

## **BATSOTSO**

### **CLANS OF THE ABATSOTSO**

The Abakobero, founded by Omukobero son of Mutsotso.

The Abang'onya, founded by Omung'onya whose father is not known.

The Abamweche, founded by Mung'oni, great grand-son of Mutsotso.

The Abamwende, founded by Mumwende son of Mutsotso.

The Abashisiru, founded by Ashisinde son of Mutsotso.

The Abashiibo, founded by Mushiibo son of Mutsotso.

The Abamatioli whose founder is unknown.

The Abamamu, founded by Mumamu grand-son of Mutsotso.

The Abatamanyini, founded by Wesamba grand-son of Mutsotso and father of Mutamanyini.

The Abashibuli, founded by Mushibuli son of Mutsotso.

The Abangusi whose founder is not known.

The Abashibimbi, founded by Mushibimbi son of Mutsotso.

The Abashialo, founded by Mushiolo son of Mutsotso.

The Abamucherera, founded by Mucherera son of Mutsotso.

The Abasinda, founded by Atira son of Mutsotso and father of Musinda.

The Abashimukoko, founded by Shimukoko son of Mutsotso.

The Abakhobole, founded by Mukhobole son of Mutsotso.

The Abamani, founded by Mumani son of Mutsotso.

The Abamanyulia, founded by Munyulia. son of Mutsotso.

The Abashiririma, founded by Ashirima son of Mutsotso.

### **Genealogies**

Mutsotso and his descendants were the forbears of the Abatsotso and all the clans of the Abatsotso were founded by the sons and grandsons of Mutsotso. Omwerema Yeswa of the Abang'onya clan is the son of Yeswa; son of Omwerema. Both of them died here in Butso. Omwerema was the son of Ambululi who died at Inaya in Marama; son of Mukungü who died at Imanga in Wanga; son of Namakhabwa who died at Eshitindi; son of Nangabo who died at Ematungu; son of Chisumi who died at Etola (Tororo); son of Webale who died at Mukomba near Mukono railway station in Uganda; son of Shikakalira who died at Malaha (Bondo in Sakwa); son of Bukwe who died at Mwibale near Sang'alo; son of Mutabiro; son of Nyanza who died at Mbulanti in Uganda; son of Mutsotso who died in Egypt. Nyanza was the one who led the emigration from Egypt. Makambo Namakhabwa of the Abamamu clan is the son of Namakhabwa; son of Anjiri; son of Andika; son of Ashiuma; son of Chikhumbali.

### **Their migratory movements**

It is not known who Mutsotso's father was but he was an African and he spoke Olutso (the Oluluyia dialect of Butso). Nyanza was the one who led the emigration from Egypt. Hamisi Nonda says that when Nyanza left Egypt (Cairo) he travelled and reached Lubiri in Uganda. From there he went to Marachi and thence to Elgon. He continued travelling until he reached Ebumakoa near Imanga. It was from this place that he emigrated and went to Lumbwa; after leaving Lumbwa he went to Malaha (Bondo in Sakwa). He continued travelling and reached Inaya, Emutondo, Eshimukoko, Ituti, (near Elukokho in Marama), Emayundo, and Eshihaka, all of

which are in Marama Location. They carried on walking and reached Asokone in Butso; once here, they began to spread out all over Butso.

On the other hand, Omwerema Yeswa says that the journey from Egypt was as follows: After leaving Egypt, they travelled and reached Elubiri (Mukono in Uganda). They found the Abanyoro here. From Elubiri they went to Etolo (Tororo) where they found the Abatama (Badama); from Etolo they went to Ematungu in Wanga where they found the Abang'oma. The Abawanga had not yet settled there. They carried on walking and reached Sang'alo where they found the Ababukusu, Shitindi, and Malaha (Bondo).

Then they went to Ebushirutidu where they found the Abamukoa who were Abaluyia. From here they went to Imanga; after Imanga they went to Ituti near Elukokho in Marama. Then they went farther and reached Munuku, Shimukoko, Mutondo, Mwirunya, and Ebusashi, which are all in Marama, and found them uninhabited. Then they moved farther and reached Isokone in Butso and found it also uninhabited.

They then began to disperse and spread out. They found in Butso the Abakhusia clan of the Abakabasi but they settled peacefully and began to intermarry with them. Later, the Abakabasi emigrated and left ruins behind. They left Butso in this manner: "As they progressively found suitable land ahead, they occupied it and we in turn moved into their former homes and ruins." Ever since they came here they had enmity and fighting with the Abetakho, the Abesukha, the Abamarama, the Abawanga, and the Nandi. The Nandi used to raid their cattle, but the rest fought with them because of land disputes.

### **Governmental System**

From the earliest time the Abatsoto always governed themselves. Their ruler was called the "owmami womukasa", i.e. the ruler with the copper bracelet. He ruled over all the Abatsoto but each clan was directly ruled by an elder called the "omukhulundu wolwashi", in other words, the clan head or elder. The functions of the "owmami womukasa" were to protect his people and to maintain peace in the country.

He presided over cases with the assistance of his 'abakhulundu bolwashi', i.e. clan heads. Again it was he who had the power over military matters such as the declaration or cessation of war although he himself never actually went to war. He was neither a rain-maker nor a magician nor a medicine man; he was, again, not a sacrificial priest. He was given meat, beer, and also foodstuffs after the harvest. For presiding over cases he was given cattle, chickens, and other types of gifts. He also got hoes, wire, coils, spears, and some sheep.

The "owmami womukasa" wore an "injirisi" cloak, i.e. a cloak of the skins of different animals such as monkeys, an "indibisi" animal, and a leopard. He also wore a "tsisimbi" cap, cow hide shoes, and a bracelet. In addition, the "owmami" had an "omwirima" shrub-staff, a fly-whisk, and the traditional stool. These things were heritable from father to son.

The "owmami" was usually installed at dawn. He usually sat on a fresh cow hide. He was installed by an elder and then his wife or sister-in-law of good repute acclaimed

the investiture with the “olwami”, i.e. ululation. The successor was usually the nominee of the “omwami” and any of his children with good character could be nominated by him. However, should the “omwami” die before naming his successor, the elders of the entire sub-tribe chose one. Once installed, the “omwami” could not be deposed.

The Abatsotso had their own royal cemetery. There are more than eight such burial places. The “omwami” was buried in a sitting position on a fresh cow hide. His head was covered with a pot and it protruded above the grave. Then, after seven days, when the head began to decompose, it was pressed into the grave. He was buried by his grandsons. He was actually buried with a small pot of beer and a drinking tube in his mouth. The tube was removed on the seventh day when the head was also pressed into the grave. The cow whose hide was used for the burial was simply slaughtered and not speared.

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