

## CURRENT ISSUES FACING THE FOREST PEOPLE IN SOUTH-EASTERN CAMEROON: THE DYNAMICS OF BAKA LIFE AND THEIR ETHNIC RELATIONSHIP WITH FARMERS

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**ABSTRACT** This paper examines the dynamics of the relationship between Baka hunter-gatherers and farmers in the forests of southeastern Cameroon, focusing on 2 aspects of this situation: Changes in the Baka lifestyle and the attitudes of the 2 ethnic groups toward the external society. As a result of the sedentarization policy promoted by the government since the 1950s, the nomadic Baka hunter-gatherers have settled near the farmers' villages. This transformation has made the Baka more economically and politically dependent on the farmers. In recent decades, the introduction of logging companies, tourism businesses, and conservation agencies to the forest in which the Baka reside has created conflicts of interest between these outside actors and the Baka with regard to forest resources. The majority of the benefits generated by these outside agencies have gone to farmers' groups, and the Baka have been marginalized politically and economically. Interventions by outside agencies appear to play a decisive role the future sustainability of the Baka way of life.

**Key Words:** Baka hunter-gatherers; Konabembe farmers; Cameroon; Marginalization; Transformation of life; Ethnic relationship.

### INTRODUCTION

In late July 2001, a local forest officer organized a meeting to initiate a forest conservation project in Malea Ancien village in southeastern Cameroon. The meeting was attended by Konabembe farmers and Baka hunter-gatherers who were living in one Konabembe hamlet. The forest officer and a facilitator selected among the Konabembe sat on chairs and the Konabembe farmers sat on wooden benches that had been provided, but the Baka hunter-gatherers sat on boards that they had brought. The officer provided an explanation of the establishment of new national parks and hunting regulations in French, which the facilitator subsequently translated to the Konabembe language.

The Konabembe response to this announcement contrasted sharply with that of the Baka. The Konabembe opposed the new arrangements, arguing that they could not live in the forest under such strict regulations. Moreover, they demanded that the officer improve their standard of living by establishing schools and health clinics. In contrast, the Baka remained silent. They looked drifting and dreaming. The organizers attended to the Konabembe, who insisted on their rights, but ignored the Baka. Immediately following the meeting, all of the Baka attendees left for the forest, whereas the Konabembe attendees remained and continued to discuss the project among themselves.

Why did the Baka not participate in the important discussion, given that the proposed project could affect their livelihood, which depends on the forest? Could their silence reflect the ethnic relationship between and the political issues dividing the Baka and the Konabembe? The Baka depend on the Konabembe not only to obtain commodities in exchange for forest products and labor, but also to negotiate with the government, conservation agencies, and traders.

The inequality of this relationship is apparent. Indeed, the local people assume that the Konabembe are superior to the Baka, who fear violence at the hands of the Konabembe. As most administrative officers have tacitly accepted this ethnic inequality, meetings are always conducted in French and translated into the Konabembe language. As the Baka are multilingual, they can understand the Konabembe language. However, it may be difficult for them to express their opinions, given that officials habitually ignore them and the Konabembe exert social pressure on them.

Considerable research has been conducted on the ethnic relationship between farmers and Pygmy hunter-gatherers in the rainforest of central Africa (Takeuchi, 2001; Terashima, 2001; Rupp, 2003; Hanawa, 2004; Kitanishi, 2010; Sakanashi, 2010; Matsuura, 2011; Oishi, 2012a; 2012b). These studies have shown that farmers and Pygmy hunter-gatherers share a mutually dependent relationship with regard to lifestyle and culture while holding ambivalent attitudes about one another characterized by both discrimination and respect, as well as loving-kindness and hate. The degree and specific features of this interdependence vary among ethnic groups and locations.

The authors of recent studies (Terashima, 2001; Hanawa, 2004) have emphasized that ethnic relationships between Pygmy hunter-gatherers and farmers should be understood in the appropriate regional and historical contexts. For example, several studies have focused on changes in lifestyle and ethnic relationships during the past 50 years. Van de Sandt (1999) reported that community divisions in western Cameroon were exacerbated when more Bagyeli adopted farming. This increased conflict led to the seizure of Bagyeli land by farmers. Matsuura (2011) observed increased reliance on farming and a move toward sedentarization among the Babongo in Gabon, but frequent intermarriage with Masango farmers resulted in increased integration between the 2 ethnic groups.

As in other Pygmy societies, sedentarization and increased reliance on farming have been also observed among Baka hunter-gatherers. In previous decades, contact with other actors, such as logging companies, conservation organizations, and sport hunting businesses, have changed the relationship between the Baka and the Konabembe.

The objective of this paper is to examine the changing relationship between the Baka and Konabembe by focusing on 2 aspects of Baka cultural dynamics: 1) transformations in the livelihood of the Baka during the past 50 years, and 2) the ways in which the Baka have related to other actors who have recently entered the forest in which they reside.

I first describe the characteristics of Baka livelihood-related activities using quantitative and qualitative data on residential patterns, subsistence activities, food intake, and household composition. I proceed to a comprehensive analysis of

transformations in Baka livelihood. Based on these analyses, I examine the economic changes resulting from sedentarization and the spread of a cash economy. Third, I describe political and economic differences between these 2 ethnic groups, focusing on negotiations with outside actors. Finally, I discuss how Baka society and the ethnic relationship with the Konabembe have changed as a result of local policies and the economic conditions of southeastern Cameroon.

## STUDY AREA AND METHOD

### Study Area

The study area, Malea Ancien village, is located in the Boumba-Ngoko Department of the East Region of the Republic of Cameroon (N 02° 49', E 14° 36'; see Preface, in this volume). The capital of Boumba-Ngoko District is Yokadouma, which is approximately 600 km southeast of Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. Ngato Nouveau is about 30 km south of Yokadouma, and Malea Ancien village is about 80 km southwest of Ngato Nouveau. A new logging road extending to Malea Ancien was constructed in the area between the boundary of Ngato Nouveau and the Boumba River. Malea Ancien village extends another 9 km to the Bek River, which serves as 1 village boundary. The village contains 8 clusters of dwellings.

According to the population census conducted by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) (cited by Halle, 2000), 307 people resided in this village in 2000. The major ethnic groups were Baka hunter-gatherers and Konabembe Bantu farmers. The central cluster of Malea Ancien village was chosen as the study area. The population consisted of 118 Baka (56 men and 62 women in July 2004) and 68 Konabembe (37 men and 31 women in February 2002).

I first review the recent history of the nomadic Baka community. About 100 years ago, the Baka resided in a region of what is now the Central African Republic alongside an ethnically distinct group of farmers. A language similar to the present Baka language (Bahuchet, 1993) was used in the farming community. When slave traders entered the forest, the Baka evacuated to the south and settled in the farming community of Cameroon. According to Konabembe elders, the Baka arrived at Malea Ancien from Madjwe, about 110 km northeast of present Malea Ancien, approximately 100 years ago. This move was caused by the First World War, as the Baka sought to escape from the intense conflict between Germany and France in this area.

After the First World War, France was granted a mandate to administer eastern Cameroon. At that time, the nomadic Baka were moving among camps in the forest, and the Konabembe farmers were living in permanent dwellings in the forest. The French administration forced both groups to participate in compulsory labor and reside in settlements along the road. The Konabembe farmers adopted this sedentarization policy, whereas the nomadic Baka hunter-gatherers managed to escape to the forest (Joiris, 1998). In the 1950s, however, the second phase

of the settlement policy was enforced, and the Baka relinquished their nomadic lifestyle, settling in extant Konabembe communities (Althabe, 1965; Joiris, 1998).

In 1960, Cameroon was granted independence and a new government was established. Since independence, the government, international donors, and NGOs have tried to promote farming, education, and democracy among the Baka (Hewlett, 2000).

A logging company built the access road to Malea Ancien in March 2001 and was granted a logging concession through September 2002. The road not only brought merchants and traders from Yokadouma, but also allowed community members (mainly Konabembe) to travel to towns and villages. In August 2001, at the onset of logging operations, forest conservation program staff and hunting regulators funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) were able to use the road to gain access to this area.

In June 2002, the first primary school was opened in the study area. By January 2003, seasonal merchants and traders had begun to establish shops in the farmers' communities. In 2004, the WWF established a project base near the Bek River, about 3 km southwest of the study area. By 2006, a tourism company had started to operate in the forest about 50 km northwest of the study area. Interactions between the Baka and Konabembe, as well as those with external actors, intensified during this period.

## Method

I collected data for this study during about 30 months between 2001 and 2009. Quantitative data were collected on the types and patterns of housing, subsistence activities, food intake, and household assets and income. Information about the first 3 factors was collected according to season during 2 weeks per month in August 2001–February 2002 and March–July 2004. In this region, a major rainy season lasts from September to November, a major dry season lasts from December to February, a minor rainy season lasts from March to June, and a minor dry season lasts from July to August.

Additionally, I interviewed Baka elders about their past and compared these data with the present situation. I also observed the responses of Baka people in public community meetings related to conservation projects and interviewed Baka and Konabembe attendees.

### *Types and patterns of residential site*

Data on residential sites and campsites were recorded for every individual in the study area (105 persons from August 2001 to February 2002 and 118 persons from March to July 2004). When individuals were absent, I obtained information about their campsites from family members and checked the accuracy of this information when they returned home. Major campsites were georeferenced with a handheld GPS device and plotted on a map in March and July 2004.

### *Subsistence activities*

Details of the subsistence activities of 10 adult males and 10 adult females

were recorded. When Baka individuals engaged in 2 subsistence activities during the same period, which occurred frequently during dry seasons, each activity was accorded 0.5 point.

#### *Food intake*

I itemized and weighed the food items delivered by heads of households or their spouses to the residential sites and campsites of 5 households. Using this information about staples and other foods, I calculated the average daily food intake per adult, counting a child younger than 12 years as 0.5 of an adult. The caloric intake was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Daily caloric intake} = (\text{wet weight of food items} \times \text{percentage of total edible weight}^{(1)} \times \text{nutritional value}^{(2)} \text{ of food items}) / \text{observation days.}$$

#### *Household income*

During 129 days in the first study period (September 2001–February 2002), 1 household allowed me to record the sources, value, and uses of its cash income. This household consisted of 6 persons: A husband and wife, an adolescent male, an adolescent female, and 2 young children.

#### *Household commodities and assets*

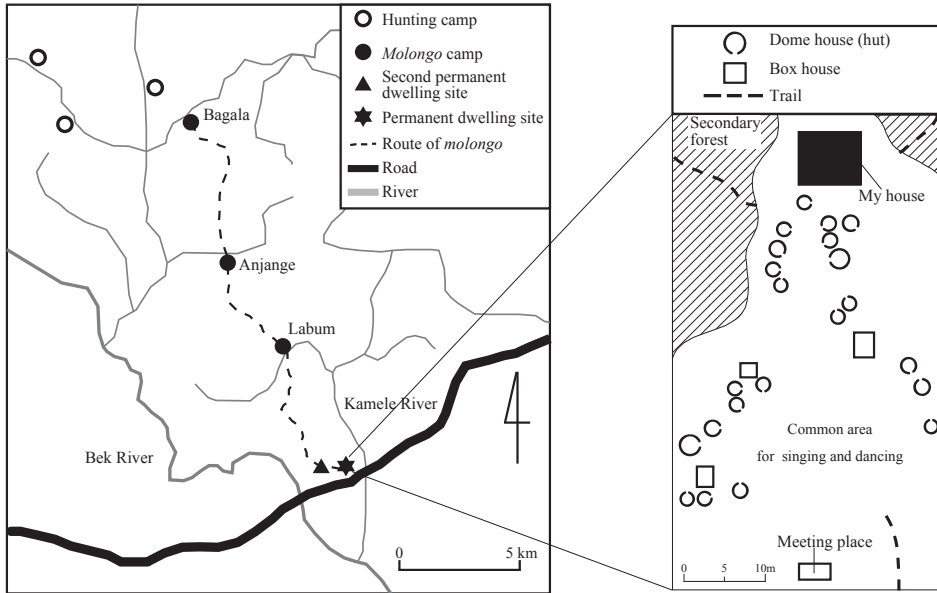
In August 2001, 26 households resided in the dwelling sites and camping/mobile sites of the study area. I recorded the household commodities and assets in every household, and obtained information about the items they had discarded or obtained during a subsequent visit made to investigate medicinal plants (Hattori, 2012).

## LIVELIHOOD OF THE BAKA

### Residential Patterns

In this section, I describe the patterns characterizing Baka residential sites. The Baka in the study area used dwelling sites in the village, campsites in the forest, and satellite dwelling sites between these 2 areas. They usually resided in domed houses with thatched roofs. At several dwelling sites in the village, they constructed box houses with mud walls, which are characteristic of houses in farming communities.

These Baka houses surrounded a common area used for singing and dancing. A meeting hut was constructed near the road (Fig. 1), and relatives and families lived next to one another. The Konabembe dwelling site, which contained trading shops, was located about 15 m east of the Baka dwelling site. A primary school that only irregularly offered lessons because of its remote location was located on the opposite side of the road.



**Fig. 1.** Study site.  
(March–July 2004)

Konabembe elders reported that previous generations of Konabembe and Baka had immigrated to this area a century ago. They claimed that large primary forests were located in this area at that time. However, the area now contains only slash-and-burn agricultural areas and secondary forest.

The Baka cleared the secondary forest to create a satellite campsite about 2 km west of the permanent dwelling site. In the early 2000s, they established a new satellite campsite about 2.5 km east of the permanent dwelling site in an area that had been cleared by the logging company, which had left in August 2001. This location became a permanent second dwelling site. Many farms in this secondary forest belonged to the Konabembe. One of the nearest, a Konabembe house, was located about 50 m from the Baka dwelling site. Several Baka hunter-gatherers also established farms in this area.

Even as the Baka's primary and satellite dwelling sites became permanent, their forest campsites shifted from year to year. Campsite locations were often determined by the harvest of yams and fruits and the distribution of game. Hence, many possible campsites were scattered in the forest. Many campsites traditionally used by the Baka were located 10 km north of the road between Malea Ancien and Ngato Ancien.

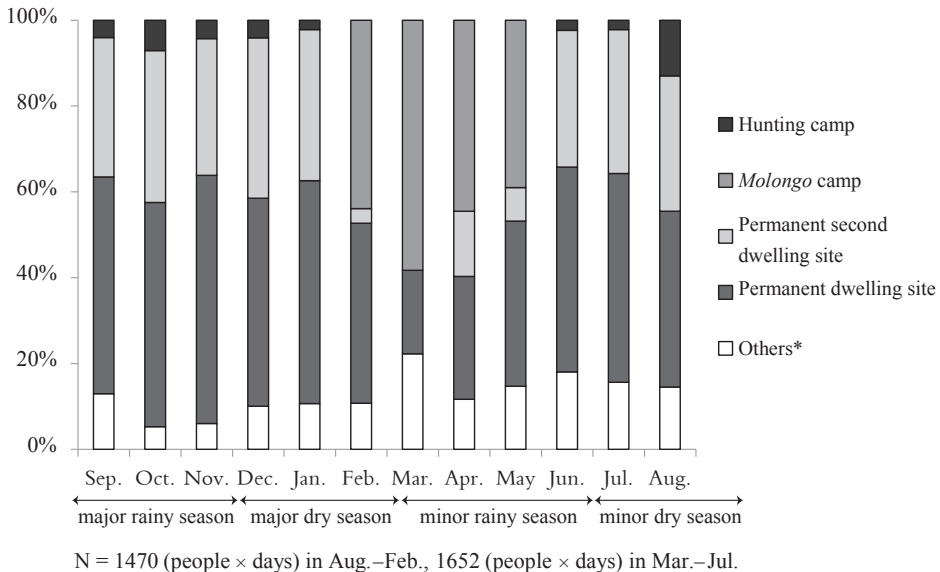
The Baka depend heavily on forest products, and their forest campsites are of 2 types: *Molongo* campsites, used for multiple subsistence activities, and hunting campsites, used for hunting and gathering activities. *Molongo* implies a nomadic forest life, and *molongo* campsites are used for several months by as few as 1 household to as many as all households in a village. In 2004, the

Baka community remained at the Bagala camp, at side stream of Bek Rivers, for a long period of time because a large colony of wild yams (*safa*: *Dioscorea prae-hensilis* Benth) was found on a nearby slope. This site was 15 km northwest of the permanent dwelling site, and the Baka had to establish 2 additional campsites (Labum and Anjange) to reach the Bagala camp.

Hunting campsites are often used for a type of hunting known as *maka*. *Maka* lasts from a few days to a few weeks and involves a few to dozens of men. A hunting camp was established in the forest, 20 km northwest of the dwelling site, and used from March to July 2004.

Gathering campsites are often established in the minor dry season to harvest *pekie* [*Irvingia gabonensis* (Aubry-Lecomte ex. O’Rorke) Baill.], *mabi* [*Baillonella toxisperma* (Pierre)], and *tondo a sua* [*Aframomum letestuanum* (Gagnepain)]. These fruits are important commodities for the Baka, and seasons are referred to as “*pekie*” and “*mabi*” in the Baka language. Women extract oil from *pekie* seeds, and *pekie* juice is made into drinks for children and women. *Mabi* produces oil to sell for cash income, and its pulp is used for snacks. *Tondo a sua* fruit is a valuable commodity for generating cash income. The Baka did not establish gathering campsites during the period of my study, but such sites can remain in use for up to 1 month in good harvest years.

Figure 2 presents the proportion of the Baka population residing at each site. Permanent dwelling sites were used by an average of 44% (range, 19–58%) of the Baka population. An average of 24% (range, 7–37%) of the population used semi-permanent sites. Hunting campsites were used by an average of 5% (range,



**Fig. 2.** Changes in the proportions of people in different types of residence.  
 \* “Others” includes relatives’ houses, the farmers’ village, and camps.

0–13%) of the Baka population, chiefly because only men used these sites. Each year, an average of 13% (range, 5–22%) of the total Baka population lived separately from their families. This situation was partly because some Baka individuals stayed with relatives elsewhere, and others worked for the Konabembe at the latter's net fishing site. Members of the study population had many relatives in Song Ancien, about 30 km northeast of Malea Ancien, and considerable movement occurred between these villages. Between 39% and 58% of the total Baka population used the *molongo* campsite during the major dry and minor rainy seasons, reflecting the characteristic seasonal movement of these people.

The use of forest campsites has changed. Baka elders explained that when they were young, in the 1950s and 1960s, they spent most of their time with their families and relatives at forest campsites. Currently, they spend only a few months during the major dry season and minor rainy season in the forest, using their dwelling sites as a base and moving to the forest campsites for hunting and gathering. Similar findings from other Baka communities have been reported (Hayashi, 2000; Bundo, 2001; Kitanishi, 2003; Yasuoka, 2006a).

### Subsistence Activities

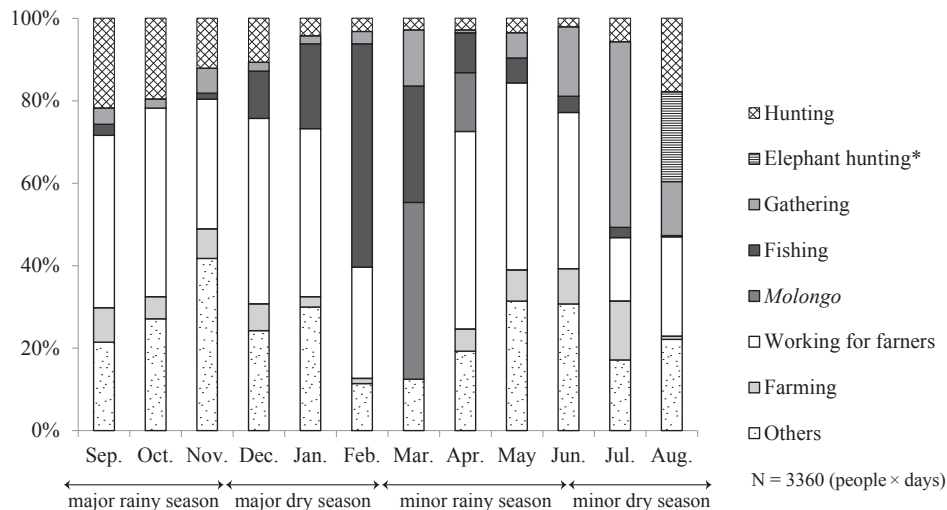
In this section, I examine the effects of changes in residential pattern on subsistence activities. Baka men hunt mammals, reptiles, and birds, choosing a particular hunting method and tool according to the ecology of their prey. The main method used is snare trapping, and they have used steel wire for snares since the 1960s. Baka men staying at the forest camp check the trapping sites almost every day. On other occasions, several Baka men may go spear hunting for 1 day without spending the night in the forest. Prey species include ungulates, such as Peter's duikers (*Cephalophus callipygus*), bay duikers (*C. dorsalis*), and red river hogs (*Potamochoerus porcus*).

Baka women gather plants and fruit. A woman and her daughter(s) or sister(s) form groups for the purpose of performing gathering activities in the forest. They gather *koko* (*Gnetum africana* Welw. and *G. buchholzianum* Engl.) leaves, wild yams, wild fruit, mushrooms, and certain edible insects. At times, Baka men perform gathering activities when they are in the forest, and they also join women's gathering groups. However, the primary gathering jobs of men are climbing to harvest honey from beehives and cutting down palm trees to harvest sap for palm wine.

Both men and women fish. Women engage in fish bailing. A dozen women construct a dam from fallen trees and mud, creating a small pool in the river. They then bail the water out until they can see and catch fish, shrimp, and crabs. Men engage in line fishing alone or with their sons. Both men and women engage in poison fishing, in which poison bark is beaten to extract sap and placed in the water to poison fish. I was unable to observe this method during the study period.

Both men and women engage in farming. Sedentarization have accelerated the adoption of farming by the Baka community. Slash-and-burn agriculture involves the selection of a field, clearing of vegetation, burning, planting, and





**Fig. 3.** Changes in the proportion of days spent in each subsistence activity.

\* Elephant hunting was separated from other types of hunting because it was performed primarily by the Baka in the neighboring village; the Baka at the study site joined them to transport and share the meat.

weeding. However, the Baka in my study area planted seeds in a field near their semi-permanent dwelling site that had already been cleared by other people in the area. The Baka planted only bananas (plantains and sweet varieties) and cassava, whereas the Konabembe usually planted groundnuts, maize, cacao, sweet potatoes, tobacco, pineapple, and sugar cane. As Baka crops are not sufficient to supply staple foods to entire households, the Baka obtain the majority of their food by working on Konabembe farms.

The Baka people perform a variety of jobs for Konabembe farmers. Women weed and harvest in the fields, fetch water and firewood, make palm oil, gather forest products, and weave mats. Although they work primarily for cash income, they sometimes work in exchange for farm products and tobacco. Baka men cut trees to clear fields, help with net fishing, monitor traps, thatch roofs, and make tools. These activities are performed primarily for cash income, but Baka men sometimes work in exchange for distilled alcohol and tobacco. Payments from the Konabembe may include second-hand clothes and kitchen utensils.

Figure 3 shows the subsistence activities in which the Baka engage. During the major rainy season, gathering (2–6%) and fishing (0–3%) become difficult; men switch to hunting (12–21%) to obtain protein-rich foods and women work for the Konabembe (31–46%) to obtain staple foods.

During the major dry season, the Baka's gathering (21%) and fishing (11%) activities increase, whereas men reduce their hunting (10%) activities. Working for the Konabembe (45%) remains the major activity. The Baka work for the Konabembe in the field in the morning, then hunt, fish, and gather wild yams in

the forest until dark. At the end of the dry season, the Baka travel to the *molongo* forest campsite (43%) and remain there to harvest wild yams and honey, fish, and hunt (14%) until the onset of the minor rainy season.

During the minor rainy season, the Baka move from the *molongo* site to the permanent dwelling site and begin working for the Konabembe (48%). Their engagement in honey harvesting increases (6–16%), whereas that in fishing decreases (4–6%) as the river's water level rises.

When the minor dry season arrives, the Baka engage in gathering (13–45%) of wild fruit. Women harvest *pekie* and *mabi* throughout the day and are sometimes joined by men for gathering activities. During this season, their work for the Konabembe decreases (15–24%), as they exchange *pekie* and *mabi* for farm products.

The diversified livelihood activities of the Baka include hunting, gathering, fishing, and engaging in farm labor for farmers. Their engagement in farm labor is directed primarily at earning cash income, and they are far less engaged in working on their own farms. Other studies (Hayashi, 2000; Kitanishi, 2003; Yasuoka, 2012) have found that sedentarization accelerated the adoption of farming by the Baka as a subsistence strategy. In my study area, however, farming has been less important (0–14%), and the Baka work as farm laborers for the Konabembe in exchange for staple foods. In other words, the Baka community in Malea Ancien appeared to depend heavily on the Konabembe's farming activities and the products therefrom.

### Food Intake

Table 1 summarizes the daily food intake of the Baka. On average, 1 Baka adult consumed 1359–1491 kcal (89–98%) from staple foods (bananas and cassavas). 1 individual consumed 192 kcal (11%) from wild yams at the *molongo* campsite during the major dry and minor rainy seasons. The farming activities of the Baka do not enable self-sufficiency, and they depended on the Konabembe for staple foods. In addition to staples, 1 adult consumed 274–491 kcal (90–98% of non-staple food) from forest products. Although the types of food varied according to season, the main forest products were game (86% of forest products) during the major rainy season; shrimp, crabs, and fish during the major dry and minor rainy seasons (8% and 13%, respectively); and honey during the minor dry and minor rainy seasons (37% and 41%, respectively). During the rainy season, when hunting and fishing are difficult, they consumed cassava leaves (27–29%).

Baka elders reported that they consumed the following items as staple foods when they were young (in the 1950s and 1960s): Wild yams and *mbalaka* (*Pentaclethra macrophylla* Benth), *bemba* [*Gilbertiodendron dewevrei* (De Wild.) J. Leonard], *pandako* (*Calpocalyx dinklagei* Harms), seed cores of *meko* (*Cola rostrata* K. Schum), and palm piths. As these food items require laborious preparation, farm products now serve as their staple foods. For example, Baka mothers formerly used the fruit of *koka* [*Atractogyne bracteata* (Wernham) Hutch and Dalziel] to wean babies, whereas they now use ripe bananas for this purpose.

**Table 1.** Daily foot intake per Baka adult in kilo calory

		Major rainy season (September– November)	Major dry season (December– March)	Minor rainy season (April–June)	Minor dry season (July–August)
Staple food	Banana	1088	865	1256	977
	Casava	209	238	89	209
	Other farm product*	124	256	146	248
	Wild yam	35	74	192	42
Other dishes	Game	260	250	150	145
	Elephant meat	0	0	0	100
	Fish and shellfish	4	44	55	19
	Honey	0	187	179	39
	Other forest product**	10	10	21	21
	Casava leaves	29	19	27	4
	Other farm product***	0	1	1	2
	Total in kilo calory	1759	1944	2116	1806

\* include yautia, maize, sweet potato, and pumpkin.

\*\* exclude palm oil and wild fruits but include edible leaves and mashroom.

\*\*\* include yauia young leaves and pumpkin young leaves. For caloric estimates those for casava leaves were used.

Wild yam is among the Baka's favorite foods. This food may continue to be a staple, as it grows in colonies and is easily harvested in bulk. However, Baka individuals have become more accustomed to farm than to forest products. According to my data, farm products accounted for about 76% of their total annual food intake (i.e., including non-staple foods) and 94% of their intake of staples, in terms of calories. Indeed, sedentarization led to changes in the subsistence activities of the Baka, which has influenced their diet. Currently, young Baka individuals consume considerable quantities of farm products and tend to associate traditional forest food with the ancient Baka (*jo na kobo*).

### Household Commodities

When in the forest, the Baka gather materials from which they make tools. They also purchase industrial products from the Konabembe and merchants. Table 2 presents the types of tool and material sources. I identified 148 types of commodity in Baka households. The major items were 78 types of tool (53%), all but 3 of which were made from plant materials; the exceptions were 3 items (spears, axes, and knives) made from iron. The households contained 47 types of industrial tool (32%) purchased from the Konabembe and merchants, 10 types of other tools (7%) made from recycled materials, 7 types of tool (4%) made from animal skin or horns, and 6 types (4%) in other categories.

According to one Baka elder, almost all hunting tools were made from plant materials during her youth; the exception was spears, which had iron blades. Clothes were also made from tree bark, and belts were made from plants. Earthen

**Table 2.** Baka's belongings

Categories	Tool made of plants (82 types)
Hunting tools	Spear*, Cross board, Simple bow, Arrow, Trap for birds, Grass whistle
Gathering tools	Stick for digging wild yams I/II**, Rope for climbing trees I/II, Tools for hanging down honey, Tools for smoking, Sheets for honey, Sponge for collecting honey
Fishing tools	Fish line I, Fish pole, Tools for bailing water I
Other tools for subsistence activity	Axes*, Knife*
Carrying devices	Carrying basket I/II, Tools for shouldering, wrap, Carrying device for honey I/II, Head band, Band for holding baby
Furniture	Bed, Mat I/II, Stand and board for a dryness, Chair, Cushion, Basket I/II
Cooking utensils	Mortar I/II, Pestle, Chopping board, Pounder, Pot I, Container I, Plate I, Ladle, Stuff for mixing, Peeler for plantain, Cup II, Tool for grinding I, Scrubber II, Cooking sheet, Fan, Funnel
Fire making instruments	Floc for making a fire
Lamp	Torches
Sanitary things	Soap I, Tissue
Dusting things	Dustpan I, Broom
Medicine and medical device	Medicine, Palm oil I
Clothes	Belt
Clothing accessories	Dancing costume, Necklace I, Accessory for mouth and nose, Dye for making up, Incense
Musical instruments	Guitar*, Maracas I/II, Wooden whistle
Entertainments and play equipments	-
Others	Cord, Bond, Sandpaper, Flyflap, Pick, Umbrella, Cigarette tissue, Palm oil II

Continued to p.109 horizontally.

\* Tools which are made of plants and iron.

\*\* I, II, III shows kinds of tools.

\*\*\* ( ) shows kinds of material or source of material.

Industrial products obtained from farmers and peddlers (48 types)	Others (18 types)***
Wire for trapping	Bag for arrow (animal)
-	-
Fishhook, Fish line II, Tools for bailing water II	Stuff for processing iron (worker in iron)
Machete	-
-	Empty bag (waste material)
-	-
Pot II, Frying pan, Container II/III, Plate II/III/, Cup I, Spoon, Scrubber I, Salt	Tool for grinding II (waste material), Empty container I/II/III (waste material), Onion (peddler)
-	Pouch for fire instruments (animal), Flint (mineral), Iron for making a fire (blacksmith)
Lamp, Heating oil, Electric torch	-
Soap II, Razor, Scissors, Comb, Mirror, Toothbrush	-
Tablet, Enema syringe	Broom II (animal)
Outer clothes for men and women, Trouser, Short-pants, Skirt, Cloth for wrapping, One-piece dress, Underwear, Shoes, Beach shoes, Socks, Hat, Bandana	-
Armlet, Bag, Necklace II	-
-	Drum (animal and plant), horn (animal), maracas III (waste material and plant)
Cassette deck, Cassette tape, Ball I	Ball II (animal and plant)
Rubber, Pen	Pipe for cigarette (waste material and plant), bell (waste material), nail (waste material), key (waste material), ID card (government)

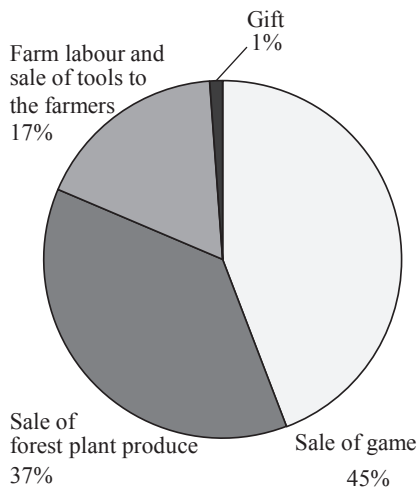
pots made by the Konabembe were used for cooking, and the Baka made wooden spoons and cups from fruit shells. Currently, the Baka use recycled nails and radio antennas left by the logging company to make tools. However, the laborious manufacturing process and lack of durability of these items have led the Baka to prefer tools and clothes made in factories. Currently, hunting tools are made from steel wire, and clothes and cooking utensils are usually bought at shops.

Household Income

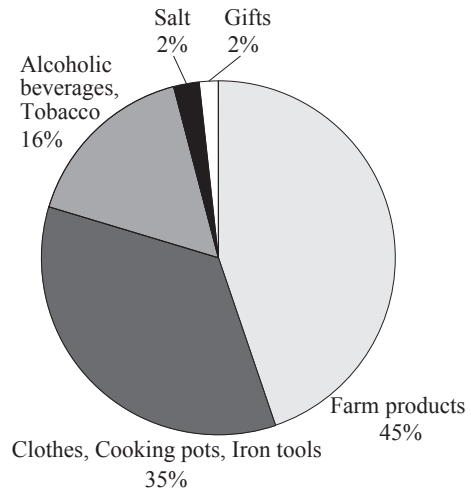
I will now turn to a discussion of the sources of the cash income with which the Baka purchase manufactured tools and other commodities. Baka men provide labor for Konabembe farms, game meat, goods such as thatched roofs, and homemade cooking utensils. They also sell forest products to merchants. Baka women sell hand-woven mats made from raffia palm leaves or plant products from the forest.

Figure 4 presents income details for 1 Baka household. During 129 observation days, this household earned 17,200 CFA francs (FCFA)<sup>(3)</sup> by selling game meat and forest plant products and providing farm labor and selling homemade tools to the Konabembe. About 45% of the total household income came from the sale of game meat, and 17% came from labor. In total, 62% of the cash income of this Baka household originated with the Konabembe, implying that the Baka depend heavily on the Konabembe economy.

Figure 5 summarizes the total expenditures of this household. Household members spent 45% of their income on staple foods, 35% on clothes and utensils, and 16% on alcoholic beverages and tobacco. As they were not self-sufficient with regard to staple foods, they spent money on farm products purchased from the Konabembe. The Baka purchased 61% of their goods, including alcohol and



**Fig. 4.** Distribution of total household cash income for 129 days. Total income was 17,200 FCFA.



**Fig. 5.** Distribution of total household cash expenditures for 129 days. Total cash expenditures were 17,200 FCFA.

tobacco, from the Konabembe. They purchased 35% of their manufactured goods from merchants.

Baka elders reported that they had never used cash with the Konabembe or merchants before the introduction of the cash economy. The Baka formerly bartered with Konabembe farmers, exchanging forest products or labor for commodities, such as farm products, alcohol, cooking pots, and salt made from the ash of raffia palms. Currently, Konabembe farmers pay in cash, farm products, and/or second-hand clothes. The Baka formerly bartered forest products for accessories, underwear, clothes, and salt from merchants. Currently, the Baka purchase these manufactured goods with cash.

The Baka whom I studied have increased their economic dependence on the Konabembe since the advent of the cash economy. This situation contrasts with those of Baka in other villages, who have planted cacao (Hayashi, 2000; Kitanishi, 2003; Oishi, 2012a) and sold game meat (Yasuoka, 2006b) as sources of cash income.

## RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE BAKA, FARMERS, AND OUTSIDERS

The Baka's strong dependence on the Konabembe is not limited to materials and economic stability, but also extends to the political arena. In recent years, logging companies, conservation groups, and tourism operations have entered the forest, exposing the Baka to the outside world. In this section, I focus on the manner in which the Baka and Konabembe deal with the outside world.

### Relationships with Logging Companies

Southeastern Cameroon has been the site of forest logging since the 1970s, and these operations had expanded into remote forest areas by the 1990s. In my study area, the CFE logging company began operations after the construction of a new logging road and ceased operations in May 2001. The SIBAF logging company took over in November 2001 and continued operating until September 2002. During this period, under the auspices of the local government, each company provided the local community with cash and other commodities in exchange for forest concessions.

CFE paid the Konabembe chief 3 million FCFA, three 100-kg sacks of rice, 4 dozen bottles of beer, 3 dozen 500-ml containers of cooking oil, three 5-kg bags of salt, 20 bars of soap, and 50 fish. The chief paid 150,000 FCFA administrative fee to a local administrator, and the remaining 2.85 million FCFA was divided among the village residents. In the absence of negotiation, the chief gave the Baka representatives only 300,000 FCFA, 1 sack of rice, 2 dozen bottles of beer, 2 bottles of oil, 1 bag of salt, some soap, and almost all of the fish (of which the Konabembe eat little).

The Baka representatives distributed 200,000 FCFA among the male Baka elders and 100,000 FCFA to the remaining male adults. The other commodities were divided among all of the men. The men distributed the cash to family members,

and the commodities were used in their households. For example, one man gave his mother and wife 1,500 FCFA each and his sister 1,000 FCFA. The remaining money was used to purchase an axe, shirts, shorts, plates, rice, and alcohol and to repay a loan from a Konabembe individual.

SIBAF did not pay the Konabembe chief in cash, but gave him 40 machetes, 1 dozen 1-L bottles of wine, 1 100-kg sack of rice, and 1 dozen 500-ml containers of oil. According to the Konabembe chief, the Mayor of Yokadouma siphoned off 8.4 million FCFA as the price for the concession. The Konabembe chief gave the Baka representatives a few machetes, which were shared among Baka community members.

Interactions with the logging company continued during its period of operation in the area. Some residents became employees of the company, and some started to trade farm products and game meat with employees who lived in towns. Almost all local employees were Konabembe farmers; the company employed only a few Baka, and these employees had seasonal contracts.

The wages of these 2 groups also differed. The Konabembe earned 1,000 FCFA per day, whereas the Baka earned 500 FCFA. The Konabembe were employed on a monthly basis for periods of 2–3 months and earned 60,000–90,000 FCFA, whereas the Baka were offered daily contracts. The Konabembe earned extra cash income through the sale of farm products and alcoholic beverages to the company and its employees.

These arrangements with the logging company resulted in a significant difference in the cash incomes of the Konabembe and Baka. Upon payment for the logging concession, the Konabembe received 37,500 FCFA per person, whereas the Baka received 2,800 FCFA per person; that is, the Konabembe received 10 times more than the amount received by the Baka. The Baka have also relied on the Konabembe for negotiation with outsiders, and the tendency of the Baka to depend on the Konabembe in the political domain may have widened the economic inequality between these ethnic groups. Indeed, the logging company recognized the inequality between the 2 groups and took advantage of the Baka.

### Interactions with Forest Conservation Organizations

As forest logging proceeded rapidly in southeastern Cameroon during the 1990s, a forest conservation project was established in the late 1990s, and many meetings were organized at the community level to promote community-based forest conservation. These meetings usually involved discussions about the establishment of national parks, demarcation of game reserves, definition of user rights, and organization of the Community Wildlife Resource Management Committee [*Comité de Valorisation des Ressources Fauniques* (COVAREF)], which controlled hunting by establishing hunting seasons and quotas, and trade bans on trophy and game-meat hunting by local residents.

As described in the initial part of this paper, the Baka community representatives in my study area were invited to the Konabembe meeting hall on August 12th, 2001. 27 Konabembe men, 7 elder Konabembe women, and 12 Baka men attended this meeting. Administrative officers and a facilitator selected from the



Konabembe village sat at the center of the meeting. The Konabembe participants sat inside the hall in eager anticipation, whereas the Baka sat outside the hall. After the meeting, all of the Konabembe men remained for the environmental education workshop, whereas the Baka men did not seem interested in the project and left for the forest. 3 such meetings were held before 2006, but the response of the 2 ethnic groups remained unchanged.

I will now turn to an examination of the degree of participation of the 2 ethnic groups. COVAREF consisted of representatives from each dwelling cluster in the villages. This committee played a role in receiving and distributing trophy-hunting concessions and was also responsible for patrolling for poachers. The COVAREF chapter in this area was established in 2002 to manage the 111-ha community forest (Defo et al., 2005). 13 villages were located on the road between Malea Nouveau and Ngato Ancien, and the committee consisted of 31 members [27 Konabembe men, 1 Konabembe woman, and 3 Baka men, according to WWF (personal communication)]. As only Baka people resided in Ngato Ancien village, the representatives from this area had to be Baka. 3 Konabembe, including the chief, were elected to the committee from Malea Ancien.

I conducted interviews with 7 Baka men and 5 Baka women in July 2006. They had no knowledge of the hunting zones or establishment of COVAREF. In contrast, most Konabembe were aware of the role of this committee. The Konabembe chief noted that they had not received some concession fees because Malea Ancien was too far from Malea Nouveau to permit their attendance at the regular meetings. He was therefore negotiating for an additional maize milling machine and chainsaw for the community in Malea Ancien.

In terms of interactions with the forest conservation project, the Konabembe actively participated in the program to reap the benefits it offered, whereas the Baka did not devote much attention to the project. The Baka appeared to be under the control of the Konabembe with regard to local political issues. The administrative body did not acknowledge that the Baka did not have equal representation on the management committee, but the officers were eager to listen to the Konabembe, who insisted that the project respect their rights.

### Interactions with the Tourism Company

A safari hunting company has been operating in the forest of southeastern Cameroon since the 1980s (Joiris, 1998), and safari hunting is permitted in the general hunting zones from January to June. The company operating adjacent to my study area began operations in 2006, which has created conflict over land and natural resources.

This tourism company, owned by a Turkish individual, operated in an area that contained many Baka forest campsites. The company's owner was displeased with the Baka's activities in the general hunting zone, in which the government had prohibited hunting by local people. He sometimes threatened the Baka and Konabembe communities by firing a gun at dogs belonging to Baka individuals or boats belonging to Konabembe individuals. Hence, some Baka were afraid to enter the forest.

During the *molongo* trip of 2004, the tourists established their hunting camp near the Baka's traditional Bagala campsite, which the Baka found increasingly difficult to use. In 2006, the Baka began to avoid using the Bagala site, and some Baka did not enter this general hunting zone for *molongo* or other hunting activities. To sustain their livelihood, the Baka used another area for *molongo* and hunting, but the tourism operator found the Baka to be antagonistic, as they continued to hunt without his permission when he was absent. On the other hand, the Baka stated that the owner continued to prevent them from engaging in traditional subsistence activities.

The Konabembe also found the owner to be antagonistic to their hunting in the general hunting zone, as he fired a gun in the vicinity of their village. The Konabembe chief finally sent a statement to the Ministry of Forestry about this assault by the tourism company. On July 13, 2003, forestry officials led an investigation into this matter. However, according to the chief, nothing has been done to improve the situation.

When I visited the study area in March 2008, I found that the chief's attitudes toward the tourism company had changed, as he had received a payment from this business, which he had distributed in the village. However, none of this money reached the Baka. Active interactions between the tourism company resulted in increased compensation payments to the Konabembe community. However, the Baka community was left with nothing from the tourism company, as they depended on the Konabembe for political negotiations.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In this section, I summarize the findings of this study and discuss changes in the relationship between the Baka and the Konabembe. Specifically, the following factors have contributed to changes in this relationship:

1. Increased sedentarization: the time spent residing in permanent and semi-permanent dwelling sites has increased.
2. Changes in livelihood activities: the Baka are less likely to farm their own land and more likely to work for existing farmers.
3. Decreased consumption of forest products: farm products obtained from farmers have become staple foods.
4. Decreased use of homemade commodities: the use of manufactured household commodities obtained from farmers and merchants has increased.
5. Adoption of a cash economy: the farmers serve as the source of cash income.
6. Restricted interactions with other societies: the farmers control access to resources, such as logging concessions and hunting compensation.

### Previous Livelihood Strategies and Relationships with Farmers

The nomadic Baka reportedly moved among forest campsites before the 1950s. Since that time, increased sedentarization has significantly changed the Baka

community. According to my research, the Baka currently prefer farm products, manufactured goods, and cash income and obtain these items from farmers. Sedentarization has led the Baka to increase their political and economic dependence on farmers.

In contrast, the Baka in southeastern Cameroon achieved self-sufficiency in the ability to produce staple foods as sedentarization progressed (Hayashi, 2000; Kitanishi, 2003; Yasuoka, 2006a; 2012). Some Baka have succeeded in planting cacao as a cash crop (Kitanishi, 2006; Oishi, 2012b), and some have started working as farmhands in the cacao plantation to earn additional wages (Kitanishi, 2006; Sakanashi, 2010). They have become more independent of the farmers as they have gained access to farm products and manufactured goods on their own. Thus, they have become less economically dependent on farmers.

What prevents the Baka in my study area from engaging in independent farming and other economic activities? First, poor access to roads may contribute to this situation, as the study area is among the most remote in terms of proximity to main roads. Indeed, the first road was constructed in 2001. Therefore, the Baka may be at a major disadvantage with regard to the initiation of farming and a cacao economy. Second, the Konabembe farmers in the study area earn cash income by net fishing, rather than by planting. As the Baka do not engage in net fishing, their source of cash income has been the farmers. Third, the density of the population in the study area is among the lowest, and the availability of natural resources did not require the Baka to engage in farming to obtain food items. Thus, the Baka did not adopt farming and, as a result, became economically dependent on the farmers.

In terms of the political dependence of the Baka on the farmers, the Baka in my study area have been interacting with farmers and merchants since 1910. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Baka interacted with the French, who were given the mandate to administer this area. Bakwele elders recalled that the farmers and the Baka were forced to gather natural rubber and weed the access roads under the French administration. Baka legends tell of similar events.

As the sedentary farmers may have had the power to negotiate with the French administrative authorities, whether the nomadic Baka had much interaction with the French is unclear. Since the 1960s and the independence of Cameroon, modern education has been introduced in these areas, and schools have been built. However, the authorities deemed my study area too remote for the construction of a school, and many farmers moved to live with relatives residing near the schools that were constructed. At school, the farmers learned social skills and French, the official language. The nomadic Baka, who did not possess the cash to access education, missed the opportunity to learn these skills. Consequently, negotiations with the new government and other actors were left to the farmers.

Furthermore, the logging and tourism companies began operating in southeastern Cameroon in the 1970s. In the late 1990s, a forest conservation organization arrived in the area. With construction of the road in 2001, more outside actors came to operate in the study area. The farmers acted as village representatives and negotiated with these other actors. The financial gap between the 2 ethnic groups has widened and the inequality between them has become more apparent. As

sedentarization has progressed, the Baka have increased their economic dependence on the farmers, which has increased the control of the farming community over the Baka's access to external economic and political resources. This situation may lead to the further marginalization of the Baka.

What has happened in other Baka communities? I could not obtain complete information about their political relationships with farmers. However, some Baka communities appear to be more politically independent from farmers by virtue of being more educated or having more access to other actors, such as cacao traders.

#### Future Livelihood Strategies and the Relationship with Farmers

How will the Baka's relationship with the farmers change in the future? Some Baka communities in southeastern Cameroon have become less economically dependent on farming communities as sedentarization has progressed and farming has become more widespread. What will happen to the hierarchical relationship between the 2 communities after the Baka community has gained economic strength and negotiating power with the outside society? Will changes in the Baka livelihood result in political and economic equality between the 2 groups? Or, as was the case when the Bagyeli and the farming community fought in western Cameroon (van de Sandt, 1999), will this lead to significant conflict between the Baka and the farmers? As negotiations with outside actors often involve control of access to profit, increased equality will likely increase conflict between the ethnic groups.

When I visited the study site in March 2008, many Baka individuals were working to clear farmland. The pace at which they were adopting farming seemed to be increasing, although considerable time might be required for them to achieve self-sufficiency with regard to staple foods. If interactions with outside groups increase before the Baka become self-sufficient, will the farming community increase its power over the Baka community, thereby marginalizing the Baka further?

During the last 50 years, the government has forced the Baka to settle and engage in farming. At the same time, the Baka have continued to follow their traditional nomadic way of life, engaging in hunting and gathering in the forest. They have been able to continue hunting and gathering primarily because the previous and current administrations have not prohibited these practices. However, several changes have occurred during the past few decades. Other actors, whose main objective is to extract natural resources from the forest, prompted the government to exclude the Baka from the forest. Logging and tourism companies began operating, and the efforts of conservation organizations led to the creation of protected areas and national parks in the forest, where the Baka have traditionally hunted and gathered. The new enterprises and developments have prevented the Baka not only from entering, but also from using the area for their nomadic lifestyle of hunting and gathering.

These businesses and conservation organizations from developed countries, as well as their host government, have increased the economic and political marginalization of the Baka. The Baka depend primarily on the forest, and they should be treated as an interested party in all discussions about the forest. As outside

actors have started to interfere with or control the use of natural forest resources, the Baka community has suffered huge losses related to their livelihood. Regulations that have been imposed in the absence of an understanding of the distribution of resources available to the Baka have affected the sustainability of the Baka community. If this situation continues, the Baka may have to abandon their nomadic way of life in the future.

In conclusion, I present several examples of the effect of outside actors on the relationship between the Baka and the farmers. In recent years, international efforts have sought to strengthen the role of indigenous peoples. These efforts have included the provision of assistance to sustain the nomadic lifestyle and culture of the Pygmy hunter-gatherers in the African tropical rainforest. By demonstrating how the current society has been discriminating against and marginalizing hunter-gatherer societies, international organizations have lobbied to restore their right to use the forests (Kitanishi, 2010). This movement in central Africa has led some conservation organizations to recognize the Baka as a forest people who have lived in harmony with the forest. On the one hand, this international movement promoting the human rights of indigenous peoples may help the Baka to sustain their nomadic way of life in the forest. On the other hand, however, this movement may precipitate new conflict with the farming community.

The manner in which the ethnic relationship between the Baka and the farmers will develop in the future is uncertain. Although the Baka have been forced to adopt the new way of life imposed on them by the outside world during the past 50 years, they have nonetheless succeeded in modifying their nomadic lifestyle. The establishment of mechanisms to help the Baka community cope with the current situation, in which their usage rights have been increasingly restricted by the international forest conservation movement, is important. An international movement is needed to help the Baka hunter-gatherer community establish a good relationship with the farming community and other interested parties in the African forest so that they can sustain their way of life.

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## NOTES

- (1) Published edible percentages were obtained from Ichikawa (1983), Kitanishi (1995), and Yasuoka (2006a).
- (2) Published nutritional values were obtained from Leung (1968).
- (3) 1 euro = 655.957 FCFA.

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