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Sean Anthony and Marlene Suter.*

***Docu Magazine is publishing the most
captivating stories from all around
the world, captured by talented
photographers.***

*Established in 2020, Docu Magazine is dedicated to contemporary
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Cattle That Mean The World

With 12 million cattle, South Sudan is the country with one of the highest cattle populations in Africa. The Ankole-Watusi cattle of the Mundari are considered the "kings of cattle" thanks to their imposing horns. To say that the Mundari love their cattle is an understatement. Their entire world revolves around them.

When we arrive at the camp, located in a clearing, in the afternoon after an hour-long drive through dense bush, we encounter tall young men and women, just ash-smeared boys and a few infants. No one is over mid-thirties. All of them smile at us curiously but friendly. However, we look in vain for cattle in the camp. They are out grazing during the day and return only shortly before sunset.

According to the stakes they are tied to at night, there must be hundreds of them. Some boys are still busy picking up the cow dung and piling it into cone-shaped piles. The others present are sitting companionably together, willingly answering my questions or having taken their pictures. The idle hustle and bustle ends abruptly when the first cattle appear at the edge of the forest. Everyone rushes to the stakes and waits there with the cords in their hands for each animal to find its place and willingly let itself be tied up. Although the stream of cows does not want to end, everything goes smoothly and without hectic. Afterwards, the men lovingly rub the hide and horns of their cattle with the ashes of last night's dung fire. The ash, which is as fine as talcum powder and serves as an antiseptic, dusts the air peach-colored in the evening backlight. Occasionally, the sweeping curved horns of the favorite animal are also adorned with tassels that drive flies from their eyes with every movement. The owners proudly pose with their favorite and imitate the swing of the horns with their arms. In the meantime, the manure, which is accurately piled up into cones, is ignited and the smoke clouds rising in the setting, glowing red sun envelop the camp.

The blue hour is used by the women and boys to milk the cows. The darker it gets, the more clearly the flames and embers become visible and illuminate the heads of the cattle standing around them. Now the people also camp around the fire, either on simple wooden platforms or in the still warm ashes ...

The longer my wife and me travel together the more we become fascinated by the customs and the daily life of indigenous people who preserve their traditional culture.

HOLGER HOFFMANN









