

Anthropology

Discussion Questions on *Eating Christmas in the Kalahari*

1. What was the goal of Richard Lee's Ethnographic research among the !Kung? Why did the !Kung regard him as stingy? Were they justified? Was his hoarding of his own food ethical?

2. When Lee bought the ox for the Christmas celebration, what response did he expect (given his own cultural biases) from the !Kung? How did the !Kung in fact treat his "generosity"? Why? What does the article illustrate about differences in cultural values?

3. Much of this article concerns difference in "manners" or Etiquette. Though etiquette may seem a trivial concern, manners often reflect deep and significant cultural values. How do !Kung and U.S. systems of etiquette reflect distinctive notions of the value of the group versus the individual, of hierarchy versus equality, of cooperation versus competition, and so forth? Why do people in the U.S. feel that it is important to thank someone who shares with others, even if the person clearly "owes" something to the rest? Can you think of other examples of U.S. "manners" that reflect our cultural values?

4. !Kung values about sharing and about humility seem to relate directly to the !Kung economic system of hunting and gathering. How? Do U.S. values and etiquette relate in any consistent way to our own economic system?