



# THE NYAM

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

## Series

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

by Jörg Adelberger

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

## The Nyam

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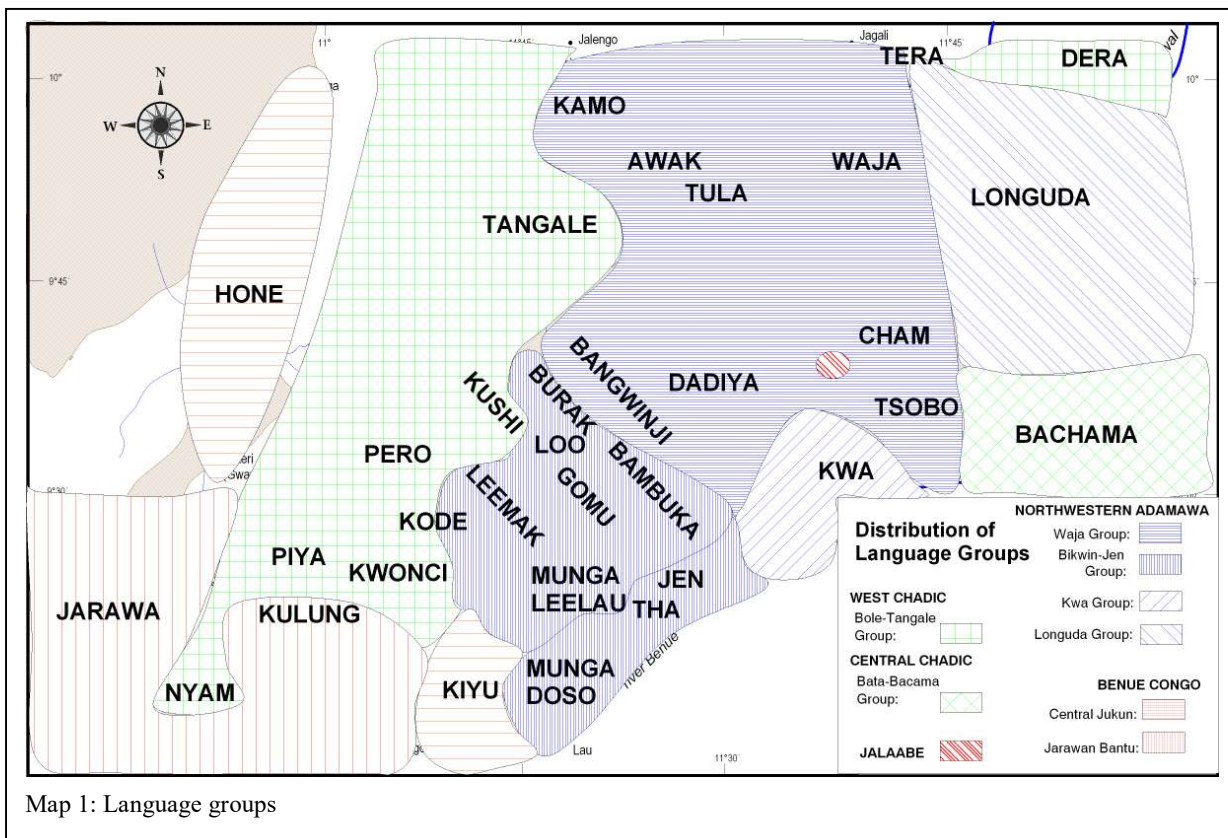
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## Introduction

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.<sup>1</sup>

The Nyam [nmi] speak a language classified as a member of the Bole-Tangale group of the West Chadic languages.<sup>2</sup> At the time of research they counted about 3,500 people, in a more recent study their number is given as 5,000 (Andreas 2012: 1)



## Settlement area

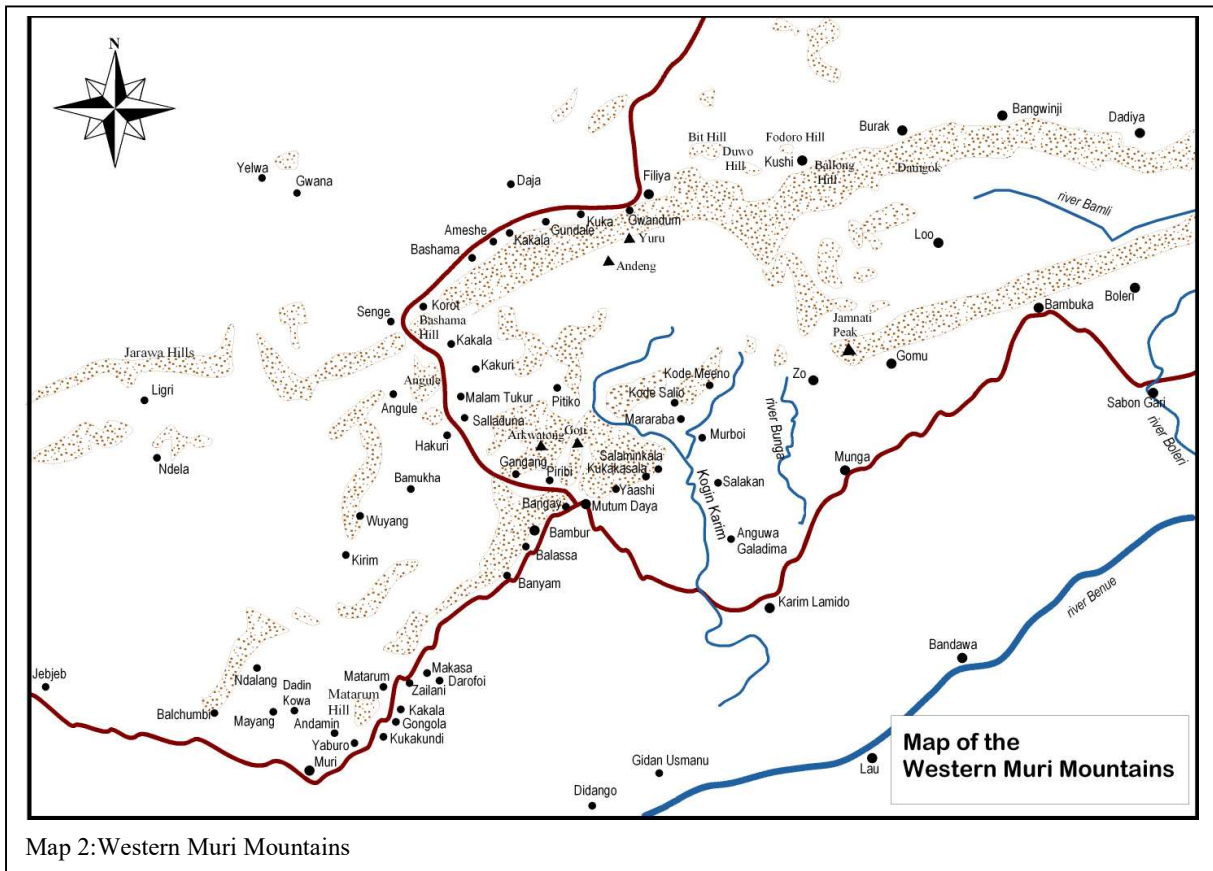
Their main settlements are Ndalang, (also called Nyambulo), and Andamin; Andreas (2012: 2-3) further mentions the hamlets of Wadata, Wagal, Bititkeleng, Tukulusu, Rekwa and Dadenkwa (Dadinkowa) as Nyam settlements.

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Jawro Manu, Malam Jibir, Waziri Chiroma, Yarima Idi (Galadima), and Yusuf Sambo for their cooperation during my research. My special thanks go to Musa Mohammed Nyam for his untiring and invaluable assistance. I am grateful to Pete Eccles for correcting my English.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Andreas 2012:4. Heike Andreas is working on the Nyam language; her thesis (2012) also contains information on the history and culture of the Nyam. In square brackets are the ISO 639 names of languages.

The Nyam explain their (self-)designation as meaning “dispersion by force” (see also Andreas 2012: 4) because they scattered after the downfall of Kwararafa.

The following groupings speak the Nyam language and are attached to the Nyam, however, the



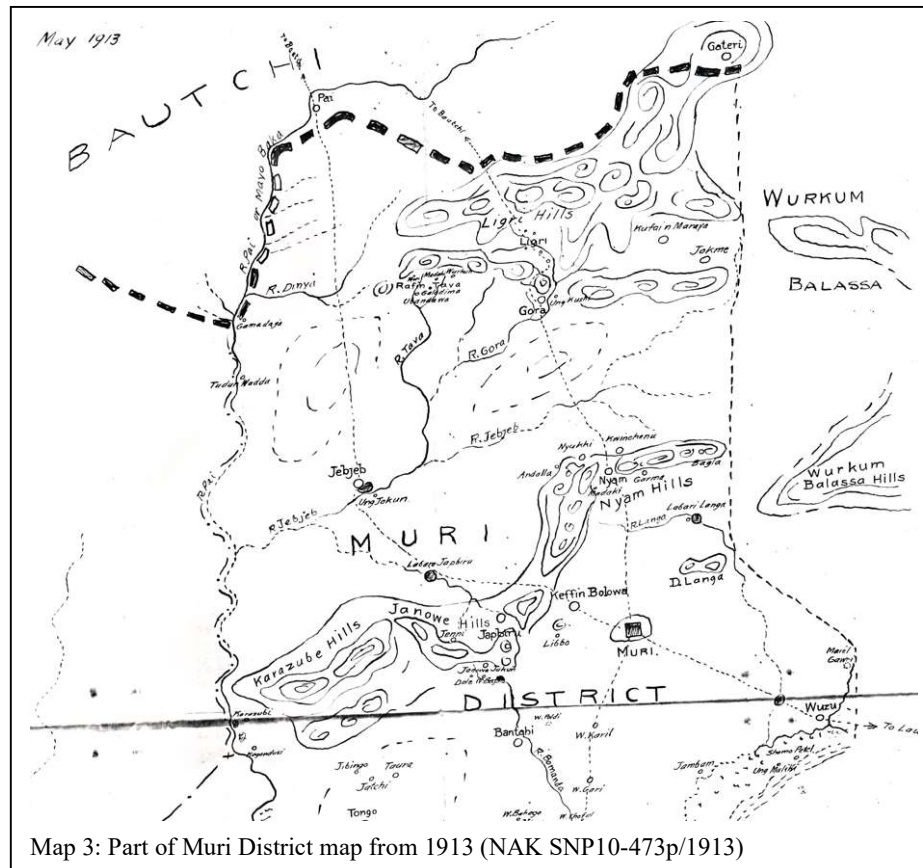
Map 2: Western Muri Mountains

Nyam proper regard them as distinct units. Further research should be conducted into the question of their identity.

The Ndelo are also called Jeni by the Hausa, it is said about them that they lost their own chiefdom and are now a part of the Nyam. They are subdivided into named sub-units.

The Awunyam live in the village of Mayang on the far side of the Nyam hills.

The Nyam of Maltiyombi (Malcumbi) are called Jukun-Nyam because they have close relationships with the Jukun; their autonym is Jee-Nyam. A group of Nyam emigrants once moved to Gwana (Gateri) and settled outside the city walls in a place called Maltumbi. This is confirmed by the Jukun of Gwana who relate that they have friendly relations with the Nyam and that they are performing joint rituals. The Nyam claim to have discovered the mineral galena (*malco*, Hausa: *toozalii* or *kwallii*) at Gwana; a dispute arose with the Gwana-Jukun about the property rights, this eventually led to the Nyam returning to the Nyam Hills where they founded Maltiyombi (also called Malcumbi or Balcumbi) on the western foothills. The area of Maltiyombi was originally called Felet, and there is a Lake Felet to the northeast of Maltiyombi. McBride (IAI Cons. 2 Box 2(4): 26) reports that they moved to Gateri due to constant attacks by the Fulani and started to return from there in 1915.

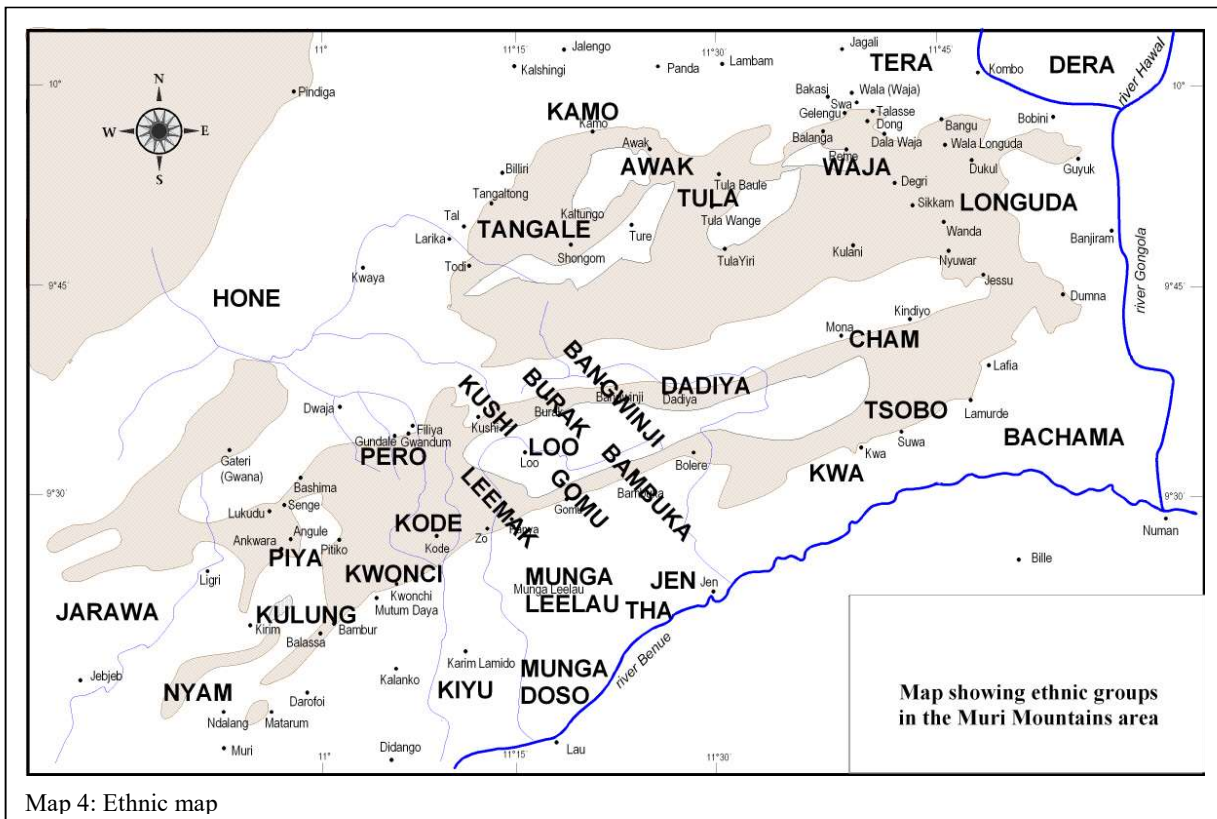


## Interethnic relations

Their neighbours to the north are the Jarawa, to the east and south the Kulung [bbu] and the Piya [piy], in particular from the Peelang (Garuma/Kunshenu) section, and to the west live Jukun speaking groups. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it is reported that Jukun communities were settled around the Janowe and Nyam hills.<sup>3</sup> The Nyam do not consider themselves as part of the Wurkun cluster, despite being linguistic cognates of the Piya. As a matter of fact, many settlements in the region are inhabited by an ethnically mixed population.

<sup>3</sup> NAK SNP 10 - 473P/1913 "Assessment Report on the Muri District of Lau Division by AR H. Q. Glenny 1913", p.7.

The Janowe Hills are located to the west of the Nyam Hills. Glenny (p. 6) writes about the Jarawa: "Those [Jarawa] who revolted against Emir Usumanu of Bauchi, about I think 30 years ago, and fled to the Wurkun Hills; who have now emerged from their uncongenial refuge and settled peaceably (after in some cases a brief period of brigandage) under the shadow of the Ligri Hills in the extreme North of the District."



Map 4: Ethnic map

Their relations with the neighbouring groups are amicable and they intermarry with them; especially close is their rapport with the Jarawa with whom they have a joking relationship.

The Nyam have historical ties with the Jukun and claim many cultural commonalities, in particular in the religious domain.

Table 1: Nyam names for neighbouring ethnic groups

Ethnic group	Nyam name	Comment
Bandawa	Kambokam	“people of the river”, also applied to other riverain peoples
Hausa & Fulani <sup>4</sup>	Kùláatà	
Jarawa	ḡàarí	
Jukun	Pèndá	
Kulung	Bèembúr	
Piya	Kà ngú bè óy	“people living on hills”
Peelang (section of Piya)	Nyálàng	

<sup>4</sup> The Nyam also have the nickname *kambele* (jinns) for the Fulani.

## History

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

It appears that the Nyam developed from a nucleus with a possible Peelang/Gaaruma<sup>5</sup> origin (the Nyirgang clan), inhabiting the Nyam hills, to which groups with a Jukun origin subsequently attached themselves.

These immigrating Jukun groups claim an origin from Kwararafa and mainly moved in from the south, some came from the north from Gateri (Gwana), apparently at a later date. In their traditions, those clans coming from the south say that they originally lived near Wukari, then they moved to Kona under the leadership of Andukwe, then to the Barkabali Hill (Matarum Hill), and finally they moved to the Ndalang hills, where they settled and later founded Andamin. Nyam informants say that at Barkabali (Matarum) they did not meet people living there, but that place was not favourable and had not enough good farmland, so they left.

While they lived at Barkabali Hill, they spotted the smoke of a fire on the opposite hill (Ndere Hill) and discovered that this was from an old man with bushy hair who lived on tree fruits only, pretending that he was alone, claiming that all others had been killed in fightings. Later it was found that there were relatives of his, but out of fear he had tried to hide them. He used a source of water at the foot of the hill which is still in use. After the group from Barkabali got his consent, they moved to Ndere Hill and joined the old man named Hakuri. Some say Hakuri was from the Ambiyeng clan of the Piya from Kunshenu, some say that he was from the Janowe Jukun (MS Musa Mohamed Nyam, 1991).

The settlements of the Nyam are confined to the Nyam hills and their surroundings; the remnants of settlements (*kufai* in Hausa) on Matarum Hill nearby are said to be from the Kulung, and those on Kakala Hill, close to Matarum Hill, are from the Piya.

During the colonial era, the Nyam moved their dwellings to the foothills and plains.

It may well be that the Jukun group under Andukwe was part of a migratory wave mentioned in a British colonial report, putting the date around 1750:

"...some older men and one in particular at the village of Walkali state that quite 150 years ago the Wurkumawa immigrated from Gwendon [Gwandum] in the North East and originally settled on the summit of Balassa hill, from where they pushed out colonies north and west, namely Angule, Ankwara, Walkali and Bashima (...). Simultaneously with this movement from Gwendon, many Jukums from Kwona crossed to the north bank of the Benue and formed a colony at the foot of Kulum Hill in the south eastern portion of the district within a few miles of Balassa. They also pushed out colonies west, and the ancestors of the present generation are said to have founded the town of Kirum 30 years ago."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The Peelang/Gaaruma (also called Kunshenu by the Hausa) are the westernmost section of the Piya.

<sup>6</sup> NAK Ministry for Local Government – 4377/1912, Muri Province: Wurkum Pagan District, Assessment Report by T. H. Houghton. See also Fremantle 1972: 27.



The migrations at that period may also probably be linked to a heavy period of drought affecting the whole region around 1740-1750 (cf. Tarhule, Woo 1997: 613).

### **Relations with the Fulani emirates<sup>7</sup>**

The Bauchi Emirate was founded by Yakubu, who had already received a flag from Uthman dan Fodio prior to 1804. In 1809 Bauchi town was founded and in the following years a vast area, including the Wurkun hills in the western Muri Mountains, down to the rivers Benue and Gongola, was conquered. Yakubu pitched a war camp in front of Bambur Hill, (McBride, n.d.:15; Fremantle 1972:27) and it is said that he destroyed Kode and Gomu and received slaves as a sign of submission, but no regular tribute was paid.<sup>8</sup> Under Yakubu's successors, however, the control over the subject peoples weakened, especially under Umaru (1883–1902). The region inhabited by non-Muslim peoples in the south of Bauchi Emirate was a regular target for slave raids (Yakubu 1992:147).

Although suffering from the various raids, and at least being nominally under the administration of the Emirate of Muri, parts of the populations were able to retain their independence. It is said that the Wurkun groups were never successfully subjugated by the Fulani.<sup>9</sup>

The Nyam living in the western end of the Muri Mountains were constantly attacked by Fulani from Bauchi and Muri and because of this, a part of them subsequently moved to Gateri (Gwana).<sup>10</sup> The Nyam in their traditions emphasise to have had good relations with the Fulani,<sup>11</sup> other sources suggest a divergent view:

“There are accounts of whole towns being overcome and taken into slavery. One such was told us by Chief Darofoi. Near his town is an old volcanic cone-shaped hill called Ma Tarum. In climbing it we noticed that most of its sloping sides were covered by terraces, held by stone walls. Broken pots also show that many people once lived here. We asked Chief Darofoi about it and he told us of a raid from Muri on that place in which every man, woman and child but one, was either killed or taken away into slavery. [...] Another such place is Ndolong, a few miles West of Muri, where another hill is covered with the ruins of a town once destroyed. Darofoi says this was a Jukon town.” (McBride, n.d.: 17)

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

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<sup>7</sup> The following is largely taken from Adelberger 2009; see also Adelberger 2018.

<sup>8</sup> NAK SNP 10 - 77P/1913, Muri Province, Gwomu District, Lau Division, Assessment Report by T. H. Haughton.

<sup>9</sup> NAK SNP 7 - 3803/1909, Patrol Tangale-Waja, Report on: From the Resident Bauchi Province to the Secretary to the Administration, Zungeru, by E. H. Lewis Resident Bauchi 5<sup>th</sup> July 1909.

<sup>10</sup> IAI cons. 2 box 2(4), McBride.

<sup>11</sup> N.N. “Tarihin Nyambulo”, ms.

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

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).

### **Colonial encounters<sup>12</sup>**

In the aftermath of the Bauchi-Bornu expedition of 1902, the first campaign to subjugate parts of the Muri Mountains took place. Starting from Yola, Captain Cubitt carried out operations in Bachama country and the Wurkun hills, sanctioned by Lord Lugard. Cubitt left Yola on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1902, with two guns, two Maxims and 130 rank and file, marching along the north bank of the River Benue. The patrol reached Lau on May 4<sup>th</sup>. From here Cubitt started towards the Wurkun hills on 6<sup>th</sup> May. On 7<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> April 1902.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The following is largely taken from Adelberger 2009; see also Adelberger 2018.

<sup>13</sup> NAK SNP 15 Acc. No. 30, Report on Field Operations 1902. See also Dugate 1985:145–155.

In 1904 the Wurkun country was visited by the Acting Resident Elphinstone with a military patrol and "*thoroughly subdued*"; unfortunately no further information is available on this patrol.<sup>14</sup> Sarkin Bambur, who had acted as a guide for this patrol, was killed around the end of the following year, apparently by people from Bacama, and Elphinstone felt compelled to punish them with another patrol.

Thus, in November 1906, Assistant Resident Waters, escorted by 70 soldiers under Lieutenant Aubin, toured the area to subdue the Wurkun and to re-open the main trade route from Lau to Gateri, which had been disrupted by highway robbers. In the course of that patrol, 65 Wurkun people were killed and five villages burnt for offering resistance, and 12 villages were ordered to clear sections of the road as punishment for having robbed traders (Ruxton, Muri Province Annual Report for 1906 by Capt. F. H.).

A combined patrol of forces from Gombe and Muri, with officers from both provinces, toured the Muri Mountains proper in May and June 1909.<sup>15</sup> They went along the northern edge, then crossed the hills to the south and returned along its southern edge. Several places in that mountain refuge were visited for the first time. At Gomu, a violent conflict arose which resulted in about 30 Gomu being killed. The Gomu warriors were defeated at the same place where they had beaten the Fulani forces years before.<sup>16</sup> The proclaimed intention of the patrol was to bring the area under control and to stop offences being committed on traders disturbing the important trading centre of Lau.

On 20<sup>th</sup> April 1909 Colour Sergeant Bailey, with 22 rank and file, left Nafada and marched via Deba Habe, where they joined Assistant Resident of Gombe Carlyle, to the Jukun town of Gateri where they arrived on 28<sup>th</sup> April. Here they expected to meet with the party from Muri Division, but, due to an illness of the Assistant Resident Fitzpatrick, the meeting was delayed. Eventually on 12<sup>th</sup> May they were joined by Resident Lau Division K. V. Elphinstone, Assistant Resident Brice-Smith and Lieutenant Feneran with 54 rank and file. The combined patrol left Gateri on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

From here they first marched east and then south along the boundary line on which, however, both parties had differing views. That stretch of country was covered for the first time by a British

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<sup>14</sup> NAK SNP 15 Acc. 117, Reports from Muri Province 1906: Province of Muri, Report No. 45 for months April, May and June by Acting Resident Mr. K. V. Elphinstone.

<sup>15</sup> NAK SNP 7 - 147/1911, Boundary Muri - Bauchi: Extract from report on Wurkum Patrol, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1909 by Elphinstone; NAK SNP 7 - 5093/1907, Wurkum Patrol 1909: - Report by Col. Sergeant C. Bailey 15<sup>th</sup> June 1909, - Report on Wurkum Patrol by Resident Lau Division Elphinstone 1<sup>st</sup> July 1909, - Extract from report from AR Gombe to Resident Bauchi by Lt. Hugh de Putron, OC Nafada.

<sup>16</sup> NAK SNP 7 - 147/1911, Boundary Muri - Bauchi. NAK SNP 7 - 3803/1909, Patrol Tangale-Waja, Report on: From the Resident Bauchi Province to the Secretary to the Administration, Zungeru, by E. H. Lewis Resident Bauchi 5<sup>th</sup> July 1909.  
NAK SNP 7 - 5093/1907, Wurkum Patrol 1909;  
NAK Yola Prof Acc. 15, Misc. Papers re Wurkum and Muri 1912: Gwomu District Wurkum Country Assessment Report Nov. 1912 by AR T. H. Haughton;  
NAK SNP 10 - 77P/1913, Muri Province, Gwomu District, Lau Division, Assessment Report by T. H. Haughton.

patrol. They first visited the Pero settlements of Gwandum and Filiya, and Elphinstone remarked that he was repelled especially by the Pero. As the Pero and Tangale claimed the same saltings on the river, that topic was discussed during the visit by the Galadima of Tangale and Sarkin Filiya. The next settlements they reached were Kushi and Burak. The Burak expressed their contentment with the new administration protecting them against the neighbouring Loo and Pero, and they prepared a road to Gomu. Then the patrol continued to Loo, Gomu and Bambuka. Bambuka had been visited by W. P. Hewby in 1900 (he was an agent of the Royal Niger Company on the Benue and, later, Resident of Benue province) and the Bambuka were said to have been subject to the Emir of Yola. Recently there had been a series of disputes between the Gomu and the Bambuka. When the patrol approached Bambuka, the people, armed with spears and shields, were working in the fields, and, at first, they assumed that the patrol were Gomu warriors. To settle the discord, Resident Elphinstone decided on a fine of spears and shields from both groups, but the Gomu resented the fine. After waiting for one day, the patrol marched into Gomu town on 25<sup>th</sup> May. Half way up the pass the force was met by the Gomu ready to defend their town, so the soldiers fired two volleys at them and fighting ensued, in which the Gomu were joined by the Loo who were their allies. At the end there were 31 Gomu killed and 19 wounded, and one Loo killed and 9 wounded, with no casualties on the British side.

The patrol continued to Kode. They considered the Kode people to be at a low stage of development but friendly and co-operative. Then they passed through Panya, Bambur and Kwonchi without incident and continued to Pitiko, Bashima, Kirim, Balasa, Ankwara and Batingo. The inhabitants of these settlements were considered to be friendly with the exception of those of Angule. Angule had been burnt three times and fought twice in the past, but now the inhabitants showed no resistance. The patrol did not collect the full amount of tribute, and nothing was given to the Emir of Muri as they felt he had not earned it, for the villages were not administered by him. Although the district had been placed under the Emir by the British administration in 1900, he had never visited it. On 27<sup>th</sup> May the two parties split and the Gombe party proceeded to Tangale country, arriving at Nafada on 14<sup>th</sup> June.

In 1914 in the southern parts of the Muri Mountains, Assistant District Officer (ADO) Haughton with a police escort visited several settlements of Wurkun groups and Jen due to what was termed "*various outrages*" and 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 Lo refused to pay their tax for 1914, and further government messengers were as-

saulted at Ankwara and driven out by Lo. Ankwara and Kwa did eventually pay their tax in February 1915.<sup>17</sup>

In the next year, 1915, there was a patrol in Wurkun country again, leaving five Kwonci dead and their compounds burnt.<sup>18</sup>

District Officer Groom left Mutum Biu on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1915 and went via Lau to Karim, where he arrived on 10<sup>th</sup> March. Here he tried to gather information about an incident in which two messengers, who had been sent to Kwonchi to tell them to provide labourers in order to assist a gun convoy, were killed. On the next day there was also a clash between some Kwonci and some Fulani from Yola, in which three Fulani men were killed and four cattle slaughtered. On 13<sup>th</sup> March, when Major Ellis returned from leave, the patrol, consisting of District Officer Groom, Major Ellis and 24 soldiers, together with the District Head, left Karim for Kwonci country. Certain quarters of Kwonchi, which were suspected of having been involved in the killing of the messengers, had formed an armed camp two miles north on the road to Kode. When the patrol approached the camp on the morning of 15<sup>th</sup> March, however, they fled. Major Ellis followed them and tried to arrest some; in the skirmish five Kwonci were killed and one wounded. On the next day, the compounds of the men found guilty were razed. This led to the submission of the other quarters of Kwonchi. The following day the compounds of the men who had clashed with the Fulani were also destroyed. The patrol then moved to Angule via Pitiko. On arrival at Angule Lukudu, the tax was collected without resistance. At Ankwara the man who had assaulted the government messengers was arrested. In 1910, ADO Haughton had forbidden a resettlement on Ankwara hill, but nevertheless a highway robber had established himself with some followers on the hill overlooking the Bauchi trade route. He escaped, but his houses were destroyed. The patrol then returned to Kwonchi on 20<sup>th</sup> March. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March they proceeded to Zoo and arrested two men. These were sentenced to up to two years' imprisonment. Two others from Kode and Gomu were sentenced for resisting Native Authority. It was reported that the Loo had prepared for a fight before they learnt about the patrol's dealing with the Kwonci, and so the Loo brought in their tax without resistance. In the report, the Loo and the Kode are described as being the least developed groups in the district. Groom then returned to Karim on 24<sup>th</sup> March, left Major Ellis at Lau and proceeded to Mutum Biu on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1915.

The Resident of Muri Province, Fremantle, together with Major Edgar and a police force made a tour in Wurkun district for a fortnight in 1918. A chief feature of the visit was the capture by night by Major Ellis' police in three places of persons who had been involved in the Wurkun outbreak of

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<sup>17</sup> NAK SNP 9 - 778/1919, Report on Wurkun District, Muri Province: A. Holdsworth Groom "From the District Officer I/C Muri Div. to the Resident Muri Province", 7<sup>th</sup> April 1915.

<sup>18</sup> NAK SNP 9 - 778/1919, Report on Wurkun District, Muri Province: A. Holdsworth Groom "From the District Officer I/C Muri Div. to the Resident Muri Province", 7<sup>th</sup> April 1915. R. Fairfax Ellis "From Major Ellis, Assistant Commissioner of Police to the D.O. in charge Muri Division", 24<sup>th</sup> March 1915.

1915. Three were condemned to death by Major Edgar and two sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.<sup>19</sup>

## Social structure

The Nyam comprise several patrilineal, exogamous descent units or clans. These clans are localised groups, each originally dwelling on one of the six hills around Ndalang which bear the same name as the clan settling there, before they moved to the foothills and plains. The smallest of the hills belongs to the autochthonous Nyirgang clan.

### Clans

The dominant core unit of the Nyam developed from a nucleus with a Peelang/Gaaruma origin (the Nyirgang clan) around which groups with a Jukun origin attached in the course of history. In terms of seniority, this sequence of the clans was given by informants: 1. Nyírgàng, 2. Kàndéré, 3. Kàlúnglùng, 4. Kéégòng, 5. Kéénjà. These five clans are considered to be the dominant core groups of the Nyam and hold many titles.

The Nyirgang already dwelled at the Nyam hills when the Kandere, Kalunglung and possibly other clans arrived. It is not clear whether the other clans, i.e. Keegong and Keenja, were among the first to immigrate, or whether they were generated by fission in the course of time. Both the Kandere and the Kalunglung claim ancestry from the cultural hero Andukwe, The Nyirgang are related with the Ambiyeng clan of the Peelang/Gaaruma section of the Piya; their rain priests come from the Ambiyeng, and, accordingly, the rain priests of the Nyam are from the Nyirgang clan. The Nyirgang are the leading clan in spiritual matters. It is said that since the colonial era, the chiefs of Nyam are from the Kandere clan; before that time, a chief could come from any of the clans. The claim to chieftainship is a source of potential conflict between the Kandere and Kalunglung clans. Details are culled from the manuscript by Musa Mohamed Nyam (1991).

Table 2: Nyam clans

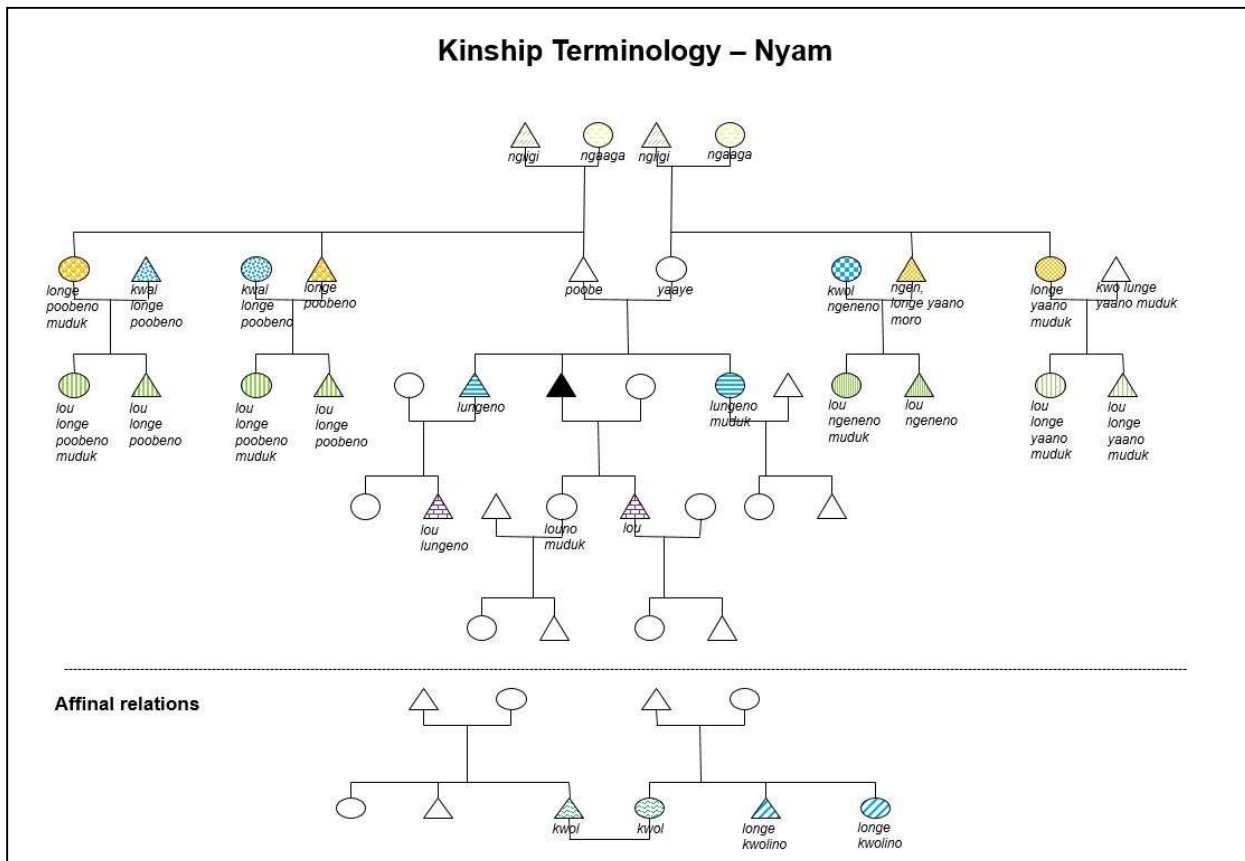
Clan	Origin	Comments
Anwunyam		live in Mayang on the other side of the Nyam hills. It has yet to be determined in which way they are affiliated to the Nyam.
Kàlúnglùng	Kwararafa	original clan, founder Andukwe. One of the two ruling clans. Associated titles: king's representative, <i>ubandoma</i> , chief of traps, chief of stones, etc. Are custodians of the <i>ziiri</i> idol
Kàndéré	Kwararafa	original clan, founder Andukwe. One of the two ruling clans. Associated titles: <i>tafida</i> , <i>wambai</i> , chief of farming, king's representative. Sometimes the queen comes from this clan

<sup>19</sup> NAK SNP 10 - 62P/1919, Muri Province, Annual Report: Resident J. M. Fremantle Report No. 102 for Half Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 1918. See also McBride (n.d.: 25).

Clan	Origin	Comments
Kéégòng	Kwararafa	stems from one of the elders who came with Andukwe, or from a son/daughter of Andukwe. Keegong is said to be the name of the founder. Associated titles: chief of farming, <i>ciroma</i> (king's adviser and one of the king makers). If there is no suitable candidate from Kalunglung or Kandere, the king may come from Keegong
Kéénjà	Kwararafa	stems from one of the elders who came with Anduka, or from son/daughter of Anduka. Keenja is said to be the name of the founder; they may not eat <i>guza</i> (monitor lizard). Associated titles: chief of hunters, chief of warriors ( <i>madaki</i> ), therefore sometimes called Madaki clan. Clan has many hunters and herbalists
Ndelo/Ndolo (Jeni)		speak Nyam language, but are not considered to belong to the core Nyam. Subdivided into –Jula, –Ngarat and –Paiju
Nyírgàng	Ambiyeng clan of Piya-Kunshenu	founder Hakuri, was met at Ndere hill. Autochthonous to Nyam land, were there before other Nyam clans came. Some say that the Nyirgang are the first group of Jukun that moved from Kororofa to Nyam land before Andukwe came. Others say that founder Hakuri was a Wurkun of Ambiyen who now live at Kunshenu. Others again state that Nyirgang originated from the soil. Associated title: <i>galadima</i>
Ze-Nyam (Malthumbi)	Gwana	also called Jukun-Nyam, settled at Malchumbi.

### Kinship terminology

The kinship terminology of the Nyam defies easy classification. While on the patrilineal side it qualifies as an Eskimo system, where cousins are called by the same term, only differentiated by



gender, and distinguished from Br and Si; it is a Sudanese system on the matrilineal side (MoBrChi ≠ MoSiChi ≠ Si). In the first ascending generation the terminology can be classified as bifurcate collateral.



## Family

A homestead is usually occupied by a family consisting of a husband, wife(s) and children. After a divorce, the woman has to return to the homestead of her parents or other relatives.

Sons as well as daughters can inherit property of their parents, titles are only inherited by male descendants according to seniority.

## Marriage

Bride-service is performed, and additionally a certain bride-price paid.

After the wedding feast has taken place, the bride returns to the homestead of her parents and will live there, until she has collected all items necessary for a new household. Only then will she move into the compound of her husband. These items traditionally include: various bowls such as *atigbo* (a traditional wooden bowl), oil lamps made of clay, cotton wrappers, clay pots for fetching and storing water as well as for cooking, wooden stools, different oils made from sheanut, peanut, sesame, *namijin kadanya* (H., meni oil tree, *Lophira alata*) and mahogany. Mahogany oil is applied against stomach ailments.

During the time she is staying with her parents, her husband may take her to his house during the night, bringing her back early in the morning; or the bride visits her husband in the night. While the bride is in the homestead of her in-laws, she will try to avoid her parents-in-law, she will not talk to them or eat there.

The following description is taken from the MS by Musa Mohamed Nyam (1992):

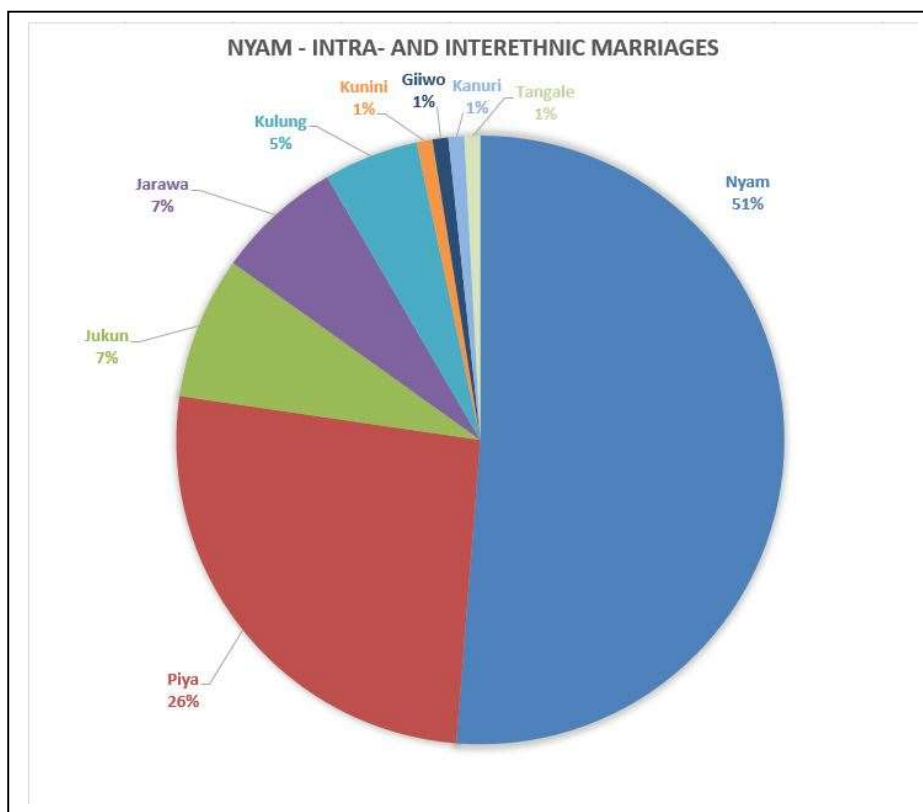
If the parents agree to let their daughter marry a boy, the girl is given a necklace by the boy's parents to signify that she is proposed to. The boy has to perform bride-service by working on the farms of his future parents-in-law about three or more times per year. In addition, on the occasion of annual festivities, the parents of the girl receive gifts (such as food) from the boy himself or from his parents, which are reciprocated with small gifts. If all goes well, the marriage is agreed upon and the wedding feast can take place. The future husband will assemble as many people as possible and till the farm of his future parents-in-law for a whole day which is rewarded by the girl's father with plenty of millet beer in the evening. Then the boy, together with his friends and relatives, will take the girl to his home where they will dance and celebrate with beer and food throughout the night. The girl is accompanied by women of her clan, and other relatives as well as her parents will join the marriage feast. After she has spent some days with her husband, the wife will go back to her parent's homestead until the final moving into her new home takes place. She and her parents will gather items needed by her and her husband. For her: cooking pots, water pot, calabashes, wrappers, axe for cutting firewood, hoe for tilling her field, wooden stool, baskets, bedstead etc. Her father collects items for the husband such as cotton garment, cap, knife, bow and arrows, goat, chicken etc. This period may take years, and during that time the bride may visit her husband, but only in the night, and both will try to avoid meeting their parents-in-law. If the span of time stretches too long, it may be negotiated between the parents to have the bride move into her bridegroom's house temporarily.

ly. On the side of the bridegroom, a house for the couple and a kitchen has to be built and garments for the wife procured. The floor of the new house is prepared by women from the bride's clan. When everything is prepared, the final moving into the new home is performed. Relatives of the girl as well as relatives of the boy will bring forward contributions to the celebration which will be communicated to the other side by a praise singer. Freshly bathed and colourfully dressed, the girl will move with the collected items and accompanied by friends and relatives to the homestead of her husband, where celebrations will take on for two days.

Levirate is practised: when a husband dies, his widow will be married by one of his brothers who will not pay any bride-price, because this has once been paid by his - deceased - brother. While clans are said to be exogamous units, in a census conducted among 33 men with a total of 119 wives, there were 8 cases of intra-clan marriages. In a smaller census it was found that there was a significant number of cousin marriages: of 8 men with 25 wives, there were 8 cases of cousin marriages (MoSiDa: 3, FaBrDa: 2, FaSiDa: 3).

#### Some statistics

In a sample of 33 married Nyam, there were a total of 119 wives, of which 61 were from the Nyam, and 58 were from other ethnic groups.



The overall polygamy rate was 3.6, the polygamy rate with concurrent wives (i.e., wives who were divorced or deceased were not counted) was 2.1.

## Granaries

Granaries are usually standing outside the homestead. Male household-heads possess grana-

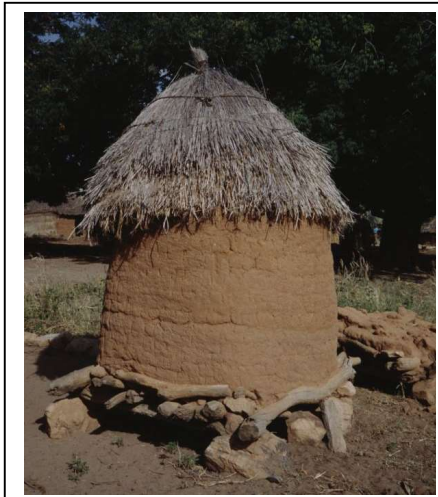


Photo 1: Nyam granary for men (*bindo*)

ries; women who have fields of their own also have their own granaries, which they access freely, and they make use of the produce at their own discretion. The provisions for the family are taken from the husband's granary. The Nyam use different kinds of granaries: men use a type called *bindo* which has clay walls and standing on a foundation made of wooden poles, as well as a more temporary type with walls made from *zana* mats; women use a type made of clay whose form resembles those used by the Kwa, as well as another small type called *bindingonong* with clay walls but standing on wooden poles. All granaries are built by men, irrespective whether



Photo 2: Nyam granary with cover



Photo 3: Nyam granary made of *zana* mats

they are a man's or woman's granary.

## Birth

The first child is born in the homestead of the parents of the mother. The reason given is that the woman does not want to put her in-laws through the pain of the first birth, with all the crying and so on. Until three days after having given birth, the mother eats only hot *kunnu* (H., a non-alcoholic beverage made of grain), and nothing else. The placenta and most of the umbilical cord are buried together behind her house, at the place where she washes herself. The part of the cord attached to the baby is cut off, wrapped around a millet stalk and fixed to the ceiling of her room.

The parents of the husband will provide calabash containers for bathing or feeding the newly born baby (Musa Mohamed Nyam MS 1992).

## Burial

When a person has died, the corpse will be bathed and all orifices sealed with cotton wool or rags. A male corpse is handled by old men, a female one by old women. The corpse is bathed for a second time with water scented with extracts from a certain tree. Then it is shrouded in clothes,

rags or mats. A horizontal grave in the direction east-west is dug behind the deceased person's bedroom and the corpse carried to the grave by middle-aged men and put beside the hole. If the deceased was a renowned person, a woman will ululate (*gudfa* in Hausa) before the body is put on the ground. The elders will make a statement that if the death was caused by another person, it should be avenged by killing that person. This is done three times before the corpse is lowered into the grave. The next day a group of elders visit the idol's shrine and announce to the ancestors that the deceased is about to join them. Three days after the burial (two days if it is a female) a ritual ('alms giving ritual') is performed involving the erection of a stone at the spot where the head of the corpse is positioned and guinea corn flour mixed with water is poured on that stone. All relatives gather and small portions of food such as cake, groundnuts or gruel which they prepared beforehand are distributed among the attendants. If there are any debts that the deceased may have incurred, these are discussed and will be settled at the occasion. At the end of the day, relatives and friends return to their homes. The widow will put a gourd with millet beer in the room of the deceased and kindle a fire every evening as a service to the deceased whose soul is believed to be still attached to the room.

A third ritual associated with a burial takes place at the time of the *ziiri* ceremony in April to May and marks the transition of the soul into the netherworld of the ancestral spirits. At dawn, a priest and a relative of the deceased visit his house and blow a horn three times which will be answered by the souls making a sound. The priest with a cockerel in his hand and intermittently blowing the horn will guide the spirits to the shrine where it will enter the world of the ancestral spirits. At the shrine, male relatives of the deceased gather and millet beer and food are sacrificed; the spirits will make themselves heard by roaring voices.

After that ritual, the widow(s) may choose to marry a brother of the deceased (Musa Mohamed Nyam MS 1992).

## ***Political organisation***

### **Chieftainship**

The title of Village Head was introduced by the British colonial administration, and the Village Heads are chosen from the Kandere clan since that time.

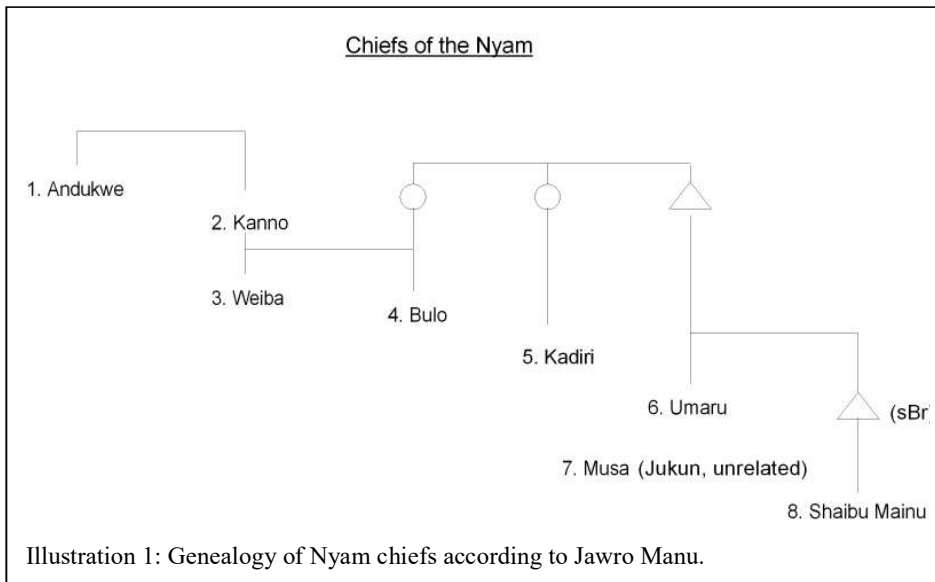


Photo 4: The chief of Nyam, Shaibu, at Ndalang, with retainers

The list of chiefs (*ndoolu*) of the Nyam (incl. pre-colonial chiefs) was given by Jawro Manu, an elder from Kandere clan, as follows:<sup>20</sup>

1. Andúkwe (from the Kandere clan): he was the first chief and resided at Bakin Ciki, an old site on the hill to the northeast of Ndalang. The hamlet's name is a reference to the fact that the people who remained there after many others had moved downhill were not hospitable. Andukwe originally went from Wukari to Matarum (Barkabali) and from there to Ndalang.
2. Kánnò (Kandere): a brother of Andukwe; he also resided on the hill, but a few people had already migrated downhill. He ruled approximately 100 years ago.
3. Weyiba (Kandere): son of Kanno; he also resided on the hill.
4. Bulu (Kandere): a brother of Weyiba, resided at Bakin Ciki.
5. Kadiri (from the Kalunglung clan): maternal cousin (MoSiSo) of Bulu. He lived at Jangkasa but had his farms in the area of Ndalang, so moved to Ndalang where his father lived. It is even said that his father had founded Ndalang.
6. Umaru (Kandere): BrSo of no. 4 Bulu.
7. Musa (a Jukun): his mother was a Nyam from the Keenja clan. He bought the title.
8. Shaibu Mainu (Kandere): sBrSo of no. 6 Umaru.

<sup>20</sup> This list cannot be considered definitive, see also the information provided by Andreas 2012: 2.



## ***Economic activities***

### **Division of labour**

Table 3: Gender specific division of labour among the Nyam (m: male, f: female)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Gender</b>
clearing	m
sowing	m & f
weeding	m & f
harvesting	m & f
irrigating	m
threshing	f
prepare threshing ground	f
winning	f
build house walls	m
build house roof	m
prepare house floor	m
cut wooden poles	m
cut firewood	f
collect firewood	f
build well	m
build terraces	-
build fence	m
weave food cover	-
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	-
tailoring	m
blacksmithing	m
wood carving	m
butchering	m
hunting	m
collect honey	m
produce salt	f

Salt was produced at the *kufai* Gopti. There is a salting at Langa belonging to the Fulani of Jebiru, and one had to pay a royalty when extracting salt there.

## Agriculture

The Nyam cultivate guinea corn, millet, groundnuts, beans, maize, rice, sesame and cassava as rainfed crops. Land is communal property owned by the descent groups.



Photo 5: Different types of hoes used by the Nyam



Photo 6: A goat shelter

## Animal husbandry

The Nyam keep mainly cattle, goats, sheep, chickens and ducks as domestic animals.

Table 4: Domestic animals and their uses (m: male, f: female)

animal	kept by	uses	comments
cattle	m & f	meat, milk, leather	men do the milking
dwarf cattle	-	-	-
horse	-	-	-
pony	-	-	-
donkey	m	riding, beast of burden	
goat	m & f	meat, leather	
sheep	m & f	meat, leather	
pig	m	meat	
dog	m	guardian, assisting in hunting	
chicken	m & f	meat, eggs	in the past, women did not eat eggs
duck	m & f	meat, eggs	
guinea fowl	m & f	meat, eggs	
pigeon	m	meat	only boys keep pigeons
cat	m & f	protection against rats	

In a census of 17 households, the following numbers of domestic animals were determined:

Table 5: Nyam - Domestic animals kept by 17 households

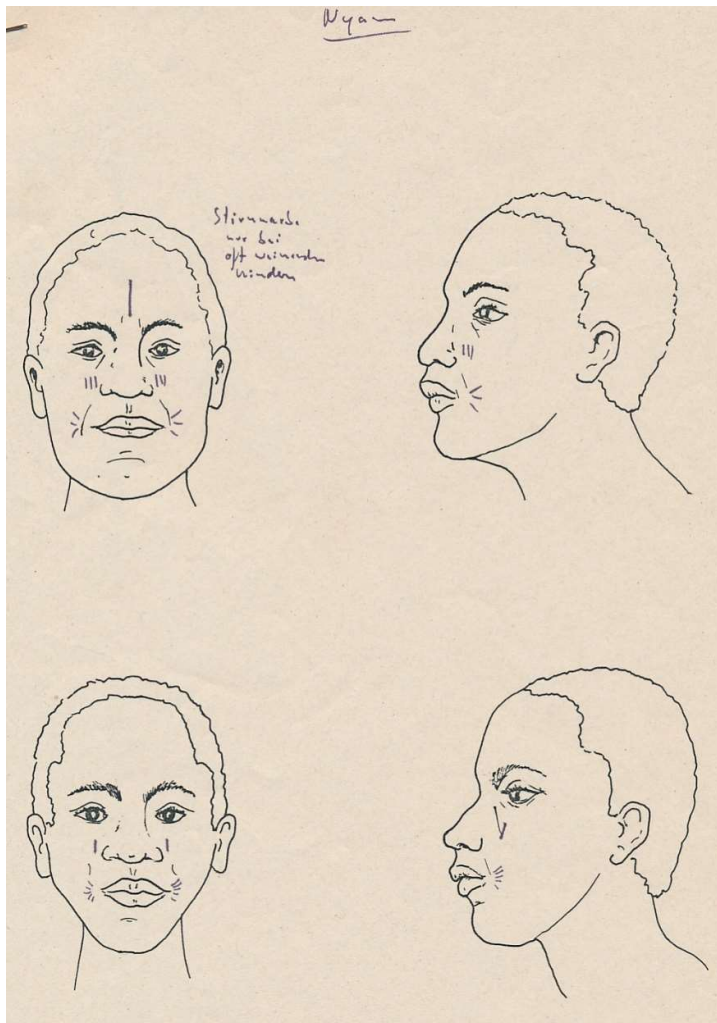
	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Chickens	Ducks
total	29	162	61	104	57
mean no.	1.7	9.5	3.6	6.1	3.4
median no.	2	12.5	5	15	25



## Scarification/cicatrisation, bodily ornamentation

The vertical line on the forehead is only applied to children who often cry.

The Nyam have no body markings.



## ***Rituals and religion***

### **Spirits and associated rituals**

Many Nyam have converted to Islam or Christianity, but there are still adherents of the traditional religion believing in the creator god *shìidóng*. They share many beliefs and ritual practices with the Jukun; the sky god is called Chidō/Shidō (Meek 1931) among the Jukun.

The Nyam do not practise the *mam gabra* or 'arm-slashing' cult<sup>21</sup> which is otherwise widespread in the region and originally comes from the Wurbo. Informants say that once it had been imported by certain persons, but later given up because it did not attract enough followers.

A major idol is called *zíiri*, embodied in a masquerade.

Like other ethnic groups in the area, the Nyam have carved wooden statues (*dáhàù*, in Hausa *gunki*), usually occurring in male/female pairs. They are used in rituals concerned with healing and well-being. They are made in cases when an unusual birth has taken place (e.g. twins or a breech birth): two wooden statues and two clay pots are made representing the twins, or one statue and a pot in case of a breech birth. Regular offerings are made to these effigies at the occasion of general harvest rituals, and when maize is harvested, some maize is roasted and sacrificed to them before the harvest may be consumed by the family (Musa Mohamed Nyam MS, n.d).

These statues may further serve as a protective device when, after having killed certain animals, a hunter is haunted by the spirit of the animal or in the cases when a breech birth has taken place.<sup>22</sup>

Table 6: Religious concepts and their material expression

Nyam		
Concept	Name	Manifestation / Comments
high god	<i>siidong</i>	creator
ancestors		
water spirit		
bush spirit		
protecting spirit		
material expression:		
<i>gunki</i> (wooden idol)	<i>dáhàù</i>	
<i>dodo</i> (masked dancer, masquerade)	<i>zíiri</i>	

<sup>21</sup> NAK YolaProf 5640 – Report on Wurkum District by A.D.O Brierly, p. 7-8.

<sup>22</sup> For a comprehensive study of sacred objects and associated beliefs in the region see Adelberger 2011, and Berns 2011 for a survey of vertical masks and masquerades.

## Ritual calendar

The following annual rituals/celebrations with a link to agricultural activities were elicited, but further research is necessary. They are all intended to ensure a successful season and good harvest.

Nyam Annual festivities												
Name of festivity	Jan.	Feb.	March	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<i>men ziiri</i>				—								
<i>gote idangga</i>									—			
<i>neeseu</i>									—			
<i>nwaalesigo</i>											—	
<i>men ad onom</i>												—
<i>lumbe pokkelmi</i>												?

*gote idangga kelmi* (“clearing the road for the idol”) – is performed in March to early April, before the clearing of the farms at the start of the rainy season may begin. The priest and some elders from different clans will fix a date for the ritual to prepare for the forthcoming rainy season. Usually, three days later it will be performed. On the very day, food is brought to the shrines and the paths leading to them is cleaned from debris littering the way. Representatives of each clan will ask the idols for a successful farming season and the idols respond by producing a roaring sound. In the night the idol (*dodo*) will come out, visiting the dwellings and greeting the people (both men and women), then it returns to its shrine. After that, people may commence the clearing of their fields. (MS Musa Mohammed Nyam, n.d.)

*mèn zírì* – is performed around April to May; during the ritual, the major idol *ziiri* is brought down from its shrine in the hills. The ritual marks the beginning of the planting season. Elders from each clan meet the priest and fix a date, usually the ceremony will take place nine days later, allowing for the preparation of millet beer in the meantime. On the fourth day people will go hunting, on the fifth day the idol (*dodo*) comes to the town, visits each homestead and lets itself seen by the women. On the sixth day the *dodo* dances around during the night. On the eighth day the idol roams the town and dances in the night for the second time. On the ninth day all worshippers will carry millet beer, food and chickens to the shrines as offerings, and the idol is asked for a successful farming season and a bountiful guinea corn harvest. The *dodo* will then come to the town again and dance in the village square or under a big tree. During the dance, guinea corn grains will come out of the dancing masquerade; if they are white, there will be a bumper harvest and a fertile season. But if the grains are red, it means that

some evil has disturbed the ritual and accordingly the farming season will be bad. The elders will try to identify the wrong-doer and appease the idol (MS Musa Mohammed Nyam, n.d.).

*gòté idángà* – takes place in September; the path is prepared along which the idols involved in the coming *néésèu* rituals will move.

*néésèu* – is celebrated around September to October: men older than 40 years go to the shrine of the idol *búdé zìiri*. During a previous ritual (*lùmbé pòkkélmì?*, see below) the wooden idol was anointed with oil and wrapped in leather. Now it is unwrapped and the ritual experts scrutinise it for signs predicting the coming harvest. If there is still oil on the idol, the harvest will be bountiful, but if the oil has vanished then famine and difficult times are lying ahead.

*nwàalésígò* – takes place around November to December; at the occasion it is announced what has been found out during *néésèu*.

*mèn ád ònóm* – is celebrated in the first half of December; only after it has been performed, the consumption of new guinea corn, millet and beans is allowed. It is comparable to the *peebe* celebration of the Piya.

Musa Mohammed (n.d.) in his manuscript describes a ritual which he calls ‘beans and guinea corn harvesting ritual’ and which is probably identical with *men ad onom*: every year around November there is a ritual that allows for the harvesting and consumption of beans and guinea corn. The priest is from the Keenja clan. Elders of each clan confer with the priest and fix a date for the ritual which will take place nine days later to allow for the preparation of beer from the new grains. Food is cooked from new beans and together with the beer offered to the male and female idols at their shrine; the prayers uttered address the ancestors as well as god and the spirits. Afterwards, celebrations with singing and dancing take place that will last for three days and are attended by men and women. Everyone consuming new beans or guinea corn before that festivity has to pay a fine consisting of chickens, beer and porridge. On the first day the celebration takes place at Ndalang, afterwards people return to their villages and continue there. Afterwards, everyone is allowed to harvest.

*lùmbé pòkkélmì* – all the different idols are carried back to their shrines in the hills where they stay until the next *néésèu* is celebrated in the coming year. Should any idol appear prior to that ritual it is a harbinger of trouble. This is probably the same ritual as the one described by Musa Mohamed (n.d.) in his manuscript which he calls ‘millet harvesting ritual’ taking place in late July or early August and meant to keep away any damage to the crops, for instance by birds. The priest prepares millet beer and at a fixed date, the idol (*dodo*) will come and dance at the gate of the priest’s compound. The priest and elders present will ask the *dodo* to protect the crops and generally look after the wellbeing of the community. After the ritual the ancestral spirits depart into their world until the next *ziiri* ceremony.

*mèn dóóàlì* – is performed around August to September, but only every third year. Even more powerful idols are brought down from the hills. At the time of research, the next one was scheduled for 1991.

Musa Mohamed Nyam (MS, n.d.) describes further minor rituals which are performed at different stages of agricultural work, often on an individual or family basis:

Guinea corn sowing ritual - is done individually by each farmer: at the first rains, the seed is carried to the farm and before sowing is commenced, a certain plant (bulbous like an onion, *gadali* in H., ?<sup>23</sup>) is placed on the heap of seeds and the ancestors are pleaded to for assisting the seed to germinate and multiply.

Guinea corn communal labour ritual *ndokke kwa sen* ("pleading for good yield") - communal labour on a guinea corn field is organised either on clan or neighbourhood basis. People involved gather in the morning and work until noon, when they rest and take the millet beer prepared by the owner of the field. Before they are allowed to consume the beer, the oldest person among them, or a priest if one is present, will address the ancestors and ask them for a good yield and he will do a libation by pouring some beer on several seedlings. After resting, the libation is repeated and then work is continued until afternoon.

End of guinea corn harvest ritual *pok sombol* - when nearly the whole field has been harvested, a ritual is performed: at the last standing guinea corn plants, the priest erects a long stone, and beer which has been prepared before, will be poured on the stone and the still standing stalks, and the ancestors asked to bless the harvest. The libation and prayers are repeated three times. Then the remaining stalks may be cut down with the exception of the plants that were included in the ritual; these are left standing. This is performed on all farms belonging to adherents of the traditional religion.

Yam and Bambara nut harvesting ritual *gwaimangadu* - in November; the priest collects samples of yam and Bambara nut from all farmers; these will be cooked and presented as offerings to the idol by its priest, attended by elders and other people. The elders taste from the food as well.

Groundnut sowing ritual (on an individual basis) - there are brown, red and white varieties of groundnuts. Before starting to sow the seed, the farmer prays to the ancestors to bless the plants and protect them from misfortune, damage or theft.

Groundnut harvesting ritual (on an individual basis) - before or after the harvest, three or four measures of the new yield are cooked or roasted and offered to the ancestors in gratitude for having guarded them.

Beniseed harvesting ritual (on individual basis) - before starting the harvest, a handful of grains is placed on the surface of a tree stump standing in the field in the four cardinal directions. This offering is meant for *jinn*s and they are asked to take their share and not temper with the remaining yield and spoil it.

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<sup>23</sup> I could not identify *gadali*, but there is a possibility that the fruit of Polynesian arrowroot (*Tacca leontopetaloides*) is used which bears ritual significance in the area.

## Taboos

Lions and leopards may not be killed or eaten by the Nyam.<sup>24</sup> Should a Nyam person meet a lion, he will praise and pet the animal, so it will not hurt him. Brave hunters may even help a lion when a bone has stuck in the lion's throat and remove it (MS Musa Mohamed Nyam, 1991).

Members of the Keenja clan may not kill geckos, because the Keenja provided the traditional priests. Further, no one of the Keenja clan may eat *guza* (H., water monitor), for it has an association with their idol and an offender becomes blind (MS Musa Mohamed Nyam, 1991).

In the past, women were not allowed to eat the meat of hares and ground squirrels, and especially they were not allowed to eat the meat of the land monitor (*kùmbúji*, in Hausa *damoo*), lest their child would develop such a long neck.

Menstruating women may not fetch water from a source, otherwise it may dry up. It is believed that a turtle (*laghribe*) secures the water-flow of the spring *Kwalodo*. Water may only be fetched from this spring by using either a calabash or a plastic container, not a vessel made of metal, this would disappear in the spring.

A father will never mention the name of his first-born, be this a boy or a girl. And all children, out of respect, will not mention the father's name, only his nickname, and may kneel down before him.

Musa Mohamed Nyam (MS 1991) mentions some more taboos:

The snake *kumni* (*gammu* H., ?)<sup>25</sup> as well as *laghribe* (*kififiya* H., turtle) and *gulanga* (tortoise) may not be eaten by anyone lest the person develops leprosy and becomes an outcast. Further, the animal *dabuji* (H., ?) may not be eaten, otherwise the person's skin peels off and becomes reddish in colour.

The tree *njoli* is not used by the Nyam, it is highly respected because it is connected with idols. *Tarambai* (*jan yaaro* H., shrub sp., *Hymenocardia acida*) and locust bean tree are not cut or used for they are also connected with idols.

The thorn tree *ngalgey nyirgam* and *nyom polloo* (*farin ganye* H., yam, *Dioscorea* sp.) are not used or taken home, otherwise an epidemic, or something similar caused by evil spirits, may break out. *Paggo* (*namijin kadanya* H., meni oil tree, *Lophira alata*) may not be burnt or its leaves left lying on the way, for it represents the idol *zuggi*; only its seed may be used for producing oil.

<sup>24</sup> The Nyam share the taboo of killing a lion with the Jukun: "Otherwise there is a more or less formal punishment for killing a lion [among Jukun]" (NAK SNP 9 -3137/1921, Keates 'Anthropological Notes on the Jukon Tribe'.

<sup>25</sup> According to Bargery (1957) *gammu* is a very young red-fronted gazelle.

## Glossary<sup>26</sup>

<b>Nyam</b>	<b>gloss</b>	<b>comment</b>
<i>atigbo</i>	trad. wooden bowl	
<i>bindingonong</i>	spec. granary for women	
<i>bindo</i>	granary for men	made of clay
<i>(búdé) zìiri</i>	name of an important idol	<i>dodo</i> H.
<i>dáhàù</i>	wooden idol	<i>gunki</i> H.
<i>gòté idárgà</i>	annual ritual in September	
<i>gulanga</i>	tortoise	
<i>kùmbúji</i>	land monitor	<i>damo</i> H.
<i>kumni</i>	sp. snake	<i>gammu</i> H.
<i>laghribe</i>	turtle	<i>kififiya</i> H.
<i>lùmbé pòkkélmì</i>	sp. annual celebration	
<i>mèn ád ònòm</i>	annual celebration in early Dec., allows consumption of new corn and beans	
<i>mèn dóóáli</i>	celebration taking place every 3 <sup>rd</sup> year in Aug.-Sept.	
<i>mèn zìiri</i>	annual celebration in April-May, marks beginning of planting	
<i>néésèù</i>	annual celebration in Sept. - Oct., to foresee the coming harvest	
<i>ndoolu</i>	chief	
<i>nwàalésígò</i>	annual celebration in Nov.-Dec. for announcing the result of <i>neeseu</i>	
<i>shiidóng</i>	creator god	

### Plants:

<b>Nyam</b>	<b>Hausa</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>comment</b>
<i>asama / bakto</i>	<i>tumuku</i>	tumuku	<i>Solenostemon rotundifolius</i>	
<i>asita</i>	<i>barkoonoo</i>	pepper	<i>Capsicum sp.</i>	
<i>baghto</i>	<i>rizgaa</i>	rizga	<i>Plectranthus esculentus</i>	
<i>dankali</i>	<i>dankalii</i>	sweet potato	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	
<i>dengee-fuuroo</i>	<i>kubeewaa</i>	okra	<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>	
<i>dengee-wogfidi</i>	<i>kubeewaan daaminaa</i>	okra	<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>	wet season okra
<i>dong</i>	<i>maiwaa</i>	pearl millet	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>	white millet
<i>gbidai</i>	<i>gautaa</i>	garden-egg	<i>Solanum incanum</i>	
<i>hoida</i>	<i>gyadaa</i>	groundnut	<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>	
<i>kedeb/kedem</i>	<i>riidii</i>	sesame	<i>Sesamum orientale</i>	soft variety, may have 3 colours: white, red or whitish;

<sup>26</sup> H. = Hausa term

<b>Nyam</b>	<b>Hausa</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>comment</b>
<i>lakdirak</i>	<i>gambi or luttar</i>	sesame	?	most popular type round variety, rougher than <i>kedem</i>
<i>manzo</i>	<i>yaakuuwaa</i>	roselle	<i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i>	
<i>mbula</i>	<i>roogoo</i>	cassava	<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	
<i>molgo</i>	<i>geeroo</i>	pearl millet	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>	
<i>ngalgey</i> <i>nyirgam</i>	?	thorn tree	?	
<i>ngan̄zi</i>	<i>kananade</i>	beans		curved variety
<i>ngwogot</i>	<i>bauree</i>	fig sp.	<i>Ficus spp.</i>	
<i>njoli</i>	?	tree sp.	?	
<i>nyom polloo</i>	<i>farin ganye</i>	yam	<i>Dioscorea sp</i>	
<i>onom</i>	<i>waakee</i>	beans		
<i>paggo</i>	<i>namijin kadan- ya</i>	meni oil tree	<i>Lophira alata</i>	
<i>reke</i>	<i>rakee</i>	sugar-cane	<i>Saccharum officinar- um</i>	
<i>saamey</i>	<i>bakin noome</i>	black sesame	<i>Sesamum radiatum</i>	black, rough variety
<i>salji</i>	<i>tamba</i>	finger millet	<i>Elusine coracana</i>	
<i>sandoo</i>	<i>dooya</i>	yam	<i>Dioscorea spp.</i>	
<i>seyu</i>	<i>daawaa</i>	guinea-corn	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	
<i>shinkafa</i>	<i>shinkaafar</i>	rice	<i>Oryza sp.</i>	
<i>siilo</i>	<i>guna</i>	melon	<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	
<i>taramabai</i>	<i>jan yaaro</i>	shrub sp.	<i>Hymenocardia acida</i>	
<i>tilboo</i>	<i>gujiyyaa</i>	Bambara nut	<i>Vigna subterranea</i>	
<i>tondoo</i>	<i>gwaiwan-gadu</i>	?	?	
<i>tuggwo</i>	<i>dargazaa</i>	shrub sp.	<i>Grewia mollis</i>	
<i>yafundu</i>	<i>jan gyadaa</i>	red groundnut	?	
<i>zakkim</i>	<i>masaraa</i>	maize	<i>Zea mays</i>	



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## Appendix

### Facsimile of Ira McBride's notes on the Nyam of Malchumbi (IAI Cons. 2 Box 2(4))

The missionary Ira McBride was stationed among the Kulung for many years and also collected information on neighbouring ethnic groups.<sup>27</sup> The following passage, containing information collected more than 60 years before my own research, is appended for the benefit of the reader.

They said they would make a chief but not Zo as he was left-handed. So Zo gave it to Kula and Fulani put a robe on him. He went and founded Kerum.

#### Kerum Chiefs

From Aberi (Yirima), June 19, 1928.

Balasa	Nzhi Kwano (all Ka Kunga)
Lauve (founder and first Chief)	Kula (founder)
Sambo	Yanga (sold as slave--caught at Muri)
Wumbo (1 year) died	Gambo
Dogo (Kpala Kiri)	Foi (shot by arrow by Garima)
	Delo (led people to Mabubu)
	Madu (Ka Kunga speared him for taking his niece and selling her as slave. Reigned at Kerum.)
	Daro (followed Delo as chief at Mabubu).

(From Abari-Kerum. A very old man. Died about 1940)

Lauve was reigning at Kerum. Three years before white man (Maisaje) came. Chief of Kpali (Hausa) came to Jebjeb for salt and called him to come. Lauve refused. Gweli (Gunter's language teacher) took Sambo, who had not yet been chief, and the Chief of Kpali put robe on him. Three years later Maisaje came and Sambo got him to burn all of Lauve's houses and leave him, Sambo, chief. Lauve went back to Balasa and was again burned out there. He returned to Kerum and Sambo slept as chief.

Sambo was Pia--Ba Kpara--son of Biru. His father came from Dugari. A fight over a top-spinning drove them from Ba Kpara and they came to Balasa where Sambo was born.

After the white man made him chief, his people chased him out because of his "rikici" and he went to Kpali. They wanted my informant, Abari, to be chief, but he was only a boy, so they got Sambo back. But his heavy rule got too bad again, so they told the white man, Mr. Groom, who ousted him.

#### History of Malchombi

From Sarkin Malchombi, February 6, 1932.

Their ancestors once lived on the main Nyam hill. They were related to the Jukun of Gateri. They were there before the coming of the Fulani. They were constantly attacked by Fulani, from both Bauchi and Muri, and finally decided that they would be wiped out if they stayed longer. So they all moved to Gateri. Here they stayed until the coming of the white man.

The first to come to Malchombi (or Balchumbi) was Yirima and another man 17 years ago (1915). Five years later the present Sarki brought his people here.

All say they speak Jukun and Nyam tongues with equal ease, but the children are leaving the Nyam. The two languages are quite different from each other--the Nyam very slightly similar to Fyelam or Pia.

A number of the younger folk are doing Moslem worship.

<sup>27</sup> See Adelberger and Kleinwillinghöfer 2016 for a biography and the publications of Ira McBride.