

My first source (1) The Konkoba of Northern Ghana was published in 1964 and is a compilation of writings by David Tait who died in a vehicular accident in 1956. When reviewing the data presented here one should understand things referenced from him as being as of approximately 1956 and understand that cultural changes may have changed the accuracy of this report.

1. Description

- 1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family: Konkomba, call themselves Bekpokpam. The Konkomba refer to their language as Lekpokpam. They refer to their land as Kekpokpam. (1, p1)
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): xon (5)
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Upper basin of Oti River (Togo and Ghana) (2)
- 1.4 Brief history: Long history of conflict with Dagomba, who originally invaded Konkomba land and drove Konkomba into Bekwom lands in the 16th century (1 p4). A long history of extortion and raiding by Dagomba (1 p9) explain why Konkomba react with such hostility to any perceived trespasses (see section on War, specifically Fish War).
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: The Konkomba have a long history of negative influence from the Dagomba and other outsiders. (1, 4)
- 1.6 Ecology (natural environment): Oti river, approximately 500 feet above sea level (1, p1). "Oti plain is alternatively a swamp and dustbowl". Hot seasons have shade temperatures up to 110 degrees and down to 50 degrees during the night. Rainy seasons make some Oti plain regions accessible by boat alone (1 pg 13).
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: Population (640,000) (2). No other data found.

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): "main meal is 'TZ', a... thick porridge ...covered with soup"(3). Sorghum, yams, rice, millet, peas, and maize grown by men, groundnuts and okra grown by women (1).
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Beans, groundnuts, sheep, goats, guinee hens grown and herded by men(1). Fish are also caught from the Oti river (2) and trapped at Konkomba flood paths (1 p14). Despite these resources Konkomba suffer from frequent protein deficiency in men and unmarried girls (unmarried girls do not eat meat) (1 p14).
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Bow and arrow, and as of a 1995 conflict AK47s (4)
- 2.4 Food storage: No data found.
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Men do the herding and grow sorghum, yams, rice, millet, peas, and maize grown by men. Women grow groundnuts and okra (1). In markets women work as the main sellers and buyers with men assisting when enough women are not available (3). It seems women keep the money they earn at markets (1 p29)
- 2.6 Land tenure: Men and women work different crops. Individual men own flood paths. Fords are owned by clans. (1)
- 2.7 Ceramics: No data found.
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Fords are owned by clans and money from ferries operated at those fords go to clans. Money earned from land (excluding the land worked by women) goes to compound heads who are responsible for providing for the males in that compound. (1 p30)
- 2.9 Food taboos: Cattle seem to be reserved for only important sacrifices and as signs of wealth (1).
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: Ferries used on Oti river (1) and Oti flood plains (1 p17). May also build dugout canoes (30).

3. Anthropometry

- 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No data found.
- 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No data found.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

- 4.1 Age at menarche (f): No data found.
- 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): Approximately 18 years for females (1 p 163).
- 4.3 Completed family size (m and f): Women atypically have more than five children. (1) With two wives per husband perhaps having an average of 3.5 children per wife one might expect their "nuclear" family to be about 10 per house.
- 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): Couples do not have intercourse after a child is born until the time when that child can walk or else it is believed that child will die. (1 p86)
- 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): Females are promised to clans or men shortly after birth and marry around age 18 or when they are pregnant. Men marry around age 40 (1).
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorces are rare and marriage is regarded as absolute (1 p 180). However, women may run away with a lover prior to marriage and her lover may later ask (often through his brother) for her family's acceptance. Because her future marriage is now broken it is usually most beneficial for her family to accept this and whatever gifts her new husband gives them. Unfortunately, this may also lead to feuds between the previous fiancés family and hers. (1)
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Polygouny is practiced with men typically having two wives (1 p163).
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Yes, prospective husbands give food and wood to the family of a young daughter (1).
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: Raised flood plain paths are inherited from father to son. Sons inherit property from their fathers and may inherit their older brother's widow (1 p86).
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Men do not marry until age forty and until then live under the their father's control (1 p29).

- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: Only data found is the urban myth of sorcerers habitually sneaking into the homes of young men to seduce them (1).
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Exogamous (1)
- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?: No data found indicating “other fathers”.
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”): No data found.
- 4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time?): No data found.
- 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: No data found.
- 4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): No data found.
- 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: Women may have lovers prior to marriage and any children she has with that lover are accepted by her husband as his own. (1 p163).
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: Prior to marriage women may become pregnant with with lovers outside of her future husbands lineage group. At this time she moves to her future husband’s clan and weds. Such children are accepted by her husband as his own. (1 p163)
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?: I would expect a man’s second wife to care for her children. However, I have found no specific data on this.
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: .5=1 husband per two wives (1)
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades: No data found.
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): No data found.
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: No data found.
- 4.24 Joking relationships? The younger brothers of a man may refer to his wife as *m pu* or “my wife” and she in turn may refer to him as *n tshar* “my husband” (1 p86).
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations.: No data found.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules: “Relations between minor lineages [from] the same major lineage may be lovers.” Relations between offspring of the same mother are considered the most repugnant with incest between offspring of the same father being second
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: No. However, women who move into her husband’s clan first live with the clan head for a week and then her original sisters help her to cook for the clan (1).
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?: No data found.
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?): Marriages occur between clans(1).
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?: Marriages are arranged shortly after the birth of females, to either individual men or to a male elder who gives her to one of his sons once she is of age (1).
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: No data found.

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: No statistical data found.
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: Ingroup killings are very strongly forbidden whereas outgroup killings are common over land disputes (1, 4).
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: “Konkomba / Nanumba / Dagomba / Gonja ethnic conflicts of 1917, 1940 and 1996” caused by conflict over land ownership and perceived superiority of other ethnic groups over Konkomba. An example war, the Fish War, started when “a Dagomba man was found fishing in a pond the Konkomba claimed belonged to them,” (4).
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): No data beyond what I’ve already presented found.
- 4.18 Cannibalism?: No data found. However, I suspect no occurrence of cannibalism barring abnormal circumstance.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: No current data found.
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): Farming during the farming season, ferrying during the flood season (1).
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): Individual clan leaders with no broader central authority (4).
- 5.4 Post marital residence: Women move in to live with their husbands. Each wife has her room, kitchen and hearth (1 p164).
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): While very territorial they do not own any land as recognized by the government partly due to their lack of centralization (4).
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex): Children interact with groups within their 4 year age group.
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: No data found
- 5.8 Village and house organization: Clans are led by an elder chief (1).
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): No data found.
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Sleep in huts, but no other data found (1).
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Minor lineages and major lineages (1).
- 5.12 Trade: Konkomba ran markets attract Yoruba, Mossi, and other ethnic groups (1 p11). Ferry owning men make substantial money during the flood season (1 p 17).
- 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?: No data found.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

- 6.0 Time allocation to RCR: April, the season of Second Burials, is dedicated to ritual activities. Lekwobil is a weekly holy day where no farm work is performed (1 p17).
- 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Earth priests called are called Tindana (2). Diviners identify the cause of hardship, death and illness as witchcraft, failures to carry out rituals, as retribution for failing to respect ancestors, or as acts of god. They also instruct people on what sacrifices to make to ensure success in an undertaking (1 p 222). Sacrifices are formal and silent (1 p226).
- 6.2 Stimulants: No data found.
- 6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): No data found.
- 6.4 Other rituals: Men who have murdered, or killed a dangerous animal are hunted by its spirit. The killer will go directly to an *igi* horn and lie beside it for three days. The *igi* horn has other protective, and medicinal purposes and is wrapped in feathers from a sacrifice as well as charred roots. (1 p82)
- 6.5 Myths (Creation): They seemingly lack a creation myth (1).
- 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): No data found.
- 6.7 Sex differences in RCR: No data found.
- 6.8 Missionary effect: Though there are some Christian Konkomba (5) I've found nothing to indicate this being common or how fundamental their Christianity is.
- 6.9 RCR revival: No data found.
- 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Both animal and human spirits interact with the living. *Kenjaa* are good spirits, *kesou* are evil. *Kesou* that plague the living may become *kenjaa* by being captured at which point they serve as advisors. Typically, the dead join their ancestors, regardless of their crimes, with the exception of sorcerers who's kin must make sacrifices on his behalf (1 p 225).
- 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: Because ancestors and recently deceased are a very strong part of their spiritual tradition I would expect no specific taboo of naming the dead.
- 6.12 Is there teknonymy?: No data found.
- 6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): Ancestor worship with sacrifices and prayers for aid. Their god, Uumbwar, is their most ancient ancestor. He is omnipresent and is a part of all Konkomba. He is the source of all good. There is no source of evil and things perceived as evil are punished by Uumbwar (1 p 226).

7. Adornment

- 7.1 Body paint: No data found
- 7.2 Piercings: No data found
- 7.3 Haircut: No data found
- 7.4 Scarification: Face cuts after age four and decorative body cuts (1 p87).
- 7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): No data found
- 7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: No data found
- 7.7 Sex differences in adornment: No data found
- 7.8 Missionary effect: No data found
- 7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: No data found

8. Kinship systems

- 8.1 Sibling classification system: Siblings are divided into age sets which are four years apart (1).
- 8.2 Sororate, levirate: Levirate marriages occur when a brother dies and his wife is passed down to his younger brother. (1)
- 8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No data found.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- 9.1 External Government influence: as of approximately 1999 Ghana government "has set up a permanent Review Committee... and Police Keeping Service... to contain the Konkomba," (4).
- 9.2 Feuds fall into the duties of young men, for instance if an older male is in an argument over a wife then his younger kinsmen will do fight for him and he'll not participate in the actual conflict (1 p 89)

Numbered references

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