

KISA

Genealogies

Kasam (Kasiamani) was the ancestor of the Abashisa. He was the father of Kitui; he died at Eshikumi across the Lukose (Yala) river in Idakho Location. Kitui was the father of Aboololo; he died at Ekangu in Idakho Location. Aboololo was the father of Nasaye and Mbandu; he died at Mukhunzuli near Maliera Gem. Of his two sons Nasaye was the father of Khabeko and Amwiru. Khabeko was the father of Saya; father of Okunyanyi; father of Eshipiri father of the Reverend Musa Eshipiri.

His other son, Mbandu, was the father of Akhonya; both of them died at Mukhunzuli near Maliera Gem. Akhonya was the father of Amurono who died at Mushibinga near Khwisero; father of Amwiru who also died there; father of Amwiru and Omunyole. Of these two Amwiru was the father of Alekana; father of Eshiwani; father of Atsole; father of Atito. Omunyole was the father of Nabusiru; father of Omusali; father of Namukunda; they all died at Mukhunzuli; father of Shikunyi; father of ex-Chief Gerishom Khatete.

Their migratory movements

Kassam was a Masai and he spoke the Masai language. He came from a place called Ebuchimi in the Masai country in search of more extensive grazing land. He came along with his brother-in-law called Ebaba to whose sister, Amwiru, he was married. It was this Ebaba who became the ancestor of the Abashirotsa (Kokwany).

When the migrants left the Masai country they passed through Kapsabet and Tiriki. Then they moved on to Ebushimuli in Idakho. It was here that the above-named sons of Kasam were born. Some of his descendants separated and came, this way but others remained there. Kasam and his people who remained in Idakho soon adopted Olwitakho whereas the people who came this way adopted Olushisa.

People they came in contact with

Ebuchumi: Their fellow Masai.

Kapsabet: The Nandi; they did not get on well with them.

Tiriki: He (Kasam) found the Abatirichi there. He then migrated because they stole his cattle.

Ebushimuli: It was uninhabited. Kasam had two sons here, Sirniuli and Aboololo. Shimuli became the ancestor of the Abashimuli clan of Idakho whereas Aboololo who immigrated here founded the Abashisa clan.

Mwiserro (near Khwisero): He (Aboololo) found the Abashisira clan of the Abetakho there.

Emunyale: After leaving Mwiserro he travelled down the Lukose river and arrived at Emunyale about ten miles from Khwisero in Kisa. He found there the Abamuhatsi and Abayangu clans of the Abanyole.

Mukhunzuli: After leaving Emunyale he went to Mukhunzuli.

Then his people gradually dispersed some going to Ebulumbi and Yala while others remained at Mukhunzuli. At that time the Abakami (Gem Luo) had not yet come in; they were still at Ndere Gem.

Warfare

The war with the Abakami (Gem Luo): The Abakami had entered into an agreement (of friendship) with the Abashisa. However, because the Abakami were constantly at war with the Abamarama, the Abashisa became angry with them on the ground that they (Abakami) were at war with their fellow Abaluyia. Accordingly, they declared war on the Abakami. Thereupon the Luo of Alego, Gem and Kathomo united against the Abashisa. Consequently, the Abashisa migrated from there and came this way.

The war with the Abetakho: As the Abashisa moved this way they in turn began to drive out the Abetakho from their land so that they might settle there. Accordingly, the Abetakho emigrated from the territories now occupied by the Abashisa Mundaha, Eshiasuli, Emulunya, Elwangale, Ekonjero, Mwikalikha, Mwisero, Mwiberenya, Mukamehero, and Nguli hill.

The war with the Abanyole: Land was the reason for fighting. When the Abashisa were driven from their land by the Joluo they in turn pressed against the Abanyole with a view to occupying their lands. As a result the Abanyole were defeated; they lost Eshibinga, Munjiti, Katsombero and Enanga to the Abashisa.

The war with the Abatsotso: Again they fought over land. As a result, the Abatsotso were driven from Eluhambi, Mulububi, Eshisango, Mungabira, Mulufu and Khwisero.

Governmental System

They had their own “aberwatsi” (adjudicators) who judged cases. They were independent. The “omwirwatsi” also protected the country and kept the peace. He was given a cow, chickens, beer, and meat for judging cases. All Abashisa people were under one “omwirwatsi” He had power over war and peace and he was also the war leader of his people. The “omwirwatsi” had special elders who assisted him in judging cases; this was usually done before the elders of the clan.

The “omwirwatsi” wore a calf-skin cloak (ingubo yobuyayi) adorned with small bells. A leather belt with a cowry shell on it was slung from his neck and shoulder. He also wore a cowry shell head dress, with the feathers of a whydah bird on it, and a brass bracelet and a copper bracelet on his wrist. In addition he had a spear. The “omwirwatsi” was appointed by the elders of the clan who had also the power to dismiss him for misconduct. He was neither a rain-maker nor a diviner nor a medicine-man. He officiated at the sacrifices of the sub-tribe.

When the “omwami” died his insignia were inherited by his successor who was usually his son. He was buried in a sitting position with a drinking tube in his mouth and a pot on his head. The Abashisa did not strangle their omwami when he was about to die. The people who buried the “omwami” were also responsible for slaughtering the bull for the funeral feast.

Land dispute with the Abakami (Gem Luo)

Abashisa wished to return to their former lands. Accordingly, they repeatedly desought Omumia to allow them to do so. However, the ruler of Mulambo called Gor Ogalo went to Mumia and told him that since they too (the Luo of Mulambo) were his subjects he should allow them to retain the lands from which they had driven the

Abashisa. Accordingly, the Abashisa were prevented from recovering their lands. Shortly afterwards the Europeans began to govern and the matter ended there.

During the early years of British administration all the Abaluyia and the Joluo became Mumia's subjects. It was also Mumia who appointed Odera Kang'o chief over the Teso. The Khwisero part of Kisa and Marama Location were placed under Mulama and the other part of Kisa known as Kisa Location proper was placed under an Omushisa headman called Musango in Central Nyanza

THE ABASAMIA

Genealogies

Their ancestor, Muchitsa, had five sons: Achero, Andayi, Aswani, Shabushi, and Andakayi. Achero became the ancestor of the Abachero clan; Andayi founded the Abatayi clan; Aswani founded the Abayonga clan; Shabushi became the ancestor of the Abakambuli; and Andakayi founded the Abalakayi clan.

Achero, was the father of Luyo; father of Mwamba; father of Miya; father of Luyo; father of Mukuba; father of Liboyi. Shabushi was the father of Mutsinzibu; father of Amakobe; father of Esiundu; father of Ambundo; father of Likoye. Festo Muleko is the son of Oluchina; son of Achero; son of Muniiri; son of Eshitera; they all died here at Ebukambuli. Eshitera was the son of Achero; son of Amakobe; son of Mutsinzibu; son of Shabushi; they all died at Emalingana near Anyiko School in Gem. Shabushi was the son of Muchitsa who died at Mundeku here in Kisa.

Migratory Movements

Muchitsa was an Omusamia. He came from the Samia village of Mupongo near Lake Owanga in Uganda. At first he came alone from Mupongo but later went back to fetch his wives, cattle, and children. When he left Mupongo he went straight to Wabuti's whom he had in mind. Muchitsa and Wabuti were old friends and already, Muchitsa knew that Wabuti had come this way. Muchitsa and Wabuti called each other "my brother", i.e. they were cousins. And so Muchitsa came to the Irecheya hill and found Wabuti there. He did not establish his own home but simply stayed with Wabuti.

While he was staying with Wabuti he moved about extensively surveying the country. On one occasion he went as far as the Lukose (Yala) river and on another occasion he went farther and arrived at Khusurusi where Omurumba now lives. He found Webiru the founder of the Ababiru clan already settled there. He too had originally migrated in from Samia. Then Muchitsa went back to Wabuti's. He found Wabuti, Musa, and Webando of the Abamarama sub-tribe participating in a funeral ritual.

The deceased was a member of the Abamarama sub-tribe. When Muchitsa also joined in the ritual, the Abamarama were extremely offended and said that a mere stranger such as Muchitsa had no right to take part in the ritual of their dead. And so they attempted to spear him. However, Muchitsa suddenly spat and his opponents panicked to such an extent that three of them got speared to death by the spears which were standing close by and which they had been using in the ritual.

As a result of all this, Muchitsa thought it best to emigrate. But Wabuti tried to persuade him to stay; this he rejected on the grounds that he might be killed as he had caused the deaths of others. And so Muchitsa became cunning and concealed four eggs in the cock which Wabuti slaughtered for him to eat and pointed out this to him saying that as a cock had been found with some eggs this clearly indicated that he ought not to stay there. In other words, he was looking for an excuse to migrate.

And so Muchitsa migrated and went to Khusurusi at Webiru's and built some huts there and then went back to Samia to fetch his people. Before he left, he told Webiru that if he should ever hear the beating of a drum at Wabuti's he should know that he had arrived back from Samia (the possession of a drum of a certain kind was symbolic of royalty. But by far the most widespread symbols of royalty in Buluyia were copper and brass bracelets, cowry-shell head dresses, various types of skin cloaks, spears, and stools). Thereupon Webiru knew that Muchitsa was an "omwami".

Then Muchitsa came back from Samia with his people and one bull and went to Wabuti's, on the hill, to rest there. The following day he went to his home at Khusurusi. On his arrival, Webiru's bull fought with his and, in the event, the former was killed. Then Muchitsa offered to compensate his host for his loss. He also gave him the hind quarter of the dead bull as Webiru had wished.

However, Muchitsa felt that as his bull had killed the other, it would be wise for him to emigrate. Accordingly, he migrated to Mundeku with his eldest son called Achero and left his other sons, wandayi and Aswani, at Khusurusi. He died there. The Abachero then lived there and gradually spread out. The Abashisa settled in the upper part of Kisa earlier than the Abasamia.

People they came in contact with

Khusurusi: The Abarebo, Abakalama, Abamulaku, Abakhubi, and the Ababiru of Webiru. Most of the members of the first four are now extinct. They all spoke Oluluyia.

Mundeku: The same as the foregoing.

Khwisero: The Abatsotso.

Reasons for migrating from Samia

Muchitsa's daughter accidentally swallowed the "inyuma" belonging to Omumani, Muchitsa's half-brother. Thereupon Omumani demanded the return of his bead. But Muchitsa told him that as the child had swallowed the bead by accident, he ought to forgive her or accept some compensation. Omumani, however, still insisted on the return of his actual bead. Muchitsa then suggested that in that case they should wait for a suitable moment when they would make a search in the child's excreta, but Omumani rejected this too. Then Muchitsa offered him the child but this too was rejected.

And so Muchitsa became disgusted and told him to kill the child and recover his bead. Then Omumani did so and recovered his "inyuma". Thereupon Muchitsa decided to part with his half-brother. At that time the Gem Luo were still down in Alego. Then when they were defeated by the Alego people they migrated and came this way where the Abashisa were living. Apart from Khwisero where the Abasamia fought with the Abatsotso, they occupied all their land peacefully.

Governmental System

Their system of government was similar to that of the Abashisa and their ruler was also called Omwami. The Abashisa and the Abasamia also fought side by side in all their major wars.

THE ABAKHOBOLÉ AND THE ABAMANI

Genealogies

Their earliest ancestor was Arap Re (these clans are related to Abashisa and Abashimuli of Idakho. Their ancestor who was either a Masai or Nandi was variously called Kasim, Kasiamani and Arab - read Arap - Re). He was the father of Arap Kute, the father of Kitui who founded the sub-tribe of the Abashisa. Arap Kitui had two sons, Nderema and Matuli. Of these two Nderema became the ancestor of the Abamani and Matuli's four sons founded the Abashimuli clan of the Abetakho (founded by Shimuli), the Abashisa (founded by Omushisa), and the Abakhobole (founded by Bubu and Nyulia). Mwanza of the Abakhobole clan is the son of Saulo Ambasu, son of Okinda, son of Ambasu, son of Luchera, son of Shinyonga, son of Kata, son of Musa, son of Bubu, son of Matuli. Bubu's other children were killed by the Masai.

Migratory Movements

Arap Re originally came from the Nandi Hills near Kajulu where the Nandi lived²⁷. From there he went to Tiriki where he found the Abatirichi and the Abamayi. Then he moved on to Ebushimuli in Idakho where he built a home. The Abakhobole and the Abamani were together on the journey though they built separate homes. One day a woman belonging to the Abakhobole clan scalded the dog of an Omushimuli clansman of the Abetakho with hot water. As a result of this the Abetakho threatened to kill Bubu and his people. Accordingly, Bubu informed the Abashisa, Nyulia and the rest that he was migrating with his people. And so Bubu, Nderema, and Nyulia emigrated and left Omushisa and Shimuli in Idakho.

When Bubu and his party left Idakho they went to Eshibinga where they found the Ababwara. From there they went to Ebulumbi and found the Abakhoba there; they lived there for a short time. When they saw that they were becoming crowded, they crossed the Olukose (Yala) river and went to Mukhokho (Nyamninia) where they found the Abarabulu subgroup of the Abaluyia. Then they dispersed here: Nderema and his party (the future Abamani) went farther down to Emurumba where they found the Abashitindi, Abamuswa, and the Abalukhobe.

All these people were Abaluyia. Bubu and Nyulia remained at Nyamninia. Later, however, Bubu moved a bit farther to Ebunyala (in Ebukhobole) whereas Nyulia went to Eshirembe. The people whom they found in these districts were the Abashituku, Abamutamba, Abatswayi and the Abamakhanywa sub-groups of the Abaluyia

A little later, the Masai came to Ebunyala and killed twenty of Bubu's children. Only Musa who was on a visit to Ebumani among his mother's relations survived. In those days the Abakami (Gem Luo) had not yet come to Gem.

The coming of the Abakami and the subsequent wars

The leader of the Abakanii (Gem Luo) was called Rading' Chiedo. When he came, he went to Wabuti's, the ruler of the Abamuswa. In those days Asumwa was the ruler of the Abamani. Then Wabuti sent a message to Asumwa saying that a stranger had just arrived from Alego; his people were extremely dark and they were simply feeding on "tsimuli" grass.

The ruler of the Abakhobole at that time was called Washiemi Wayekha and that of the Abashisa was Eshiuchi. And it was this Eshiuchi who said that these strangers who were said to have just arrived into the country from Alego ought not to be allowed to stay. But Washiemi said that the strangers should be allowed to stay so that they might help them with their wars. Accordingly, Washiemi welcomed Rading' Chiedo and slaughtered a cow for him. Then Rading' ate and carried home the head and skin of the cow. Later Rading' also invited Washiemi and entertained him at Ndere Gem. And so the Abakanii came into the country in peace. Rading' and Washiemi also made a military pact. However, after one year, Rading' died and left his son called Odera Rading' in power.

Odera flagrantly violated the terms of the military agreement and wantonly indulged in going into the homes of the Abakhobole and Abamani and taking their property by force. He also ceased to give them the war-medicine whereas it had been stipulated in the military pact that Rading' and his descendants would do so. One day Odera went to the home of Amulabu of the Abakhobole clan and took his favourite milk cow. Thereupon Amulabu stabbed him with a knife. As he was dying, he told his people, the Abakami, that as it was his own fault for having violated the terms of the alliance, they should not take revenge on the Abamani.

Accordingly, the Abakami only raided the cattle of the Abakhobole. For their part, the Abakhobole realised that their man was guilty and so they refrained from all acts of hostilities including even resistance to the raiders. They therefore stayed indoors and let the Abakami raid their cattle. In this way fighting was avoided. At that time the Abashisa were still living in the country now occupied by the Abakami".

Originally the Abamani, Abashisa and the Abakhobole were one and the same people. However, owing to the fact that the ruler of the Abakhobole regularly stole ants (trapped for the purpose of feeding chickens and quails) belonging to the ruler of the Abashisa, he was later killed in the act. As a result, enmity now developed between the Abashisa and the Abakhobole and they began to intermarry". Eshiuchi was the ruler of the Abashisa in those days.

The Abamani and Abakhobole at one time fought with the Abashisulno Luo who lived at Kathomo and Kagilo and drove them farther back. Other wars were fought with the people of Yiro, Alego, Ugenya, and the Abakholo and Abagungu. The Abashisumo were the first Luo they ever saw; at that time the Abashisumo lived down in Kathomo in their own country. On the other hand, the Abakami (Gem Luo) appeared very recently.

Their governmental system was similar to that of the Abashisa and Abasamia and so too were their burial customs.

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

