

## WOODWORK AND THE USE OF AXES AND OTHER TOOLS IN THREE KONDH VILLAGES

The Kondh people have always lived in and with the forest. So wood and woodwork is a very important part of their lives. There is the chopping down of trees of swidden fields, the daily need for firewood and the preparation of wood for the basic constructions of the houses. Trees, wood and tools play also a very important part in religious rituals and worship.

In the Dongaria Kondh village Hundijhali the axes are the most used woodworking tools. One particular axe is mainly used for chopping down trees and cutting them in parts for firewood. This is quite a light axe with a thin blade (p.4a). The dry wood gets collected every day. It has been chosen from particular trees, which, if the wood is burned, produces little smoke but much heat for cooking. After the logs and sticks were brought into the village, they have to be split by a different axe, which is quite heavy and has a broad blade (p.4b). The people chop the axe into the wood, turn the log with the axe to the side and use the axe as a lever and lift the axe-handle upwards.

In Kuttia Kondh village Dupi and Mallia Kondh village Telengapadar is the way of collecting and preparing the firewood the same. Only the shape and weight of the axes is different. Especially in Telengapadar the axes are much more heavy. The axes for splitting wood might be newly introduced to the Kondh culture, because the shape is everywhere the same, even in the very plain area of Orissa.

In Hundijhali the axe is also the main tool to prepare timber for building. The axe (p.4a) and adze (p.5c) has been used to prepare the new rafters, pillars and purlins for the ceremonial house in Hundijhali. The rafters and purlins are partly sawed by a pit-saw. But nobody from Hundijhali itself has done this work. Apparently some labourers came to the village for sawing. The adze has been a newly introduced tool to the culture of the Kondhs and has in many villages already taken the place of the axe.

In the Kuttia Kondh village Dupi the pit-saw (p.7d) for sawing planks, rafters, beams and so on, became established already two generations ago. And by now, the adze (p.6d) has replaced the axe in most of the preparation work for timber buildings. In Dupi the purlins and pillars are mostly eight-cornered, the ridge-purlins are six-cornered and the other beams are four-cornered.

In the Mallia Kondh village Telengapadar the preparation work of the wood for building purposes is given away to people from a near by village. Their only work, besides farming, is the preparation of wooden material. They get 5 Rs per 1 square foot on beams and 50 - 60 Rs by a sawed plank of 6 - 7 foot length. One reason of this system is, that at the settlements of Mallia Kondh in the plain area the forest usually belongs to the government. The wood has to be bought from a forest-guard, who gives the permit to take the wood out of the forest. If the people from Telengapadar prepare small pieces of wood by themselves they use a two-handed (p.8d) or one-handed adze. The use of the axe in Telengapadar is limited to firewood cutting.

At the Dongaria Kondh village Hundijhali the main joints in the buildings are the natural forked pillar (p.9a), where the purlin lay in and the rafters either from wood or from bamboo are tied up to the purlin with a rope from creeper. For this kind of joint work only rough axe work is necessary. The most of the construction are from Sal-wood (*Shorea robusta* Gaertn.F.) if available. If the building or the pillars are integrated into a religious context, the pillars are ornamented and the top is carved by an axe as a slot (p.9b), where the purlin is laid in. In the case of

the ceremonial house in Hundijhali the purlins are ornamented carved planks (drawing). The four-cornered rafters are laying flat on the purlin and hold by wooden nails (p.9c). For the carved planks, axe, adze and chisel (p.5d) are used. The chisel is also used to make the holes for the wooden nails. Furthermore the through mortise and tenon joint (p.9d) made by chisel and adze is used at the doorframe, the beds and the Koteimunda. Only small implements, especially the axe handles from dhaman mara-wood (*Grewia tiliaefolia* Vahl.) the sickles (p.5e) are used for preparation.

In Dupi the Kuttia Kondh village one finds as well the forked pillar, where the purlin layes in, as the main joint. It is either natural grown, on the cow shed or carved out by an axe on straight wood (p.10a) for the houses. And here too the Sal-wood (*Shorea robusta* Gaerth.F.) is the wood, preferably used for construction. The wall pillars worked out as a through mortise and tenon where the frame wood and the beams join in (p.10b). The rafters, mostly out of wood, sometimes with birds mouth cut (p.10c) are fixed on the purlin still with a rope of creeper. Planks passing through a mortise (p.10d) are used on the cowshed. At the doorframe the dovetail joint (p.11b) and bridle-joint (p.11a) are used. All this joints are made by adze, hand saw (p.7a) and chisel (p.7c). Especially on the doors and doorframes the people from Dupi are using the planer (p.7b), a new introduced tool to the Kuttia Kondh village. On the cowsheds and stables are beams with long slots, where planks or sticks are passed through (p.11c). They are used as walls or footbridges, made by axe and chisel. On the stables walls one finds logs with a groove, where split planks are edged in (p.11d). This is made only with an axe (p.6a).

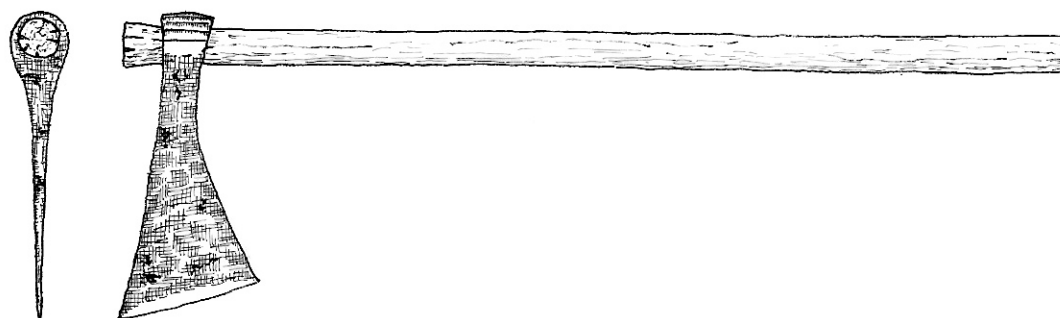
In the Mallia Kondh village Telengapadar the construction of the houses is changing. Mud walls replace the wood construction. But still for the main pillar and the roof, the forked pillar (p.12a) with the purlin layed in, is the main joint. This joint is carved out with an adze from a straight piece of wood (p.8d). Beside this the joints of through mortise and tenon (p.12b/c), the tenon and mortise joint (p.13a), the through-mortise and tenon mitre (p.13b), the dove tail joint (p.13c) the through mortise and tenon-keyed joint (p.13d), made by saw, chisel and adze are in use. Also a length connection on the purlin, between the, houses, of a half-lap joint (p.12d), made by saw and adze can be found in Telengapadar. At the house of the Gonga Ananjarka is a very nice carved door, made by the uncle of him, Depanga Ananjarka (drawing). Now the doors, beds and all work, which needs more detailed joints are made by Kathu Sangana, a joiner from Durhashi, a nearby village. He only works in joinery and carpentry on request beside his farm work. Only then he buys the necessary wood from the forest guard. His payment depends on the job but is approximately, around 100 Rs per day. He works with jackplane, smoothing plane, adze, chisel, saws, drill, rasp and sand paper, like most joiners in India.

In the Dongaria Kondh village the men are having axes, which are very light, with a thin blade (p.4c) and are hanging all day long on their shoulders with the handle down on the back. This axe is used as a weapon for hunting, especially wild boar. Therefore they through the axe up to six meters. This axe is also used as a knife. The thin blade and the lightweight makes this axe to a universal tool for many proposes. The Dongaria Kondh men are wearing this axe as jewellery. At the older men it looks like a part of their bodies. The young boys between the ages of 8-10 years get their first axe, which is much lighter and smaller (p.4d). The young unmarried men pay a lot attention to their axes. At the daily bath the axe is washed as well, sharpen on a whetstone with water and polished with the fine river sand until the axe is shining. With the engraved ornaments on their axe, which they are wearing proudly, they try to impress the girls. The axe gets several times a day sharpened like every

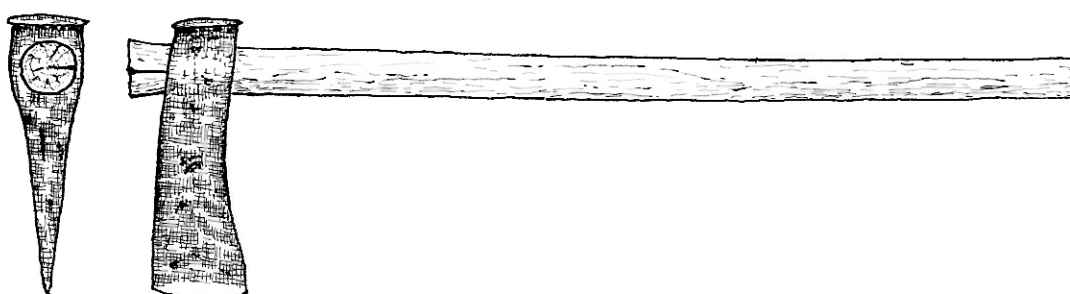
other tool on the whetstones, which are laying all over the central space row. This axe is used as well for ritual proposes, especially for the buffalo sacrifice. But if the family has a ritual axe (p.5a), they will use this for ritual sacrifice and as an instrument for the trance rituals. For this they beat the axe blade with a wooden stick. If a group of people leave the village for a certain occasion, sometimes the ritual axe is taken along, to show power and pride. In Hundijhali there are two different types of ritual axes, one is only used for sacrificing goats (p.5b). All these axes and tools are either bought at the weekly marked in Chatikona, where all tribes come to buy the necessary things. There, an axe costs between 25-100 Rs, depending on form and weight. It is even possible to buy ritual axes, which the trader gets from the 900 km distant Calcutta (p.5b). Or the Dongaria Kondh orders the axes from the smiths, a Mudi family in Kulesika, which is 1 km from Chatikona. He forges all different axes, tools and agriculture implements of all tribes from the area. But mostly he is busy repairing the tools. In the case of an axe this means straighten, hammering the blade and temper. For this work he earns 2-3 Rs per axe. The ritual axes are not ordered anymore from him.

In the Kuttia Kondh village Dupi the axes are only woodworking tools. For the ritual use there are only two ritual axes (p.6c) in Dupi left. So the sacrifice of the animals can be done by a knife as well. All the axes, tools, knives and agriculture implements are bought at the marked. But mostly they order it by the smith Orgun Bindhani who lives 1 km from Dupi. He is since 10 years smith in Dupi and he originates from Koraput, 260 km away. To learn these special techniques of forging the Kuttia Kondh implements took him one year. After the last smith died and his sons were not able to take his place, Orgun Bindhani got a piece of land from the village to settle down. Now he has 15 villages where he receives orders for forging work. For a reparation of an axe he takes 5 Rs and for a new made axe he takes 25-40 Rs depending on form and weight. For all tools, which have to be hardened, he takes the steel from a plough, which came to Dupi with a developing project and had never been used. The necessary charcoal for forging he makes himself, out of Sal-wood (*Shorea robusta* Gaerth.F.). He knows how to make a ritual axe, but until now nobody has ordered one.

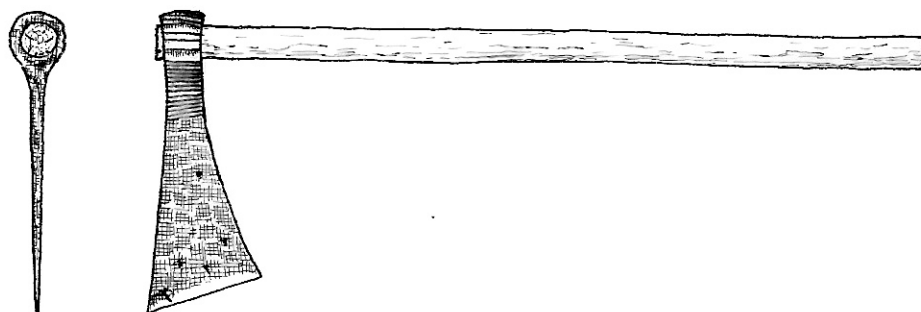
In the Mallia Kondh village Telengapadar the axe is only in use for the preparation of the daily firewood. Also the ritual axe has almost lost the importance. For a ritual festival, the people from Telengapadar have borrowed a ritual axe from another village (p.8c). Only the few tools, which are not bought from the marked or nearby shops, are ordered from the smiths. The brothers Andhu Majhi and Jatru Majhi are the smiths in the 4 km distant village. They have 30 villages from where the people come to order axes, tools, knives and agriculture implements. Their origin is Dhoikhal near Muniguda, from where their grandfather moved to their present place. For repairing an axe they take 5 Rs and for a new one 10-50 Rs depending on the size. But the customer has to bring the steel alone. Up to now, they have not forged a ritual axe, but they have learned how to do so from their father.



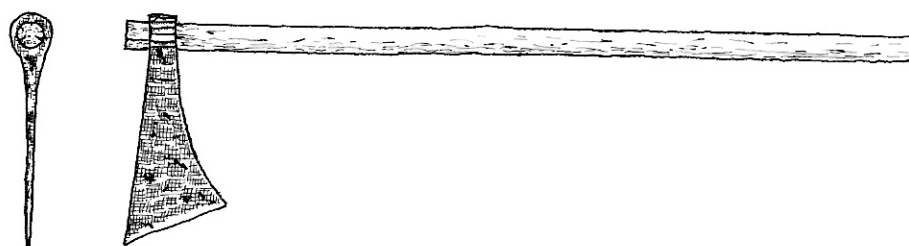
a. Trehepa-Kdali: to roam around with - Axe. An axe specially for cutting trees and firewood preparing the building timber and doing the joints



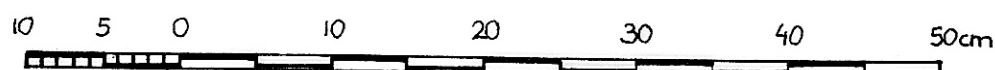
b. Werka-Sipa-Kdali: Wood splitting axe. An axe specially for splitting the firewood and shopping down very big trees



c. Trehepa-Kdali: to roam around with axe. This axe is a hunting weapon knife and jewellery for the the Dongaria Kondh men



d. Trehepa-Kdali: to roam around with axe. An axe for young boys.

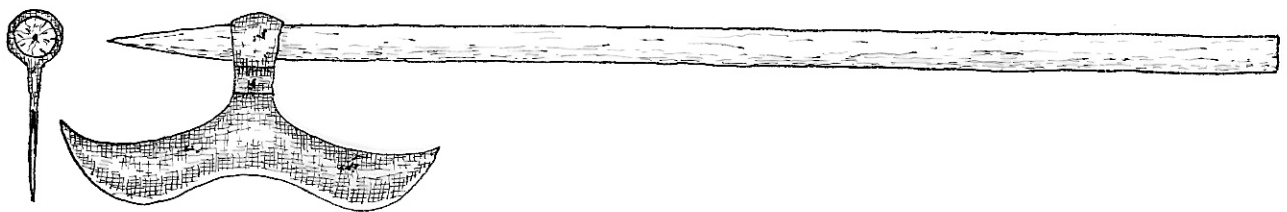




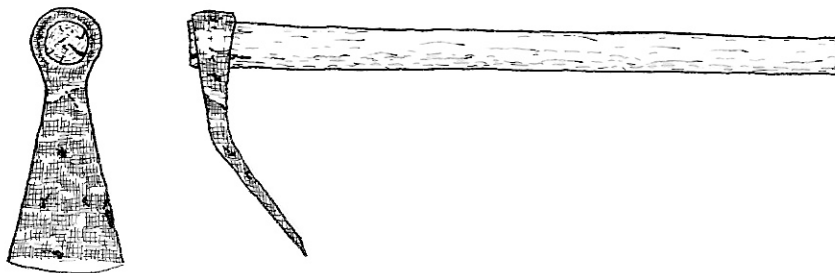
The axes and woodworking tools from the Dongaria Kondh village Hundijhali



a. Simoe: A ritual axe used for sacrifice animals especially Buffalo



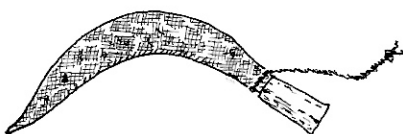
b. Tdangi: A ritual axe used for sacrifice goats. This axe is from the Chatikona market and have been made in Calcutta



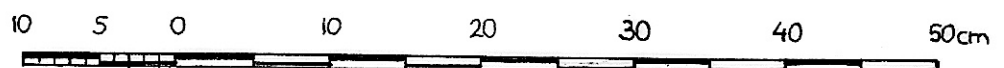
c. Bartoli: The one handled adze are used for preparing building timber and joining them.



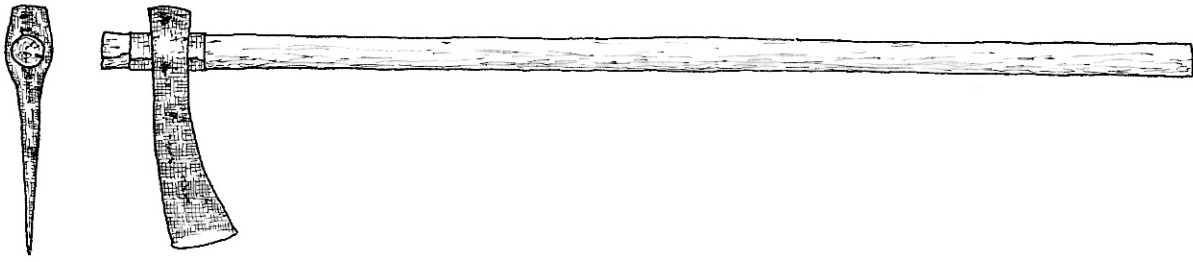
b. Bindhna: the chisel is used for carving and doing wooden joints.



e. Katrie: This sickle is used for preparing the food cutting meat working in the fields and as well for carving and making axe handles.



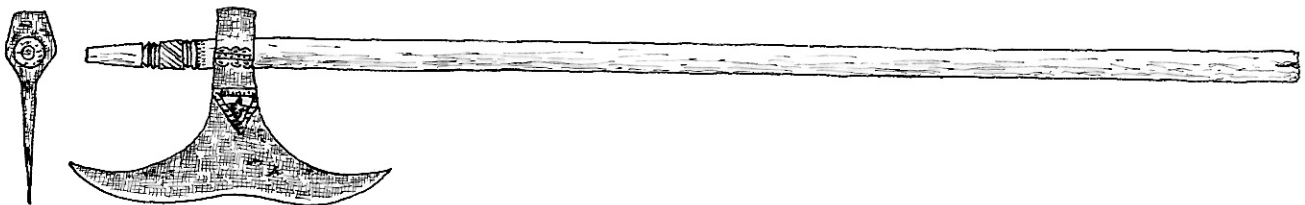
The axes and woodworking tools from the Kuttia Kondh village Dupi



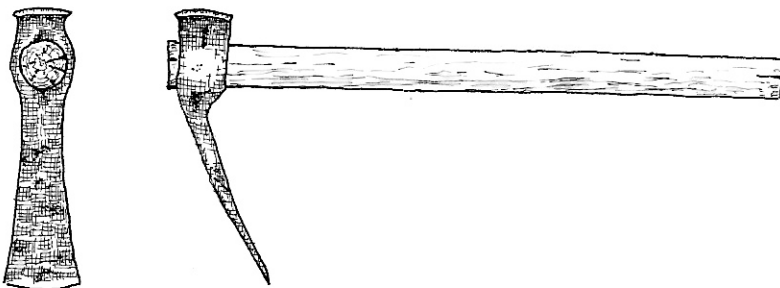
a. This axe is used for cutting down trees cutting firewood preparing building timber and joining work.



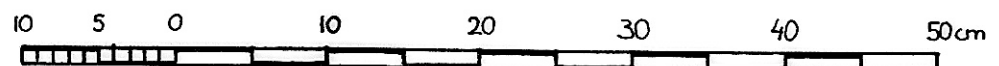
b. This axe is used for splitting the firewood and shopping down big trees

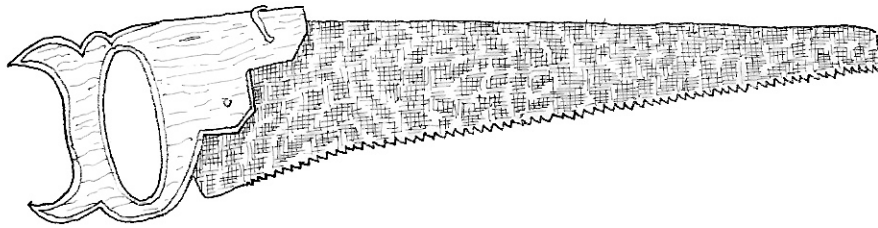


c. A ritual axe for sacrifice animals.

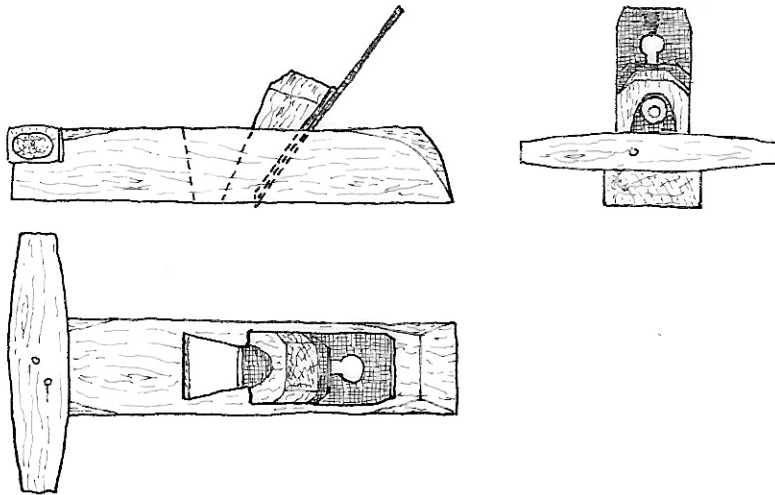


d. A one handled adze used for preparing of building timber and for working on the wooden joints.

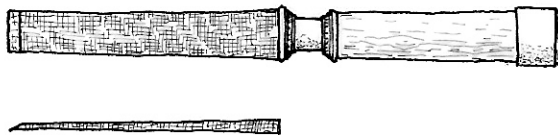




a. A Half rip saw used for joining work and cutting the wood.

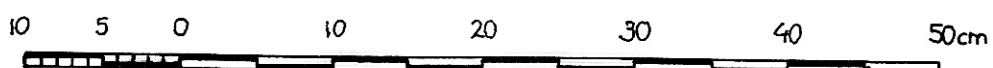


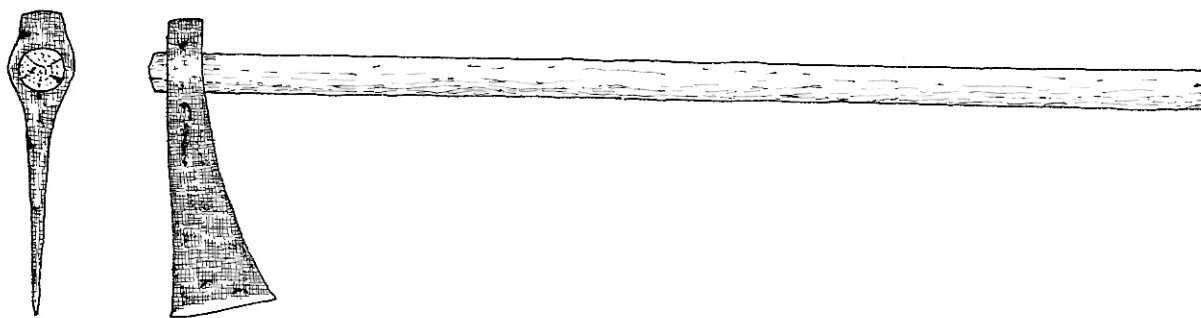
b. A smoothing plain for a finishing work on find wooden pieces.



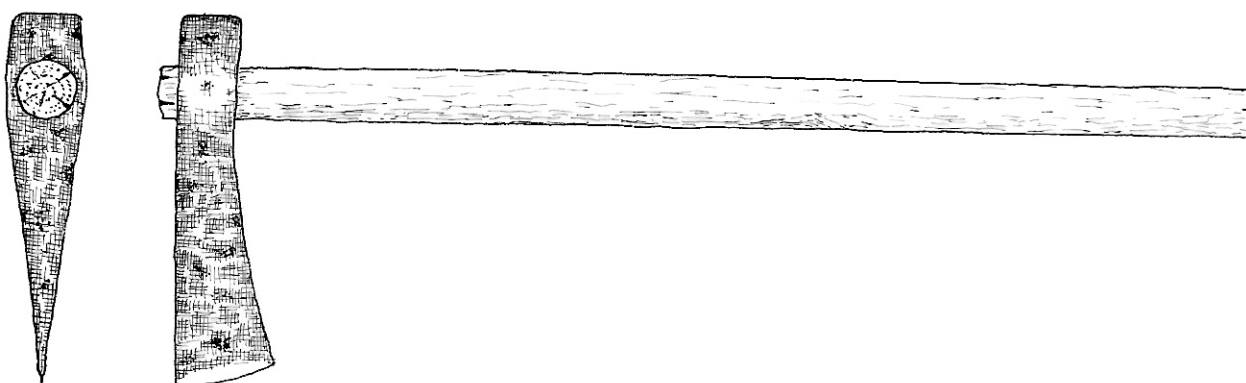
c. A firmer chisel used for joining work and carving.

d. Pit Saw used for cutting planks beams out of tree lock

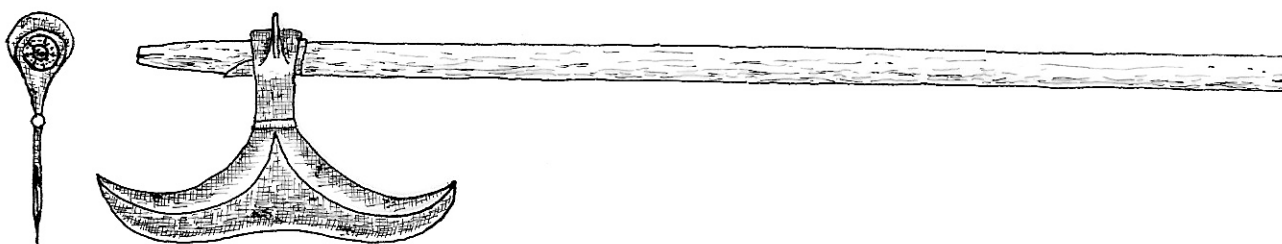




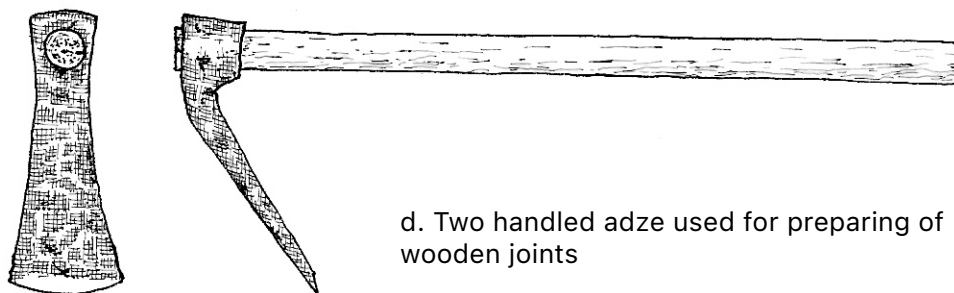
a. This axe is used for cutting down trees and cutting firewood



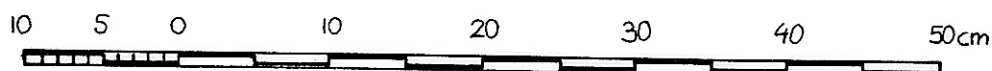
b. This axe is used for splitting the firewood and shopping down big trees.

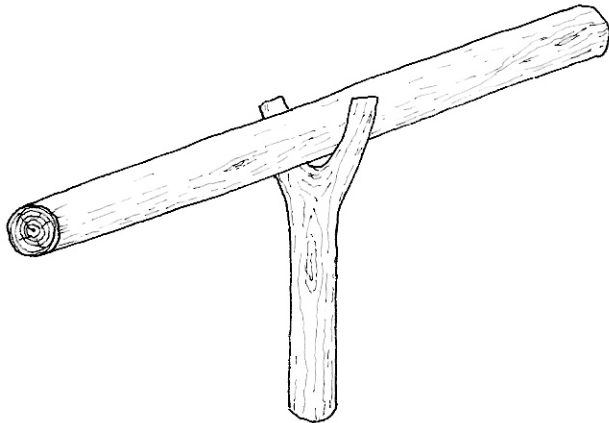


c. A ritual axe for sacrifice animals. The people from Telengapadar borrow this axe for another village for a ritual.

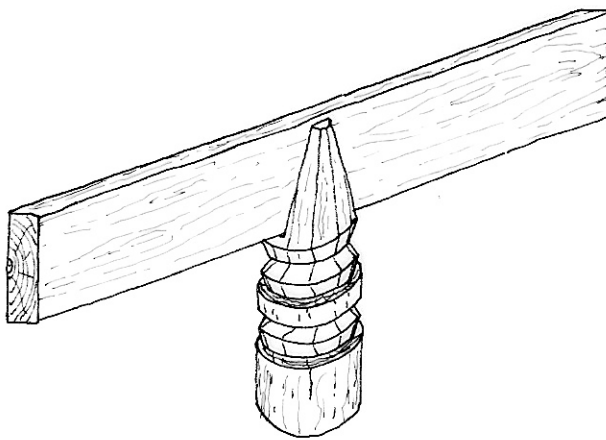


d. Two handled adze used for preparing of building timber and for working on the wooden joints

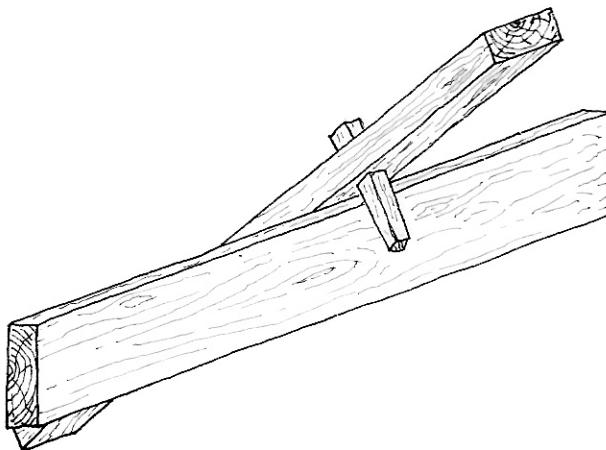




- a. The natural forked branch holds all purlins and beams, in the roof and partly in the wall construction of the houses of Hundijhali.



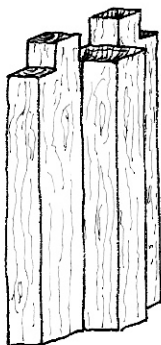
- b. The slot joint is used, when the house or the pillar is in context of ritual propose, in Hundijhali the ceremonial house and the pillar in the middle of the kitchen.



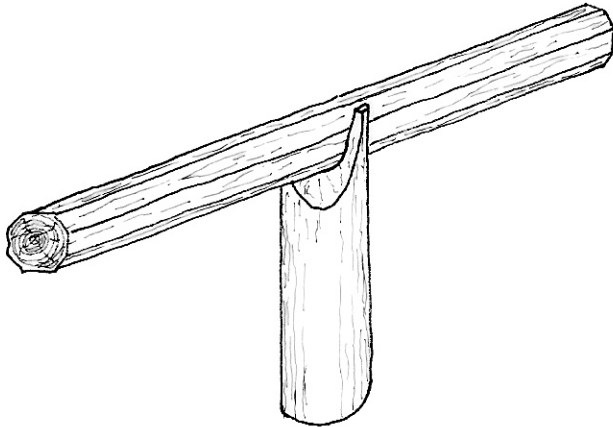
- c. The rafters hold with wooden nails, are only found in the ceremonial house.



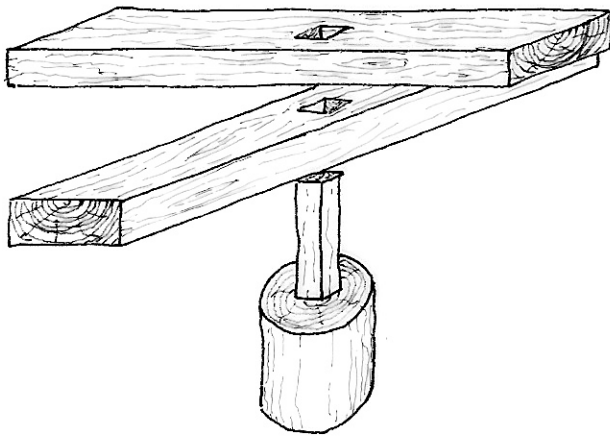
- d. The double through mortise and tenon joint at the drawing is used on doorframes. The single one is in use as well on beds and the Koteimunda.



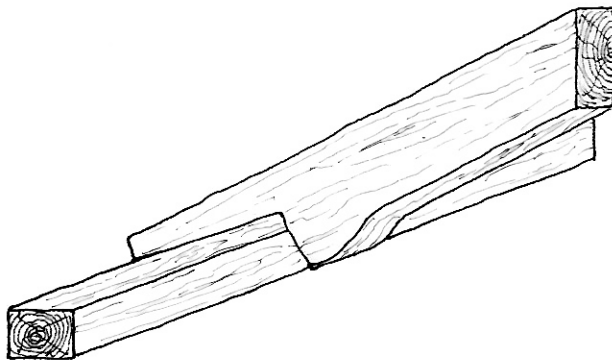




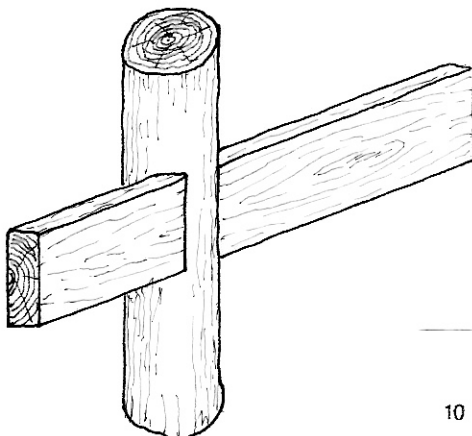
- a. The forked pillar holds all purlins in the roof construction in the houses and all purlins and beams in the stables.



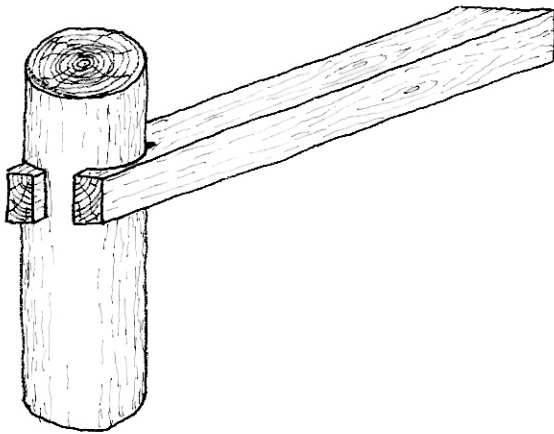
- b. The through mortise and tenon joint is in use at the wall pillars at the old houses in Dupi. The frame beams and the beams are fitting cross way on him.



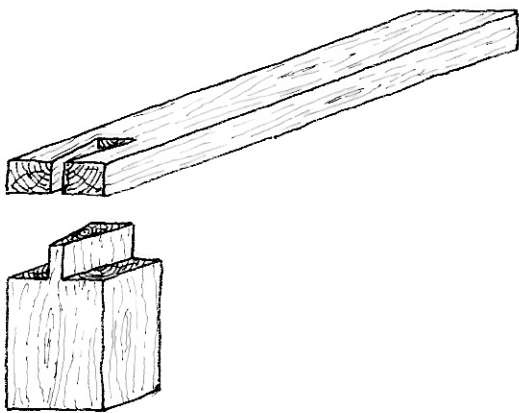
- c. The birds-mouth cut on the rafters is found in some houses especially on the canopy.



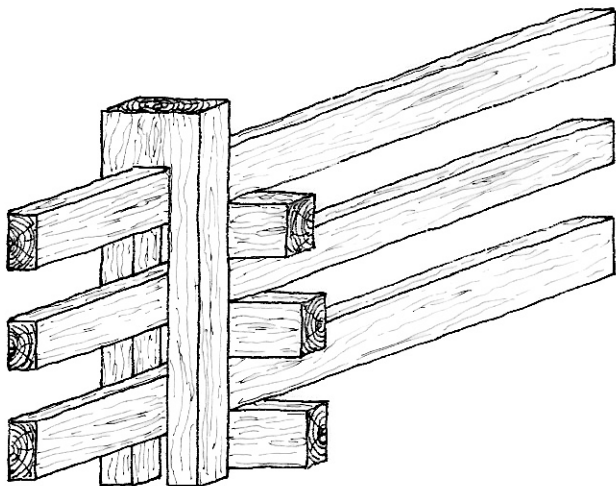
- d. The through mortise with a plank as the tenon is found at the stables. On horizontal beam laying half-split logs or planks, where the animals stay on.



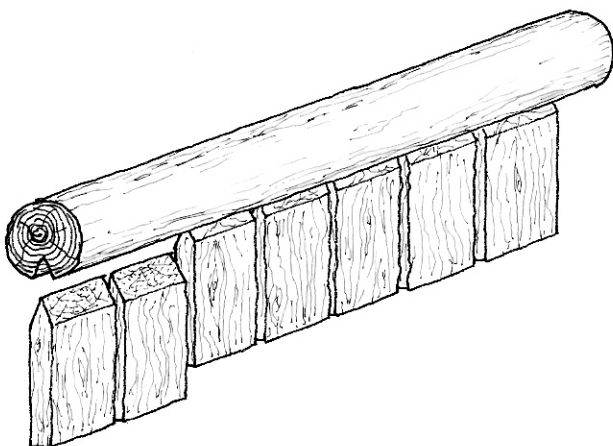
- a. The bridle-joint is in use at the older buildings in Dupi between the wall pillar and the door lintel.



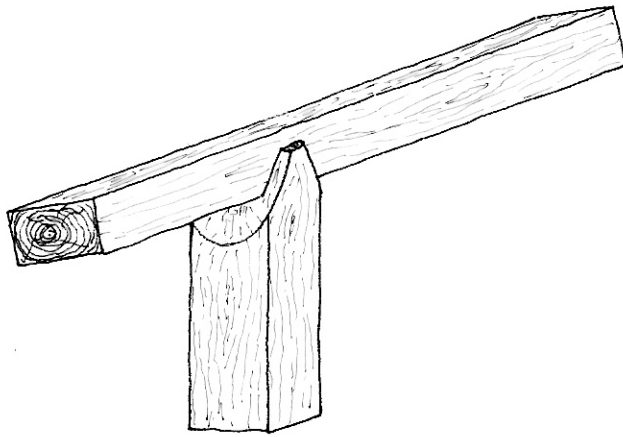
- b. The dove tail joint is in use at the door frame at the newer building, where the door frame are put in the mud wall.



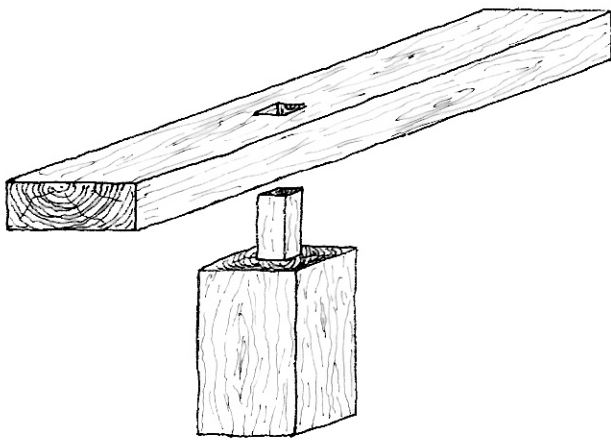
- c. The long slot, where sticks or planks are in use at the walls in the stables And without the crossing sticks and laying as a footbridge for the animal to the stable.



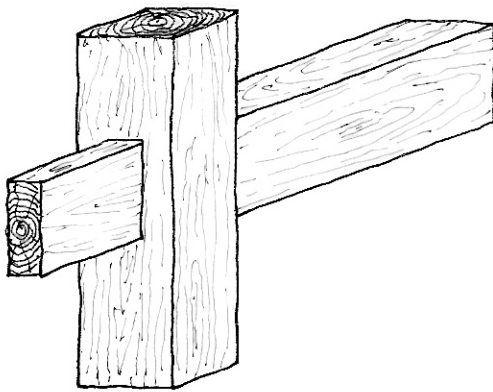
- d. The log with a groove and the planks are edged in use as walls in the stables.



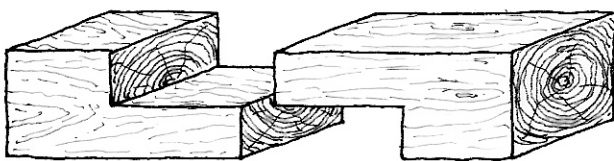
- a. The forked pillars are used to hold the most of the purlins in the roof construction at the houses.



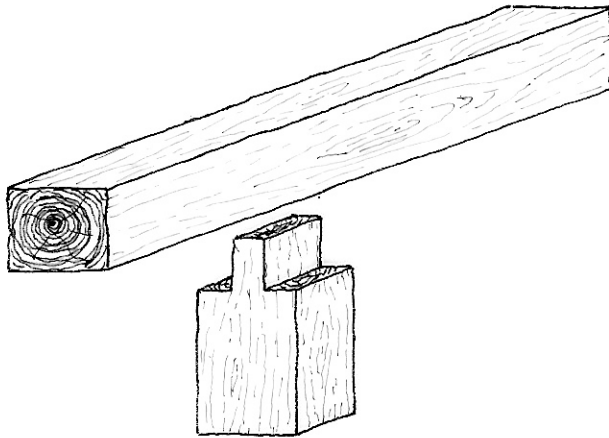
- b. The through mortise and tenon joint is used on door frames and wall constructions.



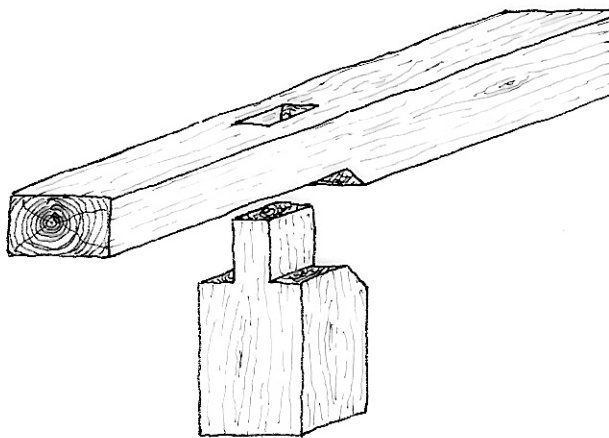
- c. Another variant of a through mortise and tenon joint is used between the main pillars for the roofs, the beams or the girder.



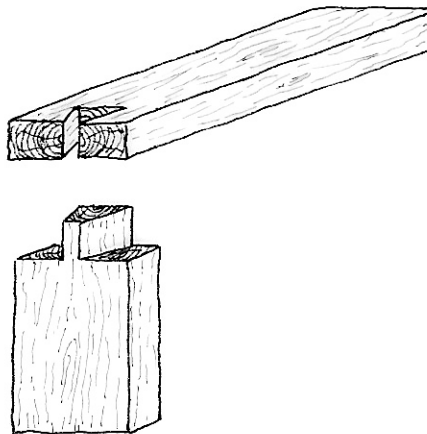
- d. The half-lap joint is a connection of the purlins between the houses in Telengapadar.



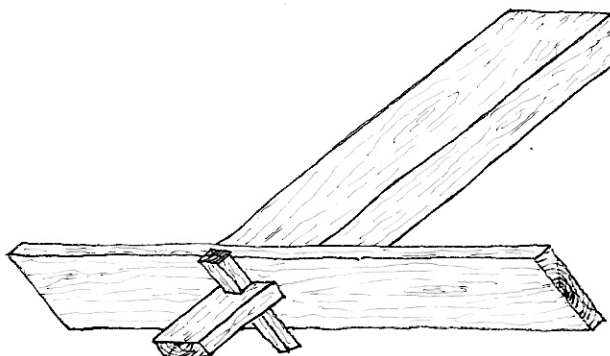
- a. The tenon and mortise joint used in the wall construction and at the door frames.



- b. The through mortise and tenon mitre joint, is used on the door frame in most of the houses.



- c. The dove tail joint is used at the door frames.



- d. The through mortise and tenon keyed joint is used at the eares planks.





Prepare it building material for a new temple in Hundijhalli. This temple has to be renewed every seven years before a big ritual. Partly this work is prepared by saw, adze, but mostly hewn with a axe. For the sawing workers from another tribe coming in the village.



Door frames worked out by an axe.





Jatra Kudi Munda prepared posts for the rituel house. If possible this posts are made of sal- wood or from Damana wood (*Grewia tiliaefolia* Vahl. )



All this pieces are only made by axe and adze.





A ritual axe of the Dongria Kondh. This axe is given further from generation to generation, festivals it is used for sacrifice animals. On special dance occasions it is used as an instrument, with a stick the axe blade beaten in the rhythm.

On occasions visit at the police station, because often disagreement all around the bride in a marriage, the axe has been taken to show their strengths.



10 to 12 such a sharpening stones lying in the courtyard of the village Hundijhalli. On these stones all tools are sharpened without the use of water.





An old frame of a house in the village Dupi. It is typical construction of a house out of Sal wood. In between the wooden construction has been a mud wall.







Kind of fence to protect the living place from the animals coming in. Beautiful work only done by axe.



On the left a wall of a cow stable there is a groove in the upper beam to hold the planks. On the right a fence for the pig Stable. All pictures are taken in Dupi.





Parts of a nice carved door, used for fence.



A half lap joint on the Purlin in Village Telengapadar.





Firwood splitting with a traditional axe in Telegapadar





As well here in Telangapadar the axes and all other tools are sharpened on this sharpening stones who are lounging everywhere in the courtyard of the village.







Here two handled adze used to prepare a beam for mortar. This beam with a couple of holes will be in the floor of the house. All pictures are taken in Telengapadar.







In Telengapadar don't exist a ritual axe any more. This axe has been borrowed from another village of the Mallia Kondhs.



Those two axes mainly for shopping firewood and cutting them trees down. The bigger one of the axes most probably newly introduced in the Kondh culture, this type has all over Orissa the same shape.





The tools of Kathu Sangana from the village Durhashi. He makes the most of the wooden work in Telengapadar.

