

IDAKHO

Genealogies

Mwitakho was the ancestor of the Abetakho. He had six sons Musali, Kasam, Shikulu, Ngolori, Shiangala, and Masaba. These six were the direct founders of the six major clans of the Abetakho. Omukoto Shiamwama of the Abamasaba clan which was founded by Masaba is the son of Shiamwama; son of Mihanda; son of Alukaya; son of Nabuhe; son of Shihira; son of Chimahatse; son Washibambo; son of Mwitakho; son of Ashisira. They all died here in Idakho. Musa Jame of the Abashikulu clan is the son of Shiaduma; son of Agani; son of Musalani; son of Shianda; son of Amonizwa; son of Shianda. They all died in Idakho.

Shianda and Sobobi were Matsanza's Sons; he died in Idakho. Matsanza was the son of Afuya who also died in Idakho; son of Shikulu who died in Kisa; son of Mwitakho, who died on the boundary between Idakho and Kisa. The Abashikulu clan was founded by Shikulu. Ngulio, the brother of ex-chief William Shivachi is the son of Shivachi; son of Khaweri; son of Shikomolo; son of Butukhu; son of Amulongo; son of Ongayi; son of Mbukuli, all of whom died here in Idakho; son of Kasam; whose mother was Shimuli. He died on the Shiakule hill on the boundary between Idakho and Kisa. Kasam was Naluse's son (Kasam was a Masai. His descendants later founded a number of sub-tribes and clans in Idakho, Kisa, and Gem Locations. Significant among these are the Abashimuli clan of the Abetakho, the Abashisa and the Abakhobole sub-tribes of Kisa Location; and the Abamani sub-tribe of Gem Location).

THE ABAMASABA CLAN

The ancestor of the Abetakho was Ashisira; he was born at Shiakule, on the boundary between Kisa and Idakho. We (Abamasaba) do not know to which tribe he belonged, but he spoke Lwitakho (the Oluluyia dialect of Idakho). Eventually, people began to disperse. The Abashisa too separated from the Abetakho; they were led by Bwololo son of Naluse. We do not know of any other tribe or clan who formerly lived here, or in the neighbourhood. Also, we have never lived anywhere else for this was our home of origin. We do not have another place of origin.

Warfare

The War with the Abalogoli was fought over the salt lick (isukura) on the Lukose (Yala River) where the Isukha used to take cattle for watering. The Abetakho used to stop the Abalogoli from using it. Eventually, the Abalogoli were defeated and the Abetakho remained in control of the "isukura". The Abatirichi also fought with the Abetakho over the use of the "isukura" at Mbuli's on the Lukose. They too were eventually defeated.

The Abesukha were driven from their lands by the Nandi and so they in turn moved into the lands of the Abetakho. In the event, there was a fight and the Abesukha were defeated. The Abatsotso were pushed out of their country by the Abamarama and, consequently, they moved into the lands of the Abetakho. In the end, they were defeated by the Abetakho.

The Abamarama. After they had defeated the Abatsotso, the Abamarama moved to Bukura. They then decided upon driving out the Abetakho as they had driven out the

Abatsotso. Then the Abetakho defeated them. The Nandi for their part simply made frequent cattle raids by night.

Governmental System

Every clan had an elder whom it obeyed. He stopped fighting and settled quarrels. He was also the one who authorised his people to go to war or to cease hostilities and to raid cattle. He could also lead his troops in his capacity as the “omusesia” (war leader). He was called “omukhongo omukali”, i.e. the big boss. Inter-clan disputes were settled by the “abakhoflgo abakali” (the big bosses) of the clans concerned. Each big boss was also responsible for all matters in his clan. All the six clans of the Abetakho had mutual understanding and friendship. Cases were judged by the “omukali’s” elders (abakhulundu bomukali). The “omukali” was neither a rain-maker nor a magician.

THE ABASHIKULU CLAN

The ruler had a staff and wore a cloak made from the skins of various animals especially cattle and monkeys. He also wore a shoe on his left foot made from the skin of a buffalo; from his left shoulder hung an elephant’s tail fly-whisk. In addition, one of his bodyguards always carried a special cage-like pot for the purposes of settling disputes - if the ruler came across any disputants, the pot was filled with water and, after some ritualistic processes, the dispute was settled. The pot acted as an ordeal (omuma).

THE ABASHIMULI CLAN

They are descended from the family of Kasam son of Naluse. Both of them were Masai. Kasam was the one who emigrated here and who was received by Ashisira, the “omwami” of the Abetakho. Ashisira was an Omuluyia; he spoke Lwitakho and lived here in the forest. Eventually, Kasam and his people abandoned the Masai language and adopted Lwitakho.

Kasam had a group of fourteen people; they came from the direction of Soyi. They were terrified by wild animals; as a result, Kasam came here alone while the rest of his group dispersed in various directions. Later, the Abetakho of the Abashimuli clan were born here.

The sons of Kasam who were born here were six. Of these Mbukuli, Khanga, and Mahube became the founders of the Abashimuli clan of the Abetakho; Mariaba went to Bunyore where he founded the Abamuli clan of the Abanyole; and Bwololo and Nasaye went to Kisa where they founded the Abashisa sub-tribe. When Kasam came here, he was an “omwami”. He concealed the bracelet on his hand under his cloak so that he might be received as an ordinary man. However, Ashisira’s children happened to see his copper bracelet and so they told their father. Then it became known that Kasani was an “omwami.

Shortly afterwards, Kasam returned to the Masai country and came back with his family, cattle, and some *ebikhutu* (a special kind of bell usually tied on a string round the neck of a cow or goat). And so Ashisira allocated him a place where to build his village. His descendants are still in occupation of that land.

From then on, the Abashimuli and the Abetakho lived amicably. However, owing to the fact that Kasam was wealthy, he was later made the ruler. He became the “omwami” because he used to welcome people and to give them food; he gave them beer and slaughtered cattle for them. When, therefore, Ashisira died, he left him in power over both the Abetakho and the Abashimuli.

All the clans of the Abetakho were always united in all their wars with their enemies. Every clan of the Abetakho had its elder but all the clans of the Abetakho had an elder or ruler who was above all the elders or rulers of the various clans in all matters relating to war and government. Even all matters relating to warfare, government and the like were the same among all the Abetakho people.

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