

# History of the Tiv

**Akiga Sai**

**Edited and translated from Tiv by  
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Appendix 1 Team of Translators Alphabetically Arranged

Appendix 2 Some of the actors in Akiga Sai's *History of the Tiv* identified by DAVID DORWARD

Appendix 3 The Story of Inyamibuan by B. Akiga. Translated from Hausa and edited by William Burgess followed by a transcript of the original Hausa text

References cited in the translation and appendices



## INTRODUCTION

It is almost twenty years ago today when first I set my heart on writing this book. This is because shortly after the missionaries arrived in Tivland and settled at my father Sai's residence in 1911, he then handed me over to them, and I was placed under the tutelage of Mr Zimmerman, a pastor with the D.R.C.M., the Dutch Reformed Church Mission. I was barely thirteen years old. After some years, I publicly professed the name of Jesus Christ and converted to Christianity. So missionaries taught me about the knowledge of God and of the world. As I accompanied them here and there in Tivland, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as hearing about and witnessing some aspects of Tiv culture, the idea of this book engaged my interest. So I embarked on a research into the history of Tiv culture and civilization. Whenever I visited my father, Sai, who was a prominent man in Tivland, or visited other elders of Tivland, my discussions with them centred basically on issues pertaining to this research. When I mentioned this to the missionaries, they strongly encouraged me to compile the results of my research into a book.

This is the genesis of this history book. I kept praying to God for his grace to enable me write this book, which would help new Tiv generations to become familiar with and enlightened about their forefathers and their relationship to the present generation. The history of Tiv culture and civilization is on the verge of extinction. Sooner or later, even the old people who are the repository of our oral history will all pass away. So, I am saddened that our cultural heritage is on the wane and nobody seems to be concerned. As I reflected on this, I became inspired with the idea of writing this history. The missionaries too, welcomed the idea, encouraged me, and assisted me to do this work. I have been guided on my task by many missionaries, particularly *Ortese*<sup>1</sup> Uhe.

He lived in Tivland for at least twenty years. He is well informed about Tiv civilization and has also compiled a Tiv dictionary. The officials of the colonial administration were quite impressed by my attempt at writing this book.

The colonial governor sent his representative to assess my efforts on the book. Even my kinsmen who are history pundits were impressed and encouraged me to persist until the work was completed. With all of these positive reactions I became inspired to continue. My next step was to take a research tour of Tivland. I made enquiries about things, saw things first hand and investigated them thoroughly. I enquired about Tiv culture and civilization in all of the clans of Tivland. I interviewed Tiv men who were widely acknowledged to be experts in their knowledge about the history of the Tiv nation. Among them were:

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<sup>1</sup>The term *Ortese* (one who teaches) is one given to ordained religious Tiv leaders, and to most missionaries. Uhe was the nickname for the Rev. Malherbe.

Sai	Shitire mba sha ya <sup>2</sup>
Zaki Aba	Shitire mba sha ya
Tor Donga	Shitire mba sha ya
Wantsoghor	Shitire mba shin itiev
Ingôgh	Ukum
Amatimin	Ukum
Tseva	Ukum
Agera	Kunav North
Ikaagba	Kunav West
Gwande	Masev
Igbor	Masev
Jato Aluse	Masev
Ajia	Tômbo West
Dzun	Tômbo East
Jape	Tômbo East
S. Audu	Makurdi
Chiroma	Makurdi
Ityokagher	Katsina Ala
Adamgbe	Ipav
Adza	Ipav
Dzeku	Iharev Ityôshin
Aka	Iharev Isherev
Kuje	Iharev Uityôndo
Jato Aka	Turan
Jato	Turan
Ayu	Ikurav mba sha ya
Agaihande	Ikurav mba shin itiev
Iyaha	Ikurav mba shin itiev
Gbatar	Nôngov
Dio	Nôngov
Agishi	Etulo [Utur]
Makar	Tongov
Ador	Tongov
Waniber	Maghev
Kasar	Maghev
Ikpa	Mbayion

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<sup>2</sup>The home districts of these Tiv experts are given in the right-hand column.

Paradoxically, younger people in Tivland seemed to be more conversant with the oral history of Tiv culture than most elderly people of the land.

If you want to make an enquiry about anything among the Tiv people, you have to be careful with and how you question them, or else you might not get substantive responses from them. They might think that you are an agent of the white officers of colonial government. Among the chiefs it was most difficult because chiefs were not favourably inclined to answer any questions about their chieftaincy and chiefdom. They were suspicious that if they answered you correctly, just in case there was a fault or doubt about the manner of their installation, the information could be passed on to the white colonial officers, who might even depose them and install another person which it rightly belonged to.

Some elderly people up to this day have the notion that the colonial white officers would soon leave, so why give them facts and figures about Tiv culture to take away, or even use these facts to cause obstacles to the aspirations of Tiv people? For other elderly people, once they answered your question and you scribbled some notes on paper they assumed you would present the information to *dogolamba* [tax collectors] to use as indices to increase tax rates on the Tiv people.

Any attempt by government officials to coerce natives to speak made them become withdrawn and secretive so that they gave false information. Even those who were willing to give honest answers to questions were discouraged by their kinsmen. They did this through body language by facial expressions; through the mouth and winking, clearly a message not to tell the truth. So, such seemingly honest people would also end up providing false information. The interviewer would then go away but with completely false information. It was better if the colonial administrator came himself, and either intimidated or forced the natives or carefully nailed them down with facts before they could open up and give him honest answers.

In the case of missionaries and their indigenous collaborators, the natives had little fear. They considered the missionaries to be harmless Whitemen, hence they said the missionaries don't adjudicate; nor do they collect taxes or inflict pain by lashing people. All the missionaries do, they thought, is to just preach. With this opinion about the missionaries, they would easily open up to them, entertaining no fear of victimization.

As for me, I am very well known among the Tiv people and they know about my good character. There is not a single chief in Tivland during this era that does not know me very well. By divine intervention, I am really favoured in my relation with them. They never hesitate to honestly answer questions that I put to them. I also try to be tactful in asking questions so that they will answer me as honestly as possible. But, surely, even so I cannot take credit for this wisdom.

When I had put the ideas of this history into a book, I never had the money to transfer the handwritten document into a typed one for publication. Right at the outset I had no money to get this typed or published. But the zeal in me propelled me forward on the project, being assured that the missionaries, at its completion, would finance its publication. As I was putting final touches to the work, the missionaries made me understand that the book would be a valuable document for them in their missionary work, as well as for tax collectors, Europeans in general and Tiv people in particular. But, regrettably, they later informed me that they never had the financial strength to pay for the publication of the

book, but said they would contact the officers of the colonial administration, who might come to my assistance.

Eventually, the missionaries contacted the officers of the colonial administration and they agreed to help. The missionaries, then, handed over the manuscript of the book to the officers who in turn, handed it over to Mr R.M. East, who was an educator turned linguist. He was an educational administrator in Tivland for at least five years. He is mentioned in this book as a supervisor of public schools. He was quite competent in written and spoken aspects of the Tiv language. He was also knowledgeable about Tiv culture.

When the officers handed over the manuscript to Mr East, they also applied to the missionaries to release me to work with Mr East on the book. Once the missionaries approved to have me released, Mr East visited me at Mkar, a town in the Ipav district of Tivland. He reviewed the entire manuscript, and then returned to Zaria where he resided. Thereafter, on his request, I joined him in Zaria with the manuscript. He and other Tiv people he invited, and my humble self, worked on the manuscript. He interviewed them on the issues I raised in the book, and made some adjustments in its organization and then proofread it. I worked with him in Zaria for a month and a half before I returned.

When he visited Tivland for the second time, I joined him in Gboko to review the manuscript again. He was making enquiries among other Tiv people about what I had researched. I also accompanied him as he toured Tivland in his quest to consult with the Tiv on what I had written in the book. Unfortunately, most of the elders I had contacted during my research had passed on. So, out of the elderly people we consulted this time, only a few were properly informed about Tiv culture and civilization. The majority were completely ignorant and empty. Upon further interview with Tiv elders, Mr East recorded everything he was told.

At this point Dr R.M. East (known as Masa Is by the Tiv),<sup>3</sup> had thoroughly reviewed the manuscript and was completely satisfied with the general body of ideas in the book. He had, at the same time, done two English translations of the manuscript. One of the two English translations also proffered explanatory notes for the benefit of Europeans who neither understand Tiv language nor have ever been to Tivland, but have the yearning to know about Tiv culture. Furthermore, because of his keen interest in the book, after working tirelessly on the manuscript he went further to raise funds for its typing and publication so that when it was done it would be accurate and well organized.

As for me, I am grateful to God for giving me the inspiration to commit pen to paper about this book, as well as guiding me to a successful completion of the

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<sup>3</sup>Names for various white men are spelled by Sai as the Tiv spoke them. Spellings vary in the Tiv text, and this is reflected in the translation. Identification of who these are can be problematic after fifty to sixty years. Many white men were given Tiv nicknames. Ortese Ofi was Rev. Orfer, known to one of the editors, Harold Bergsma. He was a missionary from D.R.C.M. and helped translate the Bible into Tiv. Ortese Agee (meaning forceful or authoritative) was the nickname for Rev. Brink. Ortese Bem (meaning peaceful) is another example. Tiv nick-names for the British colonial officers were often uncomplimentary. *Barkunu* is such a term, where the Tiv used a variation of a Hausa word, *barkono*, red pepper (implying that he was irascible) to describe one expatriate civil servant. Many of the names of British colonial officers interacting with the Tiv have been identified by Professor David Dorward and are listed in an appendix at the end of this text.



book. Left to me alone, with the mere knowledge that I have and incompetent as I am, how could I have been able to put up a book of this value?

This book accomplishes the vision of the Tiv forefathers who cared about Tiv history.

Therefore, you, my Tiv brothers of this new generation that can read, read this history and tell it to others who cannot; of the things of our ancestors; so that whether they are literate or not, at least they will be able to know something about our forbears who have gone on before us. Further, do you, however great your knowledge may be, remember you are a Tiv. Remain a Tiv! Know the things of Tiv, for therein lies your pride. Let us uplift ourselves. As the old mushroom rots, another springs up in its place, that is why the mushroom lives on.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>That is, when an old generation of a people wanes, another replaces it.

## Chapter One

# BACKGROUND HISTORY OF TIV

### TIV AND HIS CHILDREN

Tiv had two children, Ipusu and Ichôngo. Ipusu, the first child, was born while Tiv and his wife were on the farm. This was when Tiv was yet uncircumcised. An elephant hunter from the neighbouring ethnic group ran into the couple with the newborn baby. Seeing that Tiv was not circumcised, the hunter wondered and asked Tiv how it was possible for him to have a child with his wife in the uncircumcised state.

### THE GENESIS OF CIRCUMCISION AMONG THE TIV

In reply to the hunter's questions, Tiv simply said, 'I do not know what circumcision is.' He then asked the hunter to explain or display his circumcision. Tiv was impressed and asked if he could also be circumcised. The hunter agreed but explained to Tiv that circumcision, being a thing of paramount importance, could only be done at a cost. Tiv asked about the cost. The hunter told him it would cost two chickens, either a hen or a cock.

Tiv obliged the hunter and got himself circumcised. Tiv sought to learn how the circumcision surgery is done so that it could be done among his descendants forever. Again, the hunter demanded payment because without payment, circumcision would not go well. He demanded two chickens and *pue ikundu*, which was a cockerel's monetary value during that era. But the cockerel was actually a fee to pay to learn how to treat post-circumcision bleeding.

Tiv again obliged the hunter who, in turn, taught him how to perform the circumcision. It was with the hunter's type of razor that Tiv was circumcised. The hunter also gave Tiv that very type of razor blade and strictly warned him to use it for circumcision surgery only. This explains why at the beginning of circumcision among the sons of Tiv only the hunter's type of razor blade is used.

Actually circumcision was not originally part of Tiv culture; they had no tools for such an operation. So, the hunter from one of the neighbouring ethnic groups who introduced circumcision to Tiv also gave the razor for circumcision.

### THE BIRTH OF THE SECOND CHILD (ICHÔNGO)

After the wound of circumcision healed, Tiv had a second child with his wife, another son and named him Ichôngo to depict his circumcised state. He then named his first son Ipusu which depicted his uncircumcised state.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME 'TIV'

After the death of Tiv as an individual, the neighbouring peoples would generally refer to Tiv offspring as 'Tiv children' instead of calling them individually by name. Subsequently, these neighbouring groups dropped the word 'children' and employed the name 'Tiv' to refer to all the descendants of the deceased Tiv, the father. Today, Tiv has been accepted as the name of the ethnic group made up of the descendants of their ancestor Tiv.

## INTER-MARRIAGE WITH OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

The Tiv people multiplied in number while they lived side by side with other ethnic groups. Some young Tiv men took girls from neighbouring peoples as wives and had children with them. But when the men from the neighbouring group wanted to marry Tiv daughters, Tiv people never consented. This was a surprise to these ethnic groups; they realized that they only deluded themselves with the hope that the Tiv would reciprocate and be willing to give their daughters to young men of the neighbouring group. This created inter-ethnic unrest between the Tiv people and neighbouring peoples.

## TIV MIGRATION

Besieged with animosity from their neighbours, the Tiv pulled out from their midst and migrated north-east, if one uses a modern compass, until they met with another alien group called the Fulani and mingled with them. The Fulani never troubled them by interfering with their way of life. They formed close bonds with each other. In case of any attack by another group, the Fulani would easily repel such an attack. The Tiv marvelled at the dexterity with which the Fulani fought and defeated aggressor ethnic groups and nicknamed the Fulani *pul*, meaning 'conqueror' in the Tiv language.<sup>5</sup> The Fulani were well armed with staves, spears, and swords. But in spite of the cordial relationship between them, the Fulani never gave their implements to the Tiv people, nor revealed their way of life to them.

It should be explained that a wrong notion was held by other neighbouring groups, that is, that Tiv were slaves to the Fulani. What actually underlay the relation between the Tiv and Fulani was that the Fulani, who had no knowledge of soil cultivation, helped the Tiv against attackers so the Tiv people felt the need to help the Fulani by cultivating the soil for them, while they were out grazing their cattle.

In addition, the two races had different cultural habits. While the Fulani children looked tidy, the Tiv children were unkempt. For this reason, the Fulani children during disputes jeered at Tiv children, saying their parents were slaves working for the Fulani. This scoffing never disrupted cordial relationships between the two races, until they parted ways for other reasons.

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<sup>5</sup>*Pullo* is the singular for a Fulani in Fulfulde. The word may have been borrowed by the Tiv and adapted to give it a Tiv meaning.

## PARTING WITH THE FULANI

As the Tiv and Fulani became intimately related, the Tiv did not like the Fulani to marry their girls. But the Fulani were secretly marrying Tiv girls. This is one thing the Tiv had resisted before. They had resisted it with other ethnic groups so why should they tolerate it with the Fulani? So they opted to move peacefully away from the Fulani. The Tiv elders held a meeting with Fulani elders and explained to them their intention to move away. The Fulani elders never opposed their departure, but called for a covenant to institutionalize their amity for posterity. The Tiv did not see any need for a covenant; for them, the offspring of the marriages between the Fulani and Tiv girls and their sons and Fulani girls, who were of mixed blood, were ways to keep memories of their amity for posterity.

The Fulani insisted and proposed that a month should be set aside every year, during which the Tiv could get hold of them and ask for money from them, as well as any of their second-hand used clothes singed by fire. Tiv piously conceded to this Fulani arrangement, just to make the Fulani leave them alone. This is why to this day, the Tiv have not bothered to catch the Fulani and take their used clothes singed by fire.

So the Tiv parted ways with the Fulani. The Fulani moved toward the east while the Tiv passed on down south alone. Yet, evidence abounds to show that there was once courtship between the Tiv and the Fulani. This includes the resemblance in physical appearance and linguistic documentation. There are some Tiv words which have the same meaning, pronunciation, and spelling in the two languages. For example, a Fulani man would say '*shin ja*', meaning 'let us go' just like in the Tiv language. The Tiv call an axe an *ijembe* just like in the Fulani language.

So, is this evidence strong enough to convince us that there are some elements of truth in the Tiv links with the Fulani? There are many other common practices that can be identified among the Tiv and Fulani. Another thing of importance is the attestation by Europeans to the fact that the Fulani were actually a warrior people in the area known today as northern Nigeria who also established the Sokoto caliphate. By this evidence, are we not tempted to believe that the Tiv and Fulani had certainly been in contact? Of all the ethnic groups that existed during this time, why is it only the Fulani that are mentioned as the strongest?

#### THE ORIGIN OF BODILY MARKINGS AND TEETH TRIMMING AMONG TIV PEOPLE

During the Tiv-Fulani cohabitation, the Tiv people carried neither ethnic facial marks nor any other bodily cicatrices. It was after the separation with the Fulani, followed by incessant squabbles with other neighbours that the Tiv decided to adopt some bodily symbols that would be peculiar to the Tiv. So they started practising facial marks. (Where did they first see these facial markings? We do not know.) One thing is certain: the Tiv always wanted to stand apart from the peoples around them. As they passed through the other territories, they kept strictly to themselves. It was due to this tendency that they sought to differentiate themselves by putting marks on their faces. Even facial markings were not enough: later their men and women adopted additional body marks with different

names. Body marks became such a fashion among them that other neighbouring groups believed it had always been a way of life for the Tiv.

The Tiv had an established sequence of carrying out bodily marks. It started by making holes in the ears, chipping teeth, circumcision, cutting facial marks among men and women, and then followed by incising patterns on women's abdomens.

### PIERCING EARS

In the old days, once a Tiv boy was mature enough to move about with arrows, he would have his ears pierced. A child who wanted to have his ears pierced would have to obtain the consent of his parents or guardian. Sometimes their request to pierce their ears might be turned down. But naughty children, even if their request was not approved, still went ahead and pierced their own ears secretly.

As for the piercing procedures, the boy would meet the person to perform the piercing, who normally would ask the boy to bring two sharp wood splinters and also to massage and soften his ears and then come back. The boy would go, carry out the instructions, and return and have his ears pierced. The pick-like objects that were inserted like earrings into the holes in the boy's ears remained there for at least three days for the wounds to fester. The boy would again get a suitable person to help him nurse the wounds until they were healed. A burnt quill was pulled through the wounds repeatedly to clean them out.

Once the wounds were healed, the boy would assume a different status among his peers and would take to deriding his peers who were yet to have their ears pierced. Any time he saw one, he would scoff at him and say: 'there is your little mouse', and other boys who had had their ears pierced would also join in deriding such a one. One of them would start the 'Angyeto' scoffing ear song. The others would chorus: 'Your ears will quickly form lumps'. This derision would spur on others to make haste and have their own ears pierced so as not to have unpierced ears like a mouse.

### THE GAP-TOOTH

After piercing the ears, a boy would start thinking about chipping his upper incisors to have an artificial gap-tooth. Such a boy would approach a specialist of teeth chiselling. Normally, the trimmer would ask for a token or a fee. (Teeth trimming was not done for nothing, a token was to be given.) So the boy who wants his teeth trimmed will go and get the token (in the past, a measure of tobacco was the basic token because there were no arrows then, but in later years, with the presence of arrows, an arrow could also be given as the token). Once the token was provided, the trimmer would get to work. What were these tools used for teeth trimming? The tools for teeth trimming were a chisel and a round stone.

Here is an illustration of what would happen before teeth chipping could take place. Abo has come to Jape to solicit Jape to give him an artificial gap-tooth.

Abo would bring the token of tobacco and Jape would fetch his tools. The two of them would now get seated. Jape would take Abo's head on his lap. Abo would lie on his back, face up. Jape would keep Abo's mouth wide open and get a piece of corn stalk to place across it so that it would remain wide open for him to trim properly, and he would start chipping away.

By the time Jape was through, Abo would end up with a gap between his upper incisors. Then, people would say that Jape has opened a gap in Abo's incisors. Some people insisted on having the two upper incisors filed in addition so that the incisors assumed a sharp, pointed shape. This makes people say that one has a stylish gap-tooth called *kogh* or *iasse*. Some people would stop at only trimming the teeth and avoid filing because of pain.

The next thing was for Abo to go and do therapy after the trimming, which involved using boiled yams or warm water to facilitate killing the pain. Once one was through with the pain, it was time for him to go about bragging among his peers about his gap-tooth. Supposing that Abo met with Adi, one of his peer group, and smoking a pipe, the following dialogue would ensue between the two.

**Abo:** Give me the pipe to puff.

**Adi:** A minute please, I have just lit it. Let me take some puffs first.

**Abo:** What! By virtue of my gap-tooth, if you disobey me now, the day you have your teeth trimmed, they will surely develop gum irritation.

**Adi:** Take it then.

**Abo:** You, don't joke with me. You are still a kid, with all your teeth round like a monkey. Girls call me 'the fine boy with the well filed gap-tooth'.

**Adi:** Come on! I'm going straight to Jape to have my upper incisors chipped too.

So, Adi would go to Jape, have his teeth trimmed and would then go about with bravado.

## CIRCUMCISION

The next ambition for a boy, after piercing his ears and trimming his teeth, was to be circumcised. In the old days, Tiv people would not circumcise their boys at infancy. They would circumcise a boy at sixteen or eighteen years of age. The fear in those years was that if a boy was circumcised at a tender age, the circumcision might adversely affect his boyhood. Some parents dreaded that their enemies might use *mbatsav*<sup>6</sup> evil spirit influences and make the boy bleed to death during circumcision. For this reason, some parents would send their son to the son's maternal home where it is assumed he would be secure for circumcision. Only a brave man would circumcise his son among his paternal relatives.

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<sup>6</sup>*Tsav* is a Tiv conception of power that includes what would usually be translated as occult power, or witchcraft, but also extends to the abilities of successful people more generally. *Tsav* can be put to good or bad purposes, and the purposes are difficult to distinguish. Hence Tiv are ambivalent about *tsav*. The *mba-tsav* are the night society of those with this power who are believed to involve one another in debts that can be paid only in human flesh. For detailed explanation and discussion of *mbatsav* see chapters 4 and 5.

## THE CIRCUMCISION PROCEDURE

Before the appointed day for the circumcision, the father or any relation of the boy to be circumcised would take the boy to an elder who is a cult member of the *igbe* [loose stools], *megh* [poisons], or *ahumbe* [wind and famine] *akombo*<sup>7</sup> cults for the boy to be cleansed. The elder will thoroughly purify the boy of all ills or evils with a chicken.

The actual cleansing ritual was done with a chicken and sometimes with the shell of a chicken egg. During the cleansing process, the elder would swing the chicken around the boy's head while he chanted the following incantation:

In case you have peeked into an *ahumbe* bin,<sup>8</sup> or forbidden places and incurred evil spells, I cleanse you of that today. A woman is forbidden to peek at *ikôr* (hunting) witchcraft. Go away ill luck, come good luck! If you took a peek at an *igbe* fire or picked up something placed under the guard of magical powers, I cleanse you of the effect of the magical powers today.

The moon is a female child; the sun is a male child. Even if you unknowingly picked up something that is protected by *megh*, a magical poison that carries a death penalty, it can cause somebody to bleed to death. Today I cleanse you of all that. Away ill luck, come good luck! The moon is a female child, the sun a male child.

After that, the elder would smear mud on the big toe of the boy's right foot to put a seal on the cleansing ritual. Generally, this cleansing could be performed at home or by the stream. The elder who performs the ritual cleansing receives a measure of tobacco as a token and a chicken used in the cleansing ritual is set free to escape. The boy, who has been cleansed in preparation for circumcision, returns home in the evening, and waits to be circumcised the next day. In other cases, a boy to be circumcised would be cleansed and circumcised on the same day. But in another case, a boy could be cleansed in the evening and be circumcised the next morning.

Here is an illustration of a typical circumcision scenario. Let us say the name of the boy to be circumcised is Ker and Atso is the name of the father. The elderly man to do the circumcision is called Adagba. The circumcision takes place in the *ate* [gazebo or meeting place] of Agwabi, an elder versed in various witchcraft rites and assumed to be capable of protecting Ker against evil attacks. A big stone is brought. Ker sits on it, braced from behind by a young man called Adum, so that Ker does not have space to struggle and make the razor slip and cut him instead.

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<sup>7</sup>*Akombo* were cults that caused and cured a range of ailments and misfortunes. They were entered by initiation and dangerous to non-initiates. Under different names, such cults were features of a regional culture extending well beyond the Tiv. The rationale for Akiga to mention these *akombo* in relation to 'circumcision' is not given in his text, but the incantation that follows gives a clear rendering of the protection/cleansing process to ensure good luck against many things, including bleeding to death. These *akombo* are individually described in subsequent sections of the *History of the Tiv*: see especially chapter 3.

<sup>8</sup>Each *akombo* has an occult cult apparatus that must be stored out of sight of non-initiates. The single exception to this is the symbol displayed to demonstrate something is under the protective power of the cult.

**Adagba:** Adum, hold him tight. It shows in his eyes that he will struggle. You should blindfold him with your hands!

**Adum:** I have braced him firmly!

**Adagba:** You are in for it today. I will chop off this foreskin of yours.

Adagba then brings out a sharp blade and brandishes it in front of Ker. Ker trembles with fear. Adagba draws out the foreskin of Ker's penis and releases it. He then cuts a spear grass measuring it on his finger, rubs saliva on it, then sizes it up on the foreskin he intends to cut off. A hole is dug to bury the foreskin once it is cut by Atso or another assistant. Then Adagba takes the blade, and gallops back and forth in a frenzy, chanting 'I have done many deeds! I have taken both dark and fair complexioned women! I have cut off the tail of a leopard, and today, I shall finally cut a man!' He then returns and squats near Ker, gets hold of the foreskin on Ker's penis and slashes it once. Ker cries out.

**Atso:** Is this you Ker? You are not as brave as your father? Have I ever wept like this before? You are just like a feeble minded one, like a woman.

**Ker:** Ooh! I am really hurting! (Actually, the pain could make some boys defecate.<sup>9</sup>)

**Adagba:** Take heart Ker. And Adum! Why did you leave his eyes wide open? He is hurt because he watched the operation, don't you know? I am almost through but my hands have become too slippery because of bleeding.

**Ker:** Atso, my father! I am dead, I am dead.

**Atso:** Take heart and cry no more my son.

**Adagba:** Be a man, just the layer underneath is left now and I will be done with it. There. Even that; I have done it now. Give me water to pour on it. Adum, allow him to get up.

**Atso:** Adagba, here is the chicken for you.

**Adagba:** Thanks. I am going away right now. In case there is bleeding, send a boy to call me.

**Atso:** Where are you heading to?

**Adagba:** To Mbaadam's house.

**Atso:** Go well. (He turns to Agwabi.) I leave Ker under your custody. I am not into any secret deals with anybody. If any man comes with evil intentions against my son, confront such a person. Let him tell you if I am indebted to him. I am going.

**Agwabi:** Ker, get up and go into the reception hut. Someone should take in the chair for him. I am tying an *igbe* and *ambi-a-iwagh* [slag from the iron-working furnace] *akombo* to the chair. If anyone comes to stare at you with evil intentions, such a person will have his bowels gush out and die at once or a thunderbolt will strike him. Atso has hung death around my neck; I dare not take things for granted.

Just as Agwabi finished tying all the *akombo* and came back to sit and smoke his pipe, a boy came to tell him that Ker was bleeding seriously from the circumcision wound.

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<sup>9</sup>Akiga uses an idiomatic expression: 'the child could do what a hyena (*dwem*) does', which can be interpreted as defecating.



**Agwabi:** Aba, hurry and call Atso to come quick.

(Atso arrives in a hurry.)

**Atso:** Agwabi, what is the matter?

**Agwabi:** Ker is not looking so well, so I thought to let you know first to come and help look after him.

**Atso:** Aba, hurry to Mbaadam's house and get Adagba quickly.

(Adagba arrives in a hurry.)

**Adagba:** Atso, what is the matter?

**Atso:** The boy is bleeding very badly. Even his eyes are turned backwards into the skull.

**Adagba:** Is there any *alufu* growing around?

**Alu, wife of Ajaga:** There are some *alufu* at my backyard.

Adagba now goes to Alu's backyard, cuts the tips of the *alufu* plant and squeezes its astringent juice on the bleeding circumcision wound, saying that *alufu* is the best remedy for bleeding wounds: 'As I put it on this circumcision wound, the bleeding should stop at once, unless there is evil manipulation somewhere.'

(In most cases, once the *alufu* is applied, the bleeding of the wound stops at once. But in some cases, the bleeding would go on and the boy would die. It was then said that the son of so and so bled to death from circumcision.) Fortunately, in this particular case, once the *alufu* was applied, the bleeding stopped. People marvelled and dispersed and returned to their houses saying, 'Adagba has the best medicine to arrest bleeding.' Others said, 'He brought the correct medicine for it, didn't he?' Others assert, 'Adagba's medical powers are a supernatural gift. Another person could apply the same weed, but it would not work the way it does with Adagba.'

## DRESSING THE CIRCUMCISION WOUND

In previous years, when a boy was circumcised he would never eat tasty sauce, except that prepared with sorrel leaves. The sorrel sauce would be garnished on the millstone to be eaten with *ruam*. The reason was that eating any other sauce would make the circumcision wound fester. Generally, cleaning and dressing the wound would take place five days after the circumcision was done. In fact, the dressing of the wound could cause more pain than the actual circumcision. When the time came, a person who has 'good blood' would be sought to assist. The belief about someone of good blood basically is someone with good immune system. Whenever they become ill, be it skin sores or tear, it would heal quickly. This person dressing the wound would use water to moisten the wound before the dressing would start. He would then remove the previously congealed blood that had adhered to the wound. This could cause much pain and the boy would groan a lot. He would surely beat his hands on the hips in pain. After that, the wound would be covered with leaves of the *meni*-oil tree.<sup>10</sup> The dressing

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<sup>10</sup>Latin name: *Lophira alata*. This is a tall tree which makes it a target for lightning strikes. Leaves of this tree are used in many rituals.

would continue until the wound healed. The boy would use charcoal powder to darken up the red scar on the penis. The boy's father would then hang strands of beads on the boy's penis as a sign of congratulation to the boy for withstanding the pain of circumcision.

The boy now goes about his normal life. Any time he is in the midst of his peers who are not yet circumcised, he will brag about his circumcision status and scoff at those who are still uncircumcised saying 'I do smell a he-goat about!' He then shows off his circumcision and then stops. The onlookers laugh at the uncircumcised one. Because of such teasing, a boy who is not circumcised would go and pester his father to let him become circumcised.

### RELATING WITH MATERNAL RELATIVES

A few days later, a circumcised boy would visit his maternal home, where by tradition, he has the right to catch, kill and eat any chicken he wants from among those belonging to his maternal uncles without it being taken away. If however he killed such a chicken to eat and it was taken away by the uncle, he would quietly return and report the matter to the mother. An example: Ker, having recovered from travails of circumcision, has gone to his mother's home and slain a chicken belonging to Afo, who is his maternal uncle. Afo and Iju share the same mother with Adei — Ker's mother. When Ker killed the chicken, Afo defied the tradition and took the chicken away from Ker. On hearing this, Ker's mother became furious and reported the matter to Iju. Iju on hearing this snapped his fingers in anger, but consoled and reassured Ker's mother, saying, 'Don't worry Adei, you just go back home and be at ease. In future I will retaliate [by preventing Afo's daughters' sons from taking a chicken from their mothers' brother]. I shall never let this matter go to rest, I am made absolutely livid by this behaviour and I make bold to say that Ker is not an ordinary child that someone would treat him badly here at Mbaigu my kindred's place and get away with it. I will indeed retaliate this act in equal measure. Enough said.'

In any case, the next thing that preoccupies Ker's mind would be the desire to seriously start courting.

### FACIAL MARKS

As soon as a boy gets circumcised and starts getting attracted to the opposite sex, facial marks become the next prerequisite. They would want to have a particular facial mark called *abaji*.<sup>11</sup> So they would go in search of the person that knows how to cicatrize the *abaji* facial marks. For example, Asom, who would like to have the *aba* marks, as they are popularly called among the youth, will go and meet Apav, who is a specialist in drawing the marks. (Teenagers call *abaji* 'aba'.) The following dialogue will ensue between him and Apav:

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<sup>11</sup>These are raised cicatrices, through keloid scarring, made next to the eyes above the cheekbones.

- Asom:** I would want you to trace *aba* on my face.  
**Apav:** Then, have a seat.  
**Asom:** I am seated!  
**Apav:** Wanakeri [daughter of Akeri], bring water for me.

Apav would go and grind charcoal into a powder and add water to it to form a paste. He would use the charcoal paste and a stalk of grass to map out where to insert the *aba* on Asom's face. After that, he would use a hook to raise Asom's facial skin and make incisions with a razor blade. Our forefathers adopted a five incision pattern, but some people did only three. Some would even add a mosquito tattoo on their forehead.

As blood flows from the incisions, the juice of the *alufu* weed would be used to stop the bleeding. The juice can sting a lot, but one has to bear it. Next, Apav would rub the charcoal paste into the incisions. The charcoal paste goes into incision wounds to cause them to swell up and form conspicuous, keloid scars on Asom's face once the wounds are healed.

### DRESSING FACIAL MARKS AND SORES

When the time is ripe for dressing the incision wounds, Asom would look for the most suitable person to do the dressing. Here Ayo is assumed to be the most suitable person. The two meet to say:

- Asom:** Ayo, kindly dress the *aba* wounds for me.  
**Ayo:** Is palm oil readily available?

Asom would provide the palm oil. Ayo will clean the wounds, using a feather to smear the oil on the wounds. This will be done every day until the wounds are completely healed. In case the scars itch, Asom would rub camwood powder on it. If the marks are not conspicuous enough, Asom would rub cooked juice from the shoots of the indigo plant on it. This will make the scars swell up and develop to keloid scars, which is what is regarded as the *abaji* facial marks. At this point on, young girls would hail Asom as *abakuma* [the boy with fitting facial marks]. Asom then goes about taunting his peers with his facial marks. Any time Asom visits Ugor, his peer, and he sees his 'plain face' he puts him off saying, 'Out of my way, you with an empty face like the men of foreign ethnic group.' Ugor hangs his head down in shame, humiliated by this, and makes haste to also get facial marks.

Facial marks and tooth filing are some of the attractive tools in marrying women as well; and it is not only for men. In the old days, young ladies too, when they had raised scars and it looked attractive, the young men would refer to her as *abakuma wan via*, 'the daughter of so and so with fitting facial marks'.

### TUMMY SCARIFICATION FOR WOMEN

Some women had scars on their abdomens, traced around their navels. The man to trace these marks would carefully examine a woman's tummy, grind up charcoal

which he would use to sketch outlines around a young woman's navel in a design which he would use for the incisions.

For example: Agabi is a designer of tummy marks, Ahobee is a young girl going to have marks on her tummy, while Ayawer is her mother. They now say:

**Ayawer:** Agabi, tomorrow I will bring my daughter so that you give her tummy marks. She has already reached puberty but her tummy is yet to be marked.

**Agabi:** Just bring her tomorrow, and we will have it done for her.

(The next day, Ayawer arrives with the daughter.)

**Ayawer:** Agabi, come outside. I have brought my daughter as we discussed yesterday.

**Agabi:** Come, Ayawer, won't you sit down and smoke a little before we get down to the marking?

**Ayawer:** No, no. Is it not better to do it now in the early hours before her circulation increases?

**Agabi:** Very well. Ahobee, go and stretch yourself out on the chair and loosen your blouse.

(Agabi sits down beside her, takes a razor blade to make the incisions for the marks. He cuts three circles round the girl's navel, and a vertical line across the girl's chest, right up to her neck.)

Traditionally, these were the only marks given on women's abdomens. But with time, with the introduction of new fashions, additional lines were drawn left and right on a girl's body which added up to three circles round the navel. People would even go further and add more decoration marks.

After making the incisions, Agabi washes away the blood. He uses ground charcoal to rub into the incisions and allows it to remain on it for two days so that the wounds would fester. Once the sores festered, Ayawer would get a suitable man to dress the infected wounds. The person would clean the sores and cover them with palm oil. The dressing of the wounds would continue until they were completely healed. During subsequent dressings, Ahobee would rub in camwood powder to enhance the formation of keloid scars. Then, the young man courting her would kill a chicken for her to celebrate her new status. In this new status, Ahobee goes about with bravado, as well as making mocking remarks to young girls whose bellies are not yet marked.

The Tiv assumed that the belly marks help to tighten a girl's tummy so that it does not get flabby, after childbirth, like the abdomens of women of the neighbouring ethnic groups, thereby making them look ugly.

But nowadays, the Tiv do not consider the abdomen marks as necessary. Many of their women do not have belly cicatrices done at all. In the Kunav clan, the majority of women are unmarked. On the other hand, in other Tiv clans, such as Nõngov clan, stomach scarring is on the increase, with various forms and designs added. Other women's bodily marks were done around their waists. These were called waist marks. Additionally, there were other marks done on the backs of their legs.

### THE *KUSA* FACIAL MARKS

The *kusa* facial cicatrices, cut with a nail, have been recently introduced into Tiv society by young Tiv men who borrowed the practice from the neighbouring

Jukun ethnic group. These young men had mingled with the Jukun, who practised this facial scarification. They copied it and introduced this into some parts of Tiv society as a sort of fad. Subsequently, this facial design spread all over Tivland and became vogue among men and women.

This facial mark is referred to as *kusa gberen* which means 'to scratch with a nail', because a nail is used. The Tiv boy who introduced it among the Tiv people had been a porter travelling with Whitemen in the midst of neighbouring ethnic groups. He saw how the people of these groups scarified their faces. On his return to Tivland, with no means to earn a living, he became idle. But one day he picked up a nail, sharpened it properly and cut a line on another boy's cheek, very close to the eye. In a few days, the wound healed and the keloid scar formed a beautiful design on the boy's face.

Seeing this, some boys and girls rushed to the lad and asked him to give them the same facial design using a nail. The lad charged them a fee, they paid, and he gave them that very design with his nail. The facial scar marks designed with a nail became a craze done with numerous decorations. In this way, all the facial scarifications done with a nail were referred to as *kusa gberen*. Young girls would admire the boys with these marks and referred to them as *wanye kusa*, meaning the boy with beautiful nail-designed facial scars.

Young men who had reached adolescence before the advent of nail-designed facial marks were given the *abaji* facial marks as well. But the adolescents in the later years did not go for the traditional *abaji* any more. They all went for the nail-designed facial marks.

Moreover, women even despised men with the *abaji* facial marks because this facial mark became outdated and obsolete. For this reason, young men would not only design their faces with the *kusa* marks, but also put the *kusa* marks on their neck, on their forearms, and even on their stomachs. During that era, young Tiv men would usually have the *kusa* marks on their faces.

At one point, the *kusa* facial mark fashion created a stir in Tivland, because women shunned men who had the obsolete *abaji* marks. This came during the time the colonial government had abolished marriage by compulsion and marriage by exchange, and introduced the requirement that women would express their consent to a marriage for a bride price; the odds turned against men with the *abaji* marks. A woman could seek to divorce her husband just for the simple reason that the husband had a lumpy scarred face as a result of the *abaji* marks.

Thus, men with *abaji* facial marks found themselves in a desperate quandary. Some of them even imprinted the *kusa* marks on the already lumpy *abaji* marks, just to catch the admiration of women. Yet this did not help matters. So there was a widespread regret among the men with the lumpy *abaji* facial marks. As a result, a fierce generational rivalry ensued between the men of the *abaji* generation and those of the *kusa* generation. The men of the *abaji* marks had the backing of the older folk, because they belonged to the same generation. But the young men with the *kusa* marks enjoyed the support of women and were getting the best of it, since in Tivland women had a strong influence on their men. In Tivland one could even go wrong but once the action was approved by women, then it was not evil. On the other hand, even if a man has done what is correct, he would have to wait for women's approval before he was contented and convinced.

### THE *UKARI* FACIAL MARKS

Much later the young men with the *kusa* facial marks introduced another type of facial mark called *ukari* marks. The word *ukari* is the Tiv pronunciation of Wukari, a town. The reason for naming this facial mark *ukari* is that it originated from the young men of Wukari, a Jukun town.

This mark is also traced on the face, beside the eyes, just before the cheek, where tears normally flow. It is made by cutting a deep incision, and after it heals, there is a big scar, about an inch long. This facial mark is a sure woman-killer; women would usually talk of boys looking wonderfully handsome with *ukari* marks juxtaposed with the *kusa* marks on their faces. On hearing this lumpy-faced *abaji* men would become jealous.

### RIVALRY BETWEEN MEN WITH *ABAJI* AND *KUSA* FACIAL SCARIFICATION

The women's craze for men with *kusa* facial marks was one of the reasons why elderly men of Tiv persistently called for the reintroduction of marriage by exchange. They believed that with the practice of marriage by exchange, women would not be at liberty again to despise men with the lumpy *abaji* facial marks. So if it was like that, life would be more interesting, hence a brother of a woman could easily exchange her into marriage with a man with lumpy *abaji* marks, whether she is ready for the marriage or not.

However, the old men did not have the courage to state their case in its true light. Instead, they kept sentimentalizing the old tradition of marriage by bride exchange. In any case, whatever they said about marriage tradition was true but the craze of women over young men with *kusa* marks was the main thing at stake. Nevertheless, no one could say it frankly, since the old men with lumpy *abaji* marks feared they might be derided publicly by the young men with *kusa* marks.

So, being wiler than the young men with *kusa* marks, old men with the lumpy *abaji* marks mounted an eloquent campaign for marriage by exchange to convince the young men to support it. They would enumerate various advantages of the tradition of marriage by exchange, which even the young men could attest to. But, in spite of all this, no change occurred in society to allow the reintroduction of marriage by exchange. The young men with the cherished *kusa* facial marks continued to trounce the lumpy-faced old men before women in Tivland.

Suffice it to add, that with time, Tiv boys became less enthusiastic about the practice of ear piercing. They maintained that ear piercing was done to insert an *inga* ornament (a hartebeest horn which was thought to be attractive and captivated women. But even without this women still fell in love with them). Again, even the fashion of teeth chipping, which used to be a mania, was no longer held in high esteem among Tiv youth. Nowadays women don't shun people over such things.

In effect, young men who had had their upper incisors chipped now regretted ever trimming them. Some even broke off their trimmed incisors so as to have their teeth like men of the other ethnic groups and thus be able to speak Hausa and English very well, for they believed that trimmed upper incisors could interfere with one's ability to speak these languages. To sum up, Tiv women can be

blamed for most of the social ripples that were experienced in Tivland during that era.

In addition, the Tiv wouldn't hold circumcision in high esteem as much as they used to. In the course of time, parents circumcised their boys at the age of ten years, and the boys would start courting girls early. In fact, the only reason a father would delay circumcising his son was on account of taxation. This is because colonial administration had decreed that any boy who was circumcised was old enough to pay tax. For this reason, parents would delay a bit before circumcising their boys.

Girls too had abandoned the age-old practice of waiting to attain puberty before tracing tummy marks. Nowadays, a girl at just eight years of age could trace the *kusa* facial marks, instead of the tummy marks of yesteryear. Even if a girl was compelled by her parents to have the tummy marks, she would surely go for the *kusa* marks afterwards. And after that, she would take to singing songs to extol young men with *kusa* facial marks. Moreover, if not because colonial administration had also prohibited marriage of minors, a girl would marry a young man with *kusa* facial marks when she would still be underage. For this reason, Tiv people said that young people during the era of *kusa* facial marks corrupted the Tiv nation. This is the paradox of bodily marks.

#### SUBSEQUENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

All the bodily markings came into existence after the Tiv had parted ways with the Fulani. The Tiv came and settled at Yavwua Hill in the midst of other ethnic groups. These groups were the Undir, Ukwese, Ugbe, Iyônov and the Utange.

#### THE MUANAWUHA SETTLEMENT

The Tiv left Yavwua Hill and came to settle in a valley of a certain river called Muanawuha, a river with very strong current. Even today, cattle of the Uke herdsmen from Chepe drown in this river. This river is located about thirteen miles northeast of Kashimbila [Gashimbira]. I was there in the company of Pastor Uhe and Pastor Ofi on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 1934.

The Tiv never sojourned there for long. Their nearest neighbours were the Ugbe and Iyônov ethnic groups. When these ethnic groups started to trouble the Tiv over the question of marriage with Tiv girls, the Tiv moved away and headed downward to Muan.

#### THE MUAN SETTLEMENT

The Tiv came and settled at Muan, which is not far from the Muanawuha River. The distance between them is about nine miles. If you proceed straight northeast from Kashimbila, Muan is located about four miles away. It was here that the Tiv first came into contact with the Ugenyi ethnic group. The Ugenyi maintain that they were there before the Tiv arrived. The Tiv lived in peace with the Ugenyi.

But the sojourn of the Tiv was cut short, as they never wanted to live there permanently. So, the Tiv moved away from there. This time, they did not move straight. They changed direction and headed towards the south passing through the ethnic groups I have already mentioned — that is the Undir, Ukwese, Ugbe and Iyônov — until they came and settled at Mkomon.

### THE MKOMON SETTLEMENT

By the time the Tiv got to Mkomon, they started getting used to living side by side with other ethnic groups and also understood their ways of life. They watched what other ethnic groups did and tried to learn some things from them. At one point, they viewed other neighbouring ethnic groups as their brothers and inter-married with them; hence they were no longer apprehensive about them. This marked the turning point in Tiv history, where they could live closely with other ethnic groups. They took to cutting vertical facial marks between the two eyes just like the other ethnic groups. People of the other ethnic groups also copied some aspects of Tiv customs. In fact, the Tiv almost settled permanently among these ethnic groups, for they were comfortable living with them. They travelled back and forth between the Ugbe and Iyônov ethnic groups.

### THE IBENDA SETTLEMENT

After the Tiv left Mkomon, they never settled in the plains again, but moved up to Ibenda Hill and settled there. Ibenda Hill is located in the present Turan clan. If you are in Jato Aka village, you can see it to the northeast. At Ibenda Hill, they settled according to their kindred. The descendants of Ipusu settled at the major part of the hill called Ibenda Shitire, while the descendants of Ichôngo settled in the part called Ibenda Iharev.

### DESCENDANTS OF IPUSU

Ipusu had three children: two sons named Shitire and Kpar, as well as a daughter named Kum. The full name of the daughter was Ikumura. The reason for naming her thus was that she was disabled, unable to walk but able only to shuffle her bottom on the ground, and she had a problem moving about in the rain. For this reason, Ipusu named her Ikumura to depict the fact that she was constantly caught during rainfall and beaten by it. Ipusu said: ‘behold my torrential rain’. Kum was much closer in relationship to Shitire, the elder brother, and socially was distant from Kpar because he was hostile toward her.

### DESCENDANTS OF ICHÔNGO

Ichôngo had more children than Ipusu. He had six sons and a daughter. The sons were Ihar, Gondo, Nongô, Ikura, Ikôrakpe, and Mase, while the daughter was



named Tongo. Most people believe that she is not a legitimate daughter, for her mother was a slave wife captured in the wilderness by Ichôngo. There is yet another thing to prove the validity of this notion. Although the descendants of Tongo are adjacent to the Ukum of the Shitire, they behead one another. In such a circumstance, how can one, then, believe that they are same family?

## Chapter Two

# CUSTOMARY PRACTICES

## HABITATIONS

Mount Ibenda can be regarded as the gateway into Tivland. As the Tiv settled on Ibenda, they looked around and saw no ethnic groups near enough to pose a threat to them. The only ethnic groups in their neighbourhood were the Udam and Uke who were no threat to them. Thus, the Tiv felt very much at ease. They began to build their homes and life became quite pleasant for them. At first they built temporary structures. They made large huts of medium height and named them *abughurtimbe*, meaning ‘spacious tents’. Some among them called the huts *akwagi*. Actually, Akwagi was the name of one of Ipusu’s descendants who was the best at the construction of these dwellings. So *akwagi* can be taken as another name for *abughurtimbe*.

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF AKWAGI TENTS/HUTS

In the old days, if a man wanted to make an *akwagi* dwelling, he would first select a site and prepare it. Then, he would go into the bush and get some slender and supple sticks and assemble them at the already prepared site. Next, he would draw a circle on the ground, proportional in size to the *akwagi* dwelling he wanted to construct. Then, he made a peg with which he dug holes around the circle, leaving a space where the door would be fixed. He fixed the sticks in the holes and chocked them up with sand. Again, he went into the forest and got vines. Having brought the vines, he would get into the centre of the circle, get hold of the sticks, bend them over together and tie them up with the vines to form the framework, and then would thatch it up with grass.

As time went on, they learned how to construct dwellings of various shapes and sizes, but with the same concept and gave them various names. They made one in a large rectangular shape and named it *nortimbe*. Subsequently, they began to build huts to sleep in and ‘gazebo’s for relaxation.

### THE HUT FOR SLEEPING

A man who wanted to build a hut for sleeping would first choose a site and prepare it, then make a heap of sand and trace a circle proportional to the size of the hut he would like to build, around the heap of sand. He would dig a trench of about a finger’s length — one inch deep — along the circle he traced. His wife would get him water which he would mix with soil to form mud which he would use to build the hut. Once the mud settled, the building would start.

## THE CONSTRUCTION WORK

The man would get two boys: one would mould bricks to be sun-dried and the other would convey them to him at the building site. He would lay them in the trench up to a certain level to form the foundation. He would plaster the foundation with mud and smooth it over. Other people would trace fingerprints over it and make patterns, but this would make their work look rough. After building two layers of bricks above the foundation, he would leave an opening for the entrance. When he built up the wall to door height, he would put a lintel over the entrance, add some more layers of bricks to bring the building to the required height and stop. The building would then wait for roofing.

Our forefathers never built houses as high as we build nowadays. Sometimes, some people would gather stones, arrange them to lay the foundation of the hut, and plaster the stone foundation before building the hut on it. Huts built completely with mud were more appreciated. But, in terms of solidity, the ones built on stone foundations were better. A hut built on a stone foundation, even when rain washed away the mud plaster of the foundation, would not collapse. (I climbed the Ibenda of the Iharev hill with Ortese Buta in September 1916 and we saw some of the architectural structures of those years.)

## THE ROOFING

After building the walls of the hut, the next thing was for the owner to set out to put a roof on the hut. First, he would get long straight poles for the rafters and cut *ichen* grass for thatching. He would store both of them to dry before using them. He carefully twisted and plaited the *ichen* grass into a rope. Having done this, he would collect other roofing materials like *agegha* canes, climbers or vines and creepers and store them. Then he would start the framework of the roof. At this level, one cannot afford to work alone. The man would invite his relations or friends to help him.

First, they would form a ring with the vines, wide enough for three of the rafter-poles to pass through. Next, they would dig a hole in which they positioned the rafter-poles. They held up the poles and separated them. They would then lay bunches of the canes around the poles and bind them up with the rope. Naturally, three people are required to do the job conveniently. The first man would be laying the canes in bunches round the rafter-poles inside the ring; the second man would be binding them up; while the third man would be in charge of supplying the canes and the rope, a little at a time to the second man. As they progressed, more poles would be added continuously to the initial three pole-rafters to form a strong framework.

Once the framework was completed, it would be time to mount it on the building. A roof framework can be quite heavy, so several people would be invited to lend a helping hand to mount the framework onto the building. In the process, one man would hold a pole with which he would lever up the base of the framework. Another man would tie a rope inside on top of the framework and pull so that it would not fall back. Other people would hold around it to lift the framework onto the building. This would provide a moment of ecstasy as there is general hubbub and all sorts of yelling occur. Some people would say, 'Push it forward!' Some would yell, 'No, pull it back!' Others would yell, 'It's all right

as it is!’ Still others would shout, ‘Tilt it a little to the direction of stream... there! That’s fine! All right! All right!’ When the roof is finally fitted on the wall, the people would congratulate the owner of the hut for a job well done.

### THATCHING THE ROOF

In the old days, people never used *ihira*, sword-grass, for thatching their houses. Any person who wanted to thatch his house would get bundles of straw, plait some into a mat shape, and leave some unwoven. He would first tie a bundle of the woven part to the eaves of the roof, with the lower ends of the straw pointing downwards. He would lay the second bundle, this time with the tips of the straw pointing downwards. He would bring in the unwoven straw and do the thatching to the end. In cases where the owner of the hut did not know how to thatch a roof, he would engage someone who had the skills to help him out.

### MAKING THE FLOOR

After thatching the roof, the wife for whom the husband built the house would do the flooring of the house. First, she levelled the heap of dirt the husband had piled in the house at the foundation point. Then, she brought in laterite clay, spread it inside, sprinkled water on the laterite, and rammmed and pounded it with a ramming stone.

The first round of ramming would usually look rough, and people would say the woman has done the first stage of flooring. Then she demolished a termite-hill,<sup>12</sup> broke up the soil and spread it on the laterite, sprinkled water on it and allowed it to dissolve. She rammmed it over and over until the floor became smooth and nice. The soil from the termite-hill acted as a hardener to prevent cracks on the floor. People would, thus, express their admiration, saying the wife was good at flooring.

### HOUSEHOLD ITEMS: THE HEARTH STONE

Once a house was built and the flooring was also completed, the woman would set up the *atse* fireplace for cooking meals. She would get three stones which would be as big as a human head, and scrape out three holes in a triangular shape in the centre of the hut, where the stones would be positioned and supported with sand. Sometimes, she would add a fourth stone beside the triangular ones to form another hearth for cooking soup, while the three large ones would be for cooking food. A skilful woman could make a very fine looking stone hearth. Sometimes, she would coat the outer sides of the stones with mud to make it look better.

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<sup>12</sup>Termites build large termite-hills with mud, moistened with their ‘saliva’, which cements the particles of dirt together to form, when dry, a very hard and water resistant cement-like surface.

### THE WATER-POT STAND

When a woman was done with the fireplace stones, the next thing was for her to raise a stand for the water-pot, *ima*. In the old days, a lazy woman would not have the patience to make the stand with finesse. She would just put three stones on the ground in a triangular shape, much like the stone-burner, and place her water-pot on the stones. But a woman of high social status would get the stand properly done. She could do it herself or get a man to do it for her. The stand would be a bit high, oblong in shape and scooped out with hollows to hold the water-pots. She would also construct a stake by the side of the stand and hang the dipper there.

### THE UTENSIL RACK

When all other things were put in place, the next thing was for the wife to set up a rack called the *alaga*, for keeping her utensils. Early on, people did not know the use of raffia for making rope. So they used *ichen* grass and made rope with it. If she were enterprising, she would weave a flat-sided rope herself. But other women would get a man to do this for them.

Formerly, women did not care about doing the hanging rack aesthetically. Once a woman got the rope, she would cut it into four equal lengths. She would use one bit to make a loop, tied the remaining three bits at different points around the loop, then she would bind the three ends of the rope together and hang it from the rafters on the right-hand side as you enter the house, since that was the side where water was usually kept.

### THE PLATFORM

After a wife had provided the household items required of a wife in the house, it was the man's turn to provide other household requirements. First, he had to provide a *dzaam* wooden platform. To make this, he would cut four forked posts and peel off the bark, then add two more straight poles which he would use as beams for the platform, while the forked poles would be used as pillars. In addition, he would get twenty slender rods which would be used for the flooring of the platform. He would then dig four holes in the centre of the house and set the pillars upright and pack them around with sand. Next, he would lay the beams, one across two pillars, and the same with the second set of pillars. Finally, he would lay the slender rods to form the platform. This finished the wooden-platform.

### THE DRYING RACK

The next thing to be done in a house was the wooden drying rack, called an *isha-segh*, which was usually hung under the platform. In the old days, because our forefathers had not discovered how to work with raffia, they used other materials instead. For the fabrication of a drying rack, they would cut some thin rods about two feet long and use a rope to plait in between the rods. They would do three rows

of the plaiting, and then tied it underneath the wooden platform for drying things indoors.

### THE DOOR SHUTTER

Although a man would have fitted a house with most of the necessary items, he would also have to make a door shutter, called a *katsor*, for the house. Originally, the Tiv had the *katsor* made with slender sticks and called it *chivir hunda*, meaning a 'dignified door', because it added dignity to the look of a house when hung at its entrance. This name is still used among the Tiv of the Kparev clan.

To make the shutter, a man would first go into a forest and get thin sticks. He brought them home and allowed them to dry. Then he would make a rope of grass with which he would plait the sticks together. He measured the height and width of the door, and trimmed the sticks to this measurement. Again, he would get a rod the same length as the width of the door, place it across the sticks as they were spread on the ground and bind the sticks to the rod with the rope by plaiting in between the sticks and the rod. He would do the binding from one end of the rod to another, just as was done with the drying rack. Finally, he would measure the height of the doorway and trim the shutter accordingly to fit in the doorway.

Right from the days of the Ibenda settlement, the Tiv always fixed a door-shutter on the left-hand side of a rectangular house.

The water-pot stand and the utensil rack were usually installed at the right-hand side of a house, as one enters through the door. To fix the door-shutter, a straight pole of dry wood would be set up on the left-hand side beside the doorway, close to the wall. The shutter would be tied to it at the top and at the bottom. To lock the shutter, another pole would be set by the right-hand side of the doorway. The shutter would be pushed across the doorway to close the entrance, then a locking stick with a forked top would be wedged from inside against the shutter so that the shutter could not be pushed open from outside.

### THE BED

Before the Tiv people learned how to make real beds, they slept on oblong mud platforms just like the water-pot stand women now build in their kitchens. They built the mud platforms in their houses and slept on them. As time went on, they changed from sleeping on the oblong platform to logs of wood. They would cut logs of wood, trim them to size, cluster them together and sleep on them. Eventually, they graduated from the logs of wood to another type of bed. They cut four forked sticks about two feet high and fixed them to the ground in a rectangular shape. This was fixed behind the door-shutter, broad enough to contain two people, as long as they were the height of a normal person.

After the stakes had been fixed in their position, some poles about the size of a man's forearm were also cut and stripped clean of bark. Two other short sticks, equal to the width of the bed, were placed across forked sticks already set on the ground. One crossed the forked sticks at the feet. Then, the rods about the

size of a man's forearm were laid on and bound to other sticks and roped to form the floor. This was the type of bed people used. The head would usually be towards the door shutter.

### SLEEPING POSITIONS

The Tiv people never slept any way they liked on the bed. For couples, the wife would crawl over first near the wall of the house, while man slept next to her, shielding the wife. If they had a baby that was still nursing, the baby would be laid sandwiched between the man and his wife. If the baby was no longer nursing, the baby would be laid next to the wall, beside the mother. If they had visitors, the visitors would sleep on the side of the water-pot stand in the same house. Even the mother-in-law, if she visited, would sleep in the house with the couple. If she was forced to find accommodation in another house, the mother-in-law would be highly displeased. So, this was the practice in those days. A man, his wife, his children, and his relations who were visiting would all sleep in the same house.

### MEETING HOUSES AND FOOD STORAGE FACILITIES

#### *The ate*

Back when Tiv family sizes were small, a meeting house called an *ate* was the common space for family relaxation. Once a man had finally settled in a place with his family, he would build a meeting house in the middle of his compound. It was here that all the family members would convene for relaxation. In those years, *ate* were much smaller in size than we see nowadays. A man would cut forked wooden pillars and set them up in the ground, according to the size of the building he wanted to construct. Then, he would get curved rods and place them in circular shape on top of the pillars. After that, he would make its roof and thatch it. The women in his family would then make the floor. Generally, people never slept in the *ate* at night, for fear of beasts. This is because, in those days, Tivland was full of wild creatures and anybody who slept in the meeting house could easily fall prey to beasts, since the open-sided meeting house was not a well-secured structure.

But as the Tiv population increased and they started living in large villages, the quality of life improved generally and the wild beasts were also reduced in number. Additionally, there was an improvement in the quality of *ate* construction.

Nowadays, in a big village, a household head could build a *tsum*, which is a style of mini-*ate*, for the relaxation of each of his wives, as well as a storage place for food stuffs. After that, he would build one for himself, in front of the house of his most beloved wife. Again, at the present time, these structures are no longer small in shape or size, and are carefully crafted. The pillars are beautifully fashioned before raising the structure. It is also spaciouly made. A few of the meeting places are even larger than sleeping houses, and they come in various shapes and sizes. The framework for the roof is attractively done, better than other houses. The earth floor is well rammed by the women and a wall is built around it, beneath the eaves, but not so high as to prevent or obstruct ventilation.

It is in this place that the head of the family relaxes with his most beloved wife and his guests. When beer is brewed, it is here that people convene to drink the beer. Even dances are held here. The musical instruments are also kept here. In addition, a storage platform can be built in it and filled with millet. As a result, the fame of such a person gets around, for setting up a great *ate*, filled up to the roof with millet. Such is the modern *ate*. It has become a thing for respected older and successful men and young men of substance.

### *The smithy*

The smithy is called *ate-iwa*. It is a kind of shelter used specifically by the blacksmith. It dates back to the time when the Tiv started getting into iron work. Incidentally, right from the earliest times down to the present, the concept of the smithy has not altered even the smallest bit. Little care is taken about its construction. Once you see a smithy today you can imagine the smithy of the old days: small in size and unattractive. It is usually situated in the backyard, because the fire of the blacksmith can easily turn a whole compound into a raging inferno.

It was normal for the blacksmith to keep his tools in the smithy. These tools include: bellows, tongs, sledge hammers and small hammers, rakes, anvils, clay furnace nozzles, water-troughs and smith pots. Besides these, he could also keep all the items brought for mending in the smithy. These could include hoes and axes. Even though the smithy could not be secured, no one would dare steal from it by night for fear that a thunderbolt would strike such a thief dead.

But nowadays, if a blacksmith is entrusted with some implements for mending and he leaves them unsecured in the smithy, they may be stolen at night and nothing will happen to the thief. The blacksmith will cry in vain and, in the end, pay for the items lost in his smithy. This being so, blacksmiths don't keep things in the smithy anymore. They keep their things in their homes, which are well-secured.

Furthermore, in the old days, children were made to swear an *iwa* [forge] oath to prove their innocence in any accusation. If a child was suspected of having stolen something, his innocence or culpability could only be determined by having him swear on the smithy emblem. If he was innocent, he would swear by saying, 'That person's forge is evil.' But if he were guilty, he would be afraid to swear. He would remain silent and it would be inferred that such a child was guilty of the accusation. Nevertheless, with the passage of time, the act of swearing by the smithy came to mean little to them. Children nowadays, even when they are guilty of an accusation, are not afraid to swear by the powers of the smithy.

### *The tsum*

A *tsum* is another outdoor hut, very much like the meeting hut, but a little different. In this case a tall platform is made first with sticks. Then a deck is laid on top of the platform and a small house is built on it and provided with an entrance. This elevated house is called a granary, with an overlapping roof, supported all around with pillars at the eaves. The meeting hut, on the other hand, always has two circles of pillars — the inner circle of pillars and the outer circle.

When the outdoor hut was completed, the wife for whom it was built would do the flooring. The husband would, again, build a low wall around it at the



foundation level, just as is done with the meeting house. Then it would be put to use. People could relax in it. Some people could even sleep in it. But a *tsum* is not as cosy as the meeting house because of the difference in its set up. In fact, an *ate* usually has a wooden platform inside it, and millet stored on it. But a *tsum* normally has an overhead granary where guinea-corn is stored. This is how a *tsum* has always been made, right from the beginning.

#### *The bean granary*

The bean granary [*wanuna alev*] can also be used for storing groundnuts. From time immemorial, women used this granary to store beans or groundnuts. There are two types of bean granaries: one is constructed with an entrance, while the other is constructed with no entrance at all. Grains are poured into it from the top. This type is usually situated at the backyard and is similar in shape to the larger one built in the centre of a compound. The only difference is that its pillars are not that tall – just about one foot high. Some people don't even build it on pillars. They construct its foundation with stones, lay down a wooden platform and construct the granary on it, roof it and thatch it. Then women store beans in it and call it the bean granary. Generally, a granary doesn't have space for relaxation as the 'gazebos' do.

#### *The kwer granary*

The *kwer* type of granary is far larger than the bean granary, but small in size compared to the granaries built overhead, like the *tsum* gazebo. This granary is also situated in the backyard. Its foundation is usually higher than that of the bean granaries and fitted with a door. When a wife has filled up her bigger granary with grain, she usually transfers the surplus into the larger granary.

Human beings don't relax under the granary. But pigs find it very convenient for relaxation. For pigs, there is no more comfortable place for relaxation than under its foundation. If one is looking for one's pig during the heat of the day, the surest place to look is under the foundation of the *kwer*. In areas where hyenas abound, they hunt for pigs at night under the foundation of the *kwer* granary.

#### *The shelter for yam seeds*

When our forefathers began building good houses for themselves, they converted their erstwhile sleeping tents into storage facilities for the products of their bumper yam harvests. Sometimes they made two shelters, one for yam storage and another for storing yam seeds. The shelter for storing yam seeds could be made either at the farm or in the backyard, while the one for yam storage was always set up closer to a man's sleeping hut to guard against theft of the yams.

Generally, the Tiv people in the old days never used to steal yam seeds. They believed in the notion that if one planted stolen yam seeds, not only would the yams fail to do well, but the stolen seeds would also contaminate the other seeds already planted on the farm. That is why one wouldn't dare steal yam seeds. But nowadays people steal yam seeds without fear.

*The dwer*

The *dwer* is another open building used for relaxation. Originally, it was not part of Tiv architecture. The Tiv copied it from other ethnic groups in the course of mingling with them. So, it is entirely alien to Tiv culture. It was first introduced to Tivland by the Tiv of the Ukum and Shitire clans and then it spread to other parts of Tivland. The Hausa called it *zaure*. Initially, it was only chiefs in Tivland who built the *dwer*. A commoner who would attempt to build a *dwer* was doing it at his own peril, for he would surely die. So commoners never dared to construct a *dwer* for their relaxation.

When a chief wanted to build a *dwer*, he would look for a specialist to do the construction. It was usually raised right in the middle of a compound and had four entrances. But the type called *puadwer* would have only two entrances. The roof was made by a very skilled artisan. The thatched roof carried a node extending about six feet from the apex. After that, the chief's wives would do the floor very well.

It was here that a chief set up his elevated chair, and furnished the building with beds and chairs for his guests. And if he had a horse, he would also tie it up in this building. The drums for the chief's veneration were also kept here. Drummers would come in the evening and drum for the chief's entertainment as he sat on his big chair, smoking his long pipe in all his majesty. If anyone else were to build a *dwer*, the chief would never take kindly to such a person. He would feel such a person was trying to outdo him.

The *dwer* in the old days was the sole prerogative of chiefs. All other people, no matter how highly placed, could not build a *dwer*. But over time, things changed. Many wealthy people, other than chiefs, could now build such a structure for themselves.

## WORKING IMPLEMENTS

The Tiv never had as many working implements as they do today. They had excavation rods, hoes for farming, and machetes, which they got from the Udam ethnic group. They also had axes, which they got from the people of Umbu clan of the Udam ethnic group; this Umbu clan has another subgroup known today as the Etulo [Utur].<sup>13</sup> The adzes were not yet in existence.

*The ikpe hoe*

To make a hoe, a farmer would cut a forked branch of a *gbaaye* tree<sup>14</sup> and strip off the bark. He would cut another straight branch of any other hardwood, make a

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<sup>13</sup>Etulo is the present-day name for the group of non-Tiv neighbours whom Akiga referred to as Utur – though this may have been a nickname or corruption of the word Etulo, perhaps influenced by the Hausa form of the word, Turu. The Tiv migrated widely, and when they moved near to Katsina Ala merged to a certain degree with the Etulo. Many of the names used by Akiga have now evolved into a different form: e.g. Abakwa (called Mgbakpa by Akiga), Idoma (called Akporo by Akiga), Wukari (called Waka by Akiga), Takum (called Takpugh by Akiga), and Akwanga (called Akwanaja by Akiga). This translation uses the modern form of the names for ease of reference, but inserts Akiga's form in brackets the first time the name appears in the text.

<sup>14</sup>Latin: *prospis oblonga*.

flat rectangular board (which was called *igbe*; Iharev and Masev called it *ikar*), and fix it on the forked branch. He would, then, use vines to fasten the rectangular board to the forked branch. This formed a perfect hoe which the Tiv used for farming. At first it was difficult to farm with this, but as they kept doing it, they got used to it. This kind of hoe is still used by the Ikyurav South clan, especially the Ityuav subgroup.

### FOODSTUFFS

In the past, the Tiv did not have as great a variety of foodstuffs as they have at present. Their foodstuffs were beans, cocoyam, millet and a species of yam called *anumbe*. These were the only foodstuffs they had.

### ANCIENT FOOD CROPS

Originally, the ancient Tiv would cultivate only beans on a piece of land; they referred to it as the 'isolated' bean farm because nothing else was planted alongside it.

### BEAN CULTIVATION

When it was the season for bean cultivation, a farmer would first choose a piece of land that looked fertile enough and was full of trees. He would cut the weeds and grasses all around, and put fire under the trees so that they withered up. A few days later, he would burn off the grass he had weeded and cleared from the farmland. He would then take his hoe, go to the farmland and start making mounds on which beans would be planted. He would make mounds in a spherical shape and one foot high. The Tiv referred to this size of mounds as 'elephant feet' mounds. Generally, beans are not planted immediately after the mounds are made. One would have to wait several weeks after a rainfall before beans would be planted on the mounds.

### SOWING BEANS

Bean planting was usually done by women. After taking the seeds from the pods, the women would take these seeds to the farm for planting. For the planting, a woman would use her heel to make a hole on a mound, drop two beans seeds in it and ram it back with soil. In that way, she planted the whole farm. The beans would germinate after a few days. In any case, not all the seeds planted would germinate. The rotten seeds, for example, didn't germinate.

### BEAN GERMINATION

A few days after planting beans, a seed would swell up, the outer layer would peel, the seed would split into two and the inner part would shoot out with the first

leaves. The shoot is called *tômbo*. It is through these leaves that the plant is nourished. After a few days, those first leaves would wither and fall off. At this stage the germinated beans were nourished through the roots, as they produced new leaves and blossoms. At a tender age the beans shoots are call *adenge alev*. Women use the fresh bean leaves to prepare a soup. But when the leaves are parboiled and dried before use, that type of sauce is called *akafi*.

### THE NATURE OF BEANS

By nature some species of beans can just blossom and spread out on the ground, while other species are climbers. Such species do better when their tendrils climb up the trees that have been made to wither during the initial phase of land preparation. Normally, beans would produce flowers; and these form into pods and then the seeds develop within the pods. The Tiv have the superstitious belief that, in a given rainy season during which many people drown in rivers, farmers would have bumper bean harvests, especially in the districts where people drowned.

### CONSUMPTION OF BEANS

Beans are eaten in two ways. First, when they are still green and not fully ripened, women pluck the pods, cook, and eat them with their families. In the second way, beans can be allowed to ripen very well and wither up in the pods before they are harvested and made ready for consumption. Women would go and harvest them. The Tiv call this 'picking of beans'. When beans are scarce they can be harvested and carried home in a calabash basin, then spread on the drying-platform in the open air to dry well. Then, they are collected and stored in the bean granary. In another period, during the old days when beans were highly prized, it did not matter how small an amount was harvested, a wife would carry them home in a basket. For this reason, the Tiv have an idiomatic expression which says 'One is like a small amount of beans in a basket' which they use to describe a worthless person who is trying to contest issues with a man of substance.

To cook beans, a wife would first de-husk them and pour the seeds in a pot, add water, and boil them until they are cooked very well. Then a woman would fry beniseeds, grind and mix them with the cooked beans. She would, then, serve this to her husband and children. Some people don't like beans cooked this way. They prefer to eat them without being mixed with beniseeds. Generally, if a person doesn't tolerate beans well, his tummy would develop constipation any time he eats it. And during the night, he would spend a sleepless time [farting].

### TYPES OF BEANS

There are various species of beans, but the manner of their cultivation, growth and consumption is the same. The major distinction between varieties of beans lies in the quality of the seeds. Our forefathers had only two species: the *tende* and *ishwailiev* species of beans.

### AHUMA (RED COWPEAS)

The red cowpeas are one major species of beans. Usually this species is planted very early in the farming season, but some women plant it at the same time as other species of beans. This species does not mature quickly. It normally forms tubers underground like cassava. In the old days women would dig the small root tubers out, cook, and eat these with their families. This variety, if roasted and eaten, could sometimes cause a severe headache or stomach upset, accompanied by vomiting. Usually, children roast red beans and eat them. This bean can be eaten when it is still fresh or when it has dried up.

### CONSUMPTION OF RED COWPEAS

In the old days, cooked red cowpeas were a quality dish, mainly for elders. During harvest, they were gathered and bound in bundles. In the time of famine, one bundle was priceless. A wife could become a celebrated and reputable cook for her expertise in cooking red beans. She would de-husk them, put them on the fire right at twilight and keep the fire going till it became well cooked by dawn. She would then wake up, fry beniseeds and grind them, pounding them up in a mortar and adding palm oil. By day break, she would serve it to her husband in a large calabash. The husband in turn would invite his family members and share the beans with them. Some family members would not wait to be invited. As soon as they hear the pounding they would come. They would consume the food, and later show appreciation to the wife for being such a good cook, and one who can cook so much that a multitude could not finish eating all that she had prepared. This is how women acquired good reputations through culinary skills in cooking red beans.

### THE COCOYAM

In the old days, cocoyam was the major staple food. During its cultivation season, a farmer would prepare land in a marshy area, make mounds and plant it. It would germinate and spread out its broad leaves like a canopy. There is no other crop with broad leaves like cocoyam. Women used its fresh leaves to prepare a sauce called *ishôngo*. When cocoyam forms its tubers, its leaves turn reddish and wither up and are then ready for consumption. Women would dig the tubers out and pound them into food [*ruam*]<sup>15</sup>. Sometimes they could be eaten roasted.

### PEARL MILLET

In the past, the Tiv had a species of pearl millet they called *agase*. It was never cultivated on a newly-opened farm. It was normally cultivated on a piece of

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<sup>15</sup>*Ruam* is a generic term which usually means the starchy mashed or pounded material eaten with savoury stews, sauces or gravies, called soups in Nigeria, made with vegetables or meats. A pinch of *ruam* can be made into a 'spoon'.

land where cocoyam had been harvested in the preceding farming season. In the next farming season, the *agase* would be planted on the previous mounds where cocoyam had been harvested. After a few days it would germinate. When it grew about a foot tall, the weeding of the farm would be done, and the *agase* would be pruned. By the time it formed grains, it would be close to the dry season. The farmer would harvest it, tie it in bundles, bring it home and store it on the drying rack. When it dried, women would use it for making food. Long ago, and even now, *agase* is the best grain for making pap. In fact, there are no grains to be compared to pearl millet in making good pap.

### ANUMBE

In the old days, if a man wanted to grow the tuber crop called *anumbe* he would first clear the land during rainy season, make low mounds and plant the tuber on it. It would germinate, spread out broad leaves and was ready for harvest during the dry season. A woman could boil it and eat it with her family. Other wives roasted it. Its tubers are yellowish in appearance, with a vinegary taste. If banged on the ground, this tuber could be bruised. Then it won't taste right, even if boiled well. These were the staple food crops Tiv people had at first. As time went on, they discovered other valuable food crops, which they have kept up until now. Such crops include sorghum, millet, yam, maize, groundnut and Bambara nut. They also have sweet potatoes, cassava, pumpkin-like squash and vegetable marrow. These were the staple food crops Tiv people had at first.

### SOUPS

The Tiv had some ingredients which they used for preparing the soup [thick savoury sauce or stew] with which they would eat starchy food. These included vegetable squashes, sorrel and okra. They also had other soup ingredients like peppers, beniseeds, melon seeds and ginger.

### SORGHUM

The Tiv acquired this crop from the neighbouring Ugenyi ethnic group and retain it to this date. Sorghum is the staple food crop in Tivland. They grow it in different places. But men who did not have enough land would just grow it in one place. Before yam was discovered, the Tiv used to grow sorghum. But when they discovered and started yam cultivation, they would convert land on which yams were cultivated in the preceding year and grow sorghum on it. Some farmers would even cultivate it both on newly tilled farms as well as on the previous yam farm to ensure a bountiful harvest. But a lazy farmer would be contended to cultivate it only in one place.

To cultivate sorghum on fresh land, one would have to weed the grass on the land, cut down the small trees, and burn them a few days after they had dried up. Next, he would sow the sorghum seeds and plow the land. Other people cultivated it on land where beniseeds had been cultivated the preceding year. Still other

people cultivated it on any land where any another crop had been previously cultivated.

The period of cultivating sorghum is normally referred to as 'the season for ploughing seed'. When sorghum starts to germinate, bush-fowl would come and peck out the seeds and eat them up. There are also some weeds called *ilisha* which a farmer can hardly see while tilling the land. But as soon as the cultivation is done, these weeds would spring up on the farm. They would grow and wilt the tender sorghum stalks as if they have been burnt by fire. Then the sorghum would be completely ruined and never produce seeds. In fact, where these weeds are abundant, not one head of sorghum can be reaped from the land.

When the stalks are about one foot tall, it would be time to weed the farm. During the weeding, one could see some leftover maize stalks which had recently produced ears. These could be reaped and eaten by a farmer and by those who had assisted him on the farm. But if it happens that one has not come to assist the farmer, but still wants to reap the leftover maize, the farmer would refuse. That is why the Tiv have the proverb which says, 'You are not ready to assist a farmer to weed his sorghum unless you can stay clear from gleaning the leftover maize growing on his farm.'

By the time weeding is completed, the rainy season is at its peak and sorghum plants start forming bud nodes. At this time, rain is usually accompanied by loud crashes of thunder and the Tiv say this thunder is meant to strengthen the sorghum nodes. When the nodes are formed, and the stalks are high, the sorghum heads begin to emerge, and grains start to form on the heads. When the sorghum heads turn reddish, hornbills would come, yank off the sorghum heads and drop them in streams and rivers nearby. The Tiv say that hornbills do this to warn fish in the water to swim to deeper pools and hide so as to escape being trapped by fishermen. The hornbill starts its singing and people would say that is a signal that dry season is at hand. With this sign, the people start preparing for the dry season.

When the sorghum heads turn reddish, the Tiv say it is the period of the year when witches get restive; they search for a person to kill, then dry up the flesh, and use it to prepare gravy for eating with starchy food made from sorghum flour. During this period of the year, there is general restriction in moving around during the night.

Sorghum normally becomes ripe in the dry season, when people start bush-burning. Sorghum is prone to a variety of attacks. Birds converge on sorghum farms and devour it. Rufus Kob antelopes can come out in the night and ravage an entire sorghum farm so that not a single grain could be reaped from it. Monkeys too, do great damage to sorghum. There are also baboons. If a pack of baboon gets into a sorghum farm, they can destroy the entire farm. The owner of such a farm would definitely suffer from starvation that year.

When the harmattan winds begin to blow, farmers cut wooden pillars and set up a drying rack. A sorghum farmer would get to his farm in the evening and perform the *ichegh* rite on the farm. The following morning, his boys would go to the farm and tread or push down the sorghum stalks. In old Tiv tradition, sorghum stalks are trodden down in a particular way. It was assumed that if the special way of treading was not followed, the sorghum would not do well during the next harvest season. But nowadays, such beliefs are no longer held.

After treading down the sorghum, women would go to the farm the next day to harvest it. They would cut off the heads, collect them together and sort them out, separating the full heads from the leavings. In the olden days, whenever there was bountiful sorghum harvest, a man would pack home the full heads and leave behind the heads that were not properly formed. Those were the ones called the 'leavings.'

When properly sorted out, the heads would be tied into bundles, carried home and laid in the open air on the drying rack. The bundles would be neatly laid in rows, one above the other so that the arrangement created a beautiful spectacle. Again, in the old days, people would not just start eating the sorghum once harvested. It would be allowed to be thoroughly soaked by rain on the drying rack before it would be packed into a granary; only then people would start making food with it. It was left to be beaten by the rain because it was assumed that sorghum, when freshly brought in from the farm, contained a poisonous substance that needed to be washed away by rainfall so that it would not cause stomach upset when eaten.

Sorghum is eaten in variety of ways. Some make pap with it to drink. Women make flour with it and stir it into food. It is also roasted and made into powder called *mumu*. When sorghum is harvested, a man would call his wife and ask her to make beer for his kinsmen. The wife would pound the sorghum heads, get the seed and prepare some beer with it. On the appointed date, guests would come and drink the beer, which is usually served in pots. They drink to intoxication. If sorghum beer has a sweet taste, men would say it is not well brewed, so, it is beer for women and children. But when it has a vinegary taste—then, it is beer for adults. Men will drink, sing, and misbehave, as well as praise their host as they return to their various abodes late in the evening. This is how the Tiv up until now use sorghum.

The Tiv have various species of sorghum: *genyi*, *ikyeghbenda*, *iyôngo atsume*, *jinawa* (*dzenawa*), and *ichanikule*. *Genyi* is whitish with an ugly appearance and has strong grains. *Ikeghbenda* is pure white with large grains. *Iyôngo atsume* is also whitish, with larger grain heads when compared to the other species. The outer layer of its grain is black and good-looking. *Jinawa* is a species with the largest grains. It has a black-red colour and is nice-looking.

## BULRUSH MILLET

Right from the outset, the Tiv had bulrush millet, *amine*, but were never keen about its production. At one point, they nearly gave it up because of the laborious nature of its cultivation. However, they continue growing it in small quantities, which the Ugenyi people buy and mix with their sorghum to brew *tashi* (this is a fermented alcoholic drink of the Ugenyi people). They also make food with it, as well as a powdered form which they take with them when they go on hunting expeditions for drinking.

The major reason why the Tiv almost gave up its cultivation was the intensive care required to protect it against destructive birds. In any case, they had to keep using it because it was the crop that ripened first in a farming season, when there would be a scarcity of food. So it saved them from famine. Moreover, at that point in history Tiv had not begun to produce salt, so it was this bulrush millet that they



could exchange for salt with people of the Uke ethnic group. For these reasons, the Tiv continued growing bulrush millet, though in small quantities, which they could use to make food and pap.

Bulrush millet has many different species, which is reflected in its appearance. They differ even in their production cycle; some species ripen more quickly than others, though they would all be cultivated at the same time.

The various species are *amine a Tiv*, *ichaikar*, *ikagune*, *nandeityou* (headache), and *tsafa*. The *amine* of the Tiv is the species also known as *ichaikar* because it is long and slender like a baboon tail. The *ikagune* is also long but slightly bigger than *ichaikar*. The *nandeityou* has the same foliage as the first two, but is yellowish in appearance. The *tsafa* is the millet of the Ugenyi people. Even when it is grown at the same time as the other species, it ripens last. When the other species have been already harvested, the *tsafa* will still be at the blossoming stage. It can form huge heads, far larger than the other species. It always takes a longer time to ripen. And for that reason, the Tiv do not like it much.

### MILLET CULTIVATION

When the Tiv had not yet discovered the present day hybrid yams, they cultivated millet on land where they had cultivated yams in the preceding farming season. They referred to this type of farmland as *akuur*. The Tiv people of the old days were not keen farmers, so when they harvested yams on a piece of land, they would leave the land in an untidy state until the next rainy season. Immediately after the first rain of the season, women would weed the untidy land, pack the weeds together with the old crop foliage left behind, and burn them when they dried up. The land would then be cleaned up. Following a rainfall, it would be considered time for sowing millet. The head of a family would announce that women should sow millet on *akuur* farmland. The following day women would prepare millet seeds early in the morning, get to the farm, and sow the seeds on the land already prepared. They would use their heels, make a hole on an old yam mound and drop millet grains in it and ram it back with their toes. On each mound, they would sow in four places, on the side and also on top of the mound.

### GERMINATION OF MILLET

It would not take many days before the sown millet grain started to germinate. As soon as it shot out, bush-fowl would scratch up the mounds and peck out the grains. Boys would be assigned to drive them off. When the germinated millet is about ten inches tall, it is called *ijôrhôrôô*. When the millet gets tall, it's time for women and children to go and dig out the weeds on the farm. The weeding process is called 'pruning of millet'. Here, women would also pull out weaker and pale-looking millet stalks, leaving only the healthy stalks. The women would also make the millet stalks lean away from each other and prop them up solidly with dirt. After the pruning, the millet becomes more robust, grows up, forms nodes, and starts producing the heads. At this stage, people say 'the millet is developing strings'. Then the millet pollinates. Subsequent rainfall

washes away the pollen and the millet starts to form its grains. At this point, boys are again assigned to keep close watch against attacks by birds.

### VULNERABILITY OF MILLET

Bulrush millet is prone to attack from many animals. As soon it germinates, the bush-fowl would launch their attack on it. If it survives that and reaches the pollination stage, it faces attacks from the stem-borers. Sometimes it suffers from other insect pests. The borers can attack sorghum as well as bulrush millet. Once millet is able to survive these pests, it starts ripening, and its leaves turn reddish. The Tiv assume that once the millet leaves turn reddish, it means it is ripe and ready for harvest. So the farmer would go to the farm in the evening and perform the *ichegh* rite, and uproot some of the millet stalks. This would make people proclaim that this evening the millet harvest propitiation has been conducted. The harvest would begin on the next day.

In the morning, boys would go to the farm, pull up the millet and lay it on the ground. Women would cut off the heads of grain. The millet heads are categorized in three grades based on how they have formed. These are the *homon*, *akumbur* and *ijönyon*. The *homon* are the fine, healthy millet heads, with good grains; the *akumbur* are the ones poorly-formed, with little grain on them; and the *ijönyon* are the healthy, well-formed heads that have been partially devoured by birds.

The *ijönyon* is the type that is doled out to women who have been engaged to help in the harvest of millet. These women use this type to make food for themselves. The *akumbur* is the portion assigned to the wife of the owner of the millet farm. She collects it, and stores this up in her granary to use for feeding her family. The *homon* portion is for the owner of the farm. His boys would tie it up in bundles and bring it home. It would be stored on the platform inside the *ate*, and will be given to his wives a little at a time when they need it for cooking. Generally, women had no control over bulrush millet products. It was basically under the custody of men. But nowadays, with the improvement in the quantity produced, millet crops are usually shared between a man and his wives. The wife's portion could be stored on a platform in a house and would be used for feeding, while the man's portion is stored in the gazebo and used for brewing beer.

### MAIZE

Not every soil texture is suitable for maize production. It does best on land where yams had been cultivated the preceding year, or on marshland and river banks. In the old days, before people realized how suitable marshy land was for maize cultivation, a farmer would clear a piece of land in a forest, set fire under trees to scorch them, and then cultivate maize on the land. The maize would do very well. Generally, light, sandy soil does not suit maize production.

There are several species of maize. The *usu* species ripens faster than all the other species. It has a white sheath with white large grains, which are not hard at all. *Santa* does not ripen all that fast. It does not make big stalks but forms slender cobs, covered with numerous, hard, bright-reddish grains. The *awambe*

[blood] species is more of a hybrid. Generally, all maize with kernels that have small red markings on them, referred to as ox-blood grains by some, is called *awambe*. As for the *wannôngov* species, it produces large seeds on large cobs. The ears are so large that an individual cannot eat more than two or three cobs at a sitting. The *wanukpar* species is a dwarf species that is quick to ripen. The *amenge* [dented teeth] species is called by that name because of its multicoloured seeds, which look like dented teeth. *Ikumbagu* [monkey belly] is not really a distinct species, but refers to all maize whose cob forms seeds half way, leaving the other half of the cob whitish like the belly of a monkey.

Once maize starts to germinate, bush-fowl start to scratch out the germinated seeds from the ground. Again, boys would be assigned on the farm to guard against the bush-fowl attacks on germinating maize. As the maize grows and blossoms, we say the maize has survived bush-fowl attacks. At this stage, sorghum seeds would be sown on the farm alongside the maize. Some farmers wait until the maize forms grains before doing this. Normally, sorghum sown with maize produces poorly, we think, because of the harmful effects of the maize pollen on the sorghum. After maize has flowered, it forms cobs. The cobs would put out tassels and grow to full size. When it starts to form seeds, boys are again assigned to the farm to guard the maize against attacks by monkeys. Monkeys give the boys a great deal of trouble on the farm in their bid to devour the maize, and monkeys like maize a lot.

As the sheath of the maize cob starts to wither up, it is an indication that the maize is fully ripened. Boys who keep watch over the maize farm are strictly forbidden from eating maize. But that doesn't deter them, and these boys are good at pilfering. A boy would use a sharp knife, cut off the maize stalk right at the roots, take it into the bush, yank off the cob and throw away the stalk into the bush. He would come and fill in the spot where the stalk was uprooted so that nobody would know what had happened. The boy would then roast the maize and eat at the farm and throw the cobs in the bush. In fact, children have lots of ways of pilfering maize on the farm.

When maize is fully ripened, the head of the family would cut one cob and put it on the emblem of the *akombo*. After this boys would go to the farm and cut down the whole lot. Women would then yank the cobs off, and knot them in bunches. Then, men would come, get them tied in bundles, and bring them home and store them on the drying rack. Here, the best formed cobs are selected and set aside to be used as seeds for cultivation during the next farming season.

Like the other crops, maize can be used for the mashed food we eat called *ruam*, but food made with maize flour can have a poor texture. When maize is still fresh, women use it to prepare another dish called *akpekpa*. Most people prepare the *akpekpa* [a kind of bread] from maize mixed with ground Bambara nuts. Unlike other ethnic groups, the Tiv do not have many dishes prepared with maize.

## YAMS

Yams were first discovered by an orphan. A long time ago there was a great famine, so great that a man would take a daughter and exchange her for food to feed a son who was an heir apparent. This happened at the time the *ijev* dance was in vogue in Tivland. The famine came with many social ills. The Tiv

pestered the Udam people for food. So, to scare away Tiv people from encroaching on Udam land in search of food, the Udam would kill a Tiv man and hang his corpse on a tree by the roadside. But this frightful act hardly deterred the Tiv from pestering the Udam. Nobody cared about the orphans. They were left to starve to death. They just wandered about in the bush feeding on all sorts of fruits. Some even ate poisonous things and died.

One day, an orphan saw a yam growing in the forest. He thought to himself, my life is not worth anything. So why should I be afraid of anything deadly? So he dug it out, brought it home, roasted and ate it. He found that the root tasted good, and he did not die. Then the boy decided to continue to eat it. One day an old man noticed the boy and asked him how is it that other children who had parents were dying of hunger, but he, an orphan, was getting fatter as though the famine in the land did not touch him? The orphan related the whole story to the old man. When he had finished the old man asked the boy to take him to where the yam was. So, together, they went into the forest. The boy showed him the yam. He dug it up and gave it to the man. The old man examined it and concluded that it looked like a tuber crop called *anumbe*, which the Tiv had already had.

He took the yam home and prepared it the same way *anumbe* was prepared. He ate it and he found it tasted much better than *anumbe*. He saw that the yam was something that could save people from starvation; he ordered his children to make this discovery public, so that other people could help themselves. This discovery was one which could not be kept secret. The children went around the neighbourhood and called people out to the forest to meet the old man and his wife. The old man explained everything to them, assuring them that the yam was edible. This almost created a stampede as everybody rushed to dig out his own portion of the yam patch.

### THE NAME *IYOUGH*

Those who arrived later at the scene asked those who had come earlier how they were able to get the news so fast. Those who had come earlier replied in the Tiv language that '*i yôô a yôô*', which means to announce. Since then, this tuber crop came to be called *iyôô* by Tiv people. After undergoing several pronunciation changes, the name shifted from *iyôô* to *iyough* and that has remained the Tiv name for yam.

An orphan discovered and introduced yam to the Tiv; the Tiv did not know how to cultivate it themselves. They would just get it from the forest. This happened at the time the Tiv and Udam people were close neighbours. So, one day an Udam man came with his wife on a visit to his Tiv friend. The Tiv friend roasted a yam for them. After eating it, the Udam man asked his Tiv friend where he got the yam. The Tiv friend explained everything to his guests. After listening to the story, the Udam man revealed to his Tiv friend that they also know much about yams, but it had remained a secret amongst the Udam people. The Tiv friend asked to know if the Udam too were digging it out from the forest. The Udam man replied that at first they dug it out from the forest, just like the Tiv were doing. But later, they learned how to cultivate it properly.

The Tiv friend enquired from the Udam how the yam was cultivated. The two took a hoe and went to the farmland of the Tiv friend. The Udam man used a

wooden *ikpe* hoe without an iron blade (because at that time the *nduhwar* with iron blade was non-existent) and made a mound and also taught his Tiv friend how to make mounds and plant yams.

### PLANTING YAMS

On the first day, the Udam man did not teach his Tiv friend how to plant yams. The next day, they went back to the farm field along with their wives. The two men made mounds, while the Udam woman taught her Tiv counterpart how to plant yams on the mounds. The Udam man taught his Tiv friend about yam farming in detail. He explained to him that after making the mounds, he must burn all the trees on the farm so that the leaves would fall off, decompose and serve as fertilizer. He also taught him the need to make stakes on the farm for yams vines to climb up on to avoid shading the mound, which is important for yam growth.

Afterwards, the Tiv man continued to practise yam cultivation just as the Udam man taught him. The yams grew and made cracks on the mounds. The Tiv man opened up the mound and saw yam tubers had formed inside. He quietly removed one, brought it home, roasted it and ate with his family. A few days later, his wife went secretly and dug out another for the family's need. Then they ate it openly. Seeing this, fellow Tiv people copied the yam cultivation practice, because they were convinced that yams, properly cultivated, yielded better than the wild ones in the forest. In addition, Tiv people cut off the top of a yam tuber and set it aside for later cultivation and called it *ikôr*, which means a stroke of luck. Thus, yam seeds came to be called *ikôr* [pl. *akôr*].

### POUNDED YAM FOOD

At first, the Tiv would just roast yams and eat them. They never knew how to make it into the pounded form. The only other way of eating yam was to process it into yam flour, and stir it into a food paste. Later the Udam man visited again and taught the Tiv friend how to pound or mash yams for consumption. But the Tiv had no mortars, so they mashed boiled yam on a hollow grinding stone and ate this way until they invented mortars later on.

This is how yams came into existence in Tivland. Some people say it was obtained from Udam people. This is not true. It was actually an orphan that discovered it in a forest, while the Udam only taught the Tiv the appropriate way to use of it.

### SPECIES OF YAM

Yams can be categorized into three major species:

*Nuanggeh*, which is a masculine species.

*Agbo*, a species that takes time to be cooked.

*Anumbe*, which is the tuber crop that existed earlier.

The *nuangegh* yam varieties we name are as follows:

Alakpa, Bele, Par, Iyough-ki-tohough, Igoiyo, Ishamiyoo, Agbeede, Shipum, Gbagbongom, Mkparyo, Gbagere, Adei, Agyigya, Tsatoho, Shibela, Damiyo, Icholiyo, Gbaaye, Ahungwapopo, Liemen, Kpua, Kokoiyo, Tsoma, Moriyo, Awambeiyoo, Ananyie, Aya, Kungu, Tar, Apuriyo, Agbopipia, Takema, Ityundu, Ikparikpa, Ishimakaiwen, Iharevkuur, Mambe, Aicham, Amura.

The *agbo* yam types

Agbo, Ityaver, Adzaure, Akperadzembe, Adagba, Kor, Buba, Anengabeer, Ihômagbo, Isheviyo, Tsabagu, Ishondoishua, Avuragbo, Kanji, Tashaagbo, Akeakpev, Aôndosha, Agyaya, Adzenge, Ingawa.

### [Foliage of the] *nuangegh* species<sup>16</sup>

<b>Alakpa:</b>	Has dark coloured leaves.
<b>Bele:</b>	Has small shoots that can produce seeds.
<b>Par:</b>	Has leaves wider than that of Alakpa.
<b>Iyough ki tohough:</b>	Has wide, tough leaves.
<b>Igo iyo:</b>	Has small leaves.
<b>Isham iyoo:</b>	Has small growths that can produce seeds.
<b>Agbeede:</b>	Has small leaves.
<b>Shipum:</b>	Has dark leaves.
<b>Gbagbongom:</b>	Has leaves similar to Alakpa.
<b>Mkpar iyo:</b>	Has small leaves and can produce seeds.
<b>Gbagere:</b>	Has wide, long leaves.
<b>Adei:</b>	Has flat, long leaves.
<b>Agyigya:</b>	Has triangular leaves.
<b>Aya:</b>	Has rough, reddish leaves.
<b>Kungu:</b>	Has dark, triangular leaves.
<b>Tar:</b>	Has wide, dark leaves.
<b>Apuriyo:</b>	Its leaves are greenish.
<b>Agbopipia:</b>	Its leaves are not that wide and very dark.
<b>Takema:</b>	Its leaves are similar to Adei species but longer.
<b>Tsatoho:</b>	Its leaves are not very wide and dark.
<b>Shibera:</b>	Its leaves are quite green.
<b>Damiyo:</b>	Has pale green leaves.
<b>Icholiyo:</b>	Has the same leaves as Damiyo.
<b>Gbaaye:</b>	Its leaves are more greenish than those of Alakpa, but much like those of Par.
<b>Iharevkuur:</b>	Its leaves are not so green.
<b>Liemen:</b>	Its leaves are shiny, more than those of the Alakpa.

<sup>16</sup>Not only is this an amazing listing of different yams; it reveals a cultural reality relating to the Tiv: being able to name, describe, and differentiate between such a huge variety of food sources. Akiga placed high value on such information. Future generations of Tiv will now have a record that if omitted from this text would be lost.

<b>Kpua:</b>	Its leaves are similar to that of Iyoughkitohough.
<b>Kokoioyo:</b>	Has fine green leaves.
<b>Tsoma:</b>	Its leaves are not dark.
<b>Noriyo:</b>	Has wide leaves which are not dark.
<b>Awambeioyo:</b>	Has elegant, fine, pale leaves.
<b>Ananyie:</b>	Its leaves are similar to the leaves of the Gbagbogom tree.
<b>Ikparikpa:</b>	Has small, narrow leaves.
<b>Ishimakaiwen:</b>	Its leaves are not dark, but wide in shape.
<b>Ahungwapopo:</b>	Its leaves are neither wide nor dark.
<b>Mambe:</b>	Has broad leaves.
<b>Aicham:</b>	Its leaves are quite greenish like those of Bele.
<b>Amura:</b>	Has the widest leaves.
<b>Ityundu:</b>	Has wide, dark leaves.

### [Foliage of the] *agbo* species

Generally, all the varieties of *agbo* species have the same wide foliage.

<b>Adzaure:</b>	Its leaves are of medium width and length.
<b>Ityaver:</b>	Has yellow green leaves.
<b>Akperadzembe:</b>	Has wide leaves.
<b>Adagba:</b>	Has wide leaves.
<b>Kor:</b>	Its leaves are neither wide nor long.
<b>Buba:</b>	Its leaves are wide, but not long.
<b>Anengabeer:</b>	Its leaves are yellowish and not so wide.
<b>Ihômagbo:</b>	Its leaves are not wide but long enough.
<b>Isheviyo:</b>	It also has long leaves.
<b>Tsabagu:</b>	Has long leaves.
<b>Ishongo ishua:</b>	Has long leaves which are not wide.
<b>Avuragbo:</b>	Its leaves are wide and long.
<b>Kanji:</b>	Its leaves are not wide but long.
<b>Tashaagbo:</b>	Has long and wide leaves.
<b>Akeakpev:</b>	Has long and wide leaves.
<b>Aôndoasha:</b>	Its leaves are long but not wide.
<b>Agyigya:</b>	Has long, wide leaves.
<b>Adzenge:</b>	Has narrow, triangular leaves.
<b>Angawa:</b>	Has wide, long leaves.

These are just a few differences in the general foliage of all the varieties of the *agbo* species.

## SEQUENCING CULTIVATION OF CROPS

From the preceding descriptions, one can understand how Tiv people acquired their crops. These crops grow in sequence. After the most important ones have been planted earlier in the planting season, the less important ones are usually planted much later by women. Some people go to the extent of cultivating the less important crops on separate plots of land.

## PREPARING A FRESH FARM SITE

All Tiv people prepare fresh farmlands, *ihande huran*, each year. The period for doing this is during the rainy season. More precisely, the month of October is the time for that. But some people wait until November. When the time comes, all the elders of a village go out early in the morning to earmark sites for new farmland. In the old days, people avoided having farms far way from one another as it is done nowadays, for the fear that one might be attacked by an enemy on the farm and there wouldn't be anybody nearby to assist.

When elders went to select farm sites, each one would pull up a handful of grass to mark where he intended to clear and make his farm. Then they returned home, asked boys to prepare a pole with which they would push down the weeds in the process of clearing the new farmland. The next day, an elder would take his boys to the field and show the boy who was charged with the treading down the grass where he had marked the boundary for farming.

The boy would tread down the grass in lanes that were as wide as the length of the treading pole – from one end of the field to another. That would be the only part such a boy would play. The rest of the boys would get down and pull out the grass. After weeding one lane, they would stop for the day. *Akombo* worship became part of Tiv customary practices, so after the boys had quit farming for the day, the owner of the farm would come later on and place an *akombo* on the farm to safeguard it against all evil spells that would impoverish the farmland. Up until today, Tiv people place *akombo* on farms for fear that witches might impoverish the soil.

So the people set out as a group to prepare the farmland. In the old days, while weeding grass in the farm site, boys working there would look out for an insect, a large grasshopper [locust]. This insect is very common during farming season, and is a delicacy amongst Tiv boys. In the course of weeding the grass these insects usually get dislodged from their hideouts and they fly ahead of the boys. Boys would trap them and skewer them. Children's craftiness was usually measured in how they trapped this *dzumbe* insect. This is because there is another poisonous insect called *hurukuku* that looks much like the *dzumbe*, except that its wings usually lie flat against its body [katydid]. So when a dense boy caught a *dzumbe*, the crafty one would trick him to throw away the *dzumbe* in the belief that it is the poisonous *hurukuku*. The crafty boy would end up dispossessing the dense one of his locust.

This incident became something which would come up later in life; the crafty boys deriding the dense ones. Whenever any argument arose between them the crafty one would remind the dense one of how he used to trick him. For this reason the Tiv have a popular saying, 'even if I am dumb, you can't trick me and take my *dzumbe* insect.'

In the beginning, women were also compelled to participate in the task of preparing new farmland. But they would stop halfway into the work day, go and get yams and return home to prepare food for the men who were still on the farm. Some really detested the task of preparing fresh farmland. So when it was time for farm work, such women would feign sickness, but as soon as others had gone off to the farm, they would get well again. Another with a baby would pretend that her baby was sick and therefore she could not go to work on the farm. Nowadays, hardly any women participate in the task of preparing fresh



farmland. It is only a mean-spirited husband who still compels his wives to do this task.

On return from work on fresh farmland, men and women would take their bath and have their supper. By evening, men would rub themselves with camwood [*kpaai*], and go around wooing women. Generally speaking, the Tiv believe that people are best adorned during the period of preparing fresh farmland. As for camwood, the red dye of the plant,<sup>17</sup> people don't rub it in any longer.

### MAKING YAM MOUNDS

After the preparation of the farmland comes the making of mounds for planting yams. The head of the family gets up in the morning, goes to the new farmland and makes the first yam mound with a ritual object to inaugurate the farmland. This is an emblem which the forefathers used in preparing the *twer akombo*, which is the *akombo* for protection of crops. Only elders who were initiated into this *akombo* rite could use the *igbende yiase* to propitiate the *akombo* for the making of yam mounds. He did this in absolute silence. On his way there, he was forbidden to talk to people he might meet up with. If he dared open his mouth to talk to anybody, it would result in the transfer of his farm fortunes to the person he had spoken to. Moreover, he was required to make only one mound on the day of the inauguration. The next day his boys would go to the farm and continue making mounds energetically.

In the Kparev clan, people make the lines of yam mounds in a definite pattern. First, they make a line of huge mounds right in the middle of the farm field and call it *deche*. After the central line they make subsequent lines of smaller mounds on both sides of the line until the whole farmland is used up. People in other Tiv clans do not know about this kind of line. They just start by making the first straight line at the far end of the farmland and continue with the rest of the mound lines, until the land is used up.

Even in the making of mounds, the Tiv people of the Kparev clan have a special style which is different from the other Tiv clans. The Kparev make their yam mounds with clods of soil. The other clans do not know how to do it this way. This makes the Tiv of the Kparev clan deride their fellow Tiv in other clans for making their yam mounds (unconventional ones referred to as *abukpan*). Of course, they are right; indeed, the yam mounds of the Kparev clan are far better than those of the other clans. In any case, the Tiv have common yam species.

The making of yam mounds is the most crucial aspect of farming in Tivland. As such, they maintain that if someone is kind enough to help you make yam mounds, you can even share *nyam* or ['human meat'] with such a person and he will not be indebted to you in any way. (The full implication of incurring human meat debt is discussed later under the things of *mbatsav*.) Normally, by noon women take food to people making yam mounds on the farm. In Tivland, if people are on the farm making yam mounds and you stand by the road leading to the village at noon when the women come out with the morning meal, and if you shot an arrow toward the farm you would surely hit a person

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<sup>17</sup>Latin: *Baphia nitida*.

on the forehead, or even in the eye, because all the heads are turned toward the road along which the food is being brought.

If the farm is made early on in the season, it is called 'standing corn' hoeing because it is done even before the guinea corn has been harvested, or else it is called dry-season hoeing since it takes place December or January. Some call it a 'thatched-heap' farm. If you do not make a thatched heap farm for your wife, she won't love you. Women insist that this is the only proper type of farm, and produces more with larger seeds. It will produce larger yam seeds even if the crop is eaten by beetles.

When all the heaps have been prepared, the women all go to the farm site and get the seeds ready for planting. To do this the tubers are cut to the right size, each having an 'eye'. These 'seeds' are then planted down a hand's depth, for if it is planted too deep the yam becomes thick, not long. After planting, when the ground is hard, the people return to their home sites, but they also reap guinea-corn. A while later, a little rain may fall which is called the 'black stalk rain' because it rains after all the stalks have been fire charred. Now the people go out and hoe what was the cornfield so they can sow beniseeds. Then later there is much more heavy rain. That means that there is much work to do, so everyone goes about busily doing what is needed. Some people still have building to do. Women go out and sow millet and maize, or some go out to ready the farm for the beniseeds. Some make a farm for yams now which is called the 'new rain' farm, but it won't yield very big yams. Yet they are good, perhaps the best for storing. The women during this period also go out on the farm that was made during the dry season to sow seeds for various herbs and vegetables for sauce or soup.

Women go out to weed when the leaves of wild plants appear in the yam farm. This is the time they remove the grass coverings on each of the yam heaps which were made at the time of planting, then they open up the heaps to see if the seeds are rotted or not. If some rotted they take these out and plant new ones. The yam farm won't be ready to be weeded again until the yams have already formed.

## YAM EATING

So when the women go to do weeding, they secretly dig up a few to give to their children. New yam stealing is what this is called. Then, after a while, when the yams harden, they are eaten publicly. Before this, the village-head, the one who was initiated into this *akombo*, tells his wife to dig up a yam so he can perform the ceremony, the necessary rite before eating starts. The *akombo* that are set right, or fixed up, before new yams are eaten are *wayo*, *agashi*, *akombo a dam*, *ribi*, and *gwarmou*.

## YAM DISPLAY (IYOUV MBI PENDEN)

When a little of the crop has been eaten, the village-head tells the women to lay out or display yams for everyone to look at. So the women goes off to the farm early and digs up a number of the yams, big ones, brings them back home and lays them out in the village centre, or even on drying racks so that the people can see that the

yams are ready. If the man is one who has many possessions, he then kills an animal and opens a pot of palm oil which is divided among the women to use in cooking for the men, who come and eat together. Loud praises are called out, 'This or that person's wives have laid out yams today. We are going to have a great feast, so much so that there will be leftovers.' From that time forward, yams are eaten by everyone until the time for bush clearing comes around again.

When the dry season is advanced, at the beginning of the New Year, it is time to dig up the seed yams. Women dig up the yams, putting the seeds to one side and those for eating to another side to be stored away. The seed yams are kept in grass shelters buried in a hole in the ground.

The stored yams are put in a small hut, and then ashes are sprinkled over them to keep them from getting rotten. After all the seed yams have been removed, the farm is called *akuur*. The women again prepare the field and clean it up to make it ready for the millet. In the past, millet seeds were broadcast and then the dirt of the mounds was thrown over the seeds and this gave a better yield. But it is too much work to plant the seed by throwing it down on the ground and pressing it into the dirt with the heel. The time to sow maize is the same as the time to sow bulrush millet.

### DIFFERENT CROPS

After these crops have all been harvested, guinea corn is then sown, and after this crop is ready to be harvested, it is called *tsa*. Then the field is sown with beniseeds. Women and children would prepare the farmland, weeding it and burning up the weeds, readying it for tilling to grow beniseed. When God sends down the rain in its season, the people start tilling and planting beniseed. After the beniseed ripens and it is harvested, the farmland is called *tsa-kurkur*, the second generation farmland or old farmland, land that has been tilled repeatedly.

In the old days, an old farm site was only considered suitable for growing the less important crops such as sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes were introduced into Tivland by the Hausa ethnic group. When it was first introduced into Tivland, it was known by the Hausa name *dankali*. Later, sweet potatoes were known by many different names. These days, these names have increased in number. Here are a few of the sweet potatoes, however there are many more:

*Atsaka, Dankali, Akamitiôr, Atuurtar*

All these names have cultural meanings:

***Atsaka:*** A long time ago, a household head received a guest. He told his wife to cook for the guest — an important guest, considering he was his in-law. The wife refused to prepare a meal for the guest, saying let him go to bed hungry. To the disappointment of his wife, the husband decided to roast a sweet potato for his guest to make sure his guest did not go to bed on an empty stomach. When the story was told of how a sweet potato was used so effectively to beat hunger, people started to take from the phrase, a *tsa ka ijen* the words *atsa ka* and turned them into a new name for *dankal*, the Hausa name for *atsaka*, the sweet potato.

**Akamitiôr:** This is how the name came about. Women who had no yams to prepare pounded yams would use *atsaka* for this purpose in place of yams. Because this sweet yam does not have the kind of binding starch found in other yams, the food made from sweet potatoes could not hold together same way yams do. To make sure that the food made from potatoes does not all fall to the ground when taken from the bowl, the eater has to hold his hand upward while trying to mould the mashed, potato together. Hence the combination of the words *kam* and *itior* into the word *akamitiôr* make the second name for potatoes. This name was given to potatoes by Kunav, a clan in Tivland. This clan does not farm yams as much as they farm potatoes, because their soil is not suitable for growing yams but is for growing sweet potatoes.

**Atuur tar:** In 1927, there was a great famine in Tivland, severe enough to nearly destroy the land. During this time Kunav had a very good harvest of sweet potatoes. They cooked the potatoes, cut them in small pieces and dried them. The finished product was called *asôndo*. This processing procedure resulted in a long shelf life for this food. This yam was sold throughout Tivland, so that the people were saved from starvation. The people then said that it was the sweet potatoes which supported the land; otherwise, the famine would have devastated and completely ruined the land. Sweet potatoes were therefore called *atuurtar*.

The people who suffered from the famine of 1927 most were the Ugondo clan. The whole Tiv people said that it was *atuurtar* which saved Ugondo.

### MANIOC OR CASSAVA

In the past, land was tilled into heaps for planting yams. Women would then obtain and cut *vambe-iyô*, manioc. They would do this in the same way cassava would be prepared for planting. Women would then plant the *vambe-iyô* on the sides of the heaps. It was not considered a valued piece of work and not much attention was paid to it. Today, although it can still be found amongst the Tiv people, it is not widely grown in the Tivland.

### BAMBARA NUTS

This nut was introduced to Tivland by the Ugenyi. During its early days, it was a major crop, cultivated on prime farmland. In those days, it was grown alone on its own prime piece of farmland, on as much farmland as a farmer could have. It was in fact a cash crop. Over the years, its importance has declined. These days it is grown basically as a food crop. It is cultivated by women who plant it on the sides of yam heaps in the yam farms. It is harvested at the same time as the yams.

### GROUNDNUTS OR PEANUTS

Groundnuts were introduced to Tivland by the Ugenyi. It still enjoys allocation of prime farmland, same as other major food and cash crops. However, it is

cultivated on old farmland, *tsa*, where crops have been grown for at least two consecutive years. It is grown on low level ridges, unlike yams which prefer high or tall heaps. Groundnuts grown on heaps yield only a poor harvest. It prefers to be allowed to grow together with weeds. If the weeds are pulled out of a groundnut farm, the crop becomes stunted and does not produce a good or bumper harvest. Groundnuts are good for food. They can be eaten raw. But if one eats too many of them uncooked, some people develop a headache, others a stomach-ache. There are many uses for the groundnut, including, but not limited to, body lotion, cooking oil and so on. Expert groundnut farmers in Tivland are the Masev, particularly their clan called Ingyenev.

### EDIBLE TUBERS

*Agbishe* is a root crop resembling potatoes in appearance but with a different taste and texture. This too used to occupy a prime place among major food and cash crops grown in Tivland. But as the number of crops available to Tiv people increased, *agbishe* became less important. These days, it is grown as a food crop by women, and they plant it in yam farms. The Tiv obtained this root crop from the Hausas. It is not one of the Tiv's indigenous crops.

### THE GROUNDNUT *TORFAM*

The *torfam* was only recently introduced into Tivland by the Ugenyi. It is another type of nut. It is bigger than the groundnut. A pod contains about three or four nuts. It is called 'king of the wet season' because it flourishes during the wet season. It loves the wet season and yields a good harvest in the wet season without fail. A group of clans in Tivland, called Kparev, know the *torfam* as *igar*. They do not know this nut by its regular name of *torfam*. Only those people from Kparev who have travelled far and wide may know the name *torfam*.

### *AGBADU* AND *FURUM*

Both *agbadu* and *furum*<sup>18</sup> are fruits that grow on the ground and spread over a large area. *Agbadu* makes large fruit the size of a calabash. Both are often grown on heaps of rubbish. No matter how big an *agbadu* grows to become, it is often not ready to be eaten, certainly not during the rainy season. It is harvested in the dry season after it is left to absorb the excess liquid in it. That is when it is tasty and ready to be eaten.

*Agbadu* is commonly cooked and eaten with beniseed. The beniseed is first roasted, and ground into a paste. It is then used as the main ingredient in cooking *agbadu*. The leaves are also good for food, especially for preparing soups for pounded yams. *Furum* too is eaten and prepared the same way as *agbadu*, the difference between the two is that if *furum* is not harvested during

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<sup>18</sup>Both are species of pumpkin.

the rainy season, by the time the dry season arrives, *furum* becomes overgrown and it is too hard to eat. *Furum* can be processed into slices or chips. To maintain a long shelf life, it is dried under the sun, and it is used for gravy and eaten with pounded yams. It is good for soup whether dried or fresh.

### SOUPS TO BE EATEN WITH *RUAM*

*Bushi*, *ashwe*, and *igar* are the names of non-viscous soups in Tivland. All types of soups or sauces which are not sticky or slippery are referred to as strong soups. However okra and *afialeg* are viscous soups. All these are planted by women during the early rains in the rainy season. They are planted on the yam farms.

Ingredients such as pepper for the preparation of soups are planted in the shade in yam farms. Beniseed is no longer useful for just making soups. It has now become an important cash crop.

There are two types of melon in Tivland: white melon and brown melon. Both of these are planted in yam farms. The brown melon is grown at the time of the first rains. It is used mainly as an ingredient for the preparation of soups. It can cause deafness if eaten raw. The white melon is often eaten by men even if raw. But white melon is not suitable for the preparation of soups; it is not as oily as the brown melon. The Tiv people obtained these melons from a neighbouring ethnic group called Udam from Eastern Nigeria. That completes the information about Tiv food produce.

### TREE BARK CLOTHING: *NYAGBA* AND *AVURAIKON*

In ancient times, the Tiv people had no clothes. They used to dress themselves up with the bark of tree trunks or branches from trees with elastic bark, grown in marshy areas in the forest. The Tiv name for one such tree is *po*. The processing of the bark for wearing involved peeling the bark, then beating it until the outer dead part is removed and until the bark becomes soft and supple, suitable for use as a cloth. This was for men and married women only. Others used to go naked.

### COTTON AND CLOTH

Later on the Tiv people learned about cotton from the Uke. (It is the Ugenyi that the Tiv referred to as Uke here.) They taught themselves to spin cotton into thread. It was not successful at first. But they kept trying until they mastered it. Once they knew how to spin cotton into thread, they started learning how to make clothes, but it was a foreigner who in the end taught them. In the beginning they used to make cloth in single bands called *ibôr*. The cloth used by women was named *ibôrkuma*. Men too used it. But children who were not circumcised were naked. At this stage, the Tiv people had not started growing cotton. They used to buy the cotton. In the course of time they learned how to grow cotton for themselves.

## GROWING COTTON

Cotton is not grown on its own land. After the yam is farmed and the heaps are left standing for a long time, cotton seeds are then planted on the sides of the heaps—not on the top. It sprouts up, grows, and is ready for harvest during the Harmattan season. Branches with cotton-wool are cut and taken home. The cotton-wool is taken out and dried under the sun. When it is thoroughly dried, it is then gathered and stored, ready for spinning into thread for making cloth.

## SPINNING COTTON INTO THREAD

The Tiv people have two methods of spinning, to make *dzer* [thin strong thread] and *aba* [thick soft thread]. Tiv people did not invent the equipment for spinning. They did not know about the spindle, *majir*. They copied it from the Hausa, *mazari*, but it was difficult to make. As a substitute spindle they used a hard yam-head, or a fruit from the *tur* tree. The hard yam-head they called *majir*. The names *majir* and *gura* both originate from the Hausa. The Hausa word *gora* the Tiv people call *gura*. (The Tiv clan called Kparev still refers to the separating stick, *gura*, as *igambegh*.)

The cotton seeds were removed and separated from the cotton wool. The cotton wool was then put on an *ako* and *kase* [combed?]<sup>19</sup> and then put in a calabash, ready for spinning. A good spinner who wanted fine quality cloth would first burn the *alie* through fire to harden it and then fingers were dipped into its oil to aid fine spinning. *Alie* originates from the Hausa word *ali* [finger]. The first step was to spin *dzer* [thin thread]. This too is from a Hausa word, *zare mazari* meaning spindle. Following the spinning of *dzer* then starts the spinning of *aba* [thick thread]. This too originates from yet another Hausa word: *abawa* [loosely spun cotton thread]. When one looks at the origin of these words, it is clear to any observer that it was from the Hausa that the Tiv people got all that they received and learned about cotton. *Dzer* is a strong and thin thread; *aba* is a thicker thread. Both *dzer* and *aba* are used in weaving every type of cloth the Tiv people make. If only *dzer* is used to weave the cloth, it would not look beautiful and would be stiff. And if *aba* alone is used in weaving, the cloth would look beautiful and smooth but would not last.

## CLOTH

Weaving begins by putting the rough cotton fibre onto a split cornstalk, which is pushed over an object making it a spindle for spinning thread; the thin thread is now ready. It is threaded onto a small loom-frame and is now ready for

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<sup>19</sup>We were unable to translate some of the terms used by Akiga to describe the spinning and weaving process. Some of the Hausa terms given by Akiga may have been regional usages; they are not found in Bargery's classic *Hausa Dictionary* dated 1934 or Abraham's *Hausa Dictionary*, 1949, which were used by the editor for Hausa translations. Other terms seem to be Tiv but we were unable to determine their precise meaning. We are grateful to Phil Jaggar for help with some of the Hausa-derived vocabulary.

weaving. This process is for the production of strips of cloth. The first cloth Tiv people knew how to weave was *tugudu*.<sup>20</sup> They used to produce it with twenty strips of cloth sewn together. For this reason, it was often called *ikundu* [twenty strips]. It was generally used by elders who would wear it for going out. Five of this *ikundu* was the price of a Tiv cow. And if you were a rich man, you were called ‘the one with five in hand’. Wealth was measured, in part, in terms of how many clothes and how many cows you owned.

Another cloth was made of ten strips, suitable for the waist of a woman, and was called *pueikondo*. It was all white and used by women. Young men would use a strip of cloth or ten strips and make a *bente*, loincloth from that. Now, *bente* is from another Hausa word ‘*bante*’. In ancient times, when a girl grew up to become a woman, but was not yet married, she went about naked. In the course of time, the Tiv learned how to make white cloth of different types.

### CLOTH DYEING

When Tiv got into the habit of imitating others’ customs, they wanted variety in what to wear. They would take threads, whether *dzer* or *aba*, and try to dye them different colours. Sometimes, they would boil indigo dye and soak the threads in it. Again it was from the Hausa that they learned the art of cloth dyeing. They found the Hausa approach to dyeing better than their own efforts. They thought their approach was rather like harmattan, scratchy and harsh. That was why the Tiv people would refer to a good quality product as real dyeing or *aser beba*. The Hausa style of cloth dyeing was not commonly known or practised in Tivland. Only a few people had developed skills in the art of cloth dyeing.

Those who wanted to use the Hausa process of cloth dyeing would first dig a pit about four feet deep, called a dyeing pit. At the bottom of the pit, they would spread gravel to cover the floor of the pit and pound the gravel with clay hard and flat forming a hard, even, compact floor. It was so compact that water could not seep through the floor of the pit. After the pit was all done and ready, then they went into the bush or forest and cut down some particular trees. The trees were then burned to ashes. The ashes were used in preparing cloth dye. The suitable trees used were the locust bean tree, *hokura*, and other such trees. The ashes were collected and filtered, and then the balls of the *beba*, the indigo dye, which had previously been dried over the fire, were broken up into the cloth dyeing pit and mixed with water and the filtered ashes.

The cloth dyeing pit was then closed for many days. Chemical reactions took place in the pit until the *beba* broke up. When this happened, bundles of threads were immersed or soaked in the *beba* pit. The dyeing process was done. The threads were removed and dried, and then they were ready for weaving the preferred type of cloth. Others, who wished to make black cloth, would bring their bundles of threads and pay a fee for dyeing. As the practice spread, Tiv people started mixing black thread into their weaving. In this way, the Tiv obtained many more types of clothing.

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<sup>20</sup>A large white cloth made of narrow strips sewn together and sometimes dyed with indigo.



## NAMES OF CLOTH

These include: *tugudu*, *puweikondo* ['twenty strips'], *akpem*, 'loin cloth', 'ten strips' and *apu*. These are white cloths. Others with stripes are *anger* and *dzaan*. Spotted cloths are *abebe*, *ityôugh-ki-akpem*, and *ijomon*. Yet others intermixed with black thread are *gere*, *ashisha*, *ilin chii*, and *ihiandegh*. Various other recent creations include one named 'the bushfowl died in the raffia reeds', *chado*, *godo*, *godogodo* [crooked]. All these are different types of cloths that the Tiv wear. Tiv started travelling, going to other lands such as Waka, another name for the Wukari area, where they brought back cloths made by other ethnic groups: such cloths as *alishi*, otherwise known as *amua*, referring to any black cloth. Other imported cloths included *swaki*, a cotton material of black and blue strands woven into tiny checks — to the Hausa it was *saki* — and *mur fu*, which to the Hausa is *murifi*. Tiv people preferred imported cloth from other lands to their own cloth. They called the imported cloth 'cloth from other lands'. In those days only nobles used to wear them. They were used only on special occasions. On such occasions, the wives of nobles would wear the imported cloths. At the end of the day after such an outing, it was impossible for the people to go to bed early. They would talk about what people were wearing at the dance or the party all the night long: talk of a man or girl from such-and-such a village that was so well dressed that even heaven approved and the sun gave way to drops of rain even though it was the dry season. There was yet another cloth called *gbajir*. This too, originated from the Hausa. It is a very important cloth. In those days the Tivland had not yet been introduced to the clothes of the Whiteman and his ways. Those who travelled and returned with any of the Whiteman's clothes received overwhelming praise bordering on glory. Such clothes were given many different names, such as 'skies', of heavenly glory, 'egg shells' [connoting fine quality and smoothness-to-the-touch].

In the old days, clothes were not used for wearing in any old way as it is done today. Clothes were used for special occasions. The youth used to wear *gere*, and they would wrap *andzagher ikondo*<sup>21</sup> over it. That was all the youth would wear. Grown-up men would wear *akpem* and *gere* and when going out to a dance, they would wear *anger* or any other cloth available to them at the time. But a chief would wear a *riga* or gown. The practice of wearing a gown was adopted from the Hausa. At that time, some Tiv people lived with the Hausa, and were made chiefs and were also dressed by the Hausa in gowns. This is how wearing gowns became a mode of dress for chiefs exclusively.

However, other important dignitaries without chieftaincy titles, who were wealthy, would also wear a gown and a pair of *chancha*. *Gbelagi* and *chancha* are a Hausa type of trousers. Since the Whiteman's arrival, things have changed. Things which were not done are now common. People of all classes can and do dress now as they wish and no one says a thing. In former days, all things, including clothes to wear, were done according to one's rank and station in the community. These days, even youths of any age dress in Whiteman's and Hausa clothes hanging down to heel length, and girls sing their praises and call

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<sup>21</sup>A slang expression for a type of fancy cloth.

them by the names of their big clothes such as *wanyebada*. Others now dress fully in the Whiteman's type of clothing; others dress entirely in Hausa clothes.

In the early days if a young man dressed up in Hausa style, and wanted to go out with a girl, he would be rejected; she would complain that he even smelled like a Hausa man. Today, the reverse is the case. The youth wearing modern English or Hausa clothes are preferred by girls these days. Now people put on clothing of the Whiteman and Hausa and like these. The Tiv people no longer value their traditional clothing, preferring to wear English and Hausa clothes. However, Tiv clothes are still being produced today. Today, that is the state of affairs regarding Tiv traditional wear.

### INFORMATION ABOUT CAMWOOD

*Kpagh*, camwood, is a tree that grows in forests. It is an important tree with economic importance. However, the Tiv people did not know of its economic importance. Consequently, they used to cut it down and use it for firewood and other uses. It was not until the Tiv people came in contact with Udam and started interacting with them when they began to discover the economic importance of camwood. Even then, not all Tiv people acquired this knowledge. It was, at that time, the nearest Tiv neighbours to the Udam, the Tiv clan called Kparev, who first learned of the economic importance of camwood. It was when the Tiv fought and drove out Udam and possessed their land that they came to see the use the Udam made of camwood and came to learn how to use it as an ointment or lavage from this tree as the Udam did. They did not at the time yet know how to make a body lotion from camwood as the Udam did. They continued buying it from Udam. This practice extended and spread out throughout Tivland. Today camwood is big business throughout Tivland.

Although Tiv have been using the camwood lotion for a long time, they have not learned how to make it themselves. They continue to import it from the Udam and then sell it throughout Tivland. The bark of the tree is bought in raw form. When a man now wants to use camwood as an unguent, he takes a piece of bark he has bought. He cuts it into very small pieces. He gives it to a female relation in his household — a wife, mother, or sister. The woman pounds the bark into powder in a mortar. She then puts it into a grinding or milling stone and grinds it into a very smooth paste. She then moulds it into balls and dries the balls. When they are thoroughly dried, she returns the balls to the man who gave her the pieces of bark. The man then gives her one ball and keeps the rest for himself. To use camwood unguent, a portion is dissolved in a small quantity of water in a small calabash. It is then mashed into a smooth lotion. After applying body oil, cream camwood is then applied all over the body. Camwood by appearance is neither black nor white. It is red in colour, yet it comes in different shades: bright red, dark red, a dark shade, and the other dull reds. The Tiv people do not use camwood any old way. They have their reason for using it as a lotion. They say that if you do not use it you will not feel comfortable. Your skin will not be smooth and will never be free of scabies. Other people use camwood as a cosmetic or beauty treatment. In the past, people put it on when they went to see the girls they courted. Other men used it to attract women.

In the past, camwood was to the Tiv as the *riga* or gown is to the Hausa. They used to say *kpagh* as a body cosmetic was in fact more important than a gown.

In those days a man who used camwood regularly was more attractive to women than those men who did not. But in those days it was used mostly by the youth of both sexes. Grownups and children used it sparingly, only once in a while. These days, camwood is no longer used as much as it was in the past in Tivland. Times were, if a young man did not use camwood, young women would dismiss him, avoiding him on the grounds that he had body odour. Nowadays the young men who do not use *kpagh* are preferred by women. The Tiv clans who still highly value *kpagh* are the Iharev, Masev and Nóngov. All other groups in Tivland are no longer enthusiastic about using camwood as a body unguent. They now use only the dry version of the camwood powder. These days, when suitors are competing to get the approval of a maiden for marriage, the man who uses dry camwood body powder is invariably preferred over the suitor who uses the wet version of the body lotion. Because it is what women love that all Tivland follows; all the young men are now converted to using only the dry body powder. Regarding what the youth are wearing these days, some prefer the Hausa mode of dressing — trousers, gowns and wrappers — others prefer the modern mode of dressing, but both use the dry camwood powder.

In Tivland, that is where matters now stand regarding use of camwood.

### MAA TREES

*Maa* is a wild tree, a generic name for many trees of similar species. All the trees have different names and distinct characteristics. These trees are not considered to be of any great value. They yield different types of fruit. It is from their fruit that the name *maa* is derived.

The trees include *aginde*, *ipwa*, *asange*,<sup>22</sup> *maachikor*, and *ibohough*. The trunk of the *aginde*<sup>23</sup> is big but it is not a tall tree. Its leaves are as wide as fig leaves. Its fruit is almost as big as the fruit of the *amaku*. Its pod-like fruit has corners and a very hard shell. The *ipwa*<sup>24</sup> has a tall trunk; its leaves are similar to the leaves of the *ikura-ukase*. Its fruit looks rather like the fruit of the shea butter tree.

The *asange* has a short trunk. The leaves are very small. It is given its name because its seeds are very tiny. *Machikor* has a tall thin trunk. The leaves are very wide. Its fruit is like that of the shea butter tree, except that it is not as big and not as long. Its fruit is rather roundish. The trunk of the *ibohough* is not tall. It grows lots of branches. The leaves are very tiny. A dried *ibohough* takes on a new name — *ishondogh*. Cut down, it is used as a fence to keep out cattle and other animals.

### BODY MARKING WITH MAA

Although *maa* includes different names for different trees with different types of fruits, when it comes to body marking with this extract, one single process is

<sup>22</sup>A tree whose seeds yield red dye.

<sup>23</sup>Latin: *Strychnos*.

<sup>24</sup>A type of tree used for making soot lines.

used. The process of marking one's body with black lines begins with plucking fruit. If there is no such tree nearby, one has to buy the fruit.

*Aginde*, one of the *maa* trees, is not common in Tivland. It is imported from Cameroon or Eastern Nigeria. However, all the other *maa* trees are available in Tivland. *Maachikor* is not known all over Tivland. It is known only by the Ukum and Shitire clans of Tivland. Once you obtain a *maa* fruit you open it up, remove the inside of the fruit entirely and throw away the rest. The inside of the fruit is ground on a grinding stone, the same type of stone used to grind camwood after it is pounded in a mortar. After it is ground, it is made into balls and stored in cotton wool. When everything is ready, a person who is well practised in the art of body marking with this dye is found. When the person arrives, all the necessary body-marking tools, together with the black paste, are brought before him. The other tools are a dish or a piece of broken pot, and a piece of wood charcoal that has already been put out. The body marker then gets the *maa* from the cotton wool and squeezes it on to the piece of broken pot. The piece of wood charcoal is then rubbed against the piece of broken pot until the mixture turns as black as black ink. When the piece of wood charcoal is used in this way, its name changes to *bi*. When the process has been completed, the stage is now set to do the body marking. At this stage, the body-marking artist takes a feather and trims it to its bare shaft. He dips it into the mixture and starts marking the client. There are good body-marking artists but some others are not proficient. Those whose hands shake and are not steady do not make good *maa* body-marking artists. The good body-marking artists produce admirable designs on their clients. Those who are beauty fanatics are never without one *maa* body-marking design or the other. Those who like *maa* the most are young men and women.

## HENNA

These days, the youth with facial marks have introduced yet another tradition from the Hausa into Tiv culture. They call it *lele*, henna.<sup>25</sup> It comes from a domestic tree. They plant it and it grows, making a lot of leaves. The leaves are harvested and pounded in a mortar. It is then mixed with lemon juice. It is applied thickly on both toenails and fingernails. This is left to stay on for about three hours. When it is removed, the boy's nails turn red. After a long habit of regular application, the colour turns dark. Young maidens love this. They refer to such young men as *wanyelele*, the 'henna boy'. Young maidens as well as young men apply henna to their nails. Henna is now far more popular among the youth than *maa*. All these are cultural practices of the youth growing up since the introduction of the British way of life. The older generations are not familiar with these new cultural practices.

## BUSH MEAT OR WILD GAME

In the past, it was difficult for Tiv people to hunt for bush meat. The children were in no position to eat meat the way they do today. When an elder was desperate to

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<sup>25</sup>Latin: *Lawsonia inermis*.

eat bush meat, he would send either one of his children or a wife to go and dig for a cricket. The wife would fry the crickets caught in the bush for the elder. Salt was not common, so potash was used instead. The cricket 'meat' was considered such a delicacy that, if an elder met a youth who had some crickets and asked the boy for some and the boy refused, such a youth would have committed such a serious offence that the elder would not agree to share basking in the sun within sight of each other. The elder would bear a grudge against the youth for a long time. The strained relationship would continue until the time would come when the youth would be compelled by circumstances to repent of his misdeed, apologize and restore the relationship to normal. If it took a decade, the breach would be there until it was healed and attended to.

In those days when elders sat down to eat together, if they had just one cricket between them, they would share it among themselves. The owner of the cricket would take the head. Another person would have a leg, and yet another person would have the second leg. The thorax of the cricket would be shared between two people. The man sharing would say, take it, eat it, a tooth does not miss a bite, no matter how small. The abdomen of the cricket would be shared among as many as three people. In this way no matter how big the amount of food was, one single cricket was shared between all the men with a large quantity of starchy food. Children were not included in the sharing of the cricket. They were not allowed to share even in the sauce from the cricket. If a child dipped into it, an elder would dip some pounded yam in the ground pepper sauce and throw it at the child's eyes. Thus, children were not allowed to eat meat. They had to make do with vegetable gravies.

The sharing of food as small as a cricket among so many adults was common and the best example of how the Tiv people's nature was to always share good things with their relations. This is how they learned and practised the hospitality and generosity for which they are now so famous.

At another level of hunting for bush meat, the Tiv people made extensive use of hunting dogs. They would arm themselves with their hunting weapons and tools and lead their dogs into the forests. The dogs would sniff out animals such as *iviha*, the Cane Rat. The dogs would pick up a trail and the hunters would follow the chase. Once a rat is sighted, all the hunters would chase it until it was shot with some weapon or caught by the dogs and killed. The animal would belong to the owner of the dog that first attacked the animal or to the person who first shot and hit the animal with some weapon. Or, the first person who hit the animal after a dog had attacked it was given the tail of the animal when it was finally killed. Once the animal was killed, another person would be asked to carry it home. When the animal was butchered, the person who carried it home would be given the intestine of the animal. That would be his share. Tiv people have a saying, 'a quick or smart lad gets to eat the tail'. Yet at another level of hunting wild game, it was through the use of nets.

### NETTING ANIMALS

In the old days, the Tiv did not know about netting animals. Netting animals was introduced into Tivland by another ethnic group (Ugenyi).

In those days not many people could afford the cost of a net. It was bought and owned by elders or wealthy people. In later times, the Tiv learned how to make nets for themselves, and making and owning nets became more common. Other weapons or tools of hunting included staves and sticks.

## HUNTING WEAPONS

One may ask, what weapons did the Tiv people use for hunting in ancient times? Well, their hunting weapons included staves, branches, spears, barbed spears and wood or palm lances or javelins. But all the weapons now used by the Tiv people were formerly unknown to the Tiv people.

### NET

In the past, a net was made as follows, according to the method taught by their neighbours.

A man who wanted to make a net would use palm fibres. Such fibres are made from raffia palm obtained from the forest. After making fibres from the raffia, a man allows it to half-dry in the sun. Then a thin strong rope, called *kwar*, is woven from the fibres. (The man could also use the same rope for building a roof for a house. The net made out of *kwar* was for netting rabbits while the one of a stronger rope was for bigger animals.) Next he would fashion a braided rope. He would make up many such braids. Then a net is made using the rope, allowing for holes in the net as appropriate. The Tiv people have a saying that a chameleon walks step-by-step according to the order of things on earth. That means there is no disorder in creation, that all things were created and put in their proper places and stations in pairs. Just so, you must have net openings that are orderly and equidistant from each other.

### SHARPENED AND HARDENED SHAFTS: *GBOUGH*

In the old days, a man would go into the forest and cut down a thin, slim wiry sapling, the size of a man's toe. He would sharpen the head of this sapling as much as possible. He would then gently run the staff through fire to fire-dry and toughen it, especially the sharp end of it. It was made as long as the height of a grown adult. *Gbough* is as valuable as many bridal gifts that one gives upon entering a marriage. It is a handy tool or weapon carried on all manner of trips.

### CLUBS: *NDAREGH*

*Ndaregh*, the club, was a very important thing in the old days. It was considered as important as a spear. A warrior would cut open a palm tree and sharpen its core. He would then dry it over a fire. It would become dry, compact, and hard and strong. When it was used to smash the side of an animal, all the animal's ribs would be completely crushed.

Kparev warriors of ancient times were fierce fighters. The Udam could not stay in a village to defend it against Kparev warriors when they learned they were approaching. It was all because of the Kparev warriors' weapons. A warrior named Agaku Akpachum from Kunav in Mbakaange was also a champion when the Tiv people were few in number. Again, his weapon was the spear. Dzerasuwa from Mbatlav was another warrior, from another clan of the Usar. Mbadzaka, the champion warrior, he too was a mighty victor because of the clubs. All disputes were settled using these. In the old days, when the Tiv people had a quarrel with other ethnic groups, the dispute was resolved or settled using shields. Shields were tools of war. It was shaped like a plate, but huge. It was tightly woven with vines. This type of shield, if hit with an arrow or blunt club, would not be penetrated. *Mku*, or death, was then applied to the names of the warriors of old. The shield was then given to a slave who led the way and all others followed the slave who was protected by the shield. These were the weapons the Tiv people had in those ancient days. Later they developed bows and arrows, spears and cutlasses. These days some even possess guns which they use for hunting.

### HUNTING WITH NETS

In the old days, a good hunter would head into the bush after it had rained. When the hunter saw the tracks of an animal or herds of animals entering the bush or woods, he would walk all around the bush or woods. When he was satisfied that the animal had not left the woods, he would then return home. He would report the incident. Then many people both older men and the young would collect as many nets as they could get. They would then arm themselves with shields, spears and tools for setting up the net. When they got to the bush into which the animals entered, they would make paths all around the bush. After this, the nets were set on the side where the animals had entered the bush. Invariably, it is the route by which the animals enter the bush that they exit the bush.

That is why the net is situated at that particular entry point into the bush. When all this is set up, the whole crowd then moves in with their weapons. Others cut down some branches from trees and start making as much noise as they can from the other end towards the nets. Thus, even when the animals are sleeping, once they hear the noise, they quickly get up and start running, taking the same route by which they entered the bush. The crowd then follows and chases. When the animals reach the exit, by which they had entered, they find themselves caught in the nets. At that point, they are killed.

### THE RULES OF HUNTING WITH NETS

In ancient times, if a net was set, and an animal running towards the net was hit or shot with a spear or arrow and was later caught in the net, the animal was not given to the hunter who shot it before it ran into the net. It was given to the net owner. The understanding was that even if the animal had not been shot, it would, nonetheless, have been caught in the net.

However when the animal was shot, and it was caught in the net, but was able to clear the net and escape, and if a hunter then shot it after its escape from the net, it belonged to the hunter when it was killed, not the owner of the net. This rule is practised today. The ancient Tiv people have a saying that, 'My net is all over the land' meaning that the speaker is a man of authority and power who is not limited or restricted by circumstances and who has the freedom to act anywhere and everywhere as he pleases, just as a net controls all exits.

#### THE PORTION: *MHAMBE*

After an animal is caught in a net, a hunter then shoots it. When the animal is killed, the hunter who shoots it first is given the right fore-leg. That is his portion, *mhambe*. The second hunter to shoot the animal is given the neck. That is his designated share. The third hunter is give four ribs. After the animal is butchered and carried home, the owner of the net is given the head of the animal, together with one thigh and the skin. The hunter who took the net to the bush to hunt is given one thigh or one fore-leg. The hunter who set the net on the animal route is given the whole tail of the animal from the root of the tail out to the external end of the tail.

Our forefathers had a saying that 'one's net has many openings'. This means that if a person has many openings or options in life like a net, nothing stops them achieving a purpose.

#### DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The very first domestic animals the Tiv people had were dogs, cows, and chickens. After a long time, the Tiv people obtained sheep from the ethnic group known by the name Ugee (the ones who bothered them too much about marriage, also called the Mbaiyongo, it was from them that Tiv people obtained sheep). When the Tiv first obtained sheep, they were a very highly valued asset. They were owned only by the nobles who were also elders, not young people. (Even today the Tiv people say that owning sheep is not a kind of wealth for children.)

The Tiv people obtained goats from the Ugenyi. In those days, the Tiv people used to call the Ugenyi by the name Ilyufu. These are the same people who have now moved near the ethnic group called the Akpena and are now known as the Alufu. They used to have lots of goats.

#### PIGS

We wonder where the Tiv people acquired pigs from. We do not know. No Tiv person has a clear knowledge to accurately answer where the Tiv people acquired the pig. There are some who say that the pig was caught in the wild and domesticated. Others say the Tiv people got the pig from the Udam, an ethnic group who are the Tiv's close neighbours and share a common boundary line. With such different views we cannot determine with confidence which view is correct. What we are confident about is that pork is the most favourite delicacy



of most Tiv people. If you wish to prepare a favourite dish for a Tiv person and be praised, cook pork for them. (However a few Tiv people don't eat pork, particularly women for whom it is taboo. See under things forbidden to eaten by women.)

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TIV AND UGENYI PEOPLE

The relationship between the Tiv and Ugenyi started in ancient times, not today. It was when the Tiv were living on a mountain called Yavwua that the Ugenyi met Tiv, during the time when the Ugenyi went out hunting elephants. At that time, the Fulani and Tiv were living together. For this reason, the Ugenyi did not want to get too close to the Tiv people. Later, the Fulani and Tiv split up. The Tiv continued moving southward where they came across a clan of the Ugenyi at Muan. This meeting has already been referred to in Chapter One.

Then the Tiv went round and climbed the mountain called Ibenda, their first ascent. A whole clan of the Ugenyi had settled at a mountain called Kurndiva. This was the first ethnic group that the Tiv gave the name Uke to. The Uke people living in that area were the inhabitants of Donga and Takum. At that time, they too did not have many villages and were a very tiny group. The leader of the inhabitants of Donga was called Kurushi, pronounced Kusho, which by interpretation means 'Iron King'. The leader of the inhabitants of Takum was called Galenje the Great. All these people put together were called the Chamba.

Another clan of the inhabitants of Takum called Bete lived on a mountain called Sanger. But they were not living on the top of the mountain. A few others lived on mountain Ilufu. The mountains of Sanger and Ilufu were situated next to each other. If you travel from Kashimbila [Gashimbila] to Takum you would cross river Katsina [Kachina] and travel towards the north, following a path normally taken by people travelling from Takum to Kashimbila. You would travel about ten miles and arrive at Mount Sanger. (The descendants of the Bete ethnic group who lived on the mountain top have now moved down to the valley.)

Just a short distance from there you would come to Mount Ilufu. Ilufu Mountain is not far from Mount Sanger. There are many other mountains in that area called by different names. For example, Mount Karkam, and Mount Kunatami. The meaning of 'Kunatami' in the Chamba language is 'the mountain of hyenas'. Another mountain is called 'Kunabe'; this means 'the mountain of dogs'. The other mountain is called 'Dzenawa' after the elder who first settled on the mountain, Umarike. The people who now live on Mount Dzenawa produce the best guinea corn.

There are many other mountains in the area whose names are not mentioned. All those other mountains are inhabited by the same ethnic group of the Umarike. That area had been completely occupied by the Umarike ethnic group. The inhabitants of Takum arrived and seized the land from the Umarike and settled there and drove them into the mountains. The Takum settlers now rule over the Umarike, the first owners of the land. The Takum people now rule the Umarike with an iron fist. Not all the inhabitants of Donga were allied with the inhabitants of Takum in those days.

However, at Kurndiva, where both of them had settled earlier, they were one and together. But they later split up. Kurndiva is near the river Katsina. Ibenda is at the southern part of the river. Kurndiva is towards the north of the River. Even today dye pits are still there. Their present name is *ichetseke*.

Although the Ugenyi were living nearby, the Tiv did not yet know. Later on, the Ugenyi gradually started sneaking into the Tiv territory on Mount Ibenda. The Tiv saw them but did not know where they were coming from. So the Tiv asked them where they were coming from. They told Tiv everything and showed them the mountain on which they had settled. They also told the Tiv that they are called Dinyi. However, Tiv could not get used to pronouncing their name correctly and so called them Genyi. The plural form is Ugenyi, when they are more than one person. Thus the Tiv and Ugenyi lived together in peace. There were no quarrels. However, they did not live in the same villages together.

## Chapter Three

### AKOMBO

Tiv were practising *akombo* a long time ago. However, their *akombo* were divided into only three types. These were *twer*, *ilyum*, and *ihaambe*. These were all the *akombo* that they then practised. These were the ones which when they married by exchange, they would set up in front of the door of the wife's house for rites to be performed over. In those days, there were only a few people versed in the practice of *akombo*. They were so few, that in some cases a whole clan would boast of only one single *akombo* practitioner; such a person was known as the *or soron twer*, the man who treats illnesses. This was because the treatment of disease was the first and main job of the *akombo* practitioner.

The reason why there were only a few *akombo* practitioners was that the practitioner had to be a mature person of middle-age at least, had to be keen in witchcraft, and to be a noble man at the same time. Such people also had the know-how and authority to pass on the secrets involved in practising witchcraft. Because in those ancient days, if you were young, you would not dare get yourself introduced to the practice of *akombo*, no matter how powerful and rich you were. You could not behave the way people do these days. It is not altogether clear how the practising of healing the sick came to be called *akombo*.

However, some people say that it was all due to the behaviour of a certain rich man who created the circumstances that led to the treatment of illness being called *akombo*. That rich man was also very selfish. No one knew how to persuade him to become a generous man. He hoarded lots of wealth just for himself alone. One day his son became ill. The son was receiving a lot of treatment but was not getting any better. He was at the point of death. When the elders observed the boy, they were able to correctly diagnose the sickness the boy was suffering from. Nevertheless, they did not disclose to the father the sickness the boy was suffering from. The elders took counsel among themselves. One of them, who had experience in the treatment of the sickness, sent one of the elders to go to the rich man and tell him that the local healer says he knows the treatment for the rich man's son's sickness and that he was willing to come and treat the boy so that he would be healed completely and quickly. The elder went and delivered the message to the rich man whose son was ill. The rich man was pleased to hear this. He told the elder to go and fetch the healer to come and heal his son because he was overwhelmed with grief over his son's illness. The elder went and gave the rich man's message to the elder who was the local healer. Therefore, these two elders together with a group of other elders went to the rich man to attend to his sick son. The rich man welcomed them and offered them seats to sit down upon. He lit some pipes for them to smoke. After they had finished smoking, they spoke to the *akombo-akaa*, the nickname for the rich man. '*Akombo akaa*' is literally 'a hoarder of things', i.e. a stingy man. They asked him about the welfare of his home. He said that other than his son's illness, his family was well but that his son's illness overwhelmed him with grief. And that yesterday, when he was told by one of the elders that a healer knew the treatment for his son's illness, he was overjoyed when he saw them.

They told him that it was right for him to rejoice. That was why they had come. They told him that it was because he had hoarded many things and refused to be generous, that that was at the root of his son's illness. 'Now that your son is ill, we have to treat him to get him to become well again.' The rich man said he was pleased they had come, that he greatly rejoiced over their visit.

So the healer got up and started the treatment. The first thing he demanded of the rich hoarder was that he should bring a chicken to show his joy at their coming. After the hoarder's rejoicing or *ember*, then the healer would dispense the medicine. He told the rich hoarder that he must bring four chickens. The hoarder quickly brought the four chickens, without any delay.

The local healer went into the bush and brought back the leaves of the *chiha*<sup>26</sup> and *nyihar*<sup>27</sup> trees, the bark of the *kovor* tree, and the iron head of an axe, and placed them on the ground. He slaughtered the four chickens and sprinkled their blood on those items. Then he removed the feathers and burned them in the fire. He butchered the chickens and cooked them. Meanwhile, the other elders sat back and waited patiently for the chickens to cook. When they were all done, the healer got up and told the rich hoarder to call for the food which the elders would eat along with the cooked chickens. When the food was brought, the local healer got up and took the cooked chickens from the fire. The healer gave the head of the chicken to his patient, also, the feet of the chicken and a wing. He served this with some *ruam* to the patient.

The local healer then shared the rest of the meat among the elders and himself. They all feasted together. They were refreshed. Their hearts were at rest and at peace. They called the rich hoarder and asked him to bring some water with which they would pronounce blessings on him. For although he had previously shown only wickedness to the community, today they were received in his house; he had shown them some hospitality, and so they would bless him. The rich hoarder went and brought a cup of water. They did *hamber ifan* — that is, sprayed water from their mouths — thus taking the curse away from him and the household. After all this was done, the local healer went into the bush for the second time. He brought the leaves that he used in his practice to treat the illness the boy had. All that he had done earlier were just tricks to find ways to get or extort money from the stingy, rich hoarder. He called for the boy to be brought out. He touched the ears of the pot. He then put the medicine leaves in the pot. He said the pot should be heated over the fire and that the boy was to be bathed or washed with the medicine. He was to drink porridge made with the liquid from the medicine.

He also said that the boy was to be massaged with the medicine. After he had finished all this, he demanded his *agba*, a fee. The stingy rich hoarder asked how much he was to pay. The local healer told him to pay *kpakem bar môm tsô*, only a standard measure of salt. The rich hoarder paid. The elders then dispersed and went to their homes, saying, today we have treated the son of *akombo*, the hoarder. When people asked what treatment had been given, the elders would answer that it was just medicine and that he had paid the required fee as well.

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<sup>26</sup>West African Copaiba balsam tree.

<sup>27</sup>Latin: *Bauhinia reticulata*.

In the course of time, the son of Akombo Akaa was healed of his disease. When people saw this they started saying, wow, that elder treated Akombo and the healing happened. Therefore, people started referring to treatment with the use of medicine leaves as *akombo*. They started referring to *agba* as *agbar a akombo*. They called the first stage of the treatment process *ember*, gladden, which is what the rich local hoarder did when he rejoiced at first seeing the elders who had come to treat his son.

Thereafter the Tiv continued *sôron*, or practising *akombo* of different types. They started copying some from the neighbouring ethnic groups as well. When the Tiv got more involved in practising and initiating more and more people into *akombo* rites, they organized and structured the practice of *akombo* in the form in which it is practised to this day.

When the Tiv started practising *akombo* and initiating others into it, they divided it into two classes. These are the *akombo* of birth and the *akombo* of hunting. The birth type included the rites for crops or farming. And *akombo* of hunting are also those for arrows or hunting weapons. Although there is a plethora of *akombo*, there are actually basically just two types. After much time passed, the Tiv got involved in yet another type of ritual or practice called *kuraiyol*, protect the body, which are protective charms. Although the Tiv have two types of *akombo*, they actually invented only one type. They learned the other two from other ethnic groups.

Some of the *akombo* of birth were imported from the Ugenyi. The Tiv invented the *akombo twer*, that is, the treatment of illness. Later they added *ilyum* and *ihambe*. All the others were imported from different sources and ethnic groups into Tivland. The Tiv themselves invented nothing of *akombo a ikôr* — those for hunting — not even one. They practised it exactly as they had been taught by those from whom they imported them, right down to the offering of alcohol to the *akombo* for hunting. The type of alcohol, *tashi*, was also imported from the Ugenyi. The Ugenyi are also addicted to *tashi* and they want it to be there anytime they want it. When they do not have it, they become desperate. They are prepared to make anything do, even fermented cereal, which is less alcoholic, or even sorghum or guinea corn powder brew.

*Biamegh* is one kind of hunting *akombo*. *Biamegh* were imported into Tivland from the Udam. The Tiv people were initiated into *kuraiyol* protective charms by the Hausa ethnic group. The Tiv clans most involved in the *kuraiyol* type of *akombo* are the Shitire, Ukum, and Ugondo, together with the Nôngov and Iharev. Kparev do not know much about *kuraiyol*. People can and do buy *kuraiyol*. That is how it is acquired. You do not get it through some initiation process as is the case with other types of *akombo*. Another name for *kuraiyol* is *ishember*, meaning a thing or an article.

Tiv people acquired *akombo a ikôr*, the one for hunting, from the Ugenyi and other ethnic groups. The following is a list of this type acquired from the above ethnic groups which are:

Chakpa	Ugbondo	Achuku	Dzebo	Yaku
Abetse	Jam	Ikado	Fano	
Diogo	Adze	Unyer	Kaste	
Huwa	Anyia	Ugbur	Akese	

PRACTISING *AKOMBO* (BIRTH OR CHILD-BEARING *AKOMBO*)

If a woman is barren, she is treated with child-bearing *akombo* to be healed of her barrenness. The same procedure is carried out when it is feared that the harvest will otherwise be poor. Sometimes, when domestic animals are not healthy or even begin to die or have skin disease, the same procedure will be used to arrest and reverse such situations. And if a human being is afflicted with some sort of *akombo* curse, this too can be treated and healed using the same procedures.

THE HUNTING *AKOMBO*<sup>28</sup>

When a hunter's fortune has taken a turn for the worse, he might resort to *akombo* to improve his prospects for good fortune and to kill much game. Or it could be a trader or businessman or one who is no longer succeeding in making money or who has started losing money — all these would go through the *akombo* process to attract effective demand for their goods or services so that they would grow rich. Sometimes *akombo* can be used to attack rather than to heal. Such attacks can take different forms causing physical injuries and sometimes causing a person to fall on an arrow and be injured.

*Kuraiyol* is for all sorts of protection from different types of danger — for example, it can protect you from snake bites so that you can tread or step on a poisonous snake without being bitten. And if you do not see the snake and step over it, the snake would die there and then. With yet another type of *kuraiyol*, if you meet a wild beast alone in the wilderness, it would not be able to harm you. Of if you go to war you would not be shot, and if you are shot, no weapon could penetrate your skin. Another *kuraiyol* could protect you so that you could even ride a wild horse and it cannot knock you off its back. Another person may acquire his *kuraiyol* in order to unseat other horse riders, right off their horses' backs. Other people want *kuraiyol* to show that they are strong, so that no one can wrestle them to the ground. There is another type of *kuraiyol* able to make the owner invisible. If people waylaid you to attack you or to kill you, you would simply disappear from view. You may have another type of *kuraiyol* which enables you to show great powers of persuasion, oratory, reason or logic, so that you could not be convicted in any court of law. Another kind of protection *kuraiyol* offers is to gain favour with those in authority and power and to be loved by the Whiteman. The protection here is that the Whiteman would always make certain that you are never blamed for any wrong-doing whatsoever. So you have the authority to do whatever you wish to do, without any risk of punishment from a Whiteman. Another *kuraiyol* would make sure that any woman you want would love you so much that she would reject all other suitors for you. Another could be acquired to ensure that one becomes a local chief, over all others who may wish to occupy the seat themselves. Another *kuraiyol* indicates reliability, and would bring honour, praise and promotion from whites.

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<sup>28</sup>This sub-heading is scribbled out in the Tiv typescript.

PROTECTIVE EMBLEMS OF *AKOMBO*

Every type of *akombo* has its particular protective emblems. The *akombo* are known or defined by the kind of emblems seen with them. To cast a spell to stop a person from touching something that requires protection, the Tiv put a guardian emblem on it. Or they may fear that their farm could be ruined by witchcraft.

To keep the farm safe from witchcraft, they prepare an *akombo* because of witches and thieves they fear: in order for one to be there to stop people from destroying the farm, they instead put an *akombo*. Then it is said the farm has been protected. When the guardian emblem is put on the farm for protection, that physical object, an emblem, is called a *yangenev*.

THE *LOUGH* POT

Every kind of birth *akombo* has both a protective emblem and an earthenware pot. What is called *yangenev* is the object that indicates its prohibitions/spell; some have some emblems such as leaves. The *lough* pot has a rope tied to its neck and that in turn is tied to the local meeting hut called the *ate*. If you enter in a rich man's local *ate* or meeting hut, look up and you will see *lough* pots for different types of *akombo*. But the *akombo* of *agashi* (which affects the nose) does not have a *lough* pot but only a wooden container or slab. Throughout Tivland, there is no *lough agashi* but there is *kpande agashi*. The meaning of *lough* in the Tiv language is 'what is added to or fixed loosely'. For instance, if you loosely fix an arrow to a thing and it is not firm, it is said you have only done it loosely. Also, if a man builds a house but after a while the bricks lose firmness and he then uses the left over bricks to reinforce the house but it is not as firm as the first time, it is said the man has loosely fixed his bricks on the house. The above is the meaning of *lough*. Therefore, the meaning of *lough* shows that *lough* itself is not an *akombo*, but only what has been joined on to an *akombo*. *Mpev* in local parlance means to touch or violate the *akombo* because of something being kept in the pot. If something is kept in that pot and one puts his hand in to remove it, it is said the man has invaded or touched the *lough*. Every *akombo* affecting birth has a *lough*, but the *akombo* for good luck has no *lough* but only protective emblems. The meaning of *peven akombo* is to receive punishment for transgressing the *akombo*. If it is said to you that you have encountered suffering, it may mean you are suffering from *pev*, the violation of the *akombo*. That is the meaning of *peven akombo* among the Tiv.

*MSER*: FIXING UP

*Mser* means to treat the suffering one gets from violation of the *akombo*. If one touches an *akombo*, it affects him. The meaning of *soron* is to treat something to become normal and that is why sometimes it is called *mser*.

*MEMBER*: GLADDENING

When a man touches an *akombo*, he must first be gladdened, or if he intends to be initiated into the *akombo* that must be done later. The meaning of *member* is like

when you are relieved or happy. This means you are celebrating to have *mkpe iyol*, a feeling of health and relief. That is the meaning of *member u akombo*.

#### AGBAR AKOMBO: TREATMENT

If one is affected by an *akombo* and a rite is celebrated for you or you are initiated, what is offered by you for this treatment is known as *agbar akombo*, the recompense.

#### IHIRA GBEREN: FOR GOOD LUCK

*Ihira gberen* is an expression for the *akombo* of good luck only. It is only when one's luck is no longer shining that one looks for a person to treat him. The *akombo* master then performs his rite. The meaning of *mil* and *mgbe* is like when one's eyes are not shining because of evil; the practitioner makes his eyes shine.

#### MKÔR: HOLD OR OBTAIN

*Akombo a kôron* means mastery. It is when one is initiated into an *akombo* that he can use it to treat others.

#### KWAGH WUAN SHA AKOMBO, MAN M-UR: SHEDDING BLOOD FOR PROPITIATION

Both the *akombo* of birth and good luck are treated by the shedding of the blood of animals, or using alcohol and flour put together. The meaning of shedding blood is for the *mkpe-iyol* meaning health for the person treated. Because if a person is treated for his sickness and blood is not shed, he will not be protected. So when the treatment is done and even when there is plenty of meat, a fowl must be slaughtered and its blood sprinkled, then the person being treated must be well. The treatment and well-being is in the blood of fowls and goats. Some elders do say the mixing of alcohol and flour can substitute for the blood of animals, like feeding ancestors to make them happy and bless the person, to treat with good luck. These are the things involved in the *akombo* of birth and good luck. Later, we shall review other *akombo*, their treatment, initiation and prerequisites, but the one for protection, the *kuraiyol*, is different.

#### KURAIYOL: BODY PROTECTORS

*Kuraiyol* as an *akombo* has no *lough* pot; it has no protective emblem and does not require initiation, and it is bought. Everything concerning personal protection of *kuraiyol* is done in secret. It is not done in the open as are the rites for birth and good luck *akombo*.

One can see the sign or evidence of body protectors, *kuraiyol*, when people wear an amulet charm and belt, or a magical leather band on their arm, or have a native



antimony powder put on the eye. The native cosmetic powder is the medicine meant for women. Some tie amulets to their belts, and others put them in their caps and wear them on their heads. Some amulets are for protection while others are used for other purposes. Each amulet has its unique function as I have already described, and the protective belts are also of different kinds.

The observer cannot differentiate between the powers of one amulet or another: only the owner knows. On the other hand, an observer would know the powers of an amulet if he had once had and used one like it.

Another sign used for protection, or *kuraiyol*, is a horn. Some people use the horn of a male sheep, some use the horn of an antelope, and others use the tooth of a bush pig. If the horn is to be used for protection, some medicine is put into it and a red piece of cloth is tied around the tail-end of the horn and a space is designed so as to tie it on the belt around the waist.

This type is called *madugu*. *Magudu* is a Hausa name and the Hausa people do call it *maidufu*, 'one of darkness', or *rayanzana*, the 'terror'. The meaning of *maidufu* is somebody in the dark. This protection is for thieves and if a person with it steals and is being pursued, the amulet will hide him and those pursuing him will come close to him but will not see him.

Another protection is called *umalu*. The Hausa used to wash out a wooden utensil with some inscriptions written in it and give it to the person who wanted this type. In some instances, you may see a person without an amulet, belt, feather or horn, but you should not think the person is without protection; he may be drinking from the *umalu*, a stealth cup.

If you are familiar with the Hausa ethnic group, you need not be told, you know that the Tiv people get the above protections from them. Not just the Tiv people are doing this. Ethnic groups other than the Tiv have adopted protective emblems from the Hausa. Amongst the Tiv, the majority of those who seek such protections are those who find work with British government workers and acquire much wealth. If you could collect statistics of the things they spend their money on, it would be mostly on alcohol, women, gambling, and seeking protection. But it is seeking protection from charms that takes much of their money. Every chief in Tivland near Hausa settlements have obtained their protective emblems for the *kuraiyol* from the Hausa.

In the old days, the Tiv people used to get *kuraiyol* in order to fight wars and win, but nowadays, since the wars with bows and arrows are over, there is another war called Tortamen, the big chief. Where have the Tiv people heard of this war before?

From all those years until now, some Tiv chiefs are still buying protections made of amulets and drinking *malu* from the Hausa so as to be loved by the Whiteman and thereafter appointed senior chiefs. Other chiefs are afraid that they may be removed, so are buying *kuraiyol* from the Hausa people.

#### AKOMBO A MAR: BIRTH AKOMBO<sup>29</sup>

These are the *akombo* of *mar*: *ihaambe* and *twer*, *ilyum* and *ichigh*, *biamegh* and *swende*, *ahina* and *swange*, *igbe* and *ikungu* and *iwa*; *dôôr*, *wan Aôndo*, *ingbianjôr*

<sup>29</sup>This brief section in the Tiv manuscript lists a number of *akombo* practised at the time Akiga did his writing; however, it appears this entry may have been an afterthought or a set aside: it has

and *atsewe*, *lough* and *ikôôr* and *indieregh*, *atsenge* and *ikombo*, *agashi* and *wayo* and *megh* and *imbuwa*.

### *IHAMBE I ICHIGH KI ITYÔUGH: MEDICINE FOR THE HEAD*

In the *ihambe i ichigh ki ityôugh*, a wasp or hornet, *ihambe*, is fashioned or stuck to the door at the left-hand side of an entrance to a room. The insect shape is designed using two pegs, one with a sharp point and the other without. The one with a sharp tip is called *ihambe* and the other without a sharp point is called *mtam*. On installation, some buttons or beads cover the two pegs and three chameleon-like structures are put in the midst of the beads or buttons together with the *ihambe* and *mtam*. The names of the chameleon-like structures are *ichigh*, *ikarika* and *ator*. The *ichigh* leaves for medicine are from a branch without many thorns but with long thick leaves. It is the main medicine. The *ikarika* plant, a succulent, has no leaves but has branches. Its branches serve as its 'leaves'. It exudes sap that is noxious, corrosive, and if it touches one's eyes and they are not well treated, the eyes become damaged with cataracts. Some people use the sap to treat stomach-aches. If one has a stomach problem and wants to purge, the sap is extracted and put in a pot and an egg is broken and mixed with it and this is cooked on the fire. The person then drinks and it purges him and he becomes better. That is the meaning of *ikarika*. The leaves of the *ator* plant are not thick but are used as medicine for the treatment of wounds. The leaves are roasted and then the water content is extracted and mixed with copper rubbed off on a grindstone and the paste put on the wound. The wound then heals. This treatment is also applicable for eye problems.

But the *ihambe i ômbangôu* [mother's relations] is not kept together with the medicine for the treatment of headaches. If one's mother's relations visit, they will install the *ihambe i ômbangôu* close to the women of your kinsmen. If you are initiated by your mother's relatives, then you have the powers to treat young women from your matrilineal line. But if you are initiated by your mother's relatives, leaves may not be applied at the shrine. The *ihambe i ichigh ki ityôugh*, emblems of the kinsmen, and *ihambe i ômbangôu*, emblems for an aunt of the mother's relation, have the same method of treatment but the only difference is that in the *ihambe i ichigh ki ityôugh*, a male animal is slaughtered while with *ihambe i ômbangôu*, a female animal is slaughtered.

### *MPEV MI: TO TOUCH IT*

If you transgress or touch the protective emblem, it will affect you: your crops on the farm will be destroyed. The crop's leaves may become reddish in colour. When you notice this, you consult a diviner. If you are discovered to be the one involved, you arrange to get it fixed. To 'gladden' and fix this is with a head of livestock and a 'twenty'. When those things are arranged, you gather everybody in your house,

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been crossed out by hand in the typescript. The title relating to birthing *akombo* does not seem to be an appropriate heading here, but is presented as written.

with a fowl openly. The person you call on to treat you then roasts it and hangs it on a peg-post on your door and you give him 'ten'. If it is the *ihambe i itiô* [paternal] that you are propitiating, then you give 'ten' of two *kobo* [pence], and when it is for the *ihambe i igba* [maternal], you give only one *kobo*. (In the old days, it was two *bashi*.) Then the person who comes to fix it for you will take flour and pour it all over your body. The fixing is done. Your crops then start being fruitful once again. But you, who have been fixed up, will not in turn be able to fix up another person; you were not initiated. If you attempt to celebrate or treat another person, you once again transgress. Your crops will become worse than they were initially.

### MKÔR NA: INITIATION

To become initiated with the *akombo* of *ihambe*, you must provide a cow or a bar of European iron called *sokpo*. This is for the *akombo* affecting crops. A situation where a real cow is demanded has a dual function; one called *biamegh* and the other called *ikombo*. The others do not require a real cow but substitute an iron bar, *sokpo*. To be initiated, you produce a 'cow' and also a fowl to give to the person initiating you. Then a wasp-shrine is constructed and the fowl is slaughtered and its blood sprinkled on it. Your wife prepares food and cooks the fowl and you are initiated. Then you are given prerequisites under the control and the installation of the 'shrine'. You are now eligible to treat another person who is affected.

### AKUVE A TWER: ITEMS AT THE 'SHRINE'<sup>30</sup>

The items used at shrines differ but the treatment is the same. Stones are put at the left-hand side of the entrance of a structure. These are called *akuve* and are put in a circle, with the emblem for treatment in the centre. The carved figure for the treatment area is made from a Iroko tree in the shape of a male human figure and placed at the centre of the stones and then it is called *ijir i sôron kwagh* or a place to fix things.

Also at the *akuve* shrine are grasses called *ikanka*. Also, a drum made out of the *iroko* tree is kept outside the structure. The drum is made like this: a male goat is killed and skinned and the skin is stretched over both the open mouth and the bottom of the wood. Leaves of the *iroko* tree are used to cover it. The reason for using *iroko* leaves is that it has meaning during the process of trying to find the truth of a person. During the treatment phase, the *twer* drum was sometimes hung on the *mtam*, a post, but when the ritual was completed, the drum was hung openly in the meeting house. Some people call it the *mtam* drum, while others call it the *twer* drum.

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<sup>30</sup>Use of the word 'shrine' for the place where the *yangenev* or protective emblems of an *akombo* are stored is problematic, if used in the western, Christian sense. Tiv do not have shrines *per se*, but construct storage places for religious artifacts to be kept safely, or build arches or put up posts which are the protective emblems of the *akombo*.

*ER TWER KA U KOR OR YÔ: WHEN A PERSON IS AFFECTED BY AN  
AKOMBO*

*Twer* is the *akombo* related to birthing or fecundity. Sometimes when a woman stops bearing children, she consults an oracle and discovers that she is affected by an *akombo*. Sometimes a man also fails to be fertile and is also struck down and affected by the *akombo* and needs treatment.

*MSÔR U TWEREGH: THE TREATMENT, OR FIXING IT*

When a person is affected by an *akombo*, he buys an animal, plus two chickens, and adds a 'twenty'<sup>31</sup> as compensation for treatment. Then the affected person finds a local healer who is initiated in all the *akombo* of the land and he presents his problem before him.

The local healer will send a small child to call together all his kinsmen who are initiated into the same cult, to come and witness that he is treating another person.

The next morning, all the kinsmen gather and the man of medicine, the healer, calls the person to be treated to produce the items he has requested for the treatment for his kinsmen to witness. For the treatment, the healer takes a small quantity of the *kwariyogo*, sacrificial 'meat', in his hand and mixes some water with it and uses his finger to touch the person to be treated on the back of the right hand and then touches the shrine.

After this the healer takes the chickens and touches the shrine and then the person to be treated. He does this twice, and while he does this he says that the person to be treated will be healed and be well.

Thereafter the healer kills the two chickens and puts their blood on the posts, and he does same with the animal too. After this ritual, both the chickens and the animal are roasted and cooked for the people to eat, but the healer saves the loin of the animal for himself. When the meat is done, the healer calls the person to be treated to come and stand at the site and then the meat is brought and he starts the treatment. During the treatment, the healer selects parts of the chicken, such as the thighs, the wings, the liver, the back or one wing and puts these in a calabash. He then takes it towards the person to be treated and says: 'The sun for the male child, the moon for the female child'; he cuts some *ruam* and tosses it toward the east. By throwing away the food, the sun is thus given food. After this, the healer takes the meat on the calabash and gives it to the person to be treated. The healer again takes the meat of the animal and performs the same ritual and then his kinsmen are allowed to eat the rest of the meat. After eating, the *mur* rite still remains to be done.

*Mur* is a practice where a little flour is poured in a calabash with water and drunk by the person being treated. When all this has been accomplished, the person being treated gives the *ortwer* a 'consideration' payment which is called *ikundu*, twenty rods, a unit of money. Then all kinsmen are allowed to disperse. The person to be treated becomes healed. Even if he was impotent or infertile, his sickness is healed.

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<sup>31</sup>Twenty refers to a cloth that has twenty strips sewn together, a relative value, like 'he owes me a bundle.'

*TWER KÓRON: TO OBTAIN THE TREATMENT*

When a person is interested in buying the treatment for any sickness, he first arranges for some drinks secretly, without disclosing it to anybody. He then goes to his maternal relations to a local healer who can give him the treatment he is looking for. The local healer is invited over to come and initiate him. When the drinking is done, the healer goes into the quiet thought of night before he starts to perform the initiation process. For the initiation, the person interested to be initiated brings an animal. The man of medicine installs a shrine and receives the animal from the person interested in buying the treatment. The healer then calls the interested person to stand close to the shrine. He takes the animal and slaughters it and touches the man, and pours blood on the shrine emblems. He cuts off the head and hangs it on one peg at the propitiation site; the rest of the meat is cooked during the night. The following morning, when the kinsmen of the person who was initiated come around to drink, they notice the blood at the door of the initiated person with dismay. They ask in surprise whether the person invited them to come because he bought a treatment or because he wanted them to see his just-installed 'shrine' emblems. The person initiated then gives drinks to his kinsmen and to a member of his kinsmen who has the same powers as the local healer who just installed the propitiation emblems. He will take a stone from the person just initiated and break the stone into pieces according to the number of families and sets the fee for the treatment. The person just initiated then enters into the room and brings money to divide among the people there. After this, he presents a fowl from his kinsmen to the local healer, who will slaughter it and splash blood on the money. The protective emblem for *ikombo*, a sickness where a child's skull fontanelle remains divided into two, is triangular stones. This is done for *vande*, a sickness where the stomach is as cemented as a rock, or constipated like wooden planks.

When the above rituals have been performed, the fowl is cooked and those who have already been initiated are given the meat to eat. They also take the money given earlier and share it.

The process of initiating a member is costly; since sometimes the value or money needed is *ikundu* 'twenty,' while at other times a cow is demanded. When the maternal relative who is the *akombo* master is through with the initiation process and is about to leave, money is given to him twenty-fold. Then you become initiated and are able to treat people affected by these diseases. You can also attend the initiation of another person and take your share.

*ILYUM: AKOMBO FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE*

This is an *akombo* for the well-being of the people that is, setting the land right. In former times, whenever the people were no longer prospering in their farms or when hunting yielded no meat and women were unable to conceive, the elders of the land assembled at the *ilyum* and intoned words so that the land would be well. The *ilyum* was a tall stone boundary marker placed in between one clan district and another. Nowadays, people no longer gather at or assemble at the *ilyum*.

During the period when the Tiv people had become divided, they assembled at the Guardian Arch, the *iwoyangegh*. This is also a marker placed in between two

districts. This one is erected with two forked posts with a pole is placed on the top from one side of the road to the other. The reason for this construction was that anybody with evil intentions who stooped to pass through the two posts would die. These were two kinds of *akombo* rites used to seek the people's well-being — that is, to set the land right.

### BIAMEGH: A GREAT AKOMBO

The *biamegh* rite has three acquisition stages: the arrangement, the initiation, and the setting-right treatment.

During the arrangement, the person interested in being initiated in the mastery of *biamegh* will find the money for the consideration fee. The person interested installs the *ilyum*, the big tree drum at his village. Everybody interested in being initiated with the *biamegh* gathers at night and practises songs for the initiation. The boys and the girls give themselves up to merry-making and singing. When the time for the initiation approaches, the announcer takes *ikundu*, the consideration, to the person who has the necessary powers, one who is fully initiated and has propitiated the *biamegh poor*. He asks him to come and perform the initiation rite.

### MKUM U BIAM: TO DRUM THE OCCASION

When the local healer who was called comes to do the initiation, he is given a fowl by the person who proclaimed the *biamegh*. The master ties a rope to the fowl and hangs it around the neck of a female relative of the person to be initiated. The girl, with the fowl hanging around her neck, starts to pound millet to make drinks for the occasion and sings songs. When the pounded grain is ready, she sets it aside to soak and sets some aside in a basket.

The basket with some of the pounded grain is placed in front of the local healer, who puts in his hand, takes out a pinch, and puts it into the water. Then the master tells the girl to take the mash away and soak it. This is accompanied by singing. All those who intend to be initiated with the *biamegh* perform the same rituals and also soak their grain. The news spreads amongst the people that a certain person is brewing beer for the *biamegh*.

When the day for beer-drinking arrives, the man who proclaimed the *biamegh* takes a dish and lines it with pieces of buffalo hide that has been cooked with fermented seeds of locust-bean and palm oil. He gives the beer to his wife or daughter, and goes with her to tell the master, taking with him the *ikundu* 'twenty'. Then he returns home again, and on the day on which the master is due to arrive, goes out and awaits his coming, taking some beer and the dish with the buffalo hide. This is known as 'The Roadside Watch'.

### MSER: THE RITE

When the healer arrives, those who want to be initiated assemble and set a fire by the roadside. Each of the candidates provides a fowl and some drinks and pieces of hide for the master. The healer collects the fowls and slaughters these and gives

them to the children to roast. The healer cuts the drumsticks, the wings, and the head and gives these to those who intend to be initiated at this time; it is night already. Then they enter the meeting place for the ritual and the man who proclaimed the *biamegh* provides a big pot of drinks near the *wuna*, a storage bin. Only a fool would bring an absurd number of chickens but those who have been through the rite before take some from him and hide them saying, 'See, the quarry has fallen into the net!' They also take with them the pieces of hide and the locust-been seeds, and grind these on a big grindstone.

Now everyone who is being initiated goes to the outdoor meeting place, surrounded by members of his own party for support, to endure the moment of peril, or the time of possible destruction. The master proceeds with the rites. He takes a chicken and makes the passes, circles it around his head six times for the man who he is initiating.

Then the healer begins the initiation. He takes a fowl and moves it towards the person to be initiated six times, after which he asks the initiate to hold the fowl by the head. The healer then cuts the fowl and puts its blood on the pots; he gives the drumsticks, the wings, and the gizzard to the initiate. The master takes up some *ishuragh* grains, small seeds like black pepper. This is the trap set for the weakling. He throws one grain into the pot and tells the initiate to pick it out. Now, if you had any sense you would have put some of the same kind of seeds in your mouth, or in your hand. He tells you to take the seed out and produce it and give it to him when he tells you. If you can't, everyone would laugh at you for being a fool for not using hidden seeds.

At the first light of day, the people burst out of the meeting area, shouting, 'The *dzembe* tree shall wither,' which means an elephant has fallen. A weak man would be distraught by this cry. And so the dawn breaks. All who have undergone the initiation start to dance the *biamegh* dances.

#### MDZE U SHIN HUR: A VISIT TO THE WILD PLUM TREE

The master, after the *biamegh* initiation, takes the people initiated to a wild plum tree. Each has a fowl. The master then collects the fowls from them, cuts off their heads, and throws them toward the rising sun. The persons initiated start to run around the wild plum tree, going backwards and forwards, saying, 'Mother, Mother, you have borne a son indeed! I have eaten hot peppers; I have taken black and fair women. Today, I have finally finished. I have been to the *hur* and have completed the *biamegh* today.' Meanwhile, a female relative of the initiate utters shrill tremolo ululation cries and rubs him with camwood. The master takes some *tashi*, the local gin, in his mouth and sprays it on the chest of the initiated person saying, '*Biam gagaga*, lost on the farm land, lost in the village.' Now the person is initiated into the *biamegh*. The person initiated returns back to his house, washes himself, dresses in new clothes, and celebrates with songs and taunts for those who have not been initiated. He is now a master of the *biamegh* cult.

#### POOR, POOR BIAM: INITIATION INTO POOR

When a person is initiated with the *biamegh akombo*, but does not visit the wild plum tree or master the *poor*, then he becomes only a *biamegh* initiand. He does

not have the power to perform the ceremony correctly for another person. To be initiated into the *poor* means you are in the final stage in obtaining mastery of the cult of *biamegh*. Many years ago, the master of the *poor* cult was equal in power or rank to a drum-chief. Whenever an animal was killed in the hunt and its front leg was not given to the drum-chief, as 'the arm of the land', the land would be spoiled, since the land was all under the hand of the chief. And the master of the *poor* would be given the centre part of the back of the animal because he was the one who set right the *akombo* to give good luck to the hunt, since the *poor* is the hunting *akombo*. Both the master of the *poor* and the drum-chief each had their own special portion of such a beast.

When a chief dies and a new one is expected, a person initiated with the *poor* shall not be appointed, because if he took portions of meat as chief, he would be taking double portions. A neutral person is then appointed, but if no reasonable person is available, the drum-chief seat will be vacant.

### *POOR KÔRON: THE PROCESS OF INITIATION INTO POOR*

This is the process of initiating a person with the *poor* rite: a person interested in mastering the *poor* summons a man who has undergone full initiation and is thus qualified to set the *biamegh* for others. When he comes, he asks the person interested in initiation to consent and then the person asks the healer how to proceed. The master tells the man that 'consent' means you pay for it. In former times 'consent' for the *poor* required a payment of twenty-four measures of salt.

When this amount has been presented, the master receives it and puts it on the ground. He asks for a local cloth called *tugudu* of twenty-four strips, as well as a feathered chicken. He slaughters the fowl and puts its blood on the stakes that support the *poor*. If you are yet to be initiated but have only agreed to be initiated, only one *poor* stake is installed on your shrine and the blood is put at the top of the pole. When a person is not yet fully initiated into the *poor*, he cannot fix up the ceremony for another person who suffers from *poor* and neither can he look at the *poor* emblems.

To be fully initiated, you must provide a cow, a fowl, and a sheep. There is another 'sheep' given at night. (This 'sheep' at night is a human being.) All these animals are slaughtered and their blood poured on the stakes of the *poor*. After this, the person to be initiated holds the head of a fowl in his left hand and a knife for *biamegh* in his right and goes around, *yaren kwan* [a frenzied movement], calling on his group.

When this is done about six times, the village people disperse and the *poor* 'shrine' is built at the initiand's premises. For the construction of the *poor*, select trees, *mtselama* and *mtsakombo*, are used for the upright poles and the cross-bars. The builder goes to the stream to get the clay and building sand. He works alone until the whole shrine is built. While work is going on, the builder is allowed to eat only meat. That is why if a person is found eating only meat, the Tiv people say he is behaving as if he is constructing a *poor* hut. Figures of animals such as a snake, a monkey, a lion, and a leopard are part of the construction. Once the construction is completed, the covers are removed and the village people gather and marvel at the beautiful handiwork, saying he has moulded the figures by witchcraft. The person who constructs the *poor* is the greatest of all the witches



because only through special witchcraft could someone build such a beautiful *poor* with such carved or moulded figures. Six stakes are planted to support the building, and six main poles form the framework of the roof. If you are frightened at having to kill so many people, you use only three poles.

#### *IKAV MBI KOSON SHA POOR*: THINGS KEPT AT THE *POOR* SHRINE

When a man finishes the construction of the *poor* shrine, he then looks for things to keep in it. During this time, any death that occurs is attributed to the construction of the *poor*. Whether a man dies by accident, a snake bite, during war, or from a headache, it is said that the person who constructed the *poor* shrine is paying the price for its construction with these human deaths.

Among the things kept at the *poor* shrine is a manatee skull known as the *ayu*. Also kept on the *poor* is the head of the Great Father, a witch who previously had the *poor* shrine and treated people affected with *biamegh* illness, and one who specialized in killing people to the extent that his kinsmen were afraid of him. If this man said that you would die, then you died immediately. The Tiv people called such a skull of the Great Father *ityôugh ki ter tamen* as there were very few of such in Tivland. At the shrine there is also kept a head of a Rufus Kob, a rust-coloured antelope, and a bush pig. There are some places in Tivland that treat *biamegh* illness with the head of a bush pig, while others do so with the head of *ayu* [a manatee, a rare river mammal that nurses its young like a person]. It is because of the head of the Great Father kept on the *poor* shrine that people are afraid of the shrine. It is this which brings so many people to their deaths. Sometimes a *poor* has only one head, sometimes several, according to the number of the great men in the group.

#### *OR U NENGEN SHIN POOR*: LOOKING INTO THE *POOR*

When a person is initiated into the *poor* and has installed the objects inside, he has reached the summit of his power within his group. He goes about performing the rites of *biamegh* and treating illness of the *biamegh*. When he dies, his head is cut off and put into the *poor*. It is such a big thing that is the cause of many deaths in Tivland. Another reason why some meet their deaths in respect to *poor* is this: if after being initiated into the *biamegh* one then goes about the rites of *biamegh* here and there bragging about it, then such a one is digging his grave. At some point an age-mate would say to him, 'I, so and so, am not a man to fool with. Do you think you can catch a leopard by the tail and play with it as though it were a civet cat? I tell you, I am a full master of the *biamegh*. I have laid my hands on the *poor* and have held the head of the Great Father against my breast.' (He implies that he is a candidate for initiation into the *poor* and has already reached the stage of consenting, having actually peeped into the *poor* shrine and touched the head of the Great Father.)

The person yet to be initiated is challenged by words of the initiated person. He goes back to his own group and tries to find the means to look into the *poor*. He goes to the master of the *poor* to be shown the *poor* so he can have strength too. If the *poor* is shown to him, he is asked to pay a price, which normally is a human being. If the person has a brother, he offers him but if he has none, his own life

is taken and his blood is put on the *poor* posts. Then people around would say that 'the dead man's curiosity has killed him.' (That is why the Tiv people have an adage that says 'a person who has eaten and eaten again his nuts without due attention, eats a rotten one.')

But when his child or another person is offered for sacrifice, the person who is shown the *poor* shrine, the place where feared cult objects are stored, he lives and goes about saying that he has seen the *poor* shrine but is still alive and the people praise him and say he is now a great man. Of his peers there is none like him. Even if he chooses to become a *poor* master, there is no stopping him, even the 'chickens' for the initiation abound. (The chicken referred to means killing human beings for it.) Once his peers hear this, they too become interested in taking a peek into the *poor* shrine, and embrace the head of the Great father so as to attain a new status amongst their peers and be praised. The curiosity of many people to see the items kept in the *poor* has led to many people's death for reasons of this kind.

*OR U YAN TOR, MAN SHI KÔRON POOR: A PERSON WHO IS MADE CHIEF AND ALSO INITIATED INTO THE POOR*

The *poor* master and chieftaincy are two and different things, but you occasionally find a man among the Tiv who is both chief and *poor* master. This happens like this. The elders never choose an old man to be chief, instead one of the younger men will be chosen as chief (as we have seen in the section on drum chieftaincy). He may still be alive as a chief when all the elders of his group are dead, including the master of the *poor*. In such a situation, people gathered around to ask him to now completely take over the leadership of the *poor* since there are no others left and he now being the eldest of the group to initiate the *poor* in order to achieve good luck for his people. The chief now becomes the master both of *poor* and of chieftaincy. This was the only way by which one could be a *poor* master and a chief in Tivland. But where there is a person courageous enough to be initiated into the *poor*, the chief transfers the functions of the *poor* to him. He acts on behalf of the chief for the people. However, if there is no courageous and responsible young person to be initiated into the *poor*, the chief remains master of both until his death. And his skull could be put into the *poor* shrine when he dies.

At times, two younger men emerge in the future within the clan. In such a situation, one will be the chief and the other, master of the *akombo*. Then their clan becomes good again; the people now say 'In the past our land was down with no leadership, but now it has been rightfully occupied'. The Tiv people derived these *poor* and *biamegh* cults from Ugbe and Udam people.<sup>32</sup> The Tiv people also derived their ideas about chieftaincy from the Hausa. This concludes all about *poor*.

*SWENDE: RELATED TO VIEWING VIOLENT SCENES*

If a person experiences a persistent cough, he knows the *swende* is affecting him. Sometimes it causes a pregnant woman to cough until she has a miscarriage. There

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<sup>32</sup>An ethnic group in the Cross River area of Nigeria.

are two kinds of *swende*: the dry and the wet. If somebody is killed with a cutlass or has a violent death and a woman walks over the blood, the *swende* will affect her. If a dog is killed in the presence of a woman, it affects her too.

The wet *swende* is set right by means of a male goat and a cock. Its protective emblem is the fruit of an oil palm. In the dry *swende*, the symptom is a severe cough. Only a slave of the Utyusha clan can perform the rite, not a free man. To be fixed, a male goat and cock is presented for sacrifice.

#### *AHINA*: TWINS

When a woman gives birth to twins, it is said she is affected with the *ahina*. It is set right by means of a forked stick and two chickens. A pair of bracelets is put on the hands of the woman. As for its protective emblem, it is the forked stick.

#### *SWANGE*: AFFECTING THE COLOUR OF THE BODY AND HAIR

This affects a person by making part of the skin white [vitiligo, in medical terms]. The person also grows fat and has lots of curly hair. For its treatment, a male goat, camwood and a fowl are presented. Its emblems are the stalks or chaff of red guinea corn.

#### *IGBE*: FOR FIXING LOOSE STOOLS

When a person is affected with *igbe*, he excretes blood with his stools or, if a person has a cut, lots of blood comes out. There are of two types: the senior *igbe* and the junior *igbe*. To fix the senior *igbe*, four fowl are required, while two chickens are used to fix the junior *igbe*. For its protective emblem, some knots are tied, at other times a small piece of a broken pot is used by those initiated into it. If you are not initiated into this and violate its protective emblem, it will affect you.

#### *IKUNGU*: EPILEPSY

This illness makes a person have a seizure or become epileptic. It happens suddenly and sometimes starts when the affected one is near a fire or in water such as a stream. When it affects a person in water and there is no one to assist him, the person drowns and dies. To put it right, only one chicken is needed. Its protective emblem is a strip of raffia tied around a piece of cotton wool.

#### *IWA*: THE BLACKSMITH

If a man is seized by *iwa*, his skin peels off, or he is struck by lightning on his farm, or he has pain in his loins that stops him from having children. The *iwa* is an important or big *akombo*. Its emblem is the clay nozzle used in the iron forge: slag from the furnace is also an emblem.

*DÓÓR*: SEXUAL IMPOTENCE

This *akombo* renders a person impotent when he attempts sexual intercourse with a woman. For its treatment, a fowl is presented and the person's lumbar region is massaged, and he also gives a 'ten' before he becomes well.

*WANAÔNDO*: WIND STORMS THAT DESTROY

This *akombo* is the brother of the *iwa* the *akombo* of the blacksmith, but is more powerful. The Tiv derived this from Ugenyi people. If one is affected by *wanaôndo*, one's house will be destroyed by strong winds and one's farm crops blown flat by the wind. To put it right, a fowl is presented. Its protective emblem is an axe-like stone called the *ijembeaôndo*.<sup>33</sup>

*ATSEWE*: BAD LUCK

This affects a person by bringing bad luck to him or giving him eye problems. The chickens can also be affected and at times they die. The person also experiences unproductive farming. It is fixed with two chickens.

*LOUGH*: WOMEN'S INFERTILITY

This *akombo* affects a woman's fertility. For its treatment, a pot and a shell are used and two fowls are killed, one in a pot and the other in the shell. They are then cooked some conjuration is made towards the woman who is then given the cooked meat. Men are also treated in this way. . After this, a snail shell is put in the pot and it is kept under the bed where she sleeps with her husband.

*IKÔÔR*: CESSATION OF MENSTRUATION

When *ikôôr* affects a woman, her menstrual periods stop or after she has had a number of children she cannot any more. If divination shows *ikôôr* is to blame, she goes to her first husband, or the man with whom she lost her virginity, and gets a chicken from him. She takes the chicken to an old woman. The old woman then takes a snail shell and hangs it around the neck of the woman, thus freeing her from *ikôôr*. She then takes the hen away with her. An old woman collects a number of shells as the protective emblems of *ikôôr*, threading them on a piece of string and using them for whatever she wishes to guard.

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<sup>33</sup>Stone celts, beautifully crafted, perhaps are Neolithic axe heads, which are found in the earth by farmers and considered to have come from Aôndo and to be his axes. These are used in the blacksmith rite, the *iwa*, as emblems.

*INDIEREGH: MISCARRIAGE*

This applies when a woman conceives but when the pregnancy is terminated by a miscarriage. If this occurs several times and when *indieregh* is the cause, a hen is purified for the cure. The woman's waist or lumbar region is also massaged, after which she becomes normal and bears children again.

*ATSENGE: CHILD'S GROWTH*

*Atsenge*<sup>34</sup> attacks children and prevents them from becoming strong; they remain weak and sickly, have pot bellies and their hair grows straight and soft on their heads. When this is discovered, the child is treated. Six moulded clay-sand figures are placed on a post on the back right-hand side of a room, along with pieces of broken native pots. That is all and the child is healed and develops well.

*IKOMBO: LACK OF GROWTH AND WELL-BEING IN A CHILD*

When *ikombo* (see *atsenge* above) affects a child, it causes reddish skin, soft hair and a furrow, the fontanelle in the skull, does not close well. For its treatment, a house rat is taken and a stick is inserted into its anus, up through its mouth, and it is put out to dry. On the day of treatment, a cock is taken. Three triangular stones are set next to a road. Food is made of flour and the cock is killed and cooked. A piece of local pottery is put on the stones, and when it is hot the dried rat is put on it to dry out. Then the rat is smashed up and made into a paste with oil. The child is rubbed with this oily substance. The child becomes stronger.

*AGASHI: SYPHILIS*

This illness affects a person's nose and he becomes disfigured. The person experiences dryness of the throat and constant coughing and chest pain or congestion and becomes weak to the point of death. If this is discovered, the person is treated.

*WAYO: THE SKIN ABSCESS*

This *akombo* belongs to the Ugenyi people: the Tiv copied it from them. When one is affected by this, it produces sores with deep cuts on your cheeks or hips with constant pus. The person's chest can also be affected with small sores producing pustules.

If it erupts on a person's body, it is fixed up or treated by purification. After this comes the gladdening. The gladdening is like this: the person treating him gathers local leaves called *umanatumba* and *ityembegh* leaves.

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<sup>34</sup>Kwashiorkor is an endemic, serious illness among children who lack dietary protein and have malnutrition.

He ties the leaves together. The person to be treated brings two fowl. The healer kills one fowl and puts the blood on the medicinal leaves he collected. The medicine man then removes some feathers from the fowl and puts these onto the leaves. After this, the children are allowed to take the fowl to be butchered and cooked. Then the person is treated. Afterwards, a 'fee' is discussed. If the person treated wants to get the protective emblem and the power to treat others, he gives a measure of salt to the healer, who in turn initiates him into the *akombo* to become a healer using the *umanatumba* leaves.

#### MEGH: POISON

When a person is affected by the *megh akombo* he falls and dislocates or fractures a bone while pursuing an animal in the bush. Or an old man, even in his own backyard, falls and fractures his bone. To fix this condition, a rope is made of spear grass with two strands. If you enter a person's meeting hut and see this rope, mind you, it is the protective emblem for the *megh*. It is treated by killing a fowl and a set fee is paid once or in five parts.

#### IMBUWA: STRENGTHENING OF BONES

A person affected by *akombo imbuwa* has fragile or brittle bones which are accompanied by a tingly or burning sensation. If pains are experienced in the bones, a diviner is consulted to see if treatment is needed. The affected person goes to the person who can treat him and offers a finger-length size portion of tobacco. This tobacco is dropped on the ground and the healer picks it up and touches it to the body of the affected person. Then the healer applies medicine to him. The medicine for this illness is the scented leaves of a plant called *kunguraku*.

#### IKÔR: HUNTING AKOMBO

The following are hunting *akombo* that the Tiv acquired from foreigners. They include *awashu*, *aôndonan*, *aginagya*, *atogafu*, *gajir*, *damtindi*, *aseta*, *gbatarabi*, and *mfe*.

The propitiation site of *awashu* consists of two trees of different species, *akinde* and *vambe*, the silk cotton tree, in the middle of a square stand constructed with four pillars. The stand can only be made from a certain tree known as *hokura*, whose bark is completely removed. A small clay pot is placed on the stand facedown. The leaves of another tree, the *ikura-nomso*, are woven and tied round the *akinde* and *vambe* and also around the four pillars of the stand and the neck of the small clay pot. After this, two sticks are craftily shaped with three rings at both the top and the bottom. These are driven into the earth as pegs. The small pot is taken and placed facedown in between the pegs and the pillars of the stand. The woven leaves are tied around the neck of the small clay pot. Near the clay pot, another article is placed upside-down, the half of *mgbar*. Together, the small clay pot and the *mgbar* are known as *akuveatwer*.

FIXING THE *AKOMBO*

The ritual of *awashu* is only employed if a man runs out of hunting luck and wishes to perform the rites of *awashu*. The man will first brew a local beer called *tashi*. When the brewing is completed, which takes up to six days, the master of *awashu* is invited to come and perform the rites. When the *akombo* master arrives, the man brings a fowl; the *akombo* master slaughters the fowl and pours the blood on all the items and then the fowl is given to be cooked. The man who initiated the rite also brings out meat. The fowl and the meat are cooked separately and a large quantity of ground beniseed is added to both. When both are well cooked, then it's time to chant. Mashed guinea corn flour is used as part of the food in the actual rituals. During the rituals, all those in the house of the performer will bring out all their bows and the women, their fishing nets, and put them near the *awashu* shrine [not to be confused with a sacred place of worship]. Then the *akombo* master will take a fowl, kill it and pour the blood on the *damtindi* and give it to be butchered and cooked; meat is also cooked and a large quantity of beniseed is added. When both are cooked, mashed flour is prepared and used in the actual libations. After the rituals, the master of the ceremony sprinkles them with either the flour or *tashi*; it's not very strict about what to sprinkle it with. After this, the master is paid by those who participated. One person may bring cotton wool, another tobacco, and since there is currency available nowadays, another may give one *kobo*, a penny. Then everyone takes away his weapon. This is the ritual of *damtindi*. Everybody that participated in the ritual will go on to make a talisman with the *igbende yiase* and attach four or five cowries to it. This ensures good luck in the hunt. Whenever one pursues an animal, the game becomes very weak and runs slowly and is killed.

*AGINAGYA*

The shrine for *aginagya* is erected with *vambe*, silk cotton tree wood and the wood of the *igadam*. Its rituals and rites are the same as those of *Aôndonan* and it is propitiated with a chicken and the local beer called *tashi*. This ensures a lot of good luck.

*ATOGAFU*

The rites of *atogafu* are also carried out with *tashi*, and a fowl is slaughtered and used with meat; people eat and drink in the same manner as in the rites of *awashu*.

*GAJIR*

The shrine for *gajir*, a night bow is erected by planting a *hokura* tree, two pegs, and a small clay pot. *Gajir* rituals also make use of the local beer and a fowl; it ensures hunting good luck. The person that performs the ritual of *gajir* can use arrows to shoot down game no matter how far away it is from him: he rarely misses a target. This is why when someone has great skill shooting arrows it is said that he has the blessing of *gajir*— he would even hit your raised finger. Rites for fixing all *akombo*

relating to arrows involve cooking meat with lots of beniseed; arrows that are foreign-made are sprinkled with *tashi* but the ancestral protective emblems for arrows are only sprinkled with flour. For *damtindi*, a mould of mud is cast near to the site where the *twer* is erected. Then a carved stick from a wild tree like a custard apple is thrust in the centre of the heap of mud. Two pillars and a small rod are made from a cashew tree. The pillars are erected around the heap of mud in the middle and the rod is placed across the pillars.

When someone runs out of luck and goes for divination, then *damtindi* is said to break the spell of ill-luck. So the person will buy a fowl, as do all those that wish to accompany him in the rituals. They do the same thing and the *akombo* master performs the rituals. People come and eat meat and the paste of the beniseed. *Awashu* has no restriction on who can eat; women, men, children all eat and drink a lot of the local beer. When all is done, the one performing the ritual sprinkles the local beer and the young men take up their bows and arrows and proceed on their hunting expeditions, where they kill a lot of game. The people will say it is because their father performed the ritual of *awashu* that they killed a lot of game.

#### AÔNDONAN SHRINE

The shrine of *Aôndonan* is made by planting a silk cotton tree to which is tied a cloth. The neck of a clay pot is placed on the ground near the *vambe* tree.

#### AÔNDONAN RITUAL

The ritual of *Aôndonan* is different from the *awashu* ritual. Someone that wants to perform the ritual brews the local beer *tashi* and sends for the *akombo* master. On the *akombo* master's arrival, the one performing the ritual brings out the *tashi* and a fowl. The *akombo* master slaughters the fowl and pours the blood on the shrine and hands it over to be cooked and used for the ritual. During the ritual, all the young men in the compound bring out their bows to the shrine and these are included in the ritual. After the ritual is completed, the *akombo* master gives the fowl to the people; they eat it and also drink the *tashi*. The young men retrieve their bows and take up their arrows and straightaway go hunting, where they kill a lot of game. People within the village eat the game meat with praise saying that it is due to the rites of *Aôndonan* just performed that there was a spell of good luck.

#### ASETA AND GBATARABI SHRINES

*Aseta* and *gbatarabi* shrines are erected together on a road that leads to another compound. The specific place to build the shrine is where the road branches. To erect the shrine, four pillars are cut from the *hokura* tree and are fixed into the ground, then the tender branches from the same *hokura* are cut and the bark is completely removed. These form the rods to cross over the pillars. The leaves of *ikura nomso* and the leaves of locust beans are wound round the pillars and the rods. Also *mgar* is fixed at the centre of the stand and is wound with the same



leaves. After this, skulls of some vertebrates are tied together with more *ikura nomso* and locust bean leaves and placed on the *aseta* stand. It is not uniformly done this way. In some places, the trunk of the *hokura* tree is cut down with many branches and once the bark is completely removed, the skulls are fixed onto the branches, not directly on the *aseta* stand. In some other places, when the bark has been removed from the *hokura* tree, they fix it behind the emblem, *door*, and skulls are tied to the branches and this is how the *aseta* shrine is erected. For the *gbatarabi* shrine, a particular tree, the *ir kwar*, which has vines from its branches, is erected near the *aseta* stand but not very close. *Yayoghor* is woven and wound around the base and the feather of the *gbev* bird, a Scops owl, is embedded in it. Then two stones are placed near the apex of the branches. Finally, a small clay pot and *ichenge*, a receptacle in which poisons are mixed, are placed on the two stones.

### ASETA AND GBATARABI RITUALS

*Aseta* and *gbatarabi* have the same rituals. The rituals did not always involve a fowl and using its blood. A fowl is killed the first time the shrine is erected and its blood is poured on the shrine when the ritual is performed. Afterwards, the meat is cooked with beniseeds. If you want to perform a ritual, you invite the *akombo* master or someone who is already initiated. In the old days, payments for the rites were made with a twist of tobacco and an arrow, but nowadays it is paid for with a *kobo* [penny] and a *deri* [Hausa: halfpenny], along with the fowl. The *akombo* master slaughters the fowl and pours blood on the *aseta* shrine and does the same with the *gbatarabi* shrine. After this, both chickens are cooked at the outskirts of the compound, and then some other meat is cooked with beniseeds. When they are done, *fufu*, mashed cassava flour, is used to complete the ritual. The *ruam* is only eaten by those initiated and by uncircumcised children. The day of the ritual is a very big feast occasion. For those initiated, and those who are neighbours with the Muslims, they usually compare it to the day of Muslims' festival of 'Id al-Fitr expressing their merriment. After this, porridge is sprinkled and that is the end of the whole process. When this is completed, everyone retrieves his own bow, as all the bows were collected by the *akombo* master and kept at the *aseta* shrine while the ritual took place.

### THE SHRINE OF MKU

Whenever one feels like erecting the shrine of *mku* and performing its rituals, he first goes to the master of the rite to express his intention. The master directs him to go and cut a log of *gbaaye* [ironwood] and uproot a small bundle of spear grass; he should also prepare a fowl, *kpagh* [camwood], and *ikehegh* [the seeds with magical powers]. The person returns having done all that the *akombo* master asked him to do. In the evening, the *akombo* master comes. He ties the spear grass to the ironwood log but does not cover it completely: allowance is made so that one end can be pushed into the ground. The *akombo* master weaves the spear grass tied to the log into two strands. Then he sticks the bare end into the ground. After this, he leaves. If his compound is distant, he goes to

the compound next door and waits until nightfall. When night falls and every household has eaten their evening meal, it is time for the ritual of *mku* to commence. The ritual of *mku* is not done during the daytime because if any of those who are not initiated saw how the rite was performed, a spell of bad luck would follow them.

When it is time, the *akombo* master comes back and the person performing the ritual brings all the items that were gathered and gives them to the *akombo* master. The *akombo* master now uses camwood to paint the shrine of *mku* and to mark the cheek of the one having the ritual performed. Then the *akombo* master takes the *ikehegh* seeds and he chews them, and spits toward where the sun rises, then toward where the sun sets, and on the shrine of *mku*. The master then gives the other *ikehegh* to the one performing the ritual and he does what the master did. After this, the master then slaughters the fowl and pours its blood on the shrine and gives it to be cooked nearby. When meat is also cooked, both the meat and the fowl are mixed with beniseeds. When they are well-cooked, the *akombo* master takes a portion of food from the middle to create a space, then takes the liver and the gizzard, together with the head, and puts everything into the space where the portion had been. He lifts it up toward the *akombo* shrine three times as an offering. Then the master invites the person asking for the rite to come forward and join in the ceremony. When he raises his hands to the right, the *akombo* master raises his hands to the left and if he lifts them to the left, another *akombo* master will raise them to the right. They will do this for a while before the master hands a portion of *fufu* made with cassava flour with some meat to him and he eats it. The master shares the rest of the meat with the initiated members present. After the libation and eating of the meat, sprinkling takes place. After all this, he who is initiated finds something for the woman who prepared the food, because if this is not done, she would be influenced by the power of *mku*, death.

### *MKU: DEATH*

Nobody ever sees *mku* in its shrine; it exists but it doesn't dwell in its shrine. The ritual for *mku* itself is different from the one done at its shrine. The purpose of each ritual is also different. The ritual at the shrine of *mku* is known as 'raising'. One does not say 'I am going to set right the *mku*' but that 'I am raising *mku*'. Its *itimbe* shrine is also different. The *itimbe mku* is an *akombo* to bring luck when hunting game. *Mku* itself is a rite observed after a person has nightmares about the dead, especially about a dead mother or father. This is just the way of it. Some people are of the view that *mku* is a very significant power. The ancients realized the significance of the rituals of *mku*. When the rituals are performed, beer and finely-ground flour are poured on the ground to give food to one's ancestors so that they will be happy with him and fill him with abundant blessings in all that he does, rather than appearing to him in dreams.

### *IBU: HUNTING RITUAL*

*Ibu* is a great *akombo* of hunting and its rituals are set off by brewing the local beer known as *tashi*. There are several ways to be affected by *ibu*. Even if you have not

had cause to perform the rituals before, you must perform the rituals whenever you kill a wild animal like a lion, leopard, or hyena, or dangerous prey like a bush cow, a roan antelope or wild boar. You have certainly violated it and must brew beer to set it right. The wild animals called *nyiam tswam* are very aggressive and dangerous ones such as bush cows, roan antelope or wild boar. *Inyamikume* on the other hand are wild animals that screech and roar like lions, leopards and wild dogs.

The hare is included in this group of animals that when killed one violates the *ibu*, not by its character, but because the Tiv have high regard for it. They refer to the hare as the King of Animals. If anyone kills any of those listed in the animal group above in a hunt, he must perform the ritual of *ibu*. You brew *tashi* and invite the master to come and perform the rituals; you don't normally do this by yourself since anyone that may have offended the *ibu* has fallen short of *ibu* power and will join in the rituals to obtain good luck. In the Kparev parts of Tivland, if someone buys a horse and it dies, the ritual of *ibu* is carried out.

Whoever wishes to perform the ritual of *ibu* has to find meat and his wife has to prepare beans. On the day of the ritual, he makes a big mound of soil on the outskirts of the compound, near the road into the compound. The *akombo* master plants *ishough* and *ikenaika* on the mound of soil; after the planting, the ritual master places a small clay pot on the mound. On top of the small clay pot, he puts a piece of clay and these constitute the emblems of the *ibu akombo*. He then plucks a leaf from the *nyihar* tree, ties it up, puts it inside the small clay pot, and adds water. All those who are going to participate now draw near and hand over their bows to the *akombo* master, who collects them and hangs them upside-down on the shrine of *ibu*. The *akombo* master cooks the meat with lots of beniseeds, and all of these rites are performed at night. All those that have been initiated and those about to be initiated join in the *ibu* dance. One among them will beat the drum, which goes *chiki jiki kiji*, and the ritual dancing continues until daybreak, when it is time for the actual rituals. All those participating now come together and shout *Ibu o o o*. After they finish shouting, they settle down and the master fetches water from a small clay pot. Using his palm, he gives it to all those taking part, and then washes their eyes with it, so that they have good luck. When this is done, the master returns their bows. Everyone partakes in eating the meat and drinking the *tashi*. Finally, the master sprinkles the *ibu* shrine with the *tashi* and the participants all depart to their various places. Whenever one is in the process of performing the *ibu* rituals, and while the alcohol is brewing, some try to eat secretly. The food is taken to a secluded area and if someone comes by and discovers him eating, even by accident, he leaves the food.

## Chapter Four

### THE GREAT *AKOMBO*, SWEM IKARAGBE

*Swem* is the great *akombo* for oath-taking among the Tiv. All Tiv know about this. However, in reality, *Swem* is a mountain in the land of Ukwese and Undir, the foreign location from which the Tiv people migrated as already seen in Chapter One of this book. *Swem* is a very beautiful mountain. It surpasses in beauty all the mountains in Tivland and even the mountains in the foreign land where it is located. The mountain is made up of a rock. The rock is very big, though in terms of size *Swem* is not bigger than the surrounding mountains. *Swem* hill is devoid of vegetation and is therefore easy to recognize. At the apex, there is a big round stone and outgrowths of weeds on the stone. Perceived from afar, the weeds on the stone appear to be a crest.

I, the author, together with Ortese Agee and Ortese Mker, went to see *Swem* and it is exactly as recorded here. Though we did not climb up, we stood at the base of the mountain and beheld it. So I write here based on my observation. I asked the foreigners in that location where *Swem* was found so that I could find out if there is anything particular about the mountain. Samu, the chief of that ethnic group, said that even though *Swem* was located in their territory, they did not hold any particular belief about it. He said that in the old days they used to hunt elephants there, but since elephants have become extinct, there is nothing of value for them about *Swem*. The only time they hear about it is when they go down to the Tiv people, and there they hear great things about *Swem*.

#### BELIEFS ABOUT *SWEM*

Tiv generally believe that someone who is ‘empty chested’ dare not go to *Swem*, they will not even see its location. It is only elders who are *tsav* that are able to go there and set the land right. Even *Swem*’s location is not known by all, only those who went there. Some people maintain that *Swem* is located at Turan and others maintain that it is located at different places.

#### THE *SWEM*

There is a popular belief that *Swem* is in a forest and consists of a big clay pot deep in the ground with only the neck above the ground level. It is surrounded by a type of grass known as *ayande*, which is like sugar cane. Inside this forest, there are all kinds of predators and they abound in it. Leopards, elephants, snakes, tigers, and wasps/bees are all found in the forest. If a man goes into the forest having defied *Swem*, these predators will pursue him and unless the person is well versed in witchcraft, he will not be able to out-manoeuvre all of them and they will kill him. The Tiv say a lot of frightening things about *Swem*. In springtime, when a great number of migrating birds fly about, the Tiv attach special importance to birds flying from north to south. They say that the birds are the top-most elder

witches in the land who have come together and become birds to go to Swem to take care of problems related to Tivland. When the session is over and the elders are leaving, they each take different things from Swem back to their people. The witch-elders who are not kind-hearted would choose to take hunger to their people, so people that year would witness a great famine. Others carry smallpox to their people and they are almost wiped out. Still others in this group choose whooping cough and many of their people die of it. Some will take birds that devour millet and in that year no one harvests any millet.

But the elders that are kind-hearted choose good things for their people, so that the land is blessed when they come back from Swem. The people prosper; their women give birth to children; game abounds. There is an aura of good luck throughout that year and everything goes well.

### WHY IT IS CALLED SWEM IKARAGBE

Ikaragbe was a person from the people of Nôngov. He took part in eating human flesh. He gave up all his siblings for this and when there was no one left to give up, he was asked to submit himself. He became afraid and fled to Utyusha. He sojourned there and his kinsmen looked for him but could not find him. It just happened that Kpamberakpa, a man from Ikaragbe's people, also journeyed to Utyusha. He went to a drinking house and, during the drinking; the sharer poured a drink and asked that it be given to Ikaragbe. When Kpamberakpa heard this he asked which Ikaragbe was to be given the drink. The people of Utyusha answered that it is Ikaragbe from Nôngov. Kpamberakpa beat his chest and remonstrated, 'Is this not the Ikaragbe we searched for in all parts of Tivland but never found?'

Immediately Kpamberakpa left and later related this to his kinsmen. When they heard this, they appointed Kpamberakpa and Anyamagere, since they were valiant men, to go and bring back Ikaragbe. They selected a few other Nôngov people and set off.

When they arrived, the Utyusha tried to protect Ikaragbe, insisting that they would not give him to them. But the Nôngov said if they would not give up the man who belonged to them; then they should give them a person of Utyusha extraction so that they could kill him instead. Both parties stood firm. It was difficult to resolve this amicably, but Ikaragbe persuaded the Utyusha to let him go with his own people. When the Nôngov folk set off with him, he asked them to allow him to show them something before they took him away. He led and they followed closely behind until they reached a great forest. Ikaragbe asked his kinsmen to get settled and when they did, he fetched a big clay pot and filled it with ashes. He took a slice of ironwood and thrust it into the pot and he put on top of it stone *ijembe Aôndo* the 'axes of God'. He also took an *ayandegh* shrub and stuck it inside the pot.

When he finished, he lay down and rested his head on it and his wife sat beside him on her calabash. Then he told his kinsmen to go with him to kill him so that, in the whole of Tivland, if anyone did any wrong, no matter where he ran and hid, he would be found out and punished. After this the Nôngov folks set off with him and started going back with him.

When they took him to the road they started singing. The lead singer called out, '*Kpamberakpa* bring me the fugitive,' and they chorused: '*Hee e ee*,

*Anyamagbere* bring me the fugitive, *hee e ee.*' This song is known by every Tiv person.

When they brought Ikeragbe back to Nõngov, they killed him! A few days later, *Kpamberakpa* and *Anyamagere* got swollen feet and died. When this was heard, people said that they died because they had killed Ikaragbe without mercy. Even though Ikaragbe had done something wrong, he had pleaded with them and had erected a shrine of *swem*, had even lain on it, but they did not leave off and had killed him anyway. So the spirit of the *akombo* on the *swem* killed them. So if anybody kills another in this manner, *swem* will kill the person. Thus *swem*, and its emblem, the pot, from that moment on, became the spiritual force on which oaths were invoked during judgments and illnesses.

### MAKING OF *SWEM*

Whenever there is desire to make up *swem*, a small clay pot is filled with ashes and a slice of ironwood is thrust into it. Then a stone 'axe of god' is put on top of the wood, together with *ayandegh*, a weed very much like sugar cane — just as was done by Ikaragbe. Nowadays, anybody who is initiated into one of the big *akombo* will bring their symbol and add it to the *swem*. After this, *kwamegh*, a circlet of fibre, is tied around the small clay pot; this is how *swem* is made up for judgments. When someone falls sick, the above is done but then an arrow is also thrust into it and a knife also placed onto it.

The one made for arbitration is used like this: when the elders are contending with someone over an evil that he is alleged to have performed and the person refuses to agree to the allegation. The *swem* is made up and the person is asked to swear by it, so that, if what had been alleged is the truth, the spirit of the *swem* will befall him, but if he is innocent, it will set him free without guilt. The person will come forward and say an oath, to the effect that if what is being said about him is true and that if he is just denying it, may the *swem* befall him and cause him to have a swollen stomach and swollen feet and kill him, but if the allegation against him is false let *swem* exonerate him. While saying this, the person will either touch the *swem* with his hands or will lift it to his head. Now if the person swears falsely, the *swem* will befall him resulting in his getting a swollen stomach and feet and the person dies, but if he is really innocent nothing happens to him.

As for *swem* and sickness, if someone becomes sick and his kinsmen do all that is possible but the sickness refuses to go away, the sick person will make up *swem* as the final method to find the truth behind the sickness. The sick person sends children to invite all his kinsmen to his compound. When all of them are gathered, the sick man brings out the *swem* that he made and says, 'I have not called you here for nothing; this sickness is killing me and I don't know what evil I have done. This is why I call you so that I can swear an oath to you before I die. Since I was born and grew up here, I have never slept with another's wife; I have not caused sickness to any one's son; I have not eaten any human meat. I have always lived rightly, yet death is coming to me unjustly. This is why I called you to come so that I can give you my word and then break the *swem*. If I am guilty in any way let me die and you be in peace, but if I did nothing and yet I am being killed unjustly,

let the *swem* intervene and befall my enemy. This is my oath and I desire to hear from you to break the *swem*.'

His kinsmen reply, 'We have heard your sworn oath well but do not break the *swem* because your sickness will be cured.' Then one by one, those present stand before the *swem* and swear an oath: 'I have had no hand in what is causing the death of my kinsman and I say this with all my heart.' After all of them say this oath, the sick man is asked to lie down and lay his head on the *swem*. The sick man thereafter preserves the *swem*. Some people die even after they do this, but some are cured of their sickness.

Another sick man, when he performed the *swem* and called his kinsmen together, no matter how they pleaded with him not to break the *swem* pot, he broke it. He just carried the *swem* and then broke it even as his kinsmen shouted *stop stop stop!* People say that it was the sickness that bothered our kinsman and moved his mind to break the *swem*.

If a man lives among his mother's kinsmen and he has fallen sick, he swears an oath with his mother's kinsmen: 'You kinsmen of my mother, I was helpless with my father's people and that was why I ran to you so that you would know what is wrong with me — I am being witch hunted by my people. Then I came to you. Look, here too, I am not faring any better than I was with my own people. Because of this, I have made this *swem*, stuck an arrow and a knife in it, and laid on *akombo a igba* [maternal relatives]. I call you to witness my oath to break *swem* and let me die, for if you had not heard my words and I just died like that, you would say I ate human flesh with my kinsmen and that is why they have searched me out and killed me. For this, let me swear an oath. If the cause of my running away from my kinsmen to be with you is because of my partaking of human flesh, but my kinsman with 'whom I have eaten' has come and connived with somebody among my mother's kinsmen to tell on me, it is all right, for I am committed rightly in my ways. If I am guilty of this, let me be slaughtered with the knife on the *swem*, and then may you all reside in abundance with peace in your land and have spells of extraordinary good luck. May this be done unto me if I have done this with one among you of my mother's kinsmen. But if I have not eaten of human flesh, neither with my kinsmen nor my mother's kinsmen, and am being killed unjustly, your land shall be desecrated; whenever you go to war, this arrow on the *swem* will kill many of you for this unjust death: that you killed me!'

After making this oath, he would take the *swem*-pot, the emblem, and break it. But sometimes his mother's kinsmen prevail upon the sick person not to break it; at such times, the sick one will lie down and rest his head against the *swem*. This is how *swem* is performed by one living among his mother's kinsmen.

When a person desires to establish a new market among his people, he will call together the elders of the land; when they all come he tells them his desire to establish a market. When the elders accede to his request, he makes up the *swem* and makes his oath: 'If anybody uses witchcraft against this market to spoil it, let this *swem* befall such, a witch.' The elders then will jointly hold the *swem* pot and place it into a hole at the foot of the *akinde* tree in the centre of the market square.

In the old days, every major event in Tivland that was agreed upon by the elders was concluded by swearing on *swem*, so that after the event any elders that deviated and went against his earlier agreementaccord would be killed by the *swem*.

In the old days, *swem* played a major role in the affairs of Tiv people, especially to determine borderline truth, but nowadays it is not the case. Today some people do swear on *swem* but it is observed to fulfill social expectations and not with the seriousness with which it was done in the past.

In the courts, brought about by the traditions of the Whiteman, when the chiefs are judging and there is need to bring in *swem*, as in the days of old when a case reached a point where *swem* would make the one falsely testifying to become afraid and to swear on *swem*. But no one is afraid nowadays. Today, when the judges in the process of court proceedings perceive that someone is falsely denying an allegation levelled against him, and if the issue is a major one, then *swem* is brought in for the person to swear on, so that if there is truth in his denials he will be acquitted; if the allegations are true but he is just denying them falsely, just let *swem* harm him. But because there is no serious belief in *swem* any more, even the guilty will not harbour any fear, but instead will quickly swear on *swem*. When two people are involved in litigation and both of them stick to their positions without giving ground, the judges will now cause *swem* or any *akombo* to be brought for them to swear on, in order that the one who swears falsely shall be killed by *swem* or the other spiritual forces. But both of them then emphasize their innocence and swear on *swem*; neither harbours a guilty conscience to prevent him from swearing.

Even when somebody is known by his kinsmen to have really committed an offence and is taken to court, his people encourage him to stick to one view no matter how insistent his accuser is. They say he should stick to his words repeatedly. He should not say one thing this time and another the next time, for the court will acquit him if he sticks to one version of accounts. And even if *swem* is brought for him to swear on, he should not hesitate but swear. They say it is us, your people, who will kill you and we have not killed you. There is no *akombo* that ever kills; it is the witches who kill. *Swem* does not kill. If you foolishly fear *swem* and refuse to swear on it, you will be imprisoned.

So in court, it is the guilty one who is very eager to swear. Sometimes the judges are reminded about *swem* by the accused, who says, 'I am telling the truth but it seems you are not satisfied. Therefore bring out *swem* so that I can swear on it to establish my innocence.' When the *swem* is brought in, the guilty person will be the first to swear on the *swem*.

The main reason why *swem* is no longer dreaded as it used to be is the abuse to which it has been subjected to in the courts. *Swem* has become something upon which one contrives to get an acquittal from the Whiteman; it is not used in the traditional way as originally conceived. The chiefs and judges in Tivland know this but they are shying away from it so that the Whiteman will not know the truth. If someone had the courage to reveal this to the Whiteman, the chiefs and judges would not be happy with him, as this was used as a last resort to exonerate them from the Whiteman. This is all there is about *swem ikaragbe*.

As knowledge increases and innovations occur in different parts of the world, the Tiv are still very much concerned about learning how to innovate more and more *akombo*. However, their faith in *akombo* as a thing to place their total confidence in is on the decline. Even to this day, people are still inventing a few new *akombo*.

In the year 1930, someone invented an *akombo* all by himself. His name was Inya, and his father's name was Makwar, of Mbagen in Ukpar. He created an



*akombo* and named it *ichieshe*. The rite of *ichieshe* was carried out using a rat. He made a cast of mud and he plucked locust bean leaves and placed them near the moulded pillar. Then a rat was slaughtered and the blood poured on the mud and the leaves. He took the slaughtered rat along with many others, cooked them all, and performed the rite with them. Those who were initiated into this *akombo* ate the rats with him. If, however, those who were not initiated were to eat this meal, they would become victims of the *ichieshe akombo*.

The protective emblem of *ichieshe* was a hawk feather. This is because if you are affected by *ichieshe* you have no shame, just like the hawk, for instance when one's chicks hatch, the hawk shows no mercy and picks them up right in front of the owner. This is why Inya created this *akombo* based on the lack of shame of this bird of prey, the hawk. Here is the story by Inya:

During this time Chafa Don [the District Officer] beat up people to make them throw away their wicked articles of witchcraft. If a man did throw out an item, he was praised by them for being a strong witch and he was accorded reverence as being a real man. When he [Inya] was a youth, he was very peculiar; and was perceived as a being a witch of a tall order. He however did not have a single emblem of witchcraft to substantiate this belief, and so he explored all the possible ways to outdo all the others, but was unable to.

One day, as he was on his way to Katsina Ala [Kachina], and as he reached the confluence of the stream Dura and the Katsina River, he saw two big black crabs. He took the two crabs and put them inside his wildcat-skin bag. As the two crabs struggled inside the skin bag, the bag was moving as if it was alive. When he perceived this, he was very happy and praised Aôndo for granting him his heart's desire to have an article of witchcraft.

So Inya crossed over to Katsina Ala; when he arrived at Katsina Ala his kinsmen were gathered there and were discussing witchcraft. They said to him 'you are full of *tsav* but you are yet to show off a single thing. Why is this so with you? If you do not show us any of your *tsav* articles, we shall take you to the Chafa Don today.' So he told them that he actually had an *akombo* but what he had was a force not to harm anyone, but rather to protect the community and himself when he was asleep. Whenever he was asleep and the *mbatsav* came to harm him it woke him up and he gave them a good chase.

Then, elders told him to show them. So he brought out the wildcat bag with the crabs in it and threw it down before them. The crabs began to struggle and the bag moved around like a living thing. The meeting broke up in alarm. The elders cried out to take the thing away. They said it need not be shown to the Whiteman, as this *akombo* was for protection, not destruction.

So he took the bag away, and was acclaimed for having the very best magic article. When he came to the road, he released the crabs and threw them away, carried on his way and went home. Many are the stories told by the Tiv concerning the things of *mbatsav* some of which are recorded below. They are all false and just their active imaginations with no element of truth in any of it. When a Tiv talks about the things of *tsav* and you ask him if he is also one, he vehemently denies it. There is none of them who can honestly admit to being *tsav*. If however one dares to admit such, it is only for two reasons. First, he will be lying and only admit to it to gain respect and fear around him (it is generally said that only words from men who are *tsav* are weighty, words of men who are not *tsav* are inconsequential). Second, he may admit to being *tsav* under duress because no one will believe him when he says he is not *tsav*. He therefore has no choice but to accept this lie and live with it.

Concerning the doctrine of *tsav* being a myth which men have no choice but to accept whether they like it or not, I share my own experiences. A long time ago when I often spent time with my father Sai, all of my kindred said that I was *tsav* but there was no iota of truth in it. Here is how I got my reputation for being *tsav* as a lad. My mother had left me when I was but a little child. Life was hard for me but my father looked after me very well and used every opportunity to feed me well. My father used to perform the rites of *akombo* for the crops of his favourite wife, the daughter of Turan by the name of El. This *akombo* was in a field at the foot of a shea butter tree with *iyandegh* planted round about it. As the time for rites to be performed approached, my father would wake me up at cock-crow at dawn. He then caught a cock and gave it to Hirekaan, my eldest brother to carry while I was given the gourd filled with water and he himself carrying the fire. Then we set off to the farm. After carrying out the *akombo* rites, we then killed and ate the chicken and returned back to the village very early in the morning. On seeing us on our way back into the village, villagers would say 'Hirekaan and Akiga are already *tsav* beyond measure. There is not a one of their age-grade in the kindred to be compared to them. They are already eating human flesh with their father'. Deep down in me, I knew that was not so; my father was as always only looking out for an opportunity to feed me properly. Regardless, when I perceived that people interpreted my relationship with my father in this way as being *tsav*, I played along very well to earn a reputation for *tsav* and be revered.

There was another incident. The agent of the firm of John Holt, then at Ibi, also popularly known as Maiadiko by the Hausa, gave my father a large *aduduiyô* [iron box] as a gift. At that time, not many households had these types of boxes and so this was considered rare in Tivland. The key to the box was kept by Hirekaan and he was the only person allowed to touch or open the box. At that time, my father married the daughter of Buriya. There was celebration for this. The new wife was taken to the room of Wanadam [Daughter of Adam] where the iron box was kept. When I entered, I sat on the bed on which the iron box and many other boxes were kept. Then I started playing with the iron box and in the process I discovered that the box was not locked; I went out and told my father that Hirekaan had opened it and had forgotten to lock the box.

My father asked me how I knew that the box was not locked. I told him that the hasp was up on the outside. My father then called Hirekaan and asked him about this. When he was asked, Hirekaan proclaimed that he had locked the box securely and that I had used witchcraft to open it. Then my father loosened his belt and beat me thoroughly. He refused intervention and would not desist from beating me, saying Akiga is so full of witchcraft that he even opened the iron box with his witchcraft to see *imborivungu* [owl-pipe] inside. When my father said this to Hirekaan, he became overwhelmed and he sanctioned the action of my father and urged him to beat me, for as small as I was, I was full of *tsav*, the power of witchcraft, and when I grew up what would become of me? My father beat me that day and I sustained wounds in several places on my body. When I was able to break free, I ran away and hid. But since I was his favourite child, he searched for me and found me in the room of his eldest wife Adzande and he comforted me.

Next day, I became the centre of attraction and fabrications by all the villagers, calling me *tsav*. Others alleged that yesterday Akiga opened the iron box and laid his chest in it, sweating profusely; others said I did open the box and brought out

the *imborivungu* and was gazing at it when Hirekaan came and caught me red handed and reported me to our father Sai, who started beating me with his belt for being *tsav*. Now they said if I grew older, I would surpass Hirekaan on *tsav*. When I became aware that a lot of people were awed because of what they believed to be my level of *tsav* witchcraft, I became very pleased with myself. I indulged and told blatant lies about witchcraft and no one ever dared dispute me. So I was very happy about this. I postured as a great witch and people were in awe even though I was just a youngster.

There was another thing that I did that gained me fame in *tsav*. When I was young, I diligently kept company with my father. Wherever he went in Tivland, I would be there both during the day and at night unless he went away on a long journey. It was because of my closeness to my father that I was privileged to see some of the things that I saw and heard. Some of the things I heard because my father was an elder and a respected leader among his people.

My father enjoyed polygamy and had several wives. I accompanied him to each of his wives' rooms where he spent his nights. During the night if I really had to urinate I went outside to go and I was not afraid of the dark as youngsters were prone to be. Yet I was under duress because if I urinated in a wife's house, she would complain to my father in the morning, saying that he had brought me along to spoil her room. In addition, the woman might not give me food when she cooked. For these two reasons, I always went outside to urinate. As I was going out one night, I saw two black piglets; one ran to my right-hand side and one ran to the left. In our settlement, some people had pigs. Akure, my father's brother, and Gata, one of my father's wives, had pigs and all had piglets, so I thought that the piglets belonged to one of them and it was so. When I went back inside the house, my father was awake so I told him that I had seen two black piglets and wondered who had left the piglets unattended for the hyenas to devour.

Then my father asked me if they were all black or whether there was a white one among them. I answered that I perceived them all to be black, since it was night. In the morning, my father told this to Hirekaan. Hirekaan summoned me and asked what I had seen when I went out the previous night. I told him that I saw two black piglets. When I said this, Hirekaan became furious and shouted at me, saying I should stop lying and that if I did not tell him the truth he would beat me up. At first, I was not aware of what he wanted from me so I repeated what I said before. When I said it, he picked up a stick from the ground to beat me for not telling the truth. I was dumbfounded by his reaction so I quickly thought it over. If I told the truth, Hirekaan would not be satisfied, so maybe he would be content with a lie. So I turned the whole thing into a *tsav* witch matter. I said I would tell him the truth—that what I saw that night were two owls that belonged to witches. They were covered by *mbaalishi*, indigo clothes, and when I came out they ran away. Hirekaan agreed with this and said that I had now told the truth! When people heard of this they spread stories of my fame in *tsav* witchcraft, saying that the witches launched an attack on Sai but Akiga went out and chased them and they ran away! Throughout that day, this was the topic of discussion. Koho, a kinsman to my father, gave me a witch name that day, *Ipemke*, which means a pepper that is different from all other types of pepper. Actually the witches that came were pepper but I was pepper that was bitterer and therefore I drove them away. To this day, those in my house know this name but I am not comfortable being called by such a name.

The Tiv have different beliefs about witchcraft. They maintain that no one is devoid of elements of *tsav* completely and that there are two kinds of witchcraft. There is a benevolent one that heals the land and there is a destructive type that causes a lot of destruction in the land. The witches can kill a person — nobody just dies ‘just like that’; it is the witches that kill him or her. Sometimes, sickness is caused by the witches. Sickness is caused by the craft of the *mbatsav*; the witches either kill the person or make the person suffer with an illness.

In Tivland, a person is not just afflicted with sickness. Rather, affliction happens in an orderly manner. To afflict someone with an illness the person must be a blood relative and the affliction does not necessarily result in death since there are different types of affliction for different purposes. If a young man shows disrespect to an elderly man, the elder would inflict an ailment on the young man that would result in serious pain for a while before he recovers, and then he will not disrespect an elder again. An elder may afflict a young man with a stomach-ache. Another afflicts a young man with headaches; another afflicts the eyes; still another causes a sore on the young man. The young man’s kinsmen will come and arbitrate before the wound is healed; all of these are inflictions of punishment. What really annoys the elders and causes them to inflict illnesses on young men is related to women — for instance if the young man becomes a lover to the elder’s wife. The next day, the wizard will rise very early and go to the house of the one he caused to have very bad dreams under the guise of keeping the latter company. Actually it is to find out what he can discover by hearing about the dreams. This is why the Tiv have a saying: ‘If you are tormented by bad dreams from a wizard, anyone who comes to your house very early in the morning is probably your tormentor.’

### PRACTISING THE ART OF WITCHCRAFT

The art of witchcraft entails what the wizards go out and do with their witchcraft at night. However, these arts are not limited to the night; even in the daytime, a wizard [conjurer or sorcerer] if he is under a strong inclination to do witch things, could go out and do *tsav* before his mind is comforted within him. But traditionally it is in the night that witches go out to practise their witch ways. During the day, the preferred time is at noon. If it is in the dark, then it is early in the night, when people close up for the night and during the time of their first round of sleep — that is usually the time when wizards abound to do their dark works.

It is said that everything that is seen in the day can be copied and recreated by the witches. Their lamp oil is human fat and they call it by another name that means ‘star’; they also have horses. They cast their horses in copper. To the ordinary eye, they would appear to be very little but during the night they grow large through the powers of witchcraft and become big stallions, which the witches ride. In addition, a wizard can easily turn his brother who is not a wizard into a horse for him to ride. And with the coming of the Whiteman, witches made bicycles for themselves and rode during the night. There is nothing that they can’t do. They also have a flute or pipe called an *imborivungu* that is used to purify and cleanse the land. To play *imborivungu* is a very fearful and daunting task. It is not played the way an ordinary flute is played during the day. When it is played, the player does not stand in one place. Whenever *imborivungu* is

played, the one playing it squats, and plants his heel firmly against his anus before he starts to play. Then the sound will be heard as if comes from a place very distant from where the sound was actually made.

### FEAST OF THE WIZARDS

The wizards also hold a feast. On the day of the dance or feast, many of the witches come to the venue and settle down. Men and women of substance get together; they ride bicycles, motorcycles, and motor cars. A fancy woman dresses up in expensive clothes, has a necklace of human teeth and puts it around her neck like an expensive necklace. Another hangs a shawl of human skin on her shoulders and calls it her leopard-skin bag. The male counterparts dress up lavishly and all carry human skulls so that when the host of the feast brings drinks, skulls are used as drinking cups. After they drink, they begin to play music and dance.

Their dancing is different from what one sees during the day. While dancing, each dancer stands apart so that there will be no contact between them, for if there is even slight contact, both would die. When the dancing has gone on for a long period, the celebrant comes out and asks his fellows to settle down; he wants to present the main entertainment for the feast. When all the guests have settled down, he brings in the relative that he wants to offer and places him before the guests. The relative would be in a deep sleep, completely unaware of what was going on, and will not know a thing because he is not endowed with witchcraft which means 'his chest is empty'. Then the celebrant that brought out his relative to entertain his guests would tell his guests that this is what he offers for this feast. Sometimes the guests will say that the relative is not ripe to die at this time. In this case, he is spared and taken back, still asleep, to his bed and he discerns nothing. In the morning, he would say, 'I had terrible dreams last night' and he would also experience body pains. But sometimes, the guests do accept what is offered.

The manner by which the *mbatsav* kill is quite different from the *mbatanev*, the day-time folk. *Mbatanev* refers to those who do things without recourse to witchcraft; but those that practise witchcraft are called *mbatsav*, those 'of night', or *mbaimev*, those of darkness.

This is how they kill. When a person is offered and accepted, he is killed that very night, but is awakened back to life with *ikehegh* or *ishuragh*, those seeds with magical properties. He appears hale and hearty but they have programmed the person's death from a certain ailment, so that any day that he could fall sick and die. The people would say that this is just as if an old wound had been opened up. The *ikehegh* is the medicine that *mbatsav* apply to someone they kill to bring them back to life temporarily; they drop it into the person's nostrils and he awakens and seems to be healthy. And what is actually called *ikehegh* is the seed of a small tree in the forest. This small tree bears oval fruits the size of a finger, but shorter, and contains small seeds the size of guinea corn seeds, though guinea corn seeds are bigger. The seeds when chewed are *avegh* [bitter]. The witches, when they kill the person, chew these seeds and pour them into the nostrils of the dead person and it awakens him. However not every witch or *or mbatsav*, can use these seeds to restore life temporarily to one killed. There is someone else with that responsibility. So before anyone is killed, this person

must be present. If he is not around and someone gets killed, the dead man is taken to the bush and one of the witches stands guard him until this person is sought out and brought in to apply *ikehegh*. When he applies it, the dead person awakens and through their witchcraft it is predetermined what will kill him during the day. The cause of death of the victim is arranged ahead of time so that everyone will say that this is what killed him and the *mbatsav* will thus be absolved. This death comes in various forms and ways: it may be a snake bite, a predator like a lion, a leopard, an elephant or a wild deer or other beasts. The predator cannot kill on its own unless the *mbatsav* have arranged it. On their own, they are not capable of killing anyone. Even if a man is shot at point blank range and the bullet penetrates his heart, the person will not die unless *mbatsav* have prearranged for the person to die by gunshot. If a man climbs to the highest level above everything and slips and falls down to the ground, he will not die unless *mbatsav* have prearranged it to be so. Some other types of ailments are direct manipulations of *mbatsav* and here witchcraft is combined with magical spells. But spells alone cannot kill; when a child is born and then weaned and he walks, spells alone cannot kill him. Magic can kill a child when he is being nursed, but when the child walks, magic has no power to kill him.

#### EXHUMATION OF A DEAD MAN

After a man is dead and buried, all *mbatsav* will gather at the dead man's house. They send for a specific man to exhume the corpse for them. The person to perform this act is different from the one who applies magic seeds. The man that yanks people from their graves uses hooks tied to a lengthy chain and stands far away from the grave, about a league away. Then he casts the hook into the grave and hooks the dead man's throat and drags him out of the grave. The dead man leaps from the grave and drops at the man's feet. The wizards rejoice greatly, and then they call the other witch, the reviver of the dead, to come and bring the dead man back to life. There are several methods employed to get the dead out of the grave; sometimes the one performing the act will stand a good distance away and call the dead person's name. The dead person will respond and answer 'yes.' Then he will come out of the grave and meet the exhumer who brought him back to life and the witches will greatly rejoice. In another case, the one that brings dead people to life will get a white cockerel, one without a single black feather, and swing it around the grave. The dead person just comes out of the grave. So, when a man has died, the people watch the grave closely because they want to know who killed him. In that case, the exhumer will do his work and bring him out in the evening, just before dark, so the witches won't know about it. Or he makes people become drowsy and while they sleep, he brings the body out. When a death is in dispute and the parties involved all say they did not kill him, the exhumer could bring the body out and hide it. When those who killed the man come to get the corpse, they are unable to find it. They then make secret and careful inquiries of cooperative *mbatsav*, who tell them who it was that took the body from the grave and hid it. But when they go and beg him to give them the meat which is rightfully theirs, he answers, 'Was it not you who a couple of days ago denied killing this man? How is it that now you have come to exhume him? Very well, but I will not

give you your meat unless you pay for it.' They go home and collect a lot of money and bring it to the man in exchange for the corpse. By concealing or hiding the corpse, the exhumers can make a lot of money.

The next day, the grave exhumer makes it known that he was actually the one who disinterred the corpse and hid it, and that 'unnamed people', who said they had nothing to do with the death, have come to claim or redeem the body. All the people nearby hear this gossip and those 'unnamed people' have now been found out. Now if it was a wife who died and the men who killed her are those that owned her as their *ingôr*,<sup>35</sup> then her husband gets up and gets ready for a fight. He goes to their clan and demands the return of his own *ingôr*, for since they have taken theirs back again, they must return what he paid for her. So they give his *ingôr* to him and he takes her back home again. But if they like the woman, they ask the owner to leave her there and that they will give him another instead. So then he goes home and tells the elders of his group about it and usually they raise no objection. So later he comes back again and asks for another wife in exchange for the *ingôr*. This is given to him so he goes home and settles down. A woman who is given to replace a wife who has died is called a wife by the old contract called *ishetse*. Women did not care to be involved in this type of marriage.

The body, after exhumation, is not allowed to stay dead, but is brought back to life. When the person becomes alive again, he is taken away and tied up in the woods, and one of the *mbatsav* is set to guard him. The food for such a dead person is raw beniseed. This is ground up for him to eat continuously, so that he gains weight and gets large and fat before he is killed. He is fed a steady diet of beniseed until the day he is ready for slaughter. Then they torture him, drive him around the village with a big grindstone on his head, and finally kill him.

#### MBUR: BODY DISMEMBERMENT

After the killing comes the dismemberment. The *mbatsav* find a tall supple tree that has lots of green leaves on it and bend it down to the ground. They cut up the corpse and put the meat on the leaves of the tree. They command the tree to stand up straight like it was before. The business of cutting up the body is assigned to a special member of the *mbatsav* and he alone has this duty. This official is called the *haabuar*, and he is the only one who can distribute the meat. This name, *haabuar*, is used by witches only, and is unknown to the 'empty-chested'.

If the dead man had been an important person in life, he is not killed again at once. When they have brought him back to life, they ask him many questions, such as whether he has any secrets that he has been hiding from them, and tell him that he must declare them

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<sup>35</sup>*Ingôr* (pl. *angôr*), daughters of a family given in exchange for wives, and their social function, will be discussed in depth in the section on marriage by exchange in chapter 7. The idea in this passage is that if a man's wife dies and he suspects her own kin of killing her, he is entitled to demand recompense from them, either by reclaiming the daughter of his own family that was given to them in exchange for the wife, or, if they are unwilling to part with her, by being given another daughter of theirs as a replacement for the dead woman.

If he was a music composer in real life, they tell him to compose a chorus for them to sing by day, or if he was a solo singer, or played a pipe, or did anything else special, they force him to perform for them before they kill him and hand him over to the *haabuar* for cutting up. A special, single knife is used throughout the dismemberment. The *haabuar* shares the meat, and gives the head of the victim to the man who provided the body, because 'the killer gets to eat the head'.

If the man had a very nice and handsome child and he is anxious to take the lead in such nocturnal meetings, he would kill the child so that he can wear the skin of the child around his shoulders and thus outshine all his companions.

### WHAT *MBATSAV* FEAR

These things are shunned or avoided by *mbatsav* because they are afraid of them: fire, earth, and slag from the iron-working furnace, the iron tongs, the stone *ijembeaôndo* 'axe of God', and the *igbe* hoe shaft. If, for instance, a man becomes one of the *mbatsav*, and you are one of the empty chested ones, hold a lighted brand in your hand. The man of *tsav* will run for his life when he sees it, for if he bewitches you while you have fire in your hand, he would become a leper. Or if he becomes a witch at night and while he is sitting down, you pick up some earth and throw it over him; he will die, killed by *swange*.. If one of the witches bewitches a man who has tied some slag from the iron-working furnace around his neck, the witch will be struck dead by lightning, and similarly he will die if he bewitches anyone who has the iron tongs, or the axes of God stones. It is these witches who bring the birds that eat the millet, and who summon the red monkeys who destroy farm crops and the beetles that eat the yams.

### THE FLESH DEBT

If you and a witch eat some human flesh, you can run to the land of the Whiteman, but even there the witch will follow you in a single day and kill you. Or you may have shared a meal with a man who has killed his brother, or who has been given a portion of the body by night, and has cooked the meat and is eating it. If you do this, you must repay him. If you do not pay him and try to escape, he will follow and kill you wherever you go. The debt of the witches is very evil; it is called the *kpindi*, which means the flesh debt.

### INCURRING THE FLESH DEBT

A person may incur a flesh debt in different ways; sometimes a debt can be incurred with one who is one's own age, at another time with an older man. If you have a friend or if you are a young man in the service of an older man, watch out, beware! Without knowing it, you may unwittingly contract a flesh debt with him. The witches do not offer a man human flesh and say, 'Hello, have some of this. You can pay me back some other time.' It does not happen this way at all. Usually the man who incurs the debt knows absolutely nothing about it. It is not necessarily over an important matter that he becomes involved



in this. Perhaps your friend, or some older man, notices that you have a large number of children, or brothers or sisters, and so he tricks you into contracting the debt with him. He may invite you to eat food in his house alone with him, and at the beginning of the meal he sets before you two dishes of sauce, one of which contains human flesh. You are not aware of this; you think it is just ordinary meat, and of course he does not tell you. You, a guest, stretch out your hand and dip into the gravy. But as soon as you start eating — if you are not *tsav* — you will have to go outside because you become very sick. So then you go and tell the head of your family that so-and-so has tricked you into eating human flesh with him. When the older man questions you about it, you tell him the whole story. The elder then sets out and goes to that witch, all ready for a fight, saying, ‘Why have you been trying to entice my boy into a flesh debt? Why are you trying to break up my home?’ A dispute begins and everyone around learns of it. In this case no real harm is done because the man will never dare to claim the debt.

Sometimes the man who dips into the (human) sauce is also *tsav* and will not back down even though he knows what he has done. He says to his host, ‘I have fallen into the trap, but I will not turn back. Give me the rest of the meat to finish.’ Then the host cuts off some of the meat and gives it to him, and they go on eating it together every day until it is finished. Sometime later the man who cooked the flesh goes to the man with whom he shared it and says, ‘I have come now. It is your turn to kill a man and give him to me.’ The debtor may say, ‘Yes, I will also kill and give you the gravy and a small piece of the meat, since that is what you gave me before.’ But the other replies, ‘Certainly not! You must give me the entire body without argument. He who eats a child must pay back a full-grown man.’ So the man who ate the flesh is caught up in the dispute.

After a short time, the man to whom the debt is owed begins to pester and demand what is his due. This is an example of how a debt flesh is claimed:

Ityovenda killed his brother Aba, and while he was eating him, Amopav came and dipped into the sauce. In other words, Amopav has eaten Aba, and Ityovenda is about to come and demand payment for his brother.

When Ityovenda first comes to claim the debt, he does not come alone, but collects together all his *mbatsav* companions. Not one of these comes in his own form or shape; each takes on a new form. Some become *mbaakiki*, the great owls; some others become little owls and some become witch-cats, or civets. They all line up together and set out for the house of Amopav, the man who owes the flesh debt. When they get to his home, it is about the time of night when other men have had their first sleep. The owls perch on the fig trees in and around the village and begin hooting and calling out. The civet cats begin to fight among themselves and in so doing bump into the door of Amopav’s house. From time to time they put their paws alongside their heads and wail like a child crying. When this happens everyone’s hair stands on end. Meanwhile, Ityovenda, the man who is trying to claim the debt, sits with the witch elders who are sitting around smoking their pipes and talking together. During that night the air is filled with weird noises and few dare to go outside the houses into the darkness.

Amopav asks, ‘Why have you come?’ Ityovenda answers him, ‘Don’t ask stupid questions. When I remember my grief when I killed Aba, my brother, and how we both ate him together, and then when I see all your brothers and sisters still alive here and working for you, isn’t it enough to make me want to kill myself?’ All the

witch elders who are sitting with him join in, denouncing his debtor. 'Your question is not good,' they say. 'Do we appear to you to be fools, that you can eat Aba and spare your own brothers to work for you? Or to keep your own home standing after your death, while his falls into ruins? No. No. You looked for trouble and now trouble has come to you. Come on, lie down on the ground and we will cut your throat.'

'Spare me!' cries Amopav. 'I will give you the dew' (by this he means that he will pay back the creditor for all his troubles in claiming the debt, having walked through the dew to come to him). He then goes back and fetches one of his brothers or a child and gives him to them. Ityovenda takes him and says, 'I accept this. But take him back now; I will come and kill him when I am good and ready.' Then the night birds and the witch cats become silent and go away.

A few days later, a little owl comes and utters his cries outside the house of the person who was taken in his sleep and given as the 'dew'. The next day, a *kpire* ill omen bird comes and cries in the eaves of the house or on the trees near the village (it is because of the sound of this ill omen bird that it is said the *kpire* bangs). Or he could be out walking and see a *timekumun*. (It is a white beetle that moves forward and backward across his path. Most of the Tiv have never seen this hard-shelled beetle but only know the name.) Seeing this means certain death. When such things happen, it is time to go to a diviner. You ask him to interpret these signs, omens, and bad dreams. You are told that your brother is giving you up as payment for a flesh debt; in fact, you have already been delivered and accepted. Though you are still walking around, you are like a bird in a cage. Now when the victim hears this death sentence, he becomes terribly sad. Some, when told such a thing, sit down and cry; others try to escape death by running back to their mother's home. And since the coming of the Whiteman, they often run away to a distant country and live among foreign people in the hope of saving their lives. A large number of the Tiv living among foreign ethnic groups today left their homes for this reason. Some, even though they have not yet been handed over in payment of a flesh debt, hear rumours that they are about to be given, and go to the diviner, who tells them that they, like the bird in a cage are hemmed around by death. So they go and take refuge with foreign people instead of fleeing right away to their mother's home, as they did in the past.

Nevertheless, if you have been given to the witches as payment of a flesh debt which has been accepted, don't in bitterness of your mind think that you will evade your fate. Wherever you may go you, you are caught in the trap. On the day that they are ready to kill you, they will take up the mat for winnowing, a calabash scoop, and a forked stick. Holding a bunch of leaves on one side, and the winnowing mat on the other, they will utter the following incantation: 'If it be we, the Tiv who gave you birth and poured water into your mouth in accordance with our *ityumbu* rite: wherever you may be, return. But if it is not we the Tiv who bore you and performed the water rite for you, go in peace.' Saying this, they jerk the mat as if winnowing. Then, though you may be at home with your mother, or living amongst foreigners, or even holding a high position, perhaps even getting a salary of ten pounds a month, yet when the *mbatsav* jerk the winnowing mat, you will be seized with a great longing to return home. You will think and speak of nothing but the affairs of your home village, until finally your work goes to pieces and you are fired by the Whiteman. (The Tiv nowadays also refer to the Whiteman as 'foreigner' and all those who work with him. Years ago this

term was used in derision and if anyone called a Tiv person a 'foreigner' he regarded this as a great insult. Nowadays it has become a title of honour to which the chiefs beat their chest with pride.)

As soon as you get back home, the *mbatsav* bewitch you and you die. People will then say you returned from the land of the foreigner with death upon you. After your death, you are buried, and in due course the same *mbatsav* will disinter your body at night, cut it up, and give the head to the man who is paying the debt. The creditor keeps coming and each time the debtor has to give him the 'dew'. Unless he has supporters who are very strong in *tsav*, he will be unable to break himself free from the flesh debt until he has given up all his people, and his family is finished. Then he goes himself and lies down on the ground to be slaughtered, and so the debt is finally discharged.

He who is wise and has contracted such a debt, being of strong heart, and having kinsmen who are powerful in *tsav*, will not let the debt continue but will settle the matter the first time it is demanded. He can free himself in the following way. Having given the victim to be killed, he and all his brothers get together, fully armed, and stand by the body while it is being cut up. When they have finished cutting it up, and take the head to give to him, he refuses it, and tells the man to whom he owes the debt to take everything, including the head in full settlement. If that man objects, then the debtor gets ready to fight. The creditor is frightened and takes the head, and thus the flesh debt comes to an end.

A man who has incurred a flesh debt goes in abject fear of his creditor. He gives him whatever he asks for. He pays him great deference and does not raise his voice in his presence. If he were to defy him, his creditor would come by night and demand payment. (When the *mbatsav* have surrounded a man with death, all sorts of things can happen to him. For instance, rats may eat the clothes he has placed in a pot. A chameleon might bar his way during a journey. A red and black insect might crawl on him. Such things are called omens, *bi*, or nightmares, and are discussed later on in the section about Tiv customs.)

In the past, the *mbatsav* did not kill a person for no reason as they do now. However filled with *tsav* a man might be, he would not kill without a definite purpose. For example, if he were performing some rite for which a human victim was necessary, he might kill his own son, or the son of his sister. Later on, the Tiv started to buy poisons from the neighbouring ethnic groups they called the bush people or from foreigners. The ethnic groups from whom the Tiv obtained poisonous plants and herbs were the Gbe, Dam and Akporo, and also from the Wukari people, the Chamba, the Gbur and Mbafulum. The most deadly of all of these were from the Gbur and the Mbafulum. When the Tiv got these poisons, no one was safe. They tried them on anyone they could, even killing their own guests.

### THE *IMBORIVUNGU*

The *imborivungu* or owl pipe is a very big thing among the Tiv. It is used for setting the land right and has a much greater value than one would think by simply looking at it. It is a human bone. Some say that it is a shin-bone, others that it is taken from the arm. It looks more like an arm bone as it is not really big enough to be a shin-bone, unless, of course, it is the bone of a small child.

### MAKING OF THE *IMBORIVUNGU*

When a man dies, his body is dug out and witches take the bone with which they make the *imborivungu* for setting the land right. This is done in the following way. The bone is cut down to about the length of a man's hand (not all are the same size, but they are all made the same way). Some rags are tied around the top and this is covered with wax. Some hair and in some cases red beans are stuck to the wax. Two cowry shells are set in the wax to look like eyes, and more red love beans are put on either side for the raised face markings. It is also provided with a nose, mouth, and ears.

### METAL *IMBORIVUNGU*

The pipe can also be made of metal. This type is cast in brass and is made just like the bone kind, with the same patterns, except that no wax is put on it and its head part is also brass. Some of these have male heads, others female, as is the case with those made of bone. When it is completed, a hole is drilled in the chest part, the bottom end is stopped up with wax, and on to this spider webs are stuck.

### DRESSING THE *IMBORIVUNGU*

To respect its importance and give it dignity, the owl pipe is decorated with the best sort of beads. There are two kinds of *imborivungu*: those that are owned personally and those belonging to the group. A personal owl pipe eventually becomes a community pipe. A man first makes it and sells it to someone who is buying it for his own use so that he may acquire honour, wealth, and good crops. He keeps it very secret and carries out the rites alone, because if the group knew about it they would demand that he give it to them and perform the rites together with them. It would then become community property belonging to the group and used for setting the land right.

### SALE OF THE *IMBORIVUNGU*

The *imborivungu* is not sold openly like cloth or some other article; the transaction is kept secret. A man who has made an owl pipe does not wander around looking for someone to sell it to; rather he takes it to men of worth, those he has heard spoken of as men of means, those he has already heard spoken of as being *tsav* and as anxious to have these sorts of things of the land. As an example, Agaku is the seller, the buyer is Adugu: Agaku puts the owl pipe in his bag, wraps it up carefully, and comes to Adugu's home in the evening. He sits down discreetly, places his bag next to him or on his lap, and does not allow anyone to touch it. Adugu notices how carefully he handles the bag and perceives that there must be something of value in it. So he fills a pipe for Agaku, and after making all the polite inquiries, asks him where he is going. Agaku replies, 'I have only come to see you.' After conversing for a while, they go to sleep. The next morning, when the sun comes up and everyone has gone to the farm, quiet reigns in the village. Agaku then calls Adugu to come with him into the house. There he unties his bag and takes out the

*imborivungu* to show Adugu. Adugu is shaken, but keeps his head and stays calm as he asks about the price. Agaku says, 'It is not expensive, I am only asking six "twenties" for it. If you buy it at that price, I will show you how to carry out its rites.' Adugu buys it. Agaku tells him to go and catch a house mouse. When he brings one over, Agaku cuts its throat and pours the blood over the *imborivungu*, because that is the way to set it right. He also teaches him how to blow it. It is blown on the bottom end, the one covered with spider webs, and to get a good note from it you have to blow very hard. The piper doesn't stand still in one place while he blows it; he moves about, gives a blast, then runs a little way, stops and gives another. That is all there is about privately-owned *imborivungu*.

### THE *IMBORIVUNGU* OF THE FATHERS

This is a personal owl-pipe that is converted into one 'of the fathers', for the group to set right the land. This conversion happens when the group persuades the owner to part with it for the common good; if he is very hesitant, they will wait until he dies, and then the senior elder persuades his children to give it to him. The whole group then joins together to set right the land.

The man who takes it over keeps it in his charge, but it belongs to the group, not just to him. Moreover, when it becomes the concern of the whole group, its rites take on a more serious nature; a human life is required, instead of the mouse that was used when it was the property of the individual. Some people say that a man is killed, but those who know better say that it is not really a man that is used to set the land right, but rather a baby, or the foetus procured from a woman who has miscarried. But it must be from a young woman who has not previously given birth. When the rite is carried out using an aborted foetus, the procedure is as follows. If a young girl becomes pregnant at a time when it is desired to set the land right with an *imborivungu*, the elders gather together and plot how to get the child from her womb by stealth, so they can set the land right with it. They decide to make her abort. As soon as she feels the first signs of quickening in the womb, yes! Then the elders who have been discussing her are pleased. One of them goes and gets some medicine for procuring abortion, grinds it up, and gives it to her, saying that it will cure her. The girl takes it unknowingly and soon has a miscarriage. Even if this occurs during the day, the aborted foetus not buried. Those who are in on the secret tell the boys to wait, as a certain person has been sent for and to wait until he comes. But when the small children have taken it to bury at the back part of the village, one of the elders hurries there and takes it from them and sends them away. 'Go home,' he says. 'It is too dark for you children to bury it. I will do it properly myself.' The children are afraid of the darkness and run back to the village. After they leave, he takes it and hides it. When everyone is sleeping, the elders meet together and the keeper of the owl pipe brings it and they begin to carry out the rites with the dead foetus.

### rites of the *IMBORIVUNGU*

To start the rites, all the *mbatsav* gather under the cover of darkness, then the man who has been hiding the child brings it lays it on the ground, and they place the

pipe and a calabash of water beside it. They take the foetus, make passes with it, and cut its throat with a knife. They take some of the blood and smear it on the *imborivungu*. When they have finished, they wash their hands in the calabash bowl, then take the water and pour it into a well and over the farm of the keeper of the pipe. (He is also the owner of the *imborivungu*.) Thus the crops of the whole group will be good, and the very first woman to carry water from the well the next morning will conceive and bear a son, even if she had previously been barren.

Others kill babies by secret means in order to set the *imborivungu* right. The *mbatsav* elders who wish to carry out the rites decide on a woman who has recently given birth to a child and one of them watches her. One night, while she is asleep, he takes some powdered camwood, chews it up in his mouth, and blows it up the baby's nostrils. The paste or powder goes right up into the child's head, and it dies. When the mother wakes up and finds her child dead, she cries out into the night, and those who come then blame her. 'You must have lain on the child', they say. 'But do not cry. The oil is spilled, but the flask is not broken. You will bear again.' So they take the baby up and bury it. Later, during the night, they dig it up again and set the *imborivungu* right with it in exactly the same way as was done with the abortion. The land prospers. Soon after that, the woman conceives and bears another child. The elders sternly charge that no harm must come to it.

#### HOW TO STORE THE *IMBORIVUNGU*

The pipe is kept in a bin or container and anything else put into that container receives the power from it. If you wear cloth that has been in contact with it for any occasion, you will certainly win the day. No one present at that gathering will be able to compete with you. That is all about the matters of *imborivungu*.

#### POISONING: KILLING WITH *ICHI*

In the past, people were killed in a variety of ways through poison. If one person wanted to kill another, he searched for a poison. Sometimes one could go and buy it from someone who had sold it before; a man of the *mbatsav*. Others went to a friend who was also a member of their *tsav* group to get some. Then he proceeds to kill the man who wronged him. A Tiv man may have many motives for poisoning a man but the commonest of all, today and in the past, related to an affair over a wife or woman.

Here is an example: Iyange has seduced Ihande's wife, Wantor. Ihande knows this, either because he has caught them together, or has been told by another person who has seen them. So he calls Iyange and asks him: 'Why do you keep seducing my wife?'

**Iyange:** Have you been told this, or did you see it yourself?

**Ihande:** What has that to do with it? I am asking you. If it is true, stop it. If there is nothing to it, very well then, the matter is finished.

**Iyange:** Don't talk nonsense, Ihande. I am very annoyed at your ridiculous suspicions.

- Ihande:** Really! So they are ridiculous? I don't like the tone of your voice or your remarks.
- Iyange:** You don't like it? Well, so what are you going to do about it?
- Ihande:** Put your hand in mine, let's have a bet. Say that I can do nothing to you.

Iyange may actually do so, or he may defy him with more words.

Sometimes a husband accuses someone of seducing his wife without being certain of it, and the man who was accused, although he had not seduced the woman before, now sets about to do it. He says he has not slept with her, but since the fellow made up a foolish story about him without foundation, now he will give him real cause to complain. So possibly Iyange is innocent of any relations with Wantor, but when Ihande questions him, he tries until he succeeds in seducing her. Or he may have already done so, and when asked by Ihande does not give a satisfactory answer. In any case, the result is that Ihande begins to look around for a poison with which to kill Iyange. When a wife is carrying on an affair with a man, she secretly sets aside food she has made for him, a portion that he can eat without anyone knowing about it. So Ihande proceeds with his cunning, and when Wantor puts aside a little food to give Iyange secretly, Ihande creeps around and puts poison in it. Wantor, not knowing about it, gives it to Iyange who eats it and is lost! He dies.

Sometimes, if Iyange has seduced Wantor, Ihande's wife, or is trying to do so, Ihande may know but not confront him about it. Instead, he looks around for some poison and, when he gets it, lies in wait for Iyange. He never opens his mouth to confront Ihande about the matter and keeps on good terms with him, for 'the hunter does not whistle while he is stalking his quarry.' One day Ihande fills his pipe and passes close to Iyange while smoking it. Iyange believes that Ihande is well-disposed towards him and asks to have a puff from his pipe. Ihande is inwardly pleased and slips a pinch of poison quickly into the pipe and hands it to Iyange with every show of friendship. When Iyange takes and smokes it, he has taken his death.

Another common medium for giving poison is beer. Two men go to a beer party together, where one bears the other a grudge, either because he had an affair with his wife or on account of an *ingôr*.<sup>36</sup>

For example, if you and I are brothers with the same father and mother, and are arguing over an *ingôr*, I may decide to kill you so that she will be mine. For example: two brothers, Ijehe and Atav, have an argument about an *ingôr*. Atav is very *tsav* and obtains some poison. The next time they go out to a beer party together, he takes the poison with him. They start drinking along with the other guests. Atav waits until Ijehe is a bit drunk and no longer sober. As soon as he begins to talk nonsense, Atav asks him to pass him a little more beer. Ijehe gives him the cup, and he puts it to his lips as though to drink, but doesn't.

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<sup>36</sup>See Chapter Seven, subsection Marriage by Exchange, for a full discussion of bride exchange and the right to possess a female relative for exchange in order to obtain a wife and retain the family line through the exchange.

As he lifts his head from the cup, he pours a little of the poison into it and gives the poisoned beer back to Ijehe. Ijehe takes it, drains the cup in his ignorance, and dies. The poisons which are given in beer and tobacco are the most deadly of all.

Women are the cause of many murders amongst the Tiv. Sometimes it is the wife's lover who kills the husband. For example: Korgba is having an affair with Wanmue, Aga's wife. One day he buys a deadly poison, and treacherously gives it to Wanmue. 'Take this medicine called "blind heart"', he says. 'If you put it in Aga's food and he eats it, he will love you more than all his other wives. Whenever he kills any creature he will only give it to you, not to the others. You will get presents and all the attention.' Wanmue takes it, prepares a meal, cooks some good meat and puts the herb into the meat. She places it inside the house. Then she calls her husband Aga who goes in and eats it by himself. A few days later he is dead.

In some cases, when the woman sees that her husband is dying, she becomes distraught, and then the people think she is guilty. The older members of the dead man's family put pressure on the woman until she finally confesses. When the man who gave her the poison hears that she told the truth, he takes off into the bush and seeks refuge among his mother's kinsmen. There he remains, sometimes until the time of his death. The woman gets beaten by her husband's relatives, who send a message to the man who first arranged the marriage and tell him to take her back to her family.

They demand the return of their *ingôr*. If she, however, has borne children, they let her stay to look after them and leave her to mourn her loss and, of course, to envy the other women, who have husbands.

Such things still go on amongst the Tiv today. Many chiefs and many important people meet their death like this. It is the fear of death that stops some chiefs and elders from giving other men access to their wives. If there is a strong man who is feared by everybody, and the elders wish to do away with him but don't know how, they persuade a young man to go and seduce his favourite wife, and then give him poison which he entices her to use to kill her own husband without anyone knowing about it. Afterwards the people would say, 'No man is invulnerable.' The Tiv seldom bring such matters to the notice of the Whiteman, or if they do, they explain it to the Whiteman in a way he understands, but stating the facts in such a way as to completely mislead him.

#### ANTI-TSAV MOVEMENTS

When there are a lot of senseless murders, it spoils the land; the Tiv in such cases have taken strong measures to overcome *mbatsav*. Such big movements have taken place for a long time, from the days of the ancestors until modern times. One such movement was called *budeli*. Many years later, another movement was the *ijôv*. That movement appeared during the time of the Whiteman in the year 1912. Since then, there have been the *ivase* and the *haakaa*. The latter was started under the control of a Whiteman. Some of these control movements spread over all of Tivland, while some were only known locally. Some people have heard about them but have not taken part in them because some chiefs refused to allow the movements in their own districts. But there are cases when a movement got started and things got stirred up, and then it did not last. It lacked



support and became ineffective. The movements which pleased the Tiv and were the most important were the *ijôv* and the *haakaa*. These movements were so popular among the Tiv that they wanted them to continue, but after a short while they both died out.

#### THE *BUDELI* AFFAIR<sup>37</sup>

A man who decided to perform the *budeli* got a small gourd and tied a cotton thread around it. Then he killed a red rooster and put one of its feathers in the mouth of the gourd. Then, skinning the neck of the bird, feathers and all, he drew it over the neck of the gourd. He hung the string on the gourd to another gourd prepared the same way and hung them around his neck. He went into a village he sang out loudly, ‘Budeli-o! The rack to store meat is piled high’.

All the empty-chested gathered around him and joined loudly in the chorus, screeching abuses at the *mbatsav* among them, using the Hausa words ‘*Budeli! Dan kashi! Dan kare!* [Son of shit! Son of dog!] What do you dare to do to us! If you come here with *tsav* the *budeli* will kill you!’ That very night the *mbatsav* decided to test it out and see if what they shouted was true or not. So they ‘sent’ a mouse into the house of the man who had the *budeli*. The mouse died, and the next day the *budeli* supporter showed it to everybody. ‘You see, yesterday the *mbatsav* sent a mouse and the *budeli* killed it!’ Well, then everyone declared that the *budeli* was real. Then the *mbatsav* sent a skink, and this was found dead as well. After this, they were very afraid of it. But this did not last long. Amazingly, the men who had hung the *budeli* around their necks were ‘mysteriously’ found dead with it clasped to their chests. Now the people said that the *mbatsav* were too strong and that they had discovered the taboo or antidote by which to overcome it. So the people gave up the *budeli* as useless, as having no power over the *mbatsav*. The *budeli* movement collapsed.

#### THE *IJÔV* (*MBAKUV*) MOVEMENT: ‘GOBLINS’ OR WATER SPIRITS

At a time when the *mbatsav* or witches were very active and many people were being killed by poison, the *ijôv* came to put an end to such evil practices. The *ijôv* appeared, of course, in human form and shape. But those who saw it did not know that it was really an *ijôv*; you would just think it was someone you knew.

But, when you talked to it, it never opened its mouth and listened to you in silence. Even if you abused it, it wouldn’t answer back. It lives in the woods or hills and does whatever it pleases, either good or evil. For men it provides good things. If you are in a period of dire want, and have to really struggle to get even a small thing, yet when someone asks you for something, you do not refuse him, then one day the *ijôv* will come begging something of you. At that moment you do not know that it is an *ijôv*, but you just suppose it is your

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<sup>37</sup>It is not known when the Tiv adopted *budeli*, but it is of Hausa origin: *budeji* in Hausa means ‘one who practises magic’. Over time, the pronunciation changed among the Tiv to *budeli*, a phonemic aberration which is common for words adopted from other cultures or language groups.

brother whose need is greater than your own and you wish to help him out. So you give what the *ijôv* asks for and it departs. But some day later it will meet you in the bush and put something in your hands, and tell you how to use it and even explain exactly what its taboo is. If you do as it says, you will become wonderfully lucky. Sometimes it gives riches and the man becomes the richest in the country around him. He tells everyone that it is the *ijôv* who gave him prosperity. Whenever he sells anything small, he gets a big profit from the exchange. Sometimes the *ijôv* gives a person success in hunting: no one in the land can shoot as well as he does; in one year he might kill twenty animals. Another person may get a really fine crop from the *ijôv*. Even though he farms only a small plot, his yield is so big that he can't carry it home and a part is left to rot on the farm site.

### OFFENDING THE *IJÔV*

But an *ijôv* can also do ill to some, visiting people with afflictions. If the *ijôv* asks for something and you refuse, thinking it to be a fellow human being, you will have really brought trouble upon yourself. The *ijôv* will afflict you. Such an affliction can take many forms. Sometime it is the need to always ask for things. The person always tries to get what another person has until people say that he is afflicted by the *ijôv*. He keeps on asking for things, as though he was out of his mind. At other times, it may be a pregnant wife who is mean, and when the *ijôv* asks her for something, she refuses and then she becomes afflicted. When her child is born, it is a monstrosity with a mouth to one side, or else is a weakling. Or it may be unable to speak, dumb, or never learn to walk and drags itself along on the ground. People then say, 'His mother was afflicted in her womb by the *ijôv* because she was mean.' A man sometimes becomes afflicted by the *ijôv* over a woman. He goes after the same woman continuously, never giving up trying no matter how many times she refuses him. In his conversation, in his songs, in everything, the young woman is the theme. He talks about her even while eating food. 'He is afflicted by the *ijôv*,' everyone says. At other times, if a man does a wrong thing that angers the *ijôv*, it beats him and he gets welts or hives all over his body, without his even seeing the reason for it. When asked how he got the hives or marks on his body, he does not answer, so everyone concludes that he has been beaten by the *ijôv* in the woods.

### BEARING OF / BEGETTING THE *ADZÔV*<sup>38</sup>

A man who decides to carry out the *adzôv* rites brews up beer and invites the elders among his kinsmen to get together at his village when the beer is ready. The man who prepares the beer for the *adzôv* rite is known as the 'begetter' of *adzôv*. They all start to drink. No one is denied *adzôv* beer; anyone may scoop out and drink however much he pleases, without anyone daring to stop him. If anyone tried to stop him, the *adzôv* would be angry with that man who had summoned them. They would not answer when he called them, and would thus appear to be

<sup>38</sup>The plural form of *ijôv*.

hostile. If he asked them, ‘My fathers, what have I done?’ they would answer, ‘Why did someone deny our people our beer, as if it was their own. We are not pleased with what he has done. We shall ignore you unless you make propitiations to us.’ So the begetter of the *adzôv* returns home, catches a white chicken that has not even one non- white feather on its body, gets some pearl millet, some cocoyams, beans, guinea-corn, ground-nuts and a strip of indigo dyed cloth. These things are then put at the base of a tree. The trees at which the *adzôv* are begotten are the *haa* and *hurugh*, the wild plum tree trees, and no others, because the *adzôv* dwell by these trees. After the begetter has put down the presents, he calls on the *adzôv* by their names. The names of the *adzôv* are Lim and Ageraiber. Lim is the female and Ageraiber is the chief. After this happens, the land again prospers. Crops are good again, hunting is successful, and the women bear children.

### INITIATION INTO *ADZÔV*<sup>39</sup>

You need eight ‘twenties’ and six coins, a dog and a cow to do the initiation. These are all taken by the man who initiates you, but before leaving he distributes shoots of the *iyandegh* shrub among the elders present at the beer drinking, for them to take back to plant on their own farms. He also orders that all the pots have to be cleaned out that same night, and that no woman is to throw the slops outside the house, because if she does she may throw the dirty water into the face of an *ijôv*. Moreover, no menstruating woman may wash herself in the river bed, and no female may take herbs for sauce from another wife’s garden.

A woman who goes to the farm must not refuse to share her meal with any who ask of her. If the maize is ripe on the farm and someone comes and picks a cob, the owner must not cry out, ‘Thief!’ And no dog may be beaten that night in the initiate’s village.

### DRINKING THE *IJÔV*

An *ijôv* movement occurred many years after that which was called the *budeli*. It originated in the Iharev clan; from there it moved to the Nôngov. All the people who were greatly troubled by *tsav* went to get it. They brought it back to quell the *tsav* practices in their own clans.

### OBTAINING THE *IJÔV*

The *ijôv* was acquired like this: the man who wanted to acquire it to use in his own group listened for news of some place where *ijôv* was being brewed, and when he heard about someone who was doing this, he went and stayed with him and took

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<sup>39</sup>Iorwuese Hagher writes in his scholarly new book, *The Kwagh-Hir Theater: a weapon for social action* (University Press of America, 2014), about the *adzôv* as ‘spirit beings in human shape’ who do what they want, good or evil. They manifest themselves in human form and occupy the land with the Tiv. Importantly he describes how the storytelling involves props and costumes, and has songs and dances.

note of all the details connected with it. On the very day that the *ijôv* was to be drunk he asked the man who brewed it to give him the *ijôv*, so that he too could brew it up and having done that punish the *mbatsav* in his own district. Then the man poured some of the beer into a square black gin bottle and gave it to him along with some leaves of the *iyandegh* bush. After he got this, he set off at night because he was afraid to travel by day, lest the witches wait for him on the road and kill him.

When he got back to his home, he stood in the middle of the village at midday and uttered cries of triumph and sang the song of the *ijôv*. Then he told all about the commands of the *ijôv* — in other words, the things that they were not to do during the days that he was bringing it in. These commands were sometimes called forbidden activities. One decreed that, on the special day for brewing *ijôv*, no man was to kill a monitor lizard, a skink, or any creature that came into the village. During those days, strange things happened. Many people would be sitting in the meeting hut and a monitor lizard would come into the hut and stay there. No one raised a hand to touch it. Skinks and other animals would become very tame during that period.

On the day that the man started to brew beer, he caught a white ram and took it to the *adzôv* and told them he was brewing beer for them so that they could come and benefit his land. They consented and every time a meal was prepared and a beast killed, some of the meat was taken to the *adzôv* in the grove of trees. The male ones were called *gudan-a-sila* [a word of Hausa derivation meaning ‘come back and be finished’] and *wan-ikpugh-urkapa* [a Tiv expression meaning ‘the small explosion’]. Their mother was Myam, and their father Agaishuwa. The land became quiet during that period. No one went *tsav*. If one did, his bowels would churn, he would have diarrhoea, and eventually die.

On the day of drinking the *ijôv*, those who had brewed it got together in the village. After all were seated, a great pot of beer was brought out and set down in the centre of the open area. The man himself sat on an inverted mortar. Then he stood up and commanded silence. The people stopped talking; even the birds did not twitter while he took the bottle with the little beer in it and held it up for everyone to see. ‘My kinsmen, do you see this?’ he asked. ‘Yes,’ they replied with one voice. ‘We really see it.’ ‘This is the beer which the *ijôv* has given me, and with this I may now come and set the land right. I am going to mix this little beer in this pot and if any one drinks without having first thrown all his medicine or *akombo* for killing people into the basket which stands over there and confessing the evil deeds he has already done in the past, the *ijôv* will cause his bowels to gush out and he will die!’ With this, he poured the beer in the bottle into the beer that was in the pot, and the people began to drink *ijôv*. If there were any who didn’t have medicine for killing, these people stood up and swore that they had never killed anyone or bought any magic thing to kill people, nor any evil medicine. A man would say, ‘If I have done this, and am denying it falsely, let the *ijôv* kill me. But if I have spoken the truth, I shall drink and I will pass it out from my bowels freely.’ After he had taken the oath, the man who had brewed the beer gave it to him and he drank.

Someone who held *tsav* and was in the habit of killing people with poison would stand up and confess his crimes of his own accord, no one compelled him, he knew that if he did not make a full confession, his bowels would be loosened by the *ijôv* and he would die. Another person would bring out the medicine with which he

killed people. He held it up for everyone to see and disclosed the names of those he had killed with it. He said, 'I killed this one or that one, of such-and-such a family'. He explained 'Someone who had quarrelled with his brother, and was getting the worst of it, came to me and asked if I would help him. I did so and killed his brother who had been too strong for him.' With those words he threw the medicine into the basket. A woman of the village shouted out a cry of praise and every one admired him for being a brave man. Some confessed to having killed as many as five people. For instance, one man got up, displayed a charm, and declared that when he got into trouble he turned himself into a leopard. Another one stood up and said that he escaped by changing into a mongoose, and asked whether he needed to throw away his charm since it was only used in self-defense. If everyone agreed that his charm need not be put in the basket, he took it back again. Even a man with an *imborivungu* brought it out that day. If it was a pipe 'of the fathers' he was told to throw it away because men were killed to set it right. But if it was one made for fixing the land and crops well, it was not put into the basket, because people said he should not have to throw away future crops. My father threw away an *imborivungu* on an occasion like this; after he brought it out, he smashed it.

Although people threw away all kinds of things this way, no one ever brought out a human skin. Yet many insisted that this had been the practice. When my sister, after whom I came next in age, died in Mbaiyongo, people said that since she was a beautiful girl, my father had killed her and given her to his eldest son, Hirekaan, to skin, so that he might be have the smartest appearance during night dances. When the *ijôv* movement came, I was interested in seeing whether or not Hirekaan would bring out the skin of my sister Kasevevduwe. When my cousin Ndeer had brewed the *ijôv*, I took up my position next to the man who was giving out the beer so that if Hirekaan brought out my sister's skin I would be able to see it. No one stood closer to him than I. The only things that Hirekaan displayed openly were our father's *imborivungu* and some women's medicine. Everyone saw those, me as well, I saw them clearly, but he never brought out a human skin. Yet when the people went back to their homes, they spoke openly of how Hirekaan of Sai had that day done a thing which was not good: he had brought out the skin of Kasevevduwe in a public place.

This *ijôv* movement made a big stir in Tivland during that period, and was known to every section of the ethnic group. The power of the *mbatsav* diminished. Since *tsav* was forbidden, everyone in those days went about without worry. The things which were to be thrown away by people at the drinking of the *ijôv* ceremony were gathered up by the man who made the brew and then thrown into a stream. After a time, this movement lost momentum and came to an end. People once again bought *akombo* and poisons for killing men. The land went back to its evil state.

### THE *IVASE*

After the anti-*ijôv* had gone by and had failed to put an end to it, then the *ivase* movement started. It began among the Utange. Anyone who had bought it set up an enclosure for *ivase* in his own village made of stout posts, a stockade. In the centre of the enclosure, he dug in a three-forked pole on which he placed a

covered pot containing chicken eggs. To set it right, he caught a cock, hung it over the pot, and then twisted its head against the palm of his hand. The cock's head was torn off and was taken and put into the pot; the rest of the bird was cooked and eaten, but only by those who had bought the *ivase*. Sometimes a dog was killed instead, its head was cut off and put in the pot, but, since the Tiv do not eat dogs, they gave the body to the Utange to eat.

A man desiring initiation went to one who had the *ivase* in his village and gave him a present. The owner of the *ivase* took a piece of leopard skin, tied it around a stick, and broke an egg over it. The owner gave this to the man who had come to buy it. Later on, when the recipient got home he proclaimed the *ivase*, talking unintelligibly in the Utange language mixed up with Tiv.

### THE *IVASE* INCANTATION

Hoo — *Ivase*, of the wild heart, of the *belebele inko*, *we biano we biano*, *we shi mbe mbe*. *Ivase* fight the *mbatsav*, fight dauntlessly, furiously. If anyone becomes an owl, then you also become an owl. If any come by the water, then you are also water. Let no person use you to taste your food, as you use no man for your own.

When he finished speaking this way, all those who had bought the *ivase* came together in the evening and danced, accompanied by a small tree-drum. The *ivase* dance was similar to the *mbatsav* dance; the dancers did not touch each other. While they danced they sang, '*Woo woo, woro wo wo, ivase yô or, wororo wo wo.*' If one introduced the *ivase* into his village, none of his people would do *tsav*. If anyone did so, then his feet and stomach would swell up and he would die.

### PROHIBITIONS OF THE *IVASE*

The *ivase* prohibitions were as follows. No one may bury an iron weapon in the ground, such as a broad blade or barbed spear within the village of a man who had bought the *ivase*; if he did this, the weapon would be seized. To redeem it, he would have to pay a penny. No pounded yams were allowed to be brought out uncovered. Anyone who threw water from inside a house would get a headache.

If anyone died — no matter where he was at the time — it was said that the *ivase* had killed him. On that day, a red cloth was hung in the *ivase* enclosure. Those who had bought the *ivase* spent the day dancing; those who were *mbatsav* were afraid, thinking that if they went back to *tsav*, they would die like this man had died. When a man bought an *ivase*, the *mbatsav* would send a mouse to test him. The mouse died as soon as it came into the village.

### THE END OF THE *IVASE*

The *ivase* spread quickly, and the Dam then began to buy it from the Tiv. One day, a man of the Dam people came to visit a Tiv friend who had the *ivase*. He asked if he could bring it to his own house to buy it. So the Tiv prepared to leave. Before he left, he killed a number of mice, put them in a bag, and took them along on his visit

to his friend's village. After dark, his friend the Dam came out of his hut and hid, just to see whether there was any truth to the *ivase*. When everyone was asleep, the Tiv got up, took the dead mice quietly out of the bag, and tossed them here and there between the huts. Then he went back to bed. All this time, the Dam had been watching him. The next day when his friend got up, he asked how he had slept and the Tiv said, 'The *mbatsav* who are in the Dam country sent some mice to test you last night, and they all have died.' 'Stop lying,' shouted his friend. 'It was you yourself who took out the mice and put them down between the huts. I saw the whole thing. If you deny it, come and I will show you the foot-prints you made last night while you were doing it.' The Tiv was very ashamed. The Dam took back all the money he had paid to be shown the *ivase*. He said it was an obvious hoax. After the news of this spread around, there was great disappointment. All those who had bought the *ivase* lost confidence in it and the movement was discredited.

### THE *HAAKAA* MOVEMENT

After the *ivase* had proved to be worthless, another big movement occurred which shook the land of the Tiv to its foundations. It was called the *haakaa*, that is, the 'give it up' movement, and was also called *pasepase*, 'reveal-reveal'. It began like this.

The *haakaa* movement originated in the southern subgroup of the Shitire clan at the time Chafa Don was the colonial administrator of a major district in Tivland and was Resident at Katsina Ala.

Kpela and Aganyi were brothers from the southern subgroup of the Shitire clan. Shortly after the death of Kpela, Nyikaan, a kinsman of Aganyi, accused Aganyi of using witchcraft to destroy his wife. Aganyi had inherited Kpela's wife, the wife of his deceased brother, in accordance with Tiv customary practice. So Nyikaan went to Mbaakende district and advised Iganden, the brother of the wife Aganyi had inherited, to come and take his sister away or else Aganyi might destroy her in the same way.

One day, Dzungu, the inherited wife, was on a visit in Mbaakende and got wind of what Nyikaan had come to tell her brother. Upon her return, she revealed this to Aganyi. On hearing this, Aganyi went and reported to Chief Dwem that Nyikaan was looking for a fight with him. Chief Dwem summoned the two parties to his house and interrogated them. On hearing the details of the story, Chief Dwem and his jury concluded that the case was mere hearsay. Since it was a matter between brothers, he let the two go back and settle it on a family level. It was not a matter to pursue as litigation.

When they returned home, a family meeting was held to resolve the matter. Amu, the head of Mbaseer, who was their kindred, and the council of elders, made up of Ihôôn, Agishi and Chief Chembe, quickly found Aganyi guilty. Their reasoning was that, naturally, whenever a man hears something concerning his kinsman, there is a need to first corroborate the story with the kinsman. But Aganyi, upon hearing women gossip, hurriedly had gone and reported the gossip directly to Chief Dwem. So, he was wrong. Next time, he should not act like that. On hearing this, Aganyi became livid. He said he would take a complaint

against them up to Katsina Ala. But they were not bothered since they took Aganyi for a fool and one who could be unreasonably bellicose.

Aganyi set off for Katsina Ala; there he told Chafa Don [the D.O.]<sup>40</sup> that Amu, Ihôôn, Agishi and Chief Chembe had killed his brother Kpela. They had brought him the head to eat but he had refused to accept it. They then took it away and gave it to Dzegeate, who ate it. The *akombo* which had killed his brother to be set right was called *feumbatugh* (*gbeime*) of the *mbatsav*. Chafa Don heard this and sent Chief Dwem's messenger, who was in Katsina Ala at the time, to tell Chief Dwem to bring in the people who had been accused by Aganyi of killing his brother Kepla to set right the *fe akombo*. When Chief Dwem came back with the elders whose names Aganyi had mentioned, Chafa Don questioned them. They denied everything he asked about, any knowledge of the matter. So Chafa Don asked Aganyi what he had to say. Aganyi said that they knew all about the matter but were just concealing their guilt. When the others continued to deny everything, Chafa Don asked if Aganyi would recognize his brother's skull if it were brought to him. He replied that he would know it because his brother had one molar missing on the right side. Then Dzegeate said, 'Aganyi has spoken the truth. Leave me alone and I will go and get Kpela's skull.' Chafa Don gave him leave to go and get it. After he arrived at home, he dug up the grave of a woman who had died lately in their village, called Kwaghtagher, and brought her head to show Chafa Don. Chafa Don saw that no tooth was missing, and when he asked Aganyi if it was Kpela's skull, he said it was not. He accused Dzegeate of hiding it away and bringing the head of a woman instead. So Chafa Don punished Dzegeate and the elders for deliberately concealing the truth.

At that time, all of Tivland was shaken. When the Tiv saw that the Shitire elders were severely dealt with by Chafa Don they were glad, for they were now given a chance to avenge themselves on their enemies by falsely accusing them before him. No one could come and say, 'So-and-so killed my brother and set right an owl pipe, the *imborivungu*.' If Chafa Don heard this, he would have the man brought in. The *dugwer* or native authority policeman went to fetch him and before they even left his home they gave him a thorough beating. When the native authority police brought him in, the Whiteman asked him where the *imborivungu* was for which he had killed the man. When he denied it, Chafa Don upbraided him violently and accused him of hiding the truth, until he admitted his guilt and asked to be allowed to go and fetch it. Policemen were sent with him now. In some cases, when the man got home he asked to be allowed to go into his hut and finding nothing there to help his case, took a spear and stabbed himself, saying that death was better than so much misery. Or another would enter his house and set it alight, wanting to be burned to death, but was then dragged out by force. Others had a real owl-pipe or medicine and brought it; others, being unable to find anything, took a bone or some such thing and covered it with wax, stuck hair and red beans on it and said it was an owl-pipe. By giving this up, they obtained relief from their troubles. Some who said they had nothing lied, but after they had been well punished, they cleverly went and found something very different to bring in. This, they said, was the medicine

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<sup>40</sup>In the Tiv typescript 'D.O.' (i.e. District Officer) was initially used here and throughout this paragraph, but was then changed by hand to 'Chafa Don' (i.e. Captain Downes).



which they had for killing men. Then Chafa Don and even the chiefs accepted their stories. The chiefs, of course, knew what was going on and were aware of concealment, but they wanted to find favour with Chafa Don; so even when people brought in objects that were fake, they said they were the real thing.

Sometimes a man was known to own a *poor* and was a known *tsav* person, but when the Whiteman told him to bring the human skulls he had, he was unable to produce any. When he failed to find any skulls, the police gave him a thorough beating and he returned home exhausted or died. But if a man was clever, when the Whiteman told him to bring the skull of the man he had killed, he did not deny it, but set off at once to go and dig up the grave of someone who had died years ago. He took out the head and brought it back in an old sack and gave it to the Whiteman or chiefs, and then all went well for him. But the man who had no sense, who truthfully protested and said he was innocent, brought enough trouble on himself to last a lifetime, and often did not survive. The people who suffered the most certain sections of the Shitire and Ikurav clans, and also the Ugondo, Kunav and Turan.

The Whitemen knew little about the suffering that occurred in those clans affected by the *haakaa* movement. The trouble was made much worse because mutual recriminations took place when the D.O. first called in all the chiefs to Katsina Ala. All who were accused of having instruments of the *mbatsav* turned around and accused their enemies, so that in some cases as many as five men suffered. The thing the Whiteman wanted most was to get a complete human skin. He ordered that a complete human skin must be brought in but not one could be produced. When that D.O. went on leave and another person took his place, Tseva of Ikyado in Ukum told this man that if he, the Whiteman, gave him the chieftaincy of Ukum, he would bring him a human skin. The Whiteman agreed, and Tseva used all his influence and knowledge to search but never found one. People, in the end, began to laugh at him and said he was searching for something that did not even exist.

When Tseva and the Whiteman were making efforts to find a human skin, a certain man and his wife suffered more than anyone. His name was Atserve. His wife was called Tungwa, and their son was Agundu — he was a beautiful child. Agundu died, and about the time of his death it was rumoured that Tsofo, the son of Zaki Biam, had a human skin in his possession. So the Whiteman ordered Gana, his foreign messenger, and a policeman called Igbudu to go and arrest Tsofo and make him give up the human skin. Tsofo denied having one, but suggested that Atserve had killed his son and skinned him and made a bag out of it

Gana remained at Zaki Biam and sent policemen to seize Atserve, who was then beaten until he could no longer cry out; his body was covered with wounds. They told him to bring the skin of his son Agundu. When he saw he had no escape, he lied to them, saying that he had indeed killed Agundu and would bring his skin. So they untied him and told him to go and get it. Everyone was happy because they thought they would see a human skin. The police went with him, but nothing was found. So they brought him back again and beat him along the way. Having returned, Gana questioned Atserve and put the blame on his wife, Tungwa, saying that he was actually fetching it but she had prevented him. So Gana sent them back to arrest Tungwa and bring her in. They beat Tungwa until she could scream no more, while her husband lay on the ground and watched his

wife's suffering. Then they caught hold of him again and beat him once more. After a long beating, he said if they would let him go he would bring the skin and not fool around. So they untied him and took him back again. He told the police to wait outside while he went into his hut to get it. They waited. He entered his hut, took an arrow, and stabbed himself in the thigh. Then he sat down to wait for death, which seemed to him a better thing than the trouble that had come to him without cause. The policemen waited in vain for him to come out, then went into the hut and found him there at the point of death, an arrow sticking through his thigh. They quickly took him, applied remedies, and bound up the leg and sent word to Gana. Gana was afraid and released the wife, who was still lying bound in the village. The man did not die but both he and his wife bear the scars of their beating. After a few months, Gana gave up his post but I do not know the reason for it. Afterwards, I met him in Abinsi [Abetse]. He told me that he would rather be left to live in poverty than take on *mbatsav* work again.

At that time all the officers working under the Europeans claimed to have good knowledge of the Tiv and so the Whiteman acted on their advice without question. In this way, they found many opportunities to trick the Whiteman and they obtained many promotions. One day the Whiteman sent his policeman, Abaivo, to Chief Yaakur in Ugondo, and told him to go with him to seize the *mbatsav* and take their bad things away from them. Abaivo went and they went as far as Ugba's old village. Ugba was then living in Kaduna. Ugba's brother, Igase, was away at the time but the labourers working on the road from Zaki Biam to Tômbo were staying in his village and going to work from there. The name of the head labourer was Korinya Akaa of Kusuv. That day as they went to work there were two eagles fighting in a tree, and they saw them fall into the grass at the side of the road, near to the present day Ugba market. The road workers ran to the spot. One of the eagles flew up, but the other was caught by one of the young labourers whose name was Uwogba of Ugondo, who took it to Korinya, his headman. Korinya handed the eagle over to Chief Yaakur, who was drinking beer with his chief men and Abaivo. Abaivo took the eagle and said, 'I will go and tell the Whiteman that I took Igase's box with the instruments of the *mbatsav* in it, and the eagle came to snatch it from me and I caught it.' Chief Yaakur agreed to tell the same story if he were asked by the Whiteman. So they tied a string to the eagle, and three days later, when Igase returned, they told him that they were waiting for him to give them the box in which he kept the bad things.

Igase denied that he had any *mbatsav* instruments, but they beat him and went in and took one of his boxes by force, and then they put some *mbatsav* instruments into his box that they had previously confiscated from another box. Then they set out for Katsina Ala to give their evidence. When they arrived, Abaivo told the Whiteman his story, and Chief Yaakur on being questioned supported him and every one praised Abaivo for the power of his *tsav*, by means of which he had been able to catch the eagle. The Whiteman plucked a few of the eagle's feathers and put them in storage at Katsina Ala where bad things were kept. Abaivo's fame spread all over Tivland. Men came from afar to see the eagle, and, having seen it, paid homage to the cleverness of Abaivo. This pleased Abaivo greatly.

Then there was the case of the human-slaughter slab. Actually, the Tiv originally knew nothing about a slab for cutting up human flesh. They always said that

the *mbatsav* found a big tree, bent it down to the ground, and cut up the meat on the leaves. But at the beginning of the *haakaa* movement, the Ukum started the idea of the slaughter-slab. This slab was sewn like a saddle for a horse's back and made of black material. At each corner human hair and amulets sewn up in leather were attached, and it had blood on it which, according to them, was human blood. Every slaughter-slab had a small butcher's knife attached to it. This thing initially also caused the Tiv a lot of suffering until they devised a way out. Later on, when a man was seized and told to bring a slaughter-slab, he did not argue, but asked to be allowed to go and fetch it. Then he went and sewed up an old black blanket and a strip of cloth, and attached to it all the things he had seen before. For blood, he squeezed out some juice from the *akpine* tree and let it dry. Then he took this to the Whiteman and said it was a human slaughter-slab.

My cousin Wanba told me the following account. While he was at Takum, one of the older men of his family, Shishi, was arrested and was told to bring in a human slaughter-slab. Shishi denied that he had any knowledge of such a thing and so the policemen started to beat him. Wanba, observing what was happening, went quietly near Shishi and squatted down close to him. He told him that he should send him to fetch a slaughter-slab and that he would bring one. Shishi asked him, 'Where are you going to find one?' He answered, 'It is all right. Just tell the Whiteman that you have sent someone and he is bringing it along.' At that, Wanba got up and went to his house, where he took an old blanket and sewed it to exactly match the one he had seen given to the Whiteman previously. He tied on all the things he had seen tied to the other one.

Finally he killed a small goat and put some of its blood on it, to serve as human blood. Then they ate the goat. The next morning he set off and took the cloth with the goat's blood on it, carefully rolled up in an old sack. When they arrived, the open area in the centre of the village was full of people, including the Whiteman and the chief. As soon as he brought out the cloth, everyone asked why Shishi had denied having a slaughter-slab the previous day. Shishi said that all the beating confused his mind. So then he was released, and thus Wanba saved him.

Those Tiv into whose districts the *haakaa* came say that it was the worst trouble they had ever experienced. Some actually died as a result of it; during the investigation, there was no one among the ethnic groups of the elders who did not suffer. A few got into such terrible situations that they took their own lives, and others survived only after they had undergone the greatest of hardships. Much of this suffering went on unknown to the Europeans; the men who were the chief causes for it were the *ugwana* [a word of Hausa derivation meaning 'farm-thug-soldiers']. These *ugwana* were employed by the policemen and messengers. When a policeman was sent out by the Whiteman or a chief, he himself did not go alone, unless it was a very minor matter. If it were anything of importance, such as an arrest, or the collection of labour for some project, and he knew that he would have to face the people and have trouble, then as soon as the chief was out of sight of the Whiteman he found ten or twenty young men to go with him. He called them his *ugwana*. The type of men he selected to carry out his purpose were those he knew to be of violent disposition and strong physique, ready to say anything and swear without compunction, and who were completely shameless. When the administrator reached his destination he did not do much

himself, but left all the work to them. It was they who were assigned to hold and arrest someone; they caught the person, tied him up and if it was someone against whom they held a grudge, they beat the person very severely. But when they brought the individual back to where the Whiteman was, they left the policemen to bring him alone into the district officer's presence. Additionally, not only was the man in question maltreated, but anyone else in the village who dared to open his mouth or even look with hard eyes was held to be seeking a quarrel with the *ugwana* and he too was beaten severely. It was these *ugwana* who brought the people most of their troubles. The Whiteman did not know but the chiefs knew. Because of the *haakaa* movement, the chiefs eventually became very unpopular in Tivland. The Tiv asked, 'Why is it supposed that the chiefs themselves are not *tsav*? Is it only we who are *tsav*, we who are not chiefs?' If an accusation was brought against a chief, the other chiefs gave favourable evidence and he was acquitted. Moreover, it was assumed that none of the chief's favourites had any *tsav*. The chiefs who were hated the most at that time were Jato Aka and Chief Dwem. Because the Turan, Jato Aka's clan, was being strongly defended by their chief, they escaped the troubles, yet everyone said that they were the worst of all. Yet, at that time, neither he nor any of his people were assumed to be *tsav*. They were only slightly affected during the later period, when rumors reached the ears of the Whiteman. There was such ill-feeling about all of this among the Tiv that if they had been allowed to give their opinion about Jato Aka, the Whiteman would certainly have demanded that he be deposed. But the Tiv were afraid to do this because the Whiteman himself said that Jato Aka was the greatest of their chiefs. Chief Dwem, on the other hand, oppressed his clansmen very harshly, without pity. He did spare his own kinsmen to a large extent, but vented his hatred on the rest of the clan until they cried out bitterly.

#### THE END OF THE *HAAKAA* MOVEMENT

The *haakaa* movement came to its end this way: Saama and Oralai were brothers by the same mother of the clan of Shitire of the outskirts. Their subgroup was Tômbô, Mbaagia and their family-group was Mbaidyô. The clan chief was Chief Dwem, who also the head of Tômbô, and they paid tax to Agishi.

During the period when *haakaa* was at its height, Saama went down to Akpena to drink beer. On his way back, just as darkness was falling he stopped for the night at Ibumun's, of Anengena village in Mbavihi. During the night he died and they sent a message to his brother Oralai to come and bury him.

After Oralai buried him, word was brought to Chief Dwem that it was Oralai who had killed his brother Saama. When Chief Dwem heard this, he sent a policeman to seize Oralai and bring him to his village. Chief Dwem and the elders asked Oralai why he had killed his brother. Oralai protested and said that he had not killed his brother and that his accusers were lying. He said, 'I am greatly distressed by the death of my brother and feel his loss deeply. Why do you add to my grief? There were only two of us; why should I kill Saama and thus be left alone in the world?' Chief Dwem and the elders told him not to tell deliberate lies and that if he persisted in denying his guilt, Agishi, his section head, would go with him and a policeman and open up the grave. So the chief Agishi set out with the policeman

and the *ugwana* and Oralai, the one accused of killing his brother. When they all arrived at the grave, they stood around it in a circle, while someone took a hoe and opened it up. When it was opened they saw the dead man, Saama, inside and he was untouched. 'You see? Isn't this Saama lying there in the grave?' When he, Oralai, said this, Agashi slapped him across the mouth and said, 'Don't tell lies! Saama is not in the grave.' 'Amazing!' cried Oralai. 'Look, you can see Saama as well as I can.'

Then the policeman and the *ugwana* started to beat up Oralai, telling him to stop lying, and filled up the grave with dirt with the body still inside. They brought Oralai bound before Chief Dwem. Chief Dwem asked them what they had seen and they all replied together that Saama was not in the grave. Oralai once again asserted that Saama was in the grave; the others strongly insisted that he was not. So Chief Dwem sent some more of the elders to go back with them, and once again they meet Chief Dwem asked him, 'So you are the one who killed Saama?' So he just admitted it. As he admitted, Dwem asked him again, 'What is your reason for killing him?' He answered that he opened up the grave. Finally, Oralai admitted that Saama's corpse was not seen in the grave. He had killed him to service an *imborivungu*. The chief asked, 'Who connived with you in killing him?' He answered that one elderly man called Agbega connived with him. So Chief Dwem told his secretary to put down on paper that Oralai has killed his brother Saama, in connivance with Agbega. The chief asked him, 'Are you the one who killed him?' The man replied, 'The very one plus another senior man called Agbega.' Chief Dwem told the one who would write the message on the paper to write, 'Oralai killed his brother Saama, along with Agbega.' So the scribe wrote what was said to Oralai, and Malu wrote this, that Saama was killed to service an *imborivungu*. 'Write it down on the paper because if there is ever anything contrary to what has been written down, the Whiteman will not spare you. Books do not tell lies.'

Chief Dwem sent a policeman as well as an *ugwana* to seize Agbega and bring him in. Before they delivered him they practically tortured him to death. When they arrived the chief asked him, 'It was you, wasn't it, together with Oralai who killed Saama to set right an *imborivungu*?' Agbega said that he knew nothing about this, but Oralai told him to stop trying to hide his guilt through deliberate lying. Indeed, he said, it was to set right Agbega's *imborivungu* that they had killed Saama. When Agbega still denied it, one of his own sons, called Dauda, gave evidence against him. 'On the night Saama died, Oralai brought his flesh to Agbega in a basket. I saw this quite plainly, because that night I was sleeping in the *ate*. Why is my father wilfully denying it?' he asked.

Agbega said, 'You are right, my son, I admit it.' He asked Chief Dwem to send some policemen with him and he would go and fetch the *imborivungu*. So the chief sent policemen and some *ugwana* and Agishi. They took him to his home, beating him as they went. When they arrived he told them all to wait outside while he went inside the grass-mat enclosure to fetch the *imborivungu* for them to take to Chief Dwem. So they all waited outside. Agbega went inside, sat down in a dark corner, and stabbed himself with a poisoned arrow. He stayed inside while the others waited for him outside. As he was dying, he called Agishi and said, 'Agishi, come, take me and bury me. Dauda, my son, has killed me. May he live happily.' As he said this, the others came in and he died. They took him and buried him and brought back word to Chief Dwem. Chief Dwem and the

council said, 'No, there is no doubt that he was guilty. He was afraid the Whiteman would kill him, so he killed himself instead.'

At that time Chafa Don had not yet returned from leave, and Chafa Ambiti, the D.O. at Wukari, was acting in his place. There was another Assistant District Officer, Karmin Joji at Katsina Ala. On this fateful day, Chafa Abraham was also touring Tivland and was at that time in Ugondo at Ugba's old village. So Chief Dwem sent Oralai bound to Wukari in the custody of policemen, with a letter to Chafa Ambiti. Chafa Ambiti read the letter and asked Oralai, 'Is it true that you killed your brother, you and the man who has killed himself?' Oralai admitted that it was true and told him that he was killed in order to set right an *imborivungu*. Chafa Ambiti was very surprised at this, and ordered that he be taken to the Assistant District Officer, Chafa Abraham at Ugba, to help him figure out this matter. Chafa Abraham questioned Oralai, but he continued to hold to his statement that he had killed his brother Saama to set right an *imborivungu*, and that Agbega had helped him and then killed himself. So Chafa Abraham sent him back to Wukari and Chafa Ambiti once more.

Chafa Ambiti then asked him, 'Since your brother's body is not in the grave, did you eat it up entirely when you performed the rites?' Oralai said that yes, they did. Then Chafa Ambiti called the chief messenger, Ibrahim, and said to him, 'Take this man who killed his brother, Saama, along with the elders of the clan and go straight to Saama's grave. Dig it up and if you find his body inside, bring it to me here at Wukari. And if you do not find the body, but only bones, then collect these together and bring them to me.'

So Ibrahim set out and the others went ahead to the grave of the dead man Saama. All the elders stood around the grave. Ibrahim told a man to dig, and there they found the body of Saama, absolutely untouched. It was still intact, and had only just started to decay slightly and turn black near the navel. Ibrahim told them to bring a bed and lay the corpse on it, to take it to Wukari. A large crowd looked on in horror. When they got there, Chafa Ambiti asked Oralai, 'Is this not your brother whom you have over and over again said you and Agbega killed to set right an *imborivungu* and who, according to you, had been completely consumed?' Oralai remained silent. The Whiteman asked again, 'Oralai, is this the body of your brother Saama, or the body of another man?' Oralai said, 'It is no one else but my brother, Saama.' Then he began to cry. 'I told them that I had not done it,' he said, 'but Chief Dwem and the elders forced me to say that I had. I could hold out no longer and agreed to what they said.' Yet he did not tell the whole story to the Whiteman because he was afraid if he gave every detail to the Whiteman, the Whiteman would be angry with the elders, and the elders would kill him with *tsav* for exposing them to the Whiteman. But Dauda, the son of Agbega, who had said that Oralai and his father, had killed Saama, when he saw that Ibrahim had dug up Saama's body, he fled to the bush. From that day on, the Whitemen made no further efforts with the *haakaa* movement, and Chafa Don did not continue it after he returned from his leave. What can have been their views about all of this? That is all about the Haakaa movement. And also all about the things of *mbatsav* of the past.

## Chapter Five

### ABOUT SICKNESS

According to the Tiv, sickness does not just come about by itself; rather, it is caused by an *akombo* or, if not that, then by the *mbatsav*. Because of this, the Tiv name for nearly every disease is tied to the name of an *akombo*. Whenever bewitching occurs by the *mbatsav*, they invariably use the *akombo* to carry out their purpose. There are three ways to treat diseases: by killing something with a blood sacrifice, by giving medicine, or by casting away a curse. In such cases, the way the treatment is carried out is determined by divination. There are some illnesses that can be diagnosed by simply looking at the patient — he is told to carry out the rites and the sickness will leave him if *akombo* was the only cause. But when one is dealing with less well-known diseases, the *akombo* has to be properly revealed by divination before it can be set right. The divining chain, made of *iyiase* and *ive* pods threaded on a string, shows whether or not it is necessary to kill a victim, or whether applying medicines internally or externally is a way to cure the disease, or whether all that is really needed is to wash away the curse for the medicine to work. (The practice of divination is described in chapter four.)

There used to be less sickness among the Tiv compared to what there is today, and plagues did not affect the land as frequently as they do now. Old men now say that the land changed after the Whiteman came and that this brought sicknesses.

#### SMALLPOX

This disease was a terrible blight in Tivland. Smallpox is known by a number of names such as *agena*, *dogbali*, *gwa* and *akpev*. Years ago, smallpox was not as prevalent as it is nowadays. My father was about forty years of age when the Whiteman came, and during his lifetime there had been only two smallpox epidemics. One began during the time of Ayenge, who was the first drum chief of Shitire. At that time, Chile the son of Tali of Mbagen of the Kparev clan was one of the elders who used to go to Swem. Some old men assert that he brought back the disease from there. All this happened before my grandfather Deekpe was old enough to wear a cloth. He was the one who told my father about it. Neither Akpeye of Maduku nor Achii Ikema of Mbara, both of the Kunav clan, who were born a few years after the Ugenyi drove off the Tiv from Ibenda Hill and were old men at the time the Whiteman came, saw the epidemic more than thrice. They held chieftaincychieftaincy under him for a short time before they died. Nor did Asela of Iharev within Sherev sub-clan, or other men of his age, or any of that generation, report more than three smallpox epidemics before the Whiteman came. Smallpox did not come in every generation like it does now; it appeared only once in a while.

Then, however, if an outbreak did happen it killed off large numbers of people. This is the reason the Tiv know so little about their past history. Smallpox is also the reason the Tiv grew accustomed to having large numbers of wives. Before they

knew about inoculation, large numbers of men died off. In some villages, not a single person was left to tell the story; in others, only one would survive, let's say a young man. When he found out that he was the only man left alive in the village, he took for himself all the women who were left destitute and begat children with them to carry on the line of the fathers. He might not really want all these women, but took them because he had to, not knowing what else to do. Sometimes a few other men who had survived in the area — as a proverb states: 'The sword never kills all the workers on the farm' — went to live with the young man and shared the sexual duties with the other women, and this made things easier for him. But in some villages there were no men left at all, and then the women in desperation went to look for husbands on their own. In some cases, a wife would resort to killing an animal and give it to a man to eat as payment for sleeping with her because men were so scarce at that time. All over the land it was quiet, silent. The number of deaths was so great that all the old men were wiped out and so no one was left to pass on the old ancestral traditions, except for the few young men who survived. If the Tiv had then been literate and the elders had been able to record ancient lore before smallpox killed everyone off, then the knowledge would have come down to us, their children. But because they did not write, it is difficult for us to get accurate information about the people who lived long ago.

Ignorance is the real reason the Tiv were almost exterminated by smallpox. When the epidemic occurred, it was said that someone had brought it from Swem to destroy the people. So they held their religious enquiries and said the disease would do no harm. At the end of the day, every householder called his household together and told them all not to do *tsav*, saying that as long as no one did *tsav*, the smallpox would not hurt them. But because there was nothing else that could be done, everybody succumbed to the disease. Later on they discovered that smallpox was infectious, and then they acted differently. When a person got the disease, they moved him out into the bush right away. He remained there and was treated by someone who had survived the disease. When the day began to get warm, the sick man went out and sun bathed. He was never allowed to sit in the shade because sitting out under the sun made the pox ripen more quickly. If that did not work, then the caretaker put a potsherd on the fire and filled it with sand. When it was hot, he put it on the ground for the sick man to lie upon or lean against so that the heat would bring out the disease better. When the pox lesions were fully formed and began to suppurate, he took dry camwood and rubbed it on the pox lesions. After some days the scabs peeled off and that was the end of it. If the disease turned fatal, pox lesions did not form well and the struggle with the illness continued to involve the entire body, and then the man became delirious and died. When he died, no one wept for him. People don't mourn death from smallpox because if they did it would kill everyone. The Tiv do not mourn two kinds of death: death by smallpox and death by the sasswood ordeal. They don't mourn the sasswood death because it is a violent death; if you mourn the one who died that way from the sasswood trial then you will be seized by the *swende*. If smallpox attacks a man and he is not killed by it, it scars his face and this makes him repellent to women. Because epidemics used to come at long intervals, a woman might refuse a suitor who had pock-marks saying, 'He is really old. He has even got smallpox scars!'



Later on they began to practise inoculation. When a case of smallpox occurred, someone who had already suffered from it took a razor blade and made a small cut on the body of a healthy person who had not yet been infected. When it bled, he took a little of the pus from a man already suffering from the disease and rubbed it into the wound. The man who was treated this way with pus might suffer from a headache, or a few spots might appear on his face, but, hopefully, that would be all. Then he would never get the disease again. This was a great help in keeping the disease dormant for a long while. But, nowadays, ever since the Whiteman came, smallpox has become a thing that happens year after year and no longer appears in regular cycles. It may have appeared more than ten times in the lifetime of a youth who is twenty years old.

### THE WESTERN VACCINES

As smallpox became rampant in Tivland, the doctors of the colonial administration and those of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission did a lot to help the Tiv people treat smallpox. They helped in two ways: by isolating victims of smallpox and by inoculating people who had not yet caught the disease. The European vaccine is slightly different. It is made of the pus taken from a calf that has died of smallpox. It is collected in small bottles and applied to cuts made on people's skin. If pus develops in the cut, it is collected and applied to a cut made on yet another person. Such a person suffers headaches and fever but that's all. If a smallpox epidemic breaks out, the person will not catch the disease. But if he does not suffer head pain as a result of the vaccination, then it is likely he will catch the disease during an epidemic.

Sometimes when doctors vaccinate, people suffer severe side effects. As a result, the Tiv people were not ready to take it. When European doctors heard about an outbreak of smallpox in some areas in Tivland, they would either go there themselves or send their medical assistants to go and administer vaccines. But when the Tiv saw them, they would take to their heels and hide, because for them vaccination is not the best thing; they detest it. When a Whiteman went round vaccinating, the Tiv people would get very apprehensive. Thus, every Whiteman they see they take to be one giving inoculations. Nowadays, they have nicknamed inoculation *lamba* or 'number', but here meaning to poke with a pen-like instrument. There have been several stampedes in Tiv markets because of *lamba*. If there is a smallpox outbreak in an area and a Whiteman happens to appear in the area on a market day, there could be a stampede. Goods get damaged, money lost, and some people get injured in the process.

### THE LOCUST AND WORM PESTS

Locusts do not attack human beings; rather, they attack crops. In the past, locusts never attacked as frequently as they do nowadays. In those years, they would attack once and it would be decades before they attacked again. For this reason, the Tiv have the expression 'locust duration', which is an idiomatic expression to refer to a long duration of time. If a man takes too long time courting a woman, his peers would mock him for taking 'locust duration' to court the

woman without marrying her. To our forefathers, anything that had come and had been gone for several years would be an event that hadn't occurred for a 'locust's duration'.

Once in the past, locusts came and destroyed all the crops. There was a great and unprecedented famine. If anyone saw a brother lifting up his hand to his face, it was to remove tears from his eyes or mucus from his nose. A man might give his daughter to an Udam man in exchange for food to feed a son. This is how in Tivland it became a common practice to give up a daughter to get something for a son. When the *biamegh* ritual was introduced, if a man could not organize it for his son, while his peers did it for their sons and gloated about it, the man would give a daughter in exchange for money or a cow to enable him to organize the *biamegh* ritual for his son. The locusts really dealt with Tivland badly.

A long time ago, there was another invasion by worm-like insects called *iger*, caterpillars. They appeared in huge numbers, settled on crops everywhere, and ate them up from the foliage to the roots. They did not even spare yam leaves. So, all the yam farms were destroyed. There was no food for feeding the people; this was followed by a great famine, worse than the one caused by the locust invasion. In fact, some people said the *iger* were more ferocious than locusts.

For this reason, the Tiv have an idiomatic expression: 'after *iger* has devoured much, she invites her son the locust.' This means, after causing someone so much pain, you invite your brother to come and help you finish the person up. So anybody who found himself in a similar situation would say that 'after *iger* has devoured him so much, she has gone to her son the locust.'

The *iger* pest vanished during the days of our forefathers. If you ask people who were born during the advent of colonialism, they do not know what it is. The locusts had also vanished, but then they reappeared with the advent of colonialism. Thus, it makes no sense to employ the idiom 'locust's duration'. With the advent of the Whiteman, the worst locust invasions were experienced between 1930 and 1934. But after 1935, locusts were not seen in Tivland anymore. People only heard about their existence in other lands.

During the menace of locusts in Tivland, European agriculture officers of the colonial government helped Tivland wipe out the pests. At first, the white agriculture officers in Yandev kept their field assistants in many places in Tivland and taught them how to kill the locust eggs with pesticide. But this method did not solve the problem completely. This is because as the eggs in one place were killed, those in other places hatched. When the Whitemen noticed this, they invented another strategy immediately. They would go to a place where they knew locust eggs had hatched, fumigate the place, and kill the tender nymph locusts. The pesticide is quite poisonous. It can easily kill even a human being. Even then the locusts were not completely eradicated. If they knew where locusts congregated to spend the night, they would go and fumigate that place overnight. Still, not all of them would die.

### THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC

There was another type of illness that visited the Tiv in the year 1919 and killed many of the people. Some called the disease *ndovorkpoo*; others called it the cough. Its effect was so serious that silence came upon the whole countryside.

After a time, it passed by. If it had stayed for a long period, the entire human race would have died. No person knew of a remedy. Those who caught it tried all sorts of medicines and some recovered, but others died. Most of those who got it died; few survived. According to the Tiv, smallpox, locusts, caterpillars and the cough are all brought about by the *mbatsav* the night witches.

### GONORRHEA

There is another disease connected with sexual shame which has been spreading recently among the Tiv during the time of the Whiteman. It is called by different names: *akachi*, *mimi* and *mnyadem*. There are two kinds of gonorrhoea. The first is accompanied by a discharge of pus and the other one of blood. It is a very difficult complaint and if neglected will cause a man to cry out every time he urinates. It may even prove to be fatal if neglected and not treated in time. I knew a man from Zaki Biam called Chivir who died in 1925 from the effects of gonorrhoea after his penis became infected. Today, if you took twenty men from Tivland, there would only be five among them who were not infected. The same is true for women.

Elders say that gonorrhoea was formerly known by the Tiv but was not as common as it is now. They used to call it *choughikula*, the name of an *akombo*. If anyone caught it, all he had to do was drink the medicine of the *choughikula* and he would be cured. Then it was not regarded as a serious disease and the cases that occurred were few and far between. In those days, the women brought forth an abundance of children. But when the Whitemen came, the Tiv travelled about more and mixed with the Ugenyi, Udam, Hausa peoples, among whom this disease was very common. They didn't just mix with them but also intermarried with them. Those who lived near the Ugenyi took Ugenyi women, and those living near the Udam country took Udam women, while Iharev and Masev men married wives of the Akporo ethnic group. When the Tiv took women from these people who were their neighbours, they also copied their promiscuous habits. In the old days, casual intercourse with women was considered to be a serious crime. But they got so used to seeing it practised by these other ethnic groups that they ceased to have much concern about it; the same thing happened to their women. In this way, the disease began to spread; much like when a man pushes a burning brand into the grass to start a fire in the bush. This disease was most common in the villages of the chiefs and among those living nearest to the Hausa settlements. Actually the people who were more guilty of this than any others were the Whiteman's carriers and road workers. These were young men who spent their pay on food and women. Moreover, they did not just keep to one woman; a man would sleep with this one tonight and another one the next night, passing the infection from one to the other. Then another man would come after he left and catch the disease at once and in turn give it to a third — you know, just like the man who sets fire to the bush. If a gonorrhoea infection affects a woman severely, she complains continuously of pelvic pain and her sexual organs become inflamed. Moreover, she cannot become pregnant, and though her husband sets it right with all the *akombo*, she bears no more children. If she is lucky enough to have a child, it will be a weakling. If you travelled in Tivland during the days the Whiteman first appeared, you would see many young boys and girls in all the villages. It was amazing to see all the crowds of

them that followed you, pressed around you, if you happened to have something they had not seen before. But now, if you travel around, you will not see so many children. Only in villages far out in the bush where the Whiteman's followers don't often go is the number of children still on the rise. If you travel to a chief's village, and to places where the Tiv are living in contact with foreigners, you will notice that their numbers are diminishing. In the past, a Tiv woman could bear from ten to twenty children. Today, five is considered a large family for a woman. Many times she has only one child, or perhaps two, and then starts to complain of internal pains and that is the end of her bearing. People these days do not have families like those of Ikombo Agena of Ukan.

### YAWS

This disease is indigenous to the Tiv. It is either called *kpeye* or *iba* but mostly known by the *kpeye* name. Every one of them gets it. Anyone who has not yet had it will be afraid that having escaped it in his youth, he will get it when he is old. He is right. This is what happens. Five out of a hundred do not get the disease, and those five are quite certain they too will get it someday. The first symptoms are leg cramps, pain in both knees and in all the other joints. Later it begins to affect other parts of the body, first appearing as local sores, later as evil-smelling ulcers in different places — not a pleasant sight. If a boy gets it, others make up mocking songs about him. It is better to have it when you are young. If you get it later on in life it drains away your strength. Even if you get rid of it, you will never be the same until you die.

The Tiv have a remedy for yaws. It is not a fatal disease, nor does it usually cripple a man, unless the *mbatsav* take a hand in it. In that case, he may die. It may also be complicated by *akombo a dam*, which can cause the nose or mouth to become deformed.<sup>41</sup> Yaws 'of the ancestors' does not harm anyone if you take care to wash the affected areas and treat it carefully, but if it is of the 'ancestral' kind, it will give you *indior*, a lesion between the buttocks.

*Indior* is the general name for lesions on the skin in the anal region. *Indior* can be very embarrassing. When scabies transform to *indior* it takes a long time to heal. The sores that one has on the other parts of body heal easily, but the *indior* persist around the anal region. In the case of a child, if the parents do not dress the sores regularly because of pain, the child would grow up with the sores and people would constantly deride him about the sores on his anus.

When Tiv people start courting women before marriage, people can use *indior* to hurt a person's image before a suitor. A young man might be courting a woman and then someone else gossips and poisons the woman's mind, saying, 'The fellow courting you has a stigma. He has *indior* in his anal region. Can't you see how he walks with legs wide apart?' On hearing this, the woman would change her mind about the suitor, saying that she cannot marry a man with *indior*. The relationship would turn sour. The young man would get very bitter with his parents for letting him grow up with *indior*, only to be scorned by women later.

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<sup>41</sup>This is an infectious disease characterized by frambesia with lesions of the skin and bone destruction.

As a result, the Tiv have a popular adage that says, 'Have no pity when treating *indior* on your child no matter how much he groans, so that he does not grow up to be disdained by women. Otherwise he will later turn and blame you for letting him grow up with the ailment.' This proverb also means that when children are young, parents should exercise the courage to punish children over misdemeanours, not minding the pain that is inflicted. So punish a child and make him desist from his bad behaviour. Otherwise, if he grows up to be a disgrace in the community, he will turn and blame you.

The disease called crab-yaws also has another complication that is difficult to heal. This is called an ulcer or frambesia. It does not attack any part of the body except for the soles of the feet and the palms of the hand. This lesion appears on the soles of the feet after the sores on every other part of the skin have healed, and it takes a longer time to heal. It can cause a painful sore on the soles of feet, so that the person shuffles along slowly when walking. The lesions cause more distress during rainy season. During the dry season, the pain subsides. That's the information about crab-yaws.

Epidemics break out from time to time in Tivland. Sometimes an epidemic afflicts all of Tivland but is not drastic enough to affect all the people seriously. Another epidemic may not afflict the entire land, but just a few clans, and may subside after a while. Epidemics are more rampant in Tivland during the dry season. During dry season, catarrh and stomach upsets break out. Even though not many die as a result, aged people become more frail. The Tiv have medication for these types of ailments. But when the treatment does not yield any result, then, the person afflicted has to attend an *idyo* ceremony to be healed.

### THE *IDYO*

Right from the onset and up to this present time, the Tiv have a hospital which they call *idyo*. The man who purchases the right to admit patients to it is then referred as the person with rights to admit patients.

### INITIATION INTO THE *IDYO*

It costs about 120 pence to be initiated into *idyo*. Here is an illustration of what happens when a man wants to buy the right to have patients or be initiated so that he too can treat people for a fee. Let us say Ikaave is an *idyo* healer, while Adam is a candidate seeking to be inducted.

**Adam:** Ikaave, can you come and induct me in *idyo*? Let me pay you so that I can treat people.

**Ikaave:** I do not disagree but *idyo* is a difficult matter.

**Adam:** All the same, I will pay for it. I am quite interested.

When Ikaave is ready to induct Adam, he brings *idyo* medicines in a bag made of wildcat's hide, medicines he is going to use in the induction. The items in the bag include a Tiv type of flint, seeds of *ikehegh*, an egg, and an *agyanku* fruit. As he arrives he lets Adam know that he has come for the business and also lets him

know the things that are required. Adam has to build a shelter in his backyard, but if there is already a *dwer* for yam storage there, it can serve the purpose of the induction. Ikaave would also ask Adam to prepare some slightly fermented beer.

After Adam does all these things, Ikaave gets down to the induction ritual. To do this, Ikaave plants some poles or posts near the entrance to the *dwer* and ties some strings around it so as to form an enclosure. He also draws a circle around the enclosure and sprinkles wood ashes on the circle. Then he takes the pot of the non-alcoholic drink into the circle, makes a pad with sword grass, and places the pot on it. Next, Adam and other people who have already been inducted into *idyo* go into the circle and take the drink. People who are not inducted cannot go into the circle. They are served the drink elsewhere outside the circle.

After drinking, Ikaave locks up Adam in the *dwer*, where he remains for the rest of the day and the night. The next day, Ikaave comes back by noon, releases Adam, and orders him to go and have a bath. As he goes to bathe, he must not talk to anyone. He has to remain absolutely silent. When he comes back, Ikaave arranges for a meal. He tells Adam's wife to prepare pounded yams. After that, he brings out all the things prohibited by *idyo* practitioners. These include potash, beniseed, hot pepper, and pumpkin seeds. He arranges them on the ground and invites Adam and to take a place facing the things. He takes a pinch of each of them and touches these to Adam's mouth. Once this is done, Adam is liberated. He may then eat these things without ill effect. After this they eat the pounded yam.

Next, Ikaave concocts the *idyo* medicine. This consists of dark-red sorrel and dark-coloured clay, boiled together. When it is thoroughly boiled, he takes it off and pours the liquid into a potsherd placed on the grass pad. He puts the liquid back on the fire to boil. He does not just put it back; he first rubs it across the hearthstones where the medicine was originally cooked. He does the same when he is taking it off the fire. He uses a chicken feather to stir up the medicine and to rub it on the soles of his feet. He then instructs Adam on what to do when he admits a patient into the place for *idyo* treatment. He also teaches him alternative medicines to use in case the first treatment does not work: shoots of the wild plum and sword grass medicine. The two can be mixed together and rubbed on the hands, with the juice applied to a wound and then covered with leaves of *ikura nomso*, the *meni*-oil tree.

After all this, Ikaave charges Adam the fee for the induction, which is about sixty pennies. The fee to empty the pot of medicine is four brass rods. Adam would also pay one brass rod to redeem the pot in which the medicine was prepared and another rod to the wife who prepared the pounded yams. If the woman is not paid anything, she will develop sores on her skin. The boy who fetched the water that was used would also be paid a chicken. All the fees Adam pays to Ikaave are what he will in turn charge any patient he treats in his 'clinic'.

#### ADMITTING PEOPLE INTO THE *IDYO* 'CLINIC'

The *idyo* treatment is not intended for every type of ailment. Diseases treated include sores and acute *wayo*, yaws, resulting from a bowed shin-bone or flattened fore-arm, but not ailments like stomach troubles, headaches, or eye complaints. If any disease persists after several treatments elsewhere, then it is time to

enter the *idyo* clinic. The patient consults an *idyo* master, who tells him what he needs to pay: four brass rods, a chicken, and a hoe. These would take away the spells.

When the patient brings all the items, the *idyo* healer removes the handle of the hoe and lays the hoe blade on the ground for the patient to sit on. The healer transfers the ill luck of the patient into the chicken. After doing all this, the patient pays one brass rod to redeem his hoe, while the master keeps the chicken for himself. The patient is admitted, and people say that such a one is undergoing *idyo* therapy. From that point on, medicine called *kpaasu* is prepared for the person to take. This medicine's ingredients have already been discussed.

On the day of admission to the *idyo*, the *kpaasu* is put over the fire to boil and left there throughout the day. By evening, you draw out the embers, leaving only the hearth. When the brew has cooled, it is poured in a small bowl and is taken before every meal and late evenings. Every day, early in the morning, the patient goes out to bathe and then comes back and squeezes the medicine prepared for this purpose as described above on the wound, then bandages it up with leaves of the *ikura nomso*.

The patient does this continually. Some people recover from their ailment, while some do not and they die. If a patient is able to recover, he gives a chicken to the *idyo* master. This chicken is cooked, and he makes certain passes, and it is eaten by the patient and the healer.

The patient is thus left to go but has to depart quietly. He is prohibited from announcing his departure. If he bade farewell to the healer, he would fall sick again. *Idyo* has a lot of prohibitions. They include the following: a patient admitted must abstain from sexual intercourse and from eating catfish. A patient must avoid talking to anyone who has eaten sauce cooked with potash or soup made with beniseed.

Also, he must not talk to anybody when he goes to gather firewood and the ingredients for making the medicine. In addition, he must use only the typical Tiv flint to start the fire for boiling his medicine or for cooking his meals. Furthermore, he must not eat any sauce that contains potash. These are the prohibitions of *idyo*. *Idyo* used to be a very lucrative activity. In the past, people made a lot of money from it and built houses. If a man bought into it, and he healed people well, he could have abundant patients, both male and female. If a person was healed and was not able to pay off his debt, he would stay and work on the farm of the *idyo* master. Sometimes the person who had been ill would work for two years on the farm of the master, and run many other errands for him. Another person who formerly was not at peace in his home could settle down permanently with the master as a servant. Other persons, after working and paying their treatment costs, would be released and leave.

If a woman is brought to the clinic by her husband and cannot pay the fees later on, she is made to remain there indefinitely. In some cases, the husband does his best and offsets the bill much later. However, if a man decides to abandon his wife for too long, the master might get involved in a sexual relationship with her that could result in a pregnancy. Then the husband would come and take the wife away, thinking that she had redeemed herself through the illicit relationship with the healer. The child that comes out of such a pregnancy belongs to the actual husband of the woman.

But if it happens that a master seduces a woman into an illicit relationship after the husband has paid the fees, the *idyo* master is guilty of an offence. He would be compelled to bring a she-goat, plus one hundred and twenty pennies.

So far, that is all that deals with the *idyo* clinic.

## EUROPEAN DOCTORS

The Whiteman came and assisted Tivland in many ways. They have assisted immensely in the area of healthcare. The Tiv used to refer to the doctors as *likita*, which is a Hausa word. Before then, the Tiv called them *orchi*, man of medicine, but they later changed the name, today calling them *ortwer*, the healer, for one doctor, and *mbatwewev* when there is more than one doctor.

The word *twer* is the name of the first indigenous *akombo* or *akombo* of the Tiv people. When a person was afflicted by the *twer*, it was necessary to call another person who was an initiate of the *twer* cult to treat the person afflicted. There were various medicines for treating *twer* afflictions. One of these can be taken orally as well as used as a disinfectant for bathing. There is another that a patient can rub on like pomade. So the *twer* had a great variety of treatment options. This is why the European doctors, who used a variety of drugs to cure diseases, came to be called *mbatwewev* by the Tiv. The switchover from the name *likita* to *ortwer* started with the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (D.R.C.M.) in the year 1914, and this is what the word *twer* depicts.

There are two categories of medical doctors in Tivland: the doctors of the Christian missionaries and those of the *Dogolamba*, the Colonial Government.

## THE DOCTORS OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

The Christian missionaries were resident at Mkar in Ipav District of Kparev Clan. They were also resident at Mbaakon in Kunav District of Kparev Clan. The colonial government had a hand in the Christian hospital in Mkar through financial aid for procurement of equipment and drugs. There is also a leprosy rehabilitation centre just one mile away from the hospital. Here too, the colonial government assisted.

There is an ethnic mix of leprosy patients there: those of Tiv extraction, as well as Udam, and those of Ugenyi, Hausa and Fulani and Idoma extraction. All of them are attended to by the resident missionary doctor at Mkar. The hospital is well built, roofed with corrugated metal sheets and stocked with drugs for treatment of leprosy. The patients are also paid a stipend every Saturday. There is also regular evangelism and scholarly sessions organized for them. Some of the patients carry out farming activities.

Some of the patients have been healed of their leprosy and have left. But for some, their condition is too critical. The doctor is quite steadfast in his support for them. The news about the medical activities in Mkar has spread to all the parts of Benue province. The first doctor to promote medical activities in Mkar was called Dr Labushin. He was actually the first resident doctor in Mkar. He was diligent at his work and was generally a fastidious person.

What actually enhanced the good reputation of the medical services of the missionary doctors was the healing of Audu, the chief of Makurdi town.



The reason was that Chief Audu was ill. So he was granted permission to go to Lagos to seek medical attention. The doctor there diagnosed him and also gave him drugs. However, Chief Audu was not willing to stay in Lagos for long. So he returned. Immediately after his return, he brought his ill health to the doctor at Mkar, and spent almost two months at Mkar. The doctor treated him and he got quite better. This was when Dr Letu was the resident doctor. As people noticed the improvement, the Tiv people, the Hausa, and many other ethnic groups joined in praising the doctor at Mkar as the very best, because he was able to cure Audu of what even the Lagos doctors could not. People kept alluding to this for a long time.

Nevertheless, for people who do not come to conclusions quickly, but rather investigate an issue carefully before commenting, this matter was not really a question of the doctor in Mkar being more efficacious than his counterpart in Lagos. Instead, it was a matter of personal conviction. Chief Audu had high conviction about the doctor in Mkar and so he believed that his condition would truly improve if he was treated by this doctor. This type of conviction can be seen in many other cases.

Of all the projects undertaken by the missionaries, the Tiv enjoyed the medical services most. The missionaries are well respected everywhere in Tivland because of the medical services. Yet when the Tiv are angry with the missionaries, they belittle even the healthcare services. They say that the missionaries are not white men of any value; their only job is to attend to sickness. They add that the government has assigned better duties to other white men, while it has condemned the medical missionaries to the task of dressing wounds of Tiv people as well as evangelizing. As such, even those who could acquire a missionary's education could not do anything of importance with it, except for dressing wounds and evangelizing.

While angry, they would even nickname the missionaries as 'wound dressers'. But once they got over their anger, they would re-affirm that of all the white men, only the missionaries were doing humanitarian services; if one insults the missionaries, then one has insulted an honourable Whiteman.

## THE DOCTORS OF THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

The European doctors of the colonial administration have built hospitals in Makurdi and Wukari. They are curing people of their illnesses. If there is an epidemic like smallpox in Tivland, they quickly send their medical teams to inoculate people and bring the epidemic under control. They are also building additional clinics in different parts of Tivland and stocking them with drugs. Their medical assistants are treating people in many locations, except for complicated cases, which are referred to European doctors.

In spite of the fact that the doctors are curing people, the Tiv maintain that if the *mbatsav* don't give their consent to the healing of a disease, then doctors will treat and administer drugs in vain. For this reason, when there is no improvement in a particular case, they take the patient back home to undergo traditional rituals before returning to the doctors.

Sometimes, even when someone is ill, they do not rush the person to a hospital. They first go and consult a diviner, subject the person to the traditional healing process, as well as the traditional inquest. Meanwhile, the disease is getting a

firm hold on the patient. They will keep reiterating that it is not their intention to exterminate the life of such a person, that the person will surely recover, that there is no need to even take the person to a healer, that there is no cause to panic. Unfortunately, after a period of time, such a person sometimes dies. Some people, out of sheer luck, recover from their sickness.

Another person may be brought to a doctor for medical attention after wasting much time letting his condition deteriorate. If in the process of treatment the person dies, it would be presumed that it was the witches that killed the person. Even when a person dies after a surgical operation, it is said that it is witches that killed the person — the death is not a result of the surgery. The Tiv people do not fault a doctor's performance in treating any sick person. For better or for worse, it is assumed that it is *mbatsav* witches who permitted it to be so. Thus, a doctor cannot be held responsible for anything.

Even though the doctors are aware of this, it does not deter them; they are busy doing their jobs without paying heed to it. This is how ailments and medical treatment have been in Tivland up until to this time.

## Chapter Six

# TIV MIGRATION<sup>42</sup>

### TIV MIGRATION FROM IBENDA

When the Tiv settled at Ibenda, the Ugenyi people were on the other side of the river Katsina at the Kurndiva hills near Mount Ilyufu and other hills. At this time, all the Tiv people had a good relationship with the Ugenyi ethnic group. They got along very well. There was no single cause for conflict. The people of Ugenyi would move freely among the Tiv people, just as the Tiv too, could cross over and travel freely amongst the Ugenyi people.

At first the Tiv didn't know how to paddle a boat so they would cross a river by using an *agber*. The *agber* was constructed from a tree trunk into a craft of two *aseva* length, a measurement of the length of the forearm. Two large hollow calabashes were tied to it – one on top and another at the bottom. Then a person would sit on it, paddling with his hands, and would move across a river. Even nowadays, the Tiv who live at river banks construct an *agber* and use it for crossing rivers. It was the people of the Ugenyi ethnic group who taught Tiv people how to paddle a boat. One after another, they learned how to paddle and make boats. Anytime they wanted to visit the Ugenyi, they would cross at the Hur landing place where the Tiv of the Turan clan are settled presently. At that time, they generally referred to a boat as a *kpande* or canoe. Later on, they called it *tso*, boat. Yet, even now, the Tiv of the Iharev clan refer to a boat as a *kpande*.

The Tiv got several of their things from the Ugenyi ethnic group. Even certain names of Tiv children are names from the Ugenyi language. Names like Moji and Agabi, for example, are Ugenyi names. Moji means 'I have forgotten' and Agabi is a feminine name but Tiv people give the name to their male children. Kusho used to be the name of the elder of the Chamba clan of the Ugenyi ethnic group. Kurasha means 'king of lions', but it is pronounced *Kusho*. Adi is a very popular name among the Ugenyi people.

The Tiv got all these from the Ugenyi people and have named their children thus. In any case, the people of Ugenyi never cherished any Tiv names enough to give them to their own children. Several crops in Tivland and many other things were obtained from the Ugenyi people as mentioned earlier. Eventually a conflict arose between the Tiv and the Ugenyi people which crystallized into an ethnic war.

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<sup>42</sup>Almost a hundred years of social migration has occurred since Akiga described the genealogies and movements of various clans. References to locations are also problematic for historians and geographers today because there are no other written documents and histories of the era he describes, nor have maps been developed to illustrate his narrative.

### THE ETHNIC WAR BETWEEN THE TIV AND UGENYI

In spite of the good relationship between the Tiv and the Ugenyi, the Ugenyi had to wage a war against the Tiv. The war was alleged to have begun over fishing nets. It happened that a Tiv man borrowed a fishing net from his Ugenyi friend to use. He said he would return it later. One day the Tiv man visited Ugenyi land, and his Ugenyi friend asked him for his net. The Tiv friend replied that the net was still in his custody. The reason why he had not yet returned it is that a fellow Tiv man had in turn, borrowed the net from him. He assured the Ugenyi man that it would be returned as soon as he retrieved it from the Tiv fellow. The Ugenyi man said it was all right. He would wait and see.

It happened that the Tiv friend could not fulfill his promise. Again, the Ugenyi man came to reclaim his fishing net. The Tiv man told the Ugenyi friend that the fishing net was nowhere to be found, so the Ugenyi friend could go to blazes along with the usual insanity of the entire Ugenyi people. The Ugenyi man asked his Tiv friend why he should be insulted because of what was his own property. The Tiv friend must give him back the fishing net on that very day so that he can go back home with his 'insanity'.

Thus a quarrel ensued between the two. The Ugenyi man gave it back to his Tiv friend in equal measure by telling him that if not for them, the Ugenyi, the Tiv people would not have known anything about fishing nets. He added that he could understand why the Tiv have an adage, that when you try to save a drowning person, he tries to drown you. These words infuriated an elderly Tiv man who was relaxing somewhere in the gazebo. So the elderly man yelled out to his children to come and drive the worthless Ugenyi man out of the compound. So the sons of the elderly man rose up against the Ugenyi man, and battered him because of his fishing net.

The Ugenyi struggled and escaped. When he got back home he narrated his ordeal at the hands of Tiv men to his kinsmen. On hearing this, a trumpet was blown and the Ugenyi people gathered and came down to the bank of the river Katsina near Kashimbila. They crossed over in large numbers and quietly lay in ambush in the forest near the Ibenda hills. By midnight, when everybody was fast asleep, the Ugenyi got up and split up into two groups. One group went up to the area called Ibenda Shitire and another moved towards the area called Ibenda Iharev. After taking effective positions, they blew the conch shell, which was followed by a loud shout. By the time the Tiv got up from sleep it was too late. They could not defend themselves against the attack. The Ugenyi killed Tiv people in large numbers. Most Tiv people ran and took refuge in the forest near them. Not a single Tiv man was to be seen. The Ugenyi had a field day looting. They even took some Tiv people captive. They took women and young boys away alive, but they beheaded the older males, saying that there is no more amity between them and the Tiv because of the way the Tiv had insulted them. This marked the genesis of the animosity between the Tiv and Ugenyi people.

### THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE TIV NATION

When the people of Ugenyi chased the Tiv away from Ibenda and the Tiv descended to the plains, they were not a collective entity as they were at Ibenda,

that is, according to the Ipusu, the uncircumcised, and Ichôngo, the circumcised lineages. This time the larger Ipusu and Ichôngo groups were divided into clans, districts, kindred groups, and again, into even smaller family units.

### THE TIV IN CLANS<sup>43</sup>

**The children of Ipusu**, those uncircumcised, are: Shitire, Kpar, Kum and Tongo, just as we have already seen in Chapter One. In this section, we shall examine how the Tiv live today according to clans.

The children of Ipusu got divided as follows: the Shitire descendants multiplied in number to form the clan called Shitire; the descendants of Kpar multiplied to form a Kparev clan; the descendants of Kum formed the Ukum clan; and those of Tongo formed the Tongov clan.

#### **The children of Ichôngo**

The children of Ichôngo were Ihar (the Iharev) and Gondo (the Ugondo), Nôngo, (the Nôngov), Ikura (the Ikurav), Ikôrakpe (the Turan), Mase (the Masev), Tongo (the Tongov), Ityul (the Ityuluv) and Iwan (the Iwanev). The descendants of Ihar multiplied into the Iharev clan; Gondo multiplied to form the Ugondo clan; Nôngov multiplied into the Nôngov clan; Ikura formed the clan called Ikurav; the descendants of Ikôrakpe adopted the name of Turan, the eldest among them, to form the Turan clan; the descendants of Mase today form the Masev clan, and the Tongo descendants became the Tongov clan. We can now see how the descendants of Ipusu and Ichôngo have become the present-day Tiv clans according to their lineages.

#### **Ipusu's lineage**

As they came down to the plains, they settled according to their clans. The children of a particular *patrilineal* line formed a clan. So they set up settlements according to clans and each settlement would be named after the clan. But as their population multiplied, they would again break up and resettle according to *matrilineal* lines within the clan, even though these clannish settlements would still be called by the fatherly lineage.

### SECESSION AMONG THE CLANS

From the moment the Tiv were dislodged from the Ibenda hills by the Ugenyi people and they descended to the plains, the Shitire and Kparev clans parted ways because the Ugenyi war disrupted their togetherness. The Shitire, Ugondo and Turan clans moved together. The Ukum people moved with the Kparev, Masev, and Iharev. A segment of the Ikurav clan moved with the Ukum, while another segment moved back east, behind the Ibenda hills where they are to

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<sup>43</sup>Akiga presents a complex and detailed account of the development and migrations of clans and sub-clans over a long historical period. Many of the name places and designations mentioned are no longer extant.

this day. The Tongov clan, then, moved down south with the first segment of Ikurav that had moved with the Ukum. The Tongov came and crossed the river Katsina, where it met with the river Loko and moved north. The evidence of their settlements is still there.

The Utange were originally sojourners among the descendants of Ichôngo. A segment of theirs was left behind while another segment moved with the Kparev clan. A handful of the Turan population that had been left behind quickly returned to Ibenda, but the Ugenyi attacked them again. So they were compelled to move down to the plains. The Ityuluv and Iwanev were left trailing behind in the downward movement. A segment of the Iwanev moved with the Mbagen, which was a segment of the Kparev clan.<sup>44</sup>

When the Shitire parted ways with the Kparev, the Kparev took offence and concluded that Shitire had become an alien entity to them by choosing to join other clans. They nicknamed the people of Shitire the *akur-a-iyor* or the 'outsiders'. This was quite derogatory, but the Shitire cared little or not all. Today the Kparev use the name *akuraiyor* to refer to Tiv people who are not of the Kparev clan. The word *akuraiyor*, the 'outside people', has created a lot of confusion in the minds of people who are not well informed about the Tiv clans. It makes such people think that the entire Tiv population consists of just two clans, the Kparev and the *akuraiyor*. Uninformed people do not know that the term *akuraiyor* is derogatory. Tiv society is generally replete with such derogatory names. But people who are well informed know that Tiv had two children, Ichôngo and Ipusu, who are the ancestors of the entire people.

Later, when the Turan group came down from Ibenda, they settled at Mount Ipaku. The people of the Shitire clan crossed over the river Katsina at the place where the people of the Turan clan are presently settled. It was at this place that the Turan came to join the Shitire to live side by side with them wandering in the land.

### IN SEARCH OF SETTLEMENTS

The Shitire crossed the river Katsina and settled in the forests under *akôvoruwo* trees near the river. If one is at the D.R.C.M Quarters in Jato-aka, the Akôvoruwo are located to the northeast. They settled there while looking for the best mountain<sup>45</sup> to relocate to. The people of the Ugondo clan settled very close around them.

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<sup>44</sup>Knowledge about the clans of the Tiv during the period when Akiga was writing his history was primarily folk knowledge and information passed down by traditional means, rather than a recorded history. However, during that same period, Captain R.M. Downes, MC, had his small book, *The Tiv Tribe*, published in Kaduna in 1933. What is important is that the book includes a map, 'Sketch Map of the Tiv Clans Benue Province' which gives to historians one of the only clear pictures of the locations and extents of each of the clans of the Tiv at that time and illuminates Akiga's history. Downes's nineteen genealogical tables provide the names of four generations for each clan.

<sup>45</sup>Mountain settlements were common for purposes of defence. I (the editor, Harold Bergsma) have visited many and have been amazed at how difficult it must have been to bring drinking and cooking water to these homes. On most of the hills in Tiv land one can find ruins, old walls and

## THE SHITIRE PEOPLE IN ADIKPO

After some years, the people of the Ugondo clan decided to go on an expedition to scout for new land to which they would relocate. At that time one man from the Shitire clan, who had taken a wife from the Ugondo clan, was on a visit with the Ugondo clan. As they went on the expedition, this so-called in-law went with them, reasoning that he would go and help his in-laws scout for a new land to inhabit. After trekking for a long distance, they became fatigued. They came across a water well, but it was completely dry. They kept wandering about in search of water. When they got to where there was water, they all rested and fed themselves with cereal. Then, they agreed among themselves that the land around there was good enough and that one day they would relocate there. Again, they asked themselves whether the men of that foreign ethnic group would allow them to settle there in peace. Some among them were of the opinion that they should go up to the hills and set up habitations there. The hills in question were the Adikpo and Mkôvor; these two hills are close to each other.

On hearing this, one man from the Shitire clan removed a cocoyam seed and a kola nut from his bag and planted these near a certain tree. They were close to Adikpo which had a settlement of the Uke ethnic group nearby. Those men of the foreign ethnic group were of Takpugh or Takum town and their leader was called Bete.

The contingent of Ugondo returned home and informed their folk to relocate to the new land they had found.

Their elders announced that roasted and ground cereal should be prepared at once for the trip, so that they could quickly take over the land, since it was already dry season, and there should be no time wasted.

As the people of the Ugondo clan were busy preparing cereal, trail food, the man from the Shitire clan, for his part, quickly came back to inform people of his own clan that he had found a very nice place to relocate to. So they should hurry up and prepare cereal, so that they could go and take the place before the people of Ugondo clan could claim it. He also reviewed every detail of the place enthusiastically to the elders. Thus, they quickly prepared cereal and took off.

After trekking for quite a distance, they became hungry and thirsty. They had to look for water. One of them, named Ivembegbev, was the first to discover water nearby. He yelled out to the others. As they converged at the place with water, they asked among themselves to find out who had been the first to locate the water. Ivembegbev was named as the first to find the water. On learning this, the elders ordered that nobody should drink the water discovered by Ivembegbev. They said they would drink the water only if it was discovered by some person of merit, at least like Agaku Atiikôngo, and that Ivembegbev was a worthless person.

Thus, they dispersed in different directions. Then Agaku Atiikôngo, after wandering around, came to the very water that had been discovered earlier by

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pottery. Dwellings were on the hills, farms were on flat land below. Lineage or even sub-lineage groups settled on hill tops and these were parts of larger 'clans'.

Ivembegbev. He yelled out to his kinsmen that he had discovered new water. The people came and gathered there, full of joy and great appreciation that Agaku Atiikôngo had finally discovered water so they could now drink and even take their baths. But, Ivembegbev protested that this was the very water he had earlier discovered which had been rejected. They all rebuked him that his water had not been as clean as the one they had now. Ivembegbev insisted. And to prove his point he showed them the filthy evidence of how he had contaminated the water in revenge. With this, all of them became furious. They dispersed and continued on their way, feeling terribly thirsty, dehydrated, and exhausted. They managed onward until they arrived at their destination.

By the time they got there, the people of Ugondo had already taken up the land. When the people of Ugondo saw the Shitire in such large numbers, they inquired from the Shitire what they were looking for. The people of Shitire retorted that why should the Ugondo ask them such a useless question. They added that they had come to inhabit that very land. The Ugondo asked how that could be possible. A serious dispute erupted between the people of the two clans, as they laid claim upon counter-claim to the land. Their elders called for calm so that they could listen to each other and deal with actual evidence about the land.

### THE DISPUTED LANDS

When they had calmed down, the elder of the Ugondo clan rose and called out to the elder of the Shitire clan and requested him to explain why he had brought a large number of Shitire children to come and molest him about land that his children had discovered earlier on. The elder of the Shitire clan got up, called the elder of the Ugondo by name, and explained, 'I have not come along with a large number of my children to engage you in a fight. I have only come to settle on the land that I had earlier on sent one of my children to explore for my clan. I have not come here to look for any trouble.' The Ugondo elder turned to his children to comment on the claim of the Shitire elder. His people answered, 'We were the first to discover this land. But since the people of Shitire clan have come looking for trouble, we are ready to thrash it out with them.'

Again, the Shitire elder told his Ugondo counterpart, 'We elders were not part of the expedition that discovered this land. Rather, it was our young people [*mbayev*] that did it and they informed us. Let us allow our children to prove their claim and we shall see where the truth lies.' The Ugondo elder gave in. Then, a man from the Shitire clan rose up and asked the Ugondo people, 'You are claiming to be the people who discovered this land. Show us the evidence to back up your claim.' The Ugondo pointed and said, 'Look, this is the place where we stopped to eat cereal during the exploration of the land.'

The in-law from Shitire countered that he was the first to discover it and had in fact put a mark on the land. When asked to back up his claim with evidence, he pointed to a tree and said they should go and check under this tree because he had planted a cocoyam and kola nut there when he had first discovered this land. He was sure that by now that the things he had planted would have germinated and blossomed. They all went to the tree, where they saw well-blossomed cocoyam and kola nut plants. So the Shitire edged out the Ugondo and settled on the land called Adikpo.



## THE UGONDO CLAN

When the people of the Shitire clan outwitted the Ugondo clan on the disputed land, the Ugondo settled on Mkôvor, a mountain, while the people of Shitire settled near the hills of Adikpo. But the Ugondo, being a restive people by nature, packed up from there and went to a place called Mt. Mtam. Here, too, they sent some people to go explore and earmark new land at Mdema, which is on the other side of the river Donga, so that they could relocate there.

The people of the Ugondo clan moved down from Mtam, crossed to the other side of the river, and settled at Mdema. The place was filled with natural resources; one could find game to make meat sauces everywhere. In the streams around, fish were in abundance, so abundantly that their women, even with just a basin to fetch water, could catch a lot of small fish. There was food in abundance. There were many tortoises that Ugondo women could use as a support for grinding on a stone called *nase*. They did not even care when they gave out a very big coil of smoked catfish to a visitor to break a piece, eat and drink water and keep the whole lot. They took to teasing the people of Shitire clan for unknowingly pushing them away to a land of game and abundance.

In the course of time, people of the foreign ethnic groups got entangled with the Tiv of the Ugondo clan over fishing. Both groups were involved because a person named Avihitwev got involved in physical combat with a man of the foreign ethnic group over a single fish. They laid claim upon counter-claim to who had actually impaled one particular fish with a spear. Incidentally, right from the inception, the people of the foreign ethnic group never welcomed the people of the Ugondo clan with an open heart. So, ordinarily, the people of Ugondo needed to be cautious about getting into squabbles with men of the foreign ethnic group. This they did not do.

Since there was a pending feud between the Tiv and the foreign ethnic group, the Ugenyi, who are a segment of the foreign group, reassured themselves that the Ugondo people were part of the Tiv group, so why should they come and lay claim to issues outside of the Tiv domain? So the Ugenyi recruited many men of the foreign group and laid siege to the Ugondo settlement, so that there was no escape route for the Ugondo. Nobody could even go to the farm to get food or get water. The people of Ugondo did not know what to do, as there was no other Tiv clan nearby to come to their aid.

As the siege took its toll on the people of Ugondo, they said among themselves that if they did not act, their children would very soon starve to death from a lack of water and food. They added that if it had just been a matter of physical combat, they would have just confronted the men of the foreign ethnic group head on, slay them, and then the others would take to their heels. But instead hunger had taken its toll and so they had to look for an escape route. Again, they were afraid that if they sneaked away, the men of the foreign ethnic group might move into their territory and take their animals away. So, the Ugondo decided to go and hide their precious domestic animals at the mountain Mdema. After effectively hiding their animals, they sneaked away.

## THE DEPARTURE OF THE UGONDO FROM MOUNT MDEMA

When the Ugondo had sneaked away with their children and wives, the men of the Uke, a Hausa ethnic group, moved in and started looting, taking the remaining

animals, saying among themselves, ‘Let us start with the animals, the Tiv have nowhere to escape to. They cannot cross the river, so how will they get an escape route? It is no problem, after the animals we shall go after them.’

### THE CROSSING

In the course of moving, the Ugondo suddenly came to the river and became despondent, not knowing what to do; the women and the children were in tears. But one elderly Ugondo man brought out a calabash gourd from his bag and submerged it into the river, and the river dried up right across the middle from one side to the other. Thus, the people of Ugondo were able to cross and go quite a distance away. As they crossed and moved on, another elderly man by name Dangi asked where his friend Kanjikombo was. He was informed that the men of Uke ethnic group had slain him.

On hearing this, the elderly man opted to return to die at the hands of the men of the Uke ethnic group because he could not see any reason to continue living without his friend. He returned and the men of the Uke ethnic group killed him instantly. After killing Dangi and looting, the men of the Uke decided to chase after the ‘slave-men’ of the Ugondo clan. But on arriving at the river bank, they discovered to their disappointment that the Ugondo had been able to cross the river and had vanished. They returned, all the while insulting the Ugondo people. Thus, the Ugondo people were able to escape, except for the two elders who died at the hands of men of the Uke ethnic group at Mdema.

The place where the men of the Ugondo clan were able to cross the river Donga is a shallow point of the river. Even during the rainy season, that area is always shallow. This point is located a little north of the town of Donga. The area is called ‘Ugondo-crossing-place’, *ihongougondo*. We can understand from this why the people of the Ugondo clan perpetually avoid the Mdema settlement. Even all their traditional *akombo* were left behind there. It is also for this reason that Tiv people seldom sojourn far from their kinsmen for fear that they may be resented by the other ethnic groups. As such, if they get entangled or in trouble far away, there would be no one to come to their assistance. In fact, this is quite true.

### ABOUT KATSINA ALA [KACHINA]

By the time the Tiv of the Shitire clan settled on the Adikpo hills, the people of Katsina Ala were already settled on the banks of the river Katsina. These people had settled there even before the Tiv of the Shitire clan came to settle at Adikpo. These people had settled there even before Tiv people came to settle at Ibenda. When the Shitire clan settled at Adikpo, the people of Katsina Ala were located south of the river Katsina. Adikpo is located to the north. People of Katsina Ala were living in a single settlement. They were called the Abakwa [Mgbakpa], while their leader was called Nukwa.

The Abakwa people don’t have a single straight language. Their language is a mixture of the Hausa and Ugenyi languages. Even their way of life is a reflection of these two cultures. In one way, they do things like the Hausa and in another, like

the neighbouring people of Ugenyi. They practise witchcraft and at the same time they practise Islam. Everything about their life has two aspects. Their original settlement is what today is known as the town of Katsina Ala. They are culturally affiliated with the people of Wukari, the Jukun.

In fact, there is a segment of Wukari people called the Abakwa, but among themselves, they call this segment Amakwariga in their language. Their complex nature is because long ago they were part of the Wukari Jukun people who had been part of the far away Kwararafa [Kororofa] Kingdom, who had wandered up to Lokoja, then came up to Benue at Abinsi. Some of them settled at the tributary of the river Logo called Akpena. Another segment of theirs is called Alufu. Their larger segment finally settled at Wukari. They actually call themselves Uka, but the Hausa call them Jukun and their main settlement is called Wukari. Again, some of their segments are scattered within the region. The Abakwa people are among these segments.

#### ORIGIN OF ABAKWA [MGBAKPA] PEOPLE

The Waka (Jukun) are the maternal uncles of the people of Abakwa. This is because a long time ago, in a far away land where the Jukun were wandering, some Hausa men were among them. These Hausa were originally from the Northern state of Katsina, which is near the state of Bornu. Some of them got married to Jukun women — the so-called people of Waka. They had both male and female children with them. As the children grew up, their fathers died. But they noticed that their mothers fixed *akombo*, that is, practised *akombo* while their fathers were practising the Islamic religion. Their parents consequently were inculcated in two different ways of life, and so they practised them both.

Even in terms of language their fathers were not well versed in the Jukun language, just as their mothers were not well versed in Hausa languages. During discussions among their parents, they noticed that when it came to a word their mothers could not call out in the Hausa language, they would call it in the Jukun language. Their fathers did the same. In the long run, the children took to mixing up the two languages in their conversations. This is also reflected in their foods. Their food is a mixture of cassava — an indigenous Hausa foodstuff — and maize, sorghum, and guinea corn, which are indigenous Jukun foodstuffs. This explains their complex nature. These people are where they are today because of ancient people's wanderings and numerous settlements of the Wukari, which has been mentioned earlier. So this segment went up and settled at the banks of the river Katsina.

There is other evidence that they are truly related to the Wukari. Some of their immediate family groups have been in Wukari continuing until the present day. The Hausa call them Makwariga and they are located right in the heart of the Wukari town. They have set up their dwellings near the Wukari market to the east.

Following the world revolutions, they are quickly becoming Muslim and also clothe themselves properly in accordance with modern civilization. This is the reason why the Hausa called them Makwariga which literally means 'Makwanow-dressed-in-riga'. Yet, some among them still live their old way of life.

There is more evidence of a link in their relationship with the people of Wukari: when Tiv people started taking the traditional title of Toragbande, which means 'drummer chief', anybody who was installed as a chief among them would be

given a drum and directed to go and validate or finish up the chieftain rites at Wukari, which is their own ancestral land. Again, the river bank on which they have settled is a tributary of the river Benue, yet it is called the river Katsina because these people of Katsina Ala were the first to settle there. Otherwise, that river could have been named after the Tiv people because their population is the greatest there. The Tiv settlements stretch from south of the river up to Kashimbila. But the river was never named after the Tiv. This is how the issue of Katsina Ala is.

#### ABOUT THE ABAKWA IN KATSINA ALA

The people of Katsina Ala, who are called the Abakwa, were the first to settle the land where the people of Mbagen district presently live. Their settlement was less than a mile away from the residence of chief Hom. It was situated on a hill to the east. Their dyeing pits are still there. Their water well, which the Tiv used to exhort their kings in their songs as Ruwandadi, is also there. It had clean water and never dried up. When all other water wells dried up, this one never did. It was among them that the Tiv first learned about crowning a king. This people never had any dispute with Tiv people up until today.

Later on, they shifted their settlement to where they are presently. It is not far from the residence of Agishi, the chief of the Etulo [Utur] people. These have been their only two settlements.

#### THE GENEALOGY OF THE KATSINA ALA PEOPLE (NON-TIV)

Katsina begot: A. Adasu B. Kachiti C. Aji

A. Adasu begot 1. Angyu 2. Ingyerewe 3. Isa

B. Kachiti begot 1. Agbeagabo 2. Salufu or Salihu.

C. Aji died childless.

A1. Angyu begot 1. Agyo (Agyo and Angyu were their most popular local names).

A2. Ingyerewe begot 1. Na (a daughter – the name means ‘mother’ in the Ugenyi language).

A3. Isa begot one son but the boy died.

B1. Agbeagabo begot 1. Adi.

B2. Salufu begot 1. Agbu. (The name Salufu is Hausa by origin.)

#### THE CHIEFS OF ABAKWA

Aji was installed a king. He went to Wukari and acquired royal attire. This was a white robe, but sometimes it was a *kwarkwata*, a Hausa robe of spun cotton. He was also given a horse to ride on because he was of Wukari origin. They were never given any type of cap except the Saki cap. This is how their chiefs have been treated until the present time. At the demise of Aji, he was succeeded by Adasu. Adi succeeded Adasu. At the demise of Adi, his son Angyu succeeded him. Angyu was succeeded by Agyo, while Agudu succeeded Agyo after his

demise. At the demise of Agudu, he was succeeded by Adi II. Adi II was succeeded by Ala. Ala was succeeded by Alasarki. Alasarki was succeeded by Adasu II. Adasu II was succeeded by Adiwanya. Adiwanya was succeeded by Maiyaki who is on the *ika*, an elevated chair, at the time of this book's writing.

Their *akombo* are the same as those of the people of Waka and their names are:

1. Agashi
2. Asham
3. Ukuma, that is, 'Akume'
4. Aku

If these *akombo* are transgressed they can only be set right, or fixed, with alcoholic drinks, just like the Wukari people do. One is initiated into the one called *asham* with Fula. What these people know most is weaving and dyeing clothes. Many years back, no other people could compare with them in these skills.

### THE ETULO [UTUR] PEOPLE

The Etulo too were first encountered by the Tiv where they are presently. They were already there since time immemorial. Actually the Tiv met them at the area known as Leke. Leke is a stream. There are many palm trees there. This is the place where the Tiv first met them. They were in Leke when the Tiv were still at Ibenda hill. When some Tiv were on an elephant hunting expedition, they ran into the Etulo people. They had a harmonious relationship. It was from them that the Tiv people got the axe called *ijembeutur*. When the Tiv people of the Shitire clan were resident at Adikpo, the Etulo were already at Leke.

It was the segment of the Tiv of the Kparev clan called Mbagen who chased the Etulo away from Leke. They relocated to Ikyôdura, which they have inhabited for over a century now.

The Etulo are completely different from the people of Abakwa. Some people maintain that the Etulo are a segment of the Udam ethnic group known as the Umbu. However, the Etulo themselves assert that they are not a segment of Udam; they are a uniquely different people.

The Tiv and the Etulo lived side by side for a long time. But the Tiv never ceased creating squabbles with the Etulo. They kept engaging them in physical combat. Wherever the Etulo had their farms, the Tiv would go and ambush their women and children. At times they killed them. Women and children were taken captive and sold as slaves elsewhere.

### THE LEKE SETTLEMENT

Leke is the last place from where the Tiv dislodged the Etulo people and forced them to move to the Dura area where they are presently. *Leke* itself is a name of a tree. Since the tree grew in large numbers in that area, the area was referred to as the *leke* area. Today, the Tiv of the Mbagen clan and Mbadzagee sub-clan are the ones inhabiting that area.

Communal clashes were the reason the Tiv dislodged the Etulo people in the area. The clash began when a Tiv man was visiting an Etulo chief. A boy who

accompanied the visiting Tiv man went into the palace of the Etulo chief and was trimming the hair of one of the wives of the chief. The son of the chief, on seeing this, became extremely livid. He went and reported to the chief that the visitor youth was seen trimming the chief's wife's hair. The chief too found this strange because it was forbidden for anybody to touch a chief's wife. And the young man was not just trimming the chief's wife hair, but was even helping her put on the *bashi* ornament. Thus, the chief's son went and got a bow and arrow and shot the Tiv boy dead. This created an uproar: the Tiv people waged a war against the Etulo people, killing scores of them and sending them packing. The Etulo settled in the Iko Dura area, where they are presently.

Some people believe that the Etulo have cultural affiliations with the Mbu segment of the Udam ethnic group. But the Etulo have consistently refuted that and asserted that, even though they shared boundaries and intermarried with the Mbu segment up until the time the Tiv attacked and separated them from the Mbu, they are different from each other. They explain that it was after the attack that the Mbu went to join the Udam while they, the Etulo, went their way alone.

### THE ETULO GENEALOGY

Etulo begot: 1. Kwe 2. Udzi 3. Kaku.

Kwe begot: 1. Doga 2. Yube 3. Ndano

Udzi begot: 1. Shon 2. Udzei 3. Fate

Kaku begot: 1. Ukandu 2. Agbe.

### THE ETULO CHIEFS

The Etulo people started installing their chiefs when the Tiv came to dislodge them. The first Etulo to be turbaned as a chief was Kwe, the eldest of the descendants of Etulo. He was installed chief at Wukari. He took two cows as tokens to the Wukari monarch, the Aku Uka, who installed him as chief and also gave him royal attire which consisted of *ikondoil*, a large cloth, *pavbagu*, a robe and *afia*, a cap.

When Chief Kwe returned home, he organized a feast. His kinsmen assembled and amid pomp and pageantry they put him on his seat of authority and also built a royal dwelling for him. This is what all subsequent Etulo chiefs did. At the demise of Kwe, Udzi from the Mbaudzi lineage ascended the throne. After his demise, Kaku from the Mbaukaku lineage ascended the throne. So, their chieftaincy is the exclusive reserve of the descendants of just three lineages. At the advent of colonialism, Chief Agishi from the Mbakwe lineage was on the throne. This is the history of the Etulo chieftaincy.

The Tiv people also installed their first chief at the time the Etulo people inhabited the Leke area. The Tiv got the authority to install chiefs from the Etulo people. This is because, at the initial stage, the Tiv did not find it easy to go to Wukari. So, the Etulo people went and got the authority from the Wukari monarch and Tiv came and tapped into the authority from the Etulo people. But, as time went on, the Tiv too could go to the Wukari, Aku Uka for investiture

of their high chiefs. The chiefs the Etulo people got installed by the Wukari monarch were also first-class chiefs.

### THE ETULO MARKS

In the past, the Etulo people never wore bodily marks. They neither pierced their ears nor sharpened their teeth. They did not even trace the *abaj*i facial marks. It wasn't until they lived side by side with the Tiv people at the Leke area that they emulated this Tiv practice. Today, they can speak the Tiv language very well. When they are together in their homes, they usually hold their discussions in the Tiv language. They know all the Tiv traditional dancing steps. They also get initiated into *akombo* cults of the Tiv people. Initiations into *akombo* cults are usually done with alcoholic drinks. This is all there is about the Etulo people.

When the Tiv of the Shitire clan were at Adikpo, they found the place most suitable. At this time, they hadn't yet discovered the iron sheets made in southern Nigeria, which were later used to make hoe blades: so they continued to use the *ikpe*, the hard wood blade, as a farming tool. They had adequate sources of water. There was a river called Mirchihe by the Ikurav clan, east of the equator, which one had to cross when travelling from Katsina Ala to Wukari. It was the Tiv of the Shitire clan who named the river *Mirchihe*. This river flows from the mountain of Adikpo. It has several streams, swampy areas, and creeks that feed into the river. It was in this area that the Tiv of Shitire clans once lived. Anytime they wanted to make the local alcoholic drink, they went to these creeks to ferment the *ichihemsôr* drink. With time they referred to all the streams and the creeks as the tributaries of the river *Mirchihe*. Subsequently, the streams were referred to as the Mirchihe of the Shitire.

### THE MIGRATION OF THE SHITIRE CLAN FROM ADIKPO

As time went on, the Tiv of the Shitire clan started experiencing a shortage of land for farming activities at Adikpo. When they came down from the hills and farmed, they enjoying higher yields. One day elephant hunters of the Ugenyi ethnic group came across them and saw their activities there. They wondered among themselves how the Tiv beggars could be so daring as to come down from the hill to farm in the lowlands. They also asked among themselves where the Tiv would run if attacked. Thus, they conspired to go and invite their Ugenyi kinsmen to join them so that they could attack the Tiv on their farms, take them captive, and sell them into slavery. So, they actually went back and informed their kinsmen of the plan.

One fateful day, while the Tiv (of the Shitire clan) were on their farms working, the men of the Ugenyi ethnic group launched an attack on the Tiv people and slew them. The Tiv on the farm could not understand the situation because the Tiv of the ancient times had a protocol even when there was war; people working on farms were usually spared. In fact, in those days if someone was on a farm and a visitor came to see him, one didn't call the person away from the farm to abandon his work and come home to attend to a visitor. It was rather the visitor that if so pressed, would go to the farm to meet the person. Women,

too, were not slain during war. It was much later on that callous men did not even spare women during war.

So, at the time the Ugenyi people launched an attack on the Tiv who were working on the farm, the Tiv thought the attackers would not slay them because they were on the farm. But the Ugenyi slew all male adults while the women were taken captive as slaves. The Ugenyi kept on with this kind of attack, never allowing the Tiv people to have peace. As a result, Tivland suffered so severe a famine that at a particular point in history a man would sell his daughter to buy food to feed his male child.

Because of these events, the Tiv of the Shitire clan had to migrate from Adikpo. They settled at another hill called Kpeiyol, close to Adikpo hill. This was around the time the Tiv of the Ugondo clan had returned from Mdema and had settled at Abun again, the Ugondo moved from there in search of another settlement. Thus, because of the incessant attacks from the Ugenyi people and the severe famine, the Tiv of the Shitire clan had to move and joined the Tiv of the Ugondo clan. When the Ugondo moved, the Shitire followed them. Together they settled beside a stream called Ahenga. By the time they settled at Ahenga, the Shitire group had become completely famished.

When they saw the stream Ahenga, they said to each other, 'We are so many! Fetching water from the stream to prepare our cereal powder would be a waste time. Why don't we just pour all our dry cereal powder into the stream, dissolve it into a paste, and eat it that way?'

So, they all put their cereal powder together and poured it into the stream. But they did not notice that the powder sank and settled on the stream-bed sand. After drinking the water on the surface of the stream for a while, they decided it was time to eat the cereal paste that had settled on the streambed.

When they dipped their hands into the stream, all they fetched out was the sand at the bottom of the stream. On seeing this, the people of Ugondo burst into laughter in derision of the stupidity of the Shitire Tiv people. The derision continued until even the people of Ukum clan, who came later, heard about it and also joined with them and nicknamed the people of the Shitire clan the *ukunde mumu mban*, a real class of 'cereal mixers'. Even today, any time the Tiv of the Ugondo and Ukum clans want to make fun of the Tiv of Shitire clan, they call out the nickname *ukunde mumu mban*.

Days after the episode of dissolving cereal powder in the stream Ahenga, the people of the Shitire clan left the people of Ugondo, moved south, and settled in the Akpena area. They settled at Akpena, near the Jukun ethnic group of Wukari. But after a period of time, they got into loggerheads with the Jukun and, again, moved away from there. At this time a few people from the Tiv of the Turan clan were also among the people of the Shitire clan.

During this migration, not all moved. Many members of the Shitire clan and a few of the Turan clan remained behind. The members of the Shitire clan left behind were mostly those from Mbavughur and Mbaiyongo kindred groups of the Gaambe district. The Mbajir kindred were also there. But as they started causing trouble, the people of Mbavughur and Mbaiyongo kindred joined forces and sent the Mbajir away. The Kpav kindred did not go along with those settling to the southern region.



## THE SHITIRE OF THE SOUTHERN REGION

The Shitire that constitute the settlement of the southern segment include all members of Mbavughur, Utange, and Mbaicher and the Mбайyongo kindred groups who had chosen to remain in the southern region. The few family groups of the Mбайyongo kindred, who were left in the southern region, today include Tswarev, Uke of the Agya, Mбайyange, Mbagesa, Mbawar and Tômbo of Agya. The Tômbo of the Agya family is a family whose ancestral father was caught as a slave by Agya during a fishing expedition. This population grew and proliferated through rapid population growth. Their descendants are collectively referred to as Tômbo of Agya.

Agya himself was a man from the Gaambe district who came to sojourn among the Tômbo kindred group of the Shitire of the southern region. As for the Uke of Agya family, they are actually descendants of the Uke ethnic group. The people of the Agya kindred group caught their ancestral parents, a man from Uke ethnic and his wife, in the bush and brought them to be integrated in the Tiv community. These two groups are part of the Shitire clan of the southern region.

The Turan clan as well, at least those of them that settled in the southern region are from Ichembe and Chomgba families. In those years, they were just few in number. Today, even though they form several kindred groups, they do things in common. They also have a common kindred chief.

The people of Shitire clan used to live side by side with the people of the Turan clan, but part of the Shitire left the settlement in the southern region and some sections of the Turan clan moved back to Adikpo. This time they didn't share territory with the Shitire clan. The breakaway people of the Shitire clan never settled at Adikpo. Instead, they settled in other highlands near Adikpo. It was during this settlement that the people of the Shitire clan, who had always lived as a unified family group, first broke up into smaller family lineages. The descendants of Kpav family became known as the Kpav people, while the descendants of Gaambe family became known as the ôngaambe. The people of the Shitire clan in the southern region referred to the Shitire at Adikpo as the Shitire of Adikpo. Those of Adikpo, on the other hand, referred to those in the southern region as Shitire mba shin tiev.

As for the Kpav district of Shitire clan, they never joined the other districts as they wandered around. The Gaambe district wandered about with the Turan clan. The Kpav district, at most, came down from Adikpo and settled where they still are today. Nevertheless, some members of particular families among them moved and settled in the Harga hills, where the Mbavughur kindred group is presently. Another group of theirs, called Shiakpev, went up to the Ikô hill. This is the territory that the Shitire clan occupied when they initially migrated from the Ibenda Mountain. Those of the southern region were located in the area where their kinsmen parted ways with them. This is the history of the Shitire clan.

## THE TURAN CLAN

The people of the Turan clan went with the Shitire clan to settle in the south. They left part of their members there and came back with the segment of the Shitire clan that returned to Adikpo. From there the people of the Turan clan moved farther

away from the Shitire and settled at Mkar Kiriki. Mkar Kiriki is about twenty miles from the mountain Ibenda. When they finally came down, they settled on the farmland where they are currently. Today, they have spread past the Mkômon area. Part of them, known as the Maghev, settled near Muan. These are the districts of the Turan clan.

### THE UGONDO CLAN

The people of the Ugondo clan moved from the Ahenga stream, where the people of Shitire clan had tried to prepare their cereal powder in a stream. They crossed the river Katsina around Nôngov and went up to the hill at Asukunya where the Mbakor clan people are presently. The Asukunya hill is not all that formidable. If one comes from Wanune and faces Abinsi town, he will travel just about three miles to get there. It is situated on the left-hand side of the road. However, the Ugondo people didn't stay there long before they migrated and settled at the bank of the river Katsina, sharing the neighbourhood with the people of the Tombô clan.

### THE FEUD BETWEEN THE UGONDO AND TÔMBO CLANS

When the people of the Ugondo clan settled alongside the people of the Tômbo clan, the people of the Ugondo clan continued with their belligerent nature. It happened that one day during a hunting expedition the spreading of fire around the bush was led by a man from the Tômbo clan by the name Aka son of Chamwa. In the process, some people from the Ugondo clan attacked the fire team. They took captive one man named Ikpaakpe, who was a man from the Yandev district who had come to sojourn among his maternal relations. The people of the Ugondo clan took him captive and chained him down. Unfortunately the man died while in chains. The people of the Tômbo clan took up arms against the people of the Ugondo clan in such a manner that no one could broker a truce among them. The fight went on until the people of the Mbakor clan also became entangled in the fight.

### THE FEUD BETWEEN THE UGONDO AND MBAKOR CLANS

What finally sent the people of Ugondo packing from that area was their fight with the Mbakor clan. When they settled at Asukunya, the people of Nôngov had already settled around the Ukoghor stream. Much later, the people of Ugondo descended from the hill and settled around a stream called Konikar. Then the people of Mbakor came and settled around that area.

After a passage of time, one man, Sokpo Agav from the Mbakor clan, organized a hunting expedition. As people turned up for the expedition, two major districts of the Mbakor clan were in attendance: the Mbaichôghor and Mbalahan districts. So the two districts had to share among themselves the game they caught during the expedition. The Mbaichôghor district went with one part, while the Mbalahan district went with the other. As the people of the Mbalahan district passed with

their portion of the game by the outskirts of the Ugondo settlement, the people of the Ugondo clan got angry. They asked why the people of that district of the Mbakor clan should trespass their settlement with a portion of the game. They then attacked that district of Mbakor, shooting people with arrows. This made the entire Mbakor clan wage war against the Ugondo. They fought a fratricidal war. The Mbakor clan defeated the Ugondo clan and dislodged them from that territory. The Ugondo clan had to move away from Konikar where Chief Abo had his residence. Evidence of their settlement is still visible there. When they were dislodged from there, they came and settled at Mkungu as well, where the people of the Mbaichôghor district of the Mbakor clan are presently.

Later they migrated from there, crossed the river Katsina and settled at Ber Tamen. Again, they moved farther and settled where Igbôn Maa is presently. The colonial administration once set up a warehouse there. One person who helped to ferry the people of the Ugondo clan across was their kinsman by the name of Igura, who was a mean-spirited fellow to the core.

Suffice it to add that these events were happening just at the onset of the colonial administration. So, even the feud that the Ugondo clan had with the Tômbo and Mbakor clans was resolved by the colonial administration. Here are the subdivisions of the Ugondo clan.

#### THE GENEALOGY OF THE KPAREV, IHAREV, AND MASEV LINEAGES

Kparev had two children: Jechila and Jemgba.

1. Jechila begot Ikôr.
2. Jemgbar begot Inyam and Tômbo.
3. Iharev begot Ityôshin and Isherev.
4. Masev begot Igyenev and Ingohov.

At the time of the migration from the mountain Ibenda, the descendants of Kparev, Iharev and Masev did not move according to their lineages. People got mixed up. Some groups — the Shitire, Turan and Ugondo clans — sallied north as we discussed earlier. The Kparev clans too never moved intact. Part of the Jemgbar clan headed straight to the east with the Nôngov, Ikurav, Ukum and Tongov clans; they scattered and had different settlements within the area.

Initially the Jemgbar settled with the Kparev clan. But as they moved further to the Ikyô Dura area where Chief Agera is presently, they disintegrated. The descendants of Jemgbar parted ways with the descendants of Jechila. So, they and other districts, moved forward with the descendants of Kan. The Ukan clan too, moved together with Jechila clan. The people of the Udam, Iharev, and Masev clans also moved along with the Jechila. But as they moved, the people of the Ukan clan came to settle at the Ushongo hill. Ushongo is located within the Mbayegh territory, where the Mbaibon kindred of the Ukan clan are today. All the people of the Ikov district of the Ukan clan were also there.

As the Ukan clan settled there, they settled according to a pattern. The people of the Kacha district settled in the Mata highlands, while the Oraka district settled right on the Ushongo hill. The Mata highlands and Ushongo hill are close to each other. When the Ukan migrated from there, they came to settle in the Faku

territory. The districts of the Ukan clan that settled in the Faku territory included: Ingorov, Madutsu, Mbagen, Mbakpa, Ikanev, and Mbanevkaa. These were the districts of the Ukan clan that settled in the Faku territory. The Mbanevkaa, however, arrived there much later; previously they remained in the Iko Dura area with the people of Kurav.

The people of the Inyam district banded together and moved into the area where the people of the Mbagen district are today. This area was a highland at the time the Mbagen settled there. At that time, the Etulo ethnic group had their settlement at Leke area. The Abakwa ethnic group of Katsina Ala was there, where Hôm village still is located. Their well and dyeing pits are still there today.

### THE WAR BETWEEN THE MBAINYAM AND ETULO PEOPLE

Shortly after the people of Mbainyam district settled near the Etulo ethnic group, conflict ensued between them. This was a war between the Tiv and the people of the Etulo ethnic group in the Leke area. The Tiv pushed away the Etulo, who moved to the Ikô Dura plains where there are presently.

As for the Abakwa ethnic group, since the Tiv came to share the neighbourhood with them, there has been no conflict between them and the Tiv people. But since the Tiv caused the Etulo people to relocate to the Ikô Dura plains, the people of Abakwa no longer felt comfortable living in the same neighbourhood in the wilderness as the Tiv. So they also relocated and joined the Etulo people in the Ikô Dura plains.

It was actually from the Abakwa ethnic group that the Tiv first learned the art of cloth weaving; and it was from them that the Tiv saw dresses for the first time. Of the dresses the Tiv got from the Abakwa, the one that they loved most was the *togo* gown. The Abakwa in Katsina Ala would weave *tugudu* cloth and use it to make these gowns. It was a sleeveless dress, with a black thread design around the collar. Tiv people referred to it as Katsina Ala *togo*. A wealthy Tiv man could purchase just one with a cow. And the day he wore it, all the people talked about it. People would talk of how such a person was dressed to kill. At times Abakwa people would design its collar with black and red thread. This type also enticed the Tiv. They called it *togoikanyon*.

After Tiv had sojourned there for a period of time, some clans decided to pull away, leaving just the Mbainyam sub-clan there. The Tongov clan went and crossed the river Katsina and settled near the river Loko. But the men of the Uke ethnic group came and attacked them there. So they migrated and settled at Lukuu. Lukuu is a stream, located at the other side of the river Loko to the east. A subgroup of the Ikurav clan was forced by Ugenyi attacks to stop its migration and to remain behind with the Mbainyam clan.

The Nôngov clan moved along with the people of Ukum. The people of Ukum settled at Mkar hill. Mkar is where the D.R.C. Mission had a station presently. Gboko, on the other hand, is a larger settlement where the colonial administration in Tivland set up its headquarters. The distance between Mkar and Gboko is about five and a half miles. But the colonial administration decided not set up its headquarters in the main Gboko town. Rather, it is on the periphery of Gboko. The actual Gboko town is east of the headquarters of the colonial administration.

When the Ukum clan settled at Mkar, the people of Nôngov settled on another hill near Mkar, just half a mile away. Mkar is on the other side of the road that leads from Gboko to Makurdi and other destinations; the road passes between the two. Mkar is situated to the east, while the other hill is situated southwest of the road. There is a large deserted settlement there called Garalaa. At Mkar, there are several abandoned settlements of the Ukum. Today if one climbs there, he can see the ruins, old abandoned houses that were built with stones. One can also see several compounds of the ancient people at Mkar and will be amazed by the nature of their houses and their architecture in general. There are also grinding stones, clay pots that recently got broken, as well as potsherds.

Mkar has three peaks with different names. But all of them are considered to be Mkar. One of the peaks is called Agbadzar, another is Aguji and the last one is Gatur. Today the people who inhabit the Mkar hill are people of the Ipav kindred. Even the hill where the deserted Garalaa settlement is has also become the land of the Ipav. As for Gboko, it is the people of the Mbayion clan who are there. In conclusion, when the people of Ukum were at Mkar, the people of Nôngov were at that other hill.

### THE TÔMBO CLAN

At the time the people of Ukum were at Mkar, and the Ikurav clan was in Gboko, the entire Tômbo clan settled where the Mbashimbe district of the Ipav clan is today. In those years, this entire area was a large forest. The people of the Iharev clan settled at a stream named Ugbemacha. If one follows the route created by the colonial administrators from where it diverts at Tsekucha in the Mbaiyiôn district towards Akpagher in the Mbativ district and one travels three and a half miles, one would come across the Ugbemacha stream where the Iharev clan settled.

### THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE TÔMBO CLAN: MBATIE AND MBALAGH DISTRICTS

As the people of Tômbo clan moved away from the forest area, the Tômbo people of the Mbatie lineage decided to follow the Iharev clan. So they migrated south with them and settled at the Ugbemacha stream. The Tômbo of the Mbalagh lineage, on the other hand, followed the people of the Ukum clan. So they settled at Ambighir stream. The Ukum clan shifted their base from Mkar and settled at Ikuwen hill. Ikuwen is not far from the stream Ambighir — its distance from Ambighir is just two miles, and to Mkar is about five miles. In other words, the Ikuwen hill is situated between the Mkar hill and the Ambighir stream. It is a hill that is not all that rocky. It is not even very high, but is quite expansive.

If one is travelling from Makurdi to Katsina Ala, one would follow the road. After Mkar, one would travel for just two miles and would arrive at Ikuwen hill. It can be seen to the north from the road. A little distance from there, one can get to the stream Ambighir where the people of the Mbalagh district settled. There are large deserted compounds of Ukum people there. It was here that the population of the Ukum clan started multiplying.

When the people of Ukum migrated from Ikuwen hill, they crossed to the other side of the river Katsina. They moved and settled on the banks of the Ambighir stream that is found on the other side of the river Katsina. The Ukum man that settled at the Ityô Ambighir was named Anafè. The one called Awuna moved and settled beside a large lagoon. Since then, the lagoon has been named Ber Awuna. Another Ukum man by the name of Naiko settled at another lagoon and the lagoon became known as Ber Naiko accordingly.

Yet another Ukum man, named Abenga, settled at another lagoon, and it was therefore called Ber Abenga. Abenga hailed from the Mbaura kindred group in the Mbaaputor district of the Ukum clan. Another lagoon was occupied by Abado of the Kundav district. Accordingly, the place was named Ber Abado Yaku by those within his kindred group, which is called Mbamkenge.

At the time the people of Ukum settled in these areas, there was a great famine. Thus, the Ukum people from the Tsaav and Lumbuv districts went about at night stealing with a Dagbera outfit. So, these districts were nicknamed Ukum-mba-dagbera. And today, this is their name. When the Ukum clan migrated from there, they faced the direction of the sunrise and came to settle where they are today.

I, the author, had personally met with an Ukum man who was one among the Ukum people who had lived at Mkar and who migrated across the river Katsina. I had a rest in his meeting house and preached the Gospel to him as well, and asked him about our history. He told me everything. His life was quite amazing, and despite his old age, he was still strong. He explained to me that he was still at a tender age during the Wannar episode, and that this happened when the Ukum were still at Ikuwen hill.

This man had a small stature. He could speak very well, and he could not walk slowly. Any time he wanted to walk, he would move at a fast pace until he got to where he was going. He was called Sekpe and was from the Mbasôngo kindred group of the Kendev district. I met with him in 1914 and he died in 1923. Many people within the Ukum clan knew him. Ortese Agee (Mr Brink) too knew him very well.

(Considering all this, one can conclude that it is not long ago that the Tiv people came to inhabit this part of the country.)

By the time the Ukum clan quit the area and came to meet with the Shitire and Tongov clans, the people of Kparev started making trouble in Gboko with the Ikurav and dislodged them from there because, they, the Kparev, wanted to live in that area alone. They also dislodged the Nôngov in the area. The men of valour in the Kparev clan in those days were people like Agaku Akpachum of Mbakaange district in the Kunav sub-clan, and, in the Usar kindred group under the Mbadzaka district of the Mbaitiav clan, a man named Dzerasuwa Nungwa.

The prowess of all of them depended on the *andar* ritual *akombo*. It was with *andar* rites that warriors were initiated to go to war. But in the case of interethnic war; warriors were inducted with the *akuva* and *andar* ritual *akombo*. It was backed up by another round of rituals known as the *mku u ter*, which was performed by invoking the names of past warriors of the time before they set out for war.

When the people of Kparev dislodged the people of Ikurav from Gboko, the Ikurav settled at Ikyu. Ikyu is quite close to Mkar and it is actually part of the

Mkar hill. It is there that the medical team of D.R.C.M. missionaries established the leprosy rehabilitation centre. When the Ikurav clan moved away from there, they crossed to the other side of Katsina River and settled there. They could not move back to their land at Ibenda hill where they had left behind some of their kinsmen. They settled close to the Shitire at Adikpo and Tongov clans.

Their kinsmen still living at Ibenda hill referred to them as Ikurav-Tiev. The Ikurav-Tiev, on the other hand, referred to their kinsmen at Ibenda hill as Ikurav-ya. In the past, the two Ikurav segments used to do things in common, like practising common *akombo* and also engaging in the *iya ingôr* [exchange marriages ].

Nowadays, they see themselves as kinsmen but they don't do things in common. They only pretend to be closely related. These are their clans.

### THE NÔNGOV CLAN

Once the people of Ikurav moved away, the people of Nôngov clan also moved away, heading towards the Abinsi area. They came and settled by a stream called Ukoghor. It is their old, abandoned settlement that the Ugondo clan came to occupy at Asukunya hill, as we mentioned earlier in the section about the Ugondo clan. When they migrated from Ukoghor, they travelled as a group, passed by the Achigbe hill on the banks of the river Katsina, and then separated.

### THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE NÔNGOV CLAN

Over a period of time, some districts of the Nôngov clan — the Kaambe and Saghev districts — broke away at the hill Achigbe, which is located in the Mbatie area, where the Mbanatu district is today. Some people of the Saghev district crossed the river Katsina at the point where it joins the Iwagh, while some people among them crossed the river at Amgbo. Still another group crossed the river at Gimetsu. However, the people of the Kaambe district didn't cross the river. They and the people of the Ndzôrov district just settled on the south bank of the river. But later they moved again and migrated upward, north, to where the river Katsina flows into the bigger river Benue. Then, they of the Ndzôrov and Kaambe districts, crossed over the river.

Just as they crossed, they were attacked by the foreigners of Dankol [Danfodio Muslim people]. At that time, Dankol himself had set up his residence at the town of Awe. Even though they rallied round and defeated the Danfodio 'Jihadist' at Awe, that Uke ethnic group continued to harass the people of Nôngov. Thus, the people of Kaambe district had to return across the river, leaving the people of Ndzôrov district at the other side of the larger river Benue.

This is the information about the migration of the Nôngov clan. In case one needs to know about the districts and kindred groups of the Nôngov clan, they have been described earlier on.

When all the other clans left the area at the other side of the river, the people of the Kparev clan came and took over the area. The people of the Ipav sub clan took over the entire Mkar area that used to be inhabited by the Ukum clan. For at that time, the people of Ukum clan were resident there and the people of Ipav sub-clan

were nearby in the Ambighir area. So, once the Ukum clan had moved across to the other side of the river Katsina, the Ipav sub-clan came and settled into their abandoned settlement. Today, they are there with the people of the Yandev sub-clan.

The Mbayiôn sub-clan, on the other hand, came to occupy the abandoned settlement of the Ikurav clan in the Gboko area. Today the whole of the Gboko area is the land of the Mbayion sub-clan. The major stream within that area flows into the Ambighir stream. The Ambighir stream itself flows into the river Katsina.

If one follows the short route — that is, the route leading from the residence of Akpagher, the chief of the Mbaitiav district, up to the Tse-Kucha area where it joins the major highway from Abinsi town to Katsina Ala town — one would definitely have to cross the stream Ugbemacha.

When the Iharev clan parted ways with the people of the Mbatie district of the Tômbô clan at Ugbemacha, they came to settle near the Masev clan. The people of the Mbatie district, on the other hand, came to settle at the banks of the river Katsina. They are there still today. The area has now become their land. Today the Mbatie district of the Tômbô clan has the following kindred.

Once the people of Ukum moved away from the Ambighir area, the people of the Mbalagh district of the Tômbô clan settled at this abandoned Ukum settlement, sharing the neighbourhood with the people of Ugondo. When the people of Mbalagh district and the Ugondo clan lived in the same neighbourhood, they continued having clashes until the coming of the white colonial administrators. Even then, they kept having clashes during hunting expeditions. The people of the Ugondo clan kept on courting trouble with the people of the Mbalagh district. Anytime they met in a hunting expedition, the people of the Ugondo clan started a fight before they felt comfortable.

### THE MBAKOR AND MBATYEREV SUB-CLANS

The people of the Mbakor and Mbatyerev sub-clans migrated into areas that were not yet inhabited. They kept moving into the abandoned settlements of the Nôngov until they arrived at the area they are today. The Asukunya hill, which used to be occupied by the Ugondo clan, was taken up completely by the Mbakor sub-clan, who had spread out to share the neighbourhood with the Mbatie district of the Tômbô clan. These are the districts within the Mbakor and Mbatyerev sub-clans.

### MBAITIAV SUB-CLAN

The people of Itiav Inyam sub-clan migrated southward toward the land of the Udam. They came and settled at Silagi and Agundu hills. There are four hills within the same area. If one stands at the residence of the chief Akpagher, who was the first chief of the Mbaitiav to be installed by the colonial administration, one can see these four hills together to the east.

During the time the people of Mbaitiav sub-clan were at Silagi hill, life was full of joy for them, with land in abundance. Even food was in such abundance that the



people did not know what to do with it. Yet they migrated from there to Agundu hill. When they descended from there, they came to settle where they are presently. But they have kept regretting leaving their land at Silagi, just as the Ugondo have been perpetually lamenting leaving the good things of their ancient settlement in Mdemá.

### THE DESCENDANTS OF JECHILA

When the people of Jechila migrated from Ikô Dura where Agera Kômgbenda is presently, they came to settle within the land of the Udam. They just settled in the thick forest out of fear of the Udam ethnic group, who kept menacing them with wars. Since the Udam menace persisted, they migrated from there and settled at Ngôku hill. The people of the Uge ethnic group settled at Atir hill, near Ngôku hill.

As time went on, the people of the Uge ethnic group took to silently killing Tiv babies through nefarious acts. When Tiv women went to farm, leaving their babies with nannies, an Uge man would come and tell the nanny, 'Give me the baby to hold, while you go and get water for me to drink.' So the nanny would give the baby to the Uge man. And just as the nanny went into the house to fetch water, the Uge man would insert a slender stick into the urinary organ of the baby and cut it, leaving the non-visible stick inside the baby. The baby would start to screech. The nanny would come back, collect the baby, and examine him all around, but would not see where something had gone wrong to make the baby screech. So therefore, out of bewilderment, the nanny would join the baby in crying until the baby's mother returned from farming.

Even the mother of the baby could not notice anything after scrutinizing the baby carefully. The nanny, even when asked why the baby was screeching, could not fully explain why. And no matter how much the mother soothed the baby, the baby would not stop crying. This is because when the baby wanted to urinate, the urine would not flow because of the stick in the urinary tract. The baby would finally die. The people of the Uge ethnic group kept killing Tiv babies in this manner, until the Tiv people finally unravelled the mystery. As a result, the Tiv moved down from the hill and continued farther in search of a place to settle.

At this time, the people of the Masev clan were living together with the people of the Jechila clan. As they moved close to the river Kônshisha, where the Gaav sub-clan is today, the people of Iharev moved from the Gbemecha area and joined them. The people of Iharev had a battle with the Mbu segment of the Udam ethnic group on their way to join the Jechila (Kparev) clan. The Mbu people even dispossessed the people of the Iharev clan of their *akomboes* in the course of the war.

Thus, when the Iharev clan finally got to their Jechila kinsmen, they narrated their ordeal to them. On hearing the story, the people of Jechila joined forces with their Iharev kinsmen, came and fought the Udam group, and reclaimed the *akomboakombo* for the Iharev clan. This really pleased the people of the Iharev clan. The *akombo* in question was named *ishan man imenger* [star and lantern].

As time went on, the people of the Iharev clan decided that they would move and settle at Ikwe. Ikwe is a hill that is situated in the Ngyenev area of the

present Masev territorial area, close to the residence of the chief Igbor. A man named Gbainyam Unduikure, who was in charge of surveillance and security of the clan, flung the *imenger akombo* towards the hill but the light went out mid-way. Then, the man who was in charge of the security and surveillance of the Kparev clan, a man named Ashwa Mondo, took his turn. He flung the *imenger akombo* and it landed right at the top of the hill. The people of the Iharev clan applauded and rejoicing went up the hill to take their possession. They rejoiced and were very pleased with the Kparev clan.

When the Iharev clan settled down at Ikwe, the people of Kparev clan returned to their old settlement with the Ishangev clan, leaving the Masev and Iharev clans behind. But a segment of the Ishangev clan remained behind. Today this segment is called the Ishangev-Tiev. This segment spread their settlement up to Abata hill. The segment of the Ishangev clan that followed the Kunav sub-clan of the Kparev are referred to as the Ishangev-ya. So, there are two segments of the Ishangev clan today: those of the -itiev segment and those of the -ya segment.

In another area, the Gaav group went up north and settled on Agira hill. But they kept on having wars with the people of the Udam ethnic group. At that time, the Tiv people had not yet invented bows and arrows. They were using *andar* spears to fight. So, the descendants of Ikuna ikôr went up to live at the old settlement of their forefathers and live there still today.

Let us now discuss Uka. Aduku and Bu were the children of Ityev from the same mother. Iyongo and Ikaange were children of Ityev from another woman. One day, Lagh, another child of Ityev, went to get *aninge* vegetables for his mother and while doing this, he caught Kerkede, a slave from the Udam ethnic group. He handed the slave to his mother. The mother in turn, handed the slave over her husband – Ityev. Ityev accepted the Udam slave but said they should let Lagh live with the slave under the same roof so they would be as children from the same mother. As time went on, Kerkede begot Kan and Ager. Lagh, on the other hand, begot Ibev.

### THE UTE DISTRICT

The oral history of the people of the Ute district revealed that one day, Ityev went fishing with his son, Ikaange. There, they caught Te and his wife, the ancestral parents of the people of Ute district. Ityev left Te and his wife in the custody of Ikaange, so that they should stay with him as close relations.

### THE MBAGBERA DISTRICT

History also revealed that Ikaan took a wife by name of Ilia. Unfortunately, Ikaan was killed by an elephant. So, Ityev took over the wife and begot Agbera with her.

### THE TSAMBE FEMALE CHILD DISTRICT

Oral history has again revealed that the Tsambe district is made of the descendants of a girl child named Tsambe. She lost her mother and she also had a chronic sore.

Her father Ityev decided that she should not get married. So, she remained with her father and subsequently had children as a single mother. The children came to be collectively referred to as Tsambe.

Bu was the eldest of the children of Ityev. But he went to sojourn among the people of Nanev clan. He took a wife there and had children. Later on, he returned to join his sibling, Aduku. One day, they went fishing and Bu stabbed Takuruku, the son of Kaange, with a spear and killed him. So, Iyongo and Kaange had to go and slay the children of Bu. The sons of Bu were Wer and Kwen. Wer was the eldest. They were actually the ones that begot the descendants of Bu that were targeted. Wer begot Yaga, Inyam, Igyaribough and Genger. Kwen, on the other hand, begot only one child by name Atsagher. This is what our history reveals.

The Iwanev however, when the Uke ethnic group attacked the Tiv at Ibenda hill and dislodged them, broke into two segments: the Iwanev ya and of the itiev. The Iwanev and Injôôv are the smallest kindred groups in all Tivland.

### THE UTANGE ETHNIC GROUP

The people of the Utange ethnic group are well integrated among the Tiv people, but they are not Tiv. There are two factors that caused them to be well-integrated into Tiv society. Their ancestral father, Tange, quit his land, leaving his sibling behind. He came to sojourn with Ichôngo [circumcised group]. He got married to a Tiv girl and kept having children with her until the Ugenyi ethnic group dislodged them along with Tiv at Ibenda.

As people never moved freely in those years, there was no way Tange and his family could return to his kinsmen back home. So, they remained with Tiv people forever. Nowadays, they have been able to make contact with their kinsmen back home when they move about. Their language is distinct and does not correspond with other ethnic groups. So, if one claimed the Utange are not Tiv, it would mean that the Utange back home in their native land are different and have no relationship with those living with Tiv people. But if they don't have a relationship, then why do they have a common language with those in Tivland? There is no single ethnic group that has two different mother tongues. In fact, we know that even among Tiv clans there exist two segments — those of the southern and those of the northern regions: just like we have the Shitire, Ikurav, and Ishangev which are in two segments. Yet, they speak a common language within the two segments.

Again, if not for the goodwill of the ancient generation, the Utange ethnic group would be extinct in Tivland. The ancient generations had respect for the command of elders; they respected the command of Gbadi Gbem so much that the Kparev clan established a covenant with the Utange. For this reason, the people of the Utange ethnic group are well integrated among the Tiv people.

What made the Tiv people (of the Kparev clan) establish a covenant with the Utange is that the Utange are a stubborn people. Where they are today is not where they initially settled. They had their initial settlement in the Amire area, and lived side by side with the people of the Mbainyam district. Then they migrated from there, crossed the river Katsina, and settled at a lake nearby. There are many lakes in that area. This is the area presently occupied by the Ikurav. The whole of this area used to be occupied by the Utange. But the Tiv dislodged them from there. They moved and settled a bit to the north.

In the past, these people were war-mongers. They were good fighters. The Kparev clan fought a bloody and protracted war with them, and they never retreated. The war dragged on. For this reason, people have an adage: 'We will fight intractably like the Utange fought the people of the Mbajôr sub-clan.' The Tiv people just left them to become assimilated into Tiv society.

They practise all *akombo* rituals in common with the Tiv people. Thus, people who are not well informed consider the Utange to be Tiv people. This is the truth about the Utange. Here are the districts within the Utange.

### THE IHAREV CLAN

When the Iharev clan descended from Ikwe hill, they did not go far, but just settled with the Masev clan. Ihar, their ancestral father, begot Unduikure. Unduikure begot Mbainyam and Kerkede. As time went on, Gbainyam went and marked a hill to establish his settlement. The hill was thus named Gbainyam Undur. On seeing this, Ityôshin, a brother to Mbainyam, decided that he would also get a hill, and settle there so that it would be named after him. As he wandered in search of a hill, the Akporo [Idoma] ethnic group came and murdered Ityôshin's son, who was named Tsainyamwa. The people of the Iharev clan did not react to this at first. After some years, a man from the Isherev sub-clan, named Amoi, wounded a buffalo with a spear. The buffalo did not die on the spot. It wandered around in the bush and came to die at the outskirts of an Idoma settlement. This meant that the Iharev clan was sharing a boundary with the Idoma ethnic group. So, the Agbeakporo claimed the buffalo, refused to deliver it to the owner, and went and sold it. The Tiv asked among themselves, how could the Idomas be that daring? They said that first Tsainyamwa Ityôshin was murdered by the Idomas. Nobody reacted. Second, one day, an Idoma man shot an antelope with his arrow and the antelope wandered around, and came to die on a Tiv man's farm. A Tiv woman found it on the farm and it was delivered to the Idomas. But when it was their turn, the Idoma took possession of the buffalo and refused to hand it over. Thus the worst had happened; they could no longer bear such treatment from the Idoma.

For this reason a war broke out. The Iharev clan engaged the Idoma ethnic group in a fierce battle, which was as bloody as the one between the Utange ethnic group and the people of the Mbajjôv sub-clan. They displaced the Idoma ethnic group and took possession of their seed yams and hoes, as well as some arrows. The Iharev clan started farming with these implements. This is also how the Tiv people got to use arrows. The other Tiv clans learned about arrows and metallic hoes from the Tiv of the Iharev clan. This is the history of the Tiv-Idoma war.

With this new development, Tiv people abandoned their *ikpe* wooden hoes and started fabricating iron hoes. The Tiv clan that was famous for their blacksmiths was the Ukan clan. The Iharev clan made their mark in Tiv history by being the ones who subdued the Idoma ethnic group and took their arrows and metallic hoes, which then were distributed among Tiv people. And when the Tiv ran short of iron sheets to fabricate iron hoes, it was again the Iharev clan that was able to obtain sources for it.

They got it by building a smelting oven shaped like a cone and hollow inside. They created a circular space on top. They called this structure an *atur*. They

loaded the circular space on top with iron ore. Then they set a large fire with *gbaaye* wood around the iron-bearing rocks. They also raised a *wandaar* platform nearby. Men stood on the *wandaar* and had long poles, which they used to heighten the fire over the hard stones throughout the night. They continued this activity the next day until the iron bearing stones melted and flowed into the hole in the *atur*. As it condensed, someone people would reach out with their long poles and scrape debris off the slag from the iron formed. The iron came out in balls and was allowed to cool. Then, the balls were removed as hard iron balls which the Tiv referred to as *kanjibo*. After a period of time people started to call these people the *kanjibo*. Tiv people called anybody who was unusually strong a *kanjibo*.

The *atur* structures still exist in some of the ancient settlements of the Iharev clan presently inhabited by the Tiv of the Masev clan. Another way the forefathers used to procure iron was by purchasing axes from the people of the Etulo ethnic group, which they then used to fabricate hoe blades. Over time, they started getting the *sokpo* metal sheets from the Udam ethnic group that came from the Calabar area. The Tiv call the metal sheets *sokpodam*. The Tiv could use one *tugudu* cloth to pay for one metal sheet. During this era, a bull could be exchanged for five yards of *tugudu* cloth and one female cow was exchanged for ten yards of *tugudu* cloth. One piece of *bashi* brass was also exchanged for the same number of *tugudu* cloths. But five pieces of *bashi* could be exchanged for one bull.

### THE BREAKUP OF THE IHAREV CLAN

Since the Iharev clan settled down at the lower Mu basin, Chafu Bum, a man from the Isherev district of the Iharev clan, crossed over the river Benue along with the Isherev, leaving the people of the Ityôshin district behind where they were sharing the territory with the people of the Idoma ethnic group. Here are the kindred groups within the Ityôshin district. The name Isherev or Utyôndu refers to the same district. It is the Ityôshin district that is different. The Isherev district has two kindred: the Isheril and the Ishernyan kindred groups. The descendants of Isheril and Ishernyan have been mentioned earlier.

The Nanev clan is of the Ipusu lineage. But their situation is rather a dilemma. Even though the clan has a small population, the people have established a covenant among themselves. One of their districts called Usar has a strong covenant; members of this district don't intermarry with other districts within the clan. A story is told that their ancestral fathers used an elephant to establish this covenant. Thus, if their descendants decide to break the covenant, they would also be required to slay an elephant or something to that effect.

The people of the Nanev clan are a people with great strength of will. They are few in number, but the people of the Kunav clan don't find it easy to live with them. The Ishangev-ya clan, who share territory with them, also don't find it easy to be near them. The Nanev clan is situated between the Kunav and Ishangev-ya clans. The Ishangev-ya clan, which shares a neighbourhood with the Nanev, has spread out to share a border with the Uge and Udam ethnic groups. These are the districts within the Ishangev-ya clan.

## THE UTYUSHA COMMUNITY

The Utyusha community is comprised of Turan, Ikurav-ya, Ishangev-ya, and Nanev clans. These are the clans Tiv people refer to as the Utyusha community. They are called so because of the topography of their land and their social attitude. Initially, they were not called Utyusha because they are the sons of Tiv from the Ichôngo-Akem lineage. But when the Tiv were dislodged from Ibenda and forced to break up by the Ugenyi, these clans went back to the hill and settled at the old abandoned settlements of their forefathers. Some of them are integrated into the Turan, Ikurav and Ishangev clans. Members of their group who refused to go back to the hill nicknamed those who went back *atô ve a sha jime*, which meant that they were now separate and seen as their 'clans at the back'. They referred to only one section of the clan as their *ityô* at the back. As time went on, the nickname underwent a linguistic mutation to be pronounced as *atôasha* today. What made the Tiv people stop calling them correctly and instead adulterate their nickname to *utyusha* was because of their attitude to life. Because they shared a boundary with the Iyôn ethnic group, they copied most of the attitudes of that ethnic group, such as their *akombo* and the exchange of their female children for cows. A man with a daughter could take his daughter and exchange her for a cow conveniently. They were also fond of selling their daughters to the Tiv of the southern region, who bought them and called them *kwase u sha uikya*.

In the past days they could sell a child in exchange for one bag of salt or one *sokpo* of iron. One wealthy man of theirs could buy about one hundred as female slaves. He hardly offered up to a cow price for all of them but he offered on top of this additional salt measures or iron sheets, *sokpo*. It was in the advent of colonialism that they were liberated by one white colonial administrator nicknamed Wanimem.

When these female slaves gave birth to several female children, some were kept in the chief's compound as prostitutes for people and bore children who took on the wealthy man's name. Tiv people regard this group of girls kept to engage in sexual promiscuity as prostitutes.

Even the speech intonation patterns and work habits of the people of the Utyusha community were slightly different from the rest of the Tiv people. They were also not hard workers on their farms. Their major crops were cocoyam and guinea corn, which are in line with the feeding habits of the foreign ethnic groups with whom they shared neighbourhoods. Their ways are very different from the rest of the Tiv people. For this reason, Tiv people don't call them correctly as *atoasha* any more. Instead Tiv people use the derogatory name of *utyusha*, which normally infuriates them. However, nowadays, they have got used to the derisive term and it doesn't bother them any more. They even talk and refer to themselves as Utyusha. This is the matter about the Utyusha community.

## THE GENESIS OF PAYMENTS OF TRIBUTE AND TAXES

In the past, when the Uke menaced the Tiv people with war, the elders in the Tiv clan that was being attacked continuously by the Uke ethnic group would collect tribute worth the price of two or even five cows. They brought that payment to any kinsmen who were well informed about the Uke people and could even speak their

language. This kinsman would then lead them to the war commander of the Uke ethnic group. They would bribe the commander with money and also plead with him to allow them to have peace.

Thus the commander would collect the 'money' and summon the men of his troop and instruct them not to fight that particular Tiv clan again. Hence they appeased him with money. The commander would allow the men of such a Tiv clan to return to their homes with the assurance that they would not be attacked because they had not only pleaded but had paid tribute to him.

It was only through the payment of tributes that the Uke ethnic group allowed the Tiv people to have peace. Mere pleading or begging could not appease the Uke. This is how tributes and tax payments started way back before the advent of colonialism. Members of any Tiv clan that had paid its tribute could travel freely in the Uke land.

Not only was the Uke war commander appeased with money. In addition, if any young man maltreated an elderly person, the elderly person would become cold towards the young person until he offered money to appease the elderly person. Furthermore, any person who desired to ascend to a chieftain throne had to offer money to the Uke, as well as to the elders within his locality. As such, people would say such a person was paying tributes to have himself installed as a chieftain. To the Tiv people, paying tribute meant offering someone money so as to obtain *mkpeiyol*, meaning good health, a favour from him.

### TAX IN THE COLONIAL ERA

When the colonial administration came in, it imposed taxes on any Tiv clan it was able to burn and subdue, as we will see in the chapter about the coming of the Whiteman. The Tiv people thought that when the Whiteman subdued them, they were to pay tax once and for all. But when the white colonial administrators settled down at Katsina Ala and Abinsi, they continued to impose taxes that were to be paid constantly.

The Tiv people could not understand this. They said to themselves that this was not the situation during the era when they were paying tributes to the Uke ethnic group. They said they could have a conflict with men of the Uke ethnic group, but once they paid tribute the matter would be put to rest for life. They never kept paying continuously. Thus, they wondered what conflict they had with the Whiteman so that they had to pay taxes year after year. They added that they had even stopped doing some of their practices that the Whiteman disapproved of. So why would the Whiteman continue demanding tax from them?

As such, Tiv people hated the taxes<sup>46</sup> a lot. Though colonial administrators had explained several times what they were doing with the funds generated from the taxes, the Tiv people were never satisfied. At every community meeting, they expressed the hope that the Whiteman would relieve them of paying taxes.

Sometimes young Tiv men who had been expelled from schools, or dismissed from military service or civil service, would misinform people about the tax

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<sup>46</sup>See Prologue for a comment on values of exchange, taxes and terms used for these including *ikundu*, *bashi kobo* and others.

issue and all other activities of the colonial administration in Tivland. Sometimes they would just lie, saying that the colonial administrators normally consulted with them on policy issues so that they were well informed about the activities of the colonial administration. They would lie, saying that the colonial administration had announced that there would be no payment of tax for the next year. Thus, since the Tiv people detested payment of taxes anyway, they would fail to get prepared to pay taxes that year. No matter what explanation you gave, they would not accept it. They would prefer the view of the young man who was a government official. They believed he was better informed about the Whiteman. Many other misgivings about the work of colonial administration were stirred up by such young men. Tiv people took them in confidence more than the Whiteman. Even gambling got exacerbated in Tiv land because of such young men. They quietly went round every nook and cranny of Tivland misinforming people over colonial government which they knew so little about. However, the people had confidence in them more than in any other person.

Taxation has become so problematic in Tiv land these days for four major reasons.

1. Poverty
2. Nonchalant attitude
3. Elders
4. Abolition of corporal punishment

These can be explained as follows: there is much poverty in Tivland, such that even when the tax collection assistant went out on a tax drive, people would not be able to pay on time. He would take a lot of time to pester them but they would not bother as they said the tax collection assistants were not the actual tax collectors. But when the tax collector would want to compel them, they would run to the white colonial administrator with the complaint that they were making efforts to pay, but lack of money was their problem. Yet the tax collector was molesting them. So the white colonial administrator would admonish the tax collectors and tell them to stop molesting people over tax issues. They should be allowed to take their time, look for money and pay.

Once Tiv people got to know that Chafa Don had permitted them enough time to look for money, that would be the end of it. Coupled with the fact that the price of beniseed had diminished so much, even the little money that they could realize from its sale would be used by some people to pay dowries for new wives. Other people would use the money to buy chickens to use for *akombo* purposes. Yet another would use his money on drinking alcohol. And when the tax collection assistants made any demand the people would reply rudely that Chafa Don had permitted them to take their time. They would even threaten to report the tax collector to Chafa Don, who might even relieve the tax collector of his job.

This threat would make the tax collection assistant soft pedal and instead persuade them gradually, get the money from the people and remit to the tax collector in the domain, who would, in turn, use this money to marry a wife for himself or for his son. This being so, by the time the white colonial administrator would send his messenger to gather tax funds from the tax collector in each domain, the tax collectors would lie that the tax assistants of their domain had not yet remitted their taxes. When the messenger contacted the assistants, they would reveal to



him that all taxes had been collected and remitted to the tax collector. But the tax collector could wilfully deny taking delivery of any tax funds. This could create confusion as to the whereabouts of the funds.

Nevertheless, after careful investigations all fingers would point to the tax collector. He would confess taking delivery of the funds, but would add that they had been stolen. So he would advise that his subjects should pay tax for a second time, which the subjects would resist. This would create an impasse.

Other tax collectors could summon the courage to declare prompt and clear that they had used the tax funds to pay dowry. Sometimes, the tax funds would go missing in the hands of the tax assistants. The white colonial administrator could keep such a tax assistant in prison, until he sent to his children to sell their oxen and repay the missing tax money so that he would be released from prison.

The issue of tax became so complicated in Tiv land. What actually brought the complication was that sometimes when the tax assistants were out on a tax drive on one side, the tax collector would, in turn, send out his children to go on the same drive on the other side. Thus, the whole process would be thrown into confusion.

Taxation matters subsided in Tivland a lot in the era that Chafa Don was the District Officer in Tivland. What actually made Tiv people over-indulge themselves about tax was the fact that the Native Authority police were prohibited from using whips on the people. Elders in Tivland declared Chafa Don to be the most humane Whiteman because he took elders into consideration, and also never allowed the Native Authority police to inflict physical pain on people. Again, he allowed them enough time to gradually pay up their taxes. But this created a lot of levity about tax payment. This is because the Tiv people, in their nature, do not obey orders, unless brute force or coercion is applied to make them comply. Since coercion had been disbanded, hardly could anything like tax be successfully implemented.

Nowadays, Tiv people are no longer scared of prison. They normally say that, after all, they are well fed in the prison by the white men so where is the pain of prison? One man in Mbatyav District once told me that he would not pay tax on time, or even pay at all if care were not taken. When I asked him why, he replied it was because of food and clothing. He explained that on one occasion he was not able to pay tax on time, so Akombo, the tax collector, sent him to prison in Gboko, and immediately he got in he was given the inmates' uniform, which excited him, since for long he had not had any garment of his own. Even food was regularly supplied. So for him, being sent to prison was a favour.

When Chafa Don proceeded on annual leave and another Whiteman, nicknamed Akombo, was sent to take over in Gboko, the latter never tolerated Tiv people's reluctance to pay taxes. He would go, personally, to a district, gather all the elders in the area and bring them to Gboko to weed the barracks' grounds under the hot sun and on an empty stomach. Then the tax collection assistants would go round to collect taxes. At this time a man could sell off very important things just to realize a meagre amount of money to pay his tax. In some places, a cow which used to cost three pounds would go for ten shillings or one pound. In fact a chicken had never gone down as low as one penny in Tivland, yet in that period it could go for one penny or one and a half pence. A goat or a ram could be sold at one shilling. No longer were people treated with kid gloves.

Even after the elders had weeded the barracks, if the tax assistants in their domain were yet to complete the tax collection, Akombo would put the elders in prison in Gboko and make them weed around the grounds. As for those who had not paid their tax at all, he would pack them to prison in Gboko where they would spend seven days, so that they would undergo a nasty prison experience before they would go back and hasten to pay their tax. Even a first class chief, in whose domain tax collection was not completed, would have his monthly allowance withheld until the tax was fully collected. As a result, a chief would go around with the tax collectors in their domain on a tax drive. The one who was able to complete the collection would have his monthly allowance paid. Thus, tax payment was taken seriously.

The result was that elders called for a quick return of Chafa Don so that they could conduct issues as they wished, for Akombo was too severe on them. Up till June 1935, most areas in Tivland have not completed the tax for the year 1934. There were arrears of tax for the previous year and the current year. For this reason, the white colonial administration decided to saddle young men with the responsibility of tax collection instead of the elderly men. This has become the situation of tax collection in the year 1935.

## Chapter Seven

# MARRIAGE

## MARRIAGE BY EXCHANGE

In the past, Tiv people did not have the variety of options about marriage that they do today. All they did was marriage by exchange. The reason was that they never wanted the name of their female children to be consigned to oblivion in the family circle, except when they were dead. So if a man had, for example, two sons and two daughters and wished to have all of them with him, he would divide the daughters among the sons, who would exchange the daughters for wives. The wives would procreate to replace the sisters who had been given out for marriage. This would enhance the expansion of the family size.

If a man had five sons and only two daughters, the boys could possess their sisters in order of seniority. The first two sons would possess their sisters and exchange them for wives, while the next junior sibling would have to wait until the daughters of their brothers grew up before he too could get *ingôr*<sup>47</sup> [a female family relative or a woman who could be used in an exchange marriage] to give out in exchange for a wife. As such, the very last son would have to wait endlessly, far too long. Sometimes he became mature, but because there was no *ingôr*, he would remain single. It was for this reason that, in the past, some people never got married early. Nevertheless, by the time the daughters of the brothers matured, he would have numerous *ingôr* from his elder brothers. For this reason, the Tiv have an adage: ‘The junior normally ends up with more female relations than anybody else.’

The last son, after having daughters, would give back one of his daughters to his older brother, the brother from whom he had got a female relation to exchange for a wife. The brother would use the girl he had been given as compensation for him to exchange for another wife. So in a family, the sons continued sharing female relations among themselves and used them for marriage in order to produce more children.

The Tiv call the practice of sharing female relations to exchange for marriage the *iyé ingôr*. By implication, the brothers who became entangled in the *iyé ingôr* also got entangled in a unique family *akombo* practice. As they increased in population, they could form different smaller compounds, but would always be called by the one family name. When they increased further, they formed a kindred group named after their forefather – Mbaivav.

Let us use one person to illustrate this practice. Take the case of Jato Aka, for example. Jato Aka has two sons, named Chia and Adam, and two daughters. So he shares the daughters among the sons. The daughters would be the *angôr* to the sons. Suffice it to add that Chia and Adam are from different mothers. Both of

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<sup>47</sup>Note the spelling of this word, which in East’s translation is *ingol*. This variation is an example of the *l* and *r* exchangeability in pronunciation. The Tiv manuscript consistently uses *ingôr*, pl. *angôr*.

them now possess a wife and can increase the family size through procreation. Both the sons of Chia and Adam continue to lay claim on *ingôr* in accordance with the order Jato Aka had set out. As long as Jato Aka is alive, all the children, no matter the size of their population, would be called the children of Jato Aka, living in one hamlet. Thus, if anybody was to travel to that hamlet to visit any of the children, he would just announce that he is visiting the compound of Jato Aka. Even children who chose to withdraw and set up their homes apart from the family hamlet — their homes would not be called differently but remain a sub-set of the Jato Aka clan. Even if Jato Aka dies, his hamlet remains intact, so that a visitor to the place would always declare that he is visiting the compound of the now defunct Jato Aka. Any time Chia or Adam move away with their children, they are referred to as a Jato Aka family, wherever they may settle. At some point, after a series of multiplications, the children of Chia would go their separate ways to set up their own settlements, and the children of Adam would do the same. But they would still be referred to as being of the Jato Aka dynasty. The children of Chia would refer to the children of Adam as their paternal cousins [‘father’s children’, *anterev*] within the larger Jato Aka family. But they would refer to Chia’s children as maternal kinsmen [‘mother’s children’, *anmgbianev*], which implied they had come out from the same mother’s womb. That is to say, they are the ‘descendants’ of the female child that Jato-Aka, the grandfather, had given to their immediate father, Chia, to exchange for a wife. This is the essence of *ityô*.<sup>48</sup>

If any member of Chia’s family is visiting another domain and is asked to identify himself, he would say that he is from the Chia lineage of the Jato Aka dynasty. So too would the children of the Adam lineage. Up to a point, after the two lineages have multiplied several-fold, the children of the lineages would no longer celebrate a common *akombo* practice together. Each lineage would hold its own separately. By this time Chia and Adam might have passed away. Yet their families would all be called by the Jato Aka name.

This was how Tiv families expanded at the time when marriage was only contracted through exchange, when it was also not so easy to get a female relation to exchange for a wife. Some people never got married as a result. This being so, children had to wait for their father to dictate the pace of things. The father would, first, allow the senior children to marry earlier than the junior. In addition, this practice caused every Tiv clan to develop on two lineages first. This explains the paternal cousins’ relationship, just as we have seen in the case of Chia and Adam. This was the predominant feature of Tiv families: one lineage versus another; then again, they would see themselves as kinsmen. At that time, when they referred to themselves as kinsmen, it meant they had multiplied several-fold.

Up until now, if one wanted to know the subdivisions among Tiv people, for example among the Tiv of the Ipav district, one would only have to ask for the number of kindred groups in the district. The answer would be that there are two: the Kpegh and Igôr kindred groups. The Kpegh children in their large

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<sup>48</sup>The ‘stem’ or *ityô* was recruited through men (as fathers) as well as through the sisters and other wards who were exchanged so that these men could marry wives. The wives were seen as replacements made possible by the men’s ‘sisters’, whose names therefore were not lost. In this sense, the sisters were mothers to their brothers’ children. This is why Akiga remarks that the Tiv grew through exchange marriage.

number would be called Mbakpegh while Igôr in their large number would be referred to as Igôrov. It is unusual for there to be as many as three or four kindred, just as we have seen in the case of the descendants of Chia and Adam.

In the traditional Tiv practice of marriage by exchange, any time a man admired a young girl, he would have to contact the father or any immediate male relation of the girl for permission to take the girl as a wife. Then, the father or the immediate male relation of the admired woman would direct the admirer to the paternal uncles of the woman to seek their opinion before he, the father or the immediate male relation of the admired woman, would know what to do. The admirer would, thus, go and contact the paternal uncles and cousins of the beloved woman. If they give their consent, the admirer would come back and inform the father or the immediate male relation of the girl. If the latter is willing to negotiate marriage by exchange, he would tell the admirer to go away and come back again. This would be a pretext to test the admirer's seriousness about the affair.

The admirer would return to his home and inform his brothers or uncles that he is interested in a woman somewhere in a particular district, for whom he is ready to negotiate and contract the marriage by exchange. The brothers or uncles would give him the go-ahead if he readily has a female relation to give out in exchange for the woman he is interested in. The admirer would put everything in place, then go and invite the male relation of the beloved so that he could take a look at the female relation he, the admirer, is offering in marriage by exchange.

After a few days, the male relation of the woman admired would, in company of a good friend, visit the home of the admirer to take a look at the woman he has for the exchange. As they arrive, the admirer would invite the female relation he intends to give out in exchange to bring drinking water for the visitors. As she brings the water, the visitors would seize the opportunity to scrutinize her. When she withdraws, the admirer would now inform his visitors that, yes, that's the woman he intends to exchange in the marriage. The visiting relation of the admired woman would reply that, outwardly, the girl looks suitable unless her behaviour would dictate to the contrary. He would add that nevertheless one doesn't reveal his thinking so quickly about cardinal issues. So, let them get down to the process first.

Suffice it to add that in the past, Tiv people had no choice about marriage. If a woman was unattractive, but was able to bear a child and was well-behaved, that was all that mattered. They would have her to bear children who could carry on their name. As a result, it was mostly unattractive women, or even some with disabilities, that people settled down with. It is only recently that people have become so refined that they are on the lookout for attractive women. These days, when a woman is not able to bear a child but is good looking, a man will go for her and people will hail him for marrying a 'Princess Charming'. Procreation is not the primary selection priority like it was in the past. 'Good looking' is what people care for nowadays.

After some days, the person who was the first to start admiring another's female relation would get a chicken and visit the town where he saw his beloved. There, he would stay with one of his matrilineal kinsmen in the town and would reveal to this kinsman his mission there. The kinsman would become his guarantor in the exchange affair. By evening the two of them would visit the home of the intended

woman. The male relation of this woman would, in turn, inform his paternal brothers or uncles and even cousins that a suitor had come to spend the night.

In the era of marriage by exchange a man could visit a young woman he would want to marry, spend a night under the same roof with her, and woo her overnight. The following morning, the woman would fix bath water for the man. During that era a suitor could spend a night under the same roof with his intended, but they would not sleep in the same bed. Even if the man made some advances to her during the night, she could resist him. Any girl who gave in to a suitor easily before marriage was considered morally bankrupt. Some men would even abandon the relationship with the apprehension that such a woman would likely turn out to be wayward wife. But a woman who resisted a fiancé's advances was considered an upright woman. This is how a man was able to fathom a woman's character.

Upon returning from the visit, the admirer would inform his kinsmen of his intention to contract a marriage. On the appointed day, the admirer, with the female relation to be given out for exchange, as well as the mother-in-law (who was not necessarily the biological mother), an uncle, and a folksinger, would travel together to the home of the fiancée. Other kinsmen who wanted to come along were free to do so. As they arrived in the evening, they would again lodge with the nephew who had accommodated the fiancé during his previous visit in that town. By late evening, the nephew would lead them to the house where the marriage exchange was to be done.

#### *TILE SHISHA AND IVENDE RUAM BETROTHAL TOKENS*

As they arrive, the folksinger keeps singing non-stop. People around hear and know that a folksinger from Mbaivav district has accompanied someone to get a wife in that town. The female relation brought to be exchanged will refuse to sit down until the relation of the fiancée who is to take her as a wife pays a token. The token is what is referred to as *tile shisha* 'standing or waiting up'.

The male relation of the fiancée, who is to take the woman brought as a wife, provides a chicken with which food is prepared. Moreover, the woman brought to be exchanged in the marriage refuses to eat until the man who is to take her as a wife pays a token. This token is referred to as *ivende ruam*, pounded yam food.

After the meal, they go to bed. However, the man who is to take the woman brought as a wife would not sleep with the woman because she is not yet his wife. Thus, the woman would sleep in the same bed as her mother-in-law. The next morning, the uncle of the man who is to take the woman brought as a wife convenes his kinsmen with whom he does things in common. When they congregate, the eldest among them would ask the eldest among the visiting contingent, 'Why are you here?' This one would reply, 'I have seen a sheep here that I like. That is why I have come to possess it.' The former would snap back, 'That is ill-spoken; you are so wilfully mean-spirited. Once you have seen a "sheep" which you like, you feel you can possess it just like that?' The latter would reply, 'I have not come "just like that". I have brought a token gift to present for it.' The former would now turn to the elders among his kinsmen and enquire, 'Can you hear what he had said?' The elders would reply, 'Then, tell them to present the token so that we can see it.'

At this juncture, the fiancé would call for the mother of the young woman brought for the exchange to bring out the young woman. In response the male relations of the fiancée would also call out the other young woman. The two young women to be exchanged would sit beside their mothers. The elder of the visiting side would ask the woman they have brought for the exchange to get up. Then, he would turn to the eldest of the host group and say, 'This is the token I have brought to exchange for the sheep.' The eldest of the host family would reply, 'She is all right, but ask her whether she will accept me.'

The mother-in-law of the visiting group would put the question to the woman brought out. Out of shyness, the woman would keep mute. But the so-called mother-in-law would declare that her daughter has no objection. Then, the eldest from the visiting group declares to the elder of the host family, 'Our daughter has accepted you. Then, you too should ask your daughter to tell you if she will or will not accept us. We would not want her to be troubled.' So the eldest of the host family would ask the mother-in-law on their side to find out from their daughter. They, too, even if their daughter remained silent, through the mother-in-law on their side would declare, 'Our daughter has no objection.' If a female relation did object, her relatives would admonish her instantly. Sometimes they would even beat her.

After it is presumed that the female relations for exchange on both sides have given their consent, the eldest of the host family stands up, calls the eldest of the visiting family, and says, 'Ask your daughter to tell you whether she has ever been involved in an illicit relationship with a young man somewhere. If not, let her again confirm this.' This is because if she does not confess to being involved in an illicit relationship and later on the situation revealed itself, the young man involved would have to redeem himself with a female cow.

Thus, the enquiry is finished. Sometimes young girls deny ever having had pre-marital affairs. But sometimes a woman is bold and confesses getting involved in a pre-marital sexual experience. If the confession is done before the contract of the marriage, it does no harm. But if a girl wilfully denies it on the day of the marriage contract and later on it is discovered, then the young man guilty of that act would have to redeem himself by giving a cow. If he does not, this can cause trouble — so much so that the marriage might even be dissolved.

After this enquiry is done by the eldest of the two families, the two young women for marriage are asked to rise and embrace their spouses. The eldest from both sides would rise and watch as the young women exchanged in marriage accepted their husbands.

### THE MARRIAGE OATH

Once the women embrace their spouses, the elder administers the oath of marriage. For the oath, the eldest man of the host family declares to the visiting family, 'Even though the exchange marriage has been done, you are free to play with the waist of the girl as much as you want, but make sure you spare her head. If you need a human head for any ritual, come and take the one of your daughter but spare the head of my daughter for me.' Then the elder of the visiting family declares the same.

## FEEDING GUESTS

Thereafter, the spouse from the host family kills a chicken referred to as *mtanisha*, meaning, ‘visible to the eyes’; and food is prepared for feeding the guests.

## NUPTIAL GIFTS

After the feast, the spouse of the host family gives items of nuptial charity to members of the visiting family. These might include salt or a measure of tobacco. But both the *tile shisha* and the *ivende ruam* tokens are preserved for the biological mother of the girl taken as a wife from the visiting family. People would now disperse immediately. The man who has taken a new wife from the host family reserves the right to spend the night there and to leave the next day with his new wife. Or he could leave the wife with his brother-in-law and tell him to deliver the wife to him some days later.

## MODERN MARRIAGE

This is how our forefathers used to contract marriage. But when people became rich in Tivland, people started gloating about wealth and used their riches to pay a dowry. If a man saw a young girl who pleased him for marriage, he would ask if he could marry such a girl through the exchange marriage. But a wealthy person would interfere, seeking to be allowed to pay money and marry the girl. Even with little introduction, the wealthy person would go and dole out money to the brothers or cousins of the girl and poison their minds. Now all attention gets focused on the wealthy person. They also encourage the brother of the girl to give out the girl to the wealthy person. The suitor who could not dole out money was usually left in the cold.

When it came to the actual marriage ceremony, where ordinarily a chicken would be killed for celebration, a wealthy man would kill a pig. And where a suitor would have just one folksinger in his company, the wealthy man would bring along a crowd of his peers with him. When they got there, they would quickly find friends among the young men in the host community and go about in pairs. They would spend a sleepless night of merry-making. By noon the next day, it would be time for the marriage ceremony. Everybody would now settle down to listen to the elders negotiate the marriage, which was far beyond the offering of *ukpakem*, salt measure tokens only, and included several items like chickens and money as well as *sokpo*, an iron bar. Even the practice in which the family of the suitor would bring the woman to be exchanged to the home of the young woman he admired — even this custom was no longer observed.

Instead, the brother of the fiancé would mobilize his peers and also visit the one courting his sister or cousin. In this case, he would do his best so that he would out-do what the rich one did during his visit. This is how marriage became an issue, an ego contest.

## AKOMBO FOR EXCHANGE MARRIAGE

The *akombo*'s emblem is usually raised up at the left-hand side of a door, as one enters the house. In Tivland, the *akombo* for exchange marriage are never set up



on the right-hand side of a door. Any *akombo* on the right-hand side of a door of a wife is likely to be a *akombo* for game hunting acquired from the Uke ethnic group.

The *akombo* for exchange marriage is at the left-hand side of a door because this is the side where the door mat or cover is usually fitted. It is also on this same side that a man normally lies in a bed. Chapter Two treated the matter of sleeping positions and has provided an explanation about this. So, the *akombo* is placed here for the sleeping comfort of the wife, who has taken the place of the defunct mother of her spouse in the matrimonial home. Thus, to a great extent, it also depicts a man's respect for his mother. As such, all of this serves to keep alive the memories about the name of his dead mother. This also serves to prevent the man from having unnecessary nightmares about his dead mother.

### THE CHILDREN FROM A WIFE OF A MARRIAGE BY EXCHANGE

The children from a wife acquired through marriage by exchange were usually the heirs apparent in a family. They had unlimited rights within their immediate and extended family circle, which nobody could challenge. Major *akombo* like *poor* and *ibiamagh* were usually bequeathed to these categories of children. In fact, even *ingôr*, which is a female relation possessed as personal property, was the sole inheritance of these children. It was during this period that the Tiv started having traditional chiefs; it was only children from marriage by exchange that were heirs apparent to the chieftain stools of authority. Even when the Tiv reformed their marriage culture, the children of wives acquired through marriage by exchange still enjoyed a lot of privileges in society. But with the passing of time, these children were surprisingly stripped of all their privileges in Tiv society.

### ADOPTING THE DAUGHTER OF A FEMALE RELATION

In the past, if two people exchanged their female relations in the process of marriage by exchange, *yam ishe*, and it happened that one of the women exchanged was lucky to produce more children than the other, the man whose female relation had produced more children had the right to adopt one of the daughters of his female relation as his own daughter. Here is an illustration.

#### MALE RELATIONS

Igba  
Atôm

#### FEMALE RELATIONS

Ayamar  
Iwuhe

Imagine that Igba exchanged his female relation Ayamar with Atôm and collected Iwuhe — Atôm's female relation — as a wife. Ayamar has five daughters and two sons with Atôm, while Iwuhe, Atôm's female relation, bears three sons and a daughter. Then, Igba could go to Atôm and demand, 'Look my female relation has produced more children with you than I have with your female relation. Therefore you have to give me one of your daughters so that I can go and exchange

her for another wife who will produce more children for me so that there will be parity between the two of us in the number of children.' To this Atôm would reply, 'In-law, you have spoken well, but go back home. Let me consult with my kinsmen before I decide what to do.'

As Igba returns to his house, Atôm, later in the evening, would go and confer with his kinsman Agbaibu about his in-law's demand. After listening to Atôm, Agbaibu would now inquire, 'So what is the position now about the demand?' Atôm would reply, 'You know as long as you are alive I can't make a decision on matters like this without first conferring with you.' In effect, Agbaibu would say, 'Then give him one of your daughters, because by our values, we do things in this manner so as to maintain harmony in our social structures.'

Thus, Atôm would comply. Upon conferring with Agbaibu, he would invite Igba, the in-laws, to his house to take one of his daughters as demanded. As Igba comes, Atôm would call one of his daughters and present her to Igba, saying, 'Igba, this is the daughter I am going to hand over to you because your female relation has done so well in my house. I would not want to have an edge over you in our relationship.' Then Igba would reply with joy, 'Yes, this is what it means to have dealings with a fair-minded person. Now, call your daughter and also bring water so that we can enter into a covenant.' This would be done and Igba would also spend the night there.

The following day, Atôm and his wife would see their daughter off with Igba. But before Atôm would allow them to go off, he would say to his in-law, 'Look Igba, I have given you my daughter to adopt as yours, but don't keep her away from me. In case of any unforeseen problems, don't make unilateral decisions. Let me be informed. I could help you to resolve such a problem.' Igba would cut in, 'Atôm, I have no objection to your viewpoint.' With this, Atôm and his wife would withdraw and allow their daughter to go with Igba. She would, thus, become Igba's adopted daughter.

When Igba returns home with his newly adopted daughter, he would have a rest that evening. The following morning, he would present this daughter to his elder brother, named Akoso. Akoso would say 'Igba, Atôm has acted well. So, let nothing go wrong with this girl, so that you can exchange her out for a wife who would, in turn, bear many children that will carry your name.' With this, Igba would keep the girl until she was mature enough to be given out in exchange for a wife. This is how the Tiv used to adopt a young daughter of a female relation they have given out in exchange marriage. And this pattern continued until the Tiv people passed on to the 'wife by purchase' system.

### MARRIAGE BY *KEM*

The word *kem* means getting something done piecemeal. The word is used in various perspectives in the Tiv language. For example, if one would wanted to buy a cow or a horse, he would start saving money a little at a time, so that if anyone else would demand money from him he would reply, 'It is not possible because I'm in process of saving enough money to pay for a cow.' Thus, even during the era of marriage by exchange, if a man started admiring a girl, he was required to lavish gifts on the mother of the girl, gifts like a hoe, a cooking utensil and clothes, as well as dole out money piecemeal to the uncles or

cousins of his fiancée. Because these tokens were delivered piecemeal to the mother of the girl, the Tiv referred to the mother of the girl as *ngô kem* and father as *ter kem*. And in the event the marriage was aborted, the fiancé would reclaim the *kem* tokens that had been given to the in-laws piecemeal during the wooing of the girl. Again, if it happened that the *kem* was not completely refunded, the fiancé could, out of annoyance, seize a relation of the fiancée and sell her into slavery. This could happen for the simple reason that the relations of his erstwhile fiancée had taken *kem* tokens from him but denied him marriage with their daughter.

At first, marriage by exchange was the major marriage arrangement in Tivland. But as time went on, they copied marriage by *kem* from the Ugenyi ethnic group and made it part of their culture. Thus, if a man had a daughter, whether mature enough or not, maybe about ten years old, an admirer would come to engage her in the *kem* process. First, the admirer would offer her a necklace, which she would tie around her neck. This would make potential admirers steer clear of the girl, because she is being courted for marriage by someone else.

The admirer would then commence the *kem* process in earnest. He would make various offers to the mother of the chosen one. This was when wealthy people still had not emerged in Tiv society. So, this was as much as one could do in the *kem* process. In fact, by the time the admirer was able to offer a special mushroom, *ijôvtor*, to the mother of the fiancée, the process was almost completed and he would be permitted to lay claim to the girl as his wife.

However, as wealthy men started emerging in Tiv society, people started bringing many other elements into the *kem* process and called these by various names. Some people would refer to it as ‘cohabiting’ with a fiancée; some called it ‘courting’; yet others called the girl *wanya*. The term ‘cohabiting’ in that era designated a situation in which a man would live under the same roof as his intended one and called her his friend. The term *wanya*, ‘child of the house’, was used to describe a man’s fiancée when she was of his same kindred group. The term courting was used to describe an amorous relation between a man and a young girl within the same neighbourhood. These were the various terms associated with the *kem* marriage process.

When society had more wealthy men, a man, after doing the *kem* by gradually offering token payments to the father of the young girl, would still be charged an amount of money to complete the *kem* process. By this time, the girl would be fully matured. A father could charge as much as eighty pounds or a brother of the intended could even demand a cow. The whole charge depended on the personality of the girl. If she was a highly desired girl, much was surely demanded. But if she was just an average girl, less money was demanded.

After the suitor had completed *kem*, he was again required to provide a bed and a goat. The goat was killed and the meat shared among the kinsmen of the potential father-in-law. And a few days later, the mother of the fiancée would invite women within the kindred group to accompany her in taking her daughter to her matrimonial home. So, by night, just after dinner, they would take the girl to join the fiancé in his home. He in turn would offer a chicken to each of the women. Then they returned, leaving the girl and the man to live as couple. Marriage by *kem* is very typical among the Tiv of the Shitire and Ukum clans.

However, *kem* in the Kparev and Masev clans is a bit different. In the Kparev clan, *bashi*, a type of money, is mostly used. Thus, when a man loves a young girl, he continues to be generous towards the parents of the girl. He lavishes them with

a variety of gifts. As he keeps being generous towards the parents of the girl, he automatically has the authority to start cohabiting with her. If, when he cohabits with the girl, he notices another man coming around to compete with him, he would have to do his best to have an edge over such a man. To do this, he would offer the father of the fiancée about forty or sixty *bashi* so as to consolidate his authority over the girl. Then if another man intrudes, the parents of the girl would chase him away.

Next, the suitor would provide a bed for the family and go about gloating that he has consolidated his grip on the girl. Sometimes people would cohabit with a girl in her paternal home and sometimes this led to an unwanted pregnancy, and the girl would even bear the child in her paternal home. Another man would do it differently; he would elope with the girl even before the pregnancy. The mother-in-law would have to pursue them to the man's house. But as she got there, the man would lavish her with monetary gifts that would keep the mother-in-law from insisting on taking the girl back. A few weeks later, the father-in-law would now come to the man to demand the bride price. He could demand a high bride price, one hundred *bashi* or above, from the man. The suitor would definitely pay that amount, but not necessarily all at once. Another man, for example, might not be able to pay such a price. So the woman's relations would have to take her away and exchange her as a wife for another person. In the Kparev clan this young woman would be regarded as an *anmgbiankwase*, a female relative, to the man that had married her for a short period.

#### COHABITING WITH A GIRL AMONG THE TIV OF MASEV CLAN

For the Tiv of the Masev clan, cohabiting with a girl meant so much. At first they courted girls like it was done amongst the other Tiv clans. But with time they conducted it differently. For them, a mature girl who had never cohabited with a man was considered not enough woman to be admired by a man. But the other Tiv clans don't take this point of view necessarily. Actually elders of the ancient period never tolerated their children (young men) cohabiting with young girls. Those who did it, did so out of obstinacy.

However, in the Masev clan there was a preponderance of this practice, so that young partners within the same kindred group would cohabit, then separate later on for the girl to marry someone elsewhere. And if she is not yet pregnant with the current husband, it may not be over yet. Even when she finally gets pregnant and comes back to her paternal home for the *lee* ante-natal cleansing rite, it would be an opportunity for an ego contest between her erstwhile suitor and the actual husband who got her pregnant.

When the actual husband brought the wife to her paternal home for the ante-natal cleansing rite, the brother of the wife would organize a feast. On the day of the feast, the elders of the community would assemble to enjoy their drinks while youngsters got themselves ready to grace the occasion later in the evening. On that day, the suitor who cohabited with the girl while she was still with her parents would bring various gift items, packaged in a well decorated basket, and present it to the woman in the morning. He refers to her as his erstwhile lover. By noon, guests come around for the feast. Then, the kinsmen of the current husband and those of the erstwhile suitor get into a dancing

competition. The current husband and the suitor get into a dressing contest, with each of them getting dressed in *iwuan ikondo*. The *iwuan ikondo* is a sort of a shiny dark cloth. The person with the shiniest dark cloth is judged to be the most well-dressed person. In the dancing competition too, there is usually an outstanding troupe who would be judged the winner. By evening the guests would all settle down. The young woman and her lover would come and stand in the middle of the compound, embracing each other, while the actual husband would be relegated to the background. Then, an elderly head of household would perform the cleansing ritual, which was done with a variety of *akombo*. This cleansing ritual is done to cleanse the girl of the curses she might have incurred as a result of transgressing certain taboos consciously or unconsciously. As such, it is assumed that she has been cleansed so that she can be put to bed successfully.

After the cleansing ritual, a male goat would be taken and slain in the background. Once this is done, the suitor is free to live with his wife. This is the essence of a marriage of cohabitation among the Tiv of the Masev clan. This practice is still observed among the Tiv people. But this type of marriage is never taken seriously. Since it is a temporary arrangement, even when a man is in it, he is considered not yet married. He is said to be just cohabiting with his girlfriend.

#### THE OFFSPRING FROM MARRIAGE OF COHABITATION

It has always been that when a man has children by a woman through the marriage of cohabitation, he cannot be called the father of these children. These children bear the name of the father of the woman. However, if there are many children, the father of the woman may decide to give one of the children to the man who is the cause of their birth. This is done by an arrangement referred to as *anange a ityôr* (which means if a man shepherds another person's sheep very well and is able to produce rams, the shepherd is to be given one of the rams in appreciation for a job well done. The term *anange* refers to the gate of an animal pen, used to secure the animals in safety. This is why people call it so.)

In some cases, if the children are male and one day feel uncomfortable being named after the father of their mother, they might move and join the man who is their blood father and bear his name. But naturally, such children are not entitled to any female relation in that family to use in an exchange marriage. They can only get a female relation for an exchange marriage from their maternal home.

In still other cases, if these children are stubborn enough, they can be aggressive toward their brothers in their new paternal home and ascend to equal right of inheritance with them. They can even become chiefs, if they are assertive enough. For example, Chief Hôm, who reigned as a chief over the Mbagen district up until 1935, was a son of his father through a marriage by cohabitation. But in general, this category of children is regarded as *wankwase*, the girls. That is the information about marriage by *kem*.

#### MARRIAGE BY CAPTURE

Marriage by capture started as a hostile act of retaliation against a section of the Udam ethnic group known as the Mbaiyongo. These people used to forcibly take

Tiv women as their wives during the period the Tiv were wandering and migrating among other bush ethnic groups in the area. The Tiv then copied this practice themselves when they finally settled down. The Mbaiongo used to capture Tiv women to such an extent that if the Tiv were not quick to counter them, they would have snatched all the Tiv women before the Tiv arrived at Ibenda.

When the Tiv were migrating south, they encountered the Mbaiongo who really posed a great nuisance to them regarding their women. As the Tiv moved about, the people of Mbaiongo would lay an ambush ahead, attack the Tiv, and capture their wives. However, they avoided women with disabilities. It was their general practice to avoid women with disabilities. They even avoided women with sores or other bodily injuries. Once the Tiv realized this, they invented a ruse to shield their women against the Udam.

Tiv men would grind the blood-red bark of the *ikpine* tree and smear this on the legs of their wives and daughters and bandage them up. The blood-red juice of the *ikpine* would be dripping on their legs as if it were fluid from a wound. On seeing this, the Mbaiongo would assume that the women were afflicted with chronic sores. Thus they developed an aversion to Tiv women. By this guile, the Tiv were able to move about in peace among the Udam with their wives and daughters.

Afterwards, a few vindictive Tiv people remembered this, and later they practised wife capture and caused feuds and problems within Tiv society. The practice was propagated and became a common behaviour in Tiv society. If a man and his wife were travelling through another clan, ruffians from the clan through which the man was travelling with his wife would attack the traveller, seize the wife, take the man hostage and sell him into slavery, and buy a cow and slaughter it to appease the man's wife.

To illustrate this, imagine that Gande, a man from the Ukan district, is travelling with his wife to Yandev, his maternal home, and has to pass through the Ipav district. He runs into a man in the Ipav district by the name of Ugbadi at the outskirts of their settlement. Ugbadi has no money nor does he have a female relation to exchange for a wife. This was during the time when an entire district would form just one settlement. Here is what could ensue:

**Ugbadi:** Hey you, where are you from?

**Gande:** I am from the Ukan district

**Ugbadi:** And where are you going?

**Gande:** I am going to my maternal home in Yandev, to visit my uncle by the name of Abogor.

**Ugbadi:** And who is this beautiful woman in your company?

**Gande:** She is none other than my wife.

**Ugbadi:** How come you ugly men marry women that are far more attractive than yourselves?

**Gande:** Ah, a man can't be unworthy of his own property.

**Ugbadi:** Are you out of your senses. How dare you tell me a man cannot be unworthy of his belongings!

**Gande:** Why are you addressing me in such a hostile manner?

**Ugbadi:** Even if I am hostile, what can you do to me?

**Gande:** Ah, ah, what have I said here that warrants your confrontation?

**Ugbadi:** Oh, would you continue to pick a quarrel with me? If you don't take care, I might seize your wife.

**Gande:** What! No I would rather die than that.

Ugbadi has three others in his company namely, Iho, Ada and Iyongo plus himself to make up a contingent of four people; Gande is just with *Wanaga* [daughter of Aga] his wife.

**Ugbadi** [to his boys]: Move, seize this woman and let me take her away.

Thus, the boys would seize the women while the husband would take to his heels as he yells out for help. Ugbadi would return home with the woman and make her his wife. His kinsmen would praise him for seizing a wife from a man of the Ukan district.

In the past, the man whose wife had been seized would run back home and report to an elder in his district who was well known for his tact in handling such negotiations, one with a good reputation in the community. This elder would call one among them whose mother was from the Mbaivav district where the wife has been seized and send him, with *ayande* leaves [as a peace token] in hand, and tell him, 'Go to your maternal home and tell the elder there that it is not good that we are quarrelling with them. Why is there this huge offence? Let him release my wife to come back to me.' When the messenger delivers a peace token as well as the accompanying message, absolute silence would prevail. The elder who had taken delivery of the *ayande* would summon the ruffian who had seized the wife and say to him, 'The elder from the district of the man whose wife you have seized has sent *ayande* to me so that the wife will be returned. Therefore, bring the woman so that I can send her back with this man, our maternal nephew. We and the men of that district should not be in a dispute.'

The ruffian dared not resist the order, because in the past nobody failed to obey the orders of an elder. Thus, the woman would be surrendered to the elder, who in turn would hand her over to their maternal nephew. The wife would be returned and the matter would be put to rest.

But as time went on, things changed. To this effect, even when someone's wife was seized and a maternal nephew was sent to retrieve her, the person who had seized the wife would not return her to the husband. Rather, the kinsmen of the man who had seized someone's wife would call to him and organize a feast for the woman. This heralded a sign of defiance, deriding the husband of the seized woman. A confrontation could happen, much like when in a gathering one person makes a derogatory comment to deride another fellow in the group. If the fellow derided does not react, then the general assembly would yell out loudly at the person who was derided. This is how people treated anybody who had been dispossessed of his wife. He became an object of ridicule.

So if Ugbadi had dispossessed Gande of his wife, he would take the girl to his house and by evening, the youth would prepare a gong and other musical instruments. At night, just after dinner, it would be time to celebrate the captured wife. Men and women would assemble in the centre of the compound. Then, two young men would climb on a fence pole or on a baobab tree and sing.

When they finished singing they would yell out the name of the man whose wife has been seized. For example, they would yell, 'Gande oooo! Your *kwase* [woman] or *Wanaga* [daughter of Aga] has told me forcefully that she has prepared food, has eaten her portion, and put yours in a corner of the kitchen. So you can take it, eat it, and then wash the container and drink the debris. But as for her, she has gone off with the love of her life!' Then, the crowd would applaud. The music would get loud, with a lot of ecstasy. This would be repeated six times and followed by the actual celebration of the seized wife.

This could lead to a volatile situation in which war could break out. Sometimes, while the two young men were up the tree deriding the husband who has been dispossessed of his wife, the husband would out of fury come quietly with his bow and arrows. And while the multitude was applauding in ecstasy, the furious husband would shoot down the young man yelling from the tree. This would plunge those gathered into a stampede. The husband would run back and inform his kinsmen that he has murdered someone.

That very night, the kinsmen of the frustrated husband as well as those of the person murdered would get ready for war. On the next day, early in the morning, a battle cry would be raised. Each side would come and they would lock horns at the border. They would fight and bodies would be strewn on the ground. The men administering the antidote against the poison of the arrows used in the war on both sides would administer to the wounds and provide antidotes for the casualties. As soon a man was impaled, he would be evacuated out of the battle field for treatment. Some casualties would survive the arrow wounds, while others would die. Those who died were said to have fallen by the poison of the arrows in battle.

#### HONOURABLE MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS: WOOING

What facilitated free movements and interactions between various Tiv subgroups was the act of *iye*, which means enticing women away from neighbouring clans. This was basically done only among the Tiv people. Some Tiv in the past were generally unfriendly to their neighbours in that they created problems by forcibly dispossessing their fellow men of their wives. The elders tried to halt this but to no avail. In addition, they noticed that this was the easiest way for some young men to obtain a wife. So they just left the capture matter alone and it went on. This is because in the era of marriage by exchange, just before the era of forceful capture, a man could be forty years of age and still have no female relations to exchange for a wife. So he would remain single. Thus, by the time the practice of forceful capture was exacerbated, a young man of just twenty years could dispossess another man of his wife and bear children with her. And the father of such a boy would be filled with pride about his son. Because of this, elders were not zealous in their efforts to curtail this unhealthy practice.

However, elders did meet together and decided to moderate the practice of dispossessing a man of his wife, so that the bad aspect of the practice would be transformed into something more honourable. They opined that bachelors should move together in search of a wife like soldier ants, called *iyiyee*. In the past elders used to say *iye* for what we now call *iyiyee*. This described a culture of people moving together, like soldier ants, in search of a wife and came to be referred to as *iye*.

So the young men organized themselves into groups within various neighbourhoods and moved around into adjoining neighbourhoods in search of women to marry. For example, those in the Shitire clan would move to an adjoining neighbourhood in the Ukum clan. Those in Ukum would move to the Ugondo clan, while those in Ugondo would move to the Ikurav clan, and it continued on like that.

The *iye* process would not just start up. First, the elders of both sides would meet, strike an accord, and establish a covenant before the *iye* would start. In



some serious cases, a human sacrifice might be made to seal the covenant. For example, the Kpav district of the Shitire was to establish an *iye* covenant with the Mbagen district of the Kparev. While they were looking for someone to sacrifice, Avaan – the father of Chief Hôm, who was the reigning chief of Mbagen up to 1935 – offered himself to be slaughtered by Chire to enable his district to seal the covenant with the Shitire. Chire accepted this and slaughtered him. The covenant was concluded and the people of Shitire got a great number of wives out of this *iye* covenant, and in this way the people of Kparev had their own share too.

The Ukum also formed a covenant with the Shitire clan. Here, a dog was sacrificed instead of a person. This was during the reign of Chief Dajo, son of Mshanjo in the Isherev district of the Ukum clan. On the Shitire side, the chiefs involved were Chief Kon in the Mbavughur district and Akaanya in the Mbajir district, all of the Shitire clan. Through this covenant the people of the Ukum were able to take a great number of wives from the Shitire clan.

In some clans, if a covenant was to be established, the elders of the two clans involved would get a man from either side; the men would rise and get together. A large grindstone was set up on the ground. A member of one ethnic group stood up and put his hand on the grindstone. It was cut with a razor and blood flowed down on to the stone. After that a man from the other clan came and put his hand on the grindstone and it too was cut so that blood flowed on to the stone. Locust-bean seasoning like a powder was sprinkled over the blood, along with a little salt and some red palm oil, and this was mixed together. Then the men of each clan got up and took a small amount of this mixture and ate it. When that was done the elders said, 'A bond has been made between us this day. May bloodshed never occur between our two clans, so that the land will be good'. The times would be good because they sealed a pact with their blood, so they feared even shaving each other's heads just in case the razor would accidentally make a wound, even slight, because the man who had been cut must take the razor and make a cut with it on the other man, of course not with ill feelings. Such compacts or treaties were very strictly observed in the past; they were not regarded lightly.

All these things were done before they could go and seek wives under the *iye* agreement so as not to cause friction. In spite of this, since the Tiv have never had a single thing they did not throw away or spoil, disputes arose from time to time. Wars broke out between the very same people who had made such a treaty, each having vowed not to let any act spoil their friendship. Moreover, a number of men were killed before peace was restored and they could once again go about with each other.

## COURTSHIP

After an *iye* norm was made for wife-seeking, a large group of young men would start out from their homes and head out in a long line to go to the clan with whom they had an agreement. They went with proper preparations. Camwood was ground up and smeared on their clothes. Heads were dressed up smartly, some in patterns, some shaved clean with red camwood colouring put on. The dress of young men during the early times consisted of striped loosely woven loincloths

as well as a loose covering. Upon arriving at the other clan, they had a goal; they headed for and stayed with a man whose mother was of their own clan, one of their *igba*. Of course if there were many of them, they did not all stay with the same man, but rather split themselves up among other relatives. If they had friends in that district, they would get secret information from them, like go-betweens, who told them all about the girls in that district who were of marriageable age. 'That one's daughter has reached the age of puberty,' they might say, 'and when you see her you will be sure to like her.' Then they would say the girl's name, and even her father's name. The young man seeking a wife would ask his go-between where the nearest water hole was before he went to sleep.

The next morning, just as the cock crowed, that young man got up and rubbed camwood over himself, powdering his head with it until his head was bright red, and then went and sat by the water hole. When the girls came down to the water hole to draw water, he called to the one whose name he had learned the day before and asked her to give him some water to wash his face. When the girl brought over the water for him to wash, the courtship began. That day was trying for the girl. After she drew water and put the pot on her head, the young man followed her. He might be alone or even have a friend with him. After she put down her pot of water and headed to the farm, the young man again followed her. All the while the youth talked to her non-stop, making comments to create a favourable impression on the girl. He paid her all sorts of compliments, saying 'Daughter of so-and-so, if you will marry me I will think myself the luckiest man on earth. If you do I will forsake all other women.' He spoke highly of himself and told her what a big man his father was and that he had a lot of property. 'If I can get you, as soon as I get back home my father will cut the throat of a cow and that is it, he won't need to kill another. Do you just want to remain at home? Don't you want to be spoken of with high respect?' The man who was helping him told all sorts of lies about the young man that among all the friends there was no one compared to him.

When they arrived at the farm, the girl took leaves and put them on top of a yam heap for the young man to sit on and wait while the friend walked around with her and told her the things a young woman likes to hear. Even though she liked the flattery, she did not say anything at first. She just finished her work and set off for home. She collected firewood to take home and the young men also took sticks of wood and carried these on their shoulders to her village. They stayed with her while she ground the corn, and the suitor sat right on the palm stem on which she knelt while she was grinding. If he had a flute, he would play to the rhythm of her pestle as she pulverized the grain. If he was not a piper and his friend was, then his friend would play until the girl finished and swept up the cornmeal. When she finished she went out to collect corn stalks for burning and they went with her. She came and cooked the meal but she did not eat, being ashamed to do so. Finally when the time for sleep came they went back to their village where they stayed and had some food. Then the girl would get a chance to eat her own meal, because since they had risen they had not had a chance to eat food. The next day the same thing happened. For five days more, they all went hungry during the day and both the girl and the suitors got thin. When they left, the man who was acting as their go-between talked privately to the girl on their behalf.

When they came the next time, they arrived full of resolve. The young men made up songs praising the girl, even singing half the night before her door, even until dawn. At times they accompanied their singing with a calabash rattle or a small conical drum, the *wangbande*. Kparev folk mostly danced to the beating of the *kwem*, or gongs, but later on they used two drums, a male and a female, and dancers moved to the rhythm of it, singing and dancing. Sometimes the young men took many drums and the night was spent in revelry and no one got any sleep. In spite of all of this courting it sometimes happened that the man failed to get the girl; someone else took her instead and then this suitor defiantly shouted out the name of his rival. But if she was going to wed him, she gave him a pledge during the period when he was doing all he could to woo her. Before the Tiv had much property long ago, the pledge took the form of some kind of finger ring. At a later time the girl might give him some strings of beads or even a woman's loincloth, the *wanashisha*. She put these things in a small calabash bowl; the kind used to hold camwood, and gave these to the go-between to give to the suitor. She did this secretly because if not then her relatives would really keep a close watch on her. When the pledge was given, she would name the day on which the suitor could come and take her away, even tell him the place where he was to wait for her to join him.

### COURTSHIP MANNERS

If you were attractive to a girl you were courting, when you entered a house she would set out a seat for you at the edge of the room, then sit down beside you and speak with you. But if she really did not find you attractive, then she would put a seat near the entrance, next to where the water is kept. She would go outside and say that it was hot in the house. If you spoke with her, she would reply in a loud voice and become restless and irritable. If this happened and you were sensitive to the signals, you would quietly leave her alone and begin to pay attention to some other girl. Only a fool would fail to take the hint and go on wasting time, only to have another come and take her.

### CAPTURE

After the young woman had named the day and place to her would-be lover, he went to the 'trysting-place' until she came and joined up with him and then they went off together. Sometimes a girl would come out but then become unsure and filled with doubt. In that case, the man would have to drag her away by force. Usually girls chose the elopement to occur at dusk or in the morning when the sun begins to get hot.

When and if the capture occurred, the man would take the girl to the home of one of his relatives or an age mate. As he approached the village, he would begin to make shrill cries of triumph and announce their coming with song. After singing the song he would cry out again and proclaim the news, saying, '*Zaki-o-o!* News! News spread quickly! Don't rest on the way.' The news spread quickly. The people knew at once that a wife had been captured; they recognized his voice, so they rushed out. Those who were asleep awakened and along with all the women

and children of the village ran out to meet him on the way. They sang and shouted out the news. The women moved the captured bride to the centre of the group and covered her with a cloth and slowly brought her in. She was taken into the house of a kinsman of the bridegroom. All the young men with their cone-shaped drums came in and danced and sang, beating the drums. That night was not a night to be spent in sleep.

### THE DEW CHICKEN

When the bride had been brought into the kinsman's house a 'dew chicken' was given to be killed and pounded yam was prepared. The special chicken, brought early in the day when ankles got wet with the dew, was cooked but it was not eaten by everyone, only the bridegroom and others who had captured wives and the captured wife ate. If you hadn't captured a wife and ate of a 'dew-chicken' anyway, just because you wanted some meat, you would get bad luck. In some groups, such as the Mbamar of Ishangev, the wife for whom the chicken is killed does not eat it, only her husband and the others do. This custom is not the same in all of Tivland.

The next morning, news about this reaches all the hamlets that are in the same drum-circle. That night they assemble together at the village to which the bride has been brought and then celebrate the marriage with songs of bravado or defiance. In the past, when they captured other men's wives by force, they used to shout and sing defiantly at the husband. Later on, when they captured unmarried girls instead, they asked the girls for the names of suitors who had been refused before they eloped with their present lovers. If the girl had been courted before, she would probably tell them about a suitor who she particularly disliked. Then they would call out his name six times with defiant and abusive shouts. If there were any men she had been fond of, she kept quiet and did not give their names. After this they moved into the centre of the village and started marriage drumming earnestly and continued with this all night until dawn. The next day, the captor of the girl prepared a feast and slaughtered beasts to divide among the people who had stayed up all night according to their family groups. After all of this they dispersed and headed back to their own homes.

### GIFTS

While the bridegroom was staying at his kinsman's house, age mates who had also captured a wife came and got a present from him. This could be an arrow or a package of salt (called *berete*), money given was called the *ichegh*.

### THE SURREPTITIOUS PERIOD

The bride did not appear during the day when she was taken into the house. She did come out secretly but then returned. A veil was placed across the side of the house where she slept. No one but the bridegroom and young girls of the house and the wife of the house could go in there. When the woman of the house

prepared food and took it into the bride, the bride pretended not to eat. Her hostess could make pounded yam and even kill a chicken, but the young girl would take just a little bit when she was encouraged to do so. It was the same for the bridegroom. If he really felt hungry, he went out to have a meal somewhere else privately, and then came back. They both grew thin. In some cases the bride remained inside the house like this for as long as two months before she gradually came outside, usually after dark.

### ESCORTING THE BRIDEGROOM TO HIS HOUSE

When all the delays were at an end, after the capture of the wife who was taken to the home of the bridegroom's kinsman, then the kinsman announced that he would brew beer and escort his brother to his home. On the day that the beer was ready to drink, people came to celebrate the escorting of the bridegroom. After the sun had passed over into the western sky, the host told everyone to sit and he brought out sheep and goats to kill for the guests. Sometimes he gave as many as four or five animals in addition to the she-goat whose blood was to be poured over the threshold. Additionally he brought out a cloth and wrapped it around his new bride for all to see. As soon as it was dark he and his brother and the captured wife went to the home of the bridegroom's father. The father killed a chicken for him and then he returned to his own home. When he got there he boasted to others of his age of having escorted his brother, thus establishing himself.

### FATHER OF THE BRIDEGROOM

The next day the father of the bridegroom caught a big pig to make a feast for the bride. After all of this, the bride gradually began to appear outside during the daytime. She would get up early and go to fetch water for her husband to wash his face and then take a calabash bowl and go to the farm.

### BRIDAL ADORNMENT

The bride adornment did not take place until she began to appear in public. In the past, before young people had any property of their own, the bridegroom's father provided the ornaments for his son's wife. He hung fine strings of beads of different sorts on her and put brass rings on her legs. He even put a hair ornament above her ears and a *luwa* or an *agom*, a type of girdle, around her waist and hips. These items may not have all belonged to him; other people may have given some to him.

### DRUMMING (THE MARRIAGE DANCE)

After a period of time the father of the bridegroom announced that he would give a marriage feast for his son. He said that a dance would be held and so he asked a minstrel to compose a song in his honour, and for the honour of his son and his bride, as well as a song of praise for the chief men in his own group. He also

asked for a song for the bride's family. Such songs, if they were well composed and performed, were passed down from one generation to another, to be sung at marriage celebrations for any of the group. At night when the evening meal had been eaten, the people gathered together at the village of the bridegroom's father and learned the songs. The news spread that the man had proclaimed a marriage dance for his son. 'Listen,' everyone said, 'they are practising the song!' This sort of thing became a well-established and important custom. All the young men who had been given a marriage feast of their own were included. The songs rapidly evolved to include the name of this one or that one who had captured a daughter of such-and-such a clan. The tree-drum's voice was heard in all the land.

The song was practised for as many as several months. When the time was ripe, the father of the bridegroom again brewed beer, as did his kinsmen. He went to tell the father or the one who owned the woman who in turn informed his own group. When much beer was ready for drinking, people came according to their clans, and they introduced different kinds of dances. Their bodies were adorned and guns were shot off. The great dance of yesteryear was the *ange*, which was an old tradition. It was by dancing the *ange* that the old men got a name for themselves; young men however performed the *agbaga* dance, leaping about. In the early days these types of dances were the only types that were common.

The chief would come to the dance as well, dressed in a gown that was locally woven with an indigo waist-band. Or he would tie on a blue Hausa cloth around his waist and wear a cap of the same material. If he were very rich he might put on a white Hausa robe made of the material called 'the high heaven', or 'the eggshell' or *mgena*. His most important wives would wear red flannel cloths and strings of beads of the kind that belonged to chiefs called *tukure* and everyone admired these. The chief remained standing up and did not sit down until the host of the dance paid something for a throne for him to sit on, along with his wife.

The drumming for such a dance continued on without a break throughout the night until dawn. Then it was announced that everyone should sit down according to their family groups. When they all were seated silently, the father who gave the dance would dress up the groom and the bride. A bed was brought out and set in the centre of the village. The bride was led out into the open, all bedecked with finery. She had a red flannel cloth around her loins and a leopard skin across her shoulders. A fine girdle of beads was tied around her waist. A tall round hat was put on her head and in her hand she carried a horse-tail fly whisk. The older women moved in front of her, dancing to the beat of the big drum while she remained seated. Her kinswomen who danced in front of her had already been married to men of the district and they stood in front of the bed on which the daughter was to climb and would not give her permission to stand up on it until they had been given some presents. Then the procession moved around to drum in the bridegroom. He was dressed in a patchwork cloth and as he came he danced with all his might to the beat of the drums. Then the father gave his son a cow that he was providing for the feast and told him to show it to all the people while everyone including the bride looked on. Then the minstrel stood up and sang a song to which the kinsmen of the bridegroom replied in their chorus. All who were mentioned in the songs gave some kind of present to the singer. These activities continued until night came on. At dusk the bridegroom took the chickens and prepared food for the bride's relatives; he slaughtered

animals for his own group and one for the chief. The rest of the night passed with drinking and singing going on. Some of the guests left early, but others stayed on until morning.

All the clansmen of the host, members of the same drum circle, those of the same *akombo* and *ingôr* group, were called together with the purpose of slaughtering the cow which had been brought out to show them the day before. The elders divided up the meat. The right foreleg went to the host, along with some salt. A 'twenty' was sent to the father or the owner of the bride. A leg of the marriage cow went to the brothers of the bridegroom, unless the capture had created ill-feeling and they had been afraid to go, in which case one of their *igba* [maternal relatives] would be sent instead. At that time in the past *igba* relations were of great importance. If a man took a trip, it was with them that he could find safe lodging, and it was often they who made peace if quarrels arose. This is all about that.

#### *KWASE ISHIN* [WIFE EXCHANGE]

After a man had captured a woman to be his wife, her family did not come to see him right away. Rather, the time to come was when a child was born. Then the owner of the girl, her father or whoever had the use of the *ingôr*, came to the man who had captured his kin and had children with her, and asked him to do what he could to help him, so that he too might stop having to go down to the well himself 'drumming on an empty gourd.' So they spoke to his father, who then sat and discussed the entire matter with his brothers. Then they took an *ingôr*, a sister of the husband and gave her to the owner of the woman. However, if two daughters had been born to you by your wife, then her owner would take one of them, in addition to the one given to him, saying that he wanted to have two doors to enter, just like you have. The owner of the young girl did not accomplish this alone. He got support of one of his *igba* in the district. This was the man that conducted all such business and later handed the wife over to him; if anything went wrong it was he who put things right again. The owner of the *ingôr* that had been captured had children by the wife who was given to him in exchange for her, and then he took the daughter of his *ingôr* to exchange for a second wife for himself.

#### MONETARY COMPENSATION FOR CAPTURED WIVES

The results were the same if a wife was simply captured for nothing or had been obtained by payments. In each case one had to provide an *ingôr* for compensation. When friends discussed such a matter, friends of the same age, the man who got a wife for nothing said he was the better of the two. He asserted that he was so handsome that he could get women because of his good looks alone, whereas the other with no personal attraction had to collect money and pay for the woman to be caught, beaten, and handed over to him. The man who had paid a bride price would say that he was so rich that he did not have to keep going forward and backward for the same thing. He just paid out the money and was done with the matter so he could be involved with other things. But the other fellow would have nothing better to do than spend his time on the road, until eventually the girl gave in out of

sheer exhaustion. It was not a question of good looks, but of stubborn persistence. ‘Nonsense, you people with the ugliest faces always have the quickest tongues,’ the other replied. ‘How can you say you have more than I do? I captured a wife of such-and-such a name from such-and-such a group and the night was spent in celebration. Beer was brewed for the marriage feast and I even slaughtered a cow. Moreover, I have had children by her and have even given a wife to her owner for compensation.’

His opponent replied that he too had obtained a wife, paid out money, and had done all the things the other one had. But people said that the one who got the wife for nothing was a better man. The other, even though he married a wife, had simply paid money for her as though buying a slave. If the wife in question heard this, she would retort that rather than be called a slave she would leave him and go and marry someone else for nothing, and thus be free. For a cause such as this a wife would certainly leave her husband and return home, even if she had borne him many children. She would not go back to him, no matter how often he went to try to persuade her, but would marry someone else without requiring a bride price. If the owner had had children by her husband’s *ingôr*, they would then transfer the exchange agreement to the children. The man who got the woman for nothing, having heard that this had been done, then gave her owner another in exchange for her. Thus the owner was able to build one house for his wife given as compensation, and also get another wife by exchanging the daughter of the woman who had been given to him in exchange for his *ingôr* when she had gone to her original husband, so that he became the possessor of many houses.

If the woman remained with her second husband until she died, the matter would be at an end. But if she lived on, it sometimes happened that after she had been with him many years, had borne several children to him, and was getting old, she would suddenly go off and join the children she had had by her first husband whom she had formerly rejected and had left in order to marry the other. Her owner would say, ‘Why are you causing me so my trouble, my *ingôr*? I gave you a husband and you rejected him because you did not care for him. I have already had children by his *ingôr* which he gave me in exchange for you, and really liked her. Yet when you insisted I give her up so that you could leave him, we transferred the exchange agreement to the children, and he kept your children and I kept those children who had been born to me by his *ingôr*. One of them I have exchanged for a wife. Moreover, the husband you married of your own free choice gave me a wife in exchange for you, and I built a house for her. Now you are going to change back again! Do you want to tear my house apart? I did what you wanted thinking it would please you but you did not like it, so now what am I to do?’ The woman answered, ‘The female gives her life for her young. I will go back to my children and die there and be buried by them.’

### ISHEIKÔ MARRIAGE PRACTICE

In the past, if you got a wife by capturing her and did not provide a woman in exchange for her, no matter how much you paid, the connection you made with her went unrecognized. If you had children with her these were said to be *isheikô*,



which means that no exchange had been made for them. The owner of the *ingôr* could come and take them away, the woman as well as her children whenever he pleased. Here is an example of how it worked.

Name of <i>tien</i> [male relation]	Name of <i>ingôr</i> [female relation]
Agaku	Adei
Abam	Dzendaun

Agaku takes his *ingôr*, Adei, and exchanges her to Abam, who gives him his *ingôr*, Dzendaun, in exchange. Before either of the women has borne children, Adei dies and Abam then accuses Agaku of killing his *ingôr*.

Agaku denies responsibility for her death which then makes them resort to a divination ordeal. The drink or potion is administered to chickens. Abam's chicken vomits the poison and Agaku's dies. Agaku thus loses his case and tells Abam to go home for now, for he will discuss the matter with his own kinsmen and let him know the result later. He says that he is very fond of his wife and does not want to lose her so he promises to give Abam another in exchange. After Abam has left, Agaku doesn't deal with the matter and goes on having children by his wife. Everyone would agree that Abam was in the right and would tell Agaku to stop making trouble. Thus both the mother and the children are *isheikô*. If the children are all girls, Abam will take every one, but if some are males, he will take one of the daughters and give her to her brothers; she is of the stem of her mother, so that later on they would not fall victim to the sasswood ordeal at another's door. Their mother he would also leave, but even then they are all said to be *isheikô*. If anything should happen to them Abam's group would not forgive Agaku's group.

#### A WIFE OF *SHA UIKA*

A wife of *sha uika*, which means a wife purchased with money, was actually the wife men could settle down with. In the past, these types of wives were usually a female slave a man would purchase and turn into a wife, calling her a wife of *sha uika*. These kinds of women were procured mostly from the Utyusha district, the Udam ethnic group, and other distant ethnic groups. One could not get a wife of *sha uika* from within one's own clan. Generally, the children from a wife of *sha uika* were more industrious in their communities than those from a wife gotten through marriage exchange. Yet the culture had more recognition for a child of marriage by exchange. Even when he was a weakling, people still regarded him as the heir apparent because of the status of the marriage between his father and mother. On the other hand, a child whose mother was not acquired through marriage exchange — even if he was quite up and doing — was not considered a bona fide member of his community. Even when he decided to relocate to his maternal home because of the disrespect in his paternal home, and when he prospered there very well, his maternal relations too resorted to deriding him by questioning his identity in their midst.

In addition, when the Tiv people practised the culture of chieftaincy, children from wives acquired through purchase had no right to ascend to the chieftaincy as they were considered to be ordinary sojourners. The ascendancy to the chieftaincy was the exclusive privilege of children from wives acquired through marriage by exchange. Again, the son of a purchased wife had no right to peep into a hut housing *akombo* like the *poor akombo*. But the child of a purchased wife, if he strove very well, could be qualified to partake in all these, and could even become a chief as well as build a hut to house *akombo*. Hence he was no more considered a stranger in the community.

### CULTURAL REFORMS

In later years, the Tiv started to deviate from their traditional values. All that they wanted was a man of affluence, who would provide good leadership and care for the welfare of the people. In effect, the kind of marriage a man's father and mother had never mattered again. If the man was worthy enough, that would be enough. He was given a chance to provide all that could ensure good living, even though some people went about gossiping that because of the lack of a credible personality such an unqualified person was riding high in his domain.

In fact, if a man was a product of marriage by monetary payment and was able to attain high social status in his domain, his maternal uncles would keep saying that despite his social standing, he had a serious blemish as long as he had not been able to culturally redeem himself. Therefore, the maternal uncles, anytime they wanted, would conspire and destroy him, for he cannot be stronger than his kinsmen put together. This would instill fear in the man of high social status, who would hasten to meet his cultural obligations and go about his life without any form of blemish.

### ABOLITION OF MARRIAGE BY EXCHANGE

As the Tiv people went about forming marriages in different ways, all sorts of difficulties attached to them. The white colonial administrators and chiefs, as well as the local adjudicators, were inundated with marital litigation. Almost all court cases touched on marriage. At one point, if one were to check it would be discovered that three out of four litigations were cases of marital dispute. Even the remaining one, if properly investigated, would not be unconnected with marital affairs.

Generally, even prior to the advent of colonialism, most of the communal crises in Tivland were caused by marital affairs. With the advent of colonialism, most complicated litigation issues centred on marital affairs. A man would come to institute a case: 'I exchanged my female relation – *ingôr* – for another man's *ingôr*, who is now my wife. Upon my wife's demise, the oracle revealed to me that my in-law was the mastermind behind her death. Therefore, I have come to solicit the chief to compel my in-law to return my *ingôr* which I gave him in the exchange.'

Another man might come to complain, 'I gave a certain man money to give me a wife. He has spent the money but has failed to give me a wife.' So either the white colonial administrator or the local judges would send Native Authority policemen to arrest the person accused, or sometimes, the person accused would come and

deny the accusation levelled against him and narrate a different version of the story. As a result, the need to invite witnesses would arise. Most of the time, the witnesses would never speak the truth, as each witness would take the side of the person that invited him as a witness. It was always quite difficult for the jurists to determine a case.

Another person might come to complain, 'A certain man from a certain community has owed me money for a long time. And any time I go to claim my money, he threatens me.' Now, if the reason for being owed was investigated, it would be connected with marriage. In some cases, a person would file a suit on a matter of marriage by exchange that was contracted by his father even before he, the complainant himself, was born. Countless cases were of this nature.

Another man might file a suit, saying 'A certain man has taken my *ingôr* free of charge and is not ready to give me a wife in exchange. Yet, the man is having children with her. When I request that at least a daughter among the children of my *ingôr* be given to me so that I can go and exchange her for a wife, the man is not ready and only wants to beat me up. That is why I have to complain that my *ingôr* and the children be given back to me.'

People would commit murders because of marriage. Many other things went wrong with the Tiv system of marriage. Therefore, the white colonial administrators in Tivland opted to have a single common Tiv system of marriage and to do away with the rest. Thus, in 1927, all the white colonial administrators, namely Mr Mogan in Makurdi, Chafa Fishi in Abinsi and Chafa Saim in Katsina Ala, converged at Abinsi town and invited all the chiefs with their local adjudicators, as well as elders of all the Tiv clans, for a conference.

After formally welcoming the Tiv chiefs to the meeting, the white colonial administrators informed them that the reason for the meeting was to see if it would be possible for them and the Tiv people to agree on one marriage system, and abolish the host of others. The Tiv were astonished to hear this. For the Tiv, this was unheard of. But the white administrators maintained their view and told the Tiv to think about it carefully and tell them how they, the Tiv chiefs, felt about it.

It happened that this occurred shortly after the white colonial administration sent Chief Ugba to exile in Kaduna. As a result, the Tiv chiefs became more afraid that if they did anything contrary to the wish of the white colonial officers, they too might be exiled to Kaduna. Worst of all, Chafa Fishi, who had actually sent Chief Ugba to exile in Kaduna, was in the meeting. So the Tiv chiefs were really upset at the case. The white administrators allowed the Tiv several days to think and choose a particular marriage system, but the Tiv could not make up their minds.

However, the white administrators were set on the system of marriage of paying a bride price only and thought the other systems should be abolished. As the Tiv chiefs understood it, they said it was not possible to abolish the culture of marriage by exchange, since this was actually the customary practice of the Tiv people. And in fact it was by means of marriage by exchange that they were able to procreate and also have a peaceful world. That being so, if marriage by exchange were abandoned, there would be a lot of chaos; women would no longer bear children and even the crops would not yield well.

To this effect, the white men asked them for clarification on all forms of Tiv marriage so that they could understand them. The Whiteman listened to all clarifications, yet their mind was still more inclined to marriage by *kem*.

At that time, several young men had just returned from a railway line construction project and because they were financially buoyant, they were also more inclined to marriage by *kem*. Some first class chiefs joined the young men in favouring marriage by *kem*. Only a few chiefs were opposed. Thus, the Tiv people were divided into two factions: those calling for marriage by exchange and those calling for marriage by *kem*. This created an impasse and the deliberations went on for almost seven days.

A first class chief of the Ukan clan by the name of Mue Ityôkatyever revealed that he disagreed with all the opinions advanced during the days of the deliberations; he was so confused that he did not know how to conduct himself. That being so, at the end of the day's proceedings, he had to contrive a ruse: he limped past in front of the Whitemen as if he would fall down, in order to convince the Whitemen that he was not healthy enough to be further bombarded with questions. The next day, when it was time for the resumption of the proceedings, he sent word to the Whitemen that he had spent a sleepless night suffering from abdominal pain and stomach upset, vomiting throughout the night. As such, he was indisposed to attend the day's proceedings. The Whitemen easily believed the story; they had noticed that Chief Mue did not look healthy at the beginning of the proceedings of the previous day. With that, he was excused from the day's proceedings.

What annoyed Chief Mue most was that he was convinced that the Whitemen were looking for the truth, so he would tell them the truth. But when he said the truth, some mischief makers, whom he knew well, would get up and counter all that he had said and give the Whitemen the wrong impression. The Whitemen, seeing that the mischief makers were a majority and were speaking in one voice against Mue and his few supporters, subscribed to the views of the majority. This was what annoyed Mue most.

One thing that coerced the Tiv to quickly agree on one form of marriage was that at the time the proceedings were going on, lorries would sometimes come from Makurdi and park nearby. Nobody knew what the lorries were for. But when a lorry came and parked nearby, the errand boys of the Whitemen would misinform the Tiv chiefs that the lorries were actually sent for them and that if they would not hasten and speak with one voice, they would be packed in these lorries and be taken away and exiled to Kaduna, to join Chief Ugba, never to return to Tivland again. Once they heard 'Kaduna', even the few chiefs who had the courage to oppose *kem* marriage had to give in. They unanimously settled on *kem* marriage as the sole system of marriage.

Thus, the Whitemen documented that there was a consensus among the Tiv. They also spelled out the rules to observe in contracting a marriage by *kem*. As it happens, all the rules the Whitemen spelled out to the Tiv regarding the marriage by *kem* were what the Tiv were already observing traditionally in regard to marriage by *kem*.

But as the chiefs returned to their various domains, they got into trouble with their subjects, who accused them of conniving with the Whiteman at Abinsi to disrupt the entire existing social order. For the people, this was the one major thing the Whiteman had done to ruin their nation since the advent of colonialism.

The Tiv nursed a general hatred against all chiefs. They held that the chiefs had collected financial incentives from the Whiteman, which made them rich enough to accept to marriage by *kem*. The chiefs, on the other hand, exonerated themselves, saying that they had no hand in it. It was the Whiteman who single-handedly abolished marriage by exchange and imposed on them the marriage by *kem*. This created grievances among the people in Tivland up to the present.

If one goes around Tivland, this is basically what one will hear: that the Whiteman has ruined the land; that if the Whiteman had wished Tivland well, he could have adopted two options about marriage — the marriage by exchange and the marriage by capture. The marriage by capture was a situation in which a man could get a woman without paying anything. And when the *tien*, who is the brother of the woman, comes, the husband could offer him a female relation in return, so that both of them would have wives.

But if they would insist that a Tiv man has to get money ‘on the head’ of his female relation before he can go and get a wife, then, that would be difficult. The reason is that at times a man offers another man a cow as payment of the bride price for a female relation. It may happen that the recipient of the cow will not be lucky and that the cow might die before he gets the woman of his choice. Thus, the recipient of the cow would be at a loss. Meanwhile, the man who had offered the cow would go ahead having children with his wife, and the recipient of the cow could dare not ever ask to adopt a daughter of such a man. For nowadays, if one dares to do that, the white colonial administrators would not allow him to go free.

In other cases, a man might offer another man some money as payment for the dowry of his female relation. But while the recipient of the money is still searching for a wife, his dependant could fall sick and require the recipient to spend part of the money in the treatment of the ailing dependant. This could cause a shortage of money needed to pay the bride price.

This caused a lot of untimely deaths in Tivland. This is because, when a man received a cow or cash as bride price for a female relation and was not able to use it to get a wife for himself, and to make matters worse saw that his in-law was having children with his female relation, the man might, out of ill-will, use witchcraft to kill either the female relation or her children so that the in-law too lost out just as he did.

In addition, the Tiv people always say that they have complied with the ban colonialism had imposed on murder by the use of the *kor* test. But murders over marital affairs — they would never refrain from that. At first many people tried to circumvent that law by any and all means, but they failed. During the initial period, people refused to give out their mature daughters to marry through the *kem* system, hoping that the ban on marriage by exchange would be lifted and that they could use these women to get wives through marriage by exchange. But such people waited endlessly and eventually gave up. They reluctantly gave their daughters in marriage through the *kem* system.

As for the old men, what pained them most was the fact that girls rejected them during this era of the ban on marriage by exchange. In the era of marriage by exchange, an aged man, no matter how old he was, even if he had lost his fingers and toes through the ravages of leprosy, if he had a female relation to exchange in marriage, he could easily marry a young girl without any resistance from the girl. If the old man’s female relation was admired, her admirer would just force

his female relation into a marriage of exchange with the old man. The young girl, reluctantly, followed the old man around, carrying the old man's native bag. If the young girl dared to run back to her paternal home, her male relation would bundle her back to the old man.

This would make the old man feel so good he would laugh, exposing all his rotten molars, and tell the young girl, 'No matter where you run to, you will be brought back to me here. So, you just have to stay and make up your mind to be my wife.' The young girl would be completely fed up with life and would want the earth to open up and swallow her. Some young girls would even commit suicide by stabbing themselves with poisonous arrows because of being forced to marry an old man. In spite of all this, to the Tiv, this was no problem.

Thus, when the colonial government abolished the practice of forcing girls into marriage, and made it mandatory for a girl to give her consent before the marriage was contracted, young girls and young men became quite excited. From then on, if an old man made some passes at a young girl, the girl would snub him and warn him that young girls were no longer under the compulsion they used to be in the era when their male relations could force them into marriage. The colonial administration liberated them to marry who they liked and reject those they did not like. It was no longer business as usual.

There was a wide lamentation among old men, who accused the colonial administration of disrupting the social order by giving women liberty. Young girls repeated in the ears of old men that 'birds of a feather flock together'. So, let old men look for 'old feathered' women, while young girls would flock with young men. With this, women heralded this decision as the best thing that colonialism had enacted, since they were no longer under constraints like before, and were also accorded human respect. This delighted them so much. Young men too became quite delighted with the abolition of marriage by exchange because of the negation of the prerogative elders enjoyed.

Thus, young men and girls who became mature in the era of colonialism spoke with one voice about this. They were quite delighted with it. But another thing they wanted rectified was that there should not just be marriage through payment of a bride price. The terms of payment should be strictly cash, but the culture of elopement with girls, which is a result of wooing a girl, should also be enthroned. For them, the payment of bride price alone was not all that agreeable. They also maintained that the culture of marriage by exchange would be put to rest once the older generation passed away.

As elderly people heard this, they lamented that colonialism had completely destroyed the social order of their land. At every traditional council meeting, elderly people waited with the expectation that the ban on marriage by exchange would be repealed, so that they could resume marriage by exchange. Young men, on the other hand, were expecting that the Whiteman would allow them to continue the practice of wooing girls and eloping with them. Unfortunately, the colonial administration kept silent on the subject. That is all about the abolition of marriage by exchange.

#### POLYGAMOUS LIFE

The Tiv are fond of polygamous life for various reasons. But there is one major reason: procreation! For the Tiv people, no matter how well established a man

may be, if he has no child to carry on the family line known as *tse* after his demise, he is not worth anything in their esteem. They continue to mock such a man by saying what manner of a man is he who has no child? Who will continue the family name after his demise? The same goes for women. No matter how well accomplished a woman might be, if she has no children, she is esteemed very low among the Tiv. A wife too, when she cannot bear a child, no matter how well the husband treats her, will never be at peace, out of fear that there will be no one to mourn her upon her demise. This is actually what makes child-bearing very important to women. Unlike men, they care less about who would take over the *tse*, the family line, or name.

The idea of the *tse* is derived from the life of the field rat. There is a species of field rat called *san*. This species of rodent is valuable in various ways to the Tiv people. They love eating it. Every Tiv man likes it because it tastes so good. In addition, it performs a role in fortune telling. If a person sets out on a journey that turns out to be a misadventure, he will surely have run into the *san* rat on the way, for this is an omen of misadventure. The traveller would cancel the trip. But if the person insists on continuing with the trip, he will surely hear tragic news, like the death of a relation. The relation could be a wife, a child, or a friend.

One other major thing that the *san* rat does and that the Tiv have emulated as their way of life is the establishment of *tse*, a rodent burrow. Other species of mice can easily inhabit a burrow made by another rodent. Some even inhabit holes in trees or burrows made by crabs. The *san* rat, on the contrary, does not inhabit burrows made by other rodents, but only the one it has created itself. So, it is this burrow that is referred to as *tse* by the Tiv.

The *san* rat usually digs its burrow in an open place in the form of a 'bunker' and tosses out a heap of sand high enough that the heap can be spotted from afar. Then, it makes a straight hole straight down into the earth and creates several tunnels within, as well as a special place within the bunker to serve as its child-delivery place. It also creates a dead-end tunnel or cul-de-sac. It rarely resides in the cul-de-sac tunnel. It also creates one more tunnel and extends it far from the main bunker with a camouflaged exit at the end. The Tiv refer to this as an emergency escape route.

The multiple tunnels are for a reason. The cul-de-sac tunnel is to confuse hunters about the residing place of the rat in the burrow. When a hunter is excavating a burrow to trap the rat, it moves into the emergency escape tunnel with its babies. Meanwhile, the hunter unknowingly focuses his attention on the cul-de-sac tunnel, believing that is where the rat resides. The hunter excavates up to the end but finds nothing. Then, the hunter searches carefully within and identifies another tunnel, which might be the emergency exit tunnel. While the hunter excavates, the rat and his children feel the soil tremble as a result. As the rat feels the trembling, it quietly runs out of the bunker with its children along the camouflaged emergency escape route. If it is lucky enough not to be seen by the hunter, it will escape safely with its babies.

In the process of the excavation, if the hunter is not able to identify the emergency escape route, the *san* can continue to inhabit the bunker with its children. If one day the rat meets its death in the course of wandering about, the children continue to inhabit the bunker. They don't quit it, so prevent other rodents from coming and so they inherit their father's abode. They live there, and after

multiplying several times, they quit the bunker created by their parents and create several other new burrows for themselves. If the mother rat is still alive after bearing several children, then the grown-up children can decide to move away, leaving their father, mother, and the younger siblings in the old bunker. The Tiv call the grown-up ones who have moved away *uikahan mba san*, which means 'breakaway rats'. In the singular, they are called *ikahan san*.

This is where the concept and meaning of *tse* was derived from. If not for the need to maintain a family name, most Tiv people would not marry. They would just have sex or flirt with women. But the need to establish a family line has made it such that every Tiv person, once he is mature enough, has his mind fixed on getting married in order to procreate and have children to continue the family name so that no other person could inherit his property. When a man is mature enough but is not ready to be married and instead flirts around with ladies, elders admonish him for indulging in immorality for too long without the desire to get a wife and have children that would carry on the family name. If the young man is not too obstinate, he would hurry up and get married.

Suffice it to add that in the past, Tiv people were not into polygamous life to the extent they are today. They were mostly monogamists. If a man was wealthy or was a chief, then he could have two wives. They gave this reason for having several wives: even if their children from a particular wife perished or were impoverished, those from the other wives could still be better off. And in this way, the family name would not pass into oblivion. This has been given as the reason the forefathers developed polygamous life.

Nowadays people practise polygamy not just for the maintenance of the family life, but also for prestige. Young men who are well-to-do in their community marry up to five wives, or six or even as many as ten. Wealthy men marry up to ten wives. In fact, first class chiefs marry in the dozens, so much so that he is not really concerned whether any of the women bear children or not – unlike in the past.

To the Tiv people, no possession compares to a wife. Yet they don't treat their wives with the respect normally accorded to a person held in high esteem. A person might have many wives and yet none are comfortable within the household. He might make farms for some while forsaking others, who then go about begging for food. They might beg, yet would still come back and feed the husband. If they didn't, the husband could beat them up. Another person might have several wives, but cater to just one of them. The rest would be in penury. The one catered to would be referred to as the 'favourite'. Some call the favourite wife *pendaityo* ('put my head on'), while others refer to her as *harakpa*, the third wife of a chief.

The favourite wife is usually well catered to; the husband farms for her, clothes her, and even provides meat for making soup. Some men have two, three, or four favourite wives, but there is still one who is the most favoured. It is in her house that the husband keeps his things and sleeps most often. She is the one who knows most about the man's secrets. This is what a chief's *pendaityo* really is. Even the secrets ways of eliminating chiefs and wealthy men in Tivland normally emanated from the *pendaityo*. And this has turned out to be the burden of being the *pendaityo*. When a man dies, the *pendaityo* is usually accused. As for the wives that are neglected — nobody accuses them of complicity in the death of their mutual husband. Instead, they only suffer neglect during the marriage. They have a hard time getting proper clothing. Some have only the clothes a friend



has managed to make for them out of the cotton and these may be torn; that is all they have. They go about in tattered clothes, as if they have no husband.

A wife means so much to a Tiv man because she can assist him in many ways. She cooks as well as works on the farm. One other area in which Tiv men find women useful is the area of meeting the libidinal desire. A Tiv man cannot do without a woman for a whole month unless he is seriously sick or he has a serious problem that does not give him 'breathing space'. If not, even when he is worn out by age, he will do his best to mate with a woman until his death. It is this sexual pleasure that makes death a sorrowful thing to a Tiv man. They also hate imprisonment because it interferes with their chance to have sex with women. The Tiv have an adage: 'a woman is as necessary as food.'

### INHERITING A WIFE

The Tiv have long had the custom of adopting the wife of a dead relative. But with colonialism, which has reshaped some customary Tiv practices, this has died down a bit. When a woman loses her husband, the brother of the deceased or a son the deceased might have had with another wife can adopt the widow as his wife. The adopted widow is referred to as *kwase ichôghol* or *kwase dyako*. The person who adopts the widow does not just decide to do this on his own. First of all, the man to adopt the widow would invite his kinsmen to assemble. The properties of the deceased would be shared. Then the widow left behind would choose who will adopt her as a wife.

Here is an illustration. Imagine that the deceased is named Asom, the widow of the deceased is named Wantor; the brother of the deceased is named Awua, while their uncle is named Naishô. A while after the demise of Asom, his properties, including the wife, have to be shared among his relations. So his brother Awua would go around and invite his kinsmen who are stakeholders in the affairs of the deceased.

Once the stakeholders are gathered, Awua would say to them, 'Since the demise of Asom, his things have been left in the open to be beaten by rain. That is why I have invited you to come and take care of them properly. So, it is left for you people to decide whether to allow rain to destroy the things.' The elders would reply, 'We cannot allow rain to destroy our kinsman's properties. So, Naishô, get up and share the properties among those who can safeguard them. We will witness this, and then go away.'

We must understand that the 'properties' referred to here are actually the wife or wives of the deceased. The deceased might have several wives. Each one of them would be expected to adopt a husband on that occasion. So Naishô, the uncle, would rise and share the hard cash and other real properties left behind by the deceased among those who have the right to inherit the deceased's properties.

Next would be the wives. Naturally, when a man dies, the widow or widows left behind would decide for themselves who to choose as the husband of inheritance. Again, it is not just anybody that can become a husband of inheritance. The person has to be the deceased's brother, or the son of the deceased from another wife. In this case, Awua, the son of the deceased Asom, is to become the husband of inheritance to Wantor, his father's widow. Then Naishô, the uncle, would ask Wantor, 'Now that your husband is no more, who would you

prefer to look after you?' Wantor would reply, 'Even when my husband was alive, it was Awua who was caring for me. So now that his father is no more, I still would prefer him to be the one caring for me.'

In response, Naishô would continue, 'You have spoken well. Awua, you therefore have to bring a chicken for us to perform the rite binding the two of you together.' Awua would go and get a chicken and bring it to Naishô. Naishô would now say, 'Wantor, rise up on your feet, stretch out one of your legs and cross it over that of Awua.' If Naishô is the one to perform the rite, he would go ahead and do it. But if it is another person, Naishô would invite him to use the chicken brought by Awua to perform the rite. To do this, the chicken would be passed through the legs of Awua and those of Wantor. This ritual must be done; if it is not, when Awua adopts Wantor as his wife, she would not be able to have children with him. That is why the rite is absolutely necessary.

After the ritual, the two of them would be seated. Awua would go and get a she-goat to give to his kinsmen, who would slaughter it and share the meat among themselves. The man who performed the rite would leave with the chicken used in the rite. With this, Wantor would effectively become the wife of Awua. But generally, Awua would never dare call Wantor his wife. Rather, he would refer Wantor as his 'adopted mother'.

When a man shows much love to his adopted wife, it can make the wife erase the image of her deceased husband from her memories completely. But when the man is a callous person, it makes the woman continue to miss her deceased husband.

There are two categories of widows: a widow who had no children with her deceased husband, and the one who did have issue with him. If a widow had children with the deceased, then the subsequent children she has with her inherited husband still bear the name of the deceased husband, and not that of the husband of inheritance. If she has children with her husband of inheritance, the children normally go back to join their brothers, the children their mother had with the deceased husband. And people call them after the deceased husband of the widow. So if a man adopts a widow, he cannot claim to be the father of the children he has with the widow. He can only refer to those children as his 'half-brothers'.

If there are female children among them, and the man uses any of them to exchange for a wife, the children he has with his adopted wife would only increase the number of the children of the deceased husband. None of them would bear the name of the husband of inheritance. That means such a man himself has no descendants in his life yet. When he dies, the first son which the adopted widow had with the deceased husband can come and pack away all the kids that the widow-mother had with her husband of inheritance. They would become the sisters and brothers of the first son.

A man can only have children who bear his name if he has children with a wife he has obtained through exchange with a female relation assigned to him by his father. But if one adopts the widow of a deceased father or brother and she didn't have a child with the deceased husband, then all the children he has with the adopted widow will be considered his real children and would bear his name.

Many Tiv clans, like the Ikurav for example, do not have the practice of adopting widows as wives. Even among the clans that practise it, not all the people there adhere to it. Yet people still speak ill of those who refuse to adopt the widows of their dead relations. It is said that this refusal lets the belongings of their deceased relations waste away. People look at such refusal as being done in bad faith or as

an outright refusal to help produce children that would bear the name of a deceased relation.

Sometimes a woman, after the demise of her husband, wants to get back to her paternal home and remarry. But her brother might stop her for the simple reason that he already has many children with the sister of the deceased in-law who he acquired as a wife through a marriage by exchange. In some cases, a caring brother of the widow might consent to the widow's decision to go back to her paternal home, so as to shield her against the travails of widowhood. The widow would be allowed to return and her brother would use one of his daughters to compensate the family of the deceased husband. But an insensitive brother would not give a thought to the travails of widowhood faced by his female relation. Even if the widow runs back to her paternal home, such an insensitive brother would force her to go back to her matrimonial home. There would be nobody to understand things and confer with her. This has been the sad story of widows in Tivland.

However, in the present dispensation, the colonial government is getting informed about the plight of widows so the general condition of women is getting better. The government has decreed that women are at liberty to remarry whoever they like after the demise of their husbands. So much of the plight of women in that area has been dealt with. Yet, some women are still suffering at the hands of male relations. When they are faced with the plight of widowhood in their matrimonial home and they show the desire to return to their paternal home, their male relations might threaten to kill them. They, the male relations, maintain, for example, that even if Philip the colonial administrator has banned marriage by exchange, the wife they have at present was acquired before the ban was enacted. Thus the widow returning home would mean the marriage that he, the brother of widow, contracted with his present wife would be dissolved. So the brother might threaten to kill his widowed sister, if that should happen.

Even when a widow runs to seek justice under the traditional Tiv judges, the jurists would just side with the brother of the widow. They would look at the widow as trying to ruin the marriage of her brother. They would tell the widow, 'Look, the marriage by exchange under which you got married predates the decree of Philip, the colonial administrator. So, why are you trying to take advantage of it and disrupt things now? Why are women becoming so stubborn nowadays like this?' With this pronouncement, the brother of the widow would force her back to the home of her deceased husband to continue in the plight of widowhood. If a widow attempted, out of stubbornness, to report this to the colonial government, then too, the brother would threaten to curse her. And she would have to bear that problem as well.

People are not fair to widows they have adopted as wives when compared to their otherwise-obtained wives. When they buy new clothes, they would give them to their other wives and not to the widow-wife. Even when they buy meat, it is just the remnants they give to the widow-wife, just to fulfill 'righteousness'. The same goes with farming, as there is hardly enough land for the farm of a widow-wife. Even her house normally looks untidy. It is only a widow with grown-up children that doesn't suffer in the hands of their husband of inheritance, since her grown-up children normally cater to her. In fact, for a widow whose children are quite well-to-do, even the adopted husband is at her beck and call. Her children shield her against any form of abuse. This has been the condition of widows in Tivland.

## Chapter Eight

### THE *TOR AGBANDE* CHIEFTAINCY

The Tiv first witnessed how to create chieftaincy by observing the Uke ethnic group. Then they decided to have chiefs too. The word *tor*, ‘chief’, is a Hausa word *toro*, ‘a bull elephant’. In the past, elephant hunters of Uke extraction used to go around Tivland, killing elephants and removing their tusks to sell far away. Sometimes they would kill a large bull elephant, whose tusks could be quite large. In Hausa, they call such an elephant *toron giwa*. The Tiv called it *toro* after hearing this expression.

During the period when Tiv people started making informal trips to the town of Wukari, they saw Wukari people gather around a single person and giving him obeisance and veneration. Such a person was esteemed to be more honourable than the rest and he was called *Aku Uka* in the Jukun language. The Jukun of the Chamba stock also venerated their warlord who they call *Kuru*.

On observing this custom, the Tiv assumed that the men of the Uke ethnic group normally chose one person and placed him above every other person, just like the *toron giwa* is above every other elephant. So to the Tiv, a person chosen and venerated as a king was the *toro* of his people. Thus, whenever the Tiv were on a trip to Wukari, they would say they were going to see the *toro* of Wukari, who normally maintained a larger-than-life posture, just like the *toron giwa* among the elephants.

As time went on, Tiv men of substance started aspiring to the venerated position observed among the people of Wukari. If any Tiv man desired to be installed as chief, he would dress in royal attire and go to Wukari to undergo a chieftain investiture.

Ordinarily, there were three towns where the Tiv people would go to undergo the chieftain investiture: Wukari, Abakwa, and Etulo land. At first the Tiv of the Kunav clan underwent the chieftain investiture elsewhere. But as time went on, they also joined in going to Wukari or to the Etulo for the investiture. The chieftaincy titles the Tiv Kurav clan acquired were those of the Jukun termed *uke Mbamngerev*. At that time, the Tiv of the Shitire clan as well as other Tiv clans had already acquired chieftaincy titles from Wukari town and from the Abakwa ethnic group. The Tiv of the Tômbo and Mbatiev districts of the Kparev clan also acquired the *tor agbande* title from the Uke ethnic group.

### CHIEFTAINCY IN THE KPAREV [UKPAR] CLAN

At first the Tiv of the Kparev clan knew nothing about chieftaincy. It was the Tiv in the Shitire and Ukum clans, who were neighbours with the Uke ethnic group, who were informed about chieftaincy. Later, the Tiv of the Kparev clan also emulated this cultural element. Another people informed earlier about chieftaincy were the Tiv of the Nõngov clan. In fact, it was actually from them that the Kparev clan learned about chieftaincy, and the practice spread to many other Tiv clans.

However, since the human population was still small, a man could ascend to chieftaincy and then appoint his representatives to every kindred group in his district. The lexicon of chieftaincy was dominated with words from Hausa, the *lingua franca* of the Wukari people. Hence chieftaincy was basically a cultural element of the Hausa.

### ASCENDING TO CHIEFTAINCY

In the past, not just anybody could ascend to chief status. A man had to be sagacious, well-versed in witchcraft and with a large population under his control, as well as demonstrate an ability to rule for the well-being of his people. This was the calibre of person that elders of a community would choose as their *tor agbande* chief. It was not necessarily an aged person that would be installed as a chief. Even young men who exhibited leadership traits and emerged on the scene at the right time could be made one.

To select a chief, the elders of the land would sit and deliberate among themselves about who to install without consulting with possible candidates. They would just discuss it among themselves and decide that this or that one was a good person to rule and protect the interests of all citizens, especially the down-trodden ones. After thoroughly pruning the list of the candidates, the elders of a clan would meet and sit according to their districts and kindred groups within the clan so as to settle on a candidate by consensus.

On an appointed day, they would come together to drink. The unsuspecting consensus candidate too would be in the gathering. Then they would propose a journey to Wukari and invite the candidate to accompany them on the journey. (Sometimes they would have a hint that they were the chosen one, but sometimes they would be unaware. In the past, matters of chief-making were of the utmost secrecy and not child's play.) As they set off for the journey, the candidate would bear the luggage of the elders, or he could make his junior relation or a child carry the luggage. Yet it would be presumed that he was the one who had borne the luggage for the elders [as the chosen one].

At the beginning, items like sorghum, beans and money were used as gifts for the monarch who was to be installed the chief. As the elders and the candidate went off, the people left behind would start rumours among themselves that the elders of the district had gone off to make their chief.

When they arrived at Wukari, they explained the purpose of their visit to their contact man at Wukari. The contact man would take their message to the monarch, who would hear it but not act until the next day. On the next day, their contact man would lead them, along with their candidate and the gifts items, to the monarch. As they arrived, they would kneel down and make obeisance to the Aku monarch. They would narrate the purpose of their visit, as well as hand over the gift items to the contact man, who would in turn, make obeisance before the monarch and present the gift items to him.

The monarch would collect the gift items and ask the contingent to go back and wait while he pondered what to do. With that, the contingent would return to the home of their contact man and wait to hear from the monarch. Sometimes they could wait for two months and their kinsmen back home would get anxious, imagining that perhaps their people had been murdered. This thought would fill them with fear and trepidation.

When the monarch finally made up his mind, he would summon his subordinate leaders to his palace. He would also send for the contingent of Tiv elders who had come to have one of theirs installed as a chief. As they arrived, they would be served the alcoholic drink popularly known as *tashi*. After drinking, the monarch would move into his chambers with his subordinate chiefs. The titles of the subordinate chiefs of the Wukari monarchy were: *Abowachibo*, who was the senior *Abo*, and *Abowatiti*, who was the junior *Abo*. There were also *Kinda*, *Yerima*, *Galadima*, and *Mandaki*. These titles were in two categories: titles of the Jukun ethnic group and those of the Hausa people. The Jukun have *Aku Uka*, who is the main monarch and usually flanked by the senior and the junior *Abo* as well as a *Kinda*. It is the *Abo* that are sometimes called the senior assistant and junior assistant to the monarch. The three titles in the Hausa language are the *Yerima*, the *Mandaki*, and the *Galadima*. The Jukun copied these titles from the Hausa to incorporate them into their chieftain lexicon. The Jukun of Wukari had lived among the Hausa since time immemorial, and if they had not been a people imbued with huge cultural pride, they would have been completely assimilated into Hausa culture and faith. But the Jukun are known for cultural resilience.

After deliberations in the monarch's chambers, they would come back to the reception room. The monarch would order his senior assistant — the *Abowachibo* — to ask the Tiv contingent the purpose of their visit. The Tiv contingent would reply that they had brought a candidate for the monarch to install as chief to rule over their own chiefdom. The monarch would say that he is not against their desire, but are they sure that the candidate has leadership qualities to preside over their so-called 'chiefdom'? The contingent would maintain that they have evaluated the candidate very well before presenting him to the monarch.

Actually what the monarch meant by leadership qualities was the candidate's ability to enforce his authority on his subjects. However, the Tiv would reason that the monarch was referring to the candidate's prowess in witchcraft. In any case, the monarch would get the royal attire and hand it over to the contingent of elders, who would kneel down in obeisance to the monarch. Then, off they went with the royal attire. At times the Uke monarch himself would hand over the royal attire directly to chieftaincy candidate. But on other occasions, the monarch would hand over the attire to the contingent of elders to go and install the chief themselves and present him as the monarch much later.

There were two basic places where the Tiv would go to obtain the royal investiture. But as time went on, some Tiv people started also going to the Etulo kingdom to obtain royal investiture. In reality, the two major places to obtain royal status were, first, Wukari, then the Abakwa kingdom. The Etulo Kingdom was the least common place to go for royal investiture.

The Wukari royal attire consisted mainly of *pavbagu* and *afia* gowns. The *pavbagu* gown was made of white *murfu* fabric combined with *amua* fabric and decorated with yellow *murfu* fabric. As time went on, it was no longer necessary to decorate the gown with yellow *murfu* fabric. Instead a refined white European fabric was used. The Hausa called this gown *alawayo* while the Tiv call it *kwav* or a gown of god.

In all cases, the fabric would be divided into pieces of specific measurement which would be sewn together into a gown. The *afia* gown was made with the same material used in making the *pavbagu* gown. The *afia* royal gown was not as long as the *pavbagu* gown. The Wukari monarch seldom gave the Tiv the

*afia* gown to dress their chief. It was most common for him to give them the *pavbagu* gown to dress their chief. He was generally reluctant to give them the *afia* gown but was willing to give them *amua*, cotton *swaki* (black and blue) caps. For this reason, most Tiv people do not know the *afia* gown. Even when it is described to them, they don't know what it looks like. They only know about the *swaki* cap and *amua* gown. However among the Shitire, Ukum and Nôngov, the *afia* is well known.

The royal attire in the Abakwa Kingdom consisted of the *swaki* cap and a gown called *togo katsina* or another gown called *togo ikannyon* with a *swaki* or *amua* cap. In the Etulo Kingdom, the royal attire consisted of a dark-coloured gown accompanied by an *amua* cap. But as time went on, it could include the *angundu* cap. These were kinds of the royal attire Tiv people got from the Uke ethnic groups.

When the Tiv elders received the royal attire, they would return to Tivland and ask the consensus candidate to organize a feast. On the day of the feast, the chieftain candidate would fetch beer in a container, tie thread around it, and present it with some cash gifts to the eldest man of the district. By noon, the kinsmen would arrive for the feast. By this time, there was already great music accompanied by dancing. Generally for a few days close to the feast day, the candidate's movement was restricted because he had come of age and could be harmed out of jealousy. By afternoon, the celebration reached its height as more people gathered to celebrate the chief, while the elders continued drinking their beer. In the past, younger people were not into drinking much alcohol as they do nowadays. It was basically elders who drank alcohol.

In the evening, the oldest man would rise and call the gathering to order. People would sit down and absolute silence would reign. He would address the crowd thus: 'My folk, we are gathered here not just for the fun of it. It is for a genuine reason. Our nation is drifting so much into a social morass. Out of helplessness, I decided to go and hang myself. But as I set off to go, this son of our land decided to follow me. We decided to go and hang ourselves in the wilderness because all the other elders of the land have perished, leaving me alone. I have become worthless. Nobody seems to even hear my orders. The mortality rate is so high that it seems the human species is on the verge of extinction. Even our farms are not yielding well any more. Totally bewildered, I decided, I have to go and perish in the wilderness, so as to allow the younger generation to have their day on the face of the earth. But as we arrived in Hausa land and I narrated my dismay to the Uke monarch, he asked me whether the young man with me, if saddled with leadership responsibility over the land and with me standing by him, would be able to control the land. I agreed that the young man is imbued with strength of character. To this effect, the monarch summoned his subordinates and conferred with them on the matter. Consequently, he handed me this royal attire to come meet with you, the remaining elders. And if you consent, we should install this "young boy" chief of our district. So, now that you the elders have heard it all, what do you have to say?'

As all the elders consented in unison that such a candidate was worthy of the position, there would be a loud ovation. The eldest would rise with the others, as well the candidate, and move into an obscure corner. There, they would dress the candidate in the royal attire. He would be dressed in a *pavbagu* gown and an *afia* cap. Then, he would put on a 'throne'. Four men would bear the chair, followed by the elders. They would now present the chief to the public and people

would be jubilant and sing royal songs. The royal song of the Wukari monarch was worded as follows:

The chief sits on the throne  
*I ye, ye, ye, ali wai* the chief sits on the throne!

They would celebrate with the chief borne on the throne. When the chief is finally placed in the middle of the compound, people would gather and pay obeisance while continuing to sing:

Something has happened today; the clouds have extinguished the sunlight.

After a celebrating for a while, the elders would call for calm so that everybody could settle down to eat what the newly-installed chief provided. They wouldn't just sit any old way. They would sit according to their kindred group within the clan. The chief would provide beer in abundance. He would also donate a cow to each of the kindred groups.

By then, it would already be late at night. The people would collect the cows donated. Some kindred groups would kill theirs that very night, while some would not. Such kindred groups would go back to their home with the cow. For those who chose to slaughter theirs on the spot, the women in the chief's house would help cook food with which they could eat the cow. Elders spent a sleepless night as they celebrated all night long.

As for the newly installed chief, at night he would look for a hideout and sleep there because he had become a special being who must always think of his safety. Once the chief goes into a secret place to sleep, people would spread the rumour that the chief has vanished. By the next morning, the elders would reconvene in the chief's court, including those who actually spent their night there. The chief would once again slaughter a cow for them. They would not butcher the meat at once, but allow it to get stiff first.

At this juncture, the elders would sit back and dress the *swem* akombo on which they would swear their oaths of allegiance to the chief. They would make the following declaration: 'We have installed the chief with sincerity of mind; so nothing can go wrong with the chief, not even a migraine headache. The chief should be allowed freedom to administer the chiefdom. Let him care for widows. Let peace prevail. Let our farms yield well.'

After the declaration, they would lay their hands on the *swem* akombo and bury it by a baobab tree in the centre of the compound and plant *ayande* grass beside it. Next, they would fetch water in a cup and cleanse their land of curses so that peace would reign. They would cut up the slain cow now. Then they would thank the chief for providing a daytime feast and inform him that they were waiting for the nighttime occult celebration. For it is at the occult feast that they can fathom the character of the new chief. To this effect, they would cut a number of sticks and give these to the chief to indicate the number of human beings they expect the chief to sacrifice for the occult feast. After this, they would disperse.

After a period of time, if anybody died in the chief's domain, it would be assumed that the chief killed him in a mystical way for the occult feast. In fact, no matter how many people die, the elders would maintain that that is not enough. They would insist that the chief sacrifice his beloved son to them



before they would agree to subject themselves to the authority of the chief. In some cases, a chief would concede to the demands of his subjects and do the sacrifice as demanded. But, in other cases, the chief would refuse to yield to the demand.

A few months after his installation, the chief would organize another feast to appoint a council of subordinate chiefs. On that day, the elders of the chiefdom would assemble in the chief's palace, together with those who aspire to be appointed into the council of subordinate chiefs. Each aspirant would bring a cow or its monetary value to the chief. On that occasion, the chief would rise and address the elders. He would say, 'Elders of our land, these are the young men you have chosen to assist me. So, today I intend to swear them in, to prove to you that I am working according your demand. But, before that, can you assure me about your sincerity about these aspirants? I want to know because I want to be straightforward with you.' The elders would reply, 'We don't have any hidden motive about you. We profess our total allegiance to your chieftaincy. Let the chief install who would be the senior and the junior *abo*, as well as who would be the *kenda*.' These were the titles of the subordinate chiefs the main chief could appoint. After installing them, there would be a reception. Then the elders would disperse.

In the past, the newly-appointed subordinate chiefs would not disperse on the day of installation. They would remain in the chief's compound until a reception was organized for them. But as time went on, things changed. The newly-appointed subordinate chiefs would also return to their domains on the same day of their installation and organize their receptions in their own domains much later.

On the day of the reception for a subordinate, the chief himself would attend the occasion with a large entourage, with the accompaniment of heavy *agbande* drumming.<sup>49</sup> People would know right away when the chief had arrived at the venue for the reception. It is from this type of heavy *agbande* drumming announcing a chief that the Tiv derived the chieftain's title of *tor agbande*.

Actually, at first, the Tiv never knew about the *genka* drum. *Genga* is a Hausa word for drum. The Tiv call it *agbande*. Anytime a chief arrives at a venue for a special occasion, the people present at the occasion rise and remain standing until the organizer of the occasion comes and helps the chief dismount from his horse. To do this, he would have to present some token gifts to the chief. But before then, a throne covered with leopard skin was already prepared for the chief to sit on. Meanwhile, the heavy music of *agbande* drumming goes on non-stop, as other people dance to venerate the chief. So, because of this *agbande* means a chief venerated with *agbande* music.

In addition to the *agbande* drums, there was another long flute-like musical instrument called *tiam*. It was also blown along with the *agbande* drums to form the music for the veneration of a chief. This was in the era before Tiv people were familiar with the *kakaki* musical instrument. *Kakaki* is a Hausa name.

The Tiv had the *tiam* type. The music would go on until the chief got seated. A moment later, the herald would rise and order everybody to keep silent. The herald

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<sup>49</sup> *Agbande* is a tall standing drum set in the ground, with a leather top which has a deep 'voice': it is used for dancing and singing celebrations. Even larger is the *ilyum*, a huge hollowed log or tree drum with two 'lips' and a slit 'mouth' that could be heard for miles; it makes announcements, or talks.

could even hold a whip with which he would coerce people to calm down and get seated.

The *angwe* [herald], even though appointed by the chief, was not a subordinate chief. Instead, on the day of installation of the subordinate chiefs, he would be charged with maintaining order, so that he even had the authority to whip an uncontrollable crowd. The post of *angwe* is part of the culture of the Uke ethnic group, especially the Jukun in Wukari. It is usually young men who are given this post.

Suffice it to add that the Wukari monarch has a special day called *Puje* in accordance with their customary practice. On the *Puje* day, the monarch normally rises very early and moves toward the northeast into the wild bush for a retreat with his council of elders. They remain there till six o'clock in the evening. On their way back, a young man has their mugs for drinking the *tashi* beer in a sack. He comes running ahead of them with a cane in his hand while he loudly chants *agye! agye!* If he encounters anybody on the way, he would cane such a one very well to make way for the returning monarch. As he yells *agye, agye*, the people of Wukari would know at once that the monarch was returning from his retreat. So, the people would go out to welcome the monarch.

The Tiv admired this act. So, even though the Wukari monarch never introduced *agye* to them as part of their traditional titles, the Tiv incorporated the office of *agye* into their traditional organizational structure and called him the *angwe toro*. The *angwe* was, thus, the one to call people to order at public gatherings in which the chief was in attendance. Then the chief would rise and call on the eldest person in the district of the subordinate chief. And that one would respond. The chief would, then, address them:

You, the elders, have appointed me to administer the land. I, on the other hand, have placed my representative among you, so that when I am no more alive, he can continue in my footsteps. Today I have come to officially hand him over to you. This is because if I left him to return back to you alone and if anything happened to him on the way, you would claim innocence. That is why I have brought him personally to hand him over to you. Take good care of him and support him. If anything goes wrong with him, you will be held responsible.

Thus, the eldest man would rise, call the rest of the elders from every kindred group within the district and ask, 'Have you heard what the chief has said?' The elders would reply in unison, 'Yes, we have heard him very well. And we are happy that he has brought our kinsman safely back to us. If anything happens now, we are the ones to blame.'

Next, the installed subordinate chief would offer a cow to each kindred group within his district. This would be slaughtered, the women would cook the meat, and they would have a great feast. Then, the chief would finally return to his palace accompanied by music of veneration.

#### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHIEFS AND ELDERS

In the past, chiefs were never part of an 'investigative' panel. Rather, they acted as presiding judges. If there was a problem, the chief would summon the elders of his domain who would converge at an appointed time. The chief would serve them beer.

After drinking, an elder from the group called the ‘kingmaker’, who was in charge of supervising the affairs of the chief, would rise and call for silence. There would be absolute silence. He would then ask the chief his reason for summoning them. The chief would respond: ‘I have had a bad dream. That is why I have invited you to come and help interpret it for me.’ The elders would tell the supervisory elder to go ahead and ask the chief to narrate the dream for them to hear. So, the supervisory elder would ask the chief, ‘Is it possible for you to narrate the dream to us?’ The chief would reply, ‘Would I have called you, if it were something I couldn’t reveal to you?’ With that, the chief would recount his symbolic dream to the council of elders.

For instance, it might be a dream about monkeys destroying crops or birds destroying millet on farms. The dream made the chief consult a diviner and upon discovering an evil person was behind the wizardry, he would summon the elders of the land. Yet, he would not directly disclose the evil person’s identity to the public. Instead, he would just say it in a parable. If the elders could not decode the message, the chief and the few elders who were able to decode the parable would go behind closed doors with the ignorant elders and explain the message of the chief’s parable to them.

When all the elders understood the parable, they would announce that the case needed to be treated urgently since it had already persisted for too long. Thus, this would call for a meeting at the *ilyum* (*ilyum* was a place where the elders came together to deliberate on matters to fix the land, and *ilyum* itself used to be a long stone that was put in the middle between the elders – if there was an issue, the elders from different clans all came together to discuss the matter).

So, on the next day, the elders would converge at the *ilyum*. At the *ilyum*, the matter would be made public. They would reveal the evil person who was behind the monkeys or birds destroying crops. In effect, they would confront the elders from the kindred group of the ‘evil person’, informing him that the evil man was actually from his kindred group.

The custom was that not every elder could speak at the forum of elders. They would have just one spokesman speak while the chief and the rest would listen. Yet, at the end of every parlance, any decision made would be assumed to be the collective decision of the elders. Take this for example.

Akaanya is the chief.

Mjila is the spokesman of the elders.

Sabe is the elder from the evil person’s kindred group.

Afena is the evil man behind the destruction of crops.

At a judicial inquiry:

**Chief Akaanya:** It is you, the elders, who came together and appointed me to preside over the land. But the land is getting out of control. It is for this reason that I have summoned you today to let you know that if I am no longer trustworthy, you may recall your mandate from me and assign it to whatever person is most fit by your rating. For the land is surely no more under my control.

**Mjila:** Chief Akaanya, you had better stop fooling us. We appointed you wholeheartedly. So, if there is someone making mischief, won’t his ‘head’ vanish? Elders, is that not so?

**Elders:** Mjila, you have spoken our mind.

**Chief Akaanya:** But Sabe has usurped my powers. So, I felt, perhaps, you have appointed him in recent times and saddled him with the responsibility of administering this Kingdom.

**Mjila:** Sabe, is that what is happening? As for me, I am not aware of any of such development in recent times. That is why I am frankly refuting knowledge of any such development. But perhaps there are some elders who are aware of such a thing, while I am ignorant of it?

**Elders:** Mjila, as long as you are alive in this land, who would dare carry out anything without your knowledge?

**Chief Akaanya:** In ages past I was firmly in charge of this land; I protected the farms of my subjects. But now that Sabe has usurped my influence and perhaps, position, birds and monkeys are destroying crops.

**Mjila:** Sabe, speak. The chief is consistently hammering on this one issue. So, the matter had better be discussed so that a solution can be found.

**Sabe:** As for me, when I got home from our discussions, I was confronted by this boy, Afena. He attempted to deny everything but could not exonerate himself. He did his best but was proven guilty. I told him that we were to meet today and that he must be at the meeting.

**Elders:** Sabe, you have spoken well. You, Afena, do you know anything about the destruction of crops by monkeys and birds?

**Afena:** Yes, I do.

**Elders:** What influenced you to behave like this? Where did you get such witchcraft tricks?

**Afena:** I was initiated into this ability by a man from the Mbaiyange district.

**Another Elder:** You, Afena, you look ugly. Your mind is filled with ideas of wicked acts that can destroy our land. I feel like I should cut you down with my machete, you wretched-looking thing.

**Mjila:** That's okay. Don't push issues of witchcraft too far. It can still be resolved amicably. Just take it easy with him. We can talk sense into his head. Forget his stupidity. He is still one of the sons of the land. Let him appease us with a she-goat, while we warn him against doing this again.

**Elders:** Mjila, you have spoken well.

**Afena:** Here is the she-goat.

**Another Elder:** Are you giving people the option of a fine in cases of witchcraft, as if it were a case of theft?

**Mjila:** Not that. But let's start from simple to more complex. Let's use the ordinary fine first. And if he does not refrain from such acts, then, we shall take it up with him in the spiritual realm. He has actually committed an abominable thing.

**Elders:** Chief, can you make your pronouncement on the matter so that we can disperse? It is getting late.

**Chief Akaanya:** As for me, since you have installed me, I am ready to administer the land well. As for you, Afena, this should be the last of this kind of occurrence. Let the monkeys feed on herbs while the birds feed on weeds. But if you keep on with evil deeds, one day we will slaughter you here at the *ilyum* square, just as we are going to slaughter your nanny-goat.

Thus, they would slaughter the she-goat and spill its blood on the *ilyum*, while they share its meat among themselves and the chief. Then they would disperse to their various destinations. This is how elders and a chief could work in harmony.

### CASES OF THEFT

In the past, people did not deny their guilt as wilfully as they do nowadays. Even theft was rare. Theft was a disgraceful act among the Tiv people, especially the theft of crops, and worst of all was the theft of seed yams. People who stole seed yams and sorghum were highly disgraced. It was a bit better to steal domestic animals or large sums of money.

If a man has been proven to have stolen a goat or a sheep, the owner of the sheep would confront the thief. If the thief proved to be stubborn, the owner of the sheep would report to the brother of the thief, 'My sheep is missing and I have traced it to the thief's house. But he is proving to be stubborn. So I have decided to contact you to help me get back my sheep. If I owe him anything, let him tell me so that I can repay him.'

To this effect, the brother of the thief would summon the thief and ask him whether it was true that he had stolen the sheep as had been alleged. If he confessed, the brother would ask him to return the sheep to the owner. The thief might retort that the sheep was not available any more. The brother would order the thief to bring the money he had realized from the sale of the sheep. But the thief might reply, 'I have spent it all.' With that, the brother of the thief would say, 'In that case, the matter has to be brought before a chief.'

So the owner of the sheep would go to the chief. On arrival, he would bend down in obeisance and greet the chief. The chief would answer the greeting, and inquire what the person's mission was. The man would vividly narrate the theft to the chief. After listening to the complaint, the chief would send his errand boy to summon the thief and his brother to the chief's residence. When they came, the chief would make the complainant restate his case in the hearing of the thief and his brother. The chief would then ask the thief's brother whether or not the complaint has been correctly stated. The brother would agree. The chief would again ask the thief whether or not the accusation was correct. The thief too would say yes.

The chief would now say to the thief, 'You are such a cruel-minded person. You just go and dispossess someone of his property for no good reason and you then go and sell it? Therefore, you are going to pay for the sheep two-fold. And the fine for your offence is a she-goat. By the tenth day of next month, I would like to see you provide all the items I mentioned. As for you, the owner of the sheep, go back as well. By the tenth of next month, I will call you and all the elders to return.' Then they would all disperse.

By the tenth day of the following month, the thief would provide two sheep and a she-goat as instructed by the chief. The chief would also summon the elders of the land. When they convened, he would explain the situation to them and also show them the three animals. The elders would approve the manner in which the chief handled the case and add, 'Chief, as for us, we have put you in charge. If anyone messes up, we shall deal with that person. If anyone disobeys your order, such a one will surely die.'

With that, they would slaughter the she-goat, which the thief had been fined, and share the meat among themselves with joy. The chief would give one of the sheep as compensation to the complainant, while he took one for himself. The one he retained for himself was referred to as *shiator*. Sometimes, the complainant would provide the chief the monetary value of the sheep as *shiator* instead. In this case, the chief would not take one of the sheep for himself. This is how chiefs made fortunes.

Another means through which Tiv chiefs used to make a fortune was the chieftaincy, for which Tiv people could only go to Wukari to receive the investiture. Long ago, whoever wanted to ascend to a chieftaincy had to surmount many hurdles. An aspirant had to first give bribes to local chiefs before he could get clearance to go to the monarch in Wukari for investiture. If an aspirant gave bribes to a chief, the chief would send an errand boy to take the aspirant to the next chief. The next chief would do the same thing. It continued like this until the aspirant was able to do this to all chiefs in the locality. By the time the aspirant was able to reach the monarch at Wukari, he would really be overstretched financially.

The mere act of spending nights on the way to Wukari meant that an aspirant could not spend the night in just any compound. He could only spend the night where a female relative was married. The Tiv of the Shitire and Ukum clans, who were close to Wukari, were well-informed about the procedure of chieftaincy, used to take undue advantage over chieftaincy aspirants from Tiv clans that were far away from Wukari.

As time went on, the Tiv of the Ugondo and Nôngov clans became contemptuous of the Wukari monarch. This made the other Tiv clans stop approaching that monarch for chieftaincy investiture. It was worse for the Tiv of Kparev clan, who did not know at that time what a horse was. In fact, they used to refer to a horse as an *ikande* ‘long snout’. Any time they saw a man on a horse, they would say he was riding on an *ikande* with long jaws. And the Tiv of the Ikurav clan, when they engaged men of the Uke ethnic group in a war in the past, feared their horses the most. They would run away, fearing that a horse might bite them. The Tiv of the Kparev clan used to refer to a horse as a creature with long jaws. Today, they still consider horses with distaste.

### CHIEFTAINCY INVESTITURE IN KATSINA ALA

Since the distant Tiv clans continued to suffer many hurdles in getting the chieftaincy investiture, the people of the Abakwa ethnic group in Katsina Ala told the Tiv nearby, ‘The people of Wukari and we are the same. So you can get the investiture from us and it won’t be any problem.’ So some Tiv people started rushing to get the chieftain investiture in Katsina Ala. The Katsina Ala monarch, at the time the Tiv people started going to Katsina Ala for investiture, was named Allah Sarki [God is King]. This was when the Abakwa people had settled where the people of Mbagen district are today, near the residence of Chief Hôm. Their water well, which never dried up, and was named *ruandadi* [Hausa: ‘pleasant water’] and is still there. Anytime a man was installed in Katsina Ala, people would celebrate and sing:

Ooo waters of Mgbakpa waters of Kachina wooo  
 Oo waters *awey awey* waters of Mgbakpa waters of Kachina  
 Sweet and pleasant waters

And the crowd would answer in chorus. Another song was sung like this:

Ala-shirki wo o o o o a o o o o aye o  
 I revere and recognise your position chief *wei*,  
 Reverence and respect to you a yee

The crowd would answer, repeating the same stanza in chorus. As Tiv people continued to obtain the chieftaincy from Katsina Ala, the people of Wukari became angry with the people of Katsina Ala. So the Wukari monarch sent word to Allah Sarki, asking why he, Allah Sarki, had snatched his people from him. In effect, Allah Sarki was telling Tiv people that the Wukari monarch was his father. Even when they got investiture from Allah Sarki, if they were so inclined by wealth, they could still proceed to the Wukari monarch for the royal blessing to enhance the prestige of their chieftaincy. Since then, whenever Tiv people got installed chiefs at Katsina Ala and were wealthy enough, they could move further to Wukari to finalize the process. But those who were not financially buoyant enough could terminate their investiture at Katsina Ala.

At this time the Tiv were deeply involved in fratricidal wars. People of small stature could no longer go about openly. There were not even proper roads, so that a journey to a nearby ethnic group, which was supposed to be a day's journey, could take a person five days. And if such a person dared go about during broad daylight, he could easily fall into slavery. He could be caught by someone who would sell him into slavery in a faraway land to raise money. Even financial debts between people could no longer be settled amicably, but instead became a reason to take people captive. Take, for example, Ibo who owes Adagu a cow or a goat. Adagu hails from the Ukan clan while Ibo is from the Ipav district of the Kparev clan. Adagu has come to claim what he is owed but Ibo is not able to pay and requests a way to work out a way to pay his debt. Adagu would return home. One day it happened that Ngibo Dam of Igôrov in the Ipav district would set out to visit his in-law in the Kurav clan, and would have to stop over at Adagu's residence. Adagu would receive him and give him a tobacco pipe to smoke. After that, Adagu would ask him, 'Where are you from?'

**Ngibo:** I hail from Ipav district. I am the son of Dam of the Igôrov kindred group.

**Adagu:** Do you know Ibo?

**Ngibo:** Yes, Ibo is the son of Orgar in the Mbakpeh kindred group.

**Adagu:** Since you know Ibo, then that is all right.

With this, Adagu would conspire quietly with his brothers. They would take their bows and arrows and wait in ambush on the road leading to the Kurav clan, which Ngibo must follow. Meanwhile, Adagu would come back, sit with Ngibo and continue the friendly discussion. When Ngibo was ready to go, Adagu would decide to see him off. So, they would move together. As they

reached at the point where Adagu's brothers were lying in ambush, Adagu would declare:

**Adagu:** This is really a bird in the hand.

**Ngibo:** What do you mean by that?

**Adagu:** Oh, imagine him asking me so foolishly. Can't it be a bird in the hand? Is there any difference between Igôr and Kpegh kindred groups? Are they not the kindred of the same Ipav district? Now that I've got you, it is as good as a man walking straight into the waiting hands of his enemy. Let's go back. I am going take you captive.

**Ngibo:** Adagu, stop joking that way.

**Adagu:** So, you think this is a joke?

Adagu would now seize Ngibo and as they struggled against each other, the brothers of Adagu would emerge from the bush, join forces with Adagu, and tie up Ngibo tightly. They would bring him back home, tie his hands, and leave him lying in Adagu's gazebo. Adagu would quickly go with money to bribe the chief of his domain, and would narrate the whole episode to the chief. The chief would approve of Adagu's conduct at once and say, 'You have done very well. Are we slaves to the people of the Ipav district? They must stop this stupidity. If they don't come to redeem their man, you can sell him.' Thus, Adagu would return home to watch over his captive.

If Ibo hears this but has no cow with which to redeem Ngibo, then Ngibo would remain a captive until Adagu decided to go and sell Ngibo in a faraway land. That means Ngibo Dam has been sold into slavery. Whoever buys him will treat him as his slave.

This is how slavery came about. Nobody was born a slave; all were born free children. It was actually a free-born child who could become a slave.

Sometimes, even in absence of issues over debts, the strongmen of a particular clan would — without any provocation — attack people of another clan who were travelling through their territory. If they were able to subdue the travellers, they would kill some and take some others captive for no reason. In fact, if then a person wanted to be initiated into the *biamegh* cult but had no money to finance the initiation, he might go and lie in ambush along a road that non-Tiv travellers also used. If the travellers looked strong enough, the person lying in ambush would hold back from attacking. But if the travellers looked weak or were women, the person lying in ambush would pounce on them, seize them, go and sell them to get money to finance his *biamegh* initiation rite — and then brag about it among his peers.

My father Sai was almost lynched by non-Tiv travellers for this kind of thing. He revealed that he never made money through the sale of cotton. Rather, he made his money from the slave trade. Since he did not know cotton spinning or the weaving of *tugudu* cloth, slave trading was his main business. It was Hausa travellers who suffered most in his hands. His other means of making money was through the blacksmith trade. He could make spears and sell them to a non-Tiv monarch, who would pay him with a slave. I witnessed this myself. One time he made a spear and delivered it to Garbushi, who was the Takum monarch, in exchange for a female slave named Nyandi. Even though I was still at a tender age, I remember this very well. This was the time we had



settled at the stream Atu, where the people of the Mbaaputor district of the Ukum clan are settled presently.

In those days, the major road leading to Takum was popularly called the 'kola-nut road', because the people of the Uke ethnic group used to travel the road in large numbers to go and buy kola-nuts. When my father wanted to be initiated into the *biamegh* cult and was short of funds, he went to capture slaves with one of his friends named Gbaa from the Mbaityula district. My father himself was from the Mbajir district, but travelled with this friend to attack men of the Uke ethnic group.

One day they lay in ambush along the 'kola-nut road' where the D.R.C.M had their first camp in Tivland. It was here that they used to waylay men of the Uke ethnic group. They lay in ambush near the roadside by an *iyiase* tree, exactly where the Uke travellers used to make a stop-over to rest. As they lay hidden there for a while, four Uke travellers arrived. The travellers even had bows and arrows tied to their luggage. As my father emerged with Gbaa, his friend, he struck down one of the travellers on the feet with a rod and tied him up. As Gbaa went to subdue another, the third traveller came and struck Gbaa on the head with his rod. In effect, my father was then left alone, wondering what would happen. By that time, he had already finished tying up one Uke traveller. So, he left him and was able to pursue and get the one who had struck Gbaa down. He also got the woman who was with the travellers. Only one traveller was able to escape.

By the time he returned, Gbaa had recovered from his daze. He gave Gbaa the very person Gbaa had first struck down, while he took two slaves for himself. My elder brothers grew up to see many of the slaves my father had. Suffice it to say that if we talked of men of valour of the old days, then I mentioned people like Gire and Ge of the Diiv district or Adudu of the Mbaigen. These were men of valour in the southern segment of the Shangev clan whose names the women exalted in singing lullabies for lulling their children to sleep.

### THE *KUR* WARLORD

In the past, the Tiv people had another chieftain title known as *kur*. *Kur* was different from *tor agbande*. *Kur* was actually a name for chief in the language of the Ugenyi-Chamba ethnic group. Actually, they called it *Kuru*. In the Nyafa dialect of the Wukari people, it is known as *Aku*. But the Tiv pronounced it *kur*. The *kur* was not a category of chief to be accorded obeisance. The Tiv used to do the investiture of the *kur* title at Takum and Donga. These were the only two places for the investiture of the *kur* title. As I have stated earlier, the *tor agbande* investiture was done at Wukari and Abakwa chiefdoms. In the old days, the *kur* title was attained by daring warriors or one with a strong militia.

### THE MAKING OF A WARLORD

In the past, if anybody aspired to be made a warlord, he had to first intimate his ambition to the elders of his clan. He would even offer them some money as an inducement. After that he would also inform the chief of his clan. To the chief

he would even offer a cow as an inducement. After intimating his ambition to the chief and the elders, the aspirant would get a cow and a slave, but if he was not wealthy enough, he would just get a cow or a slave and go to Takum or Donga Gaba for the investiture. Some elders could accompany him on the journey. When they got there, the accompanying elders would introduce the aspirant to the monarch of the Uke ethnic group.

The monarch would then give the elders an *agundu* cap or a sun hat, a white royal robe, and a flat-head spear or a sword for fighting wars. Thus the elders would 'suit up' the aspirant. These were the regalia of a warlord.

In those days, if a monarch died, his senior assistant — the *Abo Tamen* — would replace him. If the senior assistant was a weakling, the junior assistant of the monarch — the *Abo Kiriki* — would replace him. A warlord never replaced a deceased monarch because he himself was regarded as being of the same status as the monarch. In fact, he had subordinate chiefs. The subordinate warlords were called *irmo* or *gagum*. In the Hausa language the *irmo* is called *yerima*. These were the names of the subordinate warlords.

### GREETINGS TO CHIEFS

There is a difference in the way a chief is to be greeted and the way a warlord is greeted. To greet a chief in the past, Tiv people would kneel down and throw sand over their back in accordance with the manner the Wukari people greeted their monarch, the *Aku Uka*. A warlord was greeted by the clapping of hands just as they had seen it done by the Chamba people of Takum and Donga Gaba. That is how these people greeted a warlord.

The Tiv people copied all these forms of greetings from the Uke ethnic group who have been mentioned earlier. As time went on, the Hausa people who went around Tivland with Usman Danfodio, in the course of the *jihad*, began to address their chiefs as *Zaki*. The Tiv people emulated them and addressed their chiefs and warlords, as well as sub-chiefs, as *Zaki* [Sarki] just as they had heard the Hausa do. This is still how they greet chiefs today.

### PAYING HOMAGE

In the past, if Tiv people came before a chief, they would not sit on a seat. They would all sit on the floor. Only the chief would sit on a seat. A chief's seat was called an *ika*. In the past, the chief's chair was a raffia platform about three feet high. Another small stool was attached to its side. The chief would step on it to mount his *ika*. Some people referred to the *ika* as a ladder. These acts which accorded respect to a chief were only known within the Shitire, Ukum, Nôngov, and a few other Tiv clans, because these clans were able to copy them from the neighbouring Uke ethnic group.

The Tiv of the Kparev clan never knew much about homage. Their chief was a callous person, so that they feared him because of his callousness. When a chief was seated on a seat, someone could even ask the chief to move over so that he could share the seat with the chief. They also greeted a chief without the necessary homage. In fact, among the subordinate chiefs they have, they have no regard for

them all. Even though they refer to them as chiefs, they never accord them the respect they deserve as chiefs. Chiefs are more respected by people from other ethnic groups.

### WHITEMAN'S CHIEF

The Tiv people continued chieftaincy investitures in this way until the advent of colonialism. During the early stage of the coming of the Whiteman, the Tiv did not understand the Whiteman's culture. That being so, they did not like the chiefs to be appointed by the Whiteman. If the white colonial administrator appointed a person to be a chief, the person would reject the offer because the people felt a chief appointed by colonial officers was never regarded as much. The people who were appointed chiefs by the colonial administrators were never respected; people would ask what calibre of chiefs they were, since they always went about under the hot sun adjudicating cases. The people made all sorts of ridiculous comments to insult the chiefs appointed by the white colonial administrators.

Yet it was this category of chief that had pre-eminence. This is because, as time went on, even the well-respected *tor agbande* could be judged by the chiefs appointed by colonial administrators. If a *tor agbande* was indebted to someone, such a one would come and report him to a chief who had been appointed by the Whiteman, who could send an underling to go and determine the matter. Even with this being the case, the Tiv people still cared little about the chiefs of the colonial administration. The undersecretaries who were sent to adjudicate cases were referred to as *tor shoja* – meaning, soldier chief. The undersecretaries were so called because in the past if the colonial administrator appointed a chief, the chief in turn would have a battalion of errand boys who would be sent to summon people as the need arose. Among the boys, there would be a leader who used to sometimes act in the place of the chief in matters the chief did not want to attend to personally. These were the ones that the Tiv people referred to as *tor shoja*.

The Tiv people did not know about *dughwer* the native authority policemen. The elder appointed by the Whiteman for overseeing the kindred group or clan was called *buteril* or black foreigner by the Tiv people. Some of the chiefs appointed were already *tor agbande* and the new title gave them additional power for effective oversight-cum-administration of their domains. Some of them were elders and once the Whiteman inquired about them and was convinced that they were of an impeccable character, he appointed them chiefs. The chiefs appointed by the Whiteman usually did not do much of the Whiteman's job; they were mostly engaged in extortion. The head soldiers were mostly the ones running errands. It was the same *tor shoja* that used to attend to the Whiteman. At times the *tor shoja* could not reach the Whiteman — they could only contact his staff, but nevertheless came back to their kindred groups and told them their words were from the Whiteman and frightened them. The authority of the *tor shoja* was less than that of the chief who had held a staff of office during the period when the Whiteman first came.

## CHIEFS WITH STAFFS OF OFFICE

After some time, the Whiteman started giving staffs of office to their chiefs. He would go to a clan or kindred group of Tiv and give a staff of office to the chief there, saying that the entire group should revere him and listen to his words and sayings; the person should be like a senior chief. He then appointed judges according to the sub-clans/sub-kindred of the person's clan/kindred and decreed that these *mbaa-jiriv* should also be jointly engaged in litigation duties with him. The Whiteman decreed that the chief with a staff of office should be the highest in the hierarchy of leaders or chiefs, just as there are other more senior people in the Whiteman's own hierarchy, yet the Governor is the highest. When the Tiv people first heard this, they referred to the *mbaa-jiriv* as chiefs and they called the chiefs *gomna* for governor. Not only this, but they also called him *zaki* governor. One day, a certain Whiteman named Dantsofo, who was Resident in Katsina Ala, and also in charge of overseeing all of Tivland, was travelling to Ukum by virtue of his office as the custodian of Tivland. As he approached Zaki Biam, Afegha, who was the first chief with a staff of office in Ukum, sent his *dugwer*, or security guard, to go and receive Dantsofo. On meeting Dantsofo, the security guard exchanged pleasantries with him and said to him, 'The senior Governor asked me to come and welcome you.' Dantsofo told Gbangerpev, his interpreter, to ask the security guard what he just said. Gbangerpev asked and the *dugwer* repeated again, 'The senior Governor asked me to come and welcome you'. Dantsofo asked, 'Which Governor?' The security guard said, 'Governor Afegha.' Dantsofo became angry and said they should get hold of that security guard, stretch him on the ground, and give him twelve lashes. Later when he stood up, Dantsofo reprimanded him and told him to stop calling any Tiv man a 'Governor'. 'Governor' was a big title and not one to play with. Dantsofo also warned the Tiv people accordingly. The Tiv people became exceedingly afraid and never called any Tiv man 'Governor' within earshot of the Whiteman except behind his back. After appointing chiefs with staffs of office and a litigation jury for all the Tiv clans/kindred groups, the Whiteman started appointing security guards, *adugwer*, and this marked the beginning of some very unpleasant events. It was not only chiefs with staffs of office, but also *mbaa-jiriv* and security guards who started beating people and extorting money from them by force. The most important thing to them in those days, and even up until today, was women. Once they attained the job, they became interested in women and not in the job itself.

## WAYS THE CHIEF GETS WIVES

A chief with staff of office has many ways of getting married to many women. If a man begat female children and they grew to adolescence and were beautiful and charming, the children of the chief might see them and tell the chief that so-and-so has a beautiful daughter who is ready to be a 'house wife'. If the young woman was from the chief's kindred/clan, the issue was settled; the chief had thus already married her! He only had to send for her and as they brought her to him, she became the chief's wife. Other times, if a person had married another person's sister and the brother came to report to the chief, the chief

usually had his messengers bring the bride and groom to him. On arrival, the chief bound the groom and the bride became his wife. He then told the brother to go look for some money and give it to him. Sometimes the brother came to the chief with money, but the chief drove him away and the sister remained in the chief's house as his wife, with no dowry paid. If the brother was a highly determined person, he went to the Whiteman and made a complaint. The Whiteman on hearing this, sent a security guard or a messenger to inquire from the chief and report back. The chief would deny it completely, saying that the man had lied. The judges accepted whatever the chief said. The man then became a liar with his complaint and the chief was favoured. In some cases, the brother received a punishment and in some instances the chief said that although the brother had spoken against him, he pardoned him, but if he repeated such an act, he would tell the Whiteman and he would be detained in prison. Thus the brother went back home and the chief kept his sister as a free wife. Through these means, some chiefs with staffs of office married five wives, and some ten, without paying a dowry. At times, some people marry and their wives give birth to male and female children and when the brother asks for the dowry, the sister's husband neither speaks with him respectfully nor pays the dowry. The brother might say it would have been better if the chief had married his sister without a dowry. Then the brother might go to the chief to make a complaint. The complaint is accompanied by the payment of a fee. The chief then separates the woman from her husband and takes the most beautiful daughter as his wife, in addition to the money he was paid as a complaint fee. He then returns to marry off the woman to his brother with the other children.

If someone owes another person and this is reported to the chief, the chief usually sends a security guard to arrest the debtor. On arrival, the debtor might tell the chief that he does not have the money, but he has a sister who he will give to the chief temporarily. Once he gets the money, he will come and give it to the chief to redeem his sister. Once the chief accepts this and the sister is brought to him, that's all. The man owed the money is not paid by the chief and the person owing also does not get the money to the chief to redeem his sister. The chief marries the sister. If the chief is a kind person, he may give a little money to the person owed, but this person would not dare come back to ask for the balance.

If a person pays a dowry for a woman's hand in marriage and the money is collected by the woman's relation, but the woman's hand is not given in marriage, he might go to the chief to register a complaint. The chief with a staff of office then sends a security guard to go and arrest the person who is in receipt of the dowry but has refused to give the woman's hand in marriage. Usually he is arrested along with his sister. The chief subjects the person to extreme suffering until he returns the dowry to him. He then gives only part of it to the complainant and keeps the rest for himself. He also keeps the woman as his wife. The two people, the debtor and the person owed, go back empty-handed. A woman cannot refuse to marry a chief; if he courts her, she must accept. No matter how old the chief is, if he is a suitor to the woman, she will accept him because she will enjoy status if she marries a chief with a staff of office. Even if the woman tries to refuse, her people, mother and father, would scold her, saying she should marry the chief, so that if they have an encounter with another person, the chief will help them to overcome it. With all of these pressures, the woman would succumb and accept.

These were the methods chiefs used to marry women in the past. Some people had one or two wives prior to becoming chiefs and did not have sisters to use to get a wife by exchange, as was done those days. They also did not have money, but if one became a chief with a staff of office, he became happy. Some married forty, some sixty, some eighty wives after becoming chiefs. With so many wives, some might not have food to eat. Someone who was suffering might escape to her family house; the chief would send a message for the parents to bring her back. The parents might bring her back very early in the morning and the chief would subject her to severe suffering. The other women on seeing this would become afraid, so that they would remain with the chief no matter how they were suffering.

Yet the chief could not sleep with all of them because they were too many. If, however, any of them was unable to control herself and slept with another person and this became known to the chief, she was in trouble. The chief would try her and beat her with an elephant whip to the point of death. Some of the women feared it for a long time. The chief then would arrest the person who slept with her and subject him to severe punishment. The person would set himself free by giving his sister to the chief, but the chief would continue to beat him severely before he stopped. A chief with a staff of office acquires many wives for himself, while poor people remain single. The chiefs, members of the litigation jury, security guards, and the soldiers all married in the same manner as the chief with a staff of office, but the latter had more wives than all of them.

### FINANCIAL EXTORTION

The chiefs of those days extorted and confiscated people's money in no small measure. If a man kept a fat bull that looked good, it could well be for the chief, unless the chief did not hear about it. If he heard about it, he would usually send the security guard to tell the owner of the bull, who must bring it to give to the chief, along with additional money for the chief to buy oil, slaughter the bull and eat it. Any animal a person had that was the best was eaten by the chief. If any person organized a ceremony for dancing/dancers, he had to inform the chief by giving him money. If the chief was not told and given money, he disrupted the event on the scheduled date and it was not held.

If a member of the litigation jury died and the Whiteman told Tiv people to appoint a new one, the chief, jurists, and security guards used it as an avenue to make money. If five people wanted to become chief jurists, each of them must give a cow/bull, to a total of five cattle; each of them donated a bull to the chief and gave money to the jurists and other workers to seek support in becoming chief jurists. The person that gave the highest amount of money, even if he were a fool, was appointed as the head of all the jurists. The rest went empty-handed; the chief and his workers ate all the money.

In Tivland, men of wisdom do not get anything; it is fools that are entrusted with responsibility. The Tiv do this for two reasons: in the first instance, they eat a fool's money, then they make him a chief briefly and later strip him of the chieftaincy title for a more knowledgeable person. But they fear giving the title to a man of wisdom, fearing that he may hold it in such a firm grip that they

would be unable to strip him of the title, because of his wisdom. But they give to a fool expressly, in order to eat his money completely and take the title from him for another fool and the cycle continues.

In some instances, a person may report a case; the chief adjudicates it and prevails on the debtor to pay the debt. After payment, the chief shares the money with the owner. If it is a debt involving five bulls, the chief with a staff of office would take three bulls and give the owner two, but the latter will not dare to ask questions. If he takes it up with a higher authority, he will be blocked by the bureaucracy.

### NATIVE AUTHORITY POLICEMEN

When the Whiteman first appointed chiefs with staffs of office, they did not attach security police to them. The chiefs on their own appointed lieutenants to run their errands. When the Whiteman Resident at Katsina Ala named Dantsofo came, he appointed security guards called *dogari* who put on special uniforms. *Dogari* is not a Tiv word; it is a Hausa name. The Ugenyi also did not know the name *dogari*; the only semblance of meaning they had with the *dogari* was *agye* which the Tiv people pronounce *angwe* just as was explained under *Tor Agbande*. It is this *angwe* that in contemporary history is referred to as *dogari* and that the Tiv referred to as *dugwer*. It was Dantsofo who first vested it onto the Tiv. Initially the *adugwer* were identified with a robe or special blanket, as well as a belt-like cloth that was bound around which was not wide; additionally, the uniform or robe of the messengers consisted of striped robes with a clasped belt. In the past, the Tiv people used to fear *dugwer* or Native Authority Police a great deal; they addressed them as *Zaki dugwer*. The Tiv people did not also care much about the messenger (*mashinja*) as compared to the *dugwer*. There were three people that the Tiv people feared exceedingly, namely the Whiteman, a chief with a staff of office and the security police. Once a person became a *dugwer*, he behaved any way he wanted to.

### ENLISTING THE NATIVE AUTHORITY POLICEMAN

Although the job of a policeman/security guard was a good thing for Tivland, it was impossible to become a guard to the chief except with money. If the Whiteman wanted to appoint a guard, he looked among his labourers and appointed a young man or as many as he wanted. He chose those whose good behaviour he had observed or heard of; he dressed them in the uniform of the Native Police or as a messenger and they would be under him. He sent them on errands involving kindred security. If he wanted to appoint police to Tivland, he told the chief that he wanted to appoint a guard and to look out for a well-behaved person to wear the uniform of Native Police and be with the chief and do the job of the Governor's security with the chief. At times, the Whiteman would give uniforms to the chief to dress the security guard and have the chief bring the person in to show him and to write in his name as an employee so that he could start collecting a salary. After hearing this, the chief went to confer with all his arbitrators' *mbaa-jiriv*, and told them to assist him and look for a young man with good behaviour.

As they started looking for a person, the process for getting a new Native Authority policeman (*dugwer u kpelan*) commenced. While they are considering a person identified as having good character, another person may intervene on his own. He might take goods and the gift of a bull to the chief and share money with all his jurists. By doing this, the chief and jurists dump the person they had identified earlier for the job and give it to the person they know may be of doubtful quality just because he gave them money. They would say that they will give the job to that person, not the other, though more qualified person, since the latter did not provide money and therefore cannot get a government job. They ask him to leave while laughing at him, saying he is not strong and so missed the job of Governor. The chief and jurists then send the man that gave them bribe money to the Whiteman to show him and say that this is the well-behaved boy they have found. The Whiteman then writes the name down and once the person collects the Native Authority Policeman uniform and returns home, he becomes something else. He continues to collect people's money by force, saying people should not joke with him as he did not enlist as a police guard free of expenses. Even as he is doing bad things, the chief fears to remove him, saying that if I remove him he will go and report to the Whiteman and say he bought the job with a bull. This new government employee or messenger becomes a partner with the chief; they enjoy the proceeds of looting together while the people suffer.

At times, when the position of policeman is contested, the chief may collect a bull from each of up to three persons involved in the contest. Then he gives one the job of *dugwer* while the remaining two lose out. Sometimes, while the job search is going on, he may give the position to his son or brother and thus leave the other applicants with nothing. The chief eats their money nonetheless.

Someone might ask the question, is the chief is paid a salary? If so, they say, he also eats people's money a lot and marries in the manner we heard about, without paying a dowry — what exactly does he do with the money he is paid? The money you hear about from the various sources does not seem to be enough to satisfy the chief.

The things chiefs do with their money when appointed include marrying as many as twenty wives; if there is a dancing ceremony, he will mix his wives in with those of his children and his brothers, and on this special day, he invites other chiefs and slaughters up to ten cows on the day of the ceremony.

Another thing is that he may spend money on rituals that involve the sacrifice of many cows, not just for himself but for his children or brothers too.

He might buy horses and traditional Hausa clothing that cost many pounds sterling. Another chief may buy one dress at the cost of six pounds sterling and also purchases beads costing up to fifteen pounds sterling. Chiefs buy beads and robes from Hausa people (the Uke). The Hausa set traps for the chief's money using tricks. The Hausa traders would go to the chief and bring a richly embroidered outfit to show him, praising it as being the best. They would tell the chief that the Chief of the Wukari or Sokoto (Shogodo in Tiv) had offered five or six pounds sterling for it, but this offer had been rejected. However, since the Tiv chief was a friend, even if he gave them the same amount as the other chiefs, they would just accept it. The Tiv chief would then praise the Hausa man, saying he is a friend, and would give him a cock or hen, saying he did a very good thing; that even the chief of Sokoto was refused the dress now to be



given to him. So he must buy it but he does not have money at the time. The Hausa man then says, no problem, he will come and collect the money at the end of the month. The chief thanks him and thinks this Hausa man is nice. When it is the time for salaries to be paid, the Hausa man comes immediately to meet the chief. The chief then collects his salary and pays him. Even if he does not pay it all at once, he will settle the rest by the end of the next month when salaries are again paid. Another chief may collect many items of clothing from the Hausa people and pay for one cloth by the end of each month and then have spent all his money. The Hausa people did the same thing to the Tiv people with beads as well. Even if it was the sale of a horse, they would tell the Tiv chief that this horse is not a horse for a poor man, it is the horse of big chiefs — it used to belong to the Emir of Yola. When he died, his children were unable to ride it, and that is why they sold it. They tell the Tiv chief that if he wants to buy it, he should buy it because it is a horse worthy of a chief. A certain Tiv chief may purchase it for ten pounds sterling, another for fifteen pounds sterling. Once bought, the horse may last for two months, or another one for five months and then the Tiv chief purchases another one.<sup>50</sup>

In every house compound of a Tiv chief, you will definitely find Hausa men. Even if they were not resident there, they would visit frequently. In places where there was a pay station, the Hausas came frequently to learn about the pay periods of chiefs, so they would know when to go the chiefs to collect the debts they were owed. These are the some of the things chiefs did with their money.

### THE HEAVY-HANDEDNESS OF THE HAUSA

The Tiv people suffered at the hands of their chiefs because the Hausa workers of the Whiteman increased the suffering of Tiv people. At that time, no Tiv man had been enlisted as an interpreter or messenger. It was only the Hausa who did those jobs. The Whitemen overseeing Tivland in those days did not learn the Tiv language; they only spoke the Hausa language. They spoke to the Hausa interpreter, who in turn translated and spoke with the Tiv. The Whitemen looked at the Tiv but were unable to speak with them. The Tiv chiefs befriended the Hausa, so that they would speak well about them to the Whiteman. Any time a Tiv subject reported that a Tiv chief treated him badly, the Hausa staff working with the Whiteman drove him away so he was unable to see the Whiteman. If the person was determined and eventually met the Whiteman and spoke with him, the Whiteman could not understand him. He had to call in the Hausa interpreter, who told the Whiteman a different story, one not related to what the subject really said. But the Whiteman did not know, so he reacted angrily to the Tiv man and told him he was causing trouble for the chief. When the Tiv people later figured out this development, they stopped wasting their time, and this was followed by sustained suffering. As the chief settled disputes on the one hand, the *adugwer* also did the same on the other hand, extorting money from the people. The head of the courts also settled disputes similarly, extorting money from the people. There was no hindrance whatsoever.

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<sup>50</sup>Horses in Tivland were subject to tsetse flies and died of a wasting, sleeping sickness.

### CASE TALLY STICKS

The Whiteman later on instructed his chiefs with staff to maintain records of the cases they dealt with or tried and then settled monthly. The chiefs in question would send in their messengers with tally sticks indicating how many cases they had dealt with. They were also instructed to list the names of all those who had been tried and whose cases had been adjudicated. The chief would then set fines on cases he had not concluded at the end of the month, up to fifty or sixty of them.

The people running errands also profited. If a person reported a case, the security police who went to arrest the accused was given a cock by the plaintiff. But even if the plaintiff gave a cock, the security guard still never went to carry out the arrest himself; he slept and relaxed and sent his personal *soja gwana*, lackey, to arrest the accused. Even if a woman was the subject of litigation, the *gwana* never took her to the chief immediately. Instead, he brought her to the security police, who slept with her. Even if she was a married woman, the security guard took no heed. No person dared to ask. Once he was done with his sexual exploitation, he took her to the chief, who eventually adjudicated the case. At times, the security police adjudicated and whatever the outcome of the case was, he extorted a fine.

### CASE SETTLEMENTS WITH MONEY

As time passed, the Whiteman instructed his staff chiefs to maintain records of all the cases that they dealt with or tried and then settled by money and no longer tally sticks. Whenever a chief adjudicated a case, unlike in the past where tally sticks were used, he would collect a shilling from the plaintiff which would serve as a record. The chiefs liked this more as the fee of a shilling by the Whiteman meant they could raise it to four shillings, and sometimes more. From the large amount of money raised, they would deduct and send to the Whiteman the right fee as a tally and kept the rest for themselves. After they had been doing this unnoticed for a long time, the Whiteman has finally realized this and is auditing the accounts and the chiefs having them checked. For this purpose he has provided them with scribes.

### SCRIBES OR SECRETARIES

The Whiteman appointed educated Tiv boys to assist the chiefs. The Tiv people call a scribe *malu*. If they were many, they were referred to as *umalu*. The Whiteman appointed such scribes or secretaries to help them with their work of reporting cases.

### THE JOB OF A SECRETARY

The job of a secretary was to sit with the chief at the end of the month, when the litigation jury gathered with the chief to adjudicate various cases. He was not to comment on any case; that was not the job of the scribe. He was to be quiet while the case was going on and then at the end was told what to write about the judgments that were passed. This was the instruction from the Whiteman.

But the secretaries used to operate differently from this job description. Once they reached their chief, they became so puffed up that even the chief started fearing them. The secretary told the chief that he was such a highly educated person that if the chief was not careful, he could make his report in writing against him to the Whiteman. The Whiteman had appointed him, so the chief, and even the litigation jury and other workers of the establishment of the chief, began to fear him.

Even if the chief and the jury adjudicated a case, the secretary might say the verdict was not correct and decline to write it down. He might tell them a different version of what he would write down. But at times the chief and the jury accepted what the secretary said. If a case was not settled to the scribe's satisfaction, he argued with the chief and the jury, almost as if he was going to beat them up physically. They feared that since he was truly an educated person, if he was disrespected, he could write an implicating entry on the paper that might lead to the detention of persons involved. The secretary then behaved any way he wanted and started marrying wives, and even if he had no money the chief arranged marriages for him. At times he married free, without paying a dowry, and the brother of the woman was afraid to talk to him about the dowry, since he was the secretary appointed by the Whiteman. Sometimes he did not speak the Tiv language with Tiv people but in English; some secretaries had interpreters just like the Whiteman; others refused to eat cornmeal mush and would only accept pounded yam, even if yams were scarce. The chief searched for yams to please the secretary. The people feared the secretary, so he did whatever he wanted. In some cases, the chief bought a bicycle and gave it to the secretary to ride so that he would be happy and write good reports about him.

Chiefs worked together with their secretaries to extort litigation money. If the chief fined a person one pound sterling, the secretary wrote five shillings in the litigation records. He and the chief shared the remaining fifteen shillings. The secretary that enjoyed litigation loot along with the chief was then cordial with him. At times a subject was fined a cow, but the secretary wrote that he did this and that bad thing, and was fined only ten shillings. Once the scribe was 'loved' by the chief, the subjects of the chief also became very afraid of him. But if he was the type of secretary who greedily enjoyed litigation loot without sharing, the chief and the jury connived together and reported him to the Whiteman, who then removed him from that position.

There was a certain secretary by the name of Gbaangahar. He was the type of greedy secretary that enjoyed litigation loot alone. So the elders from Gaav and the chief of Agberagba, including the entire jury, connived together and reported him to the Whiteman. He was arrested and banished to Kaduna and he still has not returned today. Some people said he is no longer alive. When other secretaries saw this development, they became very cordial with their chiefs and they continued to secretly enjoy and share litigation loot together.

#### DISPUTES BETWEEN A CHIEF WITH A STAFF OF OFFICE AND HIS SECRETARY

When the Whiteman appoints a secretary for the chief, the latter is very happy. They remain very cordial; whatever the secretary does, the chief is not annoyed.

But if the secretary courts and marries the chief's wife, the chief is proverbially dead already. The chief now starts looking for issues against his secretary. On seeing this, members of the jury as well start looking for issues to use against the secretary until that day when they are able to accuse him before the Whiteman. Then the Whiteman would remove the secretary and chase him away, just as in the case of the chief of Mkôvor in the Ipav clan and his secretary. When appointed, secretaries are very mindful about getting women; this is usually their top priority. Some secretaries may marry two wives; some three, four or five if they are young men. The Whiteman who made the secretaries be more careful was Chafa Don. Chafa Don spoke with the chiefs at a big gathering at Gboko in 1933. He said the Whitemen appointed young educated Tiv natives to assist, but these people had no regard for chiefs and were committing illegalities and the chiefs were afraid of them, which was not proper. 'Do not be afraid of them, they are Tiv people like you. If they are not doing the right thing, beat them,' Chafa Don was quoted as saying. The chiefs accepted this advice in the presence of the Whiteman, but when they left, some chiefs said the Whiteman was just deceiving them, setting a trap for them to beat their secretaries, so he could dispose of them. According to chiefs, the secretaries and the Whiteman were the same — they were both educated. The chiefs said they would not play into the trap and be deposed. At the present time, secretaries carry on their transactions secretly while pretending to be gentlemen in the presence of the Whiteman. Whenever they are alone with Tiv people, things happen and even elders kneel down to greet them. That is the story about secretaries.

#### A VISIT TO KADUNA

What helped the chiefs who held staffs of office was their visit to Kaduna. When the chiefs met at Abinsi for their regular meeting, Chafa Fishi told them that it was the intention of the white people administering Tivland to have Tiv people go to Kaduna to see what the world looked like. Thus, if Tiv people also liked the idea, every chief should prepare to travel to Kaduna with one member of his jury, a security police officer, a messenger, and one wife, since he may want to travel with a wife. They should all do this according to their respective clans/kindred groups. He, Chafa Fishi, would travel along with them by train to see things they had never seen before. They would see different manners of people, they would see the Hausa chief, the Emir, and they might see land that is good for agriculture. According to him, if any one of them wanted to settle there, he would be allowed to do so. All the chiefs agreed that they would go to Kaduna. The Whiteman scheduled a date for the trip and when it was time, all the chiefs, their messengers, security guards and wives got ready for the journey. At the time, the unlawful deeds of three particular chiefs had already been revealed to the Whiteman, Chafa Fishi. The other white men who investigated thoroughly also knew but they never told anybody. When they had all assembled in Makurdi, they boarded a train. My father (I, the author of this manuscript) was among the members of the group travelling to Kaduna, because he was a member of the litigation jury of the chief of the Shitire clan. At the time, the rail line from Makurdi to Kaduna was not yet complete. They entered the train and travelled along, then they disembarked at some point and trekked up to

five miles before re-embarking at another point. On arrival at Kaduna, all the senior Whitemen, including all the soldiers, assembled and danced and the Tiv people saw them. The chiefs were also able to recognize certain Whitemen that had earlier administered Tivland; among them was Maimadubi. The Tiv people also danced very well. The chief of Zaria [the Emir] donated two hundred mats for the Tiv people to sleep on. He also gave eight cows that they could slaughter and eat. The next day, the chief of Zaria came himself. He came with great dignity; he came with show and splendour; he had three hundred horses. Tiv people saw this and were greatly afraid. They said they themselves were a shame to the chieftaincy; it is only among non-Tiv that there are true chiefs. The chief of Zaria sat with Chafa Fishi and all the Tiv squatted down. The chief then greeted the Tiv people and exchanged pleasantries with them and told them that he was very happy to see them; that they should move round and see his domain, and if they liked it they could settle there, he would not prevent them, he would be very happy. They entered vehicles with the Tiv people and took them around to show them places that were good for farming. They finally came back and stood at the entrance of the magistrate's house. The Whiteman asked them if the place was good for them and they praised the place verbally and said it was very good, very good. The Whiteman asked them 'Will you then come here?' The Tiv people said they would come. But behind closed doors, they said, 'Who is the fool who would leave his kindred/clan and go to settle far away in the midst of non-Tiv ethnic groups? We accepted verbally only to make him happy.'

#### RETURN FROM KADUNA

The chiefs stayed at Kaduna for three days and on the fourth day, they returned to Makurdi and slept. At dawn, the Whiteman summoned the chiefs and they all assembled in the compound of the chief of Makurdi. The Resident arrived in a vehicle. The Whiteman came to greet the chiefs and told them that they were free to go, they should go in peace, but three chiefs were not free to leave. They said they wanted to discuss things with these three chiefs. When the Tiv people heard this, their hearts beat quickly. Most of them returned secretly to their kindred/clans, except strong-hearted chiefs who slept in Makurdi and went to bid the Whiteman farewell the next day. When all the other chiefs left and only the three in question remained behind, the Whiteman started to interrogate them.

These three were chief Ugba in Ugondo, Moji from Kunav, and Abagi from lower Shangev. The issues people had reported which the Whiteman had heard but did not tell them were these: Ugba ambushed his Ugondo people and collected their money by force, collected their women, and burned some of their villages; Moji was said to have collected many things from his clan/kindred by force, including their women; Abagi was said to have killed his wife at his farm. These were the accusations that members of their own clans/kindred groups had made about them. The Whiteman, Chafa Fishi, presided over their cases and adjudicated. He finished Ugba's case and convicted him, and sent him to Kaduna in exile. Ugba had to leave his clan and that was the punishment the Whiteman gave him. He also finished Moji's case. Moji was not the kind of person who worried the Whiteman by denying allegations against him that were true. The Whiteman investigated the allegations against him and

each of the allegations that people made was true, so he accepted. The Whiteman in turn asked him if he expected to pay back the money later on, and he did. He had married women in the manner other chiefs married, as we have already described. His wives were ninety-three in number and he had married them all by force, not paying any dowry. The Whiteman allowed the others to leave by virtue of the adjudication in Abinsi. Moji died as the Whiteman was about to take him to Kaduna; he died on the eve of departure to Kaduna. Some people said he killed himself using poison, but after a thorough investigation of the circumstances of his death, the Whiteman realized it was not poison. He died of cardiac arrest. In Abagi's case, the Whiteman adjudicated at length before it was proved beyond a reasonable doubt that he was at fault. The Whiteman took him to his house at Ishangev, and executed him for murder by hanging him from a fig tree. The fig tree is still there up to this year 1935. That is the end of the story about the trip of the Tiv chiefs to Kaduna.

After these events happened, Tiv chiefs became more prudent, no longer snatching people's wives by force as they had done before, because they feared being sent to Kaduna. Subsequently, if a chief contravened the law and the Whiteman heard about it, he would ask him if he desired to go and meet Ugba at Kaduna. Such a chief usually said no and would be afraid. Because of this, they no longer collected money from poor people by force, but instead they used other tricks to do so.

#### TRICKS CURRENTLY USED BY CHIEFS

The following are the tricks used by chiefs nowadays to get money after marriage by exchange was replaced with the dowry system, as described earlier.

The Whiteman told the chiefs that if a person comes to the chief to pay a woman's dowry, that person should come with money, a male relation of the bride, and the bride herself. All of them were to come in the presence of the chief to let the chief see the money and know the amount. The bride was to physically collect one shilling from the groom and give it to the chief for onward delivery to the secretary. The secretary would write all those things in a book. The single shilling was money meant for the Governor. Here too the chiefs had a means to get money. If a person doesn't have six pence, he would offer a cock as payment to the chief. The cock in some cases may be calculated in monetary terms to be worth three shillings, and then another five, and yet another could be more than these sums. Another method is that if people bring a case to the chief, the person that is at fault comes at night to give plenty of money to the chief. On the day of adjudication, the person who is right may state his case clearly to the satisfaction of every member of the jury but the chief is usually not satisfied. He states that the person is only telling lies; he convicts the person as if the person was at fault. Now if that person goes to meet the Whiteman, the Whiteman will usually give him a note to go back and meet the chief again. On coming back, the chief says, 'So, you went to report me to the Whiteman?' Thus, the chief and the other members of the jury usually gang up to say different things against the person who is actually in the right, even including some things that the person did not say. In such a circumstance, he is defeated. If the person who is right wants to get justice at all costs, he too may move money around in the night.

In a scenario where the two persons involved both give money to the chief at night, the chief is faced with a great difficulty on the day of judging the case. He is unable to decide the case frankly and decisively. He becomes caged, unable to place the blame where it should be because he has received money from both parties. Since he is visibly disturbed and if the other jurists get to know about what is in the offing, the chief will adjourn the case for one month. The parties then leave, but if the person that is truly seeking justice becomes desperate, he goes to the Whiteman to tell him. Usually he is afraid to tell the Whiteman that he gave some bribe money to the chief. So he tells the Whiteman that he reported a case a long time ago but the chief does not care to settle it quickly. On hearing this, the Whiteman sends his messengers to hear the case. On their arrival, the chief treats them excellently and benevolently, so they fall in line and support him. The person seeking justice never gets it. The messenger goes back to tell the Whiteman that the person seeking justice actually turned the issues upside-down before the Whiteman when he came to report to him. On some occasions, the Whiteman chases the person away, wondering why he came to lie to him. The person leaves eventually. The people laugh at him because he went to report a falsehood and the Whiteman drove him away. The chief becomes very happy and each time he adjudicates a case, he refers to the time that a man was not satisfied and reported him to the Whiteman but was driven away. The chief then boasts that whatever verdict he passes is usually echoed by the Whiteman; he is not different from the Whiteman. He then claims to know the Whiteman's procedures very well. Because of this, all the people who were not satisfied with how he settled their cases and who would ordinarily want to take their cases up with the Whiteman, became afraid. When the chief died or was deposed, other litigants, whose cases had been forgotten, and who had been afraid to insist, started to bring up their cases again. That is why cases in Tivland are on the increase and are never decreasing in number. Some people have been dealing with a single case since the Whiteman first came to Tivland; it never gets resolved. This is why there are so many cases in Tivland, both old and new ones.

### CREATION OF THE CHIEFTAINCY

As the Whitemen administering Tivland studied Tiv issues, they begin to separate the Tiv people according to their paternal genealogies and installed chiefs. Sometimes they separated them according to maternal genealogies to settle matters in the kindred/clan. They also appointed a jury for the chiefs, telling them as a rule not to adjudicate a dispute alone. The chief with a staff of office was no longer addressed as such by the Whiteman; instead, he was called an overseer. They were no longer issued a staff of office, yet cases did not diminish in Tivland. It was not because they were too many, but because their chiefs were not honourable — that was why new cases kept coming up. Nowadays there are many places where the Whiteman administering Tivland sits and adjudicates cases. When they go to some chief's domain, they settle cases in a couple of days, but if the Tiv chief tried to hear the case, it would take him two months and even then he might not adjudicate properly. On seeing this, the Tiv people preferred to take their cases to the Whiteman rather than to their chiefs. They pointed out that they did not need to take money to see the Whiteman, and that he

adjudicated their cases faster, and that these were cases that had been taken to chiefs many years earlier, but the chiefs had been unable to settle them. That is how the issue of chieftaincy in Tivland is today in the year 1935.

#### THE TENURE OF WHITE PEOPLE THAT ADMINISTERED THE LAND

Among many things, Tiv people see that the most problematic issues relate to the appointment of white people that administer the land. It is all about their physical settlement in Tivland. No Whiteman that administers Tivland ever settles in very long in Tivland. Once he comes, he sees and hears about the character of the Tiv people, and learns thoroughly and knows about them. As soon as he starts to work to help Tiv people that he now understands, he is transferred to another post and replaced with another Whiteman who never visited Tivland before in his life. The new one then starts to learn about Tiv character; another one may try to operate as his predecessor Whiteman did, and in the process, things may go on fairly well. The Tiv people are also listening and conforming, they say the Whiteman is administering the place well, so they are determined to keep and obey the laws of the land also. Disagreements and violence may not be as prevalent during that period as they try to reduce conflict. That is how the white successor fares when he follows for a period in the footsteps of his predecessor who knew the Tiv people very well; it brings good to the land.

When the successor that replaces the Whiteman who knew the Tiv people well does not follow in his footsteps, then things are different. He sees differently and acts differently as well. Doing this elicits a problem for the Tiv people. They think: it looks as if someone built a house almost to the point of completion and yet another person came and demolished it and built it in his own way. Will such a house ever be completed? The character of the Tiv people is uniquely different from other social groups. The Governor has seen all of this very well and knows what happens. If the Governor really desires to help the people, he should stop transferring and removing white people who know the Tiv people and replacing them with new ones. Because of this one thing, Tivland is very unstable. If he wants Tivland to be stable, he should transfer and replace a Whiteman that knows about the Tiv people with another one who also knows about the Tiv and who understands the Tiv language too. That is the only way! Then Tivland can move forward and do well. That is how it is.



## Chapter Nine

### THE COMING OF THE WHITEMAN

Ancient, wise Tiv elders of blessed memory foretold the coming of the Whiteman: a day would come when some people would come on the water like fish, yet they would be human beings, they would be white, they would remain offshore because of their fear of the scorching sun. They would be business people, nice and responsible, they would never collect anything from people violently, they would make trade by sounding a wooden drum, they would come from the water in very big ships that come and stay at anchor. The person who wanted to trade with them would take whatever he is trading to them and then return. Then the white businessmen would come and inspect the displayed goods to see if they were worth the trade. If satisfied they would exchange the goods and then return aboard and sound the drum. Once the sound was heard, the local trader would come and take the goods left behind. However, if the goods were not up to standard, they would not trade, but would return aboard and sound the wooden drum for the trader to take the unexchanged goods. If however the local trader wanted exchange by all means, he would bring further items to add to those already displayed to meet up the standard of exchange, and then the trade would happen. This is what the Tiv of old foretold about the coming of the Whiteman. Nevertheless, the Tiv did not experience this prophecy immediately. The reason for this was that this prophecy was foretold when the Tiv were together at Ibenda before the Ugenyi split them up and they disintegrated to different sub-clans as it is today when the Whiteman has now come.

#### WHITE BUSINESSMEN

The first Whiteman the Tiv people knew was the company businessman. His name was Chalis Makintos. He came in a ship up the big river (Benue). It is the same ship that the Tiv people later called *igirgi*. The Tiv people now use a non-Tiv language to call the ship *igirgi*; they dropped the word in their own language which means ship, *tsoyo*, but if translated literally means ‘boat made of iron’. When the Whiteman came in ships, he was not in the company of the non-Tiv people from the north, those who were known to Tiv people. Instead, only people from the south were with him. The Whiteman would usually come by ship and anchor in the deep part of the river; he never navigated to the banks. Tiv people came to the banks to behold him. If Tiv people desired to transact business with him, they did not understand his language, so they would usually lift a piece of what they wanted and show it to the Whiteman. So the Whiteman knew what they wanted and in return lifted up and showed them what he wanted to buy from them. At the beginning, the things Tiv people bought from the Whiteman were lead bullets for Dane guns, *sokpo* iron bars, and beads. These were the only items that Tiv people bought from the Whiteman.

What the Whiteman in turn traded from the Tiv people was sesame seed and clarified butter. These two items were the only things the Whiteman bought from

Tiv people. If he wanted to buy anything from Tiv people, he lifted it up and showed them what he wanted to buy. He also lifted his hands to show them that they should bring that item and place it at the banks of the river. Once they did that, he went with the ship and stood with the soldiers on the ship who stood sentry with their guns. The soldiers looked at Tiv people and at times motioned for them to go and stand far away. The Whiteman then measured whatever the Tiv man had brought to sell on a scale and also weighed whatever Tiv people wanted from him on the same scale in the same amount and placed it aside. The secretary of the Whiteman kept writing as the transactions were made.

After the transaction, the Whiteman rang a gong and then went back with his people to the deep part of the river. Once the Tiv people heard the gong, they came to pick what was kept for them in return for their own items. So the Tiv have a saying, 'These are the white men by sea whom ancient people of blessed memory foretold.'

Because the white businessman continued moving around for business, at times it was not the Whiteman himself who came. He sent his business secretaries. The word for secretary in Tiv, *akau*, is an imitation of the Yoruba word *akowe*, which means secretary. It was Hausa people that called the secretary *akawu* and Tiv people heard it from them, but Tiv people call a secretary *akau*.

These same black people are the ones Ashinya, chief of Tômbô, Mbalagh, from Mbasagher killed in his domain at the River Katsina. News spread that Ashinya killed Nassera. The dispute leading to the killing of the company people was not their fault. They had come and travelled south to Tor Kukwa at Katsina Ala; and on their way back, they came and anchored with the ship at the landing-place of Inyamigbe, the chief of Ikyurav Tiev. They took out beads and cutlasses and gave these to Chief Inyamigbe and to some of the elders of Ikyurav also. Then they continued on north until they arrived in Ashinya's territory in Tômbô. Here they stopped where the senior Tômbô elders and Ashinya were and gave Ashinya a gift of beads and cutlasses for him and his entire kindred. As they were struggling to move their ship into the deeper part of the river, Ashinya and his kindred started shooting them with arrows. Ashinya captured the ship, which was a big prize with all its contents. The Tômbô people made a lot of money from that load; they became wealthy people, that was how it was. The white businessmen moved everywhere for business. One day Chalis Makintos went south up the river Katsina until he came to the stretch called Dura. There he crossed over to the other side, where an Etulo man called Nyebe had settled recently. Further on, there was a small knoll on which Chalis Makintos settled and put up his tent and the Tiv people went to buy things from him. When he left, he moved further south to proceed to Kashimbila, but met up with a rapids *guguu* and so turned back. Afterwards, he made an onward journey and no one ever heard from him again.

At that time there was a certain Whiteman at Ibi. He was called Masa Ibi; he was with other white soldiers. After a time, a Whiteman went and built a provisions store at Donga. Tiv people used to go there to buy iron bars and beads, cutlasses and local dane gun bullets. They used to buy these from the secretary with sesame seeds and clarified butter. The secretary that Tiv people first knew in Donga was called Ubangogo, meaning father of baboon, because the secretary had a little baboon and he used to play with it as if it was his child. That was the

reason why the Hausa people called him Ubangogo, father of a baboon. The Tiv liked the secretary because when they made purchases from him, he would give them gifts of little things like matches, sewing needles, or granulated salt. So news about him spread; in the end he was called Magogo. Magogo is also from the Hausa language, but Hausa people called him Maigogo, meaning 'owner of the monkey'. The name Magogo became famous among Tiv people and they used it until they turned it into a company name. Any time a person was about to go to Donga, he was asked to go to Magogo so he could make good purchases at affordable rates. Magogo was very benevolent. After some time, a Whiteman, John Holt came and built a store in Donga with his secretary, near the company to the south. John Holt's secretary was called Hadiko by the Tiv. The name Hadiko was also from the Hausa language. Hausa people pronounced it Maiadiko in their language. The Hausa people called him this because the secretary, whom John Holt used to accompany, had a piece of cloth for wiping away sweat. Once he had wiped up his sweat, he tied the small piece of cloth to his belt pointing towards the ground. This type of cloth is called *adiko* by the Hausa. That is why they called that Whiteman Maiadiko, meaning 'owner of an *adiko*' [sweat rag].

The Hausa people used to call the John Holt's secretary Secretary Maiadiko, but the Tiv people just called him Madiko. From that time on, people called the company Magogo, and called John Holt, Madiko. When Tiv people first started going to Ibi, they called the company Ibi Magogo, but nowadays they call the company by the name of the senior secretary and John Holt by the name of the junior secretary.

When the Whiteman housed some secretaries in Donga, Tiv people used to go and make purchases, but not all Tiv people went there. Some were afraid of people from surrounding ethnic groups. The Tiv people who mostly went were from the Shitire and Ukum clans. At that same time the whiteman housed other secretaries at Abinsi where the Iharev and Nongov went to get purchases. The Kparev made purchases at Udum such as iron bars, gun powder and clothes. It is through the purchases by the Kparev at Udum that the Tiv now have the guns they now use till today. And all these items purchased through the Udum were actually brought from where the whiteman had earlier settled, like Calabar. All the while, the Tiv only made purchases through the whiteman's middle men, they never saw the whiteman but only heard of him from afar.

#### WHITEMAN'S BATTLE WITH KASAR

One day some whitemen from Ibi, Masa Ibi and his men took a canoe and travelled up a branch of the river Donga all the way to the town of Donga, then passed Donga and proceeded west. There is a road from there that leads to a Chamba settlement called Shanshanji which leads into the area by the 'kola road'. It is on this road that they proceeded until they arrived. They had many soldiers with them who waited by the road. At that time, it was predominantly Hausa people who accompanied the Whiteman, working as interpreters, soldiers and labourers carrying loads. The soldiers however were predominantly men of Yoruba and Beriberi origin. At that time, no Tiv person had settled near Gendagor (kola road). Sai was the only settlement near to the road. Hausa and the Whiteman

called the Sai settlement Salatu in those days. When the Whiteman and his workers passed by on the road and reached Sai's settlement, Sai treated them well and they slept the night. The next day the Hausa workers travelling with the Whiteman took Sai along so that he too could collect the spoils of war, because they told him of the battle they intended to wage against Kasar. They incorporated Sai into the group secretly without the knowledge of the Whiteman.

### THE DEATH OF KASAR

When the Whiteman and the soldiers left Shanshanji, they settled near to Markam, which is a big hill or mountain. The 'kola road' moves uphill from here and goes to Takum. When they got there, the Whiteman sent a message to Kasar to meet him the next day. When Kasar got the message, he sent a message back to the Whiteman that he was not afraid of 'fish in the water' — the Whiteman was merely one fish in the water, not God. He proceeded to block the entrances to his settlement. The settlement was fortified with wooden poles, both dry and wet, and the remnants of the settlement are still visible today. The settlement has two major large entrance gates. At dawn, the Whiteman's group surrounded Kasar's settlement. Kasar's people climbed up the fence and started shooting arrows and throwing spears at the Whiteman. Then the Whiteman opened fire on the settlement with *indyerbuka* drum-guns or automatic weapons and destroyed a significant portion of the fence. The people of Kasar then secretly opened a gate that allowed the women and children to leave the town. When the Whiteman saw this, one of them went and blocked the gates with his soldiers and started killing the people of Kasar. Kasar himself never came out of the settlement, but instead was killing soldiers with magic and his big spears. Nobody saw him. Even when he pierced people with his spear, magically nobody saw him; he would pull out the spear and wipe the blood of the victims on their clothes. Then one of the white soldiers who had the same level of magic as Kasar noticed what was happening and refused to shoot because he knew that if he did, he would be killed. When Kasar realized that the Whiteman understood his magic, he became afraid and thought he would be captured. So he took off on his horse and started running away towards Loko, a stream that is not very far from Takum. The Whiteman went after him, shooting at him until Kasar got to Loko, and there he managed to slide off his horse and hid by the side of a *mho* tree, where he bled to death. The white officer sent people to go and pick him up. They severed his hands and his head and brought these down to Ibi. That was the end of the battle with Kasar.

When the Whiteman fought and killed Kasar, the Tiv that were with Kasar and those that used to visit him regularly returned to their villages and told stories of the battle. They marvelled at what they had experienced, telling the people that if Kasar could be defeated and killed by the Whiteman, then no one could withstand the Whiteman.

### THE DEATH OF DANKOL

After the Whiteman killed Kasar, he set out to get Dankol. When Dankol left Ukum and moved to Ugondo, the Whiteman followed him up there and chased

him around. Some people reported that the Whiteman chased Dankol to Ukum from the compound of his friend Herve and then killed him in Ugondo. For Dankol, it was actually his horse that let him down.

After escaping with his men from Ukum and getting to the house of a man in Ugondo, they were tired and the horses were tied to eat grass. His was a temperamental horse so even when it was tied to a tether, they hobbled it. So Dankol sat down with his men around him and was chewing his kola nut casually while his horse ate when the Whiteman suddenly appeared. His men then shouted in Hausa *Allah shi taimake ka, ga nasara* [with Allah's help, you will be victorious]. Dankol quickly jumped up and climbed onto the horse but the horse was tethered and still hobbled. Then one of Dankol's men named Dzegi pulled out a sword and cut the tether but forgot to remove the hobble. When the Whiteman burst in, Dankol tried to use the horse to escape through the gate but the horse could not get out because of the leg hobble, which got stuck on the poles of the gate. The soldiers shot and killed Dankol at the gate. The District Officer cut off his palms and his head and took these with him. His son Dauda took his other followers and went back and settled in Jiagarigari, a town in Hausa land.

The stories about Kasar and Dankol were heard by the Tiv from some who had been witnesses. Those Tiv that lived near the rivers Benue, Katsina, and Donga were very afraid of the white authorities.

The people of Ikôr (Kunav), Shangev, Gaav, Masev and Iharev heard about these battles but because what happened was far from them they did not feel the impact and were not afraid of the Whiteman.

After these episodes, the white officer went away quietly and nobody heard from him for some time. After a long while, Chafa Molesworth, one of the Whitemen in charge of security came; as District Officer, he was a thorough and hard-working man, who attended to the administration of the Tiv area well. He and Chafa Abadie did not stay long in Tivland before they were transferred and went away.

### FIXING OF TELEGRAPH LINES

In 1901, one of the white soldiers named Masta Carnegie started installing telegraph lines at Loko. This was in Hausa land and installation progressed on through to Idoma land. He came to Akpenaja [Akwanaja] near the border between the Tiv, the Basa and the Arago peoples, but the Tiv would not allow him install lines through their territory. It was the Iharev, from the section of Laav and their elder, Abata, who was the only man that the Mbagwen listened to. They blocked the labourers installing the poles because the poles passed through their farms. The Iharev called their people together and in the morning attacked the labourers and soldiers with arrows. So the white soldiers sent a message to the white administrative officer at Ibi. Major Murdon was like the Resident, while Major Makilinton was the head soldier and Ekasili was in charge of the telegraph operations.

When the message got to Ibi, they quickly rallied, and rounded up soldiers and headed by boat to Akpenaja; this was in the month of March. They came to Akpenaja and met Chafa Carnegie. At that time, Chafa Rokson was at Loko and was an assistant to the Resident. They sent them the message by post

because the lines were not connected to Ibi because the Tiv had cut the telegraph lines. The Whitemen came to Akpenaja with soldiers and labourers but could not progress with the telegraph line installation. They fought the Iharev for about two months. Then the white officers took some soldiers to another elder of Mbagwen — this was not Abata, but another important man in the community. They met no one there. On their way back, the white officer and the labourers came to a tiny stream with a single pole bridge for crossing. As they lined up to cross one at a time, they were surrounded on both sides. Then the Tiv started attacking them sporadically with arrows. They had set the bush on fire all around the soldiers.

But only one soldier and one labourer were wounded and the poisoned arrows did not kill them. The Whitemen got out of the line of fire; they crossed a river named Keleke (it is Keleke that is at the station called Udei (Ude), where there is a railway crossing). At the Keleke stream, a labourer who went to take a bath at the river was shot in the stomach and was killed by a Tiv arrow, but at that time, it was still not a battle situation. In the morning, the Whitemen headed back to Akpenaja and they spent one night along the way. In the morning, they broke up their camp and continued, then slept in a big forest. The next morning the Tiv surrounded them and started shooting at them with arrows and killed one of the soldiers who had machine gun. The Whitemen then broke away from there and came to the banks of the river Benue and buried the labourer who had been killed. They buried him by tying him to a big stone and dropping him in the river, where he settled to the bottom. Then they went off to Nyiev in the country of Ude, who was then the head of Nyiev. They slept there; the next day they got to Akpenaja. All these journeys were made so they could meet with elders of the Tiv communities to discuss erecting telegraph lines. Sometimes they would take some Tiv boys to stay with them and send them as messengers to the elders, but the boys never came back.

They had a breakthrough when they returned to Akpenaja. They got a Tiv boy and sent him to Abata. This time the young man went straight to Abata and delivered the message. When Abata got the message, he sent two of his sons. When the Whiteman saw the two boys, he was happy and asked the boys to convey to him what Abata had said. They said that Abata requests that the Whitemen wait awhile. They will make beer and when the beer is ready, they will be invited. But the Whiteman sent the boys back with escorts to tell Abata that they would come to greet him at the village on the third day; he would come with his men.

After three days, the Whiteman left Akpenaja and headed to the home of Abata. When they got to the outskirts of the settlement, Abata gave two of his sons a long smoking pipe two feet long to give to the Whiteman to smoke while waiting for him, with a message that he was coming.

When the Whitemen saw the smoking pipe and heard the message Abata had sent, they were happy. When they got close to the village, Abata came and met them at the banks of a small stream near his compound. The name of the stream is Ahina. Abata saw the Whitemen, greeted them, and brought them into the compound where he had already assembled the elders of the community to meet with them.

After they had sat for a while, the Whiteman sent Audu, who was chief of Makurdi even at the time of my writing this book and also an interpreter for them, to them. Another Hausa man named Gimba, together with Audu, were the two sent to act as interpreters between the Whiteman and all the elders at Abata's compound. When they heard the message, they asked them to tell the

Whiteman to come to them. They went back and brought the two Whitemen but they did not get into the compound but stayed on the periphery of the compound. The Whitemen then spoke to the elders and asked if the Tiv had any intention of fighting battles with them. The Tiv answered and said that, no, they did not wish to fight battles with the Whitemen, and that it was better that the Whitemen should leave them, to let bygones be bygones, and they preferred a truce. Then the Whitemen agreed and promised that they would not fight with the Tiv. Then the Whitemen pulled back to the outskirts and returned to Akpenaja. But this peace agreement was only with the lookouts in the Laav district of Iharev.

When the rest of the Iharev clans heard about the agreement, they laughed and ridiculed the Mbagwen, saying they were not strong men and that, as for them, they would continue to fight the Europeans. The Iharev used to call the European people Yaji. They would keep fighting the Yaji people by all means.

So the Iharev went and waged war with the Yaji people. But the Yaji people fought back and inflicted heavy casualties on the Iharev people. Eventually the Mbagwen people also joined them in the fight. These are the names of the people killed. The Yaji killed Bergu of Tsebo in Mbagwen, and Azongo of Mbaber, and Adem of Mbambirawa. The Iharev took heavy casualties. They also killed Yaji people but not in large numbers. These were Iharev people belonging to the Isherev clan.

### THE UTYÔNDO

Utyôndo is one of the clans of Iharev, close to Abinsi. When they heard how the battles had affected the Iharev, they laughed and promised to fight back if the battle escalated to where they lived. At that time, the Whiteman had settled in one of their areas called Mbaikuran. The Utyôndo rallied round and encircled the white settlement and attacked the soldiers and the labourers with arrows, but the Whiteman kept quiet. Then the Yaji gave the soldiers the order to unleash their machine guns and this resulted into a bloodbath; brothers did not take the same route of escape as they ran for their dear lives. Yaji killed the Utyôndo mercilessly. The great men killed by Yaji were Kiana Achaku of Mbaikuran and Akaa of Akogi in the Mbatsa clan.

Despite these massacres, the Tiv of Iharev did not relent in giving the white people trouble with the construction of the telegraph lines. So the Whiteman had to divert the lines to Loko from Akpenaja sixty miles away to the north towards Nasarawa to avoid passing through Tivland which had been a persistent problem. At that time, it was Mr Eaglesome who was in charge of Public Works. The Tiv would vandalize the copper wires and use them for various things, including jewellery and ornaments for arms and legs. I saw some that my sister, whom I was next to, possessed. Any Tiv man who went to the Iharev area would bring back a lot of copper telegraph wire. After some time, the Tiv started discarding the wire, because they claimed the Whitemen would kill any person found with them, but it is still possible to get these copper wires in Iharev land today.

## THE BATTLE BETWEEN IHAREV AND YAJI (WHITEMEN)

When the Iharev battles with the Whitemen over the telegraph lines ended, the Iharev started other problems with the whitemen and would not leave them alone. Of course, the Whitemen did not leave them alone and neither did the Iharev leave the Whitemen alone. The reason for the trouble was this: Madugu, a Hausa trader in rubber, *donko*, brought gum from Donga down to Kwatan Sule, leaving Keana near to where the river Benue flows south. He took them to the Whitemen in Lokoja to trade. Whenever Hausa people move about, they travel in large groups. At that time, Tibe of Kaku of the sons of Dwem gathered with his people and waylaid them on the way. When they arrived with the *donko*, Tibe moved with his men and attacked them and killed five of the foreigners, seized their property, and dispersed them. But they also killed the Tiv; it was not only the Tiv who killed. Madugu fought the Tiv to a standstill but the Tiv eventually prevailed. He ran to report to the Whiteman in Lokoja that Tibe, the Iharev man in Utyôndo, had attacked and killed his men. When the Whiteman heard this, he took his soldiers and headed for Iharev. He came by boat. When they arrived at Isherev, the Basa brought out their arrows and started attacking them. The Whitemen got angry and killed the Basa and then made camp. The Basa (Busa) then secretly came to tell the Tiv that the Whiteman was coming to battle with them, and that they had fought with them but had been defeated.

The next day, the Whitemen asked for an escort into Tivland. They were surprised but had to follow the Whiteman's orders. When they came to Iharev land, the Iharev launched an attack on them. The white people responded and killed four of the Iharev and also shot Ugbu of Dom in the mouth — but he did not die. He is still alive today with a disfigured mouth from the gun wounds. The Whitemen then settled down for the night. During the night, the Isherev people gathered and started attacking the Whitemen with arrows in the early hours of the day, but they did not kill any of the Whitemen and daybreak came. When day broke, the Whitemen moved toward Ukpo near Abinsi. The next day the Whitemen went to a man in Utyôndo called Jandekur in Mbaikôngo. The next day they moved to Agbede of Iliev, the chief of Nôngov. Agbede sent some boys to lead him to Keana. At Keana, he waited at the outskirts and sent a message to the chief of Keana, Adzegea, to come and meet him on the outskirts. Adzegea sent a message back to the Whiteman to enter the town, that he was not interested in fighting. So as the Whitemen entered Adzegea made them a barracks, *bariki sha akongo*, at the edge of the village. In the morning, the Whiteman arranged a meeting and sent Idyu from Keana (Arago) to tell Tibe to meet him at Keana. Idyu played a trick and stopped along the way at a Tiv house and took a quiver of arrows. He brought the arrows back to the Whiteman and showed him that the Tibe said he will not come, take this as your answer. When the Whiteman heard this, he sent soldiers to the house of Amough of Utyôndo in Mbawundu and burned it down, because Tibe was going to come there the next day.

So the Mbadwem gathered together and went and waited at the stream of Guma. In the morning the Whiteman came forward and the Tiv started shooting arrows at them. The soldiers made their guns ready but did not shoot at the Tiv. The Tiv thought the soldiers were afraid of them and started pressing closer and closer to them; there were two Whitemen. One of them started shooting and killed



Irim of Akeda in Mbaate; the other Whiteman shot and killed Amandorough. The soldiers surrounded them and adopted the kneeling position and fired thrice, killing many people. The Tiv ran to hide at Uguma. The Whiteman chased them with the soldiers and caught up with them at the stream and killed people along the way. The stream turned red with blood. Then the Whitemen started burning down Utyôndo until they got to the house of Tibe and there, even the big talking drum was burned!

When the Whitemen were burning down Iharev, the other Whitemen at Abinsi gave Asôm the son of Kpo a letter to the warring factions. When they received the letter, the Whiteman started out for Abinsi with Asôm, the son of Kpo leading the way. They stayed at Abinsi for two nights and said they had burned down Iharev but had not seen Tibe and they were still looking to arrest him. They crossed over to Kikye and burned down the Kikye settlement, killing a woman and child, and arrested Kikye Asila. They passed from there and went over to Tibe's compound with the intention of arresting him, but Tibe hid and they arrested Akogi, a brother to Tibe, and went and settled at Ityungu-ishôhô in Isherev of the Mbadier [bearded ones]. When the Whiteman camped at Ityungu-ishôhô, he sent a message to Tibe and all the elders of Utyôndo to come because he wanted to talk peace with them. The elders that came were Tibe of Mbaaser, Adi of Mbaipuan, Anuku of Mbakusu, Ijande of Mbaafu, Akodi of Mbabai, Akerá of Mbaate, Oradam of Mbamazar, Anumkuveakara of Mbagese in Mbaikongo, and Abin of Mbaikor. When these elders met the Whiteman at Ityungu-ishôhô, he asked Tibe why Tibe was fighting him. If Tibe wanted to fight, he should tell him so they can fight. Tibe responded that he did not want to fight. The Whiteman responded in the same vein and said he therefore appointed Tibe chief today and that Tibe should cease looking for trouble. Tibe responded that people are always looking for his trouble. The Whiteman said to him, regardless, he should stop troubles and then gave them a white paper to be pasted in every household. So the Utyôndo pasted the white paper on all their village houses.

The Whitemen then left Ityungu-ishôhô and went towards Akpenaja. The Utyôndo gave every elder a goat to give to the Whitemen as a token of appeasement. This settled the quarrel between the Whiteman and the Iharev.

### FIRST TAX COLLECTION IN IHAREV (UTYÔNDO)

A year after the battles with the Iharev, the Whiteman came from Keana and sent a message that they should pay taxes to him — they should pay him tax in the form of *tugudu* cloth<sup>51</sup> in Keana. After some time, the Whiteman came for Tibe to pay taxes. Tibe said he was at Ikyôngo (the outskirts) so he should go to Kikye to get his tax because Kikye is by the riverside. The Whiteman agreed. He was paid the tax with guinea corn and after some time they paid tax with beni-seed. The Whiteman showed them a shilling and said this is what they should pay tax with from then on.

<sup>51</sup>See 'Cloth' in Chapter 2 for information about *tugudu*.

## THE WHITEMAN'S BATTLE WITH THE KUNAV

The Whitemen who fought the battles with the Kunav came north from the Udam people in Adzume, up the road leading to the Udam they call the Chukwan. They entered from Damagudu. Others came from the side of the road leading to Damaibi and they both met at Damagudu. When they met, they invited the Tiv of Kunav to a dance ceremony so they could be entertained. Kunav people came but not all of them. Mbaduku and Mbaiyongo, Mbagbera and Mbakaange are those who came and danced at Damagudu. The white people gave them big cutlasses they called *akpelaka* and long Whiteman's tobacco leaves. The other Kunav clans, the Ute and Mbaara, laughed and said, 'The Whiteman is all about money, he has come to deceive them to kill them and take their money.'

At that time the Whiteman had arrested Gberibu of Kenga of Mbaitov, and it was Udam that made the case for the arrest of Gberibu. Ute then said, 'No, if they were the ones, they would have burned down the foreigners without fail.' Then Mbaduku went to the court and said that Gberibu should be released from detention. But the Whiteman refused. When the Whiteman refused they tried to release Gberibu by force but they couldn't. After some days, another Whiteman who came from Damaibi came to Damagudu on the strength of a note that his brother in Damagudu had sent to him to come. When he arrived at Mbaduku, the whole of Mbaduku came out in peace to welcome him and he rested at the home of Mgena of Mbaduku. When he got into the compound, some Mbaduku people fired arrows into the compound but did not hit anybody. The Whiteman then shot his gun and hit Ikyeghbenda and killed him. He arrested the wife of Mgena and six of his children and left with them. Then the Whiteman pitched his camp at the home of Ikyaaagba Akpeye. After some time, the Whiteman started fighting and burning down villages in Mbaduku. He burned down and killed Akaange of Inyam, a young man, and killed Gbirekaa of Sina in Mbayar, and also killed Ayongor of Agulogo. He killed Zwaduem of Gbanor, a prominent man of no small repute. Even though he was dead, his children were spread around in three big settlements. He continued on and burned the talking drum of Ihwakwar of Ishar in Mbatyough and went and arrested Ashiekaa of Konjo in Mbapua with his three children. Ashiekaa himself was hanged at Bubula. One of the children died and the other one was left to return home, so the Mbaduku started running away from their homes. The Whiteman went on burning down Kunav and Mbaduku. At that time Agbam, a man from Shangev ya, lied, saying that the Mbaduku had packed up their bags of money to hide away in Ute. The Whiteman then told him to lead the way and he would follow. When they got there, the Whiteman found out that it was a lie. The Whiteman was annoyed; he got hold of the man and tied him against a tree and shot him dead and said nobody was allowed to bury him; he rotted tied to the tree. On the same day, the Whiteman killed two people in Ute at the home of Ikura of Wanityev by the side of a hill.

Then the Whiteman returned to Damagudu. When he got there, he sent a message that all the elders of Kunav should come to see him at Damagudu. When the elders did not show up, the Whiteman went on another burning spree of Ute. He arrested Agera of Kômgbenda, who is the chief of the place today. He pierced his hand and put a rope through it, and then arrested Ako. These

were the elders he arrested in Ute. He went on to burn down Mbaara, killed Kadzever of Achi, and then went back to Damagudu. When he got back to Damagudu, he invited the elders again and this time, the leaders did not delay. When the elders got there, he made them pay taxes. He levied Mbaduku a tax of 160 cows, and the same for Mbaiyongo, and also for all the other clans. He then held the elders, saying that they must pay the tax before they would be released. The elders arrested were Agera of Kômgbeda and Ako both of Ute, Ikyuranwantyiev also of Ute in Mbaikum, Gaum of Mbajôr in Mbaara, Adasu of Ijôhò from Mbaiyongo, Iange of Aluka in Mbagbela, Ayado of Gbaange, Ikume of Ijuwa from Mbaakange, Igurgba of Adasu; they arrested Akpeye the father of Ikyaaagba of Mbaduku.

All of Kunav came to the home of Akpeye because it was his son Ikyaaagba they had sent to the Whiteman. So they met there and paid the tax and sent it to the Whiteman at Damagudu. In those days, they paid taxes with healthy cows. After they had paid the taxes, the Whiteman released the men and asked them to give him men to go to Damaibi and carry his supplies. They gave him 300 people. Mbaiyongo gave the same number. Ishangev-ya also gave the same number. They went and packed up the equipment of the soldiers and brought it to Damagudu. The Whiteman then made a home at Damagudu with his soldiers and policemen; that was his base from where he oversaw the Kunav area. He would travel from Kunav to Gaav and Ishangev Tiev and Ukan. If anybody fell foul of the law, he was arrested and imprisoned at Damagudu. Any time the Whiteman wanted work done, he would use the prisoners and not pay them. When the soldiers needed food, the Whiteman would call and they would bring it to him to purchase. The Whiteman that was at Damagudu was the one who troubled the Kunav people. Many of Kparev people called him Konshuu and it was a bush cow [*iyar*] that killed him. His grave is at Damagudu, at the market place to the south. They sweep his grave regularly.

#### THE WHITEMAN'S BATTLE WITH THE GAAV

The battle was because the Gaav had been constantly fighting with the Udam. The Udam never lived in peace because of the persistent attacks from the Gaav. It was two Udam clans called the Iyoranyi and Ugabu that the Gaav persistently fought. It all started because of farming.

The Udam complained that Gaav people had annexed their farmland. So the Whiteman left Damaibi and came to tell the Gaav and Udam to stop fighting each other and that they should live in peace. But the Gaav people did not agree. The Whiteman then returned but as he was leaving, he requested that Ubug Agabi of the Gaav follow him back to Damaibi. Ubug and Usaka went and they were arrested and detained. The Gaav were invited to come to Damaibi, but they refused and started fighting with the Udam, saying that the Udam had compelled the Whiteman to arrest their people. When their battles with the Udam persisted, the Whiteman came with a lot of soldiers and camped near the Uiuwo, an Udam clan. He came with a lot of soldiers with machine guns to the amazement of the people. A lot of casualties were recorded, a massacre. After burning down Gaav, he then split the land and demarcated it and drove the Gaav from the area they had annexed from the Udam; he took

their settlements and gave them to the Udam. He then levied taxes on them. After they paid the taxes, the Gaav accompanied the Whiteman to the camp where he had launched the attacks on the Gaav and made them construct houses for his soldiers. After they completed the construction of the camp, they were set free. But the Gaav were not happy that their land had been seized by force and given to the Udam.

#### THE WHITEMAN'S BATTLE WITH THE ISHANGEV TIEV

The real cause of the battle was not from Ishangev Tiev but from Gaav. Gaav had a problem with one of the Udam clans called Ugabu; when Gaav started fighting, Ishangev Tiev went to help them. So when the Whiteman had finished dealing with Gaav, they proceeded to Ishangev Tiev because they had killed Ugabu people. The Whiteman started the battle from Ikurav Division and killed Ihange of Ityôna, a young promising man, and killed the wife of Agba. He proceeded to the homes of Akpoki of Mbangur and killed Boo of Ishargba in Mbangur, Ugeke Uche of Mbangur, and Ture of Wankun in Mbangur and also killed the wife of Aberika in Mbangur, a woman named Wanniu. And another man, Fama of Akuwa, was not killed by a gun, but he ran and ran and later died in the bush. The soldiers also killed two cows. All these killings of men and cows happened in one day.

The Whiteman then proceeded to go and kill Igwen of Achuwe in Mbaakpar, a section of Ishangev — the D.R.C. mission had a settlement there at this time in 1934 — and then went north to kill Swande of Ikav in Mbabu. These are the people that were killed in Ishangev Tiev. Those Whitemen came from the Udam area. After the Whitemen had fought and killed for three days, the Whiteman at Ibi came and met them at the home of Inyaregh of Mbayegh and invited Shangev to come and meet them there. They spoke to them very well and reconciled and afterwards levied taxes of cows which they paid according to their sections. They took away all their cows. This is the account of the Whiteman's battle with the Ishangev.

#### THE SHITIRE AT AKPENA

If was not for the intervention of the Shitire, Dankol [a Fulani leader with his marauders] would have definitely burned down Akpena. When it started, Buba deposed the king of Wukari and he had to run away to Tunga. Agianafe stood up and left the town of Akpena and went and brought back the king of Wukari. Dankol then surrounded Akpena with the aim of killing the king, and then the Shitire stood up and chased them away. After some time, Dankol came back to lay siege to the town but the Shitire chased them away again. But after that, the Akpena people held four Tiv people for ransom and killed two of them and beheaded them and came and fixed their heads on the silk cotton tree by the gate of the road to Alufu. Then the Shitire moved and surrounded Akpena and wanted to burn it down but some people prevailed on them saying if they destroyed Akpena, who would sell them salt. So they let them be.

## THE WHITEMAN'S BATTLE WITH THE IKURAV YA

The reason for the battle is this. The Ubirbir were elephant hunters who came and settled at Adigever in Maghev and killed an elephant. As they were leaving, the Turan attacked them on the way and seized the tusks of the elephant and their guns. The Ubirbir ran back to Adigever and narrated the story. Then the Adigever sounded the war drum and called all Maghev together and told them the story of the attack on the Ubirbir. When the Maghev heard the story, they were angry that the Turan had disrespected them and attacked their visitors. So the Ikurav would be joined in the fight because Turan comes after Ikurav and they still showed disrespect to them. So they went and attacked Ikurav and Ikurav fought and defeated them and killed their people and the Maghev ran and came to the Shangev *ya* at Nanev. Then Adigever went and called the Whiteman at Kashimbila. When the Whiteman came, the Ikurav fought and defeated the Whiteman and the Whitemen went back. After some time the Whitemen came back from the road leading to Kashimbila along the mountains and settled at Ityuav, a section of the Ikurav that is on the border with the Iyôn and Ukwese people. And the Ikurav heard about the settlement and were full of jubilation that their 'food' had returned and they would eat it. They gathered their group and went there.

In those days, the henchmen of the Ikurav were Iyul Asela in Kenev and Ambia Ate in Menev and Asôngo of Yese Anyam Liev, Amamegh Minde in Mondokwaw, and Beba Nor in Mondokwaw and Kumbur Ahar in Mondokwaw. So all of them with their henchmen and other Ikurav people rose up and went to attack the Whitemen, shooting arrows. Initially, they killed a few Whitemen. Then the Whitemen responded with heavy machine gun fire and killed a lot of people. Even when people ran to the stream, the soldiers followed and killed them and captured others. Even when they ran to hide, the Whiteman would use binoculars to locate them and then point the machine guns in that direction and mow them down. The Whiteman killed a lot of people and the whole of Ikurav was rotten with the stench of death. Vultures and hyenas ate the cadavers to their satisfaction. The Whiteman arrested the remaining few that were left alive and the countryside of Ikurav became void and empty. No one remained; all houses were burned down. The Whiteman dealt with them for two months.

As the Whiteman left Ityuav, he went and set free all the Ikurav people that his men had arrested to return back to their land, to engage in farming and so they set off. If they had not returned, the Ikyurav Ya would have become desolate and unoccupied. This is the battle of the Whiteman with Ikurav. The Whiteman: the Tiv still call him *Jam* [lanky killer] today. If you say something and mention *Jam*, Tiv who know what atrocities he committed against them will tell you to stop, *Jam* was a terrible person, he killed and decimated Ikurav. Up until today, Ikurav have not forgotten the battle.

THE WHITEMAN IN CHARGE OF THE TIV DISTRICT:  
THE BATTLE OF ABINSI

The reason why there was a battle at Abinsi is because the Jukun and the Hausa started trouble; it was not the Tiv who initiated the misunderstanding. It was the

foolishness of the Tiv to receive the emblem or charm called ‘sting of the hornets’. The Hausa started the trouble among themselves and they began to fight. While they were fighting, the Whiteman in charge of the trading post at Abinsi left. But while he was still there, he asked one Iharev man from Utyôndo to be his helper. The name of the Iharev man was Ayagwa. The Whiteman put Ayagwa in charge of all his domestic affairs until he returned. So when the Whiteman left, Ayagwa’s friends came and met him and broke into the house. As they were looting the house, the Hausa joined them. When Chafa Godi heard about it, he brought in some white soldiers who fought and killed the looters. Ayagwa ran away but the Whiteman chased him and eventually killed him. The Tiv were surprised about the incident. It was not the *imborakombo* charms that Iharev people were receiving from the Abinsi people that was the reason for their massacre by the Whiteman.

When the battle at Abinsi ended, Chafa Godi and the white soldiers went on to burn Masev as well — it is near to where the hill Ikwe stands. They also came back to Nôngov and Ugondo and burned down as many as five homesteads. This was the beginning of the work of the Whiteman’s administration in Tivland. This was in the year 1905. Chafa Godi and the white soldiers proceeded toward Katsina Ala, by river with wooden canoes, to the current location referred to as Katsina Ala.

En route to Katsina Ala they intervened in the fight between the Ugondo and Tômbô Mbatie. The reason for the conflict between the Ugondo and Tômbô was that Ikpaakpe from the Yandev, who was a maternal relative of the Tômbô, had come visiting and while they were hunting, he was killed by the Ugondo and the dispute started. The Whiteman then called the elders of the Ugondo and Tômbô and spoke to them and settled the dispute.

Chafa Godi and the white soldiers proceeded north with several soldiers along the Katsina River. At that time, the Hausa were no longer afraid to travel through Tivland. They would say that: ‘*kunekune ngu bana; Tibi (Tiv) waa Uke Kunekune kua a ba waa Tibi chi; kunekune doo ga*’. This is what the Hausa kept telling the Tiv throughout the land; that it was the Europeans that slaughtered the Tiv, not the Hausa. The Europeans are not good. Some Tiv started calling the Whiteman *kunukunu* just like the Hausa called them. Sometimes the Hausa would call the Whiteman *Nasera* and the Tiv also would call the Whiteman *Nasera*. But the Iharev never called the Whiteman by any other name other than *Yaji*. It is only today that Tiv and Iharev call the Whiteman *Nasera* or *Batur* – *Bature* – which they heard from the Hausa. The meaning of the word *Bature* in Hausa is ‘Ture Man’. *Ture* is a place in *Nasera*. This is why they called them *Bature*, meaning ‘men from *Ture*’.

When Chafa Godi got to Katsina Ala, he settled at Abakwa and pitched his tent by the riverside and made a temporary dwelling there. Then the Etulo came and summoned Ahungwaor, a prominent man from Kpav in Mbamo, to court. The reason was that the Mbamo fought with Tika who was Tiv and Tika took refuge with the Etulo, where his mother came from. While residing with the Etulo, he would come and steal boats from his kinsmen and sell them. He kept doing this until Ahungwaor captured him and sold him to Abughur Benga in Ukpar, for the Ukan to buy. This was the case against Ahungwaor that the Etulo brought to Chafa Godi. Chafa Godi then tried the case and found Ahungwaor guilty and then arrested him with handcuffs. This was the first case that the Whiteman tried in Shitire.

After that case, the Whiteman proceeded up the river Katsina to attend to the case of Boshi. Boshi was also from Kpav, from Mbamo. He held Boshi because of

the same case with Ahungwaor. When Ahungwaor captured Tika, he took him with three other Etulo people, two of whom were women. He gave one of the women to Boshi. This is why the Whiteman caught Boshi, in order to bring back the woman. Then Mbashinya of Mume, a Shitire man from Kpav, led the Whiteman to Chief Aba Kume, also from Kpav. This was the same Aba Kume who was the first Whiteman's chief in Shitire. When they got there, the Whiteman told Chief Aba to release the woman given to Boshi and the other people that Ahugwaor had captured with Tika, leaving only Tika that Ahungwaor had sold to the Abughur. Then the Whiteman released Ahungwaor and Boshi into the custody of Chief Aba.

In the morning the Whiteman proceeded to Kur Shikaan, who was also a Shitire man from Kpav of Mbander. When he got there, an old woman brought up a case that Kur Shikaan had captured her child and sold him. Immediately, the Whiteman arrested Shikaan but Shikaan brought back the child, so the Whiteman released him. The next morning, the Whiteman went on to Kaanev, to Shiakpev, and to Kpav, who were from the same mother. Here no case was tried. The next morning the Whiteman proceeded to Takum. When they left Takum, they arrived at my father's compound at Sai, Mbajir, of Shitire. (At that time there were no other Tiv settlements along this road except Sai's compound.) Then the Whiteman asked Sai to lead the way since he understood the Hausa language and was familiar with them and was friendly with Dankol. The Hausa had told the Whiteman about Sai. That is why they wanted him to follow them until they finally made it to their home at Katsina Ala.

They slept at Sai. The next morning, Sai took his white horse, which was called Tserhian, and led Chafa Godi and the white soldier to Ukum. The Hausa that followed the Whiteman through Tivland from the beginning were Mamadu, Ali, and Malam Audu, who later became the chief of Katsina Ala. He died and Ityokagher replaced him; he is still chief today. Audu, who currently is the chief in Makurdi, had associations with the Trading Company. He did not come at the beginning; he came during the time of Makondo, when he was associating with the Whiteman in Hausa land. Baba, who was the interpreter up until that date, came much later.

The Hausa's job was to go around with the Whiteman in Tivland and interpret from Hausa to Tiv for the people. They did not know how to speak the Tiv language very well. The person who knew the Tiv language and culture well was Audu, who is the chief in Makurdi today. But the person who was constantly with Chafa Godi was Mamadu. He was not very versatile in the Tiv language, but whatever they said, the Tiv tried to make some sense out of it.

#### ENTRY INTO KATSINA ALA

When Sai led the Whiteman to Ukum, Chafa Godi told Sai that they would like to build a town in Katsina Ala, just as they had built Ibi. They wanted Katsina Ala to be a big city one day like Ibi. Sai said that the Hausa were used to staying in big cities, but the Tiv preferred to stay in their compounds, so how could Katsina Ala grow to become a big town? He replied that once a settlement started, the Tiv could settle, and the Hausa would settle, and so it would eventually become a big town.

While they were in Ukum at the house of Afegha of Mbaityan, Ajang of Ashwe killed someone because of a woman and this was brought to the attention of Sai. Sai relayed the story to Mamadu, who then told Chafa Godi about the incident. There were two Whitemen there, but they had separate jobs. Chafa Godi was a judge and the Whiteman soldier was the only one who could do battle. The white soldier was lanky and would usually just sit and watch the proceedings of cases without interfering. But when it came to battle issues, he was a ruthless man, and no Tiv man was his match. When the Whiteman heard about the killing by Ajang, he sent for Ajang. But Ajang refused to come, saying the Whiteman should come and kill him in his house. So the Whiteman went and stayed near Ajang's compound. His compound was next to his kinsman Ajoko. Ajoko had brewed fresh beer so Ajang left early in the morning to go to Ajoko's house. When Chafa Godi heard all this, he left with the white soldier and came to Ajang's house. Chafa Godi asked Sai to enter with two soldiers and fish out Ajang, because Sai knew who Ajang was and they did not want to harm an innocent person.

When Sai and the two soldiers got into the meeting hut, Ajang was seated in the gazebo of Ajoko and was washing two white objects. Sai discreetly pointed out Ajang to the two soldiers in Hausa and then quickly left the gazebo. When Ajang saw the two soldiers, he rushed out and went into the hut housing Ajoko's bows and arrows and took a bow and arrows. This was the same place people had gathered to drink the local beer. When people saw this, they scattered and ran in all directions. Ajang then shot an arrow at one of the soldiers and hit him. He also shot at the second soldier, but the arrow did not penetrate because of the protective charms the soldier had. Then the Whiteman soldier ordered one of the soldiers to fire at Ajang. Ajang was hit in the chest and the bullet went through him. He fell down and was helpless. The labourers and soldiers started sacking the household and taking spoils. When they finished taking spoils, the Whiteman took a piece of cloth and wrapped it around the wound sustained by Ajang, and put him on a wooden bed and he was carried away by four young people led by Sai. They went on the road to Wukari heading to Katsina Ala. At that time, there were no paved roads in all of Tivland and they had to use winding bush paths. They took Ajang to Zaki Biam, who was the chief of all Ukum people in Isherev. When they got to the outskirts of Zaki Biam's residence, Ajang asked them to stop and requested water to drink, saying he was thirsty. When they gave him water, he drank and died. By the time they got to Zaki Biam, it was midday. The soldiers then sat around and the Whitemen rested and ate. In the evening they took a knife and chopped off Ajang's testicles and thing and then put it in a lovely white plate. They told Sai to inform Zaki Biam to take Ajang's body and bury it. So Zaki Biam took Ajang and buried him at a farmland, near the place where the houses of the Whitemen are situated today in Zaki Biam on the south side. This was the beginning of the Whiteman's presence in Zaki Biam.

In the morning, they left Zaki Biam and proceeded to Utongo to the home of the chief Tainyam. They had no cases to try. They gathered the elders of Utongo and talked to them about how to maintain law and order and not to do bad things. They left there and went down and crossed over to Loko with Katsina Ala as their destination. Here they rested at the home of the chief Takpugh of Ikurav Tiev. The Whiteman then asked Takpugh the meaning of his name.

Takpugh explained that when he went to take a chieftaincy title at Takum, he asked for the title of *kur*, but the chief refused so he decided to call himself



Chief Takpugh. The Whiteman then asked Sai why he is called Salatu, because this is not a Tiv name. He said that his real name in Tiv is Saaiutu. The meaning is that nothing in the day time can overwhelm him, but if it is things of the night (*mbatsav*) then he may be overwhelmed, so the Hausa decided to call it Salatu. But Saaitu, if pronounced as Saai, is also correct.

(The name Salatu was what the Hausa and the Whitemen have called him for a long time, but when the missionaries came and investigated the meaning they started calling him Saai.)

When they left the chief Takpugh the next day, they came to the banks of the river Katsina where there is a cut *yiasse* tree<sup>52</sup> near where the company store is located. The Whiteman invited all the people who were around this area: Chief Aba from Shitire, Chia Chile from Mbagen from Kparev, Agaihande from Ikurav and other elders. These elders met with the Whiteman and discussed the building of his house at Katsina Ala. The elders accepted the idea and praised the Whiteman.

The Tiv marked the place with an *akinde* tree, which they used to do to identify a new settlement area. The same trees are in front of the Chief of Katsina Ala's house. When they had planted these trees, the Whiteman asked them to clear the bush. The Hausa made their huts and Tiv made huts for the soldiers. At day-break, the bugle was played and the soldiers gathered and started practising shooting down the road leading to Wukari. After a few days, the trading Whitemen came and established a store at Katsina Ala. People could buy beniseed, iron, beads, and gunpowder and the Tiv were happy. The establishment of Katsina Ala was in 1905. Once Chafa Godi had established Katsina Ala, he did not stay long and went for holidays to his country. He was replaced by another Whiteman, a tall man whom the Hausa called Dogo. He did not stay long before going back to Hausaland. When he left, Wanbuavihintor came. He was the one who started tax collecting.

#### WHITEMEN'S TAX ADMINISTRATION IN THE YEAR 1911

Wanbua started tax collecting in Shitire at Mbajir. Mbajir would pay taxes and take them to Sai where they forwarded them to Wukari. Ukum would pay taxes at Zaki Biam and these were forwarded to Wukari. Initially they paid taxes with black cloths called *amua*. But after some time when the black cloth became scarce, they were given tax tokens (*ikwembe*) to pay taxes with various other things such as beniseed and raw cotton. The other Tiv clans paid taxes at Kunav. In those areas, it was the Whiteman that fixed the rate for each household and set when the tax was due. The people would collect different things and bring these to the Whiteman as tax. The Whiteman would assess them and if it was considered not enough he would ask them for more. They usually paid in cotton and guinea corn which the Whiteman would collect and sell to the Hausa. Some other things could not be sold and would get rotten or spoiled.

One day the Whiteman came and collected taxes at Tômbo Mbalagh and packed up and stored everything at the big entry gazebo of Ashinya. When

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<sup>52</sup>Latin: *Azelia Africana*.

night came and they were asleep, someone came and burned the *ate* along with all the tax materials collected. The Whiteman hurriedly left early in the morning and returned to Katsina Ala. Wanbuavihitor was not just a tax administrator — he was also a judge and was fond of flogging people. Anybody who did wrong did not escape his flogging-punishment, and that is why the Tiv called him *Wanbuavihitor* and burned his tax collection at Tômbo. The Tiv were afraid of him and were eager to have Chafa Godi come back so that this man would leave. Chafa Godi was well-known and admired across the whole of Tivland; even those who had not met him spoke well of him from what they had heard from others. Wanbua did not settle in one place. He moved around from Ibi to Abinsi and back to Tivland hearing cases and passing judgment. Any chief who heard Wanbua was going to visit would not sleep the whole night, worrying whether or not they would go free the next day. It is only when he had come and gone that they had peace of mind. The Tiv were scared of Wanbua.

When Wanbua left, Ishimawanye came and was stationed at Katsina Ala. (It was he that Montol killed.) When Ishimawanye settled at Katsina Ala, he introduced a different approach to tax collecting. He assigned dedicated tax collectors to different sections and made them responsible for collecting taxes. He was not a difficult man and was easy-going. Everything he did was peaceful and methodical. The Tiv called him Ishimawanye [heart of a child] because he was not a bad, difficult or harsh person, ‘when he starts crying, you plead with him to stop crying to no avail, he cries out more until he was satisfied.’ This was why the Tiv called him Ishimawanye. It was from Katsina Ala that he left for Ibi in the company of Ortese Aikighe to go and collect tax from Montol, and he was killed there. When he left Katsina Ala to Ibi to go to Montol, he slept at Zaki Biam and that was his last stay in Tivland. He was killed and did not return. I the author of this book saw him too. He was a good man in Tivland.

### GIVING TOR ATÔGH

When Ishimawanye was gone, another Whiteman came to Katsina Ala, but he was not given a name by the Tiv. He did not stay long. He was called Chafa Roo (Captain Rowe). He was the one who stated the concept of *Tor Atôgh*. The first person that Chafa Roo made a chief was Zaki Aba, chief of Shitire-ya. This was in the year 1913. Later on, other Whitemen started making chiefs in other parts of Tivland. It was not only Chafa Roo who gave chieftaincy titles out to the Tiv. In the beginning, the Tiv called Tôgh by the Hausa name *Sanda*. Later on, they started calling them *Tôgh* [wooden staff]. *Tôgh* is a stick of wood that women use for digging and sowing yams given to them by their men.

So when the Whiteman started appointing chiefs and giving them the staffs of authority, the Tiv did not know what to call it. They started by calling them branch, then stick, and then finally agreed to call them *tôgh* or staff.

### THE WHITEMAN’S STAFF OF OFFICE FOR TIV CHIEFS

In the past, when the Whiteman appointed someone as chief, he would write on a red piece of paper and give it to the chief. In the eyes of the Tiv people, the red

document was far more important than the staff of office. This was considered to be the paper of blood, which meant the Whiteman had given him the authority to kill. For this reason, this class of chiefs was very powerful and ruthless. They were very oppressive. They had no restraint in the way they oppressed their subjects because they used their absolute power, not to protect the people, but rather as a licence to kill.

### DANTSOFO

Chafa Roo stayed only briefly and then he left. He was replaced by another Whiteman called Dantsofo. He replaced *ikwembe* tax shells or tokens with grass sticks, another kind of token. However, these days, chiefs have scribes who have replaced these simple tokens of having paid taxes with written records rendering them redundant and useless.

### THE RETURN OF JECHILA TO KATSINA ALA

#### MAKONDO

The Whiteman settled in Katsina Ala. The Tiv were his subjects and paid taxes to him. However, in the beginning, not all Tiv paid tax to the Whiteman. Other Tiv clans including the Kunav, Ishangev and Gaav were subject to another Whiteman who ruled from Damagudu.

They served the Whiteman in Katsina Ala in other ways, such as building roads and houses and providing food supplies for the colonial army. The Whiteman also settled disputes between them.

One day Makondo left Ibi, taking Audu, the current chief of Makurdi, with him. Together, they arrived at Katsina Ala. From there, they travelled to visit Achi Ikema, who was the most senior elder of Kunav. There the Whiteman from Damagudu travelled down and joined Makondo. They gathered together all the elders from the Kunav, Gaav and Ishangev clans. The Whiteman from Damagudu addressed the Tiv people and handed them over to Makondo. They became his subjects, paying their taxes in Katsina Ala. Dantsofo, the Whiteman in Katsina Ala, went out to all these clans and issued them bamboo stick tokens as evidence that they had been assessed for the purposes of paying taxes. They became subjects of the Whiteman in Katsina Ala in the year 1914. For the first time, the Tiv were united under a single authority and rule. They no longer needed to pay their taxes in Wukari. All their taxes were now paid in Katsina Ala and Abinsi, both in Tivland.

Nowadays scribes keep tax records. It is the Whiteman's standing instruction that a tax census be taken annually by all the chiefs and judges. Even so, the Tiv people have not completely discarded the tax *ako a kpandegh* [a stick given tax collectors as a token of tax due]. They had resorted to these *ako* for tax-auditing purposes.

It was Dantsofo who first introduced policing in Tivland. It was during his time that the Tiv youth began to accept the Whiteman. Of all that has been said about the Whiteman up until now, it was only the Hausa who worked for and moved

about with the Whiteman. And among the missionaries it was I, the author, who worked with them, from 1911 up until today. I myself am a witness to some of the things I have written about the Whiteman. Other things I have heard from my father and other elders, all indisputable sources. Dantsofo worked among the Tiv people until the end of the First World War. Thereafter, we had no news of him whatsoever.

### MADUBI

Dantsofo left. A warrior, a hostile Whiteman, took over. The Hausa called him Maimadubi. His other name was Barkono. Later everyone settled on calling him Maimadubi; in Hausa, this means 'owner of a mirror'. And Barkono means 'pepper'. This is because he was as hot-tempered and hostile as pepper. However, the Tiv people also called him by the name Maimadubi, though they shortened the name to Madubi. He delighted in humiliating people. He would humiliate anyone he decided had done something he disapproved of. This could be a chief, an ordinary or poor person, or any of his staff, or anyone else. He respected no one. For example, if someone did something wrong, he would punish him publicly, regardless of his position or station in the community. He would tell them to bring him raffia sticks or *iyeseichol*. When they fetched it for him, he would tie up the sticks with raffia into something that looked like a tail of a monkey. He would have this tied around the offender's waist, resting behind between the buttocks. He would show them a tall tree to climb. While climbing, they would have to make the kind of noises monkeys make. Meanwhile he would have gathered together as big a crowd as he could muster. While the wrong-doer climbed a tree as a monkey does, with a monkey tail behind him, the crowd laughed and jeered. Madubi once treated my dad Sai in this way. This was when my dad and Peva were both competing against each other as to which of them would be chief. Another humiliating punishment was getting offenders or wrong-doers to dig the ground with their mouths as pigs do, making them grunt the same as pigs do.

Once people received such inhumane treatment with that level of humiliation, they never repeated their wrong-doing. One of his achievements was that he permitted the missionaries to set up a Saturday market at Sai for the first time. It should also be noted that he was a very severe and strict judge, a no-nonsense character of a man.

### CHAFI FISHI

When Madubi left, he was replaced by Chafa Fishi. It was during Chafa Fishi's watch that some Tiv people crossed the river to live on the other side with other ethnic groups. He liaised with the Whiteman at Ibi in administering the Tiv people on both sides of the river. But it was Ruanzafi, together with the Whiteman at Ibi, who drew the boundary line dividing the two communities. This took place in 1922. He administered Tivland for a much longer period than Madubi. He was the first to try to improve the living conditions of the Tiv people, by creating some paying jobs for them, similar to the messenger positions already held by other ethnic groups. These were positions with ranks and

staff of office. There were 'teething' problems. He appointed Gbajur as a messenger with a staff of office. In these days messengers in other ethnic groups had staffs of office similar to those held by Tiv chiefs. The difference was that the messenger's staff of office was not long and was coated with silver, not gold. Gold-covered staffs were carried only by government messengers. That was the kind of staff of office given Gbajur by the Whiteman. This authority went to Gbajur's head. Even chiefs were made to greet him on their knees, otherwise they suffered severe beatings. He would ask them whether they did not see him carrying the government staff of office. Gbajur thus oppressed the people far more than they had been oppressed before in the past by other ethnic groups. The Whiteman appointed another man called Sule to the position of a messenger, but without a staff of office. Sule was the road overseer. The other appointee was Jato Ugo at Ipav who was his bicycle messenger. Another bicycle messenger was Katsina Ala. Agbatse was appointed a Senior Police Officer. These appointees became drunk with power, abused their authority, turned on the people they were appointed to serve, and oppressed them like they had never been oppressed before. In addition, they did not respect the seniority of the appointees from other ethnic groups who had held those offices before them. That was not all. They despised them. One day they went too far. They burned down, during the night, the house of Chafa Fishi's secretary. He was nearly burnt alive in the fire. He barely escaped with his life. They were prosecuted and punished at Katsina Ala. They were dismissed by the Whiteman from their positions; some were transferred to other places.

From that time on, the Whiteman never again offered any position of responsibility or importance to a Tiv man. They were confined to doing menial jobs as labourers. This continued until the time of Chafa Don, when he once more started offering important jobs to Tiv people, including positions as messengers. Still, the chiefs and judges were sceptical of the changes and improvements. Some said that other ethnic groups were more cool-headed. They said that the Tiv people were often too involved in back-biting and prone to tearing each other apart.

## IJEN

Chafa Fishi left Katsina Ala and was replaced by another Whiteman called Ijen. At that time, the first staff-of-office-holding chief of Shitire, Zaki Aba, died. The new Whiteman, Ijen, arrested a powerful slave-buying chief named Abughur Abenga from a clan of Ukan Mbaanyam.

## THE ARREST OF ABUGHUR

Abughur was one of the early staff of office chiefs, a bold and courageous warrior. Other chiefs of his rank, although also bold and courageous, still feared the Whiteman, but Abughur had no time for the Whiteman. He complied only with the rules of the Whiteman that suited him. However, he continued buying slaves. He would tell the Whiteman to stop engaging labourers. He would tell the Whiteman that the slaves were his labourers, just as the Whiteman's labourers

were the Whiteman's. He said that if the Whiteman came to stop him from buying slaves, the Whiteman should leave Tivland. 'Has the Whiteman come to stop work in Tivland? If he does not buy slaves, who or what is going to work on his farms? Or does the Whiteman want him to stop serving as a chief and work on his farm all by himself?' The Whiteman Abughur hated most was Dantsofo because it was Dantsofo who was determined to stop his slave trade. He had both male and female slaves. There were so many that he did not know them by name. When he wanted to send for a slave, he would just call 'Slaves oooo!' then all the slaves would answer with a loud response. And countless numbers of slaves would rush to where he was and stand all around him. He would then choose some to carry out his wishes and send the rest back. They lived in their own town on his farms. Others lived with him in his village. The slaves bore children whom he named after himself — they all bore his name. And he treated them the same as his free-born children. It was not possible to distinguish his free-born children from the children of his bonded women. These were far more in number than his free-born children. Abughur continued his slave trade, as well as oppressing his people, the Ukan, taking their wives to become his wives. He had so many wives that he did not know them nor did he know how many wives he had. When he saw one of his wives he would ask, 'Where are you from?' Someone would answer, 'Chief, she is your wife.' Then he would ask, 'From where did I marry her?' He would be told 'You married her from such and such a family.' He would then say 'Ehee,' meaning 'I see'.

Abughur was the chief who taught other chiefs the practice of seizing other people's wives and forcing their daughters to become their own wives because they wanted as many wives as Abughur had.

Abughur did not want to stop his evil practices and disregarded the Whiteman's orders. The Whiteman found himself caught with a dilemma. He would say, if I now dismiss Abughur from his position as a staff of office chief, who among Ukan can successfully fill that vacancy? Not finding a satisfactory answer, he continued to turn a blind eye to Abughur's evil practices.

This continued until Ijen took over at Katsina Ala. Around that time, Abughur killed two people and Ijen heard about it. He sent for Abughur to come so that he might investigate the matter. Abughur refused to go and see Ijen. Ijen sent for Abughur a second time. Again, Abughur refused to see him, saying, why is this little Whiteman in Katsina Ala troubling him so much? He said that next time the Whiteman sent a messenger or a police officer to him that he would kill such a person without hesitation!

Having received this response from Abughur, Ijen sent a letter to Madubi, who was then District Officer in Abinsi. Madubi had travelled to Mbatiar, where the letter was delivered to him. On receiving the letter, he wrote to advise Ijen what strategy to put in place.

Ijen called up all the First World War soldiers who had been demobilized and were living in Katsina Ala. He armed them with guns locally made by Tiv people. Ijen left Katsina Ala with this army, with the full knowledge of Madubi. While Ijen was on his way, Madubi instructed Baba, still a messenger at Gboko in 1935 as I write, to trick Abughur and bring him to Madubi. As Baba and Abughur approached, Baba hurried ahead on his bicycle and told Madubi that Abughur was on his way, near at hand. Madubi told Baba to return and tell Abughur to go back and to tell Abughur that he had not called for him.

This gave Abughur a false sense of security that there was nothing to fear. He turned and headed for his home. Madubi was now certain of where Abughur was and which way he was taking back home. Madubi followed Abughur with his five police officers. Abughur did not know that he was being followed. As Abughur approached the outskirts of his village, Ijen appeared with a large army. As Abughur turned to survey his back, he saw that Madubi too arrived, by this time with more people joining his five police officers. Abughur found himself between the two forces. He and all those who were with him felt overwhelmed. He was arrested by the combined forces of the two Whitemen. They stayed with Abughur in his barracks for three days. Then they left. Madubi handed him over to Ijen, who was to judge him at his judgment seat at Katsina Ala. Madubi returned to Abinsi. Ijen brought Abughur to Katsina Ala.

When Ijen arrived, he announced throughout Tivland that whoever had any claims against Abughur should come to Katsina Ala and file a case. There was pandemonium. A plethora of cases flooded in. For example, a man would come and say that someone married his daughter and cousin without paying a dowry and had five children with her. When he took the case to Abughur, Abughur had the offender's son-in-law arrested, but Abughur kept the three daughters for himself and only returned the two boys and their mother to the plaintiff. Furthermore, the case was not free; it cost them *akundu a bashi*<sup>53</sup> *a taan*, twenty five brasses. There were countless numbers of such cases. Others complained that Abughur took their children and gave them away to the Udam neighbouring ethnic group. Such cases too were countless. Another man came with only one ear. He said he was Abughur's slave and that Abughur had cut off his ear and fed it to him to eat. It was all so shocking. The Whiteman asked Abughur to respond. He admitted to all the charges and pleaded guilty to all of them.

There were also countless charges of taking cows without paying for them. Abughur was kept in prison in Katsina Ala for over one month. And no day passed without many more charges being filed against him and he was made to pay cash compensation. After some time, Abughur fell ill and died! That was the life story of Abughur. All this happened during the time of Ijen. He died under Ijen's watch.

There was another Whiteman before Ijen, though it was Ijen who arrested Abughur. Ijen's predecessor was called Abandiirdzwa. Here is the meaning of his name. *Aba* means cotton, a big bundle of cotton, the thread of which is not firm, not strong. When it is cut, its ends fray like loose cotton and they become one with the cotton. It is very difficult, often impossible to locate the end of such a lost and hidden loose thread. The Whiteman's character was that difficult to discern and no one could figure out what type of man he was. When you worked hard at pleasing him, you would find in the end that he would take offence. And when you behaved badly to hurt him, he would not even notice it. It would not matter to him. No one understood him. And so the Tiv people named him Aba-ndiir-dzwa. His stay at Katsina Ala was very brief and when he left, Ijen replaced him.

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<sup>53</sup>*Bashi* is a brass rod for trade. Its perceived value varied according to its length and condition. A proverb says, 'Bashi do kpwee, kpa ka a lu a cul', meaning 'The brass rod (item) is okay, but has a blemish.'

Many Whitemen came to Katsina Ala, one after the other. One of them was called Mata Bello. He had no respect for the Tiv elders. He focused his attention on the youth and involved them in making decisions about the land. He died in Katsina Ala in 1917. A missionary who lived in Zaki Biam, called Ortese Agee, went to Katsina Ala from Zaki Biam on a bicycle when he heard of the death. Together with the company clerk, they buried Mata Bello at Katsina Ala. When he died the elders said it was because he was rude and hostile to the elders, and that was why he was killed by witchcraft.

Another Whiteman had died at Katsina Ala earlier than Mata Bello. He was killed by lightning. He was eating at a table with his steward, who was waiting on him. It was raining. There was thunder and lightning which threw his steward outside into the rain. He did not die but became unconscious. But the Whiteman died! He was buried in Katsina Ala, along the road that leads from the barracks to Wukari. This happened in 1917. The Tiv people explained that his death was because he had eaten someone whom the sky god, Aôndo, had killed before him and that was why Aôndo killed him. The Tiv believe that Aôndo does not kill people without reason, because he metes out his justice; only if you eat Aôndo's man. Otherwise, Aôndo will not kill you.

Many Whitemen served at Katsina Ala who have not been mentioned here. Others came only briefly and left. Others came only to 'hold the fort' for the real appointee. So then when the appointee arrived, the other left immediately. Those who stayed briefly, the Tiv people decided, left because they were no good at their jobs; that was why the competent one dismissed the incompetent one and took over. They say the same thing even today. A Whiteman who stays a long time, they say it is because he is a good worker; that is why the government allows him to stay so long.

### WANIMEM, CHAFA DON, AND CHAHUL

The last of the prominent Whitemen who ruled at Katsina Ala closed up and moved their headquarters to Waka (now Wukari) and are referred to here by the names given to them by the Tiv people: Wanimem, Chafa Don, and Chahul. They were the most prominent players in the drive to rid the Tiv people of witchcraft practices under the movement called Haakaa in the Tiv language. They also at various times ruled from Gboko.

Wanimem was a cunning man. He organized a network of spies and informants, who would spy on the Tiv people and feed him with information that would enable him to achieve his goals. Some Tiv people said that he used to be a missionary among the Tiv people, but later left and returned to Tiv as a colonial administrator. They said he was now drawing on his former knowledge and experience as a missionary to assist him in his new role as a colonial administrator. Others were so certain of this view that they said the whiteness of his skin was the particular type found among the missionaries.

He was the first colonial administrator to introduce the present practice of transferring police officers. He was the man who arrested a major slave trader from the Ityuluv clan called Ajegeiwen. This was remarkable because Ityuluv was an interior secretive area not frequented by the Whiteman. It was therefore a haven for Ajegeiwen to carry out his slave trade as much as he pleased.



However, Wanimem was able to discover what was going on through his network of spies. He arrested Ajegeiwen and set free over sixty slaves. He put Ajegeiwen in prison in Wukari for many years; he just recently has been released. Wanimem also found out about the murder committed by the Ukum staff of office chief. He judged him and imprisoned him at Waka. The chief did not personally order the murder: another person bribed the chief with a cow and proceeded to commit the murder under the chief's protection. The chief's name is Udza; he was replaced by Tseva from Ikyado who still occupies his seat of authority as I write in 1935.

Wanimem was never to be found in one place for any length of time. He travelled all over Tivland. Often he was here today and there tomorrow. And that is how he has got the name *wanimem*, meaning 'a bell' to be heard both near and far.

### CHAF DON

After Wanimem's second tour of Katsina Ala, he handed the office over to Chafa Don. Chafa Don made a name for himself in Tivland. He was interested in stories about witchcraft in Tivland and wanted to put a stop to it. It was he who introduced the movement of collecting all paraphernalia having to do with witchcraft. The program was called *haakaa*. It was also during his tenure of office that more and more Tiv people were employed by the colonial administration. In the beginning, he came across to the Tiv as a merciless, harsh administrator. So the Tiv people named him Wanbeke. The meaning is this. *Wanbeke* is a small undergarment that when worn requires the wearer to be particularly careful, for example when sitting or walking very fast. Otherwise even a gentle breeze can cause the *beke* to fly open and expose the wearer's nakedness. That was how Chafa Don too would behave; he would seize the slightest opportunity to shame a person, whoever he is.

He interrupted his *haakaa* program to go on holiday. When he came back, he calmed down. He stopped beating up 'witches' and started learning about Tiv culture and customs. He published a pamphlet on the subject from his learning and observations.

Chafa Don encouraged Tiv elders to play an important role in his administration. He believed that his approach would ensure stability and progress. However, because he was consulting with and involving the wrong type of elders, he was running the risk of achieving the very opposite effect, the one he was seeking to avoid, and making the situation worse. These days, Tiv elders are as well-informed as other elders around them. However, Chafa Don chose to deal with the worst types of Tiv elders, those known to be deep into witchcraft, or elder bereft of integrity and good judgment, or an elder who knows himself to be unworthy; these would be the elders he chose to rule over their people. Such an elder would rejoice and say that they thought they were not worthy and yet, now they have been given such great authority and elevated to such lofty heights. This went to their heads; they made a practice of lording it over the people and ruling badly. And when the people complained, they would threaten them, reminding them that Chafa Don had ordered that elders be respected. And the elders would threaten to report the people to Chafa Don. This would silence the people, forcing them to suffer

all injustices in silence. Rules which the Whiteman had previously put in place, such as the ban on *abem*, burning bushes and forests for hunting purposes, were now ignored by these elders with impunity. They, instead, encouraged the youth to break the law, damage the environment, hunt inefficiently and give them the bush meat, saying that now the land had been handed back to them, the elders.

When Chafa Don handed the land back to the elders, Tiv folk returned to bush burning and *abem* festivals. While some were arrested and imprisoned for these crimes, others were busily planning their own bush burning and *abem* bush drive festivals. Across the whole of Tivland, the rule of law became so weak as to have completely broken down. So the Tiv people said that the progress made since the arrival of the Whiteman was now lost. They could now envision that in the near future there would be days when Tiv people would return to fighting wars, and even drinking *kor* [a traditional divining apparatus used to ascertain guilt]. To understand *kor*, read my section on Tiv customs.

In 1933, two Tiv clans, the Ishangev-ya and Kunav, fought each other so bitterly that many lives were lost on both sides. At that time tempers flared up across Tivland; it was only because Chafa Don acted immediately to quell the uprising that the situation did not get completely out of control. From that uprising in 1933 until the present day in 1935, the Tiv people have continued to flaunt their disregard for the rule of law. To arrest the situation, an increasing number of young Whitemen have flooded into Tivland and are to be seen all over the place. This is quite unprecedented and has kept the lid on things and stopped Tivland from returning to the dangerous old days. There are a few wise Tiv elders, but because many are not wise, it gives the unfortunate impression that all Tiv elders are unwise.

It was Chafa Don who started to reduce and erode the authority of the chiefs. Their authority to whip people was removed. This humbled the chiefs more than anything else. No one now respects the police officers. The chiefs are very humble these days. The Tiv people no longer know how to sustain progress in their land. They do not know how and do not understand the Whiteman's thinking. They advise him but he then does those very things that are ruining the land. Now the only thing being talked about throughout the Tivland is that the Whiteman has completely ruined the land. They have decided to wait and see how the Whiteman ruins the affairs of the Tiv nation. There are few people in the land with insight. These are pleased with what Chafa Don is doing. They praise him. They say he is single-minded and focused and will produce the desirable outcomes. He is not generally loved by the Tiv people. But that does not worry him. He says they are not pleased with him now because they do not see, nor they do not understand what he is doing, but that the time will come when the results emerge, and then they will understand and be pleased. The truth is that he really does have the ability to show mercy. But his methods can be forceful and brash and so come across as uncaring to those who do not understand him. Those who know him point to his many acts of kindness and fairness. This group of people say that the government should allow Chafa Don to stay in Tivland long enough to enable him see the successful conclusion of the many changes he has introduced. This is the record of the tenure of office by Chafa Don from 1929 to 1935.

## ABOUT AKÔMBO (CAPTAIN BRIDEL)

When Chafa Don returned to his country on holiday, he was replaced by another Whiteman of equal rank. He was stationed at Gboko. He was of a completely different character, very unlike Chafa Don. There were a few other government workers from other ethnic groups living in Tivland at the time. These appeared to be his favourites and they were pleased with him. All other government employees had only complaints about him. They could not say a kind word about him. They longed for Chafa Don to return from his holiday so they could have their own way. They complained that the new Whiteman they called Akômbô favoured the other guest ethnic groups living among the Tiv people. They said he was not the Tiv's Whiteman; he was other ethnic groups' Whiteman. Akômbô was also involved with tax administration. That is it about Akômbô, and this was the end of senior Whitemen's residence in Tiv in Gboko whose names have been mentioned up until 1935.

## ABINSI

One may wonder why the author would go to great lengths to discuss the Whitemen who settled at Katsina Ala, both government employees and traders, and then entirely overlook Abinsi. Why? Is Abinsi not a town in Tivland? Is Abinsi not a major activity point or settlement? Why has the author not mentioned Abinsi? Could it be that the author knows nothing at all about Abinsi or could it be that he just does not care about Abinsi?

Abinsi is a village in Tivland. But it is not inhabited by Tiv people. It is inhabited by other ethnic groups from Waka. It was a remnant of some people travelling by the river Benue from Waka. When they arrived at Abinsi, they decided to settle there. After some time, a few people from Gara arrived and joined them there. There were therefore two ethnic groups in the same village. Their first elders were Atagara and Agabidogo from Gara. The elders of the Waka people were Akwakiriki and Jamindo. All of them were ruled by the chief of Waka. After some time, some Hausa people joined them. Their first settlement was on an island north of where Abinsi is presently situated. As their numbers increased, they left the Island and relocated to their present site on the mainland. In those days, there was not a single Tiv village or hamlet in that area. After they had established their presence in that area, Tiv moved and settled near them and the Iharev clan of Tiv people crossed the River Benue and settled near Abinsi.

Many of the Whitemen who were discussed here as being at Katsina Ala lived at Abinsi before relocating to Katsina Ala. At one time, Abinsi was the headquarters of the colonial administration over all of Tivland. A battalion of the colonial army headed by Whitemen settled at Abinsi for many years, before they broke camp and spread to other parts of the land. White judges also lived at Abinsi for a long time. The senior Tiv chiefs with staff-of-office status, and judges held their circuit meetings at Abinsi regularly; this started during the days of Lord Lugard and continued until 1928, when the white administrators living there left for good for Makurdi. Only traders continued to live at Abinsi.

## MAKURDI

It is surprising that the town of Makurdi has grown large. I, the person who is writing this book, went to Makurdi in 1912 by boat to see off Ortese Zimmerman and Ortese Guinter and Ortese Dowsen. At that time Makurdi had no more than five houses. What was present was huts built by the Hausa and the Iharev who had settled close to each other and did fishing. We stopped there by boat and as children we bought food from those Hausa in the very place that is now Makurdi.

Later on, Makurdi became a large town and all kinds of people settled there. One could not say that Makurdi was made up more of one ethnic group or another. They were not all able to understand each other, however. They also practised all sorts of religions. The chief there was Audu dan Afoda, a man of Yarbawa, who had been granted his authority by the Whiteman. This was during the time of Makondo. The chief we were most familiar with and heard about was called Audu who was there during the period when the Whiteman was installing the telegraph wires, which took them a long time to complete.

During Audu's rule, the Whiteman turned over the land administration of Iharev to him and both of the clan areas were under his authority; these were Ityôshin and Isherev and the lands of the two Masev clans, Igyenev and Ingohov. Both of these groups were under his authority. They were under him and taxes were collected from them. The collection of tax money was part of his work under the Whiteman and their disputes were also heard by him, and the chief in turn reported to the Whiteman. An amazing thing happened during the time that Audu dan Afoda was chief of Makurdi. It was during his rule in 1913 that the Tiv were in great awe and fear of the Hausa, who taxed the Tiv heavily and continuously, enforcing the rule of the Whiteman. It is not really pleasant to talk about how they really extorted much money, but they persisted with this: nothing stood in their way to get the money, nothing obstructed them.

It was during this time that he also became the chief over those Tiv who knew little about the Uke antecedents. The Whiteman gave them authority over them as they travelled very little to these lands. If he had been like the other Hausas who work for the Whiteman in Tivland that we know, they extorted from the Tiv a great deal. But he was not like that.

The Uke worked for the Whiteman among the Tiv, and they understood the ways of the Whiteman and thus reaped great benefit from them while collecting taxes. Yet he (Audu) did not take things from the Tiv by force, he was too clever for that. He befriended the Tiv and they liked him. When the Tiv visited him to pay homage with gifts, he reciprocated. He would not let them go back empty handed. So when the Tiv under his rule paid taxes, and the Whiteman gave money in return for the Tiv through him, he did not exhort the Tiv (by way of blowing on a chief's coal and swallowing the smoke) in a way they would notice like the other Uke. This in turn pleased the Tiv under them, who in turn even wrote hymns in his praise, so the town of Makurdi and the people of Iharev called out, Geri-Audu, and at times even called Makurdi by the name of Audu.

During the days of Audu's rule, the Whiteman was not held in high esteem like Audu by the Tiv. If any Hausa persons wanted to travel through Tiv land in peace, they made no mistake of saying they were representatives of the Whiteman. They

would not be taken seriously and they would be challenged. If they said there were persons of Audu, whatever thing they wanted would be given to them by the Tiv. The Hausa *ya tar*, that is, they ate the land during the rule of Audu at Makurdi. When the Whiteman sent messages about work, they disregarded it. However, if Audu was mentioned, they all rose up to the task cheerfully.

The Whiteman's only wishes for the Tiv were that they meant them well; they basically left them alone so they could carry out their own activities. However, the Whiteman wanted the Tiv clans to be independent and that the Tiv were no longer under the rule of Audu, and this did not please the Tiv. When this happened, I the author, travelled around in their land for about two years when the Tiv were collectively under Audu's authority and rule and when they were asked to be on their own like other Tiv clans, and Audu to be only in charge of Makurdi. Actually what I heard most of the time was praise for Audu, since the Whiteman had actually united them. Their disunity had displeased them, so to be under Audu's jurisdiction, the *ikev*, was preferable. They asked what Audu had done to them to be removed from under his jurisdiction. Yet, he had not really done anything wrong to them, as things were. Regardless of any explanation as to the reason why they were taken off Audu's jurisdiction, they would not be satisfied. But even though they understood, it did not please them. The matter of Audu would not be quickly forgotten, so they said. The Tiv praised Audu and Hausa. Perhaps even some of the Whitemen that worked with him also praised him up to this year, 1935.

Makurdi began to grow during the period of preparation for the installation of the train tracks. The tracks entered Masev, passed through it and emerged into Iharev, crossed the big river at Makurdi, then ran on into the lands of the Hausa. The train track in the Tiv area was called Adôgôn. The meaning of *adôgôn* in the Tiv language is to be bent, *huren*, this way and that. It was at the time of its construction that the most of the white colonial administrators, white road engineers and white businessmen came to settle at Makurdi as well as their leader. When lots of people gathered at Makurdi, something happened. The price of food increased greatly. The coming of the railway was really the beginning of the expansion and development of Makurdi and provided the impetus for its growth.

The most noteworthy aspect of the development and popularity of Makurdi was the bridge that the Whitemen constructed across the great river; nothing else was as amazing to the Tiv as the Whiteman's ability to make a bridge that crossed the large river. This bridge was constructed in a period of five years. Many Whitemen worked on it, as well as many Tiv who were involved in the construction as labourers. But there were also men from Igbo land and Akporo or Idoma, along with other people from different ethnic groups who gathered to do all the work.

As the Whitemen began to work on the bridge, the Tiv said, 'Never, never! The Whitemen do not have the ability to construct a bridge across such a huge expanse of river.' As the construction went forward and many laboured on the project, many local workers died, though not many Whitemen died. Of those who did die, they did so when huge holes were dug in the bottom of the riverbed, under the water — that was what killed the most men.

During the construction period, many people gathered in and around Makurdi to bring this or that for sale and to get money from the labourers this way. White traders came as well and settled in the town during the construction of the bridge at Makurdi. Everyone who engaged in one kind of selling and trade or another —

all were pleased. Such growth attracted many women of easy virtue as well who gathered there, along with thieves. So the Whiteman's police force had plenty to do to keep things in order, and the Whiteman's court was a busy place and did not lack for cases to try. So they were all very busy during this period. All those employed by the government were also fed up with these incidents during the construction period.

### THE BRIDGE OPENING

After the work on the bridge had been completed, the Whitemen who were governing the land called the chiefs of the Tiv as well as those of Idoma, along with their councillors, judges and elders, and even all those who had been involved as workers on the bridge project to come to witness their Governor introducing the railway and the train which passed from one part of the land to the other. The opening date was May 24<sup>th</sup> 1933. The governor who came to officiate at the bridge opening was Gomna Kamaru. That was a great day! Many of the Tiv people and others from Idoma met in Makurdi, and it was a time that the people will not forget. The Tiv were very impressed and talked among themselves and discussed many things, such as: the Whiteman is ready to destroy them all, he has called them to this gathering to put all of them on the train and take them across the bridge, the bridge will collapse once they are on it and they will all perish! Others said that perhaps the Whiteman would gather all of them and take them on the train to Kaduna into exile. So the Whiteman prepared a feast for the chiefs and killed many cows for the people to eat, yet they ate with sadness not knowing the full intention of the gathering by the Whiteman. Others however said, if the Whiteman had bad intentions for this gathering, he would not have wasted all the slaughtered animals for a feast. Others said further that the Whiteman couldn't care less about the slaughtered animals. That even when a man kills another and is to be hanged, yet the Whiteman will slaughter animals and ask the condemned man to feast on one before his death: this feast was therefore their last meal from the Whiteman. The chiefs all became fainthearted. The Whiteman also gave the chiefs an honorarium for food and instead most of them were using this to purchase types of *akômbô* from the Hausa.

On May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1933, the Governor of the land came in the afternoon. All the chiefs gathered in their splendour at Makurdi where the bridge crossed from one side to the other of the river. At the appearance of the Governor, the Chiefs all wetted themselves in fear of what was to befall them by the hands of the Governor, some wetted themselves five times at a go in fear. Many of the Whitemen crossed the bridge to the other side and waited for the Governor to cross over.

The people who were responsible for looking after the crowds were the '*udan-sanda*' [policemen with batons]; the Whiteman in charge of them had them standing all in order according to rank. When the Governor arrived, many bugles were sounded and the crowds began to cheer wildly and clap their hands. The Governor waved, returned their greetings with praise for all the people. Many praised the beautiful colour parade by the policemen on that day and the Whiteman in charge of the police.

He arrived by crossing the bridge while standing on the train, which was moving slowly. The Tiv began to eulogize the Whiteman with songs in unison and to cheer

loudly. The Governor came out and seeing the large crowd, crossed into the station house at Makurdi and entered a car to take him to the *barki* [the barracks]. When he got there, all the chiefs were gathered in the courtyard. They all passed before the Governor according to rank, a '*darbar*'<sup>54</sup>; the local chiefs first, then their judges, then later the police force and soldiers. Following these were those not under orders and all gathered there.

The white people had arranged chairs near the entrance gate where they had constructed things. Then they all sat down except the Governor, who stood up above them all and looked over the people.

#### THE SPEECH OF THE GOVERNOR (SIR DONALD CAMERON)

The Governor acknowledged the Tiv and they called back their greetings. He said that the King of the Whitemen had sent him to this country and so he was like the king himself over this land. He had also appointed other Whitemen there who were in the land helping to care for it, keeping it well-maintained and in good order. Their attitude to them was one of care and seeking what was good and peaceful for them. Thus it was good and right for the Tiv people in turn to offer their help and assistance in keeping their land in good order. If there were things that confused or bothered them, they should come to their respective Whiteman. That Whiteman would then insure that all was clarified and made well. Similarly, if the Whiteman did something that appeared to be confusing or inappropriate for the Tiv, they should not hide their concern, or shy away, but approach the Whitemen openly with their concerns for the land. He the Governor would respond to the concerns presented to him. The Whitemen would look into it, and if it were a matter for the common good, he would gladly accept and do what the Tiv ask. However, if the concerns were such as to bring the land backwards, that would become a bone of contention. The Governor reiterated all the good intentions of his administration over Tivand.

After these deliberations, they came and ate together at noon with the great Whiteman of Aro [the Rail Network construction] that they called Mata Remsi. The Tiv then returned to Makurdi town, and the Governor got back on the train and left at dusk

#### ENTERING INTO *DZWA* [LARGE CINEMA HALL]

After all of this was completed, the Whiteman called on all the chiefs present and handed them four tickets or documents of authority. He pointed out a large building at the bank of the river near the river crossing. All the chiefs who had the papers were to go into the structure one at a time with three guests, at night to enter into the building. (This ticket was like an invitation paper so that no random or uninvited guests would enter the building.)

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<sup>54</sup>Durbar was a term commonly used by British colonial officers who had served in India. It was a term derived from Hindi and Persian for a ruler's court. Commonly it was a parade which passed before those who ruled.

So the chiefs received their tickets but did not understand the meaning of these. They returned to their villages and misinformed the voice of the Whiteman to their people. They also misinterpreted what the tickets were for and then became afraid and disheartened. They said that since they had escaped going to Kaduna, the Whiteman's intention was to lock them up in the big house and destroy them once they entered the big house which they called 'jegezwa' [gaping maw]. There would be no escape for them this time. As soon as they would enter, the door of the *dzwa* would be shut and that they would be burnt to death. The chiefs panicked further and said goodbyes to their wives some saying: 'My wife as I leave you today, just wait for the news, as soon as we are burnt and dead, go and tell my so-and-so son that, even as I was crying, I knew it was not in vain as I have told him all my secrets before my death, let him fulfill my wishes'. Some would say to their wives, 'I can never leave you all by yourself, in death we shall go together' and some chiefs just feigned an unexpected *akesagh* illness.

When night came, the Whiteman displayed fireworks of different colours which appeared and were seen by many in the sky. They would fly up in the sky, explode and display various brightly shining lights which were green, white and red. The town came to a standstill and silence was everywhere and the people became distressed and in fear. As soon as the fireworks display finished, we the invited guests entered into the building's gate and the door was then shut.

We were shocked at the 'photos' we saw which we had never seen in our lives. Other photos seen previously were still images. These were not still photos but such that when one walked and talked you could see their lips move but not hear their voices. What was in the film showed a Whiteman who ran over another white female in his car and immediately came down and took her and put in the car and drove away; another Whiteman fought another, beat him up and the loser ran away to his house; another Whiteman rode on a big white horse galloping, the horse made him fall down, he got up and climbed on it again and rode away. All of these were happening in the 'movie'; we were so baffled and surprised that until today, the Tiv people still talk about this 'moving images' of a photo.

This was the biggest thing that happened in Makurdi on that day. The opening of the bridge also happened in one day. At the break of day on May 24<sup>th</sup> 1933, after the bridge was declared open, the chiefs were allowed to go to their clans.

As the Tiv dispersed and went back to their clans, Gbatar, the chief with staff of authority of Nõngov from Ndzõrov, gave Kokoiwen Adugu, the chief with staff of Mbayiõn, a wife which he brought to Gundu market at Nõngov; as Tiv saw that, there was much gossip on the day. They said: 'As the chiefs gathered at Makurdi for the bridge opening, Jato Aka requested the governor to allow the Tiv to woo or capture wives so that Tiv land will be good once more. So, the governor agreed to the request: can't you see, Kokoiwen, the chief with a staff captured a wife for free, therefore it must now be acceptable for all?'

Then the Tiv erroneously started capturing women again; the Whiteman had to put a lot of them into prison which made them calm down, they only did it secretly just as they do to this day.

That is all the information about Makurdi.



## GBOKO

After Makurdi had been well-established, the leader of the Whitemen began to look for another location among the Tiv, a place that was more central to the rest of the Tiv population, so that they could gather people together to speak about matters relating to the betterment of the land. Such a place having optimal access to many had in former times been called *ilyum*.

Initially they tried out the area near Mbaitiav, near the founder, who was Akpagher. So they started there and held two meetings with the local Chiefs. The Governor from Kaduna also came to meet with them there. A road was cleared or constructed so that vehicles could pass all the way up to Tse-Kucha which went down to Katsina Ala and from there over to Aturkpo. But after a while, this potential central Tiv meeting place was cancelled. The reason was that it was a waterlogged area. However, later on, a dispensary was built and a school constructed there for the D.R.C. Mission.

Then the Whitemen looked around for a place near Buruku, not far from the banks of the Katsina River, but on the other side. The Tiv thought this was certainly where the colonial Whiteman was going to settle. That was not to be as they did not settle there, hence it was in vain. Only a company secretary for buying of products was left there, and the Whiteman built only a little housing unit on a small hill and then left. Again, the Whitemen looked around Tivland to find a more suitable and central place. Chafa Don found a small hill area at Gboko that pleased him and built a place — that was in the year 1933. When this place was built, the Governor came and looked at the location and praised it. Then it was agreed that Gboko would become the chief meeting place for gatherings and the place to hold court. From the very beginning, they only met once a year.

THE LARGE BARRACKS: *UBARKI*

The Whitemen overseers of the land built three barracks in Tivland which became the housing units for junior colonial administrators. These barracks were at: Katsina Ala, Ihugh and Abinsi. They sub-divided the Tiv into clans so as to attend court cases within the jurisdictions of the barracks; it is the junior colonial administrators that adjudicated their cases. When the junior administrators cannot pass a judgment, it is passed down to Gboko where the Whiteman in charge decides. Some cases even at the biggest courts, a verdict is never reached. The court at Katsina Ala barracks is responsible for the clans of Shitire, Ukum, Tongov, Ugondo, Ikurav Tiev/ Ya, Turan, Tômbo, Mbalagh, Matie and Shitire-Tiev. Those who attend their court cases at Ihugh are, all of Kunav including Gaav, Ukan, Nanev and Ishangev-Ya.

Those who attend court cases at Abinsi are; Masev of both clans, Ingyenev, Ingohov, Iharev of the three clans: Ityôshin, Isherev and Uityôndo; Nôngov of the three sub-clans of: Ndzôrov, Saghev and Mbagbayange, Mbakor and Mbaityerev. That was how the Whitemen established things, each in their respective areas even up until today.

## JUNIOR COLONIAL WHITE ADMINISTRATORS

The junior Whitemen had jurisdiction over other small places, but they hardly stayed at their area of jurisdiction for long. What they did was to move their workers about. These workers travelled through Tivland widely, in fact all of them moved around the land, but of course not always to the same small places, but to wherever it was necessary to handle governmental affairs. The senior administrators also moved about; but not as often as the junior administrators, unless there was a serious need for them to move about.

In the past, whenever the Whitemen moved about the land they did so only with Hausa advisors and helpers, because no Tiv had been hired or appointed to positions of authority, only the Hausa had. At that time there were not police appointed, but there were scribes, messengers and interpreters, overseers of labourers, those workers who carried loads and goods, and cooks, the *ukuku*. All their assistants were Hausa, and as they travelled here and there, some did more work than others. The messengers, *umasinja*, were very busy, as were the interpreters. The messengers were clever, perhaps even sly, since at times they would create situations in which the Tiv ended up having to pay money which they benefited from or gave to the Whitemen in order to gain favour. Thus they collected money. But the interpreters never took money, nor did the labourers get money from the Tiv cleverly; they just did their given jobs and did not get involved in graft, much.

Other people said that in the past the Hausa worked for the Whitemen and had forcibly taken money from the Tiv, but that was not the case, though many did become wealthy in the process, perhaps because of their cunning. There was a time they got money from the Tiv. This was when the Tiv disputed among themselves about chieftaincies. In that period, the Tiv did not act respectfully when they set their mind to become a chief by all means; some bribed the messengers and gave five or eight pounds, which caused the other contender to give as much as ten pounds to the messenger in order to get his help. Sometimes, when more than one person was seeking chieftaincy, the messengers became happy, saying to themselves it is the time to make money out of these contenders. Sometimes it was a cow that was given as a bribe to influence the outcome.

Here was one way to make some money from the Tiv: when a chief had a case brought against him before the Whiteman for judgment, the chief comes or sends a person to meet the messenger or a court clerk and give him money during the night. So the messenger, in turn, would go to the judgment hearing and even influence the judgment of the Whiteman. The chief then has a judgment entered in his favour. Sometimes, when a complainant wanted to win a case, they gave messengers money to defend them so as to win the case at all cost and enter judgment against their opponent.

If you look backwards and review the activities of the Hausa you will find other avenues for graft. Years ago, if you travelled widely among the Tiv, you would see foreign cattle at ranches of the Whiteman within the Tiv clans; but these clans where they kept their cattle, were Ikurav-Iya and Iharev, these were places the Whiteman hardly visited.

Formerly, the Whitemen supervised all the land of the Tiv but did not really bother to learn the Tiv language; the only language they listened to or learned was Tsonka, Hausa. Thus, most of the work and decisions were based on

advice from the Hausa. They did nothing among the Tiv alone: the Hausa were always there, being their ears and advisors. This gave the Hausa many opportunities, but was problematic for the Tiv.

After a time, the descendants of Kparev began to serve the foreign white women as luggage handlers. Later these, with new knowledge of Hausa, began to travel with the Whitemen and carry their burdens as they travelled among the Tiv. After a time, these Tiv saw what was happening and developed an understanding of how the Whiteman worked. Later, others were hired as new workers and some looked after the labourers who carried their goods, but most other types of jobs were held by the Hausa.

When some of the Tiv boys of the Kparev people began to be employed and entered into service, they became unruly and arrogant towards other Tiv who were not enlightened, always picking unnecessary quarrels with them, taking their things by force, being abusive to them, beating them, and sleeping with their wives when they entered into villages with the Whiteman. They would not even listen to the chief. If he opened his mouth, they would say that he was stupid and that they would tell the Whiteman and he would be removed from authority. They said that they, the labourers, were respected and feared even by the Whiteman. This is what they said and the chief feared having his authority removed. At other times, the labourers of the Whiteman, upon entering a Tiv market and being required to pay two shillings, simply paid a penny. If the Tiv merchant refused, they would drop it on the floor threaten him or beat him up. And they took the object by force. If the man disagreed, they beat him up. They went to the head man or *helema*, and in such a case he would lay the guilt on the Tiv merchant and not accuse his own labourers of guilt.

If a Tiv man who was strong willed, he would cry and lie down when in the presence of the Whiteman and begin to talk to him in Tiv. But since the Whiteman did not understand, he would call over his interpreter and ask him to tell him what was being said. The Tiv man would repeat that the labourer employed by the Whiteman had dealt with him by force. So the translator would tell the Whiteman, 'This is a crazy person, let me just arrest him and take him away from here.' The translator told the labourers to catch the man in the presence of the Whiteman and they could take him away and beat him.

When the Tiv witnessed this, they said that it was true, that the Whiteman was actually in awe of his own labourers. Behold, the labourers gave witness against the Tiv man and he was beaten. So when they went running to the Whiteman he listened to them; and the reputation of the Tiv man was spoiled. The labourers are bad, abhorrent, and the Whiteman actually fears them. And so the labourers were like poison to the Tiv; they disrespected their chiefs, ruined their authority, and beat up their elders. All the divisions of Tivland heard what the Whiteman had done, and they pondered about the burdensome authority of the labourers.

Formerly, there were few extensive well-constructed roads among the Tiv, so the Whiteman travelled on the small paths made by the Tiv, as did the labourers carrying loads. The Whiteman was being carried on their shoulders. So if Whiteman had slept in the village of a certain chief and was getting ready to travel the next morning, the labourers were responsible for carrying him on their shoulders; interpreters and messengers made the first move, the *lebera* said they would come along shortly, and they took their time, packing up very slowly, knowing that the Whiteman would soon be well ahead not to see what they would do.

They forced others to carry the loads meant for them and they came on empty handed; when they caught up with the Whiteman, they now dismissed the people they forced to carry their load to go back. When good roads were made, the Whitemen travelled on bicycles, and *lebera* would just wait until the Whiteman was far ahead, they now unleashed their mayhem taking people's things by force. (For more about messengers and police, look in the section 'Things about the Whiteman and Chiefs'.)

### THE TIV LANGUAGE

What really helped stop the suffering of the Tiv by the labourers of Kparev extraction who worked for the Whiteman was the Tiv language. As time had gone by in their administration of the land, a few Whitemen began to learn the Tiv language a little at a time. But then the Whiteman began to emphasize learning the Tiv language, as well as learning matters relating to administering the land. The one who was a leader in this regard was Chafa Don, the Administrator in Tiv, and from then on they began to understand Tiv, as they still do today. Of the Whitemen, the administrator who did best with understanding about Tiv things was Chafa Don, who understood the Tiv language; moreover, he was sincere in his manner of administrating the land. All the aspects of the work with the Tiv now are carried out in similar fashion and suffering has been reduced. Junior officials of the Whiteman now are learning the Tiv language and are assisting the people well; therefore, things are no longer as disturbing as they used to be.

Of all the junior colonial administrators, all the Tiv praise a person called Chahul; he makes great effort to learn about Tiv culture and has learnt the Tiv language very well, because of his goodness of his character he is named Chahul or Soap, which means that he fixes everything in Tiv to brighten it up just like a soap washes every filth away to make it clean. The Tiv said if it were within their power to appoint administrators, they would have made Chahul a senior administrator like Chafa Don. Chahul was a truthful Whiteman, a man who operated openly, was not forceful in his actions, but did everything with calmness and peace, and for any case brought before him, he would delve into it carefully. Some other junior administrators were also decent but Chahul surpassed them all; Tiv said, 'Chahul and Chafa Don should not leave Tiv land just yet.'

Some of the Whitemen who were appointed to work for the Governor also learned Tiv very well. Most of the Whitemen appointed to the schools of the government also learned, but others did not. One who excelled in grasping the Tiv language was Masa Is; he really learned the language, even spoke it. Actually, he spoke the language as if he were a Tiv person.

When the Whitemen began their work of overseeing Tivland and began to learn the Tiv language, the troubles began to lessen for the Tiv in regard to interactions with the messengers, soldiers, labourers, policeman and scribes. When the Whiteman began to speak with the Tiv in the Tiv language, this displeased the Tiv youth of the Kparev labourers because now it limited them and interrupted their control. Some among them went behind the backs of the Tiv and began to attempt ways to punish the Tiv of other clans.

As a result of what the Tiv had suffered from the hands of these Tiv labourers initially, later on other workers did the same; the Tiv no longer trusted any worker

of the administrators up to this day. They said that they suffered a lot less at the hands of the Hausa; however these Tiv labourers of the Kparev have done the worst things to them, but the Kparev disassociate themselves from such acts and say it is the Kunav youth of Kparev that have spoilt the land with their heavy handedness. The Tiv of other clans lament about the acts of the Tiv labourers of Kparev clan to this day.

The rest of the Tiv clans have hatred and enmity with the Kparev Clan, and the Kparev themselves in turn hate the Kunav, a sub-clan within them, as a result of how their acts through the labourers brought their entire clan into disrepute with other Tiv. So, if you travel to Iharev or to Masev, the first question you will be asked is, what clan you are from? If you dare admit that you are from Kparev clan, you are in for trouble; not even a drop of drinking water will be given to you; if it is raining and you enter their meeting hut for shelter, they send you out in the rain to be on your way. If you attempt to refuse such treatment, they will beat you up. The reputation of the Kparev is worse than that of a toad, and many bad things are attributed to the Kparev. The Hausa have a snack they eat, something like a peanut. The Hausa call it *Agbakulu* or *kulikuli*. The Iharev nick-named it *ambi-a-ukpar* [shit of the Kparev clan] out of the hatred they have for the Kparev clan. If a man was foolish, they would say, 'He is as foolish as a Kparev man'. If any of their daughters disobeyed and married a man from the Kparev clan, they disowned her, saying 'she is indeed now worthless!'

Among the various other clans of the Tiv, the Kparev are still not very much loved. But the dislike towards them is not to the extreme like among those of the Iharev and Masev clans. The Kunav sub-clans generally behave presumptuously and have less shame and tend to be arrogant. It is the new Kunav youth under the Whiteman's rule that are ruthless; their generations before were great and powerful men, always taking on the Udam in battle all the time. The Kunav of this current generation are most impertinent people who don't have any regard for their elders. When they visit a place as a guest, if you are not careful, they will try to take over the control of your household; they say, 'The headman also dies, *orya kpa kpe*, a visitor also dies *orvaninya kpa kpe*, and there is no death that is garnished with beniseed'. This clearly shows that he has nothing to lose and he is willing to kill or be killed to take over a household he visits. When they visit a place and they get invited into a house to be treated to a meal as the Tiv treat guests with respect, they enter and sit down to the meal but as soon as they finish eating the food they turn round to flirt with the headman's wife saying, 'If you tie down a pig in a certain place, right away it begins to root around there.' So when the people heard and understood all of this, they no longer invited the Kparev to feasts in their homes, even sleeping; they were no longer allowed to sleep in the house as guests when they visited, their food was given to them to eat in the meeting hut; a sleeping bed was also made for them at the meeting hut to sleep. Some of the Kunav guests who were given a place to sleep in the meeting hut, slept quietly; at the sound of the cock crow, they arose and took the bed on the ground where they had slept, and also took the chairs and burned them and did other bad things like defecating on the floor, after which they left and ran away. At dawn, the man who owned the meeting hut would realize what the guest had done; and then went on to say in anger that: 'The Kparev people are really badly behaved!'

It is observed that there are a lot of young Tiv men in foreign lands; actually there are really not many; the Tiv of the Kparev are more in number. The Kunav, a sub-clan of Kparev, had a custom: if a father had five children, three would be in a foreign land, only two would be left at home: only strong willed fathers controlled such attitudes of the children so that all of them would be at home in Tiv land. They also marry among themselves and always cry out about their children that '*Ka we mar akume, atsaha u*', meaning, when you give birth to *akume* children, it punishes you. Some of them took Hausa young people as their own. The other Tiv groups are different in character from the Kparev; they are very mindful of themselves and hate embarrassment and give respect to elders; not so many of them are in the foreign lands. If you do see them in foreign or non-Tiv lands, you would know instantly that they were not children of Kparev clan. The way you can tell is by their speech and behaviour, which is different from Kparev. Regardless of how long they live in the foreign lands, they never forget their original place of origin; it is because of their not forgetting their place of origin that they treat people nicely just because someday they will return home and wish to be at peace and not have any vengeance towards them. That is all about this matter.

Nowadays, the Whitemen in Tivland have changed — they travel with labourers much less often than before because the roads have improved. This means they can move their goods and their people around by car. Thus they can enter directly into the centre of the land wherever the roads take them and when there is no passable road, seek labourers locally to help them with their loads. So the labourers are not as numerous as before. Actually most of the labourers in recent times are those who work on the roads and that is only during the wet season. On this matter, Chafa Don has done a good thing by recruiting people to work according to the needs of the job. Thus, he selects Tiv men from many divisions and selects the headman for his people from among those who live in that part of the land. Such men fix sections of the road in their area and, because they get money, they also pay taxes, so disputes have been reduced. Labourers who work in their own area don't get into as many disputes as before. If one passed through a place where the labourers worked, their relatives would say to such a person, 'If you get into a dispute with your mouth, then what will you use to drink water with.' But the Kunav sub-clan, they did not care about dispute resolution. If they were among their people and they were engaged to do the work like the others, it was an opportunity for them to start conflict and harass people while they worked. That is all about labourers in the past.

The Whiteman began to care for all the clans of Tivland and any time they could give assistance, they did so to help the Tiv. They had one concern among them relating to the temperament and customs of the Tiv which they tried to avoid, not wanting to spoil Tivland, but not exactly that. The Tiv were created with and had one major social custom of their own: marriage by exchange. All other Tiv customs, it should be understood, were acquired from surrounding ethnic groups, and many other things they learned from neighbouring people a bit at a time. Some things they had known nothing about but by observation began to copy them. They observed their forefathers and learned some things from them. But marriage by exchange was an integral part of their original custom and has been stopped, and the land had not become spoiled, so what else can be stopped that will spoil the land? There is therefore nothing culturally

that the Whiteman could stop so that the land would not become spoiled. The Whiteman is only being misled to live in fear. If you observe many things of the Tiv very well, you will get the idea of how they started just like children play in all sorts of ways by improvising toys for play. Some were like those who played with or had small pieces of calabash and pretended they were playing with a calabash; other children took broken pieces of clay pot and played with it as if it were a clay pot, some ground fine sand and called it guinea corn; others took long sticks to play with and pretended they were horses to ride. Sometimes the children will have a knife or an arrow, but as soon as it was taken away from them by an adult they cried unhappily. However, if the adult gives them something else in place of what has been taken off them, they stopped crying, even if they were upset in the first instance when they had their 'toys' taken away from them, they are now comforted and happy.

When they became elders and grew up, they themselves began to laugh about the things they played with as kids and said 'When we were kids, those things we played with were of great value and importance to us; but now, we are no longer kids, we have now become adults so we will be doing the things of adults.'

## Chapter Ten

### KNOWLEDGE OF AÔNDO AMONG THE TIV

In the past, the Tiv used the name Aôndo<sup>55</sup> frequently for different things. They knew that Aôndo existed and that he was nowhere, but just a force ‘up there’. They understood that it was a power that gave or did not give: they also knew there was not a single thing that exceeded it. If you observe, nothing at all is greater than Aôndo; if you observe carefully you can see the references about Aôndo in their speeches and the songs they sang; even as the knowledge of the Tiv concerning it was limited, you never heard a Tiv who was knowledgeable saying, there is something greater than Aôndo, regardless how great a thing it was; they only compared it to Aôndo. To say it was greater than it, they never said that. Even when they sang songs or choruses as attributes to a great personality, they only said he was like Aôndo, to say he is greater than Aôndo, no!

When the Whiteman came to Tiv land and was powerful, never did the Tiv say they were greater than Aôndo. When they greeted the Whiteman with reverence in the way they greeted him, they first pointed up to Aôndo, the sky, earth and then the Whiteman and the meaning of that was that these three, in that hierarchy, were the greatest.

In the past, the Tiv had more things to do; and gave honour to two things. First they said that the food springs from the land or ground, not from anywhere else. Second, they also said that earth or the land is really a great thing because every person is of the land/earth and that when one dies then one becomes part of the earth again. Relating to this, they said that there was a huge country below the earth and that everyone would go when he died, and dwell in that land. Also they said that whatever suffering was experienced while living would be finished at death when you go to the huge country below. But of Aôndo they said that he sees and does not sleep. If one cherishes evil in the heart, Aôndo knows about it. Aôndo listens, so if a person does good things and makes declarations of his own innocence, then that will be accepted.

Those who honoured and called on Aôndo in years past were some great ones who called on the name of Aôndo: all those of the Shitire, the Ukum, Ikurav, Tongov, Nôngov, Iharev, and all of Masev and Tômbo clans. There was one great and wise man, a person called Gbayange, whose father was Ato of the Ndzôrov section of the Nôngov clan. He had a brother called Akaakase. All the other clans, all knew the one called Gbayange Ato was a wise man who never ceased speaking about Aôndo, to the point that they came to call Aôndo ‘the Aôndo of Gbayange.’ There have been elders, four in number, who were: Gbayange of Nôngov, Ndzôrov; Ityevajir in Ukuna; Ikeratar in Tômbo; and Abaverijuwa of Ukum. These were the ones most well-known among the Tiv, but they did not live all at the same time. They were called the ‘masters of the land’; the ones who called upon Aôndo and Aôndo listened to them. By doing

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<sup>55</sup>Aôndo literally means ‘he who rains well’.



this, they set the land right. If the land was becoming dry and no rain fell, the chief would then brew some beer, assemble his group, and among them came one of these men who set the land right. Such a person was clothed in a red-flanked duiker skin, with a sash made of the *iyandegh* plant. When the people seated themselves on the ground, he stood before them and spoke. He spoke the names of many different things and then he began to sing:

The Drum of the Dance I hold to my breast.

They all answered *Hie!*

The Drum of Death I draw to one side, so that it passes me by, goes down and falls into the water.

They all answered *Hie!*

He dipped up some of the beer and drank a bit, leaving some in the cup, and poured this back into the beer pot for the others to drink. Even though no rain had fallen up until that time, after this the rain would surely fall that day.

Now that these four have all died, some of the elders who regarded them highly remember their names ritually. When the sky turned black with impending rain or a terrible storm was blowing up, then an elder would get up and cry out:

Ahe-e, Aôndo of Gbayange Ato! Aôndo of Ityevajir! Aôndo of Abaverijuwa! Aôndo of Ikeratar! Be still now, be calm!

After this invocation had been made, Aôndo would hold back its hand and send good rain without a terrible wind storm.

### THE VOICE OF AKAAKASE, A BROTHER TO GBAYANGE ATO

One day, Gbayange sent his brother Akaakase to go and get some human flesh for him in a different part of the land called Kaambe. After he was given this, he put it into his bag. Then while he was crossing a river, Aôndo made a huge red storm cloud appear. The rushing wind caught the boat that Akaakase, with his human flesh, was in. Then, as the boat began to sink, Akaakase began to sing and called upon Aôndo:

Oooo Aôndo of Gbayange, be calm; if you threaten with a bad storm, let there be only lightning! It was Aôndo of Gbayange that killed him, o! It was he that struck him, o! Aôndo of Gbayange of Nôngov ooo! You who are Aôndo of Gbayange, be still now! Let there be only lightning!

After this song was done, Aôndo stopped the fierce wind from blowing. Now the boat crossed in safety as the storm lessened.

This was the kind of belief that the Tiv had about Aôndo long, long ago. Later on, as years passed, they gave up all of this and no longer used Aôndo's name as the men of old had been accustomed to doing. Or more recently, if they did use it, they would say instead, 'This is the will of Allah,' as the Hausa say. That

continued on, their saying, 'It is the will of Allah.' They learned such from the Hausa, who at that time were among them, and so whenever trouble happened, they would say, '*Ba Allah Ba?*' Is not this the will of Allah? Later on, some of the Tiv used Hausa names for their children, such as Allah to mean Aôndo. The father of Zaki Biam, who was the chief of Ukum long before the Whiteman came, had the name Allah and his grandfather was called Akugar (or *Akbar*) which is another borrowing from Hausa. When they call to prayer, they say *Allahu akbar*; this became Akugar. The Hausa in turn had borrowed it from the Arabic meaning 'God is Great.' But actually the Hausa did not explain the meaning of their sacred learnings and sayings to the Tiv, who they considered pagans. After all, they were not among the Tiv to teach them religion, but to gain as much profit from them as they were able. However, it is very much a Tiv custom to immediately latch on to anything new, whether really understood or not, and if they liked the sound of it, they adopted it. This is how the name Akugar was acquired by them even though they had no idea of its meaning.

Nowadays the Tiv seldom use the name Aôndo with much sincerity, as their forefathers did, and as for actually invoking Aôndo — no one does it now. It was just at that time when the Tiv no longer called on Aôndo in the way their progenitors did that the missionaries came.

#### THE ENTRY OF MISSIONARIES INTO TIVLAND

The missionaries did not come into Tivland all at once; they entered gradually, one after another. The earliest to arrive came south from Ibi to Wukari and then passed on to Sai and from there went to Takum. The first one was called Dr Kuum. He arrived in the year 1908. When he got into the area, he sent one of his people ahead to the village of Sai. When they arrived, Sai came out and met him and they sat in the shade of a tree to talk by the road that leads to the east. Some of the folk thought that the person to arrive was Chafa Godi, because he was heavysset like Chafa Godi, and because there were some colonial police in the entourage, but actually there were only five in the entire group. Many people gathered around, so Chafa Godi asked an interpreter in his group to greet the Tiv people and tell them that he was not a tax collector. Rather, he had come as a part of his work to look at Tivland. Afterwards, he would return and tell other Whitemen about his trip and where would be a good place to settle in order to speak the word of Aôndo, God. When the Tiv heard this they asked among themselves, how could they speak things in Aôndo's voice? The elders who were there said, 'Are they calling on Aôndo like our forefathers did?' Dr Kuum then told the Tiv so they could grasp the meaning. He greeted them and after that he went on to Takum and remained there for three days before returning to Ibi.

It was quite a time before anything more was heard from those missionaries, the *mbatessen*. But after a time, some of the men from Sai went to the market held in Gaba in order to sell their beniseed to the storekeepers there. When they got there, an elder who followed Sai about, whose name was Bayor, asked around for a *doli* or a cart to move around their sacks of beniseed so they could sell them in the central market area. When they got there, they met another European who

never tried cases nor was buying anything. Instead, this man called to them to come to his house, he gave them peanuts and treated them happily. He had also gathered a lot of Hausa children in a huge meeting room. He began to sing with the Hausa children. They sang hymns in the Hausa language in this way:

I samu samu ...  
 ‘Yes Jesus loves us’  
 I samu samu...  
 ‘Yes Jesus loves us’

After the hymns, the missionary talked to the people in Hausa in this way: ‘*Isa dan Allah.*’ Jesus is God’s boy, or son. The Hausa people among them were absolutely stunned and quiet, not one spoke up or said a thing. When he had finished talking, then they bent down toward the earth, closed their eyes and were silent and they prayed. After this, they opened their eyes and he let them go on their way.

Now as soon as the Hausa children departed, the white preacher began to talk to the Tiv people at this gathering and asked who the Tiv leader was. It was Sai they said. He now gave a gift for Sai, a carving, very beautiful, which became a prized possession for safekeeping by Sai; it was called *wanikundan*, the infant; wherever there was a dance show anywhere in the land and Sai attended, he always won the competition. He would put this sculpture in his big pocket, when the dance was at its peak he would suddenly bring it out from his pocket and lift it up high, as soon as the people saw it, they chorused and yelled in total surprise that the sculpture is very frightening and he quickly put it back in his *riga*. Later, he gave his eldest son this gift from the Nasera preacher who went and sold it at Ukpar near Tômbo Mbalagh, and after that told him to go and purchase a cow for him.

After about three months the same Whiteman came back again, and Bayor informed Sai that this is the Whiteman that gave the gift to him, and Sai said the Whiteman should sleep at Sai. At the end of the day, the visitor gave people medicines for stomach-ache to swallow and also washed their sores and wounds. Many Tiv gathered and he helped them treat diseases of different kinds. When he had finished all the treatments, the people of Ugenyi, who were with him, joined him and began to sing hymns, the same he, Bayor Sai’s assistant, had heard when he had gone to sell beniseed and came home to tell them so. The Whiteman spoke about ‘Lord Jesus’ in Hausa, saying: ‘*Isha Almasihu maicheton mu*’, that he was the world’s saviour. As we heard that, we did not understand what it meant. The next day, when these people got up to leave, the Whiteman first handed out pictures on which prophets and Jesus were drawn. After passing out the picture cards, they left for Wukari. The Hausa called this Whiteman *Malam Bugaagindi* — the one who opens the way — and his real name in English was Mr Banhard.

Later on, two other Whitemen came: Malam [Hausa for teacher] Guinter and Malam Botha. Malam Guinter had a wife with him! She was the very first white woman they had ever seen. It was most amazing to look at that woman who wore garments that seemed to be sewed around her body. Her husband had gold teeth. Everyone shouted in wonder when he reached into his mouth and took out his false teeth and showed them to the people, who were amazed. Wow, they said, the Whiteman exceeds in the power of *tsav*.

It was nearly noon on the day they entered into the Tiv village of Sai. They, through interpreters, told Sai to invite all the neighbouring elders around there that they had come to bring an important and great message to them. So the people gathered to hear it. They told those gathered that it was their wish to settle and share with them the knowledge, news about God, Aôndo. Then the Tiv asked them, 'What has happened to Aôndo?' The missionary replied by explaining to those gathered that Aôndo was the Father of all people on earth, as well as the Tiv, and that Aôndo loves them. The Tiv wondered, and said to themselves, is this like declaring to Aôndo just like their ancestors did? They were really confused about why the missionary had come but they were pleased. They said that the missionaries should come and settle amongst them. When the day was over, the Whiteman and his group got on their horses and went about the village in search of a place to make their abode. We, as kids, followed after them all day. The missionaries wandered round the village and finally decided to settle and make a place next to Sai's backyard. Having located a site and made camp, they settled for the night and slept. At dawn, once again they left and returned to Wukari, where they had originally come from. This was in the year 1911 in the month of May on the eleventh day (May 11, 1911). As soon as the missionaries left for Wukari, a new missionary came. This marks the beginning of the coming of the missionaries to Tivland. The missionary who first settled in was Ortese Zimmerman. He arrived in Sai in the same year and month and slept in the village because no house had been built for him yet, but he went out each day to work on his own house. All the helpers who were with him were Hausa-speaking people.

#### THE BEGINNING OF MY TIME WITH THE MISSIONARIES

Ortese Zimmerman had two men with him to do his work, a cook, *kuku*, and his 'houseboy' *buoi*. The *kuku's* name was Adaasho and the boy's name was Maiyaki. Both of these were from the Wukari people. Soon after they arrived, while Ortese was just starting to build a place for himself, they both told him that they wanted to leave and go home, that they did not want to stay among the Tiv people, that the Tiv were bush people, and that they did not want to live in the bush in a miserable way. The white missionary said, 'Look, I will increase your wages', but they refused the offer. The missionary then pleaded with them to stay but again they refused; they had made up their minds that they would return home. The missionary told them that they should wait until he got their replacements; he also pleaded with them to help look out for young helpers for him.

They helped to look for and found one of their own lads who came to buy guinea corn with his father. He was called Tahwa. Adaasho taught him the work of a cook, and just before the new cook could learn the job, Adaasho left the Ortese with Maiyaki the houseboy. A few days later, Maiyaki also left.

I moved around a lot with my father Sai because my mother was not there, she had left me when I was a little child and I went with my father wherever he went without complaint. I accompanied him when he went to see and greet the missionary every evening. He would sit down with him and I was right there as well. On some days, early in the morning, I would get up to go to the farm with my older

brothers, since I was not old enough to farm the mounds; my job was to clean their farming hoes. When that was done, I went and joined my father when he visited the Ortese, the one who teaches. The missionary had a baby monkey, and Wombo, another lad, and I, used to come and play with the monkey. It happened that one time while we were playing with the little monkey, the Ortese came out and spoke to us. He asked, 'Do you not want to come and work for me as my boy?' We refused and just ran away from him. On the same day in the evening, I accompanied my father to see the missionary and then he approached my father and asked if I would agree to work for him as his houseboy and if my father would allow me to do so. My father refused and said that was not the Tiv way of doing things — that is, for a Tiv person to live and work for a Whiteman in his house. He would be laughed at if he was a houseboy. Had he ever seen any Tiv person doing such jobs for the Whiteman? The missionary replied that what my father said was true, that up until that time no Tiv person had done so, and that no son of a Tiv, not one, had worked for a Whiteman. But, he told him, the day would come when the Tiv would be involved a lot with Whitemen and work with them. So the two of them talked like this together, and after a while we got up and left. The next day we met again and the Ortese did not let up; he told Sai that it would be good for Sai to think through what they discussed yesterday and give me over to him. He wanted him to know that if my father gave me to him, he would not run away with me. He would stay among the Tiv people right here in the village where it was my home. My father said that he would never part with me, not even once; that he always travelled around with me everywhere. Only on a few journeys he could not take me, only then he painfully left me behind. Again the Ortese pleaded that he should give him another person, the one I came with to play with his monkey. My father said that the boy was not his child so he could not do that. The missionary continued to make requests concerning me.

One day, as I went to the farm with my older brother, it rained so heavily that it sent us away from work. We came home and I sat down to weave an *ishuugh*, a broom. A child came and said that my father was asking to see me. So I got up and ran, hoping it was food, because anytime my father asked after me like that, he wanted me to come and eat with him. When I got to the house my father was there with Ortese Zimmerman. He called me over and had me stand next to him and he embraced me and said to my father in Hausa, '*Na gode maka a sabada taimakon ka.*' Thank you for giving assistance to me. When I heard this, I began to cry, but my father told me to stop crying. It is nothing, he said; he was not deserting me. Then as he got up and left, I followed him as well. Ortese was baffled by my reaction but my father reassured him that he would use diplomacy to convince me to stay with him.

When my father and I were alone together, he told me what he had spoken to Ortese Zimmerman about and that I should listen well, as I had disappointed him by over-reacting. We then returned to the missionary, and being ashamed of myself, I accepted my father's wishes and remained with the Ortese.

But I was naked and also had not been circumcised, so Ortese took a pair of trousers and gave them to me to wear. I put them on and then went out into the courtyard with the other helpers and the children laughed at me and said that I looked like a Hausa now. I went back, took off the pair of trousers and gave it to Ortese because I was being laughed at by the village children. He

took it and kept it safe for me. In the morning, Tahwa the cook gave me a bucket and told me to go and draw water at the well. I did so and on my return the children once again began to laugh at me, saying, 'Oh, so now you are drawing water like a woman!' I then threw the water away with the bucket and once again went to the Ortese and told him about it. He called Tahwa and told him not to ask me to draw water any more at the well, and that he should get the water himself. Not long after, Ortese bought a little robe for me made of cotton which had red borders on the edges. He gave this to me and I put it on. Then the children no longer laughed at me. The children rather marvelled at how beautiful the robe looked. I then wore it all the time.

During this period, Ortese went to Wukari for about two weeks. While we were there I observed how the Wukari houseboys to the Ortese where we visited were dressed and how they wore trousers. I then asked Ortese to give me back the trousers he had first given me to wear. I wore them until we returned, even when the children laughed at me, I could not care less now, and that is how I became used to wearing clothes. I was the only Tiv among those who were with Ortese. All the rest were Hausa speakers.

Ortese Zimmerman was having a house built while he still lived with Sai. When it was completed we moved there and lived next to Sai, but it was only the two of us that lived together in the same house, the other labourers all lived around the village. After some months, another Whiteman whose name was Mr Fleming came and met with him. He was the one who started the school there. The school was also taught in the Hausa language. Ortese Zimmerman only talked about things of Allah in the Hausa language. After the teacher came, he began to set up a school; he also only taught in the Hausa language. Nothing was done in Tiv at all, only Hausa. Then another Whiteman came and he was called Dr Likita Hosking, so now there were three, a Reverend — an Ortese — a Mr and a Dr. This new man's work was to fix up sicknesses and heal people but he also did talk about Allah. They all did their work from morning to night and helped everyone who came and spoke about Aôndo every day. Then on *Lahadi*, the Hausa Sunday, they went to villages and took me along. They preached in Hausa and I would then interpret in Tiv. After some time, the light of Aôndo entered my own heart and I believed in Him and openly confessed the name of Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

The other two missionaries left and returned to the land of Hausa, all except for Ortese Zimmerman. After a month Ortese Bato came; his name in English was Mr Judd. This man, as soon as he came, began to learn to speak the Tiv language. He was the first to have written a book in Tiv language. The book he wrote was called 'Tiv Language'.<sup>56</sup> When he stayed there, it was under his custody that Ortese Zimmerman placed me; then he, Zimmerman, left and did not return. Later, Ortese Botha and Ortese Dogo the 'tall one' and his wife, as well as

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<sup>56</sup>Akiga may have been referring to an article by A.S. Judd: 'Notes on the Munshi Tribe and Language', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, vol. 16 no. 61 October 1916: 52-61, continued in vol. 17 no. 62 January 1917: 143-8. 'Munshi' was considered a culturally unacceptable term by Tiv people in the decades that followed, as it, a Hausa term, alluded to the Tiv eating human flesh. Decades later, the Bohannans wrote 'The Tiv are also known as the *Mitshi*, *Munchi* or *Munshi*' (Bohannon and Bohannon, 1953: 9).

Ortese Age, plus two others came. These stayed in Sai until Ortese Bato left. They arrived in 1912, at their coming they stopped all the missionary work in Hausa and made Tiv language their preferred one.

#### THE ZAKI BIAM SETTLEMENT, 1913

In the year 1913, the missionaries decided on a place at Zaki Biam to settle. Here they built houses and settled in. Actually, Ortese Age was resident in Zaki Biam, because at the start, he, Ortese Botha, and another they called Ortese Clark were all living together. Up until this time the missionaries of both S.U.M. and D.R.C.M. all worked together.

#### SEPARATION OF THE S.U.M. AND THE D.R.C.M., 1916

During the time the missionaries settled at Sai and later on at Zaki Biam, the missionaries of the S.U.M. or Sudan United Mission, as well as the D.R.C.M. had worked together to do Aôndo's work in the same territory, even working at the same station. Later on, they saw fit to divide the territory where they worked into different and separate areas, so that it will be clear which of the missionaries had what jurisdiction. So the S.U.M. moved their work into the Uke in the non-Tiv speaking lands or Hausa-speaking areas and left the rest, which is all of Tivland, to the D.R.C.M. in the year 1916.

#### SETTLEMENT OF MISSIONARIES IN TÔMBO-SEVAV, 1922

The D.R.C.M. missionaries settled in Tômbo into the home of Agwabi, and when they fully settled in, they named the place Sevav. Ortese Uhe coined the name and the meaning of it was like this: formerly, the Tiv were in the darkness of night and from where they did not perceive the true light. Formerly, the Tiv were deep in the darkness of the night of sinfulness but then understanding came when the missionaries came to bring their message, the light of salvation by Jesus. That is the meaning of Sevav, 'the dawning'. Even though the missionaries chose that place at first, they did not come to settle there immediately. In 1922, Ortese Uhe came and it was really he that truly began the work in Sevav.

#### SETTLEMENT AT MKAR, 1923

Mkar is a hill in the centre of Tivland. The people surrounding it are called Ipav. The missionaries had viewed this area at Mkar for a long time before they finally chose to settle there. During that settling-in period, it was decided that Ortese Age would be the one resident *ortese*. He left his post at Zaki Biam and went to Mkar, which became the headquarters or centre of missionary work, a place for gathering all of the missionaries for meetings. The missionaries of the D.R.C.M. were located here at Mkar and they had a large school established. The work of

healing missions had not yet been established at that time, so a hospital was built where people could come for medical treatment. If you wanted to see a large machine for cutting up big trees and a machine for grinding mill for guinea corn, one had to go to Mkar to see them. It was also here that you could see big houses built with massive fine stones. It was also here that one could get well ventilated resting lounges for reclining and resting.

#### THE NANEV SETTLEMENT, ADIKPO, 1923

The missionaries chose the Nanev and Mkar settlement in the same year. Ortese Ofi was the head here. At the time when the building was going on Ortese Ver was in charge of the building. He had also initiated the road network between Zaki Biam to Sevav and when he finally finished, Ortese Ru, who was with Ortese Uhe at Sevav, came and met him so that they should go hunting for a *nor mger* or hippopotamus to give to the Tiv. The hippopotamus killed them by River Katsina near *üvishôhô*. That is how those missionaries met their deaths in the process of trying to do good for the Tiv. Ortese Ofi remained at Adikpo until after three years when Ortese Botha, who was at the time the head at the Sai Missions, moved on and came to settle at Turan in Jato Aka. After a few more years, Ortese Ofi moved away from Adikpo and settled at Zaki Biam.

#### THE TURAN SETTLEMENT, 1926

As the work of Aôndo at Sai did not progress any further, some of the missionaries moved away to Turan at Jako Aka. It was Ortese Botha who was the last head of the missions at Sai and it was he that also moved to Turan, and became the head there.

#### THE KUNAV [UKUNA] SETTLEMENT, 1927

As the missionaries increased, they realized that the Kunav district had a large population with no permanent missionary. The missionaries only travelled there to teach and returned back. They now requested permission for settlement; it was granted and they came and chose a steep hilly place for settlement. If you stood at the hill you would be able to see as far as Mkar. It was Ortese Difo who was the head of the mission there. He later left and we thought he was not going to return, so Ortese Mker became the head up until this year 1935. Efforts were being made to build a big hospital next to Mkar.

#### THE MAKURDI SETTLEMENT, 1931

Makurdi is the biggest city in the whole of Tiv land with its inhabitants of people from diverse ethnic groups; it is a city by the River Benue. At the time Aro [Rail Network engineers] started working on the bridge construction; there were many



people and the Tiv ethnic group was in the majority. Noticing this, the missionaries thought it expedient to have an Ortese, one who teaches about Aôndo, to reach out to the Tiv there as well as those around them. So in the year 1931, they requested permission to start a new mission settlement, it was granted, they came and settled. It was Ortese Fese who became the head here, and when Ortese Uhe later left Sevav for his country, Ortese Fese relocated and became the head missionary at Sevav; Ortese Kuchi who was together with him at the Makurdi mission house then became the head.

#### THE SETTLEMENT NEAR THE OUTSKIRTS: THE *ITIEV* OF ISHANGEV, 1935

As the missionaries explored, they saw the Ishangev Tiev clan was very far off from all of their other mission stations with no one to teach them about God and school; neither did they have any one to assist them in treating their sores or wounds. They now requested permission for a mission settlement which was granted and they went there to be with them.

#### THE WORK OF THE MISSIONARIES

The missionaries came to Tivland to teach them the knowledge of Aôndo, to teach children at schools, and treat illnesses as well as to teach handiwork. These were the duties performed by the D.R.C.M. in Tivland on a daily basis.

The works of God did not progress amongst the Tiv quickly; sometimes when the missionaries settled at a place and taught about God, some people gladly accepted quickly, however, a few days later on, they became slack and reverted to their old ways: only a few progressed on with the grace of God. The people amongst the Tiv that really accepted the teachings of God by the missionaries were mostly young men and women, one by one. The elders still had their minds fixated on the old traditions of Akombo and things of *mbatsav*. The Tiv knew little about eternal life through Christ. They said: when one dies, that is the end, he is already finished and that the buried dead body will be exhumed by the *mbatsav*.

It was about the matter of the Tiv beliefs about the dead that they bothered the young people once they had accepted the teaching of Christianity concerning God. Then the elders constantly scolded them and tried to dissuade them by emphasizing the Tiv traditional practices of *akombo* and *mbatsav*: things of *ghaaôndo*, the creation, they said are from ancient times. If a young person therefore gives up these traditional practices to accept the missionary, good, *akombo* will bewitch and kill them! They sometimes said, any youth who accepted the Christian God, if the father wanted to kill a person for human flesh, such a child should not be spared; the person must be killed to appease the Tiv deities to give them a good harvest. Such a child they also said was worthless and deserved only to be killed through witchcraft and to be eaten; that the Christian God was nonsense.

Of all the Ten Commandments taught by the missionaries, the Tiv young men hated the seventh commandment the most. It says you shall not commit adultery. It is based on this commandment that some of the young men who initially believed and accepted the Word of God later gave it up, saying that it was too difficult a commandment to follow. If that commandment would be taken away, they would be likely to assent to the practice of Christianity. But among the elders, however, it was the fourth commandment which says 'remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy', the belief that no one should work on a Sunday, this was a major upset for them. They said it was just a ploy to delay people's farm work. The missionaries told them that none of the commandments were given by them, but by God, and that they got the commandments from the Bible. Therefore they could not change and teach them something different regardless of how hard it was for the Tiv to accept it. They made reference to the Bible, to scripture which says '... if anyone takes even the least of these commandments and the teachings of God and does change and teach them differently, such a person will be called the least in the kingdom of God, but if any one obeys these commandments and teaches them correctly, they shall be called the greatest in the kingdom of God'. Therefore, they would not compromise and would obey the voice of God rather than that of men.

In the past, the Tiv people who hated the teachings of Aôndo by the missionaries were the chiefs. They said they were appointed to be chiefs; therefore they no longer had any worries. They no longer needed God for any help, and they lacked nothing. They made all sorts of silly comments concerning the missionaries; in spite of this the missionaries carried on talking to them about God.

Concerning school education, in the olden days the Tiv did not want their children to get a western education, because they did not want their children to go to school in the morning hours, but rather assist their families by doing farm work. For this reason, the missionary educators developed evening school education programmes so that the children would first go to the farm in the morning to assist their parents and then attend evening lessons. Even then some parents resisted saying, western education is a hindrance, book knowledge was not of Tiv culture, and it was of the Whiteman's culture.

What the Tiv really admired the missionaries for was their ability to treat illness and for their craftsmanship. However, before they brought a sick person to a missionary doctor, they first consulted their *akombo* and declared traditional 'ill luck to go away' by incantations. They insisted on this and said, if you do not first consult *akombo* and perform the correct rites, then the missionary doctors would never be able to cure the sick person with medications. They continued, that unless the *mbatsav* first decided that a sick person would be cured, the doctor might treat as best as he could but he would not cure the ailment. If a doctor does an operation or treats a sick person and they eventually die, they said it was *mbatsav* that had already killed the sick person and the doctor was only the medium by which that was done, it was not the doctor that killed the sick person they said. Even if a missionary was to die, they would assert the same belief.

The missionaries established their largest school at Mkar and also had different places to carry out their work as it has been agreed upon and written down about the Mkar settlement by the missionaries. Whenever chiefs and other elders visited Mkar, they praised such establishments.

Later, the attitude of the Tiv concerning the missionaries changed concerning the teachings of God. Even the chiefs and elders no longer said terrible things as in the past; they now eased up, a few of them at first, and then one after another, they became interested and some became converts. They destroyed all their amulets and charms and also renounced Tiv traditional religious practices openly in the presence of many people, and wanted to be baptized. Some chiefs started seeing the clear difference between those who became Christians and the pagans. The missionaries also established a girls' school at Sevav. Some chiefs gave their daughters to be admitted into the school so that they would become educated and learn, which they did. If it were in the former times when the missionaries first came, not a single chief or elder would have done that. Nowadays they do it gladly and some brag about it.

Western education, which in the former times they had said was only from Whiteman's culture, later on, both the chiefs and elders begged the missionaries to come and establish schools in their clans, so that their children would learn the knowledge of the world and that of Aôndo. Sometimes, the missionaries agreed and established a school in agreement with them and the education authority, at other times the chiefs and elders came and requested a school teacher from the missionaries where there were no schools. If the missionaries had no teacher available, the elders turned to any of the first children among their clan who had initially received a little bit of education from the missionaries, to come and start a school by themselves to educate their children about the knowledge of the world and of the Word of God. Many of these small and informal schools were established in Tivland. Informal schools for women were also established and some adults and elders began learning in them. Because of this, there was a great increase in the knowledge of God and western education in Tivland began to grow, one little step at a time. The work of the missionaries of the D.R.C.M. in Tivland is not as extensive now as it was during the earlier years; yet the results of their work are expanding and progressing by the power of God. This is how the work of the missionaries of the D.R.C.M. progressed up until the time the author wrote this history in 1935.

### COLONIAL GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

The white colonial school administrators first established a school in 1912 at Wannune, of the Ukpar clan within Mbakor district. This was the year Makondo was at Abinsi.

When this school was started, the Whiteman had lots of difficulties trying to get children to enroll for education; the Tiv were very afraid of it, and did not agree to enroll their children. In the beginning the Whiteman did not allow children to enroll into the school just as they wished; they did not allow all of the kids to enroll and be accepted, rather, only if they were children of chiefs with a staff of office or judicial persons, or children of people of high standing in the land: these were enrolled into the schools.

Tiv people said all sorts of things concerning schools to discourage other Tiv; they said when a Whiteman wants to kill a person, he calls one of his soldiers and orders him to select all the robust and best looking native soldiers to a

stream where they all wash and become clean, after that they come and stand before the Whiteman in formation. Then the Whiteman takes his scimitar and inspects the assembled soldiers before him. When he finally sees one of the best looking soldiers who has had a proper wash and is very robust, he then selects such a soldier who is full of fat which is good for eating. Then he takes the sharp instrument and puts it across the soldier's wind pipe and instantly slashes it: the soldier falls over and dies. The Whiteman then takes the dead, fat soldier and gives it to his cook who dismembers and cooks the human flesh for him to eat. After he finished eating one, later on, he would do the same for another soldier. Therefore, concerning the matters of Whiteman's schools, the Tiv alleged that it was for the purpose tricking Tiv children to kill them and be eaten by the Whiteman that they had started schools; that there was no other reason why the Whiteman established schools. All of these rumours concerning schools were heard all across the land during those days.

Sometimes, the Tiv also spoke differently about the schools and said if children went to school and studied western education, even the rubbing of camwood, which was a Tiv tradition, would no longer be done by such enlightened ones. Even farming, such children who went to school would stop doing it; the Whiteman would take away educated children to foreign lands far away from Tivland. Those who gave up their children for education could forget that they ever had such children; they would never ever see their children again. When these rumours were heard by many people, they became afraid and disheartened. Parents stopped sending their children to go to Whiteman's schools. Then, even some of the chiefs who had wanted to give their good children to get a Whiteman's education were opposed by the mothers of the children, they would disagree and never let him have peace. As a matter of fact, sometimes when a Whiteman sent his messenger to a chief to give a child up for schooling at Wannune, the chief would be willing to comply, but then the mother of the child took offence and then and there she began to pack up all her belongings, threatening to return to her father's compound straight away. She would then assert that the chief was the one who forced her to leave. When the chief's wife left and told such things to her brother at her parent's home, the brother became really upset. He dressed with a piece of cloth tied around his belly, and came to request the chief to give him back his sister and her living children in order for there to be peace between them. Once he said this, all the people around would respond with one voice and agree to his request. They would say that he had told the truth, and that the chief's intentions concerning his child going to school were not good. They argued, why would one take a decent child and give it away to be lost? They further said to the chief that he should rather look for a useless child, an impaired child, not one of noble birth, one who is really stubborn and undisciplined; this one should be given to the Whiteman to attend the school and such a child could continue on with his foolishness there. Let the decent child of the chief alone! The chief became confused and consented, and agreed, yes, the advice was good. He told the in-law to go back to his home and that his wife should return to him; he would no longer send their child to Whiteman's school for education. The wife returned and settled down with her child who was no longer going to go to school. Now the chief looked around for children that were considered worthless for farming and who were troublesome, those known to steal and who were always up to mischief.

Now he handed over these problem children to the messengers to take to the Whiteman to be enrolled at the school. They were to say to the Whiteman, 'this is my beloved child that I am giving up for an education'. The child is then handed over by the messenger to the white school administrator who praises the chief for his kindness and then enrolls such a child into school.

Among others, it was from children of their sisters who were in their charge that they took and gave away those children to be schooled. Yet another chief sent a child that was guilty of an offence, and that was the one he gave to the Whiteman for school. Yet another chief decided that it was the slaves that he would give to the Whiteman for school; he preserved his own flesh and blood from going to school by only giving up the worthless and useless children as well as the deaf and special children who were sent to school at Wannune. If a chief somehow felt compelled to also give up his own child, it had to be a motherless child whose mother might have left the chief. That was a good excuse to send such children away to study; such children were however very few in number. Thus all problematic children were given to the Whiteman for the school to deal with. In spite of this, the Whiteman kept trying his best and did all he could with these children, and spent much money on them, fed them and supplied their school materials.

They were schooled in writing and reading and mathematics and geography; they were also taught cloth making of different types, they ate at regular intervals, they had camwood on, they also wore clothes, uniforms, and no longer looked like the naked children at home who were not at school, even after making up with camwood: their school things were not soiled by the camwood, because they washed their hands properly before going into school. After a long while, some of these students became the teachers, others became very skilled at the crafts taught to them at school.

Later, the school at Wannune was divided up in 1925 into sub-schools to be opened at other places. A new type was set up at Abinsi where such children's chiefs paid taxes; these were taken there as well as the children whose chiefs paid taxes at Katsina Ala; another school was started there and such children were enrolled.

As the school at Wannune became divided, the Whitemen stayed more at the school at Abinsi and only went up to Katsina Ala occasionally to supervise it. It was said that the children at Katsina Ala School performed and progressed better than the children at the Abinsi School. On several occasions, the Governor came and visited the school children at both locations.

In 1928 the school at Abinsi was dissolved, there was a selection of those children who were now grown and still struggling with their school studies: these were allowed to return back to their families to go and help their parents with farming instead of wasting their time. Those who had grown and had average knowledge were given jobs that they were capable of doing and those who were a lot smarter and had potential of progressing further were all brought and enrolled at the school at Katsina Ala. So the schools at Abinsi and Katsina Ala now became as one. It was now called the big school, and smaller schools were also established around the chief's domain and that practice remained up until now.

The first Whiteman to have started schools in Tivland was Masta Bajire; after he left, Masta Kol took over, after him, Masta Kulin, then Masta Is; after him Masta Filip, after that it was Masta Hogben; and when he left, it was Masta

Hei. And others came later. It was at that time when Masta Is was in charge of schools that the Abinsi School was dissolved and merged with the school at Katsina Ala, as we have heard.

Later, there were no longer any Whitemen at the school at Katsina Ala, rather two black men were appointed who were Masta Toma of the Saryo people and Masta Ndio a Calabar man, but there were also other assistant teachers of the Tiv ethnic group.

The grown-up school children were later selected and given different jobs and only the smaller children were left to continue on with the teachers instructing at the smaller schools in different sections of Tivland. After teaching their pupils for about five years, they selected those who had progressed excellently and these were brought to the school at Katsina Ala.

The school at Katsina Ala was admired and loved by all, it progressed a lot better than when it had first started. The missionaries of the D.R.C.M. praised it the most because their hearts' desires had been granted, which was to be given permission to share the word of Aôndo. At the start they were not given such permission to preach at schools until the time of Chafa Kembul who was the overseer of the schools in the big area near the big river (the Benue). Now the teachers also attended church services and so did the school children; it was far better than it had been in the past. Mr Toma worked extremely well concerning children's education at Katsina Ala; the teachers also praised his hard work and his teaching ability.

A lot of Tiv now had regrets about their old attitudes toward school. Their regret was the fact that it was the children in the past who were given to go to schools, the worthless and useless ones, who had now turned into great and well informed people who now looked down on them. The chief's children, who had not been allowed to be given to the schools, were now those who became the ones to carry luggage for those who had gone to school. Their children who they thought were better and did not go to school had now been reduced to worthless ones and did nothing but carry loads.<sup>57</sup>

Later, every Tiv man wanted a Western education. There were a lot more schools all over Tivland at the time and both small kids, teenage boys and girls and even the grey bearded ones, were enrolled to study. It was no longer about giving up of children to study. It became voluntary.

School education became a big thing in Tivland then; the people were no longer ignorant about it. The Tiv then praised the Whiteman for bringing to them a good thing which was of great benefit to Tiv land.

### WHITEMAN FARMERS (GENYI)

Among the Whitemen, the Tiv had little regard for those who were responsible for farming and agriculture. That was indeed very surprising, because the Tiv knew no other occupation but farming. If any person did any other type of job which was not farming, the Tiv said such a person was jobless.

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<sup>57</sup>See chapter 8 for comments on the 'scribes and secretaries', recruited from the schools, who were now in positions of advantage.

It was rather surprising to the Whiteman agriculturalist that a profession he thought the Tiv would embrace easily was farming, which was their second nature, but they had little interest in what he had to teach them. They were keen on carrying on with other new jobs rather than farming. However, as far as the farming and agricultural techniques and systems that were introduced by the Whiteman were concerned, they paid no attention to them.

Here is the start of the activities of the Whiteman farmer in Tivland. Chafa Maki, who was the white agriculturalist, came to Tivland in 1926 in the month of April. When he arrived, he requested the permission of the Whiteman in charge of schools to have an assistant, and a young man, Orshi Kurbaka of Tômbo, Mbatie was handed over to him. The Whiteman then went around Tiv land looking for where to start an agricultural farm. As he travelled around, he decided that Yandev was the best place to settle and start a farm, and it was here where he finally settled. He then looked around for other young people to teach them about farming activities so that they would be of assistance to him in his work; he gave them a place to live on the farm. He further chose some Tiv young men and made them *helema* [headmen] who were responsible for overseeing the works of the labourers and they also had a place to live.

In 1927, he finally settled and started his farming activities. He made sure he planted all the crops that were familiar to the Tiv farmers. He farmed yams, guinea corn, millet, maize, sesame seeds, peanuts, beans and cotton. As he finished farming all the varieties of crops that were familiar to the Tiv, he went further and introduced different crops that were new to the Tiv. Some were similar to those of the Tiv but had a different appearance. Yams of different varieties were introduced from Ibadan and Ilorin and there was even a variety he introduced that was called *iyarikure*. The Tiv did not like the new types of yams introduced to them, the reason being that these were not very starchy, when mashed to make their *ruam*. Also that when they started to germinate, the leaves went red for a while and then turned darker: the Tiv said these were yams of the forest.

He also introduced different varieties of guinea corn or sorghum; one was named by the Tiv as Kaduna, its grain was bigger than the rest of the varieties they had seen. He introduced other varieties of guinea corn. He also introduced different varieties of millet, maize, coco yam and mangoes. He also farmed different varieties of cotton; these were O.B.B. and W.A. cotton. The others were called cotton 'strain' one, cotton 'strain' two and cotton 'strain' three. As there were different farmers on the farm responsible for different crops, more attention was given to the cotton farm. He farmed different varieties of sesame seed which were called *marike* and *umarike*, which had darker seeds.

Later, he introduced the sesame varieties of *ukina* and the Tiv types. The Whiteman farmers were very skilled in their farming activities and had understanding of the right seasons to plant such crops and were very dedicated in the way they carried out their farming practices.

After a while, when they farmed on a piece of land and it became fallow and no longer yielded good produce, they took a variety of beans they had brought and planted these on such land. That variety of bean was called *makuna*. This bean was not to be eaten, it was used to regenerate the farm and served as a weed killer.

Their farming systems were quite different from those of the Tiv; the Tiv made mounds to plant their yams while the white farmers made ridges to plant yams.

The Tiv scattered their guinea corn on a farm and then used hoes to cover it up to plant it; the white farmers made ridges and planted theirs, and they also planted the millet this way. Every one of their crops was planted in a straight line and their crops yielded good harvest.

With all of these new farming methods being demonstrated, the Tiv refused to learn, even the Tiv who were assisting him on his farm and had used such techniques. The workers only did that at the Whiteman's farm yet never practised it on their own; they did it just the same way as the other Tiv who had never come in contact with these new systems. That attitude made it difficult for the new agricultural farming system introduced by the white farmer to make progress in Tivland. Even to make an attempt at the new ways, the Tiv never bothered. The Whiteman did everything possible to make his farming system attractive to the Tiv with no luck. When the Tiv gathered at their central meeting place at Gboko with their chiefs, the white farmer attended and tried to persuade them.

When the chiefs gathered at Gboko at the *ijir tiamen* [traditional council meeting], different Whitemen spoke to the people about the nature of their work in the land and what they have brought with them to teach the Tiv. The white farmer also talked about his farming methods, but while he talked, no Tiv men were interested and they paid him no attention. As he spoke other Tiv murmured saying: 'Why would this Whiteman continue to bother us about his farming system of the ridges and furrows; was he the one who taught our fore-fathers how to farm and live off the farm land? His farming system is of no worth, he makes ridges and furrows to plant yams instead of mound heaps as if he is planting cassava; yams from his ridges and furrows don't even make good pounded yam'. The white farmer after speaking would ask if any of the Tiv were interested in his farming system, a few said yes but others kept quiet. Those who wanted to impress the Whiteman would say to those who had kept quiet that 'Just say yes to please him.' So, upon his asking again, they all said yes and praised his farming system. He further asked them saying: 'Are you willing to come and have a look at my farm and see how it is done?' They remained silent for a while, and sometimes replied, saying 'Today we are fagged out because of a series of hectic adjudication meetings; let us make it another day.' Then the Whiteman would say, 'If you come to see my farm, I will give you lots of beer to drink. You will drink to your satisfaction.' Once beer was mentioned, the chiefs and the elders replied in unison, 'That is a good one, we shall go with you!' Some of the chiefs boarded the Whiteman's vehicle, while others trekked. The elders also staggered to the farm. Nobody complained of fatigue any more in anticipation of the beer awaiting them at the farm. The Whiteman took them round and they looked at the entire farm. Whatever he asked about the farm, they responded in the affirmative and with much admiration. They also vowed in his presence that they would also prepare their farms like his in the future.

After surveying the farm, they retreated to the Whiteman's residence. He served them drinks. They drank and became intoxicated. They sang songs eulogizing that out of all the Whitemen, none could be compared to agriculturalists. However, as usual, once they went back, they would forget everything. They would only be reminded on the day the Whiteman visited again to talk to them about farming. Every time, they would, in his presence, profusely shower him with accolades.

The White agricultural officer in Yandev who was most cherished among the Tiv people was the officer in charge of eradicating beetles. Unfortunately he



stayed only for a short time. He came with his assistants, with whom he would visit Tiv people's farm, dig and trap beetles right inside the yam mound. The Tiv people found this intriguing and said the man was a wizard, because for them, it was only by magical powers that beetles could be trapped right inside the yam mound. In any case, the only thing that actually interested the Tiv people about the white agricultural officer crops was the *makuna* because of its capacity to enhance soil fertility. For this reason, a few chiefs collected its seeds and planted these on their farms. Even then, nowadays, they are becoming reluctant about it.

Nevertheless, the Whiteman did persevere about his projects; the Agricultural Officer still went around with determination and gave cash incentives to allure Tiv people into these farming methods. These days, his strategy is to post Tiv young men, who are his trained agents, to three or four centres. These agents are helping to enlighten the people in those villages about the farm project. At the end of every month, the agricultural officer comes around to pay the rent for the centres used by these agents to the amount of five shillings. This is his main strategy of cajoling the Tiv people into learning the Whiteman's farm technique. So far, that is the all about the white agricultural officer and farming in Tivland.

### THE ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION

The Roman Catholic missionaries settled in Makurdi at the time of the construction of the bridge over the huge River Benue. This settlement was when the town of Makurdi was booming with activity. They used indigenous teachers. They posted one in Makurdi West and another in Makurdi East. This was at the time when the D.R.C.M., the Dutch Reformed Church Mission, sent me to teach in Makurdi West. The C.M.S., Church Missionary Society, also posted teachers, one to Makurdi West and another to Makurdi East. Many other missionaries also posted their men in Makurdi to teach the Christian religion and to educate children in schools.

When we lived in Makurdi, officers from the head offices of our various missions used to visit us from time to time. We, the teachers from the various mission groups, had no squabbles between us, except for explaining the distinctions between the various missionary organizations that were operating in Makurdi to people who cared to know. However, as time went on, a white teacher of the Roman Catholic mission came to Makurdi and took to strolling around the market square in search of boys who had dropped out from school. Actually, there were some boys who, because of their misdemeanours, had been expelled from some of our schools.

Such boys were found everywhere in Makurdi, looking around for something to do. Thus, since the teacher was looking for boys with elementary education, this group of expelled boys joined up with him. The Roman Catholic mission took these boys to Naka, in the Iharev clan of Tivland, built a school there for them, and started educating them in the English language. A contingent of the boys was left back in Makurdi under another white Catholic schoolmaster. One other schoolmaster of theirs was already touring all the nooks and crannies of Tivland. This schoolmaster, because he had no working knowledge of the Tiv

language, recruited one young Tiv man by the name of John. Before this, John's main occupation was masonry. He was the translator with whom the schoolmaster toured Tivland to propagate Catholicism.

The central message of their discourse to the Tiv people was that the Catholic Church is the only genuine church and is the founder of Christianity; all other missionaries were only misleading and inculcating wrong doctrines. They also maintained that teaching children in the vernacular was wrong. They advocated that the English language be the language of instruction so that after their studies, the children would be competent to be employed in the public service. They also made the people understand that the Catholic mission was paying the teachers in their mission far better than any other missionary organization. But whatever they said about the teachers of D.R.C.M., it never bothered the elders of Tivland, since they had no cause to complain about the character of the teachers of the D.R.C.M.

Thus, young men in Tivland became obsessed with the jumbo pay campaign and the acquisition of English language skills that would qualify them for employment, as professed by the Catholic schoolmaster. There was a mass exodus of pupils from D.R.C.M. and Native Authority schools to the Roman Catholic schools. Catholicism became the vogue and all discussions in Tivland centred on Catholic '*akombo* masters'. Many young men joined them, but they continued to woo those who were yet to join. Their strategy of alluring young men to the Catholic schools included doling out European clothing — trousers, shorts, shoes — and dining plates, one for food and another for soup, as well as hand towels. They went around enticing more and more young men. They targeted mainly young men who were already under the D.R.C.M.

Any time there was a gathering that would bring the Catholic and the D.R.C.M. boys together, the Catholic boys would put on their European attire and display their plates publicly to show that they didn't eat from calabashes any more like the natives. Rather, they ate and cleaned their hands, and after meals, dried them with towels just like the Whiteman. They also bragged that they were not as poor as the D.R.C.M. boys and that their teachers were better paid — paid five pounds per month. Thus, boys continued to defect from the D.R.C.M. schools to the Roman Catholic schools.

Another strategy they used was that in places where the masters could not visit, they would snap photos of their boys and send these to their peers in such places to allure them. In fact, there was a particular case of one young boy who was a house-boy to Pastor Botha of the D.R.C.M. in the Turan clan. This boy grew up with the pastor, was trained in Christian values, and was also doing very well in school, but later was expelled by the pastor because he got himself entangled in a sex scandal with a woman. The boy quickly joined the Roman Catholic mission and was at the forefront of the Catholic crusade. One day he got dressed in his European attire and had snapshots taken. He sent these along with a letter written in the English language to his peers in the Turan clan, explaining to them how better off the boys were in Roman Catholic schools.

Thus, the Roman Catholics embarked on their campaign to conquer Tivland, including areas where the D.R.C.M. was already established. This did not go down well with the D.R.C.M., so the Director of all the Christian missionaries in Benue had to intervene. He decided that the Roman Catholics could take charge of southern Tivland where the D.R.C.M. had not yet been established. Even

then, the decision did not work and confusion broke out. Thus, the Roman Catholics and the D.R.C.M. scrambled to conquer Tivland with their evangelizing.

At this time, the colonial government was supervising the curriculum for all studies in schools. The government decided that Tiv children should be taught in their vernacular in the first module, and then the English language would be introduced much later, after the children had become competent in their own vernacular. Because of this, the Tiv children who were in the Catholic schools became disenchanted, because of the new emphasis on Tiv language skills there over English. Some even withdrew from the Catholic schools and started saying all sorts of things about the Catholic faith.

The mass exodus of boys from the D.R.C.M. schools to Roman Catholic schools never bothered Ortese Agee, who was the head teacher in the D.R.C.M. School in Mkar. He kept saying just one thing: they, the missionaries, were in Tivland not for their personal gain, but to work for the Almighty God. So, if the Almighty God wanted them to abort the mission, then, let it be. But, if it is His desire that the mission be accomplished, no amount of frustration can hinder the mission that the Almighty has charged them with. He made the boys in his school understand that he had not coerced them into his school as slaves; each of them reserved the right to leave anytime for the Roman Catholic school if they so wished. He maintained that it was better for him to have just five pupils in his school willingly, than to have a hundred pupils whose desires in God's mission were at variance with his. Suffice it to say, in conclusion, that both the Roman Catholics and the D.R.C.M. made evangelical waves in Tivland.

## Chapter Eleven

### TIV CULTURE

The Tiv culture is complex, but generally, in regard to *gbaaôndo*, the created things, they have few religious customs. Much of what they do in their religious practice has been borrowed from neighbouring ethnic groups. Their major cultural custom was embedded in the practice of exchanging a female relation for a wife. Again, even in terms of traditional religious beliefs, as compared to Western cultures, the Tiv do not have much. All they have is witchcraft expressed in certain rituals and sorcery.

#### TREATING INFERTILITY

When a man takes a wife and the wife is not able to conceive, the husband has to take her to her paternal home for the *ikôôr* ritual, which is a treatment for infertility. Usually an elder in the wife's paternal home oversees the *ikôôr* ritual. The husband is required to bring a hen as a token to the elder who will cleanse infertility from his wife. After the cleansing ceremony, the man returns with his wife and, ordinarily, it doesn't take a long time for the wife to conceive. Once the wife is impregnated, the next ritual is the *idyugh i dughun*, which is the ritual for antenatal care.

#### TYPES OF ANTENATAL RITUALS

There is no uniform way of performing the *idyugh i dughun* ritual among the various clans in Tivland. For some clans, when a woman gets pregnant, the husband invites the elderly man who is a custodian of the ritual and presents the wife, along with sixteen chickens and a male goat. To perform the ritual, the elderly man makes two pegs of *hur*, the wild custard-apple tree. He pushes one peg [pillar] in the ground in front of the couple's hut and the other behind. He builds mounds around the pegs, pushes six small sticks in the ground around each peg, and places pieces of broken clay pots on each.

The next thing is for the husband to dress his pregnant wife properly. She will come and kneel down beside the peg that is by the door of their hut. The elderly man comes with two *hur* leaves with mud on them. He places one on each side of the pregnant woman. He takes a little of the mud and rubs it on the abdomen of the woman. The woman gets up, giving the place to her husband who also sits down, holding a chicken. The elderly man slaughters that chicken and he drains its blood onto the pieces of clay pot.

He slaughters fifteen chickens. He uses the last chicken for *hwav senden*, which means hanging [getting rid of all tragedies that might befall the pregnancy]. For the *hwav senden* rite, the elderly man ties up the legs of one of the chickens and hangs it upside down on one of the wood rafters of the hut. This chicken is

normally taken away alive by the elderly man. Then, the husband gets up. His wife is called to come and kneel where she knelt before. The elderly man cuts the hair of the slain goat, mixes it with the mud on the *hur* leaves, and rubs it on the abdomen of the pregnant wife. The goat and the slain chickens are all cooked together.

When the meat of the goat and the four chickens is done, it is time for the actual *idyugh i dughun* ritual to be performed. The wife is called back to kneel at the previous spot. The elderly man removes a head, two beaks, and two wings of a chicken and places them on a tray with a morsel of *ruam*. The woman stretches out her hands, waves them around the chicken parts, and they are handed over to her. She quits the spot with that meat. Then, the goat and the four chickens are eaten by all the people who have come around to witness the ritual. A fifth chicken — the *ikyegh swende* — is cooked separately and eaten only by those who are custodians of the *swende* cult.

After these feasts, the husband of the pregnant woman donates a cloth known as *pue kyondo* ‘ten strips’ of a specific dimension and other prescribed items to the elderly man to perform another round of the rites. The next day, the man with his wife will present the meat and palm oil to the elderly man to eat. The elderly man will take these items behind the compound where he will perform the last rite to put a seal on and finalize the *idyugh i dughun* ritual.

In the Iharev clan, to perform the *idyugh*, the couple is required to provide a ram, five hens and one ‘dreaded rooster of evil’, and a consignment of dry meat to the custodian of the *idyugh* ritual. The custodian places five pennies on the ground, slays the five chickens and the ram, and spills their blood on the five pennies. The five chickens and the ram are cooked together with the dry meat. The cock is slain separately on a peg at the back of the compound and also cooked separately. The cooked chickens, the ram, and the dry meat will be brandished around the pregnant woman. This is known as *ichian* and it is crux of the *idyugh* ritual. Then, the meat will be consumed by the people around, as well as the husband of the pregnant woman. The wife herself is forbidden to eat the meat. The ‘dreaded’ rooster is eaten by only those who are initiated into the *ichigh*, *swende*, *iwa*, or *hikumun* cults.

For payment, the husband of the woman is required to give the *idyugh* man a specified number of chickens, a cock, and *tion taav* – a measure of the unrefined Tiv tobacco. However, he is free to pay the value of the aforementioned items in cash.

The *ichian* is followed by *ifan i gberen*, which is for the neutralization of curses. In this rite, a boiled egg, *ruam* made from sorghum flour and slivers of *chaha* the West African balsam tree are used. The egg and the *ruam* are placed on the slivers or leaves of *chaha* and brandished around them. The ceremony concludes when the *idyugh* man sprinkles water on the back of the pregnant woman. Normally, the water is fetched in the *hur* leaves.

In the Turan clan and many other clans in Tivland, when a woman is pregnant, her husband takes her to her paternal home to undergo two types of rituals for antenatal care: *akombo avian* and *ka aku*, to be followed by a thorough bath. This is backed up with two other rituals known as *ikuve igbe* and *ikuve gbande* rituals. The process is culminated by the *ifan i hamber*, which is the neutralization of all curses on the woman. Once these things are done, the couple is allowed to return to their home.

However, some people do not care to carry out the *idyugh* antenatal rituals. When their wife is pregnant, all they do is take her to her paternal home just to

undergo a thorough bath and return with the hope that all will be well during delivery. If the woman experiences difficulties during labour, then the husband will rush her to her paternal home along with a male goat and a chicken for the *idyugh* ritual. The husband will also provide *ikyundu ombor* for a cash payment to the custodian of the ritual. When they get there, the husband will hand over all the items to his wife's brother. The brother will, in turn, invite his kinsmen to inform them about the case, and also invite the elderly man who is to perform the ritual.

The elderly man will come and swing into action immediately. First, he will cut flexible branches of the *hokula*, *gusa* and *ishogh* trees make three pegs with each of the branches and push the *hokula* and *gusa* pegs at same spot in front of a selected hut, while fixing the *ishogh* peg at a different spot beside the other pegs. Generally it is only in the Turan clan that the *ishogh* tree is used for rituals. So, if *ishogh* tree is seen in any compound outside the Turan clan in Tivland, it is an indication that a woman from the Turan clan is married there.

All the male siblings of the pregnant wife will be invited, while a chicken and a male goat are brought. The woman's siblings will all lay their hands on the goat and chicken as it is being slain near the pegs by the elderly man. A little of that blood will be drained into a shell, while the largest quantity of the blood will be sprinkled on the three pegs. The act of sprinkling the blood on the pegs is called *hwar senden*. When the goat and the chicken meat are cooked and pounded yams are prepared, then, it is time for *ichian* — brandishing, the main act of *idyugh*. The elderly man cuts a morsel of food, puts a little of the blood from the shell on the *ruam*, and gives it to the woman to swallow. Some parts of the chicken used for the *hwav senden*, now cooked, will be put on a tray, waved around, and then handed to her.

Naturally, she is forbidden to eat these parts of the chicken. So, she gives it to her husband to eat. The head, the beaks, and the wings of the same chicken are used to conduct the second brandishing. The woman and any other person can eat these parts. Thereafter, water is brought and the neutralization of curses, *ifan i gberen*, is done to seal the ritual.

### THE *IEE* RITUAL

*Iee* means thorough bath, and is another ritual for antenatal care. Here too a man takes his pregnant wife, along with a male goat and six chickens, to the wife's paternal home. These items are handed over to the wife's brother who, in turn, convenes his kinsmen and presents the items to them. A day is set for the *iee*. On that day, the man to conduct the ritual, normally an elderly man takes over. He uses the chickens to cleanse the woman of minor antenatal illness. The goat is used for cleansing her of major curses, which she might have incurred as a result of ignorance, or by transgressing a cultural taboo as a young girl growing up. And such curses, if not cleansed, could cause her tragic death.

The *iee* ritual is vital. In the Kparev clan, if it has not been performed during the antenatal period, she will surely be subjected to it even after she has given birth. For some clans, if she has not been subjected to *iee* during the antenatal period, all they do is to conduct the baby's purification. That is all about the antenatal rituals.

## CHILD DELIVERY

All women who have undergone the antenatal rituals discussed, face labour with ease of heart once it is their expected date of delivery. It is normal for a woman to have contractions and labour for two to five days. When this is prolonged further, it means something is wrong. The husband is compelled to consult a diviner who is normally the one to prescribe the ritual that can remedy the situation. The husband will, thus, look for an elderly man who is the custodian of several rituals, including the one prescribed by the soothsayer.

Generally, most of the rituals to remedy protracted labour are done with native tobacco. The elderly man will tap a small measure of the tobacco a number of times on the back of the woman's hand, chanting incantations in accordance with the spirits of that ritual. Once this is done, she starts dilating instantly, which is an indication that her obstacles have been surmounted and she is ready to give birth. The next thing is to look for a midwife, who is usually a woman of advanced age.

## MIDWIFERY

The midwife starts her work by positioning the baby in the womb in the right position so that it can come out with ease. The delivery is done on *akinde* leaves. Once the baby drops on the leaves, it will cry, which is an indication that the baby is healthy. If it doesn't cry, the midwife will use cold water to induce it to cry. The baby is followed by the placenta, which has to be severed so that the mother is free to go into bathroom to clean her genitals with warm water.

The midwife uses thread to tie up at the section between the navel and umbilical cord. She cuts off the umbilical cord at the side leading to the placenta, leaving its stub on the baby's navel. Meanwhile a boy is assigned to bury the placenta beside the door post of the hut in which the delivery has taken place, and a big stone is placed on the spot. The midwife will, furthermore, wash the navel with warm water, and hand the baby over to the mother. This brings to an end the first phase of the midwifery process.

In a situation where the new mother has problems with milk secretion in her breast, she will have to massage her breasts with warm water each time she takes her bath, and rub camwood powder on them to stimulate milk production in the breast. It is common for some women to have difficulty with milk production for two to three days after delivery. In such cases, any other mother can help breastfeed the new baby.

It is not advisable to bring out the baby into the open air until the stub on the navel withers and falls off. This marks the last phase of midwifery. Once the withered portion drops, the midwife comes again to concoct a salve for the baby, using *kpagh* powder, palm oil and salt. The withered stub of umbilical cord is buried by the midwife. The burial is not done just anywhere. In the case of a baby boy, the stub is buried beside a tall *gbaaye* tree<sup>58</sup> or even a strong pepper plant, so that the baby will grow up to be single-minded and of noble character. In case of a baby

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<sup>58</sup>Latin: *Prosopis oblonga*.

girl, the cord stub is buried beside a pawpaw, silk cotton or an *akinde* tree, so that she will grow up to be fertile and of soft character. Once this is done, the midwife is considered to have completed her assignment. She receives a token, usually a chicken from the baby's father, for the services rendered.

At this point, it is safe to bring the baby out into the open air. Henceforth, after bathing the baby the mother will subject her to an exercise, where the baby is turned heels over head at least three times. This is to help dispel fears in the baby. Then the bath water is poured on the spot where the placenta was buried.

### PROTECTING AND PURIFYING A BABY

There are various ways of purifying a baby among the various clans of Tivland, but at least the Turan and Shitire clans have some similar ways of doing it. In the Turan clan, the dedication is done when the stub on the navel withers and drops off. The traditional *akombo* master for the purification will send a young boy to a stream to fetch water for the exercise. The boy goes to fetch the water very early in the morning and is warned not to talk to anybody while coming and going. The *akombo* master pours the water in a conch, chants incantations, and makes the baby sip the water from the conch. He drops the conch, uses leaves to fetch water again, and pours this in the baby's mouth while he chants the following: 'Today I protect you against *kwenihundu* and *ihundugh*<sup>59</sup> illness.'

Next, the *akombo* master holds a chicken and *chiha* leaves, brandishes them three times, to the left and to the right of the door of the hut housing the baby. The mother will go into the hut with the baby. The *akombo* master draws them out by hand, pours water on the roof of the hut, and makes the mother rinse her legs in the water as it falls from the roof. He then pulls the baby and the mother to middle of the compound and declares the end of the purification. He gets a chicken and a hoe as a token from the father of the baby.

### CHILD PURIFICATION AMONG THE SHITIRE CLAN

In this clan too, the child purification is done when the stub on the navel has dropped. The man takes the baby and mother to a traditional *akombo* master. And usually, a young boy is sent to fetch water from the stream early in the morning. He keeps the water at the purification shrine, waiting for the *akombo* master. He also ensures that no chicken comes to peck in the water, because if it does and the water is used for purification, the baby will develop a fever instantly.

The *akombo* master comes with the herbs required for the ritual. The mother sits on the doorsill and holds the baby to her right breast. The *akombo* master sits facing them. He draws a line on the ground between him and the mother. He fetches the water in a conch and makes the baby and the mother sip it. Thus, the purification is done. The father of the baby will give a token to the *akombo*

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<sup>59</sup>*Ihundugh* is a type of madness or insanity; in another form it also means drunkenness.



master, normally a chicken and cotton wool, in the case of male child. In case of a female, the *akombo* master will get only grain as a token.

After this, it is assumed that the baby is protected against all common childhood illnesses. So, if he catches any illnesses as he grows up, the father has to consult a soothsayer to know the appropriate treatment to give the baby. It is also assumed that by four months of age, the baby will have outgrown common childhood illnesses. Thus, it would be strange if the baby catches any. If it happens, then, it would be considered a bewitching rather than an ordinary illness.

From three months on, it is expected that the baby should be able to sit up on his own, then start crawling, followed by the ability to hold on to objects and stand up. Subsequently, the baby should be able to stand on his own, even if trembling. When a baby is able to stand on his own for the first time, the mother or father and the nanny become excited and cheer for the baby by saying '*jiji ya kuaa*'. The baby is held by hand and supported as it toddles about saying 'Taata!' and the baby also responds by repeating the word 'Taata!' Later on, without the support of the nanny to help the baby walk, he does it by himself, often times unstable and falling over. The people around will say that the baby is finally taking strides on its own. From here on, he grows and gets mature enough to run.

### SPEECH DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN

Children normally start their speech with babbling sounds like *bee*, *taata* and *nam*. The next stage is to innocently use insulting words like *iwa*, dog, and stupid fool; and anytime he does that the mother gets excited and invites others to come and witness how the child can insult. In fact, the mother seems to reinforce the child's ability to use insults. The people around also become amused by these innocent uses of foul language. Within a short time, the child becomes well-versed in insulting language, but no one gets offended because he does it innocently. Subsequently, the child becomes full-grown, and able to join other children in their hunt for grasshoppers within their compound.

### CHARACTER TRAITS IN CHILDREN

The Tiv people first discern strength of character in a boy through the boy's skill at catching grasshoppers and hunting for birds and killing lizards. At a tender age, young children in Tivland learn how to catch grasshoppers. No matter how sunny it is, they move in and around their compound in search of grasshoppers. When they see a grasshopper perched on the ground, they tiptoe carefully and swat it with a whip. They also use other devices like sticky gum on a stick. When they see a grasshopper perched within their reach, they go on tiptoe and get closer, touch the grasshopper with the gummy stick which would get glued to it. From trapping grasshoppers they graduate to hunting lizards.

### HUNTING FOR LIZARDS

When hunting for lizards Tiv children learn to use bows and arrows. Normally, they start by using play arrows made of sticks. With these arrows, they enter

swampy places and comb the area in search of lizards. It is usually the faster boys who kill most of the lizards, while the indolent ones, even if they come out early for the search, return home empty-handed. There are a variety of species of lizards in Tivland. These edible lizards are the *atiake*, *agwatian*, *mende* [monitor lizard], and *ishondo*.

### HUNTING FOR BIRDS

As boys grow older, they abandon lizard hunting and hunt birds. At this stage, they are at least thirteen years old, but they are considered not to be mature enough to use real poisonous arrows. The father of a boy will fabricate a bow and an arrow, which is a sort of a beginner's arrow with sharp wood point instead of a metallic point. It is with these arrows that boys perfect their skills at archery. Boys who are really good at shooting, even at a distance, can shoot down a bird from a tree with a wood-pointed arrow.

As the boys hunt for birds, they also engage in a game which is to bet an arrow for a bird's wing. They do this in pairs. If certain a boy called Ayaor kills a bird, when it is cooked, he will give one of its wings to another boy called Ador, who will in turn, give him an arrow. So the boy who kills more birds is likely to collect more arrows from his partners.

Below is a list of common birds in Tivland:

*Adzenga*, *Iyoghor*, *Aburum*, *Kpanchô*, *Peeravom*, *Gbaatir*, *Ijie*, *Akôsanger*, *Ingurugh*, *Ijenkpa*, *Ikainyon*, *Ishughwa*, *Adaail*, *Imandeadzume*, *Indyulututuu*, *Genge* [parakeet], *Iyarikure*, *Atôôkuku*, *Gbargbar* [swallow], *Ashia*, *Igirakombo*, *Ivungu* [owl], *Akiki* [night bird], *Kporoughfi*, *Gberkôôkôô* [woodpecker], *Kianper* [hornbill], *Ikuundu*, *Akôrayese*, *Kporogodogo*, *Kwerikôôr*, *Icharegh*, *Ishieregh*, *Ayima*, *Adzembe*, *Hôgô*, *Akahwa*, *Ikpande*, *Ikunamger*, *Gbabe*, *Mtsaan*, *Ayughho*, *Kpire*, *Gbev* [owl], *Delagh*, *Atsator*, *Akeregh*, *Injuwainjuwa*, *Inyonanyam* [leopard bird], *Njuwainyon*, *Akera*, *Atikpagher*, *Hôlô*, *Mkirim* [ground hornbill], *Iguve* [eagle], *Gafa* [Bateleur eagle], *Iwua*, *Ada*, *Apu* [vulture], *Pevnor*, *Inyonako*, *Ikem*, *Tsoghor*, *Ayula*, *Tsarikondo*, *Inyonbua* [cow bird], *Ikange* [Guinea fowl], *Gugôô* [crow], *Ikuna* [bush fowl], *Takanger* [quail-like bush fowl], *Wer*, *Kiravange*, *Agbeegbe*, *Hulôgboko*, *Inyonalôm*, *Kaaki*, *Kirakira*, *Kolodon*, *Kariv* [stork], *Ayaichambe*, *Adzemalia*, *Vaivaan*, *Agbendual*, *Aku*, *Mkungum ma Agbedajo* [pigeon or dove], *Aganger*, *Igengegh*, *Iliakuji*, *Inima* [bat], *Wanionikungu*, *Chacha*, *Kondofi*, *Ijenkpa*.<sup>60</sup>

Another hunting tradition the boys practise is if a boy sights a bird's nest on a tree, he will proclaim, 'There is my bird's nest.' Then, the boy nearest to him will touch him and also proclaim, 'I have a share in it.' The nest will be brought down

<sup>60</sup>Many bird names resemble the sound they make. Others are named by what they do, such as cow birds; others are named by the appearance of their feathers, such as the leopard bird. For Akiga to list this many is significant as it shows the Tiv people's intimate knowledge of the natural world. Those translated above were known to this editor/translator (Harold Bergsma) because of his frequent hunting trips in Tivland many decades ago with Tiv friends. Others are simply listed as 'a bird' by Abraham's *Dictionary of Tiv*. Many others are unknown to these translators. *Inima*, the name for 'bat', was included by Akiga among the birds or flying creatures.

and whatever is found in it will be shared between the two boys. So, when they get home and the birds are cooked, they spend their evening in the backyard playing the game of betting a bird's wing for an arrow.

As they grow up hunting birds, the father replaces the wood arrows with non-poisonous metallic ones. The fear is that if they carry poisonous arrows at this age, they might injure themselves and become infected with the venom. For safety reasons, boys at a tender age are not allowed to use sharp knives. They can only use kitchen knives, which are less dangerous. Once the boys get to the mid-teen age and are circumcised, they enter into mainstream hunting.

### MAJOR TASKS FOR THE ADOLESCENT

In the past, boys during their mid-teens were considered still too under-developed to be subjected to yam mound making at the farms. They either spent most of the time with their mother, or at most, carried hoes to the farm for their fathers and would fetch fire wood for their families. In addition, if the father happened to have a visitor, the boy would be responsible for preparing tobacco in a pipe for the father and his visitor.

It was generally forbidden for children to roam about at night for fear that they would run into evil forces that would bewitch them. So, at night children stayed home and prepared a sort of camp fire with firewood they brought from the farm. All family members would cluster around to warm themselves and spend time spinning cotton into thread and tell stories and act them out in the moonlight.<sup>61</sup>

In those days, the tales told during moonlight would not just start abruptly. There was a general protocol that was to be strictly adhered to: the children would arrive first, make the campfire, and sit back to tell riddles to each other while waiting for the adults to arrive. The riddles were either in the form of proverbs rendered in a subtle manner, or popular sayings rendered into riddles. These were used among the Tiv people to while away the time, especially during the evening hours. Here is an example of how the riddle sessions were conducted. The child who proposed the riddle, let's call him Ishom, and the one to solve the riddle, Adamgbe.

**Ishom:** Riddle, riddle.

**Adamgbe:** Go ahead.

**Ishom:** An elephant was butchered on the slaughter slab. A multitude came but could not finish dismembering it. Explain what the elephant is.

**Adamgbe:** That is water.

**Ishom:** Wrong. Give me a token for the explanation.

**Adamgbe:** The elephant here is the wild bush.

**Ishom:** Not at all. Give me a token to get the explanation.

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<sup>61</sup>Such story-telling involved acting and the use of props and costumes. This was an exciting time for the household. Iorwuese Hagher, in his book *The Kwagh-Hir Theater: a weapon for social action* (University Press of America, 2014 pp.2-5) describes such plays and how they are carried out. They are an important aspect of Tiv culture.

**Adamgbe:** I offer you my brother Agaku.

**Ishom:** I wash all his filth for you to drink. Do you accept to drink it?

**Adamgbe:** I can't drink that.

**Ishom:** Then I will not explain the elephant.

**Adamgbe:** In that case, I'll drink the filth at once.

**Ishom:** Right! The elephant here represents sesame seed. Is it possible for any multitude to pick up every one of the sesame seeds that have been poured to the ground or on to a mountain?

As soon as the adults arrive, the children stop their riddles. The adults take over with tales as they spin the cotton into thread. Since the tales are built around a non-physical or rather a psychic universe populated basically by animals and spirits, they are regarded as fabrications. The normal way of starting a tale was for the person telling the tale to say, 'Let me also tell you a version of my lies for your listening pleasure.'

There are two versions of the tales: the tales that centre on the Hare are called *kwaghlôm*, while those that centre on other things like spiritual beings are referred to as *kwaghhir*. Nowadays, the *kwaghlôm* has become a major phenomenon in Tivland. Some communities organize *kwaghlôm* competitions with a large crowd in attendance. Here is a tale popular among the Tiv:

Once upon a time, there lived a man and his wife in an isolated house in the bush. The wife became pregnant and as her expected date of delivery drew closer, the man had an urgent reason to travel several hundreds of miles away, leaving the wife alone. Before he took off, he warned the wife not to go beyond their compound in satisfying her needs; she would then run into trouble. To forestall this, he stored enough water, food, meat, firewood, and many other things.

Immediately after the man left, the woman poured all the water into the reservoir, set fire to the entire stack of firewood and burned it off all at once. The next day she went to the stream to fetch water. On her way back from the stream, she saw a farm by the roadside and a tree with a withered branch. She set down the water and went to cut the branch of the tree for firewood. Just as she yanked off the withered branch, an old mother wizard with a long tusk and large stinking ulcer on her knee emerged from nowhere and exclaimed, 'Yes, what do you want?' The pregnant woman, astonished and confused, answered, 'I am about to give birth and I have come to call you to come and be my midwife.'

The old mother wizard followed the woman home. When they got home, she went into labour and delivered a big baby boy. The wizard performed the midwifery duties very well and was delighted that she had found great meat, because wizards like to eat infants. All she had to do was to wait and watch the new baby grow up before she could devour him.

Later in the day she cooked food with a lot of meat for both of them. The wizard snatched the whole pot of soup for herself, drained the pus from her stinking ulcer into another pot and gave that to the woman to use for food. She tried to protest, but the wizard threatened her with her tusk and she was cowed into using the pus for her soup.

The next day, the old mother wizard had to go to her farm. She laid a rope from the house to her own farm and told the woman that anytime she felt a tug on the rope, it meant she should pull on the rope and carefully drag the mother wizard back home. The new mother did as she was instructed and pulled the wizard home. Once the mother wizard got home and food was cooked, the same thing occurred. They continued to eat food with pus from the stinking sore of the mother wizard, and she regretted that she had disobeyed her husband.

Finally, the man returned from his journey. He arrived while the mother wizard was at her own farm. The wife narrated her ordeal to her husband. After listening to the wife the man became furious. He went and borrowed an axe from one of his kinsmen, sharpened it very well, and lay in ambush behind the door waiting for the return of the mother wizard.

When it was time the mother wizard alerted the wife as usual and the wife responded. However, on this day, the woman pulled carelessly on the rope, dragging the mother wizard recklessly. The mother wizard bumped her ulcerous leg here and there, and groaned in pain. She couldn't understand and vowed to deal with the woman once she got back for pulling carelessly and causing her so much pain. Finally, the mother wizard got back to the home. Just as she was about to go through the door, the man emerged from behind the door and struck her right on the head. The axe blade sank completely into her skull. The man tried to pull it out, but the blade got stuck there, leaving the man with only the wooden handle.

The mother wizard raced out of the house and ran back to the wizard's haven with the axe blade still in her head. When she got back, the other wizards tried to remove the blade, but the mother wizard couldn't bear the pain to allow her fellows to remove the axe blade. So, she was left alone to live with the blade in her head.

The man informed his kinsman how he had lost the axe blade to a mother wizard. He pleaded with him to accept another, even better axe as a replacement. But the kinsman would not accept any other replacement; he insisted on getting back the very axe that was borrowed from him. Not knowing what to do, the man sat back to think. Then he got an idea as to how he could get back that very same axe-head. He got a sharp razor blade and set off for the wizard's haven.

Just as he arrived at the outskirts of the haven, he met a young boy wizard. He called the boy and gave him a well-designed haircut and allowed him to go back to the compound of the wizards. The older wizards admired the haircut, asking the boy who did it for him. The boy told them about the man at the outskirts of the compound. They rushed there and ushered the man into their compound so that he could give the entire wizard kingdom the same beautifully designed haircut.

The man settled down to give them haircuts. He cut their hair one after the other. Then it was the turn of the old mother wizard. When the man saw her, his mind immediately jumped inside him, but he calmed himself so that he would not betray himself. He went ahead and began to cut her hair. He would cut a little bit and shake the blade; if she groaned, he left off doing it and continued with the designing. He kept doing this until he was sure the axe-head blade was loosened completely. He got ready, yanked out the blade, and zoomed off. The mother witch collapsed and sobbed her heart out. The witches nearby chased after the man but he escaped. He arrived home and returned the axe to his kinsmen.

In the course of time, as things would turn out, the wife of the man's kinsman gave birth to a baby, and he needed an *ihye*, a small necklace or bracelet that helps babies grow faster. As things happened, this very man was the only person with an *ihye* necklace in their community. So, the kinsman came and borrowed the *ihye* from the man who had once lost his axe. The kinsman came and hung it around the neck of his baby. Unfortunately, he forgot to remove it in time and the baby's head became too big for it to go back through the *ihye*. One day the man came to reclaim his *ihye*. It was not possible to remove it from the boy's neck. The kinsman begged the man to accept another *ihye* as a replacement, since it was not possible to remove the one around the neck of the kinsman's boy.

The man reminded his kinsman about the axe incident and insisted he too must have back the very same *ihye* that he had loaned to his kinsman. Not knowing what else to do, the kinsman had to cut off the head of his only son, remove the *ihye*, and hand it over to the man. The kinsman's only son died immediately. That's why it is inadvisable to push a fellow human being into too tight a corner, because it might be your turn another day.

### THE IPAV AND MBAGEN KINDRED GROUPS

Inyam had two sons with two different wives: Ipav, the eldest from the first wife called Ahaakaa, and Ityav from the second wife called Akpajir.

Upon Inyam's death, his first son Ipav inherited the second wife Akpajir and had a son with her on behalf of his father. He named the son Agen.

One day Ipav borrowed an axe from the wife he inherited so that he could go and cut firewood. Unfortunately, in the process the blade of the axe came off from the handle and plunged into a big pile of faeces. Ipav returned home and explained to his inherited wife how he had lost her axe.

On hearing this, Agen got hold of Ipav and told him that he must get back the axe blade. All his pleas fell on deaf ears, but Agen insisted Ipav must bring back the axe. Angrily, Ipav went back and spent a large part of the day sifting through the mound of faeces. He found the axe blade and gave it back to Agen.

Nevertheless, it didn't take long before Agen got into another trap with Ipav. What happened is that Ipav brought an egg to use for a ritual. He put the egg on the ground beside him. Agen came by and mistakenly stepped on and crushed the egg. This provided an opportunity for Ipav to take revenge on his half-brother Agen. Agen gave Ipav a container of eggs to replace the one he crushed, but Ipav rejected those, insisting the very same egg must be mended. There was no way Agen could mend the broken egg. Thus, until today, even after hundreds of years of Tiv history, the descendants of Agen, today called the Mbagen, are perpetually indebted to the descendants of Ipav, those who constitute the Ipav kindred. This is the basis of the relationship between the Ipav kindred and Mbagen kindred of the Kparev clan in Tivland.

### THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE UTANGE AND KPAREV CLANS

What actually led to the covenant was that one day someone from the Utange clan kidnapped the child of Gbadi Gbem of Ukusu [Kusuv] hamlet in the Mbagbem district.. This was when the people of the Mbainyam district and the Utange were living side by side in the Amire *ukiriki* [little river] valley. Gbadi did everything humanly possible, but could not get any clues as to the whereabouts of his child.

However, one day a man from the Utange clan made a journey to the Mbainyam district and stopped over at Gbadi's residence. In the course of discussing the matter with Gbadi, he asked for a detailed description of the kidnapped child. After listening to Gbadi's description of the child, the man went back to his district, rescued the child from the place where he was hidden, brought him and handed him over to Gbadi, the father.

Extremely pleased, Gbadi invited his kinsmen Mbainyam to his residence, including Tõmbo, his maternal uncle. Gbadi explained to them how his friend from the Utange clan had helped him get back his kidnapped child at a time when all hope had been lost. For this reason, he wanted all of them to come and witness as he repaid the good gesture of his friend. Happily, the kinsmen approved of Gbadi's intention to reciprocate the friend's gesture. They also added that Gbadi was a man they held in the highest esteem in their community, and they were keen to see how he would reciprocate.

Thus, to reciprocate, Gbadi caught two of his bullocks and handed them over to this friend. In addition, he pronounced that the amity between them and the Utange clan would be maintained for eternity. He said if the Utange were one of their enemies, they would have murdered the kidnapped child. There is should never ever be a bone of contention between them for ever. All of the Mbainyam agreed with one voice. This was because in former times when an elder spoke, no one disagreed.

*The covenant*

Gbadi put on a lavish covenant procedure. During the night, he sacrificed several humans and by day he killed several bullocks to appease his community. He followed this up with the *swem* ritual and placed an order forbidding all men in the Mbaniyam district capturing or engaging in courtship with Utange women.

Anybody in Mbaniyam who dared to contravene this order was liable to develop an abdominal abscess along with swollen legs and die at once. Hardly a few months had passed after the covenant was made, when the son of Abanyam Gbugh of Mbagen got captured the wife of Ashwebaver of the Utange clan. He quickly developed an abdominal abscess and had swollen legs and died at once. All of the Mbainyam developed goose pimples on seeing this in respect to violating the covenant with the Utange. Both sides became afraid of violating this covenant.

## THE CHARACTER OF THE TIV

Generally, the Tiv people are a well-organized and hardworking people. With respect to farming, no ethnic group in the Benue basin can compare to the Tiv. They are well-versed in farming and know all the right seasons, as discussed in the first chapter of this book. In past years, just one Tiv wealthy farmer could harvest hundreds of bags of grain, so much so that his wife's storage huts/bins could not contain all the produce. Such farmers were usually the rallying point and benefactors for the downtrodden in their communities.

In addition, the Tiv people are very skilful in constructing their houses. From time immemorial to the present day, the Tiv people have a highly stratified pattern of settlement within their compounds. In a compound of one nuclear family, the eldest son sets up his houses with the backs toward where the sun rises, while the junior son sets up his houses facing away from where the sun sets. The sojourners among them are allowed to settle at the outskirts of the compound.

If there is a mystical event necessitating a dialogue between the eldest son and the junior, the eldest one will wait until after dusk when they would be finishing the evening meal. He will come right into the middle of the compound and call the junior at the top of his voice, and he will come into the compound in absolute silence. Then a dialogue will ensue between them. Let's imagine the eldest is called Iju while the junior is Ityovenda. The dialogue might flow like this:

**Iju:** Is Ityovenda there?

**Ityovenda:** Yes, I am here.

**Iju:** What secret deals have you made with Mbasombo our kinsmen that you have not informed me of, that have triggered the calling out of the *akiki*, the night bird? If you have partaken in a flesh debt now that the night has come, you better go yourself and lay your life down before Mbasombo to slaughter you, so that the rest of us, Adi's children, can enjoy our peace. Adi our father has gone beyond to be with his ancestors and left us to continue his lineage. I can't understand. Tell me: why are the dreadful birds hovering and humming around our compound?

**Ityovenda:** Iju, as for me, I do not know what it is about.

**Iju:** Then, I ban these mysterious birds humming around our residence right away. We are just two of us in this family; both of us have no shady deal with our kinsmen Mbasombo; then let the mysteries around cease. But, in case it

is Ivogba, our maternal cousin [*wanigba*], who is sojourning with us that is into spiritual liaisons [*igyato*] with our kinsmen to cause deaths in the family, then, he better stop it. Our forefathers never tolerated such. So let the humming of the *akiki* cease at once.

If a man sets out on a journey and a quail springs up in front of him and he stands in the middle of the path contemplating, his spirits fall; some would turn back from the trip and end the journey. Others would summon courage and continue the trip. And for some others, when the quail springs up in such manner, it is a good omen and they mark it as a sign. The *atii* bird [red-breasted dove] too, if it passes in front of a person and makes the *arheer* sound, some people would take it for a bad omen, but for some others it would be an omen for good fortune, and they would continue on. The Tiv are also afraid of crabs; if a man sets out and encounters a crab on his path, he turns back from the trip and reports to his household that a crab blocked his way, that's why he turned back from the trip. The Tiv are most afraid of the chameleon; when a man sets out and encounters a chameleon on his way, he turns back from that trip as of necessity. And another thing is called the *sakon*; when a man is on a trip and a *sakon* breaks out in front of him, it signifies something. And another bird that is called *kpanchôkolaya* or *ikpenger* [the pepper bird] — when it makes the sound *ujir ujir*, it signifies evil. And the stink ant: it too signifies something to the Tiv. If a person sets out on a trip and encounters stink-ants moving in a solemn single-file formation, he observes their mouths. If they have termites in their mandibles, the man concludes the trip will be successful with good fortune, but if the ants have nothing in their mandibles, he concludes that he will go hungry today.

When a man sees a python and shows it to another, who kills it, the python is given to the man who first saw it. The one who killed it is said to *hambe* — join in — the kill. The one who killed it would be given the *tswan*, which in this case is the part of the python next to the neck. For all food animals that live in a burrow, if a man sees a burrow with evidence of an animal in it, if the burrow is dug out and an animal inside killed, the meat belongs to the one who first saw the burrow. Those who dug the burrow only by 'joining in' will receive a portion.

If a python enters a house, it is a sign of evil; the owner of the house would break the house down and go in exile to his mother's relatives, for the *mbatsav* want to kill him. If, during the day, a Tiv man encounters an *ivervese*, a particular snake that moves mostly at night, he would go to a sorcerer or he would exile himself to his mother's relatives. There is a fish called *ko-ishu*. If a man picks up a dead one floating on the water, he eats it with sorrow, wondering if his death will soon come.

The eggs of the guinea fowl: if a man goes into the bush and comes across them, it is considered a sign that death has come upon his head, and he goes to various sorcerers.

The Tiv never have peace of mind because of these beliefs.

### ISHOL I KPEHEN: DIVINATION

All these things lead the Tiv to visit diviners. When a man encounters a series of these things it is time to go to the diviner or sorcerer. Divination is of several types. One is the horn of the *murya* [duiker] covered with the leaves of the *hokura* tree. In



one type of divination, the horn is empty. With another type, the horn is filled with the pods of the fruit of the *yiasé* tree.<sup>62</sup> Another type has pieces of *dzelagba*. Of all these divination types, the one that is most significant is the one with the *yiasé* fruit pods.

**How it is done:** When something happens to you and you go to a diviner, it goes something like this. Let's say the diviner is called Wantsa and the one who needs the service is Asarya. Asarya goes to Wantsa. Wantsa at this time is the leading diviner in Tivland, so it is his divination that we will talk about here, as he sees and divines well. He is from the Ishangev clan but now lives in the Iharev clan, never visiting his native Ishangev clan area. Asarya's child died; his mother-in-law alleged that it was Asarya who caused the death, using the child to set an *akombo* right. The name of the dead child is Faishima. This displeased Asarya and he said 'Let them deny their complicity at the divination of Wantsa'. So Asarya's mother, the anchorperson or the go-between when negotiating the marriage between Asarya and his wife, and Asarya himself — all three set out. When they come to the diviner, they had not opened their mouths to say anything about the issue at hand when Wantsa greets each of them by name thus: Asarya, son of Asuga, greetings! Igba Wanishase, greetings! Ashighe Taraga, greetings! After greeting them so, the diviner says, 'Asarya, is it the death of your son that brings you? Your mother-in-law talked badly to you concerning that death.' He goes on: 'Kpash! During the past year, a leopard was killed in your area. There was a fight involving those of the darkness as well. The leopard took the chief to it.' He then asks Asarya to pay the fee, so Asarya brings out one piece of *bashi* — in those days, the equivalent of six *kobo* [pence in Nigerian currency] — and adds another *kobo* to it. Having given this, Wantsa says they have come to the divination too 'red-eyed,' so Asarya should buy water in the divination arena. Asarya buys the water in the divination arena for a 'hundred'. When the water is brought to the divination arena, Wantsa bursts out laughing and casts down the divination pieces, picks them up, and casts them on the floor again. Then he stands still and says, 'Asarya, give me your hand.' When Asarya brings out his hand, he takes a piece of charcoal and draws a mark on the leather besides the divination pieces and hands the charcoal to Asarya. After handing him the charcoal, he says, 'It is Asarya's brother who killed the child; it is not the wife's community that caused the death.' Asarya then asks why his brother would cause his son's death. Wantsa makes some more divinations and answers, 'Asarya's brother made advances to your wife intending to sleep with her, but when she turned down his advances, he made the son sick, not with the intention of death, but to cause bodily pain. But then the child died.'

There were lots of diviners who were consulted for divination, but among them were also many false diviners. When a person went to consult them, the person had a problem: to provide an interpretation first before the diviner dealt with it and wanting to know reasons why you had decided to come for consultation. Even then, people were not told the truth. They continued going from one diviner to the other about the same problem, never getting any resolution to their problem.

Some Tiv customs were very good, particularly how they were hospitable to visitors and strangers. In the past, people were not always on the road travelling

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<sup>62</sup>Latin: *Afzelia Africana*.

around like they do nowadays. When an individual left his kindred to go to a different one, upon arrival, he would take his arrows and hang them on the thatch roof, and then he would enter the meeting hut. He would stay standing there until the head of the household welcomed him by giving him a seat to sit on. Once he was seated, the head of the household would greet him and a pipe would be lit and given to the stranger. After smoking, the head of the household would ask where the stranger who had come to visit was from. The visitor would tell where he came from — for instance, that he comes from Ukan. Then the head of the household would ask him the name of his father in Ukan. He would reply that his father is Abar. Then the head of the household would call out to his wife, Wanute, that a visitor had arrived. Wanute would come out and greet the visitor; then she would carry the visitor's arrows and keep them in the hut. Then she would set out to prepare a meal. When the meal was ready, she would come to where the visitor was sitting. She would approach him from the side and whisper to the visitor to come into the hut. Now the visitor would tarry and not stand up immediately, lest he be construed as too eager for the food. So he would remain seated. After a while, he would stand up and enter the hut. She then would set the meal before him. He would not eat all of it, even if the meal was small, lest he be laughed at for being a glutton. The brothers of the household head would also each invite the visitor to meals in their huts. When the food was ready, the visitor was well fed. The day the visitor was to leave, the head of the household would see him off properly beforehand; if the visitor was worth killing a fowl for, a chicken would be caught. But before it was slaughtered, it would be shown to the visitor. Once prepared, cooked, and ready, the whole pot in which it was cooked together with a plate would be placed before him and the meat removed from the pot and set on the plate. The visitor then would begin to eat the food, but he would not consume much of the meat; he would share the meat with the people of the household. The chicken head, legs, and the wings would be put back in the pot by the visitor. The neck would usually be given to the one who roasted the chicken and stripped off its feathers, and the pot and its contents would be given back to the woman who prepared the meal.

To kill a fowl is a big deal among the Tiv; it is a thing of honour. If one prepares a meal from a whole leg of beef and another kills and prepares a chicken, the one who killed the chicken is considered to be more honourable.

Cotton became a source of money for the Tiv. In the olden times, an elderly man would spin cotton; his wife would spin cotton; if he had five children, they would each have their cotton to spin. When they all completed the spinning, the thread would be put in sacks and handed over to an elder to weave *tugudu*.

He would buy cattle and look after them. In those days, an elder did not go out much. While the youth were out farming, he would be in the compound, seated on a chair, spinning cotton for long periods. When the spun cotton is enough to make cloth, he would weave it into cloth. If there was a need to prepare medicine, the elder would be called and he would go. In the evening, the elder would sit with his children and caution them: do not sleep with another man's wife. If you sleep with a man's wife, you have contracted a flesh debt belonging to the man. If he needs to settle something, he could use you to settle it. Do not eat the broth that an elder has on his lap or you might end up eating human fat, and the elder would then demand that you kill to provide him human broth in compensation. Do not quarrel with the elders; old age is sacred. These are the kind of

things that elders of old would sit and admonish their children with in the evening, and the children would listen and take it to heart.

Stealing was not widespread among the Tiv in those days. In some clans there would be, perhaps, one thief who stole livestock and the people of the land would all know him. If a man was indebted and would not pay and if the item of debt was a head of cattle, then the man could go to the thief and contract with him to steal a cow belonging to his debtor and bring it to him, and he would pay the thief a 'twenty' or 'forty'. The thief would then go during the night when people are asleep and untie the cow and bring it to the man owed, who then settles with him. When day breaks and the debtor realizes that his cow has vanished, he tracks the hoof marks to the compound of the one who was given the animal. He would ask why the animal was removed and would be told why. Nothing would be said about the thief who actually took the cow; he would be feared as a man of magic capable of carrying you away in your sleep. The debtor then would go to the elder of the lender and say to him, such and such a person has removed my cow and I traced and found it, but he has not released it to me so I want you to help me understand this. I do not owe him, and if I do owe him, let him come and say so. Then the elder would call the one to whom the stolen cow was given with the following explanation: the one who is the debtor is Afera and the owner of the cattle is Adogo, who is related to Afera, in the Ukum clan. The man from whom Afera bought his slave has not been paid in full and this triggered the removal of his bull; he is called Adamako from Ugondo clan, and his elder is called Ipera.

**Adogo:** Ipera, last night my bull vanished. I tracked the hoof marks to Kibough's compound and found it tied to the *akinde* tree in the courtyard. When I enquired I found it was Adamako who tied the animal there. When I then went and asked Adamako, he did not respond in the right manner. That's why I came to tell you to help me reason with him.

**Ipera:** Amazing! Was it not yesterday that Wanaveinya came and said a bull should be taken for the debt of a slave?

**Adogo:** But I do not know anything about it.

**Ipera:** Agase, go and call Adamako to come.

**Agase:** Adamako, Ipera has said you should come.

**Adamako:** Ipera, have you arisen from sleep? Good morning.

**Ipera:** Adamako, this man from Ugondo has come here saying that you took his bull.

**Adamako:** You are right, I took it.

**Ipera:** For how much?

**Adamako:** His relative Afera. I bought a slave at Utyusha in Turan and when I needed to carry out the rites of *ibiam*, I wanted to sell her. Afera bought her but did not complete the payment for her. He said he would give me one bull, to cover the debt. When I went for the settlement of the debt, he talked rubbish. So I decided since he has not paid me my due, I contracted for his cow to be untied and brought to me. These Ukum people are neighbours to us and they take us for granted. When a bull belonging to Ajav strayed to Ukum, it came back with an arrow in its body and died.

**Adogo:** And so, were you told that it was I who killed it? You offend someone and when asked about it you leave the main issue and start dragging other things up.

**Ipera:** Eh, stop the argument; it is not something to quarrel about. You, Adogo, you now know the reason why your cow vanished. Go and tell your relative Afera to come and redeem your cow. He is your relative.

**Adogo:** I have heard you; I will go and meet Afera.

**Adogo:** Afera, my cow that disappeared yesterday, I have traced it to Ugondo; I met it in Kibough's courtyard; on asking I was told it is Adamako that took the cow. I talked it over with him but I could not understand his reason; I went over to his relative Ipera. When Ipera asked him, he brought up your debt that he held me for you to ransom. Then Ipera instructed I go back and he will get the cow for me.

**Afera:** That is right, concerning the cow. It is true I owe him; he gave me a slave when he needed money for the *ibiam* rite. I told him I had a lack of money at that time and so could not help. But he insisted so I offered him a bull, and a cow in debt; he accepted and collected the bull and departed. When he comes for the debt, I tell him I am still looking for the cow. Have I called his bluff on account of superior strength? Now that it has turned into a case of trouble, I will not delay; I will search for a cow and go and redeem your cow, and if it is 'twenties' for a cow, I will just go with it.

**Afera:** Adogo, I have got some 'twenties', I am off to Ugondo over the issue of your cow.

**Adogo:** All right, you can go. I may not go myself this time.

**Afera:** Atadi! Why wouldn't you go? You told me that Ipera said we should confer and settle the matter and that you should go to him and he will retrieve your cow and give to you?

**Adogo:** Then let us go and tell my elder relative Iyongoigba. When I came back that time I had told him and now that we are ready to go for the cow, I will let him know.

**Afera:** Then you can go.

**Adogo:** Iyongoigba, it is the issue of the cow I told you about here last night. Afera has got some money so we are going.

**Iyongoigba:** It is all right.

**Adogo:** Ipera, we have come now.

**Ipera:** Who might you be?

**Adogo:** A ta! You elders confound me. Ipera, is it not I who Adamako's relative untied my cow and I came here to tell you?

**Ipera:** A tadi! I did not remember, we elders. Age has taken hold of us, even sight, do we still see? It is just as you said, otherwise I would not remember. Now that you have said it, now I remember it well. Your relative, did he acknowledge the debt or did he deny it?

**Adogo:** He acknowledged, and he has brought money to settle the debt and redeem the cow.

**Ipera:** Then spend the night and in the morning I will send for Adamako and we will settle the matter.

**Ipera:** Adamako, yesterday these people got here, but because it was late, I suggested they sleep and when day breaks I'd call you and we would discuss the matter.

**Adamako:** Afera, greetings. How is your home?

**Afera:** All is well; it is only in the period I left for here that something could have happened.

**Adogo:** And in your place too, all is well?

**Adamako:** Ei, all is well.

**Ipera:** Afera, you can now say what is on your mind so let me hear it.

**Afera:** Is there anything left to talk about? I have brought money to give Adamako, so he can release the cow to you to give me, so I can hand it to my relative here; let the issue release me.

**Ipera:** Show the money. Adamako, you have seen the money; how do you say?

**Adamako:** A ta, Ipera, as for me, I now think it is you the elder who must settle matters. If you say the money is enough that will be all.

**Ipera:** We are neighbours to the Ukum in this area, so it is not a good idea for us to be difficult. Get up and untie the cow; let me give it to them.

**Adamako:** Afera, here is it. I have let it be so as not to cause enmity with your brother, or else I wouldn't have given you back this cow. When a man eats a man's young child, you pay back with your elder child.

**Afera:** Ipera, this matter is now settled. I will go back.

**Ipera:** It is all right, go well.

**Afera:** Adogo, hold the cow and let's go.

Another practice of the Tiv is this: a woman may not pick vegetables or herbs for her soup or firewood from another's farm during her absence. If a woman does so, the elders would judge her and her husband would be fined a goat. The elders would share the goat meat among themselves. In the past, there was nothing more shameful to the Tiv than stealing. Stealing was such a shameful act; even now, stealing is a shameful thing among some Tiv. Telling of lies has long been acceptable, even today. They say if you are a man, you do not take along the truth. If you take along the truth, you will not escape the sword; to be a man is to be quick-witted. Even at that, the early Tiv valued truth. If they went hunting and a dispute arose over the kill, the elders would look for a youth who was honest and ask if he was there. If the answer is that such a youth was there, he would be called and asked: you are our *ikeghtumbun* [our innocent chick], now tell us what transpired as you saw it. Then the honest youth would narrate truthfully and the elders would settle the matter in line with his narrative. It is this type of honest youth who after a long time becomes a keeper of the land.

Another practice of the Tiv which has much meaning for them is the *itya*, the laying out the corpse.

In those days, when a person died, his survivors would mourn him. In the past, people used to mourn with signs. When you saw the mourning symbol, you knew the man was bereaved. The symbols for mourning were of different sorts: going unshaven, and not rubbing on any lotion but going about with white parched skin. The Kparev would tie on the *nyagba* cloth; other Tiv groups would wear the *ikar*.

In the past, if you lost someone — whether it was your wife, mother, child, father, or brother — you stopped shaving your hair and you stopped rubbing in teak extract. If someone did not like or did not have access to teak ochre, when there was a death, they would permanently stop using it. People would think it was because of mourning that he did not rub in teak ochre. When others

resumed rubbing in teak ochre, he didn't; he would just remain dry-skinned and parched. When people realized that it is not mourning, but poverty, they say, 'Death has provided an excuse for people to have parched, dry skin.' That is still a saying today. The meaning is like this. Say you do not have money but you ask for the price of an item on sale. When the seller calls out the price, you say the price is too high. One who knows you do not have money would laugh and say, 'Death has provided an excuse for one having a parched, dry skin. I knew well that you did not have money to pay in the first place.'

In the past, when a person in the Kparev clan died, the bereaved would make the *nyagba* cloth and wear it around his waist. Anyone who saw it would know it is because a death has occurred that you are wearing the *nyagba*. Other Tiv groups would spin a necklace and wear it around the neck, or make it long enough to wear around the waist. When people see you wearing the spun necklace, they know it symbolizes that a death has occurred and that the wearer is in mourning. That is the mourning of the dead in Tivland. The Tiv do not specify the length of a mourning period in months or days as other ethnic groups do. Some people would mourn for ten days, others for even a year. But these days, the Tiv do not mourn using signs and symbols as they did in the past. It is mostly in the mind, but you can still see some individuals wearing the signs and symbols of mourning.

In the past, when a wealthy man died, a son or a brother who is strong and well-to-do would say he wants to 'lay down' his father; his father deserves not to be buried casually. First he fells a silk cotton tree, cuts a section of the trunk, and hollows it out like a canoe. Then he has the corpse, puts it in the hollowed trunk, and removes the intestines. He then digs and installs two pillars in his meeting hut; hangs the hollowed trunk with the corpse on it, and makes a fire in the hut. The corpse drains there. Then he drags out the corpse with the *indyer* [chain] to bury it. For the 'dragging out', he goes with a cock, and prepares locust beans and the hind leg of an animal, and gives all these to the owner of the *indyer* interment site. If the *indyer* becomes stuck while it is being dragged, those pulling it sit down and make incantations to 'cut the curses' before continuing. When the *indyer* reaches the compound, the one carrying out the ceremony of laying down the corpse slaughters a chicken for those that dragged it. At this point, the community is gathered in number and the celebrant gives livestock, usually goats or sheep, to all the kin of the community. The gathering breaks and people return to their hamlets. The celebrant grinds millet or sorghum and soaks it to make beer.

Preparing Tiv beer involves ten steps:

1. *mkum*: pounding or milling
2. *m mir*: soaking
3. *mtse u sha ika*: leaving overnight on leaves
4. *mtar*: spreading/laying out
5. *mnder*: waking up [?]
6. *msaar*: turning over
7. *iliekpen* [meaning unknown]
8. *gberikon*: cutting firewood
9. *mjiir*: boiling over the fire
10. *ivihinmsôr*: start of the issuing out the drink

On the day set to drink the beer, they would celebrate for two days and the celebrant would slaughter more livestock, after which those from afar would return to their places. The daily wake continues throughout the rainy season. When the dry season arrives, it is the time for *dzer*, for tying.

During *dzer*, they would prepare beer again, and this time the community to which the celebrant belongs would also prepare beer. People come; they make dances; *akume* comes out; *iba* also comes out; *ivughur* also comes out. *Akume*, *iba*, and *ivughur* are masquerades. On that day women stay indoors. When the celebrations have gone far, people settle down and the celebrant would bring out a cow. The wives and friends of the celebrant then bring out money and give it to him when the sun goes down. On the next day, the celebrant gives them a cow which they kill. In the sharing of the meat, the one who gave the celebrant the most money is entitled to the leg and the head. The next biggest donor is given a leg which is cut and not whole; others are given cuts of meat. After this, the women are given necklaces of *akombo* emblems to wear. When the night comes, the elders gather and fear fills the air. The *indyer* instrument is played, sounding *kili-kili-kili-kili*. Then the small *ilyu* [similar to the *indyer*, but much smaller] goes *tigben-tigben-tigben*. The bigger *ilyu* goes *inyam gede gede, za kaa mbatsav, inyam gede gede, za kaa mbatsav* [‘meat, *gede gede* go and tell *mbatsav*, meat, *gede gede*, go and tell *mbatsav*.’]

Just before dawn, they remove the corpse from the hollowed-out trunk and bury it. People weep. The elders chase a head of livestock and strike it with a spear and kill it, just as if a leopard had caught it.

That is the ‘laying out’ practice of the ancestors. These days, some Tiv people still lay out a corpse, but not all Tiv still do that. It is the Kparev clan that practises it the most. Other Tiv groups do not bother so much; when a man dies; they bury him and throw his clothes on the thatch roof of his assembly hut, and take it that the laying out ceremony is complete.

## THE SASSWOOD CONCOCTION TEST

In the olden days, the sasswood concoction test was an instrument for finding a guilty murderer among the Tiv. Any time a man was deeply aggrieved over the death of a relation, he would call for the sasswood concoction test. To illustrate this, let’s say the deceased is named Afa, and the father’s name is Iker. Because Iker is deeply aggrieved over the death of Afa, he would consult the oracle, who would indict some of his kinsmen. So, he would report this to the maternal uncles of his son Afa — particularly the *tien* of Afa’s mother. He would say, ‘Afa, my son, is dead. And I have come to ask you to kill me and bury me along with him, for life has no meaning to me anymore.’ Thus, the *tien* who is here named Ayo would reply, ‘I had heard the news of the death. And I am so very sad about it that I feel I would not just bury Afa casually, but would bury him with a shroud. Now that you have come, tell me the outcome of your inquest.’

Iker would reply: When I went about performing the inquest, the oracle strongly indicted my kinsmen. It specifically indicted these six: Nako, Yaor, Adamako, Iyarako, Imor, and Ajen. Even when I tried the chicken test, it also proved them guilty.

Ayo would retort back: Very well. Go and get me some money to engage a sasswood concoction test man.

Iker: Right!

Thus, Iker would go back and collect one hundred and twenty pence, which was the regular fee paid in the old days to the preparer of a sasswood concoction test and another twenty pence for the bark of the sasswood, making it one hundred and forty pence in all. Once Iker had brought the full amount and given it to Ayo, they would set out together and go to the sasswood master, who would accept the fee and fix a day for the test. After this, Iker would return home and wait for the day of the ordeal.

On the day of test, Ayo would go around to summon all the elders of his kindred. The maternal uncles of Afa, the deceased, dressed with loincloths tied around their waists and quivers of arrows hanging from their shoulders, would arrive at noon in a single file. A horn would be blown loudly and the hearts of the accused persons would stir, with fear reflecting in their eyes. Those to administer the sasswood test would come and wait along the road. A crowd gathered around, with obvious fear showing in everyone's eyes. Meanwhile, sasswood test songs would be going on. When the crowd settled down, the eldest of the team which had come to administer the sasswood ordeal would call for the head of Iker's kindred for a private conference in the backyard. Elders of each group would get up and move along. Only elders, Afa's father, the *tien* of Afa's mother, and the master to administer the test would move to the backyard. In the backyard, an elder among Afa's maternal uncles would call the elder of the Afa's kindred, and take out a number of grass stalks, one for each of the accused persons. He would say, 'Take this. This is for Nako's chicken, which did not survive the chicken test. This one is for Yaor, this is for Adamako, this is for Iyarako, this is for Imor, and this one is for Ajen. So, choose those who are to undergo the concoction test and let them drink!' The elder of Iker's kindred would say that he has three main persons who will drink the concoction. For he would say, 'The sword does not slay all the workers on the field. So, let me pick out the villains, who are tormenting the land, and eliminate them through the sasswood concoction ordeal so that there will peace. Thus, let it be Adamako, Iyarako, and Imor.' Meanwhile, the one to administer the sasswood would be listening as the names of those to drink the concoction are mentioned.

The elders would then return to the arena of the sasswood test. The men named for the test usually were dressed basically in *akpen* cloth. If anyone did not have this white cloth, he could borrow one, for the dress code for the sasswood concoction ordeal was the white cloth. The test administrator would get ready to pound the sasswood. He would take a piece of the bark of the sasswood plant and display it for the elders to see so that they would not doubt the authenticity of the sasswood. The elders could draw near and confirm, 'We have seen; it is sasswood. Go ahead and pound!' The man would start pounding. He would throw a piece of the bark into the mortar, lift the pestle, and slam it down with a thud, and he would fall back on the ground, feigning that he had been intoxicated by the sasswood. He would rise again, lift the pestle, and slam it down again, then fall back again. He would do this up to six times. The seventh time he would start pounding fast, sneezing seriously, whether the sasswood stank in his nose or not, so as to make people believe that the concoction was strong enough. When he finished pounding, he would announce that the 'food' is ready.



The eldest of the maternal uncles that has come with the sasswood test administrator would call the eldest of Iker's kindred. He would tell him that he has prepared the draught, and wishes that Iker be the first to take the oath of denial, before the others. Then, the other elder would agree, 'That is quite right. Iker, come and drink the sasswood concoction and let everybody see that you have exonerated yourself of responsibility for the death of your son Afa.' Thus, Iker would move forward declaring his innocence saying, 'The death of my son Afa; if I have taken my son to redeem my life of any sordid deed with anybody and sought to lay the blame on others, let me not survive this sasswood concoction. But if truly I am innocent of my son's death, I will survive the concoction.' After saying this, he would clasp his hands behind his back, open his mouth and the sasswood administrator would pour in the concoction. He would never stand face to face with the administrator of the concoction. Rather, he would stand a little to one side so he could not spit particles of the concoction into the eyes of the sasswood administrator. In the old days, if a man was bitter for being compelled to undergo the sasswood concoction test, he would take it in his mouth and then spit it in the face of the administrator, thus damaging the eyes of the one administering the potion.

After Iker had drunk the concoction, he would step over the sasswood fire and his companions would lead him away. Then, the people who were next in line to take the test would be called, one after the other, to take the test. Once a person drank the concoction, he would step over the fire and would be led away by his companions. Those innocent of Afa's death would vomit the poisonous concoction. But the guilty died from the poisonous concoction and were laid out on a wooden platform and left to lie, uncovered, in the open air throughout the day. People passed by and heaped abuses on them, saying that they had perpetuated the evil *tsav* deeds and have died for it, so that peace would reign in the land.

They would be buried, and the Tiv believe that by nightfall, the *mbatsav* would come and exhume the corpses and butcher them. The right arm would be taken off and be offered to the sasswood test administrator. It is usually the right arm that is offered to the administrator. It is usually a matter of great joy for anyone who survives the test. His friends and female relations would visit him and bring a chicken as a token. He also would pay a visit to his maternal kinsmen, who would also kill a chicken for him. A few days after that, Iker's kinsmen would demand he provide the dregs of the sasswood concoction as the price he has to pay for instigating the sasswood test. For this reason, if it happens that someone dies in Iker's family, it would be assumed that it was Iker who caused the person's death in order to pay for the dregs of the sasswood concoction demanded from him. This explains the matter about the procedure of the sasswood concoction test.

There is another Tiv customary practice which related to young unmarried girls. In the past, mothers in Tivland used to be very careful about the security of their daughters, shielding them from being lured into sexual intercourse. Once a mother noticed that her daughter was entering into puberty, and that young men were getting interested in her, the mother would become very anxious about her. She would take the daughter to an old woman who was a custodian of the *mngbianjôr* protection spell, and ask the woman to cast the protection spell for the young daughter, so that she would not be tampered with. So the old woman would get a shell, punch a hole in it, pass a thread through it, and tie it around the young girl's neck, thus putting a body protector upon her. Young men

would fear having intercourse with her, and she would come to full puberty without being touched by a man.

In the past, before beads were known, a girl could reach the age of puberty without a single bead tied around her waist; all she wore was a cotton thread tied around her waist and she grew up like that to full womanhood. She never wore any clothing until she got married and was said to have become a 'housewife'. Once she became a housewife she would start to wear clothing, and carry out the duties of a woman. Early in the morning, she would go to fetch water, come back and clean up the house, make the fire, roast yams and peel them for her husband to eat. After that, she would go to work on her farm. On the way home, after working on the farm, she would collect firewood. Having brought this home, she would pound up the corn and grind it into flour. She would sing as she did the grinding. When she had finished, she cleaned the grindstone, went and cooked *ruam* with the flour for her husband and others. When they had finished their meal, she would collect the dishes and wash them up. Thereafter, she would move down the stream to bathe, and also fetch water and bring it back. After this, she would rub some camwood pomade on her body and lie down to rest.

Another woman, just as she came back from the stream, would sit down to pick out cotton seeds from the cotton wool. By evening, she would put this away and make dinner for her husband. And by the time she finished washing all the dishes, it would already be dusk. At night, she would take the cotton and begin to spin, until she started feeling sleepy. Then, she would go to bed. This is what dutiful women did in the old days.

A woman could spin cotton and give it to her husband, who would use it to weave a *tugudu* cloth, which he could sell to buy calves and rear them. Sometimes, even a poor man could become rich through his industrious wife. Another virtue possessed by women in the past was that they never poked their noses into men's discussion unless they were invited to speak. But women today can intrude, whether invited or not, when men are discussing something. For this reason, Tiv men say the land has become spoiled, since women today have placed themselves on the same social level with men.

### HUNTING ACTIVITIES FOR WOMEN

In the old days, if a woman wanted to cook wild game meat for her husband, she would have to go fishing.

### FISHING

Women come together for fishing during the dry season, when water is left in small quantity in streams. Once at the stream, they get wood logs, look out for the tail-end of the stream where water is flowing slowly, and lay the wood there to make barrier across the stream, using mud to seal it up. They refer to the mud as *ruam* while the barrier itself they refer to as *akuwasuwa*. After doing this, the women move into the stream with their basins called *ukwese* and scoop out the water in

the pool to the other side of the barrier until the stream has dried up to a certain level. They would, then, decide that the stream has dried up enough for fishing.

Then they would start fishing. They do the fishing with a fishing net made for women.<sup>63</sup> *Kperayô* is woven in a circular shape with a long, oblong shape. Sometimes it is woven from cotton thread, or woven from *vugheichol* — a thread extracted from the raffia plant. At other times, it is woven from the thread of *ada* into twine. The one made of the *ada* twine is more durable. Then a fine flexible tree branch is cut, made into a round shape, and fixed to the open top of the net. This is called *gwasekper*. The *kperadzar* net is woven in the same way, but it is not so wide, and it has a little bit of a roundish base, and is not fitted with *gwase*. Instead, two sticks are fitted on it: one stick at one end, another stick at the other. To fish with the *kperayô*, two people hold it: one person on one side and another across from her. They drag it underneath the stream and thus the women make catches together. They could catch a lot of fish.

Generally, there are two species of fish: the white and the black species. The black species has the following varieties: *indiar* [cat fish], *adzer*, *ityuo-ki-ishu*, *hungur*, *wanishôôn*, *dela-ishu*, *aliaver*, *kôugh*, *iyô-ishu* [snake fish], *kusugh* [electric fish], *aker* and *ikume*. The *iliv* is a hybrid. The white species has the following varieties: *iyôgh-ki-atoogh*, *purughgba*, *ko*, *nande*, *iliv*, *iligh*, *aba*, *humbankem*, *uwase*, *kpôghol*, *yaanyi*, *tôndo*, *ijiko*, *ibaishu*, *wuar*, *hwande*, *suweishu*, and *ichagh*. There is one repulsive fish called *amboghom*; it has teeth like a human being. When it is struck with an object, it puffs up. It is not eaten. But highly carnivorous people, who want to eat it no matter what, skin it or cut off its head before they cook and eat it. This is because it can kill if consumed like an ordinary fish. Its skin is used to make a sheath for a tobacco pipe. The rest of the fishes, women can cook and give to their husbands.

Tiv women eat all the varieties of the white species of fish. The white fish is not avoided at all. But among the black species — some are avoided for specific reasons.

### THINGS FORBIDDEN TO TIV WOMEN

Certain Tiv women don't eat certain portions of a cow's head. When a cow is slain and men want their wives to partake, the forbidden parts are put aside. These parts include the rumen, the tongue, the occipital area, and the throat. In the old days, Tiv women avoided these parts of the cow with a passion. In some Tiv clans, like the Kparev clan, a woman never touched a cow while it was lying in a pool of its blood after slaughter. Men had to butcher the meat before it was handed over to women for cooking. This was a common practice among all Tiv people in the past.

It is forbidden for Tiv women to look into a grave, and women don't ever bury dead rodents. They are also forbidden to catch a glimpse of the *igbe* akombo. In the past, when an occasion arose to invoke the spirit of the *igbe*

<sup>63</sup>The women's fishing net is called *kperayô*, while the one used by men is called *kperadzar*.

akombo, all women were ordered to remain indoors. Some women within the Kparev clan, particularly in the Mbanyam district, avoid chicken eggs. But the women in the Ukan clan do eat them. The women of the Gaav clan eat neither chicken eggs nor toads. But they eat the *ifam* species of frog. The chaffinch is not eaten by any woman of the Usar district of the Nanev clan. Unmarried Ukum daughters eat the *indiar* variety of black fish. But they stop this practice once they get married outside their clan and have children. They also eat eggs. On the other hand, women of the Shitire clan eat both *indiar* fish and chicken eggs.

#### THINGS FORBIDDEN TO WOMEN OF THE MAAV CLAN

If you marry a daughter of the Maav clan, you will find that she has several taboo practices. Eating chicken eggs is highly prohibited among them. This is because if they eat an egg, they will suffer a miscarriage when they become pregnant. For this reason, they avoid them completely. As such, they get highly irritated when they see the daughters of Turan clan freely eating eggs. Eating of the *atungo* species of frog is also a taboo to them for the same reason — they will have a miscarriage. But they eat the *ifam* species of frog because it is not prohibited. They also abhor ants and lizards. They refer to them as *gban*. These are taboos for the daughters of the Maav clan. Their men, on the other hand, observe no taboos at all.

As for the daughters of Ugondo clan, if she has her first child with a man of the Mbater kindred of the Mbayam district, or a man of the Mbaidyur kindred of the Mbamar district, or a man of the Iyônov district, she cannot eat eggs. But if she happens to marry elsewhere and has her first child there and subsequently remarries within the Ugondo clan, then she is free to eat them.

The people of the Mbayegh kindred of the Mbashira district eat the white species of fish. In the Hyarev clan, all members of the Tongov, Mbachohon, Sengev, Mbapa, Etulo, Isherev kindred groups, as well as those of Utyôndo district do eat them. However, eggs are prohibited among the people of the Tongov district of the Hyarev clan.

In the Kunav clan, chicken eggs are taboo in the Mbakaange district. Chicken eggs are also taboo to the daughters of Nanev clan. In the Mbanyam district, everybody eats chicken eggs, as do the men of the Ukan clan. In the Tômbo clan they are prohibited.

No women in the Lav district of Hyarev clan eat the *aburum* and *agberadzenga* species of rat. Eating the *atungô* species of frog is prohibited among all women of the Kparev clan, except for the *ifam* species of frog. However, the people of the Mbagba clan eat *atungô*. All the people of the Ikyurav clan avoid eating lizards.

None of the people of the Hyarev clan eat lizards. Their women also avoid the cow's head. In fact, Tiv women all over don't eat the forehead, the tongue, the rumen, the chest, or the throat of a cow.

Nowadays, however, Tiv people have amended of all these prohibitions. If a cow is slaughtered by men of the Uke ethnic group, women eat the meat without observing any taboos with respect of any of its parts. It is only when it has been slaughtered by a Tiv man to celebrate a marriage that the taboos are applied. This is how these things are nowadays.

## ABOUT A SICK PERSON

As we have already seen in the chapter about *mbatsav*, a person does not just die; it is usually the *mbatsav* who are responsible for a death. Therefore, when a man becomes sick, his brother or father consults the diviner. The diviner reveals the person who has cursed the sick person. Once the diviner has revealed the person behind the sickness, the relation of the sick person would come back and first, secretly, inform his elderly kinsmen who the diviner has indicted, for it was believed that cursing is never a one-man affair. It is usually a combined effort of two or perhaps three people. In addition, elderly single women and widows are those the diviner usually indicts, along with men.

On hearing the report from the diviner, the elderly kinsmen would tell the relation of the sick person that he has given them privileged information, but that he should keep the whole revelation to himself. This is regarded as privileged information because it is information that not everybody is aware of. Related to this, the Tiv have what they call *ikughuriche*, who is an informant that gives someone secret information about those being gossiped about. The *ikughuriche* is very vital among Tiv people. What he does is to sit with a person's enemy, and sees and listens to all that the enemy has against the person. Then, he would inform the person to be on the lookout in dealing with the enemy. He can also help a man gather secret information about a woman he is in a relationship with. The informant who gathers covert information about a lady one is dating or courting is known as *orafotso*. But the informant on other secret issues is generally known as *ikughuriche*. In the Hausa language, this is called the *dansandan chiki*.

In the past, elders were careful not to comment carelessly about issues in anybody's hearing. If there was any problem, they first investigated the matter quietly before passing their verdict on it. As such, any decision they took on any issue was based on the facts they gathered from a secret informant. So, the people involved in the matter would not accuse them of passing a biased judgment on the matter. Again, it was usually men of integrity who were assigned the task of being a secret informant. In addition, during a trial, no one ever revealed who the informant was in the matter; if a hunter reveals the secrets of his hunting techniques to the animals, then how would he be able to trap them again to make his meals? This means that if the informant is exposed, who would provide secret information on issues?

However, informants of today are not reliable. Those we have now are basically scandal-mongers. Even when they don't have reliable information, they report things to an elder or a king in order to find favour. As such, Tiv people refer to informants today as scandal-mongers. There are hardly any reliable informants. Worst of all, since informants are no longer reputable, and when an informant witnesses something, he does not reveal anything about it to anybody out of fear that he will be exposed and people will label him a scandal-monger and make him a laughing stock. This is the nature of the task of secret informant.

Thus, when a person falls sick, his relation would go and consult the diviner. If anyone is indicted, the relation would come back and confide with his elderly kinsmen. On hearing this, the kinsmen would inquire further, asking whether the diviner is the *agbende* or *ityumbu ikyegh* type. If the diviner consulted is just

the former type, the relation would be asked to consult the other type of diviner before the issue would be considered a serious matter.

### THE *IKEGH TUMBUN*: CHICKEN TEST

The chicken test is the act of subjecting someone's chicken to the sasswood concoction test and it is the cardinal aspect of oracular divination. At times a man may be repeatedly indicted by the *agbende* type of diviner but when the sasswood concoction test is administered to his chicken, the chicken would survive the test. The chicken test process can be illustrated as follows.

Ityovenda is the sasswood concoction test administrator.

Taiyol is the man who is sick or who has died.

Yaga is Taiyol's brother.

Abanger is the man accused of cursing Taiyol.

**Yaga:** Ityovenda, Taiyol is so sick that his survival is quite uncertain. I have consulted all kinds of diviners, and each has indicted Abanger, my kinsman. But he has consistently defended himself and has opted to come and prove his innocence before you. That is why we are here.

So, Ityovenda would get up and take a little bark of sasswood from a pot in his gazebo, and also get a small grindstone. He would move to the backyard, where he normally performs the sasswood concoction test on chickens. On getting to the spot in the company of Abanger and Yaga, he would roll up a bunch of leaves from the meni-oil tree, and place them on the grindstone. He would pour a few drops of water on the stone and rub the piece of sasswood bark on it so that it would produce fine powder in the water. At the place where the test is performed, Ityovenda would set a potsherd of the *igbe* akombo to prevent witches from contaminating his sasswood through witchcraft.

When he has finished rubbing the sasswood bark, he would call Yaga and Abanger to proclaim their words of innocence on which he would rely in administering the sasswood concoction to their chicks. Thus, Abanger would go ahead and give him a chick, as well as a fee. In the past, the fee used to be an arrow. But in the modern world, money is the means of payment, and one penny is paid as the fee. Thus, Abanger would proclaim his words of innocence by saying, 'This illness of Taiyol, if indeed I am the brain behind it, may my chicken die from the poison of the sasswood concoction. But if I am not guilty, may it spew it out.' Next, Ityovenda would pour some fine seeds in his mouth, chew them, and spit them out on his hand. He would take the chick, put its feet together, and tie up its big toes, holding it tight in this way.

Then he would chant the following declaration, 'If Abanger is responsible for Taiyol's illness, let this chicken fall by the poison of the sasswood. If he is not, let it vomit the poison.' After chanting the declaration, he would use a leaf, scoop up the sasswood concoction on the grindstone, open the mouth of the chicken and pour it down its throat. Thus, if Abanger is the brain behind Taiyol's illness, the chick will die at once. But, if it happens that Abanger is not actually the malefactor who has cursed Taiyol, but rather the *jiiir* trick has been

played against him, his chick will die slowly. The *jiir* trick simply means to falsely implicate someone in an act of evil committed by another person so that the person falsely implicated will die by sasswood concoction-test.

The *mjiir* is basically a term from the *mbatsav* or witches' vocabulary. Tiv people don't use the word except when discussing *mbatsav* affairs that pertain to subjecting a person or a chicken to the sasswood concoction test. In fact, it is specifically when it pertains to the chicken test that term *mjiir* is applied.

So, if the sasswood concoction test is administered to a person's chick and it does not die immediately, this means the person has been falsely implicated. The person did not actually curse the sick person. So, sometimes, it is a common practice to have two chickens subjected to the sasswood test: one belonging to the person who has actually cursed the sick one and another for the person who has been falsely implicated. In administering the test on the chicken of the person falsely implicated, the administrator of the sasswood test would chant the following incantation about the person, 'If you have been caught by a spell of misfortune which has been set at a road junction, it is the same as being falsely implicated, except you actually did the cursing, then your chicken shall die. If a cockroach or a house cricket has been sent, it is still the same as being falsely implicated unless you actually did the cursing.' After chanting this incantation, if the chick fails the sasswood test — that is to say, it dies, it signifies that the person who brought the chick is guilty. But if he is innocent of causing the sickness or death, the chicken does not die. And it would be assumed that such a chick has withstood the test.

Thus, in the case where the chicks of Abanger and Yaga are subjected to the sasswood test and Abanger's chick withstands the test, the matter would be a straight-forward case. Nevertheless, Yaga could still pursue the matter further, as he could go and consult several other diviners about the involvement of other kinsmen whom he suspects of having cursed Taiyol.

If, however, Abanger's chick dies, Yaga would cut off the wing, fix it on a piece of raffia cane, and hang it on the roof inside his gazebo. Then he would rise in the evening and go to his kinsmen whom he had earlier consulted at the time the oracle had indicted Abanger. He would inform them of how Abanger's chick could not have survived the sasswood test. The kinsmen would retort that it is high time to further probe this matter and that they will meet tomorrow in the village arena to take up the case.

The next morning, Yaga would go around and summon the elderly kinsmen of his kindred. Once they were assembled, it would be time to make an inquest into the cause of the sick person's ailment.

#### AN INQUIRY INTO A PERSON'S SICKNESS

When a person falls sick and a relation of the sick person has consulted a diviner, and suppose the diviner has identified the malefactor, the relation of the sick person would convene a meeting of kinsmen within the immediate community. Once the kinsmen have assembled, he who has convened the meeting welcomes them with a cigarette. After smoking, the eldest among them would ask, 'Why have you summoned us?' The reply from the convener would be, 'My brother is so ill that I have not been able to sleep. And when I go to sleep, I have terrible

nightmares. I dreamed that if you are slow to act, my brother might die. That is why I have called you here while he is still alive, so that you can find out from him if he is indebted to anybody among the witches of sharing a meal of human flesh. And even if he is not, you will know, all the same, that someone, somewhere, just wanted to apply *ikôswende* (wilful termination of a person's life).' Then, the elders would reply, 'Now that all this is going on, you who are healthy, have you tried to unravel the mystery behind this situation?' The answer would be, 'Yes, when my brother became sick, and seeing that his disease was too serious to be caused by an ordinary *akombo*, I asked him to tell me whether he has gotten himself entangled with anybody in sharing a meal of human flesh — or whether he had bought a poison for killing, which has turned against him because he does not understand how to use it. I asked him to tell me this so that even if he dies I would not falsely accuse any of my kinsmen, but instead know that he had brought this upon himself. But he has denied it all. He says that he has neither shared a meal of human flesh with anybody, nor has any grievances against anybody that would make him seek a poison to use against such a person. Since he denied all this, I decided to go around solving the mystery. On my return, I privately hinted to my kinsmen within the immediate family. They told me to pursue this vigorously. So, having gone around twice, I have decided to call you to let you know my findings so far.' In response to this, another elder would say, 'When a cat is let out of the container, it returns with many kittens following it.' This means that once a matter is brought for an inquest, the names of those indicted by the oracle can no longer be concealed.

So, Yaga, the relative of the sick man, would bring out a chicken wing on the raffia cane from his bag and give it to Abanger, the man who has cursed Taiyol and who has been indicted by both the diviner and the chicken sasswood test. The act of giving the chicken wing to Abanger is tantamount to an open accusation. This would create a moment of absolute silence in the assembly. Then, one more elder would ask Yaga, 'Did you go about all this secretly, or you did you go with the knowledge of Abanger?'

**Yaga:** We all went together. His chicken failed the test right in his presence, not in his absence.

**An Elder:** Abanger! What reason have you in your desire to kill Taiyol?

**Abanger:** It is all about female relations. I am highly aggrieved about the way he alone is enjoying all our female relations. So I have decided to kill him, so that I will also have a chance to enjoy them. He has been doing things with impunity, as if there is no one else in this family.

**Elders:** As he was doing these things, did you complain to Agor, your elder kinsman?

**Abanger:** Yes, I did complain.

**Elders:** What was his reaction?

**Abanger:** You can ask him that.

**Adamgbe (another elder):** Agor, since Abanger was in disagreement with his kinsman, Taiyol, over female relations, did either of them speak to you privately about it?

**Agor:** One day Abanger came to complain to me about a female relation that Taiyol had given out in marriage in exchange for his wife from the Ukan clan, with whom he has children. I called both of them to my house one



evening, and I told Abanger to overlook the matter, because Taiyol had only shown this female relation to the people of the Ukan clan; they had not yet taken her away. I should have told Taiyol to leave her for Abanger, while he himself waited for the younger girl to grow up. Then he could use her to compensate the people of the Ukan clan. But since he has already given this particular one to them as compensation, and they have already taken her away, it is not decent to go and get her back. So, let Abanger wait until the younger girl is fully mature. Then he can take charge of her. That was how I settled the matter and we capped it up by using water to cleanse our hearts of any resentment before we dispersed. I thought that everything was settled. So, why should someone be down with sickness again? Now, the matter has escalated. It has become a matter for the general public to help me decide it.

**Adamgbe:** Abanger, but that was a fair decision from Agor. Yet, why are you not satisfied?

**Abanger:** To hell with that! Is this the first time that Taiyol has taken charge of a female relation?

**Yaga (who shares a same mother with Taiyol):** Well, you may be acting this way because you think you have a good case and Taiyol is at your mercy!

**Abanger:** I can't take that trash! You think it is only you children of the same mother who would have a monopoly over female relations?

**Adamgbe:** No, Abanger, that is not how to go about it. One does not need to kill in order take charge of his female relations. We go about this in a peaceful negotiation. For if you kill to take charge of a female, what is to prevent another from doing the same? Talk the matter over, wash the evil from your hearts, let the sickness depart.

Then Taiyol arises and speaks, 'Share the *angôr* with mutual good feelings. Build up this house of Atim; let it not fall into ruins.'

The elders mutually agree that Adamgbe has summed up the case very well, and that all evil thoughts must be washed away before parting, so that the sickness may leave Taiyol. A boy is told to bring water in a cup, and the elders all cleanse their hearts of evil thoughts. Then one of them takes the water that remains in the cup and pours it on the roof, over the door of Taiyol's house, so that the sick man who lies there may feel relief. He will dream that he is bathing in a running brook, and the sickness will leave him. The elders finally disperse to their various homes. Sometimes the purified person becomes well again. In other times, the illness persists and he finally dies.

#### ABOUT THE DEAD

If a man falls ill continuously with no cure and he dies, the Tiv have different ways of dealing with the burial. If a man dies young, he is buried immediately without the performance of any *akombo* rites. But if he is an elder and initiated into many *akombo*, he is laid out in the house, and not buried immediately until each of the *akombo* he had been initiated into has been set right. For example, if the dead man had been master of the *iwa*, the blacksmith cult, on the day of his death, his son or one of his brothers would buy a chicken to set it right. A similar thing would be done for all the other *akombo* which he had. If the dead man had been master

of ten *akombo* or more, his son would have to buy a chicken for each. If he had not enough money to do so, his father would remain unburied for as long as possible. Sometimes the corpse would be left for days unending, while the son was still looking for chickens. If he is then buried without the *akombo* being set right, the land becomes very unlucky. It is for this reason, that a man of high standing who is master of many *akombo* would say to his children, 'I have caused much trouble for you. When I die, I shall lie unburied, while you seek chickens with toil and trouble, and the women will go hungry.'

It shall be that, when the son has finally brought a chicken for each of his father's *akombo* for a burial rite, he summons all the elders who belong to the various *akombo* groups, and they come in and sit on the ground. Each of those initiated rises and takes one of the chickens, carries out the rites for its *akombo* of which he is master, and ties up these chickens. All who have *akombo* do the same for those *akombo* which belong to them. When all are finished, it is time to bring out and bury the dead. The site for the grave has already been chosen by one of the elders and the digging already completed before the *akombo* are set right. Finally, It is ordered that the women should go indoors and they run into their houses with their children. Only the older men remain outside. When the body has been brought from the house and buried, it is the time for the women to come out of their hiding and utter loud lamentations. There is, however, a slight variation in Tiv practice, with regard to the bringing out of the dead. In some clans the women are not ordered to go into their houses. They remain outside, and may even go as far as the grave, so long as they do not look in. Women never look inside a grave. They stand at a distance and mourn.

A weeping lament for the dead is called *kwegher*. This is not the same kind of scream or cry that one makes when one is being beaten, but is a mixture of wailing and singing. A woman wails, stops and then sings, but she is crying all the time and uttering words which tell of her bereavement. After wailing and singing, she soliloquises: '*Ayee-he-he-he!* My so and so has left me with who o—o-o? *He-he-he!* What becomes of me in this life? *O-o-o!* *Ayu!-Ayu!* It is all over for me! What shall I do when the birds laugh at me as I walk along the road?' That is the lament for the dead. As for the children, they just weep for the dead and use no words; songs of mourning are only sung by old women. The bringing out of the dead is a moment that makes everyone have goose pimples. It is then that a piercing cry goes up from the women. But after the body has been buried, only the actual female relations who are bereaved continue to mourn at two separate times: in the evening and before dawn. The actual female relation is the mother of the dead man or his wife.

Women are forbidden to take a peek inside the grave. The reason why a woman never looks into the grave is that if she were to do so, she would violate an *akombo* which is called the *uwarakombo*, the *akombo* of the grave. See more on this *akombo* in Chapter 2. A man whose wife is pregnant should also not look into the grave; otherwise his wife will have a miscarriage.

When the corpse has been buried, those who have taken part in the burial rite fetch some hot embers, pick a handful of sword-grass, blow on the embers till they glow, then light the grass, swing it around their heads, and then push it on to the grave. There are two reasons for doing this ritual: first, so that they do

not run out of hunting luck, and secondly, so they will not have nightmares about the dead person.

The dead man is laid with his face towards where the sun rises, his feet pointing to the south and his head to the north. If the dead is a man of high social status, he is buried with many cloths, and a roof is erected over the body in the grave and covered with a good thatch. Cloths are also spread over the roof, but these are pierced with a knife. If this were not to be done, thieves may come by night and take them away to sell.

### A CHIEF'S BURIAL

A chief is buried in the same way as other men of high social status, with certain additions that are not observed in the case of important men who are not chiefs. As for the chiefs, upon a chief's death, after all the death rituals have been performed and he is about to be carried out for burial, he is dressed up in chiefly clothes and the *swaki* chiefly cap is put on his head. Then they set him on a bed and carry him around the village, drumming and singing with dancing, before he is buried. Then they bury him, first taking off some of his clothes to display over the roof of his tomb. The best burial is given to a chief of the Iharev clan. They first spread out a leopard's skin underneath the grave; cover it with a mat, where the chief is laid upon. Then they cut wood to put over him, cover it with earth and beat it down well. The Tiv do not usually bury a chief behind his backyard but in a central place, such as a gazebo. But if they are afraid that burying him in a central place will result in women having various nightmares during the exhuming time, they bury him at the backyard but then make a replica *dver* of the grave in the central meeting place is made. They call this *ityar*.

### HOYO (DANKOL): DIVINATION OF GUILT

Long before the Whiteman came, the Tiv had a custom called *hoyo*. *Hoyo* or *aguda* were the names by which it was known in Shitire, Ukum, and other clans. Kparev called it *dankol*. It was indeed very terrifying. When someone fell sick a relative would go and enquire about the culprit by divination. This enquiry was then reported to someone of the sick person's age-grade to call together all the members of his age-class in the clan. Or sometimes the sick man himself, being in great pain, would send for one of his companions who had partaken of the sameage feast, and say to him, 'I am very ill, and expect not to survive. Go, therefore, on a secret mission and investigate about me. If I have indeed eaten human flesh with someone, and am being killed by him with whom I have eaten, it is enough; let me die, and let him live on in peace. However, if I have eaten no human flesh, you, my age-mates, should all assemble and ask him, while I am still living, and before my voice is mute that I also may put up a defence; for I know nothing of the People of Darkness. This is my sasswood oath I give to you. When I die, cut open my body and then you will know of my innocence.' So his companion rose up and went to the diviner. When he had learned who it was that was bewitching his age-mate, he called in all the other members of his age-class, and they went together to the home of the sick man.

There they summoned all his kinsmen and pointed the accusing feathers at the man whom the oracle had pronounced guilty. Sometimes he would deny it, and if he were insistent they would take him to the diviner in person. If he were then shown to be guilty, he would confess bewitching the sick person. Whereupon they told him to put an end to their age-mate's illness, for if he did not, and their age-mate died, they would not spare him. He would die too, and then their hearts will be at ease.

Sometimes the accused person would then cure the disease and the sick man would recover. But if he was unable to do so, and the man died, he had to answer for it to the dead man's age-class. They came together, each armed with a stick cut from a thorn-bush, *ikpine* or *ihuerdza*. The Kparevalso carried machetes, and entered the village singing loudly in unison. Their leader, who was chosen for his strength, whom they called *toraguda* went in front carrying an ox halter or a stout rope of hemp. The sasswood made of the stout rope of hemp is the most effective and strongest amongst the Tiv. The *toraguda* tied this around the neck of the witch who had killed their age-mate, dragged him out and threw him to the ground. Then they set upon him and beat him mercilessly. They pulled the roofs off the houses and scattered the thatch around. The members of his household fled into the bush; the women and children screamed. None of those who were left dared to open their mouths; if someone did so, they would turn upon him, saying that he was also one of the *mbatsav*. They dragged the witch into the bush, beating him with their sticks, so that the thorns pierced his skin and his body was covered with white scratches and weals. Sometimes he died there in the bush, and his young men took him and buried him. Sometimes when they had finished maltreating him they let him go, and he went back to his home to die. This was how the *mbatsav* used to suffer from the *hoyo*, exactly in the same way as they afterwards suffered under the *haakaa*, as you may see in the description of it in the section on *tsav*. The Tiv say that the Whiteman has spoiled the land because he has forbidden the trial by sasswood ordeal and the *hoyo*. They say that the *mbatsav* now kill people without fear that anything may happen to them, and have got quite out of control. In the past, it was the sasswood and the *hoyo* that, more than anything, held the witches in check. This how the things about the sasswood ordeal was in the past.

### RIGHTS OF WAY FOR ROAD USERS

Everyone in Tivland who travelled by any means of transportation, including trekking, car or rail was faced with many challenges concerning other road users. Here was the problem: if you were driving a car or riding a bicycle, you honked or rang your bell for the pedestrians to hear and move off the road. If there was just one person, you would not encounter much difficulty. The pedestrian would usually make way for you easily.

However, if it was a pedestrian who had no regard for the rules of the road, in spite of the bell and car honking, he would turn around, look at you, and continue on without getting off the road thinking that you were not close enough; they would only get off the road if you were really close to them. Those pedestrians on the other side of the road would tell the others at the other side to come

hither, so they can all go together on the same side of the road. Sometimes they refused, and when they heard the bell at a close range, they got scared and ended up facing the oncoming traffic directly. If you were not a careful driver, you would end up hitting the pedestrian. However, if you carefully manoeuvred your vehicle and avoided hitting the pedestrian, they laughed at you and said you were not a good driver. If you hit them, they reported you to the chief who gave you a fine of up to a *shishi* or *toro*,<sup>64</sup> given in compensation for the bruises received from the accident or for medication. Sometimes the chief then physically assaulted the rider of the bicycle. The victim became very excited as he had now been awarded money for his upkeep. Among the Tiv known for these sorts of fake claims were the labourers, or people who helped carry Uke people's loads, as well as ex-soldiers or simply people who were out of work, broke and could not find other means to get food.

That was a bad character trait which the Tiv people in the past were not familiar with. The good road user's common practice by traditional Tiv people was this. When they were walking along the road and as soon as they heard the noise of an approaching bicycle or car, they would stay off the road, some going completely off to the other side of the road or all together on one side of the road, allowing plenty of space to pass in the centre of the road. Don't think it is all fine until you have driven past; only then could you be happy that you were safe. That was so because sometimes those at the other side, as soon as you started approaching, called out to the others on the other side to come across to their side. Sometimes the others at the other side said no, but because of continual beckoning and calling, they got overwhelmed or confused. It is at this point of confusion when trying to quickly cross the road that a bicycle, a car, or a motor cycle hits them.

At Makurdi during the time of the construction of the Benue Bridge, when there were lots of Tiv people, a train killed a Masev girl because of the road user's lack of respect for oncoming traffic. This girl had gone to Makurdi with her mother. On their way back, a train was fast approaching. The girl stayed on one side of the track while her mother was on the other side. As the train approached, the mother started yelling out for the daughter to come over to her side. The daughter refused, but because of the constant pressure from her mother and threats, the young girl hearkened to her mother's voice and ran straight into the train, which crushed her to death as it rolled over her. The mother started wailing and calling out that the *mbatsav* had killed her daughter.

The railway line cuts across the Tivland from the east, the direction of Aturkpo, it passes through Masev and Iharev then on to Kaduna in the north. There have been many fatal accidents involving the trains because of the way the Tiv behave on public highways. Bicycles and horses have, like the train, knocked down many Tiv people. The behaviour leading to such accidents, many of them fatal, originated in the time when Tivland was invaded by the Hausa-Fulani Jihadists. In those days, in order to strengthen their personal defences, some Tiv men bought charms. One of the effects of having those charms was that if a man with the charm met more than one person on the road, he must never walk in between the other people. All the people must walk past him only on one side of the

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<sup>64</sup>Sixpence or threepence.

road, while he walks past them on the other side of the road. In the course of time, women became aware of this. Crossovers occurred. So that if a woman was going on a journey or walking to the farm with her child or children and they met men coming, she would tell her child or children to make way for the men on one side of the road so that the men may all pass on the other side. The men would commend the woman for her discretion. Her child or children would hear it and take note. When a child then goes out with his peers and sees a man coming, the child will tell them the same thing, that is, to cross over to be on the side they are on. He gets praises from the men as a child of wisdom. Another factor had to do with the consequences of their wars with the Uke; the Uke would come at night and stand by the entrance into a Tiv village, one by the left and another by the right to get them. Tiv became afraid and believed that if you were going on the road and there were people on both sides of the road and you went between them at the middle, someday the Uke would catch you at the entrance into the village. These were the reasons why up till 1935, at the time of writing this book, the Tiv developed bad road-user attitudes and habits which became like a part of their way of life.

Another common trait found among the Tiv people is that they tend to value what belongs to other people over and above what belongs to them. They would despise what belongs to them while at the same time singing the praises of another similar thing that belonged to another person. They covet and want to own what belongs to another person. They do this to such an extent that they do not honour their chief as much as they honour the chief of another kingdom, even if the other chief is a wicked chief. They would still honour him and criticize their own. Similarly, they do not honour elders who are theirs. When they want to honour their chief, they compare their chief with another chief, saying their chief is like the chief of Sokoto (Shogodo). There is no chief the Tiv people honour more than the chief of Sokoto. If a person is very well dressed and they want to pay him a compliment, they would say the person is as well dressed as an aristocratic youth of Sokoto.

A Tiv person who speaks English enjoys showing off his English-speaking skills. When he sees a gathering of people, he walks up to them and starts speaking English, even if there is not a single English speaker in the group who understands him. And those in the group who do not speak English will still praise the man for speaking English so well. They do the same to anyone who speaks a foreign language that they do not understand. These days, some Tiv youth have adopted Hausa as their second language. When they are together with other youths who admire the Hausa people, they seldom finish or complete a sentence while speaking Tiv without adding a word or two in Hausa. They would, for example, add the word *ko* meaning 'okay'. Here is another example using the phrase *gan dama*. Now *gan dama* means 'whatever I want' or 'I do not want your *rigima*'. *Rigima* in this context means uproar from you. Still another example: stop your joking with me. *Waasa* means 'games', as in 'do not play games with me'. These days, it is no longer possible to find a Tiv youth living away from home with other nationalities, who speaks the Tiv language without mixing in words from English or Hausa. This is especially true of labourers and houseboys.

Another aspect of the Tiv character is a lack of gumption or lion-heartedness. They do not want to stick with one job for a long time. If you take a Tiv man and a man of another nationality and give them both the same job after first testing their

suitability, you may often find that a Tiv man would be better at his job than the other man. He may progress and be promoted ahead of the other man. However, after a while you would notice the Tiv man beginning to slack off. The man from the other nationality would get ahead of him. In the end, you would notice the Tiv man walking away from his job and his good prospects.

For instance, take a Tiv man who speaks good English, who dresses smartly, and is a good and hard worker. Do not yet think you have got a real good man! Because if you take a careful look at such a Tiv man, you would say you would rather have an uneducated Tiv man who had never met a Whiteman at all. You may find a few Tiv people who have adopted Hausa as their second nationality; they have studied Islam, and are '*sauke Alkuran*' [comfortable with the Qur'an]. They may have even converted to Islam and done the traditional celebration of the event by slaughtering a ram. But it would have been better if he had not ever met a Hausa. They even adopted new names such as Musa, Ibrahim, or Yakubu. They became Muslims, refusing to eat with '*arna*' [non-Muslims]. However, later on when you met them, they would be wearing *wanchado* rather like a little pair of shorts. They would now be deeply involved in the traditional Tiv religion, mocking the Muslims they had abandoned for their traditional religion. We did the same thing regarding the Christian faith as well. The Tiv got caught up or involved in these things not necessarily because they understand them. Yet there are some who have a genuine nature, but these are few. If a Tiv man sees what he wants today, then it has to be today that he embraces it. He is not going to take time to study and investigate it. In the same way, when it comes to changing his mind about it and rejecting it, he would not hesitate to reject and discard it.

Here is another example of the Tiv character. A local chief may be making good plans for his people. Another man may give him good advice. He may spend the night turning things over in his mind to arrive at the best possible option for a desirable outcome. He may then talk to one of his children or a wife for advice. After the child and wife had listened to everything, they would dismiss the whole idea and say that the chief's plan was wrong. They would quickly put together their thoughts and come up with ideas and sell these to the chief. The chief would then and there abandon what he had spent a lot of time thinking through. He would adopt an idea that had not been thought through, but instead hurriedly put together. He would accept their ideas over and above his own. The Tiv people do not take time to think ahead for long-range planning purposes.

When the Tiv are farming, other neighbouring groups are going about doing nothing. The Tiv mock them, saying they do not know a thing about farming and when it is time to farm, they are lazing about. When the Tiv harvest their crops, foolishly, without giving a thought for tomorrow, they take all their crops to the market and sell them to the tribal groups that did no farming. They sell them very cheaply too. A bundle of sorghum sells for three pence. When these groups see how very cheap Tiv food crops are they quickly buy up everything. A large calabash container full of grain would sell for a penny. Others would buy up all the food crops and store these, while just to earn a few pennies, the Tiv would sell off all the food they produced through diligent hard work on their farms. After they have sold all they had produced, then there is a famine. During the famine, a bundle of grain which was sold for three pence now sells for nine. The price has been hiked up three hundred percent.

Now these Tiv no longer have food and have no money with which to buy food or even afford food. They have spent the money from selling their food on marrying new wives. At this time, they become beggars, wishing for the food they had produced and squandered at cheap prices to please the other groups. So they begin to farm for these groups in exchange for cassava, or gruel, made from the sorghum they had originally bought cheaply from the Tiv. Others resort to stealing food from the Hausa. When the famine is most severe, one can find Tiv women suffering, cutting down firewood to sell to the same Hausa that their husbands sold food to before the famine of the previous year.

These are some of the dangers and consequences of the Tiv's short-sighted view of life, resulting in chronic poverty as a way of life among the Tiv people. The time will come when they will have vision and foresight. They will begin to value and honour themselves. They will restore their forefathers' honour and the old value systems; they will endure hardship and develop self-control. The Tiv people will become a Tiv nation indeed, for they are not without wisdom. It is these things which have hindered their development and advancement on earth.



## APPENDIX 1

### TEAM OF TRANSLATORS, ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY

#### GROUP ONE: VOLUNTEERS' BIOS AS PROVIDED BY THE TRANSLATORS

1. Martin Akiga B.Sc. (University of Maiduguri), M.A. (Leicester), works for a British insurance company and is a reservist with the British Army. He is also the grandchild of Benjamin Akiga Sai. He is the *History of the Tiv* Translation Project Manager (2011–15) and Assistant Editor.
2. Harold Bergsma, B.A. (Calvin College); M.A. (Michigan State University); Ph.D. (Michigan State University, in International/Comparative Education with cognates in African Anthropology and Linguistics); Fellow of African Studies Center, Michigan State University, and Emeritus Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, New Mexico State University. Bergsma worked among the Tiv for twelve years (1955–1967) in institution development projects. He was the founding Principal of the W.M. Bristow Secondary School in Gboko, as well as founding Principal of the Combined Secondary School in Takum, Nigeria. During his tenure in Tivland, he spent considerable time among the traditional Tiv studying their religious practices. His collections of religious artifacts, including a large collection of *Ijembe i Aôndo* (stone 'axes of God') as well as a collection of other artifacts relating to traditional religious practices were all donated to the Jos Museum. He and Ezekiel Akiga, a son of Akiga Sai, who was the author of this history, deposited the original manuscript of *History of the Tiv* in Ibadan University Library in September of 1964. He is the chief Project Editor/translator of *History of the Tiv*.
3. Fanan Gbamwuan (B-Tech, PGDE), last-born in a family of eight, hails from Vandeikya LGA of Benue State. He studied at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU) in Bauchi. He has a Bachelor Degree of Technology in Real Property and a Post Graduate Diploma of Education. He is also much cherished by *mama* Hannah Mbamirin Gbamwuan.
4. Iormough Utuku (LGA Gboko, NCE (Katsina Ala), BA English Language (University of Maiduguri)) works in the Management Information Systems unit of the Ministry of Education headquarters in Makurdi. He is married with three children.
5. Luter Leke (BSc, Applied Chemistry (Jos) and MSc, Industrial Chemistry (Ibadan)) lectures in chemistry at the Benue State University and is currently studying for a PhD in catalysis at the University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom. Luter hails from Konshisha LG, Benue State.
6. Nicodemus M. Useh received Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees at the legendary Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, specializing in comparative clinical and experimental pathology. He became assistant professor at the University of Veterinary Medicine (TiHo), Hannover and Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute of Bacterial

Infections and Zoonoses, Jena, all in Germany. Useh was also associate professor of experimental pathology at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Giessen University, Germany. He received grants from the Royal Society, United Kingdom to conduct research at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Apart from the Society of Biology, London, where he is a fellow, Useh won grants from CV Raman, FICCI and DST, India for research on recombinant DNA vaccines at GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Utterakhand, India. Other academic laurels won by this illustrious Tiv son include grants from the Alexander von Humboldt (AvH) Foundation (Bonn, Germany), the German Research Foundation (DFG), Bonn, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Bonn, the McArthur Foundation, Chicago, The Academy of Sciences for the developing world (TWAS), Trieste, Italy, and the highly prestigious and competitive United States Senior Fulbright Research Award. He is a visiting professor at the Department of Population Medicine & Diagnostic Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA.

7. H. T. A. Yongo, Ph.D: Dr Yongo's background is in Management and Finance. All his working life is in this area, with experience in Retail Banking, the Civil Service, Insurance Industry and Management Consultancy. He studied Business and earned a Master's degree in Management Information Systems and a Ph.D. in Management. Dr Yongo is the author of *The Management of Agricultural Research, with Specific Reference to Nigeria*. Dr Yongo's current interest and work is in development, with particular focus on poverty, in association with all stakeholders, creating wealth by the poor directly to the poor.
8. Peverga Sai is a lecturer at the Open University, Lagos, Nigeria. He is also into freelance translation and editing. He holds a Bachelor's degree in French Language, a Master's degree in Francophone African Literature and a Master of Science degree in International Relations and Strategic Studies. He is happily married and blessed with three children.
9. Vershima Orvell-Diô is the author of *Silent Noise* and other, yet to be published, works, and is a contributor to several literary anthologies. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English from Benue State University, Makurdi, and an M.Sc in Media and Communication from the Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos, where he is presently researching for his PhD in Corporate Communication.

## GROUP TWO: TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BIO-DATA

Iorkaam Azoom, Basil Jev.

Special thanks to Deirdre Lonergan of San Diego, California for initial copy-editing work. Thanks also to all the members of Tivnet Inc and Ate-U-Tiv, a Yahoo social group that the Project Coordinator, Martin Akiga used to get the volunteers for this translation.

## APPENDIX 2

SOME OF THE ACTORS IN AKIGA SAI'S *HISTORY OF THE TIV*  
IDENTIFIED BY DAVID DORWARD

*Names are in alphabetical order in the form(s) Akiga uses and by surname in most cases (i.e. military titles like Captain/Chafa, and honorifics, like Master/Masa, or Orteselteacher have not been alphabetized). As an exception to this, names prefixed by the Hausa title 'Mai' have been listed under 'M' because Akiga runs them together as a single word.*

**Colonial and commercial**

## Abandiirdzwa

(p. 251)

Captain John Noel Smith (born 1887). He was the son of Alfred Cecil Smith (born 1855), graduate of St John's College, Oxford, and Church of England clergyman in Oxfordshire, and his wife, Linda Sarah Henrietta Weber (born 1861). John Noel Smith was invalided back to the UK in 1918, but he returned to Nigeria and eventually transferred to the colonial service in Jamaica, West Indies in the 1930s.

## Chafa Abraham

(p. 122)

Captain Roy Clive Abraham (born 1891 in Richmond, Melbourne, Australia, and died 22 June 1963 at 11 West View, Hendon, Middlesex).

Abraham served with the British army in Arabia and with the Indian army on the Northwest Frontier in World War I.

He took an Honours degree in Arabic and Persian at Balliol College, Oxford in 1924, a certificate in anthropology from University College, London, in 1927, and a diploma in classical Arabic from SOAS in 1930. He joined the colonial service in Nigeria in 1925, working with Rev. Bargery of the CMS and Colonial Education Service on Hausa translation, and with Rev. Malherbe of the DRCM on Tiv. Published: 1933 *The Tiv People*; 1933 *Grammar of Tiv*; 1940 *Principles of Tiv*; 1940 *A Dictionary of the Tiv Language*. After World War II, he taught at SOAS, retiring in 1951. Abraham also published on Amharic, Hausa, Idoma, Somali and Yoruba.

## Akombo

(pp. 165–6)

On circumstantial evidence, probably Iain Gilbert Gunn (born c. 1908 and died 2 Nov 1982).

Iain Gilbert Gunn married Ida Alice van Rhyneveld. (See also Captain Bridel.)

- Chafa Ambiti (in Wukari, p. 122)  
 Capt. John James Emberton (born 26 Feb 1893 in Staffordshire and died March 1976 in Surrey, England).  
 He was a son of Samuel Emberton (1856–1929), a draper, and his wife, Annie Amelia Hodgkins (1860–1937). While one of his brothers was Joseph Emberton (1889–1956) the British architect, his father was a fairly modest businessman. For John James Emberton, colonial service in Nigeria appears to have offered upward social mobility.  
 John James Emberton served as an officer in the Royal Field Artillery in World War I (1914–22)  
 In 1933, he married Sybil Challenger Ewart (13 years his junior), the daughter of a surgeon and a woman of independent means. They settled in Cobham, Surrey. In 1944, John James Emberton was awarded a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (Supplement, *London Gazette*, 8 June 1944).
- Malam/Chief Audu (pp. 132–3, 234, 243, 247, 256–7)  
 Referred to in the colonial records as Audu dan Afoda. He was said to be a Yoruba from Bida who had served as Hewby's cook. (See also East 1965: 405)
- Mata Bello (p. 252)  
 Mr C. R. Bellew, ADO Katsina Ala (born c.1877 and died in Katsina Ala in 1917).  
 There was a widespread yellow fever epidemic in 1917. J. Lowry Maxwell recorded in his diary on 9 Sept 1917: 'The Political Officer at Katsina Allah died of some unidentified disease, suspiciously like yellow fever. The Officer at Jalingi died swiftly thereafter, of apparently the same thing. The Political Officer at Ibi has had a dangerous attack of the same. Mr Botha [SUM/DRCM missionary] has had a dangerous attack of it also. Just over the border a little way, Mr. Hosking died of something suspiciously near the same kind of thing. The wife of the Political Officer at Ibi is seriously ill. At time of writing, Mr. Forbes at Wukari has been laid low, but is reported better.' The Maxwell Diaries are in Rhodes House, Oxford.
- Captain Bridel/Akômbô (Gboko, p. 255)  
 Captain Henry Samuel Bridel (born 19 April 1896 and died Dec 1971 in Warminster, Wiltshire, England). Bridel was the son of Henry Frederick Bridel (born 1869 in Greenwich, London), local municipal officer, and his wife, Kate Turner (born 1875). He served in the Prince of Wales's Own West Yorkshire Regiment in World War I (1913–21) before becoming a District Officer. In 1924, Bridel married Hilda Sybil Dickens (1897–1980).

- Masta Carnagie (p. 233)  
The Honourable David Wynford Carnegie (died 1900). He was the fourth son of the sixth Earl of Southesk. Akiga has the date slightly wrong: the so-called 'First Munshi Campaign' took place in 1900. David Wynford Carnegie died on 27 Nov 1900, having been wounded in the thigh by a poisoned arrow in a clash near Lakoja. He was buried in Lakoja. There was a 'Second Munshi Campaign' in 1901 under the command of Major John Alder Burdon (born 1866 and died 1933).
- Chahul (p. 252, 264)  
Robert Edmund Alford (born 10 Sept 1904 in Kensington and died Dec 1979 in Sussex.) Alford was the son of Robert Greenwood Alford and Maud Mary Louise Alford. Along with R.M. Downes, he was one of the first to pass the Tiv language exam. Alford went on to become Governor of St Helena, 1958–1962.
- Dantsofo (pp. 216, 219, 247–8, 250)  
Ronald Scott Chapman (born 4 Feb 1878 in Arabia, and died 5 March 1954 in Middlesex) Assistant Resident in charge of Katsina Ala Division from 1917. He was the son by the second marriage of Major General Ingram Francis Chapman of the Indian Army Staff Corps.
- Dogo (p. 245, 274)  
Kenneth Vaughan Elphinstone (born 11 Jan 1878, and died 10 Feb 1965). He was a younger son of Sir Howard Warburton Elphinstone, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet of Sowerby, Cumberland, and Constance Mary Alexander Hanker. Educated at Wellington College, Berkshire, he graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, with a BA in 1902 and an MA in 1905. Sometime Resident of Northern Nigeria. Retired from Nigerian Colonial Service in 1921. He never married
- Chafa Don/Wanbeke (pp. 93, 115–7, 122, 164–6, 224, 252–5, 261, 264–6)  
Captain Roger Meaden Downes (born 1892 and died March 1967) Roger Downes was the son of an Anglican clergyman. His Captain came from a short stint in the Royal Regiment of Artillery during in World War I. Studied for a Diploma in Anthropology at the University of Oxford (St. Edmund Hall) in 1931. Author of: 1933 *The Tiv Tribe*; 1971 *Tiv Religion*. Donor of Tiv objects to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.
- Mr Eaglesome (p. 235)  
John Egan Eaglesome (born 14 March 1868 and died 3 April 1950)

Sometime Director of Public Works and Railroads for Northern Nigeria, he was eventually awarded a KCMG.

Ekasili

(p. 233)

Captain Henry Thomas Eckersley (born 13 Oct 1873 at St Germans, Cornwall, and died on 15 Oct 1902). His father was an engineer in the Royal Navy. Henry Thomas Eckersley was educated at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the West Indian Regiment with seniority 28 Sept 1895. He joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in Jamaica and was promoted to Lieutenant on 1 Oct 1897. The West Indian Regiment was staffed by British officers but with West Indian troopers. It had low 'social status', being looked down upon by many British officers. The West Indian Regiment saw service in Sierra Leone. Eckersley took part in operations in Sierra Leone in 1898–99 [the Bai Bureh Rebellion], including the Karene Expedition, and he was mentioned in dispatches. Promoted to Captain on 25 July 1900, he took part in the Ashanti campaign in the Gold Coast [Ghana] and was mentioned in dispatches gazetted on 8 March 1900 and was seconded to the West African Frontier Force [WAFF] from that date. Much of his military history is based on the supporting documentation concerning his medals, which were sold at auction by DNW on 20 Sept 2002, part of the John Tamplin collection.

Chafa Fishi

(pp. 191, 224–5, 248–9)

Captain Gilbert George Feasey (born 26 Feb 1891 and died June 1976)  
 Son of George Thomas Feasey (1861–1938) chartered accountant.  
 Gilbert George Feasey was a Captain in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nigerian Regiment in World War I, before entering the colonial service as a Political Officer in Nigeria.

Chafa Godi

(pp. 242–6, 270)

Captain Charles Forbes Gordon (born 18 June 1877 in Alford, Aberdeenshire, Scotland and died Dec 1933 in Hammersmith, London). He was the son of Captain Rowland Hill Gordon of the 42nd Highlanders (the Black Watch) (born 25 Feb 1833 in Kirkmichael, Banff, Scotland, baptised 6 April 1833 in Kirkmichael, and died 7 July 1888 in Saint-Servan, Brittany, France) and grandson of Lt-Gen. William Alexander Gordon (born 21 March 1769 in Kirkmichael, Banffshire, Scotland and died 10 Aug 1865 in Nairn, Scotland). Charles Forbes Gordon was a son to Rowland Hill Gordon by his second wife, Sarah Ann Forwood. He was a D.O. and sometime Acting Resident, during leave of the Substantive Resident Upton FitzHerbert Ruxton.

Charles Forbes Gordon attended Christ's Hospital School, a charitable school founded under the auspices of King Edward VI in 1552. Because of its continued links to royalty, Christ's Hospital carried none of the stigma associated with many other 'charity' schools, which may have facilitated his joining the Nigerian colonial service. In 1920, Charles Forbes Gordon married Via Pratt. Charles Forbes Gordon died 21 Sept 1956, without issue.

Gordon wrote a report in 1907, 'Notes on the Munshi Tribe' [NAK SNP 5313/1907] which detailed the British perspective on the 'penetration' of Tivland. As David Dorward wrote in his thesis of 1971, "'Notes on the Munshi'" was [...] probably the most accurate and detailed report on the Tiv to be written before the 1930s [but] was rarely cited in documents after 1914, though it was often referred to in earlier reports. Moreover, none of the post-1914 administrative officers interviewed by the author could recall ever having seen Gordon's report.'

Masa Ibi

(pp. 230–1)

William Petch Hewby, CMG, FRGS (born 1866 in Kensington, London, and died 12 Feb 1946 in a nursing home in Devon). Son of John Petch Hewby, MRCS, Hewby served in Goldie's Royal Niger Company from 1883 before transferring over to the Northern Nigerian colonial administration. In 1910, he married Jeanette Claudine Stowell, twenty years his junior (1886–1963), and this may have influenced his decision to retire in 1913.

One of his brothers: Louis John Hewby had an M.A. from Oxford University, was a clerk of Treasury and Deputy Paymaster for Ireland (1908), returned to Treasury as principal clerk (1912), Assistant Secretary (1919), and retired from Treasury in 1921. He died in 1925. Another brother, Arthur George Hewby (1867–1954), emigrated to Australia.

Ijen

(pp. 249–51)

Herbert Basil James (born c.1887 in Durham and died 4 May 1959 in Eastbourne, Sussex). Herbert Basil James was the son of a Church of England clergyman, David W. James (born 1851 in Moylgrove, Wales and died 1904 in Durham, England) and his wife, Susan Lloyd (1852–1914).

In 1922, Herbert Basil James married Julia Mary Knight (1892–1977), daughter of Captain Henry Raleigh Knight (1857–1907) and sister of Lt. Col. Charles Raleigh Bruere Knight, OBE (1896–1959). He was D.O. Katsina Ala.

- James had a low opinion of the Afrikaner missionaries of Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Tivland. He felt they were secretly encouraging 'disloyalty' toward the Empire.
- Ishimawanye (p. 246)  
Francis Edward Maltby (born 1882 in Vizianargram, India and killed in Nigeria by the Montol on 30 July 1916).  
He was the son of Lt. Col. Francis Crichton Maltby of the India Army (born 1847 in Madras, India, and died 1918 in England).
- Gomna Kamaru (p. 258)  
Sir Donald Charles Cameron (1872–1948) Governor of Tanganyika (1925–31) and of Nigeria (1931–35).
- Karmin Joji (Katsina Ala, p. 122)  
Kenyon Dewar (born 1903 in India and died in a railway accident on 27 March 1942 in the Sinai Peninsula, Palestine.)  
Kenyon Dewar was the son of Douglas Dewar (1875–1957) of the Indian Civil Service and Edith Caroline Rawles (1878–1965). They had married in the Cathedral, Bombay, on 7 March 1902.  
Kenyon Dewar was brother to Wing Commander John Scatliff Dewar, DSO, DFC (1907–1940) and Douglas Rowlatt Dewar (died 2 Jan 1939).  
Dewar's residence was listed as Kano Nigeria, British West Africa, in the probate of his will. He was buried in St Peter's churchyard, Frimley, Surrey.
- Maiadiko/Madiko (p. 231)  
The John Holt agent at the time was Mr W. Kaestner.
- Maigogo (p. 231)  
'Maigogo' was the Royal Niger Company's clerk at Donga, probably the agent referred to in various Resident's reports as 'Mr Jones'.
- Makondo (p. 243, 247, 256, 279)  
Hugh Middleton Brice-Smith (born 1884 and died 1967 in Surrey)  
Brice-Smith was educated at Pocklington School and graduated from Queen's College, Cambridge, in 1906. He was appointed Assistant Resident, Katsina Ala, in Northern Nigeria in Jan 1909. In Feb 1917, he was transferred to Benin in southern Nigeria. He served in Zaria and was appointed Resident, Southern Provincial Administration in 1929. He retired in 1934. His papers are in the Bodleian Library GB 0162 MSS. Afr.s.1845  
Shortly before his death, Brice-Smith was living in Maida Vale, Paddington.



- Maimadubi/Madubi (pp. 225, 248, 250–1)  
Major John Morton Fremantle (born 1876 and died 21 Dec 1936)  
Fremantle was the son of the Very Rev. William Henry Fremantle (12 Dec 1831–24 Dec 1916) and his wife, Isabella Maria Eardley (1835–July 1901). William Fremantle was Rector of St Mary's, Marylebone, London, etc., then Cathedral Canon of Canterbury 1882, Archdeacon of Maidstone 1887, Dean of Ripon Cathedral 1895, retired 1915. His was a very well-connected and powerful family. John Morton Fremantle earlier served in the Boer War, and retired from the Colonial Service in 1929.
- Chafa Maki (p. 283)  
Captain James Richard Mackie, M.C. (born 18 March 1896 and died Sept 1981 in Devon).  
Mackie came from a commercial background. He was the son of James Hugh Mackie, a cheese factory owner from Castle Cary in Somerset, who was himself the son of a merchant. Mackie was an Agricultural Officer in 1926.
- Chalis Makintos (p. 229, 230)  
Charles William McIntosh (born 1860 in West Derby, Lancashire)  
Mining engineer and an agent of the Royal Niger Company. Some of his correspondence back to the Royal Niger Co head office was still in the United Africa Company office, Blackfriars Road, London, in the 1960s.  
On 27 June 1881, Charles William McIntosh was certified a Second Mate in merchant shipping by the Board of Trade.  
In 1905 in West Derby, Charles William McIntosh married Phoebe Birchell, 18 years his junior (born 1878). McIntosh's birth and marriage registers reveal that he often shaved several years off his age on ship's passage registers.
- Major Makilinton (p. 233)  
Augustus McClintock (born 1886 and died 24 June 1912 at Maiduguri, Northern Nigeria).  
McClintock, Captain and Brevet Major, was the fourth son of Colonel G. P. McClintock, D.L., of Seskinore, County Tyrone. He joined the Seaforth Highlanders 8 June 1889, and was promoted Lieutenant 22 April, 1891. He served with his regiment in Ireland, England and in Crete. From Crete he was seconded for service with the West African Frontier Force, Northern Nigeria, 16 Feb. 1898, and took part in all the operations in 1897, including the campaign in Egbon, Bida and Ilorin, in 1897, for which he received the Medal and clasp. He was promoted Captain 2 May 1898.

He also took part in the Munshi Expedition of 1900, when he was mentioned in Despatches [*London Gazette*, 16 April 1901], and given the Brevet of Major. In 1901, he commanded another campaign against the 'Munshi' [Tiv] and was again mentioned in Despatches [*London Gazette*, 24 April, 1903].

In the operations against the Emir of Yola, he acted as Staff Officer, and was slightly wounded; was again mentioned in Despatches [*London Gazette*, 18 April, 1902]; received the Medal and clasp, and was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order [*London Gazette*, 25 April, 1902]: 'Augustus McClintock, Brevet Major, Seaforth Highlanders. In recognition of services in the expedition against the Emir of Yola.' The Insignia, Warrant and Statutes were sent to the Colonial Office, and the Insignia presented by Brigadier-General Sir F. Lugard, at Zunguru, 21 April, 1903. In 1903 he commanded a battalion in the Kano-Sokoto Campaign, when he was again mentioned in Despatches [*London Gazette*, 31 July, 1903] (clasp). Major McClintock resigned his commission in the Army to become a Resident, in the political service.

Mr Mogan

(Makurdi, p. 191)

Walter Morgan (born 14 Jan 1886 in Wandsworth, Surrey and died June 1960 in Surrey).

He was the son of a Welshman, Henry Morgan (born 1850, Peterstow, Glamorgan, Wales) Inland Revenue officer, and his wife Ruth Griffith. Henry Morgan's work led him from Wales to Cheshire, then Wandsworth and on to London. He retired a supervisor in the Inland Revenue.

On 5 Oct 1920 at St John's Hampstead, Walter Morgan married Marjory Pearce.

Walter Morgan retired from the British colonial service in Nigeria in 1937.

Two of Walter Morgan's brothers trained as doctors and his elder brother, John Griffith Morgan served as a medical officer in British East Africa (Kenya) in 1915.

Major Murdon

(p. 233)

Major John Alder Burdon (born 23 Aug 1866 in Beijing, China, and died 1933). The son of Bishop John Shaw Burdon, he had served in the Cameron Highlanders and was a Commandant in the West African Frontier Force, before joining the civil administration in 1900. He left Nigeria to become Colonial Secretary and Acting Governor of Barbados in 1910, eventually appointed Governor-General of British Honduras from 1925–1932.

Chafa Rokson

(p. 233)

Captain Upton FitzHerbert Ruxton (1873–1954). Ruxton was Assistant Resident of what was then Lower Benue Province and served as ‘political officer’ to the 1901 ‘Munshi Expedition’.

Ruxton had originally served in the Worcestershire Regiment and later as a Senior Executive Officer under the Royal Niger Constabulary (1898–1899), before serving in the Boer War, and then returning to Northern Nigeria in 1901. He had considerable ‘weight’. He later went on to become Lt. Gov. of Eastern Nigeria but bore the onus of the ‘Aba Riots’. In her memoir *Stepping Stones* (London: Peter Owen 1983), his sister, Sylvia Leith-Ross, describes a visit to him in 1910 when he was stationed at Ibi.

Chafa Roo

(pp. 246–7)

Charles Frederick Rowe (born 11 October 1869 in Edgbaston, Warwickshire, and died 17 March 1951 in Tamerton Nursing Home, Surrey).

From Birmingham business family, Rowe was the fifth of eight children of Charles Frederick Rowe (1829–1914), a factor, and his wife Caroline Alice Lander (1841–77). On 25 July 1894, at St Bartholomew, Edgbaston, Rowe married Amy Elizabeth Sanderson (born 1869 and died 29 Aug 1945 in Sussex).

Commissioned Oct 1896 in Royal Warwickshire Regiment; resigned Nov 1898. Served Natal Police 1898–99; served in Imperial Light Horse in 1901 as Lieutenant and Captain. Travelled frequently between Nigeria and London 1904–1917.

Rowe had a slight limp, having accidentally shot himself in the knee on 11 Sept 1907 in Abinsi when a small pistol fell from his belt.

Completed military service 15 Mar 1916.

Retired as colonial civil servant in 1921.

Detail can be added from his five medals which found their way to a Quebec museum, presumably via his younger brother Harcourt who emigrated to Canada: South Africa medals (both Victoria face, with two bars, and Edward VII face, with four bars) and standard three World War I medals as Captain in the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force, one with oak leaf. From Rowe’s papers in Leeds may infer his involvement in the Kamerun campaign at Garoua and Banyo; Mentioned in Despatches March 1916.

Rowe was much more inclined to implement a policy of ‘Indirect Rule’ through ‘chiefs’ in line with the Lugard-Temple ideology than the more nuanced approach of Ruxton and Gordon. Increasingly from 1914, Residents were officials who had served in the Hausa region and saw ‘native administration’ as rule through ‘chiefs’.

Rowe's daughter was Elsie Margaret Rowe (born 12 Dec 1895 in King's Norton, Warwickshire, and died Aug 1988 in Gloucestershire). In 1901, Elsie Margaret Rowe (5) and her mother, Amy Elizabeth Rowe (31) dress maker, were living with Amy's mother, Elizabeth Sanderson (59), who supported herself on her own means, and her younger daughter, Elsie Sanderson (29), governess at a grammar school, as well as domestic servants: Annie Lane (27) and Annie Maddock (18) at 15 Yew Tree Road in Edgbaston, Warwickshire. In 1911, Elsie Margaret Rowe was a college student, boarding at St Helen's Ladies' College, Lansdown Place, Cheltenham. She became the wife of George Berridge Page in Kent in 1934. Inherited her father's modest estate in 1952. Their son Nigel Page donated the C.F. Rowe papers to Leeds University.

Ruanzafi

(p. 248)

Mr Errol Vivian Rockfort Rae (born 1890 in Dublin North, Ireland and died 3 Sept 1951 at 7 Castleton Mansions, London SW13).

He was a son of Vivian Rockfort Rea (born 1857 in Ireland, died 1889) and his second wife, Matilda Maria Julia Martin (1864–1924). On 9 March 1888 in the Melbourne, Australia, Supreme Court, Clara, his first wife, had filed for divorce from Vivian Rochfort Rae on the grounds of adultery. They had been married in Umballa, India on 5 July 1883, when he was a Captain in the West Yorkshire Regiment. Vivian was invalided to England in 1886 and retired from the service.

They immigrated to Melbourne, Australia, in Oct 1887. [*The Argus*, Melbourne, 13 March 1888, p. 8]

Vivian Rockfort Rae had married his second wife Matilda Maria Julia Martin in April 1888 in Greater London. Her father, William Henry Martion was a clergyman, Rector of Higham, Bedford.

After Vivian's death in 1889, Matilda married army Captain Peter Ridley Edward Thompson of the 27<sup>th</sup> Inniskillen Fusiliers at Christ Church, Holborn, on 21 July 1892. She must have been carrying Errol Vivian Rockfort Rae when her husband died.

In 1911, Errol Vivian Rochfort Rae (20), student, was living with his mother and step-father, Major Peter Ridley Thompson (retired) at 69 Bouverie Road West, Folkestone, Kent.

In 1926 in Marylebone, he married Lola Irene Misa. Rae was an Assistant District Officer.

Chafa Saim

(Katsina Ala, p. 191)

Captain James Stewart Smith (born 15 Aug 1900 and died 13 Feb 1987).

He graduated from King's College, Cambridge and joined the Nigerian colonial service in 1924. He was ADO in charge of Katsina Ala. He later spent most of his career in Eastern Nigeria.

- Wanbuavihintor (p. 245)  
Lt Basil Edward Maynard Waters, Royal Navy (born 12 Jan 1875 and died March 1933 in Eltham, Kent). On 16 July 1895, Lt Waters went on the Navy's retired list, at his own request. He joined the Nigerian colonial service in 1901. When World War I broke out, Waters returned to the Royal Navy and on 12 Jan 1915, Waters was promoted to Commander. After the war he returned to the Colonial Service, but not to Tivland.
- Wanimem (p. 162)  
Armar Leslie Auchinleck (born 2 Aug 1887 and died 17 Sept 1916). Auchinleck was born in Madras, son of Col. John Claud Alexander Auchinleck, commander of the Royal Horse Artillery in Bangalore, and Mary Eleanor Eyre. He was in Egypt on leave from Nigeria when World War I broke out in 1914. He returned to his regiment, the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Scottish Rifles, and was killed on the Somme in France on 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 1916.
- Wanimem (pp. 252–3)  
Kenneth Phipson Maddock (born 8 Feb 1907 and died Aug 2001) Joined the Nigeria colonial service in 1929. Posted to Benue Province for seven years and learned Tiv. , D.O. Abinsi when Akiga wrote. (Not the same Wanimem as referred to on p. 249, see Auchinleck above.)
- 'Whiteman who died of lightning' (p. 252)  
Kenneth Hamilton (born 1884 in Kensington and died 15 November 1918).  
Kenneth Hamilton was the son of Thomas F. Hamilton (born 1842, Scotland) a wealthy East India merchant of Kensington, London, and himself the son of an East India merchant, Peter Hamilton (1807–1878) of Glasgow.  
Hamilton served as A.D.O. in Tivland from 1914, dying on 15 Nov 1918 (not 1917) but of what cause cannot be confirmed. He left a widow, Alice Louise.
- 'Whiteman who ruled from Damagudu' (p. 247)  
George Sibbit Prodevin (born 1878 in Dover, Kent, and died 2 Dec 1918 in Tinto, Cameroon).  
He was the Southern Nigeria Provincial Commissioner in charge of southern Tivland at the time of which Akiga writes.
- 'Whitemen from Damagudu' (pp. 238–9)  
The border between Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria cut through Tivland. In 1909, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria sent a military expedition under Major Trenchard across southern Tivland, in an effort to assert their authority over the territory in response to the extension of administration by Ruxton and Gordon from Northern Nigeria.

- 'White soldier' (pp. 243–4)  
Probably Lt. Stone of WAFF, who accompanied Gordon on a number of tours, but there were numerous WAFF officers in the Province at this period.
- Missionaries**
- Ortese Agee/Age (p. 4n, 88, 154, 252, 275, 287)  
Rev. Attie J. Brink (born 1885).  
Brink served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1912 until 1934.
- Ortese Bato/Mr Judd (p. 274)  
A.S. Judd (born 1870)
- Ortese Bem (p. 4n)  
Rev W. M. Scott (based on an article on the 'History of the Tiv Bible', Benjamin Ityavkase Shi, *Nigerian Peoples Post*, 4 Nov 2014, which reaffirms others of the DRCM missionary nicknames).
- Malam/Ortese Botha (pp. 274, 275–6)  
Rev. Johan George Botha (1883–1952).  
Botha served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1908 until 1935.
- Ortese Clark (p. 275)  
A. W. Clark (born 1888).
- Ortese Difo (p. 276)  
Rev. Gabriel de Vos (born c.1895–96)  
De Vos served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1922 until 1934. In 1922, he gave his address as Leyton, London E10.
- Ortese Dogo and his wife (p. 274)  
Rev Joh. G. Strydom (born 1880) and Mrs Strydom.  
Strydom served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1912 until 1919.
- Ortese Dowsen (p. 256)  
Gilbert Dawson (born 1876 and died 4 Nov 1959 in Hertfordshire).  
A member of the Sudan United Mission.
- Ortese Fese (p. 277)  
Dr M. Visser.  
Visser served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1931 until 1941.
- Mr Fleming (p. 274)  
J. A. Fleming (born 1882–83).
- Ortese/Malam Guinter (p. 256, 271)  
Rev. Clarence Walter Guinter (born 1877 in Loyalsock, Pennsylvania and died 1941 in Wrightsville, Pennsylvania).  
An American member of the Sudan United Mission, Guinter was married to Laura Mae Hummel.

- Dr Likita Hosking (p. 274)  
Vincent Henry Hosking (born 1880 and died in Nigeria of yellow fever in 1917).
- Ortese Kuchi (p. 277)  
Dr E. P. du P. Coetzee.  
Coetzee served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1932 until 1946.
- Dr Kuum (p. 270)  
Dr Hermann Karl Wilhelm Kumm (1875–1930).  
Kumm was the German founder of the Sudan United Mission.
- Ortese Mker (p. 88, 276)  
Mr C. la Grange.  
La Grange served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1929 until 1938.
- Ortese Ofi (p. 4n, 19, 276)  
Rev. Johannes F. Orffer (born c.1896).  
Orffer served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1921 until 1963.
- Ortese Ru (p. 276)  
Rev. Laurie Roux (born 1894 and died 1923).  
Roux served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1922 until 1923.
- Ortese Uhe (pp. 1, 1n, 275–7)  
Rev. Dr William A. Malherbe (born 1888).  
Malherbe served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1915 until 1934.
- Ortese Ver (p. 276)  
P. Weyers (died 1923).  
Weyers served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1921 until 1923.
- Ortese Zimmerman (pp. 1, 256, 272–4)  
Carl F. Zimmerman.  
Zimmerman served in the DRCM in Tivland from 1909 until 1912.

### Education Officers

*Note that from 1930, the Education Department Annual Reports, on which these notes are largely based, become far less informative. They aggregate and thus obscure what was happening in individual schools and cease to refer to education officers by name.*

- African Staff at Katsina Ala Although African staff are referred to in the Annual Reports of the Northern Provinces Education Department's Annual Reports, they are not named. There were 7 'native teachers' at the Wannune school in the 1920s, before its transfer to Abinsi in 1924. Abinsi Government School was closed in 1928. The Government School at Katsina Ala had 7 'native teachers' from 1925 until it absorbed the 'Pagan School' at Abinsi and its 'native staff' increased to 9. None of them was ever named in the Education Department reports.

- Masta Bajire (p. 281)  
 Rev. George Percival Bargery (born 1 Oct 1876 in Exeter, Devon and died 2 Aug 1966 in Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire). Ordained Chaplain to the CMS in 1899. Served as a missionary in Northern Nigeria 1900–10. From 1912–30 worked in the Colonial Education Service in Northern Nigeria, founding the first government school among the Tiv at Katsina Ala. Seconded in 1921 to translation work, eventuating in his famous 1934 *Hausa-English Dictionary*. Taught at SOAS 1935–47.
- Masta Hei (pp. 281–2)  
 Possibly Arthur Lincoln Baron Hay (born 27 April 1902 in Jamaica and died Dec 1982 in Bath). Hay was a son of the Rev. George Herbert Baron Hay, a Methodist minister, and his wife, Edith Mary Stuart. In 1911, Edith Mary Baron-Hay (44) and her children: Dorothy (14), Kathleen May (11), Arthur Lincoln (8) born in Jamaica, and Grace Winifred (3) were living at Wesley House, 26 Lemon St, Truro, Cornwall. In 1939 at Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, Arthur Lincoln Baron Hay married Mary R. Wood. He was an Education Officer in Nigeria at the time of which Akiga writes, but cannot yet definitively be located in Tivland.
- Masta Hogben (p. 281)  
 Sidney John Hogben (born 21 Jan 1898 in Strathmiglo, Fifeshire, Scotland, and died Sept 1971 in Eastbourne, Sussex).  
 Hogben was the son of Edgar Hogben, physician, and his wife, Dorothy Maud Wagstaff; served as a Second Lieutenant in the Princess Louise's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in World War I. Hogben was Superintendent of Education, Benue Province, 1932.
- Masa Is/Masta East (pp. 4, 167n, 281–2)  
 Rupert Moultrie East (born 18 Aug 1898 in Oxfordshire and died June 1975 in Swindon, Wiltshire. Translator and editor of 1939 *Akiga's Story*.
- Chafa Kembul (p. 282)  
 Captain Colin Bruer Campbell, M.C. (born 4 Jan 1890 in Wolverton, Warwickshire, and died 26 Jan 1968 in Claro, Yorkshire)  
 The son of Rev. Stephen Melton Campbell, clerk in holy orders and rector of Wolverton, Stratford-on-Avon at the time of his death on 19 Nov 1908, Campbell was an undergraduate at Oxford University before World War I, during which he may have served in the Highland Light Infantry. When he provided a 'home address' on his shipping lists, it was either Lemington Spa, Warwickshire, or 28 Victoria St, Harrogate. On 26 Sept 1934, aged 44, he married Monica Morrison Smith (26) at Christ Church, High Harrogate. Campbell was an Education Officer in Nigeria.



- Masta Kol (p. 281)  
Mr. Henry William Cole (born 1879)
- Masta Kulin (p. 281)  
Harold George Cooling, born 26 March 1899 in King's Norton, Worcestershire appointed an education officer in 1921 and was invalided out in 1926. Died March 1979 in Worthing, West Sussex.  
Harold George Cooling was the son of Richard Thomas Cooling (born 1871 in Banbury, Oxfordshire and died 10 May 1955 in Birmingham), a tramway clerk, and his wife, Agnes.  
Harold George Cooling served in then Royal Navy Volunteer Reserves, Bristol, in 1916–17.  
In 1923, Harold George Cooling married Elsie Winifred Mallard (born 17 March 1898 in Solihull, Warwickshire and died Dec 1985 in Worthing), the daughter of a cabinet maker. She occasionally accompanied her husband in Nigeria, though she lived in Birmingham.
- Masta Filip (p. 281)  
H. R. Phillips (born 1901)  
Henry Raymond Phillips (born 28 April 1901), son of Thomas Greenway Phillips (born 1869, died 2 March 1947), fish, game and poultry merchant of Croydon, Surrey, England.  
In 1926 in Croydon, Henry Raymond Phillips married Malet De Carteret.  
Henry Raymond Phillips went on to become Director of Education in Northern Nigeria.
- Masta Ndio of Calabar (p. 282)  
N. E. Ndiyo, teacher at Katsina Ala, he resigned in 1937. In 1937 he was being paid £66 per annum [NAK/MAKPROF 98, vol II.].
- Mr/Masta Toma (p. 282)  
George Thom (born 1894).  
Noted by Akiga to be of the Saryo tribe

## APPENDIX 3

## ‘THE STORY OF INYAMIBUAN BY B. AKIGA’

TRANSLATED FROM HAUSA AND EDITED BY WILLIAM BURGESS  
FOLLOWED BY TRANSCRIPT OF THE ORIGINAL HAUSA TEXT

D.R.C.M. Mkar

There is an uneasiness throughout Tivland<sup>1</sup> this year, 1939, as a result of a new phenomenon called Inyamibuan. In the Tiv language, the word *inyamibuan* is a forest animal.

Inyamibuan is making the whole of Tivland very uneasy. Inyamibuan is troubling the Tiv people because they themselves do not know what is happening to them these days. They are very troubled, their land is impoverished and there is famine. This year they will hardly manage to pay the *gandu*,<sup>2</sup> because of Inyamibuan. There is little of importance and seriousness that the European administrative officers are doing this year other than trying to bring an end to this evil practice. It has become like a fire that cannot be extinguished. If you stamp it out here, it will flare up over there. The efforts of Christian missionaries are also badly affected. Most of the Mission schools in the villages have been closed because of Inyamibuan, as most of the pupils have gone over to Inyamibuan, most followers<sup>3</sup> have become followers of Inyamibuan, and they call Inyamibuan God.

When Inyamibuan people now meet someone – even a European – they say to them, ‘God says I should greet you.’ They fear no-one, they think no-one is their equal. Sometimes when followers<sup>4</sup> go to a village to preach, the villagers will even rebuff them, saying, ‘we too have our God now. Our God is Inyamibuan.’

This is what happens in Inyamibuan. To exemplify and to help you understand, I shall use comparable Hausa terms and names in my explanation. They have their *sarakuna*<sup>5</sup> and their *dogarawa*<sup>6</sup> and their *manzani*<sup>7</sup> and their *malamai*<sup>8</sup> and their *likitoci*<sup>9</sup> and the *uwargida*<sup>10</sup> who hands out the potion:

<sup>1</sup>After the first use of the word ‘Tiv’ in Akiga’s text, the word ‘Munshi’ is inserted in brackets. ‘Munshi’ is an old Hausa word for Tiv and is now considered offensive.

<sup>2</sup>a capitation tax paid to the Emir by conquered tribes’ (*Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria*, B. J. Dudley, p.15).

<sup>3</sup>The phrase ‘masu bi’ (‘followers’) occurs twice in this sentence. The second occurrence is attached overtly to the word ‘Inyamibuan’, so clearly the ‘followers of Inyamibuan’ is intended. But the first occurrence is simply ‘masu bi’. Relying on the context of the same phrase (‘masu bi’) in the next paragraph and its context in the final sentence of the whole text, it may be assumed that the simple unattached phrase is being used to signify ‘Christians’.

<sup>4</sup>See fn. 3 and cf. the final sentence.

<sup>5</sup>traditional rulers, ‘emirs’ (singular *sarki*).

<sup>6</sup>palace guards of a traditional Hausa ruler (singular *dogari*).

<sup>7</sup>messengers (singular *manzo*). In modern standard spelling, the plural is *manzanni* or *manzonni*.

<sup>8</sup>literate learned officials (singular *malami*).

<sup>9</sup>doctors (singular *likita*).

<sup>10</sup>(senior) wife.

Audu is the *sarki*<sup>11</sup>  
 Adamu is the *dogari*<sup>12</sup>  
 Umaru is the *manzo*<sup>13</sup>  
 Ibrahim is the *malami*<sup>14</sup>  
 The *likita*<sup>15</sup> is Tanko  
 The *uwargida* is Aminatu.

There are more than half a million Tivs, but there are very few who have not partaken of the Inyamibuan potion. Those one or two who have not are in a difficult position vis-à-vis the many who have. Those who have taken the potion call those who have not *Jabu*<sup>16</sup> – in other words, good-for-nothing fools, murderous sorcerers, cannibals, according to them – whereas those who have partaken of the potion are the righteous people, the people of God who will never die. This deception pervades the whole of Tivland today.

When people come to partake of the potion, they approach the *dogari* who will take them to the *sarki*. (On some days just over one hundred people will turn up. Each day, men, women and children will arrive. Every single one of them brings four pence and one hen's egg. If a person does not have the money, he brings one hen instead of four pence and a halfpenny instead of one hen's egg.) The *dogari* brings them to the *sarki* and the *sarki* takes from each of them what they have brought for him. On any one day, they may bring the *sarki* of Inyamibuan about £5, about forty hens, and just over one hundred hen's eggs. Then the *sarki* sends his *manzo*, Umaru, out into the bush to gather several sorts of noxious leaves, which if you partook of them would make you vomit profusely and give you bad diarrhoea. He brings them back to the *sarki* who then gives them to his *likita*, Tanko. The *likita* takes the noxious leaves and pounds them. He then mixes lots of pepper in with the pounded leaves, and pours the mixture into large pots. That's what the *likita* has to do. Then the *malami*, Ibrahim, assembles all the people who have come to partake of Inyamibuan, and they line up in front of him. He stands up, with a pitcher of water placed between him and the people. Then he says to one of them, 'I see that you are an evil person, in truth you are a sorcerer, you have a potion which kills people, and you have several sorts of charms and evil belts. Why have you come to partake of Inyamibuan? You must dispose of all these things before we allow you to partake of the potion, so that you will become strong and nothing will happen to you in this world. Even if someone gives you poison to drink, you will not die. Even if you tread on a snake, it will not bite you. And even if it bites you, you will not die. It is the snake that will die.' So says the *malami*. And then you, the young man whom the *malami* has been addressing, will agree and say, 'Yes, this is the truth. Yes, such and such was exactly as the *malami* has said. I had those things so that, if someone wanted to kill me, I would kill him first. But today I have found a potion which, thanks be to God, when I partake of it, will prevent

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<sup>11</sup>see fn. 5.

<sup>12</sup>see fn. 6.

<sup>13</sup>see fn. 7.

<sup>14</sup>see fn. 8.

<sup>15</sup>see fn. 9.

<sup>16</sup>cf. (Hausa) *jabu* 'fake', 'counterfeit'.

anyone in this world from killing me. So I shall cast off all these evil implements of mine.' Then he takes the various potions, charms, and belts which he has and drops them in front of the people, saying, 'I repent, I now abandon all these, I reject *Jabu*, I have today become a righteous man.' The *malami* might sometimes say to a person, 'I can see in the water pot in front of me that you are a murderer.' And then the person will agree, saying, 'Yes, that is the truth. I killed so-and-so.' On one occasion a woman said that she had killed sixteen people through witchcraft. (The reason why people tell such lies is that a person commands respect amongst the Tiv if he admits that he uses witchcraft to kill people. Everybody will fear him after that.) One day when I went to where people had gathered to partake of Inyamibuan, their *sarki* showed me various potions and said that anyone who partook of them would die before the day was out. I said, 'Is that so?' and he said yes. So then I said to him, 'Choose some of the most noxious of them, give them to me to swallow and you will see.' He chose three different potions and gave them to me, with a crowd assembled around us. They were saying, 'Today Akiga is going to kill himself, because if he swallows them, he will surely die, no doubt about it.' Then I split all of them open and swallowed each of them. But here I am to this day, still alive.

When a person has told of all his crimes, then the *malami* will say to the *uwar-gida* Aminatu, 'Give this person the potion to swallow.' She then takes some of the potion out of a small calabash, gives it to the person and he swallows it. He is then given a small stick no longer than the palm of a hand, and some hair from a ram (a fly-switch) which he should keep with him. They say that there are people inside the short stick. If you are walking along and some sorcerers come out to kill you, then the people inside the small stick will appear and attack the sorcerers, driving them all away. None of the sorcerers will have the power to do anything to you. As for the fly-switch, you can use it to admonish a rain cloud if it develops. They say that, if it is an Inyamibuan cloud, there should be rain and all will be well, but if it is a *Jabu* cloud, it should disperse without any rain. There was a case recently in August 1939 affecting seven people in one village called Adebo in the land of Mbaitiav. Lightning struck and killed all seven of them together.

When a person dies, they do not bury the body. They dig a shallow grave where they place the corpse, but leaving the grave open. They sprinkle ash over the body, and then all the youths from the deceased's family lineage assemble around the grave, dancing day and night to prevent sorcerers from coming to take away the body to eat. After waiting about one week, and aware that the corpse has begun to stink, everyone brings a pestle and together they set about pounding the body and smashing open the head. The corpse becomes mushy pulp and the stench pervades the whole village. They then spread some soil over the body and when this is all finished, the nearest relative of the deceased will give them a ram or a goat to slaughter and eat, because they have done him a service. They have watched over the corpse for him and the sorcerers did not come and take it away.

These days the young men and women of Tivland have taken complete leave of their senses. They do not respect their elders and they do not work. Just consider beniseed, which is a source of prosperity for the Tiv, but this year nobody is bothering to grow it. Another aspect of the current situation is that, of the many who have partaken of Inyamibuan, some are dying and some have gone mad, because of the noxious trees from which the potion they are given to take is made. Recently the Europeans at Dogonlamba in Tivland have been making strenuous efforts to

put an end to this evil, arresting those who hand out the potion, and those that pound corpses. They are being sent here to Kaduna to be imprisoned, and some are fined between £1 and £3. But in spite of this, the evil has still not been suppressed.

Personal craving and greed are the reasons why this evil is difficult to suppress. Those who hand out the Inyamibuan potion are given money and they are called *sarakuna*. They were poor once but have now become comfortably well-off as a result of the money given to them by those taking the potion. They are unable to give up what they are doing, however much the Europeans ban it by law. What is more, the Inyamibuan *sarakuna*<sup>17</sup> give money to Tiv law enforcement officials to dissuade them from suppressing the practice. And because of their greed for money, they say to them, 'Carry on with what you are doing. We will devise ways to prevent the Europeans suppressing you.' And they do indeed devise ways of doing that.

But recently, their treachery has been realised. The Europeans are cracking down hard on them with the law. If enquiries reveal that a law enforcement official has accepted a bribe in this way, the law deals with him severely. He will be fined and sacked from his job in law enforcement.

This is what we are facing today in this Tivland of ours.

Brethren, followers,<sup>18</sup> pray for us so that the Lord God will remove this evil from us.

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<sup>17</sup>see fn. 5.

<sup>18</sup>masu bi (cf. fn. 3).

## LABARIN INYAMIBUAN

B. Akiga

D.R.C.M. Mkar.

Kasar Tiv (Munshi) duk ta damu a shekara nan ta 1939. A kan wani sabon abu wanda a na ce da shi Inyamibuan. Inyamibuan fasalinsa<sup>1</sup> a bakin Tiv: Naman kurmi ne.

Inyamibuan shi ya sa har kasar Tiv duka ta damu da gaske. Inyamibuan ya dama Tiv don kansu ma, har ba su san abin da su ke ciki yau ba, sun damu da gaske kasan ta yi talauci ta yi nyungwa,<sup>2</sup> bana da kyar ne za a gama biyan gandu a kasar Tiv, sabili da Inyamibuan. Turawan Gomnati Joji Joji babu wani aiki mai girma mai tsanani da suke yi a shekara nan kamar na Inyamibuan, domin su kwabe wannan mungunyar abu.<sup>3</sup> Ya zama kamar wuta mara bituwa, in an bice ta a nan ta tashi can. Ya kuma damu aikin Mishan (Mission) yawan cin makarantan<sup>4</sup> Mishan na kauyuka sun rufu saboda Inyamibuan; gama yawancin yan makaranta sun zama yan Inyamibuan, yawancin masu bi sun zama masu bin Inyamibuan, har suna ce da Inyamibuan Allah ne.

Har masu<sup>5</sup> yan Inyamibuan idan sun gamu da mutum ko Bature ne, sai su ce masa : Allah ya ce in gaishe ka. Ba su tsoron kowa sai su ba su gan kowa mai kama da su ba. Har ma wani lokaci idan masu bi sun tafi kauye domin su yi masu wa'azi, sai su ki, su ce: “Mu ma yanzu mu na da Allahmu, Allahmu Inyamibuan ne.”

Ga yada a ke yin Inyamibuan. Ga misali:- Zan kwatanta ma ku da sunayen Hausawa domin ku gane; gama su na da sarakunansu du<sup>6</sup> dogarawansu da manzaninsu, da malamansu da Likitocinsu, uwargida mai bada maganin sha :

Audu	shi ne	Sarki
Adamu	“ “	Dogari
Umaru	“ “	Manzo

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The typewritten text does not distinguish between glottalized consonants and their non-glottalized equivalents. Apart from this, there are some instances of what I assess to be anomalies of spelling or grammar, even for the 1930s. I reference these in footnotes, giving what I presume to be the more common form after an intervening colon. When I have some lingering doubt, I add a question mark. Where a word in the text is spelt differently from modern usage, I reference the modern spelling in a footnote in square brackets. There are also some instances of what I believe to be typing or spelling errors. I reference these in footnotes, putting what I believe to be the ‘correct’ form in square brackets. There are two instances of overtyping. One is obviously to delete a typing error and I have simply discarded it. The other is a darker symbol typed over a less dark symbol. The darker symbol is obviously intended and is what I have used.

<sup>1</sup>fasalinsa : ? fassararsa.

<sup>2</sup>nyungwa : yunwa.

<sup>3</sup>mugunyar abu : mugun abu.

<sup>4</sup>yawan cin makarantan .. : yawancin makarantun ....

<sup>5</sup>Har masu ... : Har ma su ....

<sup>6</sup>[da].

Likita shi ne Tanko  
Uwargida ta ce<sup>7</sup> Aminatu.

Lisafin<sup>8</sup> yawan Tiv ya fi rabin milion,<sup>9</sup> amma wadanda ba su sha maganin Inyamibuan ba, daya daya ne, su daya daya nan da ba su sha ba, sun shiga uku da gaske da yawancin su da su ka sha. Suna kiran wadanda ba su sha ba nan wai Jabu watau mutanen banza ke nan mayu masu kashen mutane<sup>10</sup> da masu cin mutane in ji su, su wadanda sun sha<sup>11</sup> su ne mutanen gaskiya, mutanen Allah ba za su mutu ba har abada; wannan rudi ya cika kasar Tiv yau.

Idan mutane sun zo garin sha, su kan zo wurin dogari, dogarin ya kai su gun sarki (wata rana su kan zo mutum wajen dari da yan kai, kowace rana, da maza da mata da yara kowane dayan su ya kan kawo kwabo hudu da koin<sup>12</sup> kaza daya. Idan wanda ba shi da kudi sai ya kawo kaza daya mai makon<sup>13</sup> kwabo hudu da sisin kwabo daya mai makon koin<sup>14</sup> kaza daya.) Idan dogarin ya kai su wurin sarki, sai sarki ya karbi abubuwan da su ka kawo masa, rana daya su kan kawo,<sup>15</sup> wa sarkin Inyamibuan kudi wajen ₦5. 0. 0 da kaji kamar arbain koinkaji wajen dari da yan kai. Sa'annan sarki shi aika manzon sa Umaru, ya tafi jeji ya wo munganyen ganyanye<sup>16</sup> iri iri, wadanda in ka sha su za ka yi amai da zawo da gaske ya kawo wa sarki, sarki shi ba Likitansa Tanko. Likitan za ya karbi munganyen ganyanyen<sup>17</sup> ya daka, ya kawo barkono mai yawa ya zuba ya garwaye barkonon da ganyaye dakaken,<sup>18</sup> a tsiyaye cikin katayen tukani.<sup>19</sup> Aikin Likita ke nan. Sa'annan, malam Ibrahim za ya tatarar<sup>20</sup> jama'a nan da su ka zo garin shan Inyamibuan duka, su jeru a gabansa, sa'annan shi, shi tsaya, ga kuma wani tulun ruwa a kafe tsakanin sa da jama'a. Sa'annan ya ce wa dayan su, na gani kai mugun mutum ne, da gaske maye ne kai, ka na da maganin kashen mutane,<sup>21</sup> kuma ka na da rayu<sup>22</sup> da gurayen mugunta iri iri, donme ka zo nan garin shan Inyamibuan? Sai ka zubar da su duka sa'annan mu a yarda ma ka ka sha ka yi karfi ba abin da za ya same ka a duniya, ko wani ya ba ka guba ka sha ma ba za ka mutu ba; ko ka taka maciji ba za ta cije ka ba, ko ta cije ka ma ba ka mutuwa, ita macijin ne za ta mutu, in ji malamin. Sa'annan kai samarin da malam ya gaya maka kaka<sup>23</sup> za ka yarda ka ce i, gaskiya ne, i da abu kaza da kaza ne dai dai yada malam ya

<sup>7</sup>... ta ce ... : ... ita ce ....

<sup>8</sup>lisafin : lissafin.

<sup>9</sup>milion : miliyan

<sup>10</sup>masu kashen mutane : masu kisan mutane / masu kashe mutane.

<sup>11</sup>wadanda sun sha : ? wadanda suka sha.

<sup>12</sup>koin : kwan.

<sup>13</sup>mai makon : maimakon.

<sup>14</sup>see fn. 12 and fn. 13.

<sup>15</sup>extraneous comma inserted mid-sentence.

<sup>16</sup>munganyen ganyanye : mugayen ganyaye.

<sup>17</sup>see fn. 16.

<sup>18</sup>'ganyaye' is here 'correctly' spelt, but dakaken : dakakkun.

<sup>19</sup>katayen tukani : kattan tukwane.

<sup>20</sup>tatarar : tattara.

<sup>21</sup>kashen mutane : kisan mutane / kashe mutane (cf. fn. 10).

<sup>22</sup>rayu : layu.

<sup>23</sup>[haka].

ambata gama da ina da su domin idan wani yana nema ya kashe ni,<sup>24</sup> ni in rigaye shi in kashe shi, amma yau tun da na samu magani wanda idan na sha ba wanda ya ke da ikon kashe na a duniya, dai Alhamdulillah, <sup>25</sup> zan zubar da na wa kayan mugunta ta duka. <sup>26</sup> Sa'annan ya kawo magani iri iri, da rayu <sup>27</sup> da guraye ya zuba a gaban jama <sup>28</sup> ya ce: Yau na tuba na bar wadannan duka, na ki Jabu na zama mutumen gaskiya yau. Wani lokaci malamin ya ce wa wani, "na gani cikin ruwan tulun da ke gaba na, kai mai kashen mutane ne" <sup>29</sup> sai ka ga mutumen ya yarda ya ce i, gaskiya ne na kashe mutum kaza. Wata mace ta ce ita ta kashe mutane goma sha shidda da mayeta. <sup>30</sup> (Abin da ya sa su ke wannan karya haka, domin girma ne a Tiv, idan mutum ya ce shi maye ne, yana kashen mutane <sup>31</sup> da mayeta, sai ka ga kowa na tsoronsa.) Watarana da na tafi wurin da sun taru <sup>32</sup> garin shan Inyamibuan, sai sarkinsu ya nuna mani magani iri iri, ya ce, idan mutum ya ci wadannan magani, ba za ya kare wannan rana ba sai ya mutu! Na ce, haka! Ya ce, i; sai na ce masa: Sai ka zabi wadanda sun fi mugu <sup>33</sup> duka a cikin su ka ba ni in ci ku gani, ya zabi iri uku ya ba ni, ga dukan jama'a kewaye da ni, suna ta cewa: Yau Akiga na kisan kai gama in ye ci lalei za ya mutu <sup>34</sup> ne ba shakka, sai na bubude duka na ci kowanensu. <sup>35</sup> Amma har yau ga ni nan da rai.

Idan mutum ya fadi laifofinsa duka, sai malamin ya cewa, Uwargida Aminatu, sai ki ba wa ne magani <sup>36</sup> ya sha, ita ko ta diba a cikin yarkoko <sup>37</sup> ta ba shi, shi sha. Idan ya sha sa'annan za a ba shi dan guntun sanda sain sa bai fi tafin hanu ba, <sup>38</sup> da kuma gashin rago (izga) za ya rika da su. Sun ce, dan guntun sanda nan akwai mutane a ciki, wadanda, idan kana tafiya sun fito don su kashe ka, sai mutane cikin yar sanda nan su fito su fado wa mayun da fada, su kokore <sup>39</sup> su duka ba mai kon <sup>40</sup> taba ka. Dan izga nan kwa, idan hadari ta tashi za ka tsauta masa da shi, suna ta cewa, idan hadari nan, Inyamibuan ne shi yi lafiya, amma idan na Jabu ne shi watse kada ta yi ruwa. Suna haka har kwanan baya a watan Angusta 1939. Sai wadansu guda bakwai a kauye daya, sunan kauyen Adebo a kasar Mbaitiav, Aradu ya fado ya kashe su bakwaidin duka gaba daya.

Idan mutum ya mutu ba su bizinewa, sai su haka kabari, amma ba da zurfi ba, su kawo gawan su sa a cikin ama a bar kabarin abude, <sup>41</sup> su kawo toka su barbada a kan gawan, su yan samari duka na zuriyan gawan su taru, su kewaye kabarin,

<sup>24</sup>kashe na : kashe ni / kisana.

<sup>25</sup>[Alhamdulillah].

<sup>26</sup>na wa kayan mugunta ta duka : nawa kayan mugunta duka / kayan muguntana duka.

<sup>27</sup>cf. fn. 22.

<sup>28</sup>[jama'a].

<sup>29</sup>cf. fn. 10 and fn. 21.

<sup>30</sup>mayeta : maita.

<sup>31</sup>cf. fn. 10, fn. 21 and fn. 29.

<sup>32</sup>wurin da sun taru : wurin da suka taru.

<sup>33</sup>wadanda sun fi mugu : ? wadanda suka fi mugu.

<sup>34</sup>in ye ci, lalei za ya mutu : in ya ci, lalle za ya mutu.

<sup>35</sup>na bubude duka, na ci kowanensu : na bubuƙe duka, na ci kowannensu.

<sup>36</sup>ki ba wa ne magani : ki ba wane magani.

<sup>37</sup>yarkoko : ɗan ƙoƙo.

<sup>38</sup>sain sa bai fi tafin hanu ba : tsayinsa bai fi tafin hannu ba.

<sup>39</sup>kokore : kokkore.

<sup>40</sup>[ikon]

<sup>41</sup>ama a bar kabarin abude : amma a bar kabarin a buƙe.



suna ta rawa, dare da rana, domin kada mayu su zo su dauki gawan su tafi su ci; idan sun jira har kamar bakwai guda, sun gan kamar gawan ya soma doiyi,<sup>42</sup> sai kowa ya kawo tabarya, su taru su dadake<sup>43</sup> gawan su parpashe<sup>44</sup> kan duka, har gawan ya zama lubul kauyen duk ya gama da warin gawan. Sa'annan su kawo kasa kadan su ya yafa<sup>45</sup> a kan gawan. Bayan sun yi haka shi wanda an yi masa mutuwan shi kawo rago ko akwiya ya ba su, su yanka su ci, don sun yi masa abu mai kyau, sun jira masa gawa har mayu ba su dauka ba.

Yanzu a kasar Tiv yansamarai<sup>46</sup> da mata sun cika da hauka, ba su a tsoron manye,<sup>47</sup> ba su a yin aiki. Dubi ridi shi ne arzikin Tiv, amma bana ba a kula da noman ridin ba. Kuma ga wani abin da ke ciki, yawancin wadansun sha Inyamibuan,<sup>48</sup> wadansu suna mutuwa, wadansu sun haukace. Saboda mungayen<sup>49</sup> itatuwan da a ke magani da su a na ba su suna sha nan ne. Kwana nan, Turawan Dogonlamba na kasar Tiv, sun tashi a tseye<sup>50</sup> don su kwabe wannan mugunta, suna ka kama<sup>51</sup> masu ba da maganin sha da masu dakan gawaye,<sup>52</sup> suna aiko wa da su<sup>53</sup> a Kaduna su yi sarka, ana ci wa wadansu tara daga mai £1. 0. 0 har mai £3. 0. 0. Amma duk da haka wannan mugunta ba ta kwabu ba har yau.

Ga dalilin wuyan kwabon wannan mugunta. Jaraba ce da kwadayi; masu bada maganin Inyamibuan, a na ba su kudi, a na ce da su sarkuna, su ko da matalauta ne, yanzu kwa sun zama mawadatai<sup>54</sup> ta wajen kudin da masu sha ke ba su, ba su iya su bari komi hanawan Turawan shari'a. Bayan haka kuma su sarakunan Inyamibuan su kan ba,<sup>55</sup> masu zaman shari'ar Tiv kudi domin kada su hana su, su kwa don kwadayin kudin, sai su ce masu, ku yi ta yin abin ku, mu, mu a yi maku dabarun da Turawa ba za su hana maku ba. Suna kwa yin dabarun.

Amma kwana nan su ma an gane munafancinsu. Turawa suna yi n musu shari'a da zafi, kada in an yi bincike har an iske wani mai zaman shari'a wanda ya ci kudi haka, a kan yi masa shari'a mai zafi, wani a ci masa tara, bayan haka kuma a raba shi da aikinsa na zaman shari'a.

Abin da mu ke ciki yau a kasar mu na Tiv ke nan.

Yanuwa masu bi, sai ku yi mana addu'a domin Ubangiji Allah shi kwawas<sup>56</sup> mana da wannan mugunyar abu.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>42</sup>doiyi : doyi.

<sup>43</sup>dadake : daddake.

<sup>44</sup>parpashe : farfashe.

<sup>45</sup>ya yafa : yayyafa.

<sup>46</sup>yansamarai : 'yan samari.

<sup>47</sup>[manya].

<sup>48</sup>yawancin wadansun shan Inyamibuan : yawancin wadanda suka sha Inyamibuan.

<sup>49</sup>mungayen : mugayen.

<sup>50</sup>tseye : tsaye

<sup>51</sup>ka kama : kakkama.

<sup>52</sup>gawaye : gawaiwai / gawawwaki.

<sup>53</sup>aiko wa da su : aikowa da su.

<sup>54</sup>mawadatai : mawadata.

<sup>55</sup>extraneous comma inserted mid-sentence.

<sup>56</sup>kwawas : kawas.

<sup>57</sup>mugunyar abu : mugun abu.

LABARIN INYAMIBUAN.

B. Akiga

D.R.C.M. Mkar.

Kasar Tiv (Munshi) duk ta damu a shekara nan ta 1939. A kan wani sabon abu wanda a na ce da shi Inyamibuan. Inyamibuan fasalinsa a bakin Tiv: Naman kurmi ne.

Inyamibuan shi ya sa har kasar Tiv duka ta damu da gaske. Inyamibuan ya dama Tiv don kansu ma, har ba su san abin da su ke ciki yau ba, sun damu da gaske kasan ta yi talauci ta yi nyungwa, bana da kyar ne za a gama biyan gandu a kasar Tiv, sabili da Inyamibuan. Turawan Gomnati Joji Joji babu wani aiki mai girma mai tsanani da suke yi a shekara nan kamar na Inyamibuan, domin su kwabe wannan mungunyar abu. Ya zama kamar wuta mara bituwa, in an bice ta a nan ta tashi can. Ya kuma damu aikin Mishan (Mission) yawan cin makarantan Mishan na kauyuka sun rufu saboda Inyamibuan; gama yawancin yan makaranta sun zama yan Inyamibuan, yawancin masu bi sun zama masu bin Inyamibuan, har suna ce da Inyamibuan Allah ne.

Fig. 1 - B/W online, B/W in print

FIGURE 1 Photograph of part of the first page of the Hausa typewritten text (1939).

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