

**INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL TO ACCOMPANY**

# Rites of Passage: Videocases of Traditional African Peoples



**Mary Ann Watson, Ph.D.**  
**Suki Montgomery, M.A.**

**The Colorado Group**  
**Mary Ann Watson, Ph.D.**  
**Mark Groth**  
**Suki Montgomery, M.A.**  
**with**  
**Richard K'okul, Ph.D.**  
**Kenya Consultant and Co-Producer**





# Table of Contents

|  |                             |      |
|--|-----------------------------|------|
| <b>Preface</b>   |                             | v    |
| <b>Acknowledgments</b>   |                             | vii  |
| <b>The Colorado Group</b>  |                             | viii |
| <br>   |                             |      |
| <b>Introduction: Rites of Passage: Videocases of Traditional African Peoples</b> |                             | 1    |
| <b>Map 1: Africa</b>   |                             | 3    |
| <b>Map 2: Kenya Provinces and Towns</b>  |                             | 5    |
| <b>Map 3: Kenya Peoples</b>  |                             | 7    |
| <br>   |                             |      |
| <b>Ethnic Groups</b>   |                             |      |
| <b>The Kikuyu</b>  |                             | 9    |
| <b>The Kuria</b>   |                             | 11   |
| <b>The Luo</b>   |                             | 13   |
| <b>The Luhya</b>   |                             | 15   |
| <b>The Maasai</b>  |                             | 17   |
| <b>The Mijikenda</b>   |                             | 19   |
| <b>The Swahili</b>   |                             | 21   |
| <br>   |                             |      |
| <b>Rites of Passage – Tape 1</b>   |                             |      |
| <b>Birth</b>   | <b>Introduction</b>         | 23   |
|  | <b>Birth</b>                | 23   |
|  | <b>Discussion Questions</b> | 25   |
| <br>   |                             |      |
| <b>Naming</b>  | <b>Introduction</b>         | 27   |
|  | <b>Naming</b>               | 27   |
|  | <b>Discussion Questions</b> | 28   |
| <br>   |                             |      |
| <b>Circumcision</b>  | <b>Introduction</b>         | 29   |
|  | <b>Circumcision</b>         | 29   |
|  | <b>Discussion Questions</b> | 31   |
| <br>   |                             |      |
| <b>Rites of Passage – Tape 2</b>   |                             |      |
| <b>Marriage</b>  | <b>Introduction</b>         | 33   |
|  | <b>Marriage</b>             | 33   |
|  | <b>Discussion Questions</b> | 35   |
| <br>   |                             |      |
| <b>Elderhood</b>   | <b>Introduction</b>         | 37   |
|  | <b>Elderhood</b>            | 37   |
|  | <b>Discussion Questions</b> | 38   |
| <br>   |                             |      |
| <b>Death</b>   | <b>Introduction</b>         | 39   |
|  | <b>Death</b>                | 39   |
|  | <b>Discussion Questions</b> | 41   |
| <b>Addresses of Kenya Participants</b>   |                             | 42   |
| <b>References</b>  |                             | 43   |



## **Preface**

This Instructor's Guide is designed to assist you in using Rites of Passage: Videocases of Traditional African Peoples as a teaching and learning tool. I have included background information on each of the peoples and cultures that have been included in the film package as well as brief biographical information on each of the interviewees. In addition, I have added maps, discussion questions, and reference materials. The maps of Kenya allow the reader to visualize the route of our travels as well as the location of the interviews. The discussion questions and reference materials will support classroom dialogue as well as provide additional reading and resource material as desired.

I began developing Rites of Passage: Videocases of Traditional African Peoples following the completion of three previous video series: Patients as Educators (Prentice-Hall, 1992), Videocases in Human Sexuality (McGraw-Hill, 1996), and Videocases in Human Development (McGraw-Hill, 1998). In anticipation of a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program in Kenya for summer 1998, I consulted with professors in both the United States and Kenya who were teaching courses related to human development. In addition, I reviewed text and resource materials on cross-cultural issues in human development, and received reviewers' comments on the list of topics that I created.

With a list of six potential rites of passage, I contacted Dr. Richard K'okul, a professor in Kenya with extensive experience with Kenyan ethnic group studies, who assisted in pre-arranging interviews for our series. The persons and groups selected each gave written, informed consent to the use of the video for educational purposes, were paid a small honorarium as a token of our appreciation, and were interviewed and filmed for 30-60 minutes. In many ways, the next step was the most difficult: selecting the final 12-15 minutes from the original 45-60! Finally, the task was complete with segments of twenty-two interviews on six topics, with introductory graphics and comments.

For the purposes of this video series, we have divided the course of a traditional African life into six segments; three segments from birth to adolescence (Tape 1), and three segments in adulthood (Tape 2). Each segment describes a rite of passage – birth, naming, circumcision, marriage, elderhood, and death – which is commonly ritualized and celebrated in the traditional African villages. Each segment features excerpts from real persons' lives as they talk with us about personal issues that have had particular significance for them. Each portion also includes some traditional African music and/or dance segments related to the observed ritual. These people are the educators in this series. We appreciate their willingness to open their lives to teach us about their beliefs, feelings, and concerns on these very important topics.

The organizing principle guiding this project is to provide American students with dynamic slices of real human experience, particularly experience with persons who may appear or act differently. I want students to see beyond the masks, beyond the clothing, beyond the superficial difference of culture to see the similarities of the human experience worldwide. I discovered that one of the most powerful ways to change the existing prejudice related to differences is to meet real people through the medium of video. We can best understand the ways human beings make sense of things by not making assumptions, but by

listening and observing, and resisting the temptation to reach conclusions before gathering information.

I invite you to join me as co-investigators fascinated by the complexities and richness of human behavior.

Mary Ann Watson

## **Acknowledgments**

I have enjoyed the working relationships with my editor at Prentice-Hall, Nancy Roberts, as well as faculty colleagues, both in the United States and Kenya. Special thanks go to Dr. Richard K'okul who coordinated the effort in Kenya and provided enthusiastic support for the project. Two colleagues, Kenyan-born Dr. Vincent Khapoya, Professor of Political Science at Michigan's Oakland University, and Dr. Linda Lang-Peralta, Assistant Professor of English at Metropolitan State College of Denver, carefully edited the manuscript for accuracy. I am grateful for their care and consideration. Gratitude is expressed to two Fulbright-Hays Group Projects colleagues, Ms. Sutton Casey and Ms. Gloria Waggoner, who accompanied our Kenyan film team and served as on-site photographers for the project. I am indebted to the Fulbright-Hays Groups Projects Abroad Program from the U.S. Department of Education and Metropolitan State College of Denver for funding my academic experience in Kenya and providing the opportunity for me to pursue my individual video-teaching project. The essential ingredient in this effort, of course, was the spirited cooperation of the persons who were filmed for this video project. We were openly welcomed by them and made to feel very comfortable in their midst. I am deeply touched by their enthusiastic response and their dedication to the success of this process.

## **The Colorado Group**

Mary Ann Watson, Ph.D. (Senior Producer) is a senior faculty member at The Metropolitan State College of Denver with teaching experience at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Her post-doctoral work at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine laid the foundation for her work as a private practitioner, specializing in sexology and thanatology. Her research and writing interests have culminated in textbooks, workbooks, video series, and other materials for college social science courses.

Videographer and Film Editor, Mark Groth, is associated with the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center focusing his efforts through the School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry.

Suki Montgomery, MA, Project Editor, is pursuing her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at the University of Denver. She has coordinated this *Instructor's Manual*, which includes editing the general information on rites of passage, and writing the discussion questions.

Richard K'okul, Ph.D. (Co-Producer and Kenya Consultant) is a senior faculty member at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya. His doctoral work was completed at the University of Helsinki in Finland. He has teaching experience at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and is presently serving as Chairperson of the Department of Foods, Nutrition, and Dietetics at Kenyatta University. As a human development and nutrition specialist, he has had extensive experience in the remote villages and has established many ties with leaders of several of the cultural groups of Kenya.





# **rites of passage: videocases of traditional African peoples**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### Why Kenya?

Africa is a continent of contrasts. Kenya mirrors these contrasts. Its population represents the vast cultural, occupational, and linguistic diversity that can be found in Africa – forty-two cultural groups, including pastoral nomads, prosperous agriculturalists, traditionally urban dwellers; as well as Bantu speakers, Nilotic speakers, and speakers of numerous Cushitic languages. Kenya is regarded as the cradle of humanity based on the antiquity of fossils excavated in several parts of the country. Additionally, Kenya's history has also been significantly impacted by the legacies of European, Asian, and Arab settlers. Thus there are a myriad of lessons to learn on multicultural issues.

### Why preserve the traditions?

All of the forty-two ethnic groups represented in Kenya are making adaptations to progress as it is defined throughout the world. Education is valued by all of these groups. Each group indicates that it wants its children to have a better life than the previous generation. Even though the population of Kenya is still predominantly rural, (73 percent versus 27 percent urban), those individuals in each group who have ventured beyond their home village to work or study in an urban center are revered and often treated as heroes. They have ventured beyond the bounds of the familiar and are seen as special by their ethnic groups. Wherever the individual travels, he is still seen as a member of his ethnic community and his home village where he has established his roots. The underlying message wherever we traveled in Kenya, from the major cities of Nairobi and Mombasa, to the remote areas of Nyanza and the eastern provinces, was that traditional songs, dances, rituals, and human ties should not be lost, but celebrated and maintained. In the various cultural groups of Kenya, every aspect of life has a custom, a practice, or a rite attached to it. In traditional Kenya, one begins life with the observation of rites and parts with these rites only after he is

returned to the soil. Progress will come, but the beauty of Kenyan peoples and their traditions should be maintained in all their glory and splendor.

Because traditional religions permeate many of the facets of life in Kenya, there is often little distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and the non-religious. Through modernization these traditional religions do not remain exactly as they had been fifty to one hundred years ago, but they are by no means becoming extinct. In times of celebration and crisis, they come to the surface, or people revert to them in secret. Traditional religions are not primarily for the individual but for the larger community or ethnic group of which the individual is a part. Religion in African society is written – not on paper – but in people’s hearts, minds, rituals, oral history, and music. Each person is a religious carrier.

For purposes of this video series, seven of the forty ethnic groups of Kenya have been selected for a closer look. The seven groups are the Kikuyu, the Kuria, the Luo, the Luhya, the Maasai, the Mijikenda, and the Swahili. These seven groups have been chosen based on their populations, their geographical diversity, and the traditional expressions of their rituals. In this series we will have the opportunity to listen firsthand to the music, as well as talk to representatives of these groups as they describe their rites of passage.

Map #1: Africa





Map #2: Kenya Provinces and Towns





Map #3: Kenya Peoples





## THE ETHNIC GROUPS

### THE KIKUYU

The largest ethnic community in Kenya is the Kikuyu, whose estimated 3.5 million people have spread all across the country – in business, politics, agriculture, and industry. Made up of nine clans or families, the traditional homelands of the Kikuyu stretch all the way from the suburbs of Nairobi through Murang'a and Nyeri to the foothills of the sacred abode of *Ngai* (God) at Mount Kenya. They are believed to have inhabited this area by the middle of the sixteenth century. This tribe began, says the creation legend, in a sacred grove of fig trees near Murang'a, where the founder of the tribe, *Gikuyu*, was sent by God to meet *Mumbi*, the beautiful mother of all the Kikuyu. Their nine daughters (ten in some sources) are the mothers of the tribe's nine clans. (Kikuyus are not accustomed to mentioning living things by exact numbers, for they believe that this could be taboo or bring a bad omen to whatever was being counted.)

The measure of wealth among the Kikuyu is land; what cattle are to the Maasai, land is to the Kikuyu – the only measure of wealth, prosperity, and happiness.

It was British colonization which separated many of the Kikuyu lands from their Kikuyu owners, and it was this grievance above all which led to the Mau Mau rebellion – mainly disaffected Kikuyu who took to the forest to become guerrillas – and led to Kenya's independence from the British in 1963. This independence was proclaimed under the leadership of one of the most traditional yet progressive Kikuyu elders – Mzee Jomo Kenyatta – who became independent Kenya's first president.

Jomo Kenyatta's first book, Facing Mount Kenya, describes in detail Kikuyu culture as it had developed and appeared in 1938 at the book's publication. The Kikuyu culture has rested on several tenets and practices – among them female and male circumcision, warriorhood, polygamy, and elderhood. Circumcision for males was necessary if a youth was to join the ranks of warriors and become one of the elders, a generation of age-cohorts joined by their common role in the culture. The normal age for a boy to be circumcised was from fifteen to eighteen years; a girl was circumcised after her first menstruation between

twelve and fifteen years. For the boy, circumcision was a public ceremony, to make certain that no candidate showed any signs of fear or cowardice. After circumcision, the male was to move from his mother's hut and build his own within her compound. For the females, circumcision, the act of cutting off the clitoris, was a private affair, and meant to reduce the sex drive of the female as she matured. After both boys and girls had been healed from the circumcision, they were admitted to the membership of a privileged class of manhood and womanhood. (Female circumcision today is controversial. Many Kikuyu have begun to consider the elimination of the practice even though it still exists in many of the households and communities.)

Warriors trained for physical duties and performed tasks assigned by their elders. Senior warriors, the oldest of the warriors, were allowed to marry, after which they were ready to become junior and then senior elders.

The Kikuyu were predominantly agriculturalists. Most of the crops were for home consumption, but a portion was for trade with pastoralist groups. The men cleared the land; the women cultivated the land. This practice continues today as Kikuyu men are more likely to work away from the farms as their wives maintain and harvest the land.

## **THE KURIA**

Nowhere does the past linger more vividly with the present than in western Kenya, close to the shores of the world's second largest freshwater lake, Lake Victoria. Here is the home of the Kuria, in the Nyanza Province, in the southwestern corner of Kenya. The Kuria live in a wedge of hills bounded by the Maasai Mara. Even now, few roads lead to this remote and fertile location. Made up of seventeen clans, the Kuria trace their origins back to the neighboring Gusii people, saying that they came from the north (Egypt), and settled in their present location on the eastern shores of Lake Victoria in the sixteenth century. The majority of the Kuria – about 100,000 in Kenya – live across the border in Tanzania.

The Kuria are known for being notorious cattle rustlers, even more so than their neighbors the Maasai. The way of life has shaped the architecture of their homes, which are fashioned on the lines of a fortress. These housing compounds are made up of huts of many units for members of the same family. Each hut was linked by a stout-connecting fence made of poles and thorn branches, with the center of the housing compound forming an easy-to-defend cattle area. From behind this virtually impregnable wall, the Kuria would beat off the raids of their neighbors the Maasai and the Kipsigis. (During our filming the Kuria compounds were engaging in raiding of each other's cattle. Many teens responsible for the raids were seriously injured and some even killed by the vigilante community groups.)

Marriage for the Kuria is an extended affair – prolonged by the bargaining of the brideprice (male payment to female's family) and the extended marriage ritual. The bride is retrieved from her village, says ritual good-byes to her village compound, and goes to live in the hut of her husband in another compound.

Male and female circumcision remains an active practice among the Kuria. These ceremonies are enlivened by the songs and dances for which historically the group has become famous.



## THE LUO

Close by the Kuria, on the shores of Lake Victoria are the Luo, approximately 2.25 million strong. The Luo live along Lake Victoria from Homa Bay in the south to Sio Port, close to the Uganda border in the north. These people, the first settlers in western Kenya, supposedly moved south after 1000 C.E. from the Nile region, through the Sudan, arriving in Uganda by the early 1400's, and then what is now Kenya by the late 1400's and 1500's. They probably left Sudan for more pasture as well as because of over-population, droughts, and attacks on their settlements by their neighbors.

Formerly a cattle-herding, pastoralist culture, they adopted fishing when they migrated south from the Sudan centuries ago. In Lake Victoria, mainly using long nets and lines, they draw in the tilapia and other species, including the Nile Perch, whose introduction into the lake in the mid-1960's has upset the lake's delicate ecosystem. (This supposedly has led to the overgrowth of the hyacinths on the lake, making the lake surface green, not blue, and crowding out the Luo fishermen from their vocations.) As well as fishing, they also are agriculturalists, raising subsistence and cash crops, particularly sugar. Today, much of their region, east of Lake Victoria, is the sugar belt of East Africa with mile after mile of succulent sugar cane.

According to oral tradition, each Luo family belonged to a clan, and each clan was made up of families who were descended from one ancestor. They formed a lineage. Luo society is patrilineal, meaning that the inheritance of property, children, wives, and power comes from the male side, from father to son. The smallest social unit is the family, which is made up of a man, his wife or wives, his sons and daughters, his sons' wives, and his grandchildren. The wealth of an individual plays a significant role in the size of a man's family, namely, the number of wives he has. If a man was known to be rich, his relatives would bring their children to stay with them. (This model is still common among Luos even today. The successful ones, particularly males, are expected to provide school fees and homes for younger siblings and children of the extended family members who have not been so successful.) A rich man was expected to marry many wives, so as to have many sons to defend his property and look after his herds. In a Luo homestead (*dala*), each wife had her

own home and she was the head of her own household and her own children. By tradition, new wives are added periodically and are taken from their family compounds after the husband or his family have paid bridewealth or a dowry. It should be noted that traditionally there were no mature, unmarried women or bachelors in Luoland. The Luo believed that everyone should marry, since full social standing and adulthood were only attained by those who were married.

Though the urbanized Luo men and women do not practice circumcision, the practice of male circumcision is still operational in some parts of more rural Luoland in south Nyanza and the Lake Victoria regions. In addition, traditionally, at around adolescence, the Luo pulled five or six teeth from the lower jaw without any form of anesthesia or painkiller. The initiate was under pressure not to show signs of pain in order not to bring shame on the family. This ritual was performed in the past for medical and/or tribal identification reasons. Presently, though rarely existing except in older Luo members, it is to show one's ethnic identity.

Spirits, particularly those of ancestors, play an important role even today in Luo customs and beliefs. Witchcraft, mainly of the beneficial kind, is still practiced in the more remote areas. For example, it is thought that the spirits of ancestors sometimes enter the mind of a man and give him powers of healing.

Traditionally Luo stories are recited in the *siwindke*, the house of the widowed grandmother. Here, with an old woman who can share the oral history of a clan, Luo boys and girls gather to sleep and to be taught the ways and the beliefs of their society.

## THE LUHYA

The Luhya, the third largest ethnic group in Kenya, comprise about three million persons. They occupy the fertile lands around Kakamega, just north of the Luo peoples and bordering Uganda. They settled in an area which is the location of a rare remnant Congo rain forest with flora and fauna unique in East Africa. Sources report that the Luhya are a combination of sixteen sub-groups, all of which have unique features. This makes a clear understanding of the early history of the Luhya very complex. (Different sub-groups of the Luhya even spell the name differently, i.e., Luyia.) Tradition suggests that these groups of people came from the north (Egypt), but there is little to no physical or anthropological evidence to support this. What evidence that does exist indicates that these separate smaller groups came from all directions during the late fifteenth century and early seventeenth century to settle in Buluyia. They adopted the general name “Luhya” from their new homeland. These migrations to the Buluyia area were probably due to a desire for more and better land. In addition, recurrent local disputes as well as the prevalence of mosquitoes and tsetse flies made their old lands less desirable. In time, intermarriage, trade, and specialized skills, such as medicine and circumcision formed the present Luhya community into a single cultural and linguistic unit. Because so many had come from the Bantu parts of eastern Uganda, a similar Bantu culture grew up in Buluyia.

The Luhya are a clan-based society that is organized into age groups called *likhula*. Those born in the same year usually belong to the same *likhula*, and are initiated together by a circumcision ceremony. The initiated group then goes through several different stages together: middle age, old age, respected old age. Village elders from the last two stages form an honored ruling group.

The Luhya are principally agriculturalists, although they are also pastoralists, herding cattle and goats. The men fish, tend herds, hunt, prepare animals for consumption and build houses. The women cultivate the soil and harvest the crops.

The traditional Luhya believe in *Were*, the one supreme God, who is the creator and giver of life. Worship is through intermediaries, the spirits of the dead. Spirits of dead relatives are believed to be powerful and, like *Were*, immortal. It is the role of the diviner to

advise on the method of appeasement of the spirits, which usually takes the form of an animal sacrifice. Sacrificial places were often established, and they were seen as places of worship. Here, the Luhya would pray to *Were* for guidance in many different situations, either directly or through the spirits of the ancestors.

## THE MAASAI

In the southern portion of Kenya, hugging the Tanzania border, live the Maasai, historically a warlike and nomadic people. Prior to the arrival of the white colonists, the Maasai roamed the vast plains of East Africa grazing their large herds of cattle on the rich pastures. Today, however, the 250,000 descendants of these illustrious warriors of the pre-colonial era live in a greatly reduced land area. The Maasai, more than any other of the Kenyan cultural groups, have maintained their age-old rich traditions and customs and seem to have been little affected by the tumultuous and ever-changing outside world. That is not to say that they have not responded to modern education. Many have become highly educated but most seem to have returned to their tribal homes to adapt their education to their tribal lives.

As pastoralists, the Maasai were nomadic and probably had their roots in land close to Lake Turkana in northern Kenya. During the 1700's they moved further south, raiding cattle and pillaging as they went. They acquired large herds, a fearsome reputation, and dominated a vast territory. Among the Maasai, there are five original clans, subdivided into sixteen independent groups, each with its own territory, pastures, and water supply. Each of these sub-clans has its own name and cattle-brand. Further sub-divisions are linear, as persons are identified by age-sets, and each level is decided by the promotion of successive generations to new positions of responsibility.

Each level is characterized by a name. For instance, the two fighting cadres, junior and senior warriors, are known as the *il-moran*. They are the youngest and fittest of the generations and the most elite. In this most sacred of all Maasai social rituals, the mother of the initiate prepares her son for this ceremony by shaving his head. These young men are bound to each other by a lifetime oath administered during the circumcision ceremonies as they are ushered into manhood. His age-set partners hold his legs apart as the circumciser goes about cutting away the foreskin from the glans of the penis. No matter how intense the pain, the initiate must never flinch. Not so much as a tremor of the eyelid is allowed without bringing disgrace upon himself, his family, and his clan.

Although forbidden during their warrior period to marry, the young warriors lead no

life of celibacy. The uncircumcised young women (whose circumcision marks them ready for marriage) are theirs to enjoy sexually but not to make pregnant. The young warrior commonly practices interfemoral sex (between the thighs), not vaginal sex.

The second stage of a man's life is his elevation from warrior to junior elder. This occurs when the male is approximately thirty years of age and marks his readiness for the responsibilities of marriage as well as additional clan responsibilities. Since the Maasai are polygamous, men continue to take wives, as their wealth allows, throughout their adult lives.

Raising cattle and goats among the Maasai has far surpassed agriculture in importance. Cattle are herded for their milk and their blood (extracted from the necks of cattle by a miniature arrow), for their skins and hides, and occasionally, their meat. A combination of milk and blood are used for drinking. The primary meat for consumption, however, is goat, and other foods are procured via trade with other neighboring cultural groups.

The Maasai believe in a supreme creator, *Enkai*, who gives sickness as well as life. Prayers are offered to *Enkai* through the *laibon* or leader of each of the sub-groups of the Maasai people. This *laibon* is thought to possess magical and religious power.

The Maasai cherish their culture. Even so, many of them are being encouraged to modify their culture, to abandon their pastoralism and add farming to their repertoire in order to be more self-sufficient. The Maasai are working to bring education to their small communities in order to strengthen and enrich their culture as they maintain the rich heritage to which they were born.

## THE MIJIKENDA

The Mijikenda are nine closely related but distinct peoples who share the same cultural and linguistic heritage. Almost one million strong, the Mijikenda are made up of nine groups among which are the Giriama, Digo, and the Rabai tribes. They have lived on the eastern coast of Kenya, from Lamu in the north to the border of Tanzania in the south, for the last three hundred to four hundred years. According to tradition, these peoples settled in eastern Kenya after having been dispersed from areas loosely labeled Shungwaya, north along the Somali coast.

Each of the nine tribes had a *kaya*, or fortified village, and each *kaya* was divided into clans or extended family groups. While the maximum number of clans per tribe has remained at six, the number of sub-clans has steadily increased. Besides belonging to a family and a clan, the males of the Mijikenda are divided into age-sets (*rika*), according to the time during which they were circumcised. Circumcision ceremonies take place every four years, and the males are all the same *rika* for the rest of their lives.

The Mijikenda are a peace-loving people, so they do not have a special warrior age-set. Therefore, unlike other groups such as the Maasai, there is no change in the status of a boy from circumcision until he becomes an elder.

The Mijikenda clans are not chiefdoms or states, nor do they have a central authority over them. At every level of their society, groups of elders are the political leaders. These leaders are the oldest men in the clan, and they are able to decide matters that affect the whole clan.

The economy of the Mijikenda has always been agricultural, and they have kept cows, goats, and sheep ever since they lived in Shungwaya. Usually the children are left to attend to the animals and to drive them home into the cattle *bomas* in the evening. The *bomas* are made of thorn trees to keep out the wild and dangerous animals from the area, and to prevent the cattle from wandering away. Cattle remain, even today, the major wealth of the Mijikenda. They are not often slaughtered for their meat, except on ceremonial occasions. In general, cattle are kept for payment of bridewealth and for buying land and property. Grain crops were the primary staple of their agricultural economy and an advanced

crop rotation system has been followed for many decades. In the nineteenth century, coconut palms were first planted. This was a fruitful crop as the coconut trees spread rapidly and profusely in the coastal climate, and their products have many uses.

The main trade of the Mijikenda tribes has been with the Swahili towns on the coast and, in exchange for cloth and beads, they traded grains and items such as ivory, hides, honey, and beeswax which they obtained from peoples further inland. Since the Mijikenda live behind the coastal towns, they were in a powerful position as they controlled the trade between the coast and the inland peoples.

Traditionally, the Mijikenda believed in God, whose name was *Mulungu*. They prayed to *Mulungu* when they had troubles such as famine, drought, illness or disease. *Mulungu* was believed to be in the heavens and the ancestral spirits were believed to be the go-betweens from the living to *Mulungu*. There were usually shrines under trees (usually baobab trees) or in caves. Sacrifices of sheep, goats, or chickens were often made at these shrines as offerings to the dead, whose spirits were thought to be able to take prayers to God on behalf of the living.

## THE SWAHILI

Thousands of years of history define the sophisticated people known as the Swahili, literally “people of the coast.” The Swahili presently number about a half million people living in a string of coastal and island settlements from Mogadishu in the north to Mozambique in the south.

Early European visitors to East Africa in the 1400’s through the 1700’s had no difficulty in recognizing a large and important Swahili community with its own rich culture. This culture was quite separate from and unrelated to a second group which comprised later immigrants from Arabia and the Gulf. The identity of the Swahili is a complex matter. Certain obvious criteria have been suggested, of which the most common is linguistic. There is then a Swahili people, those indigenous to the area from Lamu in the north to the Ruvuma River in Mozambique including the coastal islands, and those who speak or who have adopted the Kiswahili language. The spoken Swahili language was basically Bantu but it contained many Arabic words. For many years the written language of the coast was Arabic but between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Swahili became an important written language as well.

There are also nonlinguistic criteria for defining the Swahili. They have long been Muslims, have for centuries enjoyed a high standard of living and have constructed a clearly distinguishable Swahili culture. Their settlements are always marked by their architecture, the houses being square and, in the larger towns, made of stone. Swahili cuisine, clothing, adornment, poetry, naming, and many other traits are also unique in East Africa. Here the predominant influence is that of Islam, with the women clothed in the discreet black veil known as the *bui-bui*. Cloth and adornment are used as signs and symbols not only to show status, occupation, age and gender, but also to denote degrees of moral purity of the wearers. The adornment of house interiors has much the same function, for they are as much symbolic as technical structures. They represent the permanence, stability, credit-worthiness, and purity of the owner’s lineage. There is a marked increase of privacy from the outer porch at one end to the main wife’s room, the *ndani*, at the other.

The life of the Swahili has revolved around trade, that is trade between the interior of

East Africa and the sailing routes across the Indian Ocean from the Red Sea to China and Indonesia. The Swahilis have controlled this boundary as a place of trade exchange, and this pulse of trade has created a rich culture unlike any other on the continent of Africa. In the early years trade was carried out by barter or exchange of items, but as trade increased, a need for some kind of currency developed. Initially, cowrie shells were used as money; later, coins were minted. Most of the exchanges have been linked to clothing, food, housing, warfare, religion, labor, and precious metals.

The items most often desired in trade by the East Africans were food items such as grains and spices, clothing items including cottons and silks, porcelain, wood for building, and arms and gunpowder. Those items traded by the East Africans were beads, ivory, animal skins, palm products, gold, and lastly, slaves.

Throughout Swahili culture runs the thread of ambiguity of identity, congruent with the nature of its mercantile history and the complex origins of a society whose peoples and boundaries have never been clearly defined.

## RITEs OF PASSAGE: VIDEOCASES OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN PEOPLES (I)

### **BIRTH**

#### INTRODUCTION

In some African societies, marriage is not fully recognized until the wife has given birth. Pregnancy becomes, therefore, the final seal of marriage, the sign of complete integration of the woman into her husband's family and kinship circle. In most African cultural groups, unhappy is the woman who fails to have children; when she dies, there will be no one of her own immediate bloodline to remember her, and to keep her in a state of personal immortality. These beliefs contribute to the present birth rate of 6.7 births per female.

This segment of the series features a Luo singing group, Balozi-Afrika, and two Kenyan ethnic groups: the Swahili from the Coastal Province and the Banyore, a sub-group of the Luhya from the Western Province (see Map #2 for province and town locations).

#### **BIRTH**

The initial rite of passage – birth – is introduced by Balozi-Afrika (“African Ambassadors”), a quartet of Luo cultural artists. They sing in *Dholuo*, a language spoken by the Luo people, using traditional instruments and dances. The songs are mostly of the mother continent, Africa, and they symbolize her as a beautiful maiden or a compassionate mother. The mission of this group of college students is to propagate the rich African oral poetry and to bridge the gap between today's changing values and their cultural roots. The dream of this group is to promote inter-cultural understanding both locally and internationally.

Athman Lali Omar takes us on a tour of a twelfth century home in the Swahili village of Gede (“precious”). This village at its peak had a population of approximately four to five

thousand, and was occupied for five hundred years from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries. Excavations of these ruins began in the 1940's and have continued sporadically since that time. Athman, himself from near Gede, is a Swahili man who is curator of the Fort Jesus Museum. Fort Jesus, built in Mombasa by the Portuguese in 1593, was a fort of significance for several hundred years. Athman describes the custom among the Swahili of starting a future home for a daughter when she is first born. This living pattern – a man coming into his wife's home at the time of marriage – is quite different from other African cultures where it is assumed that the bride leaves her home and village and goes to the home and village of her husband.

In this society, at the time of a daughter's birth, the family begins to build a second structure near their home (on the same property) or they add a second story to their home to accommodate the eventual husband and family of their daughter.

A patrilineal pattern is exemplified as we move from the Swahilis in the Coastal Province in the eastern portion of Kenya to the Banyore in the Western Province. The Banyore are a sub-group of the Luhya. In this segment, I speak with Maxon Zechariah Etisi Mumala, an elder in the village of Bunyore. I interview two women who have lived in the village of Bunyore for more than fifty years, and a young woman who has lived in the village for twelve years. All three of these women came to this village when they married into a family of the village. They explore the differences in their fertility rates as well as their beliefs concerning family planning. (Census projections for the Luhya indicate that they are well on their way of doubling their 1989 census population of 3 million.) They describe rituals performed when a boy or girl is born. With the birth of a boy, a pelt of an animal, symbolizing a great hunter, is placed outside the hut where the birth took place. A girl's birth is noted by the placement of a ring of reeds outside the door of the hut. Since women are the carriers of heavy loads of food, water, and cooking materials, the ring of reeds, which is placed on the head to enhance balance of these heavy objects, is symbolic of her future domestic tasks.

The ritual at a Luhya birth is that at birth the child saw only its mother. In case of difficulty, the child saw its mother, wives of its uncles, or its paternal grandmother, and it was delivered by one of its aunts. The mother then withdrew into seclusion for a period of

time. The mother's "coming out" of seclusion was celebrated. On the day of "coming out" from seclusion, the father was to be there, receive congratulations from the other villagers, give a big beer party, slaughter a goat, and have a wise man chase away any evil spirits.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What are some of the birth rituals in Kenyan cultures? How are these different or similar to those rituals and celebrations that occur in American sub-cultures?
- How is family planning seen among traditional peoples?
- How are women without children seen in American sub-cultures as compared to Kenyan cultures? How do these beliefs about a woman's role contribute to the birthrate in the United States?
- What are the contributing factors to a lower birthrate?



## **RITEs OF PASSAGE: VIDEOCASES OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN PEOPLES (I)**

### **NAMING**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The second of the major traditional African rites of passage is naming, for nearly all early African names have a meaning. The naming of children is therefore an important occasion which is often marked by a ceremony with ritual celebrations. In view of the African practice of giving special names to people, it is confusing and often meaningless to speak of “family names” as we do in Western cultures, since every individual has his or her own name, with no single family name shared by everyone in a given family.

This segment of the series features two Kenyan ethnic groups, the Swahili from the Coastal Province and the Banyore, a sub-group of the Luhya from the Western Province (see Map #2 for province and town locations).

#### **NAMING**

Two elderly women and one young woman of the village of Bunyore in the Western Province describe naming – the second rite of passage in traditional African life. These women are part of the Banyore sub-group of the Luhya cultural group. In this ethnic group, there are several ways of naming children. In some cases, children are named after the dead. For example, if someone dies in the village and there are expectant mothers, a child born after the death of that man will bear his name. Boys bear men’s names, and girls bear women’s names.

Other naming practices include naming a child after a world figure of significance at the time of the birth, (e.g. Hitler, Winston Churchill, etc.), or from historical events of importance (e.g. a time of drought, or a time of locust infestation, etc.). The Luhya also give “praise” names to a boy child based on a particular strength of the child or something that the

child has learned. Not everyone has a “praise” name. Only those who stand out and do things to win approval and admiration earn “praise” names, philosophical names, or nicknames. Women, on the other hand, give girls names according to the evils that befall them. One finds all sorts of unusual names in the village and the history of their existence usually has some connection with death, as when a woman who loses a child may be called “the biter” or “child consumer.”

The naming of the child is a great occasion. The father of the child consults a wise man of the village who talks to the dead and from him learns who among them wants his name given to the child. On the great day, the wise man and the grandfather of the child preside. A big feast and animal sacrifice to the ancestors follow.

The Swahili culture and their naming practices are described by Athnam Lali Omar at the ruins of Gede, the village occupied from the twelfth through the seventeenth centuries. After the birth, the baby has to be protected and is kept in seclusion for eight days. On the eighth day, the baby is taken outside the house and is shown the sun and the corners of the house. This ensures its proper location in the social space in which it will grow up. The child then has its *akika*, when its hair is cut, to symbolically remove impurities, followed by a closing feast to mark the end of the impurity of its birth. There is wide variation, but today, the fourteenth day after birth is more usual, so that rites for the child and mother can be performed together. By these rites, the mother is brought back from seclusion into society, and the child is given a name and a social identity.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What are the rituals surrounding naming in Kenya? When do these events occur?
- How are names chosen?
- How are these naming practices similar in American sub-cultures?
- What do you think about people not sharing a common name, like a last name, as is done in Kenya?

## **rites of passage: videocases of traditional African peoples (I)**

# **CIRCUMCISION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

For many African cultural groups, the coming-of-age or initiation period is the most significant event in the life of the individual. Initiation rites for both males and females have traditionally extended over a period of months and are very involved. Initiation includes not only the rites of circumcision for males in most all of the Kenyan cultural groups and females in many groups, but also initiation into the rituals of the tribes and the teaching of the tribal customs. Some ethnic groups separate their initiates from the remainder of the group for an extended time while they are taught the ways of their people. Normally, the initiates are between twelve and eighteen years of age and the initiation period lasts from one to two months. At present, because of increasing government regulations and interventions, circumcision rites are usually performed in August or in November and December, the longest school break of the year. Only in the most traditional and/or rural of cultural groups, for example, the Maasai, Samburu, and Kuria, are these rituals conducted in a secret and less controlled manner.

This segment of the video series features two musical segments – one by Mijikenda and one by Luhya dancers. The next two interview segments include a Luhya nurse who performed circumcisions, and one of a group of persons in a Kuria village discussing issues surrounding circumcision.

### **CIRCUMCISION**

Giriama dancers and musicians introduce this rite of passage – circumcision – as they perform a circumcision ritual celebration dance. The Giriama, one of the nine original Mijikenda cultural groups, are an ethnic group from the coastal region of Kenya. The

Giriama practice and celebrate ritual circumcisions among the males of the culture, both traditionally as well as presently.

Betty Khapoya, a neonatal nurse at Kenyatta Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya, is a sophisticated, highly trained woman who has practiced nursing for almost twenty-two years. She is originally from Western Province, growing up near the town of Bungoma. Her post-degree training has included midwifery, community health nursing, HIV counseling, and family planning. Early in her nursing career, Betty practiced community rural health nursing. In this capacity, she performed more than eighty female circumcisions in rural parts of Kenya among traditional Kalenjin women. Betty's practice was a government effort to lesson the damage that traditional circumcision does to young women. She was able to convince the women of these groups to have their daughters circumcised in medical clinics with sterile instruments where antibiotics would be available to aid with infections rather than in their home communities. Betty talks with us about her experiences in the past and her present beliefs concerning this custom.

A visit to the Kuria village of Kendege, near the Tanzania border, is the next stop on our travels. Here we have the opportunity to discuss the practice of female circumcision with a group of women and a group of men. The Kuria have routinely over the years practiced polygamy and both male and female ritual circumcision. In this particular village, all of the adolescent girls and women have been circumcised (had their clitoris removed) yet there is awareness among the women and the men that this initiation ritual is seen as controversial and that it carries many health risks. The women of the village are queried about their wishes for their daughters and the men ponder the future of this rite of passage.

This section ends with a brief excerpt from a musical presentation by a group of three Luhya elders. They are performing a traditional male circumcision dance, a musical rendition that alerts the community to the rituals that are about to be performed.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What are the typical circumcision rituals among the Kenyan cultural groups?
- What are the ways in which male and female circumcision rituals have been modified in response to external and internal reform measures?
- What are your beliefs about whether or not male and female circumcision should be able to continue in groups where this has been an age-old tradition?
- What rites of passage exist for adolescents in American sub-cultures?



## **rites of passage: videocases of traditional African peoples (II)**

# **MARRIAGE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Polygyny – one man with two or more wives – is a culturally accepted mode of marriage throughout most of the ethnic groups in Kenya. This practice has existed for centuries throughout African cultural groups and has only lessened in more recent years as persons become more urbanized. Nevertheless, with the rural-urban division at 73 percent and 27 percent, the practice remains strong (approximately 30 percent of Kenyan married males are polygynous). Another related ritual is that of bridewealth or brideprice. The majority of Kenyan men have negotiated a brideprice for their wives and most pay the family of the bride over a period of many years. (One couple I interviewed, married over twenty years, had just recently completed the payment of the brideprice at the deathbed of the woman's father.)

This segment of the series includes a marriage ritual in the Kuria village of Kendege, an interview with a monogamous Kikuyu man and wife concerning the payment of bridewealth, and an interview with a Luo polygynist and five of his forty-one wives.

### **MARRIAGE**

The initial adult rite of passage in Kenyan cultures – marriage – is introduced by a marriage ritual that we witnessed in Kendege, a small village of the Kuria ethnic group from the southwestern corner of Kenya, close to the Tanzania border. We filmed a portion of the marriage ceremony taking place in this village.

The total arrangements of a marriage may take months to complete, for initially there is a go-between, a friend of the male who may introduce the couple to each other away from the village. The tradition is that a man is to marry a woman in his ethnic group, (in this case

Kuria), but not in his village or clan, (i.e. Kendege). Later, after the families of the groom and the bride-to-be have settled upon a brideprice, several rituals take place. When the marriage is first decided upon, there is a pretend fight between the bridegroom's friends or family and the bride's friends or family. As a result, the bride is "captured" and taken to the bridegroom's homestead. Later as the bride is preparing to leave her home village to go to the groom's village to live, she visits all the homes in her village and pays her last respects to her mother in her mother's home as a fond goodbye. A feast and celebration occur in her home village and the payment of the agreed upon bridewealth is begun. The groom takes the bride to his village, and they move into his hut. Later, prior to her having her first child, the man is to build a hut for her close to his hut. Each wife is to have her own hut for herself and her children close to, but away from, the hut of the husband.

The second segment of this rite of passage film features an interview with David Kinyanjui Kamau and his wife of nine years, Margaret, both Kikuyu, outside their home in Magumu, Central Province. David proudly shows his home and seventy-nine acre farm, introduces his extended family, and describes the process of bridewealth. He negotiates bridewealth with Margaret's parents based on a symbolic number of cattle and sheep. The actual amount of bridewealth is being paid in other forms, (i.e., money and other gifts as determined by her parents). This agreed upon amount is being paid over time, and David and Margaret are planning a church "second wedding" to celebrate the completion of payment of bridewealth to her family.

Our final interview in this segment is with Ansentus Akuku Ogwela ("Denja") from the village of Ndhiwa in Nyanza Province, Luoland. This 78-year-old gentleman, nicknamed "Danger," is indeed unique, for he has accumulated a total of 126 wives. He has divorced 85 wives and is presently married to 41 wives. He says that his most recent marriage, two years ago to an eighteen-year-old, is his last and that he has "retired" from marrying. At last count he indicates that he has fathered 185 children and has over 2,000 grandchildren. His family is the mainstay of his entire village and he has his own school and market for his children and grandchildren. His sons all live nearby in his village with their wives; his daughters have all moved to their husbands' villages at some distance from his home. We had the opportunity to interview five of his present wives, including wife #3 and wife #126, the most recent one.

As you can see from the interview, the most recent wife was not feeling well (due to her first pregnancy), and the older wives were the most verbal about their lifestyle.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What are the modes of marriage in American sub-cultures?
- What are your beliefs about polygamy? How might a polygamous culture differ from a monogamous culture?
- How might American sub-cultures and extramarital sex statistics compare to Kenyan cultures and their statistics on polygyny?
- What are related rituals in the United States to bridewealth in Kenya?



## **rites of Passage: Videocases of Traditional African Peoples (II)**

### **ELDERHOOD**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Each ethnic group in Kenya holds its elders in high esteem. They are the leaders of their various communities, meeting to resolve conflicts and making decisions concerning the members of their respective groups. In most of the groups represented, elders are men who have had at least one of their children complete the circumcision ritual. As a response to modernization and a changing society, several of the ethnic groups have begun naming females to the role of elders. Elders meet on a regular basis in a pre-selected spot. This place is either within the confines of the village or, in some traditional villages, just outside the village under a particular tree or grove of trees set aside specifically for this function. Elders approach their task with pride. They are valued members of their villages, and this shows in their carriage and is exemplified in their expressions of self-esteem.

This second segment in the adulthood series features an interview with a group of elders from the Kanyaluo peoples as well as a ceremonial celebration of the naming of a Maasai elder.

#### **ELDERHOOD**

The rite of passage – becoming an elder – is celebrated in two ethnic groups in this second portion of the adulthood series of Rites of Passage: Videocases of Traditional African Peoples.

The initial interview in this segment is conducted with Walter Ayieko Ochilla, the appointed chief of the Kanyaluo group (approximately 23,000 people), and the elders of this particular tribe. This group is a sub-group of the Luo and is located in Nyanza Province near Lake Victoria. Our film crew was met by the senior elder of the group and led to a meeting

of the chief, assistant chief, and the elders. They describe their role as elders, their sense of responsibility, and the tasks that they perform in carrying out their duties.

Next, we visit the Maasai village of Olkaria near Naivasha in the Rift Valley of Kenya. I interview James Muntet, a Maasai elder, concerning the ceremony we have just witnessed naming an honorary elder in this particular Maasai village.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What decisions are elders called upon to make, and how do they come to a solution?
- What are equivalent ways in which elder status exists in American sub-cultures?
- How do you believe elders in the American sub-cultures are treated similarly or differently in comparison with what you know of the Kenyan cultures?

## **rites of passage: videocases of traditional African peoples (II)**

# **DEATH**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Birth – Naming – Circumcision – Marriage – Elderhood – all of the rites of passage lead to death, the final rite of passage. Death, viewed from an African perspective, is a rite of passage wherein the soul passes into but yet another phase of continuous existence. The soul leaves the material world and crosses over into the spiritual one. Traditionally, when someone dies, it is said that they have gone back to Mother Africa, back to their own village. Thus, when a person has led a full and productive life, the sentiment tends to be more of a celebration than a mournful state of loss. Even among the urban Kenyans, death usually means a return to their villages for burial. A quick perusal of the obituaries in the Nairobi daily Nation demonstrates the frequency of this pattern. Urban Kenyans do not identify with the city where they have worked during their adult lives; they identify with their ethnic group and home village and plan to return to their ancestral home for burial.

The final segment of the adulthood series shows short excerpts concerning burial practices from the Swahili and Kikuyu ethnic groups and culminates with a Kanyaluo death ceremony, including traditional music, dance, and ceremonial speeches.

### **DEATH**

This final segment commences with a brief look at the major Nairobi newspaper obituary notices. The majority of the death notices include information concerning the life of the individual and end with specific funeral plans as well as plans for burial. It is clear that most of the persons are not buried in Nairobi, the place of death, but are returned to their family farms in the family village. These people literally “go home” after death to the villages of their birth.

Athman Lali Omar, a Swahili, takes us on a tour of Gede, a twelfth through seventeenth century village on the coast of Kenya north of the city of Mombasa. He shares with us some of the rituals that are commonly enacted within a traditional Swahili home after a death.

We move back to Kikuyu country, in Central Province, and talk with David Kinyanjui Kamau, who shows us the burial spot for his grandfather on their family farm. David's grandfather, one of the chiefs who aided in Kenya's Mau Mau struggle for independence in 1963, is buried where he requested – on one of the paths on the family farm. He asked to be buried there so that he could observe, on a daily basis, the family cattle pass by the spot of his burial.

The last segment filmed for the series was, fittingly, the most glorious of all. We drove to Kanyaluo to visit the village, their elders, and their chief, Walter Ayieko Ochilla. The village turned out, several hundred strong, to demonstrate a traditional funeral celebration. The funeral ritual, a *teroburu*, takes place three days after the person is buried outside of the door of the family home. Males are buried on the right side of the door and females to the left. The body is placed on a mat, wrapped in a blanket or in sheets, and buried outside the home with personal belongings, for example a spear, tobacco, or a pipe.

Traditionally, the death ritual begins with rhythmic drumming, calling all members of the community to the river, closest to the home of the “returning warrior” from battle. The action recreates the role of the dead man returning from battle as a hero. Dancing and singing take place honoring the dead man as a hero coming back from the bush (as a hunter) or from battle (as a warrior). The fierce-looking figures at the lead of the musicians and dancers are the *jobruru*, scaring away the ghosts of the dead. After the *jobruru* finish their jobs, the dead man can be left in peace outside his home and the celebration of his life begins. Often, the celebration consists of the slaughtering of hens or goats and the drinking of honey beer, a home brew. These are symbolic of eating and drinking with the “dead man” in the forest, and celebrating his victory in the hunt or in war.

The Luo believe in a life after death, assuming that the dead person will die and join the ancestor world. These ancestors are believed to be spirits, capable of coming back at night in dream form and sending messages, either positive or negative, to persons they have known.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Why would a person's identity remain with their home of birth? Is this pattern likely to change as more Kenyans become urbanized?
- In what ways are death rituals in the American sub-cultures similar or different from those in Kenya?
- What are your beliefs about life after death, and how do they influence your perspective on death?

## ADDRESSES OF KENYA PARTICIPANTS

David Kinyanjui Kamau  
Box 26 Kinale via Magumu  
Kenya

Matiko Maroa  
Box 99  
Kehancha, Kuria  
Kenya

Betty Khapoya Mikhisa  
Neonatal Nursery  
Kenyatta Hospital  
Nairobi, Kenya

Maxon Zechariah Etisi Mumala  
Box 17  
Bunyore, Kenya

James Muntet  
Olkaria Village  
Naivasha, Kenya

Richard Ochillah  
P.O. Box 65043  
Nairobi, Kenya

Walter Ayieko Ochillah  
Box 21  
Kadel via Kendu-Bay  
Kenya

Ansentus Akuku Ogwela  
Kdhiwa P.O. Ndhiwa, Kanyamwa  
Kenya

Athman Lali Omar  
Ft. Jesus Museum  
P.O. Box 82412  
Mombasa, Kenya

George Odera Outa  
University of Nairobi  
P.O. Box 21037  
Nairobi, Kenya

## REFERENCES

### General

- Adamson, J. (1967). The peoples of Kenya. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.
- Ambler, C.H. (1989). "The renovation of custom in colonial Kenya: The 1932 generation succession ceremonies in Embu." Journal of African History, 30, 139-156.
- Amin, M., Willetts, D., and Tetley, B. (1997). The beautiful people of Kenya. Nairobi: Text Book Centre Ltd.
- Azevedo, M. (Ed.) (1993). Kenya: The land, the people and the nation. Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academics Press.
- Boerma, J.T. & Vianen, H.A.W. (1984). "Birth interval, mortality and growth of children in a rural area in Kenya." Journal of Biosocial Science, 16: 475-486.
- Cronk, L. (1991). "Wealth, status, and reproductive success among the Mukogodo of Kenya." American Anthropologist, 93: 345-360.
- Cronk, L. (1991). "Intention versus behavior in parental sex preference among the Mukogodo of Kenya." Journal of Biosocial Science, 23: 229-240.
- DeWolf, J.J. (1983). "Circumcision and initiation in Western Kenya and Eastern Uganda." Anthropos, 78: 369-410.
- Fish, B.C., and Fish, G.W. (1995). The Kalenjin heritage: Traditional religions and social practices. Kericho, Kenya: Africa Gospel Mission.
- Glazier, J. (1984). "Mbeere ancestors and the domestication of death." Man, 19,1: 133-147.
- Haugerud, Angelique (1993). The culture of politics in modern Kenya. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Helman, C. (1984). Culture, health and illness. Bristol, England: John Wright and Sons Ltd.
- Kassam, A. (1987). "Process of becoming: Gabra Oromo transition rites." Azania, 22: 55-75.
- Khasiani, S.A. (1987). "The role of the family in meeting the social and economic needs of the aging population in Kenya." Genus, 43: 103-120.

Kenyatta, J. (1965). Facing Mt. Kenya: The tribal life of the Gikuyu. New York: Vintage Books, Random House.

Kinsella, K. (1992). "Aging trends: Kenya." Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, 7, 3: 259-268.

Little, P.D. (1987). "Woman as Oh Payian (Elder)." Ethnos, 52, 1,2: 81-102.

Liyong, Taban lo (Eds.) (1972). Popular culture of East Africa. Nairobi: Longman Kenya Ltd.

Ochieng', W.R. (1986). People of the south-western highlands: Gusii. Nairobi: Evans Brothers Ltd.

Omondi-Odhiambo, J.K. & Voorhoene, A.M. (1990). "Mortality by cause of death in a rural area of Machakos District, Kenya in 1975-78." Journal of Biosocial Science, 22: 63-75.

Ueda, F. (1984). "Ukuu ritual: Death and sexuality among the Kamba." Senri Ethnological Studies, 15: 109-129.

Were, G.S. and Wilson, D.A. (1984). East Africa through a thousand years. London: Evans Brothers Limited.

## **Kikuyu**

Arnold, G. (1981). Modern Kenya. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Davison, J. (1996). Voices from Mutira: Change in the lives of rural Gikuyu women, 1910-1995. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. (1965). Theories of primitive religion. Oxford, England: Oxford at the Clarendon Press.

Huxley, E. (1990). Nine faces of Kenya. New York: Penguin Books.

Idowu, E.B. (1973). African traditional religion: A definition. London: SCM Press, Ltd.

Jules-Rosetti, B. (1979). The new religions of Africa. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Mbiti, J.S. (1969). African religions and philosophy. Oxford, England: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

Mugo, E.N. (1982). Kikuyu people: A brief outline of their customs and traditions. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.

Parrinder, E.G. (1974). African traditional religion. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). London: Sheldon Press.

Parry, J.K & Ryan, A.S. (Eds.). (1995). A cross-cultural look at death, dying, and religion. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers.

## **Kuria**

Makoto, O. (1989). “‘Naming’ and ‘Marrying’: Etiology about the dead among the Abakuria of Kenya.” The Japanese Journal of Ethnology, 54, 1: 16-19.

Were, G.S. (Ed.). (1986). South Nyanza District socio-cultural profile. Nairobi: Ministry of Planning and National Development and Institute of African Studies.

## **Luo**

K'Aoko, D.O. (1986). The re-introduction of Luo-circumcision-rite. Nairobi: Frejos Designgraphics.

Ochieng', W.R. (1979, 1985). People around the lake: Luo. London: Evans Brothers Ltd.

Ocholla-Ayayo, A.B.C. (1976). Traditional ideology and ethics among the Southern Luo. Uppsala, Sweden: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

Ominde, S.H. (1952). The Luo girl from infancy to marriage. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.

Othieno-Ochieng', N.A. (1968). Luo social system. Nairobi: Equatorial Publishers Ltd.

## **Luhya**

Cattell, M.G. (1990). “Models of old age among the Samia of Kenya: Family support of the elderly.” Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, 5, 4: 375-394.

Malusu, J. (1978). The Luhya way of death. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Sangree, W.H. (1987). “Childless elderly in Tiriki, Kenya and Irigive, Nigeria: A comparative analysis.” Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, 2:3:201-223.

Whyte, S.R. (1990). "The widow's dream: Sex and death in Western Kenya." Personhood and Agency: The Experience of Self and Other in African Cultures. Uppsala: Academiae Upsaliensis.

### **Maasai**

Bentsen, C. (1989). Maasai days. New York: Summit Books, Simon and Schuster.

Sankan, S.S. (1971). The Maasai. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.

### **Mijikenda**

Mwangudza, J.A. (1983). The Mijikenda. London: Evans Brothers Ltd.

### **Swahili**

Allen, J.D. (1993). Swahili Origins. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Donley, L.W. (1987). "Life in the Swahili townhouse reveals the symbolic meaning of spaces and artifact assemblages." The African Archeological Review, 5: 181-192.

Donley, L.W. (1991). "Symbolic meaning within the traditional Hindu and Muslim houses of Gujarat (India) and Lamu (Kenya)." British Museum Occasional Paper, 47: 75-89.

Middleton, J. (1992). The world of the Swahili: An African mercantile civilization. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Parkin, D. (Ed.). (1985). The anthropology of evil. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Inc.