

*Karachi, India*

(1-10-8-44)

10-8-44. While at APO 883, recorded the following picture, while visiting the zoo. I chanced to be looking at a little Hindu girl who was drinking from the end of a flower hose and at this same instant she began to choke as the water inadvertently started its course down the wrong swallowing tube. It ended with a broad smile and an acquaintance and finally a chartering of her services as a zoo guide. Her help added materially to the information acquired from the signs posted on the cages and run ways and especially was her timid smile worth the one rupee paid for the service and picture. These little Hindu girls are always cute at this particular age and compare with our own children in both physical build and personality but it is not long until they visibly show signs of premature development and by the time they reach the age of twelve and fifteen they begin a period of deterioration. This environment causes a girl of eighteen, which in the states produces a young and attractive woman, to take on those characteristic of an old woman. The first thing that struck me as being unusual in the Hindu women was the nose decorations. This ornament makes a complete penetration of the skin. It apparently does not signify any particular thing except a decoration. It is used by women of all age levels so probably has no marital significance. Frequently one finds a large unwieldy set of rings as you would find thru the nostrils of a cow. The other items of jewelry are very effectively worn by this young lady. The single red dot she calls a kum-kum and is apparently worn irregardless of age or other status. It is only used by the Hindu. The powder they use to make this caste mark is also called kumkum. This mark is not a caste mark in the strict sense of the word as I find nearly all classes and castes represented. Occasionally one sees a Y or U shape on the forehead especially older men and it signifies an affiliation with the Vishnu God worship. Horizontal lines, generally three in number, indicate a devotee of Shiva, another one of the Gods of their trinity. Sometimes white earth or yellow earth is used but of course is less resistant. Have noticed several women with the red line or dot placed in the part of the hair.