

ments would develop, which might appeal to the alternative mystical powers of the sprites discussed in this essay. Then, when the anti-*tsav* movement had run its course, there would be a swing back to the previous situation and the generation of new tensions. The earlier colonial period, which brought advantages for some Tiv (government chiefs and policemen) and new burdens (taxation, labour on public works) triggered off, at the end of the twenties, the biggest anti-*tsav* campaign yet seen in the *Haakaa* or *Namakaa* movement. To the Tiv with whom I discussed it, the *Haakaa* seemed to be essentially a result of colonial policy. "The Europeans have spoiled the land by taking all our (ritual) objects away," said embittered old men; but while the *Haakaa* reflected a reaction to colonial rule, it was one that came out of the dynamics of Tiv history. The upheaval that it caused was not simply a particularly agitated prelude to a return to normal. The art associated with Tiv traditional religion largely died out, there was a decline in both attendance at and interest in many cults, the Christian missions began to make headway.

Although I worked in areas of Tiv country where missionary influence had been relatively slight, and was able to witness traditional ritual, I felt myself to be in the presence of a dying religion. Hence, this account is concerned more with Tiv beliefs and concepts than with Tiv ritual, either as a coherent system of symbols, or as a significant element in the functioning of Tiv religion. Towards the end of the nineteen seventies, a certain revival of Tiv traditional religion took place, centred on the sprites. Adherents of this movement claimed that it was as much a religion (*kwagh u Aôndo*), in the sense of being concerned with man's relationship to God, as Christianity.

It would be rash to try and foretell the future of religion in Tiv society, or even to generalize on its past role. It may even be that the continuities in Tiv values are concerned with ethics rather than ritual. I would not claim that my understanding has been perfect; I can say that my affection and respect for the Tiv are great.

This essay was originally written in the English winter of 1971-72 to clear my own mind about Tiv religion. Having completed it, I then thought it might be expanded into a

book. At present, however, I see no chance of doing so. Yet I feel it a duty to fulfill my promise to the Tiv that I would publish what they told me. I am far from being entirely satisfied with what I have written, and I hope other scholars, particularly Tiv themselves, will make further studies.

I was in Tiv country between February 1967 and February 1970. I learned to hear and speak Tiv, though doing neither perfectly. At first, I asked questions through an interpreter. Later, I used to get informants to dictate texts on subjects which interested me.

A great many Tiv people helped me and I cannot list the names of them all. Let me at least mention the elders Yande Atum of Mbakutem and Swem Abaki of Sengeev, the late Patrick Iorshagher of Yande's compound, Cosmas Daudu, then a catechist, now a headmaster, and Julius Shinyi Akpur, then my servant, now a driver with the Benue State House of Assembly. Cosmas and Julius both helped me to gather information and provided information themselves. This essay is dedicated to them in gratitude. I thank the Catholic Bishop of Makurdi, the Right Reverend Donald Murray and my own now deceased parents for financial help. And I would like to give a word of thanks to the people who have read through the typescript, namely David Dorward, Elizabeth Tonkin, James Akor, Hyacinth Daudu, A. Faga Amough, and Samuel Yande (grandson of Yande Atum).

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