

## WATER IN THE DESERT: RITUALS AND VITAL POWER AMONG THE CENTRAL KALAHARI HUNTER-GATHERERS

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**ABSTRACT** The |Gui and ||Gana, Kalahari hunter-gatherers, practice certain rites every time one passes critical phases in their life, or when something unfortunate happens. Because the rites are a kind of curing, they use traditional medicine in the rites. The medicines are composed of plants and substances from human bodies. Comparison with the rites performed by the Kgalagadi, neighboring agropastoral people, reveals that, the |Gui/||Gana consider bodily substances to be more important than medical plants. The |Gui/||Gana think that all bodily substances stem from one identical power and people exchange the power through these rites.

**Key Words:** |Gui and ||Gana; Rites; Curing; Bodily substances

### INTRODUCTION

On the morning of January 27th, 1991, I was nervous because I was going to attend a |Gui's traditional wedding for the first time. The day before, a |Gui man, who had been working for me as a research assistant, had told me that he would hold his wedding the following day. As the groom himself had come to invite me to the ceremony, early in the morning that day, I hurried to the camp where his bride was waiting, taking my video tape recorder and camera.

Arriving there, I was slightly surprised to find it was different from what I had expected. Besides the groom, the bride and her aunt, there were only two persons coming to see the wedding. Before long, gently seizing a razor, the aunt began to cut small wounds in a few places of the couple's bodies. Other family members didn't appear. No friends came. No singing and dancing. It was just a quiet morning. If I had come near the hut without knowing the wedding was taking place, I would not have noticed it at all and just passed.

The |Gui and ||Gana<sup>(1)</sup> are hunter-gatherers living in the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa. It is reported that their ritual systems are not developed and that there is only one "rite" for the first menstruation for girls (Silberbauer, 1963; 1981; Tanaka, 1971). In the first year of my own research, I only managed to confirm such previous studies. I did not see any "rite," but their rite for menarche, in which women were dancing.

In my second research period, I happened to see a wedding ceremony, and I noticed that I had a fixed idea about what is called "a rite." My image of the |Gui/||Gana's "traditional rites" was something beyond their daily lives, a sequence

of special way of behavior and symbols, being performed by the participants or in front of an audience.

However, the |Gui/||Gana word “*tsoo*,” which refers to a “rite,” originally means “to cure” (*tsōo*) and “medicine” (*tsōo*). The meanings of *tsōo* / *tsōo* are related straightly to their daily life. The |Gui/||Gana use the words to express the meanings “to take medicinal plants for treating a stomachache, a toothache, a headache, etc” and “medicine given in hospital.”

The word is also used to indicate a sequence of provided acts that are performed when something wrong or unfortunate happens. For instance, it is used when they eat meat regarded as taboo, when they are not successful in hunting, and when someone becomes seriously ill. Moreover, the rites of passage, such as those held for births, coming-of-age, or marriage, are also called *tsōo*.

This means that, for the |Gui/||Gana, “rites” are some kind of curing. For example, they hold their wedding ceremonies to cure the physically bad conditions believed to be caused by marriage. Since little performative act is done in their rites, it is not easy for visitors from different cultural background to understand what their ritual system might be.

Some of the |Gui/||Gana’s rites are like charms, one of which is held by hunters and their families on the morning of going hunting, to pray for hunting success. When someone takes the medicine, which was made by a traditional doctor in a preceding rite, this is also considered as a rite. Their rites thus often occur consecutively in their daily life. Connected to their daily life, the |Gui/||Gana’s rites are strongly supported by their view on human beings: What is a disease? What makes human bodies? What are the strings of which human society is woven?

This paper will firstly elucidate the systems of the |Gui/||Gana’s rites: Their rites are performed every time one passes some critical phase such as birth, coming-of-age, and marriage, or when something unfortunate happens, e.g. unsuccessful hunting, a sudden accident, some serious disease, someone’s death, and other kinds of disasters.

Secondly, this paper will demonstrate that such rites are backed up the |Gui/||Gana’s view on human beings. In other words, going through some disease, provides the people with an especial opportunity to learn what human beings are. The rite for curing disease is an incomparable social setting, where the participants experience the reality of “living” in a unique way. From such a point of view, I shall make it clear that the ritual practices are closely related to underlying ideas about the human life cycle from birth to death. Paying special attention to their notion of “dirt,” the most important cause of misfortune, I shall elucidate that it is closely connected with the |Gui/||Gana’s folk-interpretation of human reproduction.

The |Gui/||Gana think that living bodies are filled with ⟨water⟩. ⟨Water⟩ represents the blood, sweat, saliva, urine, semen, amniotic fluid, and other bodily fluid. They also think all of them stem from one source of identical power. The |Gui/||Gana regard the human body as collected power from several powerful subjects. And in rituals, people exchange ⟨water⟩, between people, and between humans and wild animals. So we can express the |Gui/||Gana’s essential view of life in the image of human beings and all creatures being sparkling ⟨water⟩ in the Kalahari Desert.

## STUDYING AREA AND METHOD

The |Gui/||Gana used to live a self-sufficient life, hunting and gathering (Tanaka, 1980). They however started to settle down around a borehole with a diesel engine, which was installed in 1979 under the Remote Area Development Programme by the Botswana Government (Tanaka, 1987). Since 1988 I have been researching in Xade, where a complete village was formed.

As soon as the people started to settle down, their life and culture began to change rapidly, and the frequency of holding rites tended to decrease year by year. For example, hunting with bow and arrows is not practiced at all at present, so that the rite for successful hunting with bow and arrows is not practiced, either. As for the ritual for menarche, its duration, traditionally near one month, tends to be shortened only to a few days because girls cannot be absent from school for a long time.

In spite of this, most of the rites could be observed during the most recent research period (1998), though their forms have become simplified. Based on the narratives by old people, I attempt to reconstruct the organization of traditional rituals held in previous times.

The primary data for this paper was collected from 1994 to 1995 by intensive inquiries into the |Gui/||Gana residence in the Xade area. I also referred to supplementary data; ethnobotanical information on plants, records of observation of the rituals for the girls' menarche, marriage, and rites for dissolving food taboos. All of these data have been collected by me since 1988. The procedures of each ritual are described in the Appendix 1, and Appendix 2 lists the botanical names of medical plants.

Many of the |Gui/||Gana's rites are supposed to be influenced by the neighboring Kgalagadi, a Bantu-speaking agropastoral people. In 1998, I carried out extensive research on the Kgalagadi's rituals by inquiring of the residents of Ghanzi, Kuke, Ncojane, Hukunsi, and Kang, staying at each place for a few days (Fig. 1). I could also participate in some of the rites and observed the actual course of events in them.

As I collected more information from the |Gui during my research in the Xade area, the names of rites and plants will be written in |Gui language. But I could observe that the ||Gana also performed very similar rites, so that at least concerning the rites, there is little difference between the |Gui and the ||Gana. The phonetic notations of |Gui language in this paper follow the orthography by Nakagawa (1996). Literal translations from the |Gui language, such as the names of their rites, are marked by special quotation marks; ⟨ ⟩.

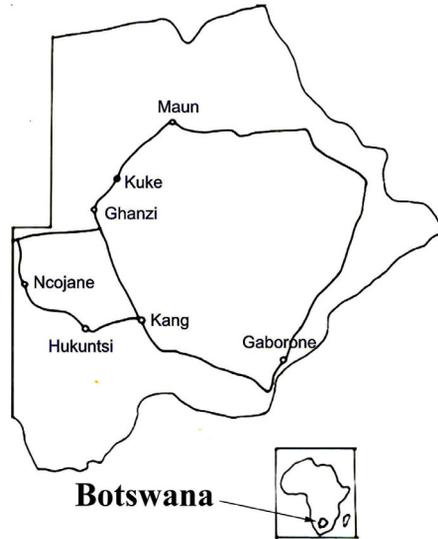


Fig. 1. Study area.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF RITES

### I. Rites of Passage

The most important of the |Gui//Gana's rites of passage are those "for menarche," "for coming-of-age," "for marriage," and "for birth." Such rites, except the ones for menarche, cannot be observed easily because only a few people are involved. Especially the rite for marriage is far from what we expect, as I mentioned in the introduction. As was mentioned above, the word *tsôo*, used for "rite," originally means "cure." This means that the |Gui//Gana's rites are essentially for cure and prevention of disease, and that ceremonial formality is not a requirement.

#### 1. *The ritual for menarche*

In the ritual for menarche, which every girl passes, a number of women gather even from a distance and dance to bless her. The ritual for menarche has two motivations: One is to hope that the girl will grow up healthily and be prolific, and the other is to pray for abundant harvest. The ritual also provides the elder with the opportunity to reeducate the girl about the ideology of the |Gui//Gana society, which is based on intensive collaboration expressed by rules such as "Share things with your relatives," "Help one another," and "Never hide anything."

When a girl has her menarche, women from the same camp hurry to build a hut and isolate her in it. Then the ritual for menarche begin. The girl, with a blanket pulled over her head, is not allowed to say any useless thing, and has to lie down for half a month. During that period, women from other camps also gather and dance around the hut she is lying in.

This dance ceremony is called ⟨eland⟩. It is said that the women are dancing, imitating a herd of Cape elands. Cape elands are large-sized antelopes with rich fat, living in the Kalahari Desert. They are a symbol of “productiveness and proliferation.”

The rite for the first menstruation period is called ⟨male eland⟩, and the same kind of rite, called ⟨female eland⟩, is repeated for the second period. The ⟨eland⟩ is the most brilliant climax in the sequence of rites for menarche. However, the whole ritual is composed of many rites that need about a year to be completed. All through this period, the girl is subjected to various regulations imposed on her manner of behavior. In this paper, I cannot fully describe the whole series of rites constituting the “ritual for menarche.” For details of them, see Imamura (2001). Below, I will concentrate only on one type of rites, in which “medical plants” are used. The girl’s ⟨aunts⟩<sup>(2)</sup> are in charge of these rites.

1. The beginning of menarche, ⟨having the girl go home⟩:

When a girl is out for gathering wild plants and notices that her first period comes, she crouches down there. The ⟨aunts⟩, who are gathering with her, have her lie down. The oldest among them bites a plant named *saasa* and spits at the girl: first at her instep, next at her sole, and then at the sand where her blood soaks.

After spitting at the girl’s foot and the sand, the ⟨aunts⟩ throw the bloody sand onto the root of a shrub. These practices are believed to cause rich harvest in the rainy season. After that, they surround the girl and take her back to their camp stealthily. The above-mentioned practices are called //ʔaeku-kaxo, ⟨having the girl go home⟩.

“Biting *saasa* and spitting at the girl” is seen several times in the process of the ritual for menarche. This behavior is held at various stages, for the first meal, the first bowel movement, the first gathering, and the first time drawing water after menarche. In every case, the ⟨aunt⟩, after biting *saasa*, spits at the girl, and, according to the situation, the stick for wiping the anus, the digging stick for gathering, or the wood, the grass, and the branches for cleaning the water spot. Each behavior is thought to have the symbolic function of “purifying” or “purging.”

2. ⟨Having the girl eat⟩:

After getting back, the girl is isolated in a special hut. There she has her first meal after her menarche. Before the meal, one of the ⟨aunts⟩ cuts the back of the girl’s thumb with a razor, has her put #ʔoõ-tsôo, ⟨eating medicine<sup>(3)</sup>⟩ on the wound and eat it. This remedy is called #ʔoõ-kaxo, ⟨having the girl eat⟩. Then she starts eating, but she is only allowed to have half of the dish and shares the rest with the ⟨aunt⟩. ⟨Having the girl eat⟩ is performed only before the first meal, but food sharing takes place every meal.

3. (Having the girl be out of the hut with the dirt scrubbed off):  
 While the girl is isolated in the hut, women from the neighboring camps come to visit and dance the (eland). With time going by, the girl's (aunts) and the women discuss the date when they should let her out of the hut. They determine it according to the phase of the moon since it is considered as desirable if the date is around full moon. Each girl is isolated in the hut for about two weeks on average, but the span is up to the occasion. Every morning during the isolation in the hut, the girl scrubs off the dirt of her body with *//nǎn* powder made from seeds of tsama melons. The blood on her body is also scrubbed off with this powder. On the morning when she is allowed to get out of the hut, the dirt on her body is also scrubbed off<sup>(4)</sup>. The (aunt) cuts twelve places on the girl's body with a razor and applies medical plants and (eating medicine) to the wounds. Then the girl gets out of the hut, wearing a necklace and a cap made by her fiance or (uncle) for the ritual. The caps used to be made of springbok skins, but at present, purchased scarves are used instead. Such a rite done in the morning is called *≠khúá ≠qx'óaxo*, (having the girl be out of the hut with the dirt scrubbed off).
4. (Snapping the grass in front of her face):  
 The girl is dazzled when she first gets out of the hut, because she has been living in the darkness till then. Her (aunt) makes *!k'áo*, a kind of grass, shut out the girl's view, and then snaps it into two to let her see the sunlight. This rite is called *khoǎ kx'ai*, (snapping (the grass) in front of her face). It has the meaning that the girl is made open her own eyes and is given wisdom by the elders.
5. (Having the girl visit):  
 After getting out of the hut, the girl is led to three different directions by the hand of (cousins). She is walking helplessly through the women gathering for her, as if it was her first time to walk. On the next day, the girl's (cousins) take her to huts where people live. The people she visits should share some food with her. This rite is called *gyíra-kaxo*, (having the girl visit).
6. (The cure for bows and arrows by the girl), *//gǎe |koǎ-sika kx'áo-mka tsôo*:  
 Together with her (aunts), the girl, just after her menarche, gathers the bows and arrows of the men living in her camp and spreads medicine called *|xáa-xo* on them. Then, she shoots the arrows one after another together with the (aunts). After that, the girl gives the bows and arrows back to the men. It is believed that such "cured" bows and arrows come to have special power and lead to success for hunting.
7. The rite for her male relatives, (the cure for tooth and stomach):  
 After her third period has finished, her unmarried (brothers), (cousins), and other men living in the same camp are gathered, and a rite is held. All the unmarried male relatives have the opportunity to eat food made by the girl when she is in this ritual period. It is believed that they will suffer from toothache and stomachache if they eat food cooked by the girl who has not previously practiced this rite.  
 The (aunt) cuts the chins and stomachs of the men with a razor. Then the girl rubs medicine and her saliva into her male relatives' wounds, and she makes the men eat the (eating medicine). This rite is called *//koǎ-zí heē |nǎa-sika tsôo*, (the cure for tooth and stomach).

## 2. *The rite for coming-of-age*

The rite for young men coming-of-age used to be held (Silberbauer, 1981), but it has not been practiced since around 1967. This rite was not performed every year, but only in years of rich harvest. So not only unmarried young men, but also married men went through this rite. It was strictly closed to women and held in bushes far from the living areas. In this rite, about 10 young men around the twenties were gathered and made spend time in this group for about a month, following the rules given by elder people.

The rules were so respected that their ritual group was called "school for men." According to some |Gui men, the rite is said to "come from the Kgalagadi." Some features of the rite for coming-of-age may come from the Kgalagadi; the old people have the younger gather and march, and they even control their ways of changing their sleeping positions. But there are also some features which seem to be of |Gui/||Gana origin; e.g. the medical herbs that are applied to wounds between the eyebrows. Moreover, "the rite for coming-of-age" seems to be related to a rite for food avoidance, in which only old people eat kori bustard. For details, see Sugawara (this volume).

Because of the strictness of the rules, some men didn't participate in the ritual although they could have done so. According to my inquiry, the ritual for men coming-of-age was performed only twice from the late 1930's to the 1960's. As for the second one, I asked 19 old men if they had attended the rite. Eleven said yes, while eight said no. The reasons they gave for not attending were, "It is painful," "I didn't want to observe the food taboos during the ritual," and so on.

There is only one disadvantage for a man who does not attend the rite for coming-of-age, namely that he doesn't know where the rite actually took place. It is said that when he passes across the place, his legs weaken because of punishment from a supernatural power.

This rite used to be held at the end of the rainy season. The young men had to sleep side by side, between a big tree and a fire. The elders put logs at the youngsters' heads and feet, and these made the boundary for the rite. In the daytime, the young men went hunting, forming a line, which was led by elders at the top and the end. When they got back from hunting, the young men had to leap over the fire to reach their place of sleep. They were under control of the elders even during the night.

The comparison with the rite for the female menarche shows interesting differences. It is "in the morning" when girls get out of their isolated huts, and "the sunshine" is shown to them by snapping grasses into two. On the other hand, it was "in the evening" when young men finished their group life and "the moon light" was shown to them. Also, while girls get out of their huts on the day of the full moon, the rite for coming-of-age continued from one day of new moon to the next one.

The young men were prevented from eating some kinds of meat for a couple of years after the group life had finished, and some of these were the same as those prohibited in the rite for the female menarche. Three kinds of meat, namely gemsbok, bat-eared-fox, black-backed jackal, are prohibited for a month while living a group life in the bushes. Even after that, for a couple of months, steenbok and red hartebeest cannot be eaten. Moreover, wild cat may only be eaten by only for people reaching old age. The male persons who did not participate in the rite for coming-of-age do not need to observe the food taboos mentioned above.

### 3. *The rite for marriage, (mixing their blood)*

Until the 1970's, girls who had not had her menarche often used to have "fiances" recommended by their parents. In some cases girls lived together with their fiances even before their menarche. Intercourse with girls before menarche is regarded just as "useless and harmless," so it is not prohibited. In their society, it does not matter if a woman is a virgin or not.

The rite for marriage was held in the process of the ritual for menarche. When a girl was isolated in the hut, her fiance was called by her (aunts) to "give us fire," and he went into the hut. He sat down back to back with the girl and made a fire by rubbing a stick in a receiving piece, saying "I wish I could marry this girl." After he lighted the fire, he put the stick and the receiving piece on the sand around the head of the lying girl.

Then the (aunt) told the girl's fiance to "clean the dirt of your hands by rubbing her thigh." He scrubbed the dirt of the girl's body off with his hands. The (aunt) told the girl to do the same thing, and she scrubbed the dirt of his body off with her hands. This rite is called *[qx'óri-zi ||qx'ae||qx'are*, (mixing their dirt). It is said that they come to love each other by doing so.

The (aunt) then put (eating medicine) on the man's hand. He had the girl eat it by throwing it into her mouth. Then the (aunt) put (eating medicine) on the girl's hand. The girl did the same to him. This rite is called *†?oõ-kaxo-ku*, (having each other eat). (Mixing their dirt) and (having each other eat) were held every morning while the girl was isolated in the hut.

After about two weeks had passed, the day of (having the girl be out of the hut with the dirt scrubbed off) came, and the girl and her fiance performed (mixing their dirt). Then the (aunt) cut twelve places of the young couple's bodies with a razor, and she smeared the blood from each wound onto the same wound of the partner. This is called *[?âo-zi ||qx'ae||qx'are*, (mixing their blood). Especially smearing the blood from the wounds in their chests is called *†kao-zi ||qx'ae||qx'are*, (mixing their hearts). It is believed that after doing this, the man and woman can love each other deeply. After all these ritual practices were finished, the rite for marriage was completed.

Recently, most of the women marry a few years after their menarche, so that the rite for menarche is regarded as completely separated from the one for marriage. When the rite for marriage is held alone, it is done as follows.

First, the groom and bride do the (mixing their dirt). Next, the rite (mixing their blood) is performed. And finally they practice (having each other eat). In these three ritual practices, (mixing their blood) is the most important action. Therefore, the rite for marriage is representatively called (mixing their blood).

The man and woman are solemn in the rite for marriage, and they aim to become one body mentally and physically through mixing their dirt and blood. By passing through the rite of marriage, the couple is considered married socially. However, the primary function of such a rite is not discriminating married and unmarried formally. Rather, it functions as a practical treatment for preventing possible disease, which is believed to be caused by sexual intercourse between groom and bride.

4. *The rituals praying for the children's growth*

1. Coming out of confinement, (having the baby be out of the hut with the hair shaved):

The |Gui/||Gana women used to give birth to their children in the bush. Some older women, (aunts), always attended and helped. They had the umbilical cord cut by a *kx'oam* (*Grewia flava*) branch of a bush and buried the placenta deep in the sand there. Then the mother went back to their camp, holding her newborn baby. She immediately retired into her hut, where she took a rest and cared for her child.

The mother is confined to shutting herself and the baby up in the hut, and no man, including the father, is allowed to see the baby. After about two weeks to a month, on the morning of the full moon, she takes it out of the hut, washes its body and shaves off its downy hair on the head. This is called */?iya #qx'óaxo*, (having the baby be out of the hut with the hair shaved). After this rite, the mother starts her usual life again, for example visiting people and going gathering with her baby on her back.

2. The rite for making the baby strong, (giving (the parents' blood) to the baby):

About two months after the birth, the head of the new born baby becomes stabilized. Around this time, it is given the blood of its parents. This is called */koã-ma chîe*, (giving (the parents blood) to the baby). It is believed that the baby becomes healthier and stronger, if the parents share blood with it. After the rite, the father often starts to touch the baby, holding it. However, it is said that the parents should avoid sexual intercourse until the baby begins to walk.

3. The rite of the umbilical cord, (having the baby dig its umbilical cord up):

The baby's umbilical cord becomes dry and comes off three or four days after the birth. Then the mother applies medical plants called *#kam* to its navel and keeps the umbilical cord in a bag. On the day of the rite (having the baby be out of the hut with the hair shaved), she wraps the cord up in the baby's downy hair and, binding it with a steenbok string, she keeps it in a bag in the hut.

When the baby grows up to be about one year old, the mother buries the umbilical cord in the sand under the floor of the hut and has the baby search for it. After the baby has digged and found it by him/herself, she puts it into the bag again. This rite is called */kõa-ma tsháro-kaxo*, (having the baby dig its umbilical cord up). It is believed that the umbilical cord ties the baby with the hut as it tied it with the mother in her body. After the day of (having the baby dig it up) the mother starts to go gathering, leaving the child in the camp. As long as the umbilical cord is kept in the hut, the child is able to come back to the hut, wherever it goes, thanks to the power of the umbilical cord, they believe.

When the |Gui/||Gana used to live their traditional nomadic lives, the most dangerous accident that could happen to a child was to get lost in the bushes.

Being lost in the bushes, the children could be killed by carnivores or serpents and sometimes died of hunger, thirst, or coldness. Around 1960, four-to-five-year-old child got lost on his way to the neighbor's hut, only 20 meters away from his own one, and died of coldness over the night.

Even after settling down, many keep umbilical cords as charms to prevent children from being involved in such accidents. It is said that when the children become about six to seven years old, their umbilical cords disappear without anybody noticing. As the children now can follow the adults and actively walk around the bush, their mothers do not worry about them as much as before.

## II. The Rites for Lifting Food Taboos

### 1. *Meat only for the elders*

The |Gui/|Gana have some taboos concerning animal food (Tanaka, 1971; 1980): *sumo*, which only old people are allowed to eat, and *!nāã-xo*, which should not be eaten by young women and parents of newborn babies. *!Nāã-xo* originally means “things with which a person avoids having a relationship.” Animals that a person mustn't call by name for some ritual reasons are *!nāã-xo* for him/her (Imamura, 2001). Food which can not be eaten is also *!nāã-xo*. This category includes the meat that a person doesn't want to eat because of personal dislike, as well as carnivores, which the |Gui/|Gana, especially women, hate to eat, and some meat which people in particular life-stages are prohibited to eat because of a taboo. So for the younger, *sumo* is *!nāã-xo*. In this paper, I will relate only to *!nāã-xo* as a food taboo in certain life-stages.

Cape pangolin, kori bustard, black korhaan, and two species of tortoises are considered as *sumo* (Sugawara, this volume). I found out that the intestines of gemsboks, the marrow of red hartebeests, and the marrow of greater kudus are also regarded as *sumo*. It is believed that if a young man eats *sumo*, he suffers from diarrhea and stomachache and becomes very thin and feeble.

Children mustn't eat the intestines of gemsboks until they are 14 or 15 years old. When they eat them for the first time, they do not have to hold a rite. People around 20 begin to eat the marrow of red hartebeest, starting with the simple rite that the elders give it to the young by hand, not using any medical plants. They can eat the marrow of greater kudu when they are over 30. When they start to eat it, they have to get a ritual remedy for it. If a man omits this rite, he will suffer from terrible pain in his legs and feet and be unable to walk.

Eating *sumo* is the privilege of the old people. In the rite accompanying the first time to eat such meat, medical plants, saliva, and sweat from the old people's armpits are used as (medicine).

## 2. *Food taboos for young women*

Girls, who are about 14 to 15 and ready to have their first menstrual period, are prohibited from eating the meat of greater kudu and bush duikers. When they are about 16<sup>(5)</sup> and have their first period, they do not have to avoid the two kinds of meat mentioned above anymore. They start eating the meat of greater kudu and bush duikers without any rite. Instead, they are not allowed to eat the following five kinds of animal meat: gemsbok, steenbok, red hartebeest, springhare, and porcupine. The five kinds of animal meat are believed to be “strong” and “poisonous” and to cause acute stomachache and poor appetite for girls who have just had their first period.

The order in which the food taboos for the five species are removed, depends on the opportunities of catching these animals, and also on each girl’s taste. Gemsbok can be eaten after a short period; even only one month after menarche. The other four kinds should be avoided for a comparatively long time, at least half a year to one year. To start eating the five kinds of meat, rites are necessarily.

## 3. *Food taboos for parents having newborn babies*

The five kinds of meat mentioned above are also believed to prevent newborn babies from growing up. Their parents never let them eat such meat, and neither do they eat it themselves. Especially the mothers strictly observe the rules of such food taboos because mother’s milk is believed to include the meat. Mothers breast-feed their babies until around the age of two. When they want to wean their babies, they rub *!nân* juice on their nipples to prevent them from sucking. *!Nân* are the roots of *qâã*, wild melons, and very bitter. The mothers keep the food taboo at least until they have weaned their baby.

When the mothers start to eat the meat avoided up to that time, they hold a rite in which they apply medicine to the child’s wounds they have cut with a razor. This method, in which people give medicine to children through their wounds, is called *|qx’âre-?o*. On the other hand, the fathers start to eat the meat avoided after a few months, and the rite they apply is much simpler than that for mothers, namely having the children drink the fathers’ saliva mixed with medicine. This method is called *≠q’âe-?o*. The |Gui/||Gana say that *|qx’âre-?o* is very painful for the baby. So one of the reasons why mothers observe the food taboo for a long time is that they are waiting for their baby to grow strong enough to endure the ritual remedy.

Mothers of newborn babies have gemsbok soup only a few days after the birth because they think the soup of gemsbok meat makes the mother’s milk rich. The mother or grandmother boils the meat with the hoofs of a gemsbok. They believe that the hoof works as medicine. The mother drinks the soup and breast-feeds her baby, so that the meat of the gemsbok as well as the medicine against gemsbok meat enters the baby’s body. This is easier ritual method than *|qx’âre-?o*. Also the mother applies her milk mixed with her saliva after biting medical plant roots, to the whole body of the baby.

After experiencing their menarche, women will not eat the food under taboo for the sake of their own health, while they follow the food taboo after their childbirth for the sake of their children. Thus, some women do not eat some kinds of meat

for as long as about 10 years throughout menarche, marriage, childbirth, and the children's growth. In any case, it is believed that unless the necessary rite performed, eating dangerous meat causes diarrhea and acute stomachache to the woman or the newborn baby, which leads to leanness and feebleness or even to death in the worst case.

When the |Gui/||Gana lift the taboo for eating the meat of gemsbok, steenbok, red hartebeest, springhare, and porcupine, an elder roasts the tabooed animal's hoofs and the roots of medical plants. Also the elder takes out the excrement from the intestines of the animal. And he/she make medicine by mixing the hair, the dirt, the excrement, and roasted root of medical plant. Then the elder cuts two or three small cuts around the younger's navel with a razor and apply the medicine.

Though the rite is indispensable, it is usually held not before lifting the food taboo, but after eating some meat. This is because the chance to eat some meat comes very unexpectedly. One should not lose this precious opportunity, even if one is not prepared for it. Thus the involved people hold the rites after eating the meat.

This point is most crucial for understanding the fundamental characteristics prevailing in the whole range of |Gui/||Gana rites. As opposed to what is assumed in general by the theories of ritual, their rites do not function as establishing boundaries between previous and new stages of life. The |Gui/||Gana hold rites not before lifting food taboos, but after actually eating the meat under taboo. That is, their rituals don't draw any clear-cut border lines in the continuous flow of human experience. People hold rituals in order to handle their own reality after they have changed some constraining condition in an ad hoc way.

### III. The rites for praying for successful hunting

The |Gui/||Gana's traditional hunting methods were hunting with snares, hunting with bow and arrows, and hunting with spears. The bow-and-arrow hunting is not practiced at present, but the other two methods still exist. For hunting with spears dogs are often needed. By hunting with bow and arrows and with spears, large game can be caught: gemsbok, Cape eland, hartebeest, and greater kudu. By snares they trap small and middle sized animals: bush duiker and steenbok. Hunting on horseback has also become very popular recently (Osaki, 1984). Even at present, their hunting activities are of great necessity for gaining not only meat, but also leather materials for handicrafts, the selling of which is the most reliable source of cash income.

When hunters are willing to have another try after a series of unsuccessful hunting, they receive some ritual remedy: (cure for snares), (cure for bow-and-arrow), and (cure for hunting dogs), depending on their method of hunting. The wives of the hunters hold the rites for their husbands every morning they go hunting. These rites are believed to make the animals to be hunted unable to notice human beings, and so to make hunting successful.

1. *⟨Cure for snares⟩, !gúí-mka tsôo*

The wives of the hunters used to perform this rite every morning, so that men over 50 have beautiful blue tattoos between their eyebrows.

The wife of the hunter cuts his body at different places: the part between the eyebrows, the center of his chest, the upper arms, and then applies a traditional medicine, which is a mixture of roasted plant roots and roasted duiker hoofs.

Tanaka (1978) reports that when a |Gui/||Gana boy had succeeded in snare hunting for the first time, his parents held the ⟨cure for snares⟩ as a celebration that the boy had finished his coming-of-age.

2. *⟨Cure for bows and arrows⟩, kx'âo-mka tsôo*

This ritual remedy for bows and arrows hunting is not held anymore because of this hunting method has vanished today.

There were two kind of rites for bows and arrows hunting. For one, the wife of the hunter cuts his body with a razor: the part between the eyebrows, the center of the chest, the upper arms, the shoulders, and the elbows. Then she rubs a traditional medicine, which is a mixture of roasted roots and a tendon from the heart of a large animal, into his wounds.

Another way is using a kind of fungus named  $\#?ôm\#?ôm$ . They call the spores of the fungus “smoke” and believe that the “smoke” covers the hunter to hide him from the game. The wife of the hunter pushes the fungus on his bow and his body: the part between the eyebrows, the center of his chest, and the upper arms. Then she bites the fungus and a *!kùro* root and spits at the place between his eyebrows, the center of his chest, and his upper arms, reciting the charm, “What happens to you? You find animals every day, but you can’t shoot them. I will make the animals’ hearts sleep. I will make their eyes close.”

3. *⟨Cure for hunting dogs⟩, ?āba-mka tsôo*

The |Gui/||Gana keep dogs and take the dogs with them, when hunting with spears. If a dog, which was once brave and good at chasing game, becomes afraid of wild animals, people give the dog some traditional medicine mixed with the dog-food. The medicine is made of roasted roots of a plant, roasted hoof of a gemsbok, and roasted foot of a bat-eared fox. They call the medicine *!nhoe*.

4. *Hunting and taboos for women during their period*

The |Gui/||Gana have some taboos for women who are in their menstrual period. They must not cook meat on their own fire. They must not touch the bows and arrows of their husbands. If a woman breaks the taboos, her husband can not succeed in hunting because the game runs away bleeding, just as his wife is bleeding.

If “the hunter’s arms are dead” because the taboo was broken, a person other than the wife holds the following rite. At first, the ashes of the wife’s fire are mixed with roasted *!gâri ïi* root. Then the person who is holding the rite cuts some parts of the hunter’s body, namely between the eyebrows, the center of the chest, and the upper arms, and rubs the above medicine into the wounds.

## IV. The Rites for Recovering from Social (Dirt)

1. *The rite for záãku, (mixing their urine)*

In the |Gui||Gana society, married persons sometimes have sexual relationships with others than their husbands or wives. Such a relationship distinguished from marriage is called “záãku” (Tanaka, 1989). The |Gui||Gana do not think of the relationship as bad behavior, but they do think that sexual relationships, especially extra-marital ones, sometimes cause disease and misfortune. The caused disease is called *|qx'óri*.

*|qx'óri* first means “dirt,” such as the dirt on one’s body, hands, and on one’s clothes. Furthermore, sick persons and those who are lustful and unjust are said to *|qx'óri -xa* (*xa* is a possessive morpheme), (having the *|qx'óri*). Thus the word *|qx'óri* also means invisible dirt or impurity hidden in one’s body. When the word *|qx'óri* is used to name some disease, it typically indicates that the man or woman who had sexual intercourse suffers from backache, headache, or pain of the sexual organs.

Even single men or women sometimes get *|qx'óri* when they have a sexual relationship. But most cases are caused by *záãku*. In the |Gui||Gana society, sometimes sexual partners are swapped between several married couples, which is called *!gúri záãku*, (enormous *záãku*) or *!núu-ma xároku*, (sharing huts) (Imamura, in press). (Enormous *záãku*) is believed to involve the couples’ whole families and make all of them suffer from *|qx'óri* in the end. The first victims are little children, and babies suffer from diarrhea and have a high fever, which is deadly in the worst cases.

Accordingly, when (enormous *záãku*) starts, an elder immediately gathers all the adults concerned and their children together, and holds the rite for *záãku*. The rite is called *|xam-zi ||qx'ae||qx'are*, (mixing their urine). It is also called *|qx'óri*. So *|qx'óri* is the name of both the disease and the ritual remedy. The rite for *záãku* is similar to the rite for marriage mentioned above, but it is different in using not only blood, but also urine.

The elder collects urine of all adults involved in the *záãku*, and wounds them to bleed. Then, the elder mixes the urine and the blood, adding roasted roots of medical plants. This mixture becomes strong “medicine.” This medicine contains only the urine and the blood of the adults, not of the children. It is then applied to the wounds of all of the adults and the children.

The action of mixing the blood in the rite for *záãku* is the same as in the rite for marriage. Also, applying the blood of the adults to the wounds of the children is similar to the rite where parents make their baby strong by giving their blood. So the rite for *záãku* implies that the families connected by (enormous *záãku*) form a kind of “extended family.”

The rite for *záãku*, named (mixing their urine), has the social meaning that a man and a woman who had a sexual relationship let all of their families and all camp members know about this relationship. The same rite is also held when a man and a woman get remarried. This rite is not for telling “marriage” from “*záãku*,” but for solving the physical and social problems caused by sexual intercourse.

## 2. What is *|qx'óri*?

What do the |Gui/||Gana think *|qx'óri* (dirt) is? *|Qx'óri* is explained as something spread by sexual intercourse, and “venereal disease” is thought to be caused by *|qx'óri*. But *|qx'óri* is not something “pathogenic” as in medical science. Below three episodes will be described, which provide an essential clue to understanding what *|qx'óri* might be.

1. At first, I believed that *|qx'óri* was something pathogenic. So I asked both people who had suffered from *|qx'óri* and those who had not the question: “How did *|qx'óri* spread from whom to whom?” But their answers were almost the same: “The whole family, including the children, got *|qx'óri* simultaneously.”
2. Blood and urine are collected in “the rite for *zááku*” because they are said to be in *|qx'óri* condition. Of all the collected blood, the blood from parts under the navel is regarded as most important. According to an informant, this is because “urine and blood from under navel are in the worst *|qx'óri* condition, and things in such a condition become the best medicine.”
3. Sometimes a married woman becomes pregnant during a sexual *zááku* relationship. The |Gui/||Gana society is tolerant of extramarital pregnancy, and such a pattern is expressed as “(the semen of) the two men, the husband and the lover of the woman, mix together and give birth to a child. (*kx'áo-bi heẽ záã-bi heẽ, etsera |kâm-tsera ||qx'ae||qx'are ya |koã-ma ?âba.*)”  
The |Gui/||Gana call semen ⟨male water⟩. ⟨Male water⟩ is thought to be the origin of an embryo and ⟨food⟩ for its growth. The ⟨male water⟩ of the husband and the lover can be ⟨food⟩ for strengthening the child, but can also turn to be *|qx'óri* and cause disease, depending on the relationship between the two men. If the two men have trouble with each other even though they respected each other at first, the ⟨male water⟩ making up the body of their child turns into *|qx'óri* condition.

The examples 1 and 3 show that *|qx'óri* is not considered as a disease which a person gets isolatedly, but as existing in the relationship between persons. The |Gui/||Gana think that they have substances in their bodies which form the base of their relationships with other people, such as the one between parents and children, brothers and sisters, husband and wife, and lovers. Although these substances are physical things such as blood, semen, sweat, saliva, dirt, and urine, they are regarded as some kind of medium that relates those involved in an especial relationship.

It is believed that once a couple has a sexual relationship, they continue to be connected with each other by bodily substance even long after they are separated (see 3). Here it is to be noted that there is a circulation of logic in this situation; the relationship, which endows mere physical things with the function of a social medium itself, originates from the exchange or sharing of these things through human bodies. I would like to designate such a relationship based on bodily substance as “concernment-based-on-bodily-substance (CBBS)”

CBBS is neither a physical matter like a “pathogen” nor an abstract relation. Its character can change from *|qx'óri* (dirt) to *tsôo* (medicine) (see 2). CBBS cannot exist independently, but only in a relationship between persons.

As seen in 3, CBBS causes no problem when the persons are getting along with each other. Semen, (male water), of both men, even has a positive effect as “food” for the baby, which makes the baby strong. However, once some problem like jealousy, hatred, lust, etc. arises in the relationship, the CBBS of all family members turns into negative at the same moment, and all of them become ill, namely *|qx'óri*. This illness does not spread gradually from the sick to the healthy, but all people related by CBBS at once experience the same *|qx'óri*.

The |Gui//Gana doubt that a sexual relationship directly leads to *|qx'óri*. They also know the positive aspects of sexual relationships, such as the power of childbirth and peaceful coexistence in *záãku*. But once only one person becomes unsatisfied with the *záãku* involving him or her, and a conflict occurs, *|qx'óri* spreads soon to even the children living with this person. As this kind of situation is feared, “the rite for *záãku*” is held.

Why can something which is *|qx'óri* turn out to be *tsôo* (medicine) by performing a rite as shown in 2? I think it implies that *|qx'óri* itself can be strong medicine, if the people, concerning *záãku*, make clear what has happened already and accept the “fact.” For example, once a wife becomes involved in *záãku*, her husband gets connected with her lover by CBBS, even though they don't want to know it. Such a relationship hidden in their bodies becomes evident through the specific action of cutting and mixing their blood and urine. Then, all members of the *záãku* share this (medicine) and put it back to their bodies.

## V. Rites Derived from the Kgalagadi

It is plausible to assume that all rites mentioned above originate from the |Gui//Gana. The sorts of plants used in them as “medicine” are all the same, and so is the pattern of applying the medicine to wounds cut by razors. Furthermore, there is little variation in the ways the rites are organized, which also supports the above assumption.

In this section, I will refer to other rites, which some |Gui//Gana people do not know. Even where they are known, the ways of performing the rite are not consistent among the people. Above all, in some rites, “ears of goats” are used, which obviously suggests agropastoralic origin. Moreover, some rites are named in SeTswana language, and some people say, “It is a kind of ritual coming from the Kgalagadi.” The Kgalagadi are an ethnic branch of the Tswana, a Bantu-speaking agropastoral people. They speak a dialect of the SeTswana language. It is clear that the |Gui//Gana had contact with the Tswana and the Kgalagadi people, and that they influenced each other culturally (Osaki, 1996).

The rituals that may derive from the Kgalagadi include “the rite of using sneeze,” “the rite of using sweat,” “the rite for hurt feeling (*qhaba*),” and “the rite for abnormal childbirth (*cabaama*).” It is still possible that these rites, which I consider as from the Kgalagadi, might stem from the |Gui//Gana. However, they are obviously

different from those regarded as purely |Gui/||Gana in this paper; in behavioral patterns as well as the species used as (medical plants).

In spite of their Kgalagadi origins, these four rites have penetrated into the |Gui/||Gana's lives deeply, and they are thriving even at present in their society. Also, they are quite different from the rite practiced by the Kgalagadi nowadays. So these rites were greatly recasted into the patterns specific to the |Gui/||Gana, after they were adopted from the Kgalagadi.

### 1. *The rite of using sneeze, (sneeze treatment)*

In addition to (mixing their urine) mentioned in the previous section, there are two other rites, the rite of using sneeze and the rite of using sweat, that are practiced against disease from /qx'óri. It is desirable that the man and the woman, who had sexual intercourse, and their respective mates take part in these two rites, but their children don't have to do so.

"The rite of using sneeze" is called (sneeze medicine (*tshéé tsóo*)). The participants sneeze by inhaling medicine that causes them to sneeze. This medicine is made by mixing medical plants with the nails of the participants. By sneezing, /qx'óri is believed to be driven out of their bodies. It is also believed that the disease is quite serious, when it is not easy to give a sneeze.

The Kgalagadi people know of a similar disease and have a ritual treatment for it. The disease is called *moilelo* in SeTswana. According to my research, the "symptoms" of the disease are acute headache and backache caused by passionate sexual intercourse, and it does not matter whether the man and the woman are married or not. The name of the medicine and the name of the rite are also *moilelo*. When making the medicine, physical things such as human nails are not used in Kgalagadi villages, because the effects of the medical plants themselves are regarded as important. Recently *moilelo* is also sometimes used as medicine for headaches not caused by sexual intercourse. And some painkillers in hospitals or drugstores are also called *moilelo* today.

### 2. *The rite of using sweat, moxaco*

Some married couples related to one another by sexual intercourse sometimes hold "the rite of using sweat," after using the (sneeze treatment). In this rite, an elder boils the water with some medical plants and the urine from all the adults involved in the *zááku*, and also puts the medicine onto the fire at the side of the boiling water, so that it produces smoke. Then all of the participants sit down around the boiling water and the smoke. They pull blankets over themselves, bathe in the steam and the smoke and sweat very much.

This rite has no vernacular name; it is called *moxaco*, which sounds like SeTswana. In the SeTswana, *moxaco* is written as *mogato*. The Kgalagadi's *mogato* is totally different from the |Gui/||Gana's ideas about disease.

According to the Kgalagadi's view of disease, a person who has just undergone pregnancy, a miscarriage, some relative's death, or too much intercourse, is impure. It is believed that when this person visits a sick person, the disease gets worse and worse because of the impurity carried by the visitor. When the Kgalagadi hold

the rite of *mogato*, they let the sick breathe in the steam of the medical plants to prevent them from suffering from impurity and have them recover from disease.

The |Gui/|Gana perform this rite to cure the persons who themselves had sexual relations and suffered from *|qx'óri*. According to them, by pulling blankets over themselves and sweating, “their blood gets (sharp), and *|qx'óri* comes out of their bodies with the sweat.” They insist that recovery from disease is possible by making *|qx'óri* leave the bodies.

On the other hand, a Kgalagadi traditional doctor said, “We pull blankets on to let the plant medicine completely penetrate into the patient’s body, and sweating is not so important.” Even though very similar rituals are done by the Kgalagadi and the |Gui/|Gana, the purposes and the explained ways of recovery are very different.

### 3. *The rite for hurt feeling, qhaba*

The |Gui/|Gana treat illness or trouble like stomachache, headache, muscular pain, and eczema by bloodletting, taking medical plants, and applying medicine to the according parts of the bodies. See details on medical plants in Appendix 2.

When a sick person does not readily recover from the disease, though he was treated, people start to guess that there might be another cause for the disease. The family and relatives of the person who is seriously ill or had a sudden accident try to find the cause of the misfortune by talking with other people. Almost all misfortunes the |Gui/|Gana encounter nowadays are regarded as caused by *|qx'óri* or *qhaba*. Other reasons might be breaking ritual rules such as food taboos and curse, which is said to be derived from the Kgalagadi.

For instance, when a woman has a difficult delivery or cannot have a baby even some while after the expected date of her parturition, this is considered to be due to *|qx'óri* or *qhaba*. When the sexual relationship of the woman or her husband is regarded as problematic, this is due to *|qx'óri*. The rite for *qhaba* is held, when the woman or her sibling is thought ill of by some relative.

*Qhaba* is like “hurt feeling” (Merriweather, 1965). It is always directed one-sidedly from older to younger relatives. When someone in the younger generation (son, daughter, nephew, niece, grandchild) does something wrong, *qhaba* is generated because such wrong behavior makes people in the elder generation (father, mother, uncle, aunt, grandfather, grandmother) be in pain. Wrong behaviors is for example: not sharing meat or money with relatives, continuing an extra-marital sexual relationship though everybody else is against it, not keeping in touch with anybody after going to a distant place, and so on. Then *qhaba* from the older (goes into) the younger, who becomes seriously ill or encounters a sudden accident.

Above I explained the phenomena called *qhaba* in the |Gui/|Gana society. In the Tswana-Kgalagadi society, there is something similar. It is called “*dikgaba*” (*di* is prefix) in the SeTswana. According to a Kgalagadi woman, who is a teacher, many social problems in present Botswana are also considered *dikgaba*. When young persons lose their jobs, cannot find new jobs, or have accidents, *dikgaba* from older relatives is often thought to be the cause. So they have to visit traditional doctors and ask them to hold the rite for *dikgaba*.

The rite is very similar to that of the |Gui/||Gana. But it is characteristic of the |Gui/||Gana's thought that the concept of *|qx'óri* is involved in the mechanism generating *qhaba*. The |Gui/||Gana regard elders filled with sadness, ill feeling, or anger against youngsters as "having *|qx'óri*." In the rite of *qhaba*, the (dirt of hands) is especially focused on. So the |Gui/||Gana wash their hands elaborately and have the *|qx'óri* (dirt) of hands dissolve into water. Then they sprinkle the water with *|qx'óri* over patients, and drink it as medicine. They call the rite of *qhaba* "*tsheu |qx'óri*," (dirt of hands).

#### 4. *The rite for abnormal childbirth, cabaama*

|Gui/||Gana people sometimes say, "My baby was born in the condition of *cabaama*." *Cabaama* means "abnormal" ways of birth. This word has been translated as "breach birth" (Sugawara, 1991: 107). However, during my research in 1995 I found out that *cabaama* means that "a baby comes out of the mother's body by facing the ground, with its face and even chests buried in the sand during the process of childbirth."

How is this interpreted medically? The traditional deliveries of the |Gui/||Gana are done by sitting with legs opened or crouching. Thus babies are normally born with their face to the ground. This means that babies born in *cabaama* are born medically normal. Dr. Kotoko Suzuki (nursing-science, Kure University) suggests that *cabaama* might mean babies falling into a state of suspended animation. And there is also the possibility that *cabaama* indicates any way of being born as "abnormal," as pointed out by Anderson & Staugard (1986).

When a child is born in the state of *cabaama*, it is said that not only the child but also its parents suffer from chest trouble. For example, if a father has tuberculosis or serious bronchitis, this is believed to be caused by his child born in *cabaama*.

*Cabaama* is called *thibamo* (Merriweather, 1965) in SeTswana, and fits perfectly the same explanation. It is thought a sort of serious disease, which the Tswana-Kgalagadi usually confuse with tuberculosis (Anderson & Staugard, 1986: 125-126).

There are some cases in which people begin to reinterpret the birth of a baby several years after it was born, saying that the child was *cabaama*. In 1996, a ||Gana man died of chest trouble. Then people started to say, "He died because the women hid the fact that his child, born two years ago, was *cabaama*." At childbirth only a few women help, and as it is ambiguous what exactly *cabaama* is, it is difficult to judge. Recently, even in the |Gui/||Gana society, the number of children considered as *cabaama* is increasing. Consequently, the parents are so afraid of disease that they are eager to hold the rite for *cabaama*, whenever they discern even the slightest possibility that their child might be *cabaama*.

## DISCUSSION

## I. Rites as an Experience

As mentioned above, the |Gui/||Gana word *tsoo*, which indicates rites, originally means curing and medicine, and for the people, rites are a special way of curing. Since they are for curing, some rites are held in order to handle expected forthcoming incidents after some actual choice has been made. For the |Gui/||Gana, their rituals do not set “formal” distinctions between succeeding and proceeding phases, but they are meant as “practical” curing.

However, it is difficult to distinguish formality from substantiality in our life. Let me consider what kind of roles rites play in the |Gui/||Gana’s daily lives by vividly illustrating their real experiences. Below I will elucidate how they actually used to hold their rites, based on an old |Gui woman’s narration about the rite for *zááku* she experienced about 30 years ago.

I had lived with my husband Hopura, for many years, and I was loved by a man named |Khooþkêbe. Then I became pregnant and gave birth to my first child named “Kénama-*tsôo*” (looking for *tsôo* for you). People around us said, “Because it is *zááku*, because it is *zááku*,” and hold the rite for us. An old person was afraid of *|qx’óri* and mixed our blood. We call this happening “looking for *tsôo* for you.” After this my son was born. So he was named Kénama-*tsôo*.

When we started *zááku*, nobody mentioned curing. ||Näekopi (|Khooþkêbe’s wife) and I as well as Hopura and |Khooþkebe said, “Yaa, I [|Khooþkêbe] will do it with Hopura. Hmm I [Hopura] will do it with |Khooþkêbe<sup>(6)</sup>. We want to share our huts.” We agreed to this *zááku* and had intercourse. Hopura agreed and we, the two women, agreed. Then the two men also agreed.

The four of us shared the huts. Hopura slept with ||Näekopi, and |Khooþkêbe slept with me. One morning, an elder made us get together. The elder collected our water (urine) and mixed with medicine. The elder cut and cut and cut our bodies with a razor and applied and applied and applied the water and medicine to our wounds.

*Zááku* is said to be “sharing huts.” That is, we share our “sleeping” (sexual partner). A man says, “I will go to sleep in your place,” and the other says “If so, I will go to your place instead.” However, a woman [|Näekopi] rejected and said, “I will not give permission to my husband. I can’t stand that he goes to sleep with that woman [|Goari]!” Since the woman said such a thing, old people gave us the curing, cutting us and mixing the blood and urine of the four of us with the medicine. After accepting *zááku*, we slept together.

At first, my husband Hopura rejected the *zááku*, saying “I will not go to his hut.” But after curing, he said, “Hi, we finished curing, so I will go to |Khooþkêbe’s camp.” Cured with this medicine, I gave birth to our child. When Kénama-*tsôo* was born, we, the four of us mixed our blood and used it for curing the child. We four gave our blood to my son. In the *zááku*, when Hopura made food, he and me ate it, and we shared it with |Khooþkêbe and his wife. When |Khooþkêbe made something to eat, the four of us, collected the food and ate it, sitting together. We gave everything to one another. So when we were in *zááku*, I was happy. My husband was happy. (|Goari, Sep. 2, 1994)

|Goari, who told me her experiences described above, was in love with |Khoopkêbe, who had his wife and a child. Then they proposed their husband and wife that the four of them should do *záãku*. Some old people were afraid that the four of them and their children would become ill because of *|qx'óri* (dirt), and so they held the rite for *záãku*. The rite can be interpreted as “prevention” of disease. But on the other hand, for them, *záãku* is associated with *|qx'óri* so closely that *záãku* relation and *|qx'óri* disease go together. It seems to be more natural to regard the rite as “curing.”

Here the connection between the rite and *záãku* should be considered in detail. Did the two married couples enter the stage of *záãku* by going through the rite? Or did they have the rite as handling the ongoing situation after first (sharing their huts)?

The four members started (sharing their huts) without having the rite. Then, when |Goari became pregnant, the rite for *záãku* was held by the oldest. According to |Goari's story, Hopura and ||Naekopi, involved in the four people's *záãku*, seemed to take a positive attitude toward *záãku* even without the rite. But, at the same time, it is also implied that they were against the *záãku* before the rite. This ambiguity in |Goari's story itself vividly represents the dynamism of feelings actually experienced by the participants involved.

The four of them didn't even know if they were accepting one another or not, while their daily life was going on in the style of (sharing their huts). This inconsistency of their psychological conflict with their peaceful daily life had reached a climax, when |Goari became pregnant. So the rite was held by the elders to make sure that the four accepted each other and also, that their *záãku* relation was accepted by all the people living in the camp. It was the rite for *záãku* “that threw the net of the story” (Hamamoto, 1985) on the chaotic reality. The rite reorganized the experiences and made them agreeable for the people. |Goari told me that after the rite was held, the four of them accepted one another from the bottoms of their heart and had their lives together, sharing sex and food.

There are many phrases emphasizing “mutuality” among the words used to denote *záãku*, such as “sharing food,” “giving something to one another,” “sharing huts,” “agreeing with one another.” Also, do the actions performed in the rite, such as “mixing all the people's blood together” and “mixing all the people's urine together.” Rubbing the (medicine) back into everyone's body may also be seen as a kind of sharing. Thus the rites reproduces their way of sharing life and can therefore be seen as a symbol for passing into another phase of life.

*Záãku* relationships between a man and a woman are first accepted by their wife and husband. The spouses are involved, even though they don't want to. But the relationship among the four people improves. Then, by performing rites, this relationship comes to be known to all members of the camp, including the children. This course of event is considered as the ideal *záãku* by the |Gui/||Gana.

The following point is, however, most difficult for me to understand. Although “infidelity” (*furin* in Japanese) is quite common in our [Japanese] society, we cannot imagine any probable situation, where such a kind of extra-marital relationship extends to involve all the members of the two families. Here we recognize a deep

gap between our “modern” society and the |Gui//Gana society. The most important point might be that “not hiding anything” is the ground principle of the latter society (Sugawara, 1991: 111). And it is the core of curing, healing, and even solving problems by negotiation to make it clear what is hidden and unseen. The rites as some “stage setting” configures the social drama in the |Gui//Gana community and supplies it with some kind of “ending.”

## II. The |Gui//Gana’s View of Humans and Bodies

Among rituals done by the |Gui//Gana people, there are many elements imported from the Kgalagadi. However, even though a rite was adopted from the Kgalagadi, the interpretation has changed into the |Gui//Gana’s way of thinking, depending on what the effects of the curing are derived from. Especially, the views of the world underlying the rituals are quite different between the Kgalagadi and the |Gui//Gana.

“Medicines” used in rituals are composed of medical plants and substances from human bodies. The Kgalagadi regard the effects of the medical plants in their rituals as important. Therefore, traditional doctors are specialized in their knowledge about medical plants. They regard using bodily substances in rituals as “vicious sorcery or cursing.” A Kgalagadi man told me that orthodox traditional doctors are not allowed to use blood, urine or hairs of humans in their treatment.

On the other hand, what is considered to be more powerful in the |Gui//Gana’s rites, are not medical plants, but substances from human bodies such as blood, urine, sweat, saliva, dirt, and nails. These substances are thought to have positive attributes, e.g. as blood in the rite for marriage or blood, sweat, and saliva in the rite lifting food taboos, but they can also have power because they are regarded as “dirty” and negative when used in the rituals of *|qx’óri* and *qhaba*. This means that the substances from human bodies can have these two opposite attributes.

The |Gui//Gana believe that the substances from their bodies stem all from the same source though their appearance is different. An old |Gui man’s explanation of human bodies is cited below.

Human beings are made from male and female water. Blood and water, both of them are strong and have great effects. They are also powerful. So human beings can give birth to children. [...]

Blood, blood is water. Water is blood. Have this part cut. Red. This is blood. This is not red when it comes out of another part of the body. Something coming out through intercourse is not red. But it is identical with blood. Water, urine, and blood. They are identical. Sweat, saliva, blood, and urine. They are also identical. Any of them comes out of the human’s body and has strong power. The |Gui think so. So we use blood, urine, saliva, sweat, and dirt for curing. (|Khoo#kêbe, Sep. 12, 1994)

He reveals the |Gui/||Gana's view on human bodies as well as their interpretation of human reproduction. They believe, human life is made by mixing *kx'áoko-mka tsháasa* (male water) and *||gǎeko-sika tsháasa* (female water). (Male water) is semen. (Female water) is love juice and amniotic fluid. They think, blood circulates in a human body and changes into (male water) or (female water), urine, sweat, and saliva. Even dirt is seen as a transformation of sweat or urine. They sometimes call semen *tsháasa*, (water), and also call urine the same *tsháasa*, (water). So (water) is some upper category of bodily substance. The power of each bodily substance is generated where human beings are born and living powerfully.

When the |Gui/||Gana just have a headache, stomachache or so on, they first let blood from a patient. But if they "diagnose" that the disease comes from a social problem like *!qx'óri* or *qhaba*, they hold rites, taking their bodily substances and exchanging them. When people lift food taboos or pray for successful hunting, they also use bodily substances of humans and animals as "medicine."

### III. Life Filled with Water

How do the |Gui/||Gana think human life starts, matures, and enters the stage of death? They believe, human life starts by mixing (male water) with (female water). Menstrual blood is regarded as useless. Thus it is thought that blood has nothing to do with the formation and growth of a human embryo. Instead, frequent sexual intercourse causes (male water) to eventually accumulate in the woman's womb, and when the womb is filled with (male water) and (female water), an embryo will finally start to form. According to the |Gui/||Gana's explanation of human reproduction, no moment of fertilization exist. That is, they believe that their lives break out in an analogical way, not a digital way. Also, even after an embryo has started to form, it is still in development and needs male water, accumulated in the womb, as "food."

The |Gui/||Gana explain that (male water) and (female water), the sources of life, are mixed and become amniotic fluid, and that life is born from this amniotic fluid. These thoughts may be based on their experiences of preparing pregnant wild animals for food. Moreover, the thirsty hunters sip gastric juice from the game or milk from the female carcasses. It can be assumed that the |Gui/||Gana's ideas of life have been formed by encountering the life and death of wild animals and by butchering them. They also think that animal babies are also made from a mixture of (male water) and (female water), too. From such a point of view the boundary between humans and animals is not very distinct.

For the |Gui/||Gana, bodies with life are filled with (water). A human being starts his life by receiving (water). It grows up by absorbing (water) into its body, receiving it from its parents and relatives, given through some rites. He or she comes to be able to exchange (water) with other people, when the first ejaculation or menarche is finished. This means that at this moment, his or her (water) starts to flow out of the body. Then, he or she gives birth to children and hands on to them his/her (water), which means that his/her freshness is reducing.

A most important point to be observed in the whole range of |Gui//Gana rites is, that they do not think of much inequality between the sexes. Both sexes pass nearly the same rituals, except for the ritual remedies concerning hunting and gathering. The way in which both men and women can freely use their ⟨water⟩, which is a kind of ritual resource, for *záãku* for instance, is also clearly related to a gender equality. In the context of their rituals, only the hierarchy of the elders and the young has a crucial meaning. The mature age has influence on the others and can give the power of the ⟨water⟩ to the young generation.

When the |Gui//Gana emphasize that they are old, they show off the wrinkles on their faces and bodies. In these cases, they do not just show their appearance, but try to show that they are getting old inside their bodies, too.

Someday human beings die. The |Gui//Gana are very realistic, and do not have the concept of a “world after death<sup>(7)</sup>.” Their tradition doesn’t know a big ceremonial funeral<sup>(8)</sup>. They only keep sorrowful silence, when a big hole for the dead is dug at the backyard of their camp, and each of the close relatives of the dead holds a handful of sand and throws it into the hole. When the hole is covered by sand, it means the funeral is complete. Soon the people resume their daily activities again.

When I asked some people, where the dead persons were, they answered: “They are buried in the sands.” They know that the bodies are eaten by little animals and insects, while they still have ⟨water⟩, that they get dry, are mixed with the sands, and finally disappear.

#### IV. Human Beings Connected by ⟨Water⟩

The |Gui//Gana think that human bodies are some collected power of ⟨water⟩, which contains blood, urine, sweat, saliva, semen, all other body fluid, and dirt. The attribute of CBBS (concernment-based-on-bodily-substance), the medium connecting people with each other, which I mentioned in this paper, changes with that of ⟨water⟩ from *|qx’óri* to *tsôo*. I would like to express their idea about ⟨water⟩ in the following images.

Human bodies are filled with ⟨water⟩, and what connects individual human beings with each other, has the character of ⟨water⟩. People are floating in a “pond,” that is, their social relationships. The water surface starts moving in waves, and *|qx’óri* spreads, once someone is involved in some conflict having extra-marital intercourse or neglecting elders by not sharing food with them.

Then the relatives hold some rites. In the rites, they take ⟨water⟩ from their bodies, so that its attribute changes from *|qx’óri* to *tsôo*. Then they exchange and share their ⟨water⟩ in which the peoples are related by CBBS. At last, the waving water surface turns to be calm again as it was.

Using ⟨water⟩ as a keyword, the whole range of |Gui//Gana rites can be summarized as follows; the rites for praying for their children’s growth, for marriage, for *|qx’óri*, and for *qhaba* prompt the people to exchange ⟨water⟩ and substances from their own bodies with those from other people’s bodies, aiming to adjust themselves to their social lives.

In rites for successful hunting and for ending food avoidance, the marrow, the hair, the dirt on the hoofs, and excrements from the intestines of hunted animals are used. They are not liquid, but animal substances. The substances separated from animal bodies are absorbed into human bodies, and by doing so, something powerful is thought to be gained from animals.

In the rites for menarche and coming-of-age, people aim to adjust themselves to the social relationships with other human beings and also the relationships between human beings and nature.

When do the |Gui/||Gana feel that they are strongly connected with other human beings? It is when they suffer from */q̄x'óri*. Though it is paradoxical, people can feel that they are alive, when they are undergoing hard experiences such as disease, misfortune, and disaster.

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#### NOTES

- (1) The |Gui and ||Gana are two dialect groups. The difference between these two dialects is so small that each group can easily understand what is spoken by the other group. Intermarriage is also frequent between them.
- (2) In the |Gui/||Gana kinship system, not only brothers and sisters of the same father or mother, but also parallel cousins are in the same category called ⟨sibling⟩. Similarly, ⟨uncle⟩ and ⟨aunt⟩ are in the same category as ⟨grandfather⟩ and ⟨grandmother⟩, respectively. For the detail of the |Gui relationship terminology, see Ono (1996).
- (3) ⟨Eating medicine⟩ used for rituals for menarche and for children, is made by mixing a plant named |kee ii, with *≠nān≠kè*, which is a kind of bean. It is thought to improve the children's growth. The children sometimes eat it like a snack in their usual daily life.
- (4) Scrubbing their bodies with ||nān powder was the |Gui/||Gana's traditional way of cleaning themselves. At present they have enough water to wash their bodies. During menstruation, women wash their underwear and use it again because sanitary napkins are not popular yet.
- (5) Except for children born after settling down, we don't know the correct ages of the |Gui/||Gana. Menarche age was estimated 16, following to the demographic study on !Kung by Howell (1979).
- (6) The |Gui/||Gana say that *zááku* is also a relation between members of the same sex. So a husband often says to his wife's lover (male) "You and I are *zááku*."
- (7) The |Gui/||Gana have the word *||gāwa*, meaning "ghost." But they don't think that all dead people become *||gāwa*.
- (8) Recently Christianity has been spread by missionary work. But I can't judge how deep the |Gui/||Gana understand and believe in it. Today, clergymen or Christians sometimes "preach" at the beginning of funerals.

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## Appendix 1. The procedures of various rites

### A. Rites of passage

#### A.1. The rituals for menarche

##### A.1.1. (Having the girl go home)

- (1) The (aunt) bites *saasa* and spits at the girl: first at her instep, next at her sole, and then at the sand where her blood soaks.
- (2) The (aunt) throws the bloody sand onto the root of a shrub.
- (3) The women surround the girl and take her back to their camp stealthily.

##### A.1.2. (Having the girl eat)

- (1) The (aunt) bites *saasa* and spits at the girl.
- (2) The (aunt) cuts two lines on the back of the thumb of the girl's dominant hand with a razor.
- (3) The (aunt) puts (eating medicine) on the wounds.
- (4) The (aunt) clasps the girl's wrist and has her eat the (eating medicine).

##### A.1.3. (Having the girl be out of the hut with the dirt scrubbed off)

- (1) The girl has her dirt scrubbed off with powder made from ||*nān* seeds.
- (2) The (aunt) makes medicine by pounding !*gōō* |*koa* and !*gâri* *ĩ*.
- (3) The (aunt) cuts twelve places on the girl's body with a razor: the middle of her eyebrows, the center of her chest, her back, the place beside her navel, both sides of her shoulders, her shoulder blades, elbows, and knees.
- (4) The (aunt) applies the medicine she made to the wounds between the girl's eyebrows, on the chest, the shoulder blades, and the back.
- (5) The (aunt) puts (eating medicine), which is made from ≠*nān*+*kè* beans pounded with |*kee* *ĩ*, on the wounds on the girl's elbows, shoulders, knees, and the navel. Then she blows (eating medicine) onto the same parts. This means praying for the girl's physical growth.
- (6) She blows (eating medicine) onto the wound on the girl's chest, with praying for the richness of her heart.

##### A.1.4. The rite for her male relatives, (the cure for tooth and stomach)

- (1) The girl's unmarried (brothers), (cousins), and all other unmarried men living in the same camp are gathered after her third period has finished.
- (2) The (aunt) makes medicine by pounding !*gōō* |*kòà* and !*gâri* *ĩ*.
- (3) The (aunt) cuts the chins and stomachs of the men with a razor.
- (4) The girl rubs the medicine mentioned in (2) into the wounds.
- (5) The girl rubs her saliva into the wounds.
- (6) The girl has the men eat (eating medicine).

#### A.2. The rite for marriage, (mixing their blood)

- (1) The (aunt) cuts twelve places of the young couple's bodies with a razor: each of their brows, the center of their chests, their backs, the place under the navel (for male) or the places beside the navel (for female), both sides of the shoulders, their shoulder blades, elbows, and their knees.

- (2) The ⟨aunt⟩ smears the blood from each wound into the same wounds of the partner.
- (3) The ⟨aunt⟩ applies medicine made by *!gõõ |kòà* and *!gári ùi* to the wounds between the brows, on the chest, the shoulder blades, and the back of each.
- (4) The ⟨aunt⟩ puts ⟨eating medicine⟩ on the wounds on elbows, shoulders, knees, and the navel of each. Then she puts ⟨eating medicine⟩ into her mouth and spits it onto the same parts.
- (5) The ⟨aunt⟩ puts the ⟨eating medicine⟩ on the groom's hand. He has his bride eat it by throwing it into her mouth.
- (6) The ⟨aunt⟩ puts the ⟨eating medicine⟩ on the bride's hand. The bride does the same to the groom as he did to her. (The order of (5) and (6) can be reversed.)

A.3. The rite for making babies strong, ⟨giving the babies (the parent's blood)⟩

- (1) The father holds his baby and has it smell his body, so as not to be afraid of him.
- (2) The ⟨aunt⟩ cuts twelve places of the parents, and the baby's bodies with a razor: the center of the chest, the back, the part under the navel (for males) or the parts beside the navel (for females), both sides of the shoulders, the shoulder blades, the elbows, and the knees of each.
- (3) The ⟨aunt⟩ smears the blood from each wound of the parents on the respective wounds of the baby.
- (4) The ⟨aunt⟩ applies ⟨eating medicine⟩ and *!gõõ |kòà* to all the wounds of the baby and the parents.

B. The rituals for lifting food taboos

B.1. Food taboo in the rite for menarche

B.1.1. Against gemsboks

- (1) Roast gemsbok hoofs, and scrape the hair and *|qx'óri* ⟨dirt⟩ off their surface.
- (2) Make medicine by mixing the hair, the *|qx'óri*, excrement from the intestines of the hunted gemsbok, and roasted *||gâa tsôo* or *||gõre* root.
- (3) Cut two or three small wounds around the girl's navel with a razor and apply the medicine mentioned in (2).

B.1.2. Against steenboks

- (1) Make medicine by mixing steenbok hairs and the *|qx'óri* of steenbok hoofs, excrement from the intestines of steenbok, and roasted *||gâa tsôo* or *||gõre* root.
- (2) cut a few small wounds around the girl's navel with a razor and apply the medicine mentioned in (1) there.

B.1.3. Against red hartebeests

The rite is almost the same as for steenboks. Sometimes people use *≠xári* besides *||gâa tsôo* or *||gõre* root.

## B.1.4. Against springhares

Almost the same as for steenboks, except for adding */kôē* and *!nàn* plants to the medicine. */kôē* and *!nàn* are said to be food for springhares.

## B.1.5. Against porcupines

- (1) The girl eats meat of porcupines mixed with the skin of *‡xári* roots.
- (2) An (aunt) bites a raw *‡xári* root, and the girl also bites a raw *‡xári* root. The two of them spit the *‡xári* root with their saliva into the (aunt)'s hands and mix them.
- (3) The (aunt) applies the saliva onto the girl's stomach while reciting a charm.  
*‡Xári* is a sort of food for porcupines, they say. The following rite is also possible.
- (1) Make medicine by pounding and mixing the roasted spines of porcupines with roasted *‡xári* roots.
- (2) Cut a few small wounds around the girl's navel with a razor and apply the medicine mentioned in (1).

## B.2. Food avoidance for parents having newborn babies

## B.2.1. Against gemsboks

The mother and the baby drink gemsbok soup only a few days after the birth.

- (1) The mother bites raw *//gâa tsôo* or *//gôre* roots, and gives some of her saliva into her baby's mouth.
- (2) She squeezes her milk into her hands and mixes it with her saliva, containing *//gâa tsôo* or *//gôre*. Then she applies the mixture onto her baby's body, rubbing it from both sides to the center of the stomach, and down from the breastbone.  
The father of the newborn baby can start eating gemsbok one month after the birth.
- (1) The father eats gemsbok meat and bite a raw *//gâa tsôo* or *//gôre* roots. Then he gives some of his saliva into his baby's mouth.
- (2) He applies his saliva containing *//gâa tsôo* or *//gôre* onto his baby's body, rubbing it from both sides to the center of the stomach.

## B.2.2. Against steenboks

The mothers and her babies can eat steenbok meat when the babies are around one year old and begin walking.

- (1) An elder makes medicine by mixing the hair, the */qx'óri*, excrement from the intestines of the hunted steenbok, and roasted *//gâa tsôo* or *//gôre* roots.
- (2) The elder cuts a few small wounds around the baby's navel with a razor and applies the medicine in (1).  
The fathers can start eating steenbok, when their babies begin crawling. The procedures of the rite for steenboks are same as those for gemsboks.

## B.2.3. Against red hartebeests

The time when the parents and their babies can begin to eat hartebeest and the procedures of the rite are the same as for steenbok. Sometimes people add *‡xári* besides *//gâa tsôo* or *//gôre* root.

## B.2.4. Against springhares

The parents and the babies should avoid eating springhare and porcupine until the babies are two years old.

- (1) The parents bite raw *|kôê*, *!nàn*, *ǂxári*, and *||gâa tsôo* or *||gôre* roots.
- (2) Then they rub their saliva with the medicine on their baby's body, from both sides to the center of the stomach.

## B.2.5. Against porcupines

When the mothers start eating the meat of porcupines, their babies are given the following rite.

- (1) An elder makes medicine by pounding roasted porcupine spines with roasted *ǂxári* root.
- (2) The elder cuts a few small wounds around the baby's navel with a razor and applies the medicine mentioned in (1).  
The fathers hold the following rite for porcupines (and some mothers also choose to do this).
- (1) The father bites a raw *ǂxári* root and gives some of their saliva into his baby's mouth.
- (2) He applies the saliva containing *ǂxári* onto his baby's body, rubbing down from both sides to the center of the stomach, reciting the charm "Uppu k'anaa, uppu k'anaa" repeatedly.

B.3. Meat only for old people, *sumo*

The rite for the marrows of greater kudu is as follows:

- (1) An elder man cuts four to five wounds on the outer sides of the thighs and shins of the younger, using the piece of the bone which was gained when the marrow of the greater kudu was taken.
- (2) The elder applies the marrow to the wounds of the younger.
- (3) The elder man or his wife cooks the marrow with meat by mixing and boiling them in a pot and pounding them in a mortar.
- (4) The elder adds a raw *||xamts'a* root to the cooked meat and mixes them by pounding.
- (5) The elder fills his hand with the prepared meat, and mixes it with his saliva and sweat from his armpits.
- (6) The younger spits his saliva into the mixture.
- (7) The elder has the younger eat it from the elder's hand.
- (8) The younger eats it, using his own hands.

## C. The rites for praying for successful hunting

## C.1. Rite for snares

- (1) The hunter or his wife roasts *ǂxári*, *||gâa tsôo* or *||gôre* roots.
- (2) The hunter or his wife roasts the hoof of a bush duiker or a steenbok. Then he cuts the hoof and the roasted root with a knife.
- (3) The hunter or his wife makes medicine by pounding excrement of the bush duiker or the steenbok together with the root and the hoof.

- (4) The wife of the hunter cuts his body: the parts between the eyebrows, the center of the chest, and the upper arms; then she applies the medicine.

C.2. Rite for bows and arrows

- (1) Roast the roots of *//gōre*, *!gōō |kàa*, and *!gâri ûi*, then pound them.
- (2) Roast the tendons from the hearts of large animals: gemsbok, Cape eland, greater kudu, and giraffe.
- (3) Cut the hunter's body: the part between the eyebrows, the center of the chest, the upper arms, the shoulders, and the elbows.
- (4) Apply the medicine mixed from (1) and (2) to the wounds.

C.3. The rite for hunting dogs

- (1) Collect the "dirt" from the hoof of a gemsbok, which has a strong smell.
- (2) Roast the hoof, and scrape the hair and dirt off its surface.
- (3) Roast the front feet of a bat-eared fox and shave its hair.
- (4) Roast the root of a *//qaru*, which means lycaon, and pound it.
- (5) Make (medicine) by mixing all the ingredients above and give it to the dog, mixed with its food.

D. The rites for (dirt)

D.1. (Mixing their urine)

- (1) All of the adults involved in the *záâku* collect their urine in one spot.
- (2) An elder puts *!gōō |kàa*, *!gâri ûi*, and (eating medicine) into the urine.
- (3) The elder cuts eleven places of the each adult's bodies with a razor: the center of the chest, the back, the part under the navel (for male) or the stomach beside the navel (for female), both sides of the shoulders, the shoulder blades, the elbows, and the knees.
- (4) The elder makes medicine by putting the blood from the wounds in (3) into the urine from (2).
- (5) The elder applies the medicine to the wounds of all of the adults.
- (6) The elder cuts the children's bodies with a razor, at the same eleven places as the adults.
- (7) The elder applies the (medicine) to the wounds of all of the children.
- (8) The elder applies some powder made from *!gōō |kàa* and *!gâri ûi*, and (eating medicine).

D.2. (Sneeze treatment)

- (1) Some elder scrapes the nails of the right thumb and the right big toe of the man with a knife.
- (2) The elder scrapes the nails of the left thumb and the left big toe of the woman with a knife.
- (3) The elder cuts a root of *|qòne kx'ai*, which means "inhaling very much," with a knife.

- (4) The elder makes ‹sneeze medicine› by mixing the ingredients from (1), (2), and (3).
- (5) The woman puts ‹sneeze medicine› onto the back of the right thumb of the man.
- (6) The man blows off the ‹sneeze medicine› to the west. Again the woman puts medicine on the same place, and he blows it off to the east. Once more she puts it there, and he inhales it and sneezes.
- (7) The man puts ‹sneeze medicine› on the back of the left thumb of the woman.
- (8) She blows off the ‹sneeze medicine› to the west. Again he puts it there, and she blows it off to the east. Once more he puts it there, and she inhales it and sneezes.
- (9) The man and the woman sneeze at the same time, which means, the cure is completed.

#### D.3. The rite of using sweat, *mozaco*

- (1) Some elder mixes the fat of a Cape eland with medical plants named *qhaba* and forms a ball of the mixture.
- (2) All of the adults involved in the *zááku* collect their urine in one spot.
- (3) The elder boils the water with the urine and *qhaba*, so that it produce steam.
- (4) The elder puts the ball from (1) onto the fire at the side of the boiling water, so that it makes smoke.
- (5) All of the adults involved in the *zááku* sit down, surrounding the boiling water and the smoke.
- (6) They cover themselves with blankets. Both the steam and the smoke from the medicine make them sweat.

#### E. The rite for hurt feeling, *qhaba*

- (1) Some elder cuts *qhaba*, or *!gǎi ||nǎu*, or *tsiriri*, or *!gǔats'a kx'áo*, or *!gǔats'a ||gǎe* with a knife and puts them in water.
- (2) All of the relatives are gathered, they wash their hands in the water from (1), and have their *!qx'óri* ‹dirt› dissolve into the water.
- (3) The younger who suffers from *qhaba* drinks some of this water.
- (4) The elder makes the younger stand surrounded by the relatives.
- (5) The relatives sprinkle the water from (2) over the younger, reciting the charm “Get out, *qhaba* ! We are in the *qhaba* condition. Go away from our camp, fathers’ *qhaba*! Go away, mothers’ *qhaba*!”

#### F. The rite for abnormal childbirth, *cabaama*

- (1) The old women, who helped with the birth, decocts the roots of *‡núú koě*, *!karibe*, *!gǎri úi*, and *!gǒǒ |kòà*, and has the mother and her newborn baby drink from it.
- (2) The next morning the traditional doctor does the “curing.”

- (3) The doctor breaks the back wall of the hut where the mother and the baby rest, and makes a hole in the wall. The father inserts his foot in the hole from the outside of the hut.
- (4) The mother in the hut lays her foot near her husband's.
- (5) The doctor cuts the ankles of each parent with a razor and smears the blood of each on the other's cuts.
- (6) The father enters the hut from the entrance. The doctor cuts two places of the parents and the baby by a razor: the back and the stomach under the navel (for males) or the one beside the navel (for females).
- (7) The doctor puts the blood of the parents into the baby's cuts.
- (8) The doctor roasts the medical plants of (1) and applies the roasted plants to the wounds of the three.
- (9) After that, the parents and the baby take the rest of the medicine from (1) over a long period, eating small cuts of the roots or drinking the decoction.

**Appendix 2.** List of plants used for rituals and medical cure.

Scientific name*1	Vernacular name*2	Usage	Parts to be used	Method of use
Agavaceae				
<i>Sansevieria aethiopica</i>	!gúí	child whose parents dead*3	root	A
Amaranthaceae				
<i>Hermbstaedtia scabra</i>	tsxooxo tsôo	anodyn	root	boil and drink it
<i>Hermbstaedtia linearis</i>	!gâri ïi	menarche, mariage	root	B
<i>Sericorema remotiflora</i> (2 species)	(mosímexa) (2 names)	<i>/q̄x'óri</i> bow-and-arrow hunting	root root	B B
		impurity with death	root	A
		<i>cabaama</i>	root	C
		praying for rich harvest	root	D
Asclepiadaceae				
<i>Pergularia daemia</i>	naaxari	praying for rich harvest	the whole	D
Boraginaceae				
<i>Ehretia rigida</i>	!gâa	praying for luck	root	E
<i>Heliotropium ciliatum</i>	‡núí koë	fever, stomachache	leaves	boil and drink it
<i>Heliotropium steudneri</i> (2 species)		<i>cabama</i>	root	C
Bruseraceae				
<i>Commiphora mollis</i>	!kùro	bow-and-arrow hunting toothache	leaves leaves	spit it after biting it A
Capparidaceae				
<i>Boscia albitrunca</i>	!nõne	skin disease	leaves	F
Caryophyllaceae				
<i>Pollichia campestris</i>	!gâi   nãu	<i>qhaba</i>	the whole	G
Chenopodiaceae				
<i>Salsola albida</i>	!gãm	praying for rain	the whole	roast it and make smoke
		impurity caused by death	the whole the whole	make smoke go into the hut
Combretaceae				
<i>Terminalia sericea</i>	!gâa	coming-of-age against bitter taste*4	the whole leaves	ritual tool A
Compositae				
<i>Dicoma schinzii</i>	<i>qhaba</i>	<i>qhaba</i> diarrhea	leaves root	G C
<i>Kleinia longiflora</i>	‡nhèu	hunting with snares	roo	B
Convolvulaceae				
<i>Ipomoea adenoides</i>	cóbexa	anodyne	root	H
Cucubitaceae				
<i>Citrullus naudinianus</i>	!nân (qãã)	weaning	root	rub the juice onto the nipples
<i>Citrus lanatus</i>	nân	scrubbing dirt	seed	I

(continued)

Scientific name*1	Vernacular name*2	Usage	Parts to be used	Method of use
Cyperaceae				
<i>Cyperus fulgens</i>	!n̄n̄	food taboo	root	A, B
<i>Cyperus margaritaceus</i>	kôē	food taboo	the whole	A, B
<i>Kyllinga alba</i>		cough	the whole	boil and drink it
(2 species)		wounds	root	chew the root and apply the saliva to the wounds
Euphorbiaceae				
<i>Jatropha erythropoda</i>	gàmca  ʔī	blood in the urine*5	root	boil and drink it
		wounds, skin disease of the genitals	root	boil and rub it onto the skin
		stomachache	root	boil and drink it
Geraniaceae				
<i>Monsonia angustifolia</i>	k'áa k'ana	anodyne	root	boil and drink it
Gramineae				
<i>Stipagrostis</i> sp.	k'áo	menarche coming-of-age	the whole	ritual tool
Hermandiaceae				
<i>Hermandia tomentosa</i>	nhàa	skin disease	the whole	F
Labiatae				
<i>Hemizygia bracteosa</i>	‡koō‡kono tsāa	mosquito repellent	the whole	place it near the pillow
Leguminosae				
<i>Acacia nebrowni</i>	qari	menarche	the whole	ritual tool
<i>Bauhinia petersiana</i>	‡nān‡kè	menarche, marriage	bean	J
		qx'óri	bean	J
<i>Cassia binesii</i>	!gōō kòa	menarche, marriage	root	B
		qx'óri	root	B
		cabaama	root	C
<i>Cassia italica</i>	qām	stomachache	root	A
		praying for rich harvest	root	D
<i>Indigofera bainesii</i>	kōō qan	poison for arrows	root	press juice
		diarrhea	root	boil and drink it
<i>Indigofera flavicans</i>	!gaeku kēre	children's growth eczema, wounds	the whole	K
		diarrhea	fruit	apply the juice
			root	boil and drink it
<i>Lonchocarpus nelsii</i>	xamts'a	food taboo	root	mix with the respective meat
<i>Otoptera burchellii</i>	!karibe	cabaama	root	C
		anodyne	root	roast it and inhale the smoke

(continued)

Scientific name*1	Vernacular name*2	Usage	Parts to be used	Method of use
Liliaceae				
<i>Dipcadi</i> sp.	k'áa gúbo	blood in the urine*5	root	boil and drink it
Loganiaceae				
<i>Strychnos potatorum</i>	qx'óri	qx'óri	fruit	L
Malvaceae				
<i>Pavonia senegalensis</i>	‡xári	hunting with snares	root	B
		food taboo	root	A, B
		heart trouble	root	B
Neuradaceae				
<i>Grielim cuneifolium</i>	gëroicam ko ko	praying for rich harvest	root	D
Pedaliaceae				
<i>Dicerocaryum eriocarpum</i>	gera‡koba	praying for rich harvest	root	D
<i>Harpagophytum procumbens</i>	‡káuca‡kába	arthritis	root	boil and drink it
<i>Sesamun capense</i>	lkáe lkane	men's sterility	the whole	N
		praying for rich harvest	the whole	D
Rhamnaceae				
<i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>	‡qx'âro	draw out the afterbirth	root	boil and drink it
Scrophulariaceae				
<i>Aptosimum albomarginatum</i>	göre	all ways of hunting	root	B
		food taboo	root	A, B
		ritual for babies	root	B
Smilacaceae				
<i>Asparagus nodulosus</i>	(tsiriri*6)	<i>qhaba</i>	the whole	G
<i>Protasparagus nelsii</i>	!güats'a kx'âo	<i>qhaba</i>	leaves	G
<i>Protasparagus bechuanicus</i>		poison*7 for arrows	root	press juice
(2 species)				
<i>Protasparagus cooperi</i>	!güats'a  gäe	<i>qhaba</i> poison*7 for arrows	leaves	G
			root	press juice
Solanaceae				
<i>Solanum panduriforme</i>	‡nai‡na tsäa	wounds	fruit	apply the juice to the wounds
Sterculiaceae				
<i>Melhania burchellii</i>	qx'óri kx'âo	qx'óri	root	L
Terfeziaceae				
<i>Terfezia</i> sp.	khuutse	antidote	the whole	N
Zygophyllaceae				
<i>Sisyndite sparteae</i>	kee ii	menarche, marriage	root	J
	(munnam)	qx'óri	root	J
	(2 names)	stomachache	root	A
		praying for rich harvest	root	D

(continued)

Scientific name*1	Vernacular name*2	Usage	Parts to be used	Method of use
a kind of mushroom	‡?òm ‡?òm	bow-and-arrow hunting	the whole	sprinkle the spores over the hunter
not identified	saasa	menarche	the whole	spit it after biting it
not identified	gâa tsôo	hunting with snares	root	B
		food taboo	root	A, B
		coming-of-age	root	B
not identified	qaru	hunting with dogs	the whole	mix with the dog food
not identified	qòne kx'ai (moilelo)	qx'óri	root	O
	(2 names)			
not identified	‡kam	babies' navels	root	P
		hunting with snares	root	B
not identified	‡k'âa	healing dance	root	Q
not identified	xâa-xo	nightmare	root	rub ointment R into nose and throat
		for bows and arrows	root	apply ointment R to bow and arrows
		in ritual of menarche		

### Notes

- \*1 Plant specimens were identified by the National Botanical Institute, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa.
- \*2 |Gui language. The words considered to be SeTswana are marked by ( ).
- \*3 When a child is upset or out of senses because of a parent's death, people have the child chew the root of this plant. Then the child calms down and comes to its senses.
- \*4 Some wild plants contain oxalate acid, which cause sharp and biting taste. When the |Gui/||Gana feel this biting tastes, they chew /gaa leaves and suck the juice of it.
- \*5 It is taboo for a |Gui/||Gana to have sexual intercourse with a woman in her menstrual period. If this taboo is broken, the man is said to suffer from blood in his urine. People use the root of this plant for curing this symptom. The color of the root is red, and this color implies the blood, they say.
- \*6 I suppose the word "tsiriri" is derived from the SeTswana "tsididi," which means the cold or a clinking noise made by falling iron. The|Gui/||Gana explain that "tsiriri" means "to be awakened."
- \*7 The |Gui/||Gana make poison for arrows from the larvae of beetles (*Diamphidia simplex*). They add this plant to the poison for making it strong.

### How to use

A : Grind it after roasting. Then smear it into the wounds cut by a razor.

B : Chew it and suck the juice of the plant.

C : Boil the roots and drink the decoction. Then do the same as in 'A'.

- D : When people have a poor crop or sick goats, they make “medicine” by decocting the roots of the plant or by dissolving the plant extract in water. Then they sprinkle the medical water to their field or have their sick goats drink it. The |Gui/|Gana say that this ritual remedy comes from the Kgalagadi/Tswana. The Kgalagadi/Tswana believe that a husband and a wife, who have been recently bereaved of their baby by miscarriage or illness after birth, have some kind of “impurity.” They think that this impurity causes poor crops and sickness of goats. So people hold the ritual remedy mentioned above in order to expel this impurity.
- E : Cut the skin of the roots into small pieces and mix them with eland fat. Put this “medicine” on a person’s tongue tip, forehead, and chin. Then this person cannot be found by others. However, some |Gui/|Gana say that “this medicine is vicious and just for a thief because policemen would not find him.”
- F : Boil water with the */nhaa* and */none* plants. Steam the diseased part with the medical water.
- G : A traditional doctor makes “medicine” by dissolving the plant extract in water. Then he sprinkles the medical water onto the sick person. Sick persons also drink the medical water.
- H : Make an ointment by pounding and kneading the plant. Then cut the aching part of the body, e.g. for stomachache, muscle ache, arthritis, with a razor. Apply the ointment to the wounds.
- I : For sanitation, the |Gui/|Gana traditionally scrub off their dirt with powder made from the dried seeds of the plant, pounded by the pestle. This sanitary method is also used in some ritual remedies.
- J : “Eating medicine” is made by mixing of */kee ii* and *≠nan≠ke*, pounded by the pestle after dried.
- K : This plant grows very quickly. So it is believed that if a child’s milk tooth is buried at the root of this plant, the second tooth will grow quickly.
- L : Put the plant, pounded with a pestle, into water. Then drink this water.
- M : Put the plant, shaven by razor, into water. Stir the water, till it become viscous. Drink this viscous liquid.
- N : Make medicine by pounding this dried mushroom with a pestle. When a person gets the poison of an arrow into his or her wound by mistake, rub this mushroom medicine into the same place.
- O : Grind it after roasting. Then inhale the powder and sneeze.
- P : Powder medicine is made by pounding the roots of the roasted plant. Rub this powder into the navel of a newborn baby, whose umbilical cord has just dried off.
- Q : A healing dancer throws pieces of the cut roots of the plant to the people gathering for the healing dance and sends the people into a trance. The color of the root is red.
- R : Make an ointment called */xáa-xo*, by cutting the plant and mixing it with eland fat. */xáa-xo*, which is red and has a good scent can be used as “cosmetics,” applying it to a woman’s body and face.

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