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The Hermit Village of Malana – an update on community democracy and the management of change in the Indian Himalayas.

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ABSTRACT

In the decades that followed Independence, the study of rural society became the backbone for new sociological understandings of India. This chapter starts with one of these accounts – Colin Rosser's study of the 'hermit' village of Malana – and goes on to offer an update on the economic, political and social organization of this unique community in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu District. Rosser's initial description of Malana (1952) was of a village that was not only physically remote but also insistent on enforcing a strict social and political separation from the wider world. Yet, closer examination revealed to Rosser the cosmological order and systems of tribute that allowed the people of Malana to survive in their mountain fastness. The second part of this chapter updates Malana's story to consider processes of economic and political change demonstrated through the introduction of cannabis as a cash crop, the building of dams and roads in the valley, and a devastating fire that tore through the village in 2008. Viewed collectively these different aspects of change are bound together though the shared cultural logic of the Malani people and a set of political institutions determined to manage relations with the external world.

UPDATING THE STUDY OF INDIA'S VILLAGES

In the decades following Independence, the study of rural life became the backbone for new sociological understandings of Indian society. A network of scholars was established that, taking the village as their unit of analysis, chose to conduct field-studies on a number of interrelated themes. The arrival of anthropologists in rural India focused attention on the everyday workings of caste, family, politics and religious beliefs at the local level. Often published in the Economic Weekly and subsequently brought together in collections such as Srinivas' *India's Villages* (1955) and McKim Marriott's *Village India* (1955), these studies aimed to demonstrate the complex interplay of social, political and economic relations and identify the ways these relationships were being reshaped in a newly democratic India with big plans for development.

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This chapter starts with one of these accounts – Colin Rosser's study of the 'hermit village' of Malana – and goes on to offer an update on the economic, political and social organization of this unique community in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu District. Rosser's initial description of Malana (1952[2]) was of a village that was not only physically remote but also insistent on enforcing a strict social and political separation from the wider world. Yet, closer examination revealed to Rosser the cosmological order and systems of tribute that underpinned the Malani people's survival. The second part of this chapter updates Malana's story to consider processes of economic and political change demonstrated through the introduction of cannabis as a cash crop, the building of dams and roads in the valley, and a devastating fire that tore through the village in 2008. Viewed collectively these different aspects of change are bound together though the shared cultural logic of the Malani people and a set of political institutions determined to manage relations with the external world. Rosser's detailed findings permit a longitudinal appreciation of Malana's engagement with wider polities and the workings of systems of exchange that reach out to the global. The apparent isolation and hostility to outsiders displayed by the people of this 'hermit village' are here re-evaluated as cultural activities which set out protocols for engagement and the management of change.

THE HERMIT VILLAGE OF MALANA

Of the first wave of village studies ethnographers, it was Colin Rosser who chose what was – physically and psychologically – perhaps the most challenging locations to undertake fieldwork. Having graduated from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, Rosser joined SOAS as one of the first candidates to study for a PhD in the newly created Department of Cultural Anthropology. Leaving for India in early 1951 he spent a period of twenty-one months in Kullu Sub-Division of what is now Himachal Pradesh. Though she is not mentioned in the published account, throughout this time Colin was accompanied by his wife Tessa.

Rosser had already earmarked Malana as a possible site for study even before his arrival in Kullu. Nevertheless, he spent the hot and monsoon seasons in the Kullu valley before heading for the Pin Parbati valley in the autumn of 1951. A full day's walk from its closest neighbour, he found Malana 'perched, at an altitude of just under 9000 feet above sea level, on a narrow shelf high on one side of a wild and isolated glen surrounded by formidable mountain ranges' (Rosser 1956: 1)

> 'High pastures, dense forests, jagged rock outcrops forming sheer cliff faces, numerous small streams plunging over high waterfalls down to the main Malana torrent, precipitous slopes, and finally an eight-mile long gorge closing the exit – these are the chief characteristics of the terrain inhabited by the Malanis' (Rosser 1956: 89).

The severe physical isolation of Malana is stressed by Rosser because of its great consequence when considering the social organisation of its inhabitants. Malana could not be called a typical Kullu village. Though the Malanis used Kullui in their dealings with outsiders, within the village they spoke a language - Kanashi – which is not spoken or understood outside Malana: 'it automatically marks all non-Malanis as alien' (Rosser 1952: 477).

[2] Subsequently re-published in Srinivas's edited collection on India's Villages (1955).

Typical Kullui social relations, as described by Rosser, were based around a 'fundamental cleavage' between the clean castes (*bhitarka* meaning of the inner circle) and the unclean castes (*baharka* meaning outsiders) (1956: 14-15). This was not the case in Malana. Within the village Rosser's survey recorded 116 families who referred to themselves as Kanets and another three who were low-caste Lohars. Contrary to convention elsewhere, 'the Malanis do not bother very much about the finer distinctions of caste differentiation... but tend to regulate their behaviour towards all Kullu villagers outside their own glen in terms of this bhitarka/baharka groupings' (Rosser 1956: 16). Thus, when visiting other villages in Kullu and when receiving visitors in their own village, the people of Malana 'appear to act as if they belonged to a caste apart from all others' (Rosser 1956: 48). This division determines marriage practices also: the 116 Kanet households were divided into eight patrilineal clans that defined the exogenous units for marriage. Through the practice of village endogamy, the Kanets of Malana insulated themselves against external contamination. Internally, all these clans considered themselves equal.

Perhaps most strikingly, the Malanis saw physical contact with all outsiders as highly polluting. Visitors to Malana were forbidden from touching people, possessions or buildings; they were not allowed to bring leather items into the village; nor were they permitted to walk on village footpaths. Any transgression to these rules was punishable by a stiff fine. 'Malana stands alone: independent, autonomous, "different" in the eyes of Kullu people' (Rosser 1952: 477).

> '...the Kullu villagers regards the Malanis as a group which stands outside the main stream of social life in Kullu; a group which is strange, foreign even, and without parallel in other Kullu villagers however remote... The Malanis are regarded as wild and uncanny by their Kullu neighbours.... In many of their customs they appear backward and "jungli" to the much more sophisticated Kullu villager' (Rosser 1956: 477).

The result of this physical, linguistic and social isolation was that Malana 'ha[d] been left more or less to govern itself' (Rosser 1956: 33). Enjoying a kind of de facto independence, Malana 'has its own system of village government, its own court for settling disputes, and a measure of village autonomy quite distinct from that of other Kullu villages which have all been drawn into the official administrative system of Government departments and courts' (Rosser, 1952: 477).

This was the Malana that Colin Rosser sought permission to enter. The reasons for wanting to visit were obvious for: 'as a unit of study for the anthropologist it emerges from its background with singular clarity' (Rosser 1956: 49-50). But, singular clarity or not, it was a unit that was resistant to being subjected to ethnographic study. Rosser was aware that it would be difficult to obtain the use of a Malani house or stay with a local family. Instead he devised a plan to build a small hut on the edge of the village. After negotiations lasting several months, Rosser succeeded in obtaining a plot of land. This site was levelled and three trees cut down and cut into planks. At this point, for reasons to be explained, prominent figures in the village came out in vehement opposition to the idea of this Englishman building a residence. Realising that any attempt to settle in Malana could only succeed 'at the cost of alienating at least half the village' (1956: 457-58), Rosser had no option by to retreat back to Kullu. He wrote: 'The failure of the plan cost me a good deal of time, effort and money – but taught me much about the way the political system works in practice' (Rosser 1956: 455).

If the people of Kullu saw the inhabitants of Malana as distinct from the mainstream of social life, the feeling was undoubtedly shared by the people of Malana. Rosser wrote of the term 'Kullu' being used by the Malanis to refer to the world beyond their valley.

> 'The people of Malana have developed an almost fanatical sense of difference, of village cohesion and of intense group loyalty. All who do not "belong" are treated with virulent suspicion and even contempt. There is not the least doubt that on reaching Malana from Kullu, one enters a cultural "atmosphere" quite distinct from, and sharply contrasted with, that of Kullu. This distinction can perhaps be best conveyed by stating that with Malana, though it consists only of one village, one is dealing with a self-contained tribal society as opposed to the village or folk society of Kullu' (1956: 50).

The isolation, independence and egalitarianism of Malana were personified in Jamlu - the powerful tutelary deity of the village:

> Jamlu....dominates and pervades the whole village. In his worship, the unity and solidarity of the village are strikingly and elaborately expressed. Jamlu is the ultimate authority, and the source of power, in the political, judicial, and religious spheres. (Rosser 1952: 479).

Under the unifying figure of Jamlu, Rosser described a system of village government based on the division of the village into two separate areas of habitation: Dhara Behr and Sara Behr. Separating the two *behrs* was a neutral area known as the *harchar*: 'the territorial hub of the village upon which turns the whole political and judicial organization' (ibid: 477). At one side of the harchar was Jamlu's *Kothi* – a granary considered one of the most sacred building in the village; on another side was the *dharamsala*; in the centre of the square a sacred stone represented Jamlu; and at the far end of this main temple square the village council met. In Rosser's time this council was made up of three permanent hereditary post-holders (collectively known as the *mundie*) and eight elected elders (called *jestas*). Rosser introduced the three permanent members of the council as the *Karmisht* (who acts to manage Jamlu's estates), the *Pujara* (priest) and the *Gur* (through whom Jamlu is able to speak). The eight *jestas* were periodically elected to represent each of the clans that make up the two factions of the village. The mudie and the jestas combined to form the village council (*Hakam*) to debate religious and judicial matters. Decisions would then be put before the *Jonang Kweshitam* – the full village council made up of an assembly of all the family heads called *chakars*.

Though from the outside Malana might appear strongly unified, Rosser identified a constant internal struggle for power between the Karmisht, Pujara and Gur and the two territorially divided *behrs'* (1952: 482). He characterised the people of Sara Behr as feeling closer to Jamlu and being more conservative in attitude. Reactionary and concerned with religious orthodoxy, they are always ready to accuse the opposite ward of backsliding. By contrast, the Dhara Behr faction appears less hide-bound, more receptive to new ideas:

> 'it is, I think, correct to characterise Dhara Behr as a progressive faction in opposition to Sara Behr as a conservative faction, the one acting as a break on the other. It is a distinction of importance in relation to the internal dynamics of the Malani political systems. It would be true to say, in somewhat general terms, that new ideas and

> proposals for changes albeit extremely limited, originated with Dhara Behr and were rejected by Sara Behr' (Rosser: 1956: 459).

This division is demonstrated by the Behrs distinctly different reactions to Rosser's request to reside in Malana. In keeping with their respective characterisation, the hereditary position of Karmisht was reserved for Dhara Behr while the Pujara were drawn from Sara Behr. Thus Dhara Behr supported their Karmisht, while Sara Behr followed the Pujara. When Rosser arrived in Kullu a young man named Jara had recently inherited the position of Karmisht. Jara spoke for Dhara Behr to try to convince the village assembly of the financial advantage that might be derived from selling milk, wood and vegetable to the Rossers and how the English couple would distribute free medicine to the sick (1956: 457-8).

The Gur and Pujara and the Sara Behr faction were not persuaded. Playing on the Malani suspicion of outsiders, they attributed all kinds of ulterior motives to explain Rosser's desire to settle in the village – spying on them for the Government, assessing them for tax, or stealing from Jamlu's treasury. As time went on, it became obvious to Rosser that the balance of power in the village had swung in favour of Sara Behr and that the Pujara and Gur would be successful in their efforts to prevent him from constructing the hut.

Rosser reflected on the political machinations provoked by his desire to do fieldwork in Malana. He theorised that the major motive force of the political system might be seen as working to achieve and maintain an equilibrium between the two *behrs* and the eight clans: 'the Malanis have evolved a political system characterised by a strong centralised authority inseparably associated with an arrangement of balances between homogenous, structurally equivalent segments' (Rosser 1956: i). Internally, hostility could be canalized and institutionalised in the relationship between the Dhara and Sara Behr, the division of which operates 'as a kind of internal safety-valve, providing an emotional outlet for the friction and the frustrations experienced in a system of rigorous discipline and social control' (Rosser 1956: 507-8).

> 'This egalitarianism is functionally related to the subordination to Jamlu. In so far as the god is seen as possessing a monopoly of power - which is delegated to human office-holders – the struggle for power is severely limited and restricted. It expresses itself rather as a struggle to maintain equality. In essence, this is what happens in Malana. Integration is achieved, as it were, through putting political power beyond the reach of individuals and groups. None can dominate because all are dominated [by Jamlu]. It is supernaturally dangerous for an individual to stand out from his fellows in terms of wealth or power' (Rosser 1956: 513-514)

The rejection of his efforts to move to Malana provided Rosser with an important lesson in the workings of the political structure of the village – change was possible but it took place according to a strict ritual logic that was bound up in the Malani people's cosmological relationship with Jamlu.

Rosser persevered in his efforts to reside in Malana. In the Spring of 1952 he again petitioned the assembly to be allowed to return. A compromise was reached with Colin and Tessa granted permission to pitch their tent on the edge of the village. This was accepted by the Sara Behr faction because it signalled the success of their efforts to prevent Rosser from living in a

permanent dwelling; at the same time Dhara Behr could claim that their arguments had also been recognised. Over time other restrictions were partially relaxed: after several months of residence Colin and Tessa Rosser were granted permission to use the village footpaths.

The Rossers stayed in Malana until December 1952. The PhD thesis that resulted from this period of residence remains the most complete account of the economic, political and social organisation of this unique community. Its central enquiry questions the ability of over a hundred households to survive in such an unpromising environment. Reviewing the household economy of Malana, Rosser notes that land suitable for cultivation is extremely scarce both because of altitude and gradient and the limiting effects of long-lying winter snow. The soil is shallow and poor in quality. If agriculture meant bare subsistence, then, to the individual Malani, pastoralism, provided at least an average standard of living, and in a few cases, was 'the source of wealth and relative prosperity' (Rosser, 1956: 100). Even so, by far the majority of economic activities were directed towards ensuring subsistence:

> 'No one type of economic activity can by itself keep them alive, and this follows from the ecological condition imposed by their habitat. Agriculture is a hard struggle against land shortage, desperately poor soil, and a severe climate: pastoralism is constantly threatened by outbreaks of disease: the volume of trade, though vital, is inadequate alone to [p115] sustain any Malani family. The lucrative activity of herb-collecting depends much on climatic conditions; early snow covers the high slopes and makes herb-collecting impossible. Every Malani family exists by a mixed economy involving all these types of economic activity.... Wealth and poverty are always relative concepts: in Malana, the range between them is extremely narrow' (Rosser 1956: 115-16).

In the balance of economic activities Malana's households conformed to those pursued in other villages of a similar altitude. Rosser divided cultivation in Kullu into three distinct zones according to altitude. Of these the low-lying lands of the Beas valley were suited to rice cultivation, and the 'mid-zone' produced two annual crops of wheat and barley. Large villages of up to 150 households are found in the lower zone, decreasing in size the higher up the hillsides their fields are located. In contrast, the villages of the *gahar* or 'highland zone' manage on one crop of wheat, barley and buckwheat per year. In this zone – between 7000 and 9000 feet – villages are rarely bigger than 10 to 15 households (Rosser 1956: 9). And herein Rosser faced a mystery. At 9000 feet Malana is one of the highest Kullu villages and would be expected to be subjected to the same difficult ecological conditions experienced by the other high villages of the gahar. And yet the hundred plus households of Malana compared very well in size with the most favoured villages of the fertile and irrigated valley bottom. The solution to the riddle of Malana's elevated existence, unmentioned in Rosser's Economic Weekly paper of 1952, is solved in his 1956 doctoral thesis. Here Malana is revealed to be considerably less self-sufficient and more outwardly turned than its image might suggest.

> 'The mixed economy, the general poverty, and the precarious ecological balance combine to enforce co-operative activity among individuals (as in trading expeditions such as the driving of sheep for sale at the annual market), among the larger kin groups (as in the provision of shepherds to herd the flocks on the summer and winter pastures) and at the level of the whole community (as in the field rotation and cropping or in the

> provision of a labour force for the major tasks such as house-building. Though of course competition between families and individuals does exist, it is restrained by the recognition of the dominant common need of cooperation to achieve subsistence. The character of the economy is cooperative rather than competitive' (Rosser 1956: 122).

But cooperation in herding and collective agriculture alone was not enough. The answer to Malana's elevated existence lay in history. In feudal times the various Rajas of Kullu would make gifts of *muafi* or revenue estates to those nobles who they wished to reward and those deities they wished to appease. The more powerful a god, the more the rajas would seek to buy his or her favour. With the deity of Malana village believed throughout Kullu to be particularly powerful (as well as exceedingly malevolent when angered) it followed that 'all the lands in the Malana glen were granted to Jamlu by the Rajas' (Lyall 1889: p34-35). Furthermore, Jamlu was made overlord of a very considerable quantity of different types of land in villages scattered in the Upper Beas valley and in Wazeeri Rupi'[3] (Rosser 1956: 77). The grant having been made, the Malanis were entitled to collect revenue on behalf of Jamlu. Known as *kar*, a share of the rice and barley grown in the tributary villages would be carried back to the treasury at Malana. Rosser's estimation, based on Kullu market rates, put the value of the rent on Jamlu's muafi at greater than the value of the total yield of the Malani fields' (1956: 90). Rosser realised this sum made 'a vital contribution to the Malani economy... and is a partial explanation of [how], though one of the highest villages in Kullu, Malana is also one of the largest' (Rosser 1956: 84).

Recognising Malana's isolation as 'a fiction', Rosser establishes Malana's dependence on an extended set of cosmological and economic relationships. Paradoxically the successful management of these relations required the projection of a collective image as fearsome, dangerous and different. Jamlu both symbolised Malana's separation and made it possible. It seems that in the 1950s (and indeed for a long time prior to then) Malana was not isolated or self-sufficient but depended on very particular forms of engagement with the wider world.

What is clear is that the Malana that was opened up to Rosser in 1952 had a record of success in managing its relations with the pre-colonial, colonial and immediately post-colonial state. However, the system through which the Malanis had maintained their separation was vulnerable to the sorts of changes apparent in India after Independence. Already in 1950s questions about the legality of collecting Muafi were being raised. Rosser considers how change would affect Malana.

> 'The Malanis are obviously well alive to the crucial part played by this external food supply in their whole economy, and are intensely afraid that if the exact details [of the extraction] of this *kar* reached the ears of the Government in Kullu town, measures might be taken.... which would be extremely damaging to the Malani economy' (Rosser 1956: 82).

Rosser chose to share the information he had gained with the head of Kullu's district administration (and in doing so, justified the wariness that the Gur, Pujara and the people of Sara Behr had about revealing their secrets):

[3] an administrative division consisting of area from the Parvati valley down to the Sainj river.

> ‘Just before I left Kullu in December 1952 I discussed this subject with the sub-Divisional Officer in charge there. He explained that it was the Government view that the very large loss of revenue resulting from the alienation of lands to temples could not be justified. The view was that the expenses of a particular cult should be borne by the devotees concerned, and not by the Government as was the present case where revenues which should be collected in the normal way now was paid into the cult treasury, there to be used for the expenses of ceremonies and the remuneration of services. I was told that it was the Government’s intention to abolish all *muafis* “in the near future”, to confirm the present tenants in their occupancy, and to collect from them the normal land revenue according to the current assessment’ (Rosser 1956: 86)

Both Rosser and Kullu’s sub-Divisional Officer in charge appear to subscribe to a particular view of what it meant to be ‘modern’ within the hill regions of Kullu – roads needed to be built, rivers dammed, schools opened, communication infrastructure promoted. It followed that the rise of secular governance would come at the expense of existing religious beliefs; scientific education would do away with ignorance and superstition; uniform legal codes allied to land reform would hand ownership of land to those that farmed it.

What effect would these changes have on Malana? Rosser was in no doubt about the likely consequences of the loss of the land held in the name of Jamlu:

> ‘the abolition of Jamlu’s muafi would have the most severe and far-reaching effects on the social system of Malana and might well initiate a major process of social change. The economy would suffer a damaging blow, but probably equally important would be the effect on the deep-seated beliefs in the power of the god’ (1956: 86-87).

MALANA AND THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPMENT

*S*rinivas’s *India’s Villages* and Marriott’s *Village India* pointed to areas of similarity and difference across the diversity of rural life. Reading these accounts today adds a temporal dimension to comparisons that highlights continuities alongside change. Over the last sixty or seventy years return visits have added a longitudinal dimension to understandings of political, social and economic changes in village life. Rosser’s depiction of Malana seems a good way to explore some of the themes pursued by ‘village studies’ now and in the past, and to examine ideas about tradition and modernity both in rural India and in the discipline of anthropology. The remainder of this chapter does not offer a comprehensive restudy of Malana but rather revisits Rosser’s work to reflect on the changes that have come to the village and the collective capacity of the Malani people to respond to the challenge of development.

Today it is no longer necessary to walk to Malana; a jeepable road carved into the walls of the valley terminates a short distance from the village. The basic layout of the village is still apparent with the harchar and temple square separating the Sara Behr and Dhara Behr sections. However, the size of the village has tripled since the 1950s – the 2011 Census records 365 families residing in the village Malana and a total population of 1,722[4]. Many of the old wooden houses apparent

[4] https://www.censusindia.co.in/villages/malana-population-kullu-himachal-pradesh-12882

in Rosser's photographs have been replaced by concrete structures, slate roofs are now tin, and satellite dishes hang from the eaves of several houses. Pollution taboos remain: a series of signs warn that touching or taking photos of the sacred buildings will be punished with a heavy fine. Physical contract with the residents of Malana is similarly to be avoided. But visitors are no longer required to request permission to enter Malana and nor do they need to remove leather shoes and belts at the edge of the village. Given the opposition to Colin and Tessa Rosser's attempt to reside in Malana, it is significant that a series of guesthouses now ring the village.

In this section, we look at a selection of significant changes seen in Malana since the 1950s: the arrival (and rejection) of opportunities for education and employment; land reform and the loss of Jamlu's agricultural rents; the rise of commercial cannabis production; the construction of two dams and a new road in the Pin Parbati valley; the impacts of a devastating fire which destroyed half the village; and the opening up of Malana as a tourist destination. In different ways, each of these processes has challenged the physical and political separation described by Rosser. We look at each in turn before considering their combined impact on the system of village government through which Malani relations with the wider world are regulated and managed.

Education and employment. With the achievement of formal statehood in 1971 Himachal Pradesh embarked on an ambitious plan to improve the educational status of its people. New schools were built, teachers trained and programmes established that transformed the mountain state from an educational basket-case to an exemplar of the progress that can be made through learning. The first primary school was opened in Malana in 1971. It made little difference. Education, the Gur and Pujari announced, would lead to Jamlu's servants becoming neglectful in their duties. Consequently, in the first decade of its existence, the only pupils to attend the school belonged to Malana's three low-caste families. Children from rest of the village stayed away - heeding Jamlu's aversion to school in general and to writing in particular[5].

Though attitudes to education have softened, literacy in Malana remains chronically low especially when compared with the remarkable improvements achieved elsewhere in H.P. At the 2011 Census, only 40.3% of the village are recorded a being able to read and write (male literacy is 52.48% and female literacy 27.82%) in contrast to average literacy in Kullu district of 79.4%. By 2016 the government primary school in Malana officially had 100 children on roll. However, absenteeism among teaching staff is reported to be high – Malana is considered the hardest of hardship posting. A middle school was established in 1996 though in 2013 the number of students was only 13. So far only two students in the village have managed to reach class 12 (Rana 2014: 89)[6]. Though Jamlu's objection to school attendance has been moderated, non-attendance remains the norm - parents emphasise that they are not responsible for enforcing attendance: the child decides her or himself whether or not to go to school.

There is some evidence to suggest that this is a necessary accommodation between the need to respect Jamlu's edict forbidding education, and parents' expressed desire to see their children learn to read and write (Rana, 2014: chapter 3). However, questions remain about the utility of educational qualifications and there is little appetite among the people of Malana to enter into

5 Singh (2008: 187) says that the literacy rate in 1994 was 1.15 per cent - 'abysmally lower than that of the Kullu district (54.8%) and the state level as well (63.9%)'.

6 Rana, chapter 3 (Self-Governance and Impact of Globalization on Malana), 2014: 89.

the employment market whether as wage labour or in government service. Of 1,190 people engaged in full time work, 873 described themselves in the 2011 census as 'primarily cultivators (owner or co-owner)' and not one admitted to employment as 'agricultural labour'[7]. A few of the men have found work outside the village – driving jeep transporters or working in guest houses - but they typically do not go very far or for very long. This is in marked contrasts to the situation elsewhere in Himachal Pradesh where the fragmentation of land holdings has forced households to diversify and find work outside of their own fields (see chapter by Axelby in Shah et al 2017)[8]. Malana's rejection of 'outside work' is in keeping with the 'intense egalitarianism' that Rosser described. Education and government jobs would lift individuals away from the community in ways that would be considered detrimental to the majority of the village. In the exceptional cases where men marry and settle outside the village they incur loss of all their property and can no longer hold political or ritual office in Malana.

In their collective dismissal of formal education and employment Malana would seem conform to Rosser's image of a hermit village. But the rejection of opportunities for wage employment needs to be considered with reference to the wider economics of household livelihood strategies. Malana's reluctance to take up these new possibilities needs to be understood with reference to changes in land tenure and agricultural production.

Land Reform. Historically, throughout the hill states that were to become Himachal, land grants to specific deities provided a means of support to their temples, priests and followers. On the eve of Independence in 1947 it was the Princes and temple committees that were the two largest aggregate landowners in the Western Himalayas. Even then, it was apparent that this arrangement could not be maintained.

In his 1956 thesis, Rosser explained how Jamlu's lands outside the village provided the basis of Malana's survival. This confirmed to the people of Malani the power of the god, and their own special position in his eyes. Malana and Kullu were part of Punjab at that time but Rosser would have been aware that the embryonic state of Himachal Pradesh[9] was, by 1953, enacting land ownership legislation and initiated substantial efforts at land reform[10]. In 1966 the state's borders were redrawn to include Kangra, Kullu and Lahaul. Then on January 25th 1971, Indira Gandhi granted Himachal full statehood and efforts by politicians to break up large estates gathered pace. Extended into Kullu, legislative changes such as the Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reform Act of 1972 stripped temples of their land-holdings thereby irreversibly altering the relationships that had linked deities to their communities for generations.

The Land Reform Act of 1972 dealt a painful blow to Jamlu's estate, as it did for many local deities (Elmore 2016). WIth the removal of opportunities to extort rent, and with new forms of wage work and government jobs proving unacceptable to the people of Malana, we are faced once more with the question Rosser asked about the village: with Malana located in the high altitude

[7] https://www.censusindia.co.in/villages/malana-population-kullu-himachal-pradesh-12882

[8] This is hardly a new phenomenon, as Parry (1971) makes clear.

[9] In 1950 the Shimla hill states in combination with Chamba were consolidated and recognized as a "Part C" state under the Indian Constitution.

[10] The Himachal Pradesh Abolition of Big Landed Estates and Land Reforms Act of 1953.

Gahar zone, how is it able to compare in size with the most favoured villages to be found with the most fertile land in the whole tract?

Despite losing formal ownership of land, Jamlu has maintained a hold over the villages in the Upper Kullu and Parvati Valleys (including Sharu, Rumsu, Pulga, Hallan, Jaggatsukh, Shamshir, Manali, Manikaran, Barshaini etc.). Towards the end of November representatives from the eight clans of Malana collect offerings from these villages in the form of grain and cash. In short, rent (paid by formal tenants of Jamlu) has been replaced by tribute (given by those who recognise the power of Jamlu). Though substantial, the amounts given are insufficient to sustain the rapidly growing population of Malana. As fortune had it, it seems that just as the village was losing its claim to collect rent from muafi land, it acquired a vital new source of income. And, as in the past, so now, the blessings of Jamlu depended on maintaining a distant and ambiguous relationship with the modern state.

Cannabis Cultivation. Colin and Tessa Rosser may have been the first Europeans to take up residence in Malana but they were not the last. Later visitors arguably had more consequence for inhabitants of the village. Perhaps attracted by Malana's reputation as a place of refuge, during the 1970s the village was adopted as the home of European hippies.

In his thorough review of agricultural production and household economy in Malana at no point does Rosser mention cannabis cultivation (1956: 89-92). Hemp that grew naturally in the area was likely used for making ropes and shoes, and the seeds eaten in the winter for extra nutrition; it's possible that shepherds smoked the leaves of the plant while passing the time at their alpine pastures. But on the whole, it seems highly unlikely that in the 1950s the people of Malana were involved in the production or consumption of *charas.*

This was to change dramatically in the following decades: in the 1970s and 80s, a handful of European *charas* enthusiasts took up residence in Malana. During the harvesting season from July to October these *charassi* would take the abundant weed growing in the valley and, massaging each flowering bud between the palms, would draw resin from the plant. The villagers soon caught on to this technique and started making and selling the charas themselves. The climate of the southern foothills of the Himalayas is well suited to growing cannabis and that produced in the Pin Parbati valley is of particularly high quality. In 1994 a batch of 'cream' from Malana was entered into High Times Magazine's prestigious Cannabis Cup where it was judged to be one of the two finest hashish smokes in the world[11]. It would seem that, by the early 1990s, the village of Malana was operating as part of the global economy; while some of this cash crop is sold directly to tourists, much is exported across India and overseas. Almost all the households of Malana are involved in the production and sale of cannabis. Where apple orchards have been enthusiastically adopted in the lower altitude areas of Kullu, Malana is, it seems, too high for horticulture. Cannabis appeals because the plants grow freely and require little water, fertilizer and only the

[11] "High Times Cannabis Cup Winners 1994"; https://www.cannabiscupwinners.com/cups-and-awards/high-times-cannabis-cup/cannabis-cup-1994.html ; "High Times Cannabis Cup Winners 1996"; https://www.cannabiscupwinners.com/cups-and-awards/high-times-cannabis-cup/cannabis-cup-1996.html.

simplest attention[12]. In Malana, cannabis production for sale is more profitable than horticulture or formal employment. Children's absence from school during the harvest seasons can be explained by the need to utilise their fine pored hands for rolling the ripe stalks and extracting resin. As adults, they earn more from the drug trade then they might from the government jobs that are much sought after elsewhere in Kullu.

The key to the international fame of Malana's cream, as opposed to the lower grade charas produced elsewhere, is that villagers in Malana were the only ones in the region willing to change from the traditional local rubbing technique and learn from the hippies how to purify their product to concentrate its potency. Even as they cling to some traditions, the Malana villagers have proved willing and able to adapt and even welcome certain forms of change. This new source of income, which arrived just when land reform meant the loss of a large part of Malana's muafi, could be seen as a continuation, in a new form, of Jamlu's protection and provision. An article in *The Tribune* newspaper (28th July 2004) quoted a representative of the Malana Panchayat: 'Cannabis has been grown here since time immemorial…. The *bhog* [food offerings] for devta is made from the seeds of cannabis, and charas has been used for medicine over the ages'. The article explains that Malani people feel their choice of cultivation is divinely sanctioned: 'unless Jamlu tells us to grow other crops, we will grow only cannabis'[13]. The cultivation of cannabis, the introduction of new production techniques and involvement in commercial exchange that span the globe are thus justified with reference to ancient cultural practices.

Malana's cannabis economy is, of course, illegal. The police post (now abandoned) across the river from the village was supposed to prevent the sale and transportation of cannabis resin. There is a widespread rumour throughout Kullu District that the people of Malana give bribes to corrupt officials in order to reduce disruption to the export of Malana's key cash crop. Even so, in the run-up to the harvest season each September, teams of police officers, and even the army, arrive in Malana and attempt to destroy standing fields of cannabis plants. A feature of land ownership noted by Rosser would maintains its relevance here:

> 'Unlike all Kullu villages, where land is farmed individually, where the variety of crops suitable for cultivation is very much greater, and each villager largely pleases himself as to what crop he will sow on a particular plot of land, Malana acts as an agricultural unit with regard to crop rotation thought the actual plots are owned separately' 1956, 93.

The continued existence of a communal and collective dimension in Malana's economy suggests a successful integration of supposedly 'traditional' practices and ideologies into international systems of marketing and exchange. In the past, Malana's economy depended on the extraction of *kar* from other villages around the Parbati and Kullu valleys. Now, with the direction of raids reversed, resistance to interference and hostility to external authority all work to side-line the state and allow cannabis to be successfully cultivated. With all Malana households owning land in each of the four distinct cultivatable areas of the valley the collective sharing of risk is promoted. Cannabis cultivation in the Pin Parbati valley can thus be seen as a niche activity enabled by the

[12] Interestingly Malana seems to have largely rejected chemical pesticides ('spray') and have sought to maintain the cultivation of desi seed varieties in the face of widespread acceptance of GM crops elsewhere in Kullu. Some, but not all, might see this behaviour as irrational and uneconomic.

[13] Quoted in Berti and Tarabout 2012.

existence of a unified collective identity able to defend the space in which individual economic transactions take place. Though part of an international system of trade, the illegality of cannabis production locates it in an 'alternative' economy that fits well with Malana's 'alternative' polity. Though surface appearances may differ, it is here argued that Malana's cannabis economy is rooted in key aspects of Malani culture and social organisation that were familiar to Rosser in the 1950s. Malana's egalitarianism, its hostile image, and its sense of collective ritual and cultural unity under Jamlu, all persist in ways that underpin its economic survival today.

The Dams and the Road. The dams and the road arrived after the school and the weed. If the latter fitted broadly into Malana's political ecology, the former represented a severe challenge to the cultural logic of change in the valley.

The first of the two dams is located several kilometres downstream of the village. Owned by the Malana Power Company Ltd. it became operational early in 2001 and has a production capacity of 86 MW of electricity. The second dam, situated about three kilometres upstream of the village, required the building of a road through the valley. Owned by Everest Hydro Power Limited, the Malana-II hydropower scheme has been involved in several scandals. First, there was a political scandal with the outgoing Dhumal government of 2003 accused of signing in undue haste the implementation agreement and failing to conduct proper geological, hydrological and geophysical surveys[14]. This was followed by accusations of police corruption and the suppression of local protest[15]. Promises were made to construct roads, paths, irrigation channels, a hospital, a Sarai, alongside drinking water facilities and the free provision of electricity in the village. The Company also said they would offer compensatory employment to those who had lost land – jobs that held considerable appeal because they would bring a cash income without the need to leave Malana. In protest at the company's failure to fulfil these agreements, in September 2009 villagers staged a sit-in protest that stalled construction for five days. The police eventually *lathi*-charged the protestors, leaving 30 Malani injured and nine villagers arrested and held in custody for two weeks. The same year the Malana case was cited for 'gross violations of forest and environmental laws'[16] due to the muck and debris dumped along the river and the destruction of 115 *bighas* (18.5 Hectares) of forest.

The upper dam has transformed the visual landscape around the village, but is also constantly audibly present. At least once a month a loud siren screams for minutes across the valley: a warning to move away from the river as water will be released. On a daily basis, there's the grumbling and the angry noise of explosions from the site of the tunnel. And of course, there are the semi-permanent tent camps of the hundreds of migrant workers that worked on the road,

[14] 'Dhumal in dock on Malana-II project', Rakesh Lohumi, August 4 2003 http://www.tribuneindia.com/2003/20030805/himachal.htm#1; 'HC panel inspects Malana hydel site', Kuldeep Chauhan, December 4 2009; http://www.tribuneindia.com/2009/20091205/himachal.htm#3

[15] "Malana Villagers In Himachal Up Against Hydropower Company", Himachal.us, 6 September 2010 (http://himachal.us/2010/09/06/malana-villagers-in-himachal-up…); "Police officers cane-charge Malana villagers", Times of India, 22 February 2011, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-02-22/india/28625163_1_malana-cane-charge-policeofficer

[16] "HC summons chief forest conservator", Shimla, July 15 2010: www.tribuneindia.com/2010/20100715/himachal.htm#6

and now work on the dam. The two worlds of the village and the workers live completely apart and inhabit different spaces.

Despite the disruption and damage done by the dams in Malana, their size and impact has to be put in perspective: these are still comparatively small-scale, low-impact projects, with no displacement of population. Furthermore, the Company has since tried hard to rebuild relations with the people of Malana: they have provided bricks and cement for the construction of toilets for every house of the village; they have cemented paths, and parts of the village square, installed solar panels and helped set up a women's group dedicated to the management of waste and recycling in the village.

Though constructed privately by the dam company, in 2015 the road up the Pin Parbati valley was handed over to the State government and now offers bus connections which are cheap if limited. The road brings Malana closer to resources, hospitals and other government services. Some inhabitants of Malana directly profited from its construction: a section of the road had to be cut out of cultivated land for which owners were well compensated. Some villagers have served the hydro-company as contractors organising logistics and supplies. The road-workers, exclusively migrant workers, mainly from Nepal and Bihar, continue to live by the hundreds in tent villages scattered through the valley. This presence is certainly unsettling for the Malanis, some of whom own land close by, or use these areas as sheep runs and grazing grounds. Far more than the dams, it is the road that represents the challenges of the outside for the inhabitants of Malana. Again though, its impacts and the way it is evaluated are not straightforward and the people of Malana have worked to understand and manage these ambiguities. Jamlu, through oracular performances, clearly stated his opposition to the building of the road. But even if the villagers had wanted to obey Jamlu's wish, they had little say in the matter. The forests and uncultivated lands in the Malana valley are all owned by the Government. In the case of the road and dams the villagers were informed of the Government's decisions but they were not consulted. Jamlu was not pleased.

The Fire. During the night of Saturday 5th January 2008, a huge fire broke out in Malana. Miraculously, no one was hurt, but 158 houses were completely destroyed and 15 more were badly damaged. 900 villagers were left homeless, and their animals without shelter or fodder. The fire was so violent that none of those who lost their homes were able to recover any possessions from the ashes. The affected families had no option but to take up residence in caves, tent shelters, or crammed into the remaining standing houses of the village. The worst of it, for the villagers, was the loss of three of the village's most sacred buildings: the Pujari's house, Jamlu's treasury and the granary – powerful symbols of Malana's identity. The village's only temple, Narol Mandir, was also substantially damaged.

The state authorities reacted promptly and generously to the news: help was sent to Malana on Sunday morning but only reached the village in the evening due to severe snowfall that worsened in the following days. All affected families were given cash compensations, food, blankets and materials for emergency shelters. HP's Chief Minister Prem Kumar Dhumal visited the village and promised three crore rupees in relief, food rations for four months and fodder for the animals. Over time, new houses were constructed: a few in the traditional wood and stone but most in brick and cement with a 'modern' metal roof and a lick of brightly coloured paint.

As well as transforming the visual character of the village, the fire of 2008 marks a turning point also in the symbolic representations of the village and illustrates a growing ambivalence in the villagers' relationship to Jamlu and his pronouncements. The Malani people have little doubt that the fire was sent by Jamlu as a punishment for letting the road come to the village. This is asserted again and again by the villagers and was quoted in press articles written at the time of the fire. However, when asked if they themselves are satisfied with the road coming to the village, almost all respondents say that they are (Rana 2014: 161). Paradox and ambiguity continue to define Malana's relationship with the wider world: the road was seen as having been imposed by the government; Jamlu reacted to the road by starting the fire; and the government reacted to the fire by intervening to assist the villagers and reconstructing the sacred centre of Malana. The sacred buildings were rebuilt by temple specialists from Mandi. But these attempts to reproduce the religious buildings of the harchar have met with criticism. Noticeably Jamlu's granary has neither the proportions, the number of supporting pillars, nor the carved motifs found on the old building. Less obvious - but carrying greater significance - is the carving of a male figure seated in the lotus position which has appeared on the frontispiece. The previously formless and indigenous Jamlu devta of Malana was hereby sanskritized into Jamdagni Rishi of the puranas.

Tourism and media attention. Over the decades, the development of roads and tourist infrastructure have, somewhat ironically, combined with images of pure and undeveloped nature to drawn domestic and global tourists to Himachal in ever increasing numbers. Once again, this tourism takes particular form in Malana. The exotic and edgy image of Malana coupled with the popularity of its export crop have made the village a destination for European and Israeli travellers who have been joined, especially in the last decade, by young Indian tourists. With the exception of one owned by a Lohar family, the guest houses that cater to these narco-tourists are owned by Malanis but managed by high-caste people from other Kullu villages.

Given the "hermit" status Rosser assigned to the village the intrusion of tourists might seem strange. Certainly, many Malani complain of the partying activities these visitors cause and many express worries about their depiction as a 'criminal village'. Among the people of Malana there is a growing understanding of the negative media stereotypes that attach to their village. Previously, when rubbing charas, children and women would happily extend palms dark with resin and ask to be photographed. Now women specifically ask not to be photographed and children have been instructed to refuse photographs whatever the circumstances. In 2016 the activities of the visitors, and the introduction of new types of drug-taking became too much and the matter was referred to the village council. The debates that followed can be seen as a re-run of the unresolved arguments from the early 1950s about the terms on which Tessa and Colin Rosser might reside in the village. On the one side the less hide-bound Dhara Behr (which includes several families who own guest-houses) pointed to the economic benefits of tourism while, on the other side, the more rigid Sara Behr replied that such intrusions were corrupting to the Malani youth and defied the will of Jamlu. After several months, the village collectively agreed to close down the village guest-houses and, once again, to prevent foreigners from staying in

Malana[17]. However, for all the disruption created by the hordes of tourists who come to the village to do drugs and party, it seems the income is too important to turn down: the decision to close the village for overnight stays has been overturned by the same council, and the guest-houses are set to reopen. The debates taking place in Malana reflect (and in some respects are in advance of) similar discussions about the destructive impacts of tourism and change that are taking place throughout the Kullu valley. In 2018 the Himachal High Court introduced a guest house ban in Khirganga, a sacred place in the nearby Parvati valley, that was seen as having been overcrowded with tent-hotels and tourists.

It is important to emphasize that, for the majority of villagers, the various elements of change described in this section are understood as part of an interconnected whole: for instance, many believe that the designation of Malana as a 'criminal village' famed for drug production contributed to the government's enthusiasm for the dam projects in Malana valley. The construction of the private road by the hydro-company made possible the building of police barracks across the river from the village - a constant foreign presence charged with controlling the activities of the villagers. Though this police station has now been closed down, the road allows the deployment of police and army forces who arrive during the charas harvesting season and seek to manually destroy the crop. Throughout, the village council has strategized over how to confront and manage change and debated which traditions to emphasize and which to quietly discard. One result of the discomforts involved in accommodating these ambiguities has been a heightened sense of fanaticism regarding Jamlu's identity: 'Jamlu devta' has become 'Jamdagni Rishi Mahadev'. Rather than fade in the face of development, religious belief in the power of Malana's deity has only been strengthened.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF A HIMALAYAN COMMUNITY TODAY

Our research confirms that all the political and administrative institutions outlined by Rosser still exist and continue to play a determining role to manage the pace and direction of change in Malana. Council meetings still function in the same way and continue to generate intense interest and discussion. *Chakars* (members of the village parliament) are obliged to be present for the *Jonang Kweshitam* (meetings of the village parliament). Members who are absent for meetings are fined though, as a concession those engaged in outside work, it has been decided to hold fewer meetings each year.

The *pujari* and *karmisht* are still selected in the same way from the same clans and fulfil the same functions as Rosser described. The only position that is not filled at the moment is that of the Gur. The last Gur died in 1985, and Jamlu has not designated another Gur since. There are still oracular performances in which Jamlu is supposed to speak, but he does so through the medium of one or more lesser clan gods, who speak through one or several 'little Gurs'. There have been a number of such special gathering to consult Jamlu directly on matters of great importance touching the future and the survival of the village in the past few years. The god Jamlu remains the main

[17] "Malana loosing its old world charm", Dipender Manta, 30 July 2017 http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/malana-losing-its-old-world-charm/444461.html accessed 7th June 2018

authority figure in the village. However, though the form of the political system as described by Rosser remains in evidence, the administrative context that surrounds it is much changed since the 1950s. We now turn to how Malana's internal political system relates to the political systems of the Gram Panchayat system, state and national elections.

At the time of Colin Rosser's research, recourse to the Kullu Court to settle internal dispute was among the worst possible offences a villager could commit and was punished by ostracism from the community. This is no longer the case; although the practice is frowned upon, recourse to the Kullu court does occasionally occur in internal disputes. The way was opened by the use of the state judicial system in land tenancy cases, opposing the council representing Devta Jamlu against his Kullu tenants.

The Malani were among the last Himachalis to establish a *Gram Panchayat* in their village: they waited until 1985, while most of the State's villages had formed theirs in the 1960s and 70s. Even then, the Malani only make use of the Panchayat's development activities in the village and do not recognize its validity as a dispute-settling agency (Kumar, 2006: 269).

Malani interest in state and national elections grew through the 1990s. In 2007, the entire adult village voted in the state election, a first for many[18]. Villagers explain their participation in elections as a reciprocation of the favours done for them by the Government such as the provision of drinking water and electricity. In one newspaper article dedicated to elections in Malana, respondents are quoted as saying: 'if we have taken favours from the Government, we need to reciprocate its gesture by participating in the democratic process to elect a representative', and: 'for many decades, we were left alone to survive. Now the government is extending help to us whenever we are in dire straits. We started casting votes almost 15 years ago when the government became sympathetic to our demands'[19].

But though now willing to participate in state and national elections, for the people of Malana, the wider politics are practiced as a function of, rather than alongside or in place of, the longstanding direct democracy offered by the village assembly. When approaching an election, the village council meets to collectively decide which of the candidates and parties they should vote for. Thus, the Malanis approach elections beyond the village through their own internal community-based decision-making processes. And, in contrast with the selection process of officials within the village's system, participation in state and national politics is considered to be of minor importance. The intense interest in the debates of the Malani council demonstrates that the villagers remain, as depicted by Rosser, obsessed by their own political process.

A HERMIT VILLAGE IN THE GLOBAL AGE

Rosser identified two factors behind the intensity of Malana's egalitarianism: first the closely connected ties of kinship (endogamous marriage meant that everyone was related to each other

[18] The 2009 documentary film, 'Bom, one day ahead of democracy' captures the national vote in Malana, with the largest voter turnout so far.

[19] "To vote or not to vote? Malana debates as Himachal goes to polls", Vikas Kahol, Nov. 20 2007, http://www.indianexpress.com/news/to-vote-or-not-to-vote-malana-debates-as-himachalgoes-to-polls/241128

in multiple ways), and, second, the lack of economic differentiation (all households practiced a combination of agriculture and pastoralism). It was this caste and economic homogeneity that allowed the village to function as a ritual and political unit. To Rosser this political system could only be understood in relation to this extreme and enduring disposition of individual Malanis 'to co-ordinate their actions closely towards each other or in respect of each other' (1956: 522). With the changes described in this chapter, it might be expected that these political and social institutions – having lost their function - would atrophy and eventually disappear. And yet, the continued existence of a communal and collective dimension in Malana's economy, suggests the successfully integration of traditional practices and ideologies into international systems of marketing and exchange. Malana's intense egalitarianism - their hostile image, collective ritual and cultural unity before Jamlu - continue to underpin the economic system of the village today. Resistance to interference and hostility to external authority all work to maintain a distance from the disciplinary forces of the state and the privatisation of profit which underpins capitalist system of exchange.

In 'Becoming Religious in a Secular Age' Elmore argues that the idea of a unique and unified Himachali religion was an implicit product of the quest for statehood and the land reforms of the 1950s (2016: 16). To this we might add the kinds of village study – such as Rossers' – which aimed to scientifically document the culture and society of remote communities in the hills north of Punjab. At the time, these surveys were undertaken they were done with the expectation that the isolated traditional communities they described would soon undergo integration into wider economic and political systems. But just as the outside world has brought change to Malana, so the idea of pure nature, unspoilt villages, and the centrality of ancient practice have come to influence the notion of *Dev Bhoomi* in which Himachal is marked as a religious space. Accounts from the 1950s, including that of Rosser, promoted the notion of unspoilt rural communities whose intimate bonds with village deities enable people to maintain traditions and live peacefully in harmony with the land.

If 'religion' and 'government' become intelligible in the process of being related to and differentiated from that which they are not, then similar understanding can be applied to ideas of tradition and modernity. The debates taking place on the harchar between the Pujara and Karmisht, Sara Behr and Dhara Behr serve to represent competing possibilities of stasis and progress while allowing change to be managed in ways that maintain the constancy and egalitarianism of the village community. Rejecting the individualism of the wider society, the political system of Malana has allowed the village to evaluate and manage change according to the cultural logic and interests of the community.

In terms of tourism and in cannabis production, Malana's engagement with the 'modern' world was, and continues to be, a communal and a creative process. The ways that Malanis represent themselves to the outside world shows a sophisticated understanding of the symbolism of tradition, isolation and separateness. Malani people deploy and manipulate their image to encourage certain aspects of engagement but ward off threats of assimilation or the assertion of government control. Isolation is here not social fact but rather a political strategy that appears to have changed little over time. As we have seen, it is more plausible to view Malana as squarely located within wider social, religious and economic structures. But rather than welcoming these uncritically, Malana's continued prosperity remains dependent on a selective engagement with

certain of these elements and a dismissal of others. The suggestion of rejection of the wider political system paradoxically allows the people of Malana to function as an inalienable part of it. Updating Rosser's work to take account of the altered context of the 21st century allows us to move beyond simple evolutionary notions of progress to see the culture of Malana not an isolated leftover but a dynamic product of involvement with the wider world.

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