

HONEY AND HOLIDAYS: THE INTERACTIONS MEDIATED BY HONEY BETWEEN EFE HUNTER-GATHERERS AND LESE FARMERS IN THE ITURI FOREST

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ABSTRACT In the Ituri Forest of north-eastern Congo, there is a “honey season,” every year, usually around July and August. During this time Efe hunter-gathers move deep into the forest to seek honey. Lese farmers living with the Efe obtain honey usually through exchange with the Efe. Some farmers, however, visit the Efe honey camp in the forest and spend several weeks or months enjoying the honey collected by the Efe. Lese farmers who go into the forest say it is their “holidays.” This paper describes how the Efe and Lese obtain honey, among other exchanges. The dichotomy of the forest and the village has been used to characterize the way of life of Efe hunter-gathers and Lese farmers. Rather than confined to either the forest or the village, the Efe and the Lese maintain a symbiotic relationship for generations. These partners are a mediator to one’s own world. The honey season provides for the farmers a refuge from tensions and conflicts in the village.

Key Words: Honey; Hunter-gathers; Farmers; Tropical rainforest; Symbiotic relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Honey is a highly appreciated food throughout the world. In the Ituri Forest of north-eastern Congo, where Pygmy hunter-gatherers and shifting cultivators have lived side by side for many generations, people eagerly look forward to the taste of honey every year. The honey not only provides the pleasure of eating for both parties, but also a special moment in their interactions and social relationship.

The relationship between the Pygmy hunter-gatherers and neighboring farmers has been one of the main subjects of anthropological research from the early days. Some anthropologists, such as Colin Turnbull, one of the pioneers in the study of the Ituri Forest hunter-gatherers evaluated the relationship very negatively, that it was minimum contact for temporal convenience (Turnbull, 1961, 1965). Today, however, almost all hunter-gatherers in the Ituri Forest maintain close contact with the neighboring farmers. Generally speaking, hunter-gatherers hunt wild animals for game meat, rich in protein, and farmers cultivate the fields for agricultural produce, rich in carbohydrate. Through exchange, both parties can satisfy their needs more efficiently than before. Ecologically, this is a symbiotic relationship through specialization (protein producer and carbohydrate producer) and exchange. In addition to the economic material exchange, the two parties share the same language (usually hunter-gatherers speak the language of neighboring agriculturalists as their mother tongue), many symbolic beliefs such as on food restrictions, and religious practices such as initiation ceremonies for boys and girls.

In some parts of the forest, inter-ethnic marriages between the hunter-gatherers and farmers have been very frequent (Terashima, 1987).

It has been taken for granted that the hunter-gatherers are “the people of the forest” and farmers are “the people of the village.” The dichotomy of the forest and village has been used stereotypically to explain their modes of life and mutual relations. Hunter-gatherers do often live in nomadic camps located in the midst of the forest and focus their subsistence activities on the forest resources. In contrast, farmers live in the village and depend much on their fields as the subsistence base. This does not, however, mean that farmers have nothing to do with the forest and hunter-gatherers depend only on the forest. In reality, hunter-gatherers depend much on the village, and farmers need the forest as well. Both the forest and village constitute the world of hunter-gatherers as well as that of farmers. The interrelations between the hunter-gatherers and farmers, and between the forest and the village are more sophisticated and flexible than suggested by the simple dichotomy. The interactions of the two peoples during the honey season provide ample examples. In this paper I describe the behavior of hunter-gatherers and farmers in the honey season of the Ituri Forest, and analyse the new aspects of their interactions mediated by honey.

EFE AND LESE IN THE ITURI FOREST

Efe hunter-gathers live in the north-eastern part of the Ituri Forest and make their living by hunting wild animals with bows and arrows and spears, and gathering wild plant food such as yams, various nuts and fruits, and honey. They maintain a close symbiotic relationship with the Lese farmers for generations and obtain agricultural food such as plantain and manioc which constitute a fairly large portion of their diet. They camp near the village of the Lese with whom they have close contact. Mbuti hunter-gatherers live in the southern and western areas of the Ituri Forest. Both Efe and Mbuti belong to the same genetic group, but, because of the long symbiotic relationship with different groups of farmers, they use different languages and different hunting methods. The Mbuti hunt with nets, and speak Bila, Budu, or Ndaka depending on the farmers with whom they live.

Andiri is a village of Lese farmers, located about twenty kilometers north-east of Nduye (Fig. 1), inhabited by some two hundred people. Around Andiri, there are six groups (bands) of Efe hunter-gatherers living in camps located within a few kilometers from the village. From time to time, they move the camp into the forest and live nomadically for various activities such as hunting, collecting honey, and gathering wild plants.

Efe men and women usually have Lese partners with whom they maintain close relationship. There are two kinds of partnership. One is formal and the other is informal or practical. The formal partnership is inherited from generation to generation. The children of partners also become partners. The Efe call their formal partners as “Muto maia,” meaning, “my villager.” The Lese call their formal partners, “Efe maia,” meaning, “my Efe.” This partnership is not just for practical exchanges. The “Efe maia” and “Muto maia” regard each other to be related by a kinship tie similar to siblings or parent and child.

The ideology of fictive kinship prescribes the nature of exchange between formal partners. It is based on generalized reciprocity rather than market principles. It is morally necessary to aid each other. When your partner requests something, you have to respond without any compensation. Economic reciprocation, however, is nonetheless important to maintain a strong and durable relationship. The solidarity would be threatened if you cannot reciprocate so much as your partner wants. The informal but practical partnership plays a very important role in everyday exchanges. The Efe tend to visit more generous villagers than the unreliable formal partners. The formal relationship, however, cannot be discarded even if one wanted to. It is a social tie based on legal rights. The relationship between the Efe and Lese is doubly based on the formal and the practical, thus assuring the whole system flexibility and stability (Terashima, 1986).

Table 1 shows the examples of exchange between the Efe and five Andiri villagers for about three weeks in the November of 1983. Exchanges took place as Efe men and women visited villagers in the village. Of the total of 59 transactions, 25 transactions, about 42 % of the whole, took place between the formal partners, and the rest, between informal partners.

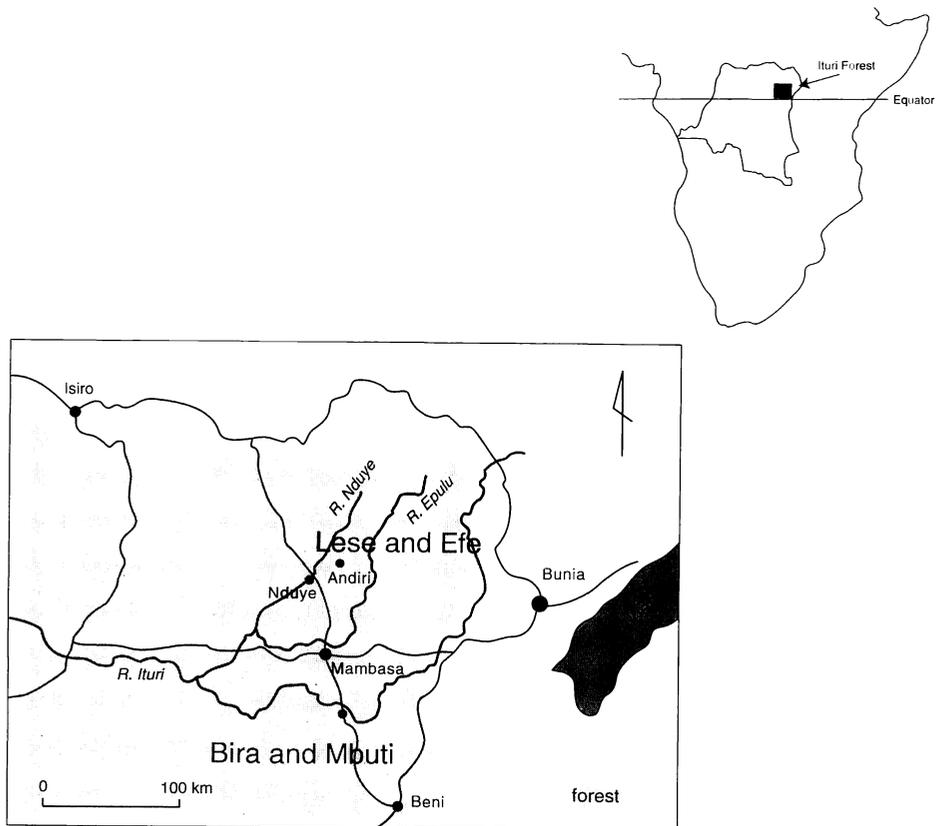


Fig. 1. The study area.

Table 1. Economic exchanges between the Efe and the Lese

(a) Number of exchanges

| Lese | times | between Efe maia and Muto maia* (%) |
|-------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| A | 18 | 6 (33) |
| B | 13 | 7 (54) |
| C | 11 | 5 (45) |
| D | 10 | 5 (50) |
| E | 7 | 2 (29) |
| total | 59 | 25 (42) |

*: The number of exchanges that took place between the Efe maia and Muto maia.

(b) Items exchanged (from the Efe to the Lese)

| item | times* |
|---------------------|--------|
| honey | 21 |
| game meat or fish | 14 |
| wild vegetable food | 13 |
| materials | 2 |
| services | 2 |
| other | 1 |
| nothing** | 7 |
| total | 53*** |

*: In some cases more than two items were given in the exchange.

** : Efe did not give anything to the villager.

***: "Nothing" excluded.

(c) Items exchanged (from the Lese to the Efe)

| item | times* |
|--------------------|--------|
| agricultural food | 28 |
| tobacco, marijuana | 18 |
| clothes | 7 |
| salt | 3 |
| utensils | 3 |
| cash or others | 3 |
| nothing** | 2 |
| total | 62*** |

*: In some cases more than two items were given in the exchange.

** : Lese did not give anything to the Efe.

***: "Nothing" excluded.

BEES, HONEY AND HONEY COLLECTION

In the Ituri Forest, there is one species of honey bee (*Apis mellifera adansonii*) and several species of stingless bees which also make honey. Among these, the honey of the

honey bees is most appreciated because of its abundance, and its taste.

In the north-eastern part of the Ituri Forest, two species of large-sized tree, *Cynometra alexandri* C. H. Wright and *Julbernardia serettii* (De Wild.) Troupin, are the most important nectar sources of the honey. The former blooms usually from April through May, and the latter from June through August. The honey becomes available in the hives about one month after the bloom, from May to September. The actual period and the quantity of the blossom, however, vary from year to year.

Every year, when the honey begins to be stored in the hives, usually in July or August, the Efe move deep into the forest and live on the honey as long as it is available. They gather honey from several hives everyday, and consume it as a staple. This is the period when the Efe rely least on the agricultural food and I call it the "honey season." Ichikawa (1981) who observed honey collection of Mbuti hunter-gatherers pointed out that, during the honey season, about 80% of total caloric intake per day was from the honey. The relationship with the farmers, however, does not entirely stop. The Efe go to the village from time to time and obtain agricultural produce, and discretionary items such as tobacco, marijuana leaves, and salt.

The honey of stingless bees, such as *ifa* and *gbana*, in their language, somewhat has a different taste. It is a bit fermented in the hive and said to be intoxicating if eaten too much. During the honey season, the honey of the honey bees is searched as the most desirable, but the honey of stingless bees is also gathered when available. Moreover, the latter is usually available throughout the year, so it contributes very much to the subsistence of the Efe people.

While at the honey camp, Efe men collect honey everyday and break open several hives, usually located beforehand. As the honey season approaches, people pay much attention to the activities of the honey bees flying in the forest. They hear the flying sound of the honey bees and search for hives usually located high on the trees. They can find the hive by observing the honey bees entering into and coming out from the opening of the hive even 30 meters above ground. When one finds a hive, he marks it by breaking a twig of small trees close by. No one is allowed to take honey out of a marked tree without the owner's permission. Even children, women and villagers have the right to the honey they find by themselves.

Much honey is consumed on the collecting spot, and the rest is brought back to the camp and distributed to others. Honey is a highly valued food just like game meat, so it must be distributed among the families in the same camp. Food sharing is one of the most important customs of hunter-gatherers because it helps to assure more stable subsistence and solidarity of the whole band. The frequent distribution of honey, sometimes more than needed for subsistence, helps not only to assure economic stability but also may aim at adjusting social relationship (Ichikawa, 1981).

The nutritional appreciation of the honey for the Efe is also exemplified in their little ceremony celebrating the growth of children. When a child reaches the age of 5 or 6 years, the Efe give a miniature axe of to the boy, and a digging stick to the girl. The former is for honey collection, and the latter is for digging wild yam tubers. This ceremony indicates the importance of honey and yam for the subsistence in the rain forest, and that one can live in the forest as long as one is able to obtain honey and yams.

THE LESE AND THE HONEY

The Lese people like honey as well, and anticipate the honey season as enthusiastically as the Efe. For the Lese, the honey is useful not only as food, but also as a means to obtain cash income. Andiri villagers often go to sell honey in Nduye where there is a Catholic Mission, Ecole Polytechnique, and local administrations of the Lese Karo. Usually villagers in the forest do not have much means to obtain cash income other than selling fish or game meat caught in their traps and honey.

Andiri villagers try to obtain honey through various methods. As mentioned above, sometimes Lese find bee hives by themselves. The problem is how to get at the honey. There are some Lese men who are famous for their skill to climb trees, bore a hole in the trunk with an axe, and retrieve honey from the hive. Generally, however, the Lese do not climb trees. Sometimes they fell the tree as a last resort. However, this is not so frequent because it is easier to ask Efe men visiting the village to collect honey for them. The Efe respond easily to such a request. The owner villager and Efe go together to the honey site, accompanied by several other villagers who expect to eat the honey. The site is mostly within one-hour-walk from the village. The Efe receives his share after the work.

Another Lese method to obtain honey is to trade with the Efe. There are two situations. In one situation, the Efe come to the village with honey seeking to trade it for something such as agricultural food or tobacco. First they ask their regular partners, but when they cannot obtain what they want, they trade with any villager who want the honey. In the other situation, villagers request Efe men to bring some honey for them. The formal partner, "Efe maia" is asked usually, but sometimes any Efe with whom the villager is in good relation will do.

In Table 1b, among a variety of items exchanged between the Efe and Lese, the honey was used in 21 of 59 transactions, that is, about 35% of the whole. It was apparently the most frequent item that the Efe used for exchange, over game meat and fish, or mushroom and some wild fruits such as the fruit of *Canarium schweinfurthii*. Those forest products make a good side dish to the main staple food such as manioc or plantain in the everyday meal of the villagers. Meat and honey are the epitome of forest products, and actually, they are the most frequent items brought into the village.

On their part, the villagers give the Efe agricultural produce most frequently in exchange, which accounted for nearly a half of all the observed exchanges (Table 1c). Then tobacco and marijuana leaves followed. These frequently exchanged products suggest the basic necessities of the Efe.

Lese exchanged only clothes with Efe honey (Table 1c). Both Efe men and women show great interest in clothes. In the forest camps, they do not care to wear anything but loin-cloth made with bark fiber. When coming to the village, however, men put on shirts and pants, and women wear a piece of cloth that covers the body even though it may often be quite tattered. The Efe say that they are afraid of being seen naked in the village. The demand for clothes has increased very much these days. However, even the villagers cannot so easily afford clothes manufactured in factories, and it is all the more difficult for the Efe. That the Efe use honey in exchange for clothes indicates the value of honey as well as their high demand for clothes. This means that for villagers, clothes are the most efficient item to obtain the honey from the Efe.

There is also another important method to obtain honey for the villagers. Some

villagers go into the forest and stay there for some period. Table 2 shows the overnight trips into the forest by villagers during the honey season of 1983 and 1985. In 1983, 26 people in 6 groups, and in 1985, 20 people in 5 groups stayed in the forest for a couple of weeks or months. Some groups lived in the forest by themselves, but most villagers visited Efe honey camps. In 1983 and 1985, 9 of 11 such groups joined the honey camps of the Efe. The villagers frankly explained that they went into the forest to eat honey. In the honey camp, the villagers depended on honey as staple food. Although villagers visited the honey camp with some provisions, they finished them up in a few days, and after that, they had to depend almost entirely on the honey and other forest products.

Villagers do not always depend on the Efe, but it is very convenient for them to stay in the camp of Efe maia when it is possible. In Table 2, four cases out of nine the relationship between the villagers and the Efe who accepted the villagers as guests were that of Efe maia and Muto maia. And in three out of four cases where the villagers stayed more than three weeks in the forest, the relationships between the Efe and the Lese were that of Efe maia and Muto maia. Efe maia with whom villagers have a very close relationship is crucial for the villagers' trip into the forest. I would like to elaborate this point later on.

The remaining two groups (no. 5 and no. 9, Table 2) did not stay in the Efe's camp. In group no. 5, there was a Lese man who was very skilled in honey collecting, acknowledged by others as "better than an Efe." And in group no. 9, an Efe man participated in the party from the beginning of the trip. So for these two groups, there

Table 2. Lese overnight trips into the forest in the honey season

| case# | Date | composition | Efe's band | visited period | motivation |
|-------|----------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) | Jun. '83 | 4 young men | Andibamba II | 3 month | escape from the hunger in the village |
| 2) | Aug. '83 | 2 men | Andikufe | 5 days | honey |
| 3) | Aug. '83 | 2 men | Andibamba I | 2 weeks | honey |
| 4) | Aug. '83 | 2 families (8 people) | Andikufe* | 1.5 month | honey, holidays |
| 5) | Aug. '83 | 2 families (7 people) | none | 2 months | fishing, honey, holidays |
| 6) | Sep. '83 | 3 women | Andimakpu | 2 weeks | honey |
| 7) | Sep. '85 | 2 families (4 people) | Andanji* | 1 month | hunting, holidays |
| 8) | Sep. '85 | 2 men | Andanji & Anditopi* | 2 weeks | honey |
| 9) | Sep. '85 | 8 men (including an Efe) | none | 3 weeks | fishing, hunting |
| 10) | Sep. '85 | 2 men | Anditelekulu | 10 days | fishing |
| 11) | Sep. '85 | 1 family (4 people) | Anditelekulu* | 3 weeks | honey, holidays |

*: Efe maia of the villagers.

was no need to visit an Efe honey camp. In other words, without some person who can collect honey, living in the forest by the villagers was almost impossible.

HOLIDAYS IN THE FOREST

The motivation of the villagers who went into the forest should be considered here. As shown in Table 2, the honey was mentioned as a main object of the visit in many cases. As long as they stayed in the honey camp, the Lese could enjoy honey everyday. And when there was more honey than needed for their everyday meal, they stored it in a pot to take back to the village. It was consumed or sold in their own or in another village.

In some cases, the villagers also explained their stay in the forest as a "holidays." The case no. 4 in Table 2 merits description in more detail: On 22 August 1983, eight people of Andiri and Tofangau villages entered into the forest heading for the camp of an Efe band called Andikufe. Mr. and Mrs. Mufere of Andiri village, Mr. and Mrs. Mutokefa and their son of Tofangau village, and one woman of Tofangau village, and two girls were in the party. Andikufe were the "Efe maia" of Mufere. After a two-day walk they arrived at a camp named Kukoa, about twenty kilometers from Andiri village. The camp consisted of 6 Efe families, 16 people in total. The villagers used three unoccupied Efe huts for their stay. Mufere, the leader of the party explained his motivation for the trip as "cong " or "vacances," using French. He said: "The work in the field has finished. Now we are tired of the village life. It's time for a holiday. We have to rest in the forest."

In the forest camp, Mufere went with Efe men to collect honey everyday although he did nothing to actually collect honey. He also went about setting traps by himself for duikers and brush-tailed porcupines. Mutokefa, the other adult man, also accompanied Efe men to collect honey, or stayed in the camp doing nothing in particular. The village wives sometimes followed the Efe women searching for edible plants such as mushrooms and yam tubers. They, however, would rather stay in the camp all day long cooking and eating, chatting, or weaving Efe women's hairs. The two girls enjoyed catching fish or crabs in the streams near the camp, or exploring the forest. The villagers consumed all the plantain and pumpkin they brought from the village in a few days, and after that, they ate only the forest products such as honey, yam, and nuts, which were provided mostly by the Efe.

In total, they stayed in the forest with the Efe for about one and a half months, moving to several camp sites. They returned to the villages at the beginning of October. As the end of the trip, both Mufere and Mutokefa had each obtained two pots of honey, and Mrs. Mukau had three pots of honey. A large cooking pot could hold about ten beer bottles of honey, exchangeable with one piece of cloth for women. Mrs. Mufere went to Nduye and got her cloth up on her return to the village.

The trip of Mufere and others was quite successful since villagers enjoyed the forest life and obtained some honey. Groups of no. 5, 7, and 11 of Table 2 mentioned "vacance" as the main motivation as well. All these cases involved the whole family and stays in the forest of more than a month. Surely such outings deserve to be called "vacances."

Even villagers who did not mention "vacance" in particular, nevertheless, seemed to imply such a motivation as well. It is not necessary for the villagers to stay for such a

long period in the forest just for honey. As I mentioned above, they only have to wait in the village for the Efe to bring honey to them. As long as the villagers had goods such as clothes for an exchange, they certainly could obtain honey. Waiting in the village may be more efficient because if villagers stayed in the forest camp, they consumed the honey themselves, and had to wait more days to store much honey, especially because they were usually accompanying fellow villagers who do nothing but eat honey.

The honey surely seemed to provide a good opportunity for the villagers to enjoy the life in the forest. What is the meaning of such a holiday for the villagers and its consequences to the relationship of Efe and Lese?

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Generally, Pygmy hunter-gatherers have been described as the “forest people,” and farmers, the “villagers.” Using this dichotomy, two models were constructed on their relationship depending whether it was viewed negatively or positively. In the negative model, the relationship between the forest and the village was antagonistic or superficial. Turnbull (1961, 1965) took this position. He said that for the farmers the forest was a place to be cleared to make fields and villages, and where dangerous wild animals as well as evil spirits haunted. The forest was a threat to human life. The villagers thought that Pygmies belonged to the forest and thus looked down on them like wild beasts. On the other hand, for Pygmy hunter-gatherers, the forest was the source of life. Just like parents the forest provided everything and protected them from enemies as well as the villagers. For them the village was dirty, dusty, and filled with evil, sorcerers, and bad authorities. Turnbull said that the Pygmies associated with the farmers only for temporal convenience, and at heart despised the village and the lifestyle of the villagers. This was, however, too simplified and biased a picture. For the Andiri villagers, the forest is not always filled with evil or antagonistic. Surely farmers fell trees and clear patches in the forest for fields and villages, but they also recognize the power of the field as that of the forest itself. After a few years’ cultivation, fields have to be abandoned and returned to the forest to regain the power. The forest is inhabited by wild animals and fish that are very important items for their diet. The forest is certainly acknowledged also by the Lese as the source of life. Without the forest, Andiri villagers are unable to support themselves just as the Efe hunter-gatherers. I have often heard that the Lese mention themselves as “we, the forest people.”

In the positive model, the two components, the forest and the village, and hunter-gatherers and farmers, can be considered complements of a symbiotic ecological system which I have mentioned earlier in this paper. This model seems better applicable. However, it is still a quite generalized and abstract a model.

The two models above do not take into account the problems within the forest or the village. It is taken for granted that the forest is the forest, and the village is the village in every aspect. I propose to reconsider the uniformity of the Efe and the Lese as such. In the everyday life of both farmers and hunter-gatherers, there are various conflicts and contradictions, which make their social life uncertain and unstable. Usually many people have friendly and generous relations with their relatives and neighbors, but sometimes antagonistic situations occur. Among the Efe and the Mbuti, the band life is known to

involves various tensions and conflicts. If the tensions increase and reach a certain level, the band needs to take action to reduce them. The Mbuti bands are reported to be divided into minimum segments consisting only of a few families during the honey season, and this is considered as a solution to the tensions increased during net hunting (Ichikawa, 1981). The Mbuti usually live in a large band for net hunting which needs many participants, women as well as men, and this is said to increase the tensions in everyday life. The seasonal fluctuation of band size is said to work generally as a mechanism to cope with inevitable tensions in the band (Harako, 1976). Turnbull also noted as follows:

“Essentially a camp is a happy-go-lucky, friendly place, but it is also full of all sorts of little tensions that can suddenly become magnified out of all proportion and lead to full-scale disputes.” (Turnbull, 1961:36)

“Only the youths seemed cheerful. For them the village meant tobacco, palm wine, the wild erotic dancing the Pygmies love to perform for the villagers, and a relaxation from the tensions of the forest. They would no longer be hunting, so they would be free from the restrictions that way of life imposed. They would no longer be in the forest, so they would be free from its everpresent authority.” (Turnbull, 1961:157)

Living in a closed band necessitates the observance of the disciplines of collective life. People may well feel the constraints and authority that the band life imposes upon them if it continues for a long period. Individual motivations are often oppressed. It is quite natural that people, not only young men but also the elders, would like a change. The village provides the Efe a respite from such constraints of collective life. In the village, the Efe live physically apart from their fellows and, in a sense, feel relaxed. The Efe are also charmed by various material goods that they cannot procure in the forest.

There is another example. In October 1983, the Efe began to return to the village from the honey camps saying that they had tired of honey. That year, it was quite a good season for honey after several mean seasons. Even after November, there still were a lot of honey in the forest, and the sound of axes hacking hives echoed in the forest everyday. The Efe emphasized the quantity of honey saying that it would be impossible to finish all the honey by the end of that year. So the Efe would have been able to stay longer in the forest if only for food. They did not do so, however. As one reason, the Efe mentioned that the life in the forest had become uncomfortable due to heavy rain. More than that, however, there seemed to be a desire to change the pace of life after a long isolated period in the forest.

In the first half of that year, there was a food shortage in the Ituri forest because of climatic turbulence. Rainfall was very little and damaged agricultural produce. Many Efe left for the forest very early in order to escape from the hunger in the village. The villagers said that they survived only by eating manioc leaves. The Efe lived in the forest by collecting honey of stingless bees and other wild food. Some young villagers joined the Efe in the forest for several months (Case 1, Table 2). Then, the very rich honey season arrived and, they spent a very long period in the forest. Even if there were tension or conflicts in the forest life, the people could not return to the village as long as the village suffered from the shortage of food. In October, however, the village began to recover from the food shortage and there were even surplus agricultural produce on

which the Efe could depend. Such economic situation induced the Efe to return to the village. The Efe seemed to have tired of the honey, since they were tired of the life at the honey camp.

On the other hand, the Lese village seemed to be filled with more conflicts and tensions than the forest. During my stay in the village, there were often “trials” for problems. Quarrels and violence took place frequently due to various reasons, such as theft, adultery, sorcery, jealousy, envy, and alcoholic drinking. The flux and fluidity of the band of hunter-gatherers is well known but also the village of farmers show some extent of flux. Sometimes a villager family moves from one village to another temporarily or eternally, or moves their house somewhat in the same village to avoid conflicts with the neighbors and for other reasons. Given such a situation in the village, Mufere’s opinion of the village life and his choice to stay in the forest with his partner Efe become quite understandable. With the Efe partners the Lese feel easy. Efe maia are a kind of kins to the Lese, with whom they grow up together, sharing much experiences and feelings, and at the same time, the Lese can stand at a little higher social status. Forest life with the Efe can bring peaceful days to the Lese who are tired of village life.

The Efe and Lese relationship give to the Efe some village life, and to the Lese, some forest life. The village for the Efe and the forest for the Lese are, so to speak, a refuge, which bring a change of pace, and reduce tensions accumulated in their proper life. However, the village for the Efe and the forest for the Lese are also an ambivalent place. The Efe fear the formal authorities of the village who often annoy people unlawfully, as well as sorcery, and arrogant behavior of some villagers. The forest is a difficult place for the Lese to stay by themselves, with mysterious and harmful things. The Efe and Lese extend their world only through their partners, Muto maia and Efe maia. Without such partners, it would be quite difficult to enter into the other world for either of them.

The intimate relationship between the Efe and the Lese, based on Efe maia and Muto maia relationship, however, may produce a new problem. The fact that the relationship creates close interactions and strong solidarity between a Lese and an Efe sometimes may alienate the diad from other villagers and foragers. The more a villager associates with his Efe, the more he risks separating himself from his relatives and neighbors. An Efe separates himself from his fellows in the same way. In this sense the Efe maia and Muto maia relationship may contribute to a kind of social disintegration of the Efe and Lese.

Richard Grinker who studied the Efe and Lese in the northern part of Ituri Forest mentions that formerly the Lese families lived in strong mutual hostility and avoided any close contact with each other (Grinker, 1994). They preferred isolation for fear of sorcery, and allowed only the Efe to live with them. Each constructed an isolate community called the “house,” apart from other “houses.” This may correspond to one extreme situation of the Efe maia and Muto maia relationship of disintegration. However, the actual relationship between the Efe and the Lese is fluid. It varies from person to person, from place to place, and from time to time. Many factors internal and external to their social and natural environments affect the external as well as internal relationships among them. Efe maia and Muto maia relationship is flexible and adjustable, and does not always lead to isolation. It is obvious that the Efe need the other Efe and the Lese need the other Lese in many situations. There may be confrontations between the Lese and the Efe in some situations and good symbiosis in other situations. Some important ritual performances such as the initiation ceremonies for boys and girls,

usually held both by the Lese and Efe together, can surely strengthen the mutual relationship between the Lese and the Efe as a whole.

The relationship between the Efe and Lese appears amorphous. This does not mean, however, that their relationship is chaotic, but that it should be understood as a dynamic, flexible and multi-valued social system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS This study was financially supported by a Grant-in-Aid for scientific research (No. 02041034 and 08041080) from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, Japan.

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_____ Accepted January 20, 1998

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