

## **ISUKHA**

Mumwamu was the ancestor of the Abesukha. Other views are that the name of the ancestor was Mundu or Muluyia. He died by the Isiukhu river on the road to Kakamega. He spoke Olwisukha (the Oluluyia dialect of Isukha). He was Adam's son, but it is not known from where he emigrated to Isukha. Mwisukha, the son of Mumwamu, had nineteen Sons: Amakhaya, Khitsende, Mwironje, Muyokho, Mushiyukha, Mwichina, Mukusi, Khamakhaiia, Mukhulunya, Mushitakha, Muteheri, Mutsumba, Mukhaywa, Mukhumbwa, Muruli, Mumalia, Musakala, Mushimutu, and Adimbuli.

These sons founded the following clans of the Abesukha: Abarimbuli, Abasaka-ia, Abamakhaya, Abitsende, Abamironje, Abayokho, Abakusi, Abamahalia, Abimalia, Abasuiwa, Abatsunga, Abichina, Abashilukha, Bakhumbwa, Baruli, Abatura, Abashimutu, Abashitaho, Abakhulunya, Abasiritsa, Abakhaywa, Abasaiwa, Abakhonyi, Abatecheri, Abayonga, Abakondi, Abaterema, and Abasikhobu.

The Abesukha did not find any people living here. Other people who now live here are the Abalogoli, the Abatirichi, and the Abanyala. However, all these are recent immigrants. All the clans of the Abesukha originated here and, also, Mwisukha and Mwitakho (the ancestor of the Abetakho) were brothers, and sons of Mumwamu or Muluyia. Mwisukha was the elder and Mwitakho the younger one.

But the reason for the separation of the Abesukha and the Abetakho was the fact that they had increased in population. The Abesukha have always lived here.

### **Genealogies**

Sebedayo Bunuli is the son of Ngosia; son of Shiswa; son of Muhaka; son of Mukangiri; son of Shirakabo; son of Khasayi; son of Mosi; son of Shibanga; son of Kironya; son of Nandika; son of Andimbuli; son of Mwisukha. Apart from Bunuli who is still alive, the rest died in Isukha.

### **Their Enemies**

The Nandi used to raid them and to take their cattle. The Masai also used to come at night from Wang'a to raid their cattle. The Abawanga used to accompany the Masai.

### **Governmental System**

Every sub-clan or clan of the Abesukha had its own ruler known as the "omukali" (the leader or great one). But the entire sub-tribe of the Abesukha was ruled by the "omusalisi" (another name for "omwami"). It was the "omusalisi" who kindled the "obuhali" lire when the rains failed, so that crops might grow and be ready for harvesting. Also, by means of the "obuhali" ritual, he blessed his troops and prayed

for their success. He was neither a rain-maker nor a magician nor the sacrificial priest of his people. His subjects gave him tribute in the form of foodstuffs, quails, honey and beer.

Cases were usually judged by the “abakali” (plural of “omukali”) of the various clans. The inter-clan disputes were usually settled by the “abakali” of the clans concerned. There was also a war leader who was known as the “omusesia”. The “omusalisi” usually wore the “ingubo yobuyayi”, i.e. a long, soft cow-hide cloak. He also wore a copper bracelet (“omukasa”) and a special cap (made from the skin of an animal called *indubirisi*. An *olusimbi* (feather) of the *isimbishira* (type of bird) was put on it as a symbol of authority and greatness). The ruler was given these insignia by hunters and they were inherited by his son, or, if he did not have one, by his brother.

The “omusalisi” was appointed on the principle of heredity. The dying ruler usually named one of his Sons to succeed him. However, should he die without having done so, then the elders of the sub-tribe would appoint one. The “omusalisi” was usually installed by the elders but he could not be dismissed. When he died, he was buried in the court-yard in a lying position.

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