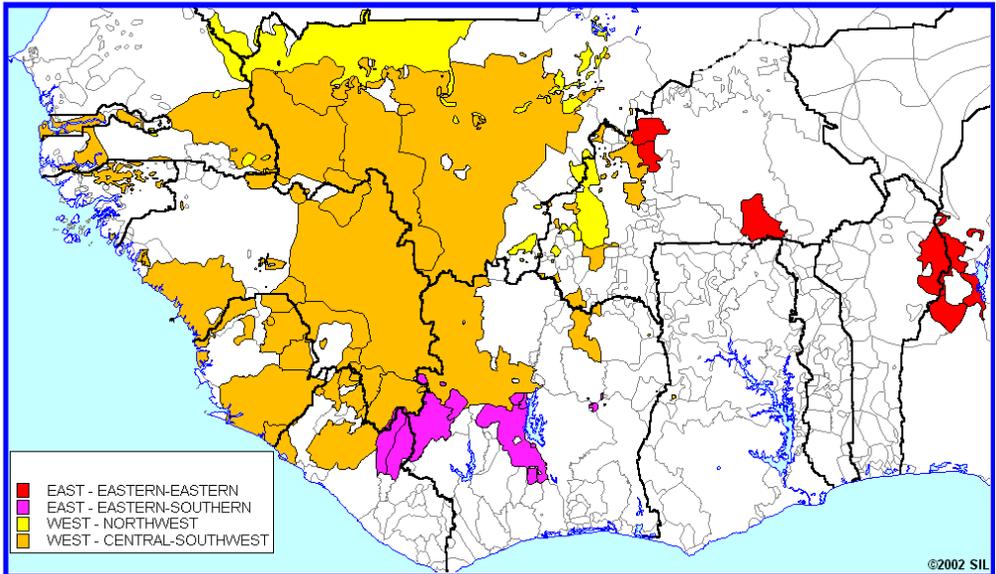


Who are the Shanga?

1.0 The Shanga language

The official classification is Niger-Congo, Mande, Eastern, Eastern, Busa. In other words Shanga belongs to the Niger-Congo branch of languages which includes most of the indigenous languages of Sub-Saharan Africa and is classified with the Mande family of languages. Most of these languages are in the centre or west of West Africa, but Shanga is towards the east, so belongs to the Eastern sub-group. Within that sub-grouping there are two clusters of languages, each cluster having some intelligibility between speakers. The Boko/Busa cluster includes Boko, Bokobaru, Bisã and Busa Illo, and the Kyanga cluster which includes Kyanga and Shanga.

Shanga is not mutually intelligible with the Boko/Busa language speakers and there is only partial intelligibility with Kyanga. Lexical similarity is 81% with Kyanga, and an average of 65% with the Boko/Busa cluster. The Shanga are called Shanga or Shangawa (plural) by the Hausa and they call themselves Sãngã, while the Kyanga at Bakinrua call them Sēnga. It is probable that the original name was Sēnga and the original name of the Kyanga was Kēnga. In francophone countries the Kyanga are known as Tienga, while in Boko they are known as Kēã.



The distribution of Mande family languages with Boko/Busa/Kyanga on the far right

This map shows that the Kyanga people are indigenous to West Africa and did not originate in the Middle East.

Eastern Mande languages

Bissa	Samo	Busa	Kyanga
Barka	Toma	Busa	Kyanga
Lebir	Tougan	Busa Illo	Shanga
		Boko	
		Bokobaru	

The results of this research show that there are about 5,000 Shanga speakers living on the banks of the Niger River just north of Yauri in the Shanga Local Government Area of Kebbi State, with another 15,000 ethnic Shanga who have assimilated to Hausa living nearby. 15,000 Kyanga speakers live in the south-west of Kebbi State, between the Niger River and the Benin border, and in the adjoining area of

Benin Republic. Another 200,000+ ethnic Kyanga who have assimilated to Hausa, Dendi and other languages.

Some of the western Mande languages include Bambara, Bandi, Boso, Jula, Kono, Kpelle, Kuranko, Ligbi, Loma, Loko, Marka, Manding, Maninka, Mende, Seeku, Sembla, Soninke, Susu, Vai, Yalunka.

Eastern division Mande languages with an approximate number of speakers (2016) are as follows:

Samo	460,000	Burkina Faso
Bisa	750,000	Burkina Faso
Boko	175,000	Nigeria/Benin
Bokobaru	65,000	Nigeria
Busa	60,000	Nigeria
Busa Illo	20,000	Nigeria
Kyanga	15,000	Nigeria/Benin
Shanga	6,000	Nigeria

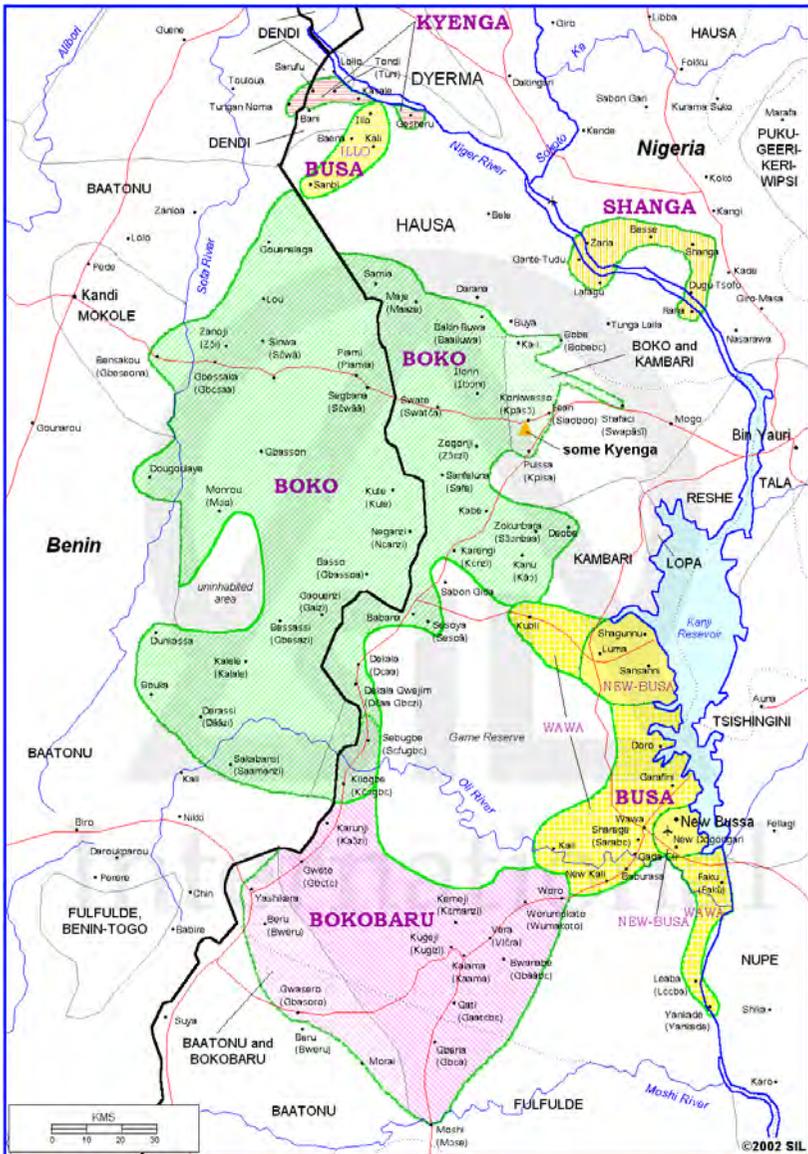
2.0 Population and distribution

The Shanga live in the Shanga Local Government Area, Kebbi State, in north-western Nigeria. The four villages where Shanga is spoken are on both banks of the Niger River 12 km north of Yelwa Yauri. Shanga town is located 50 km further north at 11°11'44" north of the equator and 4°34'2" east. The present Shanga population is about 20,000 of whom no more than 5,000 speak Shanga. Many still have the distinctive facial marking identical with that of the closely related Kyanga. According to Frank Salamone there were 40,000 Shanga in 1974, so many may have completely assimilated to Hausa.

2.1 The non-Shanga speaking Shanga population

The 2006 Shanga LGA population was 127,142. With 3% annual growth the 2016 population would likely be 160,000.

The main towns where ethnic Shanga live are Shanga (40% Shanga), the administrative centre of Shanga LGA, with a 2006 population of 7470, and Dugu Tsofo (70% Shanga) which is reported to be about 10,000. The combined Shanga population of these two towns is at least 10,000.



Home of the Boko, Bokobaru, Busa, Busa Illo, Kyanga and Shanga speakers in mid-western Nigeria and north-eastern Benin Republic
 There are also 2000 ethnic Shanga who don't speak Shanga between Shabanda and Kaoje at Kawara, Gante Fadama,

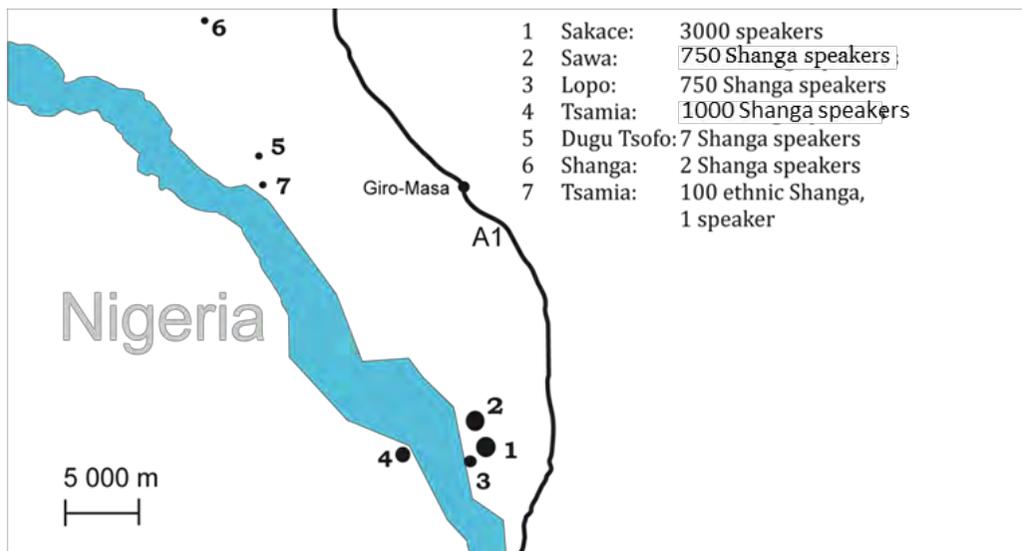
Gurwo and Lafogu, close to or in Bagudo LGA, west of Shanga LGA.

2.2 The Shanga speaking population

Apart from a few people at Dugu Tsofo and Samia the Shanga speakers are all 50 km to the south of Shanga town, 12 km upstream from Yelwa Yauri on both banks and within one kilometre of the Niger River, three villages on the north and one on the south.

Villages that speak Shanga:

Sakaci 95%	3500	
Sawa 95%	700	
Tsamia (Kawama) 95%	1000	(South of Niger)
Lapo 95%	500	
Kwakute (Nasawara)	40	
Bakintura	10	
Tungan Maaje	84	
Dugu Tsofo (70%)	7	
Shanga (40%)	2	
Tsamia (near Dugu Tsofo)	1	
Other scattered speakers	56	
Total:	5,900	



Map showing the main Shanga speaking villages

The population of Bakin Turu (near Gwalango) between Dugu Tsofo and Yauri are all ethnic Shanga, but with few speakers. In the Shanga speaking villages all ages still speak Shanga and the informants were quicker than the Kyanga speakers in the Illo area at providing illicit vocabulary. The Shanga speakers intermarry with Shanga and Reshe.

The 2006 population of Shanga LGA was 127,142.

The following ethnic population statistics were elicited from an agricultural worker for towns and villages in the Shanga LGA:

- Shanga (40% Shanga, 20% Hausa, 20% Dukka)
- Dugu Tsofo (70% Shanga)
- Sakace (95% Shanga)
- Samia (Kawama) (95% Shanga)
- Sawa (95% Shanga)
- Lopo (95% Shanga)
- Tooboo

Malajega

Approximate percentages of ethnic groups in Shanga LGA.

Hausa 40%	Fulani 20%
Shanga 15% (5% speakers)	Reshe 10%
Dukka 10%	Kambari 5%

In the main Shanga speaking villages all ages still speak still speak Shanga and the informants were quicker than the Kyanga speakers in the Illo area at providing illicit vocabulary quickly. The Shanga speakers intermarry with Shanga and Reshe.

A road starting from Tundi Gada, 10 km north of Yelwa Yauri, follows the northern bank of the Niger River before turning north to Shanga. It has many villages that are only a few kilometres apart. These villages with their major ethnic group are in order as follows:

- Tondi Gada (Reshe)
- Dakingari (Hausa)
- Toro (Reshe, Kambari)
- Tungan Bori (Hausa)
- Lopo (Shanga)
- Sakace (Shanga)
- Sawa(shi) (Shanga)
- Kundu (Reshe)
- Dala (Reshe)
- Dala Mairua (Hausa)
- Hondirgi (Hausa)
- Tunga Maji (Hausa) (10 Shanga speakers)
- Tungan Kwakute (Hausa) (15 Shanga speakers)
- Nasarawa (Hausa)
- Sante (Hausa)
- Dugu Tsofo (Shanga)

Dugu Raha (Hausa)

Shanga (Shanga)

Sakace is about 50 km south of Shanga.

3.0 Language in society

It has already been mentioned that the majority of Shanga have assimilated to Hausa. Nearly everyone in the Shanga speaking villages speak Hausa, even the old people. They don't speak for long without using Hausa words. A common cause of language loss is intermarriage with Hausa women, because their children no longer learn Shanga in the home. Shanga is still spoken in the home, but young boys in the street can be heard speaking in Hausa in preference to their mother tongue. Basic vocabulary is still used but many Hausa loanwords are preferred to the original Shanga. Shanga phonology and grammar have also been affected by the heavy use of Hausa by Shanga speakers.

4.0 Shanga clans

There are four Kyanga clans: Shiba, Mishira, Kosoro and Saaki. They speak the same Kyanga language, but their body markings, especially facial scars, differ according to clan. They have many parallel scars on the side of the face beginning diagonally from the crown of the head to the top of the ears, then vertically down to the bottom of the ears, then diagonally forward, converging towards the mouth.

The number of parallel scars may vary from 5 to 10. Some children are still receiving scars. The Shanga tribe have similar markings and are closely related to the Kyanga. Some Shanga know the Kyanga villages from where their ancestors came, especially Tondi, Kasati, Bakinrua.



SAAKI



SIBA



KOSORO



MISHIRI

The Mishiri may have chicken foot markings on the body but upward pointing. These are the Barugu Kyanga. A diagonal scar under eye is called "bule".

The Kosoro (Kɔsɔrɔ) have a downward pointing chicken foot scar or a V scar between the eyebrows and on the outside of the eyes.

The Saaki have 3 vertical lines /// anywhere on the body in addition to normal markings.

Linguistically unrelated Gobiri people have the same markings as the Saaki, and the unrelated Kabawa people have the same facial markings from the bottom of the ear to the mouth. Thanks to Mallam Gambo of Bagado for the above information and illustrations of Kyanga facial markings.

Some of the following Kyanga folklore is of doubtful authenticity as it does not agree with with known history and linguistic facts. Una, Sagare, Abonna and Yemgbere migrated after the battle of Haibara. They crossed the Red Sea and settled in Mali. Ancestors of Kyanga were Mali Beri, born Zabar Kani and Sogara, born Kyanga Manu. Both are Saki clan. Dura is the ancestor of Shiba. He went to Maiduguri and met an ancestor of the Busawa and migrated to Borgu. Yemgbere is the ancestor of Mishiri who migrated to Kumbo, now Malanville. Abonna is the ancestor of Kosoro who stayed with Sogara in Mali.

From Mali they spread to present day Niger, Benin and Nigeria in places called Soko, Kano, Mungadi, Dakingari, Bunza, Heme, Illo, Tondi, Kasati, Lollo, Bani, Sambe, Samia, Bakinruwa etc in Nigeria. In Niger: Tounouga, Bana, Yelou, Malgoru, Sabon Birni, Sokonki Birni, Gaya etc. In Benin: Kandi, Parakou, Malanville, Kwara Tegi, Garou etc. The Kyanga/Shanga people were the first to inhabit these places.

The Shiba are reported to have come from Badr in Saudi Arabia and call their chief Bede. The other 3 groups are said to come from Mishira (Egypt). Thus they share in the Kisira legend that is so strong among the Boko/Busa people of Borgu and other groups in Nigeria. According to this legend some ancestors fled from Mohammed and Islam in the Middle East and eventually settled in Borgu, intermarrying with the local inhabitants (Boko). It may be true that some people came from the Middle East and intermarried with Mande people, but it is not feasible to think of a West African Mande tribe like the Shanga as having originated from the Middle East. Linguistically all languages that are related to Shanga and the Boko/Busa group live to the west of them and so it is from the west that they have originated, not from the east.

5.0 History

The Shanga are an offshoot of the Kyanga people, with whom they comprised a part of the Songhai Empire from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. Moroccan invasions in the sixteenth century, however, forced the Shanga to relocate towards Borgu, some living at Kaoje. According to Olivier Walther (2008), the genealogy of the Kyanga chiefs of Kyangakwai is well documented and kept up to date by the court of the District Head, Kyanga Ibrahim Wata. Below is a photo of that document taken in 2010.

In 1815 the Emir of Gwandu sacked Kaoje and the Kyanga inhabitants fled east and settled around a town called Shenga or Shanga, where Kyanga/Shanga people were already living. They seem to have taken their name from this town. Later the Emir of Kontagora sacked Shanga and many of the inhabitants fled to the islands of the Niger.

THE FOUNDERS OF DANDI KYANGAKWAI DISTRICT



Kyanga chiefs of Kyangakwai

These islands are still called Sakace island and Sawa island, but in 1968 when Kainji dam was built, the Italians built houses in the present villages of Sakace, Sawa, Lopo and Samia (Kawama) and told the Shanga to move there.

The islands are now inhabited by Sarakawa. Shanga from Sakace island settled in present day Sakace, while others from an island upstream founded the town of Samia (called Kawama in Shanga) on the south bank of the Niger and 5 km from Sakace. Being separated by 150 km from other Kyanga speakers for nearly 200 years, their language has diverged. Even before 1815 the language of the Kyanga at Kaoje may have diverged. Today Kyanga speakers live north-west of Kaoje, while the Shanga are east of Kaoje, although there are still some Kyanga south of the Niger River, near the bridge which is 10 km south of Bagudo. Some Kyanga at the Boko town of Bakinrua, about 10 km west of Kaoje, speak a dialect of Kyanga that is closer to Shanga. These people said the Kyanga who fled Kaoje area were called Dɔka, which may be related to Daku, a deserted village north of Segbana. The first chief of Segbana was a Kyanga from Daku.

Frank Salamone (1975) says in “Becoming Hausa”:

“Much of the confusion in the literature concerning the meaning of the Yaurawa category in fact dissipates when one views it as a transitional one through which potential recruits for the governing elite passed on their way to becoming Hausa. Most of those who became Yaurawa were, in contradistinction to the meaning of that term, which is simply “people of Yauri”, Reshe and Shangawa seeking to change their ethnic identities in order to become members of the dominant minority.”

Olive Temple (1965) says:

“The Shangawa are a branch of Kyengawa, having broken off in the early half of the nineteenth century, when the Emir of Gando broke their town of Kaoji. Its inhabitants fled to

Shenga (in the Yelwa division of Kontagora, hence their name, and when the Filane chief N'gwamache, subsequently Emir of Kontagora, captured Shenga, they scattered to the islands on the Niger.”

5.1 First Kyanga/Shanga settlements

The very first settlements may have been in Benin Republic. It is said that Garou, near where the Sota tributary enters the Niger, was the first settlement, but children swimming in the river were dying and the settlement moved to Monkassa. One report says that the Kyanga were opposed by Borgu and they subsequently moved north of the river. Kyanga were early settlers at Segbana until the Bokus from Nikki area came and pushed them north to the Illo area. There is still an ancient Kyanga quarter at Segbana where ethnic Kyanga live. The Boko towns of Konkwesso and Bakinrua in Nigeria have Kyanga chiefs to this day.

It is reported that the Kyanga were on the island of Lele (Laata in Kyanga) near Gaya 1000 years ago. From there they moved to Katanga near Ouna and then to Barsamba, and from there to Tudun Magari near Yelou. A 17th century chief named Umaru converted to Islam and went to Mecca and on his return moved to and founded Yelou. The Kyanga extended from Yelou and maybe even further north down through Bana to Gaya on the Niger River. In Nigeria they founded Kyangakwai north of the river and Illo south of it.

In Benin many of the present Dendi speaking population are ethnic Kyanga, stretching from Kompa and Karimama in the west to Madekali in the east and south down the Nigerian border to Tungan Noma and Tungan Goge.

The Songai/Zarma/Dendi people arrived and found the Kyanga there. The Kyanga have always held the religious power associated with animism and their worship of spirits and the earth. The newcomers were more adept at politics

and defence and in time became the ruling class. Because of political domination, the Kyanga have over the last 100 years or so abandoned their own language and assimilated to the languages of the Zarma, Dendi, Hausa, Busa and Boko. New migrants coming to use land on the banks of the Niger near Gaya still pay rent to the original Kyanga owners.

5.2 Early conflicts

In 1493 with the west and south to heel, Sonni Ali, king of Songhai, turned his attention to the east and conducted a campaign against Borgu, but with only partial success. On his return from Borgu to Gao, Sonni Ali was accidentally drowned while crossing a small tributary of the Niger. (Hogben in *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria*, 1966)

At the beginning of 1505 the Songhai army was defeated by the chief of Bussa. Askia Mohammed did however carry off numerous slaves, one of whom became the mother of the succeeding Askia Musa.

At the rise of the Songhai power the three kingdoms Bussa, Illo and Nikki were attacked by Mamara at the head of the Zaberma, but on his death the king of Nikki conquered Songhai. He now ruled over the greater part of Borgu, his kingdom extending northwards to Illo, south to Ilesha and east to Kaima. (Elizabeth Ischei, *A History of Nigeria* 1893)

In 1593 the Moor leader Mahmud Pasha attacked the Songhai leader Askia Nuh in Dendi country south of Gurma. Nuh received support from the Borgawa, warlike pagans with long experience of the great defensive possibilities of their country. Later on Dendi settlers from Illo and Gaya areas on the Niger river along with traders and scholars from Hausaland formed the majority of the Muslim population in Borgu.

In the 17th and 18th centuries Borgu extended to the Niger and included Illo. It is generally believed that the Kyanga

preceded the Boko in northern Borgu. Mallam Idris claims that the Kyanga came from Mali and have a royal ancestor in the person of Askia Mohammed of the Songhai empire (1493 — 1528).

In 1810 Shehu Usman dan Fodio crossed the river and subdued Gurma.

In 1811 Bello led a 3rd expedition to this part of the country and conquered the little principality of Illo.

In 1814 Illo was made a tributary of Gwandu for a short while (this is denied by Illo).

In 1815 the Emir of Gwandu sacked Kaoje, see above.

In 1835 Borgu attacked Kaoje and killed the Emir of Gwandu's brother.

6.0 Culture

The following professions are practised by the Shanga as evidenced by these Shanga nouns.

barber	miboda	ironmonger	mɔɔyɔda
beggar	hozɛɛda	manager	ɛɛkɛda
blacksmith	shiba	mat weaver	giitāda
builder	baaboda	pilot	gookuuda
butcher	sɔɔzɛɛda	potter	lugudaboda
drummer	bāadɛda	religious worker	adinikɛda
farmer	jeekɛda	shea gatherer	kuushida
fisherman	kaabe	tanner	sheetugbeda
guard	dāda	trader	lagakɛda
hair braider	miitāda	violinist	gogedɛda
healer	ɛ̃da	weaver	bashetāda
hunter	tobe	wood gatherer	agoshida

Hunting has always been important in their culture. The Shanga are mostly farmers, planting millet and corn. In towns and villages near the Niger River, they fish and grow onions. Each village has its blacksmith for making knives, hoes, coup-coups etc. There are also wood carvers who carve handles, mortars and pestles etc. Others weave mats from palm fronds, although plastic mats are now more common. Male circumcision is practiced, but not female.

Beer drinking was a common pass-time in the old culture before Islam. Islam has brought changes to marriage and childbirth ceremonies.

Like the Kyanga they are skilled in wrestling, drumming, dancing, hunting and fishing. Many still have the distinctive facial marking.

The following description was made by Frank Salamone in 1974: The Shangawas (Shangas, Shongas, Kyengas, Kengas, and Tyengas) are an ethnic group of approximately 40,000 people living on the banks and islands of the Niger River near the city of Shanga in northwestern Nigeria. They are surrounded by Hausas, who tend to control political and economic life. Shangawas constitute 85 percent of the population in the Shanga District, part of the Yauri Division in Sokoto State. They speak Kengawa, a language in the Niger-Benue division of the Niger-Congo linguistic family. At one time, the Shangawas were a subgroup of the Kengawas. Both the Kengawas and the Shangawas claim descent from the legendry Kisra, who opposed Islam until the prophet Mohammed defeated him in battle. The Kengawas and Shangawas were part of the Songhai Empire by the thirteenth century and remained so until the Moroccan invasions of the sixteenth century. During those invasions the Shangawas relocated to Yauri, and, during the slave raids of the nineteenth century, they found refuge on the islands of the Niger River. The Shangawas make their living as farmers, raising vegetables on the river banks and millet and guinea

corn in the highlands; they also fish and are known for their commercial skills. Nearly half of all Shangawas are Sunni Muslims of the Maliki school. Traditional Shangawa religion, which revolves around the sacrifice of black animals - oxen, goats, or chickens - is tied to the Kisra legend. Traditional Shangawas believe that such major spirits as Gasakassa, Berkassa, and Gwaraswa control the key events in people's lives.

Another report says that some Shanga migrated towards Yauri after the Emir of Gwandu sacked Kaoje and they remain there to the present-day on both sides of the Niger River.

The livelihood of the Shanga is based primarily upon agriculture, with fishing and trading being of secondary importance. Millet, guinea corn, and along the rivers, onions and a variety of vegetables are grown.

While some Shanga marriages are arranged at birth, most Shanga have considerable freedom of choice when deciding upon a marriage partner. Selection often takes place during the inter-village wrestling matches, which are extremely important to the Shanga. A boy will begin wrestling when he reaches puberty and will continue until his first marriage.

7.0 Wrestling

Wrestling has also been an important cultural practice, done with spiked bracelets. Most young men still wrestle after millet harvest and on holidays but no longer with bracelets. Some youth still die from broken necks after being violently thrown to the ground.

The following account concerns Kyanga wrestlers, but could equally well be describing Shanga wrestlers. In the 1950's Kyanga wrestlers used to come to Segbana in Benin Republic for wrestling matches with the Boko. Missionary Bob

Blaschke who lived at Segbana in 1955 observed a wrestling tournament and wrote the following report:

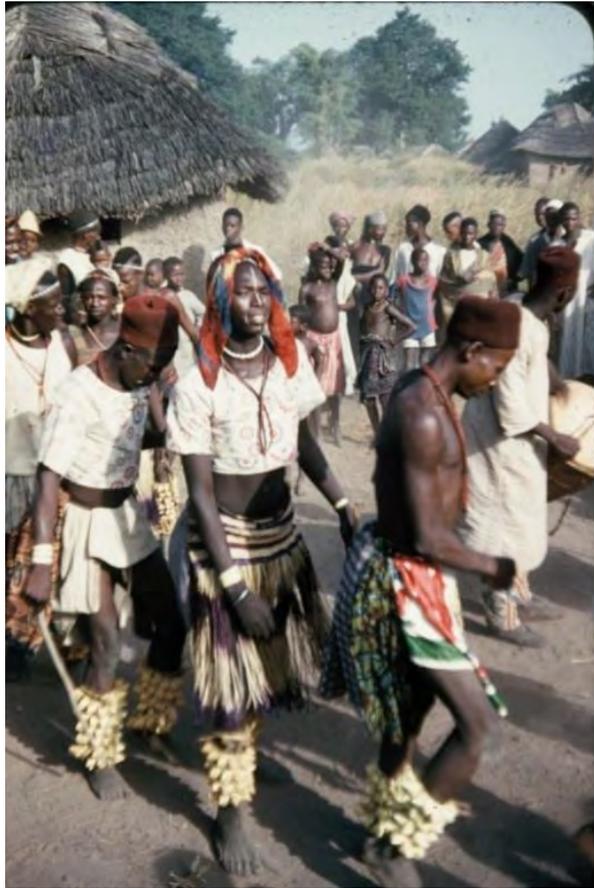
On the day they arrived in Segbana with not only wrestlers, but several drummers, they could be heard coming from afar off. This set the adrenaline flowing in the Segbana guys' veins. Wrestling was very important to the Kyanga. The Kyanga wrestled amongst themselves as a rite of passage into manhood and qualification for getting a wife.



Spiked bracelet worn by wrestlers

The young men not only had to wrestle, but wrestle with an iron bracelet that had six sharp points set toward the front and back of the bracelet, as well as two sharp metal 2 cm wide blades that line up where the ends of the bracelet come together to hold the bracelet on under the wrist. Between the fist and the wrist they tied a circle of goat hide with 10 cm long hair to hide the bracelet from the opponent. Each competitor wore the goat hair and just one bracelet on the right wrist with nothing on the left wrist.

You can imagine the damage inflicted when a wrestler grabbed his opponent under the arm or around the back as these sharp points coming and going would tear the flesh as they grappled with each other.



Wrestlers dancing

When they came to Segbana, the first thing they did was to drum and dance around a Kyanga grave in the Kyanga quarter, which is on the east side of town. In doing this they not only honored their ancestor but invoked his empowerment for a successful wrestling match.

The match consisted of hand/arm wrestling while on their two feet. The end of the match was determined when one made the other one touch 'three points' to the ground at the same time. The three points could be two feet and one hand or one foot and two hands. Even more impressive was when the best wrestlers were able to throw the other one bodily to the ground. There was no wrestling on the ground. However, the one still standing quickly jumped on his opponent and smashed down and cut across the back or side of the neck with one or both of the flat blades of the bracelet. That was the bloody and final coup that ended that match. The winner had successfully fulfilled his rite of passage and now was eligible to get married. I do not know if the loser was required to wrestle until he won to be eligible to marry.

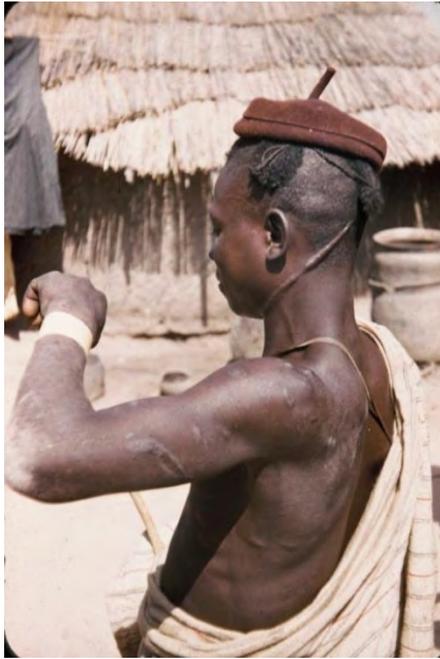
Apparently, some have died as the result of this coup on the neck. But all of them bore at least scars from having wrestled. Because of this, chief Kisama of Segbana would only allow the Kyangas to wrestle the Bocos without the bracelet. The Bocos knew how to wrestle and won a fair share of the matches, but they had never wrestled with bracelets, nor did they have that rite of passage in the Boko culture.

As interesting and exciting as the actual wrestling is, the build-up to the point of physical contact consisted of drumming with dancing and gri-gri ceremonies. The drumming beat of the wrestlers 'song' was, in and of itself, enough to get anybody's blood pumped up. The wrestlers dancing included impersonations of sexual intercourse as they danced around in a circle.



The gri-gri part for each match was both long (as much as 20 minutes) and intricate. Each side had their medicine men performing 'good medicine' on their wrestler, while performing 'bad medicine' against their opponent and counter medicine against their opponent's 'bad medicine'. Simply put, the mediums were seeking for an empowerment greater than their competitor's.

The gri-gri consisted of consecrating pebbles with chants and spitting on them before throwing them at or on each one's competitor. The only other one I recall was a bamboo pole split and tied back together at the top and bottom, then opened out in the middle through which the wrestler would walk in and out of a few times. Being a westerner, I became very impatient with these prolonged ceremonies.



Kyanga wrestler sporting his scars

I wanted to get on with the action, the wrestling. For the local people, it was the gri-gri that was equally intriguing and important. The Segbana chief's pay-off for inviting them was the gift of one of his cattle, which they were more than happy to walk back home. There is a tragic sequel to this story. Soon after they left Segbana, an epidemic of smallpox came through their area and killed nearly half of the Kyanga population, including most of the wrestlers that had come to Segbana. (Maybe this refers to the measles epidemic that killed 300 people at Tungan Jatau between 1962-64 before the rest of the village moved to Gesoro.)

8.0 Religion

An early Arabic document Tarikh-es-Sudan states that “the dwellers in the Sudan, whose capital is Ghana, were Christians up to the year 469 of the hedjira, that is to say, up

to 1076 by the Christian computation of time, and only then adopted Islam. He adds: “the growing power of the western stream, reinforced by the influence of Islam and Mandeland, destroyed Christendom in Songhai and forced it back to Borgu.”

The bronze cross still hangs on the neck of the representative of the Kisra dynasty at Karishi (north of Kontagora) today. The Kisra legend attributes moral injunctions in the passage describing his residential stay in Karishi: Kisra was wont to live in a space set apart, where he was hidden from every man’s sight. When the people came to worship him, they heard his voice from behind a wall. The voice spoke these words: Lie not, steal not, do not stir up strife and keep peace among one another. Whenever the people came to Kisra in Karishi, a herald stepped forth and showed them the cross which Kisra wore around his neck and which the chieftains of Karishi wear on their breasts today as a token of their authority.

In 1922 Olive Temple wrote the following about the Kyanga/Shanga: Muhammadanism and Muslim customs are rapidly penetrating amongst the Kyanga people, together with the use of the Hausa language, but the majority are still pagans, their religion being a form of animism. A spirit named Godakasa is worshipped by a baobab tree near Fingila, another named Berkasa has a shrine on a hill near the town of Kyangakwai. Gworagwa, in the guise of a rock shaped like a man, is worshipped at a hill north of Kamba. A belief in “bori” demons exists and the chief of the “bori” lives in a grove of bark-cloth trees on a hill to the east of Fana. All baobab and tamarind trees are sacred, as also are very tall ant-heaps.

Special sacrifices are offered at the sowing of corn, when a black bull and red cow or black goat, and a black fowl or a red goat and a white fowl are decapitated, and the blood smeared over the sacred spot.

These sacrifices are also made when a death occurs, the flesh of the animals being eaten by the assembled relatives, whilst the bones are buried with the corpse. The dead are usually buried in a sitting position with a monkey's skin tied around their loins. The grave is in the house or compound where death occurred, but if this should not be in a man's own home, a handful of earth from the grave is placed in a calabash and ceremoniously carried to the house of the deceased by the strongest man present. Polygamy is practised and women have a voice in the selection of their husbands. Boys are circumcised at the age of seven.

They are traditionally animistic with powerful black magic, animal sacrifice, divination, demon possession and beer drinking common in the last generation. Possessed women speak Hausa or Dendi when in trance.

A 1973 Summer Institute of Linguistics survey of the Kyanga/Shanga group says that 90% follow traditional religion and 10% Muslim. Most Kyanga have become Muslim since then, as have the Boko/Busa people.

Traditionally animist about 40% (at least 70%?) of the Shanga have converted to Islam in the past 80 years, and the number of converts is increasing each year. Even the Muslim Shanga, however, adhere to their traditional practices and beliefs, which involve the sacrifices of black animals such as oxen, goats, and chickens to help cure illnesses or to provide aid in time of crisis. (Source: Bethany)

There are very few Shanga Christians.

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