

Chachi's Fate: Moral Discourse in a Rajasthani Village

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Introduction

I was a student of Gerry's from 1984 to 1990. It is Gerry's door that I remember most from those days: the door plastered with political cartoons, stories, and a picture of him marching with us in the inevitable Teaching Assistants' strike. I remember his concerns over the practice of caste in India and its parallels with race relations in this country, about tourists leaving trash along the famous ascent routes in the Himalayas, and about the Chipko movement and women's roles in protecting the environment. Gerry's door was really a window, a window into Gerry's spirit—his heart, his mind, his humor, his compassion. Students were drawn to Gerry because of this mixture of politics, ethics, and action. I was one of those students.

I was happy to see that this conference was entitled "Behind Many Masks." Gerry's Prologue to *Hindus of the Himalayas* (Berreman 1963) was a favorite article of mine. When I entered the Ph.D. program in Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, I had already spent a year in India, seven months of that time in a small multi-caste village in the state of Rajasthan. I came to India as a recent Boalt Hall law graduate to study dispute-processing (see Moore 1985; 1998a). The Indian anthropologist Partap C. Aggarwal introduced me to the village where he had lived and studied (Aggarwal 1971). While he had educated the villagers to the work of an anthropologist, there were still speculations about my "true" identity: was I a spy, was I part of the village raids to force men to get vasectomies, or was I searching for a husband? Eight years later, in 1986, I was welcomed back into the same family, but I did not realize that in the intervening years my village brother had creatively filled in the missing pieces of my identity. He thought that he knew best how to help me save face. He told everyone that I had married and, of course, raised a family with sons. Returning alone, without this imagined family, the rumor quickly spread that I had divorced and abandoned my children. With this questionable introduction of my character preceding me, I embarked on a study of justice and morality.

Chachi

In the late 1970s and 1980s I spent a total of 31 months in India, most of this time in the village I call Nara. Nara had a population of approximately 1,200 persons, divided into Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, in fifteen castes. The most numerous and wealthiest caste was a Muslim caste of farmers, the Meos. They are the original

landowners and farmers in this area, the largest single ethnic group, and economically and politically dominant. I lived with a Meo family.

On my first night in Nara, Dr. Aggarwal asked his dear friends and confidants from his earlier study if I could live with them. I imagine that out of respect for him they agreed. Next we discussed what I should call them. They chose *Chachi* (auntie) and *Chacha* (uncle). The Hindi terms they chose translate as father's younger brother and his wife. These infer close, affectionate relationships. There are different terms showing the respectful distance of the more authoritarian older brother and his wife. I did not realize it at the time, but this more informal answer was a good sign. The following morning we finalized arrangements for my return to Nara and as I said good-bye to Chachi, she handed me a one rupee note and rubbed the top of my head forward, from crown to brow. I was confused. On our return to New Delhi, Dr. Aggarwal explained to me that when a daughter leaves home, she is given money from her parents to carry her on her way. Chachi offered me the rupee as a symbol that I would be her new daughter.

As my initial visit to Nara of six months turned into a long term project and a Ph.D. dissertation, my most intimate confidant and friend was Chachi. She was about fifty years old when I first met her. She was married with a fairly prosperous extended family of four sons, two daughters, three daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren. With the family land still farmed jointly and the household primarily undivided, Chachi's family was strong within the village hierarchies.

In the early years of our relationship I was one more daughter for Chachi to worry about. I was in my mid-twenties and my research led me to other villages where I sat with the male village councils. Chachi felt responsible for me to Dr. Aggarwal and I know my presence weighed heavily on her mind. At first she made her son escort me on walks to other villages. He was a welcome companion who introduced me, directed me along the right paths, and chased away snarling dogs. As the days progressed the routine became tiresome for both of us and my guide and I shared an unspoken conspiracy. Just as I was planning to leave Nara for the day, he would disappear. I repaired a rusty bicycle that had been part of a "brother's" dowry and happily traveled on my own. Chachi, too, became accustomed to my ways and as the years passed our relationship evolved, in my mind at least, from daughter to friend. This paper gives an introduction into moral reasoning in Nara. It is grounded in Chachi's life and her stories, but salted with the opinions and advice of her neighbors.

Adjusting Fate

Chachi was one of ten children. When I asked her about her childhood she scoffed, "What is there to remember? I was married when I was seven years old; I was losing my first teeth."¹ Her mother-in-law had died suddenly three months

earlier, leaving only a husband and a young son in the household. One older sister had married and moved to her husband's village. "They needed someone to cook for them," Chachi concluded. Chachi said that for seven generations (the number often used to signify "forever") there had been only one son in this patrilineage. Chachi had one son and after that she lost four children. She worried that this was her fate, a fate that she had acquired by marrying into this lineage. Her father brought her a Muslim amulet from the mosque, a prayer charm written by the *maulvi*. Then she conceived a son and at birth, even before the boy was washed, her father put silver earrings on his ears to ward off danger.

Chachi's fate seemed to change slowly. She raised three sons and then a daughter. Chachi commented, "seven children from my mother-in-law died.... I lost three, three of my girls. My daughters died at four years, at two months, at eleven months, and a boy died at eleven months." If Chachi's own fate was damaged by her association with her husband's lineage, perhaps an association with a more prosperous lineage would aide her growing family. When Chachi's only surviving daughter was three years old, a marriage engagement was arranged. Chachi quotes her husband as saying, "'She will also die. Do her engagement. Then she will be saved with another's fate. She may not be saved with our fate. Our girl won't die.' We did her engagement to save her." Gifts were exchanged between the two families over the next eight years. As the girl reached puberty, Chachi's family no longer approved of the match. The Meo youth was spotted in a local market town. He wore long hair, a handkerchief around his neck, and black coal eye liner. Perhaps he had become a dancer. The engagement was immediately broken. But it was no longer needed; the girl had survived her childhood, Chachi produced a second daughter, and the family was prospering.

Through the alchemy of Islamic and Hindu beliefs, Chachi wove a new life course for herself and her family. This hybrid culture is typical of the Meos who are said to have converted to Islam from Hinduism to avoid persecution by the Moguls centuries earlier (Aggarwal 1971). Their religious practices reflect an amalgamation of Muslim and Hindu traditions. The amulet that Chachi's father brought to her to ward off evil is widely used in the Islamic world. In villages and large town mosques, Muslim priests write sacred script on small pieces of paper that are folded and then worn, ingested, or buried to treat a variety of ills, or to encourage fertility, wealth, health, well-being, and the settlement of discord (Moore 1993).

Living in an area dominated by Hindu culture, Chachi's moral reasoning also reflected Hindu ideology: fate, karma, the *Behimata* who assigns fate and the *kali yuga*. Chachi explained to me that God, whom she calls Behimata, makes us from mud:

We are made of mud. Like what we make the fire ring out of, or a pot, or the Kumar [potter caste] makes pots out of, like this Behimata

makes children. Some are pretty, some are good, some are lame, blind, this is the story. This is how Behimata makes children. This is written in the Koran, in our book.

Chachi understands her fate, or karma, to be influenced not only by her own accumulation of good and bad deeds but also by those of her associates. Chachi describes her fate, expressed through her fertility, as affected by the ill-fortunes of her husband and his lineage and somewhat repaired through their attachment to a third lineage with the engagement of their daughter. One's fate is malleable.

Chachi's neighbor, the Pandit's wife, Lalta, with her round body wrapped in a cotton sari, presented a sharp contrast to Chachi's worn, labored frame in her Meo baggy pants and long over-shirt. Chachi was a farmer; Lalta's responsibilities were in the home. Lalta usually presented a happy, welcoming face, ready for a chat, a good story, and village gossip. She explained to me another way to influence fate: "If you give charity, it changes your fate. Imagine that there are dirty clothes and they are washed with soap. In this way, charity cleans sins away. Like washing dirty clothes with soap, the fate changes like this." She continued:

There was a holy man and someone asked him where he was going.
"I am going to God," he said.

"Take my message, too. Do this for me. Tell God that we are two, one man and one woman. We work and work and we are tired. Even then we eat one time [a day] and the other time we go without. You should ask about this for me."

Others also asked him to talk to God for them, "Say this. Say this."

[The holy man said to God] "That man told me to tell you that they are just two, but why are they starving. They work hard and still only one time a day do they get bread to eat, not the other time. What is the story?"

God said, "That man has only 820 pounds of grain written into his fate. Thus, I only give him a little; he has a long life to live. How will he live eighty years when in his fate there is written only 820 pounds. So I give him my best guess. That is why I give him only a little. Can I give him grain all his life?"

"All right."

[The holy man returns and tells the man], "In your fate there is 820 pounds of grain and if you eat the grain [pause] you both have eighty

years of life to live. So where would you eat if your grain were finished?"

"Yes. Tell God, 'Give us 820 pounds at one time. We will eat it in one day, two days, one month. But we will have full stomachs. We will be satisfied at last. Then we will remain hungry. Give it to us all at once.'"

He said to God, "They told me, 'We are always half hungry and half satisfied. Give us all the grain at once. So in one month we can eat our fill. Afterwards we will die of hunger.'"

So then one day God gave them 820 pounds grain. They ate five with whey and they sold two and bought unrefined brown sugar and made a cooked sweet millet dish. They invited all the hungry, disabled people and had a feast. In one day all the food was eaten. Then again 820 pounds grain came. They did the same thing and continued to feast others.

"God?" [the husband said].

"Yes."

"You are a liar."

"How?"

"Daily 820 pounds grain come and you said there is only 820 pounds written in my fate."

"You have 820 pounds written in your fate but the grain written in the fate of those who you are feeding is being given to you too," [God answered].

[Lalta concluded]: He is satisfying the spirits of the hungry men. So you can see that he lived the eighty years and he could fill his stomach. Not for one day did they go hungry. Their stomachs were full. Why? Because the grain came and came. So he got double, triple, four times his fate for the others' fates. Charity is like this; it can change your fate.

Kali Yuga

Fate is also washed by a sea of temporality, the *kali yuga*. This is the current Age of Darkness, of dishonesty, selfishness, and stealing. This is one of the four cyclic ages of the *maha yuga* that ranges from the Age of Truth, *sat yuga*, to the Age of Darkness, the *kali yuga*, as described in the ancient Hindu texts. In modern secular terms, Rushdie (1982) explores the meaning of *kali yuga* today:

Kali Yuga—the losing throw in our national dice-game; the worst of everything; the age when property gives a man rank, when wealth is equated with virtue, when passion becomes the sole bond between men and women, when falsehood brings success (Is it any wonder, in such a time, that I too have been confused about good and evil?). [1982:233]

Time is not seen as an empty measure, devoid of value. Instead, time can be morally good or bad. And in these periods, it is difficult to act outside the mandate of the age. Chachi lamented that today the norms for respect, appropriate marriage partners, and caste relations are ignored. She explained:

Erin, this is the *kali yuga*. Daily people are killed and kill. God's justice is not done. ... They don't respect sister, nor uncles. Before you did not talk in front of the uncles. You had shame, modesty. "They have arrived, don't talk" [people would say]. Like we laugh. Now the children talk and fight. Before they would say, "Quiet, have shame, your father has arrived." ... Now, what can I say. I am ashamed. Everyone meets everyone. In the *kali yuga* people walk around like this in front of their father-in-law, open [not respectfully covering their faces in *purdah*]. What they do with their husbands, they do with their fathers-in-law. ... Now they even marry their uncle's children. ... Now, they give the father's sister's daughter to the mother's brother's son. [Cross-cousin marriages are encouraged by the Islamization movement.] ... Everyone became one caste and drinks from the same caste. They drink and give to another. ... It is wrong that everyone is the same caste. Before the Leatherworker did not sit on the cot with us, did not eat from the same bowls. ... If they touched them, then you washed them with mud.

Chachi viewed the changes that were brought about after Independence through government legislation and a growing Islamic fundamentalism as morally wrong, part of the legacy of the Age of Darkness. One low caste Hindu man explained to me that in this Age even the Ganges flows up hill, a metaphor parallel to our saying "the world is upside down." At Partition, these Rajasthani villages were torn apart. Chachi, her husband, a four-year-old son and a seven-day-old daughter

fled together with an ox-cart loaded with grain, one buffalo, and her calf to the hills that divided the territory of the British and the Raja. There they turned the buffalo and the calf loose, loaded the grain onto their heads, and walked to her mother's village. She said:

So we went to the hills, my father and brother came and we brought back the grain on our heads. The cart couldn't go over the hills and we let the ox go free. Erin, have you heard the gun machines, *kituck, kituck* [she imitates the sounds]? People fell over and the vultures took the crying babies from their dead mothers' breasts. [At another time she explained how the men took their swords and speared the babies through the chest and flung them away, off the sword point.] People went to Pakistan and women threw their babies from the train windows, alive or dead, what could they do with them. [Her images are vivid. Her own baby died within the year.] ... We left before the killing, but then the Hindus killed men. Arms and heads were in separate places.

Chachi took her jewelry but all the other things in the house—the cots, mill, clothes, and grain—were burned or looted. They could see their village burn from the hills. There had been no fighting in the village. The richer Hindus fled earlier and the other castes continued to live peacefully. Still, the Alwar King sent his soldiers with machine guns and burned the entire village.

Blood baths in the hills near Nara encouraged many Meos to flee northwest to Pakistan, leaving their ancestral lands. Those who stayed were forced to share the land with Sikh refugees and the low caste landless craftsmen who had been their servants (see Moore 1998a). High caste villagers and the landed Meos generally thought that the government over-stepped its bounds trying to eliminate poverty and caste. They scoffed that the government was trying to act like God. Chachi reasoned, both God and the government see, judge, and punish, but “Allah does not heed the government.” When the low caste Muslim water-carrier stopped bringing the goat-skins of water to her home, exchanging farming for his caste-related service work, Chachi laughed and said to me, “He doesn’t love us anymore.” While she missed the almost free labor, she conceded that it was good that everyone could now “fill their stomachs” from new labor opportunities and government land grants. Her vocal concerns revolved around the shattered social order. Chachi associates what she sees as the growing disrespect of youth for elders and the breaking down of barriers between men and women with the mixing of castes; even non-sexual contacts felt incestuous. Life was beyond her control.

When I first met Chachi in 1977 her life was very different from what it became in the late 1980s. By 1986, Chachi was a widow. Her husband had died unexpectedly from a gangrenous leg. Because he had been an only son, there was no

resident senior male to lead the family. The farm land was partitioned among Chachi's four married sons and each lived separately. The family lost its village clout. Chachi's eldest daughter-in-law, Hurmuti, continued her longstanding affair with a wealthy Nara Meo. Chachi and Hurmuti continually fought. Chachi was afraid for her future, angry, and dependent. At this time Chachi repeated a story to me that I had often heard from Nara elders:

Now there are thieves and they live well. And the poor, they do not live well. Now even God doesn't do justice. The honest and poor people don't get anything. Now even God does injustice. Before it was *jaisi karni, waise bharni* [as you do, so you will receive]. ... No, not these days. This was the way it was.

There was a father who lived with his son, like Jamu [she names her son]. His wife, Shabu [she names her son's wife], would say, "He gives me trouble, I won't give him bread." She would fight. "Whatever you do, throw him out."

When his wife would not give the bread, like Hurmuti, he took his father on his back. They sat under a Banyan tree. The father said, "Son, why are you going here, where are you taking me?"

"Baba, if you stay in the house, my wife will not stay. This is why I have brought you here."

As he was leaving, his father said, "As you do, so you will receive." The boy did not take any notice of it and he left. The father was eaten by crows, *kag*.

Then many days passed. Then like us, Jamu became an old man. That boy became an old man. And he had one son. The one who left his father there, he had one son. His wife fought every day. "I can't give your father bread every day."

"What should I do?"

"Take your father to the jungle and leave him there," his wife said. Then when they went to the same Banyan tree, when they sat there, the old man said, "Son, where have you taken me?"

"You will stay here and I will return home. If I take you back home my wife will get mad at me. And my wife will flee. You will stay here and I will go."

"Son, are you going? 'As you do, so you will receive.' I also left my father under this tree. Son, if you leave me, someday you will also be found here."

Then he took his father back to the house. "If my wife leaves, let her leave today."

The wife said, "Why did you bring him back?"

"I brought him because he left his father there and some day that may happen to me. You can go, but my father will stay here."

[Chachi concluded:] This was justice. This was the justice of the previous times. Now mother and father are daily beaten and still there is no justice. These days no one bothers about these things. God has done injustice to me. How will they [Chachi's sons] look after their children? When they get their clothes wet, we [parents] dry them. We follow after them by day and keep them on our laps at night. But when we get old, they don't bother about us. They treat us terribly.

Chachi was particularly sensitive because she had had the primary care of Hurmuti's children periodically for several years while Hurmuti fled or was temporarily banished from Nara for her affair (see Moore 1998b)². Now as Chachi was getting older she felt neglected. Her eldest grandchildren were maturing; they should take care of her. Instead, Hurmuti continued with her affair and brought the girls with her as she rotated between the home of her husband, her lover, and her parents. Chachi was not the only one to feel cheated out of just desserts. More than half of the twenty four women I interviewed said that there was no justice today, even God did injustice (Moore 1995). One old Sikh woman looked at me and said, "You have not had children yet, but Erin, when you feel the pain in childbirth, then you will know what God thinks of women."

One day I asked Chachi what she thought was the hardest thing about being a woman. This was a question that a mentor anthropologist had suggested that I ask women. Chachi began by saying that plowing was the hardest thing but she assured me that women could do all other work. When I pressed for a broader response she said that she used to fear her husband. "If he swore at me, I would fear that he would kill me. My husband is like my god. He is above me. I must do whatever he says. ... God made woman to work for the man, that is her fate, to wash his dirty clothes, to cook his food, to serve man." Chachi did this, she said, unlike "the 'whore' Hurmuti who worked for another man, treated her own man poorly, and gave everything to another." Chachi changed the subject back to Hurmuti. It seemed that every conversation those days returned to Hurmuti. "It used to be when Chacha yelled at

me [that was the hardest thing], now it is Hurmuti. ... If God did justice there wouldn't be this type, *jati*," Chachi continued referring to Hurmuti. "God would have killed her. This type of person God gave life to, is this justice? This is not justice."

Conflicting Authorities

In discussions of moral authority Nara villagers—Muslim, Hindu and Sikh—describe a conflict between the rules of God, the state, and the community brotherhood. There are discrete jurisdictions for each pole of authority, yet there is a constant chaffing at the boundaries and pervasive corruption. These conflicting authorities particularly came into focus in conversations about the right to discipline, discipline unto death. One day Chachi said to me in private, "I could have killed Hurmuti [for her continued affair] if I had wanted to and no one would have said anything to me. But I did not." I remembered Hurmuti's father angrily declaring in the village council, "Listen, we do not support ... [Hurmuti], no one will come to mourn if you kill her today. We have spoken to her too many times" (Moore 1998a; 1998b). Hurmuti's father, uncles, and brother had been called to Nara for a Meo council of elders to negotiate a peace among Hurmuti, her husband, and her in-laws. At the time, I assumed that Hurmuti's father's talk was merely an expression of his outrage rather than a license to act. But I could see that Chachi meant blood. She made reference to an unmarried Hindu girl in a neighboring village who that same year was allegedly killed by her parents when she became pregnant. Her body was suspiciously cremated by her family in the middle of the night. Chachi thought that this family was within their rights to kill the girl. She said, "It was bad. The mother's honor went, the father's honor went. ... It is better to kill her, because she would always be a half dead person. ... Everyone will tell the parents that their daughter did this. ... If she did it once, she may do it again." I remembered reading of a similar case in north India reported by Freed (1971).

An "illegitimate" pregnancy was one occasion when the Nara villagers felt within their rights to take the life of an immoral daughter. I asked Chachi, "Isn't it a sin to kill her?" I meant to infer it was equally immoral. "No," she answered, "because the parents lost their honor. A person who cannot keep their parents' honor, even God does not think it is a sin." Lalta, the Pandit's wife, agreed and told me of a Brahman girl who got pregnant in a town several miles from Nara. Her father wanted to kill her but she ran away. In disgrace, he hung himself. She commented:

No, it is no sin. Someone who has brought a black spot on her family, why is it a sin to kill her?

Erin: Isn't it a black spot on your family to kill your daughter?

Lalta: No, it is a mark that your daughter gets pregnant and runs off with another. How can she speak, how can her parents speak in

public? When there is a fight, people would say, "Your daughter, you fucker, did so and so." Then her parents can't speak in society; they outcaste them because their daughter did this. They avoid them. But now there are all sorts of people. Now all things happen.

While Chachi and Lalta seemed to be in agreement, Nara villagers had mixed opinions. An old religious Meo man, for example, said, "Allah would not like it. He would say that He is the one to give the punishments." He complained that today people care more for their reputation in society, their honor, than they do about the sin. In spite of the sin, he agreed that the girl should be killed. Community values triumphed over God's values.

While some villagers mentioned the tension between God's justice and one's reputation within the village, others focused on the fact that the police might discover the case. A low caste Muslim man said that it is better to go to jail than to ruin the family name, highlighting the conflict between the State and the community. A high caste Hindu shop-owner man commented:

Under the present conditions it is not possible to kill the girl because the government takes action against the family. The husband would be punished. If there is a case in the court or if he is very rich, he [the one who made the girl pregnant] may spend Rs. 1,000 or Rs. 1,200. The police officer will take the money and he will get the case thrown out of court. You spend the money to save your honor. ... So for his honor's sake, he will get the officer in his favor by spending money. He will bribe him and get it thrown out of court. Nothing will be done.

Erin: If you killed the girl, would God also get angry and punish you?

Man: You fear the government and God. Your daughter committed a wrong, for the sake of the family honor you kill her, but to God.... It is a sin to God, we are taking two, the girl and the child.

The State tries to limit the villagers' self-help measures. The low caste Hindu neighbor who had watched the Hurmuti affair develop from behind the back fence commented:

In the past the lover would have been hung from a tree and his limbs would be broken. Before, the village council was this strong. They could kill someone. Now there is the government, a report is made to the government. Now the government punishes. Before the village council did it. Now even the wrong-doer can bring a case in court.

It is against the State laws for the village council to even outcaste an offender today. A Meo man added that if the council even tried to outcaste, the offender could retaliate by bringing a case in state court. "The fucker would take you and lock you up. Now, no one can outcaste."

In spite of all these fears, expressed mainly by the village men, I found that in fact the police were regularly kept out of village conflicts. The state police do not have a regular patrol of the villages. If they descend from their paved city roads into the dusty village networks to investigate, villagers routinely handle the suspicions with a conspiracy of silence and later perjured testimony in court. Even the highest judges in the larger district area expected this of the Meo minority (Moore 1985). I asked Chachi, "No one called the police? [to arrest someone in the case of the deceased girl]." "No," she responded, "Why should they? The parents are the *malik* [masters, ones responsible for her]. They have the right/duty to see that she acts as society requires."

In Hurmuti's case, she returned to Nara in 1978 after a year's absence, pregnant with her son. It would have been expected, upon discovering the pregnancy, that Hurmuti would be sent back to her father's village—possibly for good. But no one acted in Chachi's family, probably, among other things, in the hope that a son would be born. This child did become Hurmuti's only surviving son.³ In spite of all the anger and frustration against Hurmuti, she was never killed. When I pressed Chachi about killing Hurmuti she conceded that Hurmuti had four children to care for; the neighboring Hindu girl had none. Lalta commented, "When they didn't have any children, Chachi should have thrown her down the well. They should have cut her nose and sent her away, never allowing her to ruin the family's name." Lalta confided to me that she suspected that Chachi and her family had benefited economically from Hurmuti's wealthy lover.

Conclusion

Moral discourse represents a mixture of religious traditions. Nara is a community that is diverse and changing. It has a cross-section of castes and religions that are common in north India. Nara Muslims visit the mosque for a prayer amulet written with Koranic scripture while contemplating the intertwining of fates assigned by the Behimata. Fate emerges as a commodity to be manipulated; God is one to be bargained with. Issues of moral authority revolve around God and religion as well as the State and the community council. In local thought there are discrete jurisdictions for each pole of authority, yet there is a constant power struggle. The conflicts over different moral codes often emerge in discussions over caste, money, and sexuality. I used the example of the wayward girl to explore theoretical conflicts that were grounded in local examples, both Hurmuti and the neighboring Hindu girl. The conflicts between saving face within the village, the power of God to punish a sin, and the fear of the State power to jail and demand money are very real to the villagers.

God, the State, and the community define honor in their own ways. The villagers are torn between loyalties.

In this paper I have used Chachi and her stories to illustrate the interplay of moral discourses in Nara. Chachi has her own difficulties: she was married early to a lineage of single sons; she was widowed early; and she has a daughter-in-law who has brought great dishonor to her family. Chachi does not speak for others, but from her stories and the reflections of her neighbors we hear part of the universe of moral reasoning in Nara. Chachi believes that there are appropriate roles for wives and mothers (fathers and children, etc.). Chachi expects to fulfill her part. In return, she expects reciprocity in her life: from her children and from her God. The just, those who act in their socially defined roles, should be rewarded, and the unjust should be punished. But in this Age of Darkness, when so much of the social order is turned upside down, there is little justice. Even God does injustice.

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¹ At age seven she came to Nara only for five or six days accompanied by an elder male cousin. At night she slept with her sister-in-law. When Chachi was ten she was sent back to her husband's village after a second marriage ritual, the *chalo*, and at age eleven she started living permanently with her husband's household.

² The story of this affair is chronicled in a film "Keep Her Under Control: Law's Patriarchy in India" (Moore 1998b; 1994; and 1998a.).

³ In the 1990s Hurmuti fled Nara and lived in her parents' village, raising this one son by selling buffalo milk. Her husband, however, took a second wife, and has produced more children (at least one of whom was a son).