

CHAPTER XXI.

RANPUR STATE.

THE State of Ranpur lies between 19° 54' and 20° 12' N., and 85° 8' and 85° 28' E., with an area of 203 square miles. It is bounded on the north, east and south by Puri district, and on the west by Nayāgarh State. The south-west is a region of forest-clad and almost entirely uninhabited hills, which wall in its whole western side, except at a single point, where a pass leads into the adjoining State of Nayāgarh. To the north and east there are extensive fertile and populous valleys. The average rainfall for the six years from 1902-03 to 1907-08 was 55·94 inches. The headquarters of the State are at Ranpur.

The Ranpur State claims to be the most ancient of all the States formerly known as the Orissa Tributary Mahāls and a list of the Chiefs of the State covers a period of over 3,600 years. The family records are most interesting, and besides noticing the exploits and marvellous deeds of individual Chiefs, contain references to the various paramount powers of Orissa from the early Hindu rulers to the Muhammadans and Marāthās, but their authenticity is doubtful. According to the family history of this State, Biswabasu and Biswabāsab, two brothers of the Benu Rāj family, lived in the forests of the Nilgiri hills, but were driven out. The younger brother Biswabāsab fled with a few attendants and took refuge in the valley of the Munināg hill, amidst vast forest tracts, sparsely inhabited. Biswabāsab here established himself reclaiming the forests and gradually subdued the Bhuiyās of the neighbouring villages. It is related that one day when Biswabāsab was walking in the forest he found an image of a goddess which he brought to Munināg hill and worshipped. The goddess being pleased with the worship appeared to him in a dream and said: "My son, this land belonged once to Ranāsūr, but you may now live here and construct a village on the eastern side of the hill. Your supremacy may continue permanently." Biswabāsab accordingly established the State and built a village and called it Ranpur. It is mentioned in the Kapil-Samhitā that 1,274 years of the Kali

Yuga had passed when this State was established. This would be many years before the commencement of the Christian era. It was at first bounded on the south by Boitā hill and the Haldā river; west by the Kusumī river; north by the Horā river; east by Kantaināl and the Champāibhuin hill. The area of the State was once more extensive than it now is and tradition states that at one time the Dayā river was the eastern boundary, Bānki the northern, and the Chilkā lake the southern boundary. On the death of a Chief a stone statue is erected, and according to this old custom the statues of deceased Chiefs are kept in the burial ground. The first 54 Chiefs are alleged to have held the *gadi* of the State for 1,743 years, and on the death of Ananta Singh, the 54th Chief, his son Harihar Singh, succeeded, according to the family tradition, to the *gadi* in the year A.D. 16. Arjun Bhanj, Chief of Baud, defeated Nidhi Singh the 85th Chief and conquered Ranpur. But his son, Pitāambar Singh recovered the State, became Chief of Ranpur, and holding the *gadi* for 50 years died in 1108 A.D. In the 12th century the then Chief of Ranpur received at the hands of Ananga Bhīma Deva, Rājā of Orissa, the title of "Narendra" and was enrolled among the Sāmānta Rājas owing to his prowess in battle. Since his time, the Chiefs of Ranpur have always enjoyed the title of "Narendra". Rājā Ram Chandra Narendra the 96th Chief who succeeded to the *gadi* in 1437 A.D., did much to improve and develop the State and was a student of astronomy. His son extended the northern and eastern boundaries of the State of Ranpur, constructed seven strong forts, held his *gadi* for 49 years and died in 1525 A.D. He was succeeded by his son, Banamālī Narendra, who is said to have been an expert in statuary. Stone images made by him are still to be found in many places within the State.

During the time of the Chief Rām Chandra Narendra, who held the *gadi* from 1692 to 1727 A.D., many inhabitants of Khurdā, owing to the oppression of the Muhammadans, fled for shelter to Ranpur and settled there. He was succeeded by his son, Sārangadhar Bajradhar Narendra, who held his *gadi* from 1727 to 1754 A.D. During his time the Marāthās under Raghuji conquered Orissa. Sārangadhar met Raghuji by the side of the Mahānadi river, and the story goes that in order to prove his prowess as a warrior he killed a wild buffalo with a stick of sugarcane. Raghuji as a reward for Sārangadhar's bravery gave him the title of "Bajradhar" which is still employed as a family title by the Chiefs of the State. The present Chief Krishna Chandra Singh Deva Birabar Bajradhar Narendra

Mahāpātra succeeded in 1899 A.D. The emblem of the State is a sword and the family title is Bajradhar Narendra Mahāpātra.

The population increased from 40,115 in 1891 to 46,075 in 1901; it is contained in 261 villages, and the density is 227 persons to the square mile. Hindus number 45,762 of the whole population, by far the most numerous caste being the Chasās (14,000). Next in importance rank the Gauras (3,500). There is a comparatively small population of Khonds (1,631). The population is classified as follows:—Hindus—males, 22,818, females, 22,944. The Hindus thus form 99·3 per cent. of the population of the State; proportion of males in total Hindus, 49·8 per cent. Musalmāns—males, 183, females, 130: total of Musalmāns, 313, or ·67 per cent. of the population; proportion of males in total Musalmāns, 58·4 per cent. Christians, *nil*. Literates number 3,101 or 6·7 per cent. of the population. Averages:—villages per square mile, 1·29; houses per village, 35·4; persons per village, 177; persons per house, 5; houses per square mile, 45·5. The villages are classified as follows:—247 with less than five hundred; 11 with from five hundred to a thousand; 2 with from a thousand to two thousand and 1 with from two to five thousand inhabitants. The people are well off; the lands are fertile and there is ready means of export for surplus stocks.

There is a charitable dispensary at headquarters with a small indoor ward: the number of patients treated in 1907-08 was 10,607. The country to the south and east is not unhealthy, but in other parts of the State, fever is very prevalent, 43 per cent. of the deaths in the State being due to fever: cholera in epidemic form, frequently introduced by pilgrims from Purī, accounted during the ten years from 1893 to 1902 for 26 per cent. of the deaths. Vaccination is not popular in the State, but is gradually making headway and the number of primary vaccinations 945 in 1907-08 was the largest for many years: in the year 1906-07 revaccination was started, and in 1907-08 the number of revaccinations was 65. The work is carried on by licensed vaccinators, who are local men trained in the special vaccination class at the Medical School, Cuttack.

The open area of the State is well cultivated and the villages are large and populous: winter rice is the main crop, but early rice is grown in considerable quantity and excellent crops of oil-seeds and pulses are raised. The total area of the State is 130,969 acres, of which forests occupy 80,280 acres; the normal acreage under crops is 35,934 acres, of which 3,000 acres

twice-cropped: of this area rice normally occupies 31,142 acres *māndiā* 643 acres and *til* (sesamum) 350 acres.

RENTS,
WAGES
AND
PRICES.

The assessment averages per *mān* (two-thirds of an acre) for first, second and third class rice lands Rs. 3-6-2, Rs. 2-5-6 and Re. 1-4-10 respectively and for uplands, Re. 1-0-8. During the ten years from 1893 to 1902 wages have shown no tendency to rise and the daily wage has averaged as follows:—superior mason, 4½ annas, common mason, blacksmith and carpenter, 3 annas each, superior carpenter and superior blacksmith, 4 annas each, cooly, 1½ annas: during the same period the average price of wheat, rice, gram and salt has been 9¼ seers, 20⅜ seers, 25¼ seers, 12½ seers respectively.

OCCUPA-
TIONS,
MANU-
FACTURES
AND
TRADE.

There are no occupations or manufactures which call for notice. There are bi-weekly markets at headquarters, where country products are bartered for iron, cotton, blankets, cloth, silk, wheat and clarified butter brought from the Khandparā State, and for fish from the Chilkā lake.

MEANS OF
COMMUNI-
CATION.

The State lies close to the East Coast section of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway and the headquarters are connected with the line of rail at Kāluparāghāt station by a good road. There is also a good feeder road from the headquarters to the Madras Trunk Road, 10 miles in length, partly bridged and metalled. A new surface road from the headquarters to the Nayāgarh border is under construction. There is a rest-house for travellers at the headquarters and a post office. The post plies *viā* Khurda.

LAND
REVENUE
ADMINIS-
TRATION.

The land revenue demand amounts to Rs. 44,892 and is realised in two instalments in November and April. No cesses are levied and there are no zamindāris in the State. The number of grants, known as *khanjā* grants to relations of the Chief by way of maintenance is considerable. The system of the land revenue administration is similar to that of other States and the village *sarbarāhhkārs* (headmen) receive a cash commission on collection. The last land settlement was made in 1899 for a period of twenty years: six rates were fixed for wet cultivation varying from Rs. 4-11-0 to Rs. 2-1-4 per *mān* (two-thirds of an acre).

GENERAL
ADMINIS-
TRATION.

The State is administered by the Chief assisted by a *Diwān*, and the relations with the British Government are defined by the *sanad* of 1894 which was revised in 1908. The estimated annual revenue of the State is about Rs. 54,000 and a tribute of Rs. 1,401 is paid to the British Government. Forests yielded in 1907-08 a revenue of Rs. 2,227: no green timber is sold and the Chief has reserved forest areas; the forests in the past have been considerably depleted of valuable timber: in 1907-08

Finances.
Forests.

excise yielded Rs. 2,442: the supply of opium, which may be Excise. obtained from the Government treasury, is limited to 7 seers per mensem. The majority of the civil suits are of a petty Justice. nature, the greater number being for sums under Rs. 50 in value: in 1907-08 the number of civil suits for disposal was 207, 64 per cent. of them being below the value of Rs. 50. Crime is Crime. light and there is very little serious crime; the total number of cases reported to the police in 1907-08 being 36: the police force consists of one Sub-Inspector, 5 Head-Constables and 21 Police. constables. The jail is an old building with mud walls and the Jail. accommodation is for 20 prisoners. In 1907-08 the average daily population was 11.61. In 1907-08 the total expenditure Public Works Department. incurred in the Public Works Department amounted to Rs. 2,119.

The State maintains a Middle English, 3 Upper Primary Educa- and 33 Lower Primary schools, besides there is one private TION. school: the number of pupils in 1907-08 on the rolls was 660. The State receives assistance from Government for primary education.