

## APPENDIX D.

QUARTZ-POWDER.<sup>1</sup>

RÁNGOLI, the word used for the quartz lines and pictures which prudent housewives sprinkle in front of their house doors, is said to mean the brilliant line from the Sanskrit *rang* colour and *avali* a row. The orthodox explanation of the sprinkling of these lines and figures, as well as of white-washing cowdunging and tying strings of mango leaves in houses, is that it is for beauty, because God dwells in the house.

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The best *rángoli* is made by pounding white quartz into powder. Its colour is white and it may be used either while Bráhmans are in a pure state after bathing, or when they have not bathed. In the absence of quartz powder, rice-flour may be used. In addition to the white lines, dots or figures of yellow, red, black, green, and blue powder are also occasionally used. The yellow powder is made from turmeric, the red is the ordinary *gulál* of rice or *rági* flour dyed with red sanders, the green is from the ground dried leaves of the *Æschynomene grandiflora*, the black is ground charcoal, and the blue is indigo. Every day lines, dots, and figures are drawn on the floors of all Bráhman houses, three, four, or five straight lines parallel to the walls of rooms and verandas. Cross lines, circles with a dot in the centre, and elaborate figures are also drawn. On great occasions elaborate tracery and figures of men, animals, and trees are drawn. On *Nágar-chaut* or the Cobra's Fourth, that is the bright fourth of *Shrávan* or August-September, Bráhmans, in addition to making the usual figures, draw and worship single, double, and twisted forms of snakes sprinkled in quartz powder. During the leading days of the *Diváli* feast, the dark 14th and 15th of *Āshvin* or October-November, and during the bright half of *Kártik* or November-December, all Hindus set what they call the *Pandus*, five cowdung cones two or three inches high and about the same round the foot, outside to the right and left of the threshold, and on the top of the outer house door. Round each cowdung cone they draw double or treble white and red lines, set a flower of the *kumbal* (K.) *Cucurbita hispida* gourd on each of the cowdung cones, and throw over all turmeric and redpowder. On the marriage day of Vishnu and the *tulsi* plant, that is the evening of the bright twelfth of *Kártik* or November-December, and when Lakshmi the goddess of wealth comes in *Shrávan* or August-September, besides the usual quartz figures, *gopad* or cow's foot-prints are sprinkled with *rángoli* powder all along the ground from the outer threshold of the house to the shrine which has been made ready for the god. When feasts are given in the open air, in front of and on each side of the board on which each guest sits, lines and arches are drawn in quartz and redpowder. On birth, marriage, and other festive occasions, and when entertainments are given elaborate quartz powder figures are traced. On occasions of deaths, funeral ceremonies, yearly mind-rites or mind-dinners, no quartz lines, dots, or figures are drawn, except that at dinners in honour of saints a little quartz powder is occasionally used. No special

<sup>1</sup> Ráv Bahádur Tirmalráv Venkatesh.

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quartz figures are drawn on no-moon or full-moon days. The cowdunging of the ground and the drawing of fearful quartz powder figures is an important part in most exorcisms.

The great tracers of quartz powder figures, forming them simply by letting the powder drop from between the thumb and fingers, are Bráhmañ women. No Bráhmañ woman during her monthly sickness, for three months after childbirth, or when in mourning may draw quartz lines. Jains use Rángoli like Bráhmans, and Maráthás use it on special occasions. Some, but not all Língáyats, draw a few lines every day in their houses. On moon-light nights and on great occasions, Língáyats draw long double lines of dots, alternately of lime and water and red earth, and dine or play close by these lines. Língáyats also draw one or two lines of quartz powder along the edge of the grave before burying the body. Pársis, like Hindus, decorate their house fronts by stamping them with quartz powder plates. Musalmáns and Native converts to Christianity are the only persons who do not use quartz decorations. Formerly the traceries were all made by letting the powder slip between the thumb and the fingers. Of late years tubes and plates with upturned edges pierced with designs have been filled with powder and either rolled or stamped over the place to be decorated.