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Friends and Twins in Bangwa

I

The Bangwa are a group of Bamileke chiefdoms in the eastern highlands of Mamfe Division in West Cameroon,¹ During my stay there, one of the terms I had initial difficulty with was *eshua*. The Bangwa who spoke English translated it as 'friend'. Yet, as I began to acquire my own 'friends', I realized that the relationship involved more than one of mere mutual intimacy.

Most Bangwa, who asked me if I was their friend, wanted to know if I was bom at roughly the same time as themselves; if this were so, a man (or a woman) automatically became my friend and we used the reciprocal term, *eshua ga* (my friend). We also assumed a hail-fellow-well-met relationship and I adopted a more intimate attitude with his wife (whom I called 'wife of my friend') and his children. I began to assume that the primary referent for the word *eshua* was age-mate and that there existed a form of institutionalized friendship between those persons born at the same time. Yet, in Bangwa, there are no age-grades like the *manjong* warrior associations of the Bamileke and Bamenda peoples. The relationship between age-mates who are 'friends' involves mutual rights and duties but no allegiance to any form of grouping.² It is a voluntary relationship: over the years a man chooses, from among his age-mates, one or two close friends who become his close allies in social, political, and economic ventures.

Nevertheless, many of my self-declared friends in Bangwa were not of my age-group; many were much older. Most of them, when calling me *eshua ga* (my friend), implied that we stood, in some way, on a footing of equality. When I received a title in the complicated system of Bangwa title-holding, people who held the same title and had the right to attend the same societies began to call me *eshua*. Chiefs and

sub-chiefs of the same rank but from widely separated areas called each other *eshua*; on the dancing field such men expressed their relationship by clashing cutlasses above their heads. Women who are also of the same rank, such as a chief's first wife and a titled royal daughter, embrace in a formal expression of their 'friendship'. Men who do the same work and have the same amount of wealth may also be friends in this sense.

Again, I had friends who were in no sense my equals. These were more sentimental attachments than relations ascribed through birth or position. Thus one sub-chief, who took a great interest in my activities and personal life, became known as my good friend (*mbong eshua*). Small children I became attached to and who haunted my house were termed the white man's friends. Among the Bangwa themselves there is evidence of many friendships, based on affection or common interests.

Blood-brotherhood is not to be confused with the Bangwa notion of friendship. Blood pacts were made in the past and are occasionally made in a slightly different form today - usually between two men for a specific and temporary purpose, such as a warlike mission or a commercial venture, cuts are made in the forearms of the partners and the blood mixed and eaten with a segment of kola nut or a glass of wine. True friends would not need to undergo this kind of ritual and a man would be offended if his friend asked him to do so. Today such pacts may be made by two persons if one wishes to swear another to secrecy over a certain matter. In the past, chiefs made temporary political alliances in this way. In the 1890s Conrau, the first representative of the German colonial power to visit Bangwa in search of trade articles and plantation labour, made a pact with the chief of Fontem, the two drinking from a bottle of gin mixed with their blood. Conrau left Bangwa with labourers for the southern plantations. When he returned a year later, without the men, he was deemed to have broken his side of the bargain; in the quarrel that ensued he lost his life.

Friendship, therefore, In Bangwa, although institutionalized, has many aspects. It may be ascribed through birth; the term *eshua* is then qualified and becomes *eshua nzo*, friend by birth. Both sexes have ascribed friends; and men may have friendships with women based on

the fact that they were born near the same time. Friendship may be acquired later on in life through achieving equality of status with another man or woman. This type of friend is called *eshua manze*. A third type of friend, called *eshua nti* or *mbong eshua* (friend of the heart or good friend), is a friend acquired through mutual liking. I have used the word 'friend' throughout this essay since the Bangwa do not frequently distinguish these three types and because it is a more comprehensive term than age-mate or equal. Moreover if the relationship flourishes, however it began, it becomes primarily one of friendship.

Equality, in some sense, is the main ingredient of the Bangwa notion of friendship. It cuts across the basic inequalities between the sexes and different age and status groups. In relations between friends who are age-mates the usual inhibitions between the sexes or between an aristocrat and a commoner are relaxed. In relations between two men of equal status, the respect ordinarily due to the older man is relaxed. And in relations based on mutual affection, differences of both age and rank are forgotten. Friendship allows increased social and economic opportunity outside the fields of kinship, without degrading individuals in patron-client type relations. Friendship also provides valuable emotional outlets that are not usually found in the world of kinship.

II

In Bangwa the only true equals, and therefore the best friends, are twins, bom of one womb, at one time, and sharing the same rank. They are the only persons in a km group, even a nuclear family, who are allowed to use each other's personal name in conversation. All other siblings use the terms 'elder sibling' (*ndega*) or 'our child' (*mwogwük*), and age differentiation is given expression in formal etiquette even between full siblings. The reciprocal term for twins is 'my friend' (*eshua ga*). Twins are friends and equals, having shared their mother's womb for nine months, or often, according to the Bangwa, much longer. Before birth they roam the world of spirit children for indefinite periods before conception.

Twins are called 'friends' as equals; but as peculiar beings they are known as *befak* (sing. *lefak*). Duality is implied in neither word. *Lefak*

is used for a child delivered by breech birth, with a caul round its neck, with six fingers - any child in fact who exhibits physical or, later, psychological abnormalities. Twins are wonderful children, likened to 'spirit beings' and called 'children of the gods'³. They are thought to be endowed with the gift of seeing their way back to the world of unborn children (*efeng*). Children are sometimes converted into the twin (*lefak*) category after long bouts of illness. Once their propensity for dying has been removed ritually, they remain twins. Twins, of all sorts, have special gifts and are considered very highly. Chiefs choose 'twins' to succeed them. The parents of twins assume special titles (*anyi* for the mother, *tanyi* for the father) which give them the right to take up ritual office or practise as diviners.

Efeng, the world of unborn children, was described to me as a vast black cave, peopled by the spirits of children who wander around in pairs or groups looking for suitable parents. The Bangwa believe that the supply of children's spirits is constant, being replenished constantly by the spirits of dead Bangwa who are reincarnated in their descendants. Ideas about *efeng* and reincarnation are vague and very variable. Children have to be seduced from *efeng* into their mother's womb. In some cases they go in pairs and are born (in the ideal case) as twins. If this happens and no special ritual is performed, one of the twins' parents or their grandparents must immediately die to correct the imbalance in *efeng*. It is, however, rare for the spirit pair to agree to enter a single womb. Tastes differ and twins often separate at the last minute. Some enter a womb and remain there for some time before one decides to return to *efeng*. A child who has been convinced by his parents that life with them will be the best thing for him may be tormented by his twin, who lurks in the shadows or the fire burning in the hut of the pregnant woman, trying to seduce him back to *efeng*.

One man, telling me the story of his childhood, began it in the antenatal world of *efeng*, where he was travelling with his friend and twin. Looking around for a comfortable home and agreeable parents, he decided to enter the 'belly' of his father before transferring in the latter's semen to the womb of his mother. His friend refused to accompany him, but, furious at having been left, tormented the child in the womb, bringing considerable pain to the mother who suffered a long and painful pregnancy "which lasted for two years'. Towards the

end of the pregnancy the unconceived twin hid in the woman's eye, forming an ugly sty. Finally this twin left the woman's eye, entering the womb of a woman of the village who gave birth to a bouncing girl a few months later. On the advice of the diviner, who recounted this story of the twins' separate births when one of them became ill, the two children were formally declared twins (*befak*), became friends (*beshua*) - a relationship which has lasted until sixty years later.

The point of this story is to indicate how concepts of twinship are linked with those of friendship. This man was explaining 'friendship' to me. Children who are born without a twin are considered to be in a dangerous state; pairing them with a friend removes the danger that they will be seduced back to *efeng*. Another friend of mine, constantly ill as a child, was taken to the diviner who declared that the child was suffering because his friend (*eshua gi*) had been conceived in the womb of another woman and, owing to a quarrel between the spirit children, the pair had not been united. Nor had their full status as twins been recognized. The two children were declared twins, the usual rites were carried out, and their mothers assumed the status of *anyi* the two men have been 'friends' since that time. Other children, who exhibit signs of chronic illness, are said to suffer from the tormentings of their 'friends' in *efeng* who have not agreed to be born and who continue to seduce their friends along the road to *efeng* and the carefree life of the unborn children. The parents of such a child call in a ritual expert (*tanyi*, 'father of twins' himself) to perform a ceremony to cut him off from his friend. An effigy is made of the child from a plantain stem; a deep pit is dug; the child is placed inside as if at a burial, but at the last minute before the pit is filled in the child is whisked out and replaced by the effigy. In this way the unborn twin is fooled and will cease preying on his 'friend'.

The closest of friends are therefore twins, or children who travelled together as twins in *efeng*. On the whole, children are linked by their parents with other children born at roughly the same time. The same day is preferred, but friendships are encouraged between children born during the same season or even year. My interpreter told me that his father considered his friends too few when he reached the age of five or six. One day when they were walking together in a neighbouring village they met a small child of his age, whom his father swore

resembled his own son in every aspect. They must have been twins in *efeng* he declared; the two children were formally declared twins. Their hair was allowed to grow long and was dressed in two peaks like twins; and they made a formal parade through the market, well-oiled and dressed in identical fine cloths, like twins' 'coming-out' after a 'fattening' rite and ceremony. Forty years later the two men had remained firm 'best friends'.

III

During childhood and adolescence friends associate in an informal way, For most people, unlike my interpreter, friendship is entered into without any kind of ceremonial. The importance of the relationship, however, is impressed on them by precept, proverb, and story. It is a relationship which is always extolled, friends being told how they should support each other at all times, and exchange small gifts. Parents encourage their children to develop relations with age-mates and friends. Gradually a young boy or girl begins to select from among several age-mates a friend of the same sex whom he can trust absolutely. Confidences are exchanged, secret ambitions discussed. Young boys go hunting together, girls discuss their future husbands. Lads plan amorous adventures, depending implicitly on the connivance of their friends in troubles they may have within the village or compound.

Sexual education is acquired casually. There are no formal puberty rites for groups of boys or girls. Girls are married shortly after puberty or as their breasts 'begin to drop'. Once a girl, in a group of age-mates, is considered ready for marriage the parents other age-mates prepare to arrange for the weddings of all their daughters, whatever their physical maturity, although a very immature girl may be 'fattened' for seven or nine weeks, on the advice of a diviner. A girl is accompanied at her wedding by two age-mates or friends who attend her through the lengthy ceremonial, bathing with her and anointing her with camwood and oil before she is taken to her husband's sleeping-hut for the first time.

Men marry much later than women. Throughout the long process of betrothal and marriage a man is supported by his friend, who acts as go-between in relations between him and his affines. Bridewealth

arrangements are discussed by the go-between with the bride's matrikin and four patrigrups, her own and three other matrilaterally related patrigrups who have bridewealth rights in his fiancée.⁴ Nowadays young men who work in the southern towns or plantations send their friends back to Bangwa to arrange their marriages, Almost inevitably this involves the tricky business of arranging the divorce of the young woman from a husband who had been betrothed to her at her birth, and repaying to him all the bridewealth he has given to her kin and marriage guardians since that time.

Bangwa men have fleeting sexual relations with girls, but never confuse a love affair with a relationship of friendship with a woman, formed in early childhood. Men and women of the same age are not necessarily of the same social age; this in itself precludes the notion of sex. Youths, on the whole, are not considered sexually or socially mature until many years after their girl 'friends' have married and had children, The difference in poise and physique between a youth of twenty and a matron of the same age is often remarkable. A young man usually becomes betrothed to his first fiancée in his early twenties, while she is still a child; when he first marries, his female friend may be a grandmother. Sometimes a woman will give one of her own daughters the name of her own friend (boy's and girl's names are interchangeable), and this gives the friend the right to first refusal of the baby's hand in marriage. Thus a friendship between persons of both sexes is always of the *eshua nzo* (friends by birth) variety and precludes sexual relations. This friendship does not differ much from the informal relationship of companionship between men. When a man is with his woman friend the relationship between them is immediately apparent, since the woman relaxes her usual attitude of deference which she assumes in the presence of men of any age or rank. They are permitted to joke, eat together (usually tabooed between men and women), and talk frankly. In the market they exchange kola nuts and gifts freely.

Friendship between two women is not institutionalized to the extent it is between men, although women know their age-mates and have special friends among them. Perhaps a woman's closest friend or friends are those who were married at the same time to the same husband. As co-wives of an important polygynist they would have

shared the same seclusion, but after their wedding; they share farming chores, care for each other's children, mourn their death, gossip, and share small domestic tasks in the compound. After their sons and daughters have grown up and left the compound, they grow old together; the death of one is a bitter blow. Other women friends, separated by marriage, visit each other at important *rites de passage*, bringing members of their local women's society gifts of food, firewood, etc. Some women friends farm together, often travelling long distances to work a groundnut or cocoyam plot in the friend's village.

Friendship does not falter; its rights and obligations do not concern matters that lead to enmity. They are not involved in affairs of property. Friends who are non-kinsmen are not accused of bewitching each other (although to the best of my knowledge a person is not accused of bewitching his twin). The relationship is seen as one of reciprocal advantage; there is nothing to be gained by betraying a friend. A man has complete freedom of his friend's compound and receives lavish hospitality when he visits. Friends tell each other details of personal and family affairs which they would keep from a brother or other kinsman. A friend is the person who is absolutely trusted. Old Bangwa men wax long on the virtues of friendship. 'My friend can lie in my wife's bed,' said one old man, implying that a friend could never betray another by seducing his wife. It can be said of few other men. At dances men are permitted to dance with their friend's wives, a rare privilege. To sleep with a friend's wife is considered the most heinous of sins; it brings mystical danger automatically on to the head of the wronged husband.

Friends attend any family discussions or disputes and give the benefit of their impartial advice. They attend *rites de passage* as a matter of course. A man's sons will call his friend as soon as he is critically ill. A friend is considered to be the best person to calm an old man's rage. Friends can be relied on to support a man in trouble even when kinsfolk and neighbours have withdrawn: this is noticeably so in cases of accusation of intragroup witchcraft or adultery. They also execute less pleasant tasks, such as recovering debts, or demanding the repayment of bridewealth when a wife divorces. A man may well be asked to perform the autopsy for witchcraft on his friend's dead

children. When a man loses a close relative he is attended by his age-mates and friends at the mortuary rite; they perform the masquerade he arranges in honour of his dead kinsman. If anyone quarrels with a person, his friends are automatically involved. One chief, whose young wife was stolen from his compound, banned the seducer and his friends from the village; he naturally assumed that a man and his friends perpetrated such an action in concert.

A man's friend is sometimes made, formally, the surrogate father of one of his children. A boy or a girl is presented to one of the parents' friends as his or her 'child'. The surrogate parent looks after the child's interests, particularly during adolescence and young manhood. A godfather may be asked to act as a go-between in the betrothal arrangements of his 'child' and the latter's prospective affines. The Bangwa explain this institution, which is by no means universal, as a means whereby harassed fathers (in polygynous compounds) share paternal duties with a friend whose responsibilities are fewer. It is also a device whereby a young man can partake of another's knowledge or other advantages without his being a kinsman: for example, if his father's friend is a blacksmith, the child may learn his craft. Since fathers are authoritarian and somewhat distant figures, his friend may act as a confidant and adviser to his children.

Friendship is given physical expression. Youths who are friends hold hands when walking the village paths. Old men embrace their friends when they meet in the market. To the old, friendships are specially valued; the older they grow the more hours they while away, visiting their friends, chatting over legal cases, marriage disputes, politics, etc. The most bitter complaint of an ageing man is that he has grown so old he no longer has any friends to talk to.

IV

I shall consider in more detail the role of friends during a man's last years, the making of his will, his death, and the succession and inheritance of his status by his heirs. In illness a man turns to his friends for help. An old man is in constant fear of witchcraft attacks, sorcery, and other mystical dangers from kinsfolk and neighbours. When critically ill, these fears require him to be put away privily, where he will be attended by a servant, a favourite daughter, and one or two of his closest friends. The symbol of injunction of the secret

society, *tro*, is placed outside the house to warn off intruders. The advice of doctors and diviners is sought secretly by his friends, and all hint of the serious nature of the illness is kept from his family, particularly his sons.

A man's will is made, either orally or in writing, during his last illness. His wishes are confided to a small group of trusted men and other witnesses. Besides friends, a man's will may be heard by a favourite daughter, a sister's son, a retainer, and perhaps a trusted son-in-law. Bequests may be very complicated: his widows, marriage wards, palm groves, livestock and cash are divided among his sons and close matrikin. Miscellaneous properties are bequeathed to distant kin. The bulk of the property, including patrilineal paraphernalia, is inherited by the man's primary heir. Patrilineal members are banned from hearing the will and a man's sons will, on no account, be informed of its contents. A man fears the rapacity of his brothers and disappointed sons. For this reason his friend, the executor of his will, keeps all details of the will secret until arrangements have been made for the disposal of his property, the payment of debts and death dues to the dead man's chief and his marriage guardian. If the preparations are not ready, the man's death is kept secret for a time to prevent the inevitable commotion that occurs after a wealthy man's death - widows fighting for their sons' interests, patrikin snatching property, sons attempting to seduce their father's widows.

A man depends on his friend, as executor of his will, to see that his dying wishes are carried out. Bequests are distributed, often in face of the hostility of disappointed kin, grasping chiefs, and influential patrikin, all of whom try to further their own interests at the expense of the successor. A friend is not a beneficiary so his own interests are not concerned. A dying man, whatever his status, is primarily intent on perpetuating his name after death. Succession is from father to son, and a man's status as an ancestor and founder of a patriline is guaranteed only if he is succeeded by a son. If a collateral succeeds, the dead man's property is merged with that of the successor and his status as founder of a skull cult is lost for ever. Because of the strict father-son succession rule many men die while their heirs are still young. Before his death this child will be placed in the care of one of his friends. This man, the heir's guardian, manages the estate, provides

a sexual partner for the widows who remain in the compound, and watches over the education of the child until he reaches maturity. Both the estate and the heir are considered to be in a dangerous position during these years, since kinsfolk will attempt to claim widows and properties. The heir lives with his guardian; the jealousy of his mother's co-wives would be considered too bitter for his safety. When the youth formally succeeds to his father's status a wrangle frequently occurs, since the temporary compound head has become firmly ensconced in his role. Physical force may have to be brought to bear to dislodge him.

Some men die with no male heirs, In this case the position is even more tricky. His friend may arrange for the man's widow or widows to remain in the compound, take a lover, and bear children for the dead man, one of whom will succeed. In other Cases, in order to continue a dead man's name, a slave is named successor or even a daughter's son. These situations are not uncommon; patrilineal collaterals of the dead man will struggle even harder to merge the late man's property with their own, and the role of loyal friend in supporting the man's successor is of great significance.

The heir's guardian's last public act, in conjunction with the successor and the man's kin, is to arrange for the mortuary rites of his late friend. These rites jurally establish the position of the heir as head of his patrigroup and custodian of patriline skulls. The dead man's skull is exhumed, medicated, and placed in the sleeping-house of the compound head. A sacrifice is made, attended by all patrigroup members, who declare their allegiance to their new head, In the compound courtyard a spectacle is arranged. The societies to which the dead man belonged bring their music, dances, and masquerades. The heir entertains them and he is formally initiated into his father's role in the society, His guardian, his father's friend, brings his own group, members of which are also entertained by the heir. Even after the *final* mortuary rites the relationship between the guardian and the young man may continue. Alliances between patrigroups, cemented by marriage exchanges over many generations, have originated in this way.

A man's successor does not enter into the fulness of his powers until the supernatural talents of his late father have been added to more mundane ones associated with running a compound and estate. A man's witchcraft potential is inherited by his successor along with patrigroup property. This power is taught to a man's heir in many devious ways while the child is growing up. 'It is our education,' said one man. The talent he learns is involved with witchcraft and shape-changing, at which the Bangwa are great adepts. If a man dies before his heir is old enough to have learnt the tricks of this trade, he asks a retainer (In the case of a chief) or his best friend (in the case of a commoner) to hold these powers in trust for the young man. They are spoken of as being kept in a 'bag of the country' or in the physical manifestation of a twisted root. Friends cannot bewitch each other. But they are expected, from the very nature of their relationship, to indulge in witchcraft and shape-changing activities together. Friends join the same covens and incur flesh-debts on each other's behalf. Men are sometimes accused of killing their children through witchcraft, not to satisfy their own lust for flesh but to please their friends. A man's friend is thus a good person to guard his witchcraft potential and hand it to his heir when he is old enough to use it wisely.

V

Friendship in Bangwa provides many economic and social opportunities that are not available within kin groups. In any case, the important segments of Bangwa society for dealing with economic and political processes are not groups of kin but territorial groups under chiefs, sub-chiefs, and village heads, abetted by innumerable associations. Kin groups are not localized; the Bangwa do not live in extended families. There is no corporate lineage organization and the idiom of kinship does not underlie the political and economic framework of society. Economic factors play a large part in the emphasis placed on extra-kin relationships. The Bangwa economy is far from being the purely subsistence one often associated with simple societies, where farming is a cooperative venture and sharing forms the basis of exchange. The Bangwa operate, and operated in pre-colonial days, a market economy; they are highly acquisitive and property-conscious. Their role in the past as important middle men In

a profitable trade in slaves, guns, salt, and European goods between the forest lands and the savanna gave individuals many chances of acquiring wealth quickly. Opportunities for gain existed outside corporate kin groups and even local communities. Trading brought them into contact with different people and ideas. A higher value was placed on the acquisition of goods and status than on the maintenance of good relations between kin.

Friendship relationships (like *compadre* relationships) have considerable advantages in a situation of this kind. They allow increased social and economic opportunities and provide an outlet against close, restricting obligations imposed by kinship. Bangwa gain few material advantages through membership of a patrigrup or matrigrup. After the death of his father, a man if he is not the successor must make his own fortune, pay bridewealth for his own wives, and attempt to found his own patrigrup and patniine. In the past, men made quick fortunes trading slaves in exchange for European goods. Individuals formed trading friendships both within Bangwa and in the Bamileke Grasslands, where the slaves originated, and in the forest markets which had access to European goods. Young men pooled capital and joined with friends to organize long-distance trading expeditions. Chiefs traded as well, through retainers. They established friendships and alliances with neighbouring chiefs to further trading opportunities. Chiefs who were born at the same time could become personal friends (*beshua nzo*) as commoners did. Chiefs who formed such friendships had privileges in each other's markets; they also exchanged daughters or wards as wives. One of the most important obligations of a chief's friend was to supervise the installation of his successor after his death. In Bangwa such a man arrived at the palace immediately he heard of the death, took charge of the compound, arranged the mortuary rites, and saw to the crowning of the heir. To prevent spoliation of his friend's property he would place a strong man in charge of the compound during the months the new chief spent in seclusion.

In the early years of British Trusteeship, when the trade in slaves had been successfully abolished, the Bangwa continued to trade European goods, bought in south-east Nigeria, in the innumerable Bangwa and

Bamilleke markets in exchange for colonial currency. Friends tell how they formed partnerships, trekking down the mountain slopes and through the empty forests for weeks at a time to bring the valued goods from the coast to the interior. Alliances were formed between friends rather than kin, since the latter tended to quarrel. Many friendships which flourished in the sixties were the fruit of these early partnerships. Since 1962 when West Cameroon, formerly the Southern Cameroons under British Trusteeship, elected to be 'reunified' with East Cameroon, the source of these trade articles has dried up. Trade is now mostly local, in palm-oil, surplus crops, wine, and livestock. Young men have fewer opportunities for making spectacular profits with the curtailment of long-distance trading. Yet small stores have recently been opened in the market squares, frequently owned jointly by friends, who acquire together exclusive agencies from large Indian and Lebanese stores in the southern towns.

Friendship, an old institution in Bangwa, has enabled young men to cooperate easily and adapt to modern market competition. The few young men who are not traders, and have resisted the compelling urge to leave their mountain homes for the El Dorado of the southern plantations and towns, have recently begun to plant coffee and cocoa farms or continued to work oil palm. In all these occupations young men cooperate on the basis of friendship. Profits are frequently pooled and savings clubs joined. These young men help each other to build their European-style houses, plant their plantain groves. They form dance groups and meet regularly for political discussions. In all these groups, special friendships between a man and his friend by birth (*beshuo nzo*) still exist.

NOTES

1. My first field trip to Bangwa (1964-65) was made possible by a field research assistantship from University College London and grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and the Trustees of the Horniman Fund. In 1967 I had a Hayter Travel Grant. During both periods I was granted leave of absence from University College by Professor Forde, who gave me throughout practical assistance and much-needed advice.
2. Dr Kaberry informs me that great value is attached to personal friendships throughout the Bamenda Grassfields. In African ethnography very little has been published on friendship, as distinct from bond friendship and blood-brotherhood. There is, however, some material in Driberg (1935), Goody (1962), Herskovits (1988), and Wilson (1951).
3. Twins in many parts of the Bamenda Grassfields to the north of Bangwa are referred to as 'children of God' and undergo rituals after birth. In Nso a child born with a caul around its neck is also regarded as a twin (personal communication from Dr Kaberry).
4. Marriage payments and their relation to the complex descent system are discussed in the writer's article, 'Bangwa Marriage Wards', *Africa*, 1968 (in press).

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