

Questions on the customs of the Magh people and their answers.

5 First question: In olden days which countries (*mulk*) did the Maghs rule and now [which contries do they rule]? What were those places called, how are they called now?

10 First answer: In olden days the countries of Barānasī, Kapīlasar, Bangālā, Hānsī, and Hankas al-dabḥ and Asān, etc. were under the control of the Magh people. Now in the countries of Hānsī and Hanshamādī and Manī-pūr, etc. in one hundred and one such countries and Rakhang and Āshām and Singaldīp, the king Chatardhar does business (*'amal*) with those countries (they say that because he must receive presents from some important king).

15 Second question: In the past, did the Magh people use to worship idols? Do they still do this now?

Second answer: In the past, the Magh people revered the idol of Lord Buddha and used to bring his name to

2 Questions... 3 answers] This translation is based on the ext contained in the ms. orient. Fol. 281, f. 125a-131b (Pertsch, no 15.10) preserved in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. Note that the transliteration of proper names, Indic and Arakanese words is tentative. 13 they... 14 king] I assume this is a comment made by the person who recorded the interview.

rememberance, and now they still do that. They do not
 20 perform *pūja*-s, that is worship (*parastish*).

Third question: In this way of worshipping, what are the
 names of the idols? What are the benefits of worshipping
 idols, and what is their motivation to worship them?

Third answer: The Magh people used to call the idol of
 25 lord Buddha Kandūchā'in in the *sat jūg*, and in the *tartiyā*
jūg Katābakūm, and in the *dwāpar jūg* Kachāpā and in the
kal jūg Kadiyā. One obtains *nirbān*, that is to say one is
 not reborn, by attending to the aforementioned idols.

Fourth question: Do the Magh people consist of many
 30 different groups (*firqa*), and if they do, what are these
 groups called and what is the rank of each group?

Fourth answer: Among the Magh people there are various
 groups: the Barma, Sakrā, Badwā, Chīn, Magh, Akjā,
 Chakmā, Maurūm, Khang, and so forth, make up twenty
 35 communities. Among them four are eminent: the Barmas,
 Badwās, Maghs and Chīns.

Fifth question: In olden days, were the Magh people part
 of the Hindus or not? If they were, for what reason did
 they split off? And who is the founder of the religion of
 40 the Maghs? For how long has the religion of the Maghs
 existed?

Fifth answer: The Magh people were not part of the Hindus in the past and are not [part of the Hindus] now.

45 Sixth question: In the religion of the Maghs and in the religion of the Hindus, which customs were similar and which were different? And which are [similar and different] now?

50 Answer: The way of worshipping of the Magh people was different from that of the Hindus in the past and still is [different] now.

Seventh question: If someone from another community, such as a Muslim, etc., wishes to become a Magh, is it possible or not?

55 Answer: If someone belonging to another community wishes to become Magh, he becomes Magh by taking up their faith (*āwardan-i īmān*) and listening to *mantaryānī*.

Eighth question: If someone belonging to another community can become Magh, what is the process by which he becomes like a Magh?

60 Eighth answer: This person from another community becomes Magh by taking, that reciting, the *pāyaj tārānī mantar* of Lord Buddha.

Ninth question: Can the Maghs eat or drink with, or marry people from another community? If they can, with people
65 from which communities?

Ninth answer: The Magh people cannot marry into, or eat or drink with another community.

Tenth question: In the book of laws of the Maghs, the customs of the *rāwalī* and the *zunnārdār* are often written
70 together. What is the difference in rank between the two? For what reason do the Maghs consider the *zunnārdār*, who is eminent among the Hindus, [also] eminent [among their own people]?

Tenth answer: In the book of laws of the Maghs, as well as
75 in other of books of the Maghs, the customs of the *rāwalīs* and *zunnārdārs* are written together, because it is by reciting the *barma mantar* that one becomes *barma*. And it is by taking the garment (*pārcha*), that is wearing the religious habit (*khirqā*), that one becomes a *rāwalī*, and by
80 taking the thread (*zunnār*) that one becomes a thread-wearing (*zunnārdār*) *barma*. Therefore [the Maghs] consider the people (*qaum*) of the *zunnārdārs* eminent.

Eleventh question: Do the *rāwalīs* have restrictions since ancient times or not? For what reason and for how long?

85 Eleventh answer: The group (*fīrqa*) of the *rāwalīs* is forbidden from marrying from the times of the Buddha, and this is still the case today.

Twelfth question: Are the language and alphabet of the Maghs original, or are they derived from Sanskrit, or some
90 other language and alphabet? [In the latter case,] what is this language and what is this alphabet?

Twelfth answer: The science of the Maghs is ancient, and Lord Buddha spread it widely (*ān-rā bisyār jāri karda*). There are four books which are of importance for this
95 people. Lord Buddha has derived many treatises (*shāstars*) from those books, that is to say he made them current.

Thirteenth question: In olden days, were there many countries under the control of the Maghs or not? If there were many more, for how long did they lose [control over]
100 them, and what is the reason of this [loss]?

Thirteenth answer: In olden days, many countries were under the sway of the Maghs. Since the times of Farrukh Siyar's rule (i.e. 1713-1719), the Magh people have lost the country of Bangālā.

105 Fourteenth question: Do the Magh people, like the Hindus, consider cows and other animals divinities (*devatā*) and worthy of high respect or not? If they do, which animals

[do they consider worthy of high respect] and for what reason?

110 Fourteenth answer: The Magh people, like Hindus, consider some animals worthy of high respect, but they hold the lion (*śing*) in especially high esteem.

Fifteenth question: Muslims consider Ḥanīfa a religious leader (*sardār-i dīn*), similarly do the Maghs have a
115 religious leader? If they do, how do they call his rank and where does he reside?

Fifteenth answer: The religious leader of the Maghs is *ūnīt rāwalī* and he resides in the city of Rakhang. In the country of Chātḡām there is no king of the Magh people.
120 Since there is no *ūnīt rāwalī* among the Maghs living there, they accept the [authority of] *rāja ūnīt rāwalī*.

Sixteenth question: Among the Muslim people there are [sects] like the Shī‘as and the Sunnīs. Are there such [sects] among the Maghs? If there are, what is the name of
125 each sect (*mazhab*)?

Sixteenth answer: Among Muslims there are two groups (*fīrqa*), the Shī‘as and the Sunnīs; [similarly the Maghs call] one group the *rājīn*, who do not consider the *rāwalīs* worthy of respect. The other nineteen groups of Maghs
130 consider the *rāwalīs* worthy of respect.

Seventeenth question: Are there restrictions regarding food and drink for the Maghs? If there are, what are they and what is the reason behind such restrictions?

135 Seventeenth answer: For the Maghs no food or drink is forbidden. That is, they eat what is edible and do not eat what is not edible.

Eighteenth question: What are the chiefs of the country of the Maghs called in Maghī and in the language of Hind?

140 Eighteenth answer: In the Maghī language, they call the leader of the Magh people *rwācha*, and in the language of Hind, *chaudharī*.

Nineteenth question: Do they, that is the Maghs, have a book describing hell (*dozakh*) and [also] a book depicting heaven (*bihisht*)?

145 Nineteenth answer: The Maghs have books describing hell and heaven and depicting *barma* and *nirbān*, that is when one will not be reborn; if one searches, one will find it.

Twentieth question: When was the beginning of the era that the Maghs use now and what is its span?

150 Twentieth answer: In the books of the Maghs things have been recorded since the time of Chakrawartī Rāja, and the span [of this era] extends from the *sat jūg* up to the *kal jūg*.

From the time of Adakākāarak until Lord Buddha, there were thirty Chakrawartī Rājas, that is to say *rājas* of the
 155 seven climates. This represents four million and three hundred and eight thousand years.

Twenty-first question: According to the calculations of the Maghs, how many years have now passed since the creation of the world?

160 Twenty-first answer: In the books of the Maghs, the creation of the world is calculated according to the following subdivisions: The period of *sat jūg* lasts for four hundred thirty-two thousand years; *tartiyā jūg* eight hundred and sixty-four thousand years; the *dwāpar jūg*
 165 lasts one million, two hundred and ninety-six thousand years; the *kal jūg* lasts one million seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand years. In this way, sixty-four such *jūgs* are counted as one *kalb*.

170 Twenty-second question: Do the Magh people believe in the storm of Nūḥ in which the entire world drowned?

Twenty-second answer: Long ago, the entire world drowned in the water. In the Maghī language it is called *kānīn pālank* and in the language of Hind *mahāpartī*, and Muslims call it the storm of Nūḥ.

175 Twenty-third question: What kind of person was Lord Buddha, who is the prophet (*paighambar*) of the Maghs? What is he called in other languages? How long did he perform his prophethood (*paighambarī karda*)? And how long ago did he pass away?

180 Twenty-third answer: Dā'ūd is called 'Kadamā' in Maghī and Hindus call him 'Budh *awatār*' and Muslims 'Dā'ūd *paighambar*'. In this way, Dā'ūd has ten names, and they also say 'Budhū *thākur*'. After he was born in the *kal jūg* and *dawāpar jūg*, he lived for eighty years. Two thousand
185 two hundred and fifty-two years have passed since his *nirbān*, that is to say since he died.

Twenty-fourth question: For the Muslim people, the Ka'ba is the place of the Ḥajj and Madīna is where the prophet is buried. They consider it a pious act (*ṣawāb*) to
190 circumambulate (*tawāf*) those two places. Is there such a place of pilgrimage for the Maghs? If there is such a place, where is it, and what do they call it?

Twenty-fourth answer: In the same way that for Muslims Makka and Madīna are two places of pilgrimage, the
195 Magh people have three *makān-i tīrt*, that is to say, shrines (*ziyārat-gāh*). The first is Mahābut, the second Chandar-sīkhar, the third Mā'ahāshīshī mahābudh. Those three *tīrts* are considered important shrines.

Twenty-fifth question: Since when have reading and
 200 writing (*khwāndan wa niwishtan*) been current among the
 Maghs? Who established the Maghī [system of] reading
 and writing?

Twenty-fifth answer: The system of reading and writing
 has been current since the rule of Mahāṣamadā *rāja*
 205 *chakrawartī*, that is to say the *rāja* of the seven climates,
 [and it was established] by Kandūchā'īn *thākur*.

Twenty-sixth question: You must write a list of the books
 of the Maghs along with their topics in this way: such a
 book deals with such a topic.

210 Twenty-sixth answer: Mahāsā-rāja commissioned the
 composition of the 'Book of justice' (*Kitāb-i 'adālat*) and
 Mannū *tapisha*, that is to say Mannū the ascetic (*zāhid*),
 composed it. The aforementioned ascetic was born before
 Lord Buddha and he was an accomplished man.

215 Twenty-seventh question: Do the Maghs consider it among
 their duties to bathe everyday and to worship the sun and
 moon as the Hindus do?

Twenty-seventh answer: The Maghs usually perform
 religious duties three times a day. First in the morning,
 220 then at midday, and for the third time in the evening they

remember the lord Buddha by imagining him as Niranjan,
that is to say the Creator.

Twenty-eighth question: For Muslims it is compulsory to
pray five times a day. In the same way, how many times [a
225 day] must the Magh people pray?

Twenty-eighth answer: The Magh people recite the name
of Lord Buddha. They do not worship other idols as the
Hindus do.

Twenty-ninth question: In the administration of the kings
230 of the past and now, how was and is carried out the collect
of land revenue?

Twenty-ninth answer: In the administration of the Magh
people, formerly the treasurer in charge of the lands of
Magh kings took the revenue according to the *kānī*, that is
235 to say the Maghī *bīgha* of four *ānas*. Now one *kānī*
amounts to one rupee and four *ānas*.

Thirtieth question: For the Magh people is it proper to
sacrifice [animals] by cutting their throats, or to kill [them]
as Hindus do, or do they eat dead [animals]?

240 Thirtieth answer: The Magh people eat sheeps and other
edible animals either by sacrificing them or not (*mazbūḥ*)

yā ghair mazbūh), that is to say either by killing them or cutting their throat. In this matter nothing is fixed.

245 Thirty-first question: How long before the lord Buddha did the birth of Mahāsāthā occur? After the death of the lord Buddha how many customs of the sciences of the Maghs gained currency? What kind of person was Mahāsāthā who was born before Lord Buddha, and what was his rank?

250 Thirty-first answer: After the death of Lord Buddha, kings dug wells, built monasteries and caravansaries in various places.

Thirty-second question: Do the Magh people recognize the virtue of Rām and Lachman like the Hindus or do they not?

255 Thirsty-second answer: The Magh people consider Rām and Lachman to be *rāja chakrawartīs* and, in the books of the Mags, it is recorded that in the times of *sat jūg* they will be born again.