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メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2009-04-28 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 田中, 二郎 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.15021/00003136">https://doi.org/10.15021/00003136</a>

## Egalitarianism and the Cash Economy among the Central Kalahari San

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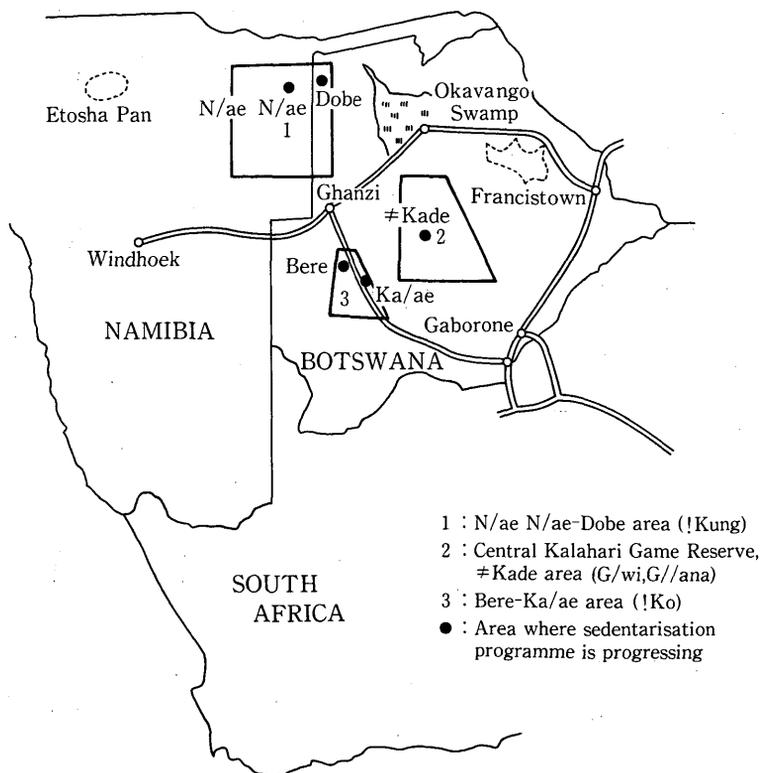
The San (Bushmen) are well known as a people who used to live by hunting and gathering up until about 10 years ago. Recent historical studies [PARKINGTON 1984; GORDON 1984; ELPHICK 1985; GUENTHER 1986a] and archeological studies [DENBOW 1984; WILMSEN 1989; WILMSEN and DENBOW 1990] have revealed that the history of the San's contact with agro-pastoral peoples can be dated back much earlier than has been thought. This long contact, differing in degree from region to region, has played a part in the development of regional variations in their lifestyle and social organisation [BARNARD 1979, 1986; GUENTHER 1986a, 1986b; ICHIKAWA 1986; HITCHCOCK 1982, 1987; BIESELE *et al.* 1989; SOLWAY and LEE 1990].

Up to the 1960s part of the !Kung population living in the northwestern region of the Kalahari Desert (around the N/ae N/ae-Dobe area along the border between Botswana and Namibia), part of the Central Kalahari San population (G/wi and G//ana) in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, and part of the !Kō population in the southwestern Botswana (Figure 1) still lived almost entirely by hunting and gathering although using iron tools and consuming tobacco. Even where, as among the Central Kalahari San, there was some intermarriage with the Bantu, these populations retained a hunting and gathering lifestyle in those arid areas unsuitable for cultivation or livestock-raising. It does not seem inaccurate to say that despite external influences they retained the principal features of their lifestyle and their social framework as well as their own language and cultural identity.

The early studies of the San focussed on developing a model of hunting and gathering societies and placing it in an evolutionary framework [LEE and DEVORE 1968, 1976; LEE 1979; TANAKA 1980]. These studies mostly neglected the history of the people's contact with other cultures and tended to overemphasise their uniqueness. Nevertheless, the amount of knowledge obtained through such studies was significant.

In the 1970s, these San populations began to be confronted with huge external pressures resulting in rapid changes. In recent years these changes were directed by the government and Christian missionaries aiming at the transformation of the people's lifestyle. At several places, villages were established with educational, medical and water supply facilities, and the people, encouraged to settle at them so that they could enjoy the benefits of modern welfare and education.

In the 1980s, I organised five research visits to investigate the resulting changes



**Figure 1.** The San's habitats and the areas where the sedentarisation programme is in progress.

in various aspects of the life and society of the Central Kalahari San at the ≠Kade settlement established in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve [TANAKA 1987a; SUGAWARA 1988, 1990; IKEYA 1989, 1991; OSAKI 1984, 1991]. In spite of the population concentration, the introduction of a cash economy, wage labour and the availability of commodities, the San still retained their egalitarianism and many traditional social arrangements.

I have outlined the recent changes among the Central Kalahari San in an interim report [TANAKA 1987a], and in this volume, Sugawara analyses some micro-sociological transformations in the exchange system. The present paper aims to describe the changes in the people's concept of labour, their exchange system, and their value system and probe the mechanisms which work to slow down this process.

### **THE REMOTE AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND IMPROVEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

In 1974 the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) was started by the

government of Botswana and in 1979 this programme was extended to the ≠Kade area (for a full account see Tanaka [1987a]). In this year a borehole, which had been unused by the inhabitants since it was put down in 1962, was improved and a reservoir tank was built. A San was employed by the government as the pump attendant, and water became permanently available. Beside the borehole, a RADP office was opened with one employee who was joined by an agricultural consultant, and a school teacher. In this way, the sedentarisation policy of the Botswana government started.

To ameliorate the effects of a series of droughts starting in 1981 the government of Botswana distributed relief goods from overseas among the inhabitants of remote areas. Maize flour, powdered milk and vegetable oil were periodically distributed, and used clothes were handed out on an irregular basis. Work on a school, houses for the school teachers, and a clinic was begun in 1982 and construction was completed in 1983.

In 1984 three school teachers arrived, the primary school was officially opened and a nurse dispatched from a Christian mission, began work. In 1983, through the Ghanzi Production Development Committee, a Danish volunteer organisation established Ghanzi Craft, an organisation for the trade of handicrafts. Ghanzi Craft opened a shop in ≠Kade in 1984. In 1984 an additional borehole was put down about 1 km southeast of the old borehole, and the water from both boreholes was pumped up to a reservoir built on a hill, while construction of piping was

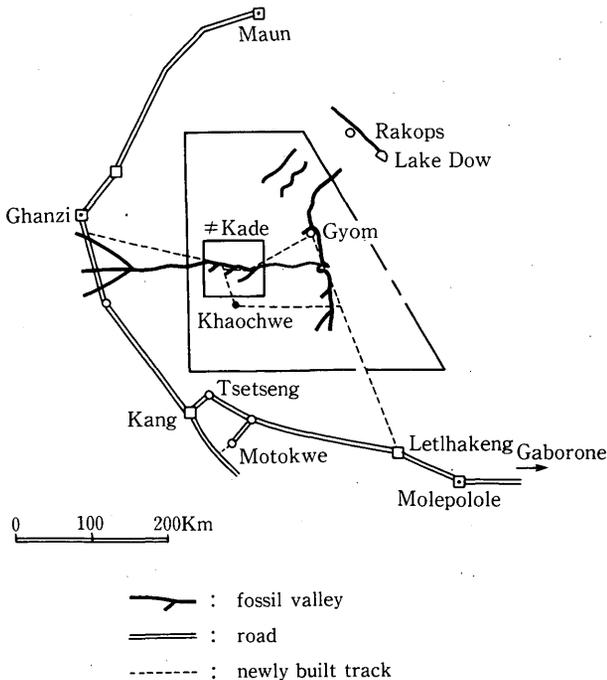


Figure 2. Sketch map of the ≠Kade area.

started for supplying water within a radius of 2 km. Since the road between the nearby town Ghanzi and ≠Kade was a roundabout, rough road with many curves, construction of a new straight road between Ghanzi and ≠Kade was started in 1983. This was completed in 1985. Furthermore, new roads leading through Gyom (Molapo) 100 km east of ≠Kade to Gaborone, and via Khaochwe 50 km south of ≠Kade to Gaborone (Figure 2) were constructed.

In the last 2–3 years, a diamond mining team has entered the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and many straight roads are now under construction within the Reserve.

As the infrastructure was improved by the government, the mission, and the mining company, a concentration of population around the borehole at ≠Kade resulted, creating many changes in the residential pattern and social relationships. Depletion of wild food resources, the introduction of agriculture, the raising of domestic animals and the distribution of rations have also created fundamental changes to the traditional economic system, including a modification of their reciprocal exchange system and borrowing patterns.

I will first review various aspects of the economic and social changes resulting from sedentary living and then look at the confrontations between the old and new value systems.

## ECONOMIC CHANGES

### Sedentary living

As the various facilities at the ≠Kade settlement were added and developed, many people who used to be scattered and leading a hunting and gathering life came to live there. The 200 or so original residents of the ≠Kade area first moved to the vicinity of the borehole. Then, those G/wi and G//ana who were temporarily employed as farmhands by Ghanzi farmers and had kin ties with the people of ≠Kade arrived. Subsequently, immigrants from the Gyom area—eastern and southeastern parts of the Reserve, including Gyom (Molapo), Metse-a-manong, Menoatse, and Kikao—increasingly sought support from their relatives who had settled in the area. Among the immigrants from the Gyom area, there were many of the Kgalagadi, a Bantu agro-pastoral people, as well as the G/wi and the G//ana. Many of these immigrants other than from the ≠Kade area came by obtaining rides on government trucks, such as those of the RADP or the Department of Water Affairs from which they could obtain lifts on the return trips after they had distributed food and water. Since the government had publicised its sedentarisation policy to encourage people to take advantage of opportunities for schooling, medical care, and other welfare services, there was no hindrance in facilitating the people to move to the settlement.

By the end of 1979, the year in which the development project started, the population of the ≠Kade settlement already exceeded 300. A subsequent series of droughts followed by the distribution of aid goods saw the population mushroom

to 530 by the end of 1982. Until 1984 the population fluctuated between 500 and 600 but began to increase again in that year so that it reached 750 in 1987 and now stands at around 800. At the beginning the people's attachment to their former habitations was strong and everybody felt a stranger to some degree. In the rainy season, when water and wild plant foods became available in abundance, many people would return to their former habitations keeping a balanced population of about 500–600. As the number of buildings and facilities grew, residents developed some rules for sedentary living. As people got used to settlement life, the present level of population has been attained. Today there remain only a few people in the Gyom area, most having moved to ≠Kade or Bantu agricultural villages outside the Reserve.

Until the 1970s residents depended largely on hunting and gathering, except for a few people who learned from the Kgalagadi to raise goats and to plant melons and maize. In their hunting and gathering life, 80% of the calories required were obtained from wild plants collected by gathering [TANAKA 1969, 1980]. Gathering was carried out within a 4–5 km radius of the camp, and when the resources became scarce, they moved their camp to a new unexploited area. Frequent movement in small groups was an effective way of utilising wild plants. Sedentary living with many people in one settlement quickly resulted in shortages of plant resources around the settlement. Gathering lost its efficiency, and with it self-sufficiency in the food supply.

### **Changes of hunting methods**

The San's traditional hunting methods were mainly solo bow-and-arrow hunting with poisoned arrows and snare springs with ropes (Table 1). Since they shifted to sedentary living, collective equestrian hunting by groups has become dominant instead. According to Osaki's research in 1982–83, the approximately 500 people at the time captured 91 large mammals, of which 87 were obtained by equestrian hunting. Only 3 mammals were killed by bow-and-arrow hunting, and one by use of spear and dogs [OSAKI 1984].

There are two types of equestrian hunting: when game animals happen to come close to ≠Kade, solo hunters go hunting on horseback. Alternatively there are planned hunts, by several to 20 or so men forming a team and spend a few nights away from the settlement. The former method relies entirely on the chance of game animals coming close to the settlement, and the frequency and success of such hunting is low. In the latter method, the hunting fields are chosen on the basis of prior information on the game animals' migration and distribution, with hunting trips lasting about a week. This kind of group equestrian hunting shows a statistically significant correlation between the duration of the hunting trip in days and the number of game animals obtained. On average, one animal is obtained per two days [OSAKI 1984: 55]. Hunting skills vary greatly from one individual to another using the traditional bow-and-arrow technique and even for skilled hunters, the success of a hunt depends greatly on chance factors so that on most

**Table 1.** Traditional hunting method and number of animals caught in 1960s (per year per 50 persons).

Hunting method	Name of animals	Average weight of mature animals (kg)	Estimated number of animals, yearly	Estimate of total weight of animals (kg)
Bow and arrow	Giraffe	1,000	0.25	250
	Eland	300	4	1,200
	Kudu	300	3	900
	Gemsbok	200	10	2,000
	Wildebeest	200	0.5	100
	Hartebeest	200	1	200
	subtotal			4,650
Snare springe with rope	Springbok	50	3	150
	Bush duiker	15	10	150
	Steenbok	10	36	360
	Black-backed jackal	4	6	24
	Bat-eared fox	2	14	28
	Cape fox	2	1	2
	Ostrich	20	3	60
	Kori bustard	6	12	72
	Guinea fowl	0.5	2	1
	Korhaan	0.4	5	2
	subtotal			849
Springhare hook	Springhare	1	50	50
	subtotal			50
Run down (spear/club)	Warthog	16	0.5	8
	Hare	1	2	2
	Genet	1	2	2
	Porcupine	2	2	4
	Python	7	3	21
	subtotal			37
	Total			5,586

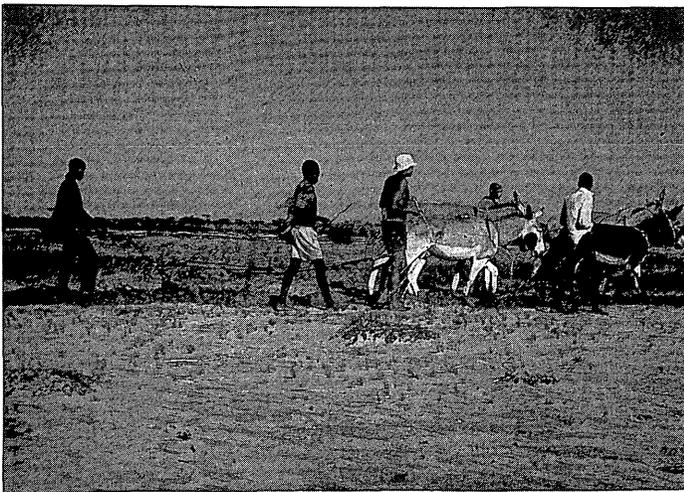
days they return to camp empty-handed [TANAKA 1980: 31–32]. By contrast, the newly introduced equestrian hunting has a high efficiency and stable catches. Above all, the predictability of success in a hunt is qualitatively different from the past. Owing to the increased cash income from construction work and from the selling of folkcrafts to Ghanzi Craft, people can now buy horses more easily than before. As the population at ≠Kade has increased and the people become used to sedentary living, equestrian hunting has become more prominent, and the number of horses raised at the settlement has steadily increased from 18 in 1982, to 54 in 1984, and 77 in 1987.

Another interesting change relates to spear hunting with dogs, which was rarely practiced in the past. This has increased in frequency since 1987 with 23 game animals being taken by this method in a 5 months period from August 1987 to January 1988 [IKEYA 1989]. The game animals hunted by this method are mostly medium-sized antelopes, medium-sized carnivores (black-backed jackal and bat-eared fox), and the young of large antelopes. The amount of meat obtained is considerably less in comparison with equestrian hunting but although its subsistence significance is low, it plays an important role in the people's exchange system.

### Cultivation and livestock-raising

When I first began studying the San in 1967, some of the people living in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve were raising goats and involved in small-scale farming of watermelons, maize, and cow peas during the rainy season. Those who were cultivating and raising livestock were mainly Kgalagadi and people of mixed descent from intermarriages between Kgalagadi men and San women. As I have reported elsewhere [TANAKA 1980], however, even for the semi-sedentary Kgalagadi, agriculture and husbandry only partly sustained their subsistence economy: more than half of their caloric intake depended on the hunting and gathering of wild animals and plants. Kgalagadi of mixed descent living with San had fewer goats and their cultivation was on a smaller scale than those of Kgalagadi of full descent. In the Kgalagadi-San mixed living group as a whole, farm and livestock products had little significance for subsistence [TANAKA 1980].

As part of the sedentarisation policy, the government encouraged cultivation: maize, sorghum, and cow peas were distributed free for planting, and three plows to be pulled by donkeys were provided. Some family groups began to till small



**Photo. 1.** When rain comes, San men start ploughing in the vicinity of the settlement.

plots of land. According to Osaki [1991], 14 out of 48 families he studied had their own fields and the remaining 34 families tilled 10 fields in groups: the area involved was only about 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> per family. The Kalahari Desert is an arid place with a rainfall of only 400 mm during the rainy season. Cultivation, depending on this scanty rainfall, is fortuitous and provides only a small yield. The rainfall fluctuates annually, and even in a favourable year food production suffices for only a few months' subsistence. During the series of droughts in the 1980s, there were hardly any harvests.

Kgalagadi and Kgalagadi-San of mixed descent came to ≠Kade with goats, donkeys, and horses. This move greatly contributed to the increase of livestock numbers in the 1980s. These numbers were further increased in 1984 by the government lending three infant female goats to those who had none and by the use of cash from construction work and folkcrafts to purchase livestock. These factors together resulted in the number of goats increasing from about 500 in 1982 to 2,700 in 1987. When Ikeya visited the area in 1987, the 2,700 goats were distributed among 35 camps, ranging from 8 to 440 goats per camp [1991]. The number of goats raised per family is mostly less than ten and families having more than several tens of goats are exceptional.

Cattle are prohibited in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve by the government for the protection of the vegetation. Because of this, livestock raising as well as cultivation, with the exception of the few families mentioned above, plays only a minor role in the settlement inhabitants' economy for the present.

### **Cash income**

Even in the 1970s, when the people were still entirely dependent on hunting and gathering for food, they practised small scale trade at the nearest town, Ghanzi, 200 km to the northwest, or at the villages of Bantu agriculturalists, 200 km to the south. The San bartered animal furs for tobacco and iron utensils. Occasionally they sold furs at shops, and bought sugar, foodstuffs, and clothing with the cash they obtained. Although many people knew of cash in this way, a cash economy never dominated the economy of the people in the ≠Kade area.

By the 1980s, however, the construction of buildings, roads, the laying of water piping and the establishment of the folkcraft trade provided the people with lasting sources of cash income. Many urbanities, such as school teachers, medical professionals, and construction people, moved to ≠Kade. They began to buy large quantities of meat from the equestrian hunters with cash. Along with the trading of folkcrafts, this led to the establishment of a full cash economy.

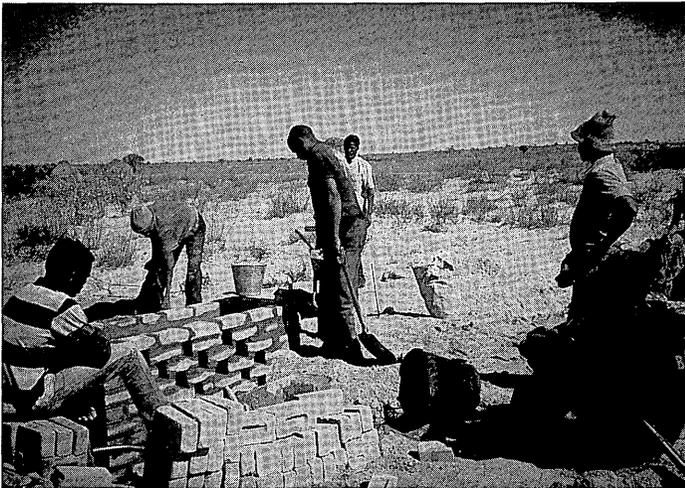
In the first half of the 1980s, about 60 San were engaged in construction work as labourers. After 1984, when most building and pipe laying was over, only road extension works and surveys for diamond mining were left as sources of wage labour. About 30 people are employed in such work. Since road construction and mining surveys are conducted more than 50 km away from ≠Kade, the employees live at the respective sites away from the settlement, only returning home at the

weekends. Income from construction labour has increased from 2.5 pula per day in 1982 to 4.5 pula per day in 1989 reflecting the inflationary trend in Southern Africa. Recalculated in international currencies, the wage has been quite stable moving within the range of \$US2.5 to \$US2.75. An industrious man who works for 20 days a month earns about \$US50. Considering that a horse is priced between \$US70 and \$US300, a monthly income of \$US50 is significant for the inhabitants of ≠Kade. The total annual revenue at ≠Kade from wage labour is estimated to be:  $4.5 \text{ pula/day} \times 20 \text{ days} \times 12 \text{ months} \times 30 \text{ persons} = 32,400 \text{ pula}$  (\$US18,000; \$US1.00 = P1.8 in 1989).

Ghanzi Craft is run as a non-profit enterprise with the aim of providing more local people with the opportunity to earn cash incomes. The folkcrafts bought from them are sold to tourists with a 25% mark-up to cover marketing costs. A set of hunting weapons, a most popular craft item, consisting of a bow, arrows, a spear, a digging stick, and a fire-making stick put together in a bag of steenbok leather, is purchased at P16 and sold at P20 by the craft shop. A leather bag ornamented with beads is purchased at P11 and sold at P14.

Ghanzi Craft comes to ≠Kade for trade once every six weeks. The purchases per trade in 1989 were as follows (Ghanzi Craft's statistics): P3,295 in May, P4,441 in June, P3,434.50 in August, P4,910 in October, and P4,159 in December. The statistics for January and March were not available. These figures give an average figure of P4,047.90 suggesting an annual income of P28,335.30 ( $P4,047.90 \times [5+2]$ ) into the ≠Kade economy. According to Ghanzi Craft's record, the 1988 purchases amounted to P21,000, suggesting a regular annual turnover of more than P20,000 (\$US11,000) per year with indications of a rising trend.

According to Mr. B. Mogens (personal communication) of Ghanzi Craft, there



**Photo. 2.** Wages from building construction work are an important source of income for the San.

are about 100 steady craft producers. The most industrious person sells crafts worth about P400 per trade and many craftsmen earn P100 each.

As already stated, collective equestrian hunting is highly efficient and the size of the kill predictable. A hunting trip taking about a week brings 2-5 large mammals. Although the hunters themselves consume a large amount of meat (sometimes 40% of the total) at the hunting camps, most meat pieces are dried and brought back to the settlement. After the distribution of meat among the hunting members is over, the remaining meat, about a half of the whole kill, becomes the property of the horse owners. They share the meat with their relatives and friends in and out of the camp and sell a considerable amount for cash to above-mentioned urbanities.

Exchange among the ≠Kade inhabitants themselves increasingly involves cash. Goats, donkeys, or horses are sometimes traded within ≠Kade. When the price is high, such as in the cases of horses, part of the price may be paid in goats. In other words, the goat has become more than a livestock for subsistence, and now is valued as a store of value. Condiments, such as tobacco, tea, and sugar, and everyday goods, such as knives, beads, and moulded pans are now sometimes traded with cash (see Sugawara in this volume).

Those who have surplus money buy sugar to brew beer overnight using a method learned from the Kgalagadi. From 2 kg of sugar, about 20 litres of beer are brewed. By selling this beer, a 500% profit can be made.

Thus cash and a market economy have become rapidly established in the ≠Kade area but neither the supply of cash nor goods is able to satisfy the demand. If a cash trade is agreed on, but there is not enough money or goods, as often happens, the people deal anyway on credit recorded only in their memories.

### **Distribution of foods**

Among the 100 or so species of wild plant foods in the region, the 11 abundant species with high nutritional values are even today often collected in season (see Tanaka [1980]). However, the amounts collected hardly suffice for the large population.

Despite the efficiency of equestrian hunting, the amount of meat consumed cannot be higher than it was before the people settled at ≠Kade where the animal population density is low. In fact, according to Osaki [1984], 87 large ungulates totalling 22,800 kg were caught in a five months period in 1982-83 with equestrian hunting. This gives a per camp (50 persons) figure of 5,472 kg which differs little from the 5,586 kg, which I obtained in my study in 1967-68 (Table 1). This fact indicates that overexploitation has not followed the improved hunting efficiency; the people still do not catch more than they need. They know through their accumulated experience that overexploitation disturbs and eventually destroys their own conditions of existence.

One quarter of the population of ≠Kade now consists of Kgalagadi. Equestrian hunting is originally their hunting technique. Over many generations the Kgalagadi hunted with this technique using muzzle-loading muskets which were

confiscated by the government at the onset of the sedentarisation policy. The Kgalagadi, who went deep into Kalahari with their agro-pastoral techniques have over the years adopted many San cultural elements and practices and even come to depend on hunting and gathering for more than half of their foods. Today they practise equestrian hunting at ≠Kade in an almost identical way to the San.

As stated in the preceding section, cultivation and goat-raising do not play an important role in the ≠Kade people's food consumption. Since sedentary living began, dependency on cash has increased year after year. The frequency of cash purchase of wheat flour, and sugar, has increased but partly because of the distribution of maize flour and vegetable oil which has been continued since the drought in 1981, the people rely on distributed food as their staple. Cash is mainly spent on the purchase of items such as horses, donkeys, goats, clothes, moulded cooking pots, enamelled ironwares, alcoholic beverages and tobacco.

## SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF CONCENTRATED LIVING

### Residential groups

In the past the San, used to live in labile groups consisting of 20–80 people, moving every few weeks from one place to another with in a radius of about 50 km. The total population in the ≠Kade area was around 200 people. Now there are in addition about 600 immigrants from surrounding areas and all 800 people live within 3 km of the borehole. These 800 people speak the closely related languages of G//ana or G/wi, including agro-pastoral Kgalagadi speakers.

The Central Kalahari San have little territorial exclusiveness and welcome whoever visits them: however, permanent residence seems to be another matter [TANAKA 1987a]. A wide variety of people now live in the ≠Kade settlement in addition to the 200 people who were originally inhabitants of the area, those who

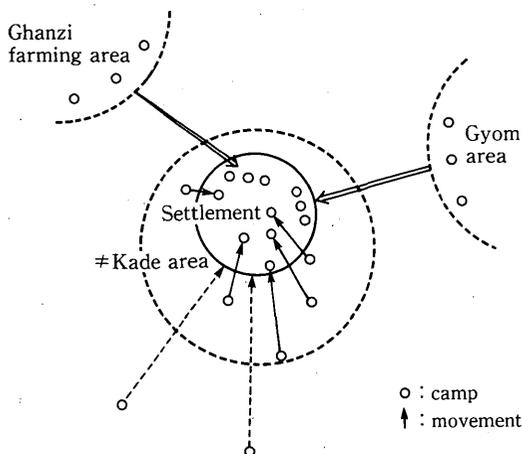


Figure 3. Schematic diagram of the moves to the settlement.

used to live in the Ghanzi farming area in close contact with modern civilisation, Kgalagadi who used to live by semi-sedentary agro-pastoralism at a watering place (not permanent) in the Gyom area, Kgalagadi-San of mixed descent people and G/wi who had close contact with Bantu agriculturalists to the south of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. The people have minor differences in lifestyle, ethnic and territorial identity in accordance with their degree of contact with outsiders, their cohabitation with other ethnic groups, and area of origin.

These different groups do not intermingle with one another in the settlement but live in separate residential groups (camps). Their camps used to be set up 10–20 km apart from one another prior to the move to ≠Kade but now the intergroup distance is reduced to 100–500 m although there has been no change in the relative spacing arrangements (Figure 3).

### **Relationships between ethnic groups**

The population ratio of the three ethnic groups; G//ana, G/wi, and Kgalagadi, in the ratio of 1 : 2 : 1. These groups share similar lifestyles, cultures, and languages. Each ethnic group is subdivided into sub-groups with minute differences in accordance with the place of origin and the history of contact with other ethnic groups and other cultures.

The relationship between a hunting and gathering people and a neighbouring agricultural (or agro-pastoral) people is commonly characterised by the agriculturalists occupying a dominant socio-economic position. In the rain forest of Zaire as among the Kalahari Desert, when there is an intermarriage between a member of the hunting and gathering people and a neighbouring agriculturalist, the pattern is always that an agriculturalist male marries with a female from the hunting and gathering people. In both these cases, the agriculturalist society is patrilineal, and the marriage takes place as a kind of hypergamy for the hunting and gathering people. This kind of Kgalagadi-San marriage is the only inter-ethnic group relationship that is distinctively asymmetrical. Among the San themselves, intermarriages between G//ana and G/wi are common and all ethnicity-gender combinations are seen. This practice is partly because San society is not unilineal. Moreover, there is no apparent socio-economic inequality between the G//ana and the G/wi.

Usually a considerable portion of the goats raised at a camp are the property of the inhabitants of other camps, sometimes, indeed, almost the whole herd belongs to others. Those who place their goats in the care of others are usually Kgalagadi or people of mixed Kgalagadi-San descent, who own many goats but even those who have only a few goats may put them in the care of those who have many, and care for no goats themselves.

Those who are entrusted with goats are entitled to use the milk as they like and to obtain a female kid from among those that are newly born [IKEYA 1991]. By putting some of their goats in charge of other people, the owners can spread the risk of disease and damage from wild animals to their herd and also avoid overgrazing in

the ≠Kade area.

The network of goat agistment is intertwined within the groups at ≠Kade and over 100 km beyond. In this network, the people recognise and restrengthen their mutual trust with others through goats. The loan of goats by the government in effect increased the number of goat owners, and in consequence encouraged the expansion of the goat agistment network, which now plays an important role in social facilitation in the settlement.

With regards to the tilling of fields, some field owners ask other men to work in their fields. In such cases the owners are Kgalagadi or Kgalagadi-San, and the workers are San. Usually the payment for the work is made with tobacco or beer, but occasionally with cash as well.

Wilmsen and Denbow [1990] in their recent paper state that the San were placed at the bottom of the Kalahari social system, and that they were slaves of the Bantu agro-pastoralists. In the case of the Central Kalahari, the Kgalagadi were the frontiersmen of the Bantu agro-pastoralists, although those who entered the interior of the Reserve were relatively marginal among the Kgalagadi. However their relationship with the San has never been one of master-serf, or shown any signs of being a master-slave, relationship despite the slight difference in the socio-economic status but rather an economic symbiosis based on mutual trust.

## DISCUSSION

### Change in the concept of labour

In describing the case of an almost self-sufficient mountain village in Japan, Uchiyama [1988], a student of natural philosophy, writes: "When a villager said, 'I go to earn money,' he meant going for wage labour or doing work for money... . However, 'earning money' never meant humane work for the villager. For him, it was labour only for money. If he could have lived without doing it, he would have rather avoided it. Activity described as 'work' by the villagers, differs from wage labour and is characterised as an humane activity. Usually such work was directly linked to nature."

Wage labour, which came into the ≠Kade area in the 1970s, drastically changed the people's concept of work. Prior to 1970 the people occasionally received some return from the Kgalagadi for labouring in their fields, taking care of goats, or tanning game skins. However, when the new system in which a day labourer received a fixed amount of cash for his/her work was introduced, and when many people began to be engaged in this way, wage labour began to be differentiated from work and the idea the commoditised labour was born.

In San society hunting and gathering, child care, and house chores, mixed with singing, dancing, and talking, making work and play inseparable [TANAKA 1987b]. In industrialised nations hunting and fishing are counted as sports, and mushroom collecting and wild vegetable gathering are practiced as recreation. Even hunting and gathering as subsistence activity have many elements of play just

as rituals that are indispensable to social life. Informal gossip although not organised as meetings, results in the exchange of information and is an important social sanction.

In industrialised societies, play is regarded as the activity of children. However, the adults differentiate children from themselves. In hunting and gathering societies, children are almost always allowed to be around when there is political and sexual gossip, etc. They are allowed to join in a tobacco-smoking circle and there are few activities from which children are excluded because they are children. Children are not responsible for subsistence activities, and therefore play is their work. They play with toys found in nature. In the process, they obtain knowledge of animals, plants, and other natural phenomena, and acquire techniques necessary for the hunting and gathering life [TANAKA 1987b].

"A society with a market economy disintegrated the broad world of work, and gave a special position only to the narrow world of labour" [UCHIYAMA 1988]. The Central Kalahari San today are facing this very same change in their concept of labour.

### **Egalitarianism versus cash economy**

#### **Change in hunting methods and the consumption of meat**

Following the introduction of equestrian hunting, bow-and-arrow hunting became unpopular and new rules of meat distribution developed. When bow-and-arrow hunting was popular, the sharing of meat was the foundation of egalitarianism. In equestrian hunting, which provides a predictable and stable meat supply, meat has become obtainable by planning, and has partly become a source of cash income. The people's system of consumption has undergone a drastic alteration. Following the introduction of cash, the people have come to recognise that goods purchased with cash, i.e. things which were nonexistent in the traditional San society or only existed because of trade, do not fit into their traditional rules of sharing.

Horses, which are the key element in equestrian hunting, are the most expensive items purchased with cash. Hunted game animals are supposed to belong to the owners of the hunting tools. In bow-and-arrow hunting, the catch used to become the property of the owners of the arrow which killed the animal. Even those who could not participate in hunting, by making (or being given) arrows, and lending them to gifted hunters, could control a catch. In this setting, which allowed equal opportunities for all, egalitarian sharing of meat was practicable. In equestrian hunting, by contrast, those who can own horses are limited to a few persons so the foundations of reciprocity have vanished. In addition, there was another important factor which contributed to this change. The concentration of 500-800 people in a small area, has made such distribution of meat to all coresidents impracticable.

The people began to value catches obtained with introduced goods and hunting methods, differently from those obtained by traditional methods, and not to subject

them to the traditional rules of sharing. On the other hand, however, the traditional view that wild meat, as opposed to meat from domesticated animals, should be shared by all still persists in the minds of the meat owners as well as those who expect distribution. The two contradictory ideologies surface in various phases of meat consumption [TANAKA 1987a].

Since exchange of goods in an egalitarian society can be reduced to a one-to-one relationship between two persons [OTA 1986], the likelihood of sharing can be predicted from the closeness in kin relationship, degree of familiarity and past interactions between two people. When no sharing is expected, if one dares to visit the meat owner ("visit" is synonymous with "go to receive share," although the final receipt is another matter), both host and guest will have an unpleasant time. Most people, in such cases, refrain from visiting, and while saying, "he does not share his meat," they nibble on meat of their closer friends who have successfully obtained their shares.

For the horse owners (i.e. the possessors of meat), the sharing of meat seems irrational, since they can expect no return from those who have no horses. Egalitarianism is based on equal opportunities. Provided that those who give now may receive on some other occasion, egalitarian sharing works. Giving consistently without return was inconceivable in the San's traditional value system. Not only would the constant giver become uneasy, but also the constant receiver would feel the psychological strain of knowing that he must make a return someday.

In 1987, 10 years after the beginning of sedentary living, spear hunting with dogs, which had been previously rare, became very popular. The cause for its popularity, in spite of the spread of the more efficient equestrian hunting, seems to have been directly related to the need to counter the imbalance in exchange brought about by equestrian hunting. Hunting with dogs, although rare, has been practiced in the past, and the meat obtained by this method is still consumed under the traditional rules of egalitarian distribution [IKEYA 1989].

Bow-and-arrow hunting is not only inefficient but also requires more than 10 years training before one becomes proficient. Once people began sedentary living and got used to living on a permanent water source, they abandoned bow-and-arrow hunting in preference for the more predictable equestrian hunting. Even the middle-aged men, who used to be renowned hunters, do not wish to return to this old hunting method. Youngsters now receive little training in the use of the bow-and-arrow because they are at the primary school. Spear hunting with dogs, on the other hand, is more efficient, and has fewer technical difficulties. If well trained dogs are available, prey may be speared with ease while the dogs are attacking the cornered animals.

In spear hunting, the prey animals are medium to small-sized mammals. Although the total amount of meat obtained may be small, the amount may be just suitable for being shared by the hunting team members and in one or two camps they belong to. Thus the increased popularity of spear hunting, which used to play only a supplementary role in hunting activities seems to indicate that the people still

retain their traditional egalitarian ideology and long for the revival of egalitarianism.

### Cash, commercial goods, and savings

In the San's traditional hunting-gathering life, material culture was limited to those items that could be backpacked and carried away at once. The total number of such items was 80, but most families only owned 20 of them on average [TANAKA 1980]. Heavy or bulky items were only a few in number in the whole camp, and shared by all camp members. Thus ownership of such items did not differentiate people from each other in any practical way.

Increased cash has resulted in an increase in possessions. Moreover, there has been increasing differentiation in the amount of everyday items such as blankets, clothes, pots, plates, etc. between families. This is also true with regards to horses, donkeys and goats, which most people do not have. The few who do own most of them [OSAKI 1991; IKEYA 1991] get large sums of cash by selling the meat they obtain from equestrian hunting, further increasing their possessions. The gap snowballs.

In the dry Kalahari, there has been a technique for meat preservation—drying thin strips of meat. However, the people mostly shared all the meat or consumed it immediately. The optimistic outlook of the San did not make them feel any necessity to store a surplus and it was rare that meat remained uneaten for more than a few days. Today, as well as cash, various things are stored, a clear indicator that people's economic concepts are changing.

In spite of the developing consensus that cash and things bought with cash are not subject to sharing, people often demand money by saying, "Spare me 5 pula. I will buy sugar with it." In fact, on pay day, those who have earned money from wage labour share large portions of their salaries with their relatives and friends.

For the most part the San appear to be maintaining their egalitarianism in the face of the market economy. Even where potential contradictions are emerging such as budding commercial activities, equestrian hunting and spear hunting with dogs, the San seek a coexistence of the old and new in their everyday activities. By so doing they attempt to retain their identity by assimilating the recent changes to their past practices and values.

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