

Food Allowance Paper

2018.9.1

F 2016

Food Allowance Paper  
Xerox



when what was 18 4 morning

Intro. not done p. 1

Meaning of word p. 2-1

choa p. 2-5

Purpose. reason 3-1

16 ← 1th out Sources of identification 4-1

Cat 1. Foods no one need avoid 5-1

14-1  
15-1  
17-1  
Cat 2 ? 5-9

" 3 voluntary 6-1

4 cli doc 7-1

5 cause death 8-1

6 have med 9-1

7 babies 10-1

8 youth 11-1

9 girls 12-1

10 boys + home 13-1

pregnant women  
died birth

12 hunting

11 First killing

13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100



A partially finished version of.....

A PAPER ON FOOD AVOIDANCES

by Lorna Marshall

.....it requires much more work.

First section - Introduction - is  
lacking entirely.

March 14, 1966

FOR RESTRICTED USE  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
COPY NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
L. MARSHALL

The introductory section will, I think,  
include what I have to say about  
keeping or breaking the taboo rules -  
Some keep. Some don't.





Tjoma

Tsh as in chuch  
such  
Sh = }  
as in sugar  
11 00

colour



(2)

and Just Back 2-1

The meanings of several words

Several words used commonly with respect to the food avoidances require definition. They are "taboo", and the Bushman terms khoa, tsi, //gow, and choma. *The ceremonies choma and choa should also be briefly described.*

① Taboo: I am using "avoid" in general in the paper instead of "taboo" because, according to Hutton Webster,<sup>1</sup> taboo should be defined strictly as follows:

"Taboos are prohibitions which when violated produce automatically in the offender a state of ritual disability - "taboo sickness" - only relieved, when relief is possible, by a ceremony of purification."

Whereas many of the !Kung food prohibitions are "taboos", strictly speaking, and I may use the word when I believe that I am dealing with a taboo, not all fall precisely under this definition. Preventing "ritual disability" is the most frequent reason <sup>given by the Kung</sup> they give for their avoidance practices. <sup>Sometimes</sup> However, they sometimes say, when asked what would happen if a prohibition were violated, <sup>they say</sup> "Nothing would happen." It turns out that in only a few instances do they mean <sup>precisely</sup> that nothing would happen; they often mean that something would happen, but not a "taboo-sickness."

(2)

Khoa Khoa and the following word tsi

We learned two !Kung words which express aspects of avoidance, khoa and tsi (a softer ts and a less nasal i than the veldkos tsi). Khoa was most commonly used. It means "to fear" and has complex connotations. It means in an immediate and direct sense

1. Webster, Hutton, Taboo, A Sociological Study, Stanford University Press, 1942, p. viii.



## The meanings of several words

Several words used commonly with respect to the food aversions require definition.

These are: taboo, and the Bushman terms khoa, tsi // gero, choma and choa. I am using "avoid"

"① Taboo. I am, <sup>in general,</sup> using "avoid" instead of "taboo" because - etc -



\*↓ (Tsi is pronounced with a softer ts and a less nasal i than the veldkos tsi) 2-2

"to be afraid of," as to be afraid of a lion or a mamba for instance; it means "to dread," as one might dread death or misfortune; and it means "to avoid" and/or <sup>"to</sup> "respect," in the sense that a !Kung young man avoids and respects his mother-in-law and must not speak to her - he says he fears her. The !Kung say they fear a food when they avoid eating it due to their society's avoidance regulations and rituals.

① Tsi: \*↑ I am not perfectly sure about tsi but ~~it appears to think it means some~~ thing to the effect that one can do something about the object one avoids besides just keeping away from it or refraining from eating it. For example, when the !Kung ~~were talking~~ about ceremonies which must take place at night <sup>STET STET</sup> because the sun must not shine upon them, they <sup>say</sup> ~~said~~ they khoa the sun. <sup>INSET H - stapled on back of p. 2</sup> They could not say they tsi the sun. They tsi a fire, however, as for example when they scrape a medicine, sha sha, into it, if a menstruating woman and young boys are sitting together beside it; They perform an act to make the fire "safe" <sup>stet</sup> when they tsi it. They may also khoa a fire.

② //gow: I understood the word //gow to mean "to take care of one's self" in the special sense of obeying the avoidance rules in order to prevent having a taboo disability come upon one.

Choma: Choma is the boys' initiation ceremony. It is not an ancient rite of the !Kung. They adopted it when the fathers of the present old men were young men. A !Kung man had married a woman of another Bushman language group to the south, had learned the choma there and had brought it to his people. Naron, Auen,



and !Kō Bushmen live to the south of the Nyae Nyae region, their territories meeting, roughly speaking, in the vicinity of Ghanzi, B.P. Our efforts to trace the choma among them failed, and its source remains a mystery to us. The choma has several of the aspects common to boys' initiations among Negro tribes and lacks others. Choma is held about every four to seven years, when a suitable number of boys have reached their early to late teens. It is held in the cold time of year.

③

*Insert below*

The music, the type of dance, the rhythms are very different from those of the ceremonial curing dances. The dance itself is called chi!go, male thing. (chi is thing; !go is male.)

④  
*to go to*

During the period of the choma the boys practice many food avoidances.

The boys are taken by the older men to some place in the veld where the women cannot see or hear them. For a week or ~~ten days~~ or two ~~weeks~~ they stay at the choma place and dance all night every night. A bull roarer is used. The boys' hair is cut in a special form. Circumcision and other mutilations are not practiced.

⑤  
*Stalwarts  
Choma*





One cannot say the Bushmen, tsi the sun  
~~They would not say they tsi the sun.~~ But ~~they could~~ <sup>one can</sup> tsi  
a fire. If, ~~would~~ <sup>if</sup>, for example, ~~if~~ a newsmaking Q  
and young boys were sitting together by a fire,  
those present would scrape shasha into the  
fire and thus would tsi ~~the~~ <sup>it</sup> fire, making  
it safe.

INSET A

p. 2-2



note on Sec 2 p. re' choa 2-4

Choa

Richard Lee has corrected my ideas it means the peoples' of age, pointing out that the ceremony has the same purpose as the avoidance itself, to protect the person's health and well-being. I intend to acknowledge this in this paper

And to Sag, instead of only purifying act or substance we came upon was a medicine which I saw a child use, they age N'ai" and to add the data that N'ai was performed in the following circumstances. 1. When a person comes to the end of an avoidance and it is proper for him to resume eating something, the ceremony is performed the first time.

She first menstruated in May 1959. By July 9, 1959 she had menstruated twice. As of Sept 1961 she has no babies.

married on May 22 1953

she had menstruated twice. Furthermore, the act of giving each veldkos with the person first eating is choa and also the roasting of it in the fire.

In addition, at the end of an avoidance, young girls from about the age of 7 or 8 choa certain veldkos the first time they eat them each year when these veldkos are

see note attached



in their new growth after the rains. They continue this practice of annual choaing until they have had a baby. They say that after a girl has <sup>had</sup> a baby, if she is healthy and has kept the avoidances well, people think that she has choaed long enough and decide that she may stop. They cut her hair at this time and may adorn it with red powder if someone has a bit. They wash her and rub her with fat. Her people are pleased, and they make her pretty.

Is this elsewhere?

At least three Niam Two plant substances which are believed to have "medicine" in them - Niam, mystical magic medicine, are employed in the little choa ceremony. They are sha sha and ~~khali~~ khali. Regretably we failed to get these plants identified botanically. The plant is 11 gwey

Sha-sha is the underground stem of a plant which grows about 18" to 24" high. Many women wore a piece of it hanging by a thong around their necks among their ornaments, a convenient place to have it. They can scrape/slivers of it ~~off~~ whenever they need to use it, which is often. Women choa food with it and also scrape it into the fire where boys are sitting if a menstruating woman is present. Sha sha is not in itself taboo to anyone. People can see it and touch it freely.

Ximenia sp  
(I am grateful to Pauline Lee for this identification)  
The stem / the fruit is cleaned powdered & mixed with fat and rubbed on the affected part for pain or used

Khali is a root or part of a plant which is dug from the ground. It is used by men to choa food for boys at the time of the Choma Ceremony. At other times men may choa with sha sha. Khali is different from sha sha in that it is "dangerous" in the !Kung sense. The people are afraid of it and would not let us see even a piece. They said they did not have any and

7  
6

to tsi a fire with sha sha if a menstruating woman and boys is sitting



would not ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ go to get any for us because that would be very bad. They must have it only when it is to be used ceremonially at Choma time. When the men choa the boys after Choma, women are excluded, although not as strictly as at the dance itself where no woman may go. Men take the boys to the place where the unmarried boys sleep, where they said, shocked at my not knowing, no woman ever goes. I had failed to observe that no woman ever went to the boys' sleeping place, because in every <sup>Camp</sup> ~~where~~ it would be set up in the midst of everything, surrounded by the family fires, no more than 6 to 10 feet from the others. But it may well be that women did not sit down right at the fire. Thinking back over it I do not remember having noticed one do so. This is like the sitting taboo which requires certain relatives not to sit near each other, but as little as 18 inches is considered a safe distance. And no one who was not informed would notice that a taboo was being observed.

Anyone who happens to be present may attend a choa ceremony. The person who performs the ceremony must be one who is no longer avoiding the food he or she is choaing. An older man choas for a boy or young man, an older woman choas for a girl or young woman; there is no restriction on the relationship between the two participants.

A man described the choaing of a young man for steenbok. According to the custom followed for generations, said the man



rather pompously, the young man had avoided steenbok until he had <sup>had</sup> two children and was going to eat it for the first time.

He was choaed by our informant in the following manner. Together they cooked some stænbok meat in the fire. The old man scraped sha sha into the meat, chewed a piece of the meat and sha sha together, spat the material into his hands and rubbed it on the young man's face, throat, <sup>and</sup> /abdomen, so that "when he ate steenbok he would not feel soreness." The old man who was incidentally a medicine man (almost all old men are), rubbed his armpits and then rubbed the sweat and dirt from them onto the young man, a regular practice of medicine men in curing or protecting people. This material he rubbed on the throat and abdomen of the young man "as if to help the food go down."

We observed the choa ceremony being performed by /Naoka for her daughter Bau, who was going to eat tsi (see p. ) for the first time after the rains that year. Bau was a girl in her early teens who had been married about two years before but had not menstruated yet. Bau and her mother sat close together by /Naoka's family fire, which had burned down to coals. (The ceremony does not require a special fire.) /Naoka brought a large tortoise shell full of tsi which she dumped into the ashes. She then bit off a sliver of sha sha from a piece hanging around a girl's neck - a girl she would also choa for tsi later that day. She placed Bau's hands on the fire paddle, her own hands over Bau's, and she blew vigorously up and down

Photo



XERO COPY XERO COPY XERO COPY 29

the fire paddle and Bau's hands and arms. Still holding the paddle together, they scraped hot coals and ashes over the pile of tsi and let them cook. When the tsi beans were ready /Naaka scraped them out and shelled them. She took another bite of sha sha and some of the tsi into her mouth, chewed them together, spat the material out into her hand (~~one hand?~~), and rubbed it onto Bau's throat, chest, abdomen, and arms, rubbing her arms especially vigorously. She repeated the chewing and rubbing three or four times.

We were told that a girl's heart should be pressed (~~the !Kung believe that the heart is in the throat~~) so that it may be hardened and made strong to keep the avoidances.

⑨ I asked what would happen if a girl failed to choa and was told that she would be laughed at. People would say that she did not //gow as she should, that she was unfaithful to the law, that she showed herself to be lazy and too fond of food, a bad person. Boys ready to marry would say she had not done the things proper to her age; or a young husband might divorce such a girl. Girls must not be disobedient; they must obey the law so that they will be fine and beautiful, said the !Kung.



The veldkooi <sup>each year</sup> over which the choa ceremony is regularly performed are:

Put  
mangetti

tsi, the seed of Bauhinia esculenta Buch., called popularly "eland bean in S.W.A."

///kxa (low tone), the almond-like nuts of Ricinodendron rautanenii Schinz, popularly called mangetti nuts.

tchong, a big sticky storage organ, <sup>underground</sup> <sup>of a plant</sup> an important item in the ~~Kung~~ food supply. ~~The edible part is underground.~~

zsh  
10

11

fruit

It must have been identified by Story but since we could not correlate all of our information in the field, I unfortunately do not know the identification.

12

n/ (high tone), wild grapes. N/ is one of the food substances which have "medicine", see p. 96. I do not have the identification of this fruit and never actually saw it myself.

~~I. Story,~~



Purposes and reasons for the <sup>food</sup> avoidance

Why must some foods be avoided? What does the avoidance do? The !Kung do not have clear answers to these questions.

We began our efforts to understand what we could about the !Kung food avoidances by finding out if <sup>these people</sup> they had or did not have some of the concepts which lie behind food avoidances in other societies. For instance, we found totemism, common in other parts of Africa, to be lacking among the !Kung. None of the foods which are avoided are <sup>the repositories</sup> ~~the repositories~~ of spirits. None are set apart as sacred or to be eaten or not eaten as an aspect of worship, as a sacrifice might be. (The !Kung do not sacrifice.)

Concepts of conservation of the resources of food are lacking. The food avoidances have nothing to do with the control of rain which the !Kung so clearly recognize as a life-giving element and do try to control by other means. They do not practice food avoidances to control fertility in the source of the food or in the person. At least they do not have the concept of doing so. I was convinced that the choa ceremony, performed for young girls over new growth after the rains, must have something to do with the protection or enhancement of fertility, either in the girl or in the veldkos, but the !Kung do not say so. They think also, <sup>that</sup> when young girls after the rains draw on the smooth gray bark of female mangetti trees pictures of their genital aprons and lines like the scarification

Photo



Insert at ~~\*~~

~~In a <sup>small</sup> fast fruits ceremony and~~

PP When a Medicines Man wants to receive  
renewed <sup>and</sup> strength, the medicine in him he eats  
things <sup>mixed with medicines</sup> are eaten with the idea  
taking something from the food, <sup>and medicines</sup> into himself.  
Also in a small fast fruits ceremony food is  
taken in ceremonially. (I shall describe these  
rituals in other papers). Otherwise the Indians  
do not have not developed practices of  
eating things to take qualities from them  
into themselves, as a warrior might  
eat a lion's heart to become lion hearted.  
The <sup>majority of eating regulations are avoidance</sup> ~~practices of avoidance~~ are directed  
to keeping something out.



It is not ~~than~~ talking in something  
to their concern. The exception  
is a ~~custom~~<sup>pragmatic</sup> of medicine men  
who to revive and renew the medicine  
in their last certain times, with medicines



lines on their buttocks and legs, that this, too, has nothing to do with some ancient fertility rite but is just for fun. photo

I believe they meant what they said, that they do not see these practices in the light of fertility, not that they were unwilling or afraid to talk about fertility or that there were other, secret meanings to the practices.

IP ~~Insert~~ ~~all~~ ~~the~~ ~~practices~~

~~We did not discover custom among the !Kung of eating something to gain some quality from it such as strength or courage, like eating a lion's heart to become lion hearted. Keeping something out rather than taking something in is the concern of the !Kung.~~

This society does not give advantage to a class, such as old people, by decreeing that food avoidance be practiced by the one class so that the other might have more food. These are not the purposes of the food avoidances.

The !Kung are concerned and express two purposes in their food avoidance. A social purpose is served and at the same time, more importantly, health, ~~safety~~ strength and well being are protected by the avoidance.



The social purpose is training in self-restraint. The !Kung point this out explicitly. To them

restraint with

respect to food is a major virtue; the lack of it would receive most severe social disapproval. "People would laugh at you" is the way the !Kung put it. Stealing of food would be a deadly offense. Cheating about food, being importunate, or appearing to be greedy and taking too big a share would meet with such disapproval that a !Kung could not bear it. They can hardly bear any disapproval at all; it makes them feel outside the group and that is unendurable to the !Kung. (They cannot stand feeling apart spiritually or socially; they dis-

them  
or physically

A hunter would walk a long distance to return to a group rather than to spend a night alone in the veld.

like very much being alone physically in the vast veld which surrounds them. The sanction is so strong that one does not see behavior which exhibits lack of self-restraint. On the contrary, one sees constantly the sharing of food and most modest demeanor. It is a very touching sight to watch these people, all of them thin, when food is being shared and there is too little to satisfy everyone's hunger. Each virtuously takes a modest portion and passes the food to the next. More than once I have seen the first person pass almost all and only lick his fingers and the last person get the biggest bite.


of disapproval

was always a

to me

Observing the avoidances not only gives training in restraint, but also <sup>wins approval by displaying</sup> displays the fact that the person is conforming and behaving properly. People would think a person had not been well brought up, <sup>and that was approval</sup> if he failed to practice the proper avoidances, they say. They would think <sup>that</sup> he was selfish and willful if he took it upon himself to defy his teaching.





The !Kung are conscious of and express two purposes in food avoidance, a social purpose is served and the important health, sanity, strength and well being is protected.



in the individuals violation  
In !Kung belief the penalty falls on upon him  
upon the individuals not upon the whole  
group

The <sup>basic</sup> ~~principal~~ purpose in practice of the food avoidances is to protect <sup>the</sup> health, <sup>compass and good fortune</sup> sanity, strength and well being. <sup>in the hunt</sup>  
The !Kung, <sup>really</sup> believe that penalties would befall them if they violated the avoidances. In some instances, as I said, the only penalty would be that people would "laugh at" the person but if he violated a real taboo should be violated he would suffer a "taboo sickness". The disability ~~he~~ would suffer would be one of following, which can be specifically listed:

According to !Kung informants these disabilities could lead to death. They had stories of a few people dying of them, as they believed, but more of people suffering from one or another of them and recovering.

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| madness                          | bleeding from the nose              |
| terrible headaches               | distension and pains in the stomach |
| getting thin                     | diarrhea                            |
| diminished lactation             | tender skin                         |
| difficult childbirth             | aching bones                        |
| weakness and failure in the hunt |                                     |



The !Kung say explicitly that about this aspect of avoidance, that it gives training in self restraint. To them restraint with respect to food is a major virtue; the lack of it would receive most severe social disapproval.

~~This sanction is so strong that one does not see <sup>behaving which exhibits</sup> lack of self restraint. On the contrary one sees constantly the sharing of food, the hunter being taken to the band to be distributed among the people. Stealing of food would be a deadly offense. Cheating about food, ~~would~~ <sup>such severe</sup> be met with unbearable disapproval if it were to ~~unbearable~~.~~

Stealing of food

~~Being impatient, about food would be an extremely bad trait or appearing to be greedy, taking too big a share would meet with such disapproval that a !Kung could not bear it. (They can hardly bear any disapproval at all; disapproval makes them feel out side the group and that is unbearable to the !Kung. They can not stand feeling alone physically or spiritual, a social any man than they can stand being alone <sup>physical</sup> in the vast veld which surrounds them.)~~  
The sanction is so strong that one



A further penalty could be put a  
medicine man if he should violate a taboo:  
his medicine <sup>might</sup> ~~would~~ disappear. - as (I have  
mentioned <sup>this</sup> again late.)



Most of the avoidances are required of persons in youth or middle life. It is they who must take care of themselves, they who must //gow assiduously. In my interpretation they are obviously the strength of the people, the provider of food, the bearers of children, the carriers of goods. They must not let disability weaken them, for the sake of the group as well as for their own sakes. The !Kung say, in effect, that it does not matter so much what happens to old people, who as they said "give up", "do not care or try any more." I assumed that furthermore there might not be a belief that the potencies in the foods which must be avoided were not as effective or as strong against the old people as against the young for some reason, or that the old

14

people resist them better. ~~I am only fumbling with this idea.~~ My assumption was not denied but the !Kung could not give me a clearly formed conception of the reasons why the young must avoid and the old need not.



## Choa

Choa is a verb and it means the performing of certain ritualistic acts in relation to food avoidance. <sup>the little ceremony,</sup> ~~It~~ has the same purpose as the avoidance itself, to protect the person's health and well being. It is performed in advance of eating something, <sup>which has been avoided</sup>; it is not at all a means of purifying a person from who has violated ~~a taboo~~ <sup>a taboo</sup> and saving him from the consequences. ~~Hot~~ (We discovered no such principle among the Iking in respect to food avoidance. The one and only purifying act or substance we came upon was a medicine which a man could rub on his arrows if they had been made useless by the touch of a menstruating woman, ~~the touch of a menstruating woman would be~~ <sup>of the woman, ~~there~~</sup> ~~thus it would be especially~~ urgent to purify the arrows.)



Why must certain foods be avoided? What is it about them that would cause "taboo sickness" or other disabilities? The !Kung have no clear answers to the whys and wherefores. The lore of the origins of the specific avoidances, the explanations for them, and much of the significance of them is lost in the past. As an overall explanation, the !Kung can only say now that the great god so created things - the great god, ~~≠~~Gao!na, he of the eastern sky, creator of all things, he taught the old people what they must do and the instructions have been passed down through the generations.

From our point of view, however, a little more can be pointed out about the avoidances. A few reasons of a sort appear, not the deep, lost ones, but some on other levels. The !Kung believe that certain of the foods have n/um, medicine, in them, as I shall describe, and that is why they must avoid them. They avoid others according to the principle of sympathetic magic. Steenbok are constipated, they say, for example, and if the young ate them they would be constipated. If a person feels repugnance, it indicates that he should avoid the food. Dislike of the inherent smell is one of the causes of repugnance. <sup>†</sup> Other avoidances are inexplicable. I believed that the concept of pollution must come into the !Kung beliefs but I could not uncover it. Informants did not give dirt as a reason for avoiding anything - dirt in the sense of matter in the wrong place. I am convinced that even when the young avoid veldkos which has been chopped with a digging



stick so that earth gets into it it is not because earth is believed to be dirt. Neither is a baby's urine avoided because it is dirty. Some other quality in the earth or in the urine makes these avoidances necessary. The concept of pollution in a larger sense may indeed lie behind food avoidance but the !Kung did not give this as a reason. By "a larger sense" I mean wrongness as against rightness in the scheme of things, wrongness polluting the rightness. (I wondered if this concept could account for the avoidance of aardvarks - strange looking nocturnal hole-dwelling creatures, not a part of the normal life of the day above ground - but the !Kung did not express this concept.†)

It should be noted that the food avoidances are associated with first menstruation, with childbirth and lactation, with the boys' initiation (ie. the choma), with hunting, with blood. (Direct association with cohabitation did not appear.) By far the majority of avoidances are required only of the young and of people in middle life; the majority of foods avoided are wholesome and are eaten with impunity at other times of life. It would seem that the thing which must be avoided in these foods was in the nature of a life-force, a potency, and that the young and middle aged must be protected from too much of it. The "life force", if that is what it is, is not n/um medicine, because the !Kung specify which foods have n/um in them. The !Kung could not define the potency. Life<sup>2</sup>force is only my interpretation, a guess.

I arbitrarily divide the food avoidances into categories

Take  
this  
out  
in  
other  
place.  
Watch!



which are not, however, perfectly commensurate. I have attempted to put together things which are avoided by one or another category of person or which are avoided in the same or a similar association.



(4)

71x

## Sources of identification of plants and animals

Dr. Robert Story, who was a member of two of our expeditions into the Kalahari Desert, in his publication, Some Plants Used by the Bushmen in Obtaining Food and Water, Botanical Survey of South Africa, Memoir No. 30, Pretoria, 1958, identifies 88 veld plants, some part of which the Bushmen eat. In the field, in the Gautscha area, we observed the gathering or had the gathering directly reported to us of 59 varieties. Unfortunately, Dr. Story and I could not correlate my information with his in the field, <sup>and</sup> although I am sure he must have included all or most of those I observed, I do not have the identifications for several of them. Dr. Story is not one to guess from a layman's description. The scientific names of those I do have come from him with the exception of \_\_\_\_\_ and I want to express my thanks to him for his many communications and help in my efforts to correlate what I observed with his report. The other botanical identifications come from Richard Lee, who spent more than a year with !Kung Bushmen ~~and~~ around Dobe in Bechuanaland, about ten miles north of the Aha Mountains, about \_\_\_\_\_ miles east and a little north of Gautscha Pan in S.W.A. He has kindly made available to me his paper (still in manuscript, to be published later), !Kung Bushman Food Plants and Botanical Categories and allowed me to cite from it. When we have the same !Kung name for a veldkos we assume it is the same thing. I indicate by (St) and



(L) which is my source for the scientific name.

The identifications which I present of the animals I have taken from Charles Handley. As a member of our expedition of 1952 he made a collection of small mammals in the Nyae Nyae region for the Smithsonian Institution. I want to express our thanks to him for the list and the scientific names.

G. E. Shortridge, the author of The Mammals of South West Africa, Heinemann, London, 1934, is ~~the~~ another source of information about the animal names.

(16) Austin Roberts, author of The Birds of South Africa, H. F. and G. Witherly, Ltd., London, 1940, is the source of the few identifications of birds that I could make.

Vivian F. M. FitzSimons, author of Snakes of Southern Africa, is my source for the identification of snakes. I am grateful to him for a personal communication which enabled me to identify the mole snake.

I have given the scientific name if I had it only when it might be desirable to be clearer than one can be with the English names as to which creature was meant - what kind of anteater, what kind of badger, for instance. If the animal is commonly known I do not include the scientific name.

(17) fix }

← X 1/2



## Sources and spellings of the !Kung names

With my embarrassing lacks in linguistics, I find my problems in rendering the !Kung names unsolvable. Wherever I can I defer to someone else and only give my own rendering when none other is available to me. Others, even experienced linguists, have difficulties, too, and differ among themselves as to the rendering of the !Kung sounds into English spelling. Take the name !Kung, for example:

!Kū, !Kun̄, or Kung - Bleek;

!Khū - Doak; !Khū - Maingard and Story;

!Xū, Köhler and Westphal;

!Kung or !un̄ - Silberbauer;

!Kxo - England.

At least these have the same click or no click, but Richard Lee in his doctoral dissertation, "Subsistence Ecology of !Kung Bushmen", the manuscript of which he presented to the University of California, Berkeley, June, 1965, says on p. 27 that he has found at least fourteen spellings in the literature, including most of those above and, in addition, !Kun, Chung, //Khun, [hū, :un, ≠Kūng.

The names of the animals I have taken from Charles Handley and from Shortridge, indicating which by (H) and (S). In the presentation of the native names for the animals, Shortridge was assisted by Dorothea Bleek, who looked over the Bushman names he

Doke

May?

(18)

They don't discuss notes



had gathered and supplied some which he lacked (Shortridge, Vol. I, p. vii). He gives the names in several Bushman, as well as Bantu, languages; we are concerned here, of course, only with the !Kung. If I take the name Miss Bleek gives through Shortridge I indicate this with (B). Charles Handley, when with our expedition, collected the names of animals from the hunters with whom we lived in the Nyae-Nyae region.

*nyai*

(19)

If they differ there are a number of possible reasons. ~~xxxxxxx~~ besides the spelling - the most likely being that the various !Kung informants came from different parts of the country. But there may be one other reason to account for quite different names being used for a given animal. We found that the !Kung of the Nyae Nyae region have what I call respect words or names which are used when the people as they say "fear" a thing and wish to express respect. For example, rain is !ga; the respect word is n/oi. When you think you may perish in the sudden deluges that pour from the thunderheads in the rainy season, you speak to the rain, calling it n/oi. Lion is n!i; the respect name is !hai. When you are hunting, if you come upon lions, if you must say any name at all you use the respect name - softly. Interrogators can be given one of the other name by informants. I am not suggesting that I know this to be the reason for the different names; it is only a possibility. (I do not know any respect names for veldkos.)

*check this may be not*

(20)

When I can correlate the names of the veldkos with theirs I take them from Story (St) and Richard Lee (L).



(5)

Fix latter part. 5-1 ✓  
Story ✓  
Leed ✓  
cross-check

Category 1: foods no one need avoid

Fix  
casually?

To substantiate my statement that the avoidances, numerous though they are, do not impose great deprivation, I list <sup>eat commonly and no need</sup> casually ~~some of the animal~~ foods which the !Kung ~~do not~~ avoid. The large animals, <sup>often</sup> most commonly killed by the hunters in this area are listed in order of their commonness. Small antelope are also killed, duiker and steenbok frequently, <sup>and other small animals</sup> but these are among the avoided foods. The large animals are the principal source of animal food. The portions of these animals which no one need avoid are, for the most part, the forequarters, hindquarters, back, neck, and ribs. The inner parts of these animals are avoided by the young, as are also the throats, chests, heads and hooves of certain ones. ~~The !Kung names are from Handley.~~

common in the area

rare in the area

wildebeest, !di (H)

buffalo, /gao (H)

greater kudu, !o'a (H)

elephant, !go (H)

gemsbok, //goe (H)

Burchell's zebra, /goe (H)

hartebeest, ntso (H)

black rhinoceros, !gi (H)

eland, n!i (H)

springbok, !gei (H)

giraffe, !goa (H)

roan antelope, /no (H)

None of the !Kung we knew had shot an elephant, but they had stories of elephant hunts in the past. Giraffe are fairly common in the area. They can see so far that they are very hard to approach, but the !Kung hunters did shoot them sometimes. While



Meeting

we were there, Mr. Robert Morris, then District Commissioner at Runtu, came into the Gautscha area for the first time. At the first <sup>in the</sup> endabe they had ever attended he told the !Kung that giraffe were royal game and that they must not shoot them. After that the Bushmen called giraffe "Morrissi cows" and we imagine kept their own counsel. Rhinoceros, buffalo, zebra, ~~reibok~~, springbok, and roan antelope come and go in the area.

(21)

Some other creatures which everyone <sup>may</sup> eats are:

porcupine, Hystrix africae-australis, !num (H)  
hare, Lepus capensis, !ni (H)

(22)

rabbit, !ni (H)  
guinea fowl, ar-i (H)  
~~pheasant, !gaisi~~  
duck and goose, <sup>ma</sup> ~~n/a~~-vite (H)  
quail, !gei (H)

Egyptian goose, !ga (H)  
python, Python sebae, ~~ñ~~ or /gu ka te, a respect name

Take out - put in med mu.

bull frog, Rana adspersa, txae, cnam (H)

locust, n!hao - roasted in the ashes and pounded to a meal

caterpillars, Cirina forda and Mudaurelia bellina <sup>bellina</sup> ~~find in story~~

(Story 10-24)

ants, /no/nomi  
pupa of a beetle the cocoons of which are strung together for dance rattles, ~~ixoro~~.

There are numerous veldkos which no one is required to avoid by the rules of !Kung society. Story, in his above-mentioned

1 We adopt the convenient Afrikaans word veldkos  
field food for the wild plant foods the !Kung gather.

see original find !Kung name



publication, identifies and describes 88 kinds of veldkos gathered  
 by the Bushmen. We have observations of <sup>sort</sup> one kind or another on  
 the gathering of 59 <sup>species</sup> kinds. The !Kung avoid only of these  
 veldkos, and only for relatively short periods of their lives.

See next page of file  
 of the !Kung  
 one on that



Of the veldkos which we observed gathered, 23 were underground parts, tubers, roots or storage organs of various plants. Eleven of these were avoided by the !Kung at some time or other of their lives, <sup>as I shall describe</sup> They ~~will be mentioned~~ <sup>these</sup> later. The ~~twelve~~ not avoided ~~were~~: include:

(25) Coccinia rehmannii Cong. ~~tsi~~, /ga: (St) *Two Ns is correct*

The large tuber is an important item in the food supply. It is so juicy that if the people have /ga: they can live without water for several days at a time.

Ceropegia sp., n!wi: (St)

(26) Bauhinia esculenta Burch., n//n (St) *n//n (L)*

<sup>tuber</sup> The ~~storage organ~~ of tsi. <sup>tsi is the seed of this plant</sup> They are eaten only when they are small and new. The old ones, which may weight up to 30 lbs., are woody; they are also very productive. *Make the clearer. n//n is the plant + B.S.*

Eulophia sp., #gawu (St), and ~~two~~ related plants, #gɔ?ɔ (St), and *#dau (L)*

We noted that <sup>#gawu</sup> #dau was juicy. Some people lived for a week on #dau without water.

Hydnora sp., //hɔk?am (St), /hɔkxan (L)

The fruit of a root parasite the size of a pomegranate.



IP

Make alphabetical by <sup>scientific name</sup> species  
check spelling of sc. names.

Of the wild loc arduin we observed gather  
23 were ~~the~~ underground parts, tubers  
with a stagg organs of plants various plants  
11 of these were avoided by the King of  
Zulu lives. They will be mentioned later  
the twelve not avoided include:

23  
11  
12

Insect  
from  
next  
page

Coccinia rehmannii Comp (ST), 1ga  
The large tuber is an important item  
in the food suppl. It is so juicy that if the people have  
it they can live without water for several days as a minimum  
Culophia sp = gawa (ST) and another = go?o (ST)  
another called = dau (L) + dau we notice  
was also juicy. <sup>Some</sup> People live on a well in + dau  
without water.

Marsicus congestus CB cl : gawa (ST)  
Sansevieria scabifolia Dente : hur (ST) <sup>the bulbs are a fairly important food in this area</sup>

p. 11

Has a juice, rhizom. (ST)  
Lapeirousia sp 11 haru  
resembles Jerusalem artichoke

Hydnora sp 11 hok? am (ST) / huk xam (ST)  
the fruit, a root parasite the size of a pomegranate. <sup>Looking</sup>

Coccinia sp (L) n/hawi <sup>Can't read</sup>

Bauhinia esculenta Burch <sup>n/2</sup> The soap  
bean <sup>They are eaten only when they are small and new as eaten</sup>  
The old ones which may be <sup>to 30 lbs</sup> are woody; they are also very productive  
— n/ oara an important food in  
this region. It

— 11 ore women at one period of  
gautschu depended more on 11 ore to  
feed their children than any other



Why the foods which the avoid  
have their several qualities, and other  
do not, no one knows. The great God  
<sup>Created</sup> ~~Made~~ them so; the lore is lost  
in the past.

Indicate Extra Space for points to leave

There are unnumerable ways to  
organize, and present this material.  
I have not been perfectly <sup>consistent</sup> ~~logical~~,  
each category is not absolutely  
commensurable with the other.

Although I mention some vedas  
in the earlier categories I describe,  
I put the bulk of the material on  
vedas in a section in the end  
hoping to attain <sup>some degree of</sup> ~~clarity~~ <sup>simplification and</sup>  
be so doing. I emphasize who  
avoids what and when, and  
~~the following categories~~  
divide the material into the following categories:



Lapeirousia sp., //haru (L)

This plant resembles Jerusalem artichoke.

Mariscus congestus C. B. Cl., !gewu (St)

The bulbs are a fairly important food in this area.

Sansevieria scabrifolia Dinter, !hwi (St)

This has a juicy edible rhizome.

- - , n/oara

An important food in this region.

- - , //ore

Women at one period at Gautscha depended more on //ore than on any other plant to feed their children. The edible underground part does not grow deep in the ground; it is easily dug.

I could not see what characteristics, if any, distinguished the 11 underground veldkos which are avoided from the 12 which are not avoided. All together they are the staple food of the !Kung. The hunters brought in the big game animals which supply meat for the band only about twice a month. The most important daily food, throughout the year are the <sup>edible</sup> roots and underground parts. They hold moisture enough to enable the plants to sustain desert conditions and provide both moisture and nourishment for the Bushmen.

2  
nic



give name. It does not seem to be consistent elsewhere  
5-7

In addition we observed the gathering of eight kinds of berries, five of them Grewia. <sup>three</sup> ~~one~~ <sup>are</sup> of these is avoided. <sup>(by boys only)</sup>  
Of 19 fruits only ~~two~~ <sup>four</sup> are avoided. The berries have the advantage of being numerous and visible and easy to gather, but they are dry, with big seeds and provide little nourishment. The fruits are scarce, ~~xxx~~ seasonal, perishable. Together with the berries, they do add vitamins to the diet, but are not the important <sup>sustaining foods of these people.</sup>

Of three nuts and seeds, two are avoided. The one which is not avoided, Bauhinia macrantha Oliv., ~~nywa~~ (St), is not very plentiful in the Nyae Nyae region and is not an important item of food. The other two which will be mentioned later, are extremely important; they are the most desired of all the veldkos by the !Kung.



The edible underground part does not grow  
deep in the ground, it is easily dug.

5-7a

Insect at

p. 41 Ceropegia sp. n'wi (ST)

Ceropegia sp.



Ques: <sup>g the ! keep at home</sup> Keep foods consist both  
Animal and vegetable substances.



I could not see what characteristics <sup>they</sup> ~~they~~ <sup>distinguish</sup> ~~the~~ 11 avoid indigenous wild <sup>no obvious</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>are</sup> avoid from the 12 which are not avoid.  
 All together they are the staple food of the Kung. The hunters bring in <sup>the biggest</sup> ~~meat~~ <sup>animals</sup> only about which supply meat in the Bush only about twice a month. The daily food throughout the year are the roots and indigenous parts. They ~~are~~ <sup>hold</sup> moisture enough to enable the plants to sustain desert conditions and provide both moisture and nourishment in the Bushmen.

In addition we observed the gathering of eight kinds of berries from the Opuntia. Only one of these is avoided. Of 19 fruits only two are avoided. ~~Of three seeds and nuts two are avoided.~~ The berries have the advantage of being numerous and visible - easy to gather but they are dry with big seeds and provide little nourishment. The fruits are scarce, far apart seasonal, perishable. Together with the berries they do add vitamins to the diet.

Of three nuts and seeds two are avoided, the one which is not avoided is



Bauhinia macrantha Oliv. is not very plentiful in the Neae Neae region and is not an important item of food, the other two <sup>which were mentioned later</sup> are extremely important; they are the most desired of all the wilds by the Kung.



Category 2: some animals and birds observed as ~~collected~~  
in the area, which were not mentioned either as  
something the !Kung eat or purposefully avoid

Among the animals which Charles Handley collected and the birds which he observed were those which I list below. The !Kung did not mention these things in our discussions of food and food avoidance. We did not observe them eating them, and it did not occur to me to ask. Either they do not eat them and did not think to mention them (as it might not occur to us to tell an ethnographer that we do not eat gila monster) or information on the eating did not come our way. I believe that they are not among the things which they purposefully and ritualistically avoid. I think of several kinds of large birds which we saw at Gautscha Pan: pelicans, gulls, herons, buzzards, storks, hawks, owls, and secretary birds (Sagittarius serpen-  
tarius). Some of course are there only during the rains when the pan is full of water. Others only pass by in their yearly migration. Charles Handley mentions forty-three other kinds of smaller birds, all of which the !Kung have names for, as they have for the big birds. Possibly the big birds do not taste good and the little ones are not worth while, or possibly if they happened to be caught someone would eat them, but we have no information on this question.

Among the animals which Charles Handley collected, which

7, x  
sold  
see  
order  
Combin with  
Comp  
see sheets  
in them  
5-9



the !Kung did not mention either eating or avoiding are:

chacma baboon, //ke (Bleek), po (H)

night ape ("bush baby"), Galago senegalensis, /ndanshe<sup>t</sup>(S),  
//dore (H)

vervet monkey, //kei (S), //gae (H)

bats, //doa~~x~~ //goma (H)

elephant shrews, /guma-!go, (!guma!goma) (H) /guma-!go-!notes

crocidura shrews, !kutche (H) ↓

gerbil

cony  
hyrax, hi-hi (H)

aardwolf, !gi (H)

silver or cape fox, Vulpes chama, #gu (S), /du (H)

Delalande's fox, Otocyon megalotis, !u (S), !nu (H)

pole cat, Ictonyx kalahariensis, da (S), zoa (H)

hedgehog, //dam (H)

genet, genetta felina, tsoa (H)

Snails; toads, cno-ha (H); millepedes, zwuma (H), choba,  
kokochinaba; mantises, small ones, middle-sized ones, and  
enormous ones, //gauwa~~x~~ khoa!a; and quantities of other  
insects were not mentioned.

Fin  
about  
not eating  
Monkeys

Proteles cristatus

aethechinus frontalis

translation



dassi

Bats shrews girdle Hyrax hedgehogs genets  
foxes (Cape and Delelaude).

baboon monkey bush babies Galago  
innumerable birds and other things

I can not think <sup>which exist in the area</sup> of were not mentioned

the fact <sup>in connection with food. No one brought me</sup> that they did not eat these things - as we perhaps would not think  
I ~~just~~ think that there must be special <sup>to mention that we do not eat Gila Monkeys</sup>  
significance to the King in not  
eating the things <sup>which I list</sup> "in this category  
which I call "Foods nobody eats."  
They either brought up the item in  
their conversation or gave special  
attention to it if I did.



Fix

~~What kind of badger. When the animal  
is commonly known and we are not  
concerned with the precise species I do  
do that with an  
not give the identification~~

b



(6)

6-1 + 2

3

Category 2: foods avoided voluntarily by individuals

For personal reasons individuals sometimes avoid foods for which the society requires no avoidance, or they avoid something for a longer period than is required by society. Our culture is beset with people - adults and children - who avoid perfectly good foods because they do not like them - their taste, their texture, or something - foods such as cheese, parsnips, brains, almost ad infinitum. This attitude was not at all prevalent among !Kung children who appeared to eat eagerly whatever was given them. The adults spoke very little about the taste of food except to say that they threw away ~~xxxxxx~~ bladders and gall bladders because they were too bitter and that certain roots were too bitter for anyone to eat. The !Kung do, however, sometimes seem to dislike things for indefinable reasons and because of personal associations, more especially for the smell, and

27

(27)

Lazy /<sup>Kwi</sup>Qui did not find it in his heart to eat python. He told me this just after he had captured a python, cooked it, and given all the meat away, mostly to the children of the <sup>camp</sup>werft. I had just eaten some of the meat and, being slightly prejudiced against eating snake, I had not exactly enjoyed it, although I did not mind the taste, so /Qui and I agreed that we just did not find it in our hearts to eat python.

It was the same /Qui who was talking with me one day when the children were playing with a huge kudu eye. It burst when they dropped it into the fire and /Qui said it made him feel sick.



It made me feel a little squeamish too, so once more we agreed that we did not have it in our hearts to eat kudu eyes.

The more frequent reason for personal avoidance is quite conscious and definite - not a vague dislike but definite ideas about the protection of health. If a person has some reaction which indicates to him that a food is not good for him, he voluntarily avoids it.

People discover that a food is not good for them by some physical sign. The thought of allergies crossed our minds but it was impossible to come to any conclusion about that question. The !Kung did not exhibit blotches, rashes, or wheezes which customarily indicate <sup>to us</sup> allergic reaction and did not mention those manifestations as signs that they should not eat something. The usual signs they mentioned were nausea and headache, which could result from innumerable causes, and if they experience them after eating something they know that food is not for them. The same /Qui (he must have been prone to this sort of thing) had another nickname, "Badger Man." He had been so nauseated after eating <sup>honey</sup> badger one time that people shouted with laughter at the memory. Even much less dramatic cases of nausea cause people to fear to eat something.

(28)

*Just vaguely not feeling well after eating some thing is enough to indicate to someone that they should not eat that thing.*

If people especially dislike the smell of something they take this as a sign they should avoid it. If <sup>the smell</sup> it makes them even a little ~~squeamish~~ <sup>feeling a nausea</sup> they fear it will give them a bad headache and this could make them mad (di). The smell of meat which is high is not the smell they mean. I wondered that everyone did not avoid eland

Dmtm  
(29)

eat that thing.



after one episode. An eland was shot far from Gautscha in a hot dry time and had to be carried to the water-hole. After a day of cutting up the meat and two days of travel in the sun, the hunters arrived with the meat hung on their carrying sticks, smelling to high heaven, irridescent and loud with flies. It was distributed as usual, cut in strips, and hung on branches before every skerm. Our tents were a few yards downwind. There was nothing we could do but endure the stench of the dead flesh for several days and nights until the meat was eaten. The thought of eland turns my stomach now but none of the Bushmen crossed eland off his list that time as far as we know. (However, meat can become so high that the !Kung will not eat it. A few maggots do not bother them, ~~They~~ just pick them off, they say, but there are limits.)

What they mean by the smell they fear is the inherent smell of things. Individuals mentioned that they voluntarily avoided eating the following animals because of the smell:

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| buffalo      | ostrich    |
| honey badger | pangolin   |
| jackal       | mamba      |
| wildcat      | puff adder |

I suppose any food might be voluntarily avoided. Others which I happened to hear mentioned were:

- blood
- duiker
- tortoise
- red things



? original add  
yellow, but  
this is  
not on  
list.

Of the above-mentioned animals all but buffalo  
are avoided by some category of persons for a limited time (~~see~~  
~~below~~). The person who continues to avoid them after the allotted  
time does so voluntarily.

the avoidance of  
the veldkos

second  
Sound  
as though  
//kain  
dama  
ment  
"voluntary"

One more avoidance might be said to be voluntary, //kain  
dama. <sup>st</sup> ~~This is a veldkos which~~ is said to cause gas. If a woman  
eats it and has to expel gas her husband would complain and this  
would destroy the love between them, we were told.



Say about lions

Category 3: <sup>4</sup> chi dole, bad things which no one eats

(Chi is thing or things; dole is bad.) It pleases me to list among ~~the~~ foods things which no one eats. I had heard the !Kung express some of their feelings about the predators and the scavengers and to amuse myself at the hubbub of protest <sup>when</sup> I asked them if they ate them. How could I think they would eat these things? they cried. I was wasting their time with such talk. Lions, leopards, cheetahs, hyaenas, and vultures are always around and are always in competition with the hunters for their food. When the hunters have shot a poisoned arrow into a game animal and are tracking it, waiting for the poison to work, their major concern is that a predator or scavenger will get the animal first, as they very often do. I also brought up the subject of eating human beings. Informants offered information on the remaining creatures in this category in response to a question such as <sup>What else is chi dole?</sup> ~~as~~ /What else could they think of to tell me that they do not eat? - not a conclusive question of course.

In the following category are more things which the !Kung do not eat but for a different reason. Those in this category are bound into a category by three aspects which they have in common.

1. They are not taboo in the sense that a taboo sickness would inevitably follow; "Nothing would happen." ~~222~~
2. The !Kung express horror and repugnance at the thought of eating them.
3. Unlike the things listed on p. \_\_, to which they were indifferent (at least no one thought to mention them), these seemed to be significant in their not eating the things in this category.

X

Fix

Fix

X



X am (Bleek + S)  
Bleek

lion, !ne (S), !ni (H)  
leopard, k'au (B), !num (H)  
cheetah, !gao (H), !gaob, !kau (Bleek),

I have in my notes an indication that the !Kung think of cheetah and leopards as being related. They said "the one with spots and the whitish one."

The !Kung say, as they do about everything, that the old old people taught them not to eat these creatures - but for once they had told them why: these animals have the wrong kind of feet - they have bad feet called jum mi. (Readers might recall that the Nyae Nyae !Kung call the Herero who live on the B. P. border jum mi!) The thought of eating these animals is horrifying; informants "ooo"-ed, slapping their lips, and muttered and scowled. I cannot refrain from speculation about the horror. My imagination leaps to the tearing and rending of flesh - human flesh, even me - and I experience fear of lions and leopards (not cheetahs, for my mind knows that they are much less dangerous to human beings and I have had my arms around a tame one).

→ When I asked Lazy /Qui about this, he said it was true that lions killed and ate people but that was not their reason for not eating lions. The reason, he insisted, was that the old old people told them not to. Here in Cambridge, Dr. Herbert Harris made another suggestion about the feet. It is possible, he thinks, that the !Kung made strong identification with lion or leopard feet, because they have toes like human feet and that the taboo on eating human flesh was extended to these animals. Though the



!Kung do not realize it, this might account for the degree of repugnance they express.

*apes and baboons put here*

cape hunting dog (wild dog), Lycaon pictus, /xu (H)

The !Kung gave no specific reason for avoiding them.

domesticated dog, #dui (H)

The !Kung in the Nyae Nyae region had no domesticated dogs at the time we were with them. However, they saw the dogs of their Herero and Tswana neighbors on the border cattle post at Kai Kai, starved, *flea-f with fleas* invested, cowed, miserable, heart-breaking, pitiful creatures. They were the basic short-haired "yellow" dog of Africa, supposed to be hunting dogs, and supposed to hold animals at bay. But at Kai Kai one time when a trapped lion broke loose and charged, the dogs turned tail and tried to run between the legs of their sprinting masters. This amused the Bushmen no end.

F (30)

brown hyaena, /ga:ha (S), !gau (H)

spotted hyaena, !khum:ap, ~~x~~gui (S), /dui (H)

Bushmen would not eat hyaena even if they were starving, the !Kung said. I pondered over the vehemence of this statement. I associate scavenging hyaenas with carrion and carrion with disease, decay, and infection, but I knew that the !Kung did not. On the contrary, they associate a dead animal with the kill of the hunting animals - lions, leopards, cheetahs - as like the



kill of their own hunters. As they walk along following a spoor they pray to the great god to lead them to a dead animal so they will not have to hunt further. If they find an animal fresh enough to eat they are well pleased, fearing no sickness. With all this in my mind, I tried the question, "Would eating hyaena make a person sick?" and was told that they did not know for no one had ever eaten hyaena. They brought up stories of hyaenas taking a bite out of a person's buttocks as he slept, or biting off a nose - enough to turn anyone against them - but did not cite these actions as reasons for their extreme expression that they would starve before eating hyaena. The old old people had told them not to eat them they said.

flamingo, uh-ana (H)

~~Flamingos are bad, bad, bad, bad, bad (the !Kung way of saying "very"). They were so created. To call a man a flamingo feather is a terrible insult~~

*put later*

vulture, txu (H)

I think the hubbub of disgust and protest that I should ask such things reached its peak over vultures. In the clamor someone did volunteer the remark that vultures eat people. (It is a common experience to them to find that vultures have eaten corpses if the people have not taken time to dig a deep grave.) But this was not offered by way of explanation. To the !Kung



it goes without saying that one does not eat vultures. It does for me; the way vultures eat makes them the most disgusting things on earth.

flamingo, uh-ara (H)

Flamingos are bad, bad, bad, bad, bad (the !Kung way of saying "very"). They were so created. To call a man a flamingo feather is a terrible insult. Informants had brought this forth and also the fact that flamingos make a sound like "hoo hūra", as though that explained everything. Thousands upon thousands of them come to Gautscha Pan toward the end of the rainy season. They almost cover the shallow pan, lifting their pink legs, bending their necks, as if in a ballet, as they feed.

chameleon

These are very bad.

lizard

These are bad except for iguana.

human beings

No one mentioned not eating human beings. In the old legends of the !Kung a theme often appears of the protagonist eating someone. ≠Gao!na was the protagonist's name, one of the names now given to the great god, the creator of all things. The old ≠Gao!na ate his brother-in-law, the fat pauw, and his

[-]  
panw



other brother-in-law, Eyes-in-His-Feet. He ate his wives when they had been turned into veldkos - that was the time they spitefully burst his stomach open. On one occasion when he had no other meat he joined his wives in eating his own buttocks. These horrible old tales make the !Kung howl and shriek with laughter.

I brought up the subject of real people eating other people either for food or for ritual purpose as something I had heard of people doing long ago and far away. The !Kung looked at me as though they were awed by the idea. They talked quietly among themselves and then <sup>declared</sup> ~~said~~ they had never heard of such a thing. Then Old Demi, the old man who had travelled far in his youth, said that he had once heard of people away to the north who had eaten human beings. What kind of people were they, I asked. They were Bushmen, he said. They were called /gaida. They lived on the other side of the river! (That would be the Okavango River, which the !Kung had heard of, though none of the Nyae Nyae people whom we knew had seen it.) That was all he could tell me.

Photo  
x

snake

The !Kung do not eat many of the snakes which exist around them, including cobra, spitting cobra, and boomslang, and many non-poisonous ones. (They do eat four kinds - python, which no one avoids; mamba and puff adder, both deadly poisonous; and



last  
mole snake, non-poisonous. The ~~latter~~ three are avoided by  
young persons.) Smell is a factor with snakes; some snakes  
smell bad, the !Kung say.

### spider

This was certainly one of the things I would not have  
thought to ask about. The !Kung mentioned especially a big  
poisonous ground spider which they did not eat (!) but I have  
no evidence that they ate any spiders, and could not uncover  
the significance of this statement. I think the one they mean is  
the one called !koochi-!geeci (H), a hunting spider.

*check when I can find - see below*

### caterpillars

Those with hairs on them are strictly avoided.

It is interesting that jackals and wild cats are not in  
this category. They may be eaten, but only by old women (see  
below).

*!kutshi-  
!gitshi*



Category 4: things no one eats which would "cause death."

Unlike the things in the previous category for which people feel repugnance but which do not cause disability (i.e., "nothing would happen"), the !Kung believe that the things in this category would cause death if they were eaten. They are very, very bad. No one could say why. The old people had taught them this.

mongoose, the slender-lesser, or brown, Myonax caui,  
tsão:ni:sa (S), tsounisa (H)

mierkat, the yellow, or bushy tailed, Cynictis penicillata,  
chî, (now-o), !didoroxa (H)

Though mierkats are of the family of mongooses the interpreters make this distinction: they called the slender-lesser mongoose which lived among the roots of the baobab tree a "mongoose"; they used the word "mierkat" for the burrow-dwelling Cynictis. The !Kung avoid both creatures.

squirrel, gray-footed (tree), Paraxerus cepapi, 'kûa-si (S),  
!nôusa (H)

squirrel, South African ground, Geosciurus inauris, !nao (H)

The old people told the !Kung to throw away a squirrel if they should happen to catch one (in a snare, it would be), never to eat it - either kind. They are deadly.

The question whether to consider these death-causing things taboo or not remains unsolvable for me. I have a feeling that they are not but the !Kung could not help me with *this*



~~these fine distinctions.~~ My feeling comes from their <sup>the !Kung do</sup> not using the phrase "death-thing" for these death-causing things. "Death things" are clearly taboo, but they do not cause death (honey, for example, is a "death thing") and they are eaten with relish except at certain times of life. I think the creatures in this category <sup>are believed to be</sup> ~~may be~~ more like poisons, which ~~are supposed to cause death from physical properties, not from magical ones,~~ but I am not sure.

The possibility comes to mind that at some time in the past these small animals may have been in the grip of a plague of rabies, or some other disease, and that the people saw them lying dead in the veld in great numbers ( as we have seen squirrels lying dead in our fields and on the roads during a <sup>disease</sup> plague which they suffered in New Hampshire). For that reason the old people might have taught the generations never to eat these little creatures. But the !Kung, who are extremely non-historic, have no such story to tell now.

32

mice and rats

R

Five kinds of mice and seven kinds of rats (but not <sup>R</sup> rattus rattus) were collected in the area by Handley. The !Kung of Nyae Nyae call most large mice <sup>!nɔi</sup> n/ui (H) and most small mice <sup>!nɔi-ma</sup> n/ui ma (H). They call <sup>the</sup> multimammate rat <sup>✓</sup> /nu:i (S) also. [ Mole rat is <sup>✓</sup> !nuhng (S), <sup>✓</sup> !nu (H). Shortridge records that !Kung speakers have individual names for ~~the following other mice and rats:~~

X

The

Found hint of 1st outbreak of plague - O Dambo Plains + Beelmauslaant



the following other mice and rats:

fat mouse, /ntaie ✓

pouched mouse, /neh ✓

black-tailed tree rat, ~~X~~goraip ✓

single-striped rat, 'gunchi ✓

I have arbitrarily put rats and mice into this list for  
 want of a better place to put them. The !Kung used to  
 eat them in the past, they said, but had recently been  
 told by Bushmen who had been to Runtu on the Okavango  
 River that the doctor there said Bushmen must not eat  
 rats and mice any more because they had a disease. I  
 do not know what disease he said they had, but it might  
 have been that they were in danger of carrying bubonic  
 plague at about that time (1953). The plague had appeared  
 in central and western Bechuanaland and an expedition  
 was sent to control it.



Kap suggest  
using mana

(9)

9-1 ✓  
+✓

Category 5: foods which have medicine, n/um, in them

(33)

X

~~mystic~~

[not mysticas - See Syn. Dechman]

N/um is a mysterious magical potency of the kind so widely believed in <sup>all</sup> over the world. Many peoples believe that this po-

712

(34)

tenency is autonomous, but the !Kung have overlaid that ancient concept with another. They believe that the great god of the

714

714

eastern sky created n/um when he created everything else and that

(34)

he put it into many things. He created it to work <sup>automatically</sup> autonomously, and it does

for the most part, but he who is the creator of all things is

also the controller of all things and he can stop n/um from working if such is his whim. <sup>it is in</sup> <sup>we can</sup> take it away from what we

The !Kung used the same word, n/um, for our pills and ointments. They gladly accepted our remedies, believing that n/um was in them and that it was working for good.

Block  
for n'u  
magic

N/um is neither good nor evil of itself and is not of itself the source of life, health, and goodness nor of death, sickness, misfortune, and other evils. It can work for man's good and protection or for his destruction. This is because it is strong.

"Strong" seems to be the key word for n/um and the !Kung seem to feel that this word explains what one needs to know about it.

Obviously because it is strong it is dangerous. The great god has so much of it and it is so strong within him that if he were to appear in a werft among ordinary people they would all die.

X

Only the greatest of the medicine men could encounter him.

N/um is in many things. It is in the medicine men and in



the ceremonial curing dance music and the fire around which the dancers circle. It is in several "medicine" plant substances, <sup>among them</sup> ~~(not edible)~~; sha sha and khali, which are used to choa food, and a few others. <sup>!gwey which is charred, pounded to powder mixed with fat and</sup> It is also in the foods which we list in <sup>mebbed u</sup> <sup>fn pain.</sup> this section.

(35) In the medicine men and the curing dance music n/um manifests itself as a protective and curing agent. It is protective in sha sha, khali and the other medicine substances. But the foods are not thought to be curative or therapeutic in any way. They are not agents to ward off misfortune, nor are they agents for bringing about desired conditions in persons, such as fertility or success in the hunt. The dangerous aspect of n/um seems to be what the !Kung think about in these foods and people shield themselves from too much of it by proper avoidances.

The !Kung call the foods which have medicine in them "death things." One hears this expression often. I believe it is an expression of measurement of the potency or intensity of the n/um in the things <sup>the analogy with death is made because n/um like death</sup> and <sup>is</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>analogy</sup> <sup>with</sup> <sup>death</sup>, which is so "strong" a thing. The phrase does not mean that the thing causes death. The !Kung do not, for example, call their deadly arrow poison a "death thing," nor the mierkats and squirrels which are thought to be deadly.

I must here express my concern that I am giving an impression that the medicine in the medicine foods is extraordinarily strong and dangerous. This is not so; many things are "death things"

Section a  
n/um  
Do not repeat



and the medicine foods have only a moderate charge of medicine in them, compared, for instance, to the medicine in the medicine men. The avoidance practices are not more stringent with the medicine foods than with other avoided foods, and when people are of a proper age to eat them, they do so.

The foods are:

aardvark (ant bear), Orycteropus afer, /hã (S & H), !dû (H)

Boys begin to avoid aardvark at the time of their choma ~~dance~~ ceremony and girls at their first menstruation ceremony. Girls continue to observe this avoidance until they have a baby; boys for about a year. They choa aardvark before eating it for the first time after the avoidance is ended.

*Medicine men who are new in Medicine must also avoid honey (see p. ).* ↗ *where should this go?*

red wing partridge, Scleroptila levaillanti levaillanti, !ga (H)

Boys and girls observe the same pattern of avoidance as for aardvark.

honey, zo, and the baby bees in the honeycomb, shum

Honey is avoided by boys and girls for the same period as aardvark.

ostrich egg, tsu (ostrich) (H), //ei (egg), dzu (ostrich egg shell)

Boys and girls and young adults must avoid eating ostrich eggs, which have very strong medicine in them. Little !Nai, who ~~was~~ was eight at a guess, had begun to avoid them, whereas



/

/Gaishay, #Toma's son, who was probably about seven, had not.

36

The measurement for the length of time the avoidance is required is five children. People whom we considered to be well into their forties were still avoiding them. This is one of the longest avoidances.

*Ta...  
...  
...*

37

Ostrich eggs are not harmful to old people but they would give young people terrible headaches, Gao Scarf told me. The headaches could cause the person to go mad, di, and run away. The old people <sup>had</sup> told them this but they <sup>had</sup> <sup>said</sup> did not say why. Gao Scarf had no conjecture or further ideas on the subject, and all my efforts to open and probe the question of fertility led to nothing.

The taboo is strictly obeyed. While one is keeping the taboo one must not even eat other food which has been put into a container which has had ostrich eggs in it until that container is especially well scoured. We observed people scrubbing containers with water and sand after ostrich eggs had been cooked in or eaten from them.

blood, /i  
When the game animals are slaughtered the blood is carefully saved and is usually put with a big piece of the animal's stomach.  
The blood <sup>must be</sup> is avoided by boys and girls. They begin the avoidance at the usual age of eight or nine. Girls should continue until they have had one child. To eat blood would cause pains in the stomach and diarrhea. (I speak of "eating" blood because it is usually prepared by being cooked in a pot and stirred constantly <sup>left</sup> by twirling between the palms of the hands with a little branch with a few stubs of twigs on the end, twirled

*usually put with a big piece of the animal's stomach.*

*left*



~~between the hands~~, until the blood has the consistency of a thin porridge. Old women with poor teeth are especially grateful if the blood is given to them in the meat distributions.)

Boys may begin to eat blood earlier than girls. A boy of about fourteen possibly (one never knows for sure) was pointed out as old enough. The boy must be prepared <sup>before they</sup> to eat it by a choa ceremony, performed by an old man who has long since been prepared to eat blood.

*girls?*

Boys avoid blood again at the time of the choma ~~dance~~ and keep the avoidance for some time after (the time was never clearly defined but was not as long as a year, which was the period required for certain other things). The blood would be choaed again before the eating. Boys must also avoid blood during their first few big hunts (see p. ) and choa it <sup>after the hunt</sup>.

Blood has strong medicine in it; it is a "death thing." As I pointed out, a "death-thing" may be a wholesome thing like honey - it need not be associated with sickness and death. But blood is <sup>so associated</sup> There is death in it. <sup>the !Kung say</sup> They <sup>believe</sup> that ~~!Kung say~~ when a person is sick, the sickness is in the blood. It is the blood that pains. Part of the process of curing illness, besides the medicine curing ceremony, is to cut the skin in tiny shallow incisions over the affected part and let the blood drip out. Alternatively the !Kung may suck the blood directly and spit it out or they may cup by sucking through a horn. They throw <sup>this</sup> the blood away on the ground without ceremony or precaution.

38

*Sickness is blood*



foods lying near an old man's head

Another aspect of medicine foods appears in a belief that there is medicine in the heads of old men who have been in choma (and these days almost all of them have been). Their heads are "death things." If an old man is lying down and some food is very near his head, a boy or young man must not eat that food. If he did, he would bleed from the nose most terribly and die. And things like a pipe must not be passed over an old man's head. Before the !Kung had choma they did not have this belief. Women have no medicine in their heads.

wild grapes, n/

Wild grapes, the only veldkos which has medicine, are ~~avoided only by girls~~ (see p. 2-10).

*Check?  
look up again  
y.*

Why is there medicine in aardvarks, red wing partridges, honey, wild grapes, ostrich eggs, blood, and old men's heads?

(39) we asked; why are they "death things"? They were so created by the great god, say the !Kung. Whatever old associations there may have been, they are now lost. No one knows and I believe it is futile to guess, but one is tempted to ponder over the question nevertheless. It is perhaps easy to imagine magic potency being in blood and ostrich eggs. Redwing partridge might be associated with the color red, the color of blood. About wild grapes no thoughts occur, but thoughts do come to my mind about honey and

*Fix*



aardvarks.

Honey could possibly be thought to have its medicine prop-  
erties because of some association with the first wife of the  
great god. Her name is Khwova!na and she is called the "mother  
of the bees." We were told that honey has strong medicine and  
the baby bees (shum) in the hive have also. Anyone who burned  
bees with fire would become very ill or be subject to some mis-

fortune. Not long before this conversation took place, a man  
named Tsangao had found a honeycomb. The bees were highly  
agitated and stung him badly. He resorted to smoking the hive,  
but, even though he had not burned the bees but only smoked them,  
that night while he slept the fire sought him out, crept to him  
in the grass, and set his hair and his pants aflame.

One of the ceremonial curing dances is the honey dance,  
and the medicine in the honey music is an agent for curing sick-  
ness when so used by the medicine men. We were told that we  
should avoid mentioning honey and sickness at the same time.

One can imagine how much the !Kung enjoy eating honey. It  
is the <sup>one very</sup> only sweet thing in their diet of meat and rather taste-  
less veldkos. (Incidentally, the !Kung do not make a honey beer  
as some of the Bantu tribes do. The !Kung do not brew or distill  
anything; they have no surplus of any food for this; their drink  
is water.) Bees are not abundant in this very arid land and  
honey is rarely found. When it is found, it becomes the personal  
possession of the man who finds it. He may give it as a gift;

--?  
The word trees  
of Feb 4  
gum?

They  
Two men who burned bees one time in the past, both sickened and died.



is not required by custom to distribute it to the group.  
 he need not distribute it. One man killed another for stealing  
 his honey from a tree which he had marked with a bunch of grass  
 to indicate his <sup>ownership</sup> possession of the honey, and he was considered  
 to have been justified.

Aardvarks are strange looking nocturnal creatures, rarely  
 seen, though judging from the number of times our trucks fell  
 into their holes they must be fairly abundant in the area.  
 Shortridge substantiates this impression. I wondered if their  
 living in holes was a clue to their being "death things", for  
 it could be that they were associated with an old belief among  
 the !Kung, which appears now in vague and confused form, that in  
 the beginning the lesser god (//gauwa is one of his names) came  
 out from a hole in the ground. The concept of the lesser god is  
 merged with the concept of the ancient evil spirit whose name  
 was ~~also~~ //gauwa, and it <sup>is possible</sup> could be imagined that holes in the  
 ground are associated with him. One can only guess. The !Kung  
 no longer know.

Say in  
 way not  
 repeat  
 W  
 na p.



10 ?

or put elsewhere?

10-1  
+✓

Category 6: ~~foods which babies' avoidances~~

<sup>FP insert</sup>  
← /ga: a veldkos, Coccinia rehmannii Cogn. /ga: (Story)

40

A large <sup>juicy</sup> ~~sappy~~ tuber which may weigh up to 3-4 lbs. It is an important part of the food of the Gautscha people, and it is so juicy that the people can live without water <sup>for a time</sup> if they are in an area where it grows with some abundance. They believe that /ga: might make a baby sick.

← tcha, a veldkos, probably Citrullus naudinianus Sond., tsa (s)

A spiny cucumber-like vegetable with cream-colored seeds. (Its root is called !garu.) Tcha is bitter and makes the mouth itch.

← ~~food~~ eating from metal spoons and ceremony of the burning arch

The !Kung believe that eating from metal spoons causes a <sup>which makes them have</sup> mouth disease in babies. The disease can be both prevented and cured by the ceremony of the burning arch. Members of the baby's family construct an arch high enough for an adult to run under by tamping branches into the ground, weaving them together over-

<sup>It is called la tata choo (a tata skam)</sup> head, and placing grass on the branches. They then set fire to <sup>using a brand from any fire wood</sup> the grass. An adult holds the baby and runs with it through the burning arch <sup>four</sup> several times <sup>from east to west, from west to east, from south to north, from north to south.</sup> The fire

and or metal cook food or that fire

The mother of the child and young boys

I do not consider <sup>the following</sup> these avoidances to be taboos; they seem to be more in the nature of physical precautions.

Insert above

The fire cures the sickness. <sup>used avoid eating that food.</sup> It is natural we were told that metal in the mouth of a child should cause this sickness. The burning arch is not used to cure anything else informants said.



(11)

and persons in early middle life,

Category 7: foods avoided by the young, <sup>both male and female</sup>

In addition to the foods which have medicine in them, several other things are avoided by the young: several whole animals, parts of animals, and certain veldkos. In this category I do not include foods avoided by girls <sup>or women</sup> only, either associated with menstruation or not, or foods avoided by boys <sup>or men</sup> only, in association <sup>or not,</sup> with choma, <sup>medicine men,</sup> or hunting ~~or not~~.

Boys and girls begin to avoid the foods in this list when they are about seven or eight (~~I wish I were absolutely certain of this age!~~) and continue the avoidances into young adulthood for varying lengths of time - the more usual length of time is until they have one child, but some avoidances must be kept longer, until two or three children have been born or, in a few instances, even five. The end of the first menstruation ceremony or the choma dance may mark the end of some avoidances.

2 1/2

When the time comes for the young person to stop avoiding a food, that food is choged the first time he eats it and then the avoidance is over.

I give the reasons for the avoidances and the penalties which would befall if the avoidances were violated as the !Kung gave them to me. For many they could give no reason and were not specific about length of time or the penalty. It is clear, I think, that with steenbok, springhare and duiker sympathetic magic is at work.

For two, honey badger and sha, <sup>Sa:</sup> a veldkos, the smell was emphasized. The rest in this category are shrouded in mystery.

(41)

(42)

Sha



steenbok, ~~Raphicerous~~ campestris ~~Thunberg~~, /hueh (S), /nu (H)

Steenbok are red and they are constipated, say the !Kung. If a young person ate them he or she would have distension of the stomach and intestinal disorders and would bleed from the nose. Redness was associated with blood several times as people talked. Someone with a <sup>careless</sup> light heart might eat steenbok after one child was born to him but others would take greater care of themselves and avoid steenbok until they had two or three children.

(43)

springhare, ~~Pedetes~~ capensis, /no:m (S), ~~n/em~~ (H)

Springhare, hole-dwelling rodents, are avoided for the same reasons as steenbok. Informants pointed out that springhares are as red and as constipated as steenbok and must be avoided as long as steenbok or even longer.

(44)

duiker, Sylvicapra grimmii, /aub (S), /nau (H)

Boys must avoid this small, especially delicious, antelope until they have had three children born to them, and girls until after the first menstruation ceremony. Girls must avoid duiker also at the time of their wedding ceremony if it should be after the first menstruation ceremony, though it is usually before, and, should the meat which the bridegroom presents to his bride's family at the time of the wedding be duiker, the bride's mother must avoid it also. Duiker skin is easily irritated by the sun, the !Kung say. Young persons eating duiker would acquire this



characteristic. Some adults voluntarily avoid duiker for longer periods of life, as I mentioned, because they fear they might get tender skin and be irritated by the sun.

honey badger, the ratel, Mellivora capensis, //haob (S), //nao (H)

The ratel is a fearless aggressive animal which can eject an evil-smelling fluid from its anal glands. <sup>(p. 10-11?)</sup> Young people must avoid it, and people often voluntarily continue to avoid it throughout their lives because they dislike and fear the smell.

pounded sha, Sa: (Story), Ša (Lee)

Put at end  
after  
animal  
food  
after  
newborn  
baby  
leaves  
fire.

Story identifies sha as the swellings on the root of Vigna dinteri Harms. The root may be as much as two feet long. The vegetable is a pleasant, satisfying food resembling potato and tasting something like green beans. It is very important in the !Kung food supply. It may be eaten cooked or raw but I think it is usually prepared by roasting in the ashes and then pounding in a mortar to a mushy texture. The young may eat it roasted but when it has been pounded they must avoid it. This is because they are afraid they will smell bad if they eat it (not, as with ostrich, because the food has a smell which displeases them. Cf. also a hunting reason.) When informants spoke of avoiding veldkos that have been chopped with a digging stick so that earth gets into them they especially mentioned sha.



black-backed jackal, Canis (~~Thos~~) mesomelas, /goe (S), /gi-di (H)

side-striped jackal, /ka:ri (S), /kari ~~Canis adustus~~

wildcat, Felis lybica, /nõa (S & H)

black-footed cat, Microfelis nigripes, /nõa-gotsoui (H)

Jackals and wildcats almost belong to the category of things which no one eats. !Kung hunters do not hunt them and the !Kung do not kill animals <sup>unless they need to.</sup> ~~out of lust to kill or to catch or whatever makes white sportsmen kill.~~ Conceivably one of these animals, jackal or cat, wary though they are, might be accidentally snared and so fall into the pot of some hungry old woman, for only very old women may eat them and many of them voluntarily avoid these creatures throughout their lives because of their dislike and fear of the smell. Shortridge mentions (p. 94) that what gives the cats their unpleasant smell is their breath. The !Kung apparently do not associate the feet of the furtive, rarely seen little cats with the feet of the big predators and do not call them jum mi.

white-quilled korhaan, nam (H)

long-legged korhaan, /ga (H)

Some of the korhaans we saw have a strange courtship display. The male flies up and suddenly begins to somersault down, his feathers fluffing out, turning over and over until he seems to be going to crash, but just before he hits the ground he straightens out and glides away. The !Kung say korhaans are mad, and this sort of behavior makes it seem so. Korhaans have a loud clattering cry



which the !Kung imitate. It was interesting to me to read in Roberts<sup>1</sup> that the Tswana name for the red-crested korhaan is khoara-khoara and to remember a story the !Kung told us of a boy whose name was Garu /Qui. He ate korhaan at an age when he should have avoided it. When he went to the choma dance and the men started to wash him he began to say khoara (khoara means "nothing" or "none" in !Kung). He could say nothing else. He just kept on saying "khoara, khoara, khoara." The medicine men tried to cure him, but he died. From then on the boys of the area have been especially careful to avoid korhaan. People say that both boys and girls would get such bad headaches from eating korhaan that they would go mad.

~~paow~~, giant bustard, Choriotis kori kori, !gui (H)

This particularly delicious bird must be avoided by the young because it would give them violent headaches and make them mad. Furthermore, if girls ate paow they would not have enough milk for their babies.

ostrich, tsu (H)

The same thing is said of ostrich as of paow. People speak of the avoidance of ostrich with special emphasis and in special detail. Many adults voluntarily avoid ostrich because they cannot bear the smell and think it would make them sick or give them such terrible headaches that they might go mad, as I mentioned. The



insides of ostriches must be especially avoided by the young and the wings and legs from the knee down, including the feet, the reason being that these parts touch the eggs when the birds, male or female, sit on the nest. <sup>As</sup> I mentioned, ostrich eggs have medicine and are avoided <sup>o</sup> must strictly until people are old enough to have had five children. Ostrich heads are also avoided with special emphasis.

special emphasis  
 46

scrupulously

eggs other than ostrich eggs

Eggs other than ostrich eggs, we were told, should also be avoided by the young; but we never happened to see the !Kung gather other eggs.

tortoise, both the large variety, /goa<sup>d</sup>, and the small one, zam<sup>v</sup>

The avoidance of tortoise need not be maintained as long as some others. After choma or the first menstruation ceremony the young person may choa tortoise and thereafter eat it freely.

iguana, tsxei

In contrast with tortoise the avoidance of iguana is maintained for a long time. A man should have graying hair before he eats iguana. The avoidance of iguana by hunters was considered to be especially necessary. A woman with three children was still not old enough to eat iguana. The danger is that it would make the

young go mad. A medicine man who ate iguana whose he should have avoided lost his power to cure.



insert at \*

Dr. Fitz Simons <sup>by personal communication</sup> ventured the opinion that 7khu is in all probability mole snake in the area and it fits the description given by the !Kung 7khu - snakes (B) long, non poisonous, whitish and it does not go in trees. The !Kung said

Mamba (n!ego), puff adder (!gai), and 7khu (high tone) are three of the <sup>five</sup> snakes eaten by the !Kung but avoided by the young. (The fourth is python, n̄, which no one is required by

!Kung rules to avoid.) No one happened to find a 7khu while we were there and so we could not even attempt to identify it. We were told it is a long whitish non-poisonous snake which does not go in trees. Many adults voluntarily avoid mamba and puff adder, also, as I mentioned previously, because of their smell.

gemsbok head

Gemsbok heads, both of the male and female animals, are avoided by the young. The !Kung call gemsbok heads "mad things", and say they would give terrible headaches. Pressed for a reason, they claimed - and stuck to it - that gemsbok eat ostrich eggs. They break the shell and lap the egg, say the !Kung. I have been unable either to verify or to refute this statement. We know that gemsbok in this arid land go for long periods without drinking water and that they get moisture in roots which they paw up as well as in melons. It is conceivable to me that they could bite an ostrich egg as they do a tsama melon.

cow eland head

Cow eland heads are also avoided by boys and girls for the same reason. The !Kung claim that bull elands do not eat ostrich



eggs!

foetus

Only the very old may eat foetus. The !Kung throw away small ones, but take fairly well developed ones, which they eat with relish. We felt that the life of old Di//khao was saved by a foetus. She had been very very ill. We thought she was going to die one night, but when someone gave her the boiled foetus of a kudu she sat up, ate the tender meat, and revived.

milk and udders

Mother's milk must be avoided by boys and girls of the age we are considering. It is taboo to them. Children nurse until three or four, some longer, and, up to five or six, they occasionally indulge in a drink of milk from their mothers, taking a share from a younger sibling. But when the avoidance begins, mother's milk must be very strictly avoided. It combines with a hunting taboo for boys and is more emphasized for them. Boys must not touch anything this milk has touched or let the milk touch them.

The milk of animals is also taboo for the young. Young men do not eat anything milk has touched. The !Kung do not milk the udder of a lactating female animal which they have killed, but cut off the whole udder and cook it, milk and all, and children and old people may eat it. Even if the female animal is not lactating, the udders of certain ones must be avoided by the young. Eland, gemsbok, giraffe, duiker, and steenbok were



mentioned. The dry udders of wildebeest~~ed~~ and kudu, however, need not be avoided. (Compare the fact that wildebeest~~d~~ and kudu heads also need not be avoided.) I asked why this distinction was made and everybody burst out laughing for they knew that I knew what the answer would be: "The old people told us this but they did not tell us why."

Girls avoid udders only until after first menstruation.

If this taboo is broken, aching bones and madness are the penalties. The !Kung had an example of madness to point to. A certain //Gunda drank the milk of a young gemsbok doe and went mad from it. In this state he committed the one act of incest which we were told about. He married a woman and her daughter at the same time. Neither had blood connections with him but this was incest in !Kung law and it was horrifying. (I mentioned this before in my paper on !Kung marriage regulations.) It was all because of the milk.

stomachs

Stomachs of animals are avoided by girls because girls must avoid the stomachs of animals. Boys avoid stomachs for a hunting reason. Their stomachs would make sounds which the animals would hear (cf. p. ).

snouts

Boys and girls avoid eating snouts, girls because girls must avoid snouts, boys for a hunting reason. The animals would smell



them (cf. p.     ).

throats

The young avoid eating the throats of animals. Their throats would get abscesses if they failed in this. The avoidance includes the skin of the animal's neck over the throat.

tails

Girls avoid tails because they would get boils on their backs if they ate them. It is possible that this has an association with sexual intercourse. The position for intercourse among the !Kung is for the man to be at the back of the woman. Women speak of having a "good back"; it means that a woman does not become pregnant too often. The reason a boy must avoid tails is a hunting reason. His arrow would only go into the tail of the animal (see p.     ).

eyes

The young avoid eating eyes to prevent their own eyes from getting sore.

a baby's urine

There are two words for urine, /xam and a respect word, !k'ali. There being no floors but the desert sand in a !Kung werft, the babies urinate wherever they are and nothing is made of it. If food should accidentally be splashed, however, with a baby's



urine, the young must avoid it. We were specifically told that this avoidance must be observed by both girls and boys, but informants talked more about boys when they told about it. It is a precaution against getting thin, against bone trouble, and misfortune in walking about, such as stepping on thorns or sharp sticks. If a young boy ate something urine had touched and got very thin, people would laugh and point out that he had not kept his avoidance.

a newborn baby's family's fire

Any food which has been cooked at the fire of a family with a newborn baby must be avoided by the young.



Category 8: foods avoided by girls or women, including those associated with first menstruation

In addition to the avoidances required of both boys and girls and of young adults (Category 7), girls alone must avoid several other things. They begin these avoidances at the age of seven or eight, unless otherwise noted, and continue them for varying lengths of time.

wart-hog, Phacochoerus aethiopicus ~~Pallas~~, 'tsar (S), /noa (H)

A girl must avoid wart-hogs until she has one baby. If she did not, a tõn (one of the women with whom the girl has the joking relationship) would laugh at her and say she was eating something with protruding tusks. It would make a girl's skin tender to eat wart-hog,

parts of animals: intestines, hearts, lungs, kidneys, livers, spleens

A girl must avoid these parts until she has one baby. It is because girls are girls that they must avoid these parts. The great god so created things.

eland chest, !neh - eland (S), n!i, tchani, respect word

A girl would not have enough milk for her baby if she did not avoid eland chest before a baby was born to her.

see page 12



kudu hooves, !nōa<sup>✓</sup> - kudu (S), !ōa<sup>✓</sup> (H)

If a girl ate kudu hooves she would step on sharp things in the veld and wound her feet. How long this danger continues I failed to find out.

giraffe heads and internal parts, goa - giraffe ~~(S & H)~~ (S & H)

Giraffes are too tall and if a girl ate a giraffe head or any of the internal parts she would have terrible headaches. She should continue this avoidance at least until she has had one baby, longer if she wanted to be especially careful.

testicles

Girls and women avoid testicles throughout their lives.

!Kung society does not impose many avoidances upon menstruating women after the first menstruation ceremony. I <sup>know</sup> mention <sup>only</sup> here three which are to be observed in periods after the first.

A menstruating woman may gather, handle, and cook veldkos but she must take pains not to let the menstrual blood touch them. Should a menstruating woman be sitting by a fire at which boys are eating, little scrapings of sha sha and //gui must be tossed into the fire and into the boys' food. Women should not touch a man's hunting gear, and this avoidance should be observed with special care when the woman is menstruating. The weapons could not kill. The man would lose his strength and power to hunt, if this taboo should be

Get veld for m. blood & respect veld



violated.

X The ceremony of first menstruation lasts for the period of  
 X the flow and during those days the girl stays in a special skerm  
 X built at a little distance from the others (ten or fifteen feet  
 X is enough), its opening turned aside from the werft. An old woman  
 X attends the girl, and carries her on her back <sup>as ever has to</sup> when she must go out  
 X to urinate or defecate, for the girl's feet must not touch the  
 X ground. The girl is covered with a kaross while she sits in the  
 X skerm and when she is carried out. The sun must not shine upon  
 her and boys and young men must not look at her. *Come near*

A few food avoidances are observed by the girl only during  
 the first menstruation period; some commence then, others end at  
 the end of the period. If first menstruation is the reference  
 point I include them in this category.

X While she is in the first menstruation skerm she must  
 restrain herself and never eat all the food which is offered to  
 her. The old woman who attends her eats what she leaves.

The girl must not touch food with her hands. She eats with  
 a stick.

She must avoid earth. I mentioned that her feet must not  
 touch the ground. Also, as all young people do, she avoids eating  
 any veldkos which has been chopped with a digging stick so that  
 earth gets into it, and during this period she takes a further  
 precaution. <sup>If food should touch the ground or</sup> If earth should get into her food in any way - dust  
 blown by the wind, for example - she must not eat that food.

(Incidentally an infant should not touch the ground  
 till is old enough to sit up a little)



A girl avoids all meat during the period of her first menstruation. Meat and menstrual blood together at this time are poisonous we were told. After the flow ceases she may resume eating any of the meats which the general avoidance rules for young people or for girls alone do not deny her. She choas each one the first time she eats it.

Girls avoid eating the skins of animals at this time and may resume eating them afterwards. The !Kung regularly eat skins cut into bits, scraped, dried to a crisp, and pounded to a meal in a mortar. The substance has a pleasant, slightly salty taste. The !Kung garments, sandals, and bags are made of skin, but each person wants only one kaross, one pair of sandals, and a few bags. They do not want to carry surpluses of anything. When something wears out they make another any time they wish. From time to time a few skins may be kept for trade with the Herero and or Tswana neighbors, but again no one can carry many. The rest are eaten.

*directly* During the period of the flow the girl avoids drinking water from ostrich egg shells (the common water container of the !Kung) and she avoids drinking rain water. She choas the shell and rain water after the period ends and no longer avoids them. (Boys also observe this avoidance during the choma dance.)

At the time of first menstruation, as I mentioned before, girls begin to avoid certain of the foods which have medicine, n/um, in them, namely: aardvark, redwing partridge, honey. They



continue to avoid these things until they have a baby. Then they may choa them and begin again to eat them.

check sp.

Up to now only five veldkos have been mentioned: wild grapes, <sup>-n/</sup> n/; pounded <sup>Sa.</sup> sha, which would make the young smell bad; // kain dama, voluntarily avoided by women, and the two which babies avoid, <sup>tSa</sup> /ga: and tcha. The first menstruation ceremony is the point at which the avoidance of several other veldkos ends and others are begun.

Girls from <sup>the age</sup> seven or eight years have been avoiding the six veldkos listed below. At the end of the first menstruation ceremony this avoidance ceases. The girl choas each of the veldkos the first time she gathers it and is then free to eat it.

<sup>!ama</sup> /amma, Ceropegia tentaculata N. E. Br. <sup>!ama (Story)</sup>

The edible part is the tuber, the size of a flattened apple, the color of a new potato.

!gamma

The tuber of a twining plant. It is about 4 inches long, brown outside, white inside, with a hollow on the top from which the stem grows. The tuber is sappy.

!garu, Citrullus naudinianus (Sond.) Hook. <sup>f.</sup>

!garu is the tap root of this plant, called "gembok"

cm?  
x  
g...?  
+...?



cucumber." If it has holes in it girls must avoid it.

!goro

Onion-like bulbs gathered in the rainy season.

n!oshulu, Pentarrhinum insipidum E. Mey., *n!o-Su and n!wa-Su (Story)*

cm

The fruits, about 3 inches long may be eaten raw or cooked.  
The leaves, usually pounded to a pulp, are eaten raw.

n!umshe *n!umSe: (st.)* Dipcadi Sp.

P.H. 2/2/2

Onion-like bulbs. The leaves may be eaten raw.

During the period of the first menstruation girls avoid three more veldkos.

*!xwa*  
Vkxoa, Fockea sp., *!xwa: (Story), !xwa (Lee)*

The big succulent storage organ is called the "water bottle."  
It may be more than a foot long.

tchung, Walleria nutans Kirk, *+gō (Story)*

The firm round storage organ, ~~larger~~ slightly larger than a golf ball, the color of a new potato.

See #49 n!evn

tchu, not identified, *3 divas me told about it - did not see it*

Tchu would cause stomach troubles if it were not avoided



See that this is not repeated in Choa ceremony part refer to the part

at this time.

As I mentioned previously there are four veldkos which girls choa each year the first time they eat them in their new growth after the rains. At first menstruation they begin to avoid those four veldkos entirely and they continue to do so until they have a baby, when they choa them again and resume eating them. The veldkos are:

11'k'a: (Story), 11'ga (Lee)

-//kxa, the almond-like nuts of Ricinodendron rautanenii Schinz, popularly called mangetti nuts, or Mongongo (the Baule name

look up Nelson's letter + file

Ts'i: (Story), Ts'in (Lee)

tsi, the seed of Bauhinia esculenta Buch., (called) popularly eland bean in S.W.A.

tchong, an edible underground storage organ. We note that it is big and sticky. It must have been identified by Dr. Story but since we could not correlate our information in the field, I unfortunately do not know the identification. Dr. Story is rightly unwilling to guess at the identification from any layman's description.

rec?

-n/, wild grapes

The interpreter called this fruit "wild grapes" and I fell in with this translation, inconsistent though it is to designate one veldkos as wild when all the others are also wild. We do not have the botanical identification and unfortunately never even saw

LJM, see Lee # 11



the fruit. This is the one veldkos which the !Kung say has "medicine" in it. In contrast to mangetti nuts, tsi and tchong, wild grapes are not an important part of the !Kung food supply. They are neither plentiful nor particularly nourishing.

The plant foods are the daily foods which sustain these people the whole year through. Meat is the most desired food of all but the hunters succeeded in their long arduous hunts in good times only about two or three times a month, and often less.

The favorite of all veldkos of the Nyae Nyae !Kung is mangetti nuts. They are rich, satisfying, delicious almond-like nuts. Band 1 of the Gautscha !Kung travel <sup>flinty fins</sup> ~~seventy-five~~ miles to the mangetti forest to which they have gathering rights. This mangetti forest is on high white sand dunes <sup>there</sup> where they are no water-holes. The people can go only after the rains when the hollow trees have little pools of rain water in them. They stay, eating mangettis, drinking sparingly, as long as the water lasts. Then they fill their bags and carrying nets with as many nuts as they can possibly carry, leaving quantities on the ground because they can carry no more, and travel back to their water-hole at Gautscha.

Girls draw pictures or diagrams on the smooth soft bark of the female trees of their <sup>front</sup> genital aprons and of the black band markings with which their legs and buttocks are scarified.

Tsi are seeds of a vine that runs along the ground. The seeds form on the runners and have a hard shell like nuts. They



*Dict meaning*

are delicious and high in protein and oils and I think are as cherished as mangetti nuts. There is a huge patch of them - a "community", Dr. Story calls it - south of Gautscha, and the !Kung travel to that place to gather them at the time of year when the seeds are developed but have not yet burst open. I have the impression that the people gathered practically the whole tsĩ crop each year. Tsĩ seeds keep well, but there are never enough to last very long for the people eat them avidly. The tubers of tsĩ are called n//ñ.<sup>n//ŋ</sup> They are edible when young, and the !Kung gather them, leaving the big woody old tubers, which may grow to weigh thirty pounds, to produce their multitude of seeds.

Tchong is one of the underground roots or tubers most important to the !Kung food supply. It is comparatively plentiful, a staple. I think that tchong, together with //ore, was what the Gautscha women depended on, more than any other one thing, to feed their families. Tchong is avoided, //ore is not.

All the veldkos avoidances associated with first menstruation are in my opinion real taboos. Except for the stomach disorders which eating tchu would cause, the penalty for violating these taboos is thinness, a real taboo sickness. People told us that not long before Khuan//a had broken her taboos. She had not listened to her elders, and had become as thin as a stick. But ~~xxx~~ by the time we saw her she had recovered, fortunately, and was only normally thin. One wonders what qualities these veldkos



have that they should be taboo. The underground parts have some similarity in shape. They are like carrots, turnips, potatoes, onions, apples. They are brownish-whitish in color. But so are a dozen other underground parts which !Kung women gather and which they do not avoid. The mangetti nuts and tsi are the most satisfying of the veldkos and the favorite plant food of the people. N/ has medicine. What lies behind the taboo associated with these things nobody knows.

The avoidance of mangetti nuts, tsi, and tchong is, in my opinion, a deprivation, possibly the greatest imposed by the !Kung avoidance rules. But most !Kung girls are already married by the time they first menstruate and begin to bear children right away, so fortunately the usual period of this avoidance would be only nine months or a year, until the end of the first pregnancy. The people say that after a girl has a baby, if she is healthy and has kept the avoidances well, her people are pleased and they make her pretty. They cut her hair, put red powder on it if someone has a bit (it is a red earth). They wash her and rub her with fat and adorn her with beads.

*get name*

*clio;  
do not  
repeat.*



Category 9: <sup>10</sup> foods avoided by boys, including those associated with choma

Boys avoid only a few things not associated with choma or hunting and not also avoided by girls during the period of "the young."

pangolin, Smutsia temminckii ~~Smuts~~, !noë (S)

termites, !guri ku !gum, "white ants"

These are eaten raw when they fall to the ground after nuptial flight and are much relished as a sweet delicacy, but they are avoided by boys. *at what age. Tsamw al.*

ants, !kxon ✓

These are almost as large as the termites, above.

X salt

heads of female giraffe

Boys avoid only female giraffe heads, whereas girls, because giraffe are too tall, must avoid the heads of both males and females. As we noted, boys and girls avoid male and female gemsbok heads and female eland heads because these animals eat ostrich eggs, the !Kung say. Boys may freely eat the heads of male and female wildebeest and kudu.



uterine wall

This is avoided by boys and men throughout their lives.

forked tchung

If a forked tchung is gathered boys must avoid it.

I failed to press for specific information about the length of time these particular avoidances must be kept, and informants did not offer it. I assume they fall into the middle category - until one or two children have been born - not the five-children period as for ostrich eggs.

At the time of the choma ~~dance~~ ceremony boys avoid many things. They continue to avoid the things they have been avoiding as young people and begin to avoid several more. Some of the avoidances end with the period of the dance itself. Others continue for about a year.

reword?  
avoid  
avoid!

meat

During the choma ~~dance~~ itself the boys avoid all meat as do girls during their first menstruation ceremony. After the choma ceremony they resume eating the various meats, except for those prohibited by the general avoidance rules for the young, choaing each one the first time they eat it in the manner described.



gums

During the ceremony boys avoid eating all tree gums. At other times anyone who sees the little globules of gum which are found on the barks of several kinds of trees in the area delights in picking them off and eating them. They are not an important item of nourishment but are a pleasant delicacy.

*direct*

drinking water from ostrich egg shells

This is avoided by boys at choma as it is by girls at first menstruation and by young hunters.

drinking rain water

The choma ceremony is held at the cold time of year when rain is not expected and is, in fact, extremely unlikely. But in any case rain water is to be avoided during choma. After choma, the first time rain falls, the boys who have been in the ceremony collect it in karosses strung up for the purpose, or in bowls. Then they choa the rain, as the !Kung express it. They put ≠kali in the rain water, cook meat in it, and then eat the meat and drink the rain broth. As we noted, girls also avoid rain water during their first menstruation ceremony and choa it afterwards.

medicine foods

Boys begin to avoid three of the foods that have "medicine" at the time of the choma dance and continue to avoid them for about a year (as mentioned before, p. ). These are aardvark,



red-winged partridge, <sup>!ga</sup> ~~//sa~~, and honey, zo. Girls also avoid these at the time of first menstruation and continue until they have a baby.

In addition boys avoid ~~shux~~ <sup>high</sup> ~~khoma~~ hornbill, <sup>chu</sup> ~~chu~~, the bird which lays its eggs in holes in trees. Boys avoid <sup>hornbill</sup> ~~chu~~ for about a year. They choa these things the first time they eat them after the avoidance ends.

Boys <sup>up</sup> to the time of their <sup>cremmy boys</sup> choma ~~dance~~ do not need to avoid veldkos except pounded sha and forked tchong. During the choma dance they avoid ten. Six of these are also avoided by girls at the time of first menstruation and have been described above.

They are !gama, //kxa, <sup>!kxoa</sup> !nshulu, tchung and tsi. Sha they continue to avoid if pounded. In addition boys avoid <sup>10</sup> ~~three~~ other veldkos.

cha

cha ha

(48) !dubi ≠ !ubi no d. isut possible

The edible underground part resembles a medium-sized turnip. gama k'wo: Grewia sp. aff. Grewia bicolor Juss

!goli

!goli are berries, one of the Grewia family of which Story records five. They are bilobed, orange-brown in color. Large ones might be just under half an inch in size. The Tswana honor one of the bilobed Grewia berries (and it may well be !goli from the appearance, though we lack the formal botanical proof of this)

cm

!gwa - Grewia retundervis Burret



Retinervis 4

with the name "Buttocks of the Queen."

!gwa Grewia retinervis Burret

In set below of \*

It will be remembered that the choma initiation ceremony for boys is not an ancient rite among the !Kung of the Nyae Nyae region. It was introduced when the fathers of the present old men were young men, we were told. It seems highly probable that the veldkos avoidance at choma time was taken over from the girls' avoidance by analogy. For boys the veldkos avoidance ends at the end of the choma dance, when each veldkos is choaed.

n/i' wild grapes-

n!o Strychnos coccoloides Bat.

( ) does not check with <sup>with</sup> <sub>sr</sub> ) a fruit about 4" in diameter, a little over a pound in weight.

# M<sup>(sr.)</sup> Adansonia digitata L.

baobab fruit

? is this !wi <sup>(L)</sup> <sub>sr</sub> click?

G Guibourtia coleosperma

the fruit

Rhodesian Copalwood (L) a fruit.

Inset x



Su ma 26 1953

Boop. Choa held less after chome

~~done~~ ✓ Mangelli

in already ✓ tri

added igui  
Sili beans

added x goa leaves igwa

✓ Dori

cha

✓ sha

added x gamma go into groups

" x nli into groups

x ! no a fruit in a tree

x ! om Boobal fruit

Fis

~~A page is lost~~



no redder

Separate sympathetic major portion

13-7

Category <sup>10</sup> 9 foods avoided by boys <sup>including</sup> ~~apart from~~ those associated with choma ~~or hunting~~

Boys avoid only a few things ~~which~~ <sup>not associated with choma & hunting</sup> not also avoided by girls during the period of "the young" <sup>which</sup>

II  
1964

Pangolin

Smutsia temminckii Smuts

!noë (S.)

Termites (!guri ku !gum). ~~These are eaten~~ "white ants."

These are eaten raw when they fall to the ground after nuptial flight and are much relished as a sweet delicacy but are avoided by boys.

Ants (!kxon)

!Kxon are almost as large as the termites, above.

Salt

Heads of female giraffe

Boys avoid only female giraffe heads, whereas girls <sup>because giraffe are too tall</sup> must avoid the heads of both males and females ~~because giraffe are too tall~~. <sup>and girls</sup> As we noted boys avoid male and female gemsbok heads and female eland heads because these animals eat ostrich eggs, they say. Boys may freely eat the heads of male and female wildebeest and kudu. ~~I persisted in asking why this~~

Repeat 5



distinction was made and why wildebeest and kudu heads were safe to eat. These animals were so created, I was solemnly told.

I failed to press for specific information about the length of time these particular avoidances must be kept, and informants did not offer it. <sup>I assume</sup> They fall into the rather vague middle category - until one or two children have been born - not the five-children period as for ostrich eggs.

Forked Tchung  
Tchung

Insect above.

If a forked Tchung is gathered boys must avoid it.

uterine walls

This is avoided by boys and men throughout their lives.



Describe Choma -  
Do not use ancient customs of the !Kung

Category : food avoidances associated with choma

At the time of the Choma Dance Ceremony boys avoid many things. They continue to avoid the things they have been avoiding as young people and begin to avoid several more. Some of the avoidances end with the period of the dance itself. Others continue for about a year, ~~still others for several years more.~~

This has been copied & clipped in by M. S. M.

Meat

During the Choma Dance itself the boys avoid all meat \* as do girls during their First Menstruation ceremony. After the Choma ceremony they resume eating the various meats, except for those prohibited by the general avoidance rules for the young, choaing each one the first time they eat it in the manner described.

Gums

During the ceremony boys avoid eating all tree gums. At other times anyone who sees the little globules of gum which are found on the barks of several kinds of trees in the area delights in picking them off and eating them. They are not an important item of nourishment but are a pleasant delicacy. ✓

Drinking water from ostrich egg shells \*

This is avoided by boys at Choma as it is by girls at First Menstruation and by young hunters.

\* also by girl at 1st Men. Ceremony



## Drinking rain water \*

The Choma Ceremony is held at the cold time of year when rain is not expected and is, in fact, extremely unlikely. But in any case rain water is to be avoided during Choma. After Choma, the first time rain falls, the boys who have been in the ceremony collect it in karosses strung up for the purpose, or in bowls. Then they choa the rain, as the !Kung express it. They put kali in the rain water, cook meat in it, and then eat the meat and drink the rain broth. As we noted, girls also avoid rain water during their First Menstruation ceremony, *and choa it after*  
*Medicine foods*

Boys begin to avoid three of the "medicine" *foods that have* at the time \* of the Choma dance and continue to avoid them for about a year (as mentioned before, p. ). These are aardvark, red-winged partridge (//ga), and honey.<sup>20</sup> Girls also avoid these

at the time of First Menstruation, *and continue to avoid them until they have a baby.*  
*hornbill. the*

*Chu* In addition boys avoid chu (high tone), a bird which lays its eggs in holes in trees. Boys avoid chu for about a year.

*P* They choa these things the first time they eat them after the avoidance ends.

Boys avoid the following veldkos during the Choma dance. After the dance they choa them and resume eating them. Several of these veldkos, those indicated by an \*, are avoided also by girls during their First Menstruation, and were described in that section.

cha ha a fruit



Penelq - Tim

How long is Choma <sup>B-11</sup>

Boys up to the time of the  
 Choma Dance do not need to avoid  
 yeldkos except pounded <sup>and faked chong</sup> shia <sup>bar</sup>  
 During the Choma Dance, they avoid  
~~eight~~ <sup>the choma dance after the dance is finished</sup> Atone. Six of these are also  
 avoided by girls <sup>at the time of</sup> <sup>just menstruating</sup> and have been described  
 name: gama K'xo'a !!K'xa'  
No shulu + ching and tsi

shia: hypocistis to avoid if pounded  
 In addition boys avoid three other <sup>which they</sup> <sup>have not named</sup> <sup>before</sup>  
 'chia lia', this is a fruit which  
 resembles mai, which are like  
 small oranges.  
 + d'ubi the edible underground part  
 resembles a medium sized turnip.  
 ! qoli.

p 27

copy: P. attached  
 about 1 qoli.

shia  
 the contents to avoid pounded shia.

1. During a hunt, hunters <sup>are</sup> avoid  
!!K'xa', manjelly nul, and tsi, slane boan,  
 (4 p).



cha ha

cf. p. 29<sup>5</sup>

/dubi the edible underground part resembles a small to medium sized turnip

!gama\*

!goli !goli are berries, in all probability one of the Grewia family of which Story records five. They are bilobed, orange-brown in color. Large ones might be just under half an inch in size. <sup>The Tswana honor</sup> ~~one~~ of the bilobed Grewia berries (and it may well be !goli from the appearance, though we lack the formal botanical <sup>proof of this</sup> identification) <sup>with the name</sup> ~~by naming~~ ~~it the~~ "Buttocks of the Queen."

copy insert

!kxoa\* "the water bottle"

//kxa\* mangetti nuts

!noshulu\* a fruit about 3" long

tchung\* the <sup>fruit round</sup> underground storage organ of Walleria, <sup>Nutans Kule</sup> ~~slightly larger than a golf ball~~ <sup>AP 5 p. 17</sup>

tsi\* ~~slightly larger than a golf ball~~ <sup>the color of a new potato</sup>

Boys, like girls, must avoid any veldkos which has been cut with a digging stick so that earth gets into it. \*



Old Chome to wind

How long for  
Boys, 13-13

It will be remembered that the chome  
initiation ceremony for boys is not  
an ancient rite among the Kiny &  
the Near Na region. It was introduced  
when the fathers of the present old men  
were young men. We were told. It  
~~seems quite possible~~  
~~looks like~~ As things that the <sup>veld k</sup> avoidances  
of at least the six veld k at Choma times  
were taken over from the <sup>girls</sup> avoidances by analogy.  
For boys the <sup>veld k</sup> avoidances end at the  
end of the chome dance when each  
veld k is choed



14

Category : food avoidances required of pregnant women and <sup>the</sup> parents

<sup>Women after child birth</sup>  
*Cartles*  
sha with holes (cf. p. ). If a pregnant woman ate this  
 her baby's buttocks would have holes. *Cartles*

cooked n//ama (cf. )

This veldkos may be eaten raw, but not cooked. The baby would get thin.

!gama (cf. p. )

*buried*  
 This veldkos must not be cooked in ashes if a pregnant woman is to eat it; because it would make the baby thin. She may eat it if it is cooked in other ways.

steenbok

A Pregnant woman must not eat steenbok. If she did the baby would be very small.

!ga, redwing partridge (cf. p. )

If !ga is roasted on the fire it must not be eaten by a pregnant woman. It would make the baby thin. She may eat it cooked otherwise.

hooves

~~Pregnant~~ Pregnant women avoid eating hooves lest the



buttocks of their babies have the shape of hooves. Young girls also avoid hooves.

Throat, heart, lungs, liver, stomach, intestines

A pregnant woman should avoid these parts. If she ate them the man who had killed the animal might lose his luck and not kill again. I am not perfectly sure but I think from my notes, which are not clear on this point, that this avoidance applies only to the large game animals. (Cf. )

food which has been lying on the ground

Mangetti nuts, tsi, roots, etc. might be placed on the ground beside a skerm but those which a pregnant woman is to eat must be placed on grass, on a kaross, or in a bowl or something to be kept off the ground. If this precaution were not taken the woman would get thin. Boys at choma take this precaution also. (cf. )

the flesh that sticks to the skin when an animal is skinned

If a girl ate the flesh which sticks to the skin, her child might be born with a caul. My informants told me that they had never seen a caul but knew that a baby born in Cho/ana had had such a thing. They said they advised the girls not to eat the skin freely when there was flesh attached to it, but the girls do not follow this advice. They had been fortunate



so far, the informants said. No child among the Gautscha people had been born with a caul. If one were they would scold the mother for not keeping her avoidance and just take the caul off. Nothing more would happen.

pots and cooking

Informants told us, in effect, that there might be someone ~~wouldxxx~~ who could and would endure all the avoidances. A pregnant woman of that mind would not eat from the pot of a person who was not a close relative. The joking relationship does not enter into this distinction. She could eat from the pot of an utsu as well as from that of a ton, for example, if they lived together. The pregnant woman may build or handle a fire without restriction. However, after the baby is born, the woman must not cook for herself. The avoidance of cooking coincides in length of time with the woman's not having (abstinence from?) sexual intercourse with her husband. Some informants thought five months long enough to abstain, others thought seven.



Two taboos are observed at the time of the birth of the first boy baby and the first girl baby. The mother and the baby would get thin if <sup>these taboos</sup> they were violated. A mother with a new baby gathers veldkos with the other women but she must not eat what she gathers herself. She should give her veldkos to <sup>her</sup> other mothers or <sup>to</sup> other ~~old~~ <sup>old</sup> middle-aged persons, who can eat what she gathers with impunity, and receive gifts of veldkos from them or from others. When it is time for the woman to <sup>in</sup> resume eating veldkos which she herself gathers the choa ceremony is performed. !U's mother-in-law performed it for her, and only once, for the veldkos she happened to gather at the time. It happened to be tchung.

The new mother must not cook for herself or for her family. Her husband can cook for her and the children or the older children could cook for themselves. They do not cook at the family fire where the new baby and the mother live. They make a fire at a little distance or cook at the fire of relatives. A close relative might cook <sup>at her own fire</sup> for the family. I asked what relative. It was !U who was talking with me. She said a mother or sister or grandmother would do this. Wondering if any avoidance rule determined what category of relative could do this cooking, I questioned further. !U replied that Bushman had no sympathy <sup>(she said "!</sup> xa zge <sup>", "heart for")</sup> for others and no one but a close relative would take the trouble. If anyone not related did so favor her she could



eat the food.

These two taboos must be observed until the baby laughs, !U said. Another informant said for three or four moons. Another said until the baby makes sounds like "ba ba" or "da da".

7/2

The father and mother of the new baby should avoid eating meat cooked by visitors. It does not matter who kills the animal but the meat should be cooked only by the father or by a close relative. Otherwise the baby might get stomach trouble and dysentery. That is, unless a precaution is taken. !U with her new baby went to sit by the fire of some visitors who were cooking duiker. The man, who was a medicine man (most are), scraped some dirt from the outside of the pot in which the duiker was stewing, rubbed his head and his armpits, taking sweat ~~wixk~~ from them onto his hands, mixed this sweat with the dirt from the pot and rubbed this on the baby's stomach and head. The baby had no trouble even though !U enjoyed a piece of the meat which her friends offered her.

The !Kung had been told by the old people that these customs must be observed. They know no reason. The women earnestly advised me not to allow my daughter to do silly things but to teach her that she must obey these rules so that her babies would be strong.



Not retyped but  
check last page

(16)

add Just Buch - 16-1  
Sha - +

Category 12 : food avoidances associated with hunting

c?

Some of the hunting avoidances are <sup>observed</sup> practiced to protect the hunter's powers to see well, shoot straight and strongly, and track successfully; others to effect the animals - to insure that they will not escape being shot, or run too far, <sup>others</sup> and to insure that the poison will not be "cool", as the !Kung say, and <sup>be</sup> weak and fail to kill the animal.

c?

Some avoidances are practiced only while the men are engaged in a hunt. Others are observed for several years <sup>by a young hunter</sup> while ~~the hunters are young~~ <sup>whether they are actually in the act of hunting or not</sup> and still others until the hunter's hair begins to turn gray. The concept of the <sup>required while a</sup> time of ~~youth~~ was very confusing. A certain Gao, who I guessed was in his early forties, said he was still too young to eat marrow. But I saw a man who looked years younger actually eating marrow. Perhaps the latter did not have a stout heart to keep the avoidances and had given up growing himself. In any case, young boys in the first several years of their hunting lives are definitely "young." \* A boy begins to engage in the big hunt when he wants to learn and his father feels he is able. We judged the boys to be about twelve or so. !Kung fathers <sup>may sometimes</sup> group together and take their boys out to practice in hunting schools. This is the nearest thing to formal training a !Kung boy has. It is the hunts for the big animals which mark the beginning of the

Gao

Fix

7.3

c?

\*(insert: Little boys practice with toy bows and arrows and begin at seven, eight, or nine or thereabouts to shoot birds and small creatures.)



avoidances. Hunting and choma are not associated or correlated. Either may come first.

*creamy & just buck*

Inner parts

The first time a young hunter kills an animal and for about five or six times thereafter he avoids eating any of the inner parts of that animal. Why, I asked. Because this is the law, this is their custom. If he failed to observe this avoidance he would lose his luck, ~~and~~ his shooting would be weak, and the animal might not die. The inner parts of these animals should be given to an old man. It is particularly good to give them to one's !gu!na, <sup>father's father</sup> ~~Fa!a~~, or person one is named for.

X

Stomachs\*

A young hunter ~~continues to avoid~~ stomachs. We mentioned that the young, both boys and girls, avoid stomachs - girls because they are girls and boys because they are hunters. If a boy ate the stomach of an animal, it would make a sound when he was stalking and warn the animal he was after to run away.

Tails\*

Tails are another part which both boys and girls avoid.- girls because they would get boils on their backs, boys because they would not be able to kill an animal. Their arrows would just go into the tail and the animal would not die.

Snouts\*

Animals would easily smell a young hunter if he had eaten

\* Mentioned before in category i.e. the young, both boys and girls.



snouts. (Girls avoid snouts because girls avoid snouts.)

Eland ~~xxx~~ intestine - the large intestine

If boys ate the large intestine of an eland, when they were hunting eland the anus of the animal would itch and the animal would run, and when it defecated the excrement would hang on a piece of grass and not fall to the ground and this would mean that the hunter would never get that animal.

Marrow

Young hunters must avoid marrow, <sup>though</sup> hard as it may be for them to do so; marrow is a cherished morsel.

\* Fat - *mint from p. 5*  
Blood \*

A boy must not drink (or eat) the blood of an animal which he himself has killed until he has especially prepared to do so by a choa ceremony. Blood is a medicine thing and, as mentioned before, is avoided by girls and boys (see p. ).

Drinking from ostrich eggshells \*

A young hunter does not drink from an ostrich egg shell but pours the water into something else. His drinking from the shell would make the animal go far. Drinking from ostrich egg shells is also avoided by girls at First Menstruation and boys at Choma.

*Fchone? Fchung?*

\* *this*  
Forked fchung, a weldler (which is not always bifurcated) must be avoided by hunters, young or old when it is forked. The animals would smell the chung.  
Mangetti nuts and tsi

During a hunt, whether they return to the werf or not,

\* Also avoided by girls  
Closed annually then  
avoided at 1st Men. till 1 boy

*What about sha  
look up.*



young hunters avoid eating certain things when they have an arrow in an animal. Tsi and mangetti <sup>nuts</sup> they avoid because these nut-like veldkos burst with a pop when they are roasted in the fire and the animal would get up as fast as the nuts burst and run so far the hunter could not get it. Furthermore, these nuts smell when they are cooking and when they burst and, if the hunter ate them, the smell would cause his arrow poison not to act. A young hunter must <sup>continue observing</sup> ~~keep on with~~ these precautions, but an old hunter (one who had three children was given as an example) would give them up. When he thought he had killed animals enough he would try eating these things and if the animals he shot died he would know that it was now all right <sup>for him</sup> to eat them. *stop.*

Mother's milk

It could be that during a hunt a man might return to his wurf to sleep. If he had a poisoned arrow in an animal and was tracking it and the trail lay not too far from where his people were, the hunter might go back, spend the night, and take up the tracking in the morning. (Bushmen dislike very much to be alone in the veld at night; it would be worth while to them to walk quite a few miles to be at home.) On such an occasion the hunter would observe the following taboo as a precaution, <sup>so</sup> in order that the animal would not get away from him but instead would die of the poison and he would find it. If his wife had a nursing ~~baby~~ he does not cook food on his



own fire but goes to someone else's or makes a fire at a distance from his family fire. He avoids touching the child and his wife, her garments, belongings and implements, except for the digging stick which is not taboo. The avoidance only applies to a lactating wife and is to protect the hunter. It is the milk which is taboo. The !Kung say that the milk smells of zao. The smell would weaken the poison of the arrow. Zao is a tree. The bark when burned has a very strong bad smell. If there are lions about, the !Kung throw some zao on their fires to frighten them away. Pounded-up zao is called "lion powder."

*Insert on p. 3*

Fat

During a hunt, when he has an arrow in an animal, a hunter should avoid eating fat, for the fat would loosen and weaken the poison on his arrow.

Even though men have reached an age when they need not avoid several



*curtain*  
*A bone*

c?

= One avoidance is practiced by girls for the protection of hunters. A bone at the base of the spine of animals must be avoided by girls if a young man has killed the animal. Should a girl eat this part of a young man's kill, the next time he went hunting the animal would twitch and be warned and run away. The girl need not avoid this bone if an old man killed the animal.



Hindley 16-6a

! qaru.

The lap root of ginseng cucumber.  
is avoided by <sup>young hunters</sup> ~~big~~ hunters a hunt  
if they ate it the poison is  
while their arrow was in a animal  
the poison would get cold.

Sha

! Kxoa Do make root

animals would urinate a lot and  
wash the poison out of their systems  
and not die. ~~He said~~ He said  
said that ! Kxoa hated him. The  
animals he shoots do not die



!garu

The tap root of gembok cucumber is avoided by young hunters during a hunt. If they ate it ~~the poison~~ while their arrow was in an animal the poison would get cold.

sha!kxoa, the water root

Animals would urinate a lot and wash the poison out of their systems and not die. Lazy /Qui said that !kxoa hated him. The animals he shoots do not die.

*This is not before, Category d*



(17)

*who has killed*

Category : The ceremony for a boy ~~killing~~ his first large animal

Because this ceremony as a whole is so much concerned with food and because it makes use of both avoidance and ritualistic eating and because it can be briefly described, I am including it in this paper.

The ceremony is performed when a boy kills his first big animal. Small animals like a duiker or steenbok do not count. The animal must be one of the large ones, kudu, gemsbok, or wildebeest, or any other<sup>s</sup> large enough to be distributed to the band.

In my opinion the ceremony is the most important one in a boy's life. It is presumably an ancient !Kung custom, whereas the choma was adopted fairly recently. Its great importance lies in the fact that a boy must not marry until he has killed a large animal and had the ceremony. The emphasis of the ritual is to insure the boy's powers in hunting.

The ceremony is performed in two parts, for the first large male animal and for the first female. Scarifications are made on the boy, on his right side for the male, on his left side for the female. The ceremony for the male animal is the more important event.

X The animal which the boy has killed is brought to the werf. The men assemble for the ceremony at a little distance from where the women are apt to be sitting and moving about, for women must not attend the ceremony, although it need not be entirely out of their sight, as the choma must be.



The meat of the animal must not be eaten by women.

The ceremony we witnessed was performed for a boy named /Ti!kay, who seemed to us to be in his early teens (perhaps about 14 or 15). He had killed a female wildebeest.

50 The father of the boy, Khan//a, kindled a special fire; the boy brought water in a pot and set it to boil. The father and a relative, /Qui - his brother-in-law it was - cut meat from the chest and from the foreleg (~~the "arm" the !Kung call it~~) of the animal and put it to boil in the pot. When it had boiled enough to form froth, the father scooped out some of the froth and some small bits of the meat, placed them on a flat stone, and mashed them together with the handle of his knife. He then mixed some of this material with zao, which had been charred in the hot ashes and pounded to a powder. Into a little more of the froth and meat the father mixed some of the animal's blood. These two mixtures were kept separate.

2 a Zao is the root of a plant which grows in soft sand. There is some near Cho/ana. !Kham, <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ lame man, brings some with him when he makes his journeys from one end of the Nyae Nyae region to the other - some hundred miles - swinging along on the branches of trees he uses for crutches. People give him meat when he visits them and since he cannot hunt he manages to reciprocate by giving other things or doing errands. Zao is one of the things he gives. Zao is used as a medicine and is rubbed on the surface of the skin - for sore eyes on the



forehead, for ~~stomach~~ stomach ache on the abdomen, or over other afflicted parts, and it has other potencies. Used in this ceremony it gives the power to shoot well. Old ~~Toma~~ Toma with his graying hair said that, having had zao rubbed into him at this first buck ceremony, he could even now shoot as far as the baobab tree with accuracy and could get the arrow into the animal.

*We have used the term "first buck" before.*

The meat from the "arm" in the mixture gives strength to the arms for pulling the bow. The chest meat makes a hunter think to himself, "Why am I sitting here in the werf? Why am I not out looking for meat?" The blood in the second mixture also gives the boy the will to go out to hunt.

We were told by informants at another time that into this pot should go a small piece of the eye of the animal so that the boy will see well; a bit from the tip of the ear so that he will hear well; a piece from the back so that the animal would stand still, and a piece from the back of the neck so that the animal would not look around and see the hunter quickly. I missed seeing this actually done, but have no reason to suppose it is not a part of the ceremony.

After the mixtures were prepared, the father took from his quiver an arrow which had not yet been poisoned and sharpened its point a bit on a stone. He passed his hands over the pot of boiling meat, holding them in the steam for an instant. He then took a small piece of meat from the pot, put



it in his mouth and was ready to make the scarifications. As the animal was female they were all to be on the left side. ~~There were seven of them and all were horizontal except the one on the forehead.~~ /Ti!kay did not flinch the least bit while he was being cut.

The scarifications are <sup>horizontal</sup> lines, for this ceremony usually about one and a half to two and a half inches in length, made with fine vertical cuts, <sup>there were seven scarifications,</sup> Each line had from 18 to 26 <sup>the little vertical</sup> cuts, which are shallow but must be deep enough to bleed. Khan//a and /Qui took a pinch of the boy's skin between their fingers, pulled it out and kept it taut, and Khan//a rapidly and deftly made the little <sup>incisions</sup> slices. Into each line of cuts, when the blood oozed, he quickly rubbed first the mixture of froth meat and <sup>d</sup> zao, then the mixture with the blood. Merely to rub the mixtures on the surface of the skin, we were told, "would not make your heart wake up." They must be rubbed into you through the cuts.

The cuts are made as follows: the first two were on the upper arm, halfway between elbow and shoulder, one a little above the other. The third was near the shoulder. All the arm cuts make the boy able to get his shots into the animal. The fourth and fifth were on the left side of the chest, about three inches above the nipple. The sixth was on the back of the left shoulder blade. This is to insure that when the hunter creeps up to an animal the animal will not see him and run but will stand still. The seventh cut was a ~~vertical~~ one



on the forehead above the nose. It is to enable the hunter to find an animal soon after he leaves the werf and not have to hunt without finding anything. *(A vertical line <sup>cuts</sup> above the nose is added at the time of Choma)*

Photo

When this part of the ceremony was completed the father scraped what remained of the mixtures off the stone into the husk of a baobab fruit and handed it to /Qui, who placed it under brush close to the foot of a small tree where no woman would step on it.

Next came the eating of the meat. The father and the son avoid the meat. This is the law, we were told. The boy must avoid it because he is still learning. If he ate it he would get nothing when he went hunting; he would lose his luck.

/Qui had been given the whole animal by /Ti!kay and his father so he was now the owner of the meat. The translation came through that he was "headman" of the meat. He gave meat to the men present in the werf who were old enough to eat it. A man should have three children before eating this ceremonial meat. They ate the meat and drank the broth, and that ended the ceremony.

I asked informants for whys and wherefores and was told by one that they were too young at the time these customs began and could not remember. Others gave the usual statement that /Gao!na made these things to be so.



(19)

where to go, 19-1

Category : ceremonial fire

Ceremonial fires must be made with fire sticks, not lighted with a brand from an old fire. They must be new fires and in a new place where there are no old skerms ~~and~~ or ashes of old fires. New fire has considerable significance for the !Kung. They make a new fire when they move to a new werf. The oldest man or headman or leader makes it, possibly assisted by another man. The members of the band take brands from this fire to light their own family fires and the first fire is allowed to go out. Should there be a death, the band, especially one they call a "meat" fire, would move to a new werf and make new fire. Or fires/may be made to bring about good fortune. It must be made in a place where there has not been a fire before. The !Kung of the interior of the region have plenty of space. I do not know if that place might just be at a distance from a werf where the people would continue to live or if the whole band must always move to a new werf when a meat fire is going to be made. They do move sometimes, anyway, and if they do move they may take a brand from the meat fire to light their new family fires, as from an ordinary new fire in a new werf. The meat fire involves ritualistic eating.

If the people have been through a long period of bad luck in hunting, the oldest man in the group may decide to make a meat fire. He cooks some veldkos in the fire, whatever kind he may have, and he alone eats it. This is a very important



Bless //gāuwa

Say the spirits of the dead

19-2

step, we were told. He speaks to the fire, in his mind, and to the //gauwasi, the spirits of the dead, asking them for good fortune. Old Demi told us what he had said to the //gauwasi the last time he made a ceremonial fire. "Why are you not giving us good fortune? What is wrong with the hunters and with the women and children? Give us good fortune. Let the hunters find an animal, or let the women and children find a dead animal in the veld, perhaps killed by a snake. This is a meat fire. Let meat come." The very day that Demi made that fire - it was at Nauchoha at the beginning of the rains - his son killed an eland.

When the "meat" fire is successful and the hunters kill an animal, the old man who made the fire takes a certain part of the meat, called "//gauwa's meat", from the top of the thigh, roasts it ~~in the fire~~, and eats it ritualistically, before the other people eat.

He also takes meat from the inside of the chest of the animal and from the foreleg, puts it to boil in a pot and with the broth he washes the hunter's face, arms, and chest. He then drinks some of this broth. Other old men may share in the drinking of the broth, but the hunter may not. This makes the hunter strong and willing to hunt.

The old man next makes a small cut in the hunter's forehead, takes some of the blood from it, throws it to the east and says, "Let the sun become blind. Let the day be fortunate.



Let this day be a "meat" day." And the old man throws blood to the west, saying, "Let the sun when it is setting become blind."

I tried to understand more about blind. Six men were talking with me. They had a lively discussion, all talking at once until one of them, laughing, pointed out that we could not understand a word and that they must speak one at a time. They said that they told me things without hiding anything. They did not mean that the sun should be blind like a man who had lost his sight. They meant that there had been many unfortunate days and that the sun had shone during those days. It is not the sun which gives good fortune or misfortune - the gods and the //gawasi do that - but the sun shone on the unfortunate days, and therefore they say this. ~~That was the only explanation I managed to get.~~

isn't this? }  
OK

There is one more part to the ceremony. The hunter loosens his bow string somewhat. The hunter holds one end of the bow, the old man the other, and together they draw the string across the throat of the animal, cutting its throat by gesture. They let the bow drop to the ground. The hunter then washes the bow with the broth and rubs it with bone marrow from the animal. The last of the broth is spilled on the fire. The spilling of the broth makes the hunter strong and willing to hunt.

Women stay at a distance from this ceremony.

Although the ceremonial fire has medicine and brings about good fortune, it must not be made if someone is sick. It is



not for curing sickness. It is too strong. The //gauwasi are the "owners" of the ceremonial fire, we were told, and there is "death" in it. If the people made the fire for sickness it would cause the death of the sick person. They are afraid of the fire, they said.



90

when 45 d?

First fruits

My efforts to find out if the !Kung had a first fruits ceremony ended in uncertainty. Such questions as I could think to ask led informants on several occasions to talk about the choa ceremony, which is performed for girls at the time of new growth, or about aspects of the choma in which old men eat of the food and then give it to the boys. However, I do have an informant's remarks that old men may gather veldkos at the first time of eating after the rains and eat it (ritualistically I am assuming) especially tsi or n/.

ritually

It was old Gau who told us this and he showed us what he would do. He went to a little distance from the werf, <sup>twinkled</sup> rolled a fire, cooked a piece of some veldkos he had, ate it, and told us that, while doing so, he had prayed silently to the gods and the //gawasi for good fortune. I do not think that among the !Kung the whole band waits to eat tsi or n/ or anything else until an old man has <sup>by</sup> ritualistically eaten it. I think that would have been discussed by informants if it were so, and that it would be observable. <sup>have been seen by us.</sup> But I feel my information on this question is inconclusive.

2

X

2

2  
1  
2



To be reworked -

21-1  
leave out  
put in

(21)

The following account is not an eating taboo but it raises a question which applies to all the avoidances.

The !Kung have a belief about lions coming. They say that if children - or anybody - should play carelessly with certain things, tossing them around and letting them fall on the ground, lions would come. The list of things includes thirteen veldkos:

chu	n/i
!gama	n#wara
!garu	n!umshe
!goro	//ore
#gu//na	tcha
//karu	tsi
!kxoa	

An inconclusive list of other things includes

pots and basins	bow
mortars and pestles	arrows
digging sticks	karosses
knives	skin bags
assegais	tortoise shells
axes	ostrich egg shell beads
pipes	a steenbok bone



Sometimes it seemed to me the point was to take good care of things and the lions were a bogymen threat to children - "If you do that (do not take care of that and are careless with it object) a lion will come tonight and get you." But on the other hand they seemed to believe what they said. They told me that if I played with the veldkos and threw it about, I would soon see, the lions would come - not any veldkos but presumably the above list. They do play a ball game with melons or some other ball-like veldkos.

*not implausible*

*7.2*

*dog  
doubt 21*

*7.2*



They told me stories of lions coming. Lame ≠Gao when he was a young boy played with a knife in a wrong way. That night a lion came and sat near. ≠Gao's mother, who had not seen the lion. got up and came toward the fire and the lion ran away scratching up sand as he turned which put out the fire. Everyone was frightened and they built up the fires. In the morning his mother scolded ≠Gao. She took him to see the lion's footprints and said to him, "Open your eyes and look at this. This is your doing. You seem to have sense but you do not listen to what people say."



Another time they heard something walking in the brush. Gao Beard threw a piece of wood toward it and they saw a lion. It scratched at the wood. They were very frightened and made noises, the men threw burning sticks and the women took up as big sticks as they could find and took their young children on their backs and they all stood close together by the fire. They stood for hours, as long as the lion growled and roared nearby. An old woman who was terribly frightened wailed, "We are few. If the lion takes some of us what will we do?" In the morning they got a plant, !gie (not edible), ~~In~~ that makes a bad smell ~~and~~ if burned and put it on the fire. Sometimes the smell chases lions away and it did that time. The lion did not return the next night. (Zao tree bark, which also has a bad smell, may also chase lions away.)

important  
point }



This last episode at least was true. The lions had come to our camp that night and walked among us. We had arrived at Gautscha that evening after a grueling day's travel and were so tired that we had not put up tents or taken any precautions and were strewn about in sleeping bags. Two or three said they heard a racket at the werf but did not care. The footprints in the morning showed that the lioness, followed by her two cubs, had leaned over one member of our party close enough to sniff at him and had walked away. People said he must smell as bad as zao.

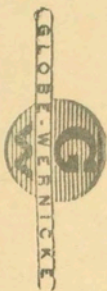


Fix

Guess level 21-6  
out a ?  
put in ?

The lions are real enough. We saw the eyes of a pride of five looking at us from the edge of the firelight one night and other times have heard them roaring for hours in the darkness, it seemed only a stone's throw away. And at least my fear of them is real enough. I know with one part of my mind that they are not as dangerous as they sound unless they happen to be man-eaters, but that part of my mind does not work when they are roaring. I cannot fully ~~the~~ understand the Bushmen's fear. They talk about lions a good deal (mystical lions too) but do not appear to translate their fear of lions into the actual precautions mentioned above to any great extent, especially <sup>about</sup> the things other than veldkos. The bigger boys give smaller children rides on karosses, dragging them around the werf. Children play with everything. They made more of a point about the veldkos saying that if I threw veldkos around I would see - the lions would come.





“TUFTEAR”

FOLDER

TO RE-ORDER SPECIFY

No. 621½ FOLDER

MADE IN U. S. A.

*Fast & Versatile Paper*  
*Xerox*