

How Totems Affect Daily Life

Shona transcript:

Koita futi imwe nyaya inoaffecter futi mutupo pamararamiro edu. Ahh inyaya yekuti usadya mutupo wako. Haufaniri kudya mutupo wako. Zvinongotenderwa izvo kuti hanzi ukadya mutupo wako unowora mazino kana kuti kudini. Nyaya yacho kuti tinyatsoziva kuti yakabva kupi iyi inyaya yandisinganyatsonzwisisa zvangu asi ndinongonzwa vakuru vachiti kana uchiera gumbo zviya usadya makumbo, unozowora mazino. Usadya moyo. Saka ndizvo zvimwe zvezvinhu zvinenge zvichitoaffecter mararamiro, ndoma affectiro anoita mutupo within our culture. Ndingazoti zvekare panyaya yenzvimbo, iyoyo inyaya yakanaka zvikuru yekuti kune nzvimbo dzinotarisirwa mutupo kuti ahh ho unoera mutupo wakati asi kumusha kwenyu ndekwakati. Iyi inyaya iriko zvikuru. Senge ini ndichitarisa kuti ndinobva kwaGutu right unonzwa vanhu vachiti ahh uri wezhira here. Ndingati vana wezhira vanhu vana vanenge vachiera gumbo. Ini zvangu handieri gumbo asi zvinhu zvinotarisirwa kuti vanhu vakawanda ndokwawakabva vanoera mutupo iwoyo. Asi nenyaya yekuti vanhu vanoita vachifamba vachimover, munongozivawo kuti vanhu vanongobva munzvimbo nemunzvimbo vachindotsvaga zvirinani, pane zvinhu zvakawanda zvinoita kuti vanhu vabude munzvimbo yavaigara. Saka ndiko kuspreader kwakazoitawo kuti mutupo ive inowanikwawo kunzvimbo dzakasiyana-siyana. Saka ahh unowana kuti ehh kana kuti vanhu vanoera Shava handiti vanonzi vana chihera chii aah vakabva kunzvimbo dzinonzi Buhera vana uhera kana kuti ahh unoera moyo ahh unobva kupiko. Zvinhu zvinowanikwa zvakadaro. Then imwe zvirikowo ndezvekuti kana iyo nyaya yezvidawo yekuti vana kana uchiera Shava kune vanhu vanotobvunza kuti uri Shava ipi yacho. You find kuti pane paine Shava dzakasiyana mukati memutupo iwoyo. Mumwe anenge achinzi Shava hameno shava yekupi. Mhofu here yekwaMurehwa. Uri Moyo ipi wohwa munhu ava kutotaura kuti ahh ndiri moyo yekwakadaiwo yekupi nekupi zvichingobvawo. Ndokusiyana kunoita wo mutupo iri mukati meZimbabwe.

English translation:

Another important aspect about totems is that you are not supposed to eat your totem, *i.e.*, you cannot eat meat from the animal that is your totem.¹ Some believe that if you do, your teeth might rot. The origins of this myth are not clear, and it is not known if this is true or not; usually the elders are the ones who advise against this. For example, we hear them say that if your totem is “the leg of an animal,” you cannot eat the drumstick or meat from the leg part of an animal. The same way if your totem is the “heart.” So these are some ways in which totems affect our daily life in our culture. Also, in terms of geographic areas, there are areas where people of a particular totem belong or originate. So, people will ask, aah, “That’s your totem. And are you from here?” This is common. For example, I am from Gutu, and when I meet people, they ask if I have the totem that is common in Gutu. However, my totem is different, but it is somehow assumed that

¹ Totem can either be an animal or an animal part, for example leg, heart, etc.

everyone from that area has the same totem. Because people move and resettle, therefore you may find other people with a different totem in the same area. That is how people with different totems spread, and they can be found in different areas [both rural and urban]. So, aah, you can find people of the *Shava* totem mostly live in the Buhera area. This is quite common. There are also different sub-groups within the totem. For *Shava*, they could be *Murehwa* or *Mhofu*. So, if your totem is *Shava*, people may ask which kind of *Shava* you belong to. Also, if you are *Moyo*, you will also find different branches within the *Moyo* totem.² That is how different totems are in Zimbabwe.

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² *Murehwa*, *Shava*, *Mhofu*, and *Moyo* are some of the different totems you will find in different parts of Zimbabwe.