

Notes and News

Zande Cannibalism (see *Africa*, vol. xxvi, 1, pp. 73-74)

MR. T. A. T. LEITCH, lately of the Sudan Service, writes :

While my own inquiries on Zande cannibalism were neither systematic nor conclusive, the general consensus of opinion was that cannibalism was confined to minor tribes, now Zandeized, such as the Abarambu, Bukuru, Pambia, Bandogo, &c. The delectable part of the human body, according to my informant, was *merendu bore*, that is, the calf. I would tentatively suggest the following comments and emendations to the text quoted by Professor Evans-Pritchard :

1. The sense of the phrase *si ki ni fu a fu kindi* (lines 21 and 23) is not fully conveyed by the translation 'it stewed for a long time'. I think that the phrase would be more properly connected with the preceding sentence and translated 'while it was still giving off an (appetizing) aroma, he removed (the pot) from the fire, and put the meat on a tripod smoking platform'.

2. In lines 36 and 39, *dia ni ni ki sa kina sere fu ni tipa a . . .* I suggest should have been written: *diani ki ni sa kina sere funi tipa ha, ko kini pasi he ni sani dunduke*. Lines 39 and 42: *Diani ni ki gbindi kina bakinde, ki fu he funi pati gani pasio*, seem to indicate that both sesame and bakinde (eleusine and cassava) porridge were cooked. This is quite normal, and the translation of lines 36 and 39 might be given as 'his wife ground sesame for him, which he then cooked (all) for himself'. The bakinde referred to would be eaten in fingerfuls between mouthfuls of meat which had previously been dipped in the sesame gravy. Except in cases of extreme intimacy in old age, a Zande man would eat separately from his wife, and in the dignity of a cannibal feast it is unlikely that she would take part in any way, except so far as the customary division of labour might dictate in the preparation of the meal. She might be allowed later to finish the uncontaminated porridge. My reasons for using the word 'uncontaminated' are guided by my recollections of Zande meals including a meat course. In these cases, the Azande are frequently, if not usually, ambidextrous. The left hand is reserved for eating meat and dipping in gravy, while the right hand is used for eating bakinde.

3. The words in parentheses in line 45, *ku dukuli yo*, might be more correctly written *ku ndukuru yo*. The *ndukuru* was a hen's laying nest, mudded on to the side of the grain store, and was frequently used as a receptacle for objects such as a small pot. A small pot would undoubtedly be used in the reconstitution, through cooking, of dried human meat. Alternatively, *dukuli* might be the *ndukura*—a large half gourd, in which a 'dirty' pot might be put, to avoid contamination of the grain store, in which the receptacle would possibly be concealed.

4. The Abamburo tribe referred to in line 62, I have never heard of. The Azande are given to transposition of vowels and consonants, and also to creating new names for people whose feelings they wished to avoid hurting, where there was a danger of the conversation being overheard. For this reason I suggest that 'Abamburo' might be the Abarambu tribe who earned particular notoriety as cannibals. In this connexion, it is amusing to note that the Azande, during the unsettled period prior to the popular revolt in the Southern Sudan, referred to the Northerners not by their old name aMundukuru, but as 'aMinga'. Another nickname was *aboro tiwi tiwi tueyo*, literally, 'the people with large ears'.