

1. Description

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

- Language: Rukuba, Che (a language of Nigeria)¹
- Alternate names: Bache, Inchazi, Kuche, Sale¹
- Language Family: Niger-Congo, Subfamily Benue-Congo, Group Plateau A, Subgroup 4 – none of their immediate neighbors understand this language⁴
- Language is “Kuche”, a speaker is “Ache”, the people are “Bache”¹

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): ISO 639-3: ruk¹

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Plateau state, Bassa LGA¹

“Central Nigeria, on the High Plateau at some 30 kilometers west of the town of Jos, capital of Plateau State”⁴

“The Rukuba say that they come from Ugba, a site lying some forty miles northeast of where they presently are. They claim to have been there together with the Jere, the Amo, the Buji, and, according to some accounts, the Chara, all populations neighboring the Rukuba, with whom they still have numerous links, in spite of speaking different languages. However, the Rukuba belong to the Plateau 4 linguistic subgroup of Greenberg’s classification, the Amo, Buji, and Jere speaking different dialects of a common language called Jera by Hansford. From a close examination of the linguistic map of the High Plateau, Ballard has made the hypothesis, with much plausibility and in spite of what the Rukuba say, that the Rukuba had been pushed northward by the intruding Birom, their cognate ethnic groups being similarly displaced but in the southwestern direction” (3p64).

1.4 Brief history: “The Rukuba claim to have migrated to their present territory from Ugba, a locality about 64 kilometers northward. Their historical tradition connects them closely with neighboring peoples of different linguistic subgroups, the Jere, the Buji, the Ribina, the Amo and, some say, the Chara. This migration is difficult to date, but the eighteenth century seems the best estimate, although it might have taken place earlier. Linguistically isolated, the Rukuba nevertheless have various formal links of a ritual nature with thirteen neighboring populations that are also small by African standards. In spite of the language barrier, these peoples formally invite representatives of other groups to communal hunting, to initiation ceremonies, to certain funerals, and so on. The British, while searching for tin on the High Plateau, subdued the Rukuba in 1905. Tin extraction by soil washing began in mining camps, providing an opportunity for the local peoples to pay a newly introduced personal tax without migrating away for long periods. This explains the relative conservatism of these Plateau ethnic groups, which met the monetary needs of the British administration by getting hired in mining camps for only a few weeks a year or by growing foodstuffs for the foreign permanent residents in the same mining camps. The town of Jos also offers some opportunities to work without going far away from home.”⁴

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: “Though their recent political activities are evidence of their ability to adapt themselves to modern conditions, culturally the Rukuba have changed relatively little since the British administration of the Plateau. As late as 1950, only two of the seven Village-Group Heads spoke Hausa, and though Christianity has made slight headway—through a mission at Kakkek—Islam is said to have made no mark. The Rukuba have little to do with the mines in their area, apart from selling food to immigrant workers: they seem to depend chiefly on this trade and on the Jos and Bukuru markets for their tax-money, rather than on working in the mines themselves” (2p36). “More is known on the social structure of the Rukuba than of other members of the Jerawa Group, though its different aspects cannot be linked together with any great certainty owing to the lack of detailed evidence” (2p37).

1.6 Ecology (natural environment): “The Rukuba inhabit a rugged country and, until the mid-1950s, when some of them descended to the foothills, lived on the hilltops, where many still remain. The geography is Northern Guinea zone characterized by thickets on the hills and ‘orchard bush’ (cultivated land on which useful trees have been retained). Elevation is about 1,200 meters; annual rainfall averages 150 centimeters and falls mainly from April to September, with a peak in July-August. The average temperature in the early dry season (December-January), when the northern wind blows, is 20.5° C; it rises to 25° C in March-April, the hottest months, and goes down again in the wet season.”⁴

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: 100,000¹, Currently 12,000³

“Occupy a territory of about 440 square kilometers with a population density of nearly 27 people per square kilometer”⁴

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): “The staple crops of the Rukuba are *fonio* (*Digitaria exilis* and *D. iburua*), sorghum, and late millet, the proportion varying from village to village, according to the quality of soils. Eleusine millet and sesame are also grown in far lesser quantities.”⁴

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: No evidence found

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: No evidence found

2.4 Food storage: No evidence found

2.5 Sexual division of production: “Men and women both perform agricultural work, but the men do the heaviest part of the hoeing. Both sexes cultivate the same plants, but women specialize in groundnuts, Bambara nuts, sweet potatoes, sesame, eleusine millet, and most pulses. Men cut firewood, but women carry it home. All meals, except ritual ones, are prepared by women. Men do all husbandry and hunting. Women fish with small nets; men trap fish. Women do all basketry; men plait sleeping mats and beer filters and craft all leatherwork, such as baby carriers and sheaths for swords and knives. Mortars, pestles, wooden seats, and wooden spoons are carved by part-time specialists, of which there are only few. Blacksmithing, in spite of its high prestige, was—and still is—a part-time occupation. Soothsayers and local medicine men also practice agriculture.”⁴

2.6 Land tenure: “Land passes from father to son(s), women being excluded from land inheritance because they work on farms allotted to them by their husbands. Patrilineal people tend to remain together at the same location generation after generation; if a man has too many sons, land will be sought from remote patrilineal kin whose family is depleted. Land can also be borrowed on a short- or long-term basis—or even bought, from neighbors who have enough farms.”⁴

2.7 Ceramics: No evidence found, but as iron smelting was common before the British arrived – and blacksmithing after – it can be assumed that this artistic group of people had some ceramic creations.²

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: No evidence found

2.9 Food taboos: “According to Counsell totemic ideas and taboos are not well-marked. ‘The harmless *dako* snake is regarded throughout the tribe as a special friend and never killed; it is encouraged to live in their huts, where it performs the duties of the domestic cat... Leopard flesh may not be eaten except by a few (e.g. the people of Binango in Kakkek)... The skin is usually the perquisite of the *Utu*, who does not, however, wear one. The ant-eater must not be eaten except by old men..., and women who see one must be ceremonially cleansed... Women must not eat hens or eggs...’ (2p41).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?: No evidence found

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No evidence found

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No evidence found

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): About twenty years old⁴

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): No evidence found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): As women can marry as many men as they want, there appears to be no specific number of family members one can have.²

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): No evidence found

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): “It is stressed that primary marriage does not usually take place before a girl reaches the age of twenty. Meanwhile, after puberty, when she is given her own sleeping-hut, she entertains lovers, who may themselves be married or single” (2p40).

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: “Wife stealing is common and most wives leave their first husband” (2p40). However, there doesn’t seem to be any evidence of an actual divorce. Most wives will take a “co-husband” – or several – instead.²

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: “Probably of great importance, as it might adjust to some extent the apparent lack of balance between the two exogamous units, is the practice of *zaga* (so named from the Hausa word meaning ‘to skulk about a place’), interest in which later led Meek to discover the institution best known as secondary marriage. Meek describes a highly generalized form of this institution: a man abducts the wife of another, with her and her father’s consent; it is conventional for the

woman to reassure her first (primary) husband of her goodwill, and the man makes customary gifts to her parents, establishing the man as 'co-husband': Ames states that Rukuba marriage-payments and farm-service are commonly regarded as inconsiderable, and adds that a husband 'deserted' cannot recover payments made, stressing that 'wife-stealing is common and most wives leave their first husband.' The children of these unions are said to belong to the group of the biological father, but the means of determining the father are not indicated. According to Meek, the same system prevails among members of the Katab group; M. G. Smith, working among the Kagoro of Zaria Province, found that a wife may regard herself as simultaneously married to two or more husbands, to any one of whom she may pay formal visits for periods of six months or a year in respect of each. She continues to call all these 'husband.' She is inherited on his death by one of the husband's kin. There is, of course, no indication how far the Katab system applies among the Rukuba. Of the intricacies that have been found to exist at Kagoro there is so far scant indication among the Rukuba" (2p39-40).

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: "Counsell states that a woman may resist the advances of a secondary suitor, and adds that the payment made to a secondary wife's parents amounts to about half that made in the case of a first marriage. He confirms that the primary husband receives no compensation, provided his wife has remained with him for at least one year; but 'the first husband can always hope to persuade her to return to him, and if she does he would have to make no further payments to her parents'" (2p40).

4.9 Inheritance patterns: "Inheritance passes from father to sons and is divided equally. If there are no sons, the next agnate in line—brother or paternal cousin—will inherit the most important property: land, goats, hoes, and debts, if any."⁴

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: No evidence found

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: No evidence found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): "[M]ost villagers consider themselves ultimately to be agnates and abide by the law of exogamy."⁴

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?: "Marriage in Rukuba society is unusual in that a Rukuba woman can marry more than once, and she is considered to be married to all her husbands even though she will live with only one at a time. A man might have more than one wife living with him at any time. Any children belong to the husband the mother claims is the father" (5p591).

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows"): No evidence found

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?: No evidence found

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape: No evidence found of sexual coercion; however, there is a situation in which "a man abducts the wife of another, with her and her father's consent" (2p39). After bestowing gifts upon the woman's parents, the man is established as "co-husband".²

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin): No evidence found

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?: "For premarital relations, however, each village was endogamous; every young girl had, prior to marriage, premarital relations with young men from other patriline of the same village. No offspring could be borne of such unions; unwanted pregnancies were terminated by abortion. A girl could have premarital relations with only one man at a time, following the payment of a sort of "lover price." The relationship had to last at least six months, but it could continue for a longer period. A girl could have several of these unions in succession before she married out, around the age of 20."⁴

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring: No evidence found

4.20 If mother dies, who raises children?: No evidence found

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: No evidence found

4.22 Evidence for couvades: No evidence found

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): No evidence found

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?: No evidence found

4.24 Joking relationships?: No evidence found

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: "Although descent is patrilineal, genealogies are not remembered after three or four generations. Patrilocality is very strong,

however, and people are believed to have remained patrilineally grouped since the time of their arrival in the country.”⁴

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: “...must avoid close relations by blood...” (2p40).

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?: No evidence found

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?: No evidence found

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?):

“Marriage among the Rukuba has been examined only—and then not exhaustively—from the point of view of premarital sexual relations permitted between members of the same exogamous unit (*izni*): therefore a number of the features of the system are puzzling. There seem to be many restrictions affecting the choice of a mate among the Rukuba. Close relations among members of the eligible exogamous unit...are to be avoided, in the first place and, in the case of secondary wives, the wives of one’s fellow-villagers” (2p39).

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?: “For the purposes of marriage, the Rukuba population, as a whole, is divided into two exogamous moieties. According to the ideational model, each village may belong to either moiety, and there are approximately the same number of villages in each exogamous moiety. Each village is also exogamous, and every girl from one moiety must, by definition, marry into the other...a unique form of preferential marriage: the eldest girl of a set of uterine sisters was betrothed to the son of her mother's last lover. Subsequent sisters were also engaged to boys from their mother's natal village, the whole operation being a delayed exchange: all the daughters of a woman had to be married in their mother's natal village. This practice occurred in conjunction with another type of marriage. As soon as a girl was betrothed to her preferential mate, any man from other villages of the girl's opposite moiety could court her and she could choose one among them to become her first husband. Only 9 percent of the women had their preferential suitor as future husband. The remaining majority married first the man they had selected by free choice. The woman stayed with him for a month or two and was then escorted to the preferential suitor. The stay with him of one month was compulsory, after which the girl, now a spouse, could either remain with him or go back to the first, deserted husband. After a year, a woman could choose to remain with the husband with whom she stayed, to join the husband she previously deserted (preferential or free choice), or to select a new husband from the right moiety. All these marriages remained valid and a woman had the right to return to any of her husbands. Nowadays the woman spends the whole year with her free-choice husband and can remain with him if she likes or marry another husband. The minimal stay with a husband is a year, but a woman can stay as long as she wishes. There is no bride-wealth refund because the woman is still considered married to all her husbands, although she cohabits with only one at a time. In case of contested paternity rights, the child belongs to the husband the woman names as the father. When a woman with one child under 5 years of age moves from one husband to another, the new husband has to take care of the child, who will be sent back to his or her true father after the age of 5 to 6 years. A husband can have several wives living elsewhere, but he can also have several living with him at the same time. The proportion of men having two wives or more living together with him is only 28 percent of married men, the rest having only one. Many husbands remain wifeless while waiting for one of their wives to come back or trying to marry a new one.”⁴

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: No evidence found

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: No evidence found

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: No evidence found

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: “Most intraethnic conflicts erupted during communal hunts, over the sharing of game. They were followed by retaliatory raids, but such outbreaks were usually quieted quickly. Interethnic conflicts flared up on the same occasions; there were mechanisms to make a truce, and relations rarely remained strained for long. The Rukuba victoriously repelled attacks from the Zaria Emirate's armies until the colonial era.”⁴

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): “Formerly the Rukuba were famed as fighters, head-hunters and cannibals, and feared by their neighbours” (2p35). They face language barriers with their neighbors.⁴

4.18 Cannibalism?: “The literature rather stresses the role of head-hunting and cannibalism among the Rukuba, but there seems to have been no tendency towards the resurgence of these during the years of British administration such as has been observed in some areas of Nigeria. A man who slew and adversary in battle did

not take his victim's head: the actual head-taking was done by a companion. Captured heads were hung from a tree, around which the women of the community performed a dance; no effort was made to preserve the skulls. Only the elders partook of the actual flesh of victims, though young men were given the broth to drink" (2p44).

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: "The Rukuba are a patrilineal agriculturalist people grouped into twenty-four villages, each of them belonging to... a section. A section comprises a senior village and the dependent villages ultimately deriving from it. There are five such sections; each of them ideally comprises a senior village, which has the right to open the important Rukuba rituals, *aso* and *izaru*. The senior village performs some of the ceremonies ahead of the dependents, which follow in order of seniority. Each senior village is the arbitrator in case of intervillage disputes arising within the section when such disputes cannot be settled by the protagonists. Arbitration is asked for from the senior village. Thus, each section has arbitration mechanisms to cope with troubles concerning peoples or villages within it but there is no institutional mechanism to deal with troubles concerning people or villages of different sections. There are, however, two patrilineal integrating devices that unite the Rukuba: the marriage system and the ritual system" (3p64).

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): No evidence found

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): "Each village is divided into patrilineal clans, which have complementary duties at the village level. One clan provides the chief, and another is responsible for both the control of witchcraft and for calling big communal or intertribal hunts. Yet another clan is in charge of the well-being of all the uterine nephews and nieces of the village. Lesser offices such as rainmaker, rain appeaser, or master of the village drum can be the prerogatives of other clan chiefs or are simply vested in houses of clans that already have a more important office. Each clan chief hears intraclan civil disputes; if not successful, the case may be brought to the village chief. Interclan civil disputes are dealt with by the clan chiefs, assisted by the village chief. Criminal cases are investigated by the clan chief or, more often, the village chief."⁴ "[S]upreme judicial authority seems to be vested in the village council: in Kakkek Village-Group there was only one court, the council of the hamlet of Egwa having no judicial powers; in Ujja, limited powers were delegated to the dependent village councils, though the village-area council remained paramount. Though some member of the council, usually the *Univichi*, was charged with producing the defendant and seeing that sentence was executed (being in effect 'armed' with 'a band of young men'), it was not the council's duty to seek out crime; on the other hand, in no case was summary justice authorized. According to Counsell, 'The court had jurisdiction over all members of the community of which it was the tribunal whether the offence was committed within the community or outside it. Thus if a Kakkek man committed a crime in Ujja, he would be arrested by the Ujja authorities and the news sent to Kakkek. The Kakkek court would then pronounce judgment and sentence, and any fines or the proceeds of selling into slavery would belong to it, though some gift would be made to the Ujja court. In civil cases, the court in whose area the defendant lived would have jurisdiction. Sentences varied from a warning to selling into slavery: capital punishment was not usual, though it is recorded that a man of Kakkek who proved to be an incorrigible arsonist was himself burnt to death. The most serious crimes were murder, burglary, and adultery (sexual relations between a man and a fellow-villager's wife, according to Counsell): the punishment for these was selling into slavery. Arson was also a most serious offence, but there seem to have been a graded series of fines for the crime, exacted according to the record of the guilty party and the seriousness of the case; the ultimate punishment seems usually to have been selling into slavery and confiscation of the guilty party's property. Witchcraft, too, had a graded series of punishments, beginning with burning the guilty party's hands and feet, increased by fines, and culminating with selling into slavery. 'Lesser offences such as theft, assault, and injury to property were punished by fines.' Counsell adds: 'Intention was taken largely into account; if there was no guilty intent there was no crime.' For example, in a case of accidental homicide, 'the slayer was only taken to the fetish-hut and ceremonially cleansed'; if hunger drove a man to steal, he was merely reminded that to ask for food was to be given it. Similarly, a case of assault with intent to kill is cited which resulted in the culprit's sale as a slave. There were apparently two methods of ordeal. The commoner of these was to cut the throat of a fowl: if it fell forward dead, the accused was pronounced guilty; if it ran a few steps and fell with its feet in the air, he was innocent. Sassafras was administered only at Ishe (Bishi?), 'a small hamlet of Kisanchi' (actually a ward? of Bimban?): 'important cases from other villages were sent for trial there.' According to Counsell, a crime was primarily an offence against Katakuru, the high god, and the community which failed to bring the criminal to justice risked disaster wrought

by supernatural means. Accordingly, the individual received no compensation for a wrong done him, apart from the restoration of stolen property, though he might be rewarded, in effect, for bringing his case to court: fines and the proceeds of the sale of slaves went largely to the heads of the community, who were equally presidents of the court. Another type of case is isolated by Counsell involving loans, the apportionment of inheritance, the adjustment of marriage payments, and the like: if these could not be settled by the compound-head or the ward-head, they were arbitrated by the hamlet or village council, whose Univichi was, again, empowered to enforce the council's decision if necessary. The successful disputant usually rewarded the arbitrators" (2p44-45).

5.4 Post-marital residence: "[T]here is a separate hut for each adult female, whether married or not" (2p36).

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): "The Rukuba never acted as a coordinated unit against foreign enemies. After numerous administrative experiments carried out by the British, the Rukuba were finally united in a single district in 1936, and in the early 1950s they elected a single administrative chief, assisted by the village chiefs in council, section chiefs being the more prominent among them."⁴

5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex): No evidence found

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: "[I]t happens more often than not that a village includes one or several groups of people from the opposite moiety. Such groups are always less populous than the main group of the other moiety and they lack political rights. Conceptually, they are seen as outsiders and they have a metaphorical status of 'wives' of the dominant exogamous moiety. For marriage purposes, they are from the opposite moiety and form sui generis wife-taking units. If the people of these groups are the metaphorical 'wives' of the dominant group of the other moiety, the latter, conversely, are deemed to be the 'husbands' of the members of such minority groups. This conjugal analogy leads to elaborate joking relationships between 'wives' and 'husbands'; boisterous relations pertain between any two men of the opposite moiety within the village, but it is not a relation entered into by both moieties qua moieties; it is restricted to the village where the 'wives' act as ritual assistants to designate such people" (3p66).

5.8 Village and house organization: "Each smaller unit of the family seems to occupy a walled-off quarter of the compound; generally, the horses are stabled together at the entrance to the 'cell' occupied by the compound-head and his immediate dependents, and in the stable the more venerable of the elders of the compound sleep on beds of mud or planks. The men and women of the compound maintain separate granaries..." (2p36). "Rukuba villages are generally comprised of a core nucleus densely populated with outlying settlements, which were originally dispersed on rocky eminences around the core nucleus. This pattern slowly changed in the 1950s, when people started migrating to their farms situated in the plains and valleys at the bottom of the rocky outcrops. Village populations range between seventy residents in the smallest ones to more than a thousand in the largest. Manured gardens, often fenced with high euphorbias, are close to the houses. A belt of small fields, usually cultivated by women, surrounds the village; the small fields are less manured, and some remain fallow for several years. Bush farms constitute another field category, sometimes at a distance of several kilometers from the village. People with faraway fields spend several weeks there in the rainy season. Such fields are never manured, except nowadays by an occasional Fulani cattle camp."⁴

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): The Rukuba had round huts made of mud with "conical thatched roofs, huddled together in the clefts and hollows of the rocky escarpment."² "The typical family household consists of a walled compound of round mud huts. The entrance, which is the kitchen and/or pounding house, is used by all the women of the compound. The owner of the house has his own room; each wife has hers as well, as do the nubile daughters. Married sons establish similar compounds very close to the parental house, one married son remaining very often within the paternal enclosure. Square huts are also to be found, but corrugated iron roofs are exceptional."⁴

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?: "The sleeping-huts have massive mud platforms for beds, with fireplaces built into them" (2p36).

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: "The Rukuba constitute a federation of villages, each village being a chiefdom. Several villages form a section comprised of villages that ultimately claim to have originated from the section head village. There are five such sections. The section head village has important ritual duties; its chief reckons the dates of all important panethnic rituals. Politically speaking, this chief can arbitrate conflicts between villages of his section if the involved parties ask him to do so. Two head villages have a more prominent ritual role in organizing, in turn, the kugo initiation ritual. Interethnic relations were rather particularistic, some villages or even clans being either "brothers" or enemies of other neighboring ethnic groups."⁴

5.12 Trade: “There was a small amount of trade with neighboring peoples. Imports were not necessary, except for salt, which came from Zaria Emirate through the intermediary of adjacent ethnic groups. Markets were unknown until the British introduced them. Eastern Rukuba go directly to the Jos main market to trade but attend the local markets to drink sorghum beer.”⁴ “The Rukuba are... noted smiths, and each village has at least one specialist, though fewer men are employed in the trade today than when they still smelted their own iron on a large scale: the craft does not appear to be inherited strictly patrilineally, ‘for the smith would usually rather have the rest of his family at farm-work’; but the principles on which the smith chooses an apprentice are not indicated” (2p35).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?: “During initiation, rules of proper behavior are taught regarding marriage prohibitions and injunctions, as well as the respect of chiefs. Witchcraft is controlled through meetings attended by clan representatives. Difficult cases were submitted to a panethnic ordeal, which has now lapsed. Civil cases are still settled by clans or village chiefs, but, since 1936, they may as well be brought to the Rukuba Central Court. Petty criminal cases are tried in this court; major ones are sent to the Divisional Court in Jos.”⁴ “However, their high status does not give the chiefs too many privileges; they are expected to work on their own fields like any of their fellow villagers, but the village looks at its chief as a living mirror of the state of prosperity it enjoys. The chief is at the same time the agent and the representation of the village’s state of affairs; he is helped in this function by various tributes and gifts. Since the chief is expected to be fat, the villagers do much to help him in living according to this standard by giving him a pot of beer, several legs of goats, some chickens and food at given occasions, all to make sure that the chief is the biggest consumer of the village. Furthermore, prestations of one or two days’ labor are undertaken by the villagers on the fields belonging to the chieftaincy. The produce of these fields is stored in a granary similarly belonging to the chieftaincy, but the grain is put at the chief’s disposal only under some conditions: if the year is good, the chief can use the grain to brew beer on ritual occasion in order to entertain guests, being here a living proof of the village’s prosperity; however, should the year be bad, the villagers can take back the grain either to alleviate a famine or to replace the seeds destroyed by flooding or by drought just after planting. Should the year be particularly bad, the chief can even be deposed for mystical incompetence” (3p68).

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR: No evidence found

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): “The Rukuba have two kinds of local doctors: those curing with herbs and plants, and diviners. No special power is vested in the first type, whereas the second is credited with spiritual powers. The most sought-after diviners, however, come from neighboring tribes, and Rukuba diviners are, conversely, more known across the ethnic border. Some specialize in treating illnesses coming from the maternal side of the patient.”⁴ “Traditional curing goes side by side with other methods of treating disease. Western medicines are eagerly sought from the missionaries and a dispensary that is well attended. Hospitals in the nearby town of Jos are frequently visited, especially by Christians.”⁴ “According to Counsell, specialists in medical practice are the only full-time craftsmen apart from smiths, numbering ‘not more than 20 all told,’ who ‘must be prepared to deal with anything from tooth-extraction to witchcraft,’ including abortion. Methods of abortion include ‘medicine to drink,’ prepared from roots of a tree; massage, often violent, if medicine fails; and finally, in extreme cases, ‘actual extraction.’ In many of the cases which have come to the attention of the Administration, the girl has died. ‘Persons practising witchcraft may be spotted by those having the power to do so, and are accused before the religious heads, who would deal with them according to the measure of evil they had caused.’ In general, it is said, ‘if a doctor’s son shows promise in the profession he will be trained to succeed him; otherwise, some other member of the family is taught the mysteries of the craft’” (2p41).

6.2 Stimulants: “The most important ceremonies are connected with initiations during which numerous goats are slaughtered.”⁴

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): “Boys undergo a compulsory three-stage initiation following a complex calendar encompassing all the villages in turn. The first stage is normally *Icugo*, a ritual that initiates and terminates an entire ten to twelve years’ initiation cycle. The second state is *izaru*, the circumcision ceremony that every boy attends before he is 7. Nowadays, however, the actual circumcision is practiced soon after birth. The third state, *aso*, makes the boy ritually adult before he is 12. He is then taught the principal rules regarding marriage and adultery. No initiation pertains to girls, although they play a symbolic role in boys’ initiation ceremonies.”⁴ “*Kugu*, the initiation ceremony, seems to mark the end of childhood, while

Asau marks the threshold of adulthood... [T]he most pressing reason for separating the two appears to be economic, and those who have passed as it were undifferentiated through *Kugu* seem in effect to be stratified according to the speed with which they complete *Asau* thereafter. *Kugu* appears to be primarily the property of the Kishin branch of the tribe, whose villages form a unit with respect to *Kugu*: it is performed at 7-year intervals alternately at Kakkek and Kishi, and in intervening years, also at 7-year intervals, by other villages (unspecified). Counsell stresses that other villages performing *Kugu* recognize the primacy of the Kishin rites, and only at Kishi and Kakkek are they performed unabbreviated. (*Kugu* has never been performed at Ujja, whose *Utu* was for a period thought to be paramount among Rukuba chiefs, and youths of that village commonly attend the rites at Kakkek and Kishi.) The essential cult-object, which Ames believes to be an iron mask, but the nature of which native informants apparently deem too awful to specify, is kept at 'Kigbo in Zaria' (a ward of Kishi? Counsell suggests that ancestral Gba, in Bauchi, is meant); in the intervals between its use by Kishi and Kakkek it may be used by other villages, fetched at night from Kigbo by the Utufichi... *Asau* (*aso*) is celebrated at intervals of two or three years—always in the dry season immediately following *Kugu*. Those who pass through *Kugu* together are conceded by native informants to form a group, but the group appears to have no particular function; and it is stressed that all members of such a group do not necessarily pass through *Asau* together, as each boy submitting himself to these rites must produce an additional goat for slaughter and a considerable quantity of beer. The boys assembled for *Asau* spend a night with an adult woman; the following day, according to Ames, they are taken to a grove apart and harangued on the subject of the sanctity of the rules governing marriage, after which they are given goatskins to wear, may be outfitted with iron greaves, and are eligible to contract the *izni* relationship and marriage. Ames adds that a youth who has completed *Asau* can also 'himself perform *tsafi* for various purposes, such as for the success of his millet crop...' Further, the initiated appear to have first call on meat supplies, while the uninitiated (including women) may be forced to do without. There seems to be a fixed order in which villages perform *Asau*, but this is only partially known (Ujja-Kakkek-Ohit-?), and it appears that *Asau* is equally the property of every village and hamlet. It is probably not a function of the ward, although it is nowhere made clear that *Utu* and *Univichi*, whose absence in effect defines a community as a ward, perform any role at *Asau*' (2p43-44). "The cycle of rites which attend a boy's growth is treated at some length in the literature. Ames states that septennial circumcision rites, termed *Izaru*, are held simultaneously in all Rukuba villages, but Counsell found no trace of them: according to Counsell, circumcision was formerly a feature of *Kugu*, but is now performed at *Kugu* only token-wise on a single representative from each compound, all others being circumcised shortly after birth. Meek's report that circumcision, performed in the home compound, is preceded by a veritable baptismal ceremony, with head shaving, in a retreat apart from the village, does not entirely clarify the situation on this point" (2p42-43).

6.4 Other rituals: "The high god of the Rukuba is *Katakuru*, and Counsell states that the primary function of the *Utu* is to 'intercede with *Katakuru* on behalf of the people.' He adds, 'there are numerous ceremonies and festivals concerned with rain-making and fertility which the *Utu* and other religious heads practise on behalf of the community.' Each *Utu*, he points out, has a ritual millet farm to tend, though the associated rites are not described, and their precise significance is not suggested. An *Utu*'s first seven years in office are considered probationary: drought, pestilence or a shortage of wives during this period would prove him unacceptable to *Katakuru*; a single great disaster might be enough to bring about his deposition and exile, if he were divined to have caused it by supernatural means (witchcraft or sorcery—no distinction between these two seems to be recognized in the literature). At Kakkek, the period of probation is said to be six *Kugu* festivals, or from 36 to 42 years, so that very few Village Headmen are actually confirmed. After the initial period, it is said, the *Utu* of Ohit cannot be removed except by prayer directed to *Katakuru*, but in other villages means appear to exist by which an incorrigible *Utu* can be dealt with, though these means may be rather more formal than any to which it is suggested recourse may be had during the early period" (2p41). "The role of the *Utu* as rain-maker has been mentioned: the rites at Ujja only are described in the literature. Ames believed that the *Utu* Ujja was rain-maker for the entire Rukuba community, and Counsell seems to confirm this view, though one may infer from his report that the Ujja rain-cult is only first among essential equals. According to Ames, the rites at Ujja are annual. A white goat, a white mare and a white fowl are sacrificed at a shrine on a hill near the village; then two handfuls of earth, said to represent Vom (Vwang) of the Birom and Ujja, are mixed in a pot and placed in a cave nearby, where the longest bamboo pole available is kept. After prayers, the bamboo, to the end of which a charm is tied in a piece of cloth, is taken to another hut at the foot of the hill, planted in a hole there and fixed in with blood from the animals slaughtered. Then the *Utu* mounts a horse, which has been held in readiness, and rides

full speed to his compound, and the crowd disperses to avoid the downpour to follow. The earth of Vom is said to be female, as the river there is termed the Mother of Waters; the river at Ujja is the Father of Waters, and the soil, male: the rain is the offspring of their union. In former times, it is said, earth was actually brought from Vwang for the ceremony, but this is no longer done” (2p42).

6.5 Myths (Creation): “A Kuba myth tells us that the niece of the cultural hero Woot gave birth to a lamb at the very moment when the dynasty’s founder voluntarily exiled himself after being blamed by his people for the incest he committed secretly with his sister” (6p102).

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): “There is no art in the Western sense of the word. The Rukuba decorate their village ritual hut, their village sacred pots and drums, and, in one village only, there is a septennial private display of decorated objects for the benefit of people organizing the ritual.”⁴ “They excel in music and dancing. Their chief instruments are pipes, usually made of cornstalks, and the sort of ‘reed-harp’—as it is commonly termed, actually constructed on the principle of the zither—widely distributed in the Plateau Area” (2p36).

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: “Women have no share in the ritual... , though rites are performed on them at the time of their first pregnancy, and if they should see an ant-eater they are taken to the door of the fetish-hut and ceremonially cleansed” (2p44). “Agricultural rites are not spectacular, although each clan chief has to undertake them. The most secret rituals are those connected with the person of the chief, but most Rukuba men know them. Ritual knowledge can be shared by all men, but women are supposed to know nothing about it.”⁴

6.8 Missionary effect: No evidence found

6.9 RCR revival: “It is primarily in small societies, such as the Rukuba (Nigeria) that the symbolic structure of this political institution is most evident. Each Rukuba village constitutes an autonomous political unit. However, Muller convincingly shows that its chief (utu) has all the characteristics ‘of the sovereigns referred to in the literature as divine kings’. If his mystical power proves ineffectual in coping with any kind of catastrophe, he is deposed. Though he is not put to death, as the classical Frazerian schema would have it, Muller demonstrates that the theme of regicide haunts Rukuba ritual thought and practice. The nominating procedures for a new village chief vary, but they are always shrouded in mystery. The ideal candidate should cut a fine figure and speak with ease and authority, and also respect the customs. Moreover, he should possess a mystical power the Rukuba call the Eye; as should the Blacksmith, the clan chief and the diviner. However, the village chief differs from the other possessors of the Eye because of the remarkable characteristics conferred upon him by the installation rites. The candidate elected from the clan in power, is truly ‘bound’ to the chieftainship. He hides in the home of his mother’s brother and his head is shaved as if he were ‘in mourning for himself’, for his agnates have symbolically killed him. In the end, the uncle gives back his nephew, who is ‘resuscitated’ like a child emerging from initiation. He then prepares to bear the ‘burden of chieftainship’ by drinking beer from the skull of one of the previous chiefs. In three leading villages, the chief is symbolically put to death during his enthronement through a substitute human victim: the ritual organisers seize and smother a sickly newborn baby belonging to the chief’s clan. Then a ram is immolated. A bit of the infant’s flesh is secretly added to a few pieces of the ram which are cooked and then eaten by the chief. He is now anthropophagous, without realising it. He becomes dangerous; his mystical power can infect those who eat or drink from the same receptacle as he” (6p99).

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: “Chiefs, clan chiefs, blacksmiths, diviners, and witches reincarnate. Their souls stay in a shooting star, or somewhere else, before reentering a pregnant woman's womb. Other people's souls simply disappear; their influence may remain, temporarily, through their bones or through curses uttered when they were alive. Burial ceremonies and mourning practices are aimed at getting rid of the dead as completely and as soon as possible.”⁴

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?: No evidence found

6.12 Is there teknonymy?: “Chiefs of Ujja are reincarnated; on the death of an *Utu*, his spirit may find temporary lodging in a star of a bird; when a woman in the compound of the *Utu*, attractive to the spirit, conceives, the spirit enters her child. The elders of the chiefly family are able to divine the reincarnation, but hide their intelligence from the reigning *Utu*, lest he should become jealous and put the infant to death: the *Utu*, thus, never knows who his successor is to be. The generality of these beliefs among the Rukuba is not known” (2p41).

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.): “Ancestor worship is said to be a factor of group-life at every level: each compound, ward and village has its own ancestral shrine. Counsell minimizes the ancestral cult in general, but Ames stresses the role of the *Utu* of Ujja (Achaka) as the

high priest of the ancestral cult: he has the power to ‘commune with the ancestral spirits, which are said to dwell in his house and become visible at night only to him and members of his household.’ The ancestral spirits of every kin-group must apparently be approached through the *Utu*, who retires to the family shrine of the individual concerned when representations are to be made. Counsell, though generalizing that ‘the *Utu* invokes his ancestors for the assistance of the whole community,’ states that the head of the compound (the eldest member of the senior branch of the family) needs no intermediary at the shrine in his own compound” (2p41). “The Rukuba believe that the prosperity and the well-being of the land and people rests in the physical person of the village chief, who is a scapegoat. If prosperity fails, or if drought, locust invasions, plagues, defeats in war, or deep dissensions between the villagers occur, the chief is deposed and replaced to remedy the situation. The village chief is a variation of James G. Frazer's "divine king"; he is forced to commit a transgression, which makes him good and bad at the same time. Like any of the other divine kings, his bad part is sacrificed by proxy at regular times and one of his alter egos is also killed in the two prominent ritual villages, the beneficial effect being shared by the other villages as well. An individual's well-being also depends on his "double" residing in his mother's natal village, under the care of a clan chief. The High God is beyond reach, and ancestors play almost no role. No more than 4 to 5 percent of the Rukuba are Christians (Evangelical Church of West Africa), but they constitute the most politically active and "modernist" group. Islam has made no inroad.”⁴

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Women have “no facial markings, but body-marks are usual and consist of faint designs on chest and stomach” (2p36).

7.2 Piercings: No evidence found

7.3 Haircut: No evidence found

7.4 Scarification: No evidence found

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): “...it is suggested that the Rukuba have wrought-iron ‘fetish objects’—possibly masks—manufactured perhaps in the more or less distant past, though no European has ever viewed these” (2p35). As blacksmiths, they manufactured rough metal bracelets.²

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: No evidence found

7.7 Sex differences in adornment: “Adult males usually wear a leather loin-covering and a tanned goat-skin cape over one shoulder and under the opposite arm, with a metal fastening in front. Men may also wear spurred iron greaves, but these must be put on by a smith and are at times painful to wear, and the suggestion is that they may be passing with the decay of intertribal warfare. The plaited penis-sheath is common and is donned when puberty is reached. Younger men and boys may wear loin-cloths, but must dress in skins on ceremonial occasions. When courting, these commonly oil their bodies with shea-butter or groundnut oil, and adorn themselves with a stripe of red ochre from ear to ear across the forehead at the hairline” (2p36).

“Women and girls wear a string girdle with a small bunch of leaves before and behind” (2p36).

7.8 Missionary effect: No evidence found

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: No evidence found

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: No evidence found

8.2 Sororate, levirate: “A widow may marry her late husband’s brother (or, according to Meek, his father or uncle) without making further payments, or she may—after a year has passed—choose another husband, who would pay her parents, however, rather than her deceased husband’s kin. In the latter case, apparently, she may choose not to join her new husband in his household, but maintain her own, presumably on the lands falling to her sons, where her husband may visit her” (2p40).

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): “The Rukuba use Hawaiian cousin terminology with bifurcate-merging terms for maternal uncles.”⁴

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

- “The restrictions on a man’s choice of a paramour appear to be in the main complementary to those affecting his choice of wife: generally, he will sleep with a girl of his own village, though he must avoid close relations by

blood (here again, as ibigyen seems to comprehend both fellow-villagers and relations of all sorts and degrees, the confines of eligibility in native terms are somewhat obscure). For his 'rights' a lover pays the girl's parents 'anything from a goat or a hoe to two goats and a hoe,' depending apparently to some extent on the duration of the relationship, for the lover can expect a partial refund if the girl turns him away for another lover or for a husband: a girl may not have more than one lover at a time, but she 'may have several...before she marries, and her parents reap great profits therefrom. This relationship has one considerable complication from the point of view of the Rukuba community: the position of a child conceived by an unmarried girl seems to be regarded as quite impossible, for what reason it is not stated, and abortion is attempted; if it is unsuccessful the child is killed at birth" (2p40).

- "According to E. H. M. Counsell...the Rukuba are a vigorous people of fine physique and impressive as regards 'the numbers of active old men'—these, he adds, 'and others...take an active interest in their own affairs, have a clear and intelligent idea of what they want, and no fear of speaking out'" (2p35).

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