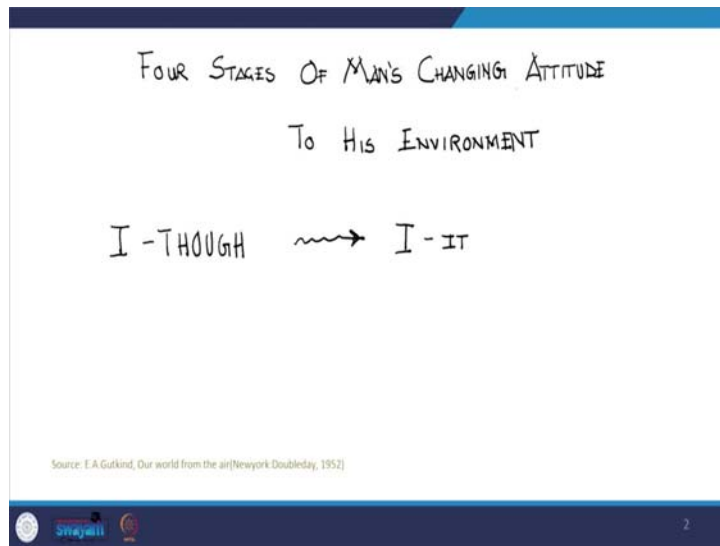


International Studies in Vernacular Architecture
Professor Ram Sateesh Pasupuleti
Department of Architecture and Planning
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee
Lecture 14
Tradition and Transmission

Welcome to the course international studies in vernacular architecture. Today, we are going to talk about tradition and transmission.

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From the discussion on man and his relation with the environment, we have to discuss about four stages of man's changing attitude towards his environment. So, that is where Gutkind brings about four different stages of relationship, how an I-THOUGH relationship takes place into I-IT relationship.

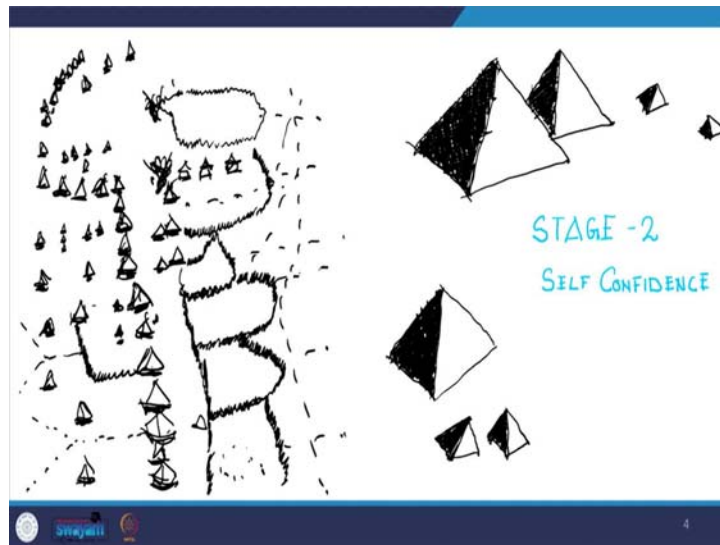
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In stage one, which is actually characterised with fear. In our earlier class also, we discussed about how the foragers society, how they have transformed into agricultural societies and that has given more secured perceptions towards their belongings. So, whether it is that day or today, the concept remains the same humans with his digging stick, he was digging the hills or any natural resources to make his dwelling to create his agricultural products or to create which is needed for his survival.

Today, we are cutting down the hills with proclains or any kind of excavators. So, that day it was with a stick today we are doing with the machines. So, the very first stage is his survival process and he has to create his a territorial belonging that is actually characterised with a fear, in olden days, he was making his dwellings and he was making boundaries, so, that he can protect from the enemy tribes or any wild animals.

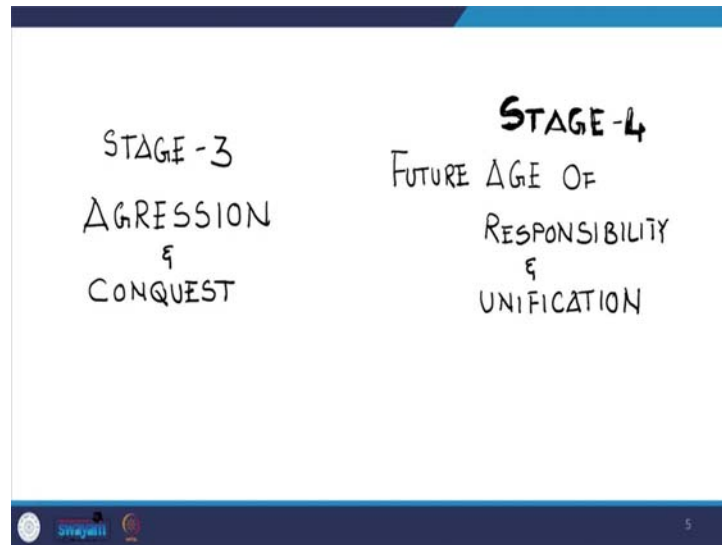
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The very first stage what we talked about the I-THOUGH relationship is how the man has integrated the nature in his setting. So, if you look at some of these African tribes, so, how their dwellings and how the settlements are coherent with the natural settings, similarly, in the Philippines, the rice farms, farming lands, the terrace gardens, the terrace farms, all these are depicting the how man has negotiated with nature and then how he tried to adapt along with the nature. But, whereas, in the stage two, we talked about the stage of self-confidence.

So, he started realizing that, yes, I can survive, I can tame the nature I can domesticate animals, and so, in that way, he started building a representation for himself. So, that is where for example, you talk about the pyramids, the tombs, which he has made, the temples which has made. So, these are all examples of showcasing his self-confidence.

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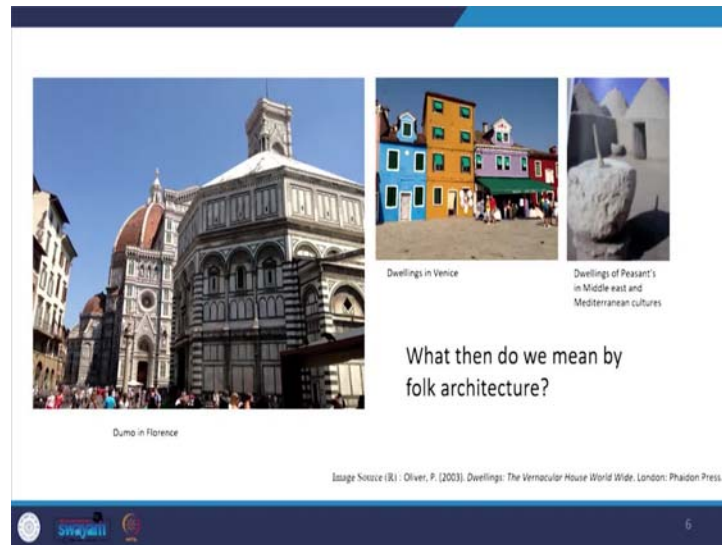


Similarly, the stage three which talks about the aggression and conquest, so, the reproduction capacities have improved, their storage capacities have improved. So, in that way, the population demographics have drastically changed in that whole process of improving their capabilities in taming the nature. So, that is where we call it to the stages of aggression and conquest. Today, we are at this stage, we are cutting down the hills, we are taking out the stones, we are building settlements, so, this is where we are in this stage.

With the stage 4 which he talks about the future age of responsibility and unification. So, in fact, even till today, we are talking about how can we adapt to the climate change. Yes, how can we talk about the principles of sustainability, how can we meet our present needs, at the same time how our future generations can also sustain, how we can rely on alternative hydro-energy, how we can rely on the solar-energy, how can we not disturb the nature much. So, there is a consciousness parallelly developing. So, this is where we talk about the future age of responsibility and how we actually unify in that process.

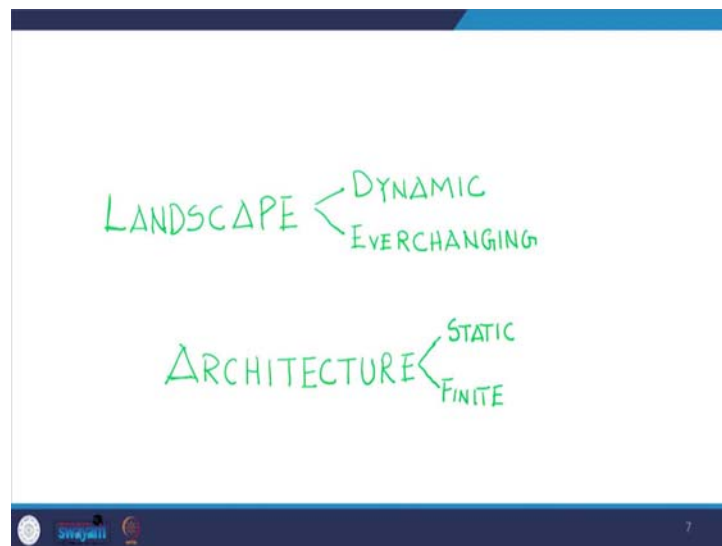
When we talk about this aggression, when we talk about the self-confidence and this is a result of these traditions, the power, the authority has been showcased in the evolution of the settlements. So, till 1960's much of the literature have talked or only on the monumentality of these traditions, but not much has been talked about the common man's traditions the folk traditions.

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So, when we talk about the dwellings in Venice, or in the peasants in the Mediterranean cultures present dwellings, so not much of the work has been done on this part of the dwellings.

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When we talk about the context of landscape architecture, the landscape itself, it is considered as both dynamic and it is ever changing. And whereas architecture is always treated as static, and finite.

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The aesthetic quality is not specially created for each house. - it is a model itself as the result of collaboration of many people including the maker and the users of buildings and artifacts and is handed down through generations. This is termed as *Traditional*.

Tradition

- Honored by Everyone
- Collective Assent
- Acts as a Discipline

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So, when we talk about traditions, these aesthetical qualities, they are not just specially created for each house, but whatever the traditional dwellings, so these are a result of collaboration of many people, including the maker and the users and artifacts, and they are being transmitted down from one generation to another generation. So, tradition is nothing but a packets of information that has been passed on from one generation to another generation. So tradition, if I have to summarise it, honored by everyone and it is a collective assent and it acts as a discipline in a particular group.


So, in my society, what I learned from my ancestors is my language, my eating habits, my taste, my decorative skills, so all these things have been transmitted from my ancestors to my parents and now I am passing on to my children, the way we celebrate our festivals, the way we eat food on banana leaf for during the occasions. So, all these or the transmissions, which we got to know from our ancestors. And in a particular society, it is collectively honored by everyone, they have a mutual respect to each other.

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The folk tradition, is the direct and unself-conscious translation into physical form of culture, its needs and values- as well as the desires, dreams, and passions of a people.

It often referred to the "ideal" environment of a people expressed in buildings and settlements, with no designer, artist, or architect with an axe to grind.

Bernard Rudofsky(1964) calls as **non-pedigreed architecture**.



Rapoport (1969) House Form and Culture. PRENTICE-HALL, INC., Engle Wood Cliffs, NJ.

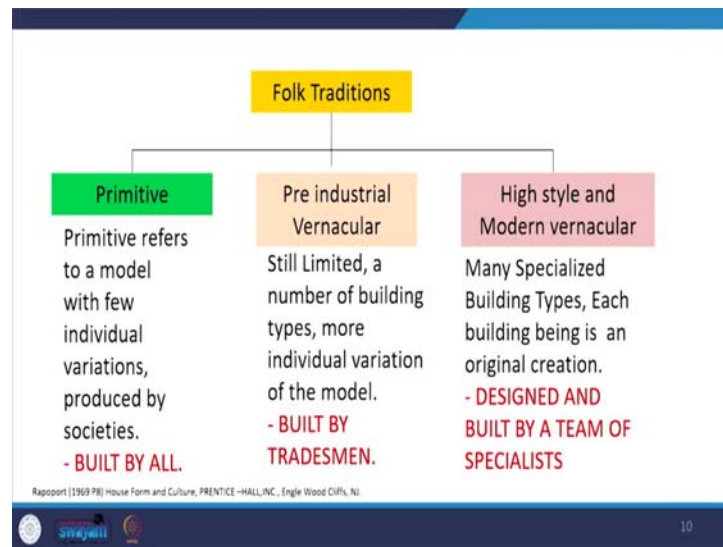
Rudofsky (1964) Architecture without Architects: A short introduction to non-pedigreed architecture. Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden City, New York.

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And when we talk about these folk traditions to common man's traditions, it is a direct and unselfconscious translation into a physical form of culture, based on its needs, and values, as well as the desires dreams and passions of the people. So, that is where it is referred as the ideal environment of people expressed in the buildings and the settlements, where there is no role of a professional designer, or an artist or an architect.

So, this is where the very preliminary understanding of Bernard Rudofsky in the modern exhibitions, it is photographic exhibition, where he actually documents a variety of folk architecture, and he refers to as non-pedigreed architecture. And later on, almost Rapoport in his seminal work of house, form and culture, he talks about how these folk traditions are classified, in a primitive, pre-industrial vernacular, high style and modern vernacular.

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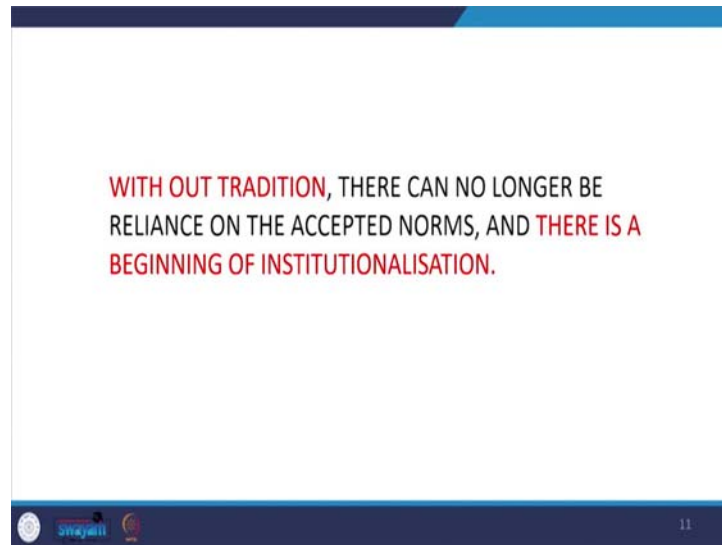


So, let us talk about a primitive. What is primitive? It refers to your model with a very few variations, which is produced by the societies by themselves. It is built by all, whether the second process is there is a limited number of building types, but more individual variation of these models. So here, it was a tribal society, if you go to any of these tribal societies, in Africa or any other places, like you see, many of their houses reflect in a similar form, similar model, because whether it is my house or your house, everyone comes together and build their house. It is not, it is everyone's business.

So, whereas here different specialisations have been transformed. A person who was working with the mud became a potter, a person who was working with the wood, he became a carpenter, so in that way he needs a weaver needs a different space, a carpenter needs a different space, a potter needs a different space, so that is how the specialisations have gradually evolved, and these are all built by the tradesmen.

And whereas, in the high style and the modern vernacular, this is where many specialised building typologies have evolved, and each building is an original recreation, and this is designed and built by a team of specialists.

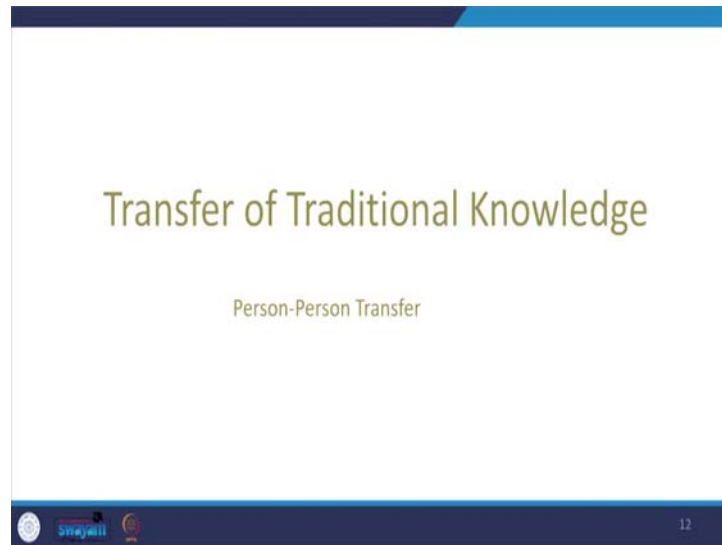
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So, this is how we talked about the traditions, but what happens without the tradition. There can be no longer a reliance on the accepted norms and there is that is where the beginning of the institutionalisation. So here, we are talking about the mutual respect how, as a collective assent, how we honor together, a particular norm or a practice, but when we do not trust each other when we do not follow each other and that is where a set of codes, a set of norms, rules, regulations, will come into the practice, how to do, and how not to do, this is where the institutionalised process comes into the picture.

Including our social institutions such as marriage, marriage is a social institution, how? Whether it is a patrilineal society, whether it is a matrilineal society, how the properties has to be inherited, so all these are the processes as a result of living practices and how when the traditions are no longer able to sustain and that is where it has given result to the institutionalisation process.

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And, and that is the background of the traditional understand, traditional understanding on these traditions, but then how are these traditional knowledge get transferred? So, today, we are going to talk about the person to person transfer, and how these transmissions are relevant in the architecture and the vernacular architecture mainly, and how, today what kind of situations they are facing on.

So, I am going to discuss about few tribal habitats and also few communities across the world and how their vernacular processes, how they used to adapt with these situations and what are they now, what are the reasons behind these, whether it is a decorative practice, whether it is a house construction process, or how time have brought many changes into their habitats.

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In primitive societies, there is diffuse knowledge of everything by all, every aspect of tribal life is everybody's business. No technical vocabulary, because there is little specialization beyond age and sex.



Samoan fale construction 1896 in polynesia

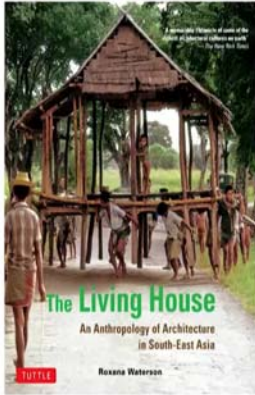
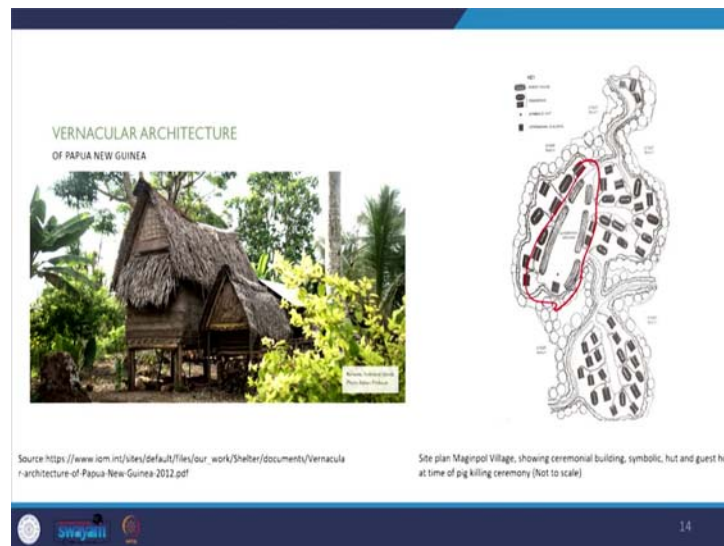


Image (R) Source: By Charles S. Greene (1856-1930)/Publisher: San Francisco news co. *uploaded by Teinesavali - Image from 1896 published book Talofa, Samoa: A Summer Sail to an Enchanted Isle ; (USA,1896)[1], Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8522054>

So, in the primitive societies, there is always a diffuse of knowledge of everything by all and every aspect of tribal life is everybody's business, there is no technical vocabulary, because there is a little specialization beyond age and sex, and many of the African tribes, a woman, men, children, everyone knows everything there, so they come together, and they build these houses, whether it is a mud houses, or any kind of grass houses made out of grass, so they all come together, they know each and every one of the community knows their skills.

So, in fact, in the polynesian tribes, where they call it as a Samoan fale constructions, so that is where many all these communities that come together and they build these fale. And in Roxanna Waterson's work on Sa'dan Toraja tribes in Indonesia, where, you can see that the whole male members of the community they come together including the child, the youngsters, they are all coming together to build a particular house and making it, they erect it, and move to that place.

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In a Papua New Guinean context, where you can see that all these dwellings are more or less they have a similar form, the similar built with the similar materials, similar skills, but they also have these kind of central public spaces where the ceremonial grounds, where they celebrate their festivals, where the community comes together, where they sacrifice the pigs and distribute along with the community.

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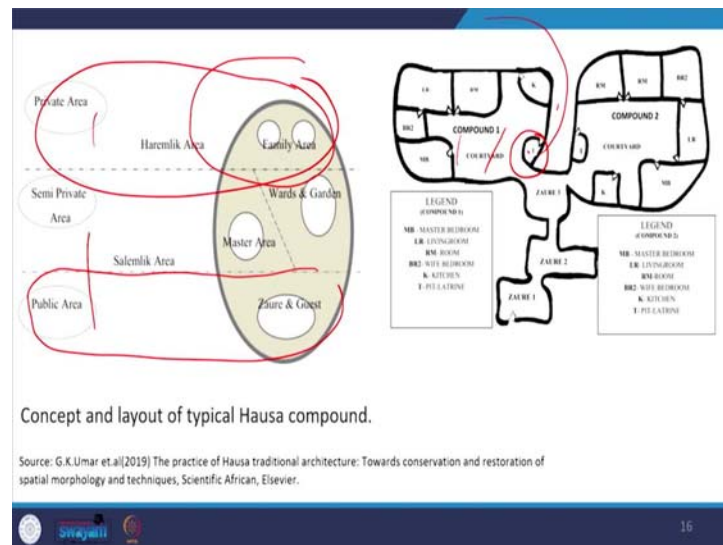


And these are the so called ceremonial buildings, which are also the cultural artifacts were these called yam houses. And these yam houses are made with the finest wood, and they spend they give, they intricate decorative look, and so that they reflect the pride of that particular community. Yam houses are nothing but they store their food products, there is a root called yam. So, that is how they store these roots for the future days.

So, the more storage of food you have the richer they try to portray it. So, because the storage of food is an important factor in the tribal society, because it can sustain the future generations. So, in fact, if the storage, the food is scarce, obviously, it is depicted gradually in their appearance of these ceremonial buildings and the maintenance of the ceremonial buildings. So, it showcases that how rich is the society is all.

In a similar way, they have developed different variations of housing for the elderly, how the elders house could be a little low height. And whereas they have this family houses, and the ceremonial building, so they brought this distinction, and what how the ceremonial building, the religious buildings, have to look like and how the elderly houses have to look like so they started building a distinction of this process.


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In the African context, we talk about the house or traditional architecture, where these tribes, they are all built by the fathers and the sons, the male plays an important role. And here you can see that, the most important of their house from the Salemlik area to Haremlik area, so where you have this public area and the semi-private area and the private area, most of the time the women spend their time over these places. Because that is where it is a very conservative society and the father have taught how to build these houses to his son, and it has been transferred from there to his sons and his sons further.

So, if you look at this, so you have the typical layout of the Hausa traditional architecture is you have these open courtyards and you have these lavatories on towards the outside or maybe for the various hygienic regions. And you have these the master bedroom and the living room and the wife's bedroom. And in that way, there is a clear segregation of the transition from the public areas to the semi-private areas and the private areas, because the kids can play in these courtyards with a sense of safety.

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Source: G.K.Umar et al.(2019) The practice of Hausa traditional architecture: Towards conservation and restoration of spatial morphology and techniques, Scientific African, Elsevier.

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Figure 13.7. A decorated Hausa dwelling, Kano, Nigeria, about 1960. The lower walls and the geometry.

These motifs could be categorized into four classes by their origin as follows: (i) The first is by modelling a fresh mud plaster manually into arabesque feature. (ii) The second by cutting ornament into wet cement or mud plaster. (iii) The third by plastering the wall with "Makuba". (iv) Fourth by painting on a plain white wall.

Source: G.K.Umar et al.(2019) The practice of Hausa traditional architecture: Towards conservation and restoration of spatial morphology and techniques, Scientific African, Elsevier.

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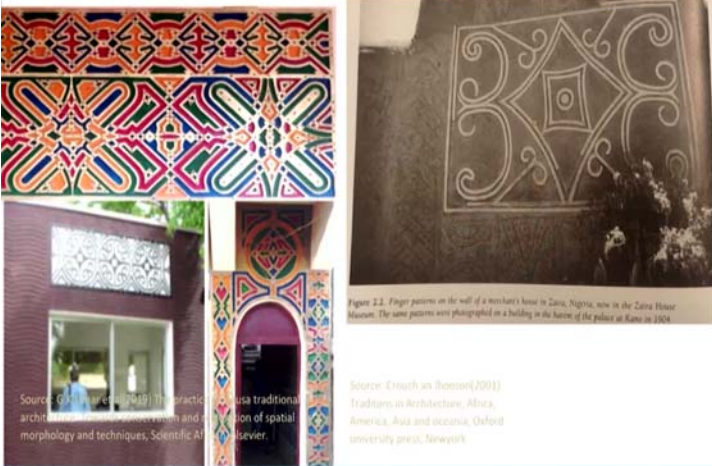


Figure 21. Finger patterns on the wall of a merchant's house in Zaria, Nigeria, now in the Zaria House Museum. The same patterns were photographed on a building in the palace at Kano in 1904.

Source: G.K.Umar et al.(2019) The practice of Hausa traditional architecture: Towards conservation and restoration of spatial morphology and techniques, Scientific African, Elsevier.

Source: Knutson (2001) Traditions in Architecture, Africa, America, Asia and Oceania, Oxford university press, New York

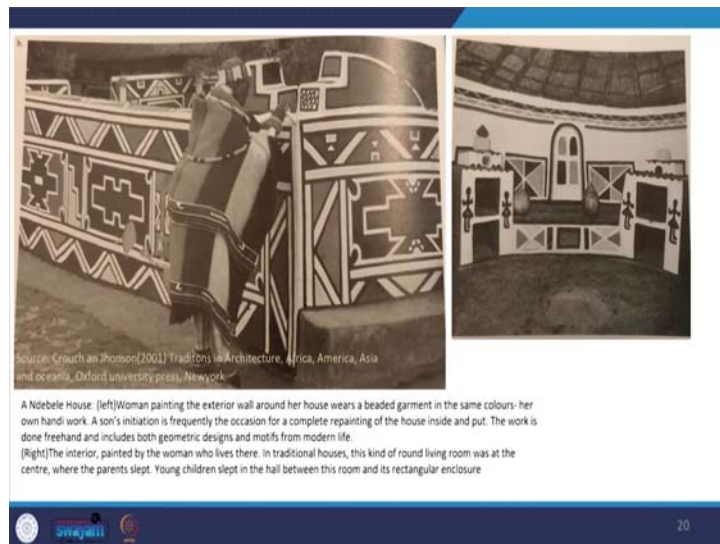
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And similarly, making a roof is also an important aspect of this Hausa traditional architecture and the decorations how these pinnacles are very important to represent in their particular society. And the Hausa architecture depicts various decorations in the house facade and they also use the bright colors, the bright colors, which are actually native in those clay contents and they try to extract those and they apply that as motifs or the mural decorations and that is how the pinnacles are also highlighted on that process.


So, these motifs you know they can be categorised into 4 classes, like the first is by the modelling a fresh mud plaster manually into an arabesque future, and the second by cutting ornament into a wet cement or a mud plaster, the third by plastering the wall with Makuba, fourth by painting on a plain white wall. So, this is how the process and all these symbolic decorative elements is an artistic aspect and they do it with the local availability, locally available clays and their colors.

So, it also, they use these bright colors, and they have to also maintain these aspects, the maintenance is also an important aspect. And today what we are seeing is initially these traditional houses are completely done with the mud. And now the generations have changed. And now all these traditional houses are undergoing a huge transformations with the newer construction techniques, newer construction, brick and concrete, have come into their places, and that is how they are struggling, hard to sustain also.

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- They express both personal accomplishment and community resistance to the domination of Boers, (the Dutch Colonists)
- The painters trained informally by other women.
- Responds through innocent actions such as combining the black, green, and yellow of the African National Congress- The political arm of black resistance to apartheid.
- Resistance was secret but transparent.
- Puberty seclusion rites and men initiation ceremonies (wela)
- Individuality is shown in her style of decoration



[Color, collage, and much more: Plaster house sculpture in the style of Ndebele Painted Houses \(colorandcollage.blogspot.com\)](#)

[Free Source: Clickulture | Why do Ndebele Paint their houses?](#)

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On a similar note, in the South African tribes, the Ndebele house where woman plays an important role. So here, the woman, they decorate these exteriors of these house after finishing their beading work, and they actually decorate with the locally available colors. But here they do, there is a political representation, because many of these tribal lands, they were actually once upon a time they were occupied by the Boers, the Dutch colonists and they used to do these as an expression for both the personal accomplishment and the community resistance to the domination of Boers.


And so, these people are not trained by any school or any art training, but they are all transmitted from the mother have taught to the daughter, and that is how the daughter when she grew up, she has taught to her daughters, this is how they have transmitted this knowledge. And if you look at this, the how, as a part of a resistance process, they try to portray that in a very innocent actions, as a combination of a black, green and yellow of the African National Congress. So, the political, which is a political arm of the black resistance to the apartheid.

And so, in this process, the imitation with these colorful decorations or the motives has a latent form of expression of their resistance. The resistance was in a latent form, which is a secret, but it is a transparent process. And not only that, when do they do this, when it is associated to many puberty seclusion rites, and the men initiation rites when the men, a group of men when they achieve at the 18 to 22, so that is where they are referred as Wela. And so, they the woman paints decorates these their exterior walls as a significant aspect so they during these occasions for every 4 years or so, which is also a kind of maintenance processes of their dwellings.

So, initially, they were all made with a circular shapes and later on they were transforming into rectangular shapes. And today, many of these houses they have the materials have been transformed into the tin sheets and instead of grass, they have using a newer materials. And in this whole process, the individuality shown as a style of decoration. So, here the woman plays an important role.

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“Places are doubly constructed: most are built or in some way physically carved out. They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood, and imagined”
(Gieryn, 2000:465)



Women Helping to Build a Dwelling in Paro, Bhutan
Photos Credit: Regina Mapau Lim

Gieryn, T. (2000) "A Space for Place in Sociology", *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 463-496

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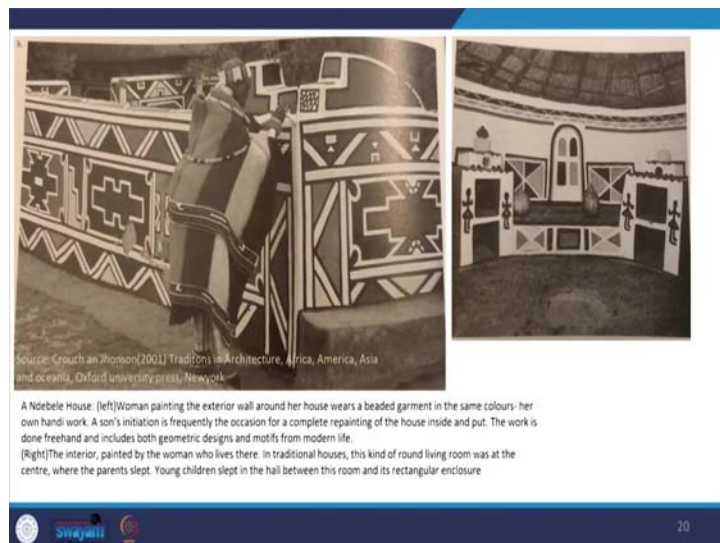
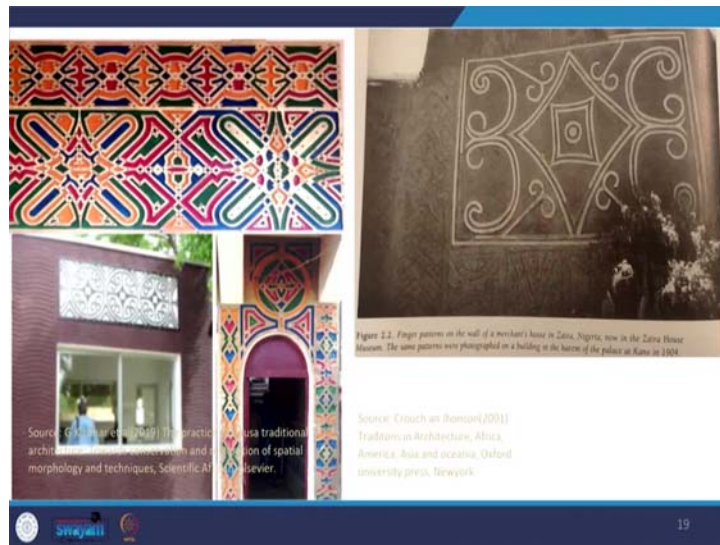


Figure 13.7. A decorated Hausa dwelling, Kano, Nigeria, about 1960. The house walls and the geometry.

These motifs could be categorized into four classes by their origin as follows: (i) The first is by modelling a fresh mud plaster manually into arabesque feature. (ii) The second by cutting ornament into wet cement or mud plaster. (iii) The third by plastering the wall with "Makuba". (iv) Fourth by painting on a plain white wall.

Source: G.K.Umar et al.(2019) The practice of Hausa traditional architecture: Towards conservation and restoration of spatial morphology and techniques, *Scientific African*, Elsevier.

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On a similar note, let us we talk about the Bhutanese culture in the work of Regina Mapau Lim. And here, the four generations of women come together when they are building the house, when we talk about the house or traditional architecture, it is not just a matter of only the ownership, because in their culture, there is no one who is owning a particular land which is not owned by himself or herself. It is basically a kind of a community coherence which is organised by their particular society's head. So, even someone who is walking by they can just call him to be part of the house construction process. So that is how the community has been playing an important role engaging each and every one in the house building process.

So similarly, in the Bhutan, where the woman comes together all the grandmother and their daughter, then mothers their daughters and the granddaughters, they come together, and they have these ceremonial occasions where they come together and they ram the earth they mix

the soil with the amount of clay and then they completely ram it and they have these ceremonial celebrations.

So, all these ceremonial celebrations mark an event of bringing people together bringing different generations together and that is how the knowledge is transferred. So in that way, again, talks about the places are doubly constructed, and most are built, or in some way physically carved they are interpreted, they are narrated, they are perceived, and they are also felt, they are understood, and they are imagined.

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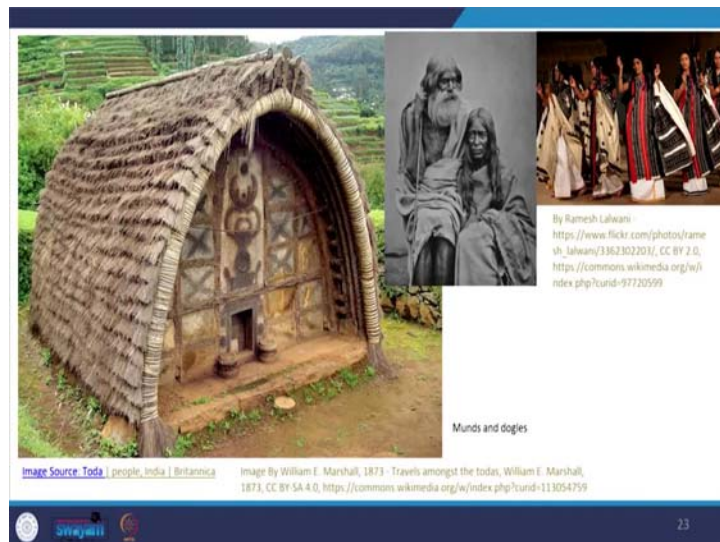


Image Source: Toda | people, India | Britannica

Image By William E. Marshall, 1873 - Travels amongst the todas, William E. Marshall, 1873, CC BY SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=113054759>

Munds and dogies

By Ramesh Lalwani
https://www.flickr.com/photos/ramesh_lalwani/3362302203/, CC BY 2.0,
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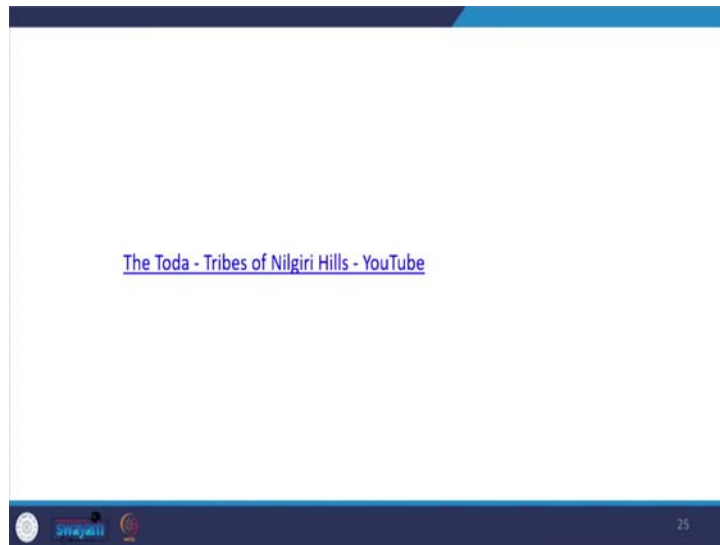
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By Edgar Thurston in 1909 - Edgar Thurston <https://archive.org/stream/castribesofoda07thuriala/page/166/mode/2up>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=57735548>

By Unknown author
<http://www.ik.ua/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photos/t/09pho0009741u00014000.html>, Public Domain,
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So, in the context of South Indian context, in the Dravidian context. So, let me bring you an example of Toda tribes, which is in the Nilgiri's bio reserves. And these tribes, they are actually located in the biosphere reserves, Nilgiri biosphere reserves, and there are a few tribes to Toda's, Kota's and Kurumba's there are a few tribes which are settled in these particular areas. And you can see their traditional hut, they are basically a half barrel shaped, and which is covered with the grass and the front part, which has these granite stones and which has a very small entry, which is just only, a person can crawl into it, that is how they have these.

And here, these Toda tribes are basically they believe that they have been, the first God has given birth to Buffalo, and then they given to the Toda man and the woman. So, that is how for them the buffalo is a very sacred animal, and then that is how they become a part of this the dairy industry, the dairy culture is very important for this particular tribe.

And if you look at some of these photographs, where these black and red and white, so have their simple Dhoti or a simple one piece cloth which they over it and whether the men and the woman, they have very rich symbolic aspects of this red and black and white combination. And even in the temples, this is one of the very old temples in 1909, someone have taken this photograph the Edgar Thurston. And even these temples they are basically meant for men, the woman are not allowed to nearby places because in that way, the role of men and the role of women was very different.

And also their green festivals, where any kind of ceremonial rituals or funerals, anything that they used to organise as a group and especially how they consider this pastoral life as a part of the sanctity and this is how these tribes used to survive. And now, these tribes have

actually undergoing many different changes, because on one side the deforestation and the forestation process, and many of them were encroached by a new commerce on this particular region, and it has gradually some brought some impacts on their architecture as well. And these are basically vegetarians, because they believe in these pastoral life and these are vegetarian community.

And today, they are dwelling models, though, they are imitating these Toda tribes and the Toda architecture which the group of houses is referred as the munds and the these dwellings are referred as the dogles. And this is how the newer forms are imitating in the same form, but then they have been modified with the newer materials. So, they have this polyandry system where the earlier the woman used to marry the brothers within their family, so, but now, today that has been abandoned and new set of institutional systems have been adapted by these communities.

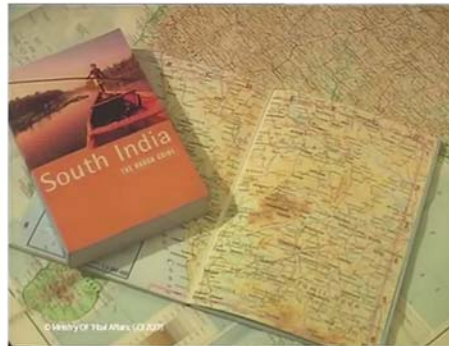
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So, there is a small film I would like to show which has been documented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. So, I would like you to watch this film and it actually explains the kind of transformation that these tribes are undergoing. And that would help you to relate what you learn from the African context, what you learn from the Bhutanese context, and what you learn from these South Asian contexts, how the traditions have been transmitted from one generation to another generation, whether in the form of art, in their form of a decoration, aesthetics, skill and their livelihoods so, all this process and today, how they are struggling to be part of it, so this would be important learning in this process.

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The Toda - Tribes of Nilgiri Hills



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sry7a4Bs01g>



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Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sry7a4Bs01g>



The Toda - Tribes of Nilgiri Hills



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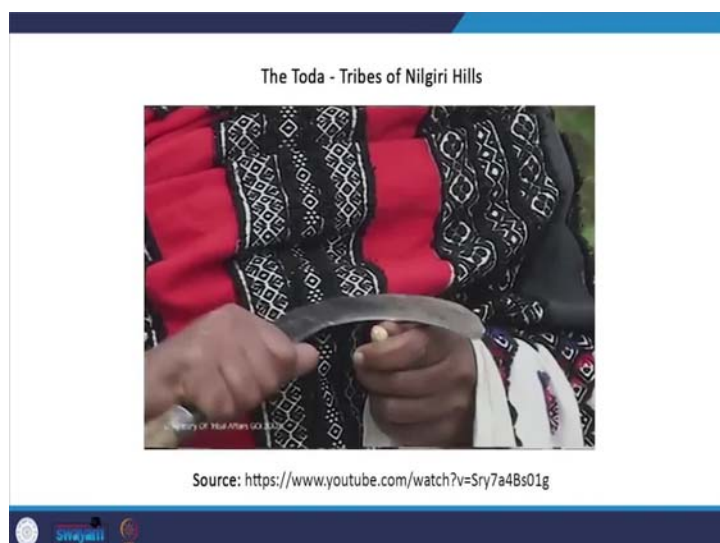


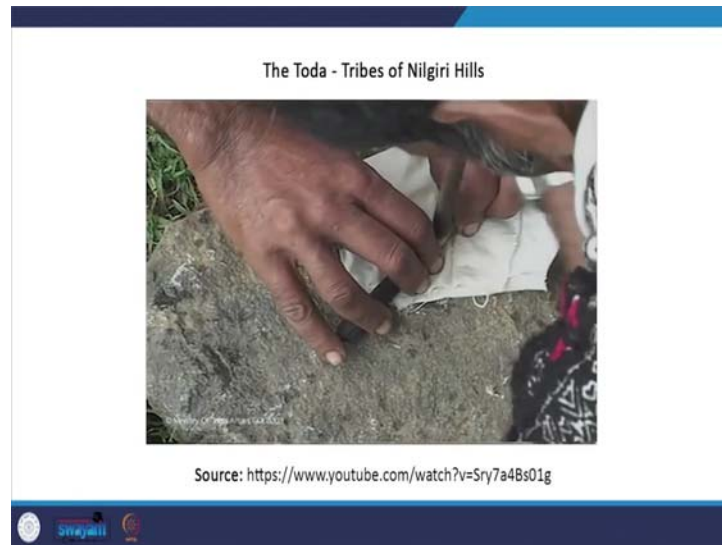
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Narrator: The Nilgiri Hills in Southern India, known for their diverse flora and fauna, and picturesque visitors. A popular retreat for people from the surrounding plains, and a backdrop for many a Tamil movie. Lesser known, however, is the diversity of the indigenous people of the Nilgiri's. The Irulas, the Badagas and the Kurumbas are only a few of the tribal groups that have made their home in these hills. Of all the tribal groups however, the best known are the pastoralists the Toda, living at altitudes of 2000 to 2500 metres on the western side of the Nilgiri plateau, the Toda have caught the eye of many and anthropologist.

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This is probably because of the regal walk of the Toda men as they make their way over the pastures tending their buffaloes. The Toda's stand out by the clothes they wear, long flowing white cloaks embroidered with colored bars thrown over the shoulder with a white waist cloth. Nowadays, pants and shirts or Sari's and blouses are worn under these cloths. These cloths have led to speculation about their origin and some anthropologists believe that they came from ancient Sumer.

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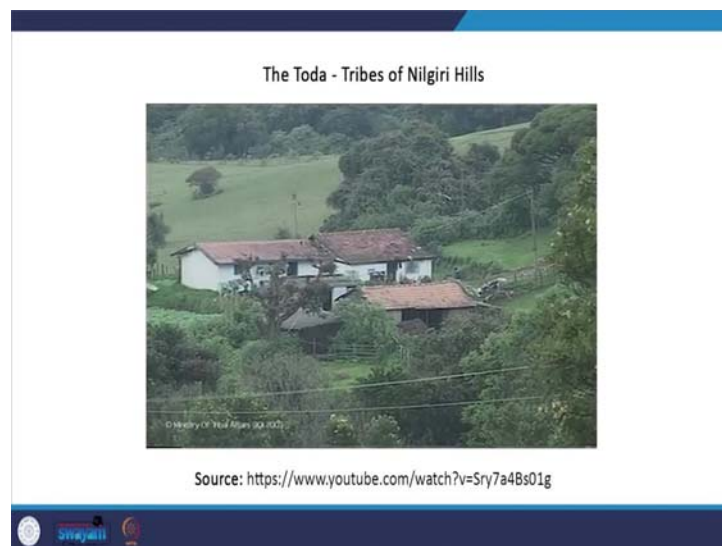
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sry7a4Bs01g>





Physically too they are distinctive, tall slim with sharp facial features and excessive body hair. Traditionally, the Toda men wear their beard long as can be seen even today among the older generation. Toda women on the other hand, stand out by the unique hairstyle, long ringlets that hang on both sides of the face. Up to 20 years ago, it was mandatory for the women to be tattooed after attaining puberty, the chest back, hands and feet were covered with a pattern of rings and dots. Tattooing would be done by making a paste of suit and breast milk, followed by a drawing with a special thorn. Young women these days rarely get themselves so extensively tattooed. A small symbolic tattoo is however still prevalent.

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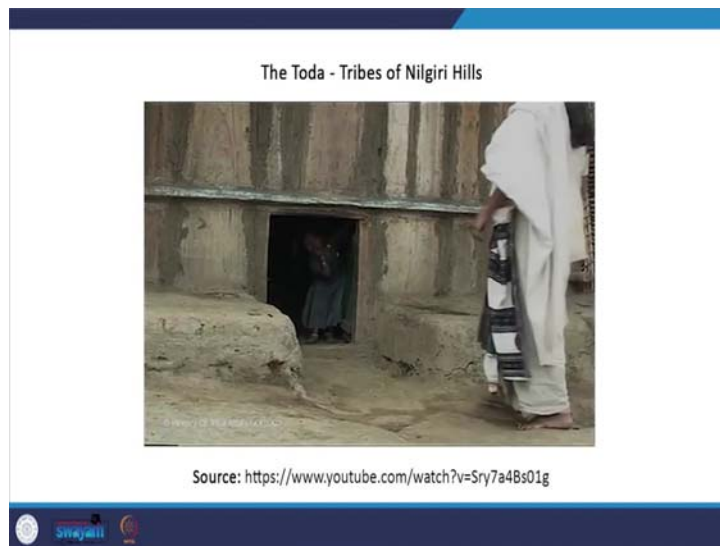


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The Toda live in small villages scattered over the slopes of the Nilgiri's, the typical village consists of only 3 or 4 houses. At first sight, a Toda village looks like any other, a closer look and one will find a temple hut set apart from the houses. Made from local materials these huts are unique in design. They are barrel vaulted with half barrel shaped roof, and sidewalls that project some distance beyond the front and rear walls. The rounded part of the roof is made of ratan supported by crosspieces of bamboo or hardwood, while grass is used as touching.

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Wooden plank sunk vertically into the ground form the front and rear walls of these huts. They use of stone slabs instead of the planks is a modern innovation. Earlier even the houses were made in this fashion. Nowadays due to a shortage of grass, only the temples are made in the traditional way. There is a small opening in the front of the house where one has to bend low to enter.

Once inside, one is confronted by the compactness of the hut, a bed on the left with the whole family sleeps together. On the right, the stove is built at ground level. Above the stove the firewood is stored in a way that the heat from the stove keeps it dry. On an opposite wall to the entrance are the shelves that hold the utensils. It is common to see pictures of Hindu gods adorning the walls. The interiors of the Toda houses have remained much the same over the years, even if the exteriors have changed.

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The Toda are pastoralists and herders of the Nilgiri's and their lives have revolved around the tending of buffaloes. Families from different tribal communities were linked to one another through hereditary links passed down over generations. In this system, the Toda provided the dairy products in exchange for grains from the Badaga's, utensils and craft were from the Kota's and forest produced from the Kurumba. In earlier days, economic exchange had ritual and social dimensions and took place according to established relationships rather than randomly in a marketplace.

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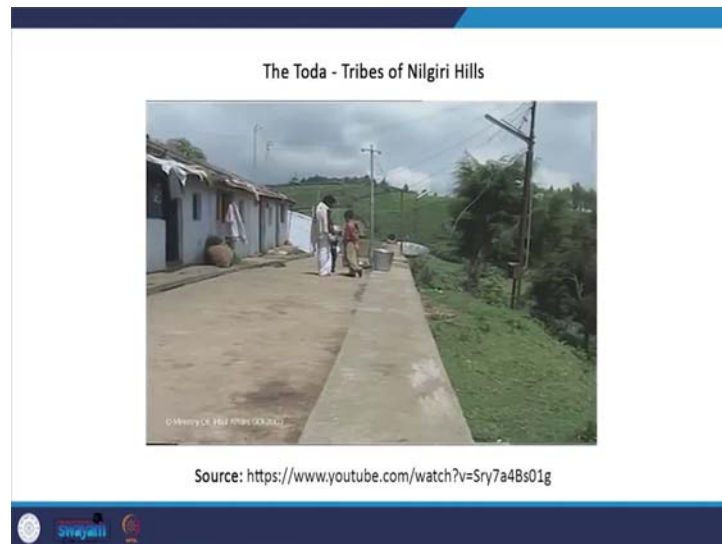
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Apart from the exchange of materials, the tribes also performed different ritual and ceremonial duties for one another. Toda buffaloes are a semi wild species well adapted to the Nilgiri environment. They have long curved, flat horns with rings, marking their age and a thick growth of light brown hair. The Toda distinguish between two kinds of buffalo sacred and ordinary, the ordinary ones attended by the boys and men of the village, while the sacred ones attended only by dairyman priests.

The Toda believe in a pantheon of gods and goddesses, who are sometimes mentioned in formal praise, and their activities and attributes are recorded in Legend. These Toda divinities are called by the generic name Tovit, meaning gods of the mountains, as most of them are believed to reside in particular Nilgiri peaks. Of all the gods and goddesses the goddess Teikirshy and her younger brother Oun are the most important. Oun is believed to have created the Toda and their buffaloes while Teikirshy is believed to be the divine ruler of the world, who instituted the customs of the Toda.

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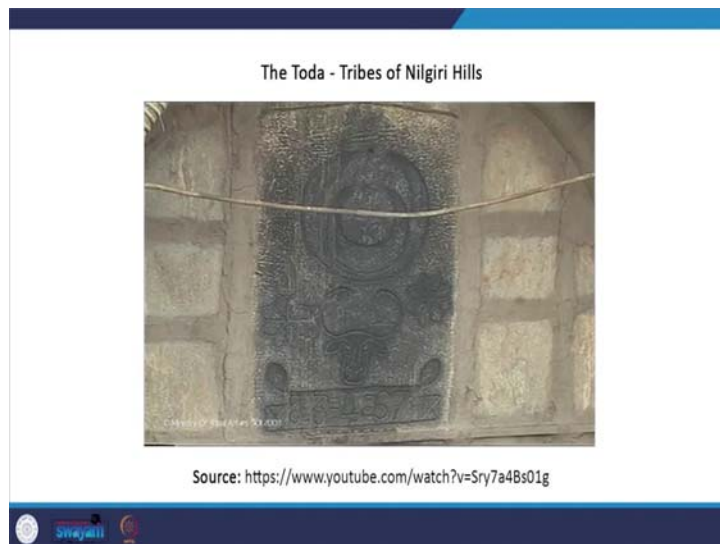
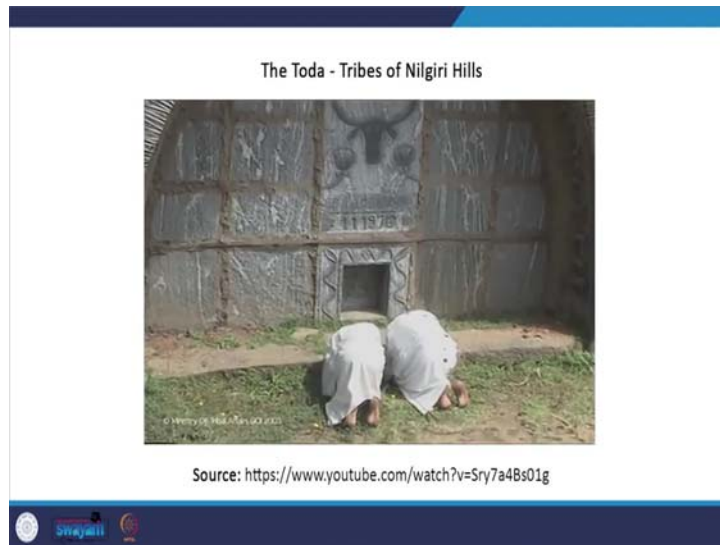


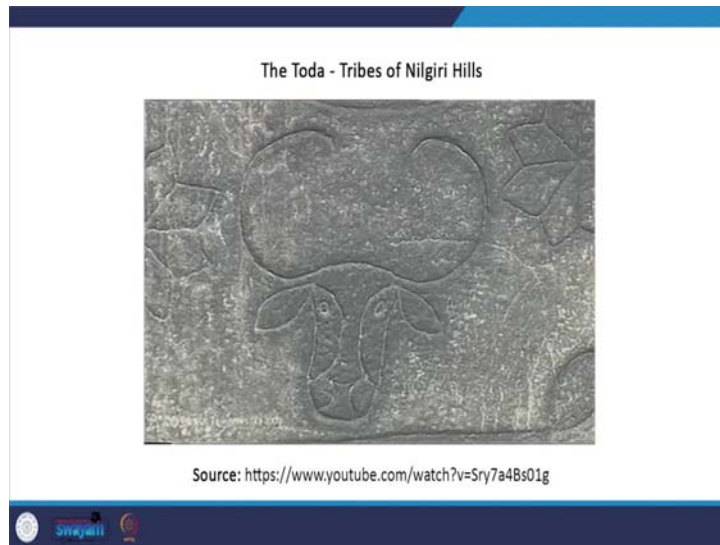
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She is also responsible for the division of the Toda into sub castes and clans. The dairy huts and the associated pens, calf sheds, pasturage and water supply are the most immediate divine presence in everyday life. In other words, the dairies, the temples and the dairyman, the priests, the sanctity of the dairy buildings is of utmost importance and they fall into different classes according to the degree of sanctity of the associated buffalo.

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The dairyman priests undergo elaborate ceremonies, which vary in complexity. They undergo a series of initiation ceremonies, and must observe strict regulations during their tenure. Among the todas, these divine spaces are not accessible to women, and the temples can only be entered by the dairyman priests. The inner room of the dairy is the Sanctum Sanctorum. The sacred dairy equipment is kept here and it is here that the dairyman performs his most important duty, which is the churning of milk into buttermilk and butter. Earlier a daily practice, but these days due to the small population of the Toda, this happens only once a year.

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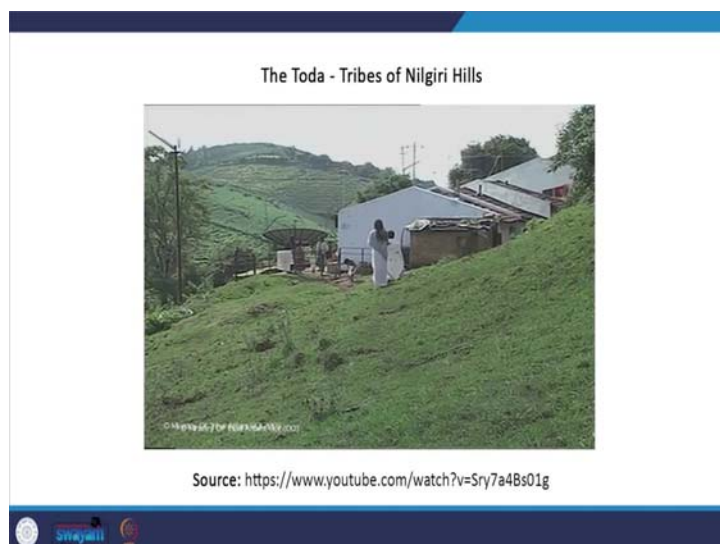




Particularly villages are marked by the impressive structure of the conical temple. In the hierarchy of dairies and their associated buffalo these dairies are at the top. A typical day starts at dawn, the men salute the rising sun and released the buffaloes from their pen to be milked. Most of the rites of passage in Toda life involve buffaloes or dairies, or both. This is true even today, when the economic role of the buffalo is decreasing.

The child is recognized as a social being between the ages of 1 to 3 months during the ritual ceremony of uncovering its face. During this ceremony, the child is also given a name. Marriages are initiated during childhood but completed at maturity. It is common for a Toda child of a few months to be married, as it is a ritual requirement for every Toda to be married. These alliances are flexible, and can be changed when the children attained maturity.

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While the men go to sell the milk in the market, the women churn the milk that has been drawn the previous day and left to coagulate. In earlier times, with the prevalence of female infanticide, it was common to see Toda families that were polyandrous a man's wife was automatically the wife to all his brothers.

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The pots and tools used for churning are especially designed and the sanctity is well guarded. After churning the butter is extracted and the rest of the meal is set on the fire to cook. Traditionally, the Toda are vegetarians, and a typical toda meal consists of rice with butter and a little chutney made from tomatoes and chilies.

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A close observation suggests that ritual has been used as a means to protect the purity of the sacred dairies. Thus, marriage and physical maturity are less ritualised as compared to birth and death, which are considered polluting events throughout India. Among all of life's crisis, it is death that generates the greatest profusion of ritual among the Toda. Every major social division, patric clan and matric clan has a role to play at the funeral.

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On the morning of the funeral Toda men and women from all over the hills begin to assemble at the dead person's hamlet. The cot is made ready. It is decorated with ornaments, pictures and laden with provisions and belongings of the deceased. According to Toda belief, the deceased go and join their ancestor afterworld called Amnor. While the men perform a ritual dance, a group of irulas play popular tunes as tradition does not allow the Toda to play musical instruments.

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The body is carried to the cot and tied down with tassels by men belonging to the opposite sub caste to that of the deceased. The body is then carried by the same men to the place of the funeral, where a wooden fire has been made ready with wood from the nearest Shola forest. The women follow a little distance behind the men with a great show of grief the living say their last goodbyes to the deceased.

As seen here, the son in law of the dead woman offers a multicolored cloth. He touches the cloth to his forehead, and then passes it on to his wife, an important right, it stands for the respect a man must show to the clan of his wife.

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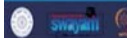
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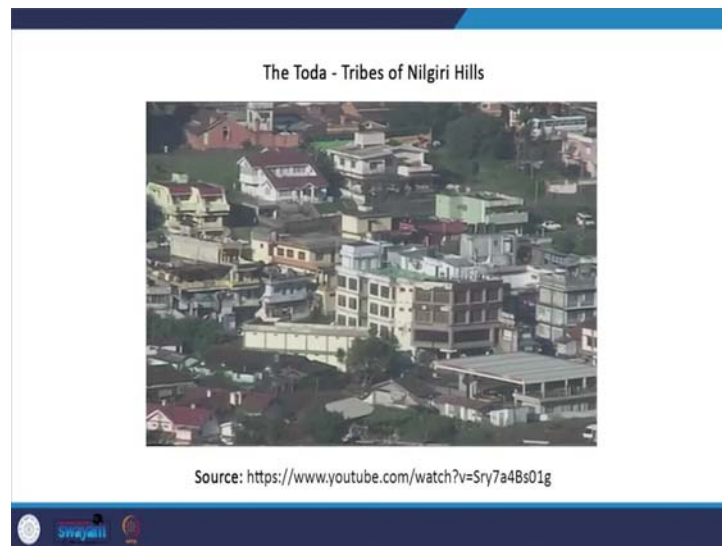


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The daughters in law of the deceased then start to light the fire with the help of a cloth soaked in ghee. Once the fire is lit, men from the opposite sub caste passed the cot three times over the fire. This ritual started after a man presumed dead was revived by the warmth of the flames in the long distant past. Till two decades ago, buffaloes were sacrificed at the time of death. The number and sanctity of the sacrificed buffaloes would vary, according to the status of the deceased. Reformers within Toda society have ensured that this practice to be stopped.

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The last 20 years have seen significant changes in the lifestyle of the Toda. The bazaar at Ooty has great economic and social bearing and has led to many innovations spreading to Toda hamlets. With education and the switch to an urban lifestyle, they tend to lose their distinct identity. Many Toda youth today looks at the traditional way of life is undesirable and will do their best to blend in with the crowd.

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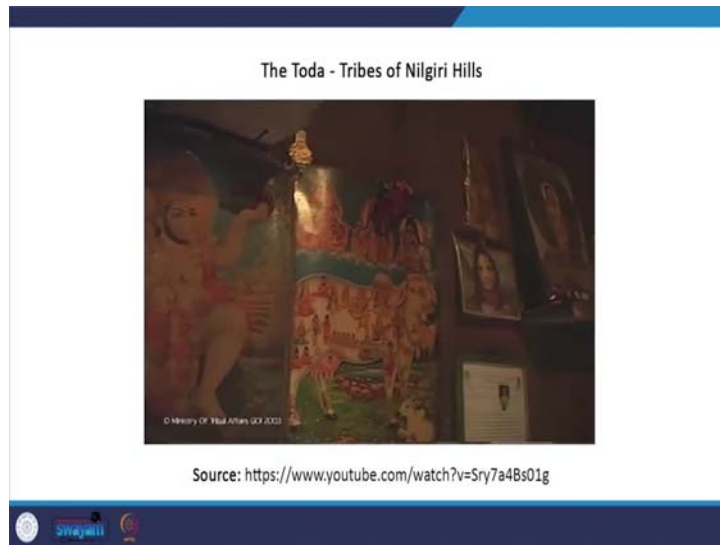


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Similarly, it has become difficult to separate Toda Gods and Goddesses from the pantheon of mainstream Hinduism. The Mariamman Temple situated near the Ooty bazaar is now a major ritual center for the Toda. And as they hear of the efficacy of Hindu deities, they make pilgrimages to Hindu places of worship and import the images of Hindu gods into their homes.

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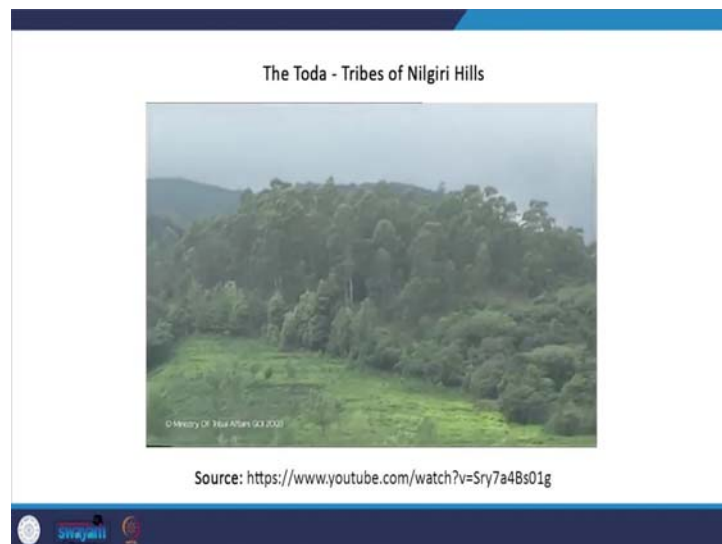
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The Toda have benefited from a number of government schemes. New concrete houses made in the traditional shape were introduced in the 1960's. Despite improvements like doors, windows, and chimneys, these designs were unsuccessful as they were found to be too cold. The most significant government policy has been the granting of land rights in an attempt to encourage the Toda to switch to farming.

Unfortunately, this well intentioned policy has had a negative effect, not being used to agriculture, very few Toda have taken to farming. Instead they lease out their land to other farmers. Sadly, today, a major part of this income goes towards liquor and alcoholism is a big problem, particularly among Toda men.

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Another factor that has impacted the life of the Toda is the new plantation policy of the government. Due to the obvious monetary advantages, pine and eucalyptus are being planted in place of the traditional Shola forest, and pasture. The few pastures that do remain are being polluted by industrial waste, so even those Toda who want to keep their buffalo are finding it increasingly difficult to do so. The government also tried to introduce high milk yielding varieties of buffalo unfortunately these had to be stalled and were therefore unsuited to the Toda lifestyle.

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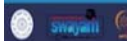
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The new generation of reformers within Toda society face a tough challenge to preserve this dwindling community. Only 1500 Toda are surviving today spread over 600 small villages and their numbers are fast decreasing. New concepts like embroidery groups for women and milk cooperatives are establishing themselves as new sources of livelihood that make use of their traditional skills.

In spite of these efforts, the bottom line is that pastoralism as a way of life for the Toda is on the decline and with that their unique identity as a tribe is bound to be lost.

Professor: Thank you very much.#