

III. A Village in Transittion in Cote D'ivoire Commetns

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COMMENT

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At first, I would like to remark that I found this paper very interesting. One of the reasons is that I myself have been to this village 2 years ago with the author. I knew the atmosphere of the village, thanks to him, and this paper taught me its structure.

Now the following is my comments.

Though the paper is titled "a village in transition", my impression of this paper is that the village has not changed so much as I expected.

The village is very near (30 minutes by car) from the economic center of the country, Abidjan city, which has the population of over 2 million. Côte d'Ivoire has experienced a very rapid economic growth after independence, and we can therefore imagine that the village is subject to the strong economic influence from Abidjan.

However, the village appears to hold many of traditional aspects even today. In particular, I would like to remark that there is no sales of land, and the villagers believe that there will never be. Though their products, including the staple crops, are commercialized, the village's main means of production are not commercialized at all.

Comparing the other countries' cases, this fact seems to me peculiar. Because today it is often reported the sales of land in the suburbs of big cities in some countries (for example Kenya, Zaire) exist. Sometimes it happens even illegally if it is prohibited by the government. My impression is rather that the village is now at the beginning of the "transition".

On the other hand, we can find some symptoms of the social

change. Here I would like to point out two of these.

The one is the income from the crop like cassava which, originally food crop, and following the custom of sexual division of labour, is cultivated by women. These days, because the production of staples is also commercialized, women can sell them and gain some cash income. As the author points out, the fact that women got the cash may cause some changes in the social structure, including the possibility of strengthening women's social position.

The other is the way of selecting the village chief. They appointed a young government official as the next chief. It appears that the villagers begin to attach much more importance to the connection with the central government. In this case, it seems to me that they took account of their merit of having the connection; the merit of politics, public finance, and so on. Considering the resistance among the villagers, especially the elders, we can say that this appointment also indicates a change of the traditional social order.

I pointed out two major symptoms of the changes in Ahoué village. These are only symptoms, but important ones. The problem is a future evolution of these symptoms, and I would like to expect the author's further research in the village on these matters.