ANTHROPOS

113.2018: 395–422

The Diverse Faces of Toda Religion

Anthony R. Walker

Abstract. – The once more-or-less exclusively pastoral Todas of the Nilgiri Mountains in South India still retain vibrant beliefs in gods and goddesses they say once lived among them but thereafter became mountains; they tell also of ancestors who were once living Todas but subsequently became divinities. Beyond such indigenous convictions, Todas have absorbed a plethora of Hindu beliefs and ritual practices. Christian ideology has been propagated among Todas, with foreign-led Christian missionaries succeeded in establishing a breakaway Toda Christian community. But notwithstanding the many divergent sources of Toda religious ideology, the predominant and most public display of Toda ritual activity (apart from among Christian Todas) still centres on their unique sacred dairying cult, despite the rapid decline in the importance of buffaloes in the community's modern-day economic life. This, together with their exclusively Toda deities and culture heroes seems to suggest a unique ethnic religion, frequently categorized as "non-Hindu." But demonstrably Indic (therefore, if only loosely, "Hindu") principles permeate Toda ritual activity. Most notable are the concepts of *hierarchy* and *purity* and those of *prescribed ritual avoidance* coupled with *required ritual cooperation*. In sum, Toda religion – like the Toda community itself – is at once unique and, at the same time, thoroughly Indic. *[South India, Nilgiri Mountains, Toda]*

Anthony Walker, an Oxford-trained social anthropologist, retired as Professor of Anthropology at the University of Brunei Darussalam in 2011 and now lives in Kandy, Sri Lanka. His peripatetic career has included teaching positions at the Science University of Malaysia in Penang, the National University of Singapore, The Ohio State University, and the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. – He began his, still-ongoing, field studies with the Todas in 1962 and has also conducted long-term field research (since 1966) on the Tibeto-Burman speaking Lahu peoples of the Yunnan-Indochina borderlands. – For his major publications on the Todas see References Cited.

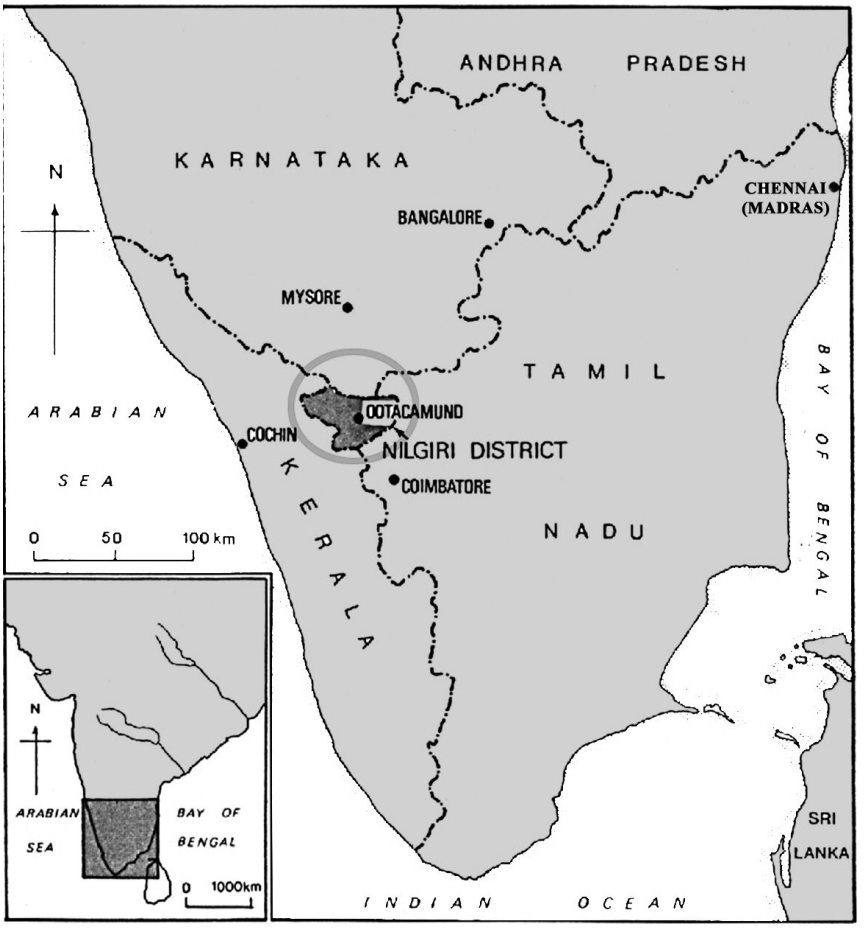
The Todas believe in their Goddess Thekershi (Tö·kiṣy[1]). They worship Goddess Thekershi for protection during their eternal (perhaps "mortal" was intended) existence and they also worship God Ayan (Ö·n) to protect them after death. The Todas do not observe idol worship. Todas worship light, fire, mountains, trees, rivers, sky, sun, and moon, which are believed to be the major creations of their Goddess Thekershi.[2]

1 Introduction

In his recent book "Religion. An Anthropological Perspective" (2015: 9), Professor Homayun Sidky, my much esteemed former PhD student at The Ohio State University, claims: "no single definition has been able to capture the entire picture" of the religious phenomenon. "For this reason", Sidky writes, "some argue that religion is best thought of as a multifaceted phenomenon with many interpenetrating dimensions as opposed to being viewed as a unitary occurrence." This indeed is my interpretation of religion as understood and practised by the once more-or-less exclusively pastoral Toda community

1 The orthography of Toda in this essay follows that of Murray Emeneau (1957: 19; 1984: 5–49), except that I have added hyphenation where I feel this might assist non-specialists with pronunciation, hence my To·r̲-θaṣ and Töw-fiḷy, where Emeneau has To·r̲θaṣ and Töwfiḷy. (Note, however, that I do not add hyphenation to Toda words when quoting directly – as I do frequently – from Emeneau's various works. Further assistance with the pronunciation of Toda words rendered in Emeneau's transcription can be had from Tarun Chhabra's "A Guide for the Transliteration of Toda" in his 2015 book "The Toda Landscape," pp. xxxvii–xliii.

2 From the pen of Pöḷ-xe·n, son of Mut-iŝky – his name anglicized as Pellican (n. d.) – a member of Ka·ṣ patriclan, first president of the Nilgiri Toda Uplift Society, high school graduate and literate both in Tamil and English.



Map: The Location of the Nilgiri District, the Toda Homeland, in Peninsular India.

(cf. Rivers 1906: 47–55; Walker 1986: 98–118) of the Nilgiri Mountains in the far northwest of the state of Tamil Nadu in South India (see Map).

The Todas (now numbering about 1,500 people), still retain vibrant beliefs in gods and goddesses they say once lived among them but thereafter became mountains; they tell also of ancestors, who were once living Todas but subsequently became divinities. To this day, many Todas are able to recount, enthusiastically, the miraculous deeds of these divine ancestors.

Beyond such indigenous Toda convictions, a plethora of Hindu (and a trace of Islamic) beliefs and/or ritual practices have been absorbed, most of them probably during the past two-to-three centuries, both from mountain neighbours and from surrounding lowland peoples. Christian ideology, promulgated at first by professional, foreign-led missionaries who, with much effort, succeeded in establishing a breakaway Toda Anglican community (now affiliated to the Church of South India) then, more recently – and less formally – by itinerant ethnic Tamil evangelical and charismatic preachers (mostly lay), as well as through Tamil language Christian radio programmes. This modern-day penetration of Christian ideology, accompanied by some ritual activity, including churchgoing (but not so far as I know – unless secretly – baptism) has primarily attracted Toda women; their menfolk, for the most part, appear to demonstrate little interest.

Notwithstanding the many different and divergent sources of Toda religious ideology, the predominant and most public display of Toda ritual activity still centres on their unique sacred dairying cult – and this despite the decline in the importance of buffaloes in the community's modern-day economic life (cf. Noble 1993: 158; see also Fig. 1 below). Other Indian peoples (including Nilgiri neighbours: Kotas and Badagas) have ritualised their relationship to their bovine herds, the Hindu veneration of the sacred cow doubtless being the best known. But in terms of the sheer complexity of its classification of sacred dairies, associated grades of buffaloes and dairymen, and the special ritual requirements for each grade of dairy, ordered in a complex hierarchy, the Toda dairying cult has no rival on the Indian

Fig. 1: Todas and their buffaloes (photo courtesy Tarun Chhabra).

subcontinent. This fact, together with their exclusively Toda deities, culture heroes, and associated myths, seems to suggest an ethnic religion unique to the Toda community, which may be why so many challenge their designation as "Hindu." On the other hand, demonstrably Indic (therefore, if only loosely, "Hindu") ideas and practices permeate Toda ritual activity. Most notable are the concepts of *hierarchy* and *purity* and those of *prescribed ritual avoidance* coupled with *required ritual cooperation*. People, animals, and material objects are situated on a pure–impure continuum, the purer occupying a position superior to that of the less pure, in the hierarchies of peoples, human (but not buffalo) genders, buffaloes, and a myriad of objects. Thus, Todas regard Kurumbas as purer and, therefore, in ritual terms superior to Kotas; the Toda subcaste called To·r̲-θa̲s̲, owners of the community's most sacred dairy-temples (see below), as purer and thus superior to the subcaste named Töw-fiɬy, whose members alone may serve as priests at those same sacred institutions; Toda men as purer and so ritually superior to Toda women, who, consequently, are excluded from most activities associated with the sacred dairying cult; temple buffaloes as purer and ritually superior to domestic buffaloes; and objects belonging to the sacred dairy-temples as purer and ritually superior to those of the domestic dwellings. All these are permanent attributions of relative purity or impurity (cf. Mandelbaum 1970/I: 189–192). Temporary attributions (Mandelbaum 1970/I: 184–189), on the other hand, are those that cause individual people or objects to incur pollution through contact with impure persons and things, especially those associated with birth and death. In people such pollution (*icïl* in Toda) is lifted automatically following a stipulated period of time, usually after the next new moon but, in some cases, the one following; in material objects it may be removed through ritual cleansing or by replacement. In sum, Toda religion – like the Toda community more generally – is at once unique and, at the same time, thoroughly Indic.

In this article, I begin with a discussion of Toda cosmography and eschatology, subsequently moving on to theology and to the community's principal ritual activities; I end by highlighting the influence of external religious ideas and practices – Hindu, Muslim, and Christian – on the Todas. My data are based on field research I began in late 1962 and have continued, sporadically, to the present day. Given the extensive literature on the Todas (cf. Walker 1998b), I have, more-or-less from the start, combined my fieldwork observations with in-depth library research, initiated in Oxford in 1963, but subsequently pursued in libraries and archives elsewhere in Britain, in India, and in the United States.

2 Toda Cosmography and Eschatology

Toda cosmography, stripped of those accretions obviously derived more recently from outside sources, identifies neither an eternal heaven nor any place of everlasting damnation. Instead, it designates two categories of place (*no·ṛ* in Toda): Imu-no·ṛ "*this* place/world" that, traditionally, has meant the world

of living Todas and other Nilgiri peoples, and Amu-no·ṛ, "*that* place/world," the abode of the dead. Todas say people who have committed heinous misdeeds, such as murder or incest, certainly must expect punishment for their misdeeds as they journey to the afterworld. Nonetheless, like everyone else, Todas say, they too will finally reach Amu-no·ṛ.

For Todas there is only one Imu-no·ṛ, the Nilgiri Mountains. Apart from Kotas and Kurumbas, who are said always to have shared the same Nilgiris with Todas, other peoples have their own Imu-no·ṛ, although just how many of these "worlds of the living" there might be, seems, traditionally, not to have been of much cosmographic concern to Todas. The Todas' great mother-goddess Tö··kiṣy is said to rule the Todas' Imu-no·ṛ, her physical embodiment being the sacred Mount Pï·ṛ-eṣy near No·ṣ, the principal hamlet of the Toda patriclan of the same name. The No·ṣ people – not unexpectedly – claim Tö··kiṣy as their special protective deity.

As for Amu-no·ṛ, there are just two that concern Todas. One is the place *below* the far southwesterly edge of the Nilgiri plateau, where the great majority of Todas are said to journey after their funerary rites are concluded; the second, located in the far west, beyond and *below* the Wynad plateau, is the exclusive afterlife abode of just one Toda patriclan, namely To··ṛo·ṛ of To·ṛ-θaṣ subcaste. The return of the departed to the ancestral homeland is a widespread belief among peoples the world around, so the location of both Toda afterworlds *below* the Nilgiris offers a hint, albeit unproven, as to the direction from which Todas first came to their present homeland.

Toda myth justifies the anomaly of two Toda afterworlds. In one version (cf. Emeneau 1984: 130–132), Tï··kwï-ṭeθy (numbered among the subsequently divine Toda ancestors but, as a mortal, said to have been a To··ṛo·ṛ patriclansman) steals the sacred bell (*moṇy*) from off the neck of the lead buffalo of No·ṣ patriclan's highest-ranking temple buffalo herd, intending to give it to Kwa-ṭen his "brother" (in this case his mother's sister's son) of Mö·ṛ patriclan. But for all Tï··kwï-ṭeθy's trouble, the angered high god Ö·n shoots him dead with an arrow. As he lies dying, Tï··kwï-ṭeθy announces that all Todas, apart, of course, from members of his own To··ṛo·ṛ patriclan, are his enemies. Consequently, he will not now join the rest in their afterworld; instead, he will depart for one all of his own.

In the beginning, when gods and Todas lived together in these Nilgiri Mountains, Todas say it was the God Ö·n who ruled over the other gods, as well as over the Todas, Kotas, and Kurumbas. But after an unspecified period of time, Ö·n decided to leave this world of the living in the care of his daughter Tö··kiṣy (some accounts have her as his sister, but daughter seems to be the more common understanding) to become instead the ruler of Amu-no·ṛ, the world of the dead. It has been like this ever since.

In Amu-no·ṛ, Todas say, their god Ö·n rules over people and buffaloes that have departed this world but who continue to live in circumstances not so very different from those they left behind when they died. Todas living in the world of the dead herd their buffaloes – the animals sacrificed at their funeral ceremonies (see below) – and the male dead carry on the same dairy-temple rituals (section 4 below) they observed when they dwelt in the world of the living. The spirits of Toda women in Amu-no·ṛ, it is said, are forbidden contact with the temple buffaloes, just as they were on this side of the cosmographical divide.

Despite the similarities, Todas point to an important difference between the worlds of the living and of the dead. In the former, the soil is comparatively soft, so people and buffaloes, due to their constant walking over it, tend to erode it. In the latter, by contrast, the soil is very hard. In the course of time, this hard soil wears down the legs of the Amu-noṭ-o·ɬ "the people of Amu-no·ṛ." When their legs have worn down as far as their knees, Todas say, God Ö·n sends them back to the Nilgiris to be reincarnated as newborn babies.

There used to be a time, Todas relate, when the inhabitants of the two worlds could freely travel back and forth between one and the other, "people from here going as guests there and people from there coming as guests here … going to and fro on friendly terms" (from a Toda text recorded by Emeneau 1984: 244 f.). But due to the misbehaviour of a demi-god named Kwa-töw of Meḷ-ga·ṣ patriclan, God Ö·n put an end to the practice.

Kwa-töw seems to have had mischievous traits analogous to those of the much-loved all-India deity Śrī Kṛṣṇa (also in origin a herdsman's divinity – cf. Basham 1954: 305). The story goes that one day Kwa-töw accompanied Po·nï-ṭa·n, a Ka·ṣ clansman, on a visit to the world of the dead. Due to a minor altercation between the two, Kwa-töw decided to return to the world of the living ahead of Po·nï-ṭa·n and, on arrival there, purposely misinformed the Ka·ṣ people that their clansmen had decided to remain in the other world. As Emeneau's text reads, Kwa-töw told that Po·nï-ṭa·n had said to him: "Catch thirty heifers along with buffalo Ïṇ-mo·n and, make a funeral over a cane." Weeping and mourning for their clansman, the Ka·ṣ people followed what they supposed to be his last instructions. They sacrificed the thirty heifers and the buffalo Ïṇ-mo·n and performed the funeral rites over a length of cane, after

Fig. 2: Mourning in pairs at Toda funeral (photo A. R. Walker).

which the sacrificed buffaloes set out to join Po·nï-ṭa·n in the afterworld. On their way through a wooded area close to Kï·-wï·ṛ patriclan's hamlet called Mü·ny, the buffaloes met with Po·nï-ṭa·n returning from Amu-no·ṛ. Learning now that Kwa-töw had deceived them, Po·nï-ṭa·n and Ïṇ-mo·n knelt down and, putting forehead to forehead, they wept in the manner Todas still do when mourning their dead at funerals (Fig. 2). "The tears from their weeping became a lake [now named Marlimund Lake] … [while] the snot running from their noses became a wild olive tree … Then the man Po·nï-ṭa·n went off to the world of the dead, driving all thirty heifers and Ïṇ-mo·n [ahead of him]." Following this incident, Emeneau's text (1984) relates, "people in the world of the dead stayed [here] without returning and the people of the world of the living [remained] there without going [to the land of the dead]."

Todas (or at least some of them) know very well the routes their departed spirits must follow and the associated natural features they will observe as they journey towards Amu-no·ṛ. Limitations of space forbid an exposition of all the details; the interested reader is urged to consult Tarun Chhabra's (2015: 358–382) fascinating and exhaustive account. Nonetheless, however short my adumbration, I must mention some of the most important sites the great majority of departed Toda spirits are believed to encounter on their way to the afterworld, as well as something of the behaviour said to be required of them at these places.

The first important place the spirits reach is a remarkable geological feature: a natural rock "staircase" (Fig. 3). The spirits climb these steps and, on coming to the top, discover a large, flat-topped, rock called Koc-aṟ "the funerary cloth flat tock," with a band right across its width that differs in colour from the rest of the geological formation (Fig. 4). Here the departed spirits are required to perform a ritual analogous to the cloth-giving rite (*koc-ïḍ-pimi* – "cloth we give") at a Toda funeral, wherein men who have married women from the deceased's patriclan (such men are known as *poy-o·ɬ*), together with their wives, in turn, receive a multi-coloured cloth – the *koc* or "affinal cloth" – which, at this point in the proceedings, is draped over the corpse. A son-in-law of the deceased (actual or classificatory) hands the cloth to each *poy-o·ɬ* in turn, who re-

Fig. 3: Natural rock steps on pathway towards the land of the dead (photo courtesy Tarun Chhabra).

Fig. 4: The "Funeral Cloth Flat Rock" on way towards the land of the dead, showing natural line across rock face (photo courtesy Tarun Chhabra).

ceives it, touches it to his forehead and hands it on to his wife. She, likewise, touches the cloth to her forehead before dropping it back onto the corpse. As for the spirit journeying to Amu-no·r̤, it touches the *koc* (the very same cloth, Todas believe, that was cremated with the body) to the forehead, afterwards handing it across the band in the rock to affinal spirits waiting on the other side to receive it.

Some way on, the departed spirits must pass through woodland, where there is an ancient (still visible to mortal eyes) fireplace sunk deep into the ground. Here, it is told, the spirit cooks its first meal since its cremation, using water from an adjacent stream and some of the food items that had been placed in the pocket of its cloak prior to the body being set on the funeral pyre. Following this repast, the spirit resumes its journey, encountering first a rock split into two halves that represent, Todas say, the worlds of the living and the dead, respectively. Male spirits must insert a knife called *kaṇ-koṭy* (the same that had been cremated with the corpse) into the narrow space between the two halves of this rock. At the very moment they do this, it is told, the deceased's still-living relatives, using the very same kind of knife, begin to cut their hair to symbolise their state of mourning.

Female spirits have no ritual to enact at the split rock, but further on, at a place called Was̲k-oṇe-kwï·r̤ "Pestle Hole Stream," where a small hole closely resembling a mortar (Toda, *was̲k*) may be seen in the rocky bed of the waterway, they must perform the womanly duty of pounding grain, using the same pestle that was placed beside their corpse before cremation. Another important rock that departing spirits must pass by is called Poṇy-upy-xa·s̲, the "Handing-over-of-Sickness Stone." Any spirit that ended its mortal life with sickness and disease leaves these disorders behind at this rock, so as to be able to enter the world of the dead free of all such blemishes. Leaving this "sickness stone" behind them, the spirits come to another rock, called Nïz̲-muṭ-xa·s̲ "The Chest-Touching Rock." Here the departing spirits press their chests against the rock and by so doing, Todas affirm, they leave behind all worldly attachments.

On the final stretch of their journey over Nilgiri soil, the departing spirits reach a flat-topped hill with a rocky (rather than grass-covered) surface. Todas name this hill Pü·θy-a̲r, "The Ashes Flat Rock," because it is here departing spirits are believed to deposit the ashes from their funeral pyre, permitting them to proceed to the afterworld uncontaminated by funerary pollution. Following this, they descend to a thread bridge, invisible to mortal eyes, stretching across a pool of water believed to be infested by worms and leeches. (The rocks on either side, from which the walkway is believed to be suspended, are visible to any living person who happens to pass by.) Todas say that if, during its mortal lifetime, the spirit had not seriously transgressed the norms

of their society, it will have no difficulty crossing this bridge. But, if it had committed serious faults, the thread bridge will surely snap and the malefactor fall into the infested abyss below. Rivers (1906: 399) identifies "selfish people," "jealous and grudging people," and people "who have committed any offences against the dairy" as those, destined to fall from the thread bridge. The resultant torture is not, however, eternal. Todas say that the spirit of one of the buffaloes sacrificed at the sinner's funeral – itself having crossed over the bridge safely – will shortly come to the rescue and pull the suffering spirit safely out of the pool.

The final obstacle the spirits of Toda dead must face on their journey to the afterworld are the *pï··roty-noy* or tiger-like dogs that lurk behind rocks beside a swamp called Paṛ-mïx-θïr̲, "The Swamp with an Open Space for the Crowd [People of the Afterworld]." This swamp is so named because just above it is a small hillock where people of the afterworld are believed to gather to witness the *pï··roty-noy*'s antics. The spirits of the newly-dead must run, as fast as they are able, across an intervening stream and dash towards the swamp and the waiting Amuno·ṭ-o·ɬ.[3] If, during its lifetime as a mortal, a spirit had committed incest by engaging in sexual relations with a person of the same patriclan or matriclan, Todas say, a *pï··roty-noy* will catch the offender, whom it will mount and sexually ravish. When this happens, relatives among the assembled Amuno·ṭ-o·ɬ are said to cover their eyes in shame, while the rest smile derisively. Innocent spirits of the dead, Todas affirm, are easily able to outrun the *pï··roty-noy*, safely cross the swamp and reach the small grassy hill beyond. Here, to the left, is O·ɬ-fïu·θ, "the place where people descend [into the afterworld]" and, to the right, Ïr- fïu·θ, "the place where the buffaloes descend." As for the afterworld itself, its physical features, particularly Mount Tö··muṣ-kuḷṇ (its Toda name), from where God Ö·n rules all of Amu-no·r̤, are visible to mortal eyes in the distance but not so its inhabitants: the departed people and sacrificed buffaloes, who, after all, are now incorporeal spirit entities.

The spirits of the dead of the two Toda subcastes, as well as those of certain individual patriclans, follow somewhat different routes to reach the land of the dead. Those of Ke-r̤ïr patriclan in To·r̲-θas̲ subcaste, although sharing the same land of the dead with all other Todas (apart from To··r̲o·r̤ clansmen), have their own special route by which to reach it, characteristically different from that used by the spirits of other patriclans. In a landscape replete with water bodies, the Ke-r̤ïr spirits need never cross water until they reach the special rock named Pu·θy ar (where funerary ashes are said to be discarded). And the To··r̲o·r̤ people, as already mentioned, are believed to have a quite different land of the dead and a unique route by which to reach it (cf. Emeneau 1984: 322 f. for details).

3 Toda Theology: The Gods at Play, the Mountains as Gods, and the Gods as Sacred Places

3.1 The Gods at Play

Most modern-day orthodox (i.e., non-Christian) Todas, I believe, would agree with Pöḷ-xe·n's words recorded in the epigraph at the head of this article (Pellican n. d.) concerning the primacy of their Goddess Tö··kis̲y, at least during the period of their mortal existence. In this world of living Todas, they would say, Goddess Tö··kis̲y is greater than any other of the many gods, goddesses, and demigods they sometimes mention in prayer and whose divine exploits they love to relate. Just as so many other peoples – closer to the South Indian Hindu mainstream than are the Todas – focus their devotional attention (*bhakti.* cf. Stutley and Stutley 1977: 41 f.; Michaels 2004: 42, 252–255) on one or another of the principal all-India deities (cf. Srinivas 1965: 214–217), such as Śiva, Vṣṇu, or one of the latter's principal incarnations, principally Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, or else on Śakti, the Goddess (in whatever form she may take), so modern-day Todas likewise appear to have raised Tö·kis̲y to the level of their supreme personal deity. I have not yet heard Todas claim Tö·kis̲y as an aspect of Pāvatī, Lakṣmī, Saraswatī, or some other goddess of mainstream South Indian Hinduism, but it is my guess that such identification will eventually occur.

Besides Goddess Tö·kis̲y and her counterpart ruler of the afterworld, God Ö·n, the Todas recognise a pantheon of deities unique to their community. The names of several of these gods and goddesses are mentioned quite regularly in formal prayers, while their attributes and activities are recounted in myths still widely known in the community.

Todas maintain that, in the beginning, their gods alone inhabited the Nilgiris, although it seems they conducted their lives and affairs very much like Todas. For example, they say God Ö·n functioned as a *poł-o·ɬ* (highest ranking dairyman-priest), while his son Pyu·f served as a (much lower-ranking) *poły-xar̲p-o·ɬ* (cf. Rivers 1906: 443). Rivers (182) admi-

3 In combination with the suffix *o·ł* (people), *no·ṛ* (place) is pronounced "*no·ṭ.*"

rably describes these Toda high gods as "distinctly anthropomorphic" and living "much the same kind of life as the mortal Todas." They had their "dairies and … buffaloes … [held] councils and consult[ed] with one another just as do the Todas … ." Moreover, they were "swayed by the same motives and … [they thought] in the same way as the Todas themselves." Subsequently, after the gods had created Todas, their buffaloes, and their secular and sacred institutions, gods and Todas lived together for some time on the Nilgiris. But the gods acted not as equals to, but as rulers and managers of their creations.

This was the time that William Noble (1991: 3), borrowing from Australian aboriginal ethnography (see Burridge 1973: 73 f.), has labelled "the Toda dreamtime," a usage Tarun Chhabra (2015: 358) has subsequently adopted. The deities of this Toda "dreamtime" (in general I am not enthusiastic about the introduction of Australian aboriginal parallels when so many Indic ones are at hand) included many gods and goddesses, most of whom – if we follow Toda mythology – seem to have belonged to a single large family of high gods, whose paterfamilias was Ö·n, of whom, so it is told, he subsequently become the ruler of the Toda afterworld. His spouse is Ti··ko·n-e·r, who bore him two sons – Pyu·f and Töw-fax – and a daughter, the already oftmentioned Tö··kiṣy. She and her husband, Pin-bi·θy, begat at least ten sons, including Peṭ-xoṇ, Kwïṛïṇ-döw, Neṣn-goṣy, Ö··söw, Mo·söw, Est-xal-xwïṛ, Tïköṇy, Ni·r-poṣy, Kïṛ-töw, and Koṛa-töw; also two daughters, Poẓe-fïsn and Pïse-fïsn.

For a time, so Todas relate, Ö·n functioned as the chief deity (despite himself being the son of the god whom Rivers (1906: 184) names as Pithi (probably Pïθy) and, earlier, Breeks (1873: 37) called "Pith" (most likely Pïθ). At any rate, in some versions of the Todas' creation myth, it was Ö·n who created the Todas and their buffaloes and who ruled over the Nilgiris. Thus, one of Emeneau's (1984: 192) Toda language texts begins: "*Mun go·stk Ö·nu-ïḍti, ïr o·ḷ ofoḍyn oḍcïc*: In former times, it was Ö·n, it is said, who ruled over all the buffaloes and Todas."

In another Toda creation myth, also recorded by Rivers (1906: 184), Ö·n and his wife Ti··ko·n-e·r together cause the first buffaloes to emerge from the earth. And, holding onto the tail of the very last animal to emerge, was a man – the first Toda. In terms strikingly similar to the biblical myth of creation recorded in Genesis 2:22 (from where the Todas, through an early missionary – perhaps Johann Friedrich Metz of the Basel Evangelical Mission (Hockings 2012a) – may have acquired it. The Toda version tells of Ö·n taking a rib from that first Toda's right side, from which he creates a Toda woman. All Todas, it is said, are descended from these two. As for the buffaloes, those animals created by the male deity became the temple animals and those by the female, the domestic herds.

This myth attributing the creation of buffaloes and Todas to Ö·n and Ti··ko·n-e·r is no more than one version of the Toda creation myth. Another, probably more widely accepted by modern-day Todas, has Goddess Tö··kiṣy as their creator. This is how Emeneau (1984: 211 f.) records that story:

> In the beginning, Tö·kiṣy thought, "How shall I create man?" and with a cane that she herself took in her hand she gave one blow on the ground – so they say. At that time a Toda was created – so they say. With that cane she again gave one blow – so they say. A Kurumba sprang forth –so they say. She gave one more blow – so they say. At that time a Kota was created – so they say. … When a Toda, a Kurumba, a Kota, the three, had been created, for these she created fruit trees, honey, [etc.] … . Afterwards the Toda went to Tö·kiṣy and said, "That you created me is good. Now you must create and give me a woman as a mate" – so they say. It is because Tö·kiṣy said, "I will create a woman". And taking one bone from the Toda's ribs, created her, that the Toda man has one rib less and the Toda woman has one bone more.

Another of Emeneau's (1984: 214–219) texts, describing Goddess Tö··kiṣy's acts of creation, tells how "in play" the goddess created both physical things, such as the cairns atop the big hills, "making toy buffalo horns, making figures of men and figures of buffaloes in mud" (a reference to the terracotta artefacts discovered in conjunction with megalithic grave sites, widely spread on mountain summits over the Nigiri plateau).[4] She also created living things, like the Toda buffaloes and in another, somewhat dissimilar version of how these animals came into being, Tö··kiṣy creates buffaloes at diverse places for different Toda patriclans. The Toda notion that their gods and goddesses created "in play" bears obvious similarity to the ancient Indic idea that, as Michaels (2004: 298) writes, "the gods let the world emerge out of their desire for … *līlā* ['sport' or 'play']."

Superb ethnographer that he was (cf. Walker 2012d), Rivers (1906: 183) admits: "[t]here was no department of Toda lore which gave me greater difficulty than the study of the beliefs about the gods." He was in no doubt that God Ö·n and Goddess Tö··kiṣy were pre-eminent, but he had the greatest of difficulty in learning from Toda informants the relationship between these two. Were they brother

4 See Das (1957); Hockings (1976); Noble (1989a); Wessels-Mevissen (2002).

and sister, or father and daughter? Moreover, Rivers says (183): "[o]thers of the gods were believed to be related to one another, but … I found it almost impossible to obtain trustworthy information." Since Rivers's time with the Todas at the start of the last century (1901–1902), our knowledge of Toda theology has been much advanced, particularly through the work of North American linguist Murray B. Emeneau (1904–2005).

The very first of Emeneau's (1984: 191) collection of Toda texts offers an insight into one Toda man's attempt to classify the gods of his community. The Toda says (in Emeneau's translation): "Tö·kiṣy and the other [high] gods are gods *created of themselves* [emphasis added]." Following their act of self-creation, these high gods went on to create "in play all the customs," then, "after creating the Todas, [they] disappeared." (In this context "disappeared" means they relinquished their mortal-like condition without leaving behind any physical body for which the performance of funeral rites would have been mandatory.)

High gods aside, a second category of deity identified in the same Toda language text comprises those divine beings who were born as Todas, but seemingly were divine from the start, since they also "creat[ed] in play after the example of Tö·kiṣy" (Emeneau 1984: 191). Moreover, the same text relates that, "[after] creating in play, [they] did not die but remained as mountains and sacred places – so they say" (191). Among these demigods Emeneau's text names Kwa-ṭe·n, Eṛtn, and Eḷ-ṇo·xm; in fact, there are many more, but I am constrained by space to recount stories of only two: Kwa-ṭöw and Kwa-ṭen.

Kwa-ṭöw, so Toda myth relates, was the son of a Meḷ-ga·ṣ patriclan father and a Ke-ṛïr patriclan mother. But despite such mundane affiliations, his birth was quite the opposite. Emeneau (1984: 241) recorded a Toda language text of Kwa-ṭöw's nativity:

> When this woman was pregnant with Kwaṭöw, the husband and wife said, "We will come from Ke-ṛïr to Meḷga·ṣ" and [they] came. Halfway, labor started for the woman. … [and] at … the funeral place of … Meḷga·ṣ clan, the woman brought forth a gourd – so they say. These two were ashamed to come carrying the gourd to the mund, and saying, "The boy died," they announced the funeral through all the munds – so they say. All the people assembling made the funeral at the funeral place – so they say. When they lifted this gourd onto the fire, the gourd burst in two – so they say. A boy who was inside the gourd, Kwaṭöw, flew off and sat on the mountain on a *poθn* tree [*Celtis tetranda*] – so they say. … Afterwards Kwaṭöw's father and mother finished making the funeral and came past the mountain where Kwaṭöw sat. They saw Kwaṭöw sitting on the tree and crying, and his father and mother came carrying the boy.

As already mentioned, Kwa-ṭöw had a mischievous nature, which we saw demonstrated in the story of how he fooled the people of Ka·ṣ patriclan into believing their clansmen Po·nï-ṭa·n had decided to remain in the land of the dead. After some time, the company of gods became frustrated by the antics of Kwa-ṭöw and so called upon one of their number, the God Ko·ṛa-to·w, son of Goddess Tö··kiṣy and tutelary deity of Niṛy patriclan, to throw him over a cliff nearby Niṛy, down to the plains below. But Kwa-ṭöw turned himself into a bird of prey, pulled up a hefty bamboo stem by its roots and used it to beat Ko·ṛa-to·w's head, splitting it into three pieces, still to be seen as the three promontories atop Hulikal Droog (1,900 m a. s. l.), known to Todas as "Ko·ṛa-to·w's Mountain." Meanwhile, Kwa-ṭöw returned to his seat near the place where the gods had assembled. The gods deliberated as to what they should do with this mischief-maker. Finally, they told Kwa-ṭöw that, if he could make the stream called O·l-foy flow uphill, the sun drink of its waters and, finally, turn day into night, they would recognise him as being among their company. Kwa-ṭöw met all three challenges, He dammed the O·l-foy with a huge rock, causing it to flow backwards; he caught the sun with a stone chain, compelling it to drink from a stone trough (still to be seen) in the bed of the stream; finally he led the sun to a pool of water surrounded by trees. Here he tethered it with the stone chain, thereby preventing it from shining on this world or that of the dead. The gods now begged Kwa-ṭöw to restore the sun to its proper place; they recognised not only Kwa-ṭöw's divinity but acknowledged him as the most powerful amongst them (see Rivers 1906: 203–210 for much greater detail).

The second demigod whose exploits I have chosen to highlight for this essay is Kwa··ṭe·n, said to have been born to Mö·ṛ patriclan. Altogether a man larger than life (as indeed is becoming of a demigod), Kwa··ṭe·n is cuckolded by his mortal wife but finally enjoys intercourse with a goddess, before mysteriously disappearing from the world of mortals. Stories of Kwa··ṭe·n's life and exploits are legion and frequently contradictory.[5] "In former times," one account (Emeneau 1984: 221) of this culture hero goes, "there was a man of Mö·ṛ patriclan … a greater man than all the men of that clan … He was … reputedly the largest Toda ever to have

5 Cf. the records of Rivers (1906: 203); Emeneau (1984: 220–230); and Chhabra (2015: 232–239).

lived, and the owner of 1,000 buffaloes" (Chhabra 2015: 31). A "devout Man" (Chhabra 2015: 31), he served as dairyman-priest at the now long-abandoned Mö·ṛ patriclan hamlet called Po·loṛy-xaṛx.

Among the supernormal acts attributed to Kwa·-ṯe·n are his throwing of buffalo dung around No·ṣ hamlet's milking grounds, which transmuted into stone walls (still to be seen there), thus preventing wild deer from entering and disturbing the buffaloes. In similar fashion, Kwa·-ṯe·n caused a wall of stone to materialise at Kï·-wïṛ patriclan's male funeral place called Pi·c. He was responsible also for causing a stream to emerge for the use of the dairy-temple at Mö·ṛ patriclan's Kwï·-s̱y hamlet. Emeneau's (1984: 235) version of this story goes:

In former times Kwaṯe·n saying, "I will live at that mund Kwï·s̱y," made the mund [hamlet] –so they say. Making the mund, having finished making dairy, pen, house, calf pen, calf shed, everything, when he looked for water saying, "I will draw water for the dairy," it was not found at any place nearby – so they say.

Then Kwaṯe·n went up Kuḍme·ṇ, the mountain above the dairy – so they say. With a cane that he himself had taken in his hand he beat on the steep side of that mountain – so they say. From the place where he had beaten, water burst forth in a stream and ran by the other side of the entrance to the dairy – so they say. Then making that water to be water for the dairy, [ritually] purifying it, he drew [water] for the dairy – so they say.

Kwa-ṯe·n is said to have been a significant innovator of Toda customs. For example, it was he, so it is told, who changed the rules governing interaction between Todas and their Kota and Kurumba neighbours, so as to permit Todas henceforth (as they are still permitted) to enter and eat inside the Kota village of Kal-goḍy (Kalgas) in the Nilgiri Wynad (all other Kota settlements still being forbidden to them); he also initiated the custom of Todas visiting and dining together with the Alu Kurumba villagers of Po·ny in the Kundahs. And with regards to his own patriclan, Mö·ṛ, it was Kwa-ṯe·n who was responsible for separating it into the two divisions that remain today.

One final Kwa-ṯe·n myth must suffice for this essay. It is one that Todas frequently tell, perhaps because it contains several subplots, viz. his friendship with the demigod Eṛtn of Moṛt-xö·ṛ patriclan, his sexual liaison, despite Eṛtn's forewarning, with a goddess or "daughter of a god" (Emeneau 1984: 229) and his mysterious disappearance from the world of the living, leaving only his magical ring behind on a deerskin. Emeneau (1984: 226–229) has two versions of the myth, from both of which I intend to select and put together various sentences, noting in brackets the version (I or II) I am citing.

[**Vers. II:**] In former times Kwaṯe·n lived in that mund [belonging to Mö·ṛ patriclan] which is called Pe·nïs̱ – so they say. One day this Kwaṯe·n and Eṛtn, the two of them, said, "We will bring salt and rice," and went to [= set out for] the bazaar [in the Malabar plains [cf. Emeneau 1984: 229, n. 2] – so they say.

[**Vers. I:**] They had to cross the Po·lpa·w river [in Mö·ṛ patriclan territory; *pa·w* means "river" in Toda] and go. Kwaṯe·n and Eṛtn, the two of them went to Tï·kołyfił [a path through a thicket at the entrance of Po·ṇy (= Bhavani) Palu/Alu Kurumba village; cf. Emeneau 1974: 59, names 218, 238]. … Saying: "We will cross Po·lpa·w," they entered the river. A head-hair wound itself around Kwaṯe·n's leg. Kwaṯe·n took that hair and stretched it out to his own measure. It was larger than himself. He stretched it out to the measure of his spear. It was longer than his spear.

[**Vers. II:**] Then Kwaṯe·n said: "Eṛtn! I will see who is the woman on whom grows hair such as this and then will return," and he went up along the river – so they say. Whatever obstruction [objection?] Eṛtn made, Kwaṯe·n refused to listen and went – so they say. When this Kwaṯe·n went up … he saw the daughters of god [Toda *töw-fagany*, derived ultimately from Sanskrit *dēva-kanyā*] bathing there, he seized one of the daughters of god [whose name, according to ***Version I***, was Te·koṣ] and put his cloak over her and lay with her – so they say. Then he let the daughter of god go, and Kwaṯe·n and Eṛtn, both of them came to Tï·kołyfił. A *ka·ṛpiłc* bird [a Toda omen bird, the Nilgiri Pied Bushchat, *Saxicola caprata nilghiriensis*] was flying back and forth in front of them crying "*tü·łe tü·łe*," so they say. Kwaṯe·n asked Eṛtn, "Why does this black bird thus obstruct us in front?" – so they say. Eṛtn said, "What shall I know? Because of your desire to join your path with a sacred power [= to have intercourse with the goddess], it is that the sacred power desires to abandon your hand" [i.e., will forsake you, so your days are numbered; cf. Emeneau 1984: 721, 57, 223, n. 57], and both of them went away – so they say. That evening Kwaṯe·n went away to his own village Pe·ṇïs̱ – so they say. Eṛtn went away to the village Twaṛy – so they say.

[**Vers. I:**] [As] Kwaṯe·n was always accustomed … that evening … [he] lay on the deer skin. The ring itself which he put on his finger and the spear itself which he [always] carried with him and a mouthful of foam he left on the deer skin and he himself disappeared. Next day Eṛtn shouted to the people of … [Kwaṯe·n's village]: "Has the man quit sleeping?" Those people said: "How could the man quit sleeping? We don't see Kwaṯe·n. On the deer skin there are just a ring and a mouthful of foam."

The tale ends with Eṛtn strangling himself and going to live in his mountain peak nearby that of his friend Kwaṯe·n. And, as the text of the first version of the myth concludes: "Today, on this side of Po·ny two mountains [are] sitting facing this way, side by side – one is Kwaṯe·n, the other is Te·koṣ. … To this day the people of Mö·ṛ clan have Kwaṯe·n's ring and spear."

As for the ring Kwaṯe·n left behind, because he was such a large man, it too was (and still is) very big, so when he disappeared, his clansmen took it to a Kota silversmith asking him to make it small. But, as Emeneau's text (1984: 235) relates:

When the Kota had heated the ring, placed it on the anvil, and hammered it once, the ring flew into the sky – so they say. That day, the people of Kö·ṟo·ṛ clan, saying, "We will pour salt [for the buffaloes] at Pï·roty mund," went to the salt-pit, [ritually] purified the salt, and placed it in the basket, the ring came and fell into the salt basket – so they say. As soon as these men of Kö·ṟo·ṛ clan realized: "This ring is Kwaṯe·n's ring," they hid it and were keeping it – so they say.

From the time these people kept the ring, misfortune at once coming to them, to men and buffaloes, the men died and the buffaloes perished – so they say. Afterwards, realizing that because of this ring misfortune had come to them, they called the people of Mö·ṛ clan, handed over this ring to them, undertook a vow of a ring to their mund, and then gave to that mund a [new] ring – so they say.

It is because the Kota beat [Kwaṯe·n's] ring on the anvil that even to today this ring is a little crooked.

3.2 Mountains as Gods

The late Kamil Zvelebil (1982: 149), Czech linguist and Dravidianist – also, *inter alia*, Nilgiri specialist – has written that "the worship of *mountains which are gods*, seems to be one of the Nilgiri areal features," for it is found among Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, and Irulas. It is not surprising, therefore, that Toda commonly label their self-created high gods, also their gods who were born as Todas, and their culture heroes as *töw-θiṭ* (*töw* "god"; *-θiṭ* from *tiṭ* "mountain/hill"). Tarun Chhabra (2015: 290) has identified thirty-four of these "god mountains" or, better translated, "mountains that are gods" (Fig. 5). Here we may usefully stress Chhabra's clarification that "Todas believe … an entire sacred peak is a manifestation of its associated deity." For this reason, he adds, "Todas do not build shrines on the summits of their sacred hills." The majority of these *töw-θiṭ* (twenty-eight of the thirty-five that Chhabra [2015: 290 f.] identifies) are literally "deity *peaks*" but the remaining six are not. These latter include two grassy promontories, a rock, the rock face at the back of a waterfall, an indentation in a cliff face, a Toda hamlet, and even the grounds of a Hindu temple.

A deity peak (whether an actual hill or not) takes its name (in Toda, of course) from the associated deity. Todas treat their *töw-θiṭ* with great respect, reverently saluting with bared right arm when they come in sight of one. "[E]ven today," Chhabra (2012: 802) writes, "a Toda elder would not commit the sacrilege of pointing out the location of a deity peak with his finger, but would, in all likelihood, point to the neighboring hill and say, 'the peak next to that'." Todas – at least some of them – are convinced of the great power these *töw-θiṭ* possess and

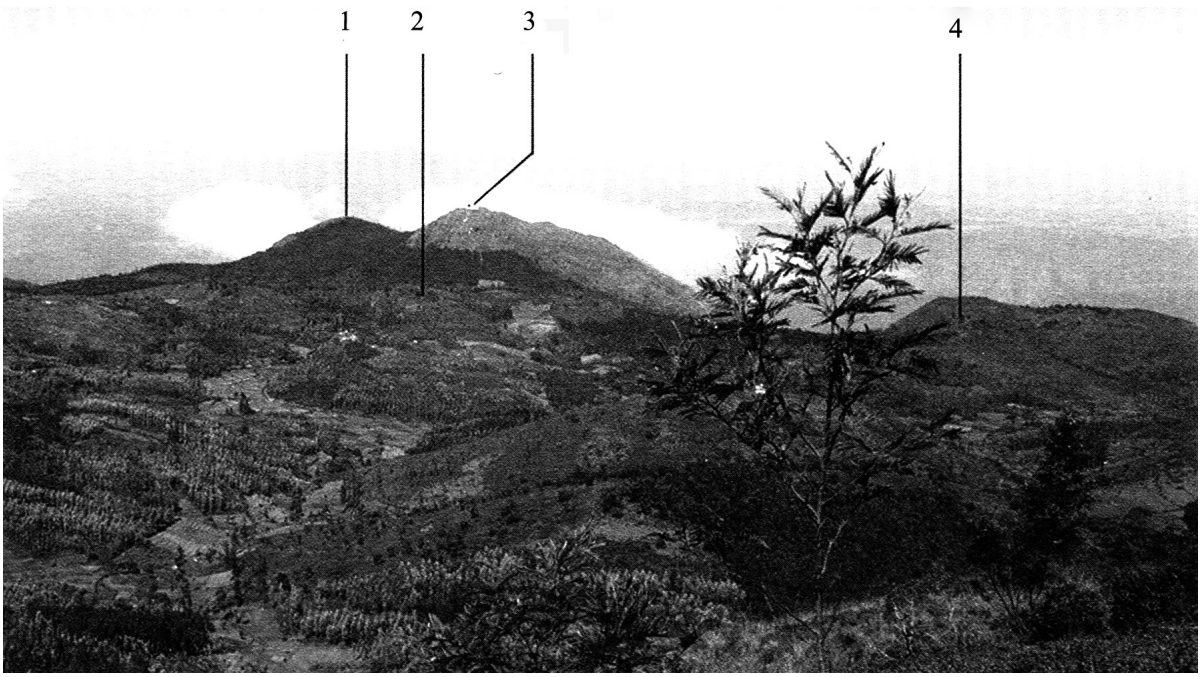


Fig. 5: Mountains that are Toda gods: 1. Mt. Ö·nš (Ottatti Betta), 1,912 m a. s. l.; 2. Mt. Tökin-nö·ṛ, 1,809 m a. s. l.; 3. Mt. Ö·gš (Birmuka Malai), 1,919 m a. s. l.; 4. Mt. Kö·dwï· (Kengal Betta), 1,851 m a. s. l. (photo courtesy Tarun Chhabra).

there are stories – ancient and modern – that relate the super-mundane prowess one or another of these deities is able to wield. Chhabra (2015: 301) relates a modern example:

> … a few decades ago … a hydroelectric dam [was under construction] at Upper Bhavani. During the building process, workers started digging earth to be used for the construction work from the nearby deity hills of Aihhzaih [Ö·zöw] and Mōzaihh [Mö·zöw]. Some Toda elders, committed to their sacred hills [see Chhabra 2015: 301, Pl. 8.11], protested this sacrilege, but their words went unheeded. After a while news came that, during the digging work, the earth had caved in and killed some of the labourers. Subsequently, these hills were left untouched.

3.3 The Gods of the Places

The importance of the *töw-θiṭ* "the mountains that are gods" for the orthodox Toda community (and, I would guess, for a good many of the older generation Christians too) is not in doubt. But this said, we need also to recognise that neither Goddess Tö·-kis̲y nor any of the other *töw-θiṭ* represent a so immediately divine presence as do the *töw-no·ṛ* "the gods (*töw*) of the *no·ṛ* (the [sacred] places)". These are the gods of the sacred dairy-complexes (Fig. 6) or, more accurately, "the sacred dairy complexes that are gods." For the most part, Todas seem to view a *töw-no·ṛ* as a diffused force, as "divinity" rather than as anthropomorphized "deity." As Emeneau (1938: 113 f.) writes:

> Within the *no·ṛ* it cannot be discovered that any [particular] element is the local seat of the divinity. The linguistic evidence shows that the *no·ṛ* itself is the god. Both songs and ordinary speech refer to the sacred part of the mund [Toda settlement] as *töw* "god" or *no·ṛ* "sacred place" or *töwno·ṛ*, a compound of the two words denoting "*the sacred place which is a god* [emphasis added]". … We must conclude that the "sacred place" and the "god" are the same thing, the localized dairy-complex.

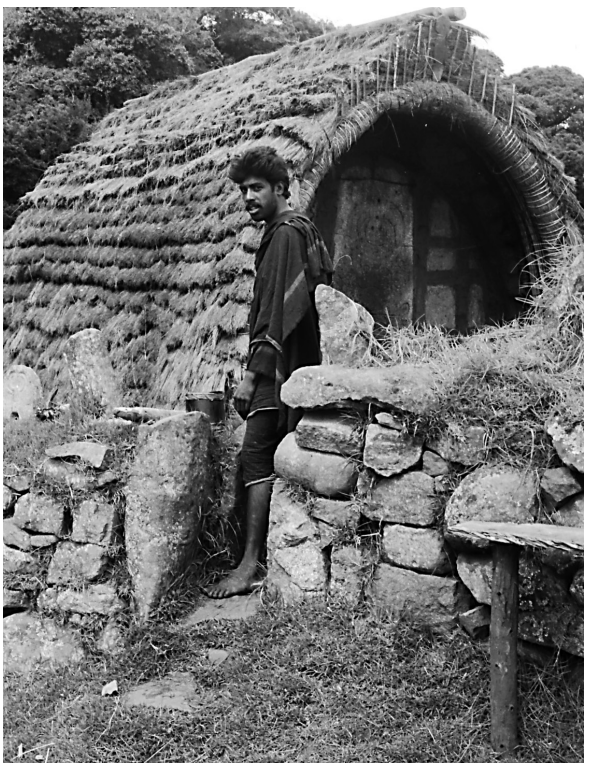


Fig. 6: Dairy-temple with priest dressed in ritual attire: black loincloth and shawl (photo A. R. Walker).

On occasion, without any doubt, Todas invest these otherwise diffused divine forces that are the *töw-no·ṛ* with anthropomorphic characteristics. Thus they sometimes talk or sing of a *töw-no·ṛ* "becoming angry," "punishing a wrongdoer," "accepting offerings," "dispensing boons," or even "attending a council of the gods" (cf. Emeneau 1971: xli). Examples of song-phraseology that Emeneau (1938: 114 [1967: 311–312]) gives to emphasise such anthropomorphism of the *töw-no·*ṛ are as follows:

no·ṛ o·s elm	*ku·ṭyïθ no·ṛ*
sacred places – all	to which she gathered – sacred place
töw o·s elm	*ku·ṭyïθ no·ṛ*
gods – all	to which she gathered – sacred place

explanation: "the sacred place [No·ṣ hamlet] to which the goddess Tö·kis̲y gathered all the sacred places, all the gods."

moxe θarm	*kwïṛtïθ no·ṛ*
children – charity	which gave – sacred place
ïre θarm	*kwïṛtïθ no·ṛ*
buffaloes – charity	which gave – sacred place

explanation: "the place (or, god) which gave children and buffaloes in abundance."

no·ṛe xu·ḍtk	*pi·ïθ no·ṛ*
sacred places – meeting	to which went – sacred place
töwe no·ytk	*pi·ïθ no·ṛ*
gods – meeting	to which went – sacred place

explanation: "the sacred place (or, god) which went to the assembly of sacred places, of the gods."

Emeneau (1938: 113 [1967: 311]), rightly I believe, declares, "[t]he *töwno·ṛ* are by all odds the most present divinities in Toda consciousness." In other words, Todas view their principal dairy-temples (those located within their divinely-created [by the *töw-θiṭ*] *ït-wïḍ mod̲*, their principal/important

settlements, as well as those so sacred they must be located away from any domestic habitation altogether), along with the associated artefacts, buffalo- and calf-pens, calf sheds, water supply, and milking grounds, not simply as sacred but as embodiments of the divinity of the *töw-no·ṛ* "the god of [this sacred] place." It is here, of course, that we find the greatest convergence between Toda theology and the ritual of the sacred dairying cult.

4 The Ritual Dimension of Toda Religion

Within their traditional world, the Todas were solely a pastoral community, whose herds of far-from-docile, long-horned buffaloes (Figs. 1 and 8) not only provided for their economic wellbeing but were also the principal focus of the community's ritual life. Indeed, so prominent was the Todas' "buffalo cult," as Murray Emeneau (1938: 111) labelled it, that to many observers it seemed to eclipse quite thoroughly the cosmographical and theological domains of Toda religion that we have discussed thus far. Indeed, W. H. R. Rivers, the Todas' premier ethnographer, remarked in his 1906 book (455): "The Todas seem to show us how the over-development of the ritual aspect of religion may lead to atrophy of those ideas and beliefs through which the religion has been built up … ." A quarter of a century on, educationalist, philosopher, and comparative religionist A. S. Woodburne (1927: 146) restated this viewpoint more forthrightly when he wrote: "The gods … [are] shadowy creatures … all of them insignificant as compared with the importance which the buffaloes hold in the ceremonial life [of the Todas]."

It is true that the complexity of the ritual activity with which Todas have embellished every aspect of their sacred dairying and herding procedures is quite without equal on the Indian subcontinent and, probably, anywhere else in the world. Virtually every major activity associated with the dairy-temples – building or rebuilding a dairy, re-thatching its roof, consecrating a dairyman for it, introducing dairy equipment into the building, lighting the dairy lamp and fire, processing milk into butter and *ghee* (clarified butter), and distributing the by-product, buttermilk – are highly ritualized acts, as also are the milking of the temple buffaloes, especially the first-milking, the naming of all female buffaloes, giving them salt water to drink at specific times of the year, migrating with them to fresh pastures, burning off degraded pastures to provide them with more succulent fodder, offering them as gifts or in payment of fines, and sacrificing them at funerals.

At this juncture it is as well to emphasise that it is the dairy-temples – as embodiments of "the gods of the places" – that are the Todas' principal objects of worship, not their associated buffaloes, as

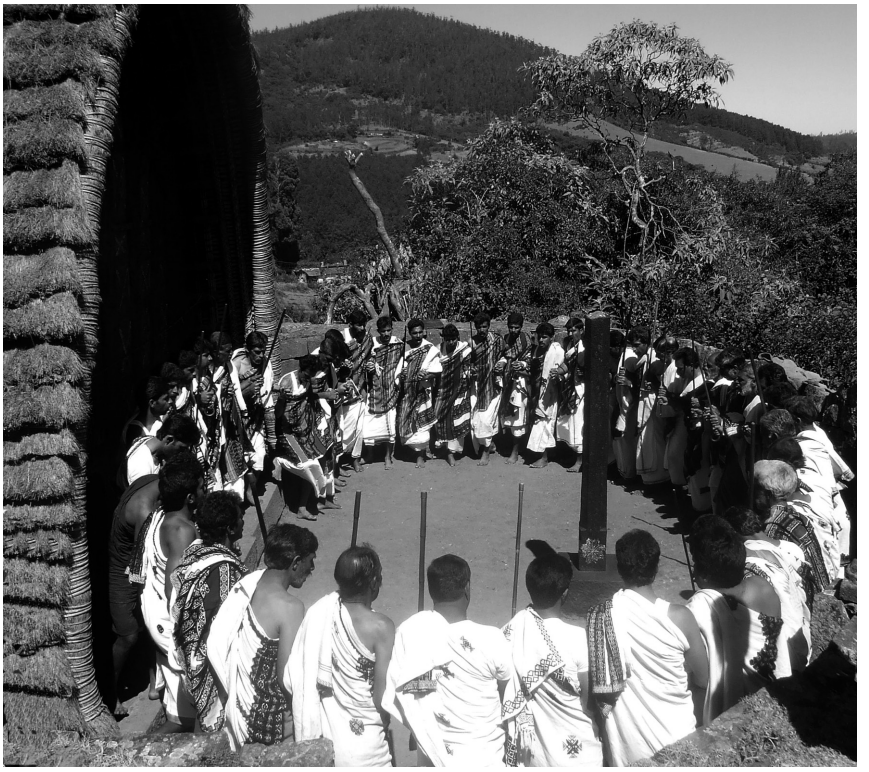


Fig. 7: Dancing in front courtyard of dairy-temple (photo A. R. Walker).

is so often claimed in the popular literature on this community;[6] but it is important to observe that, way back in 1909, John Foster Fraser entitled his chapter on the Todas (198–210), "The Toda Dairy Worshippers of Southern India," rather than label them "the buffalo worshippers …". The complexity of Toda dairy-ritual defies simple adumbration.[7] All I am able to accomplish for this essay is to provide a brief overview of the Todas' sacred dairying procedures, followed by a short analysis of their dairy-temple hierarchy.

4.1 Sacred Dairying Procedures

The principal objectives of the Toda sacred dairy operations are for the dairyman-priest – a man or male youth of greater ritual purity than that of a *per-o·ṭ* or ordinary male – to milk the temple buffaloes in his charge (Fig. 8) and to process their milk inside the dairy-temple, producing butter, buttermilk, and ghee. The milk drawn for a dairy is considered sacred, from whatever grade of buffalo it has been drawn. This is a significant datum confirming that it is the dairy-temple for which it has been drawn, rather than the buffalo from which it has been obtained, that sanctifies the milk. Buttermilk and butter, unlike the unprocessed milk, have much less sanctity, while ghee has none at all. Consequently, it is possible to interpret the entire dairy ritual – though not an indigenous exegesis – as a procedure for diluting the extreme sanctity of the milk in order that its final product, ghee, may be consumed by, or traded with, anybody (cf. Emeneau 1938: 111).

In order to operate a dairy-temple, an eligible Toda man (according to the rules of the institution he is to serve and provided he is not suffering from the particular ritual contamination known as *icïl*) must undergo specific rituals of ordination, which raise his level of purity from that of *per-o·ṭ* (lay person) to one that is commensurate with the sanctity of the dairy-temple he is to serve. As Emeneau (1974: 6) explains:

> The buffaloes and the dairy institutions have sanctity, i.e. *are divinities or gods* [emphasis added], … [but] the dairyman-priest is merely a servant of the institution who has no sanctity but is himself ritually pure through the ordination ceremony and the observation of all the ritual restrictions and details and who has the duty to preserve the sacred institution [which he serves] from ritual pollution.

The dairy's daily routine begins soon after dawn, when the dairyman, after saluting the rising sun and uttering the single word *sawñ* (from *so·-my* [*swamy*], ultimately from Sanskrit *swāmin* through Prakit, *sāmi*, "lord," "god," "divinity"; Emeneau and Burrow 1962: 33, item 162), releases the buffaloes from the hamlet pen, re-enters the dairy-temple to churn, according to prescribed rules, the milk he drew the previous evening; stores the butter and buttermilk he produces and then goes out again to milk the animals in his charge. After bringing the freshly-drawn milk back to the dairy and storing it, he hands the specified vessel for bringing buttermilk out of the dairy to a layman who, in turn, brings it to a prescribed spot, usually marked by a stone or stones (Fig. 9) that Todas call *moz-oty-θkas* "buttermilk-pouring stone(s)," at which females may assemble to receive the buttermilk; on no condition, however, may they pass into the sacred dairy-temple area be-

6 Among many examples, cf. Ottin (1956); Augustine (1976); Vohra (1980); Tobias and Morrison (2008).

7 For detailed surveys, see Rivers (1906: 56–181); Walker (1986: 121–183); Chhabra (2015: 47–56, 149–201, 216–288 – but even these 325 print pages leave much untold)!

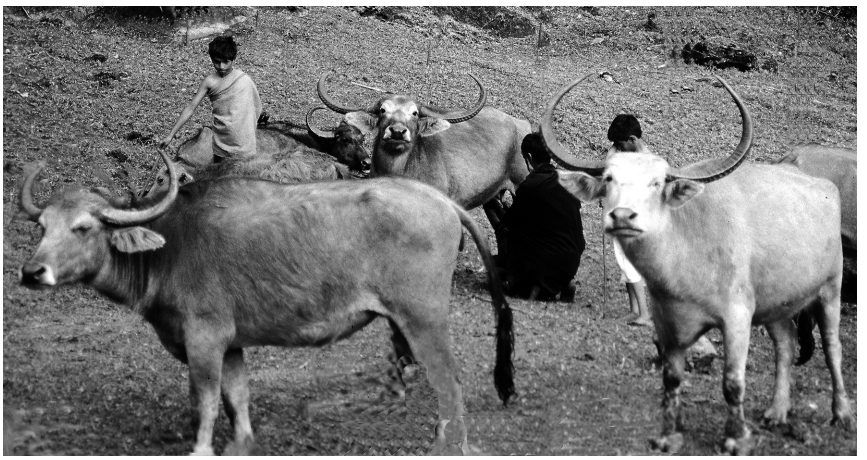


Fig. 8: Dairyman-priest (in black) drawing milk from a temple buffalo (photo courtesy Tarun Chhabra).

Fig. 9: Women waiting to receive buttermilk from dairy-temple; the stone marking the place beyond which the women may not proceed are seen at bottom right of the photograph (photo courtesy Tarun Chhabra).

yond. Following the distribution of the buttermilk, the dairyman-priest is free of his dairying duties. If he wishes, he may accompany the buffaloes to pasture; otherwise he engages himself by with odd jobs, such as collecting firewood and water, or else he snoozes away the time in the sun, or under the shade of a tree and gossips with suitably pure male (never female) visitors who visit him for a chat.

The obligatory dairying procedures of the late afternoon to early evening are more highly ritualised than those of the morning. The dairyman bows down at the entrance of his dairy – touching his forehead to the threshold – then, after entering, touches first a vessel of the less-sacred *eṛ-taṭ* grade of dairy equipment and then one of the more-sacred *po··taṭ* vessels. He fans up the fire or, if necessary, rekindles it with a flame produced with special fire sticks (thereby replicating the ancient manner in which Todas produced fire). He lights the dairy-temple's lamp and salutes it, just as he had the rising sun in the morning; but now, in place of the single utterance, "*sawñ*," he recites a formal invocatory prayer beginning with a fixed recitation of the *kwa-s̲m* or sacred names of the hamlet, dairy, buffaloes, cattle pens, and nearby natural features – hills, swamps, streams, etc. – and ends with a series of requests for boons from the *töw-no·ṛ*, in other words the divine dairy-temple at which he serves.

The prayer of the dairyman-priest at Te··fax (Pi·ṛ patriclan) recorded by Tarun Chhabra (2015: 477–482) is an excellent example of the genre. It begins with the invocation "*Sawñ, Kes̲em Pešem Tö-kis̲y θišky*," the formal opening to all prayers and one that refers to Goddess Tö··kis̲y and to her parents Kes̲-em and Peš-emy (common names: O·n and Ti··ko·n-e·r). Next, the dairyman-priest recites the *kwa-s̲m* or sacred name of Te·fax hamlet, viz. the couplet Te·fax – Te·g-wïṛy. There follow the *kwa-s̲m* of the settlement's dairy-temple, of the two *moṇy* (literally "bells") that belong to this sacred place, after which he recites two sets of sacred names, each one referring to the dairy-temple lamp and to the *pep* (buttermilk coagulant used in the dairying procedures). He follows these with the *kwa-s̲m* of Te·fax patriclan's temple buffaloes, its principal buffalo pen, and one that links an ancient pen (now in ruins) at this place with a stream. These names are followed by *kwa-s̲m* that refer to the interior of the dairy-temple: the first to the *tïṇ*, the raised earthen platform on which the dairyman-priest sleeps, and the second to the shelf on which the *moṇy* are placed. The dairyman-priest next recites the *kwa-s̲m* of the calf pen, followed by two sets of sacred names for the stone gateposts of Te·fax's principal buffalo pen (Fig. 13). The subsequent *kwa-s̲m* refer to landscape features in the vicinity of Te·fax: streams, rocks, trees, path-ways, pools of water, hills, etc. The prayer ends with an appeal for blessings, for example (from Emeneau 1974: 16 f.)

May [the god of the dairy] subdue disease! May [the god of the dairy] subdue illness!
May [the god] subdue the messenger of death!
May [the god] subdue the Tamilians!
May [the god] turn away the faces of the foreigners!
May [the god] turn away the faces of the elephants!
May [the god] subdue the hot sun! May [the god] subdue the dry wind!
May [the god] subdue tigers! May [the god] subdue Kurumbas!
May [the god] give us living children!
May the god give us living calves!
May the male buffalo climb on the [female buffalo's] hind quarters!
May [the female buffaloes] bear calf upon calf!
May measures upon measures of ghee be filtered!
May a thick mass of buttermilk rise up!
May clouds rise! May rain fall!
May water spring forth!
May grass blossom!
May honey come!
May fruit ripen!
May [the god] give us blessings!

The dairy-temple lamp lit and the prayer duly recited, the dairyman proceeds to churn the milk he had drawn that morning. He stores the butter and buttermilk in their mandatory vessels, after which

he sets off to milk the temple buffaloes in his charge. This task done, he pens the animals for the night and, facing the entrance of the pen, salutes it, while repeating the dairy prayer he uttered when lighting the temple lamp. His ritual activities are now complete; he may prepare and eat his evening meal and later retire for the night, either in the outer room of a two-roomed dairy-temple, or in an unattached shed if it is a single-roomed structure (cf. Noble 1989b; 2012: 62, 65).

4.2 The Hierarchy of Dairy Temples

The foregoing description of a dairymen-priest's daily routine applies to all Toda dairy-temples. There are, however, many additions and refinements. This is because dairies and their associated buffalo herds are graded into a complex hierarchy according to relative sanctity. The higher the position of a particular dairy in that hierarchy, the more elaborate is the ritual associated with the daily tasks of the dairyman and the more stringent are the precautions for maintaining the purity of the dairy, its appurtenances, and its incumbent dairyman. More elaborate too are the rites required to raise a *per-o·ṭ* or "layman" to the level of ritual purity required for him to operate the dairy.[8]

The higher ranking of the two Toda subcastes, namely To·r-θas traditionally are the owners of seven distinct grades of dairy-temple (from lowest to highest):

(a) *to·r-foṭy* (To·r-θas temples [*foṭy* = *poṭy*]), owned by all To·r-θas patriclans except Meḷ-ga·s,
(b) Meḷ-ga·s *poṭy*, this patriclan's equivalent to the other clans' *to·r-foṭy* and, indeed, sometimes termed as such,
(c) *kuṛ-poṭy* owned by Ka·s and Mö·ṛ patriclans only and distinguished from these clans' low-ranking *to·r-foṭy* only in their possession (or former possession) of a *moṇy*,
(d) *wïs-oṭy*, owned by all To·r-θas patriclans except for Ke-rïr, Ïṇ-kity, and Meḷ-ga·s,
(e) Ko-no·ṣ *fo·w* (one only), owned by Ke-rïr patriclan,
(f) *kog-foṭy*, "big *poṭy*," owned by To··ro·ṛ patriclan alone, and, finally,
(g) *ti··fo·w*, now all of them defunct, but owned – at least during Rivers's time (cf. Rivers 1906: 110–124) – by five patriclans: No·ṣ, Ka·s, Mo·ṛ, Pïr-go·ṛ, and Nïṛy.

All these particularly sacred *ti·* dairy-temple complexes, along with the Ko-no·ṣ-*fo·w* and Ka·s patriclan's very sacred *wïs-oṭy*-grade dairy-temple at Naesmi-no·ṛ (said once to have been a *ti·*) were located in secluded locations away from domestic habitations (cf. Noble 1998). As for the other subcaste, Töw-fiṭy, it owns only a single grade of dairy-temple called *po·ṭy* (also the generic Toda word for "dairy-temple"). Some Töw-fiṭy hamlets have, or once had, two *po·ṭy*, distinguished as *kog-foṭy* and *kid-foṭy*, "big" and "small" *po·ṭy*, depending on whether or not they possess/ed a *moṇy*.

Each grade of dairy-temple has its own specified grade of buffalo and rank of dairyman-priest attached to it. Speaking in the most general of terms, the higher the grade of dairy-temple, the higher the grade of temple buffalo and rank of dairyman-priest associated with it. But there are, as we shall see, a number of anomalies.

For six of the To·r-θas patriclans: No·ṣ, Ka·s, Mo·ṛ, To··ro·ṛ, Ke-rïr, and Kö·ro·ṛ, their lowest-grade *to·r-foṭy* (short form of To·r-θas *poṭy*) dairies are associated with the low-grade temple buffaloes called *noš-pep-ïr*, while Ïṇ-kity, Pïr-go·ṛ, and Nïṛy patriclan dairy-temples have associated buffaloes of the same lowly grade but called *pen-ep-ïr*. Irrespective of the name of the associated buffaloes, the dairymen-priest serving this grade of dairy-temple is always called *to·r-foṭy-xarθp-o·ṭ* (*to·r-foṭy-xarθ-mox* if a youth; *mox* "boy"). In To·r-θas subcaste Meḷ-ga·s patriclan (in its dairy-organisation, as in some other respects [cf. Rivers 1906: 660–663] much like a Töw-fiṭy subcaste patriclan) has only one grade of dairy-temple, termed *poṭy* (the generic Toda word for a dairy-temple). The associated buffaloes are known as *pes-os ïr* and the dairyman priest, as the *poṭy-xarθ-po·ḷ-mox*. Ka·s patriclan's *kuṛ-poṭy* (etym. of *kuṛ* obsc.) dairy-temples have associated buffaloes called *mor-ïr*, but those associated with Mö·ṛ patriclan's *kuṛ-poṭy* are only *noš-pep-ïr*, the same grade as the animals associated with its low-ranking *to·r-foṭy* dairies. The dairymen-priests at *kuṛ-poṭy*-grade dairy-temples of both these patriclans are called *kuṛ-poṭy-xarθ-po·ṭ*. The low-ranking *noš-pep-ïr*-grade of temple buffalo is also that associated with Ke-rïr patriclan's particularly sacred Ko-no·ṣ *fo·w*, so called because this temple is a conical rather than barrel-vaulted structure and thus known as a *po·w* (Fig. 10); the dairyman-priest serving it is called the *po·w-xarθ-po·ṭ*. The buffaloes associated with all the *wïs-oṭy*-grade[9] tem-

8 Cf. Rivers (1906: 144–165); Walker (1986: 131–134, 138, 140–142, 150–155); Chhabra (2015: 236–248).

9 *Wïs* usually translates as "inferior" or "younger," but it is difficult to see how it can have either meaning here, unless by contrast to the *ti·* dairies (cf. Noble 1989b: 108).

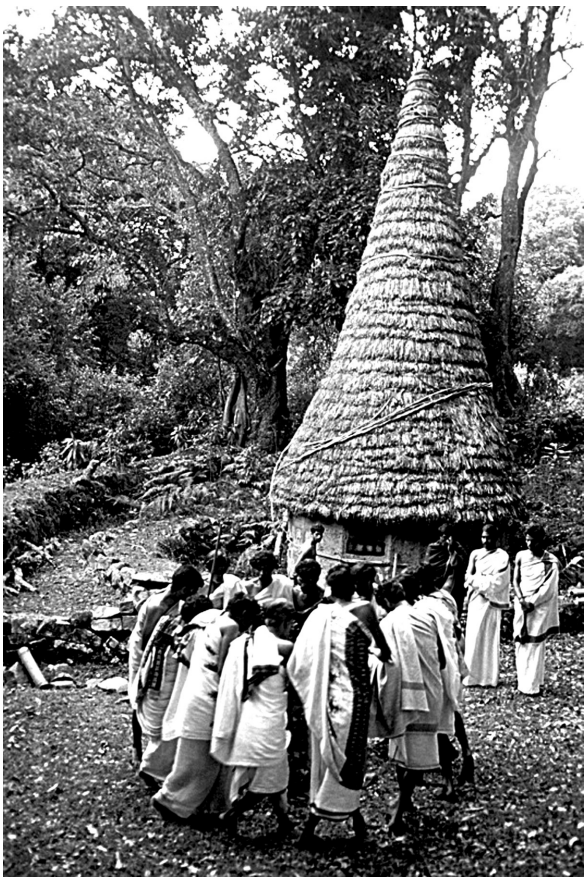


Fig. 10: Dancing in front of the conical dairy-temple at Ko-no·ṣ (photo courtesy Tarun Chhabra).

ples are called *wïṣ-oɬy-ïr* and the dairymen-priests are *wïṣ-oɬ*. These buffaloes and priests rank higher in the ritual hierarchy than any of the others mentioned thus far, with the possible exception of the Ko-no·ṣ *fo·w*. For many To·r-θaṣ patriclans the *wïṣ-oɬy* are/were the highest grade of dairy they operated, apart from their *ti·*. Similarly, To··ro·ṛ patriclan's still higher-ranking *kog-foɬy* (*kog* "big" [in sanctity, not necessarily in dimension]) dairy-temples have associated buffaloes called *kog-foɬy-ïr* and dairymen-priests called *kog-foɬy-xarθ-po·ɬ/mox*. (To··ro·ṛ clansmen claim their *kog-foɬy* are substitutes for the *ti·* dairies this patriclan never owned and, supporting this claim, the ritual language used in these dairy-temples has many parallels with that once employed at the *ti·* [cf. Emeneau 1974: 7].) At the zenith of this To·r-θaṣ subcaste dairy-temple hierarchy were the now defunct *ti·* (ultimately from Sanskrit *śri* "holiness, sacredness" [cf. Emeneau 1953: 106–108; 1971: xliii, n. 2]), dairy-temples, all of them termed "*po·w*," whether conical or barrel-vaulted; their dairymen-priests were known as *poɬ-o·ɬ* (probably a corruption of *po·w-o·ɬ*, "the man of the *po·w*," who were assisted by a youth called the *ko·lt-mox*.

As a matter of fact, these *ti·* dairies where not just another, higher, grade of Toda dairy-temple. Rather, they were microcosms – maintained at the highest level of ritual purity – of the (mostly) domestic settlement-based dairying and herding activities and, like these, had both secular and sacred dimensions.

As in a domestic settlement there are secular dwellings for lay people and a special building for the sacred dairying operations, so in a *ti· moḏ* or *ti·*-dairy settlement there was a domestic residence for the officiating *poɬ-o·ɬ* and *ko·lt-mox* belonging to the secular domain, and, at least, one, very sacred, *po·w* or dairy-temple. (Three of the five *ti·* – those belonging to No·ṣ, Ka·ṣ, and Mö·ṛ patriclans – had two *po·w*, one ranking higher than the other but both usually located quite close to one another. They were operated, respectively, by a higher- and lower-ranking *poɬ-o·ɬ* who, nonetheless, shared the same *ko·lt-mox*.) The *po·w* and their contents were the principal focus of the diffused *töw-no·ṛ*'s divinity.

Likewise, as a domestic settlement has both domestic and dairy-temple water sources, so a *ti··moḏ* also had its secular and sacred water sources. Then again, as both domestic and temple buffaloes are herded in the regular Toda hamlets, so a *ti·* complex, besides its temple-grade *pesn-ïr* (the highest ranking of all Toda buffaloes), also owned domestic buffaloes, called *pïṇ-ïr*, which were the equivalent of the *pity-ir* of the regular settlements. (Together, both *pesn-ïr* and *pïṇ-ïr* were termed *ti··ïr* "female buffaloes of the *ti·*.")

Yet again, just as most, if not all, Toda patriclans had regular hamlets as well as those to which they and their buffaloes moved temporarily, when the regular pastures becoming parched, so too did all but one of the five *ti·* complexes (that belonging to Niṛy) have two or more *ti··moḏ*, generally far distant one from the other, which the *poɬ-o·ɬ* and *ko·lt-mox* occupied, along with the *ti·*'s buffaloes, according to the season.

Indicative of the special sanctity of the *ti·* complexes, not only were they located far away from domestic hamlets, but women were forbidden access to any place from which they were visible. Toda laymen (provided they were not contaminated by *icïl* pollution and did not deviate from a prescribed pathway) were permitted to enter the vicinity of a *ti·* complex on specified days, but were allowed to come no closer than about 500 metres from the *po·w*.

5 Gods and Ritual Practices Derived from Other Peoples and Places

No investigation of Toda religion – at least as it has been practised for the past couple of hundred years or more – should fail to mention (though many do) the impact upon the Toda community of more widespread South Indian religious beliefs and practices, mostly Hindu, but including also some Islamic and Christian elements.

5.1 South Indian Hinduism

On several occasions, I have heard educated Christian Todas argue, passionately, that Toda religion has nothing in common with Hinduism. The views of Daniel Kodan (Kwa-ṛo·n in Toda), an early Toda convert to Christianity who finally ordained as a Seventh-Day Adventist pastor (cf. Walker 2012b), provide a good example. In the mid-1950s Kodan (n. d.: 3) told Indian researcher G. N. Das: "It is wrong to say the Todas are Hindus. The Hindus and Todas are poles asunder in the mode of their worship and in their concept of God … [they are] nearer to Judaism than to Hinduism." But Kwa-ṛo·n was certainly aware of the depth of Hindu penetration into the everyday religious beliefs and practices of his people; for example, he told G. N. Das, "I do not know how it came that my mother and some others believed in the *karma* theory of the Hindus … theirs seemed to be a sort of mixed faith" (Kodan n. d.: 3). Fifty years earlier, in 1901–1902, Rivers (1906: 457) had also (and in greater detail) recorded the "undoubted signs of the influence of Hinduism on … [Toda] religion", to the extent that "[i]t would be quite easy for a visitor to the Todas to talk to some of the younger and more sophisticated men and go away believing that the Todas differed little from the surrounding … [peoples] in their religious beliefs. In my first conversation with Todas on religious matters", Rivers (1906: 457) writes, "I was told that they worshipped … six gods … [f]our or five [of them] … Hindu deities."

Among the deities Todas told Rivers (457) they worshipped was "Nanjandisparan" (= Nañjuṇḍeśvara, Śiva in the form of the "poison eater," the presiding deity of the famous (circa 10th century C.E.) Śaivite temple at Nanjangud Town, near Mysore, to which Todas still frequently pilgrimage. The Maharaja of Mysore sponsored the building of a shrine to this same deity within the precincts of his palace at Fernhill in Ootacamund. This local Nañjuṇḍeśvara temple is also an important sacred place for Todas, who still carry the god's chariot through the streets of Ootacamund during the annual festival of the deity.

Another Hindu temple Rivers (1906: 457) mentions as a Toda pilgrimage destination is the Śaivite shrine in Gudalur dedicated to Vettaikorumagan (a Malayali hunting deity, identified as the son of Śiva and Parvatī' [cf. Raja 2012]). Besides the temple's obvious Hindu associations, Todas recognise this shrine as the residence of their own god Pet-xon, son of Goddess Tö··kiṣy. Toda *töw-o·ɬ* "god men" or diviners sometimes claim to be the mouthpiece of the temple's presiding deity and, in trance, utter their predictions in Malayalam rather than Toda. When new *moṇy* are acquired, they are brought to this temple to be consecrated (cf. Chhabra 2015: 343). And, of course, Todas frequently make vows at this temple in Gudalur.

Among the other Hindu temples Rivers mentions is the shrine of Goddess Māriamman in Bokkapuram, near the small Nilgiri town of Masinigudi. Again this has long been a place of pilgrimage for Todas, as it remains to this day. Another important Māriamman temple Rivers does not mention is that located in the heart of Ootacamund's principal bazaar. Todas come to this temple to make vows, to offer the first hair cut from young children, to have their ears pierced, and to perform the rites of readmission for a Toda who has been put out of caste. Rivers also records a temple, which he names as "Karmudrangan," located near the plains' town of Mettupulaiyam. Almost certainly, this is the Todas' Ka·ṛ-muṛ-θöw, "God Ka·ṛ-muṛ." Dedicated to Ranganathaswamy (an aspect of Vṣṇu) this temple was, as it remains, an important centre for Toda pilgrimage and vow-making.

Rivers certainly confirmed as very well established at the start of the 20th century the worship of South Indian Hindu deities affiliated to major gods and goddesses of All-India Hinduism. Moreover, his list of deities and temples attracting Toda pilgrimage and vow-making in his day is almost certainly not exhaustive. But, of course, several of the important places and deities Rivers fails to mention may not have gained popularity among Todas until after his time.

Among these latter are the famous hilltop temple at Palani, 100 km southeast of Coimbatore, dedicated to Lord Murukan (also known as Subramaṇyam "the six-faced god" (Kārttikeya, younger son of Śiva and Parvatī in the North Indian tradition). A common Toda incentive for pilgrimaging to Palani is to make a vow to Murukan in return for the gift of a child. Another Murukan temple to which Todas sometimes pilgrimage (cf. Nambiar 1965: 73) is the temple at Tirupparaṅkunram 8 km from Ma-

durai. Other famous Hindu shrines that Todas visit include the temple inside Madurai City dedicated to Miṉaāḵṣi "the fish-eyed one" (a goddess much revered in South India, who is incorporated into the All-India pantheon as the spouse of Śiva); also the great Śiva temple at Rasmeshvaram, an island just off the southeast coast of Tamil Nadu, which is one of the four most sacred Hindu places in all of India. Over the past four or five decades, a pilgrimage centre that has attracted many, mostly younger, Toda men is the shrine atop Sabari Hill in the Pathanamthitta range of central Travancore in Kerala. The residing god here is Ayyappan, also named Shasta, "Lord of the Realm," a local Malayali deity, whose origin has been hugely embellished with both local and All-India Hindu myth. The former has him as human born, the latter as the offspring of Śiva and of Vṣṇu in his female form as Mohini – cf. Vaidyanathan 1978: 17–48). Among this god's many Toda devotees are significant numbers of young men who seek to reform traditional Toda customs, mostly in the direction of mainstream, Sanskritised (in the Srinivasian sense; see Srinivas 1967), South Indian Hinduism. It is doubtless significant that the young men who established a second Toda uplift society, the Toda Seva Sonmaka Sangam (Toda Self-Help Society) in 1977, did so after returning from their pilgrimage to Sabarimalai. Moreover, for some time after its foundation, this "Young Turks" organisation used to meet at the local Ayyappan temple in Ootacamund.

It is pertinent to note here that it is not only Hindu shrines that have become popular places of pilgrimage among Todas but also a Muslim mosque (although, in Toda eyes, the distinction between the two is scarcely perceptible). Since at least the early 20th century, Todas have regarded the mosque at Nagore, with its tomb (*dargah*) of the Sufi saint Hazrath Nagore Shahul Hamid (1490–1579 C.E.) as a place – indeed as a god – of great spiritual potency. Emeneau (1938: 117) claims "this holy-place was learned of from Mohammedan ghee-merchants in Ootacamund." Toda vows at the Nagore *dargah* seem primarily to concern their desire for increase in buffaloes and are redeemed mostly by leaving money and silver images of buffaloes at the tomb of the Muslim saint who, in Toda eyes, is the *töw* or "god" of Nagore. As Emeneau (1938: 117) wrote in the 1930s, while Todas are well aware "that the place of worship is a Mohammedan mosque, [they] do not regard it as any different from a Hindu temple that has shown itself to be powerful in granting boons."

Whether or not such worship of the "gods of other peoples and other places" predates the British period, which saw a large-scale influx of lowland Hindu religionists into these mountains, cannot be told with certainly. But it does seem unlikely that Todas would not have learned of the efficacy of prayer to Hindu deities and of pilgrimage to Hindu shrines from Badaga, Kurumba, and Irula neighbours, long before the first British appeared on these mountains. Be this as it may, what we may affirm, with considerable certainty, is the Toda propensity – *firmly within the Indic tradition* – for reverencing the gods and respecting the ritual activities of other peoples with whom they are in contact. At first, these would have been the gods of the Kotas and Kurumbas, then of the Badagas. Todas talk of the Badagas' great goddess Hethe attending the assembly of Toda gods and goddesses (cf. Emeneau 1984: 242, Text 43 transl. of sentence 33). Subsequently, increasingly frequent contacts with Hindu peoples from the plains would surely have resulted in the absorption of aspects of their religious culture, as we see among the Todas of modern times.

In 1906, Rivers wrote (458): "[i]t is probable that Hinduism is now having more influence on the Todas than ever before." And he was surely right. Moreover, the trend he noticed in 1901–02 was to increase in momentum throughout the 20th century – indeed, it is still increasing. Consequently, it is more-or-less the norm in non-Christian Toda households today to find a "god's corner," or even a complete "god's room," replete with oil lamps, stands for incense stick, *pūjā* trays, *kumkum* and camphor holders, fruit offerings, etc. and, of course, icons (Fig. 11). These latter are mostly individually-sold polychrome prints (in which case, Todas customarily preserve them in frames they purchase in the Nilgiri bazaars); alternatively, they are made up as calendars to be sold or else gifted by commercial enterprises (whose names appear prominently on them) to loyal customers. In either case, they portray the more popular deities of All-India and South Indian Hinduism: Śiva, Parvatī, Durgā, Gaṇeśa, Subrahmaṇya (Tamil, Muruga̲n), Vṣṇu, Vēṅkaṭēśvara̲n, Lakṣmī, Rāma, Sītā, Kṛṣṇa, Radha, Hanumān, Saraswatī, Aiyappa̲n, Mīnakṣī, and many others. And outside of the Todas' homes, besides adding Hindu iconography to the exteriors of their dairy-temples and buffalo pens (Figs. 12, 13) it is becoming increasingly common to find small Hindu shrines dedicated to Aiyappa̲n or to Munīswaran (a popular local Śaivite god in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka) that have been built *inside* Toda settlements (Fig. 14).

Consider also these prayers that a Toda named Manar (Man-arn) (n. d. 61 f.) related to anthropologist G. N. Das in the mid-1950s as ones he and his father regularly chanted. These, in translation, are Manar's words:

Fig. 11: Altar in gods' room of Toda house with icons of Hindu gods and goddesses and the god-man, the late Sri Sathya Sai Baba (photo A. R. Walker).

At the time of lighting the [house] lamp in the evening I salute the lamp raising both hands and pray silently. I also pray while going to bed. Before I married and when I was about 20 years old I started praying like this. I saw my father pray uttering these words in the evening and I learnt from him.

Goddess of Light,
Goddess of Incense,
Goddess of 1,000 eyes,
Mother of 1,000 eyes,
Goddess Mahalakshmi [Mahālakṣmī].
I take refuge in the lamp crores and crores of times.
Krishna [Kṛṣṇa], don't you know?
O Siva [Śiva]
The Pandavas [Pāṇḍava] who are gods, don't you know?
The Five Pandavas, don't you know?
King Dharma and Krishna, don't you know?
God of gods, don't you know?
God Psrzeo [Paṛθo·w?; a Toda god], don't you know?
1,800 gods, 1,600 hundred gods [= all the gods], don't you know?
Mother and father, don't you know?
Father and maternal uncle, don't you know?
Mother Mahalakshmi, don't you know?
O goddess of the heart, don't you know?
Krishna, I give the *atma* [ātmā, soul] which you gave me as an offering to the cremation ground, until I give it to you.

After getting up in the morning and coming outside I pray uttering these words:

Supreme God [Skt. Svāmin, Tamil Camī]
O god,
O Siva [Śiva]
Krishna [Kṛṣṇa], don't you know?
Paramesparan [Parameśvara, the ultimate reality (cf. SCD 2011)]
Goddess Parvati [Pārvatī].
All the people of the world take refuge at the feet of Lord Krishna,
God Psrzeo [Paṛθo·w?; a Toda god], don't you know?
God who has given us birth, don't you know?

Fig. 12: Images of the "Five Pandavas" with Arjuna in centre carved into front wall of dairy-temple at Mü·ny hamlet of Kï·-wïṛ patriclan (photo A. R. Walker).

Fig. 13: The buffalo pen at Te·-fax hamlet (Pi·r̤ patriclan) with its stone entrance gate atop which is a stone icon of Arjuna (inset, left) one of the five Pandava brothers and hero of the Pāṇḍava-Kaurava war related in the Māhabhārata epic cherished by Hindus across the length and breadth of India (photo A. R. Walker).

Goddess Tekirsi [Tö·kiṣy], God On [Ö·n], don't you know?
Reality or illusion, don't you know?
Seeking refuge, don't you know?
Death, don't you know?
Taking refuge in rebirth after death, don't you know?
Krishna, I give the *atma* [*ātma*, soul] you gave me as an offering to the cremation ground, until I give it to you.

And the Todas are definitely *not* Hindus! Indeed, it is not at all surprising – nor even quite erroneous (*pace* those who claim otherwise, e.g., Noble 1991: 3, who writes of Toda religion as "uniquely non-Hindu") – that "Hindu" is given as the prevailing Toda religion in "Census of India" (Nambiar 1965) and other official documentation (consider also Figs. 11, 12, 13, 14).

It is certainly true that the "gods that are mountains" and the "gods of the places," along with the myriad beliefs and practices that surround the Todas' unique dairy-temple cult, are outside of the mainstream of South Indian Hinduism. But even here, it is not difficult to spot so many characteristics of Indic religion: "gods at play," "gods that were born as humans," "anthropomorphic deities with human thoughts, emotions, likes and dislikes," not to mention a sacred dairying cult with its underpinning notions of purity, and of hierarchy based on relative purity, that we meet with among Hindu communities throughout the length and breadth of the Indian

Fig. 14: The two temples at Kabi̤ṛy-mo̤d̤ (Mö·r̤ patriclan). On the right is the traditional Toda dairy-temple (notice the buffaloes on the hillside behind); on the left is a small Hindu shrine dedicated to the Kerala-based deity, Lord Ayyappan (photo A. R. Walker).

subcontinent. That Toda religion is (note the present tense) "uniquely non-Hindu", as Noble (1991: 3) so categorically asserts, is, I believe, untenable.

5.2 Christianity and the Todas

At the present time, besides the appeal of Hindu religious institutions, a good many Todas – especially Toda women – are attracted to aspects of the Christian religion, the propagators of which are generally not from within the small, but by now long-established, Toda Christian community, nor again from the mainstream South Indian denominations but mostly from fundamentalist evangelical and charismatic sects. Among Christian artefacts commonly found in non-Christian Toda homes are bibles, prayer books, tape recordings of devotional songs, pictures of Christ, of the Sacred Heart and of Mary, mother of Christ, especially in her apparition as "Our Lady of Good Health" (popularly known as Vailankanniamma "Vailankanni Mother"). Christian holy places have often attracted Toda boon-seekers – mostly for the same reasons that they have patronised Hindu temples and the Muslim mosque at Nagore, namely the search for super-mundane assistance from the god of the place to cure sickness (hence the present-day popularity of Vailankanniamma among Todas) and childlessness; also, in the search for material prosperity. Indeed, it was a Toda's desire to give thanks to the god of an Anglican church in Ootacamund that first encouraged British Zenana missionary ladies, in the late 19th century, to proselytise among the community (see below).

Unlike the story of mainstream South Indian Hinduism among Todas, it is possible to sketch a credible history of the community's engagement with Christianity. In brief, that history may be dated to 1602–1603. In the first of these years, a Malayali priest and deacon belonging to a section of the Syrian Orthodox Church under Roman Catholic domination, journeyed to the Nilgiris, following a rumour that there lived here a people whose antecedents were Syrian Christians. In the following year (1603), an Italian Jesuit priest, during his attempt to verify and expand on the observations of the Malayali clerics during the preceding year, managed to reach a Toda hamlet. He instructed the Todas in aspects of his Christian faith but concluded there was more pressing need for evangelisation on the plains of Malabar than among this small community of mountaineers (cf. Walker 1998a, 2012a). No evidence survives of Christian ideas or practices among Todas that might be attributed to these early 17th-century missionary visitations. Some two-and-a-half centuries later, with India now ruled by Great Britain – a self-proclaimed "Christian nation" – the situation would be very different.

Among the first missionaries to gain a secure footing in the Nilgiris was the Swiss-based Basel Evangelical Mission Society (cf. Hockings 2012a). In 1846, this mission established a Nilgiri base in the Badaga village of Ketti, to which the German pastor, Rev. J. F. Metz (1819–1895), came in 1847 and where he remained for the next quarter of a century (Hockings 2012b). Metz directed most of his evangelising efforts at the Badaga community but seems also to have harboured the hope of winning the Todas for his religion. In this he was entirely unsuccessful and in 1857 – obviously frustrated – wrote of the Todas that they were "as a body virtually atheists, leaving nearly all religious concerns to their priests, and never giving themselves the smallest trouble about them" (Metz 1864: 130). But the Basel Mission did establish a school for Toda children; this too was not a success and eventually had to be shut down.

Before the 19th century was out, however, another missionary society – one destined to gain the first Toda convert to Christianity – had established itself in the Nilgiris. This was the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (CEZMS), an affiliate of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). The CEZMS began to work among Todas due to a chance event that occurred in 1888. A Tamil Christian possessing some medical knowledge treated an ailing Toda man, at the same time telling him that it was Jesus Christ who was the true healer and that it was to him that he should pray for his recovery (cf. Wallinger 1889: 329 f.; Ling 1910: 29; 1934: 23). The patient recovered and came to the missionaries' church in Ootacamund to give thanks and, doubtless, to find out what rites of thanksgiving and/or material offerings were mandated by Christian custom.

The Zenana missionaries interpreted this event as a call from the Almighty to evangelise the Toda community. In Ling's own words (1934: 23): "This happening seemed to constitute a call to tell the Todas more … ." But the Toda man himself had surely understood the Christian healer's advice to pray to Jesus Christ in familiar Toda (and South Indian Hindu) terms: if people fall sick, they seek supernatural assistance and vow, in the event of recovery, to make an offering to the compassionate deity.

Ling engaged a Toda language teacher and soon acquired sufficient fluency in the language to be able, by 1897, to publish a translation in Tamil script of St. Mark's gospel in Toda. This was the very first

book ever to be written in this language. Translations into Toda of some hymns, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer followed. Some of these were the work of Catharine Ling herself, others of her Toda-speaking colleague Phoebe Grover and by P. Samuel, the Toda mission's Tamil evangelist from Tirunelveli (incidentally, also Rivers's interpreter). Subsequently, Samuel and Grover added the Gospel of St. John, a volume on Old and New Testament stories, and the Psalms in Toda (Ling 1900; Grover 1910).

Catharine Ling's next goal was to establish schools for Toda children (Walker 2012c). As early as 1892, Ling (1892: 515) had written: "we feel our great hope is with the children." But it was by no means easy to introduce formal schooling to this preliterate and mobile community of buffalo pastoralists. One way to overcome the unsettling educational consequences of Toda migratory patterns was to board Toda pupils at one of the Mission's educational facilities in Ootacamund. In 1889, the mission established a boarding-cum-teaching facility, naming it "The Gell Memorial School for Girls." This institution has educated – as it continues to educate generations of Toda girls, both Christian and orthodox. As for the rural schools in close proximity to Toda settlements, they certainly enabled the C. E. Z. M. S. to introduce formal education to respectable numbers of Toda children. Moreover, despite their academic shortcomings, these institutions were a vital component of the Mission's proselytising strategy.

Between 1907 and 1913, five mature Toda males and five girls embraced the Christian religion (Ling 1913). So long as most Toda converts were young girls, they could be accommodated in the Mission's urban boarding school, but when mature boys and men began to convert, the problem arose as to where they would live. The orthodox elders would not countenance their remaining in Toda hamlets; they had rejected the community's traditional ritual idiom and, consequently, were perceived to be ritually-defiling outcastes. Ling petitioned the Nilgiris Collector for permission to establish a Toda Christian colony on one of several pieces of officially-gazetted Toda land. Her hope was that "they would become Christians in their own munds, retaining their picturesque appearance … the men still wandering over the Downs with their cattle like Abraham and Isaac of old" (Ling 1934: 53). But these hopes were not realised. The land the administration decided to allocate for a Christian Colony was in the Cairn Hill area southeast of Ootacamund, a long-abandoned site of a Ka·s̲ patriclan *ti·* dairy (Barker 1914: 73; Ling 1915). To this day, more than a century after it became a Christian settlement, Orthodox and Christians alike know this place as Ti··mod̲. Situated in the middle of an area long colonised by Badaga farmers (therefore poor buffalo country) and at some distance from the main concentration of Toda settlements on the Wenlock Downs, Ti··mod̲ was far from ideal, economically or socially, for establishing the new – but still tradition-based – Toda community Catharine Ling envisioned.

Two families among the firstcomers to Ti··mod̲ left the Christian colony after four years, moving back onto the Wenlock Downs to settle at Pe··mod̲, which became the second Toda Christian settlement (Figs. 15a, b, c). For a time, these people from Ti··mod̲ reverted to their traditional buffalo pastoralism, while engaging also in some potato cultivation. Subsequently two further Christian Toda hamlets came into being. Ling's wish to see a religious but not sociocultural reformation among the Todas notwithstanding, almost from the start the Christian settlements looked very different from a traditional Toda hamlet. No longer were there thatched, barrel-vaulted dwellings and dairies, no longer a great stone-walled buffalo pen; in their places rose brick houses, a church (in two of them), a school (at Ti··mod̲), dispensary (at Pe··mod̲), and potato gardens,

Fig. 15a: The first Toda Christian church located in Pe·mod̲ and consecrated in 1924 (photo A. R. Walker).

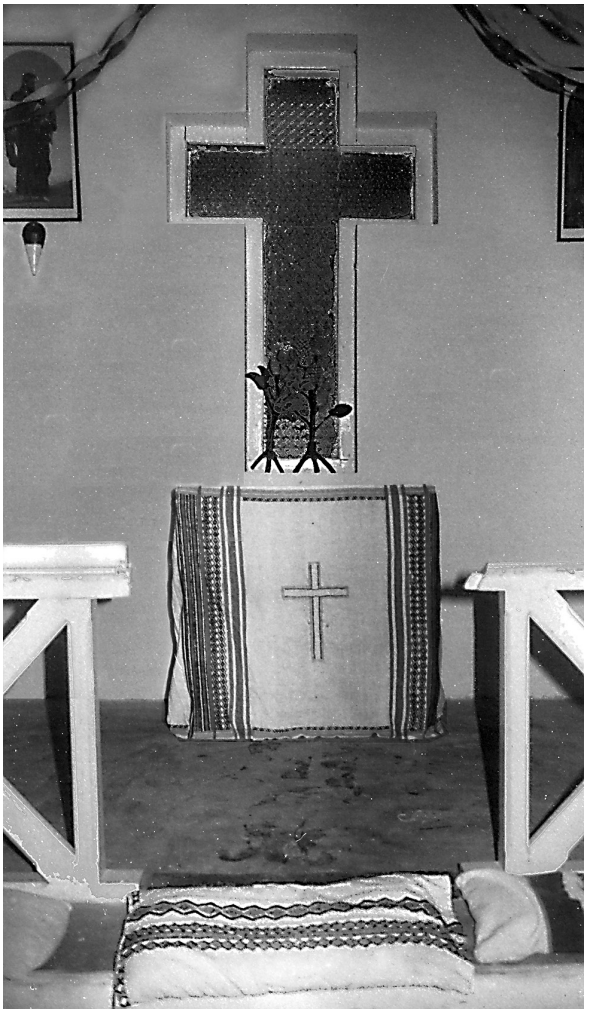


Fig. 15b: The interior of the Pe·mo̲d church; notice the altar and kneeler embellished with Toda embroidery (photo A. R. Walker).

and, increasingly, more European cows than Toda buffaloes.

The church at Ti··mo̲d was completed in December 1928 and named for "All Saints" (Ling 1929: 104). Ling explained (104) that it was not only the church building that was dedicated on this day, but all of its furnishings – not surprisingly the one of special significance for these Todas being the church bell. Also, as part of the dedication rituals "one of the Toda men presented a heifer. Crowned and garlanded with lilies, the animal was led to the west door [of the new church], where the clergy lay hands on its head in token of acceptance" Ling (104) wrote of this that it was "in accordance with the Toda custom of dedicating a portion of the herd to the service of their temples, when their progeny and their milk become the property of the temple."

One of Catharine Ling's early converts who, among Christian Todas, was to become theologically the most highly trained, was Daniel Kodan (Kwaṛo·n). In his autobiography prepared for G. N. Das, Kodan (n. d.: 60) writes:

> Regarding my views about the Christian Todas, it is my honest opinion that they are not Christians, … in the true sense of the word. *They are neither Christians nor Todas* [emphasis added]. Miss Ling, such a good and saintly lady as she was, made a mistake in taking them away from their environment and making them nominal Christians.
>
> Most of them, nay almost all of them[,] know little or nothing about Christianity. They had some help, of course, from the mission. Many of them became Christians for the help, which was a wrong motive. Miss Ling and others even afterwards never cared to ground them in Bible teachings and doctrines, with the result that, almost all of them and not good and loyal Christians.

Over the years since the first Toda was baptised in 1904, the converts and their families came to look to their principal, Toda-speaking, missionary

Fig. 15c: Christian iconography in Christian Toda home. Compare with Fig. 11, the gods' room in an orthodox Toda home (photo A. R. Walker).

for much more than spiritual guidance. She arbitrated their disputes, mediated with the outside world on their behalf, and, in times of difficulty, provided them with financial assistance. Consequently, when in 1933 Ling left India to retire in her native England, her departure resulted in what Emeneau (1939: 95) – not long after the event – said, "may only be regarded as disintegration." Squabbles within the community remained unresolved and became more frequent. To make matters worse, if we are to believe Emeneau's (1939: 95) account, there was little love lost between the Toda converts and Ling's missionary successors who, *inter alia*, forbade dancing on the grounds that "such a typically tribal activity would produce a hankering for other tribal customs and consequent backsliding from Christianity" (Emeneau 1939: 97). Indeed, the situation became so bad that, five years into retirement, Ling decided in 1938 to return to the Nilgiris to see what she could do about it (cf. Ling 1938). Fairly quickly, as reported by Emeneau (1939: 95), her renewed presence, although brief (she returned to Britain for good in 1940), restored social stability to the Toda Christian community, sufficient at any rate to permit it to survive to the present day, with some 230 members living in the three Christian Toda settlements (Sathyanarayanan 2016: 700) and perhaps the same again outside of them.

Today, in terms of formal dogma, if not always of religious practice, the break between Christian and orthodox Todas is more or less absolute. The converts have adopted an alien ritual tradition (Anglican Christianity mediated through the Tamil language) and, in orthodox Toda eyes, repugnant habits: particularly meat eating and intermarriage with non-Todas. Consequently, in the eyes of orthodox Todas, Christians are outcastes. It was this perception, along with the traditionalists' ban on intermarriage with the parent community, access to the sacred dairy-temples and use of the sacred funeral sites, that necessitated separate settlements for the converts.

From very early on, particularly due to the absence of sufficient Toda Christians with whom to conclude marital alliances, intermarriage both between couples from different endogamous Toda subcastes and with non-Toda Christians: Tamils, Malayalis, even, in at least one case, a girl from the once much-feared Kurumba community (Ling 1930: 10), became a common occurrence in the Toda Christian community. Such intercommunity marriages certainly caused further widening of the gulf between Christians and orthodox. But despite this, even today there are some quite important social links between the two Toda communities, including reciprocal attendance at certain of each other's ceremonies. Of course, Christian Todas do not (indeed, may not) actively participate in dairy-temple rituals, any more than orthodox Todas may join Christians in receiving the sacraments in their churches. But orthodox Todas may be seen at Christian Toda marriage and funerary rites. During fieldwork with the Todas in the early 1960s I recorded an instance of an orthodox Toda threatening to summon a *no·ym* (caste council) because he had failed to receive an invitation to a Toda Christian wedding. For their part, Toda Christians attend orthodox ceremonies such as name-giving, paternity rites, and funerals, contributing monetary gifts along with other Todas when expected to do so. And at funerals, in times past at least, it sometimes happened that Christian Todas provided sacrificial buffaloes for their non-Christian relatives.

The existence today of two, quite distinct, Toda communities, parent and Christian, is far different from the scenario Catharine Ling envisioned when she first set out to evangelise the Todas. Her dream was that the entire Toda community would adopt the religion she preached, but would retain its indigenous economic and cultural structure, abolishing only the ancestral religion and other sociocultural elements she judged un-Christian. But Ling (1934: 54) felt obliged to acknowledge that "none of these hopes have been realized." For Todas, she admitted, "[b]ecoming Christians has meant a complete severance from their own people, *on account of the caste system of India* [emphasis added]." Moreover, as it turned out, no more than a fraction of the Toda community was prepared to embrace Ling's religion; consequently, there was no possibility that a newly-converted Toda Christian community could replicate the traditional sociocultural and economic institutions, while abandoning the "ancestral religion." The requirement that Christian Toda renounce the sacred dairying cult in favour of Christian liturgical practice undermined the very foundation of the traditional Todas' buffalo-centred ritual.

The Christian converts, by breaking their relationship with the sacred dairy complexes, divorced themselves from the fundamentals of Toda culture. That done, there was no alternative for them but to embrace a fairly generalised Tamil Christian culture. Today, consequently, there are two very separate communities, with the Christians sharing little but the ethnonym with their traditionalist neighbours.

When I began my study of the Todas in 1962–63 it hardly seemed possible that there could be any post-Ling era Christianisation of the community. But the frequency in recent years of discov-

ering Christian artefacts in orthodox Toda households, coupled with widespread female attendance at Christian prayer meetings and Sunday services in Ootacamund, makes it difficult not to imagine that traditional Toda society is once again under pressure from Christian proselytism.

For at least several centuries the Toda worldview has readily accommodated religious ideas and practices from outside of the community. For the great majority of Todas (including even some from the breakaway Toda Christian community), such ideas and associated practices have been derived mostly from surrounding Hindu religious traditions. Now, it seems, Christian ideas and practices are gaining some currency within the orthodox community. But it is probable that most orthodox Todas – especially the males amongst them – feel no pressing need, even when attracted to Christianity, to renounce their ancestral ways. As one young and educated Toda woman recorded for me:

Many people now keep bibles and pictures of Jesus in their homes. Because of this some other Toda people say they should no longer live in Toda villages. I do not agree with this view. Many of the people who speak like this visit Ayyappan temples. They worship Hindu gods. I see nothing wrong in worshipping the Christian god. Just as many people learn passages from the *Bhagavad-Gita* and from the Koran, so people should also be permitted to learn passages from the Bible. Toda listen to Christian songs on cassette tapes. If some people ask them to stop listening to those Christian songs and to stop learning the Bible, then they too should stop visiting Hindu temples and cease worshipping Hindu gods.

If people do not respect Toda temples and Toda culture, yes, then they should be punished. But if they first of all respect Toda temples and Toda culture, then we cannot say that it is wrong for them to go to church and to read the Bible. I don't think it is wrong to learn about another god, or to worship that god. There are many things we do not know and there is nothing wrong in studying about them.

Will this be the community's 21th-century approach to evangelising Christianity? Only time will tell.

6 Concluding Remarks

Toda religion is certainly a multifacetted phenomenon, with those many (or at least several) faces interpenetrating in such a way as to constitute the practised religion of the great majority of Todas, particularly those who are not members of the by now long-established Toda Christian community. I hope this essay, in which I have striven to present first those facets of Toda religion that are indigenous and those that are fundamentally Indic, then those obviously derived from the beliefs and practices of other peoples, principally South Indian Hindu and Christian peoples, has convinced readers that it is *not* altogether misleading to label Todas (apart from the Christians) as "Hindus," even though their syncretistic religion – particularly its ritual domain – is very different from those of all other South Indians.

Although finally unable to attend the meetings, I originally prepared this text for the "Seventh South and Southeast Asian Association for the Study of Religion" conference held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (August 9 to 12, 2017). My thanks are due to the Association for providing me with the stimulus to write this article, as also are my apologies for having to withdraw at the last moment. I have also to express my gratitude to my friend and colleague in Toda studies, Dr. Tarun Chhabra, for permitting me to use some of his fine photographs and for much advice besides.

References Cited

Augustine, P. A.
1976 Todas. The Worshippers of Buffaloes. *Caravan* (Bombay/Mumbai 11. 01.): 46–49.

Barker, Mary E.
1914 News from Ootacamund. *India's Women and China's Daughters* 34/4: 72–73.

Barnes, Irene H.
1897 Behind the Pardah. The Story of C. E. Z. M. S. Work in India. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Basham, Arthur L.
1954 The Wonder That Was India. A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent before the Coming of the Muslims. London: Sidgwick and Jackson.

Breeks, James W.
1873 An Account of the Primitive Tribes and Monuments of the Nīlagiris. (Ed. by his widow S. M. Breeks.) London: India Museum.

Burridge, Kenelm
1973 Encountering Aborigines. A Case Study: Anthropology and the Australian Aboriginal. New York: Pergamon Press.

Chhabra, Tarun
2012 Sacred Peaks. In: P. Hockings (ed.); pp. 802–804.
2015 The Toda Landscape. Explorations in Cultural Ecology. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan. (Harvard Oriental Series, 79)

Das, Gopi Nath
1957 The Funerary Monuments of the Nilgiris. *Bulletin of Deccan College Research Institute* 18: 140–158, ix–x.

Emeneau, Murray B.
1938 Toda Culture Thirty-Five Years after. An Acculturation Study. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Insti-*

tute 19/2: 101–121. [Reprinted in Emeneau 1967: 286–302]
1939 The Christian Todas. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 81/1: 93–106. [Reprinted in Emeneau 1967: 321–322]
1953 Proto-Dravidian *c-: Toda t-. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15: 98–112. [Reprinted in Emeneau 1967: 46–60]
1957 Toda, a Dravidian Language. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 56/1: 15–66. [Reprinted in Emeneau 1967: 1–36]
1967 Dravidian Linguistics, Ethnology, and Folktales. Collected Papers. Annamalainagar (Tamil Nadu): Annamalai University. (Annamalai University; Department of Linguistics, 8)
1971 Toda Songs. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press.
1974 Ritual Structure and Language Structure of the Todas. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 64/6: 1–103.
1984 Toda Grammar and Texts. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society. (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, 155)

Emeneau, Murray B., and **T. Burrow**
1962 Dravidian Borrowings from Indo-Aryan. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Publications in Linguistics, 26)

Fraser, John Foster
1909 Quaint Subjects of the King. London: Cassell.

Grover, Phoebe (transl.)
1910 The Book of Psalms in Toda [Katām (in Tamil script)] Madras: S. P. C. K. – Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge; Madras Auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Hockings, Paul
1976 Paikara. An Iron Age Burial in South India. *Asian Perspectives* 18/1: 26–50.
2012a Basel Evangelical Mission. In: P. Hockings (ed.); pp. 119–121.
2012b Metz, (Br.) Johann Friedrich. In: P. Hockings (ed.); pp. 592–593.

Hockings, Paul (ed.)
2012 Encyclopaedia of the Nilgiri Hills. New Delhi: Manohar.

Kodan, Daniel [= Kwa-ṛo·n s/o Mo to-fïn]
n. d. Autobiography. (Dictated in English to G. N. Das.) [Unpubl. typescript; 65 pp.; circa 1955]

Ling, Catharine Frances
1892 The Toda Mission. *India's Women* 12/11: 515–516.
1897 The Gospel of Mark, Toda. (Transl. by C. F. Ling and others.) Madras: S. P. C. K. Press; Madras Auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society.
1900 New Books in the Toda Tongue. *India's Women and China's Daughters* 20/2: 39.
1910 Dawn in Toda Land. A Narrative of Missionary Effort on the Nilgiri Hills, South India. London: Morgan & Scott.
1913 Letter to the Collector of the Nilgiris, dated Ootacamund, 8 October. [The Late Evam Piljen-Wiedemann Collection]
1915 Progress in the Work at Ootacamund. *India's Women and China's Daughters* 35/4: 71–72.
1929 Three Outstanding Events in the Nilgiri Mission. *India's Women and China's Daughters* 49/6: 104–106.
1930 The Toda Colony. *India's Women and China's Daughters* 50/1: 9–11.
1934 Sunrise on the Nilgiris. The Story of the Todas. London: Zenith Press.
1938 Welcome Home. *India's Women and China's Daughters* 58/6: 87–89.

Mandelbaum, David G.
1970 Society in India. 2 Vols. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Man-nar [= Manarn s/o O·ẓ]
n. d. Autobiography. (Dictated in Tamil to G. N. Das.) [Unpubl. Typescript; 74 pp.; circa 1955]

Metz, Johann Friedrich
1864 The Tribes Inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills. Their Social Customs and Religious Rites. Mangalore: Prebst & Stolz, Basel Mission Press. [2nd Enlarged Ed.]

Michaels, Axel
2004 Hinduism. Past and Present. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Nambiar, P. K. (ed.)
1965 Census of India 1961. Vol. 9: Madras; Part 5-C: Todas. Delhi: Manager of Publications, Government of India.

Noble, William A.
1989a Nilgiri Prehistoric Remains. In: P. Hockings (ed.), Blue Mountains. The Ethnography and Biogeography of a South Indian Region; pp. 102–132. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
1989b The Toda and Their Dairies in the Nilgiris, South India. *The East Lakes Geographer* 24: 97–114.
1991 Ways to Toda Realms of the Dead. *Geography of Religions and Belief Systems* 13/2: 3–6.
1993 The Changed Toda of the Nilgiris, South India. Buffalo Herrders to Farmers. In: M. D. Nellis (ed.), Geographic Perspectives on the Social and Economic Restructuring of Rural Areas; pp. 152–156. Manhattan: Kansas State University.
1998 Toda Dairy Sites apart from Hamlets. *The Journal of Cultural Geography* 17/2: 43–67.
2012 Architecture. Toda. In: P. Hockings (ed.); pp. 43–79.

Ottin, Merry
1956 Chez les Todas. Adorateurs des buffles. *Connaissance du Monde* 3: 99–106.

Pellican [Pöḷ-xe·n], M. [= son of Mut-išky]
n. d. A Brief Sketch about the Todas of Nilgiris. [Unpubl. Typescript; 2 pp.; circa 1959–61]

Raja, K. K.
2011 *Veṭṭakkorumakan.* A Hunting Deity in Kerala. In: K. L. Seshagiri Rao et al. (eds.), Encyclopedia of Hinduism. Vol. 11: U–V–W–Y–Z; p. 304. New Delhi: Rupa.

Rivers, W. H. R.
1906 The Todas. London: Macmillan.

Sathyanarayanan, C. R.
2016 The Toda of Tamil Nadu. In: K. K. Misra et al. (eds.), The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in India; pp. 699–711. New Delhi: Manohar.

SCD
2011 *Parameśvara.* Absolute Reality. In: K. L. Seshagiri Rao et al. (eds.), Encyclopedia of Hinduism. Vol. 8: P–R; p. 66. New Delhi: Rupa.

Sidky, Homayun
2015 Religion. An Anthropological Perspective. New York: Peter Lang.

Srinivas, Mysore N.
1965 Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India. Bombay: Asia Publishing House. [Orig. 1952]
1967 The Cohesive Role of Sanskritization. In: P. Mason (ed.), India and Ceylon. Unity and Diversity. A Symposium; pp. 67–82. London: Oxford University Press. (Institute of Race Relations, 2) [Reprinted in M. N. Srinivas, The Cohesive Role of Sanskritization and Other Essays; pp. 56–72. Delhi: Oxford University Press 1989]

Stutley, Margaret, and **James Stutley**
1977 Harper's Dictionary of Hinduism. Its Mythology, Folklore, Philosophy, Literature, and History. New York: Harper & Row.

Tobias, Michael, and **Jane Gray Morrison**
2008 The Tribe that Worships Flowers and Buffalo. In: M. Tobias, and J. G. Morrison, Sanctuary. Global Oases of Innocence; pp. 209–219. San Francisco: Council Oak Books.

Vaidyanathan, K. R.
1978 Pilgrimage to Sabari. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. (Bhavan's Book University, 236)

Vohra, Gautam S. G.
1980 Todas Still Worship the Buffalo. *Times of India* (13.06.): 6.

Walker, Anthony R.
1986 The Toda of South India. A New Look. Delhi: Hindustan Publishing.
1998a Early Seventeenth Century Christian Missions to the Toda of the Nilgiri Hills (1969/93). In: A. R. Walker, Between Tradition and Modernity and Other Essays on the Toda of South India; pp. 89–114. Delhi: B. R. Publishing.
1998b Reporting the Toda 1602–1993. A Bibliographic Essay (1993). In: A. R. Walker, Between Tradition and Modernity and Other Essays on the Toda of South India; pp. 157–208. Delhi: B. R. Publishing.
2012a Fenicio, (Fr.) Giacomo, S. J. In: P. Hockings (ed.); pp. 314–321.
2012b Kodan, (Revd) M. Daniel. In: P. Hockings (ed.); pp. 473–477.
2012c Ling, (Miss) Catharine Frances. In: P. Hockings (ed.); pp. 535–541.
2012d Rivers, (Dr.) William Halse Rivers. In: P. Hockings (ed.); pp. 787–792.

Wallinger, A. A.
1889 A Retrospect of Three Years. *India's Women* 9/11: 328–331.

Wessels-Mevissen, Corina
2002 Creative Legacy of the Nilgiri Hills. Terracotta Offerings from South Indian Megalithic Burials. In: P. Pal (ed.), Indian Terracotta Sculpture. The Early Period; pp. 20–31. Mumbai: Marg Publications. (Mārg Publications, 54/1)

Woodburne A. S.
1927 The Place of Religion in the Social Life Illustrated by the Todas. *The Madras Christian College Magazine* 8/3: 145–152.

Zvelebil, Kamil V.
1982 The Iruḷa (Eṟla) Language. Vol. 3: Iruḷa Lore: Texts and Translations. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.