

- 1.1 The culture and language are both referred to as Kwanja, which is in the Niger-Congo family.
- 1.2 knp
- 1.3 They live in Adamawa, in Southwestern Cameroon.
- 1.4 The Kwanja were overtaken by an outside group called the Fulbe, who enslaved them. They are now relatively free but much, much poorer than their Fulbe neighbors. Not much is known of their previous history.
- 1.5 The Fulbes invaded Adamawa in the early nineteenth century and have been living unwelcome alongside the Kwanja and other local groups ever since.
- 1.6 They live on the Adamawa Plateau which has a tropical climate with wet and dry seasons.
- 1.7 There are about 10,000 total Kwanja. No information on average village size but it seems to be somewhere between 200-400

## 2.1 Maize

- 2.2 Meat of antelopes, catfish, and pythons.
- 2.3 Bow, spear, knife
- 2.4 Clay pots
- 2.5 Different natural things are said to be of particular genders, such as maize beer being "female," and therefore females must deal with the making of maize beer.
- 2.6 Most men own land upon which their families live. On these plots, the man tends to his field and his wives tend to their own. Chiefs own territories and when a person kills a leopard on one of these territories, they must inform the chief, who gets first choice on the meat.
- 2.7 The Kwanja use ceramic pots to store food and maize beer.
- 2.8 One is expected to share with one's joking partners.
- 2.9 Women and children are seen as too weak to eat leopard meat but it is not forbidden. Lepers are not supposed to eat spicy food as their condition is said to be a "hot" condition so the spicy food would exacerbate it.
- 2.10 Although Cameroon touches the sea, the area in which the Kwanja live is not on the coast and so they have no use for watercraft.

## 3.1 No information

## 3.2 No information

## 4.1 No information

## 4.2 No information

## 4.3 No information

## 4.4 No information

## 4.5 No information

## 4.6 No information but a commonly cited reason for divorce is "failure to fulfill spousal duties"

## 4.7 Polygyny exists but no numbers on its prevalence.

4.8 A typical bride price is as follows: "10-30 litres of palm wine, up to 100 cola nuts, 5-20 litres of palm oil, one bag of salt, 5,000-50,000 CFA (local currency), and possibly soap or clothes" (Gausset 82).

4.9 Movable property is given to the brothers of the deceased and non movable property (such as a house or field) is given to the children. Witchcraft and hereditary diseases are said to be inherited matrilineally.

4.10 Relationships with fathers are often tense, as children are expected to unconditionally obey them. Relationships with mothers are more tender, as they have a more loving a caring attitude toward their children.

## 4.11 No information but unlikely to be positive

4.12 One must not marry or having sexual relations with someone from one's matrilineage, one's father's matrilineage, or one's grandfather's matrilineage (the second two not being as strictly enforced as the first one). One also may not marry one's own child or any grandchild of a man in their own matrilineage. Marrying a cousin (anyone with whom you share a grandparent) is forbidden as well. A second wife cannot be related to the first unless the first has died. Also, one must not marry a person who has divorced a relative.

4.13 Paternity is not considered partible. The role of males is contribution of semen (which may contain the spirit of the baby as they come from water) and avoidance of taboos.

4.14 Menstrual blood is thought to be a kind of "building material" (Gausset 176) for a baby. When a woman becomes pregnant, she stops menstruating because it is building up inside of her to create the baby. The spirit of the child is said to come from water and so the expecting parents must not kill any aquatic creatures for they may be the spirit of the new baby trying to get into the womb.

## 4.15 Yes. See 4.14

## 4.16 No information

## 4.17 The preferential category for a spouse is a non relative.

4.18 Yes but they are expected to "fulfill marital obligations" and have sexual relations with their husbands.

## 4.19 No overt extramarital partners

4.20 If the mother dies, her husband's other wives (if he has any) will raise her children.

## 4.21 No information

4.22 No information on couvade.

4.23 n/a

4.24a One avoids and respects a spouse's elder relatives and the spouses of one's younger relatives. This is more pronounced in women, who avoid each other entirely in these situations, while men must only respect one another. In a woman-man situation, they avoid each other.

4.24b One jokes with a spouse's younger relatives and with the spouses of one's elder relatives. One may also joke with any grandparents, though the relationships are not as strong. They all call each other "my wife" and "my husband" though no sexual relations are to occur. The jokes consist of insults (but not to grandparents) such as calling each other lazy or useless or pretending to fight or be in love.

One also jokes with former enemies who are now close allies. This type of relationship may spring up after wars or accusations of witchcraft and are governed by rules enforced by small fines. They engage in many jokes which are usually very serious topics such as: calling each other witches, claiming to have killed and eaten each other's parents, stealing a body at a funeral and refusing to give it back until they have been paid, and having pretend violent fights.

4.25 Chieftom is passed down patrilineally and one is able to buy land in one's mother's village.

4.26 See 4.12

4.27 No formal marriage ceremony anymore. A couple simply moves into a new house together and may sometimes invite neighbors over for dancing.

4.28 A child is named at birth, usually by his father, after another person in the community. This person is usually a deceased relative of the father's but may be a friend, and doesn't have to be deceased. The child is thought to gain some of the qualities of their namesake and is spoken of as having the same relations that he/she did, though no one believes the spirit is reincarnated in the child.

4.29 No preference on inter- or intra- community marriages. Kwanjas say that it can sometimes be difficult to find a non relative in their own village due to the large percentage of relatives. However, it is difficult to tell who you might be related to in a different village because the Kwanja are spread all around the Cameroon but may not know people from different villages very well. See 4.12 for who counts as relatives.

4.30 Kwanjas may marry whoever they want as long as the person is not a relative.

4.31 There doesn't seem to be evidence for there being huge conflicts of interest over who marries whom other than the usual "two people are in love with the same person" type of problem.

4.14 No information

4.15 No information

4.16 Many suspect witchcraft to be the cause of killings.

4.17 Between Kwanja villages, relations are not always peaceful.

4.18 No evidence for cannibalism.

5.1 No information but it seems to be around 200-400?

5.2 Do not move seasonally.

5.3 Villages are governed by appointed chiefs. The title is sometimes handed down through a patrilineage (to the son with the most favorable qualities; not necessarily the first-born) and sometimes the "notable" chooses who the new chief will be.

5.4 Typically a new couple is expected to live in a hut in the husband's father's village but can obtain land through matrilineages so the husband's mother's village may be more preferable. Also, witchcraft is not expected to be practiced against members of a matrilineage so the couple may feel safer there.

5.5 It seems that villages used to fight over territory quite often in the past but now it is less frequent.

5.6 Social interaction is divided on lines of age and sex by using kin avoidance/respect and joking relationships. See 4.24a and 4.24b.

5.7 See 4.25

5.8 A chief is the head of the village and everyone else is, more or less, equal under him. Households consist of a husband, one or more wives, and their children. The father/husband is the authority in the house.

5.9 No information

5.10 The Kwanja sleep in huts.

5.11 Society is organized along both patrilineal and matrilineal lines. A person competes with their patrilineage and finds support from their matrilineage.

5.12 They trade freely, though some things are women's realm (e.g. making baskets and brewing maize beer) and some are men's (e.g. hunting, farming maize) and so those items end up only getting traded by their respective gender. Interestingly, when a household is making maize beer, the husband sells his wife the maize, she brews the beer, and then sells him some of her product.

5.13 There are almost no indications of social hierarchies (except for the chief, who has very nice things) because it is believed that if one displays wealth, it will make others jealous and they will cast curses upon you. More mundanely, your relatives may ask you for money. If you refuse, it does not reflect well on you.

6.0 During harvest, rituals/ceremonies occur daily.

6.1 No specializations.

6.2 No information

6.3 The Kwanja have a number of diverse tribes with different ritual practices. They do have some elements in common and these are listed below.

Birth- Child and mother are secluded in their home for (3 days if boy, 4 if girl) when the umbilical cord falls off. It is then buried under a banana tree or the bank of a river. Before they finally leave the hut, the midwife presents the mother with (the tip of a spear if boy, stick to prepare couscous if girl) which she touches (2 times if boy, 3 if girl). She then grabs it on the final try and heads out the door and is greeted by water being poured off the roof by a female member of the child's patrilineage. She sits with all the women present and pretends to uncover her baby (twice if boy, thrice if girl) and finally uncovers it on the 3rd or 4th try. The midwife then spits palm wine in the mother's face and puts some palm oil on the baby's joints. Guests eat and drink and some approach the mother and does some simple fortune telling. Someone attaches a rope belt to the baby which must not be taken off until it can walk, lest it inherit witchcraft. The parents must not have sex until it can walk or they may stunt the child's growth.

Death- When a person dies, they are buried with their head pointing to the north. Women are buried facing to the west and men face to the east. Their widow(er) must follow many rules and avoid many taboos for a few months. In the past, there would be a large collective ritual to sort of free the widow(er)s from mourning. Now, they are freed individually and the ritual that would have been used is practiced irregularly to celebrate all who have died since the last celebration. The ritual consists mostly of drinking maize beer and reintroducing the widow(er) into society. The night before this (and sometimes the night of the death), there are gendered rituals.

The men have a wrestling contest that no woman is allowed to see. It begins with one man holding a ceremonial stick that someone will try to take from him. He asks for forgiveness first, sings, and then the games begin. Any injuries inflicted during this ritual will not be punished. Even if someone kills another man, he will not be punished for it. At the end, the men throw the stick into the bushes with shouts of disgust. On the way back to the village, people must refrain from stepping on one another's feet.

The women go around the village naked, following a woman with a torch, and sing lewd songs describing male genitals or sexual relations. The men (with the exception of chiefs and fathers of twins) cannot witness this for fear of becoming sterile.

No info on puberty rituals.

After every harvest, people throw village-wide parties celebrating their dead ancestors. Each family celebrates their own parents so there end up being quite a few parties. A female member of the patrilineage of the deceased brews and filters the maize beer. She rubs redwood paste on the legs of the guests and then they go to the tomb. Another member of the patrilineage brings two ceramic pots, one with regular maize beer and one with unfiltered beer. He spills some unfiltered beer and some dried leaves onto the tomb with his left hand and asks for blessings from the dead. He then distributes food and takes a local nut and drops them on the ground to tell if the ancestors are pleased with their remembrance. If they fall with the inner side up, it is a good sign. If they fall the other way, the ancestors are not pleased, presumably because their descendants have waited too long to remember them. He will begin making excuses as to why it has been so long and apologizing and then drop the nuts again to see if the ancestors have accepted his reasons. On the way back to the village, the people must not step on each other's feet.

6.4 No other rituals described.

6.5 There is a story of how the first masquerade masks were made. It starts with two half-brothers (same father but different mothers) out hunting. They end up getting stuck in a hole and the villagers try to come to their rescue but cannot free them. One of the brothers has a full sister who gives him food. The other does not have any matrilineal relatives as his mother had died and did not have other children. No one come to feed him and so he goes hungry. When it becomes clear that the hole is filling up and that the villagers will not be able to save the brothers, the hungry one begins to tell of masquerade masks and the proper way to do his funeral since he will die of starvation. The first masquerade was done to celebrate his funeral and has been occurring ever since.

6.6 During rituals, songs are sometimes sung through beveled reeds to make the voice sound strange. A sort of mourning rope (made from the bark of a certain tree) is worn around the neck for a number of months after a spouse has died. Maize beer is drunk during every ritual. A stick made of interwoven buffalo straps is used during death rituals. "Whipping masks" are worn during death rituals.

6.7 When the ritual centers on a male, certain actions are performed three times each; when for a female, they are performed four times.

6.8 No strong missionary effect, as the Kwanja were fairly secluded. They seem to have incorporated some Biblical terms into their religion but retain most of their original beliefs/practices. Their fairly well-off urban neighbors, the Fulbes, are Christian and Muslim so this leads to the association of those religions with more money but they are not necessarily looked up to.

6.9 Most Kwanja tribes still practice most of their rituals but do not take them as seriously anymore. They perform the rituals as part of tradition but do not have the same feelings of sacredness tied to them. For example, those watching the Whipping Masks will lightheartedly try to guess the identities of the mask-wearers.

6.10 The spirit of a dead person is said to leave the body, follow its widow(er) around during the mourning period, and then try to get back to its home village to rest. If it does not find its way back, it will wander our world haunting whoever crosses its path, especially at night.

6.11 Yes.

6.12 The religion mainly consists of ancestor worship (leaving offerings to curry favor) and belief in magic/witchcraft. There is a slight amount of animism in that leopards are thought to be chiefs who have changed form (since chiefs are seen as very magical).

7.1 No body paint

7.2 Some of the women wear earrings and nose rings but there does not appear to be much cultural significance to body piercings.

7.3 All the men wear their hair short and some wear hats or scarves. All the women wear scarves on their head and appear to have short hair as well.

7.4 No scarification

7.5 Chiefs adorn themselves in leopard skin.

7.6 During a death ritual, members of some tribes wear "whipping masks."

7.7 Women wear more body jewelry and scarves.

7.8 Mostly same as 6.8

7.9 Not much cultural revival.

8.1 No specific sibling classification system- simply younger or older, half (polygamist father in common but different mothers) or full.

8.2 When a wife dies, the husband may marry her sister and when a husband dies, the wife may marry his brother.

8.3 They use Hawaiian, Crow, and Omaha kinship typology.

#### NUMBERED REFERENCES

1. Gausset, Quentin. "Constructing the Kwanja of Adamawa (Cameroon)" Lit Verlag, 2010.