

brother-in-law. And your children tie you together even more strongly, but the tensity of the situation must be papered over with cordiality. One can imagine the term *swara* traveling down through generations and spreading throughout southern Africa, as men of one society moved into territory held by another. The tension of hostility versus friendship remains in the *swara* tie, as does the remarkable ambiguity between equality/reciprocity on the one hand and inequality/hierarchy on the other.

10 / Perceptions and Directions of Social Change

Despite their history of contact with Whites and Blacks, the Ju/'hoansi were still relatively isolated when I first encountered them in 1963. They had very hazy notions of the world beyond their periphery. For example, no one I spoke to in 1963 had ever heard of Africa. They were surprised to learn that they lived on a large body of land called Africa. They *had* heard of South Africa, however. They called it *Johanni*, after Johannesburg, the place where the mine laborers went. More striking was the fact that none of the Ju were aware of the Atlantic Ocean, which was less than 800 kilometers (500 miles) due west of Dobe. I asked them if they knew of a body of water that was so large that if you stood on one side you couldn't see the other. After much discussion they pointed north to the Okavango River, rather than west to the Atlantic.

But a third experience brought home to me how unfamiliar the Ju/'hoansi were with the ways of the wider world. In 1964 I hired Koshitambo, one of the most sophisticated and well-traveled Ju/'hoan. He had made frequent trips to Maun, the tribal capital, as a valet to the local headman, Isak; he loved to make jokes in Setswana and Herero; and seemed to be as knowledgeable about the world as any Ju. I agreed to pay him £10 for two months' work, a reasonable sum in those days, and on pay day I handed him an envelope containing two crisp £5 notes. Koshitambo looked puzzled and appeared upset, but I thought nothing of it and went on with my business. Ten minutes passed, and I caught a glimpse of him sitting forlornly at the edge of the camp, the £5 notes in his hand.

"What's the matter?" I asked Koshitambo.

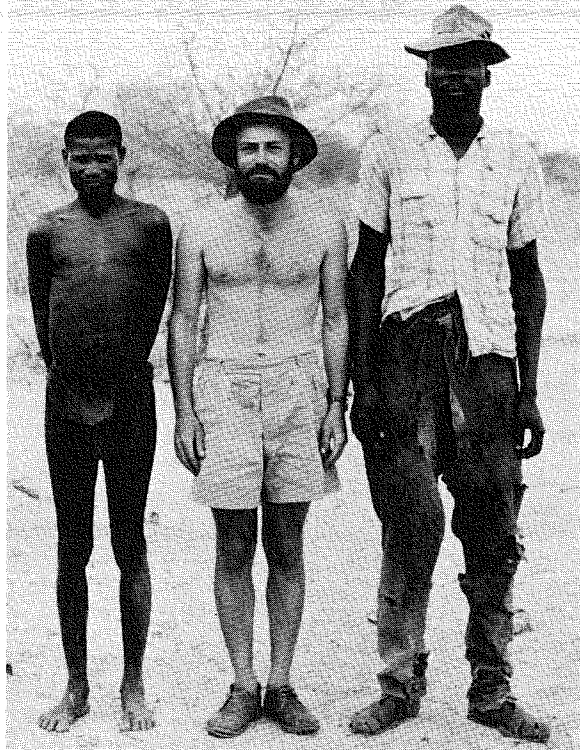
"Oh, nothing," he said, hesitating.

"Yes there is, I can see something is wrong."

"Oh, /Tontah," Koshitambo finally blurted out, "/Tontah, you disappoint me. You said you were going to pay me ten monies, but instead you have paid me only two!"

It took fifteen minutes and all my limited linguistic powers to explain to Koshitambo that those two scraps of legal tender indeed constituted "ten monies" and not just two. The idea of money, of paper money, of different denominations of paper money, and of convertibility all had to be carefully put across before a pale smile broke on Koshitambo's face and he pocketed the money.

Despite the changes, the Ju/'hoansi entered the 1960s with their kinship, productive, and land-tenure systems relatively intact. They gave birth, raised their children, married, grew old, prayed to their gods and buried their dead in ways that were similar to what they had done for hundreds of years. This is certainly not to



A Ju/'hoan, a Canadian,
and an Herero: an old-
style anthropological mug
shot.

say that the Ju/'hoansi had been static or unchanging. Their way of life had its own rhythms of change, and the arrival of the Whites and the longer contacts with the Blacks had introduced many new elements. But the pace of these changes was sufficiently slow that with time they could be absorbed into the existing structures and world view. Their systems did not break under the force of these changes; they bent and adapted.¹

But in the 1970s the tempo of change accelerated, and new changes kept arriving before the previous ones could be absorbed. The capacity of the Ju to absorb these developments without shattering was being tested to the limit. It is these fundamental changes that will be explored in this chapter.

We will first try to look at the outside world through Ju/'hoansi eyes. How do they perceive the coming of the Blacks and Whites? Then we will explore how they are attempting to adapt to agriculture, wage labor, schools, and changes in land tenure.

¹As noted in Chapter 2 I disagree with the thesis of Schrire (1984) and Wilmsen (1978b, 1981, 1989) that prehistoric contact with herders, some as early as A.D. 1000, fundamentally altered the character of Ju society long before 1900. If true, there should be an abundance of prehistoric evidence of cattle and goat bones in the Dobe area. Such evidence, despite concerted efforts to find it between 1978 and 1992, is almost totally lacking.

Well into the 1970s the Ju/'hoansi still retained a vigorous sense of themselves as a people and their special status in relation to outsiders. They called themselves *Ju/'hoansi*, “real” or “genuine” people, a term they grudgingly extended to San of other language groups elsewhere in the Kalahari—the Nharo, /Gwi, and !Ko—but not to their Black and White neighbors.

It took over a year of fieldwork before I could speak Ju well enough to find out how the Ju thought of me and the people I represented—the Whites—and where we fit into their scheme of things. The picture was not flattering: very matter of factly, they considered us to be wild animals. One day in late 1964 I was interviewing //Kokan!a, the wise and playful wife of ≠Toma// gwe, about animal classification.

“Wild animals we call *!hohm*,” she said. “Lions, leopards, cats, hyenas, and wild dogs we call *!hohm a tsi*—wild things of the bush. Tswanas, Gobas, Hereros, and Europeans like you, /Tontah, we call *!hohmsa chul o*, wild things of the village.”

This came as a great revelation to me. “What exactly are the *!hohm*?”

“We call all creatures who are different from us *!hohm* because when they speak we cannot understand a word. *!hohm a tsi* are the animals that kill people. We don't understand their language either, so we call them *!hohm*.”

“I don't quite understand. Do you mean you don't hear their language?” I asked.

Rakudu, a congenial and very intelligent Ju/'hoan from Mahopa, interjected, “It's not quite so simple. The Blacks and Whites we don't understand at all. But the wild animals of the bush, we can understand them a little. When the *!hohm a tsi* call each other we understand what they say. They are saying, ‘Come, come join me in enjoying this food.’

“We called the Blacks and the Whites *!hohm* long ago because we were afraid of them like we were afraid of wild animals. Today we don't fear them. We call them by their names. *Dama* (Herero), ≠*Tebe* (Tswana), /*Ton* (European).”

//Koka was right. Listening in on Ju/'hoan conversations, I heard the terms *!hohm* and its singular, *!homa*, used in everyday speech for Whites and Blacks, without derogatory intent. The older fear had been replaced by a familiarity, yet a definite distance remained.

The Ju were fascinated by Western technology, which they called /*tondiesi*, White Man's expertise or skill. They loved to ride on trucks most of all, and developed a lively curiosity about how things worked. I once asked Ju to name as many parts of the truck as they could. This proved to be an interesting exercise because the Ju had to assemble vocabulary from several areas—anatomy, dress, and hunting technology—in order to describe the various parts. The headlights were called /*gasi*—eyes; and the hood was called the *tsi*—mouth; the tires were the /*gvesi*—shoes or sandals. Gasoline was called *n/ i*, literally vegetable oil or butter; it was also called *!kaitoro*, a derivation from the word *petrol*. Most other parts of the truck were not named at all, or the English-derived names were used. The truck itself was called *do*, the Ju word for metal. Tin cans were also called *do*.

Tape recorders were another source of wonderment for the Ju/'hoansi. They were always asking to listen to tapes recorded at other villages and to *n/ wi e dumsi*—literally, “collect our throats”—so that they could listen to themselves on



Fascination with Western technology: peering under the hood of a Land Rover.

the tape. One woman even went into trance while listening to a tape of the Women's Drum Dance (see also Katz, 1982:187-191).

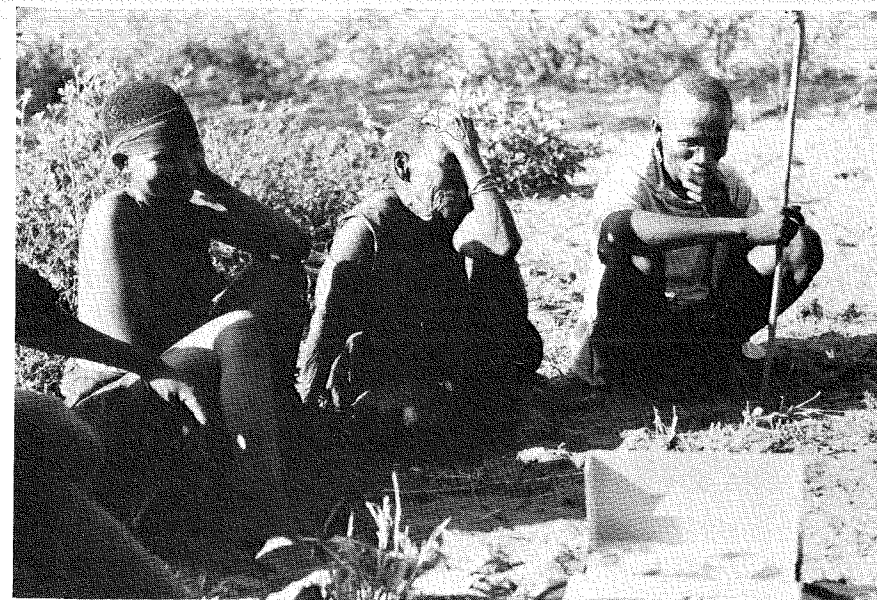
Some forms of Western high-technology were the subject of intense discussion. For example, Dobe lay on the flight path for jet planes from South Africa to Angola. Flying so high that they were almost invisible from the ground, the aircraft left vapor trails at 35,000 to 40,000 feet. One day Tsau, a leading /Xai/ xai man, and I watched as a plane came over.

"What is that thing up there with the long tail?" asked Tsau.

"It's a 'fly machine,'" I answered, using the term the !Kung used for airplane. "But it is flying so high that you can't see it."

"That's what I thought it was," explained Tsau, in all seriousness. "Some Ju/'hoansi deceived me. You know what they said? That the Whites were sending messages to each other on long rolls of paper. In the south they could take a great roll of paper covered with writing and fire it out of a giant gun. It would stream over to the north and land. Then they would cover it with new writing and fire it back to the south." Never, I thought, had toilet paper been put to such an imaginative use.

Artificial satellites, which had begun to appear in the Kalahari skies after 1957, were also a topic of discussion. Remember that my fieldwork began only five years after the first satellite had appeared. One starry night I was camped in the bush with



/Twanla and other !Gosbe people listening to a tape of one of their healing dances.

two men named /Gau, one young and one old, when a Sputnik slowly crossed the sky. As we watched its progress excitedly, I asked each of them what they thought it was.

Young /Gau spoke with feeling. "The elders have told me that when you see a star moving like that it means that war is coming from the west and going to the east."

Not a bad answer I thought, thinking about the Cold War and the arms race. "And what do you think it means?" I asked the older /Gau.

"I don't know what the elders say. They never said anything to me. All I know is when I see something like that I think the Whites sure have powerful *n/um* to make the stars move!"

In less than a decade, the isolation of the Ju/'hoansi disappeared and their perceptions about and knowledge of the outside world changed rapidly. Young men began to travel out of the area to work on mines and farms, and they brought back wondrous tales of far-off places.

The same /Gau who had spoken so gravely of the satellites was a 25-year-old man who had never been farther than 100 miles from home. In July 1964 I hired him to be my assistant on an archeological dig near Lusaka, Zambia, 500 miles east of Dobe. /Gau was eager for the chance to go to some of the world that he had heard about but never seen. He underwent a profound change on the trip. Arriving in Maun, the tribal capital, clad only in a *chuana*, the leather breechclout, /Gau expressed intense embarrassment. I bought /Gau an outfit—khaki shirt, shorts, socks, and shoes. He balled his *chuana* in his fist and heaved it with all his might into the Okavango River, saying, "I'm never going to wear that thing again as long as I live."

"I wouldn't bet on it, /Gau," I said.

The trip to Zambia lasted five weeks. /Gau was exposed to one staggering novelty after another: tarred roads, street lights, running water, and railroad trains were only a few. After three weeks /Gau took to his bed. Whether it was sickness or culture shock I could not tell. But when /Gau returned to Dobe he recovered almost immediately. And soon he was eager to share his experiences with his kin. At the same time, he was awed by the problem of how to put all of this new world into words, how to convey to his listeners a sense of what he saw. Since 1964 many !Kung have made such trips, and the experiences /Gau describes are commonplace, but then it was all, as he put it, "strange and fearful."

We drove and drove and drove and drove, through the country of the Gobas, the Damas, the Tswanas, and then we came to people who were San like ourselves, with our faces and our skin. They even had quivers on their shoulders like us, and yet when they spoke I could not understand a word of them. I had no !kun'as in common with them, no kinsmen among them. When we spoke we had to speak in Setswana. Then we left that place and came to a fence that stretched far in each direction. Men with guns and clothing the color of sand opened the gate and let us through. Then a strange thing happened. The road transformed itself. A giant black snake with a smooth back came up, and we rode on his back. He twisted and turned but we always stayed on his back; we never left him. Riding on that snake's back we went as fast as the wind.

We got to a big village of those people and stopped. We were dying of hunger by that time, and /Tontah made us go into a house and sit down on a chair with a table in front of it. A man who was not a relative of /Tontah came and brought food in a dish. There were three different kinds of food on one bowl. We had to eat it in a strange way. A metal thing shaped like a lizard's forefoot was given to me. I had to spear food with it and bring it to my mouth. It was very hard, but I learned to do it. The other things at this table—knives, cups, spoons—we have in our country too.

Metal is everywhere. When you twist metal, water comes out. You sleep on metal. When night comes giant metal flashlights as tall as trees come on and make the black snake's back shine like day. The people of this country refuse night. They reject it and push it back with light. Even in their houses there are flashlights everywhere.

But one creature of metal frightened me the most. It made the ground shake like a giant herd of wildebeest fleeing for their lives. It had one eye living in its face, like a ghost. It was bigger than many elephants, but walked on wheels like a truck. It had its path of metal and no one could make it go left or right. A fire was in its belly and black smoke breathed from its head. When it stopped it vomited people, and then ate more people. /Tontah was not afraid of it and said let's go in it. I refused. Then I said all right but feared it would kill me. I got in and sat still. When it started to move I wanted to get off. /Tontah made me stay on and so, fearing for my life, I lived.

After that I became ill and lay in my bed for many days. /Tontah took care of me and gave European *ni um*. Then /Tontah brought me back to Dobe; the medicine men and women worked me and worked me and revived me. Today I am just like myself again but happy to be alive and happy to be home.

Experiences like /Gau's gave the younger generations of Ju a changed outlook from that of their parents. They came to handle cash with confidence and would speak of the relative merits of Johannesburg, Francistown, and Windhoek as places to find work. New technology such as transistor radios expanded their horizons even further.

I think it is fair to say that in the 1960s there were genuine disagreements among the Ju on the desirability of change. Many expressed a fondness for their way of life and a love of the *t'si*—the bush. They said that in the bush you can always find food and game; in the bush you are free to live as you please. An equal number of Ju, like young /Gau, expressed a fear and dislike of the bush. The bush is hunger, said one man; it is heat and thirst, said another.

As time went on, more and more Ju/'hoansi shifted to the latter view. They wanted money and the things that it could buy. They wanted donkeys to ride on and goats and cattle. But wanting is one thing, and getting is quite another.

TRANSITION TO FARMING AND HERDING

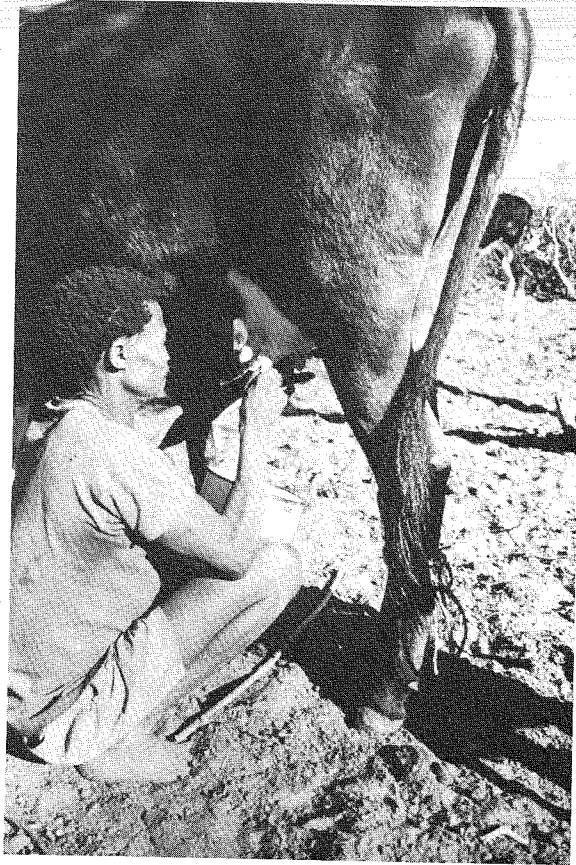
At the time of my first field trip in 1963, the Dobe area Ju/'hoansi appeared to be full-time hunter-gatherers, with no agriculture or livestock (except at !Goshe). As the fieldwork proceeded, however, a more realistic picture emerged of the "pristine" nature of the Dobe area. I learned that most of the men had experience herding cattle at some point in their lives, and that many men had owned cattle and goats in the past. Further, the Ju were no strangers to agriculture. Many had learned the techniques by assisting Black neighbors, and in years of good rainfall had planted crops themselves. However, because of the extreme unreliability of the rainfall, none of them had succeeded in establishing themselves on an agricultural basis. The same pattern occurred with livestock raising. Men often obtained cattle or goats in payment for working for the Blacks, but only a few families had set themselves up as herders independent of a Black patron.

In all, the Ju planted 10 different crops, including gourds, marijuana, sugarcane, and beans, but by far the most important crops—those planted by 50 or more families—were maize, melons, sorghum, and tobacco. Surprisingly, tobacco was the most frequently planted. It is also the most difficult of the four to grow, requiring deep shade and daily watering. The fact that the Ju/'hoansi devoted so much of their farming effort to a nonfood crop suggests that the motive of increasing their food supply was not uppermost in their minds.

Sorghum was the most successful food crop, and those who planted it enjoyed a 50 percent rate of success, compared to 35 percent for maize. The government's Agricultural Extension Department even distributed bags of drought-resistant sorghum seed to Ju and other marginal farmers during the 1967 and 1968 growing seasons.

Despite these efforts, agriculture continues to be a very risky proposition for the Dobe area !Kung. Only at !Goshe, where the Ju/'hoansi enjoy the patronage of an influential Tswana-Yei cattleman, has agriculture begun to provide a significant proportion of the subsistence.

Unlike farming, livestock production is an economically viable adaptation in the Kalahari, and it continues to be the economic mainstay of Botswana. Some form of small-scale herding represents the main hope for the future development of San communities. During 1967–1969 only about 100 head of cattle and 155 goats were owned by Ju in the Dobe area, representing about two percent of the cows and



*/Xasbe milking a cow
from his new herd, 1980.*

eight percent of the goats in the district (see Chapter 9). Only six Ju families owned the minimum number of livestock to form a viable herd, and of these, only one man had set up with his family as independent farmer-herders. Most of the other people let their animals run with the herds of their Black neighbors.

A goat herd is easier to manage, and several families have built kraals and assembled small herds consisting of their own goats and those of their relatives. These families put the children of the camp to work herding and watering the goats while the adult members combine farming with gathering and hunting. These are the modest beginnings of animal husbandry among the Ju on their own, not as employees or clients of Black masters.

The possession of a herd of goats or cattle, or of a field of maize and melons, puts Ju farmer-herders in a difficult position. First, their mobility is restricted by the need for daily supervision of the animals. It is not as easy for family members to go on an extended foraging trip or to pay visits to relatives at distant camps. Someone must always remain with the animals. Second, there are daily tasks to be performed, and the children are pressed into service. Draper (1976) has described how the children in the sedentary !Kung villages are put to work tending the

animals or helping with chores, a contrast with their carefree life in the bush camps. A more subtle change noted by Draper (1975) concerns the separation of men and women in daily work and the confining of the latter much closer to home. In bush camps both women and men go far afield in the food quest. In village life, the men maintain their mobility, following the herds, but the women become housebound, with more of their time spent alone with their children and less with peers on common productive tasks. Perhaps the beginnings of the subordination of women can be glimpsed here in the reorganization of household work loads around the demands of farming and herding (see Lee, 1975).

The Case of Debe and Bo

There is a great deal of tension between those families of Ju/'hoansi who have begun to farm and herd and their relatives who continue the foraging life. There are real contradictions between the organization and ideology of farming and the organization and ideology of foraging. The most important of these is the contradiction between *sharing*, or generalized reciprocity, which is central to the hunting and gathering way of life, and the *saving*, or husbandry of resources, which is equally central to the farming and herding way of life. As we saw in Chapter 4, the food brought into a Ju/'hoansi camp is shared out immediately with residents and visitors alike; for herders to do the same with their livestock, or farmers with their harvested grain, would quickly put them out of business.

How people grappled with these contradictions on the ground was very interesting. Sometimes they made surprising choices. For example, there were two enterprising Ju men at Mahopa, one named Debe, the other Bo. Debe assembled a small herd of goats and cattle and appeared to be on his way to becoming a successful herder. But when meat was scarce his relatives would visit from /Xai/ xai, and under heavy social pressure, Debe would slaughter one goat after another until after several years he sold or gave away his remaining herd, saying that the responsibilities were too heavy. Debe was also successful as a farmer, but his relatives always seemed to appear on his doorstep right at harvest time to consume his harvested crops. Later he tried to enlist the help of his relatives in building a larger field so that they could plant crops together for all of them to eat. But they were so reluctant that Debe in disgust *hired* a Black for wages to help him clear the land and build the brush fence—the first case we know of in which a San paid wages to a Tswana. Oscillating between exhorting his kinfolk to help him farm and hiring an outsider, Debe seemed to be caught in the contradictions between a communalistic and an individualistic style of work relations.

The second man was Bo, the leader of the only group whose members have established themselves as independent farmer-herders. Bo took great pride in his herd of six cows and his fields of maize and melons, and he emphasized to all who would listen that he was on his own and not under Black patronage. Bo was also a rational man, and when his many kinsmen and affines came to his hamlet to share in his good fortune, he fed them a fine meal, offered his fire for overnight, and sent them on their way the next morning with a handful of his home-grown tobacco. Bo knew

that nothing could put him out of business more quickly than the arrival of kin on extended visits, so he sent them on their way. The effects of this were striking: people spoke of Bo as stingy and far-hearted; he became feared, and there were mutterings that he had learned techniques of sorcery from Black diviners. So Bo became a successful but very isolated farmer-herder. Finally, in 1970, Bo had had enough. He sold all his cattle and other stock for cash, packed his things, and walked across the border to settle at Chum!kwe (now spelled Tjum!kui) in Namibia. It was factors such as these, and not simply ecological limitations, that were preventing more Ju from moving into farming and herding during the 1960s and 1970s. But even more dramatic changes were on the horizon.

WAGE WORK AND MIGRANT LABOR

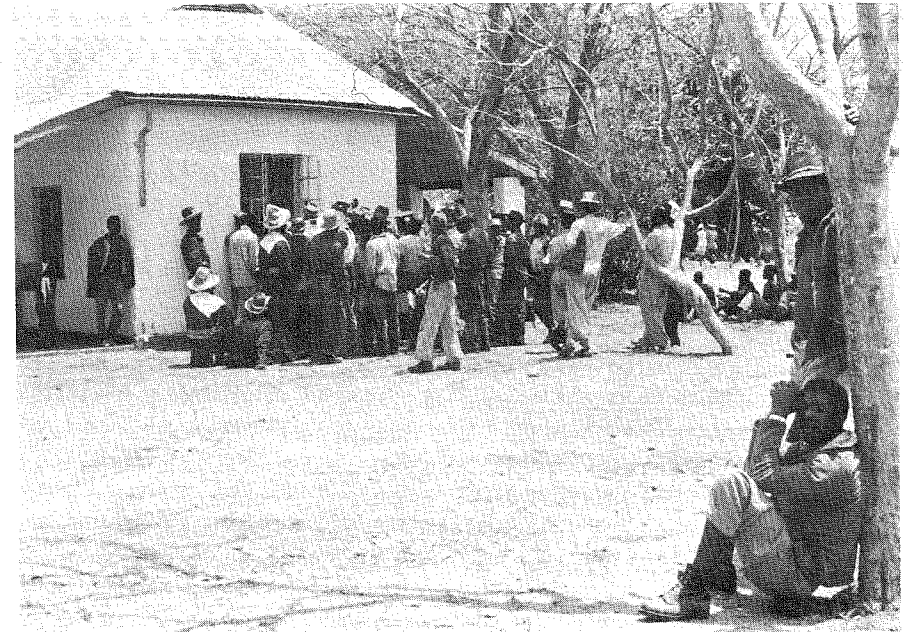
During the period 1900–1979, migrant labor in the gold fields of South Africa was a main source of income for hundreds of thousands of African men drawn from Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Botswana, and as far away as Angola and Malawi. In some areas half the adult men are away in the mines at any given moment.

This practice reached the Dobe area in the late 1950s. By 1968, 15 Dobe area men, about 10 percent of the adult male population, had made the trip to Johannesburg; eight of them had made two or more trips, and one man had signed on for five of the nine-month tours of duty. Men reported wages of between R12 and R18 per month (then equal to 18 to 25 American dollars), but from this total were deducted the worker's off-hours canteen and bar bills, so that when the Dobe area workers were paid off at the end of their contracts, most brought home only between R25 and R40 in total.

In order to go to "Johanni," Dobe area men had to walk out 100 kilometers to the main road at Nokaneg and hitch a ride north to the Witwatersrand Native Labour (Wenela) recruiting depot at Shakawe. After receiving a cursory medical examination, they would wait along with 150 other men for the weekly flight to the mines. At Johannesburg they were sent to one of the 40 or so giant Rand gold mines. The shorter men were classified for surface work at lower pay; the taller and huskier ones were chosen for the more dangerous and better-paid underground work. Returning home after nine months' work, the men were paid off in Shakawe, where a variety of home-brew joints and prostitutes were waiting to relieve them of part of their pay. Many returning workers have brought gonorrhoea back to the Dobe area as a result. With the rest of their money the men purchased clothes, shoes, saddles, blankets and yard goods, and sometimes donkeys to make their way back to the home area.

The system of remitting mine wages back to families in the rural areas was unknown among the Dobe San. There was no post office, and neither the workers nor their wives could read or write. Instead, the !Kung had developed a standard method for translating the values gained through wage work back into significant values in the hxaro exchange system.

When young Bo returned to !Kangwa in September 1968, he was dressed to kill in fedora, plaid shirt, undershirt, sport jacket, long pants with cowboy belt,



One hundred fifty miles north of Dobe is the recruiting depot for migrant laborers to the South African mines.

underpants, new shoes, and socks. Over the next few days his wardrobe dwindled as each item of clothing appeared in turn in the costume of a friend or relative. By the third day Bo himself was strolling around dressed only in his undershirt and his leather *chuana*. Bo had given away his entire wardrobe in the *hxaro* network, and we enjoyed seeing one of his kinsmen appear in fedora and *chuana*, another in sport jacket and *chuana*, and so on.

In 1967 the first store opened in the Dobe area, at !Kangwa, operated by Greek traders. Housed in the first modern building ever constructed in the !Kangwa Valley, the store sold mealie meal, soap, kerosene, clothing, saddles, and dry goods at inflated prices and purchased cattle from the Herero at reduced prices. The San had few, if any, cattle to sell, but five young men were hired for wages to tend and water the purchased cattle. The pay was only R6 to R8 per month (\$8.40 to \$11.20), but even this small amount has had a major impact in a world without cash.

The major impact of the store on both the San and their Black neighbors came from a single store-bought commodity—sugar. Sugar is the prime ingredient in the potent home-brewed beer (actually a form of mead) that is the centerpiece of a new culture that has sprung up around the !Kangwa store. The beer, called *khadi*, is a clear amber beverage that looks and tastes like a sparkling hard cider. It is made from brown sugar and *Grewia* berries, with fermentation induced by a mixture of bee earth, honeycomb, and honey called *seretse*. A number of Ju women have set themselves up as beer entrepreneurs, buying the sugar at the store and selling the product at 5 cents (\$.07) a cup. The Ju are scrupulous businesswomen. They do not

give drinks on credit, and even close kin are charged the full price for each drink. However, after the day's business is done the same women are seen sharing their wild plant foods in the traditional Ju way with their "customers" at the evening meal.

The new Ju culture is based on selling and drinking beer and listening (and dancing!) to hit tunes from Radio Botswana on transistor radios. Ju drinking behavior resembles that of their Herero and Tswana neighbors, whose women also brew and sell beer. Drinking is confined to the hottest hours of the day, beginning at ten in the morning and continuing to late afternoon. The hot sun overhead must speed the alcohol's effect, because most people are thoroughly drunk by two in the afternoon. Ju drinking parties are loud and rowdy, with shouting and laughter that can be heard a good distance away. Sometimes they take a nasty turn and fights break out, like the brawl at !Kangwa in which a mine returnee gave another man a blow with a club that fractured his skull. The situation is even worse at Chum!kwe across the border in Namibia, where frequent injuries and even deaths occur as a result of Saturday night (and day) brawls.

Many Ju/hoansi were appalled by the new way of life. They expressed fear at the effects of drinking on people's behavior; the loss of control, the fighting, and the neglect of daily tasks were seen as signs of the breakdown of the fabric of society. Stories were told and retold, with a mixture of glee and apprehension, of the bizarre behavior of people under the influence. A man named ≠Toma had stepped out of a drinking hut to urinate and had blithely relieved himself into a Herero woman's cooking pot filled with meat. In the uproar that followed, he narrowly escaped a thrashing by the woman's husband. A case was brought in the headman's court, but ≠Toma disclaimed all responsibility, saying that *he* would never do such a thing; it was entirely the fault of the beer. The headman was not persuaded by this argument and fined him a goat for the outrage.

Incidents like these were widely discussed and helped convince many Ju at the other waterholes that !Kangwa was an evil place, one to be avoided. The Ju/hoansi of the interior had entered the 1960s in their isolated areas with their group structures and productive systems intact. Through the decade, the Dobe area became open to outside penetration, starting with the building of the Chum!kwe settlement in 1960 and continuing with the opening of the !Kangwa store and its home-brew supplies in 1967. The arrival of the anthropologists in 1963 and their continuous residence from 1967 to 1971 also had its effect. But a 1960 visitor returning in 1970 would have had no great difficulty in recognizing the Ju/hoansi he knew before. More store-bought clothes, more babies, and more donkeys and goats were in evidence, but the basic pattern remained the same. The 1970s, however, brought new challenges that threatened to change fundamentally the basic pattern of Ju/hoansi existence. The power to make decisions about their lives and future was shifting from within the community to agencies outside the Dobe area and not under their control.

THE FIRST SCHOOL

The Botswana government announced plans in 1968 to build a primary school at !Kangwa, and the school opened its doors in January 1973. The school, a two-

room, single-story structure, had two teachers and offered Standards I to IV. The first class consisted of 55 Herero and Tswana students aged 5 to 10, all enrolled in Standard I. The medium of instruction was Setswana, and the curriculum was the standard one for Botswana: reading, writing, math, English, music, art, and Bible study.

Of the 60 or so Ju children of school age, *not a single one enrolled in January 1973*. When I spoke to them in July of that year, Ju parents claimed that the R3 (\$4.50) annual school fee was too high for them. When I observed that R3 per year was not an outrageous amount for people who brewed beer and worked for wages, they responded that in addition to the fees, each child had to purchase an obligatory school outfit consisting of shoes, underpants, sweater, shirt, and short pants for the boys; shoes, underpants, sweater, and dress for the girls, costing R15 to R17 at the local store, plus the weekly cost of the laundry soap to keep all the clothes clean. This sum put the cost of schooling out of the reach of all but a few Ju families. For those who *could* pay for the fees and the outfits, there remained yet another problem of equal magnitude: how to feed and care for the children in !Kangwa five days a week for eight months of the year. Even though the children would receive a nutritious school lunch, how was the rest of the family to forage for sufficient food in the immediate vicinity of !Kangwa, which already had a resident population of 63 Ju? Ju life depended on mobility, a demand that stood in direct conflict with the school's requirement of regular attendance.

Ju parents had other objections. Especially at waterholes west and south of !Kangwa, parents expressed concern that the school was located at the village where the heaviest drinking took place. They feared their children might be beaten or neglected if they were left in the care of !Kangwa relatives. Parents also objected to the corporal punishment meted out by the schoolmaster. A fifth reason given by some parents concerned reports from relatives who had children in the school at

The new school at !Kangwa, 1973.



Chum!kwe, across the border in Namibia. According to these reports, schoolchildren there were growing up to be disrespectful and contemptuous of their parents, even *zaing* them, a form of verbal sexual insulting expressly forbidden between parents and children (see Chapter 7). Finally the Ju/'hoansi were disturbed by the lack of sympathy for their culture expressed by the schoolteachers. Ju children were forbidden to speak their own language on school grounds, and no attempt was made in the curriculum to value Ju/'hoan culture and heritage. It wasn't until later years that this policy changed for the better (see Chapter 11 and Postscript).

In short, the Ju/'hoansi were faced with a real dilemma. They had many good reasons for being suspicious of the school and its impact on their lives, yet if the children did not gain some literacy skills, they would find themselves severely disadvantaged in the rapidly evolving world of land claims, jobs, and international conflict that surrounded them. The central government was creating laws that would increasingly have a direct impact on Ju/'hoan lives, and unless the San could read and interpret these laws and make the appropriate responses, their way of life would be in danger. The ability to read and write, therefore, was becoming an even more important skill than hunting in the struggle for survival.

GOVERNMENT AND THE FUTURE

Like their notions of other elements in the outside world, the Ju/'hoansi's ideas of government and the state were relatively hazy in 1963. *Horomenti* was their word for the government, an amalgam in their minds of Tswana and British overlords, with the British paramount. The only two individuals in high office they could name before 1963 were *Mogumagadi*, Mrs. Elizabeth Pulane, the ruling regent of the Botswana tribe and widow of the late paramount chief Moremi, and *Mosadinyane*, an affectionate Tswana nickname for Queen Victoria. There was some question over whether Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth were one and the same person. Apart from the occasional government patrols, almost the first direct contact the !Kung had with the central government was when the trucks announcing the pre-Independence elections arrived in mid-1964. I was struck by the spectacle of these "primitive" democrats being carefully instructed by means of a film on what elections were about and how to mark a ballot. The !Kangwa district voted solidly for the ruling Botswana Democratic Party, the electoral symbol of which was the *Dumkra*, an automobile jack.

After Independence in 1966, their member of the legislative assembly, Mr. Kwerepe, occasionally visited the district. From an aristocratic Tswana family, he was reputed to own *mafisa* cattle near !Kangwa. When I met him in 1967 he had just returned from a trip to the United States, where he had had lunch with Robert Kennedy. He was extolling the virtues of the American model of development through private enterprise, a model that was later put into practice in Botswana in the form of the Tribal Grazing Lands Policy (TGLP).

The TGLP provided a mechanism for taking land out of communal tenure and putting it into what amounted to freehold tenure in order to encourage more businesslike farming and ranching practices. Until Independence, the great bulk of

Botswana's land had been held under a tribal form of tenure. In this system the paramount chief of each of the eight Tswana tribes doled out parcels of land to senior Tswana lineage heads to allocate grazing and agricultural rights. Effectively, it was a form of communal tenure; no land taxes or grazing fees were paid, and no one could appropriate a piece of land for his own exclusive use. In the Dobe area, this tribal tenure coexisted with the Ju/'hoan *n!ore* system: foragers and herders shared the waterholes and the space around them.

With Independence came a plan to rationalize the country's cattle industry, to take land out of tribal tenure and allocate it to individuals and syndicates on 50–99 year renewable leases. The lessees would survey and fence the land and would limit their herd sizes to the number of animals that could be supported in line with modern range management techniques. The plan's proponents, like Mr. Kwerepe, hailed it as the start of a new era in scientific and profitable animal production. But, like the Enclosure movement in seventeenth-century Britain and similar movements in many other Western countries, the Tribal Grazing Land Policy was a means of transforming inalienable communal land into valuable real estate, the leases for which could be bought and sold. It threatened to transform the people who lived on that land from independent hunters and herders into tenants and landless squatters.

To the government's credit, safeguards were installed to prevent the too-rapid takeover of tribal land by unscrupulous speculators. Land boards were set up in each district to screen every application before deed and title were granted. In spite of the safeguards, the Ju of the Dobe area and other San were at a great disadvantage under the new legislation. Lacking schooling, they were quite out of their depth in the legal complexities of land board negotiations. Also, it was impossible for them to make the frequent trips to Maun to attend the land board hearings.

With the start of the 1970s, the future of the San and their role in society became a topic of discussion within the higher levels of the government. Liberal, Western-trained Batswana and expatriate civil servants saw the San, now called the *Basarwa*, as in some ways analogous to the native peoples in places like Canada and the United States. They lived on the margins of society, were socially stigmatized, and had less opportunity for advancement than did the great majority of their fellow citizens.

In 1974, the government established the Basarwa Development Office (BDO). The BDO's job was to count the Basarwa, find out what their special needs were, and offer grants to local authorities for their welfare. In the North West District, where Dobe was located, the Ju/'hoansi received three forms of aid: scholarships to attend primary school, aid for well-digging, and agricultural extension advice. The effects on the Dobe area were striking. By 1976–1977, over 70 Ju children had enrolled in the two area schools, one at !Kangwa and the other at /Xai/xai. After a series of name changes, and in order to remove any association of this agency with a single ethnic group, the BDO became the RADO, Remote Area Dwellers Office, and ever since, the Dobe Ju/'hoansi and other Botswana San, some 45,000 of them, have been known as "Rads."

Craft marketing was another important development for the Ju/'hoansi. For many years the Ju had produced some ostrich-eggshell bead necklaces for the tourist trade. They were purchased by European traders from Ghanzi for ridiculously

low prices. Fifteen cents was paid for a string that took two days of work to produce. The traders then resold them for ten times the amount. The government-owned craft marketing board, Botswana Craft, was thus a boon to the Ju and to many other rural people. They paid the craftspeople two-thirds of retail for everything they bought.

Income from craft production quickly rose to become the major source of cash in the Dobe area, an influx to the community of \$300 to \$500 a month.

Unfortunately, the influx of cash also caused a boom in beer-making at !Kangwa, and the practice spread to other centers. Drunkenness, squabbling, and neglect of nutrition increased in frequency and caused a crisis in the school program. Several parents withdrew their children from the school, fearing for the children's safety.

Well-digging was another area of emphasis by the Remote Area Dwellers Office. By 1977, 20 applications had been received from Dobe area Ju/'hoansi for digging permits. But here again, things didn't turn out as planned. Despite the efforts of the RADO, 15 of the applications were tied up in red tape by local land boards, and only 5 were approved. Of these, at only one, the well at Dobe itself, were the Ju/'hoansi successful in striking water.

The greatest successes have been recorded in agriculture and stock raising. By the early 1980s, the number of cattle in Ju hands had increased dramatically, and over 50 Ju agricultural fields had been registered with the land board. In 1980 I estimated that at least a dozen Ju families had herds of sufficient size to provide a substantial proportion of their diet. And six Ju families owned steel ploughs, a device that made agriculture possible on a greatly expanded scale.

Yet even these successes brought with them new social problems. The breakdown of sharing, the appearance for the first time of wealth differences, and a tendency toward the subordination of women were all trends that could be discerned in embryo as the Ju/'hoansi entered the last two decades of the twentieth century.

On a trip to Dobe in 1980, I visited my old friend /Xashe. It was his father, ≠Toma//gwe, who had first greeted me at Dobe Pan 17 years before (Chapter 1). His *tsu* N!eishi had made me his "son." /Xashe's daughter //Koka, now in her twenties, had been my "betrothed" (see Chapter 6).

The people of the Dobe waterhole had prospered. We were greeted with much affection, and /Xashe showed me around his new semipermanent village of well-constructed mud-walled houses that he had built with his two middle-aged brothers and an older sister. Then we visited the kraal, where I counted 19 cows and calves in the family herd, a very respectable herd size, well above the minimum for herding self-sufficiency. /Xashe and I talked over old times as his daughter //Koka, who was now happily married to a man from Chum!kwe, played her portable record player, blasting out the latest hit tunes from Johannesburg. We walked over to a smaller kraal, where his teenage son was leading 60 goats out to browse. The cows and goats of other Dobe hamlets could be heard through the trees heading out to pasture.

In a quiet glade away from the village we sat down to smoke our pipes. /Xashe, always a thoughtful person, seemed to be in an even more somber mood than usual. I asked him what was the matter.

After a long pause he replied, "It's all these people of Dobe. There are so many of them now, and all these goats, and all the cows, and all the things. And everyone has trunks full of clothes and blankets. And we argue all the time. Sometimes I wonder if we wouldn't be better off if we had stayed like we were when you first came here."

"*Mi≠tum*," I replied, using the term we had shared many years before, "*mi≠tum*, I don't know, I honestly don't know. You may be right. But whatever you and I feel, this is your life now. You can't go back."