam 2	1,233	15
Rapeti 1	1,092	26
Saragadam 1	534	26
Adari	485	7
Saragadam 5	150	1

f. Conclusions on the differences in wealth between Gavara
clans and sub-clans

Let us now summarise the above information which highlights the great differences in size and wealth of Gavara clans and sub-clans. Three clans, Saragadam, Rapeti, and Malla, stand out as the most important of the 19 Gavara clans in the village. Saragadam is by far the largest clan but is internally segmented into numerous sub-clans (kinsmen who are intimately related to the point of sharing death pollution) none of which has advantages of size or wealth over comparable units in the Rapeti or Malla clans. (Most of the Rapeti and all of the Malla clan constitute, in effect, a single pollution-sharing group and thus must be considered in segmentary terms as sub-clans). Rapetis are the biggest unit on the sub-clan level and possess the largest net holdings of wet land. On the other hand, though they are a smaller group, the Mallas have a greater concentration of average and net wealth than

any other sub-clan unit.

Table III-31.

Tabulation of rank in nine indices of wealth:

	Clans			Sub-Clans				
	S	R	M	S1	R1	M	S2	S3
Number of households	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	9
Net holdings of wet land	1	2	3	3	1	2	4	5
Average holdings of wet land	3	2	1	7	2	1	6	4
Net number of cement houses	1	3	2	4	5	1	2	3
% of households in cement houses	2	3	1	5	6	3	2	1
Net households employing <u>pālēru</u>	1	3	2	5	2	1	4	3
% of households employing <u>pālēru</u>	3	2	1	6	4	3	5	1
Net income	1	3	2	5	2	1	3	4
Average income per household	3	2	1	5	4	2	3	1

S = Saragadam

R = Rapeti

M = Malla

S1 = Saragadam 1

R1 = Rapeti 1

M = Malla

S2 = Saragadam 2

S3 = Saragadam 3

(Ranks were arrived at by giving first, second, and third place etc. based on the various statistical tables. No attempt has been made to indicate relative differences.)

The above table gives a good picture of the rather diffuse appearance of data on clan and sub-clan wealth. One of the main problems is deciding the relative weight of importance to give to net size and net holdings as opposed to average holdings (the concentration of wealth). Data on political activity which follow indicate that optimum conditions for a strong showing

are strength in both these areas. Data on the sub-clan level fit the observed behaviour far more accurately than that for clans. Clans (e.g. Saragadam) never act as a unit. Sub-clan groups are more intimately connected in what is conceived as a physical sense, the mutual sharing of death pollution. These and groups of brothers (as those described in Chapter III.B.2.a.) are the most effective units of political mobilisation. At the sub-clan level, Saragadam fare poorly. Saragadam 3 stand out in average wealth but fall down in net holdings and population figures. Saragadam 1 are large in numbers but are poor in landholdings.

4. Questions of differential political participation by clansmen

In the last section we examined the differentials of wealth between clans and sub-clans within the Gavara caste. These differences in wealth lie at the bottom of differential participation at the informal political level despite the ideal of the shared authority of the elders within the caste. In this section we consider the clan and sub-clan composition of elders who participate in dispute settlement sessions.

The principal activity of elders, peddalu, is to preside over meetings which are called to arbitrate and settle disputes. The dispute and the meeting to settle it are known as tagu (or taguvu). Such dispute settlement sessions take place almost anywhere, under a tree, in a teastall shed, at the village Rama temple, or on the verandah of a house. Internal disputes within a caste generally concern breaches of norms between caste members and particularly between kinsmen. Jurisdiction over such disputes remain within the caste and its elders. The most typical internal disputes involve:

1. Marriage breakdowns and divorce - e.g. a wife refuses to return to her husband and a tagu is held at the wife's family's village attended by the elders of the husband's family and village; elders of a Gavara woman come from her natal village to discuss with her husband's elders the terms of dissolving her marriage
2. Kinsmen's responsibilities - e.g. a Gavara man's four sons are summoned to a tagu concerning lapses in their responsibilities to support their parents: two brothers argue at a tagu over dividing their responsibility to support their widowed mother with whom the wife of one has been in conflict
3. Inheritance - e.g. a tagu is held to divide the land and debts of a recently deceased Gavara farmer between his son by his first wife and his second wife and her unmarried son, making provisions for the second wife's upkeep and the marriage of her four unmarried daughters

The perpetrator of a serious breach of norm or the guilty party in starting a fight or conflict is considered to have committed a tappu, "a wrong, a fault or error", and a fine, jerimānu, is levied, payable either to the injured party or the village Rama temple. If tagu decisions are not complied with, further tagus are held and harsher sanctions applied such as threats of social ostracism including the boycotting of their marriages and other rituals.

We noted earlier that a number of Gavara men tend to stand out at these decision making meetings and dispute settlement sessions. These men preside over the arbitration of conflicts, discuss village welfare, and assume directive roles during village festivals. Usually referred to as peddalu, "big men", (or naillu, plural of naiḍu "chief, leader or big man") they do not form a clearly delineated or officially designated group. The configuration of such men at any one specific occasion is always different though the same fifteen to twenty men generally tend to be present. It is here that the ideology of caste unity is not supported in

reality. The fluidity of composition of a group of elders emphasises unanimity. Nevertheless political decisions are actually made by those men with the most wealth and influence.

It is difficult to attribute a single factor behind a man's assumption of the role of elder. They do tend to be the eldest men, successful householders having families and children, prosperous farmers, and from the numerically or economically most prominent Gavara clans. Having one or any combination of these attributes does not automatically bestow authority. There are extra ingredients of "knowing how to talk to people" and commanding respect. Some who had all of these qualities do not assume the role of elder, while others, usually younger or less economically successful, who occasionally attempt to assume leadership roles, are ignored or not acknowledged.

Twentyeight instances of meetings to deliberate disputes or issues of village welfare were observed during the course of fieldwork. Interesting facts emerge about the clan and sub-clan affiliation of the elders who were most active.

Table III-32.

Sub-clan affiliation of thirty-seven men most active as elders

Sub-Clan	Total no. of individuals who ever act as elders (in the sub-clan)	No. of individuals who each appear more than 5 times out of 28 instances	Total no. of appearances (out of 28 observed instances) of elders of this sub-clan	No. of HH in the sub-clan	Sub-clan's net wet landholdings	Sub-clan's average wet land holdings per HH
Rapeti 1	12	7	75	25	54.8	2.1
Malla	9	4	35	1	41.9	2.2
Saragadam 2	3	1	13	16	21.1	1.3
Adari	3	-	6	10	8.6	.8
Saragadam 3	2	1	7	7	11.7	1.6
Kalla 1	1	1	9	7	4.1	.5
Dadi 1	1	1	6	2	-	-
Saragadam 1	1	-	2	26	31.8	1.2
Dadi 3	1	-	2	1	3.0	3.0
Bhimarasetti	1	-	1	3	4.5	1.5
Boddeda	1	-	1	2	3.5	1.7
Konatala 1	1	-	1	7	8.2	1.1

As might be expected, the greatest number of men who act as elders (28 out of 37 men, 75%) come from the three prominent classes, Saragadam, Rapeti, and Malla. However, the Saragadam clan and its sub-clans make a remarkably weak showing. This appears to be explained in terms of data on the sub-clan level where, for Saragadam, the factors of size and factors of individual (average) family wealth do not coincide to the degree that they do for Rapeti

and Malla. Saragadam sub-clans might excel in one of the two factors but not in both together. Saragadam 1 is very populous but poor in average landholdings per household (see Table III-21). Saragadam 3 is wealthy but rather small in size. Saragadam 2 is not particularly large, nor does it have outstanding wealth.

In the data, Rapeti clan members appear disproportionately more active as elders than Mallas. The data are somewhat biased in that they are based on occasions personally observed in Yatapalem. Since numerous important Malla families live in Mallolla Pakalu, activities of their members are less likely to be observed than Rapeti clan members who live exclusively in Yatapalem. Nevertheless, distance of residence does not seem to have been a deterrent to two of the four Mallas who resided in Mallolla Pakalu and who appear in the list of elders who participated on more than five of the twenty-eight occasions observed.

In the second table we can observe a number of other interesting features:

Table III-33.

A list of fifteen most constantly participating elders

(who participated 5 or more times out of 28 observed instances):

Clan (and Sub-Clan)	No. of individs. appearing more than five times	Personal name	No. of personal appearances	Public Office	Whether Personal factory ownership share- of wet holder land
Rapeti 1 (Cinna Rapetollu)	7	Ramu Naidu	19	Vice-Pres.	+ 3.0 acres
		Sannayya Satyam	9	-	+ 5.0
		Somunaidu Satyam	8	Bank coop	- 2.0
		Cinna Babulu	8	V.L.W.	+ 4.5
		Demudu	7	Headman	- 2.5
		Appala Naidu	7	Temp. Headman	+ 2.0
Malla (Pedda Mallollu)	4	Venkatramayya	9	Pres. Father	+ *(7.3 joint)
		Pedda Ramu Naidu	8	(head of wealthiest family)	+ *(12.0 joint)
		Sri Ramulu	5	Teacher	+ 2.5
		Jogi Naidu	5	Panch Pres.	+ 1.0
Saragadam 2	1	Appala Naidu	11	-	- *(5.1 joint)
Saragadam 1	1	Durgu Naidu	6	-	+ 2.0
Kalla 1	1	Appanna	9	-	- *(2.5 joint)
Dadi 1	1	Appala Naidu	6	-	- -

(*Land ownership figures which are marked 'joint' indicate that the man is the head of a family, in which his land has been parcelled out to his sons officially, but over which he exercises control.)

The village Panchayat Vice-President, Rapeti Ramu Naidu, participated far more consistently as an elder than anyone else (19 occasions). By contrast, the village Panchayat President, Malla Jogi Naidu (5) and the village Headman, Rapeti Demudu (7) were far less active in this role. This had very much to do with the hierarchical factor of age. Both the Panchayat President and the Headman were in their twenties, far younger than the average elder of 45-60 years old. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the Panchayat President's father, Venkatramayya, was more active (9) than the President himself. The activity of Saragadam Appala Naidu(11) stands out. Not only is he one of the oldest of the elders, but he is the head of a large joint family of seven adult sons. In addition to being in a somewhat special position as a descendent of founders of the settlement, having certain ritual prerogatives which will be discussed later, he takes a particularly keen interest in public affairs.

The second list of elders who participated most recurrently reveals various other attributes of elders. 60% (9 out of 15) are shareowners in the cooperative sugar factory (at Govada near Chodavaram) confirming that they are frequently the wealthiest farmers in the village. 6 out of 15 hold political office or are somehow connected to the government. One is an aspiring politician, though so far unsuccessful. Another two are heads of large land-owning families. In fact, only two out of the 15 do not exhibit one or a combination of these attributes: factory shareholder, political or government office holder, elderly head of a large family. The two cases which do not fall in these categories are as follows.

Kalla Appanna seems to be accorded respect because of his age and his religiosity. He has constructed an āsram out in his fields and invited sadhus to stay there on occasions. Dadi Appala Naidu also has some prominence in religious spheres. He was a song leader in religious singing sessions, bhajana, and leads the young men in folk dances at the various festivals. On the whole, however, we see that men who assert themselves as village elders have distinct advantages of wealth and power over their fellows.

b. Competition for formal political offices

All of the important political offices in Aripaka Revenue Village are held by Gavaras. This means that rivalry and competition for political posts reflect political alliances and competition within the Gavara caste. On the whole, we find a situation similar to that of informal political participation. Rapeti and Malla clansmen are prominent while the Saragadam clan are conspicuously inactive in the formal political life of the village. The hereditary post of Headman and the office of Panchayat Vice President are both in the hands of Rapeti men while the Panchayat President is a Malla. In this consideration of rivalry and competition in formal political leadership our main observations concern the influence of the state government. It has created the opportunities for such competition through its two bureaucratic structures, revenue collection (the headmanship), and decentralised community development (the panchayat).

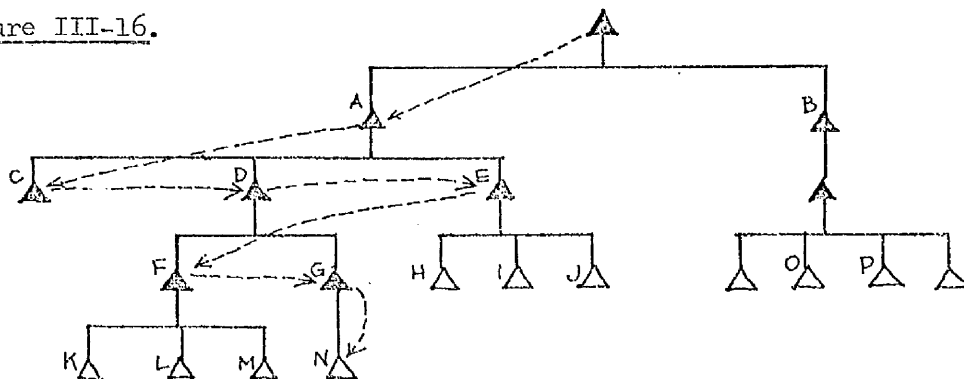
i. The office of Headman

The Headman, munsif or munasabu, is responsible for tax collection which he generally does from the platform of the village

temple accompanied by the Record Keeper, karnam, a Brahman of Aripaka who keeps all the village records of land ownership, annual tax assessments, and receipts. Farmers are summoned to the Headman by the Village Servant, bārki, a Mala Harijan of Aripaka who also runs other errands for the Headman. Births, deaths, and land transfers have to be registered at the Tahsildar's office in Anakapalli and require the Headman to constantly travel to Anakapalli. The government considers the Headman responsible for law and order in the village and with the help of the Record Keeper he must inform the police of any accidental deaths or suicides. The Village Servant is sent with any such reports to the Police Outpost in Subbavaram. The Headman is also responsible for curbing the sale of liquor by unlicensed vendors. In the past, the Headman was a powerful autocrat with an important say in a dispute arbitration, but this authority has been diffused with the introduction of the Panchayat bureaucracy, President and Vice President. Previously, succession to the headmanship was strictly hereditary, but now the government have further weakened the position of the Headman by making the succession to the headmanship dependent on a qualifying examination.

Let us look more closely at the recent path of hereditary succession to the headmanship in the Rapeti clan:

Figure III-16.



We note that the succession runs on lines of patrilineal descent and hierarchical principle which gives priority to age and goes to the next generation only after passing from elder to younger brother. (Not enough information is available on B to know why he did not inherit the headmanship from A. It is likely he died first.) It should be noted that the headmanship passed from E to F because F was older than E's son H. Similarly, G was also older than H. At an early stage of fieldwork G unexpectedly died. There followed an unsettled seven month period during which one Rapeti man, O, the brother of the Panchayat Vice President, P, served as temporary headman. The recommendation of the Record Keeper secured the selection of O. Among the reasons for O's being a good neutral choice was that he already held the position of Headman of a neighbouring Yata hamlet, Sirsipalli, and was familiar with the bureaucratic procedures required of him. He was safely out of the competition for the headmanship since he already held the position elsewhere and was not particularly ambitious.

It was generally accepted that the sons of F (i.e. K, L, M) had priority over N in terms of traditional hereditary succession. However, they were not interested in asserting these rights since all of them had received higher education and aspired to government or town jobs with greater prestige and pay than the post of Headman.

In former times the succession would have taken place fairly quickly and been confined to the Rapeti clan. Now there is the requirement that the candidate must pass a government examination (testing his ability to complete official forms and know all of his statutory duties). According to its egalitarian ideology the government permits anyone to compete for the examination. This

produced a situation in which six people were studying for the examination, only two of whom were Gavaras. N, the twenty-one year old son of G, had the advantage of the Record Keeper's favouring his appointment and received special instruction from him, which amounted to a sort of apprenticeship. Other competitors could be seen walking about the village trying to memorise exam answers from their printed exam guides.

The opportunity of competing in an exam brought out elements of competition which might otherwise have been suppressed. Very soon after the death of G, H expressed a desire to become village headman. (His reasons for aspiring to political power are discussed on p. 94 where he is referred to as "A".) In the end, he encouraged his son to sit for the examination, perhaps so as not to appear personally so ambitious, particularly since he stood little chance of success himself.

The competitors of other castes were a Velama of Aripaka, a Brahman of Aripaka, a Telukula bank employee in Anakapalli, and the illegitimate son of an Aripaka Brahman and his Gavara concubine. The net results of the government's throwing open the headmanship to universal competition was a direct contradiction to the previous structure of power which confined the post to a particular caste and clan, with succession along hierarchical lines of seniority. The government had introduced a situation of rivalry and competition which had not previously existed.

Though traditional principles of succession were under challenge, in the end they prevailed and N was confirmed as headman. In fact N failed the exam on the first try and was given a second opportunity to pass it. One might view this as a reconfirmation of the traditional

pattern of succession and claim that only lipservice was paid to the opportunity of achieving the post by merit. But these events have a more serious implication for the nature of the Headman's authority. Previously the Headman's authority was unquestionable. Now the Headman derives his power from the government whose re-confirmation he is required to seek. Even though N got his post in the end, it was demonstrated that five others could have taken his place. The general lowering of power and hence prestige of the post caused older candidates (K, L, M) not to compete for the post. This had the effect of further undermining the authority of the Headman since superior age became less of a factor to reinforce the authority of the post.

ii. The office of Panchayat President

We now examine the office of Panchayat President. With the introduction of the new panchayat system, the first president was a Malla clansman of Yatapalem. He was succeeded in the 1969 election by a 23 year old Malla of Mallolla Pakalu. The President's duties, aside from presiding over meetings of the elected village council, which meets infrequently, are connected with government sponsored economic development schemes. He has access to government funds which are allotted the panchayat for village improvement. In 1971 he had Rs. 3500 at his disposal to finance the construction of cement platforms for five village wells and a drain to keep monsoon rains from flooding certain village streets. There were also some 835 villagers who received government loans from the President. These loans were intended for fertilizer and improved seeds and were offered at low interest rates. The loans ranged from Rs. 50

to Rs. 55 with most around Rs. 50-100 and only a handful at Rs. 200 and 500. In addition to these economic benefits which he can dispense, the President has numerous political connections. He is friendly with the head of a committee of all the local village presidents and through him has potential access to the various district and state politicians with whom that politician has ties. These include a former local candidate for the State Legislative Assembly who was elected and appointed State Minister for Education. This tempting army of economic and political influence undoubtedly challenges the previously autocratic power of the traditional Headman.

We have already noted how the government opened the way for competition over the post of Headman. The introduction of the new panchayat system had the same effect. In fact, there is even more scope for competition and rivalry since the officers are elected and there is no previous tradition of hereditary succession. In the last panchayat elections there was a contest in one Yatapalem ward between two Rapeti clansmen (I and P in Figure III-16). P had far more kinsmen and friends to support him and was consequently the winner. There was also some controversy when the nine elected ward representatives voted to select a president from amongst themselves. Rapetis, led by the influence of I, at first opposed the selection of a Malla of Mallolla Pakalu. But the threat of a Raju-Velama alliance finally caused the Gavaras to close ranks and support the Malla candidate. A Rapeti, P, eventually came to be the Panchayat Vice President.

These rivalries seem to be expressions of the differences in clan and sub-clan wealth discussed earlier. Since the strong Rapeti

clan are firmly in control of the Headmanship, the increasingly wealthy Malla made a bid to assert themselves through this new political post. By contrast, Saragadam clansmen are notably inactive in formal politics, with the sole exception of one assertive man in Yatapalem, Saragadam Appala Naidu, who was the second most frequently participating elder in dispute-settlement sessions.

Comment should be made here on the general discontent of the people of Yatapalem with the men who serve as their Headman and Panchayat President. The reason for this has its origin in the intrusive nature of government influence on the village scene. The villagers' idea of a political leader is based on the role of the dispute solving elders. However, the government system of leadership, with its egalitarian ideology and elections, ignores the factor of age. Since the Headman and Panchayat President are in their early twenties, they are in positions of power but lack the hierarchically based traditional authority which derives from age. This causes the villagers to feel that they are not properly fulfilling their responsibilities as leaders who are synonymous in their minds with elders, peddalu. On their part, the Headman and Panchayat President look to the town society and government bureaucratic elite as their models for behaviour, partly as a way of rationalising their inadequacies in village terms. Some of the tensions created by the problem of official authority vested in members of the younger generation surfaced in a controversy over the conduct of the Gairamma Festival to be discussed later.

Chapter IVACTUAL BEHAVIOUR BETWEEN CASTES: RIVALRY AND INDETERMINACY

A. To what extent do castes really maintain hierarchical differences between themselves?

1. Discrepancies in status claims

In the chapter describing the ideology of caste hierarchy we noted that, from the point of view of each caste, all other castes are categorised relative to it as superior, inferior, or equal. We also noted the varna ideology with its notion that caste categories are ranked in a linear or ladder-like fashion. The inference is that all the castes of a particular locality are ranked in hierarchical order. However, when one plots the view that a caste has of itself in the hierarchy against the views other castes have of it one is confronted with evidence of a host of conflicting claims. These discrepancies extend to the level of actual interaction and are not confined merely to opinions.

selves higher the
space is filled in

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	RAJU																
2	RAJY																
3	KOMATI																
4	KAMSALI																
5	JANGAM																
6	GAVARA																
7	KAPU																
8	PERRA KAPU																
9	VELAMA																
10	TELUKULA																
11	SALI																
12	VADRAM																
13	MANGALI																
14	CAKALI																
15	YATA																
16	MALA																
17	MADIGA																

Reading down is caste's own opinion of self and statements of refusing other castes' food.

Reading across gives views of other castes towards one particular caste.

e.g. Reading down we see that Kamsalis say they are higher than all other castes (i.e. all other castes are lower than them) but reading across we see that only one Harijan caste accepts its food and only four of the lowest castes agree that Kamsalis are superior to them.

Note: also (1) the Komati case, (2) inconsistencies between considering selves higher, but accepting food or (3) of refusing food but conceding to be lower.

- = equal to
- X conflicting opinions
- ? information not known

Table IV-2.

TABLE ILLUSTRATING DISCREPANCIES IN CASTE STATUS CLAIMS

each caste's own view of itself (a) is contrasted
with other castes' views of it (b)

[illegible]

Table IV-3.Commentary on Tables Illustrating Aspects of Caste Ranking

<u>Brahmans</u>	Landowners, bureaucrats a. They consider themselves superior to all other castes and refuse to accept food from them. b. All castes except Kamsalis accept this view and admit Brahmins' superiority.
<u>Rajus</u>	Landlords (kshatriya) a. They consider themselves superior to all castes except the Brahmins. b. Kamsalis claim not to accept Raju superiority and refuse food from Rajus. Komatis accept Raju superiority but refuse to accept food from Rajus (since Komatis are vegetarian and Rajus are not).
<u>Komatis</u>	Shopkeepers (vaisya) a. Komatis refuse food from all but Brahmins though they acknowledge the superiority of Brahmins and Rajus. b. The position of the Komatis is rather controversial. It is not surprising that Brahmins and Rajus refuse to accept food from Komatis since the Komatis themselves accept that interpretation of their position. The Kamsali position is consistent with its approach to all other castes and therefore not surprising. However, the picture for Shudra and Harijan castes is unexpected. There is evidence of controversy in accepting the superiority of the Komatis. Jangams, Pedda Kapus, Yatas, Malas, Madigas and some Salis said they are against accepting food from Komatis, though not all of them deny Komati superiority (Jangams, Kapus, Velamas, some Salis, Vadrams, Mangalis, Cakalis, Malas and Madigas concede Komati superiority while some Gavaras, Pedda Kapus, Telukulas and some Salis do not. Yatas claim that the Komatis are no higher than being their equals). It is striking that the Madigas refuse food from Komatis when they are the only caste which would even consider accepting food from Kamsalis.
<u>Kamsalis</u>	Carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths a. Kamsalis take the view that they are the original and true Brahmins and like the Brahmins they refuse to accept food from any other caste. They refuse to concede to any caste having a superior status to themselves. b. The Kamsalis' claims to highest status are not supported by reciprocal acknowledgement on the part of any but the lowest castes. Only Cakalis, Malas, and Madigas concede the Kamsalis superior status (the Yatas say that the Kamsalis are at best their equals). Only Madigas might think of accepting food from Kamsalis.
<u>Jangams</u>	Tailors, pujaris a. The Jangams consider themselves to be higher than all but the three twice-born castes (Brahmins, Rajus, and

Komatis). Though they say they would accept food from only Brahmins and Rajus. Their refusal of food from Komatis seems to be part of a widespread boycotting of Komatis by many castes and reflects an historical controversy over the rights Komatis have to the position they now are generally conceded to occupy.

- b. Numerous castes to whom Jangams claim superiority do not reciprocate by their views or behaviour. Kamsalis and Kapus neither accept food from Jangams nor believe them to be superior. Gavaras, Pedda Kapus and some Velamas would accept food from Jangams though they would not concede Jangams' claims of superiority to them. Telukulas and Salis said the Jangams were neither higher nor lower than themselves hence equal (and therefore they might publicly accept food from Jangams without having to concede superiority to them.) The remainder of castes accept Jangam superiority.

Gavaras

Farmers

- a. Gavaras unequivocally accept only two castes to be superior to themselves, the Brahmins and Rajus. There are conflicting opinions about the Komatis' superiority although Gavaras say they would accept food from Komatis. The Kamsalis are considered similar to other lower castes who are inferior and whose food is unacceptable. They said they would accept food from Jangams though they said that Jangams are inferior. Fellow farmer caste Kapus are considered by Gavaras to be inferior in status though there is evidence of some conflicting opinions on this matter in as much as some Gavaras accept food prepared by Kapus. Similarly, Pedda Kapus and Velamas are said to be equals by Gavaras though Gavaras say they would accept food only from Velamas but not Pedda Kapus.
- b. Gavaras are considered to be inferior and their food unacceptable to Brahmins, Rajus, Komatis, Kamsalis, and Jangams. Kapus, Pedda Kapus, and Velamas feel the Gavaras to be their status equals and all three say that on that basis they would accept food from Gavaras. All the remaining castes concede Gavara superiority and say they would accept food prepared by Gavaras.

Kapus

Farmers

- a. Kapus concede superiority only to the three twice-born castes, Brahmins, Rajus, and Komatis. They consider the other three farmer castes of the village to be their equals and all the remaining castes to be inferior. They accept food from the Brahmins, Rajus, and Komatis and also from Gavaras and Velamas though they do not accept food from the Pedda Kapus. Nor do they accept food from any of the remaining castes.
- b. Kapus are considered inferior and their food refused by Brahmins, Rajus, Komatis, Kamsalis, Jangams, and

Velamas. Gavaras said Kapus were inferior to them though some would take food prepared by Kapus. While Pedda Kapus say Kapus are their equals, Pedda Kapus say they would not accept food prepared by Kapus. Telukulas say that Kapus are their equals and they would accept food from them. The remaining castes all concede superiority and say they would accept food prepared by Kapus.

Pedda Kapus

Farmers

- a. Pedda Kapus recognize the superiority of only two castes, the Brahmins and the Rajus. They consider the other three farmer castes (Gavara, Kapu, and Velama) to be their equals. They consider all the remaining castes to be inferior, and their food unacceptable. Food prepared by Gavaras and Velamas is acceptable to them though food prepared by Kapus is not (though they view all three to be their equals). Jangams are considered to be inferior though their food is acceptable.
- b. Pedda Kapus (of whom there are only two households in the village) are considered to be inferior by Brahmins, Rajus, Komatis, Kamsalis, and Jangams. All of those castes also refuse food prepared by Pedda Kapus. Pedda Kapus are considered to be equals by Gavaras, Kapus, and Telukulas (though Pedda Kapus said they are unequivocally superior to Telukulas). Gavaras and Kapus refuse Pedda Kapu food however. (Data concerning Velamas' views of Pedda Kapus are not available.) Those who say they would accept food from Pedda Kapus are Telukulas and all the remaining castes.

Velamas

Farmers

- a. Velamas say that only Brahmins, Rajus, and Komatis are superior to them while Gavaras are their equals. They accept food from all of these castes. (Data on Pedda Kapus are not available.) Some feel they would accept food from Jangams as well (though they considered Jangams to be inferior.) All the remaining castes are considered inferior and their food unacceptable.
- b. Except for a claim by Telukulas that they are equal to Velamas the picture of other castes' views of Velamas is the same as that for the Gavaras: Brahmins, Rajus, Komatis, Kamsalis, and Jangams consider them inferior and their food unacceptable. Gavaras and Kapus consider them as equals and accept their food. All the remaining castes consider them superior and accept their food. (Sali, Vadram, Mangali, Cakali, Yata, Mala, Madiga.)

Telukulas

Oil pressers

- a. Telukulas consider only three castes to be superior to them: Brahmins, Rajus, and Gavaras. Jangams, Kapus, Pedda Kapus, and Velamas are considered to be equals while the remainder of castes (including Komatis, Kamsalis, Sali, Vadram, Mangali, Cakali, Yata, Mala, and Madiga) are considered to be inferior. Their

willingness to accept food from other castes reveals a pattern that does not seem to coincide with their claims to superiority (if one takes willingness to accept food from another caste as an open admission of a non-superior position). Telukulas will accept food from all castes whom they say are superior to them, from those whom they say are equal to them, and also from the Komatis whom they say are inferior to them.

- b. Telukulas are considered inferior by nine castes (Brahmins, Rajus, Komatis, Kamsalis, Jangams, Gavaras, Kapus, Pedda Kapus, Velamas). Yatas claimed to be equals of the Telukula, while seven castes (Sali, Vadram, Mangali, Cakali, Yata, Mala, Madiga) consider the Telukulas to be superior to themselves. Only those castes who consider themselves inferior or equal to Telukulas say they would accept food from them, though there seems to be some difference of opinion whether the Vadrams would or not.

Sali

Landless labourers (formerly weavers)

- a. Salis say they are superior to seven castes whose food they claim they would refuse if offered. There are conflicting opinions on the Komatis whom some Salis would include with those seven castes to make eight. They say the Jangams are not their superiors but are equal to them and that they would accept food from Jangams. Salis concede to being inferior to seven castes (the largest number by self admission of the castes in the list so far discussed above): Brahmins, Rajus, Gavaras, Kapus, Pedda Kapus, Velamas, and Telukula.
- b. Salis are considered inferior by ten castes who also do not accept food from them (Brahmins, Rajus, Komatis, Kamsalis, Jangams, Gavaras, Pedda Kapus, Velamas, and Telukulas). In addition two castes consider Salis to be equal to them though they refuse to accept food from Salis (Vadrams, Yatas). Only four castes concede to being inferior to Salis (Mangalis, Cakalis, Malas, and Madigas).

Vadram

Landless labourers, village goddess pujari

- a. Vadrams (of whom there is only one household in Yatapalem) claim to being superior to only six castes in the village (Kamsalis, Mangalis, Cakalis, Yatas, Malas, and Madigas) whose food they say they would reject if they were offered it. They claim to be equal to Salis though they refuse Sali food. There is some uncertainty whether they would accept food from Telukulas whom they admit to be superior to themselves.
- b. Only the two Harijan castes of Malas and Madigas say they would accept the superior position of Vadrams or accept their food. Mangalis, Cakalis, and Yatas say the Vadrams are equal in status to themselves but that they would not accept food from Vadrams.

Mangalis

Barbers

- a. Mangalis claim to be superior to Kamsalis, Cakalis, Yatas, Malas and Madigas, saying they would reject food from those castes. They also said they would reject food from Vadrans though they say they are of equal status. Mangalis thus admit inferiority to ten of the sixteen castes in the village beside themselves. They say they would be willing to accept food from any of those ten.
- b. Only Malas and Madigas would say that Mangalis were superior to them and would be willing to accept food from them. Yatas and Cakalis claim to be equals of the Mangalis though they would not be willing to accept food from them. The remaining twelve castes consider the Mangalis to be their inferiors.

Cakalis

Washermen

- a. Cakalis claim to be superior to only the Malas and the Madigas. They say they are equal to Vadrans, Mangalis, and Yatas. Cakalis are unwilling to accept food from any of the preceding castes. Cakalis also say they would refuse to accept food from Kamsalis though they do not assert they are superior to Kamsalis.
- b. Only Malas and Madigas say that Cakalis are superior to them. Yatas say they are equal though they would not accept food from them. All other castes consider Cakalis to be inferior to them and say they would refuse food prepared by them.

Yatas

(Settigollu) labourers, country liquor sellers (former toddy tappers)

- a. Yatas claim superiority only to Malas and Madigas. They claim they are equal to a large number of castes whose food they say they would refuse (with the exception of the Telukulas whose food they would accept): Komatis, Kamsalis, Telukulas, Salis, Vadrans, Mangalis, and Cakalis. They concede their inferiority to the two Twice-Born castes of Brahmins and Rajus, to their "gurus", the Jangams, and to the four farmer castes of the village, Gavaras, Kapus, Pedda Kapus, and Velamas.
- b. Only Malas and Madigas consider Yatas superior to them and would accept food from them. Cakalis say they are equals but would not accept food from them. All the other castes in the village consider Yatas to be their inferiors.

Malas

Landless labourers, "Harijans"

- a. The only caste to which Malas claim to be superior are the Madigas though even here there are some dissenting opinions that say that the Madigas are equals. Nevertheless, there are three castes from whom they say they would not accept food: Komatis, Kamsalis, and Madigas.
- b. No castes in the village consider Malas superior to them and no castes would accept food from them.

Madigas

Landless labourers, "Harijans"

- a. Madigas claim to be superior only to Malas and say they would not accept food from Malas or Komatis.
- b. No castes in the village consider Madigas superior to them (though there were certain Malas who feel that Madigas might be their equals in status) and no castes would accept food from them.

The above tables are based on a questionnaire survey in which members of each of the village's castes were interviewed. People were asked whether their caste considered itself higher (yekkuva) or lower (takkuva) than each of the other castes in the village. Then they were asked whether they would accept food from those castes, were it to be offered. (The type of food specified was a meal with cooked rice, annam). These two questions are plotted in the first table. The second table compares castes' views of themselves with others' views of them, plotted in adjacent columns for comparison.

The tables are based on opinions rather than actually observed behaviour. Many hypothetical situations of food exchange simply never arise in normal circumstances. Hence, responses to certain questions were necessarily improvised. (Circumstances in which food is offered between castes usually centre around weddings and funerals though there are also instances of charitable "feedings of the poor", santarpnam). There are also individual variations in leniency of interpretation of traditional customs which are relaxing to a certain extent on an informal level.

The hypothetical character of the tables may seem to be a drawback but it is a strength. This is because the tables highlight the extensive degree to which there are discrepancies between castes' views of themselves and other castes' views of them. In fact there is not a single case in which statements made by a caste about itself wholly coincide with others' views and practices towards it. This tendency for castes to exaggerate claims about their own position points up the dynamic element in caste interrelations.

Far from being a system of static hierarchical ranking, it is a field of competitive conflicts and claims. All of the castes operate on the basis of hierarchical model but they do so competitively, trying to assert themselves in a higher position than others are usually willing to concede.

Let us examine some of the patterns which are discernible in the discrepancies of conflicting claims of status. First there are the cases of unreciprocated claims, e.g. where Kamsalis and Komatis claim to be of high status (and reject most other castes' food) but other castes do not acknowledge these claims by accepting their food. When a caste cannot get another caste to accept their food then its status remains controversial and contested. There was evidence that gradually, if their other attributes are "high" enough (diet and customs, economic and political influence) certain castes begin to concede their superiority, though perhaps while still rejecting their food. Examples of this are, 1. the Cakalis, Malas, and Madigas' attitudes towards the Kamsalis and, 2. the Jangams and Madigas' attitudes towards the Komatis. On the whole, the Komatis' claims are more widely substantiated than the claims Kamsalis make about themselves (Kamsalis claim to be higher than Brahmins). Nevertheless, the Komatis' claims are considerably contested.

Another series of discrepancies arises where castes claim to be equal (samānam) to other castes, rather than concede undisputed inferiority or superiority. Most credence to the existence of a kind of equality can be given to cases of castes who both say each other is equal and both accept each other's food (e.g. Gavara-Velama, Gavara-Kapu). However, in cases where one caste claims to be equal to another and the other refuses its food, then we must dismiss this as a unilateral

bid for higher status. Such is the case of the Telukulas who claim equality with the farmers. There is no reasonable case for Telukulas to claim to be higher than the farmers, e.g. based on evidence of food transaction patterns or customs, but they can claim equality rather than concede to being inferior. Cases in which two castes claimed to be equal to each other but rejected each other's food seem to be castes who are so close in status that neither concedes superiority to the other. This type of rivalry between castes of equal status is seen in the relations of Cakalis with Mangalis as well as Malas with Madigas.

Further examination of the first table (IV-1)) reveals two clusters of equality claims. These coincide with the two dietary divisions within the Shudras, those who will not eat domestic pig and those who will. Within each of these divisions there is the greatest overlapping in statuses and thus the least clarity in hierarchical statuses and hence the greatest possibility for competition and attempts to manipulate the system through unilateral claims of equality or superiority.

2. Dynamic pressures: coercion and collusion

We see from the above evidence that, in effect, each caste has its own view of its place among all other castes. In a sense it can be said that there are as many ideas of caste hierarchy as there are castes. But what is it in the end that more or less integrates the castes with each other? Aside from sharing a common ideology induced by ritual symbolism, that society is ideally hierarchically structured (discussed later in more detail), all the castes participate in a combination of coercion and collusion. Castes constantly

see themselves as protecting themselves from the groups below them, who would, if given the opportunity, force their way into a position of equality or superiority. They guard themselves from castes below them by restricting their interaction with them, such as in food exchanges, and, if possible, by dominating them economically and politically. At the same time they are often busy exerting pressure on those above them, as we have seen in the pattern of claims to higher status. The castes, rather than resting statically one on top of the other are constantly exerting pressure against one another.

In addition, we should note the role of collusion in the form of "impression management". While castes view themselves with notions of greater superiority than there is evidence for in actual inter-caste transactions, they rationalise the actual situation as a collusion with their superiors. By publicly conceding the superiority of "higher castes", which they privately question among themselves, they feel there are advantages to be gained. (Similar strategies were noted in the dealings of women with men.) Komatis tell each other that Yatas are an inferior species of being (jāti = caste, species), while the Yatas secretly gossip about the instances when vegetarian Komatis cheated and ate meat. The Yatas say to themselves, "the Komatis are men just like us, but we will go along with their pretensions since we do not have enough power to alter our 'official' position with respect to them". At the same time, the Yatas look upon the Harijans in much the same aloof superior way as Komatis look upon Yatas. But since they all uphold the "public definition" of their interrelations, the system continues to operate. The cornerstone of this collusion is the expression of respect in symbolic forms of deference. Later we discuss how these symbolic forms become

moral values through involvement in ritual symbolism.

It is interesting to note the way in which the anomalous Kamsalis fit into the picture. This caste which has refused to collude with the others suffers from collective partial-ostracism by the other castes of the village who have denied them conventional acknowledgment of the status they claim (e.g., only three castes accept their food). Nevertheless, the Kamsalis have a working relationship with the villagers who accord them de facto mid-Shudra status in most aspects of everyday life and behaviour. Kamsalis owe this to the relatively high status of their customs (diet, treatment of women, performance of upanāyanam sacred thread ceremony) and to the crucially important part they play in the economic life of the farmer castes of the village (as the fabricators and repairers of agricultural implements, carts, utensils, etc.). The hierarchical position of the Kamsalis is remarkably anomalous despite the fact that the anomaly is created by the application of hierarchical principles.

3. Laxness in enforcement of customs

We have now looked at the problems in the categories of caste ranking. Before proceeding to examine economic relations between castes we must note some further discrepancies in the customs of caste hierarchy. The first relates to inroads which the State-inspired ideology of egalitarianism has made on restrictions on interaction with Harijans and restrictions on caste interdining. The second is the issue of informal caste mixing in various contexts.

The relaxation of restrictions on Harijans is attributed by the villagers to the influence of a former headman who was in fact only

enforcing the new legislation of post-independence India. Villagers recall that he forced the village barbers to begin serving Harijans, for the first time. Around 1961 segregation of Harijan children in the village school was stopped. Nowadays Harijan fieldhands enter the homes of Gavara farmers (though there was a difference of opinion as to whether they would be allowed into the inner room with its deity and ancestor shrine, the dēvuḍu mūla). This was not previously permitted.

Restrictions on caste interdining are being eroded under the influence of town standards in which caste interdining prohibitions have been widely abandoned or compromised. Interdining with friends of other castes is sometimes dismissed as merely being 'sociable' (sosaiti-gā, from the English word 'society'). In Yatapalem, Yatas and Telukulas run liquor shops where Gavaras drink from the glasses used also by Yatas and other Shudra castes. A Sali family run a roadside tea and snack stall where Gavaras eat and drink. In Aripaka, Gavaras run several tea stalls where Rajus and Komatis take tea and most other castes accept cooked snacks. In Yatapalem, certain Gavara families take water from a well used mainly by Harijans because it is more conveniently located to their houses. During an interview about Brahman dietary and food exchange customs the son of the Brahman Record Keeper in Aripaka alluded to the meat-eating fad of Brahmans in towns. To his father's reply of "no, we don't eat meat", he added an aside "at least not out in the open".

In numerous contexts castes informally mix without enforcing customs of caste separation. Caste distinctions between Shudras and Harijans seem weak in most work situations. Malas, Gavaras, Jangams, and Yatas all work congenially side by side. An outsider can have

little idea of their relative caste statuses by observing them at work. Harijans rarely use special forms of respect or distance when addressing Gavara farmers. Contexts of play and entertainment are occasions when castes can be seen mixing freely, though admittedly there seems to be a tendency for castes of fairly similar status to associate more frequently. Young Cakali, Mangali, and Yata children frequently play games together and might also occasionally be joined by a Jangam but rarely by a Gavara. Other times when castes participate with each other indiscriminately are cinema-going, palmyra fruit-gathering, and cockfights. There is a tendency for free interaction to be most informal among castes in the same dietary category. In sum, castes are not as rigidly separated from each other in daily life as might be the impression from the complex system of hierarchy. There is a strong emphasis on interdependence and intercaste cooperation of neighbours which links the castes to one another.

3. Intercaste adultery and concubinage

While considering inter-caste fraternization we should not omit cases of sexual liaisons between castes in the village. The data are informative despite being fragmentary and second-hand. Of twenty known cases, four have already terminated, while sixteen are alleged to be ongoing affairs. Eight of the twenty cases are entirely within the Gavara caste, i.e. both the man and woman involved are Gavaras. (Status of the Gavara women involved in covert affairs with Gavara men: unmarried - 1, divorced - 1, widow - 2, married - 5). As will be seen from the chart below, in only two of the twelve covert affairs between members of different castes is

the caste status of the female partner clearly higher than that of the male (Gavara male + Brahman female, Komati male + Brahman female).

Table IV-4.

Covert sexual liaisons (data based on unsubstantiated rumours)

Caste of male partner	Caste of female partner	Number of such cases
Raju	Gavara	1
Raju	Velama.	1
Komati	Brahman	1
Gavara	Gavara	8
Gavara	Brahman	1
Gavara	Velama	1
Gavara	Jangam	2
Gavara	Sali	1
Gavara	Yata	1
Gavara	Cakali	1
Gavara	Mangali	1
Velama	Gavara	1
Kapu	Gavara	1
		21

Thus, while there is crossing of boundaries between members of different castes (10 cases of clear hierarchy difference, 3 cases of more or less similar status castes, i.e. Gavara, Velama, Kapu, 8 cases entirely within Gavaras) the sexual hierarchy is maintained, though not by the criterion of age (as in marriage) but rather by caste status. Of the two exceptions, the first is a case of a Gavara man

said to have had an affair with a Brahman from outside the village. A description of this liaison was accompanied by assertions that such sexual contacts (with the women of higher caste) caused the deterioration of the man's health and were therefore undesirable.

The second case resulted in the suicide of the Komati man's wife.

There were two cases of inter-caste sexual liaisons having produced children. The first case, it must be stressed, is based only on hearsay evidence, was the product of a Raju-Velama liaison. Supposedly a Gavara man in the village had offered his daughter as a wife for the Raju's mixed caste son. This offer was not taken up and nothing is currently known of the whereabouts of the child.

A more substantiated case of an inter-caste couple having children is a family which resides on the roadside just near Ari-paka. This is a Brahman man who is openly living with a Gavara woman who had been originally married to a man in Yatapalem. This Brahman-Gavara couple have three sons and they live together as a family unit working on the Brahman man's land. (One of his sons was previously mentioned as a competitor for the Headmanship examination.) It appears that his secure economic position has helped to insulate him from censure by his caste fellows. He rationalises his status being unharmed by saying that he does not eat meals prepared by his Gavara concubine, uncukonna manisi 'kept person', but his fellow Brahmans are hardly pleased with the situation. While the village Gavaras say they would not marry this couple's sons, they reacted with tolerance when one of them married a Gavara girl from a distant village. The bride's family were said to have had a more tolerant attitude because they had lived in Malaysia many years as migrant labourers. But though this mixed caste couple is tolerated there

are numerous rumours about the Brahman man's powers of witchcraft, silengi (a story is told of his having poisoned a bundle of food by his mere glance). Such beliefs cause many people to avoid him. Certain Rajus in Aripaka were said to be bitter enemies of his. At the same time he is mentioned by Shudras as giving them good advice on dealing with legal and bureaucratic matters in towns.

Among the Kamsalis of the village there is a case of ostracism of a man who had taken a Velama concubine. Other Kamsalis of the village say they will neither enter into marriage with his children nor those of his brothers, nor will they attend their household and life cycle ceremonies. It is said that these families will have to marry strangers from far away who do not know of their excommunication. During the fieldwork period a death occurred in the semi-ostracised Kamsali family in Yatapalem. The other Kamsalis of the neighbourhood seemed to freely participate in the funeral preparations and procession.

The death of the young woman was attributed to possession by a malevolent spirit, dayam. After it began to haunt her she hardly ate. One night she fell into a well while sleepwalking under its influence. She survived the fall but eventually did die of shock and exhaustion. Whether or not this incident is linked to the family's semi-ostracised social position is not readily apparent (I say 'semi-' since people freely spoke to them and associated with them in everyday contexts). It seemed to have more connection with the erratic behaviour of her husband who rarely stayed at home. An important additional fact is that her father, the brother of the man who had originally incurred censure, is known in the village and surrounding area as having been a skilled specialist in dealing with cases of possession. On numerous

occasions he was called upon to drive dayams out of the bodies of their victims or get them to identify themselves and air their grievances.

In this material on intercaste liaisons we note that negations of hierarchy or even violations of caste boundaries are associated with supernatural sanctions or powers: the illness of the Gavara man who had a liaison with a Brahman woman; the witchcraft powers attributed to the Brahman man living openly with his Gavara concubine and fathering children of ambiguous caste status; unusual abilities to deal with malevolent ghost attributed to a man associated with a similar case of blatantly open concubinage; the bizarre death of the latter's daughter, possessed by a ghost. By contrast, intercaste liaisons which remain covert seem to be tolerated, as long as they do not violate a hierarchical pattern (i.e. the male should be of superior caste status) or openly challenge the normative social structure.

B. To what extent do higher castes maintain economic dominance over lower castes?

We now turn to examine aspects of economics in intercaste relations. We find that ideally conceived structure of hierarchy and interdependent unity are not always consistently observable in reality. This is not to say that hierarchical patterns do not exist. Overwhelmingly they do. However, competitive, divisive, and contrasting tendencies are constantly present. In this section the principle aspects of economic relations on which we concentrate centre on, 1. Land, 2. Loans, and 3. Labour.

a. Landownership

Patterns of land ownership reveal that hierarchical patterns are substantially demonstrated. That is to say, superior castes control more land and wealth than inferior castes. On the other hand, we must note the apparent paradox that the Gavara farmers are far wealthier than the Twice-Born castes. This is mainly the result of wide-ranging changes since Indian Independence and is thus a fairly recent shift. The Gavaras are now no longer dependent upon the Twice-Born castes (in the 1930s and 1940s they were heavily in debt to the Komatis). However, since the Twice-Born castes have remained wealthy enough to maintain their economic independence and aloofness, the social hierarchy is not perceived to have been actually reversed. The highest castes still control the majority of the wealth-producing wet lands, though the wealth is now skewed in favour of the Gavaras. On their part, the Gavaras maintain "impression management", giving lip-service to Twice-Born superiority through the symbolic respect expressed in interdining patterns and greeting behaviour. For the most part Gavaras disregard or discount the importance of the Twice-Born castes whose numbers are few and who live removed in the smaller non-Gavara settlement of Aripaka. Gavaras then proceed to assume a dominant role in the village's affairs with respect to the other castes.

Table IV-5.

Comparison of castes' land holdings:

Caste	No. of households	Wet lands (acres)	Average of wet land per household
Brahman	8	11.5	1.4
Raju	10	30.4*	3.0
Komati	10	8.5	.8
Golla	1	-	-
Gavara	173	223.0	1.2
Kapu	23	18.7	.8
Pedda Kapu	2	.2	.1
Velama	29	37.7	1.3
Kamsali	12	3.7	.3
Jangam	4	-	-
Telukula	6	1.0	.1
Sali	4	-	-
Vadram	1	-	-
Mangali	7	.5	-
Cakali	10	2.8	.2
Yata	49	7.0	.1
Mala	28	2.8	.1
Madiga	12	.1	-

* The reader is also referred to the table I-6 on p. 39

From the above table it can be seen that the Twice-Born and farmer castes (Brahman, Rajus, Komati, Gavara, Kapu, Velama) control the majority of the wet lands. Of them, the Gavaras own 64% of

all wet lands and this holding is practically six times larger than the next largest caste holding. Though the Rajus are the richest in terms of average holdings per household, they are far outweighed by the size and extent of Gavara holdings. The Velamas emerge as a rather strong group with relatively large holdings though it will be recalled that they live rather dispersed (16 households in Aripaka, 12 in the rather peripheral satellite settlement of Nalamollu Kampalu, and one school teacher in Yatapalem). The Kapus are relatively poorer, having less net holdings and smaller average holdings per household. Komatis' wealth lies primarily in their shops rather than land, hence they make a relatively poor showing for a Twice-Born caste. Brahman holdings are not remarkably large and contrast with the Rajus who appear to be far better off.

Land appears to be a variable which is related to formal politics in the village (which will be discussed later at greater length). Rajus formed an alliance with Velamas in Aripaka which also apparently included the other Twice-Born castes and the Kapus. They did not, however, have sufficient strength to take power from the hands of the Gavaras. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that these castes were those who owned the largest amounts of wet land. The combined total for Brahmans, Rajus, Komatis, Kapus, and Velamas is 106 acres contrasted with the 223 of the Gavaras. That we must consider land to be a crucial element for political influence is further indicated by the fact that non-land owning castes wield little power, despite their large numbers. For instance, the combined population of Yatas, Malas, and Madigas alone is more than that of a Twice-Born, Velama, Kapu alliance.

In matters of land ownership, dynamic factors operate to keep lower castes in their inferior positions. Practically any caste, if given the chance, would prefer to be land owners. There are examples of the new economic opportunities outside the village having enabled certain Yatas and Malas to acquire land. (Note the dispute described on p. 68 which arose from the keen competition between two Mala families to acquire land.) But these new opportunities have in no way altered the overall hierarchical patterns. On the whole, the economic factors of poverty and dependence upon the Gavaras work to perpetuate the lower castes' inferior and subservient social statuses.

b. Tenancy and share-cropping (sistu)

Let us now turn to the issue of tenancy and share-cropping. Here one might possibly expect a hierarchical pattern of higher castes having considerable numbers of dependent lower caste tenants on their lands (paying half of the crop for the right to use the land.) There is evidence of this having been a fairly widespread phenomenon in the past when land ownership was predominantly in the hands of the Twice-Born castes who were averse to doing manual labour. In one of the neighbouring villages, Rayapuram Agraharam, there had been a large Brahman population which had originally received rights to income from the land of the village from the Maharaja of Vizianagaram as a charitable provision for their upkeep. After Indian Independence, government legislation turned tenancy land over to the tenants. In Rayapuram Agraharam this meant that the land of the Brahmans was turned over to the predominantly Golla tenants. The houses in the Brahman street now stand empty

and collapsing as all but a single eccentric old Brahman man have abandoned the village.

Aripaka Revenue Village did not have such extensive tenancy relationships in the past (the Rayapuram Agraharam case stands out because of the special status of Brahman Agraharam villages). In the present, tenancy relationships do not feature as a prominent form of economic relationship between castes. While Twice-Born and farmer castes do have tenancy arrangements, none is a major employer of another caste by this means.

Table IV-6.

Data on tenancy patterns:

Caste	Total of their landholdings		Amount of their land under tenancy		Number of tenants	Caste of tenants (no.)
	(wet)	(dry)	(wet)	(dry)		
Brahman	11.5	33.0	9.5	8.5	7	Gavara (2) Velama (2) Mala (3)
Raju	30.4	72.0	2.5	-	1	Gavara (1)
Komati	8.5	35.0	4.4	2.0	6	Velama (2) Kapu (2) Mala (2)
Kapu	18.7	25.7	3.5	3.5	3	Kapu (2) Velama (1)
Velama	37.7	53.7	1.0	1.0	3	Gavara (1) Velama (2)
Gavara	223.0	297.2	11.1	3.5	13	Gavara (13)
Sali	-	1.8	-	.3	1	Yata (1)
Mangali	0.5	6.0	-	.8	2	*Gavara (2)
Yata	6.0	47.4	.6	1.5	5	*Kapu (1) *Sali (1) Yata (1) Cakali (1) Mala (1)
Mala	2.8	3.5	.5	-	2	*Gavara (2)

Total of village land: 347.9 wet acres, 581.6 dry acres.

Total of land involved in tenancy arrangements: 52.1 wet acres,
28.1 dry acres.

Land on which tenants are same caste as landowners: 12.4 wet, 6.0 dry.

Land on which tenants are different caste from landowners: 39.7 wet, 22.1 dry

*Cases of potential hierarchy ambiguity, i.e. where a higher caste person is a tenant on land of a lower caste.

Table IV-7.

Data on 22 Gavaras who are tenants/share-croppers:

Number of plots	Castes from whom lands leased (and their village of residence)	Total acreage	
		(wet)	(dry)
29	Gavara (22) (Yatapalem-16) (Mal. Pakal- 2) (Outsiders- 2)	17.85	6.50
2	Kapu (2) (Aripaka)	1.00	-
1	Mangali (1) (Yatapalem)	-	.50
2	Mala (2) (Aripaka)	.50	-

(total amount of money involved was Rs. 6210)

Table IV-8.

Forms of payment for the above tenancy land:

(numbers indicate numbers of plots lessed on that basis of payment)

Lands leased from:

	<u>GAVARA</u>			<u>KAPU</u>			<u>MALA</u>			<u>MANGALI</u>	
	wet land	dry land		W	D		W	D		W	D
Half share of crop	3		$\frac{1}{2}$	2		$\frac{1}{2}$	2		$\frac{1}{2}$		1
For annual cash payment	19	7	£			£			£		

Out of the total of land cultivated in the village (347.9 acres of wet land, 581.6 acres dry) only 52.1 acres of wet and 28.1 acres of dry lands were involved in tenancy arrangements. If tenancy agreements between members of the same caste are discounted (note that Gavaras have tenancy relations predominantly among themselves --

see Table IV-6) the figures for land involved in inter-caste tenancy arrangements is a meagre 39.7 wet acres, 22.1 dry acres.

Nevertheless, examining the tenancy data we note six cases of inconsistencies with respect to the maintenance of hierarchical interrelations between castes:

Table IV-9.

Inconsistencies of hierarchy in tenancy arrangements:

Caste	(No. involved)	Are tenants of:	(no.)	on	Wet	Dry	(acres)
Gavara	2	Mala	2		.50	-	
Gavara	2	Mangali	2		-	.80	
Kapu	1	Yata	1		.30	-	
Sali	1	Yata	1		-	.50	

Most of these cases can be explained as arrangements of convenience which are of such small scale that they do not present any major challenge to the maintenance of the hierarchical relations between castes. But we are still forced to take note that hierarchical patterns are not absolute but rather "indeterminate at the edges" when closely examined.

2. Loans

a. Mortgaging of land

An interesting feature of tenancy arrangements leads us into an examination of loan patterns. In the figures for Gavaras who have tenancy/share-cropping arrangements we note that annual payments in cash overwhelmingly predominate over sharing of the crop (see Table IV-8). In tenancy, the landowner would seem to be

hierarchically superior partner in the arrangement, who received an income from it without putting in his own labour and while still holding title to it.

The village system of tanakhā loan-giving is another form of land and cash transaction between men of different castes. In a tanakhā arrangement, a person gives the use of his land into the hands of someone who gives him a cash loan. The loan has to be repaid (without cash interest) for the original owner to have the land back (often with a time limit). Thus, in contrast to the tenancy arrangement, the giver of the money is more likely to be in a superior position since land ownership is a more secure and desirable form of wealth than uninvested cash). Perhaps the fundamental contrast of tenancy and tanakhā is that tanakhā is one step towards selling (since it can lead, after time, to forfeiture of claims to the land and in the meantime is in de facto control of the money-giver) while tenancy land is more securely owned and of benefit to the titular land owner. The contrast of rates of annual tenancy rent and a tanakhā payment for the same type of land reflects these differences. While 1.5 acres of wet land typically yields an annual tenancy payment of Rs. 1000, .70 acre wet land yields a tanakhā loan of Rs. 4000.

In examining a survey of tanakhās given and received by all households of Aripaka Revenue Village we observe features which resemble patterns in tenancies. 1. There is an overall upholding of hierarchical patterns in inter-caste cases (i.e. people tend to place their land with superior or equal castes in return for loans). However, similar to the tenancy data, tanakhās are predominantly arranged between fellow castemen, especially in the case of Gavaras.

2. On the other hand there are some notable exceptions to the pattern of maintaining hierarchy (e.g. Harijans taking wet lands from Gavaras or Rajus and giving them cash in return for it). While these exceptions are hardly numerous enough to violate the overall maintenance of hierarchy they are evidence of inroads by the new money economy.

Table IV-10.

Tanakha (mortgage) loan-givers: (those who took land and gave money in return)

Caste	Lands they received (wet)	(dry)	Money they paid	Castes they loaned money to	No. of indivi- duals	Village of origin of loan- receivers
Brahman Raju	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Komati	.80	-	1100	Yata Kapu	1 1	Nb A
Kapu	1.00	-	2500	*Raju Kapu	2 1	A A
Velama	2.56	-	12400	*Komati Velama Kapu Gavara	1 2 2 4	O N A Y-3, M-1
Gavara	18.68	4.22	67965	*Brahman *Raju *Komati Velama Kapu Telukula Cakali Yata Gavaras	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 4 49	A A A A A Y Y K Y-45, A-1, M-1, O-2
Pedda Kapu	.20	-	n.a	Jangam	1	Y
Yata	.85	.10	n.a.	*Gavara Yata	4 4	Y-3, M-1, Y-2, K-1, Nb-1
Mala	2.00	-	7100	*Gavara	3	Y
Madiga	.15	-	600	"Gavara	1	Y

*cases of hierarchy violation or ambiguity (i.e. lower castes who loaned money to higher castes).

Abbreviations: A = Aripaka, Y = Yatapalem, M = Mallolla Pakalu, K = Kottapalem, Nb = neighbouring villages, O = other more distant villages, n.a. = information not available.

Position of Gavaras: 45 Gavara donors of loans, 60 recipients.

Table IV-11.

Tanakhā (mortgage) loan-receivers: (those who gave land and received loan money)

Caste	Lands they gave		Amount they received (Rs.)	Castes who loaned them money	No. of individuals	Village of the loan-givers
	(wet)	(dry)				
Brahman	1.16	-	1300	*Gavara	2	Y-1, M-1
Raju	4.02	-	10300	*Gavara *Velama *Kapu *Yata *Mala	2 3 3 1 1	A A-2, N-1 A Nb A
Komati	-	3.00	1100	*Velama	2	A
Kapu	1.90	-	6600	Komati Velama Kapu *Yata	1 3 1 1	A A-2, N-1 A Nb
Velama	1.30	-	2000	Brahman	2	O
Gavara	23.94	4.12	97030	Gavara Velama *Telukula *Kamsali *Yata *Mala *Madiga	49 2 1 1 3 5 2	Y-44, M-3, Nb-1 O-1 A Y A K-2, Nb-1 Y-4, A-1 Y
Kamsali	.20	1.00	n.a.	*Yata Gavara	1 2	n.a. Nb-1, O-1
Telakula	.80	-	n.a.	Gavara	2	Y
Jangam	1.00	-	n.a.	Pedda Kapu Gavara *Yata	2 2 1	Y Y Y
Cakali	.30 ⁴	.40 ⁴	n.a.	Gavara Cakali Yata	2 1 1	Y Y K
Mangali	.10	-	n.a.	Gavara	1	Y

(continued on next page)

Table IV-11 (continued)

Caste	Lands they gave (wet) (dry)		Amount they received (Rs.)	Castes who loaned them money	No. of indivi- duals	Village of the loan- givers
Yata	1.00 ⁴	-	n.a.	Gavara Kamsali Yata	2 1 1	M-1, Y-1 A K
Mala	.55	-	n.a.	Raju Gavara	1 1	A Y
Madiga	-	2.30	n.a.	Gavara Madiga	5 1	Y O

* Cases of hierarchy violation or ambiguity (i.e. higher castes who accept loans from lower castes)

Abbreviations: same as on previous chart.

⁴ data incomplete and fragmentary

Position of Gavaras: 54 Gavaras received 63 tanakha loans from other persons (loans from banks etc. not included), 19 of Gavara loans were to the same clan or a known relative (figures could be even higher); 7 loans were from Harijans.

Looking at the preceding tables we note that the Twice-Born castes tend to be receivers of tanakha loans rather than donors. This reflects their current state of economic weakness and continuing loss of ground to the farmer castes.

Another striking pattern is the cases of money being loaned by Harijans to Gavaras and Rajus.

Table IV-12.

Harijan loans to Gavaras:

Loan to Clan-name of Gavara house- hold	Land taken in return (wet) acres	Amount of loan: Rs.	Loan given by:	
			Caste	Village
Rapeti (P)	.40	2000	Mala	A
Saragadam 2	.70	4500	Mala	Y
Alla	.10	1000	Mala	Y
Adari	.12	600	Mala	Y
Adari	.40	1500	Mala	Y
Adari	.07	500	Madiga	Y
Adari	.13	600	Madiga	Y

7 recipients 1.92 10700 5 donors

Harijan loan to Raju:

.40	1200	Mala	A
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On the whole the Harijans are not major donors of money and are so low in status that even being in the position of loan-giver does not render them in a superior social position. However, it cannot be denied that it gives them a certain leverage. The fact that this is happening was evidenced by an incident in which the son of a

Mala of Yatapalem freely sat on a chair in the antechamber serving as the village post office in an important Raju's house in Aripaka. Ordinary Gavara farmers would only enter there with a certain trepidation and certainly would not be so bold as to sit on a chair as if equal to a Raju (though Gavara officers of the village would have had no compunctions about doing so). The reason for warm welcomes of this Mala man by the Raju was that he worked in the merchant marine earning high pay and frequently went abroad. The Raju was interested in having him buy him an elaborate short wave transistor radio. Traditional caste status distance was waived, ironically in a quest to enhance the Raju's own personal status (much prestige attaches to the possession of such a radio).

The same Mala man, through similar strategies (he appears in the above chart as the Mala who gave loans to three Gavara families) managed to have Gavara backing, from those indebted to him, when his caste headman in the village, with whom he was in fierce competition over land, opposed his third remarriage. The caste headman opposed the marriage on the grounds that the caste elders (namely himself) were not consulted or included in the wedding "search party". The wedding took place nevertheless and was attended by Gavaras (especially those whose lands he held) which was no mean feat since the pattern of marriage attendance parallels the patterns of food acceptance, i.e. higher castes rarely attend the weddings of lower caste people. When they do, it bestows great prestige on the family holding the wedding.

In considering who is the superior partner in a tanakhā arrangement the fact that land is the scarcer commodity seems to make the loan-giver superior since he gains control of land (and the land-giver

is usually reluctant to give his land except when forced to by economic circumstances). Fierce competition between brothers or families for a third party's tanakhā land and cases of costly court litigation reconfirm this view of land as the more desirable form of wealth. Neighbourhood fights broke out at various times between closely related Gavara men and between two Mala families over tanakhās (for the latter case, see p. 68).

However, the status implications of loan-giving are more complex than the simple principle that the loan-giver is superior to the loan-taker. This is because of the very complicated nature of multiple economic arrangements in which the same man can be a loan-giver and a loan-taker. To firmly judge a man's economic position all his ties must be taken into the assessment:

A Yatapalem Gavara farmer (total land cultivated: 4 wet, 3 dry acres) placed .70 w. under tanakhā for a loan of Rs. 4000 from a Yata of a nearby village to pay off a debt of Rs. 2000 and buy adjacent wet land for Rs. 2000. He took 2 acres of dry land in tanakhā from a fellow Gavara to whom he lent Rs. 800. Simultaneously he had two plots of tenancy land: 1.50 acres of wet land from a Gavara for Rs. 1000 annual payment, and .50 acres of dry land from a neighbour, a Mangali widow who occasionally did household chores for his wife.

b. Commercial loans from jaggery merchants

The pattern of Gavaras taking and giving loans predominantly among themselves is also discernable in data on agricultural loans from town jaggery merchants. We find here, in fact, the key to Gavara economic dominance in the Anakapalli region. Gavara farmers and Gavara businessmen mutually support each other and gain strength and autonomy in this way. Among Gavaras, approximately 50% of all households take loans from the Anakapalli jaggery merchants known as Commission Agents (saukārlu). These agents give the farmers

fertilizer and cash loans for the coming year at 1.5^o/o interest, compounded monthly. The farmers are then under an obligation to sell their jaggery through their Commission Agent who deducts his interest as well as a 6^o/o commission on the sale (3^o/o of which is government tax).

Families not taking such loans are frequently either poorer (without land suitable for sugar cane) or richer than average (possessing their own capital). Of the Gavara households which take loans from Anakapalli Commission Agents, 85^o/o receive loans from just two agents both of whom are Gavaras. Although the villagers said that they had no special preference for Gavara merchants over Komatis (Komatis form 50^o/o of the loan-giving merchant houses), and commented that the Gavara merchants were perhaps less trustworthy in their trade practices, in actual fact only two out of eighty-nine loans were made by Komati merchants to Gavara farmers of Aripaka Revenue Village in 1971:

Table IV-13.

Loans to Gavaras by Anakapalli Commission Agents (1971):

	Number of borrowers of each agent	Total amount loaned by each agent
Gavara agents: 1.	47	Rs. 25,430
2.	30	13,470
3.	7	4,000
4.	3	1,600
Komati agents: 1.	1	800
2.	1	500

89
loans made

Rs. 45,800

Table IV-14.

Distribution of sizes of loans to Gavaras by Anakapalli
Commission Agents:

Agents	Loan amounts (in rupees)												
	70	100-150	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	2000	2150
(Gavaras) 1.		5	7	9	6	7	4		3		4	2	1
2.	1	3	3	7	3	7	2	1			2	1	
3.						6					1		
4.				1		1			1				
(Komatis) 1.									1				
2.						1							

		Total value of loans	Number of borrowers
(Gavaras) 1.		Rs. 25,430	47
2.		13,470	30
3.		4,000	7
4.		1,600	3
(Komatis) 1.		800	1
2.		500	1

(above table is in number of loans per amount of loan)

The reason for this clustering seems to be that villagers prefer to deal with merchants with whom others, known to them, have had successful transactions. Creditworthy villagers sometimes vouch for fellow villagers to enable them to get loans. On their part, merchants find it advantageous to loan to several members of the same village since it enables them to put pressure on defaulters through their

other clients and caste connections.

The fascinating story of the rise of the Gavaras in the economic life of Anakapalli is directly associated with the tendency of village Gavaras to turn to their own caste for loans. It also closely resembles the means by which the Gavaras became economically autonomous of the Twice-Born castes in the village. Within the thirty years between 1930-60 the Gavaras of Anakapalli made remarkable inroads into the commercial side of the jaggery trade which had previously been a Komati monopoly. The Gavaras nowadays recount how they began as labourers (kalāsi) in the market yard unloading incoming bullock carts and weighing the graded blocks of jaggery. However, the process by which they managed to infiltrate the market (to the point of controlling half the seats on the influential Anakapalli Merchants Association) was more essentially a matter of loan-giving activity. The Gavaras started at the bottom of the hierarchical chain of middlemen who operated as 'go-betweens' between the Commission Agents and the farmers. The Komati Commission Agents loaned money to farmers on the condition that they sell the resulting jaggery to them. The money was received by the farmers either directly from the Commission Agents or through 'brokers', middlemen between the farmers and the big Commission Agents. In both cases the Gavaras had the opportunity of interposing themselves in the chain of money-lending since they worked as clerks (gumastā), check-up agents employed by Commission Agents, and as brokers.

Several factors contributed to their success in entering the chain of middlemen in this way. The first was the willingness of the Komatis to let others do their "dirty work". This stemmed partially from the prevailing attitude that it is an attribute of high

status to do as little of one's own work as possible. By contrast, the Gavaras, being Shudras, saw nothing wrong with doing all the work themselves. It is indeed ironic that contradictions in the caste hierarchy (i.e. lower status Gavaras challenging the economic superiority of Twice-Born Komatis) were facilitated by the symbolic values of hierarchy which viewed "non-work" as a high status attribute. In addition to this, the Gavara middlemen had other advantages over Komatis which derived from their dealing with village farmers who were their fellow caste-men.

The Komatis experienced economic difficulties in the 1930s as part of the repercussions of the worldwide economic depression. This coincided with the successful rise of the Gavara middlemen and brokers who took advantage of their increasingly improving and successful situation to buy out merchant houses on the jaggery market yard and become full-fledged Commission Agents. Gavaras came to occupy half of all the places on the wholesale market floor and gained a proportionate influence in the Merchant's Association, both of which had hitherto been exclusive Komati preserves. Eventually, Gavaras also became 'Export Commission Agents', merchants who exported jaggery to other states (e.g. Madhya Pradesh, Orissa). But even at this stage they did not emulate the Komati tendency to delegate responsibilities to outside middlemen to maintain their business contacts. This process of brokers working their way up through the system of middlemen (starting out with borrowed money) is still at work.

To summarize the picture which emerges from the pattern of inter-caste loan-giving is that hierarchical patterns are generally upheld. Notable exceptions exist which contradict the status

hierarchy though they pose no major threat to the overall trend. Standing out in all the data on loans is the dominant Gavara caste's tendency to preserve its economic autonomy. An important component of their power base thus seems to be this self-reliant economic independence.

B. Labour

Under the heading of labour we consider the realities of inter-caste relations in two spheres: skilled occupational labour (the question of the 'Jajmani System') and unskilled agricultural labour (the nature of pālēru employment, the annual-basis fieldhand relationship). In neither of these do we find the stability or consistency that we might have ideally expected.

a. Jajmani ties

On pages 63-64 we examined caste interrelations which are based on the provision of specialized services and crafts. What we will do here is examine the nature of those interrelations in greater detail. We address ourselves to the question: "to what degree are jajmani economic forms in operation?" in order to evaluate them as a basis for the sustaining of hierarchical economic and social forms. We have already noted that only three occupational castes have relations of long term ties which could be called jajmani-like. Even between these three, however, there are a number of differences.

Table IV-15.

Forms of payments to service castes:

Caste	Pay to Carpenter- Blacksmith (Kamsali)	Pay to Barber (Mangali)	Pay to Washerman (Cakali)
Brahman	K	K J	K J
Raju	K	K J	K
Komati		K £ J	K
Gavara	K	K	K
Kapu	K	K	K
Velama	K	K	K
Kamsali		K M £	K £
Jangam		M £	£ J
Telukula	£ J	K M J	£
Sali	K	J	K £
Vadram		J	£
Mangali			M
Cakali		M	
Yata	K	K £ J	K £
Mala	J	J	£
Madiga		J	£

K = annual pay in kind (grain)

M = mutual exchange of services

£ = annual pay in cash

} Long term sustained ties

J = pay in cash by the job

- Short term ties on commercial basis only

Table IV-16.

Forms of payments to service castes (in numbers of households paying by each method)

Caste	Total No. of households in the caste	Medium of pay to Carpenter-Blacksmith (Kamsali)				Medium of pay to Barber (Mangali)				Medium of pay to Washerman (Cakali)			
		K	M	£	J	K	M	£	J	K	M	£	J
Brahman	8					1			4	5		1	2
Raju	10	2			1	2			6	6			3
Komati	10					1		3	6	4		2	4
Gavara	173	120		1	1	128		6	7	143		8	2
Kapu	23	10				14			8	19		1	3
Pedda Kapu	2					1			1	2			
Velama	29	22				25		1	2	27			1
Golla	1								1				1
Kamsali	12					2	4	4	2	5		6	1
Jangam	4						1	1	1			2	1
Telukula	6	1				2			3	1		3	2
Sali	4								3			2	1
Vadram	1								1			1	
Mangali	7									1	4		1
Cakali	2					1	6		3				
Yata	49	11				15		2	16	26		20	2
Mala	28	2			1				22	17		7	1
Madiga	12				1				11	4		3	5
(Mixed caste)	1					1				1			
Total	389	170	-	1	4	193	11	17	97	262	4	56	30

K+£ = 171

K+M+£ = 22

K+M+£ = 322

(The above tables were compiled from a survey in which each household named their household Carpenter-Blacksmith, Barber, and Washerman, 'inti-kamsali, inti-mangali, inti-cākali', and specified the form and amount of their pay. The most significant figures are those indicating long-term ties, i.e. 'K', 'M', '£'.

K = annual pay in kind (grain), M = mutual exchange of services

£ = annual pay in cash, J = pay in cash for each job

*The household labelled 'Mixed-caste' is the Brahman man with his Gavara concubine. They were counted as a Gavara household in the previous chart.)

Let us now compare the three castes (Carpenters, Barbers, and Washermen) on the following factors: 1. range of castes served, 2. payment in cash vs. kind, 3. long-term ties.

i. Range of castes served:

In evaluating the nature of the intercaste ties with Carpenters, Barbers, and Washermen we must bear in mind the nature of the services performed which inherently affect the data. The reason for these differences is that Carpenter-Blacksmiths perform services which are needed only by land owning agriculturalists while Barbers and Washermen serve a wider range of people. Of the two, the Barbers serve somewhat fewer households because of the households with only women (e.g. widows living alone).

ii. Mode of payment: cash or kind (for long-term ties)

Table IV-17.

Percentages of households of all castes in the village who pay in kind:

	Payment to:		
	Carpenters	Barbers	Washermen
In kind	99.4°/o	91.8°/o	82.6°/o
In cash	.6°/o	8.2°/o	17.4°/o
	100°/o	100°/o	100°/o

Note the very high occurrence of payment in kind when the ties are long-term ones. (The somewhat lower figure for Washermen is due to the greater number of households they serve, which means that they deal with more poor families who do not have enough grain to spare to pay them in kind.)

Payment in kind is thus associated with interrelations of castes which are hierarchical in the least ambiguous degree (except for carpenters who are ambiguous because of their controversial claim to being higher than Brahmans). Later we shall see that rituals utilise the hierarchical connotations of relations with Barbers and Washermen in particular and of payment in kind in general.

iii. Long term ties
Table IV-18.

Percentages of households of all castes in the village who have long term ties:

	Ties with:		
	Carpenters	Barbers	Washermen
Have long-term ties	43.2°/o	56.6°/o	82.1°/o
Have not	56.8°/o	43.4°/o	17.9°/o
	100°/o	100°/o	100°/o

From the above data we note that there are considerable differences in the percentages of households (of all castes) which maintain long-term ties with the three service castes under consideration. The Carpenters have the lowest figure since they serve a much smaller number of households (only land owners engaged in agriculture). The Barbers, despite their broader caste spread, which

more closely resembles that of the Washermen, still have a low figure as they have fewer long-term ties and more dealings in cash. Washermen serve the greatest number of castes on a long-term basis in comparison to the Carpenters and Barbers.

iv. Interpretation:

What are we to make of all of these findings? We see that a jajmani form is in operation but it is not very prominent. Such ties are limited to only three castes and the proportion of households which do not maintain such long-term ties even with these are substantial. Only ties with a single caste, the Washerman, can be said to exhibit the ideal jajmani pattern (high proportion of households maintaining long-term ties and paying them in kind). If we view the long-term factor as an element of stability in hierarchy (analogous to other fixed hierarchical relations between castes) then the absence of widespread networks of long-term ties seems to indicate a more fluid set of relationships which are less rigidly hierarchical.

However, we can also find tensions in hierarchical relations even between castes linked by long-term ties. In the long-term relationship of service caste employee with his employer, behaviour is observed which resembles the patterns of dynamic pressure and coercion which we observe within the caste hierarchy (p.155ff). This takes the form of employers delaying payments and using occasions when service castes beg for their pay to complain about bad service (e.g., cases of washermen who do not bring clothes back promptly, barbers who visit too infrequently, and carpenters who do not finish work they are commissioned to do). On their part, service castes

have monopolies over their trades and can purposely cause delay if they are dissatisfied by the treatment of their employers, though it is usually clear that the service caste is economically subordinate to its employers. Even so, at the time of payment they frequently reject the first offer made by their employers. They appeal to the employer's obligation and indebtedness to them to force a larger payment. This haggling over pay is largely mechanical since the employers expect refusals of their first offers and hence wisely offer less to begin with. The factor of a dynamic tension in the relationship seems to be a very important element. Each side appeals to the others' obligations and indebtedness towards it. Mere pay for work is less important than this emphasis of mutual interdependence.

A final word should be added about the maintenance of caste statuses in the context of economic and service relations. Barbers and Washermen are clearly among the lowest ranking Shudras. Since, as we maintain, subordinate social status is implied by a long term service relationship, there is a problem that their serving Harijans might be a contradiction. We find, however, that Harijans maintain no long term ties with Barbers. Harijans do have their clothes washed by Washermen but the Washermen resolve the situation of potential status reversal by insisting that the Harijans carry their own clothes out to the washing areas and back. Carpenters cannot manipulate their status quite so neatly. There is really no way that they can reconcile their claim to be superior to Brahmans with their service relationship with the Shudra farmers. Their service relationships preclude their demonstrating the

superiority they claim and leave them in an anomalous, unreconciled position.

b. Annual basis field hands

We now examine another sphere of long-term ties, the pālēru relationship of "annual basis field hands". This represents the agricultural labourers who are linked to a particular employer on a long-term basis for pay in kind, analogous to jajmani ties with service castes. We find, as in the jajmani data, that the actual number of persons working under these arrangements is relatively small.

Table IV-19.

Employment of annual basis field hands (pālēru):

Employer caste	Number of field hands employed
Brahman	1
Raju	5
Kapu	3
Gavara	51
Total	60

Table IV-20.

Annual basis field hands (pālēru) employed by non-Gavaras:

Employer's caste	Field hand's caste	No. of that caste employed	Home village of field hand
Brahman	Kapu	1	Aripaka
Raju	Kapu	1	Outsider
	Velama	2	Aripaka
	Yata	1	Kottapalem
	Muslim (Saibu)	1	Outsider
Kapu	Yata	2	Outsiders
	Cakali	1	Outsider

Table IV-21.Caste composition of annual basis field hands working for non-Gavaras:

Caste	Number employed
Kapu	2
Velama	2
Cakali	1
Yata	3
Muslim	1

Table IV-22.Data on the 51 annual basis field hands employed by Gavaras:

Field hand's caste	No. of that caste employed	Home village of the field hands
Jangam	1	Y
Golla	4	Nb
Gavara	6	Y
Pedda Kapu	1	Y
Telukula	2	Y
Sali	4	Y
Yata	12	Y-7, K-5
Cakali	2	Y-1, K-1
Mala	15	Y-3, A-11, Nb-1
Madiga	4	Y-3, O-1

Y = Yatapalem

A - Aripaka

K - Kottapalem

Nb = Neighbouring village

O = Other village.

(Yata: Y-7, K-5, means seven Yatas from Yatapalem and five from Kottapalem)

Table IV-23.

Village of origin of annual basis field hands:

	Aripaka Revenue Village: Yatapalem Aripaka Kottap.			Outsiders: Neighbouring Distant vil.		Total
Employed by:						
Non-Gavaras	-	3	1	-	5	9
Gavaras	29	10	6	5	1	51
Total	29	13	7	5	6	60
	49			11		60
	81.6°/o			18.4°/o		100°/o

From the above tables we note that the principal employers of annual basis field hands are Gavaras. Gavaras employ 51, and the next largest employers are Rajus who employ 5. Annual basis field-hands (pālēru) are not drawn exclusively from any particular caste, but rather from a fairly wide range of castes. We can however, note the trend for over half of Gavara-employed pālēru to be made up of Yatas and Malas. Shudra-Harijan distinctions are entirely irrelevant in the selection of a pālēru.

We note that most pālēru (81.6°/o) are residents of the village. We can therefore expect that pālēru ties reflect the hierarchical patterns seen in other economic relationships. We note that proportionately few Gavaras employ other Gavaras as pālēru (many of these cases are arrangements between relatives.) There are only two castes which have members working as pālēru for employers who are possibly of lower caste. The first case is of a young Jangam boy from an economically depressed family. The status of Jangams in the village (according to the other castes) is not higher than the Gavaras

(see Table IV-2) although in the region the Jangams are regarded as higher (Gavaras will accept food from Jangams but not vice versa, and Gavaras send raw rather than cooked food offerings - see Table IV-1). The second case is of four Gollas from a neighbouring village, Rayapuram Agraharam. Again, though Gollas seem to be considered superior to most other Shudras in the region, the Gollas of the neighbouring village are mainly farmers and of an economic status similar to Gavaras, Kapus, and Velamas.

In addition to the above data on caste composition of employers and employees is the factor of length of employment. Somewhat to our surprise we find that the pālēru tie is relatively unstable.

Table IV-24.

Length of employment (of 51 pālēru working for Gavaras)

Length of employment with current employer	Number of <u>pālēru</u> in this category	Percentage
One year or less { under 3 months 3-6 months 6 mos.-1 yr	3 6 16	} 49
2 years 3	9 10	} 37
4 5 6 25	3 2 1 1	} 14
	51	100 %

Table IV-25.

Age distribution of pālēru (annual basis field hands) (of the 51 employed by Gavaras)

Range of age in years old	Number of <u>pālēru</u> in this category
8-10	14
11-13	15
14-16	11
17-19	1
20-22	4
23-25	3
.....	
26-30	1
31-35	1
35-40	1

In the above data there is evidence of a relatively high turn-over rate for pālēru. Some 49⁰/o had worked for their current employer one year or less, while 86⁰/o worked for their current employer three years or less. This apparent instability (so unlike the long-term on-going jajmani tie) is due mainly to two factors. The first is the tension in the relationship between the employer pressing for more work and the employee feeling he deserves more pay. Numerous pālēru arrangements were observed to break down over these issues. The second factor is related to the age of the employees. Young men generally work as a pālēru during their adolescence to help their family out and also to help pay for their wedding expenses. After marriage there is a tendency to terminate pālēru arrangements (especially among Gavaras and higher castes) and switch to doing daily wage labour,

"cooly" work (kūli-pani). This is despite the fact that depending on wage labour is less secure since it is less regularly available. This can be attributed to the part age differences play in reinforcing the hierarchical nature of the relationship. Once a Gavara is married he is technically of an equal status with all adult Gavara males. Pālēru relationships within one's own caste would be a contradiction. Since the amount of pay of pālēru (in kind) increases with the age of the employee, there would also seem to be a disincentive for a farmer to keep a pālēru after the age of marriage.

In summation, we note that in relations between castes involving exchanges of labour, long-term relations are not as widespread or stable as we might expect. Even in jajmani and pālēru ties, which are long term hierarchical relations, there are numerous factors which cause the relationships to strain or break down.

C. To what extent do superior castes exercise authority over inferior castes?

In this section we examine certain aspects in the political interrelations between castes in the informal (impromptu dispute settlement by elders) and formal (officers in the government panchayat system) political spheres. In the informal political sphere we find that the adjudication of disputes is strongly influenced by the power relations between the castes involved (in particular lower castes are coerced but employ counter-strategies). In the formal political sphere too we find competitive tensions between castes (especially at times of elections). We also note the centrality of the Gavara farmers who now exercise political dominance

in the village. Though they had previously been subordinate to members of the Twice-Born castes (particularly Rajus).

1. Informal political sphere: intercaste disputes

Though intercaste dispute settlement sessions have the ostensible purpose of harmonising social relations, we observe that in many cases there is a tendency for the dominant caste to coercively impose its authority upon lower castes. Gavaras explicitly acknowledge that justice must be done even if the guilty party is a Gavara and his accuser of lower caste. But this tends to be mere payment of lip-service to ideal principles. In reality, payment of damages to lower castes never occurs.

However, making a public commotion is a form of counter-strategy of the lower castes. Lower castes sometimes appeal to this ideal of justice by the strategy of causing a public commotion. We have already noted that women resort to similar tactics in order to exert pressure on men. A commotion and the public glare to which it subjects the conflicting parties are weapons which an inferior can use against a superior. It derives its potency from the assumption that interdependent obligations exist between hierarchical unequal. It alleges that these obligations are not being properly fulfilled. Since public wrangling is not resorted to lightly the implication is that the superior must be at least partially responsible. This public opinion thus constitutes a form of pressure and censure.

During the course of fieldwork there were numerous occasions when Gavaras mistreated pigs belonging to Yatas. Yatas have sheds for their pigs and feed them but let them roam about freely in the village most of the time. There were incidents where Gavara farmers

beat pigs belonging to Yatas which had strayed on to their lands. The beatings were particularly severe and sometimes took place suspiciously far from the fields which were allegedly trespassed. On other occasions baby pigs were killed by dogs belonging to Gavaras. In neither of these types of incidence were Yatas able to have the farmers restrained or be compensated for the loss of their animals.

In this context, an incident occurred in which a Yata's pigs were poisoned:

Two pigs, a pregnant sow and a baby, died in the night and were allegedly found near the field huts of a particular farmer. They had died from insecticide poisoning. It was known that the farmer had threatened to poison this Yata's pigs, complaining that they often drank from his cattle troughs. The Yata owner first appealed for arbitration from a passing Raju schoolmaster from Aripaka. He declined saying he was a mere schoolmaster. Meanwhile several Gavara 'big men' gathered, including the Panchayat President. However, nothing could be done since the accused farmer was in Anakapalli on a buying trip.

The farmer finally returned in the evening, after another pig had died bringing the total value of the monetary loss to about Rs. 100. A large boisterous gathering developed with heated arguments, accusations, and shouting by Yata women. A collection of Gavara ('big men' seated themselves on a stone wall while the Yata caste head (ijamāni) stood in front of them with the pig owner and the accused farmer. The gathering had a fairly informal and fluid structure with different people wandering in and expressing their opinions on the periphery. Various circles of controversy grew and subsided. First, the Yata said he would abide by the judgement of his panchayati ward head and then he threatened to go to the police. He appealed for support from the Panchayat Vice President. The Vice President then told the accused farmer, a fellow Gavara, that it was his duty to interrogate him and commented that it was widely known that he had threatened to poison the pigs. The charge was hotly denied by the farmer.

Finally the Yata said he would drop all charges if the farmer would only admit having done it. In order to make a mockery of the Yata's request a relative of the accused farmer said he did it. For lack of witnesses and

substantial evidence, the meeting degenerated into small circles of elders and Yatas and eventually the farmer walked away and the public commotion and hubbub faded out. Ultimately, the Yata did not go to the police and the farmer admitted no guilt. However, the public accusation and commotion itself served partially as the Yata's retribution though it did not compensate his loss of the market value of the pigs, Rs. 100. The fact that the public condemnation was sufficient for him was evidenced by the apparent cordiality and absence of hostility with which the Yata and farmer subsequently behaved.

2. Formal political sphere: electional politics

Earlier we stressed the integrative nature of the formal political leaders of the village during the course of their tenure in office. However, times of elections are generally occasions for intercaste rivalry. Mention has already been made (p.139f) that members of different castes competed for the Munsif qualifying examination (a Brahman, a Velama, and a mixed-caste man). In 1969, elections for Panchayat representatives and selection of the village Panchayat President had given rise to a Raju-Velama alliance against the Gavaras. The result of this was that the Gavaras who had hitherto been internally divided, immediately closed ranks. Due to their overwhelmingly superior numbers and economic influence, the Gavaras then won the election.

These Raju-Gavara rivalries surfaced again when there were State and National Elections (elections for Member of Parliament in Delhi, in March 1971; elections for member of the State Legislative Assembly in February 1972). On the occasion of the 1971 election, an Aripaka Raju managed to interpose himself between the villagers and the agents of one of the candidates. The Gavaras resented his setting himself up as the representative of the village. Rumours circulated that he had accepted bribes from the politician

to "deliver" the village. There were also allegations that the Raju had prevented the candidate from visiting Yatapalem when he once visited Aripaka. The result was that the Gavaras voted solidly for the rival candidate whom many believed stood less of a chance of winning in the region. Indeed he did lose the election. Rumours circulated that perhaps the victorious candidate would learn that he had not been supported by Aripaka Revenue Village and henceforth withhold economic favour he might otherwise have bestowed upon them. From the Gavaras' point of view it was preferable to have discredited the Raju's claim of influence in the village. He did not give up his attempts however. The son of the winning candidate went on a tour of the area and stopped in Aripaka to thank the voters for electing his father, the former Maharaja of Vizianagram. The Raju specially prepared a petition to request money for enlargement of the village school. The petition, which was translated into English and typed, was written in a highly ornate effusive style. It alluded to the former glories of the Maharaja's family and its charitable works. The petition was signed solely by the Raju who styled himself "School Committee President".

In the next election (for the State Legislative Assembly in 1972) the same Raju-Gavara polarization was not in evidence. The President of the Panchayat Samiti (the assembly of village panchayat presidents) endorsed a candidate who was duly supported by the President of Aripaka Revenue Village and others eager to curry his favour. This time the candidate visited Yatapalem where he gave a speech from the platform of the village temple. Included in the

circle of dignitaries who greeted the candidate was the same Raju. Though it seemed to suit everyone to have him present on that occasion, his aims of challenging Gavara political ascendancy were not forgotten. The Rajus on their part, not content to remain impassive as the formerly subordinate Gavaras now wielded political control.

It is notable that the caste of one political candidate is of only peripheral importance. In the 1971 election the Gavaras of Yatapalem voted for a candidate who was a Brahman, not because of caste alignments in the region but rather because of caste rivalries within the village. Similarly, in the 1972 election, one candidate was a Brahman and another a Raju. Everyone in the village, including the Aripaka Raju, readily supported the Brahman candidate by virtue of the endorsement of the Panchayati Samiti President (a Kapu). Thus, in the second election, the Raju was not backing "a fellow Raju" but, like everyone else, was out to establish his influence and link with a politician whose success was most likely. Admittedly, caste is a potential way of establishing influence if it can be exploited. For example, in his petition to the touring son of the successful Raju candidate of 1971, the Aripaka Raju identified with the former Maharaja of Vizianagaram as a fellow Raju, and purposely signed it with his own unmistakably Raju name. However, on the whole, the caste of a candidate is not automatically a significant issue. For the Aripaka Raju, there was much greater political potential in a Brahman endorsed by their mutual friend, the Block Panchayat President, than with a Raju with whom he had less promising ties.

D. To what extent is the state egalitarian?

In this section we deal with two aspects of the new State ideology: 1. conflicting status hierarchies and 2. continuities between caste and bureaucratic hierarchies. On the one hand, caste status and position in the government bureaucracy can conflict. On the other, many hierarchical behaviour patterns associated with caste seem to have continued on in the government bureaucracy.

1. Conflicting status hierarchies

The new opportunities created by the State, with its anti-caste and egalitarian ideology, has introduced the possibility of conflicting status hierarchies. A government employed school teacher was assigned to Yatapalem village school. He took up residence in the village and rented a room in a Gavara farmer's house. As an educated man he was treated with great respect by the villagers. After a number of weeks rumours began circulating that he was from a very low caste. Eventually, it came out that he was a Relli, a Harijan caste (with origins in Orissa) who are active in the fresh fruit marketing in towns in Visakhapatnam District. Some Gavaras complained to the owner of the house in which the teacher rented his room. They opposed his living in a Gavara house. The wife of the houseowner replied that she had no objection to him. He prepared and ate his meals by himself and was a good tenant. Two of her sons were attending the school at which he taught and he gave them extra tutoring in the evenings.

Within about two months a pretext was found for expressing dissatisfaction with this man of a low status caste in the high status (and well-paying) job of assistant schoolmaster. Post-funerary

ceremonies were taking place in honour of the Headman of the village who had recently died. The teacher sat in a chair on a verandah overlooking the courtyard where many Gavara elders and 'big men' had assembled. The teacher's confident sitting in a chair above the level of the elders was felt by many to be an arrogant impertinence. Subsequently, requests were sent to the government to have the teacher transferred out of the village and replaced. These requests were never granted and the teacher was then in the unhappy position of being stuck in this rather inhospitable village. The number of people who had been informally friendly with him dwindled. He also remained aloof from the Harijans apparently to avoid identification with them. He was in any case neither a Mala nor a Madiga himself. Ultimately, he remained in the village, unhampered in his official duties and constituted living proof that the egalitarian values of the government bureaucracy overrode traditional caste status. However, for the teacher involved, being in the midst of two conflicting hierarchies was a distinctly unenviable position.

2. Continuities from caste to bureaucratic hierarchy

From the above evidence we see that the new State ideology (anti-caste and egalitarian) is superceding and overriding the traditional caste hierarchy. However, we must point out that far from being a completely transformed entity, the new elite exhibits many features which have "seeped" through from the caste hierarchy. Despite the anti-caste ideology, the structuring of work in the state bureaucratic elite parallels caste behaviour in a paradoxical way. We have observed earlier, that aloofness and control of access

are high status attributes. It is not surprising to find that there is a caste-like idiom of work relations in the government bureaucracy. The top man in the structure is seen to do the least work and has others do his bidding as he stands by in an aloof manner. The caste factor of status ascribed by birth is, however, removed. Instead, the roles are interchangeable and assigned by relative hierarchical positions in the bureaucratic structure.

During a session of collecting loan repayments several government officials came to the village. The top man in charge sat by, aloof in a chair, reading a newspaper, as a clerk was doing the actual collection and recording while other clerks stood by or went to summon the villagers to come before them. When the top man went away for a while, the man who had been acting as a clerk took up his position in the chair and all assumed one position higher in the structure.

Let us now summarise some of our observations on the implications of the influence of government political structures on the formal political offices in the village, introducing elements which contradict the ideal principles of generational hierarchy and caste unity. The power of the traditional Headman has been undermined by the new requirement for government approval of a successor by means of an examination open to all. The authority of the Headmanship has been further weakened by the introduction of a second, potentially rival set of leaders in the panchayat system. The panchayat system provides new opportunities for competition within and between castes on the occasion of panchayat elections. The ostensibly egalitarian and anti-hierarchical basis of government elections and authority has introduced anomalies in the traditionally hierarchical relationship between generations. The authority of political office is now detached from the authority deriving from superior age.

Chapter V

SUMMARY: THE CONTRAST OF FORMAL PRINCIPLES WITH OBSERVED ACTUALITIES

The following tables summarize the data presented so far. Emphasis is placed on the contrast of the formal structural principles with the variations and exceptions which were actually observed. While, for the most part, formal principles are generally upheld and maintained, we note that there are considerable areas of contradiction and discrepancies brought about by rivalry and competition.

	IDEAL: FORMAL PRINCIPLES	ACTUAL: RIVALRY, DISCREPANCIES
AGE	Authority of elder over younger: kinship stresses hierarchy by relative age	New element of conflict of generations in competition for leadership positions (made possible by new government ideology, opportunity)
SEX	<u>MALES:</u> Society is patrilineal and marriage patrilocal; authority rests with males over females	Numerous spheres in which women wield influence: economic, informal politics and decision making
	<u>FEMALES:</u> Subordination of wives to husbands is reinforced by age differences; rationale for male dominance over women is ideology of female emotionalism, attachment, uncontrollability; leads to ideology of "negativity of widowhood"	Significantly high degree of marital instability; high occurrence of widowhood (older husbands tend to die before their wives)

IDEAL: FORMAL PRINCIPLES

ACTUAL: RIVALRY,
DISCREPANCIESKINSMEN HOUSEHOLD/BROTHERS:Residential, property-holding
and ritual unitBrothers inevitably separate
and compete (especially after
the death of their father)SUB-CLANS:Ritual and ceremonial unity
(death-pollution sharing, shared
categories of marriage alliance
exogamous 'brother-lineage'
category)Sub-clans eventually divide:
individual families violate
"brother clan" exogamy; and
through illarakam (matrilocal
residence and inheritance) de-
plete the clan's membership
and property; competition in
the formal political sphereCASTES CLANS:Ritual unity within clan of
death ceremonial (pākruti/
cakradāri funerary sects)

(not challenged)

Shared informal political auth-
ority within the caste in the
village (ideal of solidarity
aikyamataṁ) principle that
kinsmen share innate connect-
ion and mutual responsibilityActual exercise of political
power is correlated with size
and wealth of sub-clanCATEGORIES:Varna categories (Twice-Born vs.
non-Twice-Born)Numerous anomalies in varna,
e.g. claim of Kamsali to be
BrahmansStatus ranking is based on
hierarchical principlesEach group has its own version
of where it falls in the hier-
archy, leading to discrepant,
unreciprocated claimsCUSTOMS:Clusters of customs differences
coincide with caste hierarchy:Violations - e.g. Kamsali wear-
ing of sacred threadDietary categories - diet
and food exchangeWithin diet categories are
clusters of "equality" claimsControl, treatment of
women - e.g. Widow re-
marriage restrictionsIntercaste covert sexual
liaisons

IDEAL: FORMAL PRINCIPLES

ACTUAL: RIVALRY,
DISCREPANCIES

CASTES ECONOMIC INTERRELATIONS:

(cont.) Ideally there should be an equation of 1. superior castes as employers and sources of money, 2. subordinate castes as employees and takers of loans

Problem that economic transactions can be neutral as far as hierarchy implications go

Land:

Overall land ownership:
(Landowners are superior to non-landowners)

Gavara's own most land, giving them autonomy from Twice-Born castes (though not dominance over them)

Tenancy:
(Landowners superior to tenants who lease land)

Some recorded cases of tenants being of higher caste than the landowner (hierarchy is not violated if overall relationships are considered)

Labour:

Jajmani ties - long-term relationships with pay in kind

Jajmani type relationships are not predominant; even among the three main jajmani type service castes (Barbers, Washermen, Carpenters) there are widely different types of pay and proportions of families maintaining long-term ties

Pālēru - long-term dependence

Not as widespread or as stable as might be expected

Loans:

(Loan-giver superior to loan-taker)

Tanakha - mortgage

Exceptions to the principle that loan-giver is superior demonstrate that economic transactions have a potential neutrality with respect to caste hierarchy

Commercial loans-

Gavara autonomy and internal solidarity in taking commercial loans is the basis for their regional dominance (they restrict placing themselves in position of dependency on Komatis)

IDEAL: FORMAL PRINCIPLES

ACTUAL: RIVALRY,
DISCREPANCIES

CASTES (cont.) POLITICAL INTERRELATIONS:
Ideally superior castes have authority over lower castes

Gavaras, who are Shudras, hold the formal political offices of the village

Informal politics:
(Authority should rest with those of superior status)
Many castes appeal to higher castes in disputes which are not resolved

Gavaras never appeal to Twice-Born castes to arbitrate disputes, remain autonomous

Formal politics:
(Authority should rest with those of superior status)

In new electoral system youths can gain posts of authority over their elders; Gavaras gain positions of political authority over Twice-Born castes

Formal politics are a field of competition and rivalry within and between castes

VILLAGE Government definition of "Revenue Village"; economically and politically a single unit

Counter-tendencies of settlement fission expresses competitive spirit within the caste hierarchy (settlement autonomy means avoidance of behaviour of subordination)

Ritual interdependence

Different or conflicting festivals (ritual rivalry and autonomy)

Chapter VI

RITUAL SYMBOLISM

We now turn to examine rituals and symbolism in order to understand how it is that the ideal formal principles of social structure are instilled and reinforced in the face of the discrepancies and rivalries which we have outlined above in Chapter V. It will be seen that this is done through symbolic categories and ritual activities. We discuss how this happens in the chapters that follow. First we trace the relationship of this study to work by other anthropologists concerning ritual and symbolism. After this we outline some of the basic symbolic themes and processes which underly most ritual activity in the village and which serve to create basic categories of thought and behaviour (Chapter VI.B.). We then proceed to examine the unique way rituals use these themes to embody the basic ideologies of hierarchy and interdependence and mediate certain of the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in them. We do this by examining specific rituals in the life cycle of individuals (Chapter VII) and the calendrical rituals of the annual cycle (Chapters VII-XIII). We conclude by looking at the way ritual occasions are themselves used to express political and economic rivalries (Chapter XIV).

A. Important anthropological approaches to the study of ritual and symbolism

The work of Douglas and Turner identifies ritual categories as creators of social ideals:

"It [ritual] actually creates or re-creates the categories through which men perceive reality."

(Turner 1968:7)

"Ritual changes perception, modifies experience by expressing experience, ... standardizes situations."

(Douglas 1966:69)

In addition, Douglas emphasises that many diverse category systems in a society are inter-related and reverberate with social symbolism, the "heavy social load carried by apparently innocent looking taxonomic systems" (Douglas 1973:11). We shall see this particularly clearly in our discussion of basic symbolic themes in which we note that subordination and hierarchy are as central to the categorization and structuring of time as they are to the forms of ritual worship.

Turner's work on the Ndembu of Zambia has shown how conflicting norms can produce conflicts in a society which are mediated and resolved only through ritual. We recognise this same tendency in the society of Aripaka Revenue Village where there is the structural dilemma of controlling the competitive aspect of hierarchy. Once hierarchy and superior status is instilled as a value, there is the problem of getting people to accept subordinate positions to their superiors rather than ruthlessly pursue their own interests. This leads to the value of interdependence which stresses unity and cooperation of people and groups of hierarchically ranked statuses. A related structural dilemma is the problem of maintaining the inferior, subordinate status of women, who occupy positions of great potential influence. There is also, of course, the problem of defining the notion of hierarchy itself which is becoming increasingly ambiguous in numerous economic contexts. The way in which these built-in contradictions and ambiguities is dealt with is through ritual activities in which the ideal categories are

acted out and emphasised.

"Whenever one finds the danger of manifest discrepancy between social processes, one tends to find ritualization. The paramount values of the society are symbolically asserted against the dividing tendencies inherent in its structure."

(Turner 1968:201)

Despite the existence of contradiction, ritual symbolism and related categories of thought channel people's perceptions and cause them to feel reassured that all interactions conform to a hierarchical model or ought to, when in fact they are not that way at all.

Among Cohen's contributions has been to consider the way in which symbols and rituals give structure and identity to groups who are associated with them. He observes how interest groups express themselves through ritual contexts. He is thus particularly concerned with the ways in which ritual and symbols are used by groups for political organization or competition:

"Interest groups manipulate different types of symbolic formations and symbolic patterns of action to articulate a number of basic organizational functions, like distinctiveness and communication."

(Cohen:ix.)

His view does not overlook the level of significance of ritual activities in which Turner and Douglas are interested. Rather, he considers two levels of significance to be operating simultaneously. In Chapter XIV I sketch the process in which competition and rivalry of interest groups is expressed through modifications in times and locations of ritual performances.

- B. Basic symbolic themes and processes: subordination, respect, propitiation
1. Forms of greeting and respect: acknowledgement of subordination and hierarchy

One of the most essential concerns underlying the structure of much ritual activity is the emphasis on forms of subordination, the acknowledgement of hierarchy. These take the form of gestures of self-abasement, greeting, begging and gift-giving which emphasise the superior status of their object. Such forms are the basis of all greetings between men and are regarded as proper decorum, mariyāda, 'respect'. In interpersonal relations, the manipulative potential of such symbolism lies in the fact that one enhances the status of another by demonstrating deference to him.* Since all people are assumed to have more generous ideas of themselves than others have of them, any offer of acknowledgement by others is a valuable testimonial of their claimed status. The symbolism employed is derived from situations in which the status differences between men are basically clear and not openly challenged as for instance between Gavaras and Brahmans (though even on this level some degree of "impression management" can be operating). Such forms are then used in situations where statuses are ambiguous (e.g., in status-neutral economic contexts, particularly between individuals) and thus become a form of manipulative bribery. In such contexts, people offer valuable testimonials of status in order to get some advantage back for themselves.

*See Esther Goody's discussion of greeting as a gift, as establishing a debt, and as a mode of begging (pp. 61-62).

Let us look at some of the ways in which such status differences are expressed. First there are gestural forms such as the custom of saluting upon meeting (dandam pettadam 'to salute', literally 'to put a salute'). Dandam can mean 'homage' or 'bow' but usually refers to the raising of the hands with the palms pressed together and fingertips pointed upwards in a "prayerful" gesture. People also salute superiors upon parting and in somewhat more formal situations request permission to take leave (selavu t̥sukonadam) before quitting the presence of a superior. Another gestural form is the convention of not sitting at a higher level or in greater comfort than someone to whom one wishes or needs to express deference which emphasises hierarchical differences in status. However, it should be pointed out that the degree and nature of compliance with this convention is variable. It is enforced by Gavaras upon Yatas who occasionally complain that Gavaras insist that Yatas get up off a cot and sit on the ground in their presence. It is also a form which is used by people to show politeness as it emphasizes the status of the person to whom deference is shown. It should be noted that it is not a strictly applied principle in everyday life. In fact, castes generally tend to be informal with each other when status is not being emphasized for some instrumental or manipulative purpose, at least among Shudra and Harijan castes.

On numerous occasions men scolded their children for naturally sitting down on a cot with me. Their fathers had more reasons to wish to emphasise my status difference and used the opportunity of scolding their children to do so. One Yata man reprimanded his son

saying 'nīku cinna-pedda tēḍa tēlīdu', you do not know the difference of bigger and lesser status people. On another occasion a Gavara scolded some small boys 'atan antastu mī antastu yēmitirā?' what is his status and what is yours? (Antastu, the word used to describe status is the same word used to describe floors in multiple storey buildings). While such gestures are optional, they are greatly valued and carefully evaluated. For instance, after a group of relatives returns from a meeting with strangers in another village to discuss a prospective marriage arrangement, they report back on how well they were received. If they were treated with respect as honoured guests they comment that they were shown good mariyāda, manci mariyāda, and are highly pleased. We have already mentioned how the Harijan school master fell foul of the Gavara elders of the village when he failed to observe these conventions.

Language is another way in which status differences between the speaker and person addressed are expressed. In contrast to the Krishna and Godavari delta regions further southwest, the villagers of Aripaka Revenue Village do not generally use the second person plural in contexts where a single person was being spoken to. However, they did use these terms in circumstances in which status differences were great or in which they wished to manipulatively emphasize those differences.

Table VI-1

Hierarchical categories in Telugu personal pronouns:

<u>tamaru</u>	you - exalted, used in addressing high official
<u>mīru</u>	you - used to address higher status person, or just for politeness, also means second person plural
<u>nuvvu</u>	you - to address a lower status person, also used informally among everyone
<u>āyana/āme</u>	he/she - high status
<u>atam</u>	he
<u>vādu/adi</u>	he/she - low status or familiar (<u>adi</u> 'she', also means 'it')

The suffix -gāru added to the name of a person addressed, and the suffixes -andi (to higher status), -rā (to lower status or familiars) added to verbs were other ways in which social hierarchy was expressed in language.

The feature of exaggeration for flattery is frequently seen in terms of address. When begging a Kamsali to complete a job, a Gavara farmer frequently resorts to the respectful title brahmanḡāru (brahman is an allusion to the Kamsali caste hero Vīrabrahman, as well as to their claim to Brahmanhood). In a similar way, farmers were addressed as naidu (meaning 'lord' or ruler'). The term bābu is another term used by people to respectfully address superiors.

2. Puja

There is a striking similarity in structure between the forms of interpersonal greeting and respect and the fundamental form of religious worship, pūja (defined variously as 'worship, reverence, respect, veneration, obeisance, homage, adoration' - Brown: 669). Both of them exhibit concern with the expression of respectful subordination, the essential ingredient in the creation and symbolization of hierarchy. It is, in fact, the underlying message of puja that the showing of respect with its attendant self abasement and emphasis on hierarchy is a primary source of ritual efficacy and human well-being. The high frequency of the performance of pujas for various purposes works as a constant reinforcement of an ideal conception of social hierarchy despite the constant confrontation with social pressures which violate or contradict its consistency in reality.

Puja is thus the central ritual of hierarchy and interdependence. It expresses hierarchy in the symbolic subordination of the worshipper. It expresses interdependence in the reciprocal exchange of status testimonials, given by the worshipper, for benevolence from the object of worship on his behalf.

Here are the basic components of a puja sequence:

1. Purification of the worshipper (bathing or fasting) and the site of the worship. These are in themselves gestures of respect.
2. Salute - the offering of the namaskāram hand gesture with the worshipper facing the object of worship.
3. Offerings - presentation of gifts, naivēdyam. Depending on the object of worship the content of the offerings range widely from flowers, incense, oil lamps, fruits, and items of clothing to animal sacrifice.
4. Prasādam - the receiving back of a portion of the items offered or of some other consecrated substance. This partakes of the symbolism of accepting the food from a person of higher status and is thus a further testimonial of respect and self abasement.

There is a strong element of reciprocity in puja in that every puja is a transaction, albeit an asymmetrical one. The worshipper demonstrates his respect for the object of worship and then expects various forms of well-being in return. This is the symbolic lesson of social interdependence of hierarchically different persons and castes. But puja is not merely instrumental, it is frequently considered to be meritorious in itself. Associating puja with religious merit, punyam, and charitable, righteous behaviour between men, dharmam, elevates it to a plane of the highest morality.

3. Presence and sight: darsanam, evil eye, and architecture

Sight is an important element in puja and is linked to categories of thought with wider applications than puja alone. Sight is a means of transferring power or influence from one thing to another. If the thing viewed is benevolent then the effects are beneficial. The concept of visiting and viewing a deity (or powerful person, especially a potentially beneficial politician or religious preceptor) is known as 'doing darsan', darsanam cēyuta. Sight is also a way in which negative influences are transmitted, particularly those of divisive competition between men (Tapper 1968: 17, Pocock 1973). If someone who feels jealousy looks at one or one's possessions, he transmits dishti (negative influence, 'evil eye', dishti derives from the Sanskrit dr̥ṣṭi meaning 'sight'). Dishti causes those things which receive envious glances to spoil. To avert this effect, there is an elaborate technology of diverting visual attention to "dishti absorbers", e.g. scarecrow-like overturned pots in the fields, chillies and limes attached to a motor vehicle or bicycle, black wrist or ankle cords, or figurines at house entrance (dishti bomma). There are also numerous methods of removing dishti and throwing it away by transferring it from the person affected into various movable substances which are disposed of.

Principles of village architecture are also related to notions about the influence of sight. To avoid trapping "lines of sight" within houses there is never an opening in a building which is not opposed by another aperture on the opposite parallel wall, referred to as its "answer", javābu. Similarly, doorway frames

must be aligned exactly within the house or between houses if they face one another so as not to trap lines of sight.

Consistent with these notions is the additional principle that no house entrance should perpendicularly face a street or path down which people walk and might cast glances. In order to avoid the bad luck that is believed to result from seeing a 'bad face' in the beginning of a day or start of a month, some people do a puja or sūrya-namaskāram, dandam gesture and prayer to the god Sūrya in the form of the rising Sun, first thing in the morning.

Influences are also transmitted by touch and proximity. Numerous rituals contain gestures of placing auspicious objects in contact with others, with the aim to transfer the auspicious influence.

4. Range of objects of worship

The range of objects of worship, puja, is extensive and not solely confined to images of deities and the like. Abstract forms and substances are sometimes used to represent deities, e.g. a betel leaf with a wad of turmeric and vermillion is used to represent Ganapati in Brahmanical rituals. More striking is the veneration of a wide variety of everyday utensils, vehicles, substances, and animals. The feature all these things have in common is their involvement in the well-being of the worshipper. Tools, carts, well-pumps, fields, rice, gold, and money are all attributed with the ability to produce wealth and prosperity to their users. If they are not adequately honoured by puja, the central message of which is respect and subordination, they can and will cause harm. Carts can be involved in accidents by a wheel coming loose, fields can

become infertile, sources of livelihood can be hit by difficulties. A villager's whole existence is bound up in an interdependence with these things and with everyday domestic objects in a manner analogous to the interdependence within or between castes in the village.

It is important to note the manipulative side of such worship. Just as in the use of respect behaviour, there are two types of objects. The first is a clear-cut deity of superior power and status. The second is of ambiguous status, who has certain powers to influence the worshipper's well-being but whose status is somewhat dubious. Worship of the second type is performed in the idiom of the first type as a sort of manipulative bribe. Though, in a sense, a man can make or destroy a cart, and thus has power over it, the cart has a potential power of its own to cause a fatal accident to its owner. The point is not which has more absolute power, the man or the cart. They are both dependent upon each other. A farmer who worships his cart, offering it a fictively superior place through respectful obeisance to it, assures his well-being, his safety from accidents. (The annual worship of cobras on nāgula caviṭi is performed with the same motivation.)

Thus, the message of the ritual structure is that the entire universe is tied into a moral system in which well-being is assured when forms of hierarchy are utilized to express respect. One can thus discern an ideology of hierarchy in the worship of various objects without having to expect that the objects are ranked among themselves or with relation to men in a hierarchy replicating human society. A corollary of this is that any lack of well-being tends

to be attributed to the failure to adequately fulfil the obligations of hierarchical interdependence. Since misfortunes are to some extent unavoidable, one is compelled to do puja repeatedly and to multiple objects as an insurance for the future.

At another level, there is not much distinction between deities and these everyday objects of worship. They overlap and are co-extensive in many cases. When being instructed how to do a chicken sacrifice to my motor scooter on one festival (because it had been breaking down frequently and inexplicably) I was told to say a prayer in my mind to the goddess Durga for no accidents to occur in the coming year, despite the fact that the puja and sacrifice were intended specifically for the scooter (rather than for Durga in general). Yatas did a dandam to the first palm tree they climbed in the day to ensure they would not fall or have other accidents. However, when questioned they said that they were doing the dandam to the god Rama. Similarly, when people held gold to their eyes in a respectful gesture or when shopkeepers kissed their first earnings of the day, this veneration (with its message of respect through self-subordination) was both to gold and money as objects as well as symbolically to the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi. Housewives occasionally mentioned that their domestic grindstones were the goddess Gauri, since they ground their turmeric on it (turmeric is an auspicious substance with many ritual associations with the status of women) and it is sat upon by an auspicious non-widow, pēraṇṭālu, in the marriage rituals. Gauri is also a goddess in whose honour there is an annual festival, the Gairamma Festival, which has many associations with marriage symbolism.

5. Time, beginnings, and auspiciousness

There are a number of important features in the categories of time divisions which deserve consideration because they show how systems of cultural categories carry strong underlying social implications. In the case of categories of time we see how the timing of many activities is tied in with the ideology of subordination and hierarchy (as expressed in the underlying structure of puja) through the concern to ensure well-being by initiating activities at auspicious moments.

One of the most remarkable features of activities in village life is the immense concern with beginnings and initiations of particular activities. There is the underlying assumption that setting out at the right time has implications for the outcome of the entire undertaking. While these factors principally concern calculations for celebrating stages in the individual's life cycle, they also extend to the initiation of various agricultural operations, starting out on journeys, beginning and inaugurating buildings or other structures, the first using of implements and utensils, and the wearing of new clothing.

The factor which crucially affects beginnings in this way is the calculation of auspicious and inauspicious divisions of time. These are based on the principle that different times are "ruled" by different astrological forces. These forces are the Sun, Moon, seven planets and twenty-seven constellations (nakṣatram). The solar year is divided into auspicious and less auspicious halves (uttarāyana and dakṣiṇāyana) based on the Sun's apparent northward or southward point of daily rising on the horizon. The Sun traverses twelve zodiacal constellations (rāsi) in one year and also the

twenty seven constellations (nakṣatram) from which they are derived. The presence of the Sun in one of the twenty seven constellations is known as a kārte (each one of which is called by the name of its constellation). Kārte last for thirteen and a half days each and are known in order by name by most villagers since they are the reckoning points for agricultural operations. These conjunctions of the Sun with various constellations are attributed with auspicious or inauspicious influences.

The Moon also features prominently in the reckoning of time. Lunar months, beginning on the new moon (amavasya) are divided into auspicious (waxing, suddha) and less auspicious (waning, bahula) fortnights. Each of these lunar fortnights consists of fifteen days, the last day of which is either the full or new moon. Each day in the cycle of fifteen lunar days (tithi) is attributed with auspicious, neutral or inauspicious influence over the undertakings of men. (Tithi, lunar days, incidentally do not coincide with solar days and tend to overlap at times.) The eleventh lunar day (Ēkādaśi, or Ēkāśi in village pronunciation) particularly of the waxing moon, is the most auspicious day of a month and is always the occasion for a disproportionate number of ritual ceremonies and activities. Similarly, the fourth day (caviti) is considered to be the most inauspicious day. This tends to be a self-fulfilling prophecy and people seem noticeably pessimistic, sullen, and contentious on caviti. Many is the time when a journey is postponed or an undertaking put off when it is realised that the day is caviti. Even a severely ill person would not be taken to hospital on caviti for fear that that might surely spell disaster.

Table VI-2

The form of a Telugu date used in designating festivals etc.:

For example, caitra suddha Ēkādaśi means the eleventh phase of the waxing moon in the month of caitra. This information is given in the following sequence: 1. lunar month, 2. waxing or waning fortnight (suddha or bahula respectively), 3. lunar day, tiṭhi (there are two fourteen day cycles, the first in the waxing fortnight ends with the full moon - pūrṇimi, the second ends with the new moon - amāvāsyā. The other lunar days, which do not necessarily correspond to solar days, are designated by names which are derived from Sanskrit ordinal numbers.)

Divisions of one lunar month

1. Month	2. Wax/wane	3. Phase (day)	Numerical equivalent of lunar phase	
caitra	suddha	pāḍyami	1	
caitra	suddha	vidiya	2	
caitra	suddha	tadiya	3	
caitra	suddha	caviti	4	
caitra	suddha	pancami	5	
caitra	suddha	ṣaṣṭi	6	
caitra	suddha	saptami	7	waxing fortnight
caitra	suddha	aṣṭami	8	
caitra	suddha	navami	9	
caitra	suddha	daśami	10	
caitra	suddha	Ēkādaśi	11	
caitra	suddha	dvādaśi	12	
caitra	suddha	trayōdaśi	13	
caitra	suddha	caturdaśi	14	
caitra		pūrṇimi	Full Moon	
caitra	bahula	pāḍyami	1	
caitra	bahula	vidiya	2	
...		waning fortnight
caitra	bahula	trayōdaśi	13	
caitra	bahula	caturdaśi	14	
caitra		amāvāsyā	New Moon	
vaiśākha	suddha	pāḍyami	1	(new month)
vaiśākha	suddha	vidiya	2	
...		

Days of the week are ruled by astrological bodies, usually those planets from which it derives its name. Certain days are also associated with Śīva (Monday, sōmavaram) and Viṣṇu (Saturday). Saturday is specifically linked to Śrī Venkatēśvara, a form of Viṣṇu and the most important major Hindu deity of Andhra Pradesh. In addition to the effects of the movements of the Sun and Moon, the planets and constellations exert influences over each hour in every day. Practically every day has its varjam, inauspicious times of up to two hours, though the average Shudra villager does not concern himself with these.

The source of information on the astrological influences for any particular day is the pancangam, astrological almanac. (Pan-
cangam means 'five aspects', namely tithi-lunar day, varam - weekday, nakṣatram - constellation, yogam - luni-solar divisions of the day, and karanam - sub divisions of the lunar day.) In the village, the main authority on the almanac is the Aripaka village record-keeper. He is the most frequently consulted source for determining auspicious times (muhurtam) in the village. There are others who also know about the almanac, literate Gavara men often active in leadership roles. All these men have handbooks, easily available in town bazaars, which state instructions for each type of activity. These purport to be the assessments by scholars based on the combinations and permutations of astrological forces acting on each other. Like individuals, each type of activity has its own set of auspicious and inauspicious influences. What might be unlucky for one activity might thus be a lucky time for another. Individual men have differing luck deriving from the astrological

bodies ruling at the time of their birth. More highly sophisticated astrological techniques strive to correlate the forces governing particular activities (e.g. beginning a journey) with the forces ruling particular individuals. However, such degrees of accuracy are not generally sought by the villagers.

All of the above descriptions are of concerns for ensuring positive outcomes by initiating activities at auspicious times ruled by favourable astrological forces. There are, however, certain events, particularly in the individual's life cycle, which occur unpredictably: birth, first menstruation, and death. In these, there is the danger that an important beginning of a new state can take place at an inauspicious time. If left unremedied, this is believed to cause misfortune (nas̥tam) to various relatives. In the case of childbirth, the well-being of the husband is threatened, in the case of first menstruation, the husband or his father might be negatively affected. Deaths at inauspicious times can also bring bad consequences on the deceased person's house or neighbourhood.

Techniques to placate these malevolent influences are known as s̥anti ('peace'). They involve a combination of placatory prayers and offerings with the fulfilment of the "curse" through legal fiction. Sight plays a prominent role in these rituals. For instance, there is the case of a child which is born at an inauspicious time. Its father is not permitted to see it since he would then be afflicted with malevolent influences. At an auspicious time (muhurtaṁ) a ceremony is arranged at which a Brahman priest officiates. A cloth is held between the husband and wife who hold their

new born baby. In the ceremony, the planets are appeased by Sanskrit chants (mantram) and offerings. (The puja, as already mentioned, draws on the idiom of social hierarchy and subordination.) Then the bottom of the cloth is lifted so that the husband can view his child's reflection in the oil of a large shallow oil lamp. Thus, by a legal fiction, he views his child for the first time without directly looking at it. He thus averts the malevolent influences, which significantly are thought to transfer at the first sight. Here is an example of the crucial importance of direct lines of sight in transferring influences, and the importance of timing for beginnings.

Other instances where legal fictions are used reveal the principal mechanism involved. The central issue is the expression of respect and subordination to a benevolent ruling force. It is necessary to begin at an auspicious time, (e.g. ploughing a field) regardless of the actual intention of carrying on with that activity at that time. Farmers go through the ritual of ceremonially starting and then leave the work to be done later. This demonstrates that the actual time of proceeding with the undertaking is practically irrelevant as long as a proper gesture of respect has been shown to a benevolent force ruling at the moment of beginning. That gesture assures its jurisdiction throughout the remainder of the task. Thus, the concern with auspicious times (muhurtam) is based on underlying social categories which are found also in puja, linking well-being with the acknowledgement of subordination (the basic symbolic act in the creation of hierarchy and interdependence).

6. Well-being and the worship of deities

Interrelations with deities are phrased in the symbolic idiom of ideal relations between men, i.e. the showing of respect through expression of subordination and dependence. These relations are not merely mirror reflections of actual human relations. Rather, they are expressions of ideal categories which are created by and exist in the rituals. Villagers behave towards deities in ways which are traditionally handed down and conceive of these methods as axiomatic, proper by definition.

There is the belief that deities which are properly worshipped bring benefits such as the maintenance or restoration of bodily health, the bestowal or enhancement of fertility, and the promotion of economic prosperity. The symbolism of subordination (as expressed in puja) is linked to the techniques of ensuring those states of well-being, in either their regular maintenance or emergency restoration. By extension, occurrences of illness or misfortune are generally attributed to failures to live up to obligations of subordination and reciprocity (such as through puja symbolising hierarchy and interdependence). For this reason, persons who fall ill make promises to deities that if they are cured they will perform various rituals in the deity's honour. Such vow-making activity (mokku, 'vow') occurs with high frequency throughout the year. In one twelve month period some forty instances of vow performances came to light. Fourteen were instances of individuals being recently healed and sixteen were annual performances by families who had received some special healing benefit in the past. The content of vow-fulfilments is testimonials of subordination and

*See C. Geertz's notion of systems of symbols as model of and model for reality (Geertz: 7).

dependence which are far more demonstrative than a usual puja and can include self-mortification or considerable monetary sacrifice. Vow-making is a fundamental element in according a deity with demonstrated power and effectiveness. As such, it is a phenomenon found in many parts of the world. Ex voto testimonials in honour of patron saints or the Madonna at a particular site (e.g. Lourdes) are examples of this.

Attributing misfortune to neglect of deities is a mechanism whereby peoples' belief is strengthened rather than diminished in the face of the inevitable illnesses and mishaps which occur in the course of normal life. This is because each time a particular illness or misfortune occurs, there is an activation of worship with its symbolic message that well-being derives from showing the proper symbolic subordination and respect. These symbolic forms create an ideal model of behaviour which is extended to the relations between men. Though in actual fact relations between men do not conform to neat categories of hierarchy, they express their relationships in these stereotype terms which de-emphasize and screen discrepancies from conscious perception.

The difference between ties of individuals with deities and ties of groups with deities lies more in the regularity and permanence of the relationship. This reflects the social patterns in which relations between groups (e.g. castes) are relatively fixed, on a long-term basis, while relations between individuals (e.g. friendships or inter-caste commercial relationships) for temporary instrumental goals are more fluid. Long-term annually renewed relations characterize the ties of groups (e.g. settlements) with deities just as they form the basis for the least ambiguous economic ties between service castes and employers (e.g. jajmani ties with Washermen).

By contrast, individual vow-making tends to be initiated for a particular purpose (e.g. the curing of illness). There are obligations to fulfil the vow made on that particular occasion but the worshipper is not afterwards compelled to maintain a regular long-term tie.

Performance of deity rituals is not only the fulfilment of obligations between men and deities using the medium of puja. They are additionally the occasion for the fulfilment and expression of obligations between men and men. We shall see further on in the descriptions of deity festivals that caste interdependence is essential to many ritual occasions and ceremonies.* Participation in rituals serves to delineate groups of people who act together for their mutual benefit and well-being. Stereotype duties of various castes in rituals are stylizations and idealizations of social interrelations, particularly of the jajmani tie of long-term economic subservience and service of one caste to another. Barbers, Washermen, and Harijans, in particular, play essential roles in the life cycle rituals of all Twice-Born and Shudra castes.

Enactments of long-term ties with deities, either by groups or by individuals, have implications for the villagers' perception of long-term economic ties such as those with Carpenters, Barbers, and Washermen. The ritual forms of long-term ties and these long-term economic relations between castes are both expressions of an ideal of interdependent cooperation between castes and men which is not clearly observable in reality.

*Kāryam is the villagers' term for a ritual or ceremonial event. It carries the connotation of action and doing: 'act, use, effect, anything which is done or ought to be done, business, success in business' (Galletti: 66).

In the following accounts we examine the actions of deities in which illnesses or misfortunes are clearly seen as a punishment for laxity in expressing proper respect and subordination to them. It is interesting to note that in the issue of the coercive imperative to show respect to deities, there is not a great deal of distinction between so-called sanskritic deities, e.g. Rama, Satyanarayana (= Vishnu) and non-sanskritic deities, the village goddesses. Though it is true that on the whole, male, sanskritic deities are more benevolent and village goddesses are more potentially vindictive in overall character. This is an issue which we take up later.

a. Rationalization of the failure of a ritual to Rama to bring rain

In 1972 when villagers became anxious about the monsoon's late arrival they staged a twenty-four hour bhajana, religious hymn-singing, and hired a Brahman priest to chant 150,000 mantrams, prayer formulas, at the village Rama temple in Yatapalem. They then held a santarpanam, charitable feeding of the poor, in which dependent castes were fed by Gavaras. Some clouds appeared on the horizon and people commented "god's good-will" (dēvuḍu daya). However, it did not rain and the weather only continued to get hotter. As early as the day after the rituals a rumour began spreading that a young woman who was menstruating had attended the bhajana. Rama was displeased at the disrespect shown to him and that was why the rains were not sent. Later, as anxiety of an impending drought grew, a woman became possessed by Rama and revealed that two menstruating women had attended the bhajana and hence there had been

no merit, punyam, and therefore he had sent no rain. Through the possessed woman, Rama instructed the villagers to break fifty coconuts at the village temple to atone for this.

- b. Myths of the consequences of neglecting to fulfil one's vows to a deity:

A popular vow-fulfilment ceremony in the village is the performance of the Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam (vratan = vow in Sanskrit, satya = true, Nārāyaṇa = another name for Vishnu). People make a vow to perform this ceremony upon the successful occurrence or completion of a desired event usually associated with family well-being such as the performance of a wedding or the birth of a son. (By contrast, vows to localised village goddesses tend to centre on the curing of illnesses.) An integral part of the proceedings of every Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam is the reading of the Satyanarayana story in Telugu (other sections of the Brahmanical chanting are in Sanskrit and unintelligible to the villagers). This story consists of numerous tales and episodes about persons who promise to perform the Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam. It tells of the benefits from doing the vratan and the consequences of neglecting to do it once it has been promised. The following is a summary of one of the main tales:

A merchant (Komati) came upon a king's wife performing a Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam. He inquired about the purpose of the ritual and was told that it was to enable the king to have children. The merchant's wife had been childless so far, so the merchant made a vow to do a Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam if his wife should have a child. She then gave birth to a daughter. She reminded her husband of his vow but he postponed it saying that he would fulfil it once his daughter got married.

The daughter grew up and the merchant had her wedding performed but forgot about his vow. At that, Satyanarayana got angry and caused the merchant and his son-in-law to be imprisoned by a king whose soldiers had caught them with stolen money which had been 'planted' on them by thieves. Difficulties also befell the merchant's wife and daughter. Their money was stolen, they were afflicted with diseases, and they were finally reduced to begging from house to house.

At one house, in the course of her begging, the daughter was given some Satyanarayana prasādam. This gave her and her mother the idea to perform a Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam. With that, Satyanarayana became very pleased. He appeared in a dream to the king who was imprisoning the merchant and his son-in-law. He revealed that they were innocent and advised they be freed. The king had the men released and their property and boat restored to them.

Satyanarayana appeared to them disguised as a holy man, sanyāsi. He asked about the contents of the ship. The merchant, being excessively proud of his wealth (dhanagarvam "wealth-pride") mocked the sanyasi and suspected that he might want to steal something. Accordingly he told him that there only leaves in the hold. Soon afterwards the merchant and his son-in-law discovered that indeed their cargo was only a pile of leaves.

They realised that they had offended the sanyasi and ran to him making dandam gestures and praying to be forgiven. The sanyasi then reminded the merchant that he had never fulfilled his promise to perform a Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam. He explained that all his difficulties were the consequence of that negligence. The merchant praised him pleading for mercy (karuna) and protection (rakṣimpumu). The sanyasi restored the ship's contents and the merchant left with his son on their way to their home port.

The merchant's wife and daughter received news of their arrival as they were in the midst of performing a Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam. In their haste they neglected to partake of the prasādam at the end of the ceremony. As a result, Satyanarayana was again angered and caused the ship to sink. The wife was distraught and contemplated suicide. She thought that her husband and son-in-law had been drowned.

The merchant prayed to Satyanarayana who, by means of a voice from the sky, said that his wife had forgotten to take prasādam. The wife also heard this and went

home at once to eat some prasādam. When she returned she found her husband and son-in-law safely on shore. From then on, the merchant performed a Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam every month on the full moon day.

Another popular vrātam performed by individuals in the village was the Trīnāḍha Vratam in honour of the Hindu trinity Vishnu, Siva, and Brahma. In the story read as part of that vrātam there are similar examples of people doing the vrātam and getting beneficial results, while people sceptical of the vrātam experience grave consequences. For example, in two episodes a king and a teacher show scorn and disrespect to the Trīnāḍha Vratam puja. In both cases their sons die but are subsequently brought back to life when the king and the teacher each see the error of their ways and perform the vrātam themselves.

c. Illnesses of people and animals seen as the result of failures to properly propitiate village goddesses:

The following are examples of the tendency to regard illness as caused by failure to propitiate village goddesses. Proper propitiation of goddesses involves symbolic enactment of the ideology of hierarchy. Violations of proper hierarchical relations are then attributed with bringing misfortune.

- i. A sheep which was being raised by a Gavara farmer for sacrifice at his annual vow-fulfilment to Durgamma-Bangaramma suddenly fell ill. The farmer decided to do the ceremony in the following week and appealed to the goddesses to keep the sheep healthy since, after all, it was to be sacrificed in their honour. Later, various villagers commented that the goddesses had got angry with the farmer for delaying to do the festival and disrespectfully selling the sheep originally intended to be sacrificed to them, of which the ill one was a replacement.
- ii. When an epidemic of animal diseases appeared to be starting, plans were made to do a festival with a pig-impalement sacrifice in honour of a goddess in charge of animal illnesses, Pasuvula Māreṃma. The festival had

not been done for many years. A Carpenter commented that the reason for the farmers' neglecting this goddess' festival was pride, garvam. He added that now that the cattle were getting sick the villagers realised they should not have ignored the festival. One farmer, supporting this view, commented that the goddess caused the cattle to get sick because she was angry that her festival had not been done and hence she had not been fed.

- iii. A sister of one of the village Barbers had been visiting from another village when the Bandamma, village goddess, festival was initiated. She left several days before the conclusion of the festival and experienced unusual pains and swelling in her neck. She made a vow to Bandamma and returned to the village for the festival and the pain and swelling went away. Villagers commented that the reason why the woman's neck got swollen was that she had not taken leave of the goddess when she left the village with no intention of returning for the festival. It is a convention that one is obligated to participate in a festival if one is in the village when it is initiated.
- iv. A ballad about a local bālapēraṅtālu is in a similar vein. A local bus refused to take aboard a body of a dead child. The bus driver and conductor were soon afflicted with vomiting and diarrhoea. When they realised it was due to their affront to a bālpēraṅtālu they prayed to her acknowledging her powers and praising her. They immediately returned to take her body, which was being transported to her parents' village, and they were instantly cured.

7. Individual vs. group ties with deities

The ties of individuals with deities and the ties of groups with deities are both expressed in the same idiom of hierarchy and interdependence. Both contain the belief that well-being is dependent on the establishment and maintenance of interdependent ties with deities through forms of respect and veneration which embody the categories of hierarchy.

The difference between ties of individuals with deities and ties of groups with deities lies more in the regularity and permanence of the relationship. This reflects the social patterns in which

relations between groups (e.g. castes) are relatively fixed, on a long-term basis, while relations between individuals (e.g. friendships or intercaste commercial relationships) for temporary instrumental goals are more fluid. Long-term annually renewed relations characterise the ties of groups (e.g. settlements) with deities just as they form the basis for the least ambiguous economic ties between service castes and employers, e.g. Washer-men-Gavaras. By contrast, individual vow-making tends to be initiated for a particular purpose (e.g. the curing of an illness). There are obligations to fulfil the vow made on that particular occasion but the worshipper is not afterwards compelled to maintain regular long-term ties.

Some people undertake to do a ceremony to honour a deity annually (triennially in some cases) on the model of group ties with deities. Sometimes these ties are even passed on hereditarily, though this is not a widespread phenomenon from a statistical point of view. For instance, a Gavara woman and her family return to Yatapalem, her natal village, to perform a triennial ceremony in honour of one of the village goddesses, Maridamma.

These votive performances were initiated by her mother when she was born as the result of a vow made to the goddess. Now that her parents are dead she carries on the family tradition, particularly since she was the product of the vow. The worship itself consists of a public gathering to hear the chanting of a legend about the goddess which lasts the entire night. This is followed the next morning by a puja and goat sacrifice. This ceremony attracts wide public attendance and attention despite its being a

vow-fulfilment by an individual family.

Such enactments of long-term ties with deities, either by groups or by individuals have implications for the villagers' perception of long-term economic ties such as those with Carpenters, Barbers, and Washermen. The ritual forms of long-term ties and these long-term economic relations between castes are both expressions of an ideal of interdependent cooperation between castes and men. Many actual social relations do not neatly conform to this idealised pattern, but its emphasis in ritual maintains it as an ideal category.

8. The symbolism of female deities:

In an article about fear and the status of women among Brahmans in Karnataka, Harper observes that there is a "relationship between the low status of women and their portrayal in the cultural belief system as dangerous persons" (Harper: 81). He suggests that this arises from men's fear of women and that this fear derives from guilt over constantly manoeuvring women into a subordinate, disadvantaged status. This assumes, however, that there exists somewhere a notion that women are being denied an imagined right to be equal or powerful. I suggest that rather than arising from guilt, men's fear arises from women's real and continuing threat to male dominance. Evidence of such potential threats are abundant in our material on women in the Gavara caste (Chapter III.A.). Harper provides evidence for this in his own material:

"Nearly every conceivable structural mechanism is brought into play to prevent women from uniting in opposition to the males in the house and threaten

to some slight degree male dominance."

(Harper: 90)

Harper's material also resembles mine on the issue of widowhood. Widows seem to pose a particular threat to male dominance since they have established a real base of power and influence over their grown children and, moreover, are no longer under the control of their husband.

"A woman's progress towards a position of prestige and some control over the affairs of her household are interrupted when her husband dies. If she has daughters-in-law, the senior one supplants her as 'house mistress'. She is then under the authority and protection of her sons, and her position of power and dominance among the female members of the family is diminished. Upon the death of her husband ... she loses her hard-earned position within her own family."

(Harper: 91)

The consequence of this threat of the position of the widow among Havik Brahmins of Karnataka is that widows are believed to be particularly dangerous and go around poisoning people. All the more reason, of course, to monitor and control their activities. Harper informs us that these beliefs, about poisonings, are confined to the Brahman caste because of the more restricted life they impose on their women in contrast to the Shudras. These same patterns of belief, about the dangerousness and impulsive passion of women, are evident in my material on Gavaras. Thus, I feel that such beliefs derive from the subordinate status of women at all levels of society. In their own way, Gavara women post very real threats to the dominance of their men.

These notions about the dangerous qualities of undominated women appear in conceptions of the character of deities.

Babb makes the following observations on his material from Eastern Madhya Pradesh:

"In general, masculine divinity seems to act as a restraining factor, while feminine divinity is a potentially destructive force which must be restrained."

(Babb: 146)

"When the feminine dominates the masculine the pair is sinister; when male dominates female the pair is benign."

(Babb: 142)

"The goddess must be viewed as the subordinate member of the pair, her more terrible aspects apparently subdued by marriage."

(Babb: 147)

Harper similarly tells of a dangerous lesser female deity, caudi, in Karnataka. Stories about caudis tell of their being subdued by Brahman men who use mantras to compel them to obey them. The caudis thentail on their masters' behalf submissively and benevolently. Eventually, through tickery or a mistake on the part of the Brahman, they become free from the spell. As soon as they are no longer subdued they go out of control and become malevolently destructive to their former masters and their families.

These observations have particular relevance for us in our considerations of the significance of Andhra village goddesses. In the revenue village of Aripaka there are two major annual festivals which centre on female deities, the Village Goddess Festival and the Gairamma Festival. Significantly, the village goddess, a dēvata, is without a major male consort and is potentially highly destructive. This feature parallels the material of Babb and Harper which shows that undominated female deities are more dangerous and

potentially malevolent. It is this potentially destructive vindictive character which, in fact, imbues the worship of the village goddess with a coercive force which makes her worship the widest mobilization of the whole village for any ritual activity. In contrast, Gairamma is a dēvi, a form of Gauri, and appears with her husband Siva in the idol which is worshipped during her festival. There are numerous references to the symbolism of marriage in the Gairamma rituals which are associated with the benevolence of the goddess and fecundity of the ripening crops. The performance of the Gairamma Festival is not imperative in the way that a village goddess festival is. In fact, its performance has even been omitted in some years in the past.

Concepts of the character of these two female deities draw heavily on the stereotyped notion of women in the society at large, 1. woman as virtuous wife with her husband still alive: the benevolent Gauri with her consort Siva and, 2. woman as threatening, dangerous, and undominated (as in widowhood): the potentially malevolent village goddess who needs repetitive pacification and worship. The common feminine quality which both of these female deities share is involvement in worldly matters and desires, namely fecundity, prosperity, and health. This derives from the notion that women in society are more endowed with qualities of āsa (earthly cares, attachments, passions, lusts) than men.

It is remarkable that both these two varieties of female deity, dēvi and dēvata, are referred to in the similar idiom of motherhood, despite their marked differences in temperament. Gauri is generally referred to as Gairamma, and the individual goddesses all have names

similarly compounded with the suffix -amma,* e.g. Bandamma, Maridamma.

In the case of Gairamma, the reference to motherhood, with all of the positive, benevolent, protective qualities it implies, is quite justified. Gairamma is the goddess associated with the ripening crops. However, when we note that a village goddess is explicitly referred to as a mother, her motherly qualities are not so readily apparent. Rather, in her case, these qualities are wishfully hoped for. In addition, this use of the term 'mother' to call or address a village goddess is a kind of euphemism and form of manipulative overpayment of tribute. We have observed this manipulative use of respect behaviour between individuals. Similar payment of tribute to bribe forces of potential harm was also observed in the worship of objects with a potential to harm (fields, carts, etc.), things of ambiguous benevolence or of close interdependence. We thus see that to understand the character of female deities in the context of an Andhra village we need to distinguish,

1. the status of women in society as a whole
2. the concept of āsa,
3. the varying characters of different types of deities, and
4. the manipulative nuances in the application of the terminology of motherhood to widely differing varieties of goddess.

¹ See a further discussion of names of deities and terms of motherhood in the exposition of the village goddess festival in Chapter IX.D.3.

Chapter VII

VILLAGE RITUALS: LIFE CYCLE

A. Basic Symbols and Principles

We now turn to discuss specific ritual activities in the life of the village and concentrate on two main types of ritual, those of the individual life cycle and those of the annual cycle. We find that life cycle rituals are particularly important for understanding the demarcation and creation of categories of statuses and roles within the caste, namely age, sex, marital status, and clan affiliation. Annual cycle rituals are more prominent in the definition of inter-caste relations. It should be borne in mind, however, that these distinctions are not mutually exclusive spheres of activity. On the contrary, they overlap and interpenetrate sharing a single idiom of symbols which reinforce the basic ideologies of hierarchy and interdependence. Both the life cycle and the annual cycle rituals demarcate and create categories of status and models for roles. They both repeatedly reiterate group interdependence through common participation in ceremonies.

1. Role of Women

It would hardly be possible to describe all the ritual activities of the village in detail. Each life cycle ritual differs to varying degrees between each of the eighteen castes of the village. We shall therefore confine ourselves here to sketching the rituals of the Gavaras which are, however, essentially similar to those of the other Shudra castes. Furthermore, it is our main aim to view the rituals in relation to the social structural data

on Gavaras at the beginning of this thesis. In describing these life cycle rituals we find particularly significant the way ritual and its symbols create categories which define the role of women. This means, specifically, the ideology of the auspiciousness of 'non-widowhood' and the ideology of women as impulsive, emotional, and having strong worldly attachments (āsa). As was remarked earlier, this ideology is central to the justification of the subordination of women by men.

Let us recapitulate some of the structural problems inherent in the creation of subordinate status for the female half of the population. In previous sections we have pointed out numerous ways in which females challenge the principle of male dominance. This is evidenced among Gavaras in their degree of economic independence, the high incidence of marital instability, and sexual promiscuity. There is also the large number of women who are in the structurally paradoxical status of widow.

In order to uphold the hierarchy of sex, differences in age are favoured. This is justified in terms of female sexuality. It is widely held that older men can last longer in sexual intercourse and thus sufficiently satisfy their women better so that they will not run off to have affairs with other men. The ideology of the inauspiciousness of widowhood is closely linked to the ideological anomaly of a woman undominated by an older male. Due to demographic facts, the enforcement of a great age difference between husband and wife has had the effect of increasing the incidence of widowhood. However, due to the strength of the ritual categories, constantly repeating and symbolizing the negativity of widowhood, this demographic effect is not perceived

as a self-created paradox of the system. On the contrary, it is used to reinforce the negative, inferior status of women. Since there is the notion that the ideal faithful wife keeps her husband alive and herself an auspicious pēraṅtālu ('non-widow'), the high incidence of widowhood becomes a testimony of women's insufficient obedience and devotion. The women themselves internalize the notion of the negative and inauspicious connotations of widowhood through their participation in the rituals. In this way the negative symbols of widowhood give women an incentive to remain in an auspicious state by being loyally submissive and devoted to their husbands. Thus, the symbols of widowhood exert a pressure on behalf of marital stability and female subordination to men, in this society in which counter tendencies are constantly present.

2. Life Cycle Rituals as Beginnings

Life cycle rituals are perhaps better conceived as beginnings than as transitions or passages from one status to another. This is suggested by the great concern with timings. Life cycle rituals are invariably arranged to coincide with astrologically auspicious times (muhurtam). The lesson of subordination symbolized by adherence to astrological principles is thus expressed at every life cycle ritual. People embarking on new statuses should begin at the right time so as to be under the jurisdiction of the benevolent forces ruling at the moment of initiation. The fact that beginnings are crucial is further emphasised by the extra rituals which must be undertaken if birth, first menstruation, or death occur at astrologically inauspicious moments.

3. Turmeric Symbolism

There is another element which the life cycle rituals share in common, the prominent use of turmeric (pasupu, and vermillion - kumkuma made by mixing it with lime). This bright yellow substance, and the bright red vermillion kumkum derived from it and used in close association with it, is one of the most important ritual symbols. It is eminently a symbol in the sense described by Turner as "multivocal", "susceptible of many meanings" (Turner 1968: 17), having a multiplicity of referents. It also has the quality of simplicity, another important feature of ritual symbols:

"The greater the symbol, the simpler its form. For a simple form is capable of supplying associative links of a very generalized character; it displays a feature or features which it shares, literally or analogically, with a wide variety of phenomena and ideas." (Turner 1968: 185)

The use of yellow and red powders or pastes made of turmeric is one of the most common forms of performing puja to any object, person, or deity. Making a turmeric smear or spot with a red dot in the centre (together referred to as a bottu or tilakam) or making a turmeric smear with parallel red lines superimposed on it are ritual acts encountered in an immense variety of circumstances. The following is an inventory of associated referents in the symbolic use of turmeric which is far from comprehensive: turmeric is used in most pujas and festivals, agricultural rituals; to represent family ancestors and deities in the household shrine; to decorate the doorframe at the entrance to a house ('threshold' - gaḍapa - is the term also used to refer to 'household'); turmeric and vermillion are used to adorn ritual offerings, e.g. vegetables

animals for sacrifice; turmeric and vermillion represent the god Ganesh (Ganapati) at the outset of every brahmanical ritual; turmeric is smeared on to new books, new clothing, and announcements of auspicious ceremonies (subhakayālu = subha+kāryam) such as weddings; turmeric is a prominent substance in the marriage rituals at which it is smeared on rice, auspicious threads, the bodies of the bride and groom 'for purification'; turmeric is also one of the central symbols of the auspicious status of 'non-widowhood'. (unmarried girls as well as married women whose husbands are still alive both wear a turmeric-smeared forehead with a large red kumkum botṭu dot in the middle, while this is prohibited to widows). This inventory is given to alert the reader to the highly associative role turmeric plays in the descriptions of rituals which follow.

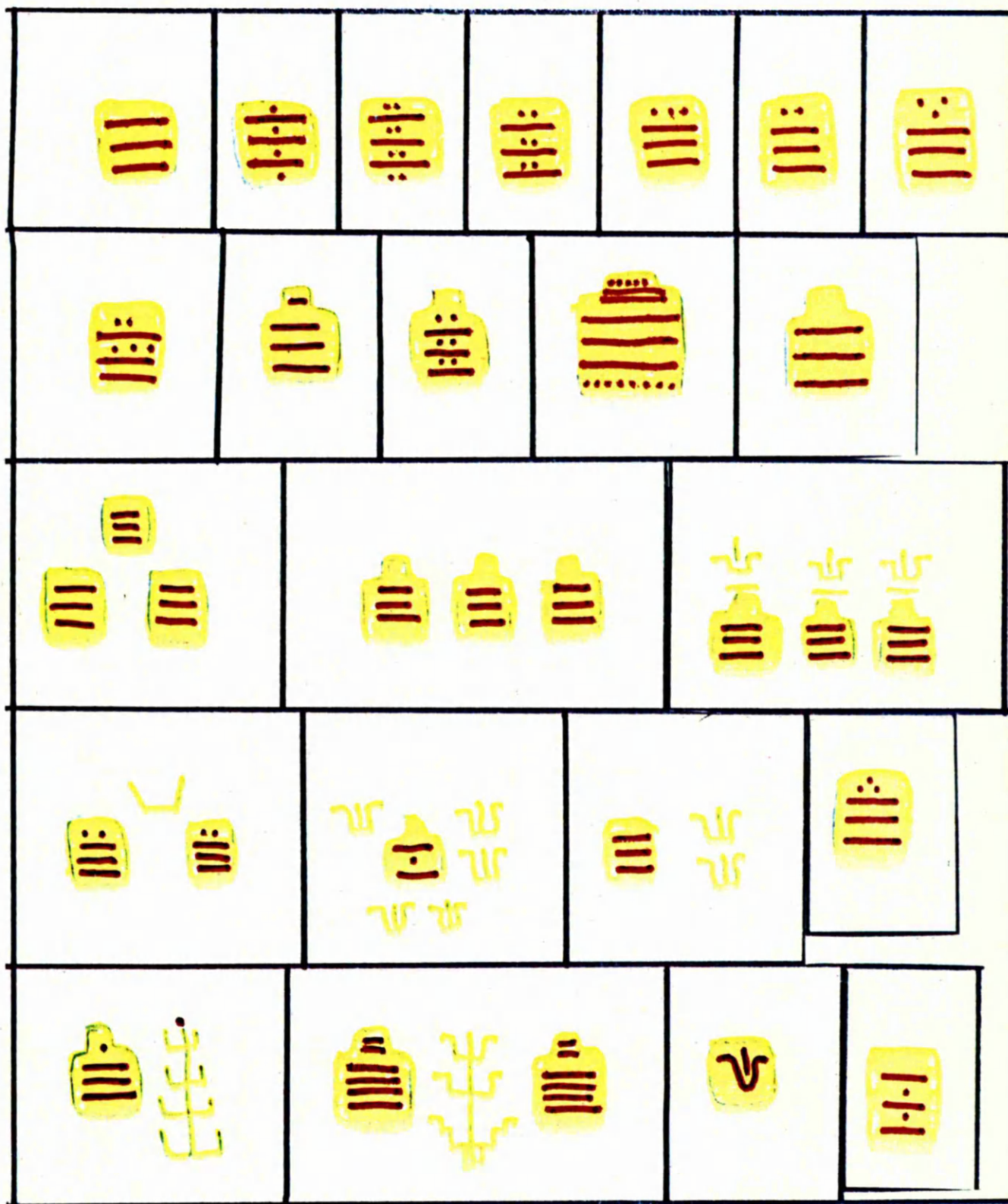
4. Household Shrine: 'God Corner' (dēvudumūla)

A final feature to note in the cycle of rituals is the prominent role played by the household shrine. This is known among Gavaras as the dēvudu mūla, 'god corner' and, as among other Shudra castes of the village is always found in the northeast corner (īśānya-mūla, 'the northeast') i.e., on the north corner of the east wall in houses with a rectangular plan. Among the Gavaras it usually consists of a small elevated area, often with three small step-like ledges. There are minor variations in its appearance among other non-Twice Born castes. Some are without a raised platform of any kind.

The essential feature common to all, and the feature which makes it a god corner is a rectangular panel (macca, 'patch, spot') smeared with bright yellow turmeric over which red vermillion

Figure VII-1.

VARIATIONS IN GAVARA DEVUDU MULA PANELS



lines (gīṭalu, 'lines') have been drawn. The patterns of parallel horizontal lines vary idiosyncratically by household. They generally tend to be made in groups of three or five, sometimes interspersed with parallel rows of vermillion dots (botṭu, plural botṭu). For Gavaras the god corner household shrine is a place of worship (pūja) and abode of deities (dēvuḍu, pl. = dēvuḷḷu), village goddesses (grāma-dēvata, pl. - grāma dēvatalu) family ancestors (peddalu, 'elders', i.e. patrilateral ancestors of the male household head), and family pēraṇṭālu (auspicious women who died before their husbands, i.e. non-widows) such as a wife of any male member of the household. Unmarried female children who die, known as bālapēraṇṭālu (bāla, 'young'), are also at the god corner but are sometimes commemorated additionally in a special monument at the site of their burial. (That monument generally has a tulasi bush of sweet basil planted in it, which further associates bāla-pēraṇṭālu with pēraṇṭālu in that tulasi is a symbol of a married woman whose husband is still alive.) Unmarried male children who die are called vīruḍu, 'hero', but are not distinguished or honoured in any particular manner.

All life cycle rituals, annual cycle rituals, personal 'emergency vows', and private merit-making devotions (especially by the household head's wife) are marked and commemorated by worship (puja) and eating a meal of offerings at the household shrine. The form of the worship varies according to the particular ceremony being celebrated but all contribute to the ritual centrality of the household and the continuing sanction of the family ancestors for its continued well-being.

When a family goes on pilgrimage to a temple, the household shrine is substituted by a tree or column upon which is applied the turmeric panel and vermillion lines. Leaf plates with food offerings are placed at the foot of this makeshift shrine and the family then eats its meal there. In this way the family can worship the deity as a household unit without having to be physically present at their house itself. The symbol of the turmeric panel enables them to do this.

B. Actual Performances of Life Cycle Rituals

Life cycle rituals will be described here to illustrate the way ritual symbolism actually works in practice. It should be noted that there are many variations in the way a ritual can be performed by different people even of the same caste, in locale, timing, elaborateness, and contents of the ritual itself. In fact, the free variations of symbols within a certain framework enhances the multiple associations of the symbols involved. The basic message of the structure of the ritual always remains.

1. Child Naming: uyyālu ('swing')

This ceremony comes within two weeks after the birth of a child and after its mother has bathed to remove purudu, birth pollution. The timing is flexible being five, seven, eleven or fifteen days after the birth. Nowadays the time is often determined by the astrological almanac. If they are still living, the child's father's parents conduct the ritual in place of its own parents. In this way the authority of the older generation is asserted. (In one ceremony observed, the child's father was not even present and its mother played only a peripheral role.

The child's maternal grandfather was present and played a more prominent role than its mother.) A puja is done at the house shrine (god corner) by the paternal grandmother (consisting of lighting an oil lamp and incense) who then places a waist cord (multāḍu) on the child. This is periodically changed but not removed until an individual's funeral when it is snapped. The baby's name is said into both of its ears by its grandfather and then grandmother. Then it is swung in a hammock-like cloth cradle (uyyālu) suspended from a roof beam.

As it swings, its grandmother and other women sing parts of a wedding song to it. The song alludes to Śīva's wife, Gauri, and Rāma's wife, Sīta, whose weddings were performed amidst splendour and good fortune (vaibhavam saubhāgyam). The song has a double reference. It looks forward to the child's growing up and getting married, while at the same time it refers to the child's own mother having had a fruitful marriage by giving birth to it. Childless married women often place their neck lockets (mangala-sūtram or tāli, symbolizing marriage much like a European wedding ring) on to the child with the hope that it will influence their ability to have children. Following this, prasādam, food offerings, are distributed to those attending. For auspiciousness, gold is sometimes placed on the multāḍu waist cord at the time of the ceremony but is then removed. A root (vāsukomma) which is believed to enable the child to learn how to speak is, however, left on the waist cord which is a frequent site for the fastening of protective amulets throughout an individual's life.

In some regions of India a child is named after the astrological force or deity ascendant at the moment of the child's birth. Not so here where names are chosen on the whim of the child's parents or grandparents. Their choices are often influenced by naming fads in the family or village. Certain families have special relationships with particular deities (e.g. Surya, Venkatesvara, Mahalakshmi) which they perpetuate through their children's names. These trends change over time and reflect the current popularity of deities. For instance, while many older people have named related to Puri Jagannath, younger people have a higher proportion of names related to Tirupati Venkateswara. This is in line with the shifting of popularity from Puri to Tirupati as pilgrimage centres. The Telugu film industry has played no small part in these trends. Other names are designed to appear meaningless or worthless (e.g. pentayya from penta, 'dung'). The reason for this is to deflect 'evil eye' or jealousy which which might otherwise be attracted to a child with an attractive name. Further discussion of naming patterns and nicknames is beyond the scope of this section on naming rituals. These are, however, significant subjects for further analysis.

2. First Haircutting: puttu talu ('birth head')

This ceremony occurs when the child is between two and three years old. Its timing is planned to coincide with an astrologically auspicious moment (muhūrtam). The first haircutting ceremony is linked to the naming ceremony in that it is typically performed at a temple of a deity in whose honour the child was named. If this is not possible, then the child's hair is collected for placing at a later date in a tank associated with a

temple to a particular deity. It thus has the effect of expressing tribute and thanks to a deity whom it is hoped will play a protective role over his namesake. The relatives who are prominent in the ceremony are again the parents of the child's father (particularly the child's paternal grandmother), if they are alive.

Turmeric appears in the ritual both in the form of a root, placed on top of a plate of raw rice later given to the family barber, and also in the form of "yellow rice", acintalu (= akṣintalu). Yellow rice is raw, hulled rice which has been stained yellow by being mixed with turmeric paste. Yellow rice is also a prominent item in marriage ceremonies. Relatives who come to the haircutting ceremony take a small coin and some yellow rice and move it about the child's head several times in a clockwise motion. They drop some of the yellow rice on the child's head and put the coin in the barber's shaving cup which is filled with water. One barber plays a drum throughout the proceedings while the family's permanent barber does the actual cutting. On one occasion observed, a female child was held by its father's mother and its hair was caught in a sari end by its father's younger sister, the category of relative known as atta which is both FYZ and potential wife's mother. The child's own mother played a peripheral role, watching from afar. Once the child's hair is cut the drumming stops and prasādam is passed out to all those who attended.

Briefly considering the significance of this ritual, we note that it is a means by which the elder generation express their authority over their children and grandchildren. It also

makes statements about the essential role of the family barber's attachment to the family in a way that is far more extensive than the mere provision of economic services. Beyond this, the ritual is an act of puja to a god in the child's name which reiterates an ideology of hierarchy, the value of symbolic obeisance.

3. First Menstruation: *Puspavati āyuta, pedda manisi āyuta
('becoming a big person')

The ritual surrounding a girl's first menstruation makes the distinction between women of married and unmarried statuses. Turmeric is a prominent symbolic element in the ritual. Aspects of astrological timing are given great importance. Women of the category pēraṇṭālu (non-widow, auspicious woman with her husband still alive) and the family barber also play important symbolic roles.

When a girl first menstruates, an authority on the astrological almanac is consulted. If the constellation (nakṣatram) is not good then ceremonies are undertaken to avert misfortune (naṣṭam, in which death is not precluded) occurring to the girl's husband. If first menstruation occurs during the lunar month of magha, the misfortune threatens her husband's father. Generally the girl 'sits' at her husband's family's house, customarily referred to as 'mother-in-law's house' (attavāriṇṭlō), the first month and at her own family (kannavāriṇṭlō) the second month. This order might be reversed depending on the house in which the girl is at the onset of menses. The girl is smeared with turmeric and has a turmeric and vermillion dot put on her forehead. She is seated on a palm mat which is brought by a woman

*Multiple associations of some terminology for menses: A girl who has just begun menstruating for the first time is referred to as puspavati or rajasvari. puspavati - from puṣpam 'flower; rajasvari - from rajasu 'menses': 'dust, the pollen of flowers'; rajasu-rajōṣaṇam "the condition of humanity, the quality of passion. The earthly nature. The natural man of flesh and blood. The flesh; that which produces sensual desire, worldliness, coveting, and falsehood, the cause of pain." (Brown: 867) (Note the close association with āśa.)

in the category of pēraṇṭālu. Piles of uncooked rice are placed at the four corners of the mat and a string smeared with turmeric is extended between them. The family barber is sent to announce the event to relatives in other villages. The written announcement he takes with him is smeared on its corners and sides with turmeric. The barber receives generous offerings of money for himself from the people to whom he brings the good news. Depending on the house in which she is sitting, relatives of the other family send her offerings of new saris (a pre-menstrual girl wears a skirt rather than a sari), fruits, oil for her hair and cooked confestions. If the girl is not married, however, no offerings are sent and the event is not ceremonialised, though announcements are made to the girl's relatives and she will begin wearing a sari.

Menstrual pollution (maila) is terminated by a bath after approximately five days or so. During menstruation a Gavara woman does not enter the inner room of her house (the location of the family god corner and storage of seed grains). She also does not do deity pujas or cook for her family at that time. The notion of prohibitions on dealings with deities during menstruation carries connotations of preserving respectfulness rather than notions of mystical contamination and ritual pollution. A ritual (ēkaham, a reading of names of the god in his praise) to honour Rama at the Yatapalem temple, was performed to ensure a good rainfall in a year when drought was presaged by a heatwave. When the ritual demonstrably failed to produce rain, the failure was attributed (by a woman possessed by Rama) to the presence of two menstuous women at the temple. This was disrespectful and caused the god's displeasure. The god allowed for

atonement to be done by the villagers breaking fifty coconuts to him.

4. Marriage: pelli, pendli

Marriage ceremonies are highly elaborate and complex and are the primary life cycle ritual in an individual's lifetime. They are the dividing line between the incomplete status of 'un-married' and the fully adult status of 'married'. Despite the complexity of the rituals a few essential aspects stand out which we shall discuss here.

a. Timing

Considerations of astrologically auspicious timings dominate all main and subsidiary steps in the ceremonies: the various journeys by the boy's family in search of a suitable bride, the betrothal ceremony where a symbolic smearing of the bride-to-be with turmeric seals the engagement, the time of raising the ceremonial post (rāta) beside which the actual wedding takes place, the exact moment of tying the marriage locket on the bride (mangalasūtram, tāli), the precise timing for the consummation (garbhādhānam) ceremony, and the times for removal of the ceremonial post and bridal canopy.

b. Turmeric

Turmeric occurs as a central symbolic substance in a large number of contexts throughout the wedding rituals: it is the essential element in the betrothal ceremony (which itself is referred to as pasupu rāyaḍam, 'the applying of turmeric'); turmeric is smeared on the marriage post (rāta) and decorated

with vermillion horizontal lines, and a turmeric-smeared thread tied around a leaf (kankaṇam) is secured to the post. When three pots are brought from the well for bathing the bride and groom on the first and last days of the wedding ceremony, one pot has a turmeric root tied to it, another one of the pots has turmeric paste mixed into its water, and the bride and groom are smeared all over with turmeric before being washed. At another point, the pēraṇṭālu who sits with the bride is smeared by other pēraṇṭālu with turmeric along with the bride. In the wedding rituals conducted by the Brahman priest a turmeric wad with a vermillion dot on it is used to represent the god Ganapati, god of beginnings, remover of obstacles. Turmeric roots are placed on ceremonial plates of raw rice, turmeric is smeared on the strings of the wrist thread (kankaṇam) and forehead thread (bāsikam) which holds a turmeric-coloured yellow and red pad in place in the middle of the forehead. Turmeric and vermillion are smeared on the mangalasūtram (wedding locket) and ceremonial cloth which is tied between the bride and groom. Throughout the ceremony turmeric-dyed rice (acintalu) is thrown or dropped on items being worshipped or on to the bride and groom. Several kilos of turmeric roots fill the brass vessels which form part of the bride's dowry which is carried on a shoulder-yoke by the family washerman during a palanquin procession around the village. Turmeric is also mixed into the water which is ceremonially poured between the pots of the two new fathers-in-law (i.e. the father of the groom and the father of the bride).

c. Pēraṇṭālu - Non-Widows

The role of auspicious non-widows (married women with husbands still alive) is a central association of the wedding ceremony. Turmeric paste is distributed to pēraṇṭālu for putting on their foreheads at the betrothal ceremony. The people who are essential for raising the ceremonial post (rāṭa) are pēraṇṭālu. Widows are prohibited from attending because of their inauspiciousness. At the Brahman-conducted wedding ceremony a pēraṇṭālu sits between the bride and groom throughout the entire proceedings.

d. Role of Elders

Marriages are occasions on which family and caste elders exert their authority. The search party for a suitable bride is a delegation of family and caste elders. Though the potential groom has certain veto powers over the choices they provide him, the ultimate decision is their responsibility. The wedding rituals themselves are occasions on which a household's kinship and friendship ties are fully activated for attending and financing the procedures. The readings (cadivimpulu) of monetary presentations (kaṭṇam) from the various friends and relatives take at least as long as the main Brahmanical ceremonies.

e. Household Shrine or God Corner: dēvuḍu mūla

Puja is performed at the household shrine in connection with the betrothal ceremony as well as during the various wedding rituals. The tying of the wedding locket, which officially seals the marriage bond, is done at the house shrine rather than under the canopy in front of the house, the scene of most of the other

proceedings. The first ceremonial meal of the newly weds takes place at the house shrine in the symbolic presence of ancestors, family pēraṇṭālu, village goddesses, and deities.

f. Role of Service Castes

The wedding rituals are times when the ties with service castes are fully activated and ceremonial duties explicitly delineated. Barbers are perhaps the most prominent, providing drumming and performing the ritual bathing of the bride and groom. They also make the forehead pads (bāsikam) for which they receive a special payment. Washermen carry the wedding palanquin in procession (ūrēgimpu) and carry a fire torch throughout the Brahmanical ceremony which always takes place at night (petromax pressure lamps notwithstanding). A Jangam, at least one Mala, and a contingent of Madiga, each playing the variety of drum unique to his caste, are considered essential to the proceedings. Their drumming is constant during all important stages of the ritual and creates the heightened dramatic atmosphere of all ceremonies. Payments (kaṭnam) to both families' service castes who perform these jobs are traditionally fixed. However, there is often controversy over the exact amounts analagous to the stylised tensions witnessed in the paying off of service castes (Barbers and Washermen especially) for their secular services. Nowadays most of the payment is in cash, but payment in kind also features prominently. The girl's family's washerman is entitled to take the considerable amounts of raw rice which the groom and bride ceremonially pour over each other's heads and the cloth they sit on during the Brahmanical

ritual. The Brahman priest who performs the ritual also receives payment in both cash and kind in this manner. This occurrence of payment in kind is a sort of model for the long-term economic relationships between castes in which payment in kind predominates over payment in cash. Payment in cash is relatively neutral in terms of status connotations whereas the donor of food and clothing is more clearly superior to the receiver. It also entails the concept of dhānam, 'virtuous gift-giving', which bestows merit on the donor.

g. Symbolization of Hierarchy

In terms of economic relations alone, the Brahman is in fact not distinguishable from the other service castes, Barbers, Washermen, and Harijans. It takes symbolic forms to maintain the social hierarchy. Apart from the fact that a Brahman priest is attributed with superior ritual powers (the knowledge and proper reciting of ritual formulae, mantram) his superiority is gesturally acknowledged by the bride and groom touching his feet and doing a salute, dandam, to them. This is a particularly potent symbol which makes use of the notion of the feet as the hierarchically lowest part of the body. Touching of the feet implies that even the lowest part of the person saluted is higher than the person saluting. As we have already pointed out, such ritual saluting (implying subordination and hence hierarchy) is the quintessential element in all ritual worship, as well as being implied in the elaborate concern for astrologically auspicious timings.

Series of symbolic dandam hand gestures recur throughout the course of the wedding ritual. These occur in sequences which

identify, by association, the subordination to elders, ancestors, Brahmanpriests, any persons of higher status, gods and village goddesses. This subordination also carries the connotation that blessing and well-being is its result. The following are two examples of this:

At the end of the brahmanical wedding ceremony, the groom and then the bride individually touch and salute (dandam) the feet of the Brahman priest who blesses them and puts turmeric-stained "yellow rice" on their heads while blessing them (asirvadinca-dam). They immediately do the same to the groom's father and women of the category atta (FZ, bride's mother, classificatory FZ). They then enter the house and do a salute at the house shrine.

A similar ritual sequence was observed on the first visit of a groom and bride to the bride's home village. On entering the village they stopped to salute the image of Rama in the village temple. On reaching the bride's family's house they did a salute to her parents (as the bride's mother performed a small ritual to remove evil eye which might have come on them on their journey). The groom and bride immediately proceed into the house to salute the house shrine.

h. Outline of Wedding Rituals

The following is an outline of the wedding rituals as performed by Gavaras:

Searches:

1. The boy's family goes in search of a girl (N.B. among Twice-Born castes the situation is reversed. Similarly, in marriage, where the boy's family is the host for the wedding among the Shudras and Harijans, among the Twice-Born the wedding takes place at the bride's family's house.)
2. Prospective girl's family comes to look at the boy's village.

Betrothal:

The boy's family goes to "apply turmeric" on the girl, sealing the engagement.

Raising of Ceremonial Pole (rāṭa):

Performed by 'non-widows' several days before the brahmanical ceremony. The time is fixed for an astrologically auspicious moment.

Wedding:

1. First day

Kāla-gōla sambaram ('nailcutting celebration')

canopied procession to well for bath water, nailcutting and bathing of the bride and groom by family barber (suvvi song)

Decoration of the area where the evening rituals will take place, a yantra-like diagram is inscribed under the wedding pandal (pandiri) next to the ceremonial pole (rāṭa) in front of the house. The diagram is known as a pīnu.

Meal of groom and bride at the house shrine, 'god corner'.

Meal given to relatives, non-related castemen, members of other castes (e.g. Yata, Mangali, Cakali, Sali, Mala, Madiga - including Malas of Aripaka) (Raw food is sent to Jangam, Kamsali).

Making of ceremonial rice-bundle (arisāla kaṭṭu)

"Lagnam" - the actual brahmanical wedding ceremony (usually at night)

Eleven steps in sanskritic ritual (note prominence of the theme of knot-tying).

1. Ganapati pūja
2. Kankanāla pūja - tying of wrist strings (with leaf attached)
3. Bāsikāla pūja - tying of forehead strings, pads
4. Mangalasūtram - tying of the wedding locket at god corner seated on ceremonial rice bundles
5. Brahma mūla - tying together of groom and bride with a cloth
6. Tālambrālu - pouring of rice over heads, putting on toe ring
7. Saptapadālu - groom treads on bride's foot then vice versa
8. Nakṣatra darśanam - viewing of the constellation Arundati (up to this point the bride was seated to the left of the groom, with a pēraṇṭālu, 'non-widow' seated between them. After returning from nakṣatra

darśanam the seating is reversed, with the bride to the right of the groom with the 'non-widow' in between them.)

9. Katnamulu - reading out of the donations by various relatives, as well as the dowry (the bride's family give cash to the groom and the groom's family give gold to the bride). Family friends and relatives make small donations, of which lists are kept so that these donations can be returned (with a small additional amount) when those people perform weddings for their children.
10. Phāla dhānam - giving of fruit and betel tributes to honoured guests.
11. Āśīrvadincaḍam - blessing and foot touching of Brahman, family and caste elders and distinguished guests.

2. Second day

Urēgimpu - palanquin ride for the bride and groom, procession with stick twirling displays, accompanied by Barber drummers, Mala and Madiga drummers (Washermen carry the palanquin and the girl's brass vessels, dowry-sāre). The ceremonial rice bundle is also carried along. During the course of the procession the bride and groom are carried up to salute Rama in the village temple. (Prohibited for bridegroom to view the wedding canopy of others and palanquin is covered when it passes.)

Following the procession, evil eye is removed from the bride and groom. The fathers-in-law pour water into each other's pots back and forth over the string of leaves (tōraṇam) at the site of the bathing of the bride and groom.

Bride and groom are sat on a bed and sung to. The groom's sisters wash his feet and get him to promise to give his children to be married to hers (his daughters to marry her sons or his sons to marry her daughters).

Meal of bride and groom (bride eats off of groom's plate after he has finished, symbolising her subordination to him) at the family god corner, household shrine.

3. Third day

Ceremony to remove kankanam wrist threads, and bāsikūlu forehead pads. First they are bathed (after a canopied procession to well to get the water).

Then there is a salutation of gods and goddesses.

Removal of kankanam and bāsikam at the pīnu area under the wedding pandal (canopy).

Ring game - stylized competition of husband and wife to retrieve rings from the bottom of a pot of water with turmeric in it.

Meal of bride and groom at the family god corner.

Departure of bride and groom to the bride's family.*

4. Fourth day - remain at bride's

Yānālu:

(Repeated trips back and forth between the bride's and groom's families.)

5. Fifth day - yānālu feast for groom's party at bride's house. Groom's party returns with them to the groom's house.
7. Seventh day - the couple return to the bride's family.
8. Eighth day - Several elders of the groom's family or village go to have a meal at the bride's house and fetch the couple back to the groom's village for ten to fifteen days after which the bride's family take her back for ten days or so before the Gārbhādhānam consummation ceremony (if she has already come of age).

Agādhā avoidance of newlyweds:

Newlyweds not permitted together for this lunar month. Bride must be at her parents' except for one day of pilgrimage to the temple of Simhachalam (customary for newlyweds to attend but then they are not permitted to make this pilgrimage again until three years later).

*They are often accompanied by a friend of the groom who is called the co-groom tōdapellikōḍuku.

i) Wedding Tributes by Service Castes

Certain aspects of marriage rituals practiced by castes which acknowledge inferiority to Gavaras merit mention in a consideration of how rituals are the dramatization of ideal categories. Certain practices of wedding tributes, idumulu, were observed which make explicit acknowledgement of hierarchical political and economic structures. By doing so, they served to maintain those ideologically hierarchical definitions. On the night of the wedding of a Washerman in Kottapalem, a delegation of Washermen went to the Yata headman, naidu, of Kottapalem. He then went with them to Yatapalem in a ceremonial procession accompanied by Barber, Jangam, and Madiga drummers. In Yatapalem he presented symbolic tribute (on the Washermen's behalf) in a form of gifts of betel leaves and areca nut. Each gift consisted of two betel leaves - tāmbulam, two pieces of areca nut - cekka, a five paise coin, and a banana. The first presentation was made to the god Rama in the village temple. It was received by the son of a Jangam, the temple pūjāri, who gave back some prasādam in return. The next presentation was to the Headman, and the third was to the family of the Headman's father's predecessor (i.e. the current Headman's FEB).

This ceremony expressed the subordination of Kottapalam Washermen to the political leader of their settlement, a Yata. This Yata leader in turn expressed his allegiance and subservience to Yatapalem as the religiously and politically superior village. The Washerman's relationship with Kottapalem's Yata leader and that leader's relationship with the Gavara leaders of Yatapalem were ones of subordination and interdependence, rituals of hierarchy

and unity. Moreover, there was a direct association in the form of obeisance and tribute to the god Rama and to the Yatapalem Gavara Headman. Both were for the ostensible purpose of securing blessing and well-being (through the symbolic acknowledgement of subordination). A further interesting feature was the acknowledgement of the line of hereditary succession in the headmanship going back as far as the descendents of the elder brother of the father of the current headman.

A second occurrence of this pattern of tribute was observed in the symbolic leave-taking by a Yatapalem Washerman who had just been married and was about to depart for his wife's village (in the series of journeys and meal giving, yānālu, back and forth between the groom's and bride's villages). In this case, the form of tributes was less an acknowledgement of political as of economic ties of subservience. The groom, bride, and the groom's family went around Yatapalem "taking leave" of "big people", peddōllu. They first went to do a salute, dandam gesture, at the village Rama temple and presented the Jangam pūjāri with a rupee donation. They then proceeded to take leave of some nine prominent Gavara elders. (There was no prescribed number.) In each case, first the groom and then the bride touched the feet of the man (or his wife if he was absent). These people then each presented the Washerman groom with a rupee gift and added a blessing. Having completed this, the Washermen returned to their house where the groom and bride touched and saluted the feet of the groom's father.

Among the nine people chosen by the Washermen for tribute were the village Headman, the village Panchayat Vice President,

and his brother who had been temporarily the provisional headman. The single feature which all had in common was that they were all serviced by that Washerman family. Altogether that family served some forty-three individual households. Of those, they had selected the most economically prominent households from among them. Some of these, consequently, were also politically prominent figures as well. Just as the previously described ceremony of tribute-paying had defined an ideal depiction of hierarchy in the political structure of the village and its settlements, this leave-taking had been an idealised hierarchical phrasing of economic relations (a jajmani model). While not enough data are available to say with certainty which other service castes perform these symbolic tributes (it was observed among Yatas in another village) it is not surprising that it is unquestionably linked with Washermen, who, we have noted, maintain the most widespread long-term (jajmani-like) economic relations with other castes.

5. Funerals

Of all the various life cycle rituals, funerals are particularly revealing of the process by which social statuses are defined and differentiated. Whereas people are born and married at the same stage in their life, death is liable to occur at any point, to persons of all statuses. Thus, funerary customs mark the major differences in status which are considered socially significant. The main status distinctions are as follows: male/female, pre/post puberty, non-widow/widow. Funerary customs do not just reflect social categories, however. They also create and maintain the ideology of the auspiciousness of non-widowhood and define the

role of women. By mobilizing emotions and actions behind the auspicious symbols of non-widowhood they create categories which are accepted as axiomatic.

a. Statuses and Roles in funerals

Age statuses are marked in the Gavara funerary rituals by differences in the treatment of the corpse. Generally, sexual maturity is the dividing line between burial and cremation. The sex of the deceased is differentiated by females being placed face down and males face up in a grave or on a pyre. The inauspiciousness of widowhood (i.e. of a woman whose husband dies before her) is symbolically defined by the emphasis and exaltation of the statuses of non-widowhood. This sounds awkward in English but is more easily understood when the Telugu treatment of deceased females is considered. In terminology there is the identification of a young unmarried girl (who is called bāla-pēraṇṭālu, bāla = 'young') with a married woman whose husband is still alive (she is called pēraṇṭālu). Both of them are non-widows in that they contrast with the inauspicious status of widow (vedava, munda). The important auspicious role of pēraṇṭālu is a constant theme throughout the various life cycle rituals. Moreover, these pēraṇṭālu are associated with the symbol of turmeric (and vermillion derived from it). Thus, it is not surprising to find that in the symbolic use of turmeric and vermillion there is also an identification of bālapēraṇṭālu with pēraṇṭālu. The corpses of both are smeared with turmeric and an unusually large wad of turmeric is used to form a botṭu (red dot on yellow background) on their forehead. In some cases this wad of turmeric paste is the size of a grapefruit. The body of a widow is not decorated with

turmeric at all.

There are also two special rituals concerning widowhood status. If a woman's husband dies, she goes through a special widowing ceremony in which her forehead mark (bottu) is ceremonially washed off for the last time, her glass bangles are broken, and the cord of her wedding locket is snapped. This takes place at the southwest corner (āgnēya-mūla) of a village tank beyond the boundaries of the settlement proper. (Southwest is the opposite direction from the auspicious northeast, isānya-mūla, the corner of the house shrine.) Sorrowfully women come to lift up a veil over her head to see her without her forehead mark for the first time. This is linked to notions about the influences of sight. If a new widow is seen for the first time in the controlled circumstances of this ritual, subsequent viewing of her will not have the same powerfully inauspicious effect than if they see her later. The first night of this ritual she is expected to disappear and not to be seen by anyone (because of the severely inauspicious effects the sight of her may have on them). This pattern exhibits the classical form of a rite of passage where the initiant goes out of society in the intermediate stage, in order to return to society with a new status. If a married woman dies before her husband (and her husband's family, i.e. clan, belong to the pākrutōllu funerary division) then a special additional ritual is performed for her on the eleventh day after her death (or at another time if a better auspicious moment is found) before the funerary meal. This ritual, muṣānam (called musi vāyanam 'covered offering' by Twice Born castes) is in honour of the woman as a pārantaḷu. In it, turmeric features

prominently and is distributed to living non-widows at that time. But it also has other features which will be discussed further on

Apart from defining the status and role of widows and non-widows, funerary customs also structure the roles of the sexes in the society at large. Men are expected to be stoic, brave, matter-of-fact, in control conducting the rituals. Men are pressured not to show emotion. If they break down crying they visibly try to hold back their tears. In complete contrast, women are expected to act emotionally. At funerals in particular, women gather in circles to wail and cry, seemingly working each other up into near hysteria on purpose. It is clear that this action has a strong symbolic content, actually felt emotions notwithstanding. Women's wailing at funerals is highly stylized. Many repeat laments as if speaking to the dead person whose body lies in front of them: "oh my son, where have you gone? what will I do without you?" etc. These laments are half sung and are pronounced with a special intonation and repeated over and over. This form of stylized wailing at funerals has close affinities to the wailing of women who wish to apply pressure on men by publicising wrongs done to them in family disputes (as described in Chapter III.A2). It gives tangible evidence to the ideological notion of women as more emotional and less controlled than men.

Women's emotional attachment (āsa) to their loved ones lives on after their deaths. Hence, rituals in honour of a pēraṇṭālu, non-widow, who died also have an aspect of trying to appease the dead woman's ghost (dayam) who continues to have *āsa, attachment to her husband and family. She dies an incomplected life and her ghost is feared to be jealous and therefore potentially malevolent

*A dead wife is said to have "āsa on her turmeric boṭṭu".

to any subsequent wife her husband might take. Thus, a Jangam woman who impersonates her in the ritual (by being possessed by her ghost) is implored to give a statement of her release of her husband from his marital obligations to her. (One man explicitly described the ritual as a kind of getting a *divorce paper from the deceased woman.) Precautions are then taken to disperse the woman's ghost by getting it into a mud image (bomma) which is then ceremonially dissolved in the village tank. Similar techniques are used in the drawing out and throwing away of the malevolent influences of evil eye, disti. There was also talk of further precautions against the jealous ghost of a dead pēraṇṭālu. Some said they knew of cases of remarriages which were performed to a plaintain tree so that the malevolent influence (naṣṭam) of the deceased wife would strike the tree rather than the actual new wife. However, this was neither observed to take place in Yatapalem, nor did it seem to have been recently practiced in the past.

b. Definition of Groups: Clans and Sub-Clans

The degree to which people are involved in funerary activities defines their membership in various groups of kinsmen. Firstly, there is the differentiation of clans on the basis of their adherence to one of the two sets of funerary rituals (pākrutōḷḷu who have Jangams as pujaris, cakradārulu who have non-Brahman Vaishnavulu as pujaris). The fact that clan exogamy patterns have no connection with funerary sect allegiances of clans means that people whose clans practice different funerary rituals will be constantly intermarrying. This serves to emphasize the distinctiveness of clans and underline the incorporation

*vidudala 'divorce', literally means 'release' in a legal sense.

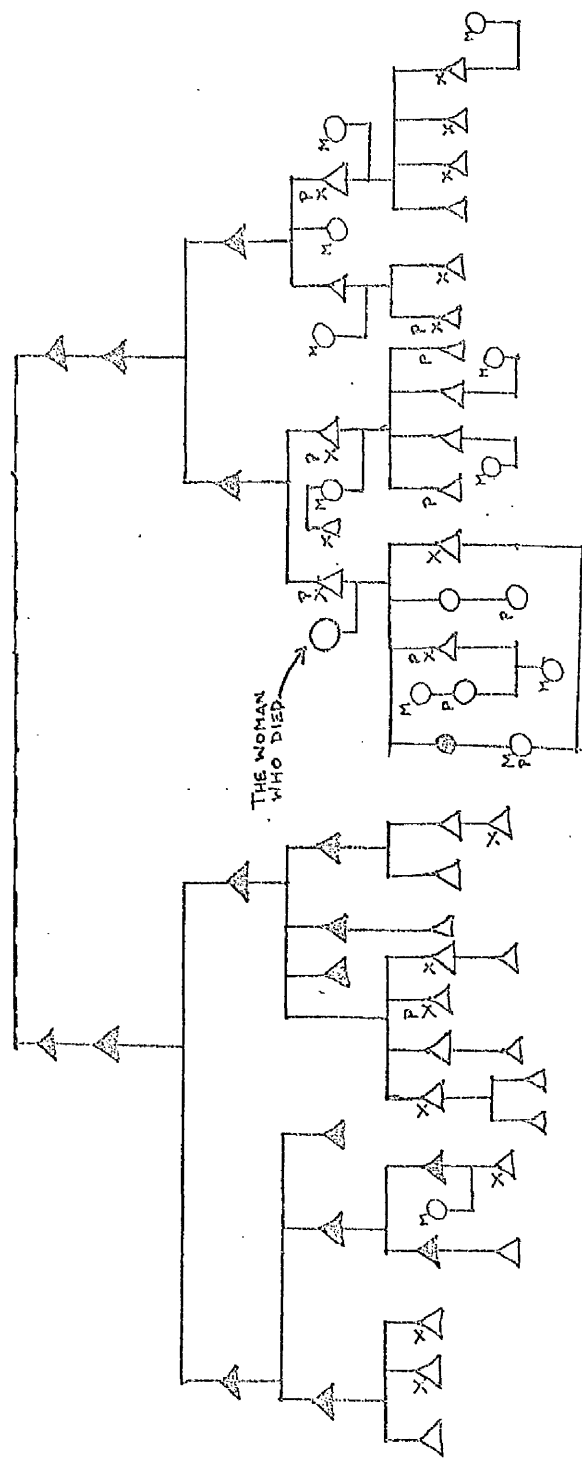
ṭaṅṭa 'strike', 'hit', 'inflict' as with a wound; same verb is used for astrological influences.

of a woman into her husband's clan upon marriage, since death pollution is not transmitted to a married woman's parents or their clan. A person who is adopted is similarly incorporated into his adoptive parents' clan. He thus does not receive or transmit death pollution to his natal family.

Death pollution (maila, also means 'dirt' in general) entails numerous restrictions. It is strongest for the first eleven days after which the pedda karma ritual is performed at which time bathing is done for the first time. (The chief mourner, talla gōrayya, eldest son for a married man or husband for a deceased woman, eats only a bland diet of rice and dal for the first three days after the death.) Certain pollution restrictions remain for the next year or less, until the ceremony in which the deceased person is installed in the house shrine (battalu pettaḍam 'placing of clothes' offerings). During that time they are prohibited from doing pujas at deity temples, doing pujas at their own house shrines (including the annual ancestor worship at Sankrānti) or performing the marriage of one of their male members. Daughters are permitted to marry since the rituals take place at her husband's house and household shrine.

The "field of transmission" of such death pollution is the crucial feature which delineates subdivisions of clans within the village. Ostensibly they share death pollution since they are all closely related patrilocally. However, those ties are not necessarily remembered or traceable. The symbolic sharing of death pollution and mutual participation in funerary rites is in fact the crucial factor which creates and activates the affiliation of people into sub-clans. Sub-clans, it will be recalled,

Figure VII-2.



FUNERARY PARTICIPATION: DEATH OF A RAPETI CLANSWOMAN

- X Attended cremation
- P Attended Pindakudu
- M Attended Musanam

Others who attended cremation:

- 1 Adari clansman (also at Pindakudu)
- 4 Saragadam clansmen

Compare with Figure III-3.

are also groups which act with unified policies with regard to exogamy or endogamy with other clans. The occurrence of different pollution sharing sub-units with different marriage affiliations all within a single clan attests to a concept of stronger underlying ties within than between sub-clans.

Finally, funerary activities serve as ceremonies which activate those kin ties which centre on the family and household. In this, kindred (including for example daughters who have married into different clans) and friendship ties play important roles. Invitation to funerary meals is based on lists made of men who accompany the body to the cremation ground. A cremation of a man of relatively average standing will generally only be attended by a handful of members of the pollution sharing group of his sub-clan (even if their kin ties are no longer traceable in actual fact) and close members of his family. A funeral of a man who committed suicide, bringing dishonour on his kinsmen, was only sparsely attended and perfunctorily carried out. The funeral of the village Headman was attended on a huge scale. It seemed as though the entire village had turned out. This was a testimonial of his own personal standing rather than a customary requirement. So many men attended the cremation ground that, for reasons of economy, only one member of each household which attended was feasted at the funerary meal. Numerous representatives of service castes (who accept food cooked by Gavaras) also attended. Members of castes who do not accept cooked food from Gavaras (e.g. Jangam and Kamsali) were sent the raw ingredients of the meal.

c. Role of Service Castes

Just as in other life cycle rituals, we find various service castes playing important roles in funerary activities. The fact that they are indispensable is an expression of the interdependence of the castes of the village. That they are primarily Washermen, Barbers, and Harijans is an expression of hierarchy, the subordinate position of castes who provide services and labour to the farmers. It is significant that these castes play prominent ritual roles since they are the ones with the clearest subordinate economic and social status. (Kamsali's status is contested and Jangam, as pujaris, are acknowledged as superior in much the same way that, historically, Kshatriyas relied for legitimation and priestly services on Brahmins to whom they conceded superior status.) The prominence of these service castes in the rituals turns them into exemplars of hierarchical relations between castes, between employers and employees.

The main duties of Washermen, Barbers, and Harijans is to provide drumming accompaniment to processions out to the cremation ground. Washermen are also prominent in cutting the wood for the funeral pyre, attending it while it burns, and aiding in the performance of rituals done with the ashes. In return, Washermen get to take the elaborate ritual food offerings. All the participating castes get cash for their services as well as invitations to funerary feasts.

d. Timing and Sequence of Funerary Rituals

The time of death is checked in the astrological almanac. If the death occurred in an inauspicious time (at a time "under the influence" of a malevolent constellation) then special rituals

are undertaken to pacify those constellations and the ghost itself. The almanac is also consulted to determine the propitious moment to initiate various stages in the subsequent sequence of rituals following the cremation or burial (which takes place in the daylight hours on the day of death if possible, otherwise the following morning). The following is the sequence of Gavaras funerary rituals in outline:

1. Bhajana, vigil for dying or dead person

Bhajana - religious song singing (particularly essential if body is lying over night waiting for daylight for cremation)

Wailing by circle of women around the body

Bathing of body (placing of turmeric-kumkum forehead mark on non-widow, i.e. bālapērantālu or pērantālu)

2. Cremation: smaṣānam

Procession to cremation ground (men only), led by chief mourner, placing of body on funeral pyre (numerous rituals of circumambulating the pyre, of poking three consecutive holes in a water pot, placing of leaves on the body by attending men, final dandam to the deceased, symbolism of body facing different direction once it has left the village boundary, etc.)

Lighting of the pyre

Bathing after leaving the cremation ground (Washer-men remain tending the pyre)

3. Piṇḍākūḍu

According to astrologically auspicious timing, usually on the same day as the cremation.

Gathering of the ashes, fictively conveying them to Benares, Gaya, and Rameshvaram after Washer-man forms them into 'images' (homma). Placing of food offerings which must be 'touched' by crows (= the deceased's soul) before the participants leave the cremation ground area

4. Pedda Dinavaram (Pedda Karma)

Nine or eleven days after the cremation (or according to the almanac). Afternoon funerary feast to all those who attended the cremation. Family eats at god corner. If a man died then special ritual of widowing takes place (her forehead mark is wiped away, glass bangles are broken, wedding locket cord is snapped). If a woman died with her husband still alive and his clan is in the pākrotōllu funerary sect then a musānam ceremony is performed.

Evening rituals:

Pākrotōllu clans

Blowing of conch, ringing of bell, chanting by Jangams in the name of the deceased's relatives who honour him in this way. Donations are given to the Jangam for each chanting of tribute in front of deceased's house. Twelve oil lamps on banana leaf over which the tributes are said is ceremonially taken out of the village boundaries and buried in a streambed by five mourners who fasted during the day.

Cakradārulu clans

Pujari is Vaishtapodu. Ceremony in honour of the deceased takes place at the family god corner house shrine. Offering of twelve leaf plates of food and liquor in honour of the deceased. The pujari eats from the cooked offerings.

5. Baṭṭalu peṭṭadam (śānti)

Usually twelve months after the cremation (can be less, e.g. five months for an individual not of full adult status such as young child). Puja done at household shrine, dēvuḍu mūla (offerings include three wads of turmeric each with a vermillion dot, oil lamp, betel, and items of food). Three leaf plates of food are placed in front of the shrine and the family dines there from them later. Offerings of clothes (baṭṭalu) are placed at the shrine in the deceased's honour. Feast is given again for all who attended the cremation.

6. The deceased is subsequently worshipped along with other ancestors annually at the Sankranti festival in mid-January, and also any other time household shrine is worshipped in honour of ancestors. Brahmanical death anniversary ceremonies, pindam iccuta, seem optional or are done at Sankranti.

e. The Musānam Ritual

This ritual was mentioned in the discussion of how funerary rituals define statuses and roles. The musānam is a ritual performed for a woman who has died before her husband, and is thus an auspicious non-widow, pēraṇtālu. It is a ritual performed only by members of clans who have pākrutōllu funerary rituals using a Jangam priest (pujari). Though the ritual is thus performed by only part of the Gavara population, since members of the two funerary sects indiscriminately intermarry, all Gavaras are likely to have participated in or seen a musānam ritual.

In the musānam ritual pēraṇtālu, non-widows, from the family of the husband of the deceased woman go in procession to a tank outside the village carrying twelve sets of double rice winnowing baskets (one covering an other) plus a thirteenth single one, containing turmeric and other offerings and puja items. At the tank they are met by a similar procession from the family of the deceased woman. The husband's family provides a Jangam woman who is ceremonially seated, bathed, and smeared with turmeric. An immense turmeric wad (like the ones placed on the forehead of the corpse of a bālapēraṇtālu or pēraṇtālu) with a large vermillion spot is put on her forehead. Meanwhile an area next to her is purified (with cowdung and a ritual diagram, muggu) and a schematic

image (bomma) of a person is fashioned on it out of several handfuls of mud from the tank bottom. This is analagous to the forming of a body-like shape out of cremation ashes at the time of the pindākūḍu ceremony. Items associated with married status are placed on this mud image, such as turmeric and a miniature wooden container for kumkum-barini, glass bangles, toe rings, string of black beads (representing the mangalasutram wedding locket cord), flowers etc. Then the Jangam woman impersonates the deceased woman as the relatives ask her if she accepts the offerings they have brought her (three women lift and lower a rice winnow of offerings covered with their sari ends): "if you do not accept it tell us, don't turn into a dayam (ghost)!" She is reluctant at first but then agrees. Then the mud image, the items on it, other offerings brought in the rice winnows, and the turmeric wad on the forehead of the Jangam woman are removed and taken out and immersed in the tank. Then the new rice winnows (each is smared with a large turmeric 'X') are distributed to the pēraṇtālu who have attended. Also distributed to the pēraṇtālu are prasādam of fruits and liberal quantities of turmeric and vermillion which they apply to their foreheads hoping they will also live their lives without ever becoming widows. All return to the village except for the deceased woman's husband who remains behind at the tank next to an oil lamp and remnants of the puja. He breaks his waistcord, multāḍu, before sadly returning to the village.

A number of aspects of this ritual deserve further consideration. First there is the obvious element of glorifying the auspiciousness of pēraṇtālu, 'non-widows', and associating it with the

meritorious (punyamaina), charitable and virtuous (dharmamaina) donations of turmeric and rice winnows. But there is an ambiguous element which arises out of notions about ghosts and women. People who die incompleted lives, dying unnaturally before reaching old age, are believed to come back to interfere vengefully with peoples' lives in the world. Moreover, women have more attachment, āsa, to their loved ones and are more emotional and less under control. For these reasons, a woman who dies before her husband has reasons to return as a ghost and be harmful to people, despite her dying meritoriously as a pēraṇṭālu. The performance of this ritual is thus to appease her vengeful nature by exalting her as a pēraṇṭālu. The making of the mud image, transferring her into it, and then harmlessly dissolving it in the tank is a technique encountered in other contexts with the casting off of malevolent influences, including ghosts and evil eye. Looked at from another point of view we could say that the ritual helps to create the ideology of the attachment and emotionalism of women by vividly dramatizing the need to ritually deal with it. It practically goes without saying that the ritual additionally contributes to the creation and maintenance of the category of auspicious non-widowhood, pēraṇṭālu.

The muṣāṇam ritual also has the purpose of redefining the relations between the families of the husband and his deceased wife. Through the ritual, the husband is, in effect, released from his marriage vow and free to remarry if he wishes. If he does not do this, he would not only have difficulties from his wife's vengeful ghost, he might also risk the resentment of his wife's family.

The muṣāṇam is a further example of ritual and symbolism creating the social category and ideology of auspiciousness of non-widowhood. Earlier we hypothesised that this arose from the need to subordinate women to men in a society in which women exercise considerable influence (see Chapter III. A.). What is remarkable is how this symbolism of the non-widow is internalised by members of society and women in particular. The notions of non-widows then come to take on a life of their own in the form of cults centring on the worship of pēraṇṭālu and bālapēraṇṭālu.

f. The Bāla-pēraṇṭālu Cult

While deceased pēraṇṭālu and bālapēraṇṭālu are associated in terminology and symbolism (particularly turmeric and vermillion) they have different spheres of influence and importance. Pēraṇṭālu are eventually "installed" in the household shrine of their husband. Sometimes separate turmeric and vermillion panels are placed on the wall to represent them. They are worshipped by family members and are believed to exert benevolent influences over their undertakings. It is not unusual for a Gavara farmer to do a salute, daṇḍam gesture of obeisance, at his household shrine (specifically with a family pēraṇṭālu in mind) before going on a trip to a town for buying or selling for instance.

The bālapēraṇṭālu on the other hand is believed to exert her benevolent influence for everyone in the village and even for people of other villages. In fact there is now a rapid expansion of bālapēraṇṭālu shrines in the vicinity of Aripaka Revenue Village (four well established ones and one incipient one in Yatapalem). Wandering bards, jamikilōllu, help to spread the

mythology and growing popularity of these quasi-goddesses.

The popularity of bālapēraṇṭālu temples as sites of pilgrimage is making serious inroads into the income of a local Siva temple. The bards tell stories of bālapēraṇṭālu, deceased young girls, who came in to their parents' dreams and requested that temples be built for them. When they were disinterred their bodies had not decomposed. Strange stones made "self-manifested" appearances at household god corners, etc.

The persons who turn out to be the parents of such miraculous children seem to be people who have recently prospered from jobs in Visakhapatnam Port or in the jaggery trade who are not displeased at being able to gain new notoriety for themselves through temples to their deceased daughters. But the situation is obviously more complex than this. A detailed consideration of the bālapēraṇṭālu phenomenon is, however, beyond the scope of this section. What is significant for us here is to note the degree to which the bālapēraṇṭālu further reinforce the category of non-widowhood associating it with auspiciousness and well-being. One of the principle areas in which bālapēraṇṭālu have demonstrated powers is alleviating problems of female health, particularly barrenness, irregular menstruation, irregular supply of breast milk, as well as curing children's illnesses. Some of the most striking symbolic elements in the bālapēraṇṭālu shrines themselves are the allusions to pēraṇṭālu, married status in the form of votive offerings of gold wedding lockets, and wooden containers of vermillion and turmeric.

Chapter VIII

CALENDRIAL RITUALS: THE ANNUAL CYCLE

A. Seasonal Changes, Agricultural Rhythms, and Festival Moods:

Annual cycle rituals are reckoned by the Hindu calendar. As mentioned earlier, this is primarily a calendar of twelve lunar months each divided into a waxing and a waning fortnight. Solar-based principles of reckoning primarily concern the division of the year into auspicious and less auspicious halves (uttarāyanam, dakṣiṇāyanam) as well as the division of the year into twenty-seven periods of approximately thirteen and a half days each, known as kāṛte. These kāṛte are based on the apparent transit of the Sun through various constellations, nakṣatram. It would be merely a pedantic exercise to cite these astrological details if we were to lose sight of the overall rhythm of the seasons and agriculture for which calendrical reckoning serves as a convenient calibration.

The Telugu year begins at the vernal equinox which is towards the beginning of the hot season, yenda kālam, during which there is neither rain nor agricultural activity. The glaring heat perceptibly increases in intensity week by week (to over 40°C) until by May and the first half of June all midday activity ceases. The oppressive heat suddenly and dramatically breaks in mid-June with the arrival of the Monsoon rains. Immediately, intensive agricultural activities begin - ploughing, planting, and irrigation. In July, as the rainy season, vārṣa kālam, continues, millet and rice are transplanted. Sugar-cane is harvested, crushed, and boiled down into jaggery in October and November. The main grain harvests are brought in after the rains have ceased

around the end of November and beginning of December. The heat abates and the cool dry season, calli kālām, sets in. Temperatures gradually drop from 35°C to 30°C reaching the coolest point of about 22°C . Threshing and winnowing get underway as secondary garden vegetable plots are planted (aubergines, onions, chillies, ladies fingers, tobacco etc.). After these are harvested in January, a slack period in agricultural activity begins which continues on into the hot season.

Table VIII-1 The Annual Ritual Cycle.

LUNAR MONTH	SEASON	AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS	AGRICULTURAL RITUALS	ANNUAL CYCLE RITUALS MAJOR FESTIVALS	OTHER HOLIDAYS	PRIVATE CALENDARS OBSERVANCES
CARTHA 1971 27 MAR - 25 APR	HOT WET WET WET WET	PLUGHING SOWING MILLET TRANSPANT RICE TRANSPANT CANE HARVEST MILLET HARVEST RICE HARVEST THRISHING VEGETABLES		BANDANNA	KOTTA AMAVASYA UGADI SRI RAMA NAVAMI	WEDDING SEASON
VAISAKHA 26 APR - 24 MAY			RAIN-BRINGING RITUALS			
JYESTHA 25 MAY - 22 JUN			FIRST SOWING	MAADANNA (CRUCIALLY SOWING DAY, 1971, 1972, 1973)		SINHAHALAM YATRA
ASADHA 23 JUN - 22 JUL			FIRST TRANSPANT			
SRAVANA 23 JUL - 20 AUG					KRSNA ASTAMI	MUSALATALLI
SHADRAPADA 21 AUG - 19 SEP	RAIN WET WET WET WET	CANE HARVEST MILLET HARVEST RICE HARVEST THRISHING VEGETABLES	FIELD SACRIFICE		VINAYAKA CAVITI	
ASNAYUJA 20 SEP - 19 OCT			FIRST JAGGERY MAKING	GAIRANNA	DIPAVALLI AMAVASYA NAGULA CAVITI	
KARTIKA 20 OCT - 17 NOV					KARTIKA - SIVA'S MONTH MONDAY PUJA	KARTIKA PURNIMI - MOON PUJA
MARGASIRA 18 NOV - 17 DEC			FIRST RICE HARVEST		PHANU - VISNU'S MONTH SATURDAY PUJA	BANGARAPPA-DURGALAMMA
PUSA 18 DEC - 15 JAN			FIRST RICE COOKING	SANKRANTI	SEASON OF FAIRS MAHASIVARATRI	MAHALAKSMI DEVATA RATHA SAPTAMI - SUN PUJA
MAGHA 16 JAN - 14 FEB	COOL WET WET WET					VENKATESWARA PUJA
PHALGUNA 15 FEB - 15 MAR						

B. The Major Annual Festivals

The agricultural and seasonal cycle has a great effect on the mood and tempo of village life and finds expression in the annual cycle of calendrical rituals. The major festivals which mobilise participation by the broadest range of the population focus on these important seasonal changes. Of all the festivals, the village goddess festivals (grāma dēvata pandugalu) have the widest degree of inter-caste and inter-settlement participation. The village goddess festivals (two are performed every year) are conducted in the hot season after the Telugu New Year, ugādi, in March. The somewhat threatening, coercive side of these deities appears to draw from the general mood of anxiety associated with the hot season when the lands are parched and the water level in the wells sinks low. Since overheating of the body is one of the main explanations for the causation of fevers and illness, as the seasonal temperatures rise, fears of disease increase. This lends further impetus to the joint endeavour to appease the village goddesses who cause as well as prevent illness.

The second major festival season is in honour of Gairamma, Siva's consort Gauri, and is instituted in October-November. This is a festival with associations of fecundity and fertility and coincides with the period in which the crops are ripening. The potentially threatening side of the village goddesses is noticeably absent from Gairamma who is looked upon with affection and happiness, reflecting the expectant satisfaction with the ripening crops.

The third major spate of festival activity, culminating in Sankranti, comes after the harvest is in. It is a season of fairs

and celebrations, an expression of the villagers' high-spirited enjoyment of the completion of the harvest.

These rituals, which mobilise a high degree of inter-caste cooperation, are dramatisations of symbols of hierarchy. They breathe life and reality into the concept that well-being derives from maintaining relationships which are phrased in a hierarchical idiom. In varying degrees, they also give actuality to the converse principle that illness and misfortune threaten those who fail to maintain such ties.

We shall now examine these rituals in detail for their symbolic content and examine how they propound and instil an ideology of hierarchy and interdependence.

Chapter IX

THE VILLAGE GODDESS FESTIVAL: BANDAMMA PANDUGA

The celebration of the village goddess festival is the occasion of the widest joint participation in a single ritual event by all the settlements associated together as the revenue village of Aripaka.

A. Timing

Each year there are two of these festivals, an annual one to Bandamma and another to one of three sets of village goddesses whose festivals rotate in a triennial cycle (Maridamma, Rāvalamma, Bangāramma/Dūrgāamma). Thus, one year there is a sequence of festivals to Bandamma and Maridamma. The next year to Bandamma and Ravalamma, and the third year to Bandamma and Bangaramma/Durgalamma (two goddesses whose temples are side by side and whose festivals are conducted simultaneously). In all of these festivals, Yatapalem is the centre of activity and the Gavaras provide the main financial support.

Since village goddesses are different for each village, there is no synchronization of timing with similar festivals in other villages, apart from the general season. In fact, it is this factor of distinctiveness which is emphasised by the unique timing. Nevertheless, goddess festivals cluster in the same general period following the Telugu New Year, at the beginning of the lunar month of Caitra. For Aripaka Revenue Village, the Bandamma festival, always the first of the two goddess festivals, is reckoned in the following manner. Śrī Rāma Navami falls nine days after the Telugu New Year, and the Bandamma festival is

initiated about a week afterwards. This reckoning is not rigid and numerous factors can intervene to push the time forward, such as the importance of the festival falling on a Sunday, the special day of Bandamma, or the necessity of avoiding caviti, the inauspicious fourth lunar day. The second goddess festival usually follows several weeks after Bandamma.

B. Structure of the Festival

The overall structure of the festival is based on the concept that the goddess is invited into the village for a week. There are activities in her honour every evening leading up to the penultimate day. On that evening there is a particularly lively procession followed by a vigil into the night until about four o'clock in the morning when a special rice offering is collected from the village households and taken out to the goddess' temple to appease ghosts that hover about there. The last day of the festival consists of a procession of the entire village accompanying a wooden idol of the goddess and pots of rice offerings. This procession goes to do puja to her in her temple and sacrifices a goat on behalf of the entire village. People return home for festival meals and an all-night long operatic drama staged by the young men of the village.

The following is a step by step outline of the Bandamma festival in detail:

THE BANDAMMA FESTIVAL

A. Announcement

The Māla Bārki (Village Servant) from Aripaka announces the festival

B. First Day

1. Bringing of the goddess into the village
2. The evening procession
Circulation of ghaṭṭam pots to collect rice offerings
3. Ghaṭṭam pots placed down at a special area
4. The holding of stylized skits, vālakālu, in front of the pots
5. The return of the ghaṭṭam pots to the house of the Vadram
Division of the evening's collection among the members of castes with ritual duties in the procession

C. Second through Fifth Day

Nightly repetition of above steps B.2-5

D. Sixth Day, 'Tolēlu'

1. Village Servant announces the ujidi bandi
A rice offering is taken in the middle of the night collected in a basket on wheels, the ujidi bandi
2. Procession of ghaṭṭam pots
 - a. Two pots are taken in procession in Yatapalem
 - b. Two other pots are sent to Aripaka for a procession there
 - c. The pots sent to Aripaka are taken to Kottapalem via Mallolla Pakalu and returned to Yatapalem
3. Procession of the four pots together in Yatapalem
4. Yatapalem pots placed down next to the Aripaka pots
5. Skits and entertainment in front of the pots;
this is sustained until:
6. Taking of the ujidi bandi at four o'clock in the morning
 - a. It is taken around the village streets to collect offerings
 - b. It is then taken out to the goddess' temple
7. Return of the men who took the ujidi bandi and division of the evening's rice collections

E. Seventh Day, 'Anupu'

1. Pujas in the morning at the temple of the goddess
Performed by households whose members made vows to the goddess over the year

2. House to house begging in the afternoon by the Vadram pūjāri and masquerading Gavaras etc.
3. Pujas at household shrines
These are synchronized with the beginning of the procession of ghaṭṭam pots
4. Processions
 - a. Proceedings begin at the house of the Vadram pūjāri
 - b. One ghaṭṭam pot is sent to Aripaka
 - c. Gavaras go in a procession led by drummers to collect the wooden idols made by the Carpenters
 - d. Vadram carries these idols on his head as the procession, accompanied by most of the villagers, moves through the village
 - e. Aripaka ghaṭṭam procession rushes to meet the Yatapalem procession at a tank outside of Yatapalem
5. The Processions join and rush together to the goddess' temple
6. At the Bandamma temple
 - a. Circumambulation of the temple amidst fireworks explosions and fire-walking
 - b. Puja is done inside the temple to the pots, the wooden idols, and the statue of the goddess
Performed by the Vadram pūjāri assisted by a Gavara
 - c. Sacrifice
Decapitation of the sacrificial goat and placing of its head inside the temple
7. Hasty flight of all participants from the scene
A Gavara men beat sticks and shout to ward off greedy ghosts (who might steal the offering from the goddess)
8. House to house begging by dependent castes.
9. All-night drama performance

C. An Account of the Bandamma Festival:

Two or three days before the festival is to begin, the Village Servant, Bārki, an Aripaka Mala, goes around all the settlements of the village. He drums and announces the day on which the village elders (Gavara) decided that the festival will begin. This announcement is official and binding. In one instance in another village a Village Servant announced that a festival would

be to a particular goddess. He mistakenly said the name of the wrong goddess so that festival had to be carried out instead for fear of otherwise offending her.

On the first day of the festival a puja is done at a termite mound by the Vadram pujari. He cleanses the area with cowdung water, draws a muggu design in rice powder, places three turmeric wads with vermillion dots on them in it, lights an oil lamp, puts down a leaf plate of food, and wafts incense smoke over the area. Three bits of dirt from the termite mound are placed in the Vadram's special basket, dāngari. The Village Servant eats the puja food offering. They return to the village and throw the termite mound dirt on to the roof of the Vadram's hut. They enter his house and do a puja to the two brass ghattam pots, saluting them with dandam hand gestures and wafting incense onto them.

They bring the ghattam pots out of the house to begin the first evening's procession. The ghattam pots are decorated with an undercoating of whitewash and a yellow strip of turmeric around their middle. Above this turmeric band the top half of the pots are covered with vermillion dots. Sitting on top of each brass ghattam pot is a black clay pot, dāka.

Starting at the house of the Vadram goddess pujari, the ghattam pots are taken in procession around Yatapalem. The procession moves through the main streets of the settlement and collects offerings of raw and cooked rice from women of individual households. The procession is led by Madiga drummers accompanied by the Village Servant, a Māla. The Vadram and a Washerman take turns carrying the ghattam pots on their heads. A Barber follows with an umbrella made of palm leaves, around whose rim five small

bunches of neem leaves are hung. Another Barber carries a censer in the form of a broken potshard containing embers on to which he periodically sprinkles pinches of powdered incense, guggilam (guggilam is used for village goddesses while sambrāni is used for all other puja purposes). A Washerman accompanies them holding a flaming torch and oil container to keep its fire fed. This is kept burning even in daytime as its function, like the umbrella, is the ceremonial one of showing respect and giving honour to the goddess. In addition, it is the duty of these castes to carry these objects in procession as part of their official participation in the festival.

When the procession has completed its round of the village, the ghaṭṭam pots are placed to rest on a special muggu diagram which is prepared in the following way. An area on the platform in front of the old Rama temple is washed with water by a Yata woman. She draws an auspicious diagram, muggu, in rice powder and places two handfuls of raw rice down on the ground on to the diagram. When the procession arrives it circumambulates the area three times, clockwise. The ghaṭṭam pots are placed down onto the small piles of rice. This honours them by not placing them directly on to the ground. An oil lamp is lit in the clay pot on top of each of the ghaṭṭam pots. The Vadram pujari performs a puja to the pots by waving the censer over them three times clockwise and placing it down on a bunch of neem leaves. He then does a dandam gesture three times, each time touching the pots before placing his hands together. The umbrella is then placed down between the pots and the Washerman holding the torch sits down nearby.

There immediately begins a series of satirical skits, vālakalu (vālakam 'pretence'), improvised by Gavaras. They are not omitted from the first night's proceedings even if these are sparsely attended since they are intended for the entertainment of the goddess as well as the villagers. They are begun always in the same way. A man or boy goes around in a counter-clockwise circle holding a burnt or smouldering palmyra palm leaf behind him while exclaiming 'abbōr abbōr' as if his "tail" is on fire. The skits frequently return to this convention of pacing around in a circle to represent people walking from one place to another, a farmer ploughing etc.

The skits are usually about villagers and incidents which have recently taken place. The plots of the skits frequently employ inversions of hierarchy and reversals of 'normal' behaviour. Recurrent themes are: men subordinate to women (i.e. husbands to wives) or impotent, women who are widely known to have illicit liaisons, and other instances of servants dominating their masters. In the slapstick antics reversals of the symbolism of hierarchy are a constant feature. Men touching the feet of women (i.e. women impersonated by men), and "women" kicking people and immodestly lifting up their saris never fail to evoke howls of laughter.

After the skits are over, the ghaṭṭam pots are taken back to the house of the Vadram pujari in procession. There, the cooked rice donations are doled out as payment in kind to the participants in the procession. It is distributed in roughly hierarchical order, to Barbers and Washermen, then to the Aripaka Mala Village Servant, and lastly to the seven or eight Madiga drummers. The uncooked

rice donations are kept by the Vadram himself.

The same procedures are followed for the next five days. There is an evening procession with the ghaṭṭam pots followed by skits or other entertainment in front of the pots. Afterwards, the evening's donations are divided among the procession participants.

On the next to last day of the festival, known as tolēlu, relatives of the villagers begin to arrive. That evening the procession with the ghaṭṭam pots is particularly enthusiastic and many villagers participate in the dancing or stick-twirling (sāmu) displays. Two ghaṭṭam pots are taken to Aripaka to be circulated for offerings. Those pots then go to Kottapalem via Mallolla Pakalu. They have to wait by a tank at the entrance to Yatapalem until the Yatapalem pots have completed their rounds in the village. Then a group of Madiga drummers come out to escort them back into Yatapalem.

The four ghaṭṭam pots of rice offerings, two from Yatapalem and two from Aripaka/Kottapalem (each pair containing one pot with cooked and one pot with uncooked rice) are placed down together on the specially prepared area near the Rama temple as on the previous evenings. A series of skits is then performed. In time, the crowd dwindles from several hundred to thirty or so and the skits gradually lose momentum. Ultimately only a token number of villagers actually stay up all night in honour of the goddess. In festivals when some form of entertainment (e.g. a wandering bard or drama troupe) is provided a larger group of people is likely to maintain the vigil.

A village Carpenter brings a wooden frame (approx. 50 x 75 cm.)

with four wheels (20 cm. in diameter) to the Village Servant who proceeds to smear it with turmeric and red parallel lines. He secures a basket (ujidi) on to the wheeled frame (bandi = 'vehicle', 'cart'). At around four o'clock in the morning the drums begin beating and the Village Servant takes off hastily through the village pulling the ujidi bandi by a rope. He shouts, "hoy, the ujidi bandi is coming". As he and the drummers pass by, women put cooked rice offerings into the basket of the small cart. The Village Servant makes one circle through the main streets and then goes out of the village without stopping. He is in a frantic rush to take the rice offerings to the temple of Bandamma. There, he and the drummers circumambulate the temple three times and abandon the ujidi bandi.

Their purpose is to appease the ghosts (bhūtam) which hover around there which might otherwise intervene and snatch the offerings made on the next day to Bandamma. This mission out to the temple in the middle of the night is considered to be highly perilous. The Vadram and others at the temple wait expectantly for the return of the Village Servant, the Washerman with the torch, and a Mala and Madiga drummer. When they finally return, the offerings in the ghaṭṭam pots from the evening procession are distributed to the procession participants. This never occurs without some argument between them over how much share to which each is entitled.

The morning that follows is the beginning of the final day of the festival, known as anupu. Between forty and fifty households perform fulfilments of private vows they have made during the year. The vows mainly concern the curing of illnesses or

barrenness. The vows are fulfilled by the performance of pujas at the goddess' temple which include the offering of turmeric and vermillion, incense, food, new clothing, chicken sacrifices and dandam gestures.

There is also house to house begging. The Vadram pujari goes around giving forehead marks (bottu or tilakam) with turmeric-stained rice grains from a neem decorated basket on his head. The basket is the one he uses to bring the termite mound dirt from the goddess' abode to bring her into the village for the festival. He exhorts the goddess to stay "cool" (i.e. calm and satisfied), addressing her as talli, 'mother'. Others who go around begging are Gavaras, masquerading as wandering minstrels "for fun" (saradāki). One fun-loving Weaver masquerades too. One year he imitated a holy man, using a snail shell necklace to represent prayer beads. The Panchayat Vice President also circulates, collecting the household levy (canda) for the festival expenses, keeping a list of donors and defaulters in a notebook.

This is the day when relatives visit and when people living and working away from the village return to see their family and friends. Women who have married out of the village come back, and women who married in from other villages are visited by their relatives from home. The visitors are feted with special holiday foods and sweets. People exchange food with relatives and also non-relatives with whom they maintain ties of friendship. It is impossible for a man to walk down a village street without being urged to enter houses of his friends to be presented with festival confections.

In the afternoon there is another procession with the goddess'

ghaṭṭam pots. It starts at the house of the Vadram pujari. One put is sent to Aripaka and Kottapalem where rice offerings are collected. Women also do puja to the pots by applying wads of turmeric with a vermillion dot in the middle (bottu). At the beginning of the pot procession in Yatapalem, the women of Sudra and Harijan households (with the exception of those with mourning restrictions from death pollution) do a puja in honour of the goddess at their household shrine.

A special procession of Gavara elders goes with the Yatapalem pot to the Carpenter quarter to collect the wooden idols (patimalu pl.) carved by the Carpenters from neem wood supplied to them by the Panchayat President. These wooden idols consist of four carvings, one representing the goddess, another her younger brother Pōturāju, and two miniature seating stools (pīṭa) to go with them.

The carvings are first worshipped at the house shrine of the Carpenter who carved them. During this puja he smears them with turmeric and vermillion. Then they are brought outside to the accompaniment of drums and placed on a cloth-covered bed. (The cloth-covering is a mark of respect.) They are wrapped in a white cloth and then taken away on the head of the Vadram pujari.

The procession continues down the main street of the village halting periodically for the Madigas to heat their drums on leaf fires to keep them taut. By this time the crowd of villagers swells to huge proportions. Amidst rising excitement, furious drumming, and spectacular firework explosions, the procession sets out for the Gandamma temple. The temple is located at the northern end of an irrigation dam 'tank bund', hence band+amma) which lies

between Yatapalem and Aripaka.

The procession is led by the various participants with special ritual jobs: drumming, carrying the ghaṭṭam pots, the umbrella decorated with neem, the censer, the bundle of wooden idols, the sacrificial goat, and the knife used to kill it. The sacrificial goat is donated by the Golla shepherds of neighbouring Rayapuram Agraharam village as a token payment for being allowed to graze their goats on Aripaka Revenue Village wastelands during the year. The sacrificial goat, paṭṭa pōtu, which has a large bōṭṭu (turmeric and vermillion spot) on its forehead and a branch of neem hanging around its neck is led by the Village Servant. The sacrificial knife is smeared with three parallel vermillion lines and has a banana stuck on top to deflect the interest of greedy ghosts hovering about.

As it gets dark the fireworks and crackers intensify. The accelerating tempo is stirred up by the constant rhythmic drumming. A crowd of people accompanying the Aripaka pot surges forward to meet the Yatapalem crowds. Among them is the Kottapalem Washerman who is customarily possessed by the goddess at this time. It takes several men to hold him down as he thrashes and leaps. His body is smeared with turmeric and he holds branches of neem leaves. Periodically, pots of water are poured over him and incense is fanned into his face "to cool him".

The crowd moves to the Bandamma temple which is circumambulated by the drummers, pots, and pujari with the idols on his head. Simultaneously four or five people begin walking through troughs of embers to fulfil vows to the goddess. Fireworks spray the crowd which runs chaotically in different directions. Loud explosions

go off and further contribute to the atmosphere of frenzy and danger. Sporadic, uncontrolled fights sometimes break out over trivial matters of procedure, symptomatic of the intensity of emotion.

Inside the temple, which has only enough room for about four or five people hunched over, the pujari and a Gavara elder of the Saragadam clan conduct the puja. They place the ghaṭṭam pots and wooden idols next to the rough hewn image of the goddess and apply large wads of turmeric and vermillion (bottu) to them. Some of the bottus applied to the ghaṭṭam pots during the procession in the village are removed and placed on the statue of the goddess. The men light oil lamps, waft incense from a censer, and do dandam gestures.

Outside the temple, a Rapeti man who always performs these sacrifices lifts the sacrificial goat three times in a dandam gesture towards the goddess. The Village Servant does the same as Gavara men position themselves in front of the temple holding poles. The drums continue relentlessly through the proceedings. At the moment of decapitating the goat, the Gavara men wave the sticks wildly in the air and beat them together while letting out a high pitched blood curdling howl of 'woooo, wooo, wooo' to frighten off hovering demons (dayam, bhūtam) which would otherwise snatch the offering for themselves. The goat's head and a shallow bowl of its blood are placed in front of the goddess in her temple.

The moment the sacrifice takes place and the howling begins, the drums stop and the villagers flee the area around the temple out of fear of the ghosts who are attracted by the blood offerings.

Once they are away from the temple there is a mood of release from the constantly rising emotional tension and frenzy. This peacefulness is emphasised by the sudden absence of drumming. Villagers return home in a relaxed manner for a festival meal at home. This is usually a meat meal made from a chicken sacrificed by the household to the goddess in the morning.

Several hours after the meal, the all-night long operatic drama starts in the square in front of the Rama temple. A harmonium player, a dancing girl, and the costumes are hired from Anakapalli. They assist the other singers and players who are almost exclusively villagers. Prominent roles in the drama are acted by Gavaras and Carpenters but Komati merchants from Aripaka also participate. Near the stage, Komatis and Gavaras set up stalls to sell tea and tobacco. These assist the spectators to remain awake through the night.

The beginning of the play is marked by invocations to Ganapati and various other gods to ensure the successful, unhindered completion of the performance. The puja takes the form of breaking a coconut on the stage platform and singing a hymn while one member of the cast holds a plate with a flaming piece of camphor (hārati) to which dandam gestures are made. During the intervals or breaks for comic relief, tribute money is sent up to the actors, usually by relatives and friends. If the singing is by a well known singer or someone who sings with particular virtuosity, others may also send money in tribute. The Komati announcer pays tribute to the actor honoured in this way and returns a formula of praise and blessing for the person and family of the donor. When the play ends there is an official closing ritual, mangalahārati,

in which another camphor flame is lit and a mangalam song is sung.

D. Aspects of the Symbolization of Hierarchy in the
Bandamma Festival

We now turn to examine various symbolic aspects of the Bandamma Festival in greater detail. First we examine how the festival endorses symbols of hierarchy and the hierarchical phrasing of the showing of respect by portraying these as the most efficacious means of achieving well-being. We then look at the phenomenon of avoidance of certain terminology and use of euphemism. We see in this expression of flattery and "impression management" a strategy for dealing with social situations as well as goddesses. Polite omission of "unmentionables" is behaviour of respect, and analogous to puja, is a kind of offering which entails obligation for reciprocal benevolent gestures.

The next aspect of the festival we examine is the improvised skits and formal dramas. We interpret these as one means by which the rituals deal with some of the contradictions which are built-in features of the society. The skits re-enact some of the structural strains on individuals and then "defuse" them by laughing at them. The operatic dramas elevate the predicaments of conflicting loyalties to lessons in morality such as the frustration of pride or the upholding of truth.

Finally, we consider the way in which the festival is an opportunity for the Gavaras to assert themselves as the dominant caste of the village. In this regard, the major economic support, exercise of authority, and predominant participation is provided

by Gavaras. The position of the Twice-Born cases is peripheral rather than subordinate.

1. Repetition of Basic Symbolic Elements

A striking feature of aspects of symbolisation of hierarchy in the Bandamma festival is the repetition of basic symbolic elements which are encountered in other rituals. The most important symbolic element is puja, in which turmeric and vermillion form only one component. Puja, the offering of symbolic respect through emphasising hierarchical subordination, occurs at all levels of activity in the festival. Puja is done to the ghattam pots representing the goddess, it is done to the ujidi bandi, to the sacrificial goat, and at individual household shrines in honour of the goddess.

a. Turmeric and vermillion

The repetition of individual elements in different contexts, such as smearing objects with turmeric and vermillion (e.g. putting boṭṭus on them) or cleaning an area by applying a muggu design in rice powder on a washed surface strengthens these symbols and enhances their emotive powers. Within this one festival turmeric and vermillion appear in the following contexts: on the termite mound abode of the goddess at the initiation of the festival, on the ghattam pots, on the ujidi bandi, on the wooden idols patimalu, in the puja inside the goddess' temple, at the corners of the votive firewalking pits, and on the forehead of the sacrificial goat.

b. Elements in threes

Another prominent symbolic element is the repetition of the

number three, either as a number of items offered (three leaf plates, three turmeric-vermillion dots bottu, three parallel vermillion lines) or as sequences of action (three circumambulations of the temple or of the muggu diagram on which the ghaṭṭam pots are placed before the skits, three repetitions of holding up the sacrificial goat etc.) This repetition of a series of three, like the use of turmeric and vermillion, serves to create a feeling of consistency or correspondence with other ritual contexts which reinforces the aura of the efficacy of the rituals.

Four prominent symbols are linked to the worship of village goddesses which are not so clearly associated with other rituals. These are the ghaṭṭam pots, the wooden idols patimalu, the ujidi bandi basket cart, and the use of neem leaves. On closer examination, however, we find that even these have links with other ritual contexts.

c. Pots

Pots are used in wedding ceremonies in numerous contexts. They are given as part of the bride's dowry, they are used to ceremonially fetch water for bathing the bride and groom, and they are used in the ceremony of removing the head and wrist strings (bāsikam, kankanam). The ritualisation of domestic utensils has already been noted in the case of grinding stones. Further on we shall see that it also occurs to rice-pounding mortars (rōlu).

d. Patima idols

The carrying of the idols, patimalu, to the goddess' temple bears certain resemblances to other processions of deity images, such as the papier mâché idol of Gairamma in the Gairamma festival. Processions of temple idols (utsava vīgrahālu, 'festival idols')

are the moveable idols specifically for this purpose) are prominent features of Brahmanical temples (e.g. of Rama, Venkatesvara, Jagannatha) which are well known to the villagers.

The patima carving of the goddess is crudely stylized with a square head with distinct eyes, nose, and mouth, a bifurcated diamond shaped body, and a rectangular base. The carving of the goddess' younger brother, Pōturāju, is clearly phallic, a cylindrical pole with a raised ridge just below a pointed knob at the top. The overt use of a phallic form to represent the male figure suggests that the bifurcated diamond shaped body of the female figure is similarly an allusion to the female genitals. This occurrence of sexual imagery in deity idols is not an isolated phenomenon. It occurs in the common representation of Siva as a lingam in a base representing a yoni. One is reminded of Turner's idea that the physiological pole of reference in symbols harnesses their emotive power to reinforce moral ideas (Turner 1968: 18-19).

Certain aspects of the patimalu need further clarification. Why is it that a male figure features in this festival to a female goddess? Furthermore, why is it that this figure is her younger brother rather than her husband? The only explanation which the villagers could give of the two wooden statues was that one represented women (āḍavāllu) and the other, men (mogavāllu). In this regard, it is interesting to note that the name pōturāju consists of the two words pōtu and rāju. Rāju means king and is commonly encountered appended to numerous other names (e.g. in personal names: Rama Raju, Jogi Raju, etc.). Pōtu in other contexts means 'male of the species' (e.g. mēkapōtu 'ram', where

mēka on its own means 'sheep') and is widely applied to animals. A nearby mountain, the biggest in the area, is locally known as pōtukonda (konda = mountain). The phallic nature of the idol added to the evidence of the male connotations of the name pōtu-rāju imply that the two wooden patimalu idols represent a sort of sexual symmetry of male and female, but not in the procreative sense. The relationship of younger brother to elder sister is one of protection and devotion by the superior female of the inferior male. The ambiguity in the goddess' character, to be protective but also potentially dangerous, seems to fit well with her position as elder sister, fictively addressed as 'mother', who has no superior male figure dominating her (village goddesses never seem to be associated with husbands by contrast to sanskrit deities who tend to be thought of as married pairs). Perhaps there is an additional ambiguity in the fact that elder sister can also be the mother of younger brother's wife, i.e. 'mother-in-law'.

e. Ujidi bandi - ghost decoy

The ujidi bandi seems unique to the goddess festivals though it is used for both Bandamma and Maridamma. However, for Ravalamma it is replaced by other activities which the villagers said performed the same functions. In the Ravalamma festival, in place of sending an ujidi bandi on the night of the next to last day, there is a special series of ritual enactments. These are called vālakālu, just like the improvised skits, but differ from them considerably in structure. A demoness (the bhūtam yernamma) is impersonated by the Vadram pujari and the village Barbers drive

"her" out of the village with flaming bows and arrows. They are aided by crowds of Gavara and Washermen men who beat dried palm leaf stems and howl 'woooo, woooo, woooo' just as when the sacrifice is made at the goddess' temple. The demoness is not driven out until she succeeds in taking some of the rice from one of the goddess' ghattam pots. It was explained that the principle involved is the same as that used in one method of casting out evil eye, disti. Three rice balls (usually of different colours: red from vermillion, yellow from turmeric, and black from pot soot) are individually raised and lowered (digaduyadam) in front of the persons suspected of having incurred evil eye. The rice balls are then thrown through the legs of the person being 'exorcised'. The ujidi bandi, like the ghattam pot of rice offerings in the Ravalamma demoness impersonation, is thought to work as a diversion to lure demons to a rice offering which is not the main one intended for the goddess herself.

f. Neem

Branches of neem (vēpa, margosa, lat.: 'melia azadirachta') feature in a number of contexts in the Bandamma festival. They are used to decorate the palm leaf umbrella used in the evening processions. (The umbrella is an ancient symbol of royalty in India and also currently features in processions of Brahmanical temples. The association of the British with the umbrella was a fortuitous reinforcement of the umbrella as an emblem of superiority. Holding an umbrella for someone is a symbol of showing respect to them.) Neem branches are also tied around the neck of the sacrificial goat, tied to pots of offerings, carried by

the holders of the incense pot, whisked over firewalking pits, held by people whilst firewalking, and held by people who are possessed by the goddess (e.g. the Kottapalem Washerman who accompanies the procession to the sacrifice in a state of violent possession).

The meaning of neem leaves derives from their being an emblem of the goddess in numerous contexts. Among certain Brahmanical customs known in the area, though not as widely practised here as in other regions of South India, is the performance of a marriage ceremony between a neem tree and a pipal tree (rāvi, lat.: 'ficus religiosa'). In this, the neem tree is considered to be female and the pipal male. Thus, the use of neem in connection with goddess festivals seems also to be associated with femaleness. The neem tree begins flowering around the time of the Telugu New Year and hence presages the season of goddess festival. Neem is also associated with notions of health and cleansing. Neem twigs are used by the villagers to brush their teeth and scrape their tongues, their usual early morning habit. Commercial firms now even manufacture neem tooth paste and neem soap (used mainly in towns).

2. The Role of Euphemism and Manipulative Naming

The notion of the goddess as jealous and potentially vindictive gives rise to the necessity to appease and flatter her, manipulatively if necessary. The most usual way this is done is through worshippers stressing their subordination to her through the symbolic forms of puja. There is, however, an additional technique which is part of the same phenomenon. It consists of the use

of euphemism and manipulative naming. First, there are terms referring to ritual items such as nillālu 'waters' for the fire-walking trough, and putta-bangāram 'termite-mound gold' for the termite mound (white ant hill) dirt used at the initiation of the festival. Then there are the euphemisms for smallpox blisters, normally called pokkulu, which are referred to as kundalu 'pots'. This avoidance of terms specifically associated with the disease-causing function of the goddess leads us to consider the name of the goddess herself and its use to describe affliction with smallpox.

The individual names of village goddesses are compounded from a proper name and the ending -amma. The proper name sometimes has a specific meaning (e.g. bangār-amma 'gold', mutyāl-amma 'pearl', paid-amma 'gold', paradēs-amma 'foreign', bhūlēkh-amma 'earthly realm') while others are without known meanings (e.g. nūkāl-amma, rāval-amma, etc.). The ending -amma has a number of applications in other contexts. On its own it means 'mother' both as a term of reference and term of address. It is also found in other kinship terms such as nānna = FM (nāna = father) and amma = MM (amma+amma). It also occurs in female personal names (e.g. nārāyaṇ-amma, venkay-amma, appay-amma) as well as a suffix of address (e.g. ūrikēltāna = ūriki+vēltānu+amma 'I am going to the village, ma'am').

Significantly, the suffix -amma can also be used among males, particularly to strangers in requests which are at once pleading and affectionate, as if to say "won't you let me in, my friend?" In such cases, the manipulative use of the suffix -amma is achieved through the allusion to the motherchild relationship. It is not

meant to express an already existing relation of affection but rather to manoeuvre the person addressed into a position where it is hard for him to refuse.

Somewhat similar use is made of the word talli, another word meaning 'mother'. Its use is more restricted than amma tending to be employed more as a term of reference than as a term of address. It occasionally replaces amma in the name of a village goddess. Bandamma is sometimes referred to as Banditalli. Talli is also used like -amma to express a request for motherly help and affection in a figurative sense. One woman exclaimed to me 'talli, talli' as I was going to fetch a doctor from outside the village for her gravely ill husband. The allusions in that statement were a request that I act protectively towards her, to my higher status and lack of a real tie of obligation between us, and to the requests for mercy people make to village goddesses imploring them with the repetition of 'talli, talli'.

This brings us back to consideration of the names of goddesses and their link with disease. Here we must consider the implications of the term ammavāru (and its synonym ammataalli, amma+talli). Literally speaking, ammavāru is a respectful form of amma, -vāru being a form of the honorary suffix -gāru (equivalent to the Hindi - jī as in Gāndhi-jī) which is used after male and female names to connote respect. In actual usage, however, ammavāru means 'village goddess' and 'smallpox'. When the word ammavāru is used to refer to the disease of smallpox, it is in a euphemistic sense. Just as blisters have a "real" name (pokkulu) smallpox also has a name, maśūcikam. But it is

felt that the use of these actual names will anger the goddess since they are patently undesirable things. The strategy is to flatter the goddess by using terms having connotations of affection and protection. In this way, it is hoped that the goddess will live up to these expectations. At the same time there is a sense in which the goddess herself knows that the euphemistic terms exaggerate the actual state of affairs. She is expected to appreciate the exaggeration as an offering of submission, an act of grovelling which acknowledges her power. Śakti, 'power' (in a general sense including bodily, political, and ritual power) is another synonym for village goddess and expresses the identification of the goddess with her influence over illness and health.

In this pattern of coercion by the goddess and manipulative submission by worshippers we discern the pattern which we observed in the relationship between castes. A caste's members feel to themselves that they are higher than members of many other castes, while they have to accept submissive roles for the sake of the smooth functioning of society. The manipulative aspect involved in this 'impression management' (necessitated by the conflict between their own self-exaggerated notion of their status opposed to others' opinions of them) is replicated in the manipulative use of euphemistic terminology when dealing with village goddesses. Both are the consequence of an underlying ideology of hierarchy.

This phenomenon of euphemistic flattery, employing terms of endearment, to avoid reference to the fearful destructive nature of the goddess seems to echo an ambiguity in the role of women in society (as it is perceived chiefly by men). The āśa, worldly attachment of women, is a double edged sword. When working

positively, it expresses itself as intense emotional attachment, i.e. motherly or wifely love. When working negatively, women's over-emotional proclivities (as culturally defined and expressed - see discussions of funerals, widowhood, role of women etc.) have a jealous, destructive side. Thus, while the worship of village goddesses is not a mirror reflection of hierarchical social relations, it partakes of many of its symbolic forms and ambiguities.

3. Skits and Dramas: Mediation and Resolution of Structural Ambiguities by Ritual

We have just seen how the conception of the goddess contains allusions to contradictory aspects of the female role in society. These contradictory elements coexist in the goddess and are turned into the focus of the festival ritual which enacts an ideal structure of society and an endorsement of a morality of social behaviour based on hierarchy and interdependence. We can interpret the significance of skits and dramas in a similar way. They also seize upon, and prominently feature, built-in social tensions (e.g. the problem of controlling and subordinating wives, challenges to parental authority, competition of brothers, etc.) and render them less harmful by bringing them out into the open or mythically resolving them.

a. Vālakālu, improvised skits

Marriage and social situations arising from it are the focus of the satire of the vālakālu skits. These involve the violation of the authority of parents, the hierarchy of the sexes, problems of adultery, as well as conflicting loyalties of husbands and wives to their own and to their spouse's family. Generally the skits

involve members of the Gavara caste but even where they deal with non-Gavaras (Madigas, Vadrams, and Carpenters) few lack reference to marital problems of some sort. Often the actors in the improvised skits satirise relatives with whom they have licence to joke. Since such relatives are of the marriageable category this contributes an additional association of sexuality, marriage, and joking.

The following are representative descriptions of seven different skits:

i) A young woman (played by a man wearing a sari) stays away from her husband at her father's house. She defies her father's exhortations that she return to her husband. Every time he suggests she return to him, she feigns illness. Finally, the father decides to hold a sānti ceremony to dispel the bad astrological influences which cause her to fall mysteriously ill every time he mentions her husband. A mock sānti ceremony is staged, to the great amusement of the audience. A cloth is held between the husband and wife and Brahmanical chants are hilariously imitated. The Brahman is also satirised as being avaricious. He keeps urging them constantly to make offerings of small coins (the priest always gets to keep the items which are used in the puja) while he will in any case take a three rupee fee at the end.

ii) This skit was a re-enactment of an incident in which the Vadram goddess pujari had been knocked down in a heated argument with his son-in-law. The Vadram was in the audience at the time and stood up and protested. Members of the audience shouted for him to sit back down and his behaviour was regarded by everyone

as bad form. The Vadram had further reason to feel sensitive since the satire also contained oblique references to his wife making a cuckold of him. She was widely rumoured to be a woman of loose morals and at one time was the mistress of a prominent Gavara elder.

iii) A woman prays to the goddess for her husband to go blind so that he will not be able to see her boy-friends. The husband overhears her and pretends he is blind. The woman believes that her husband had gone blind and proceeds to invite numerous boy-friends for dinner. The wife puts poison in the food intended for her husband but while she is out of the room he mixes it into the food on the other plates. After the meal all the guests die. Then the wife has the problem of getting rid of the dead bodies. She enlists the help of a wandering beggar by means of a generous bribe. He throws a body into a well and comes back for his payment. He is surprised to find what he thinks to be the same body back in the house. He then dumps this body into the well and returns only to do a double-take when he discovers another body to be disposed of. Many bodies later, and after this routine has been used to send the audience "rolling in the aisles" with laughter, the husband opens his eyes and shouts at his wife for her attempted deception.

A number of interesting comments on husband-wife relations come out in the actual dialogue and miming of this plot, which is improvised as it goes along (though a skeleton plot is thought up and agreed upon beforehand): The wife starts cooking her husband some millet gruel, ambali, a preparation looked down upon as cheaper and inferior to rice. She then begins to flirt with members of the audience, allowing her sari end to slip off* immodestly.

The wife then comments "Oh, these expensive saris never stay on. They keep falling off!" Later in the skit when she brings her husband his meal of gruel, he sarcastically remarks

"You always bring me this miserable gruel to eat but spend three hundred rupees for an expensive sari".

At another point, the "battle of the sexes" is waged with sarcastic remarks on pativratadharmam, virtuous wifehood (of the pēraṇṭālu = pativrata (non-widow, woman with her husband still alive):

Wife (brags, gossiping with another woman): "Do you have a husband who is equal to mine?" (long pause)
 "Well, maybe our husbands are similar after all - your husband has a crooked mouth and mine has a crooked arse."

Wife (enters her house and begins ordering her husband to help her take a heavy basket off her head): "Come on, help me take this basket off my head. Do it slowly, ... be careful."

(As he helps her she uses the opportunity of his bending over to step on his head.)

Wife: (Due to my devotion to you as a loyal wife (nā pativratadharmam) if I put my foot on your head, I will go straight to heaven."

Husband: "Hey! Are you putting your foot on my head?"

Wife: "Yes, doesn't every wife? ... Hold on, I'll take my leg down" (said as she steps on him even more emphatically) "Ah, I maintain such loyalty to you. From the day I was born I never desired any other man!" (Aside: "Except Rama Rao.").

In the part of this skit in which the wandering beggar is instructed to take the first dead body, the wife described the

*Such actions of indecency would not be possible if the actors were not men masquerading as women. If women were to try such things, even while clearly acting, they would acquire a bad reputation. This of course underlines the atmosphere of suspicion which underpins male dominance of women and their beliefs about women's weakness to restrain their emotions and sexual urges. After all, even Sita, the paragon of wifely constancy in the renowned Ramayana epic, was forced to undergo a test of her fidelity before being fully accepted back by Rama after he rescued her from her abductor in Lanka.

person using a nickname meaning "stub finger". This is an allusion to the old Gavara man who was known to have been "keeping" the Vadram pujari's wife as his mistress. In the joking, reference is made to his having lost his ring because he also lost his finger with it. The man, who actually is missing one finger, recently was accused by his wife of giving away one of his gold rings to his mistress. He staunchly maintained that he had lost it. Considering his reputation for miserliness it is highly unlikely that he inadvertently lost a gold ring.

The wandering beggar of the skit is a reference to the recent visit of a Gudda-gaṇṭal-ōḍu 'man with a bell at his buttocks'. This variety of itinerant beggar, of the nominally Muslim Rēyyi Turakacaste, circulates in the middle of the night (e.g. 3 a.m.) with a bell tied behind him. He goes from house to house and chants a prayer for household well-being and crop fecundity, accompanying himself on a small hourglass-shaped frogskin drum.

It is significant that this particular itinerant beggar was included in the skit since it is part of a further allusion to wifely infidelity. This man appeared in the village always close on the heels of an itinerant bard and his wife, of the Māla Maṣṭi caste. In the previous year, the wife of the Māla Maṣṭi had run off with the Gudda-gaṇṭalōḍu in the vicinity of Yatapalem. He was chastised and fined by his fellow caste men who held a dispute settlement session to discuss his case. The woman was sent back to her husband but it appeared that her affair with the Guddagaṇṭalōḍu was far from finished since again this year they arrived in Yatapalem within a day or two of each other.

iv) A man came home drunk, too late in the day to perform the Nāgula Caviti ceremonial offerings to snakes in termite mounds. This is a festival that has to be performed by husband and wife together. The man acted as though he was drunk, but everyone in the village knew that he had been off visiting his girlfriend in another village at the time.

v) This skit is a situation of a conflict of interest in the marriage where the wife's family interfered. A woman's father takes and sells her gold necklace which she received from her husband at the time of her marriage. (It is customary for the girl's family to make a presentation of a cash dowry and the boy's family to present the girl with a certain amount of gold.) The situation in the skit revolves around the woman's predicament when her husband refuses to accept her back until she can produce the necklace.

vi) A skit concerns a man who has only daughters and no sons. It criticises his pressuring his daughter to work for him in his fields, to the dismay of her husband. The skit elaborates the problem of sex role violations by a series of jokes about making female buffaloes pull a sugar cane press (customarily only male buffaloes are used) and milking a male buffalo. The buffaloes were represented by small boys who enjoyed participating in the skit. They kicked the main actors when they bent over to determine the sex of the buffaloes for milking.

vii) A man was criticised by his brothers for spending all his effort helping out his father-in-law in agricultural activities. The issue of the wife having an informal share in her father's

land was the occasion for remarks about a branch of the Rapeti clan. Allegedly they would only agree to a particular marriage match with their son if they could get some of the bride's father's land.

b. Operatic dramas: drāmālu

The operatic dramas which form the night-long entertainment on the last night of the goddess festival exhibit intriguing similarities with the improvised vālakālu skits. Like the skits, they are dramatic enactments of social conflicts and structural tensions (e.g. competition between brothers; a servant with obligations which conflict with ties to his master; a king torn between obligations to his wife and duty to uphold his word and protect his subjects; a wife struggles to remain faithful to her husband after she is abducted). These themes are dealt with by means of allegory rather than by reference to specific local people or conflicts. The plots of the dramas are based on mythological themes but are not always merely versions of the epics (Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavatam). A number of the stories concern principle characters from the epics who are pitted against one another in unexpected ways. The plots often focus on irreconcilable conflicts of loyalty: Rama in conflict with Hanuman; Krishna in conflict with Arjuna; descendents of brothers Dhrtarāstra and Panḍu warring against each other; King Hariścandra's abandoning his wife and son in order to keep his word to the sage Viśvamitra.

The drama staged for the Bandamma festival was Rāmanjaneyya Yuddham, the battle of Rama and Anjaneyya (Anjaneyya = Hanuman). Normally, Hanuman is considered to be the loyal servant of Rama.

In this play, however, they are brought into conflict. The plot revolves around the excessive pride of a sage who, far from renouncing worldly attachment, is concerned with petty status seeking and vindictive jealousy. He is particularly insulted when he is not accorded his due share of acknowledgement of his hierarchical precedence over another sage. The eventual outwitting of this jealous sage's curse is the subject of the subtitle of the drama, Viśvamiṭra garvabhāṅgam, 'the defeat of the pride of Viśvamiṭra' (garvam = 'pride').

A king, Yayāti, incurs the wrath of the sage Viśvamiṭra by first saluting (dandam) another sage, Vāsiṣṭha, when he comes upon them meditating in their forest retreat. Viśvamiṭra curses the king and vows to have his head at his feet by sunset. He calls on Rāma and asks for the fulfilment of an unpaid boon (varam) which Rāma had granted him some time before when the sage had done severe penance and obeisance to Rāma's name. Rāma had little choice but to agree to the fulfilment of the curse, the bringing to Viśvamiṭra of King Yayāti's head.

Meanwhile, at the instigation of Nārada, mischievous messenger of the gods, and also a sage, Yayāti goes to Hanuman's mother to request her to convince her son to protect him as his life is threatened. She agrees and gets Hanuman to give his word to protect the king. It comes as a great shock to Hanuman to learn that the king's adversary is none other than Rāma, his own master. Despite having been deceived by the king, Hanuman maintains that his loyalty to Rāma's own teaching to be steadfast to one's word mean that he must attempt to defend the king.

Rāma cannot bear the thought of fighting with his loyal servant and devotee and decides to leave his form as Rāma and turn into Viṣṇu. Hanuman sings of his devotion (bhakti) to Rāma in what is one of the most popular passages of the drama. His devotion is so great that he proposes to fight the formidable discus weapon of Viṣṇu with a bit of the dust from the feet of Rāma, which is greater to him than a powerful weapon.

Like neighbours gathering when villagers fight, the gods gather and plead for the conflict to be resolved since the whole world is being rocked by the struggle. Nārada saves the day by explaining a way out of their problems. By interpreting the sage's demand in a strictly literal fashion there is no need for the king to be killed. The king's head needs only to be brought and placed at the sage's feet. Nothing had been stipulated about severing the head from the king's body, even though the sage might have assumed that this would be so. Thus, Rāma and Hanuman are both able to fulfil their obligations and avoid a conflict between themselves. The king is saved and the excessively proud sage is shamed by being outwitted and "loses face".

Among other popular dramas performed by the villagers or in villages in the area are Gayōpakhyānam, Kurukṣetram, Satyaharīścandra, and Bālanāgama.

In Gayōpakhyānam the Gandharva king Gaya (Gayuḍu) spits betel juice as he is flying in his aerial chariot. By chance, it lands in the outstretched hands of Krishna, who is engaged in prayer. Krishna, deeply offended, vows to kill him. Gaya is terrified when he learns of this by means of a voice speaking from the sky. He goes to Brahma and then Śiva for protection but both refuse him. He is distraught but then Narada arrives with a plan. He is to get Arjuna, Krishna's brother-in-law, to promise to protect him before he knows that this means a conflict with Krishna. He does this and the stage for the conflict is set.

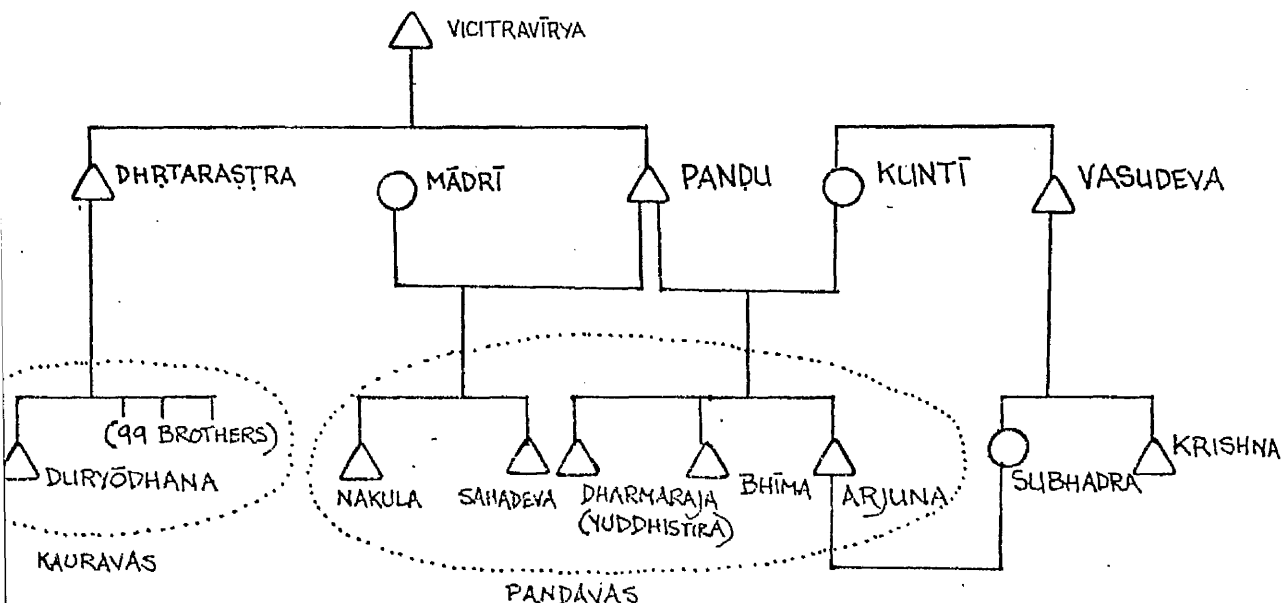
Krishna sends his wife, Subhadra, to her brother Arjuna to intervene but he refuses to go back on his word to Gaya. Meanwhile, the Kauravas hope to exploit this internal conflict of the Pandavas with their ally Krishna. They plan to join temporarily with the Pandavas (brothers of Arjuna) in order to get Krishna out of the way. They then plan to turn on the Pandavas. Despite further attempts at intervention by other wives of Krishna, Rukmīni, Satyabhāma, and Devaki, Krishna and Arjuna face each other on the battle field. Krishna launches into a lengthy description of all he has done for the Pandavas and again requests that they turn over Gaya to him. Arjuna humbly refuses.

As the combat between Krishna and Arjuna intensifies, Śiva appears and intervenes. He stops them, saying to Krishna, 'Gaya is your devotee and Arjuna is your own brother-in-law, you should not be engaged in battling with one another.' Krishna withdraws his

vow to kill Gaya and apologises to Arjuna. In return, Arjuna humbly offers him his apologies as well. Dharmarāja (= Yudhishthira, brother of Arjuna) comes and says a prayer to Siva and blesses Gaya saying that his story will live on to illustrate to the world the moral: 'when protection is needed, even by an enemy, it should be given without partiality or influence of relatives'.

The drama Kuruksetram deals with Arjuna's predicament of being at war with his own kinsmen. His brothers, the Pandavas, are in conflict with the Kauravas who are his classificatory brothers since they are his father's brother's sons. Krishna, related to both sides, attempts to intervene. Krishna's father's sister is married to Panḍu, the father of the Pandavas. But Panḍu is also the brother of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the father of the Kauravas. In addition, Krishna's sister is married to Arjuna. This story is of course the story of the Mahabharata war and Arjuna's conflict of loyalty between his various kinsmen is the inspiration for the renowned sermon of the Bhagavadgīta. Apart from the high philosophical message of the Gita, it also should be seen as addressing itself to an important problem in a villager's life, the conflict of brothers.

Figure IX-1. Kinship relations in the Mahābhārata



In Satyahariscandra, the king Hariścandra gives up his kingdom and eventually sells his wife, son, and himself into slavery in order to be faithful to his word 'hence satya 'truth'). This conflict of his ties to his family as opposed to his ties to his subjects arises out of his obligations to the sage Viśvamitra, whom he offends by accidentally interrupting his austerities (tapasa), Viśvamitra threatens to curse his kingdom so Hariścandra offers his promise to do anything to avert that. Viśvamitra accepts this offer. The sage demands money from him and he is eventually driven to sell his wife and son into slavery to get the amount demanded. This is still not enough to satisfy the sage who demands more. Hariścandra sells himself to an attendant of a cremation ground. He is reunited with his wife by chance when she brings his son for cremation. He is about to turn her away since she has no money to pay him when he suddenly recognizes her. At this point the gods in heaven descend and reward Hariścandra for his loyalty to his word and his selfless devotion to his subjects. His son is brought back to life and he is able to return to his kingdom with his family.

Bālanāgama, lēka Māyala Pakīru ('Young Nāgama, or the Sorcerer Fakir'), is another highly popular drama among the villages in the Yatapalem area. It deals with the trials and tribulations of a pativrata (pērantālu, faithful wife, wife with her husband still alive). She is abducted by an evil sorcerer but refuses to succumb to his advances. She then turns to stone from the head down. There follows a quest to find the sorcerer's secret retreat and snuffout the flame that renders him invincible.

In the end, against all odds, the sorcerer is killed and the woman recovers her normal body and is reunited with her husband.

4. Participation by Gavaras and Twice-Born Castes

So far we have examined the ideological content of the festival and seen how it endorses the symbolic expression of hierarchy and symbolically deals with tensions in the social structure. Now we turn to consider the issue of the actual relationships which are activated by performance of the festival. Here, the economic, political, and social position of the Gavara farmers emerge as predominant. Twice-Born castes, Kapu and Velama farmers play a peripheral role while the Gavaras assume hierarchical dominance over the castes subordinate to them. This reflects the position of the Gavaras in other activities in the village which we have already discussed. The overall hierarchical structure of society is maintained, despite the presence of castes which are superior or equal to the Gavaras.

The festival activities should not be considered as simple reflections of the village power structure. Their role is also to serve as arenas in which the Gavaras palpably assert their dominance and demonstrate that the Twice-Born castes do not challenge the Gavara leadership of the festival. The village goddess festivals are important as a means of Gavara dominance since they are the only major community occasions in which the Gavaras can publicly be seen in their dominant role.

The Gavaras provide the economic backing for the festival and drama through a levy (canda) on Gavara households. This is collected and managed by the Panchayat Vice President, a Rapeti

clansman of Yatapalem. This money is used to pay cash tips to the drummers, for the oil and incense used in the processions, for the construction of a drama stage, and for the hiring of the harmonium player, dancing girl and costumes.

It is Gavaras who determine the timing of the festival which, unlike most calendrical rituals, is not rigidly fixed. Gavara elders, particularly the Panchayat President and Headman, decide when the festival should take place. It is they who have the prerogative to postpone or change the timings of the festivals on the basis of astrological or economic considerations. In addition to their authority to determine the timing of the festival, the Gavara elders exercise considerable authority during the celebration proceedings. They determine the speed and route of the procession and control unruly members of the crowd.

Gavaras are also prominent participants in the festival activities. During the last two days of processions they provide entertainment by performing dances, putting on displays of stick twirling and mock combat. They perform the vālakālu skits after the evening processions and also predominate in the drama performance. It is Gavaras who collect the wooden idols from the Carpenters and also Gavaras who perform the actual goat sacrifice. Interestingly, the term ijamāni which means elder or head (and refers to the Gavara village elders, ijamānulu) also carries the meaning 'persons who institute a sacrifice and pay for its performance'.

By contrast, the Twice-Born castes tend to do individual pujas at the goddess temple before the main procession arrives and leave before the rest of the villagers arrive. By their aloofness they maintain a nominal superiority which conceals their lack of any real influence in the conduct of the festival. Twice-

Born castes are more evident at the evening drama performance.

There, Komatis set up betel and tobacco stalls. They also participate in the drama as announcers and backstage prompters. Prominent Brahmans and Rajus also usually attend.

It might be argued that since the festival involves animal sacrifice that Twice-Born castes may have traditionally had little to do with it. This seems not to be the case. Komatis, who are vegetarians, take an active part in the festival proceedings. Their effusive praise of the goddess during the announcement of honorary tributes to the actors leaves little doubt about their commitment. Though the Rajus take less active part in the public activities there is no evidence that they are averse to the worship of village goddesses (which contrasts with their explicit scepticism over the cult of bālapēraṇṭālu, so popular among Shudras and Harijans in the region). In fact, the Raju stronghold of Vizianagaram town, seat of the Raju Maharaja of Vizianagaram, is renowned for its annual "village" goddess festival, the Paidimamba Panduga (on a Tuesday in the waxing fortnight of Asvayuja month). This festival is explicitly patronized by the Maharaja and draws thousands of people from all over the district.

E. Aspects of the Symbolization of Interdependence in the Bandamma Festival

The performance of the goddess festival necessitates interdependent cooperative action by people and groups of differing statuses. We examine here how, by their activities, they bring ideology to life and make the character of the goddess a reality. We also consider how the occasion of the festival articulates sexes, families, castes, and settlements into an endeavour of the entire village.

1. Creation of the Character of the Goddess: Joint
Emotional Involvement

The intense cooperative activity and emotional involvement of all the villagers in the festival creates the reality of the goddess' power. Admittedly, it has the elements of self-fulfilling prophecy, but without such dramatic reenactment, ideological concepts of the village goddess and the imperative to worship her would lose much of their compelling force.

There is an accelerating emotional build-up in the course of the festival proceedings. First there are the evening processions and entertainments. As the last days of the festival draw closer, anticipation and excitement grow. Houses are whitewashed, relatives are invited, and puja supplies are purchased. The Thursday market in Aripaka is particularly lively and the price of chickens soars. Drama actors can be heard practicing their lines and vālakālu skit enthusiasts plan the coming night's entertainment.

The last two days of the festival are a really special event. Women wear their most dazzling and colourful saris and excitedly stand together on walls or sides of houses to watch the young men showing off their skills at stick-twirling or dancing. The drumming, which goes on for hours, causes the entire village to pulsate with its rhythmic tempo, a kind of collective quickening heart-beat.

Much drinking goes on and there are surges of conflict and sporadic outbursts of aggression. Even in the drumming there is an element of repressed aggression. At times Malas and Madigas play their drums facing each other in a sort of stylized confrontation and competition. The mock-fights with swords and sticks also

exhibit these features of controlled conflict.

The practically uncontrollable possession (pati vēyuta) of the Kottapalem Washerman by the goddess, the ability of ordinary people to walk unharmed on glowing embers, and the presence of death in the beheading of the sacrificial goat are all emotionally stirring events which attest to the presence of the goddess. The tangible quality of the frightening threatening power of the goddess is further created by the loud, unpredictable explosions of crackers and fireworks which are thrown at random dangerously into the crowd. The atmosphere of fear and menace of the goddess and the demons who hover about her temple culminates in the headlong flight from the temple immediately after the sacrifice as a contingent of men beat sticks and emit a wierd whopping sound to divert the ghosts' attention away from the offerings.

From the above it can be seen that, to a great extent, the reality of the goddess is a direct consequence of the festival activities. These activities are made possible by the castes of the village cooperating with each other interdependently. The imperative to perform the festival of the goddess is thus an expression of an ideology that the castes must cooperate with each other for their mutual well-being.

2. The Role of Women in the Festival

Women perform numerous tasks in the festival which demonstrate their indispensable role in society. It is women who have the prerogative of doing the goddess puja when individual vow-fulfilment performances take place or when offerings on behalf of

the household are made. The men stand aside as the women take charge of ritually purifying the temple with cowdung water, muggu diagrams on the ground, and turmeric and vermillion on the temple doorposts. Women are also in charge of conducting the puja at the household shrine. Women are thus deeply involved in the goddess festival even though the men take over the main public activities of the festival such as the processions, the skits, drama, and sacrifice on the last day. Women's association with the more 'domestic' side of the rituals, when the rituals have a connection with the individual household, ties in with their role of emotional attachment to their closest loved ones. Men's activities are more on behalf of larger social units, which are articulated through males, e.g. castes as wholes.

3. The link of individual households to village-wide activity, and group-defined experience

Households' activities are synchronised with the activities of the whole village in a number of ways. The performance of vow-fulfilments (mokkubadi) on the morning of the last day of the festival is one example of this. Fifty individual vow-fulfilments (pujas and chicken sacrifices performed exclusively by women) is a conservative estimate of the minimum number performed on the morning of the last day of the festival.

Another way in which the activities of individual households are intermeshed with the festival of the village is the performance of puja by women of every household at their household shrine at the beginning of the final ghattam pot procession. Women also make offerings on behalf of their household to the daily procession

of ghaṭṭam pots and to the ujidi bandi, the basket on wheels which is taken around the village in the middle of the night and then deposited at the temple to appease demons there.

4. Activation of inter-caste ties

a. Castes' ritual job specializations

As we have already seen, the village goddess festival is the occasion for intense inter-caste cooperation. The degree to which castes who are subordinate to the Gavaras prominently serve in the goddess festival parallels their roles as servants and employees of the farmers in the everyday economic and political life of the village. All the castes which are prominent are those which are clearly important dependents of the Gavaras. Higher (Twice-Born) or "equal" castes (Velama, Kapu, Telukala) are notably peripheral. The only exceptions to this are the two castes Jangam, Vadram, which act as pujaris and the Carpenters whose status is in many respects indeterminate. It is striking that aside from these three castes, the remaining five castes, who play crucial subordinate roles, are members of the inferior dietary categories which eat domestic pork (see Table II-2, p.57).

The following is a tabulation of the duties and participation of different castes in the Bandamma festival:

VADRAM: is the guardian of the ghaṭṭam pots throughout the year, brings the goddess into the village at the initiation of the festival; the daily pot processions begin and end at his house; he and sometimes his wife carry the pots in the processions; he is in charge of making the special array of the pots at the temple before the vālakālu skits; he gets possessed by the goddess; he collects and carries the wooden idols, patimalu, to the goddess' temple; he holds up the sacrificial goat to the goddess and performs puja in presenting the village's offerings to the goddess in her temple.

JANGAM: accompanies the ghaṭṭam pot processions playing a special drum, yarnam, which gives a whining sound.

CARPENTERS (Kamsāli): make the ujidi bandi frame; carve the two wooden idols and replica seating stools and do puja to them before presenting them to the Gavara delegation which comes to take them in procession; shoot off the fireworks during the final procession and goat sacrifice; participate in the drama.

YATA (or Settigollu): A Yata woman purifies and decorates (with a muggu diagram) the area where the ghaṭṭam pots are placed preceding the vālakālu skits; she also makes a special offering to the pots on the last day of the festival; Yatas provide free liquor from their sāra (sugarcane liquor) shops to the people doing special ritual jobs in the ghaṭṭam pot processions on the last two days of the festival viz. Mala and Madiga drummers, Barber holders of umbrella and censer, Washerman holder of the torch; (Yatas have special jobs connected with the goddess Ravalamma, whose brass horses are carried by Yatas from both Yatapalem and Kottapalem).

WASHERMEN (Cākali): carry a torch and oil vessel for fuelling it at all processions of the ghaṭṭam pots; accompany the ujidi bandi out to the temple of the goddess; Kottapalem Washerman carry the ghaṭṭam pots which go to Aripaka and Kottapalem on the last two days of the festival; a Kottapalem Washerman is the bhaṭṭuḍu, traditionally possessed by the goddess.

BARBERS (Mangali): participate in the ghaṭṭam pot processions on all the days of the festival, carrying the palm leaf umbrella of the goddess; a Barber also carries a censer in the procession.

MALA: The Village Servant (Bārki) who lives in Aripaka plays a prominent role in the festival: he accompanies the pot processions with his special drum, dōlu; he announces and pulls the ujidi bandi to the temple of the goddess, holds up the goat to the goddess with a dandam gesture before it is sacrificed, speaks with the goddess through people possessed by her. Other Mālas, also of Aripaka, participate in the drumming at the various pot processions and one accompanies the Village Servant and a Washerman and Madiga who take the ujidi bandi to the temple in the middle of the night. A Māla also leads the sacrificial goat in the procession to the temple. (The Bārki is also guardian of ritual items for Ravalamma.)

MADIGA: play a special variety of drum, dappu, at all processions of the ghaṭṭam pots on all the days of the festival; are the principal drummers for the dancing and stick-twirling displays; accompany the ujidi bandi out to the goddess temple.

During the performance of the festival it is often possible to find non-villagers playing special ritual roles. For instance, a Madiga from another village might assist his fellow Madigas. On one occasion a Barber from another village helped in the drumming

and carrying of the palm-leaf umbrella. These men were all relatives of men in Yatapalem and they were just helping them out. But this phenomenon of interchangeability attests to the fact that ritual duties (drumming, carrying umbrella etc.) are responsibilities of caste groups as wholes, within which individuals are interchangeable.

b. Payment in cash and kind

On various occasions during the celebration of the festival, members of the castes who perform special ritual duties are paid in cash and kind. The prominence of payment in kind seems to be associated with the kinds of jajmani intercaste relationships observed for example between Gavaras and Washermen. The qualitative difference between these two modes of payment seems to lie in the implications of hierarchy of degrees of convertibility. Cash is a more 'symmetrical' form of payment. It is easily converted into numerous other commodities or stored and accumulated over time. By contrast, payment in kind is 'asymmetrical'. It is not readily exchangeable into other commodities or stored over time, particularly when it is in the form of raw meat or cooked rice. Payment in kind, thus gives the recipient less autonomy and places him in a less ambiguously inferior position.

Castes receive payments for their ritual services on a number of occasions during the festival. At the end of the daily processions the Vadram pujari keeps the uncooked rice which has been collected as offerings. The cooked rice offerings are doled out to the Barbers, Washermen, Malas, and Madigas. On the last day of the festival, the drummers receive cash from the Vice President to

purchase liquor (Jamgam Re. 1, Barbers Rs. 3, Washerman Rs. 3, Madigas Rs. 3). After the sacrifice, the body of the goat is given to the Carpenters, its skin is given to the Barbers (to make a new drum head for their ritual drums), and its head is given to the Mala Village Servant, the Bārki. The chicken heads left at the temple during the morning vow-fulfilments become the property of the Barbers.

c. Begging

In paying castes for their ritual services, begging plays an important role. Begging is an additional expression of the hierarchical nature of caste interdependence. Those who perform functions as pujaris, the Village Servant and the Vadram, circulate in the village during the day time on the penultimate and final days of the festival. They both go around carrying branches of neem (a basket hung with neem leaves in the case of the Vadram) which allude to their roles as goddess pujaris. By contrast, the main castes which are subordinate to the Gavaras (Washermen, Barbers, Yatas, Malas, Madigas) circulate in the evenings. They go with begging baskets to Gavara houses where festival meals are being enjoyed. The people who go around begging are referred to as "poor people", bīdōllu, by Gavaras. However, poverty is not really the main criterion of the evening begging. Inferior caste status is rather their distinguishing feature. Carpenters, who claim higher status, and genuinely poor people of castes equal to Gavaras (Kapu, Velama), or within the same dietary group (Telukula Oil Pressers) are notably absent from the ranks of the beggars. This night begging, thus entails an admission of inferior caste status.

5. Inter-settlement Ties: Multi-caste Participation
and Ghattam Pots

We now consider the significance of the Bandamma festival for the ties between the various settlements which comprise Aripaka Revenue Village. Firstly, the Bandamma and other goddess festivals (grāma, dēvata pandugalu) stand out as occasions of the greatest ritual participation by all the settlements co-operating with each other. The Gairamma festival contrasts with them as a predominantly Gavara concern, conducted only in Yatapalem and Mallolla Pakalu. Moreover, even these two settlements celebrate their festival in honour of Gairamma separately. The Sankranti festival has features of inter-settlement participation (e.g. a religious song-singing bhajana procession goes from Yatapalem to Aripaka) but these are not major events in the overall festival activity. While Aripaka stages its own religious song-singing, bhajana, and has its own Rama temple, it has no independent village goddesses separate from those worshipped by Yatapalem and its satellite settlements, Mallolla Pakalu and Kottapalem.

In the celebration of the goddess festival, Yatapalem is clearly the centre of activity. The nightly processions and the caste personnel (with the notable exceptions of the Village Servant, a Mala from Aripaka, and the bhattudu, possessed Washerman of Kottapalem) are all from Yatapalem. Leadership and finance of the festival all emanate from the Gavaras (of both Yatapalem and Mallolla Pakalu). Aripaka, in fact, contributes no money for the conduct of the festival. Their participation has a distinctly passive quality, with the ghattam pot being sent from Yatapalem

to Aripaka on the final days of the festival.

The same pattern is discernable with relation to Kottapalem. Like Aripaka's Village Servant, Kottapalem is a conspicuous participant in the rituals in the person of the Washerman whose possession by the goddess is a regular feature of the festivals. (A Velama in Aripaka used to be possessed but after his death no one in his settlement or caste replaced him.) Kottapalem Yatas do, however, have a special ritual role to play in connection with the worship of Ravalamma. At the annual Sankranti fair in honour of Ravalamma and the triennial Ravalamma festival, Kottapalem's Yatas carry one of the goddess' brass horses in procession. Yatapalem Yatas carry the other one alongside them.

Despite these different degrees of participation by the settlements, the movements of the ghattam pots do serve to create and demonstrate the unity of the village and interdependence, however superficial, of its settlements. A Barber woman in Yatapalem once commented, when asked whether Yatapalem and Aripaka were separate villages, that they are the same village "because the Aripaka pot goes with the Yatapalem ghattam pot in the village goddess festival".

The way in which the ghattam pots "create" the reality of the village's unity is through the symbolic concepts of darsanam and puja. Firstly, the movements of the pots are equated with the movement of the goddess. She is brought into the village for a week which culminates in worshipping her at her temple. Her presence in the village is represented by the movements of her pots. Though the nightly procession makes a circle through only the main streets of the village, it represents the physical presence, darsanam, and

sight of the goddess herself at every household. This also enables individual households to do puja to the goddess (saluting her pot with a dandam gesture, presenting rice offerings and turmeric and vermillion). Thus, the circulation of pots in Aripaka and other settlements defines and acknowledges the domain and sphere of influence of the goddess.

Chapter X

THE GAIRAMMA FESTIVAL: RITUAL OF CROP FECUNDITY

In discussing the Gairamma festival we sketch an outline of the main activities and then discuss certain features in greater detail. Apart from these features, the Gairamma festival repeats many of the symbolic elements and content which we have encountered in the Bandamma festival. There are also numerous parallels in the structure of the festival events: 1. the concept of bringing the goddess into the village, 2. nightly entertainments of the goddess, 3. a final festival procession leading out of the village.

A. Comparison with Village Goddess Festivals

Gairamma, a dēvi, differs from a village goddess, a dēvata, in that she is wholly benevolent. Gauri is the wife of the great god Siva, thus quite unlike the village goddesses she is clearly married. She is housed in the village Rama temple during her stay in the village rather than in the house of the Vadram pujari as is the case with a village goddess. The procession on the last day of the Gairamma festival is a fond farewell to take her idol and respectfully immerse it in a tank. She is placed in a palanquin for the journey, like a bride. No animal sacrifice is required or involved in her worship.

Another point of difference between Gairamma and the village goddess festivals is the special involvement of the Gavara caste. On a number of occasions Gavaras commented that the Gavara caste (pronounced 'gaura') is the caste of Gauri (Gairamma = Gauri+amma). Aside from this resemblance in name, Gauri is intimately associated, through this festival, with abundance and fecundity of the crops,

a central concern of the Gavaras. As such, the non-Gavara castes of Aripaka were not involved in the celebrations. The range of settlements involved in the Gairamma celebrations is even more narrow than this since the Gavaras of Mallolla Pakalu and Yatapalem each hold separate Gairamma celebrations. This is a contrast to the village goddess festival where the interdependence of the entire revenue village is a prominent feature. The absence of Aripaka's participation does not, however, appreciably change the fundamentally hierarchical relationship of the Gavaras and dependent castes (Washermen, Barbers, Harijans) in the rituals. The caste relationships in the Gairamma festival are in fact essentially similar to those in the village goddess festival.

B. Outline of the Gairamma Festival

A. Initiation

1. Bringing of the idol of Gairamma into the village

- a. The papier mâché idol depicts Gauri and Siva, with Ganga in his hair, seated on the bull Nandi
- b. The idol is brought by Washermen who are delegated to purchase it in Anakapalli
- c. Village Barbers provide a drumming escort to the Washermen returning with the idol
- d. The idol is brought to the village (Yatapalem) Rama temple
- e. A Jangam, acting as pujari, cleans a room in the temple and in it places a pot with a turmeric root tied around its rim with a string

2. Procession to gather rice stalks for Gairamma pot

- a. Washermen carry a fire torch, Barbers and Madigas drum

- b. A Gavara woman who wants children carries the Gairamma pot (with the turmeric root tied to it) from the temple
- c. Outside the village, Gavara men select three rice stalks, vari dubbu, (without rice on them since these stay green and last longer) and plant them in the pot

3. Procession continues in the village

- a. The procession is led by young Gavara men who do stick-twirling displays (sāmu gariḍi) and a circle of them do an intricate folk dance, siratalu (or ciratalu), requiring coordinated beating of each other's sticks
- b. Women walk together following the procession
- c. Young men carry sugarcane poles and freshly uprooted rice stalks walking alongside the Gairamma pot (this is said to ensure the protection of their crops from insects, animals, birds, and evil eye - disti)
- d. As the procession proceeds, housewives come out to make offerings (oil, turmeric and vermillion, sugarcane pieces, bananas) part of which are returned as prasādam

4. Placing of the Gairamma pot and idol into the temple

- a. Gavara men place the pot and idol into the temple (a side room in the Rama temple)
- b. The Jangam pujari performs a puja (breaks coconut, places offerings in front of the idol). The offerings include numerous allusions to female married status (pēraṇṭālu, patrivrata): case for vermillion powder - kumkum barini, mirror for applying forehead vermillion dot - botṭu, bangles, flowers, leaves of tulasi - sweet basil
- c. A Gavara elder garlands the bull Nandi with a string of fried confections, undrālu, made from millet and jaggery
- d. Jangam pujari lights a brass oil lamp which is to be kept burning continuously for the entire duration of the goddess' stay in the village

5. Evening entertainment

- a. Ciratalu folk dancing with sticks, by young Gavara men in front of the temple
- b. Vālakālu skits are an optional feature. They are not performed differently from those at the village goddess festivals
- c. Singing to Gairamma, and then 'putting her to sleep' with a lullaby, jōla pāṭa
 These songs are sung by Gavara men who sit in front of the Gairamma idol. The song is accompanied by a rhythmic rubbing of one stick up and down another ribbed stick which is rested on a basket for resonance. Mala women occasionally participated in this singing to Gairamma.

B. Daily routine (length of festival - 1970: 17 days, 1971: 24 days)

Length of the festival depends on wealth of the community, i.e. ability to keep oil lamp burning 24 hours a day and pay for daily offerings

1. Daily puja and rice offering, naivēdyam

- a. Jangam pujari does daily puja to Gairamma and keeps the oil lamp burning
- b. A meal is offered (banana leaf plate with cooked rice and dal) incense is burned and a camphor flame is lit. The meal is left inside with the temple doors closed for a while. Then it is taken out and eaten by the pujari as prasādam.
- c. On Saturdays: a special sweet dish (paramannam - rice cooked with jaggery) is offered by the pujari; women take their weekly bath and come to the temple to do a puja to Gairamma

2. Evening entertainment

(Same as in item A-5 above): Dancing, skits, sleeping song

C. Day before last

1. Announcement of sambaram (last day's celebrations)

A Madiga goes around drumming, announcing that the final celebration is the next day

2. Evening entertainment

- a. More exuberant than usual
- b. Gavara men prepare the palanquin for the next day's procession. The palanquin frame is supplied by the Carpenters.

D. Last day: Sambaram

1. Masquerade begging (afternoon)

Gavaras go around the village 'for fun' (saradā) masquerading as itinerant entertainers etc.

2. Celebrations at the temple begin (late afternoon)

- a. Arrival of brass band hired from Anakapalli (its members are composed of the Barber caste)
- b. Dancing beings: three varieties
 - i. kōya dance
 - ii. ciratalu dance with batons
 - iii. sāmu garidi pole twirling
- c. Simultaneously, a stream of women (mainly Gavara) come to present offerings to Gairamma. The offerings consist primarily of oil (because of the expenditure of oil for keeping her lamp burning twenty-four hours a day) and varying combinations of other puja items (turmeric, vermillion, incense, sugarcane pieces, bananas, coconuts, tulasi leaves, flowers etc.)

3. Gairamma is placed into the palanquin (evening)

- a. The Gairamma idol is placed into the palanquin by Gavara men
- b. The Gairamma pot with its growing rice stalks is carried on a seating board (pīṭa) on the head of a Gavara woman (especially one desirous of having children)

4. Procession

- a. The procession is led by ciratalu and kōya dancers with the hired band, then the drummers (Jangam, Barber, Mala-Village Servant, Madiga) and finally the Gairamma palanquin carried by four Washermen. Alongside the palanquin goes the Gairamma pot. A pressure lamp is carried by a Barber and a fire torch by a Washerman.

- b. (Optional:) Jangams ring a bell and blow on a conch shell (a ritual associated with worship of Siva, Gauri's husband, and also practised at pākrutollu funerals)
- c. Girls and young women walk alongside the palanquin singing songs in praise of Gauri (Gairamma). One song is the song mentioning Gauri's wedding and is sung also at naming and wedding rituals.
- d. Much drinking goes on - by the drummers, dancers, and most adult men including Gavaras
- e. Numerous small fights break out, a combination of the emotional excitement of the festival and the drinking
- f. Fireworks are let off by the Carpenters throughout the procession as it gets dark

5. Rituals at the village tank (in darkness after sunset)

- a. The palanquin is set down and puja is done to the Gairamma idol by a Gavara elder (usually aided by the Jangam pujari)

Puja: consists of breaking of a coconut, smearing of ghee on to the mouth of the Nandi image, lighting of incense and then camphor flame (hāрати)

6. Immersion of Gairamma

- a. The idol is lifted on to the head of a young Gavara married woman as the crowd cheers "gōvinda" and "jai sankara"
- b. A Gavara young man takes the Gairamma pot on his head
- c. The holders of the Gairamma idol and pot are accompanied by a Washerman carrying a flaming torch as they wade out into the tank. Then they tip the idol and pot into the water. At this point the drumming (which is constant until now) and fireworks stop.
- d. The villagers walk back to the village leisurely, arm in arm

C. Notable features of the Gairamma rituals:

wedding symbols, dance scenarios

Many of the features of the Bandamma festival can be recognised

in the Gairamma rituals. Forms of puja, vālakālu skits, and patterns of caste participation are all very similar to those in the village goddess festivals. There are, however, certain features which merit further attention. Firstly, as we have already noted, the character of Gairamma is more unambiguously benevolent than village goddesses. Gairamma is associated with the ripening of crops and fecundity of women. Allusions to the fecundity of women are found in the occurrence of elements of wedding symbolism: offerings of items associated with married status (bangles, mirror, turmeric and vermillion, flowers, tulasi leaves), use of ritual items which are also employed in weddings (pot with a turmeric root tied to its rim, procession in a palanquin, and the singing of wedding songs), activities of the goddess (palanquin procession), and even iconography (depiction of Gauri seated next to her husband, Siva). There are also the ritual roles assigned to barren women who wish to have Gairamma's fecundity "rub off" on to them (e.g. the women who carry the Gairamma pot of growing rice stalks).

We have already considered the significance of the vālakālu skits and operatic dramas in the Bandamma festival as the ritual incorporation of aspects of social tension and conflict. In accord with Gairamma's associations with fecundity and fertility we note that the skits and dances in her festival carry a particularly erotic association, beyond what we have observed in the Bandamma festival. We now turn to examine the stylized scenarios of the men's dances in greater detail.

The kōya dance appears to derive its name from a hill tribe, the Kōyas, but there is no obvious connection with them. Perhaps it was once a dance in which people imitated tribals in the genre

of popular Telugu cinema. At any rate, the kōya dance now current throughout Visakhapatnam District consists of at least three costumed male dancers. One of the men is dressed as a Muslim with a lungi, a waistcoat, a felt Muslim-style cap, and a pencilled in moustache and beard. The other male character is dressed in a Hindu dhoti and wears a turban in a farmer's style. The female character is a man dressed as a woman, with heavy make-up and jewellery.

They act out two main 'plots' while gyrating to the cinema-style music of the brass band. The first is the competition of the two men for the favours of the woman, whose bold advances and wanton leers are relished by the principally male audience gathered around them. The second plot is a sort of mock snake-charmer routine which makes further comments on male-female relations. One male figure employs a handkerchief or shoulder cloth with one end in his teeth to imitate a snake-charmer's flute. While the band plays a "snake-charmer melody" the female character pretends to be the charmed snake. After being somewhat lulled by the snake-charmer, the snake-woman (nāgini) suddenly bites him. He rolls on to the ground and seems to be dying. The snake-woman seems to regret her treachery and eventually revives him back into a dance with her.

The erotic content and effect of these dances is overt and seems to be a further example of the ritual harnessing of erotic and aggressive impulses to the emotional power of the communal ceremonial event.

There is also social significance in the themes of the ciratalu and sāmu gariḍi dance forms. The choreography of the ciratalu dance is based on the intricate co-ordination of a circle of men. Each dancer has a stick in each hand which he uses to hit

those of both his neighbours in complicated sequences of arm-crossing. They also break into two circles of dancers which move around each other in opposite directions and sequences of bending down and rising up. The beating of the sticks is done with precision and synchronization which gives the impression of only two sticks beating together. The unison and co-operation which are required to execute this dance seem to express and enact the value of interdependent co-operation of Gavara men.

In contrast, the sāmu garidi expresses individual competitiveness, aggression and the desire to show off. This 'dance' consists of twirling a large bamboo pole with one hand, to the accompaniment of drumming. These displays of individual skill are accompanied by bouts of mock combat where two dancers beat each other's poles in between a sort of proud strutting movement to the rhythm of the music. Another associated procession display is the waving of a sword, also strutting with a puffed out chest. (This proud strutting gait is encountered in some neighbouring villages and towns in the form of dancers masquerading as tigers, pulli vēśam).

It is significant that the Gavaras in the settlements of Yatapalem and Mallolla Pakalu each staged their own Gairamma celebrations. This was, in fact, the only evidence of any overt differentiation between them. The differences in wealth between the settlements give us a clue to interpret the motivation behind the separate performance of this ritual with its associations with crop fecundity. This important issue will be discussed at greater length further on in the section "Aspects of competition in ritual". The Gairamma festival has elements of inclusion and interdependence as well as of differentiation and division. The Mallolla Pakalu Gairamma procession includes a round in nearby Kottapalem before the idol is immersed.

Chapter XI

THE SANKRĀNTI FESTIVAL: THE HARVEST AND THE ANCESTORS

The Sankrānti festival differs in numerous ways from the village goddess and Gairamma festivals though it shares many fundamental elements symbolising hierarchy and interdependence. While the village goddess and Gairamma festivals are mobilizations of whole settlements to worship particular deities, Sankranti is more centred on family ancestors and caste groups. This is not to say that deities do not feature in these rituals. Rama is honoured by daily pujas and occasional bhajans, hymn-singing, in the preceding month. At various times the shrines of village goddesses and bālapērāntālu are the venues of fairs. Sankranti is, in fact, notable for the broad range of its interpenetrating associations. It marks the beginning of the auspicious half of the year (uttarāyana-punya-kālam, uttarāyanam); it celebrates the completion of the harvest; it is the annual honouring of the household ancestors; and it is the annual puja to domestic animals, occupational tools and vehicles.

The sequence of the main ritual events associated with Sankranti is outlined below. It will be observed that rather than being a single day's festival, it is an entire season of ceremonies extending from the end of November through to February. This is because it is so intimately linked to the agricultural rhythm which intensifies over several months and reaches a climax with the harvesting of the crops.

A. Overall structure

1. First harvest - pidantuta
2. Nelaganta - the month which precedes Sankranti
3. Three principal days of Sankranti
 - a. Bhogi - bath
 - b. Sankranti - puja to ancestors
 - c. Kanumu - caste occupation pujas
Yatapalem Tirtham
4. The Tirtham Cycle
 - a. Ravalamma Tirtham

B. Summary of Sankranti and Associated Rituals

1. First Harvest: pIdantuṭa: (end of November, according to almanac)

1. Circumambulation of a rice field
 - a. Performed by a male member of the family (even a young boy)
 - b. A chicken is carried around and "polē polē" is repeated (it is a mantram, magical words, which causes crop-increase)
2. Beheading of the sacrificial chicken and the dripping of its blood on to the field at a place where the first three stalks (dubbu, 'bunch') of rice are cut
 - a. Timing is determined from the astrological almanac
3. Newly cut rice stalks are placed at the household shrine

2. Nelaganta: The Month Preceding Sankranti (Mid-December)

1. Nelaganta begins on the day the Sun enters the zodiacal constellation (nakṣatram) of Sagitarius (dhanu). This begins a zodiacal "month" known as the month of dhanu, dhanurmāsam.

- a. Dhanu month is considered sacred to Viṣṇu. A person who dies during the lunar month of kārtika, which is sacred to Śīva, is said to go directly to kailāsa, Śīva's heaven. Similarly, a person dying during dhanur-māsam goes directly to vaikuntam, Viṣṇu's heaven.
- b. The term nelaganta (literally 'month bell' refers to the ringing of a bell at the Rama temple every morning - see below.
- c. Sankranti is the term for the day on which the Sun enters a new zodiacal constellation. There are thus twelve every year. Dhanu Sankranti is the beginning of Nelaganta and is followed by Makara Sankranti which is the day of the festival known simply by the designation "Sankranti".
- d. In 1970 Dhanu Sankranti fell on 16 December which was caviti, the fourth and least auspicious day of the lunar fortnight. To avoid starting on the unlucky day of caviti, Nelaganta was begun on the fifteenth.

2. Morning puja at the Rama temple

- a. Jangam pujari puts new strings of mango leaves (tōranam 'leaf festoon') over the temple doorways, freshly cow-dungs the temple platform and applies elaborate muggu diagram. (The making of elaborate muggu diagrams in rice flour by women is one of the features of Sankranti)
- b. Village Barbers and male Jangam begin drumming
- c. Pujari performs puja to Rama (breaking a coconut and lighting oil lamp and incense). A camphor flame is lit (hāraṭi) as a bell is rung. Bystanders do danda gesture of salute to the flame and later receive prasādam from the offerings.

3. Early morning puja with drumming recurs daily until Sankranti day

A fresh series of muggu diagrams is applied each time

4. Mēlukolupu: morning bhajana procession

- a. bhajana = lively devotional hymns sung to the accompaniment of finger cymbals and mridangam-type drum (maddili)

- b. Gavara bhajana singers make house to house rounds early in the morning (mēlukolupu, 'waking up'). They carry a picture of Rama and collect oil and money, donations for the Rama temple from the housewives who come to do puja to the picture. (Their offerings: oil, incense, fruit, camphor flame.)
- c. The frequency of mēlukolupu, morning bhajana processions, increases with the approach of Sankranti. It is done mainly on the last few days before Sankranti as anticipation and preparation for the festival grows.

5. Tolivaram ('first day'), First Saturday in Dhanu Month: First Rice

- a. On the first Saturday of dhanu month, i.e. since the inception of nelaganta pre-Sankranti period, housewives do puja at their household shrine to offer the first rice of the new harvest. Rice which was cut in the pīdantuṭa, First Rice Harvest ceremony, is used to cook the main item which is offered, paramannam (jāva), a sweetened rice pudding made with jaggery.
- b. Turmeric and vermillion is distributed to pēraṇṭālu (virtuous married women whose husbands are still alive, 'non-widows') who apply it to their foreheads
- c. Special pujas are done at the household shrine on all subsequent Saturdays prior to Sankranti

6. Preparations and anticipation of Sankranti

Sankranti is the beginning of an astrologically auspicious period. Hence numerous things are renewed at this time. Houses are freshly white-washed and decorated with muggu patterns, new cooking utensils are bought, new clothing is purchased (to be offered at the household shrine to the ancestors before being worn)

3. The three principal days of Sankranti proper: Bhōgi, Sankrānti, Kanumu

- a. Bhōgi: (13 January 1971)

1. Bhōgi fire and baths (cleansing)

- a. Before sunrise, people drink a purge, bhōgi cēḍu, and bathe. This bath is said to enable children to grow and stay healthy.

- b. Fires, bhōgi manṭa, of newly cut palmyra leaves are lit and people huddle around them for warmth after their bath

2. Mēlukolupu

Gavara bhajana singers go around the village stopping house to house for housewives to present offerings

3. Morning puja at Rama temple

with drumming by Barbers and Jangam

4. Arrival of relatives

particularly daughters who have married and live elsewhere (their husbands accompany them generally only in the first few years of marriage)

5. Evening bhajana at Rama temple

Attended by some twenty participants including members of the Carpenter and Jangam castes (as well as Gavaras)

b. Sankrānti:

(14 January 1971)

Timing: this is the day the Sun enters the zodiacal constellation of Capricorn (makara) (and begins its apparent northerly movement along the horizon). The term designating this 'entry' is sankramānam or sankrānti. An alternate Telugu term for this festival day is pedda paṇḍuga 'big' or 'great festival'.

1. Yatapalem mēlukolupu group goes to Aripaka

Mēlukolupu, bhajana group, of Gavaras goes to Aripaka and Mallolla Pakalu. They collect puja offerings for the Yatapalem Rama temple.

2. Morning puja at Rama temple

3. Puja at house shrine (dēvuḍu mīla)

I. Puja at house shrine (Gavaras):

- a. Every housewife draws unusually elaborate muggu patterns in rice flour on an area in front of the house which is specially prepared with a surface of cow-dung (believed to purify the area)

- b. A puja is done at the house shrine in honour of the household ancestors
 - i. The array of puja items remains until the next day
 - ii. No puja is done by members of a sub-clan (pollution-sharing-group') in which a death occurred and the deceased is not yet "installed" in the house shrine (i.e. less than a year has elapsed)
- c. Family members eat their mid-day meals from the three offering plates placed at the shrine (this is a sort of eating of prasādam, eating food which has been offered)

II. Important components of the puja items placed in the shrine:

- a. New articles of clothing, men's and women's (smeared on the edges with turmeric)
- b. Three turmeric and vermillion wads, moddulu, i.e. yellow wads with red dots in the centre
- c. Oil lamp in a brass vessel, which sits on a layer of uncooked rice (N.B. similar to placement of goddess ghaṭṭam pots on layer of rice in evening). Burns 3 days.
- d. Incense (sāmbraṇi variety)
- e. Camphor (is lit to make hārati)
- f. Tulasi branches (sweet basil)
- g. Raw fruits and vegetables in season (aubergines, 'wood potato', beans, sugarcane, bananas, coconut)
- h. Cooked preparations: jaggery, fried millet confections - būrelu
- i. Three banana-leaf plates each with a heap of cooked new rice, dal, and būrelu

III. Details on the ancestors honoured by these offerings:

- a. Deceased parents of househead as well as his father's mother.

Beyond this, only agnatic relatives are honoured, though their names are not remembered.

Usual relatives specifically intended for honour:

F, FF, M, FM

In the case of a household in which a man came on illarakam into the village (matri-local marriage with property of the wife's father passing to the wife's children) and his wife died and his wife's mother resides with him, she (the WM) honours her deceased husband (i.e. the house head's WF)

- b. Both bālapēraṇṭālu and pēraṇṭālu are specially remembered and sometimes represented by a separate mark alongside the main turmeric and vermillion smeared panel on the wall above the shrine. These resemble the tops of tridents, though in some cases they are represented by an additional turmeric panel. There is much idiosyncratic variation in the design of these (not linked to family, clan or caste)

IV. Brahmanical ancestor worship:

- a. Certain wealthier, important Gavara households employ a Brahman to conduct the worship of ancestors
- b. The offerings in these brahmanical ancestor pujas are also made on three or five leaf plates but are of raw rather than cooked food. This is because the Brahman priest takes this as part of his payment for performing the ceremony.
- c. The brahmanical ancestor puja does not mean that the household shrine puja is supplanted. Rather, it is in addition to the household shrine ancestor puja.

V. Castes other than Gavaras:

- a. Twice-Born castes conduct brahmanical ancestor worship in the morning. Their household shrines are only for deity worship and are never associated with family ancestors. This contrasts sharply with Shudra usage. Twice-Born castes also commemorate anniversaries of the actual day of death. This was practically unknown among Shudras. Some Gavaras claimed to do a death anniversary ceremony with a Brahman (the same handful, perhaps six or seven, who had a brahmanical ceremony on Sankranti as well.)

- b. Numerous dependent castes have their main household shrine pujas either in the evening (e.g. Malas) or on the next day (e.g. Barbers). Washermen have no puja on either day and their worship of occupational tools (done by most castes on Kanumu day) is several weeks later.

4. Begging by dependent castes

- a. Malas (of Aripaka and Yatapalem) and Madigas (of Yatapalem) each have their own drumming and dance styles which they display while begging for unhusked rice from house to house
- b. Barbers and Washermen are given a measure (kuncam) of unhusked rice as partial payment in kind by their employers (this payment of annual salary is known as pedda jītam, 'big salary')
- c. Barbers, Washermen, Yatas, Weavers all go round begging for small hand-outs of raw rice and fried millet confections (būrelu) from the Gavaras.

5. Gavara elders gather at the Rama temple

- a. The Headman, Vice President and prominent members of the Malla, Rapeti, and Saragadam clans as well as other most elderly men in other clans.
- b. The temple finances are a common topic for discussion.

6. Bhajana in the evening at the Rama temple

c. Kanumu

(15 January 1971)

1. Bhajana-cettu is taken to Kottapalem to collect annual temple levy (morning)

- a. The large brass temple candelabrum bhajana cettu (bhajana = religious hymn, cettu = tree) is so named because of its multiple oil vessels at the end of stems or branches.
- b. Every village Rama temple as its bhajana cettu which is moved about within and between villages and acts as a kind of representative of Rama and of its home village. (Aripaka and Yatapalem each have a temple candelabrum but no other settlement in Aripaka Revenue Village does.)

- c. The Yatapalem temple candelabrum is taken to Kottapalem accompanied by the temple's Jangam pujari, a Washerman hitting a gong, and several important Gavara elders, particularly the panchayat Vice President.

Other Gavara elders arrive later to join the bhajana singing. Strong criticism is levelled by Kottapalem residents if insufficient numbers of high-ranking Gavara elders attend.

- d. Areas are specially purified and prepared with muggu diagrams in front of selected houses.
- e. Then the temple candelabrum is placed down on these and the singing proceeds
- f. Housewives of the neighbouring houses come to present their respects (doing puja and dandam to the candelabrum) and pay their annual levy of 50 paise

The levy is for the Yatapalem Rama temple. Residents of Kottapalem are not required to contribute to any other festival levys during the year

- g. The presence of the temple candelabrum acts like the statue of Rama, effectively giving darsanam by its movement through the streets of the village.

(Darsanam transference of beneficial influences by sight and presence.)

(Note that this is a case of 'begging' by Gavaras from lower caste Yatas. Their begging on behalf of Rama has a completely different connotation from usual begging. It is their paying tribute to Rama and also, incidentally, Yatas paying tribute to Gavaras, Yatapalem and its temple.)

2. Begging in Yatapalem

(morning)

- a. The Jangam pujari goes about the village begging

He rings his bell and blows on a conch shell trumpet, stopping at houses of families (in which pakruti funerary rituals are observed.) At these, he chants in honour of the family ancestors. In return he is presented with handfuls of uncooked rice.

- b. Begging for cooked food by Harijans in caste groups

Malas (from Yatapalem and Aripaka),
Madigas (from Yatapalem and the neighbouring village of Bangarampalem, which participates in joint festivities with Yatapalem later in the day).

- c. Barbers and other circulate in a less ordered fashion

They solicit baksheesh from likely donors in order to buy sāra, cane liquor.

3. Caste-Occupation Pujas

(late morning)

Most of these pujas take place at the same time. Each caste performs its own set of rituals which have no connection with each other.

Note the association made between the hereditary caste occupation and the family ancestors.

I. Gavaras

Gavaras do a puja to their bullock carts

They decorate them with whitewash or turmeric dots and lines and drip the blood of a chicken which they sacrifice to it.

They also worship their cattle

They smear their horns with oil and turmeric and place fried rice-flour confection rings on to the horns. These confection rings are removed from the horns and eaten as prasādam.

Women of some households do Mahalakṣmi dēvata puja.

II. Carpenters

Place their work tools at their household shrine.

They place their hammers, chisels, anvils, etc. at the house shrine and do puja to them (by applying turmeric and vermillion and placing offerings, tulasi leaves, breaking a coconut and pouring its milk on them, wafting incense, lighting camphor, and doing dandam gestures of salute).

Puja at their smithies and work areas.

A similar puja is done at the smithies of their nearby work area which are elaborately decorated with muggu designs (after being freshly cow-dunged).

Small panels of turmeric with vermillion dots (botlū) are placed on the back wall of the smithy hearth.

Chicken sacrifice, blood on to tools and smithies

A sacrificial chicken is washed with water and fed some of the sweet rice pudding offering (paramannam) at the household shrine. It is beheaded and its blood spilt on to the tools at the household shrine and then outside on to the smithy.

Meals at the household shrine

Household members then eat the meals which were placed as offerings at the household shrine (thereby partaking of food offered first to the ancestors, along the principles of prasādam).

Removal of the tools from the household shrine

The tools are only removed from the household shrine after a ceremony seven days later.

III. Oil Pressers (Telukula)

Puja to their oil press and draught bullocks

Notable features of the puja include the application of a turmeric panel with vermillion horizontal lines and dots (reminiscent of panels at household shrines) on to the huge pestle of the oil press.

Turmeric is also smeared on to the legs of the bullocks. A string with a turmeric root tied to it is secured to the pestle and another to one of the bullock's horns.

A chicken is sacrificed and its blood is put on to the pestle, the vat, and the pressing shed roof.

IV. Barbers

Puja to their tool boxes

The men of the Barber households place their tool boxes (decorated with smears of whitewash and vermillion) together on to a muggu-prepared area in front of their houses.

They do a puja to the boxes and sacrifice a chicken over them and put its blood on each of the boxes.

Tool boxes placed at household shrine

The boxes are immediately taken in to be placed at their household shrine where meals are placed as offerings. Family members then make their meal of these food offerings.

V. Washermen

Do not perform worship of their work implements at the time of Sankranti or Kanumu

They do have such a ritual, known as ballāla panduga 'festival of the beating stones', but it is performed numerous weeks later (not on any fixed date)

This ceremony resembles other castes' worship of their implements: decoration of the boiling pots and beating stones with whitewash and vermillion, and touching them with the blood of a sacrificial chicken which is later used for a festival meal.

VI. Weavers, Yatas

These castes no longer practice their traditional occupations and therefore have discontinued worship of tools of their traditional crafts.

In villages in which weaving is still a viable occupation, weavers do a puja to their looms. (Weavers also have a special caste festival at Telugu New Year when they celebrate rituals in honour of a patron sage, Bhavana Risni)

Yatas long ago gave up traditional methods of toddy-tapping due to the many years of prohibition of the production of spirits.

i. Yatapalem Tirtham, Fair on the Afternoon of Kanumu:

This fair begins the cycle of fairs (tirtham which is a season of three weeks lasting into the beginning of February.

The Yatapalem tirtham exhibits most of the typical features of tirthams in the areas.

1. Invitation

An invitation is sent to the elders of the neighbouring Gavara village of Bangāram-pālem (the letters are sent from one panchayet president to another)

2. Preparations

Commercial stalls are set up at the venue of the tirtham, the square in front of the Yatapalem Rama temple.

3. Arrival and greeting of invited villages' candelabrum procession

- a. Bangarampalem's Rama temple candelabrum (bhajana cettu) goes in a procession of villagers with Barber, Madiga, and Jangam drummers, and a Washerman playing a gong.
- b. The Yatapalem President (i.e. the Gavara of Mallolla Pakalu who is the President of all the Aripaka Revenue Village) welcomes the Bangarampalem procession with drummers from Yatapalem. He presents the Bangarampalem President with a 'pan' (killi, betel leaf and areca nut) and does a puja to their temple candelabrum (breaks coconut, lights oil lamp, places bananas, coins, lights camphor flame)
- c. The Bangarampalem candelabrum is brought to the Yatapalem Rama temple and set down next to the Yatapalem candelabrum.

4. Activities at the tirtham site

- a. The villagers gather, excitedly showing off their new clothes (which they have just removed from the household shrine offerings).

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- b. Elders: sit on a mat at the temple observing the activities somewhat aloof.

Among them are: the Panchayat President, Vice President, Headman, Sirsipalli Headman (a Rapeti clansman of Yatapalem), Bangarampalem Panchayat President and Bangarampalem Headman

- c. Bhajana: An active bhajana song-singing session takes place around the temple candelabrum.

The singers incorporate dance-like movements as they sing moving in a circle together accompanying themselves with finger symbols, talalu, and a man on a drum and one playing a harmonium.

- d. Cockfight: lively betting goes on in a crowded circle around the improvised ring.

Yatapalem Carpenters act as referees

- e. Market stalls:

Tea, toys, sweets, cigars, betel nut, vegetables and fruits are some of the items sold.

In the tirtnam in 1971, out of 22 sellers, 13 were Gavara women, 7 were Gavara men, and 2 were Aripaka Komati men.

(In larger tirthams gambling stalls are prominent with roulette-type game boards operated by dice or cards.)

- f. Housewives bring offerings to Rama at the village temple

Among the donors are Yatapalem Komatis and Harijans

- g. Departure of the visiting village's candelabrum in procession with drums

- h. Tirtham ends around sunset as revellers return home for dinner.

5. Evening Bhajana in the Yatapalem Yata Quarter

- a. Rama temple candelabrum is brought to the Yata quarter of Yatapalem just as it was brought to Kottapalem in the morning.
- b. Collection of annual levy (canda) of 50 paise from each Yata household for the Rama temple.

4. The tīrtham Cycle in Neighbouring Villages

Eleven fairs (tīrthālu) follow in rapid succession from the last day of Sankranti (i.e. Kanumu):

The Tīrtham Cycle:

Date (1971)	Host Village (and its dominant caste)	Villages Participating with Temple-Candelabrum	Deity associated with the fair's venue	Notable Features of this Fair
15 Jan	Yatapalem (G)	Y, B	Rāma	Small scale, no night entertainment
16 Jan	Bangarampalem (G)	Y, B, Ad, RA	Rāma	Night-long operatic drama. <u>Bālanāgama</u>
18 Jan	Yatapalem/Mallola Pakalu (G)	Y, B	Rāvalamma (<u>grāmadēvata</u>)	No drama, special duties of Yatapalem and Kottapalem Yatas, Suriseti clan (Gavaras)
*19 Jan	Bhogapuram (G)	(widely attended by its neighbouring villages)	<u>pēraṇṭālu</u> shrine to deceased parents of Headman	Famous for its dramas, hires well-known actors at cost of thousands (chief patron: Headman) Drama: <u>Gayopakhyānam</u>
21 Jan	Aripaka	Y, A	Rāma	No drama
22 Jan	Gali Bhimavaram (K)	Y, Gt	Rāma	No drama
23 Jan	Tekkalapalem (V)	Y, RA, T, V, N	Dūrgamma (<u>grāmadēvata</u>)	Large scale and popular. Drama: <u>Kurukṣetram</u>
24 Jan	Lagisetipalem (Y)		Paiḍitalamma (<u>grāmadēvata</u>)	Very small scale
25 Jan	Rayapuram-Agraharam (GI)	Y, RA, T(?)	Paradēsamma (<u>grāmadēvata</u>)	No drama

Date (1971)	Host Village (and its dominant caste)	Villages Participating with Temple-Candelabrum	Deity associated with the fair's venue	Notable Features of this Fair
28 Jan	Adduru (V)	Y, Ad, RA (plus others)	Gādēlamma (<u>grāmadēvata</u>)	Large scale, extensive market and gambling stalls, large cockfighting ring. Elaborate high quality drama: <u>Rāmanjaneyya Yuddham</u> (audience of approximately 5000)
*30 Jan	Anakapalli-Gavarapalem (Gavara quarter)	Villagers from the entire surrounding region attend, incl. from Yatap. crowds of 100,000	Gairamma-Festival (<u>sambaram</u>)	15 huge floats with mythological scenes (people in drama costume) partially sponsored by political parties
3 Feb	Tekkalapalem (V)	Y, T, (+?)	Bālasatyavamma (<u>bāla-pēraṇṭālu</u>)	Fairly large scale. Drama: <u>Lavakūsa</u> (Uttara-Ramayana)
6 Feb	Gotivada (K)	Y, Gt, T (plus numerous others)	Rāmayamma (<u>pēraṇṭālu</u>) shrine of parents of Panchayati Samiti Pres.	Largest of the local fairs, drama entertainment on two days, afternoon and all night. The elaborate arrangements provided under patronage of Pres. of Block Samiti. Dramas: <u>Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāyabharam</u> - (<u>burrakatha</u>), <u>Satyabhāmakalāpam</u> (<u>vīdhin-āṭakam</u>), <u>Virabhimanyu</u> (<u>burrakatha</u>), <u>Kurukṣētram</u> (drama)

Abbreviations: G - Gavara, K - Kapu, V - Velama, Y - Yata

Y - Yatapalem, B - Bangarapalem, Ad - Adduru,
RA - Rayapuram Agraharam, A - Aripaka, Gt -
Gotivada, T - Tekkalapalem, V - Vangali, N - Nainampalem

*Events participated in by Gavaras of Yatapalem and Mallolapakalu but not by the village as a whole

a. The Ravalamma Tirtham:

(18 January 1971)

Below are described certain features of this fair aside from the usual bhajana, market, cockfight, gambling, etc.

1. Special duties of Gavara families and clans

- a. The Ravalamma temple is whitewashed by a Saragadam man whose paternal grandfather financed the construction of the temple building
- b. The Suriseti clan expresses its special ties with Ravalamma by being responsible for paying the Madiga drummers and doing special pujas to the brass horses of the goddess.

2. Special duties of Yatas

There is joint participation in the endeavour by the Yatas of Yatapalem and Kottapalem. Four Yatas from Yatapalem carry a brass horse of the goddess and four Yatas from Kottapalem carry a second one.

3. Begging in the village by Jangam pujari and Madigas4. Procession of the brass horses and temple candelabrum out to the fair5. Circumambulation of the temple by the horses6. Puja inside the temple7. Movements of the temple candelabra: political implications

- a. After the fair is finished the Yatapalem candelabrum is taken to Mallolla Pakalu for bhajana singing in front of various houses, particularly the house of the Panchayat President. Only then does it return to Yatapalem.
- b. The Bangarampalem temple candelabrum is taken to the house, in Yatapalem, of the Gavara man who holds the office of Headman (combining the position of Headman with Record Keeper) of Sirsipalli.

Sirsipalli is a Yata hamlet near Bangarampalem. It holds joint festival celebrations with the Gavara-dominated village of Bangarampalem, whose Rama temple it shares. Hence, the Bangarampalem temple candelabrum represents Sirsipalli

as well, in its special stop at the house of the Sirsipalli Headman.

- c. There are other similar instances of taking a temple candelabrum to the house of a political leader or office holder. At the end of the Aripaka tīrtham, Yatapālem's candelabrum (which, during the fair, is set down beside the Aripaka candelabrum) is taken to the house of the village Record Keeper, karnam (a Brahman), before being returned to Yatapelem.

C. Commentary on Sankranti Rituals

1. Basic Symbolic Elements and their Correspondences with other Rituals

The techniques of puja are also those which we have encountered in other ritual contexts. Their repetition further strengthens their validity and expands their range of multiple associations. For instance, we note that the use of turmeric and vermillion recurs in numerous contexts (e.g. to represent elders or deities, or to consecrate offerings). We also observe the repetition of acts and concepts in puja such as the use of muggu diagrams, the use of the dandam (namaskāram) salute, the offering of praise (bhājana songs), the lighting of incense, oil lamps, and camphor (hārati), and the eating of foods which have first been consecrated by being offered (the concept of prasādam). Processions of temple candelabra draw on the concept of darśanam (auspicious effects from sight or presence) which itself is part of a complex of ideas in other rituals which employ the notion of the influence of sight. Concepts of time (importance of beginnings, power of stars and planets which 'rule' different times) are similarly reiterated in Sankranti which is the beginning of the astrologically auspicious half of the year, uttarāyana punyakālam.

Another feature of the Sankranti rituals is the recurrence of sequences of three. While the number three does not seem to have particular significance in itself, its repetition evokes correspondences between rituals on numerous levels. The main Sankranti festival is tripartite, divided into three days, Bhogi, Sankranti, and Kanumu. So little takes place on Bhogi that it seems as if it exists only to give a three day structure to the festival. The entire festival season can also be seen as a series of three (though admittedly this is not explicitly conceptualised as such by the villagers): 1. the season of preliminaries (nelaganta), 2. the three focal days of Sankranti, 3. the season of fairs. In the pujas of the household shrines as well, we find sequences or quantities of three: three horizontal vermillion lines on the turmeric panel, three wads of turmeric with vermillion dots on them (moddulu), three leaf plates of food offerings, three clockwise circlings of the offerings with a camphor flame (hāratī) etc.

These tripartite structures also suggest correspondences with life cycle rituals and van Genneep's classic three stages of rites de passage, namely, separation, transition, and incorporation (van Genneep: 11). The marriage rituals are divided into three main days, and funerary rituals can be conceived of as three stages: 1. the immediate disposal of the body, 2. the year-long transition into becoming an ancestor during which relatives are polluted, and 3. the installation into the household shrine.

This leads us to consider other types of cross reference between rituals. For instance, as a worship of ancestors, Sankranti ties in with individual households' and sub-clans' life cycle rituals. The evocation of the memory of deceased family members can be quite

poignant at the time of the Sankranti puja to the family ancestors. People, particularly women, become tearfully emotional when they recall and honour their departed parents, husbands, wives, and children.

At the time of the puja at the household shrine, family pēraṇṭālu receive special attention by having separate marks in turmeric on the wall. This enhances the ideology of the auspiciousness of non-widowhood and ultimately a whole series of beliefs about female roles in society. The ideology of the pēraṇṭālu is further associated with Sankranti and the successful harvest through the distribution of turmeric and vermillion to pēraṇṭālu at the end of the first rice-cooking ceremony on tolivaram, the first Saturday after the beginning of nelanganta.

Pēraṇṭālu and bālapēraṇṭālu also tie in with Sankranti as their shrines are the venues of numerous fairs (tīrtham) in the post-Sankranti season. Village goddess temples are similarly sites of such fairs. A further connection between Sankranti fairs and village goddess festivals are the performances of popular operatic dramas which both have in common.

Agricultural rituals are intimately linked to Sankranti since the latter is an expression of the completion of the harvest. The first rice-cutting ceremony leads directly to the first rice-cooking ceremony which is an integral part of the pre-Sankranti season.

2. Symbolization of Hierarchy in Sankranti

We now turn to consider the way in which the Sankranti rituals embody an ideology of hierarchical authority in various aspects of social relations.

a. Ancestors (authority of seniors in age):

The Sankranti rituals teach the lesson that well-being is closely associated with submission to elders (living and deceased elders are both referred to by the same term, peddalu 'elder', 'greater', or 'bigger ones'). One gives thanks to them for the successful completion of the harvest and gives them precedence in enjoying its fruits. One takes one's meals after them (this eating of symbolic leavings is also a principle of expressing hierarchy between people, e.g. between husband and wife). Even new items of clothing are first offered to them (Sankranti is the season when all new clothes are bought for the coming year and first placed at the household shrine before being worn).

In castes with hereditary occupations there is additional identification of ancestors with well-being through their caste occupation which quite incontestably does derive from the ancestors. In the pujas on Kanumu day, direct symbolic links are made between a caste's occupational implements and its members' household shrines. For instance, Carpenters put a shrine-like turmeric panel on their smithies and place all their moveable tools actually into the household shrine. Barbers do the same. The Oil Pressers, who cannot move their vats, apply a turmeric panel with horizontal vermillion lines on to the pestle identical with the panel on the back wall of their household shrines. Further links of the hereditary occupation with the ancestors are made by placing the blood of a sacrificial chicken both on to the tools and at the household shrine (e.g. Carpenters, Barbers). In addition, the meal made from this sacrificial chicken is eaten at the household shrine.

b. Political authority, leadership

Political authority is expressed in a number of ways in the Sankranti celebrations. Firstly, there is the outwardly informal gathering of Gavara elders at the temple platform on Sankranti day, to discuss temple finances etc. This echoes the gatherings of elders on other major festival occasions. Their somewhat aloof presence is a testimonial of their being in control. (It will be recalled that in other contexts such as the structuring of labour between castes or bureaucrats that the person in the higher status is aloof and has others to do his bidding.) There are less opportunities for the active assertion of authority in Sankranti since it does not have the large processions and emotionally charged crowds of the village goddess and Gairamma festivals. Tirtham, fairs, are the more likely contexts for such authority to be in evidence.

The movements of the temple candelabra are frequently modes for expressing political relationships. Yatapalem elders who go with the candelabrum to Kottapalem to exact Yata's annual dues for the Yatapalem Rama temple are thereby asserting their paramountcy over its inhabitants. The invitation and taking of village temple candelabra is also an expression of political authority. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that invitations seem to be addressed primarily to the Panchayati President. It is difficult to assess whether this was because a new Headman had yet to be appointed after the death of the old one, or whether it was an indication of the superior authority of the President as a representative leader of the village. This is a significant question since the post of Headman is much older than the relatively recently introduced Panchayat

system.

The temple candelabrum is involved in the expression of political relationships in an additional way. When the temple candelabrum is brought to the house of a political office holder who lives in another part (or settlement) of the village, it is a sort of tribute to him, a public acknowledgement of his position. Thus, when the Yatapalem candelabrum is in Aripaka for the tirtham fair, it is specially taken to the house of the Village Record Keeper. When it goes to the Ravalamma Fair it makes a special stop in Mallolla Pakalu at the house of the Panchayat President. In a similar way, the Bangarampalem-Sirsipalli candelabrum is taken to the house of the Yatapalem Gavara who holds the official Sirsipalli Headmanship.

c. Castes:

Castes dependent upon the Gavaras go about the village in stylised, institutionalised begging on Sankranti, Kanumu, and fair days (i.e. fairs held in one of the settlements of Aripaka Revenue Village: Yatapalem Tirtham, Aripaka Tirtham, Ravalamma Tirtham). Those who serve priestly functions, such as Jangams, are paid in uncooked foodstuffs while occupational and labourer castes (Barbers, Washermen, Malas, Madigas) are given handouts in cooked food. Carpenters are notably absent from this begging since they consider themselves to be the highest caste. While some poorer Yatas might go begging from Gavaras, Malas and Madigas come begging from Yatas. In addition to this begging, Sankranti is also an occasion on which many service caste households receive part of their annual payment from their employers. These payments in kind are referred to as pedda jitam, 'big salary'. A final aspect of the Sankranti festival which gives evidence to the unequal relations between castes is the

gambling stalls at fairgrounds. Though it is not an intentional effect, farmers' conspicuous spending of cash cannot help but emphasise differences in wealth between castes. Amounts equivalent to a hired labourer's daily wages are flung down with abandon.

3. Symbolisation of Interdependence in the Sankranti Rituals

Interdependence is a constant theme and feature of the Sankranti rituals. It is particularly important in the social relations between the sexes, within and between castes and between villages.

a. Interdependence of the sexes:

This interdependence is most clearly evidenced in the indispensable role of women in performing the domestic pujas. The muggu decorations in the courtyards and the puja at the household shrine are done exclusively by women. Even in the pujas to occupational implements which are performed by men, wives frequently accompany and assist them.

b. Castes' interdependence:

i. internal solidarities

Sankranti is a time when married daughters return for a reunion with their parents. Sons-in-law generally accompany them in the first year or two of their marriage. The convention of hospitality to the son-in-law is sometimes a source of tension. Town journals satirise the coming of the son-in-law at Sankranti in their cartoon sections. Sons-in-law hint they want all sorts of costly things which the father-in-law is not supposed to refuse. Such tensions, however, are not so pronounced in the village context. Rather, the

festival is a time of family reunions with members who live outside the village.

The Sankranti worship of family ancestors is a time when members of the pollution-sharing sub-clans are identified with each other by virtue of their sharing prohibitions on doing the puja to the ancestors when one of their members has recently died (and not yet been placed among the ancestors). At another level, castes display internal unity by synchronizing their various pujas, household or occupational. It is a notable feature of Sankranti that different castes do their pujas at different times of day or even on different days. Furthermore, certain specialist castes (Barbers, Carpenters) do their occupational pujas together at the same time. For instance, the Barbers all put their tool boxes together in front of their houses. Only one chicken is sacrificed and its blood is dripped on all the five tool boxes.

ii. external relations of castes

The entire Sankranti season is replete with occasions for joint participation by castes in the ritual activities, e.g. Jangam acting as pujaris, Barbers and Harijans (Malas and Madigas), drumming, Washerman gong-beating, and Yata brass horse carrying. Admittedly, only a small number of castes recurs (Jangam, Barbers, Washermen, Yatas, Malas, Madigas). These are, with the exception of the Jangam pujari, castes which are unquestionably inferior to the Gavaras and also, incidentally, members of the dietary grouping which eat domestic pork. Castes higher or roughly equal to Gavaras have no special indispensable ritual role. Carpenters, whose caste status is ambiguous, are notably absent. Oil Pressers claim to be in

a status not much lower than the farmers (Gavaras) and in the same dietary grouping (which prohibits the eating of pork).

Aside from their special ritual jobs, these dependent castes are prominent in house to house begging. While begging is an acknowledgement of inferior status, it is also based on assumptions about interdependent obligations. The welfare of poorer, dependent castes is considered to be the responsibility of the higher castes.

c. Interdependence of Settlements

i. within Aripaka Revenue Village

Many expressions of the interdependence of settlements can be discerned in the movements of bhajana groups and temple candelabra. The mēlukolupu singers of Yatapalem go to Aripaka and Mallolla Pakalu on the morning of Sankranti day because they feel they are part of the same village. The maintenance of such contacts furthers the feeling of interconnection which would otherwise only remain on a theoretical plane. Similarly, Kottapalem demonstrates its ties with Yatapalem by paying tribute to Yatapalem's temple candelabrum on Kanumu day.

ii. with other villages in the region

The interdependence of neighbouring villages finds expression in the season of fairs. Invitations are sent to settlements and villages for them to bring their temple candelabrum and jointly participate in a bhajana. Thus, the movements of temple candelabra should be viewed as expressions of "diplomatic relations" between villages. In the cycle of fairs, Yatapalem's temple candelabrum goes to Aripaka and six other neighbouring villages (Bangarampalem, Adduru, Tekkalapalem, Rayapuram Agraharam, Gali-Bhimavaram, and

Gotivada).

It is curious that there does not seem to be a principle of reciprocity since only Bangarampalem attends Yatapalem's fair. This is partially explained by the fact that Yatapalem's fair is held on a major festival day, Kanumu, when people in other villages still have their own celebrations going on and relatives to entertain. Furthermore, the degree of participation by other villages is correlated with the scale of the fair. The scale of a fair depends on whether or not its inhabitants sponsor an all-night drama. Attendance is far higher when there is to be a drama. Some villages are known for staging dramas of higher quality than others and attendance varies accordingly. The decisive factor in quality seems to be monetary expenditure, the ability to hire a professional troupe or at least professional lead players.

The apparent "prestige" of a village's fair is correlated with wealth and expenditure. However, such expenditure is not necessarily correlated with overall village wealth. For example, Adduru has poorer lands than Yatapalem and Aripaka, but its fair is far more widely attended. Rather, it depends on rich individuals who act as sponsors such as the Headman of Bhogapuram or the Panchayati Samiti Block President in Gotivada. Information is not available on the financing of the Adduru fair. If it is not paid for by a single wealthy patron it is possible that the whole village is motivated to contribute in order to enhance their village's prestige. They might be particularly keen on this precisely because of the village's mediocre wealth and relative isolation between several hill ridges.

All of this still does not account for the fact that Yatapalem's

temple candelabrum goes to Aripaka's fair but not vice versa.

Here we must suspect caste status and settlement rivalries,

though these are not otherwise overtly expressed.

Chapter XII

MINOR ANNUAL FESTIVALS, AGRICULTURAL RITUALS, AND PRIVATE CALENDRIAL OBSERVANCES

A. Minor Annual Festivals

Aside from the three major festival seasons which are closely linked to the agricultural rhythm, numerous minor festivals punctuate the year. These draw on and reinforce the symbols and ideologies we have already discussed, as well as add nuances of their own. We shall now sketch these festivals to give some idea of their structure and content.

1. Ugādi and Kotta Amavasya (Date: *caitra śuddha pādyaṃi (March))

This is the Telugu New Year but is not marked by any public ritual as such. Certain individual households prepare a special food, ugādi paccadi, 'ugadi chutney', containing ingredients associated with the season: new mangoes and the first neem flowers. New mangoes are green and neem flowers are yellow. The telugu word for chutney, paccadi, is related to the word pacca which refers to a colour category which embraces both green and yellow. Young rice leaves have a chartreuse colour which is distinctly on the border between English 'green' and 'yellow'. (Pacca is modified with 'leaf-' to mean green: āku-pacca 'leaf green', and with 'turmeric-' to mean yellow: pasupu-pacca 'turmeric yellow'). Paccadi thus associates with the new and auspicious beginning of the year through the word pacca which means the greenness of young plants, and the golden yellowness of auspicious turmeric.

Kotta Amavasya, literally 'the new New Moon', the day after Ugādi, is an important date in the reckoning of debts and contracts.

*The reader is referred to Table VI-2.

It is common for people to say "I'll settle my debt with you by 'kotta amavasya'. The employment of an annual basis field hand, pālēru, is also reckoned to begin on this date.

On the day after kotta amavasya there is the annual celebration of the Nukalamma festival in Anakapalli. This goddess is so renowned that many villagers from Yatapalem go to Anakapalli to participate in the festival, fulfilling a vow, or simply having darsanam and enjoying the festivities. Synchronized with the Anakapalli Nukalamma festival are small-scale processions out to temporarily erected palm leaf shed shrines to Nukalamma in Yatapalem and another in Kottapalem. It is a custom to carry sacrificial chickens out to the shrine on a shoulder yoke, kāvaḍi, a cross pole with a chicken and batch of neem leaves at either end.

2. Śrī Rāma Navami (Date: caitra śuddha navami (March-April))

This celebration of the marriage of Rama and Sita falls nine (lunar) days after kotta amavasya on navami (the ninth lunar day). It is celebrated in the Yatapalem temple by a Brahman from Subbavaram who is hired for the day. He performs marriage rituals to the temple idols of Rama and Sita. The Carpenters supply a new sacred thread, jandhyam, for Rama and a wedding locket for Sita. (It is significant that they supply a sacred thread in the light of their own claim to Twice-Born status and wearing of the sacred thread.) The Gavaras supply new clothing for the idols.

3. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Aṣṭami (Date: śravana bahula aṣṭami (July-August))

This holiday celebrates the birthday of Krishna. A game is played in which there is a competition to catch a bundle in a sling holder, uṭṭi, which is hoisted and lowered between two poles. As

a competing group approaches, others throw turmeric water at them to stop them retrieving it. The bundle contains offerings of grains, fruits, leaves, flowers, and fried confections.

The whole procedure is a re-enactment of a well known episode from the childhood of Krishna. One of Krishna's mischievous pranks was to devise ways of stealing curds and butter from pots suspended from the roof beams in sling holders. Numerous popular pictures depict Krishna standing on a ladder or on the shoulders of friends trying to reach the butter pots.

The stylised competition of the vṭlu game is optionally followed by an evening of entertainment. In 1971 many villagers celebrated by going to the cinema in Subbavaram, five miles away. In 1972, however, two well-to-do young Gavara farmers agreed to match each other in putting up money for an all night drama performance. The drama they picked was Satyahariscandra which had been staged in Yatapalem the year before at the Bandamma Festival.

4. Vināyaka Caviti (Date: bhādrapada śuddha caviti (August-September))

This festival, in honour of *Gaṇapati, is hardly celebrated in the village though it is very popular in towns. Twice-Born castes in Aripaka, the Komati family of Yatapalem, and the schools in both settlements do celebrate this day with a puja to an improvised or town-bought plaster of paris image of Gaṇapati. The idol is placed on a layer of turmeric smeared rice (acintalu, akṣintalu) which echoes the treatment of goddess pots and oil lamps lit in honour

*Gaṇapati = Gaṇēsa = Vināyaka, lord of beginnings and of overcoming obstacles, the elephant-headed son of Śiva.

of ancestors at Sankranti. Offerings are made of incense, bananas, coconut, and an oil lamp and then flowers and tulasi leaves are thrown on to the idol as a long list of the god's names are read from a book. At the end of the puja a coconut is broken, its milk poured on to the idol, and a piece of camphor is lit. Then, prasadam of the edible offerings is distributed.

Though Vinayaka Caviti is primarily a school-children's holiday, this does not mean to say that the Gavara villagers neglect the worship of Vinayaka. Rather, their worship centres on the annual initiation of jaggery ovens and sugar-cane presses. At that time they make mud images of Vinayaka to which they do puja. A curious feature of these mud images is the convention of depicting them with somewhat exaggerated genitals. This practice becomes intelligible in the light of the overtly obscene or sexual nature of certain images (disti bommalu) which are placed in fields or drawn on trees near animal sheds in order to attract and absorb jealous glances, disti ("evil eye"). The Vinayaka image placed at the base of the smoke stack of the jaggery oven is thus not only intended to help in the overcoming of obstacles and ensuring success, but it is also to ward off injurious jealous glances.

5. Dīpāvali or Dīpāvali Amavasya (Date: āśvayūja amavasya
(September-October)) .

This festival of lights (dīpam, 'oil lamp') has associations with the ripening crops of sugarcane and rice. It also heralds the onset of the lunar month of Kārtika, sacred to Siva. A puja is done in the evening at the household shrine to the ancestors. Then sugarcane stalks are wrapped with cloths wicks. These are lit at

the household shrine and taken out of doors where family groups (i.e. clansmen residing in the same neighbourhood) gather in semi-circles to hold them upright as fireworks and crackers are set off. After a while the sugarcane poles are dropped and all say: "dubbu, dubbu, dīpālamvasya, amavasya velli, aidu rōjulu nāgula caviti" - (dubbu 'rice stalks') 'five days after the new moon of Dipavali comes Nāgula Caviti.' Thus Dipavali leads into the next festival of Nāgula Caviti.

6. Nāgula Caviti (Date: kārtika caviti (September-October))

Five (lunar) days after Dipavali comes Nagula Caviti, the worship of cobras, nāgupāmu. Cobras are accorded the honour of this worship in order to flatter and placate them. This is in line with the principle we have observed elsewhere that one worships those things which have the power to affect one's well-being. The poisonous bite of the cobra is widely feared, particularly in this season when the crops stand high in the fields. In addition, cobras have an important place in Hindu mythology and iconography.

Nāgula Caviti is begun with an early morning bath and fast (upavāsam - non-consumption of a rice meal). Men apply forehead markings of various kinds. The Gavaras' are nāmam marks, a white 'V' or 'U' shape with a vertical red line in the middle. These are modelled on the Vaisnavite sectarian mark but have no sectarian significance for the villagers. It is merely considered as having an auspicious connotation. Other castes tend to stylize their forehead marks differently. Yatas apply their nāmams in white lines only. Carpenters smear sandalwood paste on their forehead and apply a vermillion dot in the middle; Jangams smear cowdung

ash (vibhūti, a Saivite symbol) on their foreheads. Even within the Gavaras there are variations. One made a "Sun and Moon mark", a crescent with a dot in the centre.

Family groups then proceed out of the village to large termite mounds (anthills of white ants) to perform the puja. These family groups are not rigidly defined but tend to be closely related sub-clansmen who live or work together. There is a tendency for families who share field hut areas (kallam), who are not necessarily patrilineally related, to join in such puja groups.

The hollow interiors of the termite mounds are believed to be the favourite abodes of cobras. Thus, the puja is performed by pouring offerings of milk and placing raw eggs into holes in the mounds. Other items are placed on to the termite mounds, seasonal flowers and fruits (gobbi puvvulu, tangidi puvvulu, centres of unripe palmyra fruits - tāti ginjalu, and leaves of tulasi - sweet basil) along with turmeric, vermillion, and schematic muggu diagrams. A special cloth, nāgula panci, white with a red check (smeared on its corners with turmeric) is put down and then taken back after a dandam gesture has been done to it on the termite mound. These red checked cloths are later worn by men working in the fields and are a kind of testimonial to snakes who might see them that they have respectfully worshipped them on Nagula Caviti. Fireworks are set off as each person, including each child, presents his own offerings and does a dandam (namaskāram) gesture of salute with his hands.

The puja technique reflects a pattern observed in other ritual contexts with repetitions of sequences of three. Three turmeric wads are offered, each with a vermillion dot (bottu).

Each person pours the milk offering three times into the hole of the termite mound. Some vary this procedure by pouring into three different holes.

After the puja, the women of the village, particularly young unmarried or newly married girls, go to bathe in a natural pool in the rocky hillside. No men are allowed there at that time. On their way back to the village the women run on the main road mischievously stopping buses and laughing merrily. The notion that bathing on particular festivals is beneficial for growing children is encountered in wedding rituals, processions to village goddess temples (children are held in the water poured over people possessed by the goddess) and bath on the morning of Bhōgi in Sankranti. In the bathing at the bodlabāyi hillside pool on Nagula Caviti there is the related notion that women's health and fertility is fostered by this bath.

In the afternoon, Malas and Madigas go begging in the village from house to house. Meanwhile, many Gavara elders gather and sit together at the Rama temple while young men do ciratalu dances (which are simultaneously part of the entertainment of Gairamma whose festival is in progress). In the evening there is more ciratalu dancing and a bhajana. Large numbers of villagers celebrate by treating themselves to a cinema in Subbavaram.

7. Kārtika Sōmavaram (Date: Mondays in kārtika month (October-November))

As part of the rituals honouring Siva during kārtika month, special pujas are done to him on Mondays, a day particularly sacred for him. Before sunrise, on the first Monday, unmarried girls (ten or so) launch floating lights (banana stalk segments decorated

with turmeric and vermillion) on to a village tank. They cheer "gōvinda, gōvinda" (said also at the immersion of Gairamma) and return to the village singing songs about Rama and Sita. They say that their object is punyam ('merit' or general well-being) which implies that they hope to have many children and remain pēraṇṭālu (auspicious non-widows with their husbands outliving them).

Later in the morning, villagers of both sexes bathe, and fasting they go to do puja and have darsanam at a Siva temple a few kilometres away on the main road in the direction of Bangarampalem. In recent years villagers have been going alternatively to a bālapēraṇṭālu temple, Īṣvaramma in the village of Paiḍampēṭa some fifteen kilometres away.

The Siva temple, grandly named Śrī Sōmalingēśvara Svāmi Dēvasthānam, is commonly referred to by the nickname of the turning in the road, Lingāla Tiruguḍu 'Lingam corner'. It is a small scale affair as far as Brahmanical temples go. It maintains a resident Brahman who has a working knowledge of temple rituals. It is supported by donations from surrounding villages among which the Bangarampalem Gavaras are the most prominent. Other sources of finance are the sale of flower garlands to passing bus drivers for placing on the religious pictures inside the front of their buses. The temple was said to have been founded by a bus driver who averted an accident nearby and erected the temple out of thanks. The recent growth in popularity of the Īṣvaramma bālapēraṇṭālu temple has eroded this Siva temple's income, particularly on Kartika Mondays, to the dismay of the Brahman priest and his employees.

8. Śivarātri or Mahāsivarātri (Date: māgha bahula caturdaś (February))

This is a single day festival in honour of Śiva. (Sivaratri means 'Siva night'.) The principle feature of the holiday is the requirement of remaining awake all night long, the so-called jāgarālu, 'vigil'. This vigil is customarily done at a Siva temple or shrine. Pilgrimages to rather distant temples (50-60 kilometres) for darsanam and the vigil take place on a massive scale. For Yatapalem inhabitants, one of the favourite temples is the Sanyāsi temple at Dharmavaram near the town of Srungavarapukota. At such temples all night entertainment is provided in order to help people stay awake. Even at the modest temple of Somalingesvara Svami at Lingala Tirugudu a Vīdhi-nāṭakam troupe is provided which performs a story of Krishna and his feuding wives, Satyabhāma-kalāpam.

B. Agricultural rituals

Rituals centring on agricultural operations repeat the basic themes of ideology and symbols which we have encountered in other contexts. For instance, they mark the initiation of important undertakings at astrologically auspicious times, the things which are worshipped have the ability to influence the worshippers' well-being, and the basic ritual act is the performance of puja. Furthermore, they employ many of the same symbols, such as turmeric, vermillion, incense, offerings and animal sacrifice. We have already noted how the major festivals, of village goddesses, Gairamma, and Sankranti contain numerous associations with the agricultural rhythm. For instance, first rice-harvesting (pīdantuta) and first rice-cooking (on the first Saturday in nelaganṭa) are integral parts of the Sankranti festival. Similarly, we find numerous

other cross-references in agricultural rituals. They link in with worship at the household shrine, the ideology of the auspiciousness of pēraṇṭālu (non-widows), the symbolism of turmeric and vermillion, and astrological categories of time reckoning.

1. Rain-bringing rituals (Late April-early June)

There are two varieties of rain-bringing ritual. The first is a minor ritual in which several boys about ten years old (Washermen, Barbers, and Yatas) go around the village with a frog tied in a handkerchief. This is suspended from the middle of a stick held horizontally between two boys. As they go from house to house begging they get a small quantity of uncooked rice, some jaggery, and a few small coins. When they stop in front of a house, a small pot of water is poured over the stick-bearers and the frog. The boys then chant: kappa kappa nīlāla, kappa kappa nīlāla, kaḍava niṇḍa dōmalu, morrō vāna dēmuda, 'frog, frog, waters, frog, frog, waters, a pot full of mosquitoes, oh god, cry for rain!' This is all done in a spirit of playfulness and frivolity.

However, when there is real anxiety over the arrival of the rains more serious ritual initiatives are taken. In 1972 there was a freak rainstorm before the monsoon was due. Many shrubs suddenly burst into bloom only to quickly wither in the unusually harsh heat wave which followed (mid-day temperatures reached 45°C, 114°F and stayed in the low 40s for well over a week). This prompted the villagers of Yatapalem to hold an ēkāham, non-stop bhajana and chanting for twenty-four hours at the Rama temple on an auspicious ēkādaśi day (vaisākha bahuḷa ēkādaśi). This was about a week before the monsoon customarily arrives in mid-June.

Immediately after the completion of the Ēkāham, the Gavaras held a santarpanam, 'feeding of the poor' (literally 'satisfying, gratifying'). For this purpose, Rs. 160 had been collected by means of a levy on Gavara households. In front of the Rama temple some ninety-seven persons from Aripaka Revenue Village were given meals which were cooked by Gavaras. The following castes participated: from Yatapalem - Weavers, Oil Pressers, Barbers, Washermen, Yatas, Malas, Madigas; From Kottapalam - Yatas; from Aripaka- Malas. In addition, there were some Yatas from a Yata satellite settlement of Bangarampalem.

The santarpanam was one of the few public meals where inter-dining principles were demonstrated. Castes which partook of food cooked by the Gavaras were clearly admitting their inferiority. Interestingly, the lines of diners were not very strictly divided by sex and caste. There were cases of Oil Pressers and Barbers, Weavers and Washermen eating side by side. Harijans were in all cases in separate rows though, within these, Malas and Madigas ate side by side (though in clusters rather than interspersed).

The mechanism underlying the santarpanam is the notion of punyam, merit (a sort of good deed, credit with god for one's future benefit, an auspicious act, etc.). The idea is that by praising Rama (allegedly 150,000 mantrams had been read at the Ēkāham) and by giving charitable donations of food to "the poor" and dependents, they would gain "credit" with Rama which he would repay by bringing plentiful rains.

We have discussed earlier how the subsequent failure of rain to arrive prompted explanations that menstruating women had attended and thus spoilt the punyam, 'merit', by this act of disrespect.

Rama would overlook this only if further offerings would be made (i.e. the breaking of fifty coconuts at the temple).

The notion that benefits can be obtained from gods by self discipline (e.g. tapas, self-mortifying meditation on the name or formula of praise for a god) and chanting mantras is a common theme in popular stories and cinemas of Hindu mythology. It is not an uncommon occurrence for a demon king or ascetic to gain power (e.g. a god's grant of a boon, varam) regardless of the use to which they intend to put this power. Efficacy derives from appropriate ritual actions and formulae, which automatically generate power, rather than personal good intentions per se.

A further implication of the santarpanam "feeding of the poor" is that well-being is linked to the fulfilment of hierarchical obligations between castes. When men fulfil their obligation to be benevolent to dependent castes (the value of interdependence) this also generates punyam 'merit' which influences god to be benvolent similarly to the farmers and bring them good rains. The ritual with the frogs and the ritual of feeding the poor thus exhibit a basic similarity. In both there is the underlying notion that people can manipulate cosmic events and deities (e.g. Rama's bringing of rain and stopping a heatwave) through their proper inter-relations with their immediate neighbours and environment. The upholding of social morality brings social well-being since prosperity and health result from the creation of punyam, acts which embody the ideals of hierarchy (respect) and interdependence (mutual, though not symmetrical, obligations).

2. First sowing of rice (End of first week in July)

Outlined below is a description of the main steps in the first-

sowing ritual. Note the recurrent elements: puja at the household shrine, the use of turmeric and vermillion, charitable donations to "the poor" for puṇyam, the repetition of series of three, and the reference to the auspiciousness of pēraṇṭālu, married women with their husbands still alive.

A. Consecration of seed rice at the household shrine

1. Seed rice is placed at the household shrine
2. Housewife's puja at the household shrine employs the seed rice
 - a. The puja takes place on a Saturday (a day of the week sacred to Visnu, Venkatesvara etc.)
 - b. Some seed rice is ground into flour and combined with jaggery and dal to make āradi, the special offering used in this puja
 - c. The actual puja

Consists of: lighting a three-wick oil lamp, placing a turmeric wad with a vermillion dot on it, placing the āradi preparation on a leaf plate, lighting incense sticks, and doing dandam salute to the whole.

The āradi is then taken and eaten as prasādam

B. First sowing

1. Timing is determined by the astrological almanac
2. Preparation of the seed basket
 - a. Turmeric is mixed into the seed
 - b. A turmeric panel is made on one side of the basket and three vermillion dots are applied to it
3. Taking of the seed to the field

As the seed rice is taken out to the field:

- a. A pēraṇṭālu is arranged to approach them. This is an auspicious sight believed to have beneficial effect on the undertaking, particularly since it occurs at the outset, the beginning.
- b. Portions of the seed rice are given to "poor people" who come begging. This generates auspicious puṇyam (much the same as giving food to the poor at the santarpanam) which is expected to influence the well-being and fecundity of the crop beneficially.

4. Puja at the field (performed by men)

- a. A mound of earth is made in the middle of the field. On this is put: three wads of turmeric, with vermillion dots, three bits of tamarind, three pieces of jaggery.
- b. Near this mound, some seed rice is put down in three small piles.
- c. Those attending the puja do a daṇḍam salute to the offerings. (They comment that they think in their minds at the time: "let the rice grow well this year")
- d. Men put vermillion powder on their foreheads (as a visible sign of their having done the puja, somewhat akin to the taking of prasādam). Women (i.e. pēraṇṭālu) put turmeric and vermillion on their foreheads. Then everyone eats the pieces of jaggery as prasādam.

5. The actual sowing beings

The rice is broadcast from a rice winnow, cēṭa (the winnow being used as a container in the left hand and the right used to throw seed)

When explanations were elicited about the mound of earth and its offerings, villagers said that it represents god, dēvuḍu). They would not name any specific god, however, and indicated it sort of meant all gods in general. (This is evidence of the interpenetration of the concepts of gods, well-being, and specific objects which are sources of potential prosperity or harm.) They also commented on the

ability of abstract items to represent god by pointing to the similarity of the worship of Gaṇapati (Viṣṇūśvara, Vināyaka) at the beginning of all Brahmanical rituals. It is only a turmeric and vermillion wad but nevertheless 'becomes' Gaṇapati in the puja.

3. Transplanting of rice seedlings (udupu) (End of third week in July)

In the east (north-east corner) of a field, a man initiates the first transplanting with a puja before women carry on with the job. The reader should note the rule of the number three and its multiples, and the use of turmeric and vermillion. Neradi branches have cross-associations with the Satyanārāyaṇa Vratam in which they are prominent, and the ceremonial marriage pole rāṭa, to which they are tied. The cinna nēpālam tree that is planted is notable for being tenaciously hardy, quick growing, and having a milky sap, auspicious or desirable qualities for rice. The sweet smelling tulasi is associated with pēraṇṭālu, and occurs in pujas at household shrines and numerous other rituals in a wide variety of auspicious contexts. The use of undrālu, millet confections, echoes the garlanding of Nandi with a string of undrālu in the Gairamma festival processions.

Ritual at Rice Transplantation

A. Puja (by a man)

- a. The following items are planted in the mud at the northeast corner of the field:

Three branches of neradi, a cinna nēpālam sapling, and branches of tulasi (sweet basil)

- b. The following items are placed on to a banana leaf:

Pieces of tamarind and jaggery
(These are ingredients used in the first sowing ritual)

Three confections made of millet flour (cōḍi pindi)

These are not the usual undrālu balls but are in the shape of discs with an 'X' of dough on top. These are said to represent:

1. a grain bin (gādi)
2. a sickle (nāgali)
3. a basket (gampa)

all items associated with the harvest

B. First transplanting (by a man)

Nine bunches of rice seedlings are planted in the flooded field near the puja items.

C. Prasādam

Other millet confections (undrālu) brought for the purpose, are handed out as prasādam to all present.

This ends the puja and the women begin the systematic transplantation of rice seedlings as the men bring them from the seed beds in bundles. The transplanting is customarily carried out entirely by women.

Though this is a fairly minor ritual, it is full of complex references and cross-associations with a wide variety of other rituals.

4. Field Sacrifices (Dates: bhādrapada amavasya: citta kārte)
(August-September)

There are several varieties of field sacrifices at various stages of the agricultural season. The most widespread is the sacrifice of a chicken to the field and crops at bhādrapada amavasya (e.g. in 1971 it fell on 19 September). Another type is a goat sacrifice to Ravalamma by the Malla clan after their millet (ganti) crop was in. This takes place on a Tuesday, the day sacred to Ravalamma (in 1971 on 28 September). This latter sacrifice was a whole clan's fulfilment of a vow to the goddess whose temple

stands on their lands. In contrast, the bhādrapada amavasya sacrifice is performed by individual households regardless of clan or caste affiliation.

A third type of sacrifice concerning crops is the citta bali (bali, 'sacrifice') around the time of citta kārte (in 1971 citta kārte fell on 11 October but the sacrifice was put off until the 14 October which was an ekādasi day). The citta bali coincides with the period of greatest threat to the standing crop from insects and diseases. Theoretically this sacrifice should be performed at each of the three main village tanks (irrigation reservoirs) by the farmers whose land is irrigated by them. In practice, only the well-to-do Mallas performed this sacrifice at the tank which waters most of their lands.

a. Bhādrapada Amavasya Field Sacrifice

1. Timing

The timing of this sacrifice is by lunar reckoning (i.e. on the last day of the lunar month of bhādrapada) and hence shifts relative to the solar and gregorian calendar from year to year.

In contrast, the other variety of field sacrifice is reckoned according to kārte, solar divisions which vary only a day or so from year to year.

2. Circumambulation

A young man of the family, holding the sacrificial chicken, runs around a field clockwise.

Clockwise is the usual direction for circumambulation of temples etc. which keeps the auspicious righthand side of the body towards the field.

As he circumambulates he shouts poli poli (just as in the pīdantuta, first rice harvesting ritual).

Poli means 'profit' or 'gain' and is considered helpful in encouraging the crop yield to be plentiful. In a similar way, merchants repeat the word lābham 'profit' when they count or weigh items in which they are dealing.

The phrase poli poli recurs in the first rice cutting ceremony and is also chanted during the threshing operations.

3. Sacrifice

The chicken is then beheaded with a sickle and its blood is dripped on to the field and some of the growing rice (just as in the pīdantuta ritual)

The chicken is then used to prepare a meal for the family.

b. Citta Bali: Pre-rice-harvest Sacrifice during Citta Kāte (mid-October)

A goat is sacrificed in Mallolla Pakalu and its blood is carefully collected. This blood is mixed with turmeric-smeared rice and balusu leaves and cooked. The resulting mixture is distributed to all farmers with land irrigated by the kotta ceruvu, a tank near Mallolla Pakalu. They go and spread the mixture in each of their fields. Simultaneously another preparation is made from the sacrificial blood, a sort of black pudding called nalla, 'black'. This is made by cooking the blood with tamarind, salt, and chillies. When it reaches a sticky consistency and cools into a hardened mass it is sliced and distributed as prasādam to the assembled participants in the sacrifice.

c. Ravalamma Mokku: Sacrifice by the Malla Clan after the Millet Harvest

This takes place on a Tuesday, the day sacred to Ravalamma. It

is the fulfilment of an annual vow to Ravalamma undertaken by the Malla clan. Once the millet harvest is successfully completed they sacrifice a goat to her. This ceremony contrasts with the other field sacrifices in that it is not made to the field but rather to a goddess. Furthermore it is performed only after the harvest is in, rather than to the crops while they are still growing.

5. First Jaggery Making (September-October)

At a time determined from the astrological almanac, a puja is done to Ganapati at the chimney of the jaggery oven. This ritual with its fashioning of an earthen image of Ganapati is discussed in the previous section on Vinayaka Caviti.

6. First Rice Harvest and 7. First Rice Cooking

Both of these rituals are described and discussed in the section dealing with the Sankranti festival.

C. Private Calendrical Observances

There are a number of rituals which fall on particular dates in the year which are only observed by some households and not by others. The puvvula yātra, pilgrimage to the Simnachalam temple on the eve of āṣāḍha purnimi, has already been described in the discussion of wedding rituals since it is very popular for newly-weds. Three other optional calendrical rituals centre on the worship of the Moon, Sun, and the god Śrī Vēṅkaṭēśvara.

On kārtika purnimi (full moon day of the lunar month of Kartika (October-November), most of the Carpenter households in Yatapalem perform a ritual of worshipping the Moon. The Moon is associated with Śīva, hence this festival occurs in Kartika month

which is sacred to Śīva. At night, in front of individual houses, a complicated array of puja items is laid out on a muggu decorated area with an overturned rice-pounding mortar decorated with vermillion and chalk powder. Each worshipper does a dandam salute to the Moon as he throws offerings of fruits and vegetables up towards the sky. These offerings are caught by enthusiastic onlookers and kept as prasādam. A number of the offerings have turmeric and vermillion dots (often in threes) applied to them.

An almost identical ritual is performed in honour of the Sun (Sūryudu, Sūrya-nārāyaṇa) on māgha śuddha saptami, a day called ratha saptami 'chariot seventh' ('chariot' refers to the chariot of the Sun god). This holiday usually falls in January. It is performed in the middle of the day mainly by Gavaras and Carpenters. While only some twenty to thirty households perform this ritual, it becomes a day of celebration for the whole village since members of all castes rush to playfully compete in catching the offerings which are thrown. These include green coconuts, pumpkins, sugar-cane poles, bananas, and tulasi leaves. An oil lamp is lit and later placed at the household shrine where a puja is done and three or five leaf plates of food are offered. There is no evidence that clan membership determines the family tradition to perform this festival. Rather, it seems linked with idiosyncratic household preferences of naming members after the Sun god (e.g. Sūryanārāyaṇa, Sūri, Sūrja Rāo etc.).

In a similar way, families with members named after Vēnkaṭēśvara (with names such as Venkaṭa Ramaṇa, Venku Naiḍu, Venkaṭa Rāo) celebrate an annual puja on phālguna śuddha ṛkadāsi (February-March). This is the time of a minor festival at a Venkatesvara temple

at Vaddadi, a large village outside of the town of Chodavaram.

There are also private annual observances in honour of goddesses. The worship of Mahalakṣmi dēvata on Kanumu day is performed by about ten Gavara households who have members named Mahalakṣmi. (This name is also given to men.) In addition to this, there are two prominent annual vow performances, mokku, to village goddesses by certain Gavara farmers. One of the goddesses, Mūsalatalli (mūsala 'old woman') was introduced into the village by a man who migrated from another village on illarakam (matrilocal marriage). Her worship generally takes place on a Sunday in the lunar month of bhādrapada (August-September) and includes a procession out to her abode in a banyan tree where a puja and sheep sacrifice is performed. Turmeric and vermillion are smeared on the tree and offerings of children, toys (dondakāyilu) and saris are placed in it.

The other personal annual goddess worship is at the twin shrines of Bangaramma-Durgamma. It was initiated and is still led by a Saragadam clansman. This procession and sheep sacrifice takes place on a Thursday in December. Beforehand, friends and neighbours 'sign up' for a portion of the meat for which they pay a rupee or two. Often, the Headman receives his portion free. Before the patron of the festival leads the procession out to the shrines of the goddesses, his wife performs a puja at their household shrine. In this, the sacrificial knife is placed at the shrine. After they return from the sacrifice they place the head of the sacrificial sheep at the house shrine.

Chapter XIII

RITUALS FOR UNPREDICTABLE VILLAGE-WIDE EMERGENCIES

Emergency rituals to appease negative forces have already been discussed in the section on life cycle rituals. These are the sānti ceremonies which are performed if birth, first menstruation, or death occurs at an astrologically inauspicious time. Santis are performed for the uncontrollable events of human life which it is not possible to synchronize with auspicious times. These events can render a person out of harmony with the forces of time and consequently liable to misfortune. Along similar lines of reasoning, personal illness is interpreted as evidence of a violation of an harmonious relationship of hierarchical interdependence with village goddesses. To restore health, appeasement of a goddess is necessary. This appeasement takes the form of symbolic self-abasement and offering of respect (through puja and votive performances).

Annual village goddess festivals are involved in the same line of thought. Through the festivals a village maintains a long-term tie with its goddesses. This acts as a store of credit and as a restraint on the goddess not to inflict the village with illness. Despite this, occasional epidemics do break out. When they do they are explained as the result of improper performance of a previous festival or the neglect of a particular goddess. In both cases, epidemic illness is attributed to an insufficient amount of respect being shown to a goddess.

A. Paśuvula Panduga

A specific case of this kind occurred in August 1972 when many farmers' cattle fell mysteriously ill and died. A paśuvula

panduga, 'anima festival' was immediately arranged on behalf of the entire village to placate the goddess Paśuvula Māramma. Worship of her had been neglected for many years. A village Carpenter berated the farmers saying they had grown too proud (garvam), i.e. insufficiently submissive or respectful to the goddess, and that it was no wonder that the goddess was punishing them in this way.

In the rituals of the paśuvula panduga we observe the repetition of many of the basic elements of the village goddess festival - in personnel, symbols, and activities. As usual, dependent castes have special ritual jobs, e.g. drumming, carrying special ritual items such as the stake upon which the sacrificial pig is impaled. All the settlements of the Revenue Village have representatives participating, though the Gavaras provide the leadership and largest numbers of participants.

A procession sets out from the Yatapalem temple in the morning proceeding to the termite mound abode of the goddess on the northern boundary of the village. Pots of offerings are presented on behalf of every household which has domestic animals. Then, consecrated turmeric water is mixed from a communal pot into individual pots from each household. After the pig is impaled on a stake, the villagers hastily depart to sprinkle the "consecrated water" on to their cattle to protect them.

In the afternoon a smaller contingent, consisting mainly of the drummers and the pujaris, proceed to a southern boundary of the village. There, at a neem tree, they impale another pig and put down an offering of a heap of cooked rice. Then a meal is made from the sacrificial pig for the castes who participated in the ritual.

(Barber, Washerman, Mala, Madiga).

These rituals are full of elements encountered in other ritual activities such as processions, circumambulations, pujas, and sacrifices. Many of the symbols which are employed in the pujas are also familiar from the village goddess festivals such as the use of termite mound dirt and the use of neem (margosa). Neem branches decorate the Village Servant's drum, are used to sprinkle the consecrated water on to the goddess' termite mound and on to animals to be protected. Neem wood is used to fashion the stakes on which the sacrificial pigs are impaled. The ubiquitous symbol of turmeric and vermillion also appears in numerous contexts. It decorates the forehead of the sacrificial pig, it is smeared on the sacrificial stakes, it is mixed into the consecrated water and it is used to make a household shrine variety of panel on the neem tree in front of which the sacrificial meal is eaten.

Pasuvula Panduga

A. Preparations

1. Procession to the house of the Vadram

- a. Drumming begins at the Rama temple
(Mid-Morning)

Drumming is performed by Barbers, the Village Servant (bārki) a Mala, Madigas.

The Village Servant's drum is decorated with three turmeric and vermillion dots and branches of neem.

A torch is carried by a Washerman

- b. They proceed to the Vadram's house for the pot of water

This is a brass pot of water into which turmeric and vasantakam root paste is added.

The pot is decorated with vermillion dots (botlu)

2. The stake

The stake is prepared by the Carpenters from neem wood. It is a sharply pointed stake which is smeared with turmeric and six parallel vertical vermillion lines.

3. The sacrificial pig

A baby pig is brought by a Washerman.

It is washed and a turmeric and vermillion spot is applied to its forehead.

4. Sequence of items passed through incense smoke:

The stake, the pig, and the drum of the Village Servant

B. Procession to the goddess (at the northern boundary)

1. One man and one woman from each household participate

Women carry a pot (dāka) of offerings on their heads

This pot contains ingredients which the goddess likes made from grains and leaves etc. topped with fried confections - undrālu and būrelu.

The women also carry a small pot of water which also contains turmeric, lime (cunnam), and a sprig of neem. (The lime mixed with the turmeric turns the water a reddish colour.)

2. Procession out into the fields

Processants: drummers (Barbers, Village Sergeant, and Madigas), Barber carrying a censer, Washerman carrying a torch, followed by the rest of the participants

3. Saragadam man identifies the location of the goddess' abode

This is in a termite mound at the northern boundary (polimēra 'boundary') of the village.

C. At the Termite Mound

1. Circumambulation

Circumambulation of the termite mound by the entire procession of hundreds

2. Puja to the termite mound by the Saragadam man and the Vadram pujari

- a. Sprinkle water from the brass pot on to the termite mound
- b. Put turmeric wads on to the termite mound
- c. Wife of the Saragadam pujari puts an oil lamp and muggu powder on to the termite mound in a sketchy muggu diagram
- d. Kottapalem bhattudu (Washerman who becomes possessed by the goddess at the times of the village goddess festivals) - puts turmeric and bananas on to the termite mound
- e. Saragadam pujari puts his offering pot (dāka) down on to the termite mound
- f. The Washerman's torch is placed into the termite mound
- g. The sacrificial stake is stuck upright into the ground beside the termite mound

3. Subsequent puja by all the rest of the people

- a. Sprinkle the termite mound with water from neem sprigs dipped into their individual water pots
- b. Place their offering pots

There is a great deal of individual variation in the contents and decoration of these pots

4. Distribution of consecrated water 'vasanta-nīlu'

- a. This is done from the communal brass pot amidst clamorous struggle and competition of people trying to push ahead of each other

- b. People are finally organised into two facing rows

On the initiative of village leaders (Gavara elders who are participating)

- c. Circumambulation of the seated crowd three times

by the drummers and the pujaris with the brass communal water pot from which they sprinkle the crowd with neem branches which they dip into it

- d. The brass pot is taken through the middle of the two rows of people seated facing each other with their own water pots in front of them.

- e. Most people add termite mound dirt to their individual pots

5. Impalement of the sacrificial pig

- a. This is performed by a Madiga
- b. People should 'wooo wooo wooo' (as at village goddess sacrifice). Many run away frightened, others go more slowly
- c. Previously it was the practice to bring all the cattle together for the sacrifice and then drive them away at the sound of the screeching of the pig as it is impaled. It was decided that the illness might spread if the cattle were brought together and so this was dropped.

6. People go and sprinkle their cattle with their 'consecrated' water

D. Afternoon Puja (at the village boundary on the south side of the village)

1. The procession through the village

- a. The procession leaves the Yatapalem Rama Rama temple in the late afternoon
- b. Only representatives (a token group) go rather than the massive participation of the morning ritual

- c. Barbers, Mala, and Madigas drum;
Village Servant holds a new stake;
a second sacrificial pig is carried
by a Washerman

They also bring with them a basket of uncooked rice, turmeric, oil, and other cooking ingredients and cooking pots

2. Procession to a neem tree at the southern boundary of the village

The procession circumambulates the tree three times

3. Puja

- a. The bhattudu (Kottapalem Washerman who gets possessed) makes a turmeric panel with three vertical vermillion lines on the side of the tree facing south (so that one faces roughly north to view it)
- b. The pujaris sprinkle turmeric water on the site around the tree and then throw some turmeric-smeared rice (acintalu)

4. Cooking of the rice and pouring of it into a heap (kumbham) at the tree

The pig is impaled

The pig is removed and butchered and prepared into a curry

A rice and curry meal is then eaten (as a form of prasadam) by the pork-eating castes who participate: Washermen, Barbers, Yatas, Malas, Madigas

B. Uru Kattadam

While epidemics are dealt with through emergency rituals to goddesses, different techniques are required for other sorts of threats to village well-being. For instance, after the sudden mysterious death of the Headman (in December 1970 apparently by a heart attack) a number of villagers in Yatapalem were afflicted with severe dysentery. A young man died as did his father a few days later.

Another member of their family became seriously ill and sick people in other families worried that their illnesses were somehow related. The Headman died when he was in excellent health. His was just the sort of unfulfilled life that turns a dead person into a vengeful ghost who wanders with no fixed abode. Furthermore, the Headman died at an astrologically inauspicious time. Considering the recent series of sudden illnesses and deaths the village elders decided to have a sānti performed on behalf of the entire village. (Normally, a death at an inauspicious time requires a sānti only on behalf of the immediate family and residents in adjacent houses.)

This ceremony is called ūru kaṭṭaḍam or grāma sānti (ūru 'village'; kattuta 'to tie, bind, bar, prohibit etc.'; grāma 'village'; sānti 'peace, calm' i.e. 'pacification'). It is performed by a specialist known as a cukkēṭigōḍu (cukka 'star, omen'; ēṭi - from vēyu 'put, throw, shut'; gōḍu = vāḍu 'person'). The man selected was of the Kōnārlu caste (apparently related to, or recently differentiating itself from Gollas). He was summoned from a fairly distant village by a Yatapalam Barber deputed by the village elders. When the Konaru arrived and analysed the circumstances of the Headman's death, he commented that unless the graha ('planet, star, spirit, devil'), were counteracted, nine people would die.

The ritual was performed on the day after the Headman's karma (i.e. the eleventh day after his death, the occasion for a funerary feast). Among the main components of the ritual are

1. the drawing of special yantram diagrams (intrinsically powerful

diagrams and letters) in the form of a muggu drawing in rice flour or lime powder, and in the form of writing on a copper sheet, rāgi rēku; 2. the chanting of mantram formulae; 3. the offering and manipulation of powerful substances (Ganges water, "tiger oil", ayurvedic herbs etc.); 4. the sacrificing of a chicken; 5. the cooking of a pot of offerings; 6. the circumambulation of the settlement (delineating a boundary within which the malevolent forces cannot enter); 7. the preparation of a "graha-repellant" incense which is distributed to be burnt by individual households.

Since the rituals are conducted by an outside specialist, they constitute techniques and formulae which are incomprehensible to the villagers, as obscure as the meaning of Sanskrit mantrams in a ceremony conducted by a Brahman. Nevertheless, the basic principles are familiar to the villagers. Sacrifice and circumambulation are common components of the village symbolic idiom. Mantras are prominent in Brahmanic rituals and yantras are encountered in talismans and, to a certain extent, associated with muggu diagrams. Furthermore, there are a number of similarities with the pasuvula panduga rituals, such as the use of consecrated turmeric-water and other substances to ward off malevolent influences. Also the contents of the pot of cooked offerings are essentially identical with the pots of offerings brought by individual households to Pasuvula Māremma's termite mound abode.

The circumambulation of the settlement is a typical example of multicaste participation in a procession on behalf of the community as a whole. It is led by the Konaru who throws ritually treated millet grains and periodically stops to pour three lines of water and scratch three lines with a knife blade "to black the path of

the graha." A Yata follows behind him holding the pot of consecrated water (containing: water of five wells, turmeric, cow urine, Ganges water, toddy). Next comes a Washerman who carries the tray of malodourous incense (containing: donkey and cow dung, ayurvedic herbs, potassium etc.) which he constantly puts on to the embers of the fire pot held by a Barber. Behind them comes a Madiga with the knife.

They circumabulate the village in a counter-clockwise direction. The significance of this is perhaps not so much its reversal of the usual auspicious practice, which is to keep the object of veneration faced by the right hand side of the body. Rather, in this case, the goal is to keep the attacking forces outside the village, hence the right-hand side of the body is oriented towards the outside.

People asked the Konaru if it was necessary for all the villagers to be within the circle of the procession in order to be protected. He assured them that this was not necessary. The malevolent influence is thus linked to the location of the inauspicious death. Villagers are liable to be attacked by virtue of their having a house in the village rather than through their social ties with the family or the settlement. (This explains the exclusion of Aripaka and other settlement sites from the ritual encirclement.) These concepts are akin to the notion that misfortunes can occur by virtue of the location or structural features of a house (see discussion in Chapter VI-3).

During the circumambulation, the Konaru buries the head of the sacrificial chicken at the main entrance to the village. Once his rounds are completed, he brings the batch of consecrated incense back to the Rama temple where the preliminaries of his ritual

are performed. He hands it over to the Gavara elders who gather there to supervise its distribution to every household in the settlement. After a debate on the Konaru's fee, he is paid and leaves the village taking the pot of cooked offerings to place it beneath a tree outside the village. He also takes the body of the sacrificed chicken as part of his payment.

The elders see to it that the incense is properly distributed to every household. In the evening, households perform a series of rituals. Everyone takes a leaf from over the entranceway to his house and burns it in a pile with leaves from others' houses. Many families then sacrifice a chicken at the entrance to their house and bury its head at the threshold. Then all families drive a series of spikes, mēkulu, in a row across the threshold. There is much individual variation but the spikes are usually driven in a series of three or four (made of the following materials: inumu 'iron', nimma 'lime tree', dabba = ?, and musidi = ?). They then burn the special incense.

These actions repeat on a small scale what the Konaru does for the village as a whole. They secure the entrances to their homes with appeasements (sacrifices) and ritual barriers (spikes, incense). They also attempt to destroy any malevolent influence that has already attached itself to their house by burning a leaf from the entranceway. This technique repeats the concept behind the removal of disti, evil eye. The malevolent force is lured into an object which is then harmlessly destroyed or removed. It is significant that so much effort centres on the doorway and threshold of the house. We are reminded that the doorpost is the first item installed (i.e. raised) when the building of a house is

initiated. The doorpost is also the subject of elaborate notions of lines of sight and alignment of doorposts, etc. Doorposts are even identified with the households who live within them since households are referred to as gaḍapalu, 'doorposts'. Like other important ritual items, doorposts are always smeared with turmeric and vertical vermillion lines and dots. Often this is made more permanent in yellow and red paint.

Chapter XIV

ASPECTS OF COMPETITION IN RITUAL

So far, in our examination of ritual, we have concerned ourselves with the ideological content of ritual, the symbolic definition and reinforcement of social hierarchy and interdependence. At another level, however, ritual occasions are manipulated for competitive or divisive purposes by the groups who participate in them. In this chapter we examine such instances of rivalry and competition which get expressed in the context of ritual activity. The first case concerns the relationship between Yatapalem and Aripaka while the second is a case of tensions within the Gavara caste.

A. The relationship between Aripaka and Yatapalem as expressed through bids for autonomy in the performance of ritual

The reader is reminded that Yatapalem was originally formed by Gavaras who sought to move away from the dominance of the Rajis in Aripaka. Subsequently, with the growth of cash crop prosperity (from sugar cane) and the coming of Indian Independence, the Gavaras in Yatapalem grew economically and politically stronger than the Twice Born castes in the original village of Aripaka. Recent construction of a new Rama temple in Yatapalem and changes in the cycle of rotating village goddess festivals are symptomatic of these changes.

The Aripaka Rama temple, a simple unadorned structure, had been constructed by the Komatis and like the old Yatapalem temple had the curious feature of facing roughly Southwest rather than East, the usual orientation of temples of Sanskrit deities. It

is doubtful that this had any connection with the Simhachalam temple which is also entered from the West. Rather, it is likely to have been the result of ignorance of sanskritic conventions of temple building combined with an analogy to household shrines which are in the northeast corner on the east wall (and thus approached from the west).

In the late 1960s an elderly Gavara invited a sadhu, whom he had met in Anakapalli, to stay at a small hut near his fields which he referred to as his āśramam. This sadhu, who wore clothing of bright orange and shaved his head, was a middle-aged Reddi from the Godavari delta region. He had acquired a smattering of sanskritic knowledge and religious philosophy, enough to impress and gratify the villagers. He took a delight in lecturing the villagers on their primitive ways and fulfilled a need they had for learning more about sanskritic religion.

This sadhu told the people of Yatapalem that it was very bad that their Rama temple was facing the wrong direction. He cited the decline of the Komatis' fortunes in Aripaka as a consequence of their temple being wrongly oriented. The sadhu soon became the centre of a movement in Yatapalem to build a splendid new Rama temple. This would be more in keeping with their new economic status and would also be a form of thanks to Rama for their changed circumstances.

The sadhu was the ideal man to coordinate the building of the temple because everyone trusted him with the large sums of money required (Rs 10,000). Also, as a neutral outsider, the somewhat partisan nature of the project, to glorify the Gavaras and Yatapalem, was less blatant. It is remarkable that a printed invitation

for the foundation ceremony listed the village Record Keeper (an Aripaka Brahman), and a number of important Aripaka Rajus and Komatis before listing the Gavara elders who were actually responsible for the temple construction. Here too a façade of village unity was maintained. Nevertheless, there could be no denial that the new Yatapalem temple, with its carved basalt idols and elaborate spires and ornamentation, left the Aripaka Rama temple in the shade.

Changes in the frequencies of village goddess festivals also hint at shifts of power from Aripaka to Yatapalem. Originally, the Bandamma festival had been performed only once in three years in a cycle which alternated with Ravalamma and Maridamma. In the early 1960s there was a cholera epidemic immediately following a Bandamma festival. Another Bandamma festival was hastily performed to appease the goddess and the epidemic subsided. It was then decided that the Bandamma festival should be performed annually. The Bandamma festival subsequently took on a greater significance as the principal joint ritual event of the entire village. It hardly seems to be chance or solely the occurrence of an epidemic that synchronised this change with the new importance of Yatapalem and a need to have an annually repeating festival to reaffirm village unity in place of the previous system of triennial cycles.

There is evidence to suggest that previously the triennial festival to Ravalamma was the most important goddess festival. The Ravalamma temple was the first temple to be built in cement in the 1930s. Its rituals are unique and somewhat more elaborate than the other goddess festivals. For example, only Ravalamma has

two brass horses in her procession (carried by Yatas who have no ritual job in the other goddess festivals). There is also an elaborate procession of carts and mock elephants for Ravalamma which is not encountered in rituals for other goddesses. The Suri-setti clan play an important ritual role in the Ravalamma festivals although that clan has been in decline since its prosperity in the 1930s and before.

Apart from building a new Rama temple there were other ways in which the Gavaras expressed their distinctiveness from Aripaka in the guise of ritual. On several occasions when there was a choice of interpretations of the correct timing of festivals divergent decisions were made. In 1971 there was a controversy over the correct timing of Nāgula Caviti. According to the saying chanted at Dīpāvali, Nāgula Caviti is supposed to come five days afterwards. That year, however, the fourth lunar phase (caviti) did not start until the afternoon while the festival is traditionally performed in the morning. The Gavaras decided to do the festival the following day despite reports by the Yatas that Aripaka, Kottapalem, and the neighbouring Gavara village of Bangarampalem were celebrating on that day.

Another occasion when there were divergent interpretations of timing was on the celebration of the private calendrical observance by several families of Ratha Saptami, worship of the Sun, Sūryanārāyaṇa. The Aripaka Record Keeper and a number of Rajus celebrated this festival on the astrologically correct day (māgha suddha saptami, i.e. seventh lunar phase in the waxing fortnight of the month of Magha) which fell on a Saturday. The Gavaras did the rituals on the next day and argued that it was more important

to perform the festival on a Sunday, the day of the week sacred to the Sun.

In the light of this expression of ritual autonomy between Yatapalem and Aripaka, it is interesting to note that in 1972 Aripaka revived a festival in connection with their Rama temple which had not been performed for several years. This was a Rāma Sambaram, a single day's festival which took place somewhat arbitrarily at the beginning of June (end of Jyēṣṭha month). The temple's picture of Rama and Sita was taken around Aripaka in a wedding palanquin. In the procession, Yatapalem "service castes" (Barbers, Washermen, Madigas, Jangams) performed their usual ritual services of drumming, carrying a torch, carrying the palanquin etc. They were accompanied by a Komati who was directing the proceedings and by Velamas and Kapus who did stick-twirling displays and dances. No Gavaras participated, however, though they did attend the night-long operatic drama afterwards. This was the Bālanāgama drama and was performed primarily by Brahmans, Rajus, and Komatis though Velamas and Kapus also assisted.

B. Rivalries and tensions within the Gavara caste which found expression in controversies over festivals

1. Period of unsettled leadership

The role of village leaders in village goddess festivals was in many ways a "barometer" of the state of village leadership and rivalries within the Gavara caste. This was suggested not only by observations made in Aripaka Revenue Village, but also by events at festivals in other villages. In villages in which the local leaders were in firm, uncontested control, a festival would proceed

with few if any fights over procedure. In other villages where there were distinct rival factions (pārṭilu, 'factions', lit. "parties") hostility sometimes erupted into battles with bamboo poles.

At the time of the Yatapalam Bandamma festival in April 1971 the fluid and unsettled state of the village leadership was reflected in the festival. The old Headman (of the Rapeti clan) who died in December 1970 was the last of the elder formal political leaders aside from the Vice President (also of the Rapeti clan). Though he hardly approached his predecessor in power, he was still very much an old style Headman from the days before the creation of the posts of President and Vice President. The unusually large attendance at his funeral attested to his wide following. After he died, the main formal Gavara political leader was the Panchayat President, a twenty-four year old (of the Malla clan) who did not fully participate in the role of dispute arbitrator because he lacked the authority which derives from age. The Vice President was not a particularly forceful man either, though he was older and an active dispute settler. In the interim, the village Record Keeper arranged for an older brother of the Vice President to be appointed as temporary Headman. He was a soft-spoken unassuming man who could be relied upon not to have ambitions to succeed the old Headman since he already held the position of Record Keeper-cum-Headman of Sirsipalli, a small Yata settlement near Bangarampalem.

The son of the recently deceased Headman, in the direct line of succession, was very young (twenty-one years old) and unsure of being appointed. Though the village Record Keeper came out publicly

endorsing him, he was well aware of the keen competition of other entrants for the Headmanship examination. It was not until seven months later, in July 1971, that he was appointed and then only provisionally, depending on his passing the examination.

2. 1971 Bandamma Festival

When we view the role of the village leaders in the 1971 Bandamma festival in April against this unsettled background a number of incidents become intelligible. There was a controversy on the evening of the penultimate day of the festival. The Village Servant and Vadram bitterly complained that there had been no provision made for formal entertainment to aid the villagers in their obligations to keep a vigil in honour of the goddess. The only Gavara elders present were fairly ineffectual and peripheral men. During their arguing, one pushed the Vadram pujari aside. The pujari sat down, sulked, and shortly became possessed by the goddess who complained that her festival was not being properly performed by the villagers. The whole atmosphere seemed to be coloured by a feeling of lack of leadership. The next day, though the President and Vice President were in the village in the afternoon they did not consistently assume leadership roles when sporadic fighting and controversies broke out during the ghaṭṭam pot procession. The son of the old Headman was prominent in one fight but then faded into the crowd. The Vice President was more active and at one point gave a drunken Jangam a nose bleed. The President stayed out of these controversies and watched aloofly from nearby. As the procession began to move the President lagged behind and the acting-Headman also acted uninvolved and watched from the front of his house.

The 1971 Bandamma festival was also the occasion for the challenge to the traditional rights of a Saragadam elder who had a certain reputation for being stingy. It was this Gavara who traditionally carried the wooden idols out to the goddess temple and did the puja inside the temple, not the Vadram pujari who was more the guardian of the ghattam pots than anything else. It is difficult to say whether this conflict was made possible by the fluid leadership situation. His right to his position of honorary leadership was challenged by the President, Vice President and seemingly other elders as well.

A situation was set up in which his ritual prerogatives were by-passed. He had formerly had the right to determine when the festival should be held but for this festival the President and Vice President had usurped that privilege. The President claimed that he had waited for this Saragadam elder to bring five measures of rice, part of which is used for placing under the ghattam pots during the vālakālu skits. When he failed to show up they went and bought some rice from the Komati's shop. Later, they wanted to charge him an unusually large household levy for the festival. He refused to pay and it was not long before rumours began circulating in the village that the funds collected for festivals were being embezzled ("eaten") by the village leaders.

3. 1971 Maridamma Festival

The first festival to follow Bandamma was the one to Maridamma towards the end of June. It was supposed to be held two weeks or so after the Bandamma festival but was postponed by the President three times, symptomatic of the unsettled leadership

situation. The first excuse was that it should be held only after the wedding season in May. Some time later the Vadram was possessed by the goddess who allegedly said that the festival should be held later. It was postponed a third time supposedly because of the death of a Velamma of Aripaka who had traditionally become possessed at the goddess festivals.

During the performance of the festival there were numerous rumblings of dissatisfaction and discontent. The Yatapalem Madiga caste head (ijamāni) angrily complained that the Malas and Madigas had not been given money for sāra liquor and alleged that the acting-Headman was eating up that money. Disparagingly he remarked that illnesses had been on the increase but despite that the Gavara elders had not given the customary donations for liquor to the Harijan drummers to make it a proper festival to pacify the goddess. We must note here how, through the goddess festival, the health of the village is dependent on the proper fulfilment of obligations between castes.

Most of the villagers only went as far as the road and did not make the three kilometre walk out to the temple itself for the sacrifice. Those who did go, commented that most villagers and even the President and Vice President had not come from the road because nobody was properly leading them. They spoke of the old days when the predecessor of the Headman who had just died ruled with an iron fist. The lack of firm leadership had caused this festival to be performed in a half-hearted fashion. The entertainment during the procession was noticeably meagre, without fireworks or stick-twirling. A young man scornfully commented on the Gavara elders who had not financially supported the festival "the elders

have suddenly become poor people, they don't even have left over rice water to eat" (naillu bīdōllu ayiponru, ganji kūḍa lēdu vāḷḷaki).

4. Further state of the leadership

In the third week in July, the son of the old Headman was provisionally appointed to succeed his father. However, he still had the exam hanging over him. During August and September he seemed unsure of himself. He complained of having to make frequent trips into Anakapalli and of having problems in his dealings with bureaucrats in town. He also had to contend with recalcitrant villagers who had failed to pay their household dues before the Maridamma festival, probably the real reason for its constant postponement. After that festival rumours circulated that the President and Headman were embezzling village funds. This made it even more difficult to collect the overdue funds and jeopardised future festivals which would have even less money to run on. The Headman once commented that he would have preferred collecting an annual festival levy together with the land tax as his father's predecessor had done. In the new situation of the eroded power of the headmanship, however, such a strategy was out of the question.

Against this background, a group of young men began pushing for a Bangaramma festival towards the end of August. The new Headman disappointed them by declining to become involved. Again, one of the main issues was the difficulty of financing such a festival in the face of opposition from certain quarters.

5. 1971 Gairamma Festival: Youth Faction and Mallolla

Pakalu-Yatapalem Rivalry

Two months later, in October, the Yatapalem village elders were opposed to providing financial backing for a Gairamma festival. However, when it was learnt that Mallolla Pakalu would be doing a Gairamma festival, a number of young men (kurrōllu, kurravāllu) decided to take matters into their own hands. They formed what they dubbed yuva-jana-sangham, 'young people's society', a name borrowed from a Gavara youth club in Anakapalli. They then went around the village collecting money on their own. In this, they had the complicity of the Headman who was identified with them as a young man rather than as an elder.

In this controversy the elder and younger generations exhibited notable differences in attitude towards money. The elders had experienced scarcity and were instinctually parsimonious. By contrast, the young people had grown up in the era of cash crop prosperity. They looked up to the rich Gavara villages and Anakapalli, where money is liberally spent on festivals.

The core of the "youth faction" consisted of about half a dozen men. Several were youngest or middle sons of wealthy or prominent families. Among these were a number of educated men who had studied in higher schools outside the village. Others were enthusiastic participants in festival entertainments and popular with their peers, though not necessarily members of particularly important families. In short, they seem to be incipient village leaders just beginning to assert themselves. It is significant that for their immediate task they had enlisted the support of the new Headman, himself a man just beginning to exercise authority

and leadership. The constant references to the indifference or opposition of the elders (peddalu, 'big men') to holding a Gairamma festival further confirms that the central underlying issue was the competition for authority between the younger generation and their elders.

The tensions which came out in the controversy with the elders over expenditure for the Yatapalem Gairamma festival also involved rivalry with Mallolla Pakalu. Evidence of this rivalry was emerging even in the 1970 Gairamma celebrations. The final day of the Mallolla Pakalu Gairamma festival had been held four days after the one for Yatapalem. At that time, Mallolla Pakalu sponsored an all-night drama (a story of Bālarāma performed by a hired troupe) in contrast to Yatapalem which had not provided any special entertainment for its festival. Both the timing and the entertainment were ways Mallolla Pakalu showed off its relative wealth. It was well known that the length of time Gairamma could be 'kept' was directly linked to the amount of money the community could afford (because of the cost of keeping an oil lamp lit for twenty-four hours a day and the daily food offerings). Hiring a drama troupe was a rather expensive affair as well.

During the daily evening entertainment of Gairamma, certain elders (Vice President, and a Saragadam elder) were conspicuously absent from the festivities in Yatapalem, though no formal rift had come out into the open. At those evening sessions one of the young group could always be seen scrupulously keeping daily accounts of the festival expenditure, sometimes with advice from the new Headman. After they had decided upon the date for the final celebration day, they learnt that Mallolla Pakalu had fixed its celebration for

the exact same time.

By the last day of the festival there was open talk of factions, pārtīlu, 'parties'. People voiced annoyance that Mallolla Pakalu was deliberately holding its festival at the same time. After the Yatapalem procession had gotten underway, the Vice President suddenly arrived on the scene. He belonged to the group of elders who had been unenthusiastic about Yatapalem celebrating the Gairamma festival. He urged in the interest of unity that the Yatapalam procession go to the road to join the procession in Mallolla Pakalu. This suggestion was rejected by the youths who said "where were you for all these weeks up until now?" The Vice President eventually gave up and rode off on his bicycle. At one point, the Vice President returned from Mallolla Pakalu with the President to Yatapalem but they simply joined the crowd of spectators.

The reason for a controversy and conflict to have arisen over the 1971 Gairamma festival is attributable to a combination of three factors: 1. the village still lacked the unifying authority of a firm Headman and the new man was still only provisionally appointed; 2. there was tension between the traditional elders, whose authority derived from the hierarchical principle of seniority by age, and young office holders whose posts were the creation of the government which did not reflect this principle. 3. the latent rivalry between Mallolla Pakalu and Yatapalem was a product of the growing economic strength of the Malla clan of which nearly half had migrated to Mallolla Pakalu since the 1940s (in addition, a move to Pallolla Pakalu by the richest Malla residents of Yatapalem was imminent).

Table XIV-1.

Division of the Malla Clan between Yatapalem and Mallolla Pakalu:

Current

Settlement	No. of House- holds	Wet Land (acres)
Yatapalem	11	23
Mallolla Pakalu	9	18

Projected (after moves)

Settlement	No. of House- holds	Wet Land (acres)
Yatapalem	6	11
Mallolla Pakalu	14	30

The Gairamma festival is an eminently suitable medium through which to express economic rivalry because of its symbolic association with the harvest and fecundity of the crops. The Malla family participated in other rituals concerning their economic prosperity. They were the only clan to perform a series of field sacrifices to Ravallamma and at citta kārte. But this undercurrent of economic competition was not a fundamental rift within the Gavara caste in the village, nor was it exclusively an issue of the Malla clan. Three clans have members living in Mallolla Pakalu, Malla Saragadam, and Doddi. The three households of Doddi are poor in-laws of the Malla families (of which there are a total of nine households). In addition, there are three households of the Saragadam 3 sub-clans of Saragadam clan. A glance back at the economic survey of Gavara clans and sub-clans reveals that the

Saragadam 3 have the highest average income per household of any sub-clan group (Table III-30). The Malla come second. The Saragadam 3 and Malla also rank highest in percentage of families living in cement houses (with the exception of Saragadam 2 who come between them; the prominent Saragadam man in ritual activities comes from this Saragadam 2 sub-clan) (Table III-24).

6. Consolidation of Leadership then renewed uncertainty

The controversial Gairamma festival in 1971 was followed by a period in which the new Headman consolidated his leadership. This was not, however, without continuing rumours that the Headman had been denounced to the government authorities for not reporting illicit liquor shops in the village. He had also to contend with a certain amount of continuing open competition for the Headmanship examination. The constant appearance of the village Record Keeper with him tended to legitimise him and mute his competition.

In the first months of 1972 the Headman seemed to have well established himself. In the 1972 Bandamma festival in April he demonstrated his ability to provide leadership to oversee the festivities which proceeded without mishap. The Ravallamma festival followed without delay a month later in early May. In this festival, the Gavara elder of the Saragadam clan (Saragadam 2 sub-clan), whose importance had been challenged in 1971, played a prominent role. Relations of the Headman and the elders showed no evidence of the former friction. The Headman had come into his own and was far more prominent than the President in directing the festival activities.

Towards the end of July, there were new rumours that the Headman had come into conflict with the village Record Keeper who had been his advocate until then. It was darkly rumoured that they both had filed complaints against each other with the Taluk officials. Around the same time came the news that the Headman had not succeeded in passing the Headmanship examination and would have to take it again. Perhaps his failure was the factor that aggravated his relations with the Record Keeper who had spared no pains to instruct him in the filling-in of forms and procedures etc. This state of the village leadership was reflected in the emergency worship of Pasuvula Maramma when an epidemic of animal disease broke out in August 1972. The most prominent leaders directing those rituals were of the elder generation, the Vice President and the elder of the Saragadam clan.

Chapter XVSOME CONCLUSIONS ON THE ROLE OF RITUAL AND SYMBOLISMA. The significance of ritual symbols1. Create ideal categories of hierarchy and interdependence

One of the primary messages of the ritual structure is that the entire universe is tied into a moral system in which well-being is assured when forms of hierarchy are utilised to express respect. Interrelations with deities, for instance, are phrased in the symbolic idiom of ideal relations between men, i.e. the showing of respect through expressions of subordination and dependence, expressed in puja. These relations are not merely mirror-reflections of actual human relations. Rather, they are expressions of ideal categories which are created by and exist in the rituals. Villagers behave towards deities in ways which are traditionally handed down and conceive of these methods as axiomatic, proper by definition. There is the belief that deities which are properly worshipped bring benefits such as the maintenance or restoration of bodily health, the bestowal or enhancement of fertility, and the promotion of economic prosperity.

Attributing misfortune to the worshipper's neglect of deities is a mechanism whereby people's belief is strengthened rather than diminished in the face of the inevitable illnesses and mishaps which occur in the course of normal life. This is because each time a particular illness or misfortune occurs, there is a re-activation of the symbolic message that well-being derives from showing the proper symbolic subordination and respect. These symbolic forms create an ideal model of behaviour which is extended to the relations between men. Though in actual fact relations between men do not

conform to next categories of hierarchy, they express their relationships in these stereotype terms which de-emphasize and screen discrepancies from conscious perception.

Performances of rituals are not only the fulfilment of obligations between men and deities, they are also the occasions for the fulfilment of obligations between men. Participation in rituals serves to delineate groups of people who act together for their mutual benefit and well-being. In the process, it defines and legitimates the political authorities who organise them. Stereotype duties of various castes in rituals are stylizations and idealisations of social inter-relations, particularly of the jajmani tie of long-term economic subsevice and service of one caste to another. In particular, Barbers, Washermen, and Harijans play essential roles in the life cycle rituals of all Twice-Born and Shudra castes. The ritual forms of long-term ties and these long-term economic relations between castes are both expressions of an ideal of interdependent cooperation between castes and men which is not so clearly observable in reality.

Symbols are central to the creation of an ideology concerning women which arises from the need of men to justify their domination over them. In it, women are believed to be more emotional, more attached to the world (having āśa), more lusty, difficult to control, and threatening if not kept firmly in control. The ideology of the inauspiciousness of widowhood and the virtuousness of non-widowhood is related to this need to exert pressure on women. It is symbols of the pēraṇṭālu, the virtuous wife with her husband still alive, which exert pressure on behalf of an ideology of marital stability and female subordination in this society in which, in

reality, there are considerable tendencies to marital instability and challenges to the hierarchy of the sexes.

Notions of the female character are the source for notions about the character of female deities. When they are dominated by a male deity, e.g. Gauri, they are benevolent and conceived of as loving mothers. When they are undominated, e.g. the consortless village goddesses, they are potentially malevolent. This malevolence derives from the notion of the danger undominated women (e.g. widows) pose to society and its categories of hierarchy. The potentially destructive vindictive character of such village goddesses makes their worship so imperative and justifies the mobilisation of the entire village to reenact its symbolic ideology in their name (in fulfilling its obligations to them).

Table XV-1.

The principles of hierarchy and interdependence created by ritual and symbolism:

I. Principle of elder having authority over younger

- A. Elders - elders have authority in life cycle rituals, they take precedence in naming ceremonies and have full control over the decisions about their children's marriages. In general, elders exercise authority in the conduct of festivals and other ceremonials.
- B. Ancestors - Ancestors are involved in every puja by a household through their association with the household shrine. Ancestors are identified with the successful completion of the harvest at the Sankranti festival. The well-being of a caste which is associated with its traditional occupation is identified with the ancestors also at Sankranti.

II. Principle of authority of males over females

A. Male authority - Males control festivals and decision-making in connection with them.

B. Negativity of undominated female - Ritual symbols elaborate the concept that a woman not dominated by her husband (e.g. a widow) is in a negative, inauspicious state.

This widowhood ideology is created by ritual symbolism which is pervasive and charged with widely ramifying symbolisms and symbolic cross-associations between rituals: in life cycle rituals, goddess festivals, Sankranti, agricultural rituals etc.

Turmeric is a key symbol closely associated with the symbolism of the auspiciousness of non-widow status, pēraṇṭālu.

A rationale of the need to subordinate women is their emotionalism and āsa. This emotionalism is encouraged at funerals. It is built into beliefs about women turning into vengeful ghosts, dayam. It is also associated with the character of village goddesses.

C. Auspiciousness of the married couple

Just as an "undominated" woman is unauspicious, an unmarried man is not considered a fully adult member of the community. A married couple is an interdependent unit.

Women are indispensable for the performance of puja at the household shrine. Women thus maintain the link of a man to his ancestors, just as she links him to his descendents by bearing offspring who will eventually worship him as an ancestor.

Women are indispensable for the application of muggu designs, part of the essential daily ritual cleaning of a house and a fundamental element in the preparation of the site of a ritual. Muggu are mandatory at weddings, funerals (karma), votive pujas to village goddesses, rituals in village goddess festivals, at Sankranti (at the household shrine, in front of the house, and for preparing the area for setting down the portable temple candelabrum).

III. Principle that kinsmen share an innate connection and mutual responsibility

A. Households

The household shrine, dēvuḍu mūla, is involved in every ritual participated in by its members, from the whole range of life cycle rituals to festivals celebrated by the entire village.

B. Brothers

Residential and property-sharing (or kallam, field-hut sharing) groups participate with each other in numerous festival rituals, e.g. dīpāvali, nāgula caviti, as well as individual votive performances and private calendrical observances.

C. Sub-clans

1. Defined by death pollution: Sub-clan members share prohibitions on doing any type of puja, e.g. household shrine, village festival, upon the death of one of their members. This lasts for the entire period before the performance of his entry among the ancestors in his household shrine (a period of eleven months for an adult).

This sharing of death-pollution is the definitive feature of a sub-clan. It is the expression of their feeling biologically linked to one another, to the extent that death pollution of one member affects them all.

This is one of the basic elements in the creation of the attitude that kinship bonds are innate, organic ties.

2. Defined by marriage exogamy: Sub-clans are expected to share or prohibit marriage ties with other clans or sub-clan units. Fictive kin-terms are employed which support this division into exogamous brother (annatammulu) and endogamous in-law (bāvamaridulu) sub-clans.

Though ideally these categories should apply

at a clan level, in fact there are cases of differences between sub-clans, e.g. in the Gavara Kalla clan. The possibility for the existence of differences between sub-clans arises from the notion that there is no organic, quasi-biological link between sub-clans in the way that there is within sub-clans.

D. Clans

1. Funerary 'sects': The division of the Gavara caste into adherents of two sets of funerary customs, pākrutollu and cakradārulu is along clan lines.
2. Exogamy - the clan, intipēru "house name", is the basic unit of exogamy. The name of the clan is considered to be the fundamental feature shared by all agnatically related kinsmen. By contrast, sub-clans do not bear names except in an informal sense of a "nickname".

IV. Principle that castes are in a hierarchical and interdependent relationship

A. Customs

The hierarchical ranking of castes is largely underpinned by the notions of varna, practices of dietary differences, differing customs controlling women and the system of reciprocating/refusing willingness for food exchange. These are all symbolic practices by which castes differentiate from each other and which work to create the belief that the castes really are hierarchically different. Such customs and their continuance are the justification for caste endogamy.

B. Economics (to be consistent there should be an equation of superior castes with employers and inferior castes with employees):

In ritual, a hierarchical economic model is maintained and emphasised (incompatible relationships are glossed over):

Rituals feature, with the most prominent subservient ritual duties, those castes whose relationships with the Gavaras in the economic and political spheres are most incontestably

subordinate: Barbers, Washermen, and Harijans (Mala and Madiga).

In the rituals, the Gavaras are the providers of the financial backing for the festivals in which subordinate castes have ritual duties.

Rituals feature Barbers and Washermen because of their long-term service relationships with the other castes of the village. The factors of long-term ties and the significant degree to which they are paid in kind make them the least ambiguously subordinate and most dependent castes.

Harijans also feature prominently in rituals because they are so unquestionably of inferior status.

Despite their indisputably low status, Yatas are less involved in ritual duties because their ties with other castes are not cemented in long-term bonds (in the way of Barbers and Washermen). They are both less subservient in reality and less desirable as a type of intercaste relationship to be celebrated (They do carry Ravallamma's horses.)

Carpenters do have long-term economic bonds of subservience but since they claim to be superior, they also do not participate in the festivals in a subservient role. (Their interdependence with the village is recognised however by their ritual prerogative of fashioning the wooden patima idols at the village goddess festival.)

Castes superior to Gavaras in diet and the food exchange hierarchy, e.g. Twice-Born castes in Aripaka, but autonomous (or inferior) economically, remain notably peripheral in the major festivals and ritual activities.

Castes which are equal to Gavaras but inferior to them economically, e.g. Velamas and Kapus of Aripaka, also remain peripheral in major festivals and ritual activities.

C. Politics (principle that superior castes should have authority over inferior castes):

In ritual, a hierarchical political model is maintained and emphasised (relations which are incompatible with this ideology are glossed over):

In ritual activities, Gavaras exercise their authority over the proceedings and the conduct of the subordinate castes. They also determine the timing of the all-village participation in the village goddess festival. During that festival, the Gavara centre of Yatapalem is the hub of the ritual activities.

Castes which are superior or equal to Gavaras in the traditional reckoning of food exchange, diet, customs etc. but inferior to them in local politics, remain significantly peripheral in the ritual activities of the all-village festivals.

Numerous inferior castes acknowledge the political superiority of the Gavaras in their wedding rituals in which delegations of caste heads go to make presentations to the Gavara Headman. (For example, a Washerman wedding in Kottapalem entailed the bringing of tributes by the Yata Headman of Kottapalem to the Gavara Headman of Yatapalem.)

D. Settlements (principle that the various settlements are interdependent):

Within Aripaka Revenue Village:

The major annual village goddess festivals unite all the settlements. The movements of the ghattam pots, in particular, symbolise this interdependence.

The movements of the Rama temple candelabrum cement the symbolic interdependence of the settlements. Yatapalem's candelabrum goes to Kottapalem (to collect tribute money, the annual levy for the Yatapalem Rama temple) and also to Aripaka and Mallolla Pakalu on the occasion of the Aripaka and Ravalamma fairs (tirtham) at the time of Sankranti.

The temple candelabrum from Aripaka does not, however, go to Yatapalem. This fits in with the pattern of Aripaka attempting to avoid full reciprocal recognition of Gavara dominance without openly defying them.

Between villages:

The movements and exchange visits of temple candelabra and bhajana groups in the post-Sankranti fairs season is a ritual expression of interdependence and cooperation with neighbouring villages. (Note the prominent participation of Bangarampalem in Yatapalem's tirtham at Sankranti and that village's prominent participation in the selling at the Aripaka weekly market.)

2. Rituals control or utilize manifest discrepancies in the ideal categories

Rituals deal with the insubordination of wives in the vālakālu skits which are performed as part of village goddess and Gairamma festivals. Similarly, operatic dramas deal with such problems and the rivalry of brothers and conflicts in loyalty between kinsmen, or between patrons. In this way, rituals incorporate manifest discrepancies in the ideals and utilize them to strengthen the relevance of the festival and its message of harmonious hierarchical interdependence. Beals, in a discussion of the significance of fairs, called jātra in Northern Karnataka, tells us that such fairs tend to occur in villages in which there are unsolvable structural tendencies towards conflict. (Significantly, these are anomalies in hierarchy or interdependence: either conflicting castes of roughly equal status and power or conflicting clans within a caste.) The fairs, then, like the aspects of village festivals under discussion here, offer a "religious solution":

"Where the desire or the ability to alter circumstances is lacking, circumstances can nevertheless be re-interpreted and redirected in such a way as to make it seem almost as if there had been no problem requiring a solution."

(Beals: 113)

We can discern similar mechanisms at work in the notions about the character of village goddesses. The negative character of the undominated, or insubordinate female is utilized by the ritual to infuse a powerful emotional reality to the danger and threat of the village goddess. This becomes the principal rationale for the imperative to mobilise the entire village to perform the festival to appease the goddess. The message of that festival then turns out to be an endorsement of the ideal forms of hierarchy and behaviour of respect and subordination.

B. The use of ritual as a tactical weapon in competition

1. Ritual as a tactical weapon in competition within the Gavara caste

At the outset it should be stressed that in the use of ritual as a "tactical weapon" in competition, at no time is the significance of the symbols themselves called into question. The incident of the duplication of the Gairamma festival in 1971 concerned rivalries between two conflicting authority structures, that based on age seniority and that based on the new criteria of elective politics and education. It also was the result of the growing strength of the Malla clan in Mallolla Pakalu who seem to have begun to perceive their economic and ritual interests as somewhat divergent from those of Yatapalem. This is understandable in the light of the fact that Yatapalem is numerically and politically dominated by other Gavara clans, Saragadam and Rapeti respectively. The hiatus in firm village leadership merely provided an opportunity for these latent rivalries to come out and express themselves.

The Malla tactic of forming their own separate hamlet, "to

be closer to their fields", has hitherto aided in de-fusing potential violations of the ideals of caste unity and interdependence. In the past it provided them with a rationale for performing a separate Gairamma Festival. Conflict only arose when it became clear that they were holding their festival at the same time as Yatapalem, in overt violation of the ideal of interdependence. It is difficult to assess whether this was only a unique instance arising out of controversies over leadership or whether it was the beginning of a greater cleavage between the clans. It is hardly possible for the Mallas to drift very far from their fellow Gavaras in Yatapalem since they maintain extensive kinship ties with them and rely on Gavara solidarity to consolidate their own political position in the Revenue Village as a whole.

2. The rise of the Gavaras in Aripaka Revenue Village

In the process of their rise in economic and political power in the village, the Gavaras could be said to have employed a number of ritual elements as "tactical weapons". Here again, the ritual symbols themselves have not been challenged. Rather, the issue involves the definition of a group and its importance. In building their new Rama temple in Yatapalem, the Gavaras have made a statement about the importance of their settlement as the spiritual centre of the Revenue Village. The financing of the building itself, an entirely Gavara enterprise, was a demonstration of the economic strength on which they base this claim.

Another aspect involved here is an upgrading of ritual style. The Gavaras not only built the new temple to impress the residents of Aripaka. They also felt a desire to use their money for more

elaborate and suitable ritual performances for themselves.

The temple is something of which they can be proud as a group achievement and also expresses their feeling of a need to honour Rama for the benvolence which he has so evidently bestowed upon them in the new cash crop economy.

No mention of the changes brought about for the Gavaras by the cash crop economy would be complete without a consideration of the Gavaras who have recently come to control the sugar cane wholesale market in Anakapalli. The group which has influenced them are the Komati, Vaishya merchants with whom they competed to gain access and, later, equal control of the wholesale cane sugar market. Following the lead of the Komatis, they have built a major temple in Anakapalli and a number of cultural institutions, a library and youth club, based on Komati prototypes. In 1961 a Gavara, Pedakamsetti Sitaramayya, published the Gavara Prācīna Caritra, 'Early History of the Gavaras', in which he puts forth the theory that Gavaras were originally a Vaishya caste. As part of his evidence he cites the frequency with which the names of Gavara clans, intipēru, are compounded with the suffix setti, a designation for 'merchants' in some regions of South India (though not however in Visakhapatnam District). Such theories, however, have not taken hold. The Gavaras, while keen to perform rituals in a distinguished manner, have little interest in imitating what they regard as the peculiar customs of the Twice-Born castes. In particular, they see little reason for taking the impractical step of restricting the economic productivity of their women or of altering their diet.

The Gavaras got where they are today through their diligence as farmers and their drive for monetary success. It is unlikely that they will exchange their own self-reliant ethic for the tarnished image of the Twice-Born castes. If they are becoming "Sanskritised", it is through the agency of Andhra-wide "town culture" (cinemas, etc.), and this can hardly be considered as a preserve of Brahmans.

C. Is ritual ideology merely a reflex of actuality?

So far we have discussed the relationship between the ideologies of hierarchy and interdependence with the actualities of challenge to this ideology. While there is not a direct congruence between ideology and actually observed behaviour we can say that, for the most part, actual behaviour does follow a pattern of hierarchy. Where there are inconsistencies, ideology deals with these (Chapter XV.A-B.). We are then led to ask, to what extent does ideology determine actuality and vice versa.

This question is like asking "does the idea of shared death-pollution create the sub-clan or does the existence of the sub-clan create the notion of shared death pollution?" The sub-clan exists through a sense of distinctiveness which is accorded to it by symbols (i.e. sharing of death pollution and re-enacted in rituals). But as we have seen, when the actual functioning of the group becomes unwieldy, they sever these symbolic ties and split into new sub-clan divisions (see Chapter III, C.1.a.). Thus, obviously people create or at least manipulate their symbols for expedience. The use of such symbols is that they raise the justification for group cohesion to a higher plane.* The concept of shared

*This is called objectification by Cohen (1974: 30).

death-pollution creates the notion of an innate quasi-physical tie which articulates agnatic kinsmen.

Thus, the symbols themselves partake of the "actual" situation but transform this into an idealised format, a paradigm of an ideal. The same process operates on the level of beliefs about the character of women, and beliefs about hierarchy found in the forms of puja. We should thus expect that as actuality alters, as external changes and expediencies present themselves, changing the nature, goals, and composition of interest groups, ideology should be responsive and ready to reinterpret and to be moulded out of the new elements. If, for instance, in an urban context, sub-clans were to lose their relevance, their economic, political, or social importance, then we should expect the notion of death-pollution to alter as well, and perhaps apply only to the very closest of kinsmen.

The ideology of relationships with deities should thus arise from the nature of the society in which it occurs. Village society is structured along hierarchical lines, and emphasises certain symbolic messages in puja related to subordination and respect. However, urban environments with their residents' experience of more egalitarian social structures tend to gravitate increasingly towards bhakti sects which largely ignore caste and place a stress on an intimate devotional relationship with a deity rather than a strictly submissive respectful one. That such new types of social structure generate new religious responses is evident throughout urban India and abundantly demonstrated by Pocock for Gujarat (Pocock: 158ff). In modern cities where the hierarchy of caste plays little part, we witness the rise of individualistic egalitarian bhakti sects centred on gurus. However, as we have already noted, hierarchical structuring

of social relations is still evident in non-caste bureaucratic structures. Hence, we can expect that much of the traditional ideology retains its relevance in the new circumstances.

The relationship between actuality and ideology is a complex and dynamic one. Ideology objectifies and perpetuates social structures in a society whose actual social relations it more or less legitimates. As we have seen in the present study, ritual and symbolism actively mould perceptions and behaviour to continue to strive towards a particular model of hierarchy and interdependence in which elder male Gavaras are at the centre. However, if new changes or shifts in economic or political power should occur, new symbols or new interpretations of the old symbols are bound to arise. It is one of the tasks of Anthropology to refine our understanding of the dynamics of these changes. It is hoped that this work will be a first step towards this end by elucidating the relationship between the two interacting variables of social relations and ideology in a village context.

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