

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

- Kaonde, Ba-Kaonde; Kaonde; Bantu

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

- kqn

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- -12.20 26.80

1.4 Brief history:

- “There are three main divisions of the Ba-Kaonde, or ...three groups of people that have...coalesced under the name of Kaonde...the natives themselves seem unable to give a coherent account of their origin, and have practically no idea of chronology...They coalesced into “the Kaonde tribe” apparently for geographical reasons and no other; and the tribe appears to be...a reunion of scions of an old stock that had split off into different directions and...having gone further than was consistent with security, returned to what is now the Kaonde country, and formed a kind of loose confederation, being conscious of their common origins and united by similarity of dialect and customs...” (1p28-29)
- “...the Kaonde tribe, as we call it, comes from three stocks, or from three branches of one stock that had had different experiences. The stock (a) that came, immediately, from the south-east, across the Kafue [River], and moved north-west under [Chief] Mushima and under Kasongo [younger brother to Mushima]. The stock that came, later, from the north passed through stock (a), and settled south of them under [Chief] Kasempa. The stock that came, immediately, from the south-west, by the Kabompo-Zambezi junction, and moved north-east under [Chief] Ntambo.” (1p32-33)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

- “You know - better than I do - the common objection to “Mission Boys” You know, also, that this has been caused by natives who have attached themselves to some Mission or other for a short time for material ends...they have lost their own religion and have become heathens.” (1p297)
- “the natives who have worked for long at secular industrial centres [mines, etc.] and have become detribalized. Tribalism is part of their religion, so in losing that they too have become heathens.” (1p297)
- Missionaries brought schools, hospitals, and money (from the government) to the Kaonde people. (2p48)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

- “A change from the rolling woodlands of the north and the forest of the south-west is noticeable in the south-east corner, where flat open plains teeming with games...spread for a long way on either side of the rivers. The flora here is more tropical...Immediately north of this is hilly country, with shingly soil...The Jiundu swamps in the north form a peculiar feature...and the only other place that calls for any comment is the salt pan at Kaimbwe...This is one of the few deposits of rich alluvial soil in the district, and is an extremely fertile spot.” (1p22)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

- 207,000 population in Zambia and 243,000 in all countries reported in 2006 (3)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- “In the rest of the district the staple crop is kaffir corn, largely supplemented by maize, with sweet potatoes...pumpkins, cucumber, tomatoes, etc...fungi...wild roots and fruits...” (1p24)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- “...ground nuts, beans, lentils...honey...meat and fish are also used to vary their diet.” (1p24)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- The Kaonde use bows and arrows and spears, as well as, guns introduced by the British Colonies. (1p264 and 2p53)

2.4 Food storage:

- baskets, pots, and cooking pots used for food storage (1p63)

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- Men: Build the hut, door, and beds out of cut trees and thatches. He cuts trees to make fences for both low and high ground gardens. Men also collect firewood, make *mukeka* mats, *musansa* baskets, tends fowls, hunts and fishes, etc. They also do not carry any children, except for the eldest child because they usually are carrying an axe or spear for protecting the entire party. (1p63-64)
- Women: fetch the thatching grass; muds the hut's walls and floor; weeds and reaps the garden; pounds and grinds grains; draws water, makes baskets except *musansa*; makes beer, castor oil; does the washing, and does all the cooking when on a journey or when settled in a village. (1p63-64)

2.6 Land tenure:

- Land is inherited by sons in the matrilineal line, unless it is taken by another through a loss in a fight or war. (1p95-97)

2.7 Ceramics:

- Not found.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

- The Kaonde are known to have traded with other tribes, however, they mostly like to trade within their own community. There are specific exchanges that must be met in certain situations. For example, one family "will owe another family, if members of the second family by marriage given from the first family die; this price can be paid by objects such as guns, blankets, etc. (1p105)

2.9 Food taboos:

- No taboos against any particular foods, other than when and how certain foods can be eaten. For example, when a girl has her first menstruation she sits in a hut alone and eats two pumpkin seeds. (1p78)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

- The Kaonde are known to use canoes and other watercrafts made of wood. These also represent an important symbol of good luck in ones dreams. (1p246)

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

- “The Kaonde are naturally of fine physique being often six feet or more in height and well proportioned. ..it is presumed be largely due to the high dietic of the kaffir corn.” (2p66)

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

- Described as being “fine physique” and “sometimes undernourished” at times, described by Crehan. (2p66-67)

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

- No exact age, but described by Melland that a girl usually weds between the ages of eight and thirteen, three to four years before menstruation. (1p66)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

- Not found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

- Not found

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

- Not found

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- Women: girls are usually wed between the ages of eight and thirteen. (1p66)
- Men: no number exactly, but described as, “when he finds signs that he is maturing he applies to an unmarried girl...and sleeps with her. If she tells him that she likes him and asks him to repeat the visit, he then says that he is grown up and old enough to marry.” (1p79)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

- “Divorce is fairly common, and seems always to have been common. If there is a tendency to greater frequency it is probably only in cases of “mutual consent” with no special grievance...The Ba-Kaonde have very clear and well-defined rules as to what constitutes grounds for divorce...” (1p64)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

- No percentage, but described as “not particularly common” and some numbers described by Melland are “Men with one wife; 4778; with two wives; 1110; with three wives, 100; with four wives, 15; with five wives, 4; with six wives; 2.” (1p57)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

- Described as being “a small present, which was usually two to three cloths as being the accustomed amount” was given to the girl’s parents by the perspective husband. (1p58)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- Land is inherited by sons in the matrilineal line, unless it is taken by another through a loss in a fight or war. (1p95-97)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- Not found

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

- Not Found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- “...the Kaonde matrilineal clan depended for its reproduction on the “strangers” who married into it.”(2p93)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?

- No evidence of partible paternity described by Melland or Crehan.

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)

- “There appears to be no taboo whatever in the Kaonde tribe for a pregnant woman.” (1p80)

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

- Not found

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

- Not found

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

- Men preferably want to marry their mother’s brother’s daughter. (1p79)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- No, women do not enjoy sexual freedom. A woman’s sexual attributes are considered the personal property of her husband. (1p69).

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

- No evidence found

- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?
Not found
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
- Men:31/Women:37 (1p57)
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades
- None found
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- None found
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?
- “after marriage consummation, the husband is never allowed to look his mother-in-law in the face” (1p61)
- 4.24 Joking relationships?
- None found
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
- Matrilineal – all inheritance and successors is through the mother’s line (1p95)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules
- “A man may not marry one whom he calls his mother, his sister, his daughter, or his niece” (1p62)
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?
- No, more of a rite of passage, “a man chooses his own bride, if they both agree, then he returns to his home and sends his mother and sisters with the marriage gifts. The mother and sister go to the girl’s parents and ask if she is ready for marriage. If the answer is yes, the marriage is arranged. The mother and sister return home and the man goes to the girl’s village. A spare hut is given to the couple. The first night is called *kulajika* – no connection takes place. The following day, the bride’s mother cooks a big bowl of porridge and takes it to the bridal hut. The bride leaves the hut, and the husband remains, but not does eat. The following day the marriage is consummated, and the man is never allowed to look his mother-in-law in the face.” (1p60-61)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
- At birth, the child is given a name of a deceased relative, which is chosen by some form of divination. After puberty, the child is able to change/ pick a name for his/her-self. (1p53)
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
- Outside of the community, “...the Kaonde matrilineal clan depended for its reproduction on the “strangers” who married into it.”(2p93)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?
- A man chooses his own bride (1p60)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:
- None described by Melland or Crehan

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- No number given
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- “the petty scimmages in which the Ba-Kaonde and their neighbors used to indulge...The Kaonde tribe...never appear to have fought as a tribe...The cause of the fight would be either greed-for the spoils of war, women, ivory, guns – or the desire to get back captured slaves, inherited wives taken by someone else, and so on.” (1p271)
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- See above 4.15
 - Death by punishment for breaking taboo. For example, incest with own mother, sister, or aunt, etc. (1p83)
 - Suicide (1p82)
 - Infanticide (1p50)
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
- Most fighting occurred in the North East area of the Kaonde Country with the Balamba, Bayeke, and Angola societies. (1p273)
- 4.18 Cannibalism?
- None found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:
- No clear number given
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- On average, a man is away for about two months out of the year for work. Usually more, ranging from three to four, as it takes them about a month going to and from their work destination. (1p118)
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):
- The Kaonde are split into three clans, each with a different chief. (1p28-29)
- 5.4 Post marital residence:

- The girl's people provide the groom and bride with a spare hut in their village. However, when a Chief gets married (especially when he is already married), the bride resides in her husband's village. (1p61)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

- On the north-east, they were adjacent to the Balamba, and the boundaries were the upper Kafue, the E. Lunga, and the Lushwisi Rivers. On the south-east they touched the Ba-Lenge, their boundary being the Kafue (Luenge) River. On the south their neighbours were the Mambwera, who came as far north as the Mufawashi and Luma Rivers. On the west came the Alunda, and the border varied. On the north came a few Baluba and the Basanga, Bayeke, and Batemba, and the Lufira was the boundary. As time when on the Kaonde races spread further. Especially was this so in the south. Kasempa's native pushed the Mambwera further and further, and came in contact with Barotse. The old Mambwera country is now entirely Kaonde. (1p45-46)

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

- The young girls are separated from the adolescent older girls, who are close to their first menstruation. (1p77)
- The prepubescent boys are separated from the post-pubescent men. (1p54)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

- The custom of *bulunda*, or "blood brotherhood" is a very important aspect of the Kaonde society. A man will come to the aid of his *mulunda* (or a woman to another woman), so far as can be reasonably expected. It supposedly originated from the instinct of insuring oneself against any misfortune that might come in the future. (1p109-111)

5.8 Village and house organization:

- Not specified

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

- Not found

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

- It is the man's job to make an unspecified type of bed in the hut. (1p63-64)

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc.:

- As stated before, there are three clans that form the Kaonde people, and each clan has their own chief. However, all three clans supposedly share the same customs, for example, all of the clans follow the matrilineal lineages of succession and inheritance.

5.12 Trade:

- The communities are assumed to have engaged in some small amount of trade/exchange with their neighbors, however, the colonization in these areas would increase the number of traded goods: cotton cloth, guns, ivory, slaves, etc. Overtime, trading would become the "expected" way of receiving and giving goods. (2p143-144)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- None other than position of chief

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

- No specific allotted amount of time given

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- Witch – a person who bewitches a person a community or anything, and causes death, illness, etc.
- Witch-doctor – is the person who divines, finds, convicts, and sentences the witch. (1p198-199)

6.2 Stimulants:

- Alcohol – "Dancing, feasting, and drinking last all through the day on which this ceremonial takes place." (1p136)

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

- Child naming at birth through divination (1p53)
- *Chisungu* – initiation ceremony of girls before puberty and before first menstruation, but usually done before consummation of marriage (1p76-78)
- Nearing puberty, boys receive "medicine" from their brothers-in-law, which is spread on their chest, and then they follow another prepubescent ritual. (1p78-79)
- Drums, beer, dancing, and songs precede the burial of a family member, and can continue for up to three weeks afterwards. (1p89)

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- *Lesa/Chipangavije/Shyakapanga* – three names for the same creator/God unseen, living up above, and supreme being (1p154)
- The Kaonde believe that creation started in the north-west with *Lesa* creating the first man and woman, who angered their God by unleashing certain evils on the world. *Lesa* forgave them, and helped the two first humans make tools to hunt and protect themselves. (1p156-159)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- Music is present in their RCR (1p89)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

- None found

6.8 Missionary effect:

- Missionaries brought Christianity to the Kaonde people. See 1.5 above.

6.9 RCR revival:

- Not found

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- After a man dies, his spirit (*mukishi*) can enter the baby in a womb, however, the spirit can enter more than one child and even animals. (1p153)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

- None found

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

- Not found

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

- *Chimvule* – a “shadow” that everything has. Once a man dies, the “shadow” remains behind in the village, which the people in the village pray for guidance, protection, etc.
- *Wa-Kishi* – the family spirits of departed ancestors, who the Kaonde most pray too. They consider them spirits who are accessible. (1p132-133)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

- Not found

7.2 Piercings:

- Not found

7.3 Haircut:

- Wife’s job to “dress husband’s hair in tufts” Husband’s job to cut other men’s hair. (1p62-63)

7.4 Scarification:

- Not found

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

- Beads are used in many different ceremonies for women (not many for men), such as the *Chisungu*. They are also used as gifts to the girl’s family before getting married. (1p60 and 1p76-77)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

- See above 7.5

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- Very little difference in their everyday adornment of cloth “wraps.” Adornment during certain ceremonies or occasions is what truly separates the sexes. For example, a *Kayemba* is a strip of white cloth that a husband buys for his pregnant wife. He gives it to his mother-in-law to decorate, and it is given to his wife when she is three months pregnant. (1p81)

7.8 Missionary effect:

- Not found

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

- Not found

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

- Eight kingship statuses: *inanji* (mother), *mwisho* (mother’s brother), *kolojanji* (older sibling), *nkasanji* (younger sibling), *mwana* (child), *mwipwa* (nephew or niece), *nkambo* (grandparent), and *munkana* (grandchild). The older sibling has more power than the younger siblings and children. (2p89-91)

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

- Levirate (1p57)

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

- None identified

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- *Kongamoto* – the Kaonde believe that the pterodactyl still exists; the natives can describe it so accurately, unprompted, and they all agree on its appearance. They do not believe it to be unnatural, just a very awful thing, like a man-eating lion. (1p237-238)
- The Kaonde also strongly believe in good and bad omens, these can be present in people’s lives. For example, to find a variety of honey (*chilude*) near one’s camp is a good omen. Omens can also be seen in someone’s dreams, and later be interpreted as good or bad. (1p243-244)

Numbered references

1. Melland, Frank. (1923) *In Witch-Bound Africa: An Account of the Primitive Kaonde Tribe & Their Beliefs*. London, Great Britain: The Mayflower Press.
2. Crehan, Kate. (1997) *The Fractured Community: Landscapes of Power and Gender in Rural Zambia*. California: University of California Press.
3. Ethnologue.com