

Soli/Tonga Tribe



<<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/zm.htm>>

1. Description

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

- Name: Soli
- Alternate Names: Chirsoli (1)
- Language: Tonga
- Language Family: Bantu

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

- ISO 639-3: sby

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

- Latitude/longitude: -15.40/28.30
- Central Province, east of Lusaka in Zambia (1)

1.4 Brief history:

- “Like all the peoples of Zambia, the Tonga came under British rule at the end of the nineteenth century. Zambia gained independence in 1979 under the leadership of Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. He ruled until 1991, when he lost the presidential election to Frederick Chiluba, a trade-union activist” (2).

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

- “Most parents send their children to a nearby primary school. At school they learn a few basic subjects such as English, biology, and arithmetic. After eight years of primary school, some students are selected to attend high school, which is modeled on the British system of education. Subjects may include mathematics, chemistry, physics, and biology. The few lucky students who do extremely well in government examinations are selected to attend the university or different types of colleges” (2).
- In 1976, the government of Zambia made education free resulting in an increase in literacy. Some parents, especially in the cities, value education highly and have great hopes for their children. In rural areas, however, children's labor is viewed as more important to daily living. (2)
- Many Tonga have been converted to Christianity because of missionary work by Europeans... In modern times, many Tonga practice both Christianity and traditional religious beliefs. (2)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

- The tribe is located along the Kafue River and Zambezi River. Most of the area has poor soil and irregular rainfall, which makes farming difficult. (2)

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

- Population of Soli: 54,400 (1986) (1)
- Population of Tonga: 1.3 million (2)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

- Maize, millet, and sorghum (2)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- *inshima* (thick porridge), eaten with either meat and gravy or vegetables such as beans and pumpkin leaves (2)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

- Spears and fishing equipment (5)

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

- Men tend to farming and cattle (2)
- Work with wood and metals is assigned to men (5)
- Mainly women cook the food (2)
- The making of pots, baskets, and mats are assigned to women (5)

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics:

- “Pottery, carvings, baskets, and mats are crafted by older men and women for use in their daily lives. Pots are made in various sizes for drawing water, cooking, brewing beer, and storing grain and other food” (2).

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

- When a boy who has reached adolescence decides to marry, he can find his own bride.(2)

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- When males reach adolescence they can take a wife (2)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

- There is a feeling nowadays that modern city life has made families less stable and that the divorce rate is much higher than it used to be. (2)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

- Polygamy (having more than one spouse) was traditionally encouraged, but this practice is dying out. (2)

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

- Males must pay bride-wealth usually in the form of cattle to the bride-to-be's family (2)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- Tonga are matrilineal people (5)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- Bearing as many children as possible is important in a Tonga marriage. Children are valued for their labor and as "social security" for parents in old age. (2)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

- No evidence found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- See 4.29

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

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

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

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

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

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

- In the cities many women have tried to maintain independence and resist men's control. (2)
- Many stay single (2)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

- Culture allows polygamy but no evidence as to gifts for extramarital partners/offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

- If a woman dies her family is under no obligation to replace her with a kinswomen...her children are allowed to decide whether or not they will stay with their father (5)
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females
 - Many African societies are highly polygynous, so that the ratio of married women to men approaches to 1.5 to 1 or ever higher
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades
 - No evidence found
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)
- 4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?
- 4.24 Joking relationships?
 - Clans are linked together in a joking-relationship which has broad implications; here the joking plays upon the characteristics of the totem species (natural species the clan is associated with) and their alleged hostility or fellowship (4)
- 4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations
 - Each person should know his father's clan, which has special rights and obligations in respect of him as well as his personal clan; this multiplies the number of definable roles he may fill in the local society (4)
 - Children of European fathers belong to their mothers' clans as does any Tonga child (4)
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?
 - When the bride is taken to her husband for fourth payment is made...Such payments establish the legality of the marriage (5)
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
 - See 6.3
 - Any newcomer may be invited to name a newborn child. A midwife has the option of naming a baby she delivers. Friends give their names to one another's children (4)
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)
 - Relations with Ndebele and Europeans difficult and thus intermarriages was rare (4)
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?
 - Men get to decide who they want to marry and must inform his parents and uncles (2)
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):
 - Mostly friendly with aliens and foreigners (4)
- 4.18 Cannibalism?
 - No evidence

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- There may be a central core to the village, consisting of from perhaps ten to a dozen dwelling-huts, but most people tend to build in little clusters of three or four huts, each separated from the next cluster by 50 yards or more (5)
 - Most villages are large with an average of twenty taxpayers, and a total population in the vicinity of a hundred individuals – men, women, and children (5)
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- Tonga moving from one neighborhood to another was common and there has also been an influx of foreigners from other parts of Central Africa (4)
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):
- Tonga have had little respect for authority, and a good deal of respect for the man able to manage his own affairs without interference (4)
- 5.4 Post-marital residence:
- Woman goes to live in husband's residence after marriage (2)
- 5.5 Territoriality? (Defined boundaries, active defense):
- No centralized society (4)
 - In parts of the country each village is separated from its neighbors by tracts of bush or field. Elsewhere the villages follow in a continuous stream across the country-side, often with huts of one village intermingled with those of the next (5)
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions? (age and sex):
- See 5.7
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- Girls and boys who have not reached adolescence are encouraged to play together. People talk freely in the presence of children about matters such as menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth. Most parents feel that sexual play between children of the same age is not a matter for concern. (2)
 - Those who bear the same name, especially if one is named for the other, are thought to have a special relationship and may assume one another's kinship usages (4)
- 5.8 Village and house organization:
- In rural areas, people live in isolated homesteads or villages consisting of a few huts. (2)
 - Elite Tonga in cities have modern homes and, occasionally, cars (2)
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):
- Traditionally each village had its boys house to which boys moved when they were ten or twelve. They moved out again only when they married or when they were adult...It is not associated with any age grade ceremony or with initiation into a new age status (5)
 - In some villages each boy when he nears his late teens will build his own house; siblings or relatives will build and share a house, and it is common that all the boys in a cluster will share a hut (5)
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?
- Sleep on mats on the ground in their huts (5)
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:
- The extended family, much like a clan, shares many tasks, including farming and the provision of food. In times of trouble, such as famine and drought, the extended family serves as a safety net. (2)
- 5.12 Trade:

- The specialized productivity of each group is then distributed throughout the area as a whole by means of exchange procedures, the most common of which are regular market places to which the different groups bring their specialized products (4)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- During their teenage years, boys and girls are encouraged to do their separate chores according to their sex. Girls' chores are to draw water from wells and fetch firewood, while boys hunt small game and fish. (2)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

6.2 Stimulants:

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

- A girl is trained for her future role as a man's wife. Usually, there is a period of living away from the village, and a short ceremony marking the girl's maturity. She is given a new name to signify her adult status. (2)

6.4 Other rituals:

- Mourning ceremony: two groups assemble in the hut of the dead, two pots of beer are brought in, one for each group. All other people are sent out. The two groups exchange pots and while they drink they rise alternately to bemoan their loss. Then, immediately, they begin quarrelling over the property left by the dead (5)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

- Before the arrival of the British there was a powerful chief in the town of Monze. According to oral tradition, the first Monze chief descended from heaven. He called the Tonga people to join him and settle in his chiefdom. Most people liked the chief because he had the power to heal, to cause rain, and to keep the peace. He did that by frustrating enemies through his communication with the spirits of the ancestors. (2)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- Drumming, singing, and dancing at beer parties, funerals, and naming ceremonies are frequent activities among the Tonga. At beer parties, men and women dance together. (2)
- Music, dance, and literature are part of Tonga daily life. Grandparents tell stories around the evening fire passing on knowledge and principles to the children. (2)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

- See 7.8

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- It is believed that at death each person leaves a shade or spirit, a muzimu. The muzimu commutes between the spirit world and the world of humans. (2)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

- No evidence

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

- No evidence

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

- See 1.5

- Witchcraft and sorcery are also part of traditional beliefs. (2)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

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

- See 7.6

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

- Girls participating in religious dances usually dress in bamboo skirts, beaded veils, ankle shakers, and beaded necklaces (3)

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

- Clothing is used to differentiate the sexes. As soon as children begin to run about, girls are given a dress or a skirt, while boys are given a shirt and a pair of shorts. Children are taught that boys and girls wear different types of clothes; thus, dress marks the beginning of sex identification. Some women in the cities do wear pants and shirts, but most women still prefer traditional women's clothing. (2)
- Women are also expected to dress modestly, especially keeping their knees and thighs covered. (2)

7.8 Missionary effect:

- Europeans have converted many Tonga to Christianity because of missionary work. Missionaries demanded that the Tonga and other people give up traditional beliefs and practices such as polygamy, ancestor worship, and witchcraft. At first, there were only a few converts. In modern times, many Tonga practice both Christianity and traditional religious beliefs. (2)

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

- A man calls all members of his matrilineal group who are of his generation 'brother' or 'sister'; all who are one generation younger than himself 'sister's child' (5)

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

- The men of the group (matrilineal group) have a joint right to inherit each other's widows (5)

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

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

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