



THE KWA / BAA

A collection of ethnographic and historical data from fieldwork 1989-1993

Series

Ethnographic and Historical Profiles of the Peoples of the Muri Mountains
- The Southern Groups

by Jörg Adelberger

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The Kwa / Baa

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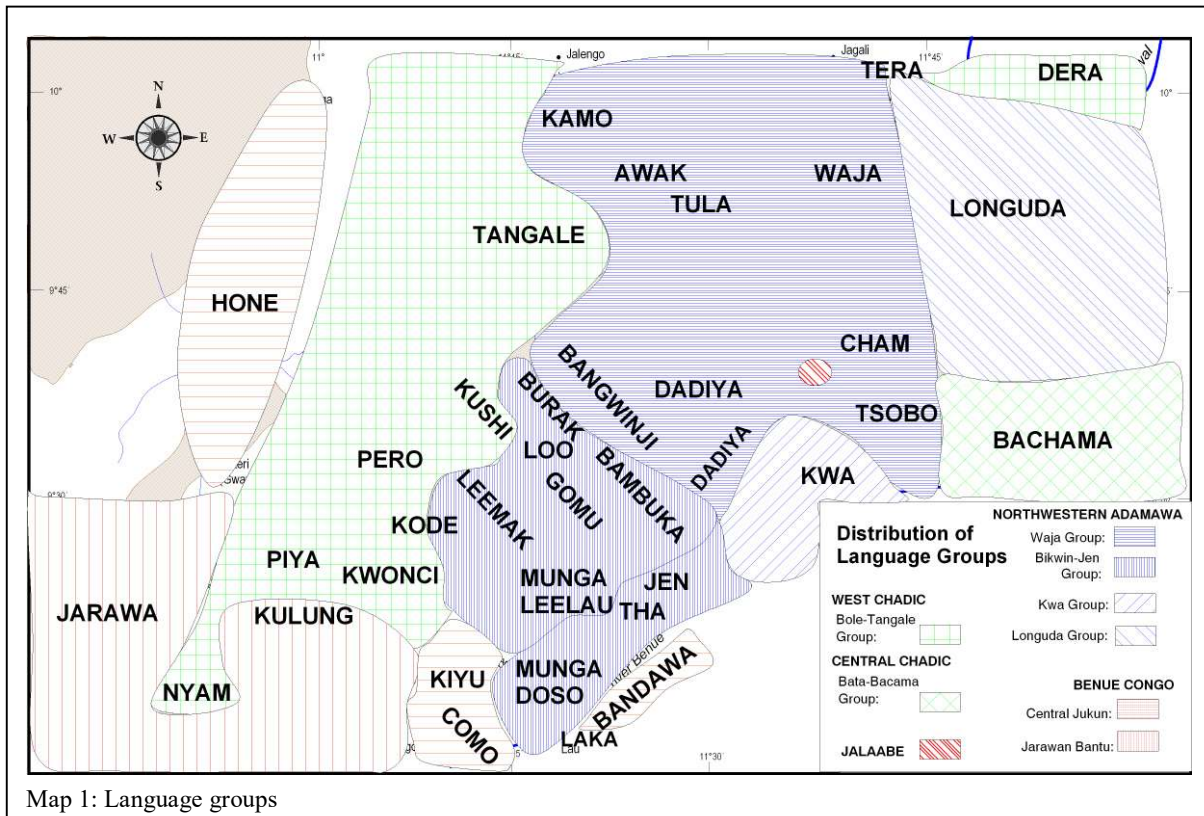
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Introduction

Ethnographic field research was undertaken within the framework of the interdisciplinary research project "Cultural Development and Language History in the Environment of the West African Savannah" (SFB 268) in the years 1989 to 1993. The information provided below reflects the situation at that time.¹

Linguistically the Kwa [kwb], or Baa as they are also called, form their own sub-group² within the North-Western Adamawa languages of the Niger-Congo phylum.

Their autonym is *nya báà*, while *báà* designates the territory of Kwa.



First mention of Kwa is made by Eduard Flegel and Edward Hutchinson who explored the river Benue on board the steamer *Henry Venn* in 1879. Hutchinson (1880: 293) writes: "Passed the town of Qua, on the right bank; two clusters of conical huts"; Flegel (1880b: 147, 149) believed that Kwa (which he calls Qua or Koha) is a settlement of the Bachama.³

¹ I am grateful to Sarkin Kwa Ezekiel Inganumbwi, Commander Fridamuri, Fredrik Ezekiel, Meshulan Lawan and Obi Jeremiah for their co-operation during my research. My special thanks go to Herbert Adams and Nathan Jeremiah for their untiring and invaluable assistance. I am grateful to Pete Eccles for correcting my English.

² Cf. Kleinewillinghöfer 2011. Mirjam Möller Nwadigo (2016, Möller Nwadigo & Lesage 2023) is currently studying the Baa language: <https://llacan.cnrs.fr/AdaGram/baa.html>. In square brackets are the ISO 639 names.

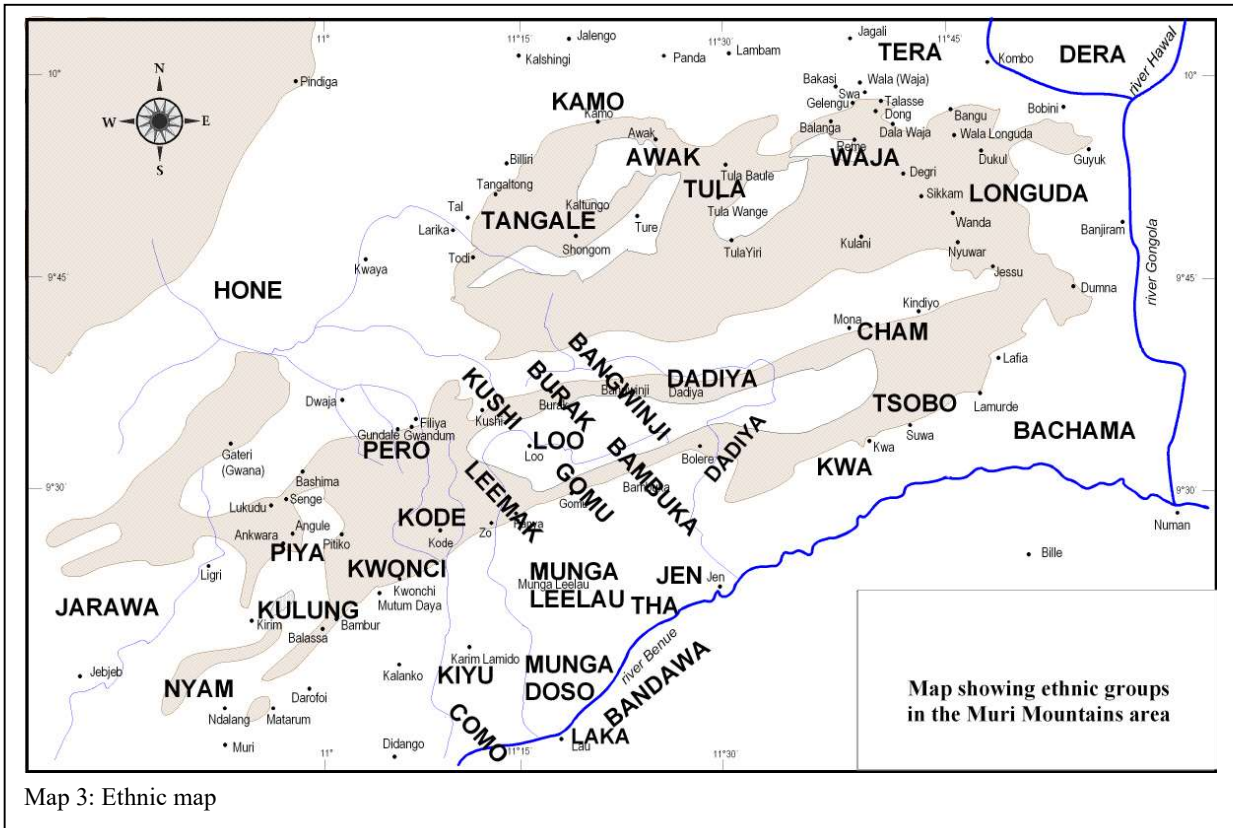
³ For an overview of Flegel's explorations see Adelberger 2000.

Settlement Area and Demography

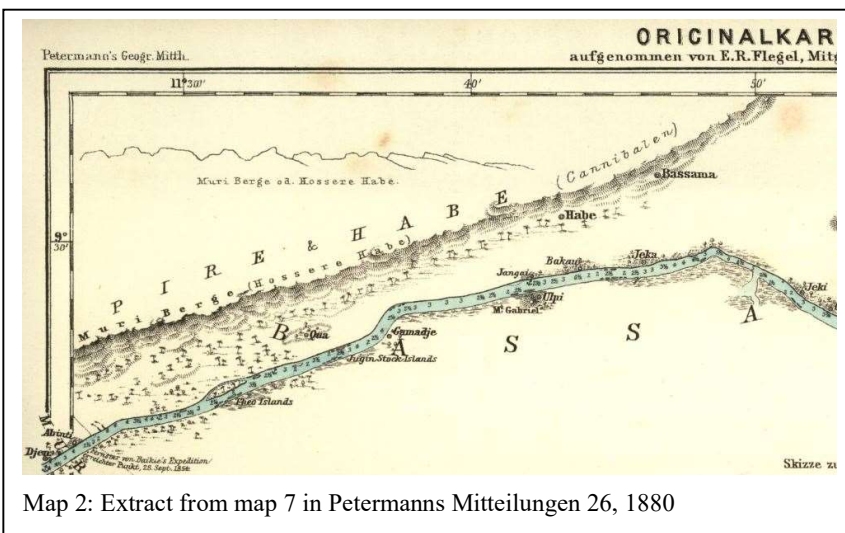
The Kwa are settled in a stretch between the southern Muri Mountains and the northern bank of the river Benue in Northern Nigeria. The Kwa are to be found in the following settlements: Gyakan, Kwa, Dwanti, Nsa, Nyagad, Gari Mashibe, Garin Bashara, Gyakan Dutse, Ruwan Zafi, Naata, Taja, Sabon Pegi, Bwaso, Gurbin Baure, Dulum, Kwafara and Seyawa.

According to the ethnographic survey by CAPRO (1992: 248) they count about 7,000.

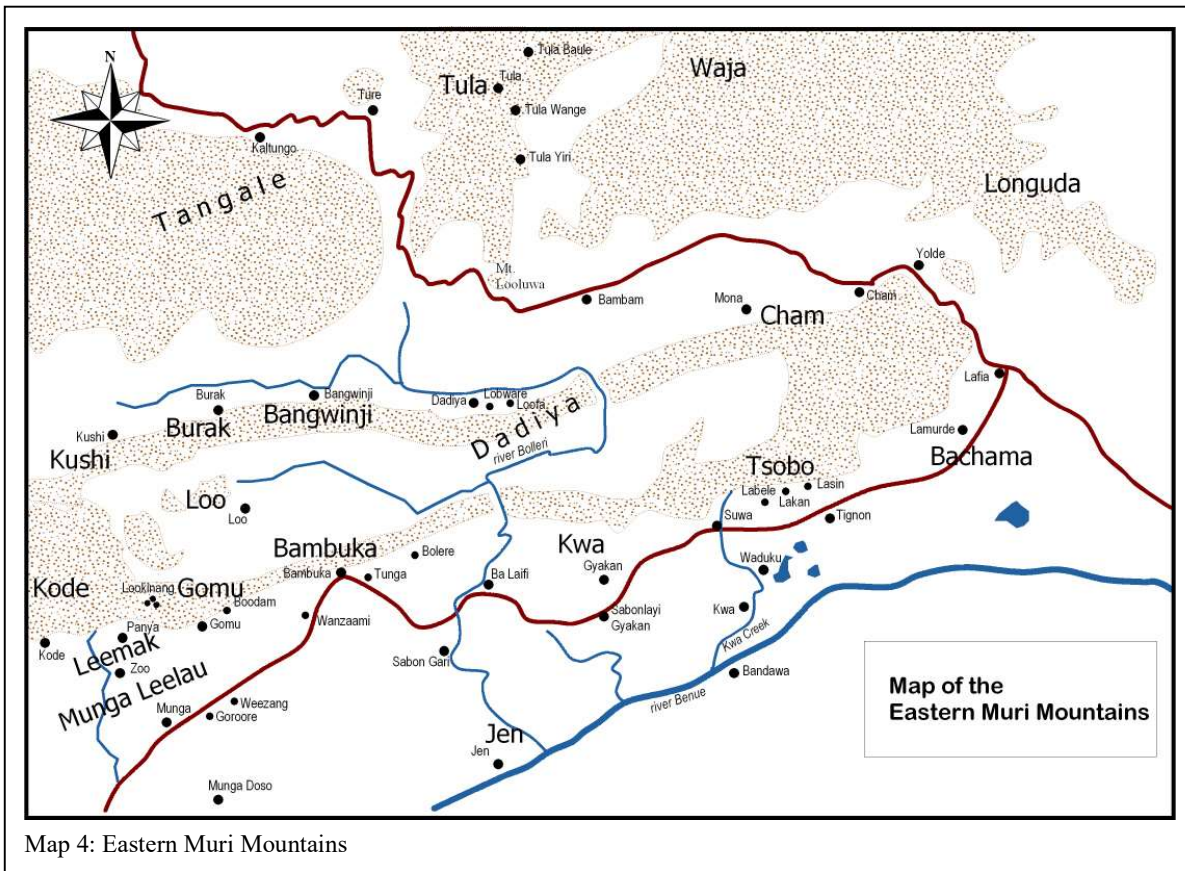
Their neighbours to the west are the Bambuka [bka], to the south-west the Jen [jen], to the east the Tsobo [ldp], and to the north the Dadiya [dbd].



Map 3: Ethnic map



Map 2: Extract from map 7 in Petermann's Mitteilungen 26, 1880



Interethnic Relations

The Kwa state that they are on good terms especially with the Tsobo, Bachama and Jen, with whom they intermarry and with the latter two have close historical and cultural ties.

They say that they offered the Tsobo refuge when these moved to their area due to a conflict with the Cham of Mona.

Fighting only took place with the Dadiya and Fulani, when the latter were trying to subjugate them in precolonial times.

The Kwa have joking relationships with the Jukun, Wurkun groups and Mumuye.

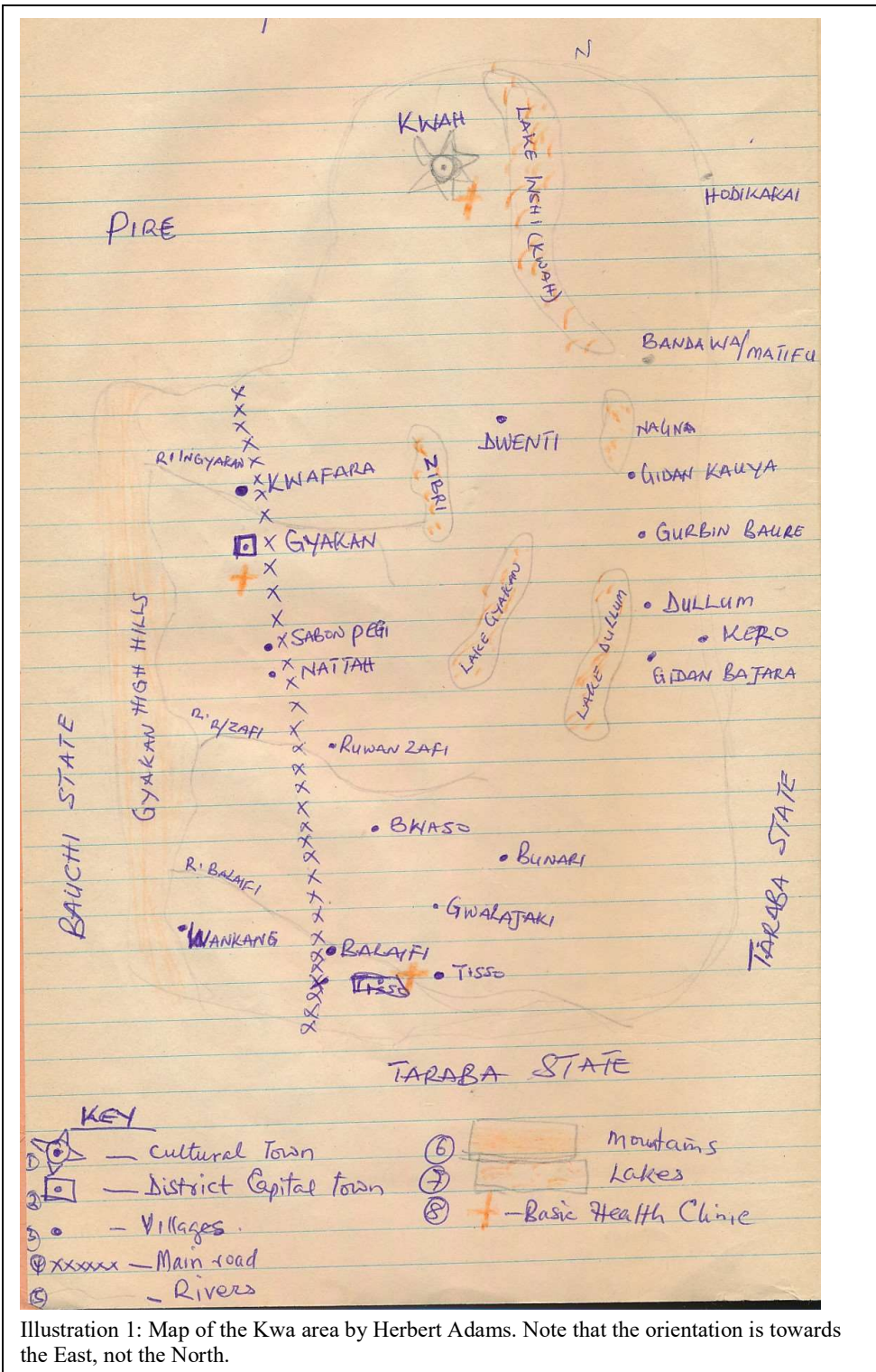


Illustration 1: Map of the Kwa area by Herbert Adams. Note that the orientation is towards the East, not the North.

History

Pre-colonial migrations and movement of settlements since the beginning of the colonial period

The Kwa people consist of several clans. The core group of clans migrated to their present territory from Yibong, a historical site which is described as a deserted place of settlement with terrace structures built from dry stone walls. The Laakya clan moved from Yibong to Kawe, while the other clans moved to Kwa Kogi or to Jwenti.

Before settling at Yibong, the Kwa claim to have originally come from the Sokoto area, where they left to evade conversion to Islam.⁴ One of their clans originates from Bachama, another is said to have settled first at Lamurde, a Bachama town, after having left Yibong. The British District Officer Major Logan in 1927 stated that the Kwa are an offshoot of the Bachama.⁵ The Bachama have had a dominant presence at the south-eastern edge of the Muri Mountains since well before the 19th century (Stevens 1973: 483 note 12).

Culturally and historically, the Kwa show many parallels with the Bachama: for instance, the putative origin from Sokoto or Gobir (Meek 1931, I: 2) and the alleged migration from Gobir to Demsa (Stevens 1973, p. 71 f.), as well as the descent system which Stevens (1973, p. 86) classifies as a double descent system with patrilineal emphasis; and the Kwa themselves acknowledge a high degree of cultural similarity with the Bachama. Linguistically, however, the Kwa have peculiarities which make them unique.

The Kwa state that the Jen also migrated from Sokoto and at one time settled at Yibong.

Relations with the Fulani emirates⁶

As far as oral, archival or published sources can tell, the Kwa were never conquered by the Fulani.

Kiri Fulani under the leadership of Hammarwa (otherwise called Hammanruwa), who later became the first Emir of Muri Emirate, established a base near lake Dulum and approached the groups in the region with the choice of either becoming their allies or being fought. The Jen made a covenant with the Fulani, and after about two years, the Fulani moved to Gowe in present Lau district and made a covenant with the Kunini, staying one year at Wulnongo south of Kunini. Before moving on to Kona, the Fulani had a series of clashes with the Bachama and the Bata, culminating in a fierce battle at Gowe, where the Bachama suffered huge losses, and subsequently the place was called 'pit of death' by the Bachama. At Gowe Hammarwa received his flag from Buba Yero and started the Jihad in 1812. While at Wulnongo, the Fulbe approached the Munga, who neglected a covenant and the Fulbe fought and defeated the Munga, who fled to Bandawa and then to Panya. From Wulnongo the jihadists went to Kindang-Kuro in Lau Habe, a centre of the

4 See also E. A. Brackenbury (NAK SNP 10-374P/1917), who reports that they came from Gobir to Demsa (which is the Batta area) and then onto their present area.

5 NAK SNP 17-99 Kwa Tribe-Ethnology (1927) by Major Logan.

⁶ The following is largely taken from Adelberger 2009.

Kona state and defeated the Jukun. In 1817, the Fulani took Muri and drove out the Je-Muri, a Jukun group settled there. The areas of Bambuka, Loo, Zo, Gomu and Panya, as well as others, were administered by personal aides of the Emir of Muri: the *liman* was in charge of Bandawa and Munga, Jen was under the *kaigamma* and the *waziri* took care of Bambuka and Panya. (Hamman 2007: 79-81, 86, 103, 111).

Local information collected by the missionary McBride corroborates that several communities such as the Bambuka, Leemak of Panya and Zo, Munga, Karim and Jen paid tribute to the Fulani Emirate Muri. The Loo, Gomu and Burak, on the other hand, were never forced to pay tribute. In their oral traditions, the Kwa recount an attack by Fulani emirate raiders from Muri, in which these were assisted by the Jen, who showed the Fulani the way to Gyakan. In the tradition it is, however, stressed that the Jen sided covertly with the Kwa and helped them in the fighting (Herbert Adams MS 1991).

In this context it is worth citing from Hamman's study of the Fulbe *jihad* in the middle Benue region:

"It is said that the first people who cooperated with the Fulbe and made *aman* (covenant) with them in the Muri area were the people of Jen who migrated from either Lamorde or Imbru in the Numan area some time towards the end of the 18th century. On arrival, the Fulbe are said to have settled east of Jen at *Vendu* (lake F.) Dulum (Jesumu according to some informants) and entered into friendly relations with the Jen. This was during the reign of the chief of Jen known as Sugu."⁷

While Hamman can give no dating of the arrival of the Fulani, it shows that the Fulani had a considerable presence at the southern margins of Kwa land.

The military strategy of the Fulani emirates was largely based on their cavalry, with noble horsemen leading the attacks (Marjomaa 1998:218–19, 232–34, 254–56; Smaldone 1977:29–32). Mounted warriors could employ their military tactics to great effect on the undulating plains of the Northern Nigerian savannah, but could not exploit their superiority in the craggy and hilly landscape of the Muri Mountains area nor in other mountainous regions. The inhabitants of the plains surrounding the hills, especially in the Tula area, built defensive stone walls and thorn hedges, which were successfully used to check attacks by horsemen. As a protective measure, the villages were strategically well-placed in the steep and rocky hills. Usually, they were protected by stone walls and could only be reached through narrow, winding paths, partly obstructed by gateways. These could be well-defended against emirate raiders, even if they approached armed with rifles.

Firearms were part of the weaponry of the emirate forces, especially since the middle of the 19th century, but since they were of the front loader musket type and, compared with contemporaneous European standards, few in numbers, their effect was mostly psychological inducing fear through their loud discharge. The arms of the mountain dwellers consisted of spears with varying, often quite vicious, tips, bows and arrows, the latter often poisoned, daggers, short swords and clubs. For protection, shields made of buffalo hide and elephant ears were used.

⁷ Hamman 2007: 79.

Thus, although the different emirates exercised considerable pressure by undertaking frequent raids on the population groups of the wider Muri Mountains area and adjacent regions, their control of the area was rather loose and varied over time. Supported by a suitable terrain, the mountain dwellers could successfully defend themselves or were able to withdraw into even more inaccessible regions. The acephalous nature of their societies and the existence of a multitude of factions on the one hand, made it difficult to form alliances for more successful defence, on the other hand the subjugation of a single community did not entail the conquest of any wider political network.

In the northern Muri Mountains, the Emirs of Gombe and Misau attacked the Tangale of Shongom in about 1886 but were repelled by the combined forces of the Shongom, Kaltungo, Ture and Tula Wange. The Emir of Misau, Sale, was killed in the battle. In another attack on Awak, the emirate raiders were also defeated.

Defence in the lowland areas was more difficult and these areas were often incorporated into the emirate structure. In the Gombe region, the Plains Waja and the Western Tangale were given as fiefs to Sarkin Yaki and Galadima Gombe respectively. They paid tribute in exchange for immunity from attacks by Fulani (Low 1972:150 ff). Still, Buba Yero and his successors inflicted numerous raids on the settlements of Waja and Tangale and the Jukun of Pindiga. The payment of tribute or the conversion to Islam did not necessarily mean that a community was exempt from being the target of slave raids (see Yakubu 1992:146,150). Buba Yero visited Waja from Dukku or Gombe, attacked the plains villages and was repulsed by Gelengu. On his way back he took his revenge on the Tera towns of Kwoil and Hinna for their expulsion of the Fulani. Yerima Suli, the son of Buba Yero, attacked and burnt Gelengu. His brother Koiranga attacked the Waja several times, and he undertook raids against the Tangale, Tula and Awak, assisted by the Emirs of Misau and Katagum. It is said that Koiranga fought seven wars with the Waja, capturing the settlements of Bakasi, then Balanga, Kube Gasi, Gelengu, Talasse and Swa. On his last raid the Emir fought Dong, whose inhabitants fled to the Degri hills and were able to drive back the Fulani. Reinforced by the Emir of Misau and his troops, Koiranga returned and attacked Reme and Degri simultaneously. There was heavy fighting with losses on both sides. Later Mallam Jibril Gaini also attacked the Waja village of Lambam and destroyed it.

Mountain dwellers, such as the Awak, Cham, Dadiya or Pero, were able to retain their independence against the Fulani (Temple 1922:34, 87, 88, 365).

In later years the Gombe Emirate's control over the Waja and Tangale fiefs weakened further still.

Colonial encounters

In their attempt to subjugate the region, the British colonial power undertook a series of military patrols.⁸

In 1902 the Bauchi-Borno expedition, a systematic attempt to bring the country under control, began. It was to cover a distance of about 1,000 miles. The expeditionary force was of considera-

⁸ See Adelberger 2009. The following is largely taken from this publication.

ble strength and its task was to subdue a major portion of North-Eastern Nigeria. The force under the command of Colonel Morland consisted of three captains, one officer of the Royal Artillery, one British non-commissioned officer (NCO) and 30 regular soldiers with two 75mm guns, 1st Battalion with two officers and two British NCO's and 125 regular soldiers with one Maxim gun, 2nd Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Beddoes and six officers and two British NCO's and 360 regular soldiers with three Maxim guns, further three Medical officers and 800 carriers.⁹ In the aftermath of this Bauchi-Bornu expedition the first campaign to subjugate parts of the Muri Mountains took place. The expeditionary force took Bauchi without encountering resistance. On the way, the Yergum were punished for allegedly disrupting trade routes and killing traders. Near Gombe and Nafada the forces of Mallam Jibril Gaini were engaged and eventually defeated near Tongo. Maiduguri (Maifoni) was visited and then the force returned to Yola via Song and Kilba. From Yola, Captain Cubitt then carried out operations in Bachama country and the Wurkun hills, sanctioned by Lugard. Cubitt left Yola on 28th April with two guns, two Maxims and 130 rank and file, marching along the north bank of the River Benue. Captain Cubitt first reached the Longuda town of Banjiram where five Hausa traders had been killed. In the fighting that broke out, 25 Longuda were killed, Lieutenant Dyer and interpreter Ankrah were wounded, and one porter was fatally wounded. Then they continued to Kwa. The people of Kwa, who were reported to have killed seven traders and one woman, fled to the hills and subsequently their town was burnt. In a house, thirty-two skulls were found; this was apparently taken as evidence of murder, in complete ignorance of local customs. The Kwa keep the heads of their dead chiefs in a special house (see below). In the whole area funerary rituals are practised by various ethnic groups in which the skulls of ancestors are taken from their places of burial in the hills back to certain places in the village after a couple of years. During later patrols in other areas, the discovery of skulls was also presented as proof of crime.

The patrol reached Lau on 4th May. From here Cubitt started towards Wurkun hills on 6th May. On 7th May their camp at Pitiko was attacked, but the Wurkun warriors were repulsed and several of them killed. Further fighting occurred the next day, until the Wurkun chiefs sued for peace. The district was considered pacified. The force was back at Ibi on 16th April 1902.

During the previous year there had already been an attempt by British forces to open the route from Numan to Lau which was blocked by the Bachama.

In 1910 again there were several patrols on both sides of the Muri Mountains.

At least three patrols were concerned with the southern parts of the mountains and were directed against Wurkun groups and eventually the Mumuye, and against the Bachama and the Kwa. Their goal was to keep trade routes open and prevent them from being imperilled. The chief of the

⁹ NAK SNP 15 Acc. No. 30, Report on Field Operations 1902. See also Dusgate (1985:145–155).

Bachama, Jaro, who had been installed by the British in 1904 and was now accused of being involved in highway robbery, was killed in a skirmish.¹⁰

In 1914, in the southern parts of the Muri Mountains, Assistant District Officer (ADO) Haughton, with a police escort, visited several settlements of the Wirkun groups and the Jen due to what was termed "*various outrages*" and he took "*executive measures*" at Bambur, Lukudu, Senge and Jen. In September 1914 District Officer Glenny reported that Bashima, Kode and Jen refused to pay grain tribute for the troops at Yola; this resistance was explained with reference to the First World War. No patrol was undertaken because there were no police available. Ankwara, Kwa, Lukudu (Angule) and Loo refused to pay their tax for 1914, and further government messengers were assaulted at Ankwara and driven out by the Loo. The Ankwara and Kwa did eventually pay their tax in February 1915.¹¹

¹⁰ NAK SNP 7 - 1317/1911, Muri Province, Annual Report 1910. NAK Yola Prof K.5/SII, Gazetteer of Adamawa Province 1936: p. 162–163.

¹¹ NAK SNP 9 - 778/1919, Report on Wirkum District, Muri Province: A. Holdsworth Groom "From the District Officer I/C Muri Div. to the Resident Muri Province", 7th April 1915.

Social Structure

Clans

The Kwa are subdivided into several patrilineal clans and lineages. In general, the term *nya* (people) is combined with the name, i.e. Nya-Dwenti, Nya-Deyi, etc. Variants of the clan names are due to variations in writing in the local manuscripts by Herbert Adams; the definitive spelling in some instances has yet to be clarified.

In several cases, the name of a clan or lineage is also the name of a settlement, suggesting that clans are co-resident units.

The following table lists all the clans and lineages of the Kwa, giving information on their origin.

Table 1: Kwa clans

Clan	Lineage	Origin	Comments
Deyi		Sokoto to Yibong to Kwa	name means coming from the east. With the Dwenti, they were the first to settle at Yibong. One of the two ruling clans; chiefs come from this clan. Take care of supreme spirit <i>kasiman</i>
Deyi	Nakyurin		sub-unit of Nya-Deyi, control the farms with fertile loamy/clay soil.
Dwenti		Sokoto to Yibong to Kwa	with the Deyi, they were the first to settle at Yibong. One of the two ruling clans, chiefs come from this clan
Gwita/Guitah		Sokoto to Yibong to Lamurde to Kwa	take care of the supreme spirit <i>ngbandima</i> . This clan organises and leads the warriors in times of war. May not eat frogs
Gwita/Guitah	Bugë/Bugei		only a small unit, probably from Jen. There is also a hamlet with that name
Gwita/Guitah	Lamadi		there is also a hamlet with that name
Gwita/Guitah	Saaponishi/Sakonishi		there is also a hamlet with that name
Gwūshwe/Gūshwëu/Guitshuwe/Gyuitshune			eligible as chiefs
Gwalaso			specialists for burial and grave digging
Gwalaso	Gur/Gura		there is also a hamlet with that name
Kagba/Kakpah	Laakwa	from lake/water	senior to Laagana; have affiliation with water spirits, can cure infertility of men and women
Kagba/Kakpah	Laagana		junior to Laakwa; can walk on water and dive, like to eat frogs
Kaso			associated with the supreme spirit <i>kasiman</i> . Joking relationship with the Deyi and Kagba. Have sp. pot <i>Wuh-Bozu-Kulu</i> that came from heaven and is annually celebrated together with people from Gwita. It secures them a good harvest and fishing results.
Kaso	Naki	Kwa	original inhabitants of Kwa

Clan	Lineage	Origin	Comments
Kwë/Kwenh		from Bachama	took over <i>ngohn</i> , the protecting spirit from Jen-Joule. Have special relation with the Deyi, joking relationship with Kagba and Gwita.
Kwë/Kwenh	Kweni		
Kwë/Kwenh	Gyaata/Gahtan		there is also a hamlet with that name
Kwë/Kwenh	Lagna/Lagha		there is also a hamlet with that name
Laakya		from Sokoto to Yibong to Waduku/Kawe	have special stone on which a chief-to-be has to step on and he then receives a chieftaincy name by the Laakya; joking relationship with the Deyi
Lajo/Lagyo		Sokoto	blacksmiths come from this clan, joking relationship with the Deyi, Dwenti and Kagba. They have sp. anvil <i>Gyoh</i> , associated with guardian spirit protecting the clan's property
Lajo/Lagyo	Kwaabwa		there is also a hamlet with that name
Waduku			probably same as Lakya?

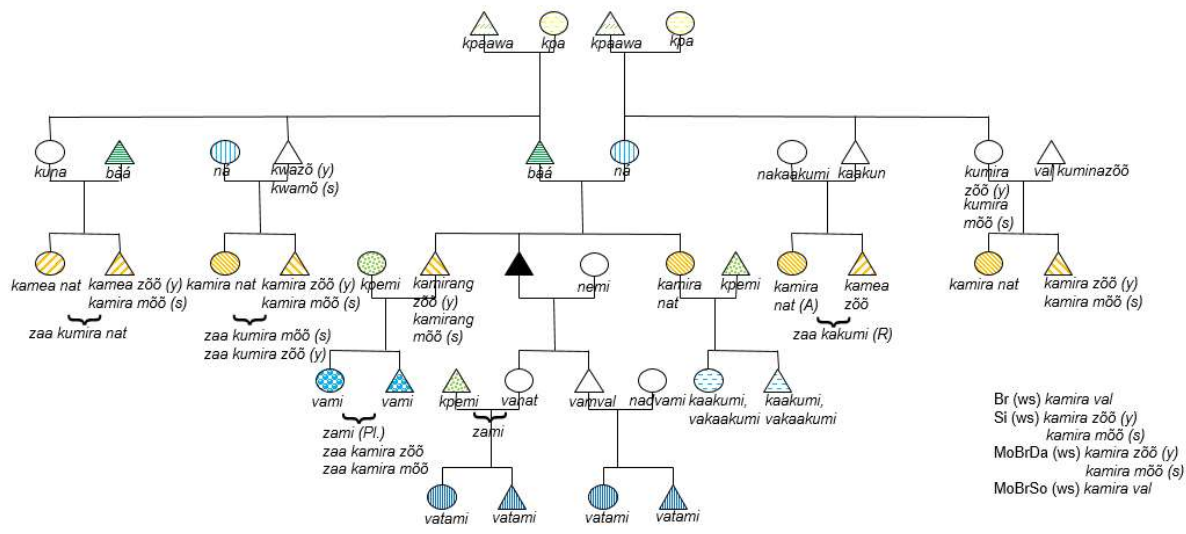
An aspect of the social structure of the Kwa that deserves further research: Herbert Adams in his MS mentions that, parallel to the patrilineally organised and named kin groups, there exist matrilineal groupings, which bear no name, but, for instance, exercise certain rights over lakes and fishing grounds.

There are descendants of captives of war (from the fightings with Fulani and Dadiya) living among the Kwa.

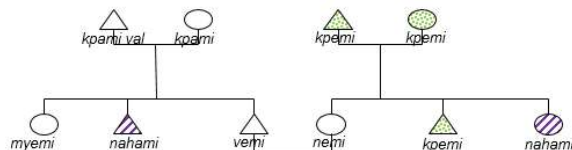
Kinship Terminology

The kinship terminology of the Kwa has features of the Hawaii system, where in ego's generation cousins carry the same term as siblings, differentiated by gender. However, the terms for cross-cousins (FaSiSo, MoBrSo) differ slightly, thus it cannot be considered a real Hawaii classification. In the first ascending generation, the terminology is bifurcate collateral.

Kinship Terminology - Kwa

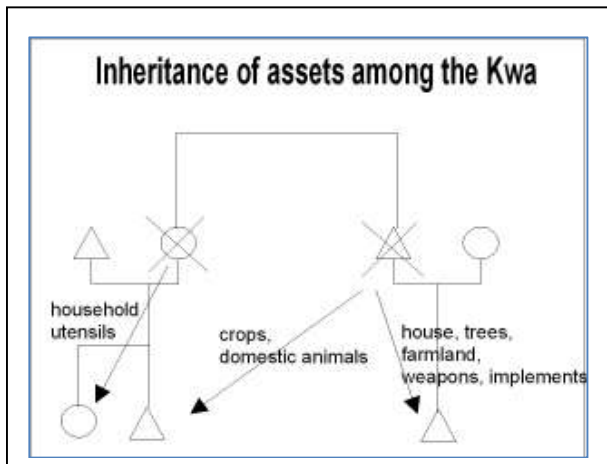


Affinal relations



Family

While the filiation into the clans is patrilineal, inheritance of property follows the patriline as well as the matriline, depending on the nature of the assets. Among the neighbouring Tsobo a similar rule can be found.



If a male person dies, his farmland, useful trees, house and items like spear, bow and arrows, knife and hoes are passed to his son; domestic animals and crops are passed to his SiSo. The most senior son gets the deceased's weapons and his compound. Farmland usually stays either within the patriline or the matriline: fields are passed on as they were inherited – if a field was inherited from Fa, then it is passed on to So; if a field

was inherited from MoBr, then it is passed on to SiSo. However, negotiations may take place in order to repeal such a regulation.

If a female person dies, her property, such as pots and dishes are inherited by her daughter.

In times of famine, a Kwa man may sell off a child of his sister (same mother) for a bag of guinea corn.

Marriage

Levirate (*na tyen*) is practised: after the death of a husband, his wife can be taken over by his brother without payment of a bride price.

Herbert Adams in his MS further mentions the following categories of marriages:

Nitikonat, ntikore, Intikonat or Intikovi: first marriage of a woman and with a regular bride price payment by the husband to her parents.

Nga manason: second marriage – the prospective new husband gives money/bride price to the married wife who pays her current husband and is then free to marry the new one.

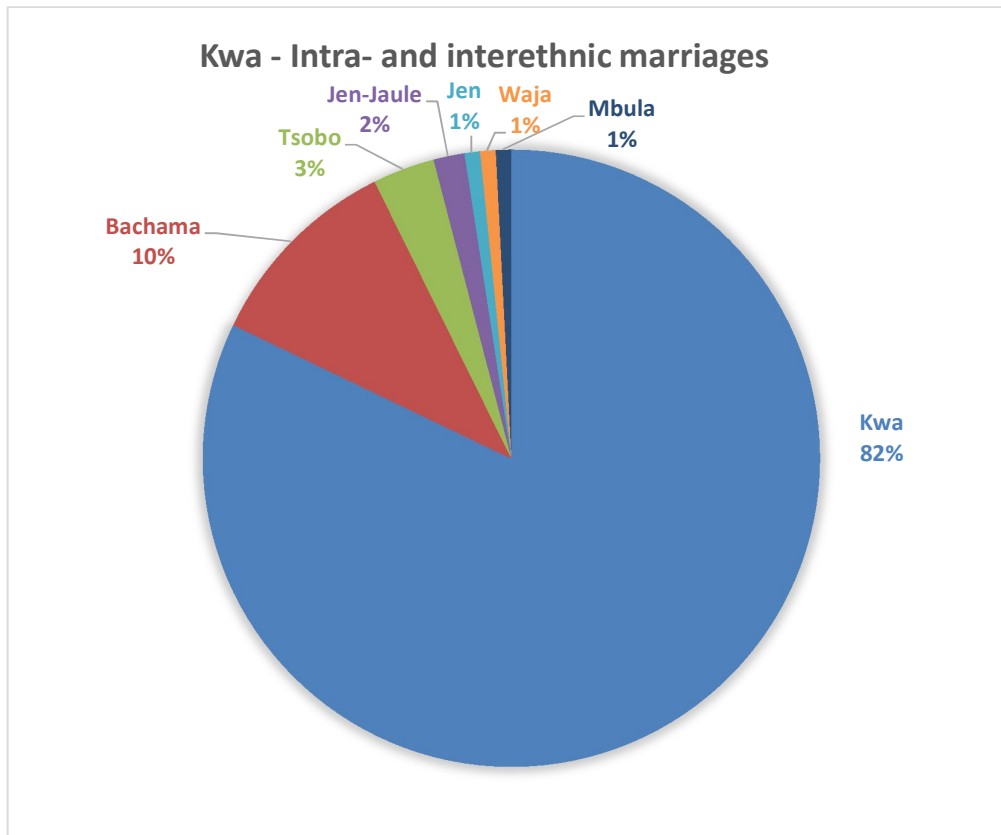
Inlerenat or inlerevi: elopement – an already married woman runs away with her new husband, but he then pays the bride price to her former husband.

Navasah mesu: a girl is impregnated before the husband marries her.

Some statistics

In a sample taken, there were 24 men who had married 123 wives.

The polygamy rate was comparably high at 5.1, but the rate reduced to 2.5 when only considering concurrent wives (= 59), i.e., wives who were divorced or deceased were not counted.



The incidence of interethnic marriages was moderate: 18% of wives came from other ethnic groups with a prevalence of Bachama wives.

The different marriage categories were distributed as follows:

1 st marriage <i>intikonat</i> :	34%
2 nd marriage <i>nga manason</i> :	58%
Elopement <i>inlerenat</i> :	21%
Levirate <i>na tyen</i> :	8%
<i>Navasah mesu</i> :	1%

Burial

Graves are sealed with a clay cover.

Members of the Gwalaso clan are specialists in burial and grave digging, they were the undertakers for the ruling clans Nya-Deyi and Nya-Dwenti. Because of this relationship, the chiefs do not take fish from the Gwalaso during the annual fishing festival.

When a chief of the Kwa dies, his head is removed and placed in a pot in a special ritual house called *agūyen* that has a special stone at the entrance. Each head is put in its own pot. Herbert Adams in his MS reports that in the *agūyen* house there is a room where the dead chief from Deyi or Dwenti has to be seated on a chair until the next dead chief takes the place. The odour of the corpse is kept away by burning rotten fish. When a new corpse arrives, the old one is buried inside the house, his fingers are removed and kept in a horn also hanging inside that house.

The Gwalaso have special drums *kwarangai* consisting of three pieces: big, medium and small, which are played during a burial ceremony, and also when a young man managed to elope with a woman from a far location.

Granaries

Working with clay is a domain of the women, and it is the women that build the granaries. In the past, women also built the clay foundations and walls of houses, and men erected the roofs with wooden poles and straw.

Men fill the granary with farm produce and also fetch the corn from the granary.

Besides the big granaries standing outside of the houses, there are small granaries built inside a woman's house.



Photo 1: A Kwa granary for men (*riwet*) with straw cover

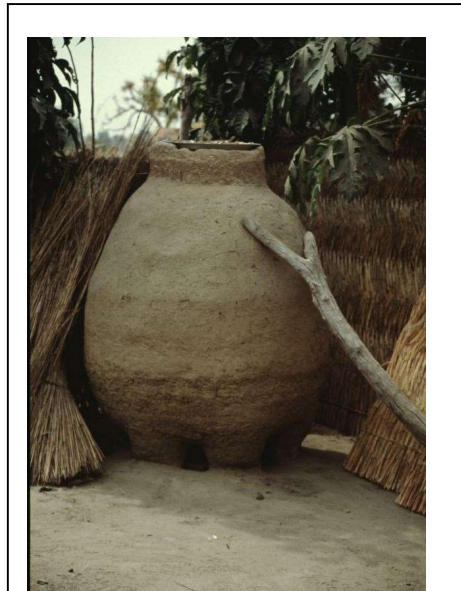


Photo 2: A Kwa granary for women (*wabon*) without cover

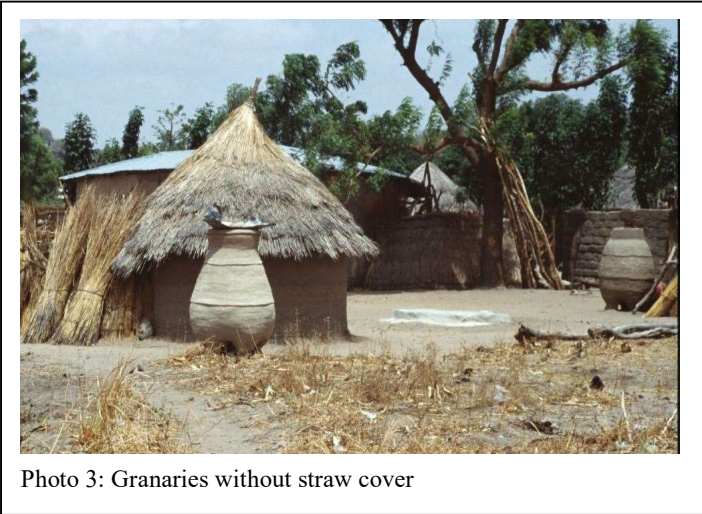


Photo 3: Granaries without straw cover

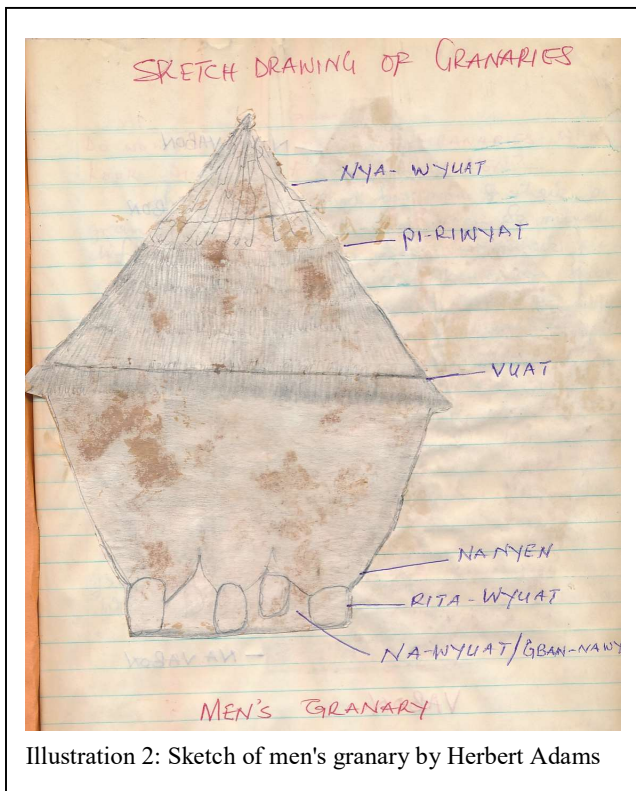


Illustration 2: Sketch of men's granary by Herbert Adams

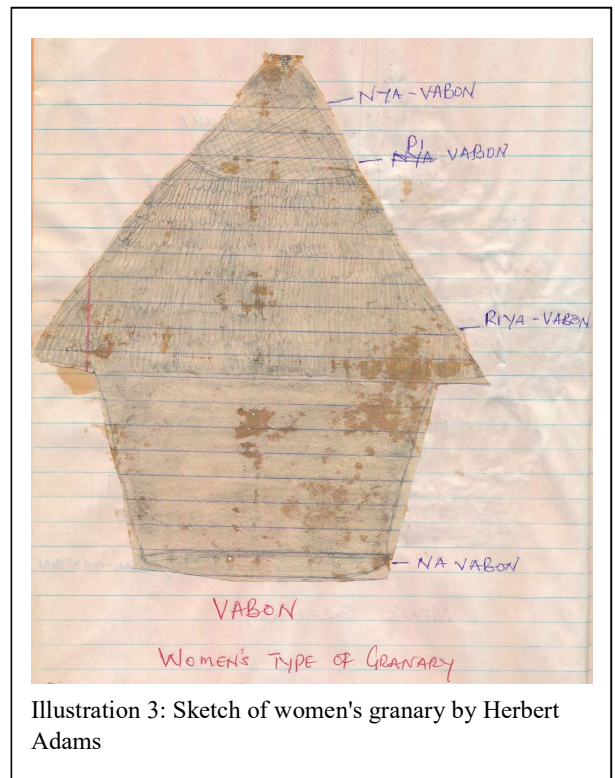


Illustration 3: Sketch of women's granary by Herbert Adams

Political Organisation

Only members of the clans Nya-Deyi, Nya-Dwenti and Nya-Gwūshwe are eligible for chieftancy.

The first pre-colonial chiefs were from the Nya-Deyi, who got the title from the Bachama.

The chiefs (*kwànbāa*) of the Kwa are sacral chiefs. As such, they are subject to ritual peculiarities (see "Burial").

The title of Village Head (VH) was introduced by the British administration.

Economic Activities

Division of labour

Table 2: Gender-specific division of labour among the Kwa (m: male, f: female)

Activity	Gender
clearing	m
sowing	m & f
weeding	m & f
harvesting	m & f
irrigating	-
threshing	f
preparing threshing ground	f
winning	f
build house walls (clay)	f
build house walls (stone)	m
build house roof	m
prepare house floor	f
cut wooden poles	m
cut firewood	f
collect firewood	f
build well	m
build terraces	m
build fence	m
weave food cover	f
weave mats	m
weave baskets	m
make ropes	m
fetch water	f
pounding	f
grinding	f
cooking	f
brewing beer	f
clean house	f
make pots	f
weaving cotton	-
spinning	m & f
tailoring	m & f
blacksmithing	m
wood carving	m
butchering	m
hunting	m
collect honey	m
produce salt	f

When a house is built, women erect the clay walls and men build the roof with wooden poles and straw.

Agriculture

The Kwa cultivate guinea corn, maize and groundnuts, as well as beniseed, beans, cassava, rice, cotton and melons.

Land law¹²

Land with sandy soil is communal land and free for cultivation by everyone; there are no individual property rights on such land. Farms with loamy or clay soil are controlled by the sub-clan Nakyurin of Nya-Deyi. While land disputes over farms with sandy soil are handled by the chief of Kwa, the disputes concerning loamy soil farms are settled by the Nakyurin.

Silk-cotton trees (*riimii* in Hausa) are owned by individuals or a clan, a silk-cotton tree also stands at the central square of a settlement.

Lakes are owned by certain clans: Lake Gyakan by the Deyi, and the Deyi also perform the ritual that accompanies the fishing festival there.

Lake Dullum is owned by the Jen; Lake Inshi is controlled by the chief of Kwa in conjunction with the clan Kagba.

Animal husbandry

Table 3: Domestic animals and their uses

Animal	Kept by	Uses	Comments
cattle	m & f	meat, leather, milk	milking is mostly done by children
dwarf cattle (<i>nambulolo</i>)	-	-	
horse	m	riding, especially for hunts and warfare	only used in the past
pony	-	-	
donkey	m	riding, beast of burden	only used in the past, until about mid-1970s
goat	m & f	meat, leather	
sheep	m	meat, leather	
pig	m & f	meat	
dog	m	guardian, assist in hunting	
chicken	m & f	meat, eggs, feathers used in rituals and as decoration during dances	some women do not eat chicken or eggs
duck	m	meat, eggs, feathers	
guinea fowl	m & f	meat, eggs, feathers	
pigeon	m & f	meat, eggs	children are keeping them. Were not kept in the past.
cat	m	protection against rats	

¹² According to Herbert Adams MS.

Pottery

Only women are working with clay, they produce pots and also build the clay structures within the



Photo 4: Clay pots aligned around the firing pit



Photo 5: Samples of clay pots



Photo 6: Pots used for storing food or water

compound. The pots produced have a high quality, are often decorated with beautiful patterns and have a fine, reddish finish. As such they are impressive examples of craftsmanship. The various architectural elements built of clay in the compounds are peculiar to the Kwa. These are, for instance, hearths or cooking areas, grinding places, raised shelves, pantry and storage compartments.



Photo 7: A kitchen with various clay components: hearth, storage columns, grinding place.



Photo 8: Clay structures within a compound



Photo 9: Architectural clay elements in a compound



Photo 10: Examples of household clay structures



Photo 11: Examples of household clay structures and storage pots



Photo 12: Pottery and clay structures in a compound

Markets

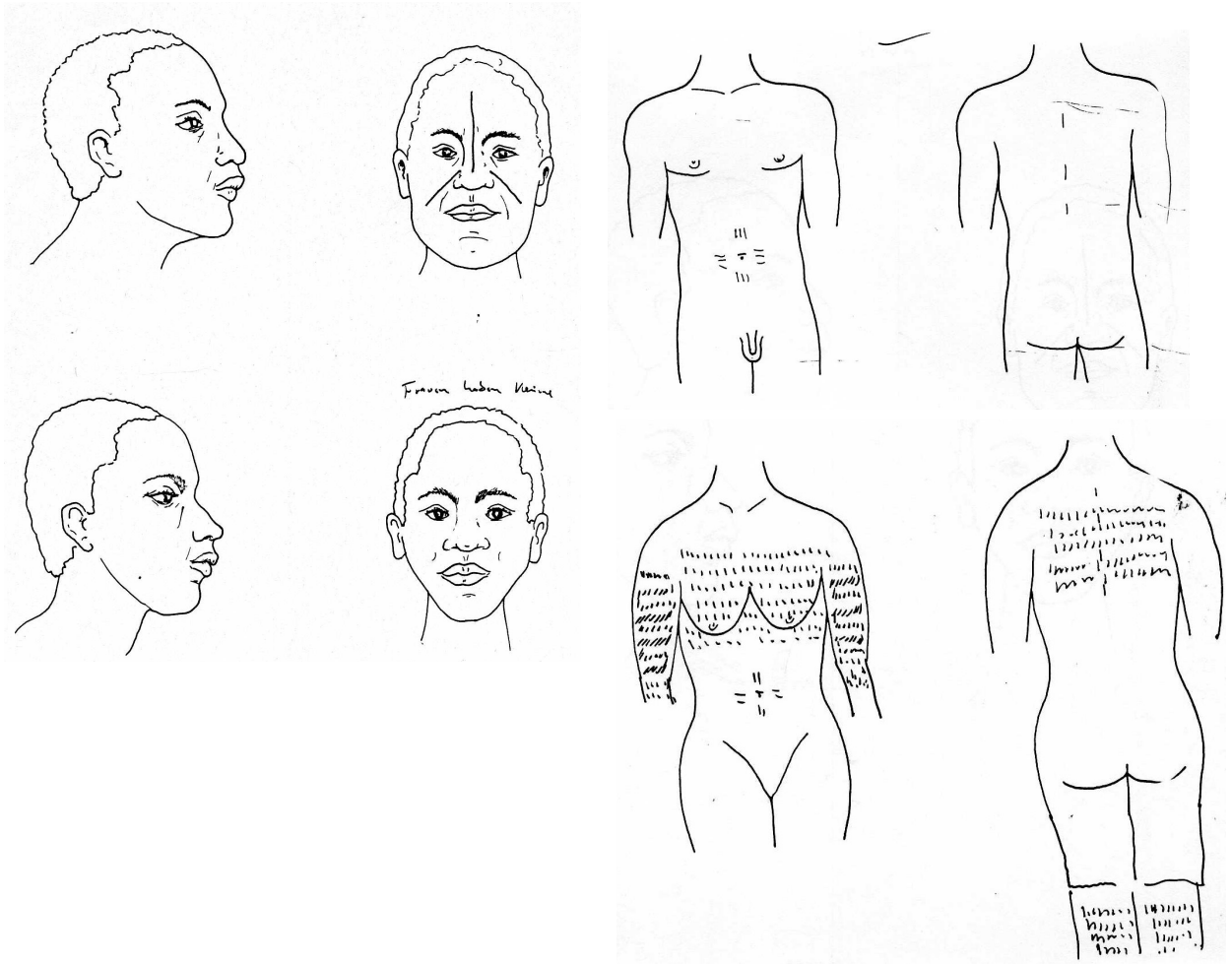
Each Friday there is market day in Gyakan.

Hunting

There are communal hunts in which the hunters are organised according to their clan membership. Early in the morning, the hunters gather, and the spirit *ngbandima* is addressed and asked for his guidance (Herbert Adams MS).

Cicatrization, bodily ornamentation

Men and women have cicatrizations on their body, but only men have face markings.



Ritual and Religion

Table 4: Religious concepts and material expressions

Kwa

Concept	Name	Manifestation / Comments
high god	<i>ěěyi</i>	creator
ancestors	<i>nyayin</i>	
water spirit	<i>nyaagba</i>	there are male and female spirits
bush spirit	<i>yiinyuku</i>	
protecting spirit	<i>kasiman, ngbandima</i>	
Material expression		
<i>gunki</i> (wooden idol, fetish)	-	
<i>dodo</i> (masked dancer, masquerade)	<i>nku</i>	taken over from the Jen
drum		
clay pot	<i>wuugbal</i>	
clay figure		

Spirits and associated rituals

Ngbandima and *kasiman* are the supreme spirits; *ngbandima* came first to Kwa, then came *kasiman*.

Ngohn and *dodo* are cults that were taken over from the Jen-Joule, *Bori* (arm slashing cult) was taken over from the Jen proper. *Ngohn* is in the possession of Kwë/Kwenh clan and is celebrated annually together with Jen-Joule. *Bori* is a secret society, members have their own language, they dance decorated with red paint on the body and feathers on their head, cutting themselves with knives. Performing *bori* drives away bad spirits and helps barren women to become fertile.

The Nya-Kagba clan is said to originate from water. Some male members of this clan have the gift to cure infertility in women. For this purpose, the healer from Nya-Kagba goes with the woman to a stream or river - usually the river Njakan near Gyakan - where he slaughters a red cock, then lights a pipe with tobacco, enters the water and dives under the surface, where he consults with the water spirits. The woman remains on the bank of the river. After completion of the ritual the woman will be able to have children.

The water spirits are called *nyaagba*, they are both male and female. These spirits purify the water they are living in.

When rain fails, people go to a certain place at Kwa Kogi and ask for rain by clapping their hands. At Gyakan, in the mountains, there is another place where the Kwa may ask for rain.

No menstruating woman is allowed to fetch water from a water source, otherwise the spring dries up; however, such a woman may fetch water from the river. A husband does not mind if his men-

struating wife fetches water, but ritual functionaries do not drink such water. Ritual functionaries cannot bear to have a menstruating woman in their presence.

Gyo/jyo is an idol of the Nya-Lajo clan, it consists of a piece of iron and is a protective spirit against diseases and attacks.

Ritual calendar

Gikou (in October) and *Viga-Nyaman* (in April) are annual festivals; farmers who harvested 100 bundles or more of Guinea corn are praised during these festivals; these farmers fix their axes on the *riimii* tree (silk-cotton tree) standing on the festival ground.

Gikou is organised by the chief of Kwa in consultation with sub-clan Nya-Naki of Nya-Kasso.

Kasiman is carried to the place where the festivity takes place, during the ritual also *ngbandima* is addressed. Successful farmers and hunters dance and celebrate.

Viga-Nyaman takes place in April and lasts for two days, by celebrating it the new season is prepared and everyone participates in the dances together with *kasiman* and *ngbandima*. On the first day *Viga-Nyaman* is celebrated at Kwa village, and on the second day at Gyakan.

Miscellanea

The Kwa believe in reincarnation along the patriline, i.e. an ancestor is reborn in a child that shows resembling features.

Some people are able to transmogrify into a hyena or snake.

Taboos

The eating of leopards (*watt*) is prohibited, as well as dogs, camels, donkeys, horses and tortoises. The plants, *madaci* (mahogany) and *kiriya* (*Prosopis africana*, false locust) may not be used for food.

Glossary¹³

Kwa

agūyen
báà
báá
ba'
ěěyi
gikou
go
gyo / jyo

kwànbaa
kasiman
kwarangai
nambulolo
na tyen
ngbandima
ngohn
nya
nya báà
nyaagba/nyaakpa
nyayin
riwet
viga-nyaman
wabon
watt
yiinyuku

gloss

sp. ritual house for deceased chiefs
 settlement area of the Kwa
 father
 come!
 high god, creator
 annual agricultural festival around October
 columnar storage, shelf
 idol of the Nya-Lajo clan consisting of a piece
 of iron in the form of an anvil
 sacral chief
 one of the two supreme spirits of the Kwa
 sp. drums of the clan Gwalaso
 dwarf cattle
 levirate
 one of the two supreme spirits of the Kwa
 sp. cult
 clan
 Kwa ethnic group
 water spirit
 ancestor
 granary for men
 annual agricultural festival around April
 granary for women
 leopard
 a spirit of the bush

¹³ H. = Hausa term.

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