Settlement patterns and rural development: a human geographical study of the Kaonde, Kasempa District, Zambia

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During my stay in Kasempa District, Zambia, in the period 1967-1969, which was in connection with a project of the Organisation of Netherlands Volunteers (SNV), I became acquainted with the practical problems related to rural development in a very thinly populated part of Central Africa. Programmes initiated by the Zambian government aimed at the regrouping of dispersed villages into resettlement areas and the introduction of new agricultural methods, met with opposition from the population and had little success. However, concentration and permanent settlement of population, together with an increase in market production, could be observed to take place in certain parts of the region. Research into these problems has resulted in the present study. It was prompted, moreover, by the wish to examine a process of change over a longer period and to compile data on the Kaonde inhabitants and on Kasempa District, which have been dealt with in a few publications only.

In 1968 and 1969 initial research was carried out into population distribution, village relocations and social structure. In 1972 a short visit was brought to the region to collect material about Kaonde oral tradition and Kaonde clangroups, as well as the history of the district during the colonial period. In 1978 (September-December) the author was enabled to carry out further research, investigating recent developments. It was this final stage of fieldwork which made it possible to complete this study.

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To my Kaonde friends: 'Mutende mwane, twasanta bingi' (peace to you and thank you very much).

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