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

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

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## BHOOTAN AND THE BHOOTANESE.

priests, proceeds to the spot where the young Dhurma is said to have appeared, conveying with them all those articles which, in his former state of existence, he had been in the habit of using. These are spread before him, mingled with a number of others purposely made to resemble them, with the innocent intention of testing the infallibility of the re-nate god. As might have been anticipated, the infant always proves victorious in this contest of skill. The priests declare their conviction that he is their former spiritual head, and he is conveyed with great ceremony to the palace of Poonakha, at which place all installations, either in the rank of Dhurma or Deb, must take place, to ensure their validity.

During the time that Captain Turner's mission was in Bhootan, it appears that both secular and spiritual authority were united in the same person; an arrangement which, though apparently opposed to the institutions of the country, was nevertheless acknowledged.

The total amount of revenue drawn from every source can hardly be estimated at two lakhs of rupees (£20,000) per annum. Of this sum but a very small portion can be fairly considered available for any public emergency. The little wealth which does exist gravitates to the palaces and castles of the chieftains. There is a most ingenious device to prevent the too rapid accumulation of wealth in any one family. On the death of the head of a household, however numerous his children, the whole of his property escheats to the Deb or Dhurma Rajah, without the slightest reference to the misery thus entailed on the survivors. Thus all incentive to exertion is removed by the certainty that even a favourite child cannot hope to reap the reward of his father's industry.

The communication with Assam is chiefly carried on by a class of Thibetans called Kumpas; a designation which, however, includes those Bhootanese who live in tents and booths, and live by trafficking from one province to another.

The population is divided into eight principal and a few minor classes, the latter deriving their designations from their trades and occupations. In addition to these several tribes, all of whom are of pure or mixed Mongolian race, there are a vast number of Bengalees and Assamese, the "helots" of the country, who have been carried off at various times from the plains by the Bhootanese in their several incursions, and who lead a life devoted to the most menial and degrading offices. The language chiefly spoken in Bhootan is stated to be a dialect of the Thibetan, more or less blended with words and idioms from the languages of the adjoining countries.

The religion of the Bhootanese is a form of Buddhism. In their religious observances the most remarkable feature is the noise with which they are accompanied. The instruments used are clarionets, sometimes formed of silver and brass, but generally of wood with reed pipes, horns, shells, cymbals, drums, and gongs. The garments of the people consist of a long loose robe, which envelops the body, and is secured in its position by a leather belt round the waist. A

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