

TRADITIONAL VERSUS COLONIAL LEADERSHIP IN EMBU TO 1923: A CASE STUDY

OF COLONIAL TAKE OVER

Embuland lies on the South-Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya. To the West, dividing the traditional Embuland from that of the Kikuyu is river Rivingaci from the river Mugaari ford and up it to its confluence with river Kii. From here the border goes up river Kii to its source in Mt. Kenya slopes. To the East, river Thuci separates the Embu from the Chuka of Meru district.¹ To the South and South-East, the Embu border with the Hbeere was not as distinct as the above. It ran along a belt of scrubland from the Mugaari ford to Ireremaari and a point on Thucu river?² To the the North, the border was the impenetrable equatorial forest of Mt. Kenya to the snowy mountain heights. These borders enclose about 210 square miles of land over half of which is highly dissected by numerous small and large fast flowing streams with deeply dug valleys. Almost all Embuland lies in "the rich chocolate loams derived from the lavas and tuffs of the foothills of Mount Kenya"³ This land is favoured with relatively good rainfall, although attimes the rainfall becomes erratic, was nursing a population of about 51,000 in 1917⁴ and 53,000 in 1918⁵ This population has grown steadily to 101,776 according to the Kenya 1969 population census.⁶

Lamented by the Embu elders as "the good old days when men were men" is the pre-colonial period. The colonial period in Embu began after June, 1906 when the British Government colonised the Embu. From their settlement in Embuland, to that year, the Embu and remained under traditional authority and leadership of their own making. 1906 brought a sudden changed from traditional to colonial leadership and authority and is therefore a land mark in Embu history. In view of this, we shall examine leadership and authority in Embuland in two phases viz, the pre-colonial Embu to 1906 and the colonial Embu to 1923.

Pre-Colonial Embu to 1906

From the 'Genesis' of the Embu to 1906, it is un-
that in general authority and leadership were never vested in any individual's but in corporate bodies. This applied in all aspects of Embu life - political, social or economic. Only the art of administering the traditional rite known as "drinking honey" was vested on one man, a member of the Njokera family in a hereditary manner. This rite which was in practice the ritual of giving life "directives" was administered to men only (their wives qualifying automatically) just before they had their first borns circumcised. The main office at any particular time had the power to order the one who went for the "honey drinking" rite. The person was told that to do and what not to do from that day to the end of his life abode with these "dos" and don'ts". However, the man in office had no power either for summon those who refused to go to him for the rite (as a fed did) or for executing his orders. The orders were anyway obeyed since people feared the power of supernatural that would punish them if they did not abide with orders.⁸ However, authority and leadership were effectively the responsibility of corporate bodies as said above, and even the few individuals mentioned above as having a share of authority and leadership of a certain nature were under these corporate bodies. These bodies were the Nthuke, Elders' Councils or Ciema and the Council of Leaders of Warriors.

The Nthuke (singular and plural) or genealogical aggregates are evidently the most ancient socio-political institutions. Apparently the Nthuke were in existence even before the 'Genesis' of the Embu.⁹ Evidently again, the Nthuke formation and consequent leadership was the responsibility of the Igamuturi, Kina and Gicuku Clans which were the pioneers - indeed they are regarded as the 'aborigines' while the other clans are taken as migrants. Consequently, from time to time, there were Nthuke leaders from the Igamuturi clan who lived near the Embu/Mbeere border, near the Nthuke

sacred groves ¹⁰. These, however, worked in cooperation with the other clans when it came to making important decisions concerning the Nthuke. The Nthuke at the beginning was one institution but during the mid seventeenth century, this 'split' into two institutions which remained until the final collapse of the Nthuke system during the colonial times. It is not quite clear why the division arose but it was perhaps because of the increased population that took place at the time in question, the long distances from the main pioneer settlement to the numerous sub-settlements or a division might have been effected for security reasons; indeed this reason is most supported by informants. The informants claim that it was realised that if a catastrophe befell the Nthuke and one had all his children as members of this Nthuke, then they would perish leaving the concerned childless. To safeguard such, two Nthuke divisions were created and one 'shared' his children between the two divisions equally. If one division perished due to a catastrophe, the children in the other Nthuke would remain to give 'seed' to the unfortunate person's family. It is even likely that a combination of some or all of these possible reasons combined to cause the split.

It is remarkable that even after the split the two Nthuke divisions kept together and depended on each other to large extents. They kept as spirit of brotherhood in the running of the country's welfare and none acted without the consent of the other. Consequently, each checked the other's actions and acted as a 'brake' on the other. Before the split, the institution was tribe-wide, although the tribe was a very small unit by then, but after the split, each institution was membered by theoretically half the tribe, which was evidently larger in the number of members as the population increased than before the split. The Nthuke institutions with two divisions were not a monopoly of the Embu, the Mbeere were also members of these institutions and generally acted together with the Embu as brothers. However, after the main ceremonies, the Mbeere went to perform in sacred groves in their land while the Embu were

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left to do the same in Embuland. The two Nthuke divisions in Embu were Nyangi and Kimanthi, in Mbeere they were Nyangi and Thathi. When an Embu of Kimanthi went to Mbeere, he joined the Thathi members as a brother and the vice versa¹¹.

Children were made aware of membership to Nthuke divisions when they were 4-5 years old or younger. They paid no fees at this stage but parents 'shared' them as they wished to these divisions. Generally, the first son joined his grandfather's division and the second that of the father and so on, alternately. The females joined their brothers also in that order. Between 10-15 years of age, their first memorable ceremony was performed where in most of them participated physically. They were given their first Nthuke name. After 15-20 years from the time the name was given the main ceremony was performed. This was called Nduiko, 'the handover' of power from the old Nthuke to the younger one. At such a time, the children who had been given a first name would be adults of 20-45 years of age and most of the members of the old Nthuke would be dead of old age. The few that would have remained to 'hand over', would be in, their late sixties and both too few and old to run the affairs of the Nthuke and the country as a whole. Before the hand over, a period of festivities termed "bribery" ensured when each of the young Nthuke members paid a goat as fee for membership. This goat would be consumed by the members of the old Nthuke. Much honey - beer, bulls, bee-hives and other things were paid to the retiring Nthuke elders. After the period of festivity, came the period of the Nthuke sacred ceremonies which began with the clearing of Nthuke highways which connected all their groves in Embu, Mbeere and today's Mwea¹² and modern Chuka/Tharaka land¹³. The candidates heads were all clean-shaven. The ceremonies of the Nduiko then began in the main groves and later came to the smaller local groves. At the end of the Nduiko, the old Nthuke retired and the young Nthuke, under a new name given during the Nduiko, different from the one given at young, came home to rule the whole country with young, energetic and

fresh blood! Their retired fathers could only advise when called upon otherwise they had no political authority over any aspect of Embu life. It should be noted that during the Nduiko proper, the Kimanthi/Thathi were allowed to perform first and the Nyangi performed soon afterwards. This was because the people believed that if the Nyangi performed first or at the same time with the Kimanthi/Thathi, there would be much chaos brought about by the latter who were ill-omened. The Kimanthi/Thathi, after performing, were followed by raids, locusts and other pests, wounds and much insecurity. The Nyangi in turn were followed by much prosperity and relative peace. Hence the Nyangi had to perform last so as to dilute, if not undo, the ill-omens of the Kimanthi/Thathi. Consequently, there would be relative peace and prosperity in the country. This time of Nduiko was an extremely solemn and remarkable period in Embuland, one can therefore not help concluding like Sabarwal that:

It is hardly necessary to reiterate their dramatic elements. The Iria marks, the beer and oil sprays, the repetition of acts 'seven' times, the shaven heads of a whole generation, the leather strips associated with adoptions, the branches brought from distant places and the prescriptive copulation, all these symbols, left their impression on the minds of the observers¹⁴

At the end of the Nduiko, everyone in Embu and Mbeere knew who were the rulers of the land beyond doubt. These rulers, during the Nduiko were strongly oathed drilled and instructed on good behaviour, ruling the land, means and times of sacrificing, peace and justice and the general welfare of the land effectively.

What was more important than the organisation and processes of the Nthuke system, however, was the Nthuke functions in the land. From the genesis of the Embu, the Nthuke had the responsibility of

looking after the welfare of Embuland. The welfare in this context affected social, economic and political aspects of Embuland. For instance, the Nthuke was responsible for preserving all tribal traditions and the tribal culture in general. Consequently, they encouraged people to undergo the 'honey-drinking' ceremony at Njokera family's where one was instructed on the taboos and other traditions. They regulated and supervised initiations. They carefully regulated the number of cattle that were to be paid for dowry depending on the economic situation of the land. When there was much livestock wealth, the dowry was high and when there was little wealth, dowry was lowered. An example is the reduction of the five cattle fixed by the Karara (of Nyangi division) in 1850s to four in 1880s by their successors, the Muranja. The Nthuke also fixed the value of cattle. For instance, the above Muranja had fixed the value of a cow to 50 goats and their successors, the Thurui, reduced this to 18 goats as late as 1920s! The Nthuke also dictated on the types and patterns of beads to be worn by their 'daughters' as Nthuke identity marks. It was the Nthuke's duty to fix penalties and settlements for broken marriages.

A main duty of the Nthuke was the worship for the welfare of the land. This was prompted normally by either lack of lateness of the seasonal rains, the killing of taboo animals like elephants, acts of sacrilege especially by sacred groves, the onset of planting seasonal rains or the harvest period. The Nthuke authorised the sacrifices and supervised them, there after, guarding their sacred groves vigilantly. During all troubled times due to warfare or epidemics, the country relied on Nthuke elders to worship for peace and ward of the epidemics with the power vested in them by Mwene Njeru, the Embu God. These same Nthuke elders summoned the Nthuke members in the sacred groves and conducted the worship for 'plenty' in the form of children, livestock and foodstuff. Consequently, they were greatly respected and feared by the whole country for their powers and duties to Embuland.

The Nthuke, above all, had 'legislative' powers all through its long history in Embuland. Indeed, it was the only body with legislative powers for a long time before the emergence of the other bodies that will be discussed below! The Nthuke ruled on where public highways, *ryiracia nutearu*, were to pass and the conduct on these highways. In the same way, they decided on public watering places or fords and passed regulations to be followed here. Once they passed the regulations, these were to be obeyed and effected even if the owner of the land in which this place was did not approve. This applied to both fresh water and salt or mineral water places. The Nthuke regulated the rate of alcoholic drinking of individuals in the country. If they thought 'young people' were drinking and could not behave themselves as custom required, the Nthuke could rule out this publically and name the 'youngest' circumcision age group that would be the last on the ladder of those allowed to drink. All those of younger age groups would not drink even if they had circumcised sons and daughters. The Nthuke kept watch over the use of witchcraft. They laid down penalties, ranging from payment of some livestock and oath-making to death. It was their duty to order 'witch-finding' and try the victims when suspected. In the same way, the Nthuke rallied everyone, member and non-member, to a sacred grove where the 'legislation' was announced and put into action with immediate effect. Later, the custom of performing this deed through a Kivata dance, arose and was used very effectively. The Nthuke system, extending beyond Embu borders undoubtedly helped to bring about cordial foreign relationship, all engineered by the Nthuke organisers. This was illustrated by the fact that an Embu could move to Nbeece on Chuka lands and receive cordial relations among his Nthuke-mates during peace times without being molested by anyone. The Embu Nthuke-mates of the above lands could in turn enter Embuland in the same way. During these periods of exchanging visits, much trading was done

thereby helping to draw the tribes together towards common understanding and appreciation of each other.

All considered, Nthuke, the most ancient single institution in Embu, was the most effective in the running of the country's affairs politically, socially and economically. Its membership spreading all over Embu and Mbeere lands drove its influence not only all over Embuland but beyond the tribal borders. At least, upto the middle of the nineteenth century, it was almost an only institution which was recognised outside Embu borders. It kept its influence and functions until the colonisation of the Embu when it then collapsed quickly due to the strong pressure put against it by the British colonialists.

Close on the heels of the Nthuke in age and organisation came the clans. When the pioneer migrants settled in Embuland and occupied some ridges, they began creating families of their own which on increasing after a few generations became large families named after their pioneer founder. This was a sub-clan. As time passed, the sub-clans multiplied and several sub-clans formed clans'. These clans, living in their founders' lands harvested these lands into clan-lands. Gradually, the clans increased in number as more migrants settled forming their own clans. The membership of the clans also increased. Consequently, there arose some small clans with under 1000 members while large clans contained over 5000 members. Most clans, however, had an average of 1,500-3,000 members by the coming of the whiteman to Embu. Normally, members of one clan were found in the same area; however, it was not uncommon to find some members of a clan, say Ngai, somewhere in Njandori - that is virtually a cross-section of Embuland from East to West. Naturally, every section of such a clan would be having a leader or leaders. In every ridge also where a certain clan owned land, leaders arose, more correctly, these leaders could be termed spokesmen, for they did not have much authority over their

colleagues as individual.

The clan spokesman were normally those elders who knew much of the clan traditions and Embu traditions in general. Above all, they had to be elderly enough to be accepted as elders. A number of these who led different sub-clans of the clan made a type of clan government. It should be stressed, however, that even these acted together with the rest of the clan, never solely on their own, simply as spokesmen. The clans had three main issues to deal with in the clan and these were merely clan affairs, viz, clan-lands, initiations and marriages, and the general conduct of clan members. Clan-lands were the property of the clan and could be tampered with by an individual member of the clan. An individual, could sublet land to someone else temporarily with the knowledge of the other members but could not dispose of it in any way like selling or exchanging. For these, the whole clan's consent was necessary. When summoned for such a deed, the buyer and seller paid some fees to the clan. Where the land was in dispute, the whole clan came to hear the case, the clan's women brought much food. The spokesman of the area affected argued for the clan. When important trees like Muriaga (*Cordia Abyssinica*) were to be cut, the clan leaders had to consent. When casing, if the clan had sections far away apart, the sections in the unfenced areas could send representatives to the hearing.

Initiations of clan children also brought the clan together. Together with following the Nthuke prescribed regulations for initiations, or marriages, the parents still had to abide with clan regulations. The parents announced their intentions either for initiations or marriages to the clan before these took away positive steps. This was necessary because it was believed that 'children and women were the property of the clan' not of individuals! The announcement took the form of a feast where much beer or livestock was consumed. Only after they gave their consent did either the initiations or marriages take place.

The clans kept close watch over the conduct of their members. If, for example, a man mistreated his wife often and deliberately, the clan could summon him and warn him of such a conduct; if the man continued, he could be disciplined by beatings. If he still continued the misconduct, the clan could discard the man from the clan but retain the wife as a clanswoman. In the same, if a woman misbehaved and would not obey her husband, the clan could discipline her. The clan had powers of dissolving a marriage and arranging for a settlement of such a marriage. However, at times they referred the matter to a higher judicial body - as with other types of dispute. Consequently, the clan was always called for help if a man could not afford to pay the dowry for a wife. Also, if a man committed homicide, the case was always referred to the clan who paid compensation or blood wealth if they thought the man a worthy member of the clan and if the homicide was an accident and not a deliberate deed. They did likewise for a witch or wizard. If any of these offenders was a habitual offender or a useless member of the clan, the clan gave the offender up for execution by the concerned.

The clan authority was always paramount within the clan both before the formation of judicial bodies and after. However, clans incorporated an amount of Nthuke legislation in theirs and also influenced judicial bodies when these formed in mid eighteenth century or thereabout.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, another corporate body emerged in Embu society which developed till the coming of the whiteman. This was the judicial institution termed Kiama (plural - ciama). The Kiama was a body made up of clan, Nthuke spokesmen and other individuals who were knowledgeable in the Embu traditions. They would sit and hear disputants over all subjects like land or domestic affairs. The spokesmen of the Kiama were termed Athamaki (singular - Nuthamaka). As time passed the kiama grew in influence over the clans and the latter would at times refer their cases to the kiama since the kiama was composed of very knowledgeable and famous men, Athamaki,

from all over Embuland! Consequently, the Kiama was classed to at least three grades namely: Kiama kia Muroro, Kiama kia Mburi and Kiama kia Ngome. The Muroro was membered by very junior men since it was the first rank of kiama. The members were men whose first born children had just been circumcised. To join, one paid a goat as fee. This group looked after initiational affairs such as the potential members, and allowed them to initiate their children after the latter had been through the Nthuke and clan machineries. They also ran the Muroro affairs such as the membership - who had joined, what type of goat he paid, who took the goat's skin and so forth. They had not judicial powers over any other aspect of life. As they qualified for membership to the next Kiama, they left the Muroro individually and joined the Kiam a kia Mburi.

The membership of the Kia Mburi was complex. People of all walks of life had rights to join it if they qualified, again after paying 2 goats or a goat and more beer. Consequently, one found clan leaders, medicinemen, retired warriors, njama and ex-njama (warrior spies), poor and rich and also Athamaki. All types of cases were settled after being heard; such were debts, thefts, land, marriage, quarrels and other issues. This kiama had powers of executing their decision by confiscating the property of an offender who refused to pay as the verdict demanded; they used such property of an offender who refused to pay as the verdict demanded; they used such property to compensate the grieved person or party. An important point to note here is that this Kiama was the seat of the Athamaki who mostly turned out to be the spokesmen of the Kiama even after joining like normal members. These Athamaki had to possess qualifications recognised traditionally so as to be accepted. The qualifications were, knowledge of the general life of the Embu and possibly the neighbouring tribes. One had to be a man respected by the Embu due to his actions personality and possession of traditional wisdom. He had to be popular in his locality and beyond and had to be renowned for his impartiality in dealing with people. Although to have these

obtained through experience and so at least mature age, if not old age, was necessary, at least forty-five and above. In practice, a large proportion came to be ex-warriors or Njama. These Athamaki were in practice, the country's brains and hence their leadership and authority could not be questioned.

The third and last grade of the Ciama was the Kia Ngome¹⁵. The fees for membership to this differed according to the economic situation but ranged from a he-goat and a ram plus much honey-beer to a bull, a he-goat and beer. The first qualification was such old age that one was 'past-child-bearing-age' that is after sixty years of age. One had to be a retired member of the other ciama. Additional qualifications, similar to those of a Muthamaki, included much experience and knowledge in the traditional life of the Embu, he had to be a humane and sympathetic man. He had to be knowledgeable of not only the geography of Embuland but that of the neighbouring lands.

For identity, in addition to the Ngome, the member carried a "black" staff, hence the alternative name of the Kiama, 'of black staff'. The member also wore a monkey-skin cap with a red ribbon called Mwonge and possessed a small 'black' gourd containing castor-oil for keeping peace. Because of the strict qualifications, membership to this body was very very small. However, the functions of the Ngome were extremely important. It did not involve itself in the affairs of the other ciama except on a point of advice but dealt with matters that threatened the peace of the land. Such were termed Thamandia. Such cases were homicide very serious land cases where the oath of Kumunda Mburi, 'to pierce the goat', that destroyed lives of many was administered and fights and feuds involving parties which at times force one of the parties to abandon its clan land and seek refuge to a far away land. Extreme cases of witchcraft were considered Thamandia because they destroyed lives of people and so were dealt with by the ngome. The ngome had powers of sentencing a criminal to death. These elders were the supreme legal power in

Embu which seems to have developed from the late eighteenth century and was very strong when the British came to Embuland. Their leadership and authority could not be questioned by anyone or party. Actually, they were respected, feared and dreaded, that is why they were effective in the whole of Embu, few as they were.

The council of the leaders of warriors or Njama ya itaa (hereafter Njama) evolved after the Embu developed their warrior system, probably between 1800-1840s. The Njama first appeared as a few brave and cunning warriors who knew much geography of the lands neighbouring Embuland and who were daring enough to enter these lands secretly as solitary individuals and collect military information for Embu warriors. Later, they would lead the Embu warriors into these lands and the Embu would emerge victorious because of the prior-information. The spy Mthusinci (plural Athisani) would be paid by those who captured some loot for his service. Gradually, the Njama developed into an institution and entry into it became highly competitive. A candidate for Njama had to have served as a normal warrior for at least two years and had to prove that he was strong, mentally and physically in character. He had to be intelligent and knowledgeable of Embu geography and that of the Embu neighbours. In his warrior career, he had to be popular with the warriors; it was essential that he was humane, one who would not let warriors perish in war by ordering them to fight against impossible odds instead of calling for a retreat, cowardly as it might have looked. An aging warrior who had paid goats of elderhood of probably the first two grades of the Giana would be considered for Njama on the grounds of age. Above all, the highest qualification was that the candidate had killed an enemy in combat at war. A combination of all or some of the above qualified one for the post. Only after satisfying these was the candidate allowed to pay a goat for fees. Even after this, he could not be entrusted with the leading of warriors to war before he was thoroughly trained in the art leading warriors.

institution had sole authority and the warriors which not even the warriors questioned. When it came to the general life of the Embu, the Njama could rectify, by 'legislating', what they thought or considered wrong through the Ciama or Nthuka. In many cases, they acted as the leaders of executive arm of the Embu judiciary because, when ordered by the Kiama to execute a decision, they effected it boldly. The Njama's legislation, in cooperation with the Ciama or Nthuka was done through a dance called Kivata. When intending to legislate, they summoned all the country to a kivata dance by a central dancing field. A night before the dance, a selected group of Njama and other elders went into seclusion either in Mt. Kenya forest, Ruvungaci valley, Njukiiri forest or the Mbeere wilderness to consult and make the laws. They would come to the dance the next morning when everyone, males and females would be assembled. Selected warriors would dance with no women partners before the 'law giving' period. In the dance, they displayed their physical masculine splendour and warrior prowess as they performed high and long jumps. They knew their spears and clubs to demonstrate their fighting tactics. This acts convinced the audience psychologically and otherwise that the Embu warriors were a strong institution, to be feared, respected and obeyed. After the display, the audience would be silenced and the law delivered by selected spokesmen. The laws took effect immediately¹⁶

After the above brief examination of pre-colonial Embu, it is fair to conclude that Embuland experienced individual leadership and authority only occasionally and in certain conditions, or even these, very rarely. The norm was corporate leadership and authority where the leaders emerged from the rest of the community because of their achievements making them fit and the unquestionable in these posts. This was, however, the case upto 1906. Things changed after this year as will be shown briefly below.

THE COLONIAL EMBU: 1906-1923

On June 18, 1906, the British at last launched their invasion of the Embu which the latter had repulsed from 1903. The invasion, after about three months was highly successful. The British took their next step, that of implementing their wishes and desires in Embuland, politically, socially and economically so as to tame and civilize the 'war like' and 'primitive' Embu, as they were popularly described. To achieve their mission, the British began by appointing 'chiefs' over the Embu. From these chiefs, they put a number of demands that formed a part of the chiefs' duties. Depending on the way the chiefs carried out these duties, their fellow-Embu judged them; at the same time the whiteman judged them. The chiefs tried to 'balance' themselves between the two pressures and in the course of time produced a society which had almost utterly changed from the traditional one discussed above; mainly because of the type of leadership and authority to which it was subjected. Let us briefly examine authority and leadership in the above context and see how these functional in contrast to the Embu Traditional context.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEFS

After the British army swept through the whole of Embuland from West to East and from the South to the forest reducing huts to ashes, capturing as much livestock and 'war-prisoners' as they could, ransacking homesteads and shambas for food-stuff and crushing every 'pocket' of resistance, a ceasefire was ordered and the whiteman who led the invasion, Captain Haycock pitched his camp at Gatituuri, near today's Keyote C.C. Mission. From this 'headquarter', he called for the Embu leader to come and surrender to him. With the Embu Society as described earlier, there was no one leader who could answer to the call. The 'prisoners of war' were then asked who the Munene of the Embu was. In Kikuyu, this word means two things namely; one an authoritative person, who can command or rule others with authority and, two, large or huge either in size, volume or both.

There having been no single individual ruler of the Embu, they asked 'prisoners of war' understood the second meaning, thereby misunderstanding the whiteman who had the first meaning in mind! However, Njiiri wife of Kuriria, answering that she knew where this person was, was ordered to go and summon him. She came back with one Kiriamiti wa Nguu whom she had fetched from his hidout in Mt. Kenya forest. The whiteman could not doubt that Kiriamiti was not the mungu tal' beyond doubt that he was well looked after, probably by the whole tribe¹⁷. It is unanimously agreed that Kiriamiti was a physically mighty man and that the whiteman declared him 'chief' over the Embu straight away. Thus, Pun helped to make Kiriamiti a chief! He had not been in anyway, except his physique, prominent in Embuland, he was not even a member of any judicial or warrior group in his locality, leave alone Embuland; yet his appointment as 'chief' was effective from the day he met the whiteman and was confirmed in the Kenya Official Gazette of April, 1908 as a chief under the 1902 Village Headmen Ordinance.

What surprised the whiteman after appointing Kiriamiti was to hear that the latter was not a chief, in the European sense of the word, for the whole of Embuland! It was most surprising to learn that Kiriamiti represented only a small locality, Rue - the area of modern Makengi and Kevute sub-locations of Gaturi location today! He was however, to help the other areas to bring their chiefs' and surrender to the whiteman and Kiriamiti sent messengers in all directions to summon representatives of these areas to come and surrender for thier localities. The surrender ceremony was generally the declaration of being loyal to the whiteman's government, agreeing to make roads and pay taxes. In return, the whiteman would not fight the Embu anymore. The Embu could understand neither the duration of the whiteman's stay in Embu nor any other above three demands, being too foreign to the Embu minds. However, to avoid anymore confrontation with the whiteman's terrible army armed with the guns that were to superior

to their armoury, the Embu consented all that the whiteman demanded. Consequently, all Embu areas followed Kiriamiti's example and sent representatives who were, to their amazement, declared 'chief'. Neither the public, nor the 'chiefs' themselves understood what chieftainship meant or involved. A few of the 'chiefs' themselves understood what chieftainship meant or involved. A few of the 'chiefs' are discussed below.

The lower section of modern Kieni location sent Kangoco to represent them at Gatituuri. It should be mentioned here that the people of Kieni and Kagaari areas had had no confrontation with the whiteman prior to this invasion. As a result, they knew very little about except some rumoured superstitions such as that the whiteman was a cannibal. This was partly why they presented serious resistance 'pockets' and therefore suffered many casualties. In contrast, the Murue/Gaturi and Ngandori Embu who had fought the whiteman in 1903, 1904 and repulsed the whiteman's attempts to enter Embuland up to 1906. The Kieni people would not send a Muthamaki or Njama so that if the whiteman ate him they would lose a worthy person. They sent Kangoco because he was a social outcast¹⁸ who had been traditionally condemned and was on the verge of being executed when the British invaded and executioners had to run for their lives, sparing Kangoco to be executed after the invasion was over. Thus, sending him to represent them, the Kieni people were subjecting him to represent them, the Kieni people were subjecting him to a possible form of execution. In contrast, the Ngandori who knew that the whiteman could not be tackled by simple people sent their tough and knowledgeable Njama, Kathendu wa Mutere and Kabuthi was Kuthathura to interced for them. These two were also declared 'chiefs' each for his small locality although they came from an area which had traditionally been run as one locality. This showed that the whiteman was prepared to divide traditional localities into segments to suit his purpose - the principal of 'divide and rule'?

And this principle of 'divide and rule' was soon followed after the Ngandori 'chiefs' were appointed, Kieni, where Kangoco was already a chief was ordered to send representatives of the upper sections. avoiding to send any useful Njama or Athamaki, the people again chose representatives who were not knowledgeable so that in case the whiteman decided to extract information about the Embu, the representatives should not reveal Embu secrets, since they did not know them'. Consequently, Kanjogu went to represent the area today called Mufu, Kibura and Kageta each represented other small areas of Kieni making a total of four 'chiefs' in one locality!

Mwea was Ithimu was a personal friend of Kiriamiti but was not recognised in any way as a member of any body with authority. On being introduced to the whiteman by Kiriamiti, Mwea was made a 'chief' of upper Kageta or Kirigano. Muruanveni wa Njua and Waineri became chiefs of western of Kageta locality at the same time. Muruanveni, for reasons only known to himself, coveted chieftainship. He therefore bribed the whiteman's collaborators who introduced him to be made a 'chief' of Kithata area, lower Gaturi. The list is long but the above are the main categories in which the 'chiefs' got their posts. Informants were unanimously of the opinion that before the appointment of Kiriamiti there was no 'chief' in Embu as such, we had not even heard of the word..... But in less than two weeks (after Kiriamiti's appointment), Embu was full of them (chiefs). The Serikali (British Government) gave every small village or ridge a chief". What is important to note and emphasize here is that the chiefs were, except the two mentioned for Ngandori, not the ideal Embu leaders but got their chieftainship due to some of the devious circumstances mentioned above. Except Ngandori, the other areas did not choose their proper leaders - apparently, they tried to avoid making 'a leap in the dark'. Consequently, social outcasts like Kangoco, opportunists like Muruanveni and Kiriamiti, favourite friends of some of the chiefs or whiteman's collaborators like Mwea and those considered by the Embu unknowledgable traditionally and hence posing no danger in revealing

the Embu secrets manned the posts of 'chiefs'. Yet, these had now authority vested on them by the whiteman and were each given the 'union jack' to hoist in their compounds as a sign of authority. As the Embu discovered later, these were the sole leaders of Embuland!

Soon after appointment, the chiefs and the Embu learnt what chieftainship meant. The chiefs' first duty to the whiteman was to disarm their warriors and anyone who kept any type of weapons - as all Embu men did until very old age - The other people's duty was to obey. This was not only amazing to the Embu but absurd. Had they ever heard of an enemy who demanded their weapons were only taken from him as macumo when he was killed during a combat by whoever killed him. However, to avoid another confrontation even before they recovered from the effects of the last one, they obeyed and surrendered their weapons. Ciira Kiondo, one who participated in helping chief Kabuthi to disarm a section of Ngandori stated:

In every name, for the first time we collected each of the above items (spears, swords, shields, clubs, arrows/bows) heaped them in different heaps each for each kind and carried them in bundles to him (the whiteman, at Gatituri).

The whiteman said this was not all. 'Go and bring all!' he ordered. We made a second round but he would not be satisfied. He ordered a third round. He then thought we had sent him all but many more remained¹⁹

The above illustrates the severity used to disarm the Ngandori and Gatiri/Murue areas. Informants agree also that such severity was not used in Kieni and Kagaari. However, the point here is that unlike many other 'conquered' tribes in modern Kenya, the Embu were disarmed and all their arms taken to the whiteman's headquarters, Gatihuri? This action nursed grievances in the Embu minds, especially of warriors, which might not have played a negligible part in forcing the Embu to join the mau mau uprising less than forty decades later²⁰. To most Embu, the deed of disarming the people

was a decree of the chiefs. This won the chiefs much disfavour and hostility from their subjects even before they had ruled for two months!

Immediately after the arms' surrender, the Embu were subjected to the making of network roads joining the homesteads of their chiefs. These homesteads functioned like the chiefs' headquarters. Later 'roads' had to join these headquarters to Nthithiari, the modern Municipality, which was under construction as the whiteman's headquarters. Nthithiari had to be joined to Mbiri, Fort Hall, the seat of the sub-commissioner while in 1917-1918 the road had to be extended to Chuka. However, the pinch was mostly felt at the beginning before the people got used to this 'useless' forced labour. At the initial stage, two orders were given by the chiefs: one was that every adult had to attend the road making, the participants were ordered to go through the shambas of those who refused to go destroying the latter's crops under cursing songs. The second was that large huts were built in the chiefs' compounds to house all unmarried but initiated girls and all young circumcised men - unmarried and those recently married. After every day's work they sung and danced and were ordered to sleep together in the huts. This action was much detested not only by the elders but by the parents also and all the traditional Embu. Never in Embu had young men and women slept together by themselves in the same hut unless they were married. These huts were scornfully called Nduka; where things are dumped together without order! The chiefs went further advised by their Kikuyu advisors, they introduced the Kikuyu custom called 'Nguiko' the interfemoral intercourse, where a boy and a girl were required to fondle each other and stimulate sexual intercourse feelings but were not allowed to perform the actual sexual intercourse. To these Embu girls and boys who had never practised it, the art went out of favour at first, they had to be forced to perform. To the traditional Embu, it was a deed they could not define for it went beyond their powers of judgement for being too

exactly as the chiefs ordered. When it came to the payment of hut-taxes and forced labour outside Embuland, the beatings continued, bribery was widely used and much unfairness done. To illustrate these briefly, let us examine the question of taxation and that of forced labour outside Embuland.

The question of taxation was brought to the Embu in 1907, less than half a year after they had 'agreed' during the surrender to pay *rubia rumue*, one rupee, as a tax. The Embu actually did not have the rupees, most did not even know what that was, their previous trade with their neighbours and the Swahili/Arabs traders having been barter, when goods were exchanged for goods and not money. In any case, the Embu understood neither the meaning nor the reason for the tax. To them, it was a continuation of humiliation and a means of impoverishing them. The official reason for charging the tax was given in 1910, at least in official records. It stated:

The intention of the tax is to make the young men, or warrior class, and especially those who do work contribute towards revenues of the protectorate.

However, in 1907 the chiefs were ordered to demand a rupee for every hut; rupees unavailable, herds of goats were paid - one goat was valued at a rupee. The goats were sold later for rupees. In 1907-8, Rs.76,000/= were collected. Soon, the one rupee was clipped upto three rupees or three goats (although the goats were not very acceptable now) and by 1911-12 poll-tax was introduced in addition to the hut-tax, to ensure that even the 'slipperly' young men who had no huts contributed to the protectorate's revenues. In 1912-13 the Registration system was introduced to improve the collection - indeed the figures collected went upto Rs.117,300/= which rose to Rs.209,123/= in 1916-17 as the Embu Political Records bear witness. The figure fell to Rs.100,768/= with the 1918-19 carrier corps famine. As they began to recover from the famine, the Embu were surprised to find that the rate was raised from Rs.3/= to Rs.5/= in 1919-20. The next year saw the rise to Rs.6/= at the beginning of the year and hardly six months elapsed before the figure was raised to Rs.8/=!

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outrageous to their morals. As expected, the inexperienced
unlike the Kikuyu an utter failure in the art. This period is
remembered as the time when girls conceived and either gave birth
outside wedlock or were given by their parents to those who conceived
them without the parents demanding their customary dues. The results
of such marriages were more of disappointments than successes.

But this did not deter the chiefs who had got a chance to launch
an onslaught to the Embu traditions, as if to compensate for what they
lacked in the eyes of the Embu. The chiefs' retinue, the retainers
and Kanga, participated in this nguiko fully. Later, they would
simply order the girls they desired to remain with them as concubines
without sheltering themselves with the cloak of nguiko. Most of the
chiefs, the irresponsible ones, also joined this grand onslaught of
traditional morals. Indeed one informant who participated in the
nguiko said, "it was acclaimed that it (nguiko) was an order from God!
That He (God) had said that people should obey what the chiefs said"²²
The outcry against nguiko was raised even by the youth of the country.
For instance, the uncircumcised boys of chief Kageta of a section of
Kieni burnt down the chief's duka and escaped to hid in Chuka-land.
Consequently, the D.C. ordered a thorough beating of the area's people
and burning down of their huts! The Kigeri Mission (C.M.S. which
established itself in 1910) joined the traditionists who condemned
the nguiko. The Mission even organised night 'raids' to chief's
quarters to capture those who practised nguiko and sued the concerned
to the DC - an issue that produced much friction between the Church
and the administration. However, nguiko was gradually controlled and
later stopped, but the morals remained low and have not recovered even
today. Needless to say, the chiefs won honour only from the retainers
but from the majority of the Embu, they were detested.

Road making was the introduction to forced labour. Soon the
building of Nthithiari as the headquarters of the whiteman followed.
After this building, people under their chiefs went back to the road
making project. It is important to stress here that these projects
were also accompanied by heavy beatings of those who did not do

As greatly disliked was the fact that one left his _____ which was considered detribalising oneself and greatly against Embu traditions which demanded that one be in his home all the time, at least at nights, unless one had gone raiding or on some known missions. Actually there were taboos and ceremonies which could not be done if one was not at home. Indeed, when the labour later came back to Embu after a long stay, each had to be cleansed ritually before joining his family!

Despite these, the chiefs forced the men to go for the forced labour. One reason was that when they went out, they brought home some rupees which were paid for taxes and saved the goats. But the main reason was that the chief could not question the DC's orders, and so the labour had to go. The chiefs were, as informants agree, too vigorous for many to dodge the labour. Consequently, the DC in 1911-12 could record supply of labour increased steadily and the District (Embu) became one of the principal recruiting fields in the protectorate²⁵. The same source, in 1918, recorded that during the war little labour went out to work on shambas but the natives of the District (Embu) responded well to the call for volunteers for the carrier corps (*my italics*)²⁵. The credit for voluntary willingness to join these enterprises is unanimously given to the chiefs and their retinue, as even the DC very well knew, but the official records had to be written in a way that would appeal to the public opinion in Britain and the world.

When one was called upon to pay his taxes or go to the forced labour and refused or showed some reluctance, the chief's retinue, who engineered most of the trouble even before they told the chief, would be ordered to arrest the person and confiscate his property, mostly in the form of livestock. At times, livestock was confiscated just because the chief and his retinue coveted some animals in the herd. These animals - bulls, he-goats or rams - would be consumed as penalties later. At other times, an arrested person would be ordered to pay exorbitant penalties for an alleged misconduct, without any trial. Failure to pay the penalties or in addition to the penalties,

Which most people could not pay and grossly resented this unfairness. It was soon dropped to Rs.6/- Evidently, a dramatic masterpiece of confusion. Upto 1923 and a few years later, the rate was 'stabilized' to six rupees understandably, the chiefs messed about with the collection. Most did not collect the right rates called for some collected less while others collected more from their localities. But it is generally agreed that most demanded more through their retinue than the right rates so that the chief and his retinue could hand over the right amount to the DC and retain the surplus for their own uses, especially before the period of Registration. Due to these abuses, the DC around 1911-13 was forced to go 'on safari' and collect the taxes from the people at every chief's quarters. The chief summoned his people in advance. The DC consequently recorded:

Tax on the whole is difficult to collect, extremely so in..... parts of Emberre (sic) and Embu. The people are not rich and it is doubtful whether many of them would have grasped the principle of taxation²³.

With this confused rates and collection system or lack of system, it was not a wonder to find cases like: "A minor independent chief called Jarwezi (sic) was deposed for embezzling but tax money....."²⁴

When labourers were required for government projects or private ones - like settlers - outside Embu, the chiefs were given their 'quotas' of contribution to the labour to be recruited. The chiefs had simply to obey without questioning the DC's order and provide the number needed. The labour contributed went to work in sisal, maize and rubber plantations situated in modern coastal area like Voi and Mazaras. Later they went to work in coffee plantations of white settlers in Kikuyu land and served in the Carrier Corps in 1917-18 in Tanganyika. The people detested forced labour generally because of the long journeys made on feet under difficult conditions like climate. Food in labour areas was very unlike their traditional dishes and the nature of work itself, like cutting sisal, was an experience they did not like.

As greatly disliked was the fact that one left his home for months which was considered detribalising oneself and greatly against the Embu traditions which demanded that one be in his home all through at least at nights, unless one had gone raiding or on some known missions. Actually there were taboos and ceremonies which could not be done if one was not at home. Indeed, when the labour later came back to Embu, after a long stay, each had to be cleansed ritually before joining his family.

Despite these, the chiefs forced the man to go for the forced Labour. One reason was that when they went out, they brought home some rupees which were paid for taxes and saved the goats. But the main reason was that the chief could not question the DC's order, and so the Labour had to go. The Chiefs were, as informants agree, too vigorous for many to dodge the Labour. Consequently, the DC in 1911-12 could record supply of labour increased steadily and the District (Embu) became one of the principal recruiting fields of the protectorate. The same source, in 1918, recorded that during the war little labour went out to work on Shambas but the Natives of the District (Embu) responded well to the call for voluntary or willingness to join these enterprises is unanimously given to the chiefs and their routine, as even the DC very well knew, the official records had to be written in a way that would appeal to the public opinion in Britain and the World.

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This is one method that the chiefs of the time used to acquire more wives than their social and economic status would have allowed under normal circumstances. Indeed it is held that some of these evils like 'sale' of daughter and tax for widows were not rectified until Harry Thuku's political times in early 1920s, the credit, however, is given to the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) of late 1920s.

As the chiefs powers were growing and establishing themselves as the new authority and leadership in Embu, the traditional bodies discussed earlier were losing their hold. The ancient Nthuke was, as expected, opposed to the new regime. Consequently, Muruagacuthe, leader was silenced. The Nthuke members were opposed strongly to the conduct of the new leaders, the chiefs, consequently, the chiefs undermined it and discredited its activities to the whitemen. The Church joined chiefs and the administrators. The Church was opposed to the Nthuke taboos and customs, especially over oath-taking, traditional worship ceremonies and the sacred groves. The Nthuke was given no chance to perform its functions. Indeed it was barred even from its Nduiko ceremonies. Consequently, in early 1920, the Nthuke was either far submerged in the background of Embu life or almost dead. Its real death actually came in 1940s.

The clans still held some authority over their members, and the government recognised this. But those whose membership was scattered in wide areas of Embu were denied their previous freedom of movement and hence began developing sectional independence. They gradually lost contact of each other and only came together very rarely when there were land issues. Gradually still, they had to have their land issues settled in new courts of law. In these, they found concepts that they did not approve of but had to try and cope. The clans, however, held themselves up weakly until the post-emergency land consolidation and demarcation of 1958-61. At this time, they rallied strongly together to claim more lands from their neighbours. After the demarcation they lost meaning due to individual ownership of land as opposed to the pre-colonial and colonial clan ownership.

The Njama, needless to reiterate died suddenly with its warrior system when the surrender of arms was done at Gatituuri (Ngoiri). The Ciama, however, tried to persist and the government recognised their role and in 1914,

These councils were recognised by the government and give certain powers..... The Kiama is composed of elders who are the fathers of one or more circumcised children..... The chief function of the council is to hear and adjudicate on civil and claims between natives; they also have criminal powers but the whole ideal of criminal law is so foreign to the native mind that these powers are rarely if ever exercised²⁶

Before allowing the Kiama to hear and adjudicate, the British had built a jail and brought warders in Embu as early as 1907. What surprised the Embu about the new legal system, a part from the criminal idea, was then the fact that instead of paying the traditional penalties, people were sent into this jail - they called it scernfully, Mnyororo, the chain. Even with Kiama, however, the chiefs were supreme. At times they sat with the Kiama and influenced decisions while they were considered traditionally qualified to give any verdicts. Indeed, a chief had power to commit an alleged offender directly to prison without trial, especially before the government recognised the traditional Kiama. Another point of disappointment here is that the membership the government allowed for the Kiama were at times not acceptable to the Embu. That is why, even as late as 1920, some would not trust that the Kiama could solve their differences with the chief and resulted to the traditional curses - effectively - as reported by saberwal²⁷.

Following the above principle and the model of the Kiama kia Ngome, the government put up theirs that was to sit at Karue, near the surrender place, in 1916 or 1917. But this Kiama was much addicted to bribery and absurd types of corruptio since its membership could not match its traditional counterpart. At this stage, the people had learnt to report their grievances to the DC. The

grievances of this were reported. Hence the DC, in his 1922 report could write:

No event of importance occurred during the year other than an indignation meeting held at Karue demanding the dismissal of the Kiama²⁸.

It was actually dismissed and he reported:

"Early in the year at the earnest request of the chiefs and people the old Embu Kiama which held sittings at Karue's was dissolved on account of corruption and oppression. A new Kiama was elected, a Kiama house was built at Embu station and monthly sittings held²⁹.

The Kiama sat here until 1924 when the Local Native Council was formed to sit in Embu. The above Kiama in turn transferred its seat to Nambure, the present Murue/Gaturi locational centre. The Kiama later moved to Runyenje's, the Embu Divisional Centre where it still seats.

Judged from the Embu eyes, by early 1920s, the chiefs and all that pertained to them were corrupt, oppressive and British stooges who stood on the way of Embu's progress and tried to enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow Embu. This is illustrated by a song composed by the embu of the Ngandori, Murue and Kagaari that cursed chief Kagane at Kagaari as the representative of chiefs their retinue. The same song prais Doctor Crawford, Ciugitaari, for his good medical work and support of the Embu against the chiefs. However, a few chiefs were fully accepted and were by then doing much from the progress of their areas.

Judged from the eyes of the whiteman, especially after listening to the cries of the people, his conclusion was not much far from the Embu judgement. A few situations from the official records will help to convey this. About Kiriamiti, the one regarded as the paramount chief of Embu and Mbeere, the records read:

KIRIAMITI WA NGUYO (NGUU). No. of hut.....701

Division..... Pube (Rue or Ruwe)

History

The stupid drunken, lazy, old chief of Central Embu. He was salaried about two years after the Embu station was started at Rs.60/= per mensem, having been made considerably more important ^{by} the DC., Mr. (Ilkson). He proved very unsatisfactory, however, being stupid and ^{much} addicted to 'tembo' (beer). The latter failing has led him on several occasions to do most outrageous acts such as beating Government Moran ~~for~~ no reason, for which he has, on various occasions been ^e fined. In 1909, nearly half his salary was with held for various reasons, and in 1910, it was reduced to Rs.40/=..... In June 1910, he suddenly raided his neighbour Jamweza (sic) for no particular reason. Jamweza referred the matter to the DC., Mr. Kenyon Slaney who fined Kiriamiti Rs.200/=.

Later, Kiriamiti was deposed because he was incapable of ruling any longer and replaced by Ngondi, one of his leading retainers. Kathendu wa Njue was also appointed chief and salaried at Rs.40/= to be reduced later to Rs.30/= . About Kangoco, the social outcast of Kieni, the Records Read:

KANGOSHO Division - KATHUNGURI

History

Kangosho was an incapable and drunken chief who has been the cause of frequent trouble. (He was deposed in 1909 by Ag. DC., Mr Piggot and replaced by KANTHAWA). The latter, Kanthawa was a complete failure and later in the year, Kangosho was reappointed..... He was unsatisfactory, however, and has required frequent visiting and threatening to keep him at work..... His country was patrolled in September, 1910 by the DC and half - company K.A.R. In January, 1911, he was so unpopular and useless that his people with chief Kagane appealed..... to elect Munyaka, which was done.

CHONBA WA KIBERU

History

Quite hopeless. In 1910 he lost hut tax book, having hidden it in the bush and forgotten where he put it. His people had been 'advised' to choose another one.

MURANO -- Succeeded Nyaki who had been deposed by Reddie on being suspected as a wizard, proved unsatisfactory both to the government and his people who in 1911 accused him on converting tax to his own use and asked for his deposition.

MWEA WA THUMO (ITHIMU) - KIRANGANO

History

Is an unobstructive pleasant - mannered chief..... In 1912 the people of the Headman..... attached and drove away a government hut tax collector for which they were punished. During 1913, Mwea deteriorated somewhat, becoming fatter, lazier and more stupid than formerly.

The above is the picture of majority of the chiefs one gets after going through the British Records. Another view of this picture is provided by records of very few chiefs, for instance the one below:

KABUTHI WA KUTHERURA (KUTHATHURA) No. of units.....271 Division Karuriri.

History

A capable minor Embu chief, enterprising but talkative. Pays tax very well, generally being the first to finish in the district from 1911 to 1913 Kabuthi's influence increased considerably.

Oral tradition contradicts this and alleges that he was very strict, that is why, because he was greatly feared, his people paid their taxes very early. However, he was preferred to most chiefs by the Embu.

Upto the early 1920s then, the chiefs³⁰ judged from both the Embu and whiteman's point of view were far from perfect, probably because chieftaniship was a foreign ideology of leadership in Embu. However, the Whiteman's authority had taken root in 1920s quite firmly through this confusion and his tact of dividing the country into numerous sub-divisions. After implanting his influence in the land, the Whiteman gradually joined these sub-divisions and deposed some of their chiefs ending with relatively few and manageable chiefs and by 1940s, only the four traditional political divisions existed as locations namely:

Ngandori, Murue/Gaturi, Kagaari and Kieni under only four chiefs accepted and of better calibre, which remained upto post-independent days³¹!

It is fair therefore to conclude that all the traditional authority and leadership were either on the verge of death or dead by 1923 and the general pattern of the authority and leadership in today Embuland had fully formed by that year. Today all the traditions have disappeared leaving those brought by colonialism ~~perseant~~ ~~single persons~~ have been accepted as judges operating a western type of justice while chiefs and sub-chiefs man the administration as individual leaders and guardians of authority. Chieftanship indeed, came to stay and has implanted itself as firmly as if it were indigenous.

FOOTNOTES

1. This border, drawn by the British after the colonisation of Embu is disputed by the Embu who state that in 1890s their border with the Chuka was somewhere near Kibugua Market of today. Indeed, the Kieni Chief appointed in 1906 over the Embu of the area built his headquarter by Modern Karandini, on the Thuci side of today's Chukaland.
2. The Embu/Mbeere border was altered several times by the British for 'Administrative convinience' and is today an Issue of hot dispute between the Embu and the Mbeere which is not settled.
3. Maher, Colin. Soil Erosion and Land Utilization in the Embu Reserve. Part 1. Nairobi, 1938, p.3.
4. Embu District Record book in Kenya National Archives, Nairobi 1917.
5. Embu District Record Book, 1 bid. 1918.
6. Embu Administrative Annual Report 1969.
7. The man in 'Office' at any time was termed Mutia, 'the honoured one' and remained in power for life. When the British came to Embu land, the Office was held by the Mutia called Gacogo. Gacogo's son, Rwandoro, tried to function after his father but was not successful due to religion - Political pressure from the British that worked against him. Gacogo's father was Karairu, the son of Njokera, all who are remembered as having been very effective in the Office. The family live somewhere in Kyeni and belonged to the Kina Clan.

8. Only two other persons rose to positions of individual leaders in Embu. These were Ireri wa Irugi and Mwendamwea, who were great tribal prophets - as was Mbogo wa Kirangi in Mbeere. However, they could only prophesy and had no powers of excuting their prophecies.
9. The oldest Nthuke named in Embu was called Gumba after the aborigines of Modern Embu land. Yet, there was the Gumba's predecessor called Gumba-Kaguku, which performed its 'handover' ceremony about 1580 in Embu. Since most evidence indicates that the Embu migrants or it evolved as the first migrants arrived.
10. Embuland alone had over 35 sacred groves belonging to the Nthuke in 1996.
11. This system of two Nthuke divisions Nyangi and Mbituki, the latter being the Kimanthi/Thathi.
12. In Mwea, they went to perform by the sacred groves called Njauri and Mbonjuki.
13. Chuka/Tharaka land had the most regarded set of sacred grove in Igambang'ombe area. This area was by then regarded as Embu/Mbeereland until the coming of the British who turned them to Meru, at least administratively.
14. Saberwal, Satish. The Traditional Political System of the Embu of Central Kenya. E.A.P.H., Nairobi 1970 pp. 62-63.
15. The Ngome was a long half-tubular metal ring worn on the right hand middle finger as a badge of authority by the

...This has since overshadowed the proper name Gatituuri and the name remains popularly the C.C.M. and its sign-body had inscriptions that remind the Embu, and teach those who were not born, of this bitter episode. In Kiembu and English translation, inscriptions read:

C.C.M. NGUIRE*		SCHOOL
COKIA NGO		RETURN OUR SHIELDS
NA		AND
MATUMU METU		SPEARS
(Kiembu)		(English)

*

*From two photographs I took in 1967.

of late, the spelling has been corrected to Ngo-ire, the Roman Catholic Orthography for Ngo-iri.

21. Interview, Mugambi, Wamiro (Mrs) 17/8/67. For more details on Nguiko, see Mwaniki, H.S.K. 'The Impact of British Rule in Embu: 1906-1923. Opt. Cit. pp 48-49.
22. Embu Political Records, Part 111 in Kenya National Archives, Nairobi, File DC/EBU 3/2 circular M.P. No. 2516/08 of June 11, 1910 on 'AIM OF CHARGING TAX' signed by W.J. Monson, Secretary.
23. Embu Political Records. Opt. Cit. p. 8
24. Embu Political Records. Opt. Cit.
25. Embu Political Records. 1 Bid. P.89
26. Embu District Record Book, p. 103.
27. Saberwal, S., The Political system of the Embu of Central Kenya. Opt. cit. p. 72-73.
28. Embu District Record book, Opt. cit. 1922. This 'Indignation meeting' is acclaimed to have resulted into physical expulsion of the Kiama Members.

16. For a detailed Traditional Embu, where traditional institutions and their functions are discussed, seek Mwaniki H.S.K. 'A political History of the Embu to 1906". An M.A. Disertation University of Nairobi, 1973.
17. Informants describe him as a giant of a man who had larger 'breasts' than those of a woman suckling a baby. His Skin cloak from only one Calf skins sewn together ~~whereas Men made their cloaks from only one Calf-Skin.~~ Given a Camp-chair to sit on by the Whiteman, it broke under his massive weight. Given a metal one, some say it also broke, others claim that it sunk into the ground, again under his weight.
18. Kangoco it is held had taught a Mbeere boy to be crying like a god at nights demanding sacrificiaul goats. When these ~~sacrifices~~ were offered, Kangoco and his boy ate the god's share. This, when discovered, was considered great saculege and the two were condemned to death.
19. Ciira, Silas Kiondo, Interview August 1967. For detailed information about the surrender of the Embu and the surrende of arms, see Mwaniki, H.S.K. "The impact of the British Ru in Embu, 1906-1923". Unpublished ms. with the History Department University of Nairobi, 1968. pp 28-34.
20. To the Embu Ngo, shield was tantamount to the weapons of a warrior. When the weapons were sent at Gatituuri, people kept on referring to the place as 'where the shields are' or Ngoiri, in Kiambu. This has since the overshadowed the proper name Gatituuri and the name remains popularly the C.C.M. and its sign body has inscriptions that remind the

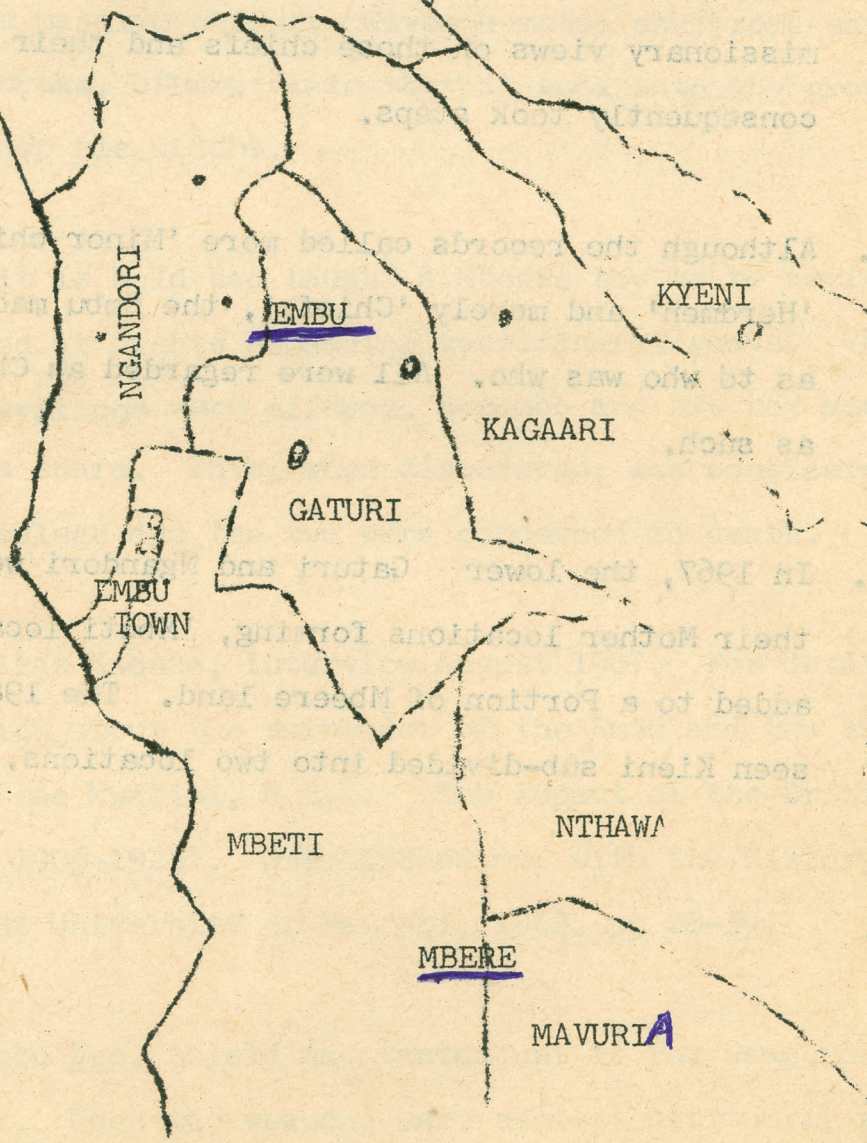
Footnotes

29. Embu District Record Book. Opt. cit 1923. The new elected Kiama was the Kiama Cia Iti, 'of seats' that sat in the house of Mirangi. From this time on, it is reported that grieved persons or parties would report their grievances to the D.C. directly, even if it meant the displeasure of their Chiefs. Examples are given by the then 'Mission Boys' like Paul Gatema, William Njuguna and Peterero Gacewa, all of who were in 1960s still alive and who would report even the accepted chief Kabuthi. The Administration also seems to have listened more sympathetically to the missionary views on these chiefs and their conducts and consequently took steps.
30. Although the records called more 'Minor chiefs' 'Sub chiefs' 'Herdmen' and merely 'Chiefs', the Embu made no difference as to who was who. All were regarded as Chiefs and treated as such.
31. In 1967, the lower Gaturi and Ngandori were cut-off from their Mother locations forming, 'Mbeti location' when added to a Portion of Mbeere land. The 1980s have also seen Kieni sub-divided into two locations.

MAP OF EMBU & MBERE ^{AND} LOCATIONS

MT KENYA
FOREST

FOREST



IVURORI

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