



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

## **The People of India, Volume One**

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## THE HO TRIBE.

ment was for five years; and in 1826, in consequence of the intermediate good behaviour of the Lurkas, the restriction limiting the assessment to eight annas was renewed for a further period of five years. It was noticed at this time that the Lurkas evinced a perfect willingness to be guided and ruled by British officers, and the utmost repugnance to the authority arrogated over them by the Singbhoom chiefs. They, however, remained peaceably disposed till 1830, when the Jyunt, Lallgurh, and Aunla Peer Coles attacked the Rajah's officer posted at Jyuntgurh, seized all his property, and drove him from the place. No steps were taken to punish the Coles for this aggression, and it was the commencement of an organized system of plunder which was carried on with impunity for several years. The chiefs, who claimed their allegiance, could not control them, and it was found that they instigated the Lurkas to ravage the territories of those with whom they were themselves at feud, which of course increased the appetite of the tribe for plunder and rapine.

In consequence of this unsatisfactory state of affairs, a proposal made by Captain Wilkinson to employ a force to subdue the "Lurkas" thoroughly, and then to take the whole tribe under the direct management of the British officers, was favourably received by the Government and acted upon. Two regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and two brigades of guns, entered Singbhoom in November, 1836; operations were commenced against the refractory Peers, and by February following, all the Mankees and Moondahs (as the heads of Peers and villages are termed) had submitted, and bound themselves by fresh engagements to obey and pay revenue to the British Government, and no longer to follow the orders of the chiefs to whom they had been required to submit in 1821. Since 1837, with a brief interval during the crisis of 1857, peace has been undisturbed. During this period the Cole or Ho population has rapidly increased, and from the region around Chyebassah, the waste lands have entirely disappeared. Colonies of Hindoos are now for the first time quietly settled in the heart of the Colehan; occupying villages apart from the Hos, and placing themselves without demur under the Ho Mankees of Peers, that is, the headmen of divisions or groups of villages.

Simple rules for the administration of justice were drawn up, which, as now modified, bring the people and their officers together without the intervention of subordinate native officials. Attempts were also made to wean the Hos from the direful superstitions that act as the great obstacle to their advancement in civilization: and with this view a school was established at Chyebassah.

The belief in sorcery, so common among wild races, is nowhere more universal than among the Hos; death used to be the invariable punishment for supposed witchcraft. When a belief is entertained that sickness in a family or mortality amongst cattle, or other misfortune has been brought about by sorcery, a "Sokha," or witch-finder, is employed to find out who has cast the spell. By the Sokhas

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