

SAMIA

The Abasamia

The earliest ancestors of the Abasamia came from Egypt on foot. When they left Egypt they went to Mukono in Uganda. Then they entered the Lake and came in boats as far as the Sikulu (Sigulu) Island. From there they went to Lwambwa in Bunyala. They then gradually spread out all over this district.

On the other hand, Obare Makhulo says that the first Abasamia emigrated from Elgon area and went to Ebukhayenje in Samia in Uganda. From there they went to Lwambwa and Alego; they dispersed in Alego. Then some stayed behind in Alego, others went to Ebuyoma (Uyoma), and another group went to Sakwa.

The people they came in contact with:

Egypt: The Baganda, the Basoga, the Madi, and their fellow Abaluyia.

Mukono: It was uninhabited; they left the Baganda here and came this way.

Sikulu: Also uninhabited.

Lwambwa. Again uninhabited.

When they emigrated from Egypt, they spoke Olusamia (the Oluluyia dialect of Samia). Their food was fish, meat, cow-peas, fruits, sorghum, millet, and eleusine meal. They came along with the Baganda, the Basoga, the Madi, and the Banyuli (and the Banyole). Samia. They found here a people called “Onguye Lugulu Masaba”, i.e. Onguye the Mount Masaba (Elgon), who had huge heads. They were then driven from here. On the other hand the Abanyala found the Abasamia here. They came from Navakholo.

The reasons for migrating

Egypt: They migrated from there because it was a bad country with poor dry soil and preponderant drought and, consequently, without sufficient food.

Mukono: They were in need of a lake where they could fish, iron ore deposits (The Abasamia are skilful black-smiths and they enjoyed a monopoly of this trade until the establishment of European Administration and the consequent introduction of European tools and implements. The industry is also known to have flourished in pre-colonial Bunyoro), and grazing land.

Sigulu: The same as Mukono; they also migrated because this hill was in the midst of the lake. In this place (Samia), they now had iron ore, wood for charcoal, plenty of fish, good grazing land and abundant food.

Genealogies

Akuru (Aguru) was the ancestor of the Abasamia; he died in Egypt. He was the father of Samia, the founder of the Abasamia clan. He died here. Ouma Omanyo is the son of Omanyo; son of Ochieno; son of Omanyo; son of Obinda; son of Wamira who died at Lwambwa; son of Khakwe; son of Ng'weno; son of Lunani; son of Tebino; son of Samia; they all died here.

William Odame is the son of Omusebe; son of Okuku; son of Obola; son of Oremo; son of Were; they all died here. Were was the son of Makabe; he died at Budinyi in

Bunyala and Makabe died here. Makabe was the son of Khayoda who died at Lwambwa; son of Musamia who died at Lwambwa; son of Mudunyi who died at Lwambwa; son of Atori who died at Budunyi in Bunyala. Donald Musungu is the son of Naliali; son of Shibeto; son of Kundu; son of Mudenyoy; son of Andati who died at Lwambwa; son of Podi; son of Waburi; son of Tebino; son of Samia; son of Alununi; they all died at Lwambwa.

Governmental System

They were formerly ruled by the “omwami wefumo” (the omwami of the spear). He was assisted in this by elders known as “abenengo”, i.e. the owners of the homes, who were his subordinates. The “abenengo” were usually appointed by their clansmen. The “abakhulundu bengongo” (the elders of the territories) presided over cases; they were appointed by their clans. The omwami could not be deposed; but he was usually reproached for misconduct. Succession was based on the principle of heredity. But the elders of the sub-tribe could reject the nominee of the reigning “omwami”. The youngest son was usually nominated but, if a minor his elder brother became his guardian.

The functions of the “omwami” were to lead his troops in war and to help the people with food during the time of starvation. He was neither a rain-maker nor a medicine man nor a sacrificial priest; neither was he a magician. His function was to keep the peace. He used to get a cow in the event of a successful raid, beer, and elephant tusks. He had personal servants and attendants. He was buried in a skin in a lying position. He wore a calf-hide cloak, a copper bracelet, a cowry-shell crown with the feather of the “isimbishira” bird in it, and brass bracelets on his legs He used to rule all the Abasamia.

Warfare

The Nandi and the Masai used to come and raid their cattle. The war leader of the Abasamia in this case was Mahabe. The Baganda fought with them at Ibanda in the Samia part which is in Uganda. They used to come to raid their cattle, iron ore, and hoes. The Baganda were finally defeated. Sidero was the war leader of the Abasamia.

The Abakhayo and the Abamia also used to come to raid the hoes, iron ore, and the cattle of the Abasamia. They defeated the Abasamia. They then went to Bukhayo and fighting broke out there again. The Abasamia defeated the Abakhayo and then returned here. The Abasamia were led by Ojune.

Further information

The Abasamia were formerly one people with the Abasamia of Uganda. It was the boundary of the Europeans Which separated them. But they are still one people.

THE ABAKHEKHE CLAN

From Egypt they went to Tororo and then to Busoga by canoe. From Busoga they went to Ibanda close to Owiny who was then in Alego.

The people they came in contact with

Egypt: The Toro, the Baganda, and the Bahimas (The Bahima (Bahuma) referred to here are the pastoral people of Bunyoro Ankole and the neighbouring territories They are said to be of “Hamitic” origin and to be the descendants of the Western Cushites

(Sidamo) who invaded central Uganda from the South-western margin of the Ethiopian plateau many years ago and introduced there the autocratic system of government. An off-shoot of the Bahima is found at Imanga, about four miles to the south of Mumias They are known here as Abamuima. It was their ruler Muima who received the future Wanga on his way from the Tiriki country.)

Toro: Uninhabited

Busoga: They came here with the Basoga; the Basoga remained there.

Ibanda: Uninhabited

Their language has always been Lukhekhe (a dialect of Oluluyia). Their food was the same as that of the Abasamia The people with whom they came this way were the Abapunyi of Ugenya, the Abakhayo, and the Abamarachi

The reasons for migrating

Egypt: The same reasons as the Abasamia's.

Tororo: Again the same as above; in addition, apart from bananas, food was scarce. Also, there was no iron ore for smelting.

Thanda: They were afflicted by sleeping sickness which caused many deaths. And so they migrated.

Genealogies

Sindu was the father of Akuru, their ancestor. They and the Abasamia are one people; the present split was caused by women. Akuru was the ancestor of all the Abakhekhe. Sadok Odedu is the son of Nakholi; son of Adongo; son of Obura; son of Oseno; son of Okuro; they all died here. Okuro was the son of Asa who also died here; son of Ganda who died at Ibanda; son of Olando; son of Masaba; son of Mukhekhe; they all died at Ibanda. Mukhekhe son of Akuru died in Egypt.

Erya Maboni is the son of Nyamori; son of Maboni; son of Khanani; son of Ofudato; son of Mwali; son of Khakoma; son of Simbundi; son of Sirikhaya; son of Bwire; son of Mbirichode; son of Mang'ale; son of Were; son of Achari; they all died here. Petero Wabala is the son of Odalang'a; son of Odidi; son of Wandera; son of Mudalong'i; son of Ojwang'; son of Nadidi; son of Omoga; son of. Khabala; son of Asa; son of Mukhekhe; they all died here, but Asa and Mukhekhe died at Bulemia, five miles to Port Victoria.

Governmental System

It was the same as the Abasamia's. Their wars were also the same. They fought side by side with the Abasamia in all the major wars. Other elders however, denied that they fought side by side with the Abasamia.

THE ABAKANGALA CLAN

Their migrations

They originally came from Sigulu Island in the lake (Victoria). From there they went to Bugiri in Busoga; Ebwayi; and thence to the Murende hill on the border between Samia and Marachi, Tukwa in Bukhaya, and then to Budimbidi and Bukangala in Samia.

The people they came in contact with

Bumba in Sigulu: They were there with the Basoga who found them there.

Bugiri in Busoga: Uninhabited; they left some of their people there.

Ebwayi: The Abalundu (Abasamia of Uganda) and the Aababukusu.

Murende Hill: The Abakhekhe and the Abasamia.

Tukowa: Uninhabited.

Bukoiwe: Uninhabited.

Budimbindi and Bukangala: The Abasamia.

The reasons for migrating

Bumba: Famine, drought, and wild animals. Also, the prevalence of sleeping sickness and overflowing.

Bugiri: The soil was poor.

Ebwayi: Poor sandy soil.

Murende, Tukowa, Bukoiwe: The same reasons as the above.

Genealogies

Masiga Meyo is the son of Meyo; son of Mulumia; son of Odima; son of Meyo; son of Ndanyi; son of Siubebe; they all died here. Siubebe was the son of Akure who died in the Elgon area¹⁰ son of Bwayi who also died there; son of Siwondo who died here; son of Meyo; son of Akula; they all died here.

Governmental System

This was similar to that of the Abasamia and the Abakhekhe. Their wars were also the same; they used to unite against their enemies. They spoke Oluluyia; they ate sweet potatoes, millet sorghum, and eleusine meal.

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