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SOLDIERS BOOK OF SHONA CUSTOMS

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SOLDIER'S HANDBOOK
ON SHONA CUSTOMS

1. This handbook is a follow-up to the booklet very kindly prepared by Phillipa Berlyn and issued by this Directorate on 5 August 1974. However, as a result of discussions, in particular with Mr. Roger Howman, a former Deputy Secretary for Internal Affairs, it became apparent that certain revisions and additions were necessary. Particular thanks must be given to Mr Roger Howman for his advise and assistance in this regard.

2. The importance of a knowledge and understanding of African customs, folk lore and ettiquete cannot be stressed enough and it is for that reason that this handbook has been produced.

Issued by:

Military Intelligence Directorate,
P.O. Box 8266,
CAUSEWAY.

17 October 1974.

MI/33/7/8

Ministry of Pwani - Pwani

SHONA CUSTOMS

Appendix A : Kinship

BEHAVIOUREATING : HABITS, METHODS AND FOODS

1. In the tribal areas, meals are eaten twice daily, at midday and at sundown. In the early morning, maheu (a non-alcoholic grain beer) is often drunk before work is begun.

2. Before eating, the hands must be washed and shaken dry, unless a clean towel is offered. It is unlikely that a towel is offered in the TTLs. Before eating, it is customary to hombera - to clap the hands lightly together, fingertips touching. This is one way of indicating thanks. By custom, people do not hold a conversation whilst eating. This custom is not in use amongst /younger

younger people. If you are not offered food, you must not take it by yourself without waiting to be invited to do so.

3. In a family, children are fed first, so that they may play outside when the adults are eating. The children eat from their own dishes. The men are then given food, usually in the dare (men's meeting place). The women eat indoors. Strict rules of etiquette are observed, the eldest helping themselves first.

4. The actual method of eating is to roll, in the right hand, a ball of sadza - the stiff porridge made either of mealie meal, rapoko or millet. The ball of sadza is then dipped into the dish of relish. In some clans the sadza ball is dented with the thumb to hold gravy. In others, this is bad manners. The sadza will be taken from a communal dish and the relish from a separate communal dish. The relish may be made of various meats - either beef, mutton, goat or game animals, /but

but more usually, when available, of mbeva (field mice), ishwa (flying ants), majuru (white ants), hove (fish), dhovi (a tasty peanut sauce); also various types of pumpkin - chipudzi (small pumpkins), manhanga (pumpkin proper), nhopi (pumpkin mashed with peanut sauce). The following green vegetables are eaten: dherere renyenje yesango (bush okra), nyemba (beans), jakari, mhowa, munhenzva, rhuni, nyimo and musungusungu (all green leaf vegetables). Various fungi are eaten, amongst them nhedi, a large plate sized mushroom, and huve, which grows on long stems inside anthills, looks like a toadstool but has an excellent flavour. Amongst other insects eaten are tsandu refuta, an insect with a fat body that tastes like salt peanuts, worth the risk; madora, musasa caterpillars and beetles called mandevere - very offputting - marapa, an edible stink bug mostly found in the Bikita/Gutu districts and certain types of locust, and birds. Mukaka wakakora, sour milk, is used as a side dish with sadza. Honey is, of course, a special favourite.

5. Meat.....

5. Meat is usually cooked on the fire but can, of course, be put in a pot and provides muto (gravy). The relish (usavi) can be made of any of the items mentioned if available and is an essential part of the meal (like butter with bread) and makes the variety in their diet. The verb ku dya (to eat) means eating sadza-with-relish. If the relish is finished first, then to eat the sadza alone is ku temura, i.e. not worthy to be called eating, so it is most important to ensure both. There are a host of words used to describe different modes of eating or combination of ingredients and to show an interest in food is, like our weather, a useful introduction to further topics.

6. Certain foods are never eaten. These include snake, particularly python (which is in fact good eating), crocodile, leguaan, crustaceans (crabs, fresh water mussels and seafood, although this applies only to landlocked tribes). The pangolin or scaly anteater (haka) is regarded as being exclusively the food of /chiefs,

chiefs, and is not eaten by ordinary people.

7. In addition, every clan and sub-clan has a mutupo or totem, usually related to some animal. It is tabooed to kill, to eat the flesh of your totem animal, or to wear its skin. You should learn something about your men's totems, since it is inconsiderate to expect them to eat forbidden food, which will shake their self-confidence and later involve them in a ritual cleansing ceremony. In every case ask about it as sometimes there are exceptions, even diversions, and sometimes only parts of the animal, e.g. the heart (moyo).

CUSTOMS RELATED TO DRINKING

8. There are several types of strong alcoholic drink; doro or musungwa made from dry millet; mhamba, which is not traditional, is the drink of shebeens and is very strong; hwahwa, made from mealie meal and millet together; maheu made similarly, but is

/non

non or mildly alcoholic; and finally hwahwa hwemurungu hunopisa - European spirits, and kachazo, made from the macao berry. Bumhe is the mild beer for women and children.

9. When drinking, people should share equally more or less. The men should drink from their own communal hari or pot, and the women from theirs, and they drink separately. The unmarried men - majaya - have also their own hari and the young married men, too, may have separate hari.

WASHING CUSTOMS

10. Personal washing is done in the river, if available. The women and mhandara, or girls past puberty, have their own place for bathing in the river. The little girls wash separately under the supervision of an older girl.

11. Similarly, boys younger than fourteen wash separately from the older men. Each has his own portion of river.

/12. People

12. People are inhibited and will strip and wash with embarrassment. They have strong taboos and etiquette on these matters.

DAILY VILLAGE ROUTINE

13. Routine and duties in the villages are divided in clear demarcation between men and women.

14. Women's Work. (Never done!)
Cooking; sweeping within the house and outside it; looking after the small children and washing them and their clothes; fetching wood; washing pots and plates; searching in the bush for miriwo (vegetables); searching for domestic animals if these have been allowed to escape by small children; sewing for the family; teaching the children good habits; grinding the grain, mealie meal, millet, rapoko and peanuts; looking after visitors who may turn up; digging in the fields, planting and weeding; plastering the house

/and

"fathers", "mothers" and "brothers"
and digging their foundations
you name it, they do it.

15. Men's Work. The cutting of poles, making of bark lathes and putting up the framework of the hut, also the thatching; all building work is done by the men, and includes the building of cattle pens and pens for pigs, sheep and goats, as well as chicken runs and fencing. The men also weave baskets, sleeping mats and nests for pigeons or chickens, and build small granaries for holding mealie cobs. The young boys herd the goats and later qualify for cattle and dig and set traps for field mice (mbeva). The men carve yokes for oxen and do the ploughing; they make the axes and badzas, and carve handles for these. They also carve chairs and any other domestic utensil and items of furniture found in the hut and its environs. They are in charge of hunting, fishing, skinning, and the making of biltong. Threshing of grain is a shared work.

/THE

THE FAMILY

16. The family, as the Shona understand it, differs considerably from that of the European concept. Within European custom, two men both with the same surname are not necessarily related. Within Shona custom, the sharing of the same mutupo, or totem, implies a clan relationship which is deemed to be as close as blood relationship. Sharing of the same chidawo (surname or subdivision of a mutupo, which would almost automatically include sharing of mutupo), implies blood relationship, although in tribal eyes both are 'ropa rimwe chete' (one blood only).

17. The Shona family consists of two definite components - the dead (non-living) ancestors (midzimu = ancestral spirits) and living people. Those not yet born are a vital expectation.

18. The European is invariably misled and annoyed by the number of
/ "fathers",

"fathers", "mothers" and "brothers" an African produces. Appendix A shows how, in the kinship system, a man calls all the brothers of his biological father, "father"; all his aunts "female father" and classifies them as "big" or "little" according to whether they are older or younger than his own father; how all the children, of that generation of "fathers", he calls "big" or "little brother" or "sister", and how his children and those of his generation are all called "my children".

19. The son of the chief or headman or kraalhead's sister (the muzukuru) are very important and the muzukuru is often the most knowledgeable and unbiased person in the kraal. The chief headman's or kraalhead's mother is also a very powerful figure.

20. The most important person depends on the nature and importance of the matter. Sometimes it is a man's sister, sometimes his mother-in-law. Generally, it is the oldest living male or in respect the eldest

/living

living female. Thus:

sekuru = grandfather

ambuya = grandmother

baba = father

amai = mother

21. Members of the family who have died are regarded rather as being in a different sphere than on a completely separate plane. They are shown respect, and beer and meat are offered to them; they are prayed to as intermediaries, with the prayers always being made by the eldest male in the family to his deceased father as representing the collectivity of prior spirits, if a paternal matter. But if it is a maternal matter, he cannot do so as that is for the wife's family. The social structure of the family, and this encompasses the tribe also, should be geared to respect for seniority.

/RESPONSIBILITIES...

RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE FAMILY

22. Decisions are usually made by the man of the family. The wife never descusses her husband's affairs outside their hut, although this varies with the individual, and women certainly try to influence their husband's decisions.

23. Intercession through the ancestors is the responsibility of the eldest male of the family unit. He is also the provider, though to a limited extent. It is the woman who must provide the day to day food, and must administer the stocks of food. If the family unit runs short, it is the fault of the wife, i.e. she is the planner, the calculator and sole guardian of the grain bin so it is necessary to ask her permission to look inside it. In the event of her husband's death, a woman still does not make her own decisions. She is a widow and is inherited by any such male relative (on her husband's side) she may choose, and she may refuse all. She need not necessarily sleep with

/him

him, should she wish not to do so. The blood line is considered to go down through the male only. Thus a man is permitted in theory to marry his niece by his sister, but should he marry his brother's child this would be incestuous.

24. The man should have (as a general rule) the final say in any family decisions. In the event of divorce, the woman's interests are looked after by the nearest male relative in her direct family. A woman's duty is usually geared entirely to the comfort of her man and to the rearing of her children.

25. Within the village there is a communal duty of respect to the village headman and the elders. Usually most persons within a village are related, if not by direct blood line then with the clan relationships, which is equally strong. However, there are vatorwa, i.e. one who is not related.

/26. Similarly..

26. Similarly, the village headman and elders owe duty and pay respect to the clan chief of their area, with whom there is also, occasionally, a clan relationship. There are, however, almost always vatorwa in any area.

MANNERS

27. There are certain fundamental conventions; speaking pleasantly always with others; helping those in trouble (with particular reference to direct or clan relations); to hombera (clap hands) when talking with elders; young women should bob (bend the knees) - curtsy - when talking with elders; young men should squat down. It is exceedingly impolite not to sit down before a superior, i.e. to stand and look down on an older or respected person. In traditional families the eyes are lowered. It is impolite to look directly in the eye. Nothing is ever given with the left hand, which is used only for personal matters. For example, one may not eat with

/the

the left hand, although it is permissible to hold a bone in the left hand while eating sadza with the right; a person should hombera when entering a village. When passing anyone else (pass in front), permission should be requested with the word "Tipindewo?" A person should make a polite request for help or information without simply taking what he wants. Not only is this very bad manners, but in the event of people looking for information, such bad manners would cause an adverse reaction, and information would be less likely to be forthcoming.

28. When accepting anything, both hands should be used, or the left hand should touch the right arm; the woman should curtsy; the man should hombera. If he has only one hand free, he brings his left hand up to his left shoulder in a gesture of respect.

29. Great emphasis certainly is placed on manners, on respect to elders, and on a smiling face.

/GREETINGS

GREETINGS

30. On entering a village, not your own, permission (nowadays often ignored and necessarily so) should be requested thus:

"Ti-pindewo?" or, more probably, "Ti-svikewo?"

The answer to which is:

"Svikayi".

Basically, this means; "May we arrive?" with the affirmative reply. If about to enter a hut, say "Go Go Go?" a verbal equivalent of knocking.

31. Greetings are important. No MuShona will begin the day without making the correct morning greeting. There are similar greetings for midday and late afternoon, and a greeting when meeting after some time.

Note: A and B are greetings between two people:

/a. The

a. The morning greeting is:

A. "Mangwanani"
"Good morning"

B. "Mangwanani"
"Good morning"

A. "Marara here?" ...
"Did you sleep?"

B. "Ndarara kana marara-
wo"
"I slept if you
slept also".

A. "Ndarara"
"I slept".

b. There are variations on
this. Try the Karanga
one, for instance:

A. "Mangwanani"

B. "Mangwanani"

/A. "Mamuka ...

A. "Mamuka here?"
"Have you arisen -
woken up?"

B. "Ndamuka kana mamu-
kawo"
"I have if you have,
etc".

c. The midday greeting is:

A. "Masikati"
"Good day"

B. "Masikati"
"Good day"

A. "Maswera here?"
"Have you spent (the
day) well?"

B. "Ndaswera kana
maswerawo"
"I have spent (the
day) well if you have
also".

A. "Ndaswera"
"I have spent (the day)"
/d. The

- d. The evening greeting is similar, except for the word manheru-maure - "Good evening" - which replaces masikati.

32. A greeting commonly in use is:

A. "Kwaziwayi"/"Kaziwayi"
..... "Greetings"

B. "Kwaziwayo"
"Greetings"

A. "Makadiiko?" or
"Makadini?"
"How are you"

B. "Ndiripo makadiwo"..
"I'm O.K. if you're
O.K."

A. "Ndiripo"
"I'm O.K."

Note the use of the plural, like the courtesy of the French. The last two would be even better as 'Ti-ripo' and, if a woman, the plural of 'a-mayi' should be used. /33. There..

33. There are variations on this theme, but the general idea is the same. It is customary, and polite, if you are proficient in Shona, to enquire after individual members of the family, the rains, the condition of crops and any other sort of topical chat. Do not ask a woman what her name is; ask the name of the child and then refer to her as "mother (plural) of the child". The mode of initial greeting, as set out, is highly important but thereafter the minutiae of customs is not so important as acting in a patient, reasonable, considerate and friendly manner to men, women and children. And above all, why should not the teacher, businessman, etc, be accorded similar respect even if he does not fit into the stereotype of "African Custom"! Remember Advocate Chitepo was made to sit on the floor by a certain official who had a compulsion towards traditional behaviour.

AQUIRING INFORMATION

34. If there is time available,
/never

never make the mistake of asking a direct question. The greetings shown in the previous paragraph will go some way towards encouraging people to talk. Also, never ask a leading question. Ask: "Where does this road go to?" not "Does this road go to Bindura?".

35. On entering a village, the request should be made to see the senior man in the village, i.e., "owner of kraal" (muridzi we musha or equivalent). If he is not there, then the next in seniority should be approached, and so on.

36. Beyond polite greeting, try to avoid questioning women. You are unlikely to get anything out of her because it is against old custom for her to:

- a. discuss business with anyone except her man, or
- b. speak to a strange man.

This is obviously the ideal but very /often

often men will not be found in the villages.

37. You must also remember that the chances are that you will be asking for information regarding direct members of her family, or clan members. Where possible, then, avoid asking women any questions.

38. In approaching an older man, the hands are clapped together or one is clapped against chest or thigh for respect and he is addressed in the plural. If there is time, the conversation should be on general topics. If he is a man of some importance or standing, he may speak to you through the medium of a third party. This is correct, and has the advantage of giving you ... and him, too, of course ... time to think before answering. After making the general friendly enquiries about crops and rains, turn to the subject about which you wish to question him.

39. REMEMBER:

a. Make

- a. Make the correct greetings.
- b. Show respect even if you do not feel it.
- c. Avoid being over-assertive.
- d. Avoid hurry if possible.

40. There may be little point in attempting to obtain information from the women. This is also true with regard to the young children, who will tend to be very afraid of you and will be speechless as a result, although kindness may have some effect. However, this all depends on the individuals concerned and the approach.

41. If the impression has been given that here is a system which is ingrained, rigid and unchangeable, then it would be well to recognise that all these customs, beliefs and attitudes are only there by a process of education, like the language itself, and are greatly susceptible to changing conditions in that "education".

/The

The African you interrogate is very likely to answer you in English or Chiraparapa, the youngster may be proud to show he has been to school and can answer questions, the woman ... well, a good argument could be made that most decisions are in fact made by her and her tongue is the most powerful influence in the village. Face the fact that things are not what the elders would like them to be, that there is an enormous "generation gap" and that there is bewilderment and confusion accompanied by regret among the old that so much "disrespect" is prevalent. Traditional views have been unable to keep up with changes.

ATTITUDES

42. Attitudes towards the following are generally (extremely so!):

a. Military Authority:

Fear and curiosity re uniform.

/b. Europeans:....

- b. Europeans:
Tolerant, in general, but they do not understand why we are always in a hurry, why we do not smile, why we often look irritable, nor have they any great understanding of our customs, although sometimes this is more than we have of theirs.
- c. Education:
A passionate desire for it, because they see it as a means to an end, and sometimes as an end in itself.
- d. Work:
Like anyone else, something to be avoided if possible; a necessary evil.
- /e. Modern

e. Modern Living:

The older generation see it as something of which they do not approve. It breaks all traditions. The younger generation naturally hanker after it.

f. Teachers and Educated Africans:

People to be respected; people to whom the world owes a living, if they are men.

43. In general, the Shona people are by tradition shrewd, often cunning experts at litigation. They are pastoral people whose lives, by and large, are governed by the elements and the seasons.

44. Basically, he is a happy person, but very socially conscious within his own community. This involves respect for the older people, and the awareness that he must not let the community down.

/It is

It is a greater crime to be caught than to commit a crime.

RELIGION

45. As an ancestor worshipper ("Spiritualism"), religion therefore is the most important single factor in Shona life. The Shona recognise one god with several names: Mwari, Wokumusoro (the one at the top); Dzivaguru (the big pool - related to rainmaking and its importance) and Musikavanhu (the creator of people) being the most common names. The Shona can be said to believe in a hierarchy of spirits, Mwari being the one above all others. Immediately second to him are the important tribal spirits - Mutota, Dzivaguru, Nehanda, followed by, say, Chingoo Nehoreka. Chaminuka is regarded as important because of the historical portrayal as prophet. However, elsewhere in the country the majority of Shona tribes have tribal spirits (apart from family spirits); these spirits are those of the original founders of the tribe in question, or were there before the tribe moved in.

/Lower

Lower in the hierarchy are the mid-zimu, the ancestral family spirits. Next in line are the living people. It is important to remember that they are part of the whole spectrum, as are the unborn people of the future.

46. It is too easy to exaggerate the "power of the spirits". Of course their power is important but there have been many instances of people ignoring the spirits, even repudiating them, and one historical tradition relates an attempt to burn Mwari. So spirits too have to be careful how they respond to public sentiment, and there are many bogus spirits nowadays out to further special interests.

BURIAL

47. Burial custom, as with all custom, varies from clan to clan and almost from village to village, but, in general, the corpse is placed on a roughly built platform in a hut, having first been washed and covered by a blanket which, in traditional

/times,

It is a greater crime to be caught
 times, was made of bark. Sometimes
 the body is placed on a reed mat
 (rukukwe). There is a hole cut in
 the wall of the hut amongst some clans
 red peppers ground to powder are
 sprinkled either round the corpse,
 or across all openings in the hut to
 ward off witches.

48. If a person dies during the
 night, the body will stay in the hut
 for the next day and following night,
 and be buried in the morning. If
 death occurs during the hours of day-
 light, the body is kept for that
 night, the following day and a second
 night before burial. Ceremonials
 involved are the burial (kuviga),
 about a month after death is the
 ceremony of departure, the parting
 of the ways (mharadzo), then between
 six months and a year later, the
 ceremony of kurova gura (releasing
 the spirit and settling it) and
 finally nhaka, the disposal of the
 inheritance, including the widow.

/THE

THE SPIRITS : TRIBAL AND FAMILY

49. Svikiro's. The spirit of each clan requires a medium or host who is called a svikiro. An unexplained illness is usually the first sign that a person has within him (or her, for this is the only area of equality between male and female in Shona society) a spirit which wishes to come out. Once this is confirmed by a diviner, the potential medium must make certain sacrifices to the spirits, and will in due course fall into a trance. During this trance, the potential medium will be subjected to intensive questioning by tribal elders and particularly by the tribe's historian, sometimes known as the dunzui, and it will be incumbent upon the person for him to answer questions, in particular about the family tree of the houses of the clan and tribe. If the answers are correct, the elders and tribal authorities recognise that person as a medium for one of the tribal spirits; if not, he is seen to be a fraud. Very occasionally a fraudulent claimant gets away with it.

/50. Once

50. Once the medium is recognised, he holds a special place in his society and is second only in power to the Chief. When a chief dies, it is the tribal spirit who is consulted, through the medium, as to who is acceptable as the chief's successor. The two are, to a certain extent, interdependent. In some areas the tribal spirit is more powerful than the chief; he is the intercessor with God for rain; he will advise on drought, crop failure, disease. And since all disaster is seen by the Shona as activated either by human failure or deliberate human malice, it is the tribal spirit who can advise on how to put matters right.

51. Recognition of a svikuro is only possible if he wears his ceremonial clothes. Common dress is a black ankle length skirt, black beads around his neck and a hat of some difference and character. In most cases he will carry some sort of staff known as a mubada.

52. Midzimu. The family spirits
 (spirits

(spirits of deceased members of the family) are known as the midzimu or vadzimu (mudzimu - singular). These spirits are responsible for the wellbeing of the family and if annoyed or neglected may cause trouble. The midzimu are consulted and appeased by the eldest male member of the family who usually does this in front of the rukva (pot shelf) inside the hut.

THE NGANGA

53. The nganga is of considerable importance in his community. He fulfils the role of diviner, herbal doctor and psychologist. Like the other svikiros he/she is usually the victim of an illness which culminates in the announcement by another nganga that the person is endowed with the spirit of an ancestor who was himself an nganga, and wishes his successor to carry on the tradition. An alternative sign that a person is destined to become an nganga is that he/she dreams continually of medical matters. Sometimes a young man or woman /undertakes

undertakes to follow in the footsteps of a parent nganga. Whatever the fashion in which the vocation is made known to the future nganga, it is usual for him/her to undertake instruction from an established nganga, to learn about the use of the different herbs. This instruction varies in time between a year and two or three years, although where the vocation is inherited, the young nganga will have been learning his skills from his parent for many years

54. The nganga charges a fee in accordance with the severity of the illness to be cured. He may use either herbal methods to cure or he may divine the cause of the illness by means of throwing the divining bones, the hakata. He may use both methods. It is usual for an nganga to have both skills, although as his skills develop more strongly in one direction, he will tend to have a bias in that particular direction. Many of the mediums possessed of the healing spirit conferred by a shaved are respected nganga.

..... /55. The

55. The nganga falls into two categories, though there is nothing to preclude one person operating both skills.

- a. The nganga proper, or murapi, the healer/herbalist.
- b. Mufemberi or mushoperi, the diviners. The mufemberi prophesies, either through dreams and their interpretation or by means of using hakata. The mushoperi uses a stick to shopera - to foretell the future.

56. The people place strong faith in the abilities of their nganga. It is easy to see why he/she is respected in any community, and held in awe, even, to a certain extent, feared because of the ability to summon witches.

57. The medicines of the nganga are in the main herbal, and it has been /confirmed

confirmed by Gelfand that these are often effective, since the nganga has learned quite a lot about his plants. It depends on the calibre of the nganga. The old style man of the bush is more to be relied on than the town gentleman, whose 'cures' often appear in bottles ex-Gillingham clinic. He can offer herbal cures for any disease from a bad cough to impotence and leprosy. But a person who has a disease is also to be blamed for having caused the ancestral spirits to be angry enough to visit this trouble upon them. The spirits must be propitiated at the same time as the medicines are taken, or the cure will not work.

58. The nganga is a clever psychologist. The medicines do not always work unless you have absolute faith in their ability to do so. To a certain extent the medicines are placebos. But then many European medicines are, too.

59. The hakata, the divining bones, have a definite pattern, and are read
...../somewhat

somewhat similarly to tarot cards. The hakata are made from either ivory, mugomo seeds halved (about the size of a peach pip) and the wooden carved set of four hakata. Six mugomo pips are used, and four wooden hakata. There are no doubt variations on this. Each has to be prepared by the nganga. The mugomo nuts are read by the combination of those falling face up or face down; likewise the wooden hakata, depending on whether they fall plain or carved side up.

60. The importance of the man who can kandira hakata, throwing the bones, cannot be underestimated. People will consult the nganga not only for illnesses or misfortunes, but in search of luck in love, at cards, in business or at the races.

61. To sum up, the power of his religion over the rural African is great, and over the urban people perhaps the details are being phased out, but the nganga still has power to frighten the urban man and to remind him of his duty to his ancestral spitits. /It

It should be stressed that the one factor remains constant and as strong as ever - the MaShona believes that disease and disaster are caused by human failure or human malice, and the only persons who can help him to appease his ancestral spirits are his immediate family spirits or, failing this, the nganga.

HOLY PLACES IN TRIBAL AREAS

62. These are often difficult to recognise and their locations are best obtained from the local District Commissioner. They may be graves; they may be caves where there will be found pots and old spears, rolls of black and white cloth, perhaps; they may also be found in the boles of hollow baobab trees, or within the small rushanga or split pole fence that surrounds a muhacha tree or, in some places the tree itself is regarded as sacred. Certain hills are taboo and may not be climbed by people, but this is becoming less the case today, as people are seen to climb these hills without anything happening to them. In most cases, these sacred
/places

places are recognised by the type of clay pots around or within the area. The sacred caves house the ritual equipment of the vakuru, the senior members of the tribe who attend rain-making ceremonies.

63. The baobab trees are sacred when used as burial places. They can be recognised by the pots and funeral gifts placed on the grave covering, which is usually inside the hollow of the tree. Unless these trees are used as burial places, or, as in the Mtoko area, where they are in a circle of eight and so used as a ritual place for the induction of Chieftainess Charewa, they are not sacred.

64. Their significance to the African people is great, and these places should be treated with respect by everyone. African custom should be respected. Desecration of the small rushinga or fences around muhacha trees, and desecration of the shelves carrying the family household gods, hari (pots), should be avoided at all costs.

/65. Spiritual...

65. Spiritual Equipment. Items such as a ganhu or spiritual axe, a gona or horn, filled with oil, a fly whisk, duiker horns, bits of hyena skin, porcupine and hedgehog quills, vulture skulls, denote the presence of an nganga in the vicinity. Unless these are in a terrorist camp, they should be left untouched. Their significance has been discussed earlier under the heading of 'Nganga'. Herbal medicines are also easy to spot, and should likewise be left alone if circumstances permit.

CHARMS

66. You will find that almost every African wears a charm, either round the neck, round the wrist, or something to be kept in the pocket. These are usually small, wrapped in cloth, worn on a string. Tiny beads are also worn, again round neck, waist or arm. One such charm or 'medicine' is "mangoromera".

67. Mangoromera is the skin or leather wrist or armband which has python skin or

crocodile gall, etc, stitched into it. It is a charm vesting super human strength, courage or audacity in the wearer. It was, and may be even still, the prized magic of the boxer, criminal and tough guy of the urban areas and would be ideal for the terrorists.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE SHONA

68. In order to understand the behaviour of the Shona, it is necessary to consider the society in which he lives. In this paper the traditional tribal structure will be examined briefly and the effects of urbanisation on the African personality will be illustrated.

69. The main tribal groupings in Rhodesia, based on the territory they now occupy, is as follows:

a. Korekore Group:

Found in the Darwin, Urungwe and Lomagundi districts.

/b. Zezuru

- b. Zezuru Group: This comprises the "Central Shona" with Salisbury as centre and found throughout the districts of Mrewa, Mazoe, Salisbury, Charter, Hartley and part of Lomagundi.
- c. Karanga Group: This is the largest group of Shona found mainly in the Victoria, Bikita, Ndanga, Chibi, Belingwe, Gutu and Chilimanzi areas. It may be considered the "Southern Group" of Shona.
- d. Manyika Group: They are located in Inyanga, Makoni, Umtali and part of Portuguese territory.
- e. Ndau Group: Found in Melsetter district and the adjacent areas of Portuguese East Africa (PEA). About one-third of the group is in Rhodesia and the rest are in PEA.
- /f. Two

f. Two other groups to be considered in Rhodesia are:

- i. Kalanga Group; This is the Western group of people in Rhodesia. Although part of the original 'Shona', the course of time has created a divergence which makes it impracticable to include this group as an effective part of Shona language group.
- ii. Ndebele Group: Ndebele is a dialect of Zulu. The conquest of Matabeleland took place in 1837 when Mzilikazi invaded the area. The effect of this invasion was to cut off the people in the West from the main body of Shona speakers.

/70. From

70. From the foregoing it will be seen that the term 'Shona' is used to embrace a number of main dialects which are further sub-divided into many other dialects. These are grouped together in clusters in definite groups of close affinity.

71. Who were the earliest people whom we now call the 'Mashona'? Oral tradition, archival evidence and the findings of archaeology suggest that the hard core were 'Karanga' who arrived South of the Zambezi from Lake Tanganyika. Authorities give dates for their time of arrival as between the 11th and 14th Century. One historian has fixed the date as about 1325 AD. There are said to be people living in the Rufiji basin today who speak a language not unlike Chikaranga. Over the centuries people were constantly on the move as a result of power struggles between the various groups. This would account for the present distribution of the tribal clans throughout the country.

72. What is the origin of the term
/ 'Shona'

'Shona'. Unlike recent times the "Mashona" did not exist as an ethnic group. It is thought that the answer is to be found in the word - EMTSHONALANGA. In the early days the Zulus accompanying the transport riders were asked when they passed through kraals where they were going. Their answer was Emtshonalanga - Europeans took this to mean their destination and distorted it to mean Mashonaland. The literal translation of the term means "towards the setting of the sun".

THE TRADITIONAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

73. When an individual is exposed to a particular culture, a process occurs which can be defined as socialization. The effect of this process tends to make an individual conform to certain group standards in order to help him get along with the group and become an accepted member of it.

74. In order to be socially acceptable, the individual is required to conform to certain recognised social values and

/modes

modes of living. Failure to conform in this way can result in social pressures of ostracism or social disgrace being brought to bear on the non-conformists.

75. The fundamental difference between European and African society is that the life of an African is communal in his traditional setting. Whilst as Europeans, we recognise family obligations, the individual is still free to make his own decisions in a highly competitive world. Thus both the men and women in European society can enter into a large number of relationships and pursue their own self interests.

76. For the Shona living within the traditional way of life, the European way of life is meaningless and incomprehensible. His personality, his whole attitude to life is bound up with the identification of 'family'. His family is extensive, far more so than that of a European. The extended family system among the Shona is in fact more of a kinship /system

system. A man is born into this system and throughout his life he will be bound by the influences of the ties which bind him within the system of kinship. How he relates to everyone else will be affected by his standing within the community. The position will be further reinforced when he marries.

77. With his kin he holds lands, property and cattle. He will look for security within the group against hunger, illness and old age. From the kin he will seek spiritual and religious safety. This same system will punish him if he fails to observe the norms and legal ties which are inherent to the society in which he lives.

78. The essential difference between the European and an African is the way in which their individual societies permit them to live. In the past, life was highly insecure, but as has been pointed out by Carothers, the individual in African society did achieve some inner sense of personal security by adherence, and only by adherence,

adherence, to the traditional rules - rules which received their sanction and most of their force from the "will" of ancestors whose spirits were conceived as powerful and as maintaining their attachment to the land. There were fears of course, and misfortunes were almost the order of the day, but even these were seldom without precedent and for each of these there were prescribed behaviour patterns which satisfied the urge to action. So that the African achieved a measure of stability and, within his group and while at home, was courteous, socially self-confident and, in effect, a social being. But this stability was maintained solely by the continuing support afforded by his culture and by the prompt suppression of initiative.

79. In the rural areas the Shona live within an intricate network of kinship bonds, of rights and duties assigned to him. He does not, therefore, exercise his freedom of choice as an individual to make his own self interest judgements and choices. /For

For him, his kinship bonds are the most valued thing in his life. Everything else is subordinated to this value. Status within his kinship group dominates him, not the pursuit of gain and contract. Thus it is unrealistic to approach an African in the same way in which one would approach a highly individualised European.

80. A European is conscious of personal responsibility for most of his actions and glories in it. The Shona are first responsible to the group, because the life of the individual is rooted in the group. When an individual goes beyond the limits of what his community deems proper and responsible, he runs the risk of less social acceptance. He may even be considered anti-social and social sanctions will be applied which will include witchcraft.

81. It must be remembered that in the first place traditional African society has never emphasised the free individual. It has comprehended
 /individuals

individuals only in the light and context of the community, protecting them within a cocoon of fine spun relationships, relating them to the ancestors of the tribe and to its posterity. How different this is from the Western concept of the individual. Western man is free to develop his capabilities as he wishes, to insulate himself against the demands from his less successful neighbours or relatives. BUT he is also free to fail and to find little but the impersonal support of state charity if he does. Given the uncertainties of a subsistence economy, it is not surprising that Africans choose to invest in the security of personal relationships.

82. This should not be taken to mean that all Africans think in the same way. The influences of changes is widespread and deep. There are Africans who because of their education and experience have adopted a variety of views as has the European. It is difficult to make an accurate assessment of how many have moved away from the /matrix

matrix of the tribal mind, or how far they have moved, how genuine this is or how expedient and in what aspects of life.

83. Every group organised for action has a structure of functions. For a group such as a state or a tribe there exists a framework of society embracing all the minor structures. This deep-seated structure of political, legal, social and economic nature furnishes the foundations of life and action. It is remarkably strong in resisting change, indeed research has shown that while immense changes in religion, in economic affairs, in material aspects of life can occur, the bedrock of social structure persists unless a veritable upheaval and disintegration of the people takes place.

84. In general it can be said that the minds of men (unlike their bodies) are mainly the products of their cultures.

85. From this theoretical description
/of the

of the social structure of the rural African we can now move to consider the general outline of the structure of urban African society as we now find it in many of our large townships.

THE URBAN AFRICAN

86. From the findings of investigations into the life of the urban African the following trends have been observed:

- a. The Urban African Personality is Characterised by Strong Feelings of Anxiety and Insecurity. That many Africans are living below the poverty datum line is now an acknowledged statistical fact. This has resulted in the ever increasing concern over financial matters.
- b. The Quest for Money has Become one of the Urban African's Basic Motivations.

/This

This constant quest for money drives the urban African from job to job in search of higher wages. This trend does not lead to a stable labour force. Thus it happens that the individual with little social conscience turns to crime; and the social conditions within urban society are very conducive to the promotion of crime. The position is further aggravated by illegitimacy, lack of parental guidance and control, high unemployment and low wages.

c. The Urban African is Tribally Biased. The survival of tribal belief has ensured the importance in the urban areas of African magic and the witch-doctor, in various forms, plays an important role. Witchdoctors are consulted regularly by many Africans, /thus

thus witchcraft and sorcery are powerful urban institutions. Shona society is based on ancestor worship and it is to be expected that the Shona should continue to be strongly influenced by religious beliefs and practices which have formed part of their society for centuries. This explains the tendency towards the formation of African ritual-type 'Christianity'.

d. The Effects of Urbanisation.

The typical urban African is a person who, while he may have dropped many of the customs and beliefs of his forefathers, has nevertheless retained his tribal affiliation and a number of tribal beliefs. Some of these have been modified to fit the requirements of urban society. For instance 'lobola' is paid in money /and

and not in cattle, but this does not make the implications of this practice less significant. The urban African sees himself as a member of a particular tribe and he recognises his fellows according to their tribe. He has adopted European dress and many Western customs, but he has also retained many of his traditional beliefs, cultural mores and practices peculiar to his tribe. Traditional African culture is adjusting to the urban situation with an intermingling of three influences: tribal society, the urban township environment and Western European culture.

APPENDIX A TO
SHONA CUSTOMS. MI/33/7/8

KINSHIP (UKAMA)

1. The relations are:

ancestor	tateguru, vadzitateguru
aunt, maternal	amai Z, mai K.M., madzimai
aunt, if older than my mother:	amaiguru, maiguru
aunt, if younger " " " :	amainini, mainini
aunt, paternal	vatete K.Z., baba mukunda M
bridegroom	murume M, muwani K.Z.
bride	muroora M.Z., mwenga K
brother, of a girl	hanzvadzi
younger brother of a boy	munin'ina, munun'una
elder brother of a boy	mukoma

/brother-

brother-in-law of a man
 brother of wife
 brother-in-law of a woman
 child
 daughter
 daughter-in-law
 father
 father-in-law of a man
 first-born child
 grandchild
 grandmother
 grandfather
 last-born child
 mother
 mother-in-law of a man

mukuwasha K.Z., mukwambo
 baba, tezvara, mukarabwa
 muramu K.Z., mwaramu M
 mupwere, mwana, pwere
 mukunda M, mwanasikana
 muroora
 baba, madzibaba
 mukarabwa K, tezvara M.Z.
 dangwe M.Z., nevanji
 muzukutu, mwanamukati
 ambuya Z, mbuya K.M.
 sekuru, vasekuru Z
 gotwe
 amai Z, mai K.M., madzimai
 vambuya Z, mbuya K.M.
 /mother-

mother-in-law of a woman
 nephew of a maternal aunt
 nephew of a maternal uncle
 nephew of a paternal aunt
 nephew of a paternal uncle
 parent
 sister of a boy
 younger sister of a girl
 elder sister of a girl
 sister-in-law of a man
 sister-in-law of a woman
 (sister of husband)
 (wife of brother)
 son
 son-in-law

vamwene, madzimwene
 mwana (nephew or niece)
 muzukuru (nephew or niece)
 mwana (nephew or niece)
 mwana (nephew or niece)
 mubereki
 hanzvadzi
 munin'ina, munun'una
 mukoma
 muramu K.Z., mwaramu M.
 vatete, vamwene
 muroora, mainini
 mwanakomana
 mukuwasha K.Z., mukwambo
 /uncle,.....

uncle, maternal sekuru, madzisekuru
 uncle, paternal (elder) baba mukuru
 uncle, paternal (younger) baba munini, baba mudiki

2. Vambuya. A man addresses his wife's sister as muramu. He calls the wives of his wife's brothers vambuya, the same term that he uses for his mother-in-law.

3. Ambuya. Ambuya is strictly applied by children to their grandmother.

4. Baba. All my father's brothers are called baba: baba mudiki if younger than my father and baba mukuru if older. His sons and daughters are, therefore, my brothers and sisters. But the same is not true of all my cousins. See Table IV.

/5. Mainini/

5. Mainini/amainini and maiguru/amaiguru/maikuru

- a. These terms are strictly applied by children to maternal aunts; the aunt being senior or junior in relation to my mother.
- b. But the same term can be applied by the children of a polygamous union to describe senior or junior wives of their father.
- c. These terms can also be used by married men to describe senior or junior sisters of their wife, adopting, when they do so, the term used by their children.

/d. Mainini

d. Mainini is also used as a term for maternal female cousins when their father is the brother of my mother. Table IV.

6. Mukuwasha/mukwambo. These are terms strictly applied to the son-in-law, but can be used more loosely as terms for any male member of the bridegroom's direct family.

7. Sekuru. On the maternal side of the family, the term Sekuru applies to three generations:

- a. My grandfather.
- b. His sons, who are my uncles.
- c. My maternal uncle's sons, who are my cousins. /8. Tezvara..

8. Tezvara. Tezvara is a term strictly applied to a father-in-law of a man, but is, likewise, used for any male member of the bride's direct family. If the true tezvara (father-in-law) should die, the brother of the bride assumes all the functions of tezvara and is known as such.

/FAMILY.....

FAMILY RELATIONS OF A CHILD:

TABLE 1

Grandmother - Grandfather Ambuya Sekuru both address me as muzukuru or mwanamukati			Grandmother - Grandfather Ambuya Sekuru both address me as muzukuru or mwanamukati			
Uncle Baba mukuru Baba mudiki	Aunt Vatete Baba mukunda	Father Baba	-	Mother Amai Mai	Aunt Maiguru Mainini	Uncle Sekuru
He addresses me as mwana. I address his wife as maiguru or mainini				She addresses me as mwana. Both address their husbands as baba mukuru or baba mudiki.		He addresses me as muzukuru. I address his wife as ambuya.
Younger Brother Munin'ina			ME Boy	Elder Brother Sister Mukoma Hanzvadzi		

/TABLE II.....

IN-LAW RELATIONSTABLE II

A. If I am a man:

	Mother-in-law Vambuya	-	Father-in-law Vatezvara Mukarabwa K		Both call me Mukuwasha K.M.Z Mukwambo
ME -	Wife Mukadzi Mudzimai		Sister- in-law Muramu Maiguru (if older than my wife)		Brother- in-law Vatezvara (Sekuru)
					Sister- in-law Muramu Mainini (if younger than my wife)
	She addresses me as Murume.		She addresses me as Muramu. My children address her as Maiguru.		He addresses me as Mukuwasha K.Z Mukwambo K.M My children address him as Sekuru.
					She addresses me as Muramu. My children address her as Mainini.

B. If I am a woman:

	Both call me Muroora M.A		Mother-in-law Vamwene	-	Father-in-law Vatezvara
	Brother- in-law Muramu or Baba mukuru (if older than my husband)		Sister- in-law Vamwéné Vatete		Brother- in-law Muramu or Baba mudiki (if younger than my husband)
					Husband - ME Murume
	He addresses me as Muramu. My children address him as Baba mukuru.		She addresses me as Muroora. My children address her as Vatete.		He addresses me as Muramu. My children address him as Baba Mudiki.
					He addresses me as Mukadzi or Mudzimai.

/TABLE III....

COUSINSTABLE III

A. If I am a boy:

Uncle	Aunt	Father - Mother	Uncle	Aunt
Baba mukuru	Vatete	ME	Sekuru	Maiguru
Baba mudiki				Mainini
His sons I call mukoma or munun'una. His daughters I call hanzvadzi.	Both her sons and daughters I describe as mwana, but I address them as vazukuru.		His sons I call sekuru. His daughters I call mainini or amainini.	Her sons I call mukoma or munun'una. Her daughters I call hanzvadzi.

B. If I am a girl:

Uncle	Aunt	Father - Mother	Uncle	Aunt
Baba mukuru	Vatete	ME	Sekuru	Maiguru
Baba mudiki				Mainini
His daughters I call mukoma or munun'una. His sons I call hanzvadzi.	Both her sons and her daughters I address as vana.		His sons I call sekuru. His daughters I call mainini or amainini.	Her daughters I call mukoma or munun'una. Her sons I call hanzvadzi.

/TABLE IV

MATERNAL COUSINSTABLE IV

of a girl:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Daughters of sister of mother
if older:
if younger: | mukoma (girl cousin)
munun'una (girl cousin) |
| 2. Sons of sister of mother: | hanzvadzi (boy cousin) |
| 3. Sons of brother of mother: | sekuru (boy cousin) |
| 4. Daughters of brother of mother: | amainini (girl cousin)
mainini (girl cousin) |

/of a

of a boy:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Sons of sister of mother | |
| if older: | mukoma (boy cousin) |
| if younger: | munun'una (boy cousin) |
| 2. Daughters of sister of mother: | hanzvadzi (girl cousin) |
| 3. Sons of brother of mother: | sekuru (boy cousin) |
| 4. Daughters of brother of mother: | amainini (girl cousin) |
| | mainini (girl cousin) |

PATERNAL COUSINS

of a girl:

/1. Daughters.....

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Daughters of brother of father | |
| if older: | mukoma (girl cousin) |
| if younger: | munun'una (girl cousin) |
| 2. Sons of brother of father: | hanzvadzi (boy cousin) |
| 3. Both sons and daughters of
sister of father: | mwana |

of a boy:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Sons of brother of father | |
| if older: | mukoma (boy cousin) |
| if younger: | munun'una (boy cousin) |

/2. Daughters

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2. Daughters of brother of father: | hanzvadzi (girl cousin) |
| 3. Sons of sister of father: | muzukuru (boy cousin) |
| 4. Daughters of sister of father: | muzukuru (girl cousin) |

In short, by Shona convention all children of my father's brothers and all children of my mother's sisters are regarded as my own brothers and sisters (Cf. each case of Nos 1 and 2 above). The children of my father's sisters and the children of my mother's brothers are differently described.

/SP

Title: Soldier's handbook on Shona customs
URL: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu//UF00103228/00001>
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