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Reforming Beliefs

THE BADAGAS

SOMETIME REFUGEES IN A NEW LAND

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It seems that hardly a week passes without the news media reporting another harrowing account of the movement of refugees somewhere: Afghan boat people heading for Australia, Africans trying to get to a better life in Italy, Ethiopians living in Moscow Airport. Their stories are often horrifying, their health and sheer numbers mind-boggling, and their futures inconceivable. Yet most of these people do survive, long beyond the day's news headlines. Some finally get the chance to return home, while others settle down in another land.

Sociologists have developed three categories to help explain the motivations which may lead people unwillingly into refugee status. Some "majority-identified" refugees, people who continue to identify with their homeland but not with its current government or social conditions: they fondly expect to return home at a later date. Secondly, there are "events-alienated" refugees who have been driven from their homeland by force or intolerable conditions, and who doubt they will ever set eyes on it again. Third, there are "self-alienated" refugees who move away for ideological or other personal reasons, including work or educational opportunities.

Taking a long view of their histories, one can see that refugees may in time be better viewed as emigrants, even if not usually willing ones. They settle down in a new host country, working there, perhaps raising families, and integrating themselves into the new place. Yet this integration may be less than whole-hearted among those who started off as "majority-identified" refugees, because they continue to feel themselves as part of their homeland. Clearly the motivation for the original refugee flight has something to do with eventual success as immigrants elsewhere. What are the characteristics of successful immigrants?

Among many highly visible examples of immigrant success are the East European Jews who came to America about a century -ere "events-alienated," others "self-alienated," but in either case they and their descendants became hard-working, loyal U.S. citizens who valued

education, freedom, and other liberal principles. They flourished in a society of non-Jews, and would not dream of going back to the ancestral homeland.¹

Have there been similar success stories in the non-Western world, where today so much refugee movement is reported? The Badaga people of South India are one such story, and it is a particularly interesting one because it was not in modern times that the Badagas were refugees: they were in fact refugees four centuries ago, yet sufficient is known about their subsequent history to show how they adapted, first to life in a new highland environment, and later to life under a modernizing but alien British administration. It is this process of adaptation, to geographical environment as well as to foreigners, that we shall now examine.

Identifying the Badagas

The word "Badaga" as used in this article has three distinct meanings: (1) the largest indigenous community in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu state, in the interior of Southern India. They number around 160,000 today. Their name, meaning "northerners", was given because they migrated, as we shall see, from the Plains of Mysore District, just to the north of the Nilgiri Hills, in the decades following the Muslim invasion that destroyed the great Hindu empire of Vijayanagar in 1565 AD. (2) Badaga is also a Dravidian language spoken only by these Badagas. It is now a distinct language, but was derived from 16th century Kannada and perhaps Kurumba as well. Today it contains many words of English and Tamil origin, as well as many ultimately derived from Sanskrit.² Although the language has an extensive oral literature of plays and ballads, as well as hundreds of proverbs, prayers, omens and curses, it was never a written language.³ (3) Badaga is also the common name³ for the Gaudas, who are by far the largest phratry within the community.

Settling Down on the Nilgiri Hills

The Badagas were initially "events-alienated" refugees who had been driven from their ancient homeland by the threat of force in the 16th century. They had been settled farmers there, living in villages which are still identifiable today. Although Badaga legend does refer specifically

to the "wandering in the wilderness", even to an apocryphal pursuit by Muslim soldiers whose advance (like that of the pharaonic forces against the Children of Israel) was cut off when the Moyar River closed in on them; yet it does not appear from these same sources that it took the Badaga settlers more than a few weeks to find forest clearings where they could build their huts and live in peace.

The picture of their initial settlement on the Nilgiri Hills is a hazy one, for they had no chroniclers then; indeed, it is safe to assume that everyone living on the Hills in those distant times, including the various local tribes, was non-literate.⁵ Occasional medieval inscriptions have been found in the foothills, carved on rocks, but these inscriptions (in the Tamil or Kannada languages) were evidently the handiwork of lowland warlords and chieftains, not of early Badagas. The first place to be settled by Badagas was a site called Anekatti, at the foot of the northern edge of the plateau. The grandson of their leader at that time, a man called Hucci Gauda, later established a settlement up above on that northern edge of the plateau, which they called Tuneri, and which somewhat later became the home village of the Badagas' paramount chief. Even today this official still exists, and his family records indicate that he is the eighteenth to succeed to that position, popularly called "Tuneri headman" or, more formally, "four-mountains headman".

One might ask how it is possible to know anything about the history of a people who were all non-literate until early in the 19th century, and who thus lack written documents from early times? Fortunately, much of their legends are a fairly factual (or at least not supernatural) kind of oral history. Beyond this, it is possible to argue from internal cultural evidence about, for example, the date of their arrival on the plateau. Because the birth of the latest incumbent of the paramount chieftaincy occurred in the mid-20th century, and because the average generation among Badagas we have a tool for calculating the date of Tuneri's founding. However, it may safely be assumed that prior to the 20th century, when schooling did not delay the age at marriage and first pregnancy, people started reproducing at a younger age and so we might guess at a generation prior to 1900 as spanning only 20 years. This assumption does allow us to count back from the birth of the present headman to conclude that the very first Tuneri headman was born about the year 1600 AD. He was the grandson of a man who fled with his family from the Muslims invading Mysore District, and this fact accords very closely with my presumption that it

was the breakup of the Vijayanagar Empire (covering roughly the modern Karnataka State), which followed the historic battle of Talikota in 1565, that prompted a flight into the nearby hills by some of the rural Hindu peasantry living near Mysore City. It would have been altogether appropriate for them to recognize as their leader a male elder, and once they had settled at Tuneri it would also be natural to their way of thinking for the eldest son to succeed his father in the office each generation. This was, after all, the most normal way in which offices had been passed on in medieval India.

Having a headman and a spokesman was essential for the newcomers. They carried a remembered peasant culture in their heads, but now needed to negotiate a *modus vivendi* with the surrounding tribes, specifically the Todas, Kotas, and Kurumbas. A Kota legend records this:

...in the night, at midnight, secretly.. they came and arrived at our...district. Having held a big meeting, (the Badagas) begged and asked, saying: Because of the trouble that the Mohammedan made for us...we have come, making ourselves to escape. This country is yours. .. We are helpless. You must help us. (The Kotas) decided, saying to all the Badagas who had come to the Todas, the Kotas, the Kurumbas, these three people: If you are to go on making cultivation on the land of our...district and eating and prospering, to us Kotas you must give a tax of grain (said to be one quarter of the yield). To the Todas you must give a winnowing basket (of grain to each house). To the Kurumbas you must give the village tax (four annas and a meal paid by each house)... They made a decision, saying: The Kotas must give to the Badagas iron things and wooden things and must make help to them. The Todas must give them winnowing Baskets and cane and churning sticks, all these. The Kurumbas must keep watch so that no one at all must come making the Badagas fear. Eating food in the houses of the Badagas, they must keep watch....⁶

In this short extract from the translation of a much longer tale recorded in the 1930s, we also find the charter for the peaceful intertribal relations that have been so extensively discussed in previous ethnographic accounts of the area.

To a modern student a frontier is a line on a map or perhaps a string of cement markers that separate Belgium from France. To new or immigrant settlers in a region of pre-modern India, on the other hand the frontier was a state of mind. And thus for the earliest Badagas the frontier was that place beyond the Mysore territory, their previous home, where they might be free from the threat of invading Muslim soldiers. In terms of practical geography this meant the gorge of the Moyar River, which still forms the boundary between Mysore District and Nilgiri District. Its frontier status was made memorable to all later Badagas by the sight of the gorge itself, but even more by the story, no doubt adapted from the Old Testament, of how the waters of the Moyar River opened up to allow the Badaga refugees to pass, but then closed on pursuing Muslim soldiers and washed them away.⁷ The southern rim of this gorge is marked by several "frontier shrines" dedicated to local deities, each the scene of an annual boundary-marking festivity.

"The frontier concept ... brings to mind the idea of a temporary, highly fluid social environment that ends when conditions of increased population bring the opportunity for movement to a close."⁸ Yet the subsequent social history of the Badagas after crossing the Moyar River meshes more closely with a new African model of a permanent "inter-frontier" which existed in zones of weak political control between established polities.⁹ This was the sort of "no man's land" in which the early Badagas found themselves eking out a living on the Nilgiri Hills—albeit surrounded by other men. They were in fact to become a tribe among tribes, as they slowly lost their former Mysore caste identity (no longer interacting with any other castes), and they represent perhaps the only well-documented case in Southern Asia of a caste group adopting a tribal social model for emulation, because usually cultural change has been in an opposite direction: tribes there emulate caste society.

It would seem that from the very outset these newcomers distributed themselves through the Nilgiri Hills according to a principle of marrying outside the settlement (settlement exogamy). In modern times this principle has expressed itself as hamlet exogamy, but in the beginning there were probably no true Badaga hamlets, only individual houses. A man and his family, perhaps with his brothers' families alongside, settled in a particular forest clearing in the 16th or 17th century. Incest prohibitions brought with them from times long past meant that this residential

unit was an exogamous unit too. As their population expanded into a regular hamlet, they grew in numbers and social organization from one extended family to one lineage, which might split later into several minor lineages. Yet all knew that (if not wives from elsewhere) they were descended from the founding male of that place. When young people wanted spouses, they had to look for them in other Badaga hamlets. Elopement or marriage by capture were sometimes resorted to, it would seem. Yet always certain rules applied, for those other affinal hamlets could not be descended from the founder of one's own hamlet (i.e., belong to the same clan), and they certainly could not be hamlets of the neighbouring Kota, Toda, Kurumba or Irula tribes either. These patterns of lineage, clan, and settlement exogamy still operate among the 160,000 Badagas of today, but they were already being formulated four hundred years ago when there were only a few hundred Badagas on the hills altogether.

The isolated style of life followed by early Badagas was related to their method of economic exploitation. In medieval Mysore their ancestors had lived in ancient villages that were within walking distance of Mysore City and the pilgrimage centre of Nanjangud. Settled agriculture on permanent fields was normal there. On the Nilgiri Hills, in contrast, Badagas had no fields available until they had cleared them; and indeed cultivation in small swiddens, following a process of slash-and-burn, was one usual form of agriculture on the Nilgiris (and elsewhere in the hilly parts of India) until the mid-19th century. A swidden is a patch of ground cleared of its forest cover for cultivation during the next few years: such a practice is commonly called shifting or slash-and-burn agriculture. Not only the Badagas but the neighbouring Kotas too practised some swidden cultivation; indeed. We may presume that much of the highland culture of the Badagas was less an adaptation of lowland traditions they had brought with them than a borrowing of useful and appropriate traits from the material culture of the Kotas and Todas.

One explanatory tale makes this point quite explicitly: the earliest refugees were fearful that their daughters would be taken by Muslim pursuers, usually said to have been soldiers. So, to make the girls look unattractive to urbane Muslims, the refugees adopted the practice, once on the hills, of tattooing the brows and arms of their girls with patterns that would make them look similar to the tribal Kota or Toda women. It was thought, probably with some justice, that this ruse would make Badaga woman sexually unpalatable to the Muslims. Young girls were still being

tattooed in the traditional way as late as the mid-20th century, using a barberry thorn and a solution of soot.¹⁰

Subsistence

We have seen that, as a community of refugees, the early Badagas had to cut their homesteads out of the Nilgiri forests. They continued with some slash-and-burn activity there until the 1870s. In general they use fields around each village, practice mixed farming of millets, barley, wheat, and a variety of European vegetables, two of which — the potato and the cabbage — have now assumed major commercial importance. Badaga farmers have virtually no irrigation but rely instead on the rainfall of two regular monsoon seasons. During the last century the farmers gradually shifted from subsistence cultivation of traditional grains to cash-crop farming of potatoes and cabbages, with irrigation in some places. After several seasons of disease potato fields were recently replaced by numerous small plantations of tea (which was first introduced here by the British in 1835, and had come from China).

Badagas also have herds of buffalo and cows for dairy purposes, less numerous now than in the past, and never kept for meat even though most people are not vegetarians. Poultry are commonly kept, and ponies occasionally, but not sheep, goats, donkeys, or elephants.

Economic Exchange

The community is well-known in anthropological literature for its complex symbiosis with the Toda, Kota, and Kurumba tribes of the Nilgiris. It is also true that some Badaga villages maintain exchange relations with the Irulas, Uralis, Panyas, and Chettis of the surrounding slopes.¹¹

The closest ties are with the seven nearby villages of the Kotas. Until 1930 every Badaga family had a Kota associate who provided a band of musicians whenever there was a wedding or funeral in that family, and who regularly furnished the Badagas with pottery, carpentry, thatching, and most leather and metal items. In return for being jack-of-all-trades to the Badagas (who had no specialized craftsmen in their own community), the Kotas were provided with cloth and a portion of the annual harvest by their Badaga associates, of whom, each Kota would have many.

The Todas, a vegetarian people numbering several hundred only, were the only group in the hills whom the Badagas were willing to accept as near-equals. The two communities used to exchange buffaloes and attend each other's ceremonies. Some Todas still supply their associates with baskets and other jungle-grown produce, I believe, as well as clarified butter (ghee). In return the Badagas gave a portion of their harvest. Since 1930 the relationship has become much attenuated, as with the Kotas, largely because the Badaga population has increased out of all proportion to the Todas and Kotas — but also because it is distinctly more modernized than theirs.

The Kurumbas are a cluster of seven tribes of jungle gatherers, gardeners, and sorcerers on the Nilgiri slopes. Each Badaga commune has (or had) a watchman, a Kurumba employed to protect those Badagas from the sorcery of *other* Kurumbas. He also takes part in some Badaga ceremonies as an assistant priest, and supplies his Badaga friends with Baskets, nets, honey and other jungle products. The Badaga headman traditionally levied for him a fixed quantity of grain from each household in the commune.

Irulas and Uralis are thought to be sorcerers like the Kurumbas, if less effective ones, and are treated similarly. Some Chettis are itinerant traders who would sell knickknacks on a fixed circuit of Badaga villages once a month. They also have a minor ceremonial connection with the Badagas. Panyas are (or were) agricultural serfs on the land of certain Badagas and Chettis who inhabit the Wainad Plateau directly to the west of the Nilgiri Plateau proper. (The above relationships are today pretty much a thing of the past.)

Villages

The settlements, usually of no more than several hundred people, consist of parallel rows of stone or brick houses with tiled roofs. They lie along the slope of a hill on its leeward side, for protection from the westerly monsoon. Each row of houses is fronted by a set of level work-spaces that look something like a street, but are not. The fields spread out all around. Up to a half-dozen temples and shrines for different Hindu gods are to be found in each village. Modern villages have piped water to communal taps, but not long ago the water supply was a nearby stream or at best a channel running into the village from a stream. One other universal feature is a village green, important as a council place, playground, dance ground, funeral place, and general grazing area for the calves.

Political Organization

Characteristic of any "inter-frontier" like the Nilgiri Plateau is that it is something of a power vacuum. This was certainly the case for the earl they had walked out of the realm of Mysore but were apparently not entering any other realm. It was only around 1820 that British people began settling in small numbers on these hills, developing towns, roads and markets; and the Badagas were then effectively brought under the administrative hand of the Madras Presidency, a huge territory covering much of Southern and Eastern India and governed at the time by the East India Company. Before that date the early Badagas had been slowly filling this political vacuum on the Nilgiris, for each hamlet founder not only became the head of a micro-economic system, but with the passage of the years he would become a respected elder with a political influence that could easily reach well beyond the confines of his relatives' customary swiddens.

Traditionally, therefore, Badagas lived in what anthropologists call chiefdom, as they are under a paramount chief. The filling of the power vacuum just referred to had its small beginning when the first settler, Hucci Gauda, founded the first settlement at Tuneri, and thus became the ancestor of that village's seventeen successive headmen and also of the paramount chiefs for the entire hamlet headmen only controlled the loyalty and labour of the younger men and women in their family; but, with the growth of their status and that of their entire family and lineage, they came to control the patterns of marriage and even the fates of wrongdoers on a much wider scale, through their headship of a council. Each hamlet (*hatti*) had a headman and a council of elders, in neighboring hamlets, constituted a higher-level council at what can be called the commune (*uru*) level. A commune was and is a cluster of neighbouring hamlets (any number from one to forty-one) that recognize one of their headmen as head also of the entire commune. The Nilgiri Hills were further divided into four segments, with recognized boundaries radiating out from the central peak of Doddabetta. Each of these segments contained a dozen or so communes, and had a divisional; council made up of the headmen of these communes, under a divisional headman. In turn, at the highest level, there was an all-Nilgiri council, ("four-mountains council") made up of all the headmen of all levels, and of course under the supervision of the Tuneri headman who, as we have already seen, was also paramount chief by tradition.

The Badaga council system still has some influence, although its judicial authority has been greatly undermined by modern law-courts and the Indian legal system. Each headman still has his council; but the paramount chief's council is rarely called together nowadays.

The traditional legal procedure of long ago required that a dispute or crime be considered first by a hamlet council — the headman's judgement being final — but that an unacceptable decision could be appealed up the hierarchy of councils. Major land disputes and cases of murder would formerly have been brought to the paramount chief after consideration by councils at lower levels. In early times the headmen could dictate severe punishments, including ostracism and hanging. Today the headmen are mainly involved in small disputes and in ceremonial duties.

Social Organization

The community is divided into a number of phratries. It is not correct to call these units subcastes (although they sometimes have been), for they are not altogether endogamous and they have no distinctive forms of occupational specialization. They are, however, like subcastes in forming a hierarchy, with the conservative Lingayat group, the Odeyas, at the top, and the headman's official servants, the Toreyas, at the bottom. Between these two extremes there are one phratry of vegetarians and three others of meat-eaters. The Christian Badagas, started by the first conversion in 1858, now constitute a separate meat-eating phratry ranked below the Toreyas but respected for their progressive habits.

Each phratry is made up of several exogamous clans — two each in the case of the Tareya, Beda, and Kumbara phratries, three in the case of Odeyas, and rather more in other cases.

Marriage: The Cement of Life

A successful family head, even a hamlet head, was effective only if he were fertile. The more sons a man had, the more daughters-in-law he would acquire, and, because both sexes worked on the land according to a set division of labor, the more agricultural productivity would result. But through one of the prime biological laws, it was typically the case that the more sons a man sired, the more daughters he was likely to have as well. By the time these girls had attained

puberty they would have to be married off to other hamlets and their labor would thenceforth be lost to their father. Nonetheless his daughters were useful to him in the frontier environment, for he could use the very fact of offering their hands in marriage, as well as the resultant kin ties, as a basis for extending his own influence. At the same time this affinal net could become a safety net when a man fell on hard times, for his in-laws might be relied upon to lend him grain or money when really necessary. The strength of affinal ties among the Badagas has always been expressed in the marital preference for a spouse who is a cross-cousin: a boy should marry his mother's brother's daughter (MBD) or else his father's sister's daughter (FZD). At the same time his sister might well find a spouse who was her mother's brother's son (MBS) or father's sister's son (FZS), and at the same time the brother of her own brother's wife. This latter situation is called brother-sister exchange. Repeated marriage arrangements between two families linked in this way led to strong ties between affines living in separate hamlets usually some miles apart. Clearly the head of a family is not only the manager of a production system but of reproductive possibilities too, because nearly all marriages are arranged by the parents.

As has also been observed for frontier societies in Africa,

... the direct expression of and means to wealth is the control of persons, their reproduction, and labor. ... [Production is geared toward the maintenance of current social relationships, that is, toward strengthening and supporting the family in its existing social matrix...] Hence the importance of being first as a salient cultural feature... Through their relation to founder ancestors, those lineages that are first in an area have a strong claim to political importance and resource control. Those that are latecomers often have more limited power and rights.¹²

In short, there is an ecological as well as political dimension to establishing one's family in a new place. Every Badaga village belongs to one particular clan or another, and hence is exogamous. At marriage a bride has to leave her natal village and move to her husband's. Beyond this the Badagas have what are, for Hindus, some unusual regulations. Most remarkable perhaps is that hypogamy (women marrying down) is as acceptable as hypergamy (women marrying up): marriages may occur between couples coming from clans of differential status, yet in these cases it does not matter whether the groom is from the higher or the lower clan.

Although a dowry has become a requirement during the past few decades, it is not a traditional part of the Badaga marriage arrangements. Instead a bride wealth of up to two hundred rupees was, and perhaps still is, paid by the groom's family to the bride's. This small sum does not purchase the girl but is viewed as payment for the ornaments she will bring with her to the wedding, and hence has increased over the years with the price of gold.

The favoured marriage partner is a cross-cousin, preferably father's sister's daughter (FZD) or MBD. But other more distant relations are acceptable, provided that they belong to an appropriate clan. Generation level is recognized as a distinguishing feature of men alone, and women may actually change their generation levels as they perhaps marry successive husbands belonging to different generations. It is even theoretically possible for a man to marry a woman and her daughter and grand-daughter simultaneously, provided he does not thereby marry his own offspring. All three wives would thus attain the generation-level of their co-husband. Gerontogamy — old men taking young wives — is not at all uncommon.¹³

Polygyny is acceptable, though not nearly as common as monogamy. In an extreme case a man had five wives at once. Divorce and remarriage are easy for men, even for women, and are acceptable practices. Widows can remarry without adverse comment in this society.

Religion

Except for perhaps three thousand Christians (Protestants and Roman Catholics in similar proportions), all Badagas are Hindus of the Shaivite persuasion: they honor numerous gods, but see Siva as the preeminent one, and most other gods as aspects of Siva. A sizeable minority, however, are of the Lingayat sect, which is almost confined to Karnataka State (formerly Mysore). This was a medieval sect founded in the 13th century which took Siva as the only deity for them, and which still worships him through a phallic emblem, the *linga*. Among Badagas the sect is represented in the entire membership of several clans, namely Adikiri, Kanakka, Kongaru, and three more which make up the Wodeya phratry.

The Hindu Badagas, including these Lingayat clans, worship quite a number of gods, all of which are sometimes explained as "aspects" of Siva, or members of his family. These include Mahalinga and Mariamma (the smallpox goddess), together with many lesser deities unknown outside the Nilgiri communities, among them the ancestral Hiriodea and his consort Hette. Each

village celebrates about a dozen festivals during the year. The most important are *Dodda Habba* ("Great Festival") which celebrates the harvest in July. *Mari Habba* is intended to keep smallpox away for the year, and is celebrated in a few villages by a fire-walking ceremony in which devotees walk unscathed across glowing charcoal with no protection for their feet.

As in all societies, certain transitions in life are marked by ceremonies. For Badagas these events are the naming, the first tonsure or head-shaving, the first milking of a cow (for boys only), the wedding, and the funeral. On rare occasions each Badaga commune used to hold a huge memorial ceremony (*manevale*) in honor of a whole generation of the dead, once the last member of that generation had passed away. This was last performed in 1936, however, and has since been viewed as too costly to repeat.

Ritual: serving the gods

In a peasant society, work is organized by two principles: the technical procedures are organized according to a certain division of labor, primarily by sex; but there is also a mystical organization of production that is handled by priests and their accessories, which rationalizes the division of labour and links it semantically to an ancient tradition.

The Badaga people, like peasants everywhere, do not think of the fruits of their labour as dependent entirely on their own efforts, on their knowledge and skills. Nor is the outcome of an agricultural season wholly attributable to what Westerners might label chance, fate, or luck. There are deities who symbolically can work on behalf of the farmer, but this is a reciprocal relationship: the farming community must also work for the deity, by feeding and honouring him or her.

The complex of deities that the Badagas worship is fairly typical of the polytheism to be found throughout India and Nepal. One deity — in the Badaga view, Siva — is pre-eminent, and is not only worshipped by all Badagas (except those few who are Christian), but is worshipped in a number of "forms" or aspects; in other words, is recognized under different names. Some of these aspects of the god are considered to be his family members: of these, Parvati is the most widely worshipped one. The kinship principle is the most usual way of organizing and relating to Hindu deities. But the Badaga complex includes other sorts of deity that do not fit into this universal pattern. Hence the occurrence of numerous purely local deities, including what might loosely be

called nature spirits, demons, and ancestral spirits. One early missionary observer ¹⁴ claimed that there were "no less than 338 idols on the Hills," which may not be much of an exaggeration. He was of course mainly counting such localized entities, many of which were only worshipped at one place, if indeed they had a cult at all.

Badagas are commonly aware that a deity known by a special name at a particular place may well be a variant of the supreme god Siva. Thus a god with the extraordinary name of Kakkayya (literally "vomit Lord"), who is worshipped at three places, is actually an aspect of Siva, who according to some legends swallowed poison which he later threw up. But with other deities there may be nothing more than a vague assertion to link a particular god or goddess somehow with the family of Siva. This is a likely scenario in the case of minor figures that are the ancestral spirits of particular clans. Anganadesvara (the *-esvara* is a name of Siva) is a god worshipped by one Odeya clan and some Adikiris. Angamasti is a goddess worshipped only by certain Odeyas. Some gods have a particular and fairly restricted function to perform in the scheme of things. Thus Maleya Madappa (or Halevirasomi) is a minor deity who protects cattle. Mallesvara is an aspect of Siva to whom Badagas pray that their cattle will be protected from disease; every cattleshed is a shrine to this deity. And Mallima is another aspect of Siva who protects people from attack by wild elephants.

Some of the deities are essentially nature spirits. Of these Gange (or Iramasti), the water goddess, is of crucial importance in an agricultural society; but she is also equated with Siva's consort, Parvati. Some nature spirits are now scarcely remembered unless a reference to them is preserved in some place-name or prayer. There is for example a hill called Ammadittu Bettu ("goddess-boundary mountain"), which certainly contains such a reference, but we know nothing further of that particular goddess today. Another similarly named hill, Ammanmudi Betta ("headland-of-the-goddess mountain") has an ancient shrine on its summit devoted to a lineage ancestress. Evidently the worship of mountain peaks was in general an ancient form of worship in this part of South India. Even today the foraging tribe of Hill Pandarams, living some 175 miles south-southeast of the Badagas, worship mountain peaks as deities—but *without* any shrines or iconographi¹⁵—and there is plenty of archaeological evidence in the Nilgiris showing that before the Badagas had come there the hilltops were the favored sites for the burial of prominent tribal people.

If nature spirits embody the powers of the land, there are also "demons" which may have to be propitiated at specific places simply because of the dangers they are thought to pose. A good example is the shrine of a deity called Muniyappa ("teacher, father, Lord") next to the Ketti railway station. Although it is a fairly substantial building today, when I first saw it in 1963 the shrine was merely a few rough stones set against a rock face. An annual offering of liquor and chicken flesh is made to Muniyappa to avert his anger and malice. This worship must date back, in his particular case, only to the beginning of the century, when the first steaming carriages chugged their way up the newly laid track, their noise and steam clouds and power posing a seeming threat to all the thousands of villagers who had to cross the railroad at this very point in order to walk up to the main road. Badagas were in such awe of these early self-propelled trains that they used to pay off their debts and settle all their worldly affairs before risking a train journey down to the plains below. Needless to say, they soon became as familiar with the twice-daily trains as all other railway passengers; and yet the cult of Muniyappa has remained at this crossing-point and his shrine has recently been growing in impressiveness.

Another kind of entity that has the status of a minor deity, but is of human origin, is the ancestor or ancestress who is venerated. Among the Badagas by far the best-known of these spirits is Hette, and a close examination of the legends about her is instructive.

There are at least eleven Badaga villages which worship an ancestress called Hette celebrating an annual festival in her honour.¹⁶ In each of these exogamous villages she is regarded as the mythical founder, with her husband Hiriodea, of at least some of the village's lineages. Both of them have become minor deities, associated particularly with the fertility of women and crops. As we shall see, there are numerous local variations in the tale of Hette, and these all lead to three broad conclusions: she was the ideal Badaga woman; she exemplifies contradictions in the lives of all Badaga woman which cannot be resolved except through a ritual; and her behaviour represented a popular flight from enforced Vaishnavite orthodoxy in the early 17th century.

It has been argued by Claude Lévi-Strauss and others that "The essential themes in a myth, impossible to identify from a simple reading of one version, emerge upon consideration of a number of other versions of that myth in which, despite various changes and reversals, certain elements persist. What is important is what is repeated, reworked to fit different circumstances,

transformed even to the point of apparent meaninglessness, but always retained."¹⁷ What is outlined in these words is a research method called structural analysis.

In the present instance we find that Hette was the ideal woman for a number of reasons that are stated in parts of her legend, namely: she was so given to the idea of chastity that she did not want to go to the bed of an elderly husband and so drowned herself instead;¹⁸ she selflessly did not want to become pregnant until a senior but childless co-wife had already conceived; her husband was once out guarding a heap of grain when someone started a brushfire—Hette went to look for him, thought he had perished in it, and so immolated herself in the flames; her husband was at home with a Chetti woman whom he loved when the house caught fire, and his ever-faithful wife returned to throw herself into the flames in the belief that he had already died;¹⁹ because her husband died, she committed ritual suicide (*sati* or *suttee*) by strangulation, drowning, or self-immolation;²⁰ her son Batrabala kept a girl he was not married to, and also ate meat, which so upset his mother Hette, a vegetarian Haruva herself, that she committed suicide;²¹ old and devoid of any relations, she killed herself so as not to be a burden on the village;²² this was done by jumping down a well where, people claim, she "saw" her husband and dead relatives;²³ and after her death she possessed another woman, during which time her ghost explained that she had really been an incarnation of Parvati, the wife of Siva, and hence a goddess who was universally the model of Hindu womanly virtue; Hette undertook to protect the Badagas, and asked for a temple to be built for her. An annual ceremony has subsequently been celebrated in her honor.²⁴

In addition to all these versions of her story, two others have been reported recently by a Badaga writer.²⁵ In one case, a man had three sons by his first wife, and after her death he married again, the second wife giving him three daughters. Once the man had died too his eldest son began pestering the surviving wife for money; and his servant was once so obstreperous in his demands that the woman threw herself down a well. She is said to have cursed the eldest son and blessed her other children; and later on somebody dreamt she was the incarnation of Maha Sakti, who is equated by Badagas with Hette. Another such incarnation arose under different circumstances. A man had promised his elder daughter to a man working for him, but she was enticed into another marriage and the jilted man was heartbroken. Her younger sister Masi (i.e., Maha Sakti abbreviated) consoled the man and promised to marry him, but he became ill with

grief and soon died. At his funeral Masi had a vision that he was calling her, and so immolated herself on the pyre. Such then are most of the variant legends, and we shall return to them shortly. The reader should not be concerned at the apparent inconsistencies between different parts of this legend.

Perhaps the most common version of the tale is that Hette was a very young girl whom her father had promised in marriage to his own sister's husband. That sister was an old and barren woman. The idea that Hette should be offered as a young co-wife accords well with the Badaga idea of marriage: her father's lineage still owed a fertile wife to her father's sister's husband. On the day when Hette reached physical maturity she knew that her ageing husband would soon sleep with her, and the idea did not appeal to her. She went out with some other girls to gather firewood, and, once in the woods, left them and built a pyre. She then asked God to grant a child to the older co-wife, her father's sister, and to accept Hette's self-immolation if He judged her to have been pure. Oblivious of all this, the other girls meanwhile returned home. When the villagers saw the column of smoke they went to investigate, and found Hette's cremation. Belatedly they performed the funeral ceremonies; and before the final ritual which releases the soul from the village, some few days after death, it was found that the old co-wife was pregnant.

In all these legends about Hette and all the villages where she is venerated, she is seen as the epitome of womanly perfection; yet underlying that image are some contradictions that no Badaga seeks to explain, contradictions which beset the life of every Badaga woman to this day, but which are resolved in due course. Let us now look more closely at the virginity-and-marriage theme, and the contradictions will be apparent. On the one hand Hette committed suicide while a virgin, rather than up-stage a senior co-wife and have possibly fruitful relations with the old father's sister's husband; alternatively, she gave birth only to three daughters, no sons. But on the other hand she was the ancestress of Badaga patrilineages.²⁶ Furthermore, though she was a virgin she was nonetheless held to be the model of a wife devoted to her husband. Yet another contradiction lies in one story that she committed suicide after all her relations were dead, lest she become a burden on the villagers. This variant, and a message from her ghost that she would protect the village, are somewhat at odds with her desire to join her dead husband through ritual suicide (*sati*) and go with his soul to the Saivite paradise.

In summary, we have found four contradictions inherent in the story of Hette:

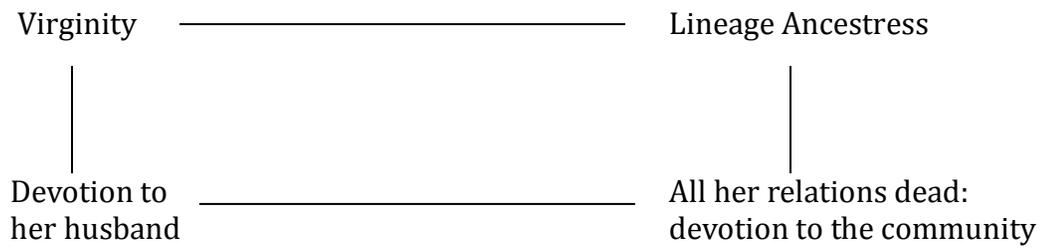


Fig. 1

It is a situation that seemingly has no resolution: this is really the predicament of women in Badaga society.

Yet one solution to the conundrum does present itself as an obvious possibility. It is that the four elements diagrammed above represent major stresses during four stages in the life and death of any woman, viz.: young virgin; devoted wife; old lady without close living relatives; deceased ancestress of a lineage. Each status is at once typical and ideal, even if not followed through in the life history of each particular woman. The transition from one to another status is marked by a radical shift in personal standards, and also by an appropriate ritual which mitigates the anomalous situation, viz.: the first two stages are bridged by a wedding; the second and third stages are bridged by the husband's funeral; the third and fourth stages by ritual suicide. All these transitions have been summarized and truncated in the brief myth of Hette, with whom all women can identify.

In the sequence of statuses just referred to, the contradictions between being a virgin and being a lineage ancestress remain unexplained. Yet here too a cyclical view of time yields some insights.

In Badaga and similar patrilineal, patrilocal societies of India (structured around male kin), a young girl is far removed, both mentally and physically, from a lineage ancestress. Devotion to her own lineage ancestress, that is, her father's, will be abandoned once the girl marries and thereupon joins another clan and lineage. In that lineage, that is, her husband's, the girl will forge a new, subservient relationship with its ancestress, for her duty henceforth will be to produce a new generation of descendants and devotees for that ancestress. In a sense this ancestress is

really a mythical mother-in-law, a personage with whom any young Badaga bride is likely to have strained, subservient relations. That the legend presents Hette as both virgin and ancestress is not then an inexplicable conundrum, but rather a reference to the common reversal that with time the fearful bride becomes a mother-in-law herself, and then after death moves towards the status of a lineage ancestress. The very word *Hette* after all means "old woman, grandmother".

A more sinister understanding of Hette's marital situation emerges when we look at two segments of the myth in combination. Reflection on her chagrin at her stepson Batrabala's behaviour in keeping a mistress and eating meat,²⁷ and on another version of the legend which makes her stepmother to three sons and mother to three daughters,²⁸ leads us to the following kinship diagram.

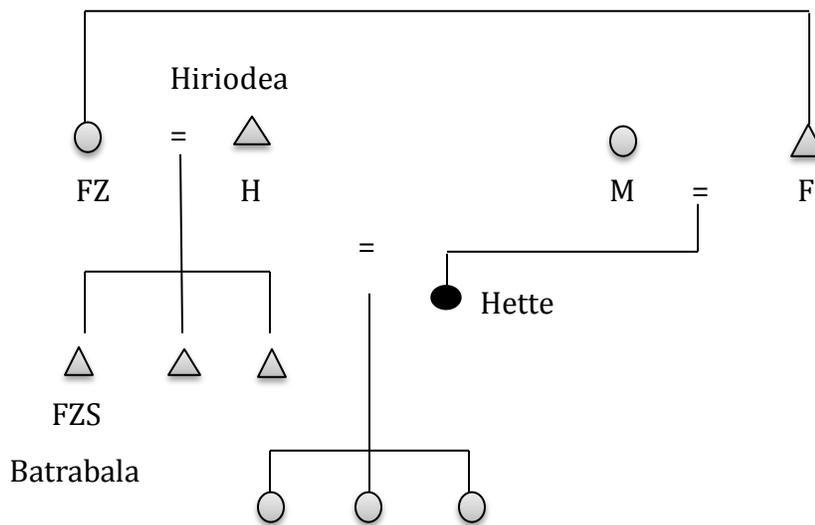


Fig. 2 The Family of Hette

It will now be noticed that Batrabala is not only Hette's stepson: the two are potential spouses, for Batrabala could marry his widowed MBD and this union would be a permissible cross-cousin marriage for the Badagas. Thus when he came pestering her for money was he asking her *in loco parentis* for the bride wealth so that he could marry her, his not-so-old cross-cousin, or was he possibly seeking a dowry, which was not a Badaga practice? Or does money here symbolize sexual favors? At any rate we can see that for Hette this man represented a

dilemma: he was at the same time her own husband's son and an ideal cross-cousin mate; she was Jocasta to his Œdipus. No wonder she cursed him!

A grander dimension to the whole Hette myth appears if we refer back to its prototype in a Hindu scriptural tale, the Bhavishyottara Purana. There it is related that Parvati had, since a child, vowed to marry none but Siva. When she came of age and was told that her father Himachala had been advised to marry her off to another god, Vishnu, she became very indignant. Taking one companion she ran off into the forest, and there on a bank she made three *lingas* (phallic icons of Siva) which she worshipped all night, while singing the praises of Siva. The god was gratified by this and appeared to her, promising to grant any request she made. So she asked to become his wife, and he agreed; then (as men will) he disappeared. After their vigil Parvati and her maid lay down to sleep, and were later found by her father who was so relieved that he consented to her marriage wish.

Now there was in medieval Badaga history a sort of parallel to this situation; for, when the earliest Shaivite Badagas were fleeing into the Nilgiri Hills from Mysore at the tum of the seventeenth century (when "Sri-Vaishnavism reached its highwater-mark")²⁹ the Wodeya lineage on the throne of Mysore was converted, in 1617, to Vaishnavism, and made the worship of Vishnu thenceforth a state cult. There followed some widespread disturbances between the Vaishnavites and the Shaivites.³⁰ Given that Badagas did recognize Hette as an incarnation of Parvati, her myth becomes a political statement about a people, the Badaga refugees, symbolized by a pure virgin, Hette, fleeing to the forest to avoid the fatherly command of the Mysore Odeya rulers to institute the cult of Vishnu. They wished to remain faithful to Siva, their caste deity. The imperious royal gurus, Tatacharya and others, in the early 17th century actually had the power "to punish people who swerved from the right path" of Sri Vaishnavism.³¹ In marital terms this change could have led to Shaivite daughters being married off to Vaishnavites. Like Parvati ("the Mountaineer"), these girls sought instead to be constant in their devotion to Siva, joining their families as refugees to the Nilgiri Hills in order to achieve this aim.

The variant legend recorded by Noble³² in which Hette's husband is described as having a Chetti mistress, is parallel to this political situation. Because the Chettis of neighbouring Coimbatore District came from Mysore and settled there long ago, and were Vaishnavites, this illicit relationship between the Badaga man and the Chetti woman exemplified turning away from

the Shaivite faith of the Badagas. In the face of it, Hette's reaction was to commit ritual suicide (*sati*), always viewed as an expression of devotion and purity. It is not surprising therefore that of over a thousand Badaga temples and shrines that exist now, only one or two are devoted to a Vaishnavite deity, Rangasvami.³³ Nor is it surprising to find some of the Hette legends contrasting her purity and selflessness with the meat-eating, mistress-keeping, and monetary greed of her relatives. Indeed, an underlying theme in those legend is that Hette is an outstanding individual because she over-values certain ideals that those around her under-value: she over-values chastity, whereas her elder sister under-values it to the point of marrying (or eloping with?) a man other than the one her father had already designated as her husband. Hette over-values marital fidelity, in direct contrast to the behaviour of her own husband. She over-values the purity of vegetarianism, in contrast with the meat-eating stepson, Batrabala. She over-values the equivalence of sisters in marriage arrangements, in contrast with Batrabala again, who seems to view Hette and his own mother in quite different lights. Finally, Hette, when alive, under-values the obligation of the community to support her in widowhood, which is at odds with the way she, when dead, over-values her own ability to protect and support the community in response to their building a temple for her and worshipping her like a goddess.

As a goddess, her association with the fertility of women and crops is appropriate for one who had promised to protect future generations of Badagas. Yet open might justifiably question why in a patrilineal society a minor goddess should be given such importance, especially when her husband Hiriodea plays what is undeniably a secondary role in the entire story. The answer to this question lies in the interconnected facts that Hette was an ancestress of Badagas only, while her husband kept a Chetti —and hence a non-Badaga—mistress. Only a properly married Badaga woman can confer legitimacy on the children she and her husband raise: children of the husband by a Chetti mistress would not really be Badagas, and would be excluded from certain key roles in their Badaga father's funeral. It is in this light that we can now understand the capital importance of premarital virginity, and of wifely chastity, purity, and devotion, in a patrilineal society where the husbands have been known to stray. Hette's legend accounts for the legitimacy of people who consider themselves to be Badagas.³⁴

Cultural values

The analysis of the various myths surrounding the ancestral figure of Hette shows that they are something more than a handful of brief just-so stories. Badaga myth is like a language which permits talking about some very basic facts of life: what it means to be a Badaga, and how this way of life can be maintained. Ritual is similarly concerned with the lives of real people, and not merely with the presumed requirements of the gods. It too can be subjected to structural analysis.

It is evident that Hette was more than an old lady who begat generations of Badagas: she has a personality, and is concerned with such ethical considerations as the unacceptable behavior of her stepson Batrabala, or her obligations toward the older co-wife, or her duty to present her husband with an heir.

Very few of the "classic" ethnographies have anything to say about ethics as such, and one will certainly search in vain for that word in their otherwise thorough indexes. It is not that non-literate peoples are or were lacking in ethical principles, but rather that Western anthropologists had no agreed-upon tools for revealing what those principles were, or were not sufficiently fluent in the language of their subjects to grasp the ethical subtleties of their thinking, comments, and behaviour. Nonetheless there are some good approaches to the question that have the advantage of not relying too heavily on the value judgments of anthropologists themselves.

A value is a selective orientation toward experience, some ideal which prompts the actor to behave in one socially acceptable way rather than another.³⁵ But such a guide to conduct has to be embodied somehow, if people are to learn and to remember each value of their culture. Embodied values are, perhaps surprisingly, readily apparent though often overlooked in any traditional culture, such as the Badaga one, for they are spelled out in proverbs, prayers, omens, blessings, curses, and various longer forms of oral literature such as poems, songs, dramas, and folktales.

This is not the place to offer even a slight sampling of all the different kinds of oral literature produced by the Badagas: much has already been published elsewhere. ³⁶ We may, however, note that the ethical values of these people can be discriminated into several hundred categories. Some of the categories are very broad, in that they differentiate right from wrong, good from evil. But most of the categories are quite narrow and specific, dealing with such

matters as using the hearth, choice of a bride, how to plough, and indeed hundreds of other points of day-to-day guidance that any Badaga might find useful from time to time.

Cultural change

For many years now the Badagas have been adapting to their own use certain alien customs and techniques. Nowhere is this more evident than in agriculture, where crops of European origin are now grown on machine-made terraces with the help of chemical fertilizers, truck transport, scientifically improved seed, and even crop insurance; and in the tea plantations, which must maintain standards necessary to ensure that the leaf can find its way into national markets.

Such progressive attitudes mark the Badagas as an unusually successful farming community. Population figures from the official censuses bear out this success: in 1812 there were only 2,207 Badagas; by 1901 there were 34,178; today there are close to 160,000. By developing intensive cash-crop cultivation they have managed to accommodate this greatly increased labour force and still improves their standard of living and of public hygiene. The traditional relationships with neighbouring tribes have been all but abandoned.³⁷ There is now a sizeable middle class living in the four main British-built towns on the plateau, and the community can boast many thousands of college graduates. Badaga doctors, lawyers, teachers, information technologists, and government officials are very numerous, in India and abroad, and there are also a few professors, agronomists, and politicians. A remarkable fact is that fathers have so often been willing to invest the profits from cultivation or labour contracting in college education for their sons and daughters. Badagas though still largely a rural population, today have as high a literacy rate (in Tamil and English) as one might find in Chennai (Madras City).

Modernization

Modernization is a very broad term for what is really a variety of processes of cultural change. One form of modernization is industrialization, but in the Badaga case this has hardly occurred at all. Another aspect is urbanization, which has occurred to some slight extent: the few hundred highly educated professional people and their nuclear families tend to live in the few towns, if

indeed they are able to find work in the Nilgiris at all. Finally, another quite pervasive form of modernization is what we call Westernization. This is the adoption of selected cultural traits, of certain behavioral patterns, from what modern Western society and business have offered the world at large. Modern transportation, radio, newspapers, television, are just a few of the most obvious items in the Badaga repertoire of cultural borrowings.

For 20th century Badagas, as for many other Indian groups, these Westernizing patterns have included the following three important factors:

1. *English literacy.* Being able to read, write, and argue in English is today the mark of an educated Badaga. For over a century and-a-half the English language has been taught in high schools in the Nilgiris District, and so one finds tens of thousands of local people, including children, fluent in that language. It is in fact as much a lingua franca and a window on the outside world as is Tamil, the "official" language of Tamil Nadu State.
2. *Christianity.* Although only a few thousand Badagas were ever converted to one or another sect of Christianity, the impact of European missionaries since the late 1840s has been an important one. In the past many thousands of Badaga children who were to remain Hindus nonetheless attended mission-run schools where they learned to read and write English, Tamil, or Kannada; acquired some mathematical and geographical knowledge; and learned how to locate themselves in a modernizing world. Even Christian values were not altogether alien to their way of thinking, as many of their own proverbs indicate; and it is probably true to say that in many respects the small Christian community which arose from the first conversion (in 1858) has recently served as a positive role model for many non-Christian Badagas, especially in matters of education.
3. *European agriculture.* Early in the 19th century British settlers or local officials introduced the garden fork, and numerous European vegetables, including the commercially important potato, cabbages, carrots and turnips, among numerous other types. To these items may be added tea, which was introduced to India from China in 1835. Its cultivation, together with that of Australian eucalyptus and the main introduced vegetable crops, has transformed Nilgiri agriculture and the landscape so much that the indigenous millets that were the Badaga staple up till the beginning of the 20th century are scarcely, if at all, grown today. Those Badagas who

are still farmers—but the majority of all workers—are now growing tea or vegetables for a regional and national market, with the help of such key paraphernalia as irrigation pumps, chemical fertilizers, and crop insurance.

These three factors should not be viewed as simply external influences, for with the passage of time they have become a part of Badaga culture, through a process of public discussion and internalization that has shown the Badagas to be the masters of their own destiny and never mere pawns in some colonial scenario. It was they who decided to send their children to school in the mid-19th century, and it was they who decided to plant tea (initially stealing the cuttings from large commercial plantations run by British companies). This changing of traditional values and adaptation to the modern world have been going for over a third of the entire time the Badagas have been on the Nilgiri Hills, and it has if anything been quickening its pace since the British administration of the country came to an end in 1947. The popularity of computers, cellphones and national television of the past several decades is bringing irreversible changes in the Badaga world view.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976). There was also an abridged edition published (New York: Bantam Books, 1980).
2. Paul Hockings and Christiane Pilot-Raichoor, *A Badaga-English Dictionary* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992).
3. Paul Hockings, *Counsel from the Ancients: A Study of Badaga Proverbs, Prayers, Omens, and Curses* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1988).
4. A phratry, as used in this article, refers to a large social group made up of two or more clans, joined by some common bond, and culturally distinct from, or differently ranked from, other phratries in the society.
5. The term "non-literate" is distinct from "illiterate," which refers to those who cannot read or write in a partially literate society. "Non-literate" can be taken as a more accurate but less judgmental term than the formerly used adjective "primitive," and simply means that the society lacked literacy.

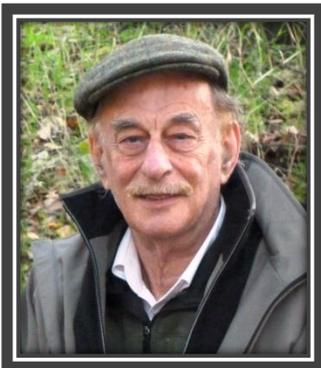
6. M. B. Emeneau, *Kota Texts, Part Four* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946 [University of California Publications in Linguistics]) 3, no. 2: 257.
7. Paul Hockings, *Ancient Hindu Refugees: Badaga Social History 1550-1975* (The Hague and New York: Mouton Publishers; New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980), p. 28.
8. A. Endre Nyerges, "The Ecology of Wealth-in-People: Agriculture, Settlement, and Society on the Perpetual Frontier," *American Anthropologist*, 94 (1992): 861.
9. Igor Kopytoff, "The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture," in Igor Kopytoff, ed., *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 3-84.
10. Paul Hockings, *Sex and Disease in a Mountain Community* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House; Columbia, MO: South Asia Books; 1980), pp. 98-99.
11. For an overview of the Wainad tribes, see Nurit Bird-David, "The Nilgiri Tribal Systems: A View from Below," *Modern Asian Studies*, 27 (1993).
12. Nyerges, "The Ecology of Wealth-in-People," p. 863.
13. Paul Hockings, "Badaga Kinship Rules in their Socio-Economic Context," *Anthropos*, 77 (1982): 851-874.
14. Johann Friedrich Metz, *The Tribes Inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills: Their Social Customs and Religious Rites*, 2nd edn. (Mangalore: Basel Mission Press, 1864), p. 61.
15. Brian Morris, "Hill Pandaram," in Paul Hockings, ed., *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1992), 3: 100.
16. Henry Harkness, *A Description of a Singular Aboriginal Race Inhabiting the Summit of the Neilgherry Hills, or Blue Mountains of Coimbatore, in the Southern Peninsula of India* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1832), p. 106, note.
17. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Siva: The Erotic Ascetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 18. A clear introduction to Lévi-Strauss's structuralism, with example, is Edmund Leach, *Claude Lévi-Strauss*, Revd. edn. (New York: Viking Press, 1974).
18. William Victor Karl, "The Religion of the Badagas" (B.D. diss., Serampore College, 1945), p. 8; Henry Whitehead, *The Village Gods of South-India*, 2nd edn. (Calcutta: Association Press, 1921), p. 126.
19. William A. Noble, "Nilgiri Dolmens (South India)," *Anthropos*, 71 (1976): 115-116.

20. Harkness *A Description of a Singular Aboriginal Race*, pp. 106-107, note; Metx, *The Tribes Inhabiting the Nilgherry Hills*, p. 64; James Wilkinson Breeks, *An Account of the Primitive Tribes and Monuments of the Nilagiris*, Susan Maria Breeks, ed. (London: India Museum, 1873), p. 44; Henry Bidewell Grigg, *A Manual of the Nilagiri District in the Madras Presidency* (Madras: E. Keys, Government Press, 1880), p. 226; M.K. Belli Gowder, "A Historical Research on the Hill Tribes of the Nilgiris" (unpublished manuscript, Ketti, Nilgiris Dist., 1923-1941); Karl, "The Religion of the Badagas," p. 8.
21. Belli Gowder, "A Historical Research," p. 54.
22. Jessica Benbow, "The Badagas—Beliefs and Customs," (unpublished manuscript, Bangalore: United Theological College, 1930).
23. Hanna Rhiem, "Die Badagas," *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift*, 27 (1900): 501; Henri-Pierre J.A. Tignous, "In the Nilgherries," *Illustrated Catholic Missions*, 26 (1911): 119.
24. Rhiem, "Die Badagas," p. 501; Edgar Thurston and Kadamki Rangachari, "Badaga," in their *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras: Superintendent, Government Press, 1909), I, p. 90; Whitehead, *The Village Gods of South-India*, p. 126.
25. Andi Dharmalingam, "The Hethaimman Festival," *The Hindu* (Madras), 29 Jan. 1971.
26. A patrilineage is a lineage in which descent is reckoned in the male line.
27. Belli Gowder, "A Historical Research," p. 54.
28. Dharmalingam, "The Hethaimman Festival."
29. Sri-Vaishnavism is the cult of the god Vishnu, one of the three universal gods (Trimurti) in Hinduism.
30. C. Hayavadana Rao, ed., *Mysore Gazetteer Compiled for Government, Volume II, Historical, in 4 parts*. (Bangalore: Government Press, 1930), p. 2368.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 2368.
32. Noble, "Nilgiri Dolmens," pp. 115-16.
33. Andreas Fedor Jagor, "Die Badagas im Nilgiri-Gebirge," *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, Jhrg. 1876: 202.
34. This section on Hette was originally published in Paul Hockings, "The Badagas," in Paul Hockings, ed., *Blue Mountains: The Ethnography and Biogeography of a South Indian Region* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 223-228, and is reproduced here by

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35. For a lengthier discussion of what values are and how they may be studied, see Hockings, *Counsel from the Ancients*, pp. 14-17, 39-46.
36. Hockings, *Counsel from the Ancients*; Paul Hockings, "The Man Named Unige Mada (Nilgiri Hills, Tamilnadu)," in Brenda E. F. Beck, Peter J. Claus, Praphulladatta Goswami, and Jawarharlal Handoo, eds., *Folktales of India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 125-129, 305-306.
37. A good analysis of relations between Badagas and these tribes early in the twentieth century is David G. Mandelbaum, "Culture Change among the Nilgiri Tribes," *American Anthropologist*, 43 (1941): 19-26. See too Bird-David, Nurit. "The Nilgiri Tribal Systems: A View from Below," *Modern Asian Studies*, 27 (1993). The only article comparing the interrelations of tribes on the Nilgiri Plateau with those of tribes on the somewhat lower Wainad Plateau.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Paul Hockings is a British anthropologist who studied the subject at the Universities of Sydney, Toronto, Chicago, Stanford and California. He has been doing research on Badaga society for the past fifty years, and, with Christiane Pilot – Raichoor, is the author of the only dictionary of the Badaga language (1992). He has also written or edited several other books on the Nilgiri people, as well as writing dozens of scholarly articles on the region. His forthcoming Encyclopedia of the Nilgiri Hills (Manohar) will be the most exhaustive 2-volume coverage of the district ever to have been printed. He is currently professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Illinois, and also Editor-in-Chief of the journal, Visual Anthropology.