

AVOIDING CHRISTIANITY – A WEAPON IN EDUCATING ‘SAVAGE’ PASTORALISTS: A CASE STUDY OF NILOTIC BURADIGA IN TANZANIA¹

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Pastoral Buradiga herders are among the poorest and most vulnerable populations in Tanzania. Like many East African pastoralists Buradiga have become marginalised within the national economy. They are struggling to survive and to retain their traditional lifestyle. Reaching them with formal or informal education has become a major challenge. For the modern Tanzanian society, education is seen as an instrument of transforming pastoralists into settled farmers, labourers, modern livestock producers, and loyal citizens. The education-for-development approaches are accounts of pastoralists’ poverty and assume that education will improve their standard of living. Together with national politics, Christianity/missionaries played, and still play, an important role in influencing pastoralists to change their traditional belief, which is represented by sending children to schools. This paper charts the past and the current (educational) activities of missionaries among pastoralists especially the Datoga clan Buradiga in central Tanzania and the way how the concept of preaching was and is received by them. In particular, the focus is on how Christianity is impacting the abandoning of the traditional way of life in a small Burediga community and subsequent change in approach towards education.

Key words: Christianity, education, Buradiga, Datoga, pastoralists, savage, missionary, Nilotic

¹ Buradiga is a name of one of the several Datoga clans, which are dispersed in different Tanzanian regions. I decided to use the clan name instead of the name Datoga, due to differences between single clans inflicted by the isolation from other clans and influences by neighbouring tribes. In this particular topic focused on Christianity, Buradiga are still considered ‘pagans’ compared to the biggest clan Barabaig or Rotigenga, where missionaries arrived many decades before.

Introduction

If we intend to discuss the education issue among East African pastoralists, we need to look to the starting point. The beginning of education in Africa, and education itself, is connected with Christianity and with the effort of the first missionaries in the 19th century. Spreading of this monotheistic religion brought by missionaries was not oriented only on faith. Development of indigenous people was seen as a must and preaching God's word was accompanied by education and with the endeavour of building the first schools. Answering a question why education was/is not attractive for pastoralists comparing to other ethnic groups in Africa, we need to go further. Arguments like *cattle complex*,² herding mobile life style, strong traditions or no awareness in the benefit of education from a parent's side are strong factors.

I would like to point out another distinguished factor – Christianity's efforts. My virtual interest arises from explicit questions: What are the relations between education and Christianity in Africa context? And why the Christian missions fail so boldly in their efforts to evangelise and convert East African pastoralists and consequently failed educational zeal? Nomads or pastoralists have been intrinsically ignored by the missionaries in favour of the more responsive agriculturists among whom Nilotic people live. Although the Tanzanian state undertook the schooling process from missionaries' hands in the seventies,³ the state has not been so successful comparing missionaries. The level of literacy among east African pastoralists is still basic, however education is compulsory (in Tanzania since 1975) and the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals identified universal primary education as one of the eight development goals for poor populations, including pastoralists. In the nineties the Church entered the educational scene again, except that the main role in the educational process was dictated by the Tanzanian state.

My attention is to reveal the actual connections between education and Christianity among the pastoral Nilotic Datoga clan Buradiga in central Tanzania and how the impact of missionaries changed over time. An attempt

² A term introduced by Herkovits in 1926 to describe the system of traits among pastoralists. The term means a configuration of behaviour pattern, whose existence depends on cattle as a cultural and existential midpoint. It is an extensive ritual usage of cattle. The Datoga view cattle as a kind of investment and this increases over the years. Cattle are a form of conspicuous wealth and the wealth is measured in terms of the size of a cattle herd. Cattle are there to see, touch, cherish and to sing to.

³ In 1968, after one century of Christian presence, the church was running 1378 primary schools, 44 secondary schools, 8 teacher training colleges, 15 trade schools and 48 home craft centres. In 1970, all primary, secondary and Teacher Training schools established by missionaries were nationalised by catholic president Julius Nyerere, the '*Baba wa Taifa*' (Father of the nation).

will be made to uncover why the majority of the Buradiga are still refusing any schooling process, unless it is based on their cultural norms and values. My own research has been basically done amongst a community of the Datoga semi-nomads, a Buradiga section of the Igunga district in the Tabora region. Previously as a volunteer, I was in contact with them and the missionaries, who worked among the Datoga, for four years. In recent time, I undertook my research for my PhD thesis in this area focusing on the impact of education on the Datoga traditional life.⁴

Missionaries – colonisers of human spirit?

The enterprise of missionaries and Christianity in Africa continent has been discussed by many scholars and many polemics have been conducted. My attention is not to discuss the role and the impact of Christianity in Africa in general. In every part of Africa, Christianity caused different outcomes and the response from local people varied. I would like to refer to some perceptions which are relevant with the mentioned topic.

Missionaries deserve the ethnographic attention due to a central role ‘played’ in the period of colonialism. They were obviously a particular type of expatriate colonial community. Shapiro claims that missionaries could be seen as the “colonisers of human spirit”.⁵ Through conversion, they transform the most deeply held cultural values of people. Therefore, Christianity could be seen as interfering and disrupting of not only norms and values, but of indigenous belief as well. Beidelman saw them as “the most ambitious and culturally pervasive of all colonialists,” because according to him “they segregate these converts into a special community in order to provide a new social environment for a different way of behaviour” or “missionaries seek to subvert the entire existing community in order to prevent old ideas from being perpetuated”.⁶ Contrary to Shapiro’s and Beidelman’s allegation, there are the arguments of missionaries, which come from different perspectives. Their master, Jesus, is seen as the one who is saving the human being and he is bringing the truth, which “shall make you free”.⁷ And this joy of freedom should be spread to the whole world to free others (not excluding Africans) as well.

⁴ First part of the research was completed in Chagana in the Igunga region from September till the beginning of December, the second part will be accomplished in June/August next year. A research permit was issued by the Tanzanian organisation COSTECH, registration number No. 2015-200-NA-2015-146.

⁵ SHAPIRO, J. Ideologies of Catholic Missionary Practice in a Postcolonial Era, p.130.

⁶ BEIDELMAN, T. Social Theory and the Study of Christian Missions in Africa, p. 242.

⁷ The Bible (Jn. 8, 32) [online].

To defend the Christian penetration of the African continent in the 19th century, we need to recall the beginning of many congregations. Verona's Father Comboni was suggesting that missionaries "should intimate with them (local people) as individuals, understand their modes of thoughts and customs, and minimise irrelevant external distinctions was a recurrent strain in missionary thought,"⁸ of course reality could diverge from the ideas of the missionary founders. The founders were deeply against ethnocentrism, promoting any kind of 'white' culture. Mastery of local languages was required and close relationship with the local people was a must. On the other side we need to emphasise that missionaries were a product of western civilization. Spreading gospel to the world according Jesus wishes: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creature"⁹ was and is a task of every Christian. The 'good news' disseminated by the first missionaries penetrated the African continent together with development or '*cultural imperialism*'.¹⁰

German protestant missionary Ludwig Krapf saw development as a non detachable component and he believed Africans should be converted as much as be civilised.¹¹ Civilisation or development was naturally promoted and realised in European style through education, one of the gifts of colonialism, which together with law, order, good government and work could transform the natural pastoralist to a cultured man according to the white settlers.

Recently a similar view of cultural change is presented by Temba, Warioba and Msabila, who accomplished a research among Maasai girls and their access to education. Authors mentioned new demands brought by education "which tend to challenge the traditional norms and values...and can transform their way of thinking and belief".¹² As we can see in their statement, Christianity is substituted by education. In the context of African education, Christianity and education could be perceived as one from the perspective of African indigenous people.

⁸ PAWLIKOVÁ-VILHANOVÁ, V. Christian missionary enterprise in Africa. A synonym for 'Cultural imperialism'?, p. 63.

⁹ The Bible (Mr. 16, 15) [online].

¹⁰ Missionaries were esteemed as mediators of western influence and culture impact. Surely, such a view of the missions' activity is open to discussion. PAWLIKOVÁ-VILHANOVÁ is elucidating the term 'cultural imperialism' in her essay: Christian missionary enterprise in Africa. A synonym for 'Cultural imperialism'?

¹¹ RIGBY, P. Pastors and Pastoralists: The differential penetration of Christianity among East African cattle Herders, p. 110.

¹² TEMBA, E., WARIOBA, L., MSABILA, D. Assessing Efforts to Address Cultural Constrains to Girl's Access to Education Among the Maasai in Tanzania: A Case Study of Moduli District, pp. 26 – 27.

Christianity hand in hand with Education

Tanzania is known as a country with both a strong presence of Muslims and Christians, who live in relative religious peace. Although missionary activities had begun much earlier around the East African coast, pastoralists came into contact with them in the 1840s and 1850s. Christianity in East Africa was first connected with the Augustinian missionaries, who arrived with Vasco de Gama in 1498 in Zanzibar. Their endeavour to evangelise did not last long due to the strong Arab Muslim opposition. Islam is spread mostly in Zanzibar and near the coastal area, where Arabs settled in the 8th century. In the 19th century Muslims made Zanzibar the biggest slave market even bigger than the European-American slave market in Western America with a turnover of 60,000 human beings per year.¹³ To the main land, Islam was not spread until the 18th century along the caravan routes. Since the governance of Seyyid Said in 1840, the Sultan of Zanzibar, many consulates were opened as a sign of good trade relationships with countries like the United States (1833), France (1844) and Britain (1839). The leading role in business activities was the United States. They were also the first in planning missionary activities. In 1844, however, German Lutherans missionaries Johan Ludwig Krapf and his assistant Johannes Rebmann, who joined him in 1846, outdistanced them. After Ethiopia, Krapf continued with his evangelical effort in coastal Mombasa. Both were trained in Basel for the British Church Missionary Society (CMS), founded in 1799 in London.¹⁴ They made trips to Kilimanjaro and Krapf wrote a description of pastoral Maasai in 1860. He dreamt to evangelise them, but he never worked with this ‘warlike’ Maasai. Iparakuyo pastoralists were in contact with the Catholic mission – Congregation du Saint Esprit (Black Fathers), who were based at Bagamoyo and opened a mission in different places between 1877 – 1885.¹⁵

Christian missionaries were aware of the great need resulting from slavery. They were buying slaves at the Zanzibar slave market and from 1890 there were more than 50 slavery villages with redeemed slaves. They were actually the first participants in schools. Many mission stations were not sufficient, however, and many missionaries moved to the mainland and continued opening new stations. Catholics mostly represented three religious congregations, the Holy Ghost Fathers, the White Fathers and the Benedictine Monks. After the First World War more congregations and societies came to help with the evangelisation. All

¹³ TANNER, N. Islam and Christianity in Tanzania. The relationship between minorities of Muslim and Christians, p. 6.

¹⁴ RIGBY, P. Pastors and Pastoralists: The differential penetration of Christianity among East African cattle Herders, p. 108.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 108.

three of them insisted on education as a priority, they became the primary agents of education for the common people. The difference is that while the Spiritans gave general education for society at large, the White Fathers concentrated on having priests and on the way got catechists and others as by products. The Benedictines were holistic. While the first two insisted more on theoretical knowledge the Benedictines gave importance to practical skills.

Through educated catechists the White Fathers could transform '*Africa by the Africans*' as promoted cardinal Lavigerie, their founder. He continued in his vision: "It must be clearly noted here that we say: become Christians and not become French or Europeans."¹⁶ We would like to point out that the school system enforced western values, curriculum and moral paradigm, which was considered as the right one. If missionaries notified or not, the form in which Christianity was propagated, went along with cultural western pattern. Missionaries, through education, helped the colonial rule in smoother governance and penetration of western culture and values. Trade always follows the missionaries and, at the end of nineteenth century, the interface between capitalists penetration, white political forces and missionaries activity had started to be conspicuous.

In the 1940s Evans-Prichard conducted his research among Nuer pastoralists in Southern Sudan. According to him, to be a Christian did not necessarily entail conversion. Nuer's statement: "I am a Christian" was intended to imply "I am educated".¹⁷ The fact that being Christian was strongly linked with education and could be meant the same, as both came hand in hand. Although the Nilotes in Southern Sudan were not collectively inspired by Christianity because the real conversion signified separation from home, kin and re-establish identity elsewhere, there was little success. Conversion to Christianity and obtaining education signified a step to elite.

Why is Christianity not attractive?

Burton argues that Christianity was not accepted by the Nilotic people in Sudan (Dinka, Nuer and Atuot) mostly because the missionaries were connected with administrative rule and were used as a means to achieve British interests. Author parables missionaries to cogs in colonial machines, who were playing their roles. Burton claims that "mission education was not to 'develop' the Southern Sudan, it was a measure to save money and to delay serious planning

¹⁶ PAWLIKOVÁ-VILHANOVÁ, V. Christian missionary enterprise in Africa. A synonym for 'Cultural imperialism'?, p. 63.

¹⁷ BURTON, J. Christians, Colonists, and Conversion: A View from the Nilotic Sudan, p. 366.

for the future”.¹⁸ After creating the elite population, missionaries began to be criticised for destroying the tribal customs of the local people.

Rigby came with the same argument – missionaries ‘nod’ to colonial rules – regarding Nilotic people, when he was trying to find out why they do not find Christianity attractive. The high mobility of the pastoral population does not explain why these nomadic or semi-nomadic ethnic groupstribes dismiss evangelisation, whilst being warm and amicable towards individual missionaries. The author stresses their resistance to change, and alludes to inherent conservatism in pastoral societies. Gulliver’s explication of ‘conservative commitment’ comes from the marginal (Maasai) environment and subsequently their ineligibility to practice agriculture. Besides he claimed Maasai “refusal to accept change with the appearance of an attitude of implicit superiority towards other people,”¹⁹ which flows into denial of any kind of religion. Pastoralists could easily be cultivators. Although they were pushed to arid zones, previously they lived in perfect fertile soil. Gulliver’s argumentation about superiority could easily be refuted by the fact, that in a Maasai community lived non-Maasai as well.

Rigby’s final conclusion deserves more attention. According to this social anthropologist, “pastoral social formations of Eastern Africa (including their ideological and hence religious practice) have some unique features which distinguish them from other social formations in which more or less a settled cultivation of land constitutes...a mode of production”.²⁰ For pastoralists a major means of production is herd, which is not part of nature in the case of cultivators. Herd is just a mediator between man and nature. The pastoral rejection of land cultivation comes from their ideology. Men appropriate nature through herd rising as the negotiator. Herd is the product of men’s labour in the context of a universally accessible word: hence the pastoralist’s rejection of land cultivation.

In 1904 Maasai lost the best grazing lands in the heart of their country and the success in making converts among Maasai finished when missionary organisations fully supported the expropriation of pastoralists land. Sempele,²¹ a Maasai involved with the American Inland Mission, decided to undertake legal action against the government over the abolition of Maasai rights. The reaction of Lee Dowling, the head of AIM, was strictly against: “Our policy is to work in

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 362.

¹⁹ RIGBY, P. Pastors and Pastoralists: The differential penetration of Christianity among East African cattle Herders, p. 100.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 101.

²¹ Mulunkit Olokirinya ole Sempele, born in Tanzania Maasailand in 1890s, he was a good contact for missionaries for his fluency in Swahili and was a teacher of Maasai language of John Stauffacher, an American missionary.

harmony with the administration.”²² Involvement of the church was clear. Establishment of a Maasai reserve as a model of better control was upheld by the government as well as the church, which supported words of bishop Peel (CMS): it is “a wise step in the moulding of these remarkable people afresh in civilisation, Western and Christian...keeping them from all peculiar evils of their present system and customs”.²³ Settlements of pastoralists as a model of better control was upheld by the government as well as the church. Maasai pastoralists were closed in a reserve at the beginning of the 20th century and according Tenu “the mission believed that the concentration of Maasai in the reserve would give them a large concentration of people, where they could easily be reached,”²⁴ but obviously they were not successful.

All news about missionaries attitudes towards pastoralist in Kenya spread to Tanzanian pastoralists. Coming to Rigby’s important conclusion, when East African cattle herders discovered the cultural and political subtext, became disillusioned with Christianity. According to them, the missionaries preached one thing and in reality they did another. Plus in the beginning, missionaries fully controlled education and it turned to be education to work for the white man. Pastoralists’ ideology rejected some labour forms. The aversion against education could be understood from this perspective. The missionaries became the moral apologists for not only the expansion of a capitalist settler interest over the land, but also labour. The only reaction from the pastoralists could be the determination of all connections with missionaries.

Attempts to educate pastoral Maasai in East Africa began in the 1920s with the establishment of mission schools at Siyabei and Ngong (Kenya). Informants referred that schooling is “an unbearable loss such as death or enslavement of children and if children went to school, they would be lost forever to Maasai society”.²⁵ In 1936 statistics showed by Horace Philip, fewer than 200 Christians among the Kenya Maasai population of 47.000, despite an enormous efforts and duration of the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) and the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM). In Tanzania the early work of evangelisation is linked with missions in Dodoma, Handeni and Mpwapwa. Few Catholic missionaries were established in the Bagamoyo and Morogoro district, but mostly Lutheran societies were active.²⁶ Pastoralists obtained a little attention from missionaries comparing to

²² RIGBY, P. *Pastor and Pastoralists: The Different Penetration of Christianity among East African Cattle Herders*, p. 121.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

²⁵ KNOWLES, J., COLLETT, D. *Nature as myth, symbol and action: Notes towards a historical understanding of development and conservation in Kenyan Maasailand*, p. 447.

²⁶ RIGBY, P. *Pastor and Pastoralists: The Different Penetration of Christianity among East African Cattle Herders*, p. 99.

neighbouring agriculturists, who were more anxious about conversion and white man's education and culture. Missionaries concentrated the zeal upon ethnic groups with a form of centralised political organisation (chiefs, kings) and through their conversion dissemination of gospel was an easier path.

Missionary activity among Datoga (Barabaig clan) had also, as on the other East African pastoralists, little impact on traditional values. Klima enrolled missionary activity along the northern borders with the Iraqw people in the 1950s. Datoga could not speak Swahili with the government officials and to correct this situation a number of missionary and state schools were established in different parts of the territory. Each family had to provide one student, but the attendance was very low due to sickness or elopement from school. Fathers had to pay fines and plus a school fee – 42 shilings (6 dollars),²⁷ tuition and boarding – 27 shilings (4 dollars). The price of a medium-sized cow at auction was 145 shilings (20 dollars). Many children returned back to the bush after completing two of three years of studies, undoubtedly the western type of education was incompatible with their herding life. Many boys ran away in the period of circumcision ceremonies, the solution for teachers was to lock them up to prevent their escape to join the ceremony.

Klima also submitted an intriguing incident.²⁸ On 6th of March 1958, a Protestant mission was established deep in Barabaig territory. Conversion was a slow process with a little virtue on Datoga's habits. The mission school was linked with a dramatic accident which occurred in 1968. An African mission teacher was speared and maimed on his way home to Isanzu²⁹ territory's land. He became a casualty of ritual murder³⁰ and this was a signal for the Tanzanian government to enter Datoga territory with armed forces. Spears and sticks were burned or confiscated and hundreds of young men arrested and pressed into National service for re-education. The independent government of Tanzania slowly succeeded in ending the ritual murder, which the Germans and the British had failed. Vanishing of one typical Datoga custom – ritual murder, naturally could not be supported by the missionaries.

An Augustana Lutheran reverend Harold Faust spent 26 years in Tanzania, where he arrived with his family in 1949. He came into contact with the Datoga

²⁷ Klima conducted his research among Datoga two times in the period from 1955 till 1959; the dollar rate might be from this period.

²⁸ KLIMA, G. *The Barabaig*. East African cattle-herders, p. 111.

²⁹ Isanzu – a small Bantu ethnic group.

³⁰ Non-Datoga was regarded as potential livestock thieves and like wild animals such as lions and elephants, which might catch the cattle, as enemies of the people. The killer of the enemy is thus rewarded by clan members. The evidence of the murder has to be taken and presented in a form of a lion's head or the genitals of a human being. According to Ndagala, the killing was motivated by economic reasons. Young men were awarded cattle, which could be used to buy a bride.

(Barabaig fraction) as well and in his memoirs *Mang'ati*.³¹ *Encounters in the Old Africa*, he wrote about his back trip to Tanzania in 1988: "We had been gone from there for 13 years and the mission had carried on without any expatriate missionaries. It had grown from about 300 to 3000 converts in that period. Most of the converts were not tribal Barabaig, but persons from other tribes, who were moving in. The Barabaig themselves had scattered into other areas where the long arm of the government could not find them nor could they maintain a closely-knit society. Like us, they too have faded away."³² Missionary's words present a typical Datoga solution – mobile herding life style was a response to any kind of change.

The study population – Buradiga

Buradiga is one clan of the Datoga, which inhabits the Singida and Tabora region. In the settled area known as Watatutu, which means People. The name given by the neighbouring Sukuma people is not recognised by other clans because they acquired this name after pulling from the other sections (emojiga). Among themselves, they use their original clan name – Buradiga. According to their mythological story, told by one informant from Chagana village, Datoga migrated together with the king. Each time a different clan left the unit and settled. As Jacobo continued with the story: "The king said: let's move! Some people told him: we are still tired. So he told them: enough, you are always tired and they got the name 'people who are tired' which entails Buradiga."³³ Literature information on them could be quite challenging due to the different names. Because of discrepancies around their name (Datoga, Tatog, Barabaig, Wataturu or Mang'ati), which are also in an academic sphere and distinctions among a particular section, I decided to use their emic name.

Population estimates for this Nilotes (all clans Buradiga included) is about 87,978³⁴ but according to different sources the number differs.³⁵ The Buradiga are polygynous and patrilineal with a strong male domination of social and

³¹ Mang'ati signifies enemy, one of the names of the Datoga given by their neighbouring Maasai. Datoga merit this name because of their cattle raiding ambition and conflicts with the Maasai.

³² BENSON, J. Augustana's Tanganyikan Mission Field: It's Impact through the Generations [online].

³³ All statements of informers are a component of the personal archive of the author. All local names were changed to protect informants.

³⁴ ELIFURAHA, I. Tanzania, p. 423.

³⁵ It is challenging to obtain plausible data about the Datoga population. Tanzanian census does not include the question about ethnicity or mother tongue and the national politics is against tribalism. Their semi-nomadic way of life is also another fact which needs to be taken into account.

political life. Their language Datog belongs to a branch of the Eastern Sudanese language family. Very little is known about their early history. Their ancestors had their origins in Southern Sudan or Western Ethiopia, approximately 3000 years ago.³⁶ It is believed that between 1000 and 1800 they once dominated Northern Tanzania and Southern Kenya, and that in the nineteenth century they were displaced from much of this area in the course of the Maasai expansion³⁷ and other ethnic groups in the region.

Buradiga depend on livestock for their subsistence. They herd East African short horn zebu cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys. Cattle have the highest social and economic value. In the research area – Chagana – Buradiga were obliged to start to cultivate rice to survive since the 90s.

Every homestead (gheda) is an independent social and economic unit, which normally consists of one married man, who is the head of the household, his wife/wives and their children; there might also be other related family members. Inside the homestead, there are mud huts surrounded by an acacia thorn fence and separate kraals for herd.

According to the census from this year, done by the village leaders, there are 3050 people living in Chagana, mostly of Buradiga origin with a few Sukuma and Nyumba people. Chagana is relatively closed and homogenous locality with no electricity network, local transportation, health care and no proper drinking water. The area was settled by five families who arrived at the beginning of the 60s, as my informer Gitalambu recalled. He was a little boy when he came to this locality. “The territory was a proper bush with wild animals like lions, elephants and zebras. We had a lot of grazing land and water. We were drinking milk and we had a lot of cows. Now we eat ugali³⁸ and cultivate rice.” Due to climate changes the locality became more arid, overgrazed and also overpopulated. Many cows died because of diseases and proud Buradiga became poor and vulnerable. They were forced to settle and change their nomadic way of life. Some of them still practise a semi-nomadic way depending on forage conditions and water availability. In reality it means shepherds with herds are leaving Chagana in July/August to localities with enough grazing lands and water sources and coming back in November, when the rainy season starts.

Literacy among Datoga is only 1% and only 5% speak Swahili – the official language of Tanzania and the *lingua franca* in East Africa. Swahili is mostly mastered by men and is used as a communication language at markets where

³⁶ YOUNG, A. Datoga [online].

³⁷ BUTOVSKAYA, M. Wife-battering and traditional methods of its control in contemporary Datoga pastoralists of Tanzania, p. 31.

³⁸ A nourishing dish prepared from maize flour, which is cooked in hot water to a dough-like consistency without any ingredients.

they sell their cattle. Although there has been a Primary school in Chagana since 1989, there are many pupils, who are not able to learn Swahili or finish 7 years of obligatory education. In 20 years of producing graduates, 51 from 401³⁹ were able to pass the final examination. We need to admit, that all 51 pupil are not Buradiga. Semi-nomad Buradiga have their own restriction and the absence of pupils at school desks or refusing the school system at all is a mix of different factors, which I analysed in my last essay.⁴⁰

Buradiga spiritual life

Buradiga in Chagana still keep their traditional belief. The highest deity – Aseeta is androgynous. Communication between people and god takes place through mediators such as male and female spirits. Spirits are more involved in people's life than the god himself.⁴¹ "Aseeta is a different god comparing to the one of Christians," explained Jacobo. Creative skills are assigned to the first man who came to the world without being formed by god. God is not present or active in a human's life. The first man, not god, created trees, heaven, water...and "after he departed to the sea and heretofore he is entire," specified my informant.

The spiritual leader of the whole Datoga people is a king/chief. The actual one was born in 1982 and is living in Bukundi. "He is honoured by people a lot, all clans and he obtains many cows or money by all. Till now he is married with 13 women", explained one man to me. Belief is practised through sacrifice. In case of hunger, sickness or need of rain, witchdoctors are visited. Men and women wearing black clothes bring him milk and cow fat. While the women are singing, a sheep is slaughtered and cooked without salt. They all eat the meat and the sheep skin is cut into small pieces and worn as a ring by all participants. The witchdoctor mixes the fat with blood and anoints every head of those present and everyone gets the medicine. Afterwards they leave home with blessings and stay home for 1 – 2 days without bathing.

Another alternative to praying could be going to the tree without thorns. Buradiga bring a sheep, they slaughter it followed by traditional songs. They eat the meat leaving the inner parts. The inner parts are taken by four young boys between 8 – 10 years of age, who throw them at all the houses without talking

³⁹ Data were collected from the head teacher of Chagana Primary school in November 2015.

⁴⁰ BIHARIOVÁ, E. 'We don't need no Education'. A case study about Pastoral Datoga girls in Tanzania online]. [cit. 12 December 2015] Available at www.degruyter.com/view/j/eas.2015.15.issue-2/eas-2015-0015/eas-2015-0015.xml?format=INT.

⁴¹ BLYSTAD, A., REKDAL, B. O. Datoga, p. 630.

or greeting. An adult person, who is announcing the presence of medicine, accompanies them and he is advising to not welcome guests for two days and to not wash themselves. During the ritual, only Buradiga households are visited, any houses of Sukuma or Nyramba families are circumvented.

Advice could be asked not only from the witchdoctor, but also from a king or ancestors as well.

Missionaries’ activities among Buradiga

Chagana’s Buradiga still resist any kind of evangelisation and there are only a few converts. They are strongly linked to their traditional belief and are refusing any kind of different religion to present day. The first missionary came to this area very late compared to other regions, at the beginning of the nineties of the 20th century, represented by a Finnish pastor of the Pentecostal Church. Subsequently, he was followed by Swedish Pentecostal missionaries as well. However, the church was built in 1992 and they raised their own local pastor, the attendance is nowadays mostly limited to close family and relatives of the pastor. The congregation does not exceed twenty members.

At the onset of preaching, an educated women (Primary level) from the Datoga clan Rotigenga, a member of the Pentecostal church from Musoma, helped spread the faith. She reminisced about the start of collaboration: “Teemu came in 1990, he received the news about one Datoga in Igunga – me, so he came and asked me to go to Chagana, where he wanted to preach. Another Datoga from Chagana was translating his words to people, but he intentionally changed his words. I understood everything and after I spoke with the man. He was startled a lot that I spoke Datog.” Local leaders were afraid of the impact of a new coming religion, so the translator played a trick to protect the indigenous faith of the people. Miriam decided to move to Chagana and help with the dissemination of the good news among the Buradiga. In the beginning some people were enthusiastic about the new religion, but how she mentioned, the council of elders organised a meeting after seeing many zealous Buradiga were in 1999. “After praying for three months with more than 50 people, elders were afraid, that people would leave the tradition because they were coming every day. Elders called all of them and gave them an ultimatum, if you continue to pray, you will be separated from others. All of them disappeared and only one woman remained.”

In 1994 Mariam married Joseph – a Buradiga from Chagana. He had a hard life, his father died when he was still a boy and his brother took all the cows. He went to Singida to live with Nyaturu relatives. Joseph attended Primary school and in 1992 returned back to Chagana to live in his uncle’s house as a herder.

His conversion happened the same year and Joseph was persecuted by the whole family. As he predicated his conversion, he acknowledged: “studies helped a lot and also hearing about the church. My uncle was strictly against. I used to help missionaries, so slowly I became interested in religion more and more”. In 1993 he was baptised and the year after he married Mariam. After the marriage, he started to be interested in religion more and more and he became a pastor in 2001. A few years later his uncle died and hence the relationship between the family members was favourable comparing the severe beginning. Pastor is sure that, “if people did study, they would trust Jesus and would join the church. The acceptance of education would mean leaving the tradition and children would be lost”. All four of their children study at private schools out of Chagana because according to Mariam: “education will help my children to live nicely, they will have their work and they will not have problems because without education life is a big torture”.

Some of the first upholders of Pentecostal church returned back, among them the chairperson of the village. He was among the first students in 1989, when the primary school was opened. He thinks “life has changed and education is more compared to wealth. I finished with all my cows because of school fees. If the child has a good head, they could help the parents in the future.” His children study and are baptised as well and he supposes “education is opening the eyes of people and those who woke up, got the awakening in the church”.

A similar reflection presents her sister in law, who sympathised with the Pentecostal church in the beginning. Her last daughter will study at a private English boarding school, in the town until 2016, and as she adds: “I want all my children to study because I was illuminated by God in the church.”

An American catholic missionary from Maryknoll fathers had started to evangelise Jesus among the Buradiga (Tabora region) since the nineties and from 2002 in Chagana. His parish is in a different distant place and from time to time comes to visit Chagana. Buradiga knew him as a person, who helps the poor to escort and pay medical treatment or surgeries. He is also financially supporting school fees for some children. Although he is not present daily, his catechist who is living here with his family represents the Catholic Church. The family is the only catholic Buradiga family all around. Jacobo, the catechist, is a member of the Barabaig clan and married a half Buradiga woman. Jacobo converted to Catholicism due to his hard life – he lost his mother, his father was an alcoholic, all the family fortune because of cow disease and he was constrained to live in another region among a different ethnic group. His conversion was slow and carried out under the influence of the Sukuma family, where he found his new home. Jacobo was illiterate and via conversion to Catholicism he obtained basic educational skills (reading, writing). As he declares, “without education and belief, there is no life, with education children

can get a job. I am only a farmer, if there is no rain, I will be poor. Only a few Buradiga think in this way. People see cows first, only herding, but life has changed”. He believes Buradiga need first examples of succeeded children from their own lines, therefore they could be followed by others.

Education and Catholicism in this area is bonded with one more missionary – the White Father from Belgium, who was a missionary in Tanzania for 54 years and died in 2014. The nearest town to Chagana – Igunga was a last place of his pastoral work. He was known as a supporter and friend of the Buradiga in the region. In his intensive missionary work he only baptised a few of them because “any kind of preaching bounces on the strong wall of traditional belief”. He supported health care by building dispensaries and education by establishing schools. In the English Medium Primary school of St. Leo, 17 Datoga children finished the school year 2015; one of them is a son of a catechist from Chagana. Another school established by him is St. Margaret Secondary boarding school intended only for girls. The founder outlined his intention to build all girls schools by preventing early pregnancies and more household duties comparing to boys.

Closed circle with no way out

The situation around the education in Chagana could be drawn as a closed circle with no way out, in which tradition, habits and belief, poor conditions of social facilities and the government’s oblivion of Buradiga hinder the education, subsequently development or modernisation. Education did not bring obvious development to Buradiga society. The chairman of the village underlined the existence of a little centre with small shops with basic commodities run by people without education or by people who failed exams at primary level. Chagana’s life continues without meaningful changes in daily life although primary school has been present since 1989. As Krätli claims “education did not bring development, development was (is) a way to bring education”.⁴² In 25 years of school existence, Chagana people still do not understand the benefits of education. In real life – there is no person with education at secondary level or somebody qualified to do a different kind of job except herding or farming. The father of a successful son, who passed the final examination at primary level after a challenging question was asked by the head teacher: will you encourage your son to continue studying at secondary school? Answered: “My son passed the examination, so why should he continue, if he already knows everything?” For a better explanation, we need to clarify the backup of possible studies at

⁴² KRÄTLI, S. Education provision to Nomadic Pastoralists: Literature of review, p. 22.

Secondary school. The current president promoted state secondary schools for free for those who enter to form one in 2016, but counting all expenditure around (200.000 shilings per year or 90 dollars) plus the fact that secondary school is 45 minutes by bicycle from Chagana's centre to the secondary school in the neighbouring village, we need to state that secondary education is very expensive for a common Buradiga family.

Local schools, established and controlled by the state could be seen as the ones less harmful to the life style of the Buradiga people. Although education has been obligatory in Tanzania since 1975, there is still the possibility of keeping children out of the system. The school attendance of students moves around 50 percent, children are returning home every day and are in contact with traditions. One day a child takes part in the schooling process, the next day herds the cattle, next day cultivates a field and in this studying process is hard to obtain sufficient knowledge to pass the final examination in the end. Swahili is the language of instruction and Buradiga children have a problem to understand. In their homes only Datog is spoken. In the primary school there is no teacher who can understand the Datog language, thus no further explanation for students could be made. As teachers reported, many children are hidden by parents, some study only 2 – 3 grades, not surprisingly parents send the child to a neighbouring village to herd cattle or they might bribe the head teacher as well.

Although the private boarding school has a better raking among Buradiga, there is a fear inside of parents. A child raised and educated in an English boarding school, could be lost forever and he will never follow the tradition any more. In the case of girls, the fear is even stronger. Girls marry around 14 – 15 years of age and thenceforth they start to wear a leather skirt, which is one of the most visible means of identifying the marital status of females. The skirt (hanangwend) has a magico-religious significance and the way to design it was taught by Udameselgwa, a female deity and it is a guarantee of fertility. In the case of boys, the strongest NO to schools comes from a mother's fear, who will take care of her in the future, if the child is lost in the world and lives a different life.

Obviously there is also a problem of paying the high school fees from the pastoralist's side. The school fee in St. Leo school in Igunga is 1.200.000 shilings per year plus school supplies and clothing – 600.000 shilings per year, together a parent needs to count 1.800.000 shilings (809 dollars). A middle piece of cow could be sold at the market for 400.000 shilling (180 dollars). Many families can not allow such a luxury for a single child. Investment to a not certain and obscure commodity such as education is implausible in the case of unlettered Buradiga. A sponsorship from a Catholic American father is known and offered, but not wildly used. There is only one non Christian family

who has a child in a secondary school in Dodoma and the boy could be the first child with a completed secondary education and the first one, who could be an example or a deterrent (if he fails) for the others. There were two other boys of non-Christian families supported by an American missionary, both escaped from the English Medium School in Igunga and walked to Chagana. Although they claimed their love for school, they still ran away. Rumours in the village are spread, that mothers were strongly against education and exploited witchcraft to allure the children to come back as some neighbours suspected.

The schooling process of English Medium schools is linked even with the possible conversion to Catholicism, which does not threaten in state Primary school. We could say state school is representing less harm to the retention of tradition and the Buradiga way of life. From a parent's perspective – a child's life is more under control and they are kept in the orthodox environment. On the other hand – a Catholic school represents a better level of education (knowledge of English is a predisposition to University level, states schools are in Swahili), which Buradiga admit, but presents unrecognisable and redoubtable difficulties. This closed circle could be broken by someone from the Buradiga community, who will obtain education and proper employment to support the family. The real benefit of education has not yet been seen by the Chagana people, hence there is no proper understanding of education.

Concluding remarks

We might admit that Willy's word: "Pastoral societies, to survive, must surely have more educational requirements than reading and writing,"⁴³ are very topical. Official education provided by local Primary state schools is irrelevant and incompatible with Buradiga life as cattle herders, in which physical movement and children's herding is required. Although many Buradiga cultivate rice and many have left the semi-nomad life style, as my research currently uncovered – boys are sent to the neighbouring Sukuma people to work for them as herders. The biggest Bantu ethnic group in Tanzania nowadays keeps more cows than the smaller marginalised Buradiga. As my aged informer observed "there were times, when the Sukuma were herding our herds, presently we send our boys to herd their cows because we have lost many of them". Shortly after independence the Tanzanian government labelled Buradiga (Datoga) "as a group too difficult to deal with".⁴⁴ Settlement (e.g. *Program*

⁴³ NKINYANGI, J. Education for nomadic pastoralists: development planning by trial and error, p. 194.

⁴⁴ NDAGALA, D. The Unmaking of Datoga: Decreasing Resources and Increasing Conflict in rural Tanzania, p. 75.

Barabaig')⁴⁵ was/is a way how to promote education to semi-nomadic Datoga after independence till today. Education officers, teachers and non Buradiga see tradition as the main problem, why Buradiga children are absent from school.

In the beginning of missionaries' activities in East Africa, converting to Christianity was a step on how to obtain education. Pastoralist refused the ideology for different reasons, which we discussed above. Missionary's link to administration and white settlers, acceptance of appropriation of the best grazing lands of pastoralists, which continued in further decades, avoiding labour for the white man were the reasons of the pastoralist's resistance against Christianity. How could education of western type improve a life style of a mobile nomad? Would he learn how to become a better pastoralist? Certainly not. Cattle are the pivot or focal point around which a majority of actions rotate. It is the core of everyday life. Remarkably in reverse order is the current situation of the relationship of Christianity and education. From actual research material we could state that the attendance in a private English school is an evangelised way/tactic how to become a Christian. The head teacher of the private Catholic schools affirmed that anyone can apply to the school. Catholic schools are known as the best schools in the country, hence attended by children of a mixture of religious beliefs. Besides curriculum defined by the state, students undertake religion lessons as well. As the head teacher of St. Leo school confirmed: "If the child is enthusiastic about religion, we baptise them." Buradiga from Chagana village consider the education provided by private school as a better choice than a state school, although the curriculum is the same, but they are afraid of religion change. A child surrounded by a non Buradiga community, in a different language (English and Swahili), religion and culture environment results in a loss.

Nkinyangi's research among Maasai pastoralists brings an interesting point to the debate. He did not find any interest of pastoralist's parents in education less than any other parents from different ethnic groups around.⁴⁶ Nkinyangi analysed in detail his conclusion. In short we can render his findings as an exploitation of people who are not literate. In practise, education for pastoralists meant: far distance to school, only a few schools in the region, poor facilities and school supplies or scarcity of teachers. Chagana Primary school could be classified in this way, though many years have since passed Nkinyangi's

⁴⁵ By 1978 the State started with the programme '*Operation Barabaig*' in order to resettle Datoga in villages with fundamental social services. Little regard was posed to the special needs of pastoralists and on the contrary, the situation of Datoga got worse. More about planned settlement in: NDAGALA, D. The Unmaking of Datoga: Decreasing Resources and Increasing Conflict in rural Tanzania. In *Commission on Nomadic People*, 1991, No. 28, pp. 71 – 82.

⁴⁶ NKINYANGI, J. Education for nomadic pastoralists: development planning by trial and error, p. 190.

research. Many informants in Chagana doubted the level of education of local school, parents complained about irregular attendance of teachers, alcoholism, playing in the school, lack of teachers plus children do not eat any food at school the whole day.

Nowadays, missionary work is not so palpably connected with education and development as it was in the 19th century, the main role assumed the independent Tanzanian state. The little Catholic community around ‘white men’ such as an American and a Belgian missionary testify that the Datoga trust them. For the little spiritual community is not only typical religious life, but also development in a sense of sending children to good English schools run by Belgian missionaries in the town. After the death of one of the missionaries, many Datoga expressed their statement/question to me: “Who will take care of us now?” I was a volunteer/teacher through the realisation of all similar conversation at the regular Friday market. After asking me such a question many of the Datoga proposed and asked me if there are boarding opportunities in the school where I teach. They wanted a school with a ‘white man’ which is seen by them as a guarantee, a donor and somebody who will not marginalise them. On the other hand there is also fear of non-converts to lose the children and traditional way of life/religion by sending children to a Catholic school.

As we could state the view on education and Christianity from a Buradiga’s view it has not changed in decades comparing to Burton’s or Rigby’s findings. There are slight differences, but the final outcome could be made: even nowadays Christianity is connected with education (provided by missionaries), from a Buradiga point of view could mean equal. Acceptation of their educational way or religion itself bounces on their resistance. At the beginning of the ninetieth century the refusal comes from the enlacement with the administration policy and the quiet agreement of land appropriation. The role of white settlers undertook the government of independent Tanzania, which continued with settlement, land confiscation (e.g. Tanzania Canada Wheat Project), pressure from agriculturists and villagisation (resettlement of Datoga in villages in the 1970s).⁴⁷ White missionaries are accepted and welcomed by Buradiga, but their ideology did not find a feedback. As my neighbour admitted: “Jacobo decided to choose and only sleep with his wife, this is not possible!” Profound promiscuity or polygyny is not neglected by their customs and obviously plays a big role in the whole case.

The question could be asked: do Buradiga want to understand the benefit of education? Or do they pretend they do not understand to protect their community/customs? The external view represented by government, officers, members of other ethnic groups judges Buradiga (Datoga) as backwards and

⁴⁷ All topics discussed by Ndagala, Lane or Young in the articles mentioned in bibliography.

uncivilised. Through decades they have learned to live with this mark and denying of every invention, in our case education, could be a mode of self-protection of marginalised groups.

Buradiga's religion is unconditionally reverted with tradition. After almost two hundred years from the evangelisation of pastoralists in Tanzania/Eastern Africa, they are still the ones counted as keepers of traditional belief. Also the ones, who are still out of the schooling process although education is obligatory in many countries with pastoral communities, in Tanzania since 1975. Focusing on the Nilotic Datoga, particularly on the Buradiga clan living near Igunga in Tanzania, we tried to attempt the actual role of Christianity/education among Datoga, as one of the factors in the whole circle, which on the one side hinders the education – fear of lost traditions and on the other helps – possibility to study at private schools. All other factors, which enter to the system, are the object of observation and further research. Research is still in progress. We only focused on the nexus between education and Christianity, more detailed detection will be the object of our PhD thesis.

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