

LIMBU WOMEN, DIVORCE, AND THE DOMESTIC CYCLE

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New York

I INTRODUCTION ¹

In this essay we examine the problem of Limbu marital stability from a woman's perspective. We maintain that the decision making powers of a Limbu woman in marriage are powers which she holds by virtue of her status as a socially productive adult. The analysis further suggests that the economic role of women is extremely important in marriage. A woman's position in Limbu society is not limited to her status as a domestic or childbearer. She brings cash into the household and actively participates in agricultural production. Her productivity and the recognition of this productivity by others are key variables in her ability to accomplish her desires.

Anthropologists have long recognized that females play an important role in marital stability. Theoretical explanations of marital stability and divorce have suggested that variables such as bride price, the degree of integration of the woman into her husband's kin group, divided loyalties of the wife, or the economic role of women play a part in the maintenance or dissolution of a marriage.² Many of

¹ Field research was conducted jointly by the authors in 1967-1969 in the area of Tehrathum Bazar, Eastern Nepal. A grant by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Research Foundation of the State University of New York, Stony Brook, in the fall of 1975 made possible a return visit by Rex Jones. The latter research project attempted to test the central thesis of this paper through accumulated survey data.

² Some of the earlier researchers correlated marital stability with variations in the payment of high brideprice (Brown 1932). This correlation was rejected by Evans-Pritchard (1934) who considered it naive to explain the maintenance of marriage as due to economic motives. Following Evans/Pritchard, Max Gluckman (1950) suggested that both the divorce rate and the amount of exchange at marriage were rooted in the social structure. Gluckman hypothesized that divorce correlated with the variable of descent; that is, low divorce rate, while societies with less marked "father right", e. g. patilineal, would have a low divorce rate, while societies with less marked "father right" e. g. bilineal and matrilineal, would have a high divorce rate. Fallers (1957) and Lewis (1962) attempted to modify and refine the Gluckman hypothesis, while still explaining marital stability in terms of descent. Fallers suggested that patrilineal corporate groups tend to disrupt marriage by dividing the loyalties of the spouses. He hypothesized that in patrilineal societies divorce correlates with the degree to which the woman is absorbed into her husband's lineage. Lewis, on the other

these suggestions, however, look upon women merely as objects manipulated by the male world around them. We attempt here to look at Limbu women's roles subjectively, e. g., that Limbu women are active strategists who can make and execute decisions about their own lives.³ Marital stability is viewed in terms of the decisions which individuals must make in order to undertake, maintain, or dissolve a marriage relationship.

In societies such as the Limbu, where marriage functions as a system of alliances to unite families (Jones 1973:278-279), anthropologists have frequently viewed women as pawns in the political games men play and marriage as a tool on the political battlefield. In Limbu society contracting marriages largely rests on the decisions made by men with an eye to the formation of alliances widespread over the Limbu area. However, the maintenance and dissolution of a marriage relationship seems vitally effected by the actions of women. Invariably, it is the Limbu

hand, suggested that divorce in patrilineal societies was correlated not with the degree to which the woman is absorbed into her husband's lineage, but with the degree to which her own agnatic kin ties are dissolved by marriage. Leach (1957) criticized the use of descent as a variable in marriage stability. Leach draws a distinction between genetricial rights and jural rights. He argues that in situations where a woman loses rights over her children (genetricial rights) but maintains membership in her own descent group (jural rights), she is presented with a situation of divided loyalties which brings tensions to the marriage. In such situation, the sibling tie remain stronger than the affinal tie, and if tensions are great enough, it may result in divorce or separation. Recently, anthropologists have returned to economic variables in explaining divorce, suggesting that the economic role of the wife plays a part in the maintenance of marriage. Cohen (1961: 1246) suggests that among the Kanuri of Nigeria, economic independence of women facilitates the breakdown in traditional patterns of male authority within the conjugal household and men become dependent upon female services - a primary factor in marital dissatisfaction.

Lloyd (1968:68), notes that among the African Yoruba, women have a high measure of economic independence as a result of occupations in crafts and trade. This is cited as a frequent cause of jealousy and envy between Yoruba men and women, and many times leads to marital quarrels, accusations of witchcraft, and divorce or marriage instability. Strathern (1972) notes that in Mount Hagen, New Guinea, the role of women as "luasi-transactors" who facilitate exchange relations between their husband and their brothers puts them in a position to challenge male dominance and sabotage the exchange system by divorcing their husbands. Jones (1973) suggests that marital stability among the Limbu is correlated to the degree of economic independence of women.

³ See Lamphere (1974) for recent attempts to look at domestic group politics in terms of strategies which women employ to achieve their desired ends.

woman who ends a marriage by leaving her husband and running off with another man. We see the ability of Limbu women to take such actions as an indication of the decision-making power of Limbu women within the domestic cycle, despite a decidedly patrilineal bias in Limbu society (Jones and Jones 1976; Chapter 3).

II THE ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING

The Limbu inhabit an area of approximately 4,500 square miles located in the hill region of far eastern Nepal, known locally as Limbuan. Historically, the Limbu were the original inhabitants of Limbuan, but today they live in a plural society as a result of the conquest of the first king of Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Shah, and the subsequent immigration of high-caste Hindus into the area.

The Limbu do not live in nucleated villages, but in homesteads dispersed up and down the steep hillsides. At most, two or three houses may be clustered together in a settlement, often sharing a common courtyard. Although a family's fields are usually in the general vicinity of the house, patterns of sale and mortgage often result in scattered holdings. Permanent bazaar towns are located in seven or eight areas, approximately one to two day's walk apart. These bazaar towns are largely populated by Newars who have migrated from the Kathmandu valley and consist of anywhere from twenty to one hundred small shops at which can be purchased a wide variety of imported goods. Each bazaar town has a weekly market called a *hāt bajār* to which hill men and women bring grain, vegetable produce, animals, cloth, salt, pottery and a variety of other village manufactured products for sale. Small *hāt bajār* are held twice a month in areas located far from a permanent bazaar town (Sagant 1968-69).

The principal domestic animals raised in Limbuan are cattle, waterbuffalo, pigs, goats, and chickens. The milk of both the waterbuffalo and the cow is used for drinking, the production of ghee, and the manufacture of yogurt. Oxen are used for plowing, while the meat of the male buffalo is eaten by most castes. Pigs, goats, and chickens are all raised for food with restrictions on their consumption varying with caste affiliation. The Limbu eat the meat of most of these animals, although members of certain lineages may refrain from eating one species or another. Cows and water buffalo are more frequently owned by Brahmans and Chetris due to dietary restrictions and greater accumulation of wealth. Pigs, which are ritually important for the Limbu, are the domestic animals most frequently raised by the Limbu.

A sexual division of labor is common to many tasks performed by the Limbu. Women weave cloth, mats, and brew beer. Men make baskets, looms, fishnets, and small stools. The only Limbu craft speciality in the Tehrathum area was a man

who made bamboo stools (*mura*) and was generally known as the *mura*-maker. Women generally cook and process foods, carry water, and cut firewood. Men, however, cook when along on the trail or on ceremonial occasions. Only men hunt and fish, neither of which is very important in today's economy. A division of labor by sex is evident in certain phases of agricultural production. The strictest rule is that only men may plow. Women usually follow behind the plow, broadcasting seeds. Cultivation and harvesting may be done by members of either sex. Children of both sexes also have specific tasks to perform. They herd animals during the agricultural season, watch their younger siblings, and aid their parents in tasks of agricultural production and food processing.

III THE LIMBU WOMAN'S ROLE IN PRODUCTION

For purposes of the analysis of Limbu women's economic roles, the Limbu economy may be grouped into three spheres of economic activity: the state, the Limbu indigenous system, and the market. The state sphere consists of institutions which reflect the penetration of the central government into the affairs of Limbuan. Central to this sphere is a government sanctioned hierarchy regulating inter-caste social relations, land distribution, and taxation. Changes in this hierarchy reflect changes in government policy which have led to the concentration of productive land in the hands of a few elite Limbu and high-caste Hindus (Caplan 1970; Jones 1976). The Limbu indigenous sphere consists of the institutions which regulate the relations of production between Limbus in their own community. Participation in these institutions is based on membership in a Limbu patrilineage, common residence in a local area, or both. The institutions of the market sphere regulate economic exchange between Limbu and non-Limbu. Individual Limbu sell their labor and the products of their labor to members of other ethnic groups in the marketplace, some of which, such as the permanent and weekly bazaars, are located in the hills, while others are located beyond the boundaries of Limbuan.

While Limbu women are generally denied access to the political and economic institutions of the state sphere, they are active producers in the institutions of both the Limbu indigenous sphere and the market sphere. Although the struggle for land over the past two hundred years has resulted in the formation of class-like divisions even among the Limbu community (Jones 1976 a), the institutions which organize subsistence production for most Limbu are basically egalitarian. Female participation in these institutions carries with it the status of social adulthood. Furthermore, women are active producers in the cash economy, both as wage laborers and producers of goods which they sell to shopkeepers or in the marketplace. A short survey of all adult married women in three Limbu villages near the

Tehrathum Bazar revealed that over 98% were either engaged in wage labor, or the production and sale of liquor, beer, and cloth, or both. What follows is a brief summary of the role of the Limbu woman in economic production.

In the Limbu indigenous sphere, participation in economic activities are based on sex, age, membership in kinship groups, and residence in a local area. These activities center around the ownership and control of land under the system of *kipat* tenure.⁴ There are three categories of relatives with which a Limbu may unite in relations of production (Jones: 1972:9): (1) the *bongsoli* (patrilineal kinsmen, or "relatives by the bone"), (2) the *mamoli* (mother's brothers), "relatives by the flesh", and (3) the *kutumba* (affinal relatives). These categories and their subdivisions form the basic units which are utilized to organize both land and labor. The economic significance of each of these units depends upon whether ego is a male or female.

For a man, the primary social category from which he acquires access to land and with whom he will join in productive relations throughout his life are his patrilineal kinsmen. He has some residual rights in the land known as *kipat* of his mother's brother's kinsmen, but may only receive land from and become part of this productive unit if land is plentiful enough for such a grant. For a man, economic relations with this affines are secondary, and involve distribution of goods in marriage exchange payments and the acquisition of a wife, who becomes part of his household's productive unit. Occasionally, he may, however, become a part of the productive unit of this group if his father-in-law has no sons.

For a woman, her patrilineal kinsmen and her affines are of more equal importance, as she is, at various points in her life, an active productive member of both her natal household and of her husband's household. If she remains unmarried, she may receive an inheritance from the lands of her patrilineage and continue as a member of the productive unit of her natal home. If she marries, she herself inherits no land from her natal group, but upon residence in her husband's home, she becomes a member of his productive unit. With the birth of children and the establishment of a separate household, she acquires certain economic decision-

⁴ Under the system of *kipat* tenure, Limbus have exclusive rights to land as a result of membership in an ethnic group, e.g. the Limbu community. These rights are contrasted to freehold tenure known as *raikar*, which are state controlled. The *kipat* tenure system and its implications for the Limbu community have been analyzed by Caplan (1970) and Jones (1976a). The Lands Act of 1964 effectively abolished *kipat*, but as late as the fall of 1975, a complete land survey in Limbuan had not been completed and the tenure system was still very much in existence.

making powers, particularly if her husband is absent in migratory wage labor. On her husband's death she receives a portion of his lands for maintenance of herself and her younger children.

A woman whose husband takes a second wife after she has children has even greater independence in economic decision making. She can demand that her husband give her half of his property and establish her in a separate household. Although she cannot sell the property, she keeps it in trust for her children and has near total control over agricultural production on her share of land, making all decisions as to planting, harvesting and distribution of crops (Caplan: 1970:42). Even after she marries, the patrilineal kinsmen of a Limbu woman provide her with economic security. Upon her marriage, she is often given a part of the bride-price as her personal property, in the form of gold or silver jewelry. Her independence in her husband's household seems to vary with the size of this property. The young married girl may spend considerable time, even years, living and working in her natal household, and as an adult with children, she makes extended visits to her natal home.

Most productive activities carried out by women are done in close cooperation with the other girls and women of the household and localized lineage in which they live. Although each household forms a unit of consumption, most other economic activities are carried out communally. Most Limbu houses are very small, and are mainly used for eating and sleeping. All other activities take place in the courtyards, the fields, the forests, or the bazaar towns near by. Even when the tasks performed by women could be done efficiently by just one person, women usually work together for companionship.

Women are responsible for many of the tasks of agricultural production, processing food, weaving cloth and mats, and supplying the household with food and water. Young girls learn to carry out these tasks by observing their mothers, aunts, older sisters and cousins as they perform these tasks together. We often saw young girls of eleven to thirteen accompanying the other women of the localized lineage to the forest to fetch wood with tiny baskets which they filled with wood for the household.

Certain phases of agricultural production, particularly planting and harvesting, require the cooperation of a labor force large than the household or localized lineage. The Limbus who live within a local area assist each other through a complex network of mutual labor exchange. Members of a household will act as hosts for a labor gang of friends and neighbors that meet to help them plant and harvest. The hosts supply beer and a snack, and a festive air prevails. Each household keeps a strict account of how much labor it owes and is owed. This labor of men and women is regarded as equivalent, and a man might send his daughter to assist

a neighbor whose son came to aid him in his harvest (Caplan 1970:108-9). Households that need more labor than they are able to return pay a daily wage to some of the people who assist them.

There are ample opportunities for Limbu women to participate in the activities of the market sphere, both in and out of Limbuan. While generally only men become migratory wage laborers, either as soldiers or agricultural workers, women work for wages as domestics and local agricultural workers. The bulk of the cash earned by women comes from the sale of goods that a woman produces herself. The goods Limbu women produce for sale include beer, liquor, brewer's yeast, cloth and flattened rice. Yeast, cloth, and flattened rice are sold by the women in the weekly bazars. Home brew and distilled liquor, being illegal, are not sold openly in the market, but are frequently brought to the *hāt bajār* on market day and sold to shopkeepers. More frequently, these products are sold from Limbu houses along the roads leading to the *hāt bajār*. Cash earned from the sale of these products is kept by the individual who produce and sold them. Women use any cash they save to buy gold and silver jewelry which then serves as a kind of personal bank account, the spending of which they control. If a woman is married, she often uses this cash or savings for the purchase of household utensils, food, or other necessities, particularly in times of emergency.

IV DIVORCE AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

In Limbuan both the bride and groom make decisions concerning their marriage. A courtship institution called the *dhān nāch* (Jones 1976b) enables Limbu men to meet marriageable girls from a wide area. Weddings, market days, and other holidays provide occasions when young people can organize these dances with marriageable partners. When a young man and his family have accumulated enough goods to make the initial marriage payments with which the marriage process begins, the prospective groom has considerable latitude in choosing his own bride and it is he, along with a male kinsman, who goes in search of a bride. In the event that he is already married and has no male children, or if otherwise strongly motivated, he can always take a second wife. Although a woman's choice in arranged marriages is limited to the right of refusal, a number of options are available which serve to give the Limbu woman considerable decision-making powers over where she will live and who she will marry: (1) She may remain unmarried and inherit property along with her brothers; (2) in an arranged marriage (*māgi bihā*) she may choose to live in her natal home for periods ranging up to ten or fifteen years; (3) he may elope with a man of her choice, thereby circumventing the wishes of her parents (*chori bihā*); or (4) finally, if dissatisfied with her marriage

altogether, she may choose to leave her husband and run off with another man (*jāri bihā*).

Very few Limbu women take up permanent residence in their husband's household immediately after marriage. Little more than adolescents when they marry, Limbu brides often return to their natal households along with their female relatives and friends who have formed their wedding party. At most, they may stay in their husband's house a few weeks. When they return to their natal home, they resume their role as daughter in the household, rejoining their friends at work and at play until the birth of a child, often three to five years later. During the initial phase of a woman's marriage, the husband makes periodic visits to his wife, occasionally bringing her home with him for a few days or weeks, while he and his family make annual payments of meat, liquor, and cash to the bride's family to cement the marriage contract. Despite the interest both families have in maintaining the marriage, should a woman be dissatisfied with the marriage, the long periods of residence in her natal home enables her to meet other marriageable Limbu men, particularly on the occasions of a *dhān nāch*. She may end the marriage by running away with another man, an acceptable form of Limbu divorce providing compensation is paid.

Fluctuations in periods of marital stability seem to correlate with developmental phases in the domestic cycle of the Limbu family. The domestic cycle of the Limbu has been described as follows (Jones 1972:17):

“within the patrilineal kingroup, there are three sets of living relatives to whom ego must relate with different behavior patterns of familiarity and respect. On the one hand there are the unproductive members of the group—the old men and women who are too old to work and who have little or no decision-making power regarding the land base. Along with this group and the extremely young—the infants and young children who must be watched and cared for by the adults. Secondly, there are those people who do not yet hold the land in trust. There are the unmarried young men and women who work and produce, but who have not set up separate households and do not hold decision-making power. Finally, there are the full-fledged adults, men and women, who are married and who maintain a household and make the important decisions concerning production. In terms of land, production, and decision-making, these three sets of relatives represent the domestic cycle. At any one point in time EGO will be a member of one of these sets of relatives and his relationship to his relatives will be determined by his position in the domestic cycle.”

Chart 1

The Domestic Cycle in Terms of Production
Bongsoli (patrilineal relatives)

Old men and women, infants	————	Dependents
Young unmarried females and males (pre-pubescent)	————	Producers
Adult males and females (post-pubescent)	————	Decision-makers

(From Jones 1972:17)

The young Limbu woman who has just married, remains a producer, not a decision-maker. The years between puberty and the mid-twenties is a period of intense productivity for a young Limbu woman. She is fast becoming a mature worker, able to carry out a full day's agricultural labor, and rapidly learning the other skills necessary to an adult Limbu woman. As yet unburdened by the necessity of caring for a number of young children, she is valued as a producer, especially in households which have been drained of men for migratory wage labor. Marriage in Limbuan links people into households which form the basic units of economic production. Married women must be integrated into the work groups of her husband's household and localized lineage for a marriage to be successful. Cooperation between these groups of women is essential for the subsistence of the household and the local group.

In her natal household, a woman works with other women with whom she has worked since childhood. Long years of cooperation have formed the women of her father's localized lineage into a relatively smooth-running team. In the off agricultural seasons of the year, the woman can direct her own time and may devote considerable time to the production of goods for sale in the market, the profits of which she alone controls. In her husband's house she must become a member of a productive group composed of strangers directed by her mother-in-law, who is often a hard taskmaster.

The Limbu recognize the significance of this aspect of marriage in the marriage ceremony itself. After the all-night ceremony, the bride, still dressed in her wedding finery, arises at dawn to ritually sweep the courtyard and take her place with the

women of the groom's household by joining them in their early-morning task of collecting the day's water from the water fountain. At each wedding we attended, the girls and women would call us out in excitement to watch the bride sweep and carry water.

If this transition into the productive unit of her husband is not successful, the options available are to remove herself from his household, either temporarily, by extended visits to her natal household, or more permanently, by divorce (*jāri*). By the time she has children, her husband is likely to establish an independent household, in which case she becomes a decision-maker, thereby elevating much of the tension between herself and her husband's kinsmen.

Limbu marriage stability fluctuates in relationship to the adjustment of the woman during the evolution of the domestic cycle and ultimately to her degree of economic independence as a producer. As the woman gradually moves from dependence in her parents' domestic unit, her family of orientation, to her husband's domestic unit, her family of procreation, she begins to assume economic independence through the retention of bridewealth and the role of producer in the Limbu agricultural economy and the market economy. This phase of independence, especially prior to the birth of children, is the phase in which Limbu marriages are most vulnerable and subject to dissolution. There is a direct correlation between instability, age, and the economic independence of the woman. *The greater her independence and her dissatisfaction, the greater the likelihood of an unstable marriage or divorce.*

A recent survey conducted in the fall of 1975 of all married women of three Limbu villages near the Tehrathum Bazar further substantiates the above statements. Statistical data were collected on the type of marriage, age at marriage, and divorce. These data were correlated to economic data, especially personal wealth of each married woman. The survey consisted of eighty-six women ranging from 20 to 85 years of age.

Table 1 below indicates the distribution of three types of marriage in the three villages surveyed. Both *māgi bihā* (arranged marriage) and *chori bihā* (marriage by "theft" or "elopement") are first marriages, while *jāri bihā* (adulterous marriage) indicates a previous marriage that ended in divorce or the woman taking a second husband.

TABLE 1

Total marriages of 86 married women of three adjacent Limbu villages according to type of marriage. (1975).

Type Marriage	Number	Percentage of Total Sample
māgi (arranged)	56	65%
jāri (divorced)	18	21%
chori (elopement)	12	14%
Totals:	86	100%

In Table 2, the 86 marriages are again presented in such a way as to show the percentages of first marriages that resulted in divorce. Both *māgi bihā* and *chori bihā* are first marriages. The figures to the right of the table show the percentages of each first marriage that ended in divorce (*jāri bihā*).

TABLE 2

Percentage of first marriages according to type ending in divorce (*jāri*)

Type	1st marriage		2nd marriage		Percentage
	Type	Number	Type	Number	
māgi (arranged)		73	jāri	17	24%
chori (elopement)		13	jāri	1	8%
Totals:		86		18	21%

In Table 2, we are able to see that a greater percentage of divorces (*jāri*) occur in arranged marriages (*māgi*) than in marriages by free choice (*chori*). This indicates a greater stability in marriages of free choice than in those cases where the woman has less say in the choice of a spouse.

In Table 3, we get an indication of age at first marriage according to type. The mean average for all first marriages according to our sample is 17.4 years of age. The average age for arranged marriages that did not end in divorce is 18 years; the average age for marriage by elopement that did not end in divorce is 19.2 years. The average ages at first marriage for those ending in divorce is 15.1 years. This clearly indicates that women who marry young are more likely to be involved in an unstable marriage than those who marry late.

TABLE 3

Ages at first marriage according to type

Sample number	Type marriage	Mean age	Median age	Modal age
56	māgi	18	17	17
18	jāri	15.1	14	14.5
12	chori	19.2	18	17

Table 4 below shows the average age at second marriage (*jāri*), or those women who are divorced and married a second time. Divorce clearly occurs in early twenties as women are entering the phase of decision-makers in the domestic cycle.

TABLE 4

Average age at second marriage (jāri)

Type marriage	Mean age	Median age	Modal age
<i>jāri</i> marriage	22.6	21	21

Table 5 below correlates personal wealth of 86 women with the type of marriage. There are indications that women who enter into a divorce (*jāri*) on the whole possess greater personal wealth than those who do not get divorced.

TABLE 5

Personal wealth index of Limbu women according to type marriage

Number in sample	Type Marriage	Percentage with less than 1000 Rs. personal wealth	With more than 1000 Rs. personal wealth
56	<i>māgi</i>	35.7% (20)	64.3% (36)
18	<i>jāri</i>	22.3% (4)	77.7% (14)
12	<i>chori</i>	50.0% (6)	50.0% (6)

In summary, the data presented in the five tables above indicates that the stability of a Limbu marriage has much to do with the adjustment of the women in the domestic cycle. First, if she has free choice in deciding whom she will marry, the marriage seldom ends in divorce. This is substantiated by the low percentage of free-choice marriages (*chori*) ending in divorce (*jāri*). Furthermore, these choices are usually made later in the woman's life, when she is an active producer in the Limbu economy, around 19 years. Secondly, a marriage arranged early in life, prior to 15 years, has a greater chance of instability and eventual divorce than those arranged after 18 years, when the woman has become a productive member of society. Finally, the means by which Limbu women are able to rid themselves of an unacceptable marriage situation through divorce (*jāri*) is made possible by their accumulation of personal wealth and their role as decision-makers in the domestic cycle.

V CONCLUSIONS

Our conclusions lend support to the theory that sociocultural and not biological variables determine the position of women in any society. Specifically, they substantiate the theories of Engels (see Leacock 1972, and Sacks 1974), that sociologically, the status and role of women cross-culturally is best explained by a labor theory of value. Humans evolved in societies based on cooperative labor, and the social value of each person seems to have been related to the degree to which he or she contributed to the production and reproduction of human life. In preclass societies, the value of a person's labor could not be alienated and could not thus accumulate value for another. Under these conditions, the labor performed by

women as well as men is social labor, and it gives to the laborer the status of a social adult. As productive modes developed which allowed for the increasing alienation of labor, the value of one's labor could accumulate to another. In the market economy, labor itself could be bought and sold, and the status of social adulthood was only granted to those individuals who could sell their own labor in the market place. In such societies where only marketable labor is given value, women who only perform unpaid domestic labor are given status of wards instead of social adults. The entire economy of a society may not be integrated by a single mode (Terray 1972, Polanyi 1968). Different economic spheres may, in fact, be integrated by different modes of production, and thus labor may be differentially valued within one society. This is true in Limbuan, where the indigenous economic institutions exist side by side with institutions which have developed as a result of the Hindu conquest and the growth of a market economy.

Limbu women are given the status of social adults because of their participation in both the Limbu indigenous economy and the market economy. It appears that the alternatives which Limbu women have in deciding whom they will marry, where they will live, and whether they will remain married, are decisions which they are able to make because of their control over their own labor in everyday production, rather than factors which are related strictly to the structure of the Limbu "kinship system."

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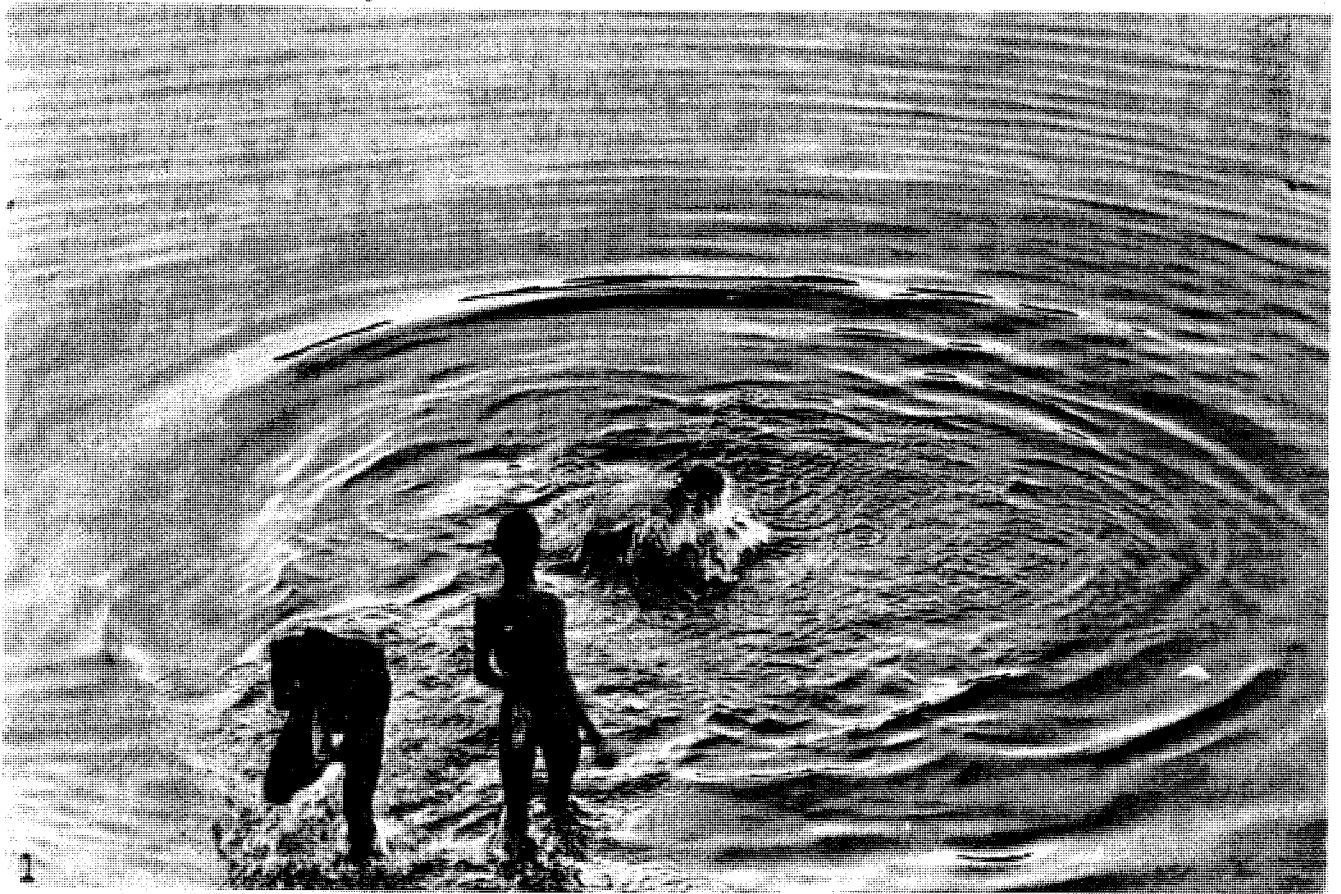
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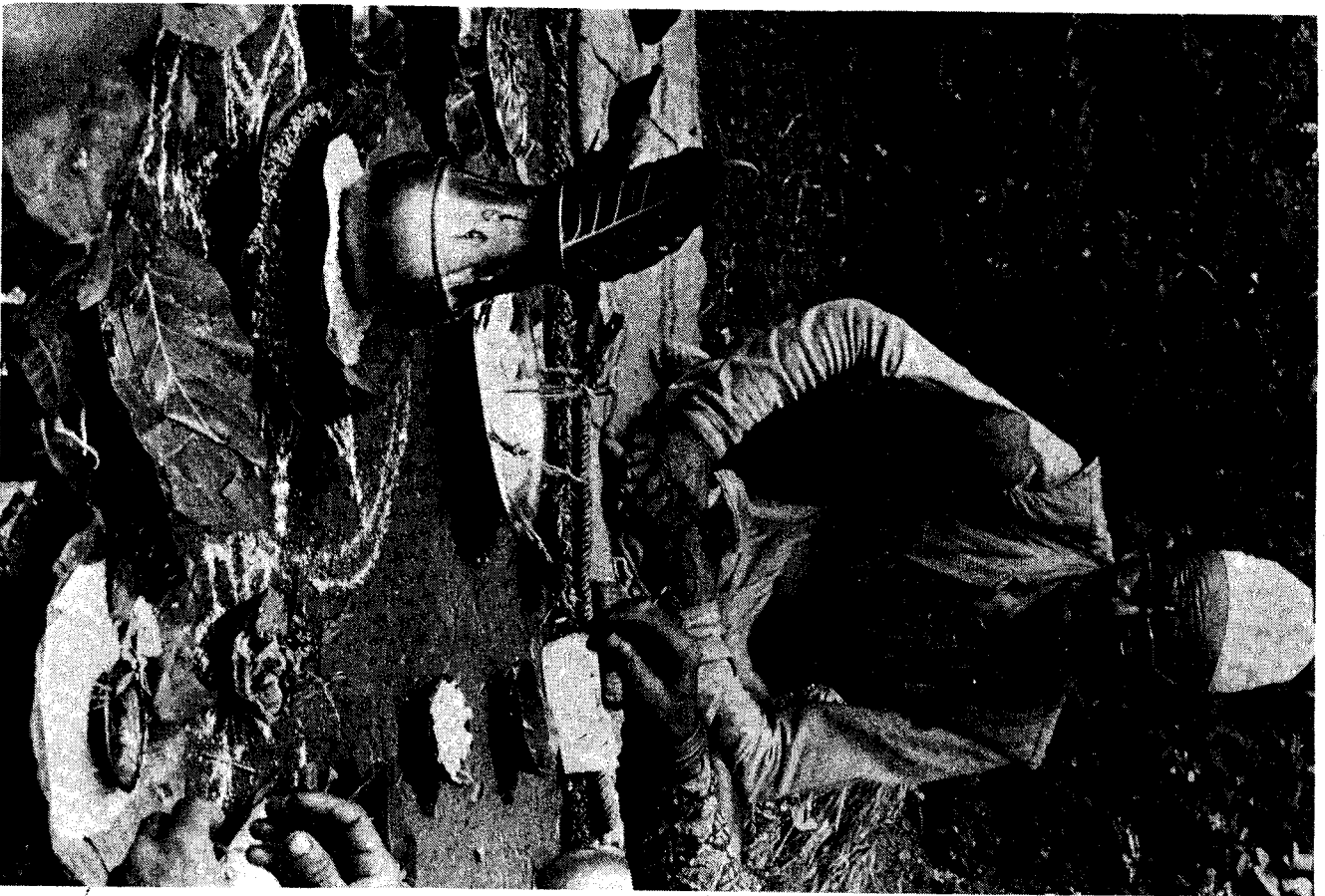


1. Men bathing on Janai Purni before putting on new sacred threads.





3. A Brahman woman prepares to indulge in the *dar Khame* feast on the eve of Tij.



4. Rishi puja officiating priest with the central *kalas* and the tray containing *kus* grass figures of the seven Rishi and Arundati.