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CHAPTER 8

THE CHANGING TODA WORLD: 1819–1981

They came to Ka·s mund. They gathered all the Toda.
They said: 'The Toda must learn the education of the children of the Europeans.'
They said: 'They must act according to the customs of the children of the Tamilians.'
They said: 'They must wear white coats.' They said: 'They must tie white turbans.'
They said: 'They must make plantain gardens.'
They said: 'They must make jacktree gardens.'
They said: 'They must take a crowbar in one hand.'
They said: 'They must take a fork in one hand.'
They said: 'They must not act powerfully in quarrels about women.'
They said: 'They must not act powerfully in quarrels about land.'
They said: 'They must not carry off a wife from that house to this house.'
They said: 'They must not drive off buffaloes from that pen to this pen.'
They said: 'They must marry each man one wife.'
They said: 'They must own each man one buffalo.'
They said: 'They must not drink bottles of liquor.'
They said: 'They must not go to the beer shop.'[1]

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In keeping with my initial fieldwork, I have devoted the greater part of this book to traditional features of Toda social life: the formal rules of social organization, the relations which once existed between these people and their Nilgiri neighbours, the activities of the dairyman, both secular and religious, and those culturally-inherited procedures which punctuate the individual Toda's passage through life. Nonetheless, all along I have tried particularly to record where Toda have modified, abandoned or innovated in respect to their social and cultural institutions. I have been conc in effect, to correct the outdated picture of Toda life based almost ex n Rivers's turn-of-the-century ethnography, which still appears t even the most recent publications on 'tribal India' (see my).

In this final chapter I hope still further to rectify the e eternal Toda pastoralist by concentrating on the events whi sulted in important changes to the Toda community, beginning ursion of the British in the early 19th century.

In tracing the social history of the Toda people fro sition c British administration in the 1820s until the present, I c ensive with the major concerns of government: taxation, lanc health, education, social reform and economic developm

1. Selected stanzas from a Toda song, dating from the late 1920s, cc proposed by the Toda Welfare Committee (below, Sec. 2.3). Cf. En

data, somewhat artificially, into pre- and post-Independence periods. I say 'artificially' because the year 1947 made no revolutionary impact on Toda society. Both the Toda themselves and their new administrators continued to wrestle with the same old social and economic problems, whose origins lay not in India's struggle for political freedom but in the socio-economic developments initiated by the advent of the British one-and-a-quarter centuries earlier.

But in the long run, the new India was certainly to make its impact on Toda society. It is significant, for example, that it was only after Independence that Toda organized their own 'uplift' society; before then, it was the British-dominated government and an English missionary society who alone promoted welfare programmes for these people. Again, the leaders of independent India have new priorities for land use in which economic development precedes conservation—in effect reversing the British stand. In the old India, British enthusiasm for the preservation of the Wenlock Downs (the Toda heartland) as an area of natural beauty also preserved, perhaps unnaturally, the Toda's exclusively pastoral economy, and the traditional lifestyle that went with it.

For the most part, the Toda have adjusted to the new political and economic environment. The adjustment has meant, for many of them, relinquishing their total attachment to pastoralism and losing some of the old values an[illegible]ditions.

Whi[illegible]oter concentrates heavily on community-government relati[illegible]e the influence of Christian missionaries on the Toda. Thei[illegible]ve produced a separate 'Toda Christian' community, in mar[illegible]er recognizable as Toda but certainly significant as a mo[illegible]nt.

[illegible]lay is po[illegible] little uneasily, between old and new: [illegible]tional w[illegible]storalist and the modern world of the [illegible]ond. In[illegible]apters of this book I have tried to [illegible]itional [illegible]My account ends with the story of the

[illegible]ODA [illegible].SH ADMINISTRATION

[illegible] pro[illegible]

[illegible]mpany acquired the Nilgiri Hills in 1799 as [illegible]e territory of Tipu Sultan, the Muslim ruler [illegible]'s troops had defeated that same year at his [illegible]urston 1913:178, 180). But so far as the Toda [illegible]were concerned, British rule probably made no [illegible]ir lives for another twenty years.

In the early days of their administration, the British regarded these hills as part of the Dannayakakottai *taluk* (sub-district) of Coimbatore District. There is no evidence of any official dealings with the Toda until "about the close of 1819", when John Sullivan, Principal Collector of Coimbatore, is said to have prohibited female infanticide (Hough 1829:70). But as we have already seen, this directive was not notably enforced. The usual services of government—administration, and provisions for education and health—were extended only very slowly to this isolated backwater of the Company's new dominions. Nonetheless, and perhaps befitting an administration controlled by a merchant trading company, revenue was collected (albeit haphazardly) from the local hill peoples and roads were built.

Long before the East India Company acquired these hills, the local people had been paying tax to their overlords on the Mysore plain (cf. Grigg 1880:337; Francis 1908:267). So far as the Toda were concerned, this seems to have amounted to a tax on all female buffaloes at the rate of two *cantarai fanam* (nine annas, five pies)[2] per head and a grazing tax of one *cantarai fanam* (four annas, eight pies) per *bullah* (3.8 acres) of land, the latter being calculated at the rate of 10 *bullah* per 100 head of cattle herded at a particular hamlet (Grigg 1880:328–29). The new administration confirmed these rates, which remained in force until "about 1850" (Grigg 1880:343). At this time the buffalo tax was abolished, and thirty years later, at the conclusion of the new land survey which took place between 1870 and 1880,[3] the grazing tax was likewise rescinded. From this date onwards, the Toda had to pay a single annual tax on the land in the vicinity of their hamlets. Each hamlet was allotted approximately 45 acres,[4] specially reserved for exclusive and inalienable use by Toda, and the tax amounted to two annas per acre (Grigg 1880:343). This was the lowest rate payable under the new tax regulations, and seems to have been levied not so much to raise revenue as to establish the government's ultimate ownership of the land.

The collection of taxes from the Toda apparently did not cause the British administration any great headache. More troublesome and persistent were the tax-related questions of determining what rights the Toda possessed in their pasture lands and defining which rights, under what conditions, they could transfer to others.

Sullivan, who had first come to the hills in 1819, decided three years later to build a bungalow at the foot of Dodabetta, the highest peak. Initially he seems not to have compensated the local Toda for the site, a hamlet

2. Before decimalization in the mid-1950s, the Indian rupee was divided into 16 annas, and the anna into four pice. Earlier still, the anna had been divided into 12 pie or pies.

3. There were several earlier revenue surveys (cf. Grigg 1880: 361–64) but these did not affect the taxes to which the Toda were liable.

4. Area measurements are given in acres according to Indian usage, then and now. One acre equals 0.4047 hectares.

belonging to Ka·ṣ patriclan.[5] Not long after, however, he came to the conclusion that the Toda, as the Nilgiri firstcomers and recipients of *guḍu* from the Badaga (Chap. 1.3), were 'lords of the soil' with proprietary rights over all of the Nilgiri toplands. This opinion moved him to pay the Toda (presumably those of Ka·ṣ patriclan although this is not clear from the written record) compensation of a hundred rupees for the bungalow site and another two hundred rupees for an additional 200 acres on which he was subsequently to build another residence (cf. Grigg 1880:333). Trifling payments indeed, but they were destined to figure prominently in British-Toda relations for the next twenty years and are not without their repercussions even now, as we shall see.

It was not long before other Europeans began acquiring land and building bungalows for themselves in the Nilgiris, mostly in the same general area as Sullivan's house. In this way a new settlement, called Ootacamund,[6] came into being. The newcomers followed Sullivan's example in paying token amounts as compensation to the Toda, ten of whose hamlets were in the vicinity of the new settlement (Price 1908:228). All but one of these settlements belonged to Ka·ṣ patriclan; the exception was Melga·ṣ, chief hamlet of the patriclan of the same name. So far as land affairs were concerned, it would seem that early British dealings were limited to the members of these two clans and did not involve the whole Toda community as the published record usually suggests.

It is doubtful whether Sullivan, or any other of the early European settlers, paid compensation to the Toda at a fixed rate. Writing a decade later, in 1833, the Collector of Malabar (to whose care the greater part of the district was transferred out of Coimbatore jurisdiction in 1830) says that compensation ranged from ten to fifty rupees, and that the Toda had "learnt to assert and protect their own rights on all occasions and never failed to make a good bargain in disposing of their lands" (cited in Grigg 1880:332). Notwithstanding the Malabar Collector's statement, 16 *cantarai fanam* per *bullah* seems to have become the accepted compensatory payment sometime before 1828, because in that year the government formalized this rate, declaring that it was acting upon the precedent set by Sullivan (cf. Grigg 1880:330). It works out to less than one and a quarter rupees per acre.

In accepting the Toda right to receive compensation from Nilgiri settlers, the government did not concede, as Sullivan wished it to do, that these people had any permanent rights in the land beyond those of usufruct. The

5. This hamlet, called Patiṛ moḍ or Pat moḍ, was located on what is now known, in commemoration of Sullivan's bungalow, as 'Stonehouse Hill' (cf. Emeneau 1963).

6. For some notes on the etymology of this name, see Emeneau 1963:191. Recently, the Tamil Nadu government has ordered Ootacamund to become 'Udhagamangalam', a change "not likely to be accepted by the millions who know it [Ooty] either gracefully or in haste", to quote the local Rotary Club's *Ooty Almanac* (Anonymous 1980a: 10).

government's position was quite clear: throughout India, proprietary rights belonged exclusively to the state. Thus, contrary to Sullivan's opinion, it was not the Toda community but the state which was 'lord of the soil.'

For the next few years the authorities in some cases demanded proof that the prescribed payment had been made to the Toda before allowing settlers to occupy their land. In other cases, land was allocated with no reference at all to Toda claims (Grigg 1880:330-31). This apparent anomaly is not difficult to explain. Where the lands granted were close to Toda settlements or sacred places, there is little doubt that the Toda would have made sure that they received payment; whether this was because they had learned to regard themselves as 'owners' of the land, in a manner unknown to their forefathers, or simply because they had discovered a new source of easy income, is impossible to determine at this late date. But where the lands were away from Toda centres, domestic or otherwise, they were unlikely to have asked for payment. Since they were not in any real sense the 'owners' of the Nilgiri toplands, there was no reason why it should have entered their minds to demand compensation for such far-off places.

If the Toda traditionally did not regard land in general as something to be owned, still they reckoned particular lands to be definitely their own. These were the sites of their hamlets and sacred dairies and their funeral places. In the early days of British settlement in the Nilgiris, there was one notable exception to the Toda's easy willingness to accept whatever money they could get for the lands the newcomers desired to enclose. This case involved the sale of a *shola* in which there was an important dairy belonging to Ka·s̲ patriclan. By all accounts, the Ka·s̲ people were most reluctant to part with this sacred place, while the potential buyer, one Sir William Rumbold, a wealthy merchant from Hyderabad, was equally determined to acquire the land. Rumbold, it seems, retained the services of a local government employee, who put unlawful pressure on the owners to relinquish their claim for a meagre Rs. 400 compensation (Grigg 1880:332; Price 1908:129). This blot on the early record of Toda-British relations was later cleared when the local official was dismissed for corruption and the land returned to the Ka·s̲ people after Rumbold's death, the government itself repaying the purchase price of Rs. 400 into the estate of the deceased (Price 1908:129).

Meanwhile Sullivan, although the extent of his administrative authority in the hills was diminishing,[7] continued to campaign for government recognition of Toda proprietary rights to the Nilgiri plateau lands. The governor of Madras and others opposed him. Against Sullivan's position they argued that, everywhere else, the state held proprietary rights to the land, that "from

7. In 1828 Ootacamund was made a military cantonment under a commandant, and thus no longer came under Sullivan's jurisdiction as Collector of Coimbatore (a position he held from 1815 to 1830). In 1830 all of the hills west of the Pykara River were transferred from Coimbatore District to Malabar District (cf. Hockings 1973).

time immemorial" Toda had paid a grazing tax and a tax on female buffaloes to overlords on the Mysore plains, and that the *guḍu* payments could not be taken as evidence of Toda overlordship. *Guḍu*, they pointed out, was given by Badaga to others besides the Toda and not all Badaga gave it to Toda; moreover, it seemed to be less in the nature of rent than a gift compelled by the Badaga fear of Toda sorcery (cf. Francis 1908:270-71).

In 1835 Sullivan became a senior member of the Board of Revenue and in this capacity his views began to carry á good deal more weight than in the days when he was merely a District Collector. On the other hand, he had by now modified his earlier position that the Toda had proprietary rights over the whole of the Nilgiri toplands, and was prepared to admit that these were limited to the major Toda settlement area, the upland portion of Todanad. This modified stand was largely acceptable to the Madras government (now headed by a new Governor), which ordered (cf. Grigg 1880:334) that the Toda people should not

> on any account be disturbed in the possession of the lands heretofore held by them, which they may desire to retain for pasturage, so long as they pay the taxes at present payable by them; that private persons shall not be permitted to appropriate any of those lands without the consent of the Todawars interested in them at terms mutually agreed upon, and no part of those lands shall be taken for public purposes without compensation to the Todawars who have previously occupied them.

This order was upheld in 1837 by the Court of Directors of the East India Company sitting in London (Grigg 1880:334). But it should be noted that neither the local government nor the Court of Directors allowed recognition of Toda proprietary rights in the land. Indeed, it was made quite clear that Toda rights were those of usufruct only, and rested on the payment of an annual tax to the government.

Once it had accepted that Toda had usufruct rights in their traditional grazing lands, the Madras government decided, in 1836, to purchase for itself these Toda rights within the settlement of Ootacamund. This was to be done by compensating the Toda of the ten hamlets in the vicinity of Ootacamund and by reimbursing all those private individuals, like Sullivan, the moneys they had paid to the Toda for the lands they had enclosed. In this manner the government would become sole landlord within the settlement, except over those areas which were to be designated Toda reserve lands. Over the latter, amounting to some 70 acres and comprising the two hamlets of Ka·s̱ and Mel̤ga·s̱ and their immediate environs, the Toda would retain their ancient rights (cf. Price 1908:228).

But matters did not run smoothly for the government. The Toda refused to accept the compensatory sum of 3,564 rupees and 6 annas for the 2,800-plus acres within and just outside the confines of Ootacamund. Their refusal, it

seems, was at the instigation of the *tahsildar* (local sub-district officer), who was later punished for misconduct (cf. Price 1908:228); presumably this official urged the Toda to hold out for greater compensation. It was not until three years later, in 1840, that the Toda of the ten hamlets finally agreed to accept compensation, by which time the Court of Directors had ruled against paying them a lump sum on the grounds that the money would promptly be wasted (Price 1908:228-29). In the final settlement, concluded between these Toda and the Collector of Malabar, the Toda of the ten settlements agreed to accept Rs. 150 per annum in perpetuity, a payment initially termed *guḍu* in the belief that it was equivalent to the traditional Badaga grain offering (two years later, in 1842, it became 'compensation'). Subsequently an annual sum of Rs. 165 was authorised to be paid to the Toda of Jakkatalla (and the Badaga living there as well) in compensation for land taken from them for a military cantonment, later named Wellington, which was begun in 1850 (cf. Francis 1908:271). The Toda involved here belonged to Ïṇkity patriclan.

By the early 1840s, therefore, the British administration had come to a more or less amicable agreement with the Toda of two patriclans, Ka·ṣ and Melga·s, with respect to land within and adjacent to Ootacamund, and by 1850 with Ïṇkity patriclan regarding the Jakkatalla acquisition. But it still remained to settle the rights of the community in general.

Early in 1839 the Court of Directors of the East India Company had written to the Madras government of their hope that it would soon conclude an agreement with the Toda over the land issue (Grigg 1880:335). Clearly what the Directors wanted was a general settlement, not merely one related to the lands at Ootacamund. The local government placed responsibility for negotiating such a settlement into the hands of the Collector of Malabar under whose jurisdiction most Toda were then living. In 1840, the same year in which he concluded his agreement with the Toda of the ten hamlets in and around Ootacamund, the Collector wrote a detailed memorandum to headquarters in Madras (cf. Grigg 1880:335-36). He pointed out that the Toda then were paying an annual assessment on no more than 190 *bullah* of land (722 acres). These 190 *bullah*, he suggested, should be guaranteed to the Toda so long as they continued to pay the annual tax. As for the rest of the Nilgiri toplands (fifty times greater in extent than the area for which the Toda were assessed), the Malabar Collector was of the view that the proprietary rights of the Toda might be recognized if they were prepared to pay the annual assessment on the whole area. Alternatively, the Toda must allow the land on which they did not pay the assessment to be occupied and used by those who were prepared to pay for the right. But the Toda might still, as was the custom in Malabar, be recognized as landlords through the receipt of 15% of any profits obtained from the land by the colonizers. The Collector went on to say (cited in Grigg 1880:336):

> All land not tendered for might be left, as at present, in the Todas' possession with liberty to use it as their own till it was, piece by piece, taken up by those who would make a more profitable use of it. It would be very long ere, under this system, any such quantity would fall out of their hands (as far as the use of it goes) as to affect their interests as herdsmen; and by that time (if not before) it may be hoped they will have advanced in the scale of civilization and have seen the advantage of uniting husbandry to the mere tending of buffaloes. They may be compelled in time ... to change their mode of life by the operation of this system, but they can never be really injured by it; for ... every bullah of land which is lost to them ... will be amply made up by the 15 per cent which it is proposed should be given them from its produce.

But this proposal, potentially so generous to the Toda, was strenuously opposed by senior members of the Madras establishment, who reiterated the view that the state, now as in the past, was the ultimate owner of the land. Before the advent of the British, they argued, the Toda had given tacit recognition to state ownership by paying taxes to Tipu Sultan's representatives, and again they pointed out that Badaga had paid *gudu* to the Toda to ensure the latter's 'goodwill and protection', not to obtain rights to Toda land.

Unable by itself to come to a decision on the Toda land problem, in 1842 the Madras Government decided to submit the question to London for a decision by the final authority, the Court of Directors of the East India Company. In brief, the local government wanted a ruling on whether it was to allow the Toda to receive 15% "of all future produce resulting from the application of the capital and skill of others to the land", or whether a payment like that given to the inhabitants of the ten hamlets around Ootacamund would be sufficient compensation (cf. Grigg 1880:339)

In their reply of 21 June 1843 (IOR 1843:51-92), the Directors set down the principles which the government of Madras was henceforth to observe in its dealings with the Toda concerning matters of land, principles whose general validity is still recognized today. First, the Toda were said to have no claim to proprietary rights in the land. "We cannot", the Directors wrote, "admit the existence of any such proprietary rights in the soil on the part of the Todas as can in any way interfere with the right of Government to permit parties willing to pay the full assessment to bring it under the plough" (IOR 1843:67). The Directors acknowledged the "immemorial occupation" of the land by the Toda, but noted that the only use they had ever made of it themselves was to graze their herds upon it. If this pasturage were at any time in the future seriously curtailed, the Directors conceded that the Toda would find themselves at a "positive disadvantage" for which they should be compensated (IOR 1843:70). But the Directors made it clear that they

regarded Toda rights in the land to be no more than those of pasturage. Therefore, any person acquiring such lands from the Toda could not obtain from them rights greater than those the Toda themselves possessed. It followed that the right to build upon, or to cultivate, Toda grazing lands had to be acquired from the government and not from the Toda.

Turning to the extent of compensation the Toda might expect for the loss of their grazing rights, the Directors ruled out the possibility of their receiving 15% of profits obtained by others from the use of the land, there being no precedent for this outside Malabar. They further opposed the idea of presenting the Toda with a lump sum as compensation, on the grounds previously stated—that they would probably squander the money in a short time. The Directors suggested that the Toda "would be sufficiently compensated by a payment equivalent in amount to the 'goodoo' which they now receive from the Burgher cultivators" (IOR 1843:71).

Considering next the rights of the Toda to those "lands which are in more permanent occupation ... such as their mands or sites of villages and particular spots appropriated to religious rites", the Directors agreed that these "should be secure from all interference, and their absolute right in them declared" (IOR 1843:78-9). More than this, the Directors went on (IOR 1843:79–80) to tell the local government,

> We are ... of the opinion that you should abstain from making any grant of land in the immediate vicinity of their villages, as it is hoped that in the course of time they may be induced so far to change their habits as to bring them themselves into cultivation.

When it received the Directors' reply, the Madras government proceeded in 1843 to issue a *patta*[8], or title deed, for every Toda hamlet and religious site, allocating to each place three *bullah* (11.46 acres) of land over which the rights of the Toda were to be absolute, subject to the payment of an annual assessment of 4½ annas per *bullah* (Madras 1882:2, 3). At the same time, the government ordered the Board of Revenue to prepare a manual for the guidance of revenue officers dealing with Nilgiri land claims. But because a detailed land survey of the hills had to be made first, the manual became available only in January 1850 (Grigg 1880:341). This *Manual of Instructions* (Madras 1850) warned officials not to make grants of land close to Toda hamlets and religious places; to determine beforehand whether Toda were

8. A *patta* is a document issued by the Collector (chief revenue officer) of a district to a landholder, or other person having rights connected with the land, specifying the conditions under which the land is held, or the nature of the rights. The printed note in Toda *patta* runs as follows (cf. Madras 1891): "This patta is issued to (1) ..... (2) ..... (3) ..... and all other Todas of .....mund on account of grama samudayam inalienable Toda mund. It conveys no personal right to any individual Toda or Todas." The Sanskrit term *grama samudayam* means 'communally-owned village', and here reinforces the collective nature of the Toda title to their land.

eligible for *guḍu*; and to recognize no rights, beyond those of grazing, of any person claiming to have purchased land from the Toda (cf. Baikie 1857:xxxiii–xxxix).

The instructions laid down in the *Manual* remained in force until 1863, when new 'Waste Land Rules' were promulgated (cf. Francis 1908:273). These rules effectively pre-empted any claims which Toda might have made to uncultivated lands on which they habitually grazed their buffaloes. Under the new rules, all lands were to be regarded as 'waste'—and therefore disposable by the government without regard to other parties—unless rights of private proprietorship or exclusive occupancy could be proved. On neither grounds could Toda lay claim to their traditional pasturage.

Fearing encroachment on their grazing lands, the Toda now appealed to the Collector of Coimbatore to "be permitted to take up *for the grazing of their buffaloes* in the vicinity of each mund about 10 or 12 bullahs of land, *on the understanding that they won't sell it*" (Madras 1882:3). The authorities in Madras sanctioned the request and the Collector of Coimbatore issued new *patta* to each settlement (domestic and religious) for an additional nine *bullah* (34.38 acres), writing on each deed these words:

> In order to avoid all future disputes the Puttadar will understand that this putta conveys to him no right to any shola land or wood which may happen to lie within the limits of the land entered in the putta.

Each hamlet and sacred site now had a little over 45 acres allocated to it, with an annual tax assessment of two annas per acre. Of these 45 acres, it appears that the Toda were still regarded as having absolute rights over the original three *bullah* granted in 1843, but on the additional nine, two conditions were imposed: they could not sell the land and they had no rights to any *shola* on it.

There were two reasons for these conditions. First, Toda grazing lands were to be kept within the community for the sake of the Toda themselves. If they had been allowed to sell off parcels of land for their own profit, the community's pastoral base, and hence the community itself, might have been destroyed. Second, the authorities wished to preserve the indigenous forests and rolling grasslands for the sake of their natural beauty. Cutting down trees for sale could have resulted quite rapidly in the destruction of the *shola*, there being always an eager market in the Nilgiris for fuel and building materials. And of course the two concerns were inter-related, for if the Toda pasture lands were turned over to agriculturalists, the natural environment would be defaced by widespread cultivation.

Seven years later, in 1871, James Breeks, first Commissioner of the Nilgiris,[9] found some Toda ignoring government regulations and selling

9. The Commissioner was then the senior British official in the Nilgiri Hills, which had become a district but not yet a collectorate.

parts of their *patta* land. He decided, therefore, to issue new documents on which were printed the words "The Puttadar has no rights either to sell the land or fell the shola and sell the wood" (Madras 1882:31). This limitation now applied both to the original three-*bullah* grant and to the additional nine *bullah*, thus forestalling further alienation of Toda lands.

The Toda reserve lands were confirmed in the 1881 settlement following the 1870–80 survey and taxed at two annas per acre per annum (cf. Francis 1908:212). But, for reasons I have been unable to discover, the land demarcated for some Toda sites vastly exceeded the 45 acres granted under the 1843 and 1863 settlements. For example, Pexeṣy (Attumund), belonging to Kö·ro·r patriclan, had some 200 acres entered in its *patta*, a figure which went unquestioned by the Commissioner of the Nilgiris (Madras 1882:3).

Because Toda were by now sub-letting portions of their *patta* lands to non-Toda market gardeners, who broke up the soil and cultivated potatoes and other vegetables (Francis 1908:212), and because cinchona planters were also, it appears, eagerly eyeing Toda reserve lands (Madras 1882:3), the Special Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Nilgiris advised the government in 1881 (Madras 1882:4) to enforce its conditions on the use of Toda *patta* lands by imposing a penal assessment on infringers (Francis 1908:212). This course of action was adopted, and in 1882 the government declared that the Toda could neither sell *nor lease* their lands to others, and appended to the deeds the following notification, amplifying Breeks's stricture of a decade earlier (Madras 1891:725):

> N.B. The land specified in the patta has been granted for mund site and grazing purposes only. The Todas have no right either to sell or lease the land, or to fell the shola and sell the wood. If any part of the shola is felled, or any part of the land sold or leased, it will be at once assessed, shola at Rs. 1,000 per acre per annum, and grass at Rs. 100 per acre per annum.

Because Toda *patta* lands frequently bordered on government forest reserve, in 1893 the government gave to the Forest Department the authority to enforce its regulations on the Toda community (Madras 1893b). At that time Toda *patta* lands amounted to 2,948.67 acres (Madras 1893b:401). Rules for the management of these Toda *patta* lands were now codified and added to the Madras Forest Act of 1882 as Section 26 (Madras 1893b:401–402). The rules made clear that Toda—but Toda alone—were "at liberty to graze their own buffaloes, to remove fuel and grass for their domestic requirements and to collect honey and wax on such lands" and that they would also receive free permits "for the removal of all timber, bamboos, rattans, fibre and thatch grass that they may require for building or repairing their munds and temples." These concessions were a good deal more generous than had been allowed under the 1882 notification. What is more,

the new rules gave to the District Collector the power "to issue annual permits for the cultivation of grassland ... by Todas themselves free of charge, or otherwise as Government may from time to time direct." It was stipulated, however, that "no Toda shall ... permit any other person except a Toda to cultivate or assist in the cultivation of such lands" (Madras 1893b:402).

Apparently the provision which allowed Toda, under strict government control, to cultivate their *patta* lands (hitherto restricted to "mund site and grazing purposes only") was made in response to a Toda petition in early 1892 to J.D. Rees, Collector of the Nilgiris. At any rate, Mr. Rees wrote to the Board of Revenue (Madras 1892:675) that he had "received a petition from certain Todas, praying for permission to cultivate potatoes or other vegetables upon small portions of their grass land", and he asked that he "be authorized to grant this request and others of the like nature without the imposition of any extra assessment." In order to prevent "more enterprising folk from Ootacamund" from gaining "profit by a concession intended for a particular class alone", he suggested that the permits contain "a provision to the effect that no person or persons other than the Toda pattadars named therein should be at liberty to cultivate or to assist in the cultivation of Toda patta grass lands." Cultivation permits, Rees said, preferably should be renewed annually and "the extent of the land to be entered in the permit ... be left to the discretion of the Collector."

"I think", argued Rees, "this backward tribe should be encouraged, whenever it shows sign of enterprise, or desire to improve its conditions." In another letter to the Commissioners of Land Revenue ten days later, he wrote (Madras 1893a:405), "This is a new departure on the part of a purely pastoral tribe and should, I think, be encouraged."

The authorities acceded to Rees's request, but stipulated that the area of the land to be brought under cultivation "should not exceed one acre ... for each male adult Toda and no grant should be sanctioned until the Collector has satisfied himself of the *bona fides* of the applicants and has approved the site applied for, which should not include any land within the limits of the three settlements on the Nilgiris" (Madras 1892:676).

Although the authorities were determined to keep a watchful eye on the Toda management of their *patta* lands, they did not consider that these lands could be taken over at will by the government. In 1891, the Acting Collector of the Nilgiris wrote to the Board of Revenue about the possible reservation as forest land of an area for which *patta* had been granted to certain Toda. He requested clarification as to "what rights and privileges the so-called Toda pattas confer on the holders, and whether Government has not a joint interest in the management of sholas granted to Todas" (Madras 1891:725). The Board's reply, while affirming that "Government and the Todas are jointly interested" in the *shola* on the *patta* lands, was unequivocal: "Toda

patta lands are not lands at the disposal of Government." Plans for forest reserves on certain Toda *patta* lands would have to be abandoned (Madras 1891:726).

The twin concerns of the government, to prevent the alienation of Toda lands and to preserve the *shola*, continued in force through the beginning of the present century. Toda could dispose of their *patta* lands only with the consent of the government, and this consent, as Emeneau (1938a:106) noted, was "charily given if it affects the Todas' best interests." In 1938 Emeneau reported that there had been only two cases of alienation "within the last fifty years". The first involved lands associated with two *ti·* dairies—one belonging to Ka·s̲, the other to Mö·r̲ patriclan—which had been unused for several years and were allocated by the government to the Church of England Zenana Mission for a new Toda Christian colony (below, Sec. 3). This was in 1914 (cf. Madras 1914), and I have found no evidence that the original owners were paid compensation, probably because the lands remained within the Toda (albeit Christian) community. The second alienation also involved *ti·* dairy land, again belonging to Ka·s̲ patriclan. This plot was sold to the government and incorporated into forest reserve when the Ka·s̲ people needed money to pay compensation to Tö·r̲o·r̲ patriclan, a senior man of Ka·s̲ having been judged responsible for the suicide of a man of Tö·r̲o·r̲ (cf. Emeneau 1971:267).

From the early 1940s, land alienations to the government, although still rare, became more frequent, and in 1949 Prince Peter (1949:5, 1953:62)[10] reported that the Toda were complaining that "they have recently lost" as much as 381.05 acres with "no appreciable compensation having been granted to them in exchange." Most of the land was taken over by the Forest Department, in one instance as much as 165 acres being acquired from Tö·r̲ hamlet of Omga·s̲ patriclan. This was taken for pyrethrum cultivation in 1943, but when subsequently the scheme was abandoned, the land was not returned to the Toda; rather, 130 acres of it were leased to outsiders (Peter 1949:5, 1953:62).

These alienations notwithstanding, the rules governing the Toda *patta* lands worked quite satisfactorily for the remainder of the period of British rule in India, protecting and preserving the Toda pastoral economy, and so the lifestyle on which it was centred. (Concern for the Toda aside, the British prized the Wenlock Downs, the Toda heartland, as the scene of the local hunt as well as a beauty spot.) Towards the end of the British period, Emeneau (1938a:106–107) could write:

> In general, the impression is gained that if Government did not keep a close watch on Toda land, either from a concern for Toda welfare or from a desire to preserve the amenities of the Nilgiris, and prevent the

10. Peter (1953) is essentially a published version of the earlier work (1949).

> free play of economic pressure, the pastures would soon all be alienated, or at any rate to such an extent that the economic life of the Todas would be severely prejudiced. Toda economic life is to this extent artificially hedged off from the interference of outside influences and preserved from total disruption.

It is something of a paradox that the alien administration which brought such great changes to the Toda homeland also helped, in no small measure, to preserve (perhaps 'artificially') the traditional Toda lifestyle.

8.2.2 Community leadership

Sometime during Sullivan's tenure as Collector of Coimbatore with responsibility for the Nilgiris, he appointed a Toda 'headman' to whom he gave the title of *monegar* (*monyxo·r̲n* in Toda), like the Badaga headmen. Probably Sullivan felt the need for a single person through whom he could deal with all the Toda and, in the absence of any traditional office of headman in this community, decided to create one. He may have been ignorant at the time of the dominant political role of the Badaga, or perhaps he was unwilling to accept Badaga dominance because he saw the Toda as 'lords of the Nilgiri soil'; in any case it seems he did not see fit to deal with the Toda through the already-established network of Badaga village and divisional (*na·ḍu*) headmen.

Although the new position of *monegar* was potentially one of considerable political power, involving as it did the collection of the annual tax which Toda had to pay on their grazing lands, it never in fact became such. The reason is almost certainly because the office lacks a traditional base in this inordinately tradition-conscious society. Furthermore, it was created without much consideration for the social organisation of the Toda community. The man whom Sullivan chose for the office, Te·ty of Kī·wīṛ clan, was from the numerically smaller and ritually inferior Töwfiẏ subcaste, and the appointment has been held in this man's family ever since. It is not clear exactly why this Töwfiẏ man was chosen.[11] Rivers (1906:556) suggests,

11. The following story of Te·ty's appointment was recorded in 1938 by Emeneau (1963: 189):

> Te·ty ... was building a new mund ... and began to make preparations for the ceremony of giving salt to the buffaloes and its accompanying feast. He had to go to the plains for rice, salt, sugar, etc., to a place called Pe·t [possibly Mettupalayam according to Emeneau]. As he and his companion were going down, they met Sullivan coming up. They asked with gestures, since they spoke no Tamil, where he was going, and said that they would carry loads for money. He promised money if they would carry him up the mountains. They made a stretcher with cloaks and brought him up. When they reached what is now Stonehouse Hill, he asked shelter in the Toda mund that was situated there. They gave it in a small tent. After a few days he paid Te·ty three rupees and appointed him monegar.

If the story is true, it places the appointment probably in 1822, on the occasion of Sullivan's first visit to the site of the future Ootacamund.

plausibly, that the first *monegar* may have been given the job because he happened, at that time, to be one of the most influential members of the community.[12] Certainly in this century the esteem in which the Toda have held their *monegar* has varied according to the charisma of the office-holder. The present incumbent, now aged 40 or so, seems to wield little influence; during my first fieldwork in 1962–63 I could safely say he had none. But the two men who preceded him, his father's elder brother and his grandfather's elder brother, were both exceptionally important men.

With regard to the dispensation of justice within their own community, the Toda looked as before to their *no·ym* or caste council. The *monegar* might or might not have an important role in this, depending on personal qualities; his office provided no guarantee of power or influence.

In their disputes with other indigenous Nilgiri peoples, the Toda continued to rely on the mediation of the Badaga headmen, representing the politically dominant caste. Appeals to British courts were rare or non-existent and summonses for Toda to appear before these bodies extremely infrequent. In part, no doubt, Toda conservatism discouraged any dealings with these supralocal judicial institutions, but there was also the fact that the facilities themselves were quite inadequate until well after the mid-century. From 1828 (see above, note 7) jurisdiction over the hills was divided between the civil authorities in Coimbatore and the military commandant in Ootacamund, whose powers were restricted to that settlement alone. Then, two years later, the administrative split became three-sided, with most of the hills coming under the jurisdiction of the Malabar Collectorate, leaving only Kotagiri and adjoining portions of Peranganad under Coimbatore. The result of this divided authority, according to Grigg (1880:299), was that neither of the civil officers took much interest in the hills, while the military commandant had no powers outside Ootacamund. And as for the hill people themselves, Grigg comments, they were not going to trek down to Coimbatore or Malabar to "complain to tribunals so distant from their homes." A visit to the Malabar courts, under whose theoretical jurisdiction most Toda now came, would have required "travel through dense feverish jungle upward of 160 miles" (Grigg 1880:305).

In 1835, 58 Kurumba suspected of witchcraft were massacred by what was probably a combined force of Badaga and Toda, none of whom was caught (Grigg 1880:299). This event, it seems, roused the British authorities to take a more active interest in the peace and security of the hills. On the other hand, there is not much evidence of improvement until 1863, when the Nilgiris became a separate district under its own resident Commissioner (19 years later it became a full-fledged collectorate on an equal footing with

12. Hockings (1973: 868) mistakenly identifies the first monegar as the same man who, according to Toda song, "held the reins of John Sullivan's horse". But the reins-holder was Te·ðy of the To·ro·r people (cf. Emeneau 1971:818, 267), not Te·ty of Kï·wïr.

Coimbatore and Malabar). By the mid-1860s, British administration became a power to be reckoned with throughout the hills, and it was backed by an increasingly efficient police force, something that had been lacking in the hills prior to 1828 and confined to Ootacamund and its environs until 1859 (cf. Francis 1908:292–7).

By the early 1870s at least one Toda had been confined in the Ootacamund gaol, apparently because of a dispute over the ownership of some buffaloes. (Breeks [1873:9] remarked that "it was found impossible to induce him to work with the other convicts, and the authorities, unwilling to resort to harsh measures, were compelled to save appearances by making him an overseer.") But it seems that instances of official interference in the internal affairs of the Toda community were still rare. Around the turn of the century interaction between the Toda and British officialdom became more frequent, as we shall see in the next section.

It is interesting to note that Europeans often are linked with courts in Toda songs (cf. Emeneau 1971:677 *et passim*):

> 'Oh son of those Europeans! Oh son of those Tamilians!
> 'Oh European in the courts! Oh important man in the places!'

Even if Toda were infrequently pulled up by the law, there is no doubt that the new institution of the court made an impression on the community.

8.2.3 Education, social welfare and health

The notion of educating Toda children was mooted fairly early in the British period. Indeed, the Court of Directors of the East India Company in 1838 asked the Madras government to consider providing education for the Toda community (cf. Grigg 1880:423). In 1842, the Collector of Malabar wrote to the Court of Directors that he had been unable to propose any suitable plan. The Directors in their early reply (cited in Grigg 1880:423) expressed

> ... their regret that the efforts of the Madras Government to introduce education and civilization among the Todas had hitherto been unsuccessful, but they did not doubt that this Government would not neglect any available means, if they should offer, of effecting this object.

In fact, nothing was accomplished in this field for another seventy years.

It was only in the second decade of the present century that the government authorities actually got around to setting up a school for Toda children. This was on the downs near Pykara, to the west of Ootacamund, and it seems to have been reasonably well attended for a number of years. But academic results were not impressive, and as late as the early 1960s, no more than a couple of non-Christian Toda had managed to move on to a high school education. Christian missions, as we shall see, entered the field of

Toda education earlier than did the government, but their success among the traditionalists was similarly limited. With Christian converts, however, they achieved some impressive results.

In social welfare work, as in education among the Toda, it was the Christian missionaries who led the way (below, Sec. 3). But as their services were so closely tied to their proselytizing goals, their accomplishments were meagre among the great majority of Toda who had no wish to embrace an alien creed.

Official attempts to interfere with traditional Toda social institutions were rather rare. Early in the 19th century Sullivan had demanded the cessation of female infanticide, but apparently his order was not strictly enforced. The disproportion of men to women continued, suggesting that the Toda were slow to abandon the practice, and there is no record of a Toda actually being charged with such a killing. As late as 1941, there were 342 men to 288 women (Elwin 1942:52).

Sometime around the beginning of the present century, a few Toda women petitioned the government to give them the means to legalize their marriages and so break the eternal round of wife-capture; their petition concluded, "You have protected our buffaloes, will you not protect us women?" (Ling 1910:14–15). The government's response was that marriages could be registered under the existing legislation, and the Treasury Deputy Collector of the Nilgiris was appointed registrar of Toda marriages. But few Toda were to make use of this facility. According to Thurston (1906: 111–12), this was because the existing Marriage Act required a declaration of bachelorhood and spinsterhood which, with child marriage the norm, few Toda could possibly make. Wife-capture continued (and has survived into the present on a reduced scale), but apparently the government did show some concern for Toda marital uncertainties, for the missionary Catherine Ling (1910: 16) could write,

> I am thankful to say that the frequent matrimonial disputes amongst the Todas have been treated more seriously since then [i.e., the time of the petition] by the officials, and have not been left to the scant justice of their own tribunals, conducted on the hillside and composed of the headmen, ever ready to increase their number of buffaloes by first inciting these raids, and, when appealed to do justice, knocking down the woman to the highest bidder.

Some Toda men, she noted with satisfaction, had received prison sentences for carrying off a woman against her will.

The petitioning women's remark about protection of buffaloes probably refers to another sphere in which the British authorities did interfere in Toda custom. From at least the turn of the century (cf. Rivers 1906: 372), the administration ruled that no more than two animals per deceased might be

sacrificed at a funeral, whether it was a first or second ceremony. Toda still managed to sacrifice large numbers of buffaloes at second funerals by holding the ceremony for several persons simultaneously. The government also frowned upon the practice of penning the sacrificial buffaloes overnight without food or water prior to sacrifice (cf. Rivers 1906: 372), but this practice survived, intermittently, until at least the late 1950s (cf. Stanes 1959).

Official concern for the physical welfare of the Toda was hardly noteworthy until the mid-1920s; its advent then was a direct consequence of the 1923–4 epidemic of relapsing fever which took about 100 lives from the total Toda population of some 640 (Yeatts 1932: 388), and of public sympathy for the community which was being ruthlessly exploited by Labbai[13] moneylenders (Nambiar 1965b: 109).

In August 1926, public meetings were held in Ootacamund under the chairmanship of the District Collector in order to consider the plight of the Toda community. One outcome of these meetings was the constitution of a Toda Welfare Committee, together with a Ladies Auxiliary. The members of these groups were British and Indian; to my knowledge no Toda was included. The Toda Welfare Committee, chaired by the Collector, came up with a 'Toda Amelioration Scheme' which had four main objectives: to obtain financial assistance for the Toda so that they might be freed from the clutches of moneylenders; to provide for the health care of the community; to encourage the Toda to abandon such 'detrimental' social customs as were believed to be abetting their decline in numbers, namely polyandry, the defloration of prepubescent females and the tolerance of sexual promiscuity; and finally, to encourage the Toda to broaden their economic base from pastoralism to one of herding and horticulture. It is worth examining these early welfare schemes in a little detail.

In 1927 the Collector of the Nilgiris initiated an enquiry into Toda indebtedness. It was discovered that the community's debt amounted to Rs. 7,500 which, although not a particularly large sum, was one which the Toda were judged unlikely ever to be able to pay off. In 1928, therefore, the government sanctioned a loan of this sum to enable the Toda to liquidate all their debts. This was done by establishing a cooperative society which would lend the Toda debtors the necessary money to pay their debts. The Collector personally oversaw the repayments, thereby preventing the moneylenders from making exaggerated claims, and pressuring them, in many instances, to forego some of the interest due to them (Nambiar 1965b:108). Furthermore, in order to break once and for all the hold of the moneylenders over the Toda community, a store was established under the cooperative society with the

13. Labbai are a community, mostly of traders, who are orthodox Sunni Muslims by faith. Their mother tongue is Tamil and they share certain features of their social and cultural life with the lower Hindu *jati* of Tamilnadu (cf. Thurston and Rangachari 1909, vol. 4:198–205).

brief to purchase all Toda ghee and auction off the lot to the highest bidder each week. Two Toda were employed to collect the ghee from all the hamlets and bring it to the society's store. Initially this scheme worked very well, enabling the Toda to obtain an average of 2½ rupees per *viss* (approximately 1.6 kg) rather than the 1½ rupees they customarily received from the market dealers. The cooperative store also sold foodgrains at fair prices to the Toda (Nambiar 1965b:120).

Despite this promising beginning, within a few years the society began to fall behind on the repayment of the government loan. The government, seeing that it was unlikely to get its money back, decided to write off the remaining Rs. 4,500 and close the Toda cooperative society. With the society, of course, went the ghee store. And by the late 1930s the community once again was badly in debt to moneylenders (Nambiar 1965b:108).

So far as the health of the Toda was concerned, in 1926 the Toda Welfare Committee requested the government to give special attention to this community in order to prevent what they believed would otherwise be the extinction of the Toda people. The government responded by ordering a special medical survey of the community. The survey was conducted in 1927 by an assistant surgeon of the King Institute for Medical Research in Guindy, Madras. In his report (Pandit 1927: 17), the doctor wrote that "the physique of the Todas in general continues to be good and they have to thank the climate for it." He noted, however, that houses were small, ill-ventilated and overcrowded, making these dwellings ideal locations for the spread of epidemics. He said that "crowding and the lousy condition of the Todas, who ... are not overclean in their personal habits, were clearly responsible for the high incidence" of death in the recent epidemic of relapsing fever. Of common non-epidemic diseases, the doctor found tuberculosis, hookworm and malaria to be rare, the last invariably contracted during a visit to the plains, and there was only a single leper in the community. He reported that more than 80% of the community were protected against smallpox and noted that, in the event of an outbreak of this disease, the Toda segregated the victim in a special hut wherein he or she was attended only by persons who had themselves suffered an attack of smallpox. A similar segregation was enjoined upon people suffering from plague, the doctor reported, but for no other diseases (Pandit 1927:16–18).

But the most serious complaint affecting the community, and clearly an important factor in its decline, was the widespread incidence of venereal disease, both syphilis and gonorrhoea. The doctor sent blood specimens from 465 people to the King Institute to test for syphilis and obtained positive results for 49%. He noted that "all the stages of the disease were met with, chancres and condylomata being perhaps the commonest" and he wrote that "syphilitic affection of the palate, throat and nose were fairly common, but nerve syphilis was rare" (Pandit 1927:18). So far as gonorrhoea was

concerned, the doctor examined 165 adult males and discovered that 53% were presently suffering or had suffered from this disease. Women were not examined, but some gave a history of infection and the doctor concluded that "it may be presumed that they suffer to the same extent as the men." He added, "Nearly 20% of the women are sterile and gonorrhoea is certainly partly responsible for this high rate, and for the low rate of fertility." Other causes of low fertility were syphilitic infections and possibly the custom of defloration. Some of the older Toda men told the doctor that venereal disease had appeared among them only "after the Nilgiris ... became a popular health resort", and the doctor remarked (Pandit 1927:19),

> Though their statement cannot be absolutely relied upon, one cannot help thinking that if the diseases had been in existence for any length of time—say four or five centuries, the Todas would have become extinct by now, as conditions have been so very favourable for the spread of the disease.

The doctor concluded that the steady decline of the Toda population since the beginning of this century was due to several factors: the low fertility rate (5.8 as against 9.12 for the Madras Presidency as a whole) brought about mostly by venereal infection, the high rate of infant mortality (nearly 400 per thousand live births), and deaths from epidemic diseases, relapsing fever and influenza (Pandit 1927: 20). He went on to recommend that a dispensary be opened at some conveniently central location for the scattered Toda community, and that this dispensary be staffed by a sub-assistant surgeon, male attendant and trained nurse; further that the treatment of venereal infections receive top priority (Pandit 1927:22).

The government declined to finance a separate dispensary for the exclusive use of a mere 600 Toda, stating that in any case there was no guarantee that they would avail themselves of the facilities if they were established (cf. Madras 1927). Nonetheless, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Toda Welfare Committee managed to obtain the services of a trained nurse-cum-midwife, paying her initially from funds made available by the Collector from his discretionary grant (Brackenbury 1928); later her salary was paid by the District Board (Nambiar 1965b:113). No doubt through the influence of Catherine Ling, who was secretary of the Ladies Auxiliary, the job went to a Tamil Christian nurse who had been trained at the hospital in Bangalore run by Miss Ling's mission. The nurse was stationed at Pe·y mod,[14] a Christian Toda settlement on the Wenlock Downs, where a Toda Christian woman assisted her and acted as interpreter (Ling 1928; 1934: 34). Despite its initial reluctance to grant funds for a dispensary with such a small clientele, the

14. The name Pe·y mod, meaning 'demon hamlet', was changed by the Christians to Tho mod, 'the hamlet of good odour', but it is the old name which is still current among orthodox Toda.

government later did sanction money for the nurse's quarters and a dispensary, while a maternity ward was subsequently put up at the expense of an "Indian nobleman" (Ling 1934:34). The centre became known as the Tho [Pe·y] Mund Welfare Centre. Reporting on its progress during 1927, the Ladies Auxiliary secretary (Ling 1928) remarked that the nurse in charge

> has done difficult work skillfully, and she has been instrumental in getting many women to go to hospital, which has always been very difficult. Her work is distinctly pioneer work, and she has not spared herself, but has walked miles to many of the munds, when hearing of any sickness, especially to help pregnant women. Already there is evidence that some of the old habits of these Toda women are being given up, and more hygienic methods adopted.

Ling (1934: 33–4) was pleased with the choice of Pe·y mod for the dispensary, recording "It is a splendid centre for medical work as it is on the direct path to many munds, and is a place where the Todas constantly pass in going from one mund to another, or on the way to funerals." Doubtless, she was also thinking of the proselytizing value of health care being dispensed by a Christian nurse in a Christian Toda hamlet.

The medical scheme which was operated under the direction of the Toda Welfare Committee lasted only until 1929, when it was discontinued for lack of funds (Peter 1949:8). But medical facilities continued to be made available at Pe·y mod through the support of Miss Ling's mission. How long the medical centre remained operative I have been unable to discover, but it is clear enough that finances remained a problem. It seems that, in the beginning, the Maternity and Child Welfare Society of Madras gave a monthly grant of Rs. 15 for the purchase of medicine, but this was stopped in 1932. The local branch of the Red Cross gave the occasional grant but this could not be relied upon. Miss Ling's society, the Church of England Zenana Mission (below, Sec. 3), lent its car to the nurse but she had to buy her own fuel. At one point the government was approached—in vain—for an annual grant of Rs. 400 (Nambiar 1965b:114).

In any case, the dispensary was not equipped to deal with the Toda's most pressing health problem, venereal infections. At the request of the Toda Welfare Committee, the Ootacamund Municipality agreed to treat all Toda brought to the VD ward at the municipal hospital and, as Toda were by no means confined to the municipality, the District Board agreed to meet half the cost of their treatment. Until the middle of 1932 the Municipality also gave the use of its ambulance to bring Toda to hospital from areas far outside municipal limits (Nambiar 1965b:174).

But these various schemes to tackle the Toda health problem did not halt the decline of the population, which reached an all-time low of 484 in 1949 (Peter 1953:60). In that year too, anthropologist Prince Peter found venereal

diseases, especially syphilis, contaminating "over half the Todas, with 100 out of a total 175 women as a consequence, stricken with sterility" (Peter 1953:60). Post-Independence measures to tackle this and other medical problems will be discussed later.

Given the extreme conservatism of the Toda in matters of social custom, neither the Toda Welfare Committee nor its Ladies Auxiliary made much headway in persuading these people to abandon polyandry and ritual defloration. These customs were eventually to die out, but only very slowly and probably more because of pressure from young modernists within the community than because of direct propaganda from outsiders. And within the bounds set by their rules of incest a wide range of sexual liaisons continued to be acceptable.

8.2.4 Agriculture

As for the plan to introduce agriculture to the Toda to supplement their pastoral economy (Nambiar 1965b:117–18), the Toda Welfare Committee decided to encourage a wider interest in potato cultivation, a few Toda having already taken this up in a small way. For this purpose the Collector, in 1927, obtained from the Madras government a grant of Rs. 5,000 to enable Toda to purchase seed, farming implements, fencing materials and fertilizer. Channelling the money through the Toda Cooperative Society, the Welfare Committee was able to induce no less than sixty Toda families to take up potato cultivation on their *patta* lands, thirty acres being used for this purpose. A special agricultural staff was appointed to supervise the Toda's efforts, and the new farmers obtained almost 9,000 rupees for their first potato crop. This money was held by the Collector, credited to each Toda family's account and paid out in weekly instalments according to its needs, for it appeared that tight economic supervision was still necessary to keep the Toda from falling prey yet again to the moneylenders. In 1930 the government provided a further sum of Rs. 2,000 to encourage the 37 Toda Cooperative Society members who had not yet taken up potato cultivation to do so.

But despite this promising start, by 1933 the whole scheme had collapsed. The market price of potatoes fell while the Toda remained mostly unenthusiastic about the cultivator's calling (Nambiar 1965b:118). Many sidestepped the government's plans for them by secretly leasing their lands and selling their implements, seed and fertilizers (Emeneau 1938a:107). Some time earlier Yeatts (1932: 389), author of the 1931 Census report for Madras, had observed:

> It is an uphill task to get the Toda to take any occupation but that of his forefathers. The Toda does not like work in the sense of anything requiring long and steady application. The grazing of cattle permits of

> many hours of sleep or meditation in sholas or on the banks of a pleasant stream; potato cultivation is a very different matter. ... Some sceptics maintain that in a good many of the professed Toda potato patches the real work is done by Badagas fee'd for the purpose. In other words, the Toda has not taken to potato cultivation at all but has taken very kindly to playing up to the whims of the would-be benefactors.

Emeneau, who arrived in the Nilgiris to begin his linguistic research a couple of years after the collapse of the agricultural scheme, had this to say (Emeneau 1938a:107):

> The scheme broke down on its really vulnerable point. The Todas are pastoralists with no tradition of agriculture and the continuous back-breaking labour it demands, and the attempt to make agriculturalists of them while their own pastoral occupation was still in full working order could not with any confidence have been expected to succeed.

As we shall see, recent attempts to make farmers of the Toda seem to be achieving much greater success. The reason is clear: in recent decades the pastoral economy, for many Toda, has been subject to severe strain. I shall return to this subject (below, Sec. 4.2).

8.3 THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

Another consequence of the opening up of the Nilgiris by the British administration was an influx of Christian missionaries, both European and Indian. As we have seen, there had been brief visits at the beginning of the 17th century, first in 1602 by two Indian clerics, a priest and deacon of the Malabar Syrian Rite in union with Rome, and then in the following year by an Italian Jesuit based in Calicut; but these made no serious attempt to bring Toda into their faith (cf. Whitehouse 1873:132–35; Rivers 1906: 728–29 and the original manuscripts: Anonymous 1602; Fenicio 1603). The missionaries of the 19th century, by contrast, were bent on conversions, and their effect on a very few Toda was great.

The first Christian organization to contact the Toda in British times was the Basel Mission Society, whose Nilgiri work was directed by a German, the Rev. J. F. Metz. This man devoted most of his energies to the Badaga, among whom he obtained several converts (cf. Hockings 1980a:187ff). Among the Toda he failed to win a single person. Obviously frustrated, he wrote in 1857 (Metz 1864:133), "they are as a body virtually atheists, leaving nearly all religious concerns to their priests, and never giving themselves the smallest trouble about them."

Metz's attitude and method, recorded in the small book he wrote on the Nilgiri peoples, are amply illustrated by this account of his visit to a *poṭo·ṭ* at his *ti·* (Metz 1864:39–41):

> A visit to the abode of one of these ascetics enabled me to see what a life of useless self-abnegation they are constrained by their customs to lead. My object was to deliver to him the gracious message of Salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, and to induce him to return to his family and friends. ... I endeavoured to persuade the youthful Pálaul of the utter futility of his endeavours to secure the favour of a spotless God towards himself and his kinsmen by a mere act of selfdenial, while his sins remained unpardoned and the wrath of God rested upon him.

Needless to say, the Toda remained unconvinced and probably not a little resentful of the missionary's vituperative attacks on their sacred institutions. But the Basel Mission did establish a school, according to a later missionary (Ling 1910:30), "for the benefit of the Todas."

During or soon after Metz's missionary career in the Nilgiris, Jesuit priests from Malabar seem also to have involved themselves with the Toda. Thus Blavatsky (1930:103), making no secret of her distaste for Christian evangelism, writes:

> Using their skill and habitual shrewdness, the Jesuits succeeded in establishing relations with the Todds [*sic.*]. They did not succeed in obtaining their confidence but established good friendship ... and to their great joy—for they detest the Protestants still more than the pagans—they learned that Metz might have lived with them [the Toda] for centuries in the most intimate friendship without making the slightest impression upon them.
>
> "The white man's language resembles the chattering of the maina (a kind of talking bird) or the gabbling of monkeys," said the old Todds to the Jesuits who, in their self-sufficiency, did not go into the meaning of this ambiguous compliment. "We listen, and we laugh ... what need have we of your gods while we have our great buffaloes?" they added.

Blavatsky (whose book was first published in her native Russian in 1893) tells us (p. 104) that "these events took place about ten years ago." "Since then", she says, "the missionaries of the two religions have abandoned their efforts to convert the Todds. They finally realized that their endeavours would mean nothing but a loss of time."

After Metz and the Jesuits, another European missionary was to have more success. This was the English woman, Catherine F. Ling, whom we have already met as secretary to the Ladies Auxiliary of the Toda Welfare Committee. Miss Ling was attached to the Church of England Zenana Mission Society and spent half a century in the Nilgiris, learning to speak Toda with a fluency almost no other European has achieved. And despite fierce resistance from the community at large, she won a number of converts and established a Toda Christian community which survives to this day.

The Zenana Mission Society's interest in the Toda community began in 1890 (cf. Ling 1910: 29, 1934: 23). One Sunday morning in that year a Toda man appeared at the society's church in Ootacamund. It turned out that he had been sick and an Indian Christian had given him some medicine, along with the advice that he should pray to Jesus Christ. The Toda interpreted the Christian's advice to mean that he should make a vow to the Christian God since, in the event of sickness or other misfortune, Toda customarily make vows not only to their own but to others' deities as well. Having recovered, he was at the Christians' temple to perform whatever rites of thanksgiving the presiding deity might demand. The missionaries interpreted his visit as a direct call from the Almighty to begin preaching to the Toda community (Ling 1910:29, 1934:23; Emeneau 1939b:93–94).

The first task Catherine Ling set herself was to learn the Toda language, employing to teach her a Toda man who, in his boyhood, had attended the Basel Mission's school and consequently acquired literacy in Tamil. She went on to translate St. Mark's Gospel into Toda, using the Tamil script. The work was published in 1897 (Ling, transl: 1897). This aspect of her work was later taken over by her assistant, a Miss Grover, and Samuel, a Tamil evangelist who also served as interpreter to Rivers during his 1901–02 fieldwork with the Toda. These two between them put out Toda versions of St. John's Gospel, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, two books of Old and New Testament stories and some hymns (Ling 1910:32, 1934:24). But despite this promising start, Toda Christian literature (which was, and remains, the only Toda literature) progressed no further. Miss Ling wrote in the early 1930s (1934: 24) that the Toda texts were "the means of winning some of the early converts", but "the children now learn to read Tamil, that being the language of the district and their means of communication with other races." Failure to develop in the convert community a tradition of Toda literacy may have been one of the reasons for its slow but sure loss of a Toda identity. But that is a later story.

Having gained some fluency in the language, Miss Ling turned her energies to education. As she later recalled (Ling 1910: 32–3), "The next step was to start schools for the children; for from the commencement we felt that the great hope with these ... people lay with the children." Some time between the 1890 founding of the Toda mission and 1904, when the first convert was made, two schools were established in the vicinity of the Toda settlement areas on the Wenlock Downs: the first at Pykara, the second at Sussigundi. The second school was set up, Miss Ling wrote (1910:34, and almost identically, 1934:25), because the children's parents were "periodically changing their munds when the pasture was exhausted on one side of the hills, and the school-master would suddenly find himself scholarless".

Reporting on these pioneer educational efforts among the Toda, Ling (1934:25; cf. 1910:33–34) wrote:

> School-keeping amongst the Todas was carried on under difficulties. A Christian school-master was placed out amongst them, who spent part of the day in teaching and part in evangelistic work. His first duty was to collect the children from the scattered villages—two or three from one mund and then on a mile or two farther to the next mund for a few more, his attendance roll growing as he went, and some of his most valuable instruction being given on the walk over the Downs. Arrived at the school, two, or at the most three, hours' teaching was all they could stand, after which they wandered home again by themselves, stopping on the way to eat wild raspberries, or rifle a wild bee's nest, or to string chains of cyclamen flowers, but always drawing home, like the cattle, at eventide.

Twice a month Miss Ling inspected the schools, which despite their shortcomings were vital to her plans for proselytization. "From an educational point of view no doubt our little schools did not amount to much," she later confessed, "yet it was these very schools that gave the Todas their first desires for better things, and from them the early converts were won" (Ling 1934:25–26).

In 1904 Miss Ling won her first convert, a former pupil of the Pykara school who had gone on to attend a Christian boarding school on the plains at Tirunelveli. "After three years' careful instruction" (Ling 1934:31), the young man accepted baptism, becoming the first Toda on record to abandon the ancestral religion. The community reacted swiftly, and all the children except "two or three who received scholarships" were removed from the mission schools (Ling 1910:41).

Undaunted, Miss Ling pressed on with new plans for educating the Toda. She proposed to open a boarding school where the children, staying put while their parents migrated, might "keep their own Toda dress, eat their own Toda food, and their caste should in no way be interfered with." The only stipulation was that they should be in the care of a Christian teacher (Ling 1910:41–42). The Toda agreed. Then, wrote Ling (1934:26),

> We hired a cottage, with twenty-four acres of land, eight miles from Ootacamund, in a thoroughly Toda neighbourhood; we got it in order and arranged an opening day. The parents came in full force and partook of the refreshments provided, but we waited in vain for the children who never came.

It would seem that, despite her assurance, the Toda were not convinced that their children's caste would "in no way be interfered with."

Failing as a boarding school, the new settlement (which, according to one of the early converts still alive, was at Glenmorgan, actually 14 rather than 8 miles from Ootacamund) did attract "two or three of the young couples, who

failed in the attempt to register their marriages, but still desired better things than obtained in their munds" (Ling 1934:26, cf. 1910:43). From this we may infer that the couples concerned were placing themselves under the missionaries' protection to prevent the women being carried off by other men. Eventually five Toda families came to live in the settlement, submitting themselves to the authority of the resident Christian teacher and his wife. The Toda built themselves huts and a buffalo pen there, and besides herding also began cultivating potatoes. The women, when not engaged in their domestic duties, occupied themselves with needlework, which the mission sold for them (cf. Ling 1910:44–45, 1934:26–27).

This could have been the start of a Christian Toda colony. Although none of these seekers of protection had converted, the missionaries clearly hoped that they would do so. "There was a short service every morning before the men went to work, conducted by the teacher in charge; and after the women had finished their household duties they came to his wife for similar teaching" (Ling 1910: 44–45). On Sundays, ordinary work was suspended in favour of Christian instruction. The Toda elders must have sensed the danger—that the settlement's existence was bound to lead, sooner or later, to conversions. Taking firm action (Ling 1934: 27),

> they issued an ultimatum ordering all to leave the colony under pain of excommunication, which included withdrawal of grazing rights, exclusion for ever from the munds, neither giving nor taking in marriage, and—severest blow of all—no burial rites.

This threat brought the five families back into line, and "One night the whole party flitted—men, women, children and buffaloes—and in the morning when the teacher got up he found the place deserted" (Ling 1910: 46). The missionaries held on for a couple of months in the vain hope that these Toda would return, but then the colony was abandoned, part of the potato crop having been stolen.

For some time there seems to have been mutual hostility between the Toda and the missionaries. No Toda came to the mission house for medicine or help of any kind, and Miss Ling (1910: 40) "also felt that for a time at least it was better to leave them." In fact, the Toda work was suspended, with the Tamil evangelists going back to their work among Tamil speakers. This must have been in the year 1905.

Since 1904, the first Toda Christian had been the only Toda Christian. And in 1905, after the failure of both the mission schools and the colony, it looked as if he would long retain this distinction. But it turned out otherwise. In January 1907 two Toda girls, also former pupils of the Pykara school, came of their own accord to the Zenana Mission Society's school in Ootacamund. A month or two later three more came, and all five were

baptized in October 1907 (cf. Ling 1910:56–8). Although opposition to these conversions was strong, particularly among relatives, the community seems to have raised less objection than it did over the five couples who had earlier sought the missionaries' protection. And, interestingly, despite the conversions the elders asked the missionaries to open another school for their children. To this request the missionaries responded with alacrity, for they trusted that a school would "furnish its contribution in the days to come to the Church of Christ" (Ling 1910:59).

By 1907, then, the nucleus of a breakaway Christian Toda community had been established, albeit with a preponderance of young females. Soon, however, several adult males embraced the new religion and by 1913 there were six male and five female Toda Christians (Ling 1913).

When the Christian Toda were mostly young girls, they could be boarded at the mission schools along with other Indian Christian children. But the arrival of adult converts raised the problem of a place to live. Christian Toda could not remain in their home settlements because, in rejecting the traditional ritual idiom, they were automatically outcaste from Toda society. Although the converts "could no doubt contest the right to live as Christians in their own munds", Miss Ling (1913) observed rightly that "it would cause friction with the other Toda." British Indian law might have supported the Christians' right to live in their ancestral homes, but orthodox Toda would not tolerate outcastes in their midst. As we have already seen, the settlements are sacred even to the extent of participating in divinity. Presumably the residence therein of persons who had broken caste would defile them. So where were the converts to live? According to Miss Ling (1934:28) they could not be housed in the mission compound "with their buffaloes and Toda habits", so she decided to ask the authorities for permission to establish a Toda Christian colony (rather like the earlier one on the Wenlock Downs) on Toda *patta* land which had been abandoned by the community, there being several such places available.

In a letter to the Collector of the Nilgiris regarding the proposed settlement, Miss Ling (1913) gave four reasons why she considered its establishment imperative. First, she said, it was necessary to teach the Toda an alternative occupation to that of the herdsman, for "at present they have no occupation but the grazing of buffaloes, and in case of cattle disease or any misfortune happening to their cattle they are often reduced to very great straits and even to starvation." She opined that the "frequent charges of theft and crime of various kinds are probably largely due to insufficient means of livelihood." Secondly, it was necessary to provide a home for the converts "where they may be able to follow their ancestral calling, but under improved conditions and without being detribalized." The third reason was "to provide an asylum against the oppression of the headmen" (i.e. the community elders). She detailed this "oppression":

> The poorer members of the community are liable to have their buffaloes annexed on the slightest pretext, their wives carried off and their children treated as slaves. It is well known that the constant change of wives is the black spot in Toda domestic life and when the cases are brought before the 'panchyat' [the *no·ym*, or caste council] the woman is knocked down to the highest bidder or in other words to the man who can give the biggest bribe to the headmen in the shape of buffaloes. Young men are let out on a yearly hire system, on the understanding that they shall receive food and clothes and a buffalo calf every other year, but the parents are not in a position to enforce such an agreement. ... One very effective way of enforcing their authority is by refusing to allow the corpse after a death to be removed from the hut, it frequently is kept eight days and sometimes longer, till the point of dispute between the relatives of the deceased and the 'panchyat' has been settled, when the impossibility of the situation eventually makes the family accede to the demands, frequently unjust.

Miss Ling's fourth reason for setting up a colony was "to establish a model settlement as an illustration of what honest work, cleaner lives [and] more intelligent knowledge of the laws of health may do to correct if possible the rapid diminuation of the tribe." In her opinion, "Consumption, immorality, ignorance of the laws of health and superstition" were "largely if not entirely responsible for the decrease amongst the Todas." Furthermore, "Drink and opium" were "making great ravages amongst them" since "women as well as men are addicted to this vice whenever opportunity offers."

Miss Ling's first choice for the site of her proposed colony had been Pe·y mo̱d, on the Downs ten kilometres from Ootacamund, and not far off the Governor Shola road. The site belonged to Kï·wïṛ patriclan, but nobody was living there. The application, made in June 1913, was rejected by the district authorities. Apparently the Kï·wïṛ people had objected to the alienation, for when Miss Ling stated her case to the Collector in October, in the letter already cited, she wrote that "it seems manifestly unfair that they should prevent others of their own tribe settling upon land that they are unable to use themselves." (Miss Ling, it seems, could not appreciate that the parent community no longer considered the Christian converts to be "of their own tribe".) Instead, the government assigned her 48.21 acres of land in the area of Cairn Hill, again ten kilometres from Ootacamund, but to the southeast of town, on the Italur road. This was the site of a long-abandoned *ti·* dairy belonging to Ka·s̱ clan, and the settlement, even in Christian hands, retained the name Ti· mo̱d or Ti· mund.

The site for the proposed Christian colony was far from ideal for Toda, since it was located not in the main settlement area, the verdant downs to the west of Ootacamund, but in a place long colonized by Badaga farmers. Thus,

in addition to being isolated from other Toda, it was poor buffalo country. But it was all that Miss Ling could obtain at the time.

The land was assigned to Miss Ling for a trial period of five years (cf. Madras 1914). Near the end of this period, having established a more or less viable Christian community, she applied to the Collector for a permanent *patta* (Ling 1918). Replying, the Collector (Wells 1919) requested a report on the colony's progress. Miss Ling (1919) wrote that 8 of the 48 acres had been broken up, fenced and planted to potatoes, oats, *korali* (a millet, *Hordeum* spp.) and European vegetables. The Toda had also been encouraged to keep cows, she said, but not the traditional buffaloes "because the latter are very destructive to fences and buildings." In addition, a small flock of sheep was being raised. Miss Ling reported that a Badaga Christian family also lived at Ti· moḍ to teach agricultural techniques to the Toda.

During the first five years of the Christian colony's existence, six Toda families settled there for differing periods. Three families remained for the whole time, two left after four years' residence and one arrived only in the fourth year of the scheme. The first two families to come to the settlement were the ones who left after four years, moving back onto the Downs and settling at Pe·y moḍ. In her report to the Collector, Miss Ling (1919) said that they moved because they

> got discouraged at the poor results of their labours, the potatoes being ... attacked by disease and being close to sholas their crops were subject to ravages from porcupines, wild pig and sambur; the pasture also in the dry weather was insufficient for their cattle ...

The two families reverted to pastoralism, she reported, but "in the dry season when their cattle were not yielding" they worked on the land to supplement their income. Pe·y moḍ thus became the second Toda Christian settlement. About 20 years later, in the late 1920s or very early 1930s, a third Christian settlement came into being, called Pu moḍ or Kwïṛko·ḷkwaṛ, originally a To·ṛo·ṛ hamlet. All three colonies survive to the present, Ti· moḍ (also known as Toda Colony) with 111 inhabitants, Pe·y moḍ (or Tho mund) with 13 and Kwïṛko·ḷkwaṛ with 30, according to a 1975 count (DAH 1975).

The authorities did not allow the permanent land grant that Miss Ling requested, but gave another five-year *patta*. This was in 1919 (cf. Madras 1919), and so would have expired in 1924, but I have no record of subsequent land legalities. The situation today is that the Christian families have their own plots of land to which they hold *patta* titles, and they have additional land from the mission.

From quite early on, the Christian settlements took on a very different appearance from the traditional Toda hamlets. Here were no thatched dairies, huts and great buffalo pens; in their places rose a church, brick houses, schools, dispensaries and potato patches. The first small church

(Plate 36b) was built at Pe·y mod and subsequently a more substantial one was erected at Ti· mod (Plate 36a), where in 1926 Miss Ling and a companion missionary also built themselves a bungalow (Ling 1934:29). In the 1920s, as we have seen, Pe·y mod became the centre of a medical welfare unit, with a dispensary and nurse's quarters, established under the Toda Amelioration Scheme.

The missionaries from the start had aimed to replace Toda reliance on the buffalo with a mixed economy of agriculture and cow-herding, and it was not long before agriculture far outweighed pastoralism in importance for the Christian Toda (cf. Emeneau 1939b: 95). By 1960, when about 87% of the parent community's economically active males were still involved in the work of the herdsman, only 18% of the Christian males were similarly engaged (Nambiar 1965b: 90). Furthermore, as the converts gained a formal education, some took up non-agricultural occupations such as chauffeuring, tailoring, and the police force. One became a government clerk and later, converting to the Seventh Day Adventist sect, became a pastor. As for the women, a Toda Christian nurse was instrumental in rescuing the parent community from what was considered the brink of extinction in the 1950s (below, Sec. 4.3).

Miss Ling retired to England in 1932, after 43 years' missionary work with the Toda. Her departure was traumatic for the Christian Toda community she left behind. Over the years, these converts and their families (counted as 27 in the 1931 census; Yeatts 1932: 387) had come to look to their principal missionary for much more than spiritual guidance; she arbitrated in disputes, mediated between them and the outside world and frequently provided, from her own resources, financial assistance in times of difficulty. Her departure produced what Emeneau (1939b: 95) says "may only be regarded as disintegration." Squabbles within the community remained unresolved and became more frequent, and the Toda converts were clearly dissatisfied with the missionaries who succeeded Miss Ling. One Christian Toda expressed his feelings in a song recorded by Emeneau (1971: 632–33) in the mid 1930s; these are excerpts:

> "Even if twelve men try to do the work that one old woman did, it has become impossible.
> "Even if twelve men look at the work that one woman looked at, it has become impossible.
> "Each European is separate, each Tamil is separate.
> "Each person is saying a different thing.
> "The crowd [Christian Toda] that gathered are rising up to migrate, each to a different direction.
> "The buffaloes that stood there, they are driving to different directions.
> "They say: 'She has left the bungalow that she managed.'

"They are saying: 'She has broken the pool that she dammed.'
"There is no relative at all to help us. We have become like children on the lap. We have become like calves in the calfpen."

So bad did the situation become that Miss Ling came out of retirement and returned to the Nilgiris in 1938. Her presence among the Christian community seems fairly quickly to have restored social stability (cf. Emeneau 1939b: 322), but she remained for only two years in India. In 1940 she returned to England and was never seen again in Toda land. She died in Brighton in 1951.

With the departure of Miss Ling, active proselytism among the parent Toda community effectively ceased. "That era has passed", as the superintendent of the 1961 census operation for Madras State wrote in his volume on the Toda (Nambiar 1965b:131). The Christian Toda have stabilized as a discrete community, and although some social and cultural links remain between the two groups, fewer and fewer individuals now cross over from one to the other.

In terms of religion, of course, the break between the two communities is complete. Having adopted an alien ritual (Anglican Christianity as mediated through the Tamil language) and repugnant habits, particularly meat-eating and intermarriage with non-Toda, the Christians are regarded by orthodox Toda as outcastes. It was this view that necessitated separate settlements for the Christian converts in the first place. But there has always been the possibility of Toda Christian converts being readmitted to the traditional society into which they were born. Although Emeneau in the 1930s (1939b: 103–104) recorded that Toda women could not be readmitted once they had been baptized, my own data differ slightly. I was told in 1962 that if a husband and wife together converted to Christianity and later changed their minds, they could be brought back into the fold of Toda society, and that a Toda woman who converted could also seek readmission provided she had not contracted a marriage alliance during her time in the Christian community.

Readmission required purification through a special rite. Emeneau (1939b:103–4) recorded this as consisting chiefly of the presentation of a new loincloth, "the fundamental garment of the Toda man." My informants remembered this custom but said that it had been abandoned. In their time, the 1940s and '50s, the rite of readmission was held in a Hindu temple, usually the Mariamman temple in Ootacamund. A male candidate would first have his head shaved. Then, inside the temple, the candidate—male or female—had his or her tongue burnt with a small gold wire, this being done by a member of the subcaste opposite to that into which the candidate was being readmitted. Finally, the candidate was sprinkled with saffron water. Having been ritually purified, the person was considered in every respect

Toda once again. (This rite, certainly a modern innovation, indicates how close the parent Toda community conceives itself to be to the mainstream of Hindu society in the Nilgiris.)

By now readmissions are probably a thing of the past. Elderly Christian converts are unlikely to change, and succeeding generations have been brought up in a non-Toda, Tamil-speaking milieu.

Even today, however, there are social links between the two communities, as in the reciprocal attendance at certain of each other's ceremonies. Thus orthodox Toda may be seen at Christian marriage and funeral rites. Indeed, in the 1960s I recorded an instance of an orthodox Toda threatening to summon a *no·ym* because he was not invited to a Toda Christian wedding. And during Christian funeral rites, I have heard, orthodox Toda are not always deterred from performing the traditional mourning in pairs inside the church while the funeral service is in progress. In their turn, Toda Christians attend orthodox ceremonies such as namings and funerals, contributing money with every other Toda when so required. At funerals it sometimes happens that Christians provide buffaloes for sacrifice. On one occasion known to me, such action provoked a strong condemnation in the next Sunday sermon delivered by the Church of South India pastor in charge of the Toda Christian community.

In judicial matters the two communities remain to some degree linked and sometimes Christian Toda submit disputes to a common *no·ym* on which both orthodox and Christian Toda sit.

As for social organization, the traditional divisions of Toda society—subcastes, patriclans and matriclans—have no relevance for the Christian community. Neither has the rule of Toda endogamy any effect; Toda Christians seek marriage partners not only within their own community but also within the much wider category of Indian Christians. There may or may not be continued preference for cross-cousin marriage, but as Emeneau (1939b: 99–100) noted decades ago, "the small number of Christians makes non-cross-cousin marriage obligatory in most cases."

That there are today two distinct Toda communities, parent and Christian, is far from Miss Ling's original concept. Her dream was that the whole Toda community would be converted to her religious views so that its economic and cultural structure could be maintained while the traditional religion and other features she judged un-Christian (like polyandry and the low ritual status of women) would be abolished (Ling 1934:53–54). But it did not work out that way. As she put it, "Becoming Christians has meant a complete severance from their own people, on account of the caste system of India." Moreover, the Christian community is virtually unrecognizable as Toda. In almost every respect, the parent community is sole heir to the distinctive Toda society and culture.

Why did the convert community so quickly lose its Toda identity, despite

the missionaries' wish that much of it be retained? It was a good deal more than 'the caste system of India' that separated the Christians from their brothers and resulted in the erosion among them of Toda culture.

First, the evangelistic missionaries of the 19th and early 20th centuries, unlike some of the more liberal breed of today, regarded the winning of souls—in a word, conversions—as their ultimate goal. Education, health care and other welfare work were means to this end. And in demanding that Toda change their religion, the missionaries undermined the foundations of traditional society. The sacred dairy cult, I suggest, is the main factor in the survival of modern Toda society and culture in clearly traditional forms. Clinging to the ritual of the buffalo despite the diminishing economic importance of dairying, traditional Toda have remained a cohesive community through monumental social, economic and administrative changes in the Nilgiris during the past century and a half. The Christian converts, in rejecting the sanctity of the dairy complexes, divorced themselves from the fundamentals of Toda culture. Then there was no substitute but a fairly generalized Tamil Christian culture, and so the next generation of Toda Christians were to find the orthodox Toda culture almost as alien as it is to any other community of Tamil Christians.

One might still imagine the development of new socio-cultural traditions firmly rooted in the Toda past. Naga Christians, for example, remain very much Naga, and Mizo Christians, very much Mizo. That this did not happen among the Toda Christians is due essentially to their early abandonment of the rule of endogamy. The new community, as we have seen, very soon showed an imbalance in favour of males, and the missionaries absolutely forbade the practice of the parent community's solution, polyandry. Hence the male converts had to seek non-Toda wives, Christian converts from other communities. Tamil, Malayalee and Badaga Christian women were the most common partners, but, according to one source (Shaposhnikova 1969: 186–87), once even a Kurumba was chosen. The language of these marriages seems invariably to have been Tamil, the modern *lingua franca* of the hills. This, together with the exclusive use of Tamil in the mission schools, effectively killed the Toda language as a means of communication in the Christian Toda community. Presumably Toda converts continued to speak it among themselves, as the few who survive continue even now to speak it to members of the parent community, but their non-Toda wives and children never gained facility in the tongue. Today most Toda Christians, a generation or more removed from the parent community, are unable to speak the Toda language at all. And if it is language which carries culture, it is clear that the non-Toda women in the Christian community had no means to absorb the cultural heritage of their Toda husbands. Representing not one but several different socio-cultural backgrounds, they found common denominators in the Tamil language and the Christian religion. It is hardly

surprising that the Toda Christian community has, as Emeneau forecast in the 1930s (1939b: 102), "become so Tamilized that those born into it . . . hardly differ at all from other Tamil Christians."

But if Toda Christians appear to some observers, such as the Russian amateur ethnographer Shaposhnikova (1969: 188), to be "displaced persons, in every way" (having forgotten their native language, their own gods, their munds and "the customs and traditions of their ancestors"), it should also be noted that they are far more mobile, both upwardly and outwardly, than the traditionalists. Marrying-out, education, and literacy in Tamil and sometimes in English have broadened their horizons, and Toda Christians now are found in occupations and far-flung locations undreamed-of by the orthodox. Their population today is around 200, although few can claim pure Toda descent. About 70% of the Toda Christians still live in the three Toda Christian settlements. The rest are spread throughout the district and beyond.

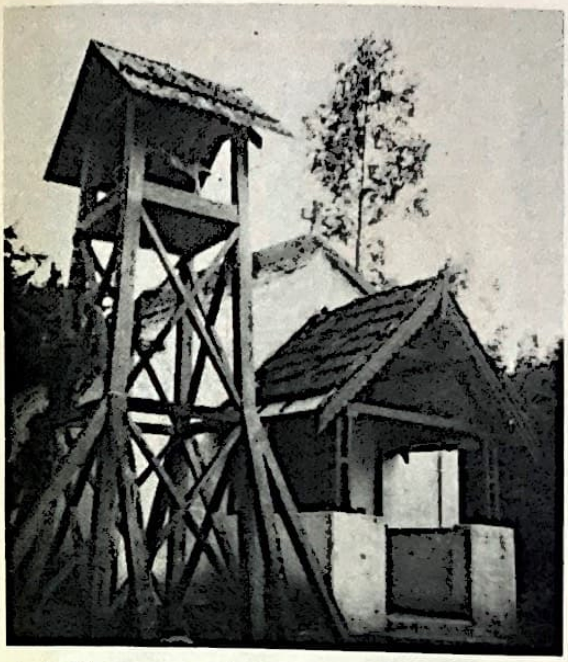
8.4 THE TODA AFTER INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

The transfer of political and administrative power from Britain to an indigenous government in 1947 brought no sudden alteration to the Toda way of life. Rather, those forces of change set in motion by the advent of British administration in the 1820s continued, albeit at an accelerated pace, to work themselves out in independent India. Thus, schemes to improve the medical, educational and economic lot of the Toda were intensified, and at the same time, problems relating to the use which Toda might or might not make of their *patta* lands became more acute. Unlike their Badaga neighbours, whose population in 1947 was around 60,000, the five hundred or so Toda could not expect to wield much influence in a political system based on "one man one vote".

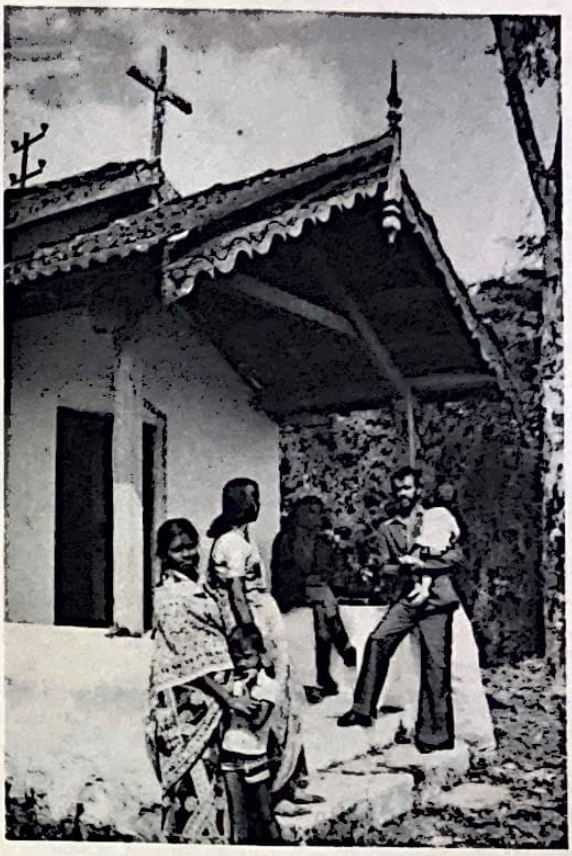
8.4.1 The land problem

In 1947, the Toda Welfare Committee recommended the issue of cultivation permits of ten rather than one year's validity to all Toda who desired them. Such long-term permits were essential, the committee argued, if Toda were ever to establish themselves firmly as agriculturalists (cf. Nambiar 1965b: 85). (At the time, only 154 of the almost 2,800 acres of Toda *patta* land were actually under cultivation.) The Madras State government accepted the committee's recommendation and authorized the Collector to issue 10-year permits to those Toda who requested them (Madras 1948).

In the following year, 1948, the Toda Welfare Committee recommended that the 154 acres of Toda *patta* land then under cultivation be assigned permanently to the Toda grantees (Nambiar 1965b: 85), so that there would be no need for them to obtain cultivation permits at all. To this request



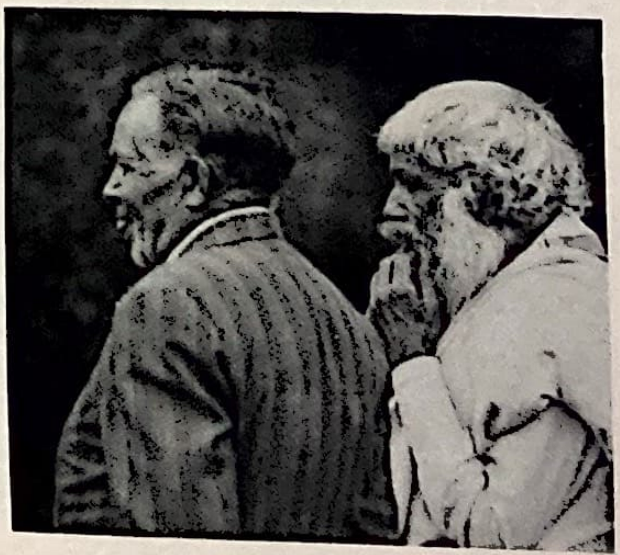
a. Bell tower and church at Ti·*mod*



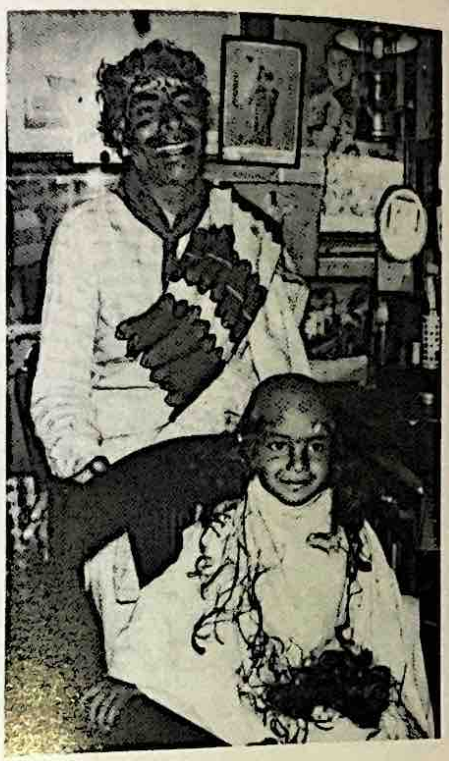
b. First Toda church at Pe·y *mod*

c. Toda Christian family: the old couple are converts, children born Christians

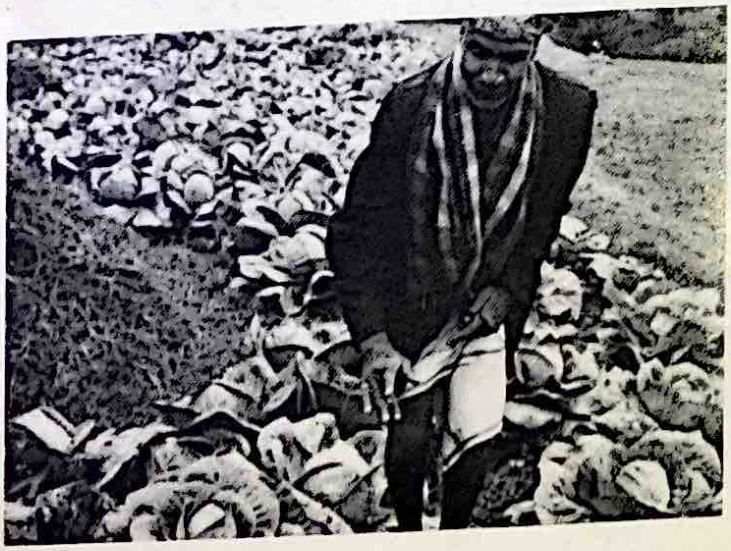
d. Christian and traditionalist participating in traditional naming ceremony



a. Poster at Ootacamund exhibition explaining agricultural developments among the Toda



d. Toda father and son: boy's head being shaved to fulfill vow made at Hindu temple



b. Toda admiring his cabbages

c. Toda (left) supervising non-Toda labourers in his potato field

e. Toda helping to carry images of Hindu deities in procession

likewise the Madras government acceded (Madras 1949). Then, in 1949, the Welfare Committee urged the withdrawal of the regulation forbidding non-Toda to work on Toda *patta* land, on the grounds that it prevented the Toda cultivators from hiring essential farm labour (Peter 1953: 63). Again the authorities agreed, provided at least one member of the Toda grantee's family actually worked on the land, and provided also that the hired hands would receive nothing for their labour beyond an acceptable wage (Madras 1950).

These three relaxations of the protective legislation represented a serious departure from the regulations which had so effectively prevented the alienation of Toda lands to the community's many creditors. Commenting on the new rules in an Indian government publication, Prince Peter (1953: 63) warned:

> They can only lead to the Todas being eventually pushed out bodily from their ancestral home and traditional places of worship, with all the disastrous consequences for a weak and defenceless Adibasi [aboriginal] community which this is bound to entail.

Long before these comments appeared in print, the Madras government had come to a similar conclusion. As early as August 1950, the Collector of the Nilgiris realized the folly of the new orders and urged their immediate withdrawal. His reasons (cf. Nambiar 1965b: 85–86) were several. He noted, first, that the Toda were not cultivating land themselves but rather were leasing it to non-Toda. The new regulations made it easier for them to do this because they could always claim their tenants to be hired hands, with little fear of the subterfuge coming to light. Second, the Collector mentioned the possibility of soil erosion resulting from poor farming techniques, and the difficulty of monitoring this because of the wide scatter of the Toda lands. Third, he claimed that unchecked cultivation of 1,300 acres of Toda *patta* land within the Wenlock Downs area posed a serious threat to the scenic heritage of these hills.

Initially the state authorities were unwilling to take the action urged by the Collector. Instead the government ruled that the concessions regarding the employment of non-Toda labour be given a further trial period, that the Collector restrict to the minimum the assignment of lands for cultivation, that those lands assigned be cultivated with due care to soil conservation, and that if any Toda grantee abused any of these privileges his permit be promptly withdrawn (cf. Nambiar 1965b: 85). But the following year, 1951, after repeated requests from the District Collector and the Chief Conservator of Forests, the state government issued a new order (Madras 1951b) rescinding those of 1948, 1949 and 1950.

The 1951 order restored the protective legislation of 1893 which, *inter alia*, allowed Toda to cultivate their *patta* lands only on the basis of an annual

permit issued by the Collector. This return to the old rules was actively resisted by a few Toda who had profited from the dispensation of the previous years. Five Toda (two of them Christians) petitioned the Madras High Court, hoping to force the state government to cancel this order. Claiming absolute right to their *patta* lands, the Toda petitioners charged that the state government's order of 1951 deprived them of personal property and therefore was unconstitutional (Srinivasa Ayyangar and Devarajan 1951:5–6). Against this position, the government pleader (cf. Venkateswara Rao 1952: 3) argued that, according to the original settlement register, Toda *patta* lands were the "inalienable common property of the Toda community" and no individual Toda could claim a personal right in them. Thus, he said, the 1949 order assigning 154 acres of Toda *patta* land to individual Toda was invalid. The pleader further opined that "The restrictions imposed on the petitioners and the other Todas in regard to the enjoyment of communal lands is [*sic*] in the interests of the Toda community calculated to preserve ... [it] from extinction" (Venkateswara Rao 1952: 4–5).

In the end, the High Court refused to rule on this case but rather advised the Toda petitioners to file a suit in a civil court in order to obtain a declaration as to their rights (cf. Nambiar 1965b: 86). The Toda litigants did not pursue the matter and the annual permit system remained in force. But these and other members of the community then requested the authorities to reconsider the ban on the employment of non-Toda labour on Toda land, and in this they were successful. According to the editor of the Toda volume in the 1961 census (Nambiar 1965b:86), the ban was rescinded on the grounds that "the Todas could not be made agriculturalists, if they were denied the benefit of employing genuine labour familiar with agriculture, but not interested in exploiting the Todas or their land." As before, the authorities imposed conditions on the employment of non-Toda labour. At least one member of the Toda grantee's family had to work the land, the hired hands were to receive no remuneration but their wages, the number of non-Toda so employed was to be kept to "the absolute minimum", and a specially-appointed Toda Welfare Officer was to be personally responsible for Toda compliance with these regulations (Nambiar 1965b: 86). Nevertheless it is certain that some Toda continued, as in the past, to lease their *patta* lands on the pretext of hiring non-Toda labour and, given the wide dispersion of these lands, it was impossible for the Toda Welfare Officer to check every instance of abuse.

In 1953 the Collector of the Nilgiris advised the Toda to establish a cooperative credit society so that they might obtain sufficient funding to make a success of farming (cf. Pellican 1958:2). Following this advice, the Toda collected a thousand rupees from amongst themselves and applied to register their society. The registrar, however, rejected their application on the grounds that the Toda had "no absolute title to their lands and therefore

could not give any security for monies borrowed from the co-operative banks" (Pellican 1958:2). This encouraged the Toda leaders to campaign more fervently for the removal of the protective legislation surrounding their lands. Thus, in 1955, they made representations both to the state government (cf. Bala Ratnam 1955) and to the then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, requesting that the Toda lands be permanently assigned to the community. (As noted earlier, permanent assignment eliminates the need for an annual cultivation permit.) The Toda leaders stressed that they were now well able to guard against these lands falling into the hands of outsiders. Nehru received their petition favourably and in a letter to the state government (cf. Nambiar 1965b: 86) expressed his view that, as the Toda seemed genuinely ready to change their economic base from pastoralism to agriculture, they should receive every encouragement. Heeding the Prime Minister's recommendation, the Madras State government decided to assign permanently to the Toda a total of 1,393 acres of *patta* land which lay *outside the Wenlock Downs area*. This, it was suggested, would give the Toda more confidence in their agricultural endeavours (Nambiar 1965b:87). The assignment (cf. Madras 1955, 1956) was to be made on the basis of families, with no family receiving more than five acres. Moreover, there were conditions: it was stipulated that the grantee could not sell or transfer the land to anyone else for ten years and, after this time, he might dispose of the land only to a fellow Toda. Thus it was to be impossible for the land to be lost to the Toda community.

The lands permanently assigned under the 1956 order constituted just under half the total acreage of Toda *patta* lands. Another 1,402 acres remained unassigned, all inside the Wenlock Downs. Now, apart from the Toda *patta* lands, the greater part of the 19,000–acre Wenlock Downs is regarded as the special preserve of the Forest Department.[15] From Independence onward, the department greatly intensified the reafforestation of the Downs with pyrethrum, wattle and bluegum (cf. Pellican 1957:4). Because of this, the state government opposed the assignment of permanent land rights to the Toda in the Wenlock Downs. As an alternative, however, the authorities declared that Toda who wished to take up agriculture, but whose *patta* lands lay in the restricted area, could obtain permanent assignments elsewhere, on condition that they give up their hereditary rights to lands within the Downs area. The Toda, already angry at the government's refusal to allow them permanent rights to their lands on the Downs, were outraged at the suggestion that they should relinquish these lands in the very heartland of the Toda people, including some of the community's most sacred sites. The Toda leaders, therefore, continued to

15. According to Pellican (1957:4), non-Forest Department grantees besides Toda included tea estates (1000 acres), the government Animal Husbandry Department (600 acres for a sheep farm), twelve Independence fighters (120 acres) and other private parties (over 300 acres).

campaign for the assignment of permanent and unrestricted rights over *all* their *patta* lands, whether inside or outside the Wenlock Downs.

In 1956 the Toda registered their newly-established 'uplift society', the Nilgiri Thothuvar Munnetram Sangam (cf. Pellican *et al.* 1956), and used this society to intensify their campaign. Writing to the Ootacamund Town Congress Party Political Conference in 1957, the president of the Toda Uplift Society declared the permit system "a source of great humiliation" to the community. He continued (shades of Sullivan), "How derogatory this is to the so called lords of the soil to whom the Government pays today a nominal tribute can better be imagined than described" (Pellican 1957:4).[16] A lengthy memorandum to the Collector on the occasion of the Uplift Society's first anniversary declared, "The Todas feel that their life and existence are bound up with the Wenlock Downs as they have been living there for centuries together" (Pellican 1958:4).

Shortly after receiving the state government's ruling on the permanent assignment of Toda *patta* lands, the Toda leaders in 1956 had presented a memorandum appealing to the authorities to reconsider the ban on permanent *patta* in the Wenlock Downs area (cf. Pellican 1958:3). There was no response. In 1958, the leaders again petitioned both central and state governments for permanent land rights inside as well as outside the Downs, as the president of the Toda Uplift Society noted in addressing the Fifth All India Tribal Welfare Conference (Pellican 1959a:3–4). In 1959, the Uplift Society president personally addressed Prime Minister Nehru during the latter's visit to the Nilgiris, ending his petition with these words (Pellican 1959b:2):

> I therefore pray you, Sir, our dearest and incomparable Saviour, to bestow a sympathetic consideration over the vital question of granting permanent assignment of the Toda patta lands to the Todas ... to enable us to eke out a living.

But the state government held to its position that the Wenlock Downs should be free from permanent land assignments. The authorities maintained, among other points, that unskilled interference with the downland ecology might adversely affect the Ootacamund watershed and the stability of the hydroelectric system (Nambiar 1965b:87). At the same time, there was some recognition of the historical claims of the Toda to this, their primary settlement area. Therefore, it was agreed that they be allowed to continue cultivating their *patta* lands within the Wenlock Downs under the annual permit system. In the long run it was hoped, according to Nambiar (1965b:87), that "the Todas would eventually realize the advantage of taking

16. The references to 'lords of the soil' and 'tribute' show that Toda themselves preserved the early misconceptions associated with Badaga *guḍu*. The 'tribute' referred to is in fact the compensation given to Kaṣ, Melgaṣ and Iṇkity for lands taken by the government.

up lands outside the Wenlock Downs on a permanent assignment and give up their annual *patta* lands within the Wenlock Downs." And to encourage them to opt for lands outside the Downs the state government sanctioned funds and expertise for terracing Toda *patta* lands outside the prohibited area (cf. Madras 1965).

Toda leaders, however, were adamant: on no condition would they leave their ancestral lands on the Downs. In addressing the visiting President of India, the new president of the Toda Uplift Society said (with some oratorical license), "Our scriptures say that we are created on the Downs by our Goddess Thekeersh" (Muthicane 1968). In much the same vein, he later addressed the state Minister for Tribal Welfare: "It seems to be the policy of the Government to evacuate us from the Wenlock Downs. How can we leave our ancestral home ...?" (Muthicane 1969a).

Meanwhile, in 1963 the Toda leaders managed to have the 'Todas Co-operative Multipurpose Credit Society Ltd' registered by the government. The society, designed to help Toda establish a firm economic base in agriculture, began functioning in 1964. In 1981 it had 321 members and assets amounting to Rs. 78,860.

By 1969 (cf. Muthicane 1969b), most Toda families living outside the Wenlock Downs had permanent possession of two acres of terraced land and could also cultivate three acres of unterraced land under the annual permit system. Inside the Wenlock Downs all Toda cultivators were still subject to the annual permit system. In 1974 the state government decided to allow the Toda to cultivate up to five acres of *patta* land per family, whether inside or outside the Wenlock Downs (cf. Raman 1978: 1). But they still had to obtain a permit every year, even for that terraced land outside the Wenlock Downs for which they had previously possessed a permanent *patta*.

All along, although their leaders were clamouring for permanent assignment of their *patta* lands and claiming that "more and more Todas have taken to cultivation by themselves" (Pellican 1958:1), many Toda continued the illegal practice of leasing their *patta* lands to non-Toda cultivators on the pretext of hiring agricultural labour. To take just one example, in 1973, the Collector of the Nilgiris noted that certain Toda of No·ṣ hamlet had "leased out the entire Toda patta lands in Muthanadmund [No·ṣ] to non-Todas." He declared, "Such leasing ... has to be prevented immediately and effectively ... only for the welfare of the Todas as they are being exploited by the non-Toda who pay meagre amounts [Rs. 250 here] to Todas as lease amount." In this case, the Collector ordered the District Forest Officer "to take immediate steps under Tamil Nadu Forest Act and Rules to confiscate the entire crops cultivated by non-Todas in the Toda patta lands" and "to effectively stop cultivation of T[oda] P[atta] lands by non-Toda all over the district" (Swaminathan 1973).

It was because they were still essentially herdsmen that Toda were willing

to accept a paltry sum of two or three hundred rupees a year per acre rather than extract the full potential of the land by their own efforts. But the unfortunate consequence, as a horticulturist attached to the Indo-German Nilgiris Development Project observed (Raman 1978), was that "the enterprising non-Todas who obtained lease of these lands ... prospered whereas the Todas ... became economically weaker year by year."

8.4.2 Towards an agricultural economy for the Toda

From Independence onwards, official attempts have been made to 'create an agricultural bias' among the pastoral Toda. Until very recently none of these has met with much success. In 1948, the Toda Welfare Committee requested the Madras State Department of Agriculture to provide seed and fertilizer free of charge, with the intention of helping certain 'enterprising' Toda to establish themselves as potato farmers. As a result, 24 Toda were selected to receive a bag each of potato seed and fertilizer. But, as Nambiar (1965b: 118) remarked, "Though most ... obtained good yields, they merely considered it [the harvest] a gift from the government to them and evinced no further interest." The authorities nonetheless persisted in their efforts to make farmers of the Toda (cf. Nambiar 1965b:119–20), appointing in 1950 an 'agricultural demonstrator' to assist them. In 1951–52, 59 Toda received free potato seed and fertilizer; in 1952–53 the number of recipients rose to 70, and in 1953–54, to 110. Assistance in the form of such gifts and direct financial subsidies continued through the 1950s and 1960s. Notwithstanding this encouragement a significant number of Toda refused to be tempted into the cultivators' world. They sold whatever seed and fertilizer they received, used the financial subsidies for other purposes, and continued to lease their lands to persons more agriculturally oriented and highly motivated than themselves. This might have gone on indefinitely had not the pastoral base of the Toda economy, at least temporarily, begun to erode.

As we saw in Chapter 5, Toda are greatly attached to their traditional hardy breed of buffalo, which is well adapted to range-feeding. They do not like cows, and attempts to introduce better-milking breeds of buffalo have mostly failed because the Toda are not used to stall-feeding their livestock, as these animals require. But Toda buffaloes need access to large areas of pasture. Year by year the Forest Department has planted more and more eucalyptus, wattle and pine saplings on the former grasslands. In the case of the pine plantations, the grazing grounds are lost forever to the Toda, as the fallen pine needles allow no grass to grow under the trees. As for the eucalyptus and wattle plantations, all grazing within them must cease for three years, in order to protect the saplings. But after this, the buffaloes may freely graze between the trees. Ten years ago, when there was a great spurt in tree planting, Toda suffered much from the diminished grazing grounds and because their buffaloes were so frequently impounded for entering the young

plantations (Chap. 4.5). At that time many Toda began to sell off their buffaloes. At present (1981) the future of pastoralism, at least for some Toda, looks considerably brighter. As mentioned earlier, it is said that the herds are now actually increasing.

In 1975, under the Fifth Five Year Plan, the central government allocated Rs. 2,025,000 (approximately U.S. $247,000) for the social and economic development of the Toda community, as part of its Hill Area Development Programme. With this funding, a new Toda Welfare Scheme was set up in October 1975, under the auspices of the Indo-German Nilgiris Development Project (cf. TN 1976; Anonymous 1976a, 1976b, 1977a, 1977b; Raman 1978). The object of the scheme was to educate the Toda in the practice of scientific agriculture, so that the community would no longer have to be dependent on its buffalo herds and its land leases. The idea certainly was not new, but more funds and expertise than ever before were being marshalled for the attempt.

Under the new scheme (cf. TN 1976) each Toda family (i.e., nuclear family occupying its own house) received financial and technical assistance to cultivate a maximum of five acres of Toda *patta* land, registered in the name of the family head. This was the first time that any kind of individual ownership had been officially recognized. Whether or not this land was inside the Wenlock Downs was no longer an issue, but the prohibitions against alienation and leasing to non-Toda remained in force. So that Toda cultivation would not have adverse ecological consequences, soil conservation received high priority, with Rs. 500,000 (approximately U.S. $61,000) earmarked for terracing Toda *patta* lands. From 1976 to 1979, 53 acres of Toda *patta* land was terraced.

In terms of crops, the major thrust of the programme was to encourage commercial potato cultivation. To this end, each family was eligible for an initial grant, amounting to Rs. 1,750 per acre, for seed, fertilizer and pesticides. Each family could also obtain, for its first year of cultivation, the loan of a further Rs. 1,500 from the Indo-German Nilgiris Development Project to cover the cost of necessary hired labour and additional expenses on transportation and the like. In the second year the cultivating family was eligible for a subsidy of Rs. 1,000 and in the third and fourth years, Rs. 500. In 1979 the 'Toda Uplift Irrigation Development Scheme' was inaugurated through the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Department. By subsidizing the construction of wells and dams and supplying electric pumps, this scheme will allow Toda farmers to irrigate their land and thus obtain three potato or vegetable crops per year.

Besides potato cultivation, the Toda Welfare Scheme planned to give some assistance with animal husbandry and encouraged the production of vegetable, cereal and fodder crops. When a Toda family took up cultivation of such crops, it was eligible for a grant worth Rs. 150 per acre for fodder

crops, Rs. 200 for wheat and barley, and Rs. 1,250 for vegetable cultivation. These grants, intended to give the Toda cultivators the incentive to try new crops, were only for the first year of cultivation. After that, so it was projected, they should be able to rely on their own profits (cf. TN 1977). But this aspect of the programme was not successful. Most Toda cultivators sold the first year's fodder crops and did not repeat the experiment. Besides encouraging Toda to plant fodder crops to compensate for the loss of traditional pasture land, it was also planned to upgrade the milking qualities of the Toda buffalo by cross-breeding with Murrah bulls. But this project was abandoned.

By 1978, financial assistance had been extended to all 250 or so Toda families to take up potato cultivation, to 82 families to start growing vegetables and to 60 to begin wheat and barley production. Fifty acres of Toda *patta* land already had been, or was in the process of being, terraced. In that year the horticulturist attached to the Toda Welfare Scheme reported (Raman 1978:3):

> The Toda who were originally leasing out their 5 acres of land for a meagre amount, have given up that practice and are now engaged in personal cultivation of potato, vegetables and cereals and fodder crops. The beneficiaries under this scheme for the last one year were able to save a surplus income ranging from Rs. 300/- to 5000/- per annum out of their land. This surplus income invoked greater enthusiasm among the rest of the Todas for coming forward in taking up personal cultivation in their land.

Of course, 'personal cultivation' by the Toda may or may not mean they are actually working the fields. A recent newspaper report entitled "Todas Shed Old Habit, Take Up Cultivation" (Anonymous 1977b) began, "The tender fingers of women engaged in embroidery work and the strong hands of men that milked the buffaloes have now turned rough due to the handling of digging forks and agricultural implements for cultivation"—but in terms of the vast majority of Toda, this is overwritten. Many Toda rely on hired labour and act as field supervisors rather than till the soil themselves. Indeed some Toda (40% was a figure given to me in 1981) continue to lease their land to others, despite warnings from the District Collector (cf. Anonymous 1978 a,b,c,d) that "such cases" would be "seriously dealt with, even to the extent of confiscating the whole harvest."

Nonetheless, the trend towards active participation in agriculture, whether as supervisors or, less commonly, as labourers, was evident among the Toda in 1981 in a way that it had never been before. Illegal leasing still continues, but a substantial number of Toda now realized the economic advantage to be had from farming their land for themselves.

8.4.3 Health, education and social welfare

At the time of Independence, the Toda population had fallen to under 500 and there was serious concern in some quarters that this people might soon die out completely. As at earlier times during this century (cf. Pandit 1927), the major problem was the prevalence of venereal infection. In 1948, A. V. Thakkar of the Servants of India Society, who had been a close co-worker with Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian national movement, appealed to the state government to undertake urgent medical work among the Toda (Nambiar 1965b:114). This plea was reiterated in the following year by anthropologist Prince Peter, who in a report to the state Governor noted, "the health of the Toda community is now so bad, ... that it is essential, if they are to be saved, that these people receive proper medical attention" (Peter 1949:8). Commenting on the situation that prevailed in 1950, another social worker associated with the Servants of India Society wrote as follows (Rao 1950:5):

> There can be no doubt that the Todas stand in urgent need of medical relief, as most of them are reported to be suffering from gonorrhoea and syphilis, with the result that the birthrate is much less than the death-rate. In 1949 there were 13 deaths and only 5 births. At present there are about 100 cases of childless marriages. The population figures are steadily on the decline. Under conditions such as these the Todas cannot survive for long and the Servants of India Society have decided to start immediately a vigorous campaign of medical treatment.

Prince Peter suggested that the state government open a medical centre on the Wenlock Downs, to be located at Nirgoj mod, about 12 kilometres out of Ootacamund on the road to Mysore. This suggestion was not taken up by the government authorities, who in 1951 sanctioned instead the establishment of a mobile dispensary (Madras 1951a). A medical centre did appear on the site proposed by Prince Peter, but it did not survive for long. The Servants of India Society, with the help of a special donation from the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, established a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre here and ran it for about two years, after which it was handed over to the government (Nambiar 1965b:114–5). The government health authorities soon discontinued this service in favour of the newly-inaugurated mobile medical service and a 'tribal ward' at the Government General Hospital in Ootacamund. The mobile unit, which began operating in 1952, stressed the treatment of venereal infections, for at that time the situation was so bad that out of 400 blood samples 82% indicated venereal infection (Venkataraman 1954:85, 1954:85–86, 1964; Das 1959:43).

About a year after its inauguration, the mobile medical unit received a great boost when a young woman of the Toda Christian community, who

had been trained as a nurse both in India and in England, returned to the Nilgiris. Alarmed at the rapid decline of her people, the nurse offered her medical services without payment for more than a year, during which time she survived on her personal savings. But in 1955, once again because of the direct intervention of Jawaharlal Nehru, she received a permanent appointment as nurse-in-charge of the mobile unit (cf. Mandelbaum 1968:84; Shaposhnikova 1968; 1969:57–68; Anonymous 1971). With this nurse's presence and personal commitment, the battle for the survival of the Toda people began in earnest.

The results were spectacular. Venereal infections responded to penicillin treatment, and many hitherto sterile women were able to conceive (Chap. 2.5). The birth-rate rose. The availability of medical care also brought down the death-rate, and the demographic decline of the Toda was halted and slowly reversed. Today the Toda population is more than double what it was in 1952.

The government-sponsored mobile medical unit is still in operation, a sister of the original Christian Toda nurse now working for it. For the majority of Toda, medical care is provided by this unit, while the Government General Hospital in Ootacamund has a special 'tribal ward' for female patients. A private organisation, The Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association, looks after the health of the few Toda living in Kotagiri *taluk*. This association, established in 1958, grew out of the medical work begun in 1942 by a local medical practitioner, the late Dr S. Narasimhan (cf. NAWA 1967–76; Shaposhnikova 1969:49–55). Its major efforts are to tackle the health problems of the Irula, Kurumba, and Paniya peoples, but Toda, especially those in the Kotagiri area, benefited greatly from Dr Narasimhan's ministrations. Since 1969 The Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association has included a Toda, the president of the Toda Uplift Society, on its managing committee (cf. NAWA 1969:4, 1971:5, 1972:1).

In the field of Toda education, Christian missionaries had been the vanguard and for a time remained so, even after Indian Independence. In 1947 the sole providers of boarding facilities—so necessary if Toda children were to attend classes regularly—were the Anglican missionaries. There was a Church of England Zenana Mission boarding home for girls and a Church Missionary Society hostel for boys in Ootacamund, and children of both convert and parent communities were housed in these hostels, together with children of other castes. Some of the Toda received government scholarships to enable them to utilize the missionary facilities (cf. Nambiar 1965b:115–16).

In 1950, a non-Christian private association entered the field of Toda education for the first time, when the Servants of India Society proposed to construct a boarding school exclusively for Toda children. In consultation with Toda elders, it was decided that this school be located at Ni·rgoj hamlet

on the Wenlock Downs, conveniently close to Ootacamund (as mentioned earlier) along the main Ooty-Gudalur-Mysore road (cf. Rao 1950:6–7). For the purpose of setting up this school, the state government granted the Servants of India Society the use of two acres of Toda *patta* land. The school was inaugurated by the Governor of Madras State in 1952 and named 'The Thakkar Bapa Gurukulum' after the prominent Servants of India Society leader, A. V. Thakkar. In the following year, 1953, a girls' dormitory was added to the facility (cf. Nambiar 1965b:116).

In 1955 the school, until this date exclusively Toda, was opened to Kota children as well. This provoked initially a hostile reaction from tradition-minded Toda elders, who objected to Toda children living in such close proximity to Kota and to the presence of the latter in the vicinity of a Toda hamlet. But Toda of a more modern spirit managed to overcome the traditionalists' objections and threats to remove the Toda children were not carried out. Later, children of other communities—Christian, Muslim and Harijan—were admitted to the school, without apparent opposition from the Toda (cf. Nambiar 1965b:116). By 1960, The Thakkar Bapa Gurukulum boasted an enrollment of 75 children. Kota were the largest single group with 34 (29 boys and 5 girls); Toda numbered 19 (10 boys, 9 girls), and the rest belonged to other communities (cf. Nambiar 1965b:116). In 1981 these figures had risen to a total enrollment of 245 (98 boarders and 147 day children). All the boarders were Toda and Kota; 31 Toda boys and 17 Toda girls, 43 Kota boys and 7 Kota girls.

Besides the Ni·rgoj school, which caters for Toda children living in the Wenlock Downs area, there are government elementary schools which Toda children of other areas can attend. From these schools several children have graduated to government and religious-affiliated high schools. As for tertiary education, the Government Arts College in Ootacamund and colleges in Coimbatore have had, and continue to have, Toda enrolled in their undergraduate programmes. In 1981, the orthodox community boasted one science graduate (a woman; cf. Paranjothi 1977) and two arts graduates (both men). Among the Christians, who have a longer experience of education, there are several college-educated men and women.

Two other concerns that have received official attention are women's welfare and housing. Three Toda hamlets, all within Ootacamund municipality (Ka·ṣ, Meḷga·ṣ and Küšu), became at one time centres for women's welfare work. For about two years they received more or less regular visits from a government social worker, whose brief was to encourage literacy and homecrafts, including "needlework, knitting, basket work and poultry keeping" (cf. Nambiar 1965b:122–3). But adult literacy did not increase and the homecrafts programme also seems to have had little success. Perhaps the programme's components could have been more thoughtfully chosen, for Toda women needed no instruction in needlework, basketry is a male

occupation, and whatever woollen clothing they wear can be purchased readymade. Poultry keeping is a particularly strange occupation to introduce to a non-egg-eating vegetarian community.

The encouragement given to traditional Toda embroidery work by the Servants of India Society, in conjunction with the All-India Handicrafts Board, was more successful. In 1958 a Toda Embroidery Development Centre was inaugurated at Ni·rgoj hamlet (Venkataraman 1958:169), adjacent to the school, and in 1962 this centre was shifted to Ootacamund, where it continued for one or two years. The centre itself no longer operates, but Toda embroidery continues to be marketed, particularly through the former mobile medical unit nurse who has taken a special interest in this work, but also through the Women's Embroidery Co-operative Society in Kotagiri, which is run by the Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association. Recently the president of the Toda Uplift Society has petitioned the state government for a building in Ootacamund to house both the Toda Co-operative Multipurpose Credit Society and an embroidery centre.

In 1956, as part of the Five Year Plan for scheduled tribes, Toda began receiving assistance from the government to build brick and mortar houses to replace their traditional wooden huts. Financial assistance amounted to Rs. 1,000 per family (Rs. 700 grant and Rs. 300 interest-free loan). This assistance continued through the 1960s, so that most Toda now live in brick houses and few traditional huts are to be seen.

8.5 THE MODERN TODA

The Toda of pre-British times participated in a complex network of economic, social and ritual relationships involving their community with those of the other Nilgiri peoples, and these relationships were governed according to principles operative throughout India. Today, although many of the links have been broken which bound the Toda's ancestors to the other Nilgiri peoples, new links have been forged to replace the traditional ones. Badaga no longer give *guḍu* to the Toda, but Badaga friends and community leaders still attend important Toda ceremonies and invite Toda to their own. Kota no longer play music at Toda funerals, but still provide some Toda with their pots. Kurumba still are feared for their powers of sorcery; ritual relations are maintained with the Kurumba of Po·ny and frequently Kurumba are engaged, in preference to the government health authorities, to combat illness. (Most Toda are prepared to tap both sources of potential cure, for the work of several dedicated medical personnel has greatly increased the Toda's confidence in modern medicine.)

Firmly rooted in tradition, Toda society at the same time is branching out into modernity. The community is thoroughly involved in the cash economy of the Nilgiris; it is politically affiliated with the district, state and federal institutions of the Indian republic; and ritually it is oriented, increasingly, to

South Indian Hinduism. The individual Toda has friends, acquaintances and business associates not only among the indigenous Nilgiri peoples but also among immigrants from the surrounding plains and beyond. He has contacts with a great many agencies of government. The Nilgiris Collectorate registers his land and the Forest Department supervises the use to which he puts it. The Agricultural Department oversees his attempts to become a farmer and the Veterinary Department, besides coming to his aid if his buffaloes sicken, also tries from time to time to introduce new buffalo breeds to him. The Medical Health Department provides a mobile medical service and staffs a special tribal ward at the Ootacamund Government General Hospital. The Police Department, enforcing government decisions, arrests the Toda if he is caught drinking arrack (Tamilnadu is officially 'dry') and confiscates crops from his land if they have been cultivated illegally by a non-Toda tenant. At election time the Toda's vote will be canvassed by supporters of a broad spectrum of political parties. Throughout the year, and most particularly during the Season, he and his hamlet—especially if they are close to Ootacamund—attract tourists and travellers from every corner of India and other countries as well. These and many other contacts influence the way the Toda sees himself, his society and the world around him.

The bazaar at Ootacamund is of great social, as well as economic, significance to the Toda. On the traditional Tuesday market day, many Toda men meet to drink coffee and talk, not infrequently conducting a *no·ym* (caste council meeting) in the vicinity. Here they also meet members of other Nilgiri communities, both indigenous and immigrant. News circulates widely on these market days and much of the Toda's knowledge of what is going on in his own community, in the Nilgiris, in India and in the outside world comes from his market-day talks in the coffee shops around the Ooty bazaar. The bazaars at Coonoor and Kotagiri, while important too, are not so well attended by Toda as that at Ootacamund, and even Toda who live near these two towns will try to come to Ooty on market day.

The market place almost certainly has been the centre from which many ritual innovations have spread to the Toda hamlets. The Mariamman temple situated near the Ooty bazaar is now a major ritual centre for Toda; they attend the annual festival when the image of the presiding deity is taken in procession through the streets, they make vows there and they use the temple precincts for their ear-piercing and readmittance-to-caste ceremonies. In their market day conversations, Toda hear of the efficacy of pilgrimages to Hindu shrines in the Nilgiris and far beyond. From the market come pictorial representations of Hindu gods and goddesses: Śiva and his consort Pārvatī, his sons Ganeṣā and Subramaṇyam; Viṣṇu and his consort Laksmi and his several incarnations, especially Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. These images occupy a place of honour in many a Toda household, and I have even seen a complete 'gods' room' in one Toda house.

Toda have been drawing closer to the mainstream of popular Hinduism for a century or more, but in recent years the pace has accelerated. At the same time, there is little sign of a decline in the importance of the indigenous Toda rituals. The modern Toda fully accepts the efficacy of two parallel ritual systems: his own and that of popular South Indian Hinduism. The latter is centred in the local Hindu temples in Ootacamund, with the Mariamman temple still the most popular, although recently several Toda have become ardent devotees of the Kerala-based deity, Sri Ayyappan, whose local shrine is near the Government General Hospital. The Toda's own ritual system, focused on the dairies, remains largely untouched by orthodox Hindu ritual, except for certain ceremonies (ear-piercing and readmittance to the caste) which are now held in a Hindu temple.

Formal education has been another source of change, although the schools took longer than the market and the temple to make their effect among the Toda. Spoken Tamil, the *lingua franca* of the hills, is now familiar to all Toda from childhood, but the educated children become literate in this language and some of them in English as well. Literacy gives them access to newspapers, magazines and books, while a command of English allows them to communicate with people from all over India. Education also allows them to take employment unthought of by their fathers and grandfathers. Thus three Toda women and seven men are now working as clerks or on the production lines of the Hindustan Photo Film Factory in Ootacamund. Six men work in various capacities at the cordite factory, one man at the Protein Products of India factory, one man works as a civilian at the Wellington Military establishment and another at the Ootacamund Microwave Communication Centre, and one is in the police force.

The effect of these contacts and associations can be seen in the Toda's attempts to better themselves. The first two Toda of the parent community to acquire a high-school education and a knowledge of English were instrumental in establishing the Nilgiri Thothuvar Munnetra Sangam, or Toda Uplift Society, in 1956.[17] To give an idea of the aspirations of these first educated Toda, it is worth citing the aims of the Munnetra Sangam (Pellican *et al.* 1956:1–2):

1. To maintain unity among the people of the Toda community, to work for their upliftment, to establish and run schools, to promote adult education, to maintain reading rooms etc., and to arrange for installation of radio sets to enable the Todas to have an idea of world affairs and to work for the common benefit of the Todas.
2. To arrange necessary lands to the Todas, to avail medical aid and

17. All officially registered associations are compelled by Indian law to submit an annual report to the registrar of societies. Failure to do this resulted in the de-registration of the Toda Uplift Society for a number of years, but registration was restored in 1977.

other public health amenities, to promote agriculture, to provide water and transport facilities and to avail Government help in all respects for the betterment of the condition of the Todas.

3. To strive for the eradication of bad habits prevalent among the Todas.
4. To arrange for sports and other entertainments, to encourage the members and to improve the funds of the Sangam.
5. To co-operate with the Government towards execution of all plans successfully which would be arranged for the amelioration of the conditions of the Todas and for improvement of their villages.
6. To work for the general advancement of the Todas, to develop their intellects, and to decide and set matters right in improvement of their lot.

The second aim, "to arrange necessary lands", took up most of the effort of the leading members of the Uplift Society, as was evident earlier in this chapter. Education, medical facilities, house construction and village electrification also have been provided or improved, but not so much because of agitation by the Uplift Society as through the voluntary efforts of government and private welfare schemes, already described.

The society's third aim, "to strive for the eradication of bad habits prevalent among the Todas", invites closer attention. What 'bad habits'? From conversations with the two educated founders of the Uplift Society, I believe they had in mind principally polyandry, wife-capture, drunkenness and the excessive sacrifice of buffaloes at funeral ceremonies. But they had little success in eradicating most of these practices, which remain a source of embarrassment or concern to the educated younger generation.

And now this new generation of educated young men and women regards the earlier 'reformers' as hardly more enlightened than the uneducated traditionalists. In 1977 the young turks founded their own association, the Toda Seva Sonmarka Sangam, or Toda Self-help Society. This association seems to have originated when a group of young educated Toda returned from a pilgrimage to the famous Ayyappan temple (cf. Vaidyanathan 1978) in the Sabari Hills of Kerala, and for a while the meetings were held in the local Ayyappan temple in Ootacamund. The principals of the self-help society are all literate, and two of them, the vice-president and secretary, command both Tamil and English, the former having attended the Government Arts College in Ootacamund for a while and the latter having obtained his Higher School Certificate. The aims of the association (Kwaturguden *et al.* 1977) are as follows:

1. To secure all the facilities from the Government such as land for cultivation, medical aid, aid to the cultivation purposes, drinking

water, conveyance in order to improve the Toda community, and to encourage the following:–

2. Competitions, sports, drama and other entertainments and make facilities [for these].
3. To retain the unity [of the Toda people], improvement in education and general knowledge activities in schools.
4. Tailoring institutions.
5. To construct more houses in one place and make them [the Toda] dwell peacefully.
6. To get rid of bad practices.
7. To stop the killing of animals during death [ceremonies]. To stop the engagements of born babies.
8. To allow all the Toda people to [visit] all the munds without any restrictions.
9. To root out all the bad practices and unlawful attitudes, and to teach them [the Toda] the real religious methods and to work for the welfare of the Toda community.

Some of these aims—maintaining unity, promoting education, encouraging the community to make the most of government welfare programmes, and the like—are similar to those of the earlier association. But the new reformers are much more explicit about what they mean by 'bad practices'. For one thing, they want to put an end to buffalo sacrifice, once and for all. In a colourful letter to the Collector of the Nilgiris, enclosing a copy of the aims of the Toda Seva Sonmarka Sangam, the president wrote as follows (Kwaturguden 1977):

> If a Toda dies, the relatives of the deceased are supposed to kill the buffaloes according to the number of relatives. This sometimes ranges from 2 to 6 buffaloes, during the ceremony. They do this sort of criminal action, under the impression that the dead will have the buffaloes in heaven and thrive by the same. THIS SORT OF BLIND AND MAD FAITH SHOULD BE STOPPED FORTHWITH.

On this subject, the association's secretary also addressed the Collector as follows (Ponmani 1977):

> I submit the following facts with my due respect and regards to your kind notice and beseech your goodself to please consider the same and do the needful in the matter and oblige.
>
> 1. Among the Toda community, there is a very blind and unlawful custom of slaughtering buffaloes during the death [rites] of Todas. This is in practice from the ancient time.
> 2. If a Toda dies... from 2 to 8 buffaloes are slaughtered according to the

number of members of the family, under the blind faith that the slaughtered buffaloes will give milk in the heaven to the dead persons.

3. While the ... buffaloes are driven from the mund where the dead body is laid, by young Todas, they get grievous injuries and fractures and sometimes they even lose their lives. A buffalo costs about 500 rupees. Most of the Todas are labourers getting a meagre wage and thus they cannot afford to buy the buffalo for the sacrifice.
4. If the buffaloes are not slaughtered in a ceremony, the family members [are] treated very meanly by imposing certain fines and abuses [on them].
5. There are more Todas without buffaloes.
6. If the poor Todas happen to buy buffaloes, they will automatically become debtors.

And the secretary ends this letter, "Hence Sir, I on behalf of the members of the sangam request your goodself to please consider the facts and see that the aforesaid practice is stopped."

The argument against buffalo sacrifice is put in terms of the injuries sustained during the traditional capture of the sacrificial beasts and the economic burden on the poorer members of the community who, through popular pressure, are compelled to conform to a practice which the young reformers regard as "blind and mad faith." Not mentioned, but I believe certainly present in the thinking of these young reformers, is that such animal sacrifice does not find favour among the higher Hindu castes whom they seek to emulate. It must be remembered that the reformers, devotees of the Hindu god Ayyappan, are motivated not by purely secular idealism but by Hindu ideology. Aim no. 9 of the new association is "to teach [the Toda] the real religious practices" which, in effect, means to get them to abandon religious practices alien or obnoxious to orthodox Hindus, replacing them with a ritual idiom more acceptable to such people.

The new reformers also want to "stop the engagements of born babies." This refers to the traditional Toda practice of child marriage, which does indeed lend itself to some abuse. Powerful men may take infant brides for themselves or their sons, not with the intention of ultimate co-habitation but in order to obtain compensation when partners more suitable for the girls present themselves. As the president of the Toda Seva Sonmarka Sangam (Kwaturguden 1977) puts it:

> A single person engages even two girls. Even a person who is already married and has four or five children ... will engage such children in their babyhood. To our surprise, the aged persons too have the engagement. This sort of habit is mainly to secure more animals which leads to a commercial line.

He declares, "This unprincipled and unlawful action should be stopped." Another unfortunate consequence of early engagements, he adds, is that "Some intelligent girls are deprived of their education due to the fact that they are prevented from study after the maturity."

Aim no. 8 of the Toda Seva Sonmarka Sangam reads: "To allow all the Toda people to all the munds without any restriction." At first sight this seems none too extraordinary a demand, but in fact it represents a major attack on the traditional structure of Toda society. As we have seen in Chapter 3, Toda society comprises two hierarchically-ranked subcastes, To·r̲θaṣ̲ and Töwfiṭy. Women of the lower-ranking subcaste, Töwfiṭy, are not permitted to enter To·r̲θaṣ̲ hamlets, although there is no reciprocal ban on To·r̲θaṣ̲ women entering Töwfiṭy settlements. The young turks want this traditional ban removed, not simply to allow greater freedom of movement to the Töwfiṭy women, but so as to pave the way for intermarriage between these traditionally endogamous units of Toda society. This is how the president of the new association puts it in his letter to the Collector (Kwaturguden 1977):

> The residents of Thorthas [To·r̲θaṣ̲] mund are permitted to enter Theviz [Töwfiṭy] mund (both males and females) but the ladies of Theviz mund are not permitted to enter Thorthas mund and the male members are allowed. ... There are more young boys in Thorthas mund and more girls in Theviz mund. Hence the life of the both boys and girls are handicapped, being the fact that the girls of the Theviz mund are not able to get married to the boys of the Thorthas mund. Hence there is every possibility of decreasing the population among the Toda community on account of this meaningless system. Due to this, they are compelled to slip out of the community and get married in other non-Toda community. There are so many cases now. Hence this sort of restriction should be banned off and the legitimate rights should be given both the young parties.

To some of the young Toda, it appears, the bi-partite structure of Toda society—basis of the whole system of ritual specialization respecting the sacred dairies, and several other important aspects of Toda ritual life—is now a "meaningless system" to be got rid of as soon as possible. This is truly revolutionary thinking on the part of these young people, and the reformers of the previous generation actively resist it. The senior generation's distaste for such radical departure from time-honoured practice was evident when, in 1980, an educated couple breached the rule of subcaste endogamy. The young people were outcaste.

It appears, then, that the Toda are far from united in their attitude towards change. Some of the modern Toda youth want nothing less than a radical restructuring of their society in order to bring it closer to the modern

world of education and technology, as well as closer to the mainstream of South Indian Hinduism. They are anxious to rid their society of its 'tribal' and 'non-Hindu' characteristics. At the other pole are the traditionalists who are suspicious of any change at all, and in the middle ground are the older reformers who founded the first Uplift Society.

Typical even today of the 'old guard' is a statement recorded some twenty years ago from an elderly Toda informant, who said (Das 1959:42):

> There is no blessing for the Todas in potato cultivation. The profession of the Todas is the rearing of buffaloes. When we do this we find there is an increase in everything but not so with agriculture. ... Now some Todas put on shirts, turbans and shoes. How to recognize them as Todas? I am disgusted with their ways. Kotas should be Kotas, Badagas should be like Badagas, Tamils should be like Tamils. Toda have been given hair, beard, cloak and loincloth. If they throw these away and wear shoes, coats and trousers, is it good?

More adaptable to new ways are the moderates, who were the first generation of 'reformers'. They favour the pursuit of agriculture, either by itself or in association with buffalo herding; they see nothing wrong with sartorial innovation and they approve of new technology. But they do not condone the wholesale rejection of Toda social and religious institutions. They sometimes deplore the excessive sacrifice of buffaloes at funerals, but few would wish to abandon the custom entirely. These people may frequent Hindu temples, even make pilgrimages and hang Hindu god-pictures in their houses, but most of them are determined that Toda rituals must continue.

These moderate reformers, who were young men in the 1950s and are now middle-aged, are the leaders of Toda society at present. They have the most influential voices in the caste council, and for the most part they carry the community with them.

The new generation of reformers still lacks that important Indian qualification, age, without which they cannot bring their education to bear on the deliberations of the *noym*; hence their appeal, on essentially internal affairs, to the representative of a non-Toda higher authority, the Collector of the Nilgiris. But it is only a matter of time before these young men, in their turn, become leaders. We may then see the evolution of a very different kind of Toda community, probably further removed from the one described in this book than this present community is from that described by Rivers eighty years ago.