THE EAST INDIANS OF YUBA CITY: A STUDY IN ACCULTURATION

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Yuba City Sikh Temple
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

This is being written at a time in the history of the United States when minority ethnic groups are demanding more understanding and equality of opportunity. Many of those groups sharing our European background are almost totally assimilated into our "American way of life." However, those coming from different cultures and having visible physical differences are finding it more difficult. Gradually, with the increased concern from all segments of our state and national life, voices are being raised demanding attention and equality of opportunity. Books are being written in an effort to bring a greater awareness and appreciation of the cultural differences that make people seem strange to one another. Milton Gordon is the editor of a series of such books written to give the American public an overview of its ethnic heritage. (Kitano, 1969:ix)

In the foreword to one book of the series, The Japanese-Americans, Gordon writes:

It is my hope that the publication of this series will aid substantially in the process of enabling Americans to understand more fully what it means to live in a
multi-ethnic society, and concomitantly, what we must do in the future to eliminate the corrosive and devastating phenomena of prejudice and discrimination, and to ensure that a pluralistic society can at the same time fulfill its promised destiny of being truly "one nation indivisible." (Kitano, 1969:ix)

There reside in the Yuba City, California, area a group of immigrant East Indian Sikhs about whom this thesis is concerned. Because they are a small and relatively unknown group, little has been written about them. This thesis is, therefore, dedicated to bringing a greater awareness of their presence, of the common values they share with other Americans, and a greater understanding of their differences. Their characteristics will be described and the degree and direction of their acculturation will be examined using Milton Gordon's Model for immigrant ethnic groups.

Context

History of American Immigration

Since its discovery, the American continent has been the mecca of many persons searching for a new life. Beginning in the sixteenth century those searching for a better financial, social, political and/or religious life have been coming to America from many parts of the world. The largest migrations came from Europe after the industrial revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought about the displacement of many people, and at the same time there was a rapid increase in
population which further stimulated the need for emigration to new frontiers. Negro slaves were brought from Africa a few years after the discovery of the New World, and during the second half of the nineteenth century California became the destination for persons from eastern Asia, especially China. Japanese also came in large numbers during the last quarter of that century and East Indians began arriving with the turn of the twentieth century. For many of the immigrants, America offered an opportunity to practice old skills and to find new ones, thus giving immigrants an opportunity to play an important role in developing the country's resources. Although not always welcome as friends and neighbors, they were needed economically and were accepted as a basic part of the American way of life. However, as the "frontier" closed and opportunities for employment dwindled, Americans began to resent and discourage continued immigration; California's feelings were centered primarily on Asians. By the time the East Indian immigration started, agricultural opportunities in California's Central Valley represented one of the last frontiers for developing a new life in a new land.

East Indian Immigration

The East Indians of Yuba City have come to the United States as part of this epic migration. At present there are between one thousand and fifteen hundred East
Indians in the Yuba City area. They are primarily of the Sikh religion and have come from Punjab, one of India's northernmost provinces. At least two-thirds represent a first generation with the rest constituting a second and extremely small, difficult to locate, third generation. Because the first generation came to the area primarily in response to words from relatives and friends, most have come directly from the same area of Punjab—a small inter-fluvial tract called Doaba, not far from the city of Ludhiana. (Refer to attached map of India.) A few have come from other Sikh settlements around the world, and others have come from other areas of Punjab. At least ninety-five per cent of the Indians in the Yuba City area have come as followers of the Sikh religion which binds them in a mutual heritage and interest as they settle in a strange new land. It is generally believed by the Sikhs that Yuba City is the largest Sikh community in the United States. Those East Indians in Yuba City who do not adhere to the Sikh religion are primarily Muslims.

As many of the immigrants to the United States, the East Indians have come primarily in search of a better economic life from a country that, for as long as there are historical records, has been over-populated, poverty stricken and torn with political strife. The vast majority of East Indians are Hindus and have been caught in a religious and political system which has given them no recourse but to endure hardship and hope for a better life.
Area from which most Yuba City East Indians immigrated
after death. Moreover, to the Hindus, who constitute eighty percent of India's population, leaving India is considered impure. The Sikhs, however, always have been known for their adventurousness and resourcefulness and have developed a tradition of world migration. Also, because of the dominance of the Hindu and Moslem religions in India, they are accustomed to considering themselves to be a minority surrounded by a hostile majority. In addition to the United States and Canada, large numbers of Sikhs are living in England, the Fiji Islands, Ghana, Malaysia, Iran, Japan and Australia. At a time when migration to the United States from many parts of the world has slowed down, immigrants from Punjab are coming in increasing numbers to Yuba City today. Estimates suggest that approximately three hundred are presently arriving each year.

Salient Research and Theory

Social scientists are devoting much time to studying the dynamics of what has been happening to and among American ethnic groups. One of the few pieces of research which included the East Indians is The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups by W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Scrole (1945). They believe that American ethnic groups are blending into the "melting pot" and that the primary problem has become one of "race." (East Indians were considered Mongoloid.) Warner and Scrole present a series
of tables dividing immigrants by racial types with six cultural categories under each type. Thus, they list thirty-five subdivisions ranging in order of predictable racial and ethnic assimilation. The East Indians are placed in the fourth racial type—Mongoloid*—and under the fifth or sixth cultural category, depending upon whether or not they speak English. Out of thirty steps ranging in order of speed of assimilation, they are rated twenty-third or twenty-fourth. Warner and Scroble further rate them according to their degree of subordination—great to very great, strength of ethnic and racial subsystem—very strong, and time for assimilation—very slow. Many changes in the United States and the world invalidate this finding for today, but it is presented as an example of research involving East Indians in the United States in 1945.

Other social scientists speak of America not in terms of a great "melting pot" but of containing ethnic or racial groups following a pattern of "pluralism" or "acculturation." One such study is Minorities in a New World by Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris (1958) in which they describe some ethnic groups as having taken definite directions involving a choice between these two extremes. The Jews in the United States and the French in Canada

*For purposes of this thesis, East Indians are considered to be members of the Caucasian race. (Linton, 1936:41)
are described as maintaining a pluralist position while living among dominant groups that advocate assimilation. On the other hand, the Negroes are described as assimilationists in their goals, but because of the dominant society are forced to make a pluralist adjustment. However, the direction of most ethnic groups is not so clear-cut.

In a chapter entitled "An Anthropological View of Minority Groups" (1958:237-95), Wagley and Harris discuss minority-majority group relations in terms of an inevitable amount of hostility and conflict that is present within and between groups of all kinds. This is found to exist in a greater or lesser degree and can have positive as well as negative consequences. In this thesis this will be discussed as an important element in the group life of the East Indian group in Yuba City. (See Chapter V.)

There is an abundance of literature dealing with the meaning of the processes usually referred to as acculturation and assimilation. In his introduction to a collection of articles on social change entitled Beyond the Frontier, Paul Bohannan (1967:xii) discusses these terms in relation to social change as a necessary dimension of all social and cultural theory. One of these articles, "Acculturation: An Exploratory Formulation" (written by four social scientists for the Social Science Research Council, Summer Seminar on Accultura-
tion, 1953), is particularly pertinent to some of the material that will be discussed in this thesis. The definition of acculturation from this article in Beyond the Frontier will be used throughout this thesis: "acculturation may be defined as culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems." (Broom, Siegel, Vogt, Watson, 1953:256)

They elaborate upon the nature of this change by saying that for change to be acculturative it must result from interactions of two mutually self-sustained systems. This would include contacts between cultural enclaves and their encompassing societies. Broom, Siegel, Vogt and Watson further state that any autonomous cultural system is in a continuous process of change which is often stimulated more generally and rapidly by contact with another culture than by internal forces. Acculturation can be considered the first step leading toward assimilation which will be defined in the following ways:

By assimilation we mean the process whereby groups with different cultures come to have a common culture . . . . Assimilation refers thus to the fusion of cultural heritages. (Berry, 151:217)

Assimilation may be defined, then, as the gradual process whereby cultural differences (and rivalries) tend to disappear. (Cuber, 1955:609)

Both of these definitions are used by Gordon, (1964:65), and will be elaborated upon further in Chapter II. Throughout this thesis the processes of assim-
ilation and acculturation will be discussed.

In an article entitled "Acculturation" by Ralph Beals (1952:621), the importance of understanding change is also emphasized. To understand the change that has taken place in a group, Beals suggests the importance of gaining an historical perspective by establishing a "base line" in the past from which change is gauged. Once this "base line" is established it is important to be able to identify change forces or processes that have brought the change about. Beals believes that the study of acculturation should be concerned primarily with processes that bring about change. He further believes that we need clarification of the methods and techniques of studying the entire area of social change.

Such a review as the present suggests strongly the need for serious stocktaking and reformulation of the field of acculturation. There is an urgent necessity to re-examine our conceptual apparatus and to reach agreement on objectives and methods which will produce more comparability in studies and which will develop a series of really significant hypotheses.

It would seem that such a re-examination could best take place within the framework of the broader problem of culture change . . . Most particularly, it is necessary to induce the time dimension if the dynamic situation is to receive adequate treatment. (Beals, 1953:638)

For the purposes of this thesis, a baseline from which to view the changes that are taking place in the Yuba City East Indian group will be established and discussed in Chapter II, Method of Study.
be of abiding worth." (1964:98) This is known as the anglo-conformity theory of assimilation and "gripped the nation like a fever" during World War I. (1964:98)

While this anglo-conformity theory is still prevalent, the ideal of the "melting pot" has also prevailed from earliest immigration. This melting pot ideal envisaged a blending of cultures to which each ethnic strain would make its contribution and out of which would emerge a new culture transcending all of them. It was a generous and idealistic theory and, like the ideal of anglo-conformity, envisioned the disappearance of the immigrants' groups as separate entities. Neither theory was embraced by the ethnic groups themselves, and neither presented a picture of what was actually taking place on the American scene.

Cultural and Structural Pluralism

With the resumption of immigration after World War I came a growing interest in Americanism, demanding that the immigrant divest himself of his culture, language and ethnic institutions and become an American. As a reaction to such unreasonable and unfulfillable demands, the theory of "cultural pluralism" began to evolve, opposing both the anglo-conformity and the melting pot theories. This theory proposed that immigrants continue to maintain their own traditional cultural and social interactions in separate associations or groups. The theory was first
advocated by persons such as Jane Addams after having had the firsthand experience of living among immigrants, and by such intellectuals as John Dewey and Norman Hapgood who recognized the cultural value presented by various heritages to America. (Gordon, 1965:138-40) Thus, according to Gordon, many social scientists elaborated upon the theory of cultural pluralism, some considering it an end in itself, others a prelude to, and an essential ingredient of, the true melting pot. Gordon describes the goal of cultural pluralism to be one of:

maintaining enough subsocietal separation to guarantee the continuance of the ethnic cultural tradition and the existence of the group without at the same time interfering with the carrying out of standard responsibilities to the general American civic life. In effect, this demands keeping primary group relations across ethnic lines sufficiently minimal to prevent a significant amount of intermarriage while cooperating with other groups and individuals in the secondary relations areas of political action, economic life and civic responsibility. Within this context the sense of ethnic peoplehood will remain as one important layer of group identity. (Gordon, 1964:158)

While cultural pluralism is the term most often used, Gordon thinks "structural pluralism" more accurately describes what is taking place in America today and is the major key to understanding the ethnic make-up of American society, while "cultural pluralism" is the minor one. (1964:159)
Gordon's Model

The following stages are presented by Gordon as a description of cultural and structural pluralism broken into the steps taken by immigrant groups on their way toward cultural assimilation or acculturation.

(1) First generation immigrants arriving as adults in sufficient numbers to make a communal life feasible, need and prefer the security of group life made up of fellow immigrants from the homeland. This refers to the need for establishing such organizations as ethnic churches and community centers in which primary relationship can take place.

(2) While few changes will take place in the primary group communal life, successful relationships to secondary groups in "modest degree and in selected areas" can and should take place. This refers to institutions in such areas as employment and job training which permit the immigrant to fill his role as a potential future citizen in the national and local community.

(3) The institutional and subcultural life of the immigrant community should be regarded not only as necessary but as an effective means of enabling a gradual degree of acculturation necessary for comfortable orientation to
American life.

(4) Although the first generation immigrants continue to cling to their own group for all of their primary relationships, their American born children, the second generation, begin the long road toward assimilation by entering into the life of the host community in a variety of ways, making eventual acculturation not only possible but inevitable. At the same time, they continue to relate, in varying degrees, to the ethnic structures established by the first generation. (1964:245-7)

Thus, America is made up of many cultural "enclaves" which provide not only an opportunity for the ethnic groups to maintain a sense of "ethnic peoplehood" but a sense of security from which the immigrants gradually develop and maintain ties with the larger communities in which they live.

Gordon considers cultural and structural pluralism to be a prelude to acculturation. After the first generation has found its identity in separate ethnic groups or "structures," the second generation is ready to relate to the larger community or "host society" in a process which Gordon describes as "cultural" or "behavioral assimilation" or "acculturation." He considers it to be the first of seven steps toward total assimilation into the American culture. The other six steps are listed as
structural assimilation (large scale entrance into primary groups), marital assimilation (large scale intermarriage), identificational assimilation (sense of peoplehood based on host society), attitude-receptional assimilation (absence of prejudice), behavioral-receptional assimilation (absence of discrimination), and civic assimilation (absence of value-power conflict). (Gordon, 1964:71) When assimilation has taken place in these areas of ethnic life, total assimilation will have taken place.

Gordon does not maintain that all types of assimilation will automatically follow cultural assimilation, nor does he set any kind of a timetable for their occurrence. Cultural assimilation can take place when none of the other types occur and the condition of "acculturation only" may continue indefinitely. (Gordon, 64:77) Because this study is concerned primarily with acculturation, no attempt will be made to use the other categories listed above, but the reader should be aware that Gordon considers them sequential steps in the long process of total assimilation into American life.

Restatement of the Problem

The degree and direction of acculturation taking place among the East Indians of Yuba City will be examined using Gordon's model for immigrant groups. This will be accomplished by describing their culture in terms of the current and historical forces which keep them together as
an ethnic group and those values and concerns that build bridges between them and the dominant community. Concepts from the literature dealing with acculturation which have been discussed in this chapter will be used to help interpret and describe the changes that led, and continue to lead, to acculturation, as well as those which inhibit and slow it down.

The following chapters will describe the East Indian community of Yuba City in terms of the history of the people, ecology of the area, the characteristics of the community, the generational changes, the attitudes and values of the East Indians toward Yuba City and of the Yuba Cityians' toward the East Indians.
CHAPTER II

METHOD OF STUDY

Sources of Material

Field work conducted in the spring of 1967

The writer's initial acquaintance with the Yuba City East Indians came in the spring of 1967 when she made a study of the group as one of the requirements for a course in applied anthropology at Sacramento State College under the direction of Dr. Mohammed Rauf (a native of Pakistan). The material was collected from interviews, visits to East Indian homes, attendance at religious functions, and information presented by Dr. Rauf in class. This 1967 research was used as a base from which the present, much more intensive, analysis, was launched.

Field work in the spring and summer of 1970

During the spring and summer of 1970 many visits, interviews in English and observations of the community were made. Twelve homes were visited from one to four times each. Although less likely to speak English well, women were sometimes more available than children and men. Men, however, were interviewed when they came in from the
fields at lunchtime or late in the afternoon. During the summer children were often at home and responded to the interviewer as time and circumstance permitted. Occasionally the children were used as interpreters and at other times they participated in the general interview. Sometimes they stood by and watched or showed little interest in the discussion and became involved in their own activities. Visits were made with the teachers and principals in two of the public schools and with the supervisors in the Yuba City District school office. The Assistant Public Welfare Director and one of the agricultural control agents who works closely with the East Indian farmers were also interviewed. A meeting of the Temple Board of Directors and "functions" in the Sikh Temple in Stockton, California, and in Yuba City homes were attended. (Until the present construction of the Yuba City Temple, Stockton has offered the Sikhs their closest formalized center of worship.)

Several non-East Indian residents of Yuba City were interviewed. Particularly helpful were visits with Dr. and Mrs. Loehlin, Presbyterian missionaries now residing in Marysville, who had lived among the Sikhs in Punjab for forty years. They were able to provide background information about India and were helpful in reinforcing and enlarging upon the writer's observations.
Written source material

Books on history of India and of the Sikh religion were especially helpful in gaining understanding. Khushwant Singh's two volume history (1963 and 1965) is definitive and was used as the basis for most of the chapter on Sikh history. Several pamphlets published by Sikh publishing houses both in India and the United States supplemented these two volumes. Magazines such as the Sikh Review, published monthly in India and subscribed to by most of the Yuba City Sikhs, and India News, published weekly in Washington, D.C., by the East Indian Embassy were a current source of ideas and events occurring in India that were of concern to the Yuba City Sikh community. Occasional articles in the San Francisco Chronicle placed events in India in an international setting. Publications from the State of California printing office provided background for attitudes that have prevailed toward the East Indians in California. In addition, newsletters from the Stockton Temple have kept the writer informed of local Sikh activities.

Previous research

A doctoral dissertation from the University of the Pacific at Stockton, California, by Lawrence Wenzel, entitled "The Identification and Analysis of Certain Value Orientations of Two Generations of East Indians in California" (1965), discusses and compares the values and
attitudes of young people and their parents and relates them to the values of the dominant American community. An M.A. thesis from Sacramento State College by Mrs. Harwant Khush, a native of Punjab, entitled "The Social Participation and Attitudes of the Children of East Indian Immigrants" (1965), compares the adjustment of school children born in India with those born in the United States.

Method of Approaching the Community

Initial contacts were made in 1967 through two members of the East Indian community who had been suggested as being cooperative and knowledgeable. They, in turn, referred the writer to others who could provide a wide variety of viewpoints and information. During the 1970 study many members of the East Indian community were available to discuss their life and feelings. An effort was made to talk with persons representing all income levels and lengths of stay in the area. While interest was expressed in all of the activities of the community, the proposed Yuba City Sikh Temple provided a focus around which information was gathered. Because the need for the temple had been the center of the East Indian community's thoughts and feelings for many years, it led to discussions about all aspects of their life. The East Indians appeared to welcome opportunities to share their plans, thoughts, food and religion with someone who seemed genuinely interested, and they looked upon this study as
an opportunity to make more information available about their ethnic group. Those devoted to their religion enjoyed talking at length about its philosophy. One gentleman, who is in favor of complete and immediate involvement of the East Indians in the Yuba City community, spent much time telling how well he and his family had done because he had stressed education and community involvement rather than East Indian ethnic activities. The "old timers" told tales of hardships they had suffered when they first came here; mothers of children told of their hopes of the temple as a place where their children can carry on Sikh religious practices, even though in modest form; and one man who had become disillusioned with the laxity in religious practices among some of the community members related several times, "The religion is good, but the people are bad." Thus, through interviews with different segments of the community, the writer was able to hear a variety of viewpoints.

In seeking information from the East Indians, the investigator introduced herself as a student at Sacramento State College making a study of Yuba City's East Indian community. Without exception, the informants seemed anxious to discuss their attitudes and appeared interested in the writer's attempt to understand them and their needs. Because some of the East Indians have family members who have pursued advanced college degrees, they understood and were sympathetic to the idea of a thesis being written
about them. Some had been interviewed for Wenzel's and Khush's studies and, hence, were aware that their ethnic group was a subject of concern and interest.

Eleven trips from Sacramento to Yuba City were made during the spring of 1970, each involving a full day of interviewing and observation. One trip was made to Stockton to observe and participate in a major religious ceremony at the Sikh Temple. Plans for visits were not made before leaving Sacramento so that the writer was free to take advantage of casual but usually very helpful meetings. Return visits were made when persons were not found home the first time. This method of conducting field work proved to be effective because of its informality and because of the freedom it offered to take advantage of unplanned opportunities that were continually presenting themselves. One interview would often lead to another by a suggestion that the writer visit "my friend, -------," who could tell her more about a particular concern or interest. On several occasions the East Indians would then telephone their friends to announce the writer's impending visit. Because most of the East Indians have little interaction with the larger community and view most non-East Indian visitors as immigration or agricultural agents seeking information about their status, this informal approach made it easier to establish rapport. Occasionally the writer would run into an East Indian on the street or in the East Indian store where most of them
shop from time to time. These casual conversations often proved to give unexpected and unsolicited information.

Method of Measuring Cultural Change

In order to determine the amount of acculturation that has taken place among the East Indians in Yuba City, a base line will be established from which culture change can be measured. This base of measurement will be the culture as embodied in individual East Indians when they arrive in Yuba City from Punjab.

For many of the East Indian immigrants, the airplane flight from Punjab to the United States represents a jump from a pre-industrial village to a modern town where most of the homes are equipped with modern conveniences. In India, most of the people were accustomed to such non-industrial conditions as farm implements powered by man and beast, cow dung and urine used for a variety of building and heating purposes, and water drawn from the village well. Life in India is village-centered with most of the primary relationships taking place within the extended family and the village temple. Only a small percentage of the East Indians in Yuba City have come from an educated, city background.

Although the reality of being in a totally different location forces individuals to change their living style, they bring with them many cultural traits which they can and do continue—their hair and dress styles, food pref-
erences, religion, language, and long established values. What changes can be observed in individual East Indians after they have lived in Yuba City ten, twenty, or thirty years? How much of their East Indian cultural heritage do their children perpetuate as they grow up and attend school in Yuba City? Their life as described in the following chapters should give an over-view of the amount and direction of changes that takes place among the first and second generations living in Yuba City and should demonstrate the relevance of Gordon's model of acculturation for this ethnic group.

Definition of Terms

The descriptions of acculturation given by The Social Science Research Council in 1935 and 1953 will be used. "Acculturation may be defined as culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems," (Redfield, Linton and Herskovitz, 1935:182), and "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups." (Broom, Siegel, Vogt, Watson, 1953:256)

In "Assimilation in American Life," (1964:62) Gordon quotes several definitions of assimilation made by social scientists. For purposes of his study and model
he refers to assimilation as the end result of the seven steps which were mentioned in the last chapter and which are shown graphically in Table 1. Acculturation as described in the paragraph above is considered the first step toward assimilation. When the seven steps are completed, total assimilation has occurred.

The author of this thesis will be referred to as the interviewer, investigator or writer. All such names refer to the same person. When dominant or larger community is used, it refers to the long established Anglo community of Yuba City.

The term Hindu will be found in quotations from the early history of the East Indians in the United States and is used frequently today to refer to them. It does not necessarily refer to their religious affiliation.

From time to time the Sikh name for temple, Gurdwara (door of the Guru), may be used. Granth is the name of the Sikh bible. Sikh means learner, and the founders of the religion are known as Gurus, or teachers. Langar refers to the institution of serving free meals.
CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Demography

Yuba City and the farming area immediately surrounding it has a population of about 20,000, of which between 1,000 and 1,500 are East Indians.* The people who have lived in and around the area for some time report that Yuba City has a reputation for being a rural, ingrown, church-oriented community with an "old timer gang." The writer also heard it described as a community of people with "southern attitudes toward race." Besides the East Indian ethnic group living almost completely in Yuba City, there is a large Mexican community, Chinese and Japanese groups, and a small population of Blacks scattered throughout Marysville and Yuba City. (Marysville is separated

*No accurate count of the present East Indian population in and around Yuba City is presently available. The generally quoted figure is "between 1,000 and 1,500" with "about 300 a year" arriving at the present time. A count from December, 1968, telephone book brought 155 families with recognizable East Indian names. If one considers that there are an average of five persons living in each household, the number comes to 775. Perhaps 400 have arrived since December, 1968, bringing the number to 1,175. Two to three hundred persons could be without phones or have names not readily distinguishable as East Indians, bringing the figure to between 1,300 to 1,400. The estimate made by Wenzel in 1965 gave the number as 700. With an increase of 200 to 300 each year since then, the present figure could be close to 1,500.
from Yuba City by only a river.) Both the Chinese and Japanese communities have language schools and each has a church or temple, both built many years ago. To the observer there appears to be no interaction between the East Indians and these other groups. In discussing the status hierarchy of the ethnic groups within the attitudes of the majority anglo community, three different members of the larger community placed them: (1) Orientals (both Japanese and Chinese); (2) East Indians; (3) Mexicans; and (4) Blacks. Thus, the East Indian community appears to enjoy a relatively high status in the community.

Location and description of the community

Although East Indians reside throughout California's Central Valley, from El Centro to Gridley, this study will deal only with those living in Yuba City and the area immediately adjacent to it. (See attached map.) The other areas do not contain as large a number of East Indians as Yuba City, nor were they as convenient for study.

Yuba City's "twin city," Marysville, has a population of approximately 10,000, and is partially surrounded by the Feather and Yuba Rivers. The two cities are in the midst of flat farming land with no city of comparable size within a radius of twenty miles. Sacramento, fifty miles south, is the closest metropolitan area. Community resources include Yuba Junior College, located in Yuba
YUBA CITY AREA

- Approximate locations of East Indian homes
- New Sikh Temple

35 mi.
to Sacramento

29
City, and Beale Air Force Base ten miles from town. Employment in the area is centered around the college, the Air Force Base, and, primarily, the many phases of farming and fruit growing.

Besides the Temple, which is in the process of being built and which will be discussed in detail, the only other exclusively East Indian community resources are an East Indian grocery and drygoods store with imports from India to supply the residents' special needs and tastes, an East Indian restaurant, and a weekly East Indian radio broadcast with news of East Indians both in the United States and around the world.

Ecology

Many factors have combined to make this area attractive to the East Indians from Punjab. Both its climate and geographical features resemble their homeland, making it possible to engage in similar agricultural activities. Like the Yuba City area, Punjab is a most fertile land. Wheat, rice, peaches, almonds and plums are the principal crops in and around Yuba City—all components of the East Indian's traditional diet. Just west of Yuba City are a series of wildlife sanctuaries, running up and down northern California in an area that is frequently marshy from flood runoff of the Sacramento River, fifteen miles to the west. These sanctuaries constitute part of the "Pacific Flyway" where birds rest on their flight between
Alaska and Mexico. Partridges, quail, pheasant, egrets, all either native or familiar to India, are four of the many birds that flourish at Gray Lodge, a State of California waterfowl management area, ten miles from Yuba City. The chukar partridge even has an East Indian name. To the west, near the waterfowl area, are the Sutter Buttes, a small mountain range providing a backdrop for the entire area, which is otherwise flat. Mustard plants blanket the area in the spring, under the peach and almond trees and in all open spaces, providing a ready source of one of the East Indian's most traditional foods. Beehives are abundant in the orchards. Although Yuba City does not have Punjab's long cold winter, it does have a similar dry warm spell—an important crop growing season for both areas. In discussing the area with one of the East Indians, the writer recalls remarks such as "it's just like home."

Several quotations from Khushwant Singh's History of the Sikhs (1963:6), describing Punjab, will reinforce the similarity which was noted between Yuba City and Northern India.

Across this monotonously flat land flow six large rivers. The homeland of the vast majority of the Sikhs is in the land between the Chenab and the Jumma Rivers... Spring is the Punjab's blossom time, when in the words of Guru Nanak "all is seemly; the woodlands are in flower and loud with the humming of bumble bees. The countryside is an expanse of mustard yellow... Partridges call in the wheat fields and at night one hears the honking of geese on their way back to the Punjab." (1963:6)
An article written for the Social Science Research Council Seminar on Acculturation points out the important role ecology can play in the acculturation process. Close study of the relationship between ecology and acculturation would no doubt reveal that rather small and particular phenomena from the ecological standpoint are sometimes of major concern for acculturation research. (Broom, Siegel, Vogt and Watson, 1953:264.)

Thus, perhaps an important reason for the establishment and maintenance of the East Indian community in this area is the similarity between the Yuba City area and that of their native Punjab. The history of the Sikhs in India and in California which follows will provide further understanding of the forces that made them the kind of people they are, and motivated them to leave their homeland in search of new modes of living.
CHAPTER IV

HISTORY OF THE SIKHS

Origin and Development of Sikhism in India

Because many of the customs observed among the East Indians in Yuba City have their roots in the history of the Sikhs in India, a review of the historical development of the religion will be helpful in understanding not only their past but their present culture and customs.

From 1400 until 1830

There is no definitive agreement on the age of East Indian civilization, but Indologists consider it "among the oldest in the world and that its cradle was in the Punjab." (Singh, 1963:8) However, for the purpose of this thesis we will consider its history beginning with the origin and development of Sikhism in the fifteenth century. This was a time of turmoil in India. Moslems and Hindus who had been able to work out areas of agreement and compromise during earlier centuries found themselves unable to live at peace with political unrest and conquest disrupting their religious beliefs.

Nanak, the first of the ten Guru founders of Sikhism, lived from 1469 until 1539. He was concerned about the religious unrest of his time and devoted his
life to a mission of peace and reconciliation between the Hindu and Muslim religions. To dramatize his allegiance to neither, he engaged in such behavior as wearing outlandish garbs combining styles of clothing worn by Hindu sadus and Muslim fakirs, and by breaking time-honored traditions of both groups.

The salient points of Nanak's teaching are summarized as follows:

(1) He was a strict monotheist. God was infinite and could not die to be reincarnated, nor could he assume human form. Therefore, there were to be no idols.

(2) The Guru was to be considered the guide or spiritual mentor showing man the path of truth.

(3) He advocated a castless society and took practical steps to break the hold of caste by starting free community kitchens where his followers, irrespective of caste, ate together. Visitors and those without lodging were always welcome to stay at the Temple. (This practice of community kitchens and lodging is practiced today in Sikh Temples in the United States and will be an important practice in the Yuba City Temple when it is completed.)

(4) The miracle of the name "God" and the reality of its power achieved through the chanting of it during meditation, is important both in
private services and in services of worship in the Temple. (Chanting is an important part of worship in all Sikh Temples and religious functions.)

(5) The discipline of service is an integral part of the religion and is given practical expression in temples throughout India. Upon entering the Temple in India a Sikh is expected to perform such services as sweeping the floor, carrying bricks, cleaning cooking utensils, or serving water. (Singh 1, 1963:39.)

Nanak's political teachings, epitomized in "There is no Hindu, there is no Musselman," gave birth to Punjabi consciousness and nationalism which, as shall be seen, was a strong force in welding the Sikhs into the cohesive and loyal group. They have weathered many setbacks and migrated to new lands carrying the strength of their loyalty to their homeland.

Nanak exalted the householder above the ascetic. He was married and appointed as his successor a devoted married disciple, Angad, as the next Guru. This loyalty to family life is still strong among the Sikhs. Until recently divorce has been unheard of and children are much loved and prized.

Following Nanak, there were nine Gurus, each appointed by his predecessor. The contributions made by the next eight will be summarized with more time devoted
to the tenth, Gobind, who, next to Nanak, made the most important contributions to the religion.

During the period from 1539 until 1709 the religion grew in numbers and organization. The writings of the Gurus were collected into the Sikh Bible, the Granth Sahib, which was installed in the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the Sikh capital. The practice of *suttee* (burning of widows on funeral pyres of their husbands) was forbidden, monogamy was advocated, and the practice of *purdah* (seclusion of women) was minimized. All of these changes separated the Sikhs further from the Hindus.

Physical fitness and competitive games were encouraged, starting a tradition which made it easy for troops of soldiers to be raised when needed. After two Gurus were murdered by the Muslims and persecution of their faith increased, the leaders realized the necessity for military defense. What had started out as a pacifist faith with Nanak was turned into a martial mission. Instead of canting peace, ballads extolling military conquest prevailed.

The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, became convinced that, although love and forgiveness are stronger than hate and revenge, once a person was convinced that the adversary meant to destroy him, it was his duty to resist. He fortified towns, built a chain of fortresses and waged battle whenever his interests or ideals were attacked.

To combat corruptness in his own people and to
provide security for them, Gobind Singh created a nucleus of a new community which he called Khalsa, or "the pure." Five men, each from a different Hindu caste were baptised to its ranks to form an inner core, and they in turn baptised some twenty thousand followers. Their Hindu names were changed and they were given one family name, Singh, meaning lion. Women were given the middle name of Kaur, meaning princess. Five emblems were to be symbols of the Khalsa, each represented by a Punjabi word beginning with "K". These symbols were, to wear their hair and beard unshorn, to carry a comb in their hair to keep it tidy, always to wear a knee length pair of breeches, carry a steel bracelet on their right wrist, and to be ever armed with a sabre. Rules of conduct were also prescribed. Thus, with an original ceremony called the festival of Baisaki, the Sikhs became militant, symbolized by the Fraternity of the Khalsa. "From Pacifist Sikh to Militant Khalsa" (Singh 1, 1963:73) is the title of Khushwant Singh's chapter in which he discusses this phase of Sikh history.

From 1708 until 1830, a period of Sikh strength and consolidation of Punjab took place under the leadership of Maharajah Ranjit Singh, "Lion of the Punjab," who was convinced that it was the destiny of the Sikhs to rule Punjab and that he was chosen by the Gurus as an instrument of their design. He was a devout Sikh but equally respected the Islamic faith.
Sikhism since 1830

In 1830 nearly the whole of India was under British domination with the exception of Punjab. By 1849, the British were able to annex Punjab and thus rule all of India. Ranjit Singh's successors did not have the same drive and leadership but rather concerned themselves with securing the throne by liquidating their rivals. The Punjabi army became mutinous and ultimately took over the functions of the state.

When the British were in control, the Sikhs were leaderless and lost hope of regaining their power as a separate state. Moreover, the British allowed them to observe the Khalsa and brought peace to their land after ten years of chaos and bloodshed. So, although the Hindus and Muslims did not accept the British rule, the Sikhs did and in this way were allowed to continue their separateness, as well as gaining the security of Britain. Their loyalty was recognized and they were able to assume an important role in the British Imperial Army. This annexation reduced the Sikhs from a position of dominance to one of subservience not only to the British but also to the Muslims and Hindus and threatened their identity as a separate group. Annexation to the British also exposed the dispirited and leaderless Sikh masses to the preaching of Christian missionaries, and proselytizing activities of Hindus. As a reaction to this, revivalistic sects developed. One, the Singh Sabba movement not only
checked the relapse of the Sikhs into Hinduism, but created Khalsa schools to develop literacy and promulgate the teachings of the Sikh scriptures.

Political tensions between the British government and the landowners created much dissatisfaction, and, by 1907, the atmosphere in the cities of the colonies had become tense. It was during this period that migration to the United States began.

Despite the tensions which were felt, many Sikhs enlisted in the British Army in World War I. They fought on all fronts and gained a reputation of bravery and conspicuous gallantry. However, they were disappointed to find that after the war they were no longer treated as heroes. Dissatisfaction with the British mounted, and the Ghadr (traitor) party was formed to drive them out of India. Although the vast majority of its membership was Sikh, it attracted Hindus and Muslims and its development brought about a radical change in the political outlook of the Sikh community. It marked the beginning of the end of three quarters of a century of unquestioned loyalty to the British. Since the end of World War I, the history of India has been rife with movements for revolution and reform, culminating in the gaining of Indian independence in 1948.
Period following World War I

This period must be discussed briefly in order to understand the Sikhs' continued desire for and efforts to maintain the Punjab for their homeland. Since the days of Guru Gobind Singh congregations have chanted the litany --"the Khalsa shall rule"--symbolizing their ideal of a sovereign Sikh state. Because part of Punjab lies in the area now known as Pakistan, they have always fought against the formation of this Muslim state of Pakistan. However, as the result of the Moslem-Sikh war of 1946 the Moslems won and gained Pakistan for themselves and the Sikhs of western Punjab were forced to abandon their homes, lands and shrines and migrate to India where they continued their demand for a Sikh homeland. In 1958 the Indian government built a new, neutral, non-sacred capital of Punjab, Chandigarh, with the hope of bringing the hostile factions together in peace and harmony. Instead, it seems to have added a conflict over a city to the religious and language differences that have torn the area for decades. After years of turmoil, it now appears that Chandigarh has been given exclusively to the Sikhs.

(San Francisco Chronicle, February 22, 1970)

According to Khushwant Singh, the Sikhs feel that their only hope of retaining their separate identity lies in having a province where they can insist on the teaching of the Punjabi language and Sikh scriptures and history, especially to the youth. In speculating about the future
of Sikhism, Singh (1965:304) believes that the relapse into Hinduism is more likely among the educated classes. The young people have begun to give up the practice of wearing their hair and beards unshorn as well as other traditional Sikh customs. He further observes that wherever Sikhs are scattered among other people, the attachment to tradition declines and apostasy rises, citing such communities as Yuba City as examples. On the other hand, in the countries where Sikhs live in compact groups, incidence of apostasy is lower. He also feels that there is a close connection between the use of the language and Sikhism. In families where Punjabi has been replaced by other languages—(English among the rich), the study of the Granth and observances of Khalsa traditions are fading. Thus he believes that the only chance for survival of the Sikhs as a separate group is to create a state in which their teachings and traditions are compulsory and respected. As such a state Punjab was created and it is hoped that Chandigarh will further serve this purpose of perpetuating Sikh traditions. The Sikh religion which started as an attempt to bridge a gap between Muslims and Hindus is now in danger of being absorbed by Hinduism.

In Yuba City Sikhism has gained new strength and momentum because of the current building of the Temple. Khushwant Singh's predictions for Sikhism in India can equally well be applied to Yuba City. However, in the present study of acculturation it is necessary to be aware
that the culture of the Yuba City East Indians is primarily Indian and secondarily Sikh. Sikh practices may wane in time but their underlying Indian culture may continue as it will in India regardless of whether they are Hindus or Sikhs.

History of the Sikhs in California

The restrictive legislation that has beset the East Indians since they first came to this country may be one of the reasons why they have maintained close ties within their own ethnic group. Also, it will help explain the fluctuating number of East Indian immigrants entering the United States each year until 1965.

Employment in the lumber mills of Vancouver, Canada and Washington State first lured the East Indians to the West Coast of the United States. However, many who did not feel welcome in Canada and Washington, gradually migrated southward to California where they found agricultural employment.

It would appear that the presence in California of the Hindu is largely traceable to one large boat load from British Columbia out of which country they were forcibly driven. (State Board of Control, 1920:116)

Despite the fact that they were not considered desirable or welcome in California and immigration officials attempted to refuse admission to them, the California census recorded 1,948 East Indians in 1910 and 2,600 in 1919. (State Board of Control, 1920:26) In 1917 the Asiatic
Barred Zone Act prevented East Indians from becoming citizens and revoked all citizenships which had been granted in the previous fifteen years. A Supreme Court Decision of 1923 (U.S. vs. Bhagot Singh Thind) known as the Thind Decision* made by Justice Sutherland ruled that East Indians were not free white persons and, hence, ineligible for citizenship. Sustained by this decision, the United States Immigration Service, through United States attorneys attempted to revoke all citizenships of East Indians, charging that they were fraudulent. They were successful in doing so in forty-two of the sixty-nine instances in which citizenship had been granted. The others were able to obtain court decisions preventing loss of citizenship. (Jacoby, 1958:2-8)

Although few persons other than students were legally admitted during the period from 1910 to 1946, many came as "illegals," mostly through Mexico, and established residence in California, worked as farm laborers, saved money and purchased land until 1921 when the Alien Land Law was passed forbiding the purchase of land by Aliens. (At this time those who already owned land were allowed to keep it.) Another drastic restriction was the application of the 1925 Immigration Act which based quota on the foreign born population of 1890, a time before East Indian immigration was started.

*U.S. vs. Bhagot Singh Thind, 261 U.S. 204.
Reports from California State Commissions during this period describe the different standards of living and hence "undesirable" condition which they found to prevail among the East Indian farm workers during this early period.

The Hindu, in the opinion of the Commissioner of the State Bureau of Labor Statistics, is the most undesirable immigrant in the State. His lack of personal cleanliness, his low morals, and his blind adherence to theories and teachings so entirely repugnant to American principles make him unfit for association with American people. These references apply to the low caste Hindus or Sikhs. (California State Board of Control, 1920:116)

At the same time, and with no more enthusiasm, their ability to own and manage land is described:

Our experience in the labor camp inspection shows that Hindus are rapidly leaving the employed list and are becoming employers. Particularly is this true in the rice growing section of California ... The change from employed to employer or lessee is rapidly placing the Hindu in the position of "little landlord." (State Board of Control, 1920:123)

From 1921 until 1942, when the Alien Land Law was repealed, the East Indian population dwindled with only students and close relatives, especially sons or nephews of those who owned land, coming to California. Only women who had special educational needs or qualifications were allowed to immigrate, so, as a result, many men came singly, often leaving wives behind. However, some men married Mexican or native white women and thereby established families and were able to own land in their wives' name. The sense of frustration and confusion arising from these laws, together with the absence of women among the
men, is reflected in a number of crimes of violence, usually committed against each other, and a high incidence of sex crimes attributed to the early Sikh settlers. (Loehlin, 1969:3) This contributed to such attitudes as that described in the Board of Control report and to the use of such terms as "rag heads" and "turbaned tide" in the American press. (Singh, 1966:168) Many East Indians became discouraged during this period and returned to India. Some died of old age. Some were deported.

After a long struggle with much court litigation on their part, citizenship was opened to the East Indians in 1946 with the passage of the Luce-Cellar Bill which removed India from the Barred Zone and assigned it a quota of one hundred per year. Those who were already here were able to get or send for wives, so that many families were formed or reunited at this time. In 1965 the quota was increased and East Indians were permitted to send for relatives other than their wives—the only requirement being a guarantee of their support upon arrival. This arrival of relatives of long time residents accounts for much of the present growth of the Yuba City community, estimated at about three hundred per year.

This history of the Sikhs in California covers the entire state. However, by 1967, the time that the search for this thesis started, Yuba City was considered to have the largest population of East Indians in the United States. Many of the reasons for this will be dis-
cussed in subsequent chapters.

Summary of the History of the Sikhs

Throughout their history in India, the Sikhs represented a minority surrounded by a hostile majority of Hindus and Muslims. This made it necessary for them to assume a militant, defensive role. In California they have likewise met with hostility and felt the need for taking an aggressive role in relation to the many restrictive laws that have been enacted limiting their entrance into the United States, their citizenship and their right to own property. Thus, throughout their history they have considered themselves different and felt the need to maintain their own ethnic and religious communities. The Yuba City group has been studied and understood in light of their adherence to Sikhism. In the future it may be necessary to measure their acculturation in terms of the broader Indian culture of which they are a part.
CHAPTER V

DESCRIPTION OF THE EAST INDIAN COMMUNITY

Cultural Characteristics

The characteristics to be described apply primarily to the members of the first generation in California. As members of families the second generation born in Yuba City participate in East Indian customs and activities but seldom initiate them. (The life of the second and third generation will be discussed in a separate chapter.)

Family life and customs

Among the East Indians, in both India and Yuba City, family ties are strong and it is important that children marry and have families. In India life is extended family and village oriented. With many of the Yuba City East Indians coming from the same villages, either as relatives or friends, their ties to India and their village are reinforced daily. Besides having the name Singh in common, those from the same village often have the same surname. In Yuba City family life is basically nuclear but frequently becomes extended when relatives or friends come from India. However, as each family becomes financially independent, separate households are set up.

Until recently, marriages in India have been pre-
arranged by the two parental families, often without prior acquaintance on the part of the couple. Affection is then expected to develop after marriage. When possible, marriage is confined to members of the same community and social status and, always, to members of the same religion. Also, until recently, divorce has not been legal in India. Even now it is seldom resorted to in either India or Yuba City. Older persons frown on it heavily and believe that it is up to the couple to "make the best of their situation."

In Yuba City there is an attempt to perpetuate these customs regarding divorce and marriage, but many variations upon them are found depending upon the length of time the East Indians have been here and the flexibility of the family. Two young people in their twenties expressed a strong preference for marrying other East Indians in spite of the fact that they had lived in California all their lives. When no suitable East Indian mate is available, parents may return to India to select a spouse or arrange for a mate to be sent by a relative. There are a few inter-marriages, especially between East Indian men and non-East Indian women. The writer witnessed a wedding between an East Indian gentleman and an anglo woman. It was conducted in the Sikh tradition following closely a description of such a ceremony by Loehlin. (1964:42) In order to comply with the requirement that marriage be "between Sikhs only," the woman had agreed to espouse Sikhism.
The couple was later seen participating in one of the temple services in Stockton. Reliable information on the frequency of intermarriage was not available, but there appears to be an increasing acceptance of it by the entire community of Yuba City.

**Role of women in the East Indian community**

In India women are expected to play a retiring, modest role and are not allowed to mingle with men socially outside their home until marriage. They are expected to wear no makeup and to dress so that all parts of their body are covered. Rather than become sexually attractive, they are expected to develop personality traits and qualities that will be helpful in their roles as wives. Public show of affection, even between husband and wife, is not acceptable. In public and social gatherings men and women sit separately. This separation of the sexes was observed at the gatherings attended in the Stockton Temple.

In spite of this traditional role, women, today, are becoming educated in India and entering into the professions. An outstanding example of opportunities that are becoming available is that of Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India.

Throughout Yuba City most East Indian women are slower to adapt new customs, including the learning of English, and confine most of their activities to their homes. Many do not drive and few of their neighbors are
within walking distance. Until the Temple was completed, there was no community gathering place other than in one another's homes. In American society women are frequently the extension of the family into the community. They participate in activities for their children, join women's organizations, and arrange much of the family's social life. The East Indian women in Yuba City perform none of these community activities for their families. This may be a major reason for the lack of community awareness of this ethnic group.

Dwellings

The homes in which the East Indians live vary from farm laborers' longhouses to small one or two bedroom, poorly constructed dwellings, to large modern four and five bedroom homes. As their income has increased, some have moved from small to larger homes, frequently on the same acreage. However, many remain in small, frugally furnished homes with little emphasis on interior or exterior decoration beyond minimum conveniences, despite financial success. This lack of emphasis on material goals can be best understood in relation to the small rural East Indian villages many of them have come from. Many of the families coming since 1965 live with relatives in an extended family arrangement, usually in very modest frame dwellings. The older, smaller homes are frequently surrounded by old, worn out pieces of equipment and machinery that is no
longer in use and is not easy to cart away or otherwise dispose of.

**Dress**

Most of the women, regardless of the length of their residence in Yuba City, wear their traditional East Indian dress—balloon-type pants called *shalwars* with tunic tops called *kamez* around the home, and *saris*, the traditional East Indian long dress, for more formal occasions. The local East Indian store is well stocked with a variety of materials from India to supply the needs for all types of women's clothing. Aside from preference, a primary reason for continuing the Indian garb among the women is that East Indian tradition dictates that women's bodies be completely covered. The men wear western clothing, which is considered acceptable because it covers as much of the body as does Indian dress. A few men, mostly the older ones, will be seen with long beards and turbans and the Sikh bracelet, symbol of Khalsa membership. Young boys who recently have arrived from India will also be seen with long hair and bracelets. Beards are frequently braided by wearing a special cord under their chin, which produces a most unusual and interesting effect to the westerner.

**Language**

Punjabi, the official language of Punjab, is spoken almost universally by the Yuba City East Indians. Even those who have been here many years speak it at home. Al-
though most of the men speak English, the women do so in varying degrees. Only those women who were well educated in India, and those who have been here a long time are able to carry on conversations in English. Children, on the other hand, learn English rapidly in school and frequently act as interpreters for their parents who are anxious for the children to learn English, but are equally anxious that they not forget their native tongue. Although many adults do not read English with any degree of proficiency, their homes are full of magazines and such reference material as the *World Book Encyclopedia*—one of the many indications of the high priority given by East Indians to educational interests for their children.

In spite of the presence of this large group of Punjabis, many of whom do not speak English, there are no provisions in the community for helping them communicate with community organizations. Nor are opportunities for learning English available. Children or friends must frequently be relied upon to interpret for parents when interacting with the welfare office, the agricultural agencies or the schools. The recognition of the language problem by the schools and the steps that were being taken in 1970 to help overcome it are discussed in Chapter VII.

**Work habits**

Since their arrival in California, the East Indians have had the reputation for being hard workers and shrewd
businessmen. They have spent little on material possessions, saving what they could to purchase land either singly or in groups. (A local resident described this as being "land poor.") It is these early settlers or their relatives who are the large landholders of today. By pooling their money and buying land gradually they were able to avoid bank loans and subsequent interest.

Not only are they hard workers, but they work as long as twelve hours a day, seven days a week. The Sikh religion does not suggest a day of rest and encourages persistence and sacrifice. Furthermore, Sikhism emphasizes the importance of being involved in the secular world, the performance of good works and the acceptability of accumulating money.

Food

Very prevalent and observable in the homes is the East Indian's preference for Indian food, even among those who observe no other East Indian customs. The odor of curry is ever-present as one enters the homes. Three dishes in particular have been observed universally throughout the community. Roti, a flat tortilla-like bread made with whole wheat flour, butter and water; stewed and seasoned lentils or dal; and mustard greens which grow freely in the fields throughout the area. The roti is served with all other dishes and is torn into pieces and used in place of a fork or spoon to convey food to the mouth. In one home which the writer visited an extra roti was prepared
for the dog. The lentils and mustard greens are seasoned with a variety of spices, especially curry and chili, and they seem to be always on hand in the refrigerator. These greens are a particular delicacy because they require much preparation. On several occasions the writer has observed the women preparing them in large piles on the floor or in the yard. Buttermilk and yogurt are also used frequently. Tea is served "Indian style"—with the cream and sugar heated and mixed with the tea. The Sikhs here have no meat taboos as do the Hindus and serve a variety of meat dishes made with chicken, lamb and pork, all highly seasoned. Traditionally in India they observe the Hindu beef taboo, but when they come to this country and suddenly find that, without their knowledge, they have been served something containing beef they gradually ignore the taboo. They do have taboos against alcoholic beverages and tobacco, but they are not universally observed in Yuba City.

**Traditional greeting**

*Sat Sri Akal*, a greeting signifying "hello" and "good-by" (literally translated "God be with you") is used by many of the people when they meet and part. It is said with the hands folded under the chin. They, especially the old-timers, responded warmly to the investigator's use of it rather than the American handshake.

**Employment**

Most of the East Indians are engaged in agriculture,
as is a large majority of the population in the Yuba City area. Those who own land employ help (from six to ten persons) to assist with the seasonal jobs of cultivating, spraying, pruning, picking, planting and irrigating the fruit and almond orchards. Those who have come more recently and do not own land, work on the orchards of relatives or other Yuba City farmers. Seasonal agricultural workers live in the longhouses along with other employees from various ethnic groups. As throughout California, these quarters are minimal and in some cases, deplorable. These East Indians are beginning their employment in California in a manner similar to the early East Indian settlers, many of whom are land owners now.

At least ten members of the community are employed professionally as teachers, physicians, attorneys and nurses. Most of the women are homemakers. Approximately thirty students attend Yuba Junior College, some as children of parents living in the area and some as independent young adults.

Observable cultural change

The characteristics of the East Indian community which have been described appear to change little during the first generation. Habits and customs which depend upon relationships in the Yuba City community change where necessary, but those that can be self-contained have in most cases remained unchanged in the first generation since
the East Indians came to Yuba City five, ten or twenty-five years ago.

Intra-Group Relations

Throughout the world, enclaves of East Indians have demonstrated intra-group loyalty and a pattern for helping each other in times of need, financial and other. In Yuba City this includes such things as settling legal disputes among themselves, and lending one another money when needed. Until four or five years ago there was no need for public assistance by the East Indian community.

East Indian organizations

In a Faculty Research Lecture at the University of the Pacific, Jacoby (1956:24-26) discusses the very observable tendency of Sikhs throughout the United States to organize themselves around a variety and multiplicity of interests, most of them related to concerns from India. He believes that the formation and maintenance of ethnic organizations has served to "hinder the integration of the East Indian into American or inter-cultural organizations!" (1956:26)

In 1967 two such organizations were active in Yuba City. These were known as the Yuba-Sutter Society and the East Indian Cultural Society. Originally beginning in 1945 the two groups existed as one organization known as the Indian Cultural Society dedicated to promoting East Indian
cultural interests in Yuba City. By 1958 they had separated because of "internal conflict" but at least some of the East Indians have continued to hope that they would again merge into a single group uniting rather than dividing the East Indian community. Neither Wenzel (1965:50) nor the writer has been able to clearly differentiate between the two groups. Membership was not clearly differentiated and there seemed to be much overlapping in attendance at "functions" of each group. However, in 1967 it appeared that a possible difference was that the Cultural Society favored the building of the Temple while the Yuba Sutter Society tended to think that a community center would be more desirable than a temple. Those who wished could then continue to attend religious services in Stockton.

In 1970 the writer was told that the East Indian Cultural Society had lost its identity and had transferred its concerns to the support of the building of the Temple. The Yuba Sutter Society did not appear very active and she heard little mention of it during the spring and summer of 1970. Thus, it appears that the residents of the Indian community have merged their interests behind the plans for, and construction of, the Temple, which will serve as both a place of worship and as a community center.

In 1970, the differences that had seemed to exist in the past between the two societies and provided areas for disagreement were channeled into differences of opinion
concerning Temple plans—amount of donations to be expected from each member, adjusting to financial limitations, and contests for status on the Temple Board of Directors.

Role of factionalism in Yuba City

Several of the East Indian residents of the area have used the term "bickering" to describe the many differences of opinion that the ethnic group is constantly faced with and have said such things as "bickering is a national pastime" in India. Although the factionalism that seemed apparent in the East Indian community seemed to make it difficult to accomplish a united effort in the building of the temple, it provided a common subject for discussion and concern. A quotation from an article entitled "Factionalism in a Village in India" from A Casebook of Social Change (1966) by Arthur Niehoff, helps to understand what is occurring in Yuba City in terms of their close relationship with their motherland, India.

Factionalism, or the association of the informal groupings of individuals for some special benefit, occurs in villages in all parts of the world, but perhaps nowhere is it carried to such lengths as in India. Factionalism, of course, does constitute cooperation among the members of one particular group, but this kind of cooperation often brings about divisiveness in the larger social unit, the village. The Indian villager is addicted to group effort, but usually this occurs on a level below that of the village. Thus, village unity and cooperation is often difficult to obtain. (1966:226)

This aspect of their community life also links them with small communities around the world where internal disputes and competition seem to serve as a means of main-
taining group spirit and of welding the community in a common concern. Such conflict is also considered common when "cross-cultural influences are pronounced enough to unsettle traditional controls." (Broom, Siegel, Vogt and Watson, 1953:278)

Inter-Cultural Communication

Although much of the life of the Yuba City East Indians is carried on within their ethnic group, they do interact with the rest of the community in secondary relationships such as the public schools, the county agricultural office, the Peach Growers Association, the County Welfare office, Motor Vehicles Department, and whatever business relationships are necessary to carry on their agricultural business. With the construction of the Sikh Temple they have become involved in a group business enterprise with the banks, the contractor and the architect. The schools, the most important community organization in which they participate, are discussed in detail in another chapter and therefore will not be included here.

Language as a barrier to communication

As mentioned in the section dealing with language, there is a communication problem in the community that is just beginning to be recognized and faced. In discussing this with the employees of several of the community organizations frequented by East Indians it was found that there
are no Punjabi speaking employees on their staffs. In the waiting room of the welfare office the writer noticed that there were translations of instructions in four languages--Chinese, Japanese, German, and Mexican, but not Punjabi. There are no community opportunities available for learning English.

East Indian ethnic celebrations in the community

Since 1965 there has been at least one major Sikh holiday celebration in the Yuba City community. (Others have taken place at the Stockton Temple.) In some years this has taken place at the Yuba County Fairgrounds where a whole day has been devoted to religious ritual, East Indian movies, speeches about India, and the traditional lunch (langar) to which all are invited. In December, 1969, a ground-breaking ceremony was held at the Temple site. These celebrations are announced in the newspapers and the entire Yuba City community is invited. However, few non-East Indians have been reported attending in the past. In the spring, 1970, an East Indian dinner and cultural program was held at the Yuba High School sponsored by the East Indian students, their parents and some of the East Indian Junior College students. The Indian community prepared the food, planned games, such as a turban tying contest, and provided an East Indian dance troop from the Yuba College who performed one of Punjab's national dances. This later program was well publicized not only in
the local newspapers, but also through the schools, and, hence, was well attended by many non-Indians as well as East Indians. The food and entertainment were well received and the hope was expressed that it would become an annual event. Perhaps because it was not a religious function and was initiated through the schools, the community attended it in greater numbers than they had other ethnic celebrations. Thus, the public schools gave leadership to an event that brought the non-Indian community closer to the East Indians and made the larger community more aware of the East Indian cultural heritage.

East Indian movies are periodically held at one of the local theatres. These are attended almost exclusively by East Indians and provide an important opportunity for ethnic gatherings.

The Sikh Temple as a major link with the larger community

The completion of the Sikh Temple in December, 1970, has made the East Indians the possessors of a new and oriental looking building designed to resemble temples in India. It will draw many Sikhs to the area, but also "tourists" as well as local residents will want to see it. In keeping with their traditions, the Sikhs will welcome visitors not only to see it but to eat langar and participate in their services to the extent of their interest.

Through newspaper publicity many people in the area are vaguely aware that such a building was being construc-
ted, but few know what religion it represents other than "Indian" or "Hindu" and fewer are aware of its significance to the East Indian community not only in meeting needs but also in fulfilling long term plans. Its location, like that of most of the East Indian homes, is on the outskirts of town, on land that was formerly peach orchards.

Other community contacts

Shopping for East Indian foods, clothes, jewelry and other East Indian imports is done at the local Continental Grocers, owned and operated by an "old-timer" who has lived in the area since the 1920's, assisted by his wife and grown son. This small shop meets many food and clothing needs without the necessity of speaking English or engaging interaction with the local merchants. It provides a meeting place for East Indians with each other and with the occasional non-Indian shopper who patronizes the shop.

There is a weekly radio broadcast in Punjabi made by a member of the local group. This includes items of interest to East Indians around the world as well as local news and religious readings.

Summary of community interaction

Although the East Indians keep very much to themselves in their primary relationships, there are several community organizations within which they interact with the larger community. There are an increasing number of opportunities for the community to learn more about their cul-
ture and become aware of their presence in the area. The most effective agent of intercultural activity is the public schools, which will be discussed in detail in the chapter on the Second Generation.

Ties with India

In addition to their religion (to be discussed in detail in the next chapter) and the many ethnic characteristics that have been reported, the East Indian community is tied to India in many tangible and less tangible ways. As many things about the Indian community in Yuba City can best be understood in relation to the long and complex history of India, itself, so much of their culture and sense of identity is inextricably interwoven with people and conditions in India today, especially in Punjab.

Life in India is extended family and village oriented. Beyond the village, loyalty extends to the province, (Punjab) to religion, (Sikhism) and last, but always, to India. Because many of the East Indians come from the same village either as relatives or friends, their village ties are reinforced daily. Frequent visits to India by residents of Yuba City bring news to the whole community, which is further reinforced by letters, money, and the arrival of relatives. When a spouse is needed for a son or daughter, an effort will be made to send for one from the home area.

The East Indians follow Indian current events and
politics closely and contribute to such causes as Indian Independence and the establishment of Chandigarh, as has previously been discussed. From time to time, when Indian political and educational personalities visit San Francisco, the Yuba City East Indians drive to see them and, likewise, entertain them if they come to Yuba City. Most of the homes subscribe to magazines and newspapers such as the Sikh Review and India News.

Not only are the Sikhs in Yuba City tied to India directly, but through the East Indian communities in San Francisco, Stockton, and the many Sikh settlements around the world. Some of the Yuba City East Indians have lived in Vancouver, Canada, the Fiji Islands or London East Indian communities before settling in Yuba City. The writer met a young man from Vancouver who was taking a semester off from school to visit friends and relatives in various Sikh communities up and down the West Coast.
CHAPTER VI

SIKHISM IN YUBA CITY

The Practice of Religion

The strongest tie binding this ethnic group together is their adherence to the Sikh religion. (The word Sikh means learner.) With approximately eighty per cent of the East Indians in India members of the Hindu religion, one might wonder why Sikhs constitute the overwhelming majority of those in Yuba City. The Sikh cultural heritage of resourcefulness and adventure must be a major force in helping them decide to leave India. Also, because they do not consider leaving India impure, as do the Hindus, they have been freer to encourage their members to go beyond their own village or province. The similarity of their religion to the Judeo-Christian philosophy found in many parts of the world to which they have migrated provides them with ready made common values. This similarity includes their belief in "one God," their acceptance of other prophets such as Jesus as Gurus, and their concern for equality and social justice, demonstrated in their breaking away from the Hindu caste system.

Although Sikhism is in some respects similar to Christianity, the dominant religion in Yuba City, its
formal practices, with their eastern mystical background, make it seem quite foreign to one who has not made an effort to understand it. While on the other hand, its tolerance and flexibility may make it easier for the Sikhs to adjust to a foreign situation, its outward manifestation makes it seem foreign and exotic in a predominately Christian community such as Yuba City. Some of the ways in which religion is practiced by the Yuba City Sikhs follow.

**Symbols of the Khalsa**

Among the men, the five symbols of the Khalsa—long hair and turbans, wearing of the bracelet, use of a certain kind of undershorts, carrying of a symbolic sword, and use of the name Singh, either as a last or as a middle name—are still practiced by some of the long time residents as well as some of the younger arrivals. Young preschool boys are sometimes indistinguishable from girls with their long and often curly hair. Adherence to these Khalsa symbols is strongly encouraged in India, but attitudes are changing rapidly, both there and in the outlying enclaves of Sikhism around the world.

**Pictures and shrines**

All the homes have brightly colored pictures of one or more of the Sikh Gurus in their living rooms, usually festooned with garlands of tinsel and ribbon. In three homes visited small rooms had been made into shrines with
Baisakhi Day, the birthday of the Khalsa Brotherhood, coinciding with an ancient festival celebrating the spring harvest. The celebrations began on Friday by East Indians gathering for an "unbroken reading" of the Granth. For forty-eight uninterrupted hours it was read by a relay of readers, each participating two hours at a time. (Those spending the night were accommodated in the dormitory, an essential part of all Sikh Temples.) An informal, fluctuating audience witnessed this reading which ended on Sunday morning in time for a business meeting, election of officers and lunch before the formal religious service at 1:00 P.M. This afternoon ceremony consisted of readings from prophets, speeches from leaders of Sikhism throughout California, performances on East Indian musical instruments and singing both by individuals and small groups. Some speaking was in English, some in Punjabi. All Granth readings were in Punjabi.

Throughout the service the priest or a member of the congregation sat behind the Granth on a high altar waving a wand-like brush back and forth, thus purifying the Granth. (This was originated because of the prevalence of flies in India and is consonant with the concern for purity in connection with religious items.) From time to time, as they arrived at the service, men walked to the altar, placing donations of money, bowing as they did so, with shoes removed and heads covered. At the end of the program a
ceremonial pudding made with wheat was served to all present, first cut by a ceremonial sword, one of the Khalsa symbols.

**Langar**, or lunch, was partaken of by all at a common board consisting of an array of typical East Indian foods prepared and served by members of the Temple in informal style.

The Stockton Temple serves as an abode for visitors to the Stockton area. Accordingly, it is equipped with beds and showers. This is true of temples throughout Punjab, and, along with free or low cost meals served to anyone in need, is a concrete expression of their philosophy of brotherhood. Tales are told of the early days of the Stockton Temple, during the depression period, when food lines formed in front of it each day. Its proximity to the railroad tracks provided a supply of needy men.

The periodic trips to Stockton (four or five times yearly) provide opportunities for Sikhs to visit with friends and acquaintances from all over Central California and to exchange news from India as well as news about friends throughout California.

**Summary**

Many traditional ways of practicing the Sikh religion are carried on by the first generation of East Indians in Yuba City--some with more, some with less
enthusiasm and regularity. Among these are adherence to the symbols of the Khalsa, pictures and shrines in the homes, daily purification ritual, the prevalence of community religious functions in Yuba City and periodic visits to the Stockton Temple for celebrations and worship. These bind the group to their common Sikh heritage and contribute to the cultural and structural pluralism about which this paper is concerned. In the next section the strongest force contributing to the perpetuation of this pluralism today, the building of the new Temple, will be discussed.

The Yuba City Sikh Temple

The strongest and most obvious evidence of the East Indian's adherence to the Sikh religion is embodied in their plans for, and construction of, the Sikh Temple of Yuba City, completed in December, 1970.

History of the movement to build the Temple

For many years the largest settlements of East Indians were in the El Centro and Stockton areas. Since the early fifties, however, Yuba City has been growing at a much more rapid rate and long time residents say that the need for a temple has been felt for many years. In the early 1960's concerted efforts began to collect money and purchase land for it. In the December, 1962, issue of the Indo-American Relations Journal (a small informally
and irregularly published newsletter) we read:

The East Indian community of this area is unanimous that it should have a place of their own for the spiritual well-being and cultural advancement of its members. With this aim in mind, the prominent members of the community have been trying to finalize the plans for erecting a building at some central place . . .

Wenzel refers throughout his dissertation to the Yuba City East Indians' need and plans for building the temple. His observations started in 1963.

Lack of effective leadership and many differences of opinion concerning its location, design, and the collection of money have delayed its construction. Some of the East Indians call these differences "politicking," or "bickering."

Financing and constructing the Temple

Funds for the temple's construction were raised locally and during a very poor financial year for the East Indian farmers (1969-70). In 1969 a donation of three acres of land by one of the local East Indians was accepted as the site for its construction. One hundred thousand dollars was raised by the community with a small donation from the Stockton Temple, and matched by a hundred thousand dollar loan from a local bank. Members who gave one thousand dollars or more, including the donor of the land, were made members of the Board of Directors, and the donation of one hundred dollars automatically made one a member of the Temple Association. One of the wealthier
men gave ten thousand dollars and was rewarded with the presidency of the association. A plaque will be installed in the Temple with the names of the donors and the amount each has given.

Delays were occasioned by the many requirements that were needed to secure the bank loan. One requirement that proved difficult was the need for a committee of five officers who would be responsible for signing agreements and upon whom the bank could rely for decisions. (Originally the East Indians wanted the entire group of twenty-five to have equal status on the board.) Differences between the American and East Indian way of functioning in groups became obvious and the process of conforming to American business and legal requirements for borrowing money from the bank and for drawing up contracts with the architect and construction company was a new experience for most of the East Indian community.

The conclusion of negotiations and commencement of construction represented a victory for the whole ethnic community. Not only did it bind them together in a common concern, but it was the beginning of a project that can lead to a new era of ethnicity and cultural growth for the East Indians. It can serve as a trans-fusion to increase their strength and give them pride in their heritage. Although the desire of and need for the Temple varies within the East Indian community, it was reported by several different East Indians that "everyone"
is in favor of its construction and is contributing to it in greater or less amounts.

**Needs the Temple will serve**

In giving the East Indians an ethnic center for their community life it will serve many needs of the East Indian community. The chief ones are:

1. **Religious.** Although not all of the Yuba City Sikhs are active practitioners of their religion, many of the first generation will use the Temple as a center for worship and for perpetuation of their Sikh traditions.

2. **Social.** The Temple will serve as a gathering place for all types of functions where a meeting place is needed and will replace the school auditoriums and homes which have heretofore been used when a gathering place was needed. With their own community center, many new kinds of groups can be formed to meet a variety of needs—especially for the women and children.

3. **Educational.** English and Punjabi language classes can be established. Women seldom learn English and children speaking English in school need help in maintaining their bilinguality. Although parents are eager for their children to learn English, a high value is placed on
maintaining ties with India through continued use of the Punjabi language.

(4) Cultural. Non-religious East Indian cultural items, as dress and food, can be enjoyed and shared in the Temple. Such days as Indian Independence Day, which is celebrated in Yuba City with East Indian movies and speeches concerning India, its problems and its future, will take place in the Temple.

(5) Community Forum. The East Indians keep close political ties with India and support many causes in Punjab, both financially and morally. The Stockton Temple has served as a clearing house for political action. No doubt the Yuba City Temple will also. Most recently, East Indians in the area have been active in supporting the movement to keep Chandigarh as the capital of Punjab. The following telegram was sent from the Stockton Temple to the Sikh headquarters in India:

PACIFICCOAST KHALSA DIWAN STOCKTON UNANIMOUSLY PASSED A RESOLUTION AT GENERAL MEETING TO REQUEST GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO LET CHANDIGARH REMAIN CAPITAL OF PUNJAB STATE. MAIN PURPOSE OF BUILDING CHANDIGARH WAS TO PROVIDE A CAPITAL FOR PUNJAB ......... IT WILL BE VERY WISE AND JUST ON PART OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO GIVE CHANDIGARH TO PUNJAB IN ORDER TO SAVE LIFE OF SANT FATEH SINGH AND ALSO NOT TO LET THIS VOLCANIC SITUATION EXPLODE. (Newsletter from Stockton Temple, March, 1970.)
The Temple can also serve as a forum for discussion of all kinds of issues that arise in the community—some controversial, some not; some provoking heated discussions and differences of opinion. This will provide a much greater opportunity than they have previously had to share their feelings and ideas.

6) **Hospitality**, to East Indian visitors in the area. Traditionally, the temples in India provide hospitality to all visitors to the community. Yuba City is visited by East Indians from all over the world for whom the Temple can provide guest facilities not only for entertainment, but for lodging.

In serving and meeting the above needs, the Yuba City Temple can be a strong unifying force in the Sikh community, especially for the first generation. The Temple can furnish the East Indian community a place to carry on their primary, ethnic group activities and, hence, a position from which they can gradually relate to the larger community in the areas of their life involving secondary group relationships and activities.

**Completion of the Temple**

As the final draft of this thesis was being completed, word was received that the Temple was completed and dedicated at religious services on Sunday,
December 20, 1970. This service was preceded by an "unbroken reading" of the Granth beginning at 9:30 A.M., Friday, December 18, and closing at 9:30 A.M., on Sunday, December 20. It was similar to the one described earlier, in the Stockton Temple.

The building is a massive 18,500 square foot structure containing a large auditorium and an almost equally large dining room, with a kitchen, dormitories for men and women, and several smaller rooms. The interior is plain and functional, with the ornate, colorful altar the only decorative area at present. (Carpeting and other furnishings will be added later.) The exterior presents an oriental design with blue tiling and concrete aggregate panels, blue onion dome and yellow trimming. The prevailing exterior construction material is white stucco. In the entrance hall are wash basins for hand washing before entering, and racks for depositing shoes. No Smoking signs are posted throughout. Landscaping will take place when more money is collected from the East Indian community for completing both the interior and the exterior grounds.

A priest, or Granthi, has been selected and sent for from Punjab, and was expected to arrive within several weeks. He will maintain the Temple and conduct Punjabi language classes for both adults and children, as well as perform the regular religious functions of the Temple. At first the priest will reside in the Temple building, but eventually separate quarters will be constructed for him.
CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST GENERATION

As with many immigrant groups, the East Indians need to be described in relationship to their generation in the United States. This ranges from a first generation born in India to a third generation of American born children of American born East Indians. The restrictive legislation described in a preceding chapter also makes it helpful to understand the East Indians according to the laws that prevailed at the time of their arrival. To clarify the four divisions of the first generation, Table I, following, has been prepared.

Group 1, those arriving before 1924

This group, frequently referred to as "old timers," came primarily from the rural areas of Punjab as single men, in response to the opportunities California presented for employment as farm laborers. They lived in groups, slept in the fields, demanded few physical comforts, and saved their money either to send back to India or to purchase land for themselves. Some came via Vancouver, Canada, where they had worked in the lumber industry, or Utah, where they had found employment on the railroads,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Legislation and Conditions Prevailing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I 1900</td>
<td>1900-1923</td>
<td>No restrictions placed on their arrival. Men came as farm laborers. Very few women came. Began to be turned back by immigration officials. Excluded by Asiatic Barred Zone Act. Citizenship revoked for previous fifteen years. Much court litigation to prevent loss of citizenship. Alien Land Law prevented further purchase of land. Those who were here continued to own and develop their land. Third Decision--ruled that East Indians not free and white--hence ineligible for citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II 1924</td>
<td>1924-1946</td>
<td>Quota based on foreign-born population of 1890. (before East Indians started coming) Immigration limited to students and &quot;illegals.&quot; Men married &quot;out.&quot; Alien Land Law repealed and they could again purchase land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III 1946</td>
<td>1946-1965</td>
<td>Luce-Celler Bill opened citizenship to East Indians and they were able to bring or send for wives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 1965</td>
<td>1965-present</td>
<td>Quota increased and East Indians are able to send for relatives, other than wives. Arriving at rate of approximately three hundred per year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**TABLE I**

Legislation and Conditions Prevailing at the Time of Arrival of Four Groups of First Generation East Indians.
or from Mexico where illegal entrance to the United States was possible. Until 1917, when the Barred Zone Act was passed, they obtained citizenship as Caucasians. However, this Act eliminated many Asians from citizenship, including East Indians along with Siamese, Indo-Chinese, Siberians, Afghanistsans, Arabians and Malaysians. For the East Indians the legislation was reinforced by the Third Decision, mentioned earlier, which stated that "a Hindu is not a free white person, hence ineligible for citizenship." (Jacoby, 1958:2-8) Citizenships granted earlier were revoked. However, many East Indians fought this ruling and about thirty-five individuals were allowed to keep their citizenship as a result of court litigation. These early settlers gradually developed large land holdings, most of which are in the hands of sons or other relatives today. In 1921 the Alien Land Law prevented further purchase of land, but those who already owned land were allowed to keep it. Almost all of the East Indians coming during this period had arrived by 1917 when immigration virtually stopped not only because of restrictions but because of World War I. (Jacoby, 1958:6)

There are about ten such "old timers" still residing in Yuba City. All have retired from active work and have placed their property in the hands of sons or nephews. One, who came to the United States in 1907 spent thirteen years in Utah, returned to India to bring a wife to settle in Yuba City in 1922. As one of three East Indian women
in the area at that time, the wife tells of the difficulties she suffered as a stranger in a very strange land—learning a new language and way of life. She found it to be quite different from the rosy picture her husband had painted to lure her here. However, both she and her husband were hardy and adventurous and he always had "a fist ready" when children in the neighborhood made unpleasant remarks about their "strange" ways. This old gentleman's one tie with his younger, active life as an orchardist is to cultivate one tree in front of their house, giving it the same care he formerly gave an entire orchard. He walks with a cane and spends most of his days sitting in a lounge chair in front of a window where the writer has always found him.

This family has raised seven children, five of whom still live in the area and constitute the only second generation from this early period whom the writer was able to locate.

Other "old timers" lead a similar retired life. One can be seen daily from early morning to sunset lying on an army cot in front of his house, sometimes visited by relatives and other old men. Another came to America around 1907, worked hard and amassed enough fortune to purchase increasing amounts of land. Finally, after living in Yuba City for thirty-five years, he was able to persuade his wife, whom he had married when she was fourteen, to join him. Now in their seventies and eighties they have sold
their land and settled down to a prosperous, apparently happy, old age. Because they were not together during her childbearing years, they have no children. As with most of the "old" men, his driving license has been revoked except to allow him to drive to the new Temple site less than a mile away on a straight, infrequently traveled road.

Group 2, the first generation arriving between 1924 and 1946

This group came at a time when immigration was severely limited, and faced problems which confronted no other group of East Indians. Immigration was virtually restricted to students and those who were able to sneak in illegally through Canada or Mexico. Because East Indian women were not available, many married Mexicans and Americans. Although the Alien Land Law prevented them from purchasing land, some were able to do so through these Mexican or American wives. However, many became discouraged and returned to India. In all, there are about twenty such families living in Yuba City today.

Some of the students who came to the United States at this time began providing an educated leadership to East Indian communities throughout the country. One such gentleman who came as a student, attended a midwestern university, where he met and married his wife, a native of a southern state. They settled in Yuba City where he purchased land, became an orchardist and raised two sons, both attorneys. One son is married to a non-Indian
American; the other one is not married. Because of their educational background and intermarriage they have become part of the larger Yuba City community and believe that since most of the East Indians intend to remain in the United States permanently, they should give up their East Indian culture as quickly as possible. He is the only person with such an attitude encountered by the researcher.

Most families of men who came during this period continue to identify with the East Indian ethnic group. One gentleman who came in through Mexico, married a Mexican woman, began purchasing land in her name, and is now a large landholder. They have two college age children attending Yuba College. Although this family also enjoys what might be considered a middle class status in the larger community, they continue to participate in many of the Sikh activities, enjoy East Indian foods, maintain ties and interests in India and make occasional visits there. Most of the first generation in this category have prospered as peach and almond growers and own large homes and landholdings.

Group 3, first generation arriving from 1946 until 1965

Coming both as single men and with families, East Indians arriving during this period constitute a third first generation of East Indians in Yuba City. Passage of the Luce-Cellar Bill in 1946 permitted East Indians to become citizens, and removed them from the Barred Zone.
This, along with the repeal of the Alien Land Law opened the way for new East Indian immigration. The quota of one hundred per year assigned to both India and Pakistan permitted primarily wives and other relatives of those already in Yuba City, so that, although East Indians did not immigrate to Yuba City in great numbers, families were reunited and new ones formed.

An example of an immigrant from this era is a man who, with his brother, came in the 1940's to help his uncle (an "old timer") manage his land. He remained single until 1950 when he returned to India to marry a wife chosen by relatives. This couple now have five children ranging in age from four to seventeen. Another family came as a unit from the Fiji Island East Indian community. Their three children are now in their twenties. Still another example is a man who came to California as a student, attended a university where he obtained an M.A. degree and a teaching credential and has been teaching fourth grade in the Yuba City schools for about eight years. In 1967 his wife and two children, who had remained behind in Punjab, joined him. This family is a strong supporter of Sikh religious functions and worships at home as well as at community religious gatherings. At school the man is most visible as an East Indian with his braided beard and turban. On the whole, members of this category of arrivals are strong supporters of East Indian ethnic groups and activities.
Group 4, first generation
arriving since 1965

Coming at an estimated rate of about three hundred yearly since 1965, these arrivals constitute the largest group of East Indian residents in Yuba City. Most of them have come as young couples with or without children, sponsored by friends or relatives already in Yuba City. The only requirement for entrance to the country has been a guarantee of means of support after arrival. For many this livelihood consists of work on their sponsor's orchard and living either with or on the property of the sponsoring family. (usually a relative.) A native of Yuba City suggested that some of them might have come as indentured servants. As mentioned previously, many of these people are coming directly from small villages, do not speak English and look for security in whatever ethnic life is available to them. Included in this group are students who come to attend Yuba College, mix with the East Indian community and may or may not eventually settle down as a part of the community.

An example of a family that has come since 1965 is one with three young children who came to live with the man's brother's family. The brother, in turn, had come earlier to manage the land amassed by his "old timer" uncle. The two brothers' families and uncle live together as an extended family. Another young family lives in a small house to the rear of the home of an early resident who has
sold most of his land and is retired. The writer did not have the opportunity to become well acquainted with any of these newer families because they do not speak English well and react hesitantly to strangers. However, they make up a large part of the ethnic community and will be the ones around which the community's future leadership will develop.
Like the first generation, the second generation can be divided into four divisions depending upon the time of arrival of their parents in the United States and upon whether they were born in this country or in India. In order to apply Gordon's model to the changes occurring, the characteristics that apply specifically to the second, and, briefly, the third generation of East Indians in Yuba City, will now be discussed. A doctoral dissertation and a masters thesis will be used to supplement the writer's observations and to help understand the role that the second and third generations play in the Sikh community.

Description of the Second Generation

The following are the four divisions into which the second generation has been divided. The first two groups will be mentioned briefly, but the bulk of the chapter will discuss groups three and four--children born in India of parents coming to the United States after 1946, and children born in Yuba City.
Children of the "old timers"

Since many of the early immigrants were not married, there is a very small second generation from this period. However, in three families with twelve children born in Yuba City, the writer can account for nine children, seven still living in the area. Six of the twelve are managing their father's acreage and have established their own families; two have become teachers; one is in college; and one is helping his parents operate the local East Indian grocery and drygoods store. At least two have married non-East Indians. Of these people, those living in Yuba City tend to identify with the East Indian community even though they have dropped many of their traditional customs.

Children of the mixed marriages

These represent a small group (perhaps ten) most of whom are now in their twenties. Two have become lawyers, one of whom is the District Attorney of Sutter County married to a non-East Indian. Two are attending Yuba Junior College. The location of the others is unknown.

Children of parents coming to the United States from 1946 until the present

These can be divided into two categories--1. Those children born in India and coming to the United States before age eighteen; and 2. Those born in the United States.
(1) Children born in India and coming to Yuba City before age eighteen.

These children continue living and behaving in much the same pattern that they had established in India until they enroll in the public schools at which time they become "caught" between two cultures. High value is placed upon school attendance and the children are enrolled as soon as possible after arriving in Yuba City, sometimes only two days after leaving India. Although adults may not be ready to learn English or to participate in the larger community, they are eager for their children to do so and to become the family's extension into the community.

Customs from India go to school with many of the children. Some, because of family pressure, continue them for a long time; others give them up more quickly. Children whose parents are very devoted to their religious customs, continue to dress in an outstandingly East Indian manner for several years. This includes long hair and turbans for the boys and long, tight-fitting pants under East Indian dress for the girls.

Khush found that there was a conspicuous difference between those born in the United States and those born in India in the amount of social participation as well as in some of their atti-
tudes. Those born in India:

are very conscious of their appearance ... they feel inhibited in inviting their American friends to their homes and feel that they will have a distinct disadvantage in their future professional life due to their national origin ... they spend most of their time with other Indians and prefer to establish intimate friendships with them. (1966:50)

One girl who is now a well accepted and participating student in high school told the writer of the days when she first attended school in Yuba City at the age of eight. Her parents had recently come from India and insisted that she wear her East Indian dress and take East Indian food to school for lunch. This, coupled with her other feelings of strangeness in a foreign country, was terrifying. But, in spite of such experiences, the East Indian children seem strong and determined to make their way in the American life around them.

(2) Second generation born in Yuba City.

The children born in Yuba City experience little of the strangeness described above. Their first experience in the larger community may come when they first attend school, but their parents have already been here long enough to have cast aside their insistence upon customs that would appear conspicuous. Hence, they enter school as a member of one of the several ethnic groups in
the area rather than specifically as East Indians. They may have spoken only Punjabi at home but most likely have spoken English in the neighborhood so that it comes quickly at school.

Examples of children in this category are three girls of school age whose parents adhere rather firmly to Sikh customs in the home. However, nothing of their appearance and behavior outside their home other than their dark skin sets them aside. The girls have also been observed to participate in religious activities in both home and temple under the supervision of their parents.

Khush states this, regarding those second generation Sikhs born in the United States:

They spend a high proportion of their free time with Americans and establish intimate friendships with them ... they are familiar with American customs ... and do not feel as inhibited in mixing with Americans as those born in India ... they hold that appearance plays no part in establishing social relations and feel uninhibited in inviting American friends to their home ... they think they will have no disadvantage in their professional life due to their national origin. (1966:50)

Both groups of second generation East Indians

Although it is clear from Khush's study and from the writer's observations that both of these groups are making significant steps in the direction of acculturation, there are great variations expressed. Many young people both in Yuba City and in India are breaking away from their par-
ents' traditions, but others find satisfaction from abiding by their parents' wishes and enjoy the security afforded thereby. The writer became acquainted with a young woman attending college in another city whose parents live in Yuba City. She resented her family's foreign ways and was determined to have a new and independent life away from Yuba City. On the other hand, a college girl from another family returns home frequently, especially during vacations, seems to enjoy resuming some of the East Indian customs and, apparently, bears no resentment toward her early life as an East Indian in the community.

Schools as Agents of Acculturation

The public schools provide the chief force for cultural change within the community. Because of the cooperative attitude of both the parents and children, the school personnel has appeared to welcome the East Indian children into the schools and in the past they have found that the East Indian children present few problems or special needs. However, with increasing numbers arriving each year their presence is being felt more and more. The principal of one school reported that they have thirty East Indian pupils. One new family came to the area last year; five this year. This rapid increase inevitably brings more need for special help with such things as language and new and unfamiliar modes of interaction. The enrollment increase has come rapidly and the teachers have
not had any special orientation to the children's needs and cultural heritage other than what each has acquired individually.

With the increasing numbers of East Indian children in the schools and the parallel development of Federal funding for ethnic groups, plans for use of special funds have been given increasing impetus. Under Title I, Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, designated for special help with reading for culturally deprived children, the East Indian children could not be included because it was limited to children of families on welfare. However, because few of the East Indian children were receiving this assistance, the school district was able to get a local re-interpretation of the Act so that the project director will be able to include these children next year.

The school district was in the process of applying for Federal funds to develop a program to help meet the overall needs of the one hundred fifty to two hundred East Indian children in the district. On December 18, 1969, a meeting was held to discuss such a proposal and was attended by school personnel as well as various interested members of the community, including two East Indians.

Following are excerpts from the report of this meeting made by Dr. Clinton Loehlin, a retired missionary from Punjab:

The Director of Special Education explained that the reason for calling the meeting was the concern
for youngsters of East Indian descent in our schools with limited background in the English language and a limited knowledge of the American culture...
Every school in the district has some children who fit this description. There are approximately 150-200 East Indian youngster in this district. These children range in culture from those who are completely westernized to those who are new immigrants. The problem of socialization is felt more in grades 7-12 than at the younger level.

Under Educational Resources Agencies, Title III, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it may be possible to receive Federal monies to develop a program to help these children. (Loehlin, 1970:4)

Although funds for this project may not be immediately available, the recognition of the need and the impetus to act upon that recognition represent awareness on the part of the school district of the increasing needs of the East Indian children.

There is as yet no awareness of a possible need to continue teaching East Indian culture and customs. Federal funds for a bilingual program where Punjabi as well as English would be taught are more readily available, but have not been applied for. The general attitude of the school officials seems to be "Let them learn English and become Americanized as soon as possible."

In spite of whatever problems the children may face when they begin school, their family patterns of strong orientation to education and their determination to make this country their home seem to give the children the strength and motivation to succeed. By the time they reach high school some have become leaders and most have maintained a good scholastic record.
Wenzel's study of the second generation

Wenzel's dissertation (1965) is primarily concerned with value orientations of fifty-four high school and junior college students and their families. (To be discussed more fully in the chapter dealing with attitudes.) Wenzel found that East Indian student attitudes and orientation toward life are similar to those of American high school and college students. He considers that because of this similarity they are gradually able to adopt and become acculturated to American ways at school and in the larger community.

Summary of the second generation

The writer has presented evidence that all four categories of the second generation have made steps toward acculturation into the life of Yuba City. However, those born in the United States are further along than those who have first been accustomed to life in India. The attitudes expressed by both groups toward their parents' participation in the social and civic activities of the community can be considered representative of the childrens' attitudes toward their own future role in the larger community. Khush's findings bear out her hypothesis that children of immigrant parents become more Americanized in direct relationship to the length of stay in this country. The findings of both Wenzel and Khush tend to reinforce point four of Gordon's model—the American born children of
immigrants, should, with few exceptions, be viewed as a generation irreversibly on its way to virtually complete acculturation.

The third generation

A third generation is found in the grandchildren of the old timers, the grandchildren of the mixed marriages and the grandchildren of those coming between 1946 and 1965. In the later group there are not more than three or four members old enough to have grandchildren. Because, out of these three categories, the writer has only observed the grandchildren of one family of old timers and of one family of a mixed marriage, information on the third generation cannot be considered sufficient to give a representative picture or to give it validity for use in this study.
CHAPTER IX

ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF THE EAST INDIANS

In a study of culture change, such intangibles as attitudes and values can be a more significant indication of the trend and pace toward acculturation than material items which change more easily and more visibly. This chapter will discuss some of these less tangible cultural items.

Attitudes of the East Indians
Toward Yuba City

With few exceptions, the East Indians consider the United States and, specifically, the Yuba City area, as one man put it, "the best place on earth," and have no intention of leaving. The above quoted "old timer" further elaborated, "Where else can you buy land with no money?" (referring to bank loans) "Where else are there agricultural agents ready to help with problems?" and, "Where else could you find a community of friends and relatives away from home?" Such sentiments are expressed by some of the "old timers" who worked hard, bought land and are now retired and "rich." Although the East Indians sometimes get nostalgic about India and visit there periodically, California is home.
The writer has seen several written expressions of their desire to encourage good relations with the larger community. In their original constitution drawn up for the creation of the Temple, they state, "The purpose of the Sikh Temple is to advance the cultural relationship among East Indians and friendly Americans." However, this statement of purpose was later changed to a more religiously oriented one.

At the Baisakhi Day celebration in the Sikh Temple in Stockton, in March, 1967, the observer heard an East Indian professor from the University of California address the group and eloquently affirm this good feeling toward life in the United States. He stated that this country offers a "dynamic democratic opportunity" for the Sikhs to practice their beliefs in complete social equality and justice. He further stated that he felt that Sikhs have an opportunity to contribute to the richness of "this cosmopolitan country with its many cultures." He was addressing himself to East Indians from Fresno, California, to Yuba City. This expression reinforces Gordon's belief in the value of diversity presented by a variety of cultural contributions in the United States.

Although most East Indians have every intention of becoming American citizens and remaining in California, they, especially the first generation, are reticent about entering into American community life and prefer to associate only with other East Indians whenever possible. From
time to time the writer has noticed a lack of trust toward the larger community. For example, during the Temple construction cracks appeared in the concrete, and wood that appeared old was used by the contractors. Some of the East Indians felt that "they" (referring to the Anglo community) were taking advantage of them. Rather than go directly to the contractor to discuss it, the East Indians harbored resentment as they discussed it among themselves. In an entirely different context the writer heard one young man express his belief that Americans steal from the East Indians while East Indians never steal from each other. Considering the years of discrimination and court litigation which the East Indians have experienced, it is not surprising that they show some fear and mistrust.

Similarities between American and East Indian Values

One reason which influences the Sikhs' happiness with their life in Yuba City is that in many ways their values and attitudes are similar to the American "way of life."

Education

Both East Indians and Americans in Yuba City place high value upon education for their children. Although many of the first generation do not read English with any degree of proficiency, their homes are full of magazines and such reference books as the World Book Encyclopedia. They look ahead with anticipation and satisfaction to their
children's education. Educated Indians in India are oriented toward M.A., and Ph.D., degrees and follow a tradition of sending students to England and the United States to fulfill this ambition. This expectation is continued among many of the young East Indians in Yuba City.

Espousal of personal freedom

Another similarity between the values of the East Indian and the Anglo community in Yuba City is their belief in individual rights. This has been discussed in the chapter on Sikh History where their tradition of democracy and opposition to the Hindu caste system has been described. This is most evident as one reads Sikh literature—books, magazines, and newspapers. Following are quotations from an article in the Sikh Review discussing the philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh:

The Sikh is a cosmopolitan and, though he is very proud of his Aryan heritage, he gladly assimilates all that is best from the rest of the world. He feels his kinship with the whole of humanity.... The Sikh does not grudge the right of equal citizenship to members of other religions. The Sikh's spirit of tolerance is the result of the catholicity of his cult, which has room for every sort of theology.

(January 1966:26)

Similarities between Sikhism and Christianity

The dominant religion in the Yuba City area is Christianity. In Chapter VI similarities between the two religions have been shown. These include their belief in "One God," the brotherhood of all men and the need for demonstrating this belief in brotherhood through service.
Dr. Clinton Loehlin, the Presbyterian missionary who lived and worked among the Sikhs in Punjab for forty years, describes many other similarities that he has become aware of in his study of the theology of both Christianity and Sikhism. (Loehlin, 1953:100) Some of these are: "Salvation by grace," the reality of sin and the need of forgiveness, baptism and the communion meal, congregational hymn singing and worship by all—men, women and children, tithing, the organization into congregations or parishes and the use of lay leaders. Dr. Loehlin believes that many of Guru Nanak's teachings are similar to Christianity and that the ten Gurus may have received their inspiration from Jesus. He likes to consider Jesus as the "Guru's Guru."

Other similar values

Dr. Loehlin also believes that the two groups share a similar sense of humor. Both tend to exaggeration. This insight has come from his own fluency in Punjabi.

As with all Americans who have come here as immigrants, the East Indians share a basic sense of adventure, adaptability, and a desire for a better life. An East Indian historian remarks with admiration on

..."the elasticity of character, the power to adapt themselves" of the Sikhs. Their vigor of body and mind enabled them to withstand the changes of a rigorous climate, so that it exercised no deterring influence on them ... Even persecution, the destruction of their homes and sacred buildings, and the enslavement of their women and children did not succeed in crushing their spirit. (Gupta 1939:275)
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Wenzel's Study of Value Orientation

In his doctoral dissertation analyzing value orientations of the first and second generations in the Yuba City area, Wenzel has presented some findings which give additional insights as well as reinforcement to some of the investigator's observations. (1965:135)

Kluckhohn's instrument

To discover the most prevalent values of the fifty-four high school and junior college students and their parents, Wenzel used a model which had been formulated by Florence Kluckhohn (1961:77-90) to test and compare values of groups with varying cultures. It was based on the assumption that there are a limited number of basic situations and problems which must be faced by all people in all places and that there is a limited range of possible solutions to these problems. The following are five problems considered common to man everywhere:

1. What are the innate predispositions of man?
2. What is the valued personality type?
3. What are the significant time dimensions?
4. What is the relation of man to nature?
5. What is the dominant modality of the relationship of man to other men?

These five questions provided the basis for an instrument which was used and tested widely by Kluckhohn to show significant differences in orientations in various cultures. It was originally used on five cultures of the southwest called the Rimrock Communities—the Zunis, the
Navahos, the Texas Homesteaders, the Rimrock Mormons, and a group of Spanish Americans. It has also been used in research in Japan, with a study of middle-class Americans, with an Italian-American group, and with a group of Irish-Americans. The above questions were organized under the four following areas of feeling and value orientation—1) Activity (being or doing), 2) Time (future, present or past), 3) Man-Nature (over, with or subjugated), and 4) Relational (collateral, lineal or individualistic).

Wenzel's use of the Kluckhohn instrument in Yuba City

Wenzel used the four categories of value orientation developed by Kluckhohn to form a questionnaire presenting twenty-two situations described to fit the experience of the East Indians in the Yuba City area. The questionnaire was translated into Punjabi and administered to the fifty-four young people and their parents.

The results brought the following conclusions about the East Indian sample:

1. In the Activity orientation, they were dominantly doing but showed a strong expression in favor of being. This was interpreted to indicate an interest in doing or accomplishing tasks, illustrated by the emphasis Sikh religion places on the importance of being involved in the secular world. Also, the Sikhs of Yuba City may be different than those remaining in India because of the selective factor
that culminated in the act of immigration. Therefore, this doing orientation might have been a precondition for those making a change in residence.

2. In the Time orientation there was a clear rejection of the past by the adults and young people. However, parents appeared to be future orientated while the students were present orientated. This viewing the future as more important than the past and the difference between the adults and young people's viewpoints seems to be no different than one would expect from a broad sample of long time Americans. Again, the selective factor of leaving India and breaking ties with their past may partially account for this strong orientation in Yuba City.

3. They demonstrated a strong Man over Nature orientation which seems consistent with the orientations to doing, to the present and to the future. A belief that man can overcome at least limited features of the environment is consistent with their concern for the future.

4. The Relationship orientation was almost equally divided between collateral, forty per cent, and individualistic, thirty-eight percent, which indicated an acceptance of both cooperative and solitary social arrangements. It rejected the idea of a lineal hierarchy of authority such as is frequently found in American social, business and
political organizations. The strong emphasis which the Brotherhood of the Khalsa placed on service to one another in such tangible ways as the free kitchens for those in need as well as the variety of ways in which they work together in Yuba City reinforces this Relationship orientation. The strong rejection of the lineal hierarchy help to understand the difficulty which they seemed to have in electing officers for the Temple Board. (Rather than elect officers, they wanted to be represented by a group of five, each with equal status.)

Similarity between Wenzel's and Williams' findings

As the result of his study, Wenzel concluded that the value orientations of this ethnic group had important similarities with the dominant value orientations found in other studies of values made in the United States. One such study was made by Robin Williams. (1970) In a chapter entitled "Values in American Society," Williams' conclusions about American society in the four areas listed above are similar to Wenzel's conclusions about East Indian value orientation. Although the larger American society and the East Indian society of Yuba City can in no sense be compared in terms of size, complexity and variety, nonetheless the similarity between the two value orientations appears striking.

Concern for doing or accomplishing tasks indicated
by the dominance of doing in the Activity orientation is paralleled by Williams' belief that American culture is marked by a central stress on personal achievement, especially occupational achievement. "The success story and the respect accorded the self-made man are distinctly American if anything is." (Williams, 1970:454) The lives of some of the "old timers" can be considered East Indian examples of the American Horatio Alger story.

The East Indians' clear rejection of the past in favor of the future as a Time orientation is paralleled in a section by Williams entitled "Progress" describing a typical American trait as "optimism, an emphasis on the future rather than the past or present ... the new is better, forward is better than backward." (1970:468)


In the Relationship area, East Indians are described as rejecting lineal hierarchy. One of three aspects of "equality" as an American value is described by Williams in this way: "America has always impressed observers from more rigid and hierarchial societies as being marked by an extraordinary informality, directness and lack of status consciousness in person to person contacts." (Williams,
This is consonant with the Sikh rejection of caste hierarchy. However, as pointed out earlier, the Sikhs do not espouse lineal authority as found in American business and political organizations.

Other values discussed by Williams in American Society consonant with deeply rooted East Indian values are their belief in "democracy" and their "humanitarian mores" both discussed in Chapter V of this thesis.

After describing and comparing East Indian values with long time American values, Wenzel concludes that there is little that is exotic or strange in the East Indian group except in their material culture and language. He further believes that they have the sort of value orientation that has led to material success in a number of instances and could well lead to success in the American industrial economy. He cited the East Indian's success in being responsible for approximately thirty per cent of the peach production in Sutter County as testimony to this possibility. (1965:136-9)

Summary of the East Indian's attitudes and values

Although the East Indians do not always appear to feel completely accepted in Yuba City, they seem to present every intention of remaining there and raising their families to eventually become part of the larger Anglo community. Much of their positive feeling can be ascribed to the many value orientations which the East Indians hold
in common with the larger American society. This has been reinforced by observation, material presented in Wenzel's study and a comparison of both of these sources with material from a current analysis of American values.
CHAPTER X

ATTITUDES OF THE LARGER COMMUNITY TOWARD
THE PRESENCE OF THE EAST INDIANS

In the previous chapter the East Indians have been described as feeling positive toward their life in Yuba City, espousing values similar to the rest of the community and showing every intention of remaining in the area permanently. The feelings of the long time residents of Yuba City toward the presence of the East Indians will now be explored in terms of three segments of the population that have occasion to interact with them—the general population, community agencies and business concerns. Tentative conclusions will be based upon impressions gained from conversations with many different persons in and around Yuba City. Among these were school personnel—administrators as well as teachers in three of the local schools, welfare and agricultural officer personnel, a variety of persons with whom the writer had occasion to interact in Yuba City and persons in Sacramento who professed to be well acquainted with the Yuba-Marysville area. No one was encountered who seemed to have more than a superficial understanding of their presence, history and culture.
The general population

Although the East Indians have been living in increasing numbers in the Yuba City area since 1907, many persons in the community are unaware of their presence. It is only from newspaper notices of their activities, from seeing a group gather in front of a theatre for an East Indian movie or from observing them in their yards or on the street that their presence is apparent. Some of the Yuba Cityians may be aware that the District Attorney is half East Indian, that one of the local physicians and several of the school teachers are East Indian or that there is a weekly Punjabi radio broadcast. Others may have seen students in the local schools, and, if they attend the Yuba Junior College, they have noticed that there are about thirty East Indians there. Some are also vaguely aware that a Temple has been built on the outskirts of town, but few will know what religion it represents or be aware that the East Indians will welcome them to services or "functions" they will have there.

To the extent that the Yuba Cityians are aware of the presence of the East Indians, they consider them hard-working and strange, show little knowledge of their culture or background, and sometimes confuse them with other ethnic groups in the area. On three occasions the writer has heard them compared or confused with Negroes. (In England where there are several East Indian enclaves, they are sometimes referred to as "niggers."
Community organizations

Community organizations such as the schools, welfare and agricultural offices are especially aware of the East Indians because they have difficulty in communicating with them. With their increasing population, the East Indians cannot be ignored or treated just like anyone else, but need special help in learning to communicate in English. To date none of the concern in the community has gone beyond helping the East Indians become Americanized. Personnel from both the schools and the agricultural office say that they have found them cooperative and conscientious about following instructions and, aside from the language barrier, easy to deal with.

Business organizations

Those who have had business dealings with the East Indians may have formed more definite impressions of them. Among them the East Indians have a reputation for being "shrewd" and "evasive" and for being "sharp traders." This was elaborated by several persons to mean such things as not putting money in the bank to avoid paying income taxes. Also when bills are sent there is frequently confusion arising over the use of the name Singh, either alone or with other names. Because so many have similar names it is difficult to be sure the bill has reached the right person. Several businessmen expressed the belief that they purposely confuse the situation to avoid paying their bills. There
was some expression of resentment toward them for being able to work such long hours and amass land at a faster rate than some of the other members of the community. One said they "plotted together" and "didn't act like normal men." This was the same criticism that was voiced against the Japanese in 1920 in the California State Board of Control Report, California and the Oriental. (Numerous references throughout.) Others in the community speak of them as being honest and conscientious in their business dealings. The writer believes that the critical attitudes voiced toward them are the result of lack of understanding of their customs and language.

The writer spoke to no persons who felt that they were taking jobs away from others in the area. But with the growing unemployment in 1970, problems among farm workers throughout California, and increasing numbers of East Indians coming to the area this possibility is a real one.

Summary

As has been described earlier in this thesis (see page 42), attitudes of prejudice and discrimination have been shown toward the East Indians in California. In the past they have been restricted from coming to this country, from becoming citizens and from holding land. Agricultural agents have described them as "inferior" and "immoral." Persons who have lived in the area for many years have, no
doubt, been influenced by past situations and attitudes. However, now that many have lived here long enough to establish families and successful lives for themselves and are entering the community life in increasing numbers, there are a variety of attitudes shown toward them. At the time of this writing the larger community appears to be on the verge of a new awareness of the East Indian population. In part, this growing awareness has been brought on by their increasing numbers and, in addition, the construction of the Sikh Temple of which the entire community of Yuba City will doubtless become aware.
CHAPTER XI

APPLICATION OF GORDON'S MODEL AND PROJECTION FOR THE FUTURE

Use of Baseline for Measurement

Let us use as a baseline the culture and manner of living held by each East Indian as he begins his life in Yuba City. What changes can be observed after he has been in Yuba City five, twenty or thirty years? Most East Indians in Yuba City arrive directly from the rural area of Punjab bringing with them their own form of dress, food, worship, traditions and attitudes. However, they are not able to transport such material cultural items as modes of transportation, farm implements and houses. They must, therefore, make an immediate and sudden change in these areas of their life.

As they reside in Yuba City they adjust rapidly to, and make maximum use of, whatever farm implements they need and can afford. Whether or not they have driven cars and trucks in India, motor vehicles quickly become a part of the men's way of life as they develop their agricultural businesses. There is a more gradual change in regard to the home living conveniences they require, but all who have been in the United States long enough to become financially established own such modern appliances as refriger-
ators and washing machines. Many have fully equipped electrical homes.

However, in the more personal, less physical areas of their lives and in their primary relationships with one another we see little change in the first generation regardless of their length of residence in the Yuba City area. Most of the East Indians dress, eat, speak, carry on religious and family traditions and have similar attitudes and values today as they did when they first arrived from Punjab. In a sense, they have been able to transport and maintain a "bit of India" in the midst of a California community, adjusting outwardly only where necessary and financially advantageous.

A dramatic example of the East Indians' cultural change in their outward life style while retaining their traditional customs and preferences is that of some of the "old timers" who came to California in the nineteen hundreds as single men, became farm laborers, lived and ate in the fields and conformed to few "socially acceptable" western customs. Gradually they bought land, developed large orchards, saved their money, married and now live comfortable retired lives. Nonetheless, they cling to many of the customs that they brought to California with them—customs which have been discussed in chapter V. These men are too few in number today to give a reliable sample for study, but they do present a true and vivid example of the kind of change that has taken place among the first gener-
The second generation born in India has been shown to follow many of the patterns of the first generation with a gradual change as they relate to the community through the public schools. The second generation born in Yuba City appear to live in two worlds. At home they follow their parents' customs where necessary for family unity and at school and in the community they are almost totally "Americanized." Structural assimilation or "large scale entrance" by the East Indians into primary groups of the larger Yuba City community is well on its way in the second generation and will probably be almost completed in the third generation as they have less desire, need or pressure to identify with the East Indian ethnic organizations. They will probably continue to cling to many of the symbols of Sikhism, but probably in much the same way that Gordon describes the Jews in America as doing when he says that they participate in "symbolic Judaism." (1964:194)

By this he means a kind of minimal adherence to specifically Jewish cultural values or patterns, in which emphasis is placed on a selection of nostalgic items of "Yiddish" background (for instance, Yiddish culinary delicacies or Yiddish phrases), the possession in the home of tangible objects denoting Jewishness (for example, books, records, or pictures with Jewish themes), a concern with "Jewish" problems, and a selection of festive religious traditions which help socialize the children into an awareness of and affection for their Jewish identity. (1964:194)
Application of Gordon's Model

Gordon's model of acculturation is presented as the direction of adjustment in which he views immigrant groups moving on their way toward assimilation into American life. The description of the life of the East Indians in Yuba City can now be related to steps of his model of acculturation.

(1) First generation immigrants need and prefer the security of a group life made up of fellow immigrants from their homeland. Structural assimilation is neither desirable nor possible for this group. Many facets of this need for association with fellow East Indians have been presented—the drive and concern for building a Temple, which has been a unifying force for them, is paramount. It will provide a gathering place for all types of activity about India and among the East Indians of the area. The association of the first generation has been shown to be almost exclusively with other East Indians with the only exceptions being in the men's business dealings and the necessary contacts with a few community organizations.

(2) While few changes will take place in the primary communal life, successful relationships to secondary groups in "modest degree" and in selected
areas can and should take place. This continuation of the first step is illustrated by contacts the parents have in connection with necessary community organizations—school, shopping, driver's licenses, agricultural and welfare agencies, Peach Growers Association and any other areas in which need arises. They continue to be "modest."

(3) The institutional and subcultural life of the immigrant community should be regarded not only as an effective means of enabling a gradual degree of acculturation and continual orientation to the culture of the old country. At this stage the East Indians are using the almost completed Temple and other cultural ties as a means of maintaining security gained in old and established patterns and of gradually absorbing the skills needed to interact with more confidence in the larger community.

(4) The second generation should be viewed as a generation irreversibly on its way to virtually complete acculturation although not necessarily structural assimilation at all levels of their life. This has been amply illustrated by the sections dealing with the second generation, especially after they have entered the public schools. The transition shown between those
born in India and those born in Yuba City represents a step in the process. The schools have been described as a first and powerful agent of acculturation for the second and third generations.

Although acculturation is not taking place to any degree among the first generation, it is well on its way in the second generation and will probably be almost completed in the third. Possibly only in deference to their parents' wishes, the second generation will probably attend many of the Temple's functions for social if not for religious reasons. They will be caught between two cultures—that of their parents and that of the larger Yuba City community. The third generation will feel freer from the desire, need, or pressure to identify with the East Indian ethnic organizations. See the following table for a description of the types and amount of assimilation that appear to be taking place among the first and second generations of East Indians in Yuba City.

Projection for the Future

Since 1965 immigration of the East Indians to Yuba City began accelerating dramatically. Therefore, any prediction based on past analysis or observations cannot be considered conclusive for the future. Today many forces are present that will accelerate acculturation and eventual assimilation. Likewise, many conditions are present which
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Assimilation</th>
<th>First Generation Adults Born in India</th>
<th>Children Second Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1900-24</td>
<td>1924-46*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural—change of cultural patterns to those of host society</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>partly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural—large scale entrance into primary groups</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>partly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital—large scale inter-marriage</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>partly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identificational—sense of &quot;peoplehood&quot; based on host society</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude—receptonal—absence of prejudice</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>partly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior—receptonal—absence of discrimination</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic—absence of value-power conflict</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE II**

Paradigm of Assimilation—applied to six groups of first and second generation East Indians in Yuba City—Adapted from *Assimilation in American Life* (1964) by Milton Gordon. (pp. 71 and 78)

*Many arriving during this period married "out."
will slow it down.

Those forces favoring acculturation can be listed as follows:

(1) The similarity in values held between the East Indians and the larger Yuba City community.
(2) The satisfaction which the East Indians express with their life in this country.
(3) The ability of the second generation to adapt to American life.
(4) The opportunities for employment and ownership of land which have been available to the East Indians.
(5) The similarities in basic philosophy between Christianity and Sikhism.
(6) The increasing acceptance that the community, especially the public schools, has shown to the East Indians.
(7) The ecological similarity between the Yuba City area and Punjab.
(8) Although the Temple will be a factor slowing down assimilation, it cannot be considered one that is completely negative. It is possible that it will give the East Indians additional security in their ethnicity and thereby permit other forms of adjustment to the larger community.
(9) Khushwant Singh predicts that in areas where
Sikhism is not the predominant religion, apostasy sets in. Although this might not affect the East Indian's continuance of East Indian customs, it will lessen the strength that comes to them from common observance of Sikhism.

Forces slowing acculturation and perpetuating cultural and structural pluralism can be listed as follows:

(1) The presence of the Temple as a place in which to carry on ethnic activities and encourage the continuance of customs from India. This will make possible a greater degree and strength of the structural pluralism which Gordon's model refers to.

(2) The growing size and, hence, strength of the East Indian group.

(3) The perpetuation of ties with India.

(4) Visibility because of their dark skin.

(5) Lack of understanding on the part of the larger community of the East Indians' special needs and patterns, hence labeling much that they do as "strange."

If we are to follow Gordon's model, we can project that the ethnic structure will remain relatively intact for the first generation. Gradually the second and third generations will start the process of acculturation and
eventual assimilation. What the timetable for complete assimilation will be cannot be predicted. In some respects it may be slower than for other ethnic groups; in others faster. The present forces favoring acculturation appear to be stronger and more dynamic than those slowing it down.
In 1970 the East Indian population in the Yuba City area was estimated to be about one thousand five hundred.

The history of the development of the Sikh religion has been traced from its inception in India in the fifteenth century as a mediating force between the Moslems and the Hindus until the present time when the Sikhs are the predominant people of Punjab and have been granted their own capital, Chandigarh. Forces and philosophy that have made them the kind of people who would be adventurous enough to migrate to a new land have been discussed and related to their life and values in Yuba City.

All of the first generation East Indians in the area adhere to their East Indian customs and religion and confine their interactions as much as possible to their own ethnic group. They continue their native language, dress and food and give at least nominal adherence to the Sikh religion. At the time this thesis is being written they are in the process of building a Sikh Temple which will serve as a religious and community center and provide, for the first time, a meeting place for their various interests and activities. This is being accomplished as the result of many years of planning by the entire East Indian community and will represent a major and unique contribution to the community of Yuba City.

The second generation enters the life of the larger community through their attendance in the public schools where they quickly learn English and adopt American ways.
At the same time they continue to be part of the East Indian ethnic life of their families. Very few third generation East Indians were available for this study but it appears that, as Gordon's model suggests, they are well on their way to acculturation in American life.

The values and attitudes toward the United States which the East Indians hold are positive and, for the most part, consonant with American values. They like Yuba City and intend to make it their home. Until recently most people in the Yuba City area have been unaware of the presence of this large ethnic group except as they have had occasion to interact with them in business and necessary community activities. In the early days the East Indian population consisted primarily of men. These men were living in groups, often in "undesirable" conditions, which occasioned prejudice and hostility. Even today many of their patterns of interaction and conducting business seem strange and different and, through the years have been misunderstood. However, as they have been successful peach growers, have raised families and are beginning to participate in the community, they are becoming accepted and welcome. With their increasing numbers, community organizations such as the schools and agricultural agencies are feeling the need to recognize and understand their needs and culture, especially in regard to their need for help with the English language.

The building of the Temple is creating much legal
and financial interaction, as well as curiosity and interest on the part of the larger community. The role which the Temple will play in the future lives of the East Indians is of utmost importance in viewing the future of the group in relation to the larger community of Yuba City. With the presence of the Temple, the growing numbers of the group, and the increased awareness by the larger community of the East Indians, it seems that the East Indians are on the verge of a new phase of their ethnic life in Yuba City.

As a result of the growing numbers and the completion of the Temple, the degree and direction of acculturation may change among the East Indians in Yuba City. The first, second and third generations resulting from recent immigration will each provide new areas for research, analysis and understanding.

As increasing numbers of East Indians arrive, there may be competition for land and employment. The effect of this on the entire community of Yuba City will be an area for future analysis.

The completed Temple may prove to be a unifying force promoting more ethnic solidarity, or it may be a divisive force if it is used as an arena for argument and competition. Its effect on future acculturation needs to be studied.

As the Sikhs continue to migrate from Punjab it would be helpful to know more about the conditions from which they come and which form a background for leaving
India and coming to Yuba City. The patterns of interaction between Yuba City and Punjab and the differences between the Sikhs and other Indians can add understanding to the Yuba City East Indian community.

A further and final area of interest is that of the amount of Indian culture the East Indians are able to retain as they accommodate to American life.
ADDENDUM

Expecting to attend a celebration of Guru Gobind Singh's birthday, I visited the new Temple after the final draft of this thesis had been completed. I found that many of the Yuba City East Indian community had journeyed to Stockton to attend the annual birthday celebration there. The Yuba City service had been delayed until the following week so that the old pattern of celebrating in Stockton with friends from up and down the valley could be continued along with the new opportunity to celebrate in their own temple.

Instead of a religious service I found six members of a family cleaning the building pursuant to their daughter's wedding the previous day. The father explained that as members of the temple community, it was their "duty" to perform such services--that all members share responsibility for maintaining the premises until the resident priest arrives from India to take charge of the building. The East Indians responded warmly to a request to see the Temple and, as a token of fellowship, offered a dish of the traditional wheat pudding that is kept at the altar and served after all services as a communion symbol. Thus, I was able to observe a tangible illustration of the Sikh traditions of service and hospitality.
discussed in Chapter VI.

The marriage of the previous day had been between the oldest daughter of this family, a graduate of a nearby State College, and a young East Indian presently earning his M.S. degree at a Texas university. In traditional Indian style the marriage had been arranged by the bride's parents who, the father explained, "can make a better choice" than the individuals involved. This family had resided in Yuba City for six years. Discussion with the father reinforced a previously mentioned need and desire of East Indian parents for the Temple as a place to perpetuate their East Indian customs and culture. This was the second such wedding to take place since the Temple had opened two weeks previously and, like the first, was conducted by the priest, or Granthi, from the Stockton Temple.

When asked if he and his family intended to remain in Yuba City permanently, the East Indian gentleman replied in a smiling, relaxed manner, "Oh yes!" This most affirmative reply echoes the sentiments of other East Indians who were interviewed.
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