

Welcome to Kakuwâ Web

Virtually nothing was known about the Kakuwâ people outside their native territories before the arrival of foreigners from Europe and the Middle East between about 1850 and World War I. These visitors included slave traders, colonialists, explorers, elephant-tusk hunters and missionaries. When it came to writing and administration, each group had its own way of spelling the native name they had heard. In the process, they coined such imaginary names as *Bari-Kakuwâ*, *Bari Kakuwâ*, *Kakuwâk*, *Kakua*, *Kwakwak*, *Kakwa*, *QuakQuak*, *Quackquacks* and even, *Cacua*. Sadly, one of those names, *Kakwa*, still appears in all official references to the Kakuwâ language, people and territories even though there is no ‘grapheme’, ‘letter’ or ‘sound’ *kw* anywhere in the standardized Kakuwâ orthography whether at the beginning, middle or end of a meaningful word.

The origin and meaning of *Kakuwâ* is the agentive noun *kakuwâ* which decomposes into the prefix *ka-*, the agentive per se, and the passive verb form *kúwâ* ‘to be bitten’ or ‘biting’ derived from the verb transitive *kója* (or *kóza*) ‘to bite.’ This agentive noun can be interpreted as meaning ‘unspecified persons doing X’ i.e. ‘they bite.’ The Kakuwâ expression *kojákoja* (*kozákoza*) *kilo* ‘the biting ones’, has the same semantic meaning as the agentive noun.

Some sections of Kakuwâ elders in Ko’buko maintain that the name *Kakuwâ* comes after Yeki's third son, *Kozá ku kálá*, literally meaning ‘bites with teeth’, a phrase consisting of the verb transitive *kóza* ‘to bite’, the conjunction *ku* ‘with’ and the noun *kálá* ‘teeth’ (singular *keléyi*). From Mount Liru in the present Ko’buko District, *Yeki*, the legendary founder of the *Kakuwâ* people), had sent *Koza ku kálá* to the present area of Yeyi County and Kakuwâ County to found the Kakuwâ people there. Later, the entire Kakuwâ nation, including all the 12 children of Yeki's sixth and last son, *Zaki*, were said to have adopted the plural form of the agentive *ka-kuwâ* ‘the biters’ or ‘those that bite.’

The Kakuwâ people also refer to thorns as *kakúwa* (singular *kokóti*). In other aspects of the Kakuwâ expressions, semantic idioms or proverbs, the word *kakuwâ* translates into ‘rebels’, ‘fulminating’, ‘harsh’ or ‘inimical’. Kakuwâ often refers both to the speakers of the language and the language itself.

There is no precise word for ‘web’ in the Kakuwâ language. Reference to ‘spider-web’, for example, is expressed as *kadi ná lugégeri* which literally means ‘house of spider.’ There is, however, word for *birá* ‘net’ as in *birá ná loka-ni tápé-nyó* ‘net for trapping Guinea fowls’, *birá ná momoka-ni sómó* ‘net for catching fish’, *birá ná kimúru* ‘mosquito net’, etc. The word for ‘line’ is *béri*. We can, therefore, confidently coin the term *birá* to refer to the ‘net’ and the expression *birá na Kakuwâ* to refer to the Kakuwâ website. Being in the net, in the worldwide web, in the Internet, or being on line, can be expressed as *gbé’dá naga i birá kata*, or simply *gbé’dá naga i beri* in the Kakuwâ language.

The Kakuwâ web is designed to research, document, cherish, protect, and communicate to our next generation what we know of our cultural and natural heritage: legends, wells, mountains, hills, rivers, valleys, forests, dances, songs, burial rituals, ethnohistory, foods, and legends that are our legacy from the past, our beacons of today. Leaving this work to others will result in information that is inherently inaccurate, negative, incomplete, not well-thought out, simplistic, malicious and at best guess work, with generalizations that amount to lack of knowledge and respect for the Kakuwâ and their territories. The

Our intention of placing Kakuwâ on the Internet is based on *lemi*—just cause—and to heed to the cries of our elders who have unselfishly and tirelessly expressed their willingness to inform us of our traditional cultural practices of the past, to document them and, most importantly, to pass them on to our future generations. During our research into the different aspects of Kakuwâ, we identified resources that can provide documentary base on which to build comprehensive framework for the integration of our traditional knowledge in wider educational and commercial programs.

These resources include oral histories, stories about our legends, video tapes, biographies, traditional place names and maps, language materials, curricula resources, or any other book, tape, video, DVD, documents or persons that can provide insights into the traditional knowledge and skills utilized by Kakuwâ people. Anyone who knows of more such resources and is willing to share that information is encouraged to contact us as soon as convenient.

It is worth noting at the outset that the word ***Koboko*** has no meaning however much one tries to slice it in Kakuwâ vocabulary. It was corrupted from the Kakuwâ expression, ***kô a'búkô*** literally meaning 'they were poured'—to death.' Vigorous research and consultations with the Kakuwâ elders, have revealed that *Kó'búko* hill (from which Ko'buko District derives its name) extracted itself out of the present mountain of **Ati** and then implanted itself where it is now. As it did so, it is said to have killed thousands of people literally by pouring them to their deaths. Though corrupted since the colonial British administrative establishments, the word ***Koboko*** still continues to be reflected in the maps and curricula produced by the colonial and post-colonial administrations.

If, through your surfing our website, you learn something, stimulate a discussion, get inspiration, or share the content with brothers, sisters, family members and friends, we will all triumph!

Finally, the variety of Kakuwâ appearing in most references of this website is ***Kakuwâ na Ko'buko*** (Kakuwâ of Ko'buko). The reason is simple: it is the variety the authors were born into, grew up in, and have known the best! Also, the spellings of most of the Kakuwâ words are in standard Kakuwâ orthography based on the *authentic* Kakuwâ language spoken over many generations by our grand-, grand-, grand-parents!