

TALI DEVELOPMENT AREA PRIMER

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TALI DEVELOPMENT AREA PRIMER

ABSTRACT

The question “who are the Tali’ people?” can be answered by looking at some aspects of the people of the area, which might not suffice, for no amount of volumes of write-ups can replace a visit and a practical encounter with these people.



Grand Stand at Tinto Where Official Occasions are Held in the Tali Development Area

INTRODUCTION

The Tali Development Area (T.D.A.) covers 59 villages grouped into 10 clans (ethnic groups) with a population of about 50,000 inhabitants. This is the Area that will directly influence the African University (A.U.) and will have direct influence by its activities.

The area covers 3,720km², $\frac{3}{4}$ of this land surface is still covered by dense forest. In 1992 a presidential decree granted this area the status of a subdivision with head quarters in Tinto.

And by a presidential decree N^o 93/321 of 25 November, 1993 creating the Tinto Rural Council which became operational in 1996 and became the main economic enhancer of the Area.

Access to Tali from Douala (225 km) typically takes six hours and the route goes through Mutengene, Buea, and Kumba. While the road from Douala to Kumba is tarred, from Kumba to Tali is untarred. The nearest town to Tali is Mamfe and the road between them is also untarred. Construction of the trunk of Cameroon-Nigeria road from Abakiliki-Enugu-Ekok-Mamfe-Kumba-Mutengene started in June 2010. This road will improve approximately 201 km of the 225 km from Douala to Tali. The project is funded by the African Development bank. The Mamfe-Kumba trunk of the road covers most of the way to Tali (i.e. Kumba to Bakebe). Tali to Bakebe is 23 km.

Tali where the A.U projected plot is found is about 6km drive from Tinto. It has a traditional council headed by a Chief. It has 13 quarters divided into two separate areas in 1954 known as Tali I and Tali II for purposes of better administrative control.

Like any forest based people the villagers here are mostly involved in hunting and farming with cocoa, coffee, palm oil as main cash crops. They also carry out orchard farming like oranges, grapes, pineapples etc.



The Tinto Council Chambers

CULTURAL VALUES



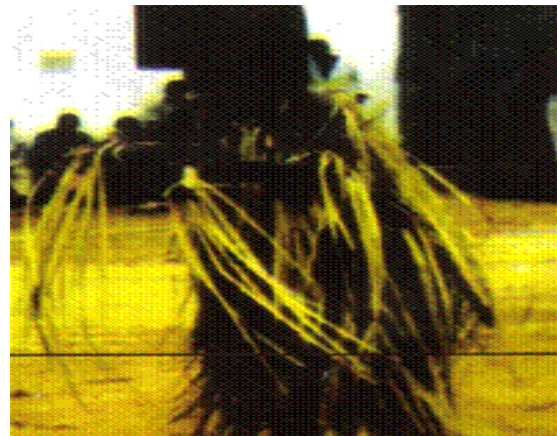
EmaN'yangnkpe On Display

“Ekpe” is the most prestigious cultural organ of the Manyu people. It is an administrative arm of the people and membership is highly selective with the highest rank being the “Sesseku”.

“Ema-N'yangnkpe” is an element of Ekpe. With its beautiful mask all over the body, it leads the drummers with its large bells on the **waist**

which gives the rhythm. It's specially prepared cane is to beat up and cleanse widows whose husbands before dying were members of the society unless it is bought-off.

“Amgbuh” is another arm of Ekpe which comes out on very special occasions. Carrying a mystical calabash on the waist and with a thorned stick. It is said that Amgbuh has as objective the cleansing of the land from all evil especially demons which it mysteriously catches and burn into ashes.



Amgbuh On Display



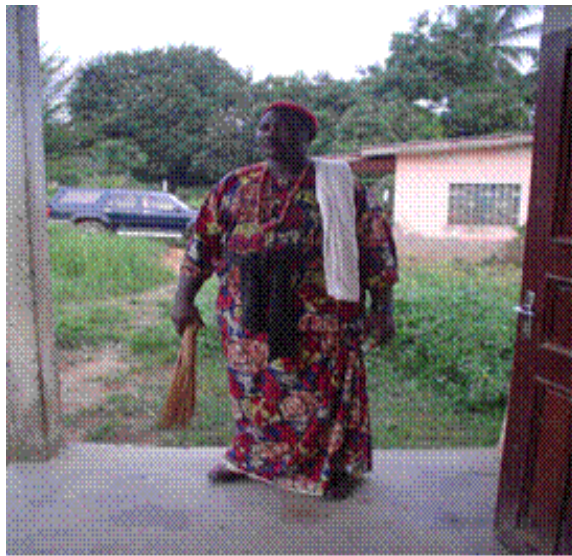
Obasinjum And Its Dancers On Display

“Obasinjum” is another very mystical cultural society in the T.D.A in particular and Manyu division as a whole. It is said that it is capable of moving on land and in water with its mirror- like eyes, the obasinjum is able to see beyond normal and thus identifies and

destroys witchcraft in the Area.

CULTURAL WEEK

Each year there are special periods set out especially during the dry season in which sons and daughters of the area whom for one reason or the other have gone out will have to come back to the villages to acquaint themselves with each other and with their culture. This period is called the “cultural week”. This period is highly prepared for to meet up high expectations of the sons and daughters of the village and well-wishers.



*His Royal Highness Orock Baiyee, the
Chief of Tali in His Traditional Attire*

ENERGY

Though this area is highly equipped with rivers and water falls that can be used to generate electricity, it is not the case. The plans of the National Electricity Corporation to get to this area seem far away for now. The people in this area use generators particularly those who can afford to buy or hire. The Council controls one at Tinto which is used at some specific periods of the day at token rates for running cost.

In the whole of the T.D.A, many people possess personal generators which are used on particular occasions and seasons like Christmas or during the Cultural week when well wishers move down to the village in large numbers.

The indigenes use mainly wood as fuel which is harvested from the forest. Some use the kerosene cooker, while others use the gas cooker. Gas is transported to this area from Douala which is the economic capital of Cameroon.

Because of the absence of regular power supply, development is greatly hindered, since many activities cannot function without it. But with the availability of all the natural resources which is required for regular energy supply there is much hope.



Tropical Rain Forest

INFRASTRUCTURE



Dry Season



Rainy Season

Roads in this area are seasonal since they are not tarred. In the dry season which last from November to May, small vehicles can also plough the road; this season is plagued with much dust. During the rainy season which covers the period of June to September the sticky clay soil makes transportation almost impossible except for four wheel drive vehicles. During the rainy season, transportation fares double. Since the road is not tarred, the council always carry out maintenance work on the road to make it continually accessible.

The roads in this area links up three major towns and divisions like kumba in the Meme division which also link up other big towns like Buea, Douala, and Yaoundé. Fontem in Lebialem division, which link up other towns like Bafoussam and Dschang. And Mamfe which links up to Nigeria. The road from Buea through Kumba to Mamfe and Ekok at the borders is part of an ongoing African Development Bank project which is presently at the second phasing i.e. Muea to Kumba.

The roads are used by motorcycles and motor vehicles for transportation, though the roads are small and are very crooked, it is rare to hear of accidents in this area. Some people trek long distances particularly those going to



Motorcycles on the Tali Road

their farms or to the market or to neighboring villages for other social and economic activities.



Council Caterpillar Maintaining the Road network During the Rainy Season



Tali Post Office



A Cross Section of Houses in Tali Village

Houses in the T.D.A range from ultra modern houses to mud houses. The ultra modern houses are possible because some of the people in this area are top in business and in the Civil Service. Except in Tinto most of the villages in the T.D.A have linear settlement therefore most of the land is still covered by the forest and farm land which if thorough planning is put in place before development continues this area could be one of the best in the country. Most villages are separated by a stretch of Forest and farmland. From the center of the village towards the periphery the houses are closely clustered together but with each built in a way that gives enough space for further development in the compound. These houses are always very neat since the villagers always respond massively to this interest. In case of communal work or general village cleaning, the village town crier has to go out as early as 4:00am to inform the villagers about the work. This is also done if there is going to be any important activity in the village that requires the participation of all or some of the villagers.

Particularly around the A.U.F project site, there are many modern houses that can host people of all standards and status.

HEALTH ISSUES

The T.D.A has six health centers, three community health posts. One of these is owned by the Roman Catholic Mission. In terms of distribution, each of these centers have to serve 5555 people which is an absolute impossibility considering their personnel, logistics and resources. This number of health posts and centers are largely inadequate to cater for the health needs of this region; therefore many have to resort to traditional means which have great limitations. Though most of the drugs and facilities offered by these health posts and centers are greatly subsidized by the government and other NGOs, many villagers can't afford the means to acquire their services and therefore resort to other unorthodox practices.

The health center in Tali has more than ten villages to cater for, but still this center is manned by only two persons who also offer extension services to meet up with others who cannot make it there. This center is controlled by the government and receives support from other NGOs. They receive generous donations like a generator, a fridge or renovation of the center. The health center also serve as a maternity and women in the villages around are expected to be delivered here. But often many of them deliver at home.

Since this area is tropical, the most prevalent sickness is malaria. Only about two out of every 100 persons may not be suffering from the effect. The high rate of malaria is due to the high level of mosquitoes and the villagers exposure to them at night as well as in the day, at night when they are on their beds which do not have mosquito nets, in the day when they are in their farms or compound. There are other illnesses present like Typhoid. The health center carry out government initiated vaccination programs for polio, measles etc and other sensitization campaigns for malaria, filaria and AIDS.

In case of an emergency, the patients are taken to the divisional headquarters i.e. Mamfe which has better health facilities like in the District hospital. It takes about an hour drive to reach there.



Health Center, Tali

The Tali health center also has a dispensary where subsidized drugs are sold. These drugs which vary according to the prevalent sicknesses are made available to the villagers at very cheap rates.

EDUCATION

This is one of the major blessings of this area which has helped in the development of the nation as a whole. Many pupils and students who studied in this area have served the nation as top administrative and military personnels and top business men etc and these people have a soft spot towards supporting education.

The T.D.A has a Government High School at Tinto, a private high school at Bachuo-Akagbe, a government Artisan School at Tinto, a Government Secondary School in Ebeagwa and an envisaged Government Technical College at Tali which will begin in September 2007 with accommodation already assured.

The region has many Government Primary Schools, those under the Ebeagwa zone are seven with the oldest being that of Government School (G.S) Tali, which was opened in 1922 and has an enrolment of about 200 pupils. The pupils also trek form long distances which discourages many from coming to school. The gender equality is very balanced as female pupils compete favourably with their male counterparts.

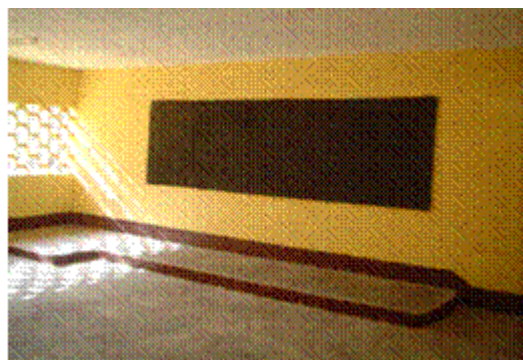


Though the school has stayed for so long and has produced key people in the nation, it has been grossly neglected because they lack basic teaching AIDS and incentives

to pupils and teachers as well. The pupils and teachers have expressed interest in computers and ICT.



Government School Tali



Classroom of Newly Created Government Technical College Tali

TOURISM

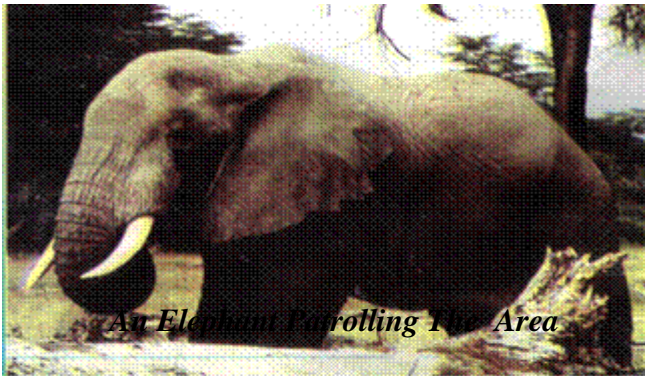
The T.D.A has continuously received many Tourists and investors who have been attracted to it by its abundant natural resources and Touristic attractions. Thus the Tinto Rural Council and the different Traditional Councils have put in place an open door policy to investors and tourists.

In terms of Infrastructure, the council has built a guest house to receive visitors. In the different villages as in Tali there are modern structures which are used to receive such visitors. These houses have adequate facilities such as water, electricity, security etc personally supervised by the village chief and other dignitaries.



Guest House In Tinto

Tourists will be privileged to come across many species of plants and animals found



no where else in the world. The Bayang-Mbo sanctuary, part of which is found in this area is a forest reserve project carried out by the government whereby poaching and exploitation are forbidding. The largest tree in the world

has recently been discovered here. The reserve harbors many species of plants and animals including monkeys, baboons, gorillas, chimpanzees, and the elephant being the largest animal in this reserve. Elephants and other endangered species are protected by government regulation.

A relic of German occupation of this area which is more than 100 years old is the German workstation in Tinto, which is a touristic attraction. The council has plans to further develop the station.

The T. D. A, is rich indeed! the Manyu River meanders down South to the Atlantic Ocean crossing the Sub division several times. Movement is possible across this river from one village to the other via cane rope hammocks locally constructed by the villagers at various crossing points.



The Beauty of This Area Lies in the Natural Vegetation

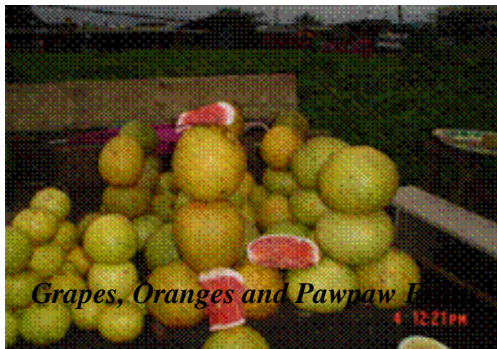
ECONOMY

Cocoa is one of the main cash crops that the area produces. Buyers penetrate the villages and determine the prices, since farmers cannot afford the means of carrying the high quality cocoa produced to the big **towns where** the market is competitive. Poor farm-to-market roads also hinders these activities. The suitable climate to farm and dry the seeds attracts many farmers and buyers to the locality.



Cocoa Beans

Other cash crops include oil palms and coffee, since the villagers do not process, these are transported to other towns and sometimes exported.



Grapes, Oranges and Pawpaw F

They also have orchards and produce fruits like oranges, grapes and pineapples. Mangoes, plums and kola nuts are produced in large quantities.

The coconut fruit have served for many years as the symbolic fruit of this area because of its distinct sweetness, those who visit this area carry it along or face a query from relatives and friends.

Food crops produced in large quantities include cocoyam, cassava, corn, plantains etc which are sometimes transported to other parts of the nation



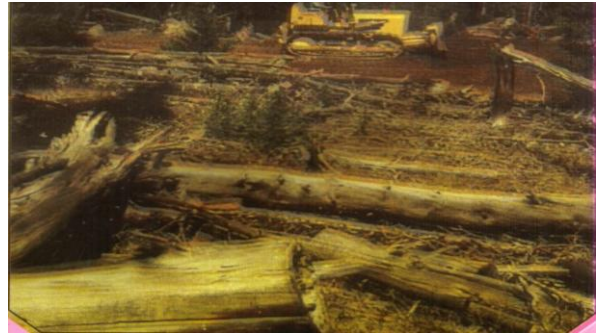
Coconut Fruit Tree

and to neighbouring countries like Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria.

This area is also blessed with many rivers which empties itself into River Manyu which also flows into the Atlantic Ocean. The many rivers serve as a source of water for home use, irrigation, and fishing and have hydro electrical potential.

Hunting is an integral part of the activities of the people, they move far into the forest to kill animals for home and for commercial purposes. This meat is mostly sold when smoked. Animals like cane grass, rat moles, deer's, antelopes, monkeys are found in this area.

There is also Timber exploitation carried out in this area under government control; the exploitation companies pay royalties which are shared between government and local population that uses it for development purposes. The government controls the exploiting companies from cutting certain species, exploiting certain areas, ensure that the roads are not damaged or that the



Timber Exploitation In The Region
movement of the Timber vehicles inconvenience the villagers.

Presently, the Wijma Company has won the contract to exploit 50,000 hectares of forest and it began exploitation since 2003. The fall outs from these activities have gone a long way to improve the living conditions of the villagers and alleviate poverty in the area.

The area have a rotational market of about 8 days in which the villagers have the opportunity to sell their local products and to buy other essentials which comes from other big towns like Mamfe; this includes articles like dresses, kitchen utensil etc.



One of the Five Markets Created by the Tinto

Recently, the Tinto Rural Council has created a central market in Tinto and five inter-village markets with one in Tali.



Tinto Central Market