

## DIVERSITY OF RITUAL SPIRIT PERFORMANCES AMONG THE BAKA PYGMIES IN SOUTHEASTERN CAMEROON

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**ABSTRACT** Ritual spirit performances among the Baka of Southeast Cameroon were studied. Through an extensive survey, characteristics and distribution pattern of the performances were described and classified. The social background of the diversification was also analyzed.

The kinds and combinations of spirit performances practiced in bands are different among the bands. Such diversity is derived through two processes. (1) Guardianship for organizing spirit rituals is transmitted individually, which generates different combinations of spirit performances practiced in each band. (2) New spirit performances are created by individuals and practiced in the limited number of bands.

As well as diversification in ritual practices, tendency toward standardization also takes place. Limited versions of new spirit performance are adopted by the Baka. Furthermore, creators of spirit performances often incorporate the elements of existing spirit performance. Through these processes, the performances are eventually standardized.

The variety of Baka spirit performance is maintained by a balance between diversification and standardization, which may reflect the present-day Baka need to establish social identity in a transition from the flexible and loosely organized nomadic society to a more sedentarized life in recent years.

**Key Words :** Baka; Ritual spirit performance; Guardianship; Diversification and Standardization; Band identity; Modernization.

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. Theoretical Background

In recent studies on hunter-gatherer societies, the existence of the intra-cultural diversity has attracted increasing attention (Kent, 1996). In spite of linguistic and cultural differences among the groups so-called Khoisan or Pygmies, similarities tend to be more emphasized than differences. Such interest in similarity may be due to preference of researchers for evolutionism, functionalism, and cultural ecology, mainly concerning the hunting and gathering way of life (as Mosco (1987) pointed out). In such theoretical perspective, human behavior of a particular society is often regarded as homogenous and standardized in given environmental conditions.

On the other hand, few studies have focused on the cultural aspects independent of environment among hunter-gatherers. In particular, the spiritual culture, such as art or religion, has not been paid due attention and at best, general encyclopedic descriptions abound. Data collected in only a few local groups tend to be generalized, with the only exception being Joiris's work (Joiris, 1996).

Such easy standardization seems to be attributed to indifference toward cultural diversities among local hunter-gatherer groups. Joiris, who studied the ritual practices among the Baka in Cameroon, pointed out that cultural differences were observed even among local groups called bands (Joiris, 1996). Attention should therefore be paid to the cultural differences found in such small groups for important cultural or social implications.

Intra-cultural diversity is supposed to reflect factors outside the band, such as natural or social environment (Hewlett, 1996). Bird-David (1996) indicated that the lack of centralized organization may itself lead to cultural isolation of each band, promoting cultural autonomy of the band and generating an intra-cultural diversity as a whole. This perspective is noteworthy as intra-cultural diversity is explained as an intrinsic tendency of the hunter-gatherer society.

I conducted an extensive survey on the "ritual spirit performances" by the Baka in southeast Cameroon, where numerous variety of spirit performances were observed. I collected and analyzed data from many groups. I have attempted a comprehensive description of a given cultural group and analysis of its social background.

A comparative study on the Baka hunting ritual practices has also been conducted by Joiris (1996) in the adjacent area, concentrating on seven groups. "Spirit rituals" are only a part of the hunting rituals in her criteria. By contrast, my study covers a total of 227 residence groups and focuses on "ritual spirit performances," which are not always performed as hunting rituals. Thus my study may complement her study.

In this paper, the spirit rituals are first categorized into several types based on the formal aspects of ritual performances. Then, the spatial distribution pattern and transmission of spirit rituals to other groups are analyzed. Finally, social dynamics between the diversification and standardization of these ritual performances are discussed.

## II. The Environment and People

The Baka are regarded as a cultural and linguistical group living in the western part of Congo Basin (southeastern Cameroon, western Central African Republic and northern Congo). Their population is estimated to be about 30,000 to 40,000. They speak an Oubanguian language which is different from that of the Aka, a Bantu-speaking hunter-gatherer group in Central African Republic and northern Congo (Guthrie, 1971). The cultural, economic, and social patterns of the both groups, however, are similar to each other (Bahuchet, 1989).

The study area is the Boumba-Ngoko district of the East province. I conducted an extensive survey in the area along roads extending to about 200 km each from Yokadouma to Moloundou and Yokadouma to Mwampak. A total of 227 bands were surveyed (Fig.1). Data were collected on the types of ritual practices and their creation and transformation processes as well as the data on demography, residence pattern and kinship organization.

In the study area, the Baka live in a semi-permanent settlement near the Bantu agriculturalist villages, and maintain economic and ritual relationships with the villagers, like other groups of "Pygmies." The Baka in this area began to sedentarize in the 1950's (Althabe, 1965). Agriculturalists who keep contact with the Baka are different from area

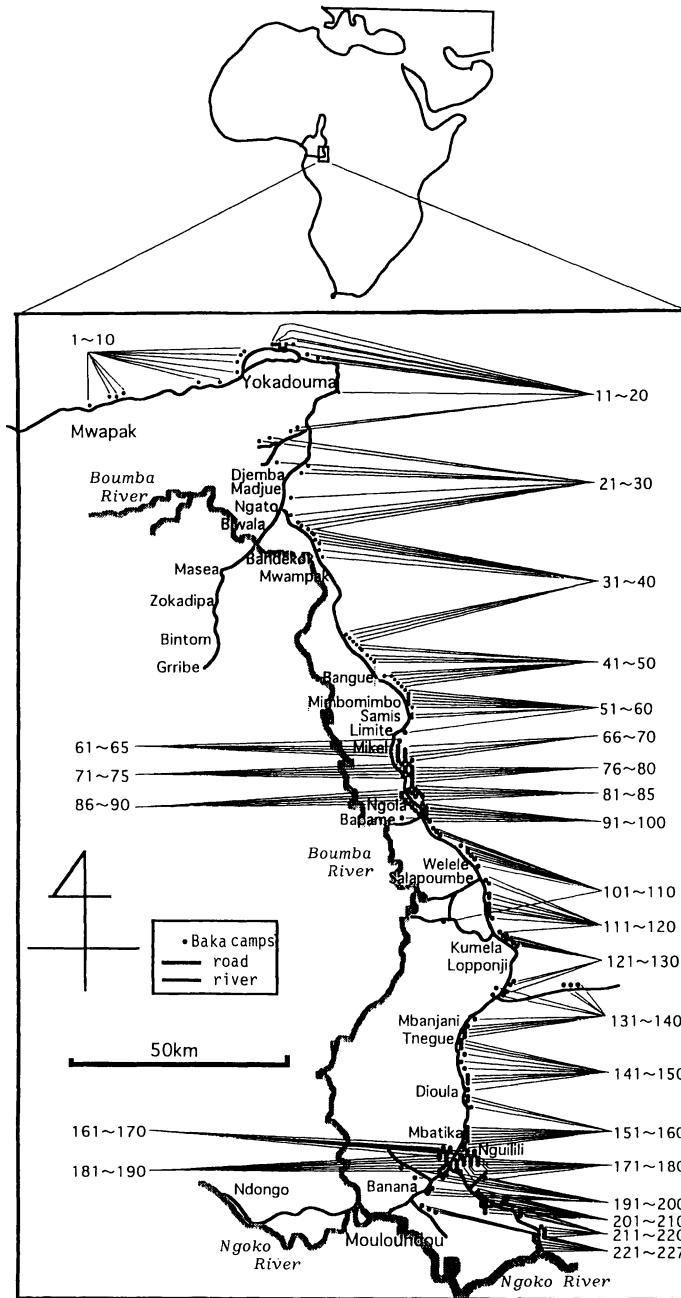


Fig. 1. The study area.

to area. In the northern side of the study area, Bantu-speaking Bongbong and Konabembe are dominant, whereas in the southern side, Mboman, another Bantu-speakers, and Bangandou, Adamawa-eastern speakers, form the majority. These villagers are slash-and-burn cultivators, whose main crops are cassava and plantain banana. The Baka adopted substantial cultivation in the process of sedentarization, although they might have practiced a certain degree of cultivation even before it. Baka men usually slash and burn the bush and women plant and harvest crops. While agriculturalists grow cacao as cash crop in earnest, the Baka are reluctant to cultivate it, because of the difficulty to obtain seedlings of cacao and to maintain the field for a long period before harvest.

The climate of this area is divided into four seasons: the major rainy season (August to October), major dry season (November to March), minor rainy season (April to May), and minor dry season (June to July). The Baka move into the forest and stay at a hunting camp for two or three months during the major dry season. In the remaining period of a year, they lead their lives in semi-permanent settlements. They depend on the farm crop and wild plants gathered around the settlement. While they rely on a greater part of diet on plantain and other agricultural products, the men actively engage in hunting and the women in gathering. Spear hunting is said to be the main hunting method traditionally, whereas net hunting seems to have been practiced in the past. At present, trapping for capturing small to medium-sized mammals is the principal hunting method. However, as games decrease due to excessive hunting pressure, the Baka in this area now rely on fishing for procuring protein. In the dry season when the water recedes, women perform fish-bailing in smaller streams. Wild plants such as wild yam, iron leaves (*Gnetum* sp.), *Landolphia*, various other forest fruits, and mushrooms are also collected by women.

#### ORGANIZATION OF RESIDENCE GROUPS (BANDS)

Each residence group of the Baka forms a settlement called *ba*. The members of *ba* also move into the forest together to form a camp, when they hunt and gather in their own forest territory. This residence group can be called the band.

In a *ba*, each nuclear family dwells in its own house. A band consists of usually nine nuclear families (50 persons) on average. Fissions and fusions of the band are not common in this area, although often reported in other hunting and gathering societies. This is largely due to the government policy and the influences of Catholic missions, both of which have promoted sedentarization of the Baka.

When a Baka man marries, he and/or his relatives must pay bridewealth to the wife or to her relatives. Then, the newly married couple takes virilocal residence in principle. Among 1,863 couples living in the area, 1,354 (73%) had virilocal residence, whereas 381 (20%) had uxoriocal residence, and 128 (7%) were immigrants from other bands (i. e. neolocal). As most couples take virilocal residence, the majority of men stay in their native bands, whereas the majority of women leave their native bands upon marriage. Consequently, most bands are comprised of the groups of nuclear families tied through patrilineal kinship.<sup>(1)</sup> One or two patrilineal descent groups usually form the core of a band. Senior men belonging to this core group generally take leadership in decision-making in the band life. Although no single person actually exerts special power in

social activities, each band has a leader-like person called *kokoma* who mainly concerns with government officials. *Kokoma* is a nominal leader for external affairs, and does not have any authority within the band.

Several patrilineal descent groups belong to a group of higher level called *ye*, which can be regarded as a clan. The membership of the *ye*, both for men and women, is determined also by paternal line. While 26 *yes* were recorded in the study area, more than a half of the total Baka population in the area belonged to only 6 *yes*. While *ye* membership is inherited through paternal line, there is no clear social force nor cultural tie for uniting the *ye* as a whole. For instance, members of *ye*-Likemba, one of the most dominant *ye*, are extensively scattered throughout the study area. The Baka rarely remember the genealogical relationships between different patrilineal descent groups within the same *ye*. However, *ye* is recognized as exogamous unit; that is, those belonging to the same *ye* strictly avoid marriage, even if they cannot trace the genealogical relationships. Some *ye* members share totemic animals or plants, but there is no legend on the origin of *ye*, nor shared ritual performances. Thus, while most Bakas know the name of their own *ye*, it can be regarded as neither political nor geographical entity. They have no identity with a political or social group of at any higher level than the band and the patrilineal descent groups within the band.

In sum, the band and patrilineal descent groups are the most important social units among the Baka society.

## PERFORMANCE OF SPIRIT RITUALS

### I. Concept of Spirits

The common feature of the Pygmy religion is that there are many kinds of spirits in the religious system. The Baka refer to these spirits by a general term, “*me*.” They clearly distinguish *me* from God of Christianity introduced by European missionaries. The Baka think that *me* usually live in the forest, forming a camp just like the Baka themselves, and occasionally visit villages to enjoy dancing and singing with Baka people. Although the *me* have anthropomorphic figure, they are clearly distinguished from human beings. In festive gathering, men, dancing to the chorus of women, depict the *me* who visit the Baka camp. In the Baka folk tales (*likano*) of *me*, *me* are described as strange figures. They have two sexes, hunt animals, understand the Baka language and sometimes play a trick on the Baka. While they sometimes exert supernatural power and become dangerous for the Baka people, they neither use sorcery nor witchcraft. They sometimes appear in the dream of the Baka to impart knowledge, such as on medicinal plants, ritual songs, and dance steps.

This concept of *me* is thus similar to that of “nature spirits” reported by Inoue (1993) who studied medicine men in the Adamawa Highland in the central Cameroon. Inoue reported that natural spirits were conceptually distinguished from the soul of a dead man. The people in the Adamawa Highland believe that these natural spirits live in the forest, make villages, are born, grow, and eventually die as if they were human beings and certain kinds of animals. Sometimes, they appear in the dream of people to show useful things.

The Baka also hold that they themselves change into *me* after death and join the community of deceased ancestors. Although neighboring agriculturalists think that these spirits are harmful to living people, the Baka do not think so. According to Joiris (1996), *me* does not derive from animals but from human beings.

There has been no detailed discussion about the relationship between natural spirits and ancestral spirits in the study of Pygmy. The ethnographers on Pygmy societies find difficulty in the descriptions of the religion. According to Thomas & Bahuchet (1991), the Baka and the Aka do not differentiate among mythological figures, ancestral spirits and natural spirits. Joiris (1996) reported that the spirit in Baka belief was an “anthropomorphic dwarf” and should not necessarily be identified with the ancestor. However, she also wrote that the ritual association concerning *me* reflected collective ancestor worship,<sup>(2)</sup> and that the concept of *me* included the idea of the metamorphosis of a man into soul after the death. She also stressed that there was no relationship of *me* with sorcery or witchcraft (Joiris, 1996).

In Baka religious belief, *nganga* rituals seem to be closely linked to the concept of sorcery and witchcraft. In these rituals, a diviner, *nganga*, identifies the source of witchcraft or cures the diseases caused by sorcery. The concept of *nganga* may be related to that of “*molili*,” which is akin to the soul of animals or human beings. The *nganga* performs a curing ritual by being possessed by *molili* in the trance dance (Joiris, 1996). Such *nganga* belief is supposed to have been recently borrowed from the neighboring agriculturalists, and not an original element in the traditional Baka belief system (Joiris, 1996). The *nganga* rituals and the concept of *me* have not fused among the Baka. The foregoing studies have shown that while the Baka concept of *me* includes both natural and ancestral spirits, interconnected with each other in a rather vague way, but clearly separated from that of sorcery and witchcraft.

## II. Ritual Spirit Performances

Some researchers have indicated that the distinction of rituals from play does not make sense among Pygmy groups (Harako, 1980; Sawada, 1991). Among the Baka, all the band members including children and women take part in the ritual spirit performance generally called *be*. The term *be* is used as a noun to mean “song” and also as a verb “to sing.” This suggests the importance of music in *be*, which is almost synonymous with music in a sense (The term indicating “dance” and “to dance” is *no*). Joiris (1996) also stressed that music generally powerfully attracted animals and spirits to the ritual practices of the Baka. The Baka hold that the success of ritual spirit performance depends on the success in the chorus performed in *be*. Men usually take part in *be* as dancers and women as singers. This sexual division is different from that of the Mbuti and the Efe, among whom both men and women equally take part in most songs and dances.

*Be* is generally performed at night from about seven to ten o'clock. First, adult women gather at the open space (*tindo*) at the center of the settlement and begin to sing. When their singing becomes excited, usually one, but sometimes several male dancers join the gathering and dance to the women's songs. There are many sorts of *be* among the Baka. Each *be* is associated with specific spirits (*me*), and has its own set of songs, dancing form and costume as described below.

The costumes of these dancers vary with the types of *be*. The costumes are generally designed the dancers to achieve appearance of spirits (*me*) by covering their bodies completely. The Baka regard that a *me* appears from the forest only when *be* songs become heated. The existence of *me* is also expressed by the “voices” or “speech” uttered from the bush or hiding place of spirits, *njanga*.<sup>(3)</sup> *Me* repeatedly comes out or goes into *njanga*, accompanying the degree of excitement in the *be*. In the presence of *me*, *be* performance reaches a climax. The Baka explain that *me* leave forest and visit the Baka settlements to enjoy *be* with the Baka. *Be* is usually organized by initiated male members of ritual association of the specific *me*,<sup>(4)</sup> and the membership of the association is carefully kept secret from non-initiates, such as women and children who actually perform the *me* dance.

There are many spirits, each with its own name. Each spirit has a particular style of costume, song and dance, and the type of *me* appearing in *be* varies with the ritual association responsible for the performances. Thus, spirit, song, dance, and ritual association form a set, which can be indicated under the same name.

In this paper, the performances such as the dance involved in the *be*, “voice” and “speech,” which show the existence of *me*, are called “spirit performances.”

### III. Spirit Guardianship and the Right of Organizing Ritual Spirit Performances

In the ritual practices of the Baka, supernatural beings appear in two ways, first in the spirit performance for *me*, and second in the *nganga* possession ritual for *molili*. There is usually a man who has a special relationship with a *me*. Each spirit performance is led by this man who is regarded as a guardian of *me*, and has the right to organize the ritual as “father of spirit”( *nie me*). In contact, *Nganga* ritual is led by a professional diviner (*nganga*) who has the ability to see *molili* of men or of animals.

Such special male association with a spirit and the ritual is accompanied with an initiation ritual to solidify the specific relationship. In the initiation, a “father of spirit” mediates between initiates and the spirit. Moreover, a man may establish a new spirit ritual in his own band. After obtaining the right to organize a new ritual association, the “father of spirit” progressively initiates followers in his own band, and a ritual association is organized in each band. The Baka believe that the “father of the spirit” decides the date to perform *be* according to the oracle of the spirit. He takes leadership over other junior initiates at the ritual performance. The Baka hold that the “father of spirit” has a special ability to communicate with *me*, like the diviner *nganga* who has a special tie with *molili*. The “father of spirit” is, however, different from the diviner *nganga*. *Nganga* must be apprenticed to famous master diviner of other bands to learn the technique and knowledge of ritual substances, interpretations of dreams and fire texture and the dotted patterns of genet fur, and other related spiritual awareness for the *nganga* rituals (Joiris, 1996). In contrast, neither special medium-like technique nor healing ritual is necessary to become a “father of spirit.” Although Baka *nganga* also performs curing ritual for the agriculturalists, a spirit performance organized by “fathers of spirits” is neither held for the agriculturalists nor are they interested in the Baka spirit performances.

While the “fathers of spirit” may coincide with important figure as *kokoma* (settlement chief) or *tuma* (elephant hunting master), *nganga* diviner generally is a

marginal man in the band. He is regarded to have the potential for dangerous sorcery and witchcraft.<sup>(5)</sup>

In this paper, I call the special relationship of a person with the spirit as “guardianship,” because the Baka always explain that “father of spirit” guards his own spirit. “Guardianship” also denotes the personal right to keep special relationship with *me* and to organize a ritual association for the spirit. This right can be shared with other persons through inheritance, gift exchange and even by purchase. Thus it is different from the special ability of *nganga*, which can only be acquired through hard discipline.

## VARIETY OF SPIRIT PERFORMANCES

### I. The Variety and Distribution of Spirit Performance

From the extensive survey covering 227 Baka bands, a total of 52 kinds of spirit performance were recorded (Table 1). The distribution of the spirit performances revealed two patterns. One was a group of spirit performance common among many bands and another was a group observed only in one or a few bands. This fact is also suggested by Joiris (1996), who calls the former “major spirit rituals” and the latter “minor spirit rituals.” The same terminology is used in this paper.

Among 52 kinds of ritual spirit performances, only four can be regarded as major spirit rituals: *jengi* (observed in 106 bands, 80% of the total of 133 bands where some spirit rituals are observed at all), *emboamboa* (90 bands, 68%), *kose* (57 bands, 43%), and *buma* (59 bands, 44%). These four account for the majority of all the recorded ritual associations. The remaining ritual spirit performance do not show such an extensive distribution pattern. Among the following, five spirit performance show moderate frequency of distribution; *pembe* in 26 bands, *joboko* in 19 bands, *elili* in 18 bands, *bokela* in 16 bands, and *bakanja* in 8 bands. The remaining 43 spirit performances were observed in only one to five bands. These can thus be called intermediate and minor spirit rituals, respectively.

### II. Costumes and Movement in the Spirit Performances

While the Baka generally think the spirits usually live in the forest and visit villages to dance at a festive gathering *be*, the forms of performance vary with the kinds of spirits (Table 2). I attempted to categorize these spirit performances based mainly on the formal characteristics of the performances. Each spirit has a set of distinct characteristics in the elements of costume, dance movement, uttering “voice,” and, in particular, the characters assigned to by the Baka. I classified the Baka ritual spirit performance into the following major types.

#### 1. *jengi*

The dancer of *jengi* spirit wears a set of three skirts made of young raffia leaves (*ndimba*) on his head, chest and waist (Fig. 2.1). Such costume is never seen in other spirit performances. When a dancer rotates in place, *ndimba* extends outward.

*Jengi* spirit performance is generally performed at the rite of passage of young men by



**Table 1.** Spirit rituals and numbers of ritual associations.

	Name of spirit ritual	Number of ritual associations observed	Band of founders*
1	<i>jengi</i>	106	-
2	<i>emboambo</i>	90	-
3	<i>kose</i>	57	-
4	<i>buma</i>	59	-
5	<i>pembe</i>	26	-
6	<i>joboko</i>	19	-
7	<i>elili</i>	18	-
8	<i>bokela</i>	16	56
9	<i>bakanja</i>	8	35
10	<i>pele</i>	4	80
11	<i>iekele</i>	7	66
12	<i>mongelebo</i>	4	-
13	<i>sonjo</i>	4	-
14	<i>ianja</i>	2	16
15	<i>mala</i>	2	85
16	<i>bisenjo</i>	2	86
17	<i>moyobe</i>	2	125
18	<i>limo</i>	2	54
19	<i>iangu</i>	2	108
20	<i>mbaka</i>	1	45
21	<i>mane</i>	1	52
22	<i>nde</i>	1	68
23	<i>lumbe</i>	1	102
24	<i>ligbado</i>	1	110
25	<i>limbo</i>	1	95
26	<i>nanda</i>	1	116
27	<i>iese</i>	1	116
28	<i>sula</i>	1	131
29	<i>linge</i>	1	139
30	<i>ngango</i>	1	139
31	<i>jendi</i>	1	30
32	<i>mokpekpe</i>	1	169
33	<i>yeyu</i>	1	227
34	<i>ndengo</i>	1	45
35	<i>mandenda</i>	1	26
36	<i>dikpaje</i>	1	127
37	<i>yua</i>	1	192
38	<i>seba</i>	1	221
39	<i>dodi</i>	1	16
40	<i>iango</i>	1	106
41	<i>lindombi</i>	1	147
42	<i>made</i>	1	93
43	<i>ndondo</i>	1	27
44	<i>lianga</i>	1	92
45	<i>lengo-1</i>	1	126
46	<i>lengo-2</i>	1	130
47	<i>nguya</i>	1	129
48	<i>molobo</i>	1	42
49	<i>basinga</i>	1	94
50	<i>lina</i>	1	134
51	<i>moyobe</i>	1	125

\*: See the band numbers in Fig. 1.

Table 2. Variation of dance elements and movements.

	Name of spirit ritual	Dance		Uttering	
		Costum	Movement	Speaking	Uttering from hiding place
1	<i>jengi</i>	3 sets of <i>ndimba</i>	Standing, rotating in place	performed	performed
2	<i>emboamboa</i>	Trouser, cloths	Standing with motion of arms and legs	performed	performed
3	<i>kose</i>	<i>Ndimba, mangisa</i> , cloths	Standing, shaking the hip	performed with false translation	performed
4	<i>buma</i>	-	-	-	-
5	<i>pembe</i>	-	-	-	performed
6	<i>joboko</i>	Trouser, cloths	Standing, motion of arms and legs	-	-
7	<i>elili</i>	Leaves of <i>Aframomum</i> sp.	Standing, jumping	-	-
8	<i>bokela</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	-
9	<i>bakanja</i>	<i>Ndimba</i> , cloths	Standing, shaking the waist	-	-
10	<i>pele</i>	Branches of trees	?	-	?
11	<i>iekele</i>	Branches of trees	?	-	?
12	<i>mongelebo</i>	Ash	Squatting, shaking the waist	-	-
13	<i>sonjo</i>	-	-	-	performed
14	<i>ianja</i>	<i>Ndimba</i> , cloths	Standing, shaking the waist	-	?
15	<i>mala</i>	Branches of trees	?	-	-
16	<i>bisenjo</i>	Branches of trees	Squatting, jumping	-	-
17	<i>moyobe</i>	Branches of trees	Squatting, rotating in place	-	-
18	<i>limo</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	?
19	<i>iang</i>	?	?	-	?
20	<i>mbaka</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	?	-	?
21	<i>mane</i>	<i>Ndimba, mangisa</i> , cloths	Standing, shaking the hip	-	?
22	<i>nde</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	-
23	<i>lumbe</i>	1 set of <i>ndimbu</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	?
24	<i>ligbado</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	-
25	<i>limbo</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	performed
26	<i>nanda</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	-
27	<i>iese</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	?	-	?
28	<i>sula</i>	?	?	-	performed
29	<i>linge</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	?
30	<i>ngango</i>	1 set of <i>ndimbu</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	?
31	<i>jendi</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	?
32	<i>mokpekpe</i>	1 set of <i>ndimbu</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	-
33	<i>yeyu</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	?
34	<i>ndengo</i>	Branches of trees	?	-	?
35	<i>mandenda</i>	?	?	-	?
36	<i>dikpaje</i>	Branches of trees	Squatting, rotating in place	-	-
37	<i>yua</i>	1 set of <i>ndimbu</i>	Standing, motion of arms and legs	-	?
38	<i>seba</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Standing, motion of arms and legs	-	?
39	<i>dodi</i>	Trouser, cloths	Standing, motion of arms and legs	-	?
40	<i>iang</i>	Branches of trees	Squatting, rotating in place	-	?
41	<i>lindombi</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Standing, motion of arms and legs	-	?
42	<i>made</i>	?	?	-	?
43	<i>ndondo</i>	<i>Ndimba</i> , cloths	Standing, shaking the waist	-	?
44	<i>lianga</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	?
45	<i>lengo-1</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Standing, motion of arms and legs	-	?
46	<i>lengo-2</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	performed
47	<i>nguya</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Squatting, rotating in place	-	-
48	<i>molobo</i>	Branches of trees	Standing	-	?
49	<i>basinga</i>	?	?	-	?
50	<i>lina</i>	1 set of <i>ndimba</i>	Standing, motion of arms and legs	-	?
51	<i>moyobe</i>	Branches of trees	?	-	?



Fig. 2.1 *jengi*.



Fig. 2.2 *Emboambo*.



Fig. 2.3 *Kose*.

circumcision and as one of the series of funeral rites for the deceased, although it is sometimes performed simply for amusement. The number of bands with their own *jengi* ritual association is the largest in this area. *Jengi* was also practiced traditionally when elephant hunting was frequent. While the connection between *jengi* and elephant hunting has weakened, the head of a patrilineal descent group is often the former elephant hunter as well as the guardian of *jengi*.

## 2. *emboamboa*

The costume of *emboamboa* is comprised of a cloth on the head and the torso, a pair of trousers and socks, which together cover the dancer's body completely (Fig. 2.2). His dance emphasizes the motion of limbs which exaggerate human motions. *Emboamboa* is usually performed for mere amusement, and not for any serious ritual purpose. In northern part of the study area, however, *emboamboa* is sometimes practiced as one of the funeral rites.

*Emboamboa* is the second major spirit ritual after *jengi*. There are spirit performance with very similar costume to *emboamboa*, but performed relatively rarely such as *joboko* (observed in 19 bands) and *dodi* (in one band).

## 3. *kose*

The dancer of *kose* and other similar spirit performance covers their chest with a cloth, wear a short raffia fiber skirt (called *mangisa*) with rattles tied to it. The dancer also wears *ndimba* under the *mangisa* (Fig. 2.3). While *ndimba* is used in several types of spirit performances, *mangisa* is used only in *kose*. The dancer makes rattling sounds by twisting his waist.

*Kose* can be regarded as the third major spirit rituals among the Baka in study area. There are several other minor or intermediate spirit rituals created by individuals, imitating the costume of *kose*, such as *bakanja* (observed in 8 bands), *ianja* (in four bands), *mane* (in one band) and *ndondo* (in one band). *Bakanja* dancer also wears a costume similar to that of *kose*, but without *mangisa*. Performances of *kose* are often undertaken in the funeral ritual.

## 4. *limbo*

The *limbo* dancer wears only one piece of *ndimba*. In the *limbo* performance the action is emphasized as in *jengi*. The *limbo* dancer, however, rotates with his hands and foot on the ground, which produces a much different visual effect from that of *jengi* (Fig. 2.4). The *bokela* dancer wears almost the same costume, except that he puts a simple crown of leaves on the head. These spirit performances are often practiced for mere amusement, and sometimes for praying to the spirit for hunting luck before and after establishing the hunting camp.

Among the minor spirit rituals such as *limbo*, except for *bokela* (recorded in 16 bands), 15 other spirit rituals were observed in only one band. *Limbo*, *limo*, *lumbe*, *ligbado*, *nanda*, *iese*, *linge*, *ngango*, *jendi*, *mopepe*, *yeyu*, *lianga*, *nguya*, *mbaka*, *lengo* (not to be confused with another type of *lengo* with a completely different costume, as shown below) are in such category. These spirit rituals were created by specific individuals and practiced only in the creators' bands.

## 5. *mongelebo*

The *mongelebo* dancer smears his body with ash. He jumps up and down pushing his hands and feet toward the ground (Fig. 2.5). *Mongelebo* is performed in funerals.

*Mongelebo* can be categorized as a major or at least intermediate spirit ritual by its distribution pattern. However, its guardianship and ritual association are not clearly established, hence the details of *mongelebo* (in Table 2) are not available.

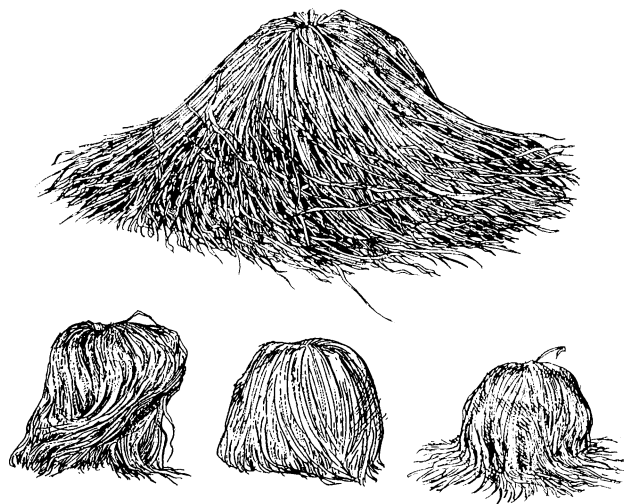


Fig. 2.4 *Limbo*, Various poses by *limbo*, A scene from *be of limbo*.

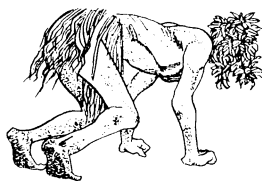


Fig. 2.5 *Mongelebo*.



Fig. 2.6 *Lumbe*.

### 6. *lumbe*

For *lumbe* performance the dancer smears his torso with ash, and wears *ndimba* from the waist down (Fig. 2.6). The *lumbe* is mainly performed for amusement. Other than *lumbe*, there are a few other spirit rituals classified as this type; *yua*, *seba*, *lengo*, *lina*, all of which are minor spirit rituals created by individuals, and performed only in the creators' bands. The bands of these creators are situated in the neighborhood, in an area spanning about 50 km along the road, which suggests the creators of these spirit rituals imitate the forms and costumes of each other.

### 7. *elili*

The *elili* dancer hides himself behind the leaves of African ginger *Aframomum* sp., *njiyi* (Fig. 2.7). He hops in place. There are no other spirit rituals with similar costume to this *elili* performance. This spirit performance is practiced for mere amusement. *Elili* shows an intermediate pattern of distribution. Its guardianship and organization of ritual association are not clearly established.

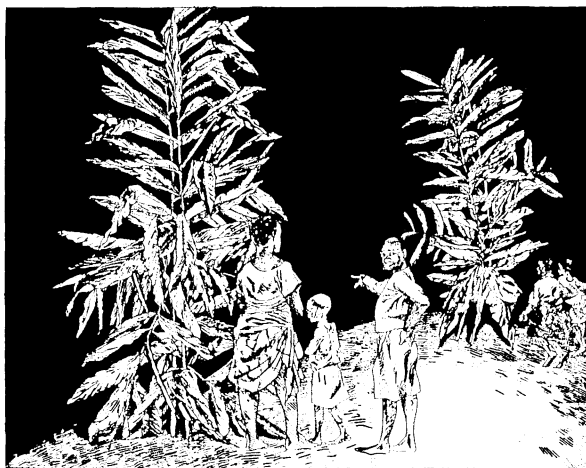
### 8. *bisenjo*

In *bisenjo* and other similar spirit rituals, dancers wear costumes made of twigs (Fig. 2.8). He jumps or rotates, pushing his hands and feet toward the ground. These spirits performances are mainly undertaken for mere amusement. Like *lumbe*, all nine spirit rituals of this type are minor ones created by individuals and performed only in their own bands. The creators' bands are dispersed extensively (in an area spanning 150 km along the road). The other dances of the same types as *bisenjo* are *pele* (observed in four bands), *iekele* (in seven bands), *mala*, *moyobe*, *ndengo*, *dikpaje*, *iang* and *molobo* (each in one band).

Although the above are the typical elements classified among spirit performances, sometimes, costumes are slightly modified in order to make them distinctive from similar kinds of spirit performances. For example, *bisenjo*, whose costume is made of twigs, had several variations. While in *bisenjo* the dancer jumps in circles with a costume of twigs tied around the waist, the *lianga* dancer rotates with a costume of twigs tied outward as an umbrella (Fig. 2.9).

The comparison of spirit costumes suggests that the spirit costumes are not created at random, but are differentiated by the combination of several kinds of interchangeable materials such as cloth, *ndimba* and tree twigs. The dominant shape of the costume is mainly a circle or a cone and rarely vary. The variation of spirit costumes thus derives from a combination of a limited number of elements, although there are many spirits in this area.

Despite considerable variety of costumes, the Baka have a common notion of the spirits. According to several informants, spirits walk around naked in the forest. The Baka give them cloths to cover themselves because they are originally so shy that they cannot appear naked in front of the audience. The notion of naked spirits was commonly found throughout the study area. The spirits have white skin like that of European people. They have extraordinarily big heads with long beards and bulgy eyes. Their eyes rustle when they blink. Sometimes, these naked spirits are found among the audience together with the costumed spirit of a certain ritual performance. On such an occasion, naked spirits dance near the bush so they can immediately escape when necessary.<sup>(6)</sup>



**Fig. 2.7** *Elli.*



**Fig. 2.8** *Bisenjo.*



**Fig. 2.9** *Liang.*

### III. The “Voice” of Spirits

The Baka think that each spirit has its own peculiar “voice.” These “voices” are uttered from the bush or *njanga*.<sup>(7)</sup> They are also uttered by the dancer who wears the spirit costumes. There are following types of “voice” heard in the spirit performances (Table 2).

#### (1) Utterance in the Baka language

The costumed dancer speaks at the interval of the dance in intelligible Baka language which can be understood by other Baka women and children. This form of utterance is observed during the rituals of *jengi*, *emboamboa*, *dikpaje* and *dodi*.

#### (2) Utterance in non-Baka language

The “voice” of spirits is heard from the bush but the spirit is invisible to the audience. This utterance is not intelligible to the audience except for the “father of spirits,” who translates this pseudo-speech. This type of utterance is observed only in *kose* performances.

#### (3) Meaningless cries

Nonverbal “voices” are heard from the bush from the invisible spirit in the performances of *jengi*, *emboamboa*, *kose*, *pembe*, *sonjo*, *limbo*, *sula*, and *lengo*.

#### (4) Whistle (*tombe*) or lip-smacking

The costumed dancer whistles or smacks his lips, imitating the cry of small animals such as mice or birds, in front of the audience during the dance pauses in the performances of *bisenjo*, *elili*, *limbo*, *mongelebo*, *mala*, *ligbado*, *mopepe*, *dikpaje*, and *nguya*.

#### (5) Handclapping (*tokpa*)

A person claps his hands in the bush while invisible to the audience. This performance is associated with all the spirit rituals.

The audience can realize the existence of spirits through “voices” even if they do not see the dance performance. The arrival of a spirit to the settlement is generally indicated by these “voice” performances before the beginning of *be*. In the types (1) and (2), which include verbal utterances, spirits speak encouraging the chorus of women. In such cases, verbal interactions with the audience are often made by the spirit. In the above (3) and (4), the audience are “pleased” with the whistle and squeaking of spirits, because they suppose the spirits are “speaking,” even if the speech is not intelligible to them.

In each ritual spirit performance, only certain types of “voice” are used. In *jengi*, type (1) and (3) are used. In *emboamboa*, only type (1) is performed. An *emboamboa* dancer speaks loudly and insults the audience. In *kose*, types (2) and (3) are uttered and for *pembe* and *sonjo*, type (3) is performed without any dance. *Limbo*, one of the minor spirit rituals, has types (3) and (4). In other minor spirit ritual such as *mala*, *ligbado*, *mopepe*, *dikpaje* and *nguya*, and several intermediate types of spirit ritual such as



*mongelebo* and *elili*, only type (5) is used.

The character of a “voice” varies with the sort of a spirit ritual. The “voice” of *jengi* is different from that of *emboambo*, even when they use the same type of voice (1). While the *jengi* dancer uses a shrill voice, the *emboambo* dancer growls in a low voice. The type (3) voice of *jengi* is also different from that of *kose*. *Jengi* cries “weeee!” in a shrill voice at length, whereas *kose* cries “ho! ho!” repeatedly. By contrast, *pembe* hums repeatedly in a low voice, and *limbo* makes a sound with a flute like that of bird songs. In most minor spirit rituals only type (4) is practiced, except for *elili* who squeaks like a mouse.

The variation in the form of “voice” used by each spirit derives from the combination and modification of the five types of “voice” mentioned above.

The “voice” performance is sometimes observed in other situations than *be*. “Voice” of *pembe* is heard after killing an elephant. “Voice” of *kose* is used to inform the women in the camp that men have killed an elephant in a distant place. The site of collecting activities on the next day is sometimes announced to the band members by the pseudo-speech of *kose*, which is translated by the “father of spirit.”

#### IV. Personalities of the Spirit

Spirits have different external appearance as well as particular personalities. This is particularly clear in the two major spirits, *jengi* and *emboambo*. *Jengi* is supposed to be an extraordinarily powerful and dangerous figure and is frequently likened to the “father.” When a Baka man encounter danger, they call “e jeng i!” to ask *jengi* for protection.

In contrast with *jengi*, *emboambo* is regarded as a sort of clown. The audience laugh at the exaggerated behavior and sexual jokes of *emboambo*. *Emboambo* is also often likened to the “youth.” As such, the two major spirits are given stereotypical personalities in marked contrast to each other.

Another spirit *mongelebo* is clearly identified with the soul of the dead persons. The Baka imagine that *mongelebo* wander in the forest. It is therefore necessary for the Baka to find them out in the forest and to led them to the village with the light of firewood. Identification with the soul of the dead persons is also observed in *kose* and other similar spirits, such as *ianja* and *bakanja*.

#### V. Other *Be* without Spirit Performances

##### 1. *abale*

While *be* usually involves a spirit performance, there are performances without any concern with spirits. The *be* with spirit performance and non-spirit performance should be compared to understand the meaning of spirit performance in *be*.

The *be* and the associated spirit are usually called by the same name. However, the spirit of *abale* is called by a different name, *kose* (see above). In general, in *abale* performance, a male with a girdle called *mangisa*, who does not pretend to be a spirit, dances (Fig. 3), often for mere amusement. But sometimes the dance is a part of series of the funeral rituals called *sinjo*. Performances of *kose* and *mangisa* are clearly distinguishable and never practiced in the same occasion. In comparison, the *nganga* performs an oracle and healing ritual based on the concept of *molili*.<sup>(8)</sup> *Nganga* and

*mangisa* performances can be performed in the same occasion.

## 2. *buma*

The *buma* dance is similar to *abale* dance with *mangisa*. The *buma* dancer wears a girdle (*lengge*) like *mangisa* on the waist and bells (*bologa*) made of seeds (also called *bologa*) tied to the ankle (Fig. 4). Some pieces of monkey fur called *kalu* (*Colobus guereza*) is attached to the *lengge*. When a dancer shakes his waist and stamps the feet, the *bologa* makes harmonized sounds as the maracas. Although the spirit of *buma* dance is also called *buma*, *buma* never appears during the dance performance. *Buma* is also performed for amusement or as a part of funeral ceremony. *Abale* and *buma* are equally practiced in *sinjo* funeral rituals. The choice between *abale* and *buma* in *sinjo* seems arbitrary, depending on the band and the locality. However, there is no spirit equivalent to *kose* spirit in *buma*. The Baka think that *buma* spirit appears in front of only the initiates of *buma* ritual association, where the spirit imposes a trial on the initiates by grabbing their toes and upsetting them. Spatial distribution of *buma* is also extensive, similar to that of *kose* (59 cases, 44%).

Dancing with *lengge* and *bologa* requires a higher skill than the *mangisa* dance. Entry to *buma* ritual association is also more strictly limited. There are only well-known specialists of *buma* (*nganga na buma*) in the study area. Applicants for *buma* ritual association are obliged to visit these specialists who apprentice them in exchange for some goods or cash.<sup>(10)</sup> In the initiation ritual, the knowledge on *lengge* and *bologa* and their ritual substances are given to the initiates. However, even after initiation, the newcomers not allowed to organize their own ritual association. In this regard, the practices of *buma* is quite different from that of other *be*.

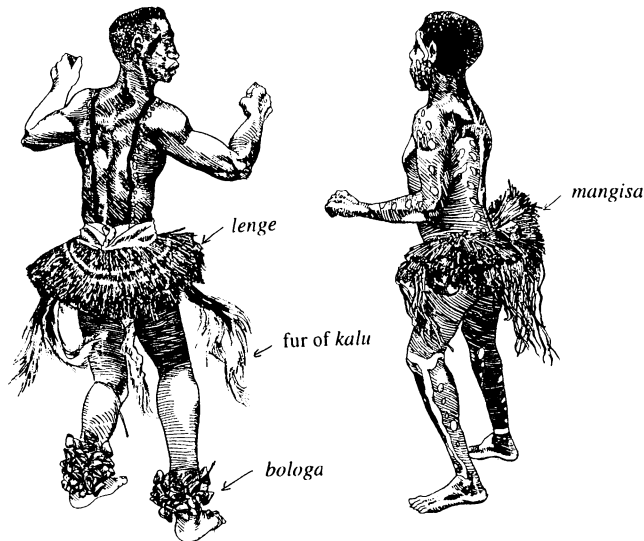


Fig. 3. A *buma* dancer.

Fig. 4. An *abale* dancer.

### 3. *yeli*

*Yeli* is quite different from the spirit rituals described above in that it is organized by the ritual association composed only of female initiates. Its ritual association is led by a female *nganga*. In *yeli*, spirit performances are never observed, and it is performed as a ritual for hunting luck or a purification ritual to remove the cause of disease from the band. The distribution of *yeli* seems to be wide, although data for proving this is, however, not enough.

### 4. *timba* and *mbala*

The performances of *timba* and *mbala* are almost the same, and the songs for these performances are often sung in the same performance. Their difference is only in the place of origin of their songs. According to the informants, while *timba* songs come from the southern part of the study area (around the band No. 200 in Fig.1), songs of *mbala* are from the northern part (around band No. 50). They involve no spirit and are performed mainly for amusement by women and children, and men never take part.

In *timba* and *mbala*, the participants dance one by one stepping into a circle of dancing and singing women. One of participants, dancing and singing, steps into the circle and approaches another participant on the opposite side, then return to previous position. This is to request and appoint the next dancer. The requested person steps into the circle and touches another in a similar way. This procedure is repeated over and over. Sometimes songs of the neighboring agriculturalists (generally called *bada*) are sung in *timba* and *mbala*. Both *timba* and *mbala* are widely distributed.

### 5. *beka*

*Beka* is completely different from other types of *be*. It is directed by the agriculturalists as a ritual for circumcision of the Baka boys. A sacred place (*njanga*) for the spirit *beka* is constructed, and according to the Baka, the *beka* initiates see the spirit *beka* at *njanga*. However, no voice is heard nor a costumed dancer dances as *beka*. Only men dance and sing.

### 6. *solo*

*Solo* is a type of *be* in which adolescent boys and girls participate. The performances is like combination of gymnastics. *Solo* is apparently influenced by school education, and no voice is heard nor a costumed dancer dances as *solo*.

## SOCIAL PROCESS OF DIVERSIFICATION OF SPIRIT PERFORMANCES

### I. Band and Variety of Spirit Performances

Spirit performances are usually collectively performed by individual bands. Their types and combinations found in a band are different from those of other bands. In order to understand such difference, the process of diversification of ritual spirit performances should be considered at the band level.

The variety observed is often brought about through the transmission of a guardianship among individual persons belonging to different bands. The process of such transfer and exchange should be analyzed.

## II. Inter-band Difference

Of 227 bands investigated, 133 (59%) had at least one ritual association. The average ritual associations in a band was three (N=134), the number ranging from one to nine (Fig. 5).

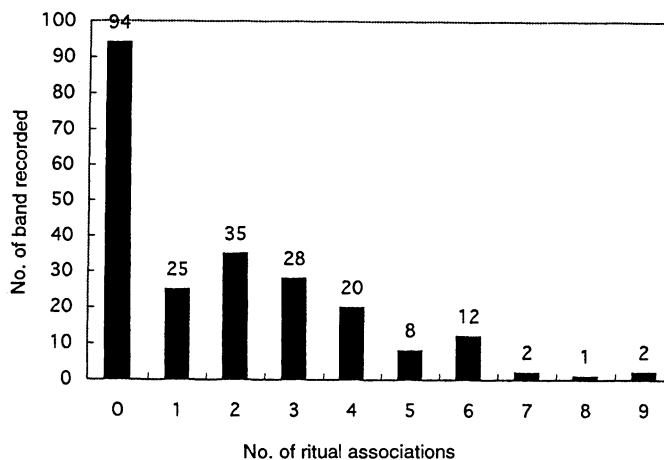


Fig. 5. Number of ritual association in each band.

Table 3. Spirit rituals observed in each of the 7 bands around Ngola village.

Bands No.*	Clan name (number of families in each band)	Spirits held by each band
94	ye-Ndumu(26)	<i>jengi</i> <i>emboambo</i> <i>buma</i> <i>pembe</i>
95	ye-Ndumu(11)	<i>emboambo</i> <i>elili</i> <i>bokela</i> <i>pembe</i>
96	ye-Makombo ye-Mukumu(14)	<i>kose</i> <i>emboambo</i> <i>elili</i> <i>limbo**</i>
97	ye-Makombo(6)	no spirit rituals
98	ye-Ndumu(5)	no spirit rituals
99	ye-Makombo(35)	<i>jengi</i> <i>emboambo</i> <i>kose</i> <i>buma</i>
100	ye-Makombo(15)	<i>jengi</i> <i>kose</i>

\*: No. of band is shown in Fig. 1.

\*\*:*limbo* was founded in band No. 96.

Joiris (1996) pointed out that the number of rituals and combination changed with the bands. She also indicated that the difference in the combination of rituals was related to the identity of the band. According to Pederson & Waehle (1991), the Baka sometimes distinguished their own bands by the number and kinds of rituals practiced. Table 3 shows the numbers and combinations of spirit rituals practiced in the seven bands situated around the Ngola village (a Bantu agriculturalists' village). Although some bands had no spirit ritual and others had as many as five, no band had completely the same combination. The Baka themselves were well aware of these differences. In particular, they all knew the bands which possessed *jengi*, because almost all the Baka men experienced *jengi* initiation ritual in adolescence in one of these bands. Out of 453 adult men sampled in the study area, 405 (89%) were initiated in *jengi* ritual associations. The number of initiates in other spirit rituals was smaller. 314 (69%) to *emboamboa*, 168 (37%) to *kose*, 103 (23%) to *buma*, and 137 (30%) to *elili*. The importance of *jengi* was reflected even in the name of the band. The five bands from No.94 to 98 (in Fig.1) were called Bapame in general, because all of them were situated along the small stream called Bapame River. Among them, only band No.94 practiced *jengi*, and was called by the specific name, "Bapame of *jengi* ." The Baka identify the band with a specific spirit ritual, as Joiris (1996) pointed out.

Baka bands generally have different combination of spirit rituals. However, the bands with no major spirit rituals (such as *jengi* and *emboamboa*) tend to create their original spirit rituals to express their group identity. The creation episodes of the minor spirit rituals also suggest that the creation is stimulated by the lack of other major spirit rituals. According to some creation episodes of spirit performance, the new spirits told the founder of the ritual, or the "fathers of spirit," that the spirits would constantly visit the settlement (band) because it was pitiful that the Baka had to visit other bands whenever they wanted to dance. Such an episode was recorded in the cases of *lengo* creation in band No.135, and *limo* creation in band No.60. A large number of minor spirit rituals are said to have been created in such a way. Therefore, the diversity of spirit rituals is partly generated through the desire for establishing group identity of the band.

### III. Inter-individual Transmission of Guardianship

The spirit guardianship and the right of organizing its ritual generally belong to an individual called "father of spirit." Of the 453 spirit rituals, 288 had individual guardianship. On average, one "father of spirit" held 1.4 such spirit guardianship with the number ranging from one to seven (Fig. 6).

For *jengi*, *emboamboa*, and *kose*, when there are plural guardians of the same spirit, each man is given a particular name for the spirits they guard (a sort of nickname) (Table 4). This clearly shows the individualistic nature of spirit guardianship.

The guardianship can be shared with other individuals. Most guardianship is easily transferred in exchange for cloths or cash. It is even given away as a part of bridewealth! In this respect, spirit guardianship can be seen as individual property, a socially unique custom of the Baka in the study area.<sup>(10)</sup>

The spirit guardianship is transferred to other individuals in two ways. First, a son inherits a guardianship upon death of his father (classified "inheritance" in Table 5). Because the son who inherits the guardianship generally remains in the father's band, the

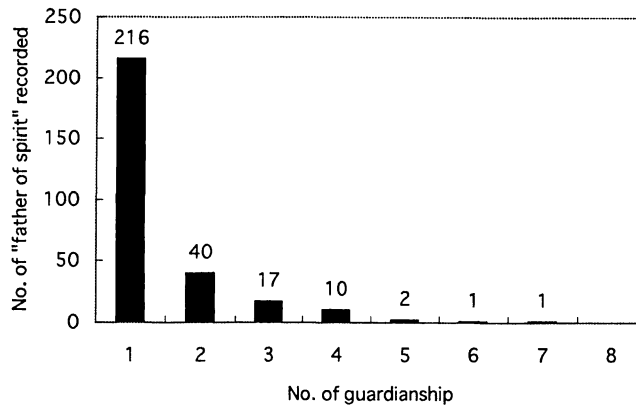


Fig. 6. Number of guardianships possessed by each "father of spirit".

spirit ritual is not transmitted to other bands. Second, a "father of spirit" shares the guardianship with other persons, in exchange for goods or cash ("sharing and exchange" in Table 5). In such cases, an additional individual name of the spirit is also bestowed by the original "father of spirit." Therefore, the number of guardians increases with the sharing of guardianships, and the spirit rituals are diffused to other bands.

New spirit rituals may be created, with accompanying episodes that the "father of spirit" encountered the spirit either in the forest or in a dream for the first time ("creation" in Table 5). After creation, the new guardianship can be also transferred to other persons through either "inheritance" or "sharing and exchange."

Both "inheritance" and "sharing and exchange" are common in transfer of spirit guardianship. The exception is *jengi* and *pembe*, whose transfers are mostly through "inheritance" (Table 5). Apart from these two cases, the relationship between the giver and receiver of the guardianship is mostly matrilineal kins, affines or personal friends (Table 6) and not patrilineal kins. In other words, the spirit guardianship is transmitted through relationship created by marriage and friendship, diffused beyond the patrilineal descent groups of the original "father of spirit."

The guardianships of two major spirit rituals *buma* and *kose* are often transferred through "sharing and exchange" (Table 6). The actual diffusion processes of *buma* and *kose* can also be followed.

Currently, the major guardians of *buma* are two specialists of *buma* (*nganga na buma*) living in the same band (No.180). Most *buma* guardianships are shared by them with other individuals in exchange for goods or cash (in 13 cases of all 20 cases). In other seven cases, the guardianships were obtained from another *nganga na buma*. These *nganga na buma* in this area diffused recently, within one or two generations, by a limited number of *nganga na buma* who had obtained their own guardianships from the

**Table 4.** Individual names for spirit.

(a) Individual names for *jengi*

Individual name	Band number	Individual name	Band number
1 Njono	27, 74, 101, 103	31 Mondekendeke	104
2 Monjonji	18, 35, 98, 137	32 Igbula	104
3 Manba	84, 106, 118	33 Asomo	114
4 Moseke	36-1*, 22	34 Manba	106
5 Mojuma	5, 164	35 Mokondi	107
6 Mandekendeke	60, 104	36 Manba	118
7 Libolongo	128, 29	37 Ndukunde	121
8 Maloko	113, 231	38 Libolongo	128
9 Malolo	136, 153	39 Njengi	140
10 Kano	147, 155	40 Mafasa	135
11 Kanyo	157, 161	41 Libulu	151
12 Nguya	202, 212	42 Fondi	149
13 Likolo	191, 227	43 Josi	144
14 Mafala	131, 204	44 Kungu	154
15 Kofonde	76	45 Mojuma	164
16 Kofonge	70	46 Sange	132
17 Mowonge	124	47 Mosuko	131
18 Njojange	54	48 Kekeso	193
19 Njinge	45	49 Nola	232
20 Londe	43	50 Uunji	207
21 no name	38	51 Mafala	204
22 Malobo	35	52 Mangobe	211
23 Mominga	26	53 Yuala	217
24 Jonjange	32	54 Libena	222
25 Elanba	19	55 Njubanji	226
26 Banga	22	56 Kela	226
27 Ndunba	23	57 Nguya	192
28 Musubu	89	58 Nafesou	197
29 Nolenbe	90		
30 Mondoki	112		

\*: In No. 36, there were two guardians of *jengi*.

(continued)

(b) Individual names for *kose*

Individual name	Band number
1 Yombi	76,111,101,103,130
2 Besinbo	3
3 Wabusu	4
4 Moli	5
5 Kao	18
6 Ekpeso	21
7 Ande	22
8 Nbongi	23
9 Nyamina	36
10 Ngonga	74
11 Mokonji	84
12 Ngbungbu	89
13 Longi	90
14 Ngungba	94
15 Aiya	98
16 Yonbi	101
17 Yonbi	103
18 Yonbi	111
19 Masangi	112
20 Bulu	115
21 Yonbi	130
22 Nbobo	135
23 Besinbo	144
24 Sonjo	157

(c) Individual names for *emboambo*

Individual name	Band number
1 Nakpeli**	99, 106, <u>118</u> , <u>120</u> , <u>149</u> , 144, <u>182</u> , 206, 231
2 Galingombo**	90, <u>184</u> , 192
3 Mofolo	98, 101
4 Kokpaje	3
5 Yayu	4
6 Nduku	18
7 Mokale	19
8 Lekpa	21
9 Kpananguma	20
10 Niekpalanga	22
11 Katuta	26
12 Nboso	27
13 Matele	38
14 no name	43
15 Gbabongo	45
16 Mokili	54
17 Mofolo	98
18 Denis	104
19 Basulu	137
20 Mboku	54
21 Lingele	164
22 Alina	176
23 Mosulo	166
24 Ndesolo	187
25 Ajina	197
26 Kekeso	193
27 Njale	230
28 Selenbeti	207
29 Nbolikofa	223

\*\* : Underlined numreals indicate case that imagined "wife" Tuka was observed.

(d) Individual names for *joboko*

Individual name	Band number
1 Mboku	45



**Table 5.** Transmission of spirit guardianships.

	Inheritance		Sharing and exchange		creation		Not clear cases		Total of records
	No. of records	% of total records	No. of records	% of total records	No. of records	% of total records	No. of records	% of total records	
<i>jengi</i>	97	92	1	1	0	0	8	7	106
<i>emboamboa</i>	36	40	27	30	1	1	26	29	90
<i>kose</i>	30	53	27	47	0	0	0	0	57
<i>buma</i>	6	10	46	78	0	0	7	12	59
<i>pembe</i>	17	85	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
<i>joboko</i>	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0	19
<i>elilli</i>	7	39	1	6	0	0	10	55	18
<i>bokela</i>	0	0	5	31	1	6	10	63	16
<i>bakanja</i>	1	12.5	6	75	1	12.5	0	0	8
<i>iekele</i>	0	0	5	71	2	29	0	0	7
<i>pele</i>	0	0	3	75	1	25	0	0	4
<i>mongelebo</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	100	4
<i>sonjo</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
other 38 spirit rituals	0	0	6	13	39	87	0	0	45

Note: The box   shows noteworthy cases.

**Table 6.** Relationship between the persons who "shared" guardianship

	Relatives on the father's side	Relatives on the mother's side	Relatives on the wife's side	Friends without kin relationship	Total of records
<i>jengi</i>	0	1	0	0	1
<i>emboamboa</i>	0	4	6	17	27
<i>kose</i>	0	0	3	44	47
<i>buma</i>	0	5	2	39	46
<i>pembe</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>joboko</i>	0	0	1	6	7
<i>elili</i>	0	0	0	1	1
<i>bokela</i>	0	0	0	5	5
<i>bakanja</i>	1	0	3	2	6
<i>iekele</i>	0	0	0	5	5
<i>pele</i>	0	0	0	3	3
<i>mongelebo</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>sonjo</i>	0	0	0	0	0
other 38 spirit rituals	0	0	0	6	6
Total of records	1	10	15	128	154

Baka in the bordering area between Congo and Cameroon.<sup>(11)</sup>

The diffusion of *kose* is said to have happened when the *be* of *abale* with *kose* was diffused. According to information collected in the oral tradition, there had been a *be* called *awoku* throughout the study area three generations ago, but without spirits involved. Then, *abale* introduced from Grribe village (Fig. 1) replaced *awoku*. Even now, some *awoku* songs remain in the repertory of *abale*.<sup>(12)</sup> *Kose* may have been accompanied with the sharing of *abale*, which is frequently observed even at present.

The transmission of *jengi* and *pembe* is quite different from that of other spirits (Table 5). The guardianship of *jengi*, which is obtained only through the patrilineal line, is never exchanged, unlike other spirit rituals. In principle, the *jengi* guardianship cannot spread into broader area. Although it is a widely distributed, single most important spirit ritual, it is not clear how it has diffused. Whether its patrilineal inheritance is a recent invention or traditional practice since the creation of *jengi* is yet to be investigated.<sup>(13)</sup>

Joiris (1996) stated that the “co-guardianship” of *jengi* has been formed through a genealogical linkage of patrilineal descent group with its own *jengi*. Such a linkage is clearly demonstrated by the mimic genealogical relationship among the *jengi* with different individual names. Co-guardianship based on genealogical relationship is peculiar only to *jengi*, which is actually transmitted through the patrilineal line. Because of such close association of *jengi* with the patrilineal descent group, *jengi* guardianship cannot be transferred to other individuals or bands through “sharing and exchange.”

While the guardianship of spirit rituals spreads into other bands, some spirit rituals disappear. Joiris (1996) indicated that within one or two generations, some ritual associations may be created while others disappear. Such instability in spirit rituals also depends on the individualistic nature of spirit guardianship. For instance, when a “father of spirit” dies, his spirit often “return to the forest,” and its spirit ritual ceases to exist, unless the “father of spirit” transmits his guardianship to another person in his life time. Spirit rituals are thus not always established as a permanent ritual. *Sonjo* and *pembe* disappeared from some bands one generation ago.<sup>(14)</sup> Even *jengi*, which is strictly linked to the band, may sometimes be lost after the death of the “father of spirit.” When the sacred place for the spirit *njanga* is covered with weeds, the Baka say that *jengi* “returns to the forest.”

The replacement of spirit rituals is also observed. While a newly introduced spirit ritual may be practiced frequently, other performances become less frequent and eventually abandoned (Joiris, 1993b). Thus the new minor spirit rituals created in the band occasionally replace the pre-existing ones. Sometimes, *jengi* is also abandoned because of the creation of a new spirit ritual (as in the case of *bakanja* in band No. 35, *ianja* in band No. 87, and *limo* in band No. 101). It is interesting that the preference of minor spirits to major spirits can be observed in these cases, but again the reason for this cannot be made clear. Such a replacement sometimes takes place simultaneously in several bands as if a fashion. The fast-spreading *abale* and *buma* in the study area were the typical examples. At present, *abale* is in turn replaced by *wonga*, newly created in several bands (bands No. 30, 35, 54, and 64).

#### IV. Creation of Spirit Rituals by Individual Persons

The individualistic nature of spirit guardianship is clear in the spirit ritual creations.

The episodes which endorse the creation of new spirit rituals always emphasizes the specific relationship of a “father of spirit” with the spirit. These episodes share a common motif of a “father of spirit” encountering a new spirit. However, there is also variation in the details of the episodes, as shown in Table 7. In the case of *mane* (No. 58), a person saw a new spirit in his dream in the daytime. For *bisenjo* (No. 93), a person found a new spirit in the forest when he lost his way to the hunting camp. For *lindombi* (No. 158), a person encountered it on the way to bathe in the forest. The specific relationship of the “fathers of spirit” with a spirit is also expressed in dramatic performances. In *bisenjo*, a fictive situation is depicted with a man (later “father of spirits”) lost in the forest, for whom the people of the band organizes a *nganga* search ritual. Then, he emerges with a new spirit, *bisenjo*. After such a performance, the man, the new “father of spirit,” makes a promise with the new spirit. In other cases like those of *lengo* and *njulimbo*, the new spirit suddenly appears in *be*. The new spirits are said to have suddenly appeared where children played (the cases of *limo*, *pele*, *mala*, *ianga*, *nguya*, *lina*, and *yeyu*, in Table 7).

The creator of spirit rituals who exchanged the guardianship for cash or goods, may consequently benefit from it. The guardianships of 21 spirit rituals belonging to eight types were created by individuals, and were transmitted to others through “inheritance” and “sharing and exchange” (four cases by inheritance, 17 by sharing). Furthermore, in three cases guardianships were then again transferred.

While some spirit rituals created by individuals disappeared after the death of the creators (e.g. in the case of *dodi*, in band No.16. *Lengo* spirit ritual disappeared from the band of the creator (No. 100), whereas it still survives in the band No.106 with which the creator shared guardianship.

There are also other minor spirit rituals widely diffused through transmission among individuals. The creator of *bokela* (band 56) shared guardianship with five men of other bands (95, 117, 118, 119, and 191). All of these were transmissions through “sharing and exchange” and no secondary transmission has been observed yet. The creator of *wonga* shared guardianship with six men of other bands. Out of these six men, two obtained guardianship as a gift of friendship (35 and 54). Three (two men of No. 64, one of No. 30) belonged to the same patrilineal group and received it as bridewealth for the creator’s second wife. The remaining one person exchanged it for meat and money. Furthermore, the man in band No.64 transferred the guardianship to his son.

In the extreme case, the individualistic nature of spirit rituals is expressed in a “personal *be*,” for which ritual association is not organized, and creator modifies even the form of *be* at his will.

There were two such personal *be* in the band where I conducted survey. The creators of these personal *be* were young men who married recently without any spirit yet. One was a *be* called *sakoja*, without spirit performances. He only danced *sakoja* and composed songs. The costume of the dancer was not formalized. The *sakoja* sometimes began spontaneously when the creator got drunk. If the women in the band thought his dance and song were attractive, they joined in singing, and the occasion developed into a festive gathering. If not, the creator danced and sang alone. In other spirit rituals, the participation of the whole band members is regarded as a matter of course and the *be* cannot be initiated spontaneously.

Another personal *be*, *monjekenjeke*, was created by a young man who met

**Table 7.** Creation episodes of minor spirit rituals.

Patterns of episodes	Name of spirits	Band number
Encounter with spirits in a dream	<i>ianja</i>	16
	<i>bakanja</i>	35
	<i>emboamboa</i>	67
	<i>limbo</i>	95
	<i>ligbado</i>	110
	<i>nanda</i>	116
	<i>sula</i>	131
Encounter with spirits in the forest	<i>seba</i>	221
	<i>ndengo</i>	45
	<i>mane</i>	52
	<i>bisenjo</i>	86
	<i>linge</i>	139
	<i>ngango</i>	139
	<i>lindombi</i>	147
Encounter with spirits in a dream, followed by another encounter in the forest	<i>mopepe</i>	169
	<i>iekele</i>	66, 201
	<i>nde</i>	68
	<i>lianga</i>	92
Spirits appear where children are playing	<i>dikpaje</i>	127
	<i>limo</i>	54
	<i>pele</i>	80
	<i>mala</i>	85
	<i>iang</i>	108
	<i>nguya</i>	129
Spirits appear when "fathers of spirits" stayed alone in the village	<i>lina</i>	134
	<i>yeyu</i>	227
	<i>iese</i>	116
Encounter with spirits in a dream followed by their appearance in <i>be</i>	<i>lengo-l</i>	126
unknown	<i>dodi</i>	16
	<i>mandenda</i>	26
	<i>ndondo</i>	27
	<i>jendi</i>	30
	<i>molobo</i>	42
	<i>mbaka</i>	45
	<i>limo</i>	54
	<i>bokela</i>	56
	<i>made</i>	93

*monjekenjeke* in the forest. The *monjekenjeke* dancer covered his body with a sack of cacao (Fig. 5). This costume was very simple but not an imitation of other spirit costumes. The *monjekenjeke* songs were composed by the creator himself. The women and children in the band, who knew these songs, participated simply for amusement in the *monjekenjeke be*. The atmosphere of *monjekenjeke* was more informal and relaxed than that of other spirit rituals. When the creator introduced a new *monjekenjeke* song, women made frank comments on the song. Moreover, the wife of the creator once said to him: "Buy me the European skirt to dance with your spirit, *monjekenjeke*." The name of other spirits cannot easily be invoked by women in such a way.



Fig. 7. *Monjekenjeke*.

The style of personal *be* can be easily modified by its “father of spirit.” Such an easy modifications of spirit ritual is assured by the individual guardianship. The ritual performance is also controlled by the “father of spirit,” unlike in other spirit rituals with established forms and styles of performance. Such a flexibility may also be applicable to other minor spirit rituals.

Even the long-lasting major spirit ritual is sometimes modified by a personal whim, and such a personal and arbitrary modification is accepted. In *sinjo* ritual, the final stage of funeral ceremony, some bands perform *abale*. In *sinjo*, dancers with *mangisa* girdles play an important part. The dancers paint white spots on their bodies with ashes in order to represent leopards. The plot of the ritual is that one of these “leopards” steals the package of the hair of the family members of a dead person, and throws it away in the bush. Just before the “leopard” steals the package, a tense atmosphere is created, because the Baka think that if the “leopard” drops the package, the people related to the dead person will suffer a terrible misfortune. When I observed *sinjo* ritual in the band No.93, a man stepped to this scene. He approached the “leopard” and pointed to the package of hair. This man intended to play an additional, original part which encouraged the “leopard” act. Because this part could not be observed in other areas, it was probably created by this man. According to an informant, whenever *sinjo* is practiced in the neighborhood, this man visits to play this part originated by him. Other people generally accept and enjoy this personal modification of the ritual. At least, they do not regard such a personal modification as spoiling the ritual.

In summary, diversity and flexibility in ritual practices among the Baka emerge from the following process: First, various combinations of spirit performance elements result in a band from frequent exchanges of spirit guardianships. Second, many spirit rituals are created by individuals, who introduced them to the society. While some spirit rituals disappear after the death of the creator, others survive and even become widely distributed through diffusion. Third, arbitrary modifications in the spirit ritual performances are made by individuals and are accepted by the society to some extent.

## SOCIAL PROCESS OF STANDARDIZATION OF SPIRIT RITUALS

Although a considerable diversity is observed in the ritual spirit performances among the Baka, there is also a certain common framework and a set of elements recurring in this diversity.

First of all, even new spirit rituals share the common notion of “nature spirit.” The concept of “nature spirit,” thus seems to be the essential element in the Baka belief system. The creation of a new spirit and its ritual performance retain this common framework of “nature spirit.”

Second, the diversity in the styles of spirit performances derives mainly from the various combination of limited elements, through slight modification. These elements include the types of costumes and creation episodes. This suggests the framework of spirit performances is shared throughout the study area.

The regionally shared framework may have resulted from the mutual adaptations by the Baka. For example, the episodes of the creation of minor spirit rituals are clearly standardized. Despite a large number of differences in detail, the majority of these episodes share the common motifs (Table 7). The motif of “seeing the spirit in the forest” or “seeing the spirit in the dream” is most frequently referred to by the Baka. Even the more detailed motif of a “spirit appearing where children were playing” is also frequently recorded. A set of detailed situation of time, place, and act of characters is added to this stereotyped motif to differentiate the episode from each other. These creation episodes are very similar.

The costume styles of minor spirit rituals are also clearly standardized (Table 8). In all these spirit rituals created by individuals the costumes of *limbo*, *bisenjo* and *lumbe* styles are used. In particular, the bands of creators of *lumbe* spirit rituals are located close to each other within 50 km along the road. This suggests that these creators may also have imitated the costumes of each other.

The appearance of major spirits are also adopted into other minor spirit performances. In *wonga*, the dancer wears a girdle made of two *mangisa*, which is also used in *abale*. The performance of *wonga* is also quite similar to that of *abale*. The costume for the spirit for *wonga*, *bakanja* is almost the same as *kose* of *abale*. The creator of *wonga* clearly imitated the preexisting form of *abale*. In several bands, the *timba* and *mbala* rituals have been replaced by *membiasi*, which has imitated the former (No. 33, 35, 36). It is probable that the bands in the neighborhood modify the ritual performances by referring to each other, thus resulting in the standardization in the style of spirit rituals.

**Table 8.** Standardization of costumes for minor spirits.

Type of <i>limbo</i> (2 <i>ndimba</i> sets)	<i>limbo</i> , <i>bokela</i> , <i>limo</i> , <i>lumbe</i> , <i>ligbado</i> , <i>nanda iese</i> , <i>linge</i> , <i>linge</i> , <i>ngango</i> , <i>jendi</i> , <i>mokpekpe yeyu</i> , <i>lianga</i> , <i>lengo-2</i> , <i>nguya</i> , <i>mbaka</i>
Type of <i>bisenjo</i> (twigs)	<i>pele</i> , <i>iekele</i> , <i>mala</i> , <i>bisenjo</i> , <i>moyobe</i> , <i>ndengo dikpaje</i> , <i>iango</i> , <i>molobo</i> , <i>moyobe</i>
Type of <i>lumbe</i> ( <i>ndimba</i> )	<i>lumbe</i> , <i>yua</i> , <i>lengo-1</i> , <i>lina</i>
Type of <i>kose</i> ( <i>ndimba</i> and <i>mangisa</i> )	<i>bakanja</i> , <i>ianja</i> , <i>ndondo</i>
Type of <i>emboambo</i> (cloths)	<i>dodi</i>

The individual names of major spirits overlap in the cases of *jengi*, *kose* and *emboamboa* through mutual imitation (Table 9). Especially, the individual names for a pair of *emboamboa*, *nakpeli* (husband) and *tuka* (wife), are frequently observed. The stereotyped image of *emboamboa* as a pair is shared in the research area.

As a result of these mutual imitation, standardization in the style of spirit rituals occurs on one hand, against the general tendency for diversification of spirit rituals, on the other.

Another aspect of the standardization process can also be observed in the distribution of spirit rituals. While *jengi* and *emboamboa* became widely distributed, and *buma* and *kose* diffused fast and extensively, other minor spirit rituals did not spread out of its original band, and some even disappeared. There must have been a sort of selection pressure which promotes extensive diffusion of certain spirit ritual.

Why only certain spirit rituals are selected by many bands seems to depend on various factors, such as the attractiveness of performance with elaborate costumes, and dramatic process. Sometimes the selection process is accidental, as in the case of *wonga* which extensively spread because of the reputation of the creator's having a good hunt after the creation of this ritual. Major spirit rituals such as *jengi*, *emboamboa*, *kose*, and *buma* may be maintained and propagated through such a process of social selection.

**Table 9.** Overlappings of individual names for spirit.

(a) <i>jengi</i>		
	Individual name	Band number
1	Njono	27, 74, 101, 103
2	Monjonji	35, 98, 137
3	Mafala	131, 204
4	Manba	84, 106, 118
5	Libolonggo	128, 29
6	Mandekendeke	60, 104
7	Moseke	36-1,22
8	Mojuma	5, 164
9	Kano	147, 155
10	Likolo	191, 227
11	Nguya	212, 202
12	Maloko	113, 231
13	Malolo	136, 153
14	Kanyo	157, 161
(b) <i>emoboamboa</i>		
	Individual name	Band number
	Knakpeli	99, 106, 118, 120, 137, 149, 164, 182, 206, 231
	Galingonbo	90, 184, 192
	Mofolo	90, 98
(c) <i>kose</i>		
	Individual name	Band number
	Yonbi	76, 111, 101, 103, 130

It is interesting to see why the Baka selected two contrastive major spirit rituals, *jengi* and *emboambo*. The specific characteristics of these two spirit rituals have probably attracted most of the Baka. The styles of these two spirit performances are very specialized, complex, and contrastive with each other. *Jengi* is clearly a violent spirit as an executor of circumcision, which is in sharp contrast with *emboambo* as a funny clown. Their performances also show a sharp contrast, which corresponds to the social contrast between senior and junior generations among the Baka society. While *emboambo* is explained as “spirit for young men” by the Baka themselves, *jengi* tends to be regarded as a “spirit for senior men” corresponding with its role in the circumcision and other rites of passage. Underlying this situation may be an opposition or a hierarchical relationship between senior generation as superior and junior generation as inferior. According to Althabe (1965), such an opposition were most serious between the senior men belonging to the core patrilineal group of the band and the young men with uxorilocal residence for bride service. Traditionally, they were expected to live in the same settlement despite of tense relationship between them. However, the conflict was practically avoided through movement to other bands in their nomadic life style. The process of sedentarization promoted in 1950’s has prevented the men from moving to other places and tense relationship between them became fixed. This relationship is also reflected in the guardianship possession (Table 10). A considerable number of guardians of *emboambo* are comprised of the men with uxorilocal residence or immigrants. In this context, the performance of *emboambo* as a clown is significant. Social connotation of a clown in hunter-gatherer societies is that he is a marginal man. For example, although men are valued for his hunting technique in the Mbuti society, unskillful hunters are socially categorized as “clowns” with androgynous characteristics (Turnbull, 1981). Althabe (1965) also pointed out that an immigrant to a sedentary residence group often behaved as a clown to make himself accepted by the members of the original groups. Althabe also reported an example that a Baka “chef,” who wished to identify himself with the Bantu farmers, played a part of clown in front of them. The guardianship of *emboambo* held by the men with uxorilocal residence clearly exhibits their social marginality and their political difficulties in their wives’ bands.

On the other hand, guardianship of *jengi* is always transferred through the patrilineal line. This guardianship may be linked with the social identity of the nucleus patrilineal group and its political influence. The demonstration of violence observed in the *jengi*

**Table 10.** Residence pattern of “fathers of spirit.”

	Virilocal residence	Uxorilocal residence	Immigration	Unclear cases	Total of records
<i>jengi</i>	95	3	0	8	106
<i>emboambo</i>	42	15	3	30	90
<i>kose</i>	45	2	1	9	57
<i>buma</i>	50		0	9	59
<i>joboko</i>	18	0	0	1	19
<i>pembe</i>	25	1	0	1	26
<i>elili</i>	8	1	1	8	18
<i>mongelebo</i>	4	0	0	0	4
<i>sonjo</i>	4	0	0	0	4
other minor spirit rituals	64	5	0	1	70



performance also supports this idea. Therefore, contrastive social situations associated with *emboamboa* and *jengi* may express the social opposition of men divided by residence and/or generation. *Jengi* and *emboamboa* have been selected as major spirit rituals by the Baka people, specialized and maintained in tandem reflecting the tense political relationships among the modern Baka men.

## FLUID CHARACTERISTICS IN RITUAL PRACTICES

Barnard (1988) pointed out that among the Khoisan, the assimilation of a new idea is non-problematic and religious notions have fluid characteristics which led to historically intra-cultural diversity. He proposed that a “grammar” which enabled such fluidity and diversity should be explicated. Joiris was influenced by Barnard, and I have been influenced by both of their studies.

I found that modifications of spirit rituals are promoted by the fluid characteristics. It is generally seen in the ritual practices based on limited framework for performance style shared among the Baka. This is comparable to the “grammar” which facilitates fluid characteristics of Khoisan religious system.

What are the social processes which promote such fluidity of ritual practice? Barnard (1988) supposed that the fluidity of the population itself promoted the diversification of religious ideas among the Khoisan. Joiris (1993a) also pointed out that the frequent movement among the Baka facilitated the fluidity of ritual practice in each band.

In this section, I will propose the idea of individualistic treatment of guardianship as a key concept for understanding these fluidity of ritual practices among the Baka. The performance diversity is generated from individuals’ commitment to transmission and exchange of guardianships. The guardianship is exchanged for goods and cash between individuals, and arbitrary modification of the styles of spirit performance by individuals are locally accepted.

The role of individual has been underestimated or even neglected in the studies of hunter-gatherer rituals so far. Individual difference in the ritual performance, for example, is regarded as negligible variants or sometimes even as the factor of spoiling the reliability of the data (Joiris, 1993a; Keen, 1988).

While problems of ownership have been one of the important themes in hunter-gatherer studies, ownership of or right to rituals has not attracted due attention. From a socioeconomic perspective, major focus has been given on the ownership of wealth extracted from natural resource. Keen (1988) reported on the right to rituals among the Yolngu in Australia. His argument was based on the fact that the right to ritual was associated with the ownership of land as a common and inalienable resource of a particular clan. Contrary to this example, the Baka transfer of spirit guardianships is easy. The right to rituals is held by individuals among the Baka, except for *jengi* which is a sort of common property of the band. This individual right is based on the Baka concept of exclusive and personal association of an individual man with a spirit.

There has been so far no report on a similar individual possession of right to rituals in other “Pygmy” groups. Turnbull (1961) reported on the Mbuti case in which the “*molimo* trumpet,” the focus of *molimo* ritual, was transmitted between brothers-in-law. This suggests the personal right to rituals among the Mbuti. There is also suggestions

that *molimo* belongs to a particular clan (Turmbull, 1961; Ichikawa, 1978). In the case of the Aka, while personal protective spirits or its powers (*kulu*) are transmitted from father to son and from master to apprentice, ancestor spirits called *dio* belongs to particular clans (Joiris, 1996). There is also a suggestion that the Aka in Northern Congo often exchange the right to spirit rituals as the Baka (Hanawa, personal communication). The Aka in the Likouala region of Congo also practice many kinds of spirit rituals (14 kinds, according to Hanawa). The right to perform these rituals is transmitted among individuals through the patrilineal or matrilineal line, or in exchange for hunting nets, spear heads, and axes. Here, spirit rituals are quickly diffused through individual exchanges of their right, as in the Baka case. It seems therefore necessary to collect more data on the diversification of spirit rituals and role of individuals in this process among other groups than Baka.

I believe that frequent exchange of spirit guardianship is facilitated by the introduction of cash economy. In most cases, guardianship is exchanged for cash, cloths, meat, or other goods which are often obtained by the Baka from the trade with neighboring agriculturalists. The exchangeable items have increased as cash economy prevailed, and spirit guardianship has become one of such exchangeable items.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I analyzed the diversification process of spirit ritual performances among the Baka.

Firstly, I have shown that this process is facilitated by individual guardianship of the spirits. As some of the guardianships are easily transmitted to other individuals, it is diffused over a wide area. At the same time, the individuals often modify the form of rituals at their own will.

Secondly, diversification process derives from the nomadic nature of hunter-gatherer society. The intra-cultural diversity has been discussed regarding the larger groups such as linguistic groups (Barnard, 1988). In contrast, my study focused on small-scale groups such as bands and individuals. Bands and individuals behave arbitrarily in ritual activities, promoting spontaneous modification of the pre-existing forms. This derives from the lack of centralization in a band society, which in turn suggests the cultural autonomy of the band in the Baka society.

Such diversification of spirit ritual performances takes place at the same time as standardization. In the latter process, strange or excessive modification dies out. Consequently, some elements of spirit rituals become similar, such as costumes, spirits overlappingly guarded by different "fathers of spirit," and creation episodes. In addition, despite the existence of diversity, there is a domination by a limited number of major spirit rituals such as *jengi* and *emboamboa* perhaps under a "selection pressure." However strong the tendency of Baka spirit rituals for diversification, they never veers radically away from the idea of spirit *me*.

Interestingly various Pygmy groups as a whole share a notion of the natural spirit. They believe in common supernatural beings connected with the forest, namely, *me* among the Baka, *mokondi* (Hanawa, personal communication) or *dio* (Joiris, 1996) among the Aka, *tore* among the Efe (Sawada, 1991) and *molimo* (Turnbull, 1961) or

*baketi* among the Mbuti (Harako, 1984). Further understanding of diversification and modification process of rituals may be necessary in order to explain the Pygmy religious notion as a whole.

Diversification and modification processes are influenced by various social factors. Especially, social change as reported by Althabe (1965), deserves special attention. He stated that Baka who began to sedentarize in 1950's experienced social confusion, generated by the contradictions between modernized sedentary life based on agriculture and traditional nomadic life based on hunting.

Such contradictions in the Baka society can be observed in many aspects. Spirit guardianship is rooted in the traditional idea of a specific relationship between a Baka person and a spirit. However, through recent modernization, infiltration of cash economy in particular, even guardianship has become an exchangeable value, promoting the fluidity of ritual practices among the bands. Consequently, the spiritual relationship between an individual and a spirit is weakened. This generalization of spirit ritual may facilitate the arbitrary modification of spirit performance by an individual (as in the case of personal *be*).

The desire for band differentiation to uphold the band identity promotes diversification of spirit ritual. However, the desire for band identity is not a given in every band society. A society characterized by frequent fissions and fusions, such as Khoisan, is hindered in forming band. The Baka, rather, wish for a safe social acculturation towards sedentarization, but they seem unable to attain any higher social integration than the band. Consequently, group identity cannot surpass the band among the Baka. Therefore, differentiation among the bands as exemplified in various spirit ritual is a phenomena rooted in modernization as well as tradition.

The Baka seem torn between modernization and tradition, struggling to create their new ritual tradition. Numerous diversification of spirit rituals may be a reflection of this struggle.

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## NOTES

- (1) Even the children of virilocal marriage maintain close relationship with their mothers' bands. For a man, the relationship with his mother's brother (in a classificatory sense) is often more intimate than that with his father's brother who lives in the same band. When a woman divorces, she often returns to her natal band.
- (2) "Each spirit class consists of ancestors linked to the living within their particular ritual association" (Joiris, 1996: 258).
- (3) *Njanga* is an open space prepared about 30 meters behind the village, and its size ranges from

- 15 to 20 meters in diameter. *Njanga* is often prepared for *jengi* and similar spirits, but is rarely prepared for other spirits.
- (4) According to Joiris (1996), the Baka believe that after the death, they reincarnate as particular spirits for the ritual associations to which they belonged in their lifetime. However, some individuals may belong to more than one ritual associations in my observation. They even take part in ritual associations of other bands.
  - (5) The status of *nganga* is ambivalent. As Joiris (1996) pointed out, despite the connection with dangerous sorcery and witchcraft, *nganga* tended to be conferred the status of an informal leader.
  - (6) Practices of spirit performances can be observed among neighboring agriculturalists. According to unpublished data by Rosei Hanawa, the following spirit rituals were observed: *maindo* among Mboman, Bangandou and Konabembe (using *ndimba* for the spirit costume, *tana* among Mboman group (using a piece of *ndimba*), *edio* among Bangandou and Mboman groups (using a *ndimba*). According to Hanawa, *jengi* was also performed among the Mboman.
  - (7) According to Ichikawa, various spirits identified as real or imagined animals, also had their own "voice" (Ichikawa, 1978). It is similar to the case of the Baka, although the idea of spirit had no connection with particular animals among the Baka. The only exception is the case of *limbo* and *sula*, the "voice" is identified with a particular squirrel, *mangenge*. The initiates of this ritual association shout "*mangenge!*," corresponding to the "voice" of the spirit made with a flute. It is not clear whether such an animal actually exists or not. It is also reported that some instruments such as trumpets are used to make the "voice" of spirits among the Mbuti.
  - (8) The relation between ritual of *nganga* and that of *kose* is not clear. According to Joiris (1996), *kose* "helped" the ritual practice of *nganga*.
  - (9) The guardianship of *buma* is different from that of "father of spirit." The guardian of *buma* is called simply the "guardian of the basket for *buma*" (who guards a basket for a *lenge* skirt) and there is no special, privileged relationship between an individual and the spirit.
  - (10) The status of *nganga* ensured by the special skill to enter into trance or knowledge of medicines, is never transmitted in such a way. The apprenticeship of *nganga* ritual association is stricter than that of *me*.
  - (11) According to Joiris (1996), the *abale* was formally called *mbomba*. It is not clear if *awoku* and *mbomba* are identical or not.
  - (12) There is also a regional difference in the distribution pattern of the spirit rituals. *Kose* is found in the northern part of the study area, whereas *buma* is in southern part. This difference probably derives from the locations where these rituals were created. *Elili* is distributed only in the southern part of the study area, as Brisson & Boursier (1978) pointed out.
  - (13) *Jengi* is supposed to be identical with *ezengi* among the Aka (Joiris, 1996). If it is true, as Bahuchet (1985: 459) pointed out, this spirit must have been a part of the ritual and symbolic corpus of an old culture of the common ancestors of the present Baka and Aka. According to Thomas & Bahuchet (1991: 281-305), these two groups are estimated to have divided about 200 years ago.
  - (14) *Pembe* is also inherited similarly to *jengi* and the diffusion pattern of *pembe* is similar to that of *jengi*. *Pembe* is performed when elephant is killed alike *jengi*. Because elephant population is very low now, *pembe* is not performed today while *jengi* has survived through its ties to the passage rite.

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