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CHAPTER 5 MBUTI HUNTING CAMPS: Exchange relations with Bila and incomers

This chapter analyses present day relations between Mbuti and villagers in the context of the hunting camps, and the way in which the economic exchange embedded in these relations enables - rather than disrupts Mbuti life in the forest. The context of this analysis is the debate concerning whether hunter-gatherers can live independently of farmers in the tropical rainforest, and the question of whether contact must mean dependency.

ECOLOGICALLY ENDURING, HISTORICALLY CHANGING RELATIONS

With central government weak or non-existent, economic relations between Mbuti and villagers today are not shaped by the constant tax demands and plantation work endured under colonisation, but are mediated through the meat trade. Village traders spend long periods of time in Mbuti hunting camps exchanging trade items and produce from their fields, for antelope hunted by the Mbuti. The traders success often depends on how intimate and personal their relationship is with the Mbuti in camp; and this system, whereby everything which the Mbuti cannot obtain from the forest is transported in by traders, enables the Mbuti to stay in the forest for very long periods of time.

This contrasts sharply with the Mbuti/Bila relationship under Belgian rule, a relationship largely shaped by the Bila's desperate need for Mbuti labour in their cotton plantations to meet tax demands, and by Mbuti refusal to be drawn into this subservient role. Those Bila chiefs who were desperate to control Mbuti labour to help harvest cotton, were unable to find and control them; whereas those chiefs who maintained traditional relations of autonomy had no such difficulty (Turnbull 1965: 41). Meanwhile less 'important' villagers succeeded in securing Mbuti support and help "because the relationship was more intimate and personal" (1965: 41). Turnbull continues: "It is not infrequent for a strong attachment to grow between the villagers and Mbuti, and in such cases the economic exchange is much more balanced. In all other cases there can be no doubt that the Mbuti, with less necessity on their side, have all the advantages while the villagers are the losers". Thus, even under colonisation, those Bila who were not experiencing the immense pressures to exploit others in order to meet tax demands, instead maintained traditional relationships of equality and interdependence with the Mbuti.

KALAHARI DEBATE

One of the central debates in Mbuti studies has concerned whether "the villagers have far more need of the Mbuti than the Mbuti have of the villagers" (Turnbull 1965: 38) or whether the foragers have been nutritionally dependent on the cultivators (Schebesta 1933, Bailey et all 1989). There are those who, taking a less extreme view than Turnbull, never the less argue that both groups can survive independently of each other, and thus that hunter-gatherers can live independently of cultivation. This is an assumption implicit in the claim that the hunter-gatherers were the original inhabitants of the rainforest (Bahuchet 1991a, 1993b, Bila and Mbuti oral history). > > > Bailey, Heidland and Reid (1989) and Hart and Hart (1984, 1986) argue that hunter- gatherers such as the Mbuti have always lived at the interface between forest foraging, and trading meat or working villagers fields in order to acquire starch from villagers gardens to meet their basic nutritional needs. Contrary to Turnbull's description of the Bila as dependent on the Mbuti, Bailey sees the foragers as dependent on the farmers > > >

CONTINUUM VS SEPARATION & OPPOSITION

The Harts and Bailey argue that the Mbuti must have entered the forest alongside cultivators, and that the cultivators, far from being invasive destroyers of the Mbutis' peaceful forest world, actually made possible the spread of Mbuti life through the forest (e.g. Bailey & Peacock 1988: 110-113, contra Turnbull 1965: 38). The importance of the Bailey-Hart hypothesis is that it points to the long standing nature of the cultural and economic exchange relationship between foragers and farmers in the Ituri, emphasising the mutuality of Mbuti and Bila life in place of the separation and opposition Turnbull emphasised. This suggests that, contrary to Bird-David's (1992b) and Ingold's (1992a) analysis, hunter-gatherers such as the Mbuti relationship with their environment may form a continuum with (rather than being in opposition to) that of their farming neighbours. The usefulness of Bahuchet's response is that it questions the element of Mbuti dependency attributed by Bailey and the Harts to this exchange, and reflects more accurately the oral history of Mbuti/villager relations.

Although different groups of Mbuti and different villages have differing relationships, these depend on the particular historical and personal circumstances within a broader pattern of long term contact which does not need to involve a form of dependency which curtails autonomy on either side. Thus when Turnbull states "that the Mbuti, with less necessity on their side, have all the advantages while the villagers are the losers"(1965: 41) this sense of 'necessity' derived not from the history of reciprocal exchange between the two groups but from the historical situation in which the Bila were forced by circumstance to attempt to impose effective hierarchy and control. > > >

EKONOMIE

Bila and Mbuti [oral history] emphasises the dependence of the Bila on the Mbuti, rather than the reverse. Phelix tells how, after a fight with neighbouring peoples in the area around Kisangani where the Bila originate from:

> The Bila decided to leave and followed the Ituri River east. The Bila crossed the Lenda River, and beat back the Lese who were the first village inhabitants in the forest. . . When the whites came they stopped the fighting and brought the Bila south of the Epulu River, making it the frontier between the WaLese and the Bila. . . The whites demanded an amount of rubber each month and if you didn't collect your amount you were whipped and sent off to collect it. It was the Mbuti who showed the Bila where the rubber trees were. When the Simba [rebels] came, all the population entered the forest. If the military or the Simba found you, you'd be dead. The Bila and the Mbuti lived together in the forest. If the war returns we'll be together in the forest again.

At the time of my fieldwork there was great tension in Zaire and many Bila felt that they might have to flee into the forest with the Mbuti again. The number of nkumbis held throughout the forest increased dramatically in this period as a way of asserting the unity of the different forest peoples. Phelix's history demonstrates that historically the Bila are aware of the help they have received from the Mbuti, while ecologically the Mbuti benefit from trade with farmers and from alterations caused by shifting cultivation. Here the enduring nature of the relationship between foragers and farmers is one in which *contact enables rather than curtails autonomy*, except where the pressure of external forces dictates otherwise. >>>

It is important to remember that the same paradigm - which assumes that relations between farmers and foragers will inevitably disrupt foragers lives - is also applied to human-environmental relations. Here the assumption is that human interaction with the environment will - unless it is 'traditional' hunting and gathering - inevitably be detrimental to the environment. Pimbert and Pretty argue that human influence:

> has often actively maintained and enhanced biological diversity in . . . environments from which rural people have historically derived their livelihoods. Recent findings in ecology suggest that nature is in a state of continuous change. The importance of disturbance is increasingly acknowledged for the maintenance of biological diversity and other fundamental ecological processes (1995: 7).

The difficulty with the Mbuti Debate is that the argument is conducted from within the confines of a belief that contact means dependency. It is for this reason that Turnbull is anxious to assert Mbuti independence, and Bahuchet anxious to assert foragers prior occupation of the forest. In response to this potentially 'romantic' isolationist view, the 'realists' stride in to assert that of course there has always been contact, and this realism can easily slip from demonstrating contact to asserting dependency. That contact and trade has been an enduring and integral part of Mbuti life is supported by my finding that core Mbuti values, rituals and relationships persist as strongly as ever even where contact and trade is strong, in the hunting camps near Utama. Rather than contact meaning dependency, contact is an aspect of autonomy for both the Mbuti and the Bila. Far from being diminished, aspects of Mbuti culture associated with being in the forest are in a sense encouraged by the presence of villagers in their hunting camps, since the villagers are providing the agricultural produce which enable the Mbuti to remain in the forest for such long periods of time. > > > just as attempted domination in no way diminished Mbuti identity under colonialism, so market hunting does not necessarily limit their autonomy, nor threaten the resilience of their culture today. That threat arises from abusive economic and political forces. Forces which may find expression in villager-Mbuti relations but are not themselves integral to the enduring relations of reciprocity between the Bila and the Mbuti.

MBUTI-BILA ECONOMIC EXCHANGES:

A brief sketch of the Bila of Utama

Utama had a fluctuating population of between 25 and 35 adult villagers. It is a mainly Bila village on the dirt road that runs from Kisangani in the west at the highest navigable point of the Zaire River, to Bunia beyond the forest edge near to Lake Kisenyi in the east. This dirt road has for many years been the only transcontinental African highway. When times are relatively secure occasional trucks carry manufactured goods from east Africa, and agricultural produce such as haricot beans from Kivu, to be sold in Kisangani or loaded onto the river boats there which head south to Kinshasa. Until recently trucks carried beer, soap and other items east from Kisangani but as the cities became ever more insecure and the factories closed down, the focus of trade shifted further and further east. Closer to home the road passes through Epulu, 35 km west of Utama, and Mambasa, 35 km east; passing through the nearby Bila villages of Tonani, 2 km to the west, and Seti, 1 km east. The occasional trucks, anticipating huge pot holes ahead, would often stop the night at Utama. Ferdinand, at Seti, was notorious for holding up trucks and stealing from them. The authorities in Mambasa would always arrest him in order to confiscate much of what he had stolen. But they tolerated his behaviour since it boosted their takings.

The most powerful person in the village was Bamootilita, whose power derived from her generous but assertive personality, and from her critical position as the parent or elder of many of the villagers, and as the embodiment of the older generations, the ancestors. She would often spend evenings telling stories of the old days by the fire, including of the times in the 1960's when the whole village fled into the forest and lived there for a year or two with their Mbuti neighbours in order to escape the violence of the Simba rebels who had killed her husband in Mambasa. Three of Bamootilita's four children lived at Utama: Bisaili, Jacqui and Janet. Bisaili and his Nande wife had moved here from a village near Epulu where he had inherited his fathers title as the local chief. Bisaili, his cousin Banyé, his sister Jacqui, and Phelix (the sage and healer of Utama) would spend periods in the deep forest, either fishing or in Mbuti hunting camps. Jean, a Nande, also spent long periods in the hunting camps. His loud haranguing of the Mbuti was at odds with Bisaili and Banyé's quiet tones. Often feared for his threatening manner, he was also well liked by many Mbuti because his loud drama was entertaining, and they often benefitted from his urgent anxiety to acquire meat. He had married into the village and, in an attempt to maintain authority over his wife and not be subject to her families collective power, his house and fields were as far from the rest of Utama as possible. The three Mbuti camps close to Utama - to which the Mbuti returned when working in village fields, or participating in village rituals such as the nkumbi - were not static in their location, but were reasonably constant in their membership.

Demand-sharing and Mbuti inclusiveness

The Mbuti do not generally cultivate their own fields because working in Bila fields means they can gain the fruits of their work on the same day, in the form of food, money, cannabis, or tobacco. Thus their work in Bila fields is part of their immediate return economy rather than an aberration from it, or an addition to it. Working Bila fields rather than their own means they can retain greater freedom of choice about where they live at any particular moment, and who they choose to work for. It also means that they are not vulnerable to the inevitable pressures that demand-sharing would subject them to from fellow Mbuti if they owned and worked their own fields. This demand-sharing, along with fluidity of local grouping and spatial mobility, is part of what Woodburn has described as "a set of distinctive egalitarian practices which disengage people from property, [and which] inhibit not only political change but any form of intensification of the economy"(1982: 447). Woodburn is here referring to Lee's work which describes how the difficulty for the few !Kung who want to farm comes, not from their own inability to build up their stocks, but from the impossibility of restraining "their kin and affines from coming to eat the harvested grain" (Woodburn 1982: 447). A pressure evident among those wage-earning Mbuti who work for the conservationists in Epulu.

Demand sharing means that any Mbuti who clearly has an excess of something will be obliged to share his excess with others or be subject to ridicule and general disapproval. This might involve being singled out in one of the evening speeches made by an elder in camp, mocked in one of the hysterically funny performances by one of the older women, or possibly becoming the subject of ridicule by the molimo's 'fool' when the sacred molimo trumpet arrives in camp at night.

At the Mbuti gold camp of Mandimo sharing was something which was emphasised, as a way of asserting that the gold would be shared out between us all, in contrast to other gold panners who would keep what they each found for themselves. By contrast in the hunting camps, where demand-sharing was not a value that was under threat, people did not have to make a display of asserting the centrality of sharing but would often attempt to hide bits of tobacco or other small items I gave them, usually with very little success. Demand-sharing should not, however, be thought of as simply a rule informing the distribution of material goods among the Mbuti. It does not stand alone but is embedded in an attitude of inclusiveness which informs their relations with everybody. The following description of Hadza inclusiveness, is also true of these Mbuti:

> Hadza society is open and there is simply no basis for exclusion. Equality is, in a sense, generalised by them to all mankind but, sadly, few of the rest of mankind, so enmeshed in property relations, would be willing to extend parity of esteem to hunter-gatherers who treat property with such a lack of seriousness. (Woodburn, 1982: 448)

One point which follows from this is that Mbuti claims on property of villagers or anthropologists is essentially no different from the claim they make on any Mbuti who appears to possess more than they immediately need. Demands on somebody such as myself, who clearly had much more of many things than anybody else, were inevitably endless. Although this could be taken as evidence of Turnbull's split between people of the forest and those of the village, as evidence of the Mbuti always seeking to exploit outsiders, or of some innate and 'rational' human desire to maximise possessions; these would all be superficial readings of the situation. Demands on fellow Mbuti with conspicuous excess were at least as strong as demands on villagers or myself: objects acquired from me would quickly and easily be passed on to others who, in their turn, had demanded them.

Case Study: Appropriate and inappropriate demands
My early period in the hunting camps was characterised by frequent hunger and unhappiness until I learnt the adults ability to know how and when to make persistent and good humoured demands. Just as at the Mbuti gold camp at Mandimo - where I had felt myself accepted after an unfair demand had caused me to demonstrate my emotional limits by getting angry - so here at the hunting camp of Bongaduwe, the moment of acceptance happened when I angrily challenged one of the hunters, Za, over his denying having hidden rice in his hut. Prior to learning to make direct - and sometimes angry - demands which were invariably amicably received; I had only become angry in a way which was deemed childish. That anger had involved an attitude on my part which assumed the fairness of delayed reciprocity rather than this immediate demand sharing. For example, I had got angry with someone when they demanded tobacco from me; because they had not included me in their distribution of honey earlier in the day. It took me a while to understand that this had been because I hadn't demanded any! Such anger was inappropriate because it assumed an obligation to reciprocate over time, whereas the obligation was simply to make and respond to demands in the present.

Endless demands are an aspect of the inclusiveness Woodburn describes: an inclusiveness which subverts any attempt by someone with power and possessions to maintain a position of power through giving gifts to those with less and thereby seeking to establish in them a sense of indebtedness.

Case Study: The indebtedness of the 'powerful'
An Mbuti man, Kambalé, walking out of the forest stopped at a villagers home. The villager made a great show of giving Kambalé some cannabis - demonstrating how generous he was. Very soon, to the great consternation of the villager, Kambalé was insisting on needing more and - after being refused - left without having been placed in the villagers debt. An even clearer example happened one day when I responded to a demand for rice from Matamba ('friend', literally 'one who walks with me') Kanjalai by giving him five glasses of rice. He carefully gathered the rice up in two big leaves, and he then asked me for a shirt. I only had two and needed them both, he knew this but it was a way of making sure that he would be refused something. This meant that, because of all my possessions, I would be left in his debt rather than he in mine.

The Power of Weakness: gender analysis and Mbuti-Bila relations
Henry Sharpe (1994) argues that to understand relations of inequality it makes sense to start from the point of view that both parties exert power in the situation, and it may not always be the person or group classified as dominant which actually holds the most power. He argues that any analysis of gender relations of inequality needs to take as its starting point a complimentarity model rather than one of dominance. One which looks at what is holding these two people or groups together in any particular cultural context, and how that which holds them together can sometimes be used by the gender classified as 'inferior' to exert tremendous power to alter the behaviour of the gender classified as 'superior'. What he is saying is that it is not enough to explain dynamics such as this in terms of the powerful acting on the passive. For using the complimentarity approach, one can see how "obligatory mutuality can give to the inferior the ability to bind and control the superior" (1994: 45). Such dynamics "are invisible from a dominance perspective" (1994: 57) which is content with delineating power in terms of an active oppressive individual or group acting on a passive powerless one. The dominance model is reductionist, and in isolating relations of presumed coercion from their context; it loses sight of the context within which relations exist. A context in which the person in a position of 'superiority' can be coerced into recognising responsibility for the 'inferior'; the only other option being the termination of an important relationship.

The point here is that it is not enough to say (contra MacCormack 1980: 20) that powerlessness is not an intrinsic quality but is the result of oppression. For there may be a power one can wield precisely because one has been classified as 'powerless'; as was evident at Mandimo where the very fact that the Mbuti appeared to accept Bênoit's classification of them as 'inferior' meant that they could often maintain the upper hand in the give and take of exchange relations. It is a model which could apply equally well to the Mbuti/Bila relations Turnbull describes.

But there is a profound drawback to this approach, for it looks at the interaction as if it were taking place within a closed system. Which is to say it doesn't take into account the wider political dimension. The dimension from which external forces may well be severely distorting the relationship: causing what might otherwise be a dynamic exchange between individuals and groups who are effectively equal, to become a cycle of abuse and revenge. Turnbull in de-emphasising the effect of colonialism, gave a picture of Mbuti/Bila relations which simply reversed the picture of domination. The Mbuti were in control and in a state of social harmony, and the Bila were frightened of both the forest and the Mbuti and deserving everything coming to them. In fact, the previous case study demonstrates that Turnbull's picture represents one of the ways Mbuti 'play' their relations

with villagers or anthropologists. Perhaps Sharpe overstates his case, and the real point of interest is: what makes either group engage in binding and controlling the other, when autonomy and interdependence would appear to be the underlying nature of their relations unless distorted by overarching abusive pressure.

Bila trading garden produce, Mbuti trading meat and labour
The Bila who live for days or months in the hunting camps are almost all from the villages with which these Mbuti are associated. The trade is between people who have to some degree grown up together: men who have undergone the nkumbi circumcision ritual together, or cleared forest to create fields together; and women who have danced the nkumbi or worked the same fields together. When the hunt is going well, the Mbuti would stay in the forest hunting antelope to exchange for the garden produce and trade items that village traders brought in from the road. When the hunt is going badly, women and sometimes men often leave the hunting camp to go and work in the village fields in order to return from the roadside village with manioc, rice and other supplies. Many Mbuti live, or spend some time, in villagers shambas, guarding them from animals and thereby earning their right to some of the produce. For a mornings work in the shambas at Utama, an Mbuti might receive a ball of cannabis, or two measures of palm wine. They might work Jeans fields in the morning for tobacco; Bisaili's in the afternoon for manioc; and Jacqie's later for some cannabis. Labour or exchange tends, unlike the hunt, to be undertaken with a specific end in mind

When talking with them in their fields, the Bila often spoke as if the Mbuti only went into the forest for brief periods. Jean, the inmarrying Nande, and Bisaili, the Bila fisher farmer (when asked at the roadside) spoke as if the Mbuti were almost always in the village fields. By contrast, the Mbuti whom all three of us had spent many months with, had entered the forest in October and, although membership was fluid and many returned to the road for days or weeks during the period (especially for the feast of Christmas), the group as a whole did not return to the roadside villages of Utama and Seti until July. 10% of the men had not once been to the roadside villages in these nine months of hunting. Ironically, part of the reason for this may have been the pressure from Dieu Donner (the corrupt chef de groupement) on four of the Mbuti youths to pay a huge fine for the death of an old Mbuti woman whom the Mbuti chief Yuma had accused of making an Mbuti man ill through sorcery.

Some traders would acquire only a few nyama and some would acquire many. Jean tended to position himself in the centre of camp: he would be at its hub, forever engaging in banter, ordering people about, and giving out small gifts in anticipation of future exchanges. He would normally get the first offers of meat when the hunters returned. Over the long term individual traders success bears a close relation to the quality of the relationships they establish both with the Mbuti hunters and with their fellow villagers. Thus although Jeans abrasiveness meant he succeeded in acquiring many antelope from the Mbuti, this same abrasiveness put him in conflict with the equally abrasive villager, Pati, who on this occasion called in the gendarmes from Mambasa who confiscated all the meat they found in the hunting camp. By contrast Banyé, who was village chief at Utama at that time, could acquire antelope partly because of his marriage to Alimoya, who was popular among her fellow Mbuti. However this also meant that he was open to demand-sharing and losing much of what he gained since, as was discussed earlier, the process of demand-sharing makes it very difficult for any Mbuti who has much of something - including Banyé's wife Alimoya - to refuse the demand of another Mbuti for something they lack.

Exchanges with Kitona Gold Camp
Banyé and Bisaili, were able to rely on fishing whenever the hunt was not going well. > > > When the hunting camp was based near the Ituri River, they could head upriver to one of the gold carriers. Here they exchanged their fish and meat for gold at a much better price than they could receive at the roadside villages. For example a large fish, which would net Bisaili 7 million zaires at the roadside, would fetch half a gramme of gold, worth 18 million zaires. However here he would pay two tige, or six million zaires, for a bottle of cooking oil which costs a quarter of that in Bandisendi. Most crucially those in charge of the gold camp - who controlled the transportation of goods into the camp - charged five tige, or fifteen million zaires, for one bottle of beer.

Each worker at Kitona paid three tige a day to the PDG (President Directeur General) who was the person in charge of the gold concession. The workers could then keep whatever gold they found. They would pan in the Ituri River in two's or three's, with dozens and sometimes hundreds of them crowded along the same stretch. Most worked for a few weeks or months to gain the money they needed for the marriage or radio or whatever they had set their hearts on. The atmosphere of the camp was like a shanty town with music blaring from cheap radios, with children everywhere, and the women in brightly coloured cloth. Meanwhile by the river the men were busy shouting and working hard - there was a sense of rivalry, of the school playground - not exactly hostile, but volatile, with the feeling that anything could happen. The PDG, Mariamu, was an enormous MuKusu woman from just south of Mambasa. Her brother Sourrit had recently married Tamu in Utama village; which meant that the woman in charge of the largest gold concession in the area was well connected to a village

in which women were in an equally powerful although very different position. Mariamu was in the process of having a big shamba created to provide manioc, haricot, rice, and other produce to sell to her workers. Where gold searchers sought enough gold to get what they had set their hearts on; more often than not they simply spent all the gold they found on expensive necessities like food, and luxuries like alcohol, whose price and supply the PDG controlled. This process enriched the owners of the gold concessions who cleared forest to make ever bigger shambas in order to support the most profitable part of their business: selling produce to a captive market at exorbitant prices. The gold seekers often returned home no better off than when they arrived.

Is Mbuti and Bila economic activity, and exchange, sustainable?

Mbuti

In general Mbuti hunters exchange forest produce - such as antelope, honey, and roofing leaves - for villagers trade items - like salt, cooking oil, metal cooking pans, and cloth - and for villagers garden produce. This is in order to satisfy basic needs, to be able to remain in the hunting camp, while hopefully being able to get hold of enough cannabis, tobacco or other luxury items through exchanging the smaller parts of meat which do not form part of the overall exchange pattern. The incidental nature of the luxuries is mirrored by the use of parts of the animals body that are not highly valued. A key point here is that although the Mbuti are clearly very happy to return with many antelope from the hunt, this has less to do with seeking to optimise the yield achieved by the hunt (Layton et all 1991: 256) and more to do with providing experiential evidence of their good relationship with the forest and their skill as hunters (Bird-David 1992b: 30). Their prime concern is to catch enough meat both to eat and to exchange with villagers for agricultural products or luxury items. To catch more than this does not ultimately benefit the hunters or their families, since there is no accumulation of wealth. Since market hunting in the central Ituri is undertaken by Mbuti within the context of long-standing relationships with Bila exchange partners, it only differs from subsistence hunting in that the focus is on hunting meat primarily for immediate exchange rather than for immediate consumption. However, for the Mbuti it does not involve a shift from seeking enough meat to satisfy immediate requirements to seeking to maximise the 'production' of antelope. The benefit of market hunting is that it enables them to remain in the forest for longer periods while maintaining a reliable supply of agricultural and luxury items in camp, usefully rationed by villagers. In this context the focus remains one of meeting subsistence needs and maintaining a good relationship with the forest and ancestors themselves.

Bila

The Bila traders, resident for long periods of time in Mbuti hunting camps, rarely make a profit from trading agricultural produce for meat. This fact, combined with the evident enjoyment many of them experience at being in the camps, indicates that they are there for other reasons than economic advantage. As well as illicit love affairs, it is also simply a chance to be away from the village, from the ever-present possibility of harassment by higher state authorities, and a chance to relax and socialise with other Bila and Mbuti in a forest environment they know well. Although large profits are theoretically possible for the Bila from acquiring hunted animals, the overheads are high. For the long period of time that traders spend in the hunting camps they will have to transport in all they need and, unless fishing, will not be doing any productive work themselves. Meanwhile a relative (normally a wife) has had to stay behind in the village to tend the shamba and will need to pay Mbuti to work in the fields. Most traders are men and, while a trader is absent, his wife may have been tempted to take a lover (as Denis found); or she may have left him entirely (as Bisiali's second wife did); or on the other hand if he has acquired a new wife or lover through the long period spent at the camp there will be difficulty on returning to the village (as Jean found). In the case of these three villagers the profit from the exchange that isn't spent on replenishing basic equipment or needs, tends to be spent on dealing with wives or lovers. Dealing with lovers is not immediately so costly: a woman will expect gifts of the equivalent of a dollar or so - perhaps in the form of soap or palm oil - from the man. By contrast, for these same male traders the first person that substantial profits are spent on tends to be their wives.

Conclusion

Bila shifting cultivators at Utama in the heart of the Ituri work with a very different economy to that of the Nande incomers at Tobola. A Nande farmer such as Nziwa at Tobola was happy to sell me rice because his livelihood is in cultivating and in selling agricultural produce. He and his neighbouring Nande farmers saw their future in expanding their plantations, often to supply gold panners with produce in exchange for gold.

By contrast, here at Utama Bisaili was reluctant to sell me rice because his agricultural produce is either for subsistence or to exchange with Mbuti for meat, doubling its value relative to selling it direct. This accounts for why a Nande village like Tobola had an impressive amount of produce for sale at the roadside, while the Bila village of Utama only displayed fruit, nuts, baking, or other items which are not part of the meat exchange system. For the Bila money is acquired primarily through selling meat or fish; not through selling agricultural

produce directly. By contrast, the Nande economy at the forests edge is often driven by the need to expand their plantations to acquire gold - in order to sustain their kin networks broader economy - an economy of plantations and gold in which the Mbuti are easily used and discarded. Meanwhile here, at the centre of the forest, the Bila and Mbuti economy involves a constant sustainable movement between river, forest and road. It is a constant exchange of Mbuti forest produce and labour for Bila agricultural produce and trade goods which is not driven by external extractive forces but by local social relations and needs. While gold panners are engaged in an economic process which would appear to be unsustainable for all but those in charge of the gold camp and the lucky few; for the Mbuti, market hunting offers the chance to remain in the forest for long periods of time; and it offers the Bila an alternative context for living, and the - rarely realised - scope to become substantially better off.

Case Study: Protestations of power

Today, as under colonialism, what underpins Bila/Mbuti relations can be a laughable, or oppressive, structural opposition at the end of a long chain of abusive relationships. More often, though, it is the usual fluid movement between forest and village that both Bila and Mbuti are entwined in. A good example of this is the Bila chief Banyé and his Mbuti wife Alimoya, who move with the other Bila and Mbuti between the river, forest and road. One evening Bisaili complained to me that Banyé *shouldn't* have an Mbuti wife. "They don't know how to cook, nor look after a home" he said; before heading over to eat a meal she had prepared from the fish they had caught that day. And I watched the three of them laughing over some joke, as the firelight played on their faces and on the huge trees overarching the camps small clearing: the reality of relationship dissolving his protestations of power.

Thus, unlike under colonialism, this economic exchange between Bila and Mbuti is not driven by the necessity for the Bila to meet tax and labour demands, but is a meeting of equals; however much Mbuti sometimes seek to manipulate the situation through protesting their poverty, and Bila sometimes seek to assert dominance and hierarchy through protesting their power.

CHAPTER 6 THE MOLIMO AND THE NET HUNT: The Mbuti and the Forest

This chapter focuses on relationships among the Mbuti, and between the Mbuti and the forest. The nature of the hunt, the mediating power of the molimo, and Mbuti relations with each other and with the forest, are seen to be centred in egalitarianism and a strong identification with the forest. Economic relations between the Mbuti and the Bila have, as we have seen, changed significantly since colonialism; and it is possible that in some ways their relations may therefore more closely resemble their pre-colonial, rather than their colonial, state. By contrast, the core ways in which the Mbuti relate to the forest and to each other would appear to remain remarkably resilient. Central among these is the demand-sharing we have already discussed, the net hunt itself, and the molimo ritual which was happening almost nightly for weeks on end during my main fieldwork period. This chapter begins by briefly sketching relations among the Mbuti, and by placing their relations in the context of their having to deal with abusive external forces.

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PEOPLE

Abusive Power Relations

Throughout this period of my fieldwork the impact of Dieu Donner, the Bila Chef de Groupement, made itself felt in camp. His actions included: arresting the four youths responsible for having beaten up the old woman they and Yuma had accused of being a witch, demanding the payment of a fine of forty *mboloko* duiker, and beating up the Mbuti chief Yuma when not enough mboloko arrived. Dieu Donner was well hated by the Mbuti and by most Bila. In any dispute in which those involved wished for a fair outcome they would always go to Umatatu, the Chef de Groupement for the neighbouring area towards Epulu, rather than draw Dieu Donner into the situation since that could only mean a heavy fine on all parties, or on only one side if the other was able to bribe him handsomely. Dieu Donner had ousted the traditional chief Batomine, who had been unpopular with the local authorities in the Zone de Mambasa. They accused him of being lazy and failing in his duty since he did not engage in Dieu Donner's zealous approach to inventive taxation, and therefore rarely enriched those above him. Meanwhile the new chief was seen as efficient and hard working by many incoming Nande, such as Venance at Mandimo, and by others in positions of power. They described him as working hard and they viewed local people as lazy for sitting back like Batomine and failing to really exploit the wealth of the forest.

The story of a corrupt chief, with all the power of a corrupt political system behind him, is only half the story however. It was because these Mbuti beat up the old woman that they laid themselves open to his abuse. Anjila-o, the old woman accused of being a witch, was distantly related to Ngo-i, the man whose near fatal illness she was accused of causing. The reason the four hunting companions gave for beating her up was that it

was because the Mbuti chief, Yuma, had told them to do this to frighten her into refraining from causing the illness. Yuma was a fierce orator, and a man who was himself caught up in seeking to assert his power while fearing its erosion. He often accused others of sorcery, believing they were causing his hunting to be unsuccessful and wishing him harm. Yuma and his wife Salama were childless and for the most part they lived in the Mbuti camps very close to the village. It was when he arrived in the hunting camps that talk of sorcery would increase. Yuma was normally absent from the hunting camps and, of the older people, those who carried the greatest authority in camp and on the hunt were his sister-in-law Nahto, her brother Za, and her maternal uncle Aposi.

Camp Relations

Nahto was a formidable woman who had been married three times. Her present husband, Kitobela, was quiet and acquiescent, and spent most of his time at the Mbuti camp near Jeans fields, always deferring to her dynamic presence when he visited the hunting camps. Nahto had had two children by her first husband, Ngomani (who now lived elsewhere) both of whom were often in camp with their children. After Ngomani she married Yuma's elder brother, a man called Phelix who should have been chief but had left Utama because he didn't want a position that gave him no power over his fellow Mbuti while leaving him accountable for their every action to people such as the Chef de Groupement. Nahto and he had had four children, who had remained here with their mother. Since Phelix's brother Yuma was childless, it was Nahto and Phelix's eldest son, Bon Anné, who would succeed his uncle Yuma as chief. Bon Anné was a powerful hunter, a leader much sought after by the women, and his voice was often hoarse from smoking too much cannabis. He had Nahto's ability to inspire and to come up with the unexpected; and this was perhaps one of the key abilities that tended to give him leadership. Nahto herself was in a pivotal position. Not only had she been married to Yuma's elder brother, but her children were at the heart of these hunting camps; camps which ranged in size from twenty five to fifty adults.

Nahto's younger brother Za, a man with a dry sense of humour, tended to take the lead in hunting. He was normally based with the hunting band his father had belonged to further west (where both he and Nahto had been born). It was their mother who was from Utama, and it was to her mothers group that Nahto had long been attached. Za had come along to join them. He often made speeches in the evening, but always from his own hearth at the side of the camp, and never from the centre which would suggest belonging and commitment to the camp, since part of his approach was to keep alive the possibility that he might return to his own group and that they might lose the man most of them thought of as the best hunter. Za was generally followed when he showed leadership concerning the hunt. Thus reflecting a broader experience of leadership among the Mbuti which is 'authoritative' rather than 'authoritarian' (Silberbauer, writing on the Khoisan, 1982: 29), and is respected only in those areas where an individual is recognised as being more competent.

Aposi (Nahto and Za's maternal uncle) had long ago been chief of the Babukusi, during the brief period between Nahto's husband Phelix leaving and Yuma becoming old enough to replace him. His three sons were in this group and they and other relations would group their huts in another part of camp to Nahto and her children. Two of his sons, Tumbelo and Aseli, had beaten up the old woman. Komie, the fourth hunter involved in the incident, would sometimes place his hut nearer to Tumbelo and his brothers, and other times nearer to Bon Anné. Komie was often laughed at for being fanatical. The sheer amount of cannabis he smoked often entailed others having to pull him out of a fearfully spaced out state by working on his body: they would do this casually, placing their hands on his head as he went through convulsions while they continued their conversation with someone else, almost completely ignoring him until he had regained his composure. The speed with which he would race up trees in search of honey, wielding his axe in search of the hive faster than anybody, and the way he threw himself so completely into any task at hand, such as digging up the *ambaka* tree at the start of the nkumbi, was highly unusual. It was easy to imagine him obeying Yuma's order to beat up the old woman with far more thoroughness than anybody had intended. The conflict that emerged between Aseli and Bon Anné over Bon Anné taking Aseli's wife, partly reflected the potential for conflict between two of the main families in camp.

Two of the other main families in these hunting camp were those of Kanjalai and of Musimu. Musimu was an elderly woman with a wicked sense of humour who would often bring disputes to an end with performances which reduced the whole camp to tears of laughter. Her sister Salama was married to chief Yuma. Her eldest son, Duobo, was in his forties, was unmarried and like some other unmarried adults was considered a doctor with powers to heal which were connected with not having children. Unlike his brother Ndumé and his sister Anifwa, Duobo moved frequently between this and other hunting camps. Ndumé and Anifwa were married to two of Kanjalai's children, Charlotte and Mokubwa, through *kosono* (sister/brother exchange). Together with Musimu's quiet husband Umé, and Kanjalai when he was in camp, the two families provided a third nucleus of

the camp. In this situation sister/brother exchange did not appear to be about men's control of women, but about siblings staying close to each other and building up a network of support in which tasks such as childcare and cooking were more closely shared than between other couples.

Although he was a superb hunter, Kanjalai preferred to stay near Utama working with the old Bila sage of Utama, Phelix. He stayed there partly out of his love for the palm wine that could be found there. When Phelix spent time fishing at the Ituri River, Kanjalai would go with him, and he also entered the forest to help me learn my way to the hunting camps. The closeness between Kanjalai and his wife, and both of them and Phelix and his Lese wife, was clearly a strong reason to remain in the village. The four of them lived slightly apart from the rest of the village, far enough to discourage people from visiting after dark, which meant that they could pass quiet evenings together. Kanjalai lived in a large Mbuti hut of interwoven saplings, and Phelix lived in a villagers square mud house nearby. The relationship ensured a good supply of garden produce for all, and because the fields supposedly belonged to Phelix this meant that Kanjalai's family were protected from losing all their hard earned produce to other Mbuti through demand-sharing. Kanjalai's family worked the fields alongside Phelix and his wife, and took what they wanted when they wanted. Kanjalai's daughter, Charlotte, and her husband, Ndume, spent much time in the hunting camps. Ndume was also building them a square villagers mud house next door to Kanjalai's hut. For Ndumé and Charlotte there is no contradiction between maintaining a strong presence in the camps and establishing a semi-permanent dwelling near the village: the two worlds are not opposed to each other but rather supplement each other.

Arriving at Bongaduwé

On arriving at a new camp, for example Bongaduwé, one of the hunting camps just south of the Ituri River, many people would build new huts, but the more important question than which hut was where it would be. At this point people can realign closer to some and further from others. The realignment of residence, practised by Bila villagers every ten years or so when they move their village back to a former ancestral site, is re-enacted every few weeks as the Mbuti move their hunting camps. Thus instead of a race to secure the least dilapidated former hut, there was a slow process of establishing residence. For example, Za cleared the ground and his wife, Masamba, created a new hut within a few hours. The fact that he had chosen the place for the hut gave him a strong say in the realignment of relationships, the fact that she constructed it gave her the power to position the door facing towards whoever she felt friendly with and away from those she disliked.

Changing residence patterns

The members of different hunting camps are not rigid sub-groups but are flexible networks of kin and affines, and since most people are related to most others through more than one kinship connection, there is much more choice for the individual than may be apparent on the surface. > > >> The net hunt relies on the forest being reasonably dry, and as numbers in camp increased and the hunt became less successful, the camp first countered this by splitting and moving south deeper into the forest. By this strategy they intended to benefit from being in forest where the duiker were less disturbed by humans and initially were more plentiful. Then as the rains increased and the days hunting time decreased, the groups adopted a strategy of staying at each camp for shorter and shorter periods of time. Finally they had to move north so that the village fields became easier to reach from the hunting camps, and in this way they could supplement their diet by working in the village fields, since there was no longer a surplus of meat in the camps which could be exchanged with villagers for agricultural produce.

The *Bélélé*

The very first night that the whole group arrived at Bongaduwé, the Bélélé, the spirit of the forest, arrived and Nahto spoke with it on behalf of the camp. The Bélélé was described as being a *Satani* (in KiSwahili) or *Kéti* (in KiMbuti/KiBila): an ancestor spirit, a spirit of the forest.

Case Study: Women representing the camp to the forest and ancestors

Nahto led the singing, with everyone (especially the children) singing the refrain: a repetitive eerie chanting that was very restrained, lacking any individual variation or exuberance. Using a stick, Nahto beat on the ground and called out to the spirit of the forest to come out and meet her. The Bélélé emerged out of the darkness of the forest at the edge of the camp: a figure totally covered in green leaves, moving very slowly in an inhuman jerky way. Nahto cried out to it, "you are always here when I come", and the Bélélé replied, "Imé kaku - I never die". She then called on it to bless the camp and to help the hunt to give us lots of animals; after which the figure disappeared into the pitch-black night forest, a host of children and youths following it, blundering through the forest and being thrashed by it. Za was nowhere to be seen until long after the event, and it was his son Ausa who helped lead the Bélélé, it seemed most likely that he was playing the part of the spirit of the forest/ancestors while his sister Nahto represented the camp.

When such *Bakéti* come into camps and bless both the camp and the hunt, the Bakéti often dance wildly and tear at huts. They are often covered in extraordinary points of light given off by the phosphorescence of decomposing plants. It is often an elder woman of the camp, although sometimes a man, who takes the lead role in addressing such spirits on behalf of the camp. > > > [This, and countless other incidents] argue against the denigrated position one would have to ascribe to Mbuti women according to the arguments of Ortner (1974) and Collier and Rosaldo (1981). > > > Mbuti women can indeed be threatened or denigrated, but this differs in kind from the more general rivalry between the sexes only in the context of the attempt by the Mbuti chief Yuma to assert hierarchy and domination over *everybody*. In the context of Yuma's assertion, the difference is a difference in kind for everybody and not simply for the women concerned. Yuma was only briefly present at any of the hunting camps, the rest of the time he stayed in an Mbuti camp near to Utama. Here at Bongaduwé the most powerful people were Nahto, Za, their uncle the much older Aposi, and the equally old Musimu.

For an adult man, marriage is a prerequisite for having ones own hut, since in theory it is the women who build them. For a woman, it is a prerequisite to accessing the meat procured by her husbands net. Thus their cooking fire symbolises the marriage: the ability to cook ones own food, to demand and offer food from; and the place to speak from and socialise at. This division of male and female roles is seen as essential ideologically, however much women are essential to the hunt, and however much men help in the building of the huts, in practice.

The Net Hunt and the Forest

If the forest is dry and the hunters are sufficiently galvanised by discussion or by the molimo singing the night before, the hunt will start early in the morning. Several of the younger hunters, or possibly an older hunter whose advice has been accepted concerning which direction to hunt in, will set off slightly earlier than the others and build a small hunting fire: either a few hundred yards from camp if the hunt is to begin nearby, or once they have reached the area the hunt is to take place in. They will mark the way for those who follow; and as soon as the first hunter has left camp carrying a smouldering log to light the fire with, he will begin singing to the forest as he seeks to establish a peaceful state of mind and a peaceful relationship with the forest.

The mornings hunting fire having been lit, the others will gradually arrive and the men will sit near to the fire passing round taba, joking or telling stories of earlier hunts, and some of the men may mark their faces with charcoal from the fire, the fire being seen as a blessing and the charcoal as a sign of this. The women will sit separately either by their own fire or close to the men, and there is often good humoured but highly charged banter back and forth between the men and women. Small boys will be with the men, and girls with the women; but young couples often sit together to one side with their infants. This pattern is repeated many times throughout the day as everyone comes together after each cast of the nets: lighting a fire or having just a brief pause before the next cast of the nets. During these pauses the stories of animals that have been caught and the ones that got away are told and re-told (as they will be later in camp), with re-enactments and a great deal of humour directed at individual hunters and at the animals themselves. The conversation is often raucous and loud, and in sharp contrast to the silence that follows as the women head off to circle round the area, getting ready to double back towards the men waiting by their hunting nets; the women beating the undergrowth to scare the antelope towards the semi-circle of nets.

John Hart has described these pauses as "an important time to flirt and visit, to play with babies, and to discuss the next drive" (1978: 337). During a typical pause in the hunt sweet potatoes were roasted in the fire, some men hacked into a nearby fallen tree, searching for an *njiko* (a small forest animal), and other men climbed a tree in search of honey. Meanwhile some of the women looked for mbuti (forest mushrooms); and the rest sat around near their own fire where two women re-enacted a moment in the hunt.

Case study: Re-enacting ambivalent relations between humans and animals

Mapaulo - a childless young woman who's husband had died, and one of the only people to demonstrate any affection towards the camps hunting dogs - played at being an antelope attempting to escape and then, using branches to symbolise the animal, she caught it and cut its throat, with appropriately blood curdling sounds. Then Nahto's daughter, Alieti, joined in: chasing Mapaulo madly though the undergrowth around the fire. The chase ended up with the 'hunter' demanding that the 'animal' brought her fire ('pika na isa'). The animal was reluctant but eventually agreed, and each time she agreed the hunter would just walk off rather than accept the fire, to the hysterical amusement of all those around. The performance played on the ambivalent relation between humans and animals, especially since Mapaulo was the one person in camp who crossed the boundary from hounding to befriending the hunting dogs. The humour lay not simply in the idea that an animal bringing fire to humans was preposterous, but also in the fact that its gift and therefore friendship was being refused. There followed a huge humorous fight between the two and this time it was the animal who in effect won and walked off, sticking out her backside and farting at everyone as she strode off.

These stories of animals outwitting, or being outwitted by, hunters are highly entertaining, but also display a strong degree of identification with the animals. They involve people re-enacting the movements and feelings of the hunters and the animals in very similar terms: both the hunter and the animal are within the performance, moving through the forest in an equally alert fashion. The storyteller in camp will move between giving a running commentary on the story and being the voice of each character in it. His or her body taking on the appearance and movement of the hunter and the animal with equal intensity, and with equal respect for their abilities. At a highly practical level the stories are a form of active evaluation of the forest and the hunt, and they also teach listening children about the nature of different animals.

When the pause during the hunt is over - the sweet potatoes eaten, and the story finished - the women head off carrying their baskets which they hope to fill with the animals caught in their husbands or male relatives nets. They circle silently round to the far side of the area in which they hope there are antelope, and wait for the men to finish setting up their nets. The hunting nets, which the men carry in a big circular coiled mass hanging from their shoulders or from their heads, are between three and four feet high, and from 100 - 300 feet long. At every cast, each hunter will advance one place up the line towards the lead position and so be able to determine exactly where they place their net. This means that at each cast each hunter will position their net at a different point in the semi-circle. The nets are hung from saplings by a twist of the rope. Women and children often help in setting up the nets, and then circle round to their beating position opposite the semi-circle of nets. When the nets are ready there will be quiet animal calls between the men and then at a signal (an arm clap, whistle, shout or animal call) the women will start shouting and advancing, beating the undergrowth to scare the duiker towards the nets. Short whistles indicate that an animal is approaching and tell the waiting hunters to remain still and silent. Loud noise erupts after an animal has passed, and often the men will have positioned themselves within the capture area and will themselves attempt to scare any duiker into running and getting entangled in their net.

The beating and shouting to frighten the nocturnal duiker from their hiding places is a peculiar long moment of great commotion in the forest, during which nothing may be happening apart from humans making as much noise as they can, (since there may not in fact be any duiker in the vicinity). However, once a duiker rushes into the barely visible net then it is quickly killed and placed in the basket, and will not be divided up until the group returns to camp. Turnbull found that "The moment of killing is best described as a moment of intense compassion and reverence. The fun that is sometimes subsequently made of the dead animal, particularly by the youths, appears to be almost a nervous reaction, and there is an element of fear in their behaviour". (1965: 161)

Although respect for the forest itself is evident in the molimo and in the calm period that follows each cast of the nets, the moment of killing was full of joy at the good fortune of the hunt having succeeded, of having been blessed by the forest/ancestors. Although the jokes may have been nervous reaction, the stories told and retold in the camp in the evening always had, as one of their high points, a graphic rendition of the sound and movements of the struggling and dying animal. In fact four years before writing the above passage, Turnbull described the killing of duikers which clearly involved no reverence, compassion or fear whatsoever; but instead involved joking and mockery in which "one of them kicked the torn and bleeding body" (1961: 95). He states that "it was at times like this that I found myself furthest removed from the pygmies"(1961: 95). Thus the story Turnbull tells changes slightly over time between 1961 and 1965; and the change is towards polarising the experience of the peaceful Mbuti and the fearful Bila: a distorting opposition between the poles which are indeed present, but present *among* the Bila and the Mbuti, not *between* them.

After each cast, the nets are gathered and everyone gradually heads on to the next meeting point. It is at this time that there is almost always a strong sense of calm and contentment with people singing different songs quietly to themselves and singing "Ituri-o" to the forest. There is a stark contrast between the commotion, noise and desire to catch an animal in ones own net, and these songs sung to the forest and the ancestors in good humour. As they move off towards the next cast they will be keeping an eye open for signs of roots, mushrooms, and honey; and pointing out, to children and to each other, changes happening in the forest. In the Ituri there are large areas which are open *mbau* forest (*Gilbertiodendron* monospecific forest). Mbau do not allow other trees to grow beneath them so there is not a dense undergrowth, and moving through such areas is easy. It is in the denser areas of mixed forest that the duiker tend to hide: so although one can pass through mbau with ease, it is when the hunting group begins to move along the twisting paths through pockets or large areas of mixed forest, and then finally starts to move into areas of the densest thickets, that one has the best chance of finding duiker.

Attempts in camp to improve the hunt occur on three levels. On the individual level black paste mixed in the horn of an antelope is put on the net, as are pieces of hair, and any other lucky charms. On the second level

there is the *endékélélé*, a small spirit house that is sometimes built just outside the camp and where food offerings are made collectively by all the hunters to ensure a good hunt. Lastly there are the interactions with the forest/ancestors in the form of remonstrating, dialoguing and singing with the molimo, and with the other forms the forest/ancestors assume, such as the Bélélé.

Evening in Camp

A few people always stay behind in camp: this may include a few of the older people, some small children, anyone who is ill, or a hunter has had a bad dream and so would bring bad luck to the hunt. Normally there will be at least one or two Bila villagers in camp hoping to recover some of the debt which is owing them: the meat being smoked on racks to preserve it. The total amount owed to villagers on a typical day equalled one hundred and forty four glasses, or more than half a basket load, of rice; much of which might never be repaid. From the middle of the afternoon the Mbuti left in camp will start making a two-tone two-hoot call to the returning hunters. The men will cut up animals just out of sight: whoever cuts the animal must not eat any of it. If the hunt has been successful then there will be haggling with the villagers over who owes who what, and although the animal belongs to whoever caught it in their net, there will inevitably be a sharing out of food as people make silent or noisy demands on each other that are difficult to refuse. The division does not follow exact rules and so there is often much argument over who should receive what. The noisy enthusiasm with which the argument is entered into, does not seem to match the much lower actual concern people express once the division has been made. Elders were usually offered the liver: it is the preferred food offering to the ancestors, on account of it being the seat of feeling, and because it is easy to chew and digest.

After a *buré* (KiSwahili: empty, useless) or exhausting hunt, the mood on the return to camp is often very loud, argumentative and confrontational. The volatile and almost violent mood contrasts sharply with the calm and rejoiceful singing as they gather their hunting nets at the end of a cast, and move on to the next place to hunt. If the final cast is close to camp then the mood switch between individuals at home in their forest environment and individuals in conflict in camp can be very sudden. The angry, confused, shouting and complaining mood is often entered into with great gusto. The mood in camp lifts as people eat, and the camp fills with evening talk around the family fires just outside their huts, or the fires which groups of hunters share, and much later the focus shifts to the shared central fires when the singing gradually begins.

Cannabis is often smoked at the end of the day just before the evening meal. After the adult who has contributed the cannabis has taken one or two deep inhalations, it is passed around all adults who wish to take part. If there is any left over it is passed on to the youngsters. If there is any pattern to who dislikes cannabis it would appear to be the adult generation: those who were primarily responsible for the hunt and who had children who were old enough to hunt themselves The smokers were primarily elders, youths and newly married young hunters.

If, as often happens, all the meat has been destined for exchange with villagers, then only the head, neck and entrails of the animals are due to the hunter. These will then be cooked, normally by the women; the liver, and often the heart, being given to the elders. For a long while Za had great luck on the hunt, and then it was his neighbour Pati's turn, which meant that they had enough meat to eat and exchange without having to make demands on others, and instead they were in a position to invite others to eat with them. Pati's toddler would run to Pati when he was upset and crying, since Pati tended to sing to him and hold him while getting on with mending a net or talking with friends, whereas Ikalabo (Pati's wife) tended to scold him. The toddlers often visited others. When they were slightly older they would spend much of their time together devising games.

One of the older women - Musimu or Nahto - would often have the whole camp in hysterics with a lively performance about their own and others sexuality. Musimu could dance an amazingly lithe dance, wearing nothing but a tiny strip of cloth between her legs, folded over a string vine around her waist. Her performances involved such things as bizarre altercations with empty baskets that were too heavy to lift, or simply moving strangely and engaging in a monologue accompanied by gestures which were sudden and arresting as she leapt on comments shouted to her from the women gathered around her in hysterics. As one such performance ended, the molimo trumpet called out from the forest, circling close to the camp, accompanied by shouts and the sound of the ground being beaten the way the women do when they are beating an animal towards the nets. Ndume stood in camp with his spear pointing in its direction, and then rushed into the forest towards it, shouting that the *nyama n'endula* (the animal of the forest) was arriving.

The molimo mirroring the Hunt

Hunting songs happened when the young hunters were relaxing and the molimo trumpet was not likely to arrive: for the trumpet required the disappearance of the young hunters who would reappear as the molimo. With hunting songs the harmony is broken up into separate notes, with each person carrying a single note for each