



Library

IAS, Shimla

PH 950.05 N 227 A



00015712

950.05
N227A
B

AN OIL PRESS AMONG BHILS OF RAJASTHAN

By S. NAVLAKHA

1. An oil press, which I have briefly described in the following lines, came to my notice among Bhils during my field investigations on them in the early part of 1958. It was first reported to me at Kundal in the district of Banswara and thereafter its use was confirmed at different village settlements in the same district. Its use is now, however, gradually diminishing and usually only a few families at a settlement possess it, lending it now and then to others for their use.

2. The oil press is an extremely simple device for extracting oil. It consists of two prepared planks of wood almost identically shaped and of nearly same dimensions. Fig. I, drawn of the first press I saw, shows the front view of the two planks *A* and *B*: *A* which is slightly longer than *B* measures 23" in length, 6" in maximum width and 1.3" in thickness. It is shaped so as to obtain a highly tapering upper end and relatively less so at the lower end. The broadest region of the plank, which is closer to the lower end, is immediately followed, further towards the latter, by two lateral notches. At the upper end a hook is formed on the front aspect of the plank by retaining some length (2") downwards of this end thicker than the rest of the plank body. This is easily discernible in the lateral view from Fig. II. The plank *B* measures 20" in length, 6" in maximum width and 1.2" in thickness. It is identically shaped with lateral notches at the corresponding position but is different from the plank *A* in its absence of any hook at the upper end. Both the planks are almost uniformly thick through their body except that the lower ends in either case are slightly thicker (by less than 0.5") than the upper.

CHĀTAWĀ—BHIL OIL PRESS

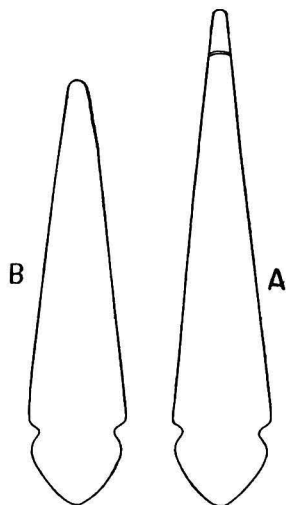


FIG. I. Front view



INDONESIAN SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES, Part Two: RULER AND REALM IN EARLY JAVA. Selected Writings of B. Schrieke. W. van Hoeve Ltd., The Hague and Bandung, 1957. Pages 491.

This is the third volume in the series *Selected Studies on Indonesian History by Dutch Scholars* being brought out for publication by an editorial committee affiliated with the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. It is an immensely learned work based on an exhaustive study of all available original sources of Javanese history beginning with old Javanese literary works and inscriptions and ending with the Dutch East India Company's records and other documents of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and it further takes into account all important secondary sources for this period. Left unfinished by the author at the time of his lamented death in 1945, it has been brought into shape by the editors with the addition of two supplementary chapters and two appendices from the author's detached writings for the purpose of filling up the gaps in his project.

The author's keynote is struck in the words of his Introduction (pp. 3-4) which are amplified in his inter-chapter (pp. 97-100) between Books I and II. 'The Java of around A.D. 1700', he writes, 'was in reality the same as the Java around A.D. 700' and in fact 'was already in existence even before the beginning of the Hindu-Javanese period'. The structure comprised a number of geographical regions under their rulers and their staff and other subjects, each region in its turn consisting of a conglomeration of villages under elders forming a link between the ruler's administration and the general population. The continuity of Javanese history is explained by the immutability of two primary factors, viz. that the foreign immigrants in comparison with the Javanese people always formed an insignificant minority, and that the Javanese 'landscape' (geography) because of the absence of technological development in the island retained its dominating influence through the ages. The corollary of the above conception of Javanese history is a new methodology involving 'the elucidation of situations, conditions and concepts prevailing in the Hindu-Javanese period by means of parallels drawn from more recent history'.

Of the contents of this work we can only give a brief outline. In Book I the author describes with full references the part played by the old Javanese concepts of the transfer of 'the mystical light of royalty', of the king as an incarnation of Vishnu 'as it were *ex officio*' and of the fiction of the descent of kings especially in the female line, towards the end of legitimizing new monarchs and dynasties and of thus 'bringing into harmony with the cosmic order facts which had every appearance of being contrary to that order'. The author further describes the influence upon Javanese historiography of the Javanese concept of the four age-cycles (*yugas*) with 'the Messiah' as the saviour of the world after the chaos at the end of the *Kali* Age, as well as the influence of the stories of Vena and Prithu in the Javanese *Purāṇas*. In Book II the author, after a preliminary account of the natural divisions of the island, gives us a very thorough and exhaustive survey based on records of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of the Javanese system of roads and waterways, methods of warfare and their economic consequences as well as administrative regions together with the lists of ministers and other officers in charge of the same. This leads to the conclusion that 'in a territory with a predominantly goods economy, an inadequate system of roads and primitive military technique, the inevitable fate of the realm would be to fall apart'. Then follows a very thoughtful and suggestive essay showing

how the spread of Islam in the archipelago was due to antagonism between the Moslems and the Portuguese, the latter being inspired by crusading zeal against Islam and Islamic trade, and the former reacting by an organized attempt to expand their sphere of influence by peaceful propaganda as well as holy war. The author further stresses the great rôle played by scholars arriving from Mecca who rose to positions of trust at the royal courts and commanding influence among the people. The chief centre of activity of these scholars was Achin at the tip of Sumatra, 'the principal emporium of Indian trade with the archipelago' through which Java mainly received 'its spiritual nourishment from Moslem India and the Holy Land' (p. 248). 'The Indian influences', the author observes (p. 260), 'and by way of Indian economic, religious and cultural channels, also the influences from the Holy Land, made their impress upon Achin and through Achin on the archipelago.'

Mention may be made in the next place of the author's very thoughtful essay entitled *The end of classical Hindu-Javanese civilization in Central Java in the beginning of the tenth century: a study in economic geography*. The author's final conclusion (p. 301) is that 'the Central Javanese royal culture was destroyed by its own temples', as the people being pressed for this work apparently by socage service were ultimately compelled to migrate to East Java which supplanted Central Java as the centre of power.

From the above brief summary it will appear that the present work is of surpassing interest. We may, however, be permitted to offer a few criticisms. In making out his case for the unity of Javanese history the author has confined himself wholly to the political fortunes of the island and has altogether ignored the at least equally important history of its literature and art. Even so, Book I of his work is itself a testimony to the overwhelming and enduring influence of the impact of Ancient Indian history and culture upon the whole history of the island. The concluding essay on the spread of Islam, which confines itself similarly to the political history of Java, is conclusive evidence of the vital rôle played by Islam in shaping the history of the island from the sixteenth century onwards. The above facts considerably weaken the force of the author's argument based exclusively upon the ethnic and geographical factors for proving the continuity of Javanese history. To turn to another point, we think that the author would have done well to analyse the component elements of the Javanese concepts of the temporal ruler and the cycle of the four *yugas* which, as has been shown by the present reviewer in his forthcoming work *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, comprise in their Indian original the distinct, though allied, notions of the king's authority based upon his origin, his office and his functions (especially as the maker of his epoch).

The value of the present work is greatly enhanced by the addition of two maps, an exhaustive bibliography, a glossary of old Javanese terms and a good index.

2-12-1958

U. N. GHOSAL

HISTORY OF THE CANDELLAS OF JEJAKABHUKTI. By Dr. N. S. Bose, M.A., Ph.D. (London). Pp. 1-213. Published by K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1956. Price Rs.10.

Originally the contents of this book formed the subject-matter of a thesis of Dr. N. S. Bose approved for the Ph.D. degree of the

The author has given a short history of the Roman script and its adoption by countries such as Persian-speaking States of the Soviet Republic, Indonesia and other countries. Even in Arabic publications scientific and foreign names are bracketed in Roman to convey the correct idea of the word. In India, a considerable number of people advocate the use of 'Roman' for all Indian languages for the sake of uniformity, correctness and ease. But sentiment stands in the way of progress in that direction.

The arguments forwarded by the author in support of his claim are worthy of consideration and are quite impressive. But it would be unjust to ignore the good features of Urdu script which have certain advantages not enjoyed by other scripts, including the Roman script. Urdu script requires less space and time. The movements of the letters, their different phases of combinations are so psychological that as compared to other scripts they are liable to produce less tiresome effects on the writer. It can be written quicker than Roman.

The book under review impresses one by its earnestness of appeal and by a coherent presentation of facts. We hope that it will be read with interest and will stimulate thought over a topic which has lately been subjected to much controversy and discussion.

SAID AHMAD AKBARABADI.



Jl. As. Soc., Letters, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, 1958.

12

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUPPLEMENT