

JOKING RELATIONSHIP AND PEACE BUILDING WITHIN AFRICA- THE CASE OF FUNYELLANG PEOPLE IN TAROKLAND

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Abstract

This paper examined joking relationship and peace building within Africa, with Funyellang as the case study. The paper established that in most cultures, it would be rude to openly mock a complete stranger, absolutely insulting to call them a slave, but joking relationship gave opportunity for this to be established, as such, people who joked together found it difficult to go into conflict. This paper used secondary method of data collection. Hence joking relationship has been used to resolve conflict in Africa and Funyellang clan of Plateau, Nigeria.

Keywords: Joking relationship, conflict, Africa

INTRODUCTION

Joking relationship are a social practice performed among ethnolinguistic communities, group and individuals to promote fraternity, solidarity and conviviality. They take the form of playful taunting, teasing between two people from two communities that represent symbolically the husband and wife cross cousin branches of the same family. Such relationship are often based on ancestral pacts forbidding conflict or war between specific communities, and imply that the members must love one another and provide assistance where needed. The member have a duty to tell each other the truth, to joke together and to pool their respective assets, knowing that any dispute must be settled peacefully. Joking relationship are practiced in public places, in the fields, offices, market place, at water sources and in the home, every day as well as on special occasions such as weddings, baptisms, ceremonies and funerals, commercial transportations, cultural and entertainment events.

Joking relationship is transmitted informally from generation to generation, joking relationship are tools for reconciliation and peace-building and promote the cohesion and stability of families, ethnic groups and communities. The foster social equality with regards to both age and hierarchy and promote intergenerational dialogue.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Marchland, T. H. J (2003) Joking relationship allow, encourage and sometimes even oblige, members of certain groups, even total strangers to family, tease or insult total strangers to family, tease or insult each other with no social consequences, no hold grudges and no offence taken. Erim (2007) opines that peace building leads to the institutionalization of positive justice and freedom in the society. Habu C, (2014), opines that peace building consist of wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation, and societal transformation before, during and after conflict.

Conflict, to choose a simile, is like sex. Victorians saw sex as something one must tolerate, not enjoy. Like sex, conflict should happen between persons committed to continuity, occur with appropriate frequency, be mutually exciting, activate both parties equally to contribute their best selves, and be prolonged until mutually satisfactory climax is possible for each. When it is

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over, both should feel better as a result. And its energy should empower other areas of life with vitality and creativity. Like sex, conflict is a source of joy, fulfilment, empowerment and celebration. (Augsburger 1992).

EXTENT AND LIMITS OF BANTER

The banter in joking relationships often devolves into a contest of wits, of who can come up with the most clever, creative and comical insult. These picturesque, almost theatrical scenes play out every day, in the streets, in concession stores, in the markets, during ceremonies, and even at work in the office or during official state summit meetings.

The interactions occasionally go beyond surface stereotypes, eating habits and obscure bits of history. They sometimes breach the borders of the sacred beliefs and practices of a people. While there are no limits on the time and place and creativity of the insults, there are some boundaries: dragging someone's mother into it is a big faux pas. Starting an actual fight and drawing blood is likewise unacceptable. If the interaction turns belligerent, the offender can gift some kola nuts symbols of peace, to ask for forgiveness.

Even funerals are not exempt. Burials are often disrupted by close friends, paired in these intimate alliances. Smiths crash Fula funerals, preventing the body from being moved by any means necessary, until they are given money. Likewise, grand-children demand gifts before allowing their grand-parents' funerals to proceed. A deceased Bissa can expect a Gurunsi to dump peanuts on his coffin as a mockery about his people's diet. Conversely, a Gurunsi can expect her Bissa friends to demand to substitute her coffin for a dog's head for the same reason. Some groups in Burkina Faso accuse each other of being murderers and kinslayers when someone dies. This is meant to trivialize and de-dramatize death, so that the family members do not fall too deeply into mourning.

ORIGINS AND SOCIAL FUNCTION

This custom can be traced back through the oral histories to Sundiata Keita, the founder of the Mali Empire. Ethnologists, though, think it may be a much more ancient practice.

In reality, joking relationships are no joke: they are much more serious and profound than a simple, light-hearted ice-breaker. (Lamle, 2016). They are a consequence of ancestral alliances, blood pacts and ties of honor between groups. While some alliances have faded, some like the Dogon-Bozo or the Fula-smith caste, remain strong. In these intense kinships, the joking relationship often goes hand-in-hand with social taboos. A prohibition on inter-marriage and sexual contact between the members of each group is typical. This supposedly helps avoid the jealousies and strife surrounding romantic relationships: many a war has been fought over a woman. (Lamle, 2012).

The golden rule of joking relationships is never harm the other. This prescription for mutual respect, assistance and friendship helps avoid conflicts between groups and promotes peaceful compromise. It offers a cathartic, non-offensive way to air grievances and soothe tensions. "Prevention is better than cure," as Balla Fasséké, griot to the first emperor of Mali, would say. (Lamle, 2016).

CONCEPTUALISATION OF JOKING RELATIONSHIPS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

In exploring the theoretical analysis of joking relationships, Radcliffe-Brown's position will be revisited. This is because he unveiled a theoretical basis that is unparalleled till this day. Other scholars have simply built on his assumptions. In his theoretical position, Radcliffe-Brown defines joking relationships as "relationships between two persons of whom one is by custom permitted, and in some instances, required, to tease or make fun of the other, who in turn is required to take no offence" (Radcliffe-Brown 1940:195). Such relationships give room to reciprocal joking and teasing. Radcliffe-Brown (1940:195) further describes joking relationships as a situation where:

A jokes at the expense of B and B accepts the teasing humorously without retaliating; or A teases B as much as he pleases and B in return teases A only a little...In some instances the

joking or teasing is verbal, in others it includes horse-play; in some the joking includes elements of obscenity, in others not. (Radcliffe-Brown 1940:195)

He additionally claims that, where each one of the two teases or makes fun of the other, such relationships are symmetrical. The relation becomes 'asymmetrical' if one teases while the other does not. Joking relationships rest particularly on the principles of reciprocity between friendliness and hostility. People treat such interaction in other contexts as hostility, which could create animosity; however, this is not the case when they are enacting a joking relationship. The reason is that, within this context, hostility and friendliness are being interplayed. Such relational conducts permit and even act out disrespect.

According to Radcliffe-Brown (1940), Africans practice joking relationships on different levels. He argues that among the Dogon ethnic group in Mali, a man could enact joking relationships with his wife's brothers and sisters. However, there are situations where a man could be in a joking relationship with the younger siblings of his wife, but does not have the same rights with the older siblings. These jokes with the siblings of the wife require caution and respect. There are cases where there is avoidance of close social contact. Such avoidance is mostly between a man and his parents-in-law. It prevents conflict that would arise because of familiarity and difference in interests. This avoidance is not mistaken for a sign of hostility. The alternative to the mutual respect that radiates between the parents-in-law and their son-in-law is a joking relationship.

Marriage requires women to form new bonds with the relatives of the husband. Similarly, the husband comes into a close relationship with the family of his wife. However, the man should be careful in his social contact with the fathers- and mothers-in-law. The husband should respect the father- and mother-in-law because they have given him the special gift of a wife. To minimise mistakes in relation to in-laws, men employ avoidance or jokes when it becomes very necessary for them to relate to the in-laws. Similarly, the wife employs avoidance and jokes as a means of social contact with her parents-in-law. Consequently, there is mutual respect between the parents of both the woman and her husband. Siblings of the two sides share this relationship. At the individual level, the man, as a son-in-law, jokes with the parents of the wife, and the wife does the same with the parents of the husband. Such relationships extend to the siblings and other extended relations, (Lamle, 2012)

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The avoidance of conflict with joking relationship is not contractual (based on specific terms). The implication is that there are no specific obligations or divergent interests. However, the level of togetherness that is created by deep respect, and implied by partial or absolute avoidance, surmounts the conflict by keeping the parties conjoined.

To effectively understand the dynamics behind these systems of respect and disrespect practised in joking relationships within a given society, Radcliffe-Brown suggests that, "... the whole social structure has to be thoroughly examined in order that the particular form and incidence in joking relationships can be understood as part of a constituted system" (Radcliffe-Brown 1940). This is because joking relationships exist as a part of the social structure of a society.

In outlining his theoretical position on joking relationships, Radcliffe-Brown concentrates on its local dynamics by examining kinship relationships. However, he accepts practice of joking relationships outside affinal ties. He argues that such forms of joking relationships do not fall within the parameters of in-laws and cross-cousin marriages. Clans in Africa practise such relationships. He argues that Ngoni and Zigua (East Africa) are clans that have joking relationships that do not arise because of marriage. Rather, they base their relationships on mutual respect and friendliness, tinged with a certain degree of hostility. At another level, the Zigua and the Zuruma ethnic groups in East Africa do not have joking relationships, because they are brothers. However, other clans, which are farther apart, may exhibit hostility towards each other. The hostility and separateness that are emphasised indicate a certain degree of a social distance, and it is in such cases that a structural pattern of joking relationship is utilised (Radcliffe-Brown 1940).

Furthermore, the paper explores how joking relationships are used for mediating peace in a feud or other conflict situations. It will also explore how conflict is used in the design and structuring of joking relationships at a level of relational conducts in Funyallang. The will focus on how conflict generates or recreates joking relationships and how joking relationships maintain amity and peaceful coexistence within Funyallang, (Lamle, 1995).

Furthermore, Tew's as cited in Lamle (2012) analysis considers conflict as an important reason for the enactment of joking relationships. According to her, this type of relationship differs from contractual alliance because it has no specific obligation for each of the partners. Joking relationships also differ from other social roles because it does not possess the rights, rules and duties that other cultural practices in the lineage or ethnic relationships possess. Sherman (1969), accepting Tew's proposition (1951), argues that anthropologists and sociologists could study the joking relationships that exist within the contemporary modern world. For him joking relationships represent a social discourse that is intrinsic to a particular community. For this reason, joking relationships, depending on how they occur in a particular society, can only be understood when they are intensively studied in a specific society.

PATTERNS OF CLAN JOKING RELATIONSHIPS IN FUNYALLANG KURSWANG, MAN AND KWANGPE IN INTER-CLAN JOKING RELATIONSHIPS

To examine joking relationships among the clans of Funyallang, certain parameters that are quintessential to this exploration will be explored. It is worth mentioning that joking relationships within Funyallang community are relational patterns that have existed over an extended period. To reach the level where it matures into full-blown joking relationships, it has to undergo some processes, (Lamle, 2012).

Characteristically, the phenomenon begins with the observation of these weaknesses. These weaknesses are used as references in teasing joke mates. They could emanate from conflict situations such as war, sickness or bereavement. Family squabbles, broken relationships, or situations where a man is unable to manage his household, could also trigger the teasing of that person or his/her clan. If a joke mate has a manifest weakness, such as crying, gluttony, or immorality, they are recorded and continually used to tease or mock him/her or his/her clan, until it becomes what is known in Tarokland as *achu nzem* (stereotype). (Lamle, 2012).

Achu nzem in its general usage implies any teasing that is used by the community to refer to a person, his/her clan or community. *Achu* connotes voice while *nzem* on the other hand denotes dance. Unlike established cases of joking relationships, *achu nzem* is usually used as a maxim, adage, an axiom, or a proverb, to refer to issues or events that manifest the weakness of a person, his/her clan or community. Similarly, unlike traditional joking relationships, *achu nzem* could be used by all within the community to refer to a person or his/her group, but it is enacted in such a manner that either the person is not directly referred to, or his/her name is not used. (Lamle, 2012).

Achu nzem does not possess the right that joking relationships possess. If one of the parties disapproves of the *achu nzem*, it must stop immediately, especially when the play includes the usage of names or attributes that are derogatory. Any insistence on the usage of *achu nzem* without the acceptance of the other could result in serious conflict. (Lamle, 2012).

In a situation where *achu nzem* is accepted, the joke mates will continually use it to tease the person or his community. Moreover, where one is enacting *achu nzem* against another, the latter will counter in like manner, referring to the *achu nzem* of the opponents. Under these auspices, there are continual exchanges of the *achu nzem* between both groups. Even if exchange continues for an extended period, it does not have the rights or privileges of joking relationships (*ijam*), until it has undergone the prescribed process. One such process is that *achu nzem*, interplayed between two persons, must graduate into a relational pattern used to tease the entire community. In such cases, the *achu nzem* that one individual utilizes to tease another evolves to include the entire clan, before it becomes *ijam*. (Lamle, 2012).

Under *achu nzem*, weaknesses observed are continually emphasised, until the society stigmatizes the weaker one or his community with the defective weakness. According to Napzing Banyo, under *achu nzem*, clans or ethnic groups are continually teasing each other to the point that they are stigmatised. This stigmatisation does not necessarily carry negative connotations; neither does it imply a mark of disgrace or reproach on the individual or his/her community. Rather, it is a mutual mockery, in which one group tries to outwit the other by highlighting their weakness. In doing this, the stories of these weaknesses might undergo continuous change, thereby increasing their uses in teasing the unfortunate clan or ethnic group. It is this type of stigmatisation that the Tarok calls *achu nzem*. It is imperative to note the difference between *achu nzem* and joking relationships. (Lamle, 2012).

In Tarokland, the enacting of joking relationships is a combination of various *achu nzem*, which have accumulated over time and matured into the continual rights to "play" with each other. It is at this stage that the various *achu nzem* become joking relationship (*ijam*). It does not connote a mark of disgrace or shame, stain or reproach on a person or the reputation of his/her community; rather, it signifies a relational symbiosis between the stigmatiser and the one stigmatised. (Lamle, 2012).

Usually, before a clan or an ethnic group has mutual joking relationships, there must be a continual playing out of *achu nzem*. These *achu nzem* later on metamorphose into full-scale joking relationships. There are times that the *achu nzem* would not mature into full-scale joking relationships. This, however, depends on the inter-ethnic relationships that exist between the groups involved. Continual interaction between the groups usually upgrades the *achu nzem* into joking relationships. Where such contact ceases, such upgrading likely will not take place, and no joking relationships will ensue between the parties. People within an ethnic group for one reason or another may reject the *achu nzem* that their parents played out. Distance may negate the maturation of *achu nzem* into joking relationships. Panam Percy Paul, a renowned Nigerian musician, gave an example from his own ethnic group,

I am not happy with the joking relationships that existed between my people, the Bachama, with the Hausa/Fulani. This is because during the primordial era, the Hausa/Fulani used to enslave us in the Trans Saharan slave trade. I grew up and learned that our people used to have such play with the Hausa/Fulani. Whenever I heard them calling us slaves, it annoys me knowing what they have done to our grand parents. Our generation rejected such play with the Hausa/Fulani. However, we accept such play with the Tarok, Jukun and many other ethnic groups in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. (Lamle, 2012).

Because playing out of *achu nzem* between the Bachama and the Hausa/Fulani did not mature into joking relationships, there are now continual conflicts between the two ethnic groups. However, the playing out of *achu nzem* between the Tarok, the Jukun and the Bachama matured into full-scale joking relationships. These groups have no recent history of inter-ethnic conflicts because of this. Paul, in explaining his stand, brought out the process through which *achu nzem* can graduate into joking relationships. He was able to explain the two likely outcomes from the playing out of *achu nzem*. Paul confirms my understanding of the process; saying that the *achu nzem* between his ethnic group, the Bachama, the Tarok and Jukun graduated into joking relationships. Under such conditions, these patterns of interactions did not mature into joking relationships and continual attempts by the Hausa/Fulani to enact and continue the *achu nzem* failed woefully. (Lamle, 2012)

Most of the relationships that matures from the trajectory of *achu nzem* between the four clans of Funyallang emanated from the observation of the weaknesses of each other. Each clan observed the weaknesses of the other and created their own *achu nzem* from it. These *achu nzem* were continually enacted among the groups; subsequently, the interaction graduated into full-scale joking relationships, (Lamle, 2012)

MIGRATION PATTERN AND CREATION OF 'ACHUNZEM' IN FUNYALLANG

Presently, the Man clan has joking relationship with the Kurswang clan. Man teased Kurswang by calling the clan a wild beast, unaccommodating and a clown. Kurswang, on the other hand, using the *Tardoh* theory, teases Man by calling him a clown and a coward who feeds on the spoils of others. They continually used this *achu nzem* to banter with each other. Man teasingly reminds Kurswang of his wild characteristics, accusing him of not being accommodating to others. Similarly, Kurswang teasingly accuses Man of not taking the initial step to search for greener pastures, partaking, instead, of the spoils from Kurswang's conquest. Through continual bantering on this theme they established the trajectory of power relations used in teasing relationships. Man believed he was stronger than Kurswang, because he remained in Pe and accommodated others while Kurswang 'ran away'. (Lamle, 2012)

The Kurswang also built their own trajectory of power by proclaiming that they were great explorers who went out to the frontiers of the unknown to kill and bring home the spoils. Within this trajectory, Kurswang would have likened himself to a lion, buffalo or hippopotamus. According to the Tarok concept of dwelling space, once a man has the courage to cross the river, he is strong (like a buffalo). Hence, Kurswang might have employed the maxim, *Unugwan ve fa nzam teh anyang izhar chit na rak*, meaning, 'a man who has left his domain has become a buffalo'; by doing this, he was showing his strength and not a weakness. The Tarok worldview regards the buffalo as an unaccommodating animal that fights its way out of any conflict situation, using its horns and legs. It is therefore seen as a symbol of power, domination and control. Kurswang portrayed himself as a conqueror that went out to the "land of the dead" and discovered green pasture. He then extolled his virtue of not keeping the spoils to himself; rather he called his brother, the founding ancestor of the Man clan, to partake of the bounty. Teasingly, Kurswang would have called Man a coward who stayed home to suck his mother's *mbyel* (breast) and *aphar* (menses). The Tarok do not regard any male child, that does not like to explore new frontiers as staying back to suck his mother's breast and menstruation dirt. They use this trajectory of power relations to encourage boys to explore new frontiers, such as travelling to other places and meeting new people. Kurswang portray himself as stronger in character than Man, because Man could not explore new hunting and farming grounds. Good character in Tarok land means the ability to control one's emotion, and one's resilience to withstand hardship. (Lamle, 2012).

The usage of power relations in *achu nzem* would have started either when Kurswang went back to Pe to relate his findings, or when Man finally arrived to settle in Funyallang. The latter is more likely. As they continued to interact with each other, the people from the Man clan were teasingly calling the Kurswang people unaccommodating, while Kurswang clan would have teasingly replied that Man's clansmen were cowards. This pattern of teasing over time translated into *achu nzem*. After much use and with the passage of time, it further developed into cliches, which seeped into people's perceived realities as joking relationships. Through these enactments, many other additions and versions of *achu nzem* would have developed. After successive generations, the Tarok perceives the reconstructed stories and *achu nzem* as realities within the collective consciousness of the people. These relationships have built up in such a manner that each time people from these clans meet, in farms, the village river, at market places, during war or any occasion that might bring them together, they employ these stereotypes to tease and banter with each other. By this act, each of the clans is claiming a joking superiority over each other. The pattern of joking relationships between Kurswang and Man replicates itself with anyone from the same ancestry. Accordingly, when Man and Kurswang were teasing and abusing each other jokingly, there is the likelihood that the families at their homeland in Pe would have heard such joking relationships. The relationships will now be tripartite, Kurswang against Man, with additional involvement of the other Pe family in their homeland in Pe. The scale of the relationships were Man versus Kurswang, Kurswang versus Pe Stock in Pe and Pe stock versus Man. This pattern of wit and teasing each other are heightened when Kwang, the kingpin of the Kwangpe clan, arrived in Funyallang from the Pe stock. When the founding ancestor of Kwang arrived in Funyallang to meet the founding ancestors of the Kurswang and Man clans, he brought with him his own version of the teasing. This

definitely increased the pattern of *achu nzem* that is outplayed among them. Kwangpe Ancestor would definitely continue the pattern of teasing that he had already heard while at the homeland in Pe. However, the jokes that Kwang ancestor would enact in Funyallang also have a high propensity for developing new forms, (Lamle, 1995).

These new forms would have arisen due to a mistake or weakness exhibited by the founding ancestor of Kwang on arriving at Funyallang. As already identified, the ancestor founder of Kwang was hardworking and bullish. By description, he was gigantic and over-ambitious. Tradition has it that Kwang's excessive ambition led him to work too hard, knowing that he had a standard to surpass. Kwang ancestor worked so hard that he broke down and became sick. This stopped him from working on the remaining portion of his farm for the season. This breakdown resulted in delay in the productivity of his crop. Consequently, his brothers had to come to his aid. This situation bred many *achu nzem* which were used to tease him. The entity of Kwang led to the tripartite teasing between the Kurswang, Man and Kwangpe clans. Already, Kurswang, Man and Kwangpe have a shared sense of history, ancestry, belief, values and worldview. The scale of teasing now also included the Pe stock. At that time, they perform certain rituals and ceremonies in Pe to strengthen the farming and hunting efficiency of the Pe kin in Funyallang. Thus, the Pe stock were involved in joking relationships, thereby creating a quadruplet link of Kurswang, Man, Kwangpe, and the Pe stock and this would have led to the expansion of the trajectory of the pattern of joking relationships. The symbiotic teasing and bantering among them remained as they continually laughed at each other when such occasions arose. These jokes become more complex when the various stereotypes are considered, (Lamle, 1995).

In a situation where the three brothers go to war any sign of weakness is noted. On returning from the war, they will amplify this weakness. This story of weakness would become *achu nzem*. They would add this stereotype to the existing structure of teasing and joking with each other. This led to the building of a plethora of jokes and subjective stories as they enact more *achu nzem*. Occasionally, other stories arose with these accompanying jokes. As new stories arose, old ones which had been modified or forgotten, were however, remembered, reconstructed and expanded to meet the realities of the day. New jokes would emerge if there were any exhibitions of weakness, for example, in the case where a woman rejected the advances of one of the members of the clans. Incidences such as these expanded and added to the existing trajectories of *achu nzem*, creating new forms of cliché. They use these jokes and jocular incidents to remind the clans of their kinship. It also serves as a means of reminding them that there is a joking relationship between them. Whenever a situation and ancestral links did not encourage the starting of any type of joking relationships between the Tarok and the Hausa/Fulani in pre-colonial times. As such, the Tarok people refused to learn the Hausa language. Only deviants or those who lived at close proximity with the Hausa/Fulani people had the opportunity, (Lamle, 1995).

Among the Tarok clans, the Lyangjit people of the Tal-Tarok had the opportunity of learning and mastering the Hausa language as they lived and interacted with the Hausa/Fulani of Wase. Bigun from Lyangjit village was also able to learn and master the language. According to Julius, Bigun is a nephew of the Pyezip family. He asserted that Bigun spent part of his life with his uncles in Funyallang. Due to his mastery of the Hausa language, he became a favourite candidate when the colonial administration wanted to install a chief over Funyallang. The Funyallang people unanimously accepted him as a chief. (Lamle, 2012).

The colonial leaders placed great pressure on the villagers to pay the taxes needed to run the local administration. Consequently, Bigun became cruel to the Funyallang people who could not pay their taxes. Bigun would tie a tax defaulter to a tree, make a bonfire around him, and then watch as he writhed in agony. Oral tradition has it that his cruelty was so appalling that people from the Man and Kwangpe clans of Funyallang plotted to kill him. The Man and Kwangpe clans lived on the hills to the west of Funyallang village, while the Kurswang stock lived on the eastern side. The throne of leadership was in *Ipang Kwali*, the land of the Kurswang, which is located at *Apang*. Bigun, a relative of the Kurswang, was living at *Ipang Kwali* among the Kurswang people, (Lamle, 1995).

The Man and Kwangpe clans from the western hill attacked and killed Bigun. In retaliation the Kurswang counter-attacked and drove away the Man and Kwangpe clans to the hills. The hostilities continued for about a day. Joking relationship doused the fire. According to Julius, during the fight some of the jokes came up. He alleged that even though he did not witness the fight, he saw his grandfather with the scar of an arrow on the left side of his eye. Before narrating how they us joking relationships to mediate this conflict situation, I need to explain the pattern of wars between clans in Funyallang, (Lamle, 1995).

Inter-clan wars in those days were fought with people lining up on two sides facing each other. The two war leaders would move ahead of the two lines, cursing and abusing each other until both sides were provoked. They would then begin by shooting arrows at each other; when the arrows were exhausted, physical combat would ensue. After the fight had progressed for some time; the parties would then stop and go back to rest, and treat the wounded, but later would resume the same process. It was during one of the accusation sessions that someone from the Man clan enacted *ijam* against the Kurswang people. (Lamle, 2012).

According to Julius (who was interviewed by Dr. Lamle, 2015), the people of Funyallang used the charge of cannibalism in a metaphorical sense because lowland people died because of exhaustion while climbing the hill or had sunstroke due to the enormity of the heat of the sun. He stated that the continual ribbing, insults and abusive attacks made the people reflect on the conflict.

Various enactments that followed the initial ribbing doused their anger and ended the war. The re-enactment of the principles of joking relationships mediated the conflict; as such, when the anti-riot police of the colonial regime arrived from the Pankshin District to quell the situation, they observed that the Funyallang people were at peace with each other again. (Lamle, 2012).

The enactment of joking relationships stopped the battle that could have engulfed the community of Funyallang over an extended period. Thus, joking relationships re-enacted the kinship, historical, genealogical, ancestral and cosmological relationships. It brought back the power of togetherness and solidarity in the fraternity of goodwill, which allowed for mediation of the conflict situation. This is a typical case of how Funyallang people use intra-clan joking relationships to mediate a conflict situation. The interesting thing is that this intra-clan conflict became an instrument for the creation of more stereotypes (*achu nzem*), which were then used within the Funyallang community for the enacting of joking relationships. This conflict brought into the limelight many *achu nzem* between the Kurswang, Man and Kwangpe clans. Funyallang oral tradition has it that Kurswang used these *achu nzem* to banter with Man and Kwangpe, calling them cannibals, and alleging that they ate Bigun. To continue the use of the *achu nzem*, or even create new ones, the Kurswang, even today, increasingly accuse Man and Kwangpe clans of killing and eating the intestines of Bigun. On the other hand, Kwangpe and Man teasingly accuse the Kurswang of harbouring a cannibal who roasted and ate people. They continued teasing and bantering the people of Man clan, saying that while Bigun was consuming the flesh of the roasted people, the Kurswang people were using the fat for rituals. These stereotypes (*achu nzem*) continued for a long time, until they became part of the pattern of joking relationships between the three Pe clans. At one point, other clans such as Timwat and Nanni, who had joking relationships with the Funyallang people, also incorporated these patterns of bantering with the Funyallang people, (Lamle, 1995).

An informant from Funyallang alleges that as a misinterpretation of the whole episode angered the Funyallang people. According to this informant, this misrepresentation led the Tarok people who did not understand the incident to add their own perception. An informant alleged that clans who do not possess the right of joking relationships with the Funyallang people adapted these *ichu nzem* to tease them. Apart from the Timwat and the Nanni people, no other clan within Tarokland had that right. Since the arrival of Islam, Christianity and colonialism the Funyallang people have not been successful in resisting use by other clans of the killing of Bigun to banter them, and abusing the right to enact *ijam*. The killing of Bigun caused the colonial government to divide Funyallang into two, placing one part under the Ponzhi Zinni, while the colonial authority placed other section under the authority of Montol

people in Shendam Local Government Area. This division weakened the power of the Funyallang people. As such, the colonialists destroyed the thriving civilisation of the Funyallang people, and the people were demoralised by the colonial administration's decisions. This is the reason why the other sections of Tarok people caricature the Funyallang people, in spite of their position within the social fabric of the Tarokland. Other Tarok people who had no right of joking relationships with the Funyallang people used these *achu nzem* to mock them. Even though other clans tried to create *achu nzem* from this conflict, it did not mature into a joking relationship between the Funyallang people and other clans in Tarokland. However, the *achu nzem* that came out of this conflict situation is widely used by the clans of Funyallang in bantering each other. In addition, the clans of Nanni and Timwat still employ these *achu nzem* to banter with the Funyallang people, (Lamle, 1995).

CONCLUSION

Joking relationships allow, encourage, and sometimes even oblige, members of certain groups, even total strangers, to taunt, tease or insult each other with no social consequence, no held grudges, and no offense taken. When people joke or banter together, they hardly engages in conflict even if they do, through their banter, they use the same means to resolve their conflict and quickly come back together. Joking relationships in Funyallang clans were enacted at the right moment to mediate in conflict. On the other hand, it also strengthened kinship relationships within these clans. Joking relationships averted a bloody conflict which would have engulfed the clans of Funyallang, and allowed for the establishment of peace within the shortest possible period. Joking relationship should be encourage in all spheres of life as these will promote peaceful co-existence amongst ethnic groups. Joking relationship can be an instrument for conflict resolution if well managed by ethnic groups.

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