

The Ethnic Groups of Present-day Borgu



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This paper was written after a research trip undertaken on motorbike in 1992 with two Boko colleagues. Before this time nobody was sure how many Mande languages there were in Borgu (French = Borgou). The paper was presented at a linguistic seminar in Bayreuth, Germany, in November 1995.

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The ancient kingdom of Borgu was comprised of those areas where the Boko/Busa and Baatombu people ruled, and most of the area is still dominated by these peoples today. In Benin Republic the Boko are dominant in the sub-prefectures of Segbana and Kalale, while the Baatombu are dominant in the rest of the department of Borgu: i.e. the sub-prefectures of Kandi, Banikoara, Bembereke, Sinendé, N'Dali, Nikki, Parakou, Perere, Gogonou and Tchaourou. Outside of the department of Borgu the Baatombu are also predominant in the sub-prefectures of Kerou, Kouande, Wassa-Tobre and Wassa-Pehunco which were part of ancient Borgu. In Nigeria the Boko/Busa are dominant in the Borgu Local Government Area (LGA) in Niger State, the Kaiama LGA in Kwara State, and in the Illo district of the Bagudo LGA of Kebbi State. The Baatombu are dominant in the Baruten LGA in Kwara State.

Borgu was ruled by a political class called the *wassangari*, descendants of the Kisira migration which may have arrived in Borgu as early as the twelfth century. (See 3.0) Members of the Kisira migration intermarried with the indigenous Boko/Busa inhabitants and eventually became the ruling class, the *wassangari*. There are ruins near Babana in Nigeria called Swalla, where it is claimed that the Kisira migration first settled, before spreading out to Bussa, Illo and Nikki. It is claimed that Swalla is derived from *a su wa la* Boko for 'he came to us here'. They gradually spread from east to west throughout Borgu, but may not have arrived in Nikki until several centuries after

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arriving at Illo and Bussa. The Boko/Busa have been the traditional rulers of Borgu. Bertho (1945) noted that the kings of Nikki, who have the title *Sinaboko*, were not of Bariba origin, even though they rule over all the Bariba, but were of Bussanche origin (Mande). Other Baatombu towns like Bembereke have chiefs who, although they now speak Baatonum, are ethnically Boko.

After intermarriage with the Baatombu many of the later kings spoke Baatonum, but the present king is a non-Baatonum speaking Boko. The word 'Bariba' was often used to include both the Baatombu and the Boko/Busa peoples as illustrated in this quotation from Dunglas (1952): 'From the beginning of their stay in Borgu, the Bariba were already divided into several tribes. There was first of all the Boko, the nobles, who belonged to the family of Kisira, then there were the common tribes only the Boko had the right to wear pants, reserved for the nobles.'

There are over twenty ethnic groups with a significant representation in present day Borgu. The following chart lists these groups according to their language classification and gives approximate population figures for each language: total population, population in Nigeria, population in Benin and population in Borgu as a whole. The population figures are derived from the Nigerian census of 1991, the Benin census of

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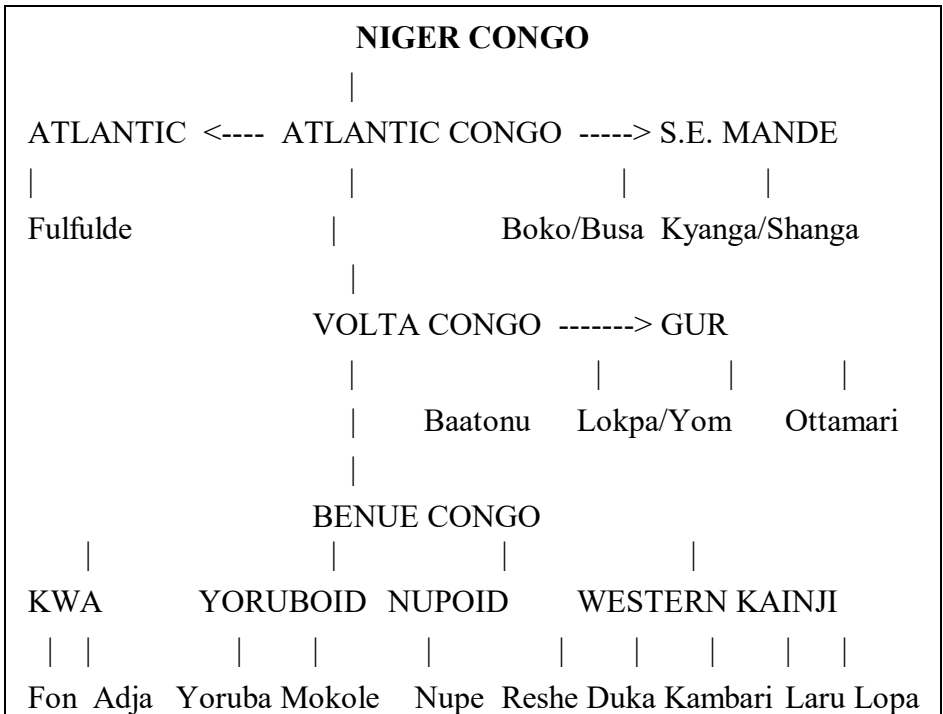
1992 (Bureau Central du Recensement) and the 'Ethnologue'
edited by Grimes (1992).

Major Language Groups in Present-day Borgu

<u>Family</u>	<u>Ethnic group</u>	<u>Total pop.</u>	<u>Nigeria</u>	<u>Benin</u>	<u>Total in Borgu</u>
Gur	Baatombu	400,000	60,000	340,000	400,000
	Ottamari	120,000	26,000	26,000	
	Yom,Lokpa	96,000		16,500	16,500
Atlantic	Fulbe	10+mil.	80,000	250,000	330,000
E. Mande	Boko/Busa	150,000	105,000	45,000	150,000
	Kyanga/Shanga	10,000	9,000	1,000	10,000
Benue-Congo	Yoruba	19+mil.	25,000	40,000	65,000
	Mokole	13,000		13,000	13,000
	Nupe	1 mil.	3,000		3,000
	Fon	1.4 mil.		30,000	30,000
	Adja	410,000		5,500	5,500
	Kambari	200,000	30,000		30,000
	Duka	73,000	3,000		3,000
	Laru	5,000	3,000		3,000
	Lopa	5,000	3,000		3,000
	Reshe	45,000	10,000		10,000
Nilo-Saharan	Dendi	135,000		96,000	96,000
Chadic	Hausa	22 mil.	<u>20,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
	<u>Total</u>	321,000	863,000	1,184,000	

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Borgu comprises the area enclosed by the river Niger on the northern and eastern boundaries, with the 9° latitude the approximate southern boundary and the 2° longitude the approximate western boundary. The following areas of ancient Borgu are no longer dominated by the Boko/Busa-Baatombu peoples: The sub-prefectures of Malanville and Karimama north of Kandi which are dominated by the Dendi; the sub-prefecture of Kaoje in Bagudo LGA, Kebbi State, which is dominated by Fulbe, and the Yauri LGA in the north-east which is dominated by the Reshe and Kambari peoples.



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The a graph shows the relationship between the Niger Congo languages that exist in Borgu. Dendi and Hausa are not classified as Niger Congo. Classification follows that of Grimes (1992).

1.0 Baatombu

Baatombu is contracted from Barutombu, their own name for themselves. The singular form is Baatonu, from *tonu* 'person', and the language is Baatonum. They are also called Bariba, Baruba, Barba or Berba. The Hausa call them *Bargawa*, singular *Babarige*, after the place *Bargu* and the language *Barganchi*. Together with the Boko/Busa they are the traditional rulers and owners of the land in Borgu.

The Boko call the Baatombu *zoana* while the Bokobaru name is *zona*. *zo* means 'slave' or 'vassal'. The kings of Nikki are known as *zoki* 'vassal king'. The rulers or 'lords' were the *wassangari* the owners of the land, while the vassals were the peasants, the people of the land, the common Boko and Baatombu. Inter-marriage of the *wassangari* produced first Boko royal clans and then Baatonu royal clans. The king of Nikki was king over all the Bariba and Boko, with lesser chiefs at Parakou, Kandi, Sinende, Tchaourou and Bembereke. In Nigeria the larger centers are now at Okuta and Ilesha, although Yashikera and Kenu were traditionally the more powerful towns with direct links to Nikki. They are culturally akin to the Boko and the Mokole, all of whom have the same facial markings. They are

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socially superior to the Fulbe and Gando population with whom there is little intermarriage. On the western front, outside the province of Borgu, there are Baatonu at Kerou and Kouande, who have different facial markings.

Parakou lay on the border between the Baatombu and the Tchabe, a Yoruba dialect. The founder of the Akpaki dynasty at Parakou was Tchabe and seventeen of the Parakou kings were Tchabe with the remaining eight Baatombu. Although the present population of the central quarter of Parakou speaks Dendi, most of them were originally Baatonu.

Religion: Muslim 70%, Traditional religion 26%, Christian 4%
The New Testament was published in 1977. The Bible is completed and near publication.

Literacy: 18.2% for Benin Borgu. (13.7% in 1979)

2.0 Fulbe

The Fulbe constitute over 25% of the Borgu population. They call themselves Fulbe (Pl.) and Pullo (Sg.), but are commonly known as Fulani in English and Peul in French. They call their language Fulfulde. It is also called Fula. They are regarded as socially inferior throughout Borgu, except in the Kaoje area. They have their own chiefs, but are generally despised by the other ethnic groups. They were not generally allowed to hold political office and were treated more or less as slaves by the Borgu rulers. They are settled in villages or encampments throughout Borgu, usually associated with Baatombu and Boko towns and villages to whom they sell milk and cheese and look

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after their cows. They buy implements from Baatombu and Boko blacksmiths and grain if needed and trade at their markets. Borgu Fulbe are sedentary and cultivate crops as well as raising cattle. The Fulbe have had political power at Kaoje since the colonial government gave it to Sokoto in 1907.

Religion: Muslim, traditional religion and Christian 0.6%. The Fulbe have been Muslim for a much longer period than the Baatombu and Boko/Busa, however they are more responsive to Christianity in Benin than they are in any other area in West Africa with at least 2000 Christians. The Fulfulde Bible was published in 1983 in Cameroon. Several New Testament books have been translated into Borgu Fulfulde which is similar to Sokoto Fulfulde. It is estimated that the Fulbe are only 1% literate in Benin.

2.1 The Gando

The Gando speak Fulfulde, but many are ethnically Boko and Baatombu. Children who were considered by their families to be dangerous, either because they were born on their stomachs or their top teeth appeared before the bottom ones, were abandoned by leaving them at night among a Fulbe cow herd. If the cows didn't run away from the child, the Fulbe would accept them and feed them on cow's milk. They never returned to their real parents and were considered by the Fulbe to be their slaves. Gando settlements are found close to Boko and Baatombu villages, about thirty of which are concentrated in the Nikki-

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Bouka-Kalale area, while others are scattered throughout the Boko and Baatombu areas. This custom finally died out in the seventies.

3.0 Boko/Busa language cluster

The number of languages together with the number of speakers of each language and their correct names has only recently come to light. Prost (1953) said that the Busa numbered 16,000, while Murdock (1959) estimated 30,000. Welmers (1971) also said 30,000, while Kirk-Greene (1966) said 50,000. The 1997 figure is about 150,000.

Nicholson (1926) and Lombard (1965) both differentiated between the Busa and the Kyanga. Westerman (1952:41) gives the numbers of speakers of Busa as follows: Nigeria about 11,000, Dahomey 16,000 in Cercle Nikki, Haute Volta about 100,000, Gold Coast 27,228. He added: 'There is some confusion of nomenclature. The Busa in Nigeria appear to consist of a fusion of peoples who now all speak the same language (known as Zugweya, and called Busanchi by the Hausa). The Busa of Dahomey are said to call themselves busano (Sg. busa).' In reality the Mande people of Dahomey (now Benin) are Boko and never refer to themselves as anything else but Boo. Even around Kaiama and New-Bussa in Nigeria, the Mande people do not call themselves Busa, but Bokobaru and Bisã respectively.

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The Hausa have grouped them all together as Busanchi after the name of the main Busa town Bussa. Bertho (1951) said the four Mande languages of Northern Dahomey and Nigeria were closely connected and maybe dialects of the same language. Prost (1953) gives a 400+ vocabulary for Boko, Busa, and other south Mande languages. The Boko, which is taken from Koelle (1854), is actually Bokobaru, but only half the words agree with today's language. Alternatives which Prost gives for Boko were derived from a woman in Niger Republic who called herself Busa. However the vocabulary she gave is Kyanga which is only 13% identical with Boko. Prost does not explain where he elicited his Busa vocabulary, and it is not clear which language it is. Wedekind (1972) wrote a grammar of Busa in which he describes the Bokobaru language of Kaiama.

As the result of an extensive survey undertaken in 1992, I found that there are four geographically separated languages, some with their own dialects. The figures for ethnic groups in Nigeria are approximate as tribal affiliation was not a question in the 1991 census. According to my own calculations based on recent census figures, in 1997 there are 80,000 Boko, 45,000 in Benin Republic and 35,000 in Nigeria; there are 30,000 Bokobaru in the Kaiama and Barutem LGAs in Nigeria, and there are 18,000 Busa in Borgu LGA, 6,000 in Illo LGA in Kebbi State and another 16,000 people in the Borgu LGA who speak Busa as a second language, making 40,000 Busa speakers in all. There is no common name for these people. As they have traditionally

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been known as Busa and Boko, we will call them the Boko/Busa language cluster.

<u>Language cluster</u>	Boko/Busa			
<u>Languages</u>	Busa	Boko	Bokobaru	
<u>Dialects</u>	New-Bussa	Wawa	Illo	Kaiama

The Boko/Busa were the earliest rulers of Borgu, even before the time of the Kisira migration. The Kisira rulers made a pact with the Boko/Busa people and intermarried with them, with their main centers at Bussa, Nikki and Illo. They then spread over the Baatambu area and intermarried with them. At Nikki kings from both the Boko and Bariba royal houses rule, all being descendants of the original Kisira migration.

In 1980 the United Bible Society made a report on the Busa/Boko peoples whom were called: Busa, Boussa, Boko, Busanchi, Zugweeya, Busawa, Busagwe, Busanse, Bokobaru. There were stated to be 50,000 in Nigeria and 50,000 in Benin. Literacy was 2%, Muslims 50%, Traditional religion 49%, Christians 1%. Dialects mentioned in the report were Boko (Boo), Wawa and Bokobaru (Kaiama). Wawa is in fact a dialect of Busa spoken at Wawa, the other dialect being that spoken at New-Bussa. Wawa Busa would appear to be oldest form of the

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language, as it is clear that Boko and to a lesser extent Bokobaru, have suffered from elision and consonant weakening.

Whether a group of speech forms are considered dialects of the one language or several languages depends on linguistic proximity of the speech forms and the degree to which the speakers have a sense of belonging to a singular language. Although the Boko/Busa languages have 85-91% lexical similarity and 40-50% of words more or less identical, they see themselves today as different peoples with different languages. Although the languages are not immediately mutually intelligible, it doesn't take long for speakers from one group to learn the language of another. There are underlying political feuds which hinder cooperation and the languages are separated geographically by a game reserve, so there is not much casual contact between them. As a result they are not interested in a common literature even if it were a viable option. A quote from Osaji (1979: 65) seems very appropriate to the above situation: 'A Nigerian language cluster can be considered as a group of closely related languages in which the various speech forms would have been regarded as constituting a single language if there was goodwill on the part of all concerned to evolve a common language.'

The Niger-Congo group of language families includes West Atlantic, Mande, Gur, Kwa, Benue-Congo and West Adamawa. Mande, the most disparate and probably the earliest family to

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break away, has two divisions, the north-west (Mande-tan) and the south-east (Mande-fu). The former includes Bambara, Bozo, Kono, Kpelle, Kuranko, Ligbi, Loma, Loko, Mandekan, Mendi-Bandi, Sembla, Soninke, Susu-Yalunka and Vai which are spoken in Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The Mande-sud languages extend from Guinea and Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Western Nigeria. Welmers (1971) concluded that Boko/Busa together with Bisa and Samo, spoken in Burkina Faso, should be distinguished from the others and put in a separate group, called the eastern segment of the south-east group. Although Bisa is geographically the next closest Mande language to the Boko/Busa and Kyanga/Shanga clusters, it has some major differences to them. According to Naden (1973), Bisa has no *kp* or *g* and only six vowels (no *ε*). In addition, nasal vowels and tone do not play an important role in Bisa, as they do in the Mande languages of Benin and Nigeria. In comparing the phonology, lexicons and syntax of these languages, it is evident that the Burkina Faso languages should be put in a separate group, with the Boko/Busa and Kyanga/Shanga groups having close affiliation with the Mande languages of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Following are the languages of the South Mande family with their approximate number of speakers.

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Mano	225,000	Guinea/Liberia
Dan/Gio	1,113,000	Côte d'Ivoire/Liberia
Guro	323,000	Côte d'Ivoire
Gagu	53,000	Côte d'Ivoire
Tura	28,000	Côte d'Ivoire
Wan	19,000	Côte d'Ivoire
Muan	16,000	Côte d'Ivoire
Beng	12,000	Côte d'Ivoire
Kyanga/Shanga	10,000	Nigeria
Boko/Busa	120,000	Benin/Nigeria
(Tougan Samogo)	105,000	Burkina Faso
(Bisa)	400,000	Burkina Faso

Comparison of:

Boko, Bokobaru, Busa, Illo Busa, Kyanga and Shanga

A list of over 200 Boko, Bokobaru, Busa and Illo Busa words together with 88 Kyanga words and 100 Shanga words was compared. The following chart shows the percentage of virtually identical and cognate words between each of the six languages. i.e. Bokobaru is 86% cognate with Boko and 12% identical with Kyanga.

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Cognate words

	<u>Boko</u>	<u>Busa</u>	<u>Bokobaru</u>	<u>Illo Busa</u>	<u>Kyanga</u>	<u>Shanga</u>
<u>Boko</u>		85%	86%	86%	52%	
<u>Busa</u>	42%		91%	89%	54%	
<u>Bokobaru</u>	39%	50%		86%	53%	
<u>Illo Busa</u>	55%	50%	43%		57%	
<u>Kyanga</u>	13%	14%	12%	16%		78%
<u>Shanga</u>	18%	20%	20%	19%	32%	

Virtually identical words

The lightly shaded area with cognate percentages ranging from 85-91 and the orthographically equivalent percentages ranging from 42-55 marks out the Boko/Busa language cluster. According to Swadesh (1971) the 85-91% lexical similarity indicates that the different languages separated from each other approximately 1000 years ago. This method has not always proved reliable, but whether it was 1000 years or two or three centuries less, the Kisira migration would have intermarried with the people of Illo and Bussa at a time when the Boko/Busa language was still one language. The original *wassangari* were considered to be Boko before they moved west to Nikki, possible evidence that Boko was the original name of the language. Or it may be evidence in favor of the Boko tradition that Kisira settled at Swalla near Babana and then his descendants dispersed from there to Bussa, Illo and Nikki after a disagreement.

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3.1 Boko

The 1992 census recorded 40,000 Boko speakers in Benin and there are approximately 35,000 over the border in mid-west Nigeria between the Niger river and the Benin border. Their immediate neighbors are the Baatombu (W-SW), the Mokole and Dendi (NW), the Hausa and Kyanga (N), the Kambari and Dukawa (E), the Busa (SE) and the Bokobaru (S). Fulbe live throughout the Boko area, while some Hausa and Yoruba have lived and traded in Boko towns for a long time.

There are over 40 Boko villages in Benin and another 40 in Nigeria. Segbana (5,400) and Kalale (2,500) are the larger towns in Benin, while Babana (4,000) is the main center in Nigeria. Most Nigerian Boko live in Niger State, but the villages of Samia, Maje, and Bakinrua are in Kebbi State to the north, and several thousand Boko live among the Bokobaru in Kwara State to the south. The Boko area, straddling the Benin-Nigerian border, measures 150 km from north to south and 125 km from east to west.

The Boko were co-rulers with the Baatombu at Nikki in pre-colonial Borgu, ruling throughout the Boko area in Benin and Nigeria. The French colonial government and then the Marxist regime in Benin republic during the seventies severely restricted the power of the Boko chiefs. They have little influence in local government, but are still recognized by the Boko people as their

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leaders. In Nigeria, the Boko are now under the Emir of Borgu, whereas in the pre-colonial era, all the Boko were under the king of Nikki. Nigerian Boko town and village chiefs have more authority than their counterparts in Benin.

Until recently the Boko people in the Buka area north-west of Nikki were losing their language and using Bariba as their first language, but with the advent of Boko literacy, they now have a new concern for their own language and roots. The Boko call themselves Boo, word medial 'g' and 'k' having dropped out of most words.

The Boko cultivate maize, guinea-corn, yams, manioc, peanuts, cotton, calabashes and bananas. The women specialize in making sheanut butter. The Boko area is remote from the main highways in Benin and Nigeria and is 700 km from the sea. They have only related to the outside world since 1950 with the advent of education. Roads have been constructed throughout the area, and schools have been opened in all larger villages. Cotton is the main cash crop, and national politics have made their presence felt.

The culture of the Boko/Busa and the Baatombu is similar. They formed a political unit known as Borgu in past centuries, described by Jacques Lombard (1965). The kingdom of Nikki which included all the Boko was firmly established by the 14th

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century and Boko influence extended east to the Niger river directly north of the Swashi river.

Religion: The majority of the Boko became superficially Islamized this century with the accompanying influence of Arabic. Christianity also has a foothold. Islam probably accounts for 70%, traditional religion 20% with Christianity at 5% among the Benin Boko where there are over 50 churches. The New Testament was published in 1984, the Boko Bible in 1992.

Literacy: In 1993 there were over 2,000 pupils enrolled in 24 schools in the Nigerian Boko area and probably double that number in Benin. There are secondary schools at Babana, Segbana and Kalale. Boko literacy has been taught in Benin, initially by the Protestant church, and also by a government literacy program. The Boko language remains the focal point for culture and traditional beliefs, but the new generation is educated in French in Benin and English in Nigeria. Literacy rate is at least 10% in French in Benin and in English in Nigeria. 10% of the Boko in Benin are literate in Boko. An EEC adult education program was begun in 1990 with a Boko literacy program launched in Nigeria in August 1995.

3.2 Bokobaru

Bokobaru is a language spoken by people living around the town of Kaiama in Kwara State in mid-west Nigeria between the Niger river and the Benin border. Their immediate neighbors are the Yoruba (S), Baatombu (W), Boko (N), Busa and Kambari (NE) and Nupe (E). Fulbe live throughout the

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Bokobaru area, while the Hausa and Yoruba have lived and traded in Bokobaru towns for a long time. Many Bokobaru, especially in Kaiama, understand some Yoruba.

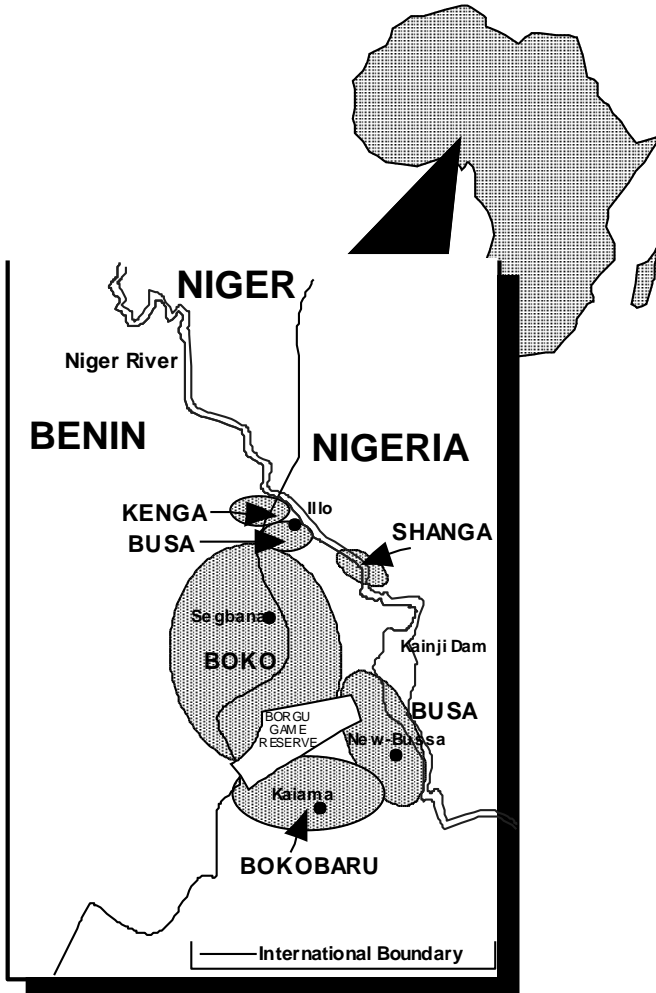
The Bokobaru are called *Boobau* by the Boko, while the Busa call them *Zògbé*. The Bokobaru call themselves *Bokobaru* and their language *Zògbé yá*. The Boko form of *Zògbé* is *zòé* 'peasant', 'slave person' or 'vassal', a person owned by the *mare* 'lord'. The Bokobaru don't recognize this meaning, but people either have a *mare* or *zògbé* burial, roughly equivalent to 'lord' and 'peasant'. Most Muslims and Christians choose to have a *mare* burial, with the body laid straight, wrapped in white, and buried in the compound, rather than a *zògbé* burial, with the body curled up, wrapped in black and buried outside the compound. These two kinds of burial were originally that of the royal *wassangari* and the vassal 'people of the land.' *Bokobaru* probably means the Boko from Barutem, the Baatombu area. Or following an alternate spelling Bokoberu, the Boko who first settled at Beru/Bweru, the town from where the Kaiama kings originated. *zògbé* is probably the name of the common people, contrasting with *Bokobaru*, which is the name for their royal clan.

According to the 1991 census there were 45,900 people in the Kaiama LGA, of whom an estimated 19,000 were Bokobaru, 16,000 Fulbe, 8,000 Yoruba, 2,000 Boko with some Hausa, Zuru, Igbo etc. With an estimated 6,000 Bokobaru living in Barutem LGA, the total number today is about 30,000. The

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Bokobaru area has about 30 Bokobaru villages and measures 80 km from north (Kaozi) to south (Mose) and 80 km from west (Gbete) to east (Woro). Kaiama is the main town with about 8,000 inhabitants. The Kaiama LGA area officials are mainly Bokobaru.

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Kaiama was founded as a royal capital in the late 18th century by members of the Boko royal clan who came from Nikki, but the original inhabitants of the area were Bokobaru *zongben*. (Hermon-Hodge 29:142) According to Richard Lander the principality of Kaiama was regarded as part of Borgu, but 'owing to the long-continued and unceasing intercourse which has been maintained between Kaiama and Bussa, the original Borgu language has given place to the Bussa and Wawa tongue.' (Lander 1832:152.) The Kaiama dialect has similarities to Busa, while the village dialect is closer to Boko. In the village dialect medial /s, t, k, gb/ weaken to /z, d, g, g/, and morpheme internal /r/ and /n/ elide. This does not explain when or why the Bokobaru language became distinct from Boko, but geographical separation is probably the major factor. It is also interesting to note that Lander regarded Borgu as distinct from Wawa and Bussa.

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3.3 Busa

In the 1991 census Borgu LGA had a total population of 110,000 made up approximately as follows. No accurate breakdown is available.

Boko	30,000	Laru	5,000
Kambari	25,000	Duka	3,000
Busa	15,000	Nupe	2,000
Hausa	10,000	Lopa	2,000
Fulbe	8,000	Igbo	1,000
Yoruba	7,000	Others	2,000

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Another 15,000 Kambari, Laru, Lopa and Nupe in the New-Bussa and Wawa areas speaking Busa as their second language giving a total of 30,000 Busa speakers. Adding the 5,000 Busa from the Illo area and 20% increase of population between 1991 and 1997 and the number of Busa speakers in 1997 would be close to 40,000. The population of New-Bussa is 16,000 and that of Wawa 4,000. The Busa area around New-Bussa and Wawa hugs the western bank of the Niger river and measures 80 km from north (Shagunu) to south (Doko) and 40 km from east (Faku) to west (Kale).

The Busa people are usually called Busa after their main town, Bussa. They call themselves Bisā, and only people from Bussa town are called Busa, or more correctly Busadeno (Busa inhabitants). Their immediate neighbors are the Yoruba (S), Bokobaru (W), Boko (NW), Hausa (N), Kambari (NE) and Nupe (SE). Hausa, Yoruba, Kambari, Lopa and Laru live throughout the Busa area. New-Bussa and Wawa are the main centers with 30 surrounding villages, in which Busa is the main language, although the population of many of these villages is mixed.

The Busa language spoken at Wawa is regarded as the purer form. At New-Bussa the language has been influenced by Hausa. The two mid open vowels. /ε, ɔ/ have for many speakers become /e, o/. There is also a tendency for /z/ to become /j/. The population of the Rafia district around Wawa and down to

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Leaba speak the Wawa dialect, while those in the north and those who resettled at New-Bussa, Karabonde, Dogongari and Monnai speak the Bussa dialect. They are evenly divided numerically. Many Bussa dialect grammatical constructions tend to follow Boko, while the Wawa dialect is more akin to Bokobaru.

The Busa have only recently been exposed to the modern world, with the advent of education, and especially after 1968 with the construction of the Kainji hydro-electric dam, when Bussa was moved to its new site. The Busa language remains the focal point for culture and traditional beliefs, but the new generation is educated in English. Most Busa speakers are bilingual in Hausa, and to a lesser extent in Yoruba or Kambari.

The States of Bussa and Wawa were closely allied to the Borgu empire, but not actually part of it. The Busa are predominant in New-Bussa, Wawa, Dogangari and Karabonde. They intermarry with Laru, Nupe, Kambari and Hausa, but not with Lopa, Fulbe or Yoruba. The Emir of Borgu is ruler over the Busa and the Boko who live in the Borgu LGA.

Approximately 6,000 Busa people live in villages south of Illo in Kebbi State. They claim they came originally from Bussa town, and thus the name, but because of their proximity to Boko villages, their language is now halfway between Boko and Busa. They live in the villages of Kali, Bani, Gilanzana, Sangba,

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Sambe, Wagaga, Anaswa and Gbegbe. In Illo itself, only the older people still speak Busa. As the Illo Busa consider themselves one people with the Busa of Borgu LGA, they are here considered as a third dialect of Busa, but the differences are considerable.

Religion: The Busa have become Islamized this century with the accompanying influence of Arabic. Some traditional religious practices are still maintained. Only in the past few years have there been some conversions to Christianity. 30% of the Bible has recently been translated into Busa. New-Bussa with its mixed population from all parts of Nigeria has 30 churches and is the most Christian town in Borgu.

Literacy: There are 26 primary schools in the Busa area with 8,000 pupils. There are also six secondary schools, two at New-Bussa, two at nearby Dogongari, one at Wawa and one at Shagunu. An EEC adult education program was begun in 1990 with a Busa literacy program being launched in August 1995 with the printing of 10,000 booklets.

4.0 Other Mande languages

4.1 Kyanga

They are also called Kenga, Tienga, Tyenga and Tyanga. They have 70% lexical similarity with the Shanga and 54% with the Boko/Busa group. Kyanga and the Boko/Busa group are not mutually intelligible. Approximately 4,000 Kyanga live near Illo in the villages of Geshuru (15 km from Illo), Kasale (15 km),

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Sarufu and Tuni (Tondio =16) in Nigeria with another 1,000 at Tungan Bage over the border in Benin. There are also some Kyanga in the Boko villages of Kebbi State: Maje, Samia and Baikinrua, and a sizable community at Pissa in Borgu LGA where they moved from Konkwesso. Tradition claims that the Kyanga came with Kisira from Zaria and first settled at Faku, Kanibe, Bussa and Wawa, and that from there they migrated west to Wazibe, ancient seat of the Bokobaru, and north to the Konkwesso/Pissa area where they have now been largely assimilated among the Boko. Others settled in the Illo/Kaoje area where they still speak their language. Others migrated further north where they have become assimilated to Dendi and Zarma. There is a town near Kamba called Kyangakwai (Kengakoi). Other nearby towns called Fingilla and Shiko are claimed to have been founded by the Kyanga. They became independent after the fall of the Songhai empire, but came under the rule of the Kebbawa in the sixteenth century (Temple 1922: 223). The Kyanga are related to the Boko/Busa, but usually take an inferior position to them. However, the present chief of the Boko town of Konkwesso is Kyanga. The Kyanga were obviously much more numerous in times past, occupying a large area on both sides of the Niger river, where Niger Republic, Benin Republic and the Republic of Nigeria meet. Platiel (1982) states that the majority of the inhabitants of the villages in the districts of Bana and Yelou in Niger Republic are Kyanga as are many in the district of Bengou and Gaya. But at least two generations ago they became Zarma speakers and more recently

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they have adopted Hausa. In Nigeria the Kyanga north of the Niger river have also assimilated to Hausa. Even south of the river where they still speak Kyanga, 35% of their own vocabulary are words borrowed from Hausa.

4.2 Shanga

The Shanga are closely related to the Kyanga. According to Temple (1965:343) they separated from the Kyanga in the early half of the nineteenth century, when the Emir of Gando overran their town of Kaoje. They fled to the northern bank of the Niger, where they now live in villages surrounding their central town called Shanga in Kebbi State between Kaoje and Yauri. There are 5-10,000 Shanga, some of whom live on the southern bank of the Niger. Many, if not most of them, now speak Hausa as their first language and more than 30% of their own Shanga vocabulary is borrowed from Hausa. Kyanga and Shanga are Mande languages, but their vocabulary and phonology are becoming hausarized. They are called Shangawa or Shongawa by the Hausa. They live in the following villages: Gante, Lafugu, Zaria, Besse, Shanga, Dugu Raha, Dugu Tsofo, Bakin Turu. They intermarry with the Lopa and Reshe.

5.0 Western Kainji group

Five languages of the western division of the Kainji group exist in Borgu: Kambari, Duka, Reshe, Lopa and Laru, the latter three being in the Kainji Lake subdivision. (Grimes 1992) They were previously classified as belonging to the Upper Niger

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group of the Western Plateau division. They are not mutually intelligible. Lexical similarity figures for these 5 languages are as follows. i.e. Duka has 20% similarity with Reshe.

<u>Reshe</u>				
43	<u>Lopa</u>			
33	42	<u>Laru</u>		
20	22	20	<u>Duka</u>	
11	17	14	16	<u>Kambari</u>

5.1 Kambari

There are two Kambari language clusters, each with various dialects.

Kambari cluster 1 (northern group)

Agadi, in Mariga LGA

Avadi, in Magama LGA

Baangi, in Kontagora LGA

Ashingini, in Magama and Yauri LGA

Yumu and Osis, in Borgu LGA

Kambari cluster 11 (southern group)

Agaushi, language called Cishingini, in Auna, Magama and Yauri LGA

Akimba, language called Tsikimba, in Auna, Magama and Yauri LGA

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Nwanci, language called Twiwenci, in Agwara, Borgu, Yauri and Magama LGA.

The latter call themselves Mawunci (Sg.), or Nwanci (Pl.). The Kambari around Wawa and New-Bussa are Ashingini. Those around Agwara are Nwanci. The Kambari now have political power in Agwara LGA, an area which formerly belonged to Borgu and where many of the towns still have Busa chiefs. The Kambari are predominant in Doko, Doro, Kuruwasa, Kere, Koro, Lubararu, Tamanai, Yangba, Garafini and Gada Oli, while other Busa villages have mixed populations including Kambari. They have been in the Wawa/New-Bussa area for many centuries and are becoming assimilated to Busa language and culture. Most of them speak Busa as their second language and Hausa as their third language. About 25,000 Kambari live in Borgu.

5.2 Reshe

The Reshe call themselves Bareshe and their language Tsureshe. The Hausa call them Gungawa (island people) or Yaurawa. They are the original inhabitants of Yauri. They fled to the nearby islands of the Niger in the mid-nineteenth century and eventually returned to a new site on the mainland named Yelwa. During the British regime, the status of Yauri as an Emirate and of Yelwa as the seat of the Emir of Yauri were confirmed (Hogben 1966:259). Both Yauri and Yelwa have now become hausarized and the Gungu (island) district of Yauri LGA is now the center of the Reshe (Gungawa) population. Most Reshe are

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bilingual in Hausa, but the majority still speak Reshe at home. They intermarry with the Hausa. There are about 45,000 Reshe speaking people, with about 10,000 living in Borgu. They live along the banks of the Niger river between Illo and Shabanda in Kebbi state and south to Ujiji in Borgu LGA, Niger State. Some live further away from the Niger at Agwarra and Papari.

The languages most closely affiliated to Reshe are Laru and Lopa. They are sometimes also referred to as Gungawa. They are all known for their use of irrigation on riverside fields of onions and for their canoe building and fishing. Fishermen along the Niger are called *Sorko* or *Soroko*. They may have originally been related to the Bozo of Mali, a western Mande group who are traditionally fishermen and call themselves Sorogo. However, *soroko* is now a name used to designate professional fishermen on the Niger river, no matter what language they speak. It does not designate a tribal language group.

Religion: 70% Muslim, 30% traditional religion, less than 1% Christian.

5.3 Duka

The Duka call themselves Hunne and their language, tHun or sSaare. There are two dialects, centered around the towns of Dukku (pop. 9,000) and Rijau (pop. 16,000) respectively. The Hausa call the people Dukawa and their language Dukanchi, after the names of their town Dukku. There are about 73,000 Dukawa, (Ahmed 1985:3) mostly east of the Niger river, in

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Sakaba LGA, Kebbi State, and Rijau LGA, Niger State. Several thousand of them live in Borgu, fanning out from the Shanga district of Yauri LGA. Duka language is closer to Dakarkari than to Kambari, but the affinity and similarity of culture between the Kambari and Duka people is well attested (Dettweller 1993). The Duka who live in the Shanga area have assimilated towards the Shangawa. Religion: Traditional religion and Muslim, 1% Christian. Literacy: 2%

5.4 Laru

The Laru are predominant in the following Borgu LGA villages: Kagogi (part of Karabonde), Monnai, Lesugbe, Luma, Sansanni and Shagunu. They are assimilating to Busa language and culture. About 3,000 Laru live in Borgu. Their total population may be only 5,000. Religion: Muslim.

5.5 Lopa

Sometimes called Lupa, they call themselves Djiri and their language Kirikjir. Amboshidi and Tungan Bori in Borgu LGA have a Lopa majority, while others live in Yauri LGA, Kebbi State. Those in Borgu LGA are assimilating to Busa language and culture. About 3,000 Lopa live in Borgu. Their total population may be only 5,000.

Religion: Muslim

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6.0 Yoruboid

6.1 Yoruba

The Yoruba are a non-indigenous group who came up from the south and trade in the larger Borgu towns. Many are there to stay, but their Yoruba language and culture remain dominant. They do not assimilate to the indigenous culture. There are as many as 20 million Yoruba living mainly in Nigeria south of Borgu, but also in Benin and Togo. In Benin Borgu there are about 40,000 Yoruba, where most of them speak the Chabe (Save) dialect which is not understood clearly by other Yoruba, but the Chabe have no trouble understanding standard Yoruba. In Benin the Yoruba call themselves Nago. The main Yoruba community in Benin is south of Borgu, but there are 10,000 Yoruba in the Tchaourou area, although the Baatombu are more numerous and have political power there. 15,000 Yoruba live in Parakou, and communities of over one thousand live at Banikoara, Bembereke, Malanville, N'Dali, and Nikki, where they are usually involved in commerce. Historically they have had a strong influence in Parakou where most of the kings were Yoruba. Another 20,000 Yoruba living in the larger towns of Nigerian Borgu.

Religion: 60% Christian, 25% Muslim, 15% traditional religion. The Bible was first translated in 1884 and revised in 1966. The New Testament was again revised in 1988.

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6.2 Mokole

The Mokole language is related to Yoruba, but their culture is more akin to the Baatombu whom they have lived among for many hundreds of years. They live in Kandi and in villages to the north and east. Their population is about 13,000.

Religion: Traditional religion, Muslim, some Christians. The N. T. has been translated.

7. Dendi

96,000 of the 135,000 Dendi live in Borgu, especially in the far north of Benin, along the Niger river, from the Mekrou river to the Nigerian border, and down to Kandi. 41,500 live in the Malanville sub-Prefecture with another 18,500 in Karimama sub-prefecture. There are 7,500 at Kandi, 16,000 at Parakou, over 3,000 at Nikki, and others are dispersed throughout Borgu, while a large community lives at Djougou, outside of Borgu. More Dendi live on the north of the Niger in Niger Republic. Dendi and Zarma are dialects of Songhai which is a Nilo-Saharan language and is not related to the Niger-Congo group. A good percentage of these Dendi are probably of Kyanga extraction.

Muslim Dendi traders have had a big influence on all the Borgu languages over the centuries. There are hundreds of words, many of them originally from Arabic and mainly concerning religion, trade items and abstract concepts, which have been incorporated into Baatonum, Boko/Busa, Fulfulde, Yoruba, Yom, Lokpa etc.

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Religion: Mostly Muslim, some Christian. Zarma New Testament published in 1954.

8. Hausa

22 million people speak Hausa as their first language with another 13 million speaking it as their second language. The majority live in Nigeria with 3.25 million Hausa living in Niger Republic. Hausa belongs to the Chadic family of the Afro-Asiatic branch of languages. It is unrelated to the other Borgu languages. There are various dialects and that spoken in Borgu is mainly the Sokoto dialect. Most of the larger towns have Hausa sections, while along the Niger river in Nigeria there are many Hausa farming and fishing settlements. About 25,000 Hausa live in Borgu, most of them in Nigeria.

Religion: Muslim 77%, traditional religion 15%, Christian 8%. The Bible was translated in 1932 and revised in 1980.

9. Nupe

1.8 million Nupe live to the south-east of Borgu. Those in Borgu are fishermen and live along the Niger from Faku south to Awuru, Leaba and Donko. They also live at Monnai and Karabonde. About 3,000 Nupe live in Borgu and are called Takpa, the Yoruba name for them. They are bilingual in Busa.

Religion: Predominantly Muslim. Bible translated in 1953 and revised in 1989.

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10. Other Gur languages

10.1 Ottamari

The Ottamari are also called Ditamari, Tamari or Somba. Over 5,000 live in the Parakou sub-prefecture, 8,000 in the Tchaourou sub-prefecture while others are dispersed throughout Borgu. They come from the Atacora region and had no significant relationship with Borgu historically. Total population is 120,000 of whom 26,000 live in Borgu.

Religion: Traditional religion with some Muslim and Christian. The New Testament was published in 1989 and the Old Testament is near completion.

10.2. Yom/Lokpa

Over 5,000 live in the Parakou sub-prefecture and another 7,000 live in the Tchaourou sub-prefecture. They have migrated east from around Djougou. There are 55,000 Yom with two dialects Temba (uplands) and Yoba (lowlands), while the Lokpa number 41,000, including some who live over the border in Togo. 16,500 Yom/Lokpa now live in Borgu.

Religion: Traditional, Muslim and Christian. The Lokpa New Testament was published in 1977, the Yom NT. was published in 1985. Literacy 2%.

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11. Kwa languages

11.1 Fon

The Fon have migrated throughout Benin Borgu from the south where they number 1.4 million, including 35,000 in Togo. The largest ethnic group in Benin, they have two dialects, Fo and Katafu. In Borgu their main concentration is in Parakou where they number 20,000 with another 10,000 living in Benin Borgu.

Religion Traditional religion (Voodoo), 20% Christian. The Fon New Testament was published in 1991.

11.2. Adja

They are also called Aja-gbe. Nearly 3,000 Adja live in the Parakou area. Total population in Borgu is 5,500. They are not indigenous to the area and have come from the south-west of Benin. 300,000 Adja live in Benin and another 110,000 in Togo. Dialects are Dogbogbe and Hwegbe. Religion: Traditional religion and Christian.

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Villages around Illo.

- Illo (0km)
- Giris (9.6km)
- Kalli (12.6km)
- Gesheru (15km)
- Kasale (15.2km)
- Tunga Rafi (17.1km)
- Bani (17.5km)
- Boma (18.5km)
- Tondio (21.8km)
- Kurukuru (21.9km)
- Tudun Sani (24.5km)
- Gwanadi Kanti (24.5km)
- Lollo (24.9km)
- Bulungai (25.1km)
- Rafin Kawo (25.7km)
- Gamana (25.7km)
- Yelawa (26km)
- Tungan Alhorma (26km)
- Sabon Gari (27km)
- Banizumbo (27.2km)
- Chiko (27.6km)
- Gilari (27.6km)
- Tungan Mumuni (27.6km)
- Tungan Kembufana (27.8km)
- Gwasadi (27.9km)
- Tungan Maigari (27.9km)
- Diggi (28km)
- Tungan Habi (28km)
- Wasali (28.6km)
- Gidan Liman (28.7km)
- Banu Goro (29.6km)
- Tungan Rogo (29.9km)
- Buki (30.6km)
- Kabaka (30.7km)
- Kassa (30.9km)
- Sarafu (31km)
- Kokwali (31.7km)
- Gabé-Tounga (32.2km)
- Bani Goro (32.4km)
- Tounga Takoubou (32.7km)
- Dolé (32.7km)
- Nomo-Kpara (33.2km)
- Sadia-Kpara (33.2km)
- Tunga Nama (33.6km)
- Lelubu (33.7km)

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- Nachango (34km)
- Tankwasari (35.2km)
- Kwakwaba (35.4km)
- Tounga Aoudou (35.6km)
- Juroki (36.6km)
- Guindogolo ma (36.7km)
- Nibu (37km)
- Tungan Noma (37km)
- Tungan Kwokoi (37km)
- Koiratégui (37.2km)
- Tounga Wondarou (37.6km)
- Naffa (37.7km)
- Zanloa Tounga (38km)
- Gwoge (38km)
- Sendé (38km)