

BOILING AND ROASTING: AN ACCOUNT OF THE TWO DESCENT BASED GROUPINGS AMONG THE ITESO OF UGANDA

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I. Introduction

The aims of this paper are, first, to present brief accounts of the two descent based groupings called *atekere* and *etem* among the *Iteso* dialect group of the Teso of Uganda, with special reference to various rituals held by them; second, to consider the relationship between the two groupings in terms of the complementary opposition between the both sexes. Some comparative references will be made, where relevant, to other related societies such as the Lango, Karamojong, Jie and Turkana.

It is to be noted in the beginning that this paper is a kind of summary of what I have written in Japanese¹ and that it is to be submitted, as the final report, to the Wenner-Gren Foundation For Anthropological Research, which kindly awarded me in 1968 a pre-doctoral scholarship for my project, entitled "An Ethnography of the Teso". This enabled me to start my field work from September, 1968 and my thanks must go to the Foundation. I am likewise grateful to the Makerere Institute of Social Research for having appointed me as a junior research fellow, owing to which I could extend my work up to the end of July, 1970.² My field work was mainly carried out in Usuku Sub-County, Usuku County, Teso District, where the *Iteso* dialect group concentrate.³ Present accounts will be limited to the *Iteso* only, excepting certain features of the Teso as a whole necessary to understand the *Iteso* institutions.⁴ Both the Teso in general and the *Iteso* dialect group are called *Iteso* (sing. *Etesot*), and in order to avoid confusion I have used *Iteso* for the dialect group

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¹ Nagashima, N. 1972a: 'An outline of the *etale* system among the Northern Teso of Uganda' *Journal of Japan Ethnological Society*, vol. 36, no. 4.

1972b: 'A Birth Ritual among the Teso of Uganda', *Bulletin of The Faculty of Liberal Arts* 7, University of Saitama.

1972c: 'The Ritual of Cleaning the Winnowing Mound', *Kikan Jinruigaku* 3-4, Shakai Shisoshu, Tokyo.

1972d: *An Ethnography of the Teso*, Chuo-Koron sha, Tokyo.

1974: 'Symbolism of Homestead; a comparative note on four Para-Nilotic Societies', *Culture and Language of Africa*, Occasional Paper of *Gengo*, Taishukan, Tokyo.

² I am particularly thankful to Professor Peter P. Rigby and Dr. Adam A. Kuper; without their encouragements, supports and advices, my field work would have been much shallower. I am also very grateful to Dr. Rodney Needham and the late Dr. Jean Buxton, who had been successively my supervisors at Oxford, for their penetrating comments on my study of the Teso.

³ I spent four months among the Ingoratok at Gweri, Soroti County.

⁴ Main written sources are; Wright, A.W.A. 'Notes on the Iteso social organization', *Uganda Journal*, IX pp 57-80, 1942 and Lawrance, J.C.D., 1957 *The Iteso*, London; Oxford U.P.

and 'Teso' for the general meaning. Their language is called *Ateso*.

The Teso are regionally separated into two groups; those who live in Teso and Bukedi Districts of Uganda and those who live in Samia Locality of Kenya (known as the Itesyo in literature) and adjacent Tororo District of Uganda. Karp proposes to call the former "Northern Teso" and the latter "Southern Teso"⁵ and I shall use these terms. The total population of the Teso may be more than half a million and that of the Northern Teso are about four fifth of it. Ateso is a Para-Nilotic (*alias* Nilo-Hamitic) language,⁶ similar to languages spoken by the Karamojong, Jie and Turkana. The Northern Teso comprise three large dialect groups, or *ineresinei* (sing. *einere*; from *einer*: 'to speak'), viz. *Ingoratok*, *Iseera* and *Iteso*. The Ingoratok dialect has been used as the standard Ateso in teaching and official writing. Socio-cultural differences among the dialect groups appear to have been greater than now, but even today these are found in rituals. Each group developed a distinctive type of age organization, which has virtually been extinct except among the Iteso.

Attempts have been made to reconstruct the pre-colonial history,⁷ including the origin of the Teso, formations of dialect groups and processes of various migrations, and though there remain many unsolved problems and contradictory accounts several agreed points have emerged; first, the core of the Teso share a common origin with the karamojong, Jie and Turkana, but somehow separated from them perhaps in present Karamoja District. Second, they came into the present Teso District in several waves of migration in the span of two or three hundred years. Those who came into Teso earlier became known to surrounding peoples by the name of *Ikumama* (or, *Ngikumama*); the name survives as that of the Kumam, a people living in western parts of Teso District mixed with the Iseera Teso, who speak a Nilotic language now but are culturally not distinguishable from the Northern Teso.

Third, causes for migration had been various; gradual migrations *en mass* in search of better pastures, small scale migrations of those who had separated from their group because of certain conflicts, abrupt and chaotic flights caused by attacks by other peoples and so on. During these migrations, various external, or alien, elements in terms of both people and culture appear to have been incorporated into the Teso: for example, some *atekeres* such as Inyakoi, Iyalei and Imiroo are said to be descendants of the Nyakwai, Sebei and Lango respectively.

The last large scale migration took place about the middle of the last century, when a people known as Iworopom and living in south Karamoja were heavily raided and dispersed by the Karamojong.⁸ The *Iteso* and the Southern Teso in Kenya are likely to be descendants of these dispersed Iworopom, who might have brought with them the name *Iteso*. At the end of the last century, many Karamojong were forced to come to Teso land, owing to the severe famine; some were killed and others were incorporated into the *Iteso*.

⁵ Karp, I. 'Traditional Southern Iteso Social Structure', Sociology Working Paper No. 109, Makerere University, 1971.

⁶ The term 'para-Nilotic' was suggested by Professor A. Tucker.

⁷ Lawrance, J.C.D. *Ibid.*, Ch I.

Nagashima, N. 'Historical Relations among the Central Nilo-Hamites' Social Sciences Conference Paper, University of East Africa, 1968 / 69, Kampala.

Webster, J. et al, *The Iteso during the Asonya*, East African Publishing House 1973.

⁸ Turpin, C.A. 'The Occupation of the Turkwel River area by the Karamojong tribe', *Uganda Journal*, XII p. 162, 1948.

Today, both the *Ingoratok* and the *Iseera* tend to look down the *Iteso*, abusing that the latter are in fact the Karamojong.

The Teso traditionally did not have any chieftainship, with only fluctuating influences of shaman-diviners (*emurwon*) and of war leaders. Their political system was based upon a gerontocratic age-organization, the *etem* groups to be discussed below and loosely defined territorial units (*eitela*). These masculine elements were quick to be affected by the process of colonization, started in this area from 1910s, and either they have completely disappeared or are on the edge of extinction. The Teso are renown for their flexible adaptation to alien and modern influences. They used to be pastoralists with crude cultivation by women but the emphasis has been shifted on to agriculture; Teso District is one of main cotton areas in Uganda now. They still keep a considerable number of cattle, goats and sheep, however, and retain characteristic features of 'cattle complex'. Owing to relatively rich supply of water, cattle herding is not a heavy burden for them and they need not practice transhumans, as the neighbouring Karamojong have got to do.

II. Atekere

1 The Word *Atekere* and Its Usages

The word *atekere* (pl. *itekerin*; I shall use English-ised plural form, *atekeres*, for the convenience of readers) has invariably been translated as "clan" by various observers who have studied any one of Central Para-Nilotes, including the Lango and the Kumam of Uganda, since the word is common to all these societies. Some Teso *atekere* names are also found among others; these names are Ikarebwok, Itengor, Irarak and Ikatekok.

An *atekere* is a named group, in a very broad sense, based on the patrilineal principle, although under certain circumstances this rule is not observed. No founding ancestor, mythical or real, is remembered. The *Iteso*, like other Central Para-Nilotes, do not show much interest in genealogical knowledge, which seldom goes beyond the grandfather; "structural amnesia", as Gulliver aptly puts it, is one of characteristics of these societies.

Several levels of social ranges are referred to by the word *atekere*. First, it vaguely refers to all the people who share a common *atekere* name and in this usage 'clan' may be an adequate translation. More than one hundred *atekere* names have been collected from the Northern Teso but these are not exhaustive. In terms of size and distribution, some *atekeres* are large and widely dispersed but most of them are small and confined within a dialect group. Second, it means the range of exogamy, which is in theory determined by a particular set of prohibitions termed *etale* (pl. *italia*; general term for prohibition is *ekisil* and the *Iteso* say that an *etale* is a kind of *ekisil*); very wide connotations of the *etale* will be discussed below and I only suggest here that the notion of *etale* is an essential key for understanding the nature of *atekere*. In the case of a small *atekere*, the first and second levels are often merged. For larger *atekeres*, however, the range of exogamy is not well defined and the people themselves have to confer each other when a marriage talk arises between *ekeki* groups of the same *atekere* name. More often than not, the range of exogamy is manipulated.

Third, there is a group of compound families termed *ekeki*, of which family heads have a common agnatic grandfather; by a compound family I mean a man, his wife (wives),

his married sons, their wives and children, and his unmarried sons and daughters. The word *ekeki* physically means the doorway of a hut. An *ekeki* group is often referred to as an *atekere* and indeed beyond an *ekeki* there is no frame of reference by which members of an *atekere* can act jointly under its particular name. Such activities as the arrangement of a marriage, collection and reception of bridewealth, performing *etale* rituals for young wives and funeral rituals for the dead and settlement of bloodwealth are all carried out by an action group formed around, or rather within, an *ekeki* group. Such an action group is usually called by its *atekere* name, perhaps because there is no particular name for an *ekeki* among the *Iteso*, although among the *Ingoratok* each *ekeki* has its own name; occasionally among the *Iteso* an *ekeki* is called 'the grandsons of so and so' (*Ipapai ka X*). It should be noted that even the range of an *ekeki*, the core of which is a shallow, agnatic descent group, is not well defined owing to frequent disputes between half-brothers. The split of an *ekeki* before it completes its developmental cycle is not unusual, thus making it difficult for the *Iteso* to know exactly who are their fellow members. At any rate, they do not much bother about the structural definition; those who come are their fellows and those who do not are gradually excluded. Behaviours decide the range, not the other way round, or the latter can be overruled by the former.

Fourth, either an *etem* group or one of its sub-divisions may be referred to as an *atekere* and as a matter of fact some *etems* and sub-*etems* in certain areas are nothing but *atekeres* on the second level, that is, as the range of exogamy. This problem will be discussed in the final part of this paper. Fifth, as a modern usage, the word *atekere* is adopted to mean a 'tribe' or a 'nation' but the same was true for the word *etem* once before.

It would be clear enough from above accounts that internal divisions of an *atekere* do not form the segmentary system, nor should be viewed as such. Ancestors are simply forgotten without becoming points of reference and the social distance of any two *ekekis* within an *atekere* is almost the same, in that there is few occasions for the two *ekekis* either to co-operate or to oppose each other. This is the main reason why I have not used the term 'lineage' for any level of an *atekere*. The concept of lineality is very vague among the *Iteso*, I would say.

Iteso elders usually remember a few cases of *atekere* fission and its pattern is almost unitary in every case. It runs as follows; a part of an *ekeki* group, usually full brothers, begin to feel that they can no longer put up with other members and decide to migrate to somewhere else. Having done this, they would not have any contact again with their former group and device a new set of *etale* prohibitions and a new *atekere* name for themselves. They need not declare their independence because their behaviours are very clear messages. If they do not change their prohibitions, they remain in the same *atekere* but not in the *ekeki* any more.

There is also a convention by which individual members change their affiliation with an *atekere* to another. This happens when a wife has lost her children successively and is very anxious about the fate of her newly born child. If her husband agrees, he would find a friend or a diviner who is willing to take his child. A special ritual is performed for this transition and, after this, both the wife and the child observe the prohibitions of the new *atekere*. I came across several such cases.

2 Family and Residential Unit

The compound family, for which there is no vernacular term, is nevertheless the basic unit of the Iteso society, and polygyny is its structural principle, although statistically less than 20 percents of married men have more than one wife. It has its own herd of cattle and usufruct over a particular land, both cultivated and uncultivated. Within a compound family, an unit called *ekale*, or a 'house', consisting of a mother and her sons and unmarried daughters, has a considerable degree of autonomy; the word *ekale* physically means the space around a hut (*akai*). As a labour unit, an *ekale* retains most of agricultural products for self-consumption and gets a fair share of cash income from the sale of cotton. It also has a strong claim to the cattle obtained through the marriage of a daughter who belongs to it, especially if there is an unmarried son. This often leads to inter-*ekale* conflicts, which may become serious after the death of the father. Witchcraft accusations are common between co-wives and between half-brothers.

Members of a compound family do not always live together within one homestead (*ere*). Nowadays, a married son tends to build his new homestead, usually near by his father's, if land is still available. A husband may make his second homestead, if his wives are quarrelsome among themselves.

3 Notion of *Etale*

The word *etale* has been translated as "clan taboo" and its official definition was given by the Teso District Council in 1964 as follows;

'"Clan Taboo" means customary treatment of women, children and twins in accordance with the clan customs'

. Clan Taboo (Teso) Law, 1964

A Select Sub-Committee of Teso District came to a conclusion in 1965 that clan taboos should strictly be observed for the welfare of the Teso people as a whole, including 'unborn children' coming in future.

From an analytical point of view, *etale* means much more than what the term "clan taboo" may suggest. First, it refers to certain kinds of prohibitions, breaches against which are thought to affect fertility of women and safety of their young children. There are two kinds of *etale* prohibitions, general and particular. General prohibitions are those observable irrespective of one's *atekere* affiliation; some examples are given below;-

Any woman in her periods should not serve foods and drinks to guests.

A wife should not visit her parents between the ritual of *Abwatar* (that for the first pregnancy) and the ritual of *Aitodor* held after the partrition.

A wife should not eat any intestine and bone of an animal until the ritual of *Ekonyokoit* (Biting the Bone) is held.

The other kind of prohibitions are those particular to an *atekere* as an exogamous unit and serve, in theory at least, as its distinctive features. Examples randomly taken from my notebooks are as follows;-

Atekere Igoria

A Pregnant wife should not eat the meat of a bush-buck.

A wife should not touch the skin of a bush-buck.

Atekere Itapengo

A wife should not touch the skin of a gazelle until the first child is born.

A wife should not touch the hair of a duiker for life.

Atekere Ikorituko (Also a sub-division of *Etem* Igetoma)

A pregnant wife should not eat the meat of an eland.

A wife should not touch the skin of a duiker.

As indicated from these examples, *etale* prohibitions, whether general or particular, are mainly imposed on wives, and objects are mostly concerned with herbivorous animals.

Second, *etale* also refers to a specific category of rituals concerning wives and little children and these may be classified into the two sub-categories, namely, "rituals of passage" by which a bride-wife (*ateran*) is gradually incorporated into her husband's *atekere*, and "rituals of restoration" by which the danger thought to have befallen on the wife's fertility and / or on the life of her young child is got rid of. These *etale* rituals are full of prescriptions, rather than prohibitions, with regards to the time and place of a ritual, things to be used and gifts to be given by the wife-giver to the wife-taker. There are also both general and particular aspects in these prescriptions. The kind of ritual to be held is generally prescribed according to the situations. On the other hand, every *atekere* as an exogamous unit has its own particular ways of performing a ritual, of which procedures and details are deliberately differentiated from those of other *atekeres*.

In short, every exogamous unit known by its *atekere* name has its own particular set of *etale* prohibitions and particular ways of performing *etale* rituals, both of which serve as its identity. I shall call this combination of prohibitions and prescriptions the "*etale* complex". When the Iteso talk about an *atekere*, they usually talk of its *etale* complex and when asked about the nature of *atekere* they generally reply that it is about wives and children. An anthropologist might be puzzled by the 'fact' that a patrilineal 'clan' is mainly concerned with wives, outsiders by birth, and their children, its yet marginal members; where adult men come in? The answer may be; 'Not much room for them except for playing minor roles in rituals'. If this is a little oversimplified view, as men do play a dominant role in marriage negotiations, the Iteso *atekere* is certainly not in the field of politics, and thus it lacks of masculine quality. Its primary function is to promote fertility of wives and assure its own continuity.

4 Marriage: The Wife-Taker and The Wife-Giver

Apart from the rule of exogamy, the range of marriage prohibitions is very wide. From a man's point of view, any woman classified as related to him is not marriageable. Women of his matrilineal *atekere* as an exogamous unit are also prohibited. The Iteso say that a girl whose *etale* prohibitions are same as those observed by one's mother, whether before or after marriage, is prohibited. Levirate is common but it is not regarded as a marriage.

The local definition of marriage (*aimany*; to marry) is to give bridewealth (*lumanyet*) in exchange of a girl. Another word for marriage is *adukokino*, meaning to build a hut (for the wife). The normal bride-wealth in Usuku in late 1960s was about 15 to 20 heads of cattle, 10 heads of goats and sheep and the sum of about 300 Uganda shillings. An *ekeki* group is the unit of marriage alliance and it is analytically useful to call the two *ekekis* concerned "Wife-Taker" (to be abbreviated as WT) and "Wife-Giver" (WG) respectively. This does not imply, of course, that the Iteso marriage is a kind of 'elementary exchange'.

From the beginning of the marriage talk, WG show strong hostility towards WT, conventional but often real behaviours, calling the latter "enemy" (*asurup*). Negotiations may take a long time, during which WG apparently act as the superior. Thus, when the

herd for bridewealth are shown to WG, the final stage of hard negotiations, WG abuse the quality of cattle and implicitly that of WT. 'These cattle are as thin as unfed goats' is a stereotyped expression used in the occasion. This ritualized superiority of WG comes to end when the bridewealth cattle are driven through the gate of WT's kraal, being blessed by the husband's mother with a blackened stick called *esasi*, the main symbol of the *etale* complex. Hereafter, WT play the role of the superior in rituals, as will be described below.

5 Relationship Terminology and Conventional Behaviours

The twenty seven relationship terms listed below are all 'classificatory' and corresponding genealogical specifications in the table are only representative ones. Remarkable features of this system are as follows; first, the distinctions of $FB \neq MB$ and $BS \neq ZS$ make the system appear as 'lineal', but equations of $FZ = MZ$, $FBS = MBS = B$, & $FBD = FZD = MBD = MZD = Z$ may neutralize the lineal quality. Second, six terms (1, 2, 3, 4, 9, & 10) contain affinal relations, four of which (1, 2, 9, & 10) show a twist in terms of generation. A wife, thus, refers to her husband's parents *papaa* (1) and *tataa* (2), as if she is in the position of a grand-child. In parallel with this, a man calls his ZH *papa*, 'father', and in that he takes the same position to the man as his ZS does. Conventional behaviours of ZS

TABLE 1. RELATIONSHIP TERMS WITH SOME GENEALOGICAL SPECIFICATIONS

1 Papaa	FF FFB MF MFB: (ws) HF HFB
2 Tataa	FM FFW MM MFW: (ws) HM HFW HFBW
3 Papa	F FB FZH MZH ZH FBDH
4 Toto	M FW FBW elstZ: (ws) H1stW
5 Mamai	MB MFBS
6 Ijaa	FZ MZ
7 Onac	B FBS FZS MBS MZS
8 Inac	Z FBD FZD MBD MZD
9 Okok	S : (ms) BS FBSS FZSS MBSS MZSS WB WBS WZS
10 Akok	D : (ms) BD FBSD FZSD MBSD MZSD WZ WBD WZD
11 Ocen (ms)	ZS FBDS
12 Acen (ms)	ZD FBDD
13 Ejajait (ws)	BS ZS
14 Ajajait (ws)	BD ZD
15 Epapait (ms)	SS DS
16 Apapait (ms)	SD DD
17 Etatait (ws)	SS DS
18 Atatait (ws)	SD DD
19 Aberu (ms)	W eBW FBeSW
20 Okilen (ws)	H HyB HFByS
21 Amui (ms)	yBW FBySW
(ws)	HZ HFBD BW FBSW
22 Omui (ws)	HeB HFBeS
23 Mororu	MBW MFBSW
24 Emororoit (ws)	HZS HFBDS
25 Amororoit (ws)	HZD HFBDD
26 Ateran	SW BSW: (1stW speaking) HW
27 Akain (ws)	HW HBW HFBSW
28 Amuran	An affine.
29 Epajen	A general term for a relative.

towards his MB are typically of joking, and he can steal anything, including the wife, from MB. A father, on the other hand, behaves authoritatively to his sons. Exegetical accounts regarding these twists in generation are that a man uses the term *papa* to a person who has given him cattle for his bridewealth, that a man can marry with cattle obtained from the marriage of his sister, and that therefore one's ZH is a *papa*. To put it another way, the cattle-giver is superior to the cattle-receiver who is also the wife-giver, and hence the wife-taker is superior to the wife-giver. The same is true for the relationship between HM and WM. Conventional attitudes of a grandmother towards her son's daughter are of intimacy but her attitudes to her son's wife, who calls her 'grandmother', are very authoritative. So, by being called *tataa* by her SW, HM is placed one generation higher than SWM; from a wife's point of view, HM is superior to her own mother.

Third, four affinal terms (19.20, 21 & 22) show the distinction of relative age and all of them relate in behaviour to sexual accessibility. A younger brother may have a sexual access to his elder brothers' wives (19 & 20), while the contrary is strictly forbidden (21 & 22). A man who sleeps with his younger brother's wife is regarded as a witch (*ekacudan*). As stated above, ZS may have a sexual access to MBW (23 & 24) but MB is strictly forbidden to have sexual relations with ZSW. The relation between MBW and HZD is that of joking.

6 *Etale* Rituals of Passage: Glossary and Description

There are eight kinds of *etale* rituals of passage as defined above and the following descriptions of them will necessarily be much limited because of the given space; restorative rituals and twin rituals are left for another paper in preparation. It is necessary first to gloss terms frequently used for descriptions.

Persons:

WT	<i>atekerekosi</i> ; our <i>atekere</i> , the wife-taker collectively
WG	<i>amurak</i> ; affines, the wife-giver collectively
The Wife	<i>ateran</i> ; the bride-wife, for whom the ritual is held
Two Junior Wives:	<i>aterak</i> (pl. of <i>ateran</i>); the wife's co-wives (real or classificatory) who have not undergone the ritual of Biting the Bone and who are chosen to accompany the wife in the ritual.
The Child	<i>ikoku</i> ; the wife's child for whom the ritual is held. Two other young children are also chosen to accompany the child.
The <i>Tataa</i>	The female ritual leader, one of the husband's father's brother's wives.
Two Senior Wives:	<i>tataa</i> , two wives of the senior generation who assist the <i>Tataa</i> . One of them must be the husband's own mother.
The Headman	<i>apolon</i> , the head of WT's <i>ekeki</i> .
The Mother	<i>toto</i> , the wife's own mother.
The Father	<i>papa</i> , the wife's own father.

Things

<i>Esasi</i> Stick	A stick made of a branch of <i>eparis</i> tree (<i>Grewia mollis</i>), which
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is always expressed as 'black' (*eparis loirionon*). The husband's mother cuts a branch of about six feet and smokes it till the surface is blackened. Both ends are flat and not pointed. She gives it to her son's wife at the *Emutula* ritual, but the wife is not allowed to use it until she finishes the *Ekonyokoit*. The *esasi* is the main symbol of the *etale* complex and is thought as having a mystical power of impregnating bridewives of the owner's husband's *ekeki*. It is also used to curse a person who is regarded as having caused disorders to a wife's fertility. It has parallel qualities with a spear as a phallic symbol and as a means of destruction.

Stirring Stick: *akingol*, made of a branch of *ekworo* tree (*Combretum splendens*) and used for stirring beer and food in a pot. It is a phallic symbol and stirring with it stands for sexual intercourse.

TABLE 2. *Etale* RITUALS AND SOME OF THEIR FEATURES

Ateso Term	Translation	Stated Purpose	When Held	Held At	Number of Beer Pots given by WG
<i>Abwatar</i>	To Return Home	To celebrate the first pregnancy of the wife	Middle of pregnancy	WG	2
<i>Aipuduno</i>	To Take Out	To take out the wife and baby from the hut	3 or 4 days after the partrition	WT	—
<i>Emutula</i>	The Stew	To celebrate the first child	One month after the birth	WT	2
<i>Aidak Ikoku</i>	Holding the Child	To allow WG for holding the baby	Two months after the birth	WT	5
<i>Aitodor</i> or <i>Abwatar</i>	To Peck or To Return Home	The first visit of the child to its maternal kin	2-3 weeks after <i>Aidak Ikoku</i>	WG	7
<i>Apietar Epejal</i>	To Clean the Wincwing Mound	To remove from the child its cause of illness	Six months after the birth	WG	7
<i>Ekonyokoit</i>	Biting the Bone	To celebrate the success of the wife after she has given birth to the third child	Within one year after the birth of the third child	WG	5
<i>Emorit</i>	Sharing	To celebrate the termination of avoidance between the husband and his wife's mother, or one of the wife's sisters	Several years after <i>Ekonyokoit</i>	WG	plenty but the number is not prescribed

Note: 1 This table is modeled on Curley's table of *Kwer* ceremonies of the Lango (1973, *Elders, Shades and Woman*, Univeristy of California Press. p. 113)

2 WT and WG stand for 'Wife-Taker' and 'Wife-Giver' respectively.

Beer	<i>ajon</i> , brewed from flour of finger millet; A symbol of femininity and agriculture.
Pot	<i>amoti</i> , used for beer, boiling water for beer and for cooking. A symbol of female genitals.
Bread	<i>atap</i> , the main food of the Iteso. Ordinary <i>atap</i> is made by putting millet flour into boiling water and stirring the mixture till it is set. For the ritual <i>atap</i> , special materials are used; these are fruits of <i>epedulu</i> tree (<i>Tamarindus indica</i>), ground nuts (<i>emaido</i>), a kind of cucumber, two species of peas, milk and cow blood, apart from millet flour.

Sides and Cardinal Points

Right and Left: The distinction of right side (*teten*) from left side (*kediany*) is ritually significant, the former being for the superior. The perspective for the distinction is always from the inside.

East and West: The opposite side of the door in a hut is called the west (*toakai*), implying that seen from inside the door is in the direction of east. These are verbal distinctions and do not correspond to the natural direction. The right and left is decided by this east-west line, that is, the right side is that of the south; there are no Ateso words for the south and north.

(1) *Abwatar* (To Return Home): Ritual for the First Pregnancy

When the first pregnancy of the wife is known, WT break the news to WG, who in return send a messenger to WG informing the date of the ritual; these messengers should not enter the other's homestead, nor they should greet. On the day, the wife, formerly in naked, and the *tataa* go to the wife's natal homestead, where the mother receives them at the gate, sprinkling over them water mixed with millet flour. The wife sits at the door of her mother's hut stretching her legs forward. Her parents anoint her with butter oil mixed with raked surface of the *tataa's esasi* stick. Then the *tataa* informs the wife of *etale* prohibitions of the *atekere* and forbids her to visit the homestead again till the *Aitodor* ritual, which may also be called *Abwatar*; this term is also used when a youth returns home after the *asapan* (initiation) ritual.

(2) *Aipuduno* (To Take Out) or *Aruun Aberu Okinga* (To Spit Out The Wife): Ritual for Child Birth

This is a ritual for taking out the wife and baby from her hut where they have been secluded for three days (boy) or four days (girl) after the partrition, or in a modern way, after coming back from the dispensary. WG send raw materials for the ritual bread and, in the case of the first child, a cow hide used as a mat.

The ritual starts in the middle of morning. A bow and arrow, used only for taking blood from cows, and a leather tethering code are put on the roof just above the door, where things symbolizing the ritual are always placed. The floor of the hut is coated with fresh cow dung, while in front of the door a hearth of three stones are made and the wife and two junior wives start cooking under the instructions of the *tataa*. They enter the hut and the wife, with her upper body naked, takes a posture of hands and knees at the centre of the hut, her head pointing to the door. The *tataa* and another senior wife turn the baby

round its mother's body three times and then put it from the head into a mortar filled with water mixed with powdered leaves of *ebiong* tree (*Ficus glumosa*). The action of turning the baby round is said for cutting the shadow of its mother; as a 'positional' explanation, it is an intermediary movement mixing the right and left sides together.

Again the wife with the baby sits at the door with the two junior wives on both sides. The *tataa* anoints the wife, saying 'Olilim' (Be cooled) and 'Inyalinyali' (Be mixed; meaning that a girl and a boy may be born alternatively). Then she anoints the other wives and children, who is followed by other senior wives. Then they enter the hut again. Senior wives, who have finished cooking, make the ritual bread and give a lump of it to the *tataa*, who pushes it onto the forehead, chest and hands of the wife. Breads are distributed among all the women.

The first beer pot is set at the centre of the hut and the *tataa* scoops beer with her fingers and smear the beer on the lips of the baby while uttering certain names. The wife gives her left breast to the boy baby; left breast for a boy, like the left hand used by a man at sexual intercourse (exegetical accounts). The *tataa* declares that the name she had uttered was accepted by the baby as it refused neither beer nor breast. After this name-giving, two pots of beer are consumed first by women inside the hut and then by men in the courtyard.

Next morning, the hearth is broken, ash are thrown into the cattle kraal and things on the roof are taken down.

(3) *Emutula* (The Stew): Ritual for the First Child

This ritual is held at WT's homestead about one month after the birth of the first child. *Emutula* (or *Amuna*) is a kind of stew made of grounded groundnuts and butter. WG send *emutula*, baby carrying skin (*anapet*) with its strings, raw materials for the ritual bread and two pots of beer, which the *tataa* receives outside the homestead. WT also prepare a quantity of beer. Main features of this ritual are cooking and communal eating of the bread, anointment, the first use of the baby carrier, and beer drinking. Drinking would last till the next morning. WG, too, have their own beer party at their home.

(4) *Aidak Ikoku* (Holding the Child): Ritual Introduction of the Baby to the Wife-Giver

Held about two months after the birth. WG visit WT with five pots of beer and are allowed for the first time to see the baby. WT treat their guests as if they were subordinates, giving orders and abusing their manners. WG, on the other hand, are careful to be as courteous as possible.

(5) *Aitodor* (To Peck) or *Abwatar*: Ritual Visit of the Child to Its Matrilateral Kin

Held two or three weeks after the *Aidak Ikoku* at WG. Seven pots of beer and raw materials for the bread are offered by WG, who only watch the ritual processes unless ordered to fetch water or other kinds of services by WT. Senior wives of WT collect a branch of *ekworo* tree and a forked branch of a tree called *amui* (species unknown to me) from bush and plant them in front of the door of the wife's mother's hut; *ekworo* branch on the right and *amui* branch on the left. Both together stand like a screen with full of leaves. The word *amui* as a relationship term means for a wife either HZ or BW, but in this case the plant appears to indicate the latter.

The wife and baby and two junior wives stand in front of the branches and are beaten

lightly by senior wives with two species of grasses, one is called *ejau* (from *aijaun*; to receive, to conceive) and the other *akak* (*aikak*; to block up . . . to be going to give birth to as the child has blocked the uterus). A small pot is placed in front of the three wives and the *tataa* holds the baby by legs and swings it round the pot three times anti-clockwise. Meanwhile, men of WT drink beer inside the hut. The second pot replaces the first in front of the branches and the *tataa* and another senior wife order the wife and junior wives to stand up and then all hand in hand go round the pot twice, first anti-clockwise and next the other way round.

All the men and women of WT sit around the pot and then *ekuroi* (scolding) or *aikun aberu naikiono* (to lament the selfish wife) begins. Senior wives accuse the wife of her idleness, meanness and selfishness, enumerating concrete instances they remember. These are done, however, very lightly and often with much laughter from both sides, apparently a type of joking relationship in this context. The husband is also verbally attacked even by his *amui*, his younger brothers' wives.

When the sixth pot is finished, the wife is anointed by her parents and senior members of WT. WT, then, make a procession, the wife, who carries the seventh pot on the head, comes in front, and leave the homestead. Women of WG begin chasing the procession shouting loudly as if they wanted to take back the wife. All of WT turn their face back towards WG and shout, raising their right hands threateningly. WG retire as if defeated and, seeing this, women of WT ululate in triumph. I was later told that the *ekworo* branch was inserted to the thatched roof of the hut and the *amui* branch was thrown into bush, but I failed to obtain explanations about the meanings.

(6) *Apietar Epejal* (To Clean the Winnowing Mound): Ritual for Getting Rid of the Cause of the Child's Illness

Although a light illness of the child is made as a premise for this ritual, it is ideally to be held for every child about half a year after the birth. The wife's father is expected to propose and prepare for it. *Epejal* is a low mound used for threshing and winnowing, found in any homestead and, as opposed to a hut which is the private world of a wife, is a place of cooperation between wives.

Entering the homestead of WG, women of WT stretch a rope of creepers called *emanymany* (*Rhoicissus erytodes*; apparently symbolizing the marriage tie, as it phonetically resembles the word *aimany*, to marry) between granaries near the mother's hut. The wife and the child also wear the creepers around their bodies. A hearth is made between the rope and the fence, the ritual bread is prepared on it and the wife bites a lump of bread offered by the *tataa* without using hands. Then, the fire is extinguished, and the hearth is broken; the coming of disorder is hinted at. The wife takes the posture of hands and knees, the child is turned round her and washed, and both are anointed. Then the wife, carrying the child on her back, suddenly breaks through the *emanymany* rope, running towards her mother's hut. Three senior wives including the *tataa* chase her, each holding the *esasi* stick, a burning torch of thatch and a winnowing tray with ash respectively, and the one carrying the tray throws ash over the wife, who nevertheless succeeds in entering the hut and shuts the door from inside.

The *tataa* addresses to the wife '*Kinakinai ikoku!*' (Return the child) three times, to which the wife replies 'mam' (No!). Again, the *tataa* addresses, this time saying '*Ibwara*'

(Build a new homestead!) and the wife says 'Ee' (Yes) and she comes out. Senior wives preach her to be a good wife. After this dramatic escape and eventual submission of the wife, eating of the bread and beer drinking follow. WG present five pots of beer to WT, who, if the ritual is for the first or second child, kick down the last pot. In spite of the name of the ritual, the winnowing mound is not used at all. I would interpret that what is to be cleaned is the dust of the wife's mind, metaphorically referred to as the dust of the mound, which still clings to her natal home and thus causes illness to her own child.

(7) *Ekonyokoit* (Biting the Bone): Ritual for Promoting the Bride-Wife to the Status of a Real Wife

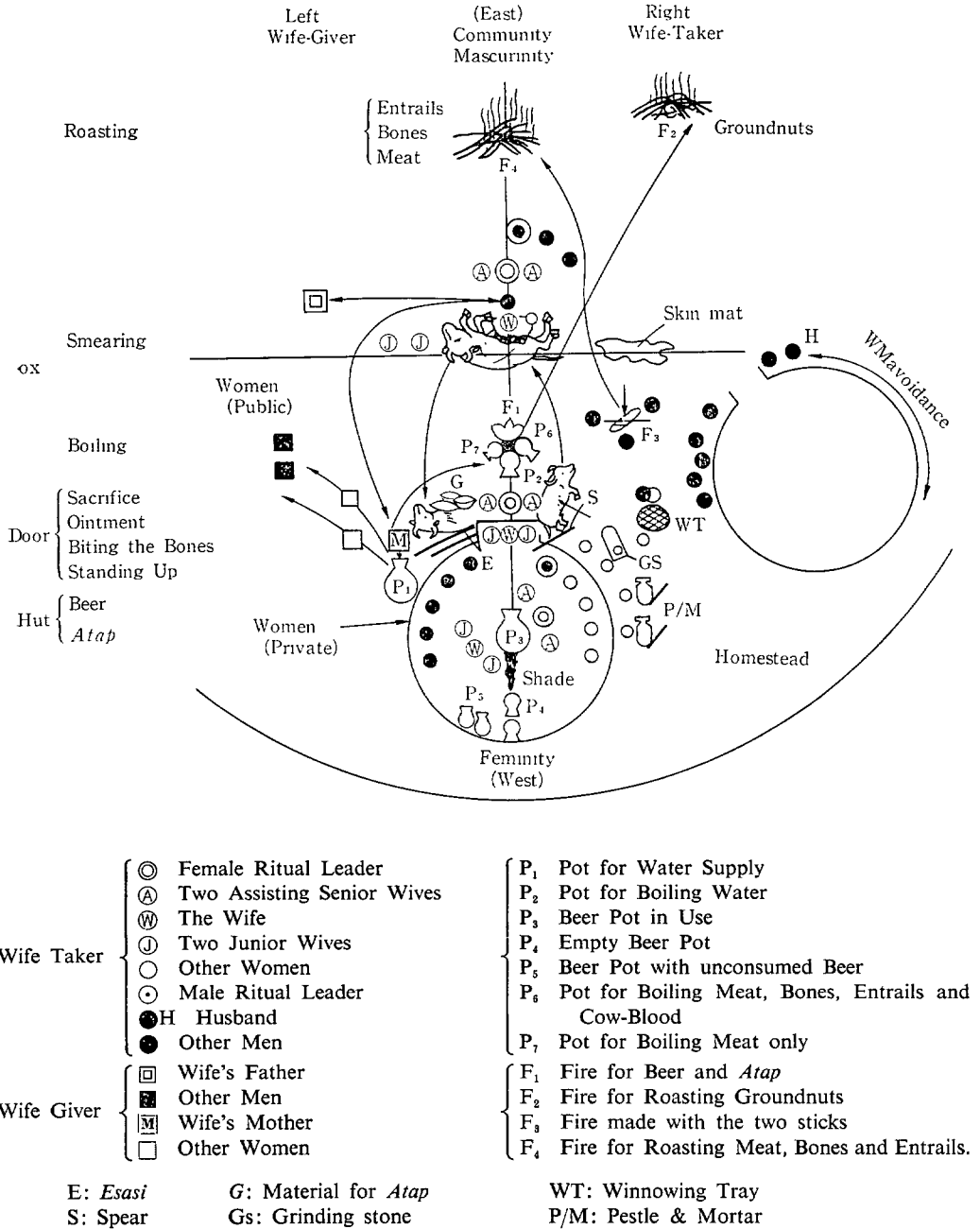
This is the central ritual of the *etale* complex, held at WG within a year after the birth of the third child. Following the ox presented by WG, WT enter the homestead and tether the ox to the right pole in front of the door of the mother's hut. Two senior wives bless it with their *esasi* sticks and a man spears it from the right side. The dead ox is laid down on its left with its back to the direction of the door, its belly is cut open, the stomachs and intestines are drawn out and placed in front of the body. An old man may read the marks of the stomach for future telling, while an elderly woman plays a role of a jester, uttering sexual jokes. She may even show her private part. The big entrail is cut off, its both ends tied with creepers named *amuria* (*Cynodon dactylon*; a symbol of fertility) and put on the front roof. The wife, holding the third child, stands on the big stomach through two cuts made in the middle of it and her two other children also stand in front of her. They are then smeared with chyme by the father and mother, men of WG, senior wives of WT and men of WT in that order. A small piece of certain membrane taken from the ox is worn around the neck by the wife.

Men of WT make a fire with two sticks, light the heaped fire wood laid far side of the ox and roast a part of intestines, bones and meat under the direction of the *tataa*, who has the absolute right with regard to the distribution of these roasted parts. In the hut, the third child is swung round the pot situated at the centre, and beer drinking follows this. Meanwhile, a hearth is made in front of the hut, between the door and the ox, and two pots are placed on it; the larger one on the right contains intestines, bones and meat mixed with blood, water and vegetables, while in the smaller pot on the left, only meat is to be boiled for junior wives, who are forbidden to eat things in the right pot. When the bread is made, the *tataa* puts a small piece of boiled bone (a rib taken from the left side of the ox) on a lump of the bread and offers it to the wife, who is sitting with her three children and two junior wives at the door. The wife accordingly bites the bone. After being anointed, those sitting at the door are helped by senior wives to stand up. Now the wife has completed her transition from the status of a bride-wife (*ateran*) to that of a real wife (*aberu*; also means a woman in general); it may be farfetching to say that a woman is created out of a left side rib of a male, viz. the ox. Spacial arrangements and movements of participants superimposed in the figure below may illustrate the richness of symbolism in the ritual.

(8) *Emorit* (Sharing): Ritual for Terminating the Avoidance

This ritual marks the end of avoidance between the husband and his wife's mother, (or one of the wife's sisters nominated at the time of marriage), who have been prohibited to see each other. There are some prerequisites for this ritual to be held. First, the wife must have undergone the *Ekonyokoit*. Second, the relation between the wife-taker and

FIG. 1. SPACIAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE *Ekonyokoit* RITUAL (SUPERIMPOSED)



This figure is from Nagashima, 1972 a, p. 297.

the wife-giver has been good enough to plan this ritual, which is not obligatory and, at any rate, lacks of incentives other than good will between the groups. It usually takes several years to occasion it after the *Ekonyokoit* was held.

The ritual itself is not so dramatic as other *etale* rituals are, nor is rich in symbolism. The husband presents a he-goat to the woman and they dance together in front of others. A quantity of beer are prepared by WG and unceremonial drinking, singing and dancing go on till the next morning. WT no longer behave as the superior, celebrating equally with WG the success of the marriage.

7 *Etale* Rituals: Interpretation

Significances of these *etale* rituals may be analyzed from various angles, but seen as a total system, its stated purpose is very clear and simple; that is, to effect the latent fertility of a woman in a legitimate way of marriage, and to protect her fertility and her children's safety from disorders caused by offences against the rules of the system. Thus, dangers coming from witchcraft, or an invading spirit, are not dealt with in *etale* rituals. A cultural feature of this system is that no mystical entity such as an ancestral spirit, an evil spirit or a god is referred to. Only unnamed, invisible mystical power appears to be felt as a sanctional force.

Coming to particular aspects, the system is first concerned with the life cycle of a woman. A girl (*apese*) becomes a bride-wife (*ateran*) by marriage and this status is full of ambiguities symbolically expressed in rituals. A bride-wife is a woman who has not yet proved that she is actually so. She is physically an adult, yet as ignorant as a baby in the new social world of her husband's *ekeki*. She is legally bound by the bridewealth to be a good wife, but she tends to behave like a daughter, irresponsible to domestic duties. In short, the period of being a bride-wife is that of liminality in a woman's life. This liminality comes to an end at the Biting the Bone ritual, in which she is promoted to the status of a real wife, or woman, responsible enough to handle the mystical *esasi* stick. Both an unmarried mother and a barren wife are excluded from this career, since the former lacks of legitimacy in realizing fertility, while the latter failed to realize it; the former is more permissible from the Iteso point of view.

The liminal period of a woman is also that of the relationship between the wife-taker and the wife-giver, because the value of the cattle handed over as the bridewealth is not equal to the value of the wife without a child, or with less than three children. The wife-giver accordingly take the position of the debtor, or the status of the inferior, to the wife-taker and make every effort to balance the account by assisting rituals held for their daughter. They are also responsible for the natural quality of the wife in terms of potential fertility, for which the wife-taker cannot do anything. This is suggested by the fact that in *etale* rituals the wife-giver offer raw materials to be processed by the wife-taker; the wife is the very raw material to be processed. Further illustrations are found in the twin birth. One of twins is to be named *Ocen* (boy) as its particular name but the word as a common noun means a sister's son. The wife-taker continually dance aggressively until the mother's brother of the twins sacrifices an ox for his sister's twin babies.

The wife-taker, on the other hand, play the role of the impregnater. Their men physically try to impregnate their wives, while their wives of the senior generation do the

same to junior wives through the mystical means symbolized by the *esasi* stick in the field of *etale* rituals. Thus, wives of an *ekeki* group form a kind of cult group, whose deity is, as it were, the very concept of *etale*. For a bride-wife, these *etale* rituals of passage are a prolonged process of initiation into this cult group. As the ritual knowledge about *etale* is transmitted from senior wives to junior wives through generations, it would be useful to call the mode of transmission "uxorilineal", for the *etale* complex is the central feature of the *atekere*. We may say that the Iteso *atekere*, and by implication *atekere* of other Para-Nilotic societies, is organized on the patrilineal principle but maintained by the uxorilineal one.

III. Etem

It is almost impossible to give coherent accounts of the *etem* organization, as it is a dying institution among the Iteso and has died long among the Ingoratok and Iseera. Even information in literature is confusing enough. According to Wright, Father Schut, one of the earliest observers of the Teso society, translated it as "clan", while Wright himself established an impression that the *etem* was in fact a territorial group⁹ and this view was repeated by Lawrance without much examination of available data.¹⁰ Moreover, the term was adopted by the local government to denote an administrative unit, namely, a Sub-County, and this further confused, as it would seem, memories of the elderly Iteso. In this and next parts, I shall try to make sense of these confusing information, mainly in relation to the *atekere*, since the present inhabitants of Usuku sometimes say that an *etem* is an *atekere*.

1 Concept of *Etem*

Etem means the fire place used to be made in the courtyard of a homestead but nowadays such a fire is seldom made; I saw only one but it was a special case because it was made for the ritual of *asapan*, an initiation of young men into the *etem* group. According to old men, elders used to meet at an *etem* if anything important or critical happened, but they are not sure as to whether these elders belonged to one *etem* group or they were merely neighbours. What seems certain is that the term *etem* is associated with fire, which is not for cooking by women, with men, and with some public affairs. Apart from these oral information, existing *etem* groups in Usuku and their ritual activities, weak though they are now, give us vague pictures of what the institution used to be.

2 *Etem* Groups among the Present Iteso

There are eight named *etem* groups in northern Usuku County and Achwa Sub-County of Amuria County. The Iteso say that an *etem* group was not based upon any territorial division, if such a division existed at all, but a local concentration of a part of one group was frequent, as members of the same *etem* group likely migrated together. In such a case, they often named the locality after their own *etem* name and this is the reason

⁹ Wright, A.W.A. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁰ Lawrance, *Ibid.*

why there are same place names in various areas, such as Asuret, Suguru, Malera, Lale, Kelim and Getom. These place names are also found in the areas where the Ingoratok and the Iseera live now, indicating that even among these two dialect groups, the *etem* was not a territorial group as Lawrance thought to be.

Each *etem* has one sacred grove called *atuket*, which is used for ritual purposes only and none of its tree is allowed to cut. Its size is not big, but large enough to accommodate one hundred people or so. Activities of the *etem* today are all of ritual; *apunya*, a ritual marking the end of mourning, *Imu*, ritual for twin birth (this is a kind of *etale* ritual but the *etem* group also participate), *asapan*, the ritual of initiation, and *ailip edou*, rain-making. The last two are very rare now. Apart from these four rituals, the *etem* Isureta, known as having mystical power, may perform secret rituals of cursing called *aigat*, in order to restore a stolen thing and / or to find out a thief. The colonial government severely sup-

TABLE 3. EIGHT *Etems* AND THEIR SUB-DIVISIONS

Etem	Related Place Name	Sub-Divisions	Related Place Name
Isuguro	Suguru	Ikuruka	Mukongolo
		Ikicira	
Imalera (Ingariama) ²⁾	Malera	Ikarikarot	
	Ngariam	Ikorinyaga Idocatok Isupatok	
Igetoma	Getom	Ikolituko	Okolitok
		Irieta	
Ikangaeda ³⁾	Kangai		
Ilalei	Lale	Ikalerio	
		Ikuruso	
		Ikibiyo	
		Itwala	
		Iminito	
Iusuko	Usuku	Atap	
		Iteso	
		Icerekul	
Isureta	Asuret	Imodoi	
		Imugenya	
Ikelimo	Kelim	Icoma Ipakwi	Pakwi

Note 1 The line combining two *etems* shows the *amurwo* relationship

2 Imalera and Ingariama are said to be the same *etem*; the fact that they sit together in *apunya* supports this.

3 Sub-Divisions of Etem Ikangaeda exist but the paper on which I recorded them seems to be lost.

pressed this kind of activities of the Isureta but it is a well known secret that some of them still practice these illegal cursing.

The *etem* group is based on the patrilineal principle, since a son joins his father's *etem* at the *asapan* ritual. Deviations from this rule are said to be rare but not impossible. An old man of Okolitok Parish, for instance, joined the Imalera, for he was given an ox necessary for the ritual from a man of the *etem*, not from his father, who belonged to the Igetoma. Since the *asapan* rituals have been rarely held for the past thirty years or so, many of middle aged men are not initiated now. At the time of my field work, one was held by the Ikangaeda, but of 16 novices of the ritual there were four sets of father and sons. This was impossible before, because a man could not marry without being initiated.

As shown in the Table 2, each *etem* comprises a few sub-divisions, for which there is no Ateso word. A sub-division functions only at the *apunya* ritual. It is to be noted that there is no occasion in which all the members of a sub-division, let alone of an *etem*, are obliged to come together and that for this reason the term 'group' could be misleading. *Etem* membership gives a person the right to participate in a ritual held by the name, but he need not do so.

3 *Apunya*: Ritual for Marking the End of Mourning

This ritual used to be held several months after the burial, but today the interval is a matter of days rather than months. The term *asuban*, meaning generally any ritual (from *aisub*; to mould, to create), is often used to refer to this particular ritual. The first part of this ritual is performed by the *ekeki* group in the hut of the dead person. I take a case in which the dead person was a middle aged, married man who had undergone the *asapan* ritual.

A beer pot is placed at the centre of the hut. The widow, wearing a new dress, sips beer from a half-gourd, and stirs the pot with an *ekworo* branch, being helped by two senior wives. This act symbolizes sexual intercourse and by this she is liberated from the prohibition imposed at the time of her husband's death. Then, the widow and two senior wives jump together, plucking a bit of thatches from the roof, with their faces looking to the west. Members of the *ekeki* group drink beer together and shout bull cries as a sign of joy, for the widow and they themselves are now freed from the sorrow. This noisy rejoicing lasts about two hours in the morning and when it ends, the part of the ritual held by the *ekeki* also comes to end.

Members of the *etem* of the dead person, perhaps about fifty in number make a circle in the courtyard each sitting on a small three legged stool, a symbol of having been initiated. This circle is called *airiget* and only the *etem* members may join. Non-members sit at anywhere as they like and watch the *etem* members drinking beer. Occasionally, a member calls out a name of his friend, and gives him a half-gourd filled with beer. Those who are invited are members of a particular *etem* which is in the relation of *amurwo* (hind leg) with the *etem* on the scene; four pairs of this inter-*etem* relationship are shown in the Table 3.

Having finished beer, the *etem* members go out of the homestead carrying spears. They go into a bush in the direction to the west, choose a big tree and form the circle again under its shadow. An ox and several goats are tethered to bushes. After heavy discussions, they choose a man from the sub-division of the dead person, and another man from a different sub-division. The former acts as the first spearer to sacrifice the ox and the

latter is to second him if the first attempt fails. Younger men are appointed for opening the sacrificed ox, for making fire, for killing goats and so on and they work very efficiently. The homestead, the circle under the tree, the sacrificed ox, and the fire for roasting are aligned in that order from the east to the west; death is explicitly associated with the west.

Roasted intestines and meat are brought into the circle and heaped at the centre. The ritual leader, usually the head of the dead person's *ekeki*, distributes them. The most valuable part is the right hind leg. The head of the sacrificed animal is for senior women and taken to them later. An on-looker may be invited to share a piece of meat, if he has a friend among the circle. When the meat finishes the ritual also finishes.

4 Age-Organization and *Asapan*: Ritual of Initiation

The Iteso age-organization remaining today is a simple generation-set system. Generations of Elephant, Giraffe and Wart Hog are remembered but none is alive. Existing three generations are Lion, Leopard and still opening Zebra, but they are not functioning except through the *etem* groups. The Zebra generation was opened in the middle of 1940s and it would be the last in the history of the Iteso, since new recruitment has become increasingly difficult. Formerly, there appears to have been a very big ritual for handing over the power from the incumbent generation to the following one. No surviving lions participated in it, however.

The *asapan* is held by a small number of people with about ten novices. If an *asapan* was held in one place, or rather, if the news that somebodies were going to have *asapan*, it used to trigger off enthusiasm of others and as the result many *asapan* rituals followed it from place to place. Thus it is not entirely misleading to say that the Iteso initiation rituals used to be held every three or four years, for many *asapan* were held in one year.

Main features of the *asapan* are as follows; novices dressed like women and were abused as women. They were led into the homestead of their ritual father at midnight, sat in complete silence around the *etem* fire, then entered the mother's hut where they were to be secluded during the night.

During the day time, novices fetched water and collected fire woods, the very job allocated for women. This lasted two or three months. Then they sacrificed an ox at the sacred grove, were given *asapan* name and the small stool, and taught the skill of fighting with spears. Then they drank beer and trumped on cow-hide mats, running round anti-clockwise. Lastly, they were painted with the pattern of the animal of their generation.

These are very unsatisfactory accounts relying on incoherent and fragmentary information given by more than ten informants. The particular *asapan* ritual held while I was in Usuku will be described in another place.

IV. Atekere : Etem :: *Boiling* : *Roasting*

1 Confusing Features

So far, the *atekere* and the *etem* have been separately considered as if each is a well defined and distinctive unit. As it is, the distinction is not self-evident, neither for an observer nor for the Iteso themselves. When asked what his *atekere* is, an adult Etesot may

give the name of his *etem*. Moreover, a sub-division in one area functions as an exogamous unit and its members say that it is their *atekere*. These confusing features, in terms of both verbal expressions and actual organizations, may suggest that the Iteso themselves do not feel it necessary to make a rigid distinction. Two factors are conceivable to account for these Iteso attitudes. First, both groupings are based on the patrilineal principle, although deviations from the rule are not merely 'exceptions' but are in accordance with the Iteso value that actions shape organizations. Patriliney provides them merely the first, though easy, choice. That an *etem* may be an aggregation of various *atekeres* like the Lango *etogo* group is an attractive idea but actual membership distributions show a good deal of cross cutting between the two kinds of descent 'groups'.

Second, historical factors must be taken into consideration. The present Usuku inhabitants are only the second or third generations in that area. Incessant migrations, revealed from their oral traditions, necessarily produced a variety of irregularities to their social and cultural institutions. It may be wrong from the beginning to search for established and coherent systems in such a mobile society. Relative stability in terms of spacial movements for the last fifty years or so might have produced a more concrete organization, but for rapid changes in their socio-economic environments.

2 Contrasting Features in Ideas

Confusing as it may seem, the distinction between the *atekere* and the *etem* does exist, if we leave the organizational level. A direct question such as asking a man what his *atekere name* is surely does not work well. In order to obtain the right answer, there are more metaphorical ways of asking, which I was taught by elders. If you ask an Etesot what his "atekere for meat" (*atekere naka akiring*) is, you would get the name of his "etem"! To ask "atekere for roasting" (a. *naipe*) would bring the same result. For the *atekere* as defined by the *etale* complex, the question should be of "atekere of boiling" (*atekere na'i-poore*). Since I learnt these expressions, my data in this respect improved considerably.

This contrast of "roasting" and "boiling" is a familiar one in rituals. At the *Ekonyokoit*, two kinds of fire are made, a hearth and a heaped firewoods; meat is boiled by women on the hearth, while roasted by men on the woods. At the *apunya*, water is boiled for beer by women in front of the hut, while meat is roasted on the fire of woods in a bush. Searching further for corresponding contrasts from ritual scenes, the following list of binary oppositions emerges naturally;

<i>Atekere as Etale</i>	<i>Atekere as Etem</i>
Boiling	Roasting
Women	Men
Birth	Mourning
Life	Death
Looking to East	Looking to West
Beer	Meat
Cultivation	Herdng
Production	Destruction
<i>Esasi</i>	Spear
Hut	Courtyard

Hearth
Homestead
Private

Naked Fire
Bush
Public

3 Conclusion

Comparisons of ritual symbolism combined with exegetical accounts of the Iteso appear to have led us to following conclusions. First, on the level of organizational principle, the *atekere* and the *etem* has a common feature of patrilineal descent but what the *atekere* emphasizes is an uxorilineal aspect, while the *etem* stresses agnatic continuity. Second, on the level of actual organizations, the distinction is ambiguous and confusing owing probably to historical factors. Third, on the ideational level, the distinction is clear. Both the *atekere* and the *etem* together form a kind of total structure through their complementary relationship.