

The Cattle-raising among the Gwembe Tonga in the Southern Province, Zambia: Research Report in 2008

Masahiro Okamoto
Research Institute for Humanity and Nature

Abstract

A field research was conducted from November to December, 2008 in Sinazongwe District, Southern Province, and Lusaka in Zambia. The purpose of the research is to understand how the cattle-rearing is conducted among the Gwembe Tonga people in Southern Province. The revealed issues by the field research are as follows;

- 1) It was after forced migration of the Gwembe Tonga by constructing the Kariba Dam in 1950s, that they started to raise the cattle actively. Before that, they used to keep goats instead of cattle, because there was the effect of tsetse flies.
- 2) The shifting from raising goats to cattle is directly linked to the change of bride wealth. That is to say, bride wealth was mainly paid by goats and cash before 1950's; it is paid by cattle and cash after 1950's as the case may be together with goats.
- 3) The most important usage of the cattle is for plowing. However the number of oxens is in shortage in most households. Therefore it is popular to use cows for plowing.
- 4) The grazing area and feed for cattle change seasonally. Cattle graze in the bush around the villages mainly. During the dry season, they feed harvested maize stem and leguminous trees, *Acacia albida*, which are kept in the maize field for the purpose of feeding and for manuring.
- 5) Feeding damage by cattle and goats is common. As a result, people make the fences around fields with the branch of echinate, *Acacia albida*.
- 6) Herdboys must attend to grayzing to avoid the invension of cattle and goats to the field during the rainy season. It is the regulation established by each village.
- 7) It is very rare to slaughter cattle for food except the case of funeral. If people need cash, they sell cattle to acquaintance or buyers from Lusaka. To slaughter goats for food is common.
- 8) Usually cattle are owned by individuals. However the cattle gifted as bright wealth are shared by the members of matrilineage. These cattle are called "*ngombe lya mukowa*". They are used, when the need arises by members of matrilineage.