The Pre-Independent Kenya

TACHON PEOPLES

History, Culture and Economy

Demmahom Olovodes Lihraw
The Tachon Peoples
History, Culture & Religion
The Tachon Peoples of Kenya

By

Demmahom Olovodes Lihraw

History, Culture and Economy

PERC-PACE International
Table of Charts, Maps and Boxes

Charts

Chart 1: The Tachon Family Tree (Structure) 31
Chart 2: Settlement Areas 48
Chart 3: Naming of Children 98
Chart 5: The Tachon Numerals 187
Chart 6: Family Chain 221
Chart 7: Family Cognatic Relationships 221

Tables:

Table 1: Circumcision Calendar and Generation Age Groups 212
Table 2: Principal Terms of Address 222

Maps

Map Kenya
Map 1: The Location of Tachon Peoples with Neighbours 32
Map 2: Tachon Peoples Origin, Movement and Settlement 44
Map 3: The Nzoia Basin 61
Map 4: Tachon Frontiers before 1895 64
Map 5: Present Tachon Frontiers 65
Map 6: A Ancient Tachon Homestead 124
Map 7: The Letia's Homestead 245
Map 8: The Tachon Village 251

Boxes

Box 1: Thanks Giving Prayer 115
Box 2: Judicial Structure 261
Members of one people
Share a common history,
This is often traced,
At least mythologically,
To either the first man
Created by God, or
To national leaders
Responsible for establishing
A particular structure
Of the society concerned.

J.S. Mbiti
African Religions and Philosophy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication and Acknowledgement</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Legend</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART ONE: THE PEOPLE</strong></td>
<td>1 - 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: Introduction And Review</td>
<td>2-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Definition and Source</td>
<td>12-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: The Tachon Peoples</td>
<td>25-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART TWO: ORIGIN, MOVEMENT AND SETTLEMENT</strong></td>
<td>33 - 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Origin and Migration Movements 700BCE-1900ACE</td>
<td>34-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five: The Dispersals and Their Significance</td>
<td>66-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six: Warfare</td>
<td>72-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Seven: The Tachon Factor in the Settlement of Western Kenya</td>
<td>85-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eight: Early Encounter with Foreigners</td>
<td>91-111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART THREE: CULTURAL SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE</strong></td>
<td>112-186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Nine: Religion and Culture</td>
<td>114-131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Ten: Circumcision and Clitoridectomy</td>
<td>132-149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eleven: The Secret Society</td>
<td>150-155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twelve: Birth and Childhood</td>
<td>156-162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Thirteen: The Concept of Death</td>
<td>163-168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Fourteen: Recreation and Its Implication to Life</td>
<td>169-173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Fifteen: Traditional Medical Work</td>
<td>174-179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Sixteen: Clothing and Adornment</td>
<td>180-182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Seventeen: Time and Its Activities</td>
<td>183-186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART FOUR: FAMILY SYSTEMS AND ORGANISATION</strong></td>
<td>187-236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eighteen: Family Concept and Principles</td>
<td>188-194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Nineteen: Courting, Marriage and Procreation</td>
<td>195-204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty: The Place of Men, Women and Children in Society</td>
<td>205-209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty-One: Generation Age Groups and Sets</td>
<td>210-213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty-Two: Family Relationships: Kinship and Clanship</td>
<td>214-236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART FIVE: THE STATE AND LAW</strong></td>
<td>237-272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty-Three: The Government Structure</td>
<td>237-255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty-Four: Class and Leadership Structure</td>
<td>256-258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty-Five: The Judicial System</td>
<td>259-272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Further Reading</strong></td>
<td>273-276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Tachon are a people living in Western Kenya and North Rift Valley. By 1918, they were estimated at 26,561. Within 15 years, they had increased to 31,701 people on an area of 450 square miles. In the 1969 census, they were estimated at about 154,521 people. During the 1989 census, they were counted at 0.85 million people. The area they occupy currently accommodates more than 1.8 million people.

Attempts to obtain data revealed that this community is very complex, diverse and difficult to understand, both politically and psychologically. Therefore, for one to fully tell the story of this community, one should face it as a task involving a wide range of people and avoid any bias or dependence on outside forces. Earlier efforts by scholars like Gunter Wagner, Professor Gideon Were and John Osogo yielded some very interesting briefs on these people. Other authors on Western Kenya history have paid very scanty attention to the Tachon people. Those who have recorded a line or two on them say very little about them that could be useful in identifying who they were then and who they are now.

Some sections of the community were found to be separate enclaves among other communities of Western Kenya. Such were the Abakiboriti of Mt.Elgon, Kabyonek of present Sebei, Abangach of Kimilili, Abachikha of Central and Southern Bungoma, and Western Uganda, Abasamo of Kapras, Abasonge living in Bungoma and Malava in Kakamega, the Abasang'alolo of both Wanga and Bukhayo in Kakamega and Busia respectively, and the Abasaniaka who live among the Maragoli of Vihiga District.

To reach such people and confirm their identity, researchers went through their clan elders and chairmen. Sometimes the chairmen had all the records required, so as a result no further interviews were necessary. Such records included the genealogy, cultural and religious rites, population, language development, migrational routes, settlements and reasons for movement and settlement.

In other cases, individual consultations with other members of the clan were conducted and results were very favourable. The data collected was re-organised, diagnosed and recorded after counter-checking with an independent Tachon team of elders.

In some areas of this work, a lot of background literature has been avoided, and in others it has been favourably adopted. The data used covers material up to date, although not totally exhaustive for the whole is a complex system, and difficult to break, but it is better than the parts put together.

The majority of the Tachon people are found in Bungoma, Malava-Lugari, Nandi, Busia, Trans-Nzoia and Mt.Elgon Districts. In Bungoma they co-exist with among others: the Banyala, Batura, Saboet and Teso peoples. In Kakamega they live among the Kapras while in Lugari they live among other Kenyan communities in Lugari-Mautuma-Turbo areas. In Busia, they are found among the Bakhayo and Marach (Abakaabi), while in Butere-Mumias they are found among the Wanga (Abaleka) and Marama (Abashien).
Between 1900 and 1963, the white man occupied most of their country in present day Bungoma, Lugari, Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia Districts. Between 1920 and 1932, the areas of Tongaren, Naitiri, Trans-Nzoia, Soy, Turbo and Kamokoliya were taken away by the white men and turned into white settlements. The Tachon were pushed to what came to be referred to as the Native Reserves of Ndivisi, Kimilili, Maturu and Kibaywa. In the year 1926, another crop of white men, the Christian missionaries, invaded their land, following the erection of various Friends Mission Centres at Lugulu, Kamusinga, Bokoli and Lugusi between 1914 and 1923, and the Catholic Missions at Misikhu and Kibabii. The North Kavirondo District was established in 1920 with Offices in Kisumu and a Sub-Commissioner in Mumias. The office of the Sub-Commissioner at Mumias intensified its administration and hold on the Tachon country by 1923. The foundation had been laid in 1902 through the appointment of tribal chiefs to keep watch over the activities of the natives. This had been further strengthened by the administration of Native Reserves by Local Native Councils with tutelage of the colonial Government.

In the initial stages of preparing this text, various social-anthropologists, especially P.S.Lipesa, argued that because most of the material herein is sociological in orientation, an anthropological and not historical research method should have been adopted. I, however, hold and tend to agree more with Mazzin that the history of mankind is the history of progressive religion of mankind. A.J.Toynbee, who argues that the Manchester School misunderstood human nature by not understanding that even an economic world order cannot be built on merely economic foundations, has expressed the same sentiments:

If a solid religious basis was required for Gregory's unpretentious economic building, it seems unlikely, on this showing, that the vaster structure of a world order, which it is our task to build today, can even be securely based upon the rubble of mere economic interests.

Henry Mwanzi, on the other hand, holds that including African religions and other ways of life in the scheme or study of history allows for comparison that is bound to indicate in certain terms the patterns of growth. It is the contention of Mwanzi, with whom I concur, that including African religions in the study and writing of the history of the African peoples is a means towards understanding the evolution of the African society, its philosophy, culture and ways of life and how these interact to complete the whole (aspect of life). So Mwanzi concludes:

History is not a museum where we go without preconceived notions. Nor is it a set of values for self-congratulation. Nor is it a prison. It is a movement, which can only be studied as a vantage point.

These sentiments do not apply to history alone, but to all issues that affect man and his environment. This study is therefore based on all dimensions of life in the real world system for purposes of comparison and growth. This follows from the understanding that the Tachon, like all other peoples of the world, live in an open systems environment and as such experience change in all aspects of life with respect to time and process. This may be used to explain the transition that the language and behaviour of these people has undergone. And as T.N.Toller suggests, this should not be seen as assimilation or absorption, but as an adjustment to the
environment and the need for expression. Toller therefore writes:

Language is the expression of thought; that which the mind can concern itself, which needs words to express it. A peoples' language must be in proportion to their knowledge. With changed conditions there must come corresponding change in language. Old material if retained must often adapt itself to new use - while in other cases that which is denoted by a word either no longer remains in object for the mind to consider if another word is chosen to denote it. In either case there is a loss of old material.

The loss of old material language forces a change in perception and colouring of peoples’ way of life, and in their stages of adaptation and consequential application of learned beliefs and practices. It also confirms the dynamism in the evolution and growth of a culture.

It will be wrong to assume that the method adopted for this text is the best. It will also be wrong to assume that the material herein cannot be challenged. In fact, in writing this text, I have exposed myself to criticism from all corners of the world. There is therefore, an open task here for critics, enthusiasts and other players.

My friends Wood Cole of Arkansas and Ludwig Kaufman of Bonn at one time argued that history, and especially oral history, changes with generation and environment, that this environment is both economic and political, and it is the political environment which is usually full of geysers that influence history. Peter Rees, a consultant in social work, has stated that writing a history of a people of whom too little or nothing at all has been recorded before, is like a "three dimensional reflection" in a "six-face mirror"- imagine the factorial permutations and the computational analysis that shall emerge from such an effort within an open and dynamic environment!

D.O. Lhraw, DBA
Waiyaki Way Nairobi
February 2010
I dedicate this Book to the Tachon children who yearn for knowledge on the history, beliefs and practices of their people, and who for long have been denied access to their history, language and religion. The only thing that remains to their claim is circumcision rites and baptism ceremonies that are quickly disappearing and becoming a domain of their visitors of a hundred years, the Bukusu. They have, for more than 120 years decided to live in rejection, abuse and denial. The majority today, speaks Bantu languages of the Kapras, Wanga and Bukusu and prefers to identified as so.

In this study, a number of persons and scholarly materials have been consulted. My indebtedness to these persons and other writers is so great. However, I have found it difficult to provide a detailed acknowledgement of every reference by way of footnotes. Individual authors have been mentioned by name in the course of the book. I have instead put some of the many books and journals I consulted at the end of this book in the section: Further Reading.

This book is largely based on interviews and recall information (oral reports) provided by different persons among the Tachon, their neighbours and friends. I have also relied heavily on historical, linguistic and archeological studies carried out by many authorities including Professors Gedion Were, William Ochieng, Christopher Ehret, J.E.G Sutton, Gunter Wagner, M. Posnansky, G.W.B. Huntingford and Sonia Cole. I salute them all.

Special thanks to my late father Asman Kerre and my late mother Amina Nelima for teaching me how to listen and speak. For the words they spoke, the songs they sang to me and the tales and myths they past down have become the basis on which the history of the Tachon has been reconstructed.

I am particularly indebted to the Tachon Welfare Association, the Tachon Council of Elders, and the staff of the Kenya National Archives for their cooperation during the research. I am also grateful to Edward K. Holi and his wife D. Holi for their extensive contributions during the initial stages of my research for this book, and to Ms Ruth Mutia for her editorial support.

Finally I acknowledge the support of my wife Susan Gathoni who became my task mate in getting this book finished. And to my children, for giving me the needed space and the grace and for urging me on to complete this book.

This book marks the beginning of a long journey into the way of life of a people who for a long time have been declared assimilated and or extinct.

D.O.L
This abstract is based on a myth passed on from generation to generation of the Tachon community regarding the origins of their totem - the Guinea fowl likhanga. This is a legendary tale and is said to have been very famous and told to all members of the Tachon family before the Sengoi Sengoi dispersal. So the tale goes:

On the lonely island village of KUNAR, surrounded by heavy masses of seawater, lay a thick, dark forest of cone-shaped trees. The only animals that lived on the island were huge snakes called Sadiat. On the grassy batch of the island were guinea-fowls, which multiplied at the rate of two per harvesting season and one moon. The guinea-fowls amakhanga laid eggs, which were swallowed by the sadiat.

During one season, the God of the island, the El Matruh, giver of life and proprietor of all things, who created the fowls and the sadiats, killed all the sadiats except two- one female (the queen) and a male. These two, it is told grew and matured, they acquired long beards and ears, and became very weak. On the other hand, the fowls multiplied faster than ever and became the rulers of the island. The God of the island denied the sadiats food and the ability to bear offspring. They became weak and beggars. They learnt to be good to the fowls and were made servants to earn food. They were good helpers. One day the Queen Fowl Ne'Khebit received instructions from the God of the Island regarding the future of the sadiats. The Queen Fowl summoned the female sadiat and revealed to her:

Now, you do not receive any offspring. You lay no eggs of your own any more. You have been faithful and obedient to me. You have also shown to be a good helper to my subjects. The Lord my God and the God of this Island has instructed me to lend you three of my eggs. You will not eat of these eggs, lest the God of this Island destroys this dynasty and its entire heritage. This is the present and the future. You sit on the eggs and you will produce a new generation, a species unique in our eyes. A species to rule this island, and the residents above and below, the species rules after me.

The female sadiat accepted the three eggs and sat on them. When the eggs hatched the results were three huge creatures with faces like those of man, tails, spotted body, dark gray feathers spotted with white, two large eyes, a long nose, two long thin hands, one long leg. Two of the creatures were male and one was female. The people of the island named the male Tuliet and Toli, and the female Temwa.

The creatures grew and when they were mature, the God of the island spoke to the Ne'Khebit saying:

I am God your God and of the Island who made the three creatures before you. I now instruct you to advise the parent serpents to take with them one of their male Tuliet and move towards the east of here. They should do this before the rising of the sun and before anyone else looks out. Let them take with them water from the waters of the west and south of the island. Tell them I their God and Father will take care of them all if they obey this command.

The sadiats left as instructed and walked towards the east and neither they nor any trace of them was seen again on the island.
The fowls and the two remaining creatures, Toli and Temwa, now inhabited the island. The fowls multiplied faster than ever. The two (Toli and Temwa) grew in size and were healthy. When they reached good age, the God their ancestors and that of the island spoke again to the Ne’Khebit, and instructed her to organize a wedding for Toli and Temwa. The Ne’Khebit asked, "but the two are one by blood how will they be wedded?" and the God the provider replied, "by my word so they shall be wedded and be good parents for many generations to come". The wedding was arranged and the two were happily married on the island.

The Ne’Khebit was now aging and sickling and the island was getting worried. The God of the Island came to her and instructed her to bless Mother Temwa who now had a baby son. The Queen Fowl then prepared Temwa for the leadership of the island. Mother Temwa moved into the Queens palace for tutelage. Mother Temwa ruled as Ne’Wachet the goddess and guardian of lower waters and the fields.

Toli and Temwa raised a new and improved species. Their offspring had long hair, more developed head and face, two long ears, two small round eyes, a long neck, two legs and hands. They walked upright although they also had two small wings. The feathers were slowly disappearing. This generation expanded very fast, grew in number and intelligence generation after generation. The body structure developed, part by part, to resemble modern man. They fed on eggs laid by the fowls, on meat, roots, leaves, fruits and the bark of trees.

After a few seasons the whole island was full and the new species covered every inch of the island in such numbers that they started spreading outward in all directions across the surrounding waters on the immediate mainland. It was during this expansion and increase in population that one by the name El Maturu drove with his sixteen wives and 36 servants to the Matioli across the waters and started the Maturu village and tribe, which later moved down along the present Nile to Sirikwa and later Kenya. This tribe is the Tachon abana ba likhanga.
PART ONE: THE PEOPLE

Chapter One: Introduction And Review  2 - 11
Chapter Two: Definition and Source    12 - 24
Chapter Three: The Tachon People     25 - 33
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

Systems Environment 3
Literature Review 4
The Peoples of Bungoma 10
The Variables of Ethnic Identity 11
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Systems Environment

The history of a people is always known to and by the people themselves. Additionally, any individual operating in an open system and interacting with the wider environment, has a historical background, which affects him and those around him. However, the permanent preservation of this historical background and its revelation to those outside its immediate influence must be done by recording and ensuring the survival of all collected relevant material. C.G. Richards has observed that East Africa is a country with few historical records. As a result, it is difficult to maintain, on record for present and future generations, the customs and traditions of the people, and to preserve ancient oral history and traditions, which in this new age is not being handed on from the elders to the young ones in the manner customary in the days gone by. Where information has not been properly preserved, it is difficult to understand the behaviour and culture of a people. Often, attempts to understand the people are littered with emotions and falsehoods.

The systems concept of a community should be the most important prevailing factor in any study of a people. This is important because communities are essentially open systems. They exist in interdependent, inter-related situations and exchange relationships. The more they exchange relationships, the less they are subject to entropy - that is, running down, becoming marginalised, going out of existence or becoming obsolete. A tribe consists of a number of significant interacting variables, which cut across or are common to its entire people. These variables are manifested in the culture, religion, technology, structure, and the external interface relationships. The other most important variable is inherent in the skills and abilities, and the leadership philosophy and style of the community. A proper record of these details makes it possible for improvement and development of a people with a dynamic culture.

Where information on any community is not properly recorded and passed over, the chances of extinction are very high in a competitive open systems environment. This happens because people cannot read about themselves, and they have no reference points on their culture, beliefs and practices. They will therefore, thrive by borrowing and prying on other people’s culture. This looks like it is the case for the Tachon community. Unfortunately, in previous works by Wagner, Were, Osogo and Makila, much data about the Tachon group of people has either been misused, misrepresented or distorted to strengthen vague historical information on other tribes. This has, in effect, frustrated and angered the Tachon people to the extent that any non-Tachon attempting to get historical data is avoided or deliberately misinformed. The elders are no longer willing to give any outsider the true facts about themselves and their history. This has created a terrible dilemma and information gap, both for the Tachon and the history scholars.
Therefore, the reluctance to discuss their past has left the community with only three options:

1. **Their history remains unrecorded.** We appreciate that research and documentation of people's ways of life and their expectations has a momentum of its own. That momentum stems from the logical structure of rational expectations and growth dynamics as modeling strategies.

2. **Incorrect history is written and published about them.** Rational thought is the cornerstone of effective research. Research into the history, beliefs and practices of people introduces researchers to major questions, and imposes critical standards to be met by researchers in answering those questions.

3. **The historian is tempted to use instincts** in assessing the Tachon history, or to pry and even bribe some ill-informed elders to get information, heightening deceit and historical untruths.

**Content Review**

This background note and review looks briefly at the notes of Wagner, Were, Osogo and Makila on the Western Kenya peoples, before examining the sources of Tachon history (sources tapped during this study).

Prof. Were, in his text, *Peoples of East Africa: A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya 1500-1930*, does not trace far into the past to establish the origin of the Tachon people, but states that:

```
......... on the other hand, many others such as the present Abatachon of Ndvisi, Trans Nzoia, parts of Bukusu land and Kapras areas, the Abashien of....... became Bantuised and lost their original identity between 1586-1625.
```

In his other text, *Western Kenya Historical Texts*, Professor Were attempts to trace the coming of the Tachon people, but again the result is hollow. He attempts to qualify the theory on the Bantuisation of the Tachon and the Abashien in his tracing of their movements. He states that these people moved with some Kalenjin groups of people from around Sirikwa. In his evidence, the Tachon were "Kalenjinised" during the period of movement. He, however, does not say where the Tachon met the Kalenjins first and who they were before being Kalenjinised. Makila attempts to suggest that the Tachon were Bukusu brothers who "lost their way on their southward journey", and were only identified at Mwalie and re-named Bayumbu or Mwalie. But, who were they before? This question has never been answered by neither Were, Wagner, Osogo nor Makila.

The other point Professor Were presents about the Tachon people is on their settlement areas. He has clearly identified the lands occupied by these people as Ndvisi, Trans Nzoia, parts of Bukusu land and Kapras. But he quickly confirms the coming of the Bukusu in the present Bungoma District, which was then occupied by the Tachon and the Bangomek (Saboet), to as recent as 1894 (about the time of the Chetambe War). Makila puts the coming of the Bukusu into present settlement areas at 1895 ACE. This compares very well with what the people themselves say:
We live on the soils we prepared ourselves, on the grazing fields for our animals, on the hunting fields of our fore fathers the kitoki, many of which were taken away from us by the colonial administration in 1895 and others on which we settled the children of our daughters.

In the same text, Prof. Were gives a brief account of the wars the Tachon fought, and suggests reasons for their involvement, such as cattle raids, search for grazing lands, insults and counter insults. The wars he lists include, amongst others, the Purko war fought between the Maasai Purko and Tachon, both in Uasin Gishu and around present day Mabanga near Webuye, the Nandi war and the Bukusu war at Mwiyenga.

According to the Tachon chroniclers no real wars were fought between the Tachon and the Nandi, neither were there wars with the Bukusu, because then the Bukusu, as a people, never existed. The official collection of Bukusu people is recognised after 1902 and they are legally recognised as a people after 1947. There was a scramble for land, between the Nandi and the Tachon, especially for the grazing fields in Lugare, Mautuma, Lumakanda, Turbo and Maturu. These were settled after the two ate a dog, that is signed a peace agreement, and drew boundaries with three main pegs at Turbo, Mois Bridge and Serigoit. For the Bukusu, the Tachon have said:

*It was not our duty to fight our labourers and any inferior communities. The people now collectively referred to as Bukusu, were originally Banyala run-a-way and Bagisu hardcore who the British Protectorate (Uganda) had enlisted to construct the road from Tororo to Kisumu through Busia, Mumbasa (Elureko) and Kakamega. They lived in a slave-camp at Elumboka. The Bagisu were our herds’ boys, they were our children and our daughters’ children, and we could not have fought them. They were also uncircumcised we couldn’t fight them. We gave them food out of our own hands, the same hands we made love to our wives, the hands that caressed the young.*

The only people the Tachon admit going to war with were the Teso and Maasai. The war with the Teso was to rescue Bagisu who had been arrested by the Teso, while the war with the Maasai concerned cattle rustling and the kidnapping of Tachon youths. The war with the Banyala Navakholo was fought around Kholera. It was started by Tachon initiates who wanted to prove that they were "man enough", so they went out to raid cattle, sorghum and millet without the authority and knowledge of their superiors. The initiates lost.

A careful study of Prof. Were’s account of the Tachon makes one feel he is writing about the Kalenjin peoples living among the Luhyia. He does not quite describe the evolution and development of the Tachon people. The details are too sketchy. On the other hand, Wagner, in his text the *Bantu of North Kavirondo, 1949*, seems to have been totally mis-informed by the local chiefs, who were basically drawn from among the Banyala and Wanga clans and posted to rule over the Tachon. Since the death of Letia Nyikuri (Sifuma), and the overrun of the Chetambe fort by the white extremists, the Tachon did not have any powers to elect/nominate or appoint their own chiefs and sub-chiefs. The chiefs, drawn from the Wanga, Banyala and Kapras, were all by the colonial government until at the time of independence, in 1964.
The most inadequate account has been made by John Osogo (1966). He lists in his text ten sub-tribes of the Tachon people, instead of the more than fifty-two. Osogo’s list includes the Abangachi, Abayumbu, Abasang’alo, Abamakhuli, Abasamo, Abarefu, Abahabiya, Abasioya, Abakafusi, and Abawayira. He goes on to classify the Tachon as, “other sub-tribes” with neither a firm identity nor cultural background (sic). He alludes that: they occupy Kapras, Bunyala and Bukusu lands; they are of Kalenjin origin, a kin to the El Kony. What this suggests is that the Tachon are squatting on lands that belonged to other people. It is, however, clear from Prof. Were's account that when the Tachon arrived in the lands between Yala and Trans-Nzoia, they found them virgin, and not previously occupied. This is confirmed by Makila in his account of the migrational movements of the Babukusu Peoples and strengthened by earlier accounts by C.W. Hobley who has recorded in his diaries:

...... during the advent of the colonial power into Kenya, European pioneers found the country known as Kitosh to be the original home of the Tatsone tribe, who clustered a round Mt.Sang’alo. The area was also used by the Masai as pasturage, and it was the Masai who scattered the Watatsone, with some settling on the left bank and others on the right bank of Nzoia River. A number of other clans settled among the Bakhayo and the Wanga.

Kitosh is a confusion of Kitoki the ancestors of the Tachon in the present lands. The Kitoki occupied most of the present Nyanza and Western provinces before the year 500 ACE. To this, Prof. Were has written that when the Tachon sojourned between the Yala and Mt. Elgon, no other people had been on those lands before. Professor William Ochieng' (1975) adds that, in subsequent years, the Kitoki were systematically absorbed by the Bantu communities which invaded the area from Eastern Uganda and the region around Lake Victoria.

F.E. Makila [a Munyala Navakholo by descent and a great grand child of Wakoli who led the Banyala and Bakisu to break away from Lumboka camp] seems to have been influenced more by the politics of the 1960s and the electioneering leading to the 1979 parliamentary and civic elections. The timing and release of his text was to consolidate support and attract sympathy and a following for the re-election of Elijah Wasike Mwangale in Bungoma as a Member of Parliament for Bungoma East in 1979. His text suffers from the following common melodies in western Kenya. That there existed leadership conflicts between the Tachon and their adopted sons, the Bukusu, for supremacy in the management of affairs especially in Bungoma, Lugari and Trans Nzoia. That like all adopted sons of Bungoma the author seemed to suffer from tribal strapilococcai – hostility, strangulation and intent to exterminate.

According to Makila, the Tachon, who he calls Bayumbu, are the Bukusu clans that had been lost on the way during the epic flight from Sirikwa and Mbayi (p.87). He says:

...these strangers were not all Barwa (Kalenjin enemies) as had been previously thought. It was discovered to the joy of the Babukusu, that many of them comprised Bukusu clans that had been lost on the way. .......... The strangers were known as Bayumbu (Batachoni).
First it must be understood that no ancestor of the Bagisu and Banyala speaking people originated in Mbai or Sirikwa. By implication Makila is suggesting that the Tachon arrived in their present settlement areas after the Bukusu. This does not compare well with what he says in another section of his book on migrational movements of the Bukusu, who he states arrived around 1895, and what Professors G.S.Were and W.R.Ochieng have separately confirmed. The Professors agree that the Bukusu arrived around 1894. They also agree that when the Tachon were sojourning, all the areas they passed through were un-occupied and appeared not to have been occupied before, with the exception of the Yala region. They were later followed by the Tukiika group (a clan of the Tachon which belonged to the house that comprised the Ngachi, Kiboriti, Kamgong, Kemei and Shien), of whom they had left at Sirikwa. Further evidence given by Hobley (1895) suggests that when the Bukusu people arrived in Kitosh, they found the Tatsone (Tachon) had already established themselves in the area under the leadership of Chief Kifuma (Sifuma) on the right bank of river Nzoia, the present Bungoma District, and under Chief Lumbassi on the left bank of river Nzoia, the present Malava/Lugari District including the Nandi escarpments.

The Tukiika are the largest single group among the present Bukusu speakers. They have largely intermarried with the Bagisu (Masaaba), the Abakichilelwa and the Banyala Sumba. As a community, they command a large lineage of the ancestors of the present Bukusu. The Abatukiika group became bantuised and hence started the Bukusu tongue, akin to Masaaba between 1230 - 1308 ACE when they first met and intermarried with the Masaaba people at Kipsengeli (Esengeli) and led some of the families to Kaplelegwe (Elegwe). The families, which evolved as a result of intermarriages between the Tukiika and Masaaba, include:

Abasibende, Abamuki, Ababichachi, Abasitui, Ababambo, Abakipemuli, Abakimwei, Ababuulo, Abakyahi, Abatilu.

Makila continues to assert:

Kitumule himself is said to have married from Ebuyumbu. A reunion of the clans with the Bukusu clans took place at Mwalie Hills, creating Mwalie cluster of clans. The merger with Bayumbu added new clans to Bukusu fold.

Kitumule, son of Kiptuyi, was a member of the Tukiika clan of the Tachon people. They were at this time led by Kiptonwek, son of Mungut, before the Sirikwa dispersal.

In his wisdom, Makila has listed the following sub-tribes as Bukusu. These include:- Abayumbu, Abamakhanga, Abasiyoa, Absamo, Abamwaya, Abamakina, Abasang’alo, Abangachi, Abamalicha, Abamakfuli, Abasengle, Ababichu, Abakamukong, Abanyangali, Abasonge, Abamacharia, Abakamutebi, Abasanaka, Abakukulu, Abachambachi, Abamuhongo, Abakafisi, Abamarakahal, Abamuulu, Abakobolo and Abasaba.
Makila distorts the spellings of the names of the various groups and thereby misplacing their identity. For instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Makila's write-up</th>
<th>Correct Spellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bamacharia</td>
<td>Abacharia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachambachi</td>
<td>Abachambai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamakina</td>
<td>Abamachina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamweya</td>
<td>Abamweywa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Abacharia, Abachambai, Abakabini, Abakobolo and Abamuongo, are the five clans of the sub-tribe of Abachikha of the Tachon community.

Makila has also classified Bukusu people according to whether they could speak lubukusu. It is important to understand that a language taken by itself does not automatically reveal the identity and culture of a person. He has therefore based his conjecture on mere usage of the Bukusu dialect to list tens of clans and sub-tribes as "Babukusu". We have examined his list in detail. The following abstract re-classifies the groups to their correct communities:


   a) The **Abamurumba** are the family members of Murumba, son of Nyikuri (Sifuma). Sifuma was the Letia of the Tachon during the onslaught on the Chetambe fort by the Whiteman. No tribe or clan has been named after Murumba.

   b) The **Abawele** and **Abawaila** are two of the three clans that form the Abangachi sub-tribe. The third is called **Abakhumaya**.

   c) **Abachemai** is a family among the Abangachi community.

2) **Kapras Sub-Tribes and Clans**: Abatobo

3) **Batura Sub-Tribes**: Abailifuma, Abasinelia, Abamuyonga, Abatura

4) **Banyala Sub-Tribes and Clans**: Abalango, Abakisebe (Abayemba clan currently in Kimilili), Abatecho, Abamweya, Abasama, Abahavua, Ababuya, Abatama (abayemba), Abamuhi, Ababurnfele, Abalinda, Abayemba, Abakangala, Abatamanu, Abakhalenge, Abamisoo, Abalindo, Abafu, Abalinda, Abakembe, Abaswuhu

5) **Others misplaced by Makila**

   a) **Abakinusu**: - these are Maasai peoples. Sometimes they are confused for Turkana.

   b) **Abalaku**: - these are the Walaku currently referred to as the Bok, a
member of the Saboet community. The Walaku confusion was used by the colonial administration to separate the Bok from the then Elgon Maasai communities.

c) **Bangoma**: - these are two groups:

- The Bangomek, who founded current Bungoma. They are members of the Saboet community of Trans-Nzoia and Mount Elgon.

- The Bangoma of Bunyala of Busia living in the flooded Bungoma Village along Lake Victoria. They originally broke off from the Bangomek while sojourning the lands between Nzoia River and Mt. Elgon. They then followed the Nzoia to Lake Victoria, present day Sio Port, initially to celebrate the circumcision ceremony and thereafter they decided to settle and become fishermen (Namunaba).

d) **Abayemba**: - Are members of the Bagisu community of Uganda.

e) **Bayima**: - Are from the Bahima community of Uganda (Buganda).

f) **Basombi**: - the family of the Banyoro-Kitara of Uganda. They include the family of Elijah Wasike Mwangale a former Member of Parliament and Minister in the Kenya Government (1979-92).

g) **Bangokho (kokho)**: - Members of the Bagisu of Uganda. In 1947, this clan decided to adopt the Abakokho translation so as not to be traced to their Bagisu ancestors of Uganda. The crusade to Kenyanise this group was led by the late Pius Henry Masinde Muliro, MP himself a member of the clan and a champion of Bukusuism. He was supported by the late Chief Pascal Nabwana who was busy building an independent new group of people from his original stock, the Abanyala. The new group he assembled came to be known as Bukusu. Masinde Muliro, who died in 1992, was a leading politician in both pre and post-independent Kenya.

It must be emphasized that much of Makila's efforts in this regard have been to duplicate tribes and to further distort the facts by including the sub-tribes and their clans as different people altogether. He seems also to have been keen on eliminating the Tachon tribe from the peoples of Bungoma. As a matter of fact, in his mention of the peoples of Bungoma he does not include the Tachon people on his list. The assumption we make is that he might have included them in the group of Barwa, as it is evident in his discussion of the Baluhyia population in 1969. He states:

It is quite certain that over 80 per cent of this figure (possibly above 240 000 persons) is composed of Babukusu. The majority of the remaining indigenous inhabitants consist of Kalenjin speaking people, viz. Ngomonek (Bangoma), Ḍony (Bakonyi), Bok (Balaky), Masabinjek (Basebej), and Semekat (Basomeki).
Makila seems to be aping the strategy that had been adopted by the white man who kept quoting different population figures for the Tachon people at different times, to the effect that by 1961, it looked like the community was threatened with extinction. For instance, in the 1915-1916 population census, it was reported that they had approximately 2,071 tax payers (hut) on average 25,000 people, in 1962 the District Commissioner (DC) for Bungoma Mr. R.S. Winser could only "hazardly guess" the population of Tachon Tax payers at between 900 - 1,000, on average 18,000 people. In their 14th August 1962 Memorandum to the Lancaster House Commission, the Tachon said that they occupied adjacent corners of four Districts -Elgon Nyanza (Bungoma), Trans-Nzoia, North Nyanza (Kakamega), and Uasin Gishu with a total population of 110,00 people.

The Peoples of Bungoma

The District of Bungoma has six peoples: The Teso, Batura, Tachon, Saboet (who include the Bok [Walaku], Kony, Sebei, Bang'oma, etc), the Banyala (Kakilelwa) and Bagisu. The Banyala and Bagisu in Bungoma have, together, been called the Bukusu since 1947. The decision by these six peoples to join hands in the development and growth of the District should not be seen as an assimilation or loss of identity to the "Bukusu". In his chauvinism, Makila has concluded that the Tachon is a sub-nation formed by some Bukusu groups of the Bayumbu community. He states:

Following the settlement of fresh Bukusu clans in the vicinity of the Mwalie Hills in later years, an expedition headed by Kitumule, son of Wetoji, was sent out to learn more about the inhabitants of Mwalie Hills. The result of this expedition was startling. Babukusu were not only pleased to learn that the strangers investigated were not 'enemies', but they were, above all, thrilled to discover that they were their lost brothers. A new name of Bayumbu was coined to cover all Bamwalie clans who, soon afterwards, merged with surrounding Basilikwa clans under the banner of Namurwa. Some of the Bayumbu people who were not completely absorbed into the tribe at Mwalie Hills today form the sub-nation known as Batachoni (Tachoni).

It is important to mention at this stage that the people called "Abayumbu" are a clan among the Mwalie people of Tachon community. It would therefore not be possible for the Tachon to be an offshoot of the Abayumbu. Makila is not doing this out of ignorance, but within a strategy formulated in 1895 by the colonial rulers after they conquered the Tachon and took over their palace, the Chetambe Fort, then situated at present Webuye. After conquering the fort, the white man adopted the strategy, as in the words of the then District Commissioner (DC), North Nyanza Mr. P.M. Gordon, the Tachon were to be run on the principle of 'divide and rule', by no means an unfavourable factor in the overall security situation. The Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza Mr. G.N. Hampson wrote in his December 1958 letter to the President of the Tachon Union, "......, and I am to advise you that the interests of your people will be best served in the future by their identifying themselves with the larger community in which they live and giving their loyalty wholeheartedly".

The community or communities, referred to, among who Tachon were allegedly the minority, were the:- Kapras, Bukusu, and Nandi, because at this time, the Tachon had been split by district boundaries in four Districts of Elgon Nyanza (Bungoma), Uasin Gishu, Trans-Nzoia and North Nyanza(Kakamega). Their leadership structure and constitution had been dismissed. Rulers were
imported into their land from Kapras, Wanga and from among the "Bukusu" (Banyala of both Kakamega - Baskari Nabwana and Busia - Namachanja and his successors).

**Variables of Ethnic Identity**

Professor Were, in a seminar paper "The Maasai & Kalenjin Factor in the Settlement of Western Kenya: A Study in Ethnic Interaction & Evolution" (1972) has described a tribe as a group of people with a common language and who share common cultural traits and traditions. He stresses that these people need not be aware of their common identity. Neither should they live in the same territory under one central authority. Sutton adds that a tribe emerges, not by maintaining the pure blood of its ancestors, but by successfully assimilating its diverse elements. These elements include: Religion And Culture (Refer To Chapter 9); Social Behaviour: Dance, Legends, Tales, And Myths; Clothes And Adornment; Related Taboos And Traditions; Foods And Methods Of Preparation; Names And Language Morphology; Words Of Self-Praise And Introduction (Yinono), Creed And Totem; And Customs and Norms, Etc.

Neither any one of the eight alone can be enough to describe a people's identity. Usually, by invoking creed and totem all the others could be identified. However, this is affected, in most cases, by the migration and movement of the people, their physical and human environment, and the internal and external factors. On this note, Professor Christopher Ehret has clearly observed that a tribe or people is a fluid grouping, which grows, and changes by adoption and amalgamation, and declines by attrition and schism. Therefore, to survive, a tribe must continually adjust itself to surrounding circumstances. This is what the Tachon ancestor, the Kitoki, probably failed to achieve. And as Professor Were has very well observed, this definition of variables excludes kinship ties as an exclusive criteria for defining an ethnic group or tribe.
CHAPTER TWO: DEFINITION AND SOURCE  12 - 25

Evolution and Growth of the Name 13

- Matur (Maturu) 13
- Kitoki, Lamek and Kabini 13
- Chesirikwet (People of Sirikwa) 14
- Mwalie and Abayumbu 14
- Abasebe and Abekwe 15
- Kitoshi or Is Kitoki? 15

The Schools of Thought 17

- Keptaijon-Lentoijon Connection 17
- Saboet Relationships 17
- Stapchon – Initiation and Baptism 18
- Nature's Village 19
- Political Influence 20

Waluchio Buria Hypothesis 21
Chapter Two

DEFINITION AND SOURCE

Evolution and Growth of the Name

The people called the Tachon are a unique people of their own kind who have, in one way or the other, lost their original language, or hidden it under their flamboyant skins and hides, and in their traditions and religion. They are a people with hidden philosophy, and this has affected their development very much.

Before the name "Tachon" was adopted around 1917, and accepted as a name comprising of and defining all the fifty one plus people of the present Tachon community in the mid 1940s, this group had many more names and nick-names. The community had also gone through an evolution, starting with Matur, Lamek, Kabini, Chesirikwet, and Kitoki, which for many years has been corrupted to Kitosh.

Matur (Maturu)

The history chroniclers reveal that while in "Misri", these people were known by the name MATUR, which meant, the men of elegance and éclat who lived in a village of life, providence, strength and peace in mud houses, and had command of the West and the Mediterranean zone trade. They were small in number, and lived in an enclosed village covering only 270 square miles. The village was surrounded by forts and mud walls. They also had a government of the people (democratic system of government), but conditioned by father-son leadership. Before moving to Matur, and while they were at Kunar, they were ruled over by women. The Women Dynasty was last led by Moigwen, daughter to Lebeiyen of Sadiyot. No one quite knows when this was, but by applying the generation formula for time computation, it is estimated to have been between 800 -600 BCE.

Because of their elegance, success in trade and management of their economy, they aroused jealousy and they died by the swords of foreigners and rich, hungry rivals. The chroniclers relate that it was after these raids that the people of Matur went out of their way to recruit and train an army of their own to defend themselves, their borders, government and businesses. They built an army called "Maturn"(Matrun), which was later referred to as Kimaatuni. The maturn was made up of unmarried lads ready to defend their government and their people at all costs.

Kitoki, Lamek and Kabini

Out in the Sudan and the Nubian land, they were divided into two groups, the "Lamek and the Kabini", each with 15 families. Thus, already thirty clans had formed. They were later re-united under the leadership of Letia Keptaijon Kitoki, son of Lamek. During the re-union, they were named the "El'Kitoki", the people of Kitoki.
On meeting the Kalenjin speaking people at Katiri, they retained the name Kitoki down into present day Kenya and towards Tulwop Kony (Koyonjo), Mt. Elgon as it is called now. They met and interacted with the first nations of Kenya the Maa, Miotik and the Azania, as has been recorded by past historians.

**Chesirikwet (People of Sirikwa)**

Down in present day Uasin Gishu, they were referred to as the people of Sirikwa, "East", or the "Chesirikwet" easterners. At Sirikwa there was a major dispersal occasioned by Maasai raiders that divided the Chesirikwet into three groups. The first group headed for Tulwop Kony led by Kibanani, and it comprised sixteen clans. The second group headed for Mbaiyek, led by Saami and comprised of eight clans, and the third group, led by Ngosi, son of Kapsis, had their first major stop at Kitalel (Koitalel, present day Kitale). The first group, after sojourning for a long time, met and intermarried with the Ateker, creating a complex nation called the "Sabeweiny". As the main nation moved onward to the south, along the slopes of Tulwop Kony, they left behind a cluster of people called Sebei, in present Pokot.

The groups that made up the Chesirikwet included the Songiek (Abasonge), Kamkong'i, Kapchu (Ababichu), Kapkenda (Kipkendek), Kapchiruk (Chimuluku), Terik (Tiriki), Kapsioya (Abasiyo), Ngachi (Abangachi), Kiboriti, Kapsinayi, Kimwei (Abakimweyi), and Kiptuik (Abatukiika).

Interactions were experienced with the Maasai and Kalenjin communities, especially, the Kipsigis, Nandi and Tugen. In most cases, intermarriages were effected resulting in the emergence of new communities among them the Abashien (now in Marama), the Kiborit (Abakiboriti), the Kapkenda, Kapsimis (Abasimisi) and Kimwei (Abakimwei).

**Mwalie and Abayumbu**

As they descended the Tulwop Kony, and approached the present Malakisi, they were in three groups. Two groups moved on into the Malakisi caves (Mwalie), while the third one crossed to Stapchon (Bokoli), and across present Nzoia River towards Nandi and then Kakamega forests giving rise to the Idakho fountain.

The two groups, which proceeded to Mwalie, were attacked by flue and cold. Their animals were attacked by tsetse flies, and other buffalo diseases. One community, the Songiek lost all their stock and their headman. Around the present Teremi, they buried their headman, and were in grief when a "look-out" from Bwai passed by. The "look-out" could not pronounce the name Songiek when he went back to Bwai, but explained the state in which he had found the "strangers". He said he thought they were stranded, weak and looked idle, and a condition he described as "bayumbuile". The Songiek people were therefore referred to as "Bayumbu" by people of Bwai, especially the Masaaba family of Kikayi who later became the Bagisu.
The term "Abayumbu" was then used by the Masaaba people to describe all people at Malakisi, who were later to be referred to as Mwalie people.

Years later, a member of the Bwai intelligence team visited Mwalie disguised as an orphan boy. He was received and given food. When he went back to Bwai he reported that he had been to the people of Mwalie. The Bwai people again referred to them as the "ba-mwalie", people of Mwalie.

**Abasebe and Abekwe**

Away from Mwalie/Sirisia, and in the present day Busia, they were referred to as "Abasebe", the circumcised. In Wanga, they were referred to as the "Abekwe", the people from the east. The Wanga also considered them conjurers with power to deform the living.

They carried the name Abekwe into the newly founded "Bwami" (see Part 5), with its forts at present Webuye/Mahanga (Chetambe) and Misikhu, then called Marikiyet. Marikiyet was the main centre for exchanging animals for other goods, such as millet, roots, etc.

**Kitosh or Is It Kitoki?**

From their fort at Marikiyet and Mahanga (1745-60), which later became Abuhalilo and Chetambe respectively, the Tachon were referred to by the Maa people as the ormagitosh. This name was confused by the Europeans to "Kitosh".

C.W. Hobley has recorded in his Diaries that during the advent of the colonial power in Kenya, European pioneers found the country known as Kitosh to be the original home of the Tatsone (Wanga pronunciation of Tachon) tribe, who clustered around Mt. Sang’alo. The Masai pastoralists also used the area, as pasturage, and it was the Masai who scattered the Watsone, some settling on the left bank and others on the right bank of Nzoia River. A number of other clans settled among the Wakhayo. At around 1850, the Wabukusu were driven from the Mt. Ekore area of the Wayi country of the Wamia. The majority of Wabukusu fled eastwards and settled in Kitosh, while a small portion of the Wakhone clan of Bukusu went southwards, and are found among the Abakhayo.

Infact, when the Missionaries arrived in Kenya and were camping with the Maasai, they were informed that all people after the Nandi country and that of Nabongo were called Kitosh. This name persisted until the late 1950s.

Kitosh is a confusion of Kitoki, the people who came down with the ancestors of the Maa and the Kalenjin to western Kenya, settling along the slopes of present Mt.Elgon and moving down and covering most of present Western and Nyanza provinces. The only existing descendants of these people are the present Tachon.

When they were in need of new and expansive grazing lands, and during the time of baptism for their newly initiated boys and girls, they visited the Kerio Valley, especially the Arror and the Kerio rivers. They passed through the lands of the Nandi, Maasai (Wausin Gishu). They were then referred to as "people who come and go", Tachonü.
During wars or times of danger, the Tachon could vanish at an electric style and speed. This was quite so after confirmation that they could not carry the day. Their vanishing act was performed in style and elegance, after the fashion of the guinea fowl. Consequently they were nicknamed "belikhanga", of the guinea fowl, by the Wanga and Kapras people. However, it should also be remembered that the guinea fowl was of great significance and value to the Tachon people, since the days in Kunar, and as their totem. They have also included the word guinea fowl in their "yinono", self-praise.

To the Colonial Government in Kenya they were referred to as the people of Kitosh. This term had been extended to cover all people of Bungoma, except the Teso and the Elkony group. The Tachon people had now come under the rule of the white man under the control of Nabongo Mumia, who was responsible for posting and/or appointing chiefs within their territory. All chiefs at the time were non-Tachon, especially made up of Wanga and Banyala.

The period came when all persons above 18 years were required to register, receive identification cards and contribute to state revenue through taxation. The registration clerks, most of whom were Banyala, Wanga and Bagisu, registered most of the people as Bukusu. Protests were lodged with the then Government. To resolve the problem, the Government asked the Kitosh people, who now included Tachon, Banyala and Bagisu, to submit names which they preferred to be identified by. This was done under the banner of Area Councils and Names Conferences sponsored by the Government and attended by tribes or members of representative communities.

The Tachon resolved to take Tachon as their tribal name. They argued that this identified them very well with their past leader, Keptaijon, who united the Lamek and Kabini factions while still in the Sudan, and Lentoijon, while at Kaptabel (Refer to Chapter 4). Whereas the two represented the past, they also stood for the present and the future. The Tachon also believed adopting the name Tachon was very much in line with their activities of initiation and baptism, "estabicha" - elicho. They also thought this would separate them from the emerging bantu, now collectively referred to as Luhyia, who they argued were lazy, cowardly, and jealous people, with no common culture and origin.

Various people have written this name differently as Tajon, Taijoní, Tachon, Tachoni, Tachonü, Tojon, Toijon, Tochon, Tadjoni, and Tatsone. This text has used Tachon. It has been clear that in the Tachon grammar there was no NI-Class, and as a result, most of the words and names supposedly to end with an NI have always been pronounced without the "I".
The Schools of Thought

A number of theories referred to as schools of thought, have been advanced as to the origin of the word "Tachon". There are five theories, which are worth examining for purposes of understanding the history of the Tachon people. Where possible we have given the estimated period when the activities happened.

Theory One: Keptaijon- Lentoijon Connection

This theory is traced back to the time when people were still sojourning the Sudan and Nubian lands then called Nubie. This is estimated to have been between 645 and 240 BCE. The advocates of this theory argue that at one time in the life of these people, there had been a very powerful leader by the name of Tachon. They cite such leaders as Keptaijon and Lentoijon, whom they say played a very big role in leading the Tachon at a time of great division and difficult. They finally managed to bring them together as one people. These leaders must have had the ability to understand people's problems in a very rational way, communicate effectively, and hold the hearts of people together. They were also fierce warriors, had charisma, and a high record of achievement.

The advocates also argue that it would be wrong to take the word 'Tachon' and claim a recent coinage. They say the word is as old as time and as the people themselves. They are, however, criticized by other schools of thought for their failure to grasp the actual morphology of the word with respect to names of the two leaders, Keptaijon and Lentoijon. They have also been accused of misrepresenting and deliberately misinterpreting the name with intent to falsify and promote the image and activities of the two leaders. The critics have therefore challenged the advocates of this theory to properly define the relationship between Taijoni, Toijon and Tachon. The response of the advocates is in the evolution and growth of the culture and language of the people. Their language, like all others, has grown and adopted a new phenomenon. The ancient vowels and alphabets have been affected, and this has influenced the culture and composite structure of words and the language in general.

Theory Two: Saboet Relationship

The advocates for this theory refer to two different historical periods in the evolution of the Tachon. The first period relates to the first millennium ACE. During this period the ancestors of the Kitoki and Kalenjin had located themselves in Western Kenya (North Rift, Western and Nyanza provinces of present day Kenya). It was from their interaction that the present communities of Tachon, Terik and Kalenjin evolved.

The second period relates to the years 1525 - 1600 ACE. The advocates of the theory argue that the Saboet and the people now called the Tachon were brothers, who walked, lived, ate, drank and suffered together. For
instance, John Osogo has stated in his History of the Abaluhya that the Abatachon were originally the same people as the Abangoma (Bangomek) of Saboet (Sibot), before they were separated and became bantuised. Sibot is one of the peaks of Mt. Elgon.

The advocates of this theory say that one-day, the Tachon asked their brothers for leave to explore the outside world beyond Tulwop Kony. Before they left, they were heard to have told their counterparts, "Ta cho nu", we are going but we shall come back.' The story goes on to say that whenever the Saboet received visitors, they told them that some of their brothers had gone down the slopes and would be coming back.

The critics think this is not consistent with the history of the origin and movement of the Tachon people. According to the history of the origin and movement, the Tachon met the first Kalenjin groups at Katiri, in southern Sudan. The question posed, though, concerns the extent of brotherhood, where it starts and ends. Apart from the circumcision of girls and boys, the critics do not see any other criteria that could bring the two groups together. The fact that the word Tachon may mean "to go and come back", does not expressly suggest that the two people are related either.

**Theory Three: Stapchon - Initiation and Baptism.**

This theory can be traced back to the 18th century when the Tachon were living in present Central and South Bungoma (Kanduyi) with forts at Tacho (Sang'alo) and Stapcha (Bokoli). They are said to have sojourned between here and the Wausin-Gishu country to fulfill their initiation and religious rites related to circumcision and the family unit.

During their sojourning, they came across three people who had just settled in the area. The people of Wausin-Gishu, at the time, comprised mainly of the Elgeiyo, Maasai and Marakwet. These three peoples had had earlier interaction with the Tachon at Sirikwa. Except for the Maasai, the other groups were very friendly. The Maasai, therefore, attempted to stop them from crossing the Wausin-Gishu country. The first attempt was at Soi, where the Maasai were repulsed, and further reassured that the Tachon were on a peaceful mission to fulfill their religious rites on the Arror and Kerio rivers. These are the rivers that were used by their forefathers, the Kitoki, while they sojourned the Sirikwa in the first millennium during the marich to baptize the newly circumcised boys and girls, okhulichwa. A practice also accepted by the Elgeiyo and Marakwet.

The marich ceremony was done by the stapchon, a place of deep fresh all season water, usually on an all season river, musitabicha. The significance of this lay in four things: - the leopard, the water, house and cow, for both men and women baptism.

The house was constructed in an arch form. The house stood for shelter and protection from the outside world, leopard symbolized bravery and guardianship, and water stood for purity and unification with God the creator who led them from Matur, while the cow represented love and motherhood.
Writing on the evolution of religious concepts of the Kipsigis, Mwanzi has said:

*Its religious significance lies in its symbolism; the symbolism of water. If it was baptism by water, it was also baptism by the cow. The arch was meant to symbolize a cow and going through it was symbolically going under a cow.*

This initiation made the youth, both boys and girls, complete and full in the eyes of God. It also gave them the key to the free world and entrusted them with the knowledge, lives and future of their people and their nation. They were taught that they now represented the present, and the future was in their hands.

So, when they sojourned through the Wausin Gishu lands, they said they were on their way to Stapchon to celebrate *marich - elicho*. They were therefore referred to as the people of stapchon, by the people of Wausin-Gishu.

This theory tends to follow and coincide with theory two above. The difference is in the related activities.

**Theory Four: Nature's Village**

This theory again dates far back to the 18th century. The theory states that as they settled in present day Mwichina Samo (Mwibale) and Sang'alo, and built the Kitalel and Sikalame forts, they discovered tacho, a rich, fertile and protected vegetation with all nature's making. The tacho was kept sacred as a shrine, and was also used during danger for hiding children and women. Most of their herbal medicine was also acquired from here. Next to it was a layo, wide rock raised like a table. The "lookouts" spent their time on the layo to check any approaching strangers to the Forts, whom they quickly reported back to their leaders, the *Baoyet*, who then immediately communicated to their commanding officer, Laitarian.

Their nearest neighbours then were the Wanga and the Balasi (Kapras), who referred to them as people of Tacho, *bantu be tacho* or *orutatsone*, and *abandu bo mulutatso*, respectively. When the Maasai visited the Wanga chief and wanted to know who stayed on their North and East, they were informed, *be tatso*, they translated this to mean *ole tasho*, descendants of Tasho.

During the Chetambe war, in 1895, the Tachon evacuated their citizens towards the North east of present river Kibisi. Here, they found shelter in a site with similar characteristics as the Tacho, at Samo and Sang'alo. In addition, it had a large river running on its eastern side and traversing from the North to the South. This river was named *Kipsis*, a river of peace and harmony, later confused to Kibisi River. The river poured in the Nzoia, which washed the Samo and Sang'alo areas. The only feature absent in the new settlement was the layo. They constructed a village and named it Tacho, which is present day Lutacho.
A number of scholars argue that this might be the true beginning of the word "Tachon". The critics, however, have argued that if this was actually the beginning, the people should have been named "Betacho" or "Olutacho" or "Tacho". They argue that no logical, morphological or prefixed relationship could automatically be traced between the words and their present usage. They further argue that the frequency of "Tacho" should be left out when detailed analysis are carried out to determine the origin of the name. Instead, investigation should be made into the recent adaptation of "NI". If sound explanation could be given as to why "NI" was added to complete the word "TACHO", and "LU" and "BE" were dropped as roots, then this theory may hold water.

The question now is:- what were they called before the Chetambe war? Some elders believe that they were Tachon before and after the Chetambe war, others argue they were the Kitoki, others say they were Abekwe.

Theory Five: Political Influence.

This theory promotes the hypotheses that the people called the Tachon never existed before the beginning of the struggle for UHURU, and that like the Luhyia; they are a simple marriage of convenience. This theory views the name as political, and holds that none of the sub-tribes within it has any common origin with the other. The advocates of this theory argue that the Tachon did not come from outside Kenya. They derive their origin from within, because their ancestors, the Kitoki, have lived in Kenya, even before it was. Their prominence comes to surface over the last two millennia. Unlike their cousins, the Kalenjin, the Kitoki could not escape the influence of the Bantu who entered their land during the 16th century.

Therefore, it is argued, their evolution should be traced to their present settlement areas and looked at in terms of interactions of various ethnic groups with diverse origins systematically leading to bantuisation.

The scholars holding this view trace the source of the name to as recently as the first and second decade of the 20th century. During this period two important events could be witnessed. The first event is the effect of the Chetambe war in 1895, which saw the birth and settlement of a new people, the Bukusu as an outcrop of the Bagisu, Kakilelwa, Banyala and Tachon, in the Tachon country. The second event was the penetration of the Wanga regime and the Whitman’s rule on the Tachon Country, which forced the split of power, immediately after the death of Letia Nyikuri (Sifuma), among his sons. This paved way for two things to happen:- The Wanga regime and the colonial government reinforced and supported Bukusu chieftainship in Tachon country, and finally missionary work was introduced into the country through the Quaker church (Society of Friends), whose outpost was at Kaimosi in the Terik country. The Quaker Church had been founded earlier (1650) by George Fox in the United States and Europe.

It was during this period and in the present territory, especially in the more easterly and northerly parts of the region that the Tachon evolved as a cultural and linguistic group. Many of the sub-tribes and clans, as they
now exist, were formed and consolidated as they responded to the colonial requirements of registration, tribal reserves and taxation. Thus the coming of both the white man and the Bagisu and Kakilelwa to the Tachon country influenced the structure of the tribe and the association of its clans.

This theory has been dismissed by some schools of thought, who have jointly stated that the people had one origin. They entered their current territory from a northerly and easterly direction. They had a common culture, tradition and ancestor. There is evidence that they originated from an ancestral village of Kunar, which most Luhya communities have referred to as Kuru in Misri. Evidence of their existence in the past is found in their migration, social and cultural developments, as manifested in their agricultural, livestock and blacksmith activities. These characteristics were also common among the people they came across. They borrowed and gave out what they could to enrich their culture and religion. The only thing that does not seem to have been in their practice was "absorption of other people". They allowed all who came among them to live as a unit of their own, not to interfere with their culture and identity. However, they, Tachon, were easily assimilated. To this end, it is possible to argue that most of the Luhya tribes and clans might have sprung from the Tachon, and not vice versa. Here, they have identified the Tirik, Abashien, Abakhayo, Abatukiika, Abakimwei, among others, as some of the clans or tribes, which were formed.

Other religious activities, which this group has argued makes the Tachon a universal group, include circumcision of both girls and boys while facing the east, marich, and the planting of the omutoto, peepul tree. The omutoto represents a shrine and it is also used to identify all the routes they passed through during their migration and settlement. Finally, they all claim to have passed through and settled at Sirikwa for a number of generations on their southward and westerly movement.

The Waluchio Buria Hypothesis

Waluchio Buria came from the Tachon Sub-tribe of Kapnabiya (Bahabiya), otherwise called Katuum, the group renown for producing chroniclers, smiths and surgeons. He was an elder since 1976 and a chronicler, respected for his grasp of the knowledge and history of the Tachon people. He is the 126th of such men in the community, since 127 BCE. He was also respected and consulted by the people of Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga, Busia and Saboet, and of the Western side of the Rift Valley on matters of universal living.

In trying to trace the present names of things, especially places and people, Waluchio states that the Maasai, the Swahili (Arabs) and the later leaders of Wanga and Maasai, particularly Laibon Lonana and Nabongo Mumia, were responsible for a distortion of history and names of places and people of Rift Valley and Western Kenya. He says, "They had great influence in making the written history of various tribes of Kenya". He adds, "where they were not involved, the Muzungu and earlier writers of history wrote everything out of imagination and conjecture".
For instance, Buria believes that the present word and name Bukusu, was coined for political reasons and as a result of the "fear of this cluster of people to be disowned", by the people of Western Kenya. He states that there was bad blood between the main occupants of the current Bungoma and Busia and the people of Masaaba of the Kikayi lineage (Bagisu), because they were associated with "man-eaters" that feasted on human flesh. By 1910, the people of Bukusu had grown outward from Lumboka, Mumias, where they were used as labourers by Mumia and also sold as slaves to Arab merchants, to the Tachon land (where they were first received as refugees running away from Mumia’s soldiers after a civil upheaval leading to the invasion of the Tachon Fort of Chetambe). By 1937, they were searching for their identity, which led to the name of **Bukusu**. This served to firstly fulfill the registration requirements with the then colonial government, and secondly to bring together all the other groups in Bungoma who did not directly fall under the Tachon, Saboet and Iteso, and who had initially been classified under the banner of Kitosh.

Buria further states that when the Bukusu fled into the Tachon Country in 1894, the Tachon were known to the colonial government as Kitosh. Between 1895 and the break-up of the Kitosh empire after the death of Letia (chief) Nyikuri, all the persons between river Nzoia and Mt. Elgon operated under the banner of Kitosh. Buria argues that the Maasai had used this word to describe the fierce character and the aggressiveness of the Tachon people at War, especially during the Mabanga war of 1798, which the Maasai lost bitterly. From then on, the Maasai marked the Tachon as their enemy number one.

Serious attempts to separate the Bukusu from the term Kitosh, started immediately after a visit to Bukusu country, specifically Kimilili, by Ms. J.S. La Fontaine, who was compiling the oral history of "The Gisu of Uganda". The campaign was led by Baskari Wakoli Nabwana, son of Wakoli, son of Mukinusu, son of Lufwalula of the Muyemba clan of Banyala (Banyala ba Ndombi-Navakholo), otherwise called Kakilelwa. Wakoli Mukinusu is renowned for masterminding the workers' strike at Lumboka against the Wanga regime, and for killing Hamisi the store man. Wakoli had been hired as a foreman, to supervise road construction and farm workers. He was responsible to Hamisi for food rations to the workers (labourers). He led the revolt that paved the way to the Chetambé war. He then led the rebels into Tachonland as refugees in August, 1895. He was generally taken by the rebels their leader and saviour for delivering them from the chains of Wangadom and slavery. After his death, his son Nabwana became a collaborator and informer to the then colonial government. He also sat on the leaders council presided over by Chief Murunga, the then colonial appointed chief of the Kitosh people. In 1942 the colonial government appointed him chief of the Bukusu people living in Kimilili areas, and he was later honored with an O.B.E award by Queen Elizabeth II of England in 1959.

Nabwana then quickly started campaigning for a "Bukusu" nation. He organised several meetings, to discuss the "Bukusu" nation. At one meeting two names were proposed to unify all people in Bungoma, who were neither Tachon, nor Saboet nor Iteso. The names proposed included "Kikai", and
Sirikwa. It was argued that these two names were important in the making of the history of the Masaaba people. The Kikai group was wholly responsible for bringing together some Uganda groups into the history of Kenya, while the Sirikwa group was responsible for the Tachon influence in the history of the Masaaba people. These names were rejected forthwith; for fear that this would strengthen the Abatukiika and promote the Tachon supremacy over the new nation. Baskari himself proposed the name "Munyala", but again this was opposed, especially by the Abanyala peoples represented at the meeting. The Banyala argued that their identity was already very clear, and they did not have to hide under a new nation. Other names proposed included "Malaba", "Neala" and "Tachon Mwalie". At one of the meetings, we are informed that Masinde Muliro, then an upcoming politician, of the house of Abangokho of Bugisu, proposed that people should be allowed to go out to the community and seek the masses opinion. This would lead to a collective and descriptive name, representative of all the people, to form the new nation. Muliro had sensed that the leaders were beginning to drift, and soon, the envisaged nation would not be founded. He was determined to hold the new community together, and as a young ambitious man, looking for political status and fame, he found this an opportunity to build his stature. He was seeking leadership and loyalty from the people who would later assure his future prominence. With this in mind, three more conferences were called and chaired by Muliro himself, under the patronage of Nabwana, and the spiritual guidance of Elijah Masinde, founder of Dini Ya Musambwa, a religious sect propagating virtuous of traditional beliefs and black magic. These meetings were held at Kimilili, Maeni and Kapchai.

Many observers viewed these meetings as calculated to enhance the name of Muliro, promote Dini Ya Musambwa and protect small groups, especially splinter groups of the Bugisu in Kenya and the Banyala seeking settlement in Kitosh, present day Bungoma. They were further seen as a movement to promote the political might of the proposed hybrid nation. They abhorred the emergence of a strong Tachon nation. It is understood that Muliro, Nabwana and Masinde, warned the people to guard against the influence of the Tachon and the British intervention in the new nation once formed, lest they be sent back to Uganda, and the cruel leadership of Ndombi of Bunyala and Nabongo Mumia. The fear of the Tachon was even manifested at the struggle for independence, and in the formation of political parties, where the new nation and the Tachon appeared in two opposing camps of Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) and Kenya African National Union (KANU), respectively.

At Kapchai, a number of clans from other communities including Tachon (especially the Mwalie family), Banyala, Batura, Wanga, Bagisu, Bakhayo, Kapras, Mrach, and Walaku (Saboet), were enlisted under a new banner "Bukusu". These are the same clans that Makila has included among the Bukusu clans, in his book.

The name 'Bukusu' was coined, firstly to hide the identity of the Bagisu in Kenya, and secondly, to open a new chapter of leadership in Western Kenya led by splinter group of the Banyala people. Most of the clans listed are said not to have been present at these meetings, were not aware of the new
nation, and had not consented to memberships. Whereas these people were trying to establish a new nation, the Government of the day was, through the Area Councils and Names Conferences, interested in understanding and documenting information on the peoples of the nation so as to fulfil the requirements for registration of persons, and to carry out a countrywide census.

As for the origin of the name Tachon, Buria holds that these people were originally called "Chesirikwet", who had three kinds of jobs: - tilling the land, keeping animals and as blacksmiths. This name was used along with other names like Abalimi (by Kapras), Abekwe (by Wanga), Abe Tacho (by Wanga), Kitosh (by the colonial Government), Barwa (by the Bukusu) and Abasebe (by the Marach and Samia). It was not until the Area Councils and Names Conferences, called by the colonial government to identify the peoples of Kenya by their right titles, that the name Tachon was officially adopted. At these meetings, the Tachon people were represented by Petro Wanyama, a church leader, schoolteacher and elite. Petro believed that the Tachon people had existed through time and the name was not new.

Buria has also cited other names, which came into existence recently. They include Kisumu, which he explains came from two activities that took place at the site. First, the site was a meeting place for traders, esiisumu, in Wanga dialect. Second, during a time of famine, many people came to this place to beg for food from those who had come to sell, and the Maragoli called it okusuma, to beg. He explains that Kakamega originated from the word kakume, to die in the wild. It came to pass that some Nandi people were trying to migrate to the south to the present Kakamega forest. Their seer advised them, saying it was wild and they could die there without trace.

On the origin of the word Kavirondo, Buria argues that it was not an original word from either the Luo or Luhya language. He explains that it was a confusion created by the Swahili Arab traders to describe the sitting or squatting behaviour, especially by women when they prepared flour or peanut butter where they crouched and sat on their heels. This was evident among women groups of Nyanza and Western Kenya.

What Buria is actually doing is to introduce a new chapter on tracing the roots of various tribal names and places. He first dismisses some of the arguments that have persisted over time, concerning the origin of some groups, and then weighs the present names. He removes any ancestral attachments, and challenges the agents or advocates of such philosophies to provide proof. This hypothesis has been successfully followed by M.D.W. Jeffreys in tracing the evolution of the name 'Hottentot'. This is later followed by the works of H.A. Mwanzi in his study of the Kipsigis people.

The question yet to be answered is, "Who actually knows the origins of present names of certain peoples of Western Kenya, particularly the Luhya? Who knows the truth and the validity of their composition?" The debate on the origins of most Luhya groups is quite bizarre and it even appears that there is nothing Luhya about the Abaluhyia.
CHAPTER THREE: THE TACHON PEOPLES  25 - 33

The Composition of the Tribe  27

The Various Sub-Tribes and Clans  29

1. Kapchikhen (Abachikha)  29
2. Chipruk (Chimuluku)  29
3. Mwalie (Abamwalie)  29
4. The Kabyonek Group  30
5. The Tambach  30
6. The Grates  30
7. El’Kony  30
8. Relievers  31
Chapter Three

THE TACHON PEOPLES

The Composition

The Tachon peoples are believed to have originated from the village of Matruh (Maturu), on the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt, hence Misri. Some chroniclers and writers have classified these people as Bantu, and hence Baluhya, while others suggest they should be read as Hamites, specifically Plain-Highland Nilotes, because they followed the Nile on their southward movement into their current settlement and further, they are related to the Kalenjin group of people. Prof. Were says they are "akin to the Kalenjin", while Makila states they are "Barwa", the enemies of the people of the land.

The History of the Bantu people suggests that they belong to the Niger-Congo family of the twelve African ethnolinguistic communities. The others include the Afro-Asiatic, Macro-Sudanic, Central Sahara, and the Click Families. Further study reveals that the Bantu came into Kenya through southern Uganda, and Northern Tanzania, with a major dispersal at Shungwaya in Eastern Kenya. This dispersal, led to the evolution of the major Bantu groups of Kikuyu, Akamba, Ameru, Embu and some coast communities. The group of Bantu people that came through southern Uganda on their way from the Congo led to the evolution of most Luhya communities and the Bantu of Western Kenya. We do not have any evidence of Bantu people who came into the country via the Nile, and the Lake Turkana, neither do we have any evidence of Bantu origins in the Sudan nor Egypt.

The groups of people who came from the Egypt and the Sudan through the Nile and the Ethiopia (Abyssinia) were previously classified as Hamitic, Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic. Today they are appropriately classified as Cushites and Nilotes. If the migration movement was used as a basis of classification, the Tachon people would be rightly classified among the Nilotes, the people who followed the Nile. Further down, the Nilotes are divided into Lake Nilotes, Plain Nilotes, Highland Nilotes and Plain-Highland Nilotes. In this particular case, the classification follows areas of settlement and preference of the route of movement during the sojourn from the North within the Nile basin. If this was followed, the Turkana and the Luos would be Lake Nilotes, the Maasai Plain Nilotes, some of the Kalenjins would be Highland Nilotes whereas others would be Plain-Highland Nilotes. The Tachon are said to have wandered between the banks of the Nile, its valleys and hills. While in Kenya, they wandered through the plains, hills, mountains and valleys for settlement and grazing fields. They were farmers and blacksmiths at the same time. They also loved their totem, the guinea fowl, which is a member of the grassland animals. This brings them closer into the Plain-Highland Nilotes group of people.

Some writers have opted to call this group "Azania", instead of Nilotic or Hamitic. Writing in 1933, G.W. Huntingford identified a group of people who practiced agriculture and who came from the north as "Azanians". He stated
that these people originated from the north, and were the first settlers of Trans-Nzoia, Wausin Gishu, Nandi, Kericho, Laikipia and Nakuru. They were also responsible for the first human developments in Eastern Uganda, the Rift Valley and Northern Tanzania. Prof. G. Were has in this case indicated that the Tachon were the first to occupy the lands between Trans Nzoia and Yala. The Tachon were also responsible for the development of the Masaaba community in Eastern Uganda through the Tukiika clan. The Tachon first met the Kalenjin at Torit in the Southern Sudan and moved with them into Kenya, as Kitoki and Kalenjin. What is not clear is the relationship between the Tachon and the Kalenjin, whether they were one community or two different communities. Pioneer writers on this subject have called them cousins.

Having been the first settlers in Western-Central Kenya and the lake region, one is tempted to ask, "Were these the Azania?" Prof. Were contends that the Tachon do not have their origins among the Bantu peoples. He has suggested that they were only bantuised between 1586 and 1625. So, were they the Azania that Huntingford referred to in his text?

The question of placing the Tachon as either Bantu or Nilotes is not so simple. Some people argue that they are Luhya, and therefore Bantu because of their language and location. Others argue that they are members of a Kalenjin family because of their language and culture of naming, circumcision, and various aspects of their religion. They state that there are some traces of Kalenjin in their language, especially at tribal ceremonies, and through circumcision activities.

It may be that these people are not what they are thought to be. In fact, some Bukusu people consider them a recent generation blend from a Bukusu mother and Kapras father. They say this is why they speak a language akin to Kapras at the same time Bukusu. At this point, references are made to what Huntingford said in 1968 in reference to the argument postulated by M.A. Bryan in 1959. Ms. Bryan had cautioned on using a language to draw boundaries. She had stated that in attempting to determine "genetic relationships", we should be careful not to speak about any language as if there were always one "parent". Not only may there be more than one "ancient" language involved, but these may have come into the "family tree" at different historical periods, so that one language or group of languages may have evolved from the impingement of one more other language type upon a substratum. Languages that are of mixed origin, in this sense, are more common than has been expected.

In reference to this, Huntingford has suggested that where a hybrid concept is postulated, it is difficult to precisely state whether the people in question are what they are thought to be, in this case Bantu or Nilotes. They might in fact be a separate ethnic group arising from a mixture of some form yet to be discovered, with their own culture and language.
The Various Sub-Tribes and Clans

There are eight groups of people with well over 50 clans who claim to be members of the Tachon tribe. These people include:

1) **Kapchikhen (Abachikha)**

This group is made up of six clans and they include the following:

- Abamuongo (Muongo), Abachambai (Chambai), Abakabini (Kabini), Abakobolo (Kobolo), Abamakhanga and Abacharia (Kapcheria).

This group is found in present day Kakamega and Bungoma districts. Their origin is traced back to Kapchikhen, the son of Kapchhai, son of Merimet, son of Chikha.

2) **Chipruk (Chimuluku)**

This community evolved around 1815ACE as a result of intermarriages between the Tachon and the Maasai Purko. They include five main clans:

- **Moitek**, who have since left to join their cousins, the Kalenjins, in the Rift Valley of Kenya.
- **Mandoli**, currently in Magemo, Lugusi of Bungoma.
- **Chepkwabi** (Abakwabi), found both in Magemo and Uasin Gishu.
- **Ababwoba**, now living among the Bukusu and the Bagisu.
- **Kapsimisi**, both in Bungoma and in Kericho. In Bungoma, they are also referred to as Abasimisi (Basisimis in the bukusu dialect).

These clans do not inter-marry.

3) **Mwalie (Abamwalie)**

This group comprises 17 clans, who were also the first arrivals in the Mwalie (Tulienge) caves around Malakisi. They include:


Kibanani, a member of the Abasonge clan, led this group into the Mwalie area. Some of these clans have reproduced and multiplied creating more clans. For instance:

a) The Ababichu are further divided into three sub-clans who include: *the Kaliuba (Abakaliuba), Lusaka (Abalusaka), and Muuyi (Abamuyi)* who now live in Webuye, Malaba and Lugari areas.
b) The Abamakhuli, are divided into four sub-clans: the King'asi, Lunza, Ewele and Mayakali, spread all over Bungoma.

c) The Abayumbu are further divided into two sub-clans: the Khaya and Njabasi living in Webuye and Kanduyi parts of Bungoma.

d) The clan of Abasonge has four sub-clans: Tawai, Kibande, Bitelia and Wandekiti, who are spread all over Bungoma (Lugulu, Lutacho, Mihu, Kanduyi, Kimilili, and Chwele) and Malava-Lugari Districts.

e) Abasamo, on the other hand, have three sub-clans: Abasimaolia in Chwele, Abakhusia in Malaba and Abalimo in Webuye.

f) The Abasaniaka are divided into three sub-clans: the Abakisila and Abamusal in Vihiga, and Abisimo in Webuye.

4) **The Kabyonek Group**

This group, which includes five clans, produces circumcision surgeons and attendants at the baptism ceremonies (marich). The clans include: Kabyonek, Katuum (Abahabiya), Kafusi (Abamatili), Abameywa, Abasihoya (Abasiyoa). The Katuum are further divided into three sub-clans: Chikolati (Abachikolati), Muumbwa (Abamuumbwa), and Muruli (Abamuruli).

5) **The Tambach Group**

The Tambach group is made up of three clans, which include the Kemei (Abakimwei), Sangale (Abasangale) and the Mang'eti (Abamangeti). Some of these people are living in Bungoma where they speak a mix of Luhya dialects, while the majority is in Tambach of Rift Valley, where they speak a Kalenjin dialect.

6) **The Grates Group**

The Grates are responsible for making fire, rain, water drilling and mineral prospecting. They are twelve in number, and they include:

Kapchewa (Abachewa), Chemwile (Abachemwile), Kapchwa (Abakahabwa), Abahambi (Abakhambi), Abamutama, Kipchebwai (Abakubwayi), Kaplekei (Abaleke), Abamarakalo, Abamuchemi, Abamukhuyu, Abasamba, Abawande.

7) **El Konyi Group**

This group includes six clans. Of these, two, the Abashien and Abatukiika, have since broken off to start two major sub-tribes of Luhyia: the Marama and the Bukusu. These clans include:

Ngachi (Abangachi), Chewoi (Abacheo), Kiboriti (Abakiboriti), Abasang’alo, Abashien, Abatukiika.

The Abangachi are further divided into: Abawaila, Abakhusumaya and Abaweke. These people are found in Webuye, Lugari, Kimilili, Kapsengel and Sirisia. The Abasang’alo, on their part, has five more units. These include: Abamwinami of Kakamega (Lugari) and Bungoma, Abatamuoyo of Kakamega and Bungoma,
Abaholela of Kakamega and Bungoma, Abaleka of Wanga and Marama in Kakamega, and the Abakhaabi of present day Mundika and Bukhayo in Busia District.

The Abatukiika, on the other hand, has ten sub-clans, which include: Abasibende, Ababichachi, Ababambo, Ababiyabi, Abamuki, Abasitui, Abakipemuli, Ababuulo, Abamatilu, and Abakimwei.

8). Relievers Group

This group comprises of the 7 families who were transferred to Letia Nyikuri (Sifuma) of Tachon by Chief Chitere of Kapras, during the war with the Banyala peoples (1870). The people in this group include: Abamachina, Abamuchi, Abasiu (Abasihu), Abamakangala, Abasogo, Abatobo and Abanjasi.

The Abasogo and Abatobo have since gone back to Kapras. The remaining families multiplied into individual clans. They are found both in Bungoma and Malava-Lugari Districts.

Following this classification, the Tachon people are made up of 58 clans. The 1989 census recorded a population approximately 0.85 million, and by 1999 they had increased to 1.09 million people, with a life expectancy of 52 years.

As we can see the Tachon can be found all over Western Kenya among different communities speaking different dialects. It should, however, be understood that the Tachon are a patrilineal group with strong emphasis on the notion of decent from a common ancestor. The community also recognizes those persons who think of themselves as Tachon because they maintain a link, however thin, with the aspect of Tachon faith, tradition, believes and practices.
Chart 1: The Tachon Family Tree (Structure)
Map 1: Western Kenya Map Showing the Location of Tachon Peoples with Their Neighbours
PART TWO: ORIGIN, MOVEMENT & SETTLEMENT  34 - 112

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Origin and Migrational Movements 700 BCE to 1900 ACE</td>
<td>34-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>The Dispersals &amp; Their Significance</td>
<td>67-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>The Warfare</td>
<td>73-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>The Tachon Factor in the Settlement of Western Kenya</td>
<td>86-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>Early Encounter with Foreigners</td>
<td>92-112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR: THE ORIGIN AND MIGRATIONAL MOVEMENTS 700 BCE - 1900 ACE

The Old Story 35
The Origin 35
The Detention 40
The Start: The Escape 41
Why and When They Left Naitiri 45
The Katiri Dispersal 49
The Sirikwa Settlement 51
The First Group 53
The Second Group 53
The Third Group 59
The Re-Unification 60
Chapter 4
THE ORIGIN AND MIGRATIONAL MOVEMENTS 700BCE-1900ACE

The Old Story

Many people of East Africa know the legend, which is now famous, that they originally came from a land to the north called Misri. It is from this mysterious land of Misri that these peoples left for East Africa. Some of the people who have claimed origin in Misri are the Bukusu, Maragoli, Samia, Banyore, Bakhoba, Bashisyutsa, Batsotso, Tiriki, Bakhayo, and Marach of the Luhyia community. All these people relate to the story that at one time, they lived in Misri, to the north of Mt.Elgon, before coming to Kenya.

Some of the other people with the same legend are the Gusii, Kuria, and the Basuba of Kenya. In addition, the Kalenjin also have the same old story. The people of Uganda, including the Baganda, Basombi, Basindi, Batenaite, Bakokho, Bagwe, Bakombe, Bagra, Bahinda and Bayango, also identify with the story that they once lived in a land called Misri. In Tanzania, the Haya people are believed to have come from Misri. Two important questions arise: Did these people actually come from Misri? Where and what is this Misri? These are questions answerable only by further research into the individual groups.

The Tachon people, now living in Bungoma, Kakamega, Trans-Nzoia, Busia and Uasin-Gishu, also claim to have come from Misri. These are the people we shall be concerned with throughout this text, and probably they will tell us what the mysterious Misri is!

Origin

The Tachon peoples have clearly identified Misri as their home of origin. This, they explained through their chronicles of the origin of the word, location, climate, physical nature, and the economic and social events that occurred when they were in the land of Misri.

On the origin of the word Misri, they have said:

In the land of Misri, we grew up. Misri is our own name, founded by our own people. We named every place we came through after our hardworking leaders: sooth-sayers, seers, baptists, latarians, letias, medicine men and warriors. The name Misri was derived from the name of our great soldier called NeChemsri Se'Chepsri, who lived before the great wars fought in that land. Misri means good fortune and good news for all human kind. It also means light, well-provisioned and strength. These are the same tenets that Se'Chepsri stood for in his leadership.

Se'Chepsri is said to have been a forthright, pure individual who ruled by the word and guidance of God. He taught all his ministers and nationals that God never built houses that looked all the same, and that whenever he released his instructions to man, he did not leave copies behind because he expected man to be pure and reasonable. He also taught that he who had clean hands, not soiled in the blood and flesh of others, grew stronger and
lived to serve the creator. That God and his angels walked besides man to protect him from evil and temptation, while man walks besides God with trepidations. God wanted man to stay prayerfully and in the freedom of maturity.

As the Letia of the people, he promised not to stand in the way of the nation but to provide for their needs and respond to their aspirations. He is alleged to have asked his ministers to serve the people diligently, saying, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door of our gates and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

On location, they have told us:

_We lived in a village called Matur on the greatest river of life. We had built mud walls all round our village. People from the south passed through our nation to get water from the great river on the north. We did our fishing in this great river. We worshipped here too. To our south was an area full of burning sand. The area received very little rain. The people of the south used camels and donkeys to fetch water from the great river. Their water pots were made of wood. On our west was a very wild desert._

From this information, one concludes that these people must have lived in Maturu i.e. Matruh on the Mediterranean sea. If this is true, then the wild desert on the West must have been the Libyan Desert, while the sandy mass of land on the south was the extension of the same desert and the Sahara.

The chroniclers also say that at Matruh, the people kept animals, they were pastoralists, and they also planted millet, sorghum and rice. Various clans have different chronicles relating to their functions during their stay in Matruh. For instance, the Kapchikhen (Abachikha), have narrated that they lived on fishing, presumably on the Mediterranean sea and the Nile, and were also responsible for appeasing the God of the Sea. They offered sacrifices on behalf of the whole community to pacify the "God of the Sea of All Good" for continued plant life, strength of the tribe and growth of the nation. The offerings ranged from plants, harvests and animals. The plants and a harvest of any particular season could be brought to the banks of the sea, prayers could be made, and the crop would be deposited into the sea. This was usually done where the waters were very calm, or at a confluence. The animals were slaughtered at a shrine built on the bank of the river; blood would be tapped and shared among the elders. A small quantity of blood was taken to the Altar at the shrine to be shared between the Sea God and his Messengers. The entrails would be opened, strewn over the seawater, the shrine, and each household given a small dose to take home for cleansing of the household. This would ensure protection of the family against hunger, drought, thirst and the rage of the Sea God.

The Kapchikhen were also responsible for protecting the marine life. They therefore did not allow anybody to misuse the waters and their inhabitants. All the fish collected was eaten, and the surplus sold out to traders from the south, west and east of the area. The Katuum (Abahabiya), were, on the other hand, responsible for protecting prospecting sites, making and selling artifacts, ironworks, etc. Their products included spears, blades, head beads, and ornamental cooking items, and pottery.
Other clans have also indicated what they did in society. Most of what they did could now be traced through their *yinono*, self-declaration and pronouncement. We shall be looking at this later. However, it is clear that all the groups were generally hunters and raiders. All the loot captured during the raids was stored in the *olukoba*, or sold to the traders from across the sea and the desert. These traders were most interested in hooves, tusks, shells, skins (especially crocodile and snake skins), and skins and hides of other animals. In exchange, they gave building materials, food, clothes and fruits.

As they mixed with in-coming visitors who wished to stay for various reasons, they expanded their village to the west bank to a place they have referred to as El Ruto Laleb. This brought the number of *chingoba*, forts, to about seventeen. Of these, eleven were in Matruh and six in Ruto Laleb. Each olukoba was occupied by a single family that later developed into a clan or clans. Every clan had an elder who ruled with the help of a council of three members called *Masis*—messengers of goodwill and fortitude. The clan elders were in turn members to the Advisory Board of the Letia. The Letia, who was the head of the tribe, also maintained a council of elders called *Mal'mayiet*—elders of impeccable disposition, intelligence and knowledge of tribal laws and customs. These were the wisemen of the tribe.

The Letia’s council consisted of six members who included the *Laitarian* the Army Chief, *Marichobiti* the Spiritual Leader and Baptist, *O'Muliuli* Clean Soul, *Omung'osi* the Oracle/Seer and Traditional Doctor/Healer, and the *Metainik* the Custodian of Culture and History of the people. The Metainik is also called *O'romuse*, Sage.

The Tachon chroniclers have identified their first Letia as Kapchikhen El Maturu, their Laitarian as Nechemsri, the Omung'osi as Loiboiben El Nalo, the Marichobiti as Kabin El Ter and the Metainik as Bel Set Nemsri. The Metainik has also been identified as the eldest brother to Kapchikhen El Maturu, the Letia. They were the sons of De El Maturu.

After having established themselves in this village, in the land of Misri, they experienced a period of war. This was probably between 700–600 BCE., the period during which the whole area was swept by what has been referred to by chroniclers as, "the wild army", which displaced many families of Misri. Some families were taken captive and others ran away. The "Wild army", led by an individual they have named Asiuben (probably Assurbanipal), swept to the south, came back again and left through the Siuna, (probably the Sinai), never to return. The army left the area completely deserted with no shelter, food, animals and other necessities. One Tachon elder had this to say:

My grandfather told me the war was not as simple as the World War I and II. It was destructive indeed. It cleared the whole area of everything including flies.

This must have been around 667 BCE, when the Assyrian army of Assurbanipal raided what are now Egypt and the then Nubian Dynasty.
After this war, there followed raids from the south, most likely from the Nubian Dynasty or the Tourages. The raids disturbed most of the Misrians in the south, forcing them to migrate to the north, settling in the villages closer to the Mediterranean Sea, which included Matruh.

The chroniclers relate that a few harvests later,

a "visitor" came and passed through Matruh. He was accompanied by someone, apparently his wife, and travelled in a chariot pulled by horses. He had servants numbering about two hundred men. From descriptions given, the servants rode on camels carrying foods and bagpipes, wore berets and loose dresses. The visitor himself had a bowler on his head, was dressed in an armour suit and carried a bayonet hanging from his side. It is believed he was a superior man or a son of a southerner ruler. In his chariot, he carried a light boat, could have been a coracle for sports or easy rowing. The lady was dressed beautifully, she had long smooth hair falling on her shoulders, bracelets, bangles and breeches on her hands and around her neck, falling on her shoulders and chest was a beautiful silken cloth. They were suspected to be Negroes or Tourages from the Nubian Dynasty.

This visitor spent a night in the village and was escorted the following morning to what has been described as:

The waters that swallowed the sun every evening grinding it into small flames (presumably stars), which hang in the sky at night. The God of the sea put these pieces together in the early morning to create the sun we saw during the day.

The people have explained that the reason why God crashed the sun into pieces at night was so that the night could be cool and people may rest.

Before the visitor left for the waters, he was given the following conditions:

1) That he will cause no disturbance to the gods of the sea.

2) That he will not go with his 200 men into the waters of the sea because some of them had shed blood in the past.

3) That if the gods of the waters of the sea were disturbed the 200 men would be offered as sacrifice.

These revelations to the visitor was made by the Omung'osi and announced by the Letia and his council. About fifty fishermen and expert swimmers escorted the visitors. One hundred and fifty men of the Matur army strengthened this team. On approaching the sea, the coracle was removed from the chariot and spread onto the water. It opened up and the couple entered with one servant. They moved from the shore and were seen to disappear far away over the water of the sea. The Matur army and the fishermen took the remaining servants; the camels and the chariot back to the village, to wait for the return of their master and mistress. Neither the couple nor their servant returned.
Two years later disaster struck the whole Misri, with devastating effects for Matruh - children, women, animals and crops died because of lack of water, food and prevalence of diseases. The waters of the sea swallowed up some fishermen while on their fishing escapades. The Letia was terrified, and his people complained and threatened to desert him if he did not act quickly to save the tribe and its stocks. The people blamed all these misfortunes on the couple that disappeared in the sea saying they must have angered the gods of the sea. They demanded that the 199 servants should be executed and offered to the ancestors and the gods of the sea. The living and the dead who ruled the underneath of the waters and the God who ruled over them all were angry with them for allowing a foreigner to venture into the great waters of life before seeking the clearance and acceptance from the gods of the sea.

Tension grew until it attracted the attention of their neighbours. At last the Letia gave up the 199 men and ordered their execution. In addition to 199 men, a gray dove was to be offered and a live white one was to be released by the seaside to search for the couple. A boat resembling the coracle used by the couple was to be constructed and stuffed with heads of two of the executed servants and a leg of the slaughtered dove and let to wonder into the sea to locate the couple and their servant. This was done at the exact spot of the seashore where the visitor and his mistress last stood before entering their coracle. The Letia prayed that this action would appease the gods to: release rain, stop the growth of the desert to the village of Matruh, give back life to the people of Matruh, restore life to plants, the soil and the animals, increase the harvests that had already started failing, stop famine, and defend the people of Matruh from any further disaster.

News of the massacre of the 199 men reached the King of the southern country. Some chroniclers have named this King Siamandiki, while others have named him King Siandike (possibly Psamtek who ruled between 644 -610 BCE). It is possible that the couple, who arrived in this area anywhere between 644 and 610 BCE, were subjects to Psamtek.

The king was angered and he interpreted this as an act of aggression, an abomination and a threat to his kingdom, government, the people and the neighbouring states. The Tachon chroniclers have described the King as:

............ who valued no small people, never valued defense for individual persons. He was very selfish, only concerned about himself and his family members. He was a crude and cruel king.
The Detention

The King of the Southern country Psamtek believed that the action taken by the people of Matrih was part of the Letia's plan to raise the people against him so as to spoil his reputation in the world. He also believed that this was indeed only a part, but the bigger plot to claim his throne and life was under way. He is alleged to have said that the people of Matrih had gone against God and deserved to be punished. He therefore sent an army of soldiers to clear the Matrih village.

During the 'clearance', women and young girls were captured and sent to the King in appeasement. Some children were slaughtered and others taken as slaves, and later sold to those who did not have any of their own. All the men were arrested and transported to a place near the border of Misri and the Nubian country called Helefwanti (possibly at Elephantine on the Nile where Egypt borders with the Sudan). Elephantine is on the River Nile and lies between Shallal and Qubbet al-Hawa.

At Helefwanti, the men were put into what have been described as "Kampiri" (possibly camps), in the hands of brutal soldiers of Psamtek. The Letia (Kapchikh) and his council were detained at a place, which has been identified as E'Sang, north of Helefwanti, (this could be Esna) along the Nile of the ancient Egypt. Esna is south of Thebes on the River Nile.

The chroniclers have described Helefwanti as:

A Cave of Death, A village of bitter life, hard labour, too little food, too congested and overcrowded with over 50,000 men (so-called rebels). Old men died in great numbers because of old age, overcrowding, hunger, hard labour and mistreatment. It was a horrible place, a cave of death. The wardens never differentiated between the old and the young, the weak and strong.

On the camps, the chroniclers have stated:

In the Kampiri were men of various races, heights, ages, size and intelligence. Some of them were criminals of war, political prisoners who were opposed to Psamtek. There were soldiers, acrobats, and swimmers, all of them.

The prisoners, we are told, came to know about each other when they worked on the fields or prepared water channels. The channels were prepared to supply water into the fields for crop, animal, and domestic use. The Tachon people hold that it is possible that most of the work on the Nile was done partly by their ancestors, including building of cataracts and dams for irrigation. On the fields they discussed about their families, previous assignments and the past in general.

The chroniclers have further observed:

Our ancestors are said to have worked on fields with people they found at Helefwanti, and with others who came later. They learnt about each other on the fields and on the big river of Misri, the river of life and death. The river had heavy floods, which washed away villages, and sometimes knocked the walls of Helefwanti down.
On the treatment while at Kampiri (detention camp), the storytellers have explained:

_We hear some of our people were tortured to death, but whether they were buried, we do not know. All that we know from our oracle is that they peacefully went to God and to our good ancestors, who were the forbearers of the tribe. They died for us all._

One night the prisoners at Kampiri of Helefwanti rose against the camp management. Del EL Masri a prisoner of Asiatic blood was co-opted to lead the uprising arrangements. The prisoners struck at night killing most prison guards and burning down buildings. They proceeded to escape in the early hours of the morning.

**The Start: The Escape**

The escape came after 8 years of detention and hard labour. The prisoners from Matruh (Tachon) were led by one of the prison guards whom they had arrested during the uprising. The guard was named Cheng El Ale. He led the Tachon ancestors, together with some Asiatic and Hamitic people through the Numbia country to Olabi and Baru lands. In their escape they followed the Nile basin and settled at Sengoi. The chroniclers have described Sengoi as a confluence of two big rivers:

*At Sengoi two big rivers joined together to form the big river of Misri that poured its roaring waters in the great waters north of Matruh. It was here that the first Sangaya since the arrest and detention of the Matruh people was celebrated. This also marked the first re-union of the Matruh people.*

The only place of confluence on the Nile before Khartoum, Wad Medani and Malakal is Atbara. Dispersal occurred here dividing the people into two groups. One of the groups followed the Monyei (Nile) to the south, while the other followed the Kisila (present Athbara).

The first group comprised three families and some Hamitic friends, sympathizers and relations probably the Wollo Wollos, moved along the Monyei River (Nile) to a place they named Katuum, possibly present Khartoum, under the leadership of Moiben Se'Songol, a younger brother to Kapchikhen. They were further led south to Kimasin, possibly Singa the basin washed by both the White and Blue Niles, where they broke into two groups - one trekking down to Emaraka, possibly Malakal, and the other wandering east and across a large water mass (Blue Nile), to establish a fort in memory of one of their war leaders Tambach who drowned when his boat was over powered by the waters. The Tambach on the ancient maps is found in present day Ethiopia and spelled Dambacha, south of Lake Tana.

Cheng El Ale led the group following the Kisila River. This group comprised the majority of the Tachon ancestors, with some Hamitic and Asiatic groups. They followed the Atbara down to Kipkirma, possibly Kassala or Khashm el Girba, where they met the first crop of very light skinned people with fair hair, possibly the Cushites. By this time, they had already intermarried with some Nubian people. At Kipkirma they all joined forces and built forts in the settlements given to them by the Cushites. They were warned not to
cross into Daora, the present day Eritrea, as savage people occupied that area.

After two generations at Kisila, approximately 60 years, the Tachon ancestors moved on to Daoria and down to a body of water they named Bali, present day Lake Tana (?). On the Daoria Highlands, Cheng El Ale died. The people were advised to bury him at the foot of the highlands, near a big river or water body. The oracle Mumbia made this advice. So they did. From the geography of Eritrea, Cheng El Ale might have been buried near Lake Tana or down the slopes and near Gallabat on the border of the present Sudan and Ethiopia. From then henceforth, they named all the land they could see from atop Daoria highlands, Cheng El Ale.

After the burial ceremonies, which were presided over by the Metainik Kepcheria, they heard drums and familiar funeral songs from the south. It was Moiben with his people coming to mourn their fallen leader Cheng El Ale. The oracle Esang’eny had informed them while they climbed the southern Dangilla highlands. They carried all items and paraphernalia for escorting a fallen leader to his final resting place. They carried ivory, animal skins and horns and drove three big bulls to be slaughtered in honour of their leader. The ivory, animal skins, other ornaments and a half of a bull were buried besides the grave of Cheng El Ale, for they found he had already been buried.

After sixteen nights of thanks giving and offerings to the gods, they all travelled down the south and reached a big river, the Nile, which they crossed under the leadership of Melut Chembaraki, and from thereon travelled south westward to the Saboet swamps, possibly the Sobat swamps, where they build forts, settlements and establishments extending to their old settlements of Emaraka. Here, their leader Melut Chembaraki died and was buried. The whole settlement was named after him. It is not clear whether this is the present Melut on the Nile or Malakal, the confluence of rivers Sobat, el Ghazal and el Jebel.

At Melut and Chembaraki many children, the initiates and animals died of mysterious diseases. Savage communities, some of whom came on canoes and others on camels from the south, took some animals away; either they were Negroes or Tourages. The people decided to abandon the settlements after the prophecy proclaimed by Tengele El Nalo the grandson of Loiboiben El Nalo, that:

“You have to keep moving down the south until you come to a swampy village which has been prepared for you to cleanse yourselves for you have stepped in bad soils which will continue to haunt your children and take away your wealth. You must proceed cleansing by dawn. Every head of the household should bring a white fowl to the cleansing site. A cow and a harisa sheep, both white should be slaughtered and the people are to bathe in their blood and entrails mixed with herbs drawn from the bark and flowers of the cedrus liban and the strobile fruit of the juniperus oxycedrus. These combined would protect the young against all evil and the animals against diseases and theft and ensure a rich harvest.

This cleansing must have taken place between September and November because this is when the liban trees flowers.
The people heeded the prophecy, offered sacrifices to their gods and trekked down along the present Blue Nile. Before they left Melut, they were divided into two groups. One group, led by Nando Senger, followed the Sobat down to the swamps near the north of Lake Lesutei, in the Equatorial Sudan at the source of Hahir River (possibly by the Lake Turkana). Letia Keptaijon Kitoki, son of Keria, under the spiritual guidance of Malekut, led the other group, which had the largest number of people. They followed the Nile in their southward movement. They were also the first to come in contact with the Bangomek, the El Kony and other Kalenjin groups at a place called Borit (Torit), and crossed over a small range of hills towards Naitiri (Katiri) in the southern Sudan. Nando Seger’s group followed them a generation later at Kapoyet where they performed the cleansing ceremonies.

Before they left Kapoyet, they received it was prophesied by Tengele El Nalo, the son of Malekut proclaiming:

*A new star is born and has just woken up from the home of our ancestors and God of all good. The star would, during the lives of our sons, grandsons and daughters, be the master of the land lost to Siamandik and his northern allies and adversaries. The star will come not of this land and will teach our children and coming generations about our ancestors, our God and us. He will be great in their eyes and those who come after him. You have to prepare yourselves to receive him in trust and good faith.*

This has been a very controversial prophecy. Some chroniclers have interpreted this to suggest a new king to rule over Misri, a king who would be more understanding and loving, compared to Siamandik. Others, especially the Christians, have maintained that this referred to the coming of Jesus Christ. This puts the period to between 22 and 7 BCE, and anywhere just before the birth of Christ. Members of the Nyikuri family (last Letia of the Tachon), have maintained that this referred to the regime of Nyikuri (Sifuma), a Letia of great heart who loved his people and championed peace among the neighbors. The weaknesses, in the Nyikuri theory are that he never ruled over Misri and the land they left to Siamandik. Recent scholars have argued that this actually referred to the coming of the white man and his art to Africa. They have insisted that his art of writing, recording and preserving information for present and future use provides a basis for understanding the past and the present.

It is not easy for us to clearly state the reference points of this prophesy and whether it has already been realized or not.
Map 2: Tachon Peoples Origin, Movement and Settlement
Why and When They Left Katiri (Naitiri)

The Kalenjin, who were then called the Miotik, put up a fort at Kapoyet (Kapoeta). The two communities started intermarrying, and this resulted into three new families: the Basenyi, Kabyonek and Sebyei. At Naitiri and Kapoyet, they adapted each other’s culture, religion and ways of life. We are told that they so fully merged that any new comer would be unable to tell the difference between them.

Around 451 ACE, the Tachon Letia was Cheng'Lailet, son of Kipro Matini. The population grew, and as they prospered, they extended their frontiers towards the northwest where they met the group they had parted with at Melut. They then decided to move on with their Miotik relations towards the south in search of new pasturelands and settlements. They first settled at a place they have identified as Tucholbut on the river Longesi, present Omo of lake Lesutei, and Turkana. They were in this area up to about the year 750 ACE. During this period, they built a very strong army under the Laitarian Meanati. The Letia at this time was Kikitwa, while the spiritual leader was Kipkirma. We are again informed that the Tachon revisited Naitiri in 1100 ACE.

After 750 ACE, under Laitarian Kapcheiyoti, from the Miotik community, they moved into present day Kenya, and settled on the west of Lake Lesutei (Turkana). They entered Kenya in two groups. The first group was composed of the Kalenjin proper (Miotik), and the Kabyonek, and the second was composed of the Tachon proper (Kitoki), the Baseneyi and the Sebei. They did not stay at Lesutei for long. Because of the harsh climate, they moved on towards the south to the Chereng'ani hills where they built a fort, which they named Cheng El Ale. They also built a shrine and planted a deciduous tree species called poplar (populus) Alba. They had carried seeds of this poplar tree all the way from Matruh. The tree resists drought and matures fast, and like the omutoto (peepul) tree (ficus religiosa), has a religious enlightenment. Most prophecies were revealed under these trees, and all major ceremonies, which touched on the sanctity of the tribe, were also conducted here. After erecting the shrine and planting the trees, they conducted prayers asking for blessings, protection of their property, and the cleansing of their hoes, spears, bows and arrows before they entered a new planting and hunting season.

At Cheng El Ale (Cherenga'nyi) they received a message from God of all Good through the oracle Chirchir Kom, saying:

*I am God of all good and your God who guided you all the way from Helefwanti and graciously received the soul of your leader Cheng El Ale and has daily kept you, your people and ancestors in touch and close connection. This day I am instructing you to inform your people to leave this fort at midnight and walk to the south and you will see yourselves what I have for you there. Your people should not at any time forget me your God, and their ancestors who were my messengers on earth. They shall not go towards the west but to the south. If they violate my instructions they are bound to enter into problems and may not find what I have preserved for them to the south of here. I am speaking this to you myself. I have set aside a peaceful settlement for my people it is safe and strategic. Here they will be protected from all evil, their enemies and greedy people. They will receive many travellers and visitors. To them I say, they should receive all in peace, feed them and show them where to rest. But let them be warned that not all who will come will be peaceful.*
Many will bring wars, and they will want to steal from you, be alert. My child the hour has come, you must now take your people out.

At this point, the Oracle Chirchir Kom was nervous and begged the God of All-Good to elaborate, saying:

Oh! My God, the creator of the Universe, the King of Light and Ruler over all that is the most high, who brought all of us into this earth and gave us the power to see and hear and do all that we can by Your strength. I am only your humble servant, mine is to obey and pass your instructions to your people as commanded. What shall I tell them when they refuse to heed your call to move? What shall I tell them?

In reply, the God of All Good said:

Tell them the God of all Good who brought you from Kunar to Matruh, released you from the chains of bondage at Helefwanti and who is the giver of life and all creation has said thus. Take with you a branch from the peepul tree, which you will plant at every location you spend a night. The leaves of the tree and its sap shall be your protector, the trunk shall symbolize your life, strength and it’s shedding the seasons of your calendar. Your ancestors will carry the rest of the needs for you. Now, you must go!

So the people moved from Cheng El Ale and settled at Koitalel, present day Kitale, around 826 ACE. The grazing fields were rich and healthy, and the hunting fields gave them all their meat requirements. However, they did not stay long, and they travelled down and built a new fort, which they again named Cheng El Ale, at present day Namanjalala, before trekking towards the slopes of Tulwop Koyonjo, which was later, renamed Tulwop Kony (Mt Elgon).

They were now under the leadership of Laitarian Moiti, the Letia Seyonei and Oracle Se’Chirchir Kom. They climbed the mountain slowly and reached its peak where they built an altar and an arc, which they named Seyonei. The fort and altar were built as a ladder between the people and their God of All Good. It was also built as an appreciation for his good work and guidance. Some Tachon elders have maintained that since the Peak of Koyonjo Mountain was closer to the sky and the sun, God would quickly receive prayers conducted here. The structure of the peak was taken as the table on which the God of All Good prepared instructions, discussed matters with the ancestors and had his meals. The arc was the house of God.

When the peepul tree matured, they cut the branches and descended down the slopes to present day Kaberwa. They built a fort before moving on to Kimalel (Kimillili), and then to Matini (Malakisi). At Matini, they built a large village filled with bomas. The village was surrounded with a wall of mud and stones on the eastern and southern side, while on the north and west were permanent rock by the Mwalie rocks. Within the rocks, caves were developed for occupation. Towards the East of the fort and immediately after the present day Malakisi Town, they developed a settlement scheme, which they named Kimatwai. From Kimatwai they set out to acquire grazing and hunting fields, and sites for marich. This took them to Stapchoi (Stapcha), present day Bokoli, where they performed marich ceremonies for all the initiates. The Stapchoi sites are still used even today, especially by the groups living in Sirisia and parts of Webuye.
From Stapchoi, they erected a fort at Martisi (Matisi). At Martisi they received some of the groups that had remained on the Koyonjo Mountain and proceeded across the Elsensioya River (probably river Nzoia) eastward to an area they have identified as Mufeku, possibly Mureku, then to Chebwai and finally settling at Maturu, a place they named after the Matruh of Misri.

While at Maturu, we are informed that they received communication through the oracle Chepserit Sapaya saying that they travel to Katiri as quickly as possible. They were advised not to follow the route they had come by to Maturu, but to proceed northwards. It was revealed that disaster was pursuing them from behind, and it involved a livestock disease, which has been described as Eilchonoik, rinderpest, which would kill animals and children alike. Eilchonoik caused dysentery, killing people and animals. This disease is estimated to have cleared the area covering present Bungoma, Busia and Trans Nzoia between 1080–1085 ACE.

Their journey back to Katiri was not easy because none of the people alive then knew where Katiri was. They relied most on the chroniclers and the oracle. They had become too many to be led by one person and various clan leaders were now jostling for power.

By the year 1090 ACE, they crossed the Lesutei with great hardship, as it was during the hot and dry season and the lake was retreating to the centre, leaving high banks with sharp ends. However, they watered at the lake Lesutei and followed its valley into the Longesi (Omo) river, finally entering Ethiopia. They were received by the Wollo people who gave them food, water and fat. They stayed among the Wollo people for two harvests (15 months), before proceeding to Gulet and then the Katiri hills where they arrived in 1100 ACE.

At Katiri, we are informed that they saw red and light coloured people cross into present day Kenya. The people are said to have been tall, with long nose and fibre like hair. A few of them were dark, but most had light skin. These may have been the Somali and/or Boran people of Kenya.
Chart 2: Settlement Areas
The Katiri Dispersal

At Katiri, they established commerce and trade with the Nubians and the Sudanese, and other tribes occupying Central Africa. They also took their trade to southern parts of present Sudan and Ethiopia. When the heavy rains came and the great river Nile was over flooded, the animals were drowned and the lives of some of the people living and tilling the lowlands were swallowed. The people sought the advice of the oracle Lutengeya who lamented that they had abandoned their God of All good, and he was unhappy with their ways of worship. That they needed to seek forgiveness from their God, strengthen their faith and trust in him, for he alone would make everything possible. The oracle is reported to have said:

.... And many of you are picking the fruits before they are ripe. This is premature; we have to follow the ways and teachings of our forefathers. Our God of All Good says our forefathers represented time - the past, the present and the future. They are the truth and we can't fight it, they are the light and we can't extinguish it. Only God of All Good has the power, strength and intelligence to do so. We must listen and act in his ways for he deals with each of us in a unique and personal way.

They therefore erected an altar, slaughtered a white harisa sheep, a goat and a bull for the God of All Good. These things were offered to reduce the rage of the angry God. In the evening, a shrine was constructed and all that remained of the slaughtered animals was served here to be eaten by God and the people's ancestors. At night, the God of All good came and told the oracle to move the people to the south to avoid the on-coming raiders. The raiders were found to include the Karamojong and Turkana warriors who had broken away from a larger gang of raiders in Central Africa, probably the Toureqs.

The people left before dawn. They went in two groups. One small group made up of Abashien and Sebeyi families were led by Mashieni Baseneyi across the Nile to the west and settled at Loka before proceeding to Yei. His son, Mulambo, the father of Nakhalaha, led sixteen households across the river to the land of Nguye (short people), probably Congo, and settled at Aba. The two groups met later at Lira and then proceeded to Ngora, Sorokho and northwards to Imatong hills. However, the Turkana and Karamojong expelled them from this area to river Namunaba (Munaba River) in Uganda.

The main group, which comprised of the majority of the people, spent their time from 1100 to 1145 in northern and northwestern Kenya, before settling at Kamalinga under Sengweti Se'Masindet. At Kamalinga, they found a number of Kalenjin communities already settled. Mashieni’s group who arrived there about 1110 ACE later joined them. The Kalenjin communities have been identified to include the Nandi and the Tugen. With these people, they moved to Marich, leaving behind the Abasaniaka who opted to settle at Weyiweyi. During the migration southwards Sengweti was recognized as the Letia, while Mashien was the Laitarian.

From Weyi, the Abasaniaka moved to Chepreria to water their flocks, salute their God of All Good, and also establish new settlements. Sengweti died just when the people were settling, and a short while later, Mashieni also
died. They were replaced by Murei Chemungun as Letia, and Chemanei Sengweti as the Laitarian. Lentoi jon Marmenti remained the Oracle while Martumu Cheng'wesi was the Marichobiti.

At Chepreria, the youth were circumcised and baptized before the tribe left for Kaptabel on their southward movement. At Chepreria, the people received a message from their God through a white dove's song, saying they leave Kaptabel as fast as possible because the area was to collapse. A rolling stone would fall from the sky destroying the whole area. The Oracle translated the message to the people and advised them to move on to the south. The youths, especially the male, argued that this was a fake message calculated to test their readiness to protect the tribe. They therefore refused to move on, and instead stayed behind to fight incase of any attacks. Others including the aged, women, girls and children, drove southwards to Kapsengeri, according to the instructions by the oracle.

When the day came, the “rolling stone” killed the majority of the people who had remained behind. Only a handful escaped, and had this to tell:

_We heard bubbling sounds like those of a flooding river or boiling water, or were they drums! From both the sky and the ground, they were all confusing. Some of us even danced to the bubbling sounds. Suddenly, there was a heavy explosion. After the explosion black jets of hot water were flying everywhere. It was a horrifying experience. We had to run like deer. We stopped at a distance and looked back to see hills forming and water jets still shooting into the air. It is a mystery that some of us survived._

This must have been a volcanic action, which led to the formation of the present Kapenguria - Cherenga’nyi escarpments, the continuation of the Elgon (Koyonjo) structures.

At Kapsengeri, they found other people of Kalenjin origin tending animals and staying in huts, which have been described as "amatokho" (manyatta). This Kalenjin group was under the leadership of Mening. The Sabeweiny arrived later in three groups, led by Matimbai, Chepsoi and Mutai. After they were all settled, they agreed to live under one government, led by Mutai who had replaced Murei Chemungun as Letia. He led the people to Sirikwa. On this trip, the composition included the Saboet, Sebei, Bangomek (Ngomanek), Kony, Semekat, and the Tachon groups. The Laitarian at the time was Matimbai. This entry into Sirikwa is estimated to have been between 1138 – 1150 ACE.

A few years later, some groups, which included the Nandi, Tugen, Katuum, Semekati and Sabeweiny, left for Kipsomba, while the Ngach, Mang'eti and Sangale trekked to Tambach to explore new pastures and settlement areas. Kipsomba was a very wild area. It was not easy to co-exist with the wild animals who raided the villages destroying crops and eating the livestock. The group that went to Tambach experienced supremacy problems. The Ngach, who formerly enjoyed superiority over the Abameywaa and Abamatili (Abakafusi), and now was being sidelined by the indigenous Tambach people, opted to travel back to Sirikwa under Chesingony. These groups were forced to retreat back to Sirikwa, and were received by the Letia Chepkabini, who had taken over from Mutai.
The Sirikwa Settlement

Sirikwa is described as the vast lands of the east, rich in pasture and game, whose people lived in underground settlements. Individual families constructed sirikwet dwellings with doors to the east. The sirikwet were underground houses entered from the east, the direction of the sun. Underground tunnels, making it possible for families to interact, connected them to each other. The structure of these dwellings was brought down from the vast Nubian Desert.

The first entry into Sirikwa is estimated at about 1138 ACE. The people lived here for approximately four generations (120 years), before they started active dispersal that took them into far away settlement areas. They had increased in numbers, and now lived in three forts all around Sirikwa. The three forts were built in one large location, surrounded on the outside by a wall built of mud and stones, a culture they brought with them from Matruh. The walls protected the occupants from surprise attacks by invading groups, especially the Turkana and Karamojong. Outside the walls were deep trenches, which ran round the whole village. The trenches were used as the first trap to net the attacking enemies, who would fall in these trenches and be arrested or killed.

While at Sirikwa, their main occupations were three: farming, (mostly millet, root crops and nuts), livestock (cattle, harisa sheep and goats) and smelting. They had also established trading relationship with people to the north, who included the Karamojong, Ateker, Turkana and Nubians. They maintained contact with the Wollo Wollo people, and lived side by side with Maasai and Kalenjin neighbours, especially the Nandi, Tugen and Kipsigis, and present occupants of the Mt. Elgon area. The Maasai groups included the Maasai Purko and founders of Uasin Gishu communities, who have been classified as Koyonjo and Kimaratia. The Abashien (Sabeweiny) had particularly rich relationships with the Tugen, leading to intermarriages, which resulted in the evolution of peoples now called Abalafu. The person who engineered this relationship was Wekoye Namiramba. Other groups that came up as part of this relationship were Abamakhanga, Abayumbu, Abachikha, and Abaliuli.

The Sirikwa dispersal, which took place about 1260 ACE, was occasioned by the Maasai Purko neighbours, together with the Kimaratia. Rivalry developed between the Maasai and the Tachen - Kalenjin groups on ownership of livestock and the general leadership in the forts. The Maasai groups, who occupied one of the three forts, decided to move out and camp on the outskirts of the Sirikwa settlement instead. They moved out into the surrounding villages and built camps. From their camps, they launched attacks on the Sirikwa settlement with the support of the Karamojong, Turkana, and the Samburu, who had settled on the southern end of Lake Lesutei (Turkana).
By 1258, the Maasai had intensified their attacks on the settlement. The groups of Tachon and Kalenjin, who had remained to defend the settlements and ritual sites, refused to pursue the attackers, arguing that while the Maasai had lived amongst them, they had intermarried and shared food from the same pot, and fighting them would lead to spilling blood of kin and loved ones, in-laws and great sages. The oracle was consulted, and he proclaimed that while the actions taken by the Tachon and the Kalenjin would be to fight evil started by the Maasai, a much more intelligent approach was possible. The people were advised by the oracle that God of All Good had talked and promised to send the Maasai to sleep long enough for the Tachon and Kalenjin groups to leave Sirikwa to safe havens. Organized migrations were started with various groups being evacuated. The evacuation went over four harvests, about 30 months, so that by 1261 ACE, all people had left the settlements.

The people left the Sirikwa settlements in four groups under four different leaders. They moved southwards and westward. As they moved, they got involved in relationships with several Bantu communities along the way. In most cases, they gave ground linguistically, but not culturally, to the people they came across. By 1700, they had been fully bantuised, and were acquiring a new identity, Tachon. Their strength, though, was in their culture, more so raising cattle, which they bled, cultivation, which was shared between men and women, and the circumcision age groups. The people who really benefited from their culture were the Bantu groups that came in from eastern Uganda. As they continued to mix and intermarry with the Bantu and Luo communities, their language dwindled and died out completely and was replaced by a hybrid Luhyia dialect, presently referred to as olutachoni.

Some of these people met later and settled together as Tachon. Others arrived as different sub-groups and were instrumental in creating most of the luhya families in Kakamega, Malava/Lugari, and Busia, as we shall see later.

The first group to leave was led by Manafwa, who headed straight for Mt. Koyonjo (Elgon). The group comprised of the people today called Abasonge, Abahengele, Abamalicha, Abasi(sania)anaka, Abamakhanga, Abalukulu, Abayumbo, Abanyangali, Ababichu, Abaluu, Abakamukong, Abakuusi, Abakamutebi, Abameya(ywa), Saboet communities, and Abamakhuli. The second group, under the direction of Kimingich, set out for Kapsenger. It comprised of the present day Abangach, Abasiyoa, Abameywa, Abakabyonek, Abakiboriti, Abashien, Abatukiika, and Abangati. The third group under the leadership of Mason was composed of the Abasang'alo, Abamarakalu, Abacheo, Abachikha, Abawande, Abahabichwa, Abamuchembi, Abasamo, Abasimisi, Abamatilu, and Abakubwayi. The fourth group under the leadership of Chemaner Kipchirchir comprised mainly the Kalenjin groups of Nandi, Tugen and Kipsigis, and some Maasai offshoots. This group headed for Central Rift; stopping briefly at Lokwek, present day Burnt Forest, before proceeding to Ravine and Bomet.
The First Group

This group, under Manafwa, headed straight for Mt. Elgon (Tulwop Kony), and spread to the slopes of Kapchai. They trekked on to Chepkwa (Bukwa), where they left the Saboet communities, the Abakamukong, Abamakhuli and Abakamutebi. The rest moved on to Kaproron, Kapchorwa, Sipi and then Solokho. From Solokho they were divided into two groups, one led by Kipbanani and the other by Se'Wamukoya. Kipbanani (Kibanani), a member of the Abasonge clan, led his group into the Mitini (Mwalie) Hills within the Tulienie region. The trek from Sirikwa to Tulienie took about 3 generations (approximately 90 years). The Kipbanani group arrived here between 1350 - 1360 ACE. The last people of this group to enter the hills were the Abayumbu. Se'Wamukoya drifted back to Chepkwa, and then to Kaitaposi, before he was forced by chingwekwe scorpions to take his people to Kitalel. Before arriving in Kitaliel, Se'Wamukoya died and was succeeded by Arap Bok from the house of Abakamukong as the Letia, while the Laitarian was Chepsumbeti from the house of Abakamutebi. A conflict arose between the Abakamutebi and Abakamukong on the leadership of the people. This forced the people to break into two groups, one led by the Abakamutebi, with Chepsumbeti as the leader, and another by the Abakamukong, with Arap Bok as their leader. The Arap Bok group sojourned to Tulwop Kony while Chesumbeti and his people followed the plains, settling at Ndalu before moving down to Misikhu, and then Kuywa. At Kuywa they were received by Arap Bok's group, which had already arrived under the new leadership of Se'Wamukoya II. The people were united under Se'Wamukoya II as they entered Tulienie.

While in Tulienie, their westerly neighbours called them the people of Mwalie - Abamwalie (Bamwalie). At Tulienie, they lived in caves, whose walls and roofs were clouded with smoke and cobwebs were hanging. The rocks forming the caves were of the igneous type and were sooty - hence mwalie.

The Second Group

This group, which was led by Kimingich, left Sirikwa between 1259-1260 ACE. They sojourned through Mbai, and moved down to Kapsenger where they met the first Masaaba speaking people between 1270-80 ACE. From Kapsenger they travelled to Kaplelegwe. Here, they broke into two groups, one under Sami Kimatek, and the other under Ng'onya Kimatun. The Kimatun group was made up of two clans; the Abatukiika, Abangati (Ababangati) and a group of Masaaba speaking people who had been deployed to look after cattle. The Ng'onya group was left in Kaplelegwe, as Kimatek's group trekked on to Kitalel, and then to Cheng'el ale (Namanjalala).

The Abatukiika, now under Ng'onya Kimatun built sirikwet (forts), at Kaplelegwe (Elegwe), and settled all their people, including members of the Masaaba community who had accepted their leadership and way of life. Intermarriages took place between the Abatukiika and the Masaaba families, leading to the creation of the clans of the Abasibende, Ababichachi, Ababambo, Abakimwei, Abakiyabi, Abalwonja, Abamuki, Abasitui, Abakipemuli, Abatilu, Abachemwile, Abaechalo, Abameme Abakhone and Abakhurarwa. These clans formed the foundation on which the present bukusu speaking communities were built.
The Masaaba people who were not Batukiikaised, remained at Kaplelegwe, as the Abatukiika community proceeded to a place in the south, possibly Namanjalala, where they found the group of Kimatek, which comprised of the Abangach; Abasiyo; Abameywa; Abakabyonek; Abakiboriti and Abashien, already settled. Kimatek and his group had entered this area from the northeast around 1325 ACE., and they named this place Cheng'elale (Namanjalala). The decision to leave Kaplelegwe for Namanjalala was occasioned by continued disturbances from the Purko Maasai and Samburu, who had joined forces with the Turkana and Karamojong to raid other tribes of their livestock.

At Namanjalala, the leadership was reconstituted into the hands of the aging and frail Kimatek. The people recommended that Ng'onya understudy Kimatek to assume power in the event of Kimatek failing to carry on his duties of Letia effectively, and as provided by the law of the land. The law of the land provided that an aging Letia would take on a student chosen by the people as the Letia-in-waiting. The aging Letia will then assume the role of a sage and develop the Letia-in-waiting to take over from him in case of senility or death. During the period of tutelage, all actions by the Letia-elect will be taken as though they came from the sage Letia.

It was at Namanjalala that the onlookers reported that they had spotted Maasai warriors in war regalia, a few kilometers from the nation. Kimatek ordered the Laitarian Tunya to organize the Baoyet to ward off the coming Maasai warriors. The Baoyet stayed alert the whole night, and by the sound of the first cock in the early morning, possibly around 3 a.m., the enemy attacked and they were repulsed and pushed towards the West, deep into present day Uganda, past Marare, a village then occupied by the Bagisu people of Masaaba stock.

Kimatek had advised the people to fight on and had predicted that they would win, because they were fighting the injustice. He recalled that the Maasai had been pursuing them all along from Sirikwa, and now was the time to teach them a lesson.

Kimatek died in 1345 ACE, two years after repulsing the Maasai attack. Ng'onya succeeded him. After the Namanjalala war, the number of clans had increased to 24 including the prisoners of war who were allowed to operate within one clan, Abanjale. The Abanjale went on to start the clans of Abang'ale and Abakangala, who remained behind joining the Bakisu. Some of their offsprings now live among the Bukusu, who crossed over into Kenya 550 years later, in 1895. On Ng'onya's death in 1352 ACE, the group was divided into three divisions under Tunya, Kiboriti and Kimasioka.

The Tunya group comprised of Abangachi, Abameywa and Abasiyoa, while the Kiboriti group comprised of the Kabyonek, Kiboriti, Basieni (who by then included Abalafu, Abamakhanga, and Abaliuli), and some of the Maasai, especially the Chepruko - Abachimuluku and the Bakoyi groups who had been captured during the disturbances at Kaplelegwe. The Kimasioka group comprised of the Abatukiika, Ababangati and the 15 clans that had developed as a result of intermarriages between Abatukiika and the Masaaba community.
The group led by Tunya, left for Kinyarusi, through Kapenguria and Kiringeti. The Kimasioka’s group followed them a harvest later. At Kinyarusi, they met the Abakatuum with some Tugen families who had come through Kaptama. The Kiboriti group arrived later after one harvest. Kiboriti died immediately after his group settled at Kinyarusi. The three groups and their hosts intermingled and leadership shifted to Mang'eti, a member of the Tugen community. After three harvests, they regrouped and spread as far as Riwa. Here, the Abasioya and Abameywa families joined them.

From Kinyarusi, the people, under Mang'eti, broke into two groups. The one under Mang'eti travelled towards the east, and are said to have settled at Tambach. The second group, under Wamukoya, moved to Chepkwa, and then towards Tulwop Kony, where there was a mini dispersal.

The Tulwop Kony (Mt. Elgon) dispersal, involved four groups. The first group, consisting of the Abangati under Masia, descended the western slopes of the mountain to Enaboko, where they met a people who spoke a language akin to Masaaba, and also ate human flesh, possibly the Bagisu. The Abangati were accepted into the community. These could be the present Bagisu - Ababangati of present day Uganda. The second group, consisting of the Abashien and Abalafu, led by Wekoye, travelled south, coming to Kimalel, present day Kimilili, and then to Bokoli, before wandering to Mahanga (Webuye hills) ranges, and then to Mabanga where they met Abang'oma (Bangomek) who had been in this area for more than 4 generations. At Mabanga, they were given temporary settlement around present Sudi Station before travelling to areas around Bungoma and then to Sang'alo. At Sang'alo, they met members of the Tachon peoples who had left Sirikwa under Manafwa. The third group consisted of the Abangachi people under Samoei, who travelled to Kiproroni, Kapchorwa, Sipi and Solokho, before trekking back to Cheptais, Kapsokwony and then down the slopes to Kimilieli (Kimilili), where they met the group led by Wekoye. The last group involved the Abakatuum (Abahabiya), Abasioya, Abakabyonek, Abakiboriti and Abameywa under Makhumbi. This group sojourned to Kitaliel, where their stay was disturbed by the Abakisila (Karamojong) cattle rustlers, forcing them to disperse in two groups - the Abakiboriti and Abakabyonek wandered to Sebei, while the rest of the people trekked down to Kimilieli, meeting the groups of Wekoye and Samoei.

At Kimilieli the youth (both male and female), had come of age but were not circumcised. The Abakatuum performed the circumcision while the Abameywa and the Abasioya performed the other rituals to complete the transition of the youth into man/woman hood. After circumcision, the people moved to Machewa, Mukuyuni and Kamokoiywa, through Chesamisi. Chesamisi is reported to have been a very unhealthy settlement where many animals died from monkey and buffalo diseases. The young suffered from diarrhea. The people sought temporary refugee at Kamasielo, but again, many animals died. It is alleged that while at this village, ones herd could only be defined by counting the number of hides and skins amasielo as a result of cattle deaths.
From Kamasielo, the group which had merged under the leadership of Kimakweti, grandson of Kamakut, moved on to Mukuyuni and then Kamokoiywa, before turning west back to Kimalieli, and then Musitabicha (Bokoli), before descending to Teremi. At Teremi, they met two Kalenjin groups of Balaku and Bachuchu. These two groups were related to the Bangomek and Saboet, who the Tachon had already interacted with on their trek to Tulwop Kony. The relationship with these two groups was mutual, and led to some exchange of presents and intermarriages. In exchange for women, the Tachon gave cattle, cereals, especially wimbi, and hoes, honey and war implements. The Tachon proceeded to Sirisia, Malakisi and finally joined their kin at the Mwalie caves.

To lead the tribe into the Mwalie caves was Monyei (Omungachi), who succeeded Kimakweti. On arrival, they found that some families were already on their southern movement as a result of leadership squabbles between Namukongo (Omubichu), and Se'Wamukoya II, his uncle. Se'Wamukoya had left with his group, leaving behind Namukongo and his followers. It is alleged that Namukongo, was influenced by his mother (a sister to Se'Wamukoya), and his age-mates to wrestle power from the aging Se'Wamukoya before his sons ascended to power after his death. She had argued that her mother was the eldest, and she had the right to the leadership mantle but only missed it because of gender bias, surrendering it to Se'Wamukoya II of the younger wife of her father. It was therefore right that her son inherited the reigns. Because of her incitement, the son organised a rebellion against his uncle.

Se'Wamukoya is said to have been a very peaceful man who shunned confrontation. Coupled with his age, he decided to move out of the forts to seek greater fields for his people elsewhere. He settled at present day Bumula in Southern Bungoma. Before he left, he warned that the actions by his nephew Namukongo, were against the religion of the people and he would have to pay for them, and this Namukongo would have to do before Se'Wamukoya died.

When Monyei arrived at Tulienge, Namukongo, who showed him and his people where to erect their olukoba, received him. Having had the stories about the greed of Namukongo and his actions, which led to the departure of Se'Wamukoya, Monyei still decided to befriend Namukongo and to serve him. Meanwhile he inspected the wealth, exit routes, the strength of Namukongo's army and his weaknesses as a man. During all this time, he tried to buy loyalty from Namukongo's army and friends by attending all their wedding parties and funerals, donating food (meat, milk, simsim [sesame] and wimbi), oils and fats, hides and skins to soldiers, wedding ornaments and presents to wedding couples. He also gave out elephant tusks and beads to Namukongo's household. People interpreted his actions as generosity and love for his fellow tribesmen. Within a short while, Monyei ousted Namukongo from power and installed himself as the popular leader of the people. He ruled for only a quarter generation when a surprise army, disguised as Maasai cattle rustlers, struck one afternoon killing him, his wives, guards and loyalists. The raiders looted everything insight except a
bull called Zisenda, Monyei's favourite, which wandered into the valleys where Monyei's warriors had gone to tend animals and for hunting. Zisenda had always stayed near his boss/mentor, Monyei, and never wandered about. When the warriors saw Zisenda, they suspected something strange must have happened back home. They decided to investigate. They came home to ruins and a slaughtered Letia, and Namukongo the detainee missing. They collected themselves under Makumbi II as Letia, and Makhombe as the Laitarian. A mission was sent out to search for young men to recruit into the army to protect the fort, the nation and to look for Namukongo. The mission recruited many trainees from Masaaba and Iteso.

On being overthrown, Namukongo was detained and he maintained a very low profile. His son Siboko and mother had taken refuge among the Balaku and Bachuchu. The Balaku were maternal uncles to Siboko's mother. It is believed that these two (Siboko & his mother), had approached the Balaku and Bachuchu for assistance, but were referred to Purko Maasai, who were sworn enemies of the Tachon, and were now camped north-east of Soi. The Balaku and Bachuchu regarded the Tachon as their kin, and could not raid their homesteads. They therefore approached the Maasai who organised for Namukongo's rescue. Therefore, the people who ransacked Mwalie were not cattle rustlers, but an organised group of a guerrilla-like army from among the Purko Maasai led by Siboko. On being rescued Namukongo, joined his loyalists who were camped at Mwiyenga, and led them to Nambale. From Nambale, he sent missions to his uncle Se'Wamukoya, who now lived at Bumula asking for his forgiveness and blessings. Before Se'Wamukoya died, he invited the elders' council, his stepsister and her son Namukongo for reconciliation. He then blessed Namukongo and recommended him to the Elders Council for inheritance of the leadership mantle. This gesture was unknown to the Tachon community, especially when Se'Wamukoya had his own full-grown son Sibionei, well known in the leadership and war circles. The son, Lumboka Sibionei, was a well-known archer and peace-setter. It is said that he had prevailed upon his father's loyalists and soldiers not to hit back when Namukongo had earlier attacked. Like his father, Sibionei championed peaceful means to conflict resolution among the members of the community and within the army ranks.

When Namukongo inherited the leadership from his uncle Se'Wamukoya, he established his command post at Mundika. At Mundika, he received more Tachon groups, and some members of the Bang'oma travelling southwards towards Mumboka, present Sio Port. Mundika became a major checkpoint and market centre for most travellers, both to the south and north. From here, people moved towards the east to Estabicha (Bokoli), where three forts were built and used for many generations until 1896, then on to Kimaeti, Mianga, Mungachi, Kholela and Kwa Siundu (Wanga). By 1400, Namukongo moved and settled at Sianda, in present Wanga area, with two outposts at Khaumo and Elukongo. The outposts served the Abachikha, Abakamukong, Abayumbu, Abasonge, Abasamo and Ababichu. From Elukongo, families extended their grazing fields and hunting grounds to Yala. At Yala, the fauna and the flora were most plenty for hunting, grazing and human habitation. A fort named Lumboka, in honor of the new army commander Lumboka Sibionei, was constructed.
When the Tachon moved into Sianda they pushed out a group of Bantu speaking peoples, later identified as Abasicheche under Omwami Sibunda Wambia. Instead of Sibunda resisting the new settlers from occupying his territory he opted to cooperate with them because his spies had revealed to him that the newcomers were conjurers and could deform the human body and mind. They reported having seen people who had their mouths at the back of their heads, and others with exceedingly short hands, as a result of belittling the powers of the Tachon. For the safety of his people and to stay in power, Sibunda decided to cooperate, and even accepted to operate at the level of a clan elder.

On Namukongo's death, about 1427, Chemwa Se'Chemiati was named the successor. By this time, Sibunda had been taken in trust, and Chemwa accepted to marry his daughter Makokha as his fifth wife. However, Sibunda explained that because Makokha was his most beloved daughter, he would give her 23 workers and 120 cows, and suggested that her homestead be separated from the main camp where Chemwa lived with his four wives. This, Sibunda explained would appease his ancestors and gods who had saved Makokha when she was left on the roadside by her deceased mother. Chemwa went ahead and accepted the arrangements as requested by Sibunda; least knowing that it was a plot to eliminate him. A large wedding ceremony was arranged, where many animals were slaughtered and a three-day beer party organised. All rank and file were involved and they spent days drinking. Meanwhile, Sibunda moved his people to Ejinja, about 40 kilometers away. On the third day, Chemwa was found dead in his official seat beside his bed at Makokha's house. Makokha was missing and all her people, including servants, her father and the whole lot of Abasicheche, had moved.

Some chroniclers have narrated that Chemwa died out of his lack of comprehension of leadership philosophy and filial duty. Many are in agreement that Sibunda who thought he could gain control over the new territory and all its wealth poisoned him. But after a full assessment of the mighty power of the Tachon army, he decided to retreat to Ejinja. He was, however, pursued and killed by Chemwa's relatives, and an oath taken by Chemwa's clansmen never to marry from Sibunda's clan of Abasicheche.

After Chemwa died, the Tachon moved their camps to Khakunga and Khulela, under Buneria. The Abasamo, Abasonge and Abaluu trekked further to Tulwop Sikinda, near present Ingotse.

**The Third Group**

The third group to leave Sirikwa confined their movements within the present Kenya, and did not climb Tulwop Kony. They loved to stay within river valleys and basins. They claim to be responsible for the creation of most human settlements in Western Kenya, especially all the way from Trans-Nzoia to Busia.

The families in this group included the Abasang'alo, Abasamo, Abacheo, Abamuchembi, Abachikha, Abamarakalu, Abawande, Abahabichwa, Abasimisi, Abamatilu and Abakubwayi under the leadership of Mason.
From Sirikwa, they travelled to Kitaliel, where they met the Abakamukong, Abasamba, Abacheva, Abamukhuyu, Abamachina, Abasiu and Abachimuluku (Chepruko), who had just travelled back from Mbai. The Kitaliel settlements, extended as far as Ndalu and Soy. The Chepruko clan established their main base at Soy, under the leadership of Me'em'e Loloibet. Me'em'e Loloibet had two wives and 29 sons. Chasam was the eldest of his first wife while Kimaritiri was eldest of his second wife. A family dispute led to the break-up of the family into two camps, and the overthrow of Me'em'e as the leader of the Chepruko people.

Chasam took some of the Chepruko families, including his fourteen brothers and eight sisters, and other clans of Tachon, towards the south, settling in the Kakume forest (Kakamega). They intermarried with the local people, who have been identified as the Abasisira, described as being only three feet tall, living on trees and eating roots and fruits. The intermarriage produced a group of people now referred to as Abashimuli. After a generation, there was a cattle dispute among Chasam’s family members, leading to movements by some members towards the present day Tindinyo, where they met Terik families on their southward movement. The other members travelled westward to Sisa (present day Kisa) and became the Abashisa (Abatsitsa).

The Kimaritiri group sojourned to Uasin Gishu, then Kapchai, Sabot, Kapchonge, Kiminini, Naitiri and Sikhendu, before meeting the Maasai Purko cattle rustlers at Kamokoiywa. The exchanges with the cattle rustlers, took them three years, 1559 - 1562 ACE, forcing them to cross the Kamokoiywa and Kibisi rivers into Taban (present day Ndivisi). Taban became a nuclear point for more than ten harvests from where the people extended their influence to Lugare, Chwele, and Sirisia. Kimaritiri died in 1602, and was replaced by Kirinda.

Kirinda was instrumental in tracing other members of the Tachon community who had left Sirikwa earlier. He managed, through his sages and spies, to trace the Se’Wamukoya group, which was now under Tapka who had taken over from Buneria. His people were camped at Khulela and had grazing lands extending as far as Matungu, Shiamanyinya, and Elukongo.

During the Kirinda reign the remaining families of Chepruko collected under Chepchirchir and established their base at Masindu, present Furoi. At Masindu, there was dispersal, and some members travelled to Nandi hills, while others followed the Nzoia River down Samo rock. Between Mahanga and Sibembe, they met bright, elegant and friendly people called Kussien, under a leader called Osokwani. These could have been the Kisii people under Osogo, while on their southern trek between 1600 and 1659 ACE.

Before Kirinda died in around 1680, he sent out word to all Tachon communities now scattered between Yala and Trans Nzoia, Malakisi and Nandi Hills, to come together and chart a common strategy to regroup the people and protect the territories they had founded. A summit was held at Samo rock around 1679, attended by Tapka, Kirinda, Kirip bei pir, Sikinda, and Cheptabin, representing various groups scattered over present day Bungoma,
Busia, Kakamega, Vihiga, Nandi, Uasin Gishu, Pokot, Sabot and Trans Nzoia. The summit discussed, among other things: the unification of the tribe and consolidation of power, the protection of the grazing lands, and the wildlife system, which was crucial for a balanced life, the quickly expanding slave trade, and the coming of a new race (white man).

Each of the leaders had come with his Council of Elders to the meeting. Sage Se'Birindwa was chosen to lead the other sages at this meeting because of his age and commitment to fostering a united nation of all the Tachon peoples. The re-unification process was entrusted to Kirip bei pir and Se'Birindwa.

The Re-Unification

After the Samo summit, sage Se'Birindwa and Letia Kirip Bei Pir proceeded to design the process to bring together all the people. A follow-up meeting was held at Elukongo and members were given the final draft plan on the re-unification. When Kirinda died, the process was complete and all people were united under the leadership of Kirip Bei Pir.

The empire was large and Pir could not be able to run around the whole area. He appointed the former leaders as his representatives among the people. His camp was moved from Elukongo to Kholela.

After Pir came Iyeya, who moved the head quarters to Sibembe. At Sibembe, he received a Bantu-speaking people who came in from the west, well schooled in the art of archery. This new people were nicknamed Abalasi. They were accommodated and incorporated in the military wing and used as instructors in the art of archery. The nearest neighbours then were the Bok and Bangomek (Wa/Balaku), and then camped at present day Bungoma.

When Iyeya died, Voi, whose headquarters was at Kabula, succeeded him. The Abalasi, who later became Kapras, moved and lived among the Abasang'alo and Abasamo at Sang'alo and Samo rocks near Bungoma, where they were joined later by the Chepkruto people who had earlier, under Chepchirchir, left for Masindu and Nandi Hills.

Among the people at Samo and Sang'alo rocks were the Abalasi, Abasang'alo, Abasamo, Abachikha, Abasamba, Abasiu and Abaluu, who crossed the Nzoia into present day South Kapras under the leadership of Wamukoya from the Abachikha community. The group remaining on the west of the Nzoia established forts at Chalicha, Ndengelwa, Mundoli, Kitalel, Munyalusi, Samo, Mwiyenga, Sang'alo, Mwichina and Bumula. They were all still under Letia Voi.

The settlements on the East, South and West of the Nzoia are estimated to have been reconstructed between 1712 and 1800, during and after Voi, who is estimated to have died in the later half of the 18th century.
Map 3: The River Nzoia Basin

After Voi, Maraka, from the house of Abangachi took over, with his main base at Chepkwa, where he lived and died around 1802. Lumbwani, who led the Tachon people in a war with the Maasai at present day Mabanga, a place of blood, in 1807, succeeded him. The Tachon carried the day. Lumbwani then established his fort at Milani. When he died, Lumbasi succeeded him, and
led the reconstruction of Stapchoi (Bokoli), a fort that had earlier been constructed by Letia Seyonei (826 - 1000 ACE), and used mostly for religious purposes. More forts were put up at Sichei, Musaka, Mukweya, Chwele and Chebini (Kabini). Lumbasi retained his head quarters at Stapchoi, and it has since been named Wa'Lumbasi. The Abakabini clan of the Abachikha community camped at Chebini.

During his reign, Lumbasi insisted on permanent settlements. More forts were therefore established at Mumbwi, Bilongo, and Elukoba. The naming of the villages or forts was always in recognition of their leaders or clans. Lumbasi died after the construction of Lumboka (1844), which was later used to house workers, especially the families of the people hired to look after livestock and the grazing fields, who comprised mostly of the Bagisu and Banyala rebels. He was succeeded by Wangusi from the Ababichu clan.

Wangusi was an expansionist. He organised a strong army and went out to expand the frontiers. He was, however, strongly opposed by Musebe, from the Abangach clan, who believed in peaceful co-existence and respect for other people's territories. Wangusi expelled Musebe from his government. Musebe set up his own fort, Wa'Musebe, at present day Matulo. By this time the group, which had earlier crossed the Nzoia into present day South Kapras, had declared independence under Lumuli. Lumuli had set up his headquarters at present day Khalumuli. Wangusi went on to declare war on this group, forcing Lumuli to surrender. Mukamakwa, who was the Laitarian to Lumuli's army, decided to go underground with members of the Abalasi, Abaluu, Abasiu, Abamarakalu, and Abasamo. He later emerged and declared he would not join or surrender to Wangusi. He therefore went on to declare all the land between present day Kibaywa and Soy his territory. He was later to be joined by some families of the Abasang'alo, Abangachi, Abachikha, Abasonge and Abasiyoa. When Wangusi realized some households were leaving and joining Mukamakwa, he called for a peace treaty to be signed, and asked that the Samo Summit resolutions should be followed. A treaty was signed between Mukamakwa and Wangusi at Maturu in Mukamakwa's territory. This treaty divided the Tachon people into two with Nzoia River as the main boundary. The people on the East and South of the Nzoia came under Mukamakwa, while all those on the West and North of the river were under Wangusi.

Wangusi went on to build his headquarters at Wa'wangusi (Ebuliuli), before he died and was replaced by Maraka Kip Voi. Maraka continued with the establishment of permanent settlements to include Siywa hill, Sirende, Kambini (Misikhu, Matisi, Nambami, Malaha, Webuye, Mahanga, Kituni, and Abuhalilo), Chebosi, Chepurukeki, Bunjosi, Kuywa, Chelekei and Manani. Maraka had moved his headquarters from Wa'wangusi to Emaraka, near present day Webuye. On his death, Chiluku succeeded him. Chiluku, on his part, spearheaded settlements in Sichanikhi, Sipala, Bunyalinyali, Namarambi, Matili, Kimilili and Khamulati. In his effort to create permanent settlements in these areas, he encountered resistance from the Maasai and the Bok. The Maasai were to be fought and pushed out, while the Bok decided to move to the slopes of Mt. Elgon and leave the plains to the Tachon.
Mukamakwa, on his part, constructed Maturu in honor of the Tachon ancestor El Matruh and the ancient and mysterious, village Matruh. He put his headquarters here, with field command posts at Kibaywa, Chekalini, Mautuma, Naitiri and Soy. When he died in 1867, Lulera succeeded him. Lulera sought to expand his empire towards the east, especially towards Turbo, but he met stiff Nandi resistance. When he tried to enter present Tran Nzoia District, he found it had already been occupied by the Marakwet and the Elgeiyo, and he decided to retreat. He died thereafter, having achieved very little in terms of expansion of his empire.

Mukonambi succeeded Lulera and immediately re-initiated re-unification talks with Maraka, and later with Chiluku. By 1880, the two groups were re-united under Nyikuri, who became sifuma, a very famous and popular leader, because of his democratic approach to leadership and management of people, their affairs and distribution of resources. The Tachon now occupied most of present day Bungoma District, eastern Busia and northern Kakamega especially between present day Malaba to Mois Bridge, and Turbo. Sifuma had appointed Mulati to administer the Northern Region, all those lands previously under the management of Mukamakwa, and Lumbasi II to look after the interests in eastern Busia. He had withdrawn any claim on the lands occupied by the Tachon, especially the Abaleka, under the management of Nabongo Mumia. He had entered and signed a non-aggression agreement, eating of a dog, with Mumia of the Wanga people, not to fight each other or interfere with each other’s sovereignty. He had entered similar agreements with the Nandi, the Balaku and the Mt.Elgon tribes, the Pokot in the North and the Iteso in the West. The agreement with the Balaku and Elkony people was entered in 1889, between Letia Nyikuri for the Tachon and Soita for the Balaku. Chetambe and Nduguyu entered the Nandi agreement in 1882 for the Tachon and Buneria for the Nandi.

The white man also honoured the agreements, signed with the Wanga and Nandi people, when he entered the country, so that it was not until 1895 that the white man took control of the Tachon territory after the Chetambe war. The provision of shelter to the revolting Bukusu workers was understood by Mumia and the white rulers of the then Uganda protectorate to mean a breach of the terms of the agreement.

Nyikuri's supreme council included Nduguyu Se'Mirume as the sage, and Chetambe Se'Maraka as the Laitarian. The other members included Belichinja, Wanakacha, Tusu and Muyekho Se'Wamukoya. This team evolved a federal government, with the main assembly at Webuye. They had laid down rules on governance, ethics, culture, the norms, needs and attitudes of the tribe and rules of war and defense. The norms of a good society were under the stewardship of Belichinja, presumably Minister of State. It was the understanding of this council that the heart of society and the foundation of religion was good leadership, with inherent accountability to the people. This policy was further strengthened by Nyikuri and Chetambe who were age-mates belonging to the same circumcision age-set, who, reflecting back on their teachings during seclusion, reminded their citizens that truth was fundamental to human life, and an inheritance from the world hereafter that the people must know and be involved.
Nyikuri was the last ever recorded Letia of the Tachon people. He died in 1902, and thereafter there have not been any organised efforts to unify the people, or create a fully established administrative system for them. It is because of the absence of a system that they suffered heavily during the period of white settlement, when all the lands of Lugare, Naitiri, Ndalu and Tongaren were taken away. Although attempts were later made to repossess the lands, the community still remained organized along clan alliances and lacked political leadership to enable them to recover the lands, even after the white settlers left. In fact clannism has been the greatest undoing of the Tachon community.

As can be noted, the Tachon have largely occupied the Nzoia River Basin since they settled in the lands where the white settlers found them. It is in these lands that the Muzungu fought, uprooted and made them squatters. The population in the current settlements is estimated at 1.5 million citizens.

Map 4: The Tachon Frontiers (Country) Before 1895
Map 5: Present Tachon Frontiers
CHAPTER FIVE: THE DISPERSALS & THEIR SIGNIFICANCE 66 - 71

Introduction 67
The Sengoi Sengoi Dispersal 590-586 BCE 67
The Kipsomba Dispersal 751-753 ACE 68
The Sirikwa Dispersal 1260-1262 ACE 68
The Tulienge (Kapchai) Dispersal 1405-1421 ACE 69
The (E) Sibembe Dispersal 1700-1701 ACE 69
The Sang'alo Dispersal 1758-1760 ACE 70
Other Dispersals 71
Chapter Five
THE DISPERSALS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction

The dispersals had various reasons, and occurred in about four major waves. Some of the reasons why dispersals were part of the Tachon migration patterns were:

- Search for better settlements and pastures for livestock
- Search for food, new markets and commercial fields
- Search for new technology and partners
- Running away from epidemics and enemies
- For travel, exploration and education.
- To create room for a growing population and expanding families.

There were, in total six (6) main dispersals: - the Sengoi Sengoi, Kipsomba, Sirikwa, Tullenge (Mwalie), Sibembe and the Sang’alo.

The Sengoi Sengoi Dispersal (590 - 586 BCE)

This is presumed to have been the first dispersal by these people. It took place at sengoi sengoi, a place of confluence and the present day Atbara. During the dispersal, people were divided into three groups: - the traders, farmers and smelters.

The Traders

This group included Abakatuum (Abahabiya), Abasioya and Abameywa, under the leadership of Nchoe. They travelled towards the south, trading with the various communities they came across. When they finally met the other members of the tribe, they were richly decorated in new bangles, rings and skin fashions, which added spice to their traditional regalia and made their dances beautiful at various ceremonies organised by the tribe. They also had acquired new blades used during the circumcision period, and new war blades, arrows and spears. The new spears and arrows had barbs and an improved form.

The Farmers

They included fishermen and herdsmen who travelled under Keptaijon and Cheng El Ale along the Atbara River to Ethiopia, looking for pastures and settlement and eager to establish new kingdoms. The idea of establishing a separate kingdom could not materialize because for one thing, they were a very small group and could not fight and defeat the indigenous groups that they passed through. Secondly, Keptaijon and Cheng El Ale could not live long to see the kingdom established.

While in Ethiopia, they were joined by a group of smelters, especially the Kabyonek and the Matili (Abamatili), who were then under the leadership of Lamek Leadum, who brought in new war tactics acquired from the Sudan and Nubialand. They had young warriors called falcons and others called hawks.
These warriors were very skilled, wild and blood-thirsty. They helped Tuchoi, the laitarian, to build a very strong army, which went raiding and killing their enemies, and expanding the territory to Kipsomba.

**The Smelters and Blacksmiths**

These included the Abakatuum, Abameywa, Abakabyonek and Abamatili under Chesmei Obett. They travelled south towards the present-day Khartoum (Ebukatuum or Katuum), building forts on the west. They also went out to explore markets for their products, and also came across new inventions. They traded with the Sudanese and the Nubians. It was during this exercise, that they highly improved their smelting skills and also were able to develop the use of a hoe. Therefore, women, in addition to clearing the sirikwet (chingoba, forts, homesteads and villages) had an added duty - digging the gardens. Better earrings, chinjiroos, rings, bungle, nose blades, blades and other ornamental decorations, attractive to their style of life, were developed. These items were also good and suitable to their Sudanese and Nubian customers.

The greatest achievement from this dispersal was the acquisition of new and much more improved weaponry and combat tactics.

**The Kipsomba Dispersal (751 - 753 ACE)**

At Kipsomba, there was a mini-dispersal, which included the Mang'eti, Abangachi and the Sangale in the company of their Tambach in-laws. They followed their Tugen relation to Tambach. However, the Abangachi, under the leadership of Chesingony did not stay in Tambach for long because their animals died, there was high child mortality, and the farms were overgrown with couch grass, which was thought to be a taboo then. They also lost their leadership to the Tugen. They therefore, decided to travel down to Sirikwa, where they found other Tachon communities had already settled under the leadership of Chepkabini.

**The Sirikwa Dispersal (1260- 1262 ACE)**

This was the greatest and most easily remembered dispersal. It was occasioned by the Purko Maasai neighbours, together with the Kimaratia. Rivalry between the Maasai and the Tachon - Kalenjin groups on ownership of livestock and the general leadership in the fort sparked of the raids and counter raids.

This dispersal, divided the people into three groups, and they experienced further mini-dispersals in the movement. It also led to the destruction of the traditional institutions, especially relating to religion and family unit, which they held as most sacred and important to the development of man. The positive effects of this dispersal were that the community came into contact with various people of different origins, including the first Bantu communities of Bwai, the Masaaba, and later the Bagisu and Banyala.
The Tulienge Dispersal 1405-1421 ACE

Tulienge is the original name given to Mwalie (present day Malakisi), by the Tachon first settlers.

The Tulienge dispersal was brought about by three factors:

- The continued theft of animals by the Bantu herdsmen, especially the Masaaba, who were later, pushed back into the interior of present day Uganda.
- Jostling for power and leadership of the tribe between Monyei and Namukongo over the vacant post of Letia, created by Se'Wamukoya, leaving the Tulienge camp for present day Bumula.
- The invasion by Maasai rustlers from the East forcing the Tachon south west into present day Busia and Yala areas.

This dispersal led to the exploration of the country between present day lake Victoria and Mt. Elgon (Koyonjo). During the sojourn in this region, the Tachon came in contact with the Bangomek and the Walaku, who had just settled around the present day Bungoma town, and the Kapras, then called Abalafu, who were then entering the present day Sang’alo. The Kapras influence was too strong, so that they could be said to have introduced the Tachon to Bantu ways of life. They were able to co-exist from then to date. As the years passed by the Tachon acquired and integrated into their culture and language the Kapras (also referred to as Abalasi or Kapras), and today they speak a Bantu dialect akin to KiKapras.

The Esibembe Dispersal (1700-1701 ACE)

The Sibembe dispersal divided the people into two groups, who went on either side of the Nzoia River living alongside the Kapras and the Bangomek respectively. The group that had crossed to the Kapras side encountered resistance from the Banyala people who had just settled in the lands between present day Malaha and Mureku. The Banyala thought the strangers would take over their grazing lands and claim ownership of the villages. The misunderstanding was later resolved when the Tachon withdrew to the shores of the river and continued with their eastward movement towards present day Malava and Maturu, crossing over to Mautuma and further westward to present day Nzoia to meet the other kin who had remained on the Bangomek side of the river Nzoia.
The Sang’alo Dispersal (1758-1760 ACE)

Since the members of the tribe converged at Nzoia, the tribe had expanded, and had many young warriors who were trying to measure their agility, strength and war tactics. There were disturbances among the ranks in the army. By 1759, the Nzoia fort had been divided into three competing camps under three different army chiefs. The main Nzoia Fort remained under the command of Iyeya as the Letia assisted by Se’Wamukoya III. The Sang'alo fort was under Se’chibeibir as the Laitarian, whiles the Lutacho fort (which combined groups settled at present day Mwibale and Mwichina Samo), was under Laitarian Merap Voi.

The Sang'alo dispersal is very significant in the making of the Luhya tribes. During the dispersal, many clans were separated from the tribe into different directions. For instance, the Abashien ancestors left Sang'alo under Laitarian Letaipen son of Busenei trekked southwards to Malaha before settling at Sianda. By 1760, Letaipen had been replaced by Induluma, who led the people to settle in present day Butsotso and Marama.

The Abasang'alo people were, on the other hand, divided into three groups. The Abakahabi, under Mbuori joined the Abamakanda, and then led by Mumbia for the great trek to present day Matayos and Nambale through Esibembe, Echinja (Ejinja), Bumula, Mianga and Lukulu in present day Marach. At Lukulu, some families under Sibakala decided to continue with the north westerly trek to present day Amukura, and they have since been absorbed into the Iteso community.

The Abasang'alo family of Abaleka, under Mwinami and Waburiri, first settled at Shiamanyinya (present day Mumias), then Imanga, before spreading to Malaha, where they met the Abashien again, then Lubinu and Khalaba. The chroniclers have indicated that at this time, the Wanga people had not taken the area. They allege that the Wanga people came in from Tiriki during the later years of the 18th Century. By the time the Wanga people arrived, the other clans of Abatobe, Abamulemba and the Abamulima had joined the Abaleka. The five clans, (Abaleka, Abashien, Abatobe, Abamulemba and Abamulima), were under the leadership of Murono.

The Wanga chroniclers have indicated that when they met the five clans, they were speaking a language described as olumakhanga, the tongue of the guinea fowl. These groups have since been absorbed among the ranks of the Wanga, although they continue to practice the cultural and religious festivities common among the Tachon people, such as Marich (elicho).

The third group was made up of the families of Abamwinami and Abaholela who trekked to Malaba before stopping at Matete. At Matete, they were further disturbed and dispersed to various parts of present day Webuye and Lugari regions.
Other Dispersals

Sometimes minor dispersals occurred before and/or after a major dispersal. This was most significant before the Sang'alo dispersal of 1758-1760. However, we also had mini dispersals occurring independent of major dispersals. An example has been given of the:

- **Tilali** dispersal of 1862 in Lumakanda, forced people to flee to Bumula, Ndivisi and Kamokoiywa. The dispersal was occasioned by clan rivalry between the Abamuongo and Abasamo. During the rivalry, Tilali (a member of the Abamuongo clan), killed a member of the Abasamo clan. To square the matter, the Abasamo went out to claim the head of their dead, *an eye for an eye*, forcing the Abamuongo to flee to Bumula and Ndivisi.

- Other memorable mini dispersals include: - the Abarefi dispersal of 1835, the Abasang'alo dispersal of 1902, leading to some groups moving to Chekalini, Kibaywa, Lutacho and Furoi of Lukusi location.

One very important consequence of these mini-dispersals was the heavy spilling of blood, and creation of clan loyalties. This made clans stronger than the tribe, weakening the structure of the tribe, such that by 1897, the tribe leadership was being manipulated along the lines of clans. This has, in effect, been a major thorn in the political leadership of the tribe. The colonial regime which penetrated the Tachon country in 1895, attempted to capitalise on this to destroy the community, such that at different times, they quoted the declining population figures of the Tachon people as they reflected increased numbers among the new tribe of Bukusu. In essence, the Tachon were effectively divided into three groups. Two groups on the either side of the Nzoia River, and one group on the eastern side of the Kibisi River in the present Kibisi-Naitiri settlement schemes.
CHAPTER SIX: THE WARFARE 72 - 85

Introduction 73
The Tulienge (Kapchai) Encounter 1409 ACE 73
The Teso War 1596-1600 ACE 74
The Kholera Defeat 1700 ACE 77
The Mabanga Battle 1798 ACE 77
The Chetambe Reception 1895 ACE 78
Chapter Six

THE WARFARE

Introduction

The migrational movements were affected, often by tribal wars, which were fought to open up new settlement fields, to acquire food, to capture more livestock, which were cherished as wealth of the tribe and to pave way among the resistant groups. In some instances, some communities who had already settled could not allow the Tachon to pass through their land. They thought the Tachon had come to stay, and were not "just passing through". To force their way through, the Tachon warriors had to be deployed.

The Tachon are known to have directly engaged in wars with the Maasai, the Nandi and the Banyala peoples of Kenya at different times and stages of their movement. At Sirikwa, they are said to have fought consistently with the Purko Maasai. The causes of these consistent wars are said to have been cattle rustling by the Maasai, and the abuse of young boys and girls by the Maasai. Assisted by the Tugen, Bok, Bangomek and the Kony, the Tachon defeated the Maasai. Further wars had to be fought at present day Mabanga and Turbo. At Kamalinga, the Tachon came face to face with the spears and swords of the Kirkisilai (Karamojong) or Abakisila, who were defending their land against intruders, at the same time involved in cattle rustling and kidnapping of young boys to beef up their ranks. They forced the Tachon to retreat northwards, taking an easterly route through Maralal to Uasin Gishu and then down to Kitalel. One articulate soldier, Lentoi Se'Chepreria, was killed.

The Tulienge (Kapchai) Encounter (1409)

This saw the poorly prepared Tachon face the Maasai from the East. The Maasai, not being satisfied with the Namanjalala defeat, consolidated their armies and years later, came hunting for the Tachon in revenge. They followed them to their new settlement at Tulienge (Mwalie-Sirisia). By the time they reached Tulienge, Monyei had been in power for a quarter generation, possibly 10 years, after wrestling power from Namukongo, detaining him and forcing his wife and son Sibiko into exile.

While in exile Siboko and his mother roamed the region between Stapcha (present day Bokoli), and Marich (in present day Elgeiyo). They are believed to have come across the Maasai, who were too happy to help them rescue their father and wrestle power back from Monyei. The Maasai thought this was the right time for a full-scale revenge on the Tachon. The invasion took place most possibly between June and August, the period when the Tachon rested their army ranks, recruited new warriors and took them into training camps along the forest edges, and other on spying missions. Most of the senior soldiers retreated into their homes or went out hunting or herding animals. This was, therefore, the time when the royal palace was left unguarded, the forts were unprotected, and everyone was on holiday. The invasion was therefore, a surprise, and everyone was found with his or
her pants down. Monyei, together with his family and guards were killed, the fort was in ruins, animals looted, except Monyei's favourite Zisenda, which wondered into the grazing fields to inform the herdsmen that home was no more.

On returning, the soldiers found the camp ransacked, in ruins and the Letia dead. The people who had survived the attack had collected under the leadership of Makhumbi and Makhombe. Together with the soldiers, they embarked on a reconstruction bid which included rebuilding the fort, reviewing the standards of the army, especially the spy-squad, and recalling all those who had gone home to look after livestock. Herdsmen were hired from among the Bagisu of the Masaaba community - they turned out latter to be thieves and rustlers.

The Tulienga encounter was very expensive and has been explained as having stemmed from the sins committed by Namukongo and Monyei. However, other chroniclers see it as a cleansing which prepared the Tachon for peaceful and successful encounters later in their movement. It is further seen as a useful lesson, which later Letias observed so as not to corrupt leadership.

The Teso War 1596-1600

The Teso war, which has rightly been called the "Opata war", was fought between the Bagisu and the Teso between 1596-97.

After the Maasai attack on Tulienga in 1409, the Tachon had hired Bagisu herdsmen to look after their livestock. The Bagisu were very successful herdsmen, although they also stole. To avoid theft, the Tachon had built for them a village at Mianga, and also constructed kraals for them, so that any animal they stole could be traced to the kraal, unless they exchanged it with their counterparts among the Teso.

Like the Tachon, the Teso (then referred to as Bamia by the Bagisu) used to hire young herdsmen from among the Bagisu of present day Uganda and Bungoma. The Bagisu kept on stealing livestock from the Teso and hiding them among their own at Mianga. The Teso were not amused at the game played by the Bagisu herdsmen. Often, they would lay ambush and recover their animals, or talk to the Tachon leaders who would facilitate the return of their livestock without any physical exchanges.

As their livestock increased, they expanded their village and were joined by more of their kin from Bugisuland. When the Bagisu became many, they were allowed to appoint their own village headman, and they choose Wandabwa wa Wetoli (nicknamed Tototoi). They then started building their own army, led by Maelo. When they were finished and all set to protect their own boundaries, they approached the Laitarian of the Tachon, Koming Kipsiele, and announced that they wanted to show the Teso that they were also men and were not always operating under the cover of the Tachon. Maelo requested Kipsiele to accept his men and train them for attack. However, Kipsiele only agreed to advise Maelo on how to do it himself without the direct involvement of the Tachon. He also promised him weaponry on condition that
of the livestock looted half was for the Tachon kraals.

The Teso, on the other hand, had sensed funny behaviour among its herdsmen, who were now disappearing back to Mundika, as they abandoned their work. They (Teso), therefore, sent among them a spy called Kimaru. Kimaru settled among the Bagisu pretending to be one of them, and went further to marry the daughter of Malemo (Omukiyabi, who was also an army chief leading one of the youthful battalions), called Nang'onzi. Kimaru kept the Teso chief Opata fully informed of what was going on at the Mianga fort. After he had completed his assignment, he disappeared from the Mianga fort and went back to Amagoro, where the Teso had put up one of their largest forts and where Opata resided. They had another fort, called Echakar, near Amukura. The Kraal at Amagoro, called Bapala, was largely known to belong to Opata, while Echakar kraal belonged to Wamurwe Lipopo.

Opata issued a seven-day notice of attack to the Bakisu, to which they responded. The war was fought in two stages. At first, and against the advice given to him by Kipsiele, Maelo had attacked the Teso during the day, instead of attacking at night. He also went a day ahead of the deadline by Opata, hoping to use surprise tactics to win. Although he went in advance of the notice, he was thoroughly thrashed by Opata's men. He retreated and asked for pardon from the Teso.

Accepting the retreat by the Bakisu, Opata warned them that if they were not prepared they should never attack, because the rules of war within the Iteso stipulated that either part must be ready or no surprises should be expected. Soldiers were expected to fight on equal terms! He also ordered Maelo to surrender all his animals to confirm that he was remorseful. Maelo did this hesitantly.

As he retreated, Maelo was bitter and breathing revenge; he sent a delegation, led by Tototoi, to Kipsiele to seek reinforcement and technical support. It is understood that the Tachon Council deliberated on this issue for three days and finally resolved that they were to support the Bagisu because it was possible the Teso would attack them as soon as they were through with the Bagisu. Further, it has been stated that they yielded because of the possible loot that would be realized once the Teso are defeated, and to protect their herdsmen.

Before they attacked, the Tachon sent their intelligence team, which included Chebai, Kiptuli and Nandekwe (who talked all languages known at the time), to survey the Teso ability, kraals and weaponry. The spies, before they left, rolled back their ears, and washed themselves in soot and coal to assume the dark tan of a typical Teso herdsman. When the spies brought their report, an attack was organised for the second cock-crow, approximately 4:00 a.m. The attack was made against the Teso war code that required that all parties must be warned in advance. This marked the beginning of stage two fights.

The attackers were divided into two groups in order to attack Echakar and Bapala respectively and at the same time. They were armed with spears,
poisoned arrows and ebiyai, flame arrows, which when they landed on a grass thatched hut, set it on fire instantly. The flame arrows were very effective in creating confusion among the Teso that they ran out of their house terrified, naked, unarmed or carelessly armed. They were easy prey for the well-rehearsed Tachon army. By morning, they were no more.

It has been alleged that when the Tachon attacked, they did not even inform the Bagisu of their plan. However, word had gone around that an attack on the Teso forts was eminent. The Bagisu, therefore, came out, hid in the bushes and watched from a distance. They could see the flames from the burning huts and hear cries of agony from the burning and dying Teso families.

By dawn, when a causality assessment was made, both Wamurwe and Opata were dead, and approximately four thousand (4,000) heads of cattle looted. As news went round the Bagisu cheered and praised the Tachon tact, and immediately composed a song and dance for three days and nights. The song had the following tone:

Haa, haa, haa che Wamurwe chacha
Haa, haa, kauka aru niye nyatuni,
Che Wamurwe chacha.

Charula mumatala kewe, neheuna kamasinya
Haha, che Wamurwe chacha
Chacha ne vavenesialo
Vasikenda chimbeka chozi niseunya
Che Wamurwe chacha
Chacha ne valulu vakanga kumulilo
Che Wamurwe ne Opata chacha.

Haa, haa, haha, and all Wamurwe's herds are gone
Haa, haa, he thought he was as tough as a lion,
All his herds are those going now.

Leaving the kraals are Wamurwe's herds going
They are going with the owners of this land,
Who have sojourned and had influence in all corners
They can smell it from anywhere
Those are Wamurwe's herds gone.
They are going with the fierce, articulate striking soldiers,
Those who breathe fire
Oh, All the herds of Wamurwe and Opata are now gone!

A third of the looted animals were given to the Bakisu and the rest ushered into the Tachon kraals. All women captured and their daughters were deployed to work in Tachon homesteads and on millet and sorghum gardens. The young boys were deployed as herds’ boys. When the boys and the girls attained the age of sixteen, they were circumcised and initiated into the Tachon culture - and today they form the bulk of the Abahengele clan. Those who could not be adopted were sold out to slave traders.
The dead were not claimed and buried. The corpses were strewn all over. As they dried out, the skulls were very prominent and littered the village, so that the Bagisu again had to sing:

- Nakholoo, nakholo
- Inja mulole, inja mulole
- Inja mulole nakholo nasena kameno kewe
- Inja mulole!

_Come and see how the wag-tail brushes its teeth._

The Bagisu saw this as their victory over the Teso. The Teso saw it as a betrayal by their trade partners, the Tachon, who they traded with very successfully in hoes, millet, sorghum and livestock. To the Tachon, they proved that they were still the war masters in the region.

**The Kholera Defeat 1700 ACE**

This was a battle between Tachon new initiates and the Kakilelwa (Banyala Ba Ndombi).

Approximately three hundred and ten (310) initiates invaded the land of the Kakilelwa to loot millet and sorghum stores, livestock and young women. They wanted to do this as proof to the tribe and their elders that they were set to defend the tribe. These youths did not have any prior experience in wars and raids, and neither talked nor comprehended the Kakilelwa language.

Excited about what they would loot and the praise they would receive from the elders and the women of the community, they set out at 3 a.m. They were successful in the first instance when they surprised the Kakilelwa from their sleep. The Kakilelwa retreated to Udieri hills and the Bunyala forests (present day Emusire), where they consolidated themselves and by mid-day they had taken command of the battle and were pushing the youthful Tachon soldiers towards the north.

The Tachon lost about 200 boys, forcing Letia Voi to enter a peace treaty with the Kakilelwa chief Ngao.

**The Mabanga Battle 1798 ACE**

Rated as the fiercest, the battle was fought for 20 days, between the Tachon and the Nandi.

After the Kholera defeat, the Tachon continued with their eastward movement under Lumbwani, who had taken over from Voi, assisted by Lumbasi I. At present day Mabanga, they built a large fort and 7 kraals. This was stimulated by the height of Mabanga and the richness of the adjoining plains. On the east and west were two permanent rivers, the Kuywa and
Stapcha (Bokoli), and to the south was the great Nzoia River.

The Tachon stocks grew to the envy of their most easterly neighbours, the Nandi and their allies, the Kakilelwa and the Abalasi (Kapras). The sage Mirume, and later Sawel, warned them of the possible attack by the Nandi people. This brought the army ranks to alert.

On one night during the harvest season, the Nandi attacked, but they were repulsed, and they retreated to Bunyala forest and the bushes of river Nzoia. They summoned the support of their allies, the Abalasi, Maasai and the Kakilelwa. The Tachon had, on the other hand, sought reinforcement from the Bok, Bangomek and the Kony.

When the Nandi struck the following night, they again met with stiff resistance. The fight went on for four days, before the Nandi and their allies were pursued to Mulombi and Mukayi in present day South Kapras, before they started for Lugare. At Lugare, they were bitterly beaten and forced to flee to Mautuma, where they surrendered and a peace agreement reached.

The more than four-day war fought at Mabanga, resulted in a lot of bloodshed, hence Mabanga (blood). Lumbasi and the Orikoiyt of the Nandi effected the peace treaty. The five point peace treaty was entered at Lumakanda, witnessed among others by the Kapras elder called Chisindai, and the Kakilelwa elder Sakwa Munyala. The treaty stipulated, among others:

- That neither the Nandi nor the Maasai shall cross the Soi, present Kipkaren River, into present day Lumakanda, nor would the Tachon claim any part of present day Uasin Gishu district, without proper consultation and on peaceful mission.
- That the Tachon, Nandi and Maasai shall eat and drink from the same pot and shall never be enemies again.
- That cattle rustling shall end between the Nandi, Maasai and Tachon, because it is the main cause of animosity and unrest between them.
- That the three tribes will henceforth work alongside each other and come to the aid of the other in case of trouble.
- That the Nandi, being the aggressors, were to compensate the Tachon by delivering 60 cattle, three harisa sheep and 12 goats. They were also to donate the dog that would be used to seal the peace agreement.

**The Chetambe Reception 1895 ACE**

The Chetambe reception was experienced around and within the Chetambe Fort in August of 1895. The Fort built in 1862, is situated on the present Webuye escarpment, and runs from Lugulu through Mahanga ranges, past the Murumba primary school to the Nzoia River.

The Tachon elders have recalled that the Fort was about five (5) kilometers long, ten (10) meters deep and 100 meters wide. It accommodated more than 10,000 people at a go. The Fort was built to house people during danger, to conceal Tachon weaponry and as barracks for the soldiers.
The reception took place on August 15, 1895, when the Tachon were settled in what is now Bungoma District, under the leadership of Letia Nyikuri Iyeya Wamukune, nicknamed Sifuma (the famous), by the Bagisu and their Banyala kin. Nyikuri had his base at the foot of the escarpment and near the road junction Bungoma-Kitale-Webuye. The people resided in a fort constructed on the Mahanga-Chetambe-Webuye escarpment. The fort was named Chetambe after the Laitarian in-charge.

Some chroniclers have said the reception, which turned sour, took three days, while others have suggested it took three weeks. Hobley diaries indicate it took three days (15 - 17 August 1895). However, all agree that the war did not involve the Tachon people directly. Hobley records in his diaries, "17th August, 1895, still at camp of yesterday, counted Waganda cattle, the total captures of cattle now amount to 1460 besides harisa sheep and goats. Another Sudanese soldier died today. Information received that the people in the village of the 15th strike were not the real inhabitants, but the people from near the scene of first fighting (Lumboka); numerous men recognised among the bodies as people who were concerned in the Spire massacre of December 1894".

Facts gathered from the Tachon chroniclers, the Wanga, and the Bukusu, and records made by the then provincial administration, reveal that this was a labour related uprising. The causes and effects point towards the earlier efforts by Africans to agitate for their labour rights and trade unionism.

Shiamanyinya (Mumias), was made a very important village in 1894, when an administration station was established there, headed by a District Officer Charles W. Hobley, then under North Kavirondo District of Uganda Protectorate. At the same time, the Wanga people, whose Nabongo was Mumia, had extended their influence and frontiers from river Yala in the south to as far as present day Bungoma South, from Samia in the West to as far as East Kakamega (Malava) and into the Tachon country.

Under the umbrella of the white man, Mumia assumed supremacy over all the land, between present day Mt.Elgon and the Nandi, down to Nyanza, especially Busuba and Buholo. All persons living within these frontiers were regarded as his subjects.

To open up the frontiers, roads were being constructed using manual labour. Trade also grew at a steady rate. The roads under construction at this time were Shiamanyinya - Marach - Bukhayo, Shiamanyinya - Yala - Kisumu, Shiamanyinya - Kakamega, Abuhalilo (Lugulu)- Lugusi- Furoi - Turbo, Abuhalilo - Kimalel - Malakisi, and Abuhalilo - Malakisi- Bungoma- Kabula - Shiamanyinya. The people working on these roads included Luhyha, Teso and Luo speaking communities, and slaves brought in from the Sudan.

Trade in guns thrived, especially between the Bagisu and the slave traders. The greatest gun dealing and racketeering of the time was carried on by the Kakilelwa who served as headmen (foremen) in the Mumia's ranks. The Kakilelwa also oversaw the administration of tribal homelands, especially
Elumboka that was occupied by the Bagisu and Abakichilelwa workers. Wakoli Mukisu, the foreman, was the chief architect of the racket supported by an Arab slave merchant called Muse. Muse also trained his clients on how to operate the guns. In exchange, he received youthful female and male slaves, beads, ivory and food from Wakoli a member of the Kakilelwa clan.

The people of Lumboka were forced to work on the roads and cultivate shambas owned by the Nabongo, under the supervision of Wakoli Mukisu. Some were also taken and sold as slaves to Arab merchants and to banana plantation farmers of Busoga and Buganda Kingdoms, in present day Uganda.

Wakoli was an articulate person, ambitious, well trained in handling guns and organised in the tact of rallying the people behind him. He had the full respect and support of the road diggers and the residents of Lumboka. He promised them freedom and independence from the Nabongo tyranny one day when he would break ranks with the people of Shiamanyinya. He therefore, intensified his acquisition of guns from among others, Spire, and the members of the Sudanese contingent left behind by Jackson. He also commenced to train some of the Lumboka residents (mostly Bagisu and Banyala) in the use of guns.

The people of Lumboka were not cultivating their farms, and lived on food rations supplied by Nabongo Mumia of Wanga, which they found very inadequate. Wakoli used this and forced labour to convince the Lumboka people to boycott work, demanding increased food, time to work on their own farms and withdrawal of slavery-like conditions for their work. They also decided to down their tools if the Nabongo office did not act accordingly. This they did on November 22, 1894, the day of the elephant among the Banyala. This coincided with the day of harvest in the land of Chief Ndombi, where the Banyala camped at Lumboka had split from. The "day of the harvest" in Bunyala, was usually proceeded by human sacrifice to appease the god of plentiful.

The boycott was on for three days before Nabongo Mumia sent his special aid Hamisi (who was also in-charge of the stores and food supply), Werachisi (who was a Nabongo adviser), and Okwara Tindi (an adviser to the war council), all men senior to Wakoli, to negotiate a return-to-work formula. Most people hated Hamisi and could not afford to sit and negotiate with him. Hamisi has been described as an arrogant and abusive man, who looked down on the poor and the enslaved.

The meeting between Hamisi's delegation and the Lumboka people was very tense. The Lumboka negotiators included Wakoli, Lyambila, Namachanja and Wandawwa. The parties disagreed, and could therefore not resolve the problem. They resorted to abusive language, including drawing of guns. Hamisi was shot when he refused to increase the rations and then he threatened to shot everyone in sight. Before he carried out his threat, the sharp Wakoli had already taken his life away. When Okwara tried to give a helping hand, he was also shot dead. People scampered for safety, as Werachisi ran to report the matter to Nabongo.
Nabongo Mumia was saddened, and angered by the killing of Hamisi by the Lumboka people, he asked Hobley to act immediately to discipline the perpetrators. Hobley mobilized about 200 soldiers and native police, who included contingents from among the Nubians and Maasai stationed at Shiamanyinya. He also sent word to the Kabaka of Buganda for reinforcement. The Kabaka released 300 soldiers under Major William Grant, the District Commissioner (DC) of Busoga. With this team, the Wakoli boys at Lumboka were no match, and they took to their heels towards the east.

The Wakoli people would have taken shelter anywhere else apart from the Chetambe Fort. However, they could not go to the Teso, because they were sworn enemies since the Teso war of Ekore. Neither could they go to the Maasai, who had an accord with Nabongo. They could also not seek assistance from the Balaku, Samia, Bakhayo and Turkana, because they used to steal animals from them. They, therefore, turned to the Tachon people for cover. The Tachon had previously helped them to crash the Teso (1596 -1600).

Wandabwa, a member of the Bakisu, advised Wakoli to seek refuge and assistance from the Letia of the Tachon. Although Wakoli was skeptical, he went ahead and sent a mission to Letia Nyikuri asking for asylum and support to hold the Wanga and the Muzungu. He was skeptical because in the past, the Banyala had always sided with the Maasai in fighting the Tachon.

Earlier in May 1895, at the Chetambe Fort, the headquarters of Letia Nyikuri of Tachon, the sage Nduguyu Mirume, warned the cabinet that there were signs of blood being shed, occasioned by people from outside. He further told the cabinet that visitors who will come seeking shelter would shed the blood, and before their heels cool down there will be fire all over the place and the Fort will be destroyed. The fire, he said, would come from hives, which will be planted, on either front of the fort. The owners who will come in from the south pursuing their victims, through Wangusi and Lumbasi camps, will bring in the hives. He warned, "let the people of Wangusi and Lumbasi not touch it or welcome it when it passes through, for if they do they will burn to ashes!" The hives have been identified to be cannons brought in by Mumia's soldiers led by C. W. Hobley, as they pursued the Lumboka run-away.

The sage advised Letia Nyikuri and Laitarian Chetambe to evacuate people from the Wangusi and Lumbasi camps, and from the Fort moving them to river Kibisi and its watersheds where they would be safe, and wouldn't even hear the sounds of the exploding hives. Members who inhabited the camps, were brought together under Chasam Kachimaketi and moved to safety first at the main fort of Chetambe, before being evacuated, together with others, to the banks of Kepis (the waters that irrigate the fertile soils of the east), river Kibisi.

To confirm his revelation, he asked the Letia to slaughter a cow so that they could study the intestines for further clues on the emerging situation. When the intestines were examined, they were frail with blood clots and spelt destruction, confirming what the sage had prophesied. In December 1894 when the Lumboka labour camp was attacked, the Letia ordered
the immediate evacuation of the Wangusi and Lumbasi camps, and the fort of Chetambe. He, however, asked that the Cabinet remain with him at the royal palace, which was at the present day situation of Webuye Town. The Cabinet would receive the people seeking shelter, advise them on what to do and where to shelter, and also meet and talk to those pursuing them so that peace prevailed.

When groups of children, women and the aged arrived from Lumboka in December/January 1895, the Letia asked the Laitarian Chetambe to organize for their shelter at the empty fort of Chetambe and supply them with food and water. Shortly thereafter, youthful warriors arrived, followed by a contingent led by Wakoli. Wakoli's team included Namachanja, Lyambila, and Wandabwa. The Letia invited them to a hastily convened meeting to discuss the events and the possible consequences if they were allowed to continue. He also invited his Kapras counterpart, Letia Martini, to participate in the talks. Mauled Said, an interpreter and ex-official representative of the Assistant District Officer Mumias in Kitosh wrote the notes of the proceedings.

It is understood that Wakoli told Letia Nyikuri (Sifuma), that what his people needed most was shelter and a good rest before any thing else was done. He also explained to the Letia that he threw the first blow at his employer; therefore he was not ready to surrender and be executed like a woman but was determined to fight to the last of his men. Therefore, any discussions on amnesty or calling of the strike, the revolt or war with Nabongo were not the best bets. He was, however, warned that Chetambe Fort was not going to be a battlefield between the run-a-ways with Nabongo. The Letia is said to have told Wakoli:

*If you could not hold these people at your Lumboka how do you expect to do it in my fort and on my soil? I cannot allow you to spoil the sacred sites of my people, abuse their ancestors to satisfy your ego. I am determined to have you resolve this matter with Nabongo*.

As it were the run-a-ways did not remain peaceful and live under the dictations of the host. They organised raids on white caravans and groups of traders crossing through Kitosh (the Tachon country). They acquired more weapons and also captured hostages from these caravans. These activities outraged the colonial administrators stationed at Mumias and they made this known to Letia Nyikuri. In response, Nyikuri organised peace meetings with representatives of Nabongo, the colonial office and the run-a-ways to resolve the stalemate.

Wakoli, being smart he was, appointed Namachanja as the political leader of his people. Wakoli himself, continued with active militant activities against the Nabongo and colonial offices. So that, in the eyes of the white man, the two groups (Bagisu and Banyala) seemed peaceful. For instance, two months after the Lumboka destruction, they were already making attempts to mend relations with the offices at Elureko (Mumias). Hobley has recorded, *on 3.9.1895, heard through Mumia that the Kitosh people were consulting about coming in; they want Namachanja to come in but he refuses as they refused formerly to let him come in*.
The strategy adopted by Wakoli is to have Namachanja win favours with the colonial office as they tainted the Tachon image in the name of raids and ambushes. Namachanja seeks Mumia's assistance and he tops this up with gifts of ivory and bracelets to Mumia and Hobley. He even made better gestures by surrendering some ammunition stolen before the food strike.

On July 23, 1895, the hostility between the run-a-ways and the colonial office in Mumias and the Nabongo regime intensified, as they continued to raid white caravans to Mt. Elgon, and through to the east and north of the region. On July 28, 1895, the Letia held sessions with both groups. Major William Grant led the Nabongo contingent, while the Wakoli group included Wandabwa, Wakoli and Namachanja. The sessions could not achieve any peaceful settlement as:

- The Nabongo team, which included most white negotiators, saw this as an opportunity to expand their territory into the Tachon nation. They therefore accused the Letia of defending and fighting for fugitives, murderers and people of small hearts.

- The Wakoli men, on the other hand, saw the Letia as a coward who did not want to raise an army to help them fight Mumia and his white supporters for tumbling on their rights.

The Letia had adjourned the meeting and instructed the Laitarian Chetambe to show the visitors where to stay. He then sent an emissary delegation to the District Officer C.W. Hobley with a message not to proceed until the next day when the Letia (Nyikuri) would meet them to discuss the possibilities of resolving the conflict without spilling blood. When peace initiatives failed, Letia instructed his chief army officer Laitarian Chetambe to evacuate the last batch of the Tachon people from within potential areas of battle.

When Hobley and his men finally fired the dreadful bullet at the fort to declare the start of the final assault on the fugitives, all the Tachon had been evacuated except six people - three men Makalaya, Khasabuli and Ndeweni, and three unidentified women. All the three men died together with hundreds of Wakoli's men who were camped in the fort. 80 innocent civilians were killed and 304 captured with 1460 cattle. Cases of looting, rape, kidnapping and slavery (of women and youth) have been reported.

Immediately after the fort was blown up, Namachanja sent envoys with presents to Hobley. These included bundles of bananas, 12 elephant tasks, 3 muzzleloaders and one burnt breach loader. In exchange Hobley released 32 prisoners, and three wives and children of the envoys.

The Tachon continued to seek for a peaceful relationship with the colonial government and the Nabongo office. Letia Nyikuri wanted the status quo to remain the way it was before the destruction of the fort. But C.W. Hobley and Nabongo Mumia thought it was now time to extend their authority over the Tachon country and to make Letia Nyikuri subordinate to Mumia. The
dispersed run-a ways re-collected under the leadership of Namachanja as their leader and spokesman, as Wakoli continued with his militant stance ambushing caravans and raiding homes at night. This behaviour made Hobley and the colonial government suspicious of the intentions of the Letia. They imagined that the raids and ambushes were sanctioned and properly organised by Nyikuri and his men. This was collaborated by the reports Namachanja made to the colonial office, exonerating his men. However, this did not deter the Letia; he continued to pursue harmonious relationships with the colonial office, although all these were never appreciated by Hobley and his men.

On September 8, 1895 Hobley recorded in his diary, “in the afternoon Martini the Kapras Chief came in with a flag for truce and a letter from Mauled saying that they wanted peace and had treated the caravan well, so we held a shauri with him and told him to call a big baraza for the day after tomorrow”.

On September 11, a meeting was held between Hobley, his entourage, and representatives of Letia Nyikuri who included Martini, Lumbasi, Nduguyu, Kakai and Chasam. Hobley recorded in his diaries: Martini, the two brothers, Lumbassi and one or two other chiefs came in, in the morning and we had a long shauri (consultative meeting) as to the outrages on the caravans and one rifle was returned and six jembes brought in, discovered whereabouts of several other rifles etc., but as these things cannot be discussed at a moments notice, it was eventually decided to make a blood-brotherhood with the chiefs present. This was done at 5 p.m. A dog was procured and tied to a tree. A Kapras chief held one end of the animal and our representative the other and the dog was cut in half, an address was then made to the effect that anyone who broke the blood-brotherhood would die a similar death to the dog. An agreement was then drawn up between myself and the chiefs by which they agreed to cease all their malpractice and place themselves entirely under Government control.

This marked the start of colonial rule among the Tachon people. This was effected on March 3, 1896 when Namachanja was appointed chief of Kitosh, and Nyikuri made a head man of his people on the Webuye site of river Nzoia, while Lumbasi continued on the Kakamega side. This by implication meant Nabongo Mumia extended his authority over the Tachon and Batura nations by the end of 1896. He, with the support and tutelage of the white counsels, appointed his own men to rule over the new lands.
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE TACHON FACTOR IN THE SETTLEMENT OF WESTERN KENYA 85 - 90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mt. Elgon Factor</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect on the People of Maragoli, Gusii and Kuria</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect on the People of Tiriki, Idakho and Related Communities</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect on the Wanga and Bakhayo</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Seven

THE TACHON FACTOR IN THE SETTLEMENT OF WESTERN KENYA

Introduction

As it has already been demonstrated in the preceding chapters, the role of
the Tachon people in the evolution of the Luhya peoples cannot be ignored.
The Tachon have played a very significant role in the evolution and
settlement of the present Luhya communities.

The Tachon people seem to have evolved and expanded between 700 Before
Common Era (BCE) and 1900 After Common Era (ACE). The period from 1270 to
1949 saw a beehive of activities as they sojourned the whole of Western
Kenya from Turkana down to Lake Victoria (Sio Port) and back again. This
brought them in contact with many Bantu groups who included the Wanga,
Banyala (Kakilelwa), Masaaba, Banyala, Kakilelwa, Bagisu, Kapras and the
Gusii. The period also witnessed them drift gradually from their allies -
the Pokot, Saboet, Tugen and the Uasin Gishu Maasai. This tendency to move
closer to the Bantu speaking people, especially the Luhya, radically
affected their way of life.

The Tachon were living in the areas of present day Bungoma as early as the
14th Century, and as Professor Gedion Were has noted, they were in this
region before anyone else. They were there along with their Kalenjin and
Maasai relations who comprised of the El Kony, Bangomek, Bangoma and Bok
(from whom Bungoma is named), the (Ba) Walaku, Saboet, Uasin Gisu Maasai,
the Siria, and the Purko. Two main camps existed, the Bangoma-Siria,
covering all the area between Kapchai and Bumula, and the El Kimalel along
the Tulwop Kony.

The major places where the impact started were present day Mt. Elgon, and
the settlements around present day Sang'alo, Samo and Bungoma. The
community was able to influence the development of new tribes/clans because
of its wealth in animals and ivory. They were also generous, humble and
loving people with a strong leadership structure passed over from
generation to generation.

The Mt.Elgon Factor

The contribution to the evolution of the Luhya community can be traced back
to the early 17th century, when the El Kimalel dispersal took place,
forcing people into different directions to cover vast areas of present day
Busia, Nandi, Trans-Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, Bungoma and Keiyo districts.

On dispersal, the majority of the Tachon stock settled in present day
Bungoma and Kakamega Districts. With this dispersal, many new societies
were formed. The Sabeweiny became prominent in the formation of the present
day Abashien of Marama, the Pokot and Sebei. Some families of Abangachi and
Abatukiika accompanied the Aldai and Tugen through Sirikwa to present day
Uasin Gishu, Keiyo, Nandi and Baringo Districts. These two clans are the
most vocal among the peoples of Bungoma. They also have larger household populations, and were most successful in acquiring education and power during the colonial rule, because of their strong affiliation to the missionary systems.

The Abatukiika have been instrumental in developing the Bakisu, and later the Bukusu community supported aggressively by the Abanyala. They are also responsible for the establishment of a strong traditional religious and cultural base, which revolves around circumcision and El Sayon (God Most High), among the non-Tachon communities in Bungoma. The followers of the Dini Ya Musambwa have confused El Sayon to mean "God on Mt.Elgon".

The encounter with the Masaaba people led to intermarriages, leading to creation of new clans of Abasibende, Ababichachi, Ababambo, Abakimwei, and Abakiyabi, among others, and laying the foundation on which the Bukusu sub-tribe was built. This intermarriage, like that between the nine (ten) Maasai warriors and the nine (ten) daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi, has one thing in common - the new tribe retains the language, culture and behaviour of the mother. It is clear that the Masaaba, Banyala and Bagisu girls who married into the Tachon clans of Tukiika, Kamkong and Kiboriti, brought their traditional ways of life with them, and ignored those they found in existence. This ensured the immediate disappearance of the Tukiika traditions, including language. Further encounter with the Banyala and Banyoro accelerated cultural fusion, leading to the adoption of the present Bantu language.

Other communities, which benefited from this development, were the present day Idakho, Tiriki, Maragoli, Wanga, Kapras and Bakhayo of Kenya, and the Ziba and Haya of Tanzania.

**The Effect on the People of Maragoli, Gusii and Kuria**

Recorded information suggests that the Gusii, Bukusu and Maragoli had a common ancestor or travelled together in their early days.

While living along the Nzoia River, the Tachon came across people they have identified as the Kussien, under the leadership of Osogwony. These could be the Gusii people on their way from their mysterious 'Misri' to their present settlement. They are said to have been coming from Mt. Elgon. This was about a hundred years after the El Kony dispersal. This is corroborated by what W.R. Ochieng said. He has written that while the Bukusu remained in Mt. Elgon, around 1560, the Gusii, Kuria, Suba and Logoli migrated southwards following the course of river Nzoia till they arrived on the eastern shores of Lake Victoria.

The Gusii are said to have stayed at the Samo rock for more than 20 harvest seasons before moving southwards. And by this time, many families of the Tachon community had joined them, and a new society was being born. Most of the families that joined the Gusii members were of the house of Wambillanga and Mabia. Wambillanga and Mabia were of the house of Bisino, of the house of Saniaka, of the house of Olu Tuchoi, son of Kimakwei, and Kimakwei, son of Samoywa, son of Nachambo, son of Murkal.
When Wambilianga and Mabia joined the Gusii people, they left behind their brothers Waliaro, Chesambili and Sioyo, who founded the present clan of Abasaniaka.

Now, Osogwony, Wambilianga and Mabia agreed to work together and develop a society that later moved down along the Nzoia river and settled at Goye. Intermarriages commenced and five distinctive communities evolved: - the Gusii proper (Osogwony's family), the Kuria, the Maragoli (after Wambilianga's son Murkal), the Suba, Haya and Ziba.

From Goye, they moved to Chesumu (present day Kisumu). In Chesumu, the people were faced with many misfortunes, including famine and drought, coupled with frequent raids from the Luo peoples. As a result, dispersal took place, forcing the Ziba to move down to western Uganda then down to the western shores of Lake Victoria and north of Bukoba. The Suba were scattered all over present day South Nyanza and the Kenya-Tanganyika border. A majority of the Osogwony (Gusii) wandered to the Kano plains and present day Nyakach area, whereas the families of Murkal under the command of Murigo moved eastward and camped at present day Kobujoi.

Those who remained at Chesumu were under the sage Waliaro, son of Bariro, of the house of Mabia. Waliaro had a younger brother Mumbia who was also a medicine man. When famine and water diseases attacked Osogwony’s people while in Kano, they sent for Mumbia, and later he took over the mantle after Osogwony.

The Kuria and the Haya continued southwards. At that time, the area now occupied by the Haya was completely unoccupied. So when the Kuria and the Haya entered the present-day northwestern Tanzania, they did not find any other person inhabiting the area.

The Kuria and the Haya were bantuised in the later years of the 17th Century, about the same time as their Tachon ancestors. The immigrants extended the Bantu influence to them from the Bunyoro-Kitara. Some of the people who came from Matili joined the Kuria towards the Kano plains, behind the Maragoli, and then westward to present day Kisa, before wandering to Karikul (present day Port Victoria). At Karikul, the Kuria cluster split into three groups—La'khone, La'Nyekeriko, and the Chesinyama, setting the foundation to the evolution of the present Banyala clans of Abakhone, Abanyekera and Abasinyama of Busia. The three groups decided to remain under one leader, Se'Osogwony the great nephew of the older Osogwony. Happy with the beauty of their new settlements they celebrated the revelation of truth as taught by sages Sumba and Nakipka, and celebrated during the harvest as the Nakhabuka festival.

The people of Karikul were later joined by some families of Bangomek, especially, the Abang'oma, Abayobo and Abalwani, who came in from the East. It is suggested that these new groups came in from Esibembe, Bumula and Mundika where other Tachon groups were already settled.
Effect on the Tiriki, Idakho and Related Communities

From Sang'alo, the clans of Idakho and Tiriki evolved. Abashien, the offshoots of the Sabeweiny, Abalwani, Abamulima and Abamulemba moved to Bumula in search of new pastures and settlement. They met and intermarried with Uasin Gishu Maasai to produce the groups of Batura and Baboro.

The Batura and Baboro grew in numbers and wandered, some in the company of the Abalwani to Karikul, while the others in the company of Abamulemba moved to present day Shiru Location of Kakamega and Vihiga Districts. At the same time, they had seven members of the Chepruko clan, led by Chasam, leave Ndalu and Soy southwards to present day Lubao, where they met and intermarried with the Absisira (Kapsis) producing, Abashimuli, Abalukhoba and Abasengo. Around Ingotse they left behind the Abasengo who had decided to settle, and proceeded to present day Luanda, where a new crop, the Abakhatiri, were left as the others proceeded to Kisa.

Of the Abasengo left behind at Ingotse, some members (under Kimariti, the younger brother of Chasam), wandered to present day Tindinyo, where they met the Ababoro, Abatura. As they mixed and grew in numbers, the family of Kimariti split into two, forming the clans of Abamuli (after Kipimuli) and Abashikalu (after Chesikul).

While some Tachon elders (chroniclers) had stated that their ancestors were the forbearers of the Tiriki, Idakho, the Abamuli of Bunyore, and some members of the Kisa (Abashisa, Abamani, and Abakhobole) clan, Profs. Were and Ochieng have maintained that the named luhya clans were offsprings of either the Kalenjin or Maasai movements. We see a very close relationship, though, between what the elders say and what the professors found out in their different studies – the period quoted by Prof. Were of late 17th Century through the 18th century seems to tally.

Prof. Were, in a seminar report of 1972 has stated:

......about 1689 and the beginning of the next century another significant group of Maasai came into the country, this time to the area around Sang’alo.

The Tachon people started settling within the environs of Sang’alo in 1650 and by 1700, they had completed the construction of camps and were receiving visitors passing through, including the first groups of the Abakuusi. Among the major Tachon clans that settled in Sang’alo were the Abasang’alo, Abasamo, Abasonge, Abamatili, Abasiyo, Abakatum, Abarefu and Abachikha.

Prof. Were, further, states that the Maasai while in Sang’alo lived with the local Bantu people called Abasonge for sometime before migrating across to Uganda.
Effect on the Formation of Wanga and Bukhayo Communities

The single most Tachon sub-nation that has had influence over the Wanga and Bakhayo people has been the Abasang'alo.

Kapkolel otherwise known as Khakhole the son of Libusi had five sons namely Khaabi, Kholela, Mwinami, Leka and Tamuoywa - who together are called Abasang'alo (after their mother). From Sibembe, the sons took different routes to seek new lives. The Kholela and Tamuoywa travelled northeast, ending up at Lutacho; Mwinami crossed the Nzoia and travelled east to Kibaywa, Matete, Lwandet and Chebwai. Leka went southwards, ending up in Wanga, while Khaabi travelled westward to present day Bukhayo, first settling around Butula, Funyula and then Nambale.
## CHAPTER EIGHT: EARLY ENCOUNTER WITH FOREIGNERS 91 - 112

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounter With the Kalenjin And Maa Speaking People</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Missionaries and Arab Merchants</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assimilation and Growth</strong></td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Migrational Settlements And Trade</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Naming Of Children</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Death And Burial Arrangements</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The European Colonial Influence On Assimilation And Decimation of the Tachon Peoples</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Eight

EARLY ENCOUNTER WITH FOREIGNERS

Introduction

The Tachon came across many different groups of people during their movement, who significantly contributed to the development of their language, culture and behaviour, and their meaningful past association. The trip starts in the village of Matur in Misri, to present day settlements.

Encounter with the Kalenjin and Maa Speaking People

The Tachon first encountered the Kalenjin, and then called Miotik, around Borit (Torit), in southern Sudan.

The encounter with the Kalenjin had significant effects on the culture and life, and making of the Tachon people. The first products of the Kalenjin - Tachon interaction were the evolution of two families - the Bionek and the Koyonjo. These two families founded twelve Tachon clans:

(a) Kiptuik (Abatukiika), Bionek gave birth to Kap'bioneik (leading to Abakabyonek), Meya (Abameywa), Kimatili (Abamatili), Kiptuum (Abakatuum), and Kalisioya (Abasiyoa),

(b) Koyonjo (also called El-Kony) was responsible for Kiboriti (Abakiboriti), Kapchewa (Abacheo or Abachewa), Khakhole (Abasang'alo), Ngachi (Abangachi), Samoei (Abasamo) and Kamkong (Abakamukong).

While together, the two people (Kalenjin & Tachon) rotated leadership, especially the seat of the Letia and that of the Laitarian, At anytime, a Tachon was a Letia, a Kalenjin was a Laitarian, and vice versa. The youth received all round training in the art of war.

The encounter with the Kalenjin also introduced the Tachon to new artifacts and weaponry, including the use of fire flames attached to arrows, in addition to the use of poisoned arrows and blades.

While in and around Sirikwa the eldest son of Ngach (the ancestor of Abangachi) Kimang'weti had intercourse with his younger sister, Chelongweti and made her pregnant. When this was discovered, he committed korianei (suicide). Chelongweti was expelled from her family and adopted by Kiptuik. She gave birth to a baby boy who was named Maina. When Maina grew up he was initiated and given a wife from the house of Kapchikhen (Abachikha), and gave life to the present families of Abatukiika Abakwangwa and Abatukiika Abayoboi.

Often the encounter with the Maasai was hostile, characterized by wars, raids and looting, all the way from Loiyangalani (on Lake Turkana) through Uasin Gishu to Mabanga (Bungoma).
The Encounter with White Missionaries and Arab Merchants

When the Tachon were settled north of present day Wanga region (Mumias), specifically in the lands covering Bumula, Bungoma, Sibembe and Sang’alo, they encountered the Sudanese, Seychelles (Shelisheli), and Arab merchants, who traded with the Wanga leaders in slaves, ivory and cereals. They, in return brought cloths, cloves, jewellery and food (especially the yellow maize).

By 1886, the Pangani regime, under a man identified only as Sudi, had extended their tentacles across into present-day western Kenya in search of slaves. This trade attracted the Wanga leadership, the Banyala (Kakilelwa), and the Baganda. When the trade in human beings reached the Tachon, the then Letia Nyikuri is quoted to have pronounced:

*It is against the teachings of our forefathers, our religion and humanity to trade in human beings. If we do not sell our animals how can we trade in human beings? All men have the image of their creator El Sayon, they cannot to be traded as a commodity but to be above it, and only his skills and inventions can be traded.*

Letia Nyikuri decreed that no Tachon would deal in human beings or his flesh. He further defined the only items that the Tachon would deal in their trade: ivory, bracelets and cereals. This was sounded in all Tachon villages.

Between 1882 and 1895, a number of important European visitors passed through the Tachon land. The first was Joseph Thompson, who entered from the east accompanied by African porters. He was hosted for a night at present Maturu, crossed the Nzoia at Furoi and followed the River southwards before he crossed over to Wanga and then back again on his way to "discover" Mt. Elgon. This is estimated to have been between 1882 and 1883.

In October 1885, Bishop James Hannington passed through on his way to the Uganda protectorate. Hannington had African porters of coastal origin, and was escorted by three Maasai aides. Letia Nyikuri received him, with two elephant tusks. On his departure, he was given three Tachon aides to serve as translators and forward messengers. Hannington had promised to come back, but he never did. A secret mission was sent out to investigate. It was reported back that he had been murdered and his aides poisoned by Malichungu, enemies in the land of Basuku, probably Busoga.

In 1889, two visitors came to Letia Nyikuri at Mahanga from the South. Nabongo Mumia’s aides brought them. They were Sir Frederick Jackson and Gedge. The Letia at his residence at present day Webuye received them. The Letia learnt that they were interested in trading in ivory, and also to visit Mt. Elgon. The Tachon were then the main suppliers of Ivory and Inyuma in the region. Jackson and Gedge were given twenty-five tusks of ivory and six gourds of inyuma.
By 1888, the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) had extended its influence into East Africa, especially the Coast and in Uganda, and was to control all important caravan routes, used by traders and travellers into the interior. However, they were not able to aggressively influence the political structure and leadership, and the economic framework of the local communities. This forced the British Government to buy them (IBEAC) out to establish the British East Africa Protectorate in 1895. This action took place to signify and stamp British dominance over all the tribes of Western Kenya. After taking over the Chetambe Fort, headquarter for the Tachon Letiadom; the British had full control of Western Kenya (present North Rift, Nyanza and Western Provinces).

As the IBEAC grew, and by 1890, white faces were a common sight in the region and the scramble for domination of the region was on between the British in Uganda and the Germany in Tanganyika. The British were coming in from the West, while the Germany came in from the South. A German, Carl Peters, who was also the head of the German Emin Pasha Expedition Team, arrived in February 1890, on his way to meet Nabongo. He proposed and agreed on a pact with Letia Nyikuri, which would protect the Tachon people from any form of aggression from neighbours and the Uganda Protectorate regime. The pact would also give the Tachon exclusive rights to trade in ivory all the way to the coast of the Indian Ocean. The Letia, Nyikuri rejected the proposal, saying that:

1. All their neighbours were friendly and did not have the muscle to attack and destroy the Tachon,

2. Trade boundaries were very clear to him, his people and the leaders of these tribes all the way to the coast. He would therefore not be interested in interfering with the regimes and sovereignty of other tribes either through trade or other means. He, however, assured Peters that the Tachon would like to give him as many tusks as he wanted, plus any other goods he would like to trade in, except human beings.

Peters moved on with his team to Kwa Shiundu/Elureko, at Nabongo Mumia's base, where he was given temporary settlement as he appraised the possibilities of taking over the Kavirondo region. This action attracted the interest of the British who had already extended their rule to Kisumu and El'reko, and Nabongo was within their administration. To defeat the interests of the Germans, the British, by orders of Sir H. Colville opened an administrative sub-station at Kwa Shiundu (Mumias) and posted Mr. F. Spire as the administrator, with 50 Sudanese Soldiers who manned a well-constructed and stocked garrison. The sub-station was specifically charged with three things: to ward off slave traders; to block any efforts by the Germans to penetrate the Kavirondo region; and to propagate and ensure acceptance of the policies of the IBEA by all.

With Elureko (present day Mumias) secure, the British focused their interest on Tachon land, where the German were busy trying to establish a base at present day Lugari. This forced the British to upgrade the sub-station at Mumias (in 1895) to the equivalence of a District Office and
posted a Sub-Commissioner C.W. Hobley. The Sub-Commissioners office was, therefore, responsible for a region defined as North Kavirondo, covering the whole of present day Kakamega, Vihiga, Saboet, Busia and Bungoma Districts. This automatically brought the Tachon under the administration of the Sub-Commissioner, and hence the Uganda Protectorate. However, Hobley could not enforce any taxation or direct reporting by the Tachon leaders to him or his Office, since this was not official. He therefore, started consultations with the Letia, with the help of Nabongo Mumia to win the Tachon people.

It was not until after the Chetambe war that the British finally took over control of the Tachonland, its administration and management. On the death of Letia Nyikuri (1912), the British appointed a chief and sub-chiefs from among the Wanga, Kapras and Banyala to rule over and also run the affairs of the Tachon people. The Tachon leadership structure was dismantled, and their legitimate leaders were reduced to village headmen, otherwise called Olukongo.

In 1899, Sir Harry Johnson, then the Special Commissioner to Uganda Protectorate, introduced taxation, which was to be paid both in kind and cash. The tax rate was 3 rupees per head per year, for those with huts. This was Hut Tax. The Tachon were required to pay in form of either iron hoes, eggs, animals and labour up to the value of 3 rupees per year. This tax was not taken lightly by the Tachon especially, when it meant the Tax was to maintain the Nabongo and his colonial masters.

In 1901, the first locomotive train passed through the Tachon land to Uganda. In 1902, Kavirondo was separated from Uganda Protectorate and became part of the newly formed British Kenya Colony. This was followed by the appointment of chiefs by the government. Instead of appointing a chief from amongst the Tachon to look after their own affairs, the government brought in chiefs from among the Wanga, Abakhone of Bunyala and Kapras. The Tachon were only allowed to produce a Sub-chief and clan elders. Before the Tachon could name a sub-chief, the British had already picked Silungai (Murumba) the younger son of Nyikuri to lead. This forced the tribe to break up into five groups - a group led by Silungai, Wamboko, Lumbasi, Kakai and Maraka - the first three were Nyikuri's children.

By 1910, two forms of taxation existed, the Hut Tax and Poll Tax. The taxes were introduced and made effective by the Hut & Poll Tax Ordinance of 1910. Persons eligible for these taxes were all males above sixteen years. The combined amount, payable per year was fixed at the value of shillings twelve (12). The Local Native Council, the administrators of the Ordinance, fixed the rate.

The Missionaries entered the area in 1900 from Mumias. The Moslem missionaries put up the base at Mumias with an outpost at Webuye, then Malakisi, Kimilili and Lugari - they followed the railway line as they tied religion to business. The Christian missionaries entered from Kaimosi and put up their first base at Lugulu in 1914 to spread the message according to the Quaker teachings - Friends World Mission that later converted to
Friends African Mission (Yearly) Meeting. By 1928, the Friends had extended their mission work to Lugusi, Bokoli, Matili, Matulo, Masindu and Misimo. By this time, the Catholics were at Misikhu and Bokoli. The Catholics used headmen and servicemen to convert the local people into their church.

**Assimilation and Growth**

Professor Were has observed that by 1000 ACE, the Tachon, especially the Abasonge, Abatukiika, Abangachi, Abashien and Abachimuluku were already settled around Mt. Elgon. He has also stated that both the Kavirondo Gulf and Mt. Elgon, at this time, were already "settled by Bantu-speaking people and a group of people whose language was akin to Kalenjin". He ascertains the people with a language "akin to Kalenjin" to be "Kitosh Southern Nilotes" who were "eventually assimilated by their Bantu-speaking neighbours, the ancestors of many of the present sections of the Abaluya and Abagisu". The Kitosh Southern Nilotes, as they were then called, turn out to be the Tachon peoples.

**Migrational Settlements and Trade**

The Bantu, especially the Baluhyia influence on the Tachon was more significant through closer inter-relationships through migration and settlement, and trade and commerce resulted in the evolution of a new culture - names, marriage customs, clothing and adornment, and other practices. This, in effect completed the assimilation process.

Among the people of Western Kenya, the Maragoli, Wanga, Bakhayo, Kapras, Banyala, Bagisu and the Luo are very efficient and effective at absorption, which has been referred to as *swallowing*, of members of other nations who they encounter. The Tachon were in constant contact with all these groups, except the Maragoli. According to Professor Gedion Were, an important historical process of assimilation of the Tachon by the Abaluhya community took place between 1586 and 1625 (40 years) in the areas between Yala and Mt. Elgon. It seems, however, that the process of the assimilation of the Tachon extended through 1900, being concluded around 1949, although the majority of the people around Mt. Elgon and in Pokot continued to speak a Kalenjin dialect, even to day, and all their rituals and practices are within that prescription.

From the trend of things, the period 1586 -1625 does not seem significant enough in the process of assimilation. At this time, there were few, if any, Bantu speaking, especially Baluhyia in the areas sojourned by the Tachon. We see this process accelerated around 1800, by which time the Wanga Nabongodom was growing on the south, the Kapras and Banyala were settling on the South West, the Marach and Bakhayo now occupied most of Busia, which was on the West of the Tachon settlements, while across the Elgon were the Bagisu, Basoga, Banyoro and Baganda peoples. On the north and east, however, were Kalenjin speaking communities, who occupied most of Mt. Elgon area, Trans-Nzola, Uasin Gishu and present Nandi regions.
The cultural influence from the South and West was stronger at this time than from the North and East. The Tachon seem to have been keen to establish new relationships with a new people, the Baluhyia, than their long-time allies, the Kalenjin, and their nemesis, the Maasai. In fact, this generated friction with the Nandi communities who felt the Tachon people, like the Terik, were becoming hostile by concentrating more on the newfound blocks of the Bantu community. On the other hand, the Luhya community was very effective in selling their practices and customs to the Tachon, accelerated by Luhya girls marrying into the Tachon community, and carrying with them Luhya traditions and language, and these were received without much opposition. It is alleged that the Tachon girls marrying into Luhya communities were compelled to practice only specific Luhya customs, giving up their own. At the same time, there were many Luhya youths, especially from Kapras and Bugisu, who were hired by the Tachon to tend animals and farms who stayed within Tachon homesteads practicing their customs and beliefs without interference. The only condition they were required to satisfy was to accept circumcision when they reached the right age.

Whereas the Tachon readily admitted other people into their land to live among them, they were reluctant to force them/trick them into accepting their beliefs, practices and customs. On the other hand, most Luhya communities went all-round to initiate the new members into their society, introducing them to their culture, beliefs and practices.

**Naming of Children**

The Tachon finally had adopted the Luhya way of naming. This was another important step in the assimilation of the Tachon. As they continued to interact with the Luhya-Bantu communities they adopted the luhya names as well. Gradually, the names the Tachon had come with down from Matruh began to disappear. They started to name their children in the manner of the Luhya and especially the Kapras, Wanga, Banyala and Bagisu. This was followed gradually by the adoption of a dialect between Kapras and Wanga, as the new language of communication.

The people of Wanga, Kapras, and Bunyala, named their children after famous persons in their community or neighbours who had died during or just before the birth of a child, or after an important event, season or according to the order of the day. The Tachon names were passed down from generation to generation. Most Tachon names started with a "K", an "L" or an "S", i.e. Kapchikhen, Kapchanga, Loiboiben, Lentoijon, Lebanoi, Sembeyo, Sapaya, Sabeiyn, Saisi, etc. Most names starting with an "S" had an "e" following i.e. "Se" which meant "son of". The Luhya names started with the letter "W" for a male child and an "N" for a female child, i.e. Wanjala (Wanzala), Wafula, Wekesa (Ekesa), Wamalwa and Wangwe (Anangwe) for male children and Nanjala or Nanzala, Nafula, Namalwa and Wanangwe for female children respectively.
The Luhya and Bantu in general, named their children after events and seasons. The Tachon has since adopted this method. The chart below demonstrates how this was done.

### Chart 3: Naming of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event/Season</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Famine</td>
<td>Nanjala</td>
<td>Wanjala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nanzala</td>
<td>Wanzala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought</td>
<td>Nasimiyu</td>
<td>Simiyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Siminyu</td>
<td>Siminyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>Nafula</td>
<td>Wafula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ofula</td>
<td>Ofula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ploughing</td>
<td>Namarome</td>
<td>Werome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivation/Weeding</td>
<td>Nelima</td>
<td>Welime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naliaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting</td>
<td>Nekesa, Negesa</td>
<td>Wekesa, Wegesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agesa, Aketsa</td>
<td>Ekesa, Egesa, Eketsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nasambu</td>
<td>Sambu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Namasambu</td>
<td>Masambu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bumper Harvest</td>
<td>Nanjikurire</td>
<td>Wekura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Tachon also adopted the naming system that appealed to the process of human evolution and physiology. For instance, a child who gave the mother a lot of trouble during her pregnancy or extended labour was named Wamurwe (male) and Namurwe (female). Where a mother gave birth to twins, the first one to come out was named Mulongo while the last one was named Mukhwana. If they were triplets, the third one was called Khamala.

Sometimes children were born with complications or after a long yearning by a couple. Such complications include:

- Children born with umbilical cords around their neck were named Kutondo, Wetondo or Litondo (Male) and Netondo (female),

- Children born legs out first were named Amakulu (male) and Lukela (female).

Some mothers conceived and had pre-mature babies who died immediately after birth. After repeated cases of this kind, some mothers were able to have a "baby of luck". The delivery arrangements for a potential baby-luck included "throwing away the baby" immediately after birth - the Moses of Israel way! The expectant parents arranged with another woman, whose family history was noble and a successful mother, to pick the baby as soon as it was "thrown away" in a basket or blanket/skin, along the footpath. She woman picked the baby, cut the umbilical cord, cleaned it, and pretended to breast-feed. This, was believed, would cleanse the baby of any evil spirits. She, then proceeded to approach the real mother and "begged her to adopt" the baby as a foster parent because she was childless. When the true mother accepted to adopt the baby, it was named, and the name was Makokha (for both female & Male children) - meaning of the ashes that collected to form a solid material as El decided.
The Tachon naming, therefore, came to be based on three main issues:

1. The name handed down from generation to generation i.e. named after an ancestor

2. The name revealed through dreams to relatives of the parents or the parents themselves during pregnancy or after delivery

3. A baby keeps crying after birth with very short periods of silence. Usually keeps people/the mother awake the whole night. In this respect, elders or diviners were consulted and they would reveal the name of a dead relative whose spirit is dominating or wants to enter the body of the new born. The child would therefore be named after this relative.

Naming therefore confirmed the concept of re-incarnation - That man after death is born again in a new body or form because the soul usually transmigrates to another new body after it has left the old one at physical death. That what usually died was the body and not the person in the body. The person in the body continued to exist and would manifest himself in a new born.

Death and Burial Arrangements

The Tachon usually buried their dead immediately. There was no waiting because this would disturb the person in the body - s/he would feel a prisoner of the dead body. The person in the body was to be released immediately - by immediate burial followed by feasting for three days to welcome the spirit to move freely among the community and serve them well before the El. After three days they would move out of the village.

Among the Luhya-Bantu, when a man died, before and after burial, people, especially women, wailed or cried out loud in their grief. If the dead was a man, some members danced with shields and spears, mimicking war actions. After burial, the clan or family members guarded over the grave for the first seven days. A big fire was made near the grave and kindled for several nights to keep the grave guards warm. Neighbours gathered every evening to keep the family members of the deceased company and provide security against esiyungu, the emptiness of death.

The Luhya-Bantu believed that a man never just died. He was usually killed either by witchcraft/sorcery, war or old age. Where death was not brought about by either war or old age, it must certainly be witchcraft. They therefore guarded over the grave for a few days to prevent the:

- Killer witch from getting fresh soil from the grave to cleanse himself and turn the wrath of the dead against the people of the deceased.

- Ghost/spirit of the dead from terrorizing his/her family. This is believed to have always happened where the killer-witch captured the spirit of the dead and turned it against the family. This would be
worse where the spirit was captured, before its family cleansed itself or properly bade farewell to the deceased.

From around 1800, the Tachon acquired Luhya names, customs and rituals regarding funerals and marriages, and the adoption of a Luhya dialect akin to Kapras as a means of communication. The original Tachon dialect dotted with Kalenjin words remained the language of the older people especially among the clans of Abakatum (Abahabiya), Abangachi, Abakiboriti, Abakamukong, and Abatukiika. The Tachon were then referred to as Kitosh before reverting to Tachon in 1947.

**The European Colonial Influence on the Assimilation and Decimation of the Tachon Peoples**

The Whiteman’s influence on the assimilation and decimation of the Tachon was the greatest among all factors. From 1895, the White rulers developed a formula in collaboration with the Bantu communities of Western Kenya, led by the Wang’a, Banyala and Bagisu, to totally assimilate and/or decimate the Tachon people. This was much orchestrated in the appointment of leaders, the education system and the type of propaganda that followed to force them into retreat.

During his excursion into the Tatsone country, C.W. Hobley (1895) wrote:

_Leaving the Eldama Ravine, we made our way through the forest and struck due northwest, across the Uasin-Gishu plateau and eventually emerged into the land of plenty at Kapras in North Kavirondo. North of Nzoia between the river and the lower slopes of Mt. Elgon dwelt a powerful tribe called Kitosh, in descent very much the same administrative structure and government as the Wa-Wanga but with strains of Hamitic blood._

Hobley goes on to explain that the name Kitosh had later included the Kapras, Bukusu, and the Kakilelwa (Banyala of Kakamega). The Kitosh people, who were once powerful and many, were later said in 1962, to have a population of between 900 and 1000 only.

The systematic and gradual destruction of the community's systems, structures and culture started immediately after August 1895, and after the destruction of the Tachon Fort at Chetambe and the Letia's Palace in Webuye, when the colonial leadership was imposed on the Tachon by a Peace Agreement of 11th September 1895. Whereas the Tachon leadership cherished the terms of the Agreement, the Whiteman abused it by directly interfering in the internal affairs of Kitosh. First, Kitosh was defined to include the Kapras, Bukusu and the Kakilelwa. Secondly, the leadership was decentered and chiefs imposed upon them from 1908 until 1963.

In 1908, Kitosh was, for administrative purposes, divided into two portions, separated by River Nzoia. Later in the year, the side on the North and West of the river was further sub-divided into North and South Kitosh, under chiefs appointed by Nabongo Mumia and approved by the colonial government. The first Chiefs were Murunga a brother to Nabongo Mumia, who was in-charge of North Kitosh, and Namajanja a member of Abakhone, a clan of the Banyala Sumba and a former aide to Wakoli was made in-charge of South Kitosh. Both men were non-Tachon. When these leaders were appointed as the official representatives of the colonial government,
they had two main responsibilities:

- Complete destruction of the institutions on which the Tachon community was built;
- To oversee the complete assimilation of the community into one or all of the three other tribes - Kapras, Bukusu and Kakilelwa (Banyala).

However, the Tachon saw it as temporary, and that time would come when their position would revert to what it was before 1895 and that each one of the tribes in Kitosh would have its own chief. This was never to be, because the colonial government did not want to see two powerful communities in one region. They, therefore, saw conquerors in the Wanga and opportunists in the Bukusu peoples and carefully used them to destroy the Tachon community.

In his 1909 Annual Report, the then Provincial Commissioner Nyanza Mr. H. H. Horne, reported:

"... Sub-chief Murunga wa-Shiundu is a younger brother of Mumia. His sub-district No.2 is the largest. It includes Tatsoni, Kitosh, Walago, Wangoma and Wamia and stretches from the Nandi escarpment on the East to the Uganda boundary at Bwango's on the West."

In this report it seems that the Tachon have been divided into two, the Kitosh, and Tatsoni.

Slowly, the Whiteman was setting in place a framework for extermination. He starts of by putting the Bukusu in the limelight. In this light, Dr. Gunter Wagner (1936), a German Professor of Anthropology on research assignment on the natives of North Kavirondo, observed:

"......... in the Eastern part of Kitosh, along the upper reaches of the Nzoia river, lives the Tadjoni, a small tribe which already in pre-european days maintained close marriage relations with the Vugusu and which to-day has been amalgamated into the chieftancy of North Kitosh (Kimilili). According to statements made by their old men, the Tadjoni formerly lived in the neighbourhood of Sang'alo hills (25 miles to the West of their present abode) until, under the pressure of the Teso and Wanga, they moved further to the East. They say that their original home was in Western Uganda, where they claim to have formed part of the Ziba (Basuba) tribe now living on the Western shores of Lake Victoria to the North of Bukoba.

If this was not a misinformation, it was part of the propaganda designed by the whites to drive the community to extinction. The observation seems both suspicious and questionable in fact and logic in four ways:

First, Hobley had already examined in 1894/5 (40 years earlier) that the Tachon were a powerful tribe with descent life style with hamitic blood, not yet diluted with intermarriages with the Bantu communities. He had also indicated that their leadership institution was as developed as that of the Wanga people. Unless a disaster had occurred, there are not enough reasons to have reduced the tribe and subjected it to a subordinated status, especially to new comers into the area.

Secondly, the Tachon did not have any misunderstandings with either the Teso or Wanga. The people who kept pursuing them even into Sang'alo areas were the Maasai, and with their newly acquired relationships with the Banyala-Kakilelwa there ensued battles at Sang'alo and Mabanga.
Thirdly, the Tachon did not come from Uganda and never set foot in Western Uganda. One of their clans, Abatukiika, which sojourned Uganda, limited its escapades in Eastern Uganda. However recent studies reveal that a sub-tribe of Abachikha occupies large masses of land in Kigezi. These are recent migrations to Western Uganda.

The Tachon contribution to the evolution of the Ziba, Suba and Haya, comes through the intermarriages with the Gusii as they settled at Goye and other adjoining areas.

The style of leadership adopted by the colonial government against the Tachon, forced the community to demand justice and respect for their rights. And as it happened, on the disbandment of the Wanga dynasty, they demanded to be recognised as an independent entity, but the colonial government argued that the Tachon were by all means properly represented by the other tribes and through the Tachon Union, and therefore, did not require self-representation. In 1962, the District Commissioner (DC) Elgon Nyanza argued:

*The Tachon are a tribe of the Luhyia speaking group (Bantu). They intermarry with Bukusu but for purposes of clannish upmanship, they like to maintain their identity. This is pursued relentlessly by Tachon Union whose office bearers are skilled petitioners. On the whole they are well led.*

Earlier, in 1936, the then Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza reported that of the 24 locations in Elgon District, 10 had a "perpetual spark that was liable at any time to light a blaze of trouble". He listed the following as having an atmosphere of hostility between sub-clans:

1. West Kakamega: - Witakho vs. Wisukha.
2. Kimilili: - Watachon vs. WaBukusu.
8. South Marama: - Yiro (a Luo clan) vs. the Marama.
In the above trouble spots, the common complaint was that each tribe or clan wanted to consolidate its areas and leadership, which had been fragmented and abused by the Wanga dynasty with tutelage from the colonial administrators. Looking at the above list, all except the Tachon problem have been solved even today. In 1936, a delegation of Tachon leaders and activists visited the then Provincial Commissioner (PC) Nyanza to present their grievances on land, education, political leadership and taxation. After listening to them, it is alleged that the PC, Mr. Montgomery replied:

All your claims have been heard and put in a box under lock and the key thrown in Lake Victoria. I do not see any time when the said box would ever be opened for your problems to be reviewed.

In May 1958, the out-going District Commissioner (DC) Elgon Nyanza Mr. P.M Gordon in his handing over report to the incoming DC Mr. P. L Johnson stated in part:

........minority tribal grounds tend to be a nuisance from time to time, but although they may always cause local disorders, they are in the long run, on the principle of ‘divide and rule’, by no means an unfavourable factor in the overall security situation. ........we have been over the ground pretty thoroughly with all the minorities and think that the relevant files both open and confidential (Adm.6) provide a substantial record. The answer generally speaking in all minority questions is 'NO'.

The minority referred to in this report were the Tachon and the Sabaot of Mt. Elgon. In 1956, Gordon had described the Tachon as a Nilo-Hamitic minority living in Kimilili with others in Kapras location of North Nyanza. He had explained in his annual report that they felt cut off and secluded from each other by the new inter-district boundaries. That they had approached him requesting to be enjoined in one district, Gordon, in his capacity as the District Commissioner (DC) held a baraza, "at which they were forced to admit they had little to complain about. The bubble was pricked and agitation subsided - anyway for the time being", the DC had recorded in his memoirs. The DC admits that he did not solve the problem of Tachon unification, but encouraged the seclusion in toto. Since the Tachon people had never learned to take a "NO" for an answer, they continued with their struggle.

Six years later (1962), the then District Commissioner (DC) for Elgon Nyanza Mr. Winser, in his handing over report, stated that the policy then for managing the District was that of integration. He wrote:

By reason of their intermarriages (with Bukusu) and the fact, although they are mostly concentrated in Ndivisi location on the eastern border of this District, it is difficult to estimate their numbers but I could hazard guess at about 900 to 1000 tax payers. The policy is one of integration.

Two things come out clearly here:

1. It is absurd for the District Commissioner (DC) to give a hazard guess when he is the Chief Executive of a District that had only five tribes - the Sabaot, Tachon, Teso, Bukusu and Batura, effectively coordinated and administered through District Officers and Chiefs, who also maintained up-to-date tax statistics.
2. It could not have been correct for Mr. Winser to give the population figure of the Tachon Taxpayers in 1962 as between 900 and 1000 because in 1916 Mr. C. E. Spencer, then District Commissioner (DC) of Mumias, gave the breakdown of the Tachon population of Hut Tax Payers as follows:

- Tatsone Under Kifuma s/o Iyeya, North Kitosh 1386 huts
- Tatsone under Kakai s/o Chetambe, Kapras area 685 huts
- Tatsone under Waliaula s/o Makhaso, North Kitosh 568 huts
- Tatsone under Kirui s/o Matacho, North Kitosh 395 huts.

In 1916, therefore, Tachon taxpayers were 3056. At the same time, Bukusu taxpayers in the District were counted at 1684, the Batura 951, the Sabaot 4050, while the Wanga were 1047 only. Yet, the Tachon and the Sabaot were categorized as minority.

Therefore, Winser's policy of integration, employed on its own, would not yield the results they anticipated because:

- The Tachon, their culture, ways of life, numbers and their territorial boundaries were clearly defined.
- People who become integrated in any given society are those who migrate from their own territorial area of jurisdiction to another area where they are considered a minority or a drop in the ocean, compared to the host community. The Tachon were at home, and had in 1899 received Kakilelwa, Bagisu and Banyala immigrants who, in 1947, joined hands to become Bukusu.

In pursuance of this policy on integration, the then District Commissioner (DC) for North Kavirondo, Mr. G.F. Archer, in his confidential report of April 14, 1909 to the Chief Native Commissioner, reported that Chief Kifuma (Sifuma), the Headman of the Tachon was useless and should be brought under the control of either the Kapras supervision or re-organised for Chief Murunga, who would instill some discipline in him. By this time, Sifuma was an old man who needed proper care and not bashing. The DC had observed in his report:

...... it will be noticed that no appointment has been made for Kapras to deal with this area. I scarcely know whom to recommend. It was originally intended to join Kapras with Tsotso, putting it under Shiundu or Tomia, but since then I have lost opinion I had of Shiundu, and Tomia is old and helpless. The local elders of Kapras Wakukha, Milanda and Kijanda cannot seriously be regarded as Headmen at all. I can only suggest leaving these people (Tachon) to their own devices, then, for the present, as there are little or no possibilities of development here, and later when Elgon regions have been brought under full control, Murunga might be moved into this District for six months or so to establish better order.

As though in contradiction, PC H.H. Horne had observed later during the year (1909), that there existed distinct clan/tribal divisions and locations and no other clan could impose its leadership to the other
without causing descent. Therefore, the policy of integration could only take place gradually and at will, and not be forced on any one single community, as it was implied. Horne had further explained that:

Mumia was the only Paramount Chief in the Nyanza Province. The other chiefs were all of one class; any additional importance they may obtain was due to the fact that such people have larger populations under them than others. This does not, however, alter their grade in the eyes of the native public.

This suggests that the Tachon chiefs: Kakai and Lumbasi on one side of the Nzola, and Sifuma, Kisaka, Sikutwa and Saska on the other side, were all recognised as chiefs, and therefore, their contribution to the development of their communities could not be disputed.

Horne was playing a diplomat, trying to adopt a suppression system, other than the militant approach adopted by his Chiefs and District Commissioner (DC)’s in handling tribal issues. He used the pay cheque and authority to achieve this. The Tachon chiefs were discriminated in remuneration and authority compared to their counterparts, although their country generated most of the food supplies and cattle needed to feed the entire population of Nyanza Province. In his Annual Report (1909), the PC H. H. Horne further revealed that:

The Tachon area occupied predominantly by the Tachon people was still under a Headman and was now known as North Kitosh. The annual salary of Kifuma (Sifuma) the headman was 96 rupees per annum. Kifuma was now under sub-chief Murunga. Murunga was answerable to his brother Mumia who himself was the paramount chief. The Bukusu area predominantly under Bukusu people was now known as East Kitosh under two headmen: Makfioso and Matere with annual salaries of 240 rupees and 193 rupees respectively. They were answerable to Murunga and Mumia respectively. Other chiefs included Maero 144 rupees, Busolo 120, Namasaka 120 rupees and Opata of Teso 96 rupees.

Note that by this time both the Tachon and the Teso had not completely and willingly submitted to the colonial rule and had not yielded to dismantle their leadership structure.

Around 1904 Lumbasi moved his residence from the settlements of Shilugu (Shirugo) on the left banks of river Nzola towards Mumias to the foot of the Nandi escarpment. Chief Lumbasi, then responsible for Kipsai and Kulumben sub-districts, explained the cause of shifting as the quick succession of losing his children and wives, which he attributed to the unhealthy nature of the site. But the DC Mumias Mr. Dundas in his report to the Provincial Commissioner explained that Lumbasi was trying to evade taxation. He wrote in part, “......the reason is the desire of the inhabitants to evade the payment of Hut Tax”. By this time a number of Uasin Gishu Maasai were scattered over most part of Mumias District. Nabongo had been complaining to Dundas about their presence, and time was now ripe for new settlements to be found for them. There was no other better site than the lands occupied by the Tachon people who, after all, should be absorbed among the Kapras or Bukusu. It did not take Dundas long to make a formal proposal to the PC for allocation of these lands to the Maasai. He wrote on July 9, 1909:
Referring to my No.220/1/144 of 5th instant in which, on page 6, I have remarked on the abandonment by the Kapras (?) of the Country known as Shirugo. The idea has occurred to me of allocating this peace of country as a reserve to E’vasin Gishu Masai of Mumias District. ..... I suggest that if you approve of my proposal, it would be advisable, when the opportunity occurs, to have the boundaries of the reserve surveyed and to grant the E’vasin Gishu title deeds to the land; and further provide for the infliction of penalties on any villages moving out of the reserve.

Although Dundas had indicated in his communication that the Maasai were agreeable to this proposal, it turned out that they were not. One, because they did not want to enter new conflicts with their sworn enemies, the Ole Tasho, and two, they knew the land was not suited to their style of life. Thirdly, Lumbasi had objected to this land being allocated to the Maasai. As a result, he was exiled to North Kitosh in the country of Sifuma, stripped of his chieftaincy and a fine of 50 cattle imposed on his people. In retaliation, his people fought and killed a police constable; one of those sent to ensure the exile was affected. In place of Lumbasi, Sunguti, a Wanga by tribe and a native agent who it was the policy of the government to place in-charge of difficult districts, like the Tachon district, was brought in. The appointment of Sunguti was in total disregard of the democratic rights of the Tachon people. It also ignored the fact that Lumbasi had deputies, like Mukonahambi then Senior Headman Kulumben, Sikolia in-charge of the Lebonjessi locations, and Sikutwa of Mabusi area.

Now Sunguti ruled over the Tachon in Kakamega District and Murunga over the Tachon in the Bungoma District (or rightly put the left and right banks of river Nzoia). When Murunga retired on July 31, 1930, Amuttallah was appointed to replace him. The then District Commissioner (DC), Kakamega, Lt. Col. E.L.B Anderson reported: "it was arranged that Murunga’s retirement should take place from 31st July 1930. With regard to his successor, the almost unanimous choice fell on a Kitosh (actually a Bukusu) headman Amuttallah wa Mayeku. ........ he like many other natives who have come under Wanga influence is a nominal Mohammedan".

The Tachon rejected the appointment of Amuttallah (Abdallah) for five reasons:

1. At the time Murunga was imposed upon them as Chief, he found they had their own leadership structure, which was then ignored by both the colonial leadership and the Wanga influence as "barbaric". It was now time for the Tachon to be recognised with their own Chief at the ranks recognised by the government and not headmen.

2. Development had been heavily compromised in the Tachon country as a result of imposed foreign rulers who did not understand the culture, life and practices of the people.

3. Amuttallah was a very junior headman compared to the much senior Tachon headmen working under Murunga. It was therefore inconceivable to have him as their supervisor just because he was a Mohammedan.

4. Like Murunga, Amuttallah was an extension of Wanga dominance because he was a Mohammedan with a Wanga wife whose appointment was influenced by Murunga and Nabongo, and not the people of the district.

5. Amuttallah was actually not a Chief as portrayed, because, in the true sense he had replaced the Assistant Chief Waluchio who had been forced into retirement on July 30, 1930. As it were, Murunga continued to be the Chief.
What the Tachon wanted was a clearly demarcated district and/or location for themselves with their own chief, just like the other tribes had. They, therefore, made these pleas in a memorandum of appeal to annul the appointment to both the District and Provincial Commissioners of the area. The appeal was dismissed and Amuttallah confirmed the chief over the Tachon. In his statement, the FC Mr. Montgomery had stated:

..... the Government has no intention of altering location boundaries so as to include all the Tachon people in one administrative unit like the Bukusu, Kakilewa, Batsotso or Kapras. Further, the Government was not yet ready to allow the Watachon to have a chief or assistant chiefs of their own. They would continue with headmen until time came for chieftaincy. They had, therefore, to obey the Bukusu chief, Amuttalla s/o Mayeku, as appointed and confirmed.

When dialogue at local level could not solve the problem, and many of the Tachon leaders and youth were indiscriminately arrested, charged and remanded for minor offences, the community decided to take the Government to Court. In January 1937, they sought the assistance of the QC Mr. Mylchreest, a British registered advocate, to represent them against Chief Amuttallah. They wanted to restrain the chief from interfering with their sovereignty and demands for a separate location, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment of their leaders. On February 3, 1937, the District Commissioner (DC) Kakamega gave the following intelligence report to the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza:

The Watachon have employed Mr. Mylchreest, the advocate, to represent them in a case in which certain members of that clan are prosecuting Chief Amuttallah. The matter is subjudice.

As it was expected, the court threw out their case, but the Provincial administration softened in their stance by appointing one more Mulango (the equivalence of headman) from among the Tachon. To the Tachon, this is not what they wanted. They wanted equal rights as enjoyed by other tribes in the country; they wanted own administrative units, chiefs and political leaders. This led the DC. Mr. C. Campbell, to state in his handing over report to the in-coming DC, Mr.J.S.S. Rowland, in July 1950:

........ there are several minority tribes in the District - Teso, Masai, Elgon Masai, Tachon, Kapras, Kakilewa and Wa Sang’alo, BUT the real troublemakers are the Tachon. They are of Nandi stock and are always clamouring for recognition and representation. Though an assistant chief is to be appointed on non-racial basis he will probably be a Tachon....

The colonial government was beginning to view the Tachon seriously, although they were still bent on making the community look small through divide and rule, and integration machinations. In his report, the DC sees the Abasang’alo as a separate tribe from the Tachon, when they are actually one of the clans of the Tachon community. The assistant chief, William Chiuli, was appointed from among the Tachon, as the deputy to Chief Henry Wanyonyi. Henry Wanyonyi had taken over as chief of Kimilili location from Amuttallah.

Writing on internal tribal affairs in 1956, the then District Commissioner (DC), Mr.P.M. Gordon observed about the struggle of the Tachon to free
themselves from Bukusu domination, that at the beginning of the year, there were some agitation on the part of the Tachon for a different chieftainship, which he thought was unwarranted because, "the vast majority of this Nilo-Hamitic minority live in Kimilili location, have an assistant chief and Olukongo, and were represented in the African Court".

Immediately an Assistant Chief was appointed among the Tachon, the colonial government devised another way to marginalize the Tachon. The primary school curriculum and teaching language for lower primary was done in Kibukusu tongue. The standard six pupils’ examination, the Common Entrance Examination, was tested in Kibukusu. The Tachon saw the danger of their children sitting an official examination in a foreign vernacular tongue and they petitioned the District Commissioner (DC). The fear was that the children would fail the exams because they could not grasp the Bukusu language, and secondly, that this was indeed a way of getting the Tachon to ape the Bukusu language, hence be wiped off the District map. They also engaged an advocate, Mr. Patel of Eldoret, to follow-up their case.

The District Commissioner (DC), Mr. Gordon, promised to look into the matter, and in his handing over report of May 1958 to Mr. Johnson he wrote:

```
...... the minorities - the Tachon - these number seven to eight hundred (700 -800) tax payers and live mostly in the Ndivisi sub-location of Kimilili, with a sprinkling in Kapras. They have an Assistant Chief and Olugongo, and an African District Council Member, and a Court Elder, and have nothing to grumble about. From time to time they demand a separate location, and engage Patel, Advocate of Eldoret, to plead their case. The firm answer is that this will never be granted on tribal grounds. This agitation largely stems from Kapras, and it is, I think, hoped that any location established would include part of Kapras. Demands are usually expressed through the Tachon Union, which is a registered Society. ......... The Tachon have recently asked for the Common Entrance Examination Papers to be translated into their vernacular. There are 455 Tachon peoples in Standard IV and I think this is justified. The Friends African Mission have agreed to arrange it.
```

Johnson did not, however, go with the recommendation of translating the examination papers into the Tachon tongue, neither was the government ready to lose this final opportunity to fully integrate the Tachon into either Bukusu or Kapras. He therefore reported in his annual report:

```
With reference to the Tachon, after discussion with the District Officer and the District Education Officer, Kimilili, I have postponed the consideration of translating Common Entrance Examination Papers into the vernacular for at least one year.
```

In response to this remark, the President of the Tachon Union, had on October 16, 1958 written to the Provincial Commissioner Nyanza, Mr. G.N.Hampson requesting, inter alia:

- The provision of separate location for the Tachon tribe
- Official recognition of Tachon language
- Registration of members of Tachon tribe, under the Registration of Person Ordinance as 'Tachon', rather than Kapras or Bukusu.
The Provincial Commissioner yielded to everything else except for examination purposes. Whereas he was agreeable that the Government recognised and encouraged the retention of whatever is best in the tribal customs, especially in social and cultural matters, he lamented that there were minor variations between the Tachon and Lubukusu languages. These variations were considered to be too small to justify the making of any special arrangements in favour of one language more than the other. It was therefore not considered that failure to recognise the Tachon language officially would have any adverse effect upon the social and economic development of the people. He therefore advised the Tachon that "their interests would be served better in the future by their identifying with the larger community in which they lived (in this case the Kapras and Bukusu) and by giving their loyalty wholeheartedly".

The Tachon were not deterred, they kept pushing even through the Lancaster Conference, and this intensified in 1960 when they were joined by other so called minority tribes of Elgon Nyanza that the DC had to report:

*The minorities within Elgon Nyanza have all demonstrated, to an increased extent, their anxiety for their position since the Lancaster House Conference. They believe this is their last chance they will have to establish their ‘minority rights’ and all have petitioned for greater recognition in one way or the other during the year.*

The Kimilili Location was finally split into three locations in 1960. In his derogatory speech, the District Commissioner (DC) observed:

*The Tachon who have for years petitioned and sometimes agitated for a location of their own separated from the Wabukusu thought they succeeded when the Kimilili location was split into three. True, one location, Ndivisi contained the majority of the tachon residents in the old Kimilili location but they were dismayed when it was made clear that it was not a tribal boundary but an administrative boundary and that there was no question of only considering Tachon for the contained sub-chiefships. The tribe as such is still divided by the Nzoia river and a fair number still live in North Nyanza.*

These words could only come from one scheming to kill the community. The DC was happy that the Tachon were still divided, even further. He also ensured that he participated fully in the appointment of sub-chiefs for the Ndivisi sub-locations to make sure that Bukusu candidates were also appointed sub-chiefs to represent "their minority interest" in the location. The same interests the colonial government had denied the Tachon in their own land for 66 years (1896 - 1960). This he managed, but the appointee was forced to resign by the residents and successfully replaced by a Tachon Assistant Chief.

Although the DC said the Government did not support tribal boundaries, meaning locations or divisions named after tribes, in the areas of Bukusu and Kapras, locations and sub-locations were named after the tribes or clans.

The evil the Tachon committed from the beginning was to tell the Muzungu to keep off their land and leadership in as early as 1849. This did not go down well in the diaries of the British Government, which was seeking colonies, and "virgin" lands abroad. It is also clear that whereas the
British were able to conquer all the lands between the Coast and the Nandi escarpments, the Uganda and to Mount Elgon, the Kitosh land was elusive until 1895 August. This pain was too great to them, and even shameful.

The Tachon, on their part, still maintained they were their own and did not need masters from outside to govern them. As early as 1924, they evolved organised structures (associations and unions) and would hire legal advisors from among the Whiteman and Asian communities in Kenya to represent their interests to the Government, and where necessary to take the Government to court. They believed in dialogue, peaceful resolution of conflict, and in the strength of an independent judicial system.

With the registration of the Tachon Union (which served as the political arm of the community), and the Tachon Welfare Association Fund (to take care of health, education and other welfare matters of the community), in the early 1940s, the colonial Government became very sensitive and intensified their war against the Tachon. However, they were not able to suppress the activities of the Union and the Association, neither were they able to silence the community forever. By 1949, the Tachon leaders were traversing the whole country seeking a political solution to their problems because, they thought, the colonial government had just refused to do what was reasonable and within their powers. The Government did not take these gestures lightly. They had to devise a strategy to counter what the Tachon were trying to achieve, and if possible silence them completely. The linking to Mau Mau was hatched and the District leadership started churning out paper on this.

In 1953, the Tachon were dubbed KAU or EX-KAU members sympathetic to the Kikuyu Central Association and the cause of Mau Mau. KAU was the acronym for Kenya African Union, which brought together practically all the African nationalists into one constructive fold to fight for independence. KAU emerged in 1946, and was the forerunner to the Kenya African National Union. By this time, the Tachon were organised under the Tachon Union, having been founded in 1945 and registered ten years later. In 1953, the then DC Elgon Nyanza, P.M. Gordon in his handing over report of July 16, to E.J.A Leslie, wrote that Kimilili was a vast location containing a hard core of EX-KAU politicians (Tachon) and Dini Ya Musambwa adherents (Abatukiika). According to Gordon, the EX-KAU members were to be watched closely so as not to infiltrate the District. In a rejoinder in 1961 June, the then DC Mr. J.G. Mackley, reported that there were fears in Elgon Nyanza District that the Tachon might link up with the Kikuyu in the Eastern Division aroused by one of the local politicians, Burudi Nabwera, who was alleged to be well subsidised by communist funds and could easily erode the hitherto monolithic and government supported Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU).

Burudi Nabwera was dubbed communist because of his training in the Eastern block and close association with Oginga Odinga. This was to be used a reason enough to call the Tachon communists and therefore anti-government. The alleged association with the Mau Mau and KCA was meant to alienate the Tachon from the mainstream government and strengthen their anti-government
stance. This was very well cultivated by the colonial Government so as to defeat the Tachon at all fronts and to set them against the Bukusu and the Luhya community whose majority were then in KADU. KADU was then the best choice of the Government as the people’s party, with its leaders identifying themselves with the Government.

The Tachon struggle for land and chieftainship persisted through the 1962 Lancaster House Commission sitting in Nairobi and Bungoma. The delegation to the Nairobi Conference of August 14, 1962, was made up of 21 representatives, while the Bungoma delegation of September 5, 1962, included 8 representatives of the Tachon communities in Elgon Nyanza, Trans-Nzoia, North Nyanza, and Uasin Gishu Districts, cutting across two Provinces. They all represented that they wanted to be in one administrative District and Province.

By 1963, the Tachon had been put in one political constituency called Lurambi North, hived out of Uasin Gishu, North Nyanza, Trans-Nzoia and Elgon Nyanza. The Constituency represented the present constituencies of Malava, Lugari, Webuye and Kimili in Webuye, Kimili, Tongaren, Matete and Malava, Lugari and Lumakanda Divisions. The only snag, though, was that this cut across two newly established districts – Kakamega and Bungoma. So that, come 1967, during electoral boundaries review, the original divide was reverted to, dividing up the community into two, using river Nzoia, effectively disenfranchising the community politically.
PART THREE: CULTURAL SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE 112 - 186

Chapter Nine: Religion and Culture 114-131
Chapter Ten: Circumcision and Clitoridectomy 132-148
Chapter Eleven: The Secret Society 149-154
Chapter Twelve: Birth and Childhood 155-161
Chapter Thirteen: The Concept of Death 162-167
Chapter Fourteen: Recreation and Its Implications 168-172
Chapter Fifteen: Traditional Medical Work 173-178
Chapter Sixteen: Clothing and Adornment 179-181
Chapter Seventeen: Time, Activities and Numerals 182-185
The world has many people of different colours, cultures and languages. They have different believes and religions, but only one sun, moon and mother earth.
CHAPTER NINE: RELIGION AND CULTURE 114-131

Introduction 116
The Concept of God 117
The Teaching of the Religion 118
• Virtues 119
• Relationships 121
• Body and Mind 121
The Elders and Sages 121
Worship and Ritual Practices 123
The old man dressed in traditional religious outfit – likutu, ekutus and esumbati stands by the omutoto, the ficus religiosa, tree and bellows out:

**Box 1: Thanks Giving Prayer**

*God the Almighty, the creator of the Heavens and Earth, the Most Powerful, and the most merciful*

*I am only your humble servant, I come to you the way those that came before me did. I ask for your grace and mercy over your people. Bless them, give them strength and wash their eyes in your saliva that they may see the truth, all that is good and use their sight properly.*

*Now, I ask you to accept our presents meat and blood from animals that you gave us to tender, cereals from the plants that we cultivate and posho for our ancestors.*

*Oh God, to you we seek and pray always. And to you it will.*
CHAPTER NINE

RELIGION AND CULTURE

Introduction

With the absence of written materials and paucity of elderly people who could educate us on the religion of the Tachon people, our knowledge of religion in ancient and modern Tachon, all the way from Misri to their present settlements is necessarily limited, but as works of research progress, we will be able to understand and appreciate their style of life and relationships with their God.

Religion and culture are important parameters for measuring patterns of growth in a society. They reveal the evolution of society, its philosophy, the growth plane followed by the society, and its concept of development. Therefore, the inability to understand a people’s culture and religion makes it difficult to plan for that people’s development. It must have been with this realization that Ryszard Kapuscinski once said:

"........... and you must know this law of culture; two civilizations cannot really know and understand one another well. You will be content in your own civilization ......... but signals from the other civilization will be as incomprehensible to you as if they had been sent by the inhabitants of Venus."

Religion and culture are the two most dynamic forces of character influencing the development of man and society. They depend so much on society’s productive forces, level of technology, human interactions and the spirit of change. A Clear understanding of the trends in religion and culture could easily lead to defining the future of man and his environment. As Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye (1996) has commended:

"All of us start off by being ignorant and none of us ends up knowing."

However, judging from the tales passed down from generation to generation, the observance of religion was just as important in the life of the people as their quest for food and water. It is argued that the only reliable knowledge of God is by a religious experience. Therefore, among the Tachon every man was expected to undergo his own experience in the fulfillment of the beliefs and practices of the people from the beginning of times. This way, s/he could ask El to be with him in meeting current and immediate needs. There were no temples, but major religious functions were performed in the open before the peepul tree, *ficus religiosa*. Indeed, religion is the collective mind of society and a permanent aspect of humanity.

Different people profess different faiths because there are as many religions as there are communities. Religions are often unequal in value and dignity; they do not contain the same quota of truth, but are not false either. All are true in their own fashion as they seek to answer, in different ways, to the void in human existence.
The Concept of God

Chroniclers have indicated that the first gods who lived before man were Bel, who was the sky-god and Set, the earth-god. These gods were responsible for the creation of heavens, man and the earth. The story goes that one day the two gods had an argument on who was most superior. They fought very bitterly and melted out leading to the creation of El, the one God being. This new god brought unity among the people and made them one with their El Sayon, God Most High. Despite this creation of one god, the Tachon still believe that each community and each people has its own god who they adore, cherish, praise and worship. Thus, the world with its many people of different colours, cultures and languages have different beliefs and religions but only one sun, moon and mother earth.

It was during the reign of El Sayon that the great ancestor of the Tachon El Matruh, God of Matruh, was born. From El Matruh were born Sirikwa the sun-god, El Nemsri the soil god, El Nalo the sea god, El Ter the spiritual god who dominates the soul and mind, El Lote the god of transformation, birth, circumcision, marriage and old age, Kapchikhen the god of war, and finally El Chepsri the god of wind and rain. These gods also represented the seven pillars of the Tachon society on which the 58 clans are founded.

Until 1658, El Sayon was the Most High God who worked through the seven gods in service of his people. The Bantu god Wele, who removes pain of all living, has since replaced him.

In the Tachon community children were taught that in the beginning there was God who was the creator of all things and the ruler of heavens and earth. This God was not represented by images but by those who went before them, the ancestors. That all those who died and who were righteous became messengers and mediums of communication between El and his people the Tachon. They were taught and continue to be taught about belief in the existence of the supernatural ruling power called El Sayon, God Most High and the El Layo the God of All Good and the creator and controller of man, heavens and the earth. That El Sayon has given man his physical and spiritual nature. That the spiritual nature continues, to exist, even after the death of the physical-self.

The religion, further teaches that the El Sayon is also a jealous El who is angered by anything that is not in line with his Uka, commandments. It is by Uka and the Councils established by the people that man is punished. El, therefore, is the final arbiter of justices and upholder of tribal sanctity. That El is great; he is the one unitary power that man cannot shake. To adjudicate over heavens and earth El has placed around him the ancestors of everything: man, plant and animal to serve as the authority to pass judgment on the living and the dead in their category. They reside at the court of justice and all good.

El, it is taught, is invisible. Though invisible, he sits with his face to the south, and in his left hand, he has a big powerful torch, which he uses to tell the heavens, and earth that the day has come. This torch is also
the biggest eye on earth, sees everyone, everything and everywhere on earth and beyond. This torch is the revelation of his existence and his location. It glorifies his presence on earth and his ability to shield the living. In the night he uses a lesser torch, which is bright but does not burn or wither plants.

It would appear that the big torch is the sun and the lesser torch is the moon. It also appears that according to these teachings, all evil is done in darkness, when El has gone to rest and the torch is showing not, and man has no protector.

In the early teachings El was personalized, associated with the light, the sun, the wind, the sea, water, drought and stars, and possessing human characteristics. His image was seen in the ancestors, and his mirror in those still living, especially the Letia, Laitarian, Sages, and the father who was the head of the household. But still the reality of El lay beyond the reach of words and concepts. Sages have finally concluded that there must be a distinction between the human perception of El and the reality itself. For instance El cannot be light and darkness i.e. God of All Good and God of All Evil. If God is unitary he must be only one. If El is many things then he is not a dependable God. The Tachon Sages, however, agree that none is as great as El, he is the Most High, Most Glorious and Most Perfect, and there is nothing else like Him.

Recent instructors of Tachon culture and religion see El as the Creator who made the universe an ordered place by separating the night from the day, light from darkness, water from dry land, and the sky from earth. El, it is said, has also made sure that all these things depend upon each other in order to establish ordered behaviour. The Tachon also believe that the universe is built on three thinks – Uka the word, that El called things into being and they became, sima the will, that there was no emanation of reality El merely willed it, and finally bita the blessings, that El blessed and sanctified the creation and pronounced it good in his eyes and it was for ever.

The Teaching of the Religion

For centuries, in order to meet the basic necessities of life, the Tachon lived in fierce competition with the environment wherever they passed. To help unify the people and to cultivate a communal spirit essential for growth and survival, they evolved the ideology of Sembeyo which fulfilled many functions of their religion. In the conventional sense, the people had little time for religion and worship as such because they were always on the move. They, therefore, worshiped at any time and anywhere. Later as the concept of religion and worship solidified they built hatoria, places of worship identified by shrines and peepul trees, gradually developing a mythology that explained the relevance of the hatoria and El to the life of the spirit. They believed in life after death, and that their ancestors lived and continued to dominate life.
The virtues of Sembeyo required the Tachon to obey his nation, the tribe, the Letia, elders and parents, and to respond to their calling. Members of the tribe were required to dedicate themselves to the protection of the tribe and its vulnerable members, especially women and children. To ensure the survival and social security of the nation, the Letia shared his wealth and possessions equally and avenged the death of one of his people by killing a member of the murderer’s tribe. If the Letia did not seek vengeance his own people and those of other tribes did not respect him, and he soon lost out in confidence and loyalty. Vendetta, therefore, was the ready form of justice, which meant that no one tribe could easily gain ascendance over any other.

It was taught that religion was a way of life of a people constructed on the economic, political and cultural structures, and the norms, beliefs and practices of the community. The Tachon believed that religion was supreme; therefore, instructions were essential to mould the behaviour and physical and spiritual growth of each member of society. Therefore, the teaching of religion, culture, beliefs and practices started early in life of a member of the Tachon nation. Early life was fragile and overshadowed by mortality, but if men and women initiated the actions of the gods they would share to some degree their greater power and effectiveness.

Instructions were passed on in every respect. The parents were recognized as the initial tools for developing the spiritual mind of the new member of the society. They, therefore, passed over their instructions through normal communication and interactions with their children, through songs, tales, discussions, proverbs, parables, sayings, and narrations. The initial instructions dealt with relationships with parents, the general community, age-sets, the elderly, the foreigners and visitors, and all the living things. This was followed by instructions on the body and mind.

**Relationships**

A relationship was a learning process that built on the enormous number of individual observations out of which was selected what was significant and suitable for the development and growth of the society. Key elements of learning were explained to include:

- **Respect**: The youth were taught to respect and value the ideas of their elders, and to give reign to their tongue. They were also taught that man should be left with his dignity, whether he is beaten or not because the soft and the yielding shall rise above them all.

- **Avoidance**: Always avoid what you have been taught is bad, not yours and not within your realm. And avoid the company of bad people or you will become blind.

- **Patience**: Always be patient, for the results of patience are El’s own determination. El rewards you for your patience, understanding and genuineness. Patience is gold. Learn to endure tolerance, to be patient. For waiting for war is a greater torture than the war itself.
• **Acceptance**: Accept defeat where defeat is pronounced for this allows you to learn more and to equip yourself better next time. Acceptance allows you to live another day. It bestows respect. Acceptance is time.

• **Social Regard**: The status of all generations is a virtue and must be respected. Know that not all that have grayed are of the status, age, value and wisdom. You will heed the society for it is supreme and above all human. Society is the future.

• **Socialization**: Man grows in stages, and has time for everything. Do not be hooked up in one locker for too long; socialize. Socialization with those of your age, norms and attitudes helps to mold your spirit and your behaviour. To socialize is to grow and develop. For in socialization you start of ignorant and end up knowing.

• **Prayers**: You must pray to El for it is him that has the power over everything and everyone. El is supreme and superior to all, and it pays to know, respect, worship and honour him. Acknowledge the importance of your ancestors for they are El’s messages on earth and you advocates before El. Before El you are the image of your ancestors and they are your mirror for in them El sees you, your deeds and your longingness.

• **Time**: Time is truth time is dynamic. We are the reflection of the past and the mirror of the future. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to happen among those who come after. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will always be done, and there is nothing new under the sun and before El, your God. What is has already bee in the ages before us. What you see now was seen before and what you do now was done before by those who came before you and by the one who was you before.

• **Responsibility**: There is no greater religion than patriotism. You must know yourself, your neighbours and all others, your rights and obligations and answer when others call. You must be responsible for El takes care of those who demonstrate a sense of responsibility. Know and protect your property and that of your neighbours, for the El takes care of him who respects and cares for others. Irresponsibility and bad judgment are punishable before El.

• **Preservation**: Preserve all that El has placed in your care and trust: knowledge, environment, and persons, and all. Fear not he who spoils for El Sayon, the God of All Good, has bestowed you with the power to protect and conserve. El takes care of those who respect and conserve his creations and provisions.

• **Purpose**: That El created every thing with a purpose. That all things breathe and eat, therefore, they are not different from each other. Plant, animal, man, stone, water, sand, they all eat and breathe. None shall be abused by the other, and it is the duty of man to nurture, protect, and promote.
The teachings on body and mind were meant to strengthen the relationships between man and El, and to reveal to mean the reasons for which each part of the body was made in the way it is. That El created man with a purpose, each full of energy for productive application, and gave him potential to utilize to accomplish this mission.

The instruction program was divided into the following categories:

- **The Body, Mind and Spirit**: The youth were taught that man was made of *porita* body, *u’muoyo* mind and spirit and *tomimiet* the soul. When man dies the *u’muoyo* takes off to the world hereafter to become an ancestor and to join the court of justice for all man presided over by El.

- **Porita**: The use of the body, the science of the development of the body, and the secrets of some essential parts of the body including sexual and reproductive.

- **Life and Its Development**: The youth were taught that the attitude of an individual toward life would pretty well determine what that life would become. If a person has faith that individual has the secret to positive living. That witnessing to the truth in a manner that would leave mankind with no justifiable ground to deny it is the only purpose beyond life and living.

The youth were also taught about the environment, relationships with animals, plants, different animals and plants, their importance to society and each other, and the need to protect, preserve and let live.

**The Elders and the Sages**

As the children grew up they entered another stage where solely family members alone could not do the teaching. Other people, especially, elders and sages were brought in.

Each *olukoba* fort had its trainers. The youth were assembled on the *khukukwa* training parlour, and taught the concepts of life, religion and societal roles. The elders taught them about the need for confession and truthfulness, and that all shall be truthful to their El, ancestors, nation, and all those among whom they live. That all shall confess any wrong they do or have done in order to receive the El’s *intelesi*, blessings.

The tutors were selected from among properly schooled members of the society, those who were clear on the history, beliefs and practices of the Tachon people. They represented all the seven pillars of the community. They were very important and noble persons with no adornment of deceit. They were selected from among the members of the *Mal’mayiet*, council of wisemen and served under the instructions of a *Metainik*, sage.
The tutors related *porita, u’muoyo* and *tomimiet*, and during the instructions revealed what happened to:

- The u’muoyo when man died and went to the world hereafter, and when later it came back to life with body and mind rejoined.
- Man as he grew through the various stages of human development
- Man as time ticked by, the night came and went.

It was the duty of tutors as they molded the youth to inculcate in them security and assurance of El’s mercy, graciousness and blessings. That love for one another brought down unto man El’s grace. That is was the duty of man to love each other, have and share joy, enjoy each other’s comfort, have hope and trust, and preach peace and unity. They further taught that:

- Those who were united in the religion of El and had faith in the strength of the nation would not fall for they were raised on a firm background and were shielded by El’s seven spears;
- The El has willingness to forgive those transgress and have confessed. Confession was made before the family hatoria first thing in the morning in the presence of the family priest and members of the family. The person confessing also gave offerings to appease the ancestors and gifts to El to praise him for his kindness and forgiving heart.
- They would have a spiritual hunger for people and strive for total humanity and good neighbourliness because the whole nation belonged to El.

Sometimes the tutors gave instructions using tales, proverbs, and/or questions and answers. Sometimes the children would have informal discussions with their elders and would also be allowed to answer as many questions as they would master. At their houses and khukukwa they leant about themselves and other people too. They were taught:

- How to handle superiors as well as their juniors and age mates
- Ways of perception and reading of the mind of people they met.
- Techniques of approach to thought, that is factual and conceptual thought, in dealing with issues concerning themselves, the community and the whole nation.

They demonstrated what they learned through their daily conduct and actions. They were now ripe for circumcision. After circumcision they met new tutors schooled in the art of war and archery. These tutors came from the pillar of Kapchikhen, the god of war and the guardian of the nation’s sovereignty. They revealed to the youth their potential as defenders of their nation and guardians of the nation’s security. They were trained in various concepts and skills of combat.
Worship and Ritual Practices

Worship, the act of adoration, respect and reverence to El was accepted as the basic way of conveying messages to God Most High. It was also seen as the way through which El communicated his satisfaction with man. The Tachon believed that it was through worship that justice and peace reached the people. Through worship and prayer peoples rights were assured.

With the belief that there was only one supreme god who was invisible and the ruler of the universe, they cherished the hope that El was also the one who would give life and take the same away. Further more, they believed that when man died he went into a second world, the world hereafter, and the world in which El lived and was visible to his subjects. Here they became El’s servants and attained the status of mediator and medium between El and his people. From the time of birth Individuals were taught to worship El through prayers, songs, riddles, names, proverbs and dance.

El wants everything done well and right. He expects his people to be forthright. Therefore, during the day man has to tend to his animals, feed the children and animals, tend the garden and promote life and growth. When man wakes up every morning he should thank El for sparing him the darkness and its evil and for giving him strength to endure, and the liberty to see another day. The Tachon believed that if they failed to thank El on waking up, when El went to rest the next evening he would switch off his torch withdrawing the Laiyo and letting in El Sisimis god of all evil and darkness. The El Sisimis came with all evil and released his mad army to raid, maim and kill, spread diseases and discontent. The El Sisimis is cold and foggy. He is not merciful he kills without discrimination. However, it was believed that if man honoured El every waking hour, El Laiyo protected him throughout the night. El let his torch work the whole night warding off the Sisimis and dispelling the spirits of darkness and uncertainty.

The Tachon believed that El’s breathe generated the heat that we feel on the warm and hot days and the rains that fall and the breeze that sizzles when his breath is cool. His breath can dry the seas, lakes and rivers; bring drought and famine to manifest his anger and dissatisfaction with our behaviour. He will divide one people into two by stretching his hand over rivers or lakes or commanding floods to create rivers that will bring barriers between villages and among men.

The Tachon looked upon the Yikwe, the East, with a lot of respect, pride and satisfaction. They see it as good, the home of all good because that is where light comes from. When they wake up every morning, therefore, they must offer prayers facing the east to thank the El Laiyo for all his goodness, kindness, mercy and protection. The rays of the early morning sun were, therefore, greeted with joy, firs by the head of the family, and in his absence his eldest son, and in their absence the mother of the house. This was because the early morning sun brought all blessings and good fortunes to the family.
Map 6: An Ancient Tachon Homestead

To offer his solace and prayers to the El the head of the house walked out of the house followed by his wife and children. Facing east they raised their hands or went on their knees as the head of the household spit towards the rising sun murmuring words of praise and solace and asked El to bless him, his family, entire household, his animals and crops. He then
turned to the **Yimbo Wa Nambwiko**, West, asking the God of All Good to protect him, his family, entire household, his possessions against the wrath of the god of darkness. Looking straight into El’s face, the **Sabana**, north he asked El not to let evil to drop on his house as El passed his torch from his left to the right hand, to allow the sun to sink and the night to approach.

The father’s prayers also included salutations to the ancestors of the East, West, North and **Matioli** South. His prayers were followed by a prayer session conducted by his eldest wife, who prayed for the protection of the children, mothers and the unborn.

Spitting was used to avert evil spirits and bad luck to usher in good luck. They also spit and prayed for good omen when they sighted new moon, **yisulwe** shooting stars and comets or when an eclipse of the moon or sun approached.

The significance of the sun cultured the Tachon to built their huts facing the north or the east. This, it was believed, allowed for first conduct with El every day before anyone else. This enabled each household to receive **el’saibo**. **El’saibo** was seen as El’s blessings that brought beauty, **muruwa** (strength and bravery) and wisdom and grace upon the household.

In the evening, as the sunset, prayers were also made to thank El for giving a good day, full of blessings and successes. If the day was not good they rebuked and reviled the El Sisimis for extending his ugly hand and pleaded with El Sayon to intercede and reign once more. Gifts and offerings were made to El at the **hatoria**. The gifts were place under the **omutoto** peepul tree.

The **Sirikwa** sun god was the eye of El on earth. He represented fortune, blessings, promise and confidence. The sun rose because El loved his people. It set because El wanted to test the faith and loyalty of his people. At night, it was believed, calamities such as earthquakes, murder, rape, robbery, witchcraft, and all other vices visited upon the people because El was resting and darkness ruled over earth.

The power of Sirikwa was seen in good health and prosperity. When a member of the family was sick he was carried out of the house early morning to be touched by the hand of Sirikwa (early morning sun’s rays) and to receive the grace and blessings of El. All sleeping plants were awakened by the touch of Sirikwa. However, herbs for treatment of different ailments were collected before the hand of Sirikwa dried the dew on them. This, it was believed, avoided picking herbs visited by bad spirits running away from Sirikwa. Because as the day developed many bad spirits disguised as messengers of good visited upon man and his possessions and waited for an opportunity to strike. This belief also influenced the hours planned for visits to the sick and to seek assistance. Such visits were all planned for early morning and before **mwisamusia** when animals left for grazing.

The **El Nalo** the sea god was responsible for all ground water sources and channels- seas, oceans, rivers, streams, wells, springs, ponds, and so on.
These were regarded as the source of life because apart from supplying water and food they also cleansed the earth of all dirt. They received everything washed away from the land cleaned it and made it good for the next user.

El Nalo was said to be physically present at wells, springs, ponds, rivers, oceans and seas very early every morning and late in the evening. He appeared in the form of fog, mist, smog or steam. In his respect, therefore, these sites were not to be visited very early in the morning and late in the evening lest you encountered El Nalo, an occurrence that was considered bad because it interfered with his work and spelt doom to the society. If any member of the community came face to face with El Nalo an alarm was raised to warn the community and to prepare for sanctification.

It was the belief that El did not just appear to one without a reason. The community under their elders brought offerings, usually harisa the sheep to the site of the sighting and offered it to El. They prayed and asked El for forgiveness and his blessings. When the harisa was slaughtered the blood was collected in a wooden bowl and with a special piece of meat placed at the altar in the hatoria specifically constructed for this purpose. The diviners read the entrails to reveal the omens and the significance of El’s visit.

This specific hatoria served as El’s house where he would rest that night to share the meat and blood with the ancestors of the tribe. The people left after offerings and prayers for their homes to come back the next morning to check whether El indeed accepted the gifts, the meat and blood. If the gifts, meat and blood were still in the hatoria then El had not accepted their offerings and, therefore, they were forced to beg for his forgiveness and to accept another offer. The ceremony was repeated and a senior priest presided over and asked El to accept his people and what they had to offer.

El Nalo was also associated with plant and animal life. If there were any fluctuations in yields, any diseases destroying the crops or plagues of animals, birds or insects, then the people believed El Nalo was not happy with them. El Nalo would be unhappy, it was believed, if he was not satisfied with the share (tithes) of the harvest that he had been given at the beginning of the previous harvest or man was abusing the sources and channels of rivers. The diviners would be consulted to tell why El had to visit the village or why he was not accepting gifts and tithes given to him. They would either confirm that:

The problem was related to the harvest. In this case the people collected the entire destroyed crop and deposited it in the nearest main water source or channel to their west. This action was called okhuchukha amababa.

The problem was as a result of misuse of the water channels and or sources. The community identified a healthy bull among the herds of the chief and slaughtered it as blood offering for El.
From such acts of worship the Tachon expected in return assurance form El that the tribe would be protected from all evil, and the children, youth and women will be safe. They also expected to receive good rains and enough water to support life, continuity of plant and animal life. And with El they expected abundance in food supply and human life.

There were other sacrifices related to the El Nalo, which could not be performed without a harisafa the ram or libusi the goat. Some of these offerings were related to management and control of floods, water supply, and to break a new well or spring. Among the Tachon it was believed that water was the weakest yet the most powerful element El ever made. Nothing could resist water just as none could resist the power of El himself. In water there is peace, harmony, truth and all holiness. These qualities made water the best medium of communication with El and a symbol of his presence in man. His presence in man was realized at marich, baptism.

The El Ter god of salvation was responsible for moulding the spirit, body and mind, and preparing the soul for the service of El Sayon. The people communicated with El Ter from the peepul tree, which served as the house of El, and the altar for offering gifts, prayers and performing all rituals concerning subjugation to the Sima will of El.

To plant the peepul tree, three black long sphere shaped smooth stones were required to form the three pillars of the house of El. The three stones are obtained from the middle of a permanent stream of high waters. They are planted forming a triangle. In the centre of the triangle the twig of a peepul tree is planned. On planting the twig into the prepared grounds, the spiritual minister of the community will raise his voice to El saying:

Oh El, God of my ancestors,
Of the heavens and earth.
Here we build for you your house.
Come, come and use it.
Know your people have not forgotten you.
They will forever remember and praise you
You gave us this holy twig to use always,
Always in building your house.
Today your house is made ready for you to dwell in.
Come, come and dwell in your house
Come, come and stay among use your people.
We, oh, your people, bless us
Bless us this community and generations to come after
We all honour and believe in you, our El
God, bless us all that we may live long to serve you on earth
And serve you always.
Bless this house that it may be the bond between you and your people.
May the strength and might of Ter be upon us
And your mercies upon all your people
And forever it will be for you and for us all.
A bull was then slaughtered to sanctify the ceremony. The main carcass was cut into two equal parts. One part was given to the spiritual minister presiding over the ceremony and the remaining part was shared among the people present at the function. The blood was sprinkled on the pillars as the entrails were split and the contents smeared obuse on the roof of the hut constructed near the peepul tree to serve as the ark, and broadcasted to the four main corners of the fort/village. As the minister conducts this final activity, he raises his right hand with his face to the north saying:

Oh El, God Most High, you know that am plagued by doubt
Show me the light and clear my mind of doubt
And give us strength that we may stride unto your house,
I plant and do all these using the hands with which I plant my grains
The hands with which I make love to my wife
The hands with which I pass gratitude and gifts to you
The hands with which I pass love to all those you have entrusted to my service
To all who deserve your blessings, care and protection
The hands that serve you, oh El!
Accept these gifts and the house we have constructed.
Oh El, let it be fulfilling that our ancestors may guard this house.
Guard it for you and those to come after us.
Oh ancestors hear my prayers that El may dwell among his people
And forever we shall be.

Turning to the people, the minister said, may all the divine beings shower their blessings upon you. The people answered: And so may it be.

This was followed with merry making, drinking, eating and dancing. The elderly were served meat and blood in a large pot, which they downed with beer specifically brewed for this purpose. The young were served boiled and roasted meat on large-wide flat stones.

The peepul tree thus became the place of worship. It was the altar and the hatoria used in all communication with El. The community visited the peepul tree for normal family prayers and:

- When calamity visited a family and somebody was suspected to be responsible though not identified. In this case the villagers were invited to the altar and an animal was slaughtered. The meat was roasted and served at the altar using two omwilulusia sticks one for women and the other for men of all the villagers present. The sticks were held by the minister one in the left hand for women and the other in the right hand for men. The evildoer will not want to eat from the stick and if he did he would convulse. Some would opt not even to touch the meat and instead surrender to the Letia’s council.

- When members of the family or the community wanted to do something that would affect the whole family or community they first paid homage to the peepul tree (shrine) to offer gifts and pray to their El and greetings to their ancestors. They were led by the high priest of El Ter.
Every season prayers were made to El. The community also held annual gift festival. To effectively communicate with El members visited the peepul tree. Some gifts were of life animals while others required slaughtered animals. In some cases of illnesses and exorcism both live and slaughtered animals were needed. A libusi (goat), a harisafa or chicken was taken to the altar; prayers were made to El while patting or caressing the animal. The animal was slaughtered and the blood sprinkled on the three pillars of the altar. The obuse was smeared on the forehead of the sick male or the neck and breasts of the sick female. If the sickness was mild the animal was slaughtered and the meat taken home.

The animals to be used at the altar carried specific full colours: gray, black, white or brown. Most often they were male for male patients and female for female patients. Animals with mixed colours were not used at the altar.

The El Lote god of transformation was responsible for the creation of life in man through conception, birth, maturity, old age and death. El Lote taught that old age and fear of death allowed changes of the heart, strengthening the conviction of man to El Sayon and his upholding of time and truth.

El Lote was also the god of revolution and development of science, technology and their application in day-to-day development of man and the manifestation of life in time. With Lote there was no substitute for a good education and the power of innovation. In Lote, the strength of man lay within the mind, not the weapon whose strength lay in the mighty hands of the holder. However, the mind and the hand combined produced absolute power that defeated the enemy. The enemy was defined to include anything impacting on man negatively.

Prayers to El Lote were made daily for procreation and the protection of the family. Special prayers were made at birth, weddings, and burials of the dead. Prayers for children were important because children were rewarding and they needed all the protection on earth and in heaven.

In El Lote it was taught that death did not mean the end of life but a mere transformation from the physical presence to the spiritual presence. However, it was also believed that the dead came back to life though another member of the family or community or any other person related to the deceased. The departed member appeared frequently through the powers of Lote in visions and dreams and was remembered through folklore, tales, naming and imagination.

The spirits and the living dead are said to strengthen the power of knowledge in man. The spirits and the living dead keep imagination alive, and continue to guide and regulate the flow of additional knowledge and the absorption and comprehension capacities of man. This, it is said, happens because those who move to the world hereafter are not dead for they continue to live in the hearts of those they have left behind.
It is further taught that the ability to store knowledge or events in the living is the power vested in the ancestors who also rule human imagination and the development of both factual and conceptual thought. In addition the living dead also served as mediators between El and his people. They conveyed El’s messages to the living through visions and dreams. It is even alleged that some people met and talked to the dead. If the meeting was for good reasons then animal gifts and prayers were made to El to thank and praise him for he is the most caring. But if the meeting spelt calamity the dead were exorcised or appeased by and with adjurations and religious rites conducted by Omung’osi the spiritual minister and a medicine man.

The Tachon also believed that the dead communicated with the living through other means other than dreams and physical interaction. For instance the living dead would express themselves to the living through mysterious signs in the sky, clear night stars, beer pot, water mug, animal cries, and the behaviour of plants. To read and interpret such signs the assistance of the dead and the power hereafter was sought.

- As the sun sets it reveals a set of interesting colours (of blood, rings), structures of objects such as lakes, spears and shields, human features and what have you. Each of these signs has a special meaning. For instance blood colours or spears predict war and suffering, and sketches of lakes and rivers on the sun and clouds predict floods and destruction of settlements.

- When the moon appears at night it also reveals different signs all of significance to human existence. All these signs must be read and interpreted.

- Animals and birds also have certain messages the living dead send them to pass over to man. For instance it is alleged that certain birds and animals only reveal themselves to man when they have a certain message to convey. These animals only appeared driven by an extra ordinary force such as the dead wanting to communicate a specific message such as to warn about impending calamity: death, destruction of crops or animals, etc. Other animals, especially birds, would insist on landing on a certain house or homestead; others would make queer noises, etc. All these must be carefully captured and interpretation sought from elders or the minister.

In fact through the concept of incarnation, the birds and other animals, and plants that communicate messages of the dead to the living represented the dead being reborn through them. They also served as mediums and if they were properly received and appropriate gifts given then life was abundant. It is also believed that the dead, as mediators, stood as legal representatives on the Day of Judgment which came immediately one was pronounced dead. When one died, he found his ancestors had already selected a prosecutor and a defending attorney for him at El’s Council.
The Kapchikhen the god of war was the defender of the borders of the Tachon Letiadom against any external intrusions. He would open ways through hostile communities and enemy zones, and was also the one who led the nation to battle and raid for livestock, food, grazing fields, when the need arose. This god was also responsible for successful handing missions. The symbol of this god was a shield, spear and crossed arrows in reference to his character as a war and hunting deity. It was believed that if the god of war was not appeased before the Baoyet left for war or hunting, they met calamity. A case that has been quoted from time to time is the Kholera defeat of 1700 ACE.

The fortunes of war were the property of Kapchikhen. The prayers and offerings to Kapchikhen included the slaughtering of a cow and a harisa sheep whose intestines were read by the Omung’osi before the Baoyet left on assignment. The Baoyet only left when the omung’osi was satisfied. They then washed their weapons in animal blood and feasted on the carcass mixed with herbs to protect them from injuries and carelessness. The minister asked El to intercede and protect the Baoyet against the spears of the enemy and so that they may win the battle and bring home plenty of loot, youth and women to work on the vast fields and look after their livestock.

War was defined as arrogance because in arrogance grew opposition, hostility, hatred and bloodshed. Kapchikhen was to soothe, heal and promote love, peace and harmony in quantities to overcome arrogance.
CHAPTER TEN: CIRCUMCISION AND CLITORIDECTOMY  132-148

Introduction  133
The Concept of Circumcision and Clitoridectomy  134
Age at Initiation  135
The Arrangements and Activities Prior To Initiation  136
Visitors to the Initiation Ceremony  140
The O’bufulu  140
Baptism Marich  141
Clitoridectomy Controversy  143
CHAPTER TEN

CIRCUMCISION AND CLITORIDECTOMY

Introduction

Circumcision for men and clitoridectomy for women was one of the ways the Tachon fulfilled their religious, social and physical development obligations. It marked two important and crucial steps in the life of the youth:

- Transformation from childhood into adulthood, and
- The beginning of the acquisition of special knowledge only meant for those who undergo the process of circumcision and Clitoridectomy.

This in turn introduced the initiates to two important life aspects that would mark a turning point in life, namely, the importance of communal living and the meaning and implications of adult life. This enabled the young to actively participate in the development of the community by sharing in the privileges and responsibilities of the nation, inheriting new rights and obligations, especially those relating to the life of the unborn, the living and the dead; sexuality, marriage, procreation and family responsibilities; and the importance of endurance.

To gain this special secret education the youth both boys and girls were separated from their families and relatives and taken to secluded huts in the forest specifically designed for this purpose for a period of five to ten months. After this period they came back home new people with added knowledge, personality, energy and power to do all that appertained to adulthood.

The Colonial Government outlawed female circumcision among the Tachon in 1925 although it persisted through 1969. With this went the female sacred education and secret society. The male circumcision still goes on but in charged form. What used to be a clan and tribal affair is now a family and hospital activity. As a result many problems related to sexuality have arisen forcing both the youth and their parents into withdrawal and complicating life for new generations. Family life and sex-education has now been transferred to teachers in schools putting them on a collision course with some universal religious establishments. This is ironical because earlier, with the coming of colonialism, Christianity and Islam this trio was in agreement on the destruction of the traditional religious and cultural systems because they were evil and dirty institutions. These evil and dirty institutions were responsible for moulding the youth and the total human into a civilized citizen. In their absence sexuality is an abused human behaviour.

Circumcision is an age-old practice started about seven thousand years ago, was first experienced by Nanguila who was appointed by El commanded to receive circumcision before he was handed the operation blades.
The Concept of Circumcision and Clitoridectomy

Among the Tachon initiation rites take place after every two years for young people aged between twelve and twenty-two years. For older persons who have not faced the knife, their operation can take place any time. Without being initiated a person is not a full member of the Tachon society, and s/he will remain a girl or a boy throughout being excluded from matters of society that require the participation of elders.

Initiation activities take place within even years only in the months of August and December. All those who are initiated together or during the same initiation season form a life-long bakoki age-set or (siritwoki) rika age group. There are three stages in the initiation. Stage one is the shedding of blood as a result of the cut. Stage two is o’bufulu seclusion, and stage three is marich baptism. Stage one to three takes from between five to ten months.

Initiation rites were very valued among the Tachon. They were accepted by all as ministered and handed down from generation to generation since Nanguila. Circumcision and clitoridectomy involves shedding of blood believed to bind the people mystically to the living dead that lived on the soil and beneath it. Pouring of libation on the ground, which penetrated the soil, joined the initiate with his/her ancestors. This was preceded by the idea that only the living dead could approve of one’s continued life and contribution to the society. This has been emphasised by one elder and high priest, the late Kiriama Siundu, who said the living dead are with us all the time. They bore us and they will take us. They have the power over us, all after us. They eat of us, and so they must nurture and protect us. They are not dead who live in the hearts they leave behind. They are in our hearts forever. These sentiments express the deep value attached to this rite of passage, the manner it is protected and guarded by the spirits of the dead.

It is further believed that this rite was inherited from El through the spirit of Nanguila to El Lote, the son of El Matruh. It is a divine rite esima. The youth were taught to believe that it was only by fulfillment of this divine rite that they became truly human, realized their full potential and contributed to the development and growth of their nation and culture. It was, therefore, their duty to fulfill this rite and guard their history, beliefs and practices. It was the teaching that culture is a fragile achievement, which could always fall prey to forces of disorder and disintegration if it was not jealously guarded, and this could only be done through and after initiation, the practice that created a lifelong bond between person and society and El.

Initiation also opened the way to understanding of time, recording of events and conservation of the history of the people. This initiation:

- Symbolized and dramatized the separation from childhood, freeing of the young from impotence, ignorance and inactivity. It meant being born again into another state of knowledge, activity, creativity and reproduction. This transformed the gentle and sterner sexes from kapsindet children to young men and women.
- Was a bond between the born-again and the living dead, which was achieved through the pouring of blood in the soils, sanctifying it. The blood shed and the blade used were seen as the bond among those circumcised during that season, binding both men and women as an age group bakoki or *siritwoki* that would work together and respect each other until death.

- Marks the beginning of time when the young acquired secrete education and could now acquire and own wealth and prepare for marriage as men and women, and as such instruments of the development of their nation.

- Prepared the youth to access secretes of the tribe, their religion and culture as revealed through the beliefs and practices. To receive this, the youth had to endure pain and suffering because only then could one become creative and knowledgeable. It was believed that man must suffer pain as the beginning of growth, undergo rigorous training in order to face tomorrow with strength, knowledge and endurance. Pain and suffering marked the beginning of time, strength and knowledge were essential for understating of the universe.

- It is the media through which spiritual authority and power are conveyed to initiates to strengthen their mind, body and soul so that they could be of good service to their El and ancestors, and to work within the direction of *koindet* spirit herewithin.

Girls were initiated when they reached puberty, just before their first menstruation. This meant at the age of between ten and thirteen. At this age girls were introduced to a comprehensive sex education curriculum. They were taught about sexual behaviour, intricacies of sex and intercourse, betrothal and marriage. At this early stage they were warned that just as a decaying carcass attracted cockroaches, worms and flies so do the disrespectful girls attract undesirable suitors. At a later stage they were isolated in a large hut and given detailed instructions in child bearing and parenthood. They were also examined to confirm their virginity.

This process enabled them to see things, the shape of things with full clarity and purity. They became more aware of what the universe provides what El has made and pleased before the human, and the greatness of life, than they will ever know again.

**Age at Initiation**

Initiates were admitted up to the age of twenty-two years. This was accepted as normal and would attend normal initiation ceremonies. Quite often women met their initiation obligations within the normal age. Some men, on other hand missed and had to be forced into circumcision. Some men who got initiated late had a myriad of reasons: *musamban* evil spirits haunted them keeping them from circumcision, they just feared the knife, could not satisfy the basic requirements demanded by the surgeons.
Delayed circumcision meant delayed maturity. Uncircumcised men could not get wives. Circumcised women could not accept to marry musindet. Such persons were also kept of the precincts of older people and were forced to sleep in the same huts with children. They were eventually forced into circumcision as esikulumenya the odd ones and could only be baptized after fourteen to eighteen months.

**Arrangements and Activities Prior To Initiation**

There were various important activities and duties to be performed by the families of and the potential initiates before the initiation date. The clan and the general community also went through a hurricane of activities before the ceremony took place. These preparations took between three to eight months.

The first initiative was made by the potential initiate who approached a blacksmith for chinyimba calling bells (boys) or chinjiroos calling rattles (girls). The candidates then formally informed their parents before a calling programme was developed for them. A calling programme enabled the candidate to inform all relations and friends selected by the parents about the forthcoming initiation ceremony. Key among those to be informed was the maternal relation. Two parties were commissioned to sound the maternal relations. The first party included the mother of the candidate(s). She informed her parents about the planned circumcision of her son/daughter at least two to three months before the ceremony to enable them perform esitekho for her and identify the bull to slaughter for the candidate likhon when s/he comes calling later. The second party included the candidate escorted by bayei a day before the planned initiation. The candidate came to collect likhon.

The paternal relations busied themselves with preparations for the ceremony: gathering food such as milk, beer, millet, sorghum, animals to be slaughtered, and collecting firewood.

Before the candidates went out to invite relatives and friends to their planned ceremony they received more training on relations, team spirit, and work. They were sent out into the forest to collect firewood. They were led, in this assignment, by their tutor tirenik who taught them:

- How to work together, helping one another, and the concept of firewood collection. Firewood cutting was used to demonstrate the significance of togetherness, corporate effort and team spirit.

- How to use the chinyimba and chinjiroos. They were introduced to different styles and tones for different purposes. There was an established style to play and a tone to follow when inviting relatives and friends to the initiation ceremony. There was also a specific format in which the bells and rattles were played to prop up oneself in readiness for the ceremony.

The bells and rattles were played rhythmically in response to song and
dance. The boys wore armbands, while the girls wore rattles, and thigh and ankle bells. The thigh bells demonstrated that the girls were ready for circumcision and would no longer be children but women.

The maternal relations were always the last ones to be invited for three reasons:

- To provide final blessings and gifts to the child of their daughter. This was the last time their niece or nephew was to be referred to as kapsindet, chesident or musindet layo or the mother’s child. They, therefore, needed all the blessings of their maternal relations as they started their final journey to adulthood, grown men and women.

- The boys went to claim the animals, which had been kept in trust for them by their maternal uncles given them as dowry. To claim the animals was a sign of bravery and a reminder to their maternal relations that their daughter who married out was now able to look after herself.

- The girls announced that the lineage of their daughter would continue and soon they may be invited to weddings and marriage parties.

The maternal relations either gave the animal live or slaughtered. The action by the maternal relations symbolized honour to their daughter and her child, and union with those in the world hereafter. However, when the candidates arrived for these gifts they were kept and treated in seclusion. They were not allowed into the houses of their uncles nor to mix with members of the maternal relations because as persons who had come to claim cattle they were enemies until after the animal(s) was slaughtered or shown to them. They were served food on the open fields on the compound. Foods served were unsalted.

The ceremony at the maternal relations home was presided over by the clan priest and grazed by the person(s) who offered esitekho and likhon. To receive likhon the initiates stood facing the east in salutation to the sun god Sirikwa. The priest blessed the initiates by daubing on the chest and forehead with the stomach entrails obuse of the slaughtered bull. Where the bull was offered in life form the initiates were instead sprayed with milk and dressed in the olukhafwa couch grass. The priest also asked the ancestors of the clan to accompany the initiates back to their parents place, protect them through the journey and the night of liteya and give them the strength to endure the pain and joy of the operation the following morning.

Selected members of the maternal relations accompanied the initiates back to their village. They were received with song and dance, as other ululated and broadcasted peanuts and simsim and showered them with milk. A bull or bulls identified by the parents were slaughtered. The initiates were teased and told to withdraw if they were not yet ready for initiation the next day to save the family and nation from humiliation. The grand parents and aunts received the presents as the initiates were escorted to their resting place. The boys were escorted to the granaries set aside for this purpose.
where their penis were checked by _abehelesi_ for any deformities or any such abnormalities that may affect a successful operation. The girls on their part were taken to a secluded hut to meet an elderly woman, usually a tutor in sexuality and womanhood, who checked their formation and assisted by traditional nurses tied each girl’s clitoris firmly with a herbal ligament to stop flow of blood to its tip, especially the portion that will be tipped of.

Before _elabukabuka_ the sun set, both the boys and girls came out from their holding grounds to receive blessings from the elders who prayed and extolled El Lote to protect the boys and girls about to be initiated. El Lote was to firm their spirits and to protect them from bad omens, pain and bleeding. It was emphasized what they were about to go through has always been and will always be for it is what El has commanded. The grandfather, in his absence a senior elder of the clan came out and slit the _lisombo_ stomach of the carcass and smeared obuse on the forehead and chest of the boys and girls lining up for initiation as the crowd went into song and dance praising the candidates and their parents. Mothers were praised for bearing such brave boys and girls about to face the blade that cuts and heals the wound, the magic blade of El, and the blade that has been since Nanguila. This marked the start of the evening and night activities that will take the boys and girls to the morning when circumcision and clitoridectomy will be performed.

Dance song and merry making characterized the initiation eve. The dancers carried _chepturian_ symbolic sticks glowing with fire to signify that the boys and girls were being reborn with fire and vengeance. That they were being prepared to become fathers and mothers, to spit fire and comfort those who receive fire burns, to afflict pain and comfort the afflicted, all in the name of El. As adults they will face more trying moments, moments that will need perseverance and endurance, more than a fire burn. The chepturian also symbolized cleansing of the home and village of evil spirits yearning to hurt the initiates. Fire, it was believed, like water was clean and anti-evil.

The song and dance went on until _we’chimbwa chibitilanga_ about three in the morning when the initiates were send to sleep for two hours after which they were served sorghum or millet meal to strengthen their loins and also control bleeding. They resumed dancing and about six in the morning they were led to the river to be dressed in clay in readiness for the operation. Twins or triplets were dressed in clay between four and five in the morning and their operation took place before the sun came out so as not to break the spell that bound them. The cold mud served as an anaesthetic and cooled the blood veins taming the flow of blood.

The uncircumcised were not allowed near the dressing field. The adult and circumcised men and women followed their initiates into their respective wells where the initiates washed and cleaned their respective parts removing prepuces. After this they were checked for any deformities and infections. This later step was mandatory to counter any multiplication or transmission of diseases. As a precaution, whether any infections were
found or not, the candidates was cleaned in some cocktail of herbs the *barleria amanensis* for cottage cheese or buttermilk like discharge, *barleria prionitis* for swollen testicles, and *aloe vera* for bacteria infections.

After inspection and treatment the initiates were further anaesthesised using *geraniaceae* herbs *ol’fufu* for male and *ol’fufwa* for female. The herbs are commonly referred to as *garcinia livingstonei*. They were then dressed in black chalk or gray-chalky soil from a permanent water/swampy site. The clay was first smeared on the chest, then hands, thighs and the spinal lining, down to the buttocks the loins and testicles for boys. A small toast was lined on the ridge of the nose up to the forehead, and another gently erected like a crest on the central part of the head. On the crest was planted a special grass to signify a house. The female initiates were washed in ice-cold water and walked home half-dressed, while male initiates walked home stark naked and carried a walking stick/holding stick or *o’musugwon* called *o’mulaha*.

Two separate routes were used to and from the dressing wells to avoid evil spirits and bad omen. These routes were selected during the night by elders and kept secret. Only the leader of the dressing team knew the routes. On arrival at home they had a mock war reception from the parents who brandished weapons of war. They were then directed to prepared operation units *chitiang*. Each initiate had her/his own *etiang*. The etiang was a well-prepared spot sprayed with a cocktail of herbal ashes, leaves, bucks and sticks, again to protect the initiate from evil and strengthen his will. The boys were operated on while standing and facing the east while the girls lay on their backs with their legs wide spread. The operation took at most one minute per initiate.

Brave candidates during the operation received applause followed by song and dance, and awards and presents. The villagers danced praising the ancestors for starting this initiation, the nation for bearing strong and brave sons and daughters able to withstand the pain brought about by the blade of Nanguila. Meanwhile the initiates were seated and received presents from parents, relatives and friends which included animals, grains, clothes (skins and hides), traditional ware, shells and coins. As song and dance died out they were led to their shelter of seclusion *likombe* where they would spend their healing time. They would only leave this shelter to attend baptism.

The *o’mulaha* was to support the initiates during the operation; they put it across the shoulders resting the head on it. It also symbolised their final battle to adulthood. They had to win this battle by being brave and persevering like the *o’mulaha*.

The team of surgical experts to operate on the initiates slept within the home where the operation will take place. They were allocated a house, which was not to be visited by any one else. Here they prepared their tools (usually a variety of blades and herbs) *a’mahalo, yingeso* and *o’lufu*, secured them and treated them. The herbs were both anaesthesia and
disinfectant, and they also softened the foreskin carefully separating the outer from the inner. The team only emerged from this house when the initiates were properly positioned in their chitiang.

After the operation the surgeons may go away immediately to serve other groups lined up in the community or stay around to give the initiates their fast meal of the day o’bulumia. The meal comprised of beef mixed with herbs and ugali from millet, sorghum or maize. The surgeon who fed the initiates was called ormu’bingilisi.

Visitors to the Initiation Ceremony

As for the visitors and those who came to participate in the initiation ceremony they were organised into five groups and allocated shelter where they would receive their meals and sleep, and receive the dancing candidates at night, if necessary. These groups included:

• The maternal relations both male and female were allocated shelter near the centre of homestead. The size of the shelter depended on their numbers.

• Visitors from outside the tribe or clan, and who were not necessarily close relatives of the family were allocated shelter in the southern corner of the homestead

• The husbands to the daughters of the clan and in-laws to the daughters married outside the community were allocated a shelter near the main entrance to the homestead.

• The members of the clan or community were allocated shelter to the east of the homestead and in line next to the main house and close to where song and dance was going.

• The elders presiding over the ceremony and in charge of setting and blessing the sacred pots bakhoa yinyungu to be used during marich were allocated prestigious accommodation in the centre of the homestead. This is usually the house occupied by the wife of the ring, the eldest wife to the owner of the homestead.

The O’bufulu

Immediately after the operation, the boys and girls ceased to be kapsindet and chesident respectively. They now waited to be confirmed men and women. Before confirmation, they underwent two more stages: the healing o’bufulu stage, and the baptism marich stage. The process to attain marich was elicho.

The initiates were limited to their likombe during o’bufulu. And during the healing process and before baptism there were the dos and the don’ts. They were not allowed into other houses or homes. They were also not allowed to bathe, eat sugary and starchy foods have intercourse, or engage in
fighting. These things, it was argued, delayed healing and brought bad habits. They were not to greet each other or other persons by hand instead by greeting sticks, which they touched each other and the salutations were complete. It was believed that some people were evil and carried bad omen and would pass it to the initiate if s/he shook hands, and this would either delay the healing, introduce complications or burst the wound. However, they were allowed to go out fishing, hunting and herding animals. They used ol’wari as their only cloth. Today they use a blanket; shuka and even some are wearing on clothes shorts, shirts and dresses).

To treat the wound they used aloe flexilifolia, kilifiensis, or the ash of the sansevieria, and the ashes of dichrostachys cinerea and rhoicissus revolii. This cocktail was generally referred to as inguu. The sap ingotio from the aloe plant was used as a disinfectant, for washing and cleaning the wound and preparing it for dressing. This application was done on a daily basis, sometimes as many as thrice in a day.

The healing took between two to three weeks but the initiates stayed on for at least four months a period during which they were introduced to different types of learning and wisdom in preparation for baptism and entry into the secret society. The girls learnt the intricate lion dance, raving and twitching to the accompaniment of ceremonial drums.

**Baptism Marich**

After healing, and at the end of the seclusion period, which came after the annual harvest, the initiates underwent marich, baptism by and sanctification by the mafadet leopard (boys) and matit lion (girls), and the newt that symbolised El with us.

Marich took four days and it was performed in three stages. Stage one involved the initiates being transferred from their shelters amakombe to two homes One for girls and the other for boys) where they would be prepared for water baptism to be conducted the next day. This is the home in which they will spend three days and it belonged to the parents of one of the initiates who had also undergone marich. This home would have been selected on the eve of circumcision and the hosts assisted by the clan to prepare for this occasion. They were facilitated by the clan to equip the home with all the equipment and paraphernalia for the baptism including the preparation of the house in which the sacred pots of El Lote will be kept, preparation of drinks and collection of food.

The initiates arrived with chicken, dried beef and flour to meet the food requirements for the four days. They were all expected to arrive between mwihangilwa 3 p.m. and elabukabuka 6 p.m. The activities of this day included collecting firewood before the sun set and singing praises for the Tachon nation. They also, led by their supervisors, censored persons of bad behaviour in the community. Those who have not acted within the minimum norms and ethics of the nation, those who were thieves, liars, adulterers, misfits, perpetual beggars, were all publicly censored at night when the village was quite. Their voices wrung e’ulo through the village piercing
the hearts of those who missed the standards during the year as they moved from one corner of the village to another to ensure that each member of the clan or the nation got the message.

Stage two involved the complete baptism and took two days and one night. The first day of this stage saw the initiates leave mabwibwi very early in the morning for stapchen (estabicha) baptismal sites. They were led to these sites, in two groups (female and male) by their Marichobiti (ababiti) high priests who would perform the baptism. The priests were dressed in their ceremonial robes and were escorted by the macebearers betukhun.

The uncircumcised and those who had not undergone baptism were not allowed into the stapchon. When the initiates arrived here, assisted by their supervisors, they removed their il’wari clothes and lined up in readiness for the ceremony. One after the other they entered into stapchon and were passed through the sacred shrine and thrown across securely prepared trench specially made for this purpose. They were taken through a combination of rituals, which culminated in prayers and thanks giving by the high priest to El. They lay covered in thick clothes on bare rocks treated with herbs; here they meditated for thirty minutes before the high priest lead them in prayers for a rich harvest, national strength and unity, the health of women and children, solid leadership, successful warriors and gatherers, and a strong army.

In meditation the initiates are said to establish complete communication with the supernatural who gives them power of speech and brings upon them divine guidance. They are also said to have intercourse with the divine self, an action that bestows upon them a superior power that dictates procedures and actions taken in emergencies and delicate situations. The
The whole procession of marich is comparable to the youth going back into their mothers’ wombs: they were conceived in likombe, delivered and reborn by the spirits of El Lote on this day. The high priest performed the water baptism and blessed the initiates invoking the spirits of the society. He entered a covenant with the super self El Sayon on behalf of all the community. The covenant read as follows: Oh, El Sayon the mighty one, for thy life manifestations, may thy will be done and thy power rest upon thee. May thy sons and daughters thee has born amongst us and who are before thee be bonded with society as they are now with the rock on which they prostrate. Make them bold and shrewd that they shall not betray thee, and their nation. Let them serve you forever as their forefathers have done. On this note he announced the end of the ceremony.

On the evening following the water baptism, the initiates were transferred to secret homes where they would undergo their final rites of el’licho, come face to face with the lion, leopard and solemnized in the newt. As leopards the young men would hunt and raid the world to enrich their nation. It will be their duty to ensure continued growth in the wealth of the nation and protection of their borders. As lionesses the ladies would seek food for their children and rule and protect their homesteads. They were also taught their respective roles in society as men and women. They were prepared to be parents and protectors of the nation. They also learnt that the best ideas they were likely to come by were actually old ideas in disguise because the future shall always be the reflection of the past. Therefore, as human beings we are the mirrors through which these reflections could manifest, be seen and be felt. That the mind, as it has been developed tends to regard anything that is composite now as secondary and derivative in future. They were taught that it was their responsibility as the ambassadors of El Sayon to safeguard and use wisely what El has provided so that the future is secure and also benefits abundantly.

The following morning was the final cleansing day. They streamed to the river and took bath for the first time since circumcision. They also shaved and discarded their old dress for new ones. This symbolised transformation into full adults ready to start new responsibilities in society including starting families and competing for leadership roles in the national government. They developed in mind, body and spirit to tembete active new blood filled with the spirits of their ancestors. These spirits had to be tamed and reprogrammed so that they are not explosive.

Stage three took place on the fourth and final day, the day of taming the spirits and culturing them for the good of society. On this day the young adults directed by ababeyi and abeseli underwent the final practical and theoretical sessions to adulthood. They ate, drank and laid their life plan. They were given the weapons of trade for the defense of the nation and their families. They were graduated echulichuli dawn and released to their homes where they found parties waiting for them with presents and an itinerary for visiting relatives, which took one month.
Clitoridectomy Controversy

The arrival of the British was characterized by the ambition to dominate and to introduce race and class differences. They used superior arms to subdue the people. When they were unable to win over the Tachon into their administration they, in 1895 used firearms, cannons and hired soldiers from Uganda and Sudan to run down the Tachon Letiadom and forced them to submit and subscribe to the British rule in Kisumu and Elureko. They also used bribes – material goods and jobs. To tumble over the Tachon Mumia the Nabongo of Wanga was bribed and elevated to paramount chief over a large area whose people and coverage he did not know. His brothers and aides were made chiefs over the Tachon Letiadom, which had been divided into three regions. Outside Tachon land African chiefs were enticed with Whiteman clothes, weapons of war and other presents to accept and profess sheer supremacy of the Whiteman and his religion over all spheres of life. The British knew that control of the chiefs meant rule over the people and the extension of the white frontiers and influence over the tribal communities.

When in 1895 the British overran the Chetambe Fort and the Letia’s palace in Webuye, they saw an opportunity to tame the Tachon and to deploy personnel over the land and beyond and for a quick expansion of the British political, religious and administrative influence over the Tachon country. Subsequently a sub-commissioner’s Office was established at Elureko, present day Mumias in 1900 to strengthen their hold on the Tachon land and expansion into the hostile north – the Sebei, Pokot and Turkana lands. The death of the Tachon Letia Nyikuri Wamukune (Sifuma) strengthened their resolve and heightened their expansionism thoughts. This led to the division of the Tachon country into three regions administered directly from Mumias through Chiefs appointed by Nabongo Mumia – Namachanja ruled southern and central Tachon territory, Murunga a brother to Mumia ruled over western and northern territory, while the chief of Kapras was given authority over the territory across River Nzoia (Mois Bridge, Lugari, Turbo, Matete, Luatendi and Malava.

The fall of the fort and palace, and the subsequent establishment of the sub-commissioner’s office at Mumias paved the way for the entrance and entrenchment of the Quaker and catholic missionaries in the Tachon lands. The Quaker established themselves at Lugulu, only four kilometers from the ruins of the fort and the palace. Lugulu served as the nucleus station for the expansion of Christianity and the destruction of the Tachon history, beliefs and practices, and British exploration and exploitation of the Tachon country. In 1908 they served their first blend tea to the local population attending an open mass. Subsequently they organised open parties in honour of the Day of the Lord when they served different rich foods to congregations. These parties were designed to entrench the missionaries into local communities, and to convince the locals that the missionaries had good motives, were caring, were for the welfare of the people, and that they had brought a religion of salvation and all goodness.
As more and more members of the community started to appreciate and accommodate the white missionaries, the missionaries added church discipline and Christian faith to their menu of services. When admitting new members into their church, they demanded good morals, which were broadly professed to be the pillars on which the Christian way of life was built. The Tachon way of life was seen as falling outside these good morals and therefore was to be abandoned. They had classified the African way of life into three categories as R. McPherson (1970) explains:

**Category A:** In this category the missionaries saw African beliefs, customs and values as being at variance with Christian principles, but were not necessarily actively opposed to them, but felt they should be allowed to die out of their own accord. These included deference to ancestral spirits, the traditional sacrificial system and the practice of magic.

**Category B:** Customs were hereby regarded as incompatible with Christian principles and therefore unacceptable in a practicing christian community. These were such as polygamy and sexually motivated dances such as those preceding marich and secrete society ceremonies.

**Category C:** Customs were also regarded as medically or hygienically undesirable, and therefore were to be confronted with great thrust. These included the procession leading to the circumcision of men and women, exposure of the dead for more than a day before burial, and the type of sex education made available to teenage girls by their elders, aunts and grandparents.

The missionaries seem to have misinterpreted the Tachon customs and practices by tying them to situations they were never meant to cover. This became a source of conflict and confrontation between the missionaries and the Tachon people. The Tachon argued that all education given to the children of El Matruh was inspired and dictated by El Sayon. They further argued that sex education was prescribed by El to ensure successful and rich procreation, the development and growth of an upright nation. This education, it was argued, was for the good of the youth before and after marriage, because sex itself was a sign of maturity and could only be available to those who had gone through full-initiation into adulthood. They were also taught that sex had a stimulating, exciting, and life giving effect. It symbolized wisdom and was to be effectively used for children bearing and healing of the soul.

Polygamy, which was also strongly attacked by the missionaries, was seen as a means of propagation and of reducing, or rather completely eliminating the possibilities of prostitution or adultery, and any other sexually related vices in society. Polygamy was meant to create a social equilibrium and to hold members of the nation to social justice.

The Tachon, therefore, saw the campaign started by the missionaries as ill intentioned and aimed at destroying their social and religious fabric, which had seen them through many centuries. They felt this would separate them from their old-age religious conceptions, morals and link to their God and messengers.
Female circumcision is said to have been started by Kharga one of the daughters of El Matruh, received a lot of opposition and ridicule from the colonialists and white missionaries in the late 19th and most of the 20th centuries. Kharga is said to have undergone circumcision to gain a place in the matrun army and to fight on the war front. It was also, it is stated, the way of informing the world that there are some secrets about women which only the women should know, and therefore, just like men they needed their own secret institutions presided over by women of integrity and accepted by the gods.

This practice was, however, seen as evil by the Quaker Christian Missionaries stationed at Kaimosi and Lugulu, who in 1910 stated it was medically, religiously and psychologically torturous, evil, and could fundamentally affect childbirth. They, therefore, demanded that the practice be abolished. In 1911, the missionaries sitting at Lugulu and Kaimosi passed resolutions against female circumcision among their congregations. In 1915, the church required all its members to sign a declaration denouncing and repudiating female circumcision, which they termed a brutal method of mutilating the female reproduction system. They also requested the government to step in and assist them by enacting laws that would make this practice illegal and punishable by law. In 1919 the then colonial government proposed to the church that the circumcision question should be resolved amicably and diplomatically by the parties in conflict that is the church, the Tachon, Sabaot and the Tirik, with the assistance of the Native Council of North Kavirondo. The same was also communicated to other groups in Kenya including the Church and the Kikuyu in Tumutumu, and the Meru in Timau and Mt Kenya. However, the rite was also practiced by the Kalenjin, Nyang’ori (read Tirik), Maasai, kikuyu, Embu, Meru and Kisii peoples was proscribed by the Local Native Council (LNC) of North Kavirondo by Resolution No.2 of 1925. The reason provided was that the practice was alien to the people of North Kavirondo Reserve.

The Nandi, Nyang’ori, Saboet and the Tachon protested this resolution to their respective LNCs. This led the North Kavirondo administration to amend the resolution to the effect that the resolution number 2/25 of the North Kavirondo Local Native Council shall not apply to the Nyang’ori tribe. This addition meant that the practice remained illegal among the Tachon and any family that attempted female circumcision suffered arrest, prosecution and imposition of heavy fines.

The missionaries were elated by the government action. This encouraged them to effect certain administrative and programmatic actions to force the Tachon into Christianity. Such actions included construction of more churches and schools and denying admission to the Tachon children until their parents converted to Christianity. These activities were supported and enhanced by the District and LNC Administrative Officers. They ignored to integrate Tachon ways of life in the local social system arguing that the Tachon should follow what the Kapras and Bukusu were doing instead. What these officers did not bear in mind was that each community had its own unique rites which formed an important aspect of their life and could not just be abandoned, however primitive. The Tachon, like other affected
communities continued to protest to the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) Mr. A. de Wade, who responded in 1931 that it was recognised that the abolition of this rite could only be gradual starting with the milder forms. He therefore stated that it was the wish of the government that a policy of propaganda by administrative officials should be pursued with a view to educating the tribes who practice the rite into an appreciation of its undesirability and its dangerous effects and that such propaganda should include as far as practicable the milder as well as the more serious forms of the operations. It should be also made as widely known as possible that no girl can be legally operated on against her wish.

Despite the CNC’s advise prosecution continued so that in January 1948 the Tachon hired the services of M/S A. Qadir Malik Advocates to champion the course, locally and abroad and if necessary take necessary legal action against the government. The advocates first contacted the local DC who proposed that the matter be send to the Local Native Council to be adjudicated at the meeting of March 1948. The Native Council rejected the proposal of the DC.

In his memorandum of April 27 1949 the North Nyanza DC gave the following outline on female circumcision situation among the Tachon:

During 1948 representations were made by a tribe which is Masai in origin called Tachon, but which has become absorbed by the Kitosh to the extent of intermarriage and to a large extend adopting the Kitosh language in general practice. This tribal origin asked for the repeal of the prohibition on the grounds that female circumcision had been their tribal custom for generations. ….. the request of the Tachon, for a repeal of the prohibition was therefore not granted.

The Kalenjin and Maa speaking tribes in the district had tacitly accepted the prohibition but continued to uphold the practice. This forced the Chief Native Commissioner, in October 1948 to issue the following instructions to the North Nyanza Native Council:

If on the other hand the tribes have in fact since 1925 practiced female circumcision despite the Resolutions and only recently has action been taken to prosecute offenders it may well be desirable to try to persuade the Council to vary their Resolution. The Chief Native Commissioner suggests that the Council might agree to an amendment whereby a proviso is added to the resolution to the effect that the parent or guardian of a girl who is a bona fide member of these Masai tribes, may with the consent of the girl obtain a permit for the operation to be performed, the District Commissioner’s decision as to whether the applicant is a member of the tribe to be final.

Following this advice the Provincial Commissioner (PC) took the initiative through his DCs. The DC North Nyanza brought the matter before the LNC but was not successful in obtaining a proviso added to the Resolution 2/25 as advised by the CNC. The LNC argued that:

a) In their opinion what the Tachon were looking for was not only a variation in the Resolution but an action on the part of the government that would lead them to demand for their separate district, identity and own native authority.

b) The LNC By-Law of 1925 aimed at preventing the custom of female circumcision from creeping in between the Abaluhya and the Jaluo in the District. Including the propose proviso would precipitate this action.
The Tachon argued that if the culture, beliefs and customs of other people (read Abaluhya and Jaluo) had to be protected from pollution so were the lifestyles of the Tachon. They, therefore, appealed to the Chief Native Commissioner who in turn advised the PC Nyanza to appeal to the North Nyanza LNC and persuade the members to revise their stand so that an amendment can be made to legalize female circumcision among the Tachon provided that the candidate herself gave the consent to her parents. In July 1949 the DC North Nyanza who was also the president of the local Native Council reported back to the PC that after a long discussion the LNC decided that they were unable to change their resolve and therefore they wished the final decision on this matter to be the resolve of the Government (the CNC). This decision was arrived at knowing very well that the Government had no powers over the work of the LNCs. His Excellency the Governor only assented and gave approval to what had been properly deliberated on and proposed by the LNCs.

In his final report to the CNC the PC Mr. Hunter reported that the DC North Nyanza had attempted to convince his LNC to agree on the amendment whereby a proviso is added to the resolution to the effect that the parent or guardian of the girl who is a bona fide member of the Nandi speaking tribes may with the consent of the girl, obtain a permit for the operation to be performed, but this was met with disapproval of the Council.

This action by the LNC was expected to put the final lid on the issue of female circumcision. But further agitation by the Tachon compelled the DC to request the local Member for Local Government (MLG) to appeal to rescind the original resolutions 2/25 and 2/31 because they offended and were contrary to the native law and customs of all the Nandi and Maa speaking peoples in North Nyanza. He further observed that the resolutions had not been loyalty obeyed over the intervening period, and therefore, served no purpose and should be replaced. He urged the MLG to propose that the resolutions be replaced with the following schedule:

```
That the practice of decliterising young in the North Nyanza District shall continue provided that this resolution shall apply to bona fide members of the Nyang’ori tribe. Provided further that the parent or guardian of a girl who is a bona fide member of one of the tribes set out in the schedule hereto may with the consent of the girl obtain a permit from his chief for the operation to be performed. The decision of the District Commissioner as to whether the girl is a member of one of such tribes shall be final. Any person, who performs such an unlawful operation to be guilty of a breach of this Resolution. Resolution Numbers 2/1925 and 2/1931 are hereby revoked.
```

In this statement the DC does not refer to the Tachon directly but wants to treat them as part of Nyang’ori or Nandi or a Maa speaking group. He leaves it to the local chief to decide whether the person presenting himself is from a tribe that has preserved its tribal identity and then grant a permit for the operation to take place. The problems to the effective and rational implementation of this resolution were that:

- None of the chiefs nor his aides were Tachon, and the Tachon as a specific group was being decimated from all angles as a result their identity was unknown – were they Kitosh, Baluhya, Kapras, Bukusu, Masai, Nandi?
• The chief was not provided with the instruments to determine who was a Tachon and who had actually preserved his or her tribal identity.

• Tribal identity was not defined, and therefore it was upon the chief to decide.

This vagueness only compounded the problem and exposed Tachon parents to more arrests and confinements, and persecution that by 1966 the Tachon finally caved in and female circumcision was outlawed.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE SECRET SOCIETY

Introduction

The secret society provides the final stage into the indoctrination into tachonism. It was an institution of specialized education, an embodiment and means of passing supernatural powers to the members of the society. Apart from providing education and training to the Tachon youth as was taught by the ancestor of the Tachon people El Matruh and carried down from generation to generation by all those who came after him, the institution also provided a platform for cultural and religious structures to be defined. Such structures:

- A code of rules of conduct, their influences and frontiers
- The chain of relationships between man, the gods and El Sayon
- Prophesies, dreams and nightmares
- The human self, mind and spirit.

The secret society, therefore, provides the backbone of the society and the process of upholding all goodness in society and punishing all bad to attain zero-tolerance. It assigns duties and responsibilities to each individual, defines the accountability plan and expected performance standards.

The Secret Institution Concept

The secret society is founded on the seven pillars of the Tachon faith. It has two distinct sectors to appeal to the male and female of the society. The youth have to pass through and become part of this institution before they graduate into custodians to the wealth, education, rites and religion of the nation.

Among the Tachon people the gods represent messengers, and messengers are used alternatively with spirits. Ordinary persons cannot see these messengers of El. The messenger appears only to selected priests or sages of the community. To the ordinary persons they appear in form of shadows hiding their faces, their images are hazy, veiled.

The youth are taught that as the mirror into the future they are messengers of El. For this purpose they were taught that all messengers are send into the world by El to look after his creations and their ecosystem. After them their followers are entrusted with the same duty. They were, therefore, being prepared to assume this duty in their lifetime just as those who came before them. To undertake this duty, therefore, the youth are to establish by witness and testimony the authenticity of truth before all mankind, and total loyalty to El Sayon. This is the testimony that makes one complete in
spirit and mind, which makes authenticity and truthfulness of divine guidance self-evident, and witness that makes it clear and indisputable for all.

The institution of the secret society is responsible for completing the creation of the human person and binding him to El. It determines the responsibilities of each individual in society so that on graduation, each person effectively assumes his/her role in society. The role is defined by sex, age and status. In each of these duties and responsibilities are clearly outlined. Whereas all of us are responsible to our respective communities, we are all accountable to El for our (non-)performance.

**Initiation into the Secret Society**

The basic factor on which the secret society doctrine was based was the concern for the effective development of the human person into a knowledgeable, intelligent, rational, objective, faithful and religious person. This began with the turning of the youth, both male and female, into fully-fledged members of the adult community. This was done through the successful conversion of an individual into a man or woman of the community through a combination of symbolical and spiritual tasks systematically executed at birth, circumcision, baptism and marriage.

Four months after circumcision the Tachon youth undergo baptism marich while naked, a transformation that symbolizes rebirth. Some Tachon sages have stated that for this transformation to be complete the spirit of El consumed the youth, and they were reborn more knowing, loyal and with utmost faith. They also received power to communicate effectively and authoritatively on the matters of the nation.

The initiation was critical because it inculcated into the Tachon sons and daughters a sense of oneness – one faith, one religion, one nation and one people. It was also meant to support the build of one strong and firm community.

**The Education and Training Curricula**

To graduate from the secret institution the person received education and training covering all aspects of life (human relationships and human development), spirit, the earth and the universe. The purpose of the curricula was to translate the community’s ideals and practices, norms and values, and rules and laws into public policies and programs for strengthening the contribution of each individual to the resources of the nation and for their Letiadom. In this the people saw how divine guidance led to equity, justice, reform and upliftment, caring and efficient administration, social welfare, peace and order in society, and high standards of morality. They were also taught how to get the government of the day may display virtue and righteousness in its policies, civilized conduct in dealing with its citizens in times of peace and in times of war, display and practice integrity and loyalty to its people and God.
The curriculum emphasised among others the following:

1. The fact that man’s perception of the environment and his capacity to adapt has, through the ages, been controlled by the beliefs and practices of his community of one form or another. To adapt effectively man, his beliefs and practices must continue to evolve. This explains why there is dynamism in the way things are done, and the way the environment responds to the demands of society.

2. That the attitude of an individual toward life will pretty well determine what the life will become. Attitude, which includes faith, love, relationships and responsibility, is seen as determining positive or negative living. That:

   - Faith is basic to positive living because it dominates the mind, stimulates creative insight and brings new ideas. Therefore, a person of faith has the secret to positive living and is the torch of the society.

   - Love is a positive factor in positive living. Love is the maximum force in the development of good, caring for others, and the development and strengthening of the mind. Good relationships with other people are very important to one’s own growth, happiness and welfare. Ill will, dislike and rejection contribute to negative living, and are to be avoided if one desires peace, happiness and unity.

3. That one is born to understand and fulfill the responsibilities and the duties that have been bestowed upon him by El on earth. Our lives bear witness to the truth that we have been given as mankind by El, the truth which we believe to be true, and which is the sole objective for which the Tachon community has been brought into being, the raison d’être of its existence as a society of human beings and El’s people. That, unless they fulfill this witness they are squandering their life because this is no ordinary duty, it is a duty enjoined on them by El.

4. The concept of divine guidance dictates that as they graduate into adulthood they have been shown the truth, which they must establish by their testimony and witness to its authenticity and faithfulness before all mankind. This is a testimony that will make authenticity and faithfulness of divine guidance self-evident, for all to see, and a witness that will make clear and be indisputable for all. As a divine society they are the sum total of all their witness to the truth, and by this they are bound to the creator El.

5. Obedience to the rules of society, and by implication, to the social regulations of the outside community enriches one’s relationship with El. The external community is emphasised because as people we exist and thrive in an open environment, which is dynamic and conditioned by all other social, economic and political structures and systems that impact on our livelihoods.
Sex and Family Education

The norms and values of sex and the family were important in building an ethical society. They were important in the development of the person and the nation as a whole. Sex defined the behaviour of humankind. In the making of sex and family is self-respect (both moral and mental) and obligation.

Sex education, being the cornerstone of human life, was given a special preference in secret education curricula. It constituted knowledge of marriage and the whole concept and totality of consanguinity. It was through sex education that the concept of child bearing, planning and regulation of the family were introduced and explained in their physical, chemical and mental forms.

There were legal and regulatory procedures regarding marriage and consanguinity which if breached led to heavy fines and punishment. The incest oluswa was the most common and feared breach that constituted gross sex abuse. The incest clause had eight prohibiting statements:

1. **Thou shall not have sexual knowledge or relationship with his or her close relative.** Close relatives included all those of your patrilineal relations, descendants of the same mother as your own, father’s uncles, sisters’ sons and daughters, and so on. Marriage with descendants of the same mother/father of your own was seen as a social evil and could result in sterility if not immediately cleansed or separated.

2. **Thou shall not have intercourse with animals – cows, goats, sheep, chicken, dogs, all that walk, fly and crawl.** Any person committing such incest would be excluded from society, receive capital punishment, and any such punishment as may be pronounced by the elders.

3. **No male member of the family shall have canal knowledge of the following:** own mother, grandmother, own daughter, grand daughter, own sister, half-sister, aunt, daughters of his brothers or sisters, and those of the daughters and sons of his brothers and sisters, descendants of his wife’s brothers or sisters, or his mother-in-law.

4. **Thou shall not have sex with any girl or boy under the age of puberty, a person who is not his wife/her husband, a person with mental disability, any person in the bush, any woman still nursing a baby or who is pregnant, any woman in her cycle.**

5. The man in society is advised against shaking hands with his mother or daughter in-law, shaking hands with any woman who he is ware is a mother or aunt to his sex partner, and sleeping in the same bed or blanket with a woman in her cycle.

6. The woman of the society is advised to maintain a solitary stature and never to attempt to give herself up for sexual purpose unless to her husband.
7. The woman of the society is advised against visiting or serving her parents after intercourse and before washing herself, having intercourse before and outside marriage, having intercourse which results in pregnancy outside marriage, behaving seductively, having sex with fellow women.

8. Parents are not allowed to kiss or fondle their partners in front of their children.

In line with clause eight the houses of parents were built separate and away from those of their children.
CHAPTER TWELVE: BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD 156 -162

Introduction 157
The Concept of Birth 157
Conception, Labour and Delivery 158
Naming and Caring For Children 159
Children Born Twins and More 160
Childhood Days 161
CHAPTER TWELVE
BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Introduction

The birth of a child is the concern of the total community, the living and the departed, the gods and El. Accordingly the birth of a child was a process in the development of a nation initiated and blessed and made possible only by El. The process started the moment the youth went through the secret society for this was when El bestowed upon each one of them the ability to think, act and work for the development, expansion and growth of the nation. Therefore, a child is only brought into the world because of nature made possible by El.

At birth the mother of the baby brings into the world three things: the baby, the house of the baby (the water membrane and the umbilical cord), and the blood (to sanctify the process of birth, baby and her relationship with her husband). The water and the blood from the house of the baby disappear into the earth without making the ground wet to demonstrate the mysteries of birth and the journey the new baby will make to the end of times.

The Concept of Birth

The Tachon people believed that their nation thrived most when there were deaths and births. For every death there were tens of births because if a tree flowered its seeds had to die to be productive. If a tree had to continue being productive it had to shed its leaves and flowers so that to sprout again to glorify the universe and the creator. Like the buds of trees children are the buds of society. Their arrival reveals the power and wealth of society today and in future. It was revealed that the closeness of El to the people and his eagerness to continue watering the nation so that it is enriched to fertility with the seed of life was through conception and birth of children. Where there was a drought of children El had rejected the couple for good reasons.

The seed of life was powerful and determined the survival of marriage and the growth of a family. A woman or man who could not bring forth children was a disgrace to the family, society and the nation. Such persons were not worthy their life and had nothing to be proud of before El. They were a point of no return in human life, wasteful, however much they contributed to society in other forms. They would miss the heroism of society revealed at death and burial. No one would mourn them and no one would keep them in their hearts, to continue living. They will be buried and forgotten.

A child does not belong to the father and its mother, but the whole family, clan and nation. The society, the people and the environment only mould the child into a social being within the dictates of El - For it is only El who can make something to evolve, grow and become useful. The society therefore only makes use of the environment to supply the child with food, clothing, education and marriage.
Conception, Labour and Delivery

Conception, which is also called pregnancy, is the first concrete indication that El has given permission for there to be born a new member into society. However, this powerful message is received earlier on the day of the wedding when the sage announced secretly to the parents of the bridegroom the rich message the bride had brought into the family. The sage reveals the hand of luck the bride had come with in terms of children, their gender, farm harvests, livestock, guests, her dreams and her attitude to life and humankind.

Therefore, conception of the first born, which fulfilled the prophecy of the sage was received with a lot of joy and was often celebrated. If the expectant mother had been a confirmed virgin on the wedding eve, as soon as conception was confirmed the families came together to celebrate the o’lulinda boring of iron feast. This feast also sealed the marriage and completely integrated the woman into her husband’s family.

The expectant mother was special and a very important member of the society. She received presents, and special treatment from the members of the family, neighbours and the nation. She was exempted from all chores as volunteers came in to help with house and farm work. This special attention went on until three to five months after giving birth.

During conception and two years after child delivery the woman observed certain regulations, rules and taboos, partly because the process of childbirth was holy and should be protected from any physical, psychological and ritual harm. This included complete abstinence from sexual intercourse and from direct contact or communication with her husband. A nurse to ensure her pregnancy developed well and that the delivery was smooth would attend her throughout the pregnancy term.

In nursing the pregnant mother, special foods were served, and they did not include eggs, blood or meat. Often the food she ate was mixed with a blend of herbs meant to help effective development and proper sitting of the baby in the womb, soften the lower stomach and virginal muscles so that they grow along with the development of the baby, and to ensure the delivery is smooth. Further, she received blessings and prayers from the mother of the homestead and the clan chief female priest to bring the goods of life and procreation closer to her and into the house.

A few days before delivery, the expectant mother would retire to the room reserved by her nurse, which would later serve as her labour ward. Two persons – the nurse and an elderly woman from her husband’s family, will forthwith serve her in this room. Only female visitors were allowed into this room. Male members of the society were not allowed near this house or room.

As soon as the labour pains started, she would go on her knees or squat and seize a rafter constructed in the middle of the room specifically for this
purpose. The elderly woman supported her from behind. The nurse helped her from the front, monitoring the movement of the baby and ready to receive it. She was encouraged to push the baby in silence because if she yelled or moaned, the gods would turn the baby into a coward if male, and barren if female. Not wanting to disgrace her mother and the tribe of her husband she braved the pain and delivered the baby in silence and with courage.

Immediately the baby came out the mother would quickly have a belt or a cloth tied around her waist to stop bleeding and to hold the stomach back. The nurse would wash the baby and bury the placenta in cowdung or manure decomposed pit for five reasons:

1. The placenta is the symbol of the child’s attachment to the state of inactivity, so it must be awakened. The energy in the cowdung started the gradual process of activity.

2. Cowdung is a catalyst before it evolves into manure. It was, therefore, used in keeping the inside of houses clean. It is said to be pure and protective against evil spirits and sickness.

3. Burying also symbolizes the separation of the child from the mother and its integration into society. That the child now belongs to society.

4. The burying in cowdung symbolized the fertility, strength and freshness that would keep the womb of the mother fertile and rich, strong and fresh and the baby pure and safe.

5. Cowdung revealed the presence of livestock, and burying the placenta in cowdung tied the newborn to heritage of his/her forefathers/mothers - pastoral life.

The mother would be asked to breastfeed her baby, and the two were kept in seclusion for four days if the child was a girl, and five days if a boy. During seclusion, only close family relatives and attendants visited the mother and baby. After the seclusion period, the husband slaughtered a goat or a sheep of thanks giving to El and the ancestors. This was done because to complete the birth of the baby. That a child must be born biologically and spiritually in order to complete the order set by El and to be integrated into the society of humankind.

**Naming and Caring For Children**

The naming of a child is an important event in childhood and in integration of the new member into society. It is marked by a naming ceremony. The first consideration in the naming is the living-dead who are said to have reincarnated in the child. Usually, the living-dead would appear in visions or dreams to the parents or other elderly members of the family days before or immediately after birth. The person receiving such a message must pass it over to the father of the baby immediately to avoid the fury of the spirits. The father of the baby did naming; in his absence his mother gave the name to the baby.
Where no vision or dream revealed a person who wanted to be named, the parents of the newborn would observe the following in picking the name for the baby:

a) Those members of the family or fathers clan who died on the eve or day the child was born

b) The personality or character of the newborn. Sometimes the newborn quickly exhibited a personality recognizable in a living-dead. The baby would then be given the name of this living-dead.

c) Some dramatic events may take place during the birth or first days of the babe’s arrival into the world. Such events may be traced back to a late member of the family or clan associated with such things or whose name relates to such an event or a combination thereof.

d) The baby may start continuous crying or refuse to suckle or swallow anything or refuse to pass urine or stool, and during this period different names of close living-dead shall be mentioned one after the other until the child responded. Some children and the living-dead are so stubborn that they reject each other even into teenage when the correct names emerge. Meanwhile during the intervening period the child would have suffered different problems including burns, semi-consciousness, paralysis, etc.

The names acquired through this process were categorised as names of ebimakombe spirits. In this respect the living-dead was expected to watch over the newborn, protect it from ill will, harm of any kind and other evil designs. This name was, therefore, the surname of the child. Another name was given to commemorate the time the child was born, morning, night, mid-day, during rain, harvest, planting, cultivation, famine, marich, war, time of plenty, etc. This became the baptismal or nickname.

**Children Born Twins or More**

Twins, triplets, were an out of the ordinary event, which was very controversial within the Tachon religion, culture and beliefs. Often the events were misinterpreted to mean doom to the family and clan and, therefore, the children were killed and the mothered separated or sent back to her family. In most cases the reaction to such an event was uncontrolled in other cases the parents volunteered and facilitated a birthday celebration during which the children were secretly suffocated to death, in the name of being taken away by the angry gods. In very few cases were the children spared and allowed to grow up into mature citizens. In these cases such children became a treasure to the community during wars. Often they were put on the frontline in the protection of the sovereignty of their nation.

The house in which twins were born was cleaned on the fourth day of all the
dust and ashes, which had accumulated since birth. The dirt collected was taken and deposited far away from home and towards the setting sun, mumbo. This was supposed to soothe the gods and to protect the family against evil. The farther the dirt was deposited the better. It was believed that such dirt if left within burnt relatives, and left white patches obukhwana, disfiguring the person’s skin.

In certain cases children were merely separated from the family and handed to a childless couple far away instead of being killed. In both cases an elderly barren medicine women was invited in to cleanse the mother of the twins, her husband and the homestead. She was also given some herbs to drink to make her womb clean and orderly. The cleansing was meant to protect the family from further abuse by the gods and the ancestors.

Often the twins or triplets leading to tragic action were those of first birth. If they were not of first birth and the family decided not to separate them from their mother, she still underwent similar cleansing, which was preceded by slaughtering of a bullock by her maternal relations. The babies were then bathed in a mixture of herbs prepared by the medicine woman or another mother of twins in the clan who had undergone similar experience and her marriage and children survived. The paternal relations would on their part give the children a live cow to tend and drink milk. This cow was given in order to make peace with the gods and ask for the intervention of El in protecting and blessing the children, the clan and the nation. The children were then allowed to grow up normally but without mixing with other babies in the family or community until they were weaned (around three years).

Twins who survived the hostility and community prejudices served many useful roles in society:

- They were looked upon to provide the early signs El’s happiness or furry.
- They were seen as a source of security. Their presence protected the house from all kinds of evil because they were the epitome of spirits in human form.
- They were very sensitive and could sense danger, coming of visitors and whether such persons were peaceful or not.
- They could foretell time and other omens in their actions, dreams, vision and speech.

**Childhood Days**

Childhood included the period immediately after birth, and ended with circumcision and baptism. This period, which lasted for between thirteen and twenty-two years of a person’s early life, was full of events that went a long with the development of the child and his/her integration into society.
The first days up-to three years saw the child under the care and nursing of the mother and close female relatives. During this period, the child learnt how to talk, walk and identify various objects. The learning process had been initiated. After this age children were entrusted to different groups for further training and education.

- The female children were left to their mothers, paternal aunts and grandmothers who taught them all about growing up as girls until when they were ready for initiation into both the secret and the wider society. They were then removed and handed over to secret society priests and tutors who introduced them to the finer details of life as women, responsibility to society and El, and being a mother of the clan.

- Male children were joined to their fathers, their older brothers and other male members of the society to learn about the world. They accompanied them to grazing fields where they learnt about the family tree, traditions, roles of livestock and the pastoral life, herbs, hunting, raiding, fighting and the edicts of war. As they neared the age of circumcision they were introduced to sessions on how and when to become men.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE CONCEPT OF DEATH  163-168

Introduction  164
Society and Death  165
Burial Ceremonies  166
Cultural Activities after Burial  167
CHAPTER THIRTEEN
THE CONCEPT OF DEATH

Introduction

The Tachon of old generally believed that death was not final. Their concept of death was governed by the knowledge that no man would live on earth forever but would, in his old age, be claimed by El who would in his place bring a hundredfold of newborns. Therefore, death though dreaded was taken calmly but with sincerity. Death at an early age in life, especially of a child, was regarded as a bad omen and meant that the gods were angry with the family or wanted to eat. Therefore, the gods had sucked the blood and breath out of the child and ended its life. Blood was sanctified, holy and an effective medium for soothing the gods. The blood of children was particularly very pure and innocent and a perfect bait to the gods to start new relationships.

Death was seen as a transformation from one part to the other in life with El. That life continued even after physical death. It was seen and recognized that life after death was an immortal state of being. That when one died his life joined the spiritual realm and it continued to exist even in a more active form, controlling and influencing the destinies of living. This life, which is usually referred to as the spirit or soul, was in direct contact with the living, and could appear to certain members of society in visions. It was commonly believed that when the spirit was displeased it could be harsh and even cause harm to the living, and even inflict the quick death of those not in harmony with it. The spirit was said to be more powerful than the living. It was in close touch with the gods, and with its persuasion, could destroy not only the uncooperative, but also the families and persons who were against it when it existed in human form. The spirit of a warrior continued to protect the nation and help the armies in war and in pursuit of the enemy.

This belief partially indicates the reasons why burials and funerals among the Tachon were respected events. The dead person was accorded honour, respect and great courtesy, more after his death than when alive.

Among the Tachon, death was a symbol of glory and marriage with gods. It moved the residence of man from this world to the world hereafter. It was all natural unless it came prematurely. Natural death came out of old age, wars, raids and other disasters. It was the price the community paid to El. Premature deaths was spat at.

The death of an old man was not disclosed until after mid-night or at dawn. It was a taboo, and it is held even today, for an old man to die during the day. He would have killed his age-mates, the children and the clan. It was, therefore, a tradition that if an old man died, regardless of the time, the tribe and the public would only be informed by the sound of a horn and the beating of a drum at night or at dawn. No one was allowed to wail between the hour of death and the sounding of the horn and drum.
When a member of the community fell sick, recognised and famous medicine persons would be summoned to come and treat the person. Disease diagnosis was done in one or more ways:

- The medicine person would eat some herbs to enable him/her see through the patient to identify the disease, its origin and how deep it had ingrained itself. He would then administer appropriate treatment.

- The medicine person may demand an animal to be slaughtered to study the entrails to determine the disease ailing the patient, its depth and the nature of treatment needed. In this particular case some parts of the animal may be administered as medicine mixed with or without herbs.

- The medicine person would consult the ancestors of the sick person to receive instructions on the disease and the appropriate treatment.

Medicine persons came from specific families and clans. Not any one would be a medicine man. Usually the practitioners inherited from their fore parents, and the trade remained in the family.

Serious diseases required intervention of the living dead and the gods. In this case brew was prepared, an animal slaughtered and its blood taped for the ancestors and gods. When there was no hope of recovery, two elders, who were close relatives would be appointed to ask the sick person to determine his will. If he was an elder, or a leader in society in whatever from, he would be asked to determine among his sons (sons included even children of his brothers, his cousins or adopted ones) who would inherit his mantle. Everything he told the elders was secret and confidential until the day of o’muse, three days after his burial.

**Society and Death**

The Tachon believed that in any society there was happiness, joy and sweet sorrow. For the society to grow, the old must die and new ones born. Men should marry many wives so that when they die many shall be born of their offsprings and be named after them.

A man’s spirit came through his daughters and sons, and the clan the nation. A society was pure when the old died natural deaths. All members of society would attend to a dying man so that they eat of his flesh and drink of his blood. The relatives were expected to be available at his bed to hear his/her last words, wishes, will and receive his/her blessings. They watched his/her muscles twitch and tighten, and the heart drop. His last breath injected new blood into the living relatives and sanctified the environment. It also reflected the dying person’s man’s new responsibility as a living dead, ready to serve and protect the family and the nation. An animal was slaughtered; and family members and relatives drank the blood and bathed in its entrails. The flesh was eaten raw and/or roasted. The significance of this was to bind the faithful and eliminate the evil ones.
Thought is the mind that taketh. Thou shalt not miss to eat of his flesh and blood. For you are made of the same blood. If thou shalt do, shall be known to have afore knowledge of the cause of death and shall be punished according to the laws of the tribe and its supreme judiciary.

The Tachon further believed that people should attend the funeral and burial of a member of their society in order to witness his departure to the new world and give their greetings to the ancestors whom he would join. A person who did not attend funerals within the community was supposedly not represented by his ancestors when he died and later joined the world hereafter.

Generally, the Tachon had great respect for order, morality and property belonging to the deceased. The slaughtering of animals was inspired by the practice of thanking El and the spirits for taking the deceased to join his ancestors, and for the skin to be used as the burial dress for the deceased. Animals were not slaughtered merely for eating and feasting, but to join the dead with his ancestors and to seek greater blessings and the guidance of El for those who remained behind.

If there was any eating or drinking after burial, it was to be done later and more particularly, the participants were only the close relatives of the deceased. Food or drinks was only offered to reduce fatigue and exhaustion, and often the neighbors and mourners generously contributed it.

There was general assistance from neighbors in form of manual work and contributions towards the feeding of visitors who came from far. Local people normally ate in their homes, and not in the deceased’s home.

The bereaved did not have anything to do with the funeral expenses, cooking or brewing of beer. The neighbors and other relatives handled most of these responsibilities.

There was sincerity in mourning, as opposed to the present day bluff which is evident in funerals elsewhere. The mourners, other than close relatives, left the home of the deceased on the third/fourth day after burial and cutting of their hair.

**Burial Ceremonies**

Burial ceremonies were often conducted differently, according to the age, sex and role one played in society. Burial was done between 8:00 a.m and 12:00 noon and before the rains, so that the dead body could be placed in a clean, dry resting place.

When an elderly person or a man of respect died, a special bull, his favoured, is selected among his animals. It was slaughtered and its skin used as his burial dress. The body was wrapped in this skin and lowered into the grave and covered immediately. The grave was dug in front of his main house. He was laid down toward the east, because the east is the gate of the morning, the home of hope.
Skin from a bull is prepared as burial dress. An ox skilled being laid in the grave in readiness for burial of an elderly Tachon | The remains of an elderly brought out for burial

A female person was buried lying on her right side with her back to the sun. Young members of the society, unless they had graduated as warriors, received similar burial rites as the women.

The Tachon, generally, place their departed ones with their backs eastwards, the head pointing between the east and north, while their feet between the southern and the western skies, that at the setting of the sun in readiness to join El in the protection of his creations, both living and non-living.

The family members and friends witnessed the burial of a woman, amongst others. Most men of the community would not attend unless she was a very reputed member of the society.

Graves on the southern side of the homestead were seen as safe and salient. South was the land of midday sacred to things heavenly and divine, matioli. The north was the seat of the most high the hilux of the nation. The east was seen to be the realm of the oracles, the special gate of the throne of El Sayon. The west was the domain of the people.

**Cultural Activities after Burial**

After burial, a woman relative brought water from the river or stream and all those who touched the soil during the digging of the grave and burial would wash their hands and legs on the grave as an act of cleansing. Another woman relative would sweep the house where the dead body had lain in state. A bull or bulls was slaughtered to provide meat for food and presents to close relatives. In the evening, the gravediggers were given a chicken, which they would strangle, roast and eat by the gravesite. By this time all had gone home, except for close relatives, who stayed another four days. The widows/widower mourned the deceased for one year.

On the next day, after burial a transition ceremony was performed. For old men, this was called okhuuisia. This ceremony was characterized by cattle dance. The animals symbolized the wealth status of the deceased and his influence over the nation’s kraals.
The okuhuisia procession started at 6 am through 3 p.m and could even run for three days, depending on how wealthy, influential and patriotic the deceased was. The animals, mostly cattle, came from near members, the clan, friends, and the nation of the deceased. They came in herds and worked hard to outdo each other. A single herd comprised of twenty to one hundred animals. The most beloved bulls and cows, and those that were renowned dancers, were well dressed in scarves, bells and *jinjiroos*. As they danced around the grave, they were sprayed with milk.

Men came with spears, shields and iron rattles tied on their legs. They were dressed in animal skins and columbus/mountain monkey headgears. They were decorated in beads, and they sang and danced *singorio*, and had mockery combats. The women, on the other hand, came with long sticks, and gourds filled with treated milk *mwichura*. They danced with their sticks in their right hand and gourds in the left. The milk gourds signified the wealth the deceased had, which was identified in terms of the number of cattle of herds he had.

On the third day, relatives, friends and people from afar assembled at the homestead of the deceased to receive the family genealogy, the history of the deceased, and be enlightened on the life, beliefs and practices of the tribe since the creation of the first man. This session was conducted by the minister of social and cultural affairs who was also the official sage representing El Ter, the spiritual god responsible for the development of the soul and mind, the El Lote, the god of transformation, birth, circumcision, marriage, old age and death, and the custodian of the culture and religion of the community. He also supervised the distribution of the deceased’s estate to his family members and relatives, as had been recorded by two elders who sat with him on his deathbed.

On the morning of the fourth day, the wives of the deceased were taken to the river to wash. The relatives shaved their heads and threw away the hair towards the setting sun. A bull or cow was slaughtered, depending on whether the deceased was a man or a woman, and the relatives received particular pieces of meat to carry home.

When the moon was in the last quarter after the head of the family had died, an ox was slaughtered and the deceased’s relatives and friends shared the meat, which they carried home to eat with their children. The ceremony was called *Kailiet* or evacuation. Early the next morning, from 3 to 5 a.m, the eldest of the remaining brothers of the deceased climbed the roof of the main house of the deceased and solemnly broke off the peak called *oulosuli*, which was bound on the main pillar of the house. After this, he entered the house and pulled down the pegs on which the weapons of the deceased were suspended, the beds and the partitioning of the rooms. This action indicated that the deceased had finally been released to leave the home and wander into the world hereafter, and his widows can end the yearlong mourning, and could now remarry, if they wished.
# Introduction

The Concept of Recreation

Songs and Dances

Wrestling and Cattle Fighting

Swimming and Fishing Competitions

War and Hunting Tactics
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RECREATION AND ITS IMPLICATION TO LIFE

Introduction

There were various forms of recreation which included songs, dances, wrestling, swimming, war demonstrations, hunting demonstrations and cattle fighting. They were taken at different times of the year and symbolized a specific occasion in their calendar of communication with El. Songs and dances were good for the development of the body and mind, and strengthened the communication with El and the ancestors.

To make recreation sessions successful, each community contributed towards the food, awards, and oils that were to be used at the function. Major recreations were organized by the state, and it was essential that all members attended, except those soldiers and intelligence teams who were on duty.

Where a recreation activity was also used as a sport the winners were awarded national honours and elevated in status. Their names were sung beyond the nation, and they became important ambassadors of the nation beyond its borders as they were invited to perform elsewhere.

The Concept of Recreation

Recreation was part of the Tachon religion. It was a special kind of refreshment for the body, mind and spirit. Apart from being a form of play which pleasantly occupied one’s time after work, it also brought people together and mad everyone fresh, cheerful and loving, because they shared the spirits of one another and of each other’s time in order that each one of them could be perceived properly and truly. Recreation also provided training for the muscles, strengthening of the body and physique of the warriors and prepared them for their difficult assignment of defending the frontiers of their nations.

Recreation improved the mechanisms of the senses, made man quick, responsive and positive in his actions. The various recreational activities helped man to conceptualize as well as discover hidden facts about life, therefore introducing the forces of perception and imagination in man.

Recreation made every one equal. It brought different age sets and sexes together, and helped them to see things the same way. It was a means of communication between and amongst different age groups and sexes.
Songs and Dances

Songs and dances were part of human evolution. One was conceived and born in song and dance. That is why when a baby cried it has to be rocked to song and dance to be silent and to go to sleep. Therefore, songs and dances were nourishment for the spirit and soul, soothing for the muscles and bones. Among the Tachon, therefore, songs and dances were regarded as good for the development of the body and the mind.

Songs had two main objectives: to entertain and to educate. Songs were also used as a tool to unite the people or reconcile warring parties of the society. They were also a historical record of the past.

Songs were developed for different occasions. When songs and poems were in their formulation stages, they were danced to and sang by all. Songs and poems for general entertainment were sang and recited at individual homes, beer parties, camp fires, digging ceremonies, and other occasions. The singers and dancers at entertainment festivals were rewarded with gourds of milk, stacks of grains, beads, oils and creams, and ivory.

During the year round, the singers learnt their songs and perfected their voices and instrument playing skills. Young boys and girls played the flute and mandolins. They also played mouth organs, the clarinet, drums and horns. They also learnt how to sing and compose songs from their parents and senior members of their families and clans. Most of the songs were religious and historical. The songs were meant to teach the children and general public patience, love for one another and respect. They also learnt songs related to various occasions and activities, such as circumcisions and weddings. Those who were accepted as good musicians at the village or family level prepared themselves for the annual events.

The women played clarinets, harmonica, and the lute during the evenings in their homes, especially at the open homestead fire. The young and old danced to their tune. The purpose of playing these instruments at this time was, firstly, to perfect their skills, and secondly, to entertain and teach the children music, and finally to present harmonious and sweet music to their husbands, sons and brothers who had been out, working the whole day. They received praises from their husbands. With family approval and encouragement, the woman would venture into public entertainment. They would start with digging and cultivation ceremonies, and parties organized by women to celebrate an important event like the birth of a child, a marriage, and so on. From here, the women would get set for the annual events. The dancers perfected their skills in preparation for annual singing and dancing competitions.

At the annual event, singers were judged in proper handling of instruments, which included the harp, lute, lyre, guitar, flute, clarinet, horn, drum, mandolins and saxophone. They were also judged on the richness of language, the flow of music, the message of the song and how relevant it was to the development of the nation, the attention the song seemed to get from the audience, and how cultured and prepared the singers were.
Horns and drums were special instruments. They were also used as a media for communicating messages within the community, and for summoning people to meetings or other ceremonial activities. Each message had a different tone and where necessary different and matching instruments (of different sizes and type of horn or drum) were used.

Wrestling and Cattle Fighting

A good wrestler was identified from birth and developed in his/her trade. Wrestling was among the skills and trades regarded as vital for defense against fellow men, and even the wild animals. When the wild animals made surprise attacks on a shepherd or herds boy, he confronted the animal with his bare hands, because these were the immediate tools that he could marshal.

Wrestling was believed to be a body builder, and also served to strengthen and harden the spirit against evil. It was believed that a healthy body would not allow evil spirits to reign over it. The youth were taught wrestling on the grazing fields as they looked after the livestock. They wrestled friends and relatives from across the ridges and valleys.

The wrestler, like the musician, represented the tribe in inter-tribe wrestling competitions. Wrestlers from different villages competed at local stadiums. Spectators came from all over the nation on the appointed day. The matches started very early in the morning and would go on until very late. In their dressing rooms their bodies were massed in sheep tail fat. The winners were given national honours and a respectable place in the society. They became a household name.

Days were also set aside for animal wrestling. Animal (cattle, sheep and goats) wrestling was used to display wealth, quality animal care, to demonstrate the love the spirits had for people and their property, to display the ability of man to train his animals, to explain the social interrelationship between man and his animals, and the established communication between man and animals. The venue for cattle fighting was selected from among valleys. The most popular venues during the twentieth century were Sang’alo, Bokoli, Nabuyole, and Muchi in Webuye.

Animal wrestling was a real crowd puller, and was third only to music and dance, and after human wrestling. Men and women cheered their favourite animals, and they even had bets on which animal would win. The winning animal was rewarded with beads, bangles, bells, food and beer. They were also given authority over a herd. Such animals were generally the leaders of a herd in the field, and had the trust of their owners.
Swimming and Fishing Competitions

Swimming for recreation was not very common, because most of the rivers had crocodiles, leopards, other deadly animals and insects. Therefore, swimming was not exploited very much as a pastime or a source of bodily development. However, swimming was taken as a spiritual activity. It was believed that swimming in the river enabled one to enjoy the comfort of all the river spirits. These spirits were said to give life to the body, to make it look fresh, to give life to the plants and to make them greener and sweeter to eat and stay amongst. If a swimmer was evil or met with evil spirits, the spirits of the waters swallowed him.

The success for swimmers was the respect for the tribe. But these successes never went beyond the tribe. The people claim that while in Kaatum (Khartoum), they had a swift swimmer called Kirui Chesmei, who won the admiration and applause of all his people and of the Nubians.

Fishing, as a recreational activity, was popular when the people sojourned the Nile on their way to the present settlements. However, it was an important sport for new initiates – *abafulu*.

War and Hunting Tactics

The war and hunting tactics and weaponry show was meant to assure the citizens that they had a talented and well equipped army to look after their borders, run raids, and provide required internal security.

The show attracted much interest, because in those days, soldiers were very important people. A society which did not have warriors was a dead society and it was often raided, its women and children taken away and men maimed or enslaved.

The show included display of combat tactics, weaponry, parades, and general theater. All war tools and equipment, including spears, arrows, bows, harpoons, ropes, shields, *rungus*, *simis*, knives, swords, blades, were on display.
### CHAPTER FIFTEEN: TRADITIONAL MEDICAL WORK 174-179

- **Introduction** 175
- **The Medical Code** 175
- **The Sources of Medicine** 177
- **Treatment of Medicine** 177
- **Treatment of Diseases** 178
- **Sorcery and Witchcraft** 179
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

TRADITIONAL MEDICAL WORK

Introduction

Traditional medical work was a very useful profession in the life of the Tachon people. People from the clans of Katuum, Chikha, and Matili practiced this profession. The practitioners were called herbalists, traditional doctors or Waganga or abang’osi.

The process to acquire this practice was either by formal or informal training or both. In most cases, it was passed over from father to son or mother to daughter. Sometimes it was claimed that the doctor was called to practice by the spirits or the living dead through dreams, visions, and so on. In both cases, the trainee doctor/mganga/herbalist was shown the various plants, herbs, animals, birds, etc. from which medicines for different purposes could be obtained. The trainee was shown how to obtain these drugs, process them and administer them in certain quantities. He was then treated to strengthen his heart, enhance the powers to foresee and foretell.

In almost every village, the role of the traditional doctor was very important, as he was regarded as the earthily messenger of El to provide both physical and spiritual treatment to mankind through drugs. That El made man, and because man wears and tears, he needed local service and repair, which were provided through the presence of a traditional doctor.

People practiced medicine as individuals or as a joint effort. Each practitioner was expected to have attained a mature age, although at times persons received instructions from El to practice before they were even circumcised. But they would wait until their supervisors certified them. This was made a condition because medical knowledge was the bridge between this world and the world hereafter. To fully assume responsibility, one had to observe very keenly, listen, carry tools for the teacher, practice as an intern and wait to be sent out to perform on his/her own.

To prepare the tribe for the future, there was a doctor or a sage who would discern the future, warn the tribe of impending trouble, and let the surgeon and the O’Muliuli to do their work to protect the people. This doctor was called omung’osi.

The Medical Code

Practicing medicine among the Tachon was a highly disciplined profession that required men and women of dignity and fear of El. Medicine was not to be used for any ill intentions, but for healing and prolonging life.

Medical practitioners were required to follow a certain code, which insisted, on respect for each other, loyalty to the people, and the nation and to El, confidentiality. Where fees were charged, it was to be within
affordable amounts by all members of the nation. They were also expected to discern people’s needs and attend to them in good faith with utmost care.

Therefore, the practitioners were expected to demonstrate a high sense of responsibility, trust, upright morality, and respect and value for life. Often practitioners were very friendly and provided service free of gain, because it was a moral duty.

It was also argued that practicing medicine was a gift from El and therefore it could not be traded for anything. Whoever had received this gift was to share it with the people of El or else the spirits and the living dead would destroy him/her.

The duties of a medicine man included diagnosis, treatment of medicine and application. A doctor served different categories of people and could treat various diseases.

A general practitioner had the duty to:

a) Combat witchcraft and sorcery, prevent the actions of witchdoctors and sorcerers, and if possible eliminate them completely.

b) Cure sickness, diseases and misfortunes. It was believed that persons with ill will or evil eyes in society caused diseases and sicknesses. These evil people accomplished their mission through witchcraft and magic. After treatment, the patients were protected against catching the same again. If the source was known, it was destroyed by the good medicine of the good doctor.

No medicines were dispensed without proper investigation. Before the doctor dispensed any medicines, he/she would take of it first in front of the patient. A sort of laboratory existed in which all medicines were measured, tested for quality and efficacy, dosage for healing and/or preventing, and side effects. Cats and dogs were used to determine the poison level in the medicine if the doctor had not received comprehensive instructions from the spirits and living dead. Water, milk and blood were used to ascertain the acidity and alkalinity levels, any poisons or other negative ingredients in the drug. The drugs would then be sieved of these elements before it was administered.

To collect the right mix of medicine, gods or spirits and the living dead guided the medicine man. They directed him/her to the right stems, leaves, plants, herbs, seeds, bones, roots, juices, minerals, fruits, and also advised him/her on the right way of processing to produce juices, charcoal, ashes, syrups, and so on. It was believed that the medicine man did nothing on his own but with El’s sima. The skill s/he possessed was not his own, but it was the power of the dead and of the God of life and truth.
The Sources of Medicine

As has been explained earlier, the knowledge of medicine, where they could be sourced, and their appropriate mix was the province of El and his messengers. El revealed the details of various drugs for various ailments to the doctor in sleep or when the doctor was diagnosing the complaints of his patients.

Medicines were obtained from trees, plants, grasses, and herbs. The leaves, roots, fruits, barks, blades, and sap were extracted. Most of these were burnt and their ashes dispensed as a drug. Where they were not burnt, they would be dried, soaked or cooked in water and the resulting syrup or steam administered as a drug. Sometimes the patient was advised to inhale the steam or vapour of the cooking concoction. He would therefore be asked to bend over the pot in which the concoction was cooking. He was then covered in a thick skin or cloth in order to experience the full effect of the fumes or vapour or steam.

Medicine was also obtained from animals. Different parts of some animals had some medicinal value: the bones, live and dead insects, feathers, the liver, blood or even plain meat. Sometimes the patient was asked to wear the skin of a certain animal to prevent or cure a certain disease, like small pox, rheumatism.

Minerals extracted from water, rock, were also believed to have some medicinal value, either when dispensed or kept in a bottle and buried on the compound of the patient or the witch.

The doctor went to collect medicine during the evening, on days with warm clear skies. This was the time when the spirits and the living dead were free to accompany him/her. Medicines were never to be collected when it rained or when the day was gloomy. However, the doctor observed certain rules:

1. He went alone or with his pupil.
2. He was never to meet a member of the female species on the way. If he did, the trip had to be cancelled.
3. He was not to greet anyone on the way.
4. If the medicine was to be collected in the morning:
   a) The collector was prohibited from having intercourse or sleeping with a member of the opposite sex.
   b) The collector should leave before dawn, and before washing the face or bathing.
5. The medicine must be picked with the right hand.
6. Before picking or placing his hand on the medicine, he was to pray to El for proper guidance and strength, because medicine was divine.

Treatment of Medicine

Herbs, leaves, roots, barks grasses, and similar drugs were kept in the dried state, or they were burnt into ashes or powder or charcoal and stored
in a warm place. They were protected from contamination by insects. Any ingredient that was transformed into water or syrup was to be consumed within seven days to avoid it going bad. Liquid medicines meant for more days were treated in honey.

Blood, sap from trees and insects, animal meat was taken fresh. If it was to be administered in powder form, it was dried either in the sun or on the fire and then ground into powder and stored in a warm place.

All medicines were kept in the house where the doctor saw and attended to his patients. This was a special house protected by the spirits and the living dead. It has been alleged that people who sneaked into these houses with bad intentions and in the absence of the doctor met with death or other misfortunes.

Treatment of Diseases

The doctors always diagnosed the disease before prescribing or administering any drugs. Fresh herbs, barks and roots were to be boiled in soup and drunk to keep the stomach and the blood in a good healthy condition. Such drugs may also be mixed with honey. Drugs derived from herbs, barks, leaves and sap, in the appropriate mix, were also used in treating diseases such as teething; stomachache; bladder ailments; sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT ailments; pregnancy problems; swellings of different types, and so on.

Apart from applying either of the herbal drugs, the doctor would also apply massage, needles, and thorns, make some incisions with a blade, jump over the patient, or make the patient run around the house specified times before the final application of herbs was made.

For broken limbs or swollen spots, warm or moist wood was used. In addition, massage was applied using animal fat mixed with some specific herbs.

The doctor also, according to the type of the disease, restricted the patient to: - certain types of food, company of people, specific types of weather, or drink water from a specific well until the disease was cured.

Sometimes the patient was asked to sacrifice a chicken or goat, and observe some taboos in order to be assured of the cure.

The doctor usually gave much time and personal attention to the patient. This enabled the doctor to understand the patient more and also allows the patient to relax and be free with the doctor. This provided the required psychological atmosphere for effective treatment. For the Tachon believed that before you entered the mind of the patient, it was not possible to provide effective diagnosis and treatment.
Sorcery and Witchcraft

Among the Tachon, sorcery and witchcraft were unheard of until they met and started intermarrying with the Bagisu, Banyala and Bukusu, around about the 17th century ACE. The women who married into the Tachon society were alleged to have come with sorcery and witchcraft.

They came with snakes, evil magic, and a habit of inflicting injury to other members of society by use of magic. This behaviour grew and became part of the society, interfering with the religion, culture and believes of the people. It polluted the traditional medical practice, and left it dominated with persons who did not subscribe to the code of conduct, as established.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN: CLOTHING AND ADORNMENT 180-182

Introduction 181
The Concept of Dress 181
Hair Styles 182
War Attire 182
Chapter Sixteen  
CLOTHING AND ADORNMENT  

Introduction  
The Tachon took the pride in wearing apparel as one of their most basic norms. They denounced nakedness and never allowed public exposure unless the activities at the time demanded such. There were some cultural festivities that required some limited exposure. These included the time of circumcision and at baptism. Sometimes, wrestling allowed the competitors to discard clothing if they found it cumbersome.  

Dress was designed according to age and status in the family and/or society. The same applied to hair dressing, and the selection and use of war attire.  

The Concept of Dress  
Clothes were religious and were meant to protect all the sacred parts of the body. For men, these parts included the shoulders, and the lower rear and front. For women, this included the breasts, the lower rear and the front.  

The elders naturally dressed in a very elaborate sort of cloth. The difference between an elder’s dress and that of the ordinary members of society lay in the insignia, such as the head gear made from the skin of the mountain monkey, ekutus. He also wore a hand band called lichabe, usually made from elephant tusks, round or circular in shape, just like the bangles. He also had injabaasi also extracted from the elephant tusk and rectangular in shape, and finally a cooper ring omukasa. He had a royal stick made from the rhino horn called indabuusi. The main body cover was an animal skin called likubuuli and held a flywhisk and had the tail of indibisi hanging by his side from a knot in the waist.  

The elders also used a hut made out of palm leaves, ostrich feathers and some wild fibres. On their legs, they wore beaded leather sandals, and as ear rings they had ofusakwa which were different from those of their subjects by colour and the routine of maintenance.  

Old men used likutu as their main dress. This dress was shorter and smoother than the likubuuli. Their headdress comprised of a hat of white feathers woven together with some strong grasses, specially selected. They carried a white or black flywhisk, from a cow/bull, and a walking stick. On their arms, they wore esitili and omukasa.  

Any person who wore omukasa was not allowed to eat or drink from the same plate or pot, or share anything else like meat, with an elder, because this would mean equating himself to the elder. In worse circumstances, through unknown powers one of them would die.
Young men wore a skin dress called *ol’wari* with *esisiembe* hanging at the back. Boys from affluent families had coloured beads dotting their dress. They also had *esitiili* on their arm. On their head, they wore a headband, which also kept their hair in order, and on the forehead hung glittering beads *esiuuma sia ndole* (bead of Ndole).

**Hair Styles**

There were two basic hairstyles among women, *omuchuru* and *esibweche*. In the *omuchuru* style, the hair grew long and was properly kept and rolled into a ball at the back of the head. In *esibweche*, the hair was dyed in ochre, a red dye obtained from the bark of a tree. The ochre was used in straightening the hair and making it easy to plait lines and to string. Well-done hair was left hanging on the shoulders. Alternatively, instead of stringing, beads were used by affluent families, to keep the hair straight and dangling to the shoulders.

The women cleaned and enriched their hair using animal fat and other plant oils. The young men left their hair to grow long into *amabala*. They used hard-long wooden combs to keep their hair straight. Animal fat and ochre, *omutoma* were used to dress the hair.

Legend informs that at one time, one male member of society let his grow until it reached the ankles. This man was known as El *Nekhen*, son of *Keria*, the grandson of *Kapchikhen*. Long hair was beauty, and was very attractive during the *singorio*, the traditional dance accompanied by the air dance, where both men and women jumped high into the air.

Nobody was forced to make his/her hair. However, hair was beauty, love and life. Touching someone else’s hair without permission was taboo and punishable by law, and the fine was a goat or a heifer.

**War Attire**

The men had *jinjiros (ofukhuli)* and *munjiti* on their legs. They wore hats made of monkey skin and plumes of ostrich feathers called *chikutwa*. Iron coverings called armour, clothes called amananing and leather sandals, protected them. In addition, they had leopard skins or coloured skin dress with a guinea fowl camouflage. The camouflage dress helped them to play tricks on their enemies and make lightening disappearances and surprise attacks on battlefields.
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: TIME, ACTIVITIES AND NUMERALS 183-186

Introduction 184
Recording of Time and Its Activities 184
Recording and Counting Of Numerals 185
Chapter Seventeen

RECORDING TIME, ITS ACTIVITIES AND NUMERALS

Introduction

Recording and storage of knowledge, events, time and numerals was central to the life, beliefs and practices of the Tachon people. Storage of information and events was basically oral. Recording of numerals and counting was done with a string, sticks and stones; fingers and other body parts. Knowledge was passed on from generation to generation through tales, secret societies, national ceremonies and through debates at evening fires and beer parties. Writing seems to have been foreign to this community. However, hand signs and knotting of sticks in different formats reveal specific numerals from one to one thousand.

Recording of Time and Its Activities

Among the Tachon, time does not come singularly, it comes with events and activities – it is a composition of events and activities that have occurred, are occurring or have now and yet to occur. It is a three dimensional phenomenon: a reflection of the past, a representation of the present, and a mirror of the future.

Time among the Tachon nationals served the same purpose and was interpreted as though it was a religious incident, and indeed it was, for it regulated life in sequence with the natural occurrences dictated by El Sayon. It is explained to underlie and influence the life and attitudes of the people. Time was seen and recognized for a concrete and specific purpose or phenomenon - It is created or produced through events and actions, and was significant and meaningful to every member of the community, especially age-sets, because every bit of it has its specific demands.

The passing of the Tachon year was calculated based on the activities that took place. For farmers, this meant clearing, burning, ploughing, planting, cultivation, watching crops, eating amacheko and/or Ovuyaya, sweet crop, harvesting, the annual sacrifice and washing the hoes (representing the months of November, December, January, February, March, April, May-June, July, August, September and October respectively). For the herds boys, time meant discovering new grazing fields and watering points, eliminating dangerous animals and parasites, bringing the animals for grazing, and finding new grazing fields and watering sites. To the hunters and gatherers, it meant finding new hunting fields, understanding the roster of animal movements, preparing nets and other traps like trenches, training dogs, sharpening the weapons, and invading the fields. This was the routine, all year round, and this routine was occasionally accompanied by wars and conflicts with neighbors over claims on these lands.
Seasons of the year were characterized by the direction of wind flow, shedding of leaves and flowers, and movement of wild animals to new grazing fields.

Daily recording was based on the sun and activities that took place. The table below summarizes some of these activities and related timing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Western Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Echulichuli</td>
<td>The time when birds begin singing</td>
<td>4:00-6:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabwibwi</td>
<td>Time when the sun begins (rises) from the east</td>
<td>6:00-7:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwisamusia</td>
<td>The time animals leave the kraal for grazing</td>
<td>8:00-10:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwihangilwa</td>
<td>When the sun is on top of the head</td>
<td>12:00 Noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elabukabuka</td>
<td>The setting of the sun</td>
<td>6:00-7:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chifusi</td>
<td>The time when the foxes and wild dogs come out of their caves</td>
<td>6:00-8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wechinjofu</td>
<td>Nightfall</td>
<td>8:00-Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ching’otelang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’chimbwa chibilitilanga</td>
<td>Midnight</td>
<td>Midnight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 4: Time and Events

The day was also explained in terms of the meals taken. For instance, if someone said he was coming in at sieingosia or sieichuli, he meant during time for breakfast; siemwisamusia meant during the ten o’clock meal; siemwihangilwe the mid-day meals; and siechifusi during the evening meal.

Recording and Counting Of Numerals

Numbers were important in the lives of the people. Every thing was known in figures: children, wives, huts, livestock, gods, soldiers, gardens, and hives. The numeral one was known by raising the index figure or a stick. The stick would be held upright. Two was two fingers or a stick held horizontal. Three was three fingers or two sticks of the same length formed into a T. The table below shows how sticks [ ] and string () were used to display different numerals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 5: The Tachon Numerals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eighteen</td>
<td>Family Concept and Principles</td>
<td>188-194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Nineteen</td>
<td>Courting, Marriage and Procreation</td>
<td>195-204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty</td>
<td>The Place of Men, Women and Children in Society</td>
<td>205-209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty-One</td>
<td>Generation Age Groups and Sets</td>
<td>210-213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twenty-Two</td>
<td>Family Relationships: Kinship And Clanship</td>
<td>214-236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: FAMILY CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES  188 - 194

The Family Concept 189

General Family Principles 190

- The Blood Principle 190
- The Birth Principle 190
- The Continuity Principle 191
- The Inheritance Principle 191
- The Adoption Principle 192
- The Mass Family Principle 192
- The Subjective Principle 192
- Respect 192
- Family By Agreement 192
- Family By Association 193
Chapter Eighteen

FAMILY CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

The Family Concept

A Tachon family was made up of two units: the immediate family called the household, and the larger family, which included other members.

The larger family was made up of a man and his wife (ves), his children and the unborn that are still in the loins of the living, uncles, aunts, brothers, his parents and grandparents, and other immediate relatives. The sons and daughters of his brother(s) or sister(s) were his own children.

Sometimes a sister or a brother got children outside marriage. On marriage these children would probably not be accepted by the new partnership. They were therefore accepted into the family of her/his parents as their own children, because they were of same stock and blood. Children were innocent creatures who belonged to the universal race. They had no single home, family nor household. They could therefore not be discriminated. Further, they were accepted into the family because of the future they carried. Female children signified wealth, while the males brought wealth and security.

The family also included the dead members of society, the living dead or ancestors. These people were present at all meals and family activities. In this regard, the living dead received food offerings and libation as tokens of fellowship, respect, hospitality and communion; otherwise they propelled misfortune among the living and the members of the family.

The household was the smallest unit of a family and was made up of the man, his wife, children and parents. Sometimes it also included the grandparents. Each household had only one wife. If the man had many wives he had many households. This also meant he had many huts, houses or homes. Often, a household became a village, and then a clan.

A man who begot only daughters and no sons lost his family identity, and would be forgotten after death, as he could only be remembered in the households of his daughters. If he was remembered outside his family and daughters, then he was a good warrior, wrestler, hunter, dancer, singer, pastoralist or farmer. Often, he was encouraged to marry more wives to bear him sons. He would therefore marry as many women as he could feed and manage.

A family would grow for as long as the man was able to feed them, protect them and love his wives. The head of the family was always the man called husband and then father. He was the head by virtue of his status in society, sex, and the command of the tribe and as commanded by the creator and founder of man.
General Family Principles

A family was built around 10 generally accepted family principles. These included the principles of blood, birth, continuity, inheritance, adoption, mass, subjective, respect, agreement and association.

The Blood Principle

A family was reckoned through blood and betrothal. Blood and betrothal system defined the genealogical ties, particularly in establishing relationship between individuals. The blood principle, therefore, defined social relationships between people, and provided a clear demarcation between families.

One important element of this principle is that members of the same family could not marry one another. In fact the first thing members of the Tachon community did when they met was to try to know each other starting with the "house", yinda each one of them belonged. So that if they shared same blood, they were members of the same family order required. From then on, they would refer to each other by the family terms of brother, sister, uncle, nephew, aunt, mother, niece and so on.

This principle embodied all the offspring known and unknown to the immediate family who shared the genealogy or the bloodline. This, therefore, included children born in and outside marriage traceable by blood. It was because of this reason that children of unmarried daughters were taken, socialized and incorporated into the family as legal members of her father’s family. Otherwise, they were taken and incorporated into her husband’s family as his legal children.

The same principle was applied in tracing any children born to a Tachon male from different women who were not married to him in order that such children would be brought home to him and initiated into the family and included in his will before he died. If they were not reached before he died, he could not be buried in their absence. In this case, their participation in sharing his property was the responsibility of the elders.

The Birth Principle

A Tachon was a member of a family by birth and after having gone through all the religious ceremonies associated with a Tachon birth. It embodied all sons and daughters of a Tachon nationality, whether born within or outside the Tachon country.

The principle also included all other people within the Tachon country who decided to use a Tachon mid-wife at birth, and caring for the baby and the mother. This included practicing all Tachon rituals at birth, including first washing of the baby and mother, exposition to the privacy of the mother, naming and sharing the foods eaten during childbirth.
The Continuity Principle

The Tachon believed in the family that evolved and grew, both laterally and vertically in every direction. Laterally, each member of the family was a father or mother, a brother or a sister, grandfather or grandmother, uncle or aunt, a nephew or niece, or an in-law, and everybody else as they came. The vertical branch of the family incorporated the living dead and the yet to be born. These two provided the determinant of continuity – That if no one died no one was born.

The vertical family relationship defined the genealogical strength, the depth of the family, how deep rooted and firm the family was, and the potential available for preserving the family identity. The lateral family, on the other hand, defined the capacity of the family to replicate, reproduce, and carry on the image of the departed.

A family that could not count the number of the departed, the living, and show potential for future procreation, was not worth its salt. If such a family existed, it was observed into another wider family with a known genealogy so that it would evolve an identity and continue procreation.

This principle helped to pass down knowledge from generation to generation to preserve the history, literature, culture and the genealogy of the family.

The Inheritance Principle

When the head of a family, the father, died, his brother or eldest son took over the responsibility and kept the family growing in the direction the previous head would have wished and in the interest of the clan.

A son was not allowed to have children or canal knowledge with his mother or stepmothers. Therefore, to continue with child bearing, the widow(s) would be allowed by the clan to choose from the brothers of her late husband the one who could look after her as though he was her husband. With him, procreation continued, and the property the deceased left for his household was protected until his children came of age and shared it. The new member of the household was not allowed to misuse her or squander the property left by the deceased. However, he was allowed with the new wife to make more property and add to the wealth of the family.

If a young wife died, instead, after only three or four births, her younger sister was sent by her parents to come and look after the children left by her sister. If her brother-in-law found her good enough to replace her dead sister, he proposed and brought her to his house to continue procreation and keep the family discipline the way her sister would have done. The children left by her sister were her legal children, and she assumed full responsibility for their growth, education, initiation and marriage.
The Adoption Principle

This principle provided guidelines on how destitutes of war, natural disasters, orphans and refugees could be incorporated into the Tachon family often, during wars and raids, destitutes, women and children were captured and brought back home. Sometimes, where the war did not involve the Tachon families, neighbouring tribes sought refuge and later on asked to be incorporated as members of the tribe of specific Tachon families. In this respect, they could not be rejected, but were allowed to go through the normal rituals and ceremonies to initiate them into the respective families as though they were new born.

Some other people came as labourers, shepherds, or looking for food, and decided that they did not want to go back to their families and also were willing to change their identity. In this respect, they were baptized into respective families that were willing to adopt them.

The Mass Family Principle

This principle looked at the family from the wider concept of the clan, and then the tribe. All members of the family belonged to the wider family of the tribe. No single member of the family could claim the family as though it was personal property.

Further, the principle allowed the community to absorb a whole family or clan from the external community or from other tribes, provided that the new members accepted to go through the rituals and initiation related to a new member of the family.

The Subjective Principle

Each family had a head, the father, who drew respect and loyalty from his subjects, the family members. Through their father, the head of the family, they received El’s blessings and were assured of continuity in life. They were therefore bound to their family norms, beliefs and practices, which defined their identity.

The Respect Principle

By respect and patience, a family lived to see many moons and harvests. Respect was time, and if one lost respect, he lost his family and lost time. Therefore, he would not be counted in the genealogy of his family.

The Family by Agreement

This principle stated that all those people initiated into the tribe by agreement, whether after war, raids, or their own volition, would with effect become members of the family and hence the tribe. Sometimes members initiated into the family would be allowed to practice their own religion, provided it did not prove negative to the life of the Tachon family.
The Family by Association

Some people become members of a Tachon family or raised one by association. In this respect, this principle protected them.

This principle stated that all persons who entered into the Tachon family through association or socialization and learning, and later chose to intermarry and opted to stay and practice the religion, culture, beliefs and practices of their hosts, automatically became members of the family and were free to participate in all the activities of the tribe.

This class of people was also free to choose whether they wanted to be adopted into an existing family or raise their own. This principle was responsible for raising several clans among the Tachon people.
CHAPTER NINETEEN: COURTING, MARRIAGE AND PROCREATION 194 - 204

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Concept</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wedding</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building the Family</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation and Divorce</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex in Marriage and Procreation</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Nineteen

COURTING, MARRIAGE AND PROCREATION

Introduction

The Tachon regarded marriage as the integration of two souls into one, something that only happened with the blessings and activity of El through his messengers. They therefore, accepted marriage as an act of El. Marriage, therefore was a sacred and holy institution.

Initially, marriage was restricted to members of the tribe only. But as the community expanded, through raids and in wars bringing home children and women as loot from other tribes, marriage partnership went beyond the national borders. In this respect, the religion, beliefs and practices of an external community or tribe into the Tachon family was not an individual affair and was not a mere introduction of a new member into the society, but an acceptance of new gods and the living dead into the community, and the merging of two cultures. If the ancestors of the two communities did not agree, then the marriage did not exist and it was never consummated.

To merge the two cultures and soothe the ancestors, the tribe decided to solemnize the marriage by welcoming the other community, and therefore receiving the woman, who they called the woman of the tribe or the wife of the tribe.

A woman was introduced into a new family as a wife in a number of ways: - Wedding esiselelo, eloping okwitikhilisia, forced okhusukuma or okhubakha, and child betrothal okhutila.

The Concept

Courting, marriage and procreation are one, a trinity. There was no courting if marriage would not take place. No courting would be started if the wise on both sides knew that the man or woman would not be able to produce life. There was no marriage was incomplete.

Courting, marriage and procreation were a religious obligation to continue the life started by El spiritually, through Ne‘Khebit and passed down biologically through Toli and Temwa. Toli and Temwa started the biological process of life when they were reproduced in their children who evolved into the present Tachon people. However, it must be pointed out here that courting, marriage and procreation was not allowed between close relatives because this would kill the family. Therefore, this could only be allowed outside the clan. Neither the boy nor his parents could select a marriage partner from closest relatives, same clan, door or bloodline or from his mother’s line. If this happened the girl would be from the fifth generation.

As we had observed earlier, the secret society prepared and introduced a Tachon youth to matters of sex, marriage, procreation, and family life.
There were two ways of selecting or choosing a marriage partner. The first one was through the parents. This could happen at three levels: before the children were born, in early childhood or before or after initiation. Where the parents decided they were to find a marriage partner for their child, son or daughter, the process was as follows:

**Before The Children Were Born**

Sometimes parents chose marriage partners for their children before they were born. Parents met and discussed the future of their families at beer parties or some homestead and decided that family “A” had a daughter that could marry the son from family “B”. This usually happened when both families were newly weds or expecting children. It could also happen where the families had had a long history of association and they want to solidify these relationships.

When the children were born and the expectations came right, the parents exchanged gifts. They then brought up the children through initiation, and the boy following the right channels and norms made formal proposal for marriage. No one else would claim or ask the boy into marriage because they were already promised in marriage to each other.

The ritual and rites that followed the birth of a child, prepared it religiously for courting, marriage and procreation. The final rituals and rites that placed a person fully into manhood or womanhood came immediately during and after circumcision. These rites, as we have seen elsewhere, transformed the person religiously and socially into full manhood or womanhood with all its secrets, privileges, rights, expectations and responsibilities.

**Children Have Been Born and Are Still Young**

Where one family had a young boy they went to another family where there was a young girl or an expectant mother and put in a solemn application that the young girl or the yet to be born baby, if a girl, would marry their son when they grew up.

**The Children Are Now Young Men About To Undergo Initiation or Have Finished Initiation**

The parents of the young man approached the parents of the young girl and initiated marriage proposals and negotiations. However, in this respect, the young were given a free hand to accept or reject the initiative. If this happened, the negotiations would stop.

The second method of betrothal was where the young had the freedom of choice. In this, the young man had three options:
Option 1: The Son Was Given a Free Hand to Identify His Girl

He would identify a young girl who he had observed carefully at the various recreational meetings, in the hunting fields as she collected firewood, as he went to water the animals, and as she collected water from the well. He would propose her to his parents. If his parents agreed, they would take the proposal to the parents of the girl, so marriage negotiations would start.

Option 2: A Girl from a Different Clan

Where a young boy developed a liking for a young girl of another clan, he would wait until she went to prepare land for the next crop. Early one morning he would take his machete or blade and join her on the farm. Using a stone, he would throw it as far into the uncultivated portion as possible. He would then begin slashing towards the point where the stone fell. If the girl, also fancied the boy she would dig very hard to complete the entire slashed portion. If she did not like him, she wouldn’t attempt to dig at all.

All the time they were performing their distinct roles, they would not talk to each other. At the end of the day, they would go to their different homes. The boy would say to his parents where he had been and propose to them that they visit the girl’s parents and initiate marriage negotiations. If this proposal was accepted, the two worked together on that piece of land, as the girl planted the crop and the boy fenced. As she cultivated the crop, he prepared a granary for the crop on her parent’s compound. She harvested and stored the crop in the granary. She then brewed beer, and the parents of the boy were invited to the beer party where they discussed betrothal arrangements, and plans for the wedding.

Option 3: This Took Place Before And During Initiation.

Where two young people developed an interest in each other, they waited until the initiation day when the young man made a proposal to the young girl. He initiated the move by standing by her during her initiation, holding her and bringing her clothes to wear immediately after the initiation. This move, if accepted by the girl was solemnized by the elders, and marriage arrangements were made for them to wed after all the rituals that go with the transition from puberty to full man/womanhood.

No courting or marriage was undertaken unless both parents had full reports about the other family’s history. This included their family genealogy, structure, behaviour, and diseases, deaths in the family tree and their causes, any extra-ordinary incidence. This information was useful in making decisions as to a relationship, which united the two families, and brought their ancestors together. A relationship, which only El or the religious commitment of the national could make fruitful.
The Wedding

There were three forms of weddings, which were closely related to the type of courting that had been going on. Whichever form the families accepted, the following were the basic requirements:

- **The Young Man** was expected to be circumcised, have undergone all rituals of birth and initiation, have at one time or other participated in or led a group of age mates or others in a village or cattle raid, have his own animals that would give milk, blood and meat to his wife and children, a skillful hunter, able to bring home game meat and blood to feed his family, and be able to defend himself and his family against enemies and wild animals. He was also expected to demonstrate good and full judgment in matters of the family, able to run an olukoba. It was also extremely important that he was to be healthy and wealthy enough to manage a family.

- **The Girl**, on her part, was expected to be circumcised, have maintained her virginity and good morals, be hardworking, have at least one granary of millet or sorghum, have hands that made clean milk and handled many gourds, have a good body structure and a full chest.

When both families were satisfied about these details, they proceeded to the *esiselelo*, wedding stage. Esiselelo was the most superior wedding, which was for the affluent and for those with means to give their children a rich send-off into a new life of procreation. The wedding took at most five weeks.

Wedding preparations started immediately the girl’s parents gave a “Yes”. The parents of the young man proceeded with the preparation of a beer called *ching’anana*. This beer was prepared before the harvest of the crop sown by their son and his girl friend on her fields. Where the proposal was made at initiation, the brewing started as soon as the girl had gone through baptism and final secret society teachings. When the beer was ready, the young lady’s parents were invited to dowry discussions.

At the dowry discussions, only the men took ching’anana. Each man had his own siphon which he inserted in the beer pot and started sucking. When the discussions opened, all the siphons were removed from the pots. The discussions centered on the gifts the boy’s relations were willing to give the girl’s relatives. The gifts would be given in the form of livestock, grains, honey and animal fat.

At the discussions, small short sticks close to six inches were used. The parents of the bride presented the boy’s parents with the number of sticks equivalent to the number of animals they wished to receive. If the groom’s relations thought that what they were asking for was too much, they made a counter offer. This game continued until a deal was struck. They then resumed drinking; food was served consisting of sorghum, millet cake, milk and meat.
After feasting, the guests were shown the animals. These would be at least 36 cows and two goats. Today it is twelve cows and two goats. After seeing the animals, they were loaded with grains, animal fat and honey, which they carried home. These animals were not taken away until two or three days before the wedding, when they were brought by young men from the grooms side, who in turn received chicken and fermented beer to take back with them. This sealed the wedding proposal, so both parties proceeded to prepare the wedding beer, with the bride’s parents using the millet and sorghum harvested from the fields prepared and cultivated by the groom and the bride.

The bride went around the village inviting relatives and friends to her wedding. She wore a special garment meant for this purpose, and carried a walking stick of the reed family called ole’lindu or Esosian, meaning “I am to die and be born in another family, come and witness my departure.” The groom also invited relatives and friends to his wedding.

The wedding was celebrated separately, and the bride and the groom did not meet on the first day of the wedding. They stayed away with their tutors to go through their final tutorials on family life and marriage rituals. Late in the evening, the bride was prepared to visit the groom’s home. Her paternal aunt anointed her with ghee. Her brother took the ole’lindu and caned her to send her off. However, before she left, if circumcised, she was honoured with a special belt adorned with beads and cowry shells called yisimbi. If uncircumcised, she received a string belt called esisia. At the gate to their homestead, she was given the seeds of esihuna, which reminded her that she was no longer a member of her family. Esihuna was used as a gate. The seeds were to symbolize the destruction of the gate and therefore the homestead. When a homestead was destroyed, people moved away to a new location, as she was to do. She left accompanied by her brother, who still carried the ole’lindu, and her male and female age mates.

On arrival at the groom’s place, she was not allowed to meet him. She was whisked straight to the groom’s brother’s house, which was prepared for her. She and her company of girls, who served as her aides, were given a hide on which they sat all night long without any food. Instead they were teased and roughed up using sticks and leaves called emikhambi. The leaves are rough and spark painful irritation on the skin. The aides were the main targets of this abuse to test their commitment to their ‘sister’ and how much protection they were willing to put up. In the morning, the female aides went to the kraal of the groom and removed all the dung, then went to the well and removed all the dung, then went to the well and brought water for domestic use. The male aides to the bride cleared the compound and prepared a compost pit. The groom’s aides sang in praise of their son and tribe, and revealed why the new member to the family was necessary. They sung and danced to a popular rhythm:

- We have brought her
- We have brought her to us
- To bear forth children to add to the family
- To add to the family and the nation
To make it rich, great and large
She will give forth sons
Great sons of the nation
To defend the nation and her people
To make the nation feared and respected
Sons to strengthen our nation
To make it strong still
Strong, strong it will be!

When the bride’s aides finished the chores, they received a live chicken, and were thereafter served with food. When they finished eating, they were showered with rings and bangles of different sizes and value. They also received other presents to demonstrate how happy the groom and his family were for their successfully bringing the bride and showing her what she would be doing most of her life with the groom.

In the evening of the second day of the wedding, the bride’s relatives called abakomi (raiders), armed with spears, axes, pangas, swords, axes and chinjiroos, invaded the home of the groom, threatening to take away their daughter. The aides and agemates of the groom resisted them. The two had a mockery fight as they chased around, the abakomi looking for the house in which their daughter was hidden, and the groom’s aides trying to stop them. When the abakomi found the house, they humbled themselves and shouted elalein – are we welcome here? They entered as peaceful guests, but while in the house they grabbed their daughter and forced her out of the house. They danced around her threatening to kill any one who came near them. They vanished as suddenly into the darkness as they had come, leaving behind the bride with her aides.

On the morning of the third day of the wedding, the abakomi returned, dancing and shouting slogans. They consisted of young warriors and age mates of the bride. A mockery battle was again staged in which they were chased away by the groom’s family aides and warriors. After they left, the bride was taken to the aunt of the groom who anointed her into the family. The ceremony was conducted while they stood on an animal skin. Her two bridesmaids assisted the bride.

The anointment included an iron ring being put on the head of the bride, which she held in position with her left hand. She was smeared with ghee mixed with simsim, a colourful rich skin was tied around her waist, and she had a head skin, which was later given to one of her maids. Then one of her brothers-in-law caned her with ole’lindu forcing her to scamper back to her parents with her aides. On arriving at her parent’s home she slept in the cattle shed because her shelter was destroyed when she left to get married. In the shed, the head cloth (skin) was untied, the iron ring removed, and the waist dress taken away. The sesame seeds and ghee were washed off her. She was served with milk and left with one of the maids to take care of her.
After three weeks, her parents conducted a thanksgiving ceremony to bless the skins, iron ring and have the sesame seeds and ghee removed from her body. A bull was slaughtered and most of the meat was dried and given to her to take to her new home. She left two days after the thanksgiving to join her new family. She was escorted by four of her maids who helped her carry the meat and other presents.

When they reached the groom’s home, they took all the presents to his mother’s house. The maids were given a cottage to stay in as she joined her new husband. She stayed for two days with her husband, after which she went back to her parents carrying the clothes they used with her husband for the first time as husband and wife. On this trip she was escorted by one of her sisters-in-law. This gesture revealed that she was accepted, had been found pure and deserved all the honour. The maids would have gone in advance to announce the goods news that their sister was a virgin and had performed her initial task well.

Her parents slaughtered and dried chicken, prepared sorghum and millet flour, made pots, cooking and water containers, and collected more food stuffs for her. Her helpers were called to carry these things to her home. As soon as they arrived at her home, they deposited these goods in an appointed place and left, leaving behind one helper to continue assisting her sister. This helper stayed on for as long as she was able.

Another journey was made by the bride to her parents to collect a hoe, cooking stick, water pot, cooking pot, milk gourd and its cleaning stick, and other items for her to start her own house. If she had been hard working while she stayed with her parents, she was given a full granary of grains called ofunywa. They were carried on bolls and rings of grass and banana fibres or leaves. These were later sent back to her parents to await the bearing of the first-born. Then the bolls and rings would be burnt. If the bolls and rings were made of skin or iron with beads, the beads were removed, threaded and the first-born child honoured to wear them around the waist.

When she died, the hoe was returned to her parents or her guardian. If at the time of her death the hoe was no longer in existence, a heifer and a granary of sorghum or millet was given instead.

The second form of wedding okwitikhilisiana did not have the many ceremonies as witnessed above. It was a quiet private marriage. The key players in this type of wedding were the intermediaries, wamwanda. The wedding took one day and the two were married. The dowry discussions took place after the marriage, and the union was solemnized.

The third form of wedding was a form of forced marriage okhusukuma, which came in three ways:

Option One: Parents vs. Daughter

In this case, the parents forced their daughters into marriage because of either of the following:
a) She had conceived out of wedlock. In this case, she could be given to any man looking for a wife and ready to pay dowry. In most cases, she was made second or third wife unless she was marrying an impotent man.

b) She was rude to her parents and other members of the society, and no one came forward to propose.

c) She had come of age, was a good girl, but no one came forward to propose.

In all these cases, the daughters were given away as second or subsequent wives. However, they went through all rituals celebrating their marriages. Dowry discussions were held and their unions solemnized.

Option Two: Parents Marrying Wealth

In some cases, parents looked for quick ways of enriching themselves and used daughters as a source of wealth. They therefore enticed rich men in society to accept their daughters as wives. They forced their daughters to accept these men as their husbands.

At certain times, when a daughter married to a very wealthy person died, her sister was forced to take over as the new wife, and the wealthy man paid more price.

Option Three: The Boy and Girl Eloping

This was the most delicate type of marriage amongst the community. It was a marriage in which a boy who felt his parents were very poor and few people in the next village loved him, organized with his friends to take a girl by force from a very wealthy and famous family, which had quarrels with his own. Where such marriages were consummated they brought harmony between groups, and helped in the distribution of wealth across classes.

Building the Family

A family was strengthened and expanded through expanded households, marrying more wives and bearing many children. Many children meant security, immortality and power. The more wives and children one had, the more he contributed to the existence of society, to social responsibility and justice, and to the state machinery.

In families with many wives, prostitution, especially on the part of the husband, was reduced or eliminated completely because he would remain within the cycle of his women.

Separation and Divorce

Among the Tachon, divorce and separation were unknown entities. The wife belonged to the family, clan and tribe and not to one individual, the husband. Further, marriage was a religious process, which could not be discontinued by man single handedly. However, temporary separations
between husband and wife were common because of quarrels between husband and wife, or between wife and the relatives of the husband.

**Sex in Marriage and Procreation**

Sex, marriage and procreation had religious, social and biological meaning in the Tachon community. It spoke of time and life, and it spelt out discipline in society. In sex were peace and quiet, which allowed the body to relax and the mind to search the truth.

As a religious rite, it was not to be performed when a woman was in her monthly periods, expecting or nursing a baby. During this period, the woman underwent seclusion and communicated with the living dead and the El the Almighty. When she was nursing a baby, she was not allowed to have sex because this would adulterate the milk the baby was taking, making it impure.

Sex also united the body and the mind, which met here and sailed in the world hereafter, of which only El knew its dimensions.
CHAPTER TWENTY: THE PLACE OF MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN IN SOCIETY 205 - 209

Introduction 205
The Men 205
The Women 208
The Girls 209
Chapter Twenty

THE PLACE OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SOCIETY

Introduction

Like the family, the Tachon nation was build around men and women. These men and women were given the duties and responsibilities to manage the resources of the world, run the environment and continue with procreation by El.

The Tachon believed, and still believe that neither a house nor a nation could be build by only man, but by man and his woman. For there to be continuity El made everything in its positive and negative so that when the positive and negative interacted a chain reaction took place, generating a new product. This concept stressed the importance of co-existence between sexes, and the need to derive energy from each other for continued productive and performance management.

Man and woman were the stewards and custodians of culture, religion, beliefs and practices. This way, they had a conceptual mind that generated ideas and programs for the welfare and development of the society. Because their minds were active, they could not be penalized for thinking, having ideas and using them. To penalize them would be fraud, blasphemy and as good as asking El not to work among his people.

The Men

Among the Tachon people, the place of men in society was clearly defined. They were regarded as stewards of culture. They evolved, extended and adopted culture. They developed conceptual thinking to complete the planning, utilization and control of the resources of the nation. They were the tools and the basic foundation of norms and attitudes in the community. They had rights to preside over most functions of the society without prejudice or jeopardy.

The men formed the male community whose roles and responsibilities in society were defined by age. Therefore, the society had five groups within this community: old men (elders), the middle age, young men and boys, abasinde.

The Old Men (Elders)

The old men formed a class of elders from who decision makers, and the cabinet of the nation was picked. They were the eyes of the community and the administrators of the wealth of the nation. They were usually more than 50 years of age.
This class included all those regarded as old men in order of:

- Circumcision age group and generation.
- Number of homesteads one controlled and was a head of.
- Number of raids one had conducted while within the middle age group and as a warrior.
- Knowledge of his own people and the neighbouring communities.
- Number of peace missions.
- Number of children, and the general family size.

Because of their immense knowledge they managed most of the institutions of the state. It was from this group that ministers, sages, herbalists and diviners emerged from. In addition, they were responsible for setting and vetting the education curriculum of the community, advisory and counseling programs for the youth, and proposals for the growth and development of the nation. They also dealt with the expansion of the empire, building sites, grazing sites, hunting fields, and so on. They also served as the inventory of the past, the present and the future.

The structure of this group included all the old men, Council of Elders Mal'mayiet, Council of Ministers (the cabinet), and the Letia (the head of the nation).

**The Middle-Aged Men**

This was a very active population aged between 30 and 50 years. It was composed of tutors, heads of various units of the different institutions, education, military, social & cultural affairs, and food security.

From this group, leaders were identified to the council of elders when they graduated. The duties and responsibilities of this group included training of their juniors in all the trades of the nation, participation in planning the affairs of the nation, provision of research and intelligence services, survey of fields (crop, hunting and grazing), survey of new settlement sites and supervision of fort constructions. The forts were usually of between 50 metres to 300 metres in diameter.

They were the cores of the nation and everything revolved around them. They were responsible for implementing the decisions of their superiors. Together with the youth, mostly the baoyet (warriors), they defended the nation against external intrusion, and those who wanted to divide them.

The group of 30 to 50 years was the pride of the nation. Any community, which lacked this group, was weak and could not resist insurgencies.

**The Young Men (Abasiani)**

This was made up mostly of warriors and young people who were circumcised and about to get married. They were composed of all herds-boys, soldiers, hunters, raiders, and fishermen aged between 18 and 30 years.
They were responsible for maintaining watering points and saltlicks for their livestock, protecting wells, grazing and hunting fields, and protecting the nation from the enemy and competing groups. They also slashed and cleared fields for ploughing, helped in sowing and harvesting. They fenced fields, milked animals, constructed grain stores, and participated in the marriage ceremonies of their age groups. They also attended and danced at burials and after burial ceremonies of the elderly members of the nation.

They were keen students who listened and acted promptly. They were the envoys and messengers of the nation to foreign and neighbouring communities. They learnt different languages and behaviours to enable them to penetrate and fit into foreign communities either on their official envoy work or on their spying missions.

They worked very hard to graduate as baoyet. Their hard work was reflected in their envoy work, spying, raids, and protection of fields and large crop harvests at the end of the season.

They were required to be very clean and handsome. They dressed their own hair in esipala. They reported to the baoyet in all their activities. The baoyet reviewed their performances from time to time, discussed with them the findings and reported recommended actions to the elders. Performance review was seen as a way of rewarding and encouraging the young men to actively participate in the activities of the nation.

**The Boys (Abasinde)**

These are those persons who had not reached the puberty stage. They were aged between 7 and 17 years, and were often not circumcised. They followed the young men (warriors) around to herding, fishing, fields and other missions as helpers and apprentices.

During the day, they cleaned the compounds (homesteads), looked after sheep, goats and chicken, and went bird hunting. They helped in other domestic duties, which could not be undertaken by women, and they were also sent to neighbors to pass messages.

In the evenings they learnt to sing, wrestle and enact self-defense techniques. They also listened to their grandmothers and grandfathers tell stories and tales. They were also taught that they were the most important persons of the society and they were to be ready at all times to defend their nation.

Therefore, they tried very hard to learn all marshal skills and trickery. They therefore acted with majesty, and were the joy of their parents.
The Women

Like the men, women were a very important sector of the nation. They contributed to the development of culture. Therefore, the woman was expected to be of dignity, beyond reproach and behind the development of positive behaviour within the family and the society at large.

The Tachon believed that it was the supportive system of the woman that led to the creation of man. That the fact that women controlled the designs of men meant they were in effect the subordinates in creativity and therefore, their absence from society would render the process of evolution, growth and development incomplete.

The women were responsible for the effective development of the fashion and material culture. They made pots, baskets, wove mats, sewed skins, did the beadwork, were skillful at farming and brewed beer.

Like men, they were also divided into four groups according to their age and role in society: Old women, middle aged, young women, and the girls.

The Old Women

The old women were very special members of the community. They provided a point of reference on all cultural and religious activities relating to women and children. They were also the inventory of the history and social structure of the community. They held the woman and the community together. As mothers of the nation, they ensured discipline amongst their lot and across to the men folks.

Aged above 50 years, they were composed of women blessed with the power to bless, treat and counsel on matters pertaining to pregnancy, birth, nursing, motherhood, engagement, marriage and family life.

Among the old women were medicine women and diviners. This group was very critical during the period of famine, drought, war and other threats to human survival.

The old women also established and run a Women’s Court, which was responsible for reviewing all matters relating to the discipline and prosperity of women. This included secret education, their changing role in society, education and training curriculum for all categories of women in society, and finally a code of ethics for all women.
The Middle Aged Women

This is the group, which was very active in domestic chores and the organization of the family. They were the married women, active in reproduction and nursing of children and comforting the nation. They took care of and educated their young ones on the religion, culture and discipline of the society. They organized and made sure the prepared fields were cultivated, planted and harvested. They also organized others and led them in hunting for eggs, vegetables, white ants, mushrooms and amasibili.

In the homestead, they led their youth in cleaning the paddocks, fetching water, and cleaning the houses. They cooked, and brewed beer to be used on various occasions as required and stipulated by the tribe and the elders.

As trainers, they taught the young women and girls threading, basketry, cooking, brewing and dressmaking, especially ofuboya and chinyinja, and on relationships with their male counter-parts.

The Young Women

These were those girls who had past puberty, were circumcised and ripe for marriage.

They served as helpers to the middle-aged women and to those getting married, they served as maids. As helpers, they learnt all women’s duties including how to be a good mother, the relationship between a husband and wife, and how to keep a marriage and a husband happy.

They went digging and planting fields, prepared flour amakwake, fetched water and served as maids at beer parties and at important family and national celebrations (ceremonies). They remained decent, dressed their hair and prepared clothes for the warriors.

During wrestling matches or other competitions, they stayed in the dressing room to massage their favourite wrestlers, hunters, and warriors. These activities were closely monitored to ensure that they did not indulge in more than just massage.

The Girls

Girls mostly accompanied by their mothers on different escapades. They also worked with their bigger sisters while collecting firewood, fetching water, preparing flour, and so on. They also sang at parties. In the evenings they joined the older women at fireplaces to listen to the literature of the tribe.
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: GENERATION AGE GROUPS AND SETS  210-212

Introduction  210
Circumcision Calendar and Generation Age Groups  211
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

GENERATION AGE GROUPS AND SETS

Introduction

The Tachon age groups *siritwoki* were classified according to the circumcision periods. Each age group ran for twelve (12) years and had six circumcision sets. All circumcision was during even years, as already explained elsewhere. However, some times some people offered or were forced into circumcision during an odd year. If there was any circumcision during the odd year following, then this was classified as odd (pimple) *il’sikulumenya* circumcision within the circumcision set *koki* of the following year.

The Tachon believe that the first persons to be circumcised were of the *Kolongolo* of the old age group; followed by the *Kikwameti*, then *Kananach, Kenyikeu, Ll’Nyange, Il’Maina, Il’Chuma* and *Il’Sawa*.

Six age-sets made an age group. There were eight age groups in any given 96 years. This is the seventy third century and the year 6,909 since the first Tachon Nanguila was circumcised.

In any one age group there could be more than six *kokis* because of *il’sikulumenya* circumcisions and related events that happened during the period. For instance between 1912 and 1922, during the circumcision group of Kikwameti 72, there were 6 age sects distributed as follows:

- Between 1912 and 1913 there was plenty of wild meat *Il’miranda* caught through hunting and wild migration, rich in fat and flesh. The persons circumcised in 1912 became Kikwameti *Il’miranda*, and in 1913 *il’sikulumenya Il’miranda Kikwameti*. The 1912 1913 persons have been referred to as *Namiranda* meat rich in fat and flesh.

- In 1914 the First World War broke out. Into 1915 the youth were being recruited into the army to fight on the front line, to serve as home guards, *askari mpishi* (cooks), and so on. This age set was called Kikwameti *keya I*.

- 1916 to 1917 set is called *Keya II*

- 1918 to 1919 *Keya III*

- In 1920 through 1921 the British colonial government introduced identification passes (personal identification cards) for the natives to check population movements within and across the borders, assess tax potential, especially in Elgon Nyanza. The persons circumcised during this period are referred to as Kikwameti *kipande* (card).

- In 1922 to 1923 present Western Kenya saw the invasion by rats, mices and other rodents allegedly brought in through the railway line from
of power and inspiration among the people. Therefore the persons circumcised during this period were named Kikwameti sia machungu.

Age groups were renowned for their militant, maiden and political achievements. They were a source of power and inspiration among the people of the same group, and provided a sense of unity, responsibility and belonging as siritwoki and families, yinda or yinju. Members of the same age group were equal rika and stood for each other and formed a “family” of their own.

Circumcision Calendar and Generation Age Groups

The table below summarises the circumcision calendar and generation age groups since 3,957 Before Common Era (BCE) to 2007 After Common Era (ACE). The schedule shows when each age group occurred over the last 63 centuries.

Table 1: Circumcision Calendar and Generation Age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kolongo</th>
<th>Kikwameti</th>
<th>Kananach</th>
<th>Kenyikeu</th>
<th>L’Nyange</th>
<th>II’Maina</th>
<th>II’Chuma</th>
<th>II’Sawa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE 2007-1996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815-1804</td>
<td>1827-1816</td>
<td>1839-1828</td>
<td>1851-1840</td>
<td>1863-1852</td>
<td>1875-1864</td>
<td>1887-1876</td>
<td>1899-1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1719-1708</td>
<td>1731-1720</td>
<td>1743-1732</td>
<td>1755-1744</td>
<td>1767-1756</td>
<td>1779-1768</td>
<td>1791-1780</td>
<td>1803-1792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623-1612</td>
<td>1635-1624</td>
<td>1647-1636</td>
<td>1659-1648</td>
<td>1671-1660</td>
<td>1683-1672</td>
<td>1695-1684</td>
<td>1707-1696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1527-1516</td>
<td>1539-1528</td>
<td>1551-1540</td>
<td>1563-1552</td>
<td>1575-1564</td>
<td>1587-1576</td>
<td>1599-1588</td>
<td>1611-1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1431-1420</td>
<td>1443-1432</td>
<td>1455-1444</td>
<td>1467-1456</td>
<td>1479-1468</td>
<td>1491-1480</td>
<td>1503-1492</td>
<td>1515-1504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1335-1324</td>
<td>1347-1336</td>
<td>1359-1348</td>
<td>1371-1360</td>
<td>1383-1372</td>
<td>1395-1384</td>
<td>1407-1396</td>
<td>1419-1386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1239-1228</td>
<td>1251-1240</td>
<td>1263-1252</td>
<td>1275-1264</td>
<td>1287-1276</td>
<td>1299-1288</td>
<td>1311-1300</td>
<td>1323-1291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1143-1132</td>
<td>1155-1144</td>
<td>1167-1156</td>
<td>1179-1168</td>
<td>1191-1180</td>
<td>1203-1192</td>
<td>1215-1184</td>
<td>1227-1176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1047-1036</td>
<td>1059-1048</td>
<td>1071-1060</td>
<td>1083-1072</td>
<td>1095-1084</td>
<td>1107-1076</td>
<td>1119-1068</td>
<td>1131-1059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0951-0940</td>
<td>0963-0952</td>
<td>0975-0946</td>
<td>0987-0976</td>
<td>0999-0988</td>
<td>1011-0976</td>
<td>1023-0968</td>
<td>1035-0957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0855-0844</td>
<td>0867-0856</td>
<td>0879-0868</td>
<td>0891-0858</td>
<td>0903-0849</td>
<td>0915-0839</td>
<td>0927-0829</td>
<td>0939-0820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0759-0748</td>
<td>0771-0760</td>
<td>0783-0752</td>
<td>0795-0743</td>
<td>0807-0736</td>
<td>0819-0727</td>
<td>0831-0718</td>
<td>0843-0709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0663-0652</td>
<td>0675-0644</td>
<td>0687-0676</td>
<td>0699-0666</td>
<td>0711-0657</td>
<td>0723-0648</td>
<td>0735-0639</td>
<td>0747-0630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0567-0556</td>
<td>0579-0586</td>
<td>0591-0590</td>
<td>0693-0592</td>
<td>0615-0584</td>
<td>0627-0576</td>
<td>0639-0568</td>
<td>0651-0560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0471-0460</td>
<td>0483-0472</td>
<td>0495-0464</td>
<td>0507-0456</td>
<td>0519-0448</td>
<td>0531-0438</td>
<td>0543-0428</td>
<td>0555-0420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0375-0364</td>
<td>0387-0376</td>
<td>0399-0386</td>
<td>0411-0376</td>
<td>0423-0365</td>
<td>0435-0355</td>
<td>0447-0346</td>
<td>0459-0346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0279-0268</td>
<td>0291-0280</td>
<td>0303-0292</td>
<td>0315-0302</td>
<td>0327-0291</td>
<td>0339-0280</td>
<td>0351-0279</td>
<td>0363-0268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0183-0172</td>
<td>0195-0184</td>
<td>0207-0196</td>
<td>0219-0186</td>
<td>0231-0176</td>
<td>0243-0167</td>
<td>0255-0158</td>
<td>0267-0150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0087-0076</td>
<td>0099-0088</td>
<td>0111-0090</td>
<td>0123-0080</td>
<td>0135-0070</td>
<td>0147-0060</td>
<td>0159-0050</td>
<td>0171-0040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0007-0066</td>
<td>0019-0018</td>
<td>0031-0017</td>
<td>0043-0008</td>
<td>0055-0007</td>
<td>0067-0006</td>
<td>0079-0005</td>
<td>0091-0004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mombasa to Tororo. All these rodents together were termed machungu.
# CHAPTER TWENTY TWO: FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: KINSHIPS AND CLANSHIP 214- 236

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening Of Clanship</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Bonds in Institutionalisation of Clanship</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kinship Concept</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Clanship Totem</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Family Trees</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Twenty-Two

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: KINSHIP AND CLANSHIP

Introduction

The notion of decent from a common ancestor was highly recognized and used as a bond to unite all the Tachon people, patrilineally, in a manner not easily questioned. They have stated, from the myth, that they were the sons and daughters of Toli and Temwa, their equivalence of Adam and Eve of the Bible and the Koran. But nothing is said thereafter until El Matruh, the equivalence of Abraham, comes onto the scene. The Tachon believe they are a creation of El who made them from the soft of an egg and hardened them to face the hardships of earth.

Even though it may leave much to be desired, they have mentioned that they were one family, and then they became a clan, who lived in one village called Kunar. The clan grew, became large and divided up into seven lineages from which sixty houses that form the sixty clans of the Tachon community. Each house, yinda (pl. chinda), as it has been defined, was made up of persons related patrilineally. Accordingly, they were related to each other and to a common ancestor, usually a father title prefixed by human noun class of omu- (pl. aba-). So that a clan formed by Kapchikhen will be aba-chikha, and a single member of this clan will be omu-chikha. What was a small house may grow big and bigger, becoming a sub-tribe and therefore creating new small houses or clans. This process, therefore, led to the splitting up of original clans to form new ones that now exist and are accorded respect.

However, the people are not completely united on this notion of a common ancestry. They have agreed to differ when it comes to transfer and sharing of power and wealth on the death of a Letia or the head of the family. This tendency has usually weakened the kindred clanship relationship. It first happened, it is reported, when the people settled in present day Bungoma and Trans-Nzoia Districts. A disagreement led to the nation breaking up into four clusters, which settled in Bungoma, Trans-Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, and Kakamega (present Kakamega and Lugari) districts. Some members of the community had felt that this disagreement and breakup was instrumental in the weak foundation on which the current Tachon is constructed. For El had warned them against disunity:

*I made all of you from the soft of an egg and hardened you to face the hardships of the earth. As a family you will remain united, no one house shall rise against the other, and no member of the same house shall rise against one another.* (The Sacred Book of El Sayon, Book IV chap 5 Verses 4-5)
Strengthening of Clanship

Clanship was regarded as “a table” not to be pushed aside or sat on. It grew from generation to generation. It was concretized through various cultural activities and practices, which created a bond, strengthening relationships between and among the people. The clan, however, did not function on its own without relations with other members of the nation. Some of the institutions, which were used in strengthening clanship, include social assemblies, annual ceremonies, ordinary ceremonies, and family parties.

Women like men identified each other by age-sets and formed self-help associations or assemblies to strengthen their relationships and also to contribute to the development and growth of their nation. Also called obulala, the women associations were responsible for converting bushlands into agricultural plots, large harvests of grains, a well-educated female community that was respected all over the land for their discipline and detail to quality in everything that they did. Men on their part demonstrated their effort towards building and strengthening the clan and the nation on the battlefield, number of homesteads each one of them was in-charge of, hunting missions and successes, distribution of loot, beer party ceremonies facilitated, ability to share cattle during marriage of their daughters, and in settling disputes with external communities.

There were also annual ceremonies, parties, dances and dinners that brought the people together strengthening their bond. Planting, harvesting, fishing, circumcision, marriage, burial, coronation, are some of the ceremonies that attracted the whole clan together and enabled them to share from the same pot. They reminded the people constantly of their oneness, their unity, religion, pain, and common purpose of existence. Infact the people believed that life is pain, and the way to sooth pain is to be with others sharing and rejoicing. Hence, where a Kitoki is, another kitoki must go.

The annual grain harvest party brought together the family, the clan, relatives and friends to share with El, the living dead, the ancestors and the people of the world the joy of a successful harvest. A bull was slaughtered and fresh blood taken, mixed with milk and sorghum or millet and sprinkled over the people. Some of this mixture would be poured into the earth to salute the living dead, and praise El for the rich soils that produced such a rich harvest. If this was not done the dead were at the throats of the men and the loins of the women destroying the seeds in their wombs.

Meat sharing ceremonies were organised for lineage. Animals would be slaughtered; each lineage had a specific part of the meat to take home. If the particular lineage were not at the meeting or ceremony the meat would be taken to them at their homes or distributed to their close relatives present at the ceremony. This ceremony symbolised the union with the creator by eating of his creation.
At the marriage of a daughter or son of the clan, relatives were called upon to contribute to the costs and gifts (dowry). This ensured that the bride and the groom understood they had an obligation to their families, clan and nation. They were not islands in a sea of people but were those people. Just as those who went after them so shall they also do the same, see to the happy marriage of their children and those of their clan and nation, and ensure that this knowledge is past on.

**Family Bonds in Institutionalisation of Clanship**

The family was and remains an important tool in the evolution, growth and development of the clan and the nation as a whole. Man and his woman were tied together by the marriage bond and therefore expected to promote family ties and culture mix. However, they were aware that ties of blood alone did not assure fidelity or love. It was, therefore, their burden to ensure that the present and the future will always be the way it has always been. They were expected to educate their children about their nation, relationships between and among them and other members of society. As parents they shared family roles as demanded of them by the law of the land, society, religion and culture.

Where a man had more than one wife, the eldest wife was the foundation of the family. She was, therefore, treated as a mother to all and everyone else in the family. Her homestead was responsible for hosting major family events and receiving family guests. She was the wife of the ring, the ring that united all and sundry.

**Parent and Child**

Parents were the reflection of the past and the light of their children into the future. The father was responsible for moulding the sons, while the mother was responsible for moulding the daughters into responsible citizens of their nation. As the boys attained puberty and adolescence, they were encouraged to build their own huts rather than to continue sharing with their parents. The girls were also separated to the kitchen or a hut specifically constructed for them. They could stay in these houses with their grandmother or aunt.

**The Siblings (Children)**

The children were separated by age and sex. Most boys did not love their sisters, even though the sisters often forced or initiated the relationships. This came as a result of their perceived love from their parents. Often fathers loved their daughters more than they did their sons. Mothers, on the other hand, were fonder of their sons than daughters. However, the mother was at the centre of demands from both their sons and daughters, and her husband, which often resulted in family feuds over her neglecting one of the parties.
Although on the surface it appeared that boys had a general hatred for their sisters, they always took refuge in their sisters’ camps during periods of danger and vice versa.

There were also fluctuations in love between children following one another in birth. On various occasions, the older brother or sister did not love the one just coming immediately after him or her. This probably could be attributed to the problem of breast love and comfort, which was denied that older child as soon as the mother conceived.

All said and done, the siblings had one bond, which could not be removed from them, that is the blood, and birth bond, which made them stand for each other in case of trouble.

Co-Wives

As stated earlier, the next most important person in the family, after the husband, was the eldest wife who was treated by all persons as their mother. She was responsible for selecting the second and subsequent wives for her husband. She set the level of discipline for the total family and commanded a high level respect. She was the wife of the ring and the one that the family and clan came together to receive and contribute to the bride price.

Ranking of wives and their ability to attract the attention of the family, clan and nation mostly depended on their age, fertility, innovativeness and creativity, and disposition, and how they received and entertained guests and family members. Often, a wife who detected weaknesses in the wife of the ring, moved to usurp her position by undertaking roles that pleased the clan and the family, and shifted the love of her husband to her house and herself.

In-Laws

Marriage created a chain of relations. It brought into the family system the paternal and maternal relations. Such relations were usually more extensive. The children of this relationship were expected to physically know and visit their relations.

When a baby was born, his/her hair was to be shaved by their paternal grandmother. Before they grew their milk teeth, they were expected to visit their maternal relations. This way, the child was fully initiated into the two families’ cultures and religions and would readily be served by El to the heights of all truth and life. He was therefore not a threat to either of the two families. During these occasions, relatives of the mother and the father gave presents, and the baby was anointed with animal fat, simsim and milk. This anointment brought the child before the seven gods of the tribe who rose and saluted the baby and also revealed his/her trade in life and fate.
There were some occasions when the mother conceived before the other child was old enough to walk, fetch various items like bring the dishes, taking food to the father, or calling the father to come and eat. On such occasions, the child would be released to his/maternal relations. This was a great honour to the maternal relations. They had all the access to one of their own by their daughter. In return, they would honour such a child with a live bull at his/her circumcision.

After marriage, the trips by the woman to her parents were limited to ceremonial days. Otherwise she learnt a lot about her parents through her husband, who often paid them visits.

On the death of a maternal relation, especially the uncle, the son of his sister received a bull called esikamo. On the other hand, if the son of a sister died, a nephew, her brother, the uncle to the son, received an animal in compensation called esibikho. This exchange of gifts maintained the relationship and solidified the lineage.

**The Kinship Concept**

As was observed earlier, kinship is reckoned through blood and betrothal. Kinship and marriage combined create a complete social system on which the corporate society was founded and which was the basis of life. This new social system borrowed beliefs, culture and religious practices from both families, maternal and paternal, influencing the emergence of sub-systems that would later create their own ecosystem.

Kinship has controlled social relationships between the people, governed marital customs, rules and regulations, determined the behaviour of one individual towards another and bound together the entire life of the ‘tribe’. It governs the behaviour, thinking and the whole life of the individual in the society of which he is a member. It is the union between man and the living-dead, man and man, man and his wealth. Kinship is the chain that links man to his creator, El, and the school that reveals the truth.

As a wider religious concept, kinship defines the relationship between man and the animals, plants and non-living objects through the ‘totemic’ system. This wider definition introduces some dynamism in the characteristics of kinship/kindred sparking a chain of reaction that forces social changes to take place. When changes are seen as changes in a functioning system, then they can be felt and understood. However, these changes have not been negative and reductionist within the Tachon community. For instance, in addition to what was earlier defined as marriage, this interaction has added another dimension. That marriage is a social arrangement by which offsprings are given mandate and a legitimate position in the society. However, no child had such a position in society if his or her parenthood in the social system was in doubt. This, though, did not deny the child born out of wedlock a chance of survival and equal status in the society.
A child born out of wedlock was accommodated in the patrilineally extended family of the social system. This system provided for a custom whereby:

a) A son belonged to the community.

b) A child born out of wedlock and whose father could not be clearly identified to the parents of the mother.

c) Sons remained in their father’s family group (family system).

d) Wives to these sons were also fully integrated into the family system and the offsprings thereto.

This recognition produced a large and extended family with a chain of relationships. However extended the family was, the controlling machinery was the male element. A man was initially seen as the son Y and brother to Mr. X. After marriage his social status was transformed into husband and to father too. A woman was seen as a daughter of Y. She remained the daughter of Y even after she got married. In case she got a daughter, called P, her relatives would refer to this daughter as “P the daughter of the daughter of Y”. This fact gave rise to a network of relations connecting any single person with his kin.

Let us imagine a marriage relationship where Y are the parents, C are children, B brothers, S sisters, H husband, W wife, F father, M mother, R son and D daughter.

The following chain would result:

a) Key interpretation variables to the chain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Parent to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QYT</td>
<td>Q Parent to T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRQ</td>
<td>T Son to Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2SO</td>
<td>Daughter to Sister to O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHST</td>
<td>O Husband to Sister to T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYD2</td>
<td>P Parent to Daughter Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D1 is related to D2 by marriage. They are sisters in law.

In this sequence R1 is a relative of O and all his offsprings. The same applies to D1 and her offsprings.

Apart from such marriage relationships, there were also the cognatic relationships and incidental relationships as a result of the marriage of ones cognates.

The Chart 4 that follows attempts to demonstrate these cognatic relationships. In this Chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>Father to Father of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Mother to Mother of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Sister to Father of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Mother to Father of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Father to Mother of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>Brother to Mother of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 6: Family Chain

Chart 7: Family Cognatic Relationships
Family members were known to each other by certain principal terms as indicated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Title</th>
<th>Swahili Title</th>
<th>Indirect Address By Third Person (Tachon)</th>
<th>Direct Address by self (Tachon)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Baba</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>Papa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Mao</td>
<td>Mayi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>Kaka</td>
<td>Wandayo we Esisolili</td>
<td>Omosolili wefu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>Dada</td>
<td>Wandayo we Esikhana Or esikhasi</td>
<td>Omukhana wefu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Mume</td>
<td>Wamwo</td>
<td>Omusakhulu/ Omusasha/omwami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Mke</td>
<td>Omukhaye</td>
<td>Omusiele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-wife</td>
<td>Mke Mwenza</td>
<td>Mwalikhwa wo (Wambalikhayo)</td>
<td>Mwalikhwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Bin/Wadi</td>
<td>Se’</td>
<td>Yindume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Binti</td>
<td>Omukhana wa (Not married), Omukoko wa (married)</td>
<td>Omukhana, Omukoko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Father</td>
<td>Babu</td>
<td>Kukayo</td>
<td>Kuko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Mother</td>
<td>Nyanya</td>
<td>Kokowo</td>
<td>Koko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Father</td>
<td>Babu</td>
<td>Kukayo</td>
<td>Kuka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Mother</td>
<td>Nyanya</td>
<td>Kokowo</td>
<td>Koko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Brother</td>
<td>Ami/Amu</td>
<td>Se’mwana</td>
<td>Tata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Elder Brother</td>
<td>Ami Mkubwa</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>Papa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baba Mkubwa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Younger Brother</td>
<td>Ami Mdogo/</td>
<td>Se’mwana</td>
<td>Tata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baba Mdogo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter In Law’s Father</td>
<td>Shemeji</td>
<td>Basakwayo</td>
<td>Basakwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Sister</td>
<td>Shangazi</td>
<td>Senjeyo</td>
<td>Senje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Brother</td>
<td>Mjomba</td>
<td>Khochawo</td>
<td>Khochawo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Sister</td>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Nyinawo</td>
<td>Mama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Brother’s Wife</td>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Nyinawo</td>
<td>Mama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Sister’s Husband</td>
<td>Mjomba</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>Tata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Brother’s Wife</td>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Nyinawo</td>
<td>Mama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Sister’s Husband</td>
<td>Mjomba</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>Tata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Brother’s Son</td>
<td>Binamu</td>
<td>Wandayo</td>
<td>Wandaye Wanje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Sister’s Son</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Sister’s Son</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Sister’s Daughter</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Brother’s Daughter</td>
<td>Binamu</td>
<td>Wandayo</td>
<td>Wandaye Wanje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Brother’s Son</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Brother’s Daughter</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Sister’s Daughter</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandson</td>
<td>Mjukuu</td>
<td>Mwichukhulu</td>
<td>Kuka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand-daughter</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>“”</td>
<td>Koko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s Father</td>
<td>Mkwe</td>
<td>Omukhweo</td>
<td>Omukhwe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family and Clanship Totem

In all circles of the useful social, political and economic life of a Tachon, whether remote or advanced, loyalty to the tribe was not a primordial loyalty causing political conflict, but was itself a dependent variable, a loyalty or identity which was politicized only under certain specifiable conditions that reactivated and rebuilt the human-tribe system. Tribalism, as it were, defined ethnic conflict. Generally, tribalism was the result of many diagonal-metric variables with both horizontal and vertical conflicts in addition to cultural differences and hostility.

Clans claimed similar and common cultural, religious and family backgrounds. The clan concept extended beyond family/clan boundaries in search of clan exogamy. Clan exogamy defined the role of the clan in building the tribe and tribal solidarity.

Tribal solidarity, therefore, was a product of family and clanship solidarity. This solidarity evolved in the following format:

a) The family/clanship supplied their members with a sense of social-cultural identity and continuity through origin, myths and tales.
b) Social cultural identity culminated in clan exogamy.
c) The family/clan applied clanship, kinship terms and titles to all clansmen and members.
d) Religion and culture were used as tools to describe man’s welfare and part in society.
e) Through religion and culture, man was taught to understand that his welfare, behaviour and belonging were mostly intimately tied up with his agnatic ancestors and proprietors.

Above all, family/clanship solidarity was and is still manifested through identification with the corporate society, which allowed growth of self-help groups and societies.
Individual societies and groups were developed around specific needs in the production, service and social system. A production or consumption unit comprised of a family of households. The major commodity was labour, which came as a contribution of society. In exchange, a price was given in form of hospitality and a share in the consumption of the joint communal effort. In most cases, people were paid according to how much they produced or were willing to produce. The rewards were meant to stimulate a sense of belonging and responsibility to society.

Land was also used to demonstrate family, clanship or tribal solidarity. Land belonged to the community. So family plots, although operated as single economic enterprises, had a distributive nature designed to develop and reconcile the interests of the individual with those of the community. According to this concept, all the Tachon people, regardless of origin, sex or age had equal rights to all land owned by the tribe as enshrined in the initiation and baptism statutes.

The family totem defined the extent of the contribution to tribal solidarity. The totem was always revealed in the family/clanship creed, which was recited every morning and evening as part of the daily prayer. It also came in when people met and introduced one another.

The family creed identified the genealogy of the people, the routes they followed to current settlement, the unique role they had always played in society, and their main source of wealth. The following abstracts from some of the clans illustrate this:

a) Abahabiya (Katuum) will say: Efwe Katuum, makhasi, liolia, Kachimaketi, be ebuyokabuyokani, kachemsi, kachelukuyu, kang'uruti, ba Mumbayi. This translated into English: We are the people of Katuum (Khartoum) who pride in animal fat and ghee, we see into secretes of life, we are rebels of Chimaketi, Chemise and Chelukuyu, we hunt the wild for meat, to smitten our long tough teeth that pierce and mince meat. We came from Mbai where we kept large stocks of animals.

b) Abachikha: Efwe makyena, wetsi, wekpye, welalo, namunaba banaba ching'eni ne banaba no olumbe. Bekhayungu nyama, ba khasanga amasinya. We lived among the crocodiles; build dams and water basins from which we collected fish. Our trade as fishermen is our fate. We cherish circumcision, and baptism by water and the sword. We have never seen poverty affluence is our trademark.

c) Abamakhuli: Efwe Abatachon ngololi, be emaabo, be elicho. We are the backbone of the Tachon nation. The pure, who undergo circumcision and baptism within the Tachon faith.

d) Abanyangali: Efwe Abatachon be esirwa, abayoboyi, khurula sirikwa, kfwachenda nechikhenda omukanda, khulichwa yingwe. We are Tachon of Kalenjin origin since Sirikwa who carried bundles of gourds stripped with beads and bead threads. We undergo circumcision, and are baptized by water and the strength and power of the leopard.
e) Abangachi: *Efwe Sirikwa, khwombakha kitaliel, be khaumo, elukongo, ne bwami, be khachobo*. We are Sirikwa who built and ruled over Kitale, Khaumo and Elukongo. Our capacity to reproduce from within is our fate.

f) Abasioya: *Efwe ababiti, sebulo, nengo, bucheko, bulimasia, khaalia, be etoma*. We stand between good and evil as we purify and baptize our people. Ours is to fight for unity, harmony, peace and growth, that is why we traversed all valleys and hills.

g) Abakafusi: *Efwe Abakafusi ekhasinganyama, wo omulaha alahindilanga, Abatachon lichina, baramba chifusi*. We are the foundation on which the Tachon nation is built. We are the mighty who protect the nation against all its enemies.

**Family Trees**

The section below provides schematic summaries of the family trees of some of the clans of the Tachon nation. These trees relate to the period 1986. Since then many more households have formed, new generations have emerged and it is possible that the trees have also grown.
Abachimuluku (Chepruko) Family Tree
The Abasaniaka Family Tree
Family Trees for Abasamo (Samo) and Abasiu Clans
Abasonge (Songiek) Family Tree
The Abamuchembi Family Tree
The Abasang’alo Family Tree
The Abamutama Family Tree

SOURCE: SE'DEVELO MUNUI (MATETE) AND MGBIA KERRE (LUKUBI)
The Abamachina Family Tree
PART FIVE: THE STATE AND LAW

237-272

Chapter 23: The Government Structure 238
Chapter 24: Class and Leadership Structure 256
Chapter 25: The Judicial System 259
# CHAPTER 23: THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Organisation of the State</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Letia</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Letia’s Cabinet: The Ministers</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Army</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Letia’s Homestead</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Capacity of the State to Thrive</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Land and Its Resources</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Construction</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce and Trade</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Twenty-Three

THE GOVERNMENT

The Organisation of the State

The Tachon people were organised under a devolved government system headed by a Letia. The state was called Bwami or Letiadom. The Bwami was divided into divisions called Olukoba (pl. chingoba) headed by a Baoyet. The Baoyet ruled through Council of Elders while the Letia ruled through a Council of Ministers.

The Letia, his ministers and their deputies received counsel from an Advisory Committee of three to five elders or sages. The elders were picked from among the chingoba and they included men and women of great knowledge, wisdom and the capacity to unite and lead the people. They were beyond reproach.

The Letia, his Council and the Advisory Committee formed the supreme Council, which was charged with the management of the state and its resources for the benefit of the community. The members to the Council were expected to be:

- Circumcised and baptized in the Tachon faith
- Knowledgeable and well informed on Tachon history, beliefs and practices
- Creative and active in society
- Married with more than one wife (men), managing a large homestead (women)
- Right-handed and with sons as their first born
- Brave, generous, and in search of peace; able to listen understand and arbitrate; loving and high achievers.
- Forthright and sober
- Clean in spirit and mind
- Able to command the support of the people.

The Letia

The Letia was not a supernatural being. He never chose to appoint himself to this position. Neither was he imposed on the people. The nation appointed him to this position in consultation with the Supreme Council. This position became vacant on the death of a sitting Letia or after a Letia was banished from society by his people.

The Letia appointing council comprised of the elders, baoyet, the nationals and the beer parties. The appointment was reached by consensus provided the candidate fulfilled all the set out criteria for the position including being a social and democratic person; an advocate for peace, love and unity; humane and patriot.
The elders were the most important people of the society. They were the store of knowledge and wisdom. Their contributions were most valued and accepted by all. They were the greatest examiners and their approval of a candidate propelled him to Letiaship. They received, sifted, approved and passed proposals from beer parties and the baoyet, and representations from the clans. They were responsible for drawing up the final decisions and programs for swearing in of the Letia elect on an appointed day Yindalo Ya Imbolima.

The Baoyet endorsed the candidacy of an intending party and passed it over to the elders. They educated the people within their olukoba of the positive and negative sides of the candidate. They were more informed about the candidate because he was either one of them or came from within their olukoba, a resident.

The beer parties’ people came from all corners of the nation and were of diverse backgrounds and orientation. At the beer parties, they consulted widely and advised each other on the curious candidates vying for leadership. They held debates on various candidates and helped the public to eliminate most of them. Elders at these parties refrained from such discussions but picked salient points, and the expression of the majority. They watched, listened and tapped important comments made by the people.

The public utilized recreational activities and ceremonies to proclaim their favourite candidates. They praised the candidate’s positive behaviour and denounced his negative ways. They sang and praised or ridiculed candidates at weddings, beer parties, recreational houses, and at other functions. Their proclamations reached the elders, who carefully sifted the information and considered their views during the selection of the final candidate for Letia.

Once a candidate had been chosen he was informed in advance to enable him acquire the required regalia and other materials for swearing in. The regalia acquired symbolized the Letiacy, its status in society, and the authority of the office, dignity and honour. Some people required a lot of time to prepare unless a Letia previously existed in their clan or family. If he did not they went out as a clan to buy these items and have them sanctified.

The swearing in regalia included, among others:

- **Royal Burner Yindabusí**: This was a scepter made from the horn of a rhino. The Letia carried this yindabusí as a sign of authority, power and superiority, and as a symbol of unity. With this yindabusí the Letia was above the Tachon Law.

- **Crown Lebweni** headdress painted and decorated with palm leaves and ostrich feathers.

- **Cloak Ekutus** made from the skin of a mountain colubus monkey. It was a special cloak with own insignia. It cost a mature bullock.
• Royal Stool *Esitiena* three-legged stool made from a tree called *omurembe* or *omukhuyu*. It could be priced for a price of a full-grown goat.

• Copper Wrist Bracelet *Omukasa* worn on the left hand ignited authority and power. It could be purchased for the price of a he-goat.

• Arm Band *Lichabe* made from the elephant tusk was circular in shape and worn on the forearm just below the elbow. It cost the price of a full-grown he-goat.

• Arm Band *Injabaasi* made from the elephant tusk, rectangular and worn on the right hand above the elbow. It also cost a he-goat.

• Royal Spear and Royal Shield to represent protection and security of the state.

• Whisk to stand for wisdom, peace and tranquility, and tenderness in handling the citizens of the nation.

The candidate and his clan were assisted to construct a shrine and to plant a peepul tree. At the foot of the shrine was *esibo* on which rested a beer pot. Esibo was a clay plate for serving sacred or royal beer and meat during coronation and swearing into office of national leaders.

The Chief Minister *Omung’osi*, assisted by the Minister for Culture and Religious Activities *Omubiti*, conducted the swearing in ceremony. The ceremony started in earnest early in the morning at the shrine with the ministers sipping some beer from the pot followed by the other members of cabinet, and then all the guests. After the beer ceremony a he-goat and a white bull were slaughtered. The entrails were opened up for the Omung’osi to study in order to predict the life of the new leader, his rule and conduct. The intestines, lungs, pancreas and the liver were of particular interest. If these items reveal any discolouring the ceremony was stopped. If they revealed a robust situation the ceremony continued, and the minister sliced some pieces, put them on the esibo and reserved them for El and the ancestors.

After these preliminaries by the Omung’osi, the Letia-elect emerged from his house with a skin mat on which he was to stand during the swearing in ceremony. He spread the skin on the ground and stood on it facing the east, the light. The dressing commenced with injabaasi, lichabe, omukasa, ekutus, and Lebweni, in that order. He was then handed the yindabusi. The Esitiena was brought and he was seated. Prayers were made to El, he received instructions, was blessed and asked to stand up and walk into his house of the wife of the ring without looking sideways or back.

In the house he found a skin mat already spread on the floor facing the main door. He was asked to sit on this mat with his legs stretched towards the door. He was anointed with ghee; animal fat and cleansed with some herbs before being transferred to the Esitiena and declared the Letia of
the nation. The women ululated and the nation joined in song and dance, praising the El for installing a new Letia, and urging the new Letia to be forthright, do his work well, even better than the past leaders. They drunk and ate.

A new Letia had now been installed to administer justice, preside over State functions, protect his people, unite the people, acquire more land and property for them, and promote their image beyond its borders. The Letia also:

- Oversaw the fair distribution of wealth and the prevention of its accumulation by a few people.
- Presided over the eradication of poverty and greed, and ensured that all citizens had access to decent living, education and careers. It was also his duty to see that the medical facilities were readily available and accessible; and marriages were properly conducted and that land and crops were protected.
- Facilitated access to natural human incentives and equal opportunities for all citizens
- Ensured that the social, economic and political systems were an ideal balance built on motivation of beliefs and adherence to ethics, together with the legal framework for distributive justice.

It was after swearing in and taking the office that the Letia revised or appointed a new Council of ministers, defined his policies for a better and effective community and people.

**The Letia’s Cabinet – The Ministers**

The cabinet was made up of six ministers representing the seven gods of the Tachon people. They included the Chief Minister, Minister of State, Justice Minister, Defence Minister, Service Minister, and the Minister for Culture and Religious Activities.

No minister worked alone. They all worked in consultation and in a team. The actions of a single minister reflected the joint decision and effort of the whole cabinet.

**The Chief Minister**

Also referred to as the Oracle of the State, on various occasions, he acted as the deputy to the Letia. He was the chief seer (omung’osi), sage and oracle to the nation. A man of great honour and status in society was held in high esteem. He organised peace missions on behalf of the nation and concluded peace agreements and land disputes with enemy tribes and neighbours on behalf of the Letia. He worked in direct consultation with the seven gods of the Tachon faith.
The Minister of State

He was also referred to as the Drum Minister. He was responsible for matters pertaining to internal security and enforcement of peace, information and communication, and creation and building of chingoba and homesteads.

He evolved a strong information and communication network to monitor all the Tachon frontiers, and keep watch over the neighbours and enemies of the Tachon nation.

Justice Minister

Also referred to as the Chief Advisor, O’muse, he was well educated on the judicial systems and structures, history, economic and political affairs of the Tachon nation and those of neighbours. He was chosen by El and empowered by El, and represented El Lote on earth. He also presided over at funerals and burials of elders.

The Defence Minister

Commonly known as the Laitarian, he was the head of the army. He recruited and trained new armies through the Baoyet. He organised and supervised raids and attacks on enemy tribes and neighbours for cattle, land expansion and labour force. He worked in collaboration with the Chief Minister and the Service Minister.

In his day-to-day execution of duties he worked in consultation with the god of war, Kapchikhen and the sun god Sirikwa.

The Service Minister

He was commonly referred to as the O’Muliuli; he implemented an effective health and medical system that was void of all diseases, bad omens and evil spirits. He was the archenemy of all witches, wizards and people of evil eyes.

The Service Minister worked in strict consultation with all the gods especially El Nalo (sea and waters), Sirikwa (light and the sun), El Nemsri (soil), and El Chepsri (wind and rain) in order to bring up a healthy, strong and active population.

The Minister for Culture and Religious Affairs

Commonly referred to as the Omubiti he worked in consultation with three key gods responsible for transformation and life. He was the Chief Baptist of the nation, and also presided over at the swearing in of all the ministers and the council of elders. He blessed all living things for the good of the nation.
The Army

The army, under the Laitarian, was concerned with the protection of the Tachon territory, expansion of the grazing and crop fields, protection of the citizens, and increasing the wealth of the state through raids for livestock, labour, gems and women. The army, therefore, was organised into three major units: intelligence, raid, and combat.

As a security measure the army had a Special Intelligence Unit (SIU) abasegei made up of young and complicated men highly versed in foreign languages and dialects. They travelled wide disguising and spying on neighbouring and enemy nations. They walked and worked among neighbouring communities and enemy tribes, on the hills, mountains, valleys, deserts and forests to collect useful security information.

Rapid Forces Sebewein squad was trained and equipped to undertake surprise, attack and raid missions for livestock, food, young men and women. They also provided rapid rescue services where needed.

The Combat Forces were organised in three lines: the swingers who formed the rear guard, the boosters who formed the middle guard and the tactical forces who led all the others in war. The tactical forces formed the frontline and led the attacks on the target prodding it to expose itself. The combat forces approached their target in a U-shape, usually dressed in guinea fowl camouflage. They surprised and swallowed the target.

The army used services of specialized medicine men and women in society. The medicine men and women were charged with the responsibilities of treating the wounded, ensuring that the battlefields were protected and the war will be in favour of the Tachon soldiers, and treating the weapons to be used by the soldiers. It was, therefore, their duty to visit and treat the battle fields before the war stated or blind the enemy army just before the battle starts and as they approach the agreed battlefield. This they did with the god of war Kapchikhen. With one arrow, it is alleged a Tachon warrior of those days could sweep weapons out of the enemy army’s hands, and this was attributed to the power and magic of the god of rain and wind.

The Letia’s Homestead

The chart below depicts the ground plan of a Letia’s homestead.
Map 7: The Letia's Homestead
The Capacity of the State to Thrive

The state was expected by all to provide some essential to the people. It was to make the army happy and strong, to run its affairs well without interfering with the day-to-day chores of each citizen, and so went the creed: *Thou shall eat; Thy Sons Sweat, And Thy Sons Shall Not Fail To Feed Thee*

That the ancestors would eat from the sweat of their sons, and the sons would ensure they utilize the available resources to feed themselves and their children to satisfaction. If the ancestors were not properly fed, they affected the lives of others, especially the living. It was the responsibility of the state to make sure that this did not happen. The Letia, therefore, organised resources for thanks giving and celebrations of harvests. In addition, the state had the responsibility to the people in the following ways:

- To feed them, especially during drought and famine
- To defend them against enemies and rustlers
- To protect lives in general
- To protect nature (flora and fauna)
- To keep the army strong and happy
- To establish good relationships between the living, the dead, and El.

The people contributed to the state resources to enable it to do its work. The contributions were voluntary and were made in the name of El and the ancestors. Although called contributions, they were actually taxation. The individual citizen sacrificed present consumption, representing a leakage from current amount to be consumed now for a further date that is direct withdrawal from current consumption. In this respect, the Tachon state had nine types of taxes: General Tax (GT), Child Tax (CoT), Crop Tax (CT), Animal Tax (AT), Land Tax (LT), Hut Tax (HT), Adult Tax (AT), Beer Tax (BT), and Status Tax (ST). The tax system included everyone and excluded none and it benefited every single member of the community.

The General Tax

The GT operated in the same manner as a Service Charge. It was contributed to the state to enable it finance essential services. The payment was in form of crops and animals.

This tax was meant to protect the community from bad omen and evil spirits. Its proceeds were also used to bridge the gap between the poor and the rich, men and women.

The Child Tax

All married couples paid this tax. It was paid in crops and animals. The crop was to be of the first harvest. It included groundnuts, millet, sorghum, elusine and roots. A black bullock for baby boys and a heifer for baby girls were accepted as payment for tax. They were taken to the Letia who had a granary and a boma for them.
This tax allowed the El and the living dead to bless the couple with many more healthy children. Every time the couple got a baby they took these gifts (tax) to the state in trust of El and the living dead.

The tax was also used by the state to find out how many children were born during the year, where they were located and their sexes. It was an indirect way of taking census on a yearly basis. This information was useful to enable the state to plan for its people.

It was this tax which determined who was to pay hut and status taxes. Children were associated with wealth. It was also believed that only a man with great wealth had many wives, children, huts and status in society. He therefore paid for the respect accorded to him by the community and state, and for all his huts. This was equivalent to the current land rates.

The child tax was a thanks giving to El for bringing into the world another one of his envoys, and to the ancestors for their patience and wise counsel.

**Hut Tax**

Huts indicated the number of wives one had, the labour force available and the status accorded to the man blessed with this in society. The wives worked on farms and kept the homes clean and warm. They planned and controlled agricultural resources. The women looked after chicken, men ploughed, women planted and cultivated the crop, and harvested.

The tax was paid either in grains or cattle, depending on the wealth of the head of the house. Each hut contributed its own tax. Women whose husbands paid more in hut tax stood tall among others.

**Status Tax**

Those who commanded more respect in society, those who created the patron-client, or master-servant relationships, as stated earlier, paid this tax. It was these men who produced more recruits to the army because of their large families. They became chiefs by virtue of having large families.

**Crop Tax**

People who grew and harvested crops paid this tax. It did not matter whether the harvest was good or bad. The tax came in form of grains (millet, elusine and sorghum) and groundnuts.

The tax was paid so as to:

- Thank the state, living dead and El for their protection and good governance during the season.
- Prepare for the next season with the grace of El.
o Save grains with the state for a dry season.
o Pray for rains and productive weather during the next crop season.
o Protect the state from disaster.

The grains were stored in granaries on the Letia’s compound, built in the middle of the homestead. They were consumed by the Letia, his staff and the army, and during famine. Properly selected and approved grains were used as seed for the next planting season.

Some families donated more to the state granaries than others, depending on their harvest and status in society. They did this of their own will.

**Animal Tax**

People who had animals paid this tax. It was paid in form of a bullock, heifer, goat or sheep. Those who kept bees donated honey. These were kept by the state in trust for the people.

The Letia, his staff and the army used the animals and honey. The warriors and soldiers, ministers and other citizens who excelled in their respective fields and who were to receive animal rewards, were paid from this tax. The supreme council members received their salary from this tax. Each member received five heifers annually. When the heifer calved, he donated the first heifer to the state, and subsequent ones to the members of his clan and/or age group.

These animals were trained in various skills including spying, saving the other animals in case of rustling, looking after the others on the grazing fields, wrestling, and conveying useful information to the tribe incase of danger from an enemy or wild animals.

The cows were used for milk and blood, while the bulls were for breeding, bleeding and ploughing. On special occasions, the bulls could also provide meat.

**Land Tax**

Anyone who used land for grazing, crops, settlement, and so on was to donate milk, beer, grains, honey or an animal to the state. Land tax revealed to the state how much land was in the custody of its people, and the type of security and protection needed to ensure protection for the citizens and their property against communities with conflicting interests.

Further, the tax revealed how much was being used for grazing, hunting, crop and settlement.
**Adult Tax**

All adults paid service to property tax. They worked on state farms, or sacrificed a bit of their earnings to maintain the state.

Adults were persons of 25 years and above, circumcised and married.

**Beer Tax**

All persons who brewed beer donated some to the State. This tax included beer, some honey and some milk.

**Other Taxes**

Other taxes included Fisherman’s Tax paid by fishermen, and Blacksmith’s Tax paid by blacksmiths in form of spears, arrows, knives, shields, ploughs, hoes, to the state.

House Thatchers’ also paid a form of tax. They donated free services to the state to repair or construct new houses, forts and fences.

Trespassers Tax and Welcome Tax were charged to people going through the Tachon land or illegally squatting on the land. All traders passing through the land surrendered part of their earnings to the state, and all squatters who had built camps on the Tachon land paid land and hut rents. The purpose of these two taxes was to restrict foreigners from infiltrating the land.

**The Land and Its Resources**

The land was regarded as El’s greatest gift to man and it was up to man himself to make sure it was appropriately utilized. All land they passed through and were yet to traverse was their land, which they argued had been occupied by their people before them, and will be by those after them. Therefore, land was to be treated with a lot of care and respect.

Land ownership, division and sub-division, was the duty of the state. That State held the land in trust for the people. Each household held the land in trust for the future generations. The living dead and El held the title to the land. Therefore, individual families acquired possession of land, where they built forts, ploughed and sowed some crops for food, as envoys of El and the living dead.

The natural hunting fields on the land provided wild animals for meat, bones, horns, ivory, hooves, fats, skins as cloths; and birds for meat, feathers and eggs. The rivers, lakes and ponds provided water, shells and fishes.
Agriculture was an important part of the community that was mostly run by women with specialized assistance from men. The men slashed the gardens, and ploughed, the women planted, cultivated and harvested, and the children chased the birds, squirrels and monkeys, which came to disturb the crop. Successful farming required farming tools, which they developed from sticks, stones and through smelting the blacksmiths; and seeds that they carefully selected from previous harvests. The farm tools included hoes omuholo, blades, adze, pangas and knives, and wooden ploughs.

The crops grown, among others, included: millet, sorghum, elusine, groundnuts, and root crops. Sorghum and millet were grown for food and beer. They were also used in purchasing of other goods, which the people needed. In addition they also planted vegetables, such as pumpkins lisiebebe, chisaka, yindelema, makowe black jack, murere, lifwafwa, lisucha night black shade, esinganyaganya wonderingjew, emiro, and esiriecha. Some fruits were also tended in the homestead gardens. However, most fruits were collected from the wild using harvesting knives, blades and sickles.

The crop harvested was kept in cylindrical granaries, which could be transported on rollers pulled by animals, incase the community shifted.

Livestock, tendering of cattle, goats, sheep, wild cats and bees was a dominant feature of the Tachon economy. Cattle were kept for their social and mystical value, and were believed to belong to their ancestors. Cattle were a sign of wealth. The more cattle one had, the more land he acquired, and the more wives he had. Animals were also a standard of value, and they were used in trade transactions.

Men and their sons looked after animals. Bomas for these animals were built within the homestead. The bomas were built within the homestead. The women cleared the bomas of dung every morning. The dung was properly decomposed into manure and later applied in gardens as fertilizer for crops. The dry dung was used as fuel. Some fresh dung was used in making the walls and floors of the huts strong, and clean, and as a disinfectant against notorious insects that wandered in homes.

Animals also provided milk, meat, and were bled for blood, and when slaughtered, gave skins, horns bones and hooves, which were used for different artifacts and adornments.

The wild provided animals, which they hunted for meat, natural vegetation from which they harvested fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, and trees for house and fort constructions, and adornment.

**Building and Construction**

The people lived in homesteads surrounded by forts. The homesteads were constructed in circular villages with circular huts. The forts were thick walls built of wood, stone and clay. Surrounding the forts were trenches dug several feet deep.
Map 8: The Tachon Village (Olukoba)
Back in their mythical Misri, mud walls surrounded the villages without trenches on the outside. The huts were strong, built on sand and clay, and were circular in shape with high roofs. The Leta’s house was large, circular or rectangular, with a low roof that was carefully vaulted.

One of their famous forts was the Chetambe Fort in Webuye that was destroyed by the Whiteman in 1895 ACE.

Site selection was first proposed by the Baoyet and approved by the Council of Ministers. The design and construction was by the office of the Laitarian and the Baoyet. Women did the muddying of the houses and the forts, and smoothing the floor.

The roofs of the huts/houses were made according to the climatic conditions of the area. There were two shapes, conical shapes for sirikwets, short amatokho huts, which one entered on his/her knees or by bending. These were for cave houses formed in a similar way as the Maa manyattas. These kinds of huts were popular when they sojourned dry areas where there was scarcity of grass for thatching and wood for making strong high roofs and walls. Then there were circular huts with high roofs. These huts were made of strong wood and grass-thatched, sloping roofs to keep the water from dripping into the hut. The walls were made with firm wood, supported by either dung or clay. These kinds of houses were popular in the wet areas.

The floors of Tachon huts were well beaten, and were smeared weekly with cow dung to keep away dust and pests.

The areas under the high roofs were used for various purposes including as stores for foods such as milk, meat, flour, and so on. There was a ladder securely built in the centre of the circular hut, which was used to get these foods up in the roofs for safekeeping. It was believed that foods kept up here never went bad, as there was fresh cool air that kept it in good condition for a long time.

**Commerce and Industry**

The Tachon seem to have employed all resources available to them to produce goods and services for use at home and for earning those goods and services not traditionally produced at home. Their industry was built on raw materials, which included wood, iron ore and metals, animals and animal products (bones, horns, hooves, skins, and milk), stones, and other earths.

**Industry**

The Tachon people, then called the Kitoki, lived by hunting, gathering, keeping animals, smelting, processing animal and wood products, and agriculture, especially the production of millet, sorghum, shoots, elusine and pumpkins.
The hunting involved the tracking down of elephants for ivory, skins and bones; antelopes and buffaloes for meat, skins and bones; antelopes and buffaloes for meat, horns and skins, bones and horns; lions for the heart and skins; monkeys for their skins and bones. Other small and big animals were hunted for food and medicines.

Gathering involved the collection of fruits, shoots, honey, vegetables and eggs.

The rearing of animals appears to have been the backbone of their livelihood. The animals gave milk, meat, blood, hides & skins, hooves, horns and bones. The horns, hooves and bones were used in making various ornaments, including earrings, nose rings, hand bands and bangles.

Milk was separated into two basic products: - Cream and saturated milk. The cream was stored and preserved in a gourd called esisachilo. It was treated by shaking and removing water so formed every evening. The water removed was used in making porridge and in beer brewing. It was also used as a stimulant at meals. When it was ripe, it was removed from the gourd and refined into ghee. Ghee was preserved as an ointment or perfume, cooking oil and medicine. Excess ghee produced by households was sold to the general public.

The saturated milk was mixed with black ashes omwichura, put in a long smooth gourd and left to go sour enough for eating ugali/potatoes/yams or for brewing. Sometimes it was drunk as a laxative. It was drunk plain as a soft drink. Milk and ghee were given to wedding parties and as part of the bride price.

Animal skins were treated with dye, dried, hammered and softened by application of ghee and other animal fat. The resulting leather was used in making garments, shoes, bedding and bags. The garments made from skins included yinyilisi, a form of garment used during the day as a dress and at night as a blanket, likutu, lilibuli, ol’wari and other wearing apparels. Rich families mostly used leather sandals.

Bags obtained from leather ebiloloti (pl.) okuloloti (sing.) were used for carrying honey, meat, eggs, grains, milk and water. There were special leather bags for carrying weapons such as arrows and related missiles emotia, arrow quivers.

Skins also provided materials for making house carpets, seats and drums. Drums were very important tools of society. They were used as accompaniments to music and dance. They were also used as means of passing messages from one village to another, summoning people to a meeting, funeral and wedding.

The leather, when cut into narrow long strips, was used in making guitars and harps – obukhana.
The bones provided cooking sticks and spoons, medicine and the hard fine material used in pottery. They were also made into decorations for the home and hung on the wall or at the entrances of the house or homestead to demonstrate wealth.

Ivory completed the insignia of elders, headdresses. Its products included headdresses, earrings, hand ornaments such as *lichabe, injabaasi, ofusakwa* and *lipale*, and the royal burner.

The animals also provided dung for fertilizer and fuel. Burning dung was done when the family was chasing away bad spirits. Dung was used as fuel for cooking and smelting.

Alluvial gold mining and gathering was done along riverbeds. Other minerals dealt in included flint, iron ore *oburale*, and copper. From these minerals spears, arrowheads, knives, adzes, axes, blades (hoe and shaving) were obtained. To separate ore and gold from the alluvial, water and sieves were used.

There were blades and adzes of different shapes to meet different uses. There were, therefore, different names for different sizes and shapes of blades and adzes according to their uses.

Some useful stones were imported into the society. These stones were used for various functions, for instance, in the construction of shrines, and the production of various shapes of pottery, ornaments and missiles. These stones included the volcanic ash, rock crystals, ballast, limestone, dolomite, breccias, obsidian quartz and marble.

To produce a certain shape of pottery, the rock material was rotated on a fixed blade or stool and modeled. The modeling helped to obtain the required and particular shape, size, smoothness and accuracy. If the pottery was not to be obtained through modeling, the rocks were first worked upon using an adze, knife, blades or axe to smoothen them. A hole was then bored of the required dimension to create a pot, plate, bowl or other dishes.

Other rock materials used in pottery included black and gray clays, schists and volcanic ash. Pottery products included water pots/jars, bowls and dishes. They were decorated in black, brown and white marks of ash, sap, beads and shells.

**Trade and Commerce**

There is enough evidence to suggest that the Tachon people had a well-organised trade far into the past. However, most of the evidence would be difficult to prove. For instance, they have indicated that while in Misri, they had external trade with the West, Touregs and Negroes, in oils, iron and cocoa, the *Siuna* or Sinai and across the Mediterranean with the Palestinians, the Cretes and the Phoenicians, where they bartered ivory, horns and hooves, fish, adzes, alabaster and iron in exchange for clothes, weapons, holy ashes and oils, pots and resin. To the south, they traded with the Nubians. They also sold honey, eggs and birds to sailors.
Down in Abyssinia (Cheng El Ale), they traded in iron and copper products (rings and bungles) with the Toureqs and western neighbors. The other articles they traded in included skins, leather cloth, headdresses, spears, arrows, knives, swords, shields and bows in exchange for food and animals, especially goats, sheep, cattle, camels, birds and cowries. The cowry shells were later modified and sewn on leather to make attractive aprons which were sold at home and abroad.

The motivation behind trade was the acquisition of new technologies and the urge for self-sufficiency. For instance, they borrowed the Nubian technology in smelting, especially whilst at Sengoi Sengoi (Atbara). Before they arrived in present day Kenya, they met with the pastoral Kalenjins, the war-like Maa and the Ateker who needed ornamental products including shields, spears, bows and arrows, swords and knives, bangles and headgear. Applying the Nubian technology, they readily provided and even taught these groups in smelting and molding.

When they arrived in Western Kenya, their trade partners were the Basoga, Bagisu, Samia, Wanga and Iteso. The items of trade were iron hoes, millet, sorghum and bananas. They later met the Arab merchants through Wanga. The main supplies here were ivory, giraffe and monkey skins, pottery ware, furniture, traditional 3-legged ebony stools, in exchange for Swahili garments, and food, yellow maize.

Porters, animals and rollers transported goods to the points of sale. Later when they met European merchants in the 19th century, transportation was becoming mechanized. And this interaction also simplified trade transactions but reduced the benefits. The standard unit of exchange introduced was the rupee, which was inaccessible to the local people. Most resource areas including mining areas, forests, and so on were gazetted and declared state land and taken over by the colonial Government. Slowly, trade and power shifted hands. The Arabs and other Asian merchants controlled the trade and commerce sector, while the Europeans ran the politics, routes and controlled the flow of the rupee.
CHAPTER 24: CLASS AND LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE 256-258

The Class Concept 257
Leadership 257
The Class Concept

Class was defined and associated with the power in resource planning, ownership and utilization. It was also seen as the ability and power to control people’s lives and culture, and religion. At a more domestic and family or clan level, it went as far as counting the number of homesteads one owned and the number of dependents he had. This would reveal the size of his wealth and his leadership capacity. At a more scientific level, class was seen in terms of the ability to innovate, assimilate, adapt and accommodate.

Often power was associated with men. They could marry many women and have many homesteads; they could employ an army to raid neighbouring clans for livestock, women and grains; they could acquire many unadulterated fields for agriculture, grazing and hunting. Therefore, they were the upper class. The women, who did all the implementation of what had been decided, took the lower class. Although the Tachon argue vividly that all were equal this was a mere division of roles, it still sticks out that the women were the low class group. They owned no property, were servants, and assumed a subordinate role in the home.

As they moved down and met Bantu speaking people, a new dimension to class definition was emerging. They were no longer pastoralists and hunters roaming around. They started settling and owning fixed property. The emergency of the capitalist society, including standards of value and exchange led to more classes: peasants, petty nobility and officialdom. Thus those with capital and liquid assets, and employers, formed the top class. They also influenced the politics in the land. The middle class was composed of employers and grassroots politicians including the baoyet. The lower class was composed of hunters, the landless and childless, and all those without a clear source of living. This new dimension ignored sex barriers.

As the society continued to develop, the population increased, intelligence and needs became diverse, and the methods of satisfying their needs changed. This called for change modification of the base on which the society operated to achieve its economic, social, cultural and political needs.

Leadership

Leadership in society emanated from two fronts. That the people made a leader, and that a leader was born a leader. However, roles in society demanded different types of leaders and leadership. A father was the head of the house and by virtue of his position in society. A mother, as the person who replicated culture and stratified religion, had an important role in moulding leaders and leadership styles.
Leadership went with activities and the audience. Where the activities strictly concerned women affairs, a woman leader was chosen. If these affairs affected the whole nation, the wife of the Letia was put in charge. In her absence, her eldest daughter was made responsible. If the matter concerned a clan, the wife of the clan elder was picked to lead the people. And if the matter involved a family, the eldest wife, in her absence her eldest daughter was identified to lead the family.

In cultural activities, the best cultured in that particular field was identified by the people to lead them. However, men made decisions as to the running of the state and other activities, mostly. The power of the tribe was vested with the Letia and his council or cabinet, who were identified by consensus. Decisions were also reached by consensus.
Chapter Twenty-Five

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Introduction

In the previous chapters, it was indicated that a Tachon family lived in a homestead olukoba. The family was bound together by common interest in inherited property, especially cattle, and common rituals.

Homesteads formed a village oyet, and villages formed the state Bwami. The head of the homestead was the father. The Muyoti was the head of the oyet. The Bayoti, were often, the commando leaders of their respective Oyets. The state was headed by the LETIA, who was the centre of power, security, wealth, and religion of the community. The Letiadom could have as many Oyets as there were homesteads and or clans. It provided a common territory and as such, allegiance to a common Letia by the clan, family and the lineage.

The state had a system of laws, rules, regulations and practices that were both civil and criminal. This system provided guidelines on family behaviour, property ownership, social rights and obligations, witchcraft, treason, suicide and other cultural wrongs. It also set procedures for remittance of taxes or gifts to the state for its continued growth and service to the general public.

The legal framework, in place then, characterized the relationships among and between people and their duties. Every man belonged to a clan, village and a lineage, and as such his behaviour was characteristic of his clan, village and lineage. The Tachon, further, believed that man’s behaviour was a product of his society, and as such the clan, the village and age-group were responsible for his behaviour, and were important tools in setting standards of managing their own behaviour. They were dependent and corporate in nature. All members, therefore, were mutually responsible for each other, according to the law.

Where a member of the lineage, village, clan or age group violated a certain section of the law, he was subject to his own peers within his group first, before the involvement of the state.

The legal framework also provided guidelines on dealing with disputes across the borders of the State into another tribe and to safeguard the sanctity of the nation. Therefore, to ensure the survival of the tribe, the community shared its wealth and possessions equally and avenged the death of a single one of its people by killing a member of the murderer’s tribe. Within the communal ethic, there was no duty to punish the killer himself, because an individual could easily vanish without trace into the wilderness and start a new society. Instead, one member of the enemy tribe was equivalent to another for such purposes: an eye for an eye. The vendetta or blood feud was the only way of ensuring a modicum of social security in a region where there was no central authority, where every tribal group was a law unto itself and where there was nothing comparable to the modern police force.
If a Letia failed to retaliate, nobody would respect his tribe and would feel free to kill its members with impunity. The vendetta was thus a rough and ready form of justice, which meant that no one tribe could easily gain ascendancy over any of the others.

**Judicial Structure**

The judicial framework was composed of the Letia, his Chief Minister, the Council of Elders, the Baoyet, the family heads and counselors. This framework provided five levels of arbitration as provided in the box below.

**Table 2: Judicial Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level One: The Letia and His Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Letia’s Council included the Chief Minister and an Assembly of sages representing each clan or olukoba in the land. The Council served as the Court of Appeal, the final court of arbitration in the land.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level Two: The Minister of Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Minister of Justice had two levels of jurisdictions: Council of Judges (Abakambi), who if they failed to arbitrate referred the case to the Letia’s Council. The judges included men and women of community versed in their lines of discipline. The second level was that of individual judges – women and men who listened to cases and provided counsel and if they were in doubt they referred their cases to the Council of Judges. Men arbitrated among men, and women among women. Where the case involved both men and women, a Council made up of women and men judges was constituted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level Three: Clan Elders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clan elders arbitrated in matters relating to their clan. They never interfered in matters of the state or other clans unless called upon to do so. They arbitrated over cases that could not be adequately dealt with by family leaders or heads of homesteads.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level Four: Family Elders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Elders stepped in to arbitrate in matters relating to their families. They dealt mostly with family feuds, domestic disagreements between and among children and across households, among co-wives, and so on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level Five: The Head of the Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The key person here was the father who was charged with the responsibility of bringing about discipline, good behaviour and respect of social ethics among his members of the household. He arbitrated matters related to his household. He would seek assistance of other elders in the family of clan when required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At its elementary stage, family heads heard the case. If any member was found on the wrong a substantial fine was pronounced. If the case was beyond the capacity and power of the family head, it was forwarded to clan elders for arbitration. Cases that this group could not handle were transferred to the Justice Minister, who would allocate it to a specific arbitrator, omukambi, who was either a woman or man, according to the nature of the case.

In addition to the ordinary legal structure, there were also special courts, such as the War Court, which dealt with cases related to war, weapons, and matters of treason. Penalty in matters of treason included stoning or spearing to death, hanging, or expulsion from society. Where a
member was not speared to death, stoned, hanged or expelled from society, he was kept in seclusion and denied access to light, food and all other basic needs until he died.

There was also a special court responsible for examining matters related to the abuse of culture, religion and practices of the people. If this court found you guilty of any abuses, the penalty was a goat, sheep, part of the harvest. If the abuse was severe, the member was expelled from society or secluded.

**Family Law**

Family Law regulated marriage, divorce and separation, offences against marriage and sex, custody of women and children after the death of the family head, and the care of the dependents.

**Marriage**

The law provided that only those who had undergone circumcision and baptism (both men and women) would get marriage. This therefore, happened when the men were in their middle twenties and early thirties, and the women were in their late tens and middle twenties.

Parents, with the participation of relatives, arranged the first marriage of their children. The man himself in consultation with his eldest wife arranged his subsequent marriages. Details on marriage negotiations are provided in Chapter 19: **Courting, Marriage and Procreation** section of this text.

Bride price was varied according to whether the woman was a virgin or non-virgin,. Further, the character of the woman, in addition to her commitment to agriculture and livestock, were determined. If she scored pluses in all these, her bride price was not less than thirty-six (36) animals. Normally, if a man could not produce any animals for bride price, the girl’s father could not consent to the marriage. This rarely happened, because the women were seen as belonging to the tribe, therefore the clan or the family of the prospective husband came together and contributed towards the bride price, unless it was the second and subsequent wives.

Where a female cow paid as bride price died without calving, the son-in-law was obligated to replace it with a heifer calf. On the other hand, the son-in-law would demand return of the bride price if his wife died without bearing him children, or they were divorced.

A married woman accepted the authority of her husband to observe marital fidelity and to bear him children. If she got children with other men while still married to him, the children were deemed to be his children; they took his name and that of his clan. Children belonged to the men.
Divorce

As stated elsewhere divorce was not something known among the Tachon, and only separation existed. There were three grounds that could justify separation. These included neglect and refusal to perform her wifely duties in the home and in the field; unfaithfulness; and finally witchcraft and being a wizard. However, if a man had to be forced to separate with his wife forever and on valid grounds, his bride price would be returned to him as he wished. This would only happen if he returned the woman and the children to her parents.

Sometimes, the women would initiate the separation. In this case, the elders would establish that either of the following grounds was valid:

- her husband was cruel and he beat her frequently and unreasonably;
- her husband did not take care of her and her children he had failed in his fatherly duties; and finally;
- She felt she was unable to bear children and she was not receiving the proper assistance from her husband.

Custody of Women, Children and Dependents

It was not mandatory that a widow, namulekhwa, remarry. However, the duty of maintaining the widow and her children fell on her late husband’s family and clan, particularly on his brother(s).

A widow was always known by her late husband’s name. For instance if Chemai Toto died and had a wife Chesina, on his death she will be referred to throughout her remaining life as Kwa Toto - of the late Toto. So that although her brother in law was responsible for her upkeep and paid her frequent visits, for as long as she had not formally remarried, children borne out of this relationship were identified as her late husband’s and would share in the property he left behind. But if she decided to remarry formally and her new husband (usually the brother or cousin to her late husband) fulfilled all the rituals and ceremonies of this kind of marriage, then she would still retain her late husband’s name, but the children borne of this relationship would not share in his property but that of their real father.

A widow could not be forced to accept any of her brothers in laws as a husband or keeper. She could also not be forced to remarry. If any of these happened, she could return to her parents and demand that whoever wanted to step into her late husband’s shoes should make a formal proposal. However, if her husband was wealthy and he left behind sons and small children, she would opt to stay on her own and look after the children and property of her late husband. This required a strong willed widow with the confidence of her parents on both sides. If her parents on both sides thought she would not be able to do this on her own, they convinced her to reconsider her decision. But if one of her sons was fully-grown and capable of decision-making, he was entrusted with the responsibility of looking after his mother.
Whoever was entrusted with the responsibility of looking after a widow, her children and property, provided both physical and material support. He was responsible for seeing that they had enough to eat, better shelter, clean home, and land properly protected. He was prevented from squandering the property, but only allowed to manage it in trust for the deceased’s children. Unless other reasons or the law prevented him, he was to live with her, eat the food and drink the beer prepared by her.

The children of the widow and any that were born to her subsequently were looked after by whoever had been entrusted with the responsibility of looking after their mother. He fully assumed the responsibility of their late father and was responsible to the clan for his actions.

Dependents included his aged parents, orphans under his care, and other children properly born outside marriage to his sisters or others. In this respect, they were deemed to be children of the widow, and she continued to look after them with the help of her adopted guardian (new 'husband'). For the aged parents, it was the responsibility of the brother of the deceased to take over.

**Property Law**

Property was counted in livestock, beehives and land. Livestock included cattle, goats and sheep.

**Cattle and Other Livestock**

Cattle had mystical and social value, and were a store of wealth for the family, clan and the state. This was the main reason why cattle raids were a common factor of dispute between these people and the Nandi and Maasai.

As a store of wealth, it was also a medium of exchange and a standard of value. It was used in settling bride price, homicide and assault cases, purchase of land, settlement of fines and taxes to the state, and given out as inheritance.

Like money, cattle could be invested, loaned and borrowed for a variety of reasons and at interest. The borrower received milk from the cattle, used them to plough his land, and also shared in heifers when they calved. Often the bulls from a borrowed heifer remained the property of the borrower. If they were invested, the owner surrendered a defined and standard number of female calves to the person looking after them. He did not claim milk from the investment, but claimed all bull calves. If the investment was in bulls that were used to fertilize cows in the village, the owner of the bull usually received a heifer calf as the price. If the bulls/ox were used in ploughing land, he received part of the grain harvest and beer as the fee. The charges were all regulated by the state and one could not demand more than was stipulated. The rates have not been available for this study.
A borrower of cattle was entitled to sub-lend to other borrowers, provided this was in the terms of borrowing, and the owner of the livestock had no obligation. However, he could not sell or slaughter the animals, their offsprings, nor transfer these animals as bride price. One condition in lending or investing was that the owner would know the whereabouts of his stock, their health, and visit them once or twice in a year.

A lender or investor was, on his part, entitled to demand the return of his animals at any time, provided he did not demand to have all his animals at once. If the lender/investor died before recalling his investment, his heir would renew or recall the investment. It should be known that an investment in livestock never got lost.

If a borrowed animal died in the custody of the borrower, he notified the owner quickly and presented him with the skin/hide of the dead. In compensation, he brought back 5 sheep, 4 goats and a basket of wimbi. If the animal did not die of sickness, the borrower shared the meat with his relatives and members of the clan who would also stand for him incase of prosecution or dispute.

A cow would be exchanged for sheep or goats. The standard measure was that one cow was equivalent to 30 sheep or 20 goats.

**Land**

Land served as a basic factor in the generation of economic livelihood throughout the community. The land, by law, belonged to the community. Therefore, there was state land from which each clan had a share, and a family benefited too. There was no individual land. As a result, settlement was regulated as follows:

- Land was held in trust for the future generations by the state. Individual families tilled the land to make sure it did not loose its texture or strangers did not claim it.
- A man who had no children did not own any land.
- A man who had only female children could not claim title to his land; neither could he transfer such land to his daughters, but to his brothers.
- A man may settle on land owned by a different clan to his if he was married to a woman from that clan, if his mother came from that clan or if his sister was married into that clan.

Land use was divided into cultivation, grazing and hunting. Cultivation land was within the homestead, or even a kilometer from the homestead, but within the area covered by the clan. Married men with families to support, and recently married couples cultivated additional land given to them on allotment by the clan and by implication of the state. Sons would have land sited close to their parent’s. A man or a clan could have as much land as they could manage, cultivate and tend for subsistence and hospitality purposes. Family land was usually fenced using shrubs of two types: *bident pilosa* *ebiloha* or *emibono*, and *esosian*.
Grazing land was within the proximity of homesteads or on plots set aside by the clan or the state for this purpose. Such fields were in proximity of water and salt licks. Herding of animals on these fields was by armed young men, because of threat of wildlife and enemy tribes with conflicting claims on the fields. Selection of grazing fields was by the Baoyet, with the approval of elders.

The selection of hunting fields was the prerogative of the elders in consultation with the Baoyet. The hunting fields were also guarded against people with conflicting claims. Hunting was practiced away from cultivated fields.

**Beekeeping and Honey**

Beekeeping (apiculture) was an ancient tradition of the people. Only certain homesteads and clans followed this practice. Everyone could not practice it. The Abachikha, Abahabiya, Abanyangali and Abamatili were the only ones who could practice apiculture with success. The beehives were erected on trees away from the homestead for the safety of families and children. There was no restriction as to the number of hives a man could erect. Honey harvested was used as medicine, in beer brewing and as bride-gifts.

**Inheritance of Property**

Inheritance of property was restricted to the family, clan and the state. The following were general guidelines on property inheritance:

- It belonged to the clan and would not go outside it.
- Only males inherited property.
- The principal heir to an estate was a man’s senior son. The sons to the eldest wife were senior to those of subsequent wives irrespective of their age. For twins, the one who came out first was the senior of the two.
- Sons were senior to their sisters, irrespective of their age and the seniority of their mother.
- Wives acquired their seniority from the order of their marriage to their husband and not by age. A widow was never counted as the wife of her present protector. She remained the wife of her husband of the ring.
- If any beneficiary was a minor, his mother, or uncle, or his senior brother held his share in custody for him.
- A man’s eldest son was his executor. If the son was still a minor, or there was no son, this responsibility was left to the man’s eldest or oldest brother still alive.
- The distribution of a man’s estate took place according to his verbal will to appointed elders. The distribution was at a gathering at his eldest wife’s homestead in the presence of his family, relatives and members of the clan. An elder supervised the distribution.
- A man’s personal chattels such as ornaments, weapons, ceremonial clothing, were inherited by sons or brothers in the following format:
• The spear, shield and master beer pot were given to the eldest son.
• The sword went to the second son.
• The bow and arrows were handed to the third son.
• The headdress was reserved for the eldest son born of his second wife.
• The monkey skin cloak *esumbati* and a snuffbox were given to his eldest brother.
• Personal ornaments, except beads and ear ornaments, worn on the right side of the body went to his eldest son. Those on his left side went to his second son. Beads and ear ornaments went to his third son.
• Household furniture, ceremonial gourd and utensils including bed skins, gourds; and stored grain went to the widow in whose house they were kept before his death.
  o A woman’s personal chattels were inherited by her daughters.
  o A man could not vary inheritance rules and regulations to suit his own particular case.

**Property Abuse**

Property could be abused in four major ways: arson, trespass, theft, and general damage.

**Arson** was defined to include attempted or actual destruction of property by fire. The rules in this respect were very specific. If the offender was caught in the act he could be: –

  o Killed by the owner of the property. The owner of the property would be compelled to go through the formal procedure to settle a homicide case.
  o The owner of the property would arrest the arsonist and arraign him before the elders for prosecution. In this respect, the arsonist would be compelled to pay the owner of the property an ox and a sheep. He would also be required to contribute to the reconstruction of the property. The sheep was used in the cleaning of the home and family of the owner of the property against any other such attempts.
  o If the arsonist had no animals or capacity to settle the fine, his store of grains and chattels would be seized, his crop on the farm harvested or destroyed, or his house pulled down.
  o If the arsonist was very poor and a known nuisance, he was expelled from the community.

If the fire also killed a member of the clan or family, the arsonist would be charged for arson and homicide. However, if he was caught and killed on the spot, this would be cancelled out.

**Trespass** included crossing another’s cultivated field, being found in another’s house or homestead or kraal without authority, and invading the privacy of another’s wife without his knowledge and consent.
In either case, the trespasser was punished depending on the magnitude of the crime. For crossing a cultivated field, the trespasser was punished depending on the magnitude of the crime. For crossing a cultivated field, the trespasser was fined a basket of grains. Being found in another’s house, kraal, homestead, would be looked at as intended crime, whether adultery, rape, theft, fornication, witchcraft, or wizardry, and appropriate fine imposed.

**Theft of property** enlisted serious punishment, including restitution or corporal punishment, or payment of a fine in form of live animals or grain to the community. For theft of cattle, the thief received restitution and was ordered to replace the animals. In addition he was fined an ox, a goat and a sheep. If he failed to fulfill this, his crops or animals would be seized and handed over to the owner of the cattle.

For theft of sheep or goats, the thief was ordered to return the animals, and in addition fined either a goat or a sheep.

**Damage to Property** was looked at by property. For killing an animal owned by another, the killer was fined an ox and ordered to replace the killed animal. For cutting off the ox-tail or any other mutilation, the offender would be fined an ox and a sheep.

For destruction of buildings, the offender would be beaten and compelled to repair the buildings. For damage to crops, the offender was compelled to replace the crop by transferring his harvest to the owner of the crop that was destroyed. Failure to do this, his farm and stores would be invaded and the whole crop or harvest taken.

**Assault and Homicide**

The state viewed assault as a social crime to be resolved through dialogue, if it failed to be brought before the state machinery for prosecution. Homicide, on the other hand, was an issue that could be disposed of immediately after the blood-price or a head for a head. However, the state required involvement of elders of affected parties to avoid further losses of men.

**Assault**

The criminal aspect of assault was dealt with like any other crime. However, assault was divided into minor, severe and serious. In minor assaults, a man could retaliate, provided he did so at the time of attack, or seek compensation for any injury inflicted.

The offender would seek the forgiveness of the injured; otherwise he would be brought before the family, clan or state judicial system. In severe and serious assaults, the compensation varied according to the extent of the injury.
An assault was an assault, regardless of the circumstances, whether deliberate or accidental. For instance, an assault as a result of being drunk or as a result of mild provocation resulting into injury of any magnitude would yield compensation, formal apologies and forgiveness. If the offender would not plead guilty and apologize, he would be arraigned before the elders who would decide. If the offender was of the same age-grade as the injured, the reprimand was very severe. It was even much worse if a person of a lower age-grade assaulted his senior.

If an assault afflicted deep injury to one person or two, the offender was fined one bull and a 50-kilogram of honey. If the assaulted and injured were more than two, the penalty was two bulls and two debes of honey or more depending on the decision of the panel. The animal, which was paid to the injured, was slaughtered and the injured would eat the roasted flesh and drink blood. The elders from both sides would also eat of this meat and drink of this blood. The blood was taken by the injured to give him new strength. The honey was used with hot water in massaging the affected parts, and also in brewing beer that would be taken on the forgiveness day.

A man who injured his own wife or child produced a goat that was slaughtered and eaten, and honey, which was both eaten and used as a drug for treating the injuries. If his wife or child injured a member of another family or clan, it was upon him to meet the fines imposed.

There were cases where a man who had been sent on an errand by another met an accident or was attacked and injured. In this case, the sender and the attackers would each be required to make some compensation. The regulated rates for compensation in case of an accident or an attack in this line were as follows:

Where one attacked the person sent, the attacker will meet the penalty as stated above, while the sender would produce one cow in all instances. The Table below summarises penalties given for different types of assault and resulting injury.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature Of Accident</th>
<th>Part Of The Body Hurt And Or Lost</th>
<th>Penalty To Sender (S) or Attacker (A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lightening</td>
<td>Any part of the body and resulting in death.</td>
<td>A bull (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snake-bite</td>
<td>Any part</td>
<td>A bull (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Animal</td>
<td>Any part</td>
<td>A bull (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fall</td>
<td>Any part</td>
<td>None, man’s own fault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Attack</td>
<td>A finger or a toe or an eye</td>
<td>A cow, a bull and a goat (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two fingers</td>
<td>Two cows, a bull and a goat (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two eyes</td>
<td>Eight cows, a bull and a goat (A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Homicide

Cases of homicide were dealt at the clan level, if it affected a member of the Tachon community. If the victim or the murderer was from outside the Tachon community, the case was dealt at the Letia’s office. Homicide was homicide, and there was no difference between murder and manslaughter.

A murder concerning a member of the same clan was resolved in the same manner as that of a different clan or tribe. The only difference was at the level of participation of the tribe, clan and family.

1. **A Murdered Member of a Different Clan/Tribe**

If the murderer/killer disappeared before he was caught, a member of his clan would be put to death by the other clan. If he was caught in the time he could either be murdered too, or be brought before a council of elders for prosecution.

A member was usually prosecuted if his clan or family discovered the murder in advance and approached their elders and those of the victim’s clan requesting forgiveness and expressing the willingness to resolve the matter without the loss of another life. They contributed a heifer to the deceased’s family as a gesture of goodwill and to serve as an injunction against retaliation.

When the matter was later heard and determined, the compensation payable to the bereaved family was usually 30 cows, 2 bulls, one goat and one sheep for male victims. Female victims were compensated twelve (12) cows; a bull, a goat and a sheep were the fine. If any of these cows died, the skin was returned to the originating clan to be replaced with another cow.

The animals of judgment were distributed as follows:

- **The Goat and One Bull** were slaughtered and eaten by the bereaved clan.
- **The Sheep** was used in cleansing the family of the bereaved so that a similar incidence may not happen again.
- **The 1st Cow, ying’ombwe ye esibanga**, described as the cow of blood, was given to the deceased’s wife (if married) or mother (if not married)
The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Cow, \textit{ying’ombe yo omurwe}, the cow of the fallen head, was given to the senior wife of the deceased or his mother. The kraal in which this cow went is where all the other animals were accommodated.

The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Cow, \textit{ying’ombe yo oluyingo}, the cow of the archer, went to the family of the father of the dead.

The 4\textsuperscript{th} Cow went to the eldest son of the deceased’s eldest sister. Sometimes the sisters to the deceased may not have sons, in this case the cow was retained by one of the brothers of the deceased. Where the eldest son of the eldest sister received the cow, he would share the heifer and calves of the cow with the eldest sons of the deceased’s other sisters. If any of these sons wanted to get a heifer calf, he brought a bull, a goat and beer. On receiving the heifer, he would tend it to maturity, and when it calved, he would share the calves with his full brothers only.

The 5\textsuperscript{th} Cow \textit{ying’ombe ye esikamo}, the cow of the maternal uncle, was given to the deceased’s mother’s family, usually to her eldest brother. When the cow calved, he shared the female calves with his brothers. Any of his brothers who needed a calf brought a bull, a goat and beer before he was given a female calf.

The 6\textsuperscript{th} Cow, \textit{ying’ombe ye mulokoba}, the cow of the clan, was given to a clan elder nearly related to the deceased. When the cow calved, the heifers were shared with the clan members.

The remaining twenty-four (24) cows remained with the deceased’s senior wife or mother, as the case may be.

2. A Member Of The Same Family Or Clan

If a man killed his own child or near relative, the fine was as above, depending on whether the child was female or male. But, if he killed his childless wife, and he had not cleared the bride price this was to be cleared immediately. If he killed a wife who had borne him children, the fine was twelve cows, a bull, a goat and a sheep to the clan.

These animals were kept for the children by the clan, if they had not reached maturity age. For a still born child or a miscarriage as a result of torture, a bull and a goat, and a sheep to cleanse the family.

If a man killed a member of his own family he was responsible to his age group. The age group protected him and contributed towards the fine.

\textbf{Witchcraft and Other Vices}

Witchcraft included the works of witches and or wizards. It is alleged to have come into the community by the hands of women brought in as wives from
other tribes, especially from among the Bagisu Banyala, and Kabras. Witchcraft was, therefore, inherited through the mother.

Witchcraft was considered a very serious immoral act against man and his creator. It was the tendency to want evil to prevail over the God Of All Good. It was therefore, a very serious crime. Any confirmed witches were beaten to death, burnt or expelled from society. However, if a suspected wizard or witch protested her innocence and asked for forgiveness, she would be allowed to stay, provided her husband welcomed her back home and the home was cleansed, and the gods were sought for forgiveness and protection. In this respect, her husband slaughtered a bull and swore his innocence too, and pledged that the family, including his wife would maintain good behaviour. If the husband was not supportive, even after the tribe had pardoned her, he was allowed to divorce her in the normal way.
FURTHER READING

BOOKS

8. Hobley C.W., District Officer North Kavirondo, Kenya from Chartered Company to Crown Colony (1895), and the Pacification of Western Kenya.
15. Jean Guerard, Navigator And Hydrograph In Dieppe, Universal Hydrographical Map (1634 Ace).


37. Vol.10, *Encyclopedia America: Egypt To Falsetto*


39. Wagner, G., *The Bantu Of Western Kenya With Special Reference To The


**Seminar Papers, Reports And Memorandums**


2. - East African Standard July 8, 1905, January 21, 1911 And October 14, 1911.


5. Letter # Adm. 3/3/7/204 Of 22nd December 1958 From G.N. Hampson, The Provincial Commissioner Nyanza In Reply To A Letter From The President Of The Tachon Union Of 16th October 1958, On Tachon Identity And Alien Rights.


9. - Native Labour Commission Report No.1


14. TWAF, Memorandum For Commissions To Demarcate Constituency And Regional Boundaries, 1962.


Demmahom Olovodes Lihraw, B.COM, MBA, DBA is a management and development consultant and a student of sustainable communities. He has worked with communities in Kenya, Africa and America for over 30 years during which he has closely studied their beliefs and practices, and how these have influenced capital formation and human development. The Tachon Peoples is one of the groups that he has studied.

Dr. Lihraw believes that human development can only occur when we understand people properly, and we are able to facilitate them to tap their development potential. This understanding is in the unfolding of the people’s traits, skills and resources. Some of these may require taking a journey into the past to discover how people evolved, grew and developed.

Dr. Lihraw is currently studying the Tachon Peoples religion and its contribution to modernity.