

SACRIFICE AND BUSINESS.
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RITUAL AND
COMMERCIAL CATTLE SLAUGHTERING
IN TENKODOGO, BURKINA FASO

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All over the world meat plays an important role in the nutrition of people. Mostly it is considered to be a special source of strength and health. In many peoples' minds the consumption of animal products, such as muscle, fat, blood, inner organs and bones, is much more associated with vital strength than a vegetarian meal. A reason for this may be the inherent physical similarity between human being and animal, especially mammals (ZIMMERMANN, 1992: 27). There are other ways of producing meat, such as hunting and fishing, but today the most common method is butchering.

The approximately 30.000 inhabitants of Tenkodogo in southeast Burkina Faso are very partial to meat. The ethnic groups in the area, Mosi and Bisa, who are mainly cultivators of millet, peanuts and beans, as well as the minorities of Yarse traders and Fulani herdsmen, enjoy the consumption of meat products. There are several restrictions due to the rules and customs of the three main religions, which are traditional African, Islamic and Christian (Yarse and Fulani are Muslims, Mosi and Bisa can be followers of one of the three). These restrictions are on certain animal species and not on quantity. Large herds of cattle, sheep and goat graze on the uncultivated land around Tenkodogo. No restrictions exist on the consumption of these animals. Plenty of donkeys, dogs, pigs and poultry are kept in the yards. The Muslim population will not consume donkeys, dogs and pigs. The meat of pigs is favoured by Christians, and dogs and donkeys are eaten mainly by followers of the traditional African religion. Unlike in Islam, however, there are no general consumption rules for the Christian or traditional African believers, but traditional taboos on special game for certain clans and taboos on dog and donkey meat for women do exist. From an ethnic point of view, there is only one difference between Mosi and Bisa meat acceptance. Unlike Bisa, Mosi people would not slaughter horses. But as there are only a couple of horses in the town, this is of no significance today.

The people in Tenkodogo consider beef to be an excellent meat. We will focus our comparative studies on special occasions, specialised butchers, locations, times, technical methods, distribution and ideas connected with the production and consumption of beef. Two fundamental reasons for the butchering of cattle can be identified: firstly, bulls are killed during the rituals of the year and secondly, cattle is slaughtered for daily commercial purposes on the market. In both cases almost the entire carcass of the butchered animal is con-

sumed by people. In Tenkodogo we can actually compare those two different reasons, which have at least one common impact.

Occasions when cattle are butchered

Tenkodogo is both the capital of one of the ancient Mosi kingdoms and the headquarters of the present province of Boulgou, part of the postcolonial nation of Burkina Faso. Traditional and modern political systems exist side by side. Although the absolute power of the Mosi king has been significantly reduced since European invaders terrorised Tenkodogo's people and soil, most of the succeeding governments did not underestimate the socio-political importance of old authorities for the maintenance of their own power in the area. Up to the present day, the old hierarchy is still functioning. The head of the traditional hierarchy, the king (*rima*), is called the Tenkodogo *naaba*. The term *naaba* means an office holder to whom power hierarchically is transmitted (KAWADA, 1979: 171). The term is used for all Mosi authorities and is often translated as minister or chief. The king's given name is *naaba tigre*, which means *naaba* of abundance (his full name and motto is: *tigre yam zaka kambilar mogela*, as long as there is food in abundance the children can laugh) (RITZ-MÜLLER, 1994:114). The representative of the actual government of Burkina Faso, who is not originally from the area, is the Préfet. Traditional and modern political leaders are well aware of each others' responsibilities and duties in as far they know the limitations of their power. Such is the case for all aspects of society, e.g. religion, law, education and the economy as a whole. One purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that certain aspects of the socio-political and economical environment are mirrored also in beef production.

The *basga* ritual

The Mosi had conquered the area of the indigenous Bisa hundreds of years ago and dominated the owners of the land by integrating them into the Mosi system. The indigenous population continued to worship the gods and spirits of their fathers' land. Therefore, the invading Mosi warriors could not legitimise their power over the land of the Bisa by referring to the gods and spirits of the soil but rather to their own mighty ancestors and their god of the sky (*wende*). Hence the offerings in most Mosi rituals are dedicated to their forefathers, which, in return, renew power to the authorities and welfare to everyone.

The fundamental problem cultivators face nearly all over Africa is the lack of rain for their crops. In Mosi belief no plentiful harvest is possible without the blessing and the help of the ancestors. Reciprocity requires offerings to them. Although all Mosi make sacrifices to their individual forefathers, the offerings by the king are highly important in that they are for the well-being of the entire society. Currently eight annual celebrations are held by the king, six of them involve the sacrifice of bulls to his ancestors. In November 1993, we

had the opportunity to participate in the *basga*, a celebration which is held at the end of the agricultural year. This ceremony forms the basis of the data presented in this paper. *Basga* means "the last or concluding meal". It is the most spectacular and latest in a row of annual thanksgiving celebrations. It is held after the harvest of millet, the last crop of the season. In the course of the same celebration a year ago, the king had promised his father, *naaba kiiba*, his grandfather, *naaba koom*, and his great-grandfather, *naaba karōngo*, offerings in return for fertility and health for his people, animals and land during the upcoming year. The ancestors had asked the god of the sky (*wende*) to send rain to their children. Now the king is to keep his word, sacrificing to each of them a white rooster, a young guinea fowl, a strong ram and a big bull. However, the *basga* means more than this, since the ancestors and the authorities as well as the people feast on these sacrifices. In other words the living and the dead participate in a big common meal, which confirms the traditional links among the individuals of the entire society and it legitimises the old authorities. Traditionally the *basga* lasts for two days but there is a modern appendix of a third day during which the old authorities have a meal with the representatives of the current local government. Several audiences are given by the king throughout these days and a multitude of dancers and musicians make the *basga* an exciting festival for his subjects. Furthermore, several sacrifices take place: secret sacrifices for the king's personal protection, sacrifices for his paths inside the residence, as well as sacrifices all over Tenkodogo at the sacrificial stones of the earliest nine ancient rulers of the town. In all these rituals either the highest of the ministers of sacrifice (*yaonaaba*) or the minister for the household of the king (*zaknaaba*) offers sacrificial drinks and roosters or guinea fowls to the spirits and ancestors. The highlights of the event are the big public sacrifices to the current king's three direct forefathers. As we have mentioned, the offerings at the tombs of the king's most recent forefathers are numerous. As it is believed that the ancestors have travelled far, they are received with a traditional Mosi welcome drink (*zoomkoom*), a mixture of water and millet flour, which is poured over the sacrificial stone (*maankugri*). Then the four sacrificial animals are killed at the grave and a common drink of millet beer (*daam*) unifies ancestors and the members of the court. We shall concentrate on the sacrifice of the bull, without neglecting details of interest related to the abundance of other areas of the *basga*.

Commercial butchering

Butchering animals outside the ritual has become a daily event in Tenkodogo. The species slaughtered by non-specialised men for private consumption or for small trade amongst cultivators in the neighbourhood are sheep, goat, dog and fowl. The majority of people keep these small and medium sized domestic animals in their direct surroundings and are well able to handle meat production by themselves.

One consequence of the increasing urban population and the development of a cash market with a subsequent tax system is ongoing specialisation. The

species butchered by specialists are cattle, pig, dog and donkey; donkeys have traditionally required a specialist butcher. The reason for this is that slaughtering them is considered to be an extremely dangerous action and requires great personal magical power. Pigs were introduced in Tenkodogo with the arrival of the French and are still not abundant. The king's father was the first to initiate pig farming as an adoption of the French custom. The number of breeders raising and slaughtering pigs is comparatively small, therefore they can be regarded as specialists. They like to keep pigs because they can be fed easily with leftovers. There is an increasing number of people who commercially butcher and prepare dogs, although Mosi consider this practice despicable. For them a meal of dog meat is only acceptable if the meat comes from one's own dog and is shared with the family or with the neighbours who have helped in the fields. Here ideology conflicts with reality because many people are very poor and must therefore survive in any way possible, up to the point that they have to disregard their society's rules and regulations. For example, the Mosi population trades dog meat even though this practice is frowned upon.

None of the specialists for butchering donkeys, pigs and dogs are Muslims. Butchering, cooking and selling of these animals will not take place in central public areas but in private yards or in hidden corners. The "amateurs" of pork consumption assemble around the big furnace of the butcher to enjoy the "porc au four" in his yard. Lovers of dog meat, on the other hand, must know exactly where the pots of dog meat are boiled. Neither in the central market of Tenkodogo nor in the small markets of its quarters can this kind of food be found.

Such an observable particularity deserves a more precise explanation. In precolonial times the butchering of animals was not locally centralised but took place in various locations all over the settlement, depending on the location of burial places. Meat products were not exchanged on a monetary basis but reciprocally distributed. With the arrival of colonialists and Christian missionaries at the beginning of the century, tolerance towards Islam increased in Tenkodogo. One possible explanation is that two rival religions allied to fight a third one (TAUXIER, 1912: 585). The need for cash became urgent when monetary taxes were introduced and new foreign products sold by the colonialists. People of all religions started to sell and buy animals and meat thus fostering the rise of commercial butchering based on a strong demand for meat. This tendency increased especially in urban societies. Members of the rapidly growing Muslim population were advantaged in commercial butchering of those animals which were not prohibited by the Koran, e.g. cattle. Neither do Christians nor followers of traditional African religion have general restrictions on the consumption of animal species, nor do rules exist which could conflict with the belief of the man who slaughters. Therefore, a Muslim butcher has potentially the largest clientele. Syncretism and tolerance between the three religions are significant in Tenkodogo, however Muslims strictly adhere the consumption rules of Islam. The activities of Muslim butchers are not restricted spatially or temporally. Therefore they can slaughter every day and

can easily work at those few public places which are under the control of modern administrative veterinary surgeons in order to raise hygienic standards of meat production: the abattoir (*abatoare*) and the central market place. Since beef is one of the country's main exports, hygienic beef production is of interest to the present government of Burkina Faso.

All these details together clearly indicate that in less than a hundred years a change took place which firstly shifted meat production from a formerly exclusive ritual event to a largely commercial business. Secondly it favoured butchering of cattle, sheep and goat, thirdly marginalised the slaughtering of donkeys and dogs and additionally introduced pigs into the area. In the next section we shall focus on the ritual and commercial butchers of cattle.

Specialists in cattle butchering

A man (butchering is exclusively a male task) specialised in commercial meat production is called *koasa* in Moore, the language of the Mosi. The correct translation of this term means "seller". In the use of the language it is still the privilege of butchers to be sellers, while all other sellers are defined by the goods they offer. For example, a seller of rice (*mui*) is called *muikoasa* and a seller of motorbikes (*moter*) *moterkoasa*. However, a seller of meat (*nemdo*) is perfectly described as *koasa*. Therefore we suggest that trade on a monetary basis initially started with selling meat.

Those men butchering in rituals without any intention to sell are also called *koasa*. In Tenkodogo we could not find another word for the ritual butcher. (Not to be confused with the sacrificial priest or the Fulani who cuts the throats of the animals.) Tauxier mentions the office of the *Mendo-Naaba* at the ancient court of the *Moro-Naaba*, king of Ouagadougou (TAUXIER, 1912: 569). Tauxier probably misspelled the word for meat (*nemdo*), altering it to *Mendo*. Kawada mentions the office of a *koos-naaba* (head of the butchers) at the court of the *Oueguedo-naaba*, who is a district chief of the king of Tenkodogo (KAWADA, 1979: 185). At the Tenkodogo abattoir we find the *koosnaaba*, who is head of the commercial butchers. But this man, despite his title, has little to do with court and ritual activities. Although he has been nominated by the Tenkodogo *naaba* and his office formerly included supervision of butchering in sacrifice and collection of one leg of every animal butchered commercially, the current *koosnaaba*, Bukare Balima, is no longer an active butcher, but he is the representative of the cattle butchers and a mediator between the butchers and the veterinary surgeons. He also takes care of the abattoir and collects various taxes and fees. The term *naaba* is sometimes confusing because it traditionally means a personal office connected with the hierarchical transmission of power (*naam*) and delegation of responsibility to the king and his court (KAWADA, 1979: 171). In addition to the old meaning nowadays the term *naaba* is employed to indicate all kinds of offices including those which were not appointed by the king.

Nowadays in ritual and commercial cattle butchering, specialists, who are called *koasa*, do the work. An individual butcher will never be involved in both forms of slaughter. Butchers in ritual will not slaughter commercially and by the same token commercial butchers will not practice their skills in ritual.

The group of three or four people butchering at the ritual has been led by Wumia Balima for many years. As a former servant at the court (*dakore*) he is familiar with many traditions. He belongs to the ethnic group of the Bisa and to one of the clans traditionally in charge of butchering; Balima, Ubda, Kondabo and Kuanda. Nowadays he mainly cultivates land with his family. In accordance with the tradition, the king gave him a wife as a reward for many years of service. In return Wumia Balima's first born child is again a servant to the king. His religious beliefs are partly traditional African and partly Christian. During the ritual he is under the command of the minister for internal residential affairs of the king (*zaknaaba*). Since court ritual butchering involves only approximately 11 bulls a year, his skills are much less developed than those of the commercial butchers. This figure was confirmed to us by the current king himself for his ruling period of more than 30 years. Elders talk about the offering of more than 20 bulls at one single *basga* ceremony in the old days.

A single commercial butcher, like Alidou Sorgho on the other hand, may slaughter more than 500 heads of cattle in one year. He is commonly seen as the most successful commercial butcher out of twenty in town. He belongs to the king's clan, is a Muslim and learnt his skills in the capital of Burkina Faso.

Butchering sites

All ritual cattle slaughter takes place at the burial sites of the latest three direct ancestors of the Tenkodogo-*naaba*. These sites are located in the street in front and in the courtyard of the present king's residence. The tombs are big cement constructions topped with Christian crosses. It was the current king's great-grandfather who first combined his traditional belief with Catholicism. In addition every tomb has its sacrificial stone (*maankugri*). In contrast to the offering of the other sacrificial animals, i.e. rooster, guinea fowl and ram, the bull is not killed directly at that stone but about 10 or 15 meters away. Furthermore the bull is skinned and cut up at the same spot where it is killed, whereas rooster, guinea fowl and ram are butchered at other locations in the court yard. This is without any doubt due to the size of the animal.

The commercial cattle butchering is done at the abattoir, which presently lies east of Tenkodogo 2 km down the road to Ouargaye. It was only inaugurated in August 1993. The oldest abattoir known to the people was directly beside the central market place. In 1950 it was moved 1 km north towards Koupela. In both cases, the neighbourhood felt disturbed by the noise and the smell and demanded a transfer. The new abattoir is partly covered and equipped with hooks to keep the parts of the carcasses away from the dirty

ground. Traditionally the cut up parts of the animal are spread out on mats. Veterinary surgeons find the hook system more hygienic and they regret the fact that there is still no electricity and no direct water supply at the site.

Butchering time

In principle, all Mosi offerings have to start before noon. However, the main offerings are celebrated right before the sun is at its zenith, thus representing the highest god of the Mosi in its mightiest splendour. Immediately after the killing the butchering starts. It takes a group of 3 or 4 people more than an hour to skin and cut up the bull into movable parts.

A commercial butcher completes the same procedure in 40 minutes with the help of one assistant only. He starts his arduous task at 3 o'clock in the morning, long before sunrise. The reasons for this early rising are of a solely climatic and commercial nature. Meat is a very perishable product. In Tenkodogo butchers do not benefit from any technical cooling systems, although temperatures are high throughout the year. Due to this, beef is best consumed the same day as it was butchered. Butchers take advantage of the relatively cool nights and can offer their products early in the morning at the market. Normally the butcher's job is done before noon including the selling of the beef.

Killing the animal

The killing method remains the same in sacrifice and commerce. Poultry, sheep, goat, pig, donkey and cattle are all killed by cutting the throat down to the backbone without numbing the animal before. Only dogs are knocked unconscious before the knife is used. Dog butchers hit the animals' forehead with a stick and say that is to prevent bites. All other animals are conscious the moment they are killed.

In ritual and in commercial cattle slaughtering, the technique of killing is also identical. The butchers bind all four legs of the animal together, turn it on its left side and pull its head back. The throat is cut and the animal bleeds to death. It takes approximately 5 minutes to bleed a bull or a cow dry. When the butcher is sure that there will be no final kick from the animal in its agony he removes the fetter.

Popular understanding of the word butcher often emphasises on the killing. In ritual and commercial cattle butchering in Tenkodogo it is not the butcher (*koasa*) who cuts the throat of the animal. This task in ritual is normally performed by the sacrificial priest (*yaonaaba*) except for the killing of the bull. As we mentioned above the bull is killed a little away from the tomb. The minister of the king's household (*zaknaaba*) carries the sacrificial knife of the priest to the place where the bull lies bound. A man from the ethnic group of the Fulani takes it and symbolically cuts the bull's throat. Then he gives back

the knife to the *zaknaaba* and really kills the bull with his own knife. Like all Fulani, the man "cutting the throat" (*kɔ̀dkodi*) is Muslim. He is chosen by the king and blessed by the Imam to cut the throat of the sacrificial bull. This is a gesture of tolerance and integration, a successful principle of Mosi ruling. The king wants all his court members and subjects to participate in the "last or concluding meal", including those who are Muslims. Therefore the bull has to be slaughtered according to the rules of Islam. The actual method chosen does not diverge greatly from the traditional African method of killing in sacrifice. We were unable to find out when this practice was introduced.

Ever since there has been an abattoir in Tenkodogo, people remember the same practice we have described above also for cattle butchering. It is also a Muslim of the Fulani group who cuts throats and the technical method is exactly the same. No cattle butcher would actually kill a bull or a cow, if somebody else would do it for him. Although the ritual details of the traditional sacrifice are not practised in commercial cattle butchering, there is still some ritual involved. Firstly, the killing is done according to the traditional ritual of Islam and secondly, the man who does the actual killing needs magic personal protection because he is doing an extremely dangerous job.

People of all ethnic and religious groups of Tenkodogo consider the killing of animals even in sacrifice to be murder. According to their belief, it calls for the revenge of the killed animal's spirit and of the animal's kin. For example cattle will trample on the grave site of a cattle murderer, dogs will bite a dog killer and the person who cuts the throat of a pig will blow up like a pig and die. The degree of danger is different depending on the species: donkeys' spirits are extremely dangerous, while the kin and spirits of sheep, goats and poultry are not very harmful. People believe, that only very powerful magic can protect against these dangers: for example drinking a "medicine" (*tiim*) or washing with a similar liquid. In the case of cattle butchering, the men who cut the throats are mainly protected by a magic powder which they rub into three little cuts on their right wrists. The Imam, a Muslim authority, has prepared this powder out of secret ingredients. It therefore seems that killing animals is less an honourable task, but rather a heavy burden for the person in charge. The act of killing is ritualised and personalised in all sacrifices of the traditional African religion as well as in Muslim slaughtering for commercial purpose. Dangerous and unsafe situations are always managed in ritual practice. Not all butchers can avoid killing an animal by themselves. The commercial butchers of donkeys, dogs and pigs have to do it, because they are not part of a well-organised institution, like the abattoir or the royal court. They run their individual business in more or less marginal places. Furthermore they urgently need every penny from the business, because they are not financially established in the same way the king or the commercial cattle butchers are. We believe it is unlikely that the commercial butchers of donkeys, dogs and pigs would engage a specialist for killing since this would be far too costly. In other words these non Muslim commercial butchers have to protect themselves extremely carefully against the dangers involved in killing.

In any case, the whole subject of butchering is closely linked to killing, hence all butchers have some magic protection even if they can delegate the act of killing to another person.

Taking the animal apart

For the purpose of transportation and distribution, carcasses of large animals have to be split up into various segments. This is regarded as the first step of the actual work of a cattle butcher in ritual and in commerce. In this paper the segments are called parts of the animal's carcass. We distinguish between two kinds of parts: firstly, parts of the bone structure represented in one single part of the carcass, e.g. leg, shoulder or back and secondly, parts which are composed by several pieces, e.g. the offal.

Taking the corpse of a bull or a cow apart necessarily happens at the killing site. Here these parts are the units of a first stage of beef distribution and consumption. In a further step the parts are cut up into portions in different locations not identical to the killing site. Portions are the smallest unit in the whole process of beef distribution and consumption. In this paragraph we describe the butchers work to the stage where the carcass of the animal has been divided into parts.

The first animal component is obviously the blood. In sacrifice the blood is offered to the ancestors. Thus it is their portion of the bull. In commercial butchering, blood is either discarded or, very rarely, part of the innards.

In ritual killing an assistant of the sacrificial priest collects the blood in a bowl to offer it to the ancestor at the sacrificial stone. Ritual butchers are not involved in this procedure.

Due to Muslim consumption rules, in 90% of all commercial butchering the blood runs away through a little channel system into the fields east of the abattoir. On rare occasions the blood is caught in a bowl and is specially prepared for non-Muslim consumers. The end product is similar to an English black pudding: intestines filled with a spicy mixture of blood and fat (*yαoziiim*). A similar practice is known in the butchering of pigs and dogs.

Once the bull or the cow is dead, the basic work of the butcher starts. He can now show all his skills and techniques. The animal is skinned, the carcass opened and the intestines are taken out. At the end of this stage the corpse is cut into movable parts. In principle this practice has a very long tradition all over the world. Ever since man began to hunt, methods and techniques of butchering have been very similar because they are often based on the anatomy of mammals. The physical structure of all mammals is nearly identical. That is to say, it is common sense to cut an animal of a certain size into movable parts using the joints of the bone structure as a naturally given plan (ZIMMERMANN, 1992: 27). It is therefore of little surprise that the methods involved in this stage of the ritual and in commercial butchering in Tenkodogo are also very similar. The only tools used by the butchers are long and short

knives (*koossuuwa*) and an axe (*kutuvæga*). The whole procedure consists of handwork and manpower. The following description of the technique of dismembering an animal concerns ritual and commercial practice alike. The skills are very much the same. A few differences do however exist.

The dead animal is laid on its back. One of its forelegs is held by an assistant or tied to a post to keep the body stable. The fell is slit from throat to belly and in the case of bulls, penis and scrotum are cut off. Four slits along the skin of the inner side of the four legs are made. Because he wants to skin the hide as a whole, the butcher starts skinning legs, breast and belly. Then he skins the backside, by hitting it with the blunt side of the axe. Only head, feet and tail are left with the fell. During the entire process, the hide is used as a pad on the ground to keep the carcass as clean as possible. The butcher slits the belly muscles to open the carcass. Turning it on the side the stomach lining slips out first, intestines and gullet follow as they are all part of the digestive system. Then the remaining inner organs can be removed: the spleen separately, liver, lungs and heart together because they all are linked with the trachea. Carefully the gallbladder is taken off the liver and thrown away.

An important difference in taking the animal apart in ritual and commercial cattle butchering is the treatment of the sternum. In commercial butchers' practice, the sternum is split in half, that is to say the sternum is cut in half to either the right or the left front part of the carcass. In contrast to this practice in ritual slaughtering, the entire sternum is cut out separately and kept as an extra part. Besides inner organs, half of this special part is used to prepare the first meal for ancestors and authorities. The other half traditionally is for the king. This indicates that the sternum is clearly preferred. Looking at the animal as a whole the central location of the sternum can probably be interpreted symbolically as the centre of vitality and strength. It also represents the front, which according to ideas means the position of authority as the common term for subordinates of Mosi leaders points out: *poore damba*. Literally translated that means "back people".

These are idealistic explanations for the ancestors and the king's preference. On the other hand, people say that no other piece represents the local taste preference for meat more than the breastbone. That is to say, the perfect harmony of three substances and tastes: juicy muscle, crispy fat and succulent gristle.

The carcass is divided into five movable parts of approximately twenty kilograms each. Firstly, the two legs (*giere/gieya*) are cut off. The knife follows the easiest natural path given: the cartilaginous gaps of the hip-bone and the coccyx. Secondly, the back (*poore/poya*) is removed at the sixth rib from behind - including belly muscles, ribs, kidneys and in all commercial and most ritual slaughtering also the tail. Cutting off the back, the butcher takes advantage of a cartilaginous gap in the back-bone. Finally the butcher disconnects

the two shoulders (*booko/bagdo*) - including neck and breast. That is difficult because in this case he can not use cartilaginous gaps. He has to split the back-bone of the neck with a long knife. The sternum has been split or cut before (we remember the difference in ritual and commerce concerning this part).

There is a curiosity concerning the splitting of the back-bone at the neck. This part includes five long sharp points (*siipika/siipiksi*). It is very difficult to split them lengthwise. Therefore the butcher leaves two of them with the right shoulder and three of them with the left. Universally the right side is considered to be better than the left (MÜLLER, 1989). Also in the specific practice of dividing shoulders this idea plays a role. Because retailers of the five parts consider the left shoulder to be worse than the right, the butcher divides the front part of the carcass in such a way that the buyer of the left shoulder has a small weight advantage. The price of a shoulder does not depend on weight. The right shoulder costs the same as the left shoulder. In other words, there is a material compensation for the idealistic loss. In commercial wholesale this method is successful. Retailers prefer the left shoulders. The same technique of dividing the shoulders was confirmed by Wumia Balima for ritual butchering. We were not able to determine who traditionally receives the left or the right shoulder.

A slight difference between ritual and commercial butchering does have to be mentioned. The loin muscle located both in the leg and in the back. Anatomically it links the two. In ritual butchering the loin is cut through and partly left with the leg and the back because nobody pays special attention to it. In commercial butchering the loin is kept as a whole. Its thick end, which is located in the leg, is cut to the back. Without doubt this is due to modern French influence. The loin in Moore is called *nemfoole*. *Nem* means *nemdo*, meat, and *foole* is the adaptation of the French word "filet". In present European meat consumption the loin is very highly priced and considered to be one of the best morsels.

Besides the difference concerning the sternum in ritual and commercial butchering, the animal's carcass is ultimately divided into five parts of approximately twenty kilograms each - two legs, two shoulders and the back. Head, genitals, inner organs and cleaned intestines together represent a sixth part (*puteedo*). The weight of these six parts can be carried by a man without much effort. Their size enables the meat to be carried on a donkey's back, in a bike's carrier and in the little chariots used for transportation to the market or, in the case of ritual, to the king's kitchen. The quantity of one part can easily be sold by a single man during the same day. These six parts represent generally accepted units in ritual distribution and commercial wholesale. They are the basis for wholesale in commerce and further distribution in ritual.

Before any further action starts, a veterinary surgeon inspects the six parts of the animal. In commercial butchering, inspection takes place at the abattoir and in ritual at the grave side. According to the *koosnaaba*, the chief of the

butchers, meat inspection was introduced in commercial butchering in Tenkodogo approximately in 1960 and soon became obligatory in ritual slaughtering also. Veterinary surgeons judge by appearance of the meat, looking for pathological symptoms such as ulcers and bone fractures as well as for parasites such as bladder worm or liver leech. They can declare the animal as a whole, or parts of it, unsuitable for human consumption. If there are no findings, the suitability of the meat for human consumption is confirmed by stamping the six parts officially and the process of meat distribution starts.

The inspection in commercial slaughtering is obligatory for sheep, goats and pigs as well as for cattle. Sheep and goats are often slaughtered at the abattoir, that is to say at the place where the veterinary surgeons are based. Animals of these species butchered at private homes have to be presented for inspection at the abattoir.

Butchers of pigs always slaughter the animals on their own premises. They also have to present the corpses for inspection at the abattoir. Here the inspection of pork is done on the side lines of the abattoir, respecting the feelings of the Muslim butchers. Although the effort of transporting the pigs' bodies (approximately 30 kilograms) to the abattoir is considered to be a painful duty, all butchers of pigs respect the law because the fines for selling uninspected meat are high and supervision is strict. Meat inspection in Tenkodogo is very effective because the Service Provincial d'Elevage de Boulgou is based there. In the outlying districts and in the countryside its significance wanes.

Distribution

In contrast to the methods of butchering, the systems of meat distribution in ritual and commercial context are totally different.

In ritual butchering reciprocal distribution is practiced. That is to say, a system of giving and taking meat guarantees a permanent supply of animal products to all members of society. For example at the king's *basga*, the ruler donates a large amount of meat. In return his subordinates give meat to him. However, while the subordinates would traditionally present the king animals, in more recent times they also give him money on the eve of the *basga* and during the celebrations. Additionally the king receives parts of the sacrificial animals his subjects offer on other occasions to their families' ancestors. For example the district chief of Wegedo, *naaba yemde*, sends about fifty roosters as a present to the king on the occasion of the *basga*. Furthermore *naaba yemde* presents to the king a whole leg of the sacrificial bull he offers to his own ancestors three weeks later. The system of giving and taking is practiced at all levels of Mosi-hierarchy. It mostly involves donations to subordinates, equals and superiors of the person making the sacrifice. For example *naaba yemde*, who has given a leg of his sacrificial bull to the king, also sends portions of beef to the local chiefs around his district. Furthermore he shares meat

and meat products with his own *poore damba*, his subordinates. The king himself gives only to subordinates and offers to superior ancestors, but he does not present anything to equals, e.g. to other rulers of kingdoms around.

Nowadays the reciprocal system is of minor importance for the supply of meat to the population of Tenkodogo. As we see it, in former days, that is to say a hundred years ago, the supply of meat was exclusively covered by reciprocal meat distribution after sacrifices.

Today the *basga* donations to the king are more or less given voluntarily. People following tradition feel socially obliged to contribute to the ruler. In the old days the king was an absolute authority, who collected contributions as he thought fit. Nowadays the three bulls sacrificed, e.g. at the *basga*, come from the king's own herds.

As a result of the lack of resources, the single portions given away have become meagre. The quantity in the reciprocal system differs greatly. Furthermore in many cases the receiver of a portion does not benefit from it totally. If he represents a group he has to redistribute in his own social area. The parts, pieces or portions that are dedicated to each person are exactly defined, often according to arguments of analogy.

In contrast to ritual distribution, the commercial system of meat marketing is relatively simple. The motto is: money (nearly) can buy everything. Age, sex, kin or other traditional aspects of social status that play a role in ritual beef distribution do not primarily determine or exclude buyers of certain pieces or portions of beef at the market. On a second level the social status of the consumer of the meat plays a role, because this status often relates to the financial capability of a person. In any case the marketing system stresses the individual abilities of a person.

We shall start with a detailed description of the distribution of three sacrificial bulls at the *basga*. Afterwards we shall present the data concerning calculation and sale of a bull at the market in Tenkodogo.

Distribution of meat at the *basga*

The *basga* is considered a common meal in a symbolic or idealistic sense. In reality not everybody eats the same food at the same place and at the same time.

During three days, three separate meals are prepared and served in the palace. Firstly, a meal for the most exclusive group of the court including the ancestors is served. Secondly, there is a meal for nearly all authorities of the traditional court and finally there is a meal for the representatives of the current government of Tenkodogo. Apart from the prepared meat, many parts of the bulls are given to individual persons for further consumption in their homes. The king himself never eats in public or with other people. In the belief of his subjects, he is a supernatural person who is not involved in normal human activities (RITZ-MÜLLER, this volume, p. 113-134).

The royal court of Tenkodogo has developed a highly differentiated form of a common meal. When subjects of the king celebrate their personal *basga* with their family, they actually eat together with their ancestors at the grave sites. Nevertheless on these occasions some uncooked parts are also delivered to specific people within the social group.

The following description of distribution of meat during the *basga* is given chronologically. The first day of the *basga* is always a "great Friday" (*azum kasenga*). Market days in Tenkodogo are traditionally held every third day. When the Islamic holiday, the Friday, coincides with a market day this is called a "great Friday". It happens only every third week.

On this day the major sacrifices start shortly before noon. Firstly little hairs from head, back, breast and tail of the sacrificial animal are cut and laid at the sacrificial stone.

1. Then, not far from the grave site, directly after killing the bull, the animal's blood (*ziim*) is caught in a calabash and poured over the sacrificial stone where it seeps away into the soil. Finally it creates a dark red crust on and around the sacrificial stone. The blood is fresh and raw when it is poured. It symbolises the high density of vital strength and clearly representing life. Despite its major significance there is a danger involved with its consumption. Only the mighty ancestors possess enough magic power to control all the consequences of blood consumption. In ethnology we know many cases where people do not hesitate to drink blood, but in Tenkodogo blood is traditionally considered the privilege and the preference of the ancestors.

2. While the bull is bleeding dry, more calabashes are filled and poured and the whole tail (*zuure*) of the bull is cut off. It is laid beside the sacrificial stone, but it is not dedicated to the ancestors. The sacrificial priest of the specific grave site is entitled to take it later. This person is not necessarily identical with the personal sacrificial priest of the king, who is responsible for all the sacrifices at the king's *basga*. Each grave site has another specific priest to do all the other services. The tail is given to the sacrificial priest because he can use it to produce a case for his sacrificial knife. He skins the tail without slitting it and in this way he gets a sheath into which the knife neatly fits.

3. When butchering the animal starts, the Fulani who has done the throat cutting, gets his reward. In analogy to his job, a part of the throat (*kodre*) belongs to him. Later he will receive more: the small stomach (*pubila*), typical of ruminants, and the spleen (*lale*) of the bull. The Fulani representing the group who herds the king's cattle receives the small stomach because it is a typical part of cattle. The spleen is supposed to give the stamina necessary for the herdsman in the wilderness. The immediate distribution at the grave site is completed by now. The butchers finish their work and transport all other parts to the king's kitchen area.

4. The most important meal is prepared. Less than half of the sternum (*yaoveinre*), liver (*saronre*), lungs (*fulfuuvu*), rumen (*pukewo*) and intestines (*yaoo*) are cut into very small morsels and grilled over an open fire. This "gril-

lade" is called *sæebo*. It is the elite of the Tenkodogo kingdom who participate in this meal. a) The ancestors get the little parts of the *sæebo* (*mâanfiusdmdila*) offered at the sacrificial stone. b) The highest sacrificial priest (*yaonaaba*) of the king also receives a portion which he will distribute further on to all sacrificial priests (*yaonanamse*). c) The king and his closest patri-kinship (FaBr, *m'banama*, elder Br, *kiemrapa*, eldest So, *nabbigkasenga*) eat from the *sæebo*. d) In addition the two most important ministers of his court participate in this meal: the *dapornaaba*, as the representative of the Mosi, and the *samandnaaba*, as the representative of the Bisa. Little cubes of the *sæebo* are delivered to the particular households of this exclusive group, which in majority represent the closest family of the ruler (living and dead). Also on "great Friday" when the *sæebo* has been prepared and served predetermined individuals acquire certain raw parts of the animal.

5. The remaining part of the liver (*sæonre*) is divided and sent to: a) the king, b) the three most important ministers, *dapornaaba*, *samandnaaba* and *balumnaaba*, c) to the chief of the drums, *bændnaaba*, and d) to two district chiefs out of six. These two, *wegednaaba* and *biisgnaaba*, are probably the leaders of the most ancient subordinate districts of the kingdom and both are Mosi, whereas the other four district chiefs of the kingdom belong to the ethnic group of the Bisa, *bitnaaba*, *bannaaba*, *yargtengnaaba* and *luangnaaba*.

People say that in former times, after the preparation of the *sæebo*, the remaining part of liver was given exclusively to the king. The preference of the elite for liver is evident, whether the king himself or in company with the most important subordinates of court's hierarchy consumes the precious organ. Liver is highly preferred all over the world, because this organ is considered to be extremely rich in vitality. Some reasons therefore are the central location of the liver and the appearance of this organ, which is most similar to blood in comparison to all other parts of the animal's body. Blood, as we have mentioned, is considered to be the most important medium of vitality. Besides the idealistic arguments for the preference for liver there are also practical ones, e.g. in hunting situations liver can be removed quickly from the carcass, liver has a soft consistency and can be chewed by toothless people, etc. (ZIMMERMANN, 1992: 157).

Another part of the animal symbolises the leadership, the sternum. Social subordinates are generally called in Moore *poore dæmba*, people in the back. Social leadership therefore means standing in front. In the anatomy of humans the sternum represents the front of humans and therefore in Mosi idea the leadership.

6. Accordingly the part of the sternum (*yaoveinre*) which remains after the preparation of the *sæebo* is devoted entirely to the king. As we have mentioned, people say this part integrates juicy muscle, crispy fat and succulent gristle, the favoured combination of local taste preference.

7. One leg (*giere*) of a bull is kept for the king. Leg is considered to be better than shoulder or back, because this part has fewer bones than the others.

8. The hides (*gongo*) of the bulls are also for the king, but not for consumption. Traditionally they were used for ritual purposes. Today they are probably sold.

9. The *balumnaaba*, first servant of the court, who is in charge of preparation and realisation of all ceremonies, gets penis (*yoore*) and scrotum (*lande*), because the rituals he is in charge of are celebrated to increase the number of people at court. That is identical with increasing power and wealth of the king.

10. The heart (*suuri*) is dedicated to the warlord of the king, *tabrana*. In former times he had to be extremely brave. He was not allowed to survive a lost battle.

11. A whole leg and a whole shoulder are cut into small pieces and sent to a large number of ministers (*nayirdamba*) and to the quarter chiefs of Tenkodogo.

12. Four front trotters (*taorkarga/taorkarse*) have to be given to the *keognaaba* and *tungelsnaaba*. These two village chiefs are involved in the enthroning of the king (*kasemdamba*).

13. The consumption of the heads (*zugu/zutu*) is the privilege of the drummers (*bendre/benda*). Beating the drums in Tenkodogo means telling about the history of the kingdom in the language of the instrument. Drummers do not beat a rhythm. The drummers need an excellent memory. Especially the long genealogy of the king requires a great power of reproducing what has been learned. If they would wrongly spell or forget one of the ancestors in their drum narration the insulted forefather would punish them severely according to the belief of the people.

14. A whole leg (*giere*) and a shoulder (*boko*) without trotter is dedicated to the brothers of the king (*naabyaoa/naabyapa*) and to the sons of the king's father's brothers (*nakomse*).

15. One front trotter (*taorkarga*) is given to the boys working at court (*dakore/dakaba*).

16. The sisters of the king (*naabtaoapoko/naabtaoapokse*) and his eldest wife (*pukiema/pukiemse*) receive the kidneys (*yiimde/yiima*) and the coccyx (*sulyagre/sulyaga*). People say these parts represent a very delicate spot of a woman's body, which is not allowed to be touched by man. On the other hand, in ethnology we find often the idea, that fertility is located in the coccyx. That was not confirmed by the people of Tenkodogo.

17. A whole leg (*giere*) and a shoulder (*boko*) without trotter are for the consumption of the king's wives (*naabpoaka/naabpagba*) and "for other strangers".

18. The tanner who takes care of the skins is rewarded with one front trotter (*taorkarga*).

Partition and distribution of raw parts are completed in the evening of the great Friday. Early in the morning of the following day the king's wives start

to prepare a meal, which will be served in the afternoon of the second day of the *basga*.

19. Some parts of the three bulls are cooked in two different ways: firstly the remaining inner organs, mainly rumen and intestines, are prepared as a soup (*nemb̄im*) and secondly all back parts are made with a sauce (*nemz̄edo*). Four different groups of people feast on the meal at different locations in the inner palace at the same time. a) All ministers of the court (*nayird̄amba*) assemble under the chairmanship of the *dapornaaba* and the *samandnaaba* at a place called *z̄ongin* to share their part. b) The patrilineal kin of the king (*na-komse*) eat in a place called *nakomszīa*. c) Chiefs of districts and villages (*kombemba*) meet at the horse yard of the palace, *wedzaka*, and have their meal there. d) The drummers (*b̄enda*) gather in a place called *binazīa* where their part of the meal is served. According to tradition, the king himself always eats all alone. Approximately 200 people participate in that meal as a whole.

Together with the meat, products of millet are served, especially millet beer. The traditional end of the *basga* is near. Nowadays on the following Sunday the king's women prepare another meal for the political authorities of the current government of Tenkodogo.

20. Chicken, guinea fowl and mutton meals are prepared for this dinner. The representatives assemble in the private court of Naaba Tigre and sit in a modern way at tables.

21. At the end of the festivities one leg and two shoulders are distributed to the children of the king (*naabkamba*). Another leg and another shoulder are given to some close friends of the Tenkodogo *naaba*.

The marketing system

Distribution in commercial butchering is based on money value. The data presented relates to prices in November 1993. The butchers buy bulls, oxen and cows at the local cattle market, which is held every third day on an area a little away outside the town on the road to Koupela. The price for the animal is negotiated by estimating the size of the animal. That is to say the butcher evaluates quantity, the number of portions he will finally be able to sell. The smallest portion sold normally is worth 100 CFA. The portions are not standardised by weight. Like all other merchants on the market of Tenkodogo (except the rice sellers) butchers do not use a balance or any other standardised unit of measurement to guarantee a certain quantity for a certain price. Butchers and customers judge quantities by appearance. As we showed with the help of scales and amidst laughter of all people on the market the quantity they estimate to be worth 100 CFA weighs approximately 300 grams. It is important to remember that this price was relevant in November 1993 because the rate of inflation and seasonal changes of supply of cattle affect prices permanently. Butchers have an eye for estimating how many portions they will ultimately get from an animal, in other words they know how much money the sale of a certain bull (*nagraogo*), ox (*nagv̄anre*), cow (*nagȳanga*) or young cow

(*nagsɛdga*) will bring in on the meat market. It is the volume of the animal which gives the price on the cattle market. Bulls and oxen are normally valued more highly than cows. Young animals are normally more expensive than old ones. Meat quality, e.g. tenderness, is not an argument for the price, but in the end the quantity categories of the butchers in Tenkodogo are identical with quality categories, e.g. a young bull has more meat quantity than an old cow and also its meat is of better quality. Meat consumers in Tenkodogo are not especially interested in the quality aspect of tenderness, because meat is consumed freshly on the day of slaughtering. The aspect of tenderness becomes important when meat can be hung in the cold or in refrigerated rooms for a period of time. Concerning the price, quantity is one criterion of the judgement for a head of cattle and a portion of beef. Another important criterion is the proportion of muscle, fat and bones of the entire animal and of the single ration. Consumers in Tenkodogo do not appreciate one of these substances without the others. They prefer a specific proportion of the three substances and tastes.

Once the butcher and the seller have agreed on a price for an animal, the starting point of any further calculation is set. Due to the climatic circumstances in Tenkodogo sale of meat takes place the same day the animal is slaughtered. Normally cattle butchers cannot sell an entire animal in retail trade during one day. Hence in a first stage the animals' parts are sold wholesale. The butcher who has bought the animal on the cattle market does the slaughtering as we described before. In his function as a wholesaler he is called *koosma*, which means mother of the butchers (*koasa*, butcher, is shortened to *koos* and *ma* means mother). As we have described, after butchering at the abattoir the animal is divided into six parts of approximately 20 kilograms: two legs, two shoulders, back and innards (including head and sexual organs). Normally the cattle butcher who has slaughtered the animal will keep the back and the innards for retail. He will wholesale the other four parts to colleagues called *koosbila*, little butchers (*koos* is a short form of *koasa*, butcher, and *bila* is the diminutive form). These little butchers sell just one part of 20 kilograms each on small markets or in street trading. The wholesale price for all parts is identical. It corresponds to the amount of money paid at the cattle market for the entire animal divided by five. For instance, if a bull costs 30 000 CFA, the wholesale price for its legs, shoulders and back is 6 000 CFA each. In such a way the expenses are covered. The sale value of the sixth part, the innards, and the worth of the skin is reckoned to be a compensation for the work of butchering. In addition the cattle butcher himself normally retails the back on the meat market of Tenkodogo. Butchers make approximately a 10 % profit marketing one of the six individual parts of the animal.

On the market the butchers prepare the single parts for retail sale. Generally the entire part is cut and chopped into small pieces, which are heaped up on a table. The piles represent portions of 100 or 200 CFA and consist of muscle, fat and bones. Butchers distinguish particular anatomical features of the animal, mostly referring to particular bones. However, customers do not ask for

piles made of identified muscle, fat and bone, i.e. they do not request a portion of the lower leg or the neck, but for a portion for 100 or 200 CFA. The consumer's first choice is the proportion of muscle, fat and bones. Under this aspect leg is better than shoulder and shoulder is better than back. The difference, however, can be equalised by the quantity sold for a fixed amount of money. Portions for 100 CFA of leg are smaller than those of shoulder and back, but all portions consist of muscle, fat and bone. That is to say all bones are sold.

Only the bone of the shoulder blade (the scapula) is not for sale. This bone is something special in many cultures. In Tenkodogo, people believe that the scapula is a medium of magic. In the hands of powerful sorcerers it can become a deadly instrument. Loaded with magic and dug in the ground it can kill the person stepping on it. The butchers do not want to be involved in this kind of evil magic. Therefore they take the scapula away and chop a little hole in it. This hole makes it useless for magic purposes. People say in ritual butchering this is practiced also, but we had no proof of it. In commercial butchering definitely everybody, also butchers of pigs, dogs and donkeys, pay attention to the correct handling of the magic bone.

Once the parts and pieces of the bull, ox or cow are piled up on the butcher's table, everybody can buy everything for money, regardless of age, sex, social status or ethnic affiliation of the consumer. The only exceptions are three pieces of the back of the animal which are traditionally kept by the cattle butcher for his own supply and for the benefit of his family. Firstly, the tail and the coccyx, secondly, the lower part of the sternum and thirdly, the pointed bones of the lower backbone. The proportion of bones and fat in these parts is high. Some of them play an important role in ritual distribution: tail, coccyx and sternum. Butchers say that these pieces are extremely nutritious and make a man very strong.

Apart from the customers' preference for portions of the leg, others do exist. In marketing systems prices indicate preferences. The liver and the skin from the head are more expensive than the other pieces of the innards such as heart or lungs. Portions of intestines and rumen are the cheapest on offer.

Conclusions

The data presented concern only one cultural aspect of the present Tenkodogo society. Observations of the material phenomena are very detailed and nearly complete. Much more research has to be done on stressing the ideas linked with the phenomena. So far following conclusions can be made.

The influence of changes in history can be found in the way beef is produced in Tenkodogo, e.g. the integration of the Muslims and the adaptation of French attitudes into Mosi culture.

Cattle butchering mirrors in a small scale some characteristics of the general situation of the present Tenkodogo society. The main aspect here is that a

community, that traditionally is based on a collective principle, changes into a society that emphasises individualism.

We look at sacrifice as representative of traditional authorities and regard commercial slaughtering as the consequence of colonial and postcolonial policy. Comparing the importance of both for the supply of beef to the population, cattle butchering reflects the actual balance of power in Tenkodogo. That is to say the present government dominates politics but there is still some political power in the hands of the king.

Although ritual and commercial butchering represent two extremely different social systems, the actual phenomena in both cases are alike as far as the technique of butchering is concerned. Differences appear in the circumstances of slaughtering and in the distribution of beef. The physical result for the population of Tenkodogo is the same in ritual and commercial cattle butchering: the supply of beef to the nutrition of people. Criteria for the individual supply vary again. While in ritual distribution the hierarchical order of all society members determines the individuals right, the only criterion in commercial marketing is the financial situation of the consumer. Social status is often linked with personal wealth or poverty. Therefore both criteria can have the same result. However, the traditional system ensures in a higher degree the supply of all members of society, because it is less variable and individual than the market system. In contrast to sacrifice, ritualised social responsibility amongst society members does not play a role in marketing.

Sacrifice does not mean solely making offerings to ancestors but also exchange of beef amongst members of society. As we see it, the distribution of beef in ritual can also be regarded as some kind of commerce. In the long term, a man contributes to collective nutrition and takes individual advantage of the system when others make a sacrifice. Therefore we find some commercial aspects also in ritual. People regard carefully the balance of giving and taking and they protest loudly when an injustice occurs. In the belief of the people even the ancestors pay attention to the quality of the sacrificial animals. In return for their blessing they ask for the best. Provocatively said, sacrifice is an ancient form of commerce.

On the other hand commercial butchering has also some ritual aspects. We have mentioned the various adaptations of ritual behaviour in commerce, e.g. the protection against the dangers of killing, the pieces of the animal exclusively for the butchers, the treatment of the scapula etc.. As we see it, the act of buying is another form of ritualised exchange. Provocatively said, commerce is a modern form of ritual.

Commerce in principle means giving and taking resources. Ritual in principle means ensure order and permanence of situations. In the long term, both depend on each other. Sacrifice and business are two aspects of a principle of existence: giving and taking in an ordered and continuous form.

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