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# ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN CEYLON, INDIA AND ON THE BORDERS OF TIBET

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Report of a lecture delivered to the Royal Central Asian Society on Wednesday, February 25, 1959, Lt.-Colonel The Lord Birdwood, M.V.O., in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen, I seem to remember when at school regarding anthropology as concerned with bones, stones and queer stories about savages. I am not sure which aspect is about to be dealt with but I do know that we have with us a great authority, one who is well known to our Society and who can be regarded in every way as an international figure. His Royal Highness Prince Peter served in the Danish Army as an officer. He has studied in London and in France; worked as liaison officer with the Greek Army and with the Chinese Nationalist Government in 1945. He is now busy in London studying at the London School of Economics for his Ph.D. degree in the subject of polyandry, which I understand is a sub-section of anthropology. We are looking forward greatly to light being thrown on what to all of us, I feel sure, is a completely obscure subject.

**M**Y Lord Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I first say how happy I am to have Lord Birdwood as Chairman; he certainly introduced me in very kind words. Incidentally, I would say that polyandry is a subject of anthropology; not a sub-section of it. - I have so far abstained from addressing the Society on this subject because it seemed to me it was not quite relevant to the Royal Central Asian Society, but since you have invited me to speak on the subject—perhaps having grown curious—I will give a short account of the research work I have been undertaking during the last few years in India and Ceylon.

It may be that the audience is rather considerable on this occasion because the subject is that of polyandry; at any rate, I notice a number of ladies in the audience! In this connection it might amuse you to know that during the war a group of doctors in Cairo asked me to speak on the psychological aspects of polyandry, but that lecture was banned by the Egyptian Government for fear that it might give Moslem ladies ideas. I do not think there is any danger of this happening here.

I will first explain why I chose the subject of polyandry; then give a short description of the polyandry practised in Ceylon, South India and on the borders of Tibet. It will only be possible to touch briefly on the subject because it is so very vast. I shall, of course, be pleased to answer questions later, if the Chairman allows, provided of course that the questions are of the answerable kind!

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### I. *Why Polyandry Chosen*

There are two reasons for my choice of the study of polyandry, one is psychoanalytical and the other anthropological. You are, no doubt, aware of the progress which psychology has made since the beginning of the present century, largely owing to the discoveries of Professor Sigmund Freud. I studied psychoanalysis in Paris in 1934 and 1935, because my mother happened to be a close collaborator with Professor Freud, so that since my youth I have been interested in the subject. A difficulty in regard to psychological findings through psychoanalytical methods in the West is that we do not quite know, as a result of discoveries made in connection with the human psyche, how much is due to the biological make-up of man, how much is due to the fact that he lives in society and how much is due to the cultural aspect of the society in which he lives. In fact it is necessary to differentiate between the biological, sociological and cultural aspects of man's psychic structure.

We know that all human beings have id, ego and super ego characteristics, but the contents of these three elements of the human psyche depend largely on the form of the culture in which the individual lives. The only way to differentiate between the three is to carry out comparative ethnographic research among people living in entirely different cultural conditions; especially to study the development of children, how they live in a different type of society, and what happens to the main complexes which have been discovered in Western psychology. For instance, how do these complexes fare in an entirely different culture such as the matriarchal.

With the idea of making this type of comparative study, I came to London to study anthropology at the London School of Economics in 1935-36 with a well-known Professor, Professor Malinowski. During the course of my study, it appeared to me that the choice of a society different from ours in the West meant limitation of the comparative research to two types of societies, the matrilineal and the polyandrous. In the matrilineal society the children inherit through their mother, who gives her name to the family; in the polyandrous society a woman has more than one husband. Eventually, the matrilineal type of society was rejected because it is avuncular, the mother's brother taking the place of the father as the authority. In such a family the father is a nice benign creature whom the children love very much, but who never asserts his authority. It is the mother's brother who has authority, who punishes the children and eventually the children inherit from this maternal uncle. In spite of these interesting aspects, the social organization and authority exercised in the family were not sufficiently different, fundamentally, from that in Western society.

Polyandry, on the other hand, appeared to be quite different because in such a society there is more than one father and authority is distributed over all the fathers. Furthermore, it was not usual to believe, at the time when I was studying the subject, that the mother had much to say in such a family. This seemed to be such a different society that it appeared worth while studying how children develop in it. If a little boy has three fathers

and one mother, what happens to his complexes, his development, his psychic structure when there is such an entirely different cultural and social set-up?

From the anthropological point of view polyandry is not very well known, possibly because it is regarded as being unnatural; we have become so accustomed to the habits of chickens and rabbits that polygamy seems to be more natural; also possibly the fact that the near Eastern people, the Moslems especially, practise polygyny makes that appear to us a more natural human organization than polyandry. Nevertheless, polyandry has interested many anthropologists in the past; in fact the early anthropologists looked upon polyandry as a stage in the evolution of human marriage. Darwin mentioned polyandry as a stage in the development of human relationship; McLennan, Herbert Spencer, Henry Maine and Robertson-Smith all took an interest in the subject. Moreover, polyandry was once practised in Britain, the authority for this being no less than Julius Cæsar who in *De Bello Gallico* (v. XIV) said: "In their domestic life they [the British] practise a form of community of wives, ten or twelve combining in a group, especially brother with brother and father with son. The children born of such wedlock are then reckoned to belong to that member of the partnership who was the first to receive the mother as a bride in the household." So some of your ancestors customarily practised polyandry.

It is known also on good authority that the pre-Islamic Arabs practised polyandry, the authorities being Strabo and the Holy Koran (iv, 26), the latter prohibiting polyandry between fathers and sons except in the case of marriages which have already taken place. In Central Asia polyandry is believed to have been customary; records show that the White Huns were polyandrous, as were also some of the tribes of the Hindu Kush, the Gaetae and the Massagetae. In Russia the Yaroslav Slavs are reported to have been polyandrous, and even in my own country the Spartans and Athenians are said to have practised polyandry in a minor form in classical times. Another example is that of the Vedic Indians, and the Indian epic, the *Mahābhārātā*, mentions the five Pandava brothers as sharing one wife, Draupadi, between them. Nearer home, the Gaunches of Lancerote in the Canary Islands were polyandrous until their conquest in the fifteenth century. Thus it can be seen that even from the anthropological point of view the subject is well worth investigating in order to learn whether there is still more to be learnt about it.

## II. Field Research

My wife and I at the conclusion of our studies in London in 1936 considered where best to go to study polyandry as practised in modern times; obviously Britain, Athens and Sparta were no longer on the list. We referred to authorities who had given accounts of polyandry in modern times, the greatest of whom was Professor Westermarck, who had for a long time been a professor at the London School of Economics. His lengthy list of polyandrous peoples included many of the Indians of South America, some of the Red Indian tribes of the United States, some Eski-

mos and the Aleuts of the Aleutian islands. In Asia, in which he included the Pacific, Westermarck mentioned some Siberian tribes such as the Chukchi, the Tibetans, some of the hill tribes on the borders of Assam, also some Himalayan tribes. Westermarck mentioned the South Indians, including the Todas of the Nilgiris, and those in Malabar along the south-west coast of India. In Ceylon, there were supposed to be some polyandrous people, too, some in Malaya, and some Philipinos, while Professor Linton of Yale University, U.S.A., has given a long description of polyandry among the inhabitants of the Marquesas islands in the Pacific.

Polyandry has been reported from Central Australia and from Queensland, but there is doubt as to whether it is true polyandry because there appears to be no marriage. As we progressed in our study of polyandry we came to the conclusion that it was important that polyandry should be a form of marriage, otherwise one could confuse it with other forms of union in which women live with more than one man.

It would have been possible to study polyandry also in Africa, in Madagascar, or among the Hottentots, the Bantus, Basutos, Banyankole, Baziba and Bapedi tribes and the Ifon in Nigeria. We decided that possibly the most interesting and pleasant areas in which to carry out our investigation would be the Himalayas, South India and possibly Ceylon, because there would be groups of polyandrous people not too far from each other and readily accessible.

Therefore in 1937 I set off overland with my wife to motor from London to India, and we covered the London to Colombo stretch from March, 1937, to September, 1939, so you realize that we took our time about the journey, which included a ride on horseback of 600 miles from the Punjab, to Srinagar the capital of Kashmir, through Western Tibet during the summer of 1938. Then the war brought us back to Europe in 1939, and I was in the Army for eight years. Thus it was that ten years later, in 1949, we went back to Ceylon to start where we had left off. After remaining the whole of 1949 in Ceylon and South India we moved to Kalimpong, in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal on the borders of Tibet, in 1950, and there we remained until 1957. We returned that year for my studies at the London School of Economics, and I hope very much to complete my thesis and obtain my Ph.D. at the end of the present year.

Now I will go into the details of our work in the field and try to give some idea of polyandry as practised in Ceylon; in the state of Kerala (which used to be Travancore-Cochin and the Malabar district of Madras); on the south-west coast of India, among the Todas of the Nilgiris; and then also among the Tibetans and others living on the Indian side of the frontier in the Himalayas.

#### *A. Ceylon, 1939 and 1949*

We left Ceylon in 1939 and returned there in 1949. We worked in an area known as Ratnapura, 60 miles inland from Colombo. Polyandry is restricted to the inhabitants of the interior of Ceylon, to the Kandyan province. The Sinhalese living in the maritime provinces have long since ceased to be polyandrous, but polyandry persists among the Kandyans

possibly because their culture has not been so much affected by contact with overseas peoples, with Europeans and Arabs and so on, who do not practise polyandry.

The Kandyan Sinhalese are polyandrous in two classes; there are the poor paddy-growers still living in clearings in the forest and between large rubber and tea plantations, and the families of the rich former chieftains, the *Rate Mahatmaya* as they are called in Sinhalese. The type of marriage among these people is of two kinds: marriage in *diga* and in *binna*. The first is marriage similar to the European in which the woman takes the name of her husband or husbands and goes to live with him or them. In other words, it is patri-lineal and patri-local, as we say in the jargon of anthropology. In *binna* marriage the man goes and lives with a woman, his children inherit from her and he is subject more or less to the authority of the wife, the wife in this case usually being an heiress who takes a husband and carries on with her branch of the family in her own house inherited from her parents. The husband is there only to help her produce children.

The Sinhalese speak of polyandry as associated marriages, and they have no real wedding ceremony as we in the West understand it. It is sufficient for a woman to cook for a man to be considered as his wife. A woman married to other men polyandrously will say "I cook for them all," meaning "I am the wife of all of them." The husbands are usually brothers. In some areas we visited it was regarded as immoral to have more than two husbands; two brothers only should be husbands.

The *diga* form of marriage, in which the woman goes to live with a husband, is preferred. There is a proverb that the *binna* marriage is dangerous for a man; it is "like standing behind a man with a hoe"; in other words, he could be left out in the street and the woman remain with the property and the children.

I am often asked: How is the relationship between husbands and wife regulated? I was told before I left for Ceylon and I had read in accounts by early writers that the Sinhalese left their cropper on the door-frame as an indication of who was with the wife, but I was unable to find any proof on the spot of that practice. When I mentioned it to the Sinhalese they thought it a good idea but said that tact was now all that was needed.

The property of the family is owned usually collectively by the men in the *diga* marriage; in the *binna* marriage the woman remains the heiress; the children of a wife married in *binna* take the name of their father and not of their mother. All fathers of children are known as *apucha*, which in Sinhalese means "father," but there are distinctive qualifications: big father, little father, etc. I met one who was known as "opium eating *apucha*" because there were four husbands and it was necessary to have a distinctive name other than "big" or "little."

When asked why they practise polyandry the poorer people say they cannot afford to divide the property; there is not enough to go round; if they keep the property together they can all live on it; they share the property with wife and children, and this is a solution of their difficulties. When asked if that is the reason for the poorer people practising polyandry, why do the rich and the former chieftains practise it, the answer

is: "Because they are powerful and have wealth; polyandry is the only way to keep the wealth concentrated and to retain power." So there are economic reasons for both classes carrying on polyandry. The rich practise it for economic reasons, as the poor do; the rich in order to keep power and wealth concentrated and the position of the family maintained. When I asked in one of the poorer families: "Why do you practise polyandry?" one of the husbands replied: "If one of us marries this lady she will certainly seduce the other brothers and we might as well accept her straight away as a wife."

With the annexation of the Kingdom of Kandy all Ceylon came under British rule and the British recognized the customs of the Kandians and included polyandry in that recognition by the Convention of 1815. However, in 1859, under Sir Henry Ward, polyandry was abolished at the request of some of the chieftains who, at the instigation of Sir Henry, insisted that marriages should be registered and that only one husband should be recognized. From then on the Kandians registered only one husband; the brothers remained bachelors nominally for the rest of their lives without the custom having changed because of legislation by a colonial power. Recently the Sinhalese Government brought out a new law known as the Kandian Marriage Act No. 44 of 1952, by which polyandrous marriage became illegal. I do not know to what extent the custom continues and whether only one of the husbands is registered today, but I rather think that is still happening and for this reason, that in spite of polyandry being illegal from the point of view of native legislation the custom will not die out.

#### B. Kerala, 1939 and 1949

In 1939 we were at Tellichery in North Malabar. In 1949 we went to Cochin, Ernakulam, and a town in South Malabar, Shoranur, where we carried out most of our field work. Former authorities have reported certain people of Kerala to be polyandrous, namely, the Nayars, Thandans and Tiyas (Izhuvass), Kammalans and other low-caste artisans on the coast of south-west India. I do not, however, agree that all are polyandrous, because of the necessity of defining polyandry in terms of marriage.

The coast of south-western India is a most complex one in which people who are entirely different in culture live in close proximity. One of the main differences is that some sections follow father inheritance, others follow mother inheritance. Those who follow mother inheritance are known as *marumakṣhayam*; those who follow the father inheritance are known as *makṣhayam*. The Nayars of Malabar always inherit through the mother's brother and the Tiyas of North Malabar are also *marumakṣhayam*. The South Tiyas (Thandans) are *makṣhayam*; they follow the father inheritance. These are the people who are polyandrous, so that in the case of the Tiyas, the section in the north are *marumakṣhayam* and not polyandrous, whilst those in the south are *makṣhayam* and polyandrous.

To cut a long story short, research has shown that the Nayars are not polyandrous because they have a wedding ceremony known as *tali*-tying,

whereby a small piece of metal is tied round a woman's neck by one of her clan when she comes of a certain age, and this is regarded as a symbolic marriage. Following this wedding ceremony the "wife" can consummate the marriage if she so wishes, and she is then free to live with men of her own caste or of the higher caste of Nambudri Brahmins in accordance with an ancient system known as *sambhandam*, which means marriage but of a much looser type.

It has been said that this Nayar custom of *sambhandam* is due to two causes: first, because the Nambudri Brahmins forbade the marriage of younger sons; only the eldest son was allowed to marry and inherit all property, including the wife or wives of his father. Younger sons could only live with Nayar women in *sambhandam* and have children by them. Since the Nayars are *marumakkathayam*, it follows that these children belonged to the Nayar caste and were Untouchables to their father. I have seen a Nayar child fall down and hurt itself and the father unable to pick it up because the child was of a different caste than he.

Another reason for this system in force in Malabar is that in ancient days the Nayar rajas of Malabar had militias of Nayars and in order to keep those soldiers properly disciplined they were not allowed to marry. The result was that two or more took one woman in common with whom they took it in turn to live in *sambhandam*. That custom is no longer practised.

The Thandans and the Tiyas of Cochin practise fraternal polyandry, that is, as in Ceylon, all the brothers in a family marry one wife. The wedding takes place in the compound of the house of the bride; she sits at one end of the row and all the brothers sit next to her in a line. They are feasted with *kanji* or rice porridge and all drink coconut milk in front of the assembled families of the people of the village. That is the wedding ceremony. When I enquired if they had any signal in connection with the regulation of their marriage I was told that sometimes one of the husbands occupied with the wife would leave his clothes on the verandah as a signal.

The brothers form a labour group; the property is owned collectively by all of them, but nowadays in the Thandan and Tiya families there is splitting up and three brothers will live with one wife in one part of the property, for instance, and two others will live with one wife in another part of the property. All the brothers of one of these families are known as the fathers of the children; they are known as *achan*, with distinctive appellations, as in Ceylon.

The artisans (who are in some way closely connected with the Kandians), the Kammalans, as they are called, have the same type of polyandry though more vigorous than the Thandans and Tiyas, possibly because the Kammalans have been less Europeanized. They are mainly goldsmiths and *dhobis* (washermen). They are less ashamed of their polyandry; they do not feel that they are backward, but that they are carrying on with their natural customs.

Other castes in Malabar, the primitive people who live in the forest, the Moplahs, Christians and Jews do not practise polyandry. This is what makes the region so complex from the point of view of study and investi-

gation, there being different layers of population all living and practising their own customs side by side.

The reasons given by the people of Malabar for the practice of polyandry are the same as those given in Ceylon, and they say it is because originally these castes came from Ceylon; that they went for a long stay in Ceylon where they acquired the custom of polyandry. They tell the story of a Perumal, one of the kings of Malabar, who was so pleased with his *dhobi* that he promised him a girl from the Ansari (carpenter) caste. It seems that the caste resented this to such an extent that they boycotted His Majesty, left Ceylon and refused to return and work for the King. The Perumal was most upset about this because he could not get his work done. It was only because of his insistence that the people should return to Malabar that the King of Ceylon agreed to send the Kammalans back with a Kandyan escort of Tiya (Thandans). It seems that they brought with them to Malabar the custom of polyandry, so that it apparently has a Sinhalese origin. However, there are no historical records. That is just the tradition.

Polyandry was abolished in Cochin, before the State of Kerala came into being, by the Cochin Makkathayam Act, 1940; this was the outcome of representation by leaders of the Tiya community in Cochin urging the abolition of polyandry by legislation, and because the community itself wished this, the law has been observed. Today, of course, the new Hindu Code forbids polygamy in general; hence both polygyny and polyandry are illegal in modern India.

### *C. Todas of the Nilgiris, 1939 and 1949*

In 1939 we spent most of the summer amongst the Todas of the Nilgiris; in 1949 we spent the whole of the summer with them. The Todas claim to be the original inhabitants of the Nilgiris. We worked in the midst of them at Coonoor and at Ootacamund, the capital. The tribe is a small one. There are some 500 original individuals. They have been studied and mentioned by many anthropologists. The Todas have extraordinary customs and are a most fascinating people. Every book on anthropology mentions them and they have become extremely well known, especially since the study of them by W. H. R. Rivers, whose book on the Todas is a classic. The problem is that the Todas, because of their contact with so many anthropologists, have themselves become anthropologists, and when questioned they give just the answers they realize the anthropologist wants. That makes one's study of the Todas all the more difficult.

When I arrived in the region for the first time in 1939 I followed an American anthropologist, Dr. Emeneau of the University of California in Berkeley, who had spent three years studying the Todas' language and songs. When I began my study they asked: "Are you the man who has taken on in succession to Dr. Emeneau?" They seemed to think this a post to which one was appointed. Rivers in 1908 experienced other difficulties when studying the Todas. An earlier anthropologist had come upon these people at the end of the last century, a man named Marshall,

and Dr. Rivers, when checking some of the names of the Todas gods which this earlier anthropologist had given, noticed that some of them were somewhat peculiar. Through his Toda interpreter Dr. Rivers discovered that the name of one of the gods in the language of the Todas, as recorded by Marshall, meant "Give me another rupee and I will tell you his name!" It is easy to understand what had happened.

The Todas are a pastoral people; they live a semi-sedentary, semi-nomadic life; they have large graded herds of sacred buffaloes, their pedigrees being known through the cow buffaloes. The processing of the buffaloes' milk into butter and buttermilk in the dairies is a religious ceremony, the dairy-man being a priest of the tribe. The priests are also graded; they have their high temples and their lower temples, corresponding to the various herds of buffaloes and their relative sacred characters.

During our stay amongst the Todas I noted fourteen gods of Sumerian origin which indicates a very ancient connection between the culture of the Todas and that of Mesopotamia. The Todas have no real wedding ceremony. This is one of the difficulties common to all anthropological research, in that a European expects to find some religious ceremony for the consecration of marriage. It is by no means general. Among the Todas the ceremony consists only of the man offering a piece of cloth to the girl whom he has chosen, or whom he has to marry because the parents wish it.

Another way of obtaining a wife is by *terershti* or the stealing of other men's wives. When a man wants somebody else's wife he goes with a friend and steals her from the man who has her; then he negotiates with the man from whom he has taken his wife to pay him the value of that wife in buffaloes, the price usually being fixed by the tribal council. It was interesting to note the valuation of the various ladies of the tribe in buffaloes. Those most highly valued, say ten buffaloes have great exchange value. I have known of a marriage of a very small boy to an elderly woman because it was hoped she would be stolen by some other man and the little boy would get the appropriate number of buffaloes.

Of course polyandry is another way of solving the problem of the shortage of women, because this really is the problem, there being among the Todas about three men to one women. Polyandry means that a number of brothers marry one woman. Apart from this, there is the Toda practice of having official lovers. Nearly all the women have official lovers and are expected to have them. Where there is no official lover one has to be appointed for a dead woman because such a lover has a definite rôle to play at her funeral ceremony.

Another curious feature of Toda culture is that the recognition of fatherhood is separate from marriage; there is a special ceremony by which a woman who is seven months with child has to appoint a father to that child, and he is not always one of the husbands. This is known as the *pursüt-pimi* ceremony, or the bow-and-arrow ceremony. The man chosen to perform the ceremony gives the woman a bow-and-arrow and she has to pronounce the name of the tribe to which the man belongs and henceforth that man is regarded as the father of her children, and he will always

be the father of all her children, unless the ceremony is repeated with someone else.

The Todas have no signals to regulate their polyandrous marriage. They rely on tact. The property is divided, so there is obviously no economic reason with them for the practice of polyandry. When I asked them why they were polyandrous they said that they were descendants of the Pandava brothers of the *Mahābhārata* and that was why. That was an anthropological answer. When I pointed that out to them, they told me that after all the real reason was that if each brother had a wife, the women would quarrel and drag the brothers into the quarrel; as they did not wish to quarrel it was better to have one wife only.

#### D. Tibetans, 1938 and 1950-57

The Tibetans are the largest polyandrous group in the world and the people the most interesting of all. About five million Tibetans live in an area of 600,000 square miles, about six times the size of the British Isles, extending from Szechwan to Kashmir, and from Koko Nor to Bengal. In 1938 we studied the Tibetans in western Tibet—in Lahul, Rupchu and Ladak, in the Himalayan foothills. We were in Kalimpong from 1950 to 1957.

Tibetan society consists of monks, lamas, Buddhist monks and ancient nobility, who have survived the taking over of the Government by the monks and who work in an uneasy alliance with the monks to govern the country; also there are agricultural herdsmen serfs, beggars and outcasts. The herdsmen serfs serve both the Church and the big houses of the nobility; the beggars and outcasts do not play a great rôle outside Lhasa.

All Tibetans practise polyandry in all the stratas of their society; they also practise polygyny and monogamy, and even conjoint marriage; that is a number of men are married to a number of women. Choice seems to depend on the economic advantage of the particular system. The Tibetans have elaborate wedding and betrothal ceremonies, quite different from those of the other peoples studied, ceremonies which last for many days and during which much food is consumed. Like the Sinhalese, the Tibetans have a marriage in which the men join the woman, and another in which the woman joins the men. The one in which the woman goes and lives with a man is known as *bag-na- (na-ma)* and the marriage in which the men join the woman is a *mag-pa* marriage. In fact, one should think of Tibetan marriage as revolving round an axis, the axis being the house and the name of the family; the desire is to keep the family name and hand it down from generation to generation, so that it may never die out. Property remains undivided and is inherited whole. All the brothers marry one wife and their children inherit the property and the name. If there are no boys, then the eldest daughter, the heiress, inherits the property alone and so keeps the name of the family, handing the property on to her children by the man who takes her name. The woman stands in when there is no male heir. This system is not unknown even in Europe. In Britain there are families in which the husband takes the

wife's name; in Spain also that is not unusual, while in some of the European Royal Houses it is a way of maintaining the succession.

The Tibetans also call the brothers "fathers" but, curiously enough, they call the younger brothers uncle or *agoo*. There is the strange idea that if a woman does not bear children that is the fault of the man, not of the woman. Rather than take another wife, they will bring in another man in the hope that he will sire a child. He is known as a *porjag* and is usually treated as one of the brothers.

If secondary wives are brought in; the men cease living in polyandry, for these wives make it a conjoint-marriage. There are no signals to regulate relations between the sexes; tact is sufficient. In winter, in Ladak, there is not enough fuel to heat the whole house and so all live communally in one room; in the case of the nomads all live in one tent, and conditions are much more public than one would expect. Property is undivided among the brothers; they own it collectively and have no wish to develop it. The tendency of the Tibetans is to economize; to restrict consumption rather than to expand production by acquiring more land.

The Tibetans economize in everything that they have; they restrict births because polyandry leads to less mouths being born. In Central Tibet (in the provinces of Ü (*dbUs*), of which Lhasa is the capital, and of Tsang) the Tibetans share one wife between fathers and sons. I have seen some families living in this way, the most famous being that of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tibet, who died some time ago. We met him in 1951 in Kalimpong when on his way to the United Nations as Tibet's representative; he, however, did not reach his destination because the question concerned was shelved. He was married to one Tibetan woman of noble family by whom he had four sons; he divorced her and married another woman by whom he had a son. She died and he was left a widower. He was then appointed governor of one of the eastern provinces where he met a minor official whose wife he thought attractive. He went to the husband and asked if he could marry her; the minor official thought it would be an honour for his wife to be married to the governor and he accepted him as second husband. Then, curiously enough, the governor's son by his second wife came to visit his father, and he fell in love with his stepmother and eventually joined the marriage, so that, in the end, this woman who had already a husband and children, was married secondly to the governor and thirdly to his son.

In another family the father's wife died and he married his daughter-in-law; that is, the girl to whom his two sons were already married. Finally, in a Tsang family which I knew, father and son had a common wife, the woman having been married originally only to the father.

The reason given by the Tibetans for this type of marriage is, again, economic; they do not want to divide the property; in fact, they say they cannot afford to do so. I was speaking to an old Tibetan who enquired how we in Europe managed to remain rich while not practising polyandry. I had not thought of that. It was an interesting question. I explained that when people in Europe married they tried to earn a living in order to found a new family. The old Tibetan said he had noticed what happened to Tibetans who became Moslems. For instance, some of

the families living in the neighbourhood had gone to work in the ruby mines in Burma; they were becoming poor because they had ceased to practise polyandry, and he looked at me in a sly way and added: "Now I understand why you Europeans come to India and other countries. If you practised polyandry you would stay at home."

The Chinese have always disapproved of polyandry in Tibet and have been very severe with the polyandrous people of Sikang and Szechwan, and also with those of Kansu and Tsinghai; they used to forbid polyandry on moral grounds and say that it was incestuous. Today the Chinese Communists are against polyandry for economic reasons; they feel that if more arms are not born they will not have sufficient labour to develop the country. By limiting mouths, arms also are limited; they need more arms to augment the labour force.

### III. *Results*

From the psychoanalytical point of view it seems that our observations confirmed that the people studied had the same psychic structure and the same complexes as we in the West have. The differences are seen in the development of the children because of their education and the cultural environment in which they live, and the emphasis of the complexes which they share with us is different than with us.

I cannot now go into details. I did some tests on these people, both Rorschach and T.A. tests, and it was interesting to note how different were the reactions of the Tibetans to those tests when compared with the reactions to similar tests made on people in other parts of the world.

Anthropologically it seems the research work has made the concept of polyandry more precise; it has linked it more with the question of marriage. Hitherto people had covered a number of practices which did not include marriage and which today we would call *cicisbeism*, i.e., where a woman lives with a number of men but not in a marital state. We gathered a great quantity of ethnographic material which confirmed all this.

There is one point I can make, and that is that I do not believe there is any relation between polyandry and the disproportion of the sexes in a community. If there are more men than women I do not think that has any bearing on whether people practise polyandry or not. When I was working in Ceylon, one of my interpreters asked me if since the war there were not a greater number of women in Britain and Germany because so many men had been killed in the war, and he added: "Are you thinking of adopting polygamy in Europe as a solution to that disproportion?" Obviously we cannot. And it is the same with these people: it is not because there are more men in the community that they adopt polyandry; its adoption has nothing to do with the number of men and women in a community. You will ask what happens to the women left over in a polyandrous community. If there is no disproportion of numbers, obviously there are a number of women not married in this fashion.

It is difficult to refer to any census; in Tibet there is no such thing, and it is practically impossible for one anthropologist to take a census in such a vast area. My impression was that many women in these com-

munities do not marry; they stay at home with their brothers and never marry. Many Tibetan women die in child-birth, so that there is always need in a family for someone to take the place of the dead mother; also many Tibetan women become nuns in the various monasteries. Again on all the trade routes there are many prostitutes and these certainly absorb a large number of unmarried women.

That is all I have now to say in regard to the studies I have been pursuing with my wife in Asia during the last 20 years. I will conclude by showing a few slides depicting the peoples of the areas in which we carried out our studies.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen, although there is no time left for questions I am sure you all feel that every minute of the last hour has been well spent. We would not for anything have missed the fascinating pictures and equally we would not have missed one word of what our lecturer had to tell us. For myself, all sorts of vistas have been opened up. My preference is for the Ceylon system which seems to look for the rich wife who can cook for one! It only now remains for us, Your Royal Highness, to join in wishing you all good fortune at the end of this year in the examination for your Ph.D. Personally I find it difficult to believe that there is anybody qualified to examine you. We thank you very much indeed for your lecture and the slides shown. (*Applause.*)

