

## **i1. Description**

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

- *Yaka, Yaka, Bantu*

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

- *ISO 639-3: yaf*

### **1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):**

- *Southwestern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Western border of Angola, -4.90, 17.15*

### **1.4 Brief history:**

- *Although no written documentation exists of the Yaka's early history, oral accounts suggest that the Yaka people originated in the Lunda Plateau region of Angola. They settled in parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when they, and neighboring tribes, invaded parts of the former Kingdom of the Kongo. After the invasion, it is believed that the Yaka became subservient to the Ingabala Kingdom, which was formed in 1620 by the Lunda people. After the Ingabala Kingdom fell apart in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Yaka regained some of their sovereignty. With the establishing of states by European nations, the Yaka were absorbed into the various nations that make up the Kwaango region, notably, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (then the Congo Free State) and Angola. (1,2,3)*

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

- *"In seeking by one means or another to withdraw or protect themselves from gerontocratic control, the younger generations may at times provocatively reject traditional healing cults and other customary practices and proclaim their allegiance to Christianity" (4 pg 19). "Thus the Luunda have been politically dominant for the past three centuries. According to Van Roy's information (1988), obtained at the court of the former and present Kyaambvu, the Luunda conquerors were able to form a stable political center headed by the Kyaambvu in Middle Kwaango, and to subjugate the Yaka groups of the surrounding area as well as the even more autochthonous enclaves" (4 pg 12)*

### **1.6 Ecology (natural environment):**

- *The environment of the Yaka is a mixture of wooded plateau and savannah. Climate is usually cool and dry. There are two seasons in the region; a wet season lasting from November to March, and a dry season lasting from April to October. The mean precipitation for the region is 49 inches per year. (1,2)*

### **1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:**

- *The actual number of Yaka can only be estimated, due to the lack of census data. Anthropologists estimate that 300,000 Yaka reside in the capitol of the Democratic Republic of the Congos' capitol of Kinshasa, while another 500,000 reside in Yakas' historical homeland of the Kwaango region. The average Yaka village located in their homeland, a long plateau that parallels Kwaango and Waamba rivers, usually consists of around 50 to 200 inhabitants. Throughout the region, the population density rarely exceeds 6 persons per square kilometer. (4, pg 11)*

## **2. Economy**

### **2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):**

- *Cassava (2,3,4 pg 11)*
- *Maize (2,3,4 pg 11)*
- *Sweet Potatoes (2,3,4 pg 11)*
- *Beans (2,3,4 pg 11)*
- *Peanuts (2,3,4 pg 11)*
- *Wild Fruits (2,3,4 pg 11)*
- *Wild Berries (2,3,4 pg 11)*

### **2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:**

- *Wild game, fish (2,3)*

### **2.3 Weapons:**

- *Bow and arrow, antiquated guns, hunting dogs (2)*

### **2.4 Food storage:**

- *I was unable to find information on how the Yaka stored their food. However, the text suggests that the Yaka did conserve their food in some way.*
- *"The space reserved for food preparation, meals, and the conservation of prepared foods" (4 pg 98)*

## 2.5 Sexual division of production:

- *Men traditionally hunt wild game, catch fish, and clear forests for agriculture. Women usually were responsible for rearing the children and cultivating agriculture. (2, 4 pg 11)*

## 2.6 Land tenure:

- *None addressed*

## 2.7 Ceramics:

- *The text does not formally say anything about ceramics; however, it could be easily assumed that the Yaka had ceramic pots and pans for cooking. (4)*

## 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

- *“The cults reach beyond lineage barriers and cross partitionings of kin and gender. Some of them include alien spirits from neighboring cultures, as they seek to come to terms with migrant labor or long distance trade.” (4 pg 148)*

## 2.9 Food taboos:

- *“In any case, the Yaka do not pet their dogs, nor do they exalt canine habits. Hence, a suitor may be rejected on the grounds of the accusation that he or she consumes dog meat” (4 pg 136)*
- *“The space reserved for food preparation, meals, and the conservation of prepared foods is strictly separated from that area reserved for sleep” (4 pg 98)*

## 2.10 Canoes/watercraft:

- *None addressed*

## 3. Anthropometry

### 3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

- *Not addressed*

### 3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

- *Not addressed*

## 4. Life History, mating, marriage

### 4.1 Age at menarche (f):

- *“A young woman may in fact marry soon after menarche, at about the age of sixteen years” (4 pg 102)*

### 4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

- *Not addressed*

### 4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

- *I was unable to find any numbers, data, or almost any other clue as to how large Yaka families got or get. The text says that males reach marriageable age at around age 23 (4 pg 102), and usually wait around 2 years after the first child is born to have another. (4 pg 110). Based on the quote below, which suggests that males stop having children around the age of 45, it could be assumed that males would rarely have more than 7 kids. I say this, because the baby is in the womb for 9 months, the couple take a 2 year break from kids, which would make the soonest a couple would have another kid 2.75 months (call it 3 years for simplicities sake), and the average time a couple is sexually active is around 20 years; simply put, 3 years per kid for 21 years is 7 kids.*
- *“Usually...father retires from begetting children, at about age 40-45” (4 pg 115)*

### 4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

- *“A new pregnancy is not preferred as long as the last-born is not yet walking and has not been weaned.” (4 pg 110)*

### 4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

- *“A young woman may in fact marry soon after menarche, at about the age of sixteen years, while a man gets married not earlier than the age of twenty-three.” (4 pg 102)*

### 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

- *I was unable to find any actual numbers that would give a clue as to the divorce rates among the Yaka. However, I was able to ascertain that marriage among the Yaka does not seem to be permanent until a wife gives birth to a child. However, once a child has been born, the marriage becomes much more difficult, and socially embarrassing, to break, as the quote below suggests.*

- *“A mother with children is not entitled to divorce on the ground that her husband is lazy, does not produce any food from the hunt, favors a co-wife, or stays in Kinshasa and eaves his wife empty-handed”*(4 pg 110)

#### 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

- *Although the exact percent of polygynous marriages is unknown, the Yaka did indeed engage in polygamy.*
- *“Male is able to augment his social status by responsibly exercising the roles of husband to several wives and father of married children”* (4 pg 1421)

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

- *“The payment of the brideswealth is an all-important procedure which makes the alliance official and acts as a major wedding ceremony.”* (4 pg 104)

#### 4.9 Inheritance patterns:

- *“The task of introducing the young wife into her nurturing role falls to her mother. For this, the mother will have taken care to put together some stocks of dried meat manioc flour, and peanut and corn seed so that the bride can be ‘sent away with a full basket’. Further, her mother or uncle will provide her with other goods: several pagnes, household utensils, agricultural tools, and a pregnant goat. These goods remain the property of the woman or her uterine kin if the marriage is untimely ended through death or divorce.”* (4 pg 107)

#### 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

- *For males, it would appear that their circumcision ritual/ initiation at the age of 12 marks the end of the child’s dependence on his parents. It is at this stage of their lives that the boys seem to have to start to grow up. For females, I was unable to find any clear information that would suggest that they undergo a similar ritual. The text only states that females are separated from their parents when they are wed, and then after they have their first child, spend approximately three days alone with the newborn. The three-day seclusion may be the symbolical equal to the circumcision ritual the males undergo.*
- *“Circumcision identifies the boys with their fathers-like them, the boys now have virile penises. At the same time however, the hardships oppose boys and fathers since the suffering is somehow mandated by the fathers who pay the circumciser.”* (4 pg 114)
- *“Initiation severs the strong ties of dependence boys have with their mothers and sisters and turns them into adult-males-to-be”* (4 pg 114)

#### 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

- *Not addressed*

#### 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

- *“There is a rule of exogamy, that prohibits marriage with a partner of the same patrikin, elders responsible for deciding whether a marriage is suitable for both the boy and the girl, or with an agnatic descendent of one’s matrilineal grandmother and great-great grandmother; spouses who might be assimilated to the mother, such as a co-spouse to the mother or the widow of an elder brother, are also strictly prohibited”* (4 pg. 102)

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

- *“Conjugal sexuality is aimed at achieving reproduction”* (4 pg 110)
- *“Sterility on the part of the husband is overcome by inviting a younger brother to spend several nights with his wife. The husband will nevertheless be considered as the ‘father by blood’ of the children begotten by the brother”* (4 pf 110)

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

- *“The transmission of life constitutes the principle reason for a matrimonial alliance and it is through childbearing and – rearing that a married woman succeeds her mother.”* (4 pg 173)

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

- *Not addressed*

#### 4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape:

- *Not addressed*

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

- *No preference found, however, there are several restrictions.*
- *“marriage... with an agnatic descendent of one’s matrilineal grandmother and great-great grandmother; spouses who might be assimilated to the mother, such as a co-spouse to the mother or the widow of an elder brother, are also strictly prohibited”*(4 pg 102)

#### 4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms:

- *Based off of the idea of family unity, and submission to husbands, it would not appear so.*
- *“When she comes out from the parental shell, the father of the bride then instructs her in her rights that her status as wife confers to her; specifically, her right to the game her husband brings home from the hunt, as an incentive to sharing meals and the conjugal bed. He then advises her to apply herself to household work and display an attitude of submission toward her husband and mother-in-law. He spits on her front and authorizes her ‘to leave from between his legs’” (4 pg 107).*

**4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring:**

- *“Anything that might violate family unity is also seen as an intrusion: abusive commensality, grave insults or curses, and especially extramarital or premarital sex, or even attitudes, gestures, jokes, and touch by a stranger which might be interpreted as an invitation to intercourse.” (4 pg 96)*
- *“Nevertheless, if the girl is already pregnant when the bridewealth is to be paid, her uncle will demand a khoombwatsiku, ‘a goat for the interdiction’. As we shall see, this goat and other valuables are intended to compensate for the ill that offending the rule against premarital pregnancy may have caused the girl or her close family.” (4 pg 103)*

**4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children:**

- *I could not find a direct answer to this question, however, it appears that adoption by either another of the husbands’ wives’ or a brother of sister of either the husband or wife would have been the likely result.*

**4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females:**

- *Not addressed*

**4.22 Evidence for couvades:**

- *“Symbolic (re)production and the concomitant recycling of forces constitute crux of senior men’s almost daily endeavor. For example, on opening a council of elders, a pair of senior men solemnly proclaim, dancing all the while to the rhythm of their clapping hands: ‘Thuna ha muyidika maambu’, ‘We are here to generate things’.” (4 pg 4)*

**4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older):**

- *None addressed*

**4.24 Kin avoidance and respect:**

- *None addressed*

**4.24 Joking relationships:**

- *“The symmetric joking relations characterizing the rapport between grandparents and grandchildren are by contrast largely exempt from standards of shame and reveal the lively expression on intimate familiarity” (4 pg 98)*

**4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations:**

- *“The oldest son often receives his fathers first name, whereas the oldest daughter is named after her father’s or mother’s father. This birth name integrates the child into the genealogy. It is not exceptional that an infant receives two names at birth. The birth name may otherwise refer to events or persons marking either the birth or the period during which the group awaited the newborn.” (4 pg 111)*

**4.26 Incest avoidance rules:**

- *“An incestuous person-literally, ‘the genitor who chokes down the foam of his own fermentation’-is believed to expose himself to leprosy. In my interpretation, the association with leprosy shows how much incest is regarded as negating the very role of the skin, that is, the minimal limit between consanguines” (4 pg 136)*

**4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony:**

- *The Yaka do exhibit a formal marriage ceremony. Although much of the marriage rites occur prior to the formal ceremony, the Yaka still place a great deal of importance on the formal/public ceremony.*
- *“All the elders gather during the morning and the goods to be handed over are placed in the center of the congregation. The bridesgroom is seated apart from the assembly, however. He is careful to avoid any behavior or dress which might be considered ostentatious. In contrast, the place of honor which the bride occupies in the assembly suggests that it is through the woman that new bonds are woven through family groups. The bride is dressed in the beautiful attire that she received shortly before from the groom as part of the brideswealth.” (4 pg 104)*

**4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name:**

- *“The oldest son often receives his fathers first name, whereas the oldest daughter is named after her father’s or mother’s father. This birth name integrates the child into the genealogy. It is not exceptional that an infant receives two names at birth. The birth name may otherwise refer to events or persons marking either the birth or the period during which the group awaited the newborn.” (4 pg 111)*

- *“When the child receives its name, the parents may be addressed to by their tecnonym, as ‘father/mother of’ and the child moreover by its patronym, as ‘child of’.” (4 pg 112)*

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

- *“Normally, alliances are struck within the confines of the same ‘yikoolu’, a region specified by the ability to make contact in less than one days march’.... ‘The elders in both the boy’s and the girl’s patrikin take into account social origin of the spouse’” (4 pg 101-102)*

#### 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin):

- *“Approval of the choice of a spouse falls to those who are responsible for the patrikin. The elders in both the boy’s and the girl’s patrikin take into account social origin of the spouse as well as his or her individual qualities” (4 pg 102)*

#### 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

- *The elders would decide who they felt would best suit the suitor; it can be assumed that if there was a conflict of interest, the elders would sort it out*
- *“Approval of the choice of a spouse falls to those who are responsible for the patrikin. The elders in both the boy’s and the girl’s patrikin take into account social origin of the spouse as well as his or her individual qualities” (4 pg 102)*

### Warfare/homicide

#### 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

- *Not addressed*

#### 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

- *Not addressed*

#### 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

- *None addressed*

#### 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

- *The Yaka have been under the political control of the Luunda for the past three centuries. The Yaka and the Luunda disagree on many levels, as the excerpt below will show.*
- *“The relationships of opposition between lineage head and the centralizing Luunda power, or between the autochthonous and matrilineal landowning groups over against the Luunda(nized) ruler, are part of a much broader constellation of assumptions with regard to the origins of physical life versus social identity, blood ties via the mothers versus lineage relations based in agnatic descent of social identity. These presuppositions underpin the relationship of land versus territory or rule” (4 pg 13)*

#### 4.18 Cannibalism:

- *“As supreme predator, he then consumes the raw meat of one of the greater antelope species caught in the hunt, normally an adult female. It is also prescribed that he snatch morsels of the meat from the hands of his companion. The animal, it is said, stands in fact for the flesh of a human victim that should have been sacrificed in order to bestow the new chief with the ‘reign of the night’, that is, the power of and over both the maternal life source and sorcery. The metaphoric cannibalism is a substitute for royal incest, which is another form of extreme violation of the minimal boundaries that exist between consanguines.” (4 pg 88)*
- *“Popular imagination, through the use of the imagery of cannibalism and extreme sexual deviancy, constructs boundaries that allow one to vividly imagine and, in particular, to temper any such wild desire that could pose a threat to society and, in particular, to the household from within.” (4 pg 129)*

### 5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

#### 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

- *The average Yaka village averages between 50 and 200 inhabitants, in separate hamlets (4, pg 11)*

#### 5.2 Mobility pattern (seasonality):

- *Yaka villages and communities are permanently resided in. The regional climate does not necessitate seasonal migration. Sustenance can be obtained year-round in one location through agriculture, hunting, and gathering. (4 pg 19,)*

#### 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

- *Several villages together constitute small, traditionally recognized, territories headed by a local Yaka chief. Above him is a sub-regional vassal, and/or one of among a dozen Luunda paramount chiefs or dynasts in principalities extending over an area with a radius of some 50 kilometers. The most important of them is the sovereign Kyaambvu of Kasongo Luunda, who stands as the leader of the chiefs. The Yaka themselves have been subjugated under the Luunda for over three centuries. (4, pg 12-13)*

#### 5.4 Post marital residence:

- *“The bride’s introduction into the husbands village and conjugal home is gradual. Given the rule of virilocal residence, only the in-married woman are able to introduce the bride into the introverted residential group.” (4 pg 107)*
- *“The bridesgroom introduces the young bride to her new home for the nuptial event and the creation of a new hearth” (4 pg 107)*

#### 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

- *“Spatial framing and residence are the primary idiom for delineating outer bounds and inner segmentation.” (4 pg 116)*

#### 5.6 Social interaction divisions (age and sex):

- *“Circumcision identifies the boys with their fathers-like them, the boys now have virile penises. At the same time however, the hardships oppose boys and fathers since the suffering is somehow mandated by the fathers who pay the circumciser.” (4 pg 114)*
- *“Initiation severs the strong ties of dependence boys have with their mothers and sisters and turns them into adult-males-to-be” (4 pg 114)*

#### 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

- *“The symmetric joking relations characterizing the rapport between grandparents and grandchildren are by contrast largely exempt from standards of shame and reveal the lively expression on intimate familiarity” (4 pg 98)*

#### 5.8 Village and house organization:

- *The “house” is the basic social unit of kinship organization and patri-virilocal residence.”*
- *“The space reserved for food preparation, meals, and the conservation of prepared foods is strictly separated from that area reserved for sleep” (4 pg 98)*
- *“The familial space is organized around the kindled hearth in or in front of the home. Most houses are rectangular and quite small, 3 meters wide and 5 long, with one or two rooms, walls, and roof made of sticks and are usually covered with palm leaves and grass.” (4 pg 94)*

#### 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):

- *Healing house devoted to healers, circumcision houses devoted to the three to one week fasting period following circumcision common to the Yaka.*

#### 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere:

- *The text never specifically says how the Yaka sleep or what they sleep on. It is likely that they have some type of bed, as the text does say that Yaka dwellings contain defined sleeping quarters. “The space reserved for food preparation, meals, and the conservation of prepared foods is strictly separated from that area reserved for sleep” (4 pg 98)*

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

- *“Agnatic descent (yitaata) forms residential kin groups. Yaka society is organized in segmentary patrilineages within loosely structured patrilines. Each person is socially identified in relation to a line of agnatic ascendants from whom he received his position in a kin group, his rights, privileges, and ancestral names, in short, his social belonging or identity.” (4 pg 115)*

#### 5.12 Trade:

- *The Yaka traded both with foreigners and with their neighbors.*
- *“Colonialism as a threat to the survival of some groups....on the other side, people recall the forced military recruitments for collective work, as well as the trade, the taxes, the benefits of school and medical-preventative and curative-care” (4 pg 15)*
- *“The cults reach beyond lineage barriers and cross partitionings of kin and gender. Some of them include alien spirits from neighboring cultures, as they seek to come to terms with migrant labor or long distance trade.” (4 pg 148)*

#### 5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

- *“Seniority grows with multiplication of the self in descendents and initiates. Life transmission, productive work, and various initiations in communal sodalities and affliction cults increases one’s seniority and weave the individual in a multilayered fabric of relations” (4 pg 142)*
- *“Male is able to augment his social status by responsibly exercising the roles of husband to several wives and father of married children, family head, judge, healer in a cult, or ritual specialist. These roles allow the man to extend his matrimonial goods, word, and ritual commissions over an ever-larger territorial space.” (4 pg 142)*

### 6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

#### 6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

- *None addressed*

### 6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

- *“Healers, called ngaanga, are former patients whose initiation in the appropriate cult led to their recovery from the incapacitating illness they now address in their client.” (4 pg 150)*

### 6.2 Stimulants:

- *“Cigarettes and tobacco are the gifts par excellence for tacitly soliciting, maintaining, and symbolically representing ludic sexuality outside marriage. As its odor is highly appreciated, tobacco tends to function in a way analogous to the use of perfume in many other societies.” (4 pg 135)*

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

- *Birth: “Mother and infant end their ‘three day’ seclusion following delivery and leave the conjugal home. The child is for the first time exposed to the light of day. At the request of the mother and in the presence of coresidents, the father, in a gesture of spitting, “vomits the name” and covering it with a rag ‘dresses the child’, thereby starting to shape its social skin.”*
- *Puberty: “When coming of age as a new generation, boys undergo circumcision, just before early adolescence...combined with the initiation rite into the yikubu male fecundity cult”*
- *Puberty: “Initiation severs the strong ties of dependence boys have with their mothers and sisters and turns them into adult-males-to-be” (4 pg 114)*

### 6.4 Other rituals:

- *“All the elders gather during the morning and the goods to be handed over are placed in the center of the congregation. The bridesgroom is seated apart from the assembly, however. He is careful to avoid any behavior or dress which might be considered ostentatious. In contrast, the place of honor which the bride occupies in the assembly suggests that it is through the woman that new bonds are woven through family groups. The bride is dressed in the beautiful attire that she received shortly before from the groom as part of the brideswealth.” (4 pg 104)*

### 6.5 Myths (Creation):

- *None addressed*

### 6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

- *“When children reach the age of 3, games begin to have a mirror function. Children like very much to switch roles in the course of their play or games: a child will then imitate his playmates gestures or exhibit his own for the onlookers. IN this way the child learns to fashion his gestures for his own and the others pleasure,” (4 pg 113)*

### 6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

- *None addressed*

### 6.8 Missionary effect:

- *“The activities of colonial government, schools, and the medical and Christian institutions have not produced lasting or deep changes in Yaka kinship patterns, political institutions, and healing cults beyond the administrative, educational, or commercial centers in Kwaango.” (4 pg 15)*

### 6.9 RCR revival:

- *Not addressed*

### 6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

- *“A married man is expected, at different stages of his life, to compensate the uterine forebears of his children inasmuch as they represent the life source of his wife and children. This occurs at the time of puberty, marriage, pregnancy, major changes in social position, ritual initiation, and death. Inasmuch as matrimonial alliance founds a basic web of exchange, it serves as a paradigm for other forms of exchange as well. Mortuary compensation have the function of bringing the life of the individual, including both personal as well as hereditary characteristics and even his faults, back to their uterine point of origin. Mortuary rituals transform the particular individual into a structural position within the agnatic ancestral order, and they recycle his idiosyncratic and innate characteristics back to their origin in the uterine life source. It is via the uterine line as well that any consequences of any of an individuals misdeeds may befall a particular descendent.” (4 pg 122)*

### 6.11 Taboo of naming dead people:

- *Not addressed*

### 6.12 Is there teknonymy:

- *“When the child receives its name, the parents may be addressed to by there tecnonym, as ‘father/mother of’ and the child moreover by its patronym, as ‘child of.’” (4 pg 112)*

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

- *“The creator who inhabits the sky (ndzamyaphuungu) is responsible for life, death, and all unanswerable questions. There are no religious practices that actively pay homage to this god. Instead, religious celebrations focus on honoring the elders and ancestors (bambuta)” (2)*

## **7. Adornment**

### **7.1 Body paint:**

- *The Yaka do not appear to use body paint. (4,5)*

### **7.2 Piercings:**

- *Neither the males nor the females appear to have piercings (4,5)*

### **7.3 Haircut:**

- *Short cropped for males and females (5)*

### **7.4 Scarification:**

- *“When coming of age as a new generation, boys undergo circumcision, -tapa, literally ‘to cut’, just before or in early adolescence” (4 pg 113)*

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

- *“The Yaka also carve numerous masks and headgear for use in initiation and to be worn by traditional leaders. Hair combs and fly whisks often are carved with decorations as well.” (2)*

### **7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:**

- *“All the elders gather during the morning and the goods to be handed over are placed in the center of the congregation. The bridesroom is seated apart from the assembly, however. He is careful to avoid any behavior or dress which might be considered ostentatious. In contrast, the place of honor which the bride occupies in the assembly suggests that it is through the woman that new bonds are woven through family groups. The bride is dressed in the beautiful attire that she received shortly before from the groom as part of the brideswealth.” (4 pg 104)*
- *“When death or a fatal injury in the hunt of one of the members leaves the domestic group open to disintegration, the survivors will wear the yibati” (4 pg 96)*

### **7.7 Sex differences in adornment:**

- *Masks are to be worn solely by males*
- *“One month later, the newly circumcised, wearing masks, are paraded around the territory.” (4 pg 114)*

### **7.8 Missionary effect:**

- *“The activities of colonial government, schools, and the medical and Christian institutions have not produced lasting or deep changes in Yaka kinship patterns, political institutions, and healing cults beyond the administrative, educational, or commercial centers in Kwaango.” (4 pg 15)*

### **7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:**

- *Not addressed*

## **8. Kinship systems**

### **8.1 Sibling classification system:**

- *“The oldest son often receives his fathers first name, whereas the oldest daughter is named after her father’s or mother’s father. This birth name integrates the child into the genealogy” (4 pg 111)*

### **8.2 Sororate, levirate:**

- *Although the husband is not technically dead, being sterile would cause the man to be viewed as near dead in Yaka society, as the ability to produce children was one of the most important parts of being a man. In a sense, very similar to a levirate marriage.*
- *“Sterility on the part of the husband is overcome by inviting a younger brother to spend several nights with his wife. The husband will nevertheless be considered as the ‘father by blood’ of the children begotten by the brother” (4 pg 110)*

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

- *Not addressed*

## **9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):**

- "If the newborn should die before the naming ritual, the death will be of no social significance and there will be neither mourning nor public burial" (4 pg 112)

### **Numbered references**

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