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The Economics of Social Life among the Central Kalahari San (G//anakhwe and G/wikhwe) in the Sedentary Community at !Koi!kom¹⁾

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Hunter-gatherer societies all over the world are currently undergoing profound transformations both in terms of economy and social organisation. The San of the harsh and dry Kalahari Desert, are no exception. In this paper I shall try to elucidate some essential features of the economic and social transformations of the life of the G//anakhwe and G/wikhwe San in the sedentary community at !Koi!kom in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana.

Since 1979, this area has undergone rapid change as a result of the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) pushed forward by the government which has encouraged people to settle around the !Koi!kom borehole. Since 1981, under the guidance of the RADP, both the San and the Kgalagadi people living in other areas outside of ≠Kade have begun to migrate to !Koi!kom. The people have settled into about 20 camps around the borehole and have become dependent on maize flour supplied by the government. Gathering of wild plants has declined, and the traditional bow-and-arrow hunting has been replaced by group hunting on horseback. This recent process of change in the life and society of the Central Kalahari San has been described in some detail by Tanaka [1987]²⁾.

I will begin by briefly examining group membership before turning to a consideration of the composition and derivation of people's belongings, including goats. I will then turn to a consideration of some aspects of social relations and cultural values in the sedentary situation. Drawing on conversational analysis³⁾ I highlight some points of tension between the different language speakers now thrown together and the way in which the perpetuation of the formalised extra-marital relationship underlines the continuing significance of economic mutualism.

1) The main part of this paper was originally presented at the Fifth International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies, Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory, Darwin, 29th August–2nd September 1988.

2) Cultural-ecological studies were carried out there by George Silberbauer between 1958 and 1966 [SILBERBAUER 1972, 1981] with the G/wi San living in the ≠Kade area located in the mid-western part of the reserve. In 1966, just after Silberbauer left, Tanaka Jiro started his research. Tanaka has studied the demography, subsistence ecology, group structure, nutrition and hygiene of the G//ana and G/wi San within this area over a 40 month period [TANAKA 1976, 1980]. ↗

I conclude by discussing the extent to which so called egalitarian values have been retained.

GROUP MEMBERSHIP

A population census in 1982 revealed that there was no significant difference in number among different kinds of primary relative linkages, by which households were connected with one another within the same camp (Table 1). This result suggests that the camps in the sedentary community are bilaterally organised, as was the case in their previous nomadic life [LEE 1979; TANAKA 1980]. Although camp membership has become far stabler after sedentarisation, occasional membership changes were observed. The process of fission and fusion of "family clusters" [TANAKA 1980] has been most closely observed among a group of three neighbouring camps totalling 66 G/wi-speaking people, including children, in the dry season of 1982. By 1984, this group had split into three distinct camps which were designated as P, S, and Km [SUGAWARA 1988] but by 1987, a tendency toward coresidence had become frequent again. For example Camp S and a large part of Camp P (P₁) are now located adjacent to each other (Figure 1). The total number of residents of the group exceeded more than 80 in 1987. This rapid population growth is mainly due to a rise in the birth rate and a conspicuous drop in infant mortality, the latter obviously caused by the excellent medical treatment offered by a clinic established in 1983.

Beginning in 1982, Tanaka has organised four successive research projects on the effects of this rapid transformation on the life and society of the San [OSAKI 1984; KITAMURA 1990; IKEYA 1989, 1991]. Participating in this project, during the first research period (August 1982–February 1983) I started a 'socio-ethological' study on the non-verbal aspects of face-to-face interaction, proxemic behaviour and physical contact between individuals [SUGAWARA 1984]. Gradually my interest has shifted from the nonverbal or ethological aspects to the verbal or socio-cultural aspects of face-to-face interaction. During the second research period (August 1984–January 1985) I studied the patterns of visiting between camps, the interactions between residents and visitors and in particular the greeting interactions [SUGAWARA 1988]. During the third period (July–November 1987) I listed the property of each household in the camp where I was working, and collected samples of everyday conversation. In the most recent paper, I attempted to integrate observations accumulated during all three periods into an argument on the interactional modes of the 'body' in co-presence [SUGAWARA 1990]. Finally, during the last period (July–November 1989) my analysis was concentrated on the conversational organisation and contents of discourse. The following description is primarily based on the data collected during the third research period.

- 3) Close examination of conversational interaction *per se* is beyond the scope of this chapter. Thus I cannot help omitting many details, and summarising complicated materials into compact and intelligible narratives. Considerations on the interactional organisation or rhetorical features of discourse have been given elsewhere [SUGAWARA 1991, n.d.].

Table 1. Numbers of primary relative linkages among adult residents of each camp.

Kinds of primary linkage	Dialect group			Total
	G//ana-prevalent	G//wi-prevalent	Mixed	
Parents-Son	2	3	1	6
Parents-Daughter	6	3	1	10
Father-Son	1	1	2	4
Father-Daughter	3	0	1	4
Mother-Son	11	5	2	18
Mother-Daughter	10	5	3	18
Brother-Brother	5	6	2	13
Brother-Sister	11	4	3	18
Sister-Sister	8	11	4	23

Kinship relations among residents of 13 camps were ascertained in August/September 1982. Sibling relations include those between half-siblings by either father or mother. Statistically, no significant difference was found among G//ana-prevalent, G//wi prevalent, and mixed camps.

In 1987 intensive observations were focussed on three neighbouring camps, here designated as P₁, P₂, and S. Fifteen 'households' were distinguished within this group. A household is defined as a set of persons sleeping in the same 'hut'

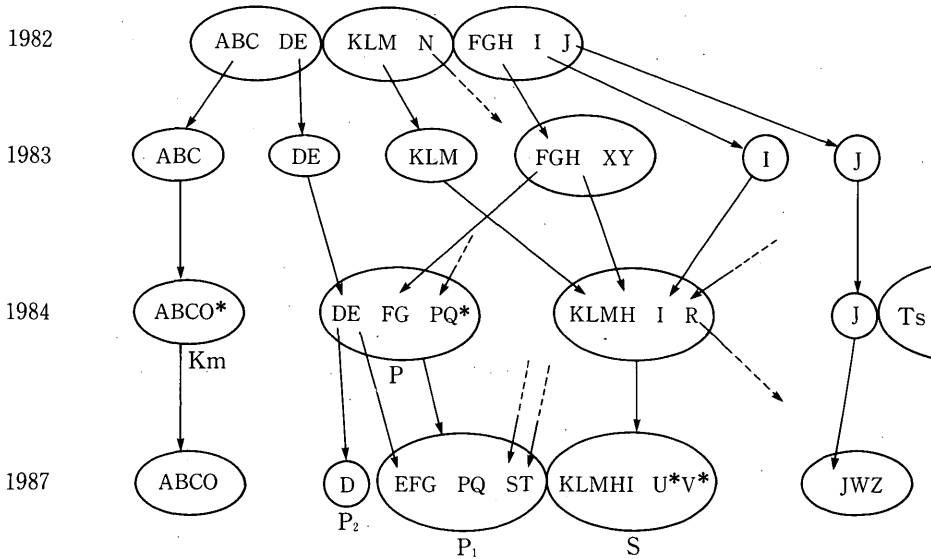


Figure 1. Fission and fusion of families among a group of G//wi-speaking people since 1982 to 1987.

Ovals indicate the camps and capital letters indicate the families composing each camp. Letters with asterisk indicate the new families formed by marriage.

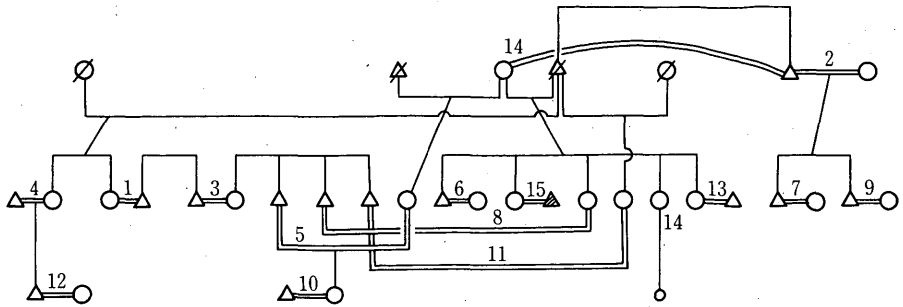


Figure 2. Genealogy of adult members of the group in 1987.

Arabic figures indicate the households most of which correspond to the families in Figure 1: 1=E, 2=K, 3=D, 4=S, 5=F, 6=I, 7=L, 8=G, 9=M, 10=P, 11=V, 12=Q, 13=U, 14=H, 15=T. Nos. 1-13 are in accordance with the relative age order among the husbands.

(*ng!u:*) at night and usually sharing the same food. In San society, a household usually corresponds to the 'nuclear family', which consists of a married couple and their immature offspring⁴).

Of the 15 households within the subject group, 11 consisted of married couples and their offspring, while two consisted of young couples without offspring. Two more households consisted of 'second' wives and their children, living in different huts from their husbands. One of them had left her husband in another camp for a long period, living with her married sisters in Camp P₁.

Figure 2 shows the simplified genealogy of adult members in the group who are or have been married. It should be noted that most households are connected to each other by primary relative linkages (ties between parent and offspring or between siblings) and most members are from the G/wi dialect group. Only the wife of household No. 7 and the husband of No. 10 are G//ana-speaking. The household numbers, with the exception of Nos. 14-15, are listed in accordance with the relative age order among the husbands.

4) The major deviations from the equivalence between a household and a nuclear family:

- (1) The position of adolescents: adolescents cannot sleep within the same hut as their parents. Adolescent males usually sleep outdoors, or behind a simple fence, near an open fire while adolescent females usually build their own hut, or gather in the hut of 'widowed' or 'separated' wives (see below). In both cases, they usually eat with their parents. However, there are many options for the adolescents as to where and with whom they can eat.
- (2) The single parent family: single parent families result when one spouse has died or been absent for a long period, or when the couple have divorced.
- (3) Polygyny: if a man is married to two or more women, the latter build their own respective huts. The husband might sleep and eat with his wives in rotation, but only one wife lives with him at a time in the same household.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE SEDENTARY LIFE

It has been pointed out that San material culture was very simple: the kind and amount of property was limited to the minimum level by the necessity of frequent and distant movement [LEE 1979; TANAKA 1980]. As is expected, since sedentarisation, not only belongings but also livestock have rapidly increased. In what follows I shall analyse the property held by people in order to elucidate the conditions of economic life in the sedentary community. First, I shall analyse the 'catalogue of belongings' in each household, which was confirmed by intensive interview of the owner and second, the ownership of goats raised in the camps.

Composition and derivation of belongings

I asked the husband or wife of each household how he or she obtained each item they own (Photo. 1). A total of 884 items were recorded, of which 3.3 percent (29/884) were folk-crafts to be sold to Ghantsi Craft, a corporation managed by several European staff. Excluding these folk-crafts, the kinds and derivation of 855 items of daily use were ascertained. The belongings are classified into seven categories: clothing (including shoes and sandals), bed clothes, containers (bags, bottles, cans, etc.), tools (hunting and gathering gear or handworking tools), utensils, hides (untanned or in the process of tanning), and other. The last category covers a wide range of goods, e.g., ornaments, pipes, walking sticks, odds and ends, and medicine.

The ways in which these possessions were obtained have been classified into nine categories: 1) *gift*: the owner (designated as Ego below) was presented with the item by other persons. This category includes 'hand me downs' (*!kaoshina*),



Photo. 1. Taking an inventory of belongings. An adolescent informant (left) is showing his father's belongings such as mortar, long cooking stick (for stirring meat), axe, quiver, carrying net, cup, pot, water container, dishes, etc.

usually clothes to Ego. 2) *barter*: the owner 'exchanged' (*duera*) some goods in return for the goods received. This category includes the cases of 'equivalent exchange' (*tsentsa*) where the same kinds of goods are exchanged only for the sake of preference. 3) *purchase*: Ego 'buys' (*//áen*) the good with cash. 4) *reward*: goods received as a reward for his or her 'labour' (*tse:*). 5) *found*: items 'found' (\neq *kxáeri* or *kó:*) while walking around, which had been thrown away by somebody else. 6) *self-made*: the goods 'made' (*tsaon*) by Ego. 7) *hunted/gathered*: goods Ego obtained (game or harvest) from hunting-and-gathering. Three methods of hunting, i.e., equestrian hunting, spear hunting with dogs, and snaring, were specified in the interview, but are not distinguished here. 8) *rations*: goods Ego received which were 'rations' (*haba*) provided by the government, and 9) *borrowed*: the goods Ego had 'borrowed' (*/óbe*) from other persons.

The most prevalent source of possessions is to receive it as a *gift* as opposed to receiving it by *barter*, or reciprocal exchange which was rare. Admittedly this method of synchronically enumerating the derivations of belonging is open to the danger of confusing cases of getting an item for nothing with that of "delayed reciprocity," where the return for a gift is to be paid sometime later. However, the San themselves are willing to declare that someone has 'given' something 'for nothing' (*kx[?]amha kíe*), and that another person has immediately asked for a return of another item. In the latter instance, the informants often say they have 'bought' the good by 'paying' something for it. Therefore it might be presumed that the *gift* partnerships represent some kind of positive social relationship, such as affinity, friendship, or an emotional attachment, while partnerships involved in both categories of *barter* and *purchase* represent more depersonalised or practical relationships. This presumption will be tested below, examining the range of partners involved in these kinds of transactions.

Several points emerge from a comparison of the ways in which the four categories of belongings were obtained (Figure 3). The most striking feature is that nearly 50 percent of the tools have been made by the owners themselves. This fact suggests that the subsistence efforts of each household are made independently. This supposition is supported by the conspicuous infrequency of *borrowed* goods. Tanaka [1980] pointed out that lending-and-borrowing of hunting gear and other daily necessities were common during previous periods, and argued that the willingness to lend and borrow such items might be a sociological device reinforcing the principle of reciprocity; emphasising the interdependence between different households. The high frequency of *self-made* tools and the conspicuous infrequency of *borrowed* belongings seems to reflect the profound transformation of socio-economic life from the previous system described by Tanaka.

Bed clothes stand in sharp contrast to tools, in that nearly 50 percent of the former were rationed out by the government. Bed clothes, especially blankets, are critical items which protect the aged, young, and sick from the severe cold in the dry winter. The blanket also seems to function as a kind of psychological shelter which imparts comfort and assurance to infants and children. It is one of the most

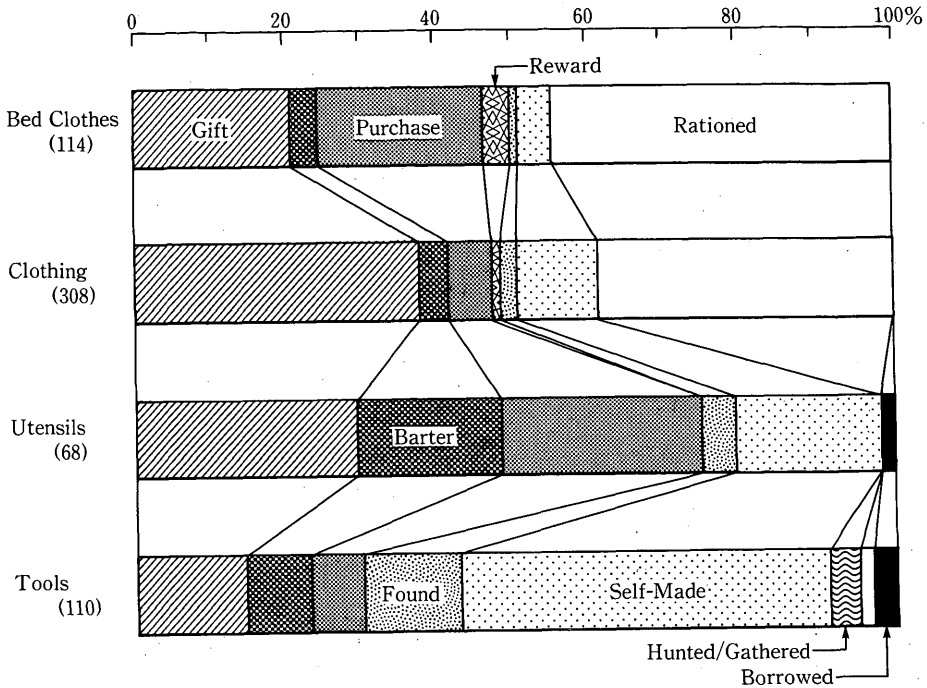


Figure 3. The ways in which four categories of belongings were obtained.

Figures in the parentheses indicate the numbers of recorded items.

attractive and valuable goods, which people often buy for cash, even though a considerable number of them are supplied by the government. An examination of the distribution of the prices of *purchased* goods, reveals a distinctive clustering in the low price range: about 56 percent of purchases are included within the range of 0.5–5.0 pula (1 pula=ca. 0.8 US\$). However, the second most frequent price cluster lies within the range of 10–15 pula. Most of the items included in this cluster are blankets. Especially, at the shop near !Koi!kom borehole, blankets are sold at a fixed price of 12.5 pula. This is a rather high price by San standards, but those who regularly obtain cash income do not hesitate to buy new blankets. A considerable number of bed clothes have been obtained as *gifts* and it was often the case that people received ‘hand me downs’ (*!kaoshina*) of old blankets pierced or scorched with holes.

The people get about 77 percent of their clothing as *gifts* or as *ration* in equal proportions. In the present sedentary community, clothes are regularly distributed at the clinic by the missionary nurse, so that the people seem to have enough clothes. Previously Western style clothes were highly valued by the San but nowadays the scarcity of clothes has decreased, and their relative abundance enables the people to readily use them as gifts which serve to confirm positive social relationships.

The ways in which utensils have been obtained are quite variable: they might be received as *gifts* (29.4%), by *purchase* (26.5%), *barter* (19.1%), or *self-made* (17.6%). The prices of utensils also cover a wide range: most were purchased at the price of less than 10 pula, but one conspicuous exception was observed, in which a big iron three legged pot was purchased at the price of 60 pula. This is the highest price for one item of all cases recorded. The high value put on the three-legged pots emerges from a consideration of *barter*. Five pots were bartered for other items; 1) one male goat, 2) two female goats, 3) one male and four female goats, 4) a piece of caracal hide and 10 duiker hides, and 5) 20 steenbok hides. Thus, it can be concluded that the three-legged pot is a very scarce and necessary item of daily life, for which the people have to pay a considerable amount of goods or money. Other cases of barter consisted of the exchange of 'valuable' goods, e.g., a spear for a goat, a saddle for a donkey, etc. It can safely be concluded that bartering is a principal means by which the San obtain a highly desired and relatively 'expensive' (*duru*;) good.

There is a striking variation among the households in the ways in which goods are obtained. This variation is primarily due to the different subsistence options which closely correlate with the husband's age (Figure 4). Thirteen husbands were divided into three age grades; old, middle, and young. The 'old' husbands differ from the other husbands, in that they seldom *purchase* good for cash and are reluctant to engage themselves in folk-craft making, the most reliable way to earn money. In contrast, 'young' husbands differ from the others in that they rarely get their goods by means of hunting-and-gathering. They engage themselves in construction labour and regularly earn a considerable amount of money. Even

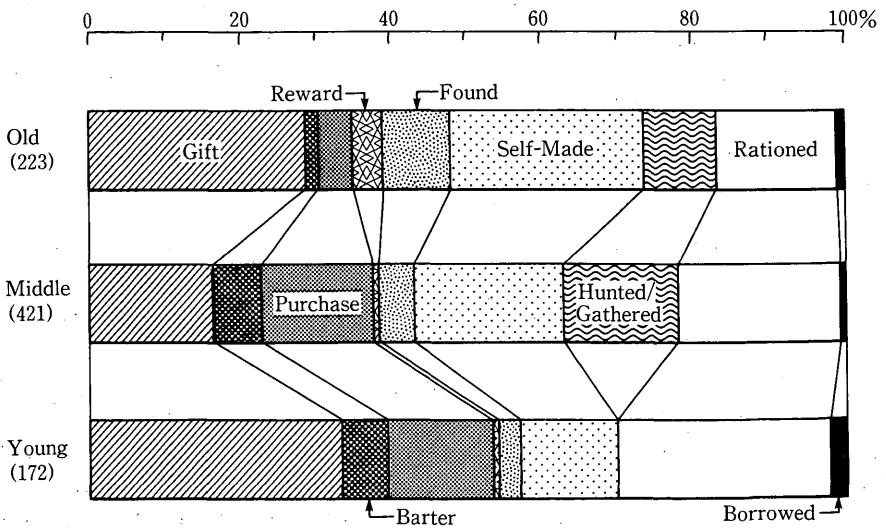


Figure 4. Variation in the ways in which belongings were obtained by three age grades of husbands (see the notation in Figure 3).

though they sporadically participate in the equestrian hunting, they are almost indifferent to snare hunting which is the most reliable means by which the skins of small antelopes, i.e., steenbok (*!gáen*) and duiker (*ng!owa*), can be obtained. The indifference of younger men to such traditional activities in the bush may be an omen of future difficulty the San will face in passing on their unique culture and knowledge of the environment to the next generation.

The partners who were involved in such transactions as *gift-giving*, *purchase*, and *barter*, are classified into five categories from the viewpoint of each informant: consanguines, primary and secondary affines, non-kin of G/wi-speaking group, non-kin of G//ana-speaking group, and Kgalagadi. Three kinds of dyads, i.e., male-male, male-female, and female-female are distinguished. *Barter* and *purchase* rarely occurred between males and females or among females but was most frequent between males amounting to 71.6 percent (58/81) of the cases. A significant difference was noticed between male-male and female-female dyads in the distribution of kinship or social distance between the owner and those who have presented the *gift* (Table 2). That is, males more frequently received *gifts* from partners of the same sex belonging to other language groups (G//ana and Kgalagadi) than females, while females more frequently received *gifts* from their female consanguines (chi-square test for two independent samples: $\chi^2=20.5416$, $p<0.001$, $df=4$). The parallel difference between the sexes in the range of social relationships was exemplified both for the proxemic relationships within the camp [SUGAWARA 1984] and for the visiting relations between camps [SUGAWARA 1988]. It can be concluded that social and economic relationships among females tend to be confined to those among close kin, while male relationships tend to be extended to a wider range of people.

Comparing kinship or social distance between the male partners involved in *gift-giving* relationships with the distance in *purchase* and *barter*, we can recognise a slight tendency for consanguines to be involved more frequently in *gift-giving* than in *barter* and *purchase* (Table 3). A reverse tendency is recognised for the partners who are only distantly related (see the columns for 'G/wi' and 'G//ana' in Table 3). But this difference between both kinds of transaction is not statistically significant ($\chi^2=4.7461$, n.s., $df=4$). The factor which diminishes the difference between these

Table 2. Kinship and social distance between givers and receivers of *gifts*.

Dyad	Consanguines	Affines	G/wi	G//ana	Kgalagadi	Total
Male-male	19 (22.1)	36 (41.9)	8 (9.3)	6 (6.9)	17 (19.8)	86 (100.0)
	^				v	
Female-female	32 (45.7)	24 (34.3)	11 (15.7)	1 (1.4)	2 (2.9)	70 (100.0)
Total	51 (32.7)	60 (38.4)	19 (12.2)	7 (4.5)	19 (12.2)	156 (100.0)

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to the total number in each row.

> : $p < 0.02$, >> : $p < 0.01$ (χ^2 - test for two independent samples, $df = 1$)

Table 3. Kinship and social distance between male partners involved in two kinds of transactions.

Transaction	Consang.	Affines	G/wi	G//ana	Kgalagadi	Total
Gift-giving	19 (22.1)	36 (41.8)	8 (9.3)	6 (7.0)	17 (19.8)	86 (100.0)
	∇					
Barter & Purchase	6 (10.3)	26 (44.8)	7 (12.1)	8 (13.8)	11 (19.0)	58 (100.0)
Total	25 (17.4)	62 (43.1)	15 (10.4)	14 (9.7)	28 (19.4)	144 (100.0)

See the notation of Table 2. (>) : $p < 0.10$

two kinds of transaction is that the categories of 'affines' and 'Kgalagadi' respectively amount to almost the same percentage in both transactions. The category of affines, in particular, deserves closer examination.

The people in the ≠Kade area are connected with one another by complicated and extensive conjugal networks, so that from any individual's point of view those included in the category of primary and secondary affines amount to a great number. In 1984 I classified most of the San people living at !Koi!kom according to the kinship distance from the adult members of camp P (Figure 1). Of 82 men for whom kinship relations were confirmed, 61 percent (50/82) were included in the category of primary and secondary affines from the viewpoint of at least one of the male residents of Camp P [SUGAWARA 1988: 182]. In order to clarify the correlation between social distance and nature of economic transaction, the variation within this too large category of 'affines' was examined. For this purpose, I divided the category of 'affines' into two subcategories according to their residence (Table 4). The category of 'co-members' refers to a set of people who were living in the three adjacent camps P₁, P₂, and S, in 1987 (Figure 1). Most of them were, of course, the subjects of this interview research on their belongings, though several unmarried adolescents are also included. We can recognise a slight tendency for co-members to be involved more frequently in *gift-giving* than in *barter* and *purchase*. But, again, this tendency is statistically not at all significant ($\chi^2=1.9644$, n.s., $df=1$).

Table 4. Residential relation between male partners who were involved in two kinds of transactions and included in the category of primary or secondary affines.

	Co-members	Others	Total
Gift-giving	23 (63.9)	13 (36.1)	36
Barter & Purchase	12 (46.2)	14 (53.8)	26
Total	35	27	62

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to the total number in each row.

Thus, the above assumption that *barter* and *purchase* represent a more practical and depersonalised relationship, than *gift-giving*, cannot be supported so far as male-male relationships are concerned. In other words, in the present sedentary community a wide-ranging gift-giving network is prevalent among males, especially between affines or between San and Kgalagadi. On the other hand, they seem to be oriented toward the profit-seeking principle of expecting immediate return, even from their close kin. The 'classical' type of gift exchange most frequently occurs in the explicit joking relationships, e.g., between an adolescent male and his mother's brother. A few cases of gift exchange were observed in persistent extra-marital sexual relationships (*za:kuaha*) as well. More broadly, however, it can safely be concluded that consistent relationships of gift exchange with a specific partner, comparable to the *hxaro* relationship among the !Kung San [WIESSNER 1982], are rarely found among the Central Kalahari San.

Ownership of goats⁵⁾

Since the late sixties there have been several 'rich men' keeping many goats in the ≠Kade area, especially one G//ana-speaking man, born in Gyom. Currently he owns more than 300 goats, and exerts a great influence on the system of goat-raising in the community. Camp S is connected with this 'great goat owner' by affinal relationship and of their herd of about 90 goats, one-third belong to him. As is shown in this case, a large-scale goat owner is willing to entrust the management of a part of his herd to other camps. Similarly, anyone who owns only a few goats also tends to entrust them to his or her close kin living in another camp who relatively speaking already have many more goats. As a result, a complex network of keeping-and-entrusting relationships for goats has spread through the community.

An extended family including an old father (KK) with two wives and his two married sons (SH and HX) constitute the core of Camp S (Figure 5). One of his sons (SH) is married to the daughter of the 'great goat owner' (TS). The son of the second wife of KK (GR) also lives in this camp. KK and his sons own 40.9 percent (36/88) of all the goats in this camp, while GR owns only 6.8 percent (6/88). Within the extended family ownership is not so clearly distinguished. When asked, "Who owns this goat?," both the father and sons immediately answered, "This is mine." However, the five goats owned by the wife of SH are clearly distinguished from those of her husband and in-laws, because she received them directly from her father. This separate ownership of property by the wife from her husband can be regarded as a symptom of subordination of the latter to his father-in-law. In fact, SH sometimes stated that he was very afraid of his father-in-law, and I have

5) The management of goats was described in detail by Ikeya Kazunobu whose research focussed on a small camp of G//ana-speaking people during the period of 1987-1988 [IKEYA 1991]. Here I do not intend to analyse the details of goat management by the San. Rather, I will point out some essential features of goat ownership.

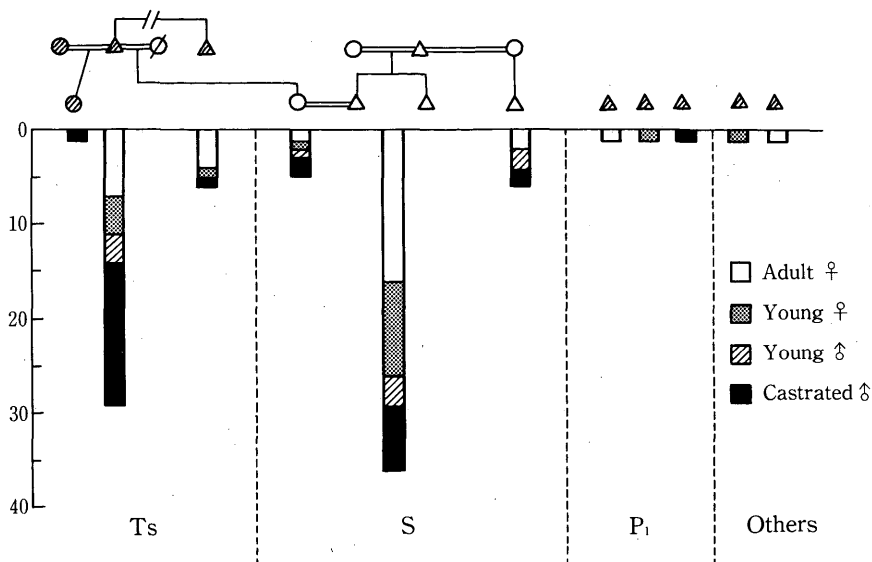


Figure 5. Ownership of the goats in Camp S.

The bars represent the number of goats owned by each individual in the uppermost section of each column. Hatched circles and triangles represent those who do not live in this camp. Letters at the bottom indicate the camps in which owners live.

observed him (SH) very flatteringly excuse himself for his bad manners after being mildly reproved for them by TS. Another 13.6 percent (12/88) of the goats in Camp S belong to seven non-residents other than TS: six were owned by TS's half brother and another six owned respectively by six other men.

Camp P₁ manages about 50 goats, most of which have been recently purchased by the residents who received cash income, mainly by selling folk crafts to Ghantsi Craft. Within this camp ownership of these goats is subdivided among 10 residents (3.9 head per person; range: 1–10), including unmarried adolescent males. Only 13.3 percent (6/45) are entrusted to this camp by three non-resident owners (Figure 6). The striking feature concerning the recognition of goat ownership common to both camps, S and P₁, is that most people are quite indifferent as to which goat belongs to whom. In Camp S, KK, SH, HX, and the children who everyday help them with management have an accurate knowledge of ownership, but GR identifies only his own goats. In Camp P₁, three adult men, each of whom owns more than 6 goats, have a relatively accurate knowledge, but even they are sometimes uncertain as to the ownership of the goats of others. The colours and patterns of hair are varied enough that individual identification is possible, if one wants to do so. For most of the San, goat-raising is quite a new method of subsistence. It seems that they have not yet developed any sympathetic feeling for the animals on which they have begun to become dependent. When I asked

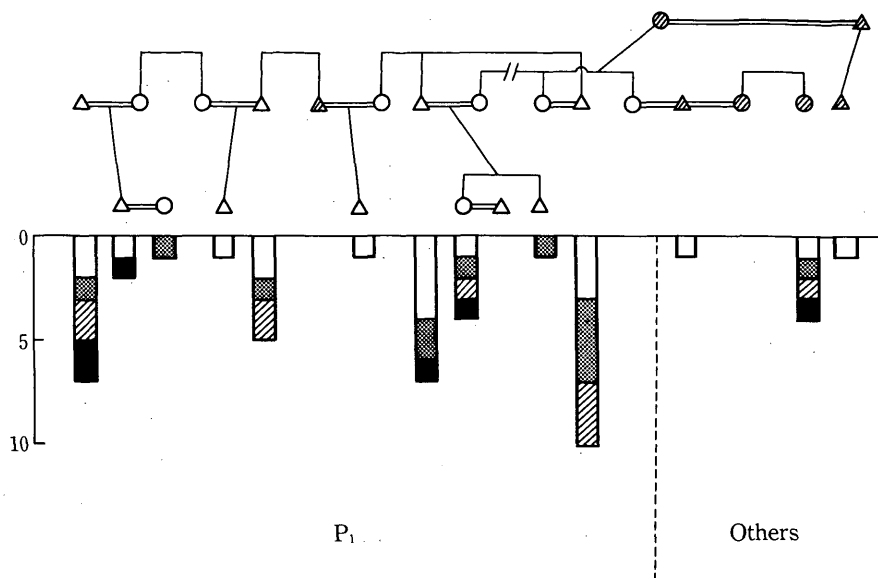


Figure 6. Ownership of the goats in Camp P₁ (see the notation in Figure 5).

whether the individual goats were named, or whether the life stages of the goats were distinguished by any named classes, TS, the great goat owner, laughed at my question, answering, "They are only goats. They have no ears. What do you want to do by naming them?" Thus, the San remain 'hunter-gatherers' at least in their attitude toward livestock⁶.

The most crucial question concerning the social arrangement of goat management is what are the economic and social functions, of entrusting one's own goats to other camps? On the face of it a caretaker does not receive any apparent benefit by keeping someone else's goats. Even if a female goat gives birth to many offspring, none of them are offered to the caretaker as a reward for his or her labour but remain the property of the goat owner. The only definite reward is their milk. However the amount of milk produced is negligible especially during the dry season. On the other hand, the cost for keeping such goats is also negligible, because livestock management by the San is far from intensive. Every morning, after separating the infants from their mothers, a few residents, sometimes only children, drive the herd away from camp. Nobody follows the herd, as they spontaneously forage on their own around the community. While it is true that there is little reason to refuse the request to care for someone else's goats, it is also difficult to specify a definite economic purpose for the practice of caretaking goats. Although further systematic research covering all the goat owners throughout the

6) In 1989, I have collected a conversation sample in which an immature goat, whether male or female, is referred to by a specific term *hxóba:*, which might have been imported very recently from the agro-pastoralist vocabulary.

community is required, it is probable that caretaking goats might be one of the means by which the owner and the caretaker reaffirm alliance or friendship between themselves.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND CULTURAL VALUES

In this section, I shall deal with several topics extracted from the samples of everyday conversations, which are especially relevant to essential characteristics of social life in the sedentary community.

Relationships between ethnic or language groups

A large part of the population presently at !Koi!kom are immigrants from homelands other than ≠Kade. Some are derived from the Kgalagadi ethnic group. Various symptoms of social tension and conflict between different ethnic or language groups can be recognised. The following is one example.

In the dry season of 1984, just before the research team arrived at ≠Kade, the daughter of a G//ana-speaking man (NA) died suddenly, probably of an illness. After the burial, a rumour began to spread that her death was caused by a Kgalagadi sorcerer (RS), a rich man who had migrated from Metse-a-Manong about two years before. Within a month, the rumour developed into a dangerous situation. The people said that the sorcerer intended to dig open the grave of his victim, and insisted that he should be arrested and be judged in court. The rumour gradually died down, and the matter seemed to rest there. However, about half a year later, the rumour about the same sorcerer, RS, was revived by NA following an extraordinary event. NA had been one of the best friends of Tanaka, director of our research team, and a member of the team, Kitamura, and his wife had lived in NA's camp, building a nice hut as a refuge from the intense daytime heat. One afternoon in later January 1985, just one or two weeks after we left ≠Kade, this hut was struck by lightning, and more than ten goats owned by NA, which were resting in and around the empty hut, died. NA was so horrified by this calamity, which was also ascribed to sorcery by RS, that he migrated to another camp.

On various occasions, the informants told me how RS carried out the sorcery. It was said that on a dark night he stripped stark naked, stalked up to the target camp, and threw some kind of medicine at the hut. It is noteworthy that this image of a sorcerer depicted by the San is very similar to the Bantu stereotype of the sorcerer which is quite prevalent among the agriculturalist societies of Eastern or Central Africa [NAGASHIMA 1987]. The idea of sorcery itself might not be the invention of the Bantu but the prevailing idiom in which people talk about sorcery is now heavily influenced by the Kgalagadi and other Tswana tribes. I could not judge whether the San really believe in the magical power as the cause of the inscrutable calamity, or whether their explanation was merely a means by which they expressed distrust and antipathy toward the Kgalagadi. The important point is, however, that the San are tempted to put an emphasis on the difference between

themselves and the Kgalagadi by insisting that the latter have mysterious power or strange manners beyond comprehension.

Analysing the conversation samples, I was impressed with several cases in which the incomprehensible behaviours of not only Kgalagadi but also of Japanese and European people were vividly depicted. In one case, a man (NK) complained that his dog was "dying." When he passed by a Kgalagadi camp with his dog, the host of the camp set his big dog on NK's dog, which was covered all over with bites. Moreover the host struck NK's dog with a club. Another man commented on this story, saying, "Why do those who have come from there kill other people's property? They are very Negro-like people, aren't they? They are not right. We treat the dog in this way. We don't know it (i.e., to beat). Even if a dog comes and steals from us, we go to the owner and tell him next morning. We never kill the dog."

The above discourse typically shows the way in which the San discriminate between themselves and the Kgalagadi. The "Negro-like"⁷⁾ people do not have the proper manners. They behave fiercely. They do not recognise how terrible it is to destroy another person's property...etc. Needless to say, the San themselves do not hesitate to beat their dogs. In fact, on another occasion I recorded a conversation in which several men joyfully discussed effective ways of repulsing a barking dog. Thus, emphasis may not necessarily be put on the real difference between the San and other people but any trouble which one experiences in an encounter with others from another group can be interpreted as a good index of the ethnic character of the group itself.

The following example shows a more extreme case, in which an argument about the ethnic character of another group is grounded on an apparently far fetched rumour. An old woman told a story to a woman of middle age, about a Kgalagadi man using magical medicine. He supposedly cursed his younger brother and let the latter die. The middle aged woman then told another story. Long ago, the young son of a Kgalagadi man named G/ui disappeared. The people looked for him, crying, "G/ui's son has been lost in the bush!" But G/ui himself was calmly sitting in a chair. Then he disclosed, "He isn't lost. I have sold him to the Government. I stamped the fingerprint for contract." That boy was very cute and young. Now how tall is he? G/ui had many children. When they have grown up, they gave birth to many grandchildren. G/ui will sell them again...etc.

According to the San, this is the way the Kgalagadi get much money, and the reason why they are so rich. The above story reveals several means of essential characterisation of 'we' and 'they.' First, for the San, brotherhood is the most reliable tie between two individuals, but the Kgalagadi might kill even their own brother. Second, for the San the love towards one's own children constitutes the profound delight of life, while the Kgalagadi are cold enough to sell their own children. The third point might be more trivial, but it may be noteworthy as a

7) The San word ≠têbe used for Bantu has slight negative overtones.

“body idiom” [GOFFMAN 1963], i.e., the Kgalagadi always sit on chairs, while San sit on the sand. Probably, we can add many other contrastive pairs to this list of ‘we’-‘they’ characteristics. The more valued the feature contrasted, the more incomprehensible and striking are the manners of other people which are characterised in terms of this feature. The San’s discourse emphasising the difference between themselves and other people rightly reflects the actual power relationship in which the San hold an inferior position. If they are involved in any trouble with the Kgalagadi, they are very eager to commit the matter to public judgement (*shie:ka*) in court (*h/o:*). However, this practice itself has been recently imported from the Tswana institution under supervision of the government. In an informal discussion within camp, the party who suffers any damage always insists that the other party is responsible for this damage, and that they should ‘pay’ (*duera*) a penalty. But, most of the trial time is spent in confirming the actual course and details of the matter, and an effective consensus hardly develops: a concrete penalty is rarely attained especially if, the damage is not material (Photo. 2). Finally, in spite of the bitter backbiting within camp, the San usually behave very temperately, or sometimes even flatteringly, in actual face-to-face encounters with the Kgalagadi.

San men sometimes visit the camps of Kgalagadi, expecting a reward for doing temporary jobs such as processing hides or building fences around the fields [SUGAWARA 1988]. It is supposed that such a kind of ‘service’ by the San to the local agropastoralist is not unique to the recent sedentary life, but has been occasionally practiced in the past (cf. Solway and Lee [1990]). The San are aware of a proper way to work for ‘Negros’ (\neq *tébe*). This was brought out in a story about an old G/wi-speaking woman living in another camp, who was criticised for



Photo. 2. A scene of discussion in the court. A G//anakhwe man (right), standing face-to-face with the appointed chief (left), is testifying that he saw a Kgalagadi man do violence to a G/wikhwe boy on the previous day.

her bad manners in offering a service. Recently she had moved to a camp of the appointed chief (a rich G//ana-speaking man) and shortly after had said to the chief and his wife, "Bring me your dirty things. I will wash them for you." A male commentator on this story remarked "How (stupid) that woman is! We never talk big in that way" and a female commented saying, "Negro people would offer something by themselves. It is not until they give us their things that we work for them." When analysing this story my informant further explained as follows: traditionally, G/wi people used to visit the Negro with collected food. The host would eat the plant food, and, after eating, take out some goods from the house *by himself* so as to offer them to the G/wi visitor. Receiving them, s/he would repair, wash, sew, tan, those goods as was appropriate and return them to the host. The host would then pay some reward in token of his gratitude. Working in this fashion is referred to by the verb *tsawa-má* which is a compound of 'make' (*tsaon*) and 'give' (*má*). This manner of working idealised by San themselves reveals essential features of the socio-economic relationship between San and Kgalagadi. The San can not enforce their demands on the Kgalagadi, and have to wait for the voluntary favour by the latter. At the same time, Kgalagadi are expected not to refuse visiting San, and to deal with them generously. Such traditional attitudes and expectations between the two ethnic groups may be maintained even under present conditions of close contact between them even though the relationship between the San and the Kgalagadi is open to antagonism and conflict. Both groups, however, are much more dependent on each other now, given their permanent co-residence.

Another type of economic transaction between the San and Kgalagadi can be formed for an especial reason; i.e., ritual. On various occasions, the San are willing to ask a Kgalagadi 'doctor' to carry out a ritual. The following is an example: it is believed that 'breach birth' (*kyaba:ma*) causes the father to fall sick. Following a breach birth the father was separated from the mother and the newborn, and left to sleep in a separate hut. An old man, a classificatory 'father' (FB) of the mother of the baby took the initiative in arranging for the healing ritual, as the father himself was unwilling to pay much for such a service. This led to a big argument with his elder brother and 'father'-in-law. Finally the old man persuaded his 'son'-in-law to go along with the ritual and succeeding in finding an old Kgalagadi man to conduct the ritual. The ritual was held and the family was healed so the father moved back to live with his wife and the newborn again in the same hut (Photo. 3). Thus, in spite of the San fear of the magical power exerted by the Kgalagadi, they are also attracted to it: such attraction is leading to more intense economic transactions between the two groups.

The San themselves are not homogeneous. I have observed several cases in which some of the G//ana-speaking people expressed a sense of superiority over the G/wi-speaking people. Similarly, G/wikhwe sometimes make negative comments on the character of G//anakhwe in their everyday conversation. The husband of household No. 10 is G//ana-speaking. His mother-in-law (household No. 5)



Photo. 3. A Kgalagadi 'doctor' is conducting a ritual which purifies the pollution caused by a breach birth. He is about to thrust his head and arms through a hole made on the back side of the hut to rub some medicine on the breast and belly of the newborn's mother sitting within the hut. It is assumed that this arrangement symbolically corrects the 'wrong direction' in which the baby was born.

complained about her 7 years old grandson who would often tease his younger brother, saying, "He makes a whip and beats him (younger brother). This is the way, G//ana child behaves. He doesn't distinguish his own younger brother (from other children)." This woman's criticism of her grandson (and G//ana children in general) might be backed with ill feeling towards her G//ana-speaking son-in-law. On another occasion, this same woman quite plainly expressed her hostility toward the son-in-law named GB. She was talking about an argument which she recently had with a G/wi-speaking man named KY living in a neighbouring camp. "That man with whom I talked, KY, doesn't have a heart like GB's. His heart is clean as if it were washed. My 'younger brother,' the G/wi man, his heart is beautiful. He never says '*ieshie, ieshie*' as G//anakhwe do." The interjection *ieshie* ('what!?!') is G//ana locution which approximately corresponds to G/wi usage of *ihosi*. Thus, by framing up the difference in everyday usage between two dialects, the speaker was effectively emphasising the displeasing character of G//anakhwe. In this context she might have implied that, though KY a G/wikhwe, was to blame for his insincerity, he was not worse than GB, G//anakhwe.

G/wi-speaking people also like to criticise G//ana-speaking people for their disabilities. A young man complained that, though his G//ana-speaking friends had patrolled to inspect his snares instead of himself, they had not set snares again after catching two steenboks. In response to this complaint, another young man said, "G//anakhwe don't know how to set a snare. Where do they come from?" The locution of 'where do you come from?' (*tse ma:da hoa:ha?*) is often used to

mock a partner's absurd or unreasonable way of behaving. Such discourse is grounded on a logic of discrimination which is familiar to ourselves: that an observed negative trait of behaviour shown by a person is to be ascribed to the 'origin' of this person. As soon as the 'origin' is confirmed, the negative trait is generalised into a collective trait shared by a set of people who have the same origin. This logic of discrimination used to differentiate two dialect groups, G/wi and G//ana, from each other, is basically the same as the logic which serves to differentiate the San from the Kgalagadi. However, it is to be noted that, when G/wikhwe emphasise the difference between themselves and G//anakhwe, more trivial traits tend to be focussed on. This is an understandable tendency, since the life styles and cultural values of both dialect groups are similar to each other. Thus, it is supposed that the confrontation between G/wikhwe and G//anakhwe is not so serious as between the San and the Kgalagadi.

This supposition is supported by the fact that there have been many cases of intermarriage between both groups, in spite of the displeasure expressed by the G/wi woman towards her G//ana-speaking son-in-law in the above case. Among 141 conjugal linkages recorded, G//ana husband-G/wi wife couples amounted to 24.8 percent, while G/wi husband-G//ana wife couples amounted to only 9.2 percent. If the view that the "G//anakhwe have always been a more progressive group" [CHILDERS *et al.* 1982: 59] can be admitted, then a slight tendency to 'hypergamy' is to be recognised in the intermarriage between G//anakhwe and G/wikhwe.

The most crucial point to be considered is which dialect group the children of G/wi-G//ana intermarriage identify themselves with. An interesting inconsistency is found between the views of these two groups. G//ana-speaking informants related that all the children of mixed marriages would speak G//ana, whether their mother was G//anakhwe or not. On the other hand, G/wi informants said that infants learn their mother's language. Undoubtedly, the statement by G/wi informants is far more reasonable and persuasive than that of G//ana informants who are biased by their 'superiority complex' over G/wi-speaking people. However, it is probable that the identity of the children will be affected by the composition of the camp where the couple chooses to reside. If the couple chooses uxorilocal residence, there would be little difficulty over the identity of the offspring. Namely, both the mother and most of the surrounding people except the father would be using the same dialect, so that a child would naturally identify him/herself with the mother's dialect group. Whereas, under conditions of virilocal residence, the situation might be more complicated. An infant would first learn his/her mother's tongue, and afterwards learn the another dialect used by most kinsmen around him/her. S/he would become truly bilingual, using the former language when s/he talks with her/his mother, and the latter with father⁸⁾.

8) This is the case for the children of household 7, of which the wife (mother) is G//ana-speaking (see Figure 2).

Co-residence of members of the two dialect groups is likely to increase the instances of intermarriage and as a result there will be many more bilingual children. It is an interesting point whether the distinct identity of each dialect group can be preserved after such intense intermingling.

Extra-marital sexual relationships

Episodes of extra-marital intercourse frequently become the topic of conversation. I do not have enough space to give a full account of these various episodes but wish to draw attention to several relevant issues. In their previous hunting-gathering life, adultery (*//au*) was by all accounts common among the San. Some of the adulterous cases developed into persistent extra-marital sexual relationships called *za:kuaha* [TANAKA 1988]. Others caused divorce, violence between the couple, or occasionally resulted in mate-swapping. In the present sedentary condition both adultery and persistent relationships remain common, and most adult members of the group have experienced at least one extra-marital relationship.

In everyday conversations, the word 'lover' (*za:be* for masculine or *za:shi* for feminine) is often used as a joke or a sociable expression. This point indicates that, in the emotional life of the San, *za:kuaha* relationships are backed by a kind of positive feeling. In other words it is ideally a 'good' relationship. One of the factors which supports this positive feeling is an economic mutualism which often accompanies a *za:kuaha* relationship. Gift-giving usually precedes the development of this relationship. A man with sexual ambition might frequently visit a woman in whom he is interested, carrying bags of maize flour and sugar in his arms. If the woman receives these gifts, she is expected to respond to the intention of the presenter. However, this situation arouses criticism and anxiety among her close kin, because, if she does not accept the presenter's courtship, they are in debt to him for many gifts. The 'ideal type' of *za:kuaha* relationship accompanied by economic mutualism might be mate-swapping. It sometimes occurs that one couple proposes a *za:kuaha* relationship and another couple 'agrees with' (\neq dom) it. If a consensus is reached, the two couples will be closely related with each other for long periods, frequently exchanging gifts. Thus, the word *za:kuaha* is also analogically applied to especially close relationships or friendships between two families, even though actual sexual intercourse may not occur between the couples.

But, of course, there is a negative or 'dark' side to the '*za:kuaha*' relationship. First, it provokes various conflicts in which not only the concerned parties but also their kin (or even their past 'lovers') are involved. Close kin of the concerned party often declare that he or she has a special responsibility for the lover's behaviour and the resulting debt. If there are enough reasons to be against the development of the relationship, the responsible kin will attempt to interfere by seriously criticising and blaming the 'lovers,' but no matter how eager they are to intervene in the affair, they have few means by which to coerce the adulterer or adulteress into abandoning the illicit relationship.

Second, there is, paradoxically, a profound fear of extra-marital sexual intercourse. It is believed that a man, as well as his children, might suffer from some disease caused by intercourse with a woman other than his wife, or, conversely, the husband of the adulteress might also become sick. Therefore any two couples agreeing with each other to continue a persistent *za:kuaha* relationship have to purify themselves by means of a peculiar kind of ritual. Another kind of disease (*kxába:*) is caused by the resentment of somebody who seriously objects to the *za:kuaha* relationship. A middle aged woman in the group involved in a *za:kuaha* relationship asked a man living in another camp to cure her by a healing dance, because she believed that her "father's " (actually FB) disapproval of the affair made her sick. The fact that in the ideology of the San *za:kuaha* is often associated with sickness reveals the ambivalent character of this relationship. The San yearn for extra-marital sexual relationships which make them happier, but, at the same time they know how they are bothered by all the conflicts and negative feelings such as anger, jealousy, and loneliness, caused by this relationship.

A striking feature of the *za:kuaha* relationship is its public status which contrasts it with extramarital affairs among the !Kung. Lorna Marshall argues that extramarital relations among the !Kung were controlled by the "impossibility of maintaining a secret" among the people so good at reading the most minute tracks in the sand [1976: 280]. Similarly, among the Central Kalahari San, inference of an extra-marital relation from the tracks is often referred to in everyday conversation. However, judging from the prevalence of this kind of relation, it can not be assumed that "the impossibility of maintaining a secret" so effectively constraints the development of extra-marital relations. More important is the belief of the Central Kalahari San that it is an abominable vice to "maintain a secret" or to 'hide' (*ng!áo*) something.

In camp S, in the dry season of 1988, the first son of a young couple (household No. 13) became seriously ill. A Kgalagadi male healer was asked to cure him. He judged that an illicit relationship between the husband and an unmarried adolescent girl living in the same camp (the wife's half sister) caused the illness of the infant⁹). The husband admitted this diagnosis, while the adolescent girl kept silent and refused to participate in the curing ritual. Talking about this episode, an old man said, "If one hides (anything from people), it will 'extinguish' (*kuri-kaho-roha*) a camp. In this way, this camp and that camp had been extinguished." This statement reveals that the social disposition to minimise one's privacy is based on the fear of a communal calamity. Such a belief would prompt those involved in *za:kuaha* relations to subject any relevant information to a common reservoir of knowledge accessible to everyone.

The third problem is dealing with the children born from extra-marital

9) This witchdoctor is RS, who was accused of sorcery in 1984, as was described in the previous section. This strange fact is evidence for the ambivalent attitude of the San towards Kgalagadi sorcery or witchcraft.

relationships. If a widow or unmarried girl gives birth, the child is called a 'bastard' (*/owa-g//amama*, which literally means the 'devil's child') and is brought up by the mother and her close kin. They usually know who the 'father' is, but seldom demand any economic aid from him. If a wife gives birth as a result of adultery, and unless the couple are divorced, the situation is more complicated. The husband who is aware of the partner's infidelity becomes enraged. He often gives the baby a name which straightforwardly symbolises his resentment; e.g., *Kirema!káoho* (sharpen a knife), *Kx[?]áobõ* (beat with axe), *!Kao≠toaho* (get out), *Kurya/ó:/ò* (be strangled by anger), *Pati:ka* (cheat: a Setswana word), etc... This does not mean that the father will treat the foster child coldly. Far from that, he is just as affectionate to the child as towards his own children. The child also forms a deep attachment to the 'father.' The people of ≠Kade seem to share quite accurate knowledge about the biological paternity of all of their acquaintances. However, in their everyday life it is rarely talked about. Even though inconsistencies between social and biological paternity are not uncommon in various traditional societies, San society seems to lack a system of sanctions which distinguishes legitimate children from illegitimate ones. This feature may correlate with the simple economics of their traditional hunting-and-gathering life, and lack of heritable property.

IS EGALITARIANISM DISRUPTED?

In this paper, I have tried to delineate how the form of transactions among the Central Kalahari San has been changed by the current conditions of sedentary life. However, it remains to be elucidated how the people themselves feel about these recent changes. In other words, it is of special significance to understand to what extent so called 'egalitarian' values have been retained in heart of the people.

Richard Lee's volume on the !Kung San [1979] vividly depicted the nature of an egalitarian society. Itani Jun'ichiro argues that "fear of civil inequality" is the most essential feature which characterises socio-economic behaviour not only among hunter-gatherer societies but also among various small-scale societies of pastoralist and agriculturalist [1988]. But all through my field work, I have been bothered with the impression that the Central Kalahari San are not so radically egalitarian as the !Kung San. Several reasons for this impression can be distinguished. First, in the ≠Kade area there have been a number of influential people, most of whom belong to the G//ana-speaking group, and are half Kgalagadi. In the 1960s these influential people already possessed many goats and cultivated fields. Their superiority was acknowledged by other San. Recent political supervision by the government has accelerated the differentiation of these influential people from the others. One of them was appointed headman, and others as members of the council. Thus, most of the San in the ≠Kade area have become accustomed to dealing with a headman and know what they can expect from the latter. On this ground, the people have relatively smoothly adapted to the

newly imported institutions, such as the trial and various kinds of meetings. Moreover, this historical background might influence the everyday manner of the San, especially when they are in face-to-face interactions with the Kgalagadi. This does not mean, however, that the Central Kalahari San are obedient conformists. They place little value on the authority of the headman, Kgalagadi, or the government nor do they give them much respect. They follow the superior party, just because that party promises more food and resources will be supplied. The most frequent complaint of the San is that; "The government promised to give more and more food, but it proved to be a lie. So we will 'throw away' (*shie:ho*) the governemnt."

A second point I want to make concerns a problem of methodology. Most anthropological discussions of egalitarianism have been focussed on economic or political aspects, with little attention having been paid to the domain of actual face-to-face interactions. I have found that even in a so-called egalitarian society, the roles in face-to-face interactions are conspicuously differentiated according to gender, generation, or situational properties [SUGAWARA 1988, 1990]. Microscopic analysis of the organisation of conversation provides a new scope for understanding of the nature of egalitarianism directing attention to the quality of social interaction (see Kitamura [1990]).

Even in the domain of economic life, the comparison of 'egalitarianism' between the !Kung and the Central Kalahari San remains difficult. It is my suspicion that both Lee and Tanaka have put so much emphasis on the principle of 'generalised reciprocity' that they have neglected a microscopic analysis of the range of people to whom this principle is applied. In this paper, the comparison of the relationship of partners to gift-giving and barter/purchase transactions failed to agree with Sahlins prediction of a correspondence between different principles of reciprocity, i.e., generalised, balanced, or negative, and social distances [SAHLINS 1974]. But, as data on the traditional economic networks is not available for the Central Kalahari San, it cannot be decided whether the orientation towards balanced reciprocity, or business-like transactions (even among close kin) is a unique feature of the Central Kalahari San, or a recent addition brought about by drastic changes to subsistence.

The features of the traditional economic relationships of the !Kung San have been elucidated by Wiessner [1982]. Concerning the persistent gift-exchanging relationship, the difference between the Central Kalahari and the !Kung San is striking. Only the cases of extra-marital sexual relationships accompanied by gift-giving are comparable to the !Kung *hxaro* relationships in their persistence; even though the former is merely a closed cycle while the latter spreads over different regions.

The above comparison between the Central Kalahari and !Kung San suggests that it might be erroneous to lump rather diverse characteristics of social and economic life of the San hunter-gatherers into a single principle of 'egalitarianism.' However, this concept of 'egalitarianism,' though having been constructed by

anthropologists, as well as philosophers, immersed in European thought, is more than mere 'illusion' (cf. Wilmsen [1983] and Solway and Lee [1990]). Itani's use of the term "fear" when talking of civil inequality cited above is most suggestive. I have pointed out that minimisation of privacy is, at least partially, derived from the fear of disease or of communal calamity. If the minimisation of privacy, or a specific emphasis on community, is to be regarded as an essential constituent of the 'egalitarian' norm, then such a norm is rooted as much in the emotional domain as in a consistent ideology.

This emotional domain does not always result in negative feeling against violation of the norm, such as fear of disease, abhorrence of arrogance, or jealousy over the haves. People also draw pleasure from and praise these egalitarian aspects of their way of life. As an epilogue to this paper, I will give a detailed description of a recently observed scene from everyday G/wikhwe life. It exemplifies the confidence of the San in the goodness of communality, which they see as differentiating them from the Bantu-speaking people.

In the morning of 8th August 1989, two men, SK and CH, slightly intoxicated, were talking about a barter in which another two men, HX and GR (HX's Father's second Wife's Son), living in the adjacent camp had recently been involved. They wanted to obtain a big three-legged iron pot owned by a Kgalagadi man HD, and agreed with him to exchange two goats for it. Thus, they brought two adolescent goats, a male and a female, to HD's camp. HD, dissatisfied to find the female too young and nulliparous, demanded an addition of 20 pula. At last, HX and GR scraped together the amount of money and paid it. The following is an extract from the conversation between SK and CH.

SK : All of us have never complained about a pot.

CH : We never complained about a pot, mortar, or axe.

SK : We cannot complain about them!

CH : In this way, you make a fire and go to someone's house, and take a mortar and pound food in it. There is also a pot. You shave off melons into pieces, and you cook them in it. Putting the pot on the fire, you pound the seeds in the mortar. You shave off the leaves from logs with an axe, and bring the logs to build a house.

SK : In this way, you build a house. That's nice!

CH : That's nice!

SK : You rest, leaving the pot on the fire.

CH : After pounding, you lift the pot and pour the soup into the mortar, and pound again.

SK : Then, pour the porridge into a dish. The wife gives it to the husband. Then pouring again, gives it to the children.

CH : And they eat.

SH : If you visit where we are living, you enter our house, and sit to eat.

CH : Eat. Never complain about anything! I used to hollow a wood to make a mortar, and whenever a man came with ten pula and asked me, I would give

it. When my relative came with five pula, I lifted it to give. When he came with ≠nan≠te beans (*Bauhinia petersiana*) which were peeled, I would give it. Then, it remains mine.

SK : It's mine. Even when he has come and taken it away, I still own it!

CH : I still own it. Soon I will go to his camp.

SK : Soon I will go to his camp, and he will say, "Yes, pound food in this mortar."

CH : I will bring it, and pound for a while, and then both of us eat.

SK : And I will pour the porridge into a dish to say, "Hey! my relative, eat it."

Most striking is the cooperative way in which the two men proceeded with the story-telling in dialogue. Both of them effectively activated the 'common sense' understanding of the way people interchange the valuable goods, such as mortar, axe, and pot. They vividly depict heartwarming images of the traditional way of life in which people had been willing to share property, and had been generous enough to give it one to another. These images may be, an idealisation of the past to some extent enhanced by intoxication which the present condition of sedentary life makes a frequent occurrence but even so, this dialogue is convincing evidence that an aspiration for the 'egalitarian' way of life is still alive at the back of San minds.

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