

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
SOUTH ASIAN CASTE AND MEDITERRANIAN
CITIZENSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
CLASSES AND THE STATE¹**

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Introduction

Kinship organized societies have often been seen as being pre-state and acephalous. In the Indian subcontinent, this understanding has taken the form of a dichotomy between the division of "tribal" society versus "caste" society, in which caste and tribe are perceived as falling at two ends of a continuum. Often, the transformation from "caste" to "tribal" has been conceived within a framework of "Hinduization," in which societies move not only along the continuum from tribe to caste, but from stateless to state. Along the way, this framework has picked up Robert Redfield's dichotomization between the Great Tradition of the Hinduized society and the Little Tradition of the tribal society. There are often implicit values that disparage tribal society, due to their statelessness, while Hinduization is seen as an advance over tribal society.

These authors, however, feel that shift of the analysis of caste from a typological approach and a continuum between opposites to a developmental and comparative approach will be useful. They argue that caste arose historically to solve problems that were also being faced elsewhere throughout the world in the transition from states organized on the basis of kinship to ones organized on the basis of property and class. These changes arose out of the growth of productive forces available to humankind represented in the domestication of plants and animals and the accompanying developments of tools, the rise of the city, new forms of knowledge and so forth. Even before the initial transformations of clan society into the first, "pristine" urban societies, the elements that underlay caste were well developed. In particular, these were the displacement of communal property

and a division of labor organized within the framework of kinship categories by private property and a division of labor organized according to class. Caste was one way that this new organization exerted and expanded itself according to the logic and form of clan organization, even while it destroyed such organization in substance.

Whereas caste and class are sometimes presented in comparison to each other as mutually exclusive, if not opposites, these authors argue that this opposition is not an essential one. Caste was just one of the forms taken by the development and expansion of class society and private property, and not necessarily a form essentially different from institutions in western society. The key is not the ideology of hierarchy, although hierarchy is contained in both, but the manner that people who find themselves in intercourse are disenfranchised or enfranchised in society and distributed within the production process and in the enjoyment of the fruits of production. Similar problems were being addressed by "citizenship," which appeared in the Northern Mediterranean, while caste was developing in South Asia. Each arose out of the same processes, both, initially at least, took the clan as their basis and expressed the rise of the city and urban classes, but each addressed different conditions and needs.

Prior Development of the State within the Lineage

At the core of the theory of the state is the problem of the origin and development of the division of labor, classes, property and consciousness, Aidan Southall (1956, 1984 a & b, 1986) argues that these processes initially arose *sui generis* from within kinship organized societies (he refers to the term the "lineage mode of production") in the course of the evolutionary development of human society. Southall calls this early form of state the "segmentary state," which he sees as a particular developmental stage of society and the state.² In addition to a genetic stage in the development of the state, he also sees the segmentary state as a generic type of state, applicable in comparisons between different times and places.

This "segmentary" state form developed merely through extension and elaboration of lineage relations and institutions. The division of labor within the lineage is based on what have been called "natural traits," i.e., gender and age, although except for bearing of children the division of labor generally is a social product. What has been called the "first true division of labor," between physical and mental labor, was defined according to age. Within the lineage group, elder women and men who generally had the wisdom that comes with age, also usually were the ritual functionaries. They controlled the ritualized communication with the spirits and gods backed with the sanction of wisdom.

In this way these rituals served to preserve or reproduce the division of labor and distribution of the product within and between lineage groups from generation to generation. Prior to domestication of plants and animals, only limited surpluses could be accumulated, which meant one group of humans was unable to set itself over others through accretion and control of the products of labor, i.e. through private property. Labor thus was controlled or brought together for common projects through relations of kinship using ritualized sanctions. Just as elders within the lineage group set themselves over youngsters, lineages representing themselves in mythology as having descended from elder siblings (sisters or brothers, for matrilineal and patrilineal societies, respectively) set themselves over younger siblings. Using this logic, it was possible for groups to invade an area and set themselves over another group by claiming certain privileged relations with spirits and gods, such as for making rain or ensuring availability of game. These ritual powers would provide them the means to demand various forms of tribute of labor or products. If prestations failed to materialize, the ritual leaders could threaten to withhold rain or make game scarce, bringing disaster to the society.³

Members of local lineage groups established themselves over an area by making claims to common descent from ancestors projected as elder to the ancestors of other groups, or else to unrelated but ritually privileged ancestors. In order to place these individuals in a comparative perspective, Southall (1956, 1986) calls them "ritual leaders" and their direct power over nearby local lineage groups "political sovereignty." Their direct power is limited, due to limited productive forces and a lack of basis in private property in land, which is held communally. But they still have an authority over much wider areas through which they can demand certain prestations, called "ritual suzerainty," backed up by sanctions such as the threat of descending upon recalcitrant villages with their entire entourage and staying as uninvited guests until their hosts' stores of food and drink are gone--- in effect looting them of all their provisions by means of the hospitality that lesser lineages must pay to members of higher ones.

Thus, within a kin framework such as of what have historically been called "tribal societies" in South Asian ethnography, we see the emergence or existence of states, even if they may be highly diffuse, decentralized and relatively egalitarian. There is a *division of labor* which demands transfers of labor from certain groups and provides ritual services in the other direction from others. This division of labor further determines a certain distribution of labor and products between groups of people who produce and groups who enjoy the products; thus, there is a nascent "private property," which is in effect the same thing as distribution but from the perspective of norms and

sanctions. However, as long as the same productive activities are reproduced within every local group, no matter what its lineage status, we cannot say that these are fully developed class societies or that private property proper exists (this ceases to hold as soon as a lineage organized society has entered into intercourse with a dominant class society, such as in the colonial situation). The state exists in the form of a set of institutions available to the members of the dominant lineage groups through which they enforce the property form, in this case the various rituals and associated supernatural sanctions. Southall (1954, 1986) termed such a state "segmentary," because it was segmented both vertically, between higher and lower status lineages, and horizontally, between segments of the same lineage; beyond shared mythology and ritual there were not yet separate, unitary state institutions which appeared to have autonomy separate from the fractures of the rest of the society.

In order to explain how members of a clan or caste of ritual leaders could set themselves over other clans, Southall (1986) refers to Godelier's position that the "relations of domination and exploitation presented themselves as an exchange of services to get themselves accepted, and to obtain the consent of the dominated" (Godelier 1978:767). However, "exchange" implies interaction between two different communities, which already anticipates not only more fully developed forms of property beyond that found in lineage organized societies, in which large segments of the society existed outside of or are alien to the community as in non-citizen or foreign groups of some sort. It is simpler to propose that ritual leaders would have based their position on the already existing relationships of seniority and gender and their accompanying ritual paraphernalia, all of which have been already repeatedly attributed to clan relations by anthropologists (e.g., clans said to have been founded by elder siblings are attributed higher status than those of younger ones, and those of maternal ancestors are different in status than those of paternal ones). If individuals of dominant clans imposed themselves in these terms, with their accompanying ritual statuses and material rights and obligations vis-a-vis each other (and I think that Southall's data and analysis both point to this), then it is unnecessary to explain relations in terms of exchange.

Finally, women had a prominent, equal and even powerful role in such societies. Production and social intercourse were based within the household and local lineage group, where women were central to all kinds of production. Given furthermore that power--- i.e., access to human labor was based in the inclusions of as wide a group of lineages as possible, then unrestricted linkages through both marriage and descent and through wives and daughters as well as sons and brothers were instrumental. As we will see, this situation

changes with the development of private property.

Within Nepal, it is evident that such segmentary states existed within the Kirat areas until recently. The history from Prithivi Narayan Shah's time can give a pretty good idea of how they have been subordinated. They also probably were the state form that characterized the Gurung and Magar areas west of the Trisuli River. Bahra Magarat ('Twelve Magarats'), with its 12 divisions, seems to have represented 12 centers of sovereignty organized within the framework of lineages. Among the Gurung, there seem to have been ritually dominant clans versus subordinate ones, although there has been a tendency to characterize these as "Jats", subsequent to their subordination to private property and class society organized in terms of caste. The Ghato dance drama, which has been attributed as a normative element of a separate "Gurung culture," seems to have been performed widely by the Magar speaking people as well, although it disappeared sooner due to their earlier direct subordination. Thus Mikesell (1988) tentatively argues that the Ghato represented a ritual sovereignty that transcended both groups, providing the means for members of various ritually dominant local lineages to assert a certain sovereignty over other local lineages, while asserting ritual authority or suzerainty over more widespread areas. With the establishment of Rajput lineages over the area, these early, ritual forms with their accompanying myths increasingly lost their old content and took on new ones. This process could have either resulted from the influx of actual groups of "populous clans of warrior cultivators" (Bailey 1983:17) from India, which were involved in a "slow process of settlement [in northeast India] which set the main features of land-control in modern times from the borders of Awadh to Bengal" or else it could have resulted from further differentiation within already established lineage groups through influence from outside ideas or rituals; or it could have resulted from combination of both. The manner that this process took place in human history generally, its particular forms in citizenship and caste, and specific reference to Nepalese history are discussed below.

Subordination of Clan to Class in the Pristine City State

The precondition of the development of the first or pristine cities were these developments of production relations, the productive forces, the division of labor, property and the state, with its ideological and ritual counterments, that occurred in the development of the clan. Domestication of plants and animals, along with accompanying developments of the tools and conditions of production, led to increasing surpluses, the control of which meant the control of people. More directly, the control of land or herds meant control over the labor and products of people who worked the land or tended the herds. Due to previous developments described above, it was the

members of the lineages of ritual leaders who were positioned to control land, labor and products, leading to the full development of these lineages into separate, priestly ruling classes in these pristine cities. For the first time there occurred not just a division between lineages of non-specialists and ritual specialists, but a full-blown division of labor between those engaged in manual labor and those engaged solely in mental labor. This new division of labor first took the form of a division between the city and countryside, a division which has underlain and colored all subsequent divisions of labor.

Now that there was an actual divide within society, characterized by the full disenfranchisement and exploitation of a collection of laboring groups or classes, the services provided by the priests were elaborated into salvation religions. Since the people's suffering and difficulties were chronically related to the contradiction in the division of labor between those who labored and those who enjoyed the products of the labor, the priests unlike the ritual leaders before them, could no longer supply the workers' needs without overturning this division of labor, abolishing property and reducing their lineages back into a laboring class as well. In lieu of such an unlikely occurrence, in addition to communicating with supernatural powers and formulating sanctions, the priests had to formulate an ideology for the laboring groups explaining the suffering and inequality in this world and provide a hope for a better life or release after death (if the sanctions are obeyed).⁴ Thus some sort of functional correlate to dharma, karma, and reincarnation or nirvana is found in all of the great religions.

As these cities expanded in their population, wealth and influence, not only did the power accruing to these priesthoods increase, but the basis was being laid for the ascendancy of other social interests and the destruction of the monopoly of the priests. The conquest of neighboring cities and the creation of empires led to the rise of military groups and emergence of military leaders who directly controlled the material forces of subjugation. Generals soon became kings, sublimating the priests, who never reappeared with the monopolistic power that they had enjoyed in the early city states. Nevertheless, they continued in providing the ideological framework in which the rule of subsequent classes was sanctioned and legitimized; they also remained a prominent force in the state in administration; and furthermore, as a ruling class based on landownership and collection of rents, their interests and those of the military groups were one. The growth of cities and their expanding influence brought also a quickening of intercourse and trade, leading to the development of specialized commercial classes and a division between trade and industry, and further divisions within industry.

Where previously the expanding linkages of one lineage to another had been the means to multiply the human resources available to an individual,

under private property these became a liability. Linkages to other groups meant also the sharing of control over land and flocks, the dispersal of wealth, and the decentralization and equalization of power. Thus the rise of class society also brought the sublimation of the lineage to the patriarchal family. Among the ruling classes particularly, the rise of private property meant the disenfranchisement of women, since the cutting of the woman off from rights within her natal family was a means that the link between affinally related clans was broken, preventing the dispersal of power and wealth. The disempowerment of women was not necessary or natural, but probably there was a tendency towards it due to the prior militarization of men, for example.⁵ Other means to the same end were the strengthening of the power of the patriarch over his wife and sons, reducing them in essence to the status of slavery. Estate slavery found its origins in this slavery of the patriarchal family as, with the expansion of the territory of the cities through conquest, the cultivator was transformed into estate holder.

Even far distant from cities, the division of labor and property relations within segmentary states became much more pronounced in the course of the development of urban civilization. For example, the great expansion of the urban colonies of the Greeks and administrative cities of the Romans, led not only to the exploitation of segmentary states through exchange by urban traders, but to the opportunity for enlarged accumulation and aggrandizement by groups composing the segmentary states in the shadow of cities. The Scythians, Mongols, Germanic tribes, etc. are examples. Commonly it was from among these greatly transformed lineage organized groups on the periphery of decaying empires where the contradictions stymieing the development of old civilizations were transcended and innovative new urban forms arose. From the standpoint of the changes that have continually taken place among the lineage organized societies in the hinterlands of cities, the delineation of the segmentary state as a generic type becomes problematic.

Caste and Citizen: Expansion of Class in the Secondary Cities

The secondary civilizations arising from the Mesopotamian pristine cities took two essentially different forms, which were shaped by the developments of those cities, but differed from them. In the civilizations of Ancient Greece and Rome, these developments led to the divisions of the state into citizen and non-citizen, while in the upper Ganges River of the Indian subcontinent of the early Vedic period (2nd millennium B.C.), they led to divisions of people among the various Varnas and jats, i.e., caste. Both citizenship and caste developed according to principles (though different ones) inherent in the clan itself, while sublimating the clan. They were alternative forms which arose to address different conditions and needs arising as ruling classes

subordinated lineage organized societies to a division of labor based upon private property. As each developed, caste also transformed to satisfy new needs arising from changing class configurations with the development of production and society.

Mediterranean Citizenship

As discussed in Southall (1984 b, n.d.), the form of state that arose in the course of the development of the city states of the northern Mediterranean diverged significantly from that of the states that had preceded them. The city states of Ancient Greece, as well as Rome, were formed by the coming together of disparate groups of cultivators organized on the basis of lineage relations. All male members of these founding lineages were citizens, residents of the city. All citizens had an equal right to a vote within the general assembly which had developed from the assemblies of the collections of lineages ("phyla" or "tribes") which had come together in the city. Initially at least, citizens had a right to plots of land and thus were by definition landowners.

It was due to this enfranchisement in terms ownership that, though the Ancient community began with its seat in the city, it was associated with a territory which had to expand as the population reproduced itself and grew in numbers and wealth. Initially, this expansion took the form of emigration of citizens and establishment of colonies in other locations throughout the Mediterranean region. It ended with the Empires of Macedonia and Rome, in which the citizens became increasingly rural landlords set upon estates throughout the territory, leading Marx to speak of the career of Ancient society in terms of "ruralization of the city."

Even prior to the foundation of the Mediterranean cities, these lineages had been greatly modified due to the influences of urban empires to the east, as well as due to internal pressures arising through their own reproduction and development. Thus the principle of lineage equality had already been transformed in practice in the preceding segmentary states. The civic democracy that it evolved into with the coming together of the tribes into the city was in fact a means for a small wealthy landlord class to rule with the assistance of dependent clients who made up the great bulk of the members of the lineage groups. Inequality in property holdings increased, and the large property holders increasingly asserted themselves in this democracy. The clan institutions gave way to less democratic forms, eventually falling to the rule of emperors among the Romans. Women were disenfranchised (although this changed in late Rome); immigrants, freedmen and the less directly exploited peoples of segmentary states in the hinterlands were left unenfranchised; and conquered peoples were enslaved to provide labor on estates and in workshops

owned by the small group of wealthy and powerful citizens. We can see that citizenship, which had developed on the basis of the clan, served as the ideological category supporting the class rule of a very limited groups of people.

"The general freedom of thought and action, the balanced cultivation of body and mind, the passion for beauty in life and art have haunted Western man ever since. But at Athens even in its heyday these things were paradoxically only for a minority. Less than a sixth of the population were full citizens, another half were of free but non-citizen status, while over one third were slaves. Only citizens participated in Athenian democracy, which was thus a glorious facade" (Southall n.d., c. 3:10).

"In reality, however, -- granted that many poor citizens were supported in a degree of leisure by political attendance payments at councils and assemblies....., as well as by the free food which both they and destitute non-citizens could share, -- a minority group of the relatively wealthy and privileged citizens monopolized power and leisure, despising the disenfranchised merchants who generated most of the wealth, collectively oppressing and taxing the peasants who grew the food and standing on the necks of the slaves who did the menial jobs" (ibid: 20).

Caste in the Indian Subcontinent

In the Indian subcontinent, clans gave rise to caste, not the division of citizen versus non-citizen. Like citizenship, the ideological categories of caste were based on characteristics of clan categories. Unlike citizenship, cast evidently originated not from a coming together of tribes in an urban community and the transformation of their members into a citizenry defined in terms of the clan principle of equality. Rather, caste developed as a further elaboration of the ideology and ritual of the lineage inequality of the segmentary state, but with the same effect of assisting displacement of communal property with private property and transformation of the organization of labor in lineages into that of classes.

Marx (1972:183), in his notes on Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877), in what the anthropologist Karl Krader (1972:15) calls "the most explicitly dialectical of all Marx's formulations ... in the Morgan notebook," hypothesized that caste arose from the ranking that developed among various groups of clans.⁶ As the ranking that developed between lineages in the segmentary state came to assure control over increasing labor and accumulation of its products, higher ranking lineages could no longer intermarry with lower ranking ones, since such intermarriage would lead to a dispersal of property. This led to what Marx identified as a conflict with the principle of clan exogamy, resulting in a "petrification" of exogamous clans

into endogamous castes. The clan increasingly existed only in abstract principles, while the concrete relations gave way to class relations clothes in the form of caste.

It is proposed that this process occurred among pastoral peoples living in the periphery of the early cities of West Asia. Breeding of domesticated livestock (particularly cattle), trade and other forms of intercourse with the growing cities provided a basis for the accumulation and differentiation of wealth, division of labor and product, and therein the full development of private property. Consequently, some form of caste ranking seems to have existed even at the time of Aryan entry into the Indian subcontinent, although it may have been closer to the sort of ranking found among the segmentary states. As this ranking became a means of subjugation of sedentary peoples it took on other characteristics presently associated with caste, depending upon the development of class interests therein.

This position is supported by existence of the four Varnas (Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaisya, and Shudra) in the early Vedas⁷ indicating ideological categories corresponding to the same main divisions that matured with the growth of cities: mental labor, military, commerce and physical labor, respectively. As in the cities, this differentiation started with a priesthood that fully differentiated out of the ritual leaders of the segmentary state. The other groups must have arisen more or less simultaneously with the creation of a separate priesthood, since the existence of such a priesthood would depend upon much greater productivity, trade, and accumulation of wealth. Militarization occurred in the face of military pressure from the cities; traders became increasingly prominent in the intercourse with the cities; and specializations within production arose with an increasingly complex aggregate of productive forces.

While caste represents and extends class interests, like citizenship, caste is neither class nor does its divisions correspond to class divisions. Class initially arises "in itself" as divisions of labor arise within production and commerce due to the exigencies and possibilities extending from growing productive forces. As consciousness arises among groups of people due to their position within the division of labor, class also comes to exist "for itself." Caste, on the other hand, has no necessary connection to production and thus does not exist "in it self". At one extreme, a Brahmin landlord may live side-by-side with a Brahman bonded laborer; or while he may be the king's purohit, his wife may be little more than an uneducated domestic laborer or courtesan.⁸ Like citizenship, caste mystifies class divisions and exists to further the interests of particular class groups.

The class divisions which underlay caste initially consisted of surplus taking classes based in landed property (landlords from priest and military

groups) and commercial capital (traders). Unlike in the Mediterranean civilization, where only slaves and non-citizens engaged in trade, commercial groups enjoyed partial enfranchisement as the lowest of the "touchable" Varnas, perhaps because the community did not begin with landed proprietors, as in the case of the Mediterranean city state. Commercial capital had developed as a specialized occupation within pastoralism prior to entry of Aryans into the subcontinent and their establishment as landed proprietors. Thus having already arisen as a social interest independent of landed property, commerce had to be given a place among the enfranchised castes. Yet, since commerce did not in general establish itself directly over producers, it continued to remain subordinated to landed property until after industrial capital entered the subcontinent in the 19th Century.

For the laborer, it was another story. Like in the Ancient city, both craft and agricultural laborers were disenfranchised socially, politically and ideologically according to descent. However, unlike the laborer in Mediterranean cities, the laborers in the caste system were not chattel slaves. They remained upon their land and in possession of it and their tools. Without the restriction of craft labor and commerce to slaves, there was no creation of an unemployed urban mass of freedmen and landless citizens. Thus in the Indian cities we do not see the rise of the institution of "bread and circuses," in which the municipality distributed hundreds of thousands of free loaves of bread and built great coliseums to keep the restive unemployed rabble fed and entertained. This significant difference between the community under the regime of South Asian caste as opposed to Mediterranean citizenship is a result of the differences in the manner of expansion of private property in the two forms.

The driving forces behind the development and elaboration of a society characterized by an ideology of caste rather than citizenship were the exigencies of a dispersed pastoral people, already transformed from a lineage-based or segmentary to class society, expanding into the South Asian subcontinent among people still organized according to segmentary states ("tribes"). Their premise was not an established city with a territory divided up among citizen cultivators as private property, which they expanded by conquest and cultivated with the labor of conquered peoples whom they had uprooted as slaves.

The Aryan groups rather took as their premise, on the one hand, their own developed productive forces and social organization organized around private property in herds and, subsequently, land. They premised themselves also in the intercourse and commerce with urban civilizations of west Asia, which had further augmented the productive forces and transformed the social organization of the segmentary state. And they took as their premise the

existing organization of segmentary states that they subjugated, with their already emerging social differentiation and accompanying ideology and ritual. Given these premises, the invading Aryan groups established themselves as landlords by inverting the clan principle into a caste one, and setting their already well established division of labor, with its caste divisions of priest, soldier and merchant, over the lineages of the segmentary states, transforming the members of these into a laboring class. The lineages of the previous segmentary state were themselves increasingly divided among themselves according to the same caste principle, while their ritual leaders were co-opted into the upper castes. Simultaneously, the Aryan groups also introduced more developed productive forces, including irrigation, plow agriculture, metal working and so forth, thereby backing and augmenting ideological and ritual means of control with increasing material powers, providing the basis for military expansion into empires. In a society where control of water and cattle provided the means to augment and control human labor power, both were given a sacred character.⁹

While the cultivator groups were disenfranchised both economically and politically, they were subject within their communities according to the principles of the pre-existing organization. The caste principle fully developed the ritual subordination of the lineage groups of the segmentary state into a subordination of agricultural and craft labor to landlords. Distribution of the means of subsistence to all groups was framed legally in terms of shares of agricultural product. While ownership of landed property became alienated from the agricultural and industrial producers, these producers remained in possession of their land and tools. Thus there was not the creation of a propertyless proletariat.

Like in the assembly of the Mediterranean cities, the democracy of the clan persisted in the community level Panchayat councils, but the franchise was restricted to the Brahman priesthood. And these in turn were dominated by the wealthiest among them. At the state level, this democracy persisted in the council of advisers to the king, the Raj Subba, but again limited not just to one caste, but to the predominant families of the nobility within it.

The process of expansion of these landed classes in Nepal can be clearly seen in the subjection of the segmentary political organization identified for pre-Rajput Nepal to a landed property class. The expansion of landed property into Nepal was associated with the movement of "populous clans of warrior cultivators" from north India, where they were involved in the same "slow process of settlement which set the main feature of land-control in modern times from the borders of Awadh to Bengal" (Bayly 1983:17). These warrior cultivators, referring to descent from Rajput lineages as a means to establish their legitimacy, set themselves over the hill people and their lineage

organized polities, initially subjecting them through their existing lineage hierarchies. The warrior cultivators subsequently established sovereignty through introduction of Brahmanic ideology and ritual and set up leading families as kings to represent their interests. They pushed the villagers from the more fertile rent producing bottom lands up onto dry hillsides, where, unable to sustain and reproduce themselves as autonomous communities, they provided a bonded labor force to the new landlord class.¹⁰

This private property form, in combination with the introduction of productive forces such as the plow, irrigation, oxen, other domesticated plants and animals and associated forms of knowledge, provided the basis for agglomeration of wealth and power, eventually enabling one of these Rajputs, King Prithivi Narayan Shah, to launch in the mid-18th century the war of conquest which resulted in the full "unification" of the present nation state by the end of the first decade of the 19th.

The Kirat areas to the east of the Kathmandu Valley, which had not been subjected by the Rajputs, were still organized as segmentary states with land remaining under communal tenure. Thus while the Kirat areas provided no match militarily, due to lack of concentration of power, subsequently they have been the most difficult to bring under the regime of private tenure; inversely, while the states to the west were conquered militarily only with great difficulty, their lands were relatively easily reallocated among landlord interests represented by the state, since these lands had already been subjected to the private tenure of such classes. Indeed, it was the desperate economic condition of the villagers in these same previously subjected areas and their ties of patronage to landlords which allowed Prithivi Narayan Shah and his successors to mobilize them with promises of land and security.¹¹

For villagers subjected in terms of landed property relations, the promise of land ownership seemed like liberation. However, these plots were encumbered with the property class which constituted the state and the cultivators never emerged as an independent peasantry.¹² Like citizenship and democracy in Mediterranean city states, caste and its assemblies and councils were "a glorious facade."

Notes

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2. Thus he goes against the positions that advocate an undifferentiated primitive communism prior to the rise of the city and civil society, such as of Marx (1973) and Engels (1983). He further develops his criticism of the "tribe" and other anthropological formulations of supposedly "stateless" societies.
3. A contemporary news story in *Rising Nepal* refers to an incident about the descendents of such ritual leaders, called here a "rain maker" (Kahl 1991: 4): "A dispute over a buffalo has had far reaching consequences for the people of Karungu, a village on the shores of Lake Victoria. Their troubles began one year ago when an old man accused the grandson of a local rainmaker of stealing the animal. Word of the alleged theft quickly spread and the accused, George Owuor, went to the village headman to complain of what he saw as a blemish on his character." If I am really a grandson of the rainmaker, Mzee Minot, there shall be no rain here in the next seven years, no harvest and the people shall experience serious hunger during these days, the angry young man vowed.

"Local belief has it that rainmakers are able to do more than move the heavens to open. If they are angry they can also bring on a drought. At first, nobody in Karungu took George seriously. It was only this spring when the time came to sow the fields that they remembered his curse. The rains, which had always fallen at the time the crops were being sown, failed to materialise this year. Alarmed, the village elders demanded to see George. He was not in the village so they questioned his widowed mother instead.

"Three times Mrs Dorsila Jongo Ogola was called to appear before the village council and each time she was quizzed about why she had brought on the drought. The woman admitted she was the daughter of a now deceased rainmaker, but said the power to make rain or cause droughts could only be handed down to boys, not to girls. This explanation failed to appease the elders, who argued that other villages in the region had had plenty of rain during crop-planting. Only Karungu and its immediate vicinity were left dry, with the result that drinking water was in short supply and crops and other vegetation were damaged.

"Some villagers pointed out that Dorsila had not bothered to till her

own fields knowing full well that no rain was going to fall. People began to ignore her. Some even demanded she be punished. When George returned he went to the elders to complain of the treatment to which his mother had been subjected. There ensued a lengthy discussion which ended with George apologising for his curse and shaking hands with each member of the village council. That same night a hefty rain shower fell on the village, according to a report in the Kenya Times. The allegations against the widow and her son were dropped. dpa”

4. See Max Weber's, (1978:490-2) discussion in the section, "The Differential Function of Salvation Religion for Higher and Lower Strata: Legitimization versus Compensation", in his *Sociology of Religion*.
5. Thus women revolutionaries, such as those in the Sandinista army, have found that to continue to maintain their power in society after a successful armed revolutionary struggle, the women's divisions in the army cannot be disbanded.
6. "The Kutchin (Louchoux) of the Yukon river Region [Northwest Territories, British North America, southerly from the ex-Russian coastal lowlands] are Athapascans and with them (according to the letter of the late George Gibbs to Morgan): among the Kutchin "3 grades or classes of society (should call totem, which however may be dissimilar in rank [& in the manner namely how had come to the dominance of the gens principle, could by & by the gens to give way to the caste-formation? Where then the prohibition of intermarriage between different gentes completely inverted the archaic rule of the intermarriage within the same gens;]; a man does not marry into his own class, but takes a wife from some other; and that a chief from the highest may marry with a woman of the lowest without loss of caste. [The concept of caste carries the letter writer further & he interprets such that a man cannot marry into his own gens, probably rather into the gens of his other brother-or cousin phratry; this shows but that as soon as a difference of rank between blood relations of the gentes arises, this comes into conflict with the apparatus (geräth) of the gentile principle & the gens in its contrary, caste, can petrify] The children belong to the grade of the mother [Which thus the rank distinction between gentes, brothers and sisters of all resign themselves in gentes of each rank. The kindred ranks let no complete aristocracy to arise, fraternity remains in the sentiment of equality] The members of the same grade in different tribes do not war with

each other" (Marx 1983: 183; emphasis added on his own interpretation).

7. "The quadruple division of society is mentioned in some of the earlier [Vedic] hymns, but it makes its formal appearance in the *Purushasukta* which seeks to explain the existing divisions by adumbrating the theory that 'when they divided the primeval being (*Purusa*) the *Brahmana* was his mouth, the *Rajanya* became his arms, the *Vaisya* was his thighs, and from his feet sprang the *Sudras*'" [Majumdar et al.: 31].
8. According to my samples of gender taking SLC in Bandipur, the proportion of Brahman men to women (78%:12%) is no different than other village groups, despite the Brahman position as landlords. This demonstrates a linkage between property, its ideology, and the disenfranchisement of women, discussed in the previous sections (Mikesell 1988: 213).
9. The sacred character of the cow was subjected to a debate started by Marvin Harris in U.S. anthropological journals in the late 1960s and early 70s around the question of functionalist rationality versus economic irrationality. However, among a herding people, domesticated cattle were property par excellence, and in cultivation, along with prepared land and irrigation, the means of production of surpluses. Thus the cow's sacred character was the means to control the distribution of this surplus within society; as such, it is no more irrational than the sanctions given to capital today, in which all forms of labor power have been subjected to the logic of private property in the form of the exchange relation, and in which the lives of millions of people are sacrificed to preserve and expand the division of labor and accumulation of surplus represented within it.
10. Available histories of course describe the process of the establishment of private property merely in terms of the conquest of tribal lands by Rajput kings who replace earlier "chiefs" or kings without providing any indication of the transformation of the property or associated political forms. However, a good idea of the process as I have described it can be obtained from the experience of the Kirat cultivators of Eastern Nepal (Limbu, Rai), who were only conquered two centuries ago and whose communal forms of tenure are still undergoing a process of transformation, and where the present State was forced to recognize these forms of property and associated interests even as it set about to destroy them.

11. Prithivi Narayan Shah was quite aware of this, as quoted in his deathbed advice to his heirs in 1775 (Stiller 1968). Thus it is the hill peoples of the western hill kingdoms of Nepal, and not the people of the eastern communally based states, who are described as the "martial races" and who subsequently were recruited by the British army.
12. The miserable condition of these people is described in Ludwing F. Stiller (1976).

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