

# **Taboos Related to the Ancestors of the Himba and Herero Pastoralists in Northwest Namibia: A Preliminary Report**

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This preliminary report summarizes first-hand data on taboos shared by the Himba and Herero pastoralists, living in northwest Namibia. By dealing with taboos related to their ancestors, I aim to clarify the relationship between the pastoralists and their ancestors. In previous studies, the relationship between the Himba and Herero and their ancestors often focused on the gravesite and the commemoration ceremony, which were often drawn from a political context. This paper, on the other hand, will present the relationship with the ancestors and the taboos shared among people. Taboos related to the ancestors can be roughly classified into two types, one related to the patrilineal clan and the other to a specific space called the “holy place” (*otjirongo tjizera*). Certain patrilineal clans associate with specific areas through the “ancestral shrine” (*okuruwo*) located inside their homestead. The relationship between the holy place and the patrilineal clan has not been clearly mentioned by people living in the area. Taboos related to the holy place are not limited to a specific patrilineal clan; anyone who is in that place must obey the taboos. However, there have been cases where elders, responsible for the patrilineal clan’s rituals at the ancestral shrine, treated those who broke the taboos inside the holy place. I have examined the relationship of the ancestors and the specific places of the semi-nomadic people, the Himba and Herero.

Keywords: taboo, ancestor, cognition of space, Himba, Herero

## **INTRODUCTION**

This preliminary report summarizes first-hand data on taboos shared among Himba and Herero pastoralists living in northwest Namibia<sup>1</sup>. Having lived with the people in the area, I became aware of the numerous taboos obeyed by the people instinctively.

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<sup>1</sup> The research period is from Aug 2015 to Mar 2016, Aug to Nov 2017, and Jun to Aug 2018.

The purpose of this paper is to classify and organize the collected data on the taboos of Himba and Herero pastoralists living in the southern part of Kaokoland.

Some taboos are strictly adhered to, whereas others may be broken if it cannot be avoided. In the former's case, when people broke taboos, they were immediately warned or reprimanded. In the latter's case, it was deemed necessary to take specific action after breaking the taboo. In other words, obeying taboos necessitates different actions. At the time I commenced the research, I was unaware of this and occasionally broke taboos. I was checked by people around me each time. That is when I learned that behind each taboo lay a fear of the ancestors (*ovakuru*), and I became interested in the taboos people have.

Previous studies have pointed out that the Himba and Herero express relationship to land in a context where pastoral actors are competing for communally-owned resources through their relation to ancestral graves. However, in the survey area of the author, no commemoration ceremonies (*okujambera*) were reported [Bollig 2009; Ohta 2009; Yoshimura 2014], nor were decorations of cattle horns placed near the tombstones [Estermann 1961; Bollig 1997]. At times, the gravestones were broken by wild animals and left as is.

I will first examine the outline of the surveyed area from the double descent system that are characteristics of the Himba and Herero and elaborate on their ancestors. Then, I will summarize the taboo cases related to the ancestors in the research site.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREA**

### ***Himba and Herero People***

The Himba (*ovahimba*, pl; *omuhimba*, sing) and Herero (*ovaherero*, pl; *omuherero*, sing) both speak the Herero language (*otjiherero*), which is a part of the Bantu

languages. They are pastoralists who live with their livestock, such as cattle and goats. The Himba live mainly in northwest Namibia and some live in southwest Angola. On the other hand, the Herero live mainly in central and eastern Namibia and partly in the northwest. Because the public population statistics of Namibia that used ethnic names were not published at the end of 1989 [Malan 1995: 2], the number of people per ethnic group is unknown. However, in the 2011 census, there were about 160,000 Herero language speakers, accounting for about 9% of the total population.

In general, the two are often regarded as different ethnic groups. Their differences in appearance, especially clothing, is a major factor that distinguishes them. The Himba men and women wear garments made of cloth or leather. Women smear their entire bodies with a mixture of butter made from ochre (*otjize*), butter from cows (*omaze*), and several kinds of fragrant crushed powders (*otjizumba*). On the other hand, Herero men wear jackets and trousers, and women wear western-style, long dresses (*ohorokova*). In the past, the two were called Herero but had the features of the current Himba. Although there are differences in their appearance, there are many cultural and social similarities. Sometimes, they refer to each other as the “same family” (*omuhoko*).

The Himba and Herero of northwest Namibia move according to the rains. They spend most of their time at the homestead (*onganda*, sing; *ozonganda*, pl), a dwelling for the patrilineal clan, from January to April, which is the rainy season. There are often gardens (*otjikunino*) inside the homesteads. When the rain subsides, the young men mainly move to the livestock camp (*ohambo*, sing; *ozohambo*, pl), which consists of kraal fences and simple huts for people to rest in. Then, when it starts to rain again, they round up their livestock and return to the homestead.

### ***Double Descent***

The Himba and Herero are known for following the double descent system just as

the Yokö in Nigeria and the Yap in Micronesia. In double descent system, individuals are associated both with their matrilineage and with their patrilineage [Keesing 1975]. Malan and Crandall, who conducted surveys in northwest Namibia, pointed out that the patrilineal line plays an important role in ceremonies such as funeral services and commemoration ceremonies, while livestock are inherited mainly in the matrilineal line [Malan 1973; Crandall 1991]. The sections below cover the details of both groups.

### *Matrilineal Clan*

The matrilineal clan is called Eanda (*eanda*, sing; *omaanda*, pl). The Eanda never changes in any life event, such as a marriage or adoption. There are seven Omaanda, some of which branch out and are called by the name of the female founder's daughter. The daughter of the female founder can trace up to three or five generations, corresponding to lineage [Malan 1973: 84; Bollig 2006: 52]. Table 1 shows the names of each Eanda and its lineage.

**Table 1.** Eanda and its lineage (A compilation of Malan [1973] and the author's data)

<b>Eanda</b>	<b>Lineage</b>
(1) <i>Omukwejuva</i>	1. <i>Hauari</i> 2. <i>Omutati</i> 3. <i>Omuzi / Okatenda</i> 4. <i>Opera</i>
(2) <i>Omukwendjandje</i>	None
(3) <i>Omukwendata</i>	1. <i>Ondjuwo Onene / Ozongombe / Omukwaruvara</i> 2. <i>Ondjuwo Okatiti / Omukwatjitupa</i>

(4) <i>Omukwenambura</i>	1. <i>Omukwambo</i> 2. <i>Omutjavikwa</i>
(5) <i>Omukwauti</i>	None
(6) <i>Omukwatjivi</i>	1. <i>Omungambu</i> 2. <i>Omuhuka</i>
(7) <i>Omukwenatja</i>	None

Points 1-6 are common not only to the Herero language group, such as the Himba and Herero, but also to the Ovambo, Ngambwe, and Tjimbundu, which are the same Bantu language groups as the Herero [Malan 1973: 84-85]. According to Bollig [2006] who investigated near the borders of Angola and Namibia, point 7 is common to Ngambwe, Zemba, and Hakaona that mainly live in southwest Angola [Bollig 2006: 54]. As described above, points 1-6 are distributed in wide areas such as northwest Namibia, the mid north of Namibia, and southern Angola, but point 7 is found only in a limited area [Malan 1973: 85]. In the author's survey site, located south of northwest Namibia, I could not find the people who belong to point 7.

In addition, Malan [1973] reports that each Eanda has a genealogy, but I did not come across this in my research site. For example, in the surveyed area, people stated that the female founder of *Omukwejuva* (1) is called *Mbondo* and she has four daughters (*Hauari*, *Omutati*, *Omuji*, and *Opera*). People only mentioned the relationship of the same Eanda and its lineage. They did not talk in reference to other Eanda like Malan did, who reported that *Omukwejuva* (1) is a woman named *Mbondo* and she is mother of those mentioned in points 4-7.

### *Patrilineal Clan*

Patrilineal clans are called Oruzo (*oruzo*, sing; *otuzo*, pl), and there are 34 such clans [Hangara 2017]. An individual has a surname (*osano*) and belong to Oruzo. The surname is derived from the name of a paternal ancestor from several generations ago and is from the lineage of a patrilineal clan. People who share the lineage gather together for commemoration ceremonies once every two to three years and for initiation ceremonies such as menarche rituals, circumcision, and weddings. Each ceremony is carried out at the ancestral shrine (*okuruwo*) located at the center of the homestead, where an elder represents the lineage. This elder, also called *omupueje*, is an intermediary between the ancestors and the people [Kavari 2001]. When performing a ritual, the *omupueje* sits on a stone that constitutes the ancestral shrine and apprises the ancestors of the changes in people's lives. During funerals, the *omupueje* interacts with the ancestors at the ancestral shrine when the coffin arrives, or before and after the burial ceremony. Similarly, when someone in the lineage becomes sick and does not recover, or when someone has bad luck, the *omupueje* tries to help by interacting with the ancestors.

In addition, some lineages use specific areas with priority. For example, members of the lineage *Ohorongo* Oruzo with the *Kapika* family name use the Kuene River basin, which flows along the border of Namibia and Angola. Many of the lineage elders are considered the owners of the land (*oveni vehi*, pl; *omuni wehi*, sing) [Bollig 2006: 52].

### ***Research Area***

This paper covers the Himba and Herero living in the Opuwo rural constituency, located in the middle and southern part of the Kunene region in northwest Namibia. This area is located in Kaokoland, one of the homelands in the South African colonial-rule era. As the term Kaokoland is used in daily life by local people, I will use the same in this

paper.

The area, including the research area, began to be included in communal conservancy, which conserves wild animals, from 2003. The base village of the research contains two homesteads, with 15 households in total; one homestead comprising 11 households and the other, 4 households. There are several livestock camps located 2 to 7 km away from the village. The majority of the population in homestead are Herero. The livestock camps comprise of relatives of the Herero from the homesteads and the Himba from other areas.

Each homestead has one ancestral shrine respectively. The shrine of the 11 households belongs to the *Omakoti* patrilineal clan and the shrine of the 4 households belongs to the *Ongwatjindu* patrilineal clan.

People who do not belong to these two patrilineal clans also live in the village, but in many cases, they are in some way related to the clans. For example, the *Omakoti* area has two herders who came from south Angola in 1992. Both belong to Ngumbi, which is one of the Bantu language groups. One is single, but the other is married to a woman of *Ongwatjindu* and has children. Both speak the Herero language and identify as Herero. The single man came to look for work in his mid-teens, and was taken care of ever since by a couple from *Omakoti* as their own. Therefore, there are also relationships that are not direct kinship.

In the matrilineal clans, there were many people who belonged to *Omukwejuva* (1) and *Omukwatjivi* (4). Members of both homesteads are often related through these matrilineal clans.

## **TABOOS RELATED TO ANCESTORS**

Various types of taboos were collected during the research. These can be

summarized into two types, one related to the patrilineal clan and the other related to the land.

***Patrilineal Clan (Oruzo)***

There seem to be six shared items in each patrilineal clan (Table 2). Although people are only aware what they should do, they also realize that the six categories are related to the patrilineal clan. As a result, I will look at the details of each item, including the taboos, while regarding the fact that the classification itself is an analytical concept. The following table displays the shared category of the *Omakoti* clan, which many people in the research area belong to.

**Table 2.** Shared category in the *Omakoti* patrilineal clan (Edited by the author)<sup>2</sup>

Category		Contents
1	Types of gourd ( <i>ondjupa</i> ) to preserve sour milk ( <i>omaere</i> )	<i>Tjisekiro</i>
2	Color of the bull ( <i>ondwezu</i> )	<i>Ondumbu and Ondorozu</i>
3	Taboo ( <i>ovizerika</i> )	(1) Do not return to the gravesite after burying the body
		(2) Do not eat the abomasum ( <i>oruverera</i> ) <sup>3</sup>
		(3) Do not keep cattle without horns ( <i>ovihungu</i> )

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<sup>2</sup> Prof. J. Kavari (University of Namibia), from the village near the researched site of the author, pointed out categories 1 to 5.

<sup>3</sup> Malan translated *oruverera* into the colon [Malan 1973: 94].



		(4) Do not touch the red bushwillow ( <i>omumbuti</i> ) <sup>4</sup>
		(5) <i>Omupueje</i> must not eat the meat of cattle without horns
		(6) Women on their period must not drink sour milk ( <i>omaere</i> ), milked from a cow
		(7) A coffin must not be carried to the graveyard in the car of a person from the same homestead of the deceased person
		(8) If a sick person dies in a car while on the way to the hospital, do not bring the body to the homestead in the same car
4	Related Oruzo ( <i>okuhuhurasana</i> )	None (only <i>Omakoti</i> )
5	Praise song ( <i>omuṭandu</i> )	<i>Omakoti woturumbu tojatukende.</i>
6	Related animal ( <i>otjipuka</i> )	Lion ( <i>oncejama</i> )

It has been reported that *Omakoti* has 45 surnames<sup>5</sup> [Hangara 2017]. Many people in the homestead of the researched village have the surname of *Kozohura* and *Mukuaruuze*. *Omupueje*, who is in charge of the rituals at the ancestral shrine, is an elder

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<sup>4</sup> *Combretum apiculatum* is the scientific name.

<sup>5</sup> Hangara classified by households (*ozonganda*) rather than surnames [Hangara 2017]. In my survey, though not included in his book, those who have surnames such as *Kozohura*, *Mukuaruuze*, *Hinu*, *Utjavari*, and *Ndjoze* belong to the *Omakoti*.

called K with the surname *Kozohura*. I will elaborate on the contents in the order seen in the table.

1. Types of gourd (*ondjupa*) to preserve sour milk (*omaere*)

This type of gourd that preserves sour milk, made by milking the sacred cattle (*ongombe jamuaha*), belongs to the category *tjisekiro*.

2. Color of the bull (*ondwezu*)

The bull is categorized according to the colors *ondumbu* and *ondorozu*. The former represents the color of dry soil and is derived from the drought (*ourumbu*) [Eckl 2000: 421]. The latter means the color of black.

3. Taboo (*ovizerika*)

There are eight taboos, the details of which will be covered later.

4. Related Oruzo (*okuhuhurasana*)

The related Oruzo participate in rituals with other Oruzo at the “ancestral shrine”. This especially refers to the ritual of purifying those who were subjected to curses (*okuhuha*). The *Omakoti* are not related to other Oruzo, only to themselves.

5. Praise song (*omiṭandu*)

Each Oruzo has a praise song. In the case of the *Omakoti*, the song is *Omakoti woturumbu tojatukende*.

6. Related animal (*otjipuka*)

There is an affinity with specific wildlife, and the *Omakoti* are related to the lion (*ongejama*). People describe themselves as lions and are associated with taboo 2.

I will now examine the contents of the taboos. The order of Table 2’s contents is the order of answers given by the elder K. It is not known at this stage if the order has

any meaning, but it is arranged as it is. (1) ~ (4) were recognized by people belonging to the *Omakoti*, but only (5) ~ (8) were mentioned by K.

(1) Do not return to the gravesite after burying the body.

When a person dies and the body is buried, *Omakoti* people must not return to the graveyard again after the funeral. This applies to not only the gravesites of the *Omakoti* people but any kind of gravesite.

When K was asked the reason for this and its origin, he did not know it but narrated the following story: When an ancestral father (*tate munene*<sup>6</sup>), who was an *omupueje*, passed away due to a taboo (2), the rest of the people moved to other places, including the ancestral shrine in the homestead.

When I asked a similar question to an elder belonging to the *Omakoti*, who was staying at another homestead, he related the next story: In the past, when a young child passed away, the body was buried in the cattle kraal inside the homestead, following which some of the people moved to other places to create a new homestead.

(2) Do not eat the abomasum (*oruverera*).

Do not eat the abomasum of ruminants. Some cloven-hoofed mammals such as cattle, goat, sheep, and deer have four stomachs and regurgitate their cud. Such ruminants are often eaten by people and their stomachs, other than the abomasum,

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<sup>6</sup> Paternal grandfather's father.

are consumed.

The origin of the taboo goes back to an ancestral father who was eating cattle meat with people and died because only he ate the abomasum. All the people who were interviewed, including K, gave similar answers. Here are some stories related to the taboo (1). People buried a man who ate the abomasum and died. Later, people feared the power of the abomasum, which killed the man, and did not care to return to the gravesite where they believed the power to remain.

In addition, this taboo is also associated with the lion, a wild animal with a high affinity for the *Omakoti*. During the interviews, many people pointed out the similarities between the actions of a lion and the taboo. A lion does not eat the abomasum of a prey but instead takes it out and carries it to a distant place to throw it away.

- (3) Do not keep cattle without horns (*ovihungu*).

The *Ohorongo* and *Ongwatjija*, which are other patrilineal clans, also believe the same taboo.

- (4) Do not touch the red bushwillow (*omumbuti*).

This tree is found around the researched area and the *Omakoti* people avoid this tree when they move.

- (5) *Omupueje* must not eat the meat of cattle without horns.

The *Omakoti*, except for the *omupueje*, can eat this.

- (6) Women on their period must not drink sour milk (*omaere*), milked from a cow.

The reason for this is unknown as is its origin.

- (7) A coffin must not be carried to the graveyard in the car of a person from the same homestead as the deceased person.

During the funeral, the coffin is placed in a special hut called an *Onene*, which is located inside the homestead. At the time of the burial, the coffin is moved from the *Onene* to a car and then carried to a nearby gravesite. In this case, the car of a person living in the same homestead as the dead is not used. On the other, it is acceptable for a person from the same homestead to carry the coffin from the *Onene* to the car.

- (8) If a sick person dies in a car while on the way to a hospital, do not bring the body to the homestead in the same car.

If a sick person dies on the way from the homestead to the hospital, everything in the car must be left in the place of the person who passed away, and the body should be carried to the hospital. The same car is not used to bring the coffin to the homestead.

These are the taboos shared by the *Omakoti* of the patrilineal clan. The interviewees consisted of those with the surnames *Kozohura* and *Mukuruaruuze*. Therefore, it is not known at this stage whether there is a difference between the taboos mentioned above and the taboos of those with other surnames. The contents of taboos are often different in each Oruzo, but some of the taboos (3) may be shared by several Oruzo. However, sharing taboos does not necessarily indicate a relationship with “Related Oruzo” (4).

### ***Land and Ancestors***

The research area includes a place called the holy place (*otjirongo tjizera*). Such places include the *okuzera*, which literally means taboo or prohibition or holy itself. Table 3 shows three *okuzera* that can be classified according to the situation. As a result of the observation, everyone in this place follows the *okuzera* regardless of the patrilineal or matrilineal group.

**Table 3.** Contents of the *okuzera* (Edited by the author)

Situation		Contents	What happens after breaking the taboo?	How to treat it?
1	From dusk to dawn	(1) Do not collect firewood	A big snake appears	Say, "I forgot"
		(2) Do not hurt plants		
		(3) Do not scratch the ground		Drop charcoal on the ground
		(4) Do not drop water on the ground		
2	Before going to the holy place and when stepping inside	Say the opposite of what one is thinking	-Never reach -Never return again -Mysterious things happen	-Go another day - Say it again
3	When killing wild animals	Cut small pieces of meat and distribute it to the ancestors first	The killed wild animals disappear	Say, "I forgot"

#### 1. From dusk to dawn

There are four things that must be avoided in the holy place from dusk to dawn.

##### (1) Do not collect firewood

Firewood is indispensable for living in the area. It is used for making a meal, to keep warm in the mornings and evenings, and to light up the dark. The dead trees

in the area that fall to the ground in both the dry and rainy seasons are picked up regularly, but not after the sun has set.

(2) Do not hurt plants

Do not hurt or collect plants in the area. According to Crandall [2004], Kaokoland has various kinds of plants, which are used as medicinal herbs, for rituals, and collected for various other purposes. The researched area of the author is not an exception. Plants like mopane (*omutati*) and nettle (*ondomo*) are used for rituals, and *ohandukaze* as an herbal tea. However, plants are not collected after sunset.

When I broke the branch of a plant, used for brushing teeth, (*omuzema*) at the start of sunset, I was warned by a herder in his early twenties, who said, “Don’t ever do this again as the ancestors are watching.” He then asked me to say, “I forgot” (*tuu ovizembirira*).

(3) Do not scratch the ground

Do not scratch the ground with pointed objects. Children, especially, often scratch the ground using elongated objects, such as a branch or the leg of a broken chair etc., and are often cautioned. Therefore, they are given pieces of charcoal by the people in the area so that they can throw them on the same spot on the ground. Also, people usually use branches to draw letters and pictures on the ground, but not after sunset.

(4) Do not drop water on the ground

Do not drop any liquid on the ground, such as water used for cooking, liquids like sour milk, tea, soup, etc.. If it drops, one should drop a piece of charcoal on it. After eating, water is used to wash pots and pans, so it often falls to the ground. Thus, in order to reduce the number of times water flows to the ground, it is

collected in one place and disposed of into the ground in one go, following which charcoal pieces are dropped in that place.

In addition, do not bathe after sunset. Men often bathe at the water point, but it is advisable to never go bathing after sunset. Women bathe in the house or tent, but if they do so after sunset, they would need to drop a piece of charcoal after they throw away the used water into the ground.

What would happen if the taboos were broken?

*Case 1: Bathing after sunset*

This is a story of a man in his mid-40s who was born and grew up in this area and herded for many years. When he was about 20 years old (around 1993), he took a bath at the water point after sunset. He knew that he should not do so, but did not know the reason behind it. After that, when he came back to his hut in the camp to unwind, a snake appeared at the entrance of the hut and stared at him. As there was no door at the entrance, the man fell asleep with his legs facing the entrance. When he woke up the next morning, the snake was gone. On that day, he did not break any taboos but at night, the same snake appeared and curled up at the entrance in the same fashion as the night before. The next day, the elder in charge of the ritual of the ancestral shrine in the homestead came to the livestock camp and got to know of what happened. The elder put a nettle (*ondomo*)<sup>7</sup> on the path that the snake took, and then the snake ceased to come.

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<sup>7</sup> The scientific name for this is *pouzolzia hypoleuca*. It is used to attract the spirit of the ancestors when conducting rituals at the ancestral shrine in the homestead [Malan and Owen-Smith 1974].



### *Case 2: Collecting firewood after sunset*

This is a story of a man in his mid-20s who was born and brought up in this area. When he was five years old (around 1997), he collected firewood after sunset. He came back to the camp, lay a blanket in front of his hut and slept on it. He woke up to go to the toilet in the middle of the night and saw a big snake in the space between the hut and the blanket. When he saw the snake, he recalled that he had picked up firewood after sunset. Then, he said, “I forgot” and slept. The next morning, when he woke up, the snake was gone.

This man realized that he had done something wrong. It is said that when wrongdoings occur, a mysterious event (in this case, a snake) takes place in order to remind that person of his wrongdoing.

### 2. Before going to the holy place and when stepping inside

When stepping inside the holy place or on your way there, you have to say the opposite of what you are thinking. Time is of no relevance in this taboo.

When you are on your way to the holy place, do not say anything related to what you are doing or planning. If you say it, you will not be able to do what you had planned, and it will not go according to schedule. Or, you will get lost in the holy place and will not be able to return again.

Also, inside of the holy place, when you talk with someone, you have to tell the opposite of what you are thinking. For example, say “it is cold” when it is actually hot, or say “I can still walk” when you are feeling tired. If you say what you were actually thinking and your partner responds, it is necessary that you rephrase.

### 3. When killing wild animals

There are many wild animals living in the area, including elephants. When hunting wild animals, such as kudu and zebra, or obtaining the meat of wild animals attacked by predators, it is necessary to distribute it to the ancestors first. The ancestors refer to the *ovakuru vetu* or the deceased people *ovati vetu*. These ancestors do not refer to a specific person, more like someone with a blood connection.

First, peel the animal's skin, cut small pieces of the meat (5-6 cm squares) and throw them in the air. Then, say to the ancestors, “Forefathers, take them!” (*Tate kamburee!*). In addition, when hunting, the hunter wraps a small amount of cigarette leaves (*omakaja*) in a plastic bag and places it between stones and trees, covering it with the leaves of the surrounding trees (mostly mopane<sup>8</sup>). Then, he tells the ancestors, “Please smoke this cigarette. We are hungry, we want to eat meat, please help.” By doing so, he is wishing for an encounter with wild animals. Tobacco is important for herdsmen. They usually share tobacco leaves and lit cigarettes. Therefore, they ask the ancestors to give them the opportunity to encounter wild animals in exchange for wrapped leaves.

In these cases, the word *tate*, an honorific title for the elder men, was used. Also, tobacco consumed mainly by men was used. Therefore, it is highly possible that the assumed ancestors during hunting refer to the ancestors of deceased men.

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<sup>8</sup> The scientific name for this is *Colophospermum mopane*. It is not only used for firewood and building materials on a daily basis, but is frequently used for various rituals [Malan and Owen-Smith 1974].

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have covered cases on the taboos among the Himba and Herero in the southern part of Kaokoland in northwest Namibia. One of the patrilineal clans has taboos related to the gravesite and the deceased, and the relationship with the ancestors was strongly shown in those taboos. There are also taboos in certain areas called the holy place, where one could observe fear for the ancestors.

The *omupueje*, a representative of a patrilineal clan in each homestead, not only performs rituals at the ancestral shrine but also when the taboos are broken in the holy place. The relationship between the holy place in the researched area and the patrilineal clan is neither referred to nor specified directly by people living in the area. However, when we look at the *omupueje*, who is also a mediator between the people and the ancestors, it is highly suggestible that there is some sort of a relationship between them. Therefore, I would like to examine this point in the future.

In addition, taboos related to the ancestors of the Himba and Herero pastoralists, as detailed in this paper, are also related to the following discussion. It is necessary to pay attention to the emotional aspects of people when understanding the motives of people who move to another place [Nyamunjoh 2013], especially discussions including how living people treat the dead [Umeya 2018]. I would like to consider this point in the future as well.

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