

K. A PASTORAL SOCIETY AND PRESSURES TOWARDS CHANGE

It can be said with considerable certainty that the process of change in Parakuyo society has been, for instance, during the past few decades, markedly slower than in most other surrounding ethnic groups. This is the view of the pastoralists themselves, as well as of government officials, who often characterize the situation in terms of backwardness, ignorance and resistance towards modern methods of production and modes of life. However, processes of change are a fact, and only some central trends can be analysed here. Because social institutions form a complex network, where no part functions independently, changes can be characterized in terms of processes rather than as accidental changes. It is more prudent to show interdependence of two phenomena than attempt to establish a cause-effect relation between them. The following changes indicate the processes which are taking place in Parakuyo society.

49. THE IDENTITY OF WARRIORS IN CRISIS

The significance of the warrior grade has been diminishing since the times of relative peace between ethnic groups. An efficient defence system was important when success in pastoralism depended primarily on the effectiveness of the group in acquiring livestock by means of raiding. The society also had to be prepared to defend itself against counterraids and wild animals.¹ The peace brought between raiding groups since the times of colonization had a double effect on pastoralism. The positive effect was undoubtedly the end of civil wars and a considerable decrease of raiding (Ole Sankan 1974:7). On the other hand, the opportunities of warriors to show their prowess as warriors decreased. If there was nothing to be raided, also the needs for defence diminished. Consequently, warrior training camps (*emanyata*, pl. *imanyat*) have not been in use among the Parakuyo for a long time, and also among the Pastoral Maasai they seem to have lost significance.² Acquiring warrior skills and qualities seems to be concentrated in *olpul*-rituals, which involve normally only small groups.

Lack of meaningful tasks creates frustration, and the role of warriorship is questioned ever more often.³ The elders keep complaining that the warriors are more undisciplined than before, which is not necessarily proof of actual changes. More convincing is the fact that young men tend to marry considerably earlier than they used to. When prestigious roles of warriors have become scarce, the warriors do not see much point in staying in the warrior grade, where, on the other hand, they are subject to many kinds of rules and restrictions, of which they will be freed after moving into the grade of elders.⁴ The active role of warriors ceases only three years after opening the recruitment of the subsequent age-set, when 'power' is transferred to the newcomers. The age-difference between the youngest and eldest members of the same set varies up to 15 years, which is very high and causes friction within the age-sets. The oldest members are eager to resign and establish a family, while the youngest ones would be willing to continue in the warrior grade.

When the age of first male marriages has tended to become lower, it has resulted in structural changes also in the *olpiron* relations of the alternate age-sets. In the *eunoto*-ritual of 1979 it was realized that there were warriors whose fathers were members of the proximate age-set above, a fact which had been hitherto unheard of. This has become possible since the warriors have started to marry prior to their *eunoto*-ritual.

The recruitment period, which ideally is four years, tends to be lengthened up to seven or eight years, and occasional circumcisions occur even later. This tendency is probably linked with the absence of the second recruitment period, which would considerably level the age-differences in recruitment.

50. LOWERED MARRIAGE AGE OF MEN

The lowered first marriage age of men has consequences on the availability of eligible girls. When polygyny is still an ideal among the males, there is an accelerating competition for girls, with men now coming to the arena several years younger than earlier. This has caused excessive strain on bridewealth, which has increased enormously from the ideal

four heifers⁵, and communal decisions, not really very successful, have been made to bring it under control. There are also incidents that the young men acquire bridewealth through purchasing from inland and selling in the coastal area. In so doing they partially bypass the control of the elders.⁶ Reallocation of the bridewealth cattle has not, however, developed into a system. The responsibility of acquiring heifers belongs to the groom and possibly his father. Similarly, the bride's father receives the bridewealth without having to redistribute it to his kinsmen. Structurally the Parakuyo bridewealth is still more of token type, although it, because of its economic significance, already functions as an effective means of controlling marriages.

51. SPIRIT POSSESSION PHENOMENA

The spreading spirit possession (*eibungita embepo*) phenomena are also a significant indication of change. These phenomena, which more than 20 years ago are said to have been almost unknown among the Parakuyo, have become common among the women. On the basis of the spirit possession histories recorded in the Mindu Tulieni village area in 1975-76, it can be estimated that probably at least half of the mature female population has experienced possession phenomena.⁷ Characterized in negative terms, these phenomena have spread rapidly in epidemiological proportions across the wide Maasai plain, involving the majority of women. Although the phenomena are referred to in negative terms, they supposedly have overall positive functions. Going through possession experiences has been to many women the only outlet to a wider community. Possession is stereotypically only a transitional phase which often leads to the Christian Church, where the women may express themselves in a context and ways different from the traditional ones.

These phenomena and their indigenous explanations have spread from the neighbouring Bantu groups, where they have been common for a long time, and where they have developed into cults with drumming, dancing and initiated mediums. The usual diagnosis of the Bantu diviners gives a result that one of the several named spirits has entered the host and demands entertainment or services. Refusal would be punished by the spirit

through causing illness, barrenness, states of trance, aching limbs, chest pains etc.

There are two significant points to be noted. First, the phenomenon is said to have been unknown in the 1950s, but it became commonplace within a few years. Second, the phenomena concern almost exclusively only women. The emic exegesis of the emergence of the phenomena is stereotypical: the spirits have come to them from the neighbouring ethnic groups. The Parakuyo and Pastoral Maasai societies have been incapable of dealing with the phenomenon. Their own healers (iloibonok) have openly declared their unfamiliarity with the possession phenomena and refer the patients to Bantu diviners and healers, or to the Christian Church. A few ones might seek help from dispensaries and hospitals.

It has been an open question to many why the phenomena have become common during the last two decades. Few, if any, would point to the changes in socio-economic and political conditions during the same time. It is probable that the phenomena are related to these changes with demands of sedentarization, 'modern' clothing, and more recently, moving to permanent villages. The social conditions of the society and particularly the position of women must be considered, however, as basic sociological preconditions for the spread of the phenomenon. The spreading itself proceeds by means of learning and imitating; the girls learn the patterns of behaviour from the possessed women. The latent preparedness for 'possession' may be triggered by various symptoms, such as stomach troubles, headache, pains in chest, a bad dream etc. Many such symptoms are interpreted as signs of a spirit which demands attention.

These phenomena obviously have connections with the structural properties of the society, and particularly with the position of women in it. It is interesting to note that this phenomenon is not found at all among the Arusha, not even in the border areas close to the Kisongo Maasai. It is very well known among the Arusha that the Pastoral Maasai women are troubled by the 'spirits', i.e. the phenomenon could spread also among them, but this has not happened so far. One reason may be the different social position of the women.

There is also a strong psychological element in the process of spreading. Many psychically sensitive women are likely to credit a variety of symptoms to the influence of spirits, which has become a popular interpretation and is supported by the members of the society and the medical experts of the other ethnic groups. Spirit possession is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and it needs a different context to be analysed.

52. LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

The potentialities of livestock development have only minimally been utilized in the area. The import of high productive exotic cattle has been hampered by unfavourable health conditions, and local disease-resistant breeds of mixed origin are dominant. An attempt to improve the stock was made in 1980 by constructing a breeding station in Lugoba. Six bulls of the Mpwapwa breed were brought from the Mwanza area, and the station was opened by President Julius Nyerere in September 1980. By January 1982, about 150 cows had been served by these bulls, and several healthy calves had been born. It is yet to be known how disease-resistant and productive these cows will be. A sign of warning was the death of three of the bulls in August - October 1982.⁸

It is clear that only such breeds should be introduced and developed which can withstand the harsh health conditions. Other prerequisites, such as availability of grass and water, are not major problems in the area. But cattle diseases, particularly trypanosomiasis spread by tsetse flies, make the herding of productive milk cows rather hazardous (Msolla 1983:40-42). Also from the cultural point of view it is questionable, whether a sharp numerical reduction of cattle in favour of exotic milk cows would be desirable. Therefore, a smooth and gradual improvement of the existing breeds would increase the milk production considerably, and at the same time health risks of the animals and adverse influences on the socio-economic structure would be tolerable.⁹

In order to combat trypanosomiasis, the Ministry of Livestock Development had since 1980 cleared dense vegetation in the village area.¹⁰ By February 1983, almost 2 000 acres had been cleared, but the sprouting of new shots

from stumps has been disappointing, and new methods are being sought for controlling the growth of troublesome trees, particularly the combretum species (Kuokka 1983:53-61). It is felt that without making the natural conditions unfavourable to the spread of tsetse there will be no permanent results in controlling trypanosomiasis. Yet this is essential for the setting of the pastoralists in the village on a permanent basis.

The solution of changing the economy from pastoralism to agro-pastoralism by encouraging agricultural activities is not without challenge. It has been demonstrated that the requirements of agricultural and pastoral economies, particularly if pastoralism is trashumant or nomadic, do not fit together without problems. A more efficient solution with lower social costs might be the equilibrium model, where different ethnic populations exploit different niches and exchange products. It has also been shown that in stable ecological conditions there emerge internal forces which cause the separation of two or more ethnic populations (Abruzzi 1982:19-20). Instead of causing assimilation with other ethnic groups, these forces create institutionalized isolating mechanisms (Barth 1967). This seems to be the case with the Parakuyo.

53. FORMAL EDUCATION

Formal education, or rather lack of it, continues to be a major problem hampering development. Contrary to common opinion, the Parakuyo have expressed their willingness to participate in modern education, if certain preconditions are fulfilled¹¹. The most important of these is that education is geared to deal with the problems of the pastoralists, and not with those of agriculturalists. The Primary School of Mindu Tulieni is a typical example of failure to meet this requirement. From 1975 to 1983 no progress had been made in this respect, and no improvement was to be expected in the near future.

The school was built in 1971 to serve the education of the pastoralists. However, during the first six years only a few children of pastoralists attended it. In 1976, among 194 pupils only 13 were pastoralists, and the rest were children of agriculturalists who lived in the village area. Consequently, education was geared to meet the needs of the agriculturalists.

None of the teachers were familiar with the problems of pastoralism; there was no Parakuyo or Pastoral Maasai teacher.¹² In 1983 the situation was no better. There were no Parakuyo children in St. II and only three were enrolled in St. I.¹³

The poor attendance does not indicate, however, that they would oppose formal education. Private and group discussions prove the opposite. They see clearly the dilemma where they are as a group with no educated representatives to defend their interests in government quarters. They feel painfully the need to educate their own members to take care of cattle dips and to get teachers capable of instructing improved methods of animal husbandry, preventive medicine, vaccinations etc.¹⁴ Plans have been made to train a few boys for this task in Bagamoyo.

The attitudes towards formal education are ambiguous. The Parakuyo see clearly that without educated youth they will be condemned to a peripheral status, both politically and economically. Their lot will be to lose grazing ground to expanding agriculture and modern livestock grazing on government farms. Yet they are convinced of their expertise in matters concerning pastoralism. But they cannot defend their interests without educated members of their own group. The ambiguity of attitudes is clearly seen in discussions on education. In principle, the value of schooling is not questioned, but in practice it brings about several problems. The question of unsuitability to pastoral interests has been mentioned already. Another problem is the rearrangement of herding, which has been a task of boys in school age.

The most serious questions are, however, connected with the identity of Parakuyo pastoralism. The government does not allow the school children to wear traditional clothing. Particularly the forced abandonment of bead decorations, an essential part of Parakuyo clothing, is felt to be unjust. Traditionally, they have communicated their identity among other people through uniform clothing and decorations with symbolic colours. The school would make them unidentifiable with the national uniform shirt and shorts or blouse and skirt combination. Bitter comments have been recorded of their opinions concerning the forced change of clothing. Would the representatives of the government be prepared to wear the clothing of the

Parakuyo, they comment. Why then they should wear the clothing of the Swahili?¹⁵

Until presently, the Parakuyo men have not seen much point in educating girls and women, because they would not represent them in government offices. They also fear that educated women would be difficult to control, and they might even become married to non-Parakuyo, which would be entirely unacceptable. Also the women seem to be ambiguous in their opinions. They love the decorations and traditional clothing, but at the same time they want to learn new skills. Adult education classes have not been very successful in attracting people. This may be more due to poor implementation than unwillingness. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) has in the MT village a promising education program, which after resettlement of the pastoralists in the village will hopefully make good progress among women and children particularly.

In learned circles there is hardly any disagreement as to the basic principles of the Parakuyo development policies. A Parakuyo elder, wise and experienced, expressed the basis of their existence in this way: "Mikiyoo-re ai kata duo enkiteng tiatua iyook Iparakuyo. Kake tadua pee eoruni iyook inkishu, kitumutate ena abila ang iyook Iparakuyo" (We Parakuyo will never be separated from the cattle. Look, if cattle will be taken away from us, this our tribe, we Parakuyo, will be finished)¹⁶ Pastoralism is one central element in ethnic identity, and clothing is felt to be important in maintaining and communicating it. The same elder commented on this: "Aaku kiimin kenya iyook oo metaa meekure eyiolouni iyook aajo iyook opa kulo." (For we shall disappear and there will be none any more who would know that we are those, i.e. Parakuyo)¹⁷ By these statements the framework for development has been laid down.

54. PROSPECTS FOR SEDENTARISATION

The villagization program effected in 1976 was an attempt to settle all the rural people into planned villages. This concerned also pastoralists, who were supposed to move to the pastoral village area allocated to pastoralists only. There was some success, although there were families who moved

back immediately after operation.¹⁸ Despite efforts the people have been moving from place to place mainly because of cattle diseases. The settlement and population survey made in 1983 shows that a substantial number of pastoralists moved away from the village area soon after villagization, in 1976 and 1977. The Mwale area (Maps 4 and 5, pp. 14-15) of Pongwe Mountain was totally deserted, as well as the area northwest of Kihangaiko. Many moved to areas southeast and southwest of Lugoba, some even close to Chalinze. Several families moved as far as to the area northeast of Miono. These moves were effected mainly in 1979-82.

In February 1983 there were more than 750 Parakuyo pastoralists (children included) who were supposed to live in the Mindu Tulieni village. Less than 200 of them were in fact living in the village area. Many of these were temporarily outside the village with the main bulk of cattle in more healthy areas. In many kraals only milk cows and calves were brought to the kraal over night.

These moves have diminished prospects for any kind of development. They have affected house-building, control of human disease, subsidiary cultivation, regular dipping of cattle, availability of clean water, education of children, adult education programs, and all kinds of planning. The Village Development Committee has not functioned satisfactorily. The dispersal of people to a wide area has also increased tension between the elected leadership and the more traditionally oriented ones. Countless meetings have been invited to discuss the use of funds collected through cattle tax of sold animals.¹⁹ Some villagers had doubts whether the money collected was used in the way decided by the villagers. Plans of the village leadership for the common enterprises of the village, such as the shop and butchery, were resisted by others apparently because of similar fears.²⁰

Clearing the area of tsetse flies, although rather costly, would be necessary for permanent settlement. It would solve part of the problems, but not all. It is unrealistic to think that there would be space enough for all the pastoralists to move there with all their cattle. It is very probable that reserve areas have to be kept for times when cattle diseases exceed in the village area (Kuokka 1983:64-65). The traditional

security measures of dividing the herds in different areas are still a necessity for reducing risks. In spite of these temporary moves, the majority of people could live and the milk cows be herded in the village area. Investment in house building, education of children, medical care of cattle, and other village development plans would become possible.

Compared with the experiences of sedentarization in other pastoral areas (Lewis 1969a; 1975; Livingstone 1979; Gulliver 1975; Schneider 1957; Saltzman 1971), it would seem as if the mysterious (Herskovits 1926; Schneider 1957:278-83) element in viewing pastoral societies has been exaggerated. The forces which are linked with accumulation of livestock and different types of moves are manifold. Relying on experiences of the Somali pastoral societies, Lewis has emphasized that in order to be successful the alternatives have to seem as natural as possible to the pastoralists, and that a successful innovation is normally introduced by 'outsiders', whom the pastoralists can imitate if proved useful (Lewis 1975:437-39.²¹ Some studies show that many successful settlements have been initiated by religious movements, Christian or Muslim, thus involving a change in ideology (e.g. Evans-Pritchard 1949; O'Brien 1971; Lewis 1975), and that these partially new ideological structures provide a motivational basis for new efforts.

NOTES to Chapter K

- 1 For example, the Kikuyu borrowed, among other things, the military system from the Pastoral Maasai, in order to defend themselves and their property against raiding groups; Lawren 1968:579-83.
- 2 Already L. James complained in 1939 that the emanyata institution had been abolished among the Kenya Maasai, and consequently the period spent in the warrior age-grade had shortened considerably. They also had started to marry much earlier than before; James 1939: 66. According to Jacobs, the emanyata was still in the 1960s in function and it functioned as an educational institution of the warriors, who were periodically instructed by their olpiron elders; Jacobs 1963:41-42.
- 3 Among the Kenya Maasai it was reported in 1939 that the Maasai seemed to have lost interest in life and that all they wanted was to be left alone; James 1939:63, 67. There had been a series of protest phenomena against the colonial government, although with poor results; King 1971a, b.

- 4 Recently there has been discussion on whether the modern military force in African countries is an extension of the traditional warrior tradition; Mazrui 1977. There is considerable interest in Africa to study the defensive systems of Africans against foreign intruders in the past, and in this way illuminate one important and neglected aspect of African history; Uzoigwe 1977; Uchendu 1977; Ocaya-Lakidi 1977. However, it has been questioned whether the raiding and war-faring traditions are the type of heritage which should be built upon in nation building; Southall 1977:166. Losing meaningful activities in defence and raiding is likely to cause unpredictable changes in the role of warriors, and in the society as a whole; Dalton 1969:76.
- 5 It was reported by Jacobs in 1965 that the bridewealth among the Pastoral Maasai was the ideal four heifers; Jacobs 1965c:156.
- 6 Bridewealth has not yet, however, changed so that it could be transferred in cash, which would still further loosen the control of elders over young men; Dalton 1969:78.
- 7 In addition to recording spirit possession histories of those who claimed having been possessed, information was obtained from local healers who treated also Parakuyo women. The following sources illuminate the complexities of these phenomena: UTA 1976/33; UTA 1976/34; UTA 1976/42; UTA 1976/59; UTA 1976/71; UTA 1976/72; UTA 1976/82; UTA 1976/91; UTA 1976/98; UTA 1976/104; UTA 1976/106; UTA 1976/129. See also Swantz 1977:163-71.
- 8 The use of the station has been limited by the dispersion of the pastoralists to a wide area due to the livestock diseases. The village chairman and secretary have been using the services extensively, and within a few years results should be available for evaluation. By February 1983 the calves born in 1981 and 1982 had grown promisingly and seemed healthy; UTAf1982/14.1./22; UTAf 1983/27.1./1-3.
- 9 Anthropologists have paid attention to the high social costs of the pervasive changes in the socio-economic base of a society. Economic improvement may be, but not necessarily, a disadvantage from the viewpoint of the social and cultural integrity and identity; Dalton 1969:76, 79.
- 10 UTAf 1982/14.1./22-23.
- 11 UTA 1976/96/1-7.
- 12 In June 1976, the number of Parakuyo children in the Mindu Tuliene Primary School was as follows: St. I: 5; St. II: 1; St. III: 1, St. IV: 2; St. V: 0; St. VI: 4. Only two girls were among them, those of the village secretary. The headmaster of the school was disappointed with the very small number of pupils. Before the beginning of the school year the teachers were supposed to go around the settlements to enroll children. They were able to get boys for the first few weeks, but gradually they disappeared. There has

been a common reluctance to send girls to school. During the enrollment rounds the teachers found that the girls had 'disappeared' from the family compounds.

- 13 UTAF 1984/4.2./30; UTAF 1983/9.2./58.
- 14 There were recurrent claims that the caretaking of the dipping facilities was not satisfactory. The Parakuyo said that if their own boys were trained to be in charge of the dips, they would be more responsible, because they know how to handle cattle. In addition, the elders could effectively control the actions of the workers, if they were members of their society; UTAF 1976/04/42-43.
- 15 The attitude of the government to clothing has become more tolerant during recent years. Still the men have to wear trousers and cover their long hair when travelling to major centres. Women are allowed to dress traditionally also when travelling to towns. In the Kariakoo market area in Daressalaam one sees daily tens of Parakuyo and Pastoral Maasai women in traditional clothing selling medicines; UTAF 1983/13.2./ 70-73; UTA 1976/96/1-2.
- 16 UTA 1976/96/7.
- 17 UTA 1976/96/1.
- 18 UTAF 1976/05/43-44.
- 19 In addition to the tax of Tshs 10.- for every sold head of cattle and Tshs 2.- for a goat and sheep, which has been in use for several years, an additional tax of Tshs 100.- for a sold head of cattle was introduced in 1982. During the first three months since November 1982 the latter tax had yielded about Tshs 40.000 for clearing the village area of tsetse flies; UTAF 1983/4.2./32.
- 20 In 1976, there were plans to buy a house in Lugoba and establish a shop particularly for the needs of the Parakuyo. Also opening a butchery was planned in the same place. Many elders expressed, more or less indirectly, their fears concerning the use of profit. It was not clear whether the 'village' should be understood, in practice, as the village leadership. Apparently the doubts had no substance, but all the same the plans did not materialize; UTAF 1976/04/46-55.
- 21 Also Dalton and Schneider have emphasized that the unwillingness to change production, to modernize it, is an expression of the great risks inherent in new experiments; Dalton 1969:78; Schneider 1974a:264-65. One could only refer to the initial reluctance of the Parakuyo to treat their cattle in dips in the early 1970s.