

## **THE ABATERE CLAN**

### **Migratory movements:**

The ancestors of the Abatere formerly lived in Tiriki. They migrated from there and passed through Khwisero and Mwirange in Kisa before finally going to Marama at a place called Khwibitiro. Then again they moved on to Khushiachi, Inombera, and Butere in Marama where they settled and gradually dispersed. They had a clash with the Abakhuli, Abashiambiri, and the Abalongo of Emasaba when they came to Butere. However, they did not have any disagreement with the Abaseta.

### **Genealogies**

Khabiakala was their ancestor who remained in Tiriki when his son Angulu migrated and came here. The following are some of the lineages of the Abatere which were founded by Angulu: Naman was the son of Shisimba Shiniali; son of Namuloma; son of Olukoba; son of Weterere; son of Angulu; son of Khabiakala who died in Tiriki. Obuchafu is the son of Chitui; son of Shibia; son of Washibutso; son of Nang'ombe; son of Olukoba; son of Weterere; son of Angulu; son of Khabiakala.

Of these Khabiakala died in Tiriki; Angulu died at Musukura in Idakho; Weterere died at Ebuchero and the other five died at Butere. Wamoyi was the ancestor of the Abashitsetse and Abatere. Before they emigrated, the Abatere and the Abashitsetse were members of the Abatirichi clan. The migration of the Abatere from Tiriki was led by Angulu after they had had a family quarrel.

### **The reason for migrating**

Both Wanga and Khabiakala were Wamoyi's sons. Wamoyi's third son was called Eshifumbi. Wanga was the eldest son; he quarrelled with his brothers over the succession and therefore migrated. He went to Imanga where he was found by his brothers. His brother Eshifumbi went to Emahondo where he became the ancestor of the Abamuhira and the Abamakoya. Angulu, Wanga's nephew, emigrated to Butere. Angulu found the Abakhuli, Abashiambiri, Abakhongo (across the Ebiratsi river at Emasaba), and the Abaseta. All these people spoke Oluluyia they gradually dwindled and some of them died out. Weterere's son called Olukoba had a number of sons later some of whom he sent out to Emasaba across the Ebiratsi river to settle there.

### **Government System**

Each clan had its own independent ruler and war leader. However, there was an "omwami" who was generally responsible for all the clans. The Omwami had his elders who assisted him in judging cases. However, he was not a war leader as there was a special person who led the warriors. Only the more serious cases were judged by the Omwami, the minor ones being settled by the elders. The Omwami was neither a medicineman nor a rainmaker nor a sacrificial priest. He was not a diviner. He had his elders who discharged these functions.

The Omwami wore the following a skin cloak ("ikutusi") a copper bracelet on the wrist and a cowry-shell head-dress with a whydah bird's feathers on it. These insignia were heritable. The Omwami was buried in a sitting position with a drinking tube in his mouth.

The head was covered with a pot into which two holes had been bored to coincide with the position of the eyes. Then when the corpse began to decompose, a goat was slaughtered and the head - which had not been covered with soil at the time of the burial - was pressed into the ground. The corpse was always buried, wrapped in a skin, in the court-yard; it was not exhumed later.

Source: Gideon Were: Western Kenya Historical Texts, EALB, 1967