

1. Description

Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Avaushi, Ushi, Usi, Uzhil, Vouaousi

ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): 639-3

Location (latitude/longitude): North, Luapula Province in Zambia, and Haut Katanga Province east of Lubumbashi in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Brief history: The Aushi tribes are considered a sub group of the Bemba tribes, one of the largest and most organized groups in Rhodesia. The Aushi migrated from Luba-Lunda empire in 'Kola' which is now a part of Congo. Much of the information I found comes from a specific Ushi tribe who's chief is named Kalaba.

Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: In Kalaba's tribe there are no schools or any churches but they are both found in the neighboring village of Tuli. Only 24% of adults in the tribe have been to school and only two villagers have had more than 4 years of schooling, but there is a much higher percentage of children that go to school.

Ecology (natural environment): Mostly revolves around Lake Bangweulun. The region also consists of danbos which are swampy plains filled with large wooded anthills broken by stretches of open water. There is plenty of vegetation that grows in those lands that the Aushi tribes use and many wild games such as fish and many different hooved animals that live there. There are also three very distinct seasons in the lands they live one the 'rains' from November to April, the dry season from April to August, and a hot season from August to November.

Population size, mean village size, density: Total population: 433,000. Population in Democratic Republic of Congo: 310,000. Population in Zambia: 123,000. The villages consist of 30-50 huts. The density is never more than 3.9 per square mile.

2. Economy

Main carbohydrate staple(s): Their main crop for a long time was the millet but now their agriculture also includes groundnuts, beans and other pulses, cassava and other root crops, *munda* vegetables, and tobacco. They also collect food such as mushrooms, insects (caterpillars), fruits (*Mpundu*, *Masuku*, and *Mfungo*), roots (*cikanda*, and *imbwelenge*), leaves, honey, and herbs.

Main protein sources: They eat many sorts of different meats. Some chiefs and important males might keep a few cattle but they are not cattle headers. Sheep and goats are a little more common for them to own but are not numerous, and poultry is a rare treat. In the wild they fish and hunt hooved animals in the land nearby. They also hunt wild pigs and collecting a variety of birds and insects depending on the season.

Weapons: They have different types of systems for fishing: weir and trap, line fishing, fish poisoning, and basket fishing. Some hunters have guns, those who don't set traps such as staked pits and snares or they joined another team from a different village that used spears and nets to hunt.

Food storage: To preserve their food the tribes either sun dry or dry their food over a fire.

Sexual division of production: Food preparation and domestic chores are mostly women's work. When a woman is ill or cannot do the work the man at times comes and helps but tries to do the least possible and relies on relatives and friends to help. Craft industries and building is mostly men's work apart from clay work that women do. Hunting is also almost exclusively a man's job and the only paid jobs are road construction, which is also a man's job.

Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Men and Women eat separately, unless in privacy in their own huts. Women eat together and a young man eats with his mom until he is to old then he joins the men.

Food taboos: Eating animals with prominent lower teeth is unlucky such as the bush pig, the wart hog, the zebra, and the eland. Goats and sheep may be killed and used as meat, but never for hunger, there has to be a ceremonial purpose.

3. Anthropometry

Mean adult weight (male): Average weight of 589 adult males was 127.65 lbs. and 83% weighed less than 140 lbs.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

Completed family size (m and f): Size depends on how many daughters a man have because daughters tend to live with their fathers while the sons tend to move away to their brides town.

Inter-birth-interval (f): After a child has reached the age of 4 and the parents have performed the *ukupoko mwana*, 'the taking of the child', intercourse is allowed and having a baby is acceptable. If one has a baby before then it is considered taboo.

Age first marriage (m and f): For a male it is around the ages of 12-14.

Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorce does happen, mostly the men do it to join a new tribe but it is not fairly common.

Percent marriages polygynous: In Kalaba's tribe twelve out of thirty women were married polygamously (40%).

Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry: The bridegroom is expected to give a bracelet to the father-in-law at the initiation and then be exchanged by cloths and a little bit of money.

Inheritance patterns: The man is legally identified by his mother's lineage and therefore belonging to her clan.

Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Many children in villages are taken care of by their grandparents because the parents are usually busy with a younger child or absent in urban areas.

Pattern of exogamy: Men usually tend to live in different villages than their parents do because they live with their wife's family.

Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): To be married with cross-cousins is not considered a good thing. They do not get treated the same as others and do not get as much help as if they were married to someone else.

If mother dies, whose raises children?: The brother has custody of the children and the paternal aunt has rights over her brother's children.

Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal): matrilineal marriage and matrilineal descent.

Incest avoidance rules: The boys move to the village of the betrothal around age 12-14 and remain in that village until they have 1 or 2 children. Then the family can move to whatever village they want.

Marriage Ceremony: The boy has to go work for his bride's father and show his worth. After the girl has gone through her initiation she is allowed to marry him. There is an old folk tale for the ceremony husbands go to fetch salt from distant places, which represents his fulfillment as a husband.

5. Warfare/homicide

Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): The Bemba were known to be warriors who raided their neighbors for slaves and tributes. After being colonized the raiding was stopped and the political stability of the country helped keep peace throughout the land.

Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): They operate under a head chief, who has control over much of the village because most of the people are related to him somehow. There can also be sub-chiefs but that is up to the main chief to decide.

Post marital residence: The man moves to the home of the betrothal to work for his father-in-law. Eventually he can marry the daughter and will remain in her village until a few children have been born. They can then decide to stay in the wife's village and continue working on father-in-law's land or move to a different village. Usually though if they decide to leave it is to join the husband's family.

Territoriality: For the Ushi and Bemba people territory is not much of a problem because they do not consider land as a possession. They divide their land up though into sections called *i-calos*, which also is used to describe the district of particular chiefs. Therefore the name of the district is the name of the chief. There can be subdivided into smaller sections and have sub-chiefs but that is up to the main chief to decide. For the most part though the Ushi and Bemba people divide their land not by political and tribal lines but by natural vegetation divisions.

Social interaction divisions: A woman's first sign of independence is not when she gets married but rather when she can distribute food or drink to her own husband's friends.

Village and house organization: A man and his wife sleep in a hut together but any children over 3 are sent to sleep with their grandparents. Young girls sleep in huts with married women when her husband is temporarily away, which means they often change their sleeping arrangements. Boys build their own houses in groups of two and threes.

Trade: There is not much tradition in commerce because money is not used to purchase food. They do trade occasionally baskets and mats, exchange off goods when supplies are low and so forth. The Ushi tribes have great supplies off fish but lack other essential things so the majority of their trade is through fish.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

Specialization (shamans and medicine): Medical treatment is scarce and is eighteen miles from Kalaba's tribe and many complaints have been made but they have been receiving European medical supplies that are becoming more common. The herb millet though is one of the herbs that they use for healing and other medical uses. Trees are also used for medicine and charm, they believe trees posses magical powers that help prevent ill health, witchcraft, and evil sprits.

Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): If a chief dies his hut must be ceremonially destroyed as well as an ox sacrifice offering and a spirit shrine is built after the hut has rotted away. The burial of commoners though is unimpressive and forgotten about quickly. Most natives avoid the burial sites. Money is used in many Bemba rituals because of its rarity; giving money is a sign of respect and it can be used for many different occasions. Some times they use money to get rid of taboos and even replace the old bark-cloth in a matrimonial ceremony. This is possible because they don't use money to spend on food.

Other rituals: The chief is believed to help the land and the ancestral spirits so give the best outcome of crops.

Myths (Creation): Muwe discovered Makumba, most likely a meteorite, and the Ushi people recognize this as their tribal God. Though the introduction of Christianity has spread since the tribes came in contact with European Makumba is still a considerable figure and who reveals himself in dreams of important people.

Cultural material (art, music, games): Paintings and ornamental art describing biblical images and clan jokes are hung around the houses and public places. Music usually consists of guitarists and singers.

Sex differences in RCR: They believe the spirits of the dead chiefs or headmen guard the land.

Missionary effect: There is a lot of white influence in the Ushi tribes. Most people now a days have converted to Christianity.

7. Adornment

Body paint: Tattoos and other body paints were very common before the introduction of Christianity, not so much anymore.

Haircut: Hairstyle for woman is still a very popular tradition.

Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: When a girl starts menstruating she is taken to the bush by a ritual specialist who instructs the girl about womanhood through clay making and song. After this ritual the woman is considered ready for marriage. Men are not allowed to attend these ceremonies.

8. Kinship systems

Sibling classification system: The brother is considered the legal guarding of his sister and her children. If her husband dies it is his responsibility to take care of his sister. The brother calls his sister *nkashi* and the sister calls her brother *ndume*. They exert recipricol rights over each other's children.

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