



Smithsonian Institution

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

The People of India, Volume Four

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RAJAH OF MUNDI AND MINISTERS.

the salt is very inferior in quality to that obtained from the Pind-dadun Khan salt mines, the people of the hills are accustomed to its use, consume it largely themselves, and give it exclusively to their cattle. There are also valuable iron mines in Mundi; but as these mines are in inaccessible situations, the consumption of the iron is limited. Rajah Bulbyr Sain died in January, A.D. 1851. His son, Rajah Bijoy Sain, was then a child about three or four years old; and, for the management of the Mundi principality, a regency was appointed, the president being Wuzeer Goosaen, a Khatree by caste, who, from a very humble position, had raised himself by his ability to the office of Prime Minister, another of the members being Meean Bhag Sing, the uncle of the Rajah. In the Photograph all these are represented: Rajah Bijoy Sain in the centre, Meean Bhag Sing on the right of the Rajah, and Wuzeer Goosaen on his left.

The practice of Suttee was formerly carried on to a fearful extent by the Rajahs of Mundi, in common with all the principal Rajpoot families in the Kangra hills. Close to the entrance of the town of Mundi are several monumental stones, bearing representations in relief, not only of the Rajahs of Mundi who have died, but of the women who have perished with them by the rite of Suttee. As one of these stones is set up on the death of each Rajah, there are memorials here of thousands of victims to the cruel rite of Suttee. With the last two Rajahs who died under Sikh rule (Rajahs Toree Sain and Zalim Sain), thirty-five women perished. With one, seventeen; and, with the other, eighteen. Of these thirty-five women, more than half were slave girls. The practice of Suttee was interdicted by the British Government in 1846 (see Aitchison's Treaties, vol. ii., page 379). At the same time the Rajah of Mundi was called upon to put a stop to the practices of slave dealing, female infanticide, and the burning or drowning of lepers.

The Rajahs of Mundi on accession always take the affix of "Sain." For instance, the present chief is Rajah Bijoy Sain, and his father was Rajah Bulbyr Sain. The same rule is followed by the neighbouring chiefs of Sookhey, who claim to be descended from the same common ancestor.

It would be impossible, perhaps, to adduce a stronger proof of the beneficent influence of the British Government over petty feudal states, than in the case of Mundi, particularly in the entire suppression of the almost unlimited Suttee, which took place upon the death of a reigning prince; while in all essential respects such states are practically independent in the management of their own affairs. It is as impossible now to practise the shocking and barbarous rites which, under a mistaken sense of honour, were previously so persistently followed, as it is to engage in clannish wars and reprisals, which prevailed everywhere without check.

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