A STUDY OF CHANGE IN CIRCUMCISION RITUALS AMONG THE ABALUYIA OF BUNGOMA AND KAKAMEGA DISTRICTS OF WESTERN KENYA SINCE 1910 A. D.

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This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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ABSTRACT OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS THESIS

This study is an investigation of Abaluyia philosophy, specifically values reflected in ceremonial activities. It focuses on change which has occurred in traditional configurations of three different Abaluyia circumcision traditions (Bukusu--Kakamega--Tiriki) since 1910 A. D. Over two hundred seventy interviews have been conducted on symbols and actions of this rite of passage to supplement library and archive sources relevant to the study.

After the introduction defining the problem of the study, theory undergirding this probe is outlined in chapter two. The model used is based upon "cultural themes" -- dynamic forces operating in dialectic tension near the cultural core of a system. Themes are viewed as heuristic, aiding discovery of factors controlling behavior or stimulating those values which are deemed to be vital to the society. The thrust of research in this study is to extend the utility of "cultural themes" by using them when measuring change. While the framework of most early employment of themes has treated society as if it were stationary, this study takes samples during six decades to plot change in cultural configurations.

Three traditional circumcisions (representing geographic epicentres) are described in chapter three, circa 1910 A. D. Historical and oral sources are used to give constructs of these ceremonies. A previously unrecorded ritual, the Khulicha ceremony of the Bukusu, is documented in this section along with other details of circumcision.

Six cultural themes are extracted from the rites of traditional circumcision/seclusion in chapter four. (1) Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation (calling on spirits which are normally

avoided, especially ancestors, to participate in the rites so a new generation can be integrated into the social structure). (2) Invoking Spirits in Promotion of Fecundity (imploring both known and unknown/feared spirits so that benevolent ancestral spirits can promote fertility and repressive spirits be neutralized). (3) Suppressing Witchcraft (deactivating those in the community having inherent anti-social tendencies). (4) Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation (promoting corporate aspirations with the threat of destruction for selfish individuals) (5) Seeking Extension of Association (promoting relations beyond clan lines to project influence and provide security by creating obligations which can be drawn upon in difficulties). (6) Promoting Courage and Human Dignity (encouraging aggressive traits along with discipline to help impart identity and to strengthen the society).

Two conclusions are made after the identification of these six cultural themes, namely: (1) there is coalesced thematic expression in Abaluyia circumcision rituals which makes it possible to say that those of Bungoma and Kakamega Districts had a quite unified world view circa 1910 A. D., as well as a common linguistic base contributing to their identity; and (2) that the rites of traditional circumcision reflect both rational and mysterious elements. Thus they serve both as enculturative instructions about how youths are to act in their new roles and at the same time promote dynamic activity (spirit participation) through their performance.

Chapter five traces development in these three circumcision traditions since 1910. Historical data is melded with a "randomized quota" survey giving 205 descriptions of individual circumcisions from 1911 through 1972. These indicate that the Bukusu have retained

a high percentage of the traditional symbols (85 %, see Figure Number 9), while Kakamega and Tiriki peoples have rejected most of them. It is concluded that the rejection of the ancestral cult among these two Southern Abaluyia types is a principle factor influencing decline in traditional practices. The Bukusu retention of tradition in this rite of passage appears to indicate they have applied westernism as a veneer over their traditional framework.

Chapter six is a description of a "typical" circumcision for each of the three traditions, circa 1972. This illustrates erosion, or lack of it, in each circumcision type since the "traditional" era.

Two hypotheses formulated for this study are evaluated in chapter seven. One is confirmed, the second nullified.

The hypothesis which appears validated is that "there is a continuity at the cultural theme level among rituals of the traditional circumcisions studied which contrasts with the variants in actions and symbols related to each tradition." Data presented in chapter four is evidence for considering this theme corroborated.

The hypothesis which is nullified states, "cultural themes which were sharply challenged by Christian missions have undergone significant changes or have decreased viability within the time span since 1910 A. D. as compared with those which were unchallenged." It is negated becauses indexes of cultural themes do not show more than decade long individual response to challenges, and in inconclusive patterns at that. Rather cultural themes in each tradition appear to be interlocked, having either unified viability or a tendency to erode simultaneously.

The writer anticipates that documenting the degree of retention of traditional actions in one rite of passage adds a new dimension in probing the cultural model of the Abaluyia and indicates added potential for use of cultural themes in the study of societies undergoing rapid change.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A. THE ABALUYIA PEOPLE: A GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Abaluyia are a people of almost one and a third million whose traditional home is in the highlands northeast of Lake Sango (Victoria) in what is known as the Western Province of Kenya.[1] Their habitation is bounded on the east by the Nandi escarpment, at the north by Mount Elgon, to the south by areas inhabited by the Luo peoples who live close to Lake Sango, to the West by the Teso people, and, for the purpose of this study, the international boundary between Kenya and Uganda despite the fact that some Abaluyia live in Uganda.[2]

The Abaluyia are part of the northeastern extremes of Bantu-speakers' expansion and as such are almost completely surrounded by peoples of other tongues: the Luo, the Kalenjin (Nandi) and Teso. They are related to Bantu-speaking neighbours on the Uganda border, the Bagisu, and also to the Gusii who are located in the highlands east of the Kavirondo Gulf of Lake Sango. Some seventy miles of Luo territory separate the Gusii from the Maragoli who are their closest relatives in the Abaluyia family.

Prior to the Colonial period, the Bantu-speaking peoples of "North Nyanza" had no common name. In their traditional organization there was little interaction beyond clan levels. The Colonial powers began calling them the "Bantu Kavirondo."[3] The name was not appreciated because it was suspected of meaning "those who squat on their heels," a reference to laziness.

But no early indigenous replacement was suggested as a generic designation for these peoples. In June 1935 the name "Baluyia" was adopted by the North Kavirondo Central Association but did not gain wide acceptance until after the Second World War.[4]

Names of the various "tribes" of these peoples were assigned by early European administrators. These titles are artificial units hacked out by the Colonialists.

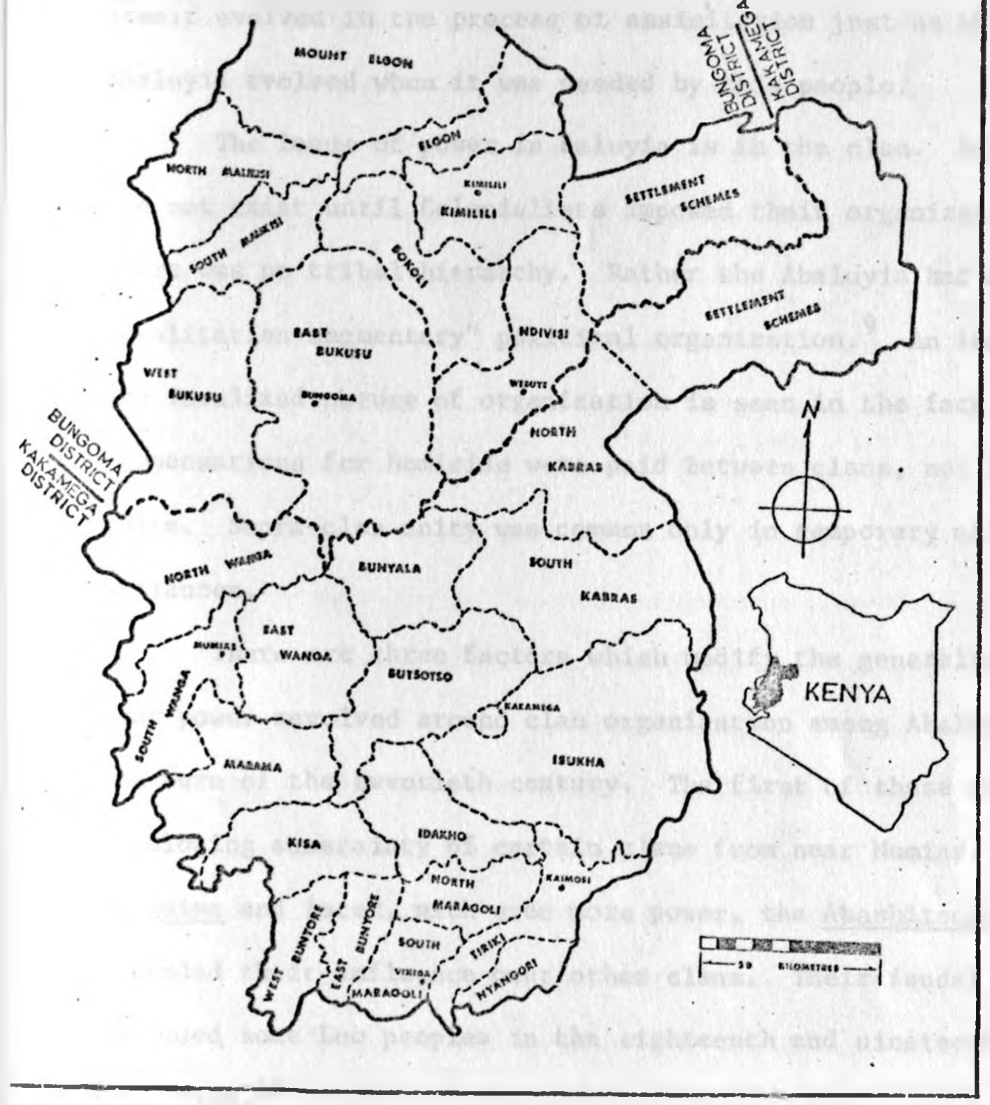
> . . .after the establishment of British Administration, various clans and sub-clans were regrouped into sub-locations and locations, each consisting of several small clans and one or two major ones. The new administrative unit, the location, came to be identified with the dominant clan from which it derived its name.[5]

So the seventeen "tribes" which courts and some social scientists recognize[6] got their names from the Colonial practice of divide and rule. They are little more than extensions of prominent clans recognized during the organization of locations. In transactions involving the government, these names are used by the Abaluyia. But in domestic and traditional contexts, the clan once again places a person in society. (See Map Number 1 for Locations and the two Districts of Western Region which are the centres from which this study is taken).

Although the Bantu-speakers of North Nyanza are called the Abaluyia, a united family, those "from the same ridge" or "of the same fire," i. e., those who counsel together,[7] their unity is fragile beyond clan level. A maze of migration patterns brought the clans into the area where they meshed with or confronted other peoples such as the Kalenjin, Luo and Teso. In fact the Abaluyia have been identified by one of their own scholars as "an amalgum of sorts, a hybrid community."[8]

MAP NUMBER 1

BUNGOMA AND KAKAMEGA DISTRICTS
WESTERN REGION, KENYA



These peoples incorporated many of their neighbours' practices as they expanded. Apparently they succeeded in absorbing many enemies by imposing their language over the pioneers they met in these districts and later waves of immigrants also. Identity itself evolved in the process of assimilation just as the name Abaluyia evolved when it was needed by this people.

The locus of power in Baluyia is in the clan. Sub-tribes did not exist until Colonialists imposed their organization. There was no tribal hierarchy. Rather the Abaluyia had an "egalitarian segmentary" political organization.[9] An index of the localized nature of organization is seen in the fact that compensations for homicide were paid between clans, not larger units. Supra-clan unity was common only in temporary military alliances.

There are three factors which modify the generalization that power revolved around clan organization among Abaluyia at the turn of the twentieth century. The first of these was the developing suzerainty of certain clans from near Mumias. The Abamuima and later, with even more power, the Abashitsetse clans extended their influence over other clans. Their feudal power included some Luo peoples in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[10]

The second factor moderating this generalization involves the residents of the Southeastern corner of Abaluyia "reserves." There influences of Kalenjin (Nandi-Terik) age-groups undergird the society. Circumcision age-classes were more important there in establishing status than were clans.[11] These people have descendants in present-day Tiriki and Nyang'ori locations.

The third factor transcending clan authority was the existence of walled villages. In the pre-colonial period conflict forced most of the Abaluyia into villages for protection. While the village and clan were largely synonymous among the Southern Abaluyia, people of many different lineages put themselves under the leadership of a strong man for protection among the Bukusu. The locus of political power rested with leaders of these walled villages. Thus many pre-colonial Abaluyia were identified by both village and clan.[12]

With these modifiers, clans were the largest basic unit of organization among the Abaluyia. They were autonomous and defended their territory. Elders' councils came from clansmen. Only ritual leaders had more influence than the clan's leaders and that because they often had extra-tribal reputations.[13]

All Abaluyia clans are patrilineal, exogamous and segmented into lineages down to the extended family. In the traditional period among the Southern Abaluyia (Maragoli, Idakho, Isukha, etc.), local communities were controlled by one clan. Land belonged to patrisibs. Sibs residing on a ridge would determine whether an immigrant could cultivate there. Sub-clans were more or less contiguous social groups. But in Bukusu villages to the north, many different lineages were gathered in one walled village. Land was held in common by residents regardless of lineage.[14]

Marriage extended kinship systems between the clans. In the pre-colonial era a Muluyia could define his relationship to another clan if anyone from the two clans was known to have married within the last six generations. If there had been no union within that period, the two were called "laughing relations"

(Bakulu) and could make ridiculous demands on each other during rituals.[15] The relations of marriage may not have cemented the Abaluyia politically, but they were a key to informal extension of relationships.

Clans were largely self-sufficient. They were headed by a council of elders. Each elder generally had a polygynous extended family of wives, their unmarried children and his adult sons with their wives and unmarried children. Each wife had her own house and circumcised sons had their own houses which were usually clustered near the homes of their respective mothers.

Competition was common among patrisibs.

> The polygynous household is both a microcosm and the starting point of a segmentary society. Not only is there competition over the inheritance between sons of the same mother, but between the descendants of the several wives. . .Lineage friction is thus endemic not only in the existence of more than one son, but in the possession of more than one wife.[16]

There were no institutions in Abaluyia society beyond the clan strong enough to exert regular coercion over people. This fact is reflected in the extensive use of oaths, ordeals and sorcery in settling disputes.[17] Justice was dispensed in clan meetings by calling upon ancestral spirits to judge transgressions. Principle institutions were clan oriented: weak patrilineal descent groups, age-grades and councils of clan elders.

B. ARAB AND EUROPEAN INCURSIONS TO BALUYIA

Arab slave traders and ivory hunters made forays into Abaluyia territory in the nineteenth century. The Abaluyia appear to have been protected earlier by the Maasai to the east who frustrated the slavers. But Swahili caravans began reaching

northern Lake Sango (Victoria) via Maasailand around 1857.[18] The first European to arrive was the explorer, Joseph Thompson. He entered the decaying village of the late Shiundu of the Abashitsetse clan in 1883 where Mumia received him. After exploring the land down to Samia, Thompson returned to the coast via Mount Elgon.[19] In 1885 Bishop Hannington and his party passed through Mumia's village on the ill-fated trip to Uganda where the Bishop was killed before arriving at the Buganda kingdom. A party from Hannington's contingent remained at Mumia's and, incidentally, observed the king's (nabongo's) circumcision.[20]

Baluyia became a minor scene in the imperial struggles of world powers shortly afterwards. Frederick Jackson, the representative of the Imperial British East African Company and Dr. Carl Peters, representing German interests, contested for influence in Western Kenya from 1889. They were unaware that their efforts were largely symbolic since the two governments agreed in a London meeting in 1890 that Uganda and the route into it should be a British "sphere of influence."[21] Within two years Lugard had built a chain of stations from Mombasa to the Nile for the Company. One of the stations was in Mumia's village called Mumias. Transition from Charter Company to government supervision occurred within five years with Squires and Hobley being the first British representatives in 1895. In this way the British flag came over the Abaluyia.[22]

The British were welcomed by the Abashitsetse who saw their presence as a buttress to the clan's influence. Just as Mumia's people had used the guns of Swahili traders to project themselves in the balance of power in Western Kenya, they hoped

to use Europeans to extend suzerainty. But the visitors had their own goals and subterfuged Mumia when they brought in forces to establish a safe trade/travel route to Uganda. He soon became a figurehead who watched as major battles were fought which established British rule, not that of the Abashitsetse clan, over other Abaluyia. The Bukusu were defeated when one hundred fifty Sudanese soldiers, nine hundred Waganda and two hundred Uasin Gishu warriors killed about four hundred twenty Bukusu.[23]

The Abaluyia were aware that they faced an enemy with superior skills after hearing of the Bukusu battle and a major Luo confrontation in 1896 when 200 Luos were killed with a maxim gun.[24] The Bunyala and Kabras capitulated after minor skirmishes, then other areas submitted without a fight. Hobley led an expedition against the Nyang'ori in 1903 where a number were killed,[25] and in a major expedition in 1905 where over 150 people were slain.[26] From that time organized resistance ceased and only isolated cases of opposition occurred such as that of a killing in Maragoli in 1905 while withstanding Willis' setting up a mission station in Vihiga for the Anglicans.[27]

In 1906 the Bukusu surrendered sixty rifles to the government. Although Europeans were still restricted from traveling for a time,[28] the old pattern of living in walled villages began to be abandoned by the Abaluyia. Settlements began to be scattered across hillsides. The land was not crowded at that time with territory in the northern areas having been settled between four and six generations back and those in the south as far as sixteen generations in the past.[29]

The area called "Lakes Province" and later Nyanza Province was transferred from Uganda to the East Africa Protectorate, the future Kenya, in 1902.[30] By 1908 the government was strong enough to have established political and economic policies[31] which included offering Western education and freedom for mission societies to teach.

The Friends Africa Industrial Mission (Quakers) established a station at Kaimosi in Tiriki (extreme southeastern corner of Abaluyia "reserves") in 1902.[32] Mill Hill missionaries started teaching Catholicism from Mumias in 1903.[33] J. J. Wilis settled in Maragoli (Vihiga) in 1905 but within the year turned that station over to the Quakers and started the Anglican mission at Maseno. The Anglicans and Quakers agreed that the CMS missionaries would work with the Jaluo while the Friends would evangelize the "Bantu."[34] But the presence of other missions which were not part of this "comity" agreement forced its being dropped. In 1905 the South African Compounds and Interior Mission located at Kima in Bunyore and competition began for "spheres" of religious influence.[35] By 1914 there were seven missionary societies established in Nyanza and most of them had active works among the Abaluyia.[36]

Different attitudes existed among the Abaluyia about the possible benefits of associating with Westerners. At first the Bukusu resisted all overtures. The Quakers also found the Tiriki and Nyang'ori apathetic as compared with other "tribes" of the south. But the majority of the Abaluyia were open to overtures. "Chiefs" often met missionary explorers and gave them gifts while begging them to settle nearby and educate their sons.[37]

The Abaluyia overlooked the fact that white men came with the attitude that "every thought of the African's heart is evil,"[38] because they saw potential in Western education. By 1937 there were 547 schools operated in North Nyanza (roughly equivalent to Abaluyia residence areas) by missions.[39] The missions were also claiming huge followings. The Friends Africa Mission had 31,000 adherents, the Mill Hill (Catholic) Mission, 12,000 and the Anglicans lamented the fact that their church was a huge baptizing machine with 50,000 untaught adherents in the whole of Nyanza by 1935.[40]

The Abaluyia were, and are not introverted. They are among the most open East African peoples in their social and philosophical systems. The receptivity to innovations make them fit subjects for studying the interaction of traditional and introduced cultural elements in a transitional period.

C. RELEVANT STUDIES ON THE ABALUYIA

Early administrators such as Hobley and Dundas were sufficiently aware of the impact of their presence in Western Kenya to publish their findings as amateur ethnologists.[41] A pioneer Catholic missionary, Fr. Stam, also published three works on the Abaluyia which, if nothing else, trace his growing understanding of their ontology. At first Stam felt the Abaluyia believed in a pantheon of dieties but later he credited them with monotheism.[42]

Gerhard Lindblom, who is known for his definitive work among the Akamba of Kenya, wrote a monogram on the Abaluyia in 1932.[43] It appears that he relied mainly on informants and

never lived among the Abaluyia nor tested any theses among them.

The most monumental work on the Abaluyia remains that of Gunter Wagner which was first published as The Bantu of Kavirondo and later as The Bantu of Western Kenya.[44] It has extensive descriptions of the social systems and the ritual life of the Abaluyia peoples. Like other ethnologies of the period, it is voluminous but not always analytical. Its chief value is its scope.

Another valuable study is Walter H. Sangree's, Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya.[45] Sangree analyzes the indigenous social structure and the way it has meshed with the introduced church/government hierarchy. He also observes the mechanism by which bureaucracy is used to maintain social order during a period of rapid social change. Jan Jacob de Wolf[46] has a similar study of the Bukusu. In it he concludes that the individualism of pre-colonial days in that area has not been materially affected by Western innovations.

Two valuable historical sources are available in the writings of Gideon Were and J. M. Lonsdale. Dr. Were, by using oral history, has traced the migration patterns and history of the peoples who became the Abaluyia for the past sixteen generations.[47] Lonsdale has written a well documented history of Western Kenya from the time of the first European contact until the end of the Second World War with emphasis on the Colonial influence.[48]

A number of studies of missions and educational policies have been conducted,[49] but they are of secondary value to this

study. Other research is in progress but results are not available for incorporation in this thesis.[50]

The degree of dependence upon and agreement with written sources will become apparent as the study progresses. Library materials were supplemented in this thesis with over 250 interviews and observations of fifteen rituals. The object of this study has been to give a more penetrating analysis to the ritual/social systems of the Abaluyia.

D. THE NEED FOR THIS STUDY

This study was deemed viable after early investigations indicated that a void exists in analysis of the social dynamic of Abaluyia rituals. Earlier studies which included data on ritual systems were either brief or more descriptive than analytical. The longer descriptions were not written after extensive observations but were drawn from interviews with aged informants. The one adequate interpretation of circumcision rituals, that of Sangree on the Tiriki, does not analyze ritual meaning but is targeted on the way traditional social structures have meshed with church and government bureaucracy.[51]

That a vacuum exists in ethnological research among the Abaluyia is indicated by the fact that Angela Molnos' study for family planning in East Africa[52] has no trained social scientist to interpret the value system of these peoples. They are the largest ethnic group included in her study of East African peoples not having a professional contributor from a discipline of the social sciences. This points to the need for further research in a people who are the third largest "tribe" in Kenya.

E. THE PROBLEM IN THIS STUDY

The goal of this study is to observe the change which has occurred in emotional configurations of a people who have experienced an almost revolutionary transition from the traditional to a pluralistic orientation since the turn of this century. Preliminary field work indicated that the traditional configurations and the proximate dilemma are juxtaposed in the rituals of the major rites of passage of the Abaluyia. These peoples have been undergoing such rapid change that many of the trappings of traditional life have given way to trends and influences from the West. But the traditional base, albeit with an overlay of westernism, becomes observable in activities connected with birth, circumcision, marriage and death.[53]

Once circumcision rituals were chosen as the area of focus,[54] specific goals were formulated. Two problems relating to the continuity of traditionalism in different circumcision rituals were proposed. These are:

(1) Whether or not there is a continuum or unity at the "cultural theme"[55] level of analysis among the Abaluyia in contrast to variants in actions and symbols within the various circumcision traditions.

(2) The relative viability of symbols related to cultural themes in communities or areas having three different circumcision traditions.[56] The degree to which these themes continue to be reflected in circumcision by decade in this century and whether themes have individual viability or an infrastructure of relations which cause cultural themes to

stand or fall together as a ritual comes under pressure from modern/western influences is measured.

Procedures followed by chapter in this study relating to these two problems are:

(1) Collating data from historical sources, interviews with ritual experts and observations of rituals into a full description of traditional Abaluyia circumcisions.[57] This material is found in chapter three.

(2) Developing a theoretical model capable of integrating study of a culture's emotional configurations with change. This material is found in chapter two.

(3) Interpreting symbols, events and components of three different Abaluyia circumcisions (Bukusu--Kakamega--Tiriki) to obtain "cultural themes" of these peoples by using indigenous exegesis and the social and symbolic context of actions of circumcision/seclusion.[58] This data is presented in chapter four.

(4) Measuring and interpreting change in the three different circumcision "types" described in this study by conducting a "randomized quota" sample of two hundred five different circumcisions and collating the findings with historical data. This should aid measuring the process and amount of change which is occurring in three different community types of the Abaluyia. Material including the "randomized collection" tempered with historical strictures is presented in chapter five.

(5) Describing "typical" circumcisions of the three types investigated after over fifty years of interaction with

Western and mission influences. This is chapter six of this thesis.

(6) Drawing conclusions and making suggestions for further studies. The hypotheses tested are set forth in this section and evaluated in view of data collected. This material is found in chapter seven of this thesis.

F. THE VALUE OF THIS STUDY

It is hoped that this study will be of value to both the academic community and those with more pragmatic goals. Hopefully it may contribute to better theorizing by giving a clearer picture of the process of change in a society which has been open to innovations. It may also be an aid to other studies of the Abaluyia which have found it difficult to integrate the effect of traditional emotional configurations on the social/historical process. The culture of the Abaluyia was viable when Europeans came to "civilize" the land, and it continues to have its traditional undergirding. This fact must not be forgotten nor passed over lightly in studies of modern Abaluyia history.

The way change has occurred as outlined in this study may give insights to those involved in innovative roles--be they government officials, technicians or church leaders. The government's aim of attaining economic power and self-sufficiency should be more easily attained if those involved in cross-cultural communication have a degree of understanding of the Abaluyia peoples. This applies not only to expatriates but also to other Kenyans who do not know the social milieu because

they are from other parts of the country. Such projects as family planning and water-boiling can be more successfully implemented if one is aware of the viable "cultural themes" of the society and the manner in which change which is occurring in this society is being effected.

G. SCOPE/DELIMITS OF THIS STUDY

An Ethnic Study: This study of the Abaluyia people is concerned only with those residing in the Western Region of Kenya and does not include urbanized Abaluyia or those of Uganda. While an ethnic study, it will be directed toward smaller units among the Abaluyia since their society has great variety in it--being described as a "hybrid community."[59] The diversity which was observed in preliminary field work made it appear expedient to preclude study in Busia District where Abaluyia have assimilated enough Nilotic Luo words and habits to be quite different from "kinsmen" of Kakamega and Bungoma Districts. These restrictions still leave over one million people in two Districts for consideration.[60]

The Rite to be Studied: The wealth of material available on rites of passage made it necessary to further limit the study. Field research showed that two rites of the Abaluyia are richer in symbolism than others, namely circumcision and death/memorial rites. Birth, other puberty rituals and marriage ceremonies vary more with local circumstances and do not appear as fruitful for an analysis of this scope.

After a year's work had been done on circumcision and death rituals, it became apparent that too much material was being

gathered for a single study and that the subject under consideration was still not precise enough to be handled in one analysis.

So circumcision rituals were chosen for further consideration for the following reasons. Circumcision rites are practiced on age-sets or classes and thus community involvement over an extended period with a number of initiates is observable. Also circumcision has been a major point of contention for "tribe," mission and government.[61] The obvious affinity of circumcision rituals with the ancestral cult brought out conflict among those parties. Finally, circumcision is a time when community moods can be measured since there is awareness that the next generation is being moulded by cultural perceptions and ideals inhering in the rituals.

The claim is made that in the area studied, circumcision is the de facto sign of manhood. Wagner concluded:

> Circumcision. . .is undoubtedly the most outstanding and important single event, even more so than the conclusion of marriage, and it involves a greater change in social status.[62]

To the Abaluyia under study it is axiomatic that the uncircumcised have no ritual status.[63] Anyone who refuses to be circumcised is in danger of being operated upon by force.[64] Thus while either death or circumcision rites could have been chosen for this study, activities connected with circumcision have been chosen to capture the evolution in the ritual system of the Abaluyia since the turn of the century.

A Study of Male Circumcision Rituals: In the pre-colonial period Abaluyia who lived near the Kalenjin people also clitoridectomized their daughters. The Bukusu,[65] the Tachoni,[66]

some Kabras in the north and the Tiriki[67] in the southeast all had female circumcision. The practice faded due to repression in Colonial Administration[68] and had a revival which is an interesting historical footnote to Elija Masinde's revivalistic traditional religion, Dini ya Misambwa (Religion of the Ancestral Spirits), and aspirations to independence in the 1950's.

The continuity in male circumcision and the wider distribution of the ceremonies for males makes it a better arena for study than clitoridectomy among the Abaluyia.

Description of Three Circumcision Types: Although there are unique actions in Abaluyia circumcisions for clans[69] or direction from which people migrated into their homes,[70] these are not numerous enough to say each clan or sub-area has unique rituals. Three different traditional circumcision types are described in this study and the areas encompassing each is then scrutinized for change since 1910 A. D. For a clear distinction of the Bukusu--Kakamega--Tiriki type circumcision rituals see the definition of terms which follow and Map 2.

H. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Abaluyia: Bantu-speaking peoples who inhabit highlands northeast of Lake Sango (Victoria) in Western Province of Kenya. These speak one of the dialects of Luluyia, a recognized language family.

Rites of Passage: Arnold van Gennep popularized the phrase "rites of passage" in his book written in French in 1909. It is used to describe ceremonies involving crises in the individual's

life cycle having three major phases: separation, transition (liminality) and incorporation. The rites of passage are birth, puberty rituals (though not always concomitant with puberty), marriage and death.

Cultural Theme: "A postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society."[71]

Indigenous Interpretation of Culture: Exegesis of symbols, events and components of observed behaviour gotten from participants and experts in the community where rituals are performed. These interpretations are collated and tested with other informants in the culture to determine if they are representative or simply personal views.

Operational Meaning of Actions or Symbols: The context of use, (i. e., the social dynamic), who uses the symbol or who performs an action, the mood of participants when the behaviour is observed and taboos connected with it aid in giving the operational meaning.

Positional Meaning of Symbols: Positional significance is determined by deriving relationship and use of a symbol in other rituals in the system of the people under study. The Gestalt (totality) surrounding an event or action in other ceremonies aids in showing its positive or negative overtones and fixes its place in the value system of a people.

"Indexes" of Cultural Themes: There is juxtaposition of certain symbols, events or components with specific cultural themes sufficient to make them indicators of that theme in Abaluyia culture. Symbols or actions are not labeled "indexes"

unless the symbol's relationship with one theme is viewed as overriding affinities with other cultural themes. Justification for calling an event or symbol an "index" of a specific theme is derived from investigations of indigenous interpretation, operational and positional meanings.

Bukusu Type Circumcision: Circumcision traditions characterized by operation on four or less boys at the homes of family siblings. This circumcision is described fully in chapter 3 of this study. Geographically it includes most of Bungoma District in Western Region of Kenya together with Bunyala, Kabras and Wanga mutants in Kakamega District. See Map Number Two.

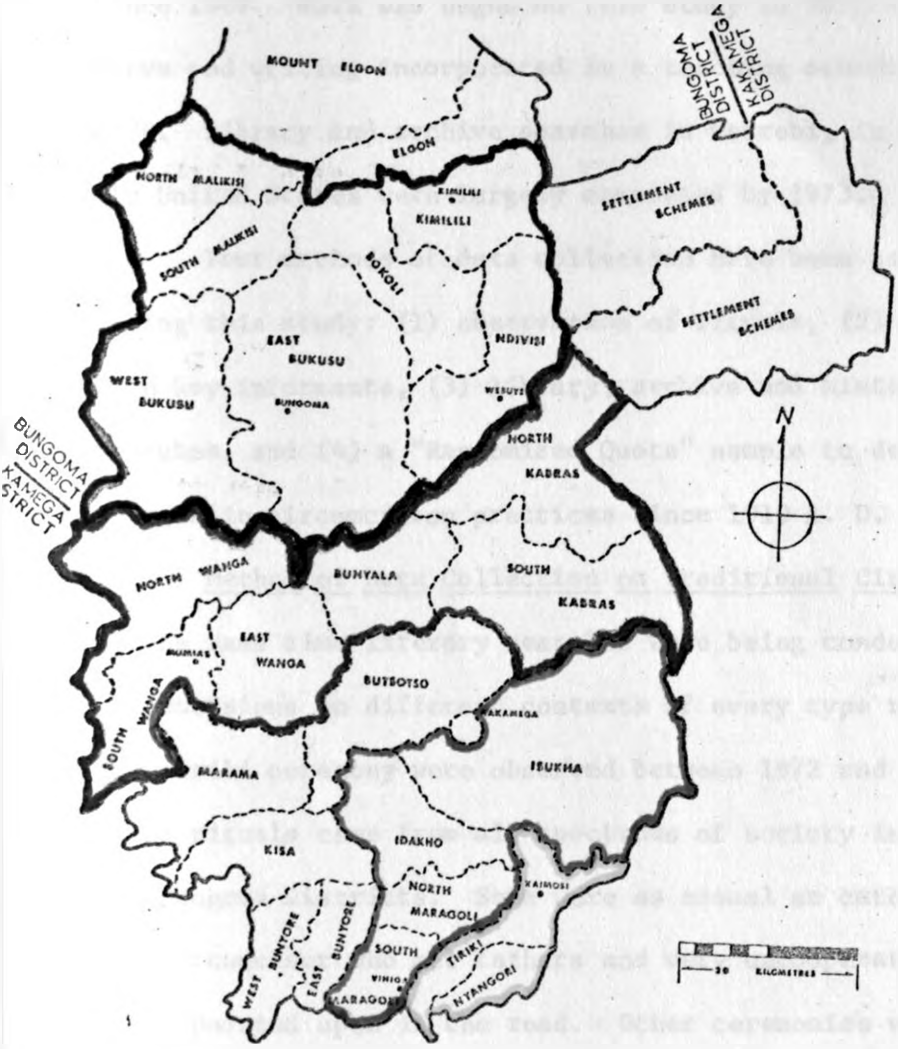
Kakamega Type Circumcision: The traditions surrounding circumcision rituals of peoples and clans in proximity to the Provincial headquarters of Western Region of Kenya, Kakamega. These rites are characterized by openness to observation and a large number of boys being initiated and secluded together. A fuller description is given in chapter 3. See Map Number Two for visualization of this area.

Tiriki Type Circumcision: A circumcision/seclusion tradition which is secret. Proponents of this system live in Tiriki and Nyang'ori Locations of Kakamega District. A fuller description of the traditional Tiriki ceremonies is given in chapter 3 of this study. See Map Number Two.

Foreign terms are defined in the context of the sentence where they are used. No glossary is given for those terms which are mainly Abaluyia dialects because that language is not

MAP NUMBER 2

AREAS ENCOMPASSED BY BUKUSU, KAKAMEGA AND TIRIKI TYPE CIRCUMCISIONS IN BUNGOMA AND KAKAMEGA DISTRICTS, WESTERN REGION, KENYA.



Code, Blue--Bukusu type; Green--mutants of Bukusu type; Orange--Kakamega type, Yellow--Tiriki type.

standardized. Spellings vary by location, thus the usage of this thesis reflects localized preferences.

I. METHODS OF RESEARCH

The period of time involved in fieldwork for this study is longer than that of most research projects. This has been possible largely because the writer has lived in his study area since 1969. Work was begun on this study in 1972 with interviews and writing incorporated in a teaching schedule through 1976. Library and archive searches in Nairobi, in England and the United States were largely completed by 1973.

Four methods of data collection have been used in composing this study: (1) observation of rituals, (2) interviews with key informants, (3) library, archive and historical document searches, and (4) a "Randomized Quota" sample to determine changes in circumcision practices since 1910 A. D.

Method of Data Collection on Traditional Circumcisions: At the same time literary searches were being conducted, fifteen circumcisions in different contexts of every type recorded except the Tiriki ceremony were observed between 1972 and 1975.[72] These rituals came from all spectrums of society in Kakamega and Bungoma Districts. Some were as casual as catching up with the circumciser who met fathers and very uncooperative sons who were operated upon in the road. Other ceremonies were organized by assistant chiefs and involved between two and three hundred operations. One circumcision observed by chance was a forced operation on a fearful teenager. A seclusion observed was that of a sixty year old man who had not been circumcised before because he had worked in the Rift Valley for years and had never been home when circumcisions were being performed. Ceremonies

observed include those of more puritanical Christian sects[73] and adamant traditionalists.

Observation of circumcision ceremonies was made easier by the fact that this rite of passage, excepting the Tiriki version, is open to scrutiny. Candidates are required to invite both paternal and maternal relatives to their circumcisions. Openness and promotion of a warrior's dignity are so inherent in the rituals that those of Bungoma and Kakamega Districts regularly invite friends and visitors including Europeans of both sexes to attend their "celebrations." The presence of foreigners is especially valued since it indicates that other people can look on Abaluyia ways with respect. Those visited are praised for bringing strangers.

So a researcher who wants to observe details is welcomed. On only one occasion was the writer treated with hostility at a ceremony. An appointment was missed in South Kabras Location of Kakamega District. When it was learned that another circumcision was about to be performed nearby, three Europeans suddenly appeared at the site. People had been drinking all night and some young men were belligerent about the appearance of strangers. When asked if the father and his bakoki (circumcision mates) would allow the visitors to observe the rites, a sudden change occurred. One fellow spoke in English, "If you know the meaning of the word bakoki, you are welcome. We know you will be respectful." On all other occasions those who follow what we are calling the "Kakamega" and "Bukusu" type circumcisions made special efforts to aid our probing.

One hundred twenty interviews[74] relating to data collection in chapter 3 were conducted to supplement written materials and observations of these ceremonies to give constructs of typical circumcisions circa 1910 A. D. Most of these interviews were with men circumcised in the first two decades of this century.

After this data was collated into papers, it was submitted to area committees to guarantee that circumcision of that era was represented. The Bukusu ceremony was criticised by two groups headed by Assistant Chief Matthew Wafula (East Bukusu Location) and by Paskali Nabwana (Kimilili Location). The paper on the Kakamega type ceremony was reviewed by ex-senior Chief Jeremiah Segero and a committee at Isukha Chief's Centre and by another committee at Idakho Chief's Centre. Joel Litu, William Serenge and Christopher Mtiva of Maragoli also analyzed it. The Tiriki paper--because of the secrets involved in circumcision--was reviewed by an anonymous committee at Seremi market. The administration in Tiriki and Nyang'ori Locations could not cooperate since tensions still exist over circumcision between traditionalists and Christians.

The fact that drafts drawn from early historical sources and interviews were submitted to critical reviews (i. e., readings before traditional leaders) more nearly actualizes the attempt to describe ceremonies some sixty years after their performance in the traditional context.

Method of Data Collection on Change in Circumcision Rituals: The questionnaire to measure change in circumcision practices was co-ordinated with the research model of chapter two and related to the descriptive/analytical work completed in chapter four. A number of pre-tests were made on what were expected to be significant practices in each circumcision type. Measurable questions were related to "themes" put forth in chapter four on "Interpretation of Traditional Abaluyia Circumcision Rituals." These questions were translated into vernacular, pretested and an interviewer was trained. After revisions, the questionnaires were re-written and re-translated in preparation for administration.[75]

Then a "randomized quota" of men were drawn from either Graduated Personal Tax Rolls or Landowners Lists in areas of each of the circumcision types defined.[76] One hundred twenty interviews (40 each for the three circumcision types--Bukusu, Kakamega and Tiriki) were conducted to give descriptions of the individual's own circumcision. The informants were then asked to describe the way their youngest son had been circumcised. This produced a further eighty-five descriptions, giving a total of two hundred five personal responses to circumcision rituals from 1911 through 1972.

The one hundred twenty interviews were conducted by one person, a Muluyia, Mr. Jonathan Songa of Butsotso Location, Kakamega District. Mr. Songa worked in earlier stages of interviewing and proved to be capable of searching for relevant data. He conducted the interviews alone since some people being interviewed betrayed discomfort at being questioned in the presence

of Europeans. Ten of the interviews conducted by Mr. Songa were selected at random and re-tested by the writer to test the accuracy of data collection. Fifty-five different questions were asked in the questionnaire. It was found that Mr. Songa's work was accurate except in the case of a negative question which caused confusion and is thus omitted from any compilation in this thesis.

The data from the two hundred five personal reactions to circumcision was coded and computerized in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA, while the writer was on leave in 1974. It is integrated with historical material in chapter five to give measurements on change in both practice and belief underlying Abaluyia circumcision rituals.

It is hoped that the methodology followed in this study will qualify its being part of data in social disciplines. It has a formulated goal,[77] its data collection has been systematic and checks and controls on reliability and validity of data have been imposed.

J. A SURVEY OF THE TRADITIONAL RITUAL SYSTEM OF THE ABALUYIA

Abaluyia egalitarianism is reflected in the fact that there is no institutional priesthood and that each household head traditionally felt qualified to spit a prayer toward the morning sun requesting God (Were or Nyasaye) to pour blessings on the clan and to take all evil to the west on setting. One's relationship to the spirit world was viewed as personal and interlocked with his relationship to ritual experts within the clan. A small complement of activities extended beyond this level.

Rituals at a Supra-clan Level: Rituals extending beyond the clan include peacemaking agreements and rituals to enhance the land's fertility. Wagner makes reference to Maragoli ceremonies which are conducted twice annually to bring the rains.[78] Smoke from fires at the convocation is observed as an omen of the future. Prominent rain-makers like those from Bunyore near Maseno are presented with cattle and sheep from community members and asked to start drawing the rains each year.

The Abashitsetse near Mumias traditionally had an annual sacrifice for Nedia, one of their former leaders. Vassals contributed to that sacrifice. Nedia was remembered for offering himself in appeasement to the Maasai rather than risk reprisals for an earlier treachery.[79]

The writer also attended an annual sacrifice which is performed between January 14th and 20th each year by Bukusu near Kimilili. The community which he observed making the sacrifice claimed to be harmonizing their traditions which originated from Israel with the sacrificial calendar of the Old Testament.[80] But there are other Bukusu who continue the old traditions of sacrificing to the ancestors each year without appealing to any higher authority.[81]

In ceremonies to declare peace between clans (Kiinga Magamu) preliminary discussions are held between leading clansmen of the two parties in camera. Differences are discussed and "polished" after payment as a means of reconciliation is devised. A day is arranged to declare peace. The place of making covenant is broadcast to clansmen of both parties.

Selected representatives of each group circulate in the two clans and collect finger-millet (ovolo) from every person who will attend the ceremony. The two collections are put together and sold to buy a sheep. The sheep is slaughtered at the ceremony of covenant and every person present has to eat a piece of the meat to authenticate the covenant.

Two curses are made. The first is, "Mundu uvunanyia amalogo yaga alamwi," (One who breaks this covenant is accursed). In the second a respected elder from one of the clans says, "Nguyu kwakalia isisa yetu, Mundu atagoneka undi yiti; okola ndiyo alamwi, Koveye vulala," meaning, "Now we have peace and unity. The one found murdering another will be accursed." The ceremony ends with men from the two clans leaving the convocation saying, "Kiinga Magamu," (Peace is declared).[82]

Among the Northern Abaluyia a dog is often split as a sacrifice as the symbol of covenant among clans or different linguistic families. After prominent spokesmen of parties make appeals for peace at a joint meeting, a specialist directs the killing and splitting of the dog to symbolize the cessation of hostilities between the two peoples. The leader is called the Omwilwachi/Omuswali we Kumuse and generally comes from a different lineage than either of the parties. He is the traditional peacemaker at funerals and at any time trouble emerges between peoples. Once he performs the ceremony of the dog it is believed that anyone opening hostilities between those of the covenant is cursed and assured of possession by the demonic spirit of the dog.[83]

Whenever death occurs between combatants of such clans, the offender has to be cleansed and protected by having obuse (chyme or offal) from an animal's stomach spread on his body in a sacrifice near his father's compound. Then prominent elders must make careful overtures to the offended clan and set aside a time for the payment of blood money.

Evening exorcisms also exist at a supra-clan level. In periods when sickness and death appear to prevail, leaders of clans select an evening to exorcise the evil spirits. The exorcisms occur once or twice a year.[84] People go outside their houses in the early evening and begin screaming for evil spirits and sickness to go back to Lake Sango (Victoria). The cry spreads from one home to another and then from ridge to ridge as shouting and beating implements reaches a high level. Sometimes the ceremony is conducted from a chief's centre or a prominent luyia (clan common). After an exorcism is declared by a prominent elder, every person present races home in competition with tumultuous neighbours. It is believed that those who tarry or are slow in leaving the meeting risk the danger of being possessed by the evil spirits. These practices continue to the present among the Abaluyia and Luo communities.[85]

Rituals within the Clan: Most rituals were conducted before the elders' council of the clan or the shrine of a prominent member of the clan or extended family. A dangerous alcoholic might be called before the council and be forced to make an oath as he threw the spear into a Mukumu (fig) tree saying something like, "I will not drink alcohol again. If I drink again, may I die within the year."[86]

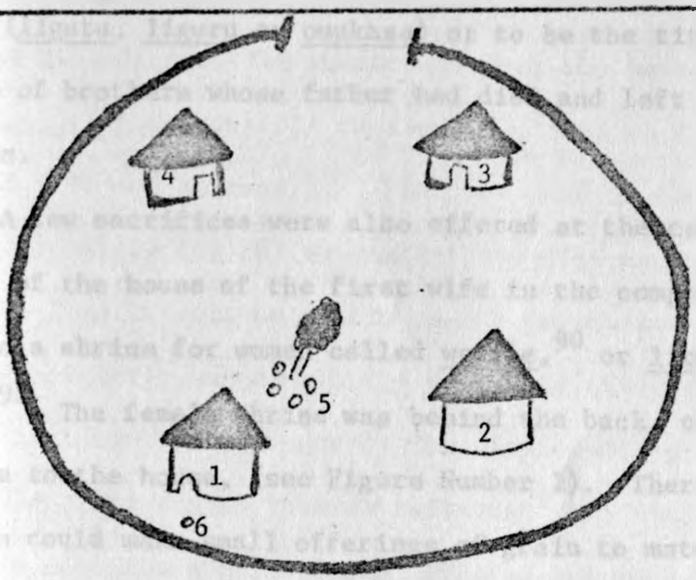
Ordeals were executed before the same council. When the judicial process failed to resolve a matter, disputants were forced to "eat an oath," or to face an ordeal which involved calling the ancestral spirits to resolve the matter. A rope made from the skin of an animal like a hartebeest (kongoni) which has been killed by a leopard was used in the ordeal. As an elder struck the rope on the ground between the disputants, he said, "May this rope bring truth between the two. May the party which is standing falsely be destroyed just as the leopard destroyed the hartebeest."[87]

Another ordeal involved putting a stake (endembe) in the middle of a path. Clansmen were forced/challenged to pass over it. Anyone who refused to pass over the stake was regarded as a witch (omulogi). It was believed that an anti-social person would immediately die when passing over the stake.[88]

Rituals involving sacrifices were generally conducted at the family shrine in front of the main house in the compound. These shrines were called lusambwa (see Figure Number 1) among the Southern Abaluyia and consisted of three or four stones which had been ceremonially "planted" around an olusiola tree which is believed to be a comfortable place for ancestral spirits to rest. The Bukusu call their shrine a namwima (see Figure Number 2). It is a small hut about thirty inches high with a grass roof and no walls. It is placed in the same position in the compound as the lusambwa of the Southern Abaluyia, i. e., in front of the main wife's house. Stones are also placed in the namwima by prominent clansmen when the shrine is erected.

FIGURE NUMBER 1

POSITION OF SHRINE IN COMPOUND OF SOUTHERN ABALUYIA



Code: 1, house of the first wife married; 2,3,4, houses of succeeding wives; 5, Lusambwa, shrine where sacrifices to ancestors of the patrilineage were offered by men; 6, female shrine where small grain offerings could be made for health and fertility.

FIGURE NUMBER 2

TRADITIONAL SHRINE OF THE NORTHERN ABALUYIA

The Namwima is approximately one meter high. Stones are in it where blood and choice pieces of meat from sacrifices are thrown to the ancestors. A "fig tree" called omutoto is more commonly planted at the grave of an important paternal ancestor which is not far from the shrine.

There was an ancestral shrine (lusambwa or namwima) in the compound of any man important enough to be called a clan leader (ligutu, liguru or omukasa) or to be the titular head of a group of brothers whose father had died and left them without a shrine.

A few sacrifices were also offered at the centre post (etisu) of the house of the first wife in the compound.[89] There was also a shrine for women called wetile,[90] or litokho[91] or litoho.[92] The female shrine was behind the back, or women's entrance to the house, (see Figure Number 1). There a wife and children could make small offerings of grain to maternal ancestors. This was the only time women actively participated in sacrifices. At other times men who were clan or family leaders officiated.

Sacrifices were made when there was sickness, sterility or omens such as evil dreams and spirit possession. In prosperous periods the shrines were neglected. But when trouble appeared, they were cleaned and sacrifices were thrown to paternal ancestors to gain their aid in restoring "order."[93]

Normally sacrifices to the ancestors were white or red animals. But if a dream was from a feared ancestor or if a diviner (omufumu) said the trouble came from evil spirits, a black cock could be killed. The evil spirits were exhorted to leave. If a case was judged serious, a sheep's head would be buried after a sacrifice near the door of the troubled one's house to keep the malevolent spirits from coming and strangling youngsters in their sleep.[94]

If the ancestor was considered really bad, the Khusekho or Khusikha rite to drive him away was performed. When a black goat was killed, meat was spread all over the homestead and the musalitsi (clan sacrificer) saying, "Vwulimu, we don't want you. Eat this meat and go away."[95] Then the head of the household made arrangements for the specialist who digs up graves (guyavi) to come. Then he went on a trip on the day chosen to dig up the grave and strictly warned all the women and children to remain indoors lest they be overcome by the displeased spirit.[96]

The grave digger took an assistant with him as he opened the grave lest the spirit of the departed overcome him when he started burning the bones and the guyavi jump into the fire. Thatching grass was used to tie the bones together and they were taken approximately one-fourth mile from the grave site to be burned.[97] Sometimes the ashes were scattered in the river afterwards,[98] but more often they were left where they had been burned.

Numerous purification rites were performed by both the grave digger and the family.

> As soon as the guyavi has finished his unsavory job he must bathe in a swift stream and immediately after having returned home must have the stomach content of a fowl spit on his body. The sheep which he has been given as a payment he must kill immediately; he must not even wait until he has reached his homestead but must kill it on the way. The relatives of the dead person. . .must all assemble and every one of them must chew a handful of eleusine lest they fall ill and be suffocated by the other ancestral spirits. If there is a small child among them which cannot chew the grains, its mother must do so for it and spit the chewed grains into its mouth.[99]

The counter-measure in the Khusekho or Khusikha ceremony was believed effective in forcing an unwanted spirit/ancestor to join other unwanted spirits in the bottom of Lake Sango (Victoria). The head of the household pretended surprise that such an action had been done by "evil neighbours."[100] The man who dug up the bones covered his tracks well and because he came from another clan, felt quite safe. It was believed that the spirit would soon leave the clan's abode because he had no place among the ancestral spirits who still had a home there.

Sacrifices were also made for those possessed with kumusambwa (ancestral spirits) of hereditary offices or skills. The son of a blacksmith or some other specialist might start exhibiting uncontrollable spirit possession. Sacrifices were made to bring the state of ancestral possession to a controllable level. After killing a chicken, a sheep or cow, a clan leader would place part of the sacrifice or the obuse (chyme) on the person troubled so he could use his skills for the benefit of the community.

A favourite activity in traditional Abaluyia society was wrestling. Matches were held after the harvests in October and November and before planting began in March and April. The contests were called makbe[101] or indumba or mugoye (rope).[102] A rope was hung in a clan meeting ground and competition began between young warriors. Clansmen gathered and prepared by singing, "Indumba yenya mulwani, indumba yenya wadinya, lero ilana, museve, museve, lero ilana," which was a challenge to the brave and strong to come forward as competitors. The winner of competitions was praised, "Aaa inze loledi, Inze

loledi, inze loledi, Aaa inze loledi, Inze loledi loledanga ha vugwi, Aaa inze loledi," indicating the winning wrestler can claim to be the strongest wrestler from the east.[103]

Most other clan oriented rituals had to do with rites of passage. Girls, for instance, had four of their lower teeth knocked out when they were adolescents in a puberty ritual. After their first menstruation, they also had markings made on the abdomen and face and had their lower lips and ear lobes pierced.[104]

The ritual symbols connected with birth, puberty rituals, marriage and death are so extensive that Wagner in his excellent study gives over three hundred pages to describing them. This summary is intended to give an overview for considering circumcision rituals and including some materials which have been overlooked by earlier writers.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER ONE

[1]The 1969 census listed 1,328,298 residents in Western Region. With the exception of two Teso Locations and Elgon Location having Kalenjin peoples, most of these residents are Abaluyia. See Kenya Population Census, 1969 (Nairobi: Statistics Division, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1970), Vol. I, pp. 62-68.

[2]J. M. Lonsdale, "A Political History of Nyanza, 1883-1945," (unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1964), p. 1, has a discussion of political/administrative boundary changes including those making Western Region in 1964.

[3]The source of the word Kavirondo is uncertain. Sir Harry Johnston, The Uganda Protectorate (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1902), Vol. II, p. 722; N. Stam, "The Bantu Kavirondo of Mumias District," Anthropos, XIV-XV, 1919-20, pp. 968-69; and C. W. Hobley, "Anthropological Studies in Kavirondo and Nandi," Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, (1903), p. 325 think it originated from a coastal missionary, Wakefield. They think he probably got the name from Arab/Swahili traders. John Mbiti, in a critical review of this thesis in June 1976, agrees that traders probably gave the name but feels it probably came from Akamba traders who have a word Mbilondo to describe the "very black" Luo from near the lake of Western Kenya.

[4]B. A. Ogot, History of the Southern Luo (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), p. 139.

[5]Gideon S. Were, A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), p. 60.

[6]Anthony N. Allott, Restatement of African Law, Kenya: The Law of Marriage and Divorce (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1968), p. 45; and Walter H. Sangree, Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. xxxv. Two of the "tribes," the Bukusu and Tachoni are in Bungoma Districts while eleven (Kabras, Maragoli, Idakho, Isukha, Tiriki, Nyore, Nyala, Kisa, Marama, Wanga and Tsotso) are in Kakamega District.

[7]Gunter Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 20. (First published as The Bantu of Kavirondo in 1949 as two volumes).

[8]Were, op. cit., p. 60.

[9]L. A. Fallers, Bantu Bureaucracy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 241-42.

[10]See Were, op. cit., pp. 106ff. for a fuller discussion on Wanga kingdoms.

[11]Sangree, op. cit., p. 82.

[12]Jan Jacob de Wolf, "Religious Innovation and Social Change Among the Bukusu," (unpublished PhD thesis, London University, 1971), p. 47.

[13]See Appendix A of this thesis for material leading to the conclusion that "political/administrative" offices among the Abaluyia were largely attained on the basis of charisma or force of personality while ritual offices were more dependent on lineages. Appendix A is on page 280 of this thesis.

[14]De Wolf, op. cit., pp. 51-54.

[15]One calls a person Bwihana if anyone from his clan has married a person of the second clan from the mother's generation. A union in the time of the "mother's mother" makes one of the other clan Omwichukhulu. Those from the next generation back are Sisoni, followed by Simila, Sichoke, Simutinga and Obukhulu (the laughing relation).

[16]Lonsdale, op. cit., p. 54.

[17]This phenomenon follows the pattern observed by Bernice Whiting, "Paiute Sorcery," Viking Publication in Anthropology, 15, 1950, where after studying sorcery in fifty non-western societies having two kinds of social controls: (1) co-ordinate and (2) superordinate. She found that in co-ordinate control societies peers settle disputes while in the latter an authority figure or council settles disputes. Whiting found sorcery more prevalent in co-ordinate controlled societies.

[18]Ogot, op. cit., p. 231; Johnston, op. cit., Vol I, p. 218; Were op. cit., p. 143n refers to T. Wakefield's entry in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol. 40, 1870, pp. 303-339, which says entry was made about 1861-62.

[19]Joseph Thompson, Through Masai Land (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1885), p. 481.

[20]W. H. Jones, "Behind my Bishop Through Masai Land to Kavirondo," London: Church Missionary Archives, Accession No. 267, Unofficial Papers.

[21]Alan Moorehead, The White Nile (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1960), p. 326. Uganda and Zanzibar were ceded to the British if they could establish "effective occupation" in exchange for the North Sea island of Heligoland which Germany proceeded to convert into a fortress for its fight against England in World War One.

[22]Were, op. cit., p. 136. [23]Lonsdale, op. cit., p. 30.

[24]Ogot, op. cit., p. 233.

[25]Edna Chilson, Ambassador of the King (Wichita: Privately published diary of Arthur Chilson, pioneer Quaker missionary, n. d.,), p. 22.

[26]Were, op. cit., p. 167.

[27]Interview with Ex-Chief Serenge (South Maragoli Loc.), August 1, 1973.

[28]"Africa's Golden Harvests," Vol. 3, No. 2, Intokozo, Transvaal (South Africa), newsletter of South Africa Compounds and Interior Mission which had a station at Kima in Bunyore. Mention is made of the fact that in October 1907 missionaries were not allowed to go north of this station by the government "because of the unsettled state of the natives," p. 15.

[29]Were, op. cit., p. 58.

[30]K. Ingham, "Uganda's Old Eastern Province: The Transfer to the East African Protectorate in 1902," Uganda Journal, Vol. 21, March 1957, pp. 41-46.

[31]Lonsdale, op. cit., p. 136. [32]Chilson, op. cit., p. 23.

[33]Diary of St. Peter's Catholic Mission (Mumias, North Wanga Loc.). David Barrett and others, Kenya Churches Handbook (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973), p. 23, incorrectly identifies Kakamega as the first Abaluyia mission centre by the Catholics. Europeans abandoned Mumias in 1912 because of "blackwater" fever. The government moved to Kakamega and the mission to Mukumu. Later Mumias was reopened as a mission station.

[34]Letter to Friends Mission, Kaimosi from CMS, Maseno, 7th June, 1920. (In files of Friends Mission, Kaimosi).

[35]Barrett, Kenya Churches Handbook, op. cit., p. 23.

[36]Lonsdale, op. cit., pp. 28 and 133.

[37]Chilson, op. cit., p. 16. [38]Ibid., pp. 16, 141.

[39]Wagner, op. cit., p. 37.

[40]Gordon Hewitt, The Problem of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society 1910-1942 (London: SCM Press, 1971), Vol. I, p. 142.

[41]C. W. Hobley, "Eastern Uganda: An Ethnological Survey," Occasional Paper, No. 1, Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1902; (See footnote No. 3 for another paper by Hobley); Kenneth R. Dundas, "The Wawanga and Other Tribes of the Elgon District, British East Africa," The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. XLIII, (1913), pp. 19-75.

[42]N. Stam, "The Religious Conceptions of the Kavirondo," Anthropos, Vol. V, (1910), pp. 359-62, and "The Bahanga," Publication of the Catholic Anthropological Conference, Vol. I, No. 4, August 1929. (See footnote number 3 for Stam's third paper).

[43]Gerhard Lindblom, "Notes Ethnographiques sur le Kavirondo Septentorional et la Colonie du Kenya," Tucuman, Universidad Nacional de Tucuman, 1932. Imprenta Casa editoru Conj Peru 684, Buenos Aires, pp. 405-25.

[44]Wagner, op. cit. [45]Sangree, op. cit.

[46]De Wolf, op. cit. [47]Were, op. cit.

[48]Lonsdale, op. cit.

[49]John Allen Rowe, "Kaimosi: An Essay in Mission History," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin), 1958; Robert Haworth Maxwell, "The Relationship of Social Differentiation to Academic Success in Secondary School and Occupational Patterns in Kenya: The Chavakali Case, 1970," (unpublished PhD dissertation, Cornell University), 1972; Filemona Fundi Indire, "A Comprehensive High School Curriculum Proposal for Reviewing and Revising the Program of Chavakali Secondary School, Maragoli, Kenya," (unpublished PhD dissertation, Indiana University), 1962; Stafford Kay, "The Southern Abaluyia, the Friends Africa Mission and the Development of Education in Western Kenya, 1902-1965," (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin), 1973; Dennis Dean Habel, "The Theological Perspective in the Literature of Contemporary Religious Movements in Africa," (unpublished Master's thesis, Northwestern University), 1971. Other incomplete theses are by J. Dealing, Fransis Bode, Ken Lohrentz and Clifford Gilpin.

[50]Ann Marie Bak Rasmussen, "A Comparative Study of Four Holy Spirit Churches." Tony Barclay, "Economic Development near Mumias," Douglas Welch, "A Comparative Study of Six Hundred Words in Five Bantu Dialects," (Michigan State). Ward Sample, "Linguistic Theory and the Abaluyia," (Indiana University). David Montague, "History of South Africa Compounds and Interior Mission in Kenya," (Clairmont Graduate School).

[51]Sangree, op. cit.

[52]Angela Molnos (ed.), Cultural Source Material for Population Planning in East Africa (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972), Vol. III, pp. 142ff.

[53]John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1969), pp. 110-115.

[54]See the rationale for selecting circumcision rituals in section "G" of this chapter, p. 16.

[55]See a definition of "Cultural Themes" in Section "H" of this chapter, p. 19.

[56]Further definitions of the three different circumcision traditions described are in Sections "G" and "H" of this chapter, pp. 18, 20.

[57]Procedures followed in composing this chapter from written and oral sources are described in Section "I", pp. 22ff.

[58]See Section "H" for definition of terms, pp. 18ff.

[59]Were, op. cit., p. 60.

[60]There were 1,015,503 residents listed in the 1969 census of the two Districts not counting those in Lugari and Tongaren Divisions (ethnically mixed farm settlement schemes) and Elgon Division (largely made up of Kalenjin people). Strangers and traders reside in these Districts, but in the main they are the home of the Abaluyia. Kenya Population Census, 1969, op. cit., pp. 62-68

[61]Chapter five of this thesis gives a full description of this conflict.

[62]Wagner, op. cit., p. 334.

[63]A favourite way of "putting down" a child or person from a tribe where circumcision is not practiced is to call him, Omusinde we." (You the uncircumcised, the child).

[64]The writer witnessed a forced circumcision near Webuye on Sept. 7, 1972 when a son of Isaka Mando was mudded and abruptly circumcised. Forced circumcisions of Luo peoples have also been reported in South Kabras near Lubao Market and Wanga,,(Letter No. 166, Rev. R. M. Spurlin, Chaplain to Bishop of Maseno, 24th, Sept. 1962, to D. C., Kakamega, ADM 8/3, North Nyanza (Archives, D. C.'s Office, Kakamega) for data on four such victims).

[65]Interview with Paskali Nabwana (Kimilili Loc.), Feb. 23, 1972.

[66]Wagner, op. cit., p. 336.

[67]Sangree, op. cit., pp. 62, 96n.

[68]N. Stam, Diary, St. Peter's Catholic Mission (Mumias, North Wanga Loc.), Jan. 16, 1924, and A. E. Chamier, D. C., North Nyanza, 1/5, p. 2, Kenya National Archives. A fine of 100 shs. for the circumciser and of 25 shillings for the father of the girl who was circumcised was imposed. A. E. Chamier, North Kavirondo Annual Report for 1925, D.C./NN/1/6, Kenya National Archives quotes the resolution of the Local Council in 1925. Unfortunately, the council minutes are lost.

[69]Examples of clan variants are given in description of the Kakamega type circumcision of chapter 3 where different kinds of knives and being circumcised near different trees indicates one's clan.

[70]The direction Bukusu candidates go to the river to be mudded indicates the migration patterns of their ancestors. The candidate goes to a river the direction from which his people migrated into the region. Further, the Khulicha ceremony comes from contact with the Nandi peoples.

[71]Morris E. Opler, "Some Recently Developed Concepts Relating to Culture," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 4:120, 1948.

[72]Another six circumcisions/seclusions were observed by colleagues who had been coached on what to expect at such ceremonies. Their reflections are also incorporated.

[73]The forced circumcision observed on Sept. 7, 1972, occurred because the father of a fearful teen-ager was a "saved one" who wanted to be separated from the sinful practices of the Bukusu.

[74]A Register of Interviews is in Field Notebook No. 1 in the writer's possession.

[75]See Appendix B for a questionnaire, pp. 285ff.

[76]See chapter five for a fuller description of the method followed in compiling the sample frames for the "randomized quota" of interviews, p. 219f.

[77]Claire Selltiz and others, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 200.

[78]Wagner, op. cit., p. 290.

[79]Kenneth Dundas, "Ethnology of North Kavirondo," DC/NN/3/2/1, p. 7, Kenya National Archives.

[80]Observed on January 15, 1972 in Kimilili Location at the home of Yohana Muhindi a leader in Judah Israel. The full description is in the writer's possession.

[81]The writer was invited to such a ceremony in January 1972 but because of the unfortunate death of a young clansman and fears that the ceremony might be reported to the administration as part of the proscribed Dini ya Misambwa (Religion of the Ancestral Spirits), nothing came of the invitation. There is a new secret religion, Sandarula, whose leader is Jeremiah Wafabwa Papela from Bokoli Location.

[82]Interview with five elders at Chavakali (N. Maragoli Loc.), May 24, 1975.

[83]See Appendix A for more material on the function of the Omwilwachi/Omuswali we Kumuse, pp. 281f.

[84]Interview with Kefa Kweyu (Musanda, South Wanga Loc.), October 16, 1974.

[85]The writer has witnessed these "evening exorcisms" five times. Two of them were while living near Kakamega and three times while on the outskirts of Kisumu.

[86]Recorded at sub-locational meeting at Malimili, (Isukha Location), March 1971.

[87]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Location), Sept. 30, 1974.

[88]The ordeal is called eshiluiu by John Osogo, The Baluyia (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 75.

[89]Wagner, op. cit., p. 282.

[90]Ibid., p. 283.

[91]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), May 23, 1972.

[92]Interview with Ex-Chief Jeremiah Segero (Isukha Loc.), Nov. 1, 1972.

[93]Wagner, op. cit., p. 265, for an excellent description of a sacrifice.

[94]Interview at Shiranda Market (E. Wanga Loc.), April 5, 1973, and also E'matia Interview (Butsotso Loc.), Sept. 9, 1973.

[95]Shizumi Yokoo, "Death Among the Abaluyia" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Makerere, 1966), p. 26.

[96]Interview with Ex-Chief Jeremiah Segero (Isukha Loc.), Nov. 1, 1972.

[97]Interview with Hezron Andulu (Idakho Loc.), Nov. 3, 1972, also with Mathia Lugiha (Muhedwe, South Maragoli Loc.). Andulu was the assistant of a man who dug up bones and burned them.

[98]Interview with Ex-Chief Jeremiah Segero (Isukha Loc.), Nov. 1, 1972.

[99]Wagner, op. cit., p. 249.

[100]Interview with Ex-Chief Jeremiah Segero (Isukha Loc.), Nov. 1, 1972.

[101] N. Stam, Safari Book, St. Peter's Catholic Mission (Mumias, N. Wanga Loc.), Letter to Bishop in Msambya (Uganda), August 29, 1921.

[102] Interview with Nicodemusi Majai (Chavakali, North Maragoli Loc.), May 23, 1975.

[103] Interview with Paulo Kabagala (Chavakali, North Maragoli Loc.), May 24, 1975.

[104] Sarah M. Lukalo, "The Maragoli of Western Kenya," Cultural Source Material for Population Planning in East Africa, ed. Angela Molnos (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972), Vol. III, p. 142.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORY UNDERGIRDING THIS STUDY (MODEL DEVELOPMENT)

The goal of this study is to observe the change in traditional emotional configurations and values in a society which is experiencing transition. In order to do so, the theoretical model used for analysis must be appropriate for the study.

Recent development in sociological studies has emphasized the fact that they are "soft sciences." Because the beliefs and values of a people are part of cultural analysis, there is recognition of a degree of "ethnological art"[1] or "exegesis"[2] (critical interpretation). Culture never fits purely objective strictures because: (1) it is not homogeneous; rather it is a multiplicity of micro-cultures or smaller units of society such as clans; (2) there are degrees of individual liberty within a culture where manipulation can be practiced which may be outside any norm described in a generalization; (3) outside influences also have varying effects even on "closed elements" of the society, that is the degree of Western influence may be suprisingly similar in both a mission adherent and a "traditional" elder; and (4) cultural ideals and realities are different, so description reflects the tension of "ought" versus practice.

These things plus the "personal factor" of the researcher, i. e., his outlook, presuppositions, interests, etc., are part of the analysis. Thus tools or models used in ethnological research have not been able to achieve a non-emotional

resolution. Subjectivity must be acknowledged as part of translation. Interpretation cannot be viewed any higher than seeking integrating principles which best explain the inter-workings of a culture under investigation.

This lack of objectivity leaves analysis open to question, but it should not force the social scientist to retreat to some purely objective area. An economist has recognized this, saying, "There is absolutely no reason for economists to treat as fiction the very springs of economic action- wants, beliefs, expectations, institutional attitudes."[4] Ignoring the basic premises of a people's world view brings with it a simplistic analysis. It may even be viewed as ethnocentricism at its worst in a scholar since the first goal of social studies is to see a people as they see themselves.

Social scientists seek to make a contribution to the body of scientific knowledge in spite of the subjective elements mentioned by imposing discipline on their studies. They do not consider interesting or exotic investigations research. Rather studies which contribute to social disciplines must be done as formulated projects. They must be planned systematically and by stages. Data must be recorded systematically and it must be submitted to checks and controls[5] on reliability and validity.[6]

The way ethnographic data is interpreted is also affected by theoretical presuppositions imposed from various schools of interpretation. The first major division in approaches is between reductionists and non-reductionists. Reductionists are concerned with conventionality and patterns or schemes of cultural expression. They seek to extract universals in the cultural systems

studied. Among these are Marxists, Freudians and sociological reductionists. The Marxist advocates abandoning deductive, positivistic theories for inductive approaches where dialectic is the main-spring of analysis.[7] Freudians have adopted an eclectic view:

> . . .of Freud's basic psychodynamic principles such as repression, the formation of guilt and anxiety, the relationship between frustration and aggression, sublimation, resistance and symbolization. They were all to be utilized as needed to draw a connection between childhood experiences and adult personality.[8]

Sociological reductionalism, such as that of Emile Durkheim, seeks solidarity forms which are an outgrowth of societal needs. It was Durkheim, for instance, who championed the view that dieties are but collective representations of society.[9]

The approach of reductionists is set against that of non-reductionists who are more concerned with meaning and content within a cultural milieu than comparison of forms. Symbolic systems are scrutinized in at least two kinds of non-reductionist approaches. The first of these is represented by Claude Levi-Strauss and others who have entered an inter-disciplinary pact with linguists. They apply linguistic theory in general socio-cultural analysis. This model has lead Levi-Strauss to turn from considering conscious phenomena to studying "unconscious infrastructure."[10] Others have followed linguistic theory in considering folk taxonomy as outlining formal properties of belief systems. Interest in the Formal Semantics school is on meanings of words, but criticism has been leveled against this approach that its non-emotional model obliterates the human element which must be included in anthropological analysis.[11]

The alternative followed in this thesis is within the second branch of non-reductionist theory, i. e., independent of linguistic theory. It follows the "themeological" lead taken by ethnologists who are concerned with meanings in their context rather than with forms and structures. Emphasis in this approach which began in the 1930's is on capturing the dynamic of societal interaction. Ruth Benedict was one of the first ethnologists to attempt the description of culture dynamically in terms of an integrating concept or summative principle.[12] Since then other serious studies have followed which speak of "cultural configurations,"[13] "value attitudes,"[14] "temper,"[15] "national character,"[16] and even "ethno-metaphysics"[17] of various peoples.

Standardized language for this school of interpretation has come from Morris Opler's contribution since 1945. He proposed a complex of "cultural themes" to describe a people's world view, beliefs and assumptions. Opler objected to earlier attempts at bringing all of a culture's dynamic under the logic and influence of one summative principle. He did this on the basis of research which indicated most cultures have multi-faceted, and unique, value systems. These expressions he called "themes." Opler defined a theme as, "A postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behaviour or stimulating activity which is tacitly or openly promoted in a society."[18]

This dynamic model is eclectic enough to integrate aspects of other schools of interpretation into its own analysis. Rather than contrasting a puristic functional view with that of a rite of passage or psychological interpretation, it accepts and even integrates contradictory elements into the whole. For instance,

in seeking "cultural themes" in a ritual under study, there is no place for debate as to whether the activity is primarily a teaching device (functionalism) or a graduation from the influence of women to a man's world (rite of passage) or that it exists because of jealousy between men and women (a psychological view).[19] In a thematic analysis all these perspectives and even more might be considered valid. It is a dynamic view which relegates seeking original purposes for a rite's performance to a secondary position. Rather, observing the way action/symbol links with summative principles is expected to give insights into the culture's mainsprings. In this view the reason a ceremony may have begun is not so relevant as how it is viewed and used at the time of observation.

Opler championed the idea that themes co-exist in a sort of dialectic tension which support the core of a culture and uphold its exterior expressions.

> The activities, prohibitions of activities, or references which result from the acceptance of a theme are its expressions. Such expressions may be formalized or unformalized. Limiting factors, often the existence of many other opposed or circumscribing themes and their extensions, control the number, force and variety of a theme's expressions. The interplay of theme and counter-theme is the key to the equilibrium achieved in a culture and structure in culture is essentially their interaction and balance.[20]

Seeking cultural themes is an attempt to approach the core of a society's belief system and to project its influence on cultural expression. The model has proven viable in academic circles and Opler's vocabulary has been adopted by other social scientists. Cultural themes are extracted from observations of actions, symbols, attitudes, both conscious and unconscious,

and even inferences which stimulate the function of society. The following are accepted when speaking about "cultural themes."

1. Every culture has multiple themes.

2. While there is necessarily some harmony among the themes of a given culture, there is no assumption of a complete lack of conflict.

3. Each theme is likely to have multiple expressions.

4. A theme in one culture can presumably be similar to that of another regardless of whether their expressions occur in all the parts of the institutional structure.

5. Themes may be part of implicit or explicit culture.[21]

A major emphasis in seeking themes is that they are heuristic devices aiding the discovery of the dynamic or "electrical" current which makes a culture a living thing. A culture's perception of reality, values and goals is given nomenclature in "cultural themes" as the energies which give life to that system are precipitated in analysis.

Extracting a theme from a mass of observations is an inductive process. The obvious source for beginning interpretation is to ask an indigenous interpreter or ritual expert the meaning of a symbol or event. But too often, and especially when dealing with symbols and rituals, the answer is simplistically, "This is our tradition." Further, such interpretations sometimes prove to be purely speculative.

At that point two further steps to educe summative principles can be used. These are seeking the "operational meaning" and the "positional meaning" of activities as proposed by Victor Turner.[22] The "operational meaning" of an action is derived by observing the social context of it. Meaning is assessed by judging relations and roles taken by participants.

Persons excluded, taboos connected with the symbol, the mood at the moment and what is done with a symbol determine its relationship to cultural themes. "Positional meaning" is gained by observing the use of a symbol in wider contexts than the ritual or action where it was first noted, in a word its Gestalt or configuration in other patterns than that of the original observation. It is assumed that scrutiny of an action or symbol in different contexts will help show its affinities and characteristics. If a symbol or event appears to be parallel with another symbol related to positive promotional themes rather than being juxtaposed with an opposite to dramatize conflict, that observation should aid relating action or symbol to theme. By following these three means: (1) exegetical, (2) operational and (3) positional interpretations, symbols are related to cultural themes.

Researchers in rural societies in Africa have found this model helpful in analysis of social systems, especially ritual configurations of a people. Victor Turner gained insight into the economic system of the Ndembu of Zambia via ritual observation when protracted study of daily life and the social infrastructure had failed to serve his need.[23] Donald Jacobs also found, in studying the Akamba of Kenya, that seeking general cultural themes in a rite of passage is a shorthand means of grasping the most important themes of society since enculturation of these themes is one of the chief purposes of initiation.[24] These studies authenticate the inclusion of the drum and dance of a people as legitimate and even necessary

objects of observation in anthropological or sociological studies where belief systems are studied.

It appears that a paradox in early application of theory about "themes" which focus on dynamic elements in culture is the fact that change and historical developments in societies under study was ignored. Not until Ramm's recent study in India where he traces the tenacity of dominant themes from the traditional period to present-day society has there been any effort to consider alterations which are going on in the society as part of the data gathered for analysis.[25] Lessa does the same in tracing a theme from the traditional era in China to the present. He shows the relationship between the practice of body divination and the theme of individualism from the late Chou period into the modern era.[26] Both these studies extend the theoretical potential of cultural themes into the historical arena.

The proposal of this study is to attempt compacting measure of change in the symbols and components associated with cultural themes to a shorter period of time. While it is possible to make an analysis covering centuries in Eastern cultures, neither records nor the nature of the social fabric in this study make that possible. Abaluyia culture, as is true in much of Africa, is presently characterized as evolving. Extensive change has occurred in this culture since 1900 A. D. So the model for study must take into account accelerated change. Swantz has correctly noted that "a study of ritual practices in a transitional society must focus essentially on the aspects of transition."[27] This is a major adjustment from older ethnographic studies which have keyed on traditionalism and have been

structured on Radcliffe-Brown's ill-advised definition of ethnology as "reconstructing the history of primitive peoples."[28]

In this study measurement of change in the way circumcision rituals have been conducted in seven decades of the twentieth century is attempted. The outline of a grandfather's circumcision, then that of his son and then the grandson's circumcision within the last decade is charted in graphs. The effort is made in full awareness of the difficulty in measuring significant indexes of change, but with a fuller sense of the inadequacies of analysis which assumes that change is not occurring, at least during the time that the study is being conducted. Monica Wilson says, "In their investigation of small societies most anthropologists use static models: that is they have pretended that the societies they were observing were not changing."[29] Thus, theorizing about cultural themes, while intent on capturing the dynamic holding society together, has not developed beyond that of other theories in one important area--namely plotting change in a system. The lineal element is missing. With the exception of Ramm and Lessa already mentioned, they are as "ahistorical" as the functionalist for whom E. R. Leach confesses, "We functionalists are not really 'antihistorical' by principle; it is simply that we do not know how to fit historical materials into our framework of concepts."[30] So change if noted in such studies is not measured precisely. Rather a reference to change is made, but as a footnote outside the framework of the study model. This is why recent studies have lamented a "theoretical poverty in study of social processes."[31]

In chapter five of this study, measurable events and components are tested by decade as indicators to the viability of the traditional symbols in circumcision rituals. They are presented as "indexes" of cultural themes, pointing to the viability of the beliefs controlling behaviour or stimulating activity. They are used advisedly as "indexes" of themes with the following reservations:

(1) Carefully screened symbols, actions and components of rituals can be indexes of one theme. While there may be multiple expressions of a theme and even multi-relations of a specific symbol or act with cultural expressions,[32] certain cultural themes have an overriding affinity with individual symbols which qualify as indexes to that theme. These indexes are not gathered haphazardly but only after conducting hundreds of interviews with leaders and ritual experts of the Abaluyia. Their full complement of use, relations and meanings are assessed before being considered indexes. A few almost have a mono-relation with a cultural theme[33] which makes them specially helpful in analysis. Because of these affinities between individual themes and symbol or event, a more precise tool than has been suggested beforehand is imposed into thematic analysis.

(2) Specific actions and symbols may cease long before a theme itself ceases to exist since they are peripheral and the theme remains near the core of the culture's system. Thus, care must be taken against over-interpretation. However, a sudden rejection of indexes of a cultural theme reflects on tension in the value system of that culture.

(3) If presuppositions and beliefs relating to a cultural theme become obnoxious or an embarrasment or inadequate to a people, pluralism will be evident in the development of alternates or in major restructuring of the ritual system. People will begin renewal from the level of symbols, acts and components and move toward the themes and value systems. Old symbols will be rejected or disappear from the rituals.

Because the use of symbols, acts and components expressed as indexes of the viability of cultural themes has not been attempted before to the writer's knowledge and because of the "time-span" attempted in the sample of chapter five (i. e., from 1911 through 1972), evidence there will be correlated and tempered with historical evidence to assess its validity.

While no claim is made in this chapter on theory behind the thesis that there is resolution of either the subjective dilemma or unresolved conflict among different schools of ethnological interpretation, it is anticipated that the study will be considered one within the framework of an accepted school of thought. Both thematic influences and historical developments in Abaluyia culture are weighed. The attempt to measure changes in cultural configurations by measuring indexes across seven decades keeps the study from treating culture as if it were frozen at some magic moment in the traditional era for the sake of an analyst interested in the archaic. Interviews and questionnaires are structured to appraise change since the influence of Western innovations began to be felt. It is anticipated that this type of scrutiny of ritual actions will make possible a wider use of thematic analysis. Hopefully such studies will also be

appreciated in developing countries which are attempting to direct improvement in the quality of their citizens' lives and need a clearer picture of the dilemma between proximate and traditional values.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER TWO

[1]George M. Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good," American Anthropologist, 67:1965, p. 295.

[2]Victor Turner, "Ritual Symbolism Among the Ndembu," African Systems of Thought, eds. M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 82.

[3]Oscar Lewis, Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951).

[4]Georgescu-Proegen, Analytical Economics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 112.

[5]See section "I" in chapter one for checks and controls imposed on this study, pp. 22ff.

[6]Claire Selltiz and others, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 200.

[7]Ramkrishna Mukherjee, "The Value Base of Social Anthropology: The Context of India in Particular," Current Anthropology, 17:1 (March 1976), p. 71.

[8]Marvin Harris, The Rise of Anthropological Theory (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 433.

[9]Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (New York: Macmillan Free Press Paperback, 1957), p. 327. First printed in 1913.

[10]Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, trans. C. Jacobson (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 33.

[11]Some Formal Semantic representatives are: Eugene Hammel, Charles Frake and Ward Goodenough.

[12]Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1934).

[13]Clyde Kluckhohn, "Patterning as Exemplified in Navaho Culture," in Language, Culture and Personality, eds. L. Spier and others (New York: Menasha, Sapir Memorial Pub. Fund, 1941), pp. 109ff.

[14]Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action (New York: Free Press, 1969), Vol. II, p. 596.

[15]Jane Halo, "The Balanese Temper," in Personal Character and Cultural Milieu, ed. Douglas Hering (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1956).

[16]Geoffrey Gorer, "Bodification of National Character," in Personal Character in Cultural Milieu, ed. Douglas Hering (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1956).

[17]A. Irving Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and World View," in Culture in History: Essays in Honor of Paul Radin, ed. S. Diamond (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 21.

[18]Morris Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," American Journal of Sociology, 1945:51:3, 198.

[19]Such an exclusivistic approach underlies the analysis of Bruno Bettelheim, "Symbolic Wounds," in Reader in Comparative Religion, eds. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 230-40.

[20]Opler, loc. cit.

[21]James B. Watson, "Cultural Themes," in A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, eds. J. Gould and W. L. Kolb (London: Tavistock Publications, 1967), p. 164.

[22]Victor W. Turner, "Ritual Symbolism, Morality and Social Structure Among the Ndembu," in African Systems of Thought, eds. M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 82.

[23]Victor W. Turner, The Ritual Process (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 8.

[24]Donald R. Jacobs, "The Cultural Themes and Puberty Rites of the Akamba," (unpublished PhD dissertation, New York University, 1961). Jacobs found that five of seven cultural themes were enculturated in the circumcision rituals of the Akamba.

[25]See Mario D. Zamora and others (eds.), Themes in Culture (Quezon City: Kayumaggi Publishers, 1971), pp. 310-13.

[26]Ibid., p. 226.

[27]Marja-Liisa Swantz, Ritual and Symbol (Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksells, 1970), p. 19.

[28]A. A. Radcliffe-Brown, Method in Social Anthropology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. xii.

[29]Monica Wilson, Religion and the Transformation of Society (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 6.

[30]E. R. Leach, Political Systems of Highland Burma (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 282.

[31]Karl Eric Knutsson, "Authority and Change, A Study of the Kallu Institution Among the Macha Galla of Ethiopia," Ethnologiska Studier, 29, Etnos Etnografiska Museet, Goteborg, 1967, p. 19.

[32]White clay which is widely used in rituals in Africa has been identified with "strength, health, good luck, ritual purity, authority, good will between the shades and their living kin, the clear and known against the obscure and unknown, life, power, breast milk, seminal fluid and the whiteness of cassava flour." Victor Turner, "Ritual Symbolism," op. cit., p. 282.

[33]See analysis of specific "indexes" of cultural themes in chapter five for those which are considered to have mono-relations with specific themes, pp. 229ff.

CHAPTER THREE

A DESCRIPTION OF TRADITIONAL CIRCUMCISION RITUALS AMONG THE ABALUYIA CIRCA 1910 A. D.

This chapter is a descriptive outline of three distinctive Abaluyia circumcisions. Each tradition is traced from the period of preparation to the final coming-out from seclusion huts after initiates have healed from their operations.

The three types of circumcision ceremonies are designated Bukusu, Kakamega and Tiriki because distinctions are closely equivalent with these three geographic epicentres. The titles are used advisedly as descriptions of the types. In any of the three "types" studied, variations can be pointed out which result from the ever present dominance of clan over "tribe" or location. The viability of clan traditions is especially observable when considering rituals like circumcision. But in spite of these localized variants, three distinct strains of circumcision tradition are observed whose descriptions are presented in this chapter.

The first circumcision is called the "Bukusu type" mainly because a large number of Bukusu in the northern areas of Western Region practice it. The Bukusu type is restricted largely to Bungoma District, although there are mutants of it in Bunyala, Kabras and Wanga Locations in Kakamega District, (see Map Number 3). The Tachoni, who live in Bungoma District on the eastern border, have some unique practices in their ceremonies which

have affinities with Nandi circumcisions. These are noted as mutants of the Bukusu ceremony.

The "Kakamega type" circumcision is restricted to four specific Locations: North and South Maragoli, Idakho and Isukha. While involving a smaller area, these locations had 247,605 inhabitants in the 1969 census[1] including some of the most aggressive Abaluyia peoples. Others in Kakamega District are less reliable informants. In Kisa, Bunyore, Marama and probably even in Wanga Locations there were lapses in performing circumcision during the traditional period just before Europeans penetrated the district.[2] Wagner reports that circumcision was suspended for six age-classes (probably between 30 and 40 years) and then taken up again in 1917 in Bunyore.[3] Circumcision stopped in Kisa Location because too many boys died in the seclusion huts at the turn of the century. It was restarted because the Bunyala and Idakho came into the Location and forced circumcision after 1935.[4] These intruders did so because they feared identity was eroding among those who had dropped circumcision. But even today many mature men from Kisa are not circumcised.[5] Thus, inhabitants of Bunyore, Kisa, Marama and Butsotso Locations, while having similar ceremonies to the Kakamega type, are not generally good informants. A gap has occurred in their circumcisions which makes it next to impossible to reconstruct their traditional practices.

The "Tiriki" ceremony is considered separately because of its secret rituals conducted in forests. It also has unique qualities because the rituals fuse traditions of Kalenjin pioneers and innovations brought by Bantu-speaking immigrants.

It is practiced in Tiriki and Nyang'ori Locations. This ceremony, because it is still secret, is the only type which has not been observed by the writer, though a description is given. (See Map Number 2 in chapter one to correlate locations and the three circumcision "types" which have been designated for the sake of these descriptions).

A. THE BUKUSU TYPE TRADITIONAL CIRCUMCISION[6]

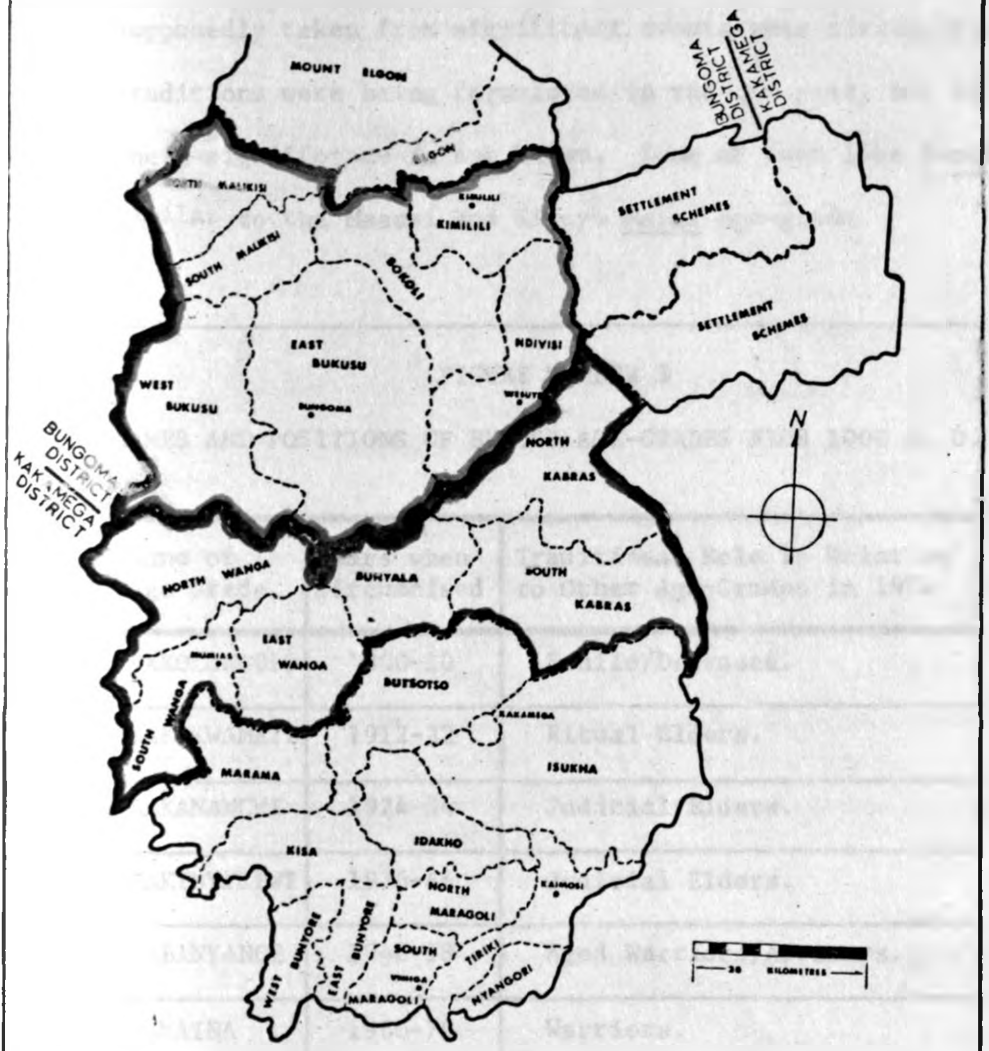
An uncircumcised person among the Bukusu, even if married is liable to be called omusinde (child/one with no status) at any time. If he has children, he cannot expect heirs to be called by his name nor to perpetuate his memory after death unless he has been circumcised.[7] He is ineligible to make oaths since the ancestors who apply sanctions do not know him.[8] If he dies uncircumcised, a retired operator (omukebi) comes to remove the prepuce before burial[9] and receives a high payment for the operation such as two cows and a sheep because these are services which "defile" him.[10]

Circumcision and Age-Grades (Bivingilo): In periods of peace circumcision occurs every two years in the Bukusu tradition. But during times of extreme stress a person might be mature before getting an opportunity to be circumcised. Informants agree that at some crucial periods in the pre-colonial era men were sometimes over thirty years of age before being circumcised. Wars and food shortages forced these lapses.

Regular circumcisions every two years for adolescent males up to twenty years of age help maintain the delicate balance of age-grades. There are eight age-grades among the

MAP NUMBER 3

AREAS ENCOMPASSED BY BUKUSU TYPE CIRCUMCISION
IN BUNGOMA AND KAKAMEGA DISTRICTS,
WESTERN REGION, KENYA



Code: Blue--Bukusu Type Circumcision.
Green--Mutants of Bukusu Type.

Ababukusu. These age-grades rotate after six circumcisions have occurred within a period of twelve years, one age-grade closes and the succeeding age-grade automatically opens. This succession continues until an age-grade appears the second time after ninety-six years. The names of the eight age-grades are supposedly taken from significant events when circumcision traditions were being formulated in the dim past, but in general their significance is not known. Some of them like Bamaina are similar to the Maasai and Kikuyu Maina age-grade.

FIGURE NUMBER 3

NAMES AND POSITIONS OF BUKUSU AGE-GRADES FROM 1900 A. D.

Name of Age-Grade	Years when Circumcised	Traditional Role in Relation to Other Age-Grades in 1974
PAKOLONGOLO	1900-10	Senile/Deceased.
BAKIKWAMETI	1912-22	Ritual Elders.
BAKANANCHI	1924-34	Judicial Elders.
BAKINYIKEWI	1936-46	Judicial Elders.
BABANYANGE	1948-58	Aged Warriors/Advisors.
BAMAINA	1960-70	Warriors.
BACHUMA	1972-82	Warriors/Uninitiated.
BASAWA	1984-94	Unborn/Uninitiated.

Claims are sometimes made that the twelve year cycle of age-grades which is indicated in Figure Number 3 goes back to beyond the nineteenth century, but Jan Jacob de Wolf feels that the time-span can be traced accurately to around 1888. Longer intervals probably existed between age-grades before that period because of wars and famines which have already been mentioned.[11]

A further division exists within each age-grade. The six circumcisions of the age-grade are paired into three groups. The initiates of the first two circumcisions in that cycle are paired into one set. Those of the following two circumcisions make up the second set. Those of the fifth and sixth circumcision within the age-grade make up the third set.

FIGURE NUMBER 4

BAKOKI RELATIONSHIPS ILLUSTRATED FROM TWO AGE-GRADES OF THE BUKUSU

Age-Grade	Year	Sub-Grade Name[12]	Relationship
BAMAINA	1960	Makonge	BAKOKI
	1962	Majimbo	
	1964	Uhuru	BAKOKI
	1966	Haibridi	
	1968	Landi	BAKOKI
	1970	Lamu	
BACHUMA	1972	Sudi	BAKOKI
	1974	Kilo	

As is indicated in Figure Number 4, the initiates of each paired set within the age-grade are called bakoki. There are three sets of bakoki in each age-grade. A special relationship exists between the bakoki of one set since they are under obligation to each other. A number of taboos are also involved in their relations. They are restricted from marrying each other's daughters and from warring against each other.[13] After a circumcision they have to avoid each other's sons. When a man's son is circumcised, neither he nor his bakoki can go to the river to watch the boy being mudded. A man also kills a bull for his bakoki after his son's circumcision so the initiate will not be cursed by them. In becoming a bakoki with all boys initiated during two seasons, a Bukusu boy extends his relation to hundreds of his peers.[14]

The Tension of Decision-making: While the calendar for circumcision follows a regular two year cycle, both a boy and his father are under pressure to choose an auspicious time for the boy's participation in the rites. If a boy is cowardly and lets peers pass him, the family is ridiculed. But if he enters circumcision before he is mature enough to bear the pain and cries out during the operation, the family is disgraced. It is also believed that the mother of a coward faces an early death.

Timid boys sometimes ask their mothers to mediate with fathers for permission to enter circumcision.[15] Requests are made to assemble iron bangles and bells which are used in dancing before circumcision. If a father is feared, the son may proceed by stealth. The father may discover his son's

intentions when he misses a rooster sold to get cow-bells from an older friend of the boy.[16] If the father doubts his son's readiness, he can challenge him to a wrestling match. The son who competes well is considered fit for the trial. Even then the father may beat him as he begins wearing garb for dancing and taunt the boy to strengthen his resolve.[17]

Preparations for Circumcision: Three months before harvest, candidates (besaile) begin appearing in belts of shiny iron (butundi). They also carry cow-bells which are beaten to the rhythm of songs by their leader (omuloli we besaile).[18]

> To these bells they attach a stiff handle made of strings, so that they can hold them like hand-bells. Also they fasten to their belts some curved teeth of wild pigs and sharp pieces of iron which protrude sideways from their waists. In this attire they go and dance about all day in groups of eight or ten, trying to scratch one another with the pig-teeth and the iron pins and making a rhythmic noise by beating the iron wristlets against the cow-bells.[19]

Dancing before circumcision cannot begin for a boy if rituals of marriage between his parents have not been normalized. First, major installments of the bride-price of the candidate's mother must be paid by his father. Secondly, the Chinyinja ceremony confirming the marriage after at least two children have been born must have been completed. In this ceremony the wife's family sacrifice a bull at their home. She, along with others from the paternal compound, carry meat, flour, beer, wood, a small broom and a cooking stick to the paternal residence. There a great feast is held to celebrate the marriage which has been "cemented" by offspring. The woman during the trip from her parents home to her husband remains incommunicado. Upon arrival, she and a girl go to the river to get water.

They remain quiet and cannot look back when coming from the river.[20]

A third ceremony, the Sise rite which confirms the mother's "maturity" is also completed before the circumcision of the first son. Another animal is killed at the maternal relatives' home. Buse (chyme or offal) from the stomach of the cow is spread on the woman and she takes major portions of the meat to the husband's home. The paternal relatives have a feast using the meat -- but excluding candidates from eating it. They have meat from an animal killed at the father's house.[20a] The meat sacrificed cannot be eaten by candidates since the buse (chyme) spread on the mother is intended to bring spirits from the maternal "line" under the control of the father's family. To eat the sacrificed meat might negate the "cooling" powers of the chyme on the vulnerable candidates.[21]

A seclusion hut (likombe) is also built for circumcision. Generally a candidate or three or four of them who will be secluded together construct it in a corner of a father's property. After doing this a boy brews his first beer called kamalwa ke khwebwa (beer of circumcision). The last stages of preparation of the porridge-like mixture are done by the mother who will give it to visitors at the circumcision ceremony itself.[22]

The daily dances carry candidates to all their relatives who are invited to the circumcision. Gifts and food are lavished on the candidates in view of the trial ahead. Old women anoint them with butter and simsim seeds. Old men give stern warnings on how to stand during the trial.[23]

Khuchukhila Ceremony: Two days before circumcision, the candidate goes to the river with a pot to fetch water. He carries the pot over his shoulder on returning and never looks back. At home he finds another pot inside the small ancestral shrine (namwima), which has been cleaned and often rethatched.[24] "Star-grass" (Kikuyu grass) is tied around the pot. Within it is a portion of fermented millet porridge which has been fried. There is also a stick from a palm tree. The father instructs the son to pour water into the pot in the shrine. Immediately he is also directed to take the cow-bells and to sing Sioyayo[25] to confirm that the date of circumcision is near. This involves ancestors in activities as the focus on the ancestral shrine and interpretations from aged informants both indicate.[26]

Animals Killed Before Circumcision: The day after the Khuchukhila ceremony, the candidate and a party go to the home of a maternal uncle who benefitted from the bride-price paid for the candidate's mother. The uncle, if he sanctions the circumcision, must slaughter a bullock. The luliki (intestinal linings from the neck to the testicles) is placed over the candidate's head. Those who accompany the candidate carry the forelegs, one hind leg with the ribs, the head and the hide back to the father's home.[27] The luliki is removed from the boy's neck by those who have accompanied him on the trip. It is cooked by the paternal grandmother or the father's sister who then eats part of the luliki without any salt.[28]

The father then kills another cow. The stomach contents (buse) are placed near the ancestral shrine. Some of the chyme

is smeared on the chest, back and head of the candidate and a piece of stomach lining (likhoni) is put around his neck. Blood from the animal is poured on the shrine[29] where a branch from a lukomosi or olusiola tree shades the ancestors.[30]

> The Bawanga and Banyala. . .take it to. . .three stones under the Olusiola tree and blood of the animal is poured on the stones. The meat is divided among the partakers but small pieces are thrown out for the dead who are constantly interceeded for the living and are invited to drink that blood and eat that meat there.[31]

After the sacrifice, the candidate's paternal aunt shaves his head.[32] Dancing continues until the operation the following morning. It becomes more vigorous as members of the clan and maternal relatives enter to swell the party. The candidates to be operated upon on one day, of whom there are usually three or four who are cousins, are the centre of attention. They shuffle about in the dance but refuse to banter, sing or greet new arrivals.[33] Near midnight they are taken to the home of the oldest "father" of initiation and made to rest naked on the floor or on a cowhide.[34] The candidates remain together through all the preliminary activities of circumcision although they will be circumcised in front of their father's houses. During the night the door is left open, and the parents of the candidates do not sleep.

Events on the Day of Circumcision: By daybreak the candidates are awakened and the dancing is revived. Songs old and new are sung as the dancers slowly move in a counter-clockwise circle. The candidates are exhorted by men and women who dance near them. Men point walking sticks into the air to punctuate the rhythm and exhortations of their songs.

The boys are then taken to a mother's house and given the last meal of childhood. Every scrap of food is eaten and they silently return to the dancing.

Shortly after the sun rises, the party goes to the grave of a paternal ancestor nearby.[35] A white goat or sheep is killed at the grave with its head pointed toward Mt. Elgon. After it is killed, the intestines are read by an omuloli (diviner of the intestines)[36] to indicate how the candidates and their immediate families will fare.

On occasions another ceremony is performed near the entrance to the compound if there is doubt as to whether benevolent ancestors will be able to suppress other spirits. The oldest man in a boy's clan and an attendant take an old spear, a white chicken and a basket[37] to a termite hill or the "stones of the pathway" (amagina ako lunganyi)[38] which is an occasional sacrificial spot. There the old man drives the base of the spear into the ground. He puts a small piece of meat on its point.[39] Then he kneels toward Mt. Elgon saying, "Wele (God), you bless this cock which I'm holding. I'm giving it to all those who have passed on for their use. Come, this is your (plural) white cock. You may use it. I'm placing it here in the basket."[40] The chicken remains there, usually overnight, as an omen. It is believed that if the sacrifices are not disturbed, then the ancestral spirits will help initiates heal quickly. The ancestors' ability to dominate at the "sacrifice" over less benevolent spirits is indicated by the way these ceremonies progress.[41]

These preliminary activities are not required for every boy. A few hardy fellows decide to join circumcision at the last moment without preparation (khufumbuka). They join candidates when they are escorted to the river for mudding.[42] A large party escorts the candidates to the river while singing Siovayo--an old song which warns candidates to face the pain of the tearing leopard like men. The fathers, their bakoki (circumcision mates), the mother and the circumcisers are required to remain at the father's compound lest one of them cause candidates to go mad.[43] It is taboo (kumusilo) for these people of the adjacent generation to go to the river.

The river is approached from the east if the father's clan entered the area from the west and vice versa for those from the east. Songs are sung and men brandish sticks before the candidates, usually three to five in number, to test their resolve.[44] Some mock battles are fought between various elements of the noisy party. A man with a pole stands at the edge of a wood as the party passes and makes spear-like thrusts at another who is passing. The second pretends that he is beating the man who has the pole.[45]

The candidates are given a chance to urinate and then they remove all their clothing near the river. The hand-bells are taken from them. Women are instructed to maintain a distance. The candidates then go into the river and bathe. On coming out they line up in the order they will be operated upon and are mudded (khulonga) by an agnatic relative who stood well at his own circumcision. As he smears mud, the older man shouts for each candidate to be brave. He:

> . . .covers the body of each candidate from head to foot with thick brown mud leaving a free space on the head. . .he places a lump of clay, about five inches high, onto which he sticks long feathers that wave in the wind.[46]

The candidates are mudded in the order of their fathers' births. If two sons of one father are circumcised together, the son of the first wife will be mudded and circumcised before the second wife's son, even if the first boy to be mudded is younger.[47]

The residue from the mud is thrown back into the river by a trusted girl from one of the candidates' immediate families. It is disposed of so no one can use it to bewitch or reduce the fertility of the candidates.[48]

A different route is taken back to the father's compound (mungo) from the river as a further precaution against medicine being placed in the way to make candidates weak, fearful or sick. On the way back to the home a maternal uncle gives each candidate a stick called kamusini which is to be held behind the neck during the operation. The song Sioyayo is sung on the way home.[49]

LEADER	PARTICIPANTS
Hoooooo, ho	Hoooooooo, ho
Musinde we	Hoooooooo, ho
Musinde we	Hoooooooo, ho
(You the uncircumcised)	
(You the uncircumcised)	
Sisiefwe sye bakhale syoloma	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Syoloma	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Syoloma	Haaaaaaaa, ho
(The old ancestral customs can be heard booming)	
(Booming everywhere)	
(Booming everywhere)	

LEADER	PARTICIPANTS
Omusinde otere aka ache ebunyolo	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Ache ebunyolo	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Ache ebunyolo	Haaaaaaaa, ho
(May the fearful go to the Luo people-- who have no circumcision or respect) (Go to the Luo people) (Go to the Luo people)	
Wangwe maalule wakonile	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Wakonile	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Wakonile	Haaaaaaaa, ho
(the tearing leopard [circumciser] is sleeping here) (Sleeping) (Sleeping)	
Omusinde olinda embalu alinda engwe	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Alinda engwe	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Alinda engwe	Haaaaaaaa, ho
(The boy who faces the cutting of his penis can resist the leopard) (Can resist the leopard) (Can resist the leopard)	
Kumwoyo kwanautu webele	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Webele	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Webele	Haaaaaaaa, ho
(If you don't have a courageous heart-- give up) (Give up) (Give up)	
Yaya okhambemula mubechule	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Mubechule	Haaaaaaaa, ho
Mubechule	Haaaaaaaa, ho
(Dear don't shame me before the spectators) (Before the spectators) (Before the spectators)	
Bakulo bali engo eyi bekhale	Haaaaaaaaa, ho
Bekhale	Haaaaaaaaa, ho
Bekhale	Haaaaaaaaa, ho
(The mockers are seated at home) (Seated) (Seated)	

Other verses of Sioyayo encourage candidates to enter manhood bravely. Those coming from the river strike out at unseen adversaries with ferocity as they return to be circumcised.[50] The emotional climate becomes so tense that various persons begin to tremble under the influence of spirits (bisebe). Unmarried girls or future circumcisers as well as the present circumciser tremble when they hear snatches of the song Sioyayo.[51] Infectious possession is not uncommon at this juncture.

> Spirit possession in traditional society is induced by the incessant rhythm of drums and rattles, the singing of appropriate songs, often accompanied by dancing and the powerful expectation of the crowd that possession will occur. Moreover, once one of the crowd is possessed, the spirit more easily seizes others also, until it is not unknown for all the participants to be dancing wildly. . .[52]

Sometimes even the maternal aunt (senenge) who comes to meet the boys is also possessed by bukhebi (the spirit of circumcision). She disguises herself with soot from a cooking pot and puts a piece of meat in her right ear (echuchali) to symbolize the way the boys will be cut like a piece of meat.[53] She carries a cooking stick which has been dipped in porridge (mayeku). She touches it to the lips of the candidates and then rushes back to the women's house ahead of the party.[54]

A father who doubts his son's strength may come out and meet the candidates one last time and try to discourage them by vividly describing how much the knife hurts. He may threaten a son with a spear and finally say, "Your fear comes from your mother's side, not from our clan." His last words are, "Don't blame me. You are entering this yourself. Stand true if you want to finish it."[55]

The candidates are then rushed into the compound which has been prepared for their return. Medicine has been placed in a hole at the spot in front of the chief house in the compound where each boy will be circumcised. An axe handle[56] or a small stick protrudes from the hole.

> A man who knows where to find a rare root (tjitiani) which is supposed to lend courage to anyone who comes in contact with it is engaged by the father of the candidate. For the payment of the stomach of the cow of luyega this man digs a little hole in the yard and puts the root inside, on branch of it protruding from the ground like a stick. The candidate then stands on the spot where the root has been buried and grips its protruding part between the big and second toe of his right foot.[57]

The circumciser, as the song Sioyayo intimated, is ready for the operation. He is from a different age-grade from the father of the initiate. He trembles in anticipation of his work "because of the nature of his uncontrollable blood," i. e., his possession by spirits of circumcision.[58]

The Operation: An assistant circumciser inspects the penis of each candidate to see if the foreskin covers it or if it has ruptured "because the ancestors have circumcised him" (basambwa bamukhebile).[59] If the penis is normal he pours powdered clay on it and the circumciser (omukhebi) begins cutting. In two swift motions he removes the foreskin.[60] Everyone watches the candidate and the feathers on top of his head to detect movement that reveals fear. As the circumciser raises the knife over his head to signify the end of the operation, a female relative trills (lulalakala) indicating triumph and also signaling that the mothers of initiates can come out of their houses.

Mothers of the three or four candidates operated upon in one compound come out of the chief wife's house with the aunt who met the boys on the way from the river. They had remained quiet within the house during the operation. The mother of each boy had clasped the centre pole supporting the roof as her son was operated upon "to keep him steady"[61] just as she had done when giving birth to her child. If a mother is menstrous, she is not allowed to go near the newly circumcised initiates after the operation.[62]

An initiate who shows fear is held and circumcised. The man who holds him is given a ram to eat as a "testimony."[63] The chyme of the animal killed is rubbed on the mother of the initiate to protect her from a quick death because of the curse brought by the boy's fear.[64] Further, the mud applied to candidates at the river is quickly removed from a fearful one since his initiation is more like that of a girl's who is held during her circumcision.[65]

Immediately following the cutting, successful candidates are congratulated. Affection is often expressed:

> . . .after a boy has been circumcised, a girl who is in love with him or who has already been courted by him rushes toward the boy and from behind throws her arms round his hips, thereby claiming him her future husband. The boy's father then has to act upon the girl's advances and give or at least promise her a "heifer of friendship" which if actually given to her publicly seals the betrothal.[66]

Songs of triumph begin as the initiates (avakhulu) squat down and have cow-skins thrown over their shoulders. Those who showed bravery are given gifts. A boy who has proved himself in spite of his father's doubts can stand and demand an animal

before sitting down. The initiates are praised by relatives and songs of triumph are sung as the blood coagulates.[67]

If the blood does not stop flowing, the circumciser beats the initiate's chest and says, "Do not bleed. I am the one who circumcised you and here is my knife. Why do you bleed?" If the bleeding grows serious, a herbalist (omusilikhi) is called. With little fanfare, he gives the initiate medicine which is expected to stop the bleeding.[68]

The mud (liloba lye khumurwe) from the initiates' heads is removed before they enter the seclusion house (generally a separate hut on the father's property). The mud, along with the foreskin and blood from each operation is gathered on a banana leaf by an aged, trusted member of the household. The bundle is then taken into the seclusion house (likombe) where it remains for three days before being disposed of in the bush in the early light of the third day (sisialukho) by the grandfather or grandmother. This is done so no enemies can get these things and curse or retard the development of initiates.[69]

If an initiate is plucky enough, he can get up and beat the circumciser before entering the seclusion hut. If he succeeds in tearing off the circumciser's headdress, the operator has to give him three chickens as a reward.[70] As soon as the bleeding stops the initiate is made to walk backward around the seclusion hut until he enters it.

Life in the Seclusion Hut: Generally two to four initiates stay in one hut during their confinement. Immediately after entering the hut, the pace slows down. The initiates are expected to cool down (khuola) and the focus of attention moves

to the next home where a circumcision will be held.

However, activities continue in the seclusion hut. Within a few hours, the initiates are given their first meal by the circumciser. He pours water on their hands and commands that it be dropped before the hands can be rubbed together. He does this three times. On the fourth time, the initiates are allowed to rub their hands together.

Then the circumciser takes stiff millet porridge and forms it into a stick-like shape about five inches long. He tells an initiate to open his mouth. The initiate then begins sucking and searching like an infant seeking his mother's breast. The circumciser presents the food, then withdraws it just as the initiate approaches it. He does this a number of times, then breaks off a piece of the porridge in the initiate's mouth. When the initiate begins chewing it, he is commanded to spit the food out. He spits it to his left side. The same thing is repeated with his spitting it to the right. Then he is allowed to eat. The initiates and the circumciser share this food which is known as khulumia.[71]

Three helpers are given to the initiates for the seclusion period. The omutiling'i (tutor) is an older circumcised youth. He advises them and teaches the rules of seclusion. The namacheng'eche is a young girl from the immediate family who brings food to the initiates who eat alone. The namakhala is a young boy who runs errands for initiates. The tutor and the female helper are called grandfather and mother respectively throughout life since they served the initiates during seclusion.[72]

On the first day after circumcision, the father's age-mates (babakoki) come to his home demanding gifts since the son of an age-mate has been circumcised. They stand on an ant hill outside the compound and berate the father saying, "Musinde we, icha eno. Khukana lubaka," (You the uncircumcised one, come here. We want the gift of circumcision). Arrangements are made for meat to be distributed to these visitors. The father tells someone to take the meat outside and distribute it to the babakoki. If anyone refuses the meat, he turns his face aside and negotiations begin again.[73]

During the visit of the babakoki, the initiate remains hidden. He avoids his father's age-mates and other older men for fear of being cursed by someone who has not received a gift from the father.[74]

On the morning of the third day the wound of the initiate is dressed. Leaves from a shrub bimeselo are placed on the penis to remove the blood. A very painful medicine enguu is then applied. It is prepared by drying the leaves of the plant and burning them to an ash which is sprinkled on the penis.[75]

Spitting Blessings on the Initiates: Later that day the circumciser returns to spit blessings (khubita) on the initiates. He is given some beer in a new calabash. He drinks a little then spits it on the circumcision knife. Then he spits between the legs of the initiate. Gripping the knife in his right hand, he beats each initiate's head, the right-hand side, the left-hand side and then the back. As he does this, he wishes each of the initiates good health and fertility. He instructs them in proper decorum for men. He specifically mentions the folly of

sitting in a brother's house in the absence of the owner. Then he repeats the initiate's name which is to be remembered for the rest of his life.[76]

An initiate who fails to heal is given traditional herbs and even has special sacrifices made for him at the family shrine. In Wanga, a fire is kept burning in the seclusion hut for months. Any initiate who dies there is pushed into the ashes of the fire. The initiates sing, "Mboya (x4). Kwa wasio (x2)" [I'm like that, as a hawk],[77] and are not allowed to mourn. There the corpse dries out.

The parents are not informed about the death. The female guardian is sworn to secrecy so no mourning will endanger the remaining initiates. She keeps bringing the deceased's food. Later the parents come to know their son is dead and are allowed to take his body out for burial.[78]

Discipline in the Seclusion Hut: The seclusion which lasts three months is a period of regimentation. Initiates are not allowed to bathe during that period, rather they apply white soil (lulongo) to their bodies in geometric patterns. They never sleep outside the seclusion hut. They are warned against being caught in a rainstorm. Should such happen, an initiate can be beaten by his tutors. He is not allowed to trim either fingernails or hair. He guards his walking-stick lest someone take it from him and rob him of the right to return to the seclusion hut. Above all he avoids men who might be unsatisfied bakoki (circumcision-mates) of his father and also girls and women lest his wound break.[79]

During the seclusion period, the initiates are in a state of limbo outside the pale of society. They may not leave compounds by regular gates; rather a special path is built for them.[80] They are not allowed to exchange normal greetings with those outside seclusion. An elder can use an euphemism of greeting, "Atiring'i simiyu," (may the penis dry as bright as the sun) as he sees an initiate.[81] The initiate can respond by repeating the same words. A second form of greeting is for old men to take the walking stick from an initiate and lightly tap the youngster's ankle bone. The initiate returns a token blow in response. It is believed that to use normal greetings and names endangers the fertility and sanity of initiates.[82]

These restrictions are an index of the transitional or liminal status of initiates. Apparently the process of change involves ritual danger which requires separation from regular social interaction. Initiates are dangerous because they are drawn close to the primary powers for their restructure.

Name Giving (Khutiukha): As coming out nears, parents brew beer and invite maternal uncles to their home. In mid-morning the initiate is expected to be inside his seclusion hut sitting by the door and facing outward. The door is half-shut by either a shield or a dry cow-hide.

The initiate is given a small stick. He holds it in his right hand while part of the stick is trimmed. Then the father comes forward with beer in a new calabash. He drinks and spits over the stick as he also grips it in his right hand. He calls the initiate by a new surname which has not been given

before. He also instructs him on how to behave on coming out. The maternal uncle does the same while wishing the initiate prosperity. The initiate is expected to remain in his hut after the exhortation for a period of meditation. Then he is free to roam about with other initiates. The elders remain in the compound having a drinking party.[83]

When initiates begin moving about in small parties, they remain under "seclusion" rules although they are often seen. They hunt small animals and are free to practice petty theft such as stealing chickens from neighbours. Further, they express aggression by beating those who have not been circumcised. At night they sing suggestive songs as they dance.[84]

Coming Out (Khurusia Bafura): The time of coming out is co-ordinated with brewing a beer called kamalwa khu khwelalule (the beer of coming out). On the day before coming out, the initiates build temporary dome-shaped huts (lisali) in a banana plantation. They set the bedding of seclusion on fire in the evening and use a torch lit from the fire to go to the lisali. No one is allowed to look back on the way to the banana plantation. Rather the initiates run to the lisali and throw their torches into a heap which is kept burning all night. Others, including girls, are allowed to be present although no one is allowed to go beyond the customary limits of premarital sexual enjoyment.

Wilful and conspicuous waste of bananas and destruction of property in the plantation is common. The boistrous party continues through the night but is halted at dawn. Initiates are careful to leave the banana grove and the lisali before sunrise. They continue carousing in the bush but avoid the lisali lest they should die soon.[85]

After sunrise, the initiates are free of seclusion restraints. They bathe for the first time in three months. New clothes are sent to them at the river by the parents. The initiate (omufulu) then becomes an omutembete (a new and soft one). He walks home singing a song of encouragement to his parents:

> Papa undomanga lelo mungubo embia!
> Mayi undomanga lelo mundubi embia!
>
> (Father, you would blame me; today I am in new clothes!)
> (Mother, you would blame me; today I eat from new utensils!)[86]

The omutembete is welcomed home with a festival. It begins with an exhortation from the maternal uncle or the father.

> My son, you have left behind "the mother's cloth" (i. e, the prepuce), but now you are given the father's cloth.
>
> If you come to a house and it is closed do not open it to enter. The closed door is not for you, only the open door is yours. If you find an old woman who has one eye, go and build (a hut) for her. She will cook food for you in peace. If you see an old man call him father and treat him as a father. If he tells you to go on an errand for him accede to his request. If you find him cutting or carrying the grass help him. If you "sit in the beer" (i. e. if you are attending a beer-drink) and you are a strong boy and you see another boy troubling an old man, help the old man and fight the strong boy who is troubling him. If an old man calls you "my strength" reply to him, "Here I am, your strength." If you meet an old woman carrying water or wood or other heavy things, help her as you help your mother and call her "mother". If she begs you to cut grass for her or help her digging do not say, "Who are you, old woman, do not trouble me!" but go and help her in peace. A good boy will always eat the secret things. Friendship is always better than (to have) many things in the house or the possession of many cattle.
>
> Now you are a man. If you see people quarrelling tell them: "Do not quarrel," and if you find people hurting each other stop them.

> Now you are a man. No longer ride on a cow or an ox! Do not dance about standing on one leg, because this is childish and a disgrace for a man. If you see the children doing bad things, take them to their father but do not beat them yourself! Do not join the women when they sit together and talk about their own things. If you go there you will hear foolish things and become a fool yourself. Go where the old men are sitting and join them![87]

After the feasting and beer drinking begins, each newly emerged man is given a spear, a shield and other war materials. He is ordered to guard the territory of the walled village. He receives many gifts from relatives and friends including a cow from the father's herd. The festivities continue and within three days the new warriors start making the rounds to collect other gifts (khubabachukha) from relatives who had not attended the feast. From that time the newly emerged person is considered a man.

The Khulicha Tradition: Among the Bukusu there are six main "lines" out of which the clans have emerged. Five of these, the Basilikwa, Bakikayi, Bamalaba, Babanabayi and Babeala circumcise as the preceeding pages have described. But the sixth "line," the Bamwalie, along with the Tachoni who live near Webuye have another secret ceremony in their circumcision called khulicha. The origin of the ceremony is probably from the Nandi to the east who have similar ceremonies.[88]

Those following the Khulicha tradition practice open curses in contrast to other Bukusu traditions. As an initiate is taken into the seclusion hut on the day of circumcision, the father uses the occasion to settle old scores. He curses any who do not act properly. He might take a walking stick and beat on the roof of the seclusion hut while singing, "There is a man who wants to seduce women and there are loose women. Let

them desist. Wafula is one of that kind. Every time he sees Mvita's wife, he goes running after her like a dog."[89] Ridicule and curses are included in the song.

The first distinct ceremony of khulicha is called "to beat water" (Khuhupa madzi or Khuhupa kamechi). It is done after healing has progressed. A feast is prepared, and everyone circumcised from the khulicha clans goes to the river under the authority of an elder, called muviti (a man who eats the first fruits of harvest and blows food out of his mouth to the left and right as a blessing).

On the way to the river a person is free to express any obscenity he desires to utter. Some men throw off their clothes even though children and women may be part of the group in its early stages. Songs about sexual activities are sung. Some men even wear women's clothes[90] "because things are different in these days and we change them."[91] The girls who accompany the dancers wear large phalic symbols around their waists.[92]

On arriving near the river, those outside the khulicha clans along with women and the uncircumcised are told to remain behind. Only those initiated in the secrets of khulicha and circumcision initiates go to the river. The muviti stands near the stream and sticks a bamboo stalk into the mud. He says, "When the people plant food, may it produce abundantly." Those present repeat, "May it produce abundantly." He continues, "Those initiates who beat the water, when they marry, may they have many children." The participants say, "May they have many children."

A temporary hut is prepared as a passage-way for initiates to enter the river to "beat the water." The hut is similar to that of the Kapkiyia ceremony among the Nandi people where a hut is constructed at the edge of a pool in the river. Initiates are forced to strip and crawl through the hut four times in the order of their operations. They become completely submerged in the water each time they pass through the hut.[93]

The Abaluyia call the hut of "beating the water" sitavicha. Over the passage nearest the river a snake called naluvonga is impaled. The fangs have been removed and it is left to hang over the door. Over the entrance there are thorns. The first initiate circumcised in the area (chivulete) is told to go through the door. He is warned to close his eyes lest the leopard eat him and scratch his eyes out. Elders then pinch the initiate. One of them says, "This is the leopard which scratches you. Don't cry. You are a circumcised man."[94]

After the initiates have passed through the sitavicha hut, the muviti sprinkles water on them from a bamboo stick. Then the initiates are individually lifted up like dead bodies and carried across the stream. There they are "awakened" and told to open their eyes. The song of leaving is sung and the party returns to a common (luyia) for a meal together.[95]

Persons who have acted in an anti-social manner or who know they are not in favour with the community are afraid to attend the ceremony at the river because they know it is common for transgressors to be "sung" in the march back from the river. The songs begin as ridicule, but they soon become "curses" of suspects of witchcraft.[96]

From the time of the "beating water" ceremony until the Khulicha ceremony itself, the initiates are free to roam about during the day and dance with other initiates. They return to their seclusion huts in the evenings.

Khulicha Coming-Out: The Khulicha coming out ceremony begins just as do other Bukusu coming-out activities. Bedding is burned and the initiates go to a banana grove. But the uninitiated and women are warned to stay away from the activities of the night, since those of the Mwalye custom (those coming from the east) will deal with the leopard who is loose.

The Khulicha songs which suggest sexual activity are sung. A bull-roarer is used to simulate the leopard's growl.[97] The initiates are taught a song of protection to keep the roaring leopard from eating them.[98] Sometimes a friction drum is used in place of the bull-roarer. The elders shout as they eat bananas and drink beer, "We've heard him; we are very happy."

Each initiate knows that during the night he will have to wrestle with the leopard. When he is taken aside, he is grabbed and two parallel cuts are made on his left arm in the tender flesh near the elbow. The marks are supposed to be the claw-marks of the leopard as he wrestled with the initiate. When the night is almost ended, the initiates, just as they had done in "beating the water," are sworn to secrecy. They are told that anyone who reveals the secrets of khulicha will become a madman or his arms will wither up, and he will become a hunchback.[99]

The brothers of Khulicha return to the village early in the morning after assuring everyone that the leopard is under their control. They warn the uninitiated against trying to learn the secrets of the leopard lest they be attacked. They sing the balicha song as they return.

LEADER	PARTICIPANTS
Ingwe yeru (2x)	Haaaaa, ha (2x)
Khwama Ebwabi (Ebwai) (2x)	Haaaaa, ha (2x)
Khwama Songeli (Sengeli) (2x)	Haaaaa, ha (2x)
Khwama Likwe (2x)	Haaaaa, ha (2x)
Khwama Silikwa (2x)	Haaaaa, ha (2x)
Likina Ehhhhh (2x)	Haaaaa, ha (2x)

The balicha song traces the migration of the Khulicha clans by explaining that the "leopard of circumcision" came from Egypt (Ebwabi or Ebwai) via Songeli (a place in the north--now unidentifiable) via Likwe (the east), through Silikwa (Trans-Nzoia in the Rift Valley). Likina (plural, amakina, stones) refers to the special stone kept by a man of the oldest age-grade of the clan Bamwalie. It is believed that some of the stones used in ancestral shrines came from "Egypt" and thus reflect a worship pattern inherited from there.

A main characteristic of the Khulicha tradition is for those who feel mistreated to call upon the community for help. The act of calling witnesses is called okhuna or khuna. The person who feels wronged climbs a tree and asks, "Do you know Simiyu?" The people answer, "Yes." "Do you know that he is not good?" "Yes." "Did you know that Simiyu steals?" "Yes."

The grieved person continues his accusations until he tires. The participants then chant, "If the man stole, when he goes out to steal again, may he be killed with a spear."[100]

As the old men and the initiates return home early in the morning no one is allowed to cross their paths either in the front or to the rear. Once they return, initiates bathe and receive new clothes. Then they become occupied with the responsibilities which are those of warriors.[101]

B. THE KAKAMEGA TYPE TRADITIONAL CIRCUMCISION

Most activities of the Kakamega type circumcision[102] are conducted in clan or sub-clan commons, called luyia, rather than at fathers' compounds as with the Bukusu. There are variants for each clan as compared with the Tiriki type ceremony which will be described later. These variants are quite insignificant in respect to the main pattern of activities and will be noted as the description is given.

Regularity of Circumcision: Initiations are conducted in these areas every two to eight years.[103] The Maragoli circumcise every eight years.[104] Because of long intervals between operations and the acceptance of Colonial innovations, no age-classes or grades have existed among the Kakamega peoples since the first decade of this century. Both Huntingforth[105] and Wagner[106] found event names for individual years but no age-classes.

In Idakho and Isukha circumcisions are conducted every two years.[107]

MAP NUMBER 4

AREAS ENCOMPASSED BY KAKAMEGA TYPE CIRCUMCISION IN KAKAMEGA DISTRICT, WESTERN REGION, KENYA

Code: Orange--Kakamega Type Circumcision.

Average Age of Initiates: Although one informant suggests that boys from four to six years of age suffice for traditional circumcision,[108] it appears to be an initiation which legitimatizes the rights of young men to enter full manhood. Thus at the turn of this century initiates from this area were from eighteen to twenty years of age.[109] Elders in Idakho say that before a married man can be circumcised, a goat is sacrificed for him and he is forced to drink some of the blood which remains in the rib-cage of the animal before being allowed to stand before the circumciser.[110] Huntingford said the average age of initiates in the early decades of this century was between twelve and eighteen years.[111]

Preparation for Circumcision: A few days before circumcision, boys begin dancing and singing the heroics of the clan.[112] They sing in the evenings and are led by young men who have already been circumcised. The singing includes subjects which are normally taboo, i. e., impotent bridegrooms, loose women, sexual abberations, venereal diseases and such matters.[113] During this period the candidates do not sleep in their homes; rather they stay as a group with an old man or woman. The Maragoli sleep in the open the last three nights before their circumcision.[114]

Learned old men like the clan priest (omukhulundu we misango) instruct the boys on how to stand at circumcision and what to expect in seclusion. The candidates are assembled before the elders two days prior to circumcision to confess their shortcomings. They acknowledge any thefts, illegal sexual

activites and the breaking of taboos which has caused them to be luswa (contaminated). These include doing such things as killing special birds, a dog, a cobra snake or being cut by an axe.[115]

The ancestral shrine (lusambwa) of a respected member of the clan whose son is being circumcised is cleaned up. Plants growing around the ancestral stones (amakina) are trimmed. Then a sacrifice is made to draw the living-dead into the rituals. A rooster is killed by cutting through its mouth and the gullet of the bird is placed on the olusiola branch growing from the shrine.[116] The ancestors are addressed by name and asked to bless the clan during the dangers of circumcision.[117] A witness of one of these early sacrifices describes it this way:

> I have seen a live bird or chicken hung by the feet to the person's neck, where it dangled and squeaked till sunset, when it was killed and eaten. . .the under-beak afterwards was tied to the neck of the person endangered. It is usual to tie a piece of skin of the animal slain (usually smothered by placing the hand over its mouth and nostrils) to the neck or wrist of the persons who are pleaded for.[118]

Events on the Day of Circumcision: Near daybreak the candidates go to the river and bathe there. They remain naked from their baths until the time of their operations.

On leaving the river the candidates are given a small animal. It is killed by being smothered and is roasted and then eaten by being ripped apart without using any implements. It is eaten without salt. The meal is the last of childhood for the candidates.[119]

After eating, they are taken to the sacrificer (omusalitsi) who blows flour on the chests, especially the right side of each boy saying, "You go to the circumciser. May you not bleed and may things go well. This custom is from our ancestors." Then he addresses the ancestors, "You grandfathers, may you lead well. May nothing happen to the boys."[120] As the candidates pass through the field to go to the circumciser in the common, each one uproots a small shrub known as ilundu or lulundu.[121] If he jerks it up with a single tug, he proves he is mature enough to be circumcised. If one fails, he is passed over until the next circumcision. More than a simple test of strength is involved in pulling on the shrub since it is believed a failure is an omen that the boy's future wife will die young.[122] Once the shrub is uprooted, it is carried by the candidate to the common and he grips it as he is operated upon.

The Place of Circumcision: The Maragoli circumcise in valleys (mikevelo) near a small stream. The Abitsende clan of Isukha circumcise near the father's house like the Bukusu do.[123] Some Idakho circumcise near the musutsu (an accacia) tree while others of Isukha and Idakho circumcise near a musembe (another accacia) tree.[124] All those who circumcise near a specific tree do so in the sub-clan common (luyia).[125] Clans from Idakho and Isukha also have different traditions about the knife used to circumcise. Most clans in Idakho use a one-edged blade, while those in Isukha use two-edged knives like the Bukusu. A circumciser who travels where clans are mixed has both kinds of knives available.[126]

The Circumciser: The circumciser (omukebi) is often referred to as the "leopard." He dresses in wild animal skins. He inherits the role and enters the profession after manifesting possession with the spirits of bukhebi (circumcision) in trembling and muttering during his own circumcision/seclusion. The operator has an assistant who beats a drum to announce his presence and to indicate the completion of each operation. The circumciser practices continence during the time he is involved in circumcision/seclusion. He slaughters a goat to his ancestors when seclusion ends.[127]

The Operation: After preparations of candidates are completed, they come to the circumciser singing, "Wohee, wohee, they said we are not men." They are quickly lined up by clans and the operations begin. An assistant examines each penis and fines the father of any boy whose foreskin does not completely cover his penis. Then the circumciser quickly performs the operation.[128]

Initiates are expected to stand without fear. Those who cry out are grabbed and the circumciser puts blood from the wound on the initiate's mouth to make him be quiet.[129] The boy who cries will be teased by others in seclusion and has to pay a fine to the circumciser.[130] If a boy grabs the hand of the circumciser during his operation, he is fined a sheep and made the brunt of even more jokes.[131] It is believed that his mother is endangered if he calls for her, so a goat or a sheep may be killed to keep malvolent spirits from bringing death/sterility. Chyme or offal is put on the mother.[132] In Maragoli initiates

are forced to strike the circumciser after the operations are completed to indicate their disdain of the pain.

The knife is not washed between operations, nor does the operator wash his hands while moving on his circuit. In fact, he eats with sticks during that period since he is ritually unclean because of the operations performed.

Dealing with Excessive Bleeding: The initiates squat down after the operation and wait for the bleeding to stop. If an initiate bleeds excessively, the circumciser approaches him and says, "My son I have disabled you, I have disabled you," as he taps him on the chest with the circumcision knife.[133] He then asks the initiate if he has done anything which has contaminated him--especially unconfessed failures. If so, a fine is assessed and the bleeding is expected to end.

If bleeding becomes dangerous, a number of actions can be performed. A necklace called shivekwe or eshibegwa which is commonly used to stop bleeding following birth can be brought to the initiate. It is placed around his head while an omusalitsi (sacrificer) for the clan says, "This is our custom. If there is a mistake somewhere, don't let it be joined with this boy. You ancestors help the bleeding stop. All of you were circumcised. It is right for us to circumcise." He then calls the names of paternal ancestors and commands them to stop the bleeding or to leave.[134]

In extremities a sacrifice can be made at the shrine of the initiate's father. The ancestors are begged to help the seclusion.[135] If it is believed that a malevolent or evil

ancestor is troubling the initiate, the relative's bones are dug up and burned to bring relief to the seclusion hut.[136]

A very sick initiate is occasionally taken home at night and carried into the back door of his father's house. A brother takes care of him because contact with the mother would cause sterility.[137] If the initiate dies in seclusion, the body is carried to the father's home at night. Mourning is subdued until after seclusion for fear that death might become endemic for other initiates.

Informants are unanimous that there is a secret burial for an initiate who dies in seclusion. But an early historical reference refutes interviews. Chilson, a Quaker missionary, went to a funeral dance for a young man who had hung himself while in seclusion. He estimated over three thousand people were present.

> His mother and sisters with their naked bodies covered with a greenish clay, danced around in a yard-like enclosure, in front of their house, with various articles of his in their hands, wailing and mourning and distorting their bodies and talking to the crowd gathered around.[138]

Chilson's observation may have been of a memorial dance after seclusion ended, but it casts doubts on subdued mourning and secrecy of burial. However, the death of an initiate in seclusion is viewed seriously. A cleansing, eshitiso, is performed on remaining initiates when one of them dies. A sheep is killed and chyme is put on the initiates' chests just outside their seclusion hut. This reduces the danger to the remaining number and gives them freedom to move about though they are still in seclusion.[139]

Cursing the Foreskins: Before the initiates leave the circumcision common or valley, the circumciser "curses" the foreskins. He takes the drum (muditi) and begins beating it slowly until he cries out, "I can bewitch you." Then he sings, "If any witch (omulogi) comes to take the blood of the circumcision, may the blood go to his stomach." He expands, "A man who has bad eyes, if he wants to spoil these initiates, the blood should go to his stomach." He concludes, "If anyone takes the blood and skin of these initiates, may his children cut each other wherever they go." Everyone shouts, "May they cut each other." Then the circumciser beats on the drum briefly and ends the ceremony.[140]

Life in the Seclusion Hut: Late in the afternoon of the operations, the elders begin searching for a house where the initiates can spend their seclusion. They choose one house for the initiates of each clan, usually the home of an old clansman who is highly respected.[141] He cannot complain but moves into a brother's house knowing that soon clansmen will build him a new residence equal to that which has been appropriated.

As the old man's property is being taken out of the house, those accompanying the initiates destroy the banana grove and other produce.[142] They then conduct the initiates into the house via the back door or by entering the front door backwards. Within two days the front door is sealed.[143]

In seclusion the initiates are under the authority of their tutors (avadili). They are quickly given a meal of gruel. They are not allowed to eat with their hands, so calabashes or a honey-barrel are used. In Maragoli, the initiates are made to

kneel and put their hands behind their backs and lap up the gruel from the honey-barrel "so they will be like cattle who are valuable."[144]

Every act is controlled by the tutors. All initiates are expected to act in concord. They are made to lie down in unison in the evening and to rise the same way. If an initiate needs to relieve himself in the night, he has to wake up the first boy from his seclusion group, then everyone is awakened and the group goes outside together.[145] Any initiate who refuses to co-operate is starved or is beaten by the tutors until he conforms.[146] Further, an initiate who feels superior is beaten by others in the seclusion with the tutor's approval.[147]

Other restrictions include the following. Initiates are not allowed to wish others peace (<u>murembe</u>); rather the person from outside seclusion taps the ankle of an initiate and a token blow is returned.[148] They cannot trim their hair or fingernails while in seclusion, neither can they whistle while there.[149] They cannot eat food sent from parents' unless it is shared and permission is granted by the tutor.

The helper, a sister of each initiate, is called <u>mama mwalishilili</u> (mama guardian) or <u>omubinjilili</u>. Because she brings food to an initiate she is known as his "mother" throughout life.[150] The little boy who runs errands is known as the <u>namakhala</u>.[151]

Whenever initiates leave the seclusion hut, they go out through a back gate or a newly constructed entrance at the side of the compound.[152] They bathe in secrecy and avoid others in early seclusion since they have no "hoods" for disguise at first.

Applying Medicine to the Wounds: Within three days engoi is prepared and placed on the wounds. In the second week the tutors prepare a pool in a secluded part of the river. The initiates are taken there by a seldom traveled path. The Maragoli initiates are made to proceed to the river on their knees. The tutors beat sticks to warn people to avoid the initiates as they go to bathe. There the initiates swish themselves in the water to purify their wounds.[153]

After three weeks the circumciser brings medicine to the initiates. He arrives on the day called lisavitsa (purification). The initiates sing his praises[154] as he arrives for "sharpening their tools."[155] Some medicine is placed on the circumcision drum and each initiate licks it. Another medicine is given to be drunk. Still another is poured on their feet and spread on their thighs.[156]

On the day of lisavitsa the circumciser begins assessing charges for operating by asking if any initiate is luswa (contaminated) because he has broken a taboo. Those in that state have higher assessments. Then every father pays for his son. The initiates are returned to their seclusion hut and a large meal is shared. Circumcised men of the same age eat together, but women have their own food.[157]

After the meal, the circumciser "curses" anyone who might take a particle of the food and use it to bewitch anyone. He also promises to remove curses from anyone who confesses he intends to bewitch another. This is done by paying a fine.[158]

Education in the Seclusion Period: The tutors use seclusion for instruction. They teach proverbs and parables. The initiates are also encouraged to be aggressive since a main purpose of the rites is to produce good warriors out of former boys. As they wander during "seclusion," initiates beat the uncircumcised and make them bring eggs to the seclusion hut as fines.[159] They also learn to knock chickens out of a tree with long poles without the owner's being aware of the theft. Such cunning is viewed benevolently since it indicates the genius of the upcoming generation.

Among the Maragoli the initiates participate in sham battles with warriors during their seclusion.[160] Those who showed fear during the operation are not allowed to participate.

There is a degree of ambivalence in moral instruction. Normally taboo subjects such as mothers' private activites are openly sung in evening walks. But during the day instructions about roles on leaving seclusion are highly moralistic. Initiates are told that they must never sleep in their father's house again, that they must follow him into his house and to be respectful of other men's wives.[161]

Regalia of Seclusion: Initiates sew a "hood" called shivembe (thatched roof)[162] or amasengeso[163] which covers their bodies past the knees. It is made from rushes. Feathers are placed in the top of the hood and initiates learn to dance in it as they meet the public in the feasts a few weeks before leaving seclusion. The hoods are used any time the initiates move outside their hut. It keeps them from being seen and appears to

serve as an extension of the seclusion hut itself.[164]

Those from Idakho also make a red "tie" from the bark of the mubure or shikhuyu tree and wear it when outside the hut. If they attend a funeral, they stand off to the side and grunt, "Uusu." They warn others to get out of the way by making the same animal-like grunts on the way home.[165]

The Feast in the Fourth Month: In Maragoli the initiates are served porridge for the first four months of seclusion. When they tire of it, they put on their hoods[166] and creep near the cooking houses of their parents. They throw sticks and stones at the cook houses to express displeasure at a diet without any meat.[167] The elders then deliberate on the matter and look for a bull to serve the initiates. It generally comes from an aunt (senge) or a rich father of one of the initiates. Though the person who gives the bull may show displeasure that his animal is chosen, he is exhorted to accept the choice since discord hampers a seclusion.

A big dance is held in the common the day the bull is killed and the whole community attends. Initiates bring poles and begin beating the ground in unison as they dance. A skin is tied to the bull and they sing, "Baana betu nindio khwalingi," (This is how we were).[168] The elders also dance near the bull. It is killed by the elders and slowly sinks down as the dancing continues. Some report that the elders give it a poison or drop red-hot beads into its ears;[169] others believe it dies under the spell of the song and the pounding of the mitobolo (poles), while others say it is simply slaughtered.[170]

The animal is cut up and distributed. The tutors take their portion and tease the initiates with it. They take a piece of the raw meat and offer it to an initiate. When he lunges for it, the meat is withdrawn. This action is repeated. On the third time a small piece is thrown into the initiate's mouth. He is expected to swallow it.[171] Then stiff porridge (obusumu) is brought to the parties present and each group eats separately, elders, women and initiates who have their own portions of meat.

Continence During Seclusion: The five or six months of seclusion are considered abnormal in the calendar of clans; thus strict rules of sexual abstinence are expected not only for the initiates and the circumciser but also for clansmen. If an initiate breaks this rule, he is not allowed to be "blessed" in the coming out. If a child is born in the clan which has obviously been conceived during the circumcision/seclusion period, parents are teased as those who "ate from the chicken's feeding place,"[172] or those who "have eaten with rats."[173]

The Day of Blasphemy (Lidukhu lya manyego): As coming out nears, singing about gross subjects increases. On the day of blaspheming, the initiates and tutors sing about the uncleanliness of women. Women and girls sing about the long sticks possessed by men.[174]

The Beer of Coming Out (Malwa ge Shialukho): After five or six months, plans are made to remove the initiates from seclusion. A song, "Ye, ye, ye, the white chickens are nearly hatched out; our children did like that,"[175] signifies the end is near.

A sign is sought for ancestral approval for coming out. The initiates leave certain sticks in the mud near the river for a day. If there has been a chemical reaction between the sap of the branches and mud which "ferments," it is understood that the time is ripe.[176]

Coming out takes three or four days and involves feasting and dancing for the whole period.[177]

One of the first events to prepare for coming out is for initiates to go to the river and put white mud (lirongo) on themselves. At that time each initiate chooses a special friend called his virongo. The two mud each other. The act joins them in a special relationship. They are not to marry each other's daughters and are obligated to help each other until death.[178]

After the mudding, the property used in seclusion is burned. Each initiate also takes his mtobolo (pole) and drives it into the thatch of the seclusion hut from within. As he does so, the initiate shouts, "My spear shaft is of so-and-so clan." The initiate who drives his pole into the roof most skillfully is congratulated by the tutors.[179] He receives additional praise if he has been able to attach a strip of cowhide stolen from the Nandi people to his pole.[180]

The initiates take rings about 150 mm in diameter called dzisume to a valley near their seclusion hut. There the rings are thrown into a specially prepared pit. The initiates return to the seclusion area without looking back, being warned by

tutors that to look back is to endanger their lives. The initiates are confined two days like prisoners in the seclusion area.[181]

On the last day of seclusion, the initiates are lined up inside the hut and allowed to go out the front door after it is unsealed. They take all property out of the seclusion hut and burn it.

> . . .the grass dresses. . .amavinu skirts and belts, the midovolo sticks with which they have practiced dancing, the feathers of the fowls which the initiates have killed. . .the banana leaves on which they have slept, and finally all their eating and drinking utensils.[182]

From then on the initiates sleep outside. During the following day they shave one another's hair.[183] A sheep is killed and chyme is spread on initiates to purify them before the final dance and the beer of coming out.[184]

Early on the morning of coming out, each initiate is given new clothes from his parents. The parents, friends and relatives gather at the gate of each seclusion hut. The initiates individually run out to the entrance with a spear and return to cheers. On the second trip each man attempts to spear the gate. When one is successful, he is loudly cheered. If not, his failure is passed over in silence.[185]

Blessing the Initiates: The initiates of various seclusions are then assembled in a large common for dancing. The dancing lasts for hours and is concluded by a ceremony of blessing. Men encourage initiates to act like warriors and to produce many children.[186] In Maragoli a mixture called kituva

made from milk, honey from a bee which makes its home in the ground and sap from the palm (bulugu) is thrown on each initiate before he receives his new goat-skin of warriorhood.[187]

In Idakho and Isukha two honourable women are chosen to bless initiates who have passed through seclusion well. The leading woman stands in a designated spot in the common. A cow hide from an animal which has died naturally is spread before her. The initiates, one by one, come up to her on their knees. Then the woman leans forward with her right hand outstretched to put butter and sim-sim seed on the initiate. She feigns the action twice and then anoints the initiate. The second woman trills. If either woman stumbles on taking up her position, a substitute is quickly produced[188] since she has endangered the potential of the initiates just as a "bride who stumbles on the way to her future husband's house" gives an omen of tragedy.[189]

From that moment each initiate is known as a "new born man" (omuhia). Beer is brought and all enter the festivities. The "new born men" are lined up at a beer-pot and made to follow each other in drinking from one straw.[190] Before each one receives his straw, it is passed toward him twice and removed, then given to him on the third time.[191]

Another bull is killed and eaten at the feast. A bracelet is made for each "new man" and he wears it as he begins circulating among relatives. By showing the bracelet, he can expect gifts. The homes of relatives and that of the virongo (circumcision mate) are visited.

Those coming out of seclusion are considered warriors (avasiani). Drinking the beer of coming out is the last formal act in the circumcision ritual of the Kakamega clans. There a man receives a walking stick known as lutivini from the lutaro tree which signifies he is a warrior.[192]

C. THE TIRIKI TYPE TRADITIONAL CIRCUMCISION[193]

Manhood begins in Tiriki when one is circumcised in the traditions drawn from the Terik-Nandi (Kalenjin) elders who first accepted Bantu-speaking immigrants into the area. Any man who moves into the district is required to be circumcised; and unless he accepts or "buys" the Tiriki circumcision, his status suffers. Anyone not circumcised in the Tiriki tradition has no age-group; so he has no brothers to welcome him in beer parties or to support him in a meeting of local communities.[194]

Traditionally the span between circumcisions is six years,[195] although the interval has been shortened under the influence of outside forces in most sub-locations. It varies according to the number of candidates and harvest/political situations.

Tiriki Age-Classes: There are seven age-classes among the Tiriki: (1) Golongolo, also called Andalo, (2) Jimingayi, (3) Mayina, (5) Juma, (6) Sawe and (7) Kabalach or Gibgoymed. The age-class is closed after two or three circumcisions, thus being open for twelve to eighteen years before being succeeded.[196]

The ceremony to close an age-class is called mwilukha. Circumcised men assemble in a special grove. They drink blood according to the old customs. They have beer and eat roasted meat. Then they play a friction drum and sing, "If you destroy

MAP NUMBER 5

AREAS ENCOMPASSED BY TIRIKI TYPE CIRCUMCISION IN KAKAMEGA DISTRICT, WESTERN REGION, KENYA.

Code: Yellow--Tiriki Type Circumcision

our ways, you will die. If you tell the secret you will be a madman." The last time mwilukha was performed as an age-class closing ceremony was in 1925 in parts of the district and in 1932 in other sections.[197]

One tenet of circumcision is that a father and son cannot be from adjacent age-classes since the natural rivalry between them does not need to be intensified by their being juxtapositioned into competitive age-classes.[198] There is rather one age-class between that of the father and son so dignity can be preserved between the two.

The Tiriki have bakoji similar to the Bukusu bakoki. They define bakoji as those circumcised the same year. Bakoji are obligated not to marry each other's sisters. One also gives gifts to his bakoji (circumcision mates) when his own son is circumcised.[199]

Members of the three youngest age-classes are warriors while elders serve in advisory roles. The judicial elders are in an intermediate level and ritual elders are from the oldest ranks. Age-classes maintain hierarchy among the Tiriki almost to the exclusion of other factors such as clan or age. Sangree notes, "The Tiriki differed from other southern Abaluyia groups in assigning no formal importance to clanship as a basis for community organization and control."[200]

Seeking an Omen for Circumcision: The Tiriki type circumcision is controlled by regional leaders who supervise the rituals of their own grove. There are approximately thirteen of these groves in the two locations where the Tiriki tradition is important. The omunene we idumi or mukhebi mukhulundu of each

circumcision grove presides and directs these elders in the cycle of rituals. He is also the supervisor over the actual operations.[201]

When the elders feel that a sufficient number of candidates between eighteen and twenty years of age are available, they meet in the forest or grove known as Mukabukolosi.[202] There they kill an animal to determine if the times are ripe for a circumcision.

> At this meeting, the elders bring with them a goat which must have been supplied by a member of the oldest age-group from one of the clans. After the goat has been slaughtered, the stomach and entrails are inspected by the eldest man in the group. If the stomach or the entrails have pimples on them, this is a bad omen indicating that most of the initiates will suffer for a long time and that their wounds might become inflammable. But if the stomach and the entrails are smooth, this is an indication that the initiates will heal quickly from their wounds and nobody will die. . .In case the results are negative the second time, the whole thing has to be postponed until the next year. But if the results are positive, then the operation can be carried out.[203]

The jivoledi (initiation candidate whose father is from the highest ranking age-class, i. e., who was circumcised in the most distant past), is taken to the forest ceremony as a representative of the uncircumcised.[204] The elders eat the goat and leave nothing except the stomach and the entrails which are carried home by the elder who inspected the stomach. His wife cooks part of it and he eats it alone. The skin of the goat is cut into narrow bands (vikhanda) which each elder ties to his left wrist.[205] After a week it is unceremoniously thrown away. Then when leaving the forest, the elders hum a certain tune which indicates that circumcision is imminent.

Preparation for Circumcision: In the month preceding circumcision, candidates (basoleli) are organized into teams of fifteen to twenty within communities of the sub-area. Counsellors or tutors (avadili) who have already been circumcised are chosen for them and they build a hut (itumi/irumbi) in a secluded part of the forest in preparation for the isolation period. The candidates cut poles, thatch and mud the hut under the direction of the tutors. They leave it in a crude condition.[206] They also begin singing every evening under the direction of a soloist (mwimiriri). They roam about beating dried sticks together or beating knob sticks on shields or dried cowhides.[207]

Precautions are taken as circumcision nears lest the candidates fall into a state of contamination (luswa). They begin sleeping in an old person's house. Married candidates observe strict continence. The "boys" also refrain from killing the cobra, dogs and the lidudu bird which nests under the eaves of houses.[208] They are also very careful not to cut themselves on the finger while building the seclusion huts because such a mishap is taken as a bad omen for the actual operation.[209]

Sacrifices before Circumcision: Two days before the operations, relatives gather at the home of each candidate and sacrifices are made by the oldest male in the family.[210] A chicken is strangled early in the morning and then roasted. As the elders eat, they tear off tiny pieces of meat and mix it with small balls of millet. They throw the meat into the shrine saying, "Abakuka, mulire omu," (grandfathers, eat here). A second piece is thrown while saying, "Vizukhulu, mulire omu," (great-

grandfathers, eat here). A third piece is thrown when one says, "Evisoni, mulire omu," (great-great-grandfathers, eat here).[211] The head of the chicken is tied around a candidate's neck and removed just before his operation.[212]

Events on the Day Before Circumcision: On the day before the operation, the candidates are shaved at noon and given their last meal of childhood. They are taken to the bush where a creeper called "muhalia" or "isenende" is uprooted. The creeper is folded and tied in such a way that it makes a headdress for each candidate.

> While still at this spot, the candidates remove all their clothes and these clothes are not used. . . again. . .if the candidates wear them again, they will be returning a step behind their life cycle instead of working to attain their social status as men.[213]

The candidates then dance naked before a large crowd in a sub-area meeting ground, the luyia. Others including mothers and sisters join in the dance. Any piece of the vine which might fall from a candidate's head is picked up and retained by a trusted relative lest the boy be bewitched. Suddenly the dancers leave the common and carry on a running dance which continues for several miles. All the relatives follow as rhythm continues to be made by beating shields with sticks and by singing. The dancing continues until dark.[214]

The Imoni Ceremony: With the coming of night, the candidates are taken to the house of a respected elder. There they are taught Imoni (the eye), a ceremony intended to teach them self-discipline.[215] It is similar to the Kaponyony ceremony

of the Nandi. In it the face and eyes of candidates are scrutinized to see if they behave as cowards or braves.[216]

The candidates are taught not to blink their eyes under duress. They are asked, "Do you know how to catch a bird?" Then a tree down a path is pointed out. The boys are told, "There is a bird in that tree." They are told to stare at the "bird" and to begin walking to that point without looking down or blinking their eyes. As the boy moves to the tree he is beaten and harassed. If he does not flinch or blink his eyes while nearing the tree, and if he slowly bends backward under the harassment until he crumples over, he is praised by those conducting the training.[217]

Confession Before the Monster: After each boy has gone through Imoni a number of times, a noise is heard from near the river. Candidates are told that circumcised men have captured the monster (gimasove),[218] which is also called a giant (manani).[219] The monster which cannot be seen but is heard roaring is taken into the old man's house and the candidates are lined up to confess before him.

Before the boys are allowed inside, proper preparations are made. An elder is placed under an animal skin and has a cow's tail tied to his leg.[220] A beer-pot is tilted to one side and placed under the skin so the man can roar or blow into it to simulate the monster's response when questioned by the elders. A trap (mugove/luvero) is prepared to catch the toe or finger of the candidate when he moves forward to touch the monster. One of the men has a small stick stuck into a

muddy hole in the floor.[221] It is used to simulate the sound of coitus when candidates are asked about sexual activities. Finally, a small metal ring (mukasa) is tied to a string and dragged around a smouldering stick which has been taken from a fire.[222]

As the first candidate is brought into the hut, he is shown the ring which is hardly visible in the gloom. He is asked, "What do you see?" He answers, "Mukasa" (ring), knowing it is the ring which boys have been told would be placed over the penis to cause a painless circumcision. Then the boy is commanded, "Pray to the monster of circumcision." He is told to pat the skin of the monster. When he does so, the monster starts roaring. The elders say, "Oh, this boy has made mistakes. The skin of the monster will cut him. What have you done, boy?"[223]

Then the boy confesses. If he refuses to do so, the trap is sprung and as his finger is pulled very hard, the boy is told, "The monster has gotten you." He is commanded to confess all the traditionally forbidden acts (mujilo) which he has committed.[224]

> The elders ask him specifically whether he has stolen property, or taken the life of certain animals that it is tabu to kill. Then he is questioned in detail about any sexual activity he may have had with either people or animals.[225]

An obstinate candidate is threatened with disease or bleeding to death when he is circumcised. He is further warned that the monster likes to commit sodomy with those who do not know how to show respect--an act which kills candidates. A roar of approval from the monster confirms the suggestion.

Usually the candidate tells everything before he can be grabbed by the one under the hide and is further harassed.

When confession is completed, a "fine" is assessed. The elders say, "Now we know your shortcomings. You are fortunate that we are going to pay your debt to the monster and that you can go free." Only in subsequent circumcisions do candidates discover that no payments are made and that the monster is one of the elders.[226]

The first candidate (jivoledi/gimasove) and the last (dawedi) to go through the ceremonies are carefully selected sons of the man from the most aged age-class and his successor.[227] After each candidate has passed through the confession, he continues his practice in performing the "eye" ceremony. They are told perfect performance (i. e., leaning over without blinking an eye under duress) qualifies one to be circumcised with the mukasa ring.

In the last quarter of the night, the initiates are taught a song, Bukhulu, which goes, "What we are doing is traditional. Does anyone want to stop it." Sticks are beaten together while leaders sing and the boys answer each verse with, "Ho, hoyee." While they sing, the men inside select circumcisers for each boy. Fathers choose sure-handed men who are not of their age-group to circumcise their sons later in the morning.[228]

Events on the Day of the Circumcision: At sun-up the boys begin singing another circumcision song known as "Hoyo

hoi!" They are answered by the circumcised who use an archaic/ secret word, "Namulole," meaning, "You will see," or "You are in for it."

The candidates again divide up and each goes to his home. There a leader blows millet flour (bwanga) on the candidate's chest through a reed. He exhorts the boy, "Be a good person."[229]

The candidate's mother puts a paste of red clay on his face while exhorting, "Don't be afraid; be a man. I put the clay on you so you may go and have courage as your father did. May your courage be like his."[230] The father kills a small animal or chicken and cuts a band to be placed on his son's left wrist from the animal's neck.[231] Blood from the sacrifice is dripped on the stones of the family shrine (lusambwa). Then the boys leave their homes, and the gate of the candidates' entrance is symbolically closed as the mother trills to show joy at the approaching elevation of her son.

Buse (chyme or offal) is put on the chest of any candidate whose father has died before the circumcision.[232]

The candidates roast chickens or goats in a banana plantation over an open fire. They eat the meat and stiff porridge without any salt. Blood from the animal is:

> . . .sprinkled on the candidates as blessing that once they are circumcised, they will be allowed to shed their blood for their country and that they now can plant their seeds for the following generation.[233]

The candidates move toward the circumcision grove singing Bukhulu and Hoyo hoi. They leave women, uncircumcised

boys and those not circumcised according to Tiriki customs as they dance forward. They are led to a stream by their tutors, and each boy washes his penis. Vine headdresses are dropped into neat piles; so they can be returned to the family. Before the candidates appear in front of the elders, a small thistle (isambakhalu) is placed on each one's penis.[234]

The circumcised squat down in a long line and wait for the candidates at the circumcision site in the forest. The first boy (jivoledi) is brought forward alone and is silently studied by the elders.[235]

He is taken to the circumcision leader (omunene we idumi) who is from either the Valukhoba or Vam'mbo clan in Tiriki or Gavajura, Gihayon or Gepkoi in Nyang'ori Location.[236] The leader is dressed fiercely.

> They paint their faces, upper part of body, arms and legs with streaks of white, red and black earth. They wear a colobus monkey skin (enduviri) on their faces. Apart from this the operators like the boys coat themselves with emihalia bush. Otherwise they go quite naked.[237]

The circumcision leader stands near a small tree called Korosiot.[238] A honey-barrel (mulinga) is placed nearby. The candidate is commanded to throw the thistle on his penis into the honey-barrel. He stands with his back to the circumcision tree. He stares at the leader and is told to "do Imoni" as he was taught the previous night at some distant object. Neither the boy nor the leader blinks his eyes during the ordeal. As the candidate looks ahead, the leader waves his hand over the boy's eyes and beats on his chest. Six times the boy is

expected to say "Ehh," as he stares outward. The elders, if they approve his performance, respond "ohh!" Then the boy is slowly pushed over until he topples on his side (khuyera).[239]

The circumcision leader then makes a tiny cut on the penis of the candidate. Candidates are told that:

> . . .they are not actually going to be circumcised with a knife, but that the operator will fix a metal ring round their member. At night, while they sleep, this ring will cut through their prepuce and make it fall off without causing them any pain.[240]

Other boys are brought before the elders in the same way. Anyone who flinches or shows fear during Imoni is passed over after a couple of responses by the elders.

Abruptly the song "Hoyo hoi" is begun. Candidates are seized and circumcised by men chosen by each boy's father.[241] The boys get angry and scream as they are circumcised, but they are held firmly. In less than ten seconds a boy is forced to squat and is circumcised. First the outer skin is cut, then the inner part of the prepuce is removed. A small flap on the underside of the foreskin is allowed to remain to serve as a Tiriki tribal mark.[242]

Young men in the circumcision party then take the vine headdress to the initiates' mothers. As the vines are given to relatives, onlookers are reminded to stay in their homes since the initiates will shortly be taken to the seclusion huts.[243]

The elders appear oblivious of the initiates (avakhulu) who are instructed to squat down and wait for the bleeding to stop. They discuss the distribution of circumcision fees. Generally half of the money goes to the circumciser and the rest to the elders for feasts during seclusion.

Any candidate who has a disease or requires a special knife has a special assessment. Those who bleed excessively also have higher fees since it is obvious "they have committed a theft which was not confessed before the monster." After payment is made, the operator attempts to stop the bleeding by saying, "My son, I have disabled you," a number of times over the wound.[244]

The circumcisers also report to fathers whether the blood is "hot" or "cold," portending fertility or sluggishness in initiates.[245]

Two or three of the foreskins are put in the honey-barrel (mulinga), and an oath is said by those present that anyone using the foreskins to bewitch the initiates should find the evil returning to himself.[246]

Arrival at the Seclusion Hut: When the bleeding has stopped, the initiates are lined up in the order of their operations and conducted to the seclusion huts (irumbi or itumbi). Branches of the olusiola tree are used to shield them from evil persons as they move to their huts.[247] Those accompanying the initiates blot out drops of blood in the path for fear of witchcraft. Anyone who passes in front of the party endangers his own life, because warnings have been posted that the initiates must not be bewitched by strange powers.

On arrival, the initiates are led around the seclusion hut three times. An elder gives each one a small piece of chicken, honey and stiff porridge at the door. He blows milk on each initiate as he enters the hut. Inside the tutors begin

the song of entering (lwimbo lwa hasi--the lower song), which says "Seclusion is an old custom."[248]

Life in the Seclusion Hut: The period of seclusion is for six months. As with the Kakamega type circumcision, every activity there is regimented.

> All the initiates of a hut eat, sleep, dance, bathe, do handcraft. . .all at the same time and only when commanded to do so by the counsellor. Even the smallest details of living are regimented.[249]

Initiates are not allowed to cut fingernails, toenails or hair. They cannot scratch their bodies with fingernails; rather they carry two little flat sticks about their necks with a string. With these they scratch their bodies.[250]

From the beginning, the initiates are taught that their rank corresponds to the order of their operations. The first boy sleeps nearest the door while the last goes to the place farthest from the entrance.

Gruel (obuseru) is brought to the hut by a sister of each initiate before evening. She calls, "Food for the initiate of Maxima (her father)," and departs before anyone gets outside. Because of impurity, the initiates do not touch the food. They eat it with sticks or calabashes (shiuhu). Some eat from a honey-barrel, but not by lapping the gruel as do Maragoli initiates; rather they use an implement.[251]

On the third day the tutors prepare a special place for the initiates to bathe in the river. It is off the beaten path, and initiates are not allowed to go there until the middle of the night, since they are both vulnerable and dangerous in the first stage of seclusion. The tutors order the initiates to

the river where they will "play sex with a Nandi woman."[252] They go to a pool prepared at a remote place on the river. There they swish their haunches into the water which feels warm and comforting after the stiffness of the trip.[253]

Caring for Initiates who do not Heal: When a serious infection develops the elders may make a sacrifice for the initiate. Blood is thrown around the seclusion hut, and sometimes even on the leg of a troubled initiate.[254] The omusalisi (sacrificer) calls the names of paternal ancestors and says, "What are you doing? Go away. Leave the initiate alone." If this does not help an omufumu (diviner) is called and a sheep is killed. He examines the stomach of the sacrifice to determine the cause of the misfortune. Meat and blood are tossed about to drive out evil spirits (misambwa iminyingi or shinanyenzo).[255]

If an initiate dies:

> . . .his death is not bewailed but passed over in silence. It is thought that if such a death is bewailed this wailing may cause the death of other initiates. The parents and relatives are not properly informed of the death but they are only given a hint of what has happened by telling the parents that they do not need to bring food for him regularly or that it will be sufficient for them to cook smaller quantities for their omukulu.[256]

Death is ignored by the initiates. When the body is taken home the father prepares the burial in a remote part of his compound. The mother does not attend the burial.[257] No mourning is allowed.

While in seclusion, the initiates are removed from their clansmen. They lose their names and are known euphemistically as the initiate of so-and-so. When they move from the seclusion hut, they do so in special masks constructed there. The masks

not only protect anonymity--they identify initiates as half-wild, uncultivated monsters. Initiates do not "know" how to exchange human greetings like peace (murembe), rather they tap the legs of those they meet with a stick called vilangasia.[258]

Instruction in the Seclusion Hut: Serious instructions begin after the initiates heal. First, they spend nearly two weeks weaving an elaborate mask. It is made so they can leave the hut without being attacked by disease because their faces have been seen. Identification of an initiate is believed to endanger not only him but also women and the uncircumcised.

Most instructions concern taboos to be observed on rejoining society. Initiates are told what is expected of those who will enter the role of men on leaving seclusion. They cannot enter the parent's cooking or sleeping place nor eat vegetables from the mother's pot. The initiates "play out" their childhood by participating in favourite games, then being commanded to leave them behind.[259] They are encouraged to pilfer crops and take chickens by stealth. Special cunning is praised in the beer festivals of elders since such genius guarantees future Tiriki glory.[260]

Herbal secrets of the Tiriki are also taught. An old man brings various branches like lusiola and lisavakwa. He tells the initiates, "This one is poisonous. If you put it in a man's food, it will kill him. If you use this one, it will make the approaching rain stay away. This one can make water change colours. This one will make your enemies go mad."[261]

Warnings are included with the instructions. Initiates are told not to use the herbs carelessly. They are told that "cursing" causes sterility and should be used only in the most extreme circumstances.[262]

Secondly, the initiates are warned of the dangers in revealing Tiriki secrets. They are told, "If you tell the secrets, these powers will eat you."[263] They also witness informers being cursed by the elders. A revealer of secrets is cursed along with thieves and witches.[264] These curses are pronounced at least three times during the seclusion: (1) on the day of the operations; (2) at the beer of the back in the fourth month;[265] and (3) on leaving the seclusion hut. Any man considered to be anti-social is liable to be called before the circumcision elders on these occasions. If he does not defend himself, he is shouted down, "Go with your evil deeds. We don't want you. Neither do the ancestors who despise evil spirits. May you quickly die and be driven to the bottom of Lake Sango (Victoria)." Sticks are thrown at that person, and from that moment all support is withdrawn from him.[266]

Finally, initiates are told that their introduction into the use of herbs has been very limited. They are warned that they are under the authority of elders who know how to kill someone who is miles away through sorcery. They are told this power rests only with the very old and that they give the knowledge only to chosen members of the closest judicial age-group to guard the people's ways after they pass on.

Pride in being a Tiriki is fostered in seclusion. Initiates are told, "We are superior to others. Don't listen to other peoples. We alone have the secrets."

Sexual Mores During Seclusion: The progress of initiates during seclusion is of interest to the community in spite of the wall between the two. In fact, seclusion is the main preoccupation of the community. Four beer festivals are held during it to commemorate the progress of initiates through various stages of their evolution.

Seclusion affects communal sexual mores. During that time an initiate's father and mother do not sleep together, since they do not want to destroy their son's seclusion (wanaranyia omuana we irumbi).[267] An opposite reaction is taken by other members of society in that regular sexual taboos are abandoned during seclusion. During the beer festivals, women become the property of all circumcised men.[268]

This abberation over against the conservatism of the parents is explained as follows. If normal standards were to be imposed during the time when beer festivals honouring the seclusions were required, the smooth transition of initiates might be disturbed. Since people become careless when drunk and then more free with their favours, attention would be drawn away from initiates if "normal" domestic standards were demanded.[269] So out of "respect" to initiates, a period of sexual lawlessness is allowed.[270] No informant says it is "normal" to have sexual excesses during the time when sexual vigour is being promoted in these rituals,[271] but that appears to the writer to be a

factor in the relaxation of mores. Circumcision is disruptive enough to affect normal sexual practices.

Beer Festivals: There are four beer festivals which mark off the progress of seclusion. These are the beers of: clothing, leaves, back and leaving.

The Beer of Clothing (Malwa gi Zungubu): This beer marks the end of convalescence and entrance into more vigorous training for the initiates. They do not take part in the drinking. Rather, they are discussed by the elders at the beer pots. On the day following the beer, the fathers send new leather clothes to their sons to replace the short aprons worn while the wounds were healing. The aprons are destroyed.

> The new leather clothing is in effect a leather cloak which forms the basic traditional garment (isumadi) for Tiriki male elders. The elders wear such a robe draped from one shoulder by day and sleep on it at night. The initiates are thus provided with a style of clothing for the rest of their seclusion period which they will subsequently have to discard until they themselves are elders.[272]

The beer of clothing occurs five to six weeks after the operations and marks the beginning of learning dances.

The Beer of the Leaves (Malwa gi Masambu): As the initiates heal, they become more aggressive. Before the beer of the leaves, they attempt to raid the hut of another initiation group during the night. If they find the members of the hut sleeping, they steal their things and hide them. Then they come back and wake those of the second seclusion by beating them. Later the goods are returned.[273]

The beer of leaves marks the first public appearance of the initiates. They emerge when the circumcision chief

determines the time is right--usually in the third month after circumcision.

Early in the morning the initiates begin dancing in their new masks and leather clothes. Groups from separate seclusion huts vie for praises in performances in the common. Parents and other members of the community praise new steps and songs as well as vigour and endurance in the initiates.

Mothers, in spite of the excitement of the dancing, are interested in spotting their sons. They search for their sons among the dancers who are disguised by the masks. Often they try to bribe a tutor to point out a relative if it is feared he has been lost.[274] In the afternoon, when the initiates tire, they return to their huts.

> Their parents hurry home, build fires, and take the headdresses which have been hanging over the cooking hearth and burn them. Late that afternoon and evening at the beer drink the group gathered round the beer pots speak of how good it is to have burned the headdresses because circumcision is past now, and it would not be good for the initiates to return home and find the headdresses still hanging there.[275]

The initiates are allowed, after the beer of the leaves, to go out daily for dancing and other activities, so long as they are disguised. After that feast, men begin visiting the novices to test their knowledge of Tiriki lore. If initiates cannot answer well, they are beaten by the visitors.[276]

<u>The Beer of the Back</u> (<u>Malwa gi Shigongo</u>): In the fourth or fifth month, all the initiates gather in the common wearing special headdresses (<u>ikwalo</u>) made of branches in addition to their masks and hides. Each initiate tries to break his

headdress as he dances by violently bobbing his head. Those who succeed in breaking the headdress are loudly cheered by the onlookers.[277]

In the evening the initiates and elders from each clan or a couple of clans go into the forest. The men tell women that they are going to kill the initiates and bring them back to life again. The boys crawl up to a big fire one by one and see frons heating in it. An old man then raises his club and strikes it against a banana trunk near the head of the initiate. As he does so, the elders cry out in unison, "Mikula we Mamesa, goyiii!" meaning, "The son of Mamesa, oh!"[278] The initiate is instructed to drop down as dead and old men carry him to an open place and tell him to lie still until called.[279]

Tutors run to mothers and report, "Your son is dying! Give me a chicken to take to the elders so they can help your son." They return with food and drink for the elders.

> By now the beer drinkers are quite high, and gleefully start to make a series of sounds simulating the cry of the hyena. Thoroughly frightened or aroused by these dreadful cries, even the more skeptical mothers surrender chickens at the second visit of the counsellors... . Soon the festivities in the circumcision grove take on the dimensions of a drunken brawl; the counsellors rush thither and yon raiding fields of the initiates' parents for ripe maize or whatever other edibles they can find. . .Everyone in the grove is thoroughly satiated with food or beer or both by daybreak.[280]

This is the first beer where the initiates are allowed to participate. During the feast they remain quiet to convince those outside the grove that they have actually died. At daybreak, the elders and tutors take water which the women

have fetched to revive the "dead" initiates. It is poured on them, then shortly after sunrise the masked novices can be seen returning to their respective seclusion huts. They stagger about like babies or drunks and are reminded once more on arrival of the oath made during the feast not to reveal the circumcision secrets.[281]

> Everything you learn during the idumi you must obey and remember forever! You must never tell a person not initiated in the Terik-Tiriki way what you learn and see. If someone threatens to kill you in order to find out, let him kill you, but don't tell. If someone offers you a cow to tell, remain silent! If you ever tell the idumi to the uninitiated you shall develop a terrible itching of the skin, and then you shall die.[282]

For three days after the beer of the back, the initiates remain listlessly in the seclusion hut. On the fourth evening they sing feebly and their tutors request more food since they are returning to their strength. By the seventh night they sing loudly for several hours in the grove. Women and children are told that the initiates have fully recovered from rebirth.

It is at the beer of the back that those circumcised according to other traditions can "buy initiation" (khugula idumi) from the Tiriki by paying the elders one bull. Once he does so, one has full ritual status at both the beer pot and the council of the elders.

> He follows the regular initiates in swearing never to divulge the circumcision customs, and for the rest of the initiation period he joins one or another of the initiation groups. He. . .follows the routine of the other initiates, but he doesn't wear a mask, and because of his greater age he is treated as an unofficial leader by the regular initiates.[283]

Like other initiates, the man who "buys initiation" goes to the seclusion hut as one who has just been raised. His wife, like other women, is the common property of other men during his seclusion.[284]

The Beer of Coming Out (Malwa gi Shyalukhu): Seclusion is seen as having run its course within six months. Beer is brewed and tutors begin a last round of activities before releasing the initiates.

First, a night is spent in the bush. Initiates go to the border of the Tiriki and enter the land of another people. Each initiate carries a long stick (lubango) which he pretends is a spear. They sing in derision and throw sticks in the direction of enemy encampments. They also curse the enemy land wishing misambwa iminyingi or vinanyienzo (evil ancestral spirits) to remain there.[285]

The initiates pretend on returning to Tiriki territory that they have burned an enemy camp. They claim to have killed enemies. Later in the day they kill a goat in the forest. Each initiate is given a piece of skin to wrap around the little finger of his left hand[286] to signify his right to take a weak one, a wife. The animal killed appears to be a sacrifice since part of it is kept by each person seeking a blessing. An early observer made the following note about sacrifices.

> Part of a sacrifice is always kept. The horns of the animal are put on the roof of the hut of the principle woman; small strips of the hide are worn round the wrists; the beak of the bird or some feathers are tied to a piece of string round the wearer's neck.[287]

Initiates are considered dangerous for six days after putting the leather rings on their arms because of the "killing" in enemy territory. Others avoid their shadows because "they have killed."[288]

A small hut (matili) is prepared at the edge of the circumcision grove just before coming out. A Nyang'ori woman who has been clitoridectomized according to Nandi customs climbs on top of the hut. She carries small clay balls which ants living in thorn-bushes build as houses. As initiates crawl into the hut which is hardly roofed, the woman breaks the clay balls and the ants fall on the initiates beneath. Then she pours water or sheep's urine on them saying, "A Nandi woman is urinating on you."[289]

Later in the day the initiates are anointed. They are lined up by the tutors and every father makes arrangements for a circumcised woman to sponsor his initiate. One woman can be the sponsor for all the sons of three or four men.

> Each sponsor has prepared a gourd of butter and a string of beads made from threaded seeds. . .while her daughter assists by holding the gourd of butter the sponsor reaches up under the mask of the initiate, smears his head with butter and says "Bamwayi". The initiate answers, "Bamwayi." By the utterance of this recriprocal term a lasting bond of friendship and mutual concern is related between the Terik sponsor and the initiate. Then the initiate removes his mask in public for the first time since he entered seclusion, and his Terik sponsor slips the string of beads around his neck. Thus the initiate's period of seclusion and his need to go masked in public are ended. . .for the rest of the initiation ceremonies he is called "bride" (mwiha). Each Terik woman sponsor is then feasted and presented with a gift of iron bracelets by the family of her bamwayi.[290]

In the afternoon the fathers take their sons a new goat skin (isiru) which accords to their status after seclusion. The father takes the mask and cowskin of seclusion. He suspends the mask from the roof of his hut to show that he has a circumcised son and the cowskin he wears himself as befits his rank.[291]

Then the "brides" (as the newly emerged are called) have their heads shaved by their tutors.[292] Old men tell them the name of their seclusion. They are reminded of mutual obligations and taboos toward age-mates and told to support each other as bakoji.[293] As instructions are given, an old man sprinkles honey and milk on each "bride."[294]

The newly emerged spend a second night outside after burning their bedding and implements of seclusion. Before they leave the forest, they are warned once more that the Tiriki circumcision is secret. The foreskin of the boy who was circumcised first is put on a stick and shown to the initiates. They are asked, "What is this?" They answer, "It is the foreskin of the first candidate to be circumcised." "What does it do?" "It eats the person who tells Tiriki secrets. He will be a madman or a fool."[295]

As the initiates emerge from the forest, they sing the song of departure (lwimbo lu shylukhu) to which the initiated respond, "Let them come." They dance in the luyia (common of the community) until noon and relatives express joy that their "sons" have come through circumcision.

"Brides" begin circulating to the homes of their parents in the afternoon. First they go to the home of the boy who "led" them through circumcision, the jivoledi. A special

entrance is prepared for them to enter the compound, and an arch from the lusiola tree, which is part of the ancestral shrine, is put over the entrance.

> All the family greet him in front of the archway. . . the "bride" of the homestead goes through the archway first, followed by his seclusion-mates and finally by his family. Inside the homestead ritual elders bless all the "brides." Thence the "brides" go to the homestead of another seclusion-mate and so on until the round of all their homes has been made.[296]

Events Following Coming Out: The first few evenings following seclusion are spent in the home of an elderly widow or widower.[297] The "brides" visit relatives and receive gifts and an abundance of food. They visit:

> . . .maternal uncles first, then paternal grandfather, paternal uncles in order of their seniority, paternal aunts and other maternal relatives and lastly his affinal relatives and neighbours. All the people he visits must honour his new status with presents.[298]

One week after the bamwayi ceremony, the "brides" gather once more at the river. There they bathe and fold their goatskins around their waists. Then they dance naked in the common so people can witness the fact that they are fully Tiriki. This is the last time they are allowed to show their privacy.[299]

Within two weeks of the beer of leaving, the elders take the new warriors to the sacred grove (gabogorosiyo) of men.

> There they are introduced to the mystery of the roaring noise which they undoubtedly had already heard coming from the hilltop grove on ceremonial occasions. The roar is made with a friction drum. The drum is a large earthenware pot (ingungu) like those used for brewing beer, over the top of which has been stretched and tied a scraped sheepskin. With the pot sitting mouth up, one end of a vertically held stick is placed against the skin. Then the skin is made to vibrate and thus the pot to roar by sliding first one hand and then the other down the stick in a milking-like motion. Each "bride" is given a chance to make the pot roar, "to milk the cow" (xushela ingombe), in order that he may acquire many cattle and grow wealthy.[300]

Once the "brides" are introduced to the mysteries of the sacred grove, they have completed initiation and they join the activities of their age-class, that of defending Tiriki territory.

D. PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF THESE RITUALS

The three circumcision/seclusion traditions traced in this chapter are quite difficult to describe because there is a kaleidoscope of patterns and interactions in the rituals which have a carnival-like atmosphere. But the vigour with which whole communities become involved in them reflects the importance of their symbols. They are not archaic reminders of past glory but tools for enculturating a new generation and manipulating the spirit milieu. Traditionalists in the area under study put the uncircumcised in the same category as a new-born child or a recently dead person for whom no sacrifice has been performed.[301] In short he is a non-person but by accepting this rite of passage he gains a place in society.

The rituals have a functional value. They exert mind-control over participants, especially the initiates.

> The neophyte, in liminality must be a tabula rasa, a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status. The ordeals and humiliations, often of a grossly physiological character, to which neophytes are submitted represent partly a destruction of the previous status and partly a tempering of their essence in order to prepare them to cope with the new responsibilities and restrain them in advance from abusing their new privileges. They had to show that in themselves they are clay or dust, mere matter, whose form is impressed upon them by society.[302]

Values are not always articulated, but their meaning is behind the circumcision activities. Symbols, as has been suggested, often reflect the moral qualities of a people.[303]

So these traditional ceremonies are teaching instruments. But they are not cast in the lecture mode. There is little drilling on the rationale for proceeding. Rather the rituals are drama involving dance and song. They are an arm extending back to the past. By drawing on what is meaningful in the past (mundaalo tisakhale/tsinyinga tsya kale), order is expected to come out of the proximate crisis.

The chief message of circumcision is that the key to the future lies in the past. Informants find it difficult to recall specific proverbs learned in seclusion. Exegetes of archaic words sung in the dances are difficult to find. But the songs and dances themselves are remembered because they assault the present with the living past: "Ours of the ancient is booming," "Power is being raised," and "Seclusion is an old custom."

Preoccupation with the past involves more than respect for what is antiquated. Both power and order from the living past are imposed on the present dilemma by reverting to tradition. The emotional tenor of ritual is affective, that is aggressive approaches are required to bring off successful ceremonies. The frenzy of dance and song attract the living-dead who are irresistibly drawn into the drama when they see the mimicry of traditions. Thus, the fullness of meaning the ancestors imposed on existence, the codification of their wisdom, even their powers to manipulate the cosmic system--all

these are absorbed in a community which lives in the past via dynamic ritual.

Circumcision is not a gradualistic graduation which can be conducted aesthetically, it has the power structure of a rite of passage. Separation, transition (liminality) and re-incorporation are seen in the three descriptions of this chapter.[304]

Candidates are taken from their families a few days before the ceremonies and introduced to a monster or forced to confess their shortcomings so they can make the difficult transition. In the liminal stage they are considered vulnerable since they are in close proximity with ancestral spirits who energize the rites. While in seclusion the initiate has no status in relation to those in "normal" society. They enter houses by the back door or backward, bathe in new areas--at night, wear masks or hoods or white clay and cannot be greeted by name. If an initiate dies, he is buried in a valley or where the ashes are thrown in the father's compound.[305] In Maragoli, an initiate is buried at night, and no crying is allowed since a non-person cannot be mourned. Further, no one can be called by the name of one who has died in seclusion, indicating that seclusion approaches a state of "extinction" in the minds of the Abaluyia.[306]

Then as "new and soft ones" or "newborn men" or "brides," they are welcomed back into the clan where the status of warrior and man is granted. The rites clearly dramatize the transformation

of boys from the side of their mothers to the society of men. While they are avasinde (uncircumcised, statusless) before the rites, they become useful men after the ceremonies which have an approximate duration of six months.

Circumcision is important to the Abaluyia of Kakamega and Bungoma Districts. They accept the proposition that values ingrained in tradition must be imposed on new generations -- especially on circumcision initiates whose ebullience in grasping the "rights" of manhood appear threatening to the adjacent generation. These Abaluyia hold in disdain neighbouring peoples who do not circumcise and have failed to consciously plant themselves in society's structure. The uncircumcised are viewed as adult children existing without direction. The ultimate message of traditional Abaluyia circumcision is that enculturation is accomplished by juxtaposition of initiate and community, including ancestors, so institutional and political strictures can be perpetuated.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER THREE

[1]Kenya Population Census, 1969 (Nairobi: Statistics Division, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 1970), Vol. I, pp. 62-68.

[2]Kenneth R. Dundas, "The Wawanga and Other Tribes of the Elgon District, British East Africa," The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. XLIII, (1919), p. 30. Elder sons and only sons were almost always circumcised among the Wanga. Younger sons were rarely circumcised. See Dundas', "Ethnology of North Kavirondo," DC/NN/3/2/1, Appendix A, Kenya National Archives, for a list of eight clans and five "sub-clans" which did not circumcise among the Wanga. Ex-Chief Osundwa agreed that general circumcision began among the Wanga when the provincial headquarters were moved from Mumia's to Kakamega in 1912, (Interview, April 14, 1973 near Mumias). Laurient Shionzo (Shiranda Market), Batalumio Makongo (Imanga Market) and Mathayo Manda (Lureko Market) say universal circumcision occurred for generations. The fact that Mumia and many elders were not circumcised until three years after his inauguration in 1882 indicates that circumcision was not practiced on a regular cycle and was probably not universal among the Wanga in pre-colonial times. See W. H. Jones, "Behind My Bishop Through Masai Land to Kavirondo," London: Church Missionary Archives, Accession No. 267, Unofficial Papers.

[3]Gunter Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 336.

[4]Interview with Abraham Okwomi (Mwitseshe, Kisa Loc.), Aug. 8, 1972.

[5]Interview with Samuel Shiranda (Kisa Location), Aug. 20, 1973.

[6]See Map Number 3 for Locations included in both the Bukusu type circumcision and its mutants, p. 62.

[7]Interview with Joshua Kusiienya s/o Yohana Wafula, (Chwele, North Malikisi Loc.), Sept. 3, 1972.

[8]Interview with Shitseswe Anyolo (Butsotso Loc.), Sept. 25, 1972, and also interview with Assistant Chief Victor Milimo (W. Bukusu Loc.), August 5, 1972 by Dr. Roger Bruce of Mwuhila.

[9]Matthew A. Wafula and Committee, "Circumcision Ritual Among the Babukusu," an unpublished paper presented in response to questions by Hilton Merritt at Kanduyi Chief's Office, East Bukusu Location, Bungoma, Kenya, July 20, 1972.

[10]Interview with Paskali Nabwana and eight other leaders at Kimilili Chief's Centre, Feb. 23, 1973.

[11]Jan Jacob de Wolf, "Religious Innovation and Social Change Among the Bukusu," (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London), 1971), p. 54.

[12]Sub-grade names are taken from some important event marking off that particular seclusion. Makonge refers to the sisal planted between plots of land. Majimbo is a reference to changes in provincial boundaries and Elijah Masinde's demand for a separate province for the Bukusu people. Uhuru is a reference to the year independence came. Haibridi is corrupted English for introduction of hybrid maize into the area. Landi refers to land adjucation. Lamu identifies the year the paved road to Uganda was completed. Sudi is in memorial of the high-chief's death. Kilo refers to the introduction of metric measures in the district. These are Swahili or English derivatives.

[13]Anthony N. Allott, Restatement of African Law: Kenya, The Law of Marriage and Divorce (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1968), p. 46

[14]Matthew A. Wafula and Committee, "Circumcision Ritual Among the Babukusu," op. cit.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Observed in North Sangalo sub-location, East Bukusu Location, August 4, 1972.

[17]Wagner, op. cit., p. 340, and interview at Bokoli Chief's Centre, Aug. 12, 1972. Also see Timona M. K. Mosii, "Sabaot Traditional Religion," (Nairobi: Dept. of Religious Studies, Kenyatta College, 1970), p. 12. (Mimeographed). This is a neighbouring Kalenjin/Maasai people of the Bukusu who also have circumcision and like symbols.

[18]Gerhard Lindblom, Notes Ethnographiques sur le Kavirondo Septentorional et al Colonie du Kenya (Tucuman: Universidad Nacional de Tucuman, 1932), Imprenta Casa Editora Con., Peru 684, Buenos Aires), p. 405. (Privately translated by Ursla Annerud).

[19]Wagner, op. cit., p. 341.

[20]Wafula and Committee, op. cit., Appendix B, p. 4.

[20a]If there is only one boy of the correct age, he may be circumcised alone. Usually sons of three or four brothers are circumcised together and congregate at the home of the eldest brother.

[21]A fuller description of both the Chinyinja and Sise rites is given in Japeth Shiundu's interview (W. Bukusu Loc.), Oct. 27, 1975. Notes of the interview are in the writer's notes.

[22]Wagner, op. cit., p. 342, and also interview with Tutolo Mzee (E. Bukusu Loc.), April 10, 1972.

[23]Interview with Zakaria Soita Wamelungo (Bokoli Loc.), July 10, 1972.

[24]Wafula and Committee, op. cit.

[25]The text of this song follows after four pages of description in this chapter, p. 72.

[26]Interview with Joseph Kasinya (Malikisi Loc.), Sept. 3, 1972.

[27]Interview with Yohana Nayere Masambu (Bokoli Loc.), Oct. 5, 1972, and Wafula and Committee, op. cit., p. 2 and Appendix B, p. 6.

[28]Wafula and Committee, op. cit.

[29]Observed by Dr. Howard Johnson (E. Bukusu Loc.), April 12, 1972. Also reported by Yohana Masambu (Bokoli Loc.), Oct. 5, 1972.

[30]Interview with Javan Siundu Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Aug. 30, 1973. Also see DC/EN/3/2/4, Kenya National Archives.

[31]Diary of St. Peter's Catholic Mission (Mumias, N. Wanga Location), entry of Aug. 13, 1916. (This diary is unpublished and available in the guest-house of the mission.) Also see Safari Book, Aug. 31, 1926, pp. 131-32.

[32]Wagner, op. cit., p. 342.

[33]Observed in Bokoli sub-loc., Bokoli Loc., Aug. 12, 1972, by Nicole White and Hilton Merritt.

[34]Observed at North Sangalo sub-loc., E. Bukusu Loc., Aug. 4, 1972.

[35]Interview at E. Bukusu Loc. by Dr. Howard Johnson, Aug. 12, 1972, and observed on Aug. 4, 1972, by Hilton Merritt.

[36]Wafula and Committee, op. cit., Appendix B, p. 10.

[37]Observed at North Sangalo sub-loc., E. Bukusu Loc., Aug. 4, 1972.

[38]N. Stam, "The Bahanga," Catholic Anthropological Conference, [Washington, D. C.,] Vol. I, No. 4, (Aug. 1929), p. 155.

[39]Wagner, op. cit., p. 230, plate 9 has a picture of using a spear in a sacrifice.

[40]Observed on Aug. 4, 1972, East Bukusu Loc.

[41]Interview with Japeth Shiundu (W. Bukusu Loc.), Nov. 16, 1975. A similar context where an omen is sought is when a move is contemplated. Trees are left on the ground at the proposed new home. If one finds on returning after four days that the logs have been attacked by termites, the move will not be made.

[42]Interview at Bokoli's Chief Centre, Nov. 1, 1973.

[43]Wafula and Committee, op. cit., Appendix B, p. 10, also de Wolf, op. cit., pp. 61, 68.

[44]Observed at Bokoli Location Circumcision, Aug. 12, 1972 by Nicole White.

[45]Observed at Bokoli Location Circumcision, Aug. 12, 1972 by Leslie Weathers.

[46]Wagner, op. cit., p. 343. A corn tassel or grass stalk could also be used.

[47]Observed on August 16, 1972, in N. Wanga Loc.

[48]De Wolf, op. cit., p. 61, also observation by Nicole White, Bokoli Loc., Aug. 12, 1972.

[49]Wafula and Committee, op. cit., Appendix B, pp. 5-6.

[50]Observation by Leslie Weathers, Bokoli Circumcision, Aug. 12, 1972.

[51]Observation at N. Sangalo sub-loc., E. Bukusu Loc., Aug. 4, 1972. White flour of finger-millet is put on anyone who "comes too near ancestral spirits," i. e., parents of twins, those who tremble when near mourners or around circumcision. See Mosii, op. cit., p. 9.

[52]F. B. Welbourn and B. A. Ogot, A Place to Feel at Home (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 14.

[53]Wafula and Committee, "Circumcision Ritual Among the Babukusu," op. cit., Appendix B, pp. 5-6.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Wagner, op. cit., p. 343. Also Dr. Howard Johnson's observation in East Bukusu, Aug. 12, 1972. Also Klement Okipo (S. Wanga Loc.), Aug. 10, 1972, reported by Ken Lohrentz.

[56]Interview with Teutolo Mzee (E. Bukusu Loc.), Oct. 4, 1972.

[57]Wagner, op. cit., p. 348, also interview with Yohana Mukhimu (Tachoni Loc.), Feb. 20, 1973. A more modern spelling of the word for the stick is "chitiang'i."

[58]Wafula and Committee, op. cit., Appendix B, pp. 9-10.

[59]De Wolf, op. cit., p. 63, also interview with Mukhungu Chinge (Kimilili Loc.), Feb. 21, 1973.

[60]Wagner, op. cit., p. 350, for a full description of the actual operation.

[61]Ibid. Centre poles are no longer used in houses so women sit quietly in the middle of the house with their legs extended before them. In North Wanga the two mothers of candidates' circumcised had curved harvest knives in their right hands. The handles were carved like phallic symbols. (Observed on Aug. 16, 1972).

[62]Interview with Enoch Waboma (Kimilili Loc.), Feb. 21, 1973.

[63]Wafula and Committee, op. cit., p. 18.

[64]Interview at Bokoli Chief's Centre, Aug. 12, 1972.

[65]Lindblom, op. cit., p. 406.

[66]Wagner, op. cit., p. 352. This custom was observed twice in the Dec. circumcision by Gaston Tarbet, Sonny Guild and Hilton Merritt (1972).

[67]In 1972 the favourite song following circumcision was "Omutalia" referring to the role of Kenyans in helping drive Italians from Ethiopia in the Second World War. In the 1930's the Wanga bragged about killing Alfayo, the Luo preacher, at Musanda after a land dispute. See A. K. Rice, DC/KMG/1/8, p. 2, Kenya National Archives.

[68]Interview with Anaseti Musee (Kimilili Loc.), Feb. 22, 1973.

[69]Interview with Zakaria Soita Wanelongo (Bokoli Loc.), Oct. 7, 1972.

[70]Wagner, op. cit., p. 352. Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), attacked the circumciser and got a reward when he was circumcised in the 1920's.

[71]Wafula and Committee, op. cit., Appendix B, p. 8.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), May 22, 1973.

[74]Interview with Victor Milimo (West Bukusu Loc.), by Dr. Roger Bruce, Aug. 1972.

[75]Wafula and Committee, op. cit.

[76]Interview at Bokoli Chief's Centre, Aug. 12, 1972.

[77]Interview with Kefa Kweyu (Musanda, South Wanga Loc.), Dec. 27, 1972. Apparently in most of the area a hurried funeral is conducted for the initiate who dies in seclusion and no mourning is allowed.

[78]Kimilili interview, June 26, 1973.

[79]Wafula and Committee, op. cit., p. 2.

[80]Observed in Wanga and E. Bukusu Locations, September 1972.

[81]Interview with Victor Milimo (West Bukusu Loc.), by Dr. Roger Bruce, Aug. 1972.

[82]Wagner, op. cit., p. 359.

[83]Wafula and Committee, op. cit.

[84]Interview at Bokoli Chief's Centre, Aug. 12, 1972.

[85]Wagner, op. cit., p. 364.

[86]Wafula and Committee, op. cit.

[87]Wagner, op. cit., p. 364. "An old woman who has one eye" is an unmarried woman. To "eat the secret things" means being given morsels of choice food which are not offered to an ordinary visitor.

[88]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), April 30, 1973.

[89]Observed at Bokoli Circumcision on Aug. 12, 1972.

[90]Observed at "Khulicha" coming out by Gaston Tarbet and Wilburn Hill near Lwuandeti, North Kabras Loc., Dec. 1972. See A. C. Hollis, The Nandi (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), p. 52.

[91] Interview with Jotham Mafunga (Ndivisi Loc.), May 9, 1973. Also interview with Johana Mukumu s/o Lumbasi (Lwuandeti, North Kabras Loc.), Feb. 20, 1973.

[92] Interview at Bokoli Chief's Centre, Nov. 1, 1973.

[93] Hollis, op. cit., p. 56.

[94] Luka Chekata interview, (Nambilima, North Kabras Loc.), Jan. 22, 1974.

[95] Interview with Jotham Mafunga (Ndivisi Loc.), May 9, 1973. See Timonah M. K. Mosii, "Sabaot Traditional Religion," Nairobi: Dept. of Religious Studies, Kenyatta College, p. 15, (mimeographed), describing a similar ceremony which he labels a "resurrection" among a neighbouring people to the Tachoni and Bukusu.

[96] Interview with Luka Chekata (Nambilima, North Kabras Loc.), Jan. 22, 1974.

[97] Yohana Mukhumu s/o Lumbasi (Lwuandeti, N. Kabras Loc.), Feb. 20, 1973.

[98] See Robert E. Daniels, "By Rites a Man: A Study of the Societal and Individual Foundations of Tribal Identity Among the Kipsigis of Kenya," (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1970), p. 154, for a Kalenjin parallel.

[99] Interview with Peta Wanyama (Ligulu, Ndivisi Loc.), May 9, 1973.

[100] Interview with Jotham Mafunga (Ndivisi Location), May 9, 1973.

[101] Letter from Joseph Baraza (East Bukusu Loc.), May 9, 1973. Also Wafula and Committee, op. cit.

[102] See Map Number 4 for Locations included in this description, p. 75.

[103] Liranda interview (Isukha Loc.), with Yohana Lumwachi, Lazaro Afwayi and Zakayo Chumba, Sept. 20, 1973.

[104] Majengo interview (South Maragoli Loc.), June 9, 1973.

[105] G. W. B. Huntingford, The Eastern Tribes of the Bantu Kavirondo [The Peoples of Kenya, No. 14], (Nairobi: Njia Kuu Press, 1944), pp. 29-30.

[106] Wagner, op. cit., p. 373.

[107]Critique of Hilton Merritt's first draft, "Kakamega Type Circumcision," by Jeremiah Segero and five other elders at Khayekha Chief's Centre (Isukha Loc.), March 14, 1973.

[108]Lazaro Afwayi in Liranda Interview (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 20, 1972.

[109]Wagner, op. cit., p. 338.

[110]Critique of Hilton Merrit's first draft, "Kakamega Type Circumcision," by Shedekha Mufwobo, Yosufu Lisabushila and Andrew Chibukosia at Iguhu Chief's Centre (Idakho Loc.), on March 21, 1973.

[111]Huntingford, op. cit., p. 28.

[112]Bilha Liyai, "Traditional Religion of the Isukha," Nairobi: Kenyatta College, Dept. of Religious Studies, 1970, p. 6, (mimeographed).

[113]Collected by Hilton Merritt, Aug. 1972 and confirmed as typical by elders who were circumcised in the early Colonial period.

[114]Wagner, op. cit., p. 345.

[115]Majengo Interview (South Maragoli Loc.), June 9, 1973.

[116]Interview with Assistant Chief Hosea Shimonyo (Isukha Loc.), and also with Hezron Andulu, Daudi Shiguli and Bari Bakira s/o Mukanzi at Shibakala Market (Idakho Loc.), Oct. 24, 1973.

[117]Interview with Japeth Lubai (North Maragoli Loc.), Oct. 15, 1972 and confirmed at Iguhu Chief's Centre, (Idakho Loc.), March 21, 1973.

[118]"Africa's Golden Harvests," Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 20, Intokozo, Transvaal (South Africa), newsletter of South Africa Compounds and Interior Mission. Available at Witwaterstrand University in Johannesburg, South Africa.

[119]Interview with Daudi Kisa (North Maragoli Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972.

[120]Interview with Ex-Chief Jeremiah Segero (Isukha Loc.), Oct. 1, 1972.

[121]E. R. Shackleton, "Notes on Some Customs and Beliefs," DO/NN/3/2/2 (1931), p. 21, Kenya National Archives.

[122]Critique of Hilton Merritt's paper, "Kakamega Type Circumcision," by Jeremiah Segero and five other elders, Khayekha, (Isukha Loc.), March 14, 1973.

[123]Observed at Rosterman circumcision (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 8, 1972.

[124]Interview with Hezron Andulu (Sibakala, Idakho Loc.), Oct. 24, 1972.

[125]Interview with Alex Mwinamo (Idakho Loc.), Oct. 20, 1972.

[126]Observed in Idakho and Isukha circumcisions, 1972.

[127]Liyai, op. cit., p. 1.

[128]For a full description see Wagner, op. cit., p. 349, and Shackleton, op. cit., p. 21.

[129]Majengo interview (South Maragoli Loc.), June 9, 1973.

[130]Interview with Jonah Olugaba (North Maragoli Loc.), Aug. 28, 1973.

[131]Interview with Assistant Chief Hosea Shimonyo (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 23, 1973.

[132]Observed by Berkeley Hackett in Marama Loc., Aug. 20, 1972.

[133]Wagner, op. cit., p. 351.

[134]This necklace is in the possession of Mudi Nabema Bukusi who inherited it from his paternal grandmother. Jeremiah Segero (Oct. 1, 1972) and the Isukha critique committee (March 14, 1973), as well as Joel Litu of North Maragoli knew of the necklace. Mr. Bukusi showed it to me on March 16, 1973. It is kept in an abandoned hut one half mile south of Rosterman, Kakamega.

[135]Interview with Benjamin Shiamala (Idakho Loc.), Oct. 20, 1972.

[136]Interview with Alex Mwinamo (Idakho Loc.), Oct. 20, 1972.

[137]Wagner, op. cit., p. 358.

[138]Edna H. Chilson, Ambassador of the King (Wichita: Privately published diary of Arthur Chilson, n. d.), pp. 48-49.

[139]Interview with Lazaro Afwayi Kobwa (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 25, 1973.

[140]Observed at Rosterman (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 1972.

[141]Liyai, op. cit., p. 6.

[142]Liranda interview (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 20, 1972.

[143]Joseph Shiuma interview (Isukha Loc.), Nov. 13, 1972, also Joel Litu (N. Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973, who said the door was closed on the third day.

[144]Wagner, op. cit., p. 356.

[145]Interview with Daniel Akero (South Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 14, 1972.

[146]Interview with Assistant Chief Hosea Shimonyo (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 23, 1973.

[147]Critique of Hilton Merritt's paper, "Kakamega Type Circumcision," by Jeremiah Segero and five other elders at Khayekha Chief's Centre (Isukha Loc.), March 14, 1973.

[148]Interview with Assistant Chief Hosea Shimonyo (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 23, 1973.

[149]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[150]Liranda interview (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 20, 1972.

[151]Interview with Assistant Chief Hosea Shimonyo (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 23, 1973.

[152]Luranda interview (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 20, 1972.

[153]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[154]Interview with Ex-chief Jeremiah Segero (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 20, 1972.

[155]Observed at Rosterman (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 31, 1972.

[156]Wagner, op. cit., p. 357.

[157]Interview with Meshacha Temba (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 23, 1973.

[158]Observed at Isukha circumcision, Aug. 9, 1972.

[159]Interview with Assistant Chief Hosea Shimonyo (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 23, 1973.

[160]Wagner, op. cit., p. 360.

[161]Interview with Assistant Chief Hosea Shimonyo (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 23, 1973.

[162]Huntingford, op. cit., p. 29.

[163]Interview with Christopher Mutiva and William Serenge (Majengo, South Maragoli Loc.), Aug. 29, 1973.

[164]Wagner, op. cit., p. 358.

[165]Interview with Ex-chief Jeremiah Segero (Isukha Loc.), Nov. 1, 1972.

[166]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[167]Interview with Assistant Chief Hosea Shimonyo (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 23, 1973.

[168]Interview with Daudi Kisa (North Maragoli Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972.

[169]Christian informants of Wagner, op. cit., p. 367, gave this interpretation.

[170]Shackleton, op. cit., p. 21. Amos Mukoyani (South Maragoli Loc.), Oct. 27, 1972, and Mtiva and Serenge (South Maragoli Loc.), June 9, 1973, said it died from the dancing.

[171]Interview with Mathayo Esendi (North Maragoli Loc.), Oct. 14, 1972.

[172]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[173]Liranda interview (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 20, 1972.

[174]Critique of Hilton Merritt's paper, "Kakamega Type Circumcision," at Iguhu Chief's Centre (Idakho Loc.), Mar. 3, 1973.

[175]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[176]Michael Katayi (Bunyore Loc.), interviewed by Prisca Lidya Silvano, University College, Nairobi, History Dept., R.P.A., C/2/3/1, 1967.

[177]Wagner, op. cit., p. 368.

[178]Anthony N. Allott, Restatement of African Law: Kenya, The Law of Marriage and Divorce (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1968), p. 46.

[179]Wagner, op. cit., p. 366.

[180]Interview with Meshaka Temba (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 23, 1973.

[181]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973. See Wagner, op. cit., p. 368.

[182]Wagner, op. cit., p. 368.

[183]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[184]Interview with Alex Mwinamo (Idakho Loc.), Nov. 20, 1972.

[185]Wagner, op. cit., p. 370.

[186]Interview with Lazaro Afwayi (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 25, 1973.

[187]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[188]Interview with Ex-chief Jeremiah Segero (Isukha Loc.), Nov. 1, 1972.

[189]Hollis, op. cit., p. 91.

[190]Interview with Joel Litu (North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[191]Critique of Hilton Merritt's paper, "Kakamega Type Circumcision," by Jeremiah Segero and five other elders at Khayekha Chief's Centre (Isukha Loc.), March 14, 1973.

[192]Ibid.

[193]See Map Number 5 for area encompassed in this circumcision type, p. 92.

[194]Anonymous informant in Kakamega, July 1972.

[195]Alta Howard Hoyt, We Were Pioneers (Wichita: Privately printed missionary journal, n. d.), p. 73, says circumcision was held every three years. Walter H. Sangree, Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 50, gives four or five year intervals. Gideon S. Were, A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), p. 26, collates oral history on the basis of a six year cycle. The most reliable oral sources I've contacted in Tiriki Location (Jonathan Mugala, Andrea Jumba and Luka Kheyitsi) agree that a six year cycle was normative.

[196]Interview with Ernest Matahana (Shamakhoha, Tiriki Loc.), May 29, 1973. Confirmed by Sangree, op. cit., p. 67, who gives an average 15 years for each age-group.

[197]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), March 11, 1974. See also interview with Hesbon Onyango (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), Feb. 9, 1974.

[198]Sangree, op. cit., p. 76.

[199]Interview with Adanus Musotso (Tiriki Loc.), June 7, 1973. The bakoji were also called bagugwa or bagule, interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), July 22, 1975.

[200]Sangree, op. cit., p. 96.

[201]Interview with Joash Ombiri and Hesbon Onyango (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), Aug. 8, 1975.

[202]Grace Diru, "The Effect of European Contact on Tiriki Traditional Circumcision Rites," A paper presented to Dr. Donald Jacobs, BA 2, 1971, Nairobi University, p. 1.

[203]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[204]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), July 25, 1975.

[205]Interview with anonymous leader (Nyang'ori Loc.), Nov. 1972.

[206]Wagner, op. cit., p. 355. [207]Hoyt, op. cit., p. 73.

[208]Wagner, op. cit., p. 199.

[209]See Gunter Wagner, "The Abaluyia of Kavirondo," in African Worlds, ed. Daryll Forde (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 44, for a description of luswa as abnormal behaviour in people.

[210]Letter to the Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, "Secret Circumcision Customs of the Tiriki Tribe," Jan. 24, 1921. Archives, Friends United Mission, Richmond, Indiana, USA, p. 1.

[211]Interview with Adanus Musotso (Tiriki Loc.), June 7, 1973.

[212]Interview with Joash Ombiri (Nyang'ori Loc.), Oct. 11, 1973. Ombiri had become a Christian before his circumcision in 1918. He was taken home for a traditional ceremony. The sacrifice was tied on his neck to draw the ancestors.

[213]Diru, op. cit., p. 9. [214]Hoyt, op. cit., pp. 73-75.

[215]Interview with Rev. Saulo Aluta, Nathani Shijedi, Enoch Mbete and Yohana Inyanje (Mungabo, Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 4, 1972.

[216]Hollis, op. cit., p. 53.

[217]Interview with Jonathan Mugala (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972. Confirmed in letter to the Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, though not called Imoni.

[218]Interview with Andrea Jumba (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 21, 1972. Wagner, Bantu, op. cit., p. 344, says the monster was called a lion while the Friends' Mission Secretary said it was called shing'ang'a (hyena) in his letter to Richmond in 1921.

[219]Sangree, op. cit., p. 53.

[220]Interview with Jonathan Mugala (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972.

[221]Daniels, op. cit., p. 137, also Diru, op. cit., p. 5.

[222]Interview with Luka Kheyitsi, Thomas Luteshi and Cornell Isenti (Senende, Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[223]Ibid.

[224]Interview with Andrea Jumba (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 21, 1972.

[225]Sangree, op. cit., p. 53.

[226]Letter to Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, op. cit. (See footnote 210 for particulars).

[227]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa and Amulabu Andambi (Tiriki Loc.), July 25, 1974.

[228]Interview with Luka Kheyitsi (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[229]Interview with Jonathan Mugala (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972.

[230]Interview with Adanus Musotso Budgira (Tiriki Loc.), June 7, 1973.

[231]Interview with Luka Kheyitsi (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[232]Interview with Hesbon Onyango (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), Feb. 9, 1974.

[233]Diru, op. cit., p. 12.

[234]Interview with Jonathan Mugala (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972.

[235]Anonymous informant in Kakamega, July 1972.

[236]Interview with Hesbon Onyango and Joash Ombiri (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), Aug. 8, 1975.

[237]Diru, op. cit., p. 10.

[238]Interview with Hesbon Onyango (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), Feb. 8, 1974, and Aug. 9, 1975.

[239]Interview with Jonathan Mugala (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972.

[240]Wagner, Bantu, op. cit., p. 344.

[241]Interview with Hesbon Onyango and Joash Ombiri (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), Aug. 8, 1975.

[242]Diru, op. cit., p. 13.

[243]Interview with Luka Kheyitsi (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[244]Diru, loc. cit. [245]Ibid.

[246]Interview with Hesbon Onyango and Joash Ombiri (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), Aug. 8, 1975.

[247]In the 1975 Christian ceremony at Gambogi, Nyang'ori, an imposter was caught (he was an uncircumcised Teso) because he did not protect the initiates on the way to the seclusion hut with an olusiola branch but another shrub. He was run away.

[248]Interview with Joash Ombiri (Nyang'ori Loc.), Aug. 8, 1975.

[249]Sangree, op. cit., p. 55.

[250]Letter to the Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, Archives, Friends United Mission, Richmond, Indiana, USA.

[251]Interview with Luka Kheyitsi (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[252]Interview with Daudi Mahindu (Tiriki Loc.), Dec. 22, 1972.

[253]Interview with Luka Kheyitsi (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[254]Letter to the Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, p. 4, Archives, Friends United Mission, Richmond, Indiana.

[255]Interview with Hesbon Onyango (Nyang'ori Loc.), Feb. 8, 1974.

[256]Diru, op. cit., p. 12.

[257]Interview with Andrea Jumba (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 21, 1972.

[258]Sangree, op. cit., p. 63.

[259]Anonymous interview in Kakamega. Also interviews with Jonathan Mugala and Luka Kheyitsi (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972, and Nov. 28, 1972.

[260]Diru, op. cit., p. 18.

[261]Interview with anonymous leader in Nyang'ori Location, Nov. 1972. Also Adanus Musotso Budgira (Catholic Mission, Tiriki Loc.), June 7, 1973.

[262]Interview with Jonathan Mugala (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972.

[263]Interview with Andrea Jumba (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 21, 1972.

[264]Letter to the Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, "Secret Circumcision Customs of the Tiriki Tribe," Jan. 24, 1921, Archives, Friends United Mission, Richmond, Indiana.

[265]A description of the beer of the back follows after three pages, p. 125.

[266]Interview with Luka Kheyitsi (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[267]Interview with Hesbon Onyango (Nyang'ori Loc.), Feb. 9, 1974.

[268]Interview with Luka Kheyitsi (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[269]Daniels, op. cit., p. 146, display of anger or disruption in a circumcision is discouraged by Kalenjin people since it will "spoil" initiation and necessitate a ceremonial slaughter to rectify the situation. The death of a Christian circumcision leader's wife before the Nyang'ori ceremony in Dec. 1975 was viewed in the same way. Other officials encouraged the leader to remain at home since it was feared his tragedy might be transferred to the seclusion huts.

[270]See Victor Turner, The Forest of Symbols (Ithaca [New York]: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 209, for a parallel among the Ndembu people of Zambia.

[271]Welbourn and Ogot, op. cit., p. 15, say in traditional Ugandan rituals suggestions are made of sexual activity then immediately censured. Revivalist of the Bakalole movement there have occasionally appeared naked as a sign of their new "holiness."

[272]Sangree, op. cit., p. 56. [273]Diru, op. cit., p. 19.

[274]Anonymous interview in Kakamega, July 1972.

[275]Sangree, op. cit., p. 49. [276]Diru, op. cit., p. 19.

[277]Sangree, op. cit., p. 57. [278]Diru, op. cit., p. 19f.

[279]Letter to the Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, p. 3. (Fuller reference on footnote number 264).

[280]Sangree, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

[281]Wagner, Bantu, op. cit., p. 363.

[282]Sangree, op. cit., p. 58. [283]Ibid., p. 59.

[284]Interview with Andrea Jumba (Tiriki Loc.), Feb. 8, 1974.

[285]Interview with Joash Ombiri (Nyang'ori Loc.), Oct. 11, 1973.

[286]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), March 11, 1974.

[287]N. Stam, "The Bahanga," Catholic Anthropological Conference (Washington, D. C.), Vol. 1, No. 4, Aug. 1929, p. 156.

[288]Interview with Andrea Jumba (Tiriki Loc.), Feb. 8, 1974.

[289]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), July 25, 1975. The urine of a sheep is believed to be "sympathetic magic" of fertility since it is productive and the ideal intermediary in sacrifices to the ancestors.

[290]Sangree, op. cit., pp. 61-62 and also 66.

[291]Wagner, Bantu, op. cit., p. 371.

[292]Interview with Jonathan Mugala (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 6, 1972.

[293]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), April 11, 1973.

[294]Interview with Luka Kheyitsa (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[295]Ibid.

[296]Sangree, op. cit., p. 63.

[297]Interview with Luka Kheyitsa (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[298]Diru, op. cit., p. 10.

[299]Interview with Luka Kheyitsa (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 28, 1972.

[300]Sangree, op. cit., p. 64.

[301]Wagner, "The Abaluyia of Kavirondo," op. cit., p. 46.

[302]Victor W. Turner, The Ritual Process (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 103.

[303]Marj-Lisa Swantz, Ritual and Symbol in Transitional Zaromo Society (Uppsala: Almquist and Witsells, 1970), p. 17.

[304]Arnold van Gennep, The Rites of Passage, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabriella L. Caffe (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 10.

[305]Refer to Kakamega type circumcision in this chapter, p. 96.

[306]Interview with Luka Chekata (Nambilima, North Kabras Loc.), Jan. 22, 1974.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL THEMES OF TRADITIONAL CIRCUMCISION RITUALS

The rationale for analysis by seeking "cultural themes" given in chapter two is exercised in this section. Culture has more than form, it includes the structures of meaning, concepts, ideas and judgments, both conscious and unconscious which give meaning to activities. Its symbols and rituals are more than simple sympathetic magic. They are tied to a worldview.

By drawing from indigenous interpreters of circumcision rituals and "operational" and "positional" meanings,[1] some of the themes affecting behaviour and stimulating Abaluyia culture are distilled and described here.

A. SEEKING INVOLVEMENT OF SPIRITS IN INITIATION

Circumcision as lilingila--initiation or entrance--involves initiates in the emotion packed transition of a rite of passage. And in the system expected in such a ceremony, the boys are released from social structure (the women's realm) into a liminal stage (seclusion--where there are few of the attributes of either past or future state) and ultimately back into structured society (in this case, that of men). The omusinde (uncircumcised male) has no more status than bakulu (the laughing relation).[2] The circumcision operation is spoken of as "removing the mother's cloth."[3] Seclusion ends with participants being called "new and soft ones" or "brides" who have passed through a mystical rebirth.

The emotional pace quickens as the transition nears. Raucous singing attends dancing of candidates and their friends. Nakedness is observed in a society which normally identifies such with spirit possession or an anti-social bent.

There are occasions of role reversals. Near Webuye (Broderick Falls) men cook and brew beer for festivals, activities usually restricted for women. In dances some men wear women's clothes or move about naked. They sing openly of sexual activity. In short, many restraints of normal times are thrown off.

Social scientists when observing activities which seem at variance with the social values of the people under observation attribute deviations to a number of things. Some see it as ritual expression of hostility. Gluckman, for instance, sees travestism and behaving obscenely in Zulu women at rain rituals as a kind of compensation for a normally submissive role in life.[4] Rigby, in studying the Gogo of Tanzania, views such rites as intending to rid the country of ritual pollution.[5] Swantz, in a Tanzanian coastal study, saw women's travestism as "an expression of mockery of God's order which has failed to run its regular course and now by human inversion will be directed to right itself."[6]

None of these appears definitive in interpreting Abaluyia "abnormalities" during circumcision rituals since neither local exegesis nor the context of performance points to jealousy, purification as an ultimate goal or an attempt to involve God in the rites. Rather the increase in dancing and performing unusual activities is intended to "attract ancestral spirits who

are just like we are in temperament. . .When unusual activities are engaged--and emotions rise higher because of such things as prolonged dancing--the spirits (misambwa) draw near."[7] Their presence becomes so pervasive as rituals continue that it becomes dangerous for those not being transformed by the ceremonies to come into contact with initiates. So the neophytes are relegated to seclusion.

This is involvement of mimetic quality--acting strangely and walking naked is the way those possessed by spirits perform. The rationale making these activities effective in involving ancestors is seldom articulated by those involved but indigenous interpreters give that meaning. Further, the context where similar activities are performed when households are troubled and desire ancestral help is similar enough to support this conclusion.

Benevolent ancestral spirits are wanted at this juncture and sacrificial meals are offered to them in hopes they will empower the process of initiation. The community cannot return to progressive normalcy without appending another age-class sising'ilo (Bukusu). Thus the dead who are normally invoked only when there is tragedy are called as the circumcision cycle requires. Apparently friction between adjacent generations has led to this ritualization of ancestral participation. The living-dead[8] are called because transforming boys into men demands their involvement. Elders are willing to "change things" because of this tension between generations. They expose the

community to the dangers of the spirit world symbolized by the monster or the leopard of circumcision. The taboos observed during circumcision/seclusion point up the tension involved in being in close proximity with those who are generally avoided and feared. Without them, the cycle of life cannot be completed. So the involvement of ancestral spirits is sought when a new generation's needs force leaders to initiate bizarre activities and sacrifices at the clan shrines.

Because receiving spirits back into the community is dangerous, confessions which can purify participants are carried out. Reconciliations, often initiated by unusual methods are encouraged.[9] Coitus may be simulated as a father asks his son about sexual activities.[10] An aggrieved person climbs a tree and curses an opponent by confessing the enemy's shortcomings.[11] An initiate who continues bleeding after his operation is forced to search for hard feelings or secret passions between himself and a clansman, else any aid offered will be negated. Even being circumcised naked before the clan is a sort of ultimate confession since the depth of a boy's soul is barred for anyone to watch for the slightest indication of fear as the operation is performed.[12] These confessional elements reduce ritual defilement for those entering a vulnerable state. Openness, by contrast, promotes participation of benevolent spirits.

A graphic description left by the first European observers of an Abaluyia circumcision, that of Nabongo (king) Mumia in 1885, encapsules the emotional change involved in initiation.

They saw the Abaluyia as conservatives who prayed each morning by spitting toward the sun and exhorting "things to take their normal course."[13] But when Mumia became sick and a diviner recommended circumcision, an emotional erruption was witnessed by the surprised visitors.

> There was a great dance. . .I never did witness such a thing before in my life. Daughters of Eve in every conceivable manner, thoroughly naked, kept skipping together from place to place, following the sound of a drum. . .How glad the women were I can hardly tell. They danced, they jumped up, they reeled to and fro like drunken men. They shook their bodies and shoulders as if they were going to dislocate them.[14]

These shocked Victorian missionaries saw ritual joy and emotional outbursts, but they were probably not aware enough to see the attempts to invoke help from the spirit world nor to appreciate the social sophistication of circumcision as initiation into a structured order.

Bukusu--Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation: When candidates go to the river to get water for the shrine, the spirits are expected to be attracted. A boy is not allowed to look back for fear he will see a spirit and displease it, thus bringing danger on himself.[15] Then the family chants "ours of the ancient is booming" from the song Sioyayo[16] to affirm their desires to draw the ancestors into their activities.

Circumcision is a time when manifestations of spirit possession are apropos. It may be that trembling at the 1885 rite when Mumia was operated on was from spirit possession.[17] Girls who meet candidates returning from being mudded at the river are prone to tremble. A good circumciser also does the same as the operation nears "because of the uncontrollable nature

of his blood." Anyone who trembles when the ceremonies are being performed is considered to be possessed by the spirit of bukhebi inhering from some paternal or perhaps a maternal ancestor. This circumcision spirit (bukhebi) is expected to emerge at this time.

Candidates in their dancing also enter a trance state. While others are involved in conversations in the night before operations, those facing the trial become indrawn. They shuffle in the midst of the crowd with eyes that appear glazed.[18] Candidates are constantly surrounded by dancers who hope to transmit power to them by the repetitive dancing. If the pace becomes sluggish in the midst of the night, the party is exhorted to frenzic performance "so the initiation will go well."[19]

Sacrifices are important to circumcision since the spirits come from their wanderings famished. Anyone who circumcises without slaughtering animals and observing ritual is reproved, "Do you circumcise your sons with water?" meaning, "Why do you have such a weak, anemic ceremony?"[20] Whenever an animal is killed in such a sacrifice and rigor mortis sets in, people attribute the "trembling" of flesh to a spiritual consumption of the essence of the animal by ancestral spirits.[21]

The discipline of the seclusion period, among other things, is intended to enhance ritual cleanliness so ancestors can energize initiates.[22] Bathing is not allowed but white clay is applied to initiates' bodies since they are close to the spirits. No one would kill an initiate wearing the clay of purification, not even a Maasai or Nandi enemy, since such folly would expose the killer to possession by spirits near initiates.[23]

In the Balicha song the spirit cult is also mentioned.[24] The stones which come from "Egypt" and which are abodes of the ancestors receive special mention. Also, Khulicha rites themselves are conducted near the river where spirits reside. Even the curses made on anti-social elements of society are believed to be enforced by the ancestors.

Kakamega--Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation: Many of the events and symbols of Bukusu circumcision have the same meaning in the Kakamega ceremonies. Initiates are warned n not to look back at important junctures, trembling is attributed to "spirit possession," and sacrifices by the omusalitsi (clan sacrificer) are directed to paternal ancestors who are begged to bless the proceedings. One unique Kakamega symbol is the use of white millet flour (bwanga). The sacrificer spits it on the chest of the initiate for purification. That enhances worthiness in approaching ancestral shades who help transform boys into men.[25]

A sign is required from spirits before emergence from seclusion can be allowed. Ancestors have to signify that the initiates are ready for re-entry into society by "fermenting mud."[26]

Sexual continence is required in the community during the seclusion period because relationships which are normally well-defined are disrupted. There is fear of conceiving a child at a time when uncontrolled divinities or unnamed and thus dangerous spirits are present because of the frenzied activities of circumcision. The Abaluyia, while not believing

in reincarnation in offspring, see a special affinity between every heir and some ancestor. While spirits (both benevolent and evil) are proximate, sex relations are declared taboo.[27] Clansmen prefer having children conceived when the attraction between benevolent ancestor and the child would be more probable than when unknown spirits are present.

Tiriki--Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation: From the time the goat is sacrificed in the forest by the elders, guidance from ancestors is sought. Use of Muhalia/isenende vines which are vestiges from altars to the ancestors of the Kalenjin who first inhabited the district of the Tiriki/Nyang'ori also point to invoking ancestors.[28]

The reason precautions are taken against falling luswa (contaminated) is that the initiation is a period of high vulnerability. Confession and having white flour blown on the chest helps purify candidates for contact with spirits who will speed their transformation. Tying the beak of a chicken sacrificed to the shrine around a candidate's neck is considered a blessing because the beak retains spirits drawn to the sacrifice.[29]

The closing ceremonies to receive initiates home are conducted in full awareness of the ancestors. The newly emerged warriors are received through an arch of the lusiola tree known as the ancestral shade at the traditional shrine. Participation in the cow-milking ceremony (khulishela ing'ombe)[30] is also effective because it unites the newly emerged warriors with elders in the cultic system at the sacred grove.

There is great emphasis on doing what is "traditional" in circumcision because the entrance of ancestral spirits into the arena of ritual is guaranteed by following the old ways. They bless the transition if the ways of the past are properly respected and imitated.[31]

A sense of awe pervades the rites because spirit forces undergird them. The ritual experience is felt "to be high or deep mysteries which put the initiates temporarily into close rapport with the primary or primordial generative powers of the cosmos, the act of which transcends society."[32]

There is an aura of covenant in circumcision. The initiate gains a place in the hierarchy of elders which extends to the generations of the living dead. By being circumcised in the midst of these relatives, the initiate is mystically joined in community. The place of circumcision is very important. While there is not the full sense of being joined with "mother earth" such as is common in West Africa,[33] ritual shedding of blood in clan territory is the mark of covenant to a Muluyia in the areas under study as surely as removing and burning an unwanted relatives' bones is the ultimate attempt at breaking relations.[34] If a boy is circumcised at home where the ancestral spirits hover, he is integrated into the larger community watched over by them.

Thus, even the timing of the most important events of circumcision indicate the pre-eminence of ancestors to the rites. Rituals are performed either early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Those of the morning are done then because, "The spirits of the dead are present. If we wait until the sun has

risen fairly high, we have allowed them to disperse."[35] The evening activities may be started after a fluttering chicken is placed on a candidate's chest to draw the attention of spirits. Then they remain with the person facing the trial because the essence of the sacrifice (the lower beak) remains on his person. The presence of ancestral spirits cements the initiation of the new age-class in the hierarchy of paternal society among these Abaluyia peoples.[36]

B. INVOKING SPIRITS IN PROMOTION OF FECUNDITY

A second theme promoted in circumcision rituals relates to sexual vigour and reproduction. Nothing is more frightening to a Muluyia than the thought of dying without any heirs. To be forgotten in the spirit world without having a sacrifice made for one is to be avoided. The worst possible thing that could happen is to perish without the possibility of having any grandchildren called by one's name since there is no issue. Or as an informant succinctly put it, "A man who has no children is more extinct when he dies than the man who has children."[37]

Abnormal spirit presence is accepted by the community in the early stages of circumcision rituals in spite of the fact that it is dangerous because neither an individual nor a new generation can hope to raise up progeny without the aid of ancestors. As they make pleas for many children, elders focus attention of ancestors on initiates via the sacrifices.[38] The initiates are projected into an undefined state where white clay is applied as purification for spirit contact. Reservations about ancestral contact occur only when an initiate begins to bleed

to death. The elders may begin to berate or "curse" paternal ancestors.[39] The spirits may be asked to leave if they cannot control anti-social beings in their midst. If death threatens an initiate, unknown and/or malevolent spirits (often ancestors having anti-social reputations) may be exorcised. The most radical exorcism, as shown on page 96 of this thesis, involves digging up the bones of the suspected ancestor and burning them to facilitate the annihilation of that uncooperative being.

In normal circumstances, i. e., when bleeding does not bring a crisis and there is no sense of emergency, the initiates are entrusted to the spirits. In that contact the initiates are divorced from mores. In seclusion they are forced to lap water like animals. They lunge for meat. Some are forced to eat from a trough like livestock. They act like creatures with a low level of intelligence who cannot speak and have to "greet" with a stick, grunt or throw rocks to express themselves. They wander through the bush rather than following paths like cultivated beings. The crude construction of seclusion huts "reflects their level of intelligence,"[40] i. e., tutors force mammalian behaviour.

However, the erruption of activities akin to possession at initiation is not totally uncontrolled. Even in the initial, radical outburst, tutors monitor activities. Clan leaders and the circumciser expect their ancient formulas to keep spirits from being able to debilitate the vulnerable initiates. They "tame" the monster and "control" the leopard of circumcision. Their use of medicines to regulate both healing process and rituals indicates faith in ability to monitor contact with spirits to beneficial ends.

One medicine used when the circumcision/seclusion environment appears too "spirit charged" for initiates' benefit is chyme (buse or obuse). The offal from the stomach of a sacrificial animal "cools" or regulates spirit participation.[41] It is liberally applied: when an initiate's father has died before the boy's operation,[42] if one's foreskin does not cover the penis and it is believed to be already operated upon by the ancestors or by God,[43] and upon all the initiates remaining in a seclusion hut after one of them has died from the operation.[44] The use of chyme is believed to draw Were khomuwani omuvumbi (the Bukusu deity of fertility) in one's behalf.[45]

Chyme functions in this context because it is under the control of benevolent ancestral spirits. When a diviner uses the words "mung'one munda" over a sacrifice, the desire for khuong'ona is to transform, to make the chyme into something else. It is transmuted by sacrifice into a regulating medicine.

> The ancestors are invited to eat the meat and to lick the blood, which is the human part of the transaction. In return, the ancestors have to transform the chyme of the stomach, so that it can be ritually efficacious.[46]

Buse causes evil spirits (binanyenche) and evil deities (Were vimbi)--those who have no secure place in the realm of the dead--to be driven away. The dead (bamakombe) or ancestral spirits (misambwa) can eat the chyme and are expected to bring a successful circumcision because of their understanding of the community's aspirations. They should promote fertility in the initiates so future sacrifices can be performed. Liberal application of chyme guarantees attachment of benevolent spirits. Fear of malevolent spirit presence obligates manipulative

activities. Both rituals and dances are directed at cultivating benevolent ancestral involvement with initiates so their fertility will be enhanced.[47]

Bukusu--Invoking Spirits in Promotion of Fecundity: Spirits of the dead (bamakombe) who include unknown spirits are believed to accompany benevolent ancestors (misambwa) to the circumcision. Duplicity and diversionary tactics are practiced to separate them from benign spirits who can bless the ceremonies. Chyme, because it is energized by benevolent ancestors present in the compound (litala) of the family when it is applied, is believed to drive evil ones out.[48] The mudding also confuses destructive spirits as to the individual identity of candidates. Malignant spirits who might frustrate reproduction are frightened away by the black regalia worn by the maternal aunt who meets candidates just before they enter the compound.[49] Wandering in the bush after leaving seclusion is also considered necessary lest one be possessed because he is lazy. The chitiang'i root on which candidates stand is also believed to negate powers of spirits addicted to ill-will toward the initiate or his father.[50]

Immediately after the operation men shout, "Do you see, the circumciser has spoiled you?" They use the word khuhonge (to spoil), which is also used of deflowering a virgin.[51] This may suggest that circumcision is an attempt to "assert the male role in reproduction by producing bleeding comparable to menstrual bleeding"[52] and thus to point to enhancing fecundity in the operation itself.

The desire for offspring is expressed when leaders say, "The initiates, when they marry, may they have children." This is done when the circumciser spits blessings on the initiates, when names are confirmed and at the Khulicha ceremony. A chief purpose of the latter is to assure wealth and a prosperous homestead—necessary components to having progeny.[53]

Kakamega--Invoking Spirits in Promotion of Fecundity: The reason pulling up the lulundu bush is an ordeal to Kakamega candidates who follow that tradition is because the action affects whether spirits directly related to fertility will help him. It is like the bad omen of stumbling by the woman who anoints candidates for a boy to fail to jerk the bush from the ground in a single effort. The way an action is conducted is affective in channeling fertility to an initiate.

The phenomenon mentioned earlier of unrestrained excess occurs in the first stages of circumcision/seclusion. Songs about sexual relations with beasts and unions which are contrary to the social order are part of the boast/taunt songs of initiates in the evening walks.[54] Waste in banana groves as a seclusion hut is being prepared is attributed to ritual joy and the presence of spirits who are attracted by the ceremonies. The apex of demonstrating the "power of tradition" comes during the feast of the fourth month. Under the influence of dances, drumming with poles and joint songs of initiates and elders who participate in close proximity, a bull slowly expires.[55] His death demonstrates communal power so dynamic that death can occur. The presence of ancestral spirits peaks at that ceremony. Excepting the sudden

reversal on the day of blasphemy,[56] excesses taper off as societal control begins to be anticipated in the latter stages of seclusion.

When coming out of seclusion, a son is addressed. "I praise you for having conquered seclusion life. You did no wrong. May you have a prosperous home. You must bear children like yourself."

Tiriki--Invoking Spirits in Promotion of Fecundity: At the sacrifices before initiation blood is spread on candidates chests so they can plant their seed in the coming generation.[57] While healing a few days after the operation, they are taken to the river at night. No reason is given for such an unusual time such as to remain hidden or to protect themselves while vulnerable. Rather the initiates who are stiff from the operation are told, "You are going to play sex with a Nandi (Kalenjin) woman." They are forced to splash their haunches in the water in a remote pool in imitation of coitus. This dramatizes that sex is a positive thing just as water cools their wounds.[58]

The Tiriki praise fertility by making the son of the man from the oldest age-class the leader (jivoledi) and the son of his nearest follower the last candidate (dawedi) of the circumcision. These expressions of esteem for old men who are still fertile are hoped to animate initiates to be prolific since they have seen such a person is honoured.[59] The ceremony where the clitoridectimized woman claims to urinate on the initiates also has fertility motifs. Pouring sheep's urine on them combines

the productivity of that kind of an animal with the potential for fertility a circumcised woman has over the non-circumcised.

The way the Bamwayi ceremony of blessing is conducted also affects the potential of initiates. If a woman stumbles, she is replaced since nothing can be allowed which is an omen of failure for initiates who must be able to reproduce well.

The Abaluyia of Kakamega and Bungoma Districts believe that "circumcision aids fertility."[60] As they dance before operations, men rhythmically point their walking sticks upward to puncture the heavens. The sticks appear to be phallic symbols in the dance. Some knives observed by the writer are also phallic replicas.[61] Trilling by women at various stages of the rites occurs because each symbolizes a victory in transition leading to emergence of men who will be productive.

The Abaluyia are not preoccupied with individual stamina or potency as are sister peoples who have extensive personal trials and ordeals of physiological nature.[62] Rather the group of initiates are reduced to a mammalian level in being exposed to spirits while at the same time being protected by medicines and ceremonies which cool and channel that power. A well-conducted circumcision is expected to increase fertility and initiates are sent out by elders who say, "Buli mundu areye na musambwa gwegwe" (Every man has his own ancestral spirit, i. e., one's relation to the spirit world will determine his fecundity and progress).[63]

Assumptions related to this theme are subtlely conveyed to initiates. The formulas used by men who in community regulate

which spirits are allowed proximity to the initiates suggest the delicacy involved in promoting fecundity. Success is assured only if initiates cooperate with tutors. If communion is properly sought with benevolent ancestors by offering white sacrifices, fertility is enhanced by infusion of their powers.[64]

C. SUPPRESSING WITCHCRAFT

While one aspect of Abaluyia cultural configurations involves channeling power from the spirit world into productive structures, an antithesis considers the negative influence of anti-social persons having mystical powers. The social milieu of the Abaluyia includes the conviction that witches (avalogi) can throttle[65] benefits from their rightful recipients. Witches are seen as inheriting their evil dispositions from similar ancestors.[66] Bad blood will slowly exert itself and make one evil against his will. The mystical powers are believed so strong that simply casting an evil eye--especially on vulnerable initiates--can cause death or arrested development.[67]

Witches are dangerous because they are clansmen--and thus have to be treated with care--who are feared more than external enemies of the clan. A common song of circumcision is, "Mbiti ye wenyu ukhulitsanga ni rekhera," (The hyena of your country can eat you and leave you," i. e., one's clansmen are dangerous [they can eat one] and require exhortation to "leave" one while he has some semblance of existence.)[68]

Extensive safeguards are taken against that possibility. Not only should one guard against angering a witch, he should watch lest by oversight something he touches might be used.

> Chief Sudi of South Kitosh, when he had to pay a formal visit to Chief Amutala of North Kitosh in 1934, insisted on spending the night in an improvised grass hut which he made his own retainers put up for him. Next morning before his departure, he ordered the hut to be burnt down for fear that someone might 'take' his footprints or some object that he had touched and perform bad magic over it.[69]

Witches may be tempted into an irrational destructive frenzy during circumcision because of the presence of evil spirits who are probably ancestors. So although a witch does not need to get paraphernalia from a victim to destroy him--the exigency of the moment warrants extreme protection against tempting such a depraved being from snatching some small thing and using it to kill for the sheer joy of destruction. This is why initiates are placed in seclusion huts, they wear hoods or masks and are monitored by trusted relatives. Witches operate within the context of society--in fact they most often come from within the circle of one's associates. So initiates are shut off and have curses performed over them which hopefully turn spells of those with evil natures back on the incantor.

Bukusu--Suppressing Witchcraft: At the last meal of childhood, the mother or a trusted aunt eats all the food given to candidates lest someone get a morsel and retard the progress of the candidates.[70] Blood of women entering their monthly cycle is also feared (perhaps sympathetically causing excess bleeding) since it is foreign to rites performed for paternal spirit participation and thus an unknown which might bewitch. Only a trusted sister is allowed near candidates as they are mudded. She is required to throw the mud remaining from the ceremony back into the river so no one can capture the boy's spirit and cause

madness by getting a bit of the mud spread on them. A trusted man supervises returning the mud to the river.

An initiate's mother is restricted from observing his operation. Modesty and dramatizing separation from female influences may be part of the rationale behind the exclusion, but the position she takes as the boy is circumcised also points to aiding him overcome evil influences. The mother stays in her house and sits rigidly with her legs stretched our straight in front of her. She clasps the centre pole of the house firmly "so her son will stand firmly at the cutting." A wife is often berated as the purveyor of weakness that can cause the boy to lose face before the community because of bad blood from maternal ancestors.[71]

Protection and hiding the blood, foreskin and mud from the top of initiates' heads keeps anyone from being able to attack an initiate after getting some of his personal things at a moment of high vulnerability.

Among some clans meat from animals killed is distributed by members of the initiate's family to clansmen and friends attending the ceremonies. He climbs on the roof and begins throwing small pieces of the meet to the struggling crowd. The distribution serves a very pragmatic purpose. It is believed capable of turning any evil contemplated back on the practitioner who eats the gift.[72]

The destruction of property used in the seclusion hut is believed necessary to protect against anti-social people.

Kakamega--Suppressing Witchcraft: The ritual by the old clansman who spits millet flour (bwanga) on candidates before

circumcision says, "Omundu omuhenza tsimoni ndamanu atse agwe muyalube," (Whoever looks at you with bad eyes, may he perish in a deep sea.)[73] A second cursing occurs in the common (luyia) where the operations are performed. The circumciser sings that any spell put on an initiate by an evil person using the blood or foreskins should return to the anti-social person. Essentially the same thing happens on the day of payment (lisavitsa).[74] The context is positive at that time since the community shares a meal, and it is commonly "known" that a witch cannot eat with the community and successfully perform. Opportunities are even given for confession of witchcraft, although it is doubtful in the writer's opinion that anyone would be willing to confess witchcraft in such a context.

Anything which has been used personally by initiates is burned when they leave the seclusion hut. This keeps full entrance into manhood from being frustrated.

Tiriki--Suppressing Witchcraft: The initiates (avafulu) are protected from evil people by: being shielded from women and those uninitiated in the Tiriki custom where control is exerted by oathing, having all blood carefully removed from the circumcision site, guarding against a candidate's isenende vines and other personal property from falling into enemies' hands, and as with other circumcision traditions, destroying utensils and personal property used in the seclusion hut.

The anti-social are openly cursed by the elders of circumcision. Revealers of tribal secrets and those acting selfishly are considered witches who bring death to the clan. On a number

of occasions they are wished speedy oblivion in the bottom of Lake Sango (Victoria) with other undesirables and homeless spirits.[75]

An unstated curse is put on initiates themselves when they are taught the use of herbs. They are told that the elders of the oldest age-class know how to kill without using apparatus. Initiates are warned that the power lodged among these elders can be used legitimately in a curse only when leading withdrawal from a clan rebel. Warnings are given that anyone who engages a curse privately becomes sterile by being exposed to supra-normal powers--so the young must avoid cursing. In order that the secrets surrounding Tiriki circumcision remain intact, the initiates are oathed before the foreskin of the jivoledi (first boy to be circumcised in their hut) [See page 130 of this thesis] just before leaving circumcision. They agree that anyone telling the secrets be eaten by spirits or become a madman or fool.[76]

Being throttled by the anti-social is more than a possibility in Abaluyia thinking. Witchcraft's real, malignant power parallels the positive influence of benevolent ancestors. It is not a thing of philosophy as interpreters see it as:

> . . .an arm of law and politics, as a stimulus to economic distribution, as a cause for rupturing social relations which have become too cramping, or as a socially tolerable outlet for aggression, anxiety or emotional purging and display.[77]

Any of these suggestions may result from the belief in anti-social forces in society, but they are not primary in the minds of the Abaluyia. Depraved clansmen are feared by them for one thing--their power to destroy life.

Many circumcision rites, because of these fears, take on the aura of a community ordeal. While revival of ancestral powers is being promoted, everyone is especially sensitive to any abnormal, furtive acts or events that point to witchcraft. The community supports the public curses of the circumcisers and elders because a need is felt for protection.

Kluckhohn says, "Ceremonies act as a cure, not only for physical illness, but also for antisocial tendencies."[78] The upshot of the anti-witchcraft rites is a dramatized kind of character moulding. Cultural ideals of communal concerns over individual desires and of openness to the covert or secret are made clear. The dynamics involved in rejection are painfully enacted before initiates. Thus cultural limits on individual manipulation are imposed in no uncertain terms on the whole community. Accepted limits on strife are also conveyed. Intolerable conflict situations also are swiftly resolved.

Opportunities are given for witches to confess, but not much faith is evident that they can really change. Rather warnings and curses--both corporate and individual--are repeatedly invoked in hopes of frightening the witch whose blood is probably overheated because of the presence of anti-social spirits who were his or her ancestors. The best protection devised against these evil persons is having extravagant communal feasts--which are in a sense ordeals--and secluding the initiates so access is restricted. Much of the secrecy and taboo in circumcision is intended to counter the hungry witch who might go on rampage and kill many initiates.

D. MUTING INDIVIDUALISM WITH THREATS OF ANNIHILATION

Witchcraft is not the only thing feared by the Abaluyia. They also have a paradoxical need for balancing individual desire to become a clan hero with belief that greater ultimate good comes when peers make steady corporate progress. Conformity at a level sustained by clansmen is applauded. Ambitious individuals are considered dangerous because their actions are an attack on that ideal.

Any person who feels a clansman's success threatens "norms" may become a client of the ombila (magician/sorcerer). Before he can get medicines (olunyasi/amasambu), he is asked, "Do you want medicine to protect yourself or those which kill a person?"[79] If the claimant can establish a case where the peer's attainment is believed to hurt him, medicine for destruction will be sold. Abaluyia society countenances this because of an egalitarian ideal opposed to individualism.

Anyone who indulges in too much initiative, who becomes wealthy or has singular success--like having twins--is suspected of surpassing the orally canonized norm. He automatically becomes a target of sorcery (ovuvila). Medicines generally used for such things as lifting curses, effecting reconciliation, for counter-magic or to assure the purchaser's prosperity[80] may be procured by one who feels slighted by a rich man's success. A "good" sorcerer refuses to aid a complaintant whose "cause is not right, i. e., legitimate"[81] but it must be remembered that in this mind-set "right" is determined by the assumption that much individual aspiration runs counter to the needs of society.

It should be obvious that sorcery is not looked upon as a crime like witchcraft in this context. Rather the magic is supposedly used--or at least predominantly so--for legitimate ends. In a context where individualism is shunned, the use of sorcery against an aspirant is expected.[82]

An occasion where this view of need for balanced outlets is tried is in respect to the birth of twins (amakhwana). It is commonly believed among Abaluyia that if the first birth of a couple is twins, then death is inevitable. It is abnormal and one of the babies must die or a parent of the infant's sex will expire. In order to lessen the possibility, both paternal and maternal relatives stage a mock battle at the home. An animal is sacrificed and taboos are put on the mother whose blood is believed hot. It is hoped that ritualized conflict might draw ancestral spirits and a feast might dissuade neighbours jealous of the family's success at reproduction.

Belief about debilitative competition is seen when a man has sexual relations with his brother's wife and then visits the "offended" brother while he is sick. Death is believed inevitable in the weakened man's family. Either he or some of his children will begin dying of Ishira (the sickness of competition).[84] This is not witchcraft but a struggle for supremacy between the blood of combatants.[85] The same is expected when a father visits seclusion after being intimate with his wife. An initiate, generally his son, must die because the man's shadow is stronger than theirs. This is a primary reason for taboo on sexual relations during the seclusion period.[86]

While many of the taboos of this theme are similar to one in popular vogue--the Limited Amount of Good--[87] there are important differences. Both shun individual competition. Both make allowance for one injured by a peer's success to put a spell on him. Both are concerned about limited resources. But in Limited Good theory rationing is required because of a shortage from the source. That is not the focus in Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation. One getting poorer harvests than a neighbour might say, "Omundu yatoola omukundu kwanje," (Someone has picked up the fertility of my garden),[88] because he believes evil magic has been used to make his land less productive. The only time there is documentation that a drain on corporate ancestral resources may occur is at circumcision when a father and his agemates (babakoki) have to be passive. They are inert "because there is a strain. If they are consciously inert when the boys are being joined to the community, the boys then have more power."[89]

More commonly jealousy in villages over distribution of emotional and physical resources ensures that successful men will be attacked.[90] The greatest source of malignant competition exists among patrisibs.[91] Allowing sorcery threats to be a deterrent to rivalry confuses neighbouring peoples who fail to detect the subtle positive mechanism and say, "The Abaluyia are always bewitching themselves."[92] At the root there is an egalitarian vein echoed in the strange saying, "We want all people to be poor, may the rich become poor."[93]

Bukusu--Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation: The struggle between generations is given ritual outlet by circumcision. Quarrels and fighting over whether a boy should be circumcised shows the ambivalence in the father's mind. He wants to resist giving quarter which will speed the son's accumulation of resources[94] while wanting at the same time the honours of joining elders with circumcised sons. Some fathers agree only after a physical contest makes it apparent that the son is stronger than the parent.

As stated earlier, the father and age-mates are passive as a boy is circumcised. Otherwise rivalry between the groups may repress the emergence of the adjacent generation.

The babakoki demand gifts of a man whose son has been circumcised. They belittle the age-mate calling him omusinde (uncircumcised). They feel justified in humbling a peer who is experiencing success.[95] Any sudden death of an initiate whose father has not given gifts to the babakoki is attributed to their righteous anger which kills (barafu bwe bakoki bwamuira).[96] Their curse is not considered witchcraft but a legitimate means of curbing a peer who refused their demands.

The ceremonies of Khulicha are introduced with warnings that a disobedient initiate will be eaten by the leopard. There are extensive taboos during the ceremonies to teach the dangers of seeking success outside guidelines set down by the community.[97]

Kakamega--Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation: Crudeness promoted in drawing spirits to enhance fecundity is offset by forcing marked stages of development on initiates.

They are frustrated by having food offered, then withdrawn three times in the great feast in the fourth month.[98] The same happens when they are offered the straw from the beer pot on leaving seclusion. It is withdrawn, then offered the second time.[99] Gradualism is involved in bringing the initiates out of the seclusion area twice and when the woman anointing initiates feigns the action twice before applying butter to their heads, then trilling.[100]

From the time initiates enter the seclusion hut to leaving it and going to drink from beer-pots with elders, they do everything in the order of their circumcisions. The stability promoted by introducing hierarchy among the "beasts of circumcision"[101] is not to develop a class system. Its intention is to mould corporate bodies which will progressively move up a ladder of privilege that is supported by new circumcision groups. This guarantees that the aggressive will not overcome the weak on leaving seclusion. In order to reinforce the point, surly or disobedient initiates are beaten for infractions of the minute rules of seclusion.

Tiriki--Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation: The system of following hierarchy according to order of operations even in the seclusion hut and of observing multitudes of taboos disciplined initiates to act in concord.

In a curious twist, circumcision itself has become the tool of Tiriki who want to protect privilege. They blunt Maragoli immigrants politically by using the local circumcision secrets to establish seniority. Curses are put on those who might tell the Tiriki secrets.

The Tiriki have a humorous story illustrating why it is clever to keep the circumcision secret. They foiled an attempt of the Nandi to get the secret of the death/rebirth ceremony at the beer of the back and in the process insulated their position politically.

> The elders of this tribe finally told it to them as they told it to the women here and the Nandis believed them. So when the next time came for them to have their circumcision rites, sure enough they struck all their boys on the back of the neck as the Tirikis had said and many of them really died. The next morning they came to the Tiriki elders and said, "What shall we do, because we have done just as you said but our boys did not come back to life, they are bleeding at the nose and mouth." The Tirikis told them that they did not yet know about certain medicines used to help their boys come back to life and that they, the Tirikis, could not reveal it to another tribe. This, they said, happened years ago.[102]

The Tiriki view their circumcision unique and remain aloof in their traditions so there will be no competition[103] or negating of spiritual powers from different traditions.

This theme as a complement to that of "witchcraft" deals with rivalry and the "fissiparous tendency"[104] which is endemic in Abaluyia society. Not only is there fear of being throttled by the anti-social, a man can be crowded from his rightful share of power (obunyali) by stronger/aggressive brothers. The natural tendency for spoils to fall to the strong is moderated by promoting hierarchy. Clansmen believe that allowing a father and son to be from adjacent age-classes juxtaposes them in a struggle which debilitates their powers.[105] The imposition of gradualism and the discipline of hierarchy on initiates prescribes rationing of resources. Threatening sorcery and giving precedence to the old assures a stable social order.

The discipline involved is predicated on respecting the "system" which one hopes eventually will give him a rightful share in precious commodities.

The fact that fathers remain inactive during their sons' circumcision/seclusion suggests that even sexual vigour is considered a limited resource. If such is the case, it is true only when a corporate transfer of power such as that involved in "graduating" a new age-class taxes fertility. In the main the Abaluyia do not believe that the number of heirs or potential wives are in short supply.[106]

The attempts at imposing "gradualism" are positive responses to the viewed shortage of resources. Hierarchy and ordeals guard against illegitimate assumption of power. Taboos in the seclusion period foster awareness of the delicate balance in society.

E. SEEKING EXTENSION OF ASSOCIATION

Ideally one who has property (miando) does not use it selfishly but shares it with friends, neighbours and his family. Hospitality is a chief virtue and the man called omwingisi we bageni (hospitable to strangers) has a high place in the eyes of all.[107] Colson notes that uncertainties brought on by wars, famines and sickness in traditional societies leads them to put more faith in the social structure than in accumulating physical goods. They:

> . . .have been concerned to invest their capital, land and cattle and their personal time in building up the system of mutual obligations incorporated in their social systems; and, in times of emergency they play upon this system and prefer to invest their wealth in maintaining it.[108]

A primary reason for seeking to extend association is that a tolerable existence after death is not axiomatic with the Abaluyia. Rather, it depends upon the dignity with which a funeral is conducted, with the number of sacrifices made for one, and the memorial services of relatives and friends. A barren person (omukumba, shitsali) is "lost" in the sense that he is soon forgotten among the living. As suggested earlier, he "is more extinct when he dies than the man who has children."[109] Practically he is annihilated since he quickly moves from remembered ancestor to the sphere of unknown spirits. To offset this one must have as many people as possible obligated to him so he will be fed by their remembrances to the spirits.

So success parallels the number of relationships one can cement beyond those of his clan. Circumcision helps launch him into that wider society. He needs to hold feasts, beer parties and to be hospitable so obligations will be created. In order to do all these, he has to generate wealth. He gets the seeds at circumcision for doing so when presented with calves and being given permission to marry--since wives guarantee children and hoes which can be used to become wealthy.

The fragmentary/informal nature of Abaluyia political systems also make this effort to cement friendships important since one has to call on these people for help when under attack.

Bukusu--Extension of Association: Before a son can be circumcised, many activities have to be carried out to normalize relations between his father and the mother's clan. The bride

price, the chinyinja ceremony of early marriage and the sise ceremony confirming the mother's maturity have to be completed.

As the day of the operation nears, a cow is killed for the boy at a maternal uncle's home. It usually comes from the uncle who married with cattle given for the mother's bride price. Assigned portions are brought to the father's compound to cement relations between the two clans. The action is also an acknowledgement of closure of relations since the gift from the maternal uncle also symbolizes the boy's leaving his mother's clan to be "born" into the paternal clan.

The aunt who runs out of the compound to meet candidates as they return from the river has three symbols intended to intensify potential for material success.[110] The cooking stick placed in the mouth, the piece of meat in her pierced ear and the small piece of gourd (lisali) are symbols of sympathetic magic. She hopes the initiates will pass through circumcision and have their own cooking pots, to be able to share meat with others (even a shank piece obligates another), and to have beer pots which need frequent testing with a gourd.

One's rank in age-classes and circumcision into the bakoki relationship helps a boy break beyond the clan/marriage web of relations. A boy's potential for becoming an omukasa (clan leader) is enhanced by a lavish ceremony. If his father can take care of more than two or three initiates, a relationship develops which vaults the son of such a prosperous man ahead of others and heightens his prospects of becoming a clan leader in his old age.[111]

Giving a calf to the initiate also projects him since cattle are a medium of exchange for marriage and getting wealth. One can extend obligations to others by farming his cattle out to them and taking some of their animals. Not only does this guard against one's wealth being wiped out by disease or theft, it increases social intercourse which is a prerequisite of success.

The secret society of Khulicha obviously unites those who enter it and sets them apart from all other Bukusu--even the circumcised. They can fine and intimidate the uninitiated and can participate in exclusive beer parties.

Kakamega--Extension of Association: Initiates of each seclusion feel a comradeship that supersedes their clan. They receive a name which memorializes some important aspect of their seclusion. There is also a special relationship between two boys who mud each other with white clay and become virongo. The virongo are similar to Bukusu bakoki and are expected to respect taboos toward each other and help each other through life.

Tutors of initiates become ritual grandfathers, and sisters who bring food to the seclusion hut are called mothers. Initiates and elders show solidarity by sharing food at the great feast of the fourth month and on the day of cleansing.

If the initiate's father is paid-up on his dowry, a maternal uncle brings gifts to the boy on his coming out of seclusion. A cow called ing'ombe ye shikama (the cow linking the clans) or a goat called imbuli yo lusala (the goat of the

stick), i. e., an euphemism of the walking stick carried by the initiate during seclusion, is given to the initiate to commemorate union of the clans.

Tiriki--Extension of Association: The initiation of circumcision makes a Tiriki a member of the elite group which defends their territory. Without being circumcised, he is still a child.

The special relationship between those circumcised the same year is impressed on initiates. As bakoji, they cannot fight each other or marry each other's daughters but protect each other like brothers. Obviously this relationship extends solidarity far beyond the clan.

In the anointing ceremony, Bamwayi, the initiate becomes related to the Terik sponsor and treats her with honours reserved for a mother. When circumcision is over, the "brides" visit relatives and neighbours to receive gifts which are a tribute that the community is now obligated to them as warriors.

As mentioned earlier, circumcision joins a boy in a blood covenant with the living dead of the clan.[112] Communal meals[113] extend association to a supra-clan level. While eating together, the larger community implicitly acknowledges its reciprocating social/political duties. Sharing food has a ceremonial aspect.

> The ritual sharing of food is. . .not the act of a specific unit of the tribe, whether of family, age-group or village, but a kind of mystic and religious communion of the society at large.[114]

The resources expended in circumcision/seclusion feasts are not for prestige alone, nor can they be viewed as "harmless waste" involved in "ritual extravagance."[115] Rather, the cost is considered by an aspiring Abaluyia family as a good investment. Others become obligated by the hospitality. Spells of enemies are turned away from the family and return to the person who has eaten from their bounty.[116]

Unlike societies whose ritual extravagance is invested in other-worldly concerns like monasteries,[117] or are efforts to gain status by wholesale destruction of property,[118] the Abaluyia invest in the social milieu. They believe that individual and collective immortality are closely related to the ongoing of the social system.

So while there is uncertainty as to what kind of future existence there is beyond death, life is approached lustily among the Abaluyia since there is certainty of spiritual oblivion for one who does not extend associations. The present is not considered transitory and inconsequential. They live life fully and seek to enhance their status by extending relations as far afield as possible. Then perhaps, just perhaps, a legend will arise about one after death which places him among the tribal heroes who live forever in the people's remembrances.

F. PROMOTING COURAGE AND HUMAN DIGNITY

The Abaluyia are proud of their ability to exist in the face of adversaries on every side. Military and cultural advancements of other peoples have been blunted by the elusive viability that keeps the people Abaluyia.

Defense is required for continued existence. Thus initiates are taught to be hard and stoic in the face of disaster or pain. The death of one of them is almost ignored. No mourning is allowed in either the seclusion hut or the home of the deceased. An initiate:

> . . .is passive, even captive throughout the initiation, someone to whom things are done, whose own personal characteristics are irrelevant; someone who has to be taught the appropriate responses and has to internalize them in the absence of any institutionalized powers to force compliance.[119]

Initiates are encouraged to be warlike so they can defend the clan/tribe on coming out. They are taught to use the implements of war. In a song of closing they sing that initiation has "made us strong like an axe (haywa)."[120]

Bukusu--Courage and Human Dignity: In spite of the fact that little boys are warned, "Kane uingira impalu kane ubone," (If you enter initiation, then you will see),[121] they like to follow candidates and pretend they are also preparing for circumcision. It is obvious that pain is involved--the whole community witnesses the operations. But the excitement of dancing with sharp pieces of iron and swaggering about draws little boys who aspire to be warriors. Fathers occasionally become excited enough by the pregnancy of the moment to give sons cowrie shell caps to wear at circumcision in anticipation of projection to the point of being called bakasa (clan leaders).

The pain of circumcision is expected to harden prospective warriors. In Sioyayo the boys sing, "The candidate who endures the cutting of his penis can resist the attack of the leopard. Dear, don't shame me before the audience. May the fearful go to Luo land (where there is no circumcision and no discipline)."

At the operation itself, candidates are expected to stand with dignity. They should not move or cry out when cut. The bravery and self-control a young man shows at that moment probably has more to do with his status than any other moment in his life. A woman trills when the operation is completed, just as is done when a battle is won.

In the Khulicha ceremonies, initiates are tried by being stung with nettles, being pinched, cut on the arm and having to touch a living snake. They are expected to be more manly than the uninitiated because of the experience. They are thus superior warriors to those who have not gone through the ordeal.[122]

On coming out the "new and soft ones" walk home "brilliantly" singing, "Father, you would blame me, today I am in new clothes." He is welcomed as a warrior and given a spear and a shield plus instructions befitting a self-respecting man.

Kakamega--Courage and Human Dignity: When operated upon, a candidate knows he is showing the right spirit if he can contain himself until the circumciser finishes his job and then hit the circumciser to show disdain of pain. Those who cannot do so voluntarily are forced to give him a token blow.

The last two months of seclusion include mock battles, practice in deployment and aggressive dancing. Uncircumcised boys are beaten and made to bring eggs to the seclusion hut. The initiates are encouraged to be independent when they sing, "Ndeigo akhasia khusuma akimo omwana," (In the day of hunger it is necessary for even children to be self-sufficient).[123]

Tiriki--Courage and Human Dignity: Tiriki candidates are taught self-control in the Imoni (eye) ceremony on the night

before the operation. They are also told the small flap left on the underside of the penis is a sort of Tiriki badge. They are instructed, "We Tiriki are superior. Don't listen to other peoples. We alone have the secrets."

That which is intrinsically Tiriki is guarded in seclusion by a linguistic taboo. An initiate was beaten for using Swahili, English or especially Luo words (Luo is hated because they do not circumcise), when these languages began to intrude. They represented threats from other cultures on the respected traditions of the Tiriki and were resisted.[124]

At the beer of the back initiates display strength and try to break their headdresses. They go on all excursions from the seclusion hut with the jivoledi and dawedi first and last respectively in their line since these are the traditional battle positions given to men of greatest strength and courage. Strong defenders on the flanks keep the company from being overrun.[125]

Raiding huts of other seclusion groups is encouraged to prepare initiates for future cattle raids against the Nandi and Luo. Pilfering crops and stealing chickens is allowed by clansmen since it enhances the future capacity of initiates to provide by raiding.

The mock raid to enemy territory includes pretending to have burned an enemy camp and having killed a man. Those completing a seclusion are thus considered men and they swagger about expecting gifts and respect since they are now clan protectors.

It is commonly believed that men get strength (obunyali) from the ordeal of circumcision itself. The word is derived from khunyala, to be able, and refers to either physical strength or force of personality, wisdom and power. Scuffling and taunting before an operation which successfully raises the ire of candidates is an aid in moulding them into good warriors. If they become angry (lirima) and aggressive because of the exhortations of the dance, they will be better warriors.[126]

The Tiriki encourage their initiates to threaten anyone who passes in front of them. The Bukusu teach their sons to swagger after circumcision. The Maragoli praise those who can strike the target in mock battles. Other Kakamega peoples have a special day when initiates spear the gate as they leave the seclusion hut. Dignity is related to the political and military might of warriors coming from seclusion, so war-like qualities are promoted.

G. CONCLUSION: CHAPTER FOUR

It is apparent that the Abaluyia in following their circumcision rituals accept a universe which the theorist Levi-Strauss describes as having spectrums which cannot be detected by normal, rational procedures.[127] Thus the cultural themes described in this chapter are linked with less than precise symbols which convey the perception of mystery. Archaic language, the leopard, the monster and covert ceremonies where participants are sworn to secrecy show the investment of ritual symbols in mystical powers.

The six themes extracted in this chapter give pointed--though incomplete--reasons for the practice of circumcision rituals by the Abaluyia under study. The themes are heuristic--they aid discovery of such complex things as world view and the power grid. In fact, the six themes fit like beads on a string in explaining how an initiate is interfaced with six classes of creatures as he goes through the circumcision rituals and how power is interpreted in each context (see Figure Number 5).

This figure indicates that themes are deeply imbedded in the infrastructure of society. Power generated is manipulated so an additional teir can be added in the social structure. It is cemented to that order with all the inequalities and paradoxes that the culture exhibits. Conflict is recognized as a reality and even a necessary element in the composite. Conflict and negative themes do not disrupt society, rather they

have a place in the evolution of lineages and villages.[128] An Abaluyia proverb has it, "Mupana nowashio kho muhilili sanie ninaye," (If you fight with your relatives, you will be close to them).[129]

FIGURE NUMBER 5

RELATION OF CULTURAL THEMES WITH CLASSES WITHIN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

CULTURAL THEME	INVOLVING INTERACTION OF INITIATES WITH WHAT CLASS?
Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation	Ancestral Spirits
Invoking Spirits in Promotion of Fecundity	Benevolent Spirits among Ancestors.[130]
Suppressing Witchcraft	Witches
Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation	Peers/ Sorcerers
Seeking Extension of Association	Pan-Clan Associates
Promoting Courage and Human Dignity	Enemies

The attempt to channel ritual efficacy into use of the social structure introduces the second major emphasis in circumcision ceremonies, namely enculturation. Disjunctive qualities such as acting like a "low-level humanoid" and receiving instructions on moral structures or seeking the presence of

ancestral spirits while warning them to go away if disturbances emerge are resolved in light of this "dualism" inhering in circumcision rituals. There is constant movement from "dynamism" to enculturation. Thus at one moment the symbol is related to mystery, ancestral spirits and the archaic. In the next breath it is highly moralistic.

Circumcision is a teaching design. The laws and mores required for community harmony are enculturated. The symbols of instruction are clearly articulated so those who are fused to a higher level in the social structure will not usurp their new position. The instructional signs, that is devices for transmission of ancient lore, are valued for implanting the societies' world view on community and especially initiates.

This chapter points to a quite unified traditional Abaluyia world view. The ancestral spirits are paramount in the sacrificial system of all three traditions. The moral instructions given in circumcision/seclusion of the three are much more homogeneous than individual symbols or actions in each tradition. The six cultural themes extracted from the traditional circumcision rituals are diffused in all three of the traditions. (It appears that only in the Kakamega type where symbols relating to "Extension of Association" and "Promoting Courage and Human Dignity" are weak that their universality is limited). Thus it would appear in character to speak of these people's common value system as reflected in the cultural themes extracted from circumcision rituals. The Abaluyia have not only a common linguistic base; their world view is also marked by unity.

The enculturative design dominates Abaluyia circumcision rituals to the point that they do not exhibit the baroque elaborations of other ritual systems. No evidence is found of a pervasive colour symbolism such as Turner describes among the Ndembu of Zambia,[131] or of a permeating right/left hand classification such as is known in other East African peoples.[132] Sacrifices are offered in Abaluyia ceremonies, not because the animals fitly represent the half-wild state of initiates and are intermediaries between culture (man) and the unorganized state of the bush (wilderness),[133] but because the ancestral spirits are believed to like meat. Once they are drawn to a memorial, they participate in community and help order it. In short, Abaluyia circumcision ceremonies are dynamic enculturative devices.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

[1]See definition of terms in chapter one for a fuller explanation of these methods of interpretation, p. 19.

[2]Interview with Harron Wahongu (Bungoma, Bokoli Loc.), Sept. 11, 1978, # 23, also page 6 of this thesis.

[3]Gunter Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 365.

[4]Max G. Gluckman, Custom and Conflict in Africa (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), p. 87.

[5]Peter Rigby, "The Symbolic Role of Cattle in Gogo Ritual," The Translation of Culture, ed. T. O. Beidelman (London: Tavistock 1971), p. 285.

[6]Marja-Liisa Swantz, Ritual and Symbol (Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksells, 1970), pp. 17, 156.

[7]Interview with Erastor Muganda (Kakamega, Isukha Loc.), October 8, 1978, # 343.

[8]John Mbiti, "The Heritage of Traditional Religions," Kenya Churches Handbook, eds. David Barrett and others (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973), p. 292, suggested this term as one of the readers of this thesis.

[9]See page 112 for a warning that the monster of circumcision will eat those who do not confess everything.

[10]See the description of Tiriki confession in chapter 3 for the fuller context of this act, pp. 112-113.

[11]See the Khulicha ceremonies in Bukusu circumcision for a fuller description in chapter 3 pp. 84-89.

[12]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwe (Tiriki Loc.), July 25, 1975.

[13]See Gunter Wagner, "The Abaluyia of Kavirondo," African Worlds, ed. Daryll Forde (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 43, for a fuller discussion of gradualism in traditional religion.

[14]W. H. Jones, "Behind my Bishop Through Masai Land to Kavirondo," London: Church Missionary Archives, Accession No. 267, Unofficial Papers, October 21, 1885.

[15]The same is true among Sabaot neighbours of the Bukusu on Mount Elgon, see Timonah M. K. Mosii, "Sabaot Traditional Religion," Nairobi: Department of Religious Studies, Kenyatta College, 1970, p. 6, (Mimeographed).

[16]Recorded in chapter 3 under Bukusu type circumcision, pp. 71-72. The ceremony ridicules those who are fearful and encourages them to go to Luo land.

[17]Jones, op. cit., (see footnote no. 14). Modern informants are almost evenly divided as to whether the trembling was caused by excitement or spirit possession.

[18]Observed in East Bukusu and Bokoli circumcisions in August, 1972.

[19]See Bengt G. M. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets of South Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 198, for a description of "spirit forces" being raised by dancing.

[20]Interview with Administrative Police, Bokoli Chief's Centre, Nov. 1, 1973.

[21]Kimilili interview, June 26, 1973, also interview with Silifano Oponyo, Imanyulia, Marama Loc.), Oct. 22, 1974.

[22]Interviews conducted on behalf of writer by Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Aug. 18, 1973.

[23]Kimilili interview, June 26, 1973.

[24]Interview with Peter Wanyama (Ligulu, Ndivisi Loc.), April 30, 1973, who says the fact that the Khulicha ceremonies are conducted near the river and a divinity of the Northern Abaluyia called Wele Malava is believed to reside in the river are indications of the importance of the spirit cult in the ceremonies. A number of stories have been collected by the writer about some clansman seeing a divinity at the river and experiencing either profound blessing or disappearing.

[25]See a description in chapter 3, p. 92.

[26]See chapter 3, p. 103.

[27]Parallels exist in Victor W. Turner, The Ritual Process (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 104, and Harry Sawyerr, Creative Evangelism (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968), p. 25, for refusing sexual relations during planting season so powers will not be dispersed or adulterated when fertility is needed.

[28]See Mosii, op. cit., p. 12, and Robert E. Daniels, "By Rites a Man," (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1970), p. 126. Charles Lumbate of Tiriki Loc. says Isenende is part of the traditional Nandi shrine. In these languages korosek and sinendoik, seretiondet are used. (Interview on July 25, 1975).

[29]Interview with Jeremiah Doya (Tiriki Loc.), July 25, 1975.

[30]See chapter 3 p.131.

[31]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), July 25, 1975.

[32]Victor Turner, "Myth and Symbol," in International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (London: MacMillan and Free Press, 1968), p. 576.

[33]Sawyerr, op. cit., p. 24.

[34]Minute 46, Kavirondo Local Native Council (May 15, 1933), p. 345, Minute Book II, gives a brief description of the Abaluyia practice of burning unwanted ancestors. This volume is in the council chamber of Kakamega County Council.

[35]Interview with Daudi Maina (E'matia, Butsotso Loc.), Oct. 13, 1974. See Rigby, op. cit., p. 268, for a parallel.

[36]"Africa's Golden Harvests," October 1907, Vol. 3, No. 2, Itokozo, Transvall, Newsletter of the South Africa Compounds and Interior Mission which started its station at Kima (Bunyore) in 1905. Available at Witwaterstrand University, Johannesburg, South Africa.

[37]Angela Molnos, "Traditional Beliefs and Customs Relevant to Fertility and its Limitations in East Africa," Discussion Paper no. 27, University of Nairobi, Institute of African Studies, (October 1971), p. 3.

[38]See page 69 of this thesis for the sacrificial context and page 79 for the circumciser's supplication for fertility. Also interview with Joel Litu (N. Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973, mentions appeals by ancestors for fertility when sacrifices are made.

[39]Donald R. Jacobs, "The Cultural Themes and Puberty Rites of the Akamba," (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, New York University, 1961), p. 132, also Meshaka Temba interview (Isukha), Aug. 23, 1973.

[40]Interview with Charles Lumbata Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), July 25, 1975.

[41]The positional meaning of chyme is that of a depressant when spirits overwhelm. It is spread on married couples endangered by being too closely related. The couple is told, "The sheep has been killed so your children may live," Gunter Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya, op. cit., p. 385. It is also applied to people in evening sacrifices to drive out unwanted spirits (Interview with Adanus Musotso, [Tiriki Loc.], June 7, 1973) and on a warrior who has killed an enemy and does not want the spirit of the deceased to follow him home and throttle him in sleep.

[42]Interview with Hesbon Onyango (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), Feb. 9, 1974.

[43]Jan Jacob de Wolf, "Religious Innovation and Social Change Among the Bukusu," (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1971), pp. 62, 70.

[44]Kimilili interview, June 26, 1973.

[45]Interview with Likata Muliru and Asukanwa Andati (Butsotso Loc.), May 10, 1974.

[46]De Wolf, op. cit., p. 39. [47]Sundkler, op. cit., p. 9.

[48]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Nov. 1, 1973.

[49]Interview conducted on behalf of writer by Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Aug. 18, 1973.

[50]Refer to footnote number 57 in chapter 3, page 140.

[51]Interview with Administrative Police, Bokoli Centre, Nov. 1, 1973.

[52]J. S. La Fontaine, "The Social Organization of the Gisu of Uganda with Special Reference to their Initiation Ceremonies," (unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1957), p. 49. None of my interviews confirmed this theory, thus calling it into question.

[53]Interview with Reuben Mukhwana (Kimilili Loc.), Aug. 18, 1972.

[54]Interview with Meshaka Temba (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 23, 1973, Luyia text in original notes.

[55]Described in chapter 3, page 101.

[56]See chapter 3 Kakamega type circumcision for a description of the day of blasphemy, p. 102.

[57]John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1970), p. 122.

[58]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), July 22, 1975.

[59]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), July 22, 1975.

[60]Letter from Assistant Chief William Sitati to D. O., Kakamega, (22nd March, 1951), ADM File 8/3, "Customs, Circumcision," Archives, D. C.'s Office, Kakamega.

[61]Observed in Wanga circumcision, August. 1972.

[62]Philip Mayer, "Gusii Initiation Ceremonies," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 83, 1 (January-June), 1953, p. 21. Pegs had to be pulled from the ground very near a fire, string from a boy is tied to the finger and jerked until it cuts the flesh, the novice is beaten with nettle plants. [Robert Levine who has done more recent research among the Gusii says none of these elements remain in circumcision rites]. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 135ff., indicates Akamba initiates had to prove sexual prowess even when exhausted.

[63]Interview with Lazaro Afwayi Kobwa (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 25, 1973, also Yona Ologoba (N. Maragoli Loc.), Aug. 28, 1973.

[64]Interview at E'matia (Butsotso Loc.), Sept. 9, 1973.

[65]Monica Wilson, Good Company (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 94, applied the word "throttling" for belief in witchcraft among the Nyunyukusu. The concept is similar for the Abaluyia.

[66]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), May 22, 1973.

[67]Interview on "Cultural Themes" with Harron Wahengu, (Bungoma, Bokoli Loc.), Sept. 11, 1978, # 77 documents a case where a fellow was believed bewitched in seclusion and remained like a small boy.

[68]Interview with William Serenge (Vihiga, South Maragoli Loc.), Aug. 3, 1973.

[69]Wagner, Bantu of Western Kenya, op. cit., p. 185.

[70]Description in chapter 3, page 70.

[71]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), May 22, 1973.

[72]John Roscoe, The Bagesu (Cambridge: University Press, 1924), p. 186, has an example of this practice of the Bantu-speakers across the border in Uganda. It is also required of clansmen at death/funerary rituals where a common meal is a sort of ordeal which will rebound on anyone who has committed witchcraft against the deceased/victim. See also "Cultural Themes" interviews with Daudi Omwera (Butsotso, Kakamega District), Sept. 29, 1978, # 239-242 and Clement Waswa, (Bungoma, E. Bukusu Loc.), Sept. 19, 1978, # 100-103 for confirmation among Abaluyia informants who saw this when they were young--around 1920.

[73]Interview with Joseph Shuma (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 27, 1973.

[74]See chapter 3 Kakamega type circumcision, p. 99.

[75]Cursing evil spirits also occurred at the new year ceremonials and when the bones of unwanted ancestors were burned and wished a speedy demise at the bottom of the lake as they were thrown into the river.

[76]The "oath" implied in showing the foreskin in closing activities of seclusion is also administered on the day of the operation and at the beer of the fourth month, see page 122.

[77]Miriam Ann Adeney, "What is 'Natural' About Witchcraft and Sorcery?" Missiology, Vol. II, No. 3, July 1974, p. 378.

[78]Clyde Kluckhohn, "Myth and Rituals: A General Theory," Reader in Comparative Religion, eds. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 157.

[79]Wagner, Bantu of Western Kenya, op. cit., p. 123, and "Cultural Theme" interview, Zedekia Muzungu (Tiriki), Oct. 7, 1978.

[80]Wagner, Ibid., p. 139.

[81]Interview, Joseph Masipo, (E. Bukusu), Sept. 20, 78, #180.

[82]Interview on "Cultural Themes" with Zedekia Muzungu, (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 7, 1978, # 489-91.

[83]Kisumu interview with Kigudwa (N. Maragoli Loc.), Atema (Idakho Loc.), and Juma (N. Kabras Loc.), Sept. 9, 1973.

[84]Interview at E'matia (Butsotso Loc.), Sept. 9, 1973, p. 281 in my field notes.

[85]Interview with Harson Asa Kuya (Imanyulia, Kisa Loc.), Sept. 20, 1974.

[86]See chapter 3 Tiriki type circumcision, p. 123.

[87]George M. Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good," American Anthropologist, 67: 1965, p. 296.

[88]Interview with Samuel Shiranda (Kisa Loc.), Aug. 26, 1972.

[89]Interview on "Cultural Themes" with Clement Waswa (Bungoma, E. Bukusu Loc.), Sept. 19, 1978, # 115.

[90]John S. Mbiti, Ibid., p. 209.

[91]Joan la Fontaine, "Witchcraft in Bugisu," Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa, eds. John Middleton and E. H. Winter (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 205-207.

[92]Interview with Tony Barclay who is doing research at Mumias from Columbia University. Barclay first lived near Kapsabet with the Nandi. The Abaluyia themselves believe that protective medicine 'planted' in one's compound, called obuvira or omushingo, returns to the person who procured it if there is no spell or other medicine nearby which is attacking the person. If unchallenged the obuvira returns to the owner and kills him. Interview with Fanuel Liaka (Musanda, S. Wanga Loc.), Nov. 20, 1974.

[93]Interview at Nambilima (North Kabras Loc.), Sept. 16, 1973.

[94]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Sept. 25, 1974.

[95]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Sept. 25, 1974.

[96]La Fontaine, "The Social Organization," op. cit., p. 240, documents a case of such a death in 1954 among the Bagisu. The babakoki who were felt to have brought death to the initiate were not blamed, rather the father was berated.

[97]See chapter 3, Bukusu type circumcision, p. 86.

[98]Discussed in chapter 3, p. 102.

[99]See chapter 3 Kakamega type ceremony, p. 105.

[100]See chapter 3 Kakamega type ceremony, p. 104.

[101]See chapter 3 Kakamega tradition, p. 105.

[102]Letter to Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, "Secret Circumcision of the Tiriki Tribe," Archives, Friends United Mission, Richmond, Indiana.

[103]Interview at E'matia (Butsotso Loc.), Sept. 9, 1973.

[104]Hilda Kuper, "The Swazi Reaction to Missions," African Studies, Vol. 5, No. 3, Sept. 1946, p. 177.

[105]Walter H. Sangree, Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 77.

[106]Interview with Luka Chekata (Nambilima, N. Kabras Loc.), Jan. 22, 1974. Women are not considered 'limited resources' by the Abaluyia since they believe more girls than boys are born. There is no jealousy among young men for an old man to take wives from girls of their age-group since women are quite often a decade younger than their husbands, and the fecundity of the Abaluyia provides for an abundance of marriageable girls.

[107]Interview with Luka Chekata (Nambilima, N. Kabras Loc.), Jan. 22, 1974.

[108]Elizabeth Colson, "Native Culture and Social Patterns in Contemporary Africa," Africa Today, ed. G. Grove Haines (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1955), p. 79.

[109]Molnos, op. cit., p. 3.

[110]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Aug. 18, 1973.

[111]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Aug. 18, 1973.

[112]Sawyerr, op. cit., p. 90, also mentions this motif.

[113]In Tiriki there are communal meals at the beer of the back and at coming out. Among the Bukusu food is shared on the day of circumcision and just before coming out. In the Kakamega type ceremonies the community shared a meal in the fourth month of the seclusion period.

[114]Audrey Richards, Hunger and Work (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1932), p. 180.

[115]Foster, op. cit., p. 305.

[116]Interview in Bokoli Chief's Centre, Nov. 1, 1973, "medicine" of a person who eats your food is powerless over you. Also interview with Lazaro Afwayi (Isukha Loc.), Aug. 25, 1973.

[117]Medford Spiro, "Buddhism and Economic Action in Burma," American Anthropologist, 68, 1163-73.

[118]Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture (New York: Mentor Books, 1968). p. 178.

[119]Daniels, op. cit., p. 166.

[120]Interview with Charles Lumbate Sagwa (Tiriki Loc.), July 22, 1975.

[121]Interview at Bokoli Chief's Centre, Nov. 1, 1973.

[122]See chapter 3 Bukusu type circumcision, p. 86, also interview with Luka Chekata (N. Kabras Loc.), Jan 22, 1974.

[123]Interview with William Mtiva (Vihiga, S. Maragoli Loc.), Aug. 3, 1973.

[124]Interview with Ernest Matahana (Tiriki Loc.), Jan. 30, 1974.

[125]Interview with Jeremiah Doya (Tiriki Loc.), July 25, 1974, also see Daniels, op. cit., p. 132, for a parallel in the war parties among the Kalenjin.

[126]Interview with Luka Chekata (Nambilima, North Kabras Loc.), Jan 22, 1974.

[127]Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, trans. C. Jacobson (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1963), pp. 81-82.

[128]Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya, op. cit., p. 70, "Chief Mumia assured me that such accusations raised on the occasion of the funeral ceremonies have always been the chief cause for the splitting up of clans."

[129]Kisumu interview, Sept, 3, 1975, Kigudwa (North Maragoli Loc.), Atema (Idakho Loc.), and Juma (N. Kabras Loc.).

[130]Informants do not have a clear view of the composition of the spirit world. Ancestors interact with the spectrum of spirit beings, many of whom, because they are unknown, are frightening.

[131]Victor Turner, The Forest of Symbols (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 59ff.

[132]T. O. Beidelman, "Right and Left Hand Among the Kaguru: A Note on Symbolic Classification," Africa, Vol. XXXI, 1961, p. 250.

[133]Peter Rigby, op. cit., p. 284.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHANGE IN CIRCUMCISION RITUALS SINCE 1910 A. D.

The Abaluyia have been consciously absorbing alien influences into their society since the early part of this century. With Colonial "pacification," mission competition for adherents and a growing educational system, their traditions have come under pressure. An illustration of the impact of these influences is the fact that many of the traditional circumcision symbols described in chapter 3 of this study no longer exist. An effort is made in this chapter to include historical and statistical data to document the differing responses of adherents of Bukusu, Kakamega and Tiriki circumcisions to these challenges to their traditions.

A. MISSIONARIES AND CIRCUMCISION RITUALS

The strongest attack on circumcision rituals came from missionaries who felt they were uncivilized, unhygenic and morally corrupting. From the time they first set up stations, the missionaries began exerting influence on both Christians and non-Christians in respect to their traditions. The proximity of missions and the administration made it possible for them to force initial changes such as making the circumciser (omukebi) use a different blade for each operation even when the older generation had no intention of following the strangers' religion.[1] Missionaries who had students invited Dr. Bond from Kaimosi to their stations for operations there. They were

dubbed the "housed circumcisions" or "lubao" (the operation on "the board') by traditionalists who lived nearby.[2] Their only affinity with traditional symbolism was in the operation itself where the prepuce was removed. No dancing or traditions were allowed in these operations.[3]

Because they felt traditional circumcision was "not compatible with religion,"[4] missionaries who had no medical training were not above circumcising boys so their followers would not come under the influence of elders. A Quaker missionary Chilson, for example, circumcised 47 boys at Malava (Kabras, Kakamega District) in 1924.[5] Others felt frustrated when trying to modify the rites. They had reservations about many things in the circumcision ceremonies.

> In some countries like Kitosh (now called Bukusu) sacrifices made a part of it and the custom of going naked, the custom of remaining in the circumcision hut for the period of about three months without attending to their religious duties, all these cannot possibly be allowed.[6]

Resistance among the Abaluyia to challenges of their ways stiffened in most quarters and leaders threatened to boycott missions which attacked their customs. When tribesmen were supported by the administration,[7] missions retrenched by depending on two years of instruction at mission stations to detribalize their disciples.[8] Soon the logistics of such a disruption forced dropping the plan since plagues endangered such concentrations of people and the burden of feeding adherents was too heavy for the missions.[9] The missions then reverted to the earlier practice of building "Christian villages" or "lines" where adherents could live separately from their "pagan" clansmen.

> These centres consisted of a school building, which was also used for church services, and straight lines of houses in which converts were supposed to live. . . Heathen practices such as drinking beer, dancing and playing music were not tolerated. Residents were punished for not being properly dressed and for not keeping their homes spotlessly clean. The actual number of people living in such Christian villages must have been between twenty and thirty young men, many of whom were married.[10]

Christian villages were part of attempts by the missions to circumvent administrative and traditional authority. They had their own punishment as the following missionary claim indicates:

> Christian barazas in full swing--authority of barazas being recognized by wayward Christians. Summonses issued by baraza Christians are obeyed and decisions abided by.[11]

The government considered mission "administration" unauthorized competition as an Annual Report in 1927 indicates:

> A more difficult position is arising owing to the appointment by certain mission societies of Head Christians and Traveling Inspectors! The normal duties of these Natives is to look after the interests of the Christian natives in this area. Unfortunately these Natives are inclined to consider themselves as the executive authority and considerable friction arise between them and baraza elders owing to their attempting to regulate marriage, dowries, etc., at their own barazas.[12]

This problem came to the attention of the Local Native Council which had been set up to function under the supervision of the Colonial Administration. The District Commissioner at Kakamega was relieved when, in 1933, the council unanimously recommended that development of further "mission lines" or Christian villages be prohibited among the Abaluyia and quickly approved the resolution.[13] While this move did not resolve tensions among missions, nationals and administration, it was symbolic in pitting the Abaluyia and the government against the policies missions had been following.

The only avenue left to missionaries who did not want the mushrooming members of their churches to follow the old ways was to encourage their being circumcised in a hospital. But problems of transportation and finances made it impossible for many to get to hospitals. Further, hospitals were not geared to handle such loads. As the chart in figure 6 indicates, one of the most widely used hospitals; Kaimosi,[14] had highs of 747 (in 1938) and 985 (in 1946) circumcisions while the number of students and converts far outpaced these figures. This indicates that the kind of antiseptic operation which missionaries wanted was not possible for most Abaluyia youth.

FIGURE NUMBER 6

CIRCUMCISIONS RECORDED AT KAIMOSI HOSPITAL 1929-1969
(Excepting 1948-1964, 1966)

Year	Number Circum-cised	Year	Number Circum-cised	Year	Number Circum-cised
1929	218	1937	183	1945	79
1930	383	1938	747	1946	985
1931	308	1939	110	1947	27
1932	294	1940	100	1948	52
1933	71	1941	75	1965	2
1934	55	1942	132	1967	6
1935	20	1943	87	1968	207
1936	104	1944	302	1969	10

A trickle of converts continued requesting letters from missionaries to go to government hospitals for circumcision.[15] But in the main, missionaries abandoned the problem after exhorting adherents to refuse anti-Christian aspects of rituals. The shelving of earlier imperialistic goals is more akin to the traditions of earlier Christianity as the following exerpt from the Epistle of Diognetus, c. 150 A. D. indicates:

> For Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or custom. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric manner of life. . .They follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily life, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their own commonwealth.[16]

But it must be observed that the impetus for indigenization did not come from enlightened minds. There were no strong advocates in Western Kenya, as there have been in other African countries, of making a Christian functional substitute for questionable practices. Rather, missionaries reconciled themselves to the inevitable since their supervision among thousands of followers was necessarily superficial. They continued to feel students undergoing traditional circumcision were alienated with "countenance black and sin hardened."[17] The reservations and paternalism inhering in many expatriates as to whether Kenyans could become genuinely Christian without being detribalized was thinly veiled in their attitude toward circumcision rituals.

The results of what might be called the "missionary era" from 1902 until 1927[18] was that the rituals of circumcision had not been deeply affected by the frontal attacks by expatriates.

Rather, a number of indirect agents more proximate to the life of Christians in their villages brought about change in the ritual system.

B. FACTORS AFFECTING MODIFICATION OF CIRCUMCISION RITUALS

Essentially, Christians who were displeased with traditional circumcision were left to their own devices when facing questionable rituals. Some evaded confrontation by taking their sons to mission hospitals for operations. But others began exerting internal pressure on the social structure to bring about modification of the traditional ceremonies.

At first they could do little more than keep their sons at home during convalescence so they would not receive any instruction in seclusion. But a number of factors not directly related to circumcision began to weaken the ritual system. They were: (1) the campaigns to remove stones of the traditional "family" shrines; (2) the revival movements starting from 1927; and (3) increasing awareness of the advantages of Western-type education.

The "Anti-Shrine" Campaigns: Zealous converts of Protestant missions began to remove the stones of ancestral shrines from their homes from 1912.[19] Radiating out from mission centres at Kaimosi, Luranda, Vihiga, Maseno, Kima and Butere, an ever widening number of family and sub-clan heads began abandoning the shrines (lusambwa). Missionaries like Arthur Chilson and Henry Reece from the Friends Africa Industrial Mission led their converts to renounce the old system.[20] Special services were held at the homes of those willing to dig up the stones of the

ancestral shrine and to dispose of them.[21] The mission influenced anti-shrine movement has been found so strong that it is doubtful if there is a single shrine in 1975 in the area encompassed by Kakamega, Kaimosi, Butere and Maseno. Thus missions had their influence. Their attack on the relation of communities with the ancestors was singularly successful and affected the way circumcision rituals are conducted by undermining a major element in the traditional value system.

In northern Kakamega District shrines are still found at a few old men's homes. The writer saw one in the home of a prominent ex-chief near Mumias in 1972. They are also rebuilt when clan-leaders are inaugurated in North Kabras. In Bungoma District, the shrines, called namwima, are numerous. They are often rebuilt when a boy is being circumcised and justified as part of the traditions of the people, even by Christians.

The Revivals: The second factor which aided Christians in modifying the rituals of circumcision came from the revivals beginning in 1927 from Kaimosi. Representatives of the 31,000 adherents from the Friends Mission reported in the 1930's[22] were encouraged to be baptized in the Holy Spirit by Arthur Chilson.[23] Students took his exhortations to confess sin in preparation for the Holy Spirit baptism[24] further than mission authorities approved. Night meetings began to be held. Soon glossolalia (tongues speaking), extensive confessions, dancing and ecstatic excitement was found in a movement ironically founded by quietists.

A rupture occurred between revivalists and those in the mainline Quaker tradition. Schools of independent churchmen

retaining a charismatic-confessional theology began exerting their influence in local communities. The "independent" churchmen believed missionaries encouraged their being "beaten by mission Christians,"[25] so the charismatics were forced to seek their own identity in the milieu of traditional culture--the villages of their clansmen. There they applied a puritanical scrutiny to every aspect of life in order to authenticate their separate existence.

First, they concluded that the Christianity introduced by missionaries was deficient. They noted the "good news" had been preached without a strong call to repentance--thus not reducing the level of sinfulness among converts. They concluded that many people had more sin as church members than they did before becoming Christians.[26]

They also scrutinized tribal rituals. While adherents of mission churches had furtively continued most traditional activities like beer festivals, the revivalists made them taboo.[27] Community tolerance for coarseness and talk about sexual subjects for those in seclusion after circumcision was opposed by the "saved ones" who sponsored their own closely supervised seclusion overseen by trusted churchmen. There the risque songs of traditional seclusion were replaced by the teaching and composition of Christian hymns.[28]

Western Education: The third factor which forced traditional circumcision to change was Western education. Progressive parents soon demanded that their sons not miss six months of school due to seclusion. So the ceremonies were shortened, first to three months, then later to fit into the one month break

between school terms in either August or December when food is plentiful. The process of this change is indicated from the sample[29] conducted among those following the "Kakamega type" ceremonies. During the decade of 1920-29, 91.5 % of those questioned claimed to have spent 2.0 or more months in seclusion. In comparison, it is asserted that 71.43 % of the boys in the sample who had been circumcised in 1970 and 1972 spent less than 1.9 months in seclusion. It is the writer's experience that a seclusion hut built as such, by the 1970's, where initiates live separately from their parents and the uninitiated is virtually non-existent with those of the Kakamega type circumcision. Those who claim to remain in seclusion are often found at school or herding cattle, but because they have not gone through the ceremony of purification (l'savitsa)[30] are still called initiates.

The trend indicated for those of the Kakamega type circumcision is true also for those of the Tiriki and Bukusu types. In Tiriki, seclusion huts exist, but even with "traditionalists," they are used for only five weeks because boys must get back to the classroom. Bukusu initiates often say they still have a three month seclusion, but a great majority of them return to school after one month and drop all traditional activities with the exception of the coming out ceremonies three months later during the next school holiday.

Obviously compacting seclusion into a short period leaves a mark on circumcision rituals. Many activities are dropped because there is a lack of time for them. This factor is as much a problem for adamant traditionalists as it is for Christians.

The effects of undermining the role of ancestral spirits, the revivals and restrictions forced by the school calendar have been felt by all Abaluyia. The degree of change which has occurred in the three circumcision traditions is set forth in section "D" of this chapter where results from a "randomized survey" (a sample giving 205 individual responses to circumcision) is given.

C. UNIQUE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE TIRIKI CIRCUMCISION

The one area where there has been open conflict between Christian converts and traditionalists is in Tiriki and Nyang'ori Locations. Antecedents of the problem date back to the report received in 1921 by missionaries on the secret circumcision tradition of the Tiriki.[31] The fact that Tiriki Christians were encouraged to openly confess the secrets caused Tiriki/Nyang'ori communities to divide into two camps, the traditionalists and the "avakikeke Tiriki" (half-Tiriki, the Christians). The lines of schism were defined by the District Commissioner in 1927 in authorizing two kinds of ceremonies after peace was threatened by fighting between the two parties.[32] He gave a dictum that traditionalists could follow their ceremonies while Christians were to have operations meeting the approval of the mission or to take their sons for hospital operations. Neither side was to question the other's rights in the matter.[33]

Missions had sponsored their own circumcisions and encouraged boys to go to the hospital for their operations. But they could not adequately serve the whole community. The new

administrator at Nyang'ori Mission in 1930, Mr. Keller, stopped the only mission operation among those of the Tiriki/Nyang'ori tradition after over twelve hundred boys had been circumcised at that station between 1911 and 1929.[34]

This left "Tiriki" Christians to their own designs. For a number of years they were inactive. But by 1935 a Christian ceremony was being carried out in the bush in Central Tiriki. It reportedly had the approval of Mr. Ford at Kaimosi mission. The first "Christian" ceremony in Nyang'ori was held near the mission under the supervision of Thomas Idiang'o and Saul Chabuga.[35] The traditionalists ridiculed the Christians for not having a circumcision forest and thus allowing women and children to observe their activities in imitation of the Maragoli pattern.

The defection of a traditional circumcision leader (omunene we idumi) in central Tiriki at this time helped give the Christians an authentic head for their ceremonies. The Friends revival which spawned Independent churches along with competition from the Salvation Army brought many Tiriki into the Christian camp. Among these was Charles Lumbate, the son of Sagwa, the circumcision chief.

> Sagwa intended that his son Charles Lumbede (sic), eventually should succeed him as initiation chief. Lumbede, however, joined the Salvation Army in the late 1930's. The Tiriki initiation elders informed Sagwa that because of this they would not allow Lumbede to inherit his position. Sagwa was so upset at the elders refusal to sponsor his son that he himself joined the Salvation Army, and in 1940 he became initiation chief of the Tiriki Christians.[36]

Sagwa aided the cause of the Christian camp because he had authentic status even in the eyes of traditionalists. By 1944 Christians were claiming more initiates in their seclusion than the traditionalists,[37] although it is doubtful if they had more in Nyang'ori before 1947 and in Tiriki before 1958.[38] (See Figure Number 7). But Christians did have enough political influence to force the baraza of Nyang'ori Location to give them one of the traditional circumcision groves (Asievera forest) in 1948. This made it possible for them to have their own "secret" ceremony like the forest ritual of the traditionalists.[39]

Hard feelings between the parties often result in sons of Christians being kidnapped and circumcised "traditionally;" in fights and even in burning each other's seclusion huts to show disdain.[40] To minimize these tensions, the administration has tightened licensing policies for circumcision. In 1960 chiefs of the two Locations also arranged for discussion between the antagonists. They proposed having a Tiriki operation but different seclusions according to the philosophy of the initiate's parents. Some Christians had already expressed reservations about such an arrangement,[41] but it was rejected when the traditional leader said that "blood must flow before the ceremony" meaning the goat which is killed in the forest is essential to the Tiriki custom.[42] An impasse resulted with Christians refusing the act as a "sacrifice" and continuing on their own way with a demythologized circumcision which strips almost every traditional symbol except Imoni (the ceremony of the eye) the night before the operation.[43]

FIGURE NUMBER 7

STATISTICS ON CHRISTIAN CIRCUMCISIONS[44]
IN TIRIKI AND NYANG'ORI LOCATIONS 1938-1972

Year	Nyang'ori Area	Tiriki Area
1938	113	22
1939	118	
1943	314	
1944		37
1947	700	63
1948	319	
1952	254	96
1956	1,100	
1958	865	1,151
1960	176	
1964	1,807	1,517
1968	225	
1970		2,317
1972	242	

In 1964 two incidents forced the chiefs of Nyang'ori and Tiriki Locations to lay down stiffer licensing procedures for circumcision. First, two stock theft policemen in plain clothes were accosted by initiates. The men refused to move out of the initiates' way since they were circumcised Nandi. Suspicion was high and a crowd quickly formed which started stoning the policemen. One of them drew a gun and shot two initiates. The crowd then grabbed the policeman and he was later found shot and trampled in a swamp. His companion escaped. Three tutors were charged with manslaughter in the incident.

In the same year a group leaving the forest blocked the Kisumu--Kakamega highway. A Maragoli man drove through the party of initiates and broke the leg of one boy who later died. The man returned with the police who were sympathetic since they found an unauthorized roadblock. The man was later charged and convicted of careless driving.[45]

Since that time chiefs have special meetings in which leaders of the traditional and Christian parties are brought together and made to guarantee the behaviour of their followers. Since 1964 incidents between the circumcision parties in the locations have been minor.

Another development in 1964 resulted in the formation of another Christian sect. An elder of the African Divine Church from North Tiriki "reverted," in the opinion of churchmen, to the traditional circumcision. Moses Busolo took a number of Christian boys to the traditional ceremony. Busolo was excommunicated by his denomination because the boys confessed before the monster of circumcision, they were seen naked, they made a mask in seclusion, they wore skin garments, they learned the use of traditional herbs, and they were anointed in the Bamwayi ceremony.[46] Shortly afterwards Busolo started a new denomination, African Sinai Church, which is more lenient toward traditions. It is the only sect known originating from the Southern Abaluyia which openly promotes the full spectrum of traditional activities while claiming to be Christian at the same time. As its name indicates, the church relies heavily on the Old Testament.

D. GENERAL DATA ON CHANGE IN THREE KINDS OF CIRCUMCISION RITUALS 1911-1972

In early 1974 a sample was made involving one hundred twenty interviews. Each person tested was asked seventeen questions[47] about whether specific activities were performed at his own circumcision/seclusion. Then the informants were asked to answer the same questions in reference to the circumcision, if it had occurred, of a son recently operated upon. This sample netted 205 personal descriptions of involvement in circumcision. Figure Number 8 gives a breakdown of the number of circumcision descriptions obtained in this "randomized quota" in each decade from 1911 through 1972.

FIGURE NUMBER 8

NUMBER OF CIRCUMCISIONS DESCRIBED BY DECADE OR PART OF DECADE IN ABALUYIA SAMPLE OF 1974

Decade	1911 -19	1920 -29	1930 -39	1940 -49	1950 -59	1960 69	1970 -72	Not Cir.	Total
No.	10	21	36	39	24	28	46	1	205

A Randomized Survey: The graphs which follow in this chapter are compiled from the sample or "randomized quota" drawn from Graduated Personal Tax Registers and landowners lists (the one having the largest number of people listed in each sample area was made the sample frame). Three prospective interview lists were extracted from these sample frames by using random number charts for selecting names.

Percentage data (as distinct from raw "unpercentaged" data, i. e., rather than saying five of nine men in the sample used this symbol, the data is presented as 55.55 %) of continued use of specific actions by circumcision type is plotted on these graphs by decade. For example, the graph of Figure Number 12 sets forth the finding that 100 % of the Bukusu circumcised in the 1930's had chyme applied to them in their rituals. This means that 100 % of the Bukusu sample conducted in 1974 who were circumcised between 1930-39 had chyme spread on them. To be precise, all fifteen men from Bukusu interviewed in the sample who had been circumcised between 1930-39 had chyme spread on them.

This figure from the Bukusu sample suggests the probability that nearly 100 % of the Bukusu circumcision candidates had chyme applied to them during the decade of the 1930's. This statement is obviously an inference based on the sample. It is not proved because all Bukusu circumcised in the period have not been interviewed. But it can be stated as a probability in view of results from the sample and thus be defensible as an indicator of Bukusu practice during that decade.

A number of factors make it unwise to consider this data an accurate random survey: (1) inaccuracies in the Graduated Personal Tax Registers which were used for the sample frames; (2) inaccessibility of some men to be interviewed because they are employed outside Western Region though having official residences there; and (3) the small number of interviews conducted (120) in a population of over one million. Because of

these problems, it is presented as a "randomized quota" of forty interviews per circumcision type.

The limiting factors just mentioned plus the fact that different symbols or actions are juxtaposed as "indexes" of individual themes for each of the circumcision types (Bukusu--Kakamega--Tiriki) introduce unknowns into the measurement which keep it from being unequivocal. Thus, minute changes by decade in the sample are not interpreted. [The use of different "indexes" to one theme is illustrated by the way measurements are made in relation to "Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation" (See Figure Number 11). The ceremony of carrying water to the shrine is measured for the Bukusu, a ceremony of blowing white flour on the boy is considered for the Kakamega type and wearing vines related to the shrine are measured for the Tiriki type circumcision]. Use of different actions for each circumcision type introduces obsolescence into the measurement. Thus only when variants of ten percent are registered by decade in the sample of the three circumcision types will interpretation be considered necessary. In essence, there is a "tolerance factor" of plus or minus ten percent (expressed as + or - 10 %) in interpreting the data from this "randomized quota." This means that change will be considered intimated strongly enough only when there is a ten percent increase or a ten percent decrease in statistics of a circumcision type by decade. There is doubt that the sample can be considered more precise than plus or minus ten percent.

So the probability is defended in this study that between 90 % and 100 % of the Bukusu circumcised in the 1930's, to return to the illustration drawn from Figure Number 12, had chyme spread on them in their rituals. (It is obviously not possible to have 100 % to 110% of them using it). All data presented in the graphs taken from the "randomized quota" will adhere to this framework.

The Tentative Nature of Data Presented for the 1970's: Another observation must be registered about the nature of data collected on circumcisions during the 1970's. It is presented, though incomplete for the whole decade, as representing a trend in the graphs which follow. This is done in awareness that further change may modify the projections. The number of descriptions (46, see Figure Number 8) of individual circumcisions for the 1970's is high compared to an average of 29 interviews per decade in the seven decades under consideration. Thus, it is believed the data on the 1970's can be presented tentatively as indicating the direction of change for that time. Care will be taken in analysis since further change could modify the graphs considerably. The lines on the graphs will be left incomplete for the decade of the 1970's to indicate that further data is not available.

General Trends Indicated by Randomized Sample of 1974: The purpose of scrutinizing 205 Abaluyia circumcisions was to measure change from the use of traditional symbols. The study indicates significant differences in the retention of symbols relating to circumcision by "circumcision type," i. e., Bukusu, Kakamega and Tiriki.

A composite graph of measurements relating to five symbols measured in the sample of each circumcision type is given in Figure Number 9 which follows. Data from the five actions in each circumcision tradition is lumped together in this graph for two reasons: (1) it was found that the responses follow an amazingly regular pattern (for confirmation note the similarities of lines in Figures 11-15 by circumcision type), and (2) the need to contrast responses to challenges to traditions by circumcision type. A general analysis of findings from the sample is warranted before considering individual symbols or events in relation to specific cultural themes of the Abaluyia.

The graph in Figure Number 9 traces percentage retention of traditional symbols for those of the Bukusu, the Kakamega and Tiriki traditions by decade. The following questions are the basis of the composite graph.

Bukusu: Did you bring water to the shrine from the river a day or two before your circumcision in the Khuchukila ceremony? Was buse (chyme) spread on you before you were circumcised? Was the blood, foreskin and mud from the top of your head collected from your operation and buried by an old person? After your circumcision did you have food offered to you, then withdrawn a number of times before having it placed in your mouth? Were you circumcised naked before a group?

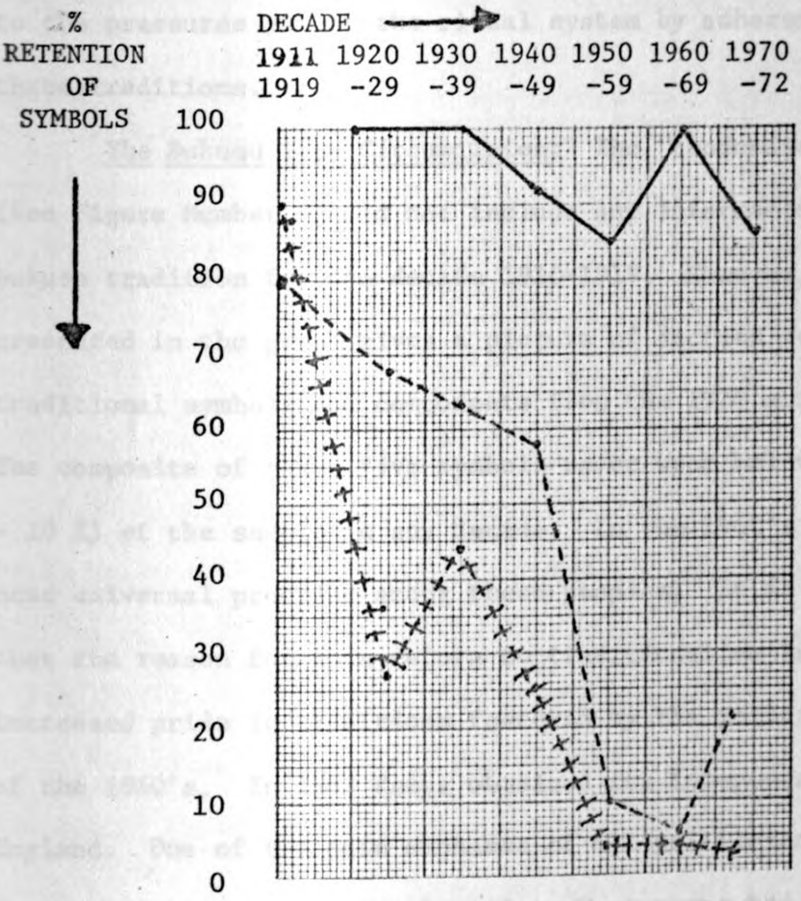
Kakamega: Was white flour (bwanga) blown on your chest before you were circumcised? Were you anointed with milk and honey or butter and simsim seed when coming out of seclusion? Did you wear a mask/hood going to your knees in your seclusion? Were any of the initiates beaten because they were slow or refused to obey when you were circumcised? Did you participate in mock battles with warriors or did you attempt to spear the gate of the seclusion hut as you left it?

Tiriki: Did you wear muhalia/isenende vines when dancing in the evening before your circumcision ceremony? Were you anointed by a circumcised woman in the Bamwayi ceremony with butter and seeds? Did you wear a mask in seclusion? Did you have to go into enemy territory the night before leaving

seclusion and pretend to burn an enemy village? Did you dance naked in front of the community before being circumcised?

FIGURE NUMBER 9

GRAPH COLLATED FROM USE
OF FIVE SYMBOLS OR ACTIONS IN BUKUSU,
KAKAMEGA AND TIRIKI CIRCUMCISION SAMPLES BY DECADE
(Indicating General Trends of
Change in Symbol Use in Abaluyia Circumcision)



Code: Bukusu Type Circumcision ———
Kakamega Type Circumcision + + +
Tiriki Type Circumcision – – – –

The most obvious result drawn from the graph in Figure Number 9 is the difference in retention of traditional symbols between those of the Bukusu tradition and their counterparts in the Southern Abaluyia, the Kakamega and Tiriki systems. While percentage retention of Bukusu initiates has remained in the upper quarter of the register by decade, by the 1950's it had fallen into the lower quarter for both Kakamega and Tiriki candidates. Obviously there have been quite different responses to the pressures put on the ritual system by adherents of the three traditions.

The Bukusu Type Circumcision: The "randomized quota" (See Figure Number 9) did not include any informants from the Bukusu tradition for the decade 1910-1919. However, the data presented in the graph gives a picture of decided retention of traditional symbols and components from the 1920's into the 70's. The composite of these five symbols never went below 85 % (+ or - 10 %) of the sample in any decade. In the 1960's it rose to near universal practice among these peoples. It is suggested that the reason for this return to traditionalism indicates increased pride in traditions fostered by the political events of the 1960's. In 1963 Kenya obtained its independence from England. One of the main emphases of all politicians during that period was to remove the stigma Westerners had put on traditional life. Apparently the call found receptive ears among the Bukusu who still retain traditional events in 86 % (+ or - 10 %) of their circumcisions in the 1970's.

Thus, while there may be individualism among Bukusu peoples,[48] apparently there is also a community mood which is decidedly conservative. Innovations have been absorbed into the traditional framework which has to be valued because of the way it is actively promoted by such a large percentage of the community. Or as a committee sitting at East Bukusu Chief's Centre in 1972 said, "We are opposed to our boys being circumcised in the hospital. . .such a circumciser may be a home Bukusu circumciser if this could be welcomed by our Honourable Government of the Republic of Kenya."[49]

The Kakamega Type Circumcision: Dramatic changes in the ritual system of the peoples near Kakamega are indicated in the graph of Figure Number 9 by the 1940's. The composite of symbols drops from 90 % retention of traditions from 1911 to 15 % retention (+ or - 10 %) among those of the sample in the 1940's. [The drop plotted from 1911 to 1929 (90 % to 27%) appears to have been neutralized to a degree in the next decade for the figure rises to 44 % in the 1930's before declining to a lower level in the 1940's. The reason for a revival of traditionalism in the 1930's is not known. See discussion of Figures 12 and 15].

The major force behind the general decline in traditional practice is apparently the Friends Africa Industrial Mission (Quakers).[50] As indicated in an earlier section of this chapter, the anti-shrine campaigns, the revival movements and the early educational work done by Friends missionaries, primarily in the area of the "Kakamega type" circumcision augured well with the desire of these peoples to modify their ways. Thus the traditional ritual system has floundered.[51]

The Tiriki Type Circumcision: An observation must be made about the relatively low percentage of traditional symbols used (i. e., 69 % in the 1920's) by those of the Tiriki sample in Figure Number 9 even during decades when traditionalism was still strong. The Tiriki have been pressed by large numbers of immigrants from other circumcision traditions for generations. As Figure Number 10 indicates, over 60 % of those questioned in the sample have roots in Tiriki for two or less generations.

FIGURE NUMBER 10

PERCENTAGE OF IMMIGRANTS
TO TIRIKI-NYANG'ORI LOCATIONS BY
GENERATION AS INDICATED IN A SAMPLE OF FORTY MEN

Generation Entering Area	Percent	Number
Paternal ancestors came to area in the previous generation.	22.5	9
Paternal ancestors came to area in the last two generations.	40.0	16
Paternal ancestors came to area three or more generations back.	22.5	9
Non-codable responses	15.0	6

There was a major immigration into Nyang'ori and Tiriki Locations at the turn of the century,[52] and another surge into northern Tiriki in the 1920's under the sponsorship of Chief Amiani of Tiriki.[53] These late arrivals were not zealous to follow the Tiriki system. But they were pressed by the pioneers in the area to buy Tiriki circumcision[54] and to have their sons

circumcised under that tradition. This is probably because the pioneers wanted to keep immigrants under their suzerainty. The influx of immigrants constantly diluted the percentage of men advocating the Tiriki circumcision in every decade. So a double problem of dealing with immigrants and Western influences faced Tiriki wanting to retain their traditions.

Figure Number 9 indicates the conflict over the secrets of the Tiriki type circumcision did not materially affect the tradition until the 1950's. (Earlier reductions were gradualistic and probably reflect the Maragoli influx into the area). Although secrets were revealed to missionaries and respected non-Tiriki church leaders in 1921 in confessions of Christian Tiriki,[55] no appreciable change occurred in the patterns of circumcision for twenty years. The anti-shrine push and revival among other Southern Abaluyia were blunted among the Tiriki who resisted intrusions.

But in the 1950's, significant change occurred. The traditional symbols dropped from being used by over 50 % of those sampled during the 1940's to 10 % (+ or - 10 %) of those circumcised in the fifties. Most informants who speak of earlier Tiriki responses act embarrassed by the conservatism of the early decades of the century. The rigidity of the system which was undergirded by secrets became its downfall. After it was observed that early revealers of secrets did not die after being cursed by elders, skepticism about a system built on deceptions such as pretending to kill initiates in the beer of the back began to grow. Drinking, possible

immorality and teaching about the use of herbs began to be perceived by many Tiriki in the way missionaries had presented them as part of the "futile ways inherited from your fathers."[56]

These doubts about the validity of the traditional system linked with suspicion that conservatism was weakening Tiriki peoples in the competition for modern amenities led to the dramatic change plotted during the 1950's in Figure Number 9. The preparations of the Christian community by having a legitimate circumcision leader and forests where they could hold their own "secret" circumcisions while claiming to be fully Tiriki paid high dividends. Numbers in the Christian tradition swelled during the 1950's (see Figure Number 7) when thousands accepted the rites which had very little traditional symbols remaining.

In the decade of the 1970's there appears to be a revival in the use of traditional symbols of circumcision. Upward of 22 % (+or - 10 %) of these symbols are now being used, often by Christians who consider the original scrutiny too harsh[57] or who feel no need to reconcile traditions with Christianity. Further studies are needed in the future to indicate if there is a genuine revival of traditional ways among the Tiriki or if the phenomenon is temporary.

E. SPECIFIC MEASUREMENTS RELATING TO VIABILITY OF THEMES

Data in this section involves juxtaposing information gathered about individual symbols or events of circumcision/seclusion with the cultural themes to which they relate. The

action of "indexes" of cultural themes is measured by circumcision type (Bukusu--Kakamega--Tiriki) each decade. It is unfortunate that one symbol cannot be used for each cultural theme in all three traditions, but the eclectic nature of Abaluyia culture makes it necessary to view each "circumcision type" separately. Each has its own symbols even though there are indicatations that cultural themes themselves are more universal among the Abaluyia.[58]

Measurements Relating to Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation:[59] Three questions relating to seeking ancestral spirits are presented in the graph in Figure Number 11. These questions measure the degree traditional acts have been retained by decade in three circumcision areas. The questions are:

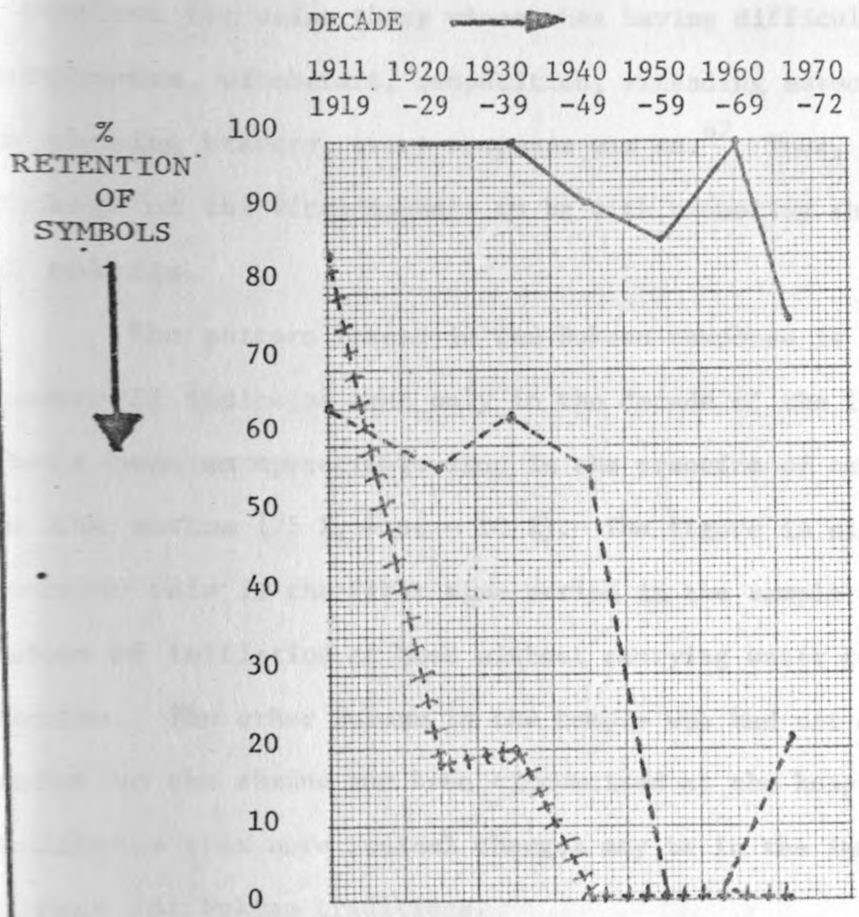
> Bukusu--Did you bring water to the shrine from the river a day or two before your circumcision in the Khuchukhila ceremony? (1) Yes, (2) No.
> Kakamega--Was white flour (bwanga) blown on your chest before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
> Tiriki--Did you wear muhalla/isenende vines when dancing in the evening before your circumcision ceremony? (1) Yes, (2) No.

The proximity of the ceremony in bringing water from the river to the ancestral shrine indicates the natural affinity of the two in a system desiring progressive direction from ancestral spirits. Further, there is no context known to the writer where water is used for either promoting or restricting any of the other five cultural themes under consideration in this study.[60] Thus the Khuchukhila ceremony is considered an index of the above-mentioned cultural theme.

Although white flour of the Kakamega type ceremony is used to promote fertility (it is spit on barren women),[61] the

FIGURE NUMBER 11

GRAPH RELATING TO BUKUSU, KAKAMEGA AND TIRIKI CIRCUMCISION INDEXES OF THE THEME "SEEKING INVOLVEMENT OF SPIRITS IN INITIATION" FROM 1911 TO 1972.



Code: Bukusu Type Circumcision ————
Kakamega Type Circumcision + + + +
Tiriki Type Circumcision - - - - - -

power which is sought in doing so is that of benevolent ancestors. White flour is believed to purify people so spirits can approach them. Thus a primary context for using white flour is to welcome ancestral spirits.

The muhalia/isenende vines, as stated earlier, come from the shrines, mabawi, of Kalenjin peoples who provided the format for the Tiriki circumcision. Their inclusion relates to a desire for the presence of spirits who feed at the shrines to energize the ceremonies. When two interviews were conducted to consider a context for using these vines when having difficulties with barrenness, witchcraft, competition, extending association or in showing bravery, every response was no.[62] Thus, the dominant linkage of the vines appears to be with promoting the presence of spirits.

The pattern traced in the Bukusu response in Figure Number 11 indicates that only in the decade of the 1970's has there been an appreciable drop in the practice of carrying water to the shrine (75 %, + or - 10 %). The figure is significant because this is the first time period in the sample to be a token of initiation at home without carrying water to the shrine. The other Bukusu in the sample who had not carried water to the shrine had been circumcised at the hospital. This indicates that more radical changes may be in the immediate future for Bukusu traditions.

Both the Kakamega and Tiriki responses follow the general trend of Figure Number 9 and its analysis.

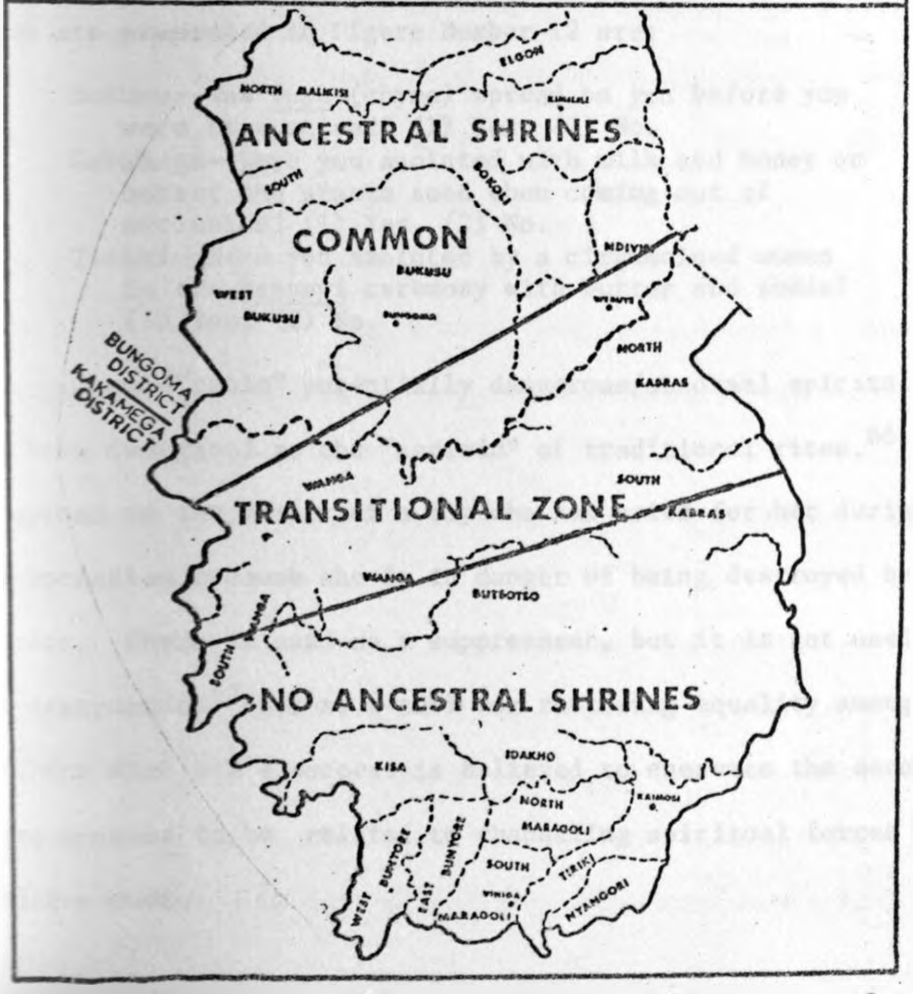
The data presented in Figure Number 11 indicates that the mythology of the ancestral cult in both the Kakamega and Tiriki traditions has faded, though in different decades. Thus, even those wanting to follow the traditional Tiriki ceremonies of circumcision are troubled by the fact that there are no more ancestral shrines for relating to the ancients.[63]

But with the Bukusu, symbols relating to the ancestors are quite evident. This appears to reflect two different ways of merging culture and Christianity. The Bukusu have fused the two systems while the Southern Abaluyia have accepted Christianity with the corollary that the ancestral spirits are demonic. Sangree is probably correct in saying that among the Southern Abaluyia:

> Perhaps the largest change in traditional cosmology accompanying conversion to Christianity is the

MAP NUMBER 6

DISTRIBUTION OF TRADITIONAL SHRINES IN KAKAMEGA AND BUNGOMA DISTRICTS, 1976.



establishment of God and his Son Jesus as the fountainhead of good, and the relegation of the ancestral spirits (misambwa) to the side of Satan.[64]

Map Number 6 on the distribution of ancestral shrines correlates with this perspective. This map, which has been compiled on the basis of field observations and interviews, indicates shrines and rites associated with them are dead in the south while a revival related to the ancestral shrines is seen among the Bukusu during circumcision even into the 1970's. Thus both historical data and the "randomized quota" sample point to quite different responses from Southern and Northern Abaluyia in respect to the ancestral spirits.

Measurements Relating to Invoking Spirits in Promotion of Fecundity:[65] The questions asked by "circumcision type" which are presented in Figure Number 12 are:

Bukusu--Was Buse (chyme) spread on you before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Were you anointed with milk and honey or butter and simsim seed when coming out of seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Were you anointed by a circumcised woman in the Bamwayi ceremony with butter and seeds? (1) Yes, (2) No.

Chyme "cools" potentially dangerous/abnormal spirits. It has been described as the "aspirin" of traditional rites.[66] It is spread on the mother of a boy who has cried for her during his operation because she is in danger of being destroyed by spirits. Chyme is used as a suppressant, but it is not used for destruction[67] nor as a tool for restoring equality among brothers when one's success is believed to enervate the second.[68] Chyme appears to be related to channeling spiritual forces to positive ends.

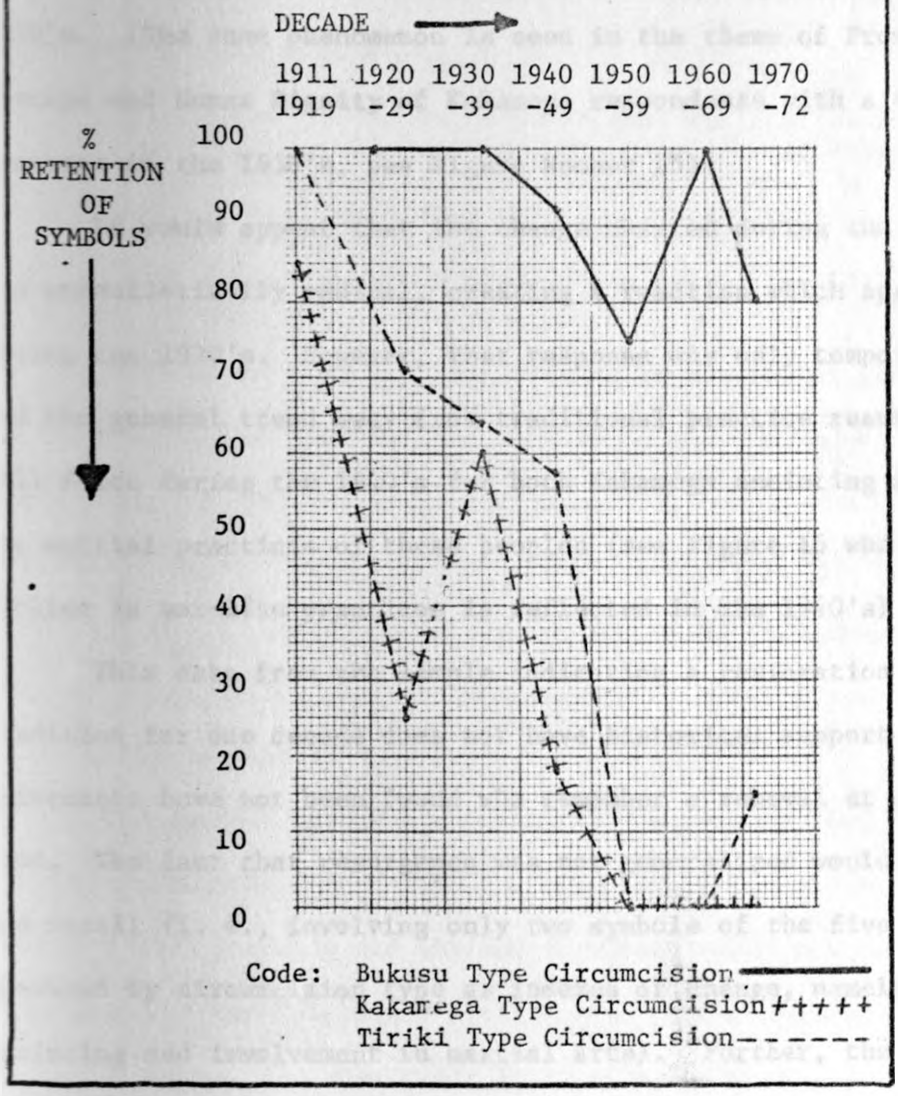
The anointings are considered indexes to this theme for the following reasons: (1) The words repeated in them point to desiring fertility. The person performing the anointing says, "May you have many children."[69] (2) No circumstance is known where anointings are done in the context of bewitching, lowering competetive spirit, reconciling brothers or to make warriors "hot" for battle.[70] And (3) the operational meaning (adducing the social dynamic of the action) is that of a successful manipulation of the ceremonies to obtain issue.[71]

The graph in Figure Number 12 indicates the Bukusu had a drop in the practice of spreading chyme on their candidates in the decade of the 1950's (a drop from 92 % in the previous decade to 75 % = 17 % change, + or - 10 %). This can be attributed to the attrition that comes from compacting the rituals into a one month period of time and also to a probable deterioration in traditional extended family ties.[72] Many boys had no time to go to the maternal uncle before circumcision because they remained in school until the day before operations. Further, maternal uncles are not obligated to provide animals if the bride-price on the candidate's mother is not reconciled. More individualism with orientation toward new values may be the reason this change is observed in this sample.

During the 1960's, as pointed out in the analysis of Figure Number 9, political events apparently sparked a revival of traditionalism which resulted in 100 % of the Bukusu sample using chyme at circumcision. By the 1970's, the fervour appears to have decreased and 20 % of the candidates do not have chyme spread on them (+ or - 10 %).

FIGURE NUMBER 12

GRAPH RELATING TO BUKUSU, KAKAMEGA AND TIRIKI CIRCUMCISION INDEXES OF THE THEME "INVOKING SPIRITS IN PROMOTION OF FECUNDITY" FROM 1911-1972.



The directions lines take on the graph of Figure Number 12 for the Kakamega and Tiriki circumcisions follow the analysis given in Figure Number 9 of a sudden depression in the use of traditional symbols (in the 1920's for those of the Kakamega type and the 1940's and 1950's for those of the Tiriki type).

The exception to this pattern is in the Kakamega sample of the 1930's where a 35 % increase is measured from the previous decade in the practice of anointing initiates with milk, honey or seeds. Apparently every part of the ritual system was not rejected without fight, and the symbols of this theme show resistance in the 1930's. (The same phenomenon is seen in the theme of Promoting Courage and Human Dignity of Kakamega respondents with a 40 % increase in the 1930's, see Figure Number 15).

It would appear that the change charted during the 1920's was unrealistically radical, creating a reaction which appeared during the 1930's. However, that response was only temporary, and the general trend away from traditional practice resumed in full force during the 1940's for both Kakamega anointing and the martial practices of these peoples (see Figure 15 where a decline in war-like practices is reflected in the 1940's).

This data from the sample indicating a restoration of tradition for one decade does not have historical support since informants have not been found who remember a renewal at that time. The fact that resurgence was not generalized would not aid recall (i. e., involving only two symbols of the five measured by circumcision type as indexes of change, namely anointing and involvement in martial arts). Further, the figures indicating a restoration during the decade may reflect an almost spontaneous populist response which would not be remembered in the same way a campaign lead by leaders would be recalled. Thus, statistics seem to point to temporary (i. e., decade long) resistance to rejection of specially meaningful symbols which has been forgotten by Kakamega communities.

Measurements Relating to Symbols of "Suppressing Witchcraft":[73] In measuring change from 1911 to 1972 relating to symbols and actions juxtaposed with suppression of witchcraft, the following questions were asked according to circumcision type which are collated in the graph of Figure Number 13. Each question involved some hiding or furtive action.

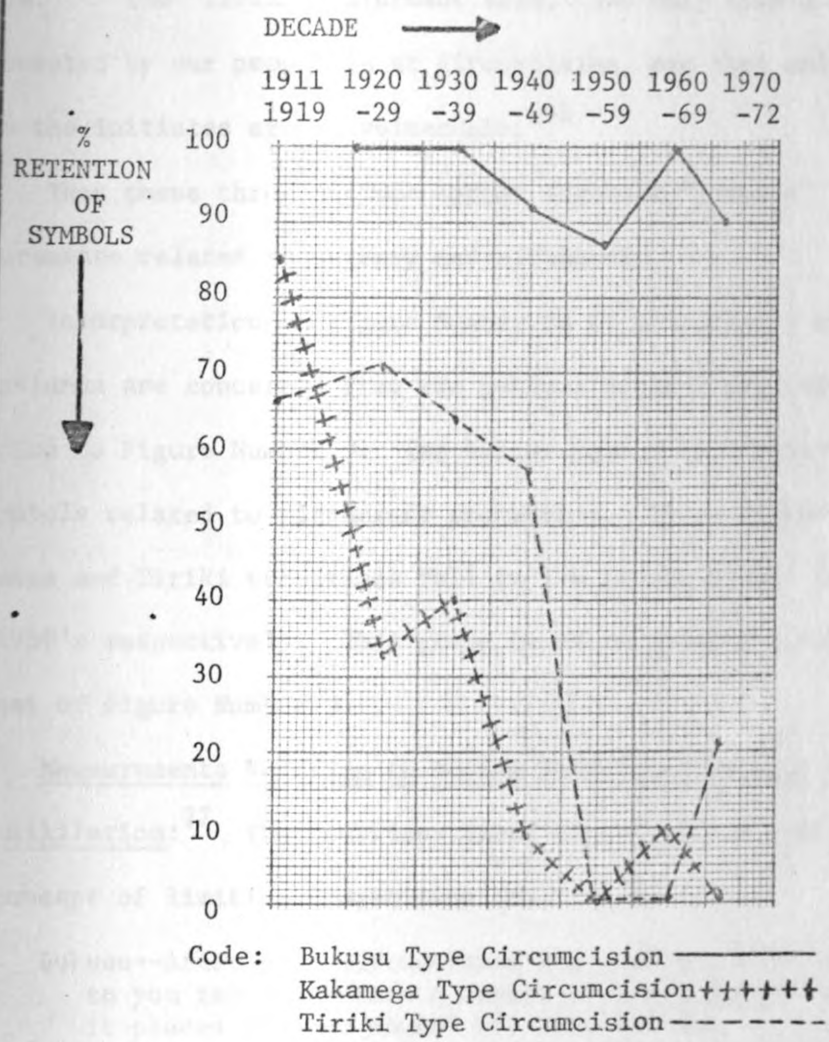
> Bukusu--Was the blood, foreskin and mud from the top your head collected from your operation and buried by an old person? (1) Yes, (2) no.
> Kakamega--Did you wear a mask/hood going to your knees in your seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.
> Tiriki--Did you wear a mask in seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.

The way the initiate and anything he touches is guarded in the traditional context lest someone be able to endanger him during this vulnerable period point these questions to the fear of being destroyed by witchcraft. It appears that communal "official" attitudes toward the potential of witchcraft are reflected in the percentage retention of these protective acts in Figure Number 13.

The forced circumcision which the writer observed had provisions made by the family for only one thing--disposing of the blood, foreskin and the mud from the top of the head.[74] The community had forced the victim to be mudded against the father's wishes, and when their initiatives were considered inevitable, he placed a plastic fertilizer sack beneath the initiate so the waste could be carried to the river and removed. Whether he did this as a saved one who did not want to tempt anyone to be anti-social in leaving the remains or whether he feared witchcraft is open to interpretation, but the "reality"

FIGURE NUMBER 13

GRAPH RELATING TO BUKUSU KAKAMEGA AND TIRIKI CIRCUMCISION INDEXES OF THE THEME "SUPPRESSING WITCHCRAFT" FROM 1911--1972.



appeared strong enough in this moment of strife for one action acknowledging the traditional mind-set to be performed, namely to acknowledge the danger of witchcraft.

Hoods and masks of the Kakamega and Tiriki ceremonies also appear to have one chief purpose--protecting initiates against anti-social elements. A Kakamega informant says, "The only time I've seen hoods worn among our peoples is at circumcision."[75] The "Tiriki" informant says, "The only time a disguise is accepted by our people is at circumcision, and that only because the initiates are so vulnerable."[76]

Thus these three actions appear adequate "indexes" for measurements related to sorcery and witchcraft.

Interpretation of Figure Number 13 is unnecessary so far as deviants are concerned from the general outline suggested in relation to Figure Number 9. The Bukusu have a high retention of symbols related to witchcraft protection. Those of the Kakamega and Tiriki traditions fall to low levels by the 1940's and 1950's respectively. This graph bears an amazing similarity to that of Figure Number 9.

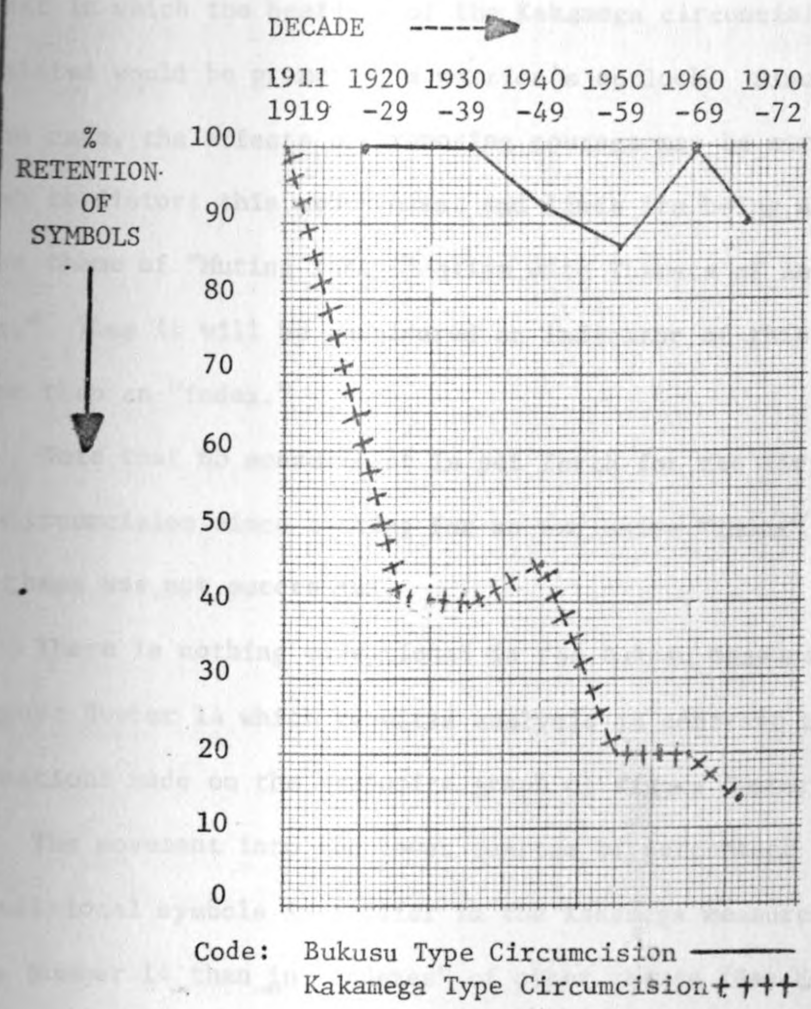
Measurements Relating to Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation:[77] The questions asked about symbols relating to the concept of limiting competition are:

> Bukusu--After your circumcision did you have food offered to you then withdrawn a number of times before having it placed in your mouth? (1) Yes, (2) No.
> Kakamega--Were any of the initiates beaten in seclusion because they were slow or refused to obey when you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.

Gradualism and respect for hierarchy are enculturated in the Bukusu and Kakamega circumcisions because of the egalitarian ideal. Trials and things such as offering and withdrawal of food to Bukusu initiates within hours of their operation has

FIGURE NUMBER 14

GRAPH RELATING TO BUKUSU AND KAKAMEGA CIRCUMCISION-INDEXES OF THE THEME "MUTING INDIVIDUALISM WITH THREATS OF ANNIHILATION" FROM 1911-1972



been witnessed in another context which points to its being a heuristic device of innate inequalities in the human situation. An old man who was dying in Bungoma District called his grandson to eat a last meal with him. The old man feigned the actions of offering food just as is done in the first hours of seclusion.

Then he sent the youngster away perplexed. He was asked the reason for his actions and said, "I want him to know that life is difficult and that man cannot get everything he wants."[78]

So discipline and beatings for minute infractions are imposed in the traditional context. The only other thematic context in which the beatings of the Kakamega circumcision could be related would be promoting a warrior's outlook. Since that is the case, the effects of promoting courage may be strong enough to distort this measurement and limit its being an "index" of the theme of "Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation." Thus it will be considered an indicator of this theme rather than an "index."

Note that no measurement is put forth for the Tiriki type circumcision since testing for an exclusive "index" of this theme was not successful.

There is nothing exceptional in the Bukusu measurement of Figure Number 14 which requires analysis in contrast to the observations made on the composite graph of Figure Number 9.

The movement into the lower quarter of percentage retention of traditional symbols is tardier in the Kakamega measurement of Figure Number 14 than in "indexes" of other themes (See Figure Number 12, 13 and 15). The percentage retention of beating initiates remains at 45 % (+ or - 10 %) in the measurement of the 1940's in Figure Number 14 in contrast to an average of 15 % in the composite of Figure Number 9. It is probable that even Christians who had reservations about actions related to the ancestral cult, fertility and witchcraft felt less tension about how their initiates were treated in seclusion. Perhaps it can

be surmised that there was little perception of tension between the philosophy of "Muting Individualism" and introduced teachings. Thus the more gradual decline in percentage beatings reflects on the demise of a ritual system rather than an abrupt philosophical re-orientation.

Measurements Relating to Seeking Extension of Association: No symbols were found for measuring this theme which were not interlocked with other cultural themes. To have presented the data on extension of association would not be proper since the indexes are not exclusive enough. Perhaps future research will be more fruitful at this point.

Measurements Relating to Promoting Courage and Human Dignity:[79] The following questions were asked to measure continuity of the traditional theme of promoting courage and human dignity in circumcision rituals:

> Bukusu--Were you circumcised naked before a group? (1) Yes, (2) No.
> Kakamega--Did you participate in mock battles with warriors or did you attempt to spear the gate at the seclusion hut as you left? (1) Yes, (2) No.
> Tiriki--Did you have to go into "enemy territory" the night before leaving seclusion and pretend to burn an enemy village? (1) Yes, (2) No.

As suggested in the analysis of chapter four, the degree to which a boy impresses his community with bravery and ability to face pain without fear is the reserve of status he has in the community--much more so than such things as his lineage or wealth. To be a Bukusu is to get assurance of self-worth from facing circumcision with dignity. Standing naked is not related to sacrificial motifs or to removal of barrenness[80] but promotion of dignity.

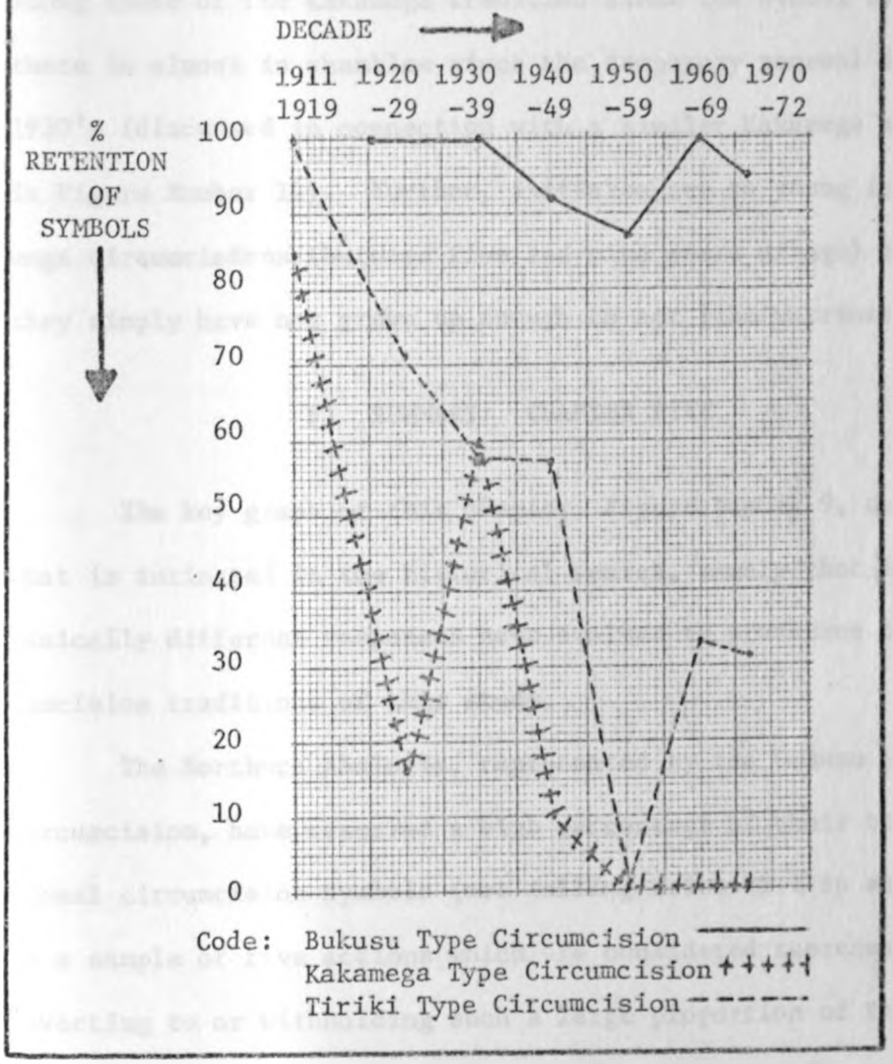
Mock battles are conducted at three times in Abaluyia rites: in circumcision, when twins are born and when a girl is taken from her home to marry. An overriding connotation from all three is to foster identity and bring into being power which will sustain people entering difficult roles. It is believed that creative effort in itself generates unity necessary for a sense of purpose.[81] So measurement of mock battles and spear throwing contests appears appropriate to capture the promotion of courage and human dignity (especially traditional dignity) in the Kakamega and Tiriki samples.

The degree of importance placed on dignity and courage in the Bukusu ceremonies is illustrated by the fact that every person in this sample making up Figure Number 15 who was circumcised at home had a large crowd to witness his operation. While the ancestral shrines have been forgotten by some families in the initiations of the early 1970's (see discussion on Figure Number 11), circumcision is not viewed as a private operation done for some abstract purpose such as hygiene. Circumcision determines worth and worth has to be won under scrutiny among Bukusu men.

The patterns of the Kakamega and Tiriki samples in Figure Number 15 are not exceptions to the format suggested in Figure Number 9 with the exception of the higher retention of traditional symbols by the Tiriki in the decades of the 1960's and early 1970's. In the sample 33 % and 31 %, respectively, of the two decades made excursions into "enemy territory" to prove their worth as warriors. An adapted symbol is also emerging which

FIGURE NUMBER 15

GRAPH RELATING TO BUKUSU, KAKAMEGA AND TIRIKI CIRCUMCISION INDEXES OF THE THEME "PROMOTING COURAGE AND HUMAN DIGNITY" FROM 1911-1972



indicates this theme's viability. In 1975 the initiates of Eastern Tiriki spent a considerable period of their seclusion in carving rifles. They acted like soldiers on coming out and paraded with their new "guns."[82]

So in spite of the fact that the pioneering Christian mission (Quakers) in the area is pacifistic, the traditional theme of promoting a warrior's image is on the upsurge in these communities. This kind of revival does not appear so likely among those of the Kakamega tradition since the symbol system there is almost in shambles since the temporary renewal in the 1930's (discussed in connection with a similar Kakamega response in Figure Number 12). Further, initiates are so young in Kakamega circumcisions (between five and nine years of age) that they simply have not grown up enough to act like warriors.

F. SUMMARY: CHAPTER FIVE

The key graph of this chapter, Figure Number 9, outlines what is intimated in the historical search, namely that two basically different responses have evolved to pressures on circumcision traditions of this study.

The Northern Abaluyia, represented by the Bukusu type circumcision, have reserved a high percentage of their traditional circumcision symbols (not falling below 85 % in any decade in a sample of five actions which are considered representative). Reverting to or withholding such a large proportion of the components harking from the luminous past characterizes a society which chooses to interpret innovations in the light of tradition. It should not be a point of debate to suggest that traditional cultural themes are still viable among the Northern Abaluyia since their "indexes" are witnessed in the upper quarter of a percentage register within the last decade. Thus, the Bukusu

have resolved the crisis coming from juxtaposition of different world-views conservatively by reverting to traditional rites every two years and apparently using that framework as the basis for constructing new models for existence.

The second response is that of Southern Abaluyia. Those of the Tiriki tradition have followed, by about two decades, the advocates of the Kakamega circumcision in wholesale rejection of symbols and actions relating to the traditional circumcision rituals. Apparently the relegation of ancestral spirits to the realm of demons which has been documented in this chapter has had a series of "waves" of repercussion on the ritual system of the Southern Abaluyia. The final result of it has been the acceptance of either hospital circumcision, (lubao, the board), or an abbreviated operation and no seclusion among Kakamega peoples or a demythologized ceremony by both traditionalists and Christians who are their Tiriki counterparts.

Deeper interpretation hinges on resolving the question of what has happened to the themes reflected in the rites of traditional circumcision if the symbols and components of the ceremonies have largely disintegrated in the last two generations.

Unfortunately, this study cannot resolve that question because of limitations in its design. It has not been comprehensive enough to encompass a problem where traditional values have to be defined, where rejection of the ritual system related to that culture is measured, and a new synthesis has been effected. Two of the three steps, it is believed, have been completed toward drawing this conclusion, but until another

study seriously considers the proximate dilemma little can be said with authoritative voice about what the present cultural themes of the Southern Abaluyia are. Such a study model would have to investigate both private and community actions and rituals and interlock findings with the residues of the traditional system which this study has documented.

The skepticism stated in chapter two about the danger of concluding that a theme ceases to exist because peripheral actions and symbols are no longer visible, coupled with observations lead the writer to repeat the warning about drawing conclusions which are too severe. What seems apparent from this study is that rejection of the ancestral cult among Southern Abaluyia threw question on the validity of the ritual system related to circumcision. So these rituals succumbed corporately. The "indexes" of individual cultural themes are not barometers of thematic viability in a culture, but measures of tension. It can be concluded that tension between proximate and traditional values has been high among Southern Abaluyia since the 1940's. But there is no evidence in this study of the way needs and presuppositions underlying themes like fertility, witchcraft, the need for expanded associates and dignity have been resolved. Socio/economic pressures among Southern Abaluyia are so high that it would appear probable that there might be preoccupation with some of the negative themes in this list, namely witchcraft and muffling competition,[83] but a carefully regulated study would have to be conducted to inject valid conclusions at this point.

The following can be summarized at this stage of the study. First, circumcision is deeply entrenched in the culture of the Abaluyia studied. It is an "ancient tradition" which gives form to their definition of manhood.[84] Even when forced to admit that roots of the ceremony can be documented with historical certainty for only four generations back,[85] elders recount songs referring to a custom inherited from ancestors who lived centuries in the past.[86] Mythology on a Semitic origin for their tradition may be without historical base,[87] but satisfies people who feel the ceremony serves them well. They consider the sophisticated social mechanisms it places in the hands of communities an indicator of cultural achievement. It meets "felt needs" and some form of the tradition is entrenched in ritual calendars of all the Abaluyia under study.

Secondly, two kinds of response to pressures on circumcision traditions have been documented. That of the Bukusu is basically conservative where traditional categories become the focus for arranging new cultural constructs. The response of the Southern Abaluyia has been more complex. It involves three steps for analysis: (1) resolution of the traditional framework, (2) charting change in the rituals of that world-view (rejection of the symbols of a major rite of passage), and (3) evolution of a new system of interaction. In completing this study the first two of these steps on the Southern Abaluyia has been completed, but little more can be said about the present state of cultural themes there than the fact that tensions between proximate and traditional values have been high among Southern Abaluyia peoples since the 1940's.[88]

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER FIVE

[1]Interview with Joel Litu (Mbale, N. Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1973.

[2]From "Nyang'ori Teriki Circumcision," by Raphael S. Mbiti, typewritten draft of address delivered at Sembi School (Nyang'ori Loc.), Sept. 4, 1972, at the coming out of "Christian" initiates.

[3]Interview with Jeremiah Angode (Isukha Loc.), Sept. 13, 1975. Angode was in the second group of Quaker initiates circumcised in 1919 at Luranda Mission.

[4]Safari Book, St. Peter's Catholic Mission (Mumias, North Wanga Loc.), letter to Bishop, Aug. 31, 1926, pp. 131-32.

[5]Edna H. Chilson, Ambassador of the King (Wichita [Kan.]: Privately printed diary of Arthur Chilson, n. d.), p. 47.

[6]Safari Book, St. Peter's Catholic Mission (Mumias, North Wanga Loc.), Aug. 31, 1926, pp. 131-32. Kitosh is the unpopular name for the people and region of the Bukusu.

[7]Letter of Ethel Chadwick, Jan. 16, 1924, CMS Mission Correspondence, Kenya National Archives.

[8]Diary, Roman Catholic Mission of the Sacred Heart, (Mukumu, Isukha Loc.), July 21, 1923. Thirty girls who had been readers agreed to live at the mission after a mud and wattle house was built. The South Africa Compounds and Interior Mission started bringing "boys" to Kima from October, 1907, "Africa's Golden Harvest," Oct. 1907, Vol. 3, No. 2, Itokozo, Transvall, South Africa, p. 15.

[9]Fr. Coenen, "A Short History of Mumias Mission, 1955," p. 31. A copy of this paper is in the guest house.

[10]Jan Jacob de Wolf, "Religious Innovation and Social Change Among the Bukusu," (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1971), p. 169.

[11]Diary, Roman Catholic Mission of the Sacred Heart, (Mukumu, Isukha Loc.), Sunday, Nov. 30, 1924.

[12]DC/NN/1/8, 1927, Kenya National Archives.

[13]North Kavirondo Local Native Council Minute Book, 1921 to 1933, pp. 360 and 375, Resolution No. 7, proposed by Chief Mulama. One Christian village at Bukoyani in South Maragoli was begun in 1915 by Quaker missionaries. It was dispersed in 1955 and land given to a primary school. Interview with members of Bukoyani Holy Spirit Church, Jan. 11, 1973.

[14]The records of Kaimosi hospital are the only ones in Western Region which have any historical value. Records of other hospitals are either non-existent or not accurate enough to indicate how many hospital circumcisions have been performed.

[15]Diary of St. Peter's Catholic Mission, (Mumias, North Wanga Loc.), 1918-1944, Nov. 10, 1930.

[16]Ray C. Petry (ed.), A History of Christianity (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1962), p. 19.

[17]Annual Report of Kitosh Station, Dec. 31, 1923, Friends Africa Industrial Mission files, Kaimosi, Kenya.

[18]The breakout of revivals in 1927 was the impetus for indigenous interpretation and independent actions by Abaluyia Christians.

[19]Enoch Olando interview by Prisca Lydia Silivano, UCN/HD/RPA, C/2/3 (1), Aug. 28, 1967.

[20]Interview with Japeth Zale and ten elders of Bukoyani Holy Spirit Church of East Africa, Jan. 11, 1973. They said shrines began to be uprooted from 1915 in South Maragoli.

[21]Interview with Nathaniel Lijodi (Isukha Loc.), March 15, 1973. Lijodi's father lived in North Maragoli. Chilson came to the homestead in 1934 (?) and removed the shrine.

[22]Gunter Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 35.

[23]J. M. Lonsdale, "A Political History of Nyanza, 1883-1945," (unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1964), p. 358.

[24]F. B. Welbourn and B. A. Ogot, A Place to Feel at Home (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 95. Missionaries did not realize the place of confession in traditional life and were unable to appreciate the cathartic element it added to the Christian experience of the Abaluyia.

[25]In a policy statement on Jan. 6, 1928, Shadrack Amuko, John Amukune and Andrew Akafanga objected to confessing "some of the most filthy sins in public." Quakers turned on the Holy Spirit leaders. Daniel Sande died from beatings he received on Nov. 3, 1936. See Florida Okwemba, "A Comparative Analysis of the Causes of Religious Independency in the Western Region of Kenya," UNC/HD/RPA, C/2/1 (2).

[26]Interview with Japeth Zale and ten elders of the Bukoyani Holy Spirit Church of East Africa (South Maragoli Loc.), Jan. 11, 1973.

[27]Interview with Simeon Lunani, leader of Lurambi Church Group of Light (Nambilima, North Kabras Loc.), June 23, 1972. Tea was substituted for beer.

[28]Interview with Japeth Zale and ten elders of the Bukoyani Holy Spirit Church of East Africa (South Maragoli Loc.), Jan. 11, 1973.

[29]A fuller description of the mechanics of this sample are given in Section "I" of chapter one and at the beginning of Section "D" of this chapter, pp. 22, 219.

[30]See chapter 3 Kakamega type circumcision for a description of this ceremony, p. 99.

[31]Raphael S. Mbiti, "Nyang'ori Teriki Circumcision," typewritten draft of address delivered at Sembi School (Nyang'ori Loc.), Sept. 4, 1972.

[32]Walter H. Sangree, Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 129.

[33]Interview with Andrea Jumba (Tiriki Loc.), Nov. 21, 1972.

[34]Mbiti, "Nyang'ori Teriki Circumcision," op. cit.

[35]Interview with anonymous Nyang'ori leader, November 1972, pages 203-206 of author's "circumcision" notebook.

[36]Sangree, op. cit., p. 138.

[37]Mbiti, "Nyang'ori Teriki Circumcision," op. cit.

[38]It was not until 1947 that the people of Nyang'ori Location claimed to have seven hundred boys in Christian circumcision and not until 1958 that the Tiriki claimed 1,151.

[39]Letter from Pastor Joel Kipwayo to District Commissioner, Aug. 15, 1960. ADM 8/3, Entry 151, Archives, Kakamega D. C.'s Office.

[40]Letter from Pastor Joel Kipwayo to District Commissioner, Aug. 15, 1960. ADM 8/3, Entry 151, Archives, Kakamega D. C.'s Office.

[41]Letter of protest from Quarterly Meeting of Friends, Munzatsi, April 6, 1957. ADM 8/3, Archives, Kakamega D. C.'s Office.

[42]Interview with Chief James Tsinalo (Nyang'ori Loc.), March 4, 1974.

[43]The degree of change is best seen by comparing the revised ceremonies of the Tiriki (described in chapter 6) with the traditional rites of chapter 3.

[44]Interview with Chief James Tsinalo (Nyang'ori Loc.), March 4, 1974.

[45]Compiled from Raphael S. Mbiti's report at Sembi School on Sept. 4, 1972 and Joseph Sambili's, "Mpango wa Sherehe za Kuondoka kwa Watoto wa Kikristo Chondoni," (Plans for the celebration to leave seclusion by Christian children), Mungavo Centre, Aug. 20, 1970, and interview with Andrea Waudi (Kiboswa, Nyang'ori Loc.), who was circumcised in the compound of the Pentecostal Mission in 1913 and was one of the first twenty to be circumcised openly contrary to the secret tradition of the Nyang'ori.

[46]Interviews with Moses Busolo (Bulukava, Tiriki Loc.), July 11, 1972, and with John Busola Shisiali (son of the founder) who was circumcised in 1964.

[47]A copy of this Questionnaire is in Appendix B of this thesis, p. 285.

[48]De Wolf, op. cit., p. 45.

[49]Matthew Wafula and Committee, "Circumcision Ritual Among the Babukusu," an unpublished paper presented in response to questions by Hilton Merritt at Kanduyi Chief's Centre, East Bukusu Loc., Bungoma, July 20, 1972, p. 4.

[50]See Section A of this chapter for the influence of missions, p. 205.

[51]A description of the "demythologized" Kakamega type circumcision circa 1972 is given in chapter 6.

[52]Interview with Chief James Tsinalo (Nyang'ori Loc.), March 4, 1974.

[53]Sangree, op. cit., p. 137.

[54]See Tiriki type circumcision, chapter 3, page 127.

[55]Letter to the Mission Board from Mission Secretary, 1921, "Secret Circumcision Customs of the Tiriki Tribe," Jan. 24, 1921, Archives, Friends United Mission, Richmond, Indiana.

[56]Bible, I Peter 1:18.

[57]See a reversion led by Moses Busolo of North Tiriki which is described in Section "C" of this chapter, p. 218.

[58]See conclusions in chapter seven, pp. 268-69.

[59]See Section "A" of chapter four for a discussion of this cultural theme in traditional circumcision, pp. 154ff.

[60]Interview with Natembea Umbu (North Nyolondo, East Bukusu Loc.), April 25, 1976. In seeking a context where water might be used to: (1) promote fertility, (2) suppress witchcraft, (3) indicate a limited amount of good, (4) promote extension of association, or (5) courage and human dignity, the interview became frustrating. Finally the old man said, "You are not asking the right questions. If you think these things are true, you don't understand the Bukusu." When I explained that negative responses were expected, he relented but continued to be vexed.

[61]Interview with Marko Kigudwa (North Maragoli Loc.), Sept. 3, 1975. He saw it spit on a barren woman in 1931.

[62]Interview with Douglas Mbiti (Gamalenga, Nyang'ori Loc.), April 28, 1976, and interview with Norton Amiani, (Gamalenga, Nyang'ori Loc.), April 28, 1976.

[63]Interview with Joseph Sambili (Seremi, Tiriki Loc.), Jan. 6, 1976. Sambili avows there are no traditional shrines in the whole of Tiriki Location, even at homes of "traditionalists."

[64]Sangree, op. cit., p. 137.

[65]See Section "B" of chapter four for a discussion of this theme in the traditional context, pp. 163ff.

[66]Interview with James Omole (East Bunyore Loc.), July 15, 1975, also see Section "B" of chapter four for a discussion of the use of chyme, p. 164.

[67]Interview with Charles Juma (Nambilima, North Kabras Loc.), Sept. 3, 1975. The question was asked, "Was buse ever put on a person who was believed bewitched?" Also, "Would buse be put on a person suspected of being a witch?" Both were answered in the negative.

[68]Interview with Natembea Umbu (North Nyolondo, East Bukusu Loc.), April 25, 1976.

[69]Interview with Joel Litu (Mbale, North Maragoli Loc.), Nov. 3, 1972.

[70]Interview with Peter Atema (Iluyia, Idakho Loc.), Sept. 3, 1975.

[71]Matthew Wafula and Committee, "Circumcision Ritual Among the Babukusu," an unpublished paper presented in response to questions by Hilton Merritt at Kanduyi Chief's Centre, East Bukusu Loc., Bungoma, July 20, 1972, p. 3. No person who is barren can approach initiates.

[72]Joyce L. Moock, "Pragmatism and the Primary School: The Case of a Non-Rural Village," Discussion Paper No. 135, Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, March 1972. "Extended family financial obligations are lessening. . .school fees have become almost entirely a nuclear family affair." p. 16.

[73]See Section "C" of chapter four for discussion of this theme in the traditional circumcision of the Abaluyia, pp. 170ff.

[74]Observation of circumcision of son of Isaka Mando (Ndivisi--now where the settling ponds of the paper mill stand), Sept. 7, 1972.

[75]Interview with Marko Kigudwa (North Maragoli Loc.), Sept. 3, 1975.

[76]Interview with Douglas Mbiti (Gamalenga, Nyang'ori Loc.), April 28, 1976.

[77]See Section "D" of chapter four for discussion of this theme in the traditional context, pp. 176ff.

[78]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), Nov. 1, 1973.

[79]See Section "F" of chapter four for discussion of this theme in the traditional context, pp. 187ff.

[80]Interview with Natembea Umbu (North Nyolondo, East Bukusu Loc.), April 25, 1976.

[81]Interview with Marko Kigudwa (North Maragoli Loc.), Sept. 3, 1975.

[82]Observed by Dr. Steven Wilhite, Kaimosi Mission, Dec. 1975.

[83]Interview with Ernest Ebagole, Partnership for Productivity, Kakamega, July 20, 1975, "No one south of the Sahara dies of natural causes," and interview with George Butler (PFP manager) who had a number of clients who suffered because they were wealthier than peers. One of these, a prominent baker/politician at Mbale, had his bakery burned by a brother who was miffed because the wealth generated was not being shared to his liking.

[84]Political and social status depend on men's places in circumcision age groups. It has become so important in defining relationships that provision was made for operating on a corpse before burial. See page 61 of this thesis for elaboration.

[85]Interview with Daudi Omwera (Kakamega, Butsotso Loc.), Sept. 29, 1978, # 218. Omwera lucidly admitted that he could not speak with authority beyond four generations, then recounted names of his paternal ancestors for that period and said firmly, "I don't know what other theories are, but these four men were circumcised."

[86]The Bukusu, for example, believe Mango (a proto-Bukusu leader who lived in Uganda) restarted circumcision hundreds of years ago. See Harron Wanongu interview (Bungoma, Bokoli Loc.) Sept. 11, 1978, # 4-8.

[87]J. E. G. Sutton, "The Settlement of East Africa," in B. A. Ogot, ed. Zamani (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1974), p. 81, places the probable origin of Bantu-speakers in the Congo. While there is probability that many of the Abaluyia are "Bantuized" migrants from the Nile, the fact that Nilotics do not generally circumcise and the possibility that the Biblical account of Jewish circumcision has been fused into oral tradition makes the thesis questionable.

[88]See Clifford Gilpin, "The Church and the Community: Quakers in Western Kenya, 1902-1963," (unpublished PhD dissertation), Columbia University, 1976, p. 333, for confirmation of different reactions toward accepting modernity among Bukusu and Abaluyia of the south. He suggests economic factors as pcvital. It is recommended that future studies investigate that possibility as neither of these studies have closely considered economic considerations.

CHAPTER SIX

ABALUYIA CIRCUMCISION CEREMONIES, CIRCA 1972 A. D.

School schedules, a developing cash economy and innovations from Christianity have all had their influence on the various circumcision traditions of the Abaluyia. This chapter is written to give descriptions of the kind of ceremonies practiced by circumcision type in 1972. "Typical" circumcision ceremonies for each tradition (Bukusu--Kakamega--Tiriki) are given.

A. BUKUSU CIRCUMCISIONS IN 1972

Most preliminaries for circumcising have been dropped because boys remain in school until a day before the operations start. All modern ceremonies have the quality of Khufumbuka--jumping into the party going to the river for mudding without making arrangements. Locational leaders warn they want no dancing in anticipation of circumcision since that takes boys away from school where they can develop into doctors and other important people.[1]

The night before the operations relatives begin coming to the home where three or four "brothers" or cousins will be operated upon. Dancing takes up most of the night and involves shuffling and singing traditional songs. The candidates are made to sleep on the floor or a cow-hide even if they have beds when they rest from 3:00 A. M. Before dawn they are aroused and more singing/dancing starts. They are given a last meal of childhood and the mother or a trusted aunt eats every morsel

left over so no enemy can get something to retard the progress of the initiates. Old men put water into a pot of the "shrine" in the Khuchukhila ceremony[2] although often neither the parents nor initiates appear concerned about the ceremony. If Europeans are present and ask about the practice, parents may explain they are Christians, but they have to humour the old people who want to follow traditions.

The ceremony of mudding retains the traditional flavour. A different path is taken to the river than will be used on returning. The song Sioyayo is sung and taboos against the father and his party going to the river are strictly observed. The remaining mud from the ceremony is returned to the water by a trusted girl from the family of the candidates.

No root is put into the ground to help boys stand well at the operations, but outlines of where they are to stand are made with maize-meal flour. The assistant inspects each penis and spreads a fine clay on it. Then the circumciser who wears a uniform that looks more like the style of a soccer outfit than traditional regalia operates using a knife gotten from a traditional blacksmith. As each operation is completed a woman trills. When all the operations are finished there is another round of singing and dancing. Small coins are stuck in the mud on each successful candidate's head. An old woman very carefully collects the blood, foreskins and mud from the top of initiates' heads. She keeps it for hiding on the third morning.

There are no separate seclusion huts. As visitors start leaving, initiates are taken to the boys' house. They

are made to walk around it three times backward before entering. There a "bush doctor" who has gotten his medicine illegally waits with penicillin injections. After the shots are given, the circumciser comes in and offers food to initiates, then withdraws it a number of times before feeding it to the initiates.[3]

The initiates remain secluded and attention focuses on the father's responsibility to his babakoki. He prepares gifts for his circumcision-mates and welcomes them to his beer. As other circumcisions are being carried out every morning nearby, the community forgets those recovering from their operations.

Initiates are not allowed to bathe in the first few weeks of seclusion nor to scratch themselves. They begin moving about within two weeks in small groups and paint each other with geometric designs using white clay. Most initiates return to school within a month of their operations and resume a regular role. A few fellows whose fathers cannot afford school fees continue to be in "seclusion" until a feast is held for them in the fourth month to signify coming out of seclusion.

B. KHULICHA CEREMONIES

The Khulicha tradition appears to be getting stronger among the Bukusu since it is spreading through maternal lines. It gives a definite end to the circumcision rites. Usually they are held four months after the operations during a school holiday. Those not knowing the Khulicha secrets are not

allowed to go to the river although they are invited to the festivities after the ceremonies. The Khulicha ceremonies are similar to those described in chapter three.

C. KAKAMEGA CIRCUMCISION IN 1972

The first thing that strikes one about the Kakamega ceremonies is the youth of the candidates. Boys from three to nine years of age are grabbed by their fathers and taken to the circumciser. The circumciser meets them as he moves down a road toward a big meeting prepared by an assistant-chief. The only preparation made by candidates is to remove their trousers and undershorts. The boy is forced to the ground and held firmly as the operation is performed. Boys usually scream and cry for their mothers. The assistant to the circumciser beats the drum a few times when an operation is completed.

As the circumciser moves toward the centre of the assistant chief, the luyia, he performs scores of operations. Upward of two hundred boys wait at the centre. Elders grumble that circumcision is supposed to be performed near sun-up so bleeding will be minimal. It is often eleven o'clock before the circumciser arrives. Women stand apart from the proceedings since it is not proper for Christians to see the boys' nakedness. But occasionally the traditional spirits are promoted when two or three of the ladies will trill. Most of those present laugh and act uncomfortable in a sort of dual role.

Operations are performed like those on the road. The circumciser is known because he wears an animal skin or a cape

of a monkey skin. Immediately after an operation, iodine is put on the wound by one of the circumciser's assistants. A "bush doctor" with a complement of shots is also available for initiates who get an infection.

Initiates go to their homes after the operation and stay in their regular sleeping places. After healing is completed, they begin meeting at dusk to sing a few songs related to circumcision. Songs thanking the circumciser for sharpening their tools and other songs about abnormal sexual activities are sung. The initiates do not have any kind of hoods nor do they have any paints on them to be distinguished from other boys. (In fact, boys who have been circumcised at the hospital join in these evening song periods along with those circumcised "traditionally").

The return of the circumciser on the day of paying[4] is used by the community as the closing of circumcision/seclusion. At that time one is able to distinguish Protestants and Catholics because traditional medicines are poured and rubbed on Catholic boys by the circumciser while parents of Protestants have a respected church leader pray for their fertility. The two parties meet after payment is assessed by the circumciser for a community meal. The sexes and age-groups segregate. Older men, older women, middle-aged men, and middle aged women, young men, girls and the initiates along with other single boys and the uninitiated eat a common meal. The circumciser and his assistants eat separately from the others. European visitors eat with the oldest age-group of their sex to show respect for these visitors.

No stigma is attached to those who choose the hospital or dispensary circumcision. The main reason the traditional circumciser is preferred is the fact that he performs mass production and has a lower fee (shs. 3 to 5) versus 20 shs. for a dispensary operation.

D. TIRIKI CIRCUMCISION IN 1972

There are two distinct ceremonies in the Tiriki tradition: The Christian and the traditional ceremony.[5] Both are shielded from the eyes of non-Tiriki, so they are not fully described here. Further, they are strong enough that those who want to be known as Tiriki cannot, as Sangree suggested as an option,[6] have their sons circumcised in the hospital. A well-known Christian leader says he knows of no Tiriki, Christian or traditionalist, who has had his son circumcised in the hospital since 1950.[7]

In the Christian ceremony major revisions have been introduced. All that remains of the traditional preparation is to build seclusion huts in the forest and to have the Imoni (the eye) ceremony the night before the operation. Confession is made before the elders of each candidate's denomination. Rather than having a goat killed to determine if the time is ripe for circumcision, the leaders meet and choose a time for operations after reading Genesis 17:9-11.

The leaders go to the forest with Bibles and hymn books. Choruses like "Precious Jewels" are sung rather than traditional songs. Olusiola limbs are used to shield initiates after their operations are completed.[8]

The Christian boys remain hidden during their month of seclusion since they do not make masks. They suddenly appear at a widely publicized coming-out at a school. A well-planned programme including talks by members of parliament and the committee overseeing the Christian ceremony takes upward of four hours. Included in the programme are songs composed as original hymns by those of each seclusion hut. The Christian boys wear ties, white shirts and short pants. Their hair is shaved before coming out of seclusion.

When boys go around with those of their seclusion to each fellow's house, a feast and gifts wait them at every stop. Some parents keep beer for the occasion, but a majority observe the taboos of the Christian community.

The traditional ceremony has a more aggressive aura. A goat is killed in the forest by the ceremonial leaders. Although there are no shrines for individual sacrifices, such ceremonies as Bamwayi where a circumcised woman anoints the initiates before coming out are performed. The ceremonies of traditionalists last five or six weeks rather than the four weeks set aside by the Christian community. Thus "traditionalists" usually miss the first two weeks of the new school term.

In the third week the traditionalists begin holding dances. A modernized mask using sisal and dyes is made along with colourful skirts for each initiate. They dance in public places and like to attract crowds. Ruffians accompanying the initiates warn those present not to take any pictures or their cameras will be smashed.[9] The initiates are encouraged to act

tough. Those of Eastern Tiriki in 1975 carved guns and marched about in military fashion to indicate their desired role in the community.[10]

E. SUMMARY: ABALUYIA CIRCUMCISIONS IN 1972

By 1972 almost all rituals have been telescoped into the one month school holiday of August or December. Age of initiates has dropped in all ceremonies. There is a parallel between the age of initiates and percentage retention of traditional acts/symbols. In the Kakamega ceremonies where boys three years old may have their prepuces removed, the circumcision is little more than a mutilation. In the Tiriki tradition where candidates are ten or more years old, attempts are made to retain some ties with traditions, even by Christians. Among the Bukusu where candidates are in early puberty, the percentage retention of traditional acts is high (see Figure Number 9, chapter five, 85 % retention, + or - 10 %).

There is no indication of different responses according to denominational/sectarian followings among Abaluyia peoples such as was indicated by a parallel study of Kikuyu female circumcision practices by Jocelyn Murray. She found clitoridectomy to be more common among Catholic girls than it is with Protestants.[11] Generally Abaluyia Catholics have more shrines and include use of traditional medicines and beer drinking with their ceremonies. But they stand within the Christian tradition against traditionalists in Tiriki when a "sacrifice" is mentioned.

The more obvious contrasts in Abaluyia circumcisions are between traditions. Erosion has occurred in the Kakamega and Tiriki traditions until they have low affinities with the ancient ways while the Bukusu remain strongly attached to the past.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER SIX

[1]Announcement heard by writer at Chief's Baraza, West Bukusu Location, July 1972.

[2]See chapter 3, Bukusu type circumcision for a description of this ceremony, p. 68.

[3]Witnessed by writer on Aug. 12, 1972, in Bokoli Loc.

[4]Refer to Chapter 3, Kakamega type circumcision for traditional context, p. 99.

[5]Interview with Chief James Tsinalo (Nyang'ori Loc.), March 4, 1974. Tsinalo classifies four traditions: Christian and Maragoli (the Maragoli is not conducted in secret) which were influenced by missionaries and Tiriki and Nandi rites which are "traditional," i. e., they reflect the patterns of earlier settlers in the area.

[6]Walter H. Sangree, Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 211.

[7]Interview with Joseph Sambili (Seremi, Tiriki Loc.), April 17, 1973.

[8]Interview with Jackton Kung'a (Nyang'ori Loc.), June 20, 1972.

[9]Observed in Dec. 1975 by writer.

[10]Observed in Dec. 1975 by Dr. Steven Wilhite of Kaimosi Hospital.

[11]Jocelyn Murray, "The Present Status of 'Female Circumcision' among Kikuyu and Embu Secondary Schoolgirls with Reference to the Historical Background," (Mimeographed copy.) University of California at Los Angeles, July 1972. Murray found that girls belonging to the Roman Catholic Church still show a rate of 68 % circumcised, while for Presbyterians the incidence is only 7 %."

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

This study indicates that attempting a construct of cultural configurations is liable to distortion if considered outside the spectrum of change. It intimates that change itself is a significant variant, especially among innovative peoples, since it does not flow evenly among those having a similar linguistic base. Degrees of change are perhaps as significant in a thematic analysis as traditional configurations may be -- even when allowing for the fact that "tradition" is itself evolving.

Documentation of this fact is shown in the "Kakamega" and "Tiriki" developments in circumcision. As the graph in Figure Number 9 indicates, the percentage participation in traditional symbols and acts becomes negligible after the 1940's in these two traditions. These people are no longer traditionalists in the sense that they follow, without variation, some ancient ritual system to retain identity. Circumcision itself is a necessity but the way it is performed shows signs of erosion and manipulation by the Southern Abaluyia.

Circumcision/seclusion symbols have become the focus of cultural stress, not simply reflections of it as functionalists would expect.[1] The last two generations of Kakamega and Tiriki peoples have dared to do just what some theorists say cannot be done to the ritual system of a people.

> No generation would dare to manipulate consciously these rites without regard to the past. The rites as they come from the preceding generation are sufficiently sancrosanct so that the oncoming generation feels that the rites do preserve a meaningful tradition.[2]

When ancestral shrines were removed, apparently circumcision rites ceased "to reflect the social milieu"[3] for Southern Abaluyia and the ceremonies went into decline. Leaders of different philosophies, especially in the Tiriki tradition, then began scrutinizing symbols to extract those which were close to the essence of identity. Traditionalists retained the killing of a goat in the forest, beer parties and use of masks. Christians felt the Imoni (eye) ceremony, secret operations and a concealed seclusion could suffice to be called Tiriki without compromising any religious standards.

The passiveness of Kakamega peoples to erosion in this rite of passage (witnessed by their acceptance of lubao, the operation on the board, i. e., in the hospital) and the popularity of the Christian Tiriki ceremony[4] which denies any place to monsters, nakedness, sacrifices, beer, masks and suggestive talk call into question generalizations drawn from other studies on change. One of these on urban Kenya states, "the deeper an innovation penetrates the cultural levels from the periphery, the more resistant the culture is to change."[5] While this is almost a truism, there are overtones in this study on the Abaluyia for suggesting significantly dissimilar responses to challenges in various cultures. It appears that some societies have a "chameleon" capacity to change when innovations are brought even to the cultural theme level when compared with others. They are able to survive with newly evolved values/identity. Other societies are more rigid, and if attacked, more likely to suffer identity problems when innovation penetrates to core levels in the cultural configuration.

While it is doubtful if the Southern Abaluyia could be characterized, like other cultures have,[6] as experimenters with culture itself

they appear more open to cultural alterations than the Bukusu who juxtaposed traditional elements on the proximate situation every two years. The rapid modification of Southern Abaluyia circumcisions in the 1940's and 1950's apparently came about after the place of ancestors in the socio/cosmological system had been successfully assaulted.[7]

The important point here is evaluating the ramifications of rejection of the ancestral cult by the Southern Abaluyia and retention by kinsmen in the north. It is suggested greater attention be given in future studies to classifying and evaluating openness of micro-cultures to change rather than to simplistically assume values of archaic traditional systems represent a "tribe's" world view. Scales of openness to innovation should be theorized and tested in such studies -- and ultimately become tools of the social sciences. If this is not done, some studies dealing with traditional configurations will rightfully continue to be viewed with disfavor by African governments which suspect racial and cultural bias in scholarship based on Western models.

A. ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESES FORMULATED FOR THIS STUDY

Early in this study hypotheses were designed to measure and analyze the change occurring in the emotional configurations in Abaluyia ritual systems since 1910 A. D. The following hypotheses about cultural themes and change in circumcision rituals were the focus as this study was conducted:

(1) There is a continuity at the cultural theme level among rituals of the traditional circumcisions studied (Bukusu--Kakamega--Tiriki) which contrasts with the variants in actions and symbols related to each tradition.

(2) Cultural themes which were sharply challenged by Christian missions have undergone significant change or have decreased viability within the time span since 1910 A. D. as compared with those which were unchallenged.

Evaluation of the First Hypothesis: Chapter four draws from the descriptions of the third in this thesis and distills six cultural themes thus giving nomenclature to some of the values deemed vital in Abaluyia traditional societies. While chapter three indicated a kaleidoscope of clan and geographic variants so far as circumcision/seclusion activities were concerned, continuity indicating a patterned Abaluyia world-view became discernable in the process of extracting the heuristic "cultural themes" in chapter four.

It appears there is sufficient uniformity[8] at the thematic level to warrant confirmation of the first hypothesis. Of six cultural themes drawn from the traditional circumcision rituals by type (Bukusu--Kakamega--Tiriki), there are two cases where the symbols of a specific circumcision type appear significantly weaker than those in the other two geographic areas studied. This is the case with the "Kakamega" circumcision and its themes of "Extension of Association" and "Promoting Courage and Human Dignity." The virongo relationship[9] is not nearly so strong among Kakamega peoples as the bakoki union pitting all Bukusu men of two circumcision years together,[10] or the bakoji relation which gives Tiriki a firm place in the ruling age-class system.[11] Further, the implements of warriors are present in the Kakamega rituals, but the dynamic appears weak. The negligible resistance of Kakamega peoples to the challenge of colonialism is reflected in the muted expression of these themes.

This weakness among Kakamega peoples in themes which relate to community/identity is reflected where highly individual responses to the requirements of circumcision are allowed. In contrast neither Bukusu nor Tiriki communities approve lubao, the board, i. e., the hospital operation.[12]

But the muffled responses to these themes in the Kakamega tradition is not proof of lack of community. The analysis reveals differences in degree not essence. The Kakamega peoples may have more freedom than Bukusu or Tiriki counterparts -- particularly in reference to circumcision -- but even they have to be circumcised and sublimate personal aspirations to the expectations of the clan.

So continuity is seen at the cultural theme level among rituals of the traditional circumcisions considered which contrasts with the variants in actions and symbols related to each tradition.

Evaluation of the Second Hypothesis: The second hypothesis set forth in this study was not established. It is that, "themes which were sharply challenged by Christian missions have undergone significant change or have decreased viability within the time span since 1910 A. D., as compared with those which were unchallenged." Two unexpected elements contributed to its nullification:

(A) Christian missions did not sharply challenge circumcision rituals. While there were some early indications of the influence missionaries had on symbols and rituals, i. e., they abhorred circumcision as practiced[13] and they attempted to regulate it,[14] their ineffectiveness in challenge was not known when hypotheses were formulated for this study. The terminology of the hypothesis affected

its validity since it was assumed that missionaries had direct influenc on the way circumcision rituals were performed.[15]

(b) A second element contributing to the nullification of this hypothesis is that cultural themes do not show individual reactions to challenges on tradition. The system of each circumcision type seems to be interlocked with its cultural themes having either unified viability (as with the Bukusu circumcision rites) or a common tendency to erode (as with the Southern Abaluyia responses) when subjected to pressure.

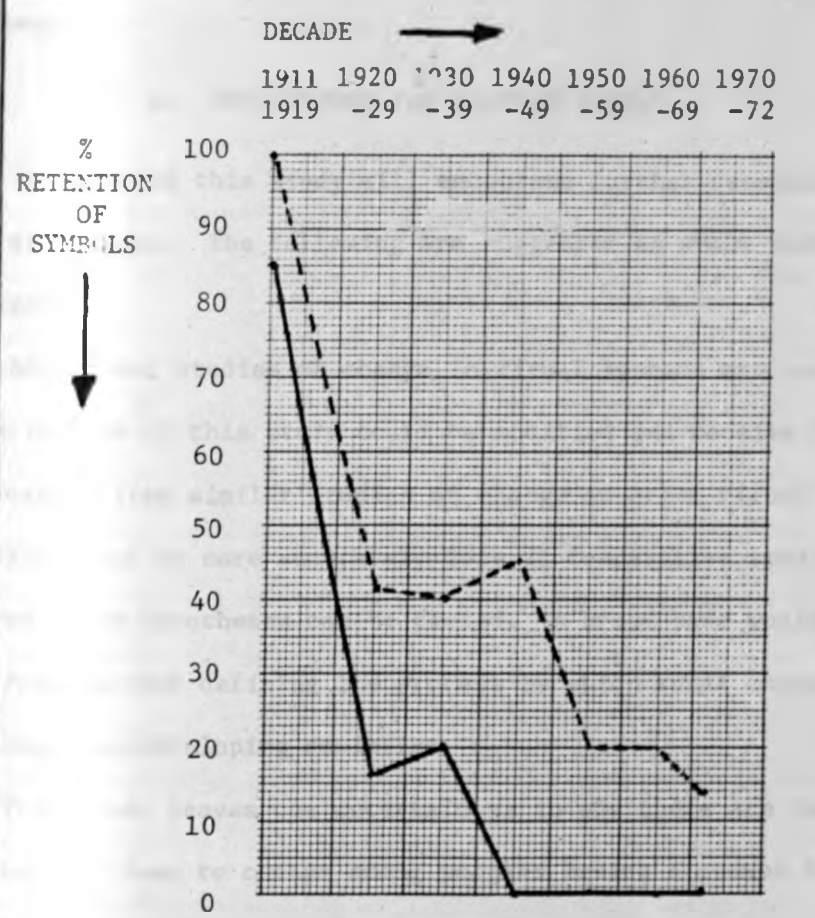
The one occasion where statistics from the "randomized quota" sample[16] warrant analysis of differences in index measurements between what might be considered a "challenged" versus an "unchallenged" theme is seen in Figure Number 16, page 272. There was an effective campaign among Southern Abaluyia to remove ancestral shrines from homes of prominent clansmen.[17] Further, mission pioneers classified ancestors in the rank of demons.[18] These attacks qualify "Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation" as a "challenged" theme. Less confrontation is apparent over the theme "Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation" although there are probably elements in this theme which might have been challenged by missionaries if they had investigated this facet of Abaluyia cosmology.

But in spite of the approximately 20 % higher decadal retention of traditional symbols in the Kakamega area with the less "challenged" theme (Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation) as compared with actions relating to the ancestral cult, there is still no clear indicator of significant differences in the two kinds of themes. The disparity seen in the Kakamega area is not confirmed in the other circumcision types. Note that both percentages (Figure Number 16)

by the 1950's are below 20 % retention of traditionalism and follow the pattern of decline in the Kakamega symbol system from the 1940's (see Figure Number 9). It appears there is uniformity of reaction

FIGURE NUMBER 16

COMPARISON OF RESPONSES TO INDEX OF THE THEME "SEEKING INVOLVEMENT OF SPIRITS IN INITIATION" TO THE INDEX OF THE THEME "MUTING INDIVIDUALISM WITH THREATS OF ANNIHILATION" AMONG RESPONDENTS OF THE KAKAMEGA TYPE CIRCUMCISION BY DECADE



Code:
Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation ———
Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation - -

of cultural themes in each geographical area rather than variation. Because hypothesis two is contradicted, it is suggested that future studies on the interaction of cultural themes start with awareness that they appear to be interlocked in Abaluyia models and may have the same characteristic in other settings.

In summary, there is thematic continuity in Abaluyia circumcision rituals. Also, cultural themes appear to be interlocked so far as development/regression is concerned. There is little or no individual difference in their viability as reflected in this rite of passage.

B. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

It is hoped this study will encourage further research on values and change. The following are suggested as areas needing investigation.

Additional studies of change in ritual systems are needed. The conclusions of this study could be modified and receive further clarification from similar studies of change in other ritual systems. Theorizing could be more accurately done if comparative studies are consulted where hypotheses can be tested. A broad base would also emerge from further defining the process by which rural change is taking place in developing societies.

This study leaves one uncertain as to why there are two disparate reactions to change among peoples having a common linguistic and philosophic background. The reason the Bukusu have retained traditional ways while accepting Christianity/westernism and Southern Abaluyia have rooted up most of their traditional paraphernalia remains unanswered.

One possibility is an untested thesis proposed at the beginning of this study in 1972. It was suggested that revival/Holy Spirit[19] movements which were strong among the Southern Abaluyia might help explain why the relative Puritanism prevailed in respect to traditional activities there. However, like all PhD investigations, this study grew too large for dealing with all the matters originally envisioned and a stimulating possibility was dropped because of needs relating to more primary goals. The fact that studies were done with some 77 Independent denominations in 1972 in Kakamega District (versus only two which had origins in Bungoma District)[20] suggests that a deeply different religious orientation exists between the two and needs to be investigated.

Another pregnant suggestion involves economic considerations. It is known that land pressures vary considerably in the two areas under consideration. Economic factors related to relative abundance of land may explain why the Bukusu feel freer to accept Christianity while retaining shrines and customary practices. The Southern Abaluyia rejection of ancestors as demons, sacrifices as offerings to idols and traditional customs as deception may spring from economic roots,[21] although some of my informants interpret the matter theologically.[22]

These two suggestions (revival groups and economic factors) were discussed in the oral examination for this thesis in 1977 and an interview schedule (see Appendix C) was devised to probe the matter more closely. The result, as the following discussion indicates, was inconclusive as far as questioning elders was concerned and may suggest another study need.

The Bukusu claim their ability to fuse traditionalism with Christianity came from a more sophisticated cosmology than southerners had. They claim the Bukusu concept of Were/Wele (God) gave them an edge over the Southern Abaluyia who worshipped only via misambwa -- ancestral spirits -- and were more intimidated by Europeans. The southerners were nothing but cultural scavangers from the beginning. The Bukusu claim that proof of this rests on the fact that the Maragoli name for God -- Nyasaye -- is borrowed from the Luo.

Southern Abaluyia respond by saying they had the word Were in their vocabularies in pre-colonial times, but it was not accepted as God since there are a spate of Were's even in Bukusu cosmology.[23] Additionally, the Southern Abaluyia claim that when spitting the morning prayers, they spoke the words, "Asayi bwetu," translated "our God"[24] and claim the name Nyasaye came from that Abaluyia origin. There is incredulous shock among these southerners that the Bukusu could claim to be Christians and retain the traditional system.

Another area which warrants investigation is additional cultural themes. The six themes drawn from this study were helpful in seeking the springboard of Abaluyia values, but there are without doubt others. It is suggested that a theme, "Transparency" and probably "Promotion of Hierarchy" and "Promotion of Egalitarianism" among other themes be investigated in a new probe.

The writer would especially like to recommend a study of change in funerary practices among the Abaluyia and/or Luo since 1900 A. D. to help complete the picture of change as reflected in the ritual systems of these peoples.

A thematic study of rituals conducted by religious bodies should aid relating present value systems. Religious societies,

especially in Kakamega District where there are three strong movements to give a comparative cast -- the Catholics, Protestants and Independent movements, could be scrutinized for suppressed cultural themes. The treatment of the new message by different kinds of communities (i. e., those receptive or partially resistant to change) could also be fruitful investigation. Official Catholic, Protestant and Independent church attitudes could be gathered and compared with folk practices of members of these bodies.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations which appear warranted on the basis of this analysis of Abaluyia cultural configurations.

The wealth of affirmative human values inhering in these rituals means attention should be focused on melding favorable thematic emphasis into Kenyan institutional complexes. The writer would like to encourage greater government focus on philosophy reflecting both traditional and modern realities -- while continuing to allow pluralism where both religious freedom and cultural innovation are possible. The newly formed ministry of culture could monitor this emphasis. Certainty that political inclination necessary to conceive a model including the positive values of tradition needs to be seen in comprehensive government directives for societies to promote pride in constructive human expressions such as those seen in these Abaluyia cultures.

Rather than continuing adoption of foreign formats, existing cultural sources should be more widely incorporated into activities of existing institutions. The government would do well not simply to encourage but to give guidance in implementing these ends. Researchers

need to make recommendations about positive social values from traditional and modern sources and suggest means of implementing them into social institutions. An appraisal of everything from Provincial Commissioner's attire to revision of hymnology needs to be taken.

Churches, while allowed to have distinctives, could intensify efforts to incorporate relevant traditional symbols and expressions into their liturgy. Colonial relics in African religion need to be criticized and appropriate symbols need to be introduced rather than imitations of Western evolution. Denominations should be encouraged to revise the concept of mission from one where there is one way communication of a divine message from "superior" to "inferior" cultures to that of reciprocity. "Cultural superiority" blocks symbiotic potential. If, for instance, Africa's cultural ideals were appreciated more, its commitment to the extended family documented in this study could have more potential for promotion to Westerners facing a major crisis in their atomized, unstructured societies.

D. SYNOPSIS

This study has centred on rituals, cultural themes and measurements of indexes of these themes and thus has only an approximate relation to the present value system of peoples among the Abaluyia. Whatever conclusions are drawn cannot be more than informed by the data given by indexes to cultural themes. It is not assumed that there is an absolute correlation between index and theme, much less between cultural themes described and the value system interlocking culture. Indexes of themes would be given a "quasi-scientific" status if a sprinkling of statistics were made normative in interpreting deep philosophic biases of a people. But if the "indexes" are

viewed as indicators of tension on individual cultural themes and used to evaluate evolution in ritual practices, they have a genuine place in interpretation.

Thus materials gathered on traditional rituals need supplementary observations before a master model describing present values can be attempted. Additional data would be needed on the way individuals react to personal crises and the kind of rituals evolving in place of traditions like circumcision. Only then could definitive statements be made about the present world view.

This study has documented three different communal responses to challenges in their ritual systems. It gives an outline of the degree of retention of traditional actions in one rite of passage. In assessing the degree to which the traditional value system of the Abaluyia has changed, one should draw only comparative conclusions. It would appear proper to say that the Southern Abaluyia (Kakamega District) have made greater change in their value systems which have higher indications of tension (i. e., the measurements of "indexes" to themes in Figures 9, 11-15 of chapter five) since European influences began to be felt. The Bukusu of Bungoma District appear to have applied Westernism as a veneer over the traditional system so far as rituals are concerned.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER SEVEN

[1]A case in point is Mumia's circumcision in 1885. After his circumcision, all the aged advisors of his father and Mumia's own brothers were operated upon also. This made them his juniors and deactivated them politically. See W. H. Jones, "Behind My Bishop Through Masai Land to Kavirondo," (London: Church Missionary Archives, Accession No. 267, Unofficial Papers).

[2]Donald R. Jacobs, "The Cultural Themes and Puberty Rites of the Akamba," (unpublished PhD dissertation, New York University, 1961), p. 212.

[3]Ibid., p. 213.

[4]See Figure Number 7 in chapter five, p. 217.

[5]Francis Vincent Tate, "Kangemi: The Impact of Rapid Culture Change on Community and Family," (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nairobi, 1973), p. 389.

[6]See Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language (Greenwich: Fawcett Publications, 1959), p. 84.

[7]See chapter five, "Anti-shrine Campaigns", Section "B", pp. 210ff.

[8]See conclusion of chapter four, p. 194.

[9]See chapter 3, Kakamega type circumcision, p. 103.

[10]See chapter 3, Bukusu type circumcision, pp. 64-65.

[11]See chapter 3, Tiriki type circumcision, p. 130.

[12]Matthew A. Wafula and Committee, "Circumcision Ritual Among the Babukusu," an unpublished paper presented in response to questions by Hilton Merritt at Kanduyi Chief's Centre, East Bukusu Loc., Bungoma, July 20, 1972, p. 4. "Any Bukusu boy circumcised outside his father's home will never be welcomed in the home unless: (a) a ram is slaughtered to cleanse the rest of the family, (b) he is all of a sudden banged over the head and sheds some blood." (p. 4). The writer knows of instances dating back to the 1920's where these actions were not performed (Javan Nandoli's circumcision, Bokoli), but there is community pressure for having circumcision in the father's home.

[13]See Section "A" in chapter five, p. 206.

[14]See Section "A" in chapter five, p. 206.

[15]See Section "A" in chapter five, p. 209.

[16]See Section "D" in chapter five for information on procedures in this sample, p. 219.

[17]See Section "B" of chapter five, p. 210.

[18]Refer to discussion in connection with Map Number 6 in chapter five for documentation, p. 233.

[19]See p. 211 for a short introduction on a significant local revival movement spawned among the Southeastern Abaluyia from Kaimosi under the influence of Chilson, a Quaker missionary.

[20]The two denominations in Bungoma District are: Wokovu African Church (Salvation) which came from the Salvation Army and Pentecostal Christian Universal Church of Kenya which came from the PEFA" denomination. The names of the groups in Kakamega District along with relevant data are in a research folder in the writer's possession.

[21]This is a primary reason suggested by Clifford Wesley Gilpin, "The Church and the Community: Quakers in Western Kenya, 1902-1963," (unpublished PhD dissertation), Columbia University, 1976, p. 333 for Southern Abaluyia acceptance of modern influences.

[22]Interview with Isaya Amuguni (Kakamega, North Maragoli Loc.), Sept. 29, 1978, # 300 saying the intensive confession of sin and closer adherence to "true Christianity" by followers of conservative Protestant missionaries are pivotal. It is his opinion that Independent/Holy Spirit churches are not spiritual -- rather "hunger" has forced men to claim visions authorizing them to start new denominations.

[23]There are at least four Were's: (1) Were Khaba "the higher god," (2) Were Mukhobe, "the god who informs people," also known as Were Murumwa wa bami "god who sent for the governors" -- the Khumuse (see page 282 of this thesis for Omuswali we Kumuse who is at other times called Mukhose, (something like a prophet), (3) Were Malaba, "the river deity," and (4) Were wa Nasali, "the god who guards women when they bear." (The word Nasali refers to a cut like a slit. Women who are born with sexual organs like a slit are guarded by him. Since new life has to pass through the organ which looks like a slit -- he is the guardian deity. This god is also called Were Owelisaya (lisaye, noun, multiplication).

The Southern Abaluyia also point out that men are called Were by the Bukusu, thus the name cannot be too exalted.

[24]Interview with Erastor Ombodo Muganda, (Kakamega, Tiriki Loc.), Sept. 25, 1978, # 404.

APPENDIX A

CULTIC SPECIALISTS AMONG THE BUKUSU

In his thesis, de Wolf theorizes a minimum of social organization among the Bukusu. He says:

> There were no kings, no chiefs or territorial rulers who played roles within an institutional framework of a state-like organization. Age-sets were not used to allocate authority and organize people into councils of warriors and elders.[1]

This study indicates that de Wolf failed to see the place of age-classes or age-sets in the decision-making process. When there was a possible battle or raid the Naitiran (raid leader, a Nandi term) was called by the Omwami Weng'oma (chief of the drum) and instructed on how the warriors were to proceed. The diviner (omung'osi) advised on ways to surprise the enemy and which cows to take first. Then the elders (avagasa) went to the forest and made the warriors take an oath that they would not run away in the battle.[2]

The age-sets of the Bukusu imposed a definite hierarchy among those peoples. Men could not, for instance, enter judicial positions without: (1) being circumcised, (2) and having matured to the point that they were considered elders.[3]

As indicated in Figure Number 17, of eighteen professions differentiated among Bukusu men, nine have been established as being generally restricted to certain clans. Occasionally a man from another clan would show signs of spirit possession (Kumusambwa) "from his mother's blood," i. e., the maternal line and begin practicing as a specialist. But there was a body of

FIGURE NUMBER 17

NON-HEREDITARY AND HEREDITARY OFFICES AMONG THE BUKUSU

Non-hereditary Offices	Hereditary Offices
1. Omwami we Ngoma (Chief of Drum)	1. Omukhebi (Circumciser)
2. Omukasa we Lichabe (Judicial clan elder)	2. Omuliuli (Discoverer of hidden medicine)
3. Omukasa we Njabasi (Clan leader)	3. Omung'osi (Diviner using buffalo tail)
4. Omukasa we Lugova (Walled village leader)	4. Omwilwachi/Omuswali we Kumuse (Guardian of customs/orator after funerals)
5. Omwisayi (Sacrificer)	5. Omubasi (Blacksmith)
6. Naitirian (Raid leader)	6. Omusilikhi (Herbalist)
7. Omukabi (Arbitrator of inheritance)	7. Omukimba (Rainmaker)
8. Omutiling'i (Tutor of circumcision)	8. Omupotoli (Iron smelter)
9. Omutoli we Munda (Diviner of intestines)	9. Omufumu (Diviner of Gourd)

offices which were considered hereditary. Clans which settled in the area earlier had rank over those following.[4] Dundas noted this when he saw Namajana (sic, Majanja) could not wear a leopard skin cloak while another "smaller chief" (in the government's eyes) Maelo (sic, Maiero) did so.[5]

Certain of these functions/offices could be entered when one was a mature man, others only after one was counted an elder (measured by his having circumcised sons who were married). Figure Number 18 differentiates the eighteen professions mentioned earlier into these two categories.

FIGURE NUMBER 18

AGE AT WHICH ONE BEGAN
FUNCTIONS OF OFFICE AMONG THE BUKUSU[6]

Office Entered In Warrior Age-Grade	Office Entered When One Was Counted An Elder
1. Omubasi	1. Omwilwachi/Omuswali we Kumuse
2. Omukhebi	2. Omukabi
3. Naitirian	3. Omwami we Ngoma
4. Omusilikhi	4. Omukasa we Lichabe
5. Omuliuli	5. Omukasa we Njabasi
6. Omung'osi	6. Omukasa we Lugova
7. Omufumu	7. Omuloli we Munda
8. Omutiling'i	8. Omwisayi
9. Omukimba	
10. Omupotoli	

These findings[7] lead to the conclusion that what would be called political/administrative offices today were largely attained on the basis of charisma in the traditional period. A man with aptitude and desire would be a leader/warrior. But with ritual offices where communication with ancestral spirits or clairvoyance was a necessary ingredient, heredity was more important. The one office where both heredity and age was required is that of the Omwilwachi/Omuswali we Kumuse (Guardian of customs/Orator after funerals).

De Wolf's conclusions appear to be over-stated since little research has been conducted on the influence of traditional offices mentioned in the lists of Figures Number 17 and 18. To my knowledge, no researcher of the Abaluyia has investigated, for instance the supra-clan activities of the Omwilwachi/Omuswali we Kumuse. But even from this preliminary investigation

it is obvious that both age and heredity played an important part in the decision-making process and in the social organization of traditional Bukusu society.

FOOTNOTES: APPENDIX A

[1]Jan Jacob de Wolf, "Religious Innovations and Social Change Among the Bukusu," (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1971), p. 55.

[2]Paskali interview (Kimilili Chief's Centre), Feb. 23, 1973, also interview with Enoch Wahoma (Kimilili Loc.), Feb. 21, 1973.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Interview with Javan Nandoli (Bokoli Loc.), April 30, 1973.

[5]Kenneth Dundas, DC/NN/3/2/1, p. 61, Appendix C, Kenya National Archives.

[6]Refer to Figure Number 17 for translation of the names in this chart, p. 281.

[7]Both Figures Number 17 and 18 were presented to and approved by a committee headed by Paskali Nabwana at Kimilili Chief's Centre on Feb. 23, 1973. They were presented in question form to Javan Nandoli on April 30, 1973, and he gave the same responses in classifying each of the eighteen professions. In the interview notes of these two sessions lists of clans which are said to serve the hereditary offices are appended. The data is not presented here because it has not been tested enough to be considered documented.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHANGE IN CIRCUMCISION RITUAL

1. Number of Interview.

2. Circumcision type: (1) Bukusu, (2) Kakamega, (3) Tiriki.

3. Location: (1) Bokoli, (2) Isukha, (3) Idakho, (4) N. Maragoli, (5) S. Maragoli, (6) Tiriki, (7) Nyang'ori.

4. Year Circumcised: (1) Before 1919, (2) 1920-29, (3) 1930-39, (4) 1940-49, (5) 1950-59, (6) 1960-69, (7) 1970-72, (8) Not circumcised, (9) not answered.

5. Age when circumcised: (1) 3 through 9 years, (2) 10-14 years, (3) 15-19 years, (4) 20-24 years, (5) 25 or older, (6) not circumcised, (7) unknown or uncodable.

6. Type circumcision claimed: (1) traditional, (2) Christian with Christian seclusion, (3) Christian with seclusion at home, (4) hospital circumcision, (5) not circumcised.

7. How long in seclusion? (1) 4.0 or more months, (2) 2.0 to 3.9 months, (3) up to 1.9 months, (4) not in seclusion.

8. Why were you in seclusion for that period:

IF LONG	IF SHORTENED
(a) It was traditional	(a) We didn't believe in traditional matters so we shortened it.
(b) The tutors demanded it.	(b) Christian leaders shortened it.
(c) It took that long to heal	(c) We had to get back to school/work.
	(d) Other.

9. Did anyone kill any animals/birds for you in the days before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.

10. Why was/wasn't the animal killed for you before your circumcision?

IF ANIMAL KILLED	IF ANIMAL NOT KILLED
(a) It was traditional	(a) We did not believe in traditional matters.
(b) Animals were killed for others so one was killed for me.	(b) Killing animals had stopped before my circumcision.
(c) We liked meat	(c) We were too poor to kill an animal.
(d) Other	(d) Other.

11. Bukusu--Was Buse (chyme) spread on you before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Was white flour (bwanga) blown on your chest before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Did you wear muhalia/isenende vines when dancing in the evening before the circumcision ceremony? (1) Yes, (2) No.

12. Why did/didn't you?

IF ANSWERED YES	IF ANSWERED NO
(a) It was traditional	(a) We didn't believe in those customs
(b) Everyone else did it so we did also	(b) Church leaders condemned it.
(c) It looked nice	(c) We were too modern/poor.
(d) Other	(d) Other

13. Bukusu--did you bring water to the shrine from the river a day or two before circumcision in the Khuchukhila ceremony? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Did you dance with other initiates in the last part of your seclusion to kill a bull which was eaten? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--(3) Not answered.

14. Bukusu--After your circumcision did you have food offered to you, then withdrawn a number of times before having it placed in your mouth. Then were you told to spit it out before you started eating in seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Did the circumciser pour medicine on you on the day of cleansing? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Did a circumcised woman anoint you in the Bamwayi ceremony with butter and seeds? (1) Yes, (2) No.

15. Why did/didn't this happen to you?

IF IT HAPPENED	IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) It was traditional	(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Others did it so we imitated them.	(b) Church leaders condemned it, so we stopped it.
(c) It was fun.	(c) We had to go to school/work.
(d) Other.	(d) Other.

16. Bukusu--Did you wear intestinal linings from cattle killed the day you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Were you anointed with milk and honey or butter and simsim when coming out? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Would any person who might have passed in front of you and the elders as you went to the seclusion hut the first time have been endangered of being killed? (1) Yes, (2) No.

17. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) Because others did it.
(c) Because it was exciting.
(d) Other.

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned it so we stopped it.
(c) It was considered foolish/ we didn't have time.
(d) Other.

18. Bukusu--Was the blood, foreskin and mud from the top of your head collected from your operation and buried by an old person? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Did you wear a mask/hood going to your knees after circumcision? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Did you wear a mask in seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.

19. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) Because others did it.
(c) It was fun/exciting.
(d) Other.

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned it, so we stopped it.
(c) It seemed foolish.
(d) Other.

20. Bukusu--Was everything you used in seclusion burned when you left the hut? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Were witches (avalogi) given opportunity to confess during the rituals of your time? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Were witches (avalogi) cursed in your circumcision? (1) Yes, (2) No.

21. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) Others did it.
(c) It was fun/smart.
(d) Other.

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned it so we stopped it.
(c) It was foolish.
(d) Other.

22. Bukusu--Did your father ever challenge you before you were circumcised to see if you were ready for the operation? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--What would have happened to any initiate who grabbed the circumciser's hand when you were circumcised? (1) Fine assessed, (2) No fine assessed.
Tiriki--Did you learn to do the Imoni ceremony the evening before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.

23. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) Because we were expected to do so/jealousy of parent.
(c) It was exciting/fun.
(d) Other

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned it so we didn't do it.
(c) It seemed foolish.
(d) Other.

24. Bukusu--Were you mudded before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Did you have to confess errors of childhood before clan/church elders before or after you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Did you confess before the "monster" and elders of circumcision or before church elders when you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.

25. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) Others did it so we did it.
(c) It was exciting.
(d) Other.

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned confession except before themselves.
(c) It seemed foolish.
(d).Other.

26. Bukusu--Were any fines assessed of those in your seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Were any of the initiates of circumcision beaten in seclusion because they were slow or refused to obey when you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Were any initiates beaten in seclusion because they did not learn the secrets of the tribe when you were in seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.

27. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) It was expected.
(c) Our tutors were mean and enjoyed troubling us.
(d) Other.

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We did not believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned it, so we did not do it.
(c) It seemed foolish.
(d) Other.

28. Bukusu--Was your mother allowed to observe your circumcision? (1) Yes, (2) No. (3) Other.
Kakamega--Were you allowed to greet older men when you were in seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--(3) Not answered.

29. Omitted.

30. Bukusu--Did your maternal uncle kill a bull for you or give an animal to you when you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Was there a time when elders and initiates ate together before seclusion was closed? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Did a circumcised woman anoint you in the bamwayi ceremony with butter and seeds? (1) Yes, (2) No.

31. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) Our clan expected it.
(c) It provided meat for feast/ it was fun.
(d) Other.

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned it so it wasn't done.
(c) It seemed foolish.
(d) Other.

32. Bukusu--Was the Sise ceremony confirming your mother's maturity performed before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Did you put white clay on a circumcision mate and call him virongo when you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--(3) Not answered.

33. Why did/didn't this occur?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) Others did it so we did.
(c) It joined us as relations.
(d) Other.

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned it so our fathers stopped it.
(c) It seemed foolish/backward.
(d) Other.

34. Bukusu--did people see you stand naked when you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Were you circumcised naked before a group? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Tiriki--Did you dance naked in front of the community before you were circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No.

35. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED
(a) It was traditional.
(b) Others were circumcised openly, so I was also.
(c) We could show off that way.
(d) Other.

IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Church leaders condemned it so it was stopped.
(c) It seemed foolish/backward.
(d) Other.

36. Bukusu--Were you given a spear and shield when you came out of seclusion? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Did you participate in mock battles with warriors or did you attempt to spear the gate of the seclusion area as you left? (1) Yes, (2) No. (3) No answer.
Tiriki--Did you have to go into "enemy territory" the night before leaving seclusion and pretend to burn an enemy village? (1) Yes, (2) No.

37. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED	IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) It was traditional.	(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) Others did it so we did.	(b) Church leaders condemned it so we didn't do it.
(c) It was fun.	(c) It seemed foolish/ wasn't time.
(d) Other.	(d) Other.

38. Bukusu--Did you dance before circumcision to prepare yourself for the operation? (1) Yes, (2) No.
Kakamega--Were there any times in your circumcision when the initiates sang about secret things and exposed wrongdoings in their songs? (1) Yes, (2) No, (3) No answer.
Tiriki--Did you attempt to break your headgear in the dancing before the beer of the back? (1) Yes, (2) No.

39. Why did/didn't this happen?

IF IT HAPPENED	IF IT DID NOT HAPPEN
(a) It was traditional.	(a) We didn't believe in those matters.
(b) It was taught so we did it.	(b) Church leaders condemned it, so we didn't do it.
(c) It was fun.	(c) It appeared foolish.
(d) Other.	(d) Other.

40. Are there any men of your age who have been circumcised in the hospital from your location? (1) Yes, (2) No. (3) No answer.

41. Why were these men circumcised in the hospital?
(a) Because their fathers considered traditional circumcision bad.
(b) Because church leaders told them to do it there.
(c) Because hospital circumcision was cleaner.
(d) Other.

42. Are there any men of your age in your location who have not been circumcised? (1) Yes, (2) No. (3) Not answered/ other.

43. Did you become a Christian before or after circumcision? (1) Before, (2) After, or never, (3) Not circumcised.

44. What was your church when you were circumcised? (1) Catholic, (2) Protestant, (3) African Independent Church, (4) Traditional or Dini ya Misambwa, (5) No religious affiliation and other.

45. Did you leave it and join another church? (1) Yes, (2) No.

46. When did you leave it? (1) Before 1941, (2) 1941-1950, (3) 1951-1960, (4) 1961-1970, (5) 1971-1972, (6) Did not leave.

47. What is your church now? (1) Catholic, (2) Protestant, (3) African Independent Church, (4) Traditional or Dini ya Misambwa, (5) No religious affiliation.

48. Was the way you were circumcised affected by what missionaries/church leaders said? (1) Yes, (2) No, (3) Not answered, other.

49. Did your church make you "do repentance" after you were circumcised because you had broken a church rule? (1) Yes, (2) No, (3) Don't know or didn't answer.

50. How many generations back did your paternal ancestors come to this location? (1) 1, (2) 2, (3) 3 or more, (4) Not answered.

51. Which of the following forced traditional circumcision to change more than others?
    (1) The government.
    (2) Education/schools.
    (3) The way tribes are mixed up.
    (4) Churches/missions/Christianity.
    (5) Not answered.

52. Chose a most objectionable activity connected with traditional circumcision:
    (1) Seclusion period of up to six months.
    (2) Aggressive training for warriorhood given in seclusion.
    (3) Worship at shrines connected with circumcision.
    (4) Dancing naked by initiates.
    (5) Curses put on those who did not act properly.
    (6) Many precautions to keep someone from bewitching the initiates.
    (7) No answer.

53. Choose a second most objectionable activity from the list above (Nos. 1-7).

54. Choose a most desirable activity connected with traditional circumcision/seclusion.
    (1) It gave initiates an opportunity to be brave.
    (2) It taught initiates how men ought to act.
    (3) It joined initiates with men/ancestors.
    (4) It helped fathers and sons get along better.
    (5) Ceremonies helped initiates be fertile.
    (6) It helped a man have more friends.
    (7) No answer.

55. Choose a second desirable activity from the list above (1-7).

APPENDIX C

A STUDY OF INDIGENOUS INTERPRETATIONS RELATING TO CULTURAL THEMES SUGGESTED IN CHAPTERS FOUR AND FIVE OF THIS THESIS.

At the suggestion of examiners of the oral committee dealing with this thesis, a review of the interpretations of chapters four and five was structured. The goal was to inject more explanation by Abaluyia elders into that section. The committee suggested that ideas from theorists concerning "vital force," among other things, should be reviewed since indigenous conceptions about power and the ancestral spirits suggested personal categories.

A schedule of nine interviews was structured under the oversight of Dr. Samuel Kibicho of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. There were eleven interviews because of requirements for two short queries to supplement those scheduled. The goal--as suggested--was to go beyond descriptive levels. Initially informants usually responded, "That's traditional" when asked for an explanation. But there were some who gave more incisive answers under probing. When such a reason was given, an attempt was made to test it with other informants to determine if the answer was an individual opinion or if it was a commonly held position. An example of this kind of probing can be illustrated by noting question number 5 and those from 132-35 in the typed copies of these questionnaires. There one informant said that Mango, the early Bukusu leader who re-introduced the

circumcision rituals, did so because he had a barren wife.[1] In fact, the suggestion did not hold up in this instance and cannot be used as a buttress of the theme of promoting fecundity in chapters four and five.

An additional stricture on the interviews involved review of the first interview by Dr. Kibicho and suggestions for additional questions. This was intended to: (1) assure more pointed inquiries and (2) keep questions from being coercive. The first interview was reviewed in this fashion and suggestions made. However, information was received by post on the date that the final interview was conducted. Thus a short additional interview with Erastor Muganda (numbers 342-346 in the typed interview schedule) was conducted in response to the suggestions by Dr. Kibicho.

The material which follows reflects the change which has been made in the thesis in chapters four and five since the time of presentation for orals. Collation comes from the 504 questions gotten in the interviews mentioned earlier in the appendix and from reactions of the orals committee. It also reflects the continued reading and reflecting on Abaluyia cosmology.

Originally six cultural themes were suggested in the thesis and passed scrutiny to the point of oral examination. These were:

1. Seeking Participation of Ancestral Spirits.
2. Channeling Spiritual Powers to Productive Fecundity.
3. Suppressing Sorcery and Witchcraft.
4. Acknowledging a Limited Amount of Good.
5. Seeking Extension of Association.
6. Promoting Courage and Human Dignity.

Some reservations about the terminology and thrust of the first theme was expressed in the examination. Minor changes were also made in terminology of themes two and three. Major questions were reserved for the fourth theme, Acknowledging a Limited Amount of Good. The response of aged Abaluyia informants along with insights gathered since the time of the oral examination led to the following title revisions of the six cultural themes (those which are underlined have been changed):

1. Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation.
2. Invoking Spirits in Promotion of Fecundity.
3. Suppressing Witchcraft.
4. Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation.
5. Seeking Extension of Association.
6. Promoting Courage and Human Dignity.

Change in the First Theme: The rationale for change in titles of themes follows. It became apparent that the "covenantal" aspect of ceremonies relating to the theme on ancestral spirits and the fact that aspects of a classic rite-of-passage were involved justified sharpening terminology. The basic thrust is the same but the reason for the behaviour is more clearly seen in the new format, "Seeking Involvement of Spirits in Initiation."

Change in the Second Theme: The change in terminology from "Channeling Spirit Power to Productive Fecundity" to "Invoking Spirits in Promotion of Fecundity" is to avoid assumption of a fluid, pervasive "power" in Abaluyia cosmology apart from the presence of spirits and divinities.

Change in the Third Theme: A minor change in theme three relegates sorcery to the theme which follows. Enough practical distinction appears between activities relating to witchcraft

and sorcery to justify the separation.[2] The first is criminal activity of depraved individuals while the second is generally for positive ends such as counter-magic (see page 176 of this thesis). Witchcraft involves those who have inherited a nature which inevitably leads to attempts to kill and destroy. On the other hand, sorcery becomes negative only when base emotions such as jealousy or anger reign. Sorcery takes on a dangerous tinge when economic disparities and competition increases. Some activities of circumcision/seclusion are aimed at witchcraft per se, while others are directed at peers who may turn to destructive actions because of jealousy of one's success. Theme three deals with the first of these problems--witchcraft.

Change in the Fourth Theme: The theme entitled "A Limited Amount of Good" giving a reason for opposing rich individuals was originally proposed at this juncture. In that theory the amount of power--not simply physical resources--available is limited and is strained by abnormal or singularly successful drains on it. According to the theory of "Limited Good":

> . . .all the desired things of life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety, exist in finite quantities and are always in short supply.[3]

But scrutiny of the theory has led to its being challenged in the Abaluyia context. Although some of the mechanisms for dealing with aggressive peoples are similar in the Abaluyia situation with those of "closed Indian societies" of Mexican mountains, other matters are not apropos. All the resources

supposedly restricted in this theory are not bound in Abaluyia thinking. They do not believe the following are "limited resources": land,[4] friendship,[5] manliness,[6] and respect.[7] Questions put to Abaluyia exegetes about the need to "ration" these brought negative or incredulous responses. But there is belief about debilitative competition regarding: adultrous relations with another man's wife,[8] and the birth of twins.[9]

Also--and perhaps more crucial--limited good exponents consider "resources and power" quite impersonal, perhaps even in an abstract philosophical sense. In Abaluyia cosmology the power complex is, by contrast, intensely personal. The anthropological ideal "mana"[10] or Smith's suggested "dynamism"[11] or even Tempels' "vital force"[12] have not proven compatible with indigenous exegesis. Other studies have established that for Bantu-speaking peoples "being is force"[13] i. e., meaning and identity ebb and flow in proportion to one's fortune. And while there are elements of sympathetic magic in the activities of the Abaluyia (as there is with all peoples), the most important mystical powers come from ancestral spirits mentioned in earlier themes in the chapter on interpretation--4.

These reservations about the theory of "Limited Good" should not detract from the fact that an obviously rich person in Abaluyia clans is considered a target for extermination. It is almost axiomatic that one more fortunate than peers becomes an object of sorcery.[14] Abaluyia culture exhibits tension at this point where: (1) every man wants to become wealthy/fertile/successful and eventually to father a new clan (that is the route to

traditional immortality) and (2) there is a suppressant to individualism which says the greatest good is the ongoing of the community.[15]

Imposing strictures on competition and promoting moderation--even if it involves the threat of sorcery against those who exceed the norm--profoundly affects manipulative efforts in both economic and social spheres. Strangers to this orientation are impressed by the fact that a community-wide paralysis in respect to innovation is possible. So long as there is belief in the danger of destruction by sorcery--a degree of obstruction exists. But to those living in the context, there is a paradoxical comfort in conformity in contrast to the fear of being marked as ambitious or successful and thus subject to sorcery.

The theme "Muting Individualism with Threats of Annihilation" attempts to promote an ideal, progressive society where debilitative rivalry is suppressed. Hopefully it captures the dynamic of encouraging conformity of large groups (usually circumcision age-sets) who pass through stages of life successfully. This theme deals with much of the same phenomena as did "Limited Good" theory, but perhaps without the same problems in the Abaluyia context.

Other Themes: The questions of this study did not significantly affect the last two themes of chapters four and five so data presented on these points has not been changed.

FOOTNOTES--APPENDIX c

[1]These interviews were conducted from Sept. 11 until Oct. 8, 1978, under the title "Interviews on Cultural Themes." They are typed and have been used in collating this appendix. Dr. Samuel G. Kibicho had access to them in directing the revision. The interviews are in the possession of the writer. Names of people interviewed will be given at the end of the footnotes of this appendix.

[2]Gunter Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 132.

[3]George M. Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good," American Anthropologist, 67: 1965, p. 296.

[4]Questions number 73 and 285 confirm the impression that for 2/3 of the study area (Bukusu and Northern Kakamega areas) land pressures are recent things. There has been intense competition among the Abaluyia of the south since the beginning of the Colonial era. See Clifford Wesley Gilpin, "The Church and the Community: Quakers in Western Kenya, 1902-1963," (unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1976), p. 333, for confirmation of this conclusion.

[5]See number 80 of the "Cultural themes" schedule for confirmation.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]The sickness of competition, Ishira, where the spirits or blood of the two men engage in combat when they are intimate with the same woman appears to be universally believed among the Abaluyia, see no. 235-36 of the "Cultural Themes" interviews. Note that the society is so "male oriented" that a man can have many different mates without being endangered. This may point out belief in man's having more mystical power from ancestral spirits than women do because they have no secure place in the ritual system.

[9]Twins are so "abnormal" that they make the mother taboo for months. Her shadow can't fall on livestock or other people without endangering them. Her blood is believed hot or heavy. Even her using milk from a cow is believed to make the animal go dry. See number 451 of the "Cultural Themes" interviews.

[10]John Mbiti, "The Heritage of Traditional Religions," Kenya Churches Handbook, eds., David Barrett and others, (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973), p. 293.

[11]Edwin W. Smith, African Beliefs and Christian Faith (London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1936), p. 79.

[12]Placide Tempels, Bantu Philosophy (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959), pp. 30, 31, 84, 85. [Colin King translator from the French].

[13]Alexis Kagame, "A Bantu Philosophy," English version by Fr. J. O'Donohue of Makarere University, October 1973, [Available in Archives of Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Nairobi, p. 1].

[14]An example of this thinking is seen on pages 64 and 179 of this thesis where babakoki (age-mates) of the father of an initiate feel justified in demanding gifts from the family since there has been a successful initiation. If the father refuses, they curse the initiate without feeling any guilt. See also Wagner, op. cit., pp. 135-38, for case studies in the same context. Interview with Zedekia Muzungu (Tiriki Loc.), Oct. 7, 1978, # 489, 491 and 495 for dangers faced by a wealthy person.

[15]Examples of inculcating this ideal are found in the following activities of circumcision; on page 98 of this thesis Kakamega initiates have to act in concord during the months of seclusion, on page 110 the same is true of Tiriki initiates, on page 83 Bukusu initiates are exhorted to be socially minded on coming out and perhaps even the symbolic action of offering and withdrawing food to initiates on p. 78 is an indication they must accept the rules imposed by the community to proceed into manhood.

SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS FOR REVIEW

OF CULTURAL THEMES
(Chapters 4 & 5 of thesis)

Harron Wahongu, Bukusu, September 11, 1978, questions # 1-88.
Clement Waswa, Bukusu, Sept. 19, 1978, questions # 89-130.
Akatonia Maganda, Bukusu, Sept. 20, 1978, questions # 131-173.
Joseph Masipo, Bukusu, Sept. 20, 1978, questions # 174-182.
Daudi Omwera, Kakamega, Sept. 29, 1978, questions # 183-251.
Joseph Musimbi, Kakamega, Sept. 29, 1978, questions # 252-290.
Isaya Amuguni, Kakamega, Sept. 29, 1978, questions # 291-341.
Erastor Muganda, Kakamega, Oct. 8, 1978, questions # 342-346.
Erastor Ombodo, Tiriki, Sept. 25, 1978, questions # 347-405.
Daudi Mafwa, Tiriki, Oct. 6, 1978, questions 406-467.
Zedekia Muzungu, Tiriki, Oct. 7, 1978, questions 468-504.

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