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Chapter Six

CEREMONY AND CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH

In this chapter, I return to an analysis of church ritual and a discussion of the place of the church within the village community and its role in articulating and maintaining the local systems of power and hierarchy. What we see is that the church is itself embedded within the indigenous system of social ranking and that its rituals and celebrations become occasions for the demonstration or contestation of rank.

The focus is specifically on the privileges in church ritual held by the village élites and the contestation of these privileges by the lower social groups. The rites and ceremonies of the Catholic calendar become the focus for demonstrating dominance within the community. I will discuss the structure of the mass and the ways in which it manifests hierarchy, and will look briefly at the ordering of different social groups within the church and at processions. Finally, I will look at the manner in which, in the changing agrarian economy, the church has become the arena of a variety of conflicts between socially mobile caste groups which are trying to translate their newly acquired wealth into honour and respect by seeking ritual privileges within the church.

The lowest castes have never had a significant place in church ritual. The main organizers of most church-centred rituals were the *gauncars*, who usually belonged to one or other of the higher castes. This was the situation for most of the Portuguese period. After the 1960s, however, there was a significant shift. The *gauncars* completely lost at this time all local administrative authority, which passed into the hands of district bureaucrats and the elected *panchayats* in each village. The lower castes too had by this time improved their economic position to some extent by taking up jobs outside the agrarian structure.

All these changes together have brought the lower social groups into a position from which they can pose a more serious threat to the high-caste *gauncars*. Thus, while the latter still wield considerable socio-economic power and control the *panchayats*, both economically and politically, the other social groups have today become more serious contenders. The *panchayat* is dependent on the votes of all castes and it has to 'listen sometimes' to the voice of the lower castes. The different groups are today in conflict, which is played out predominantly in the arena of the church.

The Church and Social Relations

The Portuguese were aware of the centrality of the temple in the life of the Hindu village communities. Among the Hindus, the ritual privileges enjoyed by various social groups in temple festivities represented their positions within the hierarchical social structure of the village.[1] The *gauncars* organized and endowed the various activities of the temple. They carried the newly-cut sheaves into the temple on the day of the harvest festival (Wicki 1940–72: Volume 4). Also the dancing-girls (*kolvonts*) danced first at the houses of the village *gauncars* (Baden-Powell 1900). The *gauncars* led the temple processions and carried the image of the deity. Such privileges were denied to the lower social groups.

With conversion, churches replaced village temples. The east–west cardinal orientation of the construction of temples was replicated in the churches, as the Council of Trent decreed that the church should face east. In the temples, the shrine was smaller than the antechamber in length, width and height. Since light entered through a single door, the antechamber was turned into a kind of penumbral zone leading to the darkened shrine, shrouded in mystery.

Santosgaon's village church, as other east-oriented churches, ensures that the central sanctuary is luminously lit in the morning, the usual time of mass, but otherwise remains a kind of dim cavern. The worshipper entering the church turns his back to the west, facing east, the direction associated with the figure of Christ.

Churches also replaced temples as the focus of the socio-religious life of the community. The converts were able to reconstruct their socio-cultural system around the new places of worship. From the very early period of conversion, the missionaries allowed the Catholic higher-caste *gauncars* a variety of honours and privileges in the church-centred

Catholic ritual cycle. These rituals are, even today, used to symbolize status in the same manner as might have been found in village temple celebrations.

Today, in Santosgaon, the village church is at the centre of the relations of power and hierarchy within the Catholic community. While these relations are based on caste status, the ownership of land or control within the local *panchayats*, (socio-politically and economically based), the church maintains and articulates them. Honours in church ritual are important in themselves and because they signify authority or stature in the community (see Dirks 1987). They constitute as well as express social relationships and political authority.

Ritual is not merely reflective of relations that exist independently of it. It constitutes a means of crystallizing ordinary social experience by providing 'a vehicle for significance and display in a way presented by no other domain' (Dirks 1987: 304). That is precisely why different castes spend so much time and effort in their attempts to assert themselves by claiming particular privileges in church celebrations. The possession of these privileges is clearly important in itself as a signifier of status within the community. The church *fabrica* remains in the hands of the high-caste *gauncars*. The privilege of hosting the celebrations for different feasts belongs to the two lay Catholic associations in the village.

The two Catholic associations are the major and the minor confraternities. The major confraternity (*confraria maior*) in Santosgaon is *Confraria de Santissimo e Nossa Senhora de Socorro*. Only high-caste *gauncars* may be members of this confraternity. The confraternity enjoys the privilege of organizing the harvest feast celebrations and those centred around Good Friday. The confraternity has red capes,[2] which distinguishes its members, which they wear at the feasts that are organized and hosted by them. Members of the confraternity are registered automatically at birth and all the *gauncars* of the village belong to it. They organize and participate in its feasts.

The minor confraternity (*confraria menor*) to which the other groups belong is called the *Confraria de São Sebastião e Santas Almas*. The Chardo non-*gauncars*, Sudras and other lower-caste groups are members of this confraternity. This confraternity has blue capes, which are worn by its members during the celebration of the feast that it organizes—that of St. Sebastian. One is not automatically registered at birth as a member of the confraternity but membership can be sought by registering at any time with the parish priest. As far as I could find, all the non-*gauncar* lower castes in Santosgaon were registered members and took part in the celebration of the feast of the confraternity.[3]

Let me say something here about the origin of the *confraria* system. This will give us an idea about how these associations, which were part of sixteenth century Catholic life in Portugal and other parts of Europe, came to be entrenched in the indigenous caste relations of power and hierarchy in Goa. *Confrarias* were Catholic lay associations that developed in Europe in Medieval times (Beirante 1990). They were religious in character and had cultic and ceremonial aims centred particularly around Holy Week celebrations (ibid.).

In Goa, these associations were established very early on as a means of involving lay Catholics actively in church life. Though they were in theory open to all, they came to have an essentially exclusive character. In most villages, the village élites (the high-caste *gauncars*) who held most of the ritual privileges in church celebrations could alone become members of the major confraternity. The other caste groups formed the minor confraternity in the village church. Thus, interestingly, though of European origin, the confraternity system in Goa came to be thoroughly indigenized, embedded in the local system of power and privilege.

Church Ceremony: The Mass and Processions

In the description of church ritual and ceremony in this section, I will examine the interaction between *gauncars* and the lower castes, the priests and the laity, and men and women. As I have noted at various points in the book, particularly during the discussion centring around marriage and the traces of patriarchy discernible in the Catholic marriage ritual, when it comes to the question of gender, to a certain extent, Hinduism and Catholicism seem to converge. This may be perceived in the appraisal of church ritual as well.

Women are excluded from important positions in formal religion: they can become nuns but not priests, and it is the latter who celebrate the mass. They also do not find a place in the formal membership of the confraternities and are, thus, not primarily involved in the organization of important public rituals, though they do help in the decoration of the church and the like on such occasions. However, the drama and the conflict in churches in twentieth-century Goa has not centred around gender relations but rather around castes, and it is this that forms the core of this chapter.

Here, I give a brief description of the mass and processions which take place in the church and form the central means of ritual celebration

for the Catholics in the village. This will enable us to examine the rights and privileges of the two confraternities in church ritual and will form an entry point for our understanding of the conflict between them.

The mass follows a particular pattern and consists of specific, fixed prayers. The prayers are led by the priest. The mass consists of two parts. In the first, the word of God, taken from the Bible, is read and then interpreted by the priest. In the second, the elements (bread and wine) are consecrated and communicated to the congregation. They constitute the body and blood of Christ. There are usually three readings from the Bible which are read during the first part of the mass. The first is from the Old Testament and the second from the New Testament. They are read by two members of the laity, while the people sit and listen in silence.

The final text is from one of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke or John—which speak directly about the birth, life and death of Christ. This is the most important reading of the mass and, not surprisingly therefore, is read by the priest while the people stand and listen. Then comes the sermon where the priest interprets the readings and localizes them to make them meaningful for the community. The mass does not leave room for spontaneous prayer by the laity. Prayers are led by the priest. Specific liturgical prayers are said during the mass and there are particular postures to be adopted: standing, listening in silence, sitting or kneeling. This contrasts, as we shall see later, with the pattern of Charismatic celebrations.

The Second Vatican Council of the 1960s brought two important changes in the celebration of the mass. Instead of being intoned in Latin, incomprehensible to a large majority of local people, the mass is now said in the local language, Konkani. Second, the priest now faces the people where earlier he celebrated mass with his back turned to them. Both changes were aimed at bringing the laity and clergy closer but, as we shall see, even now it is the priest who controls the celebration while the laity have a passive role to play.

In the second part of the mass, the priest consecrates the elements which are then said to 'become Christ's body and blood'. At that point in the mass, the people kneel in worship. The elements are then communicated to the people who go up to receive them from the priest. In both parts of the mass, then, the people have an essentially passive role. They sit, stand or kneel while listening or receiving the elements. The priest says the silent words of consecration and controls the celebration because his is the dominant voice speaking and interpreting. He stands to

preach while the people sit and listen, and he raises his arms to bless and consecrate. There is, then, a hierarchical relationship between the priest and the people because it is the priest who mediates between the 'word' and the 'body' of Christ and their reception by the people. He interprets the word of God and consecrates the bread and wine.

This relationship also has a spatial dimension in that the benches where the people sit and the altar where the priest stands are separated by some steps. About thirty or forty years ago, it was common for the first few benches (those nearest to the altar) on one side of the church to be occupied by the high-caste Chardo men—the *gauncars*. High Chardo women and children occupied the front benches on the other side. Behind them sat the lower-caste women and children. Lower-caste men usually stood at the back of the church.

At the present time, however, these divisions are not seen in the village. People sit more or less where they wish. Yet, at the time of feasts, the benches closest to the altar are still left vacant for the high-caste celebrants and, indeed, even the main altar space may be given over to them. The priest stands at the altar and the benches nearest to him, in front of the church, are occupied by men and women from the highest castes. The place of the lowest castes, at least in the past, was at the back of the church. Thus, the different castes appear to be distinguished by their particular places within the church.

As evidenced later, while the priests control ritual, they do so together with the high-caste Chardo *gauncars*. The *gauncars* are members of the church *fabrica* and of the confraternity which organizes the main celebrations in the church. Thus, the church exercises dominance in collaboration with the high castes who have taken its symbols and rituals and made them their own, using them as a demonstration of their status within the indigenous patterns of hierarchy.

The other castes too are found to use church ritual to demonstrate changing status. They manifest their power either through disputes with the high-caste *gauncars*, withdrawing from active participation in church feasts, or by joining religious movements outside the church such as the Charismatic movement. The church remains the central arena where order, hierarchy and dominance emerge through the differing rights of different social groups.

These rights can be seen in the processions which are part of all major church celebrations in this and other villages in Goa. Appadurai and Breckenridge (1976) and Dirks (1987) describe, for parts of south India, the kinds of processions that take place in Hindu temples. The image of

the deity is washed, dressed, decorated and taken out in procession, usually in a decorated carriage or *rath*. The privileges of washing, dressing and decorating the image may be distributed between different groups given their position within the social order. Other privileges associated with temple rituals include that of organizing and paying for a particular celebration.

It is argued that the deity honoured in such festivals may be viewed as a ruler and the processions serve to demonstrate his sovereignty over his sacred realm, constituted by the temple and the routes covered by the processions (Kaufmann 1979). The privileges of different groups in such processions therefore become indicative of their particular social position within the community. In Chapter Two, we saw that in Goa too during the *zatras* (temple festivals), the deities of different temples are taken out in procession around the temple and its surrounding areas.

Among the Catholics too in Goa, processions are a central part of church ritual and are taken out particularly on the occasions of the feasts of saints. They played an important part in Catholic ritual in Goa from the early period of conversion. When Albuquerque took over Goa, he and his men went in triumphal procession around the city carrying the monstrance with the Host. At the place of victory, he dedicated a church to St. Catherine whose feast was on that day. The saint's rule and in effect that of the Portuguese was thus established over the realm.

In fact, in sixteenth-century Portugal, processions were a primary part of all major church celebrations and, indeed, remain so even today there and in other Catholic countries of Europe (Driessen 1984). A.H. de Oliveira Marques (1971) gives a description of one such procession. The various artisan guilds commenced the procession, each carrying the standard of its profession. Then followed the rich city merchants, scholars, scribes, judges and councilmen. Behind them came the monastic orders and then the knights of various orders. Finally, the magistrates of court, the official of the crown and the monarch himself formed a group around the bishop who carried the image or the monstrance with the Host.[4]

Embedded here is a particular ordering of society which, according to Weinstein and Bell (1982), was common across most countries of Europe. There was an essential tripartite distinction between the workers, the knights and courtiers, and the clergy. A place in the social hierarchy was found for merchants, scholars, judges and other urban professionals by grouping them together in a catch-all 'middle' category. The highest social groups were closest to the image of the saint or the monstrance.

The lower a group, the further away it was from the bishop or priest who carried the image. As in Hindu processions, we see that the place of a particular group in the procession is indicative of its social position within the community.

In Santosgaon, the Catholics do not use carriages (*raths*) in their processions but, in other ways, they have similar practices to the Hindus. In the processions on the harvest feast and (in the past) on Good Friday, the first-class Chardo *gauncars* play a major role. They lead the procession from the front and, on Good Friday, used to carry the large cross. On the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour too, it is the *gauncar* members of the *fabrica* who carry the image.

Processions start at the side-door of the church which is to the right of the altar. The participants go around the square in front of the church and enter it through the main door. The image is taken and placed on the main altar and the procession disperses. As mentioned earlier, the organizers or main celebrants carry the image, leading the procession from the front. Behind them come the women and children. Sometimes upper-caste women walk just behind the main celebrants followed by lower-caste women, but this is not always the case. On occasion I have seen upper-caste women at the back of the group. Lower-caste men follow behind.

This is the order followed when the Chardo *gauncars* are the main celebrants. On the feast of St. Sebastian, the order changes. On that day, it is the Sudras and low Chardos who lead the procession. The main celebrants among them carry the image. Women and children follow. At the feast I witnessed in 1993, some of the high-caste *gauncars* walked at the back, keeping a little distance between themselves and the bulk of the participants. They walked in a leisurely fashion as though not really interested in the proceedings as such. In fact, a number of them remained in the church and did not join the procession at all.[5] This is probably because they do not wish to be seen participating actively in a celebration which is organized by those lower down in the social scale.

The main privilege that is important in these processions is who carries the image and, thus, leads the procession. Yet, other rights are also involved in feasts. It is the members of the major confraternity who have the right to dress and decorate the image of St. Bartholomew or bathe the body of Christ before mounting it on the cross during Good Friday celebrations. They also have the right to decorate the altar during these feasts. The confraternity as a whole pays for the altar-cloths and other decorations used on the feast of St. Bartholomew. On Good

Friday, the *vangor* which is organizing the ritual in a particular year pays for its costs. For the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, it is the *gauncar* members of the *fabrica* who organize and make arrangements for the decoration of the church and the image.

On the feast of St. Sebastian, the high-caste Chardo *gauncars* remain in the background. It is the minor confraternity which organizes the celebrations. The main celebrants for the year make the arrangements for the decoration of the image and the church, provide the funds for the celebration and carry the image in procession after the mass. Other confraternity members come to help with the decoration and arrangements on the day of the feast and take a lead role in the procession, helping to carry the image and walking just behind the main celebrants. Thus, processions and the practices related to them as seen among the Catholics may be viewed, in some respects, as bringing together Hindu and Christian ideas.[6] The different rights in processions are used to symbolize status within the community. Through such processions centred around feast days, the church itself appears to become a part of the local social system of the Catholics.

Healing Practices and Beliefs

We move on to talk about the healing practices and beliefs which are held, in particular, by the Sudras and other lower-caste groups among the Catholics. They share these ideas in common with lower-caste Hindus. These ideas bring the Catholics who believe in them in contact with Hindu religious specialists. In Santosgaon, the lower-caste groups, particularly Sudras and Gauddis, continue to maintain access to Hindu religious specialists such as the *gaddhi* (a kind of shaman, usually low-caste). They take all kinds of problems and afflictions to the *gaddhi* which, they believe, are caused by the intervention of spirits in their lives. Spirits are called *bhut, mharus* or *khetro.*

They may, on occasion, turn out to be the spirits of some dead ancestor or other relative but are much more frequently identified as the spirits of persons who have died violent or 'bad' deaths: either through drowning, premature illness, murder or fatal accidents. The spirits of these people are said to be restless because they died 'before their time'. They are said to haunt the world of the living because they still have 'unfulfilled desires'. People can be possessed by these spirits or harmed by them in various ways.

These ideas seem to have a basis in Hindu notions about demonic and spirit possession. In the Hindu beliefs of the region, there appears to be no radical division or opposition between the forces of good and evil. Rather, there emerges a gradual gradation so that the Hindu pantheon includes both benevolent divinities, and spirits and demons who have the power of evil over human lives.

With the coming of Catholicism to Goa, a different picture arose. Catholic teaching sees good and evil as being radically and fundamentally opposed. This is seen in the celebrations of the annual church calendar which, as we noted, focuses on the worship of Christ, his death and passion, and the veneration of Mary and the saints. Christ is seen as conquering Satan and the forces of evil through his life and death on earth. He opened the way for the salvation of men from their sins and suffering, which are seen as coming about through the work of the devil on the individual's conscience. All good, then, appears to derive from God and the saints, while the devil is viewed as being essentially antithetical to Christ and the forces of good.

Among the Catholics in Santosgaon, good things or spiritual and material benefits are seen to be the gifts of God. They are the fruits of prayer and a good life in which one treats one's relatives, neighbours and all other persons with respect and concern. As part of such activity geared towards living a good life, one should also offer masses for dead persons, particularly one's ancestors. Respect for dead ancestors is part of the complex of good acts that one must perform in order to ensure blessings and benefit for oneself and one's family.

How are misfortunes explained? In the folk beliefs of Santosgaon's Catholics, misfortunes are viewed as the possible result of one's sins or evil actions. To avoid or overcome them, as far as I could gather from indigenous interpretations, one performs certain specifically Christian acts such as confessing one's sins to the priest, praying and giving money in charity. Evil therefore has two referents: the misfortunes that occur in one's life and the evil acts that persons themselves commit by not caring about or behaving responsibly towards others (Parkin 1985).

Catholics, however, also believe that misfortune may be caused by the entry of spirits into one's life. At this particular phenomenological level there is an overlap between Hindu and Catholic notions, despite any differences that may be found in their religious theologies. Both Hindus and Catholics see the human world as being impinged upon by various capricious forces which must either be avoided or placated to prevent them from doing harm (see Caplan 1987). These spirits are

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They may, on occasion, turn out to be the spirits of some dead ancestor or other relative but are much more frequently identified as the spirits of persons who have died violent or 'bad' deaths: either through drowning, premature illness, murder or fatal accidents. The spirits of these people are said to be restless because they died 'before their time'. They are said to haunt the world of the living because they still have 'unfulfilled desires'. People can be possessed by these spirits or harmed by them in various ways.

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Among the Catholics in Santosgaon, good things or spiritual and material benefits are seen to be the gifts of God. They are the fruits of prayer and a good life in which one treats one's relatives, neighbours and all other persons with respect and concern. As part of such activity geared towards living a good life, one should also offer masses for dead persons, particularly one's ancestors. Respect for dead ancestors is part of the complex of good acts that one must perform in order to ensure blessings and benefit for oneself and one's family.

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viewed as intervening actively in peoples' lives and causing, in many cases, physical illness and affliction.

This notion, which is also held by Catholics, of the active entry of the spirits of the dead into human life appears to owe much more to Hindu ideas than to Christian teaching, for the latter does not envisage the dead as interacting or communicating with the living actively through possession or through mediums and diviners. At this level, a degree of ambiguity also seems to enter the notions of Santosgaon's Catholics. While the spirits' power for evil is, in keeping with Christian teachings, sometimes spoken of by Catholics as being 'devilish' in origin or nature, it is recognized by them that even their own ancestors may do them harm.

This they attribute to the fact that ancestors 'punish' their descendants for their own good, 'to bring them to the right path' and (if they themselves had not lived ideal lives) 'to warn them [the descendants] not to follow in their footsteps'. Again, ancestors who have died 'bad' deaths are remembered, but in a different way. They are not included in the *bhikranjevan*, but I was told that food is kept outside the house on the night of All Souls' Day in the belief that they come to partake of it.[7]

Such notions held by Catholics and Hindus alike are therefore, in a sense, related to ideas about the need to treat dead ancestors with honour to obtain blessings and keep away potential harm. To deal with spirits of the dead when they possess or harm men, the Catholics have recourse to low-caste Hindu religious specialists as the *gaddhi*. However, such recourse to the *gaddhi* and an elaborate cult of spirit affliction and healing has, in general, been much more part of lower-caste practices. It may be possible that in the past such practices were somewhat more widespread than at present. For instance, one high Chardo woman told me: 'In my mother's time we used to hear more about spirits coming to possess people but we do not believe in these things. Only those people [lower castes] talk about them and go to *gaddhis* and so on'.

It is perhaps possible to argue that in recent decades the high Chardos may have withdrawn themselves from such practices and beliefs about 'possession' and spirit affliction in an effort to separate themselves from the lower-caste groups who, particularly since the 1960s or so, have become more of a threat to them and have started posing a challenge. They now speak disparagingly of such beliefs and see them largely as the domain of the lower castes. I know of at least one case where a high Chardo woman recently took recourse to a *gaddhi* because she believed that her husband was afflicted with the spirit of his dead brother, but

such cases are rare and when they occur are kept secret. Even low Chardos today claim that they do not hold such beliefs. On their part, too, this may be an attempt to separate themselves from the Sudras.

Kapferer (1983) in his discussion of demonic beliefs among Sinhalese Buddhists in Sri Lanka argues similarly, though his reasoning is in terms of class rather than caste relations. However, he too finds that it is the lower social and economic groups who hold such beliefs. According to him, such ideas might have had greater acceptance in the past, but the Sinhalese middle classes in recent decades have started shunning such practices and use this difference to define themselves as superior to groups below them.

It is mainly the sudden and inexplicable onset of illness or the coming of unexpected misfortune that are attributed to the intervention of spirits or *khetro* by the Catholics. Such afflictions, which are believed to be caused by the spirits of dead persons, are called *variancé* and they are taken to the *gaddhi* for his diagnosis and treatment. *Gaddhis* are to be found in many villages, especially in areas where the Hindus dominate. Many Catholics in Santosgaon visit *gaddhis* in Fatorpa and Canacona in the south of Goa.

The *gaddhi* asks the patient and his relatives various kinds of questions. For instance, he asks for the symptoms of the illness that the patient is suffering from and where the family comes from. He often asks if there has been a recent death in the family of the afflicted person or if he/she had been to the house or funeral of a dead person in the period before the illness struck. The *gaddhi* usually asks for a detailed account of the various places to which the patient had been in the days or weeks prior to his/her illness. It is on the basis of such questions that the *gaddhi* reaches a diagnosis and prescribes some form of remedy. These remedies can take the form of offerings, usually of one or two chickens, made by the *gaddhi* to the spirit of the dead person for the relief of the patient. Other means are also followed to make the spirit of a dead person depart from the patient whom it has possessed.

Some cases of spirit affliction and healing among the lower castes came to my knowledge in the village.

> Rose, a Gauddi girl, was said to be possessed by an evil spirit. She was found one day, some distance from her home, standing under a large tree. When people spoke to her she looked at them with glazed eyes and screamed at them, frothing at the mouth. She was taken home by force as she struggled to get free. Suspecting the influence of some

evil spirit, her parents and some relations decided that the best way to get rid of the influence was by beating her. The girl was beaten with a stick as she screamed and cried aloud with pain. Even after this treatment, her condition did not change. It was then thought that it might be a good idea to douse her with water to remove the influence of the spirit. Even after this was done, the girl's condition did not change; and so, after two days, she was taken to a *gaddhi*. He asked how long the patient had been so afflicted. When he heard that the symptoms had appeared some days ago, he asked whether anything had been done so far. The patient's father said that they had tried beating her and dousing her with water but the methods had not worked. The *gaddhi* made the patient stand on some grains of black pepper and crush them with her feet. As she did so, he invoked the spirit to reveal itself. The girl started speaking in a male voice which was identified as belonging to the spirit of the dead person afflicting her. Apparently, under the tree where the girl had been standing, a couple of years earlier, a man had been killed and his body buried. The spirit belonged to the dead man. When asked by the *gaddhi* why he had possessed the girl, he said: 'She looked good'. Asked what he would take to release her, he said 'chickens'.[8] The *gaddhi* slit the throats of two chickens and offered their blood to the spirit. The spirit is said to have been appeased by the 'honour' of the offering. By this time, the girl had quietened down and was sitting still on the floor. The *gaddhi* then told the relatives that the spirit had gone and that they could take the girl home, but should remove all the clothes she was wearing and burn them. The girl's demonic behaviour did not repeat itself.

Theo, a young Sudra boy, had for some days been displaying behavioural signs that his parents found very disquieting. He would stand still in one place and stare vacantly into the distance, not responding even when called. He started dropping things and displaying other signs of clumsiness. His parents saw these sudden changes of behaviour in their son and suspected some kind of spirit affliction. The boy's mother remembered that some days earlier he had gone to play and when he returned had told her of having gone past a house where a man had recently committed suicide and of having felt a shiver pass through him as he went by. When his symptoms did not recede even after some days had passed, it was decided to take the boy to a *gaddhi*. The *gaddhi* agreed with the boy's

parents that he might have been affected by the spirit of that dead man. Since the boy was not displaying signs of acute possession—screaming or violence—he was only given a small piece of charmed wood to wear around his neck so that he would not be affected by the spirit again. The boy's symptoms apparently decreased and his parents were of the opinion that this was to be attributed to the cure that was given.

Virginia, a young Sudra woman, had been married two years when she started hearing strange sounds as she moved about in her house. She heard the sounds of shuffling feet behind her every time she walked and felt that someone was watching her all the time. One day, she was holding a pan of hot water in the kitchen when she suddenly heard a sound right behind her head. In her fear, she dropped the pan and badly scalded her feet. Her husband remembered that his father's unmarried sister, who had survived his parents, had been living in the house with him when she died some months before he himself married. Her death anniversary was approaching in a few weeks. Since Virginia had grown very afraid after the incident, it was decided to go to a *gaddhi* to obtain a cure. The *gaddhi* took the name of her husband's dead aunt and of all his other dead relatives. Then he sat down and started taking their names as he went slowly into a trance. He invoked the names of all the relatives, asking which one of them was persecuting the patient and in the course of doing this took the dead aunt's name—Phillipa—the most frequently. This was taken by Virginia's husband as a sign that it was her spirit that was at work here. When the *gaddhi* awoke from his trance, he confirmed the suspicion. It was recommended that a meal be offered in honour of the dead aunt. On the day of her death anniversary, Virginia and her husband visited her grave and offered a mass for her. They also called a poor woman to the house and gave her food and some clothes in honour of the dead woman.

What we may note is that it is among the lower-caste Catholics in particular that such ideas about spirit affliction and healing seem to have developed more elaborately, which involve visits to Hindu religious specialists. In the examples given earlier, the Catholics who go to *gaddhis* themselves make various kinds of decisions in cases of suspected spirit affliction.The relatives of a patient may decide to take action to remove the spirit by beating or dousing the patient with water.

They may also reach tentative conclusions regarding the identity of the spirit. The *gaddhi* takes note of these suspicions and of the actions already taken by the patient's relatives and might even agree with or confirm their suspicions.

It may perhaps be argued that the continuing vitality of ideas and practices about spirit affliction among lower-caste groups may be related to the fact that they appear to retain a degree of control over the ritual activity involved in these practices (see Kapferer 1983). While the high-caste group remains in control of church-centred rituals, participation in such practices perhaps enables the lowest social groups to have some control in a setting which is outside that dominated by the former.[9] In recent times, some of these practices have been drawn into the Charismatic movement. Joining the movement itself has become an opportunity for some lower-caste Catholics to challenge the high Chardos on their own ground, as it were, within the arena of the church.

Conflict and Contestation

In this final section, I will discuss the conflicts that have taken place in the church between the major and minor confraternities. These conflicts, as we shall see, have divided the minor confraternity, with the low Chardos seeking to separate themselves from the Sudras, and both coming into conflict with the high, first-class Chardo *gauncars*. Disputes between the confraternities of the different caste groups are quite common. It is probable that in the past conflicts over the distribution of ritual privileges in the temples took place between different groups in the village. This has certainly been shown for other parts of India, particularly in the south (Dirks 1987, Mosse 1986).

In Goa we do know that conflicts between the Catholic confraternities of different villages were often present during the Portuguese period (Xavier 1907). However, the missionaries or church authorities to whom such conflicts were referred usually maintained the privileges of the high-caste *gauncars* in such situations (Gomes 1987). Hence, while these conflicts are not something altogether recent, today newer kinds of tensions have started feeding into them. The agrarian context is in a fluid and dynamic state and this has, perhaps, given rise to tensions which are brought into the ritual sphere.

The first major conflict between the two confraternities in recent decades took place in the late 1960s. By this period, a change had come

about in the economic position of the various caste groups. Many among the lower social groups had started taking up jobs outside the village and had thereby improved their economic position in a major way. Political changes had also taken place. The high-caste *gauncars* had lost all control over the management of *comunidade* land and other matters. The district administration had taken over control of these lands and other administrative rights had come under the *panchayats* in each village.

Further, during this period, changes were taking place within the church itself. With the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, the church was coming to terms with the realities of a post-colonial world and the ideas of democracy and social equality that it had thrown up. It became important for the church to redefine its stance with regard to these issues. As Ryan (1968: 244) argues, 'In an age when men are struggling to end discrimination and oppression and to establish the freedom, equality and independence of all men it was important that Vatican II should proclaim explicitly that no political, racial or social differences can offset the equality of all who belong to the people of God'.

In Goa, we have noted how changes in the liturgy sought to bring about a more equal relationship between the clergy and the laity and to enable greater participation of the latter in the mass by having it said in the local language. The Council made it clear that 'the laity are not second-class citizens and the mission of the church is not the preserve of those in holy orders' (Ryan 1968: 237).[10] Another consequence of all these changes, for Goa at least, appears to be the more subdued role the church seems to take when conflicts emerge between different confraternities. It is now less willing to be seen supporting the higher-caste *gauncars* as used to happen frequently in the past (Gomes 1987). Thus, it is not economic factors alone that have led to conflict between the major and minor confraternities in Santosgaon. Rather, a combination of economic, ideological and political factors appears to have come into play in generating such conflicts in recent times.

The first time serious conflict broke out between the two confraternities in recent decades, it was focused on the rights centred around the *passe* celebrations. In Chapter Four, I described the *passe* as I had witnessed it during the period of fieldwork. However, in the past, the crucifixion had been more elaborately celebrated. Earlier, the *gauncars* used to take the large cross in procession around the church after the evening service wearing their red capes. They would be met by members of the lower-caste confraternity who carried the image of Mary and wore the blue capes that were allotted to them. The biblical scene described in

the gospel by John between Christ on the cross and his mother would then be enacted.

Some time in the late 1960s, this celebration became the focus of much conflict. A serious fight broke out between the *gauncars* and the Sudra and Chardo non-*gauncar* members of the minor confraternity over who should carry the cross. They came up to attack the *gauncars* and lunged at the cross trying to snatch it from the latter. They were stopped with difficulty and the celebrations could not proceed that year. Now that the dissent had come out into the open, a new situation arose. Though the fight had included both Sudras and Chardo non-*gauncars*, it emerged that the latter did not want to be associated with the Sudras. In the heated exchanges that followed, it emerged that the low Chardos really wanted to be given the privilege of joining the confraternity of the high Chardos—the *Confraria de Santissimo e Nossa Senhora de Socorro*—and of handling the cross and wearing the red capes that distinguished the latter. They wanted to be given rights in the celebration of the feasts of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and St. Bartholomew. However, they did not want the Sudras to be given all these rights: they should remain in the minor confraternity.

The conflict was brought to the attention of the then Archbishop of Goa, and the church, in the new, post-colonial times more acutely sensitive to any accusation of acquiescing to privileges for any particular social group, stopped the wearing of red capes by the high-caste *gauncars* and the carrying of the large cross in procession. The conflict slowly died down after that. As a result of this conflict, the dominance exercised by the major confraternity in rituals centred around the church was, to some extent, challenged. Today, the situation is complex. We find that while the members of the minor confraternity wear their blue capes on the feast of St. Sebastian, on the feasts organized by the high-caste *gauncars* red capes are no longer worn.

Since the conflict though, the low Chardos have largely withdrawn themselves from the organization of the celebration of the feast of St. Sebastian, saying: 'We do not involve ourselves in all this. They organize the feast. We keep out of all the arrangements'. Thus, they seek to separate themselves from the Sudras and other lower groups and assert their Chardo status as it were. The Sudras, on the other hand, have begun to show more ostentation in the celebration of the feast, as we saw in the use of cameras and videos.

The next major conflict that we see in the village is essentially between the Sudras and the high Chardos. In this conflict. the Sudras tried

to assert themselves by holding a separate prayer service on the day of the *passe*, Good Friday. This new move by the Sudras was seen as a challenge not only by the Chardo *gauncars*, who drove them out of the church, but also by the low Chardos, who supported the latter. As one of them said to me: 'These Sudras are getting above themselves'.

What gave rise to this new conflict? It seems that the entry of the Charismatic movement into Goa in the early 1980s or so may once again have given new life to conflicts between the different social groups in the village. A brief description of the Charismatic movement may be in order here. The movement is part of a wider Pentecostal movement in Christian groups of all denominations, particularly Protestants, that originated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It seems to have welled up more or less simultaneously and independently in various parts of the world. The movement entered the Catholic church in a big way in the 1960s in the United States, when it emerged out of the activities of various prayer groups which were influenced by the Pentecostal stress on the Holy Spirit. Since then, the movement has spread to all parts of the Catholic world.

The Charismatic movement relies on the biblical teachings in the New Testament that speak about the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Charismatics believe that they can obtain these spiritual gifts or powers through prayer and can use them in a variety of ways, particularly to heal or cure people of physical ailments or remove afflictions caused by evil spirits. Thus, the stress in the movement is on the spiritual power that Charismatics obtain from the Holy Spirit and its use in healing.

The Catholic church has had an uneasy relationship with the Charismatic movement. In theory, the movement has been approved of by the Roman church. However, in practice, as we see in Goa, while there are some priests associated with the movement, most parish priests tend to oppose the Charismatics because they see their activities as disruptive of the order of church ritual and ceremony and as promoting conflict within the church. In the 1970s, a number of Charismatic groups were formed in various parts of Goa. In Santosgaon, as in many other places, the movement tended to attract Sudra and other lower groups in particular. These groups find themselves socio-economically and politically in an inferior position within the existing hierarchies of caste, status and power. As we shall see, they bring into the Charismatic movement some of their ideas and practices with respect to spirit affliction and healing.

It is not clear how the Charismatic movement came to India or became widespread here. It appears, though, that the movement was already in existence by the middle of this century among Christians in major cities and other urban areas. From there, it seems to have spread slowly to other places. In Goa, the movement grew out of its initial restriction to small groups of Charismatics. These were probably influenced by the teachings of Charismatic groups coming from outside Goa, possibly from nearby cities such as Mumbai and Pune.[11]

Let me describe the features of the Charismatic meetings I attended. Meetings of Charismatics take place in small groups in the houses of one of the members or in larger groups when Charismatics from two or three villages might get together. They are usually held once or twice a week, during the evenings when people are free from work. Most Charismatics are lay persons, but there are some nuns and priests associated with the movement in Goa. Two priests, in particular, are well-known to be very powerful Charismatics. These are Fr. Savio and Fr. Rufus. There are, however, some others as well. Most of the priests associated with the movement tend not to be linked with any particular parish but go from place to place organizing the meetings of the Charismatics and working with the various local groups.

These priests, however, deny that there is any caste-based aspect to the movement. As one told me:

> It might be true that many of those who join us are from the lower social groups. But we do not preach caste or any such thing. Nor do we tell them to fight the other castes or start conflicts in their local churches. We only talk about God and the power of the Holy Spirit to transform people's lives. In fact, we tell them to attend church more frequently and participate more in its activities.

Thus, there is nothing intrinsic to the Charismatic teachings or beliefs to link them unequivocally with the lower social groups. We must, therefore, look at them as they are found in the particular context and see how the lower social groups in Santosgaon take over these beliefs and practices and use them as part of their own conflicts with the high Chardos of the village.

One of the meetings I attended was led by Fr. Savio and two lay persons—a man and a woman. The meeting began with the Charismatics standing up and singing aloud spontaneous praises to Christ and the Holy Spirit and clapping their hands. There were a few moments of

spontaneous prayer by different members. Then came the moment for people who had been cured to give their testimonies. After each testimony, there was another period of singing, spontaneous prayer and clapping. Later, there was the praying over the sick and healing of afflictions. This brought the meeting to an end. This was the essential pattern of most of the Charismatic meetings.

This pattern, as we see, is different from the mass I have described earlier. In the mass, specific prayers were said and these were led by the priest. In the Charismatic meetings, there was what I call a spontaneity. In using this word, I am referring to several things. First, while there are leaders who open the meeting and often say the first prayer, they are not always (or only) priests but include lay persons as well. Further, after the initial introduction, anyone from the group can take up the prayers 'as they might be moved by the Holy Spirit'. Stress is therefore placed not on a particular order imposed by a priest or anyone else but on how the Holy Spirit moves people during the meetings.

People are encouraged to bring up their own concerns in their prayers. They might pray aloud for their families, their needs or their illnesses and so on. No control is exercised to ensure that prayers go in a certain order. Both men and women participate in the prayers and there are no caste or status distinctions to be seen. Most of the members are, in any case, from the lower castes. After each prayer there is a pause during which someone else may speak. If the pause is long enough to assume that no-one else wishes to pray aloud, the leader (or even someone else) may start up a hymn of praise and the meeting proceeds.

Finally, what we saw in the mass was that people had to follow a particular pattern of postures: at certain times everyone had to sit or kneel, at other times everyone had to stand together. An emphasis seemed to be placed on passivity, i.e., on listening or responding to the priest rather than on taking a more active part in the service. In Charismatic meetings, on the other hand, there is a more active participation of the part of the people. Clapping, singing and sometimes even dancing are seen as accepted forms of worship. No regular order is imposed: people may sit, stand or kneel during the prayer meetings as they wish or feel themselves motivated to do so. The absence of any clear hierarchy between the leaders and the group, of status distinctions or of any rigidity in modes of worship make me speak of these meetings as being somewhat more spontaneous in character than the mass or other church rituals.

Why do people join this movement? Which are the kinds of people who join? What are they looking for? As one Sudra man told me: 'In the

church it is all very rigid—sit, stand, kneel and all that. When I joined the Charismatics it was so different—spontaneous prayer, clapping, singing. I liked it'. Felix, a young Sudra man said:

> I had heard about the Charismatics but had not thought of joining them. But about eight months ago, I fell very ill. Even the doctors could not tell exactly what was wrong, though they thought it was some viral infection and were giving me treatment for that. But I kept getting worse and very weak. My wife suspected that there was some evil spirit at work. She said that we should go to the *gaddhi* or do something to find out. We were wondering what to do when a friend of mine came to see me. He had joined the Charismatics. He told me they drive out spirits and cure illnesses and all and perhaps I should try it. He said he would call Fr. Savio to see me. I agreed to try it. The next day, the Father came and he prayed over me. At once, I felt I was getting better. Since that day, believe it or not, I started responding to the doctor's treatment and got well soon. I then decided to join the Charismatics.

The themes of healing and possession emerged repeatedly in what people said to me about their reasons for joining the movement. At one meeting, a low-caste woman told me:

> My son was very sick. It was diagnosed that he had cancer. The X-ray had shown that there was a growth in his stomach. My sister came and talked to us. She had joined the Charismatic movement and she thought they could help. They had cured her cough, she said. I decided to take my son to one of the meetings. There, when the time came for healing, three of the leaders of the Charismatic group came and prayed over my son. Nothing seemed to show for some time, but when we got home, my son said that he felt less pain. That week we went to take another X-ray and they found that there was nothing! The growth had gone! From that time, I have been coming regularly for the meetings.

In another case, I was told:

> I had a strange experience. One day my husband and I were coming home late at night from a wedding when we passed a crossroad, where earlier that year a woman had died in an accident. When I

passed the place, I felt something happen to me, like a shivering sensation. After I got back, I wasn't feeling well. Since that day, I remained sick, feverish and even vomited sometimes. I had heard earlier about the Charismatics and their healing sessions, and I decided to go there. At the session, I was kneeling there when someone came up to pray over me and I felt their hands on my head. Suddenly, my body grew tense and a massive shudder, like a wind, went through me. I fell to the floor quiet. Afterwards, the Charismatic who had prayed over me told me it was the spirit that was troubling me which had gone out of me. Soon after, I found that I was completely well again. Now I am sure that the Charismatics removed the spirit which was causing me this illness.

Lower-caste members seem to have taken to the Charismatic movement and to have merged with it certain ideas about spirit affliction and healing. Mosse (1986) shows for the Tamil Catholics, as Caplan (1987) does for Madras Protestants, that ideas about spirits and misfortune have, in recent times, been integrated with the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements.[12]

In Santosgaon, at least for some lower-caste Catholics, involvement in the Charismatic movement has become a means which they can use to challenge the high castes on their own ground, i.e., within the church. This happened in Santosgaon church two years ago on the occasion of Good Friday and we turn our attention to an examination of the incident.[13] Apparently, on that day a group of Charismatics, consisting particularly of Sudras, had approached the parish priest and asked him if they could conduct a small prayer service in the church after the *passe* and the evening mass. The priest did not know that they were Charismatics and agreed. In the evening, the group of about sixty to seventy Charismatics came to the church to pray. They sat at the benches normally occupied by the laity during church services. They began in the usual manner with praise to the Holy Spirit and singing and clapping.

Apparently, knowledge of what was happening in the church came to Mr Viegas, a first-class Chardo *gauncar* of the village. He quickly went to the houses of other high Chardos and gathered a number of men together. About thirty of them came with sticks, stones and bricks and entered the church. They did not start throwing their weapons immediately but ordered the Charismatics out of the church. The latter refused to go, saying that they had asked the parish priest's permission.

Furious, the Chardo *gauncars* went to the parish house and called out the priest. Fiercely they demanded to know how he had permitted all these lower-caste people to come in here and start all their singing and so on. The priest denied that he knew what they were going to do, saying he had just thought they wanted to come in and pray quietly in the church, like many other people do on Good Friday. If he had known, he said, he would not have let them. The Chardo *gauncars* demanded that the church be closed. They went back and there was a fierce scuffle between the two groups, the *gauncars* pushing the Charismatics out of the church and even using their sticks. They threw the stones at them as they were going. No one, however, was seriously hurt. The Chardo *gauncars* made sure that the church doors were closed and locked before they went home.

What are we seeing in all this? The lower-caste Charismatics who came in on Good Friday (and who were members of the minor confraternity) may be said to have deliberately chosen that day to make a statement within the church. It has always been the high Chardo *gauncars* who have controlled the ritual celebrations on that day. The other social groups may only participate in the service or 'pray quietly' at other times. It is not for them to conduct their own service on their own lines or in their own way. This is precisely what the Sudra Charismatics seem to have been trying to do. As one of them said: 'We wanted to have our own service. These people organize everything otherwise. We also want a role in the celebrations'.

The groups which oppose these people see them as a threat to their own privileges, which are maintained by the ordered, hierarchical form of worship generally seen in the mass and in church celebrations. The kneeling, sitting, standing and, generally, ordered worship in church is, in a sense, challenged by the spontaneous prayer and worship, the singing and clapping of the Charismatics. The Chardo *gauncar's* right to oversee Good Friday celebrations is also challenged by them. The priests also oppose the Charismatics, if for slightly different reasons. As the priest himself said: 'These sorts of things cause conflicts within the church and we don't want that. I am not for or against any group but I do not like disputes and conflicts. And this clapping, singing and all leads to such things because those who are not involved in it do not like it and are not used to it'.

In the new, democratic atmosphere, the church is clearly less inclined to openly support the privileges of the high-caste *gauncars*. Yet,while the priest says that he is 'not for or against any group', his

position involves an implicit support of the high-caste élites in the village. As one high Chardo said to me: 'The priest would not have let them in if he had known what they were going to do. [This is confirmed by what the priest apparently said when the conflict occurred]'. Finally, even the lower Chardos come out against the Sudras in this matter. I quoted earlier one who said that they, i.e., the Sudras were 'getting above themselves'. This is part of the attempt of the low Chardos to separate themselves from the Sudras and assert their higher status.

These disputes are about privileges within the church, which is itself found embedded in the local relations of power and hierarchy. In the present times, as I have pointed out earlier, new kinds of tensions have given rise to and fed these disputes. Till now, however, the Chardo *gauncars* of the village, with the tacit support of the church, have managed to put down any attempts to take control from them. Moreover, the socially mobile lower groups have not attempted so much to fight the system itself but, rather, have sought to use their own newly acquired wealth to gain some of its privileges for themselves.

We might conclude by saying that the recent changes within the agrarian economy have not altered social relations in the village radically. However, the situation is fluid and the probability of more such conflicts in the future is very high. For one, we might recall the words of the Sudra informant who, speaking about the possibility of lower-caste control in the *panchayat* said: 'Maybe things will change soon'. Perhaps, these groups will gain control in the *panchayat* in the future.[14] If this happens, it may strengthen the position of these groups against the high castes. The fact that the church itself now seeks compromise in situations of conflict may also encourage those lower down the scale to use the opportunity to continue their struggle to gain the privileges they seek in church ritual.

Alternatively, and much more radically, they could opt out, as it were. A strengthening of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements could bring about a shift: the complete and lasting transfer of religious affiliation to these from the established churches. If this should, indeed, happen, the rules of the game would change entirely.

Notes

1. Authors like Dirks (1987), Appadurai and Breckenridge (1976) and Stein (1980) have written similarly about temples in south India. In Santosgaon, there are two small chapels built and maintained out of parish funds. Masses are generally held there only on the occasion of the feasts of the chapel patrons (Our Lady of Sorrows and Our Lady of Piety). Else they are used mainly for private devotion. Major feasts and rituals (and conflicts about them) centre around the village church and we limit our discussion to these.
2. Red and blue appear to be the colours instituted by the missionaries for the higher and lower confraternity in the different villages. Within the confraternity system, the colours do not seem to bear any particular religious symbolism. Red, as mentioned in Chapter Four, is usually the colour associated with martyrdom within Catholicism. As the colour of a particular confraternity it does not necessarily have this religious significance. St. Sebastian was a martyr but his feast is celebrated by the confraternity which uses blue capes.
3. In recent times, the Chardo non-*gauncars*, though they remain nominal members of the confraternity, have largely withdrawn from the celebration of the feast. Both men and women help in the decoration of the church at feasts, though only the former are registered members of the *confrarias* and carry the image. The system of allowing privileges to be held by certain caste or élite groups is different from the auctioning of such privileges to interested parties observed particularly among the Jains (Banks 1992).
4. Similar processions are described for other parts of Europe. For instance see Zika (1988) on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Germany and Davis (1981) on sixteenth-century France.
5. A number of the lower Chardos also remained in the church and did not join the procession. This is because in recent years they have started dissociating themselves from the celebration of this feast. I have described the order in the processions as I observed it. Though I focus on disputes later, I did not see or hear of any that centred particularly around the place of one's group in these processions.
6. I saw one Hindu procession in a village at some distance from Santosgaon and I could not get to the details of the social organization of the village, but I was told that the procession was led by the village *gauncars* and priests who took the image around the temple, the shops and stalls that surrounded it in a *rath*. They were followed by the other village people. This appears to be parallel to the Catholic procession I have described.
7. This seems similar to the pattern described for Hindus of western India (Kane 1946). When food is served in honour of ancestors, some might be put aside on the ground for those who did not have proper deaths.
8. Chickens, or sometimes goats, are the most common offerings made on such occasions by Hindus and Catholics in the region. It should be remembered that such animal offerings are largely to be seen among lower-caste Hindus and are usually made to lower, non-Brahmanic deities or spirits.

9. Kapferer (1983) also argues that spirit possession enables the lower classes to bring out into the public arena feelings of oppression that they cannot express through any other medium. When speaking in the voice of a spirit, a possessed person can express more freely such emotions which have no other outlet. While this does not seem to happen among the lower-caste Catholics in Goa, I would agree with Kapferer that participation in such forms of ritual activity give the lower social groups a degree of control in their ritual life which they do not have within the church itself.
10. I will not discuss here the Indianization set in motion within the Indian church around this time through means such as the use of *diyas* (lamps) or the introduction of floor mats instead of benches in the church. These moves have spread little among Catholics in Goa or Indian Christians generally. They are largely limited to some sections of educated Christians in certain metropolitan cities.
11. The Charismatic movement can perhaps be compared to various *bhakti* and devotional movements that have spread among Hindus all over India in this century. Many of these too are to be found among the urban populace, but there are also cases in villages where the low castes in particular have been drawn to such movements. See Carstairs (1957), Babb (1972) and Fuller (1992).
12. As Caplan (1987) notes, however, Charismatic beliefs are as sharply dualistic as those of orthodox Christianity. They regard spirit possession as the work of the devil and those who join the movement are urged to stop all practices of spirit propitiation, even those relating to ancestors. Hence, while the Catholics can merge with the movement their ideas about spirit possession, they must also give up beliefs regarding ancestral shades. Charismatics might give up all practices with regard to spirit propitiation and, indeed, often claim to have done so. Alternatively, they might continue such practices and visit the *gaddhi* when they believe harm has been caused by ancestors, but go to the Charismatics with other cases of spirit affliction. Though it is difficult to verify this, in fact, in none of cases of possession brought to Charismatics that I heard of, were ancestral spirits said to be involved.
13. I refer to the year 1991. I was in the field for Good Friday celebrations in 1993. People talked constantly of the incident, though there was no repetition of it in 1992 or 1993. Things had calmed down for the moment, as it were.
14. State politics too may give the lower social groups more bargaining power. While elections at the state-level have been held in Goa, such politics has not divided the castes in Santosgaon on political lines and hence has not been discussed here. When and if this happens, it may become another arena in which caste conflicts start to be played out.