

MATERNAL UNCLES AND SORORAL NEPHEWS AMONG THE LEGA (1)

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"Bule myoza ku mubele u bule mebuto" ("As are the hairs
on the body, so are the ties of kinship")

Introduction

The Lega - in rare available literature incorrectly referred to as Warega - are spread over a vast area of the eastern Belgian Congo stretching between the 26th long. and 28th 30' long., and between the 4th lat. and the 2nd lat. Their culture is fairly homogeneous, though at least three main currents may be distinguished. We will therefore concern ourselves here with the Lega-groups of sector Beia (Maniema District, Pangi Territory) which are surely the truest of all Lega and quite the most interesting ones.

Formerly Lega were mainly trappers and gatherers, rearing small livestock and practising shifting cultivation and fishing. Under Belgian administration, however, they have become primarily agriculturalists.

Descent is reckoned patrilineally and marriage is virilocal. Agnatic relationships are of primary importance in many circumstances, such as marriage arrangements, co-operation in war, hunting expeditions, the organization of circumcision rites, and, above all, in the institution of the all-pervading bwame association. But in many other vital spheres of life, such as mutual aid co-operation, the need for protection, the exchange of valuables, and ceremonial duties, extreme stress is laid on seven groups of "male mothers", (bamwizio) (2) on the corresponding groups of sororal nephews and nieces (beigwa), on relations with the wives' families (butokali), on buninabo-links (the ties existing between two individuals who are sororal nephews of a same lineage) and on buninanina-links (uterine relationships).

What is actually considered to be a clan (kelongo), a sub-clan (kebundu or bukolo), a lineage (kekalo; kebanda; ibele) consists, almost in all cases, of an agnatic nucleus into which strange elements (beidande) have been absorbed. In most instances it is extremely hard to distinguish the true children of the land (bana ba kese) from the assimilated ones (beidande), because they have become through time and Lega-patterns of kinship an inseparable unit which is identified with a closely tied agnatic group. These beidande generally belong to one of the following groups of people :

- a) the descendants of bakobe, individuals who had become serfs through war expeditions.
- b) the descendants of sororal nephews who left their group and went to settle with their maternal uncles, and vice versa.
- c) the descendants of poor individuals who had established themselves with a powerful nenekese ("master of the land").
- d) the descendants of males who had come to join their married sisters'

(1) Over three years field-work among the Lega and related groups was carried out under the auspices of "L'Institut pour la Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale" (IRSAC), Brussels.

(2) Looked at from the point of view of a male.

village.

- e) the descendants of persons linked through buninabo (sororal nephews of the same lineage) and who had come to live together.
- f) the descendants of persons who came to set down in the same region because of a buninanina-link (uterine relationship).

Lega are polygynous. Nowadays the marriage-tie is extremely unstable. Junior levirate is in vigour and secondary marriages occur with the father's widow, father's younger brother's widow and the mother's brother's widow. Sororal polygyny is only practised in a wide classificatory sense; the sororate and secondary marriages with a brother-in-law's daughter do occur, but are not very frequent. Double marriages too are rare, whereas exchange marriages are unknown.

Lega never had a paramount chief, nor did they know a common tribal authority. The exercise of political authority was restricted to a very small group, the limits of which coincided with a minor lineage or a group of two or more minor lineages.

The Bwame closed association is by far the most important aspect of Lega culture. Men and women have both of them access to a separate, though parallel hierarchy of stages, each of which is acquired through a long and painstaking process of preparation, an elaborate cycle of rites and ceremonies, considerable exchange of goods and lavish payments and the distribution of valuables.

Terminological Usages Prevailing Between Maternal Uncles and Sororal Nephews and Nieces

The mother's junior or senior male siblings and half-siblings are grouped into the classificatory category of bamwizio (sg. mwizio).

This is the universal terminological use among the Lega with whom we are concerned here. It is however not the unique pattern of classificatory grouping, since there exists among a rather small group of Lega principles which differentiate mother's brothers into two groups. The mother's elder brothers are then classified with grandfathers (batatangulu) and mother's younger brothers only constitute the category of bamwizio. This sporadic arrangement is parallel to some universal uses of Lega terminology, that is to say the division of mother's sisters into elder sisters (= grandmothers, bakuku) and younger sisters (= little mothers, bamage); the differentiation of father's brothers into elder brothers (= grandfathers, batatangulu) and younger ones (= little fathers, batata banabato). The term mwizio changes according to whether one is speaking about "my, your, his maternal uncle". Nyokolume thus means your maternal uncle; ninalume, his maternal uncle. (1) A term such as nyokolume clearly illustrates the exact significance of the word, nyoko being your mother" and lume being the root for "male". That is to say "your mother male" (2)

A male speaker refers to his mother's brother's wife by means of a descriptive term, mwikulu wa mwizio, wife of my maternal uncle. He addresses her as mwikulu wane, my wife. A female speaker addresses her as mmage, my mother.

A man calls his sister's son or daughter mwigwa wane, my sororal nephew or niece. The word is unchangeable and currently used with the possessive pronoun following it, thus: mwigwa wane, my sororal nephew; mwigwa wobe, your sororal nephew, etc. Lega contend that there is a correlation between this term and the verb kuigula which

- (1) Among the eastern Lega and the Bembe the term mwico does not change, but is always accompanied by the appropriate possessive pronoun.
- (2) Father's sister, whether his senior or junior ~~ex xxxxx~~ sister, is called mmage, "my mother". There is no use at all to consider her as a female father, as is done, for example, among the Nyanga (shenkhari).

means to be able to stand up against something which exceeds the powers of all others. Even if this etymological explanation is not the true one, it is very significant from the semantic point of view. The sororal nephew, from a Lega point of view, is a person who is able and allowed to do and to realise things which outdo the possibilities of all other relationships.

The mother's brother's wife calls her husband's nephew iba wane, my husband, using the term mwana wane, my child, to denote her husband's sororal niece.

The main problem of classificatory terminology rises when we examine the type of terminological relationship prevailing between cross-cousins and their descendants. The different aspects of this relationship are as follows. In a situation in which two families which have been complete strangers to each other have become linked through marriage, a male speaker will call a son or daughter of his mother's brother, provided he is still alive, mubiala wane. Lega think that there is a correlation between this term and the verb kubia which means to denude, to take the things somebody had, to nag or to tease. The term is used by males and females and is applicable in both senses. The face-to-face behaviour of two male babiala is marked by moderate joking (bubiala), or better, their relations are based on profound friendship and are devoid of any constraint.

The relationship between a male and his mother's brother's daughter shows the same moderation; he treats her as a sister (mubetu wane). He could never marry her nor take her as a sexual partner. For, as Lega put it, she is a potential mutamba, or producer of marriage payment, to him. The relationship between a male and his mother's brother's son's wife is not coloured by imposed restraints. He calls her mwikulu wane, my wife; he may dance with her, chat and joke, or touch her breasts. But any sexual claim upon her would be seriously condemned by public opinion and would threaten to disturb the smoothness of the interrelationships of both families.

On the other hand, a male must completely abstain from close contact with his father's sister's son's wife. He may not dance with her and may not engage in privileged joking with her. The same type of behaviour characterises his relations with his father's sister's daughter.

There seem to be two main reasons for explaining this difference in attitude and its unilateral aspect. First of all, as Lega state themselves, the links existing between two male babiala is very much like that which prevails between elder and younger brothers. There is implicit the notion that mother's brother's male descendants, as a group, are senior brothers and that father's sister's male descendants, as a group, are junior brothers. (1) This implicit notion then may justify the distinctions in behaviour which characterise the relations of male cross-cousins towards their respective wives. A younger brother may engage in a certain degree of moderate joking with his senior brother's wife, whom he calls "my wife" and who may become his spouse under the existing levirate. Secondly, in this type of behaviour is already foreshadowed an Omaha-system of cross-cousin terminology. The mother's brother's son will, sooner or later, become a maternal uncle and the father's sister's son his sororal nephew. This means, among other things, that his father's sister's son's wife will become a mukanwana, daughter-in-law, a woman who has to be avoided; the mother's brother's son's wife, on the contrary, will become "my wife". It may further be noticed in this context that a man may inherit the wife of his mother's brother's son, during the lifetime of the mother's brother, but not vice versa. For the same reasons the relations between a male and his father's sister's daughter are

- (1) This principle is common among the Bembe, where cross-cousins on becoming older use to call one another senior brother (mother's brother's son) and junior brother (father's sister's son).

characterised by reserve and distance. She is very much the same as his mubetu, sister, but a very peculiar one, for she may never become his mutamba, i.e. the woman who may produce a marriage payment in his favour.

A male calls his father's sister's daughter's husband mukozi wane my brother-in-law. This seems not to coincide with the inherent Omaha-system, for he might be expected to call this individual mutenzia wane, my son-in-law, as a husband of his future sororal niece. It should be pointed out however that the groups of brothers-in-law and sons-in-law are almost completely merged among the Lega. Finally, the terminology existing between a female and her husband's father's sister's son's wife entirely coincides with the inherent Omaha-system, for she calls her mukamwana, daughter-in-law, just as if she already were the wife of this woman's husband's maternal uncle.

The Omaha-system completely establishes itself on the death of the mother's brother. His son, however young he may be, then becomes called mwizio and his daughter mmage. The Omaha-system thus establishes itself through the recognition of the criterion of decedence, as P. Murdock calls it. This arrangement contributes to the establishment of a long range relationship between the two families or minimal lineages linked through an original marriage-link. It brings about the Lega saying "bwigwa tabukuzinda" ("the relationship of sororal nephews never finishes.")

By the application of this principle the following groups of "male mothers", of direct and constant importance to an individual, have come into existence :

- a) from the point of view of a married or unmarried male :
 1. the bamwizio be idulu, the real maternal uncles; mother's brothers and, if dead, their sons. This category comprises two kinds of people, according to the degrees of proximity :
 - bamwizio wanda: mother's male siblings and half-siblings, i.e. descendants of a same father.
 - bamwizio ba mubuto: mother's classificatory brothers, members of her minimal lineage.
 2. the bamwizio ba mbusa, more distant classificatory "male mothers", comprising:
 - the maternal uncles of father and their male descendants.
 - the maternal uncles of mother and their male descendants.
 - the maternal uncles of father's mother and their male descendants.
 - the maternal uncles of mother's mother and their male descendants.
 - the maternal uncles of father's father and their male descendants.
 - the maternal uncles of mother's father and their male descendants.
- b) from the point of view of an unmarried female:
 1. the same category of bamwizio be idulu
 2. the category of bamwizio ba mbusa only comprises two groups
 - the maternal uncles of father and their male descendants.
 - the maternal uncles of mother and their male descendants.
- c) from the point of view of a married female:
 1. the same category of bamwizio be idulu.
 2. the category of bamwizio ba mbusa consists of:
 - the maternal uncles of father and their male descendants.

- the maternal uncles of mother and their male descendants.
- the maternal uncles of father's father and their male descendants.

Next to that, the members of a sub-clan, or even a clan may consider another clan or lineage as being in a position of maternal uncles or sororal nephews to them. This is for example the case for Banasalu-clan. This clan has considered the Banakagela-Banamombo linked clans as sororal nephews, since the two sisters of the four founders of the four Banasalu sub-clans gave birth to Kagela and Mpombo, some eleven generations ago. The very long survival of this link is primarily due to the close geographical proximity of the three groups, the mother of Kagela having been married to Bagilanzelu-clan, closest neighbour of Banasalu-clan, and Mpombo, whose mother had been married far away, having come to join the son of his mother's elder sister.

It may further be stated that the notion of a mwizio-mwigwa link looms extremely large in the mind of the Lega. It was pointed out above that the "male mothers" recognised generally belonged to the minimal lineage which provided the linking woman. We know, however, of examples whereby an individual was given a considerable amount of goods, on initiation or other ceremonial occasions, by members dispersed within the whole clan to which the lineage of the linking woman belonged, and this because of the mere fact of his being a sororal nephew of that lineage.

The neighbouring Ngobango and Zimba tribes are still nowadays considered to be sororal nephews of the Lega, and labourers from these tribes working within Lega territory still enjoy special privileges and prestations from the Lega.

On the other hand, stress must be laid on the fact that the several categories of "male mothers" recognised are often reduced under Lega marriage arrangements. It often happens that an individual has two or more groups of maternal uncles belonging to a same maximal lineage, or that several of these different groups are settled within his village, or even that some of them belong to his own patri-clan.

The following traits should further be noticed with regard to the Omaha-system as occurring among the Lega. If the lineage, as a unit, has been considered as a homogeneous group of "male mothers", through the generations, the terminological relationships which persist between Ego and a given member of one of these lineage groups are quite definite and differentiated. Let us illustrate this point by means of an example.

Suppose that father and father's mother's brother are alive and that I have a son:

My father calls his mother's brother: mwizio, male mother.

I call my father's mother's brother: tatangulu, my grandfather.

My son calls his grandfather's mother's brother: tata, my father.

My father calls his mother's brother's son: mubiala, joking relative or cross-cousin.

I call my father's mother's brother's son: tatangulu, grandfather for, as outlined above, this man as well as the father's elder brother and father's senior brother is classified with the grandfathers.

My son calls his grandfather's mother's brother's son: tata, father.

My father calls his mother's brother's son's son: mwana wa mubiala, child of my cross-cousin, which is much the same as "my child". I call my father's mother's brother's son's son: mubetu wane, my brother: my senior brother (mukulu wane) if born before me; my junior brother (muto wane) if born after me.

My son calls his grandfather's mother's brother's son's son: grandfather or father according to whether he is called elder or younger brother by myself.

This interpersonal terminology changes, or better, shifts, if the father or father's mother's brother dies. If my father's mother's brother dies, his son becomes father's "male mother" but remains my grandfather. The sons too of my father's new "male mother" continue to be my brothers. If my father dies, my father's mother's brother remains my grandfather; my father's cross-cousin, however, now becomes my "male mother" and his sons continue to be my brothers. If my father were alive and his male cross-cousin died, the child of his cross-cousin (mwana wa mubiala) would become his "male mother". This man whom I used to call brother would then become neither my grandfather nor my maternal uncle but would be considered as being my mubiala.

Categories of Maternal Uncles and Marriage-Prohibitions

Ka mulume kasonga tugu wa kunse kwa nina, ntasonga wa kunse kwise
("A man may surely marry a girl from behind his mother. He may not marry a girl from behind his father.")

As a general rule, it may be stated that a man is not allowed to marry a girl from the minimal lineage-group of any of the seven categories of "male mothers" described, at least before six generations have passed and the terminological point of mubuto uzinda ("kinship is finished") has been reached. The significance of the number of generations is reflected in the five separate terms for descendants: mwana, my child; muyukulu, my grandchild; kayokolo kane, my great-grandchild; kankumbamazu kane, my great great-grandchild; and kampetamegongo kane, child of my great great-grandchild. Below that there is not any specific term available and we have arrived at mubuto uzinda or "kinship is finished".

Even if on the side of the "male mothers" this point has been reached, marriage-prohibitions may remain. This is particularly so if the links between both lineages have been firmly maintained; if both groups live in one another's neighbourhood or are established in the same village or sequence of villages (mutanda); if older people who know quite well the exact kinship tie are alive; or if, because of situations resulting from the structure of the compound family and from birth- and death-ratios, the relations of generation is a very unbalanced one.

Lega Sayings with regard to Maternal Uncles and Sororal Nephews

1. Kelongo metula enazi nu mwigwa, ku kuboko kwe ikazi ukokomezia mwigwa mbandi: ("a clan: four hearths and a sororal nephew; on the female side is firmly established the sororal nephew, he whom we cannot deny anything.")
This song is frequently sung during initiation into the bwame closed association. The concept is even illustrated on plaited discs and by means of ivory carvings. It firstly refers to basic structural arrangements with regard to Lega kinship-groups. These almost always comprise an agnatic nucleus, into which sororal nephews and other people too have been absorbed. It further stresses the high degree of privilege and regard of which sororal nephews are the object.
2. Mwigwa mpiku, munda munyama u mweyamine mpiku: ("the sororal nephew: a kidney; deep within the animal has slept the kidney"). The kidneys, too, of each animal killed are a privileged part of the sororal nephew.

3. Nkoko lenalingelaga, mwigwa wa kenyama u wanendile nazo: ("the chicken I have spurned; the sororal nephew has gone away with it.") A sororal nephew is his uncle's pet and favourite; in his village he may take away, without sanction, chickens, goats, meat, food and other valuables.
4. Mwigwa kyogo kya nkenze kyakomana lusu: ("the sororal nephew is a housepole of nkenze wood" i.e. a very hard wood used for the men's gathering house.) This is a precept (mengu) given to the youth during kongabulumbu-rites: "Do not ever imagine clan-daughters and their descendants to be a negligible quantity."
5. Kwita muntu, kutenena mobia mwa Kasumba: ("to kill a man is to fly to the maternal uncles to Kasumba" - lit. a place where one is at home; a spot one frequently visits.) An uncle's village is, in all circumstances, an ideal refuge.
6. Kabegabega, mwana we mutamba, ambega: ("the little wrongdoer, child of the marriage payment provider, does wrong against me.") A sororal nephew may engage in all kinds of liberties. He is, however, not allowed to seduce his uncle's wife. If so, the maternal uncle is unable to react severely against him, but the final issue will be a gradual slackening of good relations.
7. Bwame keteta kya nkame kyankaninie bamwizio: ("the bwame association, a big packet of rafters which my maternal uncles have tied up for me.") This song stresses the high degree of co-operation between both kinsmen with regard to the bwame initiation.
8. Kalemba ka tatage, nnyabulaga ukankula mega, nabulaga ukalanaga na ba kwisula: ("little billy-goat of my father, I did not imagine that you would butt me; I thought that you would fight with those at the confines of the village.") This refers to the desperate complaint of a Mulega: "my agnates, you are ill-disposed against me, you do me wrong, I am but weak. Why did you not quarrel and settle matters with my maternal uncles? They surely would have protected me against your wrath."
9. Bamwizio babazaga melela, nne u wakelwa ge ibungu: ("my maternal uncles have dug out very light canoes, but I am belated without hope of salvation at the water-side.") This is to say that there is no hope left to me of ever getting initiated to the bwame association. My maternal uncles who were powerful bame, all of them, have died out.
10. Keluka bamwizio bansesa itende ta bamwizio: ("Keluka-bird, my maternal uncles cut me the tail. They are not my maternal uncles"), or from maternal uncles only true assistance and loyal help is expected.
11. Lutunge lumozu ntabuta: ("one thigh does not bring forth.") and Ikazi na idume na muteli magulugwa lwende: ("left and right, each side is cleaved by the large river.") These sayings give the reasons why Lega never lay stress on the agnatic group only.
12. Nevertheless it is continually asked: Ku baso nu ku benyoko kuni kusoga: ("among your fathers and among your mothers, where is it best?") The answer is: among your fathers, for there reciprocal respect, security and congeniality are better assured. Lega even assert that the more an individual is well integrated within his patri-group, the more he will be honoured by his maternal uncles.

Some Privileges, Rights and Duties Existing among Maternal Uncles and Sororal Nephews

1. A sororal nephew possesses the right of ntiko; a maternal uncle has the right of idego. Ntiko is the right a sororal nephew has to inherit from his maternal uncle. Idego are claims exercised by maternal uncles on special payments when their nephew or niece dies.

When his maternal uncle dies, a sororal nephew may get several kinds of things. He may be awarded a wife, bikulo (shell-money, goats, tools), and isigi (the bride payment given or to be given for a female cross-cousin of his). With regard to the bwame association, a sororal nephew may get the initiatory objects and paraphernalia of

his uncle, provided he has acceded to the same degree in the association. This however is only a provisional legacy, for the day a younger brother or son of his maternal uncle gets initiated to that degree, he has to return all objects to him. Rights of possessing the knife of the ant-eater, of organising the musembe circumcision rites, or of making lutala circumcision lodges may also temporarily pass on to the sororal nephew.

To inherit from the property left by a maternal uncle, is further always subject to certain conditions. If the mwizio has left behind brothers or sons, to them only belongs the right of distributing the wives and goods. Ka nkazi kubagania nte ka ndume kasila. ("The female side distributing means the male side has died out.") This does not exclude the fact of the sororal nephew receiving some part of the goods, even if his uncle has many close agnates. He will, however, rarely be alone to benefit by them, for sororal nephews are numerous under the principles of Omaha-terminology and because of the several categories of maternal uncles recognised. The order of primogeniture and the order of classificatory distance will then determine how the goods have to be divided. Strictly speaking a sororal niece may not inherit from her maternal uncle. On his death, she may however be awarded chickens, goats, shell-money and pieces of bark cloth. Chickens are really her property, because they represent the privileged part of all sororal nephews and nieces. Pieces of bark-cloth are hers, if worn by herself; if given to her husband, they become part of the mubego gifts. Mubego gifts are presents which a man continually gets from his wife's family or from her maternal uncles as long as the marriage-link lasts. They form the counter-part of igabisa or mukosi, gifts presented by a man, his family or maternal uncles to his wife's family or maternal uncles. To the mubego group also belong the shell-money and goats a woman might get at her maternal uncle's death.

Maternal uncles, on the contrary, cannot inherit from their sororal nephew. On his death, they may however temporarily take over some of the rights he possessed, for example the knife of the ant-eater, musembe and lutala mentioned above, etc. Yet they exercise claims to idego-payments. On the death of their sororal nephew, the seven categories of "male mothers" referred to previously are engaged in a complex series of distributions and redistributions of goods. When their unmarried sororal niece dies, three groups only of "male mothers" participate in the same cycle of exchanges. If their sororal niece was married, four groups of "male mothers" and the girl's agnates, as a fifth group, are concerned with the idego transactions. We do not emphasise further these idego payments now, because the relevant material has been condensed in an article to be published elsewhere.

2. A man often gets presents from his maternal uncles, which he afterwards uses as mekesi payments to his wife's family. When a marriage is dissolved, these mekesi gifts, plus the marriage payment, less the mubego gifts, have to be repaid to the husband's family. If he gets these payments back, a man does not have to return to his maternal uncles the part of gifts received from them and used as mekesi.
3. When a man brings forth his first son, the maternal uncles of this son have to receive the milindia payment. It generally consists of ten kanue measures of shell-money, an iron tool and an axe. This payment is thought to belong to the group of muyolelo offerings, a kind of thanksgiving, because pregnancy is said to be a sort of illness.
4. As soon as it begins to crawl, their sister's child receives its first muyolelo offering from its maternal uncles: a chicken, meat, fish and earth nuts.

5. If their nephew gets seriously injured, his maternal uncles claim the mesululu payment: a he-goat and the weapon or knife that injured him. The real maternal uncles will then award one leg of the goat to the maternal uncles of their nephew's father and one shoulder of it to the maternal uncles of their nephew's mother. If other categories of maternal uncles happen to be nearby, they are allowed to partake in the meat distribution.
6. An individual who has several categories of maternal uncles living within his village is called ketutuma. A man having several categories of maternal uncles living in the same sequence of villages (mutanda) is called mubake. Both of them are highly considered by society and are said to consolidate the agnatic kinship ties. They never will be sent to war in the first ranks.
7. When leaving the circumcision lodge, a nephew goes to receive a muyolele offering from his maternal uncles: four or five chickens and one iron tool.
8. Even if the amount of marriage payments necessary is sufficient, a sororal nephew always gets some supplementary goats and shell-money from his maternal uncles.
9. A nephew visiting his uncle's village may freely take away chickens, food, money, tools, nets and even goats. A maternal uncle enjoys the same privileges in his nephew's village, except that he may not take goats. There was only one means of prohibiting a nephew from taking goats, dogs and chairs, namely by tying around it a katembetembe (lit. little phallus), a small ivory figurine or other ivory carving.
10. Although a nephew may inherit his maternal uncle's wife, he must abstain from seducing her during his uncle's lifetime. This would be considered as sengale, misplaced joking, although this type of seduction is not believed to result in metala, incest illness.
11. Concerning a secondary marriage with a maternal uncle's wife, it should be noticed that a sororal nephew never can get a wife of his uncle who has been initiated to bunyamwa. Bunyamwa is the highest woman's degree of the bwame association, parallel to the men's kindi degree. Such a woman has to remain within the closely tied group of agnates. If her husband dies without leaving behind close agnates, she is usually given to the mukondi we idumba, supervisor of the grave (in this case, an initiate of the kindi degree).
12. The nephew's privileged portion of each animal killed is the kidneys (mpiku). The maternal uncles' part is either mutibi, the middle portion of the back, or kasele, the haunches.
13. A sororal nephew was often sent as a messenger to his maternal uncles, in case a man of his lineage was guilty of kasele, blood-revenge. He then secretly informed them that a man would be sent to them to be killed.
14. A sororal nephew may get bunenekese within his maternal uncles' group. This means that he may become "master of the land" and supreme authority, when settling among them.
15. Maternal uncles and sororal nephews are continually engaged in a mululo assistance, that is to say, in all circumstances they provide one another with necessary goods. Formerly co-operation in wartime was usual. Maternal uncles, on the other hand, readily engaged in musubo, revenge, when their nephew had been done wrong or had been killed.
16. It was a universal custom to notify the sororal nephew about any war expedition planned. A small packet of magungu leaves, containing a kazozo fruit, which was a symbol of the sororal nephew, was then sent to him. If the nephew disliked the proposed expedition, he hurriedly came to his

uncle's village to put his veto. A goat, called mpene za malonga ("the goat of reconciliation") was then killed by the warriors.

17. A maternal uncle or sororal nephew is never paid for services rendered. Another for example has to be paid for initiation into the bunsingia, dance and initiatory techniques of the bwame association by a sororal nephew at his uncle's.
18. The ant-eater (ikaga) is a kitikolo, an animal prohibited to younger people; it is, at the same time, an animal of kulongana, an animal to be distributed among a mass of kinsmen in the village of the possessor of the knife of the ant-eater. It is the exclusive right of a sororal nephew to take off the animal's shells and to kill the goat, which has to be eaten together with the meat of the ant-eater. His privileged portion of the animal consists of the kidneys, busesasesa-cuttings and three shell-lengths of the tail. When enjoying his privilege for the first time, he has to give a knife to his maternal uncle.
19. When a wife is inherited, her new husband has to give an important part of goods to her family (bulambi). Her maternal uncles do not get anything on this occasion.
20. A man guilty of incest was seldom banished out of his group. But he was no longer allowed to contract a bubake marriage, that is to say a marriage with a girl of his sub-clan or clan; neither might he claim the marriage payment provided for a girl of his own lineage. He might however marry a wife either with his own goods or with goods received from his maternal uncles.
21. A sororal nephew might intervene in the kabi ordeal. A woman found guilty of sorcery and collapsing under the effects of the powerful narcotics, could be relieved by him. This was called ubulwa kabi. He gave her an egg to eat together with a concoction of herbs and stirred in her mouth a stick previously dipped in human excrement.
22. The relationship of maternal uncles to sororal nephews is a very important one with regard to the bwame association. The development of rites and degrees of this association has been an intricate process of continual shifting of emphasis, accretion and adaptation. New rites, for example existing among other Lega groups were regularly introduced into the group. This mainly happened by way of sororal nephews or maternal uncles. As soon as the rite had been introduced within one or other group of maternal uncles, a powerful initiate among the sororal nephews went to acquire it there for his own group.

Many did not succeed in acceding to the association within their own group, whether because of lacking the necessary initiatory payments, or because of rejection. They then went to their maternal uncles to be initiated there.

With regard to the highest degree of kindi, a sororal nephew often took over the role of kuye or mwikalizi. An initiation into kindi takes a very long preparation, in order to get the necessary goods. Moreover it is a common pattern that the initiated try to annoy as much as possible the initiate. During the preparatory period they regularly come to his village to ask presents, to count his goods stored and to invent all possible reasons for delaying the beginnings of the initiation. It is then that a maternal uncle or sororal nephew initiated to the kindi degree will run to his kinsman's aid and come to settle in his village as a kuye. Kuye is a little bird which is said to lure the other birds by its songs so that they may come together. The kuye in this case will urge his bame colleagues to be benevolent towards his kinsman. He will oppose their covetousness and will insist upon the initiation being held by issuing the warning (ketemp) that he will not

leave his kinsman's village before all initiations are completed.

When preparing his initiation, a man goes to visit most of his maternal uncles and sororal nephews, asking them to help him with goods, (mululo: metumwa). His sororal nephews will contribute with all kinds of goods (goats, tools, nets, shell-money, clothes, resin torches, antelopes, food, chickens). His maternal uncles help too, except that they may not give him chickens. Initiated uncles or nephews will generally come to join their kinsman's village in order to assist in his initiation. During and after the dances they will get their part of the nkindo and mwikio distributions in the same way as other participants. But before returning home, they have to receive a return payment (ikaso or menganangana).

The real sororal nephew is a gosia or muse, a person who will assure help wherever dangers or difficulties arise. It may happen for example that, during the very secret kasisi rite of the yananio degré, one or more goats are lacking. This elicits opposition and threats of prohibition on the side of the initiators. In such a case it is usually the sororal nephew who provides the necessary support to his maternal uncle.

23. With regard to the ancestral cult, a man always invokes the spirits of his patrilineage, when offering in his own village. When staying at his maternal uncle's or passing by their ancient village settlements (makindu) he sacrifices to the spirits of his maternal uncles' lineage.
