

Dark Cults of Africa

By

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The Life of the Kikuyu

THE KIKUYU ARE KENYA'S MOST POPULOUS ETHNIC GROUP. 'KIKUYU' IS THE SWAHILIZED FORM OF THE PROPER NAME AND PRONUNCIATION OF GĪKŪYŪ ALTHOUGH THEY REFER TO THEMSELVES AS THE AGĪKŪYŪ PEOPLE. THEY ARE EQUAL TO ABOUT 22% OF KENYA'S TOTAL POPULATION. THEY CULTIVATE THE FERTILE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS.

ORIGINS

THE ANCESTORS OF THE KIKUYU CAN BE SAID WITH SOME CERTAINTY TO HAVE COME FROM THE NORTH, FROM THE REGION OF THE NYAMBENE HILLS TO THE NORTHEAST OF MOUNT KENYA (KIRINYAGA), WHICH WAS THE ORIGINAL IF NOT EXCLUSIVE HOMELAND OF ALL OF CENTRAL KENYA'S BANTU-SPEAKING PEOPLES, VIZ. THE MERU, EMBU, CHUKA, KAMBA AND POSSIBLY MBEERE. THE PEOPLE ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE ARRIVED IN THE HILLS AS EARLY AS THE 1200S. FROM WHERE THEY CAME, THOUGH, IS A MATTER SUBJECT TO A LOT OF CONTROVERSY: ONE THEORY ARGUES THAT THEY CAME FROM AXUM MIGRATING WHEN THE AKSUMITE EMPIRE OR AXUMITE EMPIRE FELL ANOTHER MYTHICAL 'SHUNGWAYA', PRESUMABLY IN SOMALIA, FROM WHICH THE NINE TRIBES OF THE COASTAL MIJIKENDA ALSO SAY THEY CAME. THE OTHER MAIN THEORY POSITS THAT THEY CAME FROM THE WEST, HAVING SPLIT FROM THE BANTU OF CENTRAL AFRICA.

WHATEVER THEIR EARLY ORIGINS, IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT STARTING FROM AROUND THE 1500S, THE ANCESTORS OF THE KIKUYU, MERU (INCLUDING THE IGENBE AND TIGANIA), KAMBA, EMBU AND CHUKA, BEGAN MOVING SOUTH INTO THE RICHER FOOTHILLS OF MOUNT KENYA. BY THE EARLY 1600S, THEY WERE CONCENTRATED AT ITHANGA, 60 MILES SOUTHEAST OF THE MOUNTAIN'S PEAKS AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE THIKA AND SAGANA RIVERS. AS ITHANGA'S POPULATION INCREASED, ORAL TRADITIONS OF ALL THE

TRIBES AGREE THAT THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO FAN OUT IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, EVENTUALLY BECOMING THE SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT TRIBES THAT EXIST TODAY. THE THEORY THAT THE CHUKA, EMBU, MBEERE, GICUGU AND NDIA BROKE AWAY FROM THE MAIN KIKUYU GROUP BEFORE ARRIVING AT ITHANGA IS PLAUSIBLE, BUT IS CONTRADICTED BY THE ORAL TRADITIONS OF VARIOUS TRIBES, MANY OF WHICH INCLUDE ITHANGA IN THEIR HISTORIES. THE KIKUYU THEMSELVES MOVED WEST TO A PLACE NEAR MURANG'A, FROM WHERE THE KIKUYU CREATION MYTH PICKS UP THE STORY.

SPECIALISTS BELIEVE THE KIKUYU CAME TO KENYA FROM CENTRAL AFRICA TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER BANTU GROUPS. THEY MOVED EAST PAST MOUNT KILIMANJARO AND INTO KENYA, FINALLY SETTLING AROUND MOUNT KENYA, WHILE THE REST OF THE GROUP CONTINUED MIGRATING TO SOUTHERN AFRICA. THEY, UNLIKE THE NILOTIC TRIBES WHO WERE PASTORALISTS, WERE FARMERS AND BEGAN FARMING THE VERY FERTILE VOLCANIC LAND AROUND MT. KENYA AND THE KENYAN HIGHLANDS. HOWEVER, KIKUYU LEGENDS HAVE IT THAT IN THE BEGINNING, A MAN CALLED GIKUYU AND HIS WIFE CALLED MIREIA OR MUMBI WERE PLACED ON MŪKŪRWE WA NYAGATHANGA BY GOD, MWENE NYAGA OR NGAI. IT WAS SAID THAT THEY WERE PLACED NEAR THE MUGUMO OR FIG TREE UPON THE SLOPES OF THE MOUNTAIN. THEY GAVE BIRTH TO NINE DAUGHTERS NAMED, WANJIKU, WANJIRŪ, WANGECI, WAMBŪI, WANGARI, WACERA WAITHERA, WAIRIMŪ AND WANGŪI. IT SO HAPPENED THAT WHEN THEY WERE GROWN UP, THEY MET NINE YOUNG MEN FROM A DISTANT LAND, OSTENSIBLY AXUM, WHO MARRIED THE GIRLS AND FROM WHOM THE KIKUYU NATION AROSE. A POPULAR MYTH CLAIMS THAT WHEN KIKUYU'S DAUGHTERS CAME OF MARRYING AGE, KIKUYU PRAYED TO MWENE NYAGA TO PROVIDE HUSBANDS FOR THEIR DAUGHTERS WHOM HE DULY PROVIDED BY A FIG TREE.

HISTORY

TIME

THE AGĪKŪYŪ HAD FOUR SEASONS AND TWO HARVESTS IN ONE YEAR. THESE WERE DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS: MBURA YA NJAHĪ -THE SEASON OF BIG RAIN-

FROM MARCH TO JULY, MAGETHA MA NJAHĩ -THE SEASON OF THE BIG HARVEST-
BETWEEN JULY AND EARLY OCTOBER, MBURA YA MWERE -SHORT RAIN
SEASON- FROM OCTOBER TO JANUARY, MAGETHA MA MWERE -THE SEASON OF
HARVESTING MILLET.

KIKUYU EXPANSION

THE KIKUYU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HAPPY TO ADAPT, IN TERMS OF TERRITORIAL EXPANSION, WERE BY FAR THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OF THE GROUPS THAT HAD ORIGINALLY MIGRATED SOUTH FROM THE NYAMBENE HILLS, RELYING ON A COMBINATION OF LAND PURCHASES, BLOOD-BROTHERHOOD (PARTNERSHIPS), INTERMARRIAGE WITH OTHER PEOPLE, AND THEIR ADOPTION AND ABSORPTION. ONLY OCCASIONALLY DID WARFARE FIGURE IN THIS EXPANSION, SUCH AS IN THE EARLY 1800S WHEN A COMBINED KIKUYU, MAASAI AND ATHI FORCE ANNIHILATED THE HUNTER-GATHERING GUMBA OR AGUMBA, A PEOPLE WHICH ONE KIKUYU LEGEND REFERS TO AS PYGMIES. THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF KIKUYU-LAND, IT IS SAID, WERE THE THAGICU, WHO PRACTICED IRON-WORKING, HERDED CATTLE AND SHEEP AND GOATS, AND HUNTED. THE SIMILARITY IN NAME BETWEEN THAGICU AND GIKUYU WOULD SUGGEST THAT THEY WERE IN FACT THE KIKUYU'S EARLIEST KNOWN ANCESTORS, IF NOT THEIR PRIMARY LINEAGE. THEY MAY INDEED HAVE BEEN THE 'TENTH' OF THE 'FULLY NINE' CLANS, THOUGH ADMITTEDLY THAT THAT IS MERELY SPECULATION. SOURCES DIFFER ON THE ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE THAGICU – SOME SAY THEY WERE BANTU-SPEAKING, OTHERS THAT THEY CAME FROM CUSHITIC PEOPLES. AS THE LAND WAS FERTILE AND IDEALLY SUITED TO AGRICULTURE, THE POPULATION INCREASED RAPIDLY, CAUSING FURTHER WAVES OF MIGRATION WHICH LASTED UNTIL THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: WEST INTO THE ABERDARES (NYANDARUA MOUNTAINS), SOUTH TO THE SITE OF NAIROBI, AND NORTH TO THE NYERI PLAINS AND THE LAIKIPIA PLATEAU, WHERE THE KIKUYU CAME INTO CONTACT WITH THE CATTLE-HERDING MAASAI. UNUSUALLY IN CONTACTS WITH THE MAASAI, THE KIKUYU WERE NEITHER CONQUERED NOR ASSIMILATED BY THEM, BUT INSTEAD ENGAGED IN TRADE (AS WELL AS SPORADIC CATTLE RAIDING), WHICH LED TO A DEEP AND LONG-LASTING SOCIAL INTERACTION WHICH ESPECIALLY AFFECTED THE KIKUYU. DURING THE ACTUAL MAASAI

CIVIL WARS, HUNDREDS OF MAASAI REFUGEES WERE TAKEN IN AND ADOPTED BY THE KIKUYU, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN KIAMBU. IN CONSEQUENCE, NILOTIC SOCIAL TRAITS SUCH AS CIRCUMCISION, EXCISION AND THE AGE-SET SYSTEM, ARE BEING ADOPTED; THE TABOO AGAINST EATING FISH IS ALSO PROGRESSIVELY ACCEPTED; AND PEOPLE INTERMARRY, SO MUCH SO THAT MORE AND MORE OF THE KIKUYU OF SOME REGIONS HAVE NOW MAASAI BLOOD IN THEIR VEINS. FROM OTHER PEOPLES CAME LOANWORDS FOR CEREMONIAL DANCES, PLANTS AND ANIMALS, AND THE CONCEPT OF IRRIGATION AS AN AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUE.

ALTHOUGH THE KIKUYU WERE A FORMIDABLE FIGHTING FORCE, THE AGRICULTURAL NATURE OF THEIR LIVES MEANT THAT VIOLENCE IS GENERALLY ONLY USED FOR DEFENCE, FOR THEY LACK THE MOBILITY OF PASTORALISTS SUCH AS THE MAASAI AND SAMBURU, WHO LIVE TO THE NORTH AND WEST. GEOGRAPHICALLY, THE KIKUYU ARE RELATIVELY WELL PROTECTED, WITH THE NGONG HILLS TO THE SOUTH, THE NYANDARUA MOUNTAINS TO THE WEST, AND MOUNT KENYA TO THE NORTHEAST. TO THE EAST, ALSO, ARE THE RELATED MERU, EMBU AND KAMBA PEOPLE, WITH WHOM RELATIONS ARE GENERALLY FRIENDLY, REPLYING AS THEY DO ON THEIR TRADE WITH THE KIKUYU.

DEFENCE IS THUS A PRIMARY CONCERN ONLY IN THE WEST, WHERE THE KIKUYU ARE WARY OF SETTLING OR VENTURING OUT ONTO OPEN PLAINS FOR FEAR OF THE MAASAI, WHO ARE INTERESTED IN CONTROLLING THE WIDEST POSSIBLE AREAS FOR THEIR HERDS. GREATER DEFENCE IS NECESSARY ONLY CLOSE TO THE MAASAI BORDER, WITH THE RESULT THAT VILLAGES THERE ARE IN EFFECT FORTS AND ARE BUILT FOR MAXIMUM PROTECTION. GENERALLY, ONLY THOSE FAMILY GROUPS (MBARI) WITH MANY WARRIOR SONS OR WHICH HAVE ATTRACTED A CLIENTELE OF FIGHTING FOLLOWERS CAN MUSTER THE DEFENCE NECESSARY TO SETTLE THESE NEW AREAS. THESE VILLAGES ARE ALSO WELL CONCEALED: EUROPEANS FIND THEY CAN BE WALKING ONLY METRES FROM A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT KNOWING OF ITS EXISTENCE.

LANGUAGE

KIKUYU SPEAK KIKUYU, A BANTU LANGUAGE, AS THEIR NATIVE TONGUE. ADDITIONALLY, MANY SPEAK SWAHILI AND THE MOST CIVILISED, THOSE WHO LIVE NEAR MISSIONS, SPEAK ENGLISH AS WELL. THE KIKUYU ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE EMBU, MBEERE, KAMBA AND MERU PEOPLE WHO ALSO LIVE AROUND MT. KENYA. THE KIKUYU FROM THE GREATER KIAMBU ALSO REFERRED TO AS THE KABETE AND NYERI DISTRICTS ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE MAASAI DUE TO INTERMARRIAGE PRIOR TO COLONIZATION. THE KIKUYU BETWEEN THIKA AND MBEERE ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO KAMBA PEOPLE, WHO SPEAK A LANGUAGE ALMOST THE SAME AS KIKUYU, BEING GEOGRAPHICAL NEIGHBOURS. HENCE THE SUB-TRIBES THAT RETAIN MUCH OF THE ORIGINAL KIKUYU HERITAGE RESIDE AROUND KIRINYAGA AND MURANG'A REGIONS OF KENYA. THE KIKUYU FROM MURANG'A ARE CONSIDERED TO BE MORE PURE, BELIEVED TO BE THE CRADLE OF THE KIKUYU PEOPLE.

RELIGION

MOST KIKUYU ARE MOSTLY CHRISTIANS, BUT ANCIENT WAYS CAN STILL BE SEEN OUT OF THE CITIES. THERE ARE OTHER SIGNS, TOO, THAT THE OLD WAYS HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN. THE INSTITUTION OF ELDER HOOD MAY AT FIRST SIGHT APPEAR TO BE DEFUNCT, BUT HERE TOO, THE KIKUYU HAVE ADAPTED AND ADOPTED TO THE NEW WAYS RATHER THAN SIMPLY DISCARDING THE OLD.

NGAI-THE CREATOR

TRADITIONALLY, THE KIKUYU WERE MONOTHEISTS, BELIEVING IN A UNIQUE AND OMNIPOTENT GOD WHOM THEY CALLED NGAI (ALSO SPELLED MOGAI OR MUNGAI). THE WORD, IF NOT THE NOTION, CAME FROM THE MAASAI WORD ENKAI, AND WAS BORROWED BY BOTH THE KIKUYU AND KAMBA. GOD IS ALSO KNOWN AS MUNGU, MURUNGU, OR MULUNGU (A VARIANT OF A WORD MEANING GOD WHICH IS FOUND AS FAR SOUTH AS THE ZAMBEZI OF ZAMBIA), AND IS

SOMETIMES GIVEN THE TITLE MWATHANI OR MWATHI (THE GREATEST RULER), WHICH COMES FROM THE WORD GWATHA, MEANING TO RULE OR REIGN WITH AUTHORITY.

MOUNT KENYA AND RELIGION

NGAI IS THE CREATOR AND GIVER OF ALL THINGS, 'THE DIVIDER OF THE UNIVERSE AND LORD OF NATURE'. GOD CREATED THE HUMAN COMMUNITY, HE ALSO CREATED THE FIRST KIKUYU COMMUNITIES, AND PROVIDED THEM WITH ALL THE RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR LIFE: LAND, RAIN, PLANTS AND ANIMALS. HE – FOR NGAI IS MALE – CANNOT BE SEEN, BUT IS MANIFEST IN THE SUN, MOON, STARS, COMETS AND METEORS, THUNDER AND LIGHTING, RAIN, IN RAINBOWS AND IN THE GREAT FIG TREES (MUGUMO) THAT SERVED AS PLACES OF WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE, AND WHICH MARKED THE SPOT AT MUKURUE WA GATHANGA WHERE GIKUYU AND MUMBI – THE ANCESTORS OF THE KIKUYU IN THE ORAL LEGEND – FIRST SETTLED.

YET NGAI IS NOT A DISTANT GOD. HE HAS HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS, AND ALTHOUGH SOME SAY THAT HE LIVES IN THE SKY OR IN THE CLOUDS, KIKUYU ALSO SAID THAT HE COMES TO EARTH FROM TIME TO TIME TO INSPECT IT, BESTOWS BLESSINGS AND METES OUT PUNISHMENT (SIMILAR TO GOD'S VISIT OF ABRAHAM BEFORE DESTROYING SODOM). WHEN HE COMES, HE RESTS ON MOUNT KENYA AND FOUR OTHER SACRED MOUNTAINS. THUNDER IS INTERPRETED TO BE THE MOVEMENT OF GOD, AND LIGHTNING IS GOD'S WEAPON BY MEANS OF WHICH HE CLEARS THE WAY WHEN MOVING FROM ONE SACRED PLACE TO ANOTHER.

OTHER PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT NGAI'S ABODE IS ON MOUNT KENYA, OR ELSE BEYOND ITS PEAKS. NGAI, ONE LEGEND, MADE THE MOUNTAIN HIS RESTING PLACE WHILE ON AN INSPECTION TOUR OF EARTH. IN THE ACCOUNT GOD THEN TOOK THE FIRST MAN, GIKUYU, TO THE TOP TO POINT OUT THE BEAUTY OF THE LAND HE WAS GIVING HIM.

LEGENDS

A RELIGIOUS KIKUYU PROPHET CALLED CEGE WA KIBIRU OR MUGO WA KĪBIRŪ PROPHESED ABOUT THE COMING OF THE EUROPEANS LONG BEFORE THEY

ARRIVED AT THE COAST. IT WAS SAID THAT THERE WOULD COME PEOPLE FROM A DIFFERENT LAND, HAVING THE COLOUR OF KIÛÛRA KYA MARIGÛ-INI "FROG OF THE BANANA PLANTATION". THIS DEPICTS SOMETHING CLOSE TO THE NATIVE WHITE COLOUR. HE ALSO PREDICTED THE ARRIVAL OF AEROPLANES, "LIKE BUTTERFLIES IN THE SKY".

TWO OF THE OTHER MEMORABLE MEN IN THE KIKUYU HISTORY WERE WANG'OMBE WA IHÛÛRA AND WAMÛGUMO. WANG'OMBE WA IHÛÛRA KILLED A MAN-EATING LEOPARD WITH HIS BARE HANDS. WAMÛGUMO COULD SINK 3/4 OF A TRADITIONAL HUNTING SPEAR TO THE BARE EARTH. HE WAS A GIANT SIZED MAN WHOSE SIZE AND EATING HABITS WERE LEGENDARY. WAIYAKI WA HINGA WAS ANOTHER KIKUYU PARAMOUNT CHIEF, WHO WAS CREDITED AS AMONG THE FIRST TO RESIST THE ENTRENCHMENT OF THE WHITE SETTLERS IN THE KIKUYU LAND. WHEN CONFRONTING ONE WHITE SETTLER IN THE SETTLER'S TENT, WAIYAKI'S SWORD GOT CAUGHT IN THE TENT'S ROOF AS HE RAISED IT TO STRIKE. HE WAS QUICKLY OVERPOWERED, SEVERELY BEATEN, AND BURIED ALIVE IN KISMAYU.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

ACCORDING TO FOLKLORE, THE KIKUYU TRIBE WAS RULED BASED ON A MATRIARCHAL SYSTEM. DURING THE RULE OF WANGÛ WA MAKEERI, A LEADER WHO WAS SAID TO BE SO FIERCE SHE HELD MEETINGS SEATED ON THE BACKS OF MEN, THE MEN DECIDED TO REVOLT AND TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP. (ALTHOUGH MODERN KIKUYU OFTEN ASSUME THAT WANGU WAS A MYTHICAL CHARACTER, SHE WAS IN FACT ONE OF THE FIRST "CHIEFS" INSTALLED BY THE BRITISH AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY IN MURANG'A DISTRICT AS A RESULT OF HER LIAISON WITH A MORE WELL-KNOWN "CHIEF" KARURI WA GAKURE.) ONE VERSION OF THE STORY SAYS THAT THE REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE WHEN KIKUYU MEN ORGANIZED TO HAVE ALL THE WOMEN DANCE NAKED IN A KÎBAATA DANCE. THE WOMEN REFUSED AND THE KIKUYU MEN TOOK THE RULE TO THEMSELVES. IN ANOTHER VERSION, THE MEN CONSPIRED TO MAKE ALL THE WOMEN PREGNANT AT THE SAME TIME. THIS MADE THEM VULNERABLE AND UNABLE TO CARRY OUT LEADERSHIP DUTIES. THE MEN THEN TOOK OVER LEADERSHIP- AND NEVER LET GO.

TRADITIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE KIKUYU PEOPLE

THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF THE KIKUYU PEOPLE IS CLOSELY INTERWOVEN WITH THE FAMILY AND THE RIIKA. A YOUNG MAN AFTER INITIATION THROUGH CIRCUMCISION AUTOMATICALLY ENTERS INTO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUNIOR WARRIORS (NJAMA YA ANAKE A MUMO). AFTER 82 MOONS OR 12 RAIN SEASONS AFTER THE CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY THE JUNIOR WARRIOR IS PROMOTED TO THE COUNCIL OF SENIOR WARRIORS (NJAMA YA ITA). TOGETHER THIS TWO COUNCILS WOULD BE CALLED UPON TO PROTECT THE TRIBE IN CASE OF EXTERNAL AGGRESSION. THE COUNCIL OF SENIOR WARRIORS IS IN ADDITION AN IMPORTANT DECISION MAKING ORGAN. THE TWO COUNCILS IS SERVED BY MEN OF 20 TO 40 YEARS. UPON MARRIAGE A MAN IS INITIATED INTO A COUNCIL CALLED KIAMA KĪA KAMATIMO. THIS IS THE FIRST GRADE ELDERSHIP AND IT DENOTES ELDERS WHO ARE ALSO WARRIORS. AT THIS STAGE THE MAN PLAYS THE ROLE OF OBSERVERS OF SENIOR ELDERS. THEY ARE REQUIRED TO ASSIST IN PROCEEDINGS BY CARRYING OUT MENIAL TASKS LIKE SKINNING ANIMALS, BEING MESSENGERS, CARRYING CEREMONIAL ARTICLES OR LIGHT FIRES AMONG OTHER TASKS.

WHEN A MAN HAS A SON OR A DAUGHTER OLD ENOUGH TO BE CIRCUMCISED, HE IS ELEVATED INTO ANOTHER COUNCIL CALLED THE COUNCIL OF PEACE (KIAMA KĪA MATAATHI). ON ENTERING THIS COUNCIL THE MAN IS NOW A MAN OF PEACE AND NO LONGER OF THE WARRIOR CLASS. HE ASSUMES THE DUTY OF PEACE MAKER IN THE COMMUNITY. WHEN A MAN HAS HAD PRACTICALLY ALL HIS CHILDREN CIRCUMCISED, AND HIS WIFE (OR WIVES) PASSES CHILD-BEARING AGE HE REACHES THE LAST AND MOST HONOURED STATUS. A COUNCIL KNOWN AS KIAMA KĪA MATURANGURU (RELIGIOUS AND SACRIFICIAL COUNCIL). AFTER PAYING AN EWE WHICH IS SLAUGHTERED AND OFFERED IN SACRIFICE TO NGAİ THE MAN IS INVESTED WITH POWERS TO LEAD A SACRIFICIAL CEREMONY AT THE SACRED TREE (MũGUMũ mũtĩ wa IGONGONA). THE ELDERS OF THIS GRADE ASSUME THE ROLE OF 'HOLY MEN'. THEY ARE HIGH PRIESTS. ALL RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL CEREMONIES ARE IN THEIR HANDS. IN THE AGĪKŪYŪ SOCIETY THE RELIGIOUS, GOVERNANCE AND LAW FUNCTIONS ARE CLOSELY INTERTWINED. WITH VARIOUS COUNCILS BEING CALLED UPON TO PERFORM ONE OF THESE FUNCTIONS. IT IS NOT QUITE CLEAR WHETHER WOMEN ALSO HAVE COUNCILS AND

WHAT FUNCTIONS THESE COUNCILS SERVED. THE INITIATION CEREMONY SEEMS TO BE ORGANIZED BY A COUNCIL OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN.

PARALLEL TO THE SAID COUNCILS THE FAMILY UNIT FORMES A COUNCIL KNOWN AS NDUNDU YA MŪCIE OF WHICH THE FATHER IS THE HEAD. THE FATHER AS THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD THEN REPRESENTS THE FAMILY IN THE NEXT COUNCIL CALLED KIAMA KĪA ITORA (VILLAGE COUNCIL) COMPRISING OF ALL THE FAMILY HEADS IN THE VILLAGE. THIS IS HEADED BY THE SENIOR ELDER. A WIDER COUNCIL CALLED KIAMA KĪA RŪGONGO (DISTRICT COUNCIL) IS FORMED COMPRISING OF ALL THE ELDERS FROM THE DISTRICT. THIS IS PRESIDED OVER BY A COMMITTEE (KIAMA KĪA NDUNDU), COMPOSED OF ALL THE SENIOR ELDERS IN THE DISTRICT. AMONG THE SENIOR ELDERS, THE MOST ADVANCED IN AGE IS ELECTED AS THE HEAD AND JUDGE (MŪTHAMAKI OR MŪCIIRI) OF THE NDUNDU. THE DISTRICT COUNCILS THEN COME TOGETHER TO FORM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL. AMONG THE JUDGES, ONE IS ELECTED TO HEAD THE MEETINGS.

FAMILY LIFE

THE KIKUYU MAN IS REFERRED TO AS A MŪTHUURI (MEANING SOMEONE WHO CAN CHOOSE OR DISCERN EVIL FROM GOOD) AND THE KIKUYU WOMAN IS CALLED A MŪTUMIA (MEANING SOMEONE WHO RETAINS FAMILY SECRETS AND PRACTICES). KIKUYU SOCIETY IS POLYGAMOUS SO THAT MEANS ANY MAN COULD HAVE AS MANY WIVES AS HE COULD AFFORD.

THE FAMILY LIVES IN A HOMESTEAD WITH SEVERAL HUTS FOR DIFFERENT FAMILY MEMBERS. THESE HUTS ARE CONSTRUCTED SO THAT DURING THE COLD SEASON THE INTERIOR IS VERY WARM WHILE IN HOT SEASON THE HUT IS COOL. THE HUSBAND'S HUT IS CALLED 'THINGIRA', AND THAT IS WHERE THE HUSBAND WOULD CALL HIS CHILDREN IN FOR INSTRUCTION ON FAMILY NORMS AND TRADITIONS AND HE IS ALSO CALL HIS WIVES FOR SERIOUS FAMILY DISCUSSIONS. EACH WIFE HAS HER OWN HUT WHERE SHE AND HER CHILDREN SLEEP. AFTER BOYS ARE CIRCUMCISED (AT PUBERTY) THEY MOVE OUT OF THEIR MOTHER'S HUT INTO THE YOUNG MEN'S HUT.

THE HUSBAND INVITE HIS AGE-MATES OF HIS RIIKA (AGE GROUP) TO A HORN (RŪHĪA) OF TRADITIONAL BEER (NJOOHI) CALLED MŪRATINA; AN ALCOHOLIC DRINK MADE FROM SUGAR CANE AND THE MŪRATINA FRUIT.

THE KIKUYU HAVE A SYSTEMATIC METHOD OF FAMILY PLANNING. A FATHER WILL ONLY HAVE ANOTHER CHILD WITH HIS WIFE, AFTER HER YOUNGEST CHILD IS AT AN AGE WHERE THE MOTHER CAN SEND HIM TO LOOK AFTER THE FAMILY'S HERD OF GOATS, A PRACTICE CALLED (GŪTHIĨ RŪŪRU). RŪŪRU IS A COLLECTION OF GOATS AND SHEEP OR COMMONLY REFERRED AS HERDING. TRADITIONALLY THE FIRST BORN BOY IS NAMED AFTER HIS FATHER'S FATHER AND THE SECOND BOY, HIS MOTHER'S FATHER. THIS IS THE SAME WITH GIRLS; FIRST GIRL IS NAMED AFTER HER FATHER'S MOTHER AND THE SECOND GIRL, HER MOTHER'S MOTHER. THIS IS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THE SPIRIT OF THE DECEASED GRANDPARENT WILL CARRY ON TO THE CHILD.

CULTURE

CIVILIZATION ERODES MANY TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND VALUES, ALTHOUGH THE LANGUAGE SURVIVES. MANY KIKUYU MOVE FROM THEIR TRADITIONAL HOMELAND TO THE CITIES TO LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES. THEY MOVE ALSO TO OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY DUE TO INTERMARRIAGE AND GENERALLY SEEKING BETTER PROSPECTS IN LIFE. BUT MOST TEND TO CONTINUE TO PRACTICE FARMING.

IN THE KIKUYU LAND THERE IS A VERY DIVERSE HISTORY OF HOW PEOPLE LIVED. THE KIKUYU YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN TRAVEL TO ISOLATED AREAS, OUT OF VILLAGES, FOR DANCE AND FEASTING. DISCIPLINE HOWEVER IS OBSERVED AND NO MAN IS SUPPOSED TO TOUCH A LADY SEXUALLY. THE YOUNG MEN ONLY ENJOY THE DANCE AND THEY HAVE THE CHANCE TO MINGLE WITH THE BEAUTIFUL YOUNG LADIES WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME THEIR SUITORS. THE COMMON DANCES ARE NGUCHU, NDUUMO, MŪGOIYO, GĪCHUKIA AND NDACHI YA IRUA (CIRCUMCISIONAL DANCE). THE GRANDMOTHERS HAVE A CRITICAL ROLE OF CHECKING IF ANY MAN UNWOUND THE INNER GARMENT OF THE YOUNG LADIES. THIS GARMENT WAS CALLED MŪTHURU. THE GRANDMOTHERS (MACŪCŪ), TIE IT SAFELY TO PROTECT ANY PROMISCUITY IN YOUNG WOMEN. WOMEN WHO ENGAGED IN SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE, AFFAIRS, OR GOT PREGNANT CAN ONLY BE MARRIED AS A SECOND WIFE AND ARE COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS 'GĪCHOKIO'. THEREFORE THE KIKUYU CUSTOMS VALUE THE CHASTITY OF UNMARRIED WOMEN AND PROTECT YOUNG WOMEN AGAINST ABUSE. IT ALSO ENSURES SOME FORM OF

ENTERTAINMENT IS PREPARED AND YOUNG PEOPLE CARRY FORWARD THE
PRACTICES FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

Cults in Those Savage Lands

CETTE PARTIE DÉCRIT LA RELIGION DES KIKUYUS ET S'ATTARDE LONGUEMENT SUR LES RITES DE LEURS SORCIERS ET PRÊTRES PRATIQUÉS POUR LA TRIBU, AINSI QUE SUR LES NOMBREUSES SUPERSTITIONS ANCESTRALES EFFRAYANT CE PEUPLE ÉLOIGNÉ DE DIEU.

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THE KIKUYU TOLD ME A STRANGE TALE CONCERNING THE "MOUNTAIN OF THE BLACK WIND". THIS DESOLATE PEAK IS SUPPOSED TO BE INHABITED BY A "TERRIBLE GOD", WHO UNLEASHES A BLACK WIND WHICH BRINGS PESTILENCE, FAMINE, AND DEATH IN ITS WAKE. THE FACE OF THIS "GOD" IS SAID TO BE DEPICTED AS A GREAT BLOODY TONGUE.

THIS "GOD" IS SERVED BY A PRIESTHOOD KNOWN AS THE "SERVANTS OF THE BLOODY TONGUE". THEY PROPITIATE THEIR "GOD" THROUGH ABOMINABLE RITES, WHICH SUPPOSEDLY INCLUDE HUMAN SACRIFICE, THE VICTIMS HAVING BEEN ABDUCTED FROM SURROUNDING VILLAGES. THE LEADER OF THESE MISCREANTS IS SAID TO BE A WOMAN, CHOSEN AT BIRTH AND TUTORED IN THE PRACTICE OF FOUL ARTS AND MAGICKS BY THE "GOD".

THE KIKUYU WERE UNWILLING TO TAKE ME TO THE MOUNTAIN OF THE BLACK WIND, BUT THEY TOLD ME THAT IT LIES NORTH OF THE GREAT MOUNTAIN AND EAST OF A LARGE LAKE. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SOMEDAY A MISSIONARY FROM THE CHURCH WILL BRING ENLIGHTENMENT TO THAT TORMENTED LAND.

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Rites of the Magicians

CETTE PARTIE DÉCRIT LONGUEMENT, EN S'ATTARDANT SUR LES NOMBREUX DÉTAILS TECHNIQUES, LES RITES SOIT-DISANT MAGIQUES PRATIQUÉS PAR LES SORCIERS DES TRIBUS AVEC LESQUELLES L'AUTEUR EST ENTRÉ EN CONTACT.

ON Y TROUVE, ENTRE AUTRES,

LA DESCRIPTION D'UN RITUEL PRATIQUÉ PAR UN SORCIER NANDI PERMETTANT DE RELEVER LES MORTS.

LA DESCRIPTION D'UN SORT LANCÉ PAR UN MAGICIEN KIKUYU POUR COMMANDER À UN LION DE LAISSER SON VILLAGE EN PAIX.

LA DESCRIPTION D'UN RITE D'UN PRÊTRE KIKUYU PERMETTANT DE REPOUSSER LES ESPRITS MALINS.

LA DESCRIPTION D'UN RITUEL D'UN SORCIER NANDI DU NOM DE COLUBRA LUI PERMETTANT DE TRANSFORMER SES BRAS EN SERPENTS VENIMEUX.