



**MUNDARI**  
**SO FAR (AWAY), SO GOOD**

4 hours from Juba in South Sudan live the Mundari. The Ankole-Watus cows are the pride of this tribe. When winter arrives, the herds migrate to a camp along the Nile. Beyond the beauty of the place and the harmony of the tribe with its animals, the Mundari are confronted with the arrival of the modern world.

The young people dream of another life through the screens of their mobile phones. Many are returning to their villages after spending years in refugee camps in Kenya or Uganda after fleeing South Sudan during the civil war.

A clash between ancestral traditions and new desires that do not necessarily go hand in hand.



**A column of smoke appears on the horizon, followed by high wooden masts crowned with long horns: the Mundari winter camp where the tribe migrates in search of new pastures for their cows.**



The cows had to cross the Nile, a dangerous moment for the tribe who may lost some.



The young boys are busy and rekindle the fires of dried cow dung to keep warm and to keep away ticks, tsetse flies and mosquitoes.



The first rays of sunlight show the silhouettes of the oversized horns of Ankole-Watus cows as far as the eye can see. The treasure of the Mundari.



Giant placids emerge from their bamboo elevated beds. Rare are those who do not exceed 6 ft in this people considered to be one of the tallest in the world.

Each cow is given a vigorous ash massage to remove parasites and shine its coat. Even the horns are dusted.







Boys discreetly suckle milk directly from the cow's udder before milking them, while a friend blows into the animal's vagina to stimulate its milk production.

Time for a break, and the opportunity to smoke a shisha, heritage of the northern Arabs. The Mundari are not vindictive, they have had to endure vexations and humiliations for decades from visitors from the north who were slumming in the south to escape the sharia law imposed by Khartoum!





Kid rushes under the cows' urine stream to shower. If you put cow urine on your hair, it will turn orange.



You can also pass urine over your body, it prevents the wounds from getting infected.



Cows are everything for Mundari, without them they cannot marry, they cannot trade, and they cannot survive during starvations. Having to sell a cow is a heartbreak for a Mundari man. Losing one is a real sorrow.



The whole football Champions League seems to be meeting in the tribe. These jerseys, Made In China, are prized because they cost only two dollars and will be worn until they fall into rags.



One cow has not eaten for a few days. A man painfully make a hole in the jugular with a kind of punch and make a bleeding.



The recent signature of a fragile peace has demobilized many soldiers (easily recognizable, they have kept their military berets and the look of those who will claim backshishes).





Ronah has the rare chance to go to school and speaks English. "I would like to go abroad to study and become a doctor, but when I tell my parents about it, they tell me to look after the cows. ».



When the Mundari pauses for a picture, they raise their arms to imitate the shape of the horns of their favourite cows.



The assets to please many pretenders in Mundari tribe: tall, chubby, diastema and beautiful black gums are needed.

The courtyards of the clay huts are impeccably clean. Not a piece of rubbish lying around.

That's normal for Charlie: "If a woman doesn't run your house well, it means she doesn't respect you. You will be laughed at by the neighbours. You have to beat her. »





No aggressiveness or outbursts of voice among them, except to provoke each other at any time for small improvised wrestling tournaments, the ancestral sport.



The bare-breasted women who used to peel peanuts a few minutes before rushed into small huts and came out transformed into nuns, all dressed for the Sunday service.



Ritual scarifications, a real death sentence during inter-tribal violence, as the identification of people is facilitated by these indelible marks.



Having these scars on the forehead, the cheeks or the corner of the eyes represents for young Mundari people the passage to adulthood: "No one calls you a kid anymore when you are scarified. "





The love of religion has led Mundari women to make impressive scarifications in the shape of a christian cross on their bellies.



Paul has the carefree attitude of his childhood. He returns to his village after nine years of exile in Kenya in the Kakuma refugee camp. "My brother was killed in a raid, so my father asked me to come back and look after his 20 cows..."



The naked men smearing themselves with ashes to face the imminent return of the mosquitoes.



A Mundari man grabs a huge cow horn and blows into it to produce a hollow sound that resonates for miles around to call the cows.



The cows are back, the boys will tie them with ropes around the firedamps and sleep with them.



The camp looks like a movie set with special effects. Smoke obstructs the view of the horizon, children climb up the wooden masts to try to spot the missing animals



The philosophy of the tribe is perhaps summed up on the t-shirt worn by all Mundari women. It proclaims, spelling mistakes included: « we are made of dreams, let's gtart to dream together, you're my dreem, let's gtart to dream, you're my dreem. »

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