

Witchcraft in Bakwele, South-East Cameroon

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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 numbers 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 mention detailed cases of the witchcraft/sorcery beliefs themselves.

In his study of Maka people in south Cameroon, P. Geschiere mentioned *djembe* (Geschiere, 1997). *Djembe* is the thing (or being) which is in human belly, and controls its host to kill his/her kin. In Bakwele who live in south-east Cameroon, *elieeb* is almost equivalent to *djembe*.

I already started ethnomedical research to clarify the boundary between normal illnesses and witchcraft.



Baka's dance(?)



sultan' s palace, Funbam

Geschiere, P. 1997. *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. Charlottesville: University Press of Verginia.