

## On-site Education of Practical Languages for Area Studies

### Report in 2008

—Bakele, University of Yaoundé 1, Republic of Cameroon, (31 Nov. 2008 - 2 Mar. 2008)—

Year of Enrollment: 2008

Graduate School of Asian and African Areas Studies

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#### On My research theme and/or Language Training

My research purpose is to clarify the witchcraft/sorcery beliefs in central Africa. Witchcraft and sorcery are traditional issues in cultural anthropology. However, after 1960s, these issues became less attractive for researchers partly because anthropological interest became diverse at that time. Situation has changed in the middle of 1980s. Anthropologists found that witchcraft/sorcery beliefs were still important matter to be concerned to understand the people who were living in postcolonial Africa, and these issues were worth being reconsidered. Since then, Many anthropologists have reported that there are increasing number of witchcraft/sorcery beliefs through the Africa. They have revealed backgrounds of the growth of such beliefs from the point of economy and politics. They successfully presented that witchcraft/sorcery is not a traditional anthropological issue contemporary, but ongoing phenomenon in Africa. However, they tend to focus on the large scale movement, such as global economy, state politics and expansion of the modernity. They do not to mention detailed cases

of the witchcraft/sorcery beliefs themselves. So my research should be started to clarify the situations of daily life which evoke witchcraft/sorcery, the way how such believes hold imagination, and the way how images of evildoers are shared by many groups. For this purpose, I should learn local language which is spoken in my research area.

In this language training program, I took part in the special course of structural linguistics (especially Bantu languages) at University of Yaounde 1, Republic of Cameroon. This course was not so long, but I learned basic information of Bantu languages, for example, characteristics of vowels and consonant, structure of noun and verb, class system, etc.

Along with that course, I learned Bakele language from my counterpart. The Bakele is people who are living in south-east Cameroon to north part of Republic of Congo and Gabonese Republic. French is common language in Cameroon because it was colonized by French, and many Bakele speak French. They use both French and their own language.

This private lessen helped me to understand the basic Bakele grammar. I also acquired the basic communication ability for daily life. But communication with natives was yet difficult. I should increase my vocabulary of Bakele at next visit in Cameroon. Because there is no grammatical text and dictionary of Bakele, so I should improve my French to help my study.