

University of London

**RAINMAKING, GENDER AND POWER IN
IHANZU, TANZANIA, 1885-1995**

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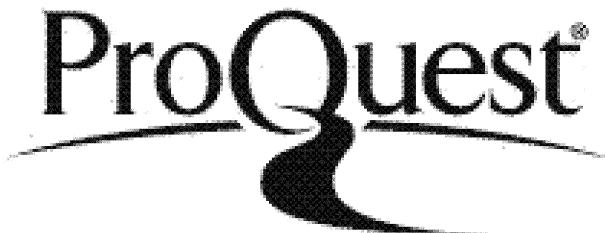
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Abstract

THIS THESIS is about rainmaking amongst the Ihanzu (or Isanzu), a 30,000-strong matrilineal, Bantu-speaking agricultural group of north-central Tanzania. By examining rain rituals and their cosmological underpinnings as locally envisaged, I suggest that central to the Ihanzu cultural imagination lies the notion of gender complementarity. In a number of contexts, but particularly in the context of rainmaking, I show how masculine and feminine principles of a gendered universe, when combined, are seen as a site of cosmic and divine powers. To join the genders is to transform, to create, to rejuvenate.

Using oral and archival sources, the first section examines the nature of the Ihanzu dual monarchy between 1885 and 1976. In spite of the radical political, economic and social changes that took place throughout this period, the dual leadership—with one male and one female—and people's understandings of royal power and legitimacy remained constant: control over rains is control over reigns.

Section two examines annual rainmaking rites as they occur today. The point is to show the extent to which gender complementarity pervades these rites, and the local logic as to why this must be so. An indigenously grounded, gendered model of transformation is developed that applies equally to making children as to making rain. Power, in Ihanzu eyes, comes in gendered pairs.

Section three discusses measures taken when annual rain rites fail to bring rain, and how the gendered model of transformation applies to these remedial rites. The penultimate chapter, on rain-witchcraft, suggests that gendered witches are a cosmological inversion of gendered rulers, yet for both duos their powers are based on gender complementarity. In the conclusion it is argued that the notion of gendered complementarity as developed in the thesis might be equally useful in explaining rain rites elsewhere in Africa.

TO MY MOTHER, PATRICIA R. SANDERS

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER, JERALD J. SANDERS

Preface

‘PRAY FOR RAIN’ read the hastily-constructed billboard signs in bold, pleading letters. Slowly collecting another sign from the rear of his dilapidated pick-up truck—perhaps the hundredth one that day—a robust, nameless rancher wiped the sweat from his brow and looked squarely into the camera before hammering the sign on its stake firmly into the parched earth.

‘We ask that everyone pray for rain,’ a vehement voice from a nearby group passionately proclaimed. The camera slowly panned the crowd; in an expansive, yellow field they stood, the sun beaming down on them, mercilessly, oppressively. ‘We must pray for rain’ the speaker repeated as if trying to persuade, yet his powers of persuasion were all but wasted on this group, none of whom uttered a sound as they listened in earnest, sweat glistening and rolling silently down their foreheads.

The camera switched wildly between a number of near catastrophic scenes: the dried-out reservoir that had become nothing more than an oversized pond; moistureless grasses, seemingly dead trees, dusty plains and hills; thin cattle becoming still thinner. ‘We must pray for rain’ echoed the voice in the background a last time as the picture, but not the memory, steadily faded away.

This scene, which I witnessed on Sky News while sitting in London in June 1996, was about how some desperate and religious residents of a small town in the US State of Texas had found a solution to the seemingly insoluble problem of drought. The story, not an unusual one perhaps, struck a particularly resonant chord and instantly whisked me back two years and across several thousands of miles to my field site in north-central Tanzania. As cherished notions of time and space collapsed, I heard

especially clearly the desperate cries of one particular Ihanzu ritual officiant, cries so clear that he might have been sitting next to me watching television—*kūkuletele īmazī!*, ‘Bring us water!’ But alas I was alone, or almost alone, sharing company only with the scribbled pages of this thesis that sat beside me on the sofa. As I stared at the pile of papers, I briefly felt—for it was impossible to do otherwise—a formerly unknown empathy for those nameless, desperate faces in a small Texas town, a place I have never been, a place I will probably never go. As I pondered my Tanzanian field experience, my paper guest suddenly transformed itself before my eyes into much more than a mass of information on a small and virtually unknown group living in a place not easily located on a map. In fact, if for only a moment, the thesis seemed of much wider interest and carried me far beyond the boundaries of the small African community in which I worked. I can only hope the reader also finds this to be true.

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Language and Orthography

SINCE MUCH OF THE MATERIAL in this thesis and its interpretation depends on my language abilities, it seems only fair that I should explain, first, how this part of the research was carried out and second, why I have made the orthographic decisions I have.

None of the research was conducted in English. During my entire stay in Ihanza I met only three local people who spoke reasonable English and so research in my native tongue was not in the least practicable.

Due largely to the fact that the Ihanza are extremely mobile—almost all have done wage labour, near and afar, within Tanzania—almost everyone speaks several languages, young and old, male and female. The standard of Swahili, Tanzania's *lingua franca*, is exceptionally high. For this reason, for the first six months or so, I carried out all the research in Swahili which I learnt from books while in the field.

Once I got a reasonable grasp of Swahili, I began learning the vernacular which they call in their language *Kīnyihanza*. Both languages are classified as 'Bantu', which means that although the vocabulary often varies widely, the grammatical structures are very similar and in many instances identical. In the Ihanza language I never became fully fluent—I cannot pretend otherwise—though I can converse reasonably well, if with lots of mistakes.

Ihanza people in everyday situations prefer their own language to Swahili but they readily switch between the two in different contexts. They use Swahili exclusively at government meetings, in government offices, in court, at church and in the mosque. Swahili is also the preferred language for courting, sometimes for arguing, and for

speaking to cattle, dogs and anthropologists. As one moves about Ihanzu, the linguistic picture becomes more convoluted and frustrating for the ethnographer.

In the south and east people often speak a mix of Iramba and Ihanzu languages. In the westernmost villages the Sukuma language is the norm and some Ihanzu diviners, most of whom are trained in Sukumaland, have the impressive but wholly frustrating habit of switching in and out of Sukuma as they do their work. Unfortunately I can make no claims to speaking Sukuma and only rather insubstantial ones for the Iramba language which, also a Bantu language, is closely related to *Kīnyihanzu*. Any meetings, divination of entrails, songs and so forth that were carried out in these languages, either partially or entirely, I recorded and later transcribed and translated into Swahili, Ihanzu or both so that I could make sense of them. Luckily for me, perhaps, I was never present at an Ihanzu event at which Ihanzu people spoke Hadza, Iraqw or Tatog, the other neighbouring languages, all of which are non-Bantu languages.

In this thesis I have written out some of the quotations in Swahili, rather than in the vernacular, because this is the way they were given to me. I see this as a strength, not a weakness. For one, it means that it will be possible for the Swahili-speaking reader to evaluate my translations and thus arguments, rather than leaving the reader mostly in the dark about how I moved between points A and B. I have tried to include as many of the Ihanzu texts as are relevant too (see especially Appendices E and F) as these are without question valuable, not so much for the intended general reader perhaps, but more for linguists and future ethnographic researchers including Ihanzu researchers who may be keen to dismantle my work, stand it on end, and suggest that I altogether missed the point. This should aid their cause considerably. For those readers who speak no Swahili, the transcriptions in this language may be distinguished from those in the Ihanzu language by the lack of tildes (~) over the letters.

There are five vowel sounds in Swahili and two additional ones in the Ihanzu language. These I represent as follows: *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, *ī*, *ū*. The first five are invariably pronounced as they would be, for example, in Spanish. As Mr. Perrott says on page one of his excellent *Teach Yourself Swahili* book:

A is something like the *a* in *father*, but not quite so deep.

E is like the *a* in *say*, without the final sound we give it in English by slightly closing the mouth.

I is like the *e* in *be*. When unstressed it is the same sound as we make at the end of the English words *say* or *I*.

O is like the *o* in *hoe* before we begin to close the mouth at the end; very much like the first *o* in *Oho!*

U is like the *oo* in *too*; it is never like the *u* in *use* unless preceded by y.

The final two vowel sounds, which I write as *ī* and *ū*, are not present in Swahili, only in the Ihanzu language. In the only two books written in the Ihanzu language, both from the Lutheran church (see Unknown authors 1964a; 1965), and in an Iramba Lutheran song book (Unknown author 1964b), the transcribers chose to use a tilde over these two additional vowels using, I presume, the Kikuyu language as a model. This seems reasonable. It thus follows:

Ī is like the *i* in *it*.

Ū is like the *oo* in *cook*.

The consonants in the Ihanzu language are the same as in English with a few exceptions: there is no *q* or *x*. Also, as is common in many Bantu languages, there is no distinction to be made between an *r* and an *l*, the sound being somewhere between the two, a midway point between an English *l* and a Spanish *r*. For consistency with earlier Ihanzu documents, anthropological and otherwise, I use an *l* to represent this sound.

The *ng'* sound (that is, *ng* with an apostrophe), common in Swahili and more so in the Ihanzu language, is pronounced like the *ng* sound in the word *sing*, and never as in the word *wrangle*.

The letter *z* in the Ihanzu language is normally pronounced as if it has a soft *d* before it, as with the *dz* sound in the English word *adze*. There is no hard *ch* sound in Ihanzu as in the English word *church*.

The stress in the Ihanzu language (and Swahili) is normally on the penultimate syllable; when it is on another syllable, I have so indicated with an accent mark.

Finally, when I use apostrophes in the Ihanzu language, I do so to indicate that a letter has been removed to render the transcription nearer the spoken language. For example, grammatically speaking the phrase ‘to Ihanzu’ would be written *kū Ihanzu* but it is always pronounced as *Kihanzu*, which I therefore write as *k'Ihanzu* to indicate the missing *ū* sound.

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THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS SECTION, aptly located at the beginning of a thesis, undeniably humbles an author by reminding him that a work is never entirely of his own doing. It is impossible to credit by name all those responsible for the completion of this thesis—that task, undoubtedly, would make a separate thesis itself, a long and rather unreadable one at that, which would ultimately honour no one. Those whose names have been left out will know and hopefully forgive.

I should first like to acknowledge the most generous support of the National Institute of Health (Fellowship no. 1F31MH10359-01), the British Government's Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme (no. 91055005) as well as the London School of Economics for several years of studentships. Also, the University of London's Irwin Fund (administered through the Central Research Fund) made it possible for me to get to Tanzania in the first place, while the Royal Anthropological Institute's Radcliffe-Brown Trust Fund and the London School of Economics' Malinowski Memorial Research Fund Grant offered vital financial assistance towards the end of writing up. Had it not been for the kind support of these various agencies and institutions, it is doubtful this thesis would have ever been finished, not to mention started.

At the LSE, I have had the good fortune to work under the supervision of Henrietta Moore and James Woodburn who both, in very different ways, share an extraordinary enthusiasm for the field of anthropology and their students' works. Both willingly—indeed enthusiastically—endured countless drafts of my chapters, forcing me in the end to produce a significantly better thesis than I would have otherwise done. I am extremely grateful to both.

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When I returned to London from Africa, I was desperate to sit, talk, drink a coffee and do nothing whatsoever. Peter Loizos had the good sense to recognise this and he did the unthinkable—he sat and listened. Thanks.

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As is always the case, only the author, I myself, may be held ultimately responsible for the mistakes expressed herein, in spite of my colleagues' dogged efforts to make me correct them.

I owe much thanks to my mother who, throughout my life in academia, has conspired to force my prose into a form more in line with the English language, a tendency which at times eludes me. In addition to trying to persuade me to speak and write the language properly, she has been an unwavering supporter and source of encouragement throughout, from start to finish. My brother Bret, too, deserves much credit for he, being an electronics wizard, made it possible for me to work in the field with a solar-powered laptop computer. Mr. Mann of SOAS deserves some acclaim for first insisting that my computer could, in fact, type odd but invaluable characters (like ū and ī) and then for modifying my font to prove it.

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Chapter One

Rainmaking, gender and power: an overview

THIS THESIS IS ABOUT RAINMAKING rites and beliefs amongst the Ihanzu,¹ a relatively small, Bantu-speaking agricultural people who live in north-central Tanzania. If it is true, as Evans-Pritchard (1940) would have us believe, that one cannot properly understand the Nuer without first understanding cattle, then this may equally be said of the importance of rain for understanding the Ihanzu. Nor should this surprise us much. The Ihanzu are, like many agricultural communities, entirely dependent on the rains for their continued existence. That the rains begin promptly and fall regularly each season—or indeed that they arrive and fall at all—is, to put it bluntly and quite literally, a matter of life or death. Accordingly, people in Ihanzu

¹ The Ihanzu people have been known by a confusing conglomeration of names: the Germans called them Issánsu (Stuhlmann 1894), Issansu (Sick 1915), Issanssu (Obst 1923: 147), Wa-Issansu (Werther 1894) and Waissansu (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1914: 360; Obst 1912a; 1912b). British administrators commonly used the terms Anisanzu, Wanisanzu and Isanzu, though other early variations include Ishanzu (Richter 1934: 97) and Anizanzu (Jerrard 1936: 4). More recently, they have been recorded as the Isansu (Tomikawa 1970), Izansu (Koponen 1988: 234n), Izanzu (Odner 1971: 152), Ihanbu (Thornton 1980: 216, 234), Inhanzu (*ibid.*: 231) and Ehansu (Douglas 1969: 124). Swahili speakers call them the Wanyisanzu (or, for those who know no better, Wanyiramba), and this is the common name government officials call them, if, indeed, they call them at all. The last anthropologist to work there sensibly called them the Ihanzu or Isanzu, depending on the context (Adam 1961; 1962; 1963a; 1963b; 1963c). The only thing that seems not to have occurred to anyone is to call them by the name they call themselves, the *Anyihanzu* (This should actually be *Anyā-Ihanzu*, yet it is always heard as *Anyihanzu*). Following in this long and established tradition of calling them anything other than who they are, I will follow suit by simply calling them ‘the Ihanzu,’ or ‘the Ihanzu people,’ omitting the prefix *Anyā* which means simply ‘the people of.’ Their language locals refer to as *Kinyihanzu*, their land, *Ihanzu*.

hold a complicated set of beliefs and have developed complex institutional arrangements to deal with controlling the weather. But there is more to it than this, much more.

Because this thesis is about rainmaking, it is about power: who has it and under what circumstances; how it is mobilised; its uses and abuses; when it is legitimate and when it is not; and to what ends it is put. Rainmaking is therefore a great deal more than mere rituals that purportedly cause water to fall from the sky. It is also used as an idiom to raise, discuss and act out significant social issues: the relationships between good and evil, the living and the dead, human and divine, chiefs and commoners, old and young, men and women.

For reasons that I will make plain in a moment, both topics—rainmaking and power—are linked by a third theme that runs through the entire thesis: gender. In brief, I wish to argue that gender, from an indigenous point of view, lies at the very heart of rainmaking and power in Ihanzu. How this is so I will discuss presently. Before doing so I would first like to examine what ethnographers have had to say about rainmaking through the decades—their approaches, their concerns and their conclusions. Though the outline is organised chronologically, it is only roughly so since in some instances there are several trends evident side-by-side.

RESEARCHERS, RAINMAKERS AND SECRETIVE KNOWLEDGE

Rainmaking has never been a straightforward topic for anthropologists.² Some of the first studies on rainmaking, and more specifically, those carried out during the early stages of the colonial encounter, were often frustrated by unwilling or unruly informants because of the secrecy in which these rites and beliefs were often shrouded. In fact, secrecy may partially explain why, even though rainmaking institutions have been widely reported across the entire continent,³ they have rarely

² As it is commonly used and as is dictated by common sense, the term 'rainmaking' is simply about 'bringing the rain.' Less apparent from this definition is the fact that this does not necessarily imply 'making' rain if by this we mean creating it from thin air. After all, 'rainmakers do not in fact make rain, they simply perform the rites which accompany prayers for rain...' (Mbiti 1975: 111). In Ihanzu as elsewhere (Schapera 1971: 17; Buxton 1973: 349-50), *creating* rain is entirely God's job. It is then left to men and women to summon God's rain. The term 'rainmaker' I use, like others, as a convenient shorthand for those people thought capable of controlling the weather.

³ The references are too numerous to list. In Tanzania alone, rainmakers and/or rainmaking institutions have been noted amongst the Shambaa (Feierman 1974; 1990), Nguru (McVicar 1941), Luguru (Beidelman 1967: 34; Swantz 1974: 82), Kaguru (Beidelman 1993: 114), Kwere (Beidelman 1967: 25), Mbugwe (Gray 1963; Mbee 1965), Rangi (Fosbrooke 1958; Kesby 1982: 154-65), Gogo (Hartnoll 1932; 1942; Carnell 1955: 29-31), Turu (Jellicoe 1967-68), Iramba (Ntundu 1936; 1939; Lindström 1987), Sukuma (Kollmann 1898; Cory 1951), Ha (Scherer 1959: 893-4), Kerewe (Hurel

excited the minds or thrilled the hearts of anthropologists in a way that other topics have done, such as kinship or witchcraft. A Uganda District Officer noted the following about rainmaking some time ago:

The difficulties of obtaining any exact and reliable data under this head [rainmaking] will be readily appreciated by any who have endeavoured to penetrate the esoteric beliefs of a primitive tribe. One is liable to meet with a veil of concealment and evasion and to be fobbed off with inaccurate and lying information (Persse 1934: 114).⁴

Not only government officials but trained and competent researchers, too, have been plagued by similar problems:

The whole question of rainmaking [among the Balobedu] is very obscure for no commoner is in a position to give authentic information on it, and the members of the royal family will divulge nothing of these their deepest and most closely guarded secrets (Krike 1931: 209).

Even Evans-Pritchard noted that when he attempted to carry out research on this topic in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, some of the practices of the Böri rainmaking clan were 'regarded as subversive by the local administration. Four members of the clan were in prison and others had been penalized earlier. It was therefore difficult to investigate their rain-making techniques in the short time at my disposal' (Evans-Pritchard 1938: 53).⁵

Yet in spite of the inherent difficulties with the topic a fair amount has in fact been written on rainmaking and it is this material that I should now wish to consider.

1911: 84-5; Zimóń 1968; 1974), Ihanzu (Adam 1963b) and probably elsewhere. Lest it be thought that human influence over the weather is confined solely to Bantu-speaking agricultural societies, we should think again: rainmaking institutions and beliefs have been reported amongst the pastoral and Nilotc Barabaig (Klima 1970: 80-1), the Akie hunter-gatherers of Handeni District (Kaare 1995), the Southern Cushitic-speaking Iraqw (Thornton 1980; 1982; Snyder 1995; 1997) and Gorowa (Gray, personal communication in Kesby 1982: 154n), and the Sandawe (Kesby 1981: 43) who practise a mix of farming, herding and hunting and gathering. Needless to say, practices and beliefs vary greatly from one society to the next. See the bibliography for further rainmaking references in other parts of East and Southern Africa; and bibliographies in Zimóń 1974 and Petermann 1985 for other references.

⁴ Nor, so it seems, is deception on the topic necessarily a thing of the past. In a scathing attack on Laughlin and Laughlin's (1972) work on rainmaking and the *Kenisan* ghost cult of Uganda Weatherby complains that, due to the brevity of their field stay, their narrow geographical focus and inadequate language skills, the Laughlins quite simply got it wrong. Unknowledgeable and unreliable informants, Weatherby tells us, can always 'be persuaded commercially to divulge what little they know, on account of poverty and starvation; but the acquisition of information to any depth is a long process unattainable by any commercial short cut' (1974: 90).

⁵ But Evans-Pritchard's efforts were apparently little dampened by these adverse circumstances, as he then continued for three pages, describing some useful details of Moro rain rites and the social tensions that surround them, as well as offering some rather interesting historical speculations on the possible origins of certain rainstones in the area.

RAINMAKING IS RITUAL

It would be fair to say that most of the early studies on rainmaking were singularly concerned with documenting the intricacies of rainmaking rites themselves (Roscoe 1909: 189-90; 1923a; 28-34; 1923b: 31-2; Dornan 1928; Beresford-Stooke 1928; Hartnoll 1932; 1942; McVicar 1941; Wright 1946; Cory 1951: 47-54; Brewer 1952; Ludger 1954; Harding 1963), sometimes in exhaustive detail (Driberg 1919; Krige 1931; Cooke and Beaton 1939). A few have focused either on ritual rainmaking implements, like rainstones (Rogers 1927; Bell 1936; Harding 1963), or on taboos surrounding rainmakers (Ntundu 1936; 1939). Oddly enough, very few of these analysts actually observed the rites about which they wrote, and most of their information came instead from what informants told them, or failed to tell them, about the ceremonies (Spire 1905; Hoernlé 1922; Krige 1931: 210; Evans-Pritchard 1938). Still others were at pains to describe rain rituals which they never could see, as they were no longer performed; only in informants' memories were these rituals still alive and well (Schapera 1930; 1971: 98). Under these circumstances it is entirely understandable that many such accounts remain, to say the least, incomplete.

Conspicuously absent from most of these early accounts are two things. The first is a systematic exploration into the meanings of the rites for those who perform them.⁶ Second, most failed to relate the rain rites they recorded to the larger political, social and economic contexts in which they were imbedded.

Of course not all early works focused narrowly on rain rites to the exclusion of meaning and context. We can find some useful discussions on both issues, the political and social dimensions of rainmaking (Spire 1905: 19-20; Cole 1910; Hurel 1911: 84-5; Meredith 1925; Rogers 1927; Alvord 1928; Hodgson 1931; Franklin 1932; Evans-Pritchard 1938: 54-6; Wollacott 1963) and, much less often, the underlying cosmological notions as understood by locals (Bleek 1933a; 1933b; Shoeman 1935; Marshall 1957). Yet on balance, and in spite of some calls for a more systematic political, social and economic contextualisation of these rites (Beemer 1935: 278-9), these latter issues were largely neglected, making rainmaking rites appear to be strangely free-floating and decontextualised entities that apparently have neither political ramifications nor any compelling meanings or significance for those who participated in them. More regrettable still, rain rites out of context give (or at

⁶ To be sure, not everyone writing on rainmaking rites was equally unconcerned with local meaning. Hoernlé, for example, pointed out that certain rain ceremonies 'seem to me as full of symbolic rites as any I know' (1922: 21), which is undoubtedly true, but she then failed to give us any further clues as to what this symbolism might have meant for ritual participants themselves.

least gave) the impression that actors were somehow irrational, as it was sometimes assumed that no reasonable person could possibly partake in such palpable nonsense.

RAINMAKING, RATIONALITY AND STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALISM

A large part of the initial debate about rainmaking was the extent to which people were acting either rationally or simply following customs that had, through some minor miracle, been caught in a time warp and catapulted into the ‘modern’, colonial era. Writers, in other words, argued over whether any ‘reasonable’ person anywhere could accept such beliefs and if so under what circumstances. One early writer patronisingly put it this way:

I have myself, more than once, been solemnly asked by natives (who, judging by the intelligence they display in other matters, one would consider ought to know better), to arrest and put to death or severely punish So-and-So for stopping the rain! (Spire 1905: 19).

Following an obviously Frazerian and evolutionary logic, it was sometimes assumed that the analyst’s task was to explain the ‘sympathetic magic’ that underlies rain rites (e.g., Eiselen 1928; Carnell 1955). This tendency showed concern for meaning in a way other studies had not but it did so by ultimately disallowing any claim to reasonableness on the part of ritual participants; rather, such approaches served to point up the fallacy of rainmaking and the muddled thinking (or lack of thinking) of those who engaged in it.

The idea underlying this [particular rain rite] was that of sympathetic magic; that as it blackens his body, so it would help to turn the clouds black, and cause them to part with the rain. I do not think the rainmaker speculated much about sympathetic magic. Too much is often read into the ceremonies of savage peoples. Many of these ceremonies are purely traditional, and the reasons for them have been forgotten by those who practise them. What their fathers did the children do without thinking (Dornan 1928: 188).

Such views as those of Rev. Dornan did not go unchallenged. Others laboured furiously to refute them, trying instead to make apparent ‘how predominant the religious aspect was within the rain-ritual...’ (Feddema 1966: 192). Still others have argued that rainmaking rites are, in fact, both religious and magical at once (Ten Raa 1969). But whatever the case, this debate was a spurious one—or at least it is today—for once one dismisses the untenable social evolutionary assumptions, the debate slips into obscurity; it has proved neither relevant nor interesting to later scholars.

Rather than argue in terms of sympathetic magic versus religion, others attempted to 'rationalise the rainmaker' by adding layers of context to rainmaking rites. Typically they did this by placing otherwise out-of-context rain rites and beliefs in their wider social, political and economic surroundings.

To isolate the rain rites from the economic as well as from the political background gives a distorted picture of Swazi mentality. It overemphasises the belief in magical powers and ignores the knowledge which the people have of plants and trees, types of soil, seasonal changes and other natural phenomena. The ritual forms part of a practical, organised economic system... (Beemer 1935: 279).

By far the most outstanding example of this particular approach is Krige and Krige's (1943) monumental study, *The Realm of a Rain-Queen*. Here, unlike in any other publication about rainmaking with which I am familiar, we are presented with an exhaustingly detailed picture of the South African Lovedu with extended discussions on the landscape; subsistence activities; economic, political and legal activities; social organisation; child rearing; marriage and social structure; health; witchcraft and sorcery; tribal attitudes; culture contact and change; and, of course, rain rites and beliefs (among other topics). Throughout the book, though especially in the early chapters, the Kriges stress the no-nonsense and practical manner in which Lovedu deal in and with their environment. 'They have a vast knowledge of the vegetation,' we are told, 'which constitutes the best example of a science among them. It is a science closely related to their everyday lives...' (Kriges and Krige 1943: 34). The reason they find it necessary to point this out in the first place is this:

We are often inclined to picture primitive man as engrossed in ritual pageant unrelated to, and unserviceable for, the major ends of human existence. It is very necessary to correct this view. It is often thought that sex, magic, and witchcraft absorb most of the time, activities, and interests of primitive man. But, at all events among the Lovedu, more time and energy is [sic] spent, more interest centred, on getting food, shelter, and the material comforts—in short, on a pragmatic adjustment to nature by the application of empirical knowledge—than on any other aspect of their culture (ibid.: 34-5).

If the Kriges were correct on the point that some writers had a particularly dim understanding of local rationality—and surely they were correct—then their functionalist method for showing it eventually proved rather unwieldy. Since the publication of their book few have been so ambitious as to attempt to provide such a holistic account of the institutions surrounding rainmaking rites and beliefs.⁷ But even

⁷ On the other hand, some functionalist accounts of rainmaking have been produced which, even if shorter, reproduce more or less the same arguments (cf. Colson 1948; 1977 on rain rites and 1962, among others, on their context; also Gluckman 1963).

if the concern with all-inclusive ethnographies eventually faded, the concern with the rationality of rainmaking did not.

Rather than attempt to examine all possible social institutions and the interrelations between them, a daunting task at the best of times, some later writers have looked for the rationality of rainmaking by placing informants' slightly more elusive explanations of rain rites next to seemingly more pragmatic ones. As Schapera tells us for the Tswana:

All informants agreed that to violate one or other of these taboos would cause the rain when it came to fall as hail, and thus damage or even destroy the young crops.... 'the gods will scold.' (A more rational explanation was also given for the ban on further ploughing: if people did not stop in time and take their oxen back to the cattleposts, the animals might stray into neighbours' fields and trample down or eat the crops already growing there.) (1971: 93).

To be sure, this approach is undoubtedly more manageable than more all-inclusive, functionalist ones. But it also raises some important questions like: What sort of rationality are we talking about? Rationality *to whom*? And herein lies one of the major problems with the functionalist solution to the problem.

While it may help to see the logic of these systems by placing them roundly into their political, economic, legal, social and other contexts, this still falls short of 'making sense' of the whole thing. Even if we find logical explanations (which is to say, explanations that make 'European sense') as do Schapera and others, neither does this suddenly and irredeemably negate the supposed irrationality of the other beliefs and rites themselves. We still fail to understand why they should exist at all, if seemingly reasonable and common-sense explanations may be offered for precisely the same thing.

In retrospect it is clear that the sometimes heated polemic between those who saw 'silly savages' and those who insisted on 'rational rainmakers' has bettered our understanding of rainmaking only slightly, if at all. The reason for this is simple: if we are required to show the logic of rain rites and beliefs solely *in our own terms* then we are to a large extent doomed from the outset. If anything is to make sense, then surely what is required is a thorough exploration of *local* ideas about what people imagine they are up to, which is to say, a systematic unpacking of the complex relationships between cosmology, ritual and power (cf. Beidelman 1966a; Krige 1968; Vincent 1975). This Schapera and the Kriges failed to do, in spite of the exceptional quality of their ethnographies. It is as if any in-depth probing into local ideas might suddenly cause the rational rainmaker edifice to come crashing down. In the end, by failing to explore in any detail the symbolism of local belief systems, the

very beliefs they recorded appear to belie their own claims about rational rainmakers. Others, by turning more directly to local notions of cosmologies and indigenous understandings of power, have by and large avoided these pitfalls.

POLITIES AND COSMOLOGIES: TOWARDS AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE

More recent works on rainmaking have demonstrated the fruitfulness of approaching the topic from at least two different points of view: the political and the cosmological or, better still, both at once.

It may be only a slight exaggeration to claim, as have some, that '*[e]n Afrique il est impossible de parler des rites liés à la pluie sans mentionner la royauté*' (Hauenstein 1967a: 8),⁸ if by this we mean that rain rites must be organised and orchestrated by royalty alone. For it must be pointed out that the mark of the rainmaker in some societies is that he or she is *not* royal (Roscoe 1923b: 31), even though non-royal rainmakers may be expected to work closely with ruling royals (Scherer 1959: 893; Beattie 1964). Further, in a few societies there is no obvious connection between rains and royals at all, since even though rainmaking rites exist, royal clans with exclusive control over the elements do not (e.g., Driberg 1919). On balance, however, in the vast majority of African societies where rainmaking rites are found—and this includes Ihanzu—rains and royals are inextricably linked. And since rains are about royals, it logically follows that rainmaking must also be about power.⁹ The legitimacy of leaders often derives from and is dependent upon their ability to harness and control the forces of nature. Consider the following typical statements:

[T]o the Alur...rainmaking is the most vivid attribute of chiefly power (Southall 1956: 379).

The first chiefs [among the Mbugwe] were of foreign origin,¹⁰ and evidently acquired their political power in the first place through their reputations as rainmakers (Gray 1963: 45).

[Madi] Chiefs, rainmakers and the *vudipi* (who exercise important powers over the land) are descended from a line of ancestors who performed the same functions, and it is on this fact alone that their authority rests... (Williams 1949: 202).

⁸ Transl.: '[i]n Africa it is impossible to speak of rain-related rites without mentioning royalty.'

⁹ For some fascinating studies on the politics of rainmaking, see James 1972, Larson 1966 and O'Brien 1983. Avua (1968) discusses the flip side of the coin—the politics of rain-stopping—among the Lugbara; and Buchanan (1943) does the same for Nyasaland (now Malawi).

¹⁰ Incidentally, they were of Ihanzu origin, so my informants claimed. Gray confirms this (1955: 42).

The main source of the [Acholi] chief's authority is derived from his control of the rain (Grove 1919: 172).

The root of the Monze's authority lay, however, in his rainmaking and prophetic powers as far as the Tonga people were concerned and not in his possession of an army or organized rule through a court. This type of leadership has a long history in Central Africa (O'Brien 1983: 34).

Indeed it does (cf. Packard 1981). It is scarcely news to the anthropologist that the authority of rainmaker-chiefs may in some instances be based entirely on their relationship with the other-world and have little or nothing to do with control over other more secular means like armies or trade routes. What is at issue though is determining the precise nature of rainmaking powers as understood locally. On what basis, from an indigenous point of view, do rainmaking rulers rule? How do local people understand the basis of royal power and authority? Other studies have broached more directly these and related issues (e.g., Feierman 1974; 1990; Packard 1981; Lan 1985).¹¹

What makes these latter studies decidedly different from many of their predecessors—especially those of the functionalist persuasion—is their avowed interest in indigenous ideational systems, which is to say, an interest in looking at ritual, cosmology and power first and foremost from a local point of view and thus finding an otherwise hard to locate local sense (see also Middleton 1971). By examining more closely cosmology and through careful explorations of indigenous ideas of power and authority we are bound to find that ‘the source of power resides in the interaction between natural, social, and supernatural realms’ (Arens and Karp 1989: xvii; see also Beidelman 1966a; de Heusch 1990; Izard 1990; Jonckers 1990; Tardis 1990; Vincent 1975; 1990).

Along these lines one of the principle aims of this thesis is to approach rainmaking rites and beliefs from a local perspective, allowing local ideas, explanations and associations to remain at the fore.¹² This requires paying close attention to the way Ihanzu themselves understand and make sense of rainmaking rites and the beliefs that surround them. Having said that, and because Ihanzu ideas of rainmaking are inextricably linked to notions of gender, it is this theme that I must now take up in earnest.

¹¹ Still other studies have looked at the relationship between sacred myths and rainmaking rites (Rouch 1953; Ten Raa 1969; Kaare 1995) while others have concerned themselves almost entirely with cosmological systems (Berglund 1976; Murray 1980).

¹² Even though I attempt throughout this thesis to explore local ideas, ideals and models about rainmaking, I am not prepared to push things to their logical conclusion, as have some, and suggest that ‘rainfall rituals are based on faith and through faith the participants can make it rain’ (Akong'a 1987: 83). I am wholly uncomfortable with this attitude.

GENDER COMPLEMENTARITY AND GENDER HIERARCHY

In this section my aim is to clarify how it is that gender fits into a thesis about rainmaking for it is, at first glance, not at all obvious. My concern with gender, as will become apparent throughout this thesis, derives mainly from my informants' concerns—one might even say obsessions—with the topic. For most in Ihanzu, to discuss rainmaking is to discuss gender and vice versa.

By the term gender, I am referring specifically to cultural constructions of male (or masculine) and female (or feminine) as well as the relationship between them. It is important to note that using the term in this way does not limit our attention solely to cultural constructions of men and women as specific types of persons. Rather, what we are talking about is masculine and feminine principles which move beyond and subsume those constructions. Thus, gender is not only “about” men and women but “about” other things as well’ (Strathern 1981: 177). My cues I take from the Ihanzu themselves, for the Ihanzu universe is a thoroughly gendered one.

The terms Ihanzu use to create, consider and converse about their gendered universe are *agohá* (male or masculine) and *asūngū* (female or feminine). When used as nouns, these terms most often refer to men and women respectively. Yet Ihanzu use these same terms as adjectives to (en)gender their social and natural world as, for example, when they speak about animals, some plant life, rainstones and even the rain itself, among other things. In a number of instances it is plain that gender features centrally as a cosmological structuring principle.

One of the main arguments of this thesis is that gender complementarity¹³ is a pervasive aspect of life—or more to the point, of *ritual life*—in Ihanzu. Though there is no indigenous term in the Ihanzu language for ‘gender complementarity,’ the concept nonetheless pervades many domains of their cultural imagination. Informants variously explain the ways that male and female principles are mutually constituted and dependent on each other. Most commonly people explain that male and female must ‘co-operate’ (*kiunga*) and that ideally they should ‘reside together harmoniously’ (*wikiū ūza palūng’wī*) to ensure the continuation of meaningful life.

¹³ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a complement is defined as ‘something which, when added, completes or makes up a whole; each of two parts which mutually complete each other, or supply each other’s deficiencies.’ Thus gender complementarity, as I use it here, should be understood as two component parts, male and female, of a larger system which together form an organised, integrated and complete whole. The two elements are decidedly different but mutually constitutive. Each is incomplete without its opposite gender complement.

Life in the present and its continuation into the future are largely dependent upon successfully joining the genders.

For the purposes at hand gender complementarity is about symmetry (equality) between male and female and not asymmetry (hierarchy). Masculine and feminine principles, in certain cosmological context, may be understood as ‘separate but equal’ (Shope 1994). Almost without exception anthropologists have used the term gender complementarity in this way, but sometimes without being entirely clear thinking about the term’s precise application (see McDowell 1984).¹⁴

The term gender complementarity is in the literature sometimes used to mean ‘interdependent and *hierarchically ranked* as when Kristi Stølen tells us: ‘Male-female relations are defined as different and complementary; but they are not characterised by a complementary opposition between equals; it is a power relation’ (1996: 393; see also Forge 1972: 36; Rao 1996: 79). But since the ‘equality or inequality of two complementary items is [ultimately] an empirical question’ (McDowell 1984: 34), I again follow my informants’ lead and suggest that in certain ritual contexts, ‘male and female are truly equal’ (*īagohá n’īasūngū nī sawa tai*).

The notion of gender complementarity cannot be used to sum up accurately the whole of Ihanzu society. Nor would any of my informants use it in this way. Such usage would imply, among other things, a singularity and an all-embracing, coherent ‘system’ of ideas that disallows for the possibility of multiple and conflicting representations of gender (Caplan 1989; Hays and Hays 1982; Holy 1985; Ortner and Whitehead 1981: 15). As Meigs concisely puts it, ‘Probably there is no such thing as a single gender ideology in any society. On a topic like the relationship of males and females, each society undoubtedly has many ways of thinking—complex, subtle, and even contradictory ideological options’ (Meigs 1990: 103).¹⁵ The issue of interest, then, becomes one of specifying how varied cultural representations of gender are operationalised in practical situations (Bloch 1987; Ortner 1996).

¹⁴ Buckley (1989), Devereaux (1987), Hammer and Hammer (1994), Harris (1978) and many others use the term in this way. For a unique and thought provoking application of the notion of gender complementarity, see Hoskins (1987: 175) who demonstrates convincingly for the Kodi of Sumba that ‘[c]omplementarity of male and female in this world is linked to maintaining the balance of complementary forces in the world to come.’

¹⁵ The Hua of Highland New Guinea have at least three different and competing gender ideologies—male superiority, female superiority and gender complementarity—and each is appropriate in different contexts, and at different stages in a person’s life-cycle. Since these gender ideologies compete with each other, and vary depending on the context in which they are employed, none may be given logical priority over the other and none among them may be considered hegemonic (Meigs 1990; but see Ortner 1996; Poole 1996: 198-199).

Along these lines Simon Harrison (1985) has aptly demonstrated some of the culturally specific ways that two particular cultural representations of gender—one of complementarity and one of hierarchy—intersect with two gendered practices, daily and ritual. For the Avatip of New Guinea, the everyday, mundane world, is characterised by a fairly even division of male and female labour. The main subsistence activities are fishing and sago-starch production, with yam cultivation and hunting playing secondary roles. Women fish, men hunt. Men and women farm yams together, and ‘men and women contribute an approximately equal amount of labour to the production of sago...’ (Harrison 1985: 416). More significant still, the valuation of men’s and women’s labours is apparently equivalent. ‘It is a basic ideal of the domestic ethos, and by and large an actuality, for husbands and wives to have equally important roles in food production and joint control of the products of their labor’ (ibid. 1985: 416). The phrase Harrison uses to describe this particular situation is ‘secular equality’.

By way of contrast, the ritual sphere—which is wholly controlled by men—Harrison characterises as one of ‘ritual hierarchy’ and it is in this arena that one finds an ethos pervaded with gender *inequalities*. ‘According to this formulation, the core of human culture is the male cult and the secret knowledge and practices associated with it, while women, children, and the domestic sphere are accorded—very much along the lines of Ortner’s argument—a virtually infracultural status’ (Harrison 1985: 417). (Significantly, the equal, mundane sphere is in no way dependent for its reproduction on the unequal, ritual sphere) (ibid.: 417). For the Avatip, then, mundane life is to gender equality as ritual life is to gender inequality. Others have made nearly identical arguments (see, e.g., Hill 1984; Meigs 1990).

For the purposes of this thesis I will argue that, as far as the Ihanzu are concerned, the converse of this proposition is true: the mundane world is hierarchical while the ritual world is characterised by equality (cf. Rao 1996). The term ‘ritual life’ I use, like Harrison and others, in a broad sense to imply not just religious rites but, perhaps more importantly, to include the Ihanzu cultural imagination and cosmological systems of thought that accompany and inform those rites. Jacobson-Widding (1990) makes a very similar and convincing case for the Shona (Manyika) of Zimbabwe.

In the Shona culture, social relations in everyday life are premised on the notions of hierarchy and dualism. Especially important is the high-low distinction which pervades all social relations from king and subjects to parents and children (Jacobson-Widding 1990: 65).

This mode of categorization applies above all to the relationship between the two genders. The man’s ‘highness’ compared with the woman’s ‘lowness’ is strongly

marked, even by African standards. It is constantly made visible in everyday life (Jacobson-Widding 1990: 65).

The Shona understand this everyday, hierarchically ordered existence in terms of 'coolness,' for 'a good [social] order is a cold one' (Jacobson-Widding 1990: 66).

By way of contrast, Shona understand things 'hot'—which include fire, disorder, anger, lust, twins, albinos, fevers, witchcraft among other things—as having inherently disorganising properties and potentialities. Hot things transform by (con)fusing the boundaries between otherwise distinct, everyday categories, forging into one what were formerly two. Fire and sexual symbolism are pervasive in Shona rain rites and fertility cults, as well as in forging. In all instances where these transformative, 'hot' things come into play, but especially 'in love-making, total equality prevails. The difference between high and low is erased' (ibid.: 69).¹⁶

For the Shona, then, life alternates between ordered hierarchy and chaotic equality. As in smelting, '[f]orm must be melted into formlessness in order for new form to be assumed. Structure must be transformed into chaos in order to become a new structure' (ibid.: 68). Everyday structures are periodically transformed as when rain rites are carried out, but those structures are also, according to Jacobson-Widding, rejuvenated from one day to the next through sexual intercourse.

The daytime, public structure of high/low, then, is transformed by night into a non-structure of equality. The order and form of day becomes chaos and formlessness after nightfall, subsequently to be re-created as order. Total fusion of distinct elements is seen as a prerequisite for the recreation of structure and order (Jacobson-Widding 1990: 69).

Where the Shona, on the one hand, imagine a *total* collapse of the genders into one as a logical prerequisite for revivifying the social order, the Ihanzu, on the other hand, emphasise gender complementarity: a coming together of masculine and feminine principles but *not* their ultimate fusion. Male and female must combine to effect transformations, but to fuse completely, to obliterate all distinctions between them, on some level disallows the possibility of future gendered combinations. Dissolved into one, the genders lose the generative and transformative powers that together, but as separate entities, they possess. I shall have more to say about this in the context of androgyny discussed below.

¹⁶ In Ihanzu this is certainly not the case. Procreation beliefs imply gender complementarity or equality, as will be shown in chapter four, yet the *act* of sex itself, as informants commonly explained it to me, is all about gender hierarchy and power relations—men on top, women underneath; men initiate, women reluctantly acquiesce.

In this thesis my primary focus is on the ‘ritual’ and not the everyday side of the equation: on the Ihanzu cultural imagination, cosmological thought and rain rites. It is in this domain that Ihanzu understand relations between the genders as complementary—that is, equal. This in no way implies, of course, that the Ihanzu are ‘egalitarian’ or that men and women are, on balance, equal. They are not. Everyday life is characterised by sometimes marked gender inequalities. It is only in the ritual sphere that complete gender equality is imaginable as a lived reality, and its expression is largely limited to this sphere. The reason this is so, I shall argue, has to do with the way people in Ihanzu link notions of gender complementarity with cosmic power and fertility.

GENDER COMPLEMENTARITY, POWER AND FERTILITY

Perhaps the most obvious way that gender complementarity is evinced in the realm of Ihanzu rainmaking is in Ihanzu’s two rainmaking-chiefs, one of whom is male, the other female.¹⁷ Both must be from the royal *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan-section. Although there are a number of ways this royal duo may be related to each other,¹⁸ what my informants find significant, without exception, is that they are a *gendered* duo. Together they embody and represent the fundamental dichotomy of the Ihanzu cultural imagination: a distinction between masculine and feminine elements. As male or female, each possesses certain abilities and attributes that the other does not. For this reason, by co-operating in certain capacities, they are themselves representatives of masculine and feminine elements of the gendered Ihanzu universe and can thus activate other such gendered powers. The success of all Ihanzu rain rites hinges

¹⁷ In colonial times, the male rainmaker was recognised as governmental chief (*mūtemi*) of Ihanzu and today, though he holds no official government position, he is still frequently referred to as such by locals. Collectively the male and female rainmakers are referred to by Ihanzu as chiefs (*atemi*). It appears from informants’ statements that they may have been so called historically as well (also see song number eighteen, line nine, in Appendix F). Prior to the colonial encounter these rulers’ title was *akola ihī*—owners of the land—a term that is still in common use by Ihanzu today. Though the secular powers of these royal rulers are today minimal, and were by no means absolute in the past, I prefer to gloss them as ‘chiefs’ rather than ‘priests’ for the simple reason that this is the way the few English-speaking Ihanzu, as well as other Tanzanians, translate the term *atemi*. I am well aware of the problems such translations raise. For one thing, the term ‘chief’ has often been used in the literature when discussing rulers whose power base is ‘secular’ in nature, whereas the term ‘priest’ implies a more ‘sacred’ power source. This secular-sacred dichotomy I find unconvincing, except perhaps as two poles of an idealised continuum. In reality, it is much less clear where one stops and the other begins. In Ihanzu both types of power are inextricably linked, making it difficult and perhaps even unhelpful to make hard and fast distinctions between them (cf. Forster 1995; Ray 1991).

¹⁸ Appendix A at the end of this thesis details the male and female lines of royal succession during this century and before. In the past, as is apparent from figure A1, the two royal rulers have stood in relation to each other as M-S, ZD-MB, S-B and in one rare instance, as MZD-MZS. Currently they form a brother-sister pair.

ultimately upon the co-operation of these two gendered leaders, a point upon which all my informants readily agreed.

Some anthropologists and historians may have paid attention to dual kingdoms—frequently under the rubric of divine or sacred kingship (e.g., de Heusch 1958; 1962; 1972)—but only rarely, for a number of reasons, has there been any sustained enquiry into this particular topic. In fact, ‘[o]ne of the most striking features of the literature on divine kingship is the absence of attention to women’ (Feeley-Harnik 1985: 297).¹⁹ Instead, a few recent notable exceptions aside (e.g., Berger 1995; Hauenstein 1967a: esp. 14ff; Henry 1991; Kaplan 1997; Troy 1986), many seem to have assumed the fundamental importance of male leaders, divine or otherwise, while simultaneously downplaying whatever importance female leaders might otherwise be accorded by locals.

For example, in an important but often ignored critique of Gluckman’s treatment of certain Zulu and Swazi ‘rituals of rebellion,’ Hilda Kuper chastised Gluckman for ignoring the role of the Queen Mother.

Both aspects—female and male—are joined together for national unity; one cannot be complete without the other. Throughout the ceremony there is this ambivalence between the sexes and stress on their complementary rôles which overcomes hostility (Kuper in Gluckman 1963: 257-8n).

This is far removed from Gluckman’s own emphasis on the king alone and the supposed symbolic rebellion the rites allegedly express (Gluckman 1963). Had Gluckman paid more attention to the relationship between these gendered royals—the king and the queen-mother—and most especially, to people’s own ideas about the precise nature of this royal relationship, he would have undoubtedly come to different conclusions.

Other scholars have been more sensitive to the ways in which royal gender complementarity features centrally in African systems of thought and rainmaking rites. In Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) we find that:

¹⁹ The Ihanzu dual chiefship is, by most definitions, *not* a divine kingship, making the literature on this topic of only marginal relevance. For one, there is no history of regicide in Ihanzu, one of the central tenets of divine kingship (Frazer 1913; Leinhardt 1961; Roscoe 1911; Seligman 1934). Not unrelated to this point, in sacred kingships it is invariably true that ‘the body-fetish of the chief or king articulates the natural and social orders’ (de Heusch 1997: 231). This is not so in Ihanzu. Ihanzu leaders grow old and eventually die of natural causes, but their ageing and death has no effect on the land, the social or moral order. Finally, Ihanzu rulers are in no sense considered divine or sacred; they are respected, but not worshipped. For concise overviews of some of the debates surrounding divine kingship, see Feeley-Harnik 1985 and Vaughan 1980.

...l'homme seul n'a pas le pouvoir de faire venir la pluie. Sans prêtresse de la pluie il est impuissant. Pour provoquer la vie (dans le cas particulier la pluie) les deux éléments (sexes) sont nécessaires (cited in Hauenstein 1967a: 14).²⁰

And again, this time in South Africa:

Without his [the king's] presence and co-operation she [the royal mother] is practically powerless. The rain magic can only be made really active when the king is present with that part of the rain medicine which he keeps in his possession (Schoeman 1935: 172).

As in Ihanzu, it would seem that royal gendered duos are locally significant in many African systems of government, even if few analysts have dwelled on this or even had much to say about it (see also Cohen 1977). There should therefore be nothing strange or startling in that 'when studying the rain ceremony...women play such an important part in it [even] in a patrilineal-patrilocal tribe like the Swazi' (Schoeman 1935: 169). Quite the contrary, we might almost expect this to be so.

As these examples suggest, the precise relationship between male and female royals is not everywhere identical. It may even change, as it does in Ihanzu, when one leader dies and another succeeds to the throne. Yet what is significant, whatever the nature of the relationship between them, is that the two leaders represent the masculine and feminine elements of a larger, gendered universe (cf. Troy 1986). The reason locals find gendered rulers significant in their varied forms has to do, I submit, with local notions of power and fertility.

The combination of masculine and feminine elements, in their various cultural manifestations, often provides a model for reproductive, generative powers. In the Ihanzu human and natural worlds fertility is about, and dependent upon, the coming together of masculine and feminine aspects of their gendered cosmos. By drawing ultimately on the powers of divinity, the combination of gender categories in some sense completes a vision of the world, a world that would otherwise remain incomplete and sterile. Masculine and feminine principles combined have power (*ngūlū*) and ability (*ūwezo*) that each gender by itself lacks altogether.

To join the genders is to renew, to invigorate, to transform, to unleash generative and sacred cosmological powers. Gender complementarity, as such, is a manifestation of divine power; fertility and the continuity of the social and natural worlds are

²⁰ Transl. '... a man alone does not have the power to make the rain come. Without a rain priestess he is impotent, incapable. To call forth [new] life (in this particular case, the rain) the two elements (sexes) are necessary.'

ultimately dependent upon it. My suggest then is that the two Ihanzu leaders embody and, through ritual, enact the principle of gender complementarity.

But gender complementarity, a central feature of the Ihanzu cultural imagination, informs much more than local ideas about rulers. For example, as will be discussed at length in chapter four, Ihanzu ideas about the human life-cycle are similarly informed by notions of gender complementarity and, as such, draw on the transformative powers inherent in it (cf. Heald 1995). And throughout the thesis, we shall see the sometimes subtle ways that the combination of masculine and feminine domains similarly underlies and provides the local logic for rain rituals. But in whatever form, the overall point is that masculine and feminine principles provide salient categories for thinking about the world, and their complementary combination, a powerful means of transforming it. Central to Ihanzu cosmological thought, then, is the proposition that fertility in all its forms—humans, crops, animals, land—is ensured only through the strategic combination of masculine and feminine principles of a gendered world. For the Ihanzu, as with the Tanzanian Chagga, ‘sexual reproductivity was the model of the most powerful forces in the universe’ (Moore 1976: 367; also Beidelman 1993; Herbert 1993; Jacobson-Widding 1979; 1990).²¹ In an Ihanzu vision of the world, powers of fertility come in gendered pairs.

There is plenty of compelling (if often inconclusive) evidence that local ideas about gender complementarity might, as they do in Ihanzu, feature centrally in African systems of thought all across the continent. African rainmaking rites and beliefs are pregnant, so to speak, with fertility symbolism, calling forth cultural constructions of male and female. It is also full of material of a patently sexual nature—obscene songs, royal incest, pregnant sacrificial animals, sacred serpents that elicit rain by entering into holes—that, once again, appear to have something of interest to say about the cultural categories ‘male’ and ‘female’ and the relationship between them.²²

All across Africa we find gendered rainstones (Rogers 1927; Hartnoll 1932: 738; 1942: 59; Cooke and Beaton 1939: 182; Avua 1968: 29; Middleton 1971: 196; James 1972: 38; Packard 1981: 69); gendered rain pots (Cory 1951: 51n); male and female rain drums (Weatherby 1979); and repeated references to pregnant sacrificial animals

²¹ The main transformation with which I am concerned is rainmaking, though the same idea of transformative processes might equally be applied to the production of metals and millets, beers and babies, as well as rains and rulers.

²² For an interesting discussion, as well as an overview of some rather obscure literature on this topic, see Hauenstein 1967a and 1967b.

and sacred serpents.²³ Furthermore, rainmaking rites are commonly hedged with sexual taboos either for commoners who participate in those rites (Driberg 1919: 55) or for royal rainmakers themselves (Roscoe 1923b: 31; Cory 1951: 53; Feddema 1966: 182); frequently only those who cannot reproduce (pre-pubescent or elderly) may participate or play prominent roles in rain rites (Rogers 1927: 82; Schapera 1930; Chitewhe 1954). Rain songs, too, are often sexually explicit or, if not, at least they are very suggestive (e.g., Evans-Pritchard 1929; Krige 1968), while allusions to royal incest and rainmaking powers are very common indeed (e.g., Krige and Krige 1943: 308; Jacobson-Widding 1990; Schoeman 1953: 173). Even the rains, in some places, are gendered (Bleek 1933a; Holas 1949; Marshall 1957). And finally, it should be pointed out that stopping the rain, like bringing it, is frequently associated with sex or sexuality gone awry—a man may in some places stop the rain by urinating on a fire (Marshall 1957: 237) or ‘by raising his posterior to the clouds’ (MacDonald 1890: 130).

In spite of this few have made much, if anything, of the extent to which sexuality and notions of gender underlie African rainmaking rites and beliefs; indeed the sexually-explicit rainmaking information, though often reported, seems frequently to have baffled the ethnographers who report it (but see Jacobson-Widding 1985: 9-11; 1986: 3ff; 1990). For example, although some have been told that the union of male and female rainstones ‘symbolizes the insemination of the earth and the sky’ (Williams 1949: 205-6), few have explored the cosmological implications of such statements. In a typical remark (reported in a footnote) Cory informs us that:

The *kibiga* is considered a house in which the *shigemero* represents the male and the four pots represent the female element. Rain is generated by these two elements to the accompaniment of lightning and thunder (Cory 1951: 51n).

To this he adds no further explanation. Another ethnographer discusses rain rites at some length only to tell us that she is ‘frankly puzzled as to why some are considered appropriate to the occasion. In one the dancer limped sadly about the shrine.... Other dances were obscene’ (Colson 1948: 279-80). And another, when examining a Tswana rain song, says: ‘I cannot explain the allusions in the second song to “whores”...’ (Schapera 1971: 100). So what does one make of all the local emphasis on sexuality and gender in rain rites? This thesis offers one approach to understanding better rainmaking rites and beliefs which centres on the notion of gender complementarity.

²³ For mention of royal snakes that are associated with rain and rain rites, see Hobley 1903: 349; Roscoe 1909: 189; Cooke and Beaton 1939: 190; Rangeley 1952: 32-33; Ludger 1954: 185; Carnell 1955: 31; Hauenstein 1967a: 14-5; Avua 1968: 29, 32; Murray 1980: 68; among others.

As should be apparent, the concept of gender complementarity is fairly straightforward and comprehensible when male and female genders correspond to two discrete entities, be they bodies, rainstones, rain pots or the rain itself. Rather more perplexing are those cases where this is manifestly not the case, where gender complementarity is condensed into *single* entities.

IMAGES OF ANDROGYNY

We have already seen how dual, gendered rainmaking rulers are commonplace in Africa. It was also suggested that local ideas about gender complementarity may account, in part, for their prevalence. What is also common is for *individual* rainmaking rulers to embody symbolically male and female elements, taking on aspects of both genders at once. And since male and female elements, when combined, are often locally understood as a generative source of power (see discussion above), it is no different when they combine with(in) individual bodies. Thus androgynous persons commonly take on ‘some extraordinary power unleashed in that transcendence—a power sometimes manifested in their prominence as religious symbols,’ as Poole argues for Highland New Guinea (1996: 201).

For example, some in Malawi recount tales of a certain semi-divine and semi-mythical androgynous figure Makewana—‘the mother of all people’—who had extraordinary powers over the weather. Makewana, one scholar tells us in no uncertain terms, ‘was without sex’ (Rangeley 1952: 36). Locals greatly emphasised that she should not—and perhaps could not—become pregnant, even though she was said to have on certain ritual occasions a male consort who was referred to as a python (ibid.: 32-34). This python-man, however, was never referred to as her husband ‘for God has no husband’ (ibid.: 37). Even Makewana’s personal attendants were, like Makewana her/himself, androgynous beings: virgin girls who had not yet reached puberty and who were not permitted to engage in sexual intercourse with men. Violation of this sexual taboo called for the guilty man’s death, and the girl’s removal from her previous position (ibid.: 36-37).

From Makewana’s androgynous state derived her power over rain and over the forces of life and death. In addition to being responsible for rainmaking ceremonies, Makewana also oversaw girls’ initiation rites, uttered prophesies and carried out divinations (ibid.: 33-34). Yet the true telltale sign of her powers is that she was believed incapable of dying. On physical death, Makewana is said to have gone to visit God temporarily, only to reappear at a later date in another bodily form which

would subsequently become androgynous (ibid.: 34-35). Similar instances of androgynous rainmakers and/or rulers are found across Africa and it is evident that their powers derive, at least in part, from the strategic combination of male and female cultural domains (cf. Adler 1982; Drucker-Brown 1992; de Heusch 1983).

Amongst the Iramba (Thanzu's southern neighbours) we are told the following:

The chief rain-maker is a 'father' who never expresses his paternity through prestations of livestock. On the contrary, he receives livestock. He is the 'mother' but not related to a 'grandmother' and, thus, capable of identifying rights in land....His character of an androgynic being (a male mother?) places him above his own descent group, the *anambua* clan, as he serves all Iramba (Lindström 1987: 79).

Or again, among the Manyika of Zimbabwe:

Thus the female chief is not only an unchaste woman who enhances the fertility of the land by living promiscuously, nor is she merely a symbolic partner for her father or brother. She is also a man in the shape of a woman. She is thus both sexes in one (Jacobson-Widding 1990: 56).

Androgyny, in short, is often directly linked to cosmic powers: the powers of creation, fertility and (re)generation. Why might this be so? Some have argued that, '[a]s a general rule, the androgynous creative powers are conceived as primordial units, which represent the fusion of heaven and earth, male and female, and whose unity must be recreated each time that life is to be regenerated' (Jacobson-Widding and van Beek 1990: 22). This primordial fusion of all things precedes 'structure and form [and] is the chaos of boundless potentialities' (ibid.: 19). As such, androgens embody, quite literally, the primordial and undifferentiated state of the universe and with that, the creative powers inherent in it.

There is solid ethnographic evidence in support of this position (see, for example, Jacob 1990; Poole 1996). In some instances it is evident that rituals, through the fusion of masculine and feminine elements, aim to (re)capture that lost primordial unity and, hence, to regenerate the cosmos (Kaare 1995; cf. Eliade 1971). Androgyny is in this sense about fusion, chaos, unboundedness, sameness, asexuality and genderlessness—which is to say, the total elimination of difference (see Jacobson-Widding 1990).

Although true in some instances, there are alternative ways of representing androgyny as a site of cosmic power. In some places, for example, androgyny is conceived as a dual-gender system in which two genders combine equally, but do *not* collapse within single bodies. To put it differently, masculine and feminine elements might be understood as coexisting in single bodies, but on some level remaining distinct and

differentiated.²⁴ This type of androgyny is therefore more about embodied gender-duality than genderlessness. Furthermore, these two images of androgyny (and others along with them) are not necessarily in conflict and may even be realised simultaneously within a single culture.

The Bimin-Kushusmin of Highland New Guinea, by way of example, recognise an array of androgynous images in popular mythology, ritual and everyday life. On the one hand, primordial deities, their living descendants and ancestral spirits along with some terrestrial animals and foods are all represented as androgynous and undifferentiated in the sense that they fuse together male and female into perfect bodily union, blurring or even obliterating all distinctions between the genders (Poole 1996: 203-205, 209). This is the ungendered androgyny of primordial union to which Jacobson-Widding and van Beek refer (see above).

On the other hand, the Bimin-Kushusmin also have other androgynous beings—forest spirits (*amengmotiir*) and human beings, for example—that conjoin elements of male and female. In these instances, however, rather than collapsing the genders into ‘chaos’ (Jacobson-Widding 1990: 64; also 1979), male and female co-exist, if sometimes uneasily, as distinct elements (Poole 1996: 206-210). Though Poole does not use the term, this latter sort of androgyny I see as identical in every respect to gender complementarity as defined above. Here, single bodies become microcosmic sites of gender complementarity writ small (cf. Strathern 1988).

In sum, depending on the culture and the specific context, images of androgyny may vary greatly. ‘Indeed, the very idea of androgyny admits of myriad possibilities of degendering, regendering, and double-gendering persons or instantiations of personhood—some emphasizing images of wholeness, transcendence, and undifferentiated being, and others illuminating recombinations of elements of dual gender difference’ (Poole 1996: 202).

In Ihanzu at least two distinct images of androgyny co-exist. In chapter four, we shall see that the funerary role of the jester is largely about the first type of androgyny—fusion, undifferentiated states and collapsing of categories—whereas in chapter six androgynous female dancers come nearer the second sense—gender complementarity. Be that as it may, it is important to point out that on balance it is the latter

²⁴ Nor do these two extremes exhaust the list of logical possibilities. States of maleness and femaleness may, for example, be defined in terms of substance rather than (or in addition to) genitalia, with the corollary that a person’s gender may shift between male and female depending on the context and stage in the life-cycle. Thus, ‘[g]ender is not an immutable state but a dynamic flow’ (Meigs 1976: 406; see also Broch-Due 1993; Gillison 1980; Poole 1981; Strathern 1988; 1993).

understanding of androgyny, the one I have referred to as gender complementarity, that Ihanzu themselves find most relevant for structuring, making sense of and explaining their cultural universe. The cultural salience of the gender complementarity model is entirely unremarkable since the Ihanzu, unlike many African peoples, have no myth of primordial unity from which to draw images of genderless and formless fusion.

IHANZU: THE LOCATION AND NEIGHBOURS

Location

Ihanzu is located in north-central Tanzania, forming the northernmost part of Singida Region, bordering Shinyanga Region to the north and Arusha Region to the north-east and east (see Map 1.1). Officially Ihanzu is known as Kirumi Division (*Tarafa ya Kirumi*),²⁵ one of seven such divisions that make up Iramba District. The Sibiti River, which flows northwards from Lake Kitangiri and empties into the southern end of Lake Eyasi, forms the northern boundary between Shinyanga and Ihanzu. The western border of Ihanzu is made by a tributary of the Sibiti called the Duromo. To the south, while there are administrative boundaries dividing Ihanzu from the rest of Iramba, there are no distinctive geographical features to support this divide and Ihanzu flows imperceptibly into the Iramba Plateau and vice versa. As with the landscape, cultural and linguistic boundaries blur here as well. Villagers in this southern border region tend to speak both the Ihanzu and Iramba languages, often intermingling the two. From its extreme southern border to its northern one, Ihanzu is about twenty-five miles, and it is about the same distance from east to west. Ihanzu country thus covers an area of just over 600 square miles.

Neighbours

To the south and west of Ihanzu live the Iramba, another Bantu-speaking agricultural group with whom they share close affinities socially, culturally and linguistically.²⁶

²⁵ Kirumi Division is divided into four wards (*kata*)—Mwangeza, Nkinto, Ibaga and Mpambala—and these wards are further sub-divided into, at present, 18 villages.

²⁶ The most complete account on the Iramba comes from Lindström (1987; also 1986; 1988). Some of the topics he does not discuss were partially dealt with in earlier publications, many of which are of a very high calibre. See, for example, Obst 1912a: 217ff; 1923; and Reche 1914: 92-100. Everth Ittameier, an early—if not the first—missionary from the German Leipzig Mission to preach at Ruruma Mission in Iramba, wrote an early and important piece on Iramba religion (Ittameier 1922). Later American Augustana Lutheran missionaries and some of their Iramba converts also gathered some information of varying quality (Ntundu 1936; 1939; Johnson 1948; 1951-52; Danielson 1957;

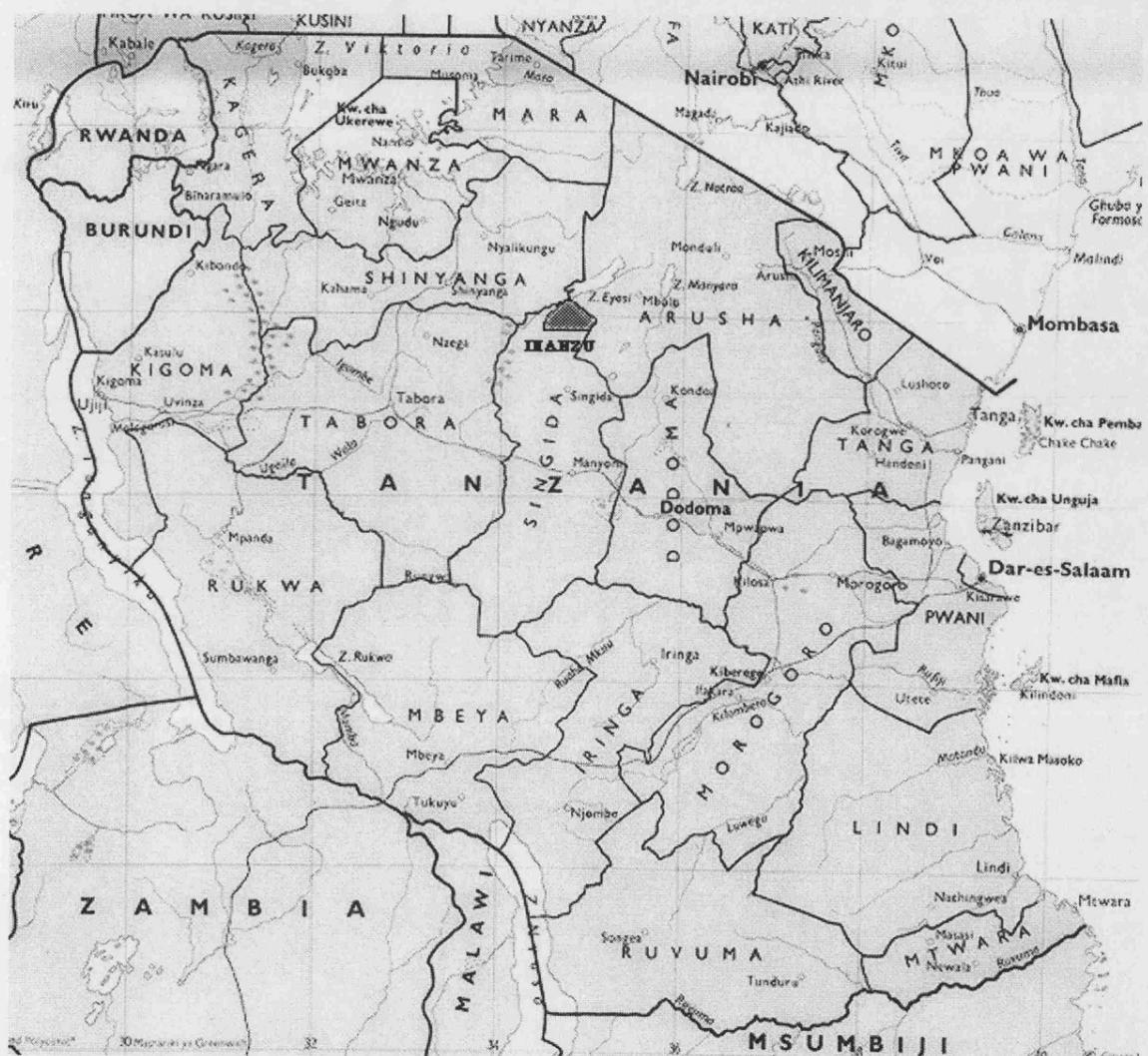
Although some Tanzanians—and probably even some Iramba—like to think of the Ihanza and Iramba as one people, no one in Ihanza would accept this classificatory schema. All, or at least all I spoke to on the issue, would energetically and passionately dispute this claim: they are not Iramba, never have been, and certainly never will be. Mild antagonism or conflict between these two groups seems to have been present for some time (e.g., Obst 1912b: 3), even if it is today more apparent than real. Nevertheless, intermarriage between Ihanza and Iramba people is not uncommon, nor was it uncommon in the past, and many Iramba live in certain parts of Ihanza country. Almost all Ihanza understand and speak their numerically superior neighbour's language, *kīnilamba*. The converse is not true.

East of Ihanza, atop part of the Rift Valley scarp, live the Southern Cushitic-speaking and agro-pastoral Iraqw (usually referred to in Swahili as the *Wambulu*). They practise a mixture of pastoralism and intensive agriculture. Interaction between Ihanza and Iraqw, historically speaking, has been slight. There is still little intermarriage between them though some informal trade exists (see Winter 1955; 1962; 1963; 1966; 1978; Johnson 1966; Thornton 1980; 1982; Snyder 1993; 1995).

The Sukuma and the Hadza live to the north. The former are the largest single ethnic group in Tanzania, the latter, one of the smallest. The Sukuma practise a mix of herding and agriculture with a strong emphasis on the former. Ties between the Ihanza and Sukuma are cordial. In the past Ihanza women were loath to marry Sukuma men, so I was told, because, unlike the Ihanza, they do not circumcise and were thus considered less than proper human beings. Be that as it may, intermarriage is not unheard of today, especially in the western sections of Ihanza country which border Sukumaland. Ihanza move in and out of Sukumaland during droughts; in the dry seasons they go there to gather reeds with which to weave baskets and beer strainers.²⁷

1977; Kidamala and Danielson 1961). Patrick Pender-Cudlip collected Iramba oral histories over an extended period in the 1960s (Pender-Cudlip 1968; 1969), and although his data could have been more carefully analysed, they remain useful data all the same (Pender-Cudlip 1967a; 1967b; 1974a; 1974b; 1974c).

²⁷ The Sukuma are not only the largest but are also one of the best documented peoples of Tanzania. For some recent works which employ a 'culturalist' perspective see, for example, Brandström 1990a; 1990b; 1991. For more traditional approaches, see the extensive works of Hans Cory, a former Tanganyika government sociologist (e.g., Cory 1949; 1951; 1954; and the enormous collection of Hans Cory Papers held at the University of Dar es Salaam Library) and Tanner (1956a; 1956b; 1957a; 1957b; 1958a; 1958b; 1959; 1970). On Sukuma traditional religion, see Millroth 1965 and Hatfield 1968. Austen (1968) provides the most comprehensive history of the area, and this may be usefully supplemented by several other historical works (Liebenow 1955; 1960; Holmes and Austen 1972; Itandala 1980; 1992) whereas Malcolm (1953), on the other hand, offers an extremely detailed study of Sukumaland itself, with but few cultural observations.



Source: *Atlasi Mpya Kwa Shule za Tanzania* (1980)

Map 1.1. Ihanzu in Tanzania

The Hadza economy, unlike others that surround it, is based almost entirely on hunting and gathering.²⁸ Not all Hadza live a nomadic existence however—in some of the outlying Ihanzu villages (mainly Endasiku and Munguli) a few have intermarried with Ihanzu and now live permanently (or nearly so) in these places. Since the areas in which they reside are typically rather marginal and barren, these mixed Ihanzu-Hadza households tend to practise a combination of agriculture and hunting and gathering strategies, depending mostly on the state of the rains, to ensure adequate foodstuffs.

Ihanzu views of the Hadza are highly ambivalent. They are seen on the one hand as ‘owners of the land’ (like the Ihanzu chiefs themselves) who, therefore, are of high status and control mighty medicinal and natural forces. On the other hand, they are often ridiculed as simple people who do little more than hunt, eat meat, honey, roots or anything else they can get their hands on. For many in Ihanzu, the Hadza represent a curious relic from the past, a living fossil of what the Ihanzu presume they once were.

Directly south of the Iramba people live the agro-pastoral Turu (who call themselves the Alimi).²⁹ Like the Sukuma, the Turu value their cattle greatly and although they also farm, they like to imagine themselves first and foremost as pastoralists. The Turu deserve mention because of the strong historical ties with the Ihanzu which are, unfortunately, far from clear. The Turu share with the Ihanzu many clan names, linguistic similarities and may even share a common origin to the north-west near Lake Victoria (Jellicoe 1978: 53). Though I made no systematic attempts to study either the Turu or Iramba language, it appears to me—and some of my informants confirmed this—that the Turu language is nearer to the Ihanzu one than is Iramba.³⁰

²⁸ See Obst 1912b; Woodburn 1968a; 1968b; 1972; 1979; 1980; 1982a; 1982b; 1988a; 1988b.

²⁹ There has been a goodly amount written on the Turu. The works of the former government sociologist, Marguerite Jellicoe (1967; 1967-68; 1969; 1978), provide some detailed ethnographic and historical information (see also Liebenow 1961), while Schneider (esp. 1970; but also 1962; 1966) gives us a general account that follows explicitly a cultural ecological approach. The most complete early information on the Turu comes from Sick 1915, whereas several additional early German works which are rarely cited also deserve attention (Stadlbaur 1897; Werther 1898: 368-76; Obst 1911; 1913: 155-60; 1915: 19-26; Reche 1914: 31-68). Mdachi (1991), himself of Turu origin, provides a readable account of Turu history and society. Turu religion has been a popular topic on which some have written (e.g., Jellicoe 1967; 1967-68; 1978: 3-46; Gieringer 1990); on some Turu songs, Olson 1982a and of only dubious value, Olson 1982b. Another invaluable (if hard to locate) document is a ‘Report of a visit to Singida District: 6th-30th April, 1959,’ by Marguerite Jellicoe, found in the Tanzania National Archives (accession no. 68, ‘The Wanyaturu, M. R. Jellicoe’) which, in spite of what the title suggests, gives an impressive overview of many aspects of the Turu including kinship, birth and circumcision, burial and marriage customs, amongst other things.

³⁰ For the most complete examination of the Turu language see Olson 1964. Some excellent, if dated, work exists on the Iramba language (Dempwolff 1914-15; Ittameier 1922-23; Johnson 1923-26). Also, for some sayings and stories with original Iramba texts see Johnson 1931; for some Christian hymns in the Iramba language (with no translations) see Unknown author 1964b.

Let us now turn our attention to the Ihanzu people themselves, now that we know where they live and who their neighbours are.

THE PEOPLE OF IHANZU AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Compared with all of their neighbours, very little indeed has been written on the people of Ihanzu.³¹ This thesis is based on twenty-one months of fieldwork carried out in Ihanzu in 1993-1995, and is further supplemented by several months' archival work in Dar es Salaam, Oxford and London. Appendix B gives further details on the fieldwork setting, informants, types of information gathered and the methods used.

The Ihanzu people, from my best estimates, number around 30,000.³² They live in eighteen government-approved villages. Although some keep cattle, goats, sheep and chickens, the Ihanzu are in the main agriculturalists and, unlike some of their neighbours, they largely think of themselves as such.³³ The main crops grown are sorghum (*ilo*; *Sorghum bicolor*), millet (*üele*; *Pennisetum glaucum*) and maize (*akimpukile*) in that order of importance. These grains are ground and cooked into a stiff porridge called *ügalī*, which forms the basis of all meals.³⁴ Grain is rarely sold, but it is commonly bartered for other foodstuffs and it forms an important source of

³¹ There are two notable exception: the works of Virginia Adam who lived with the Ihanzu between 1960 and 1962 (see Adam 1961; 1962; 1963a; 1963b and her extensive field notes which are to be catalogued at the British Library of Political and Economics Science); and those of Erich Obst who spent considerable time in Ihanzu the early part of this century (Obst 1912a; 1912b; 1915; 1923). Of lesser but still significant value are the works of Kohl-Larsen (1937; 1943; 1956) and Werther (1894; 1898).

³² Since independence the Tanzanian government has not recorded 'tribal affiliation' in its censuses, making it difficult, if not impossible, for researchers who still assume the relevance of such categories to obtain accurate information on the matter. To get total figures for Ihanzu people living in Ihanzu itself, I examined 1988 published government figures for each of the 18 villages in Ihanzu; then, based on local tax registers, I determined what percentage of each village's population was Ihanzu and made the necessary adjustments to the overall population figures. The data for the central villages required only minor alterations since almost all residents in this area are Ihanzu whereas some of the outlying villages that border Shinyanga and Arusha Districts required considerable adjustments. By this method, I have calculated that Ihanzu living at home number around 30,000. We should exercise extreme caution with this estimate for there is considerable room for error. One problem is the government's failure to specify, for example, how migrant labourers are (or are not) accounted for in their figures.

³³ Cattle are important for a number of reasons. In addition to being used for bridewealth payments, ancestral offerings and funeral slaughters, they also plough fields, provide milk, fertilisers and are a valuable store of wealth for times of famine and illness. They provide a household with the means to pay fines of various sorts as well. Slaughtering cattle for food is extremely rare. Even during famines, it is not uncommon for a man to walk for two days into Mbulu or Sukumaland to work for grain before he will slaughter one of his cows to eat. Smaller livestock like goats and sheep are still important as a store of wealth though they are of lesser value (five goats/sheep equal one cow).

³⁴ All meals include stiff porridge (*ügalī*) accompanied by a relish (*nyanyi*). Meat relishes are the most desirable, but are also the least frequently eaten. The largest portion of an Ihanzu's diet actually comes from cultivated sorghum and wild greens. See below.

cash income when made into beer. Other crops grown which are of lesser importance include sweet potatoes (*ikondolo*), peanuts (*nkalanga*), another variety of groundnuts (*nzūgū*), cassava (*mihogo*), beans (*maharage*), tomatoes (*nyanya*) and onions (*itūngulu*).³⁵

Ihanzu has two seasons, the wet (*kītikū*) and the dry (*kīpasu*), and the changes from one to the next are dramatically marked in the colours of the landscape, a movement from often lush, green months to invariably dry, brown ones (contrast Plates 1.1 and 1.2, overleaf). The rainy season normally begins in November and, in April or May, it comes to a close. The months between June and October typically see no rain at all. The year may thus be divided into two, the wet and the dry, each of which lasts around six months, depending on the year. The whole of Ihanzu is classified as semi-arid and has an annual rainfall of between twenty and thirty inches. Weather fronts almost always move from east to west.

Rainfall, even in good years, is far from certain. Heavy showers may come early and sweep away all the seeds. They may be excessive and prevent crops from maturing properly. Or, as more often occurs, they may be so delayed or patchy as to cause famine over the whole area. Averages rarely give an accurate picture. Even in those years with seemingly sufficient rain it is never evenly distributed—two nearby plots, sometimes in the same village, may receive differing amounts of rain, causing the harvest on one to fail completely while the other thrives. With no year-round river sources and no working water pumps, irrigation is not a farming option in Ihanzu. Villagers are, and always have been, entirely dependent on the rains. As villagers depend on the rain, so too does rain mark out and regulate the seasonal flow of activities.

Wet Season Activities

Prior to the onset of the rains, usually in late September or early October, members of individual households begin raking up and burning the sorghum, millet and maize stocks that remain on their plots from the previous year's harvest. A husband, wife (or more rarely, wives) and their children will carry out this work; if there are any other dependants present such as sons-in-law carrying out brideservice, or elderly parents,

³⁵ Some, though not many, grow sunflowers. Those who do, grow them as a cash crop, selling them to one of few small shops in the area. I have never heard of any Ihanzu making home-made sunflower oil from their crop as some people apparently do in Iramba.

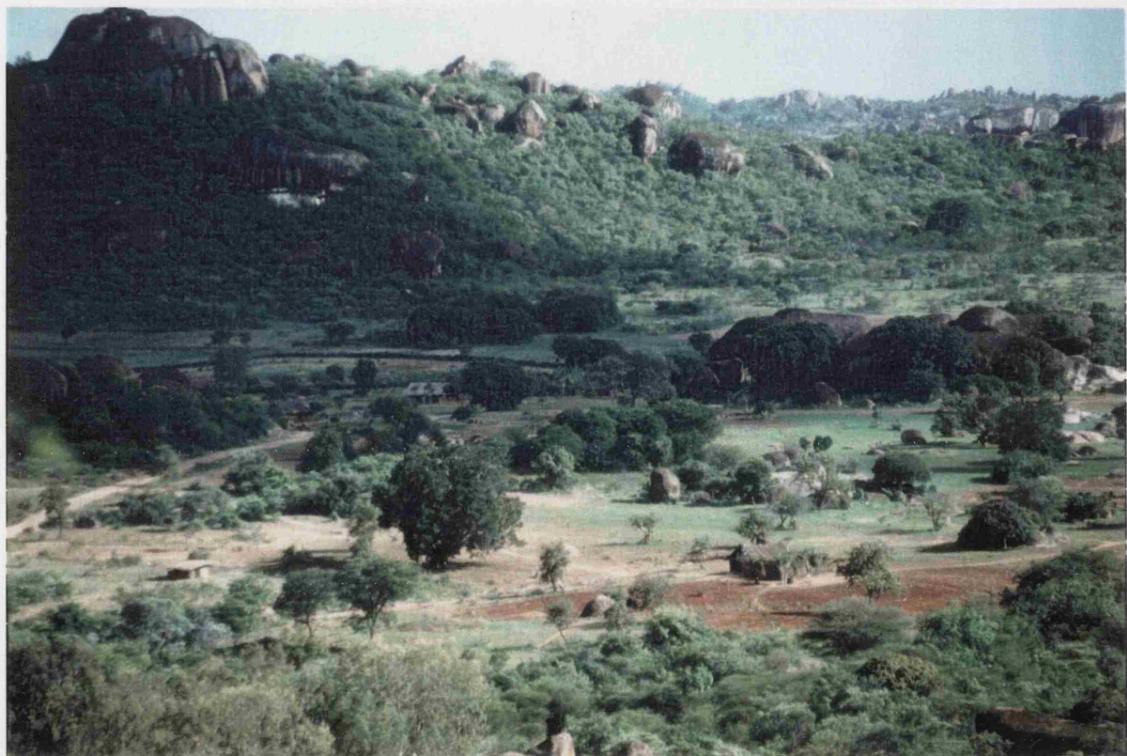


Plate 1.1. The central area of Kirumi, December 1994



Plate 1.2. View from Ilongo village on the western plains, August 1995

they too will help.³⁶ Once cleared, plots are manured.³⁷ People then wait for the onset of the rains. This is a period of great anxiety during which people drink lots of beer and discuss incessantly their hopes and fears about the year to come. Will it be a wet or dry year? Have the rains begun in the east yet? Or elsewhere? When will they arrive in Ihanzu?

In a good year, the rains will begin in November or early December. Any time later than that severely threatens the harvest. If the rains do not arrive until late January or early February, there is little point in planting; it will unquestionably be a famine year.

Once the rains begin, and following a one-day ritual working prohibition (to be discussed in chapter three), villagers enthusiastically begin hoeing their fields.³⁸ Again, as with other farming activities, men, women and older children (those who are not at school) all participate. People hoe from around 7am to about 4pm, every day, once the rains begin. As the hoeing proceeds, men and women scatter their seeds over the field. Hoeing is an ongoing process. The larger area one successfully hoes and plants, the more likely one is to obtain a reasonable harvest.

Sometimes in February people stop hoeing and planting and return to the first parcels planted to remove the weeds (Plate 1.3). Removing the weeds, like planting, is done progressively over a period of several months. Planting and weeding in stages offers some security as it ensures that when crops ripen they will do so at slightly different times. If the rains prove to be very long, then those crops planted first may rot; but if

³⁶ Almost all agricultural labour in Ihanzu is today organised at the homestead level, the only exception being the occasional village work party. Each homestead, depending on the stage in its development cycle, has at least one but often two or three plots which are farmed simultaneously. Based on a 194 household survey in four villages (23 sub-villages), the percentage of households with the number of plots is as follows:

<i>Number of Plots</i>	<i>Percentage of Households</i>
1 plot only	22.6 percent
2 plots	51.8 percent
3 plots	19.3 percent
4 plots	5.8 percent
5 plots	0.5 percent

³⁷ It is normally only those plots near the homestead that are manured with cattle dung; those further from home, if they are not fertile enough, are usually left to return to bush and a new plot will be cut. No chemical fertilisers are used in Ihanzu.

³⁸ Hand hoes (most of which are now imported from China) and ox-drawn ploughs are both used in Ihanzu. Men and women may own and use either. Every woman, like every man, owns a hand hoe; I know of only a few women who own cattle ploughs. (There are no working tractors in Ihanzu.) The percentage of villagers using cattle ploughs and hand hoes differs greatly from one locale to the next; in Kirumi, for example, about 3/4 of the residents in 1994-1995 used a cattle plough whereas in other villages like Munung'una to the east this figure drops to less than a quarter. These figures may be deceptive for, even in those areas with a high percentage of plough usage, few people actually own them. Many seek out those who do and make mutually beneficial, non-monetary arrangements to help each other, since a plough owner cannot reasonably plough even his own fields alone.

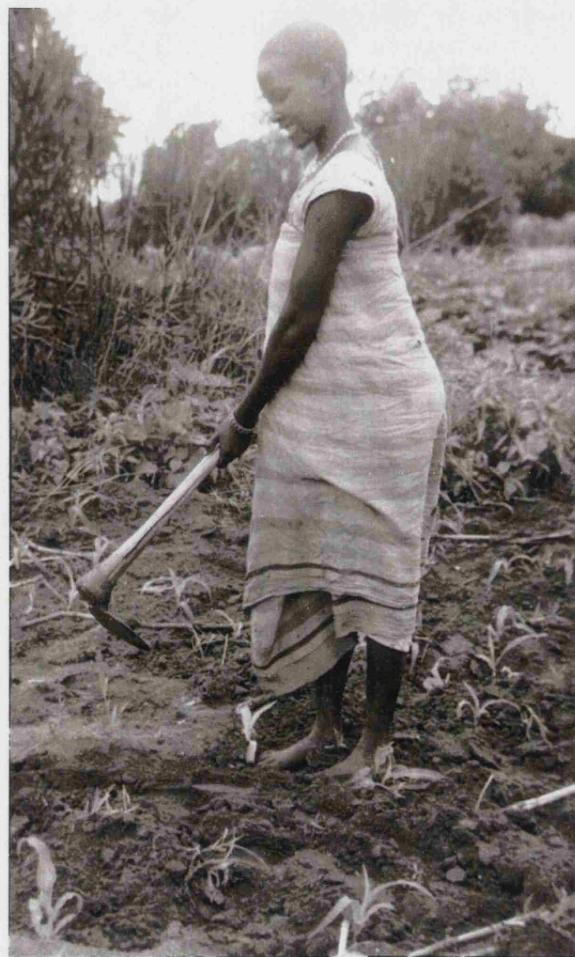


Plate 1.3. Woman weeding a plot, 1962 (Photo by Virginia Adam)



Plate 1.4. Woman picking wild greens, 1962 (photo by Virginia Adam)

they stop early, the early crops may thrive. Crops planted last, if the rains endure, will provide a good harvest when others have rotted. Weeding is done by men, women and children alike. During this period and until after the harvest livestock are herded daily into the bush to graze on newly sprouted grasses, so that they do not destroy people's crops.

By the end of April the weeding is finished and demands for farming labour lessen considerably. From this time on, men (and only men) sleep on their larger plots, those furthest from their home, to guard against theft by pigs, baboons, birds and people.³⁹ Women and children sometimes help scare off birds and baboons in the daytime. Some maize is often harvested in April; since it is not the most popular grain, maize harvests are rarely large and are seen as something to tide people over until the real (sorghum) harvest a few months later. It is during the month of April that women begin picking and sun-drying wild leaves, tomatoes and onions for the dry months (Plate 1.4). Storage of dried foodstuffs for dry months is of decided importance since these foods make up the bulk of the diet during this period.⁴⁰

Dry Season Activities

By June the rains have normally stopped and household members begin to harvest their plots. Harvesting, like the threshing (*kūpula*) that follows, is done by women and men. Winnowing (*kūpeta*), on the other hand, is done entirely by women, usually a woman and her unmarried daughters. Grain is carried from plots to the homestead,

³⁹ Shelters are built in a strategic location on the plots for each plot owner, in which he may sleep and cook. These shelters are built as scaled-down, quickly-built houses (*matembe*) and normally last three to four years. The walls are built of vertical sticks, their ends buried closely together, which are packed with mud (a style known as *mazengo*). As with village houses, the roof is supported by vertical posts (*impandwa*) and horizontal cross-beams (*malo*), covered with several layers of sticks (*kūgūnī*), branches with leaves (*zaningala*) and finally mud.

⁴⁰ There are dozens of wild greens that are regularly picked, prepared and eaten, even (and especially) during famine years. *Ndalu* is the most common relish and is made up of a combination of several leaves found in the rainy season (the combination of leaves changes depending on the rains). The most hardy type of leaf used to prepare *ndalu*—it is available even in the worst years of hunger—is called *ikūluga*, of which there are two locally-identified varieties: *ikūluga la mbata* (*Ceratotheca sesamoides*) and *ikūluga la lume* (*Sesamum calycina* ssp. *angustifolia*). To make *ndalu* relish, one of these *ikūluga* species is mixed with other leaves like *alimbī* or *gogó* (*Cucumis* sp.), *mükombi tagata* (*Asystasia schimperi*), *moga* (*Amaranthus* sp.) or, in times of sheer desperation due to its less than palatable taste, *kumbukumbū* (*Crotalaria* sp.). *Ndalu* is popular and, most years, plentiful. Other leaves commonly prepared as relishes, when available, are: *mūshisha* (*Amaranthus hybridus*), *mūshisha a ng'ombe* (*Amaranthus hybridus*), *nsonga* (*Crotalaria* sp.), *nsansa* (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), *nsogolo* (*Tribulus cistoides*) and the ever bitter though undeniably delectable *mūng'ang'ī* (*Gynandropsis gynandra*).

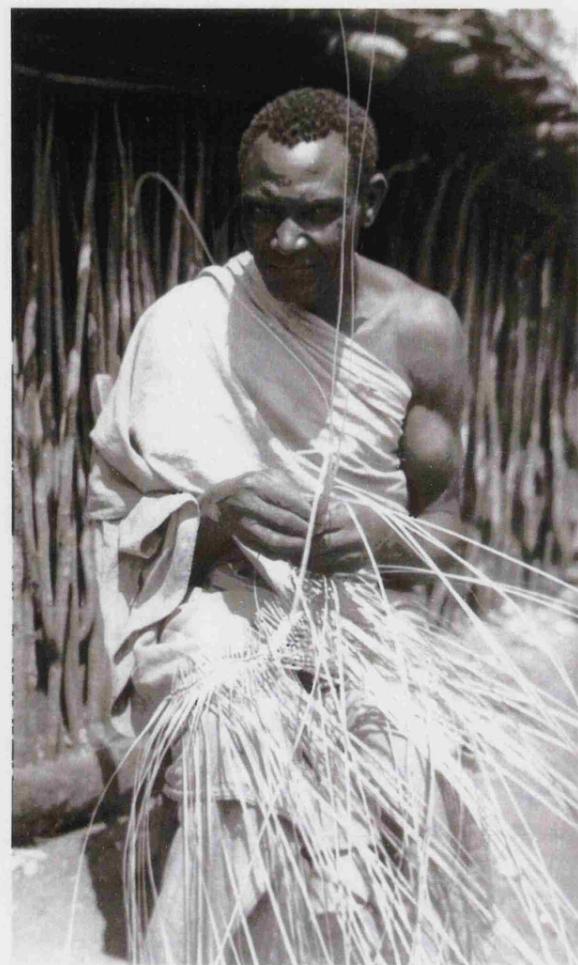


Plate 1.5. William Kali of Dindima weaving a beer strainer, 1962
(Photo by Virginia Adam)



Plate 1.6. Men walking to Iramba to sell beer strainers, 1994

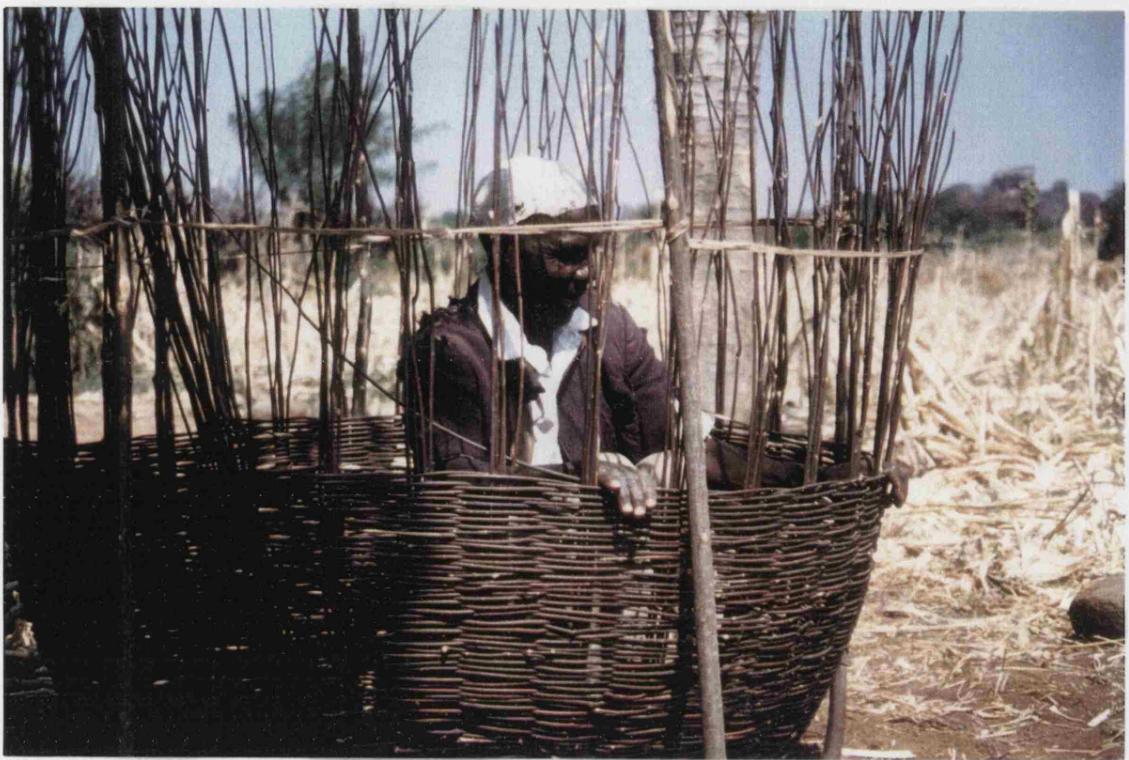


Plate 1.7. Kirumi man weaving grain store, 1995



Plate 1.8. A beer party at Matongo village, 1995

where it is put into the grain store (*isalanka*).⁴¹ From the time the harvest begins until all the grain is in the grain store may, in a good harvest year, take up to three months, the entire process ending as late as August. This gives those who are not cutting new plots a month or so to relax before they begin preparations for the following farming season.

In the dry months following the harvest, people relax, weave and sell baskets, beer strainers (Plates 1.5, 1.6), reed mats and grain stores (Plate 1.7), and brew and drink beer in abundance (Plate 1.8). Men weave beer strainers and grain stores, while mats and small baskets are woven by women. During this time Ihanzu supplement their diets, only minimally however, through trapping, hunting and fishing, all of which are male activities.⁴² Men and women fetch salt in the dry season which requires a few days' walk to the shores of Lake Eyasi to the north. House building, too, is done in the dry months. Cattle are herded during the dry months near the homesteads where they graze on the previous harvest's sorghum, millet and maize stubble. The seasonal flow of activities is summed up on Table 1.1 on the following page.

THE IHANZU CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

When it comes to rainmaking, not all parts of Ihanzu are understood by locals as equally relevant. In particular, for the Ihanzu, the chiefly royal sub-village of Kirumi features centrally in rainmaking rites and beliefs and has provided a home for its two royal leaders for more than a century. The aim of this section is to examine Ihanzu perspectives on their own landscape and history in order to understand the relationship between rainmaking and the land on which the people live.

Ihanzu land is composed of two distinct geographical areas: a central, boulder-strewn plateau and the more recently inhabited undulating plains that surround the plateau.

⁴¹ Each household has its own grain store. If a man has more than one wife, as is the case for about seven percent of all Ihanzu marriages (down from 25 percent in the 1960s [Adam 1962: 5]), then each wife has her own house, on the same homestead or elsewhere, with her own grain store over which she has ultimate control.

⁴² The Ihanzu were once known as keen hunters but this, for a number of reasons, has changed. First, the government prohibits such activities to all Ihanzu bow and arrow users and to gun owners without a game licence. Perhaps more importantly, wildlife populations in the area have declined sharply since the turn of the century, much being deprived of its habitat through anti-tsetse fly bush clearing campaigns (Johnson 1948: 87-91). For a fascinating and readable historical account of wildlife policy in East Africa from the German colonial period up to the mid-1960s see Ofcansky 1981 (esp. pp. 112-63 on Tanzania). As for fish, most come from the Sibiti River and are bartered in Ihanzu extensively. In July cichlids (*cichlidae*) are available in abundance; and in August, freshwater catfish (*mochocidae*), at least in rainy years, abound.

Ihanzu Months	English Equivalents	Weather	Food Supply	MEN		WOMEN	
				Farming	Other Seasonal Activities	Farming	Other Seasonal Activities
<i>Mūlekana</i>	December	Moderate rains	Grain stores declining. No fresh greens	Sowing sorghum, millet and maize	Hunting	Sowing sorghum, millet and maize	—
<i>Ng'weli wa mūmbilī</i>	January	Heavy rains	Hunger month (low grain)	Sowing sorghum, millet and maize	—	Sowing sorghum, millet and maize	—
<i>Ng'weli wa mūhatu</i>	February	Moderate rains	Hunger month (low grain). Wild greens ripen	Weeding	—	Weeding	—
<i>Ng'weli wa mūnī</i>	March	Heavy rains	Hunger month (low grain). Wild greens plentiful	" "	Migrant labour	" "	—
<i>Ng'weli wa mūntano</i>	April	Moderate rains	Early maize ripens	Small harvest (maize). Guarding plots at night (against pigs). Clear new fields	" "	Small harvest (maize). Guarding plots in day (against birds and baboons)	Sun-dry wild greens and tomatoes
<i>Ng'weli wa mūtandatu</i>	May	Rains decreasing	Ample maize	" "	—	" "	" "
<i>Ng'weli wa mūpungatī</i>	June	Rains stop. Very cold	Sorghum and millet plentiful	Harvest sorghum and millet. Guard harvest	—	Harvest millet and sorghum	—
<i>Ng'weli wa mūnanā</i>	July	Very cold	" "	Threshing grain	Fishing. House building	Threshing and winnowing	House building
<i>Ng'weli wa mūnkenda</i>	August	Moderate temperature	Sorghum and millet plentiful. Ample leafy greens	Threshing grain. Carrying grain home	Fishing. Hunting. House building. Weaving of beer strainers	Threshing and winnowing grain and carrying home	Weaving mats, baskets. Making pots. Collecting firewood. House building
<i>Ng'weli wa mūkumi</i>	September	Hot season	Fresh greens decreasing	Cleaning fields. Spreading fertilizers	Fishing. Hunting. House building	Cleaning fields. Spreading fertilizers	" "
<i>Ng'weli wa kumi na kang'wī</i>	October	Hot season. Early rains	Grain stores declining. No fresh greens	" "	Fishing. Hunting	" "	" "
<i>Mūtia mbeū</i>	November	Rains begin	" "	Sowing sorghum, millet and maize	Hunting	Sowing sorghum, millet and maize	—

Table 1.1. Calendar of Seasonal Activities in Ihanzu

The plateau area forms part of the Rift Valley wall, rising in some places to over five thousand feet. There are drop-offs to the plains below, some of them sharp indeed, to the north, west and east. The terrain in this area is rugged. Enormous granite boulders—some of them reaching several stories into the sky—irregularly pepper the mountainous landscape creating an abundance of natural caves (Plate 1.1, p. 28). Some caves have become ancestral offering sites; others contain rock paintings or large drums from a bygone era.⁴³ Villages and village-sections, all of which are permanent, are often divided by or built to follow the distinctive rocky contours of the land. Homesteads tend to be close together, sometimes twenty or thirty yards apart, and fairly evenly spread throughout the villages. While there are many farm plots on the plateau, there are few large, flat areas as the land is continually broken up by large boulders. Soils in this central area are mainly of the sand loam (*iselwe*) variety, and are the least fertile in Ihanzu, normally requiring substantial fertilisation with manure to ensure adequate harvests.

The plains areas are different. The lowland plains consist of undulating flats which are on a slight decline, gradually and imperceptibly sloping to the north. For this reason, seasonal rivers flow northward and eventually into Lake Eyasi. Homesteads are spread further apart in the lowlands than on the plateau. Plots are larger. Soils—black cotton soils (*ikūlūhi*) to the east, grey soils (*mbūga*) to the north and rock soils (*ihangahanga*) to the west—are more fertile. Manure is not normally used in these areas. Intriguingly, there is almost a complete lack of the large granite boulders which form such a distinctive feature of the highlands landscape. Expansive, rock-free fields allow people to more easily farm with cattle ploughs (Plate 1.2, p. 28). Besides some rolling hills and a few slight valleys, most of these areas are nearly flat; further north it becomes monotonously so. The distinction between the two geographical regions, plateau and plains, is of the utmost importance for locals since, as we shall see, '[t]he history of settlement, history of contact with Europeans, settlement patterns, system of land tenure, economy and importance of clanship ties vary considerably between these areas' (Adam 1961: 3; also 1962).

⁴³ The Ihanzu know not the artists of the many rock paintings scattered about the region (see Culwick 1931; Kohl-Larsen, L. and M. 1938; 1958; Masao 1979); the rock paintings, it is worth noting, hold no cosmological significance for the Ihanzu nor do they play any role in rainmaking rites (cf. Lewis-Williams 1977). Many insist that the massive and weighty cave drums (see Hunter 1953) were made and played by giant savages (*washenzi warefu*) who allegedly lived in the area prior to the Ihanzu themselves. (A few claim they were called Wareno and came from the west). Living off a patently odd diet of wild animals and trees, these savages reputedly had the good sense to hide their drums in the caves in times of war. The paintings, like the drums, are said to have been there already when the Ihanzu first arrived.

Migration from Ukerewe Island, Lake Victoria

Until the turn of the century the Ihanzu confined themselves to the central plateau, the area that, according to oral tradition, the ancestral Ihanzu immigrants first settled in after their arrival from Ukerewe Island in Lake Victoria. Whether this original migration ever took place at all we may never know though, fact or fiction, the idea that they came from Ukerewe has informed Ihanzu beliefs about their own history throughout this century, and probably for much longer.⁴⁴

During the migration, people say, each clan or clan-section rested or temporarily settled at various sites along the way. These places are remembered and are today used as sacred ancestral offering sites. After much warring between clans and other ethnic groups, the migrants allegedly took refuge in the central mountainous region, an area called *Ihanzu la ng'wa Kingwele* (Kingwele's Ihanzu), which is named after one of the first *Anyansuli* clan members. There, so the story goes, they built a large protective, fenced-in enclosure in which they lived. When threatened by man or beast, the entrance could simply be sealed up with a large door made of sturdy poles or *mahanzu* (sing. *ihanzu*). The people thus became known as *Anyihanzu*—‘the people of the byre door pole.’ Today this area features centrally in the Ihanzu cultural imagination and in understanding the history of royal rainmaking traditions in Ihanzu.

Movements in the Twentieth Century

At the turn of the century the inhabitants of Ihanzu confined themselves to the small, rocky, central area of modern-day Ihanzu that was about one-tenth the size of their current territory. From their central core area, beginning in the early 1900s, the Ihanzu gradually began spreading to peripheral areas.

⁴⁴ Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920, (16 April 1920), p. 4, Tanzania National Archives (hereafter TNA) 1733/1. An unsigned entry in the Mkalama District Book made around 1926 confirms this: ‘Tradition states unanimously that the tribe formerly inhabited Ukerewe Island, whence it migrated under stress of famine to the shores of Lake Eyassi [sic]. After a short stay there, it moved to its present location around Mkalama, which was found uninhabited’ (p. 18). See discussion in Appendix D at the end of this thesis. Adam reported in the 1960s that the migrants arrived to Ihanzu ‘about 8 generations ago, after their journey from Ukerewe in Lake Victoria’ (Adam, 1961, p. 4a, ‘Land ownership and local descent groups in Kirumi,’ Unpublished manuscript at The British Library of Political and Economic Science [hereafter BLPE]), but I am unclear on how she established this. And Jellicoe noted that, according to the male chief of Ihanzu, the Ihanzu arrived ‘probably only about 100 years ago...’ (1961, ‘Interim report on Isanzu,’ p. 45, Rhodes House [hereafter RH], MSS. Afr. s. 2038 (4)). I would have thought that they were in their present area much earlier than the 1860s.

A careful examination of the Ukerewe material would of course be necessary to say more about this migration, or to establish its factuality more convincingly. From a very cursory examination of the literature on Ukerewe there are few if any striking linguistic or cultural similarities with the Ihanzu.

Bush clearing began at the turn of the century under the Germans for purposes of road building and to reduce the tsetse fly population.⁴⁵ These efforts were stepped up under the British following the First World War. While it appears the Germans, when it came to bush clearing in Ihanza, were mainly concerned with building roads and removing vexatious tsetse fly populations,⁴⁶ the British emphasised resettlement schemes in new, more fertile areas. For this, massive bush clearing was necessary.⁴⁷

As new areas were opened up, people were encouraged to move into them to live and farm. Resettlement was seen as crucial to the success of the anti-tsetse campaign, for once people moved to a cleared area they were unlikely to let it return to bush (Johnson 1948: 91).⁴⁸ In the decades following these clearing works, there was indeed considerable movement into some of the newly opened areas.

By the 1940s and 1950s there was a steady out-migration from the central, core area of Ihanza into the surrounding areas. To the east the villages of Ng'wangeza and Ng'wansigwa were established (Adam 1962: 1). Others in the 1950s moved north onto the plains while still others carried on to the north-west, near the border of Sukumaland, to establish new villages.⁴⁹ Since independence in 1961, people have continued to migrate within Ihanza, continually moving outward from the centre. Relatively new Ihanza villages have been established—Igonia, Lugongo, Mkiko, Ibaga, Nyaha, Mpambala, Ikolo, Munguli and Dominiki—all located outside the central homeland area of Ihanza country.

Images of the Land

As Ihanza have slowly moved from the centre of their country to its periphery, they have maintained an image of central Ihanza—and within that, the royal and chiefly sub-village of Kirumi—as the ‘traditional’ centre *par excellence*. Here almost

⁴⁵ Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), p. 14, TNA 1733/1.

⁴⁶ Oberleutnant Ruff, Report dated 24 March 1910, in ‘Einsiedler Adolf Siedentopf,’ TNA G55/27.

⁴⁷ One early and zealous British administrator based at the Mkalama village government post expressed his hope ‘to continue bush clearing, to reduce flies, [and to] open up cultivation land for natives to increase food supplies’ (Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), p. 14, TNA 1733/1). Native bush clearing teams were organised from the 1930s onward, and spiralled out from central Ihanza in all directions. According to one former headman from Matongo village, teams of about 60 men worked in 10-day shifts cutting the bush. In addition to receiving nominal salaries, workers also occasionally had cattle slaughtered for them while on the job. (Letter from Assistant Livestock Officer to Singida District Officer dated 16 September 1936, doc. 100 in ‘Statistics of Cattle Sales and Markets,’ TNA 68/235).

⁴⁸ Letter from D.O., Kisiriri, to the Settlement Officer, Kondoa-Irang'i dated 6 February 1953, doc. 563 in ‘Medical and Sanitation, Mkalama Leper Settlement,’ TNA 68/37/22.

⁴⁹ Jellicoe, 1961, ‘Interim Report on Isanzu,’ p. 49, RH, MSS. Afr. s. 2038 (4).

everything is reputedly more extreme, often bordering on the mythical. This central area was the original homeland after the long migration from Ukerewe; there are, informants claim, more witches and diviners all of whom have stronger medicines; there are more traditional dances; the rain-chiefs live there and former ones are buried; and, of course, it is in Kirumi that all rainmaking rituals take place. In brief, central Ihanzu is imagined, often in an exaggerated form, as the 'real' Ihanzu while the outlying areas are somehow less so, even though parts have now been inhabited for generations.⁵⁰ This is the way most, if not all, Ihanzu conceptualise their cultural landscape today (cf. Pender-Cudlip 1974c: 59; Thornton 1980; Parkin 1991).

Kirumi, the home of royal chiefs, ancestral powers, and the rains, provides a tangible symbol of true 'Ihanzu-ness.' Its existence also ensures, in a very real sense, the continuity of all Ihanzu with their past rainmaking traditions and also paves the road into an uncertain future.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In the following chapter, I show that between the years 1885-1976 the Ihanzu dual chieftship was negotiated and renegotiated as colonial powers waxed and waned. The Germans captured and hanged the male leader of Ihanzu while the British re-instated his successor as rightful heir to the chiefly office. In the postcolonial era the newly

⁵⁰ Differences between old and new areas are not imaginary. Given the demographic shifts from centre to periphery that have occurred over the century, one generally finds actual practices to be more 'traditional' in the central, homelands area, less so in the more recently established areas of residence. Consider the following activities that support this central/traditional, peripheral/non-traditional dichotomy:

Highland, Central Area (longest inhabited)

Clan lands
Communal house-building parties
Mostly Ihanzu

Each village has a rainmaking assistant (*mūtaata*)
All rainmaking rites
Traditional *mbutu* horn funerals
Many sacred ancestral offering sites
Matrilineages most developed
No cash cropping

Lowland, Periphery (recently inhabited)

No clan lands
No communal house-building parties
Large ethnic mix including (west) Iramba and Sukuma, (east) Tatog and Iraqw, (north) Hadza, Sukuma, Tatog and (south) Iramba.
Only a few villages have rainmaking assistants
No rainmaking rites
No *mbutu* horn funerals
Almost no ancestral offering sites
Matrilineages least developed
Some cash cropping (until 1970s)

In spite of the foregoing, I do not wish to imply that the central area has, in actual fact, remained unchanged while the lowland areas are somehow 'modern' or 'progressive.' Rather, I only wish to point out that on some ideational level this is the way the Ihanzu themselves see this particular cultural dichotomy as overlaid onto the landscape. Although most hold this ideal, informants, too, are well aware of the radical changes that have occurred over the decades in all areas.

independent government abolished the chiefship, which effectively eliminated the male chief's position once again. Throughout the entire period the female ritual leader was ignored by all, all except the Ihanzu themselves that is, who continued to understand their chiefship as a dual and gendered one. What is more, the nature of dual royal power and legitimacy remained remarkable stable throughout, based as it was on privileged access to the ancestral other-world generally, and control over the weather specifically. Polities and politics changed radically; the basis for dual royal chiefly authority remained unchanged.

Chapter three begins part two of the thesis. Here I focus specifically on annual rainmaking rites as they take place in the 1990s. I discuss in detail the royal rituals held at the Kirumi rainshrine and the belief systems underlying these rites. Even if in the 1990s it is the male chief and his assistants who conduct most of the rainmaking rites, the female chief nevertheless plays an important role on an ideological level for locals. The royal duo must co-operate, men and women continually point out, to bring the rain. Furthermore, as will be shown, chiefly authority is sometimes contested in certain practices.

Chapter four delves into several issues that are often dealt with separately—power, gender, kinship and cosmology. This chapter in many ways forms the crux of the arguments made in this thesis about Ihanzu ideas of gender complementarity. By examining local ideas about the human life-cycle and certain rainmaking rites described in chapter three, I propose that central to the Ihanzu cultural imagination lies the notion of gender complementarity. Here we shall see that the reproduction and regeneration of the cosmos is dependent ultimately upon the appropriate combination of masculine and feminine elements of a thoroughly gendered universe. Cosmic power, in Ihanzu eyes, comes in gendered pairs, whether as rulers, rituals or rains themselves.

Chapter five begins part three, the final portion of the thesis, and is concerned with what I call remedial rites, those practices that come about when the rains still fail to fall after the annual rainmaking ceremonies have been carried out. Chapter five discusses ancestral rain offerings which are led by the male and female chiefs but are attended by many. Here I show how the gendered model of transformation developed in chapter four is made manifest in ritual practice.

Chapter six provides a detailed examination of a so-called ritual of rebellion in Ihanzu. Although much has been written on similar sorts of rites across Africa, and frequently with the idea that they are 'about' gender conflict or protest, I suggest that this particular rite in Ihanzu is, like other rain rites, broadly informed by Ihanzu

notions of gender complementarity. Thus, this ‘ritual of rebellion’ is nothing of the sort, but is about balancing and expressing male and female principles simultaneously and in co-operation with each other. From an Ihanzu perspective there is nothing inherently conflictual about this process.

In the penultimate chapter, through an examination of rain-witchcraft cases, I show how beliefs about rainmaking, rain-breaking, and gender complementarity intersect in the political sphere: who is accused and by whom. One of the main purposes of this chapter is to demonstrate that the male and female witch pair is a cosmological inversion of the male and female royal pair—both duos draw their powers from the complementary combination of masculine and feminine, but those powers are used to disparate and opposed ends.

Finally, in chapter eight, I follow the implications of the arguments to their logical conclusion and suggest that the approach taken in this thesis to rainmaking might shed light on other data on African rainmaking. More specifically, I suggest that the indigenous model of cosmological power and transformation that is developed in this thesis might be very similar—or even identical—in other areas of Africa.

PART I: HISTORY AND ROYAL LEGITIMACY

Chapter Two

The Politics of Precipitation: Royalty, Rains and Resistance in Ihanzu, 1885-1976

WITH LITTLE FOOD and no more European goods to give to (and hopefully impress) local leaders, the tired German explorer C. W. Werther, followed by a nearly endless queue of even more tired trunk-toting porters, reached the Wembere swamps just north-west of Ihanzu. The year was 1893. It was the rainy season, and rain there was. Lots of it.

As is common even in dry years, all the more so in wet ones, the Wembere swamps had flooded, making any passage a potentially perilous one. Rather than turn back or go elsewhere, the party toiled determinedly for several hours to construct a bridge across the Sibiti River, a feat they accomplished in spite of a hippo's savage attack on their temporary structure. After all had safely reached the other side, the bridge promptly collapsed and was swept away by the flood waters.

Several hours later, Werther entered central Ihanzu, thus becoming the first European to have done so. Some of his messengers he sent to the male ritual leader's homestead to make him aware of their arrival and to demand foodstuffs.

Undoubtedly perplexed by such an oddity, some Ihanzu men looked on curiously as Werther's party set up their camp. Recognising one particularly exquisite bovine with Werther's party as belonging to a man in Sukumaland, one local came forward and asked where Werther had acquired the beast. It was true, the man was assured;¹ it had belonged to the Mwanangwa from Miatu, but had been purchased from him. His curiosity now aroused, the man persisted.

¹ This conversation, as Werther records it, took place in the Sukuma language between one of his assistants and a local. I would like to thank Ilka Thiessen once again for translating many of the German documents cited in this chapter.

How had Werther and his party managed to cross the river, given that it was completely flooded? Again, one of Werther's assistants answered. 'The Great Lord here,' gesturing to Werther, 'made a powerful *dawa* [medicine] that made the river drop, we crossed and the waters swelled once again.' This was surprising indeed, as such medicines would have been the domain of powerful leaders alone. Mr. Werther, so it appeared, possessed medicines—undeniably potent ones at that—that could influence the elements, causing rivers to rise and fall, and who knows what else. Not long afterwards fierce fighting erupted between the two sides which eventually led to Werther's hasty retreat to the East (Werther 1894: 221ff). Thus began the first recorded conflict over the nature of Ihanzu royal powers. It would not be the last.

ROYAL POWER AND LINKS TO THE LAND

The discussion to follow begins in around 1885, just prior to the arrival of C. W. Werther and his patrol; the chapter ends in 1976, immediately after Tanzania's villagisation programme. By examining the historical developments in Ihanzu over this ninety-one year period, I wish to make three main points. First, the nature of royal *Anyampanda* power and authority remained relatively constant throughout, based as it was on religious sanction (cf. Packard 1981). All across East Africa in the nineteenth century, 'most chiefs were respected primarily as rain-makers, magicians, and arbitrators. In their role as mystical guardians of the land, they regulated the cycle of economic activities, but they normally had little political or military power' (Roberts 1970: 42). However with the advent of long-distance trade routes in the late nineteenth century and the radical social, economic and political changes that frequently accompanied them (Alpers 1969; Feierman 1974; 1990; Hartwig 1976; Iliffe 1979: 40ff; S. F. Moore 1986; Roberts 1970; Shorter 1972), the nature of power itself changed as 'rulers used scarce goods to secure loyalty' (Iliffe 1979: 52). Power was often acquired and sustained through controlling military might, but little more (e.g., Bennett 1971; Harvey 1950; Kabeya 1966). This era was therefore marked by 'a shift from religious to military power as a basis for political authority' (Roberts 1969: 58).² My first point then is that in Ihanzu no secularisation of political authority occurred—the nature of royal *Anyampanda* power has remained based on religious sanction from the pre-colonial to present.

² Roberts qualifies this by stating that some peoples like the Iraqw and Iramba were relatively unaffected by this trend (*ibid.*).

Second, royal power over this period was, in Ihanzu eyes, premised on the principle of gender complementarity. To be effective, Ihanzu leadership must at all times be a dual one, with a male and a female leader. This fact, so apparent to the Ihanzu themselves, was repeatedly missed by successive waves of outsiders—Germans, British and the postcolonial state.

My third and final point is to show how Kirumi has provided, and indeed continues to provide, a microcosm of many of the issues surrounding Ihanzu rainmaking. To preserve Kirumi is to preserve the dual monarchy and with it, the rain itself. Royals are thus linked to their lands in a very direct sense.

PRE-COLONIAL IHANZU³

Ihanzu in a Regional Context

From the 1880s to the late 1890s, the Ihanzu were embroiled in an expansive regional economy with their neighbours, warring and exchanging, raiding and trading. They also played a prominent regional role by providing rain medicines to different peoples in the area.

³ The particular period in Ihanzu history that I propose to reconstruct, while full of holes and ethnographic unknowns, is by no means lost in the shadowy recesses of the past. Even if there are in Ihanzu no elaborate, memorised historical texts, nor any locally recognised ‘professional historians’ whose job it is to remember lengthy political and social narratives about the past (cf. Hartwig 1976: 18-24), elders still have plenty to say about their past—or more correctly, about their pasts in the plural—through life histories, songs and stories, memories and myths. Of course working extensively with oral histories one runs the risk of presenting the past as only a slightly veiled political present (Cohen and Odhiambo 1989: 35-40); fortunately there are ample external sources to substantiate some informants’ claims. The earliest data on Ihanzu, meagre though it is, comes from C. W. Werther (1984: 237-47; 1898). The German scholar Erich Obst, who himself spent four months in Ihanzu in 1911, provides the most valuable early information (see Obst 1912a; 1912b; 1915; 1923; Reche 1914; 1915). I have had also access to German and British colonial records in the Tanzania National Archives, though some files were unavailable to me due to a recataloguing project that was underway during my research. Rhodes House, Oxford, also holds some invaluable information, in particular, Mkalama and Singida District Books compiled under the British; these help to evaluate the validity and reliability of earlier (i.e., Obst’s) works. Of lesser significance are some works from the German Leipzig Lutheran Mission in Iramba (Ittameier 1912; 1922) which in 1928 became the American Augustana Lutheran Mission (Danielson 1957; 1977; Johnson 1948; Kidamala and Danielson 1961). The final major works of interest are those of Virginia Adam, an English scholar who spent much of 1961 and 1962 in Ihanzu carrying out a large-scale social survey for the East African Institute of Social Research (EAISR), Makerere, Uganda. Adam’s study was broad-ranging, the scholarship of the highest calibre. See Adam 1961; 1962; 1963a; 1963b; 1963c and extensive collection of unpublished field notes to be archived at BLPES. Virginia Hole (née Adam) has read and made extremely helpful comments on earlier drafts of most chapters in this thesis. For the record, James Woodburn suggested and I agreed that, while I would make use in the thesis of the Adam writings cited above by date, and a very few other unpublished documents of hers in draft manuscript form, I would not have access until after submission of the thesis to her wider collection of actual field notes in order to avoid any confusing of my views and data with hers and any possible ambiguity about the authorship of my thesis.

The pastoral Maasai and Tatog were both a threat to the Ihanza and made periodic cattle raids into their country (Adam 1961: 3, 5; 1963c: 9; Kidamala and Danielson 1961: 74-5; Reche 1914: 69).⁴ Many elders tell of the heroic exploits of Ihanza who, hidden amongst the many boulders and caves in their country, shot and killed Maasai with their bows and arrows as they passed through the area with their stolen Iramba, Iambi and Turu cattle.⁵ Occasionally Ihanza returned the stolen bovine goods to their rightful owners in Iramba and Iambi, sometimes at a profit.⁶ Map 2.1 (overleaf) shows the relative locations of various peoples and language groups during this period.

Arab and Nyamwezi caravan traders during this period passed to the south and north of Ihanza (Alpers 1969; Roberts 1970). There is convincing evidence that slave raids, and raids by the Nyamwezi, reached well into Iramba (Danielson 1977: 18-20; Kabeya 1966: 35-7; Kidamala and Danielson 1961); it is unclear from oral and written sources, however, whether any of these raids ever reached as far north as Ihanza. Yet, given that internal slavery in Ihanza was not unknown (Kohl-Larsen 1943: 319; Kidamala and Danielson 1961: 77), and because the dynamics of slave raiding required that raiders range far and wide, it is unlikely that Ihanza would have escaped slave raids entirely.

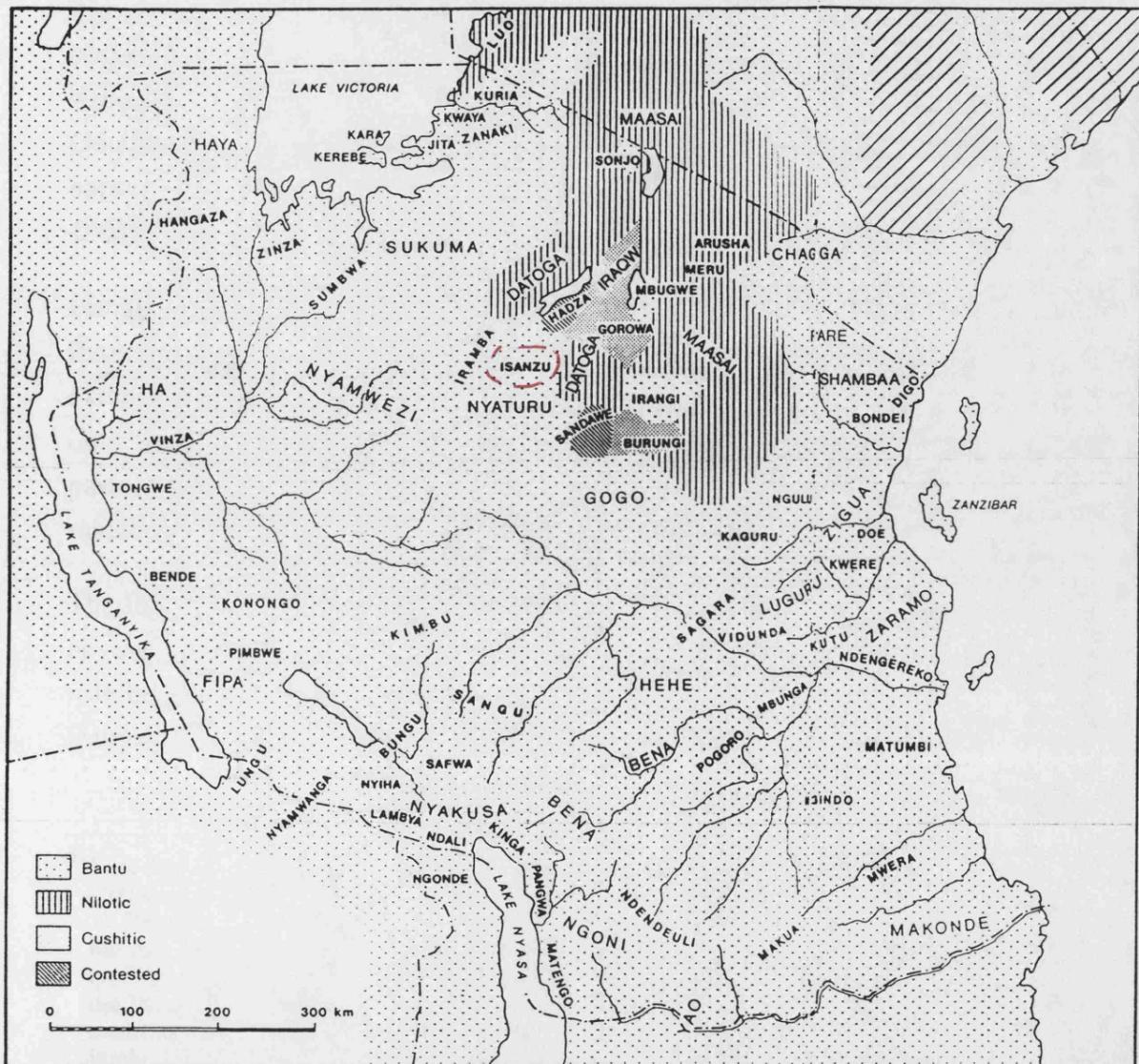
The Ihanza maintained substantial links with the southern caravan traders from whom they obtained beads, and with the Nyamwezi who supplied iron for hoes (Kidamala and Danielson 1961: 77; Obst 1923: 218n, 222; Stuhlmann 1894: 759, 763; Werther 1894: 238). Stronger still were trading links to the north, north-east and west.

There was some traffic between the Ihanza and the Sukuma to the north who occasionally provided the Ihanza with iron in return for salt gathered at Lake Eyasi (Obst 1912a: 112; Reche 1914: 84; 1915: 261). From the Hadza to the north the Ihanza acquired ivory, rhino horns, honey and arrow poison, giving in return

⁴ Wyatt, n.d., p. 6, Mkalama District Book, SOAS; Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), TNA 1733/1.

⁵ The Maasai were troublesome not only for the Ihanza, but for their southern and western Bantu-speaking neighbours as well: the Iramba (Danielson 1977: 18; Kidamala and Danielson 1961: 74-5; Peters 1891: 508-9), Turu (Jellicoe 1978: 92-3; Sick 1915: 29), Gogo (Obst 1923: 304) and Sukuma (Ashe 1883, in Millroth 1965: 15n; Itandala 1980: 9-13). See also Waller 1978. Informants claim that women and children were hidden in caves during raids, a fact that is substantiated by Werther's claim that when he visited in 1897, he never saw an Ihanza woman (1898: 72), and that men remained, during his uneasy stay, perched high up on the rocks, bows and arrows at the ready (*ibid.*: 73).

⁶ M. Jellicoe, 1961, 'Interim report on Isanza,' p. 45, RH MSS. Afr. s. 2038 (4); Wyatt, n.d., p. 6, Mkalama District Book, SOAS.



Source: Koponen 1988

Map 2.1. Language groups and peoples of Tanzania, c. 1890

calabashes, beads, cloth, knives, axes and metal arrowheads (Obst 1912a: 112; 1912b: 24; Reche 1914: 19, 71; Woodburn 1988a: 51; 1988b).⁷ Ihanzu bartered goods with the Iraqw to the east who, like the Ihanzu, confined themselves to a small, protective, mountainous homeland area (Thornton 1980: 194-6). For goods made by their own smiths—arrow heads, knives, hoes and axes—Ihanzu received from Iraqw livestock, red earthen body paint, tobacco and arrow poison (Obst 1912a: 112; Reche 1914: 69, 71). And even beyond Iraqw country, as far east as Mbugwe, some Ihanzu bartered to obtain brass and copper jewellery since Ihanzu smiths, who were quite adept at working with iron, were unskilled at working with softer metals (Reche 1914: 84). Goods that were not of any immediate use to the Ihanzu, such as ivory, were later bartered in other areas for more useful items such as hoes (Kidamala and Danielson 1961: 77).⁸

Far from being isolated in their mountainous homeland in the pre-colonial era, Ihanzu—or rather, some men from Ihanzu—ranged far and wide, maintaining extensive trading networks of various sorts with almost all of their neighbours. The only neighbouring groups with whom they did not trade or intermarry were the pastoral Maasai and Tatog (Reche 1914: 86). By the latter peoples they were regularly raided.

The Ihanzu and their ritual leaders were renowned for their powerful medicines well beyond the boulder-strewn confines of their own land. As such, Ihanzu played a key role in what might be called the regional ritual economy. People from Turu, Iambi, Iramba, Sukumaland and possibly Hadza country⁹ made annual pilgrimages to the

⁷ Woodburn (1988a) downplays the significance of Ihanzu-Hadza traffic, especially denying the likelihood of any trade in ivory, which might imply dependence of the latter on the former (pp. 52-3). Regardless of the relative importance—or lack of importance—of these trading links, it seems to me that their existence *per se* is of only marginal relevance in telling us anything about possible types of hierarchical relations of dependence between trading partners. As Woodburn rightly claims, the Ihanzu and Hadza have never stood in patron-client relations (1988a: 52); I would suggest this could be so with or without trading links between the two. Trading, after all, does not necessarily imply dependence.

⁸ It appears—though this is by no means certain—that it was Ihanzu who went elsewhere to trade, and only rarely did outsiders visit Ihanzu. The earliest piece of evidence I have found on the matter comes from Werther, whose Sukuma informants allegedly told him that, though they regularly visited Iramba, they did not visit Ihanzu because they were afraid of the Ihanzu people (Werther 1894: 236). If this is true, it strengthens my argument considerably, for it suggests, as I will argue below, that Ihanzu's neighbours saw Ihanzu ritual leaders as wielders of powerful potions—for warfare and rain.

⁹ The claim that Sukuma visited Kirumi in the 1890s is based on (a) what informants told me and (b) the nature of Sukuma society at the time. The fact that multiple, small-scale Sukuma communities had by the late nineteenth century developed across Sukumaland in which people relied heavily on royal ritual leaders (*ntemi*) to provide rain, coupled with the fact that these same leaders were increasingly being deposed, their ritual powers increasingly being called into question, makes it plausible that some eastern Sukuma would have visited Kirumi in an effort to seek out legitimate rainmakers (see Holmes and Austen 1972: 386; Tanner 1957a: 201). Informants also say that the

Ihanzu royal village of Kirumi, bringing tribute of, among other things, black sheep so that the rains would be plentiful in their own lands (Adam 1963b). Although Turu and Iramba both had their own rainmaking traditions and shrines, some people, in particularly harsh years, still visited the Kirumi shrine which they evidently saw as more potent than their own (Adam 1961: 2; Jellicoe 1969: 3). The Kirumi rainshrine thus had a regional role to play in negotiating inter-tribal relations over an expansive region (cf. Iliffe 1979: 28-30; Kimambo 1991: 30, 34; Lan 1985; O'Brien 1983; Swantz 1974: 75-82; Young and Fosbrooke 1960: 41-2).¹⁰

Ihanzu ritual leaders prepared not only rain and fertility medicines but, no doubt of equal importance, especially in this era, war medicines.¹¹ Informants claim that royal *Anyampanda* medicines were so potent that Maasai and Tatog were defeated, time and again, and finally repelled from Ihanzu never to return.¹² The pastoral departure from Ihanzu coincided with 'a succession of human and animal plagues, culminating in rinderpest and smallpox epidemics...in 1891-1892' (Waller 1978: 2) that swept the entire region (Kjekshus 1977). Smallpox and rinderpest epidemics spread through Ihanzu and surrounding areas during this period (Cory 1951: 62; Götzen 1899: 49, 54; Obst 1912a: 116n; Reche 1914: 89; Sick 1915: 3; Stuhlmann 1894: 760).¹³

Hadza visited the Kirumi rainshrine long ago, and it is certain two Hadza men named Majui and Tawashi regularly visited Chief Omari in the 1950s (cf. Woodburn 1979: 262n). I have been unable to substantiate the claim for the 1890s with written sources.

¹⁰ Several groups in the region, though they made no regular pilgrimages to Ihanzu, trace their rainmaking traditions to the royal *Anyampanda* clan of Ihanzu. The Iraqw, who live to the east, claim their Manda clan, which controls ritual matters regarding rain in Mbulu, originated with the Ihanzu *Anyampanda* (Thornton 1980: 203-4; Winter 1955: 11); the Mbugwe royal rainmaking clan is apparently of Ihanzu *Anyampanda* clan origin as well (Gray 1955: 42; 1963: 145; Kesby 1981: 41; Thornton 1980: 216). Intriguingly the Ihanzu claim *all* Hadza are members of the royal *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan section, and James Woodburn informs me that they, when asked by Ihanzu, admit this is true, though relevant only for their occasional dealings with Ihanzu. Woodburn also tells me that the Hadza have no rainmaking institutions. Hadza are seen by Ihanzu, like Ihanzu chiefs, as 'owners of the land,' a status which would seem to derive from their hunting and gathering lifestyle. As an interesting aside, there is some confusion as to the origin of both Sukuma and Iramba rainmaking traditions. The Sukuma claim their rainmaking powers and rituals originated in Iramba (Millroth 1965: 135) while the Iramba have it the other way round, claiming they learnt the art from the Sukuma (Ntundu 1936; 1939). Still other sources claim that Iramba rainmaking originated to the south in Kimbu (Shorter 1968: 104).

¹¹ These rainshrines and their ritual specialists, at once controllers of rain and warfare, formed a potent source of anti-colonial resistance with the arrival of the Germans (cf. Jellicoe 1967/8; Maddox 1988: 759; Sick 1915: 45; Swantz 1974: 77). The most famous of these movement was the Maji-Maji rebellion (see Gwassa 1973; Iliffe 1967; 1969: 9-29). Later in this chapter I will elaborate on this connection between ritual leaders and rebellions.

¹² Jellicoe, 1961, ('Interim Report'), claims that the Ihanzu 'took the leading part in driving Masai out of the District,' p. 45, RH MSS. Afr. s. 2038 (4). Werther noted that during his battle with the Ihanzu in 1893, *dawa* (medicine) was prepared and used against them to stop their bullets, though he does not give us any more precise information about the source of this protective medicine (Werther 1894: 241).

¹³ Given that the Ihanzu were seen as wielders of powerful medicines for rainmaking and warfare, it is unsurprising that some of their neighbours like the Iramba, Iambi and Turu had amiable relations with them in several other significant ritual matters. It is clear from life histories that Iramba and

Internal Social, Political and Ritual Arrangements

The Ihanzu probably numbered no more than a few thousand in the 1890s. Villagers farmed sorghum, millet, groundnuts, manioc, sweet potatoes, beans and tobacco. Domestic livestock included cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1901: 903; Obst 1923: 218; Reche 1914: 69-70; 1915: 260; Werther 1894: 238; 1898: 72).¹⁴ In this mountainous area, which was reported to have been fairly densely populated (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1901: 903; Obst 1912a: 114), men and women worked their fields together. All lands were owned and allocated by particular clans. If a man cleared the bush to farm or live, the land became the property of his matriclan (Reche 1914: 74).¹⁵

Ihanzu men had a reputation as keen hunters¹⁶ as well as competent smiths (Obst 1923: 218-222; Reche 1914: 84; Werther 1898: 72).¹⁷

Men and women alike greatly valued beads. Ihanzu men wore bead necklaces, women wore beads on their arms, legs, around their waists and in their hair. This prompted one early German observer to dub them 'The Bead People' (*Perlenvolk*) (Obst 1912a: 115). (See Plates 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3). Before the Germans arrived in Ihanzu, these trade beads were obtained from the southern caravan routes in Turu or Iramba (Stuhlmann 1894: 759, 763; Werther 1894: 238).¹⁸

Ihanzu villages were fairly independent and largely autonomous in deciding their own internal affairs. All villages were governed informally by groups of male elders who dealt with matters as diverse as witchcraft and cattle theft. Village elders, and not rainmaking assistants or royal ritual leaders, were the final arbiters in village matters (Adam 1963c). When inter- or intra-village feuds developed over murders, or in adultery cases, fines were negotiated between the parties involved (Reche 1914:

Iambi boys participated regularly in Ihanzu circumcision rites (also Adam 1961: 2); and that women from these areas, and sometimes women from as far away as Turu, took part in the Ihanzu women's fertility cult (*mūlīmū*).

¹⁴ Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), pp. 13-6, TNA 1733/1.

¹⁵ Virginia Adam, 1961, 'Land ownership and local descent groups in Kirumi,' Unpublished manuscript to be archived at BLPES.

¹⁶ They hunted using bows and poisoned arrows, often in large groups. With the use of dogs, and by setting the bush ablaze, men flushed out animals which they then killed. Elderly men often snared animals like antelope, zebra and small birds (Reche 1914: 71). Ihanzu hunters regularly ventured into Iramba and Hadza country, as elders' stories make clear.

¹⁷ One early source reported unequivocally that Ihanzu smiths, in addition to smithing, carried out a limited amount of smelting (Werther 1894: 238); I have been unable to substantiate this claim.

¹⁸ Though used as ornamentation, beads were probably important ritually as well—the preferred colours were two, blue and white (Obst 1923: 223; Reche 1915: 260), both of which were and are ritually auspicious colours and associated with rainmaking (cf. Tanner 1957a: 199).

85).¹⁹ Movement between villages was sometimes dangerous and often required certain ritual precautions (Adam 1963b: 17; 1963c: 9).

Villages and villagers were, in spite of tensions and occasional violence between them, ritually connected, in that all recognised the supreme leadership of one clan-section—the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* (Adam 1963c: 9).²⁰ This clan-section had a regional reputation for its powerful rain and war medicines, as we saw above. Internally, within Ihanzu itself, these royal powers took on an even greater significance as they provided the basis for the Ihanzu political structure (Adam 1963b).²¹ There were on any given occasion two royal leaders—one male, the other female. In the drought-stricken and disease-ridden 1890s (Kjekshus 1977), the male *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan-section head, ritual leader and rainmaker was Semu Malekela (Werther 1898: 72-3), his female counterpart, his sister's daughter's daughter, Nya Matalū.²²

These two royal owners of the land (*akola ihī*), both of whom resided in (and only rarely ventured beyond) the royal village of Kirumi,²³ were jointly responsible for the general welfare and prosperity of all villagers of Ihanzu. Semu initiated male circumcision ceremonies (*kidamu*),²⁴ hunting parties²⁵ and salt fetching caravans to the northern salt flats.²⁶ He was also in a position to offer sanctuary to murderers,

¹⁹ For a man killed, the guilty man's clan reportedly paid fifteen cows and thirty goats; for a woman killed, the bloodwealth was thirty cows and thirty goats, sometimes more (Reche 1914: 85).

²⁰ Wyatt, n.d., p. 9, Mkalama District Book, SOAS.

²¹ Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), p. 7, TNA 1733/1. Bagshawe, Kondoa-Irangi Annual Report 1920-1921, pp. 14-15, TNA 1733: 5.

²² The latter name is from oral sources; I discuss the dating in Appendix A.

²³ Werther describes very clearly his trip into Kirumi (though he does not call it by name) and says that Semu, 'the Sultan,' and his 'advisors' normally assembled under a large sycamore tree to conduct their business (1898: 72). He failed to mention Nya Matalū.

²⁴ If male leaders initiated boys' circumcisions, it was the male elders who were responsible for carrying them out. In some years several hundred boys attended. Circumcision took place just prior to the harvest, in May or June, and involved spending up to two months in the bush under the tutelage of the elders (Reche 1914: 76). In the past, as life histories make evident, Iramba and Iambi boys often participated in these Ihanzu circumcision rites (cf. Adam 1961: 2).

²⁵ Hunting was sometimes done communally, by burning the bush (Reche 1914: 71). It appears that Semu had his own gun-wielding elephant hunters, the only men in Ihanzu to own guns (Werther 1894: 238, 242).

²⁶ The Ihanzu salt trade was at one time considerable (cf. Kjekshus 1977: 94-6). Semu is said to have supplied protective medicines for salt fetching and it was he who was also responsible for preparing medicines which ensured a large salt harvest each year. Salt fetching pilgrimages (*mūhīnzo wa buda*) followed the harvest in July each year. Led by a ritual guide (*mūkūlū a mūhīnzo*) whose job it was to ensure the group's welfare, stopping periodically to rest and preparing special medicines which placated ancestral and other evil spirits, the salt pilgrims took a leisurely pace, anywhere from four to five days to arrive, fetch their salt and return (cf. Senior 1938). Semu and Nya Matalū were always given some of the salt from each trip, though it appears from informants' statements that it was never much, and was meant mainly for household consumption.



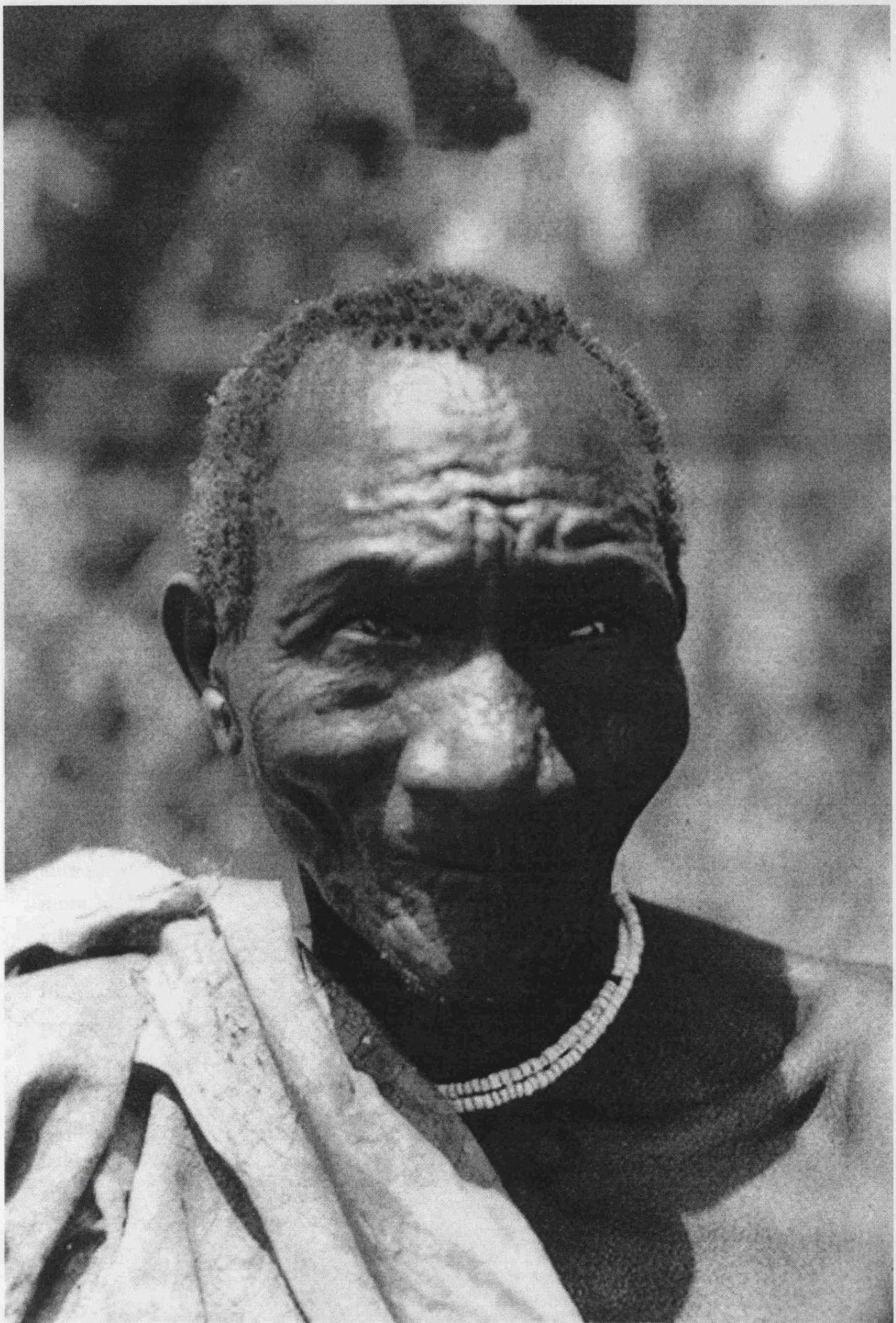
Source: Obst 1912a

Plate 2.1. Ihanzu displaying their adornments, 1911



Source: Kohl-Larsen (1956)

Plate 2.2. Elderly Ihanzu woman (c. 1934-1939)



Source: Kohl-Larsen (1956)

Plate 2.3. Elderly Ihanzu man (c. 1934-1939)

regardless of the Ihanzu village from which they came (Adam 1963b: 16; cf., S. F. Moore 1986: 57; Rigby 1971: 397).

It was Nya Matalū's responsibility, on the other hand, to initiate and co-ordinate female rain dances (*masimpūlya*) in dry years, a decidedly important task in a dry decade like the 1890s. She also had an indispensable role to play in various remedial rain rites (see, e.g., chapter five).

Together these two royal rulers controlled the Ihanzu agricultural cycle from the first cutting of the sod ceremony (*kūtema ilīma*) which initiated each new agricultural season, to giving the order to begin the harvest (*kūpegwa lupyū*). This royal duo also prepared war medicines together. In essence, and in a variety of forms, the fertility of the land and the well-being of its inhabitants were in the hands of these two ritual leaders—they ensured an abundance of salt, crops and wild animals as well as success in warfare against enemies. Of monumental importance is the fact that, in concert, they also reputedly held the tightly guarded secrets of rainmaking. Control over the weather upon which all depended in large part formed the basis of their political power. As Wyatt wrote in the 1920s of pre-colonial Ihanzu leaders:

They appear to have derived their authority solely from their supposed powers as 'rain makers.' Their chief functions appear to have consisted of 'making the rain,' setting dates for the planting and reaping of the native crops and deciding the disputes²⁷ brought by litigants. It is doubtful if they had very much executive power, as such until comparatively recent years.²⁸

Semu and Nya Matalū were assisted in some of their rainmaking tasks by male and female rainmaking assistants known as *ataata* (sing. *mūtaata*). Each village in Ihanzu had at least one such assistant. These assistants exercised no special power or authority over their fellow villagers on the basis of their positions, but functioned more as intermediaries between the two royal *Anyampanda* leaders in Kirumi and villagers from other parts of Ihanzu (Adam 1963c: 9).

In August or September each year rainmaking assistants collected grain from their respective villages which they then brought as tribute to the royal rulers in Kirumi (Reche 1914: 85; 1915: 261; Werther 1898: 99). Some of this grain, informants claim, was divided between the two royal rulers, blessed and later returned by the assistants to the villages from which it came to ensure all round fertility. The remainder was later used by Nya Matalū and her female assistants to brew sorghum beer for the annual rainmaking ceremonies which are referred to as 'cutting the sod' (*kūtema*

²⁷ He is presumably referring to bloodwealth negotiations.

²⁸ Wyatt, n.d., p. 7, Mkalama District Book, SOAS.

ilīma). These rites usually took place in October each year and both Semu and Nya Matalū played indispensable roles in them.

Semu and Nya Matalū jointly initiated these rites each year in Kirumi. Ihanzu rainmaking assistants attended, bringing with them a number of children from their home villages. Rainmaking assistants from outside Ihanzu are also said to have attended these rites. After a ritual ‘grandson’ and ‘granddaughter’ had cut the sod with special hoes (a long-handled male hoe and short-handled female hoe), the children, who probably numbered in the hundreds, began hoeing the royal *Anyampanda* fields adjacent to the Kirumi rainshrine. These annual ‘cutting of the sod’ rites normally lasted a day and a half (cf. Adam 1963b).

The pre-colonial picture of Ihanzu in the early 1890s that emerges is one of a small number of decentralised and largely autonomous villages, clustered around the boulder-strewn centre of the country, each village responsible for its own internal political, legal and economic affairs. From this protective, highland area some members of the community occasionally trekked over vast distances and were deeply involved in long-distance trading of various goods with neighbours.

Village elders—any men of advanced age—governed their own daily activities. There was little co-operation between these village units and even occasional fighting. People did, however, share a common purpose in ritual matters and warfare. In both instances villagers looked to the two *Anyampanda* owners of the land for leadership and to cure their ills which, in the 1890s, were manifold: war with invasive pastoralists, diseased animals and peoples, and severe droughts.

The royal leaders established their legitimacy and exercised power not through military means but through their control over ritual knowledge. ‘Ritual knowledge’ hardly does justice to the breadth of their influence however, since the very flow of day-to-day life—the farming cycle, hunting, circumcision, the rains and the state of the land itself—all fell under their domain. The two *Anyampanda* leaders and the clan medicines they controlled were essential to the flow and continuation of even the most mundane activities.

There is solid evidence that Semu reigned throughout the greater part of the 1890s (Werther 1898: 72-3) and oral sources suggest this was also the case with Nya Matalū. More telling still, villagers from as far away as Iambi were through some of the worst years of drought still paying tribute to the Ihanzu chiefs at Kirumi (ibid.: 99). From this we may reasonably surmise that *Anyampanda* royal powers were strong indeed during the 1890s, given that people were repeatedly faced with famine,

disease and plagues, all natural forces that were allegedly under Semu's and Nya Matalū's joint control.²⁹ It was these two ritual leaders—one male and one female—who apparently served as a powerful focal point for all Ihanzu in the 1890s, and who, with the entrance of the first Europeans in the area, played a pivotal role in the anti-colonial resistance movements.

ENTER THE GERMANS

This is not the place to re-examine early German colonial history in East Africa as others have already done this successfully, and at great length.³⁰ Instead I should like to focus on the colonial encounter in Ihanzu, but from a regional perspective. A regional focus is justified on several grounds. First, German military forces dealt from their forts simultaneously in many areas, with many different peoples. Second, as we have already seen, when the Germans first entered the area the Ihanzu and their neighbours shared mutual affinities, trading relations in goods and ritual powers; it thus makes little sense to isolate one from the other analytically. Finally, from the evidence that exists, it appears there was some degree of regional (that is, inter-tribal) co-ordination and co-operation in their common reaction to colonial forces. My aim is not to construct a regional history of African resistance—a daunting task to be sure, and one well beyond the scope of this thesis—but to present selected regional information to the extent that it sheds light on the Ihanzu case.

For a number of years, Gogo people had extracted tariffs from passing caravans, a practice German colonialists deplored (Peters 1891: 521). Accordingly, in 1894 a massive fortress was erected in Ugogo to put an end to tariff extraction, a feat that was eventually accomplished (Obst 1923: 303-4; Prince 1895; Sick 1915: 59).

²⁹ Counter-intuitive though it may seem, people normally turn *to* the ritual leaders in times of crisis, not *against* them. This is because there are many possible explanations for the failure of the rains in any given year: rain-witches abound; someone has angered the ritual leaders; someone has spilt blood on the land; etc. All of these instances, far from denying or attacking the royal *Anyampanda* power base, actually *strengthen* it. And even though ritual leaders may come under intensive fire during a drought, there is no evidence of one ever being removed from office, expelled from Ihanzu or being killed for his or her alleged part in stopping the rains. All people can do is threaten, for there is no viable alternative, other than to look elsewhere for the source of the problem. When faced with prolonged droughts, famines and plagues in the 1890s, people would have paid particular attention to the Kirumi rainshrine and the *Anyampanda* ritual leaders, shoring up considerably their power base which was ritual in nature.

³⁰ For a thorough and meticulously documented overview of local conflicts with German colonial forces, see Iliffe (1969: esp. 9-29; 1979: 88-122). Dundas (RH MSS Afr. s. 948) and Rodemann (1961: 33-70) offer some fascinating nuts and bolts details of encounters including number of troops, artillery, locations and so forth, though the former, regrettably, dispenses with all references to his primary source materials. Finally, Kjekshus' work deserves attention for its helpful list of 84 German-native conflicts between the years 1889 and 1905 (1977: 148-9). Details of battles between 1889-1896 are given, including dates and locations of battles, sometimes tribal leaders, destruction caused and body counts (Kjekshus 1977: 186-90).

Kilimatinde, as the fortress was called, was about thirteen days south of Ihanza county by caravan or five days for runners (Admiralty 1916: 326).

From their fort at Kilimatinde colonial forces began slowly extending their influence to the west and north—into Turu, Iramba, Iambi and Ihanza (Sick 1915: 59-60).³¹ Their movements in the region, however, did not occur without grave difficulties. Often colonial forces found people that, as one early observer politely put it, ‘did not like the protection of the Germans’ (Obst 1923: 304). Resistance and revolts were rife amongst a number of ethnic groups in a number of areas north of Kilimatinde over the course of the decade.³² As Dundas correctly pointed out, if a bit awkwardly:

In Kilimatinde District disorders, plundering and murders of travellers as well as government servants were constant and a never ending form of guerrilla warfare resulted which was little satisfactory owing to the impossibility of tackling any larger number of natives and thereby [sic] inflicting a severe lesson.³³

The Germans’ response to local riots and resistance was in most cases a simple one: killing as many as deemed necessary to quell the situation. A popular strategy employed in the area—though not a very popular or effective one with locals, to be sure—was capturing and hanging local leaders, or other significant figures like diviners who were similarly thought roguish and responsible for inciting anti-colonial revolts. In many cases, the Germans’ suspicions were undoubtedly correct; traditional leaders, given the ritual powers they often controlled, were uniquely situated to unite people against aggressive colonial forces, not just within their own groups, but often between them as well (cf. Lan 1985).³⁴

We saw at the beginning of this chapter how the Ihanza had, from the beginning, proved a rather unruly lot when faced with German colonial forces. C. W. Werther’s

³¹ Dundas, 1914, ‘History of Germans in East Africa, 1884-1910’ (m.s.), pp. 34-5, RH MSS. Afr. s. 948; I have seen what I presume is the same document cited in several places (e.g., Iliffe 1969: 215; Jellicoe 1978: 375) as a book published in 1923 though I have failed, not due to lack of trying, to get my hands on a copy.

³² The Rangi of Kondo riot in 1895 and 1896 (Admiralty 1916: 82-3; Kesby 1981: 54); the Gorowa rebelled in 1896 (Admiralty 1916: 82-3). And as we shall see, the Ihanza too, along with their immediate neighbours the Iramba and Iambi, proved unruly in the face of German military advances.

³³ Dundas, 1914, ‘History,’ p. 24, RH MSS Afr. s. 948.

³⁴ Aggression against German forces was not always immediate. The Turu for example, who had long been expecting the arrival of their legendary ‘red men without toes,’ offered no initial resistance to colonial forces whatever, as the German troops were said to fulfil their prophesy. The Germans were indeed red men and with their boots on, as far as anyone could tell, had no toes (Jellicoe 1969). It was only with the realisation that the Germans had come to stay—and to collect taxes, and remove and sometimes kill local leaders—that Turu began to cause problems for the colonial regime. The Germans soon appointed local Turu leaders (*jumbe*) whose responsibility it was to collect taxes. These leaders had little, if any, real authority and were often chased off by irate villagers who refused to pay taxes (Sick 1915: 60).

unfortunate encounter with the Ihanzu in 1893 was the first of its kind, but by no means the last. For years following Werther's visit, caravans attempted to pass through Ihanzu on their way to Mwanza. But the Ihanzu proved so aggressive that this practice was eventually halted, all caravans being diverted instead to a more southerly route through Ussure (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1901: 903). But these arrangements were temporary, for their newly established fort at Kilimatinde provided German forces a base from which to 'pacify' the Ihanzu as never before.

German military patrols made their first large-scale expedition from Kilimatinde into Iramba and probably Ihanzu area in 1899. In Iramba they swiftly captured the principal tribal rulers, some of whom were hanged (Lindström 1987: 38).³⁵ When large German military forces arrived in Ihanzu in the late 1890s, they rapidly appointed a *jumbe*³⁶ by the name of Mügunda s/o (son of) Nzega who was to be in charge of the whole of Ihanzu and who would periodically report to their fort at Kilimatinde. They left as quickly as they had come, returning to their fort.³⁷ The then male ritual leader, Semu, who had met up and fought with Werther's party seven years before, had by this time died, sometime in 1897 or 1898; his sister's son, Kitentemi, had succeeded as the new male *Anyampanda* leader. Nya Matalū still held her position as female ruler (see Appendix A for royal genealogies and the dates of different reigns). It is uncertain whether German forces actually met the two *Anyampanda* royals on this trip, though given the earlier expeditions, they undoubtedly knew of their existence (see Werther 1894; 1898).³⁸

But appointing a *jumbe* was only the beginning. Faced with such a history of vexatious behaviour in Ihanzu, colonial officials decided in 1902 to establish an outpost from Fort Kilimatinde, to build a new fort in Ihanzu proper (Obst 1923: 304; Sick 1915: 60). They chose Mkalama village, just south-west of central Ihanzu, and on 26 May 1901 one Sergeant Künster and his troops moved into the area. There they

³⁵ Dundas, 1914, 'History,' pp. 34-5, RH MSS. Af. s. 948. One of the better known leaders and rainmakers in Iramba, Kingo, apparently survived German rule by refusing to have anything to do with them. 'Kingo himself states that his attitude in this respect was one of divine instruction from the sungod Munankali...' (Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920, pp. 7-8, TNA 1733/1). It probably helped that no German patrols, somewhat inexplicably, were sent against him.

³⁶ *Jumbe*, a term that is variously translated as 'chief' or 'headman,' were political agents largely employed under the German regime all across German East Africa.

³⁷ Wyatt, n.d., p. 6, Mkalama District Book, SOAS.

³⁸ I have found no additional written information about the newly appointed colonial *jumbe*, Mügunda, who he was or why he was appointed to represent the Ihanzu. One of my best informants, quite without my asking, named Mügunda as the first German-appointed leader of Ihanzu, and said he was a local man from Tumbili village. He also noted adamantly that this man was not even of the royal lineage, so how could he possibly be expected to rule over Ihanzu? The short answer is he could not. An illegitimate ruler is just that; without any ability to bring the rains, he had no chance of replacing the rightful leaders.

built a temporary ‘thorn fortress’ and necessary living quarters for the soldiers. Sergeant Künster was assured by a local German-appointed *jumbe* that the Ihanzu people, who were now purportedly under his control, had surrendered completely to the colonial government. Around a thousand locals showed up at the site, allegedly to make peace with the new administration, and they celebrated well into the night. Not insignificantly, Chief Kitentemi was not among them (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1901: 903).

Shortly thereafter German forces began erecting a large stone military fortress at the same location. This strategically located fort, which still (partially) stands today, is an immense structure perched high atop a hill, surrounded by massive stone walls. The location, wind-swept though it is, affords a view of much of western Ihanzu and well into Iramba and Sukumaland. The fortress took eight years to complete and was largely the result of forced Ihanzu and Iramba labour. If the colonial administration thought that such a move would put an end to their problems, as the building of their fort in Gogo land seemed to have done there, they were sorely mistaken.

LEADERS OF RITUALS AND REVOLTS: 1902-1910

The Germans’ problems did not end in 1902, for just after beginning their Mkalama fort—only weeks after the grand ‘peace dance’ at their new fort site—there was a district-wide uprising.³⁹ These riots were directed both against colonial forces and their instruments, the German-appointed and evidently illegitimate leader, Mügunda s/o Nzega (ibid.: 1902: 587).⁴⁰ It was Kitentemi and Nya Matalū, so my informants agreed, who were in large part responsible for these riots, which is hardly surprising, given their regional reputation as wielders of powerful medicines. People from Ihanzu and elsewhere no doubt relied on their royal powers to repel invading colonials forces, much as they had done successfully with the Maasai and Tatog the previous decade.⁴¹

In June 1902, Ihanzu, Iramba and Lambi attacked and annihilated a number of colonial caravans (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1903b: 1). Eventually, following several

³⁹ Post-1896 German-native battle documentation, which includes this conflict, is available, according to Kjekshus (1977: 186), in confidential military reports in the Potsdam archives. Sadly, I have not seen these records myself. This information I flag for future footnote-reading researchers, especially those who, unlike myself, speak and read German properly.

⁴⁰ Wyatt, n.d., p. 6, Mkalama District Book, SOAS.

⁴¹ Written sources confirm the central role Ihanzu leaders played in anti-colonial resistance and revolts (Adam 1961: 9; 1963b: 17; Jellicoe 1969: 3).

successful campaigns against German forces, ‘the natives were so emboldened as to send a formal declaration of war to the military post at Mkalama.’⁴² Zahn, the German sergeant in charge at Mkalama, sent out troops to Iambi. His troops consequently suffered heavy losses at the hands of locals, who had joined forces with the Ihanzu and Iramba; many African troops and two European officers were killed in the battle.⁴³ ‘The position was now so serious that Zahn had to retire to Mkalama and call in all his patrols, a move which appeared very necessary when a series of attacks on Mkalama ensued which were repulsed only with great difficulty.’⁴⁴ Days later reinforcements arrived at Mkalama from the German fort at Mpwapwa, and the revamped colonial forces mounted another assault on locals. This time German forces were victorious (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1902: 587; Thurnwald 1935: 18).⁴⁵ Further fighting took place two months later, in August 1902, when more reinforcements arrived at Mkalama—seven Europeans, 99 soldiers and 300 levies; again, colonial forces triumphed (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1903b: 1).

It must have come as quite a shock to the people of Ihanzu, Iambi, Iramba and elsewhere when colonial forces eventually won definitively the battle—royal Ihanzu powers had finally met their match. Even more shocking, I imagine, it must have been when Kitentemi himself was captured, hauled to Fort Kilimatinde and hanged.⁴⁶ Nya Matalū, on the other hand, appears to have benefited greatly from colonialists’ lack of local knowledge and their misguided assumptions that there must be only one leader who, naturally, was a man: Nya Matalū survived the encounters unscathed and, according to informants, continued to prepare rain and war medicines secretly in Kirumi with Kitentemi’s successor, Kali (Kitentemi’s ZS).

⁴² Dundas, 1914, ‘History,’ p. 34, RH MSS. Af. s. 948.

⁴³ Dundas, 1914, ‘History,’ p. 34, RH MSS. Af. s. 948; Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920, p. 4, TNA 1733/1.

⁴⁴ Dundas, 1914, ‘History,’ p. 34, RH MSS. Af. s. 948.

⁴⁵ Dundas, 1914, ‘History,’ p. 34, RH MSS. Af. s. 948.

⁴⁶ Lyons, n.d., Iramba (Kiomboi) District Book, vol. I, RH Micro. Afr. 472, reel 22; Wyatt, n.d., pp. 6-7, Mkalama District Book, SOAS. Lyons (n.d., p. 3, Mkalama District Books, SOAS) says one of his informants witnessed Kitentemi’s hanging. A few reliable informants claim that Kitentemi’s two principal seers (*amanga*; sing., *mūmanga*), named Masilia and Mkii, were taken to Kilimatinde with him (cf. Maddox 1988: 757-58). The name Kitentemi is known by almost everyone in Ihanzu today. He is remembered not so much for what he did during his brief reign, but for what became of him—he was taken away by the Germans, never to return to Ihanzu again. During my field work many people, when asked, speculated about Kitentemi’s ultimate fate. Some suggested that he might have been taken back to Germany to start a rainmaking clan there. Chief Omari, the current male Ihanzu rain-chief (Kitentemi’s ZDDS) related the following: ‘The Germans tried to round up all the chiefs—Ihanzu, Iramba, Nduguti—and take them to Kilimatinde to hang them. Kitentemi, the Ihanzu chief, was not caught at his own house because he had gone to Kīnyīngogo to rest. When he heard the news of the chiefs being rounded up he moved to Tumbili where he hid with a man named Uhula. When he lived there, people began to spy out that the chief had left, and they wondered where he had gone. [...] it was there that he was caught. We don’t know where they took him.’

Following the failed battle with colonial forces and Kitentemi's capture and removal from Ihanza, *jumbe* Mügunda s/o Nzega, the Germans' chosen leader of Ihanza, was promptly given an assistant, a man from Tumbili village by the name of Kapüngü.⁴⁷ Shortly thereafter however, Mügunda s/o Nzega was brought up on extortion charges and imprisoned at Mkalama; he later hanged himself in the guard room. As for Kapüngü, he too was imprisoned on similar charges. Though unlike Mügunda, he completed his prison sentence and then moved far from Ihanza, to Mwanza. Msengi s/o Mügunda, the son of the suicidal Mügunda s/o Nzega, became the new *jumbe* of Ihanza.⁴⁸ His time as *jumbe* of Ihanza proved no less problematic than that of his father.

Taxes were imposed in Ihanza in around 1905, as they were in Turu (Admiralty 1916: 19-20; Jellicoe 1969: 10), and it now fell on *jumbe* Msengi to collect them. This must have proved no easy task, for Msengi eventually moved from the Ihanza heartland to the colonial settlement at Mkalama. Though one early observer flaunted this fact as a decisive colonial victory, indisputable proof of the irresistible attractiveness of western goods brought by the colonial regime (Obst 1912a: 113n), it is seems more likely that Msengi relocated to avoid tensions and conflicts with his fellow Ihanza, and to gain more immediate support of the colonial authorities who had empowered him.

In 1908 regional difficulties erupted yet again with the 'Turu Uprising.' The revolt was quickly put down by (in the wake of the Maji-Maji rebellion) paranoid German forces requisitioned from Arusha, Tabora, Kilimatinde and Mkalama. In a blatant demonstration of military force, about 750 colonial troops marched through the area (Jellicoe 1969: 8; 1978: 119; Obst 1923: 305; Sick 1915: 60).⁴⁹ This signalled the end of major uprisings in Ihanza and surrounding areas.

⁴⁷ Wyatt, n.d., pp. 6-7, Mkalama District Book, SOAS. Early British sources incorrectly refer to this man as 'Kapangu' and 'Kapongo.' His name was, if peoples' accounts and my linguistic abilities are worth anything, 'Kapüngü.'

⁴⁸ Wyatt, n.d., p. 6, Mkalama District Book, SOAS. By the end of 1902 things were relatively quiet in Ihanza; not so in nearby areas. Fighting broke out in north Turu in 1903 and a military expedition was promptly launched against the leader of the uprising, who was killed (Jellicoe 1969: 4; Sick 1915: 60). The same year there were uprisings in Sandawe country (Admiralty 1916: 80-1; Bagshawe 1924/5: 221-2; Dundas, 1914, 'History,' p. 34, RH MSS. Af. s. 948). Other alleged rebels and renegades from Iramba, Turu and Iambi were hanged at Mkalama for their anti-colonial activities during this period (Kidamala and Danielson 1961: 72; Thurnwald 1935: 18).

⁴⁹ Dundas, 1914, 'History,' p. 53, RH MSS. Af. s. 948; n.d. Tanganyika District Books (Singida), RH Micro. Afr. 397.

RESISTANCE OF A DIFFERENT SORT

The failure of mass rebellion did not see an end to resistance in all forms, but only to its military manifestations. Ihanza, Iramba, Iambi and others continued to engage in more subtle forms of resistance, what Scott (1985) aptly calls 'everyday resistance': foot-dragging, apparent lethargy, migration out of the area or, for those who stayed, extreme reluctance to carry out colonial labour like road and fort building (Admiralty 1916: 80-1).⁵⁰

The years 1908 to 1910, like much of the 1890s, were harsh ones. Faced with severe drought and dwindling grainstores, people bartered cattle for grain in Iramba, Turu and Sukumaland (Sick 1915: 18).⁵¹ Taxes had to be paid to authorities at Mkalama. Governmental forced labour—bush clearing, road and building the fort at Mkalama—was a deplorable fact of life.⁵² Consequently, there was an enormous out-migration from Ihanza during this period. In some cases, though by no means all, we can see movement out of the area as a sign of continued resistance to colonialism. One elderly man born in Kirumi village related the following:

I was born during the period—I don't know the date—when they started building that fort at Mkalama [1902]. After they began building that fort, the Germans gathered people to do the work there. My parents both saw that the work was too hard and wanted to leave so we moved to Sukumaland. I was only small at the time and was carried on my mother's back. [...]

When we arrived in Sukumaland, we lived there until I grew up a bit, and it was then that my father was forced to go and fight in the [First World] War. His name was Kea. When my father was taken, I was fully conscious of what was going on: I saw my father was going to war. [...]

After my father was taken off to fight, I went to live with my grandfather who had come with us to Sukumaland. He also wanted to get far away from the Germans and their fort.

⁵⁰ Resistance in the context of political action and nationalism has long played a pivotal role in historical studies of Tanzanian societies, a topic Dar es Salaam historians first took up in earnest in the 1960s (e.g., Gwassa 1969; 1973; Iliffe 1967; Ranger 1968). More recently scholars working in Africa have fruitfully used resistance as a way of re-introducing indigenous social actors into local histories. See, for example, Atkins 1993; Comaroff 1985; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Moore and Vaughan 1994; Switzer 1993.

⁵¹ Oberleutnant Ruff, 24 March 1910, 'Einsiedler Adolf Siedentopf,' TNA G55/27.

⁵² It has been remarked that forced labour was used to build the fort at Mkalama. In order to do this, Ihanza were required to walk to Mbulu District where they picked up (quite literally) beams and carried them back to Ihanza, no simple feat, to be sure. Each trip took a few days. Understandably, some Ihanza refused to carry out this work at all or, for those who did not outright refuse, many worked at such an exaggeratedly lethargic pace that some German observers remained in a constant state of anxiety, annoyance and misapprehension over the matter. (Oberleutnant Ruff, 24 March 1910, 'Einsiedler Adolf Siedentopf,' TNA G55/27).

I collected many life histories like this one that attest to the fact that numerous Ihanzu left their country during this first decade of German occupation, not just to gain food and return but more to the point, to escape the clutches of the governmental menace at their doorstep. In all directions they scattered: into Hadza country (Woodburn 1988a: 39), Sukumaland and Mbulu.

It was during this turbulent period that, according to informants, the two royal *Anyampanda* leaders, Kali and his sister Nya Matalū, fled Ihanzu for Hadza country. One of my most reliable informants (who had an extraordinary memory for dates and events, so I later discovered in the archives), claimed the year was 1910 when the leaders departed, the same year the fort at Mkalama was completed; Kali, he said, was severely beaten by *jumbe* Msengi and told to leave Ihanzu.⁵³

Yet contemporaneous with this manifest resistance are indications that by the end of the decade some Ihanzu were beginning to accept, if only tentatively, German governmental authority. For example, it was during the famine years of 1907-1910 that many Ihanzu and Iramba began trekking to the northern part of the territory to work on the northern railway and plantations in Moshi and Arusha (Adam 1963a; Iliffe 1979: 161). Here, far from escaping the grip of colonial structures, migrant labourers were, by raising money to pay taxes and buy consumer goods, firmly embedding themselves in those structures.⁵⁴

More remarkable still, a few people in Ihanzu even began using the colonial government to their direct advantage—one man took a government-appointed *jumbe* to court at Mkalama in 1913.⁵⁵

In spite of this, we must not lose sight of the fact that even with all the radical changes that swept Ihanzu and altered the face of the country forever, locals

⁵³ Some of these migrants settled permanently elsewhere (Woodburn 1988a: 39), yet by far the majority, including Kali and Nya Matalū, returned to Ihanzu a few years later, following the First World War (see below). Obst, who travelled through the area in 1911, came across a large camp in Hadza country that he said was only half Hadza, the other half being Ihanzu people who lived there ‘to escape from the military station at Mkalama’ (Obst 1915: 28; also Obst 1912b: 5-6). Wisely, he asked few questions, realising the situation was a potentially volatile one. Unbeknownst to Obst, the situation may have been a good deal more explosive than he imagined—it is possible that both of Ihanzu’s ritual leaders, Kali and Nya Matalū, sat staring back at him, wondering if Kitentemi’s fate would likewise befall them.

⁵⁴ Also by the early 1910s, some Ihanzu villagers began moving down from their mountainous homeland, nearer the Mkalama fort which now sported several Arab-run shops where people could buy, among other things, beads and cloth (Obst 1923: 217, 223; Kenny-Dillon, Mkalama Annual Report 1924, p. 9, TNA 1733/14: 91). As Mkalama became a more integrated trading centre for the local economy, the importance of the long-distance trade routes that existed in past decades with neighbouring groups lessened considerably (Obst 1912a: 113n).

⁵⁵ Letter in Swahili, 1913, TNA G55/67. Bd. 2.

themselves continued to view their two traditional leaders, and not the foreign-appointed *jumbe*, as the only legitimate figure heads. An assistant political officer based at Mkalama in the early 1920s wrote that during the transition period, after Kitentemi had been hanged and *jumbe* had been appointed:

The tribal chiefs still controlled their people and from them permission was still sought for planting, harvesting, marriage, circumcision, for the cure of ills, the detection of thieves, for the punishment of murderers and the rectification of tribal ills, while at the same time they were looked to to produce favourable conditions through the Sun-God for the year's harvest. The Germans tried hard to stamp out this system, and the measure of their failure is in the degree of fidelity with which the people still cling to their hereditary rulers.⁵⁶

Even though the Germans removed and hanged the Ihanzu leader, Kitentemi, in an effort to quell the violence directed against them, they not only failed in the end but suffered a tremendous amount of misfortune for their efforts. Men and women today commonly recount the Germans' colonial policy as an assault not only on the chiefship, but also on the rains that are inextricably linked to it. To attack the *Anyampanda* royals was the same as attacking the rains and hence, all people of Ihanzu.

NZALA NDEGE—THE AEROPLANE FAMINE (1918-1920)

Following the First World War and the expulsion of German forces, German East Africa was in a disaster state due to, among other things, drought and famine. Ihanzu was among the worst affected areas. Not since the 1890s, in fact, had Ihanzu suffered through such a devastating drought. And of the food that remained, German forces throughout the war had shipped enormous quantities out of Ihanzu by carrier safaris, and by transport wagons of the Arusha Dutch, to the front in Moshi.⁵⁷ Labour shortages, too, added to the burden.

Life histories reveal the extent of the tragedy. Many able-bodied Ihanzu men who might otherwise have cultivated were, during the war, recruited by both sides—some were enlisted and paid, others were abducted outright—to fight a foreign war they

⁵⁶ Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), p. 7, TNA 1733/1. See also Wyatt, n.d., p. 6, Mkalama District Book, SOAS. Another early British administrator, Bagshawe, reported that '[t]he Germans recognised none of them [tribal leaders] and their influence, which remained never the less at full strength amongst the tribesmen, was a potential source of mischief...'. (Bagshawe, Kondo-Irangi Annual Report 1920-1921, pp. 14-5, TNA 1733: 5).

⁵⁷ Bagshawe, Kondo-Irangi Annual Report 1919-1920 (14 April 1920), pp. 13-4, TNA 1733/1.

scarcely understood. Some were marched to distant locations to fight or work as porters; others did so closer to home. Towards the end of the war, as the Germans retreated south into Iramba in the wake of advancing South African forces, abandoning their fort at Mkalama, they abducted many Ihanzu and Iramba men, any who had enough strength to carry their loads, to hasten their retreat. In the process many died. The Germans pillaged and plundered, taking with them foodstuffs and livestock (cf. Brooke 1967: 15; Ten Raa 1968; Maddox 1988: ch. 3).⁵⁸

A young boy at the time living in Matongo village, now an elder, William Kali vividly recalls this period which Ihanzu refer to as *nzala ndege* ('the aeroplane famine,' a name derived from war-time Allied Forces aeroplanes).⁵⁹

Many people moved out of Ihanzu. Many people. They went in all directions in search of food. Many of those died. Many who stayed died too. We stayed.

My father went into the bush, into Hadza country,⁶⁰ and learned how to dig roots in the bush. It was hard. We picked some wild fruits and ate roots from the bush. There was no food. None. I even ate baboon meat sometimes! There was nothing. We survived.

Ali Gimbi, who was born in Ikūlūngu la Mpepo village, was the son of a wealthy cattle owner and farmer. He, too, remembers the aeroplane famine.

We sold all our cattle. We—father, mother, my maternal uncle, the children, everyone—went to Mbulu in search of food, and we stayed there for three years. It was hard there too.

⁵⁸ One of the first British District Political Officers to enter the area, F. J. Bagshawe, painted a haunting portrait of the wretched conditions under which many lived, suffered and died during this period:

'On my arrival in February [1919] an appalling state of affairs existed. Excepting for the Masai and Tatoga who are not dependant upon cereal food, and for the Wafiom, all tribes were practically starving. On every road were to be met thousands of natives with their families travelling—too often unable to travel further—in search of food, ready to barter their last remaining possessions, their children, even their wives, for food. Not only the local tribes had to be dealt with for constant streams of refugees poured in from Dodoma and Singidda [sic], all seeking for what could not be found. ... Robberies by the starving were of daily occurrence and homicides by robbers and the robbed were common, especially as, in their enfeebled condition, people died easily. Food was so scarce that every native employee of the Government and the servants of all Government employees had to be limited to a bare ration from the scanty supplies at my disposal. I do not know how many died, and I have never tried to find out. To look back upon that period is like recalling a nightmare...'

'[L]arge numbers, especially from Mkalama [District], who have moved into other districts, are beyond recall, unless they desire to return themselves' (Bagshawe, Kondo-Irangi Annual Report 1919-1920 (14 April 1920), pp. 15-6, 19, TNA 1733/1).

⁵⁹ *Ndege* also means 'bird' in Swahili (but not in the Ihanzu language) though I believe that aeroplane is the right translation in this instance.

⁶⁰ This is confirmed by Bagshawe who noted, 'During the 1918-1920 famine hundreds of natives belonging to other tribes took refuge in their [Hadza] country and lived on game the Kangeju [Hadza] assisted them to kill' (Bagshawe 1924/5: 126).

Dealing with the immediate disasters at hand was, naturally, among the British administrator's top priorities. As part of this process of (re)building the area, administrators sought to re-establish the 'chiefdoms,' (supposedly) as they existed prior to the arrival of the Germans. Re-establishing chiefdoms meant, by and large, finding 'chiefs' and making sure they were doing what they were intended to do: rule over their 'tribes' (Graham 1976; Iliffe 1979: ch. 10). War, drought and famine had sent a flood of 'tribesmen' in all directions in search of food; early British administrators took it as part of their task to redraw tribal boundaries and to ensure people stayed within them, a massive geopolitical exercise in reducing to a minimum 'tribal matter out of place.'⁶¹

THE EARLY DECADES OF THE IHANZU CHIEFDOM

From their earliest days in Ihanzu, British administrators paid close attention to the status of the German-appointed *jumbe*. Since almost all Ihanzu still looked to their *Anyampanda* leaders as the rightful owners of the land it is hardly surprising that all those *jumbe* empowered by the Germans were highly unpopular and later deposed. All *jumbe* were, from an Ihanzu point of view, illegitimate rulers.

Careful inquiries were made into the methods of each *jumbe*; as to the number of under-strappers employed by him, and as to their and his actual tribal status. Following this, numbers of *jumbes* have been charged and convicted of crimes (varying from the concealment of murder to cases of mere petty theft) and five *jumbes* are undergoing detention at the present moment.⁶²

Of the Ihanzu *jumbe*, we will recall, Kapūngū had earlier been imprisoned at Mkalama and had, on his release, fled to Mwanza District. A second *jumbe* was

⁶¹ Finding chiefs and establishing chiefdoms does not necessarily mean inventing them from thin air, though the debate is sometimes framed in these terms (Graham 1976). As one prominent historian succinctly stated, '[t]he British wrongly believed that Tanganyikans belonged to tribes; Tanganyikans created tribes to function within the colonial framework' (Iliffe 1979: 318). Following these lines of argument, much recent Africanist scholarship has insisted that, for whatever else the case may have been prior to colonial encounters, it was rarely (if ever) one of socially, morally and geographically bounded entities or 'tribes' that identified as such with their leaders or 'chiefs.' These particular structural arrangements—and indeed peoples' very collective identities—were largely, to state it baldly, invented (Beidelman 1978; Cohen and Odhiambo 1989: 25ff; Jackson and Maddox 1993; Lonsdale 1977; Ranger 1983; Vail 1989; Wilmsen 1989). If it was true that many tribes and their leaders were 'invented' by colonial administrators, then it is equally true that there were many places where pre-colonial identities, including 'chiefs,' were already evident (Atkinson 1994; 1996; Bank 1995; Greene 1996; Ranger 1993; Roosens 1994; Willis 1992). Ihanzu definitely falls into the latter category.

⁶² Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), p. 8, TNA 1733/1.

arrested and imprisoned in 1918. *Jumbe* Msengi whose authority extended over the vast majority of Ihanzu was in 1919 arrested by British officers and 'convicted on several charges of abuse of his position and authority.'⁶³

With all of the German-appointed *jumbe* in prison, British administrators enquired into the pre-colonial situation in the hope of re-establishing some semblance of that order.

Every effort was made to get into friendly touch with the chiefs and subchiefs, and to elucidate from them all information touching the economy and organisation of their people.[...]

The result has been that the most suitable relations have been established with the chiefs and subchiefs, the sympathy and support of the people themselves have been aroused, and the countless cases of extortion and concealment of crimes and offences have dropped to minimum.[...] The policy I have followed throughout has been to ignore those *jumbes* and others who have no status tribally, and to enlist the support of the chiefs and *jumbes* who, by reason of their hereditary position, enjoy the actual respect of their people.⁶⁴

Unfortunately, as with their colonial predecessors, British administrators and their empowerment schemes once again overlooked female leaders. In 1919 they sought out Kali Mpungati, Ihanzu's male leader who had fled to Hadza country in around 1910. He was returned to Ihanzu and, in March 1920, officially installed as 'chief' of the Ihanzu.⁶⁵ Nya Matalū, for her part, returned with Kali at this time but was given neither governmental office nor official recognition. If there was to be a chief, so went the government thinking, there would be one, who would 'naturally' be a man.

When Kali and Nya Matalū returned, so did the rains; the aeroplane famine had come to an end. With leaders and rains, Ihanzu itself held new possibilities and promise that had been notably absent since the Germans first entered the area twenty seven years earlier. As a result, '...many hundreds of Anisanzu [Ihanzu], who, during the past years, had fled to neighbouring districts to avoid the impositions inflicted upon them, have now returned.'⁶⁶

⁶³ And these arrests, it appears, were not wholly arbitrary, or for good measure alone: 'On the arrest of one of these *jumbes* above mentioned, more than two hundred people presented charges of extortion against him; although his tribe was starving, he was found to have more than three thousand kilos of foodstuffs stored in his own house' (Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), p. 10, TNA 1733/1).

⁶⁴ Hichens Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), pp. 8-9, TNA 1733/1.

⁶⁵ Bagshawe, Kondo-Irangi Annual Report 1920-1921, pp. 14-5, TNA 1733: 5; Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), p. 10, TNA 1733/1.

⁶⁶ Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), p. 10, TNA 1733/1.

One elderly man who, along with many of his relatives, had spent the aeroplane famine far from Ihanzu in Mbulu District had this to say:

[W]e got the news that Mpungati and Nya Matalū had lots of sorghum at home so we returned. That is how he got his name, Mpungati. It means ‘someone who brings [people] together.’ His real name is Kali. Our leaders had returned and so did the rains and the food. When we returned, I didn’t leave the country again.

Many other elders, like this one, delight in telling dramatic tales of the triumphant return of their exiled leaders. In these stories, it is not only the leaders’ physical return that is at issue, but the rains too. Some claim that as the two chiefs were driven triumphantly back into Kirumi by British officials, the rains followed just behind them.

It would appear then that, in the Ihanzu popular imagination, the British not only returned the rightful Ihanzu rulers to Kirumi but in so doing, and likely unbeknownst to them, returned the rain as well. If the Germans destroyed the rain by destroying the chiefdom, then it was the British who returned it by returning the royal *Anyampanda* leaders.

THE EARLY CHIEFSHIP AND THE POLICY OF INDIRECT RULE

Kali was accepted as the rightful ruler of Ihanzu by locals and administrators alike.⁶⁷ Nya Matalū, for her part, held no government office, a fact that was of no consequence since she, like Kali, could still carry out her indispensable role in rainmaking rites. Rainmaking rites through the 1920s once again took place annually at the Kirumi rainshrine, as they had prior to the arrival of the Germans. All my informants claimed that early administrators were supportive of tradition (*jadi*) and that they made every effort to encourage rain rites and other traditional matters.

In spite of his swift and enthusiastic appointment as government chief, Kali was given few governmental responsibilities at the outset, with the notable exception of tax collection.⁶⁸ It was not until the introduction of the policy of indirect rule in the late

⁶⁷ Unlike some other areas of Tanganyika where British administrators had severe difficulties in finding, let alone empowering, locally accepted leaders (see Abrahams 1967: 49; Iliffe 1979: 254-5; Kimambo 1991: 77; Winter 1955: 16-7), or where the nature of local leadership was in some way disputed (Austen 1968: 120-2; Beidelman 1993: 76; Graham 1976; Iliffe 1979: 330-4; Liebenow 1960: 238-9), no one contested Kali’s appointment nor his legitimacy.

⁶⁸ From the available information, it appears Kali and his *wanangwa* were efficient tax collectors; the figures for Mkalama as a whole increased between 1918 and 1920 from 6,459 rupees to 88,347 rupees and by 1924 reached 179,526 rupees (Hichens, Mkalama Annual Report 1919/1920 (16 April 1920), appendix C, TNA 1733/1; Bagshawe, Kondo-Irangi Annual Report 1925, p. 35, TNA 1733/14: 91). It must be borne in mind that these figures are aggregates for Ihanzu, Iambi and

1920s that government expectations began to change. Chief Kali's behaviour, however, did not.

Kali failed repeatedly to take on new governmental responsibilities with any degree of enthusiasm, and he regularly objected to proposed government policies. One such policy, for example, was the proposed amalgamation of Ihanzu with Iramba, a policy colonial officials favoured immensely but one which Kali and the people of Ihanzu did not.⁶⁹ The Singida District Officer gives a telling description of the situation at the time of Chief Kali's death in 1927.

Chief Kali, who died during the year and who was an autocratic and obstinate old man, was the principal stumbling block to amalgamation. It may be possible to induce amalgamation or at least a federation with Iramba in the coming year as the present chief, Asmani, does not appear to have the same tribal pride as his uncle. The matter, however, rests to a large extent with the elders of the tribe now that old Kali has gone and their prejudices are not easily broken down. It would, of course, be easy to direct an amalgamation but such a course would be most indiscreet and would probably lead to trouble.

In the Mkalama area the mass of the people and their leaders are steeped in superstition and they have to be handled carefully....

He then goes on in the same report to point out that:

The question of rainmaking in this area is one which must be approached with the greatest caution....⁷⁰

Here the District Officer was, no doubt, aware of the misfortunes the Germans had suffered as a result of their assault on the chiefs. It is also clear that Ihanzu ideas about rainmaking and their leaders were at the heart of these issues.

Iramba. By 1924, in addition to hut and poll taxes, licence fees were also being collected for such things as firearms, hunting, dances, beer brewing and dogs (Kenny-Dillon, Mkalama Annual Report 1924, appendix A, TNA 1733/14: 91). Kali's rainmaking assistants (*ataata*) might have been a logical choice for tax collectors, given that they were well accustomed to going house to house to collect tribute for the chiefs. By all indications this did not occur. Rainmaking assistants kept their ritual domain a separate matter from government.

⁶⁹ One of the earliest initiatives proposed by colonial officials in the newly created native authority was the political amalgamation of Ihanzu with Iramba. Neither Kali, nor other Ihanzu, were in favour of this amalgamation and went to great lengths to sabotage any move in this direction. Endless speculation went on in government circles about the reasons why the Ihanzu were so opposed to the proposal. One official decided that, since Ihanzu 'express the utmost contempt for the Aniramba [Iramba],' this was the reason for the abhorrence expressed when faced with amalgamation (Wyatt, n.d., p. 6, Mkalama District Book, SOAS). After another British administrator questioned some elders in 1928 about the matter, he wrote, 'as far back as could be remembered this tribe [the Ihanzu] had been a separate and independent unit [from the Iramba] with its own mtemi or paramount chief' (Anonymous Memorandum, 12 January 1928, Iramba (Kiomboi) District Book, vol. I, RH Micro. Afr. 472, reel 22).

⁷⁰ Singida District Officer, Singida Annual Report 1927, pp. 8-10, TNA 967: 823.

On Kali Mpungati's death (1927), his sister's son, Sagilū Asmani, succeeded him as male ritual leader and government chief (again, refer to Appendix A on chiefly succession). Nya Matalū, Sagilū's mother, continued as female ritual leader, something about which administrators were still either unaware or unconcerned. As far as Ihanzu themselves were concerned, however, only she and the male leader together could control the rains, the fertility of the land and people. And if the administration did not interfere with her ritual duties—and they did not—then it was of no consequence that she was given no official governmental post or even recognition.

The newly installed Sagilū initially held great promise for British administrators, but he was eventually to prove one of the most detested and troublesome chiefs in the Territory. This was not necessarily so for most Ihanzu however, among whom feelings were mixed. Most remember Sagilū as a powerful and sometimes cruel man (especially when it came to his tax collection methods); he is also remembered as one of the greatest male rain-chiefs of Ihanzu.

Unlike Kali, Sagilū had travelled far and wide and was a comparatively 'progressive' man. Before his installation as chief, Sagilū had spent a number of years in the King's African Rifles (KAR) based in Tanga and Dar es Salaam. There, in addition to becoming a Muslim—he even took an Islamic name, Athmani—he also acquired a taste for European fashion and prided himself on his conspicuously European consumption habits.⁷¹

Sagilū thus filled Ihanzu-based colonial officials with hope in a way that his mother's brother Kali never could. Kali was seen by local colonial officials as a backward chief, mentally grounded in the past, with a heavy stake in rainmaking rites. Sagilū, on the other hand, offered new potentialities for the spread of civilisation, so apparently thought administrative officials.⁷² What administrators failed to realise is that the very thing they would have preferred to leave by the wayside—rainmaking—was, in fact, the sole basis of Sagilū's legitimacy in the locals' eyes. In his 1927 annual report the Singida District Officer made the following remarks:

⁷¹ Singida District Officer, Singida Annual Report 1927, p. 12, TNA 967: 823. Chief Sagilū is also occasionally referred to by his other name, Mpilolo.

⁷² Administrators had seen the alleged benefits a 'progressive' chief could bring to his 'tribe'—education, religion, effective legal courts, civilisation—as Chief Mgeni of the Turu had aptly demonstrated during his lengthy reign (1924-1939) as Paramount Chief of Turu. In fact, Chief Mgeni was reckoned by the District Commissioner to 'rank amongst the best chiefs in Tanganyika' (Jellicoe 1978: 103-4; also Iliffe 1979: 327). It was in the face of Mgeni's chiefly model that administrators were filled with lofty aspirations for Sagilū's progressive potential as the deliverer of his people from a primitive past and into the 'modern' world.

The authority, Asmani, comes of a line of rainmakers, but having spent the last seven years in the K.A.R. [King's African Rifles] prior to succeeding to the chiefship this year on the death of his uncle, Kali, it is more than probable that he does not know much about the art which was always jealously guarded by old Kali. As far as can be ascertained, Asmani has not been initiated in accordance with tribal custom. It is anticipated therefore that rainmaking will not play such a prominent part in the tribal life as hitherto.⁷³

We see the District Officer suffering from mild, but not inconsequential confusion about the role of Sagilū being 'initiated in accordance with tribal custom.' He is thus led to proclaim the inevitable demise of rainmaking rites and beliefs which, as we shall see, was a decidedly premature proclamation.

With his extraordinary annual income of £35,⁷⁴ Chief Sagilū was able to satisfy partially his seemingly insatiable desire to acquire foreign goods—my informants claimed he bought, among other things, a bicycle, motorcycle, rifle, drank beer and smoked tobacco and marijuana regularly. Later he even purchased a car. In spite of his dazzling display of material wealth, Sagilū had not become the 'progressive' colonial chief the administration had hoped for. Far from it. Only a year after Sagilū took office, C. Lyons, who was based at Mkalama, ruefully pointed out that:

During the lifetime of Kali the old mtemi of Isanzu the court of Isanzu was the best controlled court in Mkalama [District], but with the advent of his successor I regret to say it is the worst. Sagilu (or Asmani as he prefers to call himself) is still young and very inexperienced. It is possible that he is a man of good character and has many latent good qualities, but up to date he has only succeeded in making a bad impression on all who have come into contact with him. He tries to introduce military methods into the tribe...to the extent of making his wanangwa stand to attention and address him as 'effendi.' Fortunately the baraza have some nice old wazee—especially Zugika—who I hope will have a restraining influence on Sagilu.⁷⁵

Elders who can remember, as well as younger Ihanzu who cannot, all take great pleasure in telling tales of Sagilū's and his mother's dealings with British officials. One popular story tells that when administrators drove from Mkalama to call on Sagilū in Kirumi, rather than respectfully greeting them, he would instead remain inside his house drinking beer with his friends and smoking a number of substances,

⁷³ Singida District Officer, Singida Annual Report 1927, p. 12, TNA 967: 823.

⁷⁴ Singida District Officer, Singida Annual Report 1927, p. 12, TNA 967: 823.

⁷⁵ Lyons, March 1928, Iramba (Kiomboi) District Book, vol. I, RH Micro. Afr. 472, reel 22.

forcing colonial officials to wait inordinate amounts of time, or to return on another occasion.⁷⁶

Some of the most widely-known stories tell of Sagilū's and Nya Matalū's impressive displays of ancestrally-sanctioned powers over the rain while administrators were present. As one elderly man from Kirumi told the story:

Sagilū was around during the British rule and, after asking around at Kiomboi they arrived at Sagilū's house by car, saying they had heard he could make rain. He went to his mother [Nya Matalū] and told her the white men [*azūngū*] wanted some rain and she told him to bring it. He donned his black clothes, his lion skin loin cloth, and went to the rainshrine. The British were afraid to enter. There he did his stuff with those pots and the rain began to pour! They said good-bye and went on their way, leaving him there as chief.

In this story, the fact that the administrators were said to be afraid to enter the rainshrine is telling. As we shall see in the next chapter, anyone entering the shrine who is neither a chief nor a rainmaking assistant may become severely ill, or even die, due to the wrath of the ancestral spirits. The logical conclusion from the story is that the British—the ultimate authority in Tanganyika—were somehow afraid that they did not exercise legitimate rule over the people since they could not bring the rain. To enter the rainshrine fully cognisant of this fact was likely to provoke supernatural retribution and potentially their own demise.

A similar story which is probably the single best-known story in Ihanzu, one that many recount in animated detail, gives further insights into the relationship between colonial officials, power of different sorts and the rains. The story revolves around colonial administrators' desires to establish chiefly legitimacy, to see, amongst the three chiefs of the Mkalama Federation, who the 'real' one was. A former assistant to Sagilū, now said to be the oldest man in Kirumi, recounted the story this way:

I was his *kiongozi*. If he had any safaris, I was there with him. If he was called to a meeting at Mkalama, we went to Mkalama. The D.C. said that when the chiefs of the area are called for a meeting at the *boma* [at Mkalama], he wanted each one, when he arrived, to bring the rain with him. It should rain. When Sagilū left

⁷⁶ Perhaps in part to deal more effectively with Chief Sagilū's insubordinate behaviour, a federation of chiefs was formed at Mkalama at the end of 1928 which merged three native authorities: Iambi, Iramba and Isanzu. Chief Kingu of Iramba became the president of the federation, while Sagilū became an administratively subordinate chief to Kingu (illegible signature, Singida District Annual Report 1928, p. 3, TNA 967: 823). This fact is something no Ihanzu ever told me and I do not even know if people are aware of it. I only found out later in the archives. But even if people are aware of Sagilū's demotion, it does not concern them in the least, nor does it figure into any oral histories I collected.

home here in Kirumi, he told his mother, Nya Matalū, 'Mum, I'm leaving, I've been called to the fort. When I arrive there—before I start up the steps to the top—it will start to rain.' She agreed. Then he left. We walked and walked and just when we arrived, truly, it did begin to rain. The D.C. said, 'This one, Sagilū, really is the chief of the Ihanzu.' The other chiefs, those of Iramba, failed completely to bring any rain.

The first point to note from these stories is the emphasis on gender complementarity of the rulers, a point people made without exception in all versions of the story I heard—Sagilū and his mother always agreed to make the rain together before it fell. It is of great interest that nearly identical stories were being told in the 1960s, again, with an emphatic emphasis on co-operation between gendered rulers.⁷⁷ The logic of why this should be so is the topic of chapter four.

Second, these well-known tales bring out very clearly the relationship between different sorts of power and legitimacy. Legitimacy to rule over people, as the Ihanzu see it, is to a large extent based on ability to control positively the weather. In Ihanzu's eyes Sagilū and Nya Matalū legitimately ruled because they controlled the rains. In the last story the two chiefs of Iramba and Iambi, through their inability to bring the rain, firmly establish their chiefly illegitimacy in the eyes of Ihanzu. In an interesting twist, the story seems to suggest that British administrators, like the Ihanzu themselves, based their judgements of chiefly legitimacy on the chiefs' ability to bring the rain.

THE ENTRENCHMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY

Sagilū passed away in 1939. His sister's son, Omari Nkinto, was next in line to the ritual office. Omari, however, was judged too young by British administrators to fulfil his administrative duties (he was in his teenage years) and they thus pressed for a regent leader, until Omari came of age.

A man by the name of Gunda (Sagilū's mother's sister's son) was chosen by the people,⁷⁸ and remained in office for fifteen years from 1939 to 1954. In addition to being a greatly respected and gentle man who is said to have controlled the rains

⁷⁷ Virginia Adam recorded one version in which Sagilū went to a District Officer-sponsored rainmaking competition (with Kingu of Iramba and Jima of Iambi) at the Mkalama *boma*; he rode home on his bicycle to Kirumi to prepare medicines with Nya Matalū before any rain fell. Unpublished field notes to be archived at BLPES, July 1963, pp. 19-21.

⁷⁸ Although this was a highly unusual transfer of power, it did remain within the royal matrilineage. From the information I have, there are no indications that this transfer caused any problems beyond some initial confusion, after which time people readily agreed that if a chief were to carry out administrative duties, as well as ritual ones, he must be competent in both.

admirably and with great skill, he was also an efficient bureaucrat and administrator. Unlike his chiefly predecessors, Gunda appears to have been well-liked by colonial officials and Ihanzu alike. He became perhaps the first 'proper' government chief, in that he carried out myriad bureaucratic duties.⁷⁹ For the people themselves, Gunda's role as government chief appears to have been a non-issue—as long as he also co-operated with Nya Matalū and brought the rain, which he did.

According to reliable informants it was during Gunda's reign, in 1947, that Nya Matalū passed away. Of this monumental event—monumental for people in Ihanzu at least—I have found no mention in colonial records. With the death of this ancient woman ended a lengthy (and probably the longest) reign of any Ihanzu female leader. She had managed to outlive all of her own daughters, save one, who immediately succeeded her. Nkili, or Nzītū as she was sometimes known, became the next female leader. And a powerful one she proved to be over the next forty years of her reign.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNCERTAINTIES AND RAINMAKING BLISS IN THE 1950S

In 1954, Chief Gunda, the regent chief, stepped down, allowing Omari Nkinto to become the new Ihanzu governmental and ritual leader. Succession was unproblematic and Omari, Sagilū's sister's son, now about thirty years of age, was inaugurated and accepted as the new governmental chief. Nkili remained the female leader.

As government chief, Omari was a difficult man. Like all of his predecessors (except Gunda) his main concern was not policy but rainmaking. If the Ihanzu appreciated enthusiastically this aspect of his personality, colonial officials, for obvious reasons, were much less sympathetic. Omari himself claims he never cared much for administrative duties, but carried them out when pressed to do so because it was expected of him.

Marguerite Jellicoe, a Tanganyika government sociologist, wrote of Chief Omari in the early 1960s:

⁷⁹ Taxes, as always, was a major concern (District Commissioner to Chief Kingo (Iramba), Gunda (Ihanzu), Jima (Nduguti) and Hema (Singida), 8 September 1939, 16 July 1941, 4 August 1943, 2 February 1944, TNA 68/50/1). Gunda was also responsible for distributing grain to the needy, overseeing hospital staffing, facilities and admissions policy (Correspondence in TNA 68/37/22 and 'Medical and Sanitation, Kirumi (Isanzu), N.A. Dispensary,' TNA 68/37/39) and Coronation Day events (correspondence in TNA 68/C1/8)

An apparently young man of very difficult personality. Is variously called [no doubt, by colonial officials] lazy, weak, ineffectual, shy. Avoids whenever possible meeting strangers, especially Government officials and Europeans. Is said to be practically illiterate, which fact helps to undermine his present-day position, literacy now being admired. Clearly has an immense 'inferiority complex' coupled with a firm belief in his powers as a rainmaker and his rights as traditional chief. Very touchy and ready to take offence at any imagined slight, but still has great power over the more traditionally-minded of his people, and if he is offended it is difficult to make any headway. [...] He should on no account be asked about his rain-making rites, until perhaps he is known very well. The best approach is through the history of his clan and of the Masai wars. [...] Neither should any initial curiosity whatever be shown about the rainmaking house (the *mpilimo*) which can be seen close to the old tumbledown resthouse. Nor should Kirumi Ridge [Ng'waūngu] be climbed (the rainmaking hill behind the Resthouse), nor any drum cave visited, without the permission of the Mtemi. The Mtemi speaks Swahili.⁸⁰

Jellicoe's comments make us aware of the extent to which Omari himself, like many Ihanzu during this period, still thought of their leaders not primarily as a government administrators but as the owner of the land, the bringer of rains; her notion that Omari's illiteracy somehow undermined his legitimacy was unlikely, for his legitimacy was never based on such things in the first instance. If it was true that literacy was being admired, it was only amongst a small minority. 'In the eyes of most of the Isanzu,' Adam reminds us, 'the chief is not regarded as a government servant but as the giver of rain' (1963c: 10; cf. Packard 1981: 169).

Omari himself talks affectionately of his days as government chief—driving about in his Land Rover; being able to afford imported brandy and whisky; being able to support five wives and all his children; being allowed to carry out rainmaking ceremonies at the Kirumi rainshrine, ancestral offerings and rain dances without government interference. In fact, the 1950s and early 1960s are for many Ihanzu recalled as a time when 'tradition' was supported and encouraged by the government. Annual rainmaking rites, in which Omari and Nkili played central roles, took place in all their splendour (see Adam 1963b). Events were to take a marked turn immediately following independence.

THE EARLY INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Independence to the ordinary Ihanzu person seems to have meant very little and many do not remember with any clarity those particular years. What did have a lasting

⁸⁰ Marguerite Jellicoe, April/May 1961, field notes in current author's possession. I owe thanks to Virginia Hole (née Adam) for, first, preserving this document for thirty some odd years and, second, for passing it on to me.

impact on people's imaginations, though, was TANU's decision at the end of 1962 to abolish the chiefdoms all over Tanganyika which, of course, included that of Ihanzu.⁸¹

Since the British had spent inordinate amounts of time and effort strengthening the male chieftainship, progressively vesting in it a wider range of powers over executive, legal and jural domains of Ihanzu life, it was all the more distressing when it was abolished, almost overnight, by the newly independent TANU government. What people feared most, of course, was that Chief Omari would no longer be allowed to make rain.

Omari recalled a particularly unpleasant meeting in Kiomboi with the new District Commissioner after being relieved of his administrative duties in December 1962. He claims that the former chiefs of Nduguti (Iambi) and Kisiriri (Iramba) were there too.

The D.C. was really angry, crazy you could say. He told us, 'So you think you are chiefs? Real big men? Well, let me tell you you're nothing. TANU is in charge now. You are just rubbish, savages (*washenzi*). All of you. There's no place for any of you lot.' You know, *they* are really the ones who are savages. And do you know what happened then? We left Kiomboi and returned home, all of us. And the rains did not fall over the whole of Iramba District that year, and the government had to start importing food aid, dishing it out by the cup, to help the people.⁸²

As with the other stories recounted in this chapter, Omari here establishes a direct link between legitimacy, power and the rains. TANU was not sanctioned by the ancestral spirits to own, nor rule over, the land. For this reason the change of power angered the spirits and stopped the rains. Omari's deposition harked back to a bygone but not entirely forgotten era—sixty years earlier to be precise—when his MMMB, Kitentemi, was captured and hanged by German forces. Time had seemingly come full circle, the end mirrored its own beginning.

With Chief Omari's removal, a young and relatively well-educated TANU man filled the newly-created position of Division Clerk (*Katibu Tarafa*). He was himself an Ihanzu and a Lutheran.⁸³ The clerk soon moved to the administrative centre of

⁸¹ Abrahams (1981) provides one of the most thorough analyses of this transition period, focusing specifically on the Nyamwezi.

⁸² Two things about this famine seem to have captured people's imaginations: Americans, from whom they received aid, eat brilliant yellow maize that, when ground and cooked, makes rather bizarre looking stiff porridge. People also agree that President Kennedy, under whom this aid was dispensed, was a great man.

⁸³ This man had no connection whatever with the royal *Anyampanda* clan-section, a factor that may have aided in reinforcing a sharp break between the new and the previous order: *Anyampanda* chiefs and native authorities (cf. Abrahams 1981: 37).

Kirumi. There, to make the transition from chiefs to TANU complete, he moved into the former chief's house, a massive and positively ostentatious structure built towards the end of the British colonial era to convey an unequivocal sign of chiefly authority. The chief having moved back into a modest mud brick home, the grand State House now embodied all the power and hopes of a new, but as yet unproved, post-independence order.

It was at this point not at all clear what the former Chief Omari's future role would be.⁸⁴ He had been relieved of all his administrative duties, made painfully aware of his uselessness in the new TANU structure, and could now only look on as a radical changing of the guard took place. Many villagers felt the same.

The horror which swept the country when it was heard that the chief was to be deposed by government was related to this belief [that the chiefs control the rain]. Men feared that he would no longer be rainmaker. When it was later heard that he would still reign, but would no longer be a government servant, people were much relieved (Adam 1963b: 15).

Omari and his mother Nkili carried on with the rainmaking ceremonies, if only in a half-hearted, demoralised fashion, though not for long. Without his government salary on which he had come to rely, the standard of Omari's lifestyle and that of his five wives was declining rapidly. He had already sold his Land Rover and most of his livestock. Always fond of liquor, his alcohol consumption had reached a new all-time high. Finally, two years after being relieved of his government post, in 1965 Omari did the unthinkable—he left Kirumi. Shortly thereafter, Nkili followed him.⁸⁵

No reigning ritual leader had ever voluntarily moved from Kirumi, as far as anyone could recall. Yet as far as Omari could tell (as he bitterly pointed out to me), he was, in fact, no longer reigning.

Along with his five wives and their children Omari took up residence in the northern village of Ikolo. Their life did not improve dramatically. Omari continued to drink

⁸⁴ There was some effort made on the part of TANU to integrate former chiefs into the new structure though how much of an effort was made in Ihanzu is debated. Chief Omari, although he had been a marginally successful government administrator for nearly a decade, had never been to school, a fact that positively weighed against him when his position was eliminated. In the immediate area, Chief Senge of Turu was given a position as Singida Regional Game Warden, admittedly a job quite different to government chief, though one he held and carried out successfully for many years after Independence. As the former Division Clerk explained to me, 'there was little Chief Omari could do since he had never attended school' (cf. Maddox 1988: 794-5). Eventually Omari was offered a position as Ihanzu Game Warden working as a subordinate to former Chief Senge. Omari declined.

⁸⁵ Some informants told me that TANU officials and Christians (often one and the same) put pressure Omari and Nkili to stop holding rainmaking ceremonies, since these rites were, for them, a sign of backwardness. Rain chiefs in some other parts of Tanzania also left their homes, taking with them their ritual regalia, which sometimes greatly disturbed villagers (Abrahams 1981: 38).

daily, from morning to night at beer parties. Two of his wives left him during this period.

The second year there—the rains had failed the first—villagers built a rainshrine near Omari's and Nkili's homestead, similar to the one they had left vacant at Kirumi, with the hope that the ritual leaders would continue to make rain. Omari tentatively agreed but there were to be no more festive public ceremonies to cut the sod: children were not to come to hoe his fields; there was to be no ancestral beer brewed. Nkili's role in rainmaking was reduced practically to nil, though as we shall see in the following chapter, her role remains indispensable on an ideological level.

Omari summoned his rainmaking assistants from the various villages. They collected grain tribute for the chiefs, brought it to them for their blessing, and later prepared their rain medicines in private in their new rainshrine. This Omari and Nkili continued to do until they moved from Ikolo to Ilongo village. Once again, villagers built a rainshrine where Omari and his rainmaking assistants continued to prepare rain medicines in private.

Omari, still restless, and now left with only two wives, made a third move to Mkalama village. Shortly thereafter, another rainshrine was built for him by villagers. Once again, his mother Nkili moved with him.

By 1976 people all over Ihanzu began to suggest that it was inappropriate and unbecoming of ritual leaders to be moving about the country when they should, in fact, remain in Kirumi. This alone would please the ancestral spirits. A number of local meetings were held and villagers decided it was only right that Omari and Nkili should both return to Kirumi. This was the home of the chiefs. It always had been. And even if Omari had doubts about his new role, most villagers, by and large, did not. So after months of discussions it was decided Omari and his mother would return to the place where they belonged, where they could look after the true rainshrine and give it the respect it deserved.⁸⁶ This they did.

On their return to Kirumi, villagers built a house for Omari and his one remaining wife. Nkili also returned to Kirumi where she remained until her death in 1987. The royal *Anyampanda* leaders had once again found their home.

⁸⁶ It is interesting to note, as a sideline, that the years Omari and Nkili were out of Kirumi (1965-1976) the rains were, in most seasons, sufficient. People explain that even though the rains were plentiful, a sign that the ancestral spirits were not angry, 'it was just better' that Omari and Nkili live in Kirumi since they were the owners of the land. As the first Division Secretary pointed out: 'Because of belief, Omari and Nkili were returned to Kirumi, not because of a lack of rain. There was plenty of rain during those years, not like these days.'

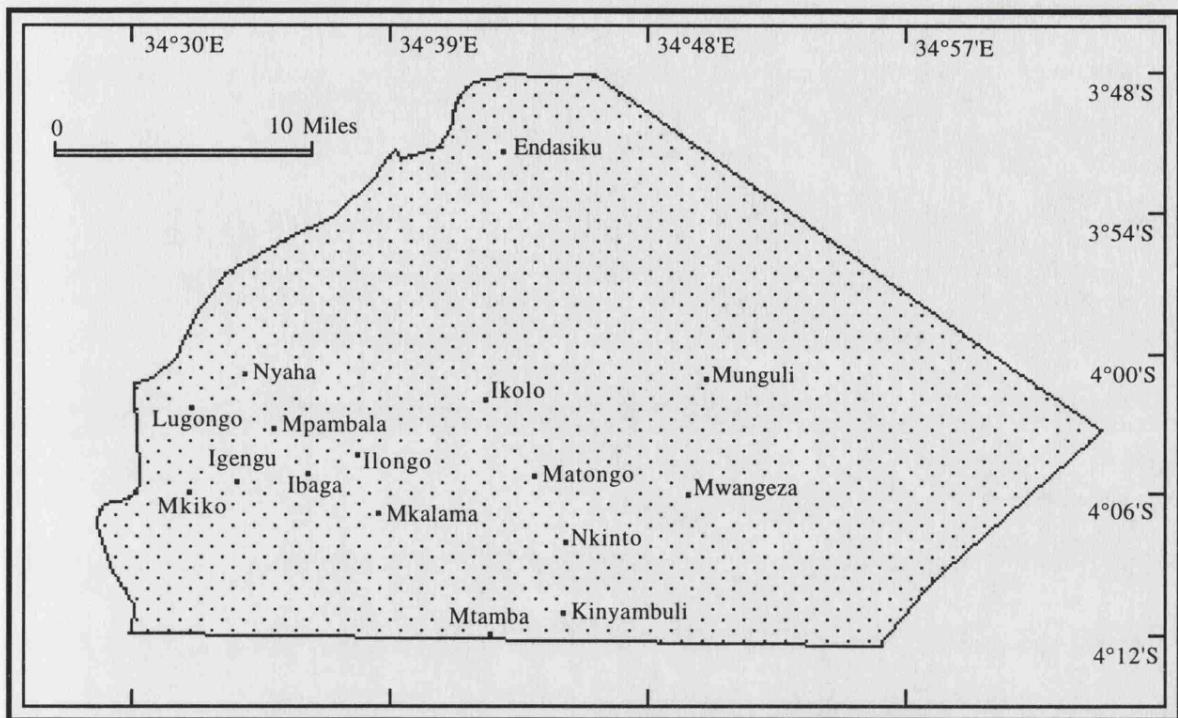
THE STRUGGLE FOR KIRUMI AND THE RAIN: OPERATION VILLAGISATION

When Omari and Nkili returned to Kirumi, they were fortunate to find it still there—it had nearly been ‘closed’ during villagisation the previous year.

The *ujamaa* villagisation programme, as it was known, was devised by President Nyerere and his colleagues and was the most elaborate social experiment ever attempted in Tanzania. The premise was simple—if people lived in close proximity, it would be to everyone’s benefit; all would have access to roads, transportation, shops, schools, dispensaries, water pumps and other such modern conveniences. The government would provide most of the raw materials for these developments while the villagers, in the spirit of co-operation, would provide the labour power necessary to build the larger good. This even extended to enormous village farm plots on which people were urged to work together for the common good. The logistics of such a massive relocation programme—and millions of Tanzanians were moved into large, centralised villages—were daunting, the final results mixed.⁸⁷

In the discussion to follow I shall examine those movements that took place around Matongo village, one of sixteen villages that was selected as a preferred location of domicile in Ihanza. The purpose is two-fold. First, it will give us an idea of the processes that took place on a much larger scale across the entire region. Second, and more importantly for the purposes at hand, it will show how the nearby village of Kirumi narrowly escaped extinction. The intensity of the battles between villagers and TANU officials pointedly demonstrates the symbolic importance of Kirumi for locals today.

⁸⁷ For some excellent overviews of Tanzania’s *ujamaa* policy, see Abrahams (1981: 54-89; 1985); his 1985 bibliography has references for further readings on this topic. See also Coulson (1982: 235-62).



Source: Plotted on site with aid of GPS machine; generated on Atlas MapMaker 4.53.

Map 2.2. Selected development villages in Ihanzu

It was 1975 when district level officials at Kiomboi made their decisions: there would be sixteen *ujamaa* villages (*vijiji*) in Ihanzu, which are shown in Map 2.2.⁸⁸ Under each of these villages there were to be a number of satellite sub-villages (*vitongoji*), which had also been chosen at the district level.

The criteria used to select villages and sub-villages, as well as to close those villages deemed unacceptable, were fairly straightforward. Those villages with the most modern amenities were favoured; those that were remotely located, especially those without easy road access, were not.

Table 2.1 on the following page lists the thirteen villages in the Matongo area prior to the 1975 villagisation as well as the ‘modern’ amenities found in each. These include water pump, road access, medical facilities, courts, schools, shops, churches and mosques.

⁸⁸ Two additional villages not shown on this map, Dominiki and Igonia, both came into existence only in the late 1970s.

Village	Water pump	Road	Medical facilities	Court	School	Shops	Church/Mosque
Matongo		✓				✓	✓
Isene		✓					
Kitaturu	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Mponwelo		✓					
Igwe la Mbaū							
Nyonyela							
Ikūlūngu la Mpepo		✓					
Ikūlūhī							
Ng'wansigwa		✓					
Kinyangogo							
Tumbili					✓		✓
Dindima							
Kirumi		✓	✓	✓			

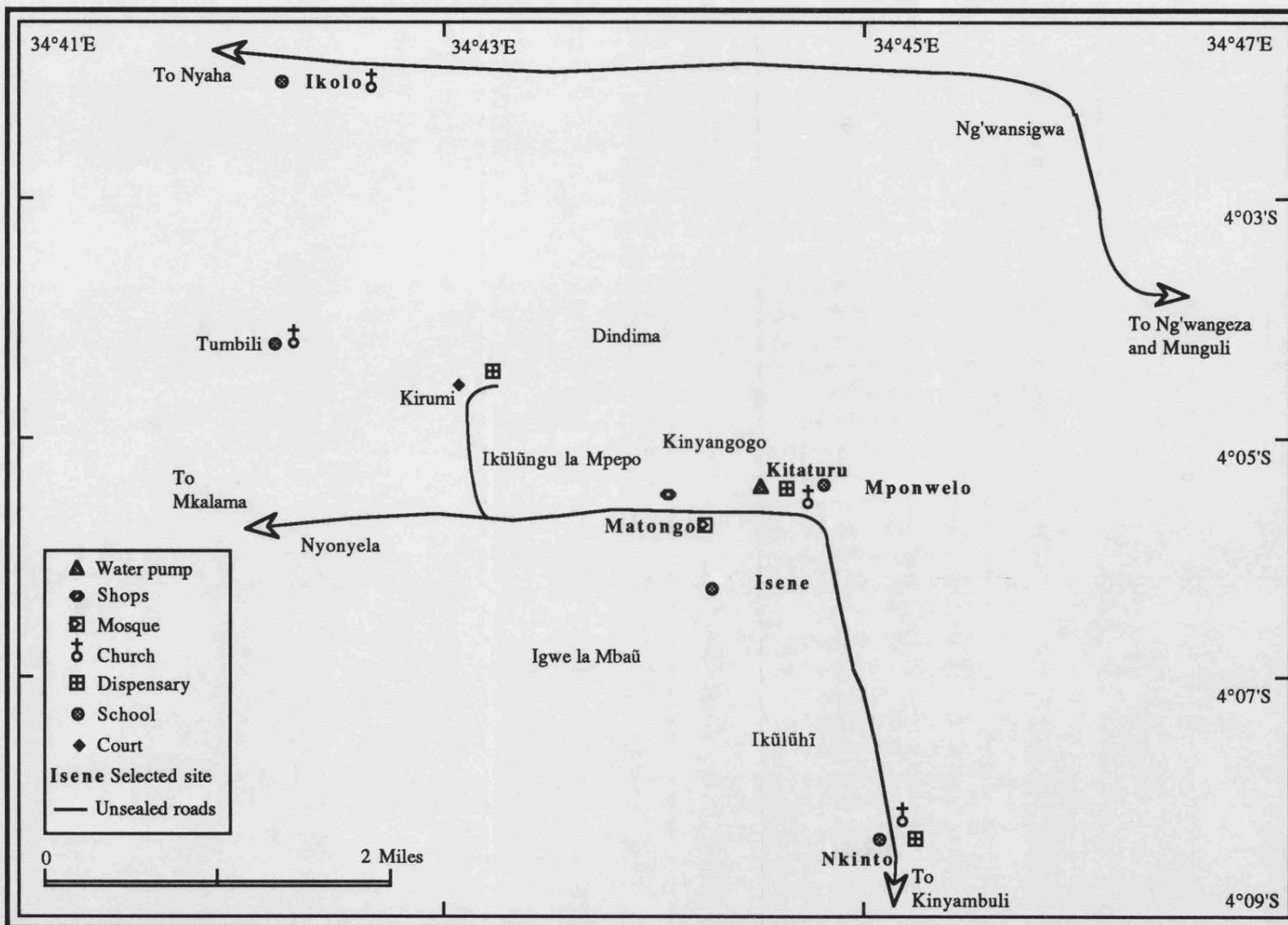
Table 2.1. Villages in Matongo area prior to 1975 villagisation

Not illogically, from these, Matongo was chosen as the site of a future *ujamaa* village. Three other nearby villages were demoted to sub-villages and would become satellites of Matongo village. These were Mponwelo, Isene and Kitaturu.⁸⁹ Those villages in the immediate area that were to be ‘deleted,’ their residents moved into Matongo village, were as follows: Igwe la Mbaū, Nyonyela, Ikūlūngu la Mpepo, Ikūlūhī, Ng'wansigwa, Kinyangogo, Tumbili, Dindima and finally, Kirumi. Map 2.3 (overleaf) shows the relative locations of these villages and the facilities each had prior to the move.

Unlike in some areas of Tanzania where there were confrontations, some of them violent, between overzealous government officials and reluctant villagers, there was little sign of open protest in Ihanzu. There was, however, one notable exception—Kirumi.

Villagers were more than disturbed by the idea that Kirumi would be closed. As far back as anyone could remember, this village had been the rightful home of the royal rulers, the place where the original migrants from Ukerewe allegedly settled. Kirumi is today deeply symbolic of Ihanzu postcolonial identity, connecting people with their past, past leaders and the lands on which they live. It was here that all former chiefs (except Kitentemi) were buried; and the place where all rainmaking rites are carried out. Kirumi had survived Maasai and Tatog raids in the nineteenth century. It had withstood the onslaught of two different colonial forces. Now it appeared President Nyerere’s villagisation programme was going to destroy the traditional home—and

⁸⁹ There would also be a sub-village named Matongo, thus making a total of four sub-villages under the village of Matongo.



Source: Plotted on site with aid of GPS machine; generated on Atlas MapMaker 4.53.

Map 2.3. Matongo area and amenities prior to 1975 moves

with it, the rain—once and for all. As one elderly woman pointedly put it, ‘Closing Kirumi is like closing Ihanzu.’⁹⁰

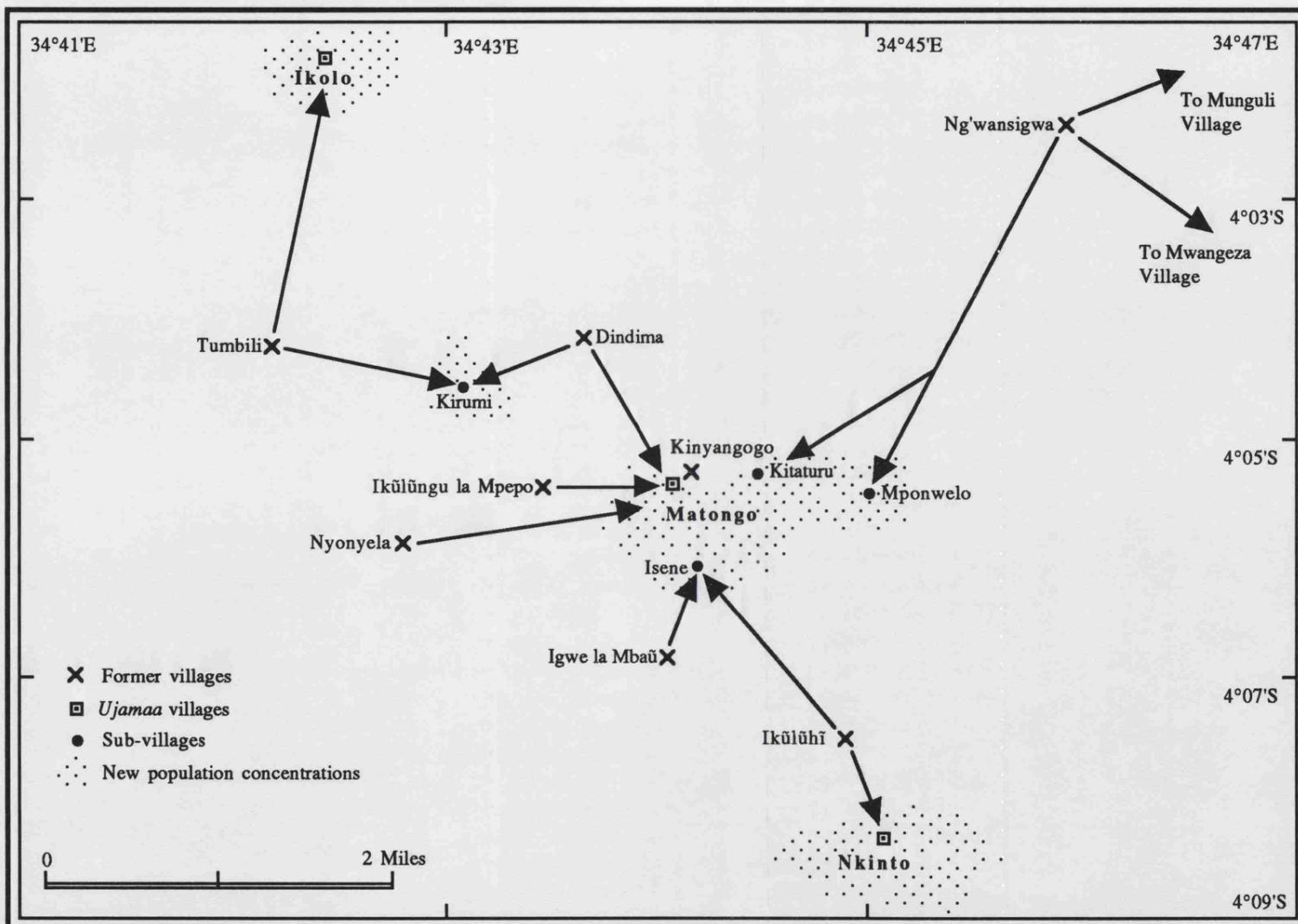
There was some protest in various parts of Ihanzu to the proposed closure of Kirumi, though most of it came from residents of Kirumi themselves. Zugika Maua, who was in 1975 the head village representative of Kirumi (*shina wa Kirumi*), explained that there were lots of troubled public meetings that year in which villagers expressed their dire concerns about the move. Following one meeting, he told me, he wrote on behalf of the villagers a letter of protest, pleading that Kirumi be incorporated as a sub-village under Matongo village. The letter went to the Division Secretary, an Iramba man named Welia who lived in Kirumi. Welia was a staunch supporter of the move and paid the letter no heed.

Maua suggested in the letter that there was no good reason to close Kirumi since it had some modern facilities, including a dispensary, a courthouse and an almost reasonable road. He did not mention rain in the letter, though he told me that this, really, was what concerned most people at the meetings. Maua continued, ‘To convince the government, they do not want to hear about our problems of rain. We had to use a different approach and show them how modern we were. We told them about roads and dispensaries, not chiefs and rains.’ For his spirited letter campaign on the villagers’ behalf, Maua was reprimanded in court and fined 500 shillings (about £0.80 today). Other villagers were intimidated.

In the middle of all the commotion, the unpopular Division Secretary, Welia, was unexpectedly transferred from Kirumi and a new Secretary, Obedi Lange, took his place. Like his predecessor, Secretary Lange was an Iramba man and a Lutheran. Unlike Welia, however, he was decidedly sympathetic to villagers’ concerns. After reviewing the problem, Lange sided with villagers and even argued forcefully in Kiomboi in favour of Kirumi’s incorporation under Matongo village. He wrote letters to the D.C., pleading that the matter of Kirumi’s closure be seriously reconsidered.

In the end, enough pressure had mounted at various levels. District level officials, after nearly a year of commotion, abandoned their original position and re-issued a revised and updated statement: Kirumi would as a sub-village of Matongo village. Villagers were elated. It will be seen in Map 2.4 (overleaf), which details the final

⁹⁰ People’s concern and political actions can scarcely be explained, in this instance, on a less symbolic level. It would be impossible, for example, to make a persuasive argument that people were really competing for fertile soils since this area is commonly acknowledged to be the least fertile in Ihanzu, having been farmed the longest (see chapter 1). The locations to which people were supposed to relocate were said to be more fertile, without question.



Source: Plotted on site with aid of GPS machine; generated on Atlas MapMaker 4.53.

Map 2.4. Movements in Matongo area during 1975 Operation Villagisation (ujamaa)

decisions and movements that took place in 1975, that maintaining Kirumi—an isolated pocket of residence—was, at least geographically speaking, perhaps not the best choice. None the less Ihanzu themselves would accept nothing less.⁹¹ Chief Omari (who was not in Kirumi at the time of the proposed move) pointed out to me:

That time when the government wanted us to move out of Kirumi to Matongo [1975] was a real disaster. They said all of us would go, everyone. But there was one thing that stopped them: that house [pointing to the rainshrine]. In the end they realised that if they moved us from here, they would absolutely destroy our rainmaking traditions and so, in the end, they let us remain. What do you think would have happened if we had moved? All this would be bush, and there would be no rain.

Whether the rainmaking tradition is the reason district administrators changed their minds and allowed Kirumi to survive villagisation is doubtful, though certainly Omari is in tune with many others in pointing out the significance of these traditions for most in Ihanzu today. The proposed closure of Kirumi village was the only one that raised vocal public outcry, protest that lasted for almost the entire year. It was also the only village in the whole of Ihanzu that was, once wiped clean from the map, redrawn by government officials in ink.

CHIEFS AND COLONIALS, RAINS AND REIGNS

I have argued in this chapter that chiefly authority and legitimacy from around 1885 to the present was ritual in nature, based as it is on control over ancestrally-sanctioned powers over the rain. Policies and polities are often imagined and recounted by Ihanzu people in terms of the rain and legitimate control over it; legitimate reigns are often about plentiful rains, and little more.

By and large it was (and is) the male and female leaders, a complementary ruling pair, who were together thought capable of activating the ritual powers necessary to ensure

⁹¹ Somewhat ironically perhaps, it may have been the building by the British—the courthouse, the large chief's residence, the road, the dispensary and the dispenser's quarters—that, flaunted in the name of modernity, actually saved tradition. Had it not been for these things, it would have been considerably more difficult for Ihanzu villagers to press their claim that Kirumi should not, like so many other Ihanzu villages, be swallowed up by history.

Lwoga (1985) discusses similar disputes that took place in the 1970s surrounding the fate of Bigwa village, near Morogoro town, on the lower slopes of the Uluguru Mountains. There, too, villagers eventually won and kept their village. His concerns are slightly different than my own and he thus gives less attention to the logic behind villagers' protest; when he does, he cites mainly the potential loss of fertile soils as the cause for concern. It would be interesting to know to what extent, if any, notions of clan land, ancestral spirits and ritual control over the area played in fuelling their protests.

the fertility of the land and of all its inhabitants. Consequently, leaders who stood outside the system—the German-appointed *jumbe*, for example—failed miserably to gain popular support as rulers, on the one hand because local ideas of legitimacy hinged on ritual control over the elements (which meant being a member of the royal lineage) and, on the other, because single rulers in no way conformed to the required model of gender complementarity upon which the exercise of power was, in part, premised. Successive waves of outsiders failed to appreciate the integral role of the female ritual leader throughout, while the male leader was killed (under the Germans), enthroned (under the British) and made redundant (under the postcolonial state). In Ihanzu eyes however the underlying ritual powers of the royal gendered duo have remained virtually unchanged. These powers are in part dependent on royal links to the land and more specifically, to the sub-village of Kirumi.

In the next chapter, I wish to examine in some detail annual rainmaking rites as they take place in the 1990s, as well as some of the beliefs that underlie these rites. Of particular interest are some of the ways in which the cosmological basis of chiefly authority is being called into question in some quarters.

PART II: ANNUAL RAIN RITES

Rain Rituals, Cosmology and Conflict in the 1990s

WE HAVE SEEN in the previous chapter that the basis of chiefly legitimacy lay in their control over the rains. As far as Ihanzu themselves are concerned, the male and female leaders must work together to be effective in their task. This chapter takes a closer look at annual rainmaking rites and the beliefs that surround them in the 1990s. My aim, after giving a detailed account of these rites and beliefs, is to show some of the ways in which royal legitimacy is contested today. Some Christians, as well as some government officials, express extreme scepticism, not only about the basis for royal *Anyampanda* legitimacy, but more fundamentally, about the very question of whether individuals can in any way positively influence the weather. In the next chapter I will explore further how these rituals relate to royal legitimacy, and conversely, how and in what ways certain types of practical protest call into question the basis of that legitimacy.

THE RAINSHRINE AND RITUAL PARTICIPANTS

Up to the 1960s when Chiefs Omari and Nkili moved from Kirumi, both played an active role in annual rainmaking ceremonies (*kütēma ilīma*). With the sudden demise of these rites, the female leader's role was virtually eliminated however. Yet the royal duo continues annually, as they always have done, to bless the seeds (see below). No less important is that the female leader still figures prominently in annual rain rites on an ideological level—men and women insist that the two gendered royals co-operate to bring the rains, even if it is not always apparent. Though everyone knows that it is the two royals and their assistants who bring the rain, much of the information about

rainmaking rites themselves is a tightly guarded secret and is unknown to the general populace.

Rainmaking rites take place in Kirumi and centre on the rainshrine (*mpilimo* or *iñdo*). The shrine itself, which is slightly hidden amongst some large trees on royal *Anyampanda* clan land, is entirely unremarkable. It is not easy to see from the main road and a passer-by, if from outside the area, might mistake it for a cattle enclosure. There are no other structures near the shrine. Two paths pass the shrine, but it is generally forbidden to use them since the area around it, like the shrine itself, is considered sacred. Cattle may pass and their herders if they do not dawdle, though I have never seen anyone except the male chief and his assistants use the path that passes just next to it. See Plate 3.1.

The rainshrine is made entirely of *mīlama* (*Combretum molle*) trees which are several layers thick so it is impossible to see inside. These are said to be 'cool' trees (a topic I shall have more to say about in chapter six). The trees forming the outer walls are about ten feet tall and form a square about fifteen by fifteen feet. There is no roof, and one door which faces west. Outside this door is a long pole bench which rainmaking assistants use to sit on during certain rites, mainly when they are carrying out the onerous task of opening the door. The doorway is closed off by a number of heavy tree poles that are removed and later replaced each time the shrine is used.

Inside the rainshrine there is a small mud hut (*itembe*) against the north wall which contains the ritual rainmaking implements. The contents list is a long one: a large bell (*nkīnda*) which rainmaking assistants ring while digging and pounding roots, several ordinary hoes for cleaning out the shrine, a special hoe (*igembe la mūgembe*) used for digging medicinal roots, an ancient axe (*kīhendo*) to cut roots, a large earthen pot (*iluo*) used to prepare medicines, three water-carrying, long-necked gourds (*mūmbū*), a grinding stone (*ikunu*), a hand-held stone (*nkomango*) used for pounding roots, an ancestral walking stick (*mīlanga*), a whisk (*nsing'wanda*), wooden divining bowl (*ntua*), a supply of medicinal roots (*makota*), an ancient rake (*lūkuko*), a special curved-neck gourd (*nkungu mītī*) used to carry ground medicines, a buffalo horn (*mbīlū*) and some potsherds from pots that formerly contained the rainstones.

Outside the hut, in the centre of the shrine on the ground are a number of small, rather ordinary looking earthen pots (*shūngū*), the type normally used for cooking stiff porridge (*ūgalī*), which are laid out in three rows. The first row has five pots; the middle row, eight; the last row, three. Neither the number, nor their arrangement, is



Plate 3.1. Chief Omari in front of the Kirumi rainshrine (*mpilimo*)

particularly significant.¹ Each pot has an identical pot which is, except when preparing medicines, turned upside-down and used as a cover. Inside each pot are several sacred rainstones—gemstones of different sorts and a few stones from hyrax stomachs (*nsaligwe*)—most of which are said to have come with the first Ihanzu migrants from Ukerewe. A few of these stones have their own names, like the Majui and Tawashi stones, named after the two Hadza men who brought them to the chief as a gift in the 1950s (cf. Woodburn 1979: 262n). At the beginning of 1995, there were a total of eighty-two rainstones in the pots. Again, there is no great significance attached to the precise number.

Rainmaking Assistants

Being a rainmaking assistant or *mūtaata* (plur., *ataata*)² means that a man is expected to work for the male chief at the Kirumi rainshrine for several days each year carrying out various duties.³ He also acts as a middleman between the male chief and villagers. The chief himself does little work at the shrine but instead acts as an overseer, a supreme ritual authority one might say, for these rainmaking assistants. These assistants may be summoned by the chief to the shrine to do their work, though after greeting him at his house, they for the most part carry out their work by themselves at the shrine.

Rainmaking assistants generally conduct their work because they enjoy it and believe strongly in its importance for the country, not because they are obliged to do so. They are unpaid. Succession to these positions is not rigidly defined. If a rainmaking assistant retires, he is responsible for finding someone else interested in taking an entry-level position at the shrine. It is not normally difficult to find replacements, as the work load is minimal. In rare cases villagers may decide to increase the number of assistants from their village—each village, in theory, has at least one—and so put another person forward. If villagers, the nominated assistant and the chiefs all agree, a man may become a rainmaking assistant.

¹ Though the rain pots have numbered 16 since at least the 1920s (Wyatt, n.d. (1928?), 'Mkalama: the back and beyond,' RH MSS Afr. s. 272), the male chief and his rainmaking assistants alike insisted that there was nothing particularly exciting or noteworthy about this precise number; it is just the way things have always been. Adam (1963b: 5) and Wyatt (*ibid.*) both noted that these pots were arranged in two rows. Even though this fact remains in living memory—some assistants say the current three row arrangement came about during the chaos years when Omari was absent from Kirumi (see chapter 2)—no one is too bothered about it, nor has anyone suggested rearranging the pots to their previous positions.

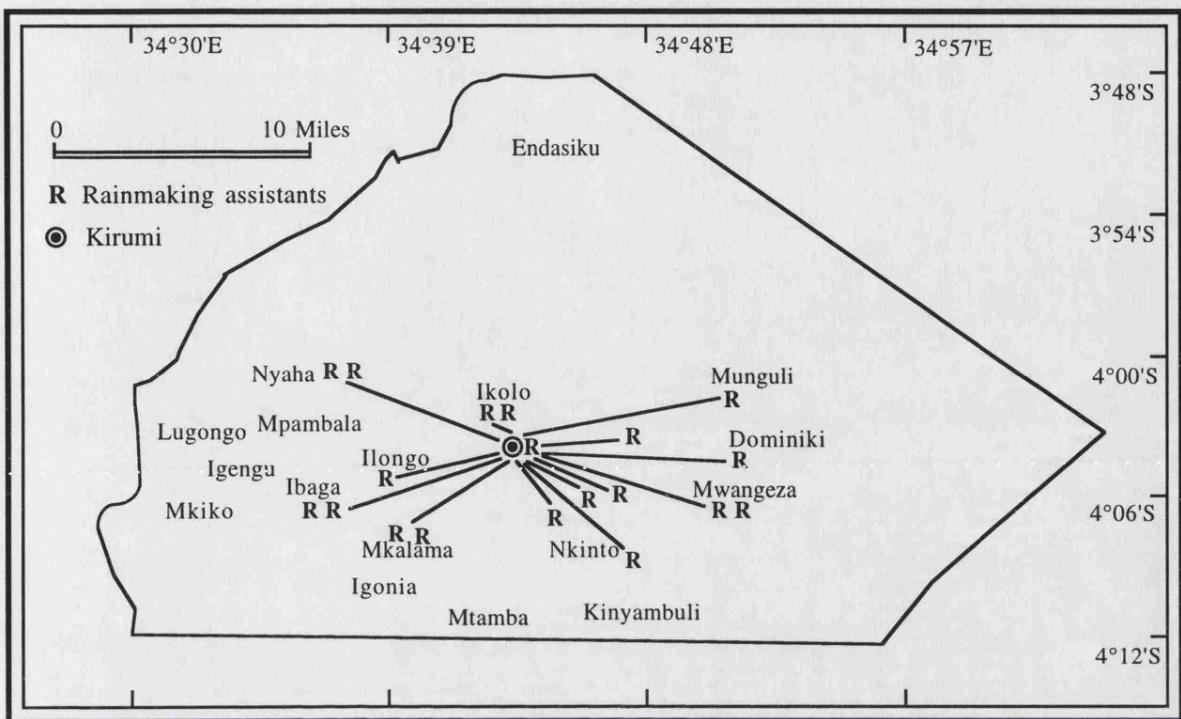
² These terms are sometimes heard as *mūtalata* and *atalata* respectively.

³ The female chief has a parallel set of female rainmaking assistants, also called *ataata*. I will discuss this more fully in chapter six.

Obtaining such a position gives a man no additional status in his home village and he is not treated differently from other villagers. He does not collect tribute for himself nor expect special favours because of his position. Holding such a position, in fact, may at times be personally dangerous since, having access to the rainshrine and some of its secrets, rainmaking assistants are often the first to be suspected of rain-witchcraft during droughts (see chapter seven). Assistants also run the risk of open conflict with Christians and government officials, some of whom are less than sympathetic to their (as they see them) outmoded practices. I will have more to say about these conflicts below.

Currently there are nineteen rainmaking assistants who represent ten of the eighteen villages in Ihanzu.⁴ Matongo, one of the most populous villages and longest inhabited areas, has five rainmaking assistants, each representing a different sub-village. Other villages, also because of their large size, have two. The eight villages with no rainmaking representative (Endasiku, Kinyambuli, Mtamba, Igengu, Igonia, Lugongo, Mkiko and Mpambala) lie without exception on the periphery of Ihanzu either bordering Iramba or Sukumaland (see Map 3.1). As we saw in chapter one, most of these villages have only come into existence in recent decades and they have thus played a much lesser role in Ihanzu history.

⁴ These assistants, all of whom are males, average 52 years of age. They may be from any clan. Most of the male assistants practise traditional religion (*kīnyakilūngū*) exclusively though three are also Muslims. None are Christians. The villages from which these rainmaking assistants come, and their numbers, are: Nyaha (2), Ibaga (2), Ilongo (1), Mkalama (2), Nkinto (1), Matongo (5), Ikolo (2), Munguli (1), Dominiki (1), Mwangeza (2).



Source: Plotted on site with aid of GPS machine; generated on Atlas MapMaker 4.53.

Map 3.1. Villages with rainmaking assistants (*ataata*)

Rainmaking assistants are divided into three unnamed groups which are based on seniority. First, there are the novices, those who have only a few years' experience working at the rainshrine. None in this group has yet entered the shrine; instead they carry out menial labour like fetching water and firewood and helping to remove the door. Before entering the shrine each novice must assist several years outside and then he must give a black sheep which will be slaughtered at the shrine.⁵

The second group is composed of those who have given their sheep and entered the shrine but who have not yet gone into the bush (*mihaka*) to dig medicinal roots. They may prepare the rain medicines inside the shrine once the senior rainmaking assistants have brought the roots.⁶

Lastly there are the senior rainmaking assistants, those whose primary responsibility it is to dig roots in the bush. These men are known simply as 'elders' (*anyampala*). Having served the chief for many years at the rainshrine, the members of this group

⁵ In 1995 there were only two member in this group. One was the Kirumi assistant who began working at the shrine in 1992 when the former rainmaking assistant retired and moved to another village; the other was an assistant from Nyaha, the second from that village, installed by villagers in a singularly dry year (1993-1994) so that they could have a stronger voice in Kirumi.

⁶ This group is, at present, the largest of the three with a total of fourteen members. These rainmaking assistants have worked at the shrine for between three and about twenty years; the average number of years is just over six.

are entrusted with much of the secret knowledge of rainmaking—which roots to dig, how to combine them, and so forth. In this group there were in 1995 only four members, all of whom have worked at the shrine for over twenty-five years.

Promotion from one group to the next is near automatic though I have heard of cases when rainmaking assistants did not move up the ranks because of friction with their rainmaking colleagues, or with the chief.

Rainmaking assistants and the male chief are the only ones allowed to enter the rainshrine at any time. It would be a grave and quite unimaginable offence for anyone else to do so.⁷

Grandson of the Shrine

There is one assistant known as ‘the grandson of the shrine’ (*mizūkūlū a mpilimo*) who performs perhaps the most important role during rainmaking rites. It is he who initiates and carries out several of the rites, must make all the ancestral addresses and initiates all other ritual activities at the shrine. While it is possible for the men to do their jobs without all rainmaking assistants present, as they and their tasks are to some extent interchangeable, they would on most occasions fail to do anything at all without the grandson.

If the term ‘grandson’ conjures up images of small children for many westerners, it must here be borne in mind that this is simply not so in Ihanzu, given the nature of the classificatory kinship system. The current rainshrine grandson is in his fifties (I attended dozens of ancestral offerings in which ‘grandchildren’ played a ritual role and never did I see any carry out the prescribed tasks who were younger than about thirty-five years of age).⁸

Up until the 1960s there were two grandchildren, a male and female, who together cut the sod at the annual rainmaking ceremonies (see Adam 1963b); this is no longer the case.

⁷ Uncircumcised males may not enter the shrine nor may anyone with any sores on his body. One rainmaking assistant, who was under normal circumstances allowed into the shrine, was forbidden for most of the 1995 season since he had some large, festering sores on his arm.

⁸ The current grandson, named Mazengo, has held his position for more than 20 years, since the death in 1971 of the former one, Siali. He, like all grandsons of the shrine, is a grandson in a classificatory, not a biological, sense. Mazengo is a grandson by virtue of the fact that his father’s mother was a member of the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan-section. One further stipulation is that the grandson must be of the *Anyansuli* clan. This is due to the fact that the *Anyansuli*, before the *Anyampanda*, were the owners of the rain, something I will have much more to say about in the following chapter.

The above should suffice to give the reader some idea of the setting, the shrine itself, the participants and a little about their varied tasks. Now I wish to take up the topic of rainmaking rites themselves in detail, most of which are today carried out in secret, or at least very discretely. Everyone in Ihanzu knows the male chief and his rainmaking assistants prepare the rain medicines at the shrine each year. Few know in any detail the ritual mechanisms.

ANNUAL RAIN RITES

Annual rain rites at the Kirumi rainshrine have changed considerably over the years. There are almost no early records on these rites,⁹ but there is some exceptionally detailed information from the early 1960s (Adam 1963b). In their heyday, as we have seen, these cutting the sod rites lasted three days and involved, among other things, communal hoeing of the royal fields around the rainshrine, beer brewing for the ancestors, and extensive participation by the male and female ritual leaders, as well as by a royal grandson and granddaughter. This was before Omari and Nkili left Kirumi, as discussed in chapter two. The rites are today much less grand. Ritual participants are now all men, including the male chief, but the ideas that underlie these rites have not changed fundamentally. People still insist that it is the two chiefs together who bring the rains, even though neither the female chief, nor the granddaughter, plays a role in the particular rites as they are practised today.

Cutting the Night Sod (*Kūkumpya lutinde*)

The act of cutting the sod at night is a private act and is the first rite of the new year. It normally takes place in the middle of the night. The grandson and a few of the senior rainmaking assistants, all robed in black, are summoned to the male chief's house on a designated night in the month of October. They then enter the rainshrine and light a fire inside the hut. There they set a fresh *mūlama* (*Combretum molle*) branch into the fire until it ignites.¹⁰ This branch is then taken and tossed into a certain cave near the rainshrine. This secret rite, 'the night cutting of the sod,' initiates

⁹ But see the brief and quite inadequate paper: Wyatt, n. d. (1928?) 'Mkalama: the back and beyond,' RH MSS Afr. s. 272.

¹⁰ This tree is ritually significant in parts of Sukumaland as well where it is used during chiefly installation ceremonies (Tanner 1957a: 198).

the new year.¹¹ After the night cutting of the sod, word rapidly spreads that the sod has been cut and people are allowed to begin farming. This rite thus officially marks the beginning of the new agricultural season.

Opening the rainshrine (*kūlūgula mpilimo*)

The chief later summons his assistants to Kirumi to officially open the rainshrine. This normally occurs in October or November, depending on the status of the weather. If it looks like the rains may begin early, the shrine is opened earlier.

On the designated day all the rainmaking assistants leave their villages for the male chief's house early in the morning. All wear black. If there are any who plan to enter the shrine for the first time, each such entrant brings with him a black sheep. If a black sheep is unavailable, a white sheep with a black head is also acceptable. As a last resort, a plain white sheep will do. Brown/red sheep, however, may never be used as they are said to be inauspicious—they are the colour of lightning, blood, violence and destruction—and are likely to anger the ancestral spirits who might then bring on these misfortunes.

On their treks to Kirumi, rainmaking assistants often adorn themselves with, or carry, certain ritually important leaves like *mūmbīlīlī* (*Entada sp.*) and *mūlama* (*Combretum molle*). Both are associated with rain. Greetings are expressly prohibited on these trips. If one sees a rainmaking assistant on his way to Kirumi—it is usually fairly obvious, as not too many people wander about dressed in black from head to toe, carrying ritually significant leaves, with a black sheep on a lead—the best policy is to allow him to pass without saying a word. He will neither acknowledge nor greet anyone. In fact, he is not supposed to stop along the path at all before reaching the male chief's house. Only then do his social graces return to normal. This anti-social behaviour on this occasion stresses the assistants' temporary removal from everyday activities.

The men converge on the male chief's house. The grandson comes with a black sheep or, if he has none, he will be given one by the chief or another member of the royal lineage. While the sun is rising they go to the rainshrine with their animal or animals,

¹¹ Adam reports (1963b: 6) that there was a special hoe with which the night sod was cut, one which was never seen by commoners. I was unable to substantiate this. I was told by some otherwise reliable informants (none of whom ever participated in these rites) that the special night hoe was called *igembe la ūlongo*. All rainmaking assistants, however, insisted that it is only secret medicines that are prepared on this occasion. Whatever the case may be, it should be noted that neither Adam nor I actually saw these particular rites.

and sit outside on the bench and on the ground. Participants are solemn on this occasion.

If there is no one entering the shrine for the first time, and there is thus no sheep to be slaughtered outside the shrine, some of the rainmaking assistants then proceed to remove the poles that block the doorway so the grandson may enter.

He enters with his sheep. He lays it down inside the shrine, its head to the west, its eyes looking north (towards the salt flats) towards the *Anyampanda* ancestral homeland, and cuts its throat. The others, too, may enter at this point. The grandson takes a handful of the stomach contents and tosses it about the shrine 'to cool it,' I was told.

Outside, they light a fire. The only firewood used is *mūlama*. Now the men gather round and roast the meat. After finishing their communal meal, the rainmaking assistants re-enter the shrine and retrieve the hoes and rake and began cleaning it out, removing the leaves and weeds that have grown up since the previous year. The rainstones are removed from the pots, anointed with castor-seed oil (*mono*) and replaced. The shrine has now officially been opened and cleaned for the year.

They sleep at the shrine that evening and return to their respective villages the following morning. On their journey home they follow the same greeting prohibitions until they have reached their homes. Once there, they must now begin gathering tribute for the chiefs, one of the most important and pervasive rain-related rites. Although much has changed in Ihanzu over the course of the century—politically, economically, ritually and so forth—paying grain tribute to the chiefs for rainmaking has remained constant.

Tribute to the Chiefs (*kūleta mbeū*)

Now that the shrine has been opened, the rainmaking assistants begin visiting the households in their villages to collect grain tribute from villagers. The years I was there households gave only a token amount—usually several cups was enough—though the importance of this practice was always stressed to me. Each household, at least in theory, should give some, for all share a stake in the rains and should thus support this particular endeavour. In practice, of course, things are not so simple. Since there is a sizeable Christian population (around seventeen percent), many of whom refuse to participate in such nonsense (as they see it), and because only a few rainmaking assistants cannot possibly visit every homestead in an entire village, they instead collect a much smaller amount than they otherwise might. In both seasons I

was in Ihanzu the average collection per rainmaking assistant was about two large buckets (*ndoo*) of grain. A few brought up to two burlap bags, others as little as half a bucket.

Once a rainmaking assistant has collected all the grain he thinks he needs from his area, he gathers local children to help him carry it to the two chiefs' houses in Kirumi. The assistants are not summoned and they are not necessarily expected on a particular day. The children, each with a small basket of grain on his or her head, walk in a bee-line, led by an old woman from their home village to Kirumi. The rainmaking assistant heads up the queue. All must wear black. It is a good idea, though not strictly required, for the grain pilgrims to carry or wear certain leaves like those mentioned above. As before, they should not stop on the way until they have reached the male chief's homestead, nor should they greet anyone in the path. Their return home takes place in much the same manner, with the additional stipulation that they should not look back.¹²

Once the grain tribute has reached Kirumi, it is divided between the male and the female chiefs' houses, the male one receiving slightly more than the female. This grain was formerly used to brew ancestral beer (cf. Adam 1963b), though this is no longer the case. Today it feeds rainmaking assistants when they visit Kirumi to do their work; more significantly, some is returned, after being blessed, to the villages (see below).

In chapter two we saw that there were formerly rainmaking assistants from other ethnic groups who made annual pilgrimages to the Kirumi rainshrine, bringing tribute to the royal *Anyampanda* leaders. This tribute was not in the form of grain, but usually of sheep. Today it is rare for non-Ihanzu people to bring tribute to the chief, though not unheard of.¹³

When outside rainmaking assistants visit the chief, all the same restrictions apply: they must wear black, carry ritually significant leaves and not stop along the path before they reach the chief's house. Those from other ethnic groups are allowed into

¹² Although I lived in Kirumi for most of my field work, I did not see every rainmaking assistant arrive with his children, since they do so unpredictably, many times when anthropologists are away doing other work. Those I did see arrive (less than half) had between 20 and 30 children with them. Also, a few came with no children at all but, instead, with burlap bags on donkeys. One assistant arrived, with two full buckets of grain, riding the ever-popular Chinese *Phoenix* bicycle!

¹³ Some Turu from the Singida area came both years I was there, each time with several black sheep. A few Hadza visited Chief Omari and expressed some interest in 1995 in re-opening a ritual link with Kirumi due to insufficient game and roots in their lands. Rainmaking assistants from other areas stopped visiting Kirumi following independence when the chiefdom was abolished and especially when Chief Omari and Nkili moved from Kirumi.

the rainshrine and prepare medicines like the rest. Since they are so few these days, however, they come at odd times and tend not to work with the others. They usually just bring their tribute, visit the shrine, and return home with their medicines.¹⁴

Before Ihanzu rainmaking assistants return to their respective villages, the female chief returns to them some of the tribute seeds they had earlier brought to Kirumi. But these are no longer mundane, ordinary seeds—after having been divided between the male and female chiefs, they are now recombined and blessed. Upon their arrival home, the assistants toss these seeds into their granaries (*magagati*). This chiefly mixing of seeds and placing them into variously located village granaries is said to promote an abundant harvest, not only for rainmaking assistants' households, but for all villagers. In the following chapter I will examine in greater detail the symbolic significance of this particular practice.

Preparing Rain Medicines (*Kūnonia Makota*)

Rain medicines must be prepared anew at the beginning of each agricultural season. Once the chiefs have received their grain tribute from villages, and then returned some of it to them, the male chief sets a date for his assistants to return to Kirumi and begin the year's work at the rainshrine. On the morning of the appointed day, they arrive at the male chief's homestead and then proceed to the rainshrine.

Inside the rainshrine the senior rainmaking assistants collect their 'root bell,' axe and hoe and depart for the bush. The novices (those who are not yet allowed into the shrine) fetch water using the long-necked gourds (*mūmbū*), the traditional water container.

As they walk through the village and bush, the senior rainmaking assistants ring the bell to signal that they are in search of rain medicines. People should not disturb them. When they find the desired tree, they toss the bell at its base and then begin digging using the ritual 'hoe' (*igembe la mūgembe*), which is no hoe at all, but a sharpened digging stick. If they need additional aid to cut particularly onerous roots,

¹⁴ It is not clear what rainmaking assistants from outside the area do (or did) with their medicines when they arrive home, or indeed, whether they were even given medicines at all. The Turu men who visited Kirumi told me they have a ceremony in Turu under a large tree where a black sheep is sacrificed. The sheep's stomach contents are mixed with medicines from the Kirumi rainshrine and this mixture is then sprinkled along the boundaries of their territory. Once this is done, there is a one-day farming prohibition over the whole of Turu. Their description is strikingly similar to the Iraqw *masay* ceremony (Snyder 1993; Thornton 1982) and similar rain-related ceremonies in Rangi (Fosbrooke 1958) and Gogo (Rigby 1968a). For the record, there are no rites in Ihanzu, rainmaking or otherwise, that concern themselves with Ihanzu's territorial boundaries.

they use the axe (*kīhendo*). After they have retrieved a small piece of the root, they return to the rainshrine. This process may go on all afternoon, wandering between the rainshrine and the bush, until they have enough of the various types of roots necessary to prepare their rain medicines (*makota a mbula*). Not all the medicines are necessarily roots; in some cases ground leaves or small branch shavings are used.¹⁵ Occasionally rainmaking assistants, even the most senior, consult the male chief about certain medicines or mixtures of medicines since he, along with the female chief, is the only one acknowledged to understand completely the esoteric secrets and ritual mechanisms of rainmaking. Everyone with whom I spoke stressed that the male and female chiefs must ‘work together;’ they must discuss at length their royal medicinal secrets for the medicines to be at all effective. Male rainmaking assistants never approach the female chief directly; this is the male chief’s job.

As the senior rainmaking assistants continue their search in the bush, others inside the shrine pound the roots into a pulp on the grinding stone (*ikunu*) with the assistance of the round hand-stone (*nkomango*). For the first few blows to the root, the man who is doing the grinding must ring a small bell while so doing. Once ground, the roots are placed into the large, water-filled earthen vat (*iluo*). The water will have been boiled, but the roots themselves, ground or otherwise, are not. This mixture of warm water and ground root medicines is then transferred to the pots containing the rainstones, each pot getting about the same amount of the medicinal waters. The medicinal root pulp is strained over each of the rain pots by the grandson who, while doing so, addresses the ancestral spirits, asking that there be plenty of rain, a large harvest, that women bear twins and so forth. With this, the medicine’s preparation is completed.

The Return Home

The rainmaking assistants sleep at the rainshrine and return home the following morning. During their entire stay they eat at the male chief’s house, only a few hundred yards from the shrine. The assistants return to their homes in silence without greeting anyone in the path.

It is normal, I was often told, that on the rainmaking assistant’s trip home, the rains begin in Kirumi and follow him as he walks, washing away his footprints. He should walk slowly, deliberately and never look back. When all of the assistants have arrived

¹⁵ Marijuana (mostly ground leaves) is a common medicinal ingredient as it is famed for its ‘enticing’ properties—it is used for hunting to pull animals towards traps and guns, just as it is used in rain medicines to pull the rains to Ihanzu.

home safely and there are no footprints remaining, the rains then pour down over the whole of Ihanzu. They start at the centre, emanating from the Kirumi rainshrine, the centre of *Anyampanda* royal powers and then, following the rainmaking assistants to the various villages from which they come, drench the entire country. I personally never saw this happen, though most Ihanzu insisted that this is the way things normally proceed. The rains begin in Kirumi, with the two chiefs, and spread from there to all villages.

The word is sent out via the rainmaking assistants, after their return home, that they have prepared their medicines at the rainshrine. The following day is *ikali*, a day of rest during which no one is supposed to break the soil with a hoe or do any other strenuous physical labour. Violation of this taboo may anger the spirits who might therefore stop the rain from falling. Those who choose to work during *ikali* are sometimes punished (see below).¹⁶

Seasonal Upkeep of the Shrine

The grain has been collected, the medicines have been prepared, now it remains to wait for the rains to arrive. There are times when the rain medicines fail to pull the rains properly, or at all. When this happens, the rainmaking assistants are summoned to the shrine to re-mix the medicines. If the rains stop, for example, for two to three weeks, it is a sign that the medicines must be renewed. This is most often the first step taken during a drought, often before ancestral offerings (chapter five) or female rain dances begin (chapter six), and before people begin looking for rain-witches (see chapter seven). Generally then, if the rains fall a few days each week during the rainy season, there is little more to do at the shrine. It is only when there is a problem that the rainmaking assistants are summoned to try to correct it.

In May the rains steadily diminish and quick-moving, sporadic rain showers called *ng'wanili* begin to pass across the country. These rains are essential for crops to ripen to a fully mature state.

The male chief again summons his assistants to Kirumi and gives each some medicine from the shrine to dab on the largest of a certain class of tree, trees of a type referred to as 'cool trees' (*mītī nī mīpolo*) or 'rain trees' (*mītī a mbula*) in their home

¹⁶ A word about *ikali* is in order. This taboo day, people point out, is an act of respect for the spirits, a public and nation-wide thanksgiving. This taboo is also observed the day after the women complete their rain dance, as will be described in chapter six. *Ikali* is also observed the day after the birth of twins and on their death.

villages.¹⁷ Placed strategically around the villages at the four cardinal points, these medicines reputedly pull the rains to the various villages during a decidedly crucial period in the farming cycle.

Later in the season as the grains begin to ripen, if there are problems with sorghum-eating insects (*nyihomi*) like aphids (*ülikü*), the assistants may intervene to destroy them. The assistants will capture some of the insects (or if that proves too difficult they collect some pieces of the damaged crops) which they bring to the rainshrine. There they slaughter a black sheep. The sheep's tail is boiled until the oil may be skimmed from the water. The insects are well-roasted over the fire and are then mixed with some ground root medicines and the sheep oil. Each man is given a small bit of this concoction, which he takes home the following day (they spend the night at the shrine once again) to his village. Once home, they dab a small amount of their medicines onto each plot in their village. Sometimes these medicines may also be placed on large 'cool trees' around the various villages, the ones that reputedly help pull the rains.

The Brawling Goat (*Mbūlī a Kīsūūlū*)

If anyone brawls during the rainy season in any Ihanzu village and blood is shed as a result, the village rainmaking assistant is responsible for collecting a black, pregnant goat as a fine from the guilty party (the one who caused the blood to spill). Fighting, and particularly bloodshed, endangers the land (not to mention the combatants themselves), as it angers the spirits who may stop the rains or send damaging lightning strikes. Lightning, especially, is associated with blood as both are said to be hot (*lūpyu*), fierce (*lūtaki*) and red (*lūkaūku*). This restriction applies only during the wet season, not during the dry.

The rainmaking assistant brings the goat to the rainshrine where it is slaughtered, normally by the grandson. Small bloody pieces of the foetal goat, referred to as 'stomach water' (*mazī a ndā*), are placed into each of the water and medicine filled rain pots inside the shrine. One rainmaking assistant told me that this was done in order 'to cool the land, to cool the blood that had been spilt in the fight, and to prevent red clouds from forming which bring lightning.'

¹⁷ The most commonly cited trees in this class include *mūlama* (*Combretum molle*), *mūata* (*Diospyros fischeri*), *mūmbilī* (*Entada sp*), *mūsū* (*Sclerocarya birrea*) and *ipolyo* (*Rhoicissus tridentata*).

As we saw above, sheep are under normal circumstances the preferred sacrificial animal at the rainshrine as they are said to be gentle (*mpolo*) and are unlikely to bring wildly unpredictable lightning storms that may damage crops and destroy homes, livestock and people. In cases of bloodshed though, goats are the norm, as they are thought to be singularly unruly and troublesome (*mbankalūku*), much like the people involved in the brawl. Slaughtering the vexatious goat brings a symbolic end to social disorder while placing the bloody foetal parts into the rain pots both cools the blood and returns fertility to the land.¹⁸

First Fruits (*kūpegwa lupyū*)

At the end of the season it is the male chief who gives the order to begin the harvest (*kūpegwa lupyū*). This has to do with the fact that to cut sorghum requires using a knife, scissors, or something else sharp; if this is done while the rains are still falling, the ancestors may become angry and withhold the rains in the future. Thus the chief should first begin his harvest, and only then should other villagers follow.

Closing the Shrine

At the end of the season just before the harvest, the rainmaking assistants must return to the rainshrine to close it for the year. This they normally do in June, and always in the evening. The rainshrine is opened in the morning, when the sun is in the east, and closed in the evening, about a half a year later, when the sun is in the west.

The rainmaking assistants prepare their last medicines in the shrine, not for the present year—it is, after all, over—but for the year to come. The door is closed, unceremoniously, and the male chief comes to the shrine while his assistants sit outside. He splashes them with a whisk (*nsing'wanda*) dipped in a water-filled divining bowl (*ntua*), giving them his blessing. The rainmaking assistants return to their homes.

¹⁸ There are obviously more fights and more blood spilt than there are goats brought to the rainshrine for such offences. In 1995, I knew of three cases in which offenders paid goats for their offences against the land.

COSMOLOGY AND THE RAIN

I should now like to examine in detail some of the cosmological ideas that underpin these and other Ihanzu rainmaking rites. Let us begin first with the Supreme Being.

The Ihanzu God has several titles that are applied to Him (and most Ihanzu agree it is a Him, not a Her; see Kohl-Larsen 1943: 296-97). The word *Itunda* is frequently used for God, or when speaking Swahili, *Mungu*. Many elders pointed out that the word *Itunda* is in reality of Iramba, not Ihanzu origin, its advent unmysteriously coinciding with the building of the Lutheran church at Kitaturu in 1931; God's proper name, they insist, is *Lyoa* (a word used today mainly for the sun in a secular context), a fact that is confirmed by early accounts of Ihanzu religion (Obst 1912a: 115).¹⁹

By whatever name, God is of decided importance to all Ihanzu people and is, as a concept, entirely uncontentious. Unlike the Iramba God who apparently vanished long ago (Pender-Cudlip 1974b: 6-9), the Ihanzu God is omnipresent—he guides all of our lives in some form, though we are never certain in which directions or for what purpose. Paradoxically, God is also the furthest removed from human affairs. What He gets up to and His motives for doing what He does are never clear, nor are they discoverable, as are the motives of ancestral spirits through divination. In all aspects of life God plays a role, if a fundamentally perplexing and ultimately unknowable one. On these matters, all will readily agree, Christians, Muslims and practitioners of traditional religion (*kīnyakīlūngū*) alike.

God evidently created the world and everything in it—rain, people, trees and all the rest. Also, so claim informants, certain people must have been given their tasks by God at the beginning of time though I have never heard any myths about these matters (cf. Kaare 1996: ch. 2). It is commonly held, for example, that God gave rain to the first Ihanzu rainmakers, and that it has been passed down through the royal matrilineage since that time.²⁰ Intriguingly, I never heard even a single story or myth about 'The Creation' (save, of course, the familiar ones amongst the Christian minority), making the Creation itself perhaps the greatest ever non-event in Ihanzu history. Nor are people given over to idle speculation on the topic. 'How should I

¹⁹ *Itunda* appears to be of Iramba origin though matters are by no means straightforward. *Tunda*, Pender-Cudlip (1974b: 3ff) informs us, is one of several Iramba names for God; interestingly, he claims that *Nzua*—an obvious cognate of the Ihanzu *Lyoa*—is the most popular word for deity and sun (*ibid.* pp. 5-6). Variations of God-names recorded at the beginning of the century in Ihanzu include *Dyiowa* (Obst 1912a: 115), and for the Iramba, *Liowa* (Obst 1912a: 115), *Mulungu* and *Semwi* (Dempwolff 1914/5: 253) and *Nzoa* (Johnson 1923/6: 243).

²⁰ People also say that the rain was actually given to another clan—the *Anyansuli*—which I will have more to say about in the following chapter.

know,' mused one elderly woman, 'what happened in the beginning?' She then went on to point out—not uncharacteristically I might add—that it is, lacking reliable witnesses, rather impossible to give details of such matters.²¹ Even so, none will deny that God is the creator of all things, even if the details of that creation persistently elude mere mortals, apart from Christians.

When God first created humans, people reason that he must have done so by vesting in them a soul (*nkolo*), since we each have one today.²² Souls may be 'seen' in strong sunlight as the blurry shadow that surrounds a person's main cast shadow. At the moment of death, sometimes before, the soul immediately leaves the body, leaving the corpse with only one dark cast shadow (a corpse held up in the light supposedly does not have a second shadow). It proceeds to the ancestral other-world (*ūlūngū*) where, if welcomed by familiar clan spirits into its new home, it will usually remain. As someone nears death, the body becomes less able to contain the restless soul and it may leave and return several times over a period of days or even weeks, causing alternating states of coherence and incoherence, before its final departure from this world and entrance into the next. It is only after the soul's final departure from the body that it becomes an ancestral spirit in the full sense of the word.

Each Ihanzu matriclan or matriclan-section is alleged to have its own distinctive ancestral spirits (*alūngū*). When a member of any particular section dies, royal or otherwise, his or her soul joins the others of his or her group in the other-world, where, if living clan members are fortunate, the spirit will remain for eternity. But the living are not always so fortunate; nor do spirits always co-operate and remain in their world as the living hope they might. Dealing with the dead is thus, for many, a regrettable fact of life.

When ancestral spirits decide to vex the living, not an infrequent occurrence, there are certain limitations to their powers which depend largely on which clan or clan-section the afflicting spirits come from. It is here necessary to draw a sharp and consequential distinction between two types of spirits—commoner and royal—and two different types of afflictions of which they are thought capable—personal and communal. The crux of the matter lies in *what types of damage* these different types of ancestral spirits are allegedly capable of inflicting. Clan spirits of commoners may inflict

²¹ Several other Bantu-speaking groups in the area—for example, the Luguru (Brain 1983: 18), Rangi (Kesby 1981: 91; 1982; 150-1), Sukuma (Tanner 1956a: 46-7) and Gogo (Rigby, personal communication in Kesby 1982: 151)—in a similar vein, have no creation myth. The Iramba, Pender-Cudlip (1974c: 64) brings to our attention, 'regard it as absurd that any man should pretend or expect to know how the human race began.' See also Pender-Cudlip 1974b: 6-7.

²² These souls, people claim, may and often do leave the body during sleep, visiting far off people and places, both the living and the dead. This is normally how witches are said to travel about at night.

illnesses upon individuals who are lineally related to them while the clan spirits of royals are capable of inflicting the most severe communal damage, namely, withholding the rain. One type of damage is individual and personal, the other is communal (cf. Bösch 1925: 202-3). Thus we might set up the following equation—personal damage: commoner::communal damage: royal.²³ This situation, informants suggest, is an historical given; royals control the rain in death as they controlled it in life, commoners do not and cannot. Rain rites carried out by the ritual leaders therefore address and ask for the assistance of their own royal predecessors to bring the rain. Chiefly spirits, no longer of this world but still able to affect it by withholding the rains, are nearer to God, the ultimate giver of rain and all forms of fertility. As such, it is they who function as mediators between chiefs and God, after death as they did while still alive. Rain rites almost never address God directly.

Ancestral addresses are in many instances made to *Mūnyankalī*, a name used for the sun on ritual occasions. No one I spoke with suggested that sun *was* God, the spirits, or anything else other than a rather large entity that rises and sets each day and gives off a goodly amount of heat. Cardinal points become important in several contexts to be described later, and some important rites deal with the sun's east-west axis. More specifically, the sun is often addressed as if it were a set of ancestral spirits, told to observe carefully the offering underway, to take good news to the ancestral homeland (Ukerewe) and on its journey to take away the bad (i.e., drought or heat) and to cool it in the waters of Lake Victoria. Here, surely, Adam is correct to stress that '[t]he Sun seems to be a visible and tangible symbol of a supernatural world about which nothing can be known' (1963b: 22).

To understand the conditions under which such addresses are carried out—ancestral afflictions of all sorts, be they personal illness, dying cattle or drought—we should take a closer look at local cosmological ideas. There are many ways to do this, but one of the more illuminating, I find, is to examine things in terms of two compelling cosmological categories: hot and cold.

Hot and Cold

Hot and cold, and processes of heating and cooling, provide apt metaphors for a host of other Ihanzu ideas, as is patently true elsewhere on the continent (cf. Jacobson-

²³ To be sure, the spirits of the royal clan-section can also inflict individual hardships on its members and they often do. But it never works the other way round—the spirits of commoner clan-sections may never inflict universal harm across the entire society. They are wholly incapable of this.

Widding 1979; 1989; Kuper 1982: 19-20; see too Beidelman 1993: 123; Goheen 1992: 392; Kesby 1981: 106). Heat, for obvious reasons, is associated with fire. But this is just the beginning. There are a number of other objects and dispositions that informants state explicitly are 'hot,' including lightning, the colour red, and blood of various sorts including menstrual blood and blood that results from brawling; anger and angry persons; and witchcraft. Almost all illnesses too, including ancestral afflictions, are said to be 'hot,' a fact that is entirely understandable given that the most common illnesses such as malaria, typhoid, brucellosis and others are associated with fever. Ill bodies are hot bodies.

As much of this implies, heat is often relative. Persons, like the land on which they live, may become hot through illness; they may also cool down and become well, just as the land and the royal ancestral spirits who hold sway over it may be cooled through carrying out rain rites. Neither are 'hot' and 'cold' gender-coded in any straightforward way. Men may generally be hotter than women, since they are thought to have more blood, women more water (to be discussed in later chapters). Men, also, are on an ideational level more closely associated with anger and thus heat. But this can change rapidly as when women 'heat up' by menstruating, or when they are angered.

Things cool, on the other hand, are often associated with water. The colour black, the colour of rain clouds, is said to be cool. This colour is therefore used extensively in all rain rites, while the colour red, because it is hot, is rigorously excluded from them. Cool people are well people; a fertile, rainy year is a cool one. In more ways than one healing persons and healing the land is about cooling, removing excess heat.²⁴ Whether for bodies or the land, local ideas about illness and good health are frequently couched in idioms of heating and cooling.

An ancestral offering is about cooling the spirits that have been angered and cooling the illness of the afflicted person. Indeed the very notion of carrying out an ancestral

²⁴ Ihanzu people, when ill, have an extraordinary desire for injections. I have seen (living near the Kirumi dispensary) numerous cases where people demanded injections, only to be given tablets to treat the same thing but which they claimed were almost useless. Though this attitude towards injections seems to be common over a large area of Tanzania and probably beyond, for the Ihanzu it may well hold a unique cosmological significance—they are receiving cooling and thus healing waters directly into the body. Further, when discussing concepts of health and disease with people, it was often pointed out that it must be true—water saves lives by cooling heated blood—for, when taken to Haydom hospital with severe illnesses like cerebral malaria, patients were invariably and immediately started on intravenous feeding, 'the drip.' This, informants say, is to increase the waters in the body (*kūongelya mazī mū mūlī*), to cool rotten, heated blood. People with acute illnesses are almost never given blood.

offering—*kūpolya*—means ‘to cool off.’ An ancestral offering, *ipolyo* (plur. *mapolyo*) means ‘a cooling.’

Drought is about unwanted heat. This heat may come from one of two sources, or both at once: (1) angered royal spirits, and (2) witches. In either case, anger and the jealousy of spirits or witches leads to heating of the land which cause the rains to fail. Heat thus becomes relevant in a double sense—heated tempers and heated lands. The appropriate action to take, then, is to locate the source of the heat, and to cool it. Many of the rain rites described in this thesis, and the symbolism in them, rely on this dichotomy between hot and cold, and concern themselves with cooling the heated in an effort to bring the rains.

Chiefs, Rainstones and Ritual Knowledge

The ritual leaders are thought to have been given the rain at the beginning of time by God. What owning the rains amounts to, I should make clear, is two things: (1) the possession of sacred rainstones, and (2) possession of the esoteric knowledge surrounding their use. These two go hand-in-hand and indeed must do so, for one without the other is of little use. An unskilled practitioner, try though he may, cannot bring the rains with the rainstones alone, nor would any knowledgeable practitioner, without the rainstones, prove any more successful.

As we saw above, a number of rainstones are kept in the rainshrine. These, I must now add, are all said to be ‘male’ rainstones.²⁵ They were originally under the custodianship of the first male chief of Ihanzu, and have remained so to the present. There are also female rainstones which were under the custodianship of the female chief; these remain not in the shrine but with the female chief herself.²⁶ Female

²⁵ Gendered rainstones have been noted across Africa (Avua 1968: 29; Cooke and Beaton 1939: 182; Hartnoll 1932: 738; 1942: 59; James 1972: 38; Middleton 1971: 196; Packard 1981: 69; Rogers 1927; Williams 1949: 205) and elsewhere (Williams 1929: 384).

²⁶ The former female ritual leader, Nkili, was said to have worn a rainstone strapped around her thigh; her predecessor Nya Matalū also wore a rainstone in this manner (see Adam 1963b: 17-8). The current female leader, Ng’welu, claims that the female rainstone/s somehow went missing since the death of Nkili. Her suspicion is that it/they may have been inherited by Nkili’s daughter, Itale. Though the female ritual leader kindly gave me this information, no one else seems to be aware of this fact; or if they are, they do not care. My research assistant (who happens to be her co-wife’s son, hence, her own son) who was with me when we discovered this piece of information shrugged his shoulders and said female rainstones were not as important as male rainstones anyway. He may be right, for, as I have argued elsewhere (Sanders 1995), it is women themselves—more specifically, their ‘watery’ bodies—that appear to be the primary means by which females attract rain. Female rainstones have never been used in the male rainshrine or in any public rites but functioned, claim informants, simply by being in the possession of the female rain chief.

rainstones are never displayed publically, nor have they ever been used in public rain rites. Thus, each chief—the male and the female—owns his or her own rainstones and is responsible for them.

Informants say that the male and female chiefs in concert, but not singly, control the esoteric knowledge of rainmaking. Without agreement between the two royals about what actions to take, the rains will fail, irrespective of what they do separately; it is only when they work together that the rains will fall correctly, or at all. This suggests that the knowledge of how to operate the rainstones is, like the rainstones themselves, gendered. One informant, in a very typical remark, told me this:

Lazima watemi wetu wafanye kazi pamoja. Yaani mvua itakataa wakikaa hivi hivi bila kushirikiana. Itakataa kabisa! Haitanyesha mvua kabisa. Mvua ikikataa mtemi Omari anakwenda kwa dada yake usiku na wanaongea taratibu kabisa, usiku kucha, mpaka wakubaliane. Halafu mvua itanyesha.

It is necessary that our chiefs work together [to bring the rain]. That is, the rain will refuse [to fall] if they just sit there like this [separate], without co-operating. It will just refuse! It really won't rain. If the rain refuses to fall, Chief Omari goes to his sister's [the female chief's] at night and they discuss it very carefully, perhaps all night, until they agree. Then the rain will come.

Leaving aside for the moment the only slightly veiled allusions to royal incest, a topic I will take up again in chapter four, the point made by this man is so fundamental to Ihanzu ideas of rainmaking that it deserves very close attention. Male and female chiefs must work together to bring the rain. Informants' stories about past rainmakers also stressed this point, as will be recalled from the previous chapter—for example, when Sagilū had to discuss the matter with the female ritual leader, Nya Matalū, before either could bring rain (pp. 73-74 above).

During my fieldwork I spent a lot of time with the female and male chiefs as both live in Kirumi, and only a few hundred yards apart at that. But they did not spend much time together, either publicly by day or, as far as I am aware, in private by night, discussing matters of rainmaking. Be that as it may, all with whom I spoke insisted that these ritual leaders worked together. That the rains fell at all was, in fact, sometimes taken as proof that this was so! There is of course no logical contradiction here: ideals and actual practices need not coincide. In this instance, they clearly do not.

In the ritual cutting of the sod that took place up until the early 1960s, it was patently true that male and female worked together to bring the rains. Each had his or her own ritual duties to carry out during these annual rain rites. The crucial point is this—

when these rituals came to an abrupt end when Chiefs Omari and Nkili left Kirumi, the ideas and ideals about royal gender complementarity remained unassaulted. That men and women must work together to bring the rain is a premise so fundamental that it continues to inform ideas about bringing the rain, even if some rain rites like those discussed in this chapter have changed considerably and have taken on a largely male appearance. On an ideal level, male and female chiefs still co-operate to bring the rain. If male rainmaking assistants and the male chief conduct most of the annual rites (with the notable exception of blessing the seeds, which both chiefs do), it still remains foremost in everyone's minds that it is the male and female chiefs' co-operation—their sharing of royal secrets—that brings the rain to Ihanzu.

RAINMAKING AND CONFLICT IN THE 1990S

In this section I wish to highlight some of the conflicts that occurred between 1993 and 1995 concerning the rain rites discussed above. It is my contention that these frictions offer a privileged position from which to appreciate deeper ideological conflicts over the nature of the rain, royal *Anyampanda* legitimacy, governmental authority and church dogma.

CASE 3. 1.

A newly arrived government Ward Executive Officer (WEO), a Rangi man by birth, came to greet Chief Omari at Kirumi a few days after taking up his post in 1994. Curious about rainmaking (since they allegedly have similar traditions in Rangi country), he asked to enter the rainshrine. Omari refused, insisting angrily that neither the government nor anyone else had any business in the shrine. The WEO said that it was he who represented the people and that Omari had no right to deny him access to any part of Ihanzu, rainshrine included. At first the WEO said he would return with police and enter the shrine if he pleased; he later decided against this (for reasons I do not know) and left peacefully, if a bit irritated.

Here we have a direct confrontation between a high-level government official and the male *Anyampanda* ritual leader whose job it is to ensure the sanctity of the rainshrine. This case brings to our attention the different types of authority in direct competition: one sanctioned by the government, the other, by ancestral spirits. In this case but in few others, the spirits appear to have won.

This dispute was short-lived and relatively minor. Nonetheless, it brings out some of the underlying tensions concerning legitimacy over Ihanzu country—is it the chiefs or the government who ultimately holds authority over any given part of Ihanzu? The

conflict ended abruptly, the outcome was undetermined. Unfortunately not all such confrontations end so uneventfully.

In recent years, in spite of the large number of people who wait to receive the chief's order to begin their harvests, some normally and defiantly begin early. These people are invariably Christians. Since Ihanzu Christians are a sizeable minority, but a minority all the same, those who choose to defy this rule often suffer as a result. In rare cases like the one to be discussed, they are able to muster enough governmental support to strengthen their claim, and even to win.

CASE 3. 2.

In 1994, a Christian man from Ibagu village began harvesting his fields before Omari had given the order to proceed. The local rainmaking assistant, noting this, approached the man and reprimanded him for doing so, implying he had better stop immediately. The Christian, for his part, did not take kindly to threats and paid a visit to the Ward Executive Officer of Ibagu who, also a Christian, decided to intervene on his behalf. The WEO threatened to jail the rainmaking assistant if he continued interfering with people's own personal business such as their own harvests. The rainmaking assistant said nothing more, and made no more threats. Neither did he approach anyone during the 1995 season for harvesting early.

This case is one in which a man from the Christian minority was able to press his claim successfully with the assistance of a fellow Christian, the Ward Executive Officer. The Christian's claim, evident in his actions, was that the royal *Anyampanda* clan-section did *not* legitimately control the land on which they lived and farmed. His refusal to accept the otherwise accepted rule that 'the chief gives the order to harvest' directly called into question and undermined Omari's position, all the more so when he was allowed to continue with his harvest without interference.

One can well imagine this case is about Christian solidarity in the face of 'pagan' rites (especially given that the two Christians in question are good friends from church) but one might equally well imagine that it is, as in case 3.1, about questions of legitimacy—who has the right to rule over the land and give orders to villagers? By putting pressure on the rainmaking assistant and silencing him into submission, the WEO, regardless of his personal beliefs, demonstrated that it was the CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi*) Party that was firmly in control of the people and the land, not the chiefs and their assistants. Of course this demonstration was only temporary at best, and would later be called into question in other cases and under different circumstances.

Not all Christians are as successful as this man apparently was, though this does not dissuade many from remaining openly defiant.

CASE 3. 3.

In 1995 a Christian man from Ikolo village began his harvest early. Neighbours were most concerned and rapidly brought it to the local rainmaking assistant's attention. He confronted the man and told him he would have to be reported to the chief the next time he went to Kirumi. Rather than being summoned by the local vigilante group (*Nkili*), brought to Kirumi and dragged through lengthy trials, he chose to repent. He promised the rainmaking assistant that he would stop harvesting immediately and would wait for the chief to give the order. This he did, with no further incident. No case was brought against him.

This case shows that in some instances rainmaking assistants can exercise a degree of authority which can translate into power to shape people's behaviour. This Ihanzu Christian, like most at the time, knew perfectly well that Omari had not yet given the word to begin the harvest. Yet, being a Christian, neither was he supposed to pay heed to such 'paganistic' observances. Be that as it may, this particular man, when faced with a potentially large opposition to his defiant acts, gave in fairly quickly. Unlike the man in case 3.2, this man chose not to press the issue by involving government officials. Christians make up only a minority and non-Christians can make life extremely unpleasant, if not plain miserable, for those who insist on continually causing problems.

CASE 3. 4.

Msa, an elderly man in his 90s, was one of the first Christian converts in Ihanzu. He has been an enthusiastic critic of royal *Anyampanda* legitimacy ever since. In 1993 Msa felled some sacred rain trees in Kirumi, adjacent to his plot, 'so he could cultivate the area' he claimed. Neighbours were incensed. Villagers called a meeting and summoned Msa. During the meeting they asked Msa, among other things, if it would be acceptable for them to burn his church to the ground, or to use pages from the Bible to roll and smoke cigarettes, since they did not share his beliefs in Jesus. He was eventually found guilty of violating 'traditional law,' and was fined one goat. Shockingly, though not unexpectedly for this impertinent character, Msa refused to pay on the grounds that he was a Christian.

Enraged villagers hauled him to the Matongo village CCM office. The government officials said it was not a government matter but would have to be dealt with by villagers themselves.²⁷ A few Christians from Kirumi then escorted Msa to the preacher's house. A shrewd man, the preacher told Msa he had wronged by knowingly cutting down the sacred trees and was thus responsible for paying any village fines imposed on him. Msa was called to another meeting and this time he agreed to pay the goat fine for his malicious act.

The preacher, an Ihanzu man himself, did not fail to grasp the subtleties of the situation—his own father was a rainmaking assistant until his death in the 1950s. Later the preacher told me that if people disliked him, or Christians in general, he

²⁷ I will discuss this distinction between government and traditional matters in greater detail in chapter seven.

would have little chance of converting anyone. Above all, he emphasised respect for other beliefs in the process of proselytising.

Before his death in 1994, Msa was an unusually provocative individual and had strained relations with many fellow villagers, Christians included, not only over his religious beliefs, but over many other things too.²⁸ This case is a particularly illuminating one, if a bit unusual. During several of the conversations I had with Msa about religious beliefs—his own and those of fellow villagers—he assured me that it was Jesus, and ultimately God, who brought the rains. Any suggestion to the contrary as far as he was concerned was not only mistaken but patently untrue. Few others, Christians included, are so dogmatically committed to this belief.

CASE 3. 5.

Kirumi villagers called a public rain meeting (*shalo ka mbula*) in early January 1994, to discuss the state of the rains. Villagers from other areas attended too. The meeting was called during *ikali*, a day following the first big rain of the season on which no one is supposed to hoe. At the meeting, villagers reported several people in different parts of Ihanzu who were hoeing that very day, in spite of *ikali*.

The chief sent his Ikolo village rainmaking assistant to accuse a certain Christian farmer in that village of hoeing during *ikali*; this man was later brought to a meeting and fined one goat, which he paid. A Kirumi man, Msa (Case 3.4 above), was also fined a goat which he eventually paid. A third man who was present at the meeting was fined, not because he himself was farming but because his Christian teenage son who lived at home, was. The rainmaking assistant from Kirumi had earlier in the day attempted to stop the boy from farming though in vain. The guilty boy's father, a former Christian himself, was thus fined a goat which he paid on the spot.

This case is particularly interesting for a number of reasons. Like others, it shows that the majority of Ihanzu are deeply committed to observing rainmaking taboos. The exceptions are the more militant Christians, and those Christians who live further from Kirumi, in outlying Ihanzu villages. If they farm during *ikali*, they rarely, if ever, get caught.

Although he has no authority in the eyes of the government, Chief Omari still commands considerable respect and legitimacy from most Ihanzu based solely on his

²⁸ Even death, villagers pointed out in a wry irony, would not put an end to Msa's vexing behaviour—while digging his grave in Kirumi, we hit impenetrable stone about three feet down and soon abandoned the site; on our second attempt in another spot, when we had nearly finished the job, the pastor arrived only to tell us that Msa had long ago requested to be buried in the church graveyard; the third grave we dug in the graveyard near the church in Kitaturu and there, after the appropriate Christian ritual, he was laid to rest.

ancestrally-sanctioned powers. This we saw was true historically, and it holds to date. Those who insist on breaking rainmaking taboos—notably the more defiant Christians—can normally expect to suffer for doing so, though in a few cases they do not.

In case 3.5, Omari sent his rainmaking assistants out to scour the countryside in search of violators of *ikali*. They found, and fined, several. Were the guilty parties to refuse to pay, they would be socially isolated by villagers, or perhaps expelled from Ihanzu. This threat is rarely made good; offenders instead continue offending, and paying fines, like Msa (Cases 3.4 and 3.5).

One factor that occasionally allows Omari to exercise power beyond that sanctioned by the spirits is that many of those in office, especially those at lower levels of the bureaucracy who are themselves Ihanzu, are sympathetic to his cause. In an interesting and not inconsequential twist, the local Chairman of Kirumi (*Mwenye Kiti wa Kirumi*) is Omari's son (BS). While this man is only a low-level government official, he is none the less in a position to apply considerable government pressure on unruly villagers. There is thus in some cases at least the implicit threat that, if people guilty of violating 'traditional' laws do not admit their guilt and pay their fines, they not only risk being shunned or expelled, but also jailed, taxed or fined by some government officials on other grounds. I am not saying that this regularly happens. Rather, it is the threat which is a persuasive one and one which plays some role in guiding people's decisions to defy, or abide by, the rules of the game.

Rules are not rigid. Nor are they equally applied. People on both sides of the fence instead play with the boundaries of these rules—pushing them this way, flexing them that—as they negotiate their way through the years, putting to the test, through practice, the boundaries of their own belief systems and royal legitimacy.

The above cases give us insights into some of the ways that royal *Anyampanda* clan legitimacy is being challenged in the 1990s. These claims and counter-claims are often manifest in practice. In the following section I should like to pay particular attention to what people say about what they do, when and why they do it, and to examine in greater detail these alternative dialogues that motivate their actions.

DIFFERENT DIALOGUES ON RAINMAKING

What individuals' statements make evident is that it is very difficult, if not wholly impossible, to discuss monolithically 'the Christian point of view' or 'the government.' Individuals are wearers of many hats; and they change them often. In

the 1990s interpretations are discussed, argued over, evaluated, re-evaluated, and finally, argued over again. There is little resolution.

In several instances I encountered, people (again, all were Christians) refused to pay grain tribute to the rainmaking assistants at the beginning of the season. During the two years I was there, I heard of none of these people being fined or otherwise suffering from their refusal to contribute, though I did hear of a few cases in recent years when individuals were brought to Kirumi to face Chief Omari. A thirty-four-year-old Christian man who was employed at the local Matongo government office for a number of years, explained it to me this way:

I won't give any seeds to those chiefs. It's a waste. If they can stop the rain over my fields for not giving tribute, so be it. As soon as they do—as soon as I see the rain fall on my neighbours' fields but not on mine—I'll run directly to the chiefs with gifts, not only with small amounts of sorghum, but with a goat or even a cow!

This statement is a direct challenge to the chiefs to demonstrate their legitimacy by bringing and withholding the rain. This man went on to explain to me at some length that it was Jesus who brought the rain, and it was only by attending church and praying to God that one might expect to improve a bad season. Sceptical, this man doubts the chiefs have the ability to bring the rains in any form.

Another well-known woman and, in the Christian community, a respected one too, derided the male chief. 'We here, those of us with religion [i.e., Lutheranism], know that it is God who makes rain, not the chief. While others wait until he does his work there in Kirumi to begin farming, we just begin whenever we like.' She represents the views of a small pocket of committed Lutherans who reside in Kitaturu around the Lutheran church.

If some Christian attitudes appear self-righteous and assured, we should not conclude from this that all those who call themselves Christians feel similarly. To be sure, as we have seen, there is a good deal of scepticism over the chiefs' powers and legitimacy in some quarters. This scepticism, however, is tempered by other Christians who remain less committed to extreme positions, and who are less certain as to the ultimate source of the rains.

A young Christian man whom I knew well, a resident of Kirumi, showed more doubts about these issues, in spite of his strong convictions in the bible and Jesus. In November 1993 I recorded in my field notes:

At first I thought X was one of the biggest jokers about the chiefs' ability to make rain. But after today I am not sure. He is convinced the former chiefs, in the old

days, *did* make rain. They had the power. And even today, he says, he is now unsure about things. ... I asked him straight-out if it were true, if they really caused the rain to fall. His answer: 'I don't know. It is a big matter and it is difficult to know.'

Unlike some of the more extreme Christians who claim that the chiefs *never* had the ability to bring the rains, this man leaves the matter open as a distinct possibility in the past, and perhaps in the present too. As I was later to discover (since this informant along with several others helped me carry out a large-scale survey around Ihanzu), he was sceptical about, and eager to question, both Christianity and rainmaking beliefs.

A common belief among some Christians is that the royals have no ability to bring rain, but they are able to destroy it as could any rain-witch. All Christians—indeed, all Ihanzu—with whom I spoke shared an immutable belief in witchcraft. Witchcraft is (as Christians never tired of pointing out to me) in the Bible.

A young female Lutheran mother from Matongo, when I asked for her opinion about the fact that a few people had begun farming prior to Omari, quickly dismissed the whole of rainmaking as a hoax. 'It is impossible,' she said, 'to pull rain clouds. Omari cannot do this. But, he *does* have medicines [*makota*] to make the wind blow so that the clouds will disperse.' In other words, while the chief is certainly no rainmaker, he may be a rain-witch. His powers are thus not absent; they are simply directed towards evil ends. At the beginning of the 1993-1994 season, when the rains were severely delayed, another Christian man confirmed this view.

If the chiefs there in Kirumi really know how to make rain, why don't they do it? Everyone wants it but they just sit there. They cannot. But, they do have powerful medicines to make the rain stop, which they are clearly using right now. This, they are doing because they are angry with someone or because they are greedy and want more gifts, perhaps a sheep. They may even be angry because they see many people [Christians] planting before Omari himself.

Trying unsuccessfully to make small talk after this interview I mentioned to this man that I, myself, would soon be planting my own field. His eyes widened and he said with the utmost concern that I had best wait until Omari had given the word to hoe before doing anything. No one who lived in Kirumi would be unwise enough to plant before him! I took his advice.

Some Christians have managed to integrate and reconcile in a seemingly contradiction-free manner beliefs about Christianity and those of rainmaking. A Christian man from Matongo in his mid-sixties—he told me he became a Lutheran in 1939—made this point rather clearly. As we sat under a tree on a sweltering, dry

December day, talking, sweating and lamenting the lack of rains, he optimistically scanned the horizon to the east for any sign of approaching clouds.

If God wishes, the rain will fall today. If we pray, and seek other help, it may come. God, I'm sure you've heard, has helpers, people who can help bring the rain.

The first chief of Ihanzu was like Moses. He was given the ability, long ago, by God, to help people. God explained to him, 'you do this, and you do this, and this' and then the rain fell. Until today Moses' rules are here to help people and so are the chiefs.

There is thus for this man and many other Christians no real conflict over rainmaking between Christians and non-Christians. Others would disagree.

Some government officials, especially those who are high up in the bureaucracy, tend to doubt the chiefs' rainmaking abilities entirely. This could be for one of several reasons. First, high-ranking officials in Ihanzu tend to be Christian. Second, at the highest local level administrators almost always come from outside Ihanzu. They therefore do not share the same beliefs about the basis of royal legitimacy as do most Ihanzu themselves. Following one of his speeches at Matongo village on the virtues of development, and the problems of the particularly dry year we were suffering, I had the following conversation with the District Commissioner.

D. C.: How is the rain-chief (*mtemi wa mvua*) doing there in Kirumi? Is he well?
Sanders: Yes, he is fine.
D.C. What does he say about the rains this year?
Sanders: He says there are too many rain-witches this year, and that God has not brought the rains.
D.C. Rain-witches, eh? I guess we don't have those in Kiomboi because there is rain [sarcastically]. I guess they all live here in Isanzu! Do you have rain-witches where you are from?
Sanders: Uh, not that I'm aware of. If there were, however, people would probably rejoice since it normally rains all the time there. It might be nice to have someone stop the rains, say, for a picnic.
D.C. You mean to tell me you've lived here all this time and you haven't yet learned to stop the rains?
Sanders: Why would I want to learn to be a witch? It's not the best of occupations!
D.C. So what does the chief do anyway? I never see him at these government meetings (*hathara*).
Sanders: He mostly stays around the Kirumi area.
D.C. Well, you know, the chiefs here in Tanzania, for a long time, stopped development (*maendeleo*). They kept people from becoming modern (*water wa kisasa*). They were against education, against good roads, against business and against change. They only wanted old customs (*mila za zamani*), not development. Perhaps it's better that the chief stays there in Kirumi with his rainshrine. He had many years to send development backwards (*kurudisha nyuma maendeleo*). Now they're gone and the government's here. We will develop these people. I have yet to receive any of your reports from your work here.

Sanders: I didn't really think you'd be interested, but if you wish I'll certainly send some copies on to you.

D.C: Yes, I'd be most interested to read them. I think that there might even be some cultural factors which are stopping these people from developing, something I don't know about.

Sanders: Perhaps.

Not to go unnoticed is the fact that the District Commissioner is himself a Christian, a high-ranking military official and originally from the Gogo area. Also, he lives in the district headquarters, Kiomboi, Iramba. When he visited Ihanza, which was around three or four times a year, he did so rapidly: a motorised brigade of normally five vehicles covered seven or eight or more villages in one and a half days, stopping at each for a brief speech. Being so removed culturally and physically, the D. C. seems to understand very little about the people over whom he 'rules,' though he did express an interest in reading over my work to enable him to better 'develop' the Ihanza.

The D. C. sees rainmaking not only as a curious cultural relic from a bygone era, but worse, as a positively destructive force that has hampered development and continues to do so today. Few others in Ihanza share his views, except perhaps some of the more extreme Christians.

On the 26th of April, 1994, the District Commissioner made another appearance, this time at Ibaga village, to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Sporting his usual military attire—polished boots, smartly-pressed khakis and wielding a rather offensive baton—he addressed a crowd of around 500 to 600 villagers who had gathered for the festivities. At one point in his speech he proclaimed what I later discovered to be the standard government answer to the lack of rain in the area: 'If you want to get rain like in the past years, plant trees.'

The lack of trees is, according to a few higher-up government officials with whom I spoke, a major reason rains are so scarce over much of Tanzania (cf. Maddox 1988: 828). This answer serves a number of purposes. It enables some administrators to fix the blame roundly on German and British colonial administrations that encouraged large-scale bush clearing; it also allows some the chance to identify themselves as 'modern' or 'progressive,' since the few I spoke with felt that they were following concerns of the West about deforestation and global warming.

Each Ihanza household is by law required to plant a minimum of ten trees per year. I met only a very few people who adhered to this policy, while most people find neither the time nor the energy (not to mention money) to do so. Moreover, few can make much sense of the policy since the bush is seemingly plentiful; to plant trees on

cleared land means to reduce the amount of arable farmland, something no reasonable agriculturist would consider.

By attempting to force people to plant trees, and claiming, as the D. C. does, that this will bring the rains, administrators are now, wittingly or not, claiming a stake in the game. By suggesting that they have the answer to bringing rains—plant trees—government administrators like the D. C. are implicitly offering an alternative solution to Ihanzu royal leaders and rainmaking rites. In Ihanzu there is an apparent connection between trees and rain and the D. C., using this theme, attempted to assert the CCM's authority and legitimacy. Though he chose a popular medium, he did not gain the support nor capture the imaginations of any Ihanzu with whom I spoke. Trees are nice, of course; some of them, like sacred rain trees, do help bring the rain. But *planting* trees is quite another matter and the connection between tree planting and bringing rains is far from obvious to most Ihanzu.

CONCLUSION

This chapter began with a detailed description of rain rites as they are practised in the 1990s, and then went on to discuss some relevant aspects of Ihanzu cosmology. In the second part of the chapter I gave several instances of practical protest over these rites, actions which directly challenged the nature of *Anyampanda* legitimacy. These were public and often provocative demonstrations, defiant acts designed to call into question rainmaking institutions and royal legitimacy. As was also shown, defiant persons do not always remain silent about what they do, nor are they entirely unaware of the consequences of their actions. In spite of the competing nature of the various discourses and practices, all of them, even with their manifest differences, show up one point on which none will disagree—rain is significant for all in Ihanzu. In the next chapter I shall delve into the issue of the ways in which Ihanzu ideas of royal power are dependent upon the notion gender complementarity.

Chapter Four

‘Rain is more important than the child you have borne’¹

The Transformative Powers of Gender in Ihanzu

SCHOLARS HAVE LONG RECOGNISED and dealt uneasily with the rather elusive nature of power and legitimacy in African societies. Some time ago we were told that:

An African ruler is not to his people merely a person who can enforce his will on them. He is the axis of their political relations, the symbol of their unity and exclusiveness, and the embodiment of their essential values. He is more than a secular ruler (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940: 16).

Furthermore, they continued, ‘[t]he “supernatural” aspects of African government are always puzzling and often exasperating to the European administrator. But a great deal more of research is needed before we shall be able to understand them fully’ (p. 19).

Sound and sober research advice though it may have been, most anthropologists concerned with political systems—Fortes and Evans-Pritchard among them—failed to follow this advice very far, if at all, instead focusing their efforts on comparison, classification and, ultimately, generalisation (Cohen 1965; Eisenstadt 1959; Fried 1967; Middleton and Tait 1958).

It was not until decades later with the publication of two works by Thomas Beidelman, one on the Nuer (1971d) and one on the *incwala* ceremony among the Southern African Swazi (1966a), that Africanist anthropologists approached with renewed interest Fortes’ and Evans-Pritchard’s earlier suggested but abandoned programme. In both his analyses Beidelman attacked the (at the time) prevailing

¹ I will discuss the significance of this saying (*mbula iūwai kūliko ng’wana nūtugile*) in the concluding section of this chapter.

British social anthropological orthodoxy, charging, among other things, that structural-functionalism ‘diverts attention from the main themes and purposes of such rites’ (Beidelman 1966a: 374). While Beidelman, like his predecessors, was convinced that African leadership and the powers that went with it were not merely secular in nature, Beidelman’s main contribution was undoubtedly his convincing demonstration of the complex ways this was so. In addition to showing that the Swazi king, during the *incwala* ceremony, played a crucial role by mediating between a number of otherwise separate cosmological realms, he also showed that *this*, in fact, was the source of his power. The king himself, quite literally, ‘assumes the filth of the nation’ (*ibid.*: 396) and thereby both empowers himself and rejuvenates the cosmos in the bargain.

Many Africanist scholars, in a similar vein, have since been at pains to examine more subtly the nature of power and legitimacy from an indigenous perspective (Feierman 1974; 1990; Izard 1990; Jonckers 1990; Kopytoff 1980; Lan 1985; Packard 1981; Tardits 1990; Vaughan 1980; Vincent 1975; 1990), to show the complicated ways that, as Arens and Karp put it, ‘power resides in the interaction between natural, social, and supernatural realms’ (1989: xvii).

Similarly, my aim in this chapter is to show how a more careful unpacking of informants’ ideas about gender goes a long way towards making sense of Ihanzu ideas of power and legitimacy. In the process, I aim to develop an indigenous model of transformative processes (Herbert 1993; Holy and Stuchlik 1981; Jacobson-Widding 1983; 1984), a model that does two things: first, it will help us to understand why people in Ihanzu find a dual chiefdom politically and ritually significant, even if colonial officials did not; and second, it will enable us to make sense (local sense, that is) of the varied rainmaking rituals and beliefs that have already been described, and of those to be discussed in chapters to come. Such an undertaking requires that I deal with a number of topics simultaneously that are usually addressed under separate headings—power, kinship, gender and cosmology.

My main argument is that in Ihanzu eyes, changes or transformations of different types are brought about primarily by combining masculine and feminine elements of a gendered universe. The combination of gender categories provides both the focus and the locus for transformations of all sorts, making babies and making rain among them. As such, from a local perspective, power derives ultimately from the equal co-operation and application of male and female principles—in short, the notion of gender complementarity. What I will ultimately show is that ideas about sexual and social transformations are in a number of instances gendered, and people often

suggest that the continuation of life in any form is predicated upon the appropriate combination of masculine and feminine attributes.

To avoid any potential ambiguity or confusion, I should state explicitly that my approach is to follow as closely as possible local understandings and interpretations. This does not imply, however, that I do not go beyond what informants tell me, for indeed I do. What it does imply is that I attempt to listen to and thus to take seriously what informants tell me about their own notions of relatedness (cf. Carsten 1995; Feldman-Savelsberg 1994; 1995; Gottlieb 1992: ch. 3; Kaspin 1996). Bearing this in mind, I would like to set the foundations for our discussion by examining the varied ways people of Ihanzu conceptualise their web of social relations.

MATRILINY AND MILK

Matriliney has received considerable attention in the literature. If some analysts have unjustly privileged 'the matrilineal principle' over other notions of relatedness (e.g., Poewe 1981; Watson-Franke 1992), many others have not and have instead endeavoured to show the complex ways in which persons are related through ties of all kinds (Beidelman 1967; Brain 1969; Douglas 1964; 1969; Holy 1986; Richards 1950; Turner 1957). Below we will see that there are a number of ways Ihanzu understand and emphasise relatedness with each other. Some of them may be neatly reduced to the flow of various substances—the most significant being milk, blood and water—through individual and social bodies (cf., e.g., Godelier 1986; Herdt 1981). Other notions of relatedness that inform people's everyday practices about who their relatives are and, of equal importance, who they are not, are those surrounding the womb and what are called *milongo* groups. Irrespective of how ties are traced and reckoned, however, in Ihanzu the notion of gender complementarity underlies and is an enduring aspect of every person's make-up. In this respect my informants would maintain, in full agreement with others (Collier and Yanagisako 1987), that to discuss kinship is to discuss gender as well as the other way round.

The Ihanzu divide themselves into twelve exogamous, non-localised matriclans (*ndūgū*). Clan size varies considerably, from the largest—the *Anyampanda*, who number around 9,150—to the smallest—the *Anyikīli*, who number only about 450

people. Table 4.1 lists all Ihanzu clans, the percentage of population each accounts for and the approximate number of people in each.²

Matriclan	Percentage of Population	Approximate Membership
1. <i>Anyampanda</i>	30.5	9,150
2. <i>Anyambilu</i>	16.2	4,860
3. <i>Anyankalī</i>	13.3	3,990
4. <i>Anyansuli</i>	8.4	2,520
5. <i>Anyameū</i>	7.8	2,340
6. <i>Anyang'walu</i>	6.9	2,070
7. <i>Anyabmwá</i>	4.5	1,350
8. <i>Anyisungu</i>	4.0	1,200
9. <i>Anyambala</i>	2.3	690
10. <i>Asambá</i>	2.3	690
11. <i>Anyakumi</i>	2.0	600
12. <i>Anyikiki</i>	1.5	450

Table 4.1. Ihanzu Matriclan Information

Most of these clans are subdivided into named clan-sections (also called *ndūgū*) which total thirty. Clan-sections are localised in name, though not in practice. Thus *Anyampanda* clan members, for example, are divided into *Anyampanda wa Matongo*, *Anyampanda wa Kirumi*, *Anyampanda wa Iyīndī*, and so forth. All of these clan-sections are listed in Table 4.2, along with some additional information to be discussed more fully below. It is likely, as informants often suggest, that clans were more localised in the past.

Clan-sections are further divided into matrilineages or *maele* (sing. *iele*). These groups are known by the name of the oldest living female, or more rarely male, member. *Maele*, tellingly, also means breasts and milk. The associations are of course as obvious to the anthropologist as they are to all Ihanzu: the matrilineage is associated with matrilineal descent groups, members of which are defined, in part, by having shared a common, intergenerational substance (i.e., milk) that flows ultimately from the breast of a single ancestress. When people explain, as they often do, that two individuals are related because they sucked milk from a single breast (*kūnkile iele līng'wī*) they are expressing matrilineal concepts of connectedness (cf. Lindström 1987: 57). The use of such expressions does not necessarily imply that two people

² Because I am slightly less confident about the accuracy of the figures for the total population (see footnote 32, chapter 1) than I am about my own statistical data, the total membership in each clan is given as approximate only. Percentage figures are based on my own 194-household survey.

Clans and Clan-Sections	Male Name	Female Name	Emblem
1.1 <i>Anyampanda wa Kirumi</i> (<i>Anyanzoka</i>)	<i>Sungwa</i>	<i>Müza</i>	Baboon
1.2 <i>Anyampanda wa Kinyakambī</i> (<i>Iyīndī</i> , <i>Mühaī</i> or <i>Mpilimaigūlū</i>)	<i>Nkangala</i>	<i>Itale</i>	Bee
1.3. <i>Anyampanda wa Anegá</i>	<i>Izuligi</i>	<i>Itale</i>	Finch
1.4. <i>Anyampanda wa Igomano</i>	<i>Nkangala</i>	<i>Itale</i>	Bee
1.5. <i>Anyampanda wa Ikela</i>	<i>Nkangala</i>	<i>Itale</i>	Bee
1.6. <i>Anyampanda wa Itiili</i>	<i>Sungwa</i>	<i>Müza</i>	Baboon
1.7. <i>Anyampanda wa Ikunguli</i>	<i>Sungwa</i>	<i>Müza</i>	Baboon
1.8. <i>Anyampanda wa Matongo</i>	<i>Sungwa</i>	<i>Müza</i>	Baboon
1.9. <i>Anyampanda wa Kīnyīngogo</i>	<i>Nkangala</i>	<i>Itale</i>	Bee
1.10. <i>Anyampanda wa Nyonyela</i>	<i>Nkangala</i>	<i>Itale</i>	Bee
1.11. <i>Anyampanda wa Magemelo</i>	<i>Nkangala</i>	<i>Itale</i>	Bee
2.1. <i>Anyambilu wa Gūdali</i>	<i>Igīmbī</i>	<i>Izima</i>	Cattle
2.2. <i>Anyambilu wa Kinyankūnde</i>	<i>Igwīla</i>	<i>Sungi</i> or <i>Ilīmū</i>	Giraffe (male) Rat (female)
2.3 <i>Anyambilu wa Azigo</i>	<i>Iyīndī</i>	<i>Izima</i>	Cattle
2.4. <i>Anyambilu wa Mümba</i>	<i>Milīsūa</i>	<i>Mümba</i> or <i>Ng'wai</i>	Cattle
2.5. <i>Anyambilu wa Anyankunī</i>	<i>Ipūza</i>	<i>Mīanzi</i>	Cattle
3.1. <i>Anyankalī wa Ilumba/Iyanīko</i>	<i>Igūnda</i>	<i>Ng'wanyi</i>	Leopard
3.2. <i>Anyankalī wa Ipilinga</i>	<i>Mpinga</i>	<i>Shoga</i>	Lizard (3.1 + 3. 2 = Sun)
4.1. <i>Anyansuli wa Kingwele</i> (or <i>Mükoolo</i>)	<i>Mütiipa</i>	<i>Mülima</i>	Wild boar
4.2. <i>Anyansuli wa Mükilampīlī</i> (<i>Itimbwā</i> or <i>Ng'wamalaga</i>)	<i>Mütiipa</i>	<i>Mülima</i>	Wild boar
5.1. <i>Anyambeū</i>	<i>Ikīngu</i>	<i>Siu</i>	Cat
5.2. <i>Anyambeū</i>	<i>Ikīngu</i>	<i>Nzītu</i>	Sheep (5.1 + 5.2 = Moon)
6. <i>Anyang'walu</i>	<i>Mpanda</i>	<i>Itale</i>	Donkey
7.1. <i>Anyambwā</i>	<i>Kīula</i>	<i>Mügalu</i>	Dog
7.2. <i>Anyambwā</i>	<i>Makala</i>	<i>Chūnyū</i>	Dog
8. <i>Anyisungu</i>	<i>Mükumbo</i>	<i>Kiliī</i>	Parrot
9. <i>Anyambala</i>	<i>Ilanga</i>	<i>Igoli</i>	Goat
10. <i>Asambá</i>	<i>Mügana</i>	<i>Ng'wīgo</i>	Parrot
11. <i>Anyakumi</i>	<i>Kītūndū</i>	<i>Müsūa</i>	Scorpion
12. <i>Anyikīli</i>	<i>Müsengi</i>	<i>Ikīli</i>	Lion

Table 4. 2. Clan Names and Emblems

have in reality fed from the same breast but only that they are of the same matrilineage.

Another metaphor commonly used to imagine, speak about and emphasise matrilineal links is having 'come from a single womb' (*kūpumie ndá īng'wī*) (cf. Bloch 1971: 49; Richards 1950: 207). As with milk idioms, speaking of sharing a womb does not logically require a common mother as such, but it does imply a common ancestral, matrilineage womb. We therefore see that common membership in a matrilineage implies a linear link with a common ancestress, and that people often discuss this link in terms of having received milk from the same breast, having come from one womb, or both.

Every Ihanzu is by definition a member of a matriclan, a clan-section and a matrilineage. These affiliations are something that follow logically and irrevocably from birth, and remain so until death. It is impossible to lose one's clan affiliation, or to become a member of another clan.³

The groups I have so far discussed include clan, clan-section and lineage, all of which reckon ties through the mother's side. I should now like to explore several other ideas of relatedness that are traced through a person's father. Far from being mutually exclusive, it should be stressed—as informants often stressed to me—that ties to the mother's and father's sides complement each other. Both are deemed essential to a person's make-up. Neither may one side be given logical priority over the other nor, if we wish to understand properly and contextualise Ihanzu understandings of social relatedness, should we stress one side over the other.⁴ With the Ihanzu, as with the Bemba, 'there is a very even balance between patrilineal and matrilineal kinship...' (Richards 1939: 115).

PATRIFILIATION: BLOOD AND MILONGO

As all children are related to their mothers, so too do they share socially significant ties with their fathers, something that is patently true in all societies, matrilineal or

³ The odd exception, of course, being the occasional anthropologist who may become an honorary member of one or the other clans; I became a member of the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* (those renowned for their powerful rain and witchcraft medicines, among other things) and a 'child' of the *Anyambeū* clan (see below).

⁴ Fortes' (1959) notion of complementary filiation is not, in this context, a helpful one for the simple reason that my informants denied adamantly that ties traced through ones father's side might somehow be secondary or subsidiary to ties traced through the mother's side (cf. Dumont 1971). As Leach (1961: 4-6) rightly pointed out some time ago, there is no reasonable *a priori* justification for prioritising one particular set of social relations over another; clearly, this should remain an issue to be raised and problematised in each individual instance, and not simply taken as a given.

otherwise. The purpose of this section is to examine the nature of some of the ties shared between Ihanzu fathers and their offspring, as locally understood.

Blood Ties

Ihanzu commonly claim that blood, unlike milk, passes from father to child, through the generations (cf. Colson 1961: 77). Thus a biological father passes blood to his sons and daughters; his sons in turn, though not his daughters, are thought to pass this blood on to their children. What this amounts to is an apparent patrilineage, members of which are related through ‘blood’ ties.

This ‘patrilineage,’ based on notions of a common blood, appears to complement matrilineages defined through idioms of milk and womb though it might be a mistake to carry this parallel too far. There are for example no named ‘blood groups’ in Ihanzu that are normally thought of as such. Be that as it may, tracing to its logical conclusion notions of blood descent, one does indeed come up with a patrilineal descent group, as several informants made clear to me, which to some extent complements the matrilineage. Further, these groups are clearly recognisable as localised (if unnamed) ‘patrilineages’ when one considers post-marital, virilocal residence preferences. A blood group thus largely corresponds to residence in a homestead and, when coupled with virilocality, stresses patriline continuity through time. There are still other ties between a father and his children which deserve attention; these are *milongo* groups. These ties, too, stress the links between children and their fathers.

Milongo Groups⁵

When a child is born, he or she automatically gains what amounts to ‘honorary membership’ in his or her father’s matriclan (cf. Colson 1961: 41, 74-9). This is partially because a child shares blood with his or her father, as we have already seen. But there is more to it than that. All children gain membership in one of several *milongo* (sing. *mūlongo*) groups, depending on their father’s matriclan affiliation. As

⁵ The term *mūlongo* is widely used across Tanzania among people speaking Bantu-languages and has meanings as varied as its geographical distribution. In all cases I have found, the term is associated either with patrilineages (Beidelman 1971b: 386-7; 1974: 284), patriclans (Rigby 1969: 81-7) or with the father’s matriclan (Lindström 1987: 59-60, 66-8, 191-2). *Milongo* ‘groups’ in most societies—Ihanzu among them—do not function as collective and corporate entities, making it unclear why they might be labelled groups at all. However, my informants saw people who shared their same *mūlongo* ‘group’ as more closely related than those who did not and it is on this ideational basis that I refer to them as ‘groups.’

such, children are said to be ‘children of their father’s clans’ (cf. Beidelman 1963d: 60). Accordingly all men bear (*kūtuga*) certain children.⁶

Each of the thirty matriclan-sections has at least two additional names specific to it—one male, the other female—and each new-born receives one of these names from his or her father’s matriclan-section. With these names come specific emblems, invariably animals which, again, are specific to each clan or clan-section. Each *Ihanzu* is therefore a member of his own matriclan and is an ‘honorary member,’ or child, of his father’s. Table 4.2 summarises all the clan-sections and their specific names and emblems.⁷ Affiliation to both one’s father’s and mother’s clans stresses the complementary nature of different kinship ties at an ideational level and to some extent, as we shall see presently in relation to funerals and inheritance, in the practical realm too. Before going any further though, let us first examine how these *milongo* names and animals actually work.

In Figure 4.1, two children are born of a father, B, of the *Anyampanda wa Matongo* matriclan-section and a mother, C, of the *Anyambilu wa Azigo* matriclan-section.

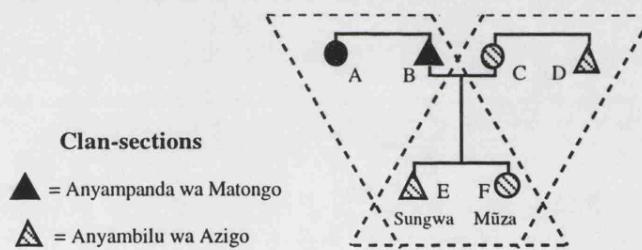


Figure 4.1.

These children, E and F, will become members of the *Anyambilu* matriclan, the *Anyambilu wa Azigo* clan-section and of whatever matrilineage within it they happen to be borne into. All sons (E) will take the name *Sungwa* while any daughters (F) will be named *Mūza*, names that come from the father’s matriclan-section. As such, both E and F will be ‘children of the *Anyampanda*’ (*ana a kinyampanda*). With these *milongo* names from the father’s matriclan come a ‘totemic’ animal, in the case of our example, a baboon. The children E and F will on birth immediately become ‘baboons’ and will remain so for life. Even though it appears at first glance that these paternal ties are structurally identical to those on the mother’s side, if we extend the diagram

⁶ The *Ihanzu* term for ‘to beget’ (*kūtugisa*), the causative form of the verb ‘to bear children’ (*kūtuga*), is rarely heard. People instead prefer to speak of men and women, together or separately, ‘bearing children’ (*kūtuga*), emphasising that men and women contribute equally to the formation of a child.

⁷ The similarities between *Iramba* and *Ihanzu* clans, emblems and children’s names are remarkable and make patent how closely related the two groups have been historically (cf. Lindström 1987: 191-2).

over three generations, the picture alters radically and we see that this is not necessarily so.

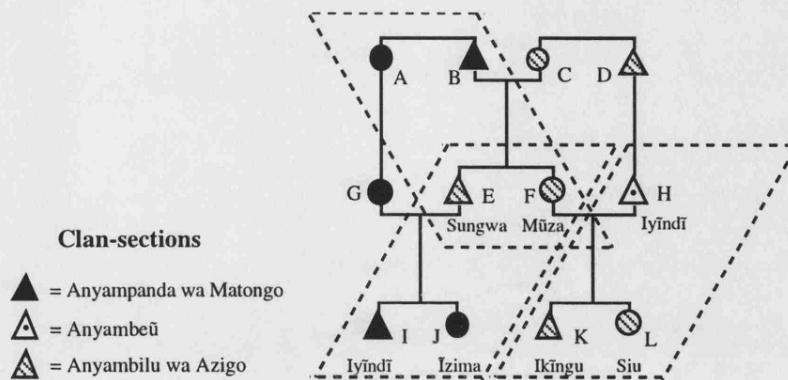


Figure 4.2

Here, in Figure 4.2, E and F have each married their cross-cousins, G and H respectively. The children of G and E (I and J) will be members of the *Anyampanda* clan like their mother and maternal grandmother. They will also, through their father's (E) matriclan affiliation, become members of the *mūlongo* group 'cattle'—children of the *Anyambilu wa Azigo*—and will take the name, if a son, *Iyindī* or, if a daughter, *Izima* (again, see Table 4.2 for a synoptic look at the *milongo* names and emblems). The children of F and H (K and L) will become 'cats' and will be called *Ikīngu* (male) and *Siu* (female). Finally, let us carry this diagram one generation further.

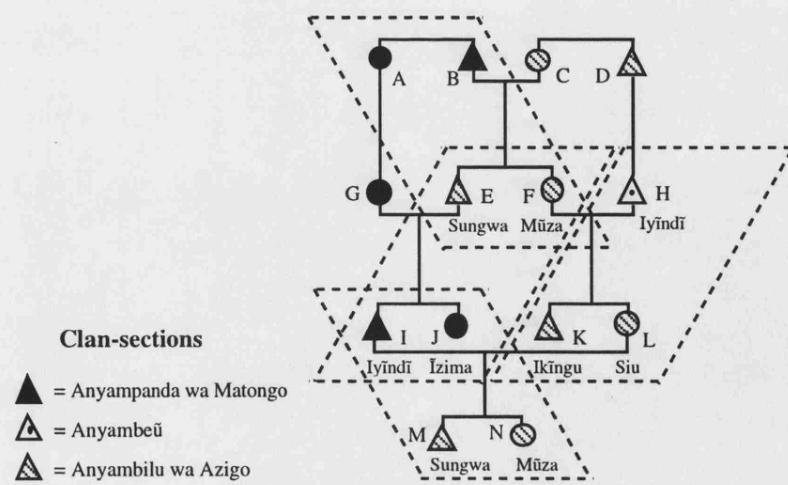


Figure 4.3

In Figure 4.3, I has married L, his patrilateral cross-cousin. In so doing, he has ensured that his children will be structurally identical to his own father. Thus, M and

N will be children of *Anyampanda wa Matongo* (*Sungwa* and *Müza*); both will be 'baboons.'

My point in examining such groups is to show how certain ties to one's father's matriclan are conceptualised and how, to some extent, these notions complement ties on the mother's side. Again, as with patriline blood ties discussed above, *milongo* groups are not, in spite of initial appearances (e.g., Figure 4.1), mirror images of matrilineages; *milongo* are not patrilineages. There are no descent groups *per se*, nor do members trace descent from a common male ancestor. Instead what we find is a series of overlapping, intergenerational groups that play up the relationships between two generations (father and child). Furthermore, when linked with patrilateral cross-cousin marriage, these groups may repeat themselves over three generations, making grandchildren structurally identical to their paternal grandfathers.⁸ Grandchildren are often named after their grandparents and refer to them as brothers and sisters which further emphasises continuity through the generations in the patriline. And finally, if we recall our discussion of 'patrilineal blood groups,' it is plain that *milongo* allegiances have considerable overlap with blood ties as well as locality.

What informants find significant about *milongo* groups, whether it is actually so in fine detail or not, is that they complement ties traced through the mother's side. And here lies the crux of the matter. A child is said to be related equally to his father and mother, in spite of the rather different social groupings and substances used to account for these ties. One of the more pervasive idioms of relatedness, to which I shall now turn, is that of fertilising fluids; this encompasses, at once, father and mother. Here local attention to gender complementarity is much more striking.

WATERS, SEEDS AND FERTILISING FLUIDS

Procreation

When it comes to sexual reproduction, all I have spoken with on the matter—schooled and unschooled, religious and non-religious—agree on one thing: men and

⁸ Structures similar to the Ihanzu *mülongo* are found in many Tanzanian societies with matrilineal descent groups (see, e.g., Beidelman 1960; 1974: 282-4; 1993: 92-3; Ehrenfels 1959; Lindström 1987: 59-60). While Kopytoff refers to the nearly identical structures (called *kitaata*) among the Suku of Congo as 'truncated patrilineages' (1964: 106-8), I prefer to use the local term, *mülongo*, instead, as any reference to patrilineages seems to me more likely to confuse than to elucidate the situation. Bilateral cross-cousin marriage is the preferred form of Ihanzu marriage, though both the ideal and the practice seem to be becoming less important.

women contribute equally to the formation of a child. We have already seen a number of ways in which a child is related to his mother (milk and womb) and father (blood and *milongo* groups). If these substances and means of affiliation differ slightly from one another, the final means of kin reckoning makes a forceful and unequivocal statement about the gendered and complementary nature of sexual reproduction.

Ihanzu have a concept of what I shall call ‘fertilising fluids.’ To express this idea informants sometimes use the word *manala*, but only in one-to-one conversations, for the word verges on the improper. Much more commonly, convenient and telling cognates are employed when discussing ‘the facts of life.’ Those are water (*mazi*) and seeds (*mbeū*).⁹

Water or seeds are not generally thought of as flowing through the matriline or the patriline in the same way as milk or blood. This is understandable since the ‘waters,’ if they did so, would become murky indeed: if parents are composed of the waters of their parents, and they of their parents, and so on, back to the beginning of time, there would be a sense in which waters/seeds through time would blur all boundaries between father’s and mother’s sides—and everyone else—fusing all into a solid and undifferentiated block of ‘relatives.’ Seeds/waters are instead seen as somewhat unique with each generation (and sometimes with each individual) of offspring. In discussions people invariably emphasise that two generations are involved in this particular substance transfer, as shown in Figure 4.4. Children are thus seen as the physical embodiment of the complementary combination of their parents.

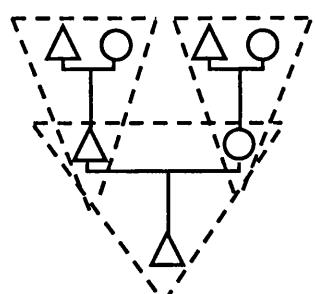


Figure 4.4.

⁹ In a very few instances I heard people discuss fertilising fluids in terms of ‘eggs’ (*majī*), though this seemed to reflect their training in western medicine (these informants were nurses) rather than their fluency in a popular or widely-used idiom. Neither would eggs be used as a particularly convincing procreation metaphor for they reportedly cause infertility (Virginia Adam and Marguerite Jellicoe, n.d. [c. 1961], ‘Notes on the Position of Women and Children in Isanzu, Iramba District, Tanganyika.’ RH MSS. Afr. s. 2038 (4)).

Although male and female fertilising fluids are essentially the same substance, they are nevertheless in some sense gendered.¹⁰ The terms ‘waters’ and ‘seeds’ are used interchangeably for the fluids produced by either sex. These fluids are the same, on the one hand, in that both types of ‘waters’ or ‘seeds’ are said to contain exactly half of the eventual attributes of the child they will produce—there is no notion among the Ihanzu that the flesh or bones, for instance, derive exclusively from one side or the other.¹¹ On the other hand, the two fluids differ in that only a combination of male and female will lead to pregnancy and the formation of a child; neither two female fluids together, nor two male ones, are capable of this. Beyond this commonly held wisdom, theories as to why a couple produces, at any given time, boys, girls, twins, or no children at all, vary considerably. This need not detain us here.¹²

The main points I have so far put forward may be summed up as follows: first, the terms ‘seeds’ and ‘waters’ are commonly used as metaphors for imagining, explaining and making sense of biological reproduction; and second, both male and female fluids are required for reproduction to take place. Male and female fluids complement each other and, when combined, are a source of creative power. Let us now turn our attention from the beginning of life to its end and carefully examine what happens to ‘seeds’ when a person dies. In death, as in life, we find that for the Ihanzu themselves, the notion of gender complementarity is a pervasive one.

FUNERALS

Ihanzu funerals, like notions of procreation, emphasise gender complementarity in suggestive ways. It is not my intention to describe these complicated rites in any detail but only to note that, much as parents are said to give life to children by giving them water or seeds, so are children required to return these life substances to their

¹⁰ Since Ihanzu males and females have the same sorts of seeds, gendered though they may be, there is no notion of seed:male::soil:female as is found amongst the nearby Sukuma (Brandström 1990b; 1991) and elsewhere (Ngubane 1976: 275; see also Delaney 1991).

¹¹ Note the variation amongst other peoples of Tanzania with matrilineal groupings. To take just a few examples—the Kaguru and Ngulu both claim, quite contrary to the Ihanzu, that blood runs through the matriclan (Beidelman 1963a: 328; 1964a: 361). Additionally, the Kaguru have it that bone, teeth, cartilage and other solid parts are from a child’s father; soft bits including flesh and blood come from mother (Beidelman 1973: 136). The matrilineal Iramba stand this on end, claiming that the permanent attributes of a child (i.e., bones) come from his or her mother; those less durable parts of the body like flesh and blood are from the father (Lindström 1987: 57). The Luguru, on the other hand, like the Ihanzu, ‘claim that both sides contribute to the child equally...’ (Brain 1983: 10). See also Kindness (1996) on the Tonga of Zambia.

¹² One man, for example, told me that if the female seed leaves the womb and meets the male seed somewhere near its final resting place, the child will resemble the mother and be a girl. If, on the other hand, the father’s seed makes it all the way to the womb, the child will be a boy and resemble the father. The chances of either occurring, he said, were about equal. Others have different opinions.

parents on death (cf. Bloch 1971; Strathern 1982). There is therefore a heavy ideological emphasis in funerary rites placed on the roles of the deceased's mother and father, and a reversed flow of goods from children to parents. Many of the actual funerary practices however, while still maintaining the reversed and ascending transaction of goods, are concerned with mediating the flow of goods between the deceased and his or her parents' *clans*. The relevance of this distinction between *ideal* transactions (between deceased and parents) and *actual* transactions (between deceased and parents' clans) will be made clear momentarily. But whatever the case, in all instances informants are quite explicit about the fact that, on death, a reversal of life processes does, in fact, occur.

To begin, a corpse must be washed and dressed by one's 'mother' and 'father.' In practice, of course, this would rarely be possible since parents usually die before their children.¹³ This task is accomplished instead by selecting clan members on both the mother's and father's sides who then act as representatives for the biological parents and who are addressed as mother (*iya*) and father (*tata*). These parents may both be male, or female, depending on the task at hand. For example, a male corpse is washed by two males, but of those, one must be from the deceased's father's clan, the other from his mother's; whereas a female corpse is washed by two females, one from her father's clan, and one from her mother's. In either case and in spite of the gender of actual participants, the stress is on the complementarity nature of a mother and a father preparing their child for burial. Throughout funerals it is these (clan) mothers and fathers—and there may be several on any given occasion—who carry out specified parental duties.

The actual placing of a corpse into the grave is done by three people, not two: 'father,' 'mother,' and a jester. Since putting bodies into graves is solely men's work, the two parents are in this case men, one from the deceased's matriclan, one from his or her father's matriclan. Thus, much as mother and father give birth to their children, so too do they take them to their final resting place. The life-cycle comes full circle. (About the role of the jester I shall have much more to say below).

Following the burial, for the next few days of mourning, several animals are slaughtered, most of which ideally come from the deceased's own homestead.¹⁴ Stressing once again gender complementarity, in all instances specific cuts of meat

¹³ Nor would biological parents (except in the case of infants) ever play the 'parent' roles in funerals. People say they would be too distraught to function properly.

¹⁴ In practice, this is not always so since not all people own livestock. When the deceased had no animals in his or her cattle byre, they are often given by the deceased's children and are then treated as if they were given by the deceased him- or herself.

are carefully allocated either to the deceased's 'mother' or 'father,' or both. Here, we see the returning of life—in this case livestock—from child to parent.

Finally, on the last day of the funeral, a mixture of seeds is taken from the grain bin of the deceased and cooked into mixture called *mpeke*. This food should be eaten first by 'mother' and 'father' before anyone else. This final funerary act of consumption—ingesting the child's own seeds—may be seen (and in fact *is* seen by many of my informants) as symbolically returning the original seeds of life, those given the child on birth, to his or her parents and their clans. As one elderly man put it when asked why the 'parents' have to eat the seeds first, 'It is necessary because he is returning the seeds he was given by his birth-parents' (*lazima kwa sababu ndiyo anarudisha mbegu zake alizipewa na wazazi wake*). People suffer no confusion, of course, over the fact that those receiving the seeds did not, in reality, give birth to the deceased—they are, after all, of their clans but not themselves the progenitors—yet informants state categorically that it is a parent's right to recover, and the child's duty to return, what was given at birth: namely, the seeds of life.¹⁵ Clan members of the mother and father become the nearest approximation to the biological parents themselves. The noteworthy point is that people place a heavy symbolic emphasis on the transaction between the deceased and his or her biological parents, even though it is always the parents' clanmates that represent themselves as parents. This same idea of reversal carries over into inheritance practices, as we shall now see.

INHERITANCE

When Ihanzu discuss inheritance they make explicit that wealth in whatever form should be divided and returned to the deceased's mother (*iya*) and father (*tata*). This people state unequivocally. (In actuality, again, this almost always means that the property passes to members of the deceased's parents' clans). The property divisions made between 'mother' and 'father' are never equal, but this fact detracts little from the overall point which is this: irrespective of property's ultimate division and

¹⁵ The emphasis on one's parents in funerary rites may sound more like New Guinea than Africa but the Ihanzu do not stand alone. Amongst the Kaguru 'both [father's and mother's] sides should contribute the burial cloth (*sanda*, nursing cloth, womb), thereby not only *expressing the past contribution of both the mother and the father in creating the person*, but signaling their accord in reaching final disposition of their relations to the dead' (Beidelman 1993: 44; emphasis added). With Ihanzu funerals, it might be argued that the parents' funerary role is really about assisting their 'child's' soul into the other-world, and that this may constitute a *repetition* of procreative processes but not necessarily a *reversal* of them. There is no doubt some truth to this. We can, for example, deduce this (since no one told me directly) from people's claims that problematic funerals sometimes lead to problematic spirits. But since my main concern is with representing my informants' points of views as closely as possible, it is worth pointing out that the reversal interpretation is unquestionably the one most commonly articulated by Ihanzu themselves.

allocation, the division itself presupposes gender complementarity; property, like fertilising fluids, is returned to its ultimate source of origin.

A Kirumi man, probably in his 90s, died in September 1994. Masusu, as he was called, was a member of the *Anyampanda* clan and was sometimes referred to as *Ikingu*, a child of the *Anyambeū* clan (*ng'wana wa kinyambeū*), since his father was of that clan. Following the funeral, Masusu's clan parents sought to divide up the property (*kūgalana mataho*).

In the negotiations thirteen people took part who may be divided into three groups: (a) three male representatives of his father's clan, all classificatory fathers of Masusu (b) one male and one female representative of his mother's (and his own) clan, and (c) Masusu's wife and children.

The *Anyambeū* 'fathers' presided over the meeting. Masusu's clothes were divided evenly between his mother's clan and his father's. One pair of trousers and one shirt went to the former; one overcoat went to the latter. Masusu had one pair of shoes—one shoe was given to his mother's clan, the other to his father's. Every man must return his bow and arrows to his father's clan, never his mother's, though Masusu had none; his son was forced to give his in his father's stead.¹⁶ One arrow was then given by Masusu's father's clan to his mother's clan; this is normal. A few stools and an axe were handed over to the fathers. A small amount of tobacco must go from child to father, but since Masusu had none, his son gave a token amount of money instead (Sh100; or £0.17).¹⁷

During the funeral proceedings days before, Masusu's sister's son had stood during a meeting and was 'given' Masusu's two grainstores, his house, two papaya trees, his wife and a cow (Masusu farmed on his wife's plot and had none of his own). There was no mention of the fact that none of this property, strictly speaking, would in reality be given to the sister's son.

Prior to the passage by the Iramba District Council of a patrilineal inheritance law in 1962, the sister's son and his clanmates would have inherited all of these items. Further, had he chosen to do so, the sister's son would have moved into his now deceased mother's brother's house, becoming the social father for his children and husband to his wife. Though the material realities have changed, as has the actual transfer of properties, their symbolic content has remained largely the same: sister's sons are now expected to 'advise' their newly acquired 'children' on financial and other matters, even if, legally speaking, they hold no disposal rights over that property. As expressed in the kinship terminology, in other words, they are still 'fathers.'

This division of property is not unusual. In other societies with matrilineal groupings, too, inheritance is commonly divided between mother's and father's sides (Beidelman

¹⁶ The bow and arrows were accepted by one of the *Anyambeū* 'fathers' who, an old man himself with little use for such weapons, quickly turned around and gave them to his own son who, by sheer coincidence, was a member of the *Anyampanda* clan, the same as Masusu himself! As with the division of a perfectly good pair of shoes, this strongly suggests the symbolic load carried in these transactions.

¹⁷ Once property has been divided up, the deceased's children may 'buy' back (*kūkomolia*) anything they feel is essential to remain in the house. A very small token amount is set, usually Sh50 or Sh100, for various items. Masusu's son later returned, with a payment of Sh100, a stool and axe to the household.

1993: 44; Colson 1961: 75; Lindström 1988: 176). Further, and fairly predictably, almost anything of value such as cattle, land, trees and grain stores goes (or at least formerly went) to the mother's side (to sister's son), while most things of lesser value like bows, arrows, tobacco and some clothes go to the father's side.

Of much greater interest—and this is the point—is the manner in which Ihanzu themselves make sense of these property transfers. For they represent this division not as one between mother's and father's *clans* but as one between mother (*iya*) and father (*tata*). The primary division between mother and father is essential, people claim, as both played an active role in creating the deceased. As such, property must be returned to the parents. The division of certain goods more than others demonstrates that these divisions are of more symbolic than practical value: giving one shoe to 'father,' the other to 'mother,' for example. As with ideas about conception, this division asserts an ideological equality between mother and father, irrespective of actual types of property transferred.

A second salient feature is that the flow of goods is, on death, seemingly reversed. In other words, on closer inspection, what we somewhat surprisingly find is a *regressive* inheritance system in which parents inherit from their children, as unlikely as that may seem.¹⁸ Or at least this is what informants regularly explain is going on. Again, people frequently claim that property is divided, *not* between mother's and father's clans, but rather *between mother and father* (*kafī ūiya na ūtata*).

Taking birth and death together, then, we may sum up Ihanzu representations of the life-cycle this way. Through sexual intercourse persons conjoin their own unique gendered substances and in so doing unleash powerful, generative forces that bring into existence new life. Life and all property descend in the first instance from parents to children. On death, gendered substances and property must be retained and returned to the two biological parents who gave them, and people go to great lengths to ensure that this actually happens. This they do by conflating actual parents with members of the parents' clans, the latter standing in for the former. The life-cycle as locally envisaged can be best summed up by a simple diagram.

¹⁸ I am unaware of other Africanists describing matrilineal inheritance systems in these terms and yet there is some tantalising, if terse, evidence that similar sorts of things may be going on elsewhere. At Iramba funerals, "the Cow for the Porridge," "the Goat of the Byre" and "Part of the House" are given to the members of the matriclan of the father of the dead man. These prestations are, by the Iramba, regarded as a manifestation of the importance of the father. They explicitly explain that these transactions should be seen in relation to what the son receives from his father at birth and marriage, the marriage payment and the *mbeu* [seeds]' (Lindström 1988: 176).

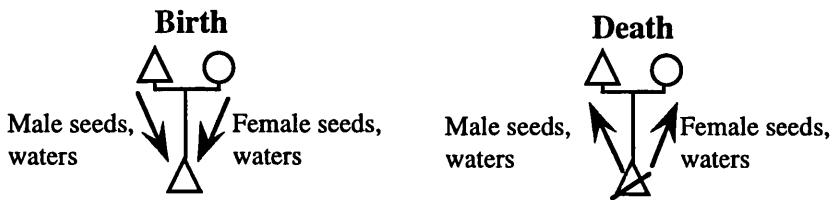


Figure 4.5.

This is an idealised version of the life-cycle as the men and women of Ihanzu would have it. There are of course a number of unpleasant realities that make this flow of substances logically untenable—not the least of which is that parents usually die prior to their own children—and yet these same realities are overcome on an ideational level, enabling children to return life to mother and father, by returning it to their mother's and father's clans. What this means is that, on the one hand, people can assert that parents are being given back what they initially gave—namely, gendered seeds and waters—while on the other, members of the parents' clans actually receive these things. To put it another way, in the ideational realm people insist that there is an alternation of life substances between parents and children, with each birth and death; while in the practical realm this is clearly impossible, and the best that can be maintained is a cyclical movement between children and their parents' clans. But this raises at least one logical problem: if mother and father and people representing them are clearly gendered, the clans from which they come are not. Accordingly, although the deceased is often said to return life to individual (gendered) parents, life must simultaneously be returned to clans which contain members of both genders and are thus gender neutral bodies. It is at this juncture that the jester intervenes to overcome this particular dilemma.

Jokers, Joking Relations and Death

By virtue of their matriclan affiliation, all Ihanzu stand in specified joking relations (*isoi*) with all others in Ihanzu. (See Table 4.3, below). Members of clans which share joking relations are expected to (and often do) abuse each other verbally, accuse each other publicly of witchcraft and deceive each other in almost any way possible. On ritual occasions, too, such as funerals and ancestral offerings (see chapter five), jokers (*anyisoi*; sing., *mūnyisoi*) take on especially important roles as mediators.¹⁹

¹⁹ Joking relations occur widely across East and Southern Africa. See Beidelman 1966b for a concise overview of the literature. Though I discuss only those joking relations internal to Ihanzu (that is, between clans) it should be noted that most, if not all, ethnic groups in Tanzania also share specified joking or non-joking relationships between them. Joking partners commonly cited by many Ihanzu

Name of Clan	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. <i>Anyampanda</i>			✓					✓	✓	✓		✓
2. <i>Anyambilu</i>									✓			
3. <i>Anyankalī</i>	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
4. <i>Anyansuli</i>			✓					✓	✓	✓		✓
5. <i>Anyambeū</i>							✓					✓
6. <i>Anyang'walu</i>			✓					✓	✓	✓		✓
7. <i>Anyambwá</i>					✓						✓	
8. <i>Anyisungu</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓
9. <i>Anyambala</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
10. <i>Asambá</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓
11. <i>Anyakumi</i>					✓		✓		✓			
12. <i>Anyikili</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		

Table 4.3. Inter-clan joking relationships (*isoi*)

By ‘mediators’ I mean that jokers are under certain ritual circumstances uniquely positioned to move between otherwise relatively impermeable categories: between this world and the spiritual one; between social and asocial; between young and old; between male and female. In essence, by moving between and within these categories but ultimately recognising none, jokers effectively collapse them, obliterating all distinctions and differences. Boundaries between the living and the dead, young and old, male and female, blur, or in the best case scenario, vanish altogether.²⁰

No ‘traditional’ funeral would be complete without a jester or two, or sometimes more. Jesters in life are jesters in death. Anyone who shared joking relations with the deceased may decide to play the role of jester during a funeral (in practice this often means middle to old-aged women and men).

Jesters should participate throughout the funeral in a variety of contexts and all these joking behaviours imply a misrecognition or, more accurately, a denial of boundaries. One task a joker must carry out at funerals is, with the help of the deceased’s ‘mother’ and ‘father,’ to lower the body into the grave. As people often say, ‘it is your joker who buries you.’ In this way the jester mediates between life and death, ensuring safe and rapid passage to the underworld. In addition to ‘burying you’—an explicit toying with the boundaries between life and death—a jester tests the bounds of sociality as

included: the Arusha, Meru, Gogo, Hehe, Makonde, Barabaig, Iraqw, Maasai, Mbugwe, Gorowa, Sukuma, Nyamwezi, Zanaki, Tende, Taita, Iramba, Lambi among others. Those with whom the Ihanzu share no joking relations are: the Turu, Hadza, Rangi, Pare, Chagga, Europeans and Arabs.

²⁰ As Beidelman puts it, jokers (*watani*) among the Tanzanian Kaguru, like ghosts, ‘occupy ambiguous liminal zones that are dangerous yet necessary to connect categories ordinarily separated’ (1993: 122). Or Rigby, drawing on Victor Turner’s work, notes that among the Gogo ‘The category of persons with whom one jokes are therefore ‘mediators’ between the poles of “structure” and “community”’ (1968b: 152).

well: he or she is expected to snatch prime cuts of meat from all slaughtered animals, dash to a distance and eat them alone or with other 'anti-social' jesters 'in the bush.' Jesters often do this while hurling obscenities at anyone within earshot.

Jesters are also expected to be generally disruptive in any way possible to the otherwise smooth and orderly funeral proceedings. At one funeral I attended, a jester burst into the house while the corpse was being washed by its 'mother' and 'father,' shook it vigorously and shrieked at it to get up and come have a beer; he then laughed uproariously at the female mourners, telling them they were silly for having bewitched one of their clan members, and even sillier for weeping, since the corpse was obviously just sleeping and would awake to go for a beer at any moment! His 'humour' was largely unappreciated, but not derided, as people shoved him aside and continued dressing the body.

Just as jesters push the boundaries between life and death, the social and asocial, so too do they bend, or obliterate, gender boundaries. Women jesters often carry out what are normally 'male' tasks.²¹ One woman provoked much laughter when, with the aid of a sorghum stalk, she ridiculed the men by mimicking them as they played their *mbutu* funeral horns. Others sometimes sit with the men and discuss 'men's business.' Transvestism, for the more ambitious and well-prepared jesters, is common.

At one funeral I attended in Matongo village in 1994, a respected elderly woman, much to everyone's delight, arrived as a 'man'—she wore trousers (something I have never seen any other Ihanzu woman do), carried a knife on her belt, wore a hat, walked with a stick (periodically striking people as she wandered about), did not wail and yelled at men and women in a gruff voice. When the mood struck her, she spontaneously spouted an imaginative array of obscenities (cursing is ideally thought of as a 'male occupation'). Neither fully male nor fully female, s/he was in many respects both, and at the same time neither.²² In some respects then, as has been shown to be the case in other parts of Africa (Broch-Due 1993; Holy 1996: 159-65), the boundaries between male and female are highly fluid. Gender may be understood, on one level, as a 'given' and yet on quite another as a *process* requiring continual negotiation (cf. Gillison 1980; Meigs 1976; 1990; Poole 1996; Strathern 1988; 1993).

²¹ I have only rarely seen this the other way round: males carrying out 'female' tasks. Men seem to prefer different sorts of *isoī* than 'gender bending.'

²² In fact, numerous people approached me during the funeral and asked me where 'my fellow countryman' had gone, implying not only that 'she' was 'male' for the clothes s/he wore, but that s/he had also managed to cross colour and ethnic boundaries to become a non-African as well!

By behaving as members of the opposite gender, funeral jesters are not simply trying to become members of that gender, symbolically or otherwise (Rigby 1968a; Wikan 1977). Nor is it obvious to me that they are attempting to become members of some third gender category, however it may be defined (Herdt 1994). But what they do successfully do, I believe, is to transform themselves temporarily into 'hybrid beings' who, through combining both masculine and feminine traits in single shells or bodies, manage to become, at once, men and women. And being both means being neither. For only through the ultimate androgynous fusion of the cultural categories of male and female in individual bodies is their ultimate negation imaginable.

Though there is plenty to say about the jester, for the moment we need only note that the jester is a universal mediator, able to cross boundaries of all sorts and, in so doing, obliterate them. By becoming, at once, male and female—and at the same time neither—funerary jesters dissolve the differences between the genders. Similarly, by 'burying the dead,' by accepting the body into the grave, the jester erases momentarily the boundary between life and death, between the living and the dead, and allows the soul to move unproblematically into the other-world. For this reason the jester plays a crucial role in returning parents' waters to their respective clans. The jester's participation in the burial process, in addition to obliterating the differences between life and death, at the same time dissolves the differences between 'male' and 'female.' Differences between male and female erased, the deceased's clan substances are de-gendered, as it were, and may then return to, and become re-integrated into, the deceased's parents' clans as ungendered clan substance—seeds or waters that are, like the jester him/herself, both male and female, and neither.

To sum up, men and women in Ihanzu imagine the human life-cycle as alternating between parents and their offspring. By joining the genders at life's beginning and again at its end, the powers of life itself are reserved and replenished as they move from one pole to the other. This ideal vision of the world, however, is partially undone by the fact that parents normally die prior to their own children. This is dealt with on a practical level, and without a great deal of ideological elaboration, by returning seeds and waters to parents' clans, not to parents themselves. This requires that various gendered substances first be degendered, so that they can be incorporated into the undifferentiated, non-gender specific bodies that clans are. This task falls roundly on the jester, the androgynous mediator of categories.

From this discussion at least two things become apparent. First of all, people place great emphasis on the notion of gender complementarity, and this appears to power the cosmic engine, as it were, that brings about cosmological transformations. That men and women choose to represent the ungendered, practical transactions involved

in all deaths as either secondary or as wholly irrelevant is telling indeed. Second, whether transactions on death are represented as gendered (returning to mother and father) or ungendered (returning to mother's and father's clans), they are in all cases *ascending* transactions. Though more commonly reported outside of Africa (e.g., Damon 1989; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971; Taylor 1993), the logic here is unmistakably one of (re)cycling of life forces through the cosmos and back again. What ultimately appears to be the case, then, is that masculine and feminine principles conjoin to make things happen, to recycle and revivify the social order—that is, to keep life itself moving along smoothly on the eternal roundabout of life.

By turning from ideas about the life-cycle to another transformative process, bringing the rain, I will now attempt to show that making babies and making rains are homologous processes, not because one leads directly to the other, but because both share the same underlying gendered model of transformation. This requires that I first say something more specific about idealised gender categories and what it means to be male or female in Ihanzu society.

GENDERED BODIES, GENDERED RAINS

Men and Women as Social and Moral Beings

As male and female life substances are said to be complementary, so too are male and female bodies. What one lacks the other has, often in abundance. One category is constructed against the other, each unique, but dependent on its gender opposite. Male without female, like female without male, is therefore incomplete. Taken together, male and female form an organising *gestalt*—they share the potential of becoming far more than the mere sum of their parts. One of the most effective ways to make sense of the differences between the genders, as locally understood, is to dissect the two archetypical male and female objects—the bow and the grinding stone, respectively. When combined with an understanding of bodily substances, these bows and grinding stones go a long way towards addressing, explaining and even justifying some of the alleged differences between the cultural categories of male and female, and in showing up the ways these categories are thought to be complementary.

Men use bows (*ūtū*) and arrows (*mīyī*; sing. *mūyī*); women do not. Though very few in Ihanzu hunt today (and those who do most often use home-made muzzle-loading guns), it is still common and expected that each man own a bow and arrow (five arrows, to be exact) which should hang over his bed. Bows and arrows may be insignificant in most rituals but they still play a particularly important part in

inheritance cases; they are always transferred through the male line, from a son to his father. Indeed, women are forbidden from touching bows and arrows. Bows and arrows, as such, serve as potent symbols of Ihanzu masculinity and share many of the characteristics that men themselves should possess.

The sexual symbolism almost goes without comment, and I have already mentioned that bows and arrows normally hang over a man's bed. Bows and arrows, like males, fire rapidly and accurately, hitting (with a bit of luck) the animal at which they are fired. Arrows do not waver from their flight path. Once fired, they move swiftly and are not easily distracted. The work of bows and arrows is greatly varied, from no work at all, to sudden and enthusiastic bursts of energy which ultimately provide sustenance in a no-nonsense manner. Bows and arrows, like men, are fierce. Though simply constructed, they are highly mobile, deceptively powerful and are always at the ready. Bows, also, are said to be hot. Male traits complement and are often contrasted with female traits.

Grinding stones (*nsio*), on the other hand, are always used by women, never by men or even boys.²³ They are one of the few things that truly belongs to women and that are passed through the female line. A husband has no right to move, remove or otherwise touch his wife's grinding stone. A woman enters marriage and with her comes her grinding stone. Once in a household, grinding stones are immobile, fixed. It is only on divorce that they are removed.

Each household has at least one such grinding stone, sometimes more. One of these is invariably located in the room just inside the entrance to the house (*k'iandá*), near the hearth (*moto*), where a woman or her daughters will spend considerable amounts of time each day grinding grains. I have heard both the grinding stone and the nearby fire used as metaphors for sex, which is hardly surprising, given that it is here that 'seeds' are mixed, ground and finally transformed into an entirely new substance through cooking. Much like male and female seeds are mixed through sexual intercourse to create children, so too do women transform sorghum seeds into stiff porridge, *ūgalī*, at their hearths.²⁴

²³ As an experiment, I once—and only once—attempted to grind some grain on a grinding stone. This not only provoked a good deal of laughter but was also the source of many embarrassing stories for the following months. It is interesting to note that the word for grinding stone (*nsio*) is strikingly similar to the word for vagina (*nia*) though none of my informants made this connection explicitly and I did not think to ask about it at the time.

²⁴ It is not entirely coincidental either, I think, that the room in which the grinding stone and hearth are found is referred to as *k'iandá* which translates as 'the womb room.'

But this process of transformation is a slow one, monotonously so when compared with male's hunting. The process is repetitive, monotonous, and demands both endurance and a good deal of patience. Unlike shooting an arrow at an animal, grinding sorghum has no highly dramatic nor even any readily observable beginning, middle and end. It is a process, not an event, so people commonly claimed.

Ideal traits associated with male bows and arrows, and female grinding stones, are unproblematically transferred to ideal male and female persons, and vice versa. Men, like their bows and arrows, are explosive, directed and, so male informants often suggest, prone to accomplish whatever they set out to do in a straightforward manner. They move swiftly and work hard. They are hot. Men are active and initiate activities, always leading the way.

In contrast, women, like their grinding stones, are said to be passive but enduring. They are followers, not leaders. Women are cool. Both in sexual activities and in others, women have an endurance that men lack entirely. Unlike men, however, women are often said to be incapable of sudden and extreme bursts of energy. They work slowly and sometimes in a roundabout way. They are unfocused and often require a man to lead the way. Little may they accomplish in the short run, but they can succeed, usually with the help of a man, in the long run. Women depend on men to guide them, just as men depend on women to provide a warm hearth and, with that, sustenance.²⁵

The central point for our purposes, one I made in the introduction, is that in the context of rainmaking beliefs, male and female are understood as complementary. Of note here is that this particular gender ideology is on some occasions grounded in men's and women's bodies. According to this particular discourse, the two genders logically require each other and only together can they successfully achieve anything of value. Again, this is not to suggest that there are no contexts in which women are

²⁵ Nor are these gendered ideas entirely disconnected from daily practices. Informants have a tendency to 'naturalise' gender differences as God-given, with the clear corollary that those differences are to some degree seen as immutable (Stølen 1996; Weinermann 1983; Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). Male and female informants alike often justify, for example, the gender division of labour by reference to the alleged 'natural' construction of male and female bodies. Women mind the children because they are 'naturally' gentle, cool and infinitely suited for such tasks. They cook food and brew beer, in no small part, because both these activities involve using a grinding stone, the archetypical female item. Men clear plots because they are hot, active and fierce; they also have to precede women, making men's plot clearing labour twice as important and apparently inevitable. Men are always fed before women, 'because men must go first.' And although both men and women play their separate roles in house building (indeed a house can scarcely be built without women's assistance), all my informants claimed that it is men who build houses, and women who are then brought to live in them. This, so informants suggest, 'naturally' ties in with post-marital virilocal living arrangements; a man leads the way to his father's village, a woman follows.

devalued when compared with men; nor am I claiming that in everyday life Ihanzu women are, in actual fact, equal to men or even that informants themselves would make this claim. Gender ideologies, as was already suggested, are often multiple and contradictory (Bloch 1987; Meigs 1990; Ortner 1996; Peletz 1994). My point is simply that at some ideational level—and at this level only—informants imply the mutual interdependence of male and female, and although their tasks are different, it is not in this case a question of valuing one while devaluing the other. Male and female informants alike stress that men and women need each other. It is therefore quite impossible, not a few people have told me, to decide that one might be better, worse, or of greater or lesser importance, than the other. The genders are here related as complements, an ideal which resonates strongly in other Ihanzu cultural domains.

Male and Female Rains

Rain in Ihanzu is best spoken of in the plural, not the singular, for the rains come in many forms. Rains differ in the direction from which they come, relative strengths, durations, seasonal fluctuations, what time of the day or night they fall, and where. There are in fact so many gradients of rain that it was quite impossible, so I discovered, to list all the rains and their characteristics and then to achieve even nominal agreement among informants that I had, in fact, got it right. Informants will sometimes agree about some names of rains, but they then disagree on from which direction they approach or their likely severity; others disagree on specific names, claiming that they had never heard of one or the other and that I was surely misled, but would then readily agree on the general characteristics of a rain coming from that particular direction. Many statements flatly contradicted each other. During group interviews, informants argued with each other to no resolve. In spite of this, all agreed that there was a distinction to be made—a substantial one at that—between two all-encompassing, over-arching classes of rain: male rain (*mbula a agohá*) and female rain (*mbula a asüngü*) (cf. Holas 1949). What is more, when discussing the characteristics of male and female rains, as well as the ownership of those rains, I found no dissenters.²⁶ Male rains take on male attributes; female rains take on female attributes. The current owner of the male rain is Chief Omari; the current owner of the female rain is his sister, the female chief, Ng'welu. Let us examine some statements to see more clearly how the rains are thought to be gendered.

²⁶ The exception are Christians, who make up around 18 percent of the total population in Ihanzu. In public and with other Christians many of these people would deny that the rains are gendered, or that the chiefs control them. In one-to-one conversations these people are much less certain however.

An elderly man from Matongo, a former division secretary (*katibu tarafa*) of Ihanzu told me that:

There are male and female rains, that's what I heard a long time ago from some elders. The two have to go together—that's why there's a male chief and a female one. It is like a house. Is a house really a house with only a man in it? Of course not. There must be a woman too. And so it is with the rain.

Note the emphasis here on gender complementarity. Male and female go hand-in-hand, whether people or rains. A household is nothing of the sort without both a husband and a wife; neither is a male rain of any use without its female counterpart.

A middle-aged woman from Kirumi gives us an idea of the desired sequence of male and female rains. Again, these correspond precisely with ideas about male and female persons.

The male rain (they say that is the one of Chief Omari) goes first, the female rain (the one of Chief Ng'welu) follows. Most times the male goes first, and we [women] follow. For example, a man clears the bush to farm and then the woman comes and works later. [...]. Another time when men go first is at a funeral, it is always the men who dig the grave. The women only come later to wail.

And finally, an elderly male diviner from Mkalama village suggested some possible reasons for the gendered division of rains, and the key to their effectiveness.

These rains are different. The male rain must go first; it is fierce (*ntaki*). He opens the path. Because you, the man, must clear the bush [for a field] or you build a house so a woman can be put in it. It is the same with all animals, the male always goes first. [...] There is one reason this must be so: if some [rain-witchcraft] medicines have been placed in a certain spot, if that [female] rain called *maembeela* comes, it will not fall because it has no strength (*kūtilī anga ngūlū*). For example, the day before yesterday, do you remember the rain that came that night? It was not good. Lightning was everywhere; moreover, it was destructive. That was a male rain, because it came to do work. So if either of the other two female rains comes now [after the male rain], it will fall immediately. They will fall gently. There will not be any wind. The water will just fall. Again [it will be] good water (*mazī maza*). It will soften the ground (*kūtontia ihī*), to saturate it to the core (*mpaka mūkatī*).²⁷

²⁷ This imagery is strikingly similar to that of a few Southern African groups. Bleek (1933a: 308-10) transcribes a /Xam tale: 'You must not arouse a rain-bull, but you must make a she-rain, which is not angry, which rains gently, because it is a slow shower. It is one that falls gently, softening the ground, so that it may be wet inside the earth. For people are afraid of a he-rain, when they hear it come thundering, as it gets its legs' (see esp. pp. 306-10). Among the !Kung, '[r]ain itself [like clouds] is male and female.... Male rain breaks the trees and beats down the fruits, the men told us. It is (like) a fight, and may kill a person. Thunder and lightning accompany it, and sometimes hail. Female rain has tiny drops and does not spoil anything; it beautifies the trees and the grass and makes the veldkos grow' (Marshall 1957: 232). Though it is unclear whether the Tswana speak

His suggestions are several. First, the gendered sequencing of rains—male rains precede female rains, as males precede females—is grounded in the ‘natural’ order of things. Men clear the path for women in a number of respects; identically, male rains clear the way for female rains. The social world becomes ‘natural,’ the ‘natural’ social, placing both worlds beyond the realm of question.

This man and other informants stated unequivocally that female rains without male rains, as well as the other way round, were useless. A male rain is harsh and often destructive. Like an arrow once shot, the male rain achieves its objective quickly; it cannot possibly provide the amount of water necessary to saturate the country. Female rains on the other hand, as with females themselves, last a long time but are frail. The two genders are defined by and therefore logically require each other (cf. Strathern 1988). Male rains alone are too strong and powerful to do any long-term good; female rains, though enduring, are too weak to be effective by themselves. Neither male nor female can survive alone, conceptually or in practice.

Other informants had more direct ways of linking notions of sexual reproduction and rainmaking. One Kirumi man told me:

Rain and sex (*kitoma*) are, one might say, identical. It is always the male who must go first (*kūtongela*), the female who follows (*kūshata*). A man enters (*kingīla*) a woman and she [later] bears a child. A man builds a house and puts a wife in it. A man first clears the bush, later his wife comes to farm the cleared land. With the rains, the male goes first, it really enters (*kingīla*) the country with force and prepares the ground for the female rains.

The female rains [then] begin, those that last a long time and are very gentle. No man can have a child without entering a woman; no woman can bear a child without being entered [by a man]. With the rains [it is] the same. Male and female must co-operate.

To sum up this section and the previous, we may say that the principles of male and female are ideally complementary. Though male and female are both necessary, there is a specific order in which this must occur, and specific traits associated with the categories of male and female that make effective combinations between them viable in the first place. Male must precede female. Male is quick and explosive, female is slow and enduring. Categories of male and female must combine to reproduce

about male and female rains as such, they do associate the sacrifice of female animals with ‘soft steady rain (*medupe*) coming from the east “without thunder or lightning”...’ and the sacrifice of a male one with “strong rain” (*makgomara*) from the north-west’ (Schapera 1971: 71). And for the Sudanese Uduk, ‘the female [rain]stones, in particular, are said to bring steady, gentle rain, and the males to cause dangerous storms’ (James 1972: 38).

sexually and to bring the rain, since one gender without the other is logically and practically untenable.

I would now like to take up and examine two additional themes raised by informants above: (1) that gendered rains are tied to gendered chiefs, and finally, (2) the nature of the relationship between notions of the life-cycle and rainmaking. This will bring us full circle and back to the point at which we started this chapter.

ON RAINS AND ROYALS

The Nature of the Chiefship

As we saw in chapter two, Ihanzu has a dual chiefship. These chiefs, as was noted, are commonly referred to by Ihanzu as 'owners of the land' (*akola ihî*), and this seems to have been their correct title prior to the colonial era. Owners of the land they may be, but they do not allocate plots, give permission to clear the bush or to live in particular places, or in any other way exercise political control over the land they allegedly own.²⁸ Nor does oral or written evidence suggest things have ever been otherwise. The purpose of this section then is to examine on what basis this claim is made, in what ways the Ihanzu chiefs are thought to 'own' the land. This will eventually bring us back to a discussion of gender complementarity.

At any given time there must be one male and one female ritual leader, both of whom come from the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan-section, one among eleven *Anyampanda* clan-sections (see Table 4.2, p. 125). Succession to these two ritual offices follows fairly strict rules of matrilineal primogeniture within the royal lineage. Currently the two leaders stand in relation to each other as brother and sister though the relationship between them will, and does, change through time (see Appendix A for more details).

Powers of the chiefship are clearly vested in the office, not in individual leaders. When the former regent Chief Gunda stepped down from office in 1954, for example, he moved to the northern village of Nyaha and never played a role in Kirumi rainmaking rites again. And although the line of succession is obvious to all, those who will eventually enter office are not thought to possess any special powers prior to

²⁸ The only exception to this is the small parcel of *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan land located in Kirumi sub-village. Even here though, although the male chief may allocate plots, my 1995 census shows that there were only 14 adults using this land. Of those, only three (21.4%), including the chief himself, were of the royal lineage. The remainder were using the land as wives (his own or otherwise), married sons (only one), or in two cases, as people who shared no obvious link to the royal landowner at all.

their installation, even though some informants claim that incumbents-to-be may be familiar with some, or even all, of the royal lineage rainmaking secrets. These individuals play no special role in rainmaking or in other royal rites prior to their succession to office.²⁹

As we have already seen, the rains are themselves gendered and so is their ownership; the male chief has his rain, the female hers. What owning the rain amounts to, I should make clear, is two things: first, the possession of sacred and gendered rainstones; and second, possession of the esoteric knowledge of their use. These two go hand-in-hand and must do so, for one without the other is of little use. An unskilled practitioner, try though he may, cannot bring the rains with the rainstones alone, nor would any knowledgeable practitioner without the rainstones prove any more successful. As male and female rainstones are said to be different, and the rains they bring, so too is the knowledge of how to use them—in concert, the two royal leaders are held to be the guardians of and ultimate authorities on the esoteric knowledge of rainmaking.³⁰ Again, half the knowledge is only half the picture and is fundamentally incomplete. And it is on this basis that Ihanzu, today and in the past, commonly claim that gendered rulers rule: because they own the rains (cf. Adam 1963b: 15).³¹

By arguing that chiefs reign because they own the rain I have shifted the question slightly but have not yet answered it. We should now want to know how it is that chiefs are able to claim ownership of the rains. For this, we must turn to a popular story.

²⁹ Neither do royal bodies metaphorically represent the land on which they live. When it comes to ritual leaders, '[e]lders have denied that character and physique are important' (Adam 1963b: 16). Even though the current male incumbent is a decidedly diminutive, frail and often sickly elder, his physique and bodily disposition neither aid nor detract from any rainmaking skills he might possess. His predecessor, the regent Chief Gunda, was a stout (and charismatic) character but is still remembered as a rainmaker of renown. If a leader falls ill this is certainly unfortunate, but at the same time it is never disastrous for Ihanzu. There is no history of bringing on prematurely the demise of old or ill leaders (cf. Cory 1951: 5-6; Lienhardt 1961: 298-319).

³⁰ Some claim the entire royal lineage, or at least several people near the centre of it other than the two chiefs themselves, are also well-versed in these esoteric matters, yet just how widely this is held to be true is uncertain. If royal rain-witchcraft accusations are any indication, then we may safely assume that knowledge to influence the weather is thought to extend well beyond the two ritual leaders (see chapter 7).

³¹ Royals commonly justify their legitimacy in relation to their status as 'sacred outsider' (Brandström 1990b: 180-1; de Heusch 1991; Hultin 1990: 162; Thornton 1980: 203-4; Waller 1995; Winter 1955: 11). This is not so in Ihanzu. The Ihanzu royal lineage did, so people say, come from Ukerewe but then again so did all other clans, making any claim to special outsider status ultimately untenable.

The Story of the Stolen Rain

It is generally known and widely accepted in Ihanzu that the *Anyansuli wa Kingwele* formerly owned the rain, prior to the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi*, and the transition from the former clan-section to the latter is enshrined in a popular story (see Adam 1963b: 14-15; 1963c: 10). Perhaps ‘stories’ in the plural is more accurate, since there are many versions of this one. Even so, boiled down to its constituent elements there is little discord between the versions. Through trick or trade, deceit or descent, the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* managed to wrest control of the rains from the *Anyansuli* and have held it to this day.

All versions begin, in general, with the mythical journey from the Island of Ukerewe to Ihanzu, and with two *Anyansuli* leaders in particular. Ikomba and Kingwele, as they were known, are said to have brought the rains (i.e., the rainstones and the knowledge of how to use them) with them on this journey. Most versions have it that these two men were related as mother’s brother-sister’s son, a few that they were father and son.

Once in Ihanzu, they built separate houses, each bringing his own rain. One of them had a child (no one seemed to know by whom) and, since rainmaking consumed considerable amounts of time, sought a nanny from the *Anyampanda* clan. At this time, the *Anyampanda* were not in any way different from any other clan. This nanny—her name was Mbula, which means ‘rain’—helped dig rainmaking roots for many years, and assisted her employer in rainmaking, learning all the secrets in the process.

From this point different versions diverge. One has it that after many years, one of the men died and Mbula inherited the rain from him, thus becoming the first female rainmaker, and an *Anyampanda* one at that. Another elder told me that Mbula actually stole the rain from Kingwele, long before his death.

Other popular versions of the transfer-of-rain-power story have it that Ikomba and Kingwele left Ihanzu going northward and were swallowed up in Lake Eyasi (*Lütende*), along with their cattle and all their belongings.³² Mbula, who had accompanied them on the trip, was miraculously saved from this fate because she had stayed behind to relieve herself in the bushes. The rainstones she found sitting at the

³² Lake Eyasi and the surrounding salt flats are notoriously dangerous; Ihanzu and Hadza stories abound about people being swallowed up there or being taken by evil spirits.

edge of the lake. With them, she returned to Ihanzu and became the first *Anyampanda* ritual leader.

Still another version, I heard, claims that Mbula, after acquiring the rainstones, wandered about lost in Hadza country where she was taken in and nursed back to health by some amiable Hadza. In return, she made rain for them before returning home to Kirumi with the rain. One man told me that Mbula became pregnant while in Hadza country, returned to Ihanzu with the rain, and gave birth to the second *Anyampanda* rainmaker (she being the first).³³

All versions of the story agree that the *Anyansuli* lost the rain, the *Anyampanda* gained control over it. And this is what people find interesting about this story and what makes it worth telling in the first place.³⁴ It is a story about acquiring the rain, even though the first *Anyampanda* to obtain it was herself 'Rain.' *Anyampanda* chiefs therefore not only own the rain but are also the mythical descendants of it. This myth justifies *Anyampanda* control over the rains, though, as far as myths go, not in a very convincing manner. After all, if the rain changed hands once, why might it not happen again? Part of the answer, no doubt, is that no one except the current ritual leaders has the knowledge required to bring the rains. The other part we must find in the everyday workings of the system itself, and specifically, in how the acting out of certain rituals confers an authority and legitimacy on *Anyampanda* leaders that is difficult to deny. This is where we return to local concerns about gender complementarity.

³³ An obvious, though I think completely mistaken, interpretation of this latter version would be that the *Anyampanda* rainmakers somehow derive their authority from the Hadza. The reasons for my severe scepticism that Hadza might confer authority on *Anyampanda* rainmaking rites and leaders are several. First, it is surely not insignificant that Mbula entered Hadza country with all the powers she needed to make rain—what she might have additionally gained from the Hadza is not clear. Ikomba and Kingwele, after all, had managed before her to make rain perfectly well though in the story they never visited Hadza country to do it. Second, the Hadza never spontaneously came up in any other Ihanzu rainmaking context besides this myth recounted by one man, in spite of the fact that I spent much of my two years in Ihanzu discussing rain and rainmaking. In the 1950s and early 1960s two Hadza man are known to have visited Kirumi, as did people from Iramba, Iambi, Turu and Sukumaland, as rainmaking assistants. Their presence was never required, nor did anyone—and this includes both chiefs—imagine their presence was in any way necessary. Finally and most tellingly, when questioned directly on this topic, all Ihanzu informants denied vigorously that the Hadza had anything to do with Ihanzu rainmaking, much less with its legitimacy. All insisted that the rain—and it was perfectly legitimate rain—came from Ukerewe, not Hadza country.

³⁴ It is worth noting that in no versions I recorded was it stated or implied that the *Anyansuli* lost the rain because they misused or abused it. Indeed the rain was not a total loss; since the *Anyansuli* formerly owned it, the spirits (*alūngū*) of Ikomba and Kingwele are still thought capable of stopping it and their names commonly come up during addresses at royal *Anyampanda* rain rites. No *Anyansuli* can, however, bring the rain today.

Exchanging ‘Seeds’ for ‘Seeds’

We saw in the previous chapter that at the beginning of each new agricultural season, people from all over Ihanzu pay a small amount of tribute that goes to the two ritual leaders. Each household gives to a local village rainmaking assistant a small amount of grain from their grain store. These assistants, once the grain is collected from each household, take the seeds to the home of the chiefs, the sub-village of Kirumi. There the grain is divided between the chiefs, mixed, blessed, and the remainder that is not used to feed rainmaking assistants is returned to the villages from which it came. At the villages these now-blessed seeds are placed into the rainmaking assistants’ grain stores, or are more rarely divided up between villagers and put into their own stores. The total hardly amounts to anything, and is more symbolic in nature. Men and women state that this blessing of seeds ensures a large harvest, that is, fertility of the land and full grain stores.³⁵

Months later the rains come. These rains, claim informants, begin in the centre—in the chiefly sub-village of Kirumi, with the two chiefs themselves—and expand slowly outwards in all directions until they envelop the entire country. Ancestral powers, and with them the rains, emanate from Kirumi. One popular story I heard time and again offers revealing imagery of this process.

When rainmaking assistants, after visiting the chiefs, leave Kirumi on their return journeys to their respective villages, they must under no circumstances look back. They should walk slowly, majestically. They speak to no one. On their journeys the chiefly rains follow, but do not touch them, washing away their footprints as they proceed. Once safely in their houses, the skies break and the rains that had followed them from Kirumi pour down everywhere, drenching the country. In short, royal rains radiate outward from Kirumi, from the two royal chiefs themselves.

Now, by transposing Ihanzu notions of tribute to the chiefs and the rains they produce and placing them side-by-side with ideas of the individual life-cycle discussed in the first part of this chapter, something rather surprising results—the two processes prove to be mirror images of one other.

³⁵ In spite of the radical changes that have occurred over the course of the century, as discussed in chapter two, this practice has endured.

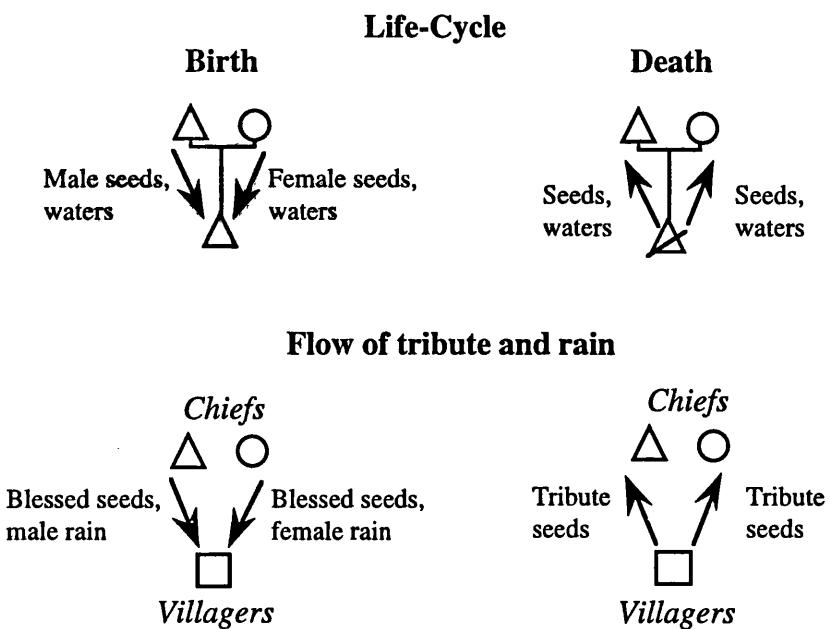


Figure 4.6.

Whether in the context of the individual life-cycle or rainmaking rites, it is obvious that the notion of gender complementarity features centrally in the Ihanzu cultural imagination. Gendered seeds and waters are given by parents to children at birth and are divided and returned to those parents as gendered life substances on death. By the same token chiefs give life to villagers in the form of blessed seeds and gendered 'waters,' while villagers' seeds are later divided and returned to the two chiefs as grain tribute. By acting out 'natural' reproductive processes, gendered royals bring the rain(s) and regenerate the social order in the process. And it is on this basis, I submit, that the two chiefs exercise power and establish their legitimacy: on their apparent ability to enact ritually everyday reproductive processes. Royal power, then, is based largely on the operationalisation of reproductive beliefs as villagers bring seeds to, and return them from, their two gendered leaders. However one looks at it, in Ihanzu eyes, power comes in gendered pairs.

CONCLUSION: ROYAL INCEST AND THE RAIN

Now, I am well aware that my argument hinges, first, on how locals conceptualise the links between the life-cycle and cosmic transformation; and second, on the extent to which 'seeds' and 'water' (fertilising fluids) may be equated with 'seeds' and 'water' (sorghum and rain). I must now take up these two issues.

First, as we saw above, at least one informant (p. 146) drew explicit connections between sex and rain when discussing the way male and female bodies and rains

come together for maximum effectiveness. Second, I would suggest that people's choices of cognates are not entirely random. The fact that people choose to speak about fertilising fluids as 'seeds' and 'water,' and not as 'eggs' or anything else, is telling in and of itself. But beyond this, surely the real litmus test for firmly establishing a connection between local ideas of the life-cycle and rainmaking would have to be a royal one. What if the male and female chiefs were to combine their own royal fertilising fluids through an incestuous encounter? Would such an act bring prosperity or disaster on Ihanzu? On this topic again we find overwhelming confirmation of a link between sexual and social transformations (cf. Jacobson-Widding 1985: 10; 1990).

The title of this chapter comes from a well-known Ihanzu saying, '*Mbula ūwai kūlīko ng'wana nūtugile.*' This may be translated as, 'Rain is more important than the child you have borne.' What this means, informants explain, is not at first obvious, for it applies mainly to the male and female rain-chiefs. One elderly male diviner explained it to me this way:

Ilikuwa na miko yake. Ilikuwa na miko yake. Ndiyo, akasema kwamba 'mbula ūwai kūlīko ng'wana nūtugile.' Yaani, ina miko yake. Ina miko yake. Hawa watemi. Hawa watemi, hawa wawili. Kuna miko, ilikuwa na miko. Ilikuwa na miko, eti. Kwa maana, hiyo ni kawaida. Si kawaida ya, nani hii, ya kujenga au kutengeneza? Yaani, wao walikuwa na siri yao peke yao. Wao walikuwa na siri yao peke yao. Ndiyo maana wakasema 'mbula ūwai kūlīko ng'wana nūtugile.' Kwa maana wewe utaweza ku... [pause] kwenda kum... [pause] nani hii, kwenda ku..., kwenda kukutana na mama yako au dada yako. Unafanya taratibu. Hayo maji ndiyo unapeleka huko kwenya [inaudible] ulioko. Ndiyo maana 'mbula ūwai kūlīko ng'wana nūtugile.' Si ndiyo? Sasa hiyo ndiyo ilikuwa siri. Unakutana na dada yako au mama yako...[inaudible]; halafu anaweka hio kitu, maji yao yanaingia. Unapeleka kwenye mvua, kwenye mvua. Ndiyo yanyavuta haya mambo yote!

It had its own taboos. It had its own taboos. Yes, it is said that 'rain is more important than the child you have borne.' That is, it has its taboos. It has its taboos. Those chiefs, those two [chiefs]. There is a taboo, there were taboos, there were really taboos! But it's normal. Isn't it normal, eh, to build or to repair [something]? That is, they had their own secrets all to themselves. They had their own secrets all to themselves. That's the reason people say: 'rain is more important than the child you have borne.' The sense is that you can...[pause], go to... [pause], eh, go to..., go and get together with your mother or sister. You do it slowly [re: sex].³⁶ That water, well, you take it over there...[inaudible] and put it there [pointing towards the rainshrine]. That is the sense [in the saying], 'rain is

³⁶ *Kufanya taratibu* is a common euphemism many of my informants used when discussing sexual intercourse.

more important than the child you have borne.' Isn't it true? So that was the secret. You get together with your sister or mother...[inaudible]; she puts something like this [signifying setting something on the ground], their waters enter. You [then] take it over to the rain[shrine], to the rain[shrine]. Indeed, *that* is what pulls everything!

The point this elder makes, if in a roundabout manner, is unequivocal—royal incest is the secret to bringing the rain to Ihanzu. The true significance of this story lies not in any historical facts it may contain; it seems most unlikely, after all, that *Anyampanda* royals would have actually engaged in incestuous sexual activities, collected the residues and used them as rain medicines in the rainshrine. More instructive is that people *believe* the story to be true, and further, that it is informed by a specific cultural logic that makes it entirely plausible, even desirable.

Royal waters (fertilising fluids), when combined, bring on yet more royal waters (male and female rains). The saying that 'rain is more important than the child you have borne' refers then to the relationship between commoners and chiefs; it is as if commoners are telling the chiefs that for them, rain is the issue. Children of chiefs are not. It is also a moral statement about the diversion of 'royal waters,' implying that royal fertility can and should be used to create rain rather than offspring. To the extent the chiefs channel their own waters into rain, they fail to produce their own offspring. Ironically though, by investing these waters in the production of rain and not children, the chiefs consequently give birth to and thus become the parents of all Ihanzu (cf. Mosko 1995).

Understood in this way, we can now more fully appreciate the symbolic import of grain tribute brought to the chiefs as well as, in part, account for the fact that this practice has for more than a century proved at once pervasive and persuasive. It also explains why refusing to pay tribute to the chiefs, as Christians sometimes do, is much more than a mere refusal to part with a small amount of grain—it is, in fact, a categorical repudiation of 'royal parenthood.' Obstinate Christians, by refusing to pay tribute, refuse to 'give birth' to the chiefs, and thus refuse to be 'borne' by them. In other words, they toss a metaphorical wrench into the ritual system and in so doing successfully short-circuit the flow of seeds and waters between chiefs and commoners on which the system is premised.

To this point in the thesis we have seen how rainmaking rites at the Kirumi rainshrine have proved a focal point for the Ihanzu people over a long and decidedly tumultuous history. In spite of many changes, and even the demise of the central cutting of the sod ceremony in the early 1960s, certain ritual components remain. These include

bringing tribute to the chiefs, blessing the seeds and preparing medicines at the rainshrine. Moreover, on an ideational level, matters appear to have changed little, for the entire system is still premised on the notion of gender complementarity. Male and female chiefs, men and women regularly stress, must work together, even if their labours are not always apparent in practice.

In the following chapters the focus is on what I term 'remedial rites.' Unlike those rites carried out at the rainshrine which take place every season, remedial rites occur only after the fact, in times of drought. Like rites at the rainshrine however, and as with notions about male and female chiefs' participation in them, the ritual logic of gender complementarity is very much in evidence—both male and female elements are required to bring the rain as it is these two mutually constituted categories that, when conjoined, unleash the powers of divinity.

PART III: REMEDIAL RAIN RITES

An Offering to the Spirits

OCCASIONALLY, in particularly difficult years, the rains do not fall immediately following the preparations of medicines at the Kirumi rainshrine. When this happens villagers take other measures to ensure the onset of the rains. These include carrying out a women's rain dance and rain-witchcraft trials to ferret out rain-witches, topics that will be discussed in chapters six and seven respectively. The purpose of this chapter is to examine another measure to which villagers commonly resort in times of drought—ancestral offerings (*mapolyo*; sing. *ipolyo*).

There are two types of ancestral offerings in Ihanzu: those that deal with rain (*mapolyo a mbula*) and those that are concerned with individual misfortunes such as illness (*mapolyo a ndwala*). This chapter will focus on the former, though the two types are nearly identical in structure and symbolic content. Offerings held for personal afflictions are much more common than are those carried out for rain and, unlike rain offerings, continue all year round. Offerings for rain, on the other hand, occur only during the agricultural season when the rains have failed and it has been divined that the royal *Anyampanda* ancestral spirits are angry and demand such an offering. Whereas any clan may carry out offerings directed at eliminating personal, or more rarely, clan misfortune, only the two royal *Anyampanda* leaders may initiate offerings for rain. All these rain rites take place in Kirumi at two royal *Anyampanda* caves.¹ Following a lengthy exposition of one particular such royal rain rite, I will propose that, in spite of the complexity, the underlying logic follows clearly the gendered model of cosmological transformation discussed in previous chapters.

¹ There is one exception to this—the *Anyansuli wa Kingwele* may occasionally carry out rain rites too, as they did in 1994. The only reason they are able to do this is because, as was discussed in chapter four, they are believed to have formerly owned the rain. Their spirits, therefore, can still stop the rains if they wish. See Appendices E and F, which show clearly that the two *Anyansuli* ancestors—Ikomba and Kingwele—are addressed, even at royal *Anyampanda* offerings, as former owners of the rain.

Ancestral offerings, like other Ihanzu rites of transformation, are ‘about’ gender complementarity.

The example to be discussed below is based mainly on an offering that took place on 13 February 1994 and events leading up to it. This was the only rain offering made that year. I have attended a total of nineteen similar offerings at homes and at sacred clan sites around Ihanzu and Iramba, most of them for personal afflictions. I recorded the details of several additional offerings and have had countless more discussions with people about the various rites and their significance. The description that follows then, while based on a single instance, may be taken as typical in most respects of all ancestral offerings.² Since this is a royal offering, I will note the few instances where these rites differ from those carried out by other clans at other sites. Since all offerings begin with a divination session, let us begin there.

A DIVINATION SESSION

It had been an exceptionally poor start to what should have been the 1993-1994 rainy season—dry, stiflingly hot and there were few indications that the rains were near—this in spite of the fact that the women had completed their rain dance (described in the next chapter) and several rain-witches (*alogi a mbula*) had been found, tried and fined in different villages around Ihanzu (to be discussed in chapter seven).

Across the country in Mkiko village in western Ihanzu, a well-known Ihanzu diviner (*mūganga*; plur. *aganga*)—I will call him Juma—continued his work as normal, diagnosing and treating Ihanzu, Iramba and Sukuma people from near and afar.³

A diviner from Ikolo village, one of Omari’s rainmaking assistants from the same village, a diviner from Kirumi and myself showed up one day in mid-January 1994 for a divination session.⁴ They were hoping to solve an ongoing problem of some

² When he was in Ihanzu in 1911, Erich Obst attended an ancestral offering to cure his malaria. His exceedingly detailed observations are by all measures accurate and make clear that, as far as these rites go, things have changed very little since the turn of the century. See Obst 1912a: 115-7; 1923: 221-2.

³ Divination in Ihanzu is a skill that may be revealed to the living by the ancestral spirits through dreams, or it may be learnt from other diviners. Many Ihanzu diviners learn their trade in Sukumaland which seems to confer upon them more authority and respect than being trained at home. See Tanner 1957b for an overview of Sukuma divination or, for a more in-depth examination of Sukuma diviners and their training, see Hatfield 1968.

⁴ It may seem odd that diviners would rely on each other’s readings but this is in fact common. People would rightly be sceptical of a diviner who knew all the problems to be divined and still proceeded to carry out a reading anyway. A common saying is *ūsūnswī shanga wīnunā*, meaning roughly a doctor (any doctor including a diviner) is unable treat himself.

suspected rain-witchcraft items found in the northern village of Ikolo. They wanted information about the witches who put items there and how to neutralise the destructive witchcraft medicines.

When we arrived at his compound, at about ten o'clock in the morning, the diviner was hard at work with other clients. I had visited Juma on perhaps a half-dozen occasions prior to this one and each time he was deeply involved with clients, giving credence to people's statements that he was, in fact, one of the best known and most respected diviners in the area.

Taking a seat in the shade on one side of his house, our only defence against the blistering sun, we waited eagerly, in silence. The diviner from Ikolo gripped the chicken he had brought with him tightly, expectantly; the Ikolo rainmaking assistant did much the same with his. The status of the rains and, in essence, the fate of the entire Ihanzu people as they saw it, was riding on the outcome of this entrails divination. If the Ikolo witchcraft items were not disposed of properly, the rains might be ruined for good.

While sitting at the diviner's house, we did not discuss the problem. As one man later told me, 'If you discuss the problem near the diviner, he may hear and just repeat it back. If he is really a diviner, one who is not a complete fake, he should be able to spell it out for you from reading the chicken alone.' This quest to get the unblemished truth is also evidenced by the fact that it is quite normal, as in this case, for people to visit diviners far from home, rather than those nearby who would presumably be far more attuned to local social tensions, specific household problems and the like. This maximises the chances of getting an accurate and 'spiritually-inspired' diagnosis.

As Juma finished the last client's divination, the Ikolo rainmaker and the Ikolo diviner stood up slowly, took their respective fowls to the far side of the compound and picked some branches from a nearby *mūata* tree (*Diospyros fischeri*).⁵ Holding the chicken and branches up to the sun in the east, each uttered a near hushed prayer to the ancestral spirits. In so doing, they began the preparations for making an ordinary fowl readable, alerting the spirits to the fact that the chicken was about to be sacrificed and that they must do their job of imprinting on its entrails the vital information which would soon be revealed to the living. These prayers are not

⁵ As alternatives in place of *mūata*, *mono* (*Ricinus communis*) or *ntūla* (*Solanum incanum*) may be used for divination. I have never heard any explanation for why these three trees/plants and no others are acceptable, except that 'this is the way we have always done it, and it works.'

identical, yet there is a standard format that is always followed, making them very similar. One of the prayers on this occasion went as follows:

Üe Mūnyankalī kūnū nūpūmīle kū mūtala wako nūkūlū n'ūñzū kūnū kū ng'weli na mītyīla inkūkū īyī itī. Itambūle inkani yīhi. Kūlīnge yīhi. Tīlī nūlakūlekela. Üpūmiye yīhi kabisa. Üleke kūleka hata inino.

You Mūnyankalī, who come from the house of your senior wife and who are going west, I spit on this chicken here. Tell everything. Allow us to understand it all. Do not omit anything. Just give everything. Don't leave anything out, not even a little bit.

When they had finished, the two carried their branches and chickens across the courtyard and, one at a time, handed them to Juma the diviner, who sat on a small, wooden stool facing east. The tools of his trade—his oblong divining bowl (*ntua*) filled with water, a small water-filled gourd (*mūmbū*), his special knife (*lupyū*) and a wildebeest hair whisk (*nsing'wanda*)—sat before him on the ground. He placed the small branches on the ground next to his bowl and, like the bowl, they pointed to the east, towards the rising sun. We sat cross across from him on the ground in a semi-circle.

Juma carefully examined the wings of the first bird. After mumbling an inaudible prayer over the bird, he tapped its feet on the four sides of his divining bowl—east, west, south and then north. This, I was later told, is to alert the spirits that a divination session is in progress. After pouring some water from the gourd into the bowl, he dipped his knife into it and stroked the first bird's head gently while uttering another prayer. Juma forced the bird to drink a few swallows of the water from the knife and then to eat a small piece of the leaves. He sacrificed the bird by slicing down the centre of its neck, and then placed it on the leaves facing east. The second bird he subjected to the same treatment. No one had yet said a word.

This diviner, one of the most experienced and respected in Ihanzu, is one of the few to hold a government license (*cheti*) issued at the district level (Kiomboi). Unlike many diviners, Juma does not wear the traditional garb which sometimes includes lots of metal, plastic and animal hide bracelets and necklaces. Rather, he is a modestly dressed Muslim. I have never seen him without his distinctive white Islamic hat and long, white robe.

Carefully, he began to skin the chickens so that he could examine the entrails. Periodically during his examination he used the water from the divining bowl to wash

the fowl. He studied the entrails of both birds intently before he began to speak. His reading lasted about twenty minutes. The points of interest may be summed up as follows:

- (1) The mixture of the best varieties of sorghum seeds found in the hollow of a tree in Ikolo, was indeed rain-witchcraft related; the unnamed witches aimed to destroy the rain and therefore the harvest (see Case 7.2 in chapter seven).
- (2) To destroy the medicines effectively, two things were required: an anti-witchcraft ceremony at Ikolo village to cool the tree in which the medicines were found; and an ancestral offering by the royal lineage, so that their ancestral spirits would help alleviate the problem and bring the rain. Both rites should be carried out without delay. The ancestral spirits were angry over the witches' behaviour and were thus partially responsible for stopping the rains.
- (3) For the ancestral offering, the royal spirits required (a) a black sheep born at night, and (b) three large vats of beer.

Once the diagnosis had been made, and its consequences discussed, the entrails reading session was over. One of our party placed 100 shillings (£0.17) on the ground in front of Juma. The diviner unceremoniously poured out the water from his divining bowl and placed the chickens into it. He took hold of the bloody *miata* branches on which the chickens had been placed, dragged them to the edge of the cleared space in which we had been sitting, and from there hurled them off into the bush. The session was finished.

After returning home to our respective villages, everyone followed the dictates of the diviner. Those from Ikolo successfully removed the witchcraft items from their village, while those in Kirumi informed Chief Omari that, were he to carry out an ancestral offering, the spirits would help to neutralise the rain-witchcraft. The Ikolo anti-rain-witchcraft ceremony took place within two weeks of the reading. Since beer had to be brewed for the offering in Kirumi, it took nearly a month to complete. Compared with other ancestral offerings however, it was completed with exceptional expedience.

INITIATING THE ANCESTRAL OFFERING (*kūkūmbīka*)

Grandchildren

To initiate the ancestral offering, a few 'grandchildren' were first summoned to the chief's house to carry out certain ritual duties. Grandchildren play a central role throughout the entire offering process, from beginning to end. It is they who organise and take a leading role in orchestrating the offering, initiating each set of rites. These grandchildren, however, are not grandchildren in a biological sense but in a classificatory one vis-à-vis the royal clan-section, which is to say, people whose grandmother or grandfather (often, but not always, paternal grandfather) is (or was) a member of the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan-section. This is much the same for grandchildren at non-royal offerings who acquire their positions because one of their grandparents was a member of the afflicted person's clan-section. Again, as with grandsons at the rainshrine discussed in chapter three, these grandchildren are invariably full-grown adults.

For this offering three grandchildren were initially summoned, one women and two men. Grandchildren for ancestral offering are selected according to convenience, usually those who live in the vicinity of the afflicted. In this case the granddaughter, Nya Maua, is a resident of Kirumi, as is one of the grandsons, Sha Kitongo. The other grandson, Mazengo, who lives further away, was selected for different reasons which will be discussed in a moment.

At all ancestral offerings, royal or not, it is imperative that there be at least one grandson and one granddaughter present. No offering can occur without them. Sometimes too, as with this rain offering, there are more grandsons than granddaughters, or there may be more granddaughters than grandsons, but this is of little consequence. What informants find significant is that there be at least one male and one female.

There are a few additional stipulations about grandchildren at royal offerings that require comment, since I have never seen them ignored in practice. First, one grandson and one granddaughter must be from the royal *Anyampanda* clan-section. They are therefore, at once, grandchildren of this clan-section and members of it. In this case, Sha Kitongo and Nya Maua filled these roles. Second, the other grandson must himself be of the *Anyansuli* clan. The reason for this, explained informants, is because the *Anyansuli* are a 'brother' (*aheu*) clan to the *Anyampanda* and more importantly, because they formerly owned the rain.

Initiating the Offering

To initiate the rain offering, which was done the evening of the day of the divination session when we returned from Mkiko village, the two grandsons addressed the royal spirits. They then entered the bush and gathered some cuttings from several ritually significant 'cool' trees—*mūlama* (*Combretum molle*), *mūmbilīlī* (*Entada sp.*), *ipolyo* (*Rhoicissus tridentata*) and *mūhingiha* (*Boscia angustifolia*)⁶—and returned them to Chief Omari's homestead. There, while addressing the spirits, the granddaughter ground some white sorghum on the grinding stone. This sorghum is always white, never red.⁷ She then took a special long-necked calabash (*mūmbū*) from inside the house, filled it with water and mixed in the white sorghum flour. After this, the grandchildren took some cuttings from the recently clipped trees and placed them into the hole in the top of the calabash. They then placed the calabash in the doorway of the homestead and, one at a time, addressed the *Anyampanda* clan spirits; the two grandsons' addresses preceded that of the granddaughter. Nya Maua's address went like this (the other two were nearly identical):

Usese kakūmbīka. Kūlompile mūkūletele īmazī, kūpate indya. Kamūona ūnyenye alūngū. Ngīze nyenye alūngū itule alūngū tai. Usese kalūmbīya. Kūlompa mūkūletele īmazī. Saya īmazī anyu kamū peza. Ipolyo hegi kinonelye. Kamūkīmbūka. Kūlompile mazī mūkūletele ihī ipole kūpate īmazī a kūng'wa.

We have begun an ancestral offering. We ask that you [plural] bring us water [i.e., rain] so we get food. We have seen you [in the chicken], ancestral spirits. If it is really you ancestral spirits, let it be so. We are rejoicing. We ask that you bring us water. Here is the water we have brought you. The ancestral offering itself is still in preparation. We remember you. We ask that you bring us water so that everything cools off, so that we might get water to drink.

These preliminary rites, which took less than an hour from beginning to end, are essential to the success of the entire offering as they formally announce to the spirits that an offering is underway. At this point the spirits may choose to heal the ill or, in this case, to allow the rains to fall. Even if the spirits are temporarily benevolent—people say spirits may be so pleased an offering has begun that they may immediately stop causing misfortune—an offering is, once begun, rarely forgotten as there is always a chance that the spirits will be angered by deceit and return with a vengeance.

⁶ Other commonly-used trees and shrubs for ancestral offerings, in addition to those already listed, are: *mūende* (*Hibiscus micranthus*) and *mūntūngazi* (?).

⁷ It is the colour, not the variety, that is ritually significant. Red is inauspicious and is likely to anger the spirits and/or bring on lightning strikes.

GATHERING LIVESTOCK AND GRAIN

Gathering the necessary items to carry out the ancestral offering may take from a few weeks to several months, depending on the generosity of the affected clan members and the type of offering to be carried out. Almost any member of the relevant clan may collect the items to be used which typically include grain to brew beer and livestock. As we saw above, the diviner specified, as diviners must, the precise details of this offering: a black sheep born at night and three vats of beer.

With rain offerings, the rules are in theory straightforward: the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan-section must give a cow, the *Anyansuli* clan must give a sheep (the reverse is true for *Anyansuli* offerings). If a clan member from either of these clans has an animal which is the wrong colour or sex (that is, if it does not match the diviner's dictates) it may be swapped for another of the desired type within the appropriate clan. As a last resort, the animals may be acquired from another clan since sometimes securing the proscribed animal within the correct clan is just not possible. Since the spirits in this case called for only a black sheep that was born at night, and no cow, the process was greatly speeded up since Chief Omari himself happened to have such an animal in his own cattle byre.⁸

If beer is to be brewed—and it always is—the grain comes from both the *Anyampanda* and *Anyansuli* clans and must be mixed together before the brewing begins. Grain was collected for this offering mostly around the Matongo Village area (including the sub-villages of Kirumi, Matongo, Isene, Igwe la Mbaū and Kitaturu) from members of the two clans. In theory, all *Anyampanda* and *Anyansuli* clan members should contribute grain to these offerings but this never happens, the weight falling disproportionately on those who live nearest to Kirumi and among those, mainly on non-Christians. I heard of no one who refused to donate to this offering, Christians included. The grain, once collected, was brought to Chief Omari's house where it was left for the grandchildren to prepare for the offering.

ANCESTRAL BEER BREWING

Beer forms a necessary component of all ancestral offerings in Ihanzu. Without it, such offerings cannot take place. Men and women, youngsters and elders, all can

⁸ It is unlikely that the diviner knew this prior to our divination session, or that he would really care. An appropriate animal would, in any case, have been found, if not at the chief's, at another clan-section member's homestead.

explain the sometimes excruciatingly complicated process of brewing local beer. And yet in spite of this widespread and generalised knowledge, actual brewing on everyday occasions is largely done by women. It is they who collect the firewood, grind the sorghum, fetch the water and carry out the numerous other required specialised tasks. With ancestral offerings this is not the case.

When beer is brewed for ancestral offerings it is the two (or more) grandchildren who do most of the brewing work, grandsons and granddaughters together (see Table 5.1 for summary). Since usually much beer has to be brewed, and the grandchildren cannot possibly complete all the work alone, they are frequently aided by local clan members and neighbours (mostly women). There is little point in giving all the details of beer brewing during this particular offering, and I have instead given a concise overview in tabular form. The main point of interest for our purposes is that grandchildren—male and female—work together at each stage in the process: addressing the spirits, initiating activities and carrying out much of the work. The day of the final beer brew is very eventful and significant, so let us begin our discussion there.

It is on the final brewing day that the grandchildren prepare a small amount of ritually significant beer (*kīnyaūlūngū*), to be differentiated from the other beer to be used later (see below). This is the first beer to come from this brewing, and is usually around twenty litres (cf. Jacobson-Widding 1986: 4-5).

On the evening of this final brewing day, just before sundown, the two *Anyampanda* grandchildren (Nya Maua and Sha Kitongo) took two small calabashes from inside the chief's house and filled them with the *kīnyaūlūngū* beer. They then stuffed small branches from the sacred trees into the mouths of the calabashes. Carrying these calabashes, they set off for a few sites: a sacred *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* cave on Mt. Ng'waūngu; and to three graves of former *Anyampanda* ritual leaders Kali, Sagilū and Nya Matalū, all of whom are buried in Kirumi.⁹

Mount Ng'waūngu, the sacred site of the royal *Anyampanda* clan-section, is the site at which all royal ancestral offerings for rains are carried out. (Each clan or clan-section has its own sacred site or sites which are various spread across Ihanzu, Iramba and elsewhere. Further details of all these sacred sites are given in Appendix D). At the

⁹ There are three possible locations at which these beer-filled gourds may be left: graves of clan members; sacred ancestral sites; or on a cross path leading to or other of these sites. The choice again depends on the diviner's dictates. Though attention is regularly paid to royal graves during rain offerings, former rainmakers are never exhumed as is (or was) common in some areas during drought (cf. Hurel 1911: 84n; S. R. 1906; see also Madden 1940).

<p>To Start Get a good supply of sorghum. This stock will be used at different times throughout the brewing process. Most any variety will do.</p>	<p>DAY 1: Preparing Sprouted-Sorghum (<i>kina ümela</i>) An Anyampanda grandson and granddaughter arrived at Chief Omari's compound, both wearing black. Placed some sorghum into large water-filled, earthen vats while addressing the spirits. Grandson's address preceded granddaughter's.</p>	<p>DAY 3 The same two grandchildren arrived and removed the sorghum, spread it out on the floor inside Chief Omari's house so it would sprout. Again, they addressed the spirits.</p>	<p>DAY 5 The grandchildren returned to Omari's and, following a brief address, mixed the sorghum about with their hands; this is necessary so that it sprouts evenly and does not get mouldy. Since the grandchildren had removed the taboo, the chief's wife and children continued mixing the sorghum each day thereafter.</p>
<p>DAY 9 Two grandchildren arrived; carried now-sprouted sorghum from the house and spread it over a large rock in sun to dry.</p>	<p>DAY 10 Grandchildren collected the dried, sprouted sorghum; this is called <i>ümela</i>. Put inside house. This was ground into flour over the next week by many people.</p>	<p>DAY 11 The grandchildren mixed some of the sorghum they had put aside with some dried, solid dregs (<i>miha</i>) (the left-over residuum seeds from a previous beer party). This mixture is called <i>ntapī</i>. The granddaughter began grinding, other women followed.</p>	<p>DAY 13 Grandchildren arrived at Omari's homestead in morning and while addressing the spirits, dug a beer-brewing trench (<i>ilüngü</i>). It had an east-west orientation, as is the case with all royal ritual beer trenches.</p> <p>Grandchildren took some <i>ntapī</i> and stirred it into the boiling vats. They then transferred the mixture to other large vats inside the house to cool, each half filled with water. It has now become <i>isümbī</i>.</p>
<p>DAY 14: Boiling <i>isümbī</i> Grandchildren boiled the <i>isümbī</i> down for about 8 hours into a thick porridge-like sludge called <i>igai</i>. The granddaughter took some sorghum from the original stock and ground it.</p>	<p>DAY 17: <i>kükülla</i> In the morning the grandchildren and a few other women arrived at chief's and mixed the sorghum flour in with the <i>igai</i>. Nothing was heated or boiled.</p>	<p>DAY 18 The same two Anyampanda grandchildren arrived early in morning and; joined by Anyansuli grandson. Grand-daughter and her female companions spent morning fetching water; grandsons went into bush to cut ritually significant trees.</p> <p>Boiled water and mixed in the <i>ümela</i> flour from day 10. They then transferred it to pots to cool. This mixture is now called <i>müzozo</i>. Took the <i>igai</i> and stirred it into the <i>müzozo</i>. This now becomes beer(<i>ntüllī</i>) but full of solid dregs (<i>miha</i>). They strained out the solid dregs after about 4 hours.</p>	<p>DAY 19 Today the beer, <i>ntüllī</i>, was ready for the offering.</p>

Table 5.1. Beer brewing at an ancestral offering

cave and one grave, the grandson and granddaughter set a gourd of the specially prepared beer with the leaves; at all these sites they briefly addressed the spirits making them aware that they had completed one of their obligations, and that they would be carrying out an offering on the following day.

The two grandchildren returned to Chief Omari's where, with the help of the Anyansuli grandson, who now joined them, they proceeded to consume the entire bucket of *kīnyaūlūngū* beer. All the grandchildren then spent several more hours laboriously running the remainder of the beer through reed filters, removing the solid dregs, so that it would be ready to drink the following morning. Other women who had come for the offering helped with this arduous work.

Anyampanda clan members and others, both young and old, celebrated and slept at the male chief's house the night before the offering, many dancing and singing well into the night. It was mostly the women who did the dancing and singing, which is often the case on these occasions, though there are no restrictions on men's participation and some occasionally joined in.

The jokers or *anyisoi* (sing. *mūnyisoi*) showed up for the first time on this night. There is no one particular person who functions as a joker for an ancestral offering: anyone who is old enough to understand what is going on, male or female, may become the designated *mūnyisoi* on a particular occasion, as long as he or she, of course, is of the appropriate joking clan. In practice this usually means the first elder (or 'semi-elder') to arrive at an offering who happens to stand in joking relations to the *Anyampanda* clan (see Table 4.3, p. 138). On this particular evening, a middle-aged man of the *Anyankalī* clan played the role of joker. He danced away the evening, springing about madly in the cattle byre, shrieking things like 'we'll get free beer tomorrow because some moron from your lineage bewitched the rains.' This was accompanied by the joker's drinking beer from a half-calabash and spraying it all over people, to the delight of some, and the annoyance of others.

THE RAIN OFFERING (*ipolyo la mbula*)

Participants

Up to this point, the two *Anyampanda* grandchildren (one grandson, one granddaughter) have played the major role in the offering by initiating all activities: ancestral addresses, preparing the beer, cutting the appropriate trees, offering the beer to the spirits by leaving it at certain locations. The Anyansuli grandson joined these two only for the final brewing.

Other significant actors who play a role from this point forward are the two royal *Anyampanda* leaders, without whom no royal rain offering can take place. Diviners, too, are essential for any offering, for rain or otherwise. It is they who must read the sacrificial animals' entrails to determine whether the spirits have accepted the offering. Through their readings they also make known whether the rains will fall, the ill will recover and so forth. One diviner is the minimum required for any offering though in this particular rain rite, given its import, three participated—one from Kirumi, two from Mkalama. Diviners, so long as they are good, may come from anywhere in Ihanzu.¹⁰

With all royal offerings, a group of elderly women must prepare castor-seed oil (*mono*), sing, dance, play a buffalo horn drum (*mbilü*) and anoint some drums in the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* cave. With the exception of singing and dancing, none of this goes on at non-royal ancestral offerings.

As we saw above, jokers too have roles to play in these rites. The night prior to the offering they first appear, and are thereafter expected to carry out certain ritual duties that will be discussed below.

Of lesser importance, though still essential to any offering, is a group of elderly men and women and rainmaking assistants (*ataata*). Without the elders, the sacrificial feast could hardly be a success. Anyone who is considered an adult may attend these offerings; the only restriction is on menstruating women who, though they may attend, may not approach the sacred caves for fear that they will ruin the medicines (*makota*), consequently spoiling the offering and the chances of getting rain. Instead, these women remain in a clearing lower down on the mountain.

Rainmaking assistants have no proscribed roles to play but they are commonly summoned by the male chief to these rites and often prepare their medicines in the rainshrine after such rites (see chapter three).

Finally, there are youths, male and female, who have never before, or who have only rarely, attended such offerings. They play no ritual roles in offerings, save being present and eating meat from the sacrifice. Children are not allowed to attend (the exceptions being infants carried on their mothers' backs).

¹⁰ I attended two Ihanzu ancestral offerings in which non-Ihanzu diviners carried out the oracular readings: one was a Sukuma man, the other an Iramba.

Beginning the Offering

At about seven in the morning on the day of the offering, people woke up at Chief Omari's house (those who did not dance all night) and began preparations for the offering. Others continued to arrive from all over Ihanzu. Together, they totalled about eighty. Almost everyone wore black, many with large sheet-type wraps called *akaniki*; those who did not wear black wore other dark colours like blues and greens. One woman who was indiscreet enough to show up in a red dress was forced to change her clothes immediately; she borrowed an outfit from a clan sister who lived in Kirumi. Many wore *mūmbīlīlī* (*Entada* sp.) wreaths around their heads.

The first event of the day was undertaken by a few *anyisoi*, the jokers, who set off for the graves and caves where the grandson and granddaughter had, the previous night, left the *kīnyaūlūngū* beer-filled calabashes. Without any formal addresses like those delivered by the grandchildren, the jokers, when they arrived at these sites, sat down and unceremoniously began drinking the beer. While there are no 'proper,' formal addresses on these occasions, the jokers sometimes improvise some sort of verbal abuse, usually directed against the spirits and members of the royal lineage or clan.

At the grave of the former chief, Sagilū, they accused the spirits and the *Anyampanda* clan members of being witches, and ordered them to stop ruining the weather. To conclude, they said that the rains would probably not fall ever again, even if this offering were carried out, but that it did not really matter since they got their free beer, had finished it and were now drunk. After they felt they had satisfactorily insulted all those involved in the offering to be held, they proceeded to the other sites and did the same. Finally, when all the beer was gone and they were reasonably inebriated, the jokers returned to the chief's house, leaving the empty calabashes behind.

Arriving and Preparing the Sacred Site

When the jokers arrived back at the chief's homestead, people began leaving, led by Chief Omari, for the royal caves at Mount Ng'waūngu (Plate 5.1, p. 171). Everyone walked in single file, slowly, deliberately, speaking only in quiet tones, or not at all. Elders later explained that it is absolutely essential to approach *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* ancestral sites in a humble, hushed manner, since this was the sort of rain they were seeking. If people were to run recklessly towards the caves screaming and jumping about, which sometimes occurs with offerings carried out by other clans, it

might cause the rains to fall recklessly with lots of wind and lightning, destroying homes, crops, people and livestock in the process.

The party arrived at the foot of Mount Ng'waūngu at about eight o'clock and we began our ascent up the mountain. Before proceeding up the mountain, those wearing shoes stopped and removed them, leaving them at the base. (Shoes are removed at all ancestral offerings). Several elderly women, led by the female ritual leader, Ng'welu, trailed behind and remained at the base of the mountain where they began preparing castor-seed oil (*mono*).¹¹

Everyone stopped at a small clearing about half way up the mountain, this being the place where most of the day's activities would take place: animal sacrifices, divination, ancestral addresses and the communal feast. Here, those few who were wearing hats removed them. It is the grandchildren's job to police attendants to make certain that no one wears hats, shoes or the colour red.

People sat in distinct groups. The diviner, along with Chief Omari and a few other elderly men, sat at the highest point of the clearing, in the middle of the path that continues up the mountain to the sacred caves. Other elderly men sat below them. The women sat in the next lower position down the path while those who had never before attended an offering, young men and women, sat in the path further down the mountain. These seating arrangements were not entirely accidental, and follow a specific logic that will be further explored below.¹² Wherever they sat, no one, for the duration of this offering, or at any other I attended, was allowed to sit on rocks. People who inadvertently violate this taboo (for sitting on rocks at all other times is normal) are fined a token amount by the grandchildren; their behaviour threatens to destroy the entire offering. At this offering, one elderly man accidentally made himself comfortable on a rock and was fined fifty shillings (about £0.08) by a grandson, which he later paid.

Grandchildren who participate in ancestral offerings are sometimes the same as those who prepared the beer, and sometimes not. At this offering, Sha Kitongo, Nya Maua

¹¹ The preparation process is the same as during the rain dance (see chapter 6) except that here no one disrobes.

¹² I attended three other offerings for personal afflictions at this site and at all of them people sat in these relative positions. Further, at one *Anyansuli* offering I attended at another clan site deep in the bush, when a group of young women mistakenly sat on the path above the men, they were promptly told to relocate themselves to an area further below. 'That is how it must be,' the elderly men and women reminded them. Not all clan sites, given their variability, offer the same topological possibilities—some sites, for instance, are flat—but of those that had a decline, for all the offerings I attended, men invariably sat above women. Obst stated clearly that men and women sat separately during ancestral offerings (1912a: 116n).

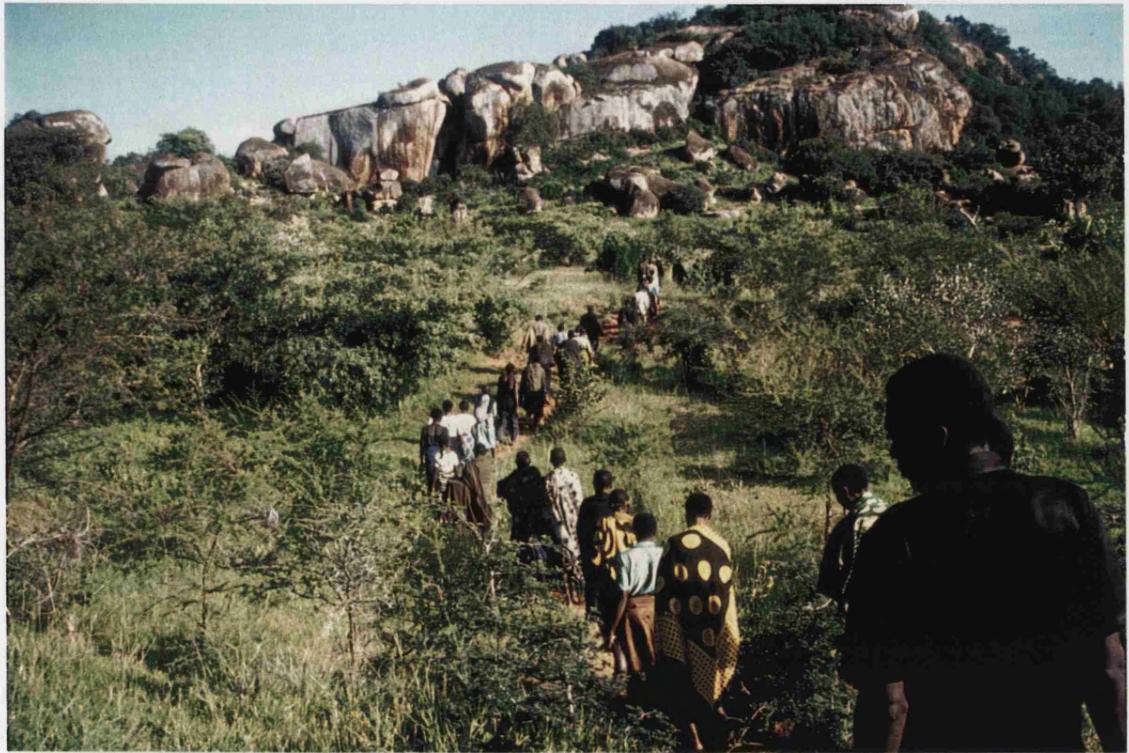


Plate 5.1. People going to rain offering at Mt. Ng'wañgu, Kirumi



Plate 5.2. Grandchildren starting ritual fire

and Mazengo continued in their roles; a fourth *Anyampanda* grandson later aided in starting the fire, skinning the sheep and making addresses.

One grandson, Mazengo, continued up the path for about twenty yards to the first cave together with one of the senior rainmaking assistants. At the entrance to the cave, they both removed their shirts. Mazengo approached the entrance to Mümbau, the first sacred cave, which was sealed off with tree limbs. Sucking in a mouthful of beer from the half-calabash, he sprayed it over the entrance. He briefly addressed the spirits, telling them an offering was to begin, that they desired rains, that the land should cool off. He then sat with the rainmaker and drank some beer at the cave's entrance before descending once again to join the others in the clearing.

Mazengo then went into the bush to collect some more 'cool' trees (*mūmbilīlī*, *mūlama* and *mūhingiha*) to be used for the sacrifice. Mazengo broke the branches with his hands since using a machete, which is normal for cutting branches, might further anger the spirits. He brought them back and placed them in a large bunch in the centre of the clearing, cut ends to the east, the leaves to the west.

The sacrificial sheep was then laid down with its head to the west, eyes to the north, atop the leaves. All the grandchildren held it down, smothering the animal until it had passed out. Then, a Muslim approached and with one clean pass of the knife, slit its throat.¹³ Two of the grandsons began skinning the sheep.

Starting the Fire

While some were skinning the sheep, Makala, the third grandson, together with the granddaughter Nya Maua, began starting a fire by twirling a long, slender firedrill (*kīlīndī*) into a hole in a smaller, stationary hearth (*kiziga*).¹⁴ Nya Maua held the hearth. Fires at all ancestral offerings, for rain or otherwise, are started using such a firedrill and hearth, but in everyday life Tanzanian matches are the norm. Informants make an explicit connection between fires started with firesticks and 'the old ways,' the traditions of their forefathers. Makala addressed the spirits while twirling the

¹³ Cutting sacrificial animals' throats rather than suffocating them to death is a relatively recent ritual innovation which probably began under Chief Sagilū, the first Muslim Ihanzu chief, in the 1930s. Many an elder told me that they recalled attending offerings in their youths during which the sacrificial animals, once tied to a tree by one leg, simply died on their own accord, having been taken directly by the spirits. One Christian elder told me this was accomplished—he saw it as a boy—by stuffing grasses into the animal's mouth when no one was looking, causing it to pass out and die abruptly in a seemingly mystical manner. (Obst [1912a: 116] notes that sacrificial animals were suffocated).

¹⁴ The former is made from the *mūtala* tree (?), the latter from the *ipolyo* tree (*Rhoicissus tridentata*).

firedrill, informing them that they had come together for an offering, calling on them to allow the rains to fall.

Since the batteries in my recorder had gone flat, I did not record this address. However addresses are highly standardised and Makala was happy to repeat it for me a couple of days later at which time I did manage to record it.

Uewe Mūnyankalī nūpūmile kū mūtala wako nūkūlū n'ūinzū kū mūtala wako nūnino, wakila mūnū m'Ihanzu wahanga kūkete ipolyo, ipolyo la m'ikulungu. Kūkete ipolyo la mbula. Kūipoelia ntūlī n'īnkolo naitugilwe ūtikū. Ūko n'ūninzū ūtwale ninza aya ni mabī ūmagūmīle mū lūzī mū Nyanza.

You, Mūnyankalī, who come from your senior house and are going to your junior one, you have passed through Ihanzu and have seen we are carrying out an ancestral offering, an offering in the cave. We have an offering for rain. We are offering [you] beer, and a sheep which was born at night. Take good news to the place you are going; and the bad, toss it into the waters of Lake Victoria.

The granddaughter, Nya Maua, followed the grandson. Taking hold of the firedrill, she drilled furiously while addressing the spirits. Makala now held the hearth in place. Since the ground was damp, it took a few minutes to start (see Plate 5.2). The smoke rose straight up into the sky, a very auspicious sign on these occasions. At a few other offerings I attended where this did not immediately occur, due to strong wind or to other reasons, some bemoaned the fact, claiming the offering was not a good one.

A few people gathered firewood from the immediate area which they piled near the fire; they did not follow any ritual restrictions for its selection, but did pay some heed to the fact that 'cool' wood should be placed on the fire first, before any other sort. Soon the fire was ablaze.

Tossing Meat to the Spirits (*kūtagangīla*)

The two grandsons, Mazengo and Sha Kitongo, finished removing the sheep's skin. They then cut a long strip of meat from the sheep's upper chest (*nyama a kikua*), roasted it on the fire and cut it into small, bite-size pieces. Two of the four grandchildren (one grandson, one granddaughter) took a handful of these pieces.

Mazengo then stood and hushed the crowd. He was about to begin. He addressed the spirits at each of the four cardinal points—east, west, south and north in that order—

tossing, before each address, a piece of meat in that direction.¹⁵ When the grandson had finished, the granddaughter did the same. (see Appendix E for similar royal addresses recorded on another occasion).

Mazengo then approached the male chief and put one of the pieces of meat into his mouth. He then fed the female chief who had come up temporarily from the base of the mountain and sat nearby, the three diviners, several other elderly clan members. The meat, for reasons that were never clear to me or anyone else, was supposed to be swallowed without chewing. The sacrifice had been made and offered to the spirits.

Reading the Entrails

The primary aim of this divination session is to determine whether the ancestral spirits have accepted the offering. Though it might be tempting to focus narrowly on the animal sacrifice as ‘the offering,’ this would make little sense to anyone in Ihanzu. What informants make manifest is that it is only a combination of all these rites—collecting the grain and animals, beer brewing and drinking, participation in the rites themselves, and so forth—that ensure their ultimate efficacy.

Makala and Sha Kitongo placed the sheep’s liver (*itīma*), lungs (*mapūpū*), spleen (*ihela*), intestines (*mala*) and a large membrane that lies under the chest meat covering the front of the rib cage (*ilugali*), into the oblong, wooden divining bowl (*ntua*) and carried them up to the diviners. The meat, as always, was treated carefully so as not to damage its message. Each piece was mindfully washed prior to being read; a grandson inflated the lungs by blowing into them (Plates 5.3 and 5.4, overleaf).

The men who sat nearby moved nearer the diviners so as to hear their soft-spoken pronouncements. The remainder—mainly the women and novices—remained silent, listening intently from where they sat at a distance.

¹⁵ At some offerings I attended, though not at this one, an additional piece of meat was thrown directly down as well.



Plate 5.3. Grandson inflating sacrificial sheep's lungs



Plate 5.4. Diviner reading sheep's lungs

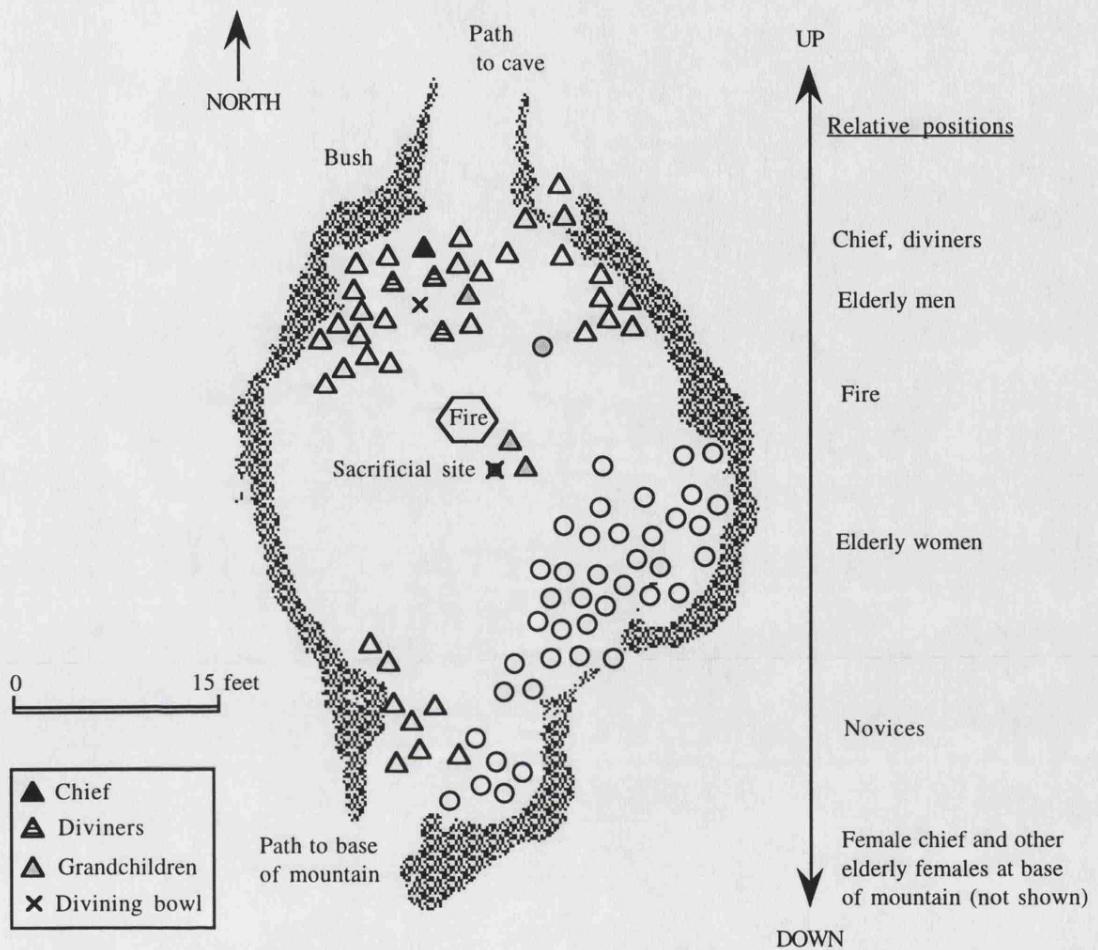


Figure 5.1. Seating arrangements during entrails reading

Figure 5.1 shows the locations of ritual participants during the entrails reading, which differ only slightly from the seating arrangements during the rest of the offering in that the men are here nearer the diviners. The grandchildren, two of whom continued carving up the sheep during the reading, remained highly mobile throughout, moving from one area to another to carry out their various ritual duties.

This reading was relatively brief, lasting only about twenty minutes (some may last an hour or more). The entrails told, as they did at all offerings I attended, of the spirits' gratitude for the offering. The rain, too, would be plentiful. The reading was quickly confirmed by the second and third diviners who looked on as the primary one studied the meat. The diviners then summed up the results of the reading and broadcast them loudly so the women and the others who sat at a distance could finally hear the outcome. The women ululated, the reading came to an end.

Women Anointing the Drums

From their first arrival at the mountain, the few elderly women who had remained at the base, including the female ritual leader, had been preparing castor-seed oil.¹⁶ These women brought with them to the offering a pestle and mortar, an earthen pot, a few gourds of water and a few half-gourds. At the base of the path they started a fire using a burning stick from the fire the grandchildren had lit. Periodically, during the oil preparation, they played an *mbilū* drum and sang women's songs, songs about rain but only those of the non-obscene genre (see Appendix F).

By the time the divination session had finished, these women had finished preparing their castor-seed oil. They danced up the path with it, singing rain songs and playing their drum. They moved past the offering site clearing and went directly to the entrance of the first cave, Mūmbau.

All of the grandchildren present took a handful of chyme from the sacrificial sheep and joined the women climbing the path. Once at the cave entrance, everyone stopped. One at a time the grandchildren addressed the spirits in a loud voice and tossed the chyme around the entrance, 'to cool' (*kūpolā*) the spirits, they told me. The grandsons then laboriously removed the tree limbs that seal the entrance to the cave and descended to the clearing below. Ng'welu, the granddaughter and a few other old women of the *Anyampanda* clan, so I was told, removed their clothes and, carrying the half-gourd of castor-seed oil, entered the cave. There, after the granddaughter addressed the spirits, the women anointed some ancient cave drums with oil. They departed, donned their clothes, and proceeded to a second cave (Nkonzele) about twenty yards from the first. There too, led by the granddaughter, they addressed the ancestors and tossed chyme around the entrance. They did not remove their clothes at this cave. All these women then descended from the caves and sat in the clearing with the others. (Both of these caves come up again in the context of the women's rain dance to be discussed in chapter six).

¹⁶ The female ritual leader, Ng'welu, led this group. She had not remained at the base of the mountain throughout the preparations but had gone up the path briefly to receive some meat from the grandchildren (see above).

The Communal Feast

The grandchildren congregated about the fire and began roasting and handing out the sacrificial meat. As is common at all offerings, tending the fire and distributing the meat was done solely by the grandchildren; one man, when he approached the fire to light a cigarette, was severely reprimanded for having done so. People should remain in their respective groups during the offering, the feast included (see Figure 5.1, p. 176). There are a few exceptions to this rule. Grandchildren can of course move wherever they like: into and out of the bush, between men and women, up to the caves or down to the elderly women at the base of the mountain. Jokers also have some liberty. Walking over to the pile of uncooked meat, one joker at this offering snatched the liver and a flaming stick from the fire, then dashed down the path to roast the meat alone 'in the bush.'

Others are those who feast on the graves of the vexed spirits (those on which the grandchildren and jokers earlier carried out their addresses and drank beer). Two *ad hoc* groups, one of eight people, one of six, set out for two of the graves, each carrying certain cuts of meat.¹⁷ With them they took some fire from that lit by the grandchildren. Once at the graves, they roasted and ate the meat. No addresses were made at either of the two graves. When they had finished, they removed a flaming stick from the fire to be returned to the grandchildren's fire, collected the bones and extinguished the fire with some chyme from the sacrificial sheep. Both groups then returned to join the others at the offering site.¹⁸

People began leaving the site when all had finished eating. The grandchildren took with them the sacrificial sheep's head, intestines, skin and some of the remaining chyme. Another woman collected the bones and placed them in the divining bowl. The branches on which the sacrifice was carried out were also collected and carried. All returned directly to Chief Omari's homestead.

¹⁷ Groups feasting on a female's grave (i.e., Nya Matalū), as on this occasion, are normally given the loin (*kiuno*) which is associated by informants, for obvious reasons, with giving birth. Front legs, left or right, often go to the graves of former male leaders.

¹⁸ People ate all meat without salt, something that is often explained by the fact that salt is good (*mūnyū imūlio*). To enjoy this meal for its palatable meat might suggest that such offerings—and the associated difficulties, be they drought or illness—were similarly a good thing and this would no doubt bring on more hardships in the future.

Beer for the Spirits (*kūlonga shalo*)

Once back on Omari's homestead, everyone danced around singing rain songs for about fifteen minutes (Plate 5.5, overleaf). The remaining meat and skin were taken into the house. When people finished dancing, they sat down in the courtyard. Chief Omari sat in the doorway of his house. A grandson stood in the centre of the courtyard holding a ritual whisk (*nsing 'wanda*); at his feet sat a divining bowl into which he had poured beer and water. Dipping the whisk into the bowl and splashing it to the east, he began his theatrically intoned address to the spirits, repeating this procedure to the west, south and then north.¹⁹ When he finished, the granddaughter stepped forward, took the whisk from him and did the same. At this point two other individuals made addresses, their first and last time of the offering.

An elderly man from Matongo, Chief Omari's 'father' (that is, this man was himself of the *Anyambeū* clan, like Omari's father), gave the next address. In format and content his address was nearly identical to those delivered by the grandchildren.

Finally, it was the joker who completed the day's formalities by delivering the last set of addresses. He stumbled into the centre of the courtyard, pushing people aside as he did so. He snatched the whisk forcefully from Omari's 'father,' turned to the east and showered the crowd with water before beginning his address. In each direction he then did the same. Given in Appendix E are some similar addresses recorded during another royal offering.

Once the joker had completed his address to the spirits, which followed roughly the format of the previous ones but was designed to abuse the living and the dead, he placed the sacrificial leaves and the whisk on the roof of Omari's house, just over the doorway. The day's rites were over. From here, people sat and continued to drink beer until late that night.

CONCLUDING THE ANCESTRAL OFFERING

The offering proper having come to an end, the following morning there is a brief ceremony to mark formally the end of the festivities. These rites take place, in the case of an afflicted person, at his or her homestead or, in the case of rain offerings, at the male chief's homestead. Of all the offerings I attended, these final ceremonies

¹⁹ The Sukuma (Welch 1974: 181-2) and Iramba similarly address the cardinal points during ancestral offerings.



Plate 5.5. Dancing at a rain offering

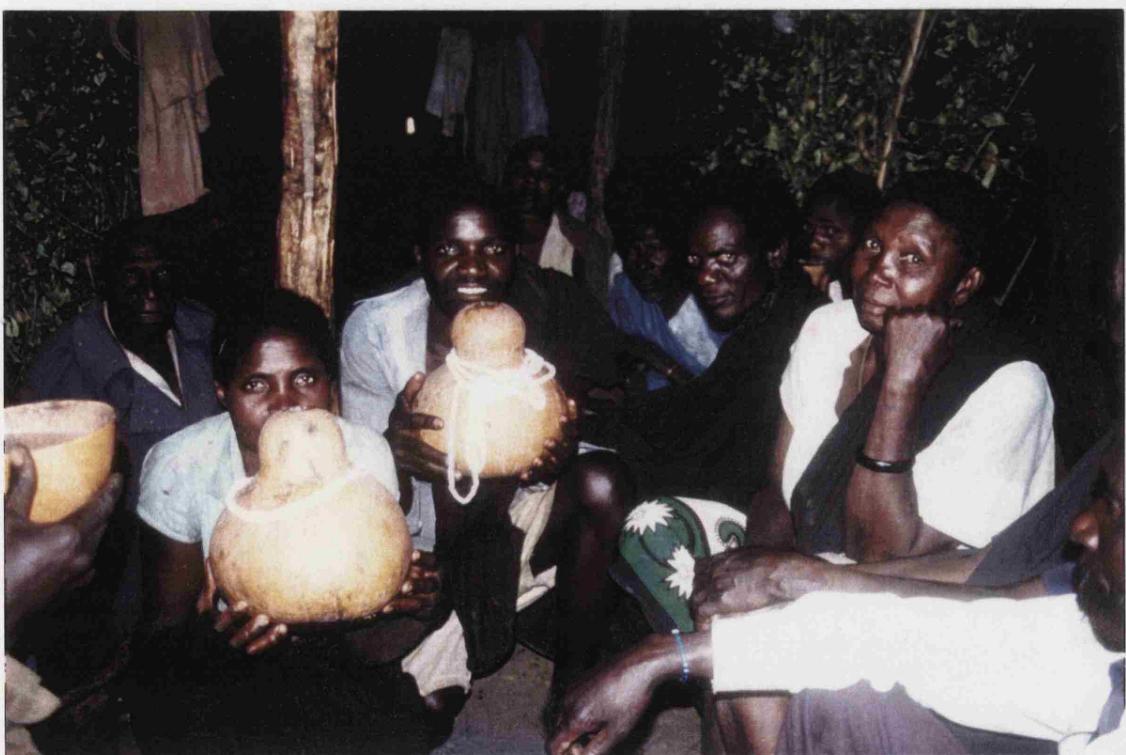


Plate 5.6. Grandchildren displaying ritual calabashes (*mūmbū*)

were never omitted—except, regrettably, on this particular occasion I have been describing.

The chief was keen to attend a beer party in a distant village. Rather than conclude the ceremonies as normal, he simply left early that morning in search of beer. Since this closing ceremony must under normal circumstances be included as part of the offering rites themselves, it would be a mistake to omit them in description, even if they were in this instance omitted in practice. The following then is a description of another royal closing ceremony that took place at the chief's homestead earlier in the year (when there was plenty of beer at home), not for rain *per se* but because a number of his cattle were dying. Had the closing ceremonies actually been performed on this occasion, based on what informants told me and what I saw at other offerings, we can confidently say that they would have been nearly identical to those described in the following pages.

Food for the Living, Offerings for the Dead

The grandchildren slept at the male chief's house, as did many other people, and most arose just before sunrise. The granddaughter immediately set about cooking stiff sorghum porridge at the chief's hearth while the grandson roasted some meat remaining from the previous day's sacrificial offering. At sunrise, the diviners present at the offering the previous day and some male clan elders collected themselves just outside the doorway of the house. They sat in a semi-circle facing the doorway where the chief himself was seated in the threshold.

The two *Anyampanda* grandchildren (one male, one female) divided the stiff porridge into two parts, which each then put into a separate half-calabash (*lūkūlū*). The roasted meat they also divided between two half-calabashes. The grandson took his two calabashes (one filled with stiff sorghum, the other with roasted meat) out of the house and set them on the ground in the centre of the group of elders. The granddaughter followed with her two calabashes, setting them next to the grandson's.

The grandson picked up a piece of the recently roasted meat from his half-calabash along with a small piece of stiff porridge from his second calabash. Facing east, he quieted the crowd, tossed the piece of meat in that direction, immediately followed by the piece of porridge, and began a theatrical address to the royal spirits. He repeated this to the west, south and north, in that order. The granddaughter followed the grandson, throwing her meat and porridge in each direction followed by addresses to the spirits.

When the granddaughter finished her last address, the grandson walked over to the male chief who was sitting in the doorway throughout, made a brief address to the spirits while looking at him, and then fed him a piece of cooked meat and stiff porridge. A few other royal lineage members were fed too. The granddaughter then did the same. The addresses finished, the small group of male elders that had been sitting near the doorway began eating their stiff porridge and meat. When all had eaten, the grandson returned his two half-gourds into the house, one at a time. The granddaughter similarly collected her two gourds and took them back into the house, first one, then the other.

Once the elderly clan males had finished eating, other men sitting further away were then served by the grandchildren.²⁰ And when they had finished, the women who sat in their own group received their portion: two bowls of stiff porridge (one from each grandchild) and two of meat relish.

Drinking inside the House

After all had eaten, the grandchildren brought out the beer and distributed it likewise—clan elders near the door, men and then women. It was at this point that the small group of elders near the door entered the house to drink beer just inside the door. This move from the outside to the inside is the high point of the morning. In the centre of the group sat two special long-neck calabashes (*mūmbū*)²¹ with white beads around their necks, both filled with ancestral beer. These particular calabashes are royal property, and many though not all lineages own such calabashes and display them on the final day of ancestral offerings (see Plate 5.6). People poured the beer from the ritual calabashes into half gourds and drank it, sharing, as they always do, the same half-gourd/s.

Skin Bracelets and Animal Leads

While the drinking was going on inside the house, some men from the royal clan-section removed the skin from the head of the animal sacrificed the day before and cut it into strips (*imputa*; sing. *kīimputa*). The grandchildren helped some ritual

²⁰ It is nearly unheard of to leave any stiff porridge or meat relish on other occasions, though on this one the people are required to leave a final morsel of both in their half-calabashes. I have never seen this custom ignored. These leftovers are then returned to the house, always one bowl at a time.

²¹ Coincidentally, *mūmbū*, the word for the long-necked calabash that is used throughout this offering, is also the word for ‘womb.’

participants (royal and non-royals) put these strips around their left wrists or, for smaller ones, on their fingers. Informants claim that the male chief is supposed to wear one of these but he did not want to do so on this occasion, so did not. There is no requirement that everyone present wear one of these fleshy, dripping bracelets, though it was clear that they were in high demand as people pushed and shoved to get theirs. Once on, it is inauspicious (not to mention rather difficult) to remove them until they break on their own accord, a process I found may take up to six months.²² Such bracelets are thought to ensure all-around ‘good fortune’ for the wearer and, to a lesser extent, for the afflicted person.²³

Extinguishing the Trench Fire

At around half eight, the women began singing and dancing. They slowly danced their way over to the trench fire (*ilūngū*), the one the grandchildren had used to brew the beer prior to the offering, and began to fill it. The actual filling the grandson started. Others then followed. The bones from the sacrificial animal were dropped into the trench as it was filled. The grandson stood at one end of the trench and told the ancestors what they were doing: filling the trench after the offering. He sprayed beer from a half-calabash over the trench. The granddaughter then did the same. The women ululated.

When the trench was filled, some of the singing women sat in a row along the length of it, legs stretched out in front of them. They then began bouncing over the trench to pack down the earth. This final rite officially marked the end of the offering ceremonies. Following this, people sat around drinking the remainder of the beer well into the afternoon.

During offerings, people do not normally expect the rains to begin immediately nor did they do so on this particular occasion. In spite of this, when describing past rites informants often speak as if this is the normal course of events: the spirits hear and

²² These bracelets remain smelly and wet for only around four days after which time they dry out and become otherwise respectable bracelets. At one time I wore up to six of these furry adornments at once, which proved conversation pieces with informants and also kept me from entering the Lutheran church. Few others managed to wear them as long as I did which means one of two things—they cheated and cut them off earlier; or more likely, they did more manual labour than I did, causing them to break prematurely.

²³ At offerings which involve cattle sacrifice the hide is at this point cut into lengthy strips which are given to royal clan members and others present. These strips are stored and used as cattle leads in other ancestral offerings. Sheep skin, people say, is too weak to be used for this purpose.

accept their requests for rain and to express their gratitude to the living, they allow it to fall, drenching all those present.

EXPLANATIONS

As should be patently obvious, ancestral offerings are anything but simple. They involve a number of rites over a period of days, weeks, or even months, and an entire thesis could no doubt be written on these rites alone. Given space limitations I shall focus on a single issue: the underlying transformative model. To put it slightly differently, I am here concerned solely with the local logic, or some of it anyway, that informs these rites.

Grandchildren as Structural Mediators

The first point that requires explanation is the singular focus on grandchildren. It is they, and they alone, who initiate each and every stage of the ritual process from the first acknowledgement to the spirits that an offering is underway, to the final addresses on the last day. To understand better the important role grandchildren play in these rites, it is necessary to take a minor diversion and look at their roles in everyday life.

In mundane contexts, the grandchildren-grandparent relationship (*shekūlū*) is characterised by a mild form of joking or teasing relations (*maheko*). Furthermore, there is some sense in which the two generations are equated: grandchildren commonly refer to their grandparents as brothers (*aheu*) and sisters (*ng'waitu*), and vice versa. This inter-generational closeness one would never find, for example, between parents and their children. One logical implication of this alleged brotherhood, which provides the source of much joking and entertainment, is that a man's grandfather's wife must also be *his own wife*. Indeed, a grandson often jests about how his grandfather stole his own wife, and about how he wants to return her to her 'rightful' partner (i.e., himself).²⁴ On some level then it is grandchildren who, by virtue of their structural positions, mediate between and across the generations, in mundane, but especially ritual situations.

²⁴ This is entirely in jest and I know of no cases in which men actually married their grandmothers.

What we must bear in mind is that being grandchildren logically demands grandparents, whether dead or alive. During the offering just described, it is the grandchildren who initiated everything, while the ‘grandparents’ (in this case, members of the royal matrilineage) do very little indeed. This is true except for one notable detail—the grandchildren themselves, save one *Anyansuli*, were all of the royal matrilineage. In other words, these ritual officiants are at once grandchildren of the royal clan, and members of it. They embody, as it were, the grandchild-grandparent relationship within themselves. What this implies is that they can at the same time be active and reactive, initiators and recipients of the offerings. Of all the categories of kin, grandchildren are the candidates most capable of condensing such hierarchical categories and thus reducing the difference between them. But what is the point in de-emphasising inter-generational distance? The answer is simple—fertility flows hierarchically. To diminish hierarchical structures is to bring together categories that under normal circumstances remain separate—in this instance, divinity and humanity. Let me say more about this because it is important.

It will be recalled from chapter three that God created the world and is thus the ultimate giver of life, rains, fertility and everything else. The ancestral spirits sit under Him; and the two royal leaders beneath them. Between all these categories flow prayers for rain (up the chain) and the rain itself (down the chain). In chapter four we saw how, once the chiefs get the rain, which comes down to them from the spirits and ultimately God, they then send it down to their subjects who have, in turn, given their seeds (up) to the chiefs. The entire process might be summed up this way. Fertility flows between superiors (parents, chiefs, ancestral spirits and God) and inferiors (children, commoners, the living). Just as prayers, tribute and so on flow ‘up’ the hierarchy from commoners to chiefs, chiefs to spirits, spirits to God, so does fertility flow in reverse order, ‘down’ the chain to those below (cf. Jacobson-Widding and van Beek 1990; Kuper 1982: 14ff). Now let us return to the grandchildren-grandparent relationship.

This relationship is nominally informed by the logic of hierarchy too. And yet, as far as other hierarchical relationships go, this is one of the least marked. Thus I would argue that the focus on persons who are structurally grandchildren and grandparents at the same time is an attempt to recognise the hierarchical nature of fertility exchanges, but simultaneously to minimise the distance between ranked categories. By being grandchildren and grandparents at once, these ritual mediators aim to short-circuit the fertility pyramid, to collapse hierarchical structures between this world and the

other.²⁵ But if joining hierarchically ranked categories was the sole reason that grandchild played such central roles in these rites then it would remain somewhat of a mystery as to why there must be (at least) two of them—a grandson and a granddaughter. To explain this, we must return to our earlier discussion of gender complementarity.

In earlier chapters it was suggested that central to the Ihanzu cultural imagination is the notion of gender complementarity—that ‘male’ and ‘female’ must be conjoined in a complementary fashion to effect transformations. Masculine and feminine principles combined are, in Ihanzu eyes, a generative and creative source of power. With children and chiefs this is so, as we have already seen. Here it will be seen that the complicated series of rites that make up an ancestral offering, in a similar fashion, is about the operationalisation of a particular ideology of gendered (re)production. The goal of these rites is to set in motion the cosmological order and hence, to bring the rain. This is accomplished by joining the genders and unleashing the generative powers inherent in that combination.

Grandchildren as Archetypal ‘Male’ and ‘Female’

Grandchildren participate throughout these rites. Without them, men and women often told me, the offering would undoubtedly fail to achieve its objective—to bring together the human and divine worlds, and ultimately to bring the rain. More telling still were the remarks made when I enquired into the possibility of either two grandsons, or two granddaughters, conducting these rites. Quite simply, this was seen as a logical impossibility; the rites would fail. This response strongly suggests that the ultimate success of ancestral offerings is largely dependent upon an underlying logic of gender complementarity. This people articulate in no uncertain terms by saying that during these rites ‘grandchildren must co-operate’ (*lazima wajukuu waungane*).

Grandson and granddaughter laboured in all ritual tasks jointly. It was they who initiated the offering; the beer they brewed together; together they addressed the

²⁵ Beidelman (1964b: 120) explains Kaguru ritual concern with grandchildren in this way: both grandchildren and grandparents are nearest the land of the dead and therefore have easiest access to it; the souls of the former are recently arrived from there, while the latter are soon on their way. Unfortunately, though no one in Ihanzu would argue about whether elders will sooner rather than later enter the other-world, the idea that children’s souls come from there would be seen as highly dubious. Ihanzu souls come from parents’ ‘waters,’ and the divine powers inherent in that combination, and nothing more. Indeed, if Beidelman’s theory were correct even for the Kaguru, we should rather expect that the greatgrandchild-greatgrandparent relationship would be most significant, a fact that Beidelman himself recognises. This relationship, however, is ritually unimportant.

spirits, sacrificed the sheep and started the fire. What is more, like ideal men and women, grandsons went first, the granddaughter followed. The grandson's (sometimes grandsons') addresses invariably preceded those of the granddaughter. Like building a house, or like the rain, male must go first and female must follow. There is some sense, then, in which grandson and granddaughter, besides being primary mediators between this world and the other, also act as archetypal 'male' and 'female.' Combined, they unleash the generative powers of divinity. This manifest emphasis on gender complementarity, evident throughout the rites, can be seen particularly clearly in the three most important addresses of the offering.

All addresses are made by both granddaughter and grandson but never at the same time, always one (female) after the other (male). Addresses go on continuously throughout the offering, at each and every stage. These are usually nothing more than short addresses of a few sentences, stating the obvious (i.e., we are making an offering; we are brewing beer; we are digging a trench; and so on). However, three addresses in particular men and women find more significant than others. Indeed, without them no offering would be complete. Those are: (1) the one on the day of the offering which is made by tossing meat to the cardinal points (pp. 173-174), (2) the one that follows which is made with the use of the whisk and beer (p. 179), (3) the one made the following morning during which meat and stiff sorghum are tossed at the same time (pp. 181-182). What I would like to argue is that these three central addresses are (1) male-coded, (2) female-coded, and (3) dual-gender-coded, respectively. The reason this is so, in brief, is that meat is to men as grain is to women. It works this way.

The first of these addresses, *kūtagangīla*, is always made by tossing meat. The address described above was made, as these addresses always are, immediately following the sacrifice of the animal. A grandson began, the granddaughter followed; both spoke, both tossed meat. This particular address, I will suggest, is male-coded and represents masculine components of the cosmos. The reason this is so has to do with the fact that meat is often owned and controlled by men—it is mainly men who own livestock and, with it, acquire women by paying bridewealth; it is also men who hunt, never women. Men and women alike seem to agree that livestock (and game), at least ideally, are 'men's business,' even if in reality some women own and control livestock as well. This being the case, it is wholly unsurprising that one of the grandson's jobs on the final day is to roast meat (p. 181), a substance that is, like males in other contexts, said to be hot, dry and hard. For these reasons we can see this first address (*kūtagangīla*) as supplying and activating masculine elements of the cosmos.

The second address, *kūlonga shalo*, always follows the ‘male’ address and is always made with the aid of a ritual whisk (*nsing’wanda*) that is dipped into a beer and water-filled bowl. This address I am suggesting is female-coded for the following reasons. Although men and women jointly work their fields, once the grain has made its way into the household grain bin a wife has almost total control over its allocation within and outside of the household.²⁶ With control of grain comes control over the production of beer (which women normally brew) as well as the Ihanzu staple upon which all must rely—stiff porridge. To a large extent then grain and its two principle by-products, beer and stiff porridge, are female-coded. Following this logic it is clear why the granddaughter, and not the grandson, must on the final day of the offering prepare stiff porridge (p. 181). Porridge and certainly beer are, like other things female, said to be soft and watery. It is for these reasons that I am suggesting this second address deals with the female elements of the cosmos.

Following this through to its logical conclusion we see that in the last significant address, the one made on the morning following the offering, each grandchild tosses a piece of meat *and* stiff porridge (p. 181-182). This final address, then, represents the dual-gendered combination of masculine (roasted meat) and feminine (transformed grain) elements of a gendered cosmos. Here, in the last noteworthy address of the offering, male (grandson) and female (granddaughter) are joined in a single address, as are their gendered substances, (masculine) meat and (feminine) porridge.²⁷ Grandson and granddaughter together embody and act out the principles of gender complementarity.

²⁶ On several occasions different men mentioned to me circumstances in which they were personally denied access to their own grainstores by their wives. Without exception, rather surprisingly perhaps, these men accepted (if sometimes reluctantly) and ultimately respected their wives’ verdicts. Many men portray themselves, often correctly, as domestically incompetent and therefore claim that in these contexts it is wise to respect their wives’ judgement. In this context but in few others, male informants agree that ‘women know best’.

²⁷ Although it may be tempting to see the jester’s address on the end of day one as enabling the conjoining of the grandchildren’s addresses on day two, it should be apparent that the jester’s role at these offerings differs considerably from his funerary role. In particular, the jester’s role is in this context more narrowly circumscribed—for one, although he mediates to some extent between the social and the asocial, human and divine, he invariably remains a *he*. Transvestism, in the context of ancestral offerings, is unheard of and would be a bizarre development indeed. In this instance, any concern with gender fusion with(in) the jester, in other words, is entirely lacking. Not himself an androgynous being, he is hardly in a position to mediate or collapse entirely the opposition between masculine (grandson) and feminine (granddaughter). True, as a universal mediator he may be capable of partially reducing the distance between gender categories, but there is no evidence in the context of these offerings that he eliminates altogether those differences, either within himself or between the granddaughter and grandson. On the contrary, the grandchildren and the symbolism their ritual actions evoke go to extremes to combine but to maintain distinctions between masculine and feminine principles.

But this is only the beginning. It is not only grandchildren who, acting together, bring about transformation by acting out ideal gender categories. On closer inspection, it appears that many people are involved in this project of combining gender opposites in significant ways.

Combining Masculine and Feminine Principles to Bring the Rain

Let us return briefly to a discussion of the seating arrangements at the offering (see Figure 5.1). Here, too, we find that people's positions metaphorically reproduce an idealised picture of gender relations. First, men remain 'on top,' women are situated 'under' them (This is reproduced among novices who sit, as a group, lower). At the extremes we find, on top, the male chief and underneath, the female chief. The male chief is therefore 'above' almost all others while the female chief remains most of the time 'below' all others.

Between the group of men (on top) and the women (underneath) is the fire, something that, as was mentioned in chapter four, is commonly used as a metaphor for sexual intercourse. Fire is a transformative agent, turning seeds into sustenance, and men and women into parents. The ritual fire starting implements which receive such great attention at these offerings also provide, as with bows and grinding stones, apt metaphors for masculine and feminine principles or a gendered Ihanzu universe. The fire-drill that is twirled round is 'active' and 'determined' and male; the short, stationary piece with a hole in it, the hearth, is passive and female (cf. Århem 1985: 13; Jacobson-Widding 1990: 68). An elderly man from Matongo pointed out that:

The long fire stick (*kilindī*) and the short one (*kiziga*) are like a man and his wife. The one on top is the man; the one underneath is his wife. Can one start a fire without the other? No. But if they work together, both of them, fire is born.

This is more than suggestive. Here we see that encoded in the spatial layout of the offering itself is a model of reproduction: men on top, women underneath, with a sexually transformative agent—fire—in-between them. The grandson and granddaughter together start this fire, alternating between holding the base and twirling the top stick. These grandchildren might be understood then as initiators of the combination of masculine and feminine elements, making it possible for the categories male and female to conjoin and effect transformation. This is further supported by the apparent care that is taken during the offering to use only the fire started by the grandchildren. From this fire the one at the base of the mountain is lit, and so are those on the various graves. This ensures that the gendered and generative properties of the fire are effective during the other rites.

That these rites are in the main about combining the two genders to bring about transformation is also evident in what ritual participants do *not* do. First, menstruating women (and the colour red) are not allowed to approach the ancestral caves during these offerings. This is entirely understandable, given that Ihanzu see menstrual blood as a sign of failed conception; and, of course, it is 'hot,' which thus further threatens the 'cool' state they are actively seeking.

Second, participants are prohibited from sitting on rocks and risk being fined, as one man was, if this prohibition is ignored. Though there are a lot of complex ideas about rocks in Ihanzu (ancestral caves, after all, are made of rocks) what appears relevant in this context is the commonly held notion that having sexual intercourse on rocks cannot lead to pregnancy. Informants were most unclear on the causal mechanism at work. A few speculated wildly on the topic, whereas most claimed they did not know why this was so. Of interest however, and in spite of the precise causal mechanism, is that this particular taboo links the sexual and social spheres of reproduction in a seemingly straightforward way. Having sex on a rock means no conception, just as sitting on rocks during ancestral offerings means no 'social conception.' Rocks somehow provide a solid barrier between humans and spirits through which fertility in any form simply cannot pass.

In sum, my argument is that these particular rites are in the main about gender complementarity. Through a complicated series of rites over several days, masculine and feminine elements of a gendered universe mingle, combine and re-combine in an effort to effect cosmological transformation. Grandsons and granddaughters co-operate to make 'male' addresses, and later come together to make 'female' addresses; finally they join forces in the grand finale and make a dual-gendered address to the spirits, a final attempt to unleash the gendered and generative powers of divinity. Other participants in the offering assist, by their very presence, in acting out the principle of gender complementarity that features so centrally in the Ihanzu cultural imagination. By placing themselves around a (gendered) fire, men on top and women beneath, ritual participants symbolically bring together male and female. By acting out this highly salient cultural theme, men and women attempt to unite and thus transform the cosmos. In the next chapter we shall see that this same model of gender complementarity is found somewhere that at first seems most unlikely—in a so-called 'ritual of rebellion.'

Rains Gone Bad, Women Gone Mad: Exegetical perspectives on a ‘ritual of rebellion’

‘RITUALS OF REBELLION in South-East Africa,’ Max Gluckman’s (1963) landmark paper, was first delivered as the 1952 Frazer Lecture and, since that time, similar rituals have been widely reported, discussed and analysed by Africanist anthropologists.¹ This chapter is about one such ritual that takes place in Ihanzu. There, in times of drought, women gather in the sub-village of Kirumi and carry out a rain dance under the leadership of the female ritual leader. During these rites women are granted extreme license and are expected to behave rather outrageously: they dance naked down the paths, they make lewd gestures, they sing obscene songs. If any unfortunate man happens to be caught in their path he is stripped of his clothes, carried triumphantly about the village naked and later fined a goat. Men who live in the area are, quite understandably, cheerless on these occasions and normally stay at home.

Before delving into the complex rites themselves however, it is first necessary to engage briefly with some of the anthropological literature on the topic. The aim of this first section, I should state clearly, is more theoretical than ethnographic. By teasing out some of the explanations offered by anthropologists for these rites, I intend to discuss the basis on which different interpretations ‘make sense,’ or more correctly, *to whom* they make sense. Following a detailed description of the Ihanzu rites, I will offer an explanation for the Ihanzu rites that draws extensively on Ihanzu cosmological notions discussed in previous chapters. For, as Beidelman’s rightly insists, ‘one must

¹ See, for example, Creider and Creider 1997; Jackson 1989; Llewelyn-Davies 1984; Spencer 1988: 198-209; Weil 1976. For Tanzania see Kaare 1995; Rigby 1968a; Snyder 1995; 1997. See, also, La Fontaine 1985 for a helpful overview and discussion of some related works.

understand the cosmology of the people involved so that one has some idea of what they themselves believe that they are doing with such ritual' (1966a: 374). What I will ultimately argue is that these Ihanzu rites are mainly about bringing masculine and feminine together to effect transformation, in this case, to bring the rains. Far from being a 'ritual of rebellion,' then, these rites are mainly about expressing gender complementarity.

'RITUALS OF REBELLION' AND THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Max Gluckman's well-known paper (1963) neatly sums up his approach to ritual and provides a useful point of departure for the purposes at hand. Responding to James Frazer's 'intellectualist' approach to notionally similar rites, and following some cursory praise to Frazer for his efforts, Gluckman advocates strongly a more sociological approach to explain these 'rituals of rebellion,' an approach which relates the rites in a more direct way to social structure. The idea of rebellion in particular seems to have captured Gluckman's imagination, for, as he himself puts it:

[W]hatever the ostensible purpose of the ceremonies, a most striking feature of their organization is the way in which they openly express social tensions: women have to assert licence and dominance as against their formal subordination to men, princes have to behave to the king as if they covet the throne, and subjects openly state their resentment of authority. Hence I call them rituals of rebellion (1963: 112).

He focuses his attention on two South African rituals, yet it is clear that Gluckman sees his approach as having much wider applicability.² Indeed, others have too (e.g., Spencer 1988: 198-209; Weil 1976).

In the first of his two examples, he discusses certain agricultural rites formerly carried out by Zulu women at the start of the each season. Through a complicated series of rites they praised one Nomkubulwana, a female spirit associated with fertility in general and rain in specific. Gluckman tells us this:

The most important of these rites...required obscene behaviour by the women and girls. The girls donned men's garments, and herded and milked the cattle, which were normally taboo to them. Their mothers planted a garden for the goddess far out in the veld, and poured a libation of beer to her. Thereafter this garden was neglected. At various stages of the ceremonies women and girls went naked, and sang lewd songs. Men and boys hid and might not go near (1963: 113).

² For the record, Gluckman's (1963: 112) report of the demise of the rites surround *Nomkhubulwana* seems to have been premature (cf. Krige 1968: 173; Berglund 1990: 254).

He goes on to contrast this ritual with everyday gender roles, which are highly unequal, women being legally, politically and economically subordinate to men (ibid.: 114ff). Thus, the reportedly patriarchal structure, one which at all other times favours men, is temporarily, through ritual, stood on end, allowing women for a brief period to become men, and men women; the oppressed becomes the oppressor and vice versa. While paying some heed to the complexity of the social and psychological mechanism at work, he ultimately suggests that these rites add up to an act of rebellion against the status quo, if an ultimately futile one.

His second example is the Swazi first-fruits ceremony (*incwala*); here, too, Gluckman finds rebellion, this time in the political arena (ibid.: 119ff). During these elaborate rites that could only be staged by the king himself, the king was taunted in song by his subjects, and further, was required to walk before them naked while the women wept. 'This ceremony is not a simple mass assertion of unity, but a stressing of conflict, a statement of rebellion and rivalry against the king, with periodical affirmations of unity with the king, and the drawing of power from the king' (ibid.: 125).

For both his examples Gluckman concludes, as any good Durkheimian must, that these rites do not in any way subvert the social structure but actually strengthen it. That is to say, for whatever else they may do, or for whatever else participants may actually think about them, Gluckman argues that all such rites function to release underlying social and psychological tensions, thus ultimately reinforcing the social structure. Paradoxically, then, these apparent rebellions do not threaten the current social order but bolster it. They are not revolutionary, but conservative.

The criticisms levelled against Gluckman and his approach are many and are, at this point, well-rehearsed. They scarcely require repetition here.³ Instead, I would like to raise a single query: 'To whom do these explanations make sense?' The answer, it seems to me, is a simple one—they make sense to Max Gluckman himself, and perhaps a few other anthropologists, though probably not to any of his informants. In fact, his explanation leaves no space whatsoever for local ideas about what people think they are doing.

A dropping of normal restraints, and inverted and transvestite behaviour, in which women were dominant and men suppressed, *somehow* were believed to achieve good for the community—an abundant harvest. Clearly a wealth of psychological and sociological—even physiological—mechanisms are contained in that 'somehow were believed to achieve good.' I have not time to enter into these mechanisms, of

³ For several pointed logical and theoretical criticisms see Norbeck 1963; Krige (1968: 184), on the other hand, offers some cogent criticisms of an ethnographic nature.

which indeed as yet we understand little. Here I stress only that the ceremonial operates seemingly by an act of rebellion, by an open privileged assertion of obscenity, by the patent acting of fundamental conflicts both in the social structure and in individual psyches (Gluckman 1963: 117-18; emphasis in original).

Clearly, Gluckman is here unconcerned with that local exegesis, turning his attention instead in a direction which no local would have directed him—the effects on the social structure. If these rites are, at least for those who perform them, really about insuring an abundant harvest, this information becomes strangely irrelevant for the structural-functional anthropologist who, by privileging social structure, privileges himself and his own explanatory models over local ones. He (or she) alone is uniquely qualified to see what the natives themselves cannot. Now, I do not wish to imply that these sorts of explanations are unhelpful or incorrect but only that they may approach the problem back to front. Does it not make better sense to begin with local cosmological understandings and explanations, and from them proceed to other, more 'etic' explanations?

If some Africanist scholars seem largely unconcerned with such issues and seem to take on board Gluckman's arguments and approach, sometimes with only minor modifications (Spencer 1988; Weil 1976), others have been more vexed by them and have insisted on taking Gluckman to task. Thomas Beidelman, for example, in a re-examination of the Swazi *incwala*, argued forcefully and convincingly that Gluckman's approach, concerned as it is with social structure and latent psychological functions, 'diverts attention from the main themes and purposes of such rites' (1966a: 374). After carefully unpacking Swazi cosmological notions and the *incwala* rites themselves, Beidelman finds that there is nothing inherently conflictual about them at all, as Gluckman would have us believe. In fact, from a culturalist perspective, we are told that 'the main theme of the *Incwala* is not rebellion or the expression of aggression and conflict, as Gluckman maintains, but the separation of the king from the various groups within his nation so that he is free and fit to assume the heavy supernatural powers of his office as king-priest of the nation' (ibid.: 401).⁴

The important point for our purposes is that Beidelman's 'making sense' is rather different from Gluckman's. The former attempts to place the meaning of the rites roundly in its cultural context, while the latter is concerned with latent psychological and social functions of which the actors themselves appear entirely unaware and unconcerned. Beidelman's culturalist explanations, then, are bound to produce meanings that at least stand a chance of making sense to ritual participants, while

⁴ See also Rigby 1968a on the Gogo.

Gluckman's do not afford such luxuries. Beginning with local exegesis may not be a revolutionary suggestion, yet it is one that has been significantly downplayed—or simply ignored—by many structural-functional anthropologists like Gluckman.

But neither are culturalist explanations without their shortcomings. As Gluckman himself pointed out—and rightly so—informants themselves often remain silent on the very issues about which we would wish them to speak. A few extreme cases aside (e.g., Turner 1967: ch. 6), when faced with a battery of queries about the meaning of rituals, ethnographers must continually deal with the ubiquitous responses: 'I don't know;' 'Because we have always done it that way;' 'Because our parents and their parents did it that way,' and so on. Such 'exegesis' leaves precious little space for the production of 'anthropological meaning,' if by that we mean finding sense which makes sense to locals and anthropologists alike. A persistent paucity of local exegesis need not leave us theoretically bankrupt however. Other scholars have found ways round this impasse, which is perhaps more apparent than real.

Beginning with Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), another approach to these sorts of rituals is one that pays careful attention to, as the book title suggests, practical activities (Jackson 1989). Here, 'meaning' is not found in social structures, in cultural discourses nor anywhere else. Instead, the meaning is in the performance; a ritual—so-called rituals of rebellion and others too—has meaning because it *does* something, not because its meaning can be articulated. Rituals may be 'good to think,' as culturalists would maintain, but they are especially 'good to act.'

This approach, as should be evident, offers a subtle critique of both of the foregoing—the sociological and the intellectualist/cultural one—in that its aims are more modest. In particular, by focusing on bodily practices and ritual performances, scholars have attempted to avoid pushing analytic (and often ethnocentric) frameworks to the point of absurdity. To put it another way, a singular focus on practice is an attempt to avoid flagrant over-interpretation, a move 'against undue abstraction in ethnographic analysis' (Jackson 1989: 134). Like culturalist interpretations, those concerned with practice begin with local understandings of what ritual participants are doing. Those understandings, however, need not be verbalised, nor is this always possible. 'Meaning' here largely goes without saying. To explain 'the meaning' of any rites, then, demands not verbal exegesis, but a re-performance of the rites in question.

After a discussion of the Ihanzu female rain dance, I will use a combination of culturalist and practice approaches to explain these rites. The reasons I find these approaches particularly attractive is that they offer the potential, in a way others do not, of finding meaning where ritual performers themselves find meaning—in what they

say, and also in what they do. As I will argue in chapter eight, locally generated theories may, in fact, prove to be comparative ones as well, and may apply broadly to situations well beyond the immediate localities from which they come. But let us first turn our attention to the Ihanzu women's rain dance.

THE IHANZU RAIN DANCE

The woman's rain dance, called *isimpūlya*, is always performed in Kirumi, normally either in January or February, though only in those years when the rains have failed completely. Since the rainy season normally begins in November, it is fairly obvious by January—and certainly by February—whether the year is going to be a wet one or not. The ritual's aim, participants and others claim, is straightforwardly to bring rain to the country.

As we saw in chapter three, it is first and foremost the male chief and his male rainmaking assistants who are responsible for bringing rain each year, a feat they accomplish with the aid of the Kirumi rainshrine and the sacred rainstones that are kept inside the shrine. There, too, the female chief plays a role, one which was until the 1960s active, but is now almost purely an element of the popular imagination. It is only when these rites at the rainshrine fail, as evidenced by no rain, that the women take over and begin preparations for their rain dance. While both years I was there it was the females who took the initiative to begin their rain dance, I was told that the male chief, too, occasionally asks the women to do so. My discussion will be mainly about the 1994 dance I attended though the 1995 dance was nearly identical in structure, as were the individual rites.⁵

Once begun, the female rain dance usually lasts two days. It may however carry on for several, depending mostly on whether the rains have begun to fall. As soon as the rains begin—or it seems likely that they may—the women may safely return to their homes knowing that the royal ancestors have heard their requests. In 1994 the rain dance was spectacularly successful: the general air of debauchery carried on for two days before the rains seemed near. The women stopped dancing, returned to their respective villages and on the third day, miraculously I thought, the rains poured down. For the

⁵ I was allowed to attend both the 1994 and 1995 dances after negotiating and paying the women a 20 litre bucket of beer each year. I saw many though not all the rites and I will try to indicate those that I did see, and those I did not, as I proceed.

record, the 1995 dance did not immediately bring the rains as it seemed to have done the year before.

Participants: Chiefs, *Ataata* and Fertile Females

As described in chapter three, the male chief has a group of rainmaking assistants known as *ataata*; it is they who work for, and are directly answerable to, the male chief. There is a parallel structure of female rainmakers, a group of women who fall under the ritual authority of the female chief. They, too, are called *ataata*. It is these female assistants, each from a different village, who spread the word that a rain dance is to take place in Kirumi on a certain day.

Any woman who has borne at least one child may participate in the dance. Infertile women (*agumba*; sing. *mugumba*) should not participate since, as one old woman explained to me, 'They are counted the same as men, they don't have any fertility.' This is not invariably true though. Infertile women are generally prohibited from attending, but if the older initiated women agree (and they often do), an infertile woman may pay a fee of a cow to remove the taboo (*kūheja miko*) and then attend the dance. The barren woman, for her part, then stands a chance of conceiving and bearing a child at a later date. Under no circumstances may menstruating women participate in these dances as this is said to threaten the well-being of the participants and is likely to ruin the dance itself, and hence stop the rains for good. Menstrual blood is decidedly dangerous during these rain-related rites, though there are few menstrual taboos in everyday life.⁶

There are four groups into which the women divide themselves, based mainly on seniority. The oldest women (*akombi nīakūlū*), those who have attended the dance many times and are thus regarded as experts, are responsible for the preparation of certain medicines and for singing and playing a ritually significant buffalo horn drum called *mbilū* which they always play with a *mūlama* (*Combretum molle*) branch. It is they, too, who prepare castor-seed oil (*mono*) and a sorghum mix that is eaten by all.

⁶ Menstrual blood in this context is seen as a sign of failed fertility and, because of its colour, is associated with lightning. Informants told me that were a menstruating woman to participate in the dance, the 'medicine' would be ruined, leading either to no rain or destructive lightning strikes. For the record, menstruating women are scarcely affected by menstrual taboos in everyday life. They may farm, cook and mind the children and house as they normally do. Women are never confined during menstruation, and menstrual blood itself is, in mundane contexts, almost never threatening. It can, so informants maintained, be used by witches to make the woman from which it came infertile.

The second senior group (*akombi nīakete īntepe*) generally organises the labour of the younger women. These women are fairly senior, and understand the 'correct' ritual procedure reasonably well.

The third group is called *adamu*; they are the primary dancers. These women have all attended the dance previously and are responsible for instructing those who have never before attended the dance. They also do most of the work, fetching water and cutting firewood.

The final and youngest group is made up of novices, those young women (*iyombwe*) who are attending the dance for the first time. Each novice brings with her a small amount of sorghum that will be cooked and eaten by all as boiled sorghum (*mpeke ya ilo*).

In addition to these four groups of women there is one outstanding individual who deserves mention: the female chief. She is named Ng'welu and is a member of the senior women's group (*akombi nīakūlū*). It is she who is in charge of the dance. Much as Chief Omari orchestrates rites at the rainshrine, so Ng'welu does the same for the rain dance. Throughout the rain dance participants are based at her home in Kirumi; there they sleep, eat, gossip and paint themselves with medicines.

Other important women on this occasion (though together they do not form a named group) are mothers who have given birth to twins; these women have their own distinct tasks during the ceremony that I will discuss in a moment.

Finally, some men are also allowed to take part in the ceremonies—those who have sired twins. No men participated in these rites the two years I was there but I met about a half dozen who had done so on previous occasions. Several informants also claimed that the male chief could, if he wished, participate. Chief Omari, for his part, told me that this might be true but that he had no interest in doing so.

Setting the Stage

The rain dance to be described took place in January 1994, nearly a month after Omari and his male rainmaking assistants had prepared their rain medicines at the rainshrine but to no avail. People had begun to worry seriously, and not without good cause: if the rains are delayed severely and do not begin until late January or early February, the opportunity to plant sorghum—or almost anything else for that matter—is irretrievably lost. In short, it will be a famine year. Rain, a topic of discussion at any time of the year, became a near obsessive daily preoccupation. When visitors from the other side

of Ihanzu arrived people always asked, after going through their lengthy but never omitted greetings, whether there was any rain at home; the answer was invariably in the negative.

As the situation worsened and the rains still refused to fall, people from several villages were publicly accused of bewitching the rains. Rain-witch trials began in Kirumi and several suspected witches were fined for their alleged socially deplorable behaviour. A few less fortunate of the accused were expelled from their communities (see chapter seven).

It was against this background that in the beginning of January the female chief, Ng'welu, suggested to her brother that it was high time the women began their rain dance. He agreed.

The First Day

Acquiring and preparing anti-witchcraft medicines

Women began arriving in Kirumi, some from as far as fifteen miles away, in preparation for the dance that would begin the following day. Each novice brought with her a small amount of sorghum from her home that would later be cooked and eaten. All slept at the female chief's homestead.

The first morning at about half past seven, led by the female chief, Ng'welu, ten senior women all dressed in black wraps danced and sang their way to Chief Omari's homestead. There they sat for a short time while Ng'welu conversed quietly with her brother, the male chief, formalising arrangements for the dance to begin. Omari collected and gave his sister some medicine (*makota*), and the women spiritedly sang and danced their way out of his homestead, down the path and into the bush.

This medicine is put onto dancers and is buried in holes around the dance ground to protect the dancers against witches; on the last day, women use this medicine to prepare 'holy water' in which all the participants bathe before they return home.

It is significant, I think, that there is no rain medicine per se used during their dance, as is used by the men, for example, at the rainshrine. The only medicine used is that given to them by the male chief, the purpose of which is to ward off witchcraft attacks. The implications of this will become clear below.

The old women arrived at a large clearing just on the outskirts of Kirumi, 'in the bush' (*mihaka*), informants told me. Other younger women, mainly *adamu*, soon followed until their numbers had swelled to about thirty. The aim of this first trip into the bush is to prepare the area against possible witchcraft attacks that might damage the participants and threaten the efficacy of the dance.

I was told that the mothers of twins, using the tips of the buffalo horn drums, began digging small holes about a foot apart around the perimeter of the dance ground. They dropped small amounts of the medicine into these holes. The earth was returned to the each hole and members of the *adamu* group then, after disrobing, seated themselves naked over the top of each hole, and while singing, bounced over the holes to pack down the earth. Other *adamu* apparently removed their clothes and were dancing naked around the dance ground while this was going on. When the entire dance ground had been ringed with medicines and each hole had been packed down by each naked woman, they put on their clothes and danced and sang in their characteristic single file back to the female chief's house (see Plate 6.1).

At each cross-path (*mīnsambwa anzīla*) leading to the female chief's house the women stopped and buried some medicine. I saw these rites. Members of the *adamu* group then packed down the earth, as on the dance ground, with the aid of their naked backsides. This protects all paths leading to the house against witches who, given their perversely evil dispositions, might follow. A few women commented that this process also helps attract the rains.

Once back at the house the elderly women began to dab each participant with medicine. This is protective medicine that purportedly protects women against witches. The women also painted those infants which some women were carrying on their backs with medicines, as they are thought exceptionally easy prey of diabolically determined witches.

Anointing drums and snakes

Now afternoon, with all the participants wearing their freshly applied protective medicines, the women set off for their witch-proof dance ground. Along the path they praised the ancestors in song and dance, as they did for the two days of the ceremony whenever they made a trip into the bush. They sang a few lewd songs as well (see below). On this particular trip they took with them castor-oil seeds (*mono*), the sorghum brought by the novices, two ritually significant water-filled, long-necked gourds (*mūmbū*), two half-gourds (*lūkulu*), two small earthen pots (*shūngū*), a pestle

(*mūtoangīlo*) and mortar (*itūlī*), a few small baskets (*itoto*; sing. *kītoto*) from which to eat the sorghum mixture and a burning piece of firewood with which they would later light a fire.

Once at the dance ground, the senior women continued banging furiously on their buffalo horn drum and singing while other women went to fetch water and cut firewood. Others, including all initiates, removed their black cloth wraps and continued dancing.

The women later returned with the firewood and water and some of the older women started a fire. The elderly women then began a rather lengthy process of preparing castor-seed oil: roasting, grinding with the pestle and mortar and then boiling the seeds until the oil could be skimmed off and put into the long-necked gourds. While this was going on, other senior women boiled the sorghum. All ate the sorghum mix. When all had eaten and the oil was ready, they all departed for Mount Ng'waūngu.

Ng'waūngu, besides being the tallest boulder-strewn hill in Kirumi, is also perhaps the most sacred place for the royal *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan members: this is the location where their ancestral spirits meet. Specifically, there are two caves on the hill—Mūmbau and Nkonzele—and it is these sites where the royal clan-section holds its ancestral offerings (*mapolyo*) when clan-section members become ill, or during drought (see chapter five). As is true with all sacred clan caves, anyone who enters without going through the proper ritual preparations may go mad, blind or even die. This results directly from the malevolence of the ancestral spirits. While men and women sometimes carry out ancestral offerings just outside these caves, it is only the women who are allowed to enter into them. At other times the caves remain sealed up with cut trees. These particular caves may be understood as the female equivalent of the (male) rainshrine (*mpilimo*), the women's 'high court' for dealing with the ancestral spirits in matters of rain.

The name of the first cave, Mūmbau, is in the Ihanzu language the name for several ancient drums, each about 8 feet tall, that are inside the cave. Most people are unclear as to their precise origin, saying simply that they were there when the Ihanzu people first entered the country. Other such drum-filled caves around Ihanzu hold no significance for the royal *Anyampanda* lineage.

When the women arrived at Mūmbau on this evening, Ng'welu, the female chief, entered first, leaving her clothes at the entrance. She entered with the gourds of castor oil prepared on the dance ground, began addressing the ancestors and anointing the drums with the oil. When she finished, a few other royal *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan

members, after leaving their clothes at the entrance, entered and began their addresses to the spirits. They, too, anointed the drums with castor-oil. When they finished, the women left the cave, donned their clothes and proceeded to the second cave, Nkonzele, which is located on the same mountain not far from the first.

There are no drums in Nkonzele but there is another notable attraction that is never missing from people's accounts: an enormous snake. Everyone involved in rain dances, and even those who are not, has heard about the snake that lives in Nkonzele. There are several other ancestral caves around Ihanzu in which snakes allegedly live and all seem to agree that while we see them as mere reptiles, they are really ancestral spirits.

Late one afternoon, I was walking along a path with an elderly man who was trying to explain this to me, how an animal or spirit can be one and many at the same time. 'Do you see this tree,' he said. 'Let's say this tree is the tree of the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi*.' Then pointing to the tree's flowers and leaves he asked if I saw them, which I readily affirmed. 'Those leaves and flowers are like individuals,' he continued, 'each one is an Ihanzu, each one is a member of the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi*. And let's say that one of these leaves has a problem. Where does it go? Of course it goes there,' he said, theatrically gesticulating at the base of the tree. 'All the leaves and all the flowers are individuals but they all come from one base, one seed, just there at the bottom. That is your snake in the cave.' Others share his view.

When the women entered Nkonzele they again entered naked, leaving their clothes at the entrance. Ng'welu was the first to enter, and she began her address to the spirits. I was told she approached the snake (i.e., ancestral spirits), anointed its head with oil and then its body. None of the other women approached the snake but they instead addressed the ancestors from a respectful distance. They put on their clothes when they finished and left the cave.

Being male, I was not allowed to go to the caves during the ceremony and so did not see the actual addresses to the ancestors or the anointing of the snake. The snake, people claim, is assuredly a python, a rare snake in Ihanzu and the only auspicious one. I have my doubts, however, as to whether there is really a snake there at all, as I have myself entered many caves during ancestral offerings where snakes (always pythons) allegedly live. To date, I have seen none. In spite of this fact, rather extraordinary stories customarily circulated around Ihanzu after these same offerings concerning our fearless encounters with implausibly large reptilian creatures. This is not as puzzling as it seems. One thoughtful young man remarked:

The snakes in the caves that everyone talks about, well, they're there, but they're not there. You see, it is sort of like Jesus for the Christians. Now who has seen Jesus? No one. But no Christian with a brain would claim he isn't there.

What this man is suggesting is that the python is a physical manifestation of the royal *Anyampanda* spirits themselves. And since everyone knows that the spirits meet in these caves, it logically follows that the snake must live in the cave, or at the very least make an occasional visit. Whether the python is there at any given time or not is, for all practical purposes, irrelevant.

When the women left the cave, they began collecting firewood on the mountain, something that at all other times is strictly forbidden. This prohibition holds for all sacred ancestral sites—no trees may be cut in the area until there is an ancestral offering involved, at which time it is required. Just before sundown, the women danced and sang their way back to Ng'welu's house, carrying on their heads the firewood that they would burn that night.

The women stoked their fires, rested for several hours and then, after disrobing once again, began dancing, first at the house and later in the bush. They made their way to the rainshrine where they danced just outside, asking the *Anyampanda* ancestral spirits for rain again.

If the flavour of many of the songs in their repertoire is obscene—and it manifestly is—their dancing undeniably expresses this. Several women told me that at night novice girls were made to dance lewdly around the rainshrine, each gripping one of its outer posts 'like huge penises.'⁷ This apparently goes on at most, if not all, of these dances. Though I did not see this, I was also told by a few women that many other dances, especially those performed at night, were concerned with working female dancers up into an orgasmic frenzy.⁸ The significance of this I will discuss presently.

Until about four in the morning the women danced determinedly around Kirumi, into the bush and back again, up and down almost every path, singing their songs and beating their ominous-sounding buffalo horn drum.

⁷ The association of house posts with penises is not unique to the Ihanzu; the matrilineal Ngulu (Beidelman 1964a: 379-380) and Kaguru (Beidelman 1973: 143, 1993: 39) also draw these parallels.

⁸ Virginia Hole (personal communication) confirms this point.

The Final Two Days

On the second day of the dance, the women from the outlying areas continued to arrive at Kirumi. Men at this point stayed well away from Ng'welu's house which was now full of women, perhaps sixty or seventy, from all over Ihanzu. Since they had danced most of the night, the women slept for much of the day.

Later that day the women came out of the compound, dropped their clothes and began to sing their obscene songs boisterously as they paraded around the area, making lewd gestures and yelling obscenities (see Plate 6.2). Men vanished.

Just before sundown, the women danced naked and sang their way into the bush for the last time and there they carried on for much of the night. After returning to Ng'waūngu where they again addressed the ancestral spirits, and anointed the drums and snake, the women—at around three in the morning—returned to Ng'welu's house, donned their clothes and slept.

The following morning, now the third day, the women arose, and prepared for their return journeys home. The weather had changed for the better—clouds were forming and there were some light showers—so it was clear their rain dance had been a success, the royal spirits had heard, and taken to heart, their requests.

Before their return home all the women bathed in some of the medicated water that they say is to protect them on their journeys home and afterwards. In the water the women use the anti-witchcraft medicine given them on the first day by the male chief. After being medicated, the women returned to Ng'welu's house for the last time to sweep out the rubbish (*kūzola mpaala*) and then set off on their individual journeys, each village group of women going in separate directions.

The only restriction on this journey was that the women were not allowed to bathe until they reached their homes since this would prematurely remove the women's medicines from their bodies, thus threatening their own vitality and the efficacy of the dance itself. In fact, I was told, the women should not bathe for three days. On the day following the dance, which is known as *ikali*, carrying out any heavy labour like farming is prohibited.

Obscene Songs

Rain dances have a colossal repertoire of songs, some of which are transcribed, together with the women's commentary, in Appendix F. These songs the women sing



Plate 6.1. Senior women returning to the female ritual leader's homestead

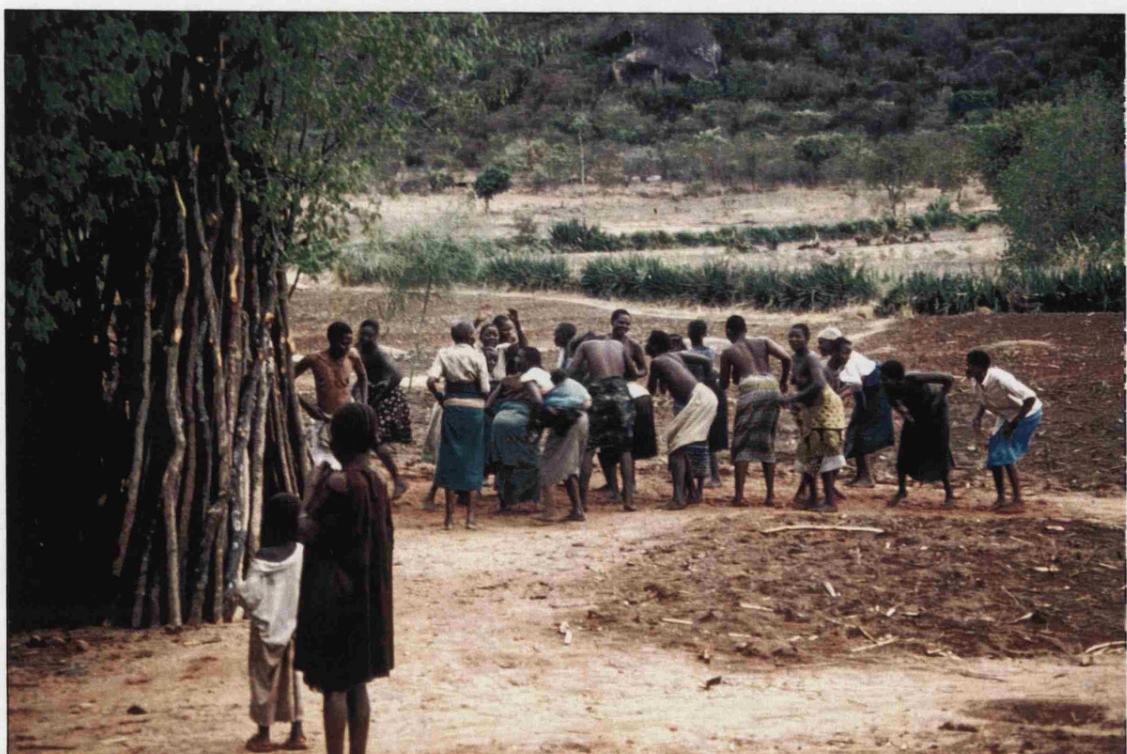


Plate 6.2. Women carrying out their rain dance

not only at rain dances but also during female fertility rites (*mīlīmū*) and twin life-cycle rituals. All songs have two parts: a lead and a chorus. A lead singer begins the songs and the others then echo the chorus. For example, in one song the lead sings: 'Let the rain clouds of Omari come.' The rest of the women, the chorus, reply, 'Let them come, let them come.' The lead then replaces 'Omari,' the current male chief, with former chiefs (male and female) and other significant royal clan figures of the past.

If there are many tame songs that are in the main about asking the royal spirits for rain, there are countless more that are full of sexual innuendoes and peppered with obscenities. Others are patently male-abusive. One song, for example, that the women sang repeatedly over the two day period consists of only one line that they repeat time and again: *Ilūga ikalamūku lagiiye īmbula kūnia*. That is, 'The penis is dried up and worthless; it stops the rain from shitting down.' It may be worth pointing out that men rarely use these strong words, and if they do it is only amongst themselves; women (so they tell me) do not normally use these words at all. Topics of other songs are similarly intriguing: super-powerful clitorises that heal female bodies, immense penises that threaten to split women in half during sexual intercourse, and copulating monkeys to name but a few. While some of these songs are blatantly obscene, as the Ihanzu themselves point out, many others are less obviously so and contain only oblique references to male and female genitalia, fornication and giving birth.⁹ Again, see Appendix F for more details.

Although some of the songs are, if you listen to the lyrics alone, seemingly about praising the spirits, about asking for rain, even these songs are spotted with periodic and spontaneous verbal abuse, a fact I discovered when later listening to my tapes to re-check my transcriptions. So while the women may in lyric be asking the long dead chief Kali for rain, they may at the same time be yelling 'cunt!' or 'have you seen a large penis lately?' at the top of their lungs. These taunts, according to the women, are not directed against the unfortunate dead chief about whom they are singing but simply fit neatly with the spirit of the dance. The idea seems to be to hurl sexual obscenities indiscriminately, concerning penises, vaginas or the two together having, or failing to have, sexual intercourse. Why this might be so will become clear presently.

⁹ The prominence of obscene songs in various fertility and other rites has been noted across East and Southern Africa. See, for example, Beidelman's (1964a: 382-4) brief re-analysis of Ngulu songs collected by Cory (1956) and his notes on Kaguru songs (Beidelman 1973: 137-9); Krige (1968) on the Zulu; Evans-Pritchard (1929) on many groups.

Men's Attitudes

Men's attitudes about the rain dance are here worth mentioning since I have so far ignored them entirely. First, since they are not directly involved, men in Ihanzu are most unclear about what the women are actually getting up to during their dance; in many cases they claim to know nothing at all, except that it is dangerous—not to mention downright stupid—to interfere with the women on this occasion. (This does not apply of course to the fathers of twins or the male chief who are not threatened by or excluded from these activities).

No men were anywhere in sight during most of the dance, especially on the second day when the numbers had swelled and the flavour of most of the songs had turned threatening. (This statement I must qualify and say no males except one patently nervous anthropologist who had given a stately bucket of beer so he would not be unduly abused).

The men I later spoke to, many of whom stayed at home during the dance, had horror stories to tell about the atrocities these women had committed during former rain dances. One most unfortunate Kirumi man a few years back had followed his wife to a rain dance, angry that she had not informed him before leaving the house. When he arrived at the female chief's house and saw the naked women dancing around, they seized him, stripped him of his clothes and then paraded him naked around the village until late into the night. Women and men alike made much of the fact that they 'played' with this man, much against his will, pulling mercilessly on his penis and hurling him about high over the naked women's heads like a beach ball. Later he was fined one goat. The general consensus is that this hapless man has since that day not been the same—understandably I think—that he has gone insane since he learned the women's secrets. Both men and women point out that this is the logical consequence of men seeing the women dance: you either go completely mad or you turn, irreversibly, into an idiot. You may even die. Not surprisingly perhaps, men in the Kirumi area were not keen to leave their houses on these particular days.¹⁰

In men's explanations, one topic that came up time and again was that these women were somehow like witches (*alogi*). They were evil, through and through, and were on this occasion almost entirely unpredictable. In some consequential respects they simply failed to adhere to the normal codes of behaviour, for men or women. When I

¹⁰ It is worth noting that since this dance takes place in Kirumi, the taboos surrounding it do not directly affect anyone living outside the sub-village. Actual incidents of violence against men, while pointedly recalled and perhaps greatly exaggerated, are few in number. They appear more imagined than real.

confronted several dance participants with this news, they smiled wryly and either said nothing, or confirmed these views.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND LOCAL EXPLANATIONS

As was shown at the outset of this chapter, there are a variety of ways these types of rites have been interpreted by anthropologists. My own intention, as was already alluded to, is to begin with local explanations and leave aside the issue of social structure that have attracted the attention of not a few analysts like Gluckman (1963), Spencer (1988) and Weil (1976). This I do, not because social structure is irrelevant, but because I am attempting specifically to arrive at an explanation that is more in line with what informants say and do, one that is based more on local knowledge. Local exegesis at the very least provides us with a common ground—common ground, that is, between ethnographer and ritual performers—from which to begin our analysis. On this note, Peter Rigby's work merits careful consideration since it is in some senses very similar to my own, as are the people with whom he worked, the Gogo of Tanzania.

A Look at Local Explanations

Rigby (1968a) found that among the Gogo, women periodically carry out what he calls rituals of reversal. In these rites, which come about whenever the ritual state of the country turns sour, women dress as men, wield sticks and other offensive weapons, sing obscenities and steal and herd men's cattle, among other things. Men, for the three days of the ritual, remain at home, confined to the female domain. To explain this, Rigby turns from a Gluckman type sociological approach to a more cosmological, cultural one.

The Gogo, so claims Rigby, imagine time to be divided into two: good time and bad time. Good, auspicious time is that experienced when women, cattle and crops all prosper and multiply; bad, inauspicious time is precisely the opposite, those periods when women, cattle and crops are diseased and dying. Life, then, is a perpetual alternation from good time to bad and back again. Rigby's intriguing suggestion is that through a series of systematic gender reversals—through women behaving as men and men behaving as women—Gogo women attempt to reverse misfortune by reversing

time and the cosmic state of the universe in the bargain. In other words, when life goes bad, play it back to front and it will become good again.

While Rigby's argument is somewhat seductive and indeed move well beyond structural-functional explanations in their stronger forms, his notion of bi-polar, reversible time (which he borrowed from Leach) is, for the Ihanzu case anyway, of very dubious value. The trouble is that none of my informants could confirm this view, even in its mildest form at a cosmological level. Time in Ihanzu goes in one direction and one direction only—onward into the future—and does not alternate between poles, repeat, go in circles or move about in any other highly irregular geometric fashion.¹¹ So while some of Rigby's informants may have found time to alternate back and forth between good and bad, auspicious and inauspicious, thus making time and the state of the country in some sense reversible, the men and women in Ihanzu with whom I spoke did not, making this particular explanation, elegant though it may be, inappropriate for the Ihanzu. The Gogo and Ihanzu may be close geographically, but cosmologically speaking the two groups appear to be rather distant. To explain the Ihanzu rain dance my focus, like Rigby's, will be on indigenous cosmological ideas and actions though my conclusions will differ markedly.

From understand these rites from an Ihanzu perspective, it will be helpful to outline in some detail two separate cosmological principles. The first of these may be stated baldly as follows: 'like attracts like.' This principle, for which I claim no originality, was reported by Monica Wilson (1957: 10) concerning the Nyakyusa of Tanzania over thirty years ago, and others, in slightly different forms, have found this to be true in other places.¹² Let us begin by way of example to get a better understanding of how this principle works in Ihanzu.

When it comes to ancestral spirits in general, and rainmaking in particular, the Ihanzu are explicit about proper ritual conduct. The colour black is auspicious in all ritual contexts; it is the preferred colour for clothing and sacrificial animals. Interestingly, the reason invariably given for this colour choice is that it is the same colour as rain clouds. The idea here is that one form of black invites another. As we have seen throughout this

¹¹ Having said that, a few of my informants *did* speculate that perhaps in Europe *we* might be able to reverse time or to make it stop outright and that it was only they themselves who were quite unable to master this feat.

¹² Ten Raa (1969: 50-1) gives several examples of this principle among the Sandawe of Tanzania. Klima points out that 'like produces like' among the Barabaig (1970: 47). See also Herbert (1993: 85-6) for a discussion of a slightly different though related principle—like *affects* like—in the context of smelting and menstruation in Africa. The idea of likes somehow affecting each other, either positively or negatively, may, of course, be ultimately traced to Frazer's principle of 'the logic of similarities' (Frazer 1913: 52-174).

thesis, in all rainmaking activities, be they female rain dances, ancestral offerings or rainmaking at the rainshrine, people wear black. And black animals are almost always chosen over others for sacrifice. Black is cool and brings life-giving waters which cool the land.

If black sacrificial animals and the wearing of black clothing attract black rain clouds, things red anger the spirits and cause red things to be drawn near. By all counts the colour red is ritually dangerous and may under no circumstances be considered auspicious.¹³ This colour is often said to be 'hot' (*lupyu*), 'sharp' or 'fierce' (-*taki*). Most things red are dangerous in some contexts—menstrual blood, bloodshed from war, red clothing, lightning, red lights on anthropologists' cassette tape recorders. If someone were to wear red during an ancestral offering, or menstruate during a female rain dance, people say lightning storms would soon appear and destroy people and livestock, crops and homes. For the same reason, brown/red animals are wholly unacceptable as sacrificial ones. Red, thus, like black, attracts itself; or more correctly, it attracts other things that are of the same class of 'fierce' or 'hot' objects. Thus red hats do not attract more red hats but they do attract red lightning. Heat brings on more heat.

White is largely an auspicious colour though it does not raise the same strong and unequivocal feelings in people as do black and red. Black and red signify good and evil respectively; white is neither strongly negative nor positive. People explicitly connect white in the ritual context with clouds though only those other than black rain clouds. A few I spoke with drew a connection, after a bit of prodding, between the colour white, semen and breast milk. This is not pervasive though. Others made a connection between white and death, as this is normally the colour of the shroud in which a corpse is wrapped before burial. Overall then, while white is nearly neutral in terms of its emotive value, it still holds that white things attract each other.

There are other ways people classify objects in ritual contexts besides by colour, namely, by attributes. Trees are a case in point. For their selection in numerous ritual contexts people focus not on their colour—most trees are, after all, green—but instead on the sorts of attributes they possess.

Trees tend to be lumped into two mutually exclusive and diametrically opposed categories which might be glossed in English as 'cool,' 'gentle' trees (*mītī nī mīpolo*)

¹³ Compare Kaguru notions of the colour red and blood which are at once life-threatening and life-giving (Beidelman 1963a: 328-9; 1993: 37-8) as it is for their neighbours, the Ngulu (Beidelman 1964a: 374-5).

and 'hot,' 'sharp' trees (*mītī mitaki*). The former are desirable for rainmaking and appeasing the ancestral spirits at other times too; the latter are never used in ritual contexts as they are likely to anger spirits and ruin the chances of getting any rain. While there are countless species in these two classes, the characteristics that place any given tree roundly into one class or the other are clear. Cool trees are generally large, deciduous shade trees that grow in cool spots like river beds. Hot trees most generally have few leaves, they often grow in hot, dry areas and most importantly, they have thorns. Even the firewood used during all rites dealing with ancestral spirits must be of the cool type, never the hot.¹⁴ Whatever else all this may mean, the point is that 'cool' trees attract cool rains while 'hot' trees do not and are more likely to attract 'hot' lightning. Like attracts like.

To push this a bit further, there are some ritual contexts in which colour and attributes are used in combination. For example a black sheep is the preferred sacrificial animal not only for its blackness, but also for its gentle character. People say that gentle sheep bring gentle rains. So black sacrificial sheep are, in a sense, a ruminant double bonus. Goats, on the other hand, given their wildly unpredictable and troublesome nature no matter what their colour, are almost never used as sacrificial animals since they would presumably return the same unruly weather.¹⁵

The main point I am trying to drive home is that in ritual contexts we can see the 'like for like' principle at work. Black clothes, bodies and sheep bring black rain clouds; red clothes, menstrual blood and fighting blood bring lightning and destructive stormy weather; white attracts ordinary white rainless clouds. Gentle, cool things like sheep and certain shade trees bring like qualities in rains. In all cases it is clear that in the ritual sphere, whether good or bad in nature, similar things attract each other. Having spelt out the dynamics of this first proposition, I should like to move on to the second. This will require we move through some different cosmological terrain, more particularly, that associated with Ihanzu concepts of the person and some of the conceptual differences between male and female bodies.

¹⁴ The Gogo similarly divide trees into two distinct categories that correspond fairly exactly to the Ihanzu divisions (Rigby 1966: 9). The Sandawe, like the Ihanzu, appear to have a class of cool trees (Ten Raa 1969: 41) as do the Turu (Jellicoe 1978: 80) and Maasai (Spencer 1988: 205). I do not wish to give the impression that tree symbolism in Ihanzu is as complex as Victor Turner (e.g., 1967: ch. 9) found it to be amongst the Ndembu; though I relentlessly interrogated people about tree preferences in different ritual contexts, I failed to discover any maniacally elaborated Ndembu-like arboreal classification system. There seems to be nothing inherently interesting or thought provoking to the Ihanzu about the bitter taste of some trees, whether they exude white latex-like sap, the stringiness of their bark or any other peculiarity.

¹⁵ The association between black animals (particularly sheep), rain and rain clouds is nearly universal, the references far too many to mention.

It is a common assertion in Ihanzu, one might even say a fact, that women's bodies are wet (*atotu*) while men's bodies are dry (*akalamūku*). We can thus set up a suspiciously neat dichotomy that will become my second proposition—female:wet::male:dry.¹⁶ Let me make a few remarks about what it means to be wet and dry, since this distinction is at the crux of the matter.

The adjective suffix *-totu*, as applied to women or anything else, implies a certain watery quality. It may in some cases be translated as 'raw' (as with eggs), 'soft' (as with meat or body flesh) or 'damp' (as with grass or soil). Without exception, however, moisture must be present in some form for something to be considered *-totu*; something *-totu* can never be dry.

Women are said to have been created in the beginning by God with more water in their bodies than men, and they remain that way to the present. This is necessarily a good thing, as water is said to be cooling, a life force and it allows a woman to give birth. People explicitly state that it is women's vaginas that put them into a category of wet things. Water, as we saw in chapter four, is fertility. Ihanzu women are therefore by nature considered in some sense more fertile than are Ihanzu men; and this fertility is built-in, 'embodied' one might say, into the very fabric of male and female bodies themselves.

Men are dry, comparatively speaking anyway, though this is not so in an absolute sense; they, too, have watery bodies, though their waters are minimal compared with those of women. The adjective *-kalamūku* implies a certain waterless (and often lifeless or useless) quality and almost always has negative connotations. It may be used to describe land (*ihī nkalamūku*) in which case it means barren or dried out. It may also be used to describe a phenomenally filthy person (*mūntū nūmūkalamūku*), that is, one who never bathes, one who remains at a distance from water. When applied to the entire male universe it is always negative—or at least it implies a water-deficiency, a lack of a certain life-giving quality, somehow falling short of women's God-given moist make-up. If we recall the mildly abusive women's song mentioned above—The penis is dried up and worthless; it stops the rain from shitting down—the wet-dry, female-male opposition comes into sharp contrast.

A male diviner from Mkalama village explained it to me this way:

¹⁶ It appears other groups in the area share this wet-female/dry-male notion. See Beidelman (1964a: 377) on the Ngulu and on the Kaguru (Beidelman 1973: 138, 151; 1993: 39).

Wanaume ni kavu, yaani, hawana uwezo. Sisi hatuna maji, kama mti ambayo ilikauka. Mwanamke ana maji mwilini; kwa hiyo anazaa watoto. Tutumie mfano ile. Wanaume hatuzaai watoto.

Men are dry, that is, they have no ability. We [men] have no water, like a dried out old tree. Because a woman has water in her body, she bears children. Let's use that example. Men, we don't bear children.

Again, no one would claim that this is true in an absolute sense, that men have no fertile abilities just because of their seeming lack of water. Men and women alike, it will be recalled, give 'water' to their offspring in equal amounts. It is only compared with women that people find men to be drier. Both have their own gendered waters; but women have additional vaginal, birth waters that men, for fairly obvious reasons, lack. On some level then it is true that women, given their watery bodies, are fertile in a way that men are not.

With these two propositions clearly in mind, it will probably be apparent where my argument is headed. I should at this point like to give the crux of my argument in the words of one particular thoughtful elderly Kirumi man, the comments that allowed me to develop this argument in the first instance. He told me the following:

Asūngū atotu anga mbula. īAgohá akalamūku. īyī itī itotu kūtambula. Asūngū inio yao shanga yumaa, mazī mazī du. Úsese kīūmū hata mīaka ihī. Hata kūtome inino da lūhikū lūlū, lūng'wī, kīkūuma lūkūlū. Ila ūmūsūngū shanga wūmaa. īMazī īpūma kila mala aze atotu ūdu. Kūlūlo kūlūnga īasūngū īmpya nī mbula.

Wakati wa masīmpūlya akūina kimpūnyu hata ūmūng'wī! īyī kū mahala ane ionesha, īonesha kūwa akete mazī dū n'īmakuta. īAlūngū īkalowa n'īmbula īkaza. Wai-ne ataata akūgenda kīmpūnyu kūnzi? Agīla anga kīntū kīhi nīka mazī mazī.

Women are wet like rain. Men are barren, dry. This is rather simple to explain. Women, their vaginas, never dry out; they are always wet. We [men] can be dry for years on end. Even if we have sex only a few times in one day, we become really dry. A woman, however, never dries out. Water comes out of them all the time that keeps them wet. For this reason you might say that women are like rain.

During the women's rain dances they dance naked, even in the middle of the afternoon! This, I think, is because they are displaying themselves, showing that they have lots of water and fat. The ancestral spirits rejoice and the rains come. You don't see those [male] rainmaking assistants wandering about outside naked, do you? They don't have anything wet [to show].

In other words, similar things attract each other. And since women are wetter than men, making them more fertile, they stand to attract other forms of wetness, namely, rain. Fertility in one form invites fertility in another.

Almost everyone would agree with his statement or, at the very least, with parts of it. The apparent fact that women are wet, men are dry, is entirely uncontentious. Equally uncontroversial is the idea that similar things attract each other, for this is obvious in all ritual practices involving the rain and in other rituals too. What is novel here—and is indeed mildly speculative on his part—is this elder's connecting up of these two principles, that women's watery bodies attract watery rains. Women dance naked in broad daylight. They dance naked at night too. What are they doing? They are showing off their wateriness, their womanly fertile abilities as it were, so that the spirits will rejoice and the rains will fall. This, in short, is the causal link between naked female bodies and rains he offers: fertile females attract fertile weather; water of one sort attracts another.¹⁷ As further evidence here is the ethnographic fact that it is not only women who may participate in the dance, but men who have sired twins as well as the male chief, should he so choose, and all of these people are decidedly more fertile than the average 'dry' male. In this context, too, it is understandable why the participants require no rain medicines *per se* because, as one elderly woman told me, 'the medicine is their naked dance.'

This argument is strengthened if we recall several things about the rain dance itself. First, women must have born at least one child to participate. In other words, women must have been pregnant at some point, they must have, as the Ihanzu put it in their language, *aī akete mazī*, 'been with water.' Unlike in similar rites described by Gluckman and Rigby in which women through reversal ostensibly become men, Ihanzu women are not here becoming symbolic men. They do not garb themselves in male clothing nor do they carry weapons. Instead, far from denying their femininity, women are clearly stressing it by displaying their fertility; women should thus most accurately be seen in this context as exaggerated, fertile females. I might add one short case study that lends further support to the idea.

In late February 1995 a man from Kirumi named Mahalu, a reputed rain witch of many years, was caught in the dead of night engaged in some decidedly bizarre behaviour. Sauntering along one of the paths leading up to the rainshrine, he was digging small holes and dropping medicines into them. After so doing, his 9 year old son, naked and inexplicably blindfolded, sat atop each hole and packed down the medicines with his *derrière*. Everyone except Mahalu himself took this as

¹⁷ It is extremely interesting to note that Schoeman, who did fieldwork amongst the South African Swazi, was given an identical explanation for the *Incwala* ceremony though he failed to make any sense of it. He writes in a footnote: 'On asking my informants why females play such an important part in the rain-ceremonies, one of them...answered: *Kwentelwa umhlaba, itulu li twale, litsambe, ngoba ngumuntu lomsikati, u manti*—it is done for the sake of the earth, so that the rain clouds will gather, and get soft, i.e., rainy, because it is a female person, and she (a female) is wet (has a uterus). When I asked him to explain what he meant in this instance by *u manti* he just shrugged his shoulders and walked off' (1935: 172n). What further exegesis or clarification such a statement might require remains a mystery to me. I, too, would have shrugged my shoulders and walked off.

indisputable proof that he was, once again, attempting to sabotage the rains (he claimed he was trying to protect medicinally his own plot which was nearby). He was dragged through a lengthy trial, eventually found guilty and fined several head of cattle for his decidedly anti-social witch behaviour. His boy's nefarious acts were largely forgiven on the grounds that he was forced by his father to help him. The damages, ruefully, had already been done though, and men and women bemoaned the fact that the rains might be ruined.

This case offers an intriguing insight into the workings of rainmaking and rainstopping, a topic I shall have much more to say about in chapter seven. A young (and therefore infertile) boy, by packing down anti-rain medicines with his back side, might be seen as the converse of the (fertile) women who do the same during their rain dance. In the former case of the 'dry' pre-pubescent boy, the rains grind to a halt; in the later case of wet, fertile women, the rains are enticed. Both instances point up the ways that gendered bodies are thought linked to the fertility of Ihanzu.

Male and Female: Complementarity or Rebellion?

From the evidence presented so far, it is obvious that in Ihanzu eyes dancers not only remain women during these rites but also that they are firmly emphasising this fact by making a blatant display of their watery, fertile bodies in broad daylight. Their fertile (feminine) abilities are at issue, and must be present to bring the rains. We might thus be led to the conclusion that dance participants are in some way 'protesting' or 'rebelling' against men, as Gluckman would have us believe. Yet if this is so, it is far from obvious. When I brought up the topic of potential gender conflicts in the dance, women and men alike were quick to point out that the dance could not take place before the male and female chiefs agreed and co-operated. The male chief, it will be recalled, supplies anti-witchcraft medicines to his sister, the female chief, and all claimed that without these medicines the dance would be ineffectual. In short, informants stress that co-operation between the two chiefs is necessary before the dance can take place at all. From what people say, then, there is no compelling evidence that this dance is about gender conflict. On the contrary, oddly one might think, people talk about this dance in terms of co-operation (*kiunga*) between male and female. This alleged co-operation between the genders makes more sense if we focus on the cultural logic of what dancers actually do, and the images they evoke in the process.

There are a few issues that feature centrally in the dance which now require explanation. These are the (ritualised) violence and the sexual and often obscene nature

of the songs and verbally explicit taunts.¹⁸ If, as I have suggested, this dance is about women acting as exaggerations of themselves to bring the rain, then these particular aspects are clearly 'out of character' as far as images of the idealised women are concerned. Ideal femininity requires cool, non-violent and sexually discrete behaviour, so informants suggest. Violence and obscenity, on the other hand, are commonly understood as components of the masculine domain. That is to say that of the two genders it is men, and not women, who are generally associated with all these things—obscenities, domestic and other types of violence like warfare. This, again, is the ideal. It is true of course that at a practical level matters are much less straightforward, for just as men sometimes beat their wives so, too, do wives occasionally beat their husbands; and some women can hurl obscenities as well as, or better than, some men. Yet we are concerned here with ideals, and at this level men and women readily agree that aggression and verbal and physical abuse are generally aspects of the male domain.

Bearing this in mind, the method to the dancers' 'madness' suddenly becomes obvious. Ritual participants may be emphasising their female, fertile abilities, but they are simultaneously displaying, in a highly ritualised and exaggerated form, some of the more 'typical' male characteristics and pushing them to their logical conclusions.¹⁹ On final analysis, participants in this rain dance appear to become at the same time 'superwomen' and 'supermen,' bold over-exaggerations of both. Intriguingly, masculine and feminine are no longer confined to separate bodies but are here condensed into single casings. That is to say, single bodies formerly occupied by a single sex become composite, androgynous beings containing within them two distinct genders.²⁰

There is still more evidence that male and female here co-exist in single persons, which may be found in the type of rain that these rites purportedly bring. If the dance were

¹⁸ The violence does occur but, as far as I am aware, not often. And it is always found in ritualised form (i.e., the women never attempt to cause serious bodily harm to their victims, even though every woman knows perfectly well how to wield a machete).

¹⁹ Jacobson-Widding has consistently offered a rather different explanation for the prevalence of obscenity in these sorts of women's rites among the Manyika of Zimbabwe. She suggests that, through excessive use of verbal and physical obscenity, female dancers are attempting to arouse sexually the (male) ancestral spirits and, in turn, to prompt them into letting their male 'waters' (i.e., semen) fall from the heavens (Jacobson-Widding 1985: 9-10; 1986: 3; 1990: 53). All I can say about this is that none of my informants ever suggested this type of explanation to me and that the logic of it, for Ihanzu anyway, makes no sense. First, it will be recalled from previous chapters that there are male *and* female rains, just as there are male and female ancestral spirits, and that both genders must work together to ensure efficacy. Even if the dancers were to provoke the male spirits, the female spirits would, no doubt, remain unimpressed. Second, provoking Ihanzu spirits, sexually or otherwise, would by all counts be unwise as it might anger them even more and thus lead to prolonged drought.

²⁰ Marilyn Strathern's (1988) on Highland New Guinea is here of relevance. Ihanzu persons on these occasions cease to be single-sexed individuals and are instead 'transformed into the individual composed of distinct male and female elements' (Strathern 1988: 15).

solely about females, or fertile females, or solely about women turned men, then we might expect that the rites should attract either female or male rain, but not both. I questioned my informants directly on this topic and none ever suggested that any type of rain ritual would bring only female, or only male, rain; all rites—this one included—must bring male and female rains together. What, after all, would be the point of one without the other, women and men mused? If, as the logic of the Ihanzu cultural imagination dictates, 'like attracts like,' then masculine and feminine must work together to attract both male and female rains.

It will be recalled that during these rites dancers often dance lewdly and may even work themselves up into orgasm, especially during those dances that take place at night. If it is true, as I have suggested, that dancers are both 'super-women' and 'super-men' on this occasion, then this logically implies that they must be having 'super-sex' with(in) themselves, which is not the same as masturbation. Nor is it anything close. It is, however, masculine and feminine combined within single dancers. Male and female must conjoin to effect transformations. And what better way than the combination, en masse, of a group of supermen and superwomen, all of whom are having sexual intercourse with(in) themselves? It is, in a sense, the ultimate combination of male and female to bring the ultimate communal good: rain. What is more, such efforts largely go without saying. It is the *act* of combination that is important and determining and anything people might otherwise say—or not say—is wholly irrelevant. Much as *discussing* sexual intercourse will not bring about a child, neither will talking about a rain dance bring the rain, no matter how thoughtful the discussion. In both cases a degree of practical engagement is not only desirable, but logically required. These rites are, if nothing else, 'good to perform.'

In the end then we must conclude that these rites, at least in Ihanzu, are in no way about gender 'protest' or 'rebellion,' as Gluckman and others would lead us to believe. Instead, by following closely local ideas of these rites we have seen that they are largely about conjoining the genders, in this instance, within single bodies. It is only through the combination of gender opposites that the cosmos is regenerated and transformed. An arrestingly unusual gender combination this may be, but it is nonetheless an effective one.

Don't stop the rains, you'll kill us all! Rain-witchcraft, politics and gender

Ng'wano alila. Aleli kiligitya. Kūtaganile kū ng'wandū kūng'wa īSumbī. Kūtonge shalo, kūleke lūgano. Mbula kū kiliya ikomile nkīngī. Ikomile nkīngī. Ikomile mambo. Tai lūkūlū; shanga ūtele.

Danger has come. Let's discuss it. Let's meet under the baobob tree near where Sumbi lives. Let's talk, let's leave these matters. The rain in the east has been bewitched. It has been bewitched. It has been bewitched. It is really true; it is not a lie.

*Ihanzu folk song,
sung by an elderly woman from Ibaga village in 1994*

THROUGH A UNIQUE (and perhaps woeful) combination of colonial encounters and on the ground realities, Africa has provided a fertile area for the production of an enormous body of literature on witchcraft. It is not my intention here to review systematically witchcraft in anthropology or even witchcraft as limited to an African context.¹ Instead I should like to focus in this chapter on one particular type of witchcraft: that involving rain.

The African literature is replete with references to rain-witches and rain-witchcraft though oddly, they remain only fleeting references, nothing more.² True, quite a few

¹ Mair (1969) offers a highly readable synthesis, if decidedly functionalist in flavour, of some of the better-known early works on African witchcraft. Marwick's edited volume *Witchcraft and Sorcery* (1970) remains one of the best collections of various essays (some of them highly condensed books) on the topic; discussions include witchcraft in Africa though the book ranges widely to include witchcraft in ancient and modern Europe, America and the Pacific. For some more recent works of interest see Comaroff and Comaroff 1993.

² Rain-witches and rain-witchcraft have been reported in Tanzania among the Kaguru (Beidelman 1963d: 63; 1993: 140, 145); Rangi (Kesby 1982: 184); Barabaig (Klima 1970: 30-2); Gogo (Cole 1902: 325-6; Maddox 1988: 821, 896-7, 900-1, 906; Rigby 1971: 414, 417); and Sukuma (Liebenow 1961: 76; Mombeshora 1994: 73; Tanner 1956b: 438; 1970: 20) among others. Further scattered references make it plain that the phenomenon occurs widely in time and space across much of Africa (Buxton 1973: 352; Colson 1977: 132; Driberg 1919: 59, 71; Feddema 1966: 184-5; Garbutt 1909: 533; Hauenstein 1967a: 21; Hodgson 1931: 267-8; Krige and Krige 1943: 275, 277; 1954: 66; Ludder 1954: 185-6; MacDonald 1890: 130; Niehaus 1993: 507-8; Rangeley 1953: 9; Roscoe 1923b: 32; Vaughan 1992: 72-3). Neither is negative control over the weather confined solely to Africa:

have mentioned the topic as the flip side of the coin to rainmaking, that is, when makers of rain become destroyers of the same (Beattie 1964: 141; Carnell 1955: 31; Gray 1963: 146; Hartwig 1976: 189; Hauenstein 1967b: 11; Heald 1991: 311; Holas 1949; Huntingford 1963: 181; Kitereza 1980: 43; Roscoe 1909: 189; Schapera 1971: 99; Spire 1905: 19-20; Wagner 1949: 151, 153-4). And yet only a few have sustained their analyses of rainmaking and ‘rain-breaking’ to the point of usefulness (e.g., Avua 1968; Buchanan 1943; Feierman 1990; James 1972; Packard 1981). In spite of the nominal allusions, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no sustained inquiry into the dynamics of rain-witchcraft *per se*. This oversight becomes all the more puzzling if we ponder for only a moment the consequences of bewitching the weather—wholesale destruction that threatens to rock the very foundations of society. Surely this, one suspects, might properly constitute a true ‘standardized nightmare’ (Wilson 1970: 285).

By examining rain-witchcraft in Ihanzu, my concern in this chapter is to bring together the two major themes in this thesis—rainmaking and power—and, as before, show how from a local perspective they intersect with gender. In the process we will see the subtleties of some locally-defined notions of power and the ways in which they are played out in practice. Based on twelve of the fourteen rain-witchcraft cases³ in Ihanzu from the 1993-1994 season, a particularly dry year, and also based on other data, I wish to make several arguments.

First, I will argue that the dynamics of rain-witchcraft are best understood in relation to the farming cycle. This proposition is hardly controversial for one might expect the frequency of accusations and severity of cases to vary depending on the state of the rains. (Locals, of course, see the arrows moving in the opposite direction—when there are rain-witches at work, the rains are bound to decrease).

Of greater sociological interest is my second point: examining rain-witchcraft cases over any given season tells us a great deal about gender ideologies and politics. More to the point, we shall see some of the ways that the principle of gender complementarity are made manifest in practice. In this instance, it will be shown that male and female witches together provide the structural converse of male and female chiefs—both duos conjoin their powers to achieve their aim, in the former case evil, in the latter, for the benefit of all.

Thomas points out that witchcraft directed against the weather, though rare in England, was commonplace in Continental Europe (1971: 519).

³ I have only incomplete details on the two missing cases and they therefore have been left out. For the record, they were both named males, one a Christian, one a Muslim of the *Anyampanda* clan.

Additionally, at the end of this chapter we should be better placed to understand why so little work has been done on this particular type of witchcraft, in spite of its presence across so much of Africa. The rain-witchcraft cases that I will now discuss are organised roughly in order of occurrence.

WOMEN ACCUSED

CASE 7.1: 17 December 1993

The chiefs' sister (MZD), Itale, who is of the *Anyampanda* royal lineage and resides in the far eastern village of Kidarafa, was accused of bewitching the rains. This was discovered at a chiefly divination session (*kūlīngūla ihī*). Diviners read in the chickens' entrails that she had acted maliciously and wilfully in her evil doings. Over a month later, this knowledge was made public. In spite of this, she was never confronted, nor was there ever a case made against her.

One theme emerges here that is common to rain-witchcraft cases in general—accusations are often directed against people of power, specifically those who are members of, or in some way associated with, the *Anyampanda* royal lineage. (See Figure 7.1 at the end of this chapter, p. 242, which shows some of the royals accused rain-witchcraft in 1993-1994 and their relationships to one another). Itale is the daughter of an infamous female rainmaker, Nkili, who died in 1987. Though Nkili's sister's daughter Mīlimū succeeded her to the ritual office of female rainmaker, her own daughter Itale is likely, people claim, to have seen her mother practising rainmaking and perhaps even to have been given some rainstones prior to Nkili's death. Itale is at the centre of the royal lineage and is thus in a position, in theory, to have knowledge of how to bring the rain, and stop it. Of significance is that no case was, in the end, brought against her. The implications of this will become clear below.

CASE 7.2: December 1993/January 1994

Villagers of Ikolo discovered a pile of sorghum seeds, a gourd and a burnt fire in the hollow of a large fig tree (a notorious nocturnal haunt for witches). Following this find, a local diviner read in the chicken oracle that there was powerful witchcraft at work. Both of the suspects, though unnamed, were identified as women, one from Nyaha village, one from Shinyanga District (this implies she may have been a Sukuma who, in Ihanzu, are renowned for their witchcraft). A second reading a few weeks later by a different diviner across the country determined there were two witches responsible for the rain-witchcraft—a male from Ikolo and a female from Kirumi. Both, said the diviner, were members of the *Anyampanda* clan. None of these individuals was ever named, and there were no resulting accusations nor trials. Anti-witchcraft rites were carried out in Ikolo, and an ancestral offering at Kirumi, to neutralise the destructive effects of the witchcraft. (In chapter five this case was discussed during the entrails divination).

A few significant points should be noted from this case. First, although people spent inordinate amounts of time and energy discussing the matter, walking across the country to visit diviners, carrying out anti-witchcraft rites and so on, no witch was ever singled out for accusation. Nor did any trial ever take place. People remained instead with lingering suspicions. This is interesting—and highly unusual when we recall much of the literature on witchcraft—for here we have a case in which there is, in a very real sense, no accuser and no accused. Communal fears were the issue, threats of evil from within, not interpersonal relationships between individuals or groups of individuals.

The second point is that of those witches that were divined in the chicken oracles, though unnamed and thus unaccused, there was a high proportion of females (three out of four). It is important in this regard to bear in mind that it was at this point still early in the farming cycle; the rains, while missed, were at this stage not of decided importance to the ultimate success of the harvest.

Once again we see an association with the *Anyampanda* clan, but there is a subtle difference worth mentioning. In this case, as with others, it is the entire *Anyampanda* clan that is implicated and not just the royal *Anyampanda* matrilineage, which is much smaller. This, surely, is significant since the *Anyampanda* clan is by far the largest clan in Ihanzu, its members accounting for some 30.5 percent of the total population (see Table 4.1, p. 124). People admit that *Anyampanda* clan members outside the royal lineage are most unlikely to possess any rainmaking abilities and would be deeply suspicious of anyone who claimed otherwise. In rain-witchcraft cases, however, people commonly conflate the two—*Anyampanda* clan and the much smaller *Anyampanda* royal lineage, which forms only a numerically inferior part of that clan.

CASE 7.3: 6 January 1994

Mwajuma, the daughter of a former female rainmaker (Mīlimū, d. 1991), was mentioned at a public rain meeting as being partially responsible for the lack of rains. She was allegedly wandering about the village telling people in confidence that should she be given grain and beer, she could make the rains fall. Villagers at the meeting stood and confirmed publicly this was true. Following these allegations, and after speaking to the current female ritual leader, Ng'welū, which she did in private for about a half an hour, the matter was finished.

People began having these ‘traditional’ rain meetings (*shalo ka mbula*) in early January. These public gatherings are always held in the bush, far from government structures. Their aim is, as the song on the first page goes, to discuss the matter, the rain or, more accurately, to discuss the lack of rain. Anything that might be causing

the rains to stop gets publicly aired at these meetings. The aim is not invariably to find witches (though this is often the outcome) but to look into all matters that affect the state of the rains—the male and female chiefs' performance, the state of the ancestral spirits and so on.

Accusations against people alleged to be practising rain-witchcraft often occur at these meetings. When they do, it is never a simple process. Normally the local commander of the *Nkili*⁴ vigilante group arbitrates these meetings. He acknowledges someone who wishes to speak, who then stands and speaks. When he has finished, he sits. Others may follow the speaker's lead or they may not. Anyone present who wishes to speak may. Meetings, while sometimes heated, always proceed in an orderly fashion. It is through this process of speaking and listening that people suggest specific individuals as potential rain-witches. On hearing the evidence, others may agree, in which case the matter is pursued by others in their speeches, or they may disagree and dismiss the suggestion as baseless. General suspicions and rumours begin long before meetings are ever called, normally at the public beer halls (*vilabu*) where people are not infrequently passionately embroiled in conversations about the state of the weather. Not everyone, of course, agrees on the guilt of a particular person, making the topic all the more interesting. Suspicions are brought into the public light at rain meetings. Only then is it possible to come to any consensus. In these meetings no one person's opinion—and this includes those of rain-chiefs, diviners or anyone else—counts for anything but one person's opinion (cf. Snyder 1993). The crucial point is that in a very real sense, rain-witchcraft accusations come about, not through one individual accusing another, but following hours, days and even months of public discussion, controversy and argumentation. Rain-witchcraft accusations are made collectively after lengthy deliberations.

One interesting point revealed in the above case is that telling lies about rain, whether by design or otherwise, may cause the rain's untimely termination. People are most unclear as to the actual mechanism at work. Of those willing to speculate, it seems it is ultimately the ancestral spirits who, angered by these lies, stop the rain. Mwajuma's 'lie' was her claim to control the rains legitimately, when in fact she did not.

Note once again that the accused woman is a member of the royal *Anyampanda* lineage (see Figure 7.1). Nothing much came of her case except for being mildly reprimanded by the current female leader. She was not even fined.

⁴ These vigilante groups are known in other parts of Tanzania as *Sungusungu*. For more on these groups as they function in Unyamwezi, Sukumaland and elsewhere, see Abrahams 1987; Bukurura 1994a; 1994b; 1994c; Masanja 1992; and Mwaikusa 1994.

CASE 7.4: 7 January 1994

At a public rain meeting, people raised the issue of one Nya Shaka of Nyaha who might be negatively affecting the rains. She was accused of bewitching the rains, first inadvertently, then with full knowledge. The daughter of former Chief Gunda's sister, she was a potential contender for inheritance of ritual knowledge and paraphernalia. People alleged that she inherited some rainstones from the late Chief Gunda. Nya Shaka denies this. In denying the alleged truth of the matter—that she, in fact, had the stones—people say she is guilty of telling lies about the rains and thus causing them to stop. She was summoned to Kirumi and after speaking to Chief Omari, was sent home. There was never a formal case brought against her, nor was there any trial.

Like Mwajuma in Case 7.3 and Itale in Case 7.1, Nya Shaka can also trace direct matrilineal descent from a renowned, but now deceased, rainmaker. Once again we see that membership in the royal *Anyampanda* clan in general, and the royal lineage in particular, may be dangerous, especially for those at the centre of the power structure.

MEN ACCUSED

Entering the crucial period in the farming cycle, around mid-January, the nature of rain-witch cases alters dramatically. If the above cases largely involved women from the royal *Anyampanda* lineage, none of whom were ever formally tried (some were not even named), the cases to come are more hostile, more confrontational, in nature. Also, they all involve men. As the consequences of not getting rain become more severe, so too do the cases against rain-witches. If there is no rain by the end of January, obtaining an adequate harvest is highly unlikely. By the beginning of February, if the rains still have not fallen, there is little point in planting as the season is essentially ruined; people will expect to engage in significant amounts of migrant labour the following year to provide for their households' basic needs.

CASE 7.5: 15 January 1994

Villagers from all over Ihanzu descended on Kirumi and called a public rain meeting in which Chief Omari was himself accused of bewitching the weather. He successfully defended himself by shifting the burden of guilt. He made it known that although he was indeed trying, his efforts were in vain due to the ill-doings of several others who were sabotaging his efforts. He pointed to Itale (Case 7.1) who had, until then, not been identified in a public forum as a rain-witch (people still took no action against her however). He also made public the fact that an unnamed man in the east had earlier been found in an oracle to be practising rain-witchcraft, though no one in that village had done anything about it. In addition to allaying people's fears about Chief Omari himself, these pronouncements set in motion a witch-hunt for the oracle-identified male to the east (see Case 7.6 below). People returned home contented. Omari suffered no adverse consequences.

This case comes as the first among many in which public accusations are directed against males, a trend which continued for the remainder of the season. Chief Omari escaped being fined or forced from Ihanzu. Those accused later would be less fortunate (see below).

Also significant in this case is the fact that villagers can and do accuse the royal rainmakers themselves, if they feel they are not doing their job, without themselves suffering any retribution. As others have noted, though normally only in passing, it is not uncommon to find that those who normally bring the rain may, by logical extension, destroy it (cf. Feierman 1990; Gray 1963: 146; Heald 1991: 311; Huntingford 1963: 181; Wagner 1949: 151, 153-4).

CASE 7.6: Beginning of February 1994

A man in the eastern village, identified by means of the chicken oracle in late December (see Case 7.5 above), was subjected to a lengthy trial for allegedly stopping the rain. Though he was first identified as 'a man from the east' in December 1993, people only mobilised and found a culprit in February 1994 when the rains were still inadequate. The elderly man they accused turned out to be (no surprise) of the *Anyampanda* clan and was accused at a public trial of maliciously causing harm to villagers by stopping the rains. He was threatened, fined and let go.

Although this man was first identified in December, he was not actively sought out until February. This again shows up the importance of looking at rain-witchcraft cases simultaneously with the agricultural cycle. The two are not unrelated. When times become hard, witch-hunting becomes fierce.

The Role of the Government in Rain-Witchcraft

To this point, we have seen only cases that involve 'traditional' rain meetings (*shalo ka mbula*), which by definition do not involve formal government participation. The two cases to follow give some idea of the role government officials play in some rain-witchcraft trials.

CASE 7.7: January-May 1994

A diviner by the name of Kingu from Ng'wangeza village was accused at a public meeting of bewitching the rains. He is of the *Anyambeū* clan. Kingu has a long and notorious history of being accused of practising rain-witchcraft. The crux of the matter lies in whether he would, or would not, sacrifice a sheep each year and tie its hide around a certain tree. He was told by another diviner that this would please his ancestral spirits. His failure to do so, villagers said, had caused the rains

to stop. In 1994 alone Kingu suffered through four lengthy and heated 'meetings' concerning his alleged rain-witch practices (For the past five years, all of which were dry, he has faced a similar fate each and every farming season). In the final meeting of the season, high-up government officials were called in to remove Kingu from the village though they failed to do so. Villagers remained frustrated, and once again threatened Kingu, saying that if the rains continued not to fall he would be expelled from the village. People regularly ignored him.

Government officials play a complex role in negotiating villagers' witchcraft related problems, though they keep strictly away until requested by villagers to involve the government machinery. This is normally an option of last resort. In this case, Kingu had been through several meetings with villagers over a number of years where they failed to resolve their differences. Only at this point did they resorted to a higher authority, government officials, though they too failed to iron out disagreements.

This is the first case, with the exception of those who remained unspecified (Case 7.2), in which the accused is not of the *Anyampanda* clan. Kingu is of the *Anyambeū* clan, a clan that is said to be one of the oldest in Ihanzu. Membership in it, however, gives one no additional status as membership in the *Anyampanda* clan may in some circumstances. Of relevance here is Kingu's part-time occupational choice—he is a diviner. Diviners are thought to be powerful, regardless of clan affiliation. I have never heard of an Ihanzu diviner with the ability to bring rain though most of the good ones are reputed to be able to ruin it. People who wish to become rain-witches may similarly buy medicines from diviners to carry out their malevolent work. As such, Kingu was in a position of power—and allegedly able to destroy the rains—vis-à-vis his access to the powers of the ancestors.

CASE 7.8: March-April 1994

Kibado, a man of the *Anyankalī* clan, was accused of bewitching the rain when, after boasting he could make it, the rain failed to fall. With the help of the local Ward Executive Officer (WEO) of Mpambala, Kibado collected from villagers money, tobacco, sorghum and a sheep with which he promised to bring rain. His claims to rainmaking legitimacy were based on his alleged connections to the *Anyampanda* royal lineage. He claimed to have learnt from Chief Omari's deceased mother's sister, Nkili, the secrets of rainmaking. Kibado also said he was tutored by Chief Omari's deceased MZS, Matutu (d. 1992), another member of the *Anyampanda* royal lineage. Unfortunately, no one could corroborate his story, since all involved but Kibado were dead. In the end, the rain did not fall, and Kibado abruptly left his village, supposedly to visit the chiefs at Kirumi. In fact, he never made it to Kirumi, but instead wandered around Ihanzu for over two weeks drinking beer. By the time he returned home, though people were still furious, the farming season was essentially finished. No case was brought against him, but everyone agreed he had bewitched the rain by telling lies about it. He received many threats, some of them less than subtle. The following year he was forced out of Ihanzu (see Table 7.1 at the end of this chapter for the 1995 case made against him).

More than anything else, it was Kibado's lies about the rain that people claim stopped them from falling. Claiming to be a rainmaker, when in fact one is not, is highly risky. It was only the passing of the season that eventually (though only partially) defused this conflict. The following season he was less fortunate.

Of importance is the way Kibado tried to establish his legitimacy as a potential rainmaker in the first place. Being a member of the *Anyankalī* clan people were rightly sceptical of his professed powers and were most reluctant to pay tribute to him. He tried to legitimise himself by stressing his connection to the *Anyampanda* royal lineage. His efforts were in vain, except for one powerful person whom he did manage to convince—the Ward Executive Officer (WEO) of his area. Not insignificantly, the WEO was an Iramba man. It became clear to me, after speaking to him, that this man had no idea which Ihanzu clans did what, and simply assumed that almost any Ihanzu could be a rainmaker, Kibado included. With the WEO backing him, Kibado was able to coerce people into contributing to his collections, even though all I spoke with stated their allegiances to the chiefs at Kirumi, no one else. We thus see that some government officials, in some instances, use their power and influence to force villagers to participate in what many see as bogus rainmaking practices. Had it not been for the WEO's efforts and support, it is unlikely Kibado would have ever been taken very seriously as a rainmaker, though he might well have been singled out as a rain-witch if he had continued to tell lies about the rains and his alleged control over them.

What do People do to get Accused?

CASE 7.9: March-June 1994

One of Chief Omari's rainmaking assistants or *ataata* (from the *Anyambwá* clan), an old man named Gunda from Ng'wangeza village, was accused by fellow villagers at several public rain meetings of bewitching the rains. Gunda, as part of his normal rainmaking responsibilities, brought Chief Omari a black sheep in November 1993. It died shortly thereafter, allegedly, the chief and others claim, from witchcraft. Gunda was accused of trying to kill Omari with the sheep. Omari actively stopped the rains in Ng'wangeza, so people alleged, due to Gunda's irresponsible behaviour. Gunda's problems were compounded since, knowing Chief Omari was angry with him, he refused to continue trekking to Kirumi to visit the male chief and to carry out his normal duties at the rainshrine. Villagers insisted he go. In the face of angry protests he repeatedly agreed to do so, but then repeatedly failed. At one meeting in May they threatened to force him out of Ng'wangeza, into Mbulu or Sukumaland, if he did not carry out his ritual obligations. Gunda succeeded at putting people off until the harvest, at which time people had no time for further trials and meetings. The rains had stopped for the year; Gunda never went to see the chief, nor did he pay any fines. He did,

however, receive numerous threats of being expelled from the village, being socially isolated, or worse.

There are actually two witchcraft cases in one here, though no one would see them as identical. First, there is Gunda, the rainmaking assistant who supposedly tried to kill Omari with a bewitched sheep. This is striking at the source of rainmaking itself. Next there is Chief Omari stopping the rains due to his anger over Gunda's attempt on his life. The point to note is that one bewitching is legitimate—that of Chief Omari—while the other, namely, Gunda's witchcraft, is entirely unacceptable. If someone angers the chief, he is not only entitled to stop the rain but can almost be expected to do so. And while people might say 'the chief has bewitched the rains,' this statement carries with it (in this case anyway) no immoral overtones. He was, after all, angered, and for good reason. The responsibility falls entirely on Gunda, the rainmaking assistant who angered Omari in the first place. This demonstrates plainly that there are a few instances in which witchcraft may be considered legitimate. It is only if there is no sound reason for being angry that a chief might be in the wrong for stopping the rains (see Case 7.5 above).

In this instance, as in others (e.g., Case 7.10 below), a person may be accused of rain-witchcraft for nearly anything, like the sudden and unexpected death of a sheep at an inopportune time. Gunda might have avoided many of the difficulties that later befell him had he gone immediately to see Chief Omari following the sheep incident. Instead, his fears of what might happen became an unfortunate reality.

CASE 7.10: Late March 1994

Maiko Gunda, an *Anyampanda* clan member from Ibaga village, was accused of bewitching the rains after allegedly being seen by a child conducting a bizarre ritual in his fields. A child of about 10 years of age claimed to have seen Gunda from a distance putting a few iron rods into the ground (one of them red),⁵ digging holes with an animal horn and tossing what he surmised to be anti-rain medicines to the four cardinal points. This story came out fully at a public rain meeting of around 100 men. Gunda denied doing any of this. Gunda's family background was discussed in great detail—his sister was a witch, his mother too. By implication, so they suggested, Gunda was also a witch. No one spoke of chasing him out of Ihanzu, or at least not explicitly. They only concluded the meeting by saying, 'if you are smart, you will move from here, a long way away, or something bad could happen.' Perhaps wisely, Gunda promptly moved to Sukumaland, where he remained until well after the harvest.

⁵ The colour red is commonly implicated in witchcraft, especially rain-witchcraft, as it is said to be hot, like blood and lightning. In the context of rainmaking, red is damaging and is opposed to black which is life-giving.

This case shows up issues that have already been discussed above: the fact that Gunda is male, a member of the *Anyampanda* clan (though not the royal lineage) and that he, like other men, was tried and persuaded to move from the area. This case makes obvious, too, the fact that doing almost anything—or nothing at all—might get one accused of rain-witchcraft. It is uncertain whether Gunda did carry out a ritual in his field. All the same it is telling that people accepted without dispute the testimony of a young child. I know of another rain-witchcraft case a few years back in which a man was accused, tried, fined and forced out of Ihanzu after being seen walking in the rain with an earthen pot on his head. He claimed it was to keep dry. Others disagreed.

What Happens to the Accused?

CASE 7.11: Late March - 12 April 1994

One of the chief's rainmaking assistants from the north-western village of Nyaha was found guilty of bewitching the rain by telling lies about it. This came about when Nya Shaka (Case 7.4) returned to her home in Nyaha to proclaim her innocence; she had inherited no rainstones from the late Chief Gunda. Mazi, the chief's rainmaking assistant of Nyaha, began spreading rumours at beer parties about the 'true' facts of the matter. Chief Omari, claimed Mazi, said there would be no rain in Nyaha for five years since Nya Shaka had really hidden the rainstones. Villagers thus concluded that Chief Omari had sent his assistant Mazi home to stop the rains in Nyaha. Concerned, Nyaha villagers mobilised and, together with Mazi, went to Kirumi to sort matters out. It quickly became apparent that Mazi had been lying about the no rain 'five-year plan' for Nyaha. The chief sent them all home to solve the problem. Mazi had angered both the chief and the spirits by lying about the rain. Following a heated meeting, Mazi was fined two cows and a sheep. One cow and the sheep went to the chief in Kirumi; the other cow Nyaha villagers ate. Mazi retained his job as rainmaking assistant and, at the Nyaha villagers' request, an additional rainmaking representative from their village was installed to represent better their interests in Kirumi.

Fining a rain-witch is a common form of punishment (*kupa adhabu*). In these cases, emphasis is placed on reconciliation with fellow villagers—a 'good' rain-witch (if there can be such a thing), once accused, will quickly admit his (or more rarely her) guilt and submit to the imposed fine without argument. In practice this rarely occurs. The accused protests his innocence vigorously. When the accused finally confesses—and invariably this happens—it re-confirms what villagers suspected all along, namely, that rain-witches are eminently unruly people who, besides bewitching the weather, are likely to resist telling the deplorable truth of the matter except under the most extreme conditions. This is where threats come into play.

Few rain-witch trials are completed without threats. These come in several forms: threats of being socially isolated, expelled from Ihanzu or being tortured and/or

killed. Everyone I spoke with on the matter felt rather certain none of these options was too severe a punishment for rain-witches, as these evil-doers are by common consent the most reprehensible sort, the Ihanzu's true 'standardised nightmare.' In practice, and for a variety of reasons, few of the threats are actually carried out.

Social isolation is multi-faceted. It means the accused will not be allowed to fetch water from public wells, will not eat or drink beer with fellow villagers, will not greet or be greeted by anyone and, most insulting of all, should not expect the otherwise expected assistance in digging his grave when he dies, thus allowing his corpse to lie in the house to rot. Social isolation is social death. When it is imposed (there have been some cases), the accused often moves from Ihanzu.

Rain-witches are regularly chased from Ihanzu as we saw in Case 7.10 above (also see the 1995 cases in Table 7.1). If they do not move permanently, they normally leave for the season and return after the harvest when there are no more rains and thus no possibility of being accused of bewitching them. The fact that the accused may return makes this punishment no less severe for, by failing to be in Ihanzu during the growing season, especially if they are regularly forced out, alleged rain-witches also fail to farm and thus to acquire any harvest for themselves.

In spite of the potential threat rain-witches pose to Ihanzu society, villagers are most reluctant to carry out their most extreme threat, that is to kill them. The fear comes from a fear of being locked up by high-up government officials, and little more.⁶ I have collected information on over 100 well-known historical rain-witches; if what elders say is true, witches throughout the colonial period were regularly tortured, expelled from Ihanzu and even killed.

CASE 7.12: 20 - 24 April

The Nyaha commander of the vigilante group *Nkilī*, who was a Sukuma man, not Ihanzu, was accused of bewitching the rains in Nyaha. The problem was discovered during a divination session to assess the success of Mazi's case (no. 7.11). A diviner read in the chicken oracle that, although the chief had accepted Mazi's cow and sheep and was now content, there was another witch, one who had gone to Kirumi to accompany Mazi with the chief's gifts. They read that Ng'wanayegela, the *Nkilī* commander, was stopping the rain because he had an outstanding debt to a powerful Sukuma diviner, a diviner who had recently grown angry over this debt and used his medicines to stop the rain. On his return from Kirumi, Nyaha villagers called a rain meeting. The commander was fined Sh10,000 (£16.67) and several cows, all of which he paid immediately

⁶ Ihanzu are well aware that witch killing goes on regularly in nearby Sukumaland (cf. Mesaki 1994; Tanner 1970).

(Ng'wanayegela was reasonably well-off). Though the fines were hefty, the barely implicit threat of being forced out of his village (or worse) was much more severe.

As in Case 7.9 we see that angering those in power is not generally a good idea and may lead to being accused of rain-witchcraft. In this case, he had angered a diviner. Ng'wanayegela admitted to having visited a diviner and also to having an outstanding debt. No one questioned the right of the diviner to stop the rain. Indeed, he had every right to do so. Ng'wanayegela, on the other hand, had acted foolishly by not paying his debt and it was thus he, not the diviner, who was ultimately held responsible. This again demonstrates that there are in some instances 'legitimate' uses of witchcraft, even rain-witchcraft, the most dreaded type.

WHAT CAN WE SAY ABOUT RAIN-WITCHCRAFT?

Given we have only examined twelve rain-witchcraft cases, it would be overly ambitious to attempt from these cases alone to derive any all-inclusive generalisations about rain-witchcraft in Ihanzu. Be this as it may, there is still ample material from which to draw out some reasonably informed conclusions which are likely to hold even under more careful scrutiny. The generalisations I shall make follow from the above cases and are strengthened by the data given for the 1994-1995 rain-witchcraft cases in Table 7.1. Note that there is an easy reference summary (Table 7.2) of the above cases at the end of this chapter. Let me begin with the relationship between political power, wealth and witchcraft.

Political Power, Wealth and Rain-Witchcraft

Recent scholars of African witchcraft, like some of their structural-functional predeccesors (e.g., Marwick 1965; Middleton 1960; Turner 1957), have had plenty to say about the complex relationships between political struggles, systemic conflicts of interest and witchcraft accusations. It is nothing new to point out that witchcraft may lie at the heart of political processes. Of greater interest are the complex and historically specific ways in which politics and witchcraft mesh in different societies.

Rowlands and Warnier, for example, suggest that in the one-party state of Cameroon sorcery becomes 'a popular mode of political action.' Witchcraft empowers villagers, giving them a moral edge with which to exercise some degree of agency that might otherwise be entirely absent. Since all power, wealth and success are viewed largely as a result of control over, or manipulation of, mystical powers, it is the powerful,

wealthy and successful who become targets for witchcraft accusation. Accusations thus serve as a political and economic equalising mechanism. Those in power, the wealthy, and those who have variously succeeded in other walks of life, are all to some degree suspected of having dabbled in the black arts to acquire their status; and the potential for accusation against them may, in fact, constrain the rich to redistribute wealth, the powerful not to abuse their power unduly (Rowlands and Warnier 1988; see also Geschiere 1988). Still others have suggested, in different contexts, that this may not necessarily be so, that politics and witchcraft may to some extent run independently of each other (Pradelles de Latour 1995).

It is worth asking the question: what is the relationship in Ihanzu between the wealthy, the powerful, the successful and witchcraft accusations? Naturally, these categories of people are not always the same, though they may be. A wealthy Ihanzu person does not necessarily exercise any additional power based on his wealth, nor are the politically powerful—chiefs or government employees, for example—necessarily wealthy. In analysis we should separate the issues.

To begin, we must say categorically that when it comes to Ihanzu rain-witchcraft, material wealth has little, if anything, to do with actual accusations. From our case studies, the only one in which the accused was unequivocally ‘rich’ was Case 7.12, the Sukuma man. He, by common consent, is one of the wealthiest in the village. There are no other outstanding cases in which the accused was considered more wealthy than the average villager.

When the Sukuma man, Ng’wanayegela, was eventually fined, his fine was relatively large and was based mainly on his available store of wealth. This is not unusual. Persons found guilty are invariably fined, not according to some predetermined and agreed upon scale of possible offences, but according to their ability to pay. It would be plain silly to impose on someone who owned only three goats, a fine of three cows.⁷ Material wealth alone is never a reason to accuse a person of bewitching the rain; nor is it grounds for suspicion. Rain-witches receive fines like any witches—based on ability to pay. But it never works the other way round: their ability to pay

⁷ This point was driven home with painful clarity when I was fined myself for carrying a tape recorder during a woman’s rain dance which, regrettably, had a glowing red light on it. My initial fine was five cows, two more than a local rain-witch had paid a week earlier. People assumed that being an outsider I must be incalculably wealthy and that paying five cows was therefore not unreasonable. Their assumptions were in part justified—I was by their standards exceptionally well-off—but my student grant, generous though it was, scarcely put me in a position to buy livestock to pay enormous fines of this sort. Following hours of heated protest, debate and negotiation, I eventually reduced my fine to an unthinkably low two goats, which I paid.

does not implicate them in rain-witchcraft in the first place.⁸ We must conclude that in Ihanzu there is no significant link between material wealth and rain-witchcraft.

But let me push this a bit further, for while ownership of material wealth may be unrelated to rain-witchcraft accusations, the same cannot be said for the ownership of ritual wealth. By this I mean that ownership of the rain itself. Rain-witchcraft accusations, it will not have escaped the reader's attention, are often directed against those in the royal rain-owning lineage.

It is tempting to conclude from this that, as others have implied, because some individuals have the power to bring the rains they also have the powers to ruin them, and thus become rain-witches. This is undoubtedly so in Ihanzu, though only up to a point. The two ritual leaders Omari (Case 7.5) and Ng'welū are currently the only ones 'licensed,' as it were, to bring the rains; any other member of the royal *Anyampanda* clan-section who attempts to do so is normally referred to as a thief (*mii*). Moreover, not only are others in the royal lineage not expected or allowed to bring rain; most of them, due to the strictly-followed succession rules of primogeniture, will never be in one of the two ritual positions to do so. The logical implication is that within the royal lineage only a few will ever be able to bring rain legitimately, while the vast majority will not. Cases 7.1 and 7.4 are of this latter sort. Both women are direct matrilineal descendants of famous rainmakers though they themselves can never gain legitimacy in the eyes of the vast majority of Ihanzu due to their position in the royal matrilineage. Mwajuma's case (no. 7.3) is slightly different, for although she, too, is an illegitimate rainmaker at present, she will one day succeed to the female ritual office, given that she is the eldest daughter of the current female rainmaker's eldest sister (see Figure 7.1 for clarification). These accusations, then, can hardly be seen as jockeying for political position within the royal lineage (cf. Feierman 1990; James 1972), since it will be impossible for most of the accused to be legitimate rainmakers anyway. It would seem, then, not so much their abilities to bring rain that leads to being accused, but people's jealousy over the fact that the royal lineage owns the rain in the first place. Some accusations apparently come about on this basis alone.

This brings us to the second part of the question which is the relationship between political power (that is, on the ground power in a Weberian sense) and rain-witchcraft. As mentioned above, some have suggested that political power and witchcraft are inextricably linked (Geschiere 1988; Rowlands and Warnier 1988)

⁸ Matters are different with inter-personal witchcraft. In these cases, being wealthy puts one at risk of being accused of having used witchcraft to obtain that wealth.

whereas others, in different circumstances, claim the two may be unrelated (Pradelles de Latour 1995). Interestingly, the Ihanzu case seems to sit precariously between these two extremes, for while the powers derived from traditional authority structures may be reasonably related to rain-witchcraft accusations, governmental powers are perceived as different and kept separate. In Ihanzu, in other words, we find that only *certain types* of political power are associated with witchcraft accusations. This may be summed up as follows: political powers deriving from 'traditional' sources are potential areas of rain-witchcraft conflict; those deriving from government positions are not. I have never heard of a case in which a government official was accused of being a rain-witch or even a suspected. Government officials are of course politically powerful—they can, for example, even prevent villagers from carrying out rain meetings and trials if they so choose—but they are almost never implicated in these issues themselves. It is those who share some stake in the traditional authority structure who are more often accused than those who do not. Let me make myself clear.

I am making a sharp analytic distinction between 'traditional structures' (*jadi*) and government structures (*serikali*) because men and women of Ihanzu themselves make this distinction and find it significant. The fundamental difference between the two is straightforward—traditional, cosmological powers derive from, and are sanctioned by, the ancestral spirits (*alūngū*) while governmental powers are not. The two, in local theory, are dissimilar and have little to say to each other. As Chief Omari's sister, Itale, once told me: 'Ancestral spirits know nothing of the government' (*Mizimu haifahamu mambo ya serikali*). The royal power base, and notions surrounding it, has remained a rather separate matter from governmental power.

Not only in theory are the government and 'tradition' opposed but, to some extent, in practice as well. This point was brought home in full force when, sitting in the bush at a traditional rain meeting while the rain poured down, discussing why there was so little rain, people refused to continue in a nearby government building. 'This is a traditional matter (*jadi*)," elders snapped. 'It is not to be confused with the government (*serikali*).'" By becoming soaked through and through while sitting in the bush, I learnt an important lesson in spatial distinctions—'traditional' matters take place in the bush; government matters take place in the village. Anything less would be, like dirty shoes on the kitchen table, or dirty dishes in bed, 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966).⁹

⁹ Rain meetings are not the only 'traditional' events in which people and things must be properly situated in space: it is also true that women's rain dances (chapter six), ancestral offerings (chapter

Many parts of the traditional occupational structure, like rainmaking and divination, are said to have been around 'since the beginning.' These occupations derive their powers directly from the ancestral spirits. As we have already seen, many of those accused were of the *Anyampanda* clan (Cases 7.2c, 7.2d, 7.6, 7.10) and often of the royal *Anyampanda* lineage (Cases 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5). Those who were not members of this clan or lineage but who could demonstrate some connection to either, also occasionally fell prey to accusation (Case 7.8). Others, like rainmaking assistants, fell victim because they were assumed to have special access to the male chief and thus some rainmaking secrets (Cases 7.9, 7.11). They, like the male chief, are 'on the inside,' they share with him some of the esoteric knowledge of rainmaking. This being the case, these people are in a unique position to ruin the rains, should they so choose. Still others (Case 7.7), as diviners, were accused because of their privileged access to the ancestral other-world. But I do not wish to give the impression that 'tradition,' as locally understood, is only about things whose origins are unknown and unknowable, about things that began in the distant and foggy past.

Some types of power, as many Ihanzu see it, are recent in origin. For example, *Nkilī* vigilante groups, which everyone knows spread from Sukumaland and entered Ihanzu in 1986, people classify as 'traditional' on the basis that their concerns are with 'traditional' matters: witchcraft of all types, cattle theft, divination and the like. It is wholly irrelevant for purposes of classification that these so-called traditional groups are government-sanctioned and are a relatively recent innovation. Tradition, in this sense, may have little to do with having survived over the long run. It is on this basis that Ng'wanayegela in Case 7.12 was accused.

By selectively and creatively merging past and present, Ihanzu manage to negotiate a category of tradition that is constantly open to manipulation, modification and change but which, paradoxically, remains in some sense outside of time. It is in the structures surrounding this category of 'tradition' (*jadi*) that rain-witches are most often found.

To claim that government officials are not suspected of bewitching the rains is not to say they are completely uninvolved or that they are oblivious to the accusations and trials. This would be untrue. Low-level officials often participate in traditional meetings as individuals, since most of them are Ihanzu themselves and thus share a stake in the traditional system. In some sense, they have a foot firmly in both worlds. Higher-up officials occasionally intervene in rain-witchcraft cases, as we saw in Cases 7.7 and 7.8. When they do—and many of these officials are people from other

five) and female fertility rites all make strategic use of 'the bush,' a spatial move that allies these activities and participants in them with the ancestors who are said to have lived in the bush long ago.

parts of Tanzania who understand little of Ihanzu customs and traditions—they often do so from an outsider's position, strictly as mediators (e.g., Case 7.7). District level officials were all non-Ihanzu. And all I spoke with, including the District Commissioner, were dubious about a witch's ability to ruin the rains. But this may matter little, for I have never heard of a rain-witchcraft case reaching the District level. When they enter the government arena at all, which is only infrequently, these cases tend to move between local village rain meetings (*shalo ka mbula*) and, at the highest level, government meetings (*mkutano wa hadhara*) involving the Ward Executive Officer.¹⁰

Police, too, occasionally become involved in these cases, though they were not in any mentioned above. There is one small police post in the Ihanzu village of Ibaga with less than a dozen men, a few guns (often without the aid of bullets) and no working vehicle. Together they are responsible for the entire area. In 1994-1995, several police locked up suspected rain-witches. In doing so it is difficult to say whether they were acting as government officials or as individuals, since they are both. When questioned, they claimed the suspected witches were locked up not because they were necessarily guilty (though many police, like other locals, often believe them guilty), but 'for their own protection.' Were they to remain free, so one policeman and a few lower government officials pointed out, they might be killed by angry villagers. If the rationale is one of preventing violence against the accused, rather than preventing rain-witchcraft violence against villagers, the outcome is identical. Witches are locked up. The role played by government officials is thus a complex one in these matters.

It is in the end not simply a matter of saying rain-witchcraft can be related to political power or it cannot. On further inspection, we see that political power and witchcraft in Ihanzu are linked, though in rather complicated and unexpected ways. Those who have the most at stake in these traditional authority structures, whoever they may be, generally have the most to lose as well.

I now wish to look at what these rain-witchcraft cases can tell us about gender ideologies as related to witchcraft. What I wish to argue is that witchcraft accusation patterns provide further insights into indigenous ideas about gender complementarity and notions of the cosmological powers.

¹⁰ The government pecking order, from bottom to top, is: sub-village Chair (*Mwenye Kiti wa Kitongoji*), Village Executive Officer (*VEO*) and his Chair (*Mwenye Kiti wa Kijiji*), Ward Executive Officer (*WEO*), Division Officer (*Katibu Tarafa*), District Officer (*Mkuu wa Wilaya*) and Regional Officer (*Mkuu wa Mkoa*).

Witchcraft Accusations, Ideologies and Gender

Our case studies indicate that men and women alike are accused of spoiling the weather. What seems to require explanation is why males and females are accused at particular times, and with apparent differing degrees of severity. In particular, the question is: Why is it that women tend to be accused at the beginning of the season, and if they are punished, it is only mildly so, while men, who are accused towards the middle and end of the season, are punished considerably more? Let us first recall the relevant facts.

At the onset of the new agricultural season, the rains provide a constant sources of speculation. What will this year be like? A dry one or a wet one? Will the rains begin soon? Will they stop prematurely? It is during this period that, in the hope of beginning farming earlier rather than later, people begin to ferret out rain-witches.

The first rain-witches of the season were, over the two year period I am discussing, always women. Since it was still early in the agricultural cycle, these alleged rain-witches were rarely treated harshly. From our case studies, four of these early alleged witches (three of whom were identified as women) were never even named; no trials occurred. Of the women who were named (Cases 7.1, 7.3 and 7.4), none went through a trial or even much of a confrontation with villagers. Two (Cases 7.3 and 7.4) were reprimanded by current rainmakers; one (Case 7.1) was never confronted. It appears that there is a certain 'grace period' at the beginning of the agricultural cycle during which time accusations are not dealt with very seriously. During this period people see it as unfortunate that the rains have not begun to fall, while at the same time realising the matter is not yet detrimental to the harvest. In the 1993-1994 and 1994-1995 seasons, this was the period women were most often accused of bewitching the rains.

Around mid-January the situation alters dramatically. This is a crucial period in the farming cycle that will determine, like nothing else can, the state of the year's harvest. If the rains fail until the end of January and into the beginning of February, there is almost no hope of obtaining any reasonable harvest. It is from this point onwards that rain-witches are sought and brought to justice in earnest.

In 1993-1994 Chief Omari himself was the first man to be publicly accused (Case 7.5). Villagers threatened to expel him from Ihanzu. He managed to deflect the accusations onto a man identified earlier using a chicken oracle who, until that time, no one had done anything about (Case 7.6). Accused men (there were no more accused women) following Omari, with only one exception (Case 7.8), were

denounced through lengthy public meetings and trials. These men were constantly discussed at village beer drinks, loathed and ignored by many. All were publicly threatened. One of these men thought it prudent to leave Ihanzu until tempers simmered down following the harvest (Case 7.10).

Looking at seasonal fluctuations in rain-witchcraft accusations what emerges is a fairly rapid shift from accusations which are not taken too seriously, to later ones which invariably call for harsh treatment—vocal, public accusations, meetings, trials, threats, social isolation, being chased from the country or, in the past, being killed. If we recall the first two cases of the season (nos. 7.1 and 7.2) in which alleged witches (most of them women) remained unnamed and/or unaccused, and the last two cases of the season (nos. 7.11 and 7.12) in which men were tried, threatened, found guilty and fined, this assertion becomes even more clear. That accusations become more severe as the season progresses is hardly surprising, for there is considerably more at stake, namely, the state of the harvest. There was also a notable shift in accusations from women to men as the season progressed.

During the two seasons discussed (1993-1994, 1994-1995) women were accused during the initial stages and none were dealt with severely; men were accused later in the season and all were denounced with vigour during public trials, many fined and some expelled from Ihanzu. I am reluctant to push my own data much further and suggest that women are never accused later in the season, men never earlier. It is not inconceivable that accusations could occasionally occur the other way round. Be that as it may, this possibility should not distract us from the main point which is this—the overwhelming majority of the most severe cases involve men, not women. This assertion is supported not only by the cases I sat through over a two year period but also by elders' accounts of notorious rain-witches from the past, of which there are plenty. Thus, while it may be unwise to generalise about any required gendered ordering of accusations based on the available data alone, the evidence strongly suggests that, regardless of the exact order of accusations, accused male rain-witches are taken much more seriously than are their female counterparts. To explain this requires a discussion of witchcraft in its idealised form or, rather, idealised forms in the plural.

There are two stereotypes of the Ihanzu witch—one male, the other female—and each type is assigned his or her own particular tasks in their diabolical division of labour. The male witch, people claim, is much better at ruining rain and crops over vast regions as well as public water sources. The female witch, on the other hand, is noted for her ability to attack swiftly and effectively, killing individual clan members and neighbours. Both male and female witches, often as husband and wife teams,

allegedly work together for maximum ruinous results. A female witch attacks and kills individuals, removing their souls from the grave to work as nocturnal zombie labourers (*atumbūka*; sing. *tumbūka*) on their plots; these zombies allegedly return and live, thanks to witchcraft medicines, an invisible existence inside witches' houses with other zombies that have been, likewise, fiendishly revived.¹¹ The female witch's husband then ruins the rain over vast areas but allows it to fall on their own plot so their crops will grow. Together this disastrous duo unjustly deny others the most basic productive and reproductive resources in the name of fulfilling their own perversely egotistical desires. In short, we see the principle of gender complementarity coming through loud and clear, albeit in a particularly unsavoury form. If the male and female chiefs acting together are capable of unleashing cosmic powers for the benefit of all in Ihanzu, then the male and female witch together can similarly activate those powers by to everyone's detriment. One gendered duo provides the ultimate good; the other, the ultimate evil.

While I have not presented any cases material on personal witchcraft accusations, I should mention that actual accusations do not, in fact, fit the gender stereotype in that both women *and men* are commonly accused. That is to say, in personal witchcraft attacks between individuals the stereotypical female witch does not coincide very neatly with actual accusations. Men and women are both commonly accused and found guilty of practising personal witchcraft, in spite of the fact that the stereotypical personal witch is female.

Rain-witchcraft cases are different. Here the stereotype of the male rain-witch carrying out his heinous crimes against the collective fits neatly with the actual cases which are taken up and denounced. As we saw, this is not necessarily so with initial rain-witch accusations. Women, like men, may be accused (Cases 7.1-7.4). What is significant and indeed rather telling is the actual *outcome* of rain-witchcraft cases. Here accused men are denounced in a way that accused women are not. With only one exception (Case 7.8), all men accused were subjected to lengthy trials. They were all found guilty. All were threatened. One man was expelled from his community. This is not to say that these things could never happen to female rain-witches for they sometimes do. What the cases do make plain, however, is that the male rain-witch

¹¹ The most common zombie labour cited is hoeing, but they are also said to carry out almost any activity that aids household (re)production—fetching water, chopping firewood, grinding sorghum, preparing meals, brewing beer. Not insignificantly, all of these tasks are associated with women. It appears the Sukuma hold similar beliefs about nocturnal zombie labourers (Mesaki 1994: 49) as do the Iramba (Lindström 1988: 183n; Pender-Cudlip 1974a: 29n), Fipa (Willis 1968: 4) and Kaguru (Beidelman 1963d: 66, 93). Nyaturu witches are notorious for reviving the dead though only to turn them into lion-men (*mbojo*), not zombie labourers (Mdachi 1991: 97-99).

stereotype adheres very closely to actual cases as played out, not so much in terms of accusations but certainly in terms of eventual outcome.

Now this raises the intriguing issue of why one witchcraft stereotype—namely, the male one—should be strictly followed in practice, while the other, the female one, is not. And here Willis, speaking in a slightly different context, gives us a start towards an answer. Speaking of anti-sorcery movements amongst the Fipa of Tanzania, Willis claims that '[i]t may be assumed, then, that the accusations made during a Kamcape [anti-witchcraft] operation relate primarily to general and social, rather than interpersonal conflicts within a village community' (1968: 10). This is on the grounds that 'the accusations are public and the whole community participates in making them...' (*ibid.*). He then suggests in a footnote that 'the social genesis of these tensions may also be indicated by the fact that Kamcape allegations are always made against those who, by sex and age, correspond to the conventional image of the Fipa sorcerer as an old man. Inter-personal sorcery allegations frequently refer to young men and to women' (*ibid.*). In other words, as Abrahams neatly sums it up, 'stereotypes are more likely to inform actual behaviour when a community, rather than an individual, feels threatened' (1994: 21).

Though the contexts in which these statements were made differ slightly from the context in which I am using them, the relevance to my argument should be apparent. Here, as with anti-witchcraft movements, these cases are social, not individual or personal in nature in that they emanate from the entire community. Since rain-witchcraft threatens society as a whole, it demands the whole society's co-operation in making accusations.¹² The nature of the lengthy and hotly contested rain meetings ensure this to be the case. Since there are in these cases no specific interpersonal conflicts to guide behaviour, people fall back on stereotypes of what the ideal rain-witch should be. As cases drag on in the public eye week after week, month after month or even year after year, people come to follow more neatly the expected stereotype by systematically eliminating accused women and focusing on men. The stereotypical male witch, due to the public nature of rain-witchcraft cases, thus comes to life in a way the female stereotypical witch never can. Male witches, both in theory and in practice, are truly the standardised nightmare in Ihanzu society. Even so, male

¹² Any talk about 'the entire society' surely demands some qualification. Rain meetings, where most accusations and trials occur, are normally the domain of elder members of the community, though this is not invariably so. Sometimes, depending on the village, people in their early 20s attend, both males and females. Men are normally more vocal than are women. Christians occasionally participate in these meetings though not frequently.

witches cannot realise fully their perverse potential without the assistance of a female cohort, so claim informants.

At an ideal level it remains ultimately the male witch, in concert with his witch-wife, that provides the most powerful model of evil forces in the Ihanzu cultural imagination. Through their evil and co-operative doings they threaten to undo all that is done, to destroy, maliciously and without remorse, Ihanzu society at its very foundations. The man destroys the rain; the woman destroys the kin.

Rain-Witchcraft in Context

If we accept that rain-witchcraft accusations and the ensuing cases are by definition socially-driven, and not based on inter-personal tensions, then we can better imagine why the topic of rain-witchcraft has proved a singularly uninteresting one for anthropologists. This is because the overwhelming majority of witchcraft studies have concerned themselves with the question of whether persons in certain social relationships are more likely to accuse one another of witchcraft. That is to say, anthropologists have had a particular fascination with social dynamics—as indeed they should—examining in great detail who accuses whom, and under what circumstances.¹³ As Beattie tersely sums up the matter in speaking about the Nyoro: ‘sorcery reflects interpersonal conflicts: as in other cultures, people practise sorcery against those whom they have a grudge...’ (1963: 30). So uncontroversial is this proposition that some feel confident enough to claim: ‘I doubt if anyone would disagree...that witchcraft beliefs and accusations provide a means of rupturing relations which become intolerably strained’ (Douglas 1963: 124).

Fruitful though these approaches have been, one is somehow left theoretically bankrupt when faced with witchcraft accusations that seem to be driven more by society as a whole than by interpersonal conflicts, and when faced with witchcraft that is at the same time directed against the entire society and not against any specific individual. Rain-witchcraft accusations and cases come about not because of structural or underlying interpersonal tensions—mother’s brother accuses sister’s son, co-wives accuse each other—but rather due to a *generalised* fear that, faced with no rain, there is powerful, all-pervasive, all-threatening evil at work within Ihanzu

¹³ Probably the most spectacular example of the approach I am talking about may be found in Marwick 1965. Others have similarly concerned themselves with the interpersonal dynamics of witchcraft accusations (e.g., Harwood 1970; Middleton and Winter 1963; Turner 1957; Wilson 1951).

society. The problem, then, for structural-functional models of witchcraft, or indeed for any approach that presupposes witchcraft is about revealing underlying dynamics of one-on-one social relationships, is the distinct lack of the very relations which they presuppose.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have examined several rain-witchcraft cases in Ihanzu from the 1993-1994 season. From them, there are two points that I would like to emphasise. The first is that gender complementarity pervades indigenous ideas about witchcraft, much as it does in a number of other domains. The stereotypical rain-witch is male; the stereotypical personal witch, female. As on all other occasions men and women must co-operate to achieve their goal, even if it is an extremely anti-social one like witchcraft. Through examining patterns of rain-witchcraft accusations, we can readily see how ideas of gender complementarity are played out in practice. As such, male and female witches provide a structural inversion of male and female chiefs: both rely on the model of gender complementarity to achieve their ends.

My second point is this: people in Ihanzu have distinctive ideas about political power and legitimacy that are, like ideas about gender categories, made manifest in practice. Through rain-witchcraft accusation patterns we saw that only certain types of people were regularly accused, all of whom were in some way connected to what I have called the traditional authority structure. Government officials, on the other hand, are powerful but in a very different way—their basis of authority lies not in ancestral sanction but derives ultimately from the capital city and the government machinery. The point of interest, if we recall the discussion from chapter two, is that this dual Ihanzu notion of cosmic power exists today much as it has since the Germans first instituted a governmental bureaucracy in Ihanzu around 1900. In other words, the two types of power—governmental and symbolic—have coexisted throughout this century and they continue to do so today.

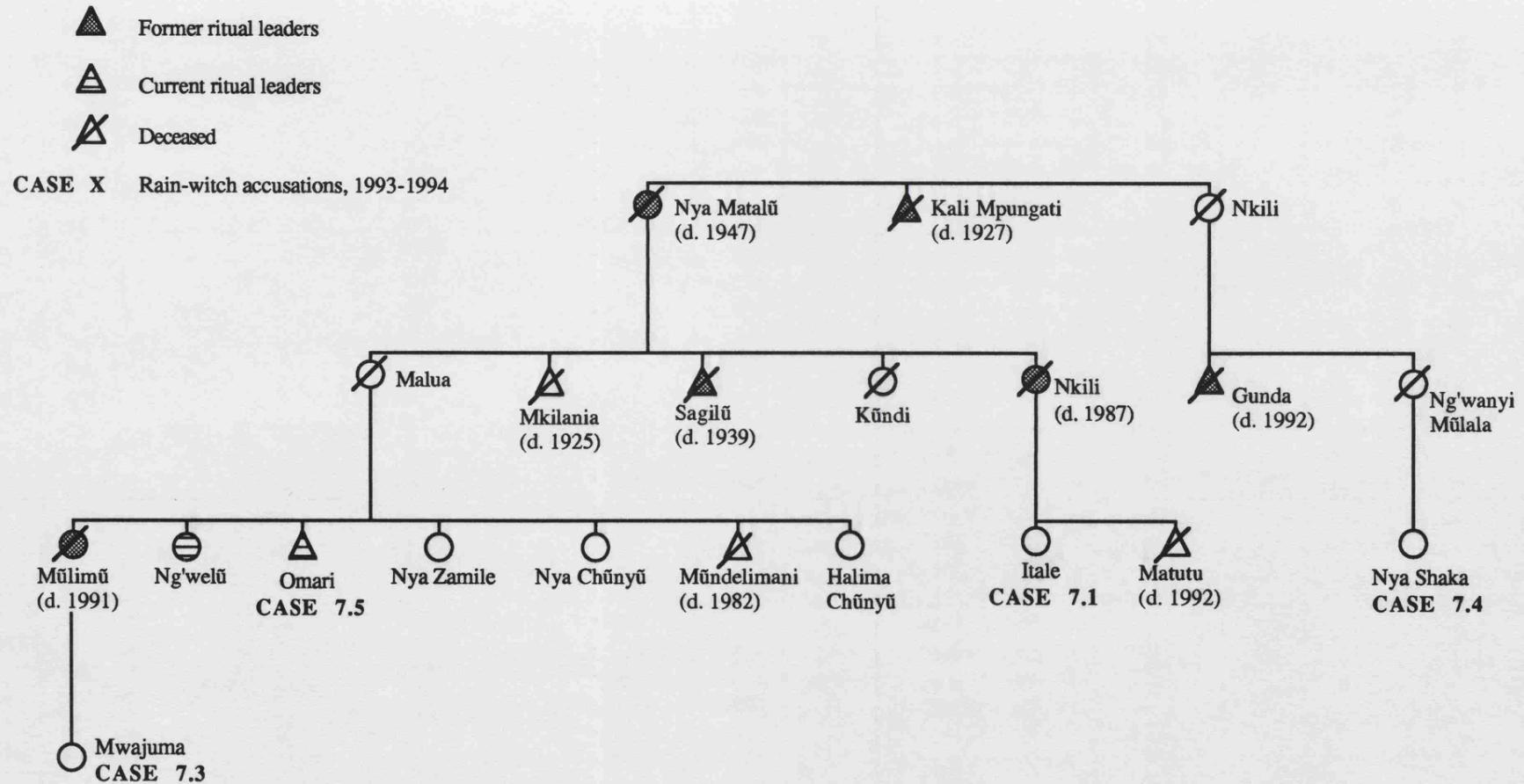


Figure 7.1. 1993-1994 rain-witchcraft accusations within Anyampanda of Kirumi royal matri-lineage

Date	Sex	Person accused	Clan	Nature of problem	Outcome
22 Jan 95 - 2 Feb 95	F	Mwajuma*	<i>Anyampanda</i>	Didn't farm; suspected of being envious of others' harvests	No trial; no fines; left Ihanzu for Babati for the season
24 Jan 95	M	Haraka	<i>Anyansuli</i>	Claimed had been given rain by ancestral spirits	Trial; threat; fined a few goats
27 Jan 95-1 Feb 95	M	Lüketo (rainmaking assistant)	<i>Anyambilu</i>	Accused of stealing rainstones from Kirumi rainshrine	Trial; threat; fined 3 cows, 3 goats
Early Feb 95	M	Kibado*	<i>Anyankalī</i>	Claimed to have rain (again!)	Trial; covered with mud, made to sit in sun until confessed; locked up by WEO for one day; fined cow; forced into Sukumaland
Feb 95	M	Müliani	<i>Ayankalī</i>	Allegedly bewitched rain to sell his grain stock at high price	Trial; threat; arrested and locked up by police for three days
Feb 95	M	Iha Mbuta	<i>Anyankalī</i>	Claimed to have rain	Expelled from Ihanzu
25 Feb 95	M	Mahalu**	<i>Anyampanda</i>	Caught burying medicines near rainshrine	Trial; threat; fined

*Accused in 1993-4

**Known to have been accused prior to 1993

Table 7.1. 1995 rain-witchcraft cases in brief

Case no.	Sex		Named	Clan	Basis of accusation?			Accused of which type of witchcraft?			What community actions taken?					
					Oracle	Dubious acts	Lies about rain	Inadvertently angered:			Fully-conscious acts	None	Public trial or meeting	Threat	Fine	Forced from Ihanzu
	M	F			Ancestors	Chief	Diviner									
7.1	✓	✓		<i>Anyampanda</i>	✓						✓	✓				
7.2a	✓			Not Stated	✓						✓	✓				
7.2b	✓			Not Stated	✓						✓	✓				
7.2c	✓			<i>Anyampanda</i>	✓						✓	✓				
7.2d	✓			<i>Anyampanda</i>	✓						✓	✓				
7.3	✓	✓		<i>Anyampanda</i>				✓	✓			✓				
7.4	✓	✓		<i>Anyampanda</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓				
7.5	✓	✓		<i>Anyampanda</i>		✓					✓		✓	✓		
7.6	✓	✓		<i>Anyampanda</i>	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
7.7	✓	✓		<i>Anyambeü</i>		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		
7.8	✓	✓		<i>Anyankalü</i>			✓				✓				✓	
7.9	✓	✓		<i>Anyambwá</i>		✓			✓		✓		✓	✓		
7.10	✓	✓		<i>Anyampanda</i>		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
7.11	✓	✓	?					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
7.12	✓	✓		<i>Sukuma man</i>	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	

Table 7.2. Summary of rain-witchcraft cases for 1993-1994 season

Conclusion

THIS THESIS has examined the practice of rainmaking and rain-breaking in contemporary Ihanzu, Tanzania, as well as the history of such practices. Rain rites were divided into two distinct types—those that occur annually (chapters three and four) and those that occur following the failure of the annual rain rites (chapters five, six and seven). While on the one hand I have sought to document a range of Ihanzu rain rites in great detail, I have on the other endeavoured to reproduce simultaneously the local logic that broadly informs and gives meaning to those rites.

The emphasis throughout on local logic, to reiterate, is by no means absolute—not being an Ihanzu myself, I can make no valid claims to capturing, appropriating or (re)presenting completely the Ihanzu cultural imagination from a local point of view. Nor is it simply a matter of trying to present an ‘emic’ perspective rather than an ‘etic’ one, for this thesis in some instances moves well beyond what any of my informants would have (or could have) clearly articulated. As with many anthropological analyses, this thesis is a never-ending alternation between local and global ideas and explanations, ‘a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring them into simultaneous view’ (Geertz 1983: 69). To paraphrase Marilyn Strathern who was speaking in the context of Highland New Guinea, this study has aimed at presenting an analysis from the perspective of a particular Western anthropological preoccupation of what the Ihanzu cultural imagination might look like if my informants shared such preoccupations (Strathern 1988: 309). These particular preoccupations have led to some important conclusions.

First, in Ihanzu eyes, rainmaking and gender are inextricably linked. Central to the Ihanzu ritual world and cultural imagination is the proposition that gender complementarity makes the world go round. Two genders together complete a vision of the world, a world that would otherwise remain sterile and fundamentally incomplete.

This fact manifests itself in a variety of ways. One of the more apparent is in the nature of the dual leadership which, as we saw in chapter two, has proved significant for the people of Ihanzu since at least 1885, and likely before. Successive waves of outsiders from the Germans, to the British to the postcolonial state failed to recognise or to capitalise on the significance of the royal duo, but from an Ihanzu perspective there was never a question on this score. Historically, leadership in Ihanzu has in all instances remained a dual one. And even today, in spite of the far reaching political, legal and economic changes ushered in by the colonial state, and since then by the postcolonial government, the dual monarchy continues to provide the people of Ihanzu with a meaningful way of envisioning and making sense of the world in which they live.

In a similar fashion, as with Ihanzu rulers, Ihanzu rain rites are also replete with gender symbolism. Annual rain rites at the Kirumi rainshrine, as discussed in chapter two, were up until the 1960s presided over by male and female royals; all the activities were initiated by grandsons and granddaughters. As we saw in chapter three, these rites are today quite different, concerned as they are mainly with men; yet even so, informants repeatedly stressed that male and female must co-operate if the rains were to come at all. Today male and female royals are said to share the esoteric and gendered knowledge of rainmaking, a knowledge that can only be put into effect when drawn upon and deployed jointly. Thus while the annual rain rituals have changed markedly over the years, and especially since the 1960s, people's ideas of gender complementarity that underpin them by and large have not.

Turning from annual rites to remedial rites, chapter five examined the various ways that the cultural categories 'male' and 'female' are combined during ancestral offerings for rain. Foremost among them is the fact that granddaughter and grandson must jointly labour to initiate each stage of these rites. It was also shown that the ancestral addresses they make, like the grandchildren themselves, are variously gendered and complementary.

In chapter six I demonstrated that even for a so-called 'ritual of rebellion' designed to bring the rain, men and women stress, through word and deed, gender complementarity. Interestingly, it is here the combination of masculine and feminine aspects within single dancers' bodies that provides the locus of combination. Finally, in chapter seven, I argued that ideas and ideals about gender complementarity are once again evident in local understandings of witchcraft—a gendered diabolical duo provide the cosmological converse of male and female royals, as each pair must co-operate to achieve the desired outcome. It is only the ends to which their powers are put, not the method of achieving them, that differ.

Overall, then, the aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate in a variety of contexts how Ihanzu rain rites, as locally understood, are in the main ‘about’ the cultural construction of gender, the categories of ‘male’ and ‘female’ and the relationship between these two categories. In Ihanzu, gender categories provide particularly salient categories for thinking about the world, and their complementary combination, a powerful means of transforming it. Gender, as such, provides a primary cosmological structuring principle for the Ihanzu people that resonates strongly across a number of cultural domains.

Gender is implicated in rainmaking and other rites of transformation, I suggested, because of the form that Ihanzu notions of power take. In the Ihanzu cultural imagination, power comes in gendered pairs. To join the genders is to transform, to invigorate and to unleash the cosmic powers of the Ihanzu human, natural and divine worlds. When masculine and feminine elements of a gender universe combine, things happen—babies are born, iron is produced, beer is brewed, food is cooked or, as in this thesis, the rains fall. In this respect, it is ‘precisely because our actions have effects on and in the world, we are able to produce form and fashion something out of nature’ (Arens and Karp 1989: xx; cf. Herbert 1993). Here, gender categories enable people not only to imagine meaningfully the world in which they live, but also to act purposively upon it, shaping and reshaping their world through ritual action. It was with this in mind that I developed in chapter four a gendered model of transformative processes, a model which I argued underpins all rain rites in Ihanzu. The issue I would now like to raise briefly is the extent to which this locally-generated model of gender complementarity may apply not only in Ihanzu, but in other areas of Africa as well.

RAINMAKING IN AFRICA

Given that cultural knowledge is (almost by definition) specific, and that it differs from one locale to the next, we should not expect that the Ihanzu case could fully explain rainmaking or other transformative processes across Africa. This can only be done by further fieldwork in other areas. What it does offer, however, is a useful starting point and a heuristic device for reconceptualising some of these complex issues in other areas of Africa where rainmaking institutions and practices are found.

We may recall from the introductory chapter that the literature on rainmaking in Africa is replete with references to gender, most of them obscure and unanalysed. All over Africa we find male and female rainstones (Avua 1968: 29; Cooke and Beaton 1939: 182; Hartnoll 1932: 738; 1942: 59; James 1972: 38; Middleton 1971: 196; Packard

1981: 69; Rogers 1927; Williams 1949: 205-6), gendered rain-drums (Weatherby 1979: 321), rain rites hedged with sexual taboos (Cory 1951: 53; Driberg 1919: 55; Feddema 1966: 182; Rogers 1927: 82; Roscoe 1923b: 31; Schapera 1930), pregnant sacrificial animals and sacred serpents (Avua 1968: 29, 32; Carnell 1955: 31; Cooke and Beaton 1939: 190; Hauenstein 1967a: 14-5; Hobley 1903: 349; Ludger 1954: 185; Murray 1980: 68; Roscoe 1909: 189). At the very least, this makes patent the fact that when it comes to rainmaking, gender distinctions hold a particular fascination and have a certain cultural salience across a wide region of Africa—much as they do for the Ihanzu people, with their concern with gendered cosmologies, gendered rains and gendered chiefs. Lacking more thorough explorations into the many local African cosmological systems however, it is rather difficult at present to draw any sound and sweeping conclusions on the matter. The point would simply be that anthropologists have paid much less attention to ideal gender constructs in Africa than is warranted, if, of course, we are concerned with hearing more clearly our informants' voices and concerns.

My central concern in this thesis has been with the Ihanzu of Tanzania who are relatively small in number, but who are by no means extraordinary—they share a number of cultural similarities with other Bantu-speaking groups found widely all across East and Southern Africa. In this sense it is not Ihanzu's uniqueness, but their very typicality, that demands attention. If, as I have argued, gender constructs feature centrally in the Ihanzu cultural imagination and the exploration of those constructs provides new insights into rainmaking rites, then why has the focus on the cultural construction of gender in other areas of Africa been given only secondary attention, or no attention at all? To answer this query we must turn briefly to the nature of anthropological knowledge.

THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

As was argued in the introduction, many earlier analysts either ignored local understandings of rain rites altogether or, like Schapera (1971), Colson (1948; 1977), the Kriges (1943) and some other anthropologists in the structural-functional tradition, noted them but then failed to appreciate and explore fully the local logic that lay behind them. Their concerns, more often than not, were to demonstrate the functional interrelations (latent or not) between rain rites and social structures. There was little concern with local understandings which, in turn, meant little concern with the cultural construction of gender.

There are a number of reasons early anthropologists emphasised social structure often to the exclusion of local understandings. One of the most obvious is the desire that anthropology be a truly comparative discipline that could (in theory) be equally applied in, say, Highland Burma and Central Africa. Thus, anthropological explanations, by focusing on social structures, were thought capable of explaining the ethnographic facts across vast regions in a way that more locally-grounded (and hence, culturally-specific) theories were not. Following this rationale, though it might have been important to record local ideas and explanations to achieve some semblance of a functioning, unitary whole, there were no compelling reasons to foreground those same explanations. In fact, to the extent one did so, explanations became more local and were thus thought less relevant cross-culturally. In some sense then it was the anthropologist as outsider who knew best, and who could understand the trappings of the system in a way that locals themselves could not.

Now, in spite of persistent deconstructionist claims to the contrary, there are still good grounds for assuming that anthropologists *do*, as informed outsiders, stand in a privileged position that enables them to see some things that locals simply do not, and perhaps cannot. If this were not so, then doing anthropology (or, for that matter, engaging in any other social science research) would be entirely pointless. Any view—including the deconstructionist view itself—would be as good or bad, as true or false, as the next.

But this is not the same as claiming that in all instances the outsider's perspective is the only one. Even less does it imply that it is the correct one. What is at issue, rather, is the recognition of multiple perspectives which simultaneously offer different sorts of truths in different circumstances. As I have argued in this thesis, local understandings should feature centrally as one type of 'truth' in our understandings of the peoples about whom (and for whom) we speak and write. Such a suggestion in no way implies the abandonment of the comparative project that is so fundamental to the anthropological enterprise. This is because it simply makes no sense to assume, *a priori*, that all local understandings are only local and that they therefore have nothing of interest to say about larger, more comparative issues. Such assumptions are not only patent ethnocentrisms—or worse—but they also suggest that the theories of 'the rest' can never match those of the West. Moore rightly reminds us 'that anthropology should recognise that local knowledge, including local technical knowledge, can be part of a set of knowledges properly pertaining to political economy and the social sciences, and can thus be comparative in scope, as well as international in outlook' (1996: 6). The approach to rainmaking taken in this thesis is a case in point. This thesis offers a detailed examination of a central feature of the Ihanzu cultural imagination—gender

complementarity—but one which, I would suggest, is likely to be found widely across Africa. From the available ethnographic evidence, it appears that a careful unpacking of local ideas about rainmaking across Africa will lead at once to a more subtle and complete understanding of local notions of gender and power, as well as the other way round.

GENDERED MODELS OF TRANSFORMATION

If it is true that the cultural construction of gender, from an indigenous point of view, proves to be a particularly salient feature in transformative models across Africa, then we should expect to find that gender features prominently in other transformative processes besides rainmaking.

The historian Eugenia Herbert, in an elegantly written and fascinating book, has argued convincingly that such a ‘procreative paradigm,’ as she calls it, underlies processes of smelting and smithing across Africa. There, she argues that ‘...within the systems of belief underlying transformative processes, gender plays a far more important role than has been commonly realized’ (Herbert 1993: 1).¹ Taking this as her starting point she goes on to show how smithing, and even more so smelting, across a wide region, are invariably hedged with sexual taboos and anxieties and how furnaces themselves are often constructed complete with genitalia. Even when ritual smelting paraphernalia do not take on overtly male and female forms,

genderization and social identity are achieved by other means and reiterated by the rituals, exclusions, prohibitions, and prescriptions surrounding smelting in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. The totality of the process thus invokes the paradigms of procreation and of the living and the dead, not only as part of the explanatory process but *actively*, to make things happen (Herbert 1993: 20; italics in original).

Without too much exaggeration the same might be said for rainmaking in Ihanzu, and probably for rainmaking in many other places too. It is the varied outcomes that are at issue—rain, babies, iron, or whatever—not the underlying, gendered and generative processes which are common to all.

¹ She also takes age as a second, though subsidiary, category that requires attention along with gender.

APPENDICES, BIBLIOGRAPHY

Appendix A

Succession to Royal Office

FOR THE DURATION of this century, succession to ritual office has followed fairly strict rules of matrilineal primogeniture within the *Anyampanda* royal matrilineage. This we can say with complete confidence from at least 1893 (see below), and with decreasing confidence the further back we go from that date. When asking about former leaders, I failed, as have others, 'to draw out any accounts of attempts to take over from the *Anyampanda*, or even of disputes over succession within the clan itself' (Adam 1963b: 15). One of the earliest entries in the Mkalama District Book on the Ihanzu, probably recorded in the late 1910s or early 1920s, states that '[n]o chief has yet been murdered nor has any attempt to do so yet been made' (p. 30). A few years later, in either 1926 or 1927, another anonymous entry in the Book notes that '[o]nce a chief has been duly chosen and actually succeeded to the chieftainship, he has not been deposed for any reason' (p. 19).

In spite of this, 'apparently one [leader] was driven out because of successive famines' (Adam 1963b: 16). Unfortunately we know not who, or when, though we may safely assume that this leader was a pre-colonial one, and probably a distant one at that. If he were expelled sometime in the previous century, this would be congruent with the situation in nearby Sukumaland where nineteenth century rainmakers suffered similar fates in times of drought (Holmes and Austen 1972: 384; Kollmann 1898: 119-20; Liebenow 1960: 236).

Let us examine in more detail the history of the royal succession. I shall proceed in chronological order, beginning with the earliest rulers. Data on these early figures are necessarily scanty, while for the later leaders documentation is voluminous. Given that we are dealing with a dual chieftainship, there are two separate paths to be

followed—one male, the other female. Allow me to begin, as do informants, with the former.

The names of all the royal leaders in Figure A1 (overleaf) commonly come up in oral histories of the chiefdom. For the earliest male leaders—specifically, those prior to Semu Malekela (6)—there is often disagreement as to the exact order of succession. According to an unsigned and undated entry in the Mkalama District Book (p. 18), which judging by entries surrounding it must date around 1926 or 1927, people disagreed over who allegedly led the Ihanzu from Ukerewe. But, the entry continues, ‘succession after Sumbi [1] is not disputed, through Lingi [2], Kidosi [3] and Mau [4], brothers of Sumbi (probably not actual brothers, but certainly relations) to Semu [6], nephew of Mau, and thence to his brother [Kitentemi, 7]’ (pp. 18-19). My assumption that 1, 2, 3, and 4 were biologically-related brothers may prove incorrect, as the entry itself warns, though there is unfortunately no way of knowing. Informants differed on this point.¹ Of decided importance is a second early source, the information for which was collected by Iramba missionaries in 1931, that corroborates this early chronology—Nsumbi [1], Lyugi [2], Kidosi [3], Mau [4], Semu [6] and Kitentemi [7] (Kidamala & Danielson 1961: 73). The diacritical marks on some of the names in Figure A1, and some minor spelling alterations, are my doing and are based largely on informants’ pronunciations.

C. W. Werther, the first European to enter Ihanzu, found Semu Malekela (6) in office on his first trip in 1893 and, most tellingly, still reigning on his second trip in 1897 (Werther 1898: 72). (Werther refers to him solely as ‘Semu;’ the name Malekela comes from oral sources). The fact that Semu remained in office throughout the 1890s, through a decade which we know from reliable sources was plagued by extreme drought and famine (Kjekshus 1977), strongly suggests that the office of ritual leader in Ihanzu had by this time become firmly entrenched.

We do not know the exact year Semu died; I have put it at 1897 (the year Werther visited for the second time), though this may be off by a year or so. When he died his brother Kitentemi (7) entered office. His reign was short-lived, as he was captured in 1902 in an uprising against the Germans. With Kitentemi’s capture and death, his

¹ Later entries in the District Book confirm earlier reports though they differ enough to convince me that they are not simply plagiarised, or at least not entirely, from earlier ones. For example, Wyatt recorded in the 1940s that the line of male chiefs, from the earliest recalled to latest, was as follows: Malugi, Mgilia, Sumbi [1], Kidosi [3], Shiali [4], Semu [6], Kitentemi [7], Sagilu [13], and Gunda [16]. A very elderly man, and by far my most industrious informant on the topic, spontaneously gave the following order of succession to the chiefdom: Kingwele and Ikomba, Mbula, Münkanti, Gambeng’wenu, Malagala, Ngala, Mügilia, Malüme, Kidosi, Mpüma, Sümbi, Lyüdī, Siali, Malekela, Kitentemi, Kali, Sagilū, Gunda, Omari.

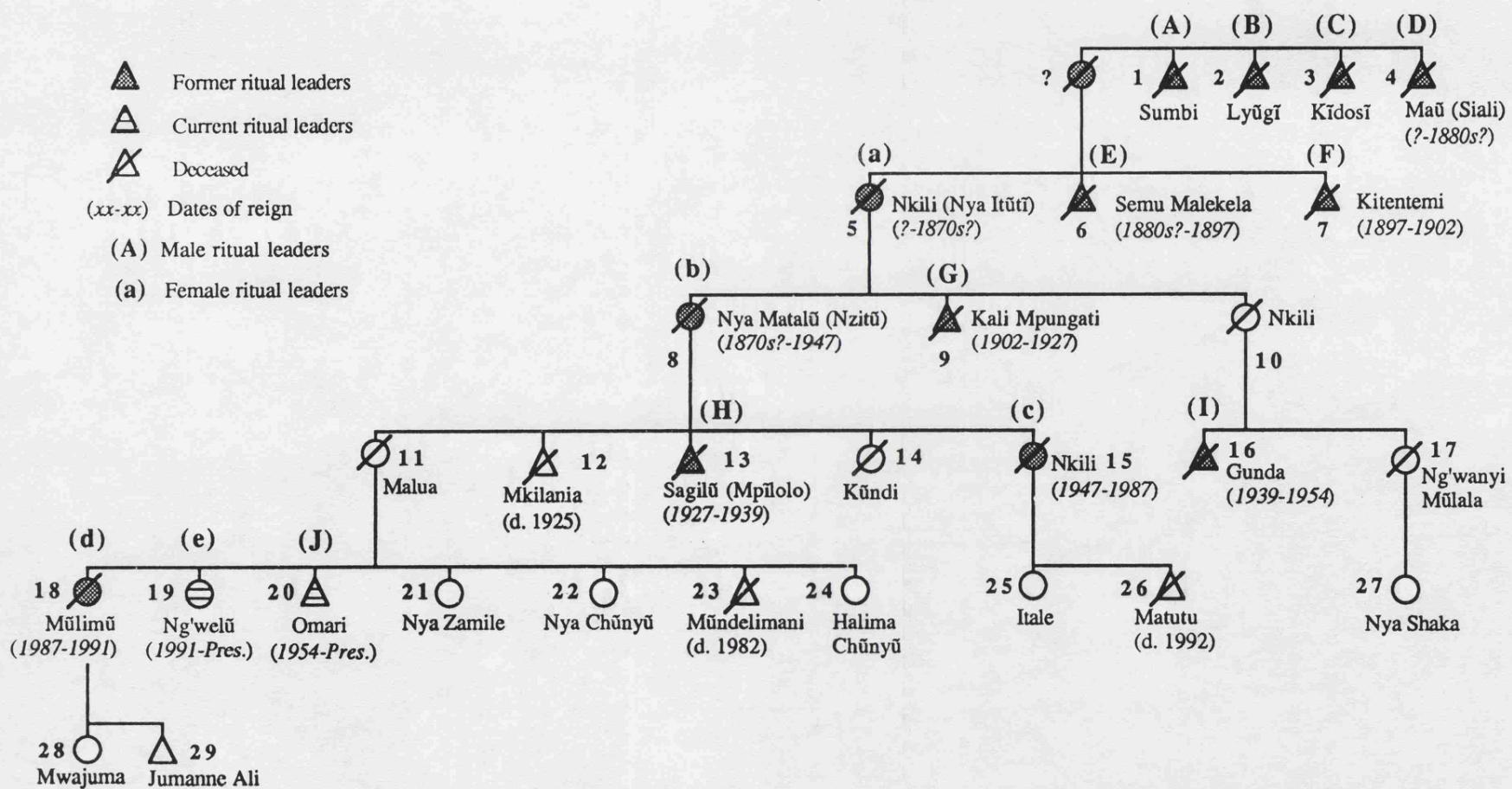


Figure A1. Anyampanda wa Kirumi royal matrilineage

sister's son, Kali Mpungati (9), succeeded to the position of male ritual leader; in 1920 he was appointed government chief (see chapter two for sources).

On Kali's death in 1927, his eldest sister's son, Sagilū (13) succeeded to ritual office (see chapter two for sources). Mkilania (12), Kali's eldest sister's eldest son, would have become the next leader though, according to Wyatt, he died in 1925, prior to Kali, thus making Sagilū the next candidate.²

When Sagilū's died in 1939, his eldest sister's eldest son (20) should have followed him though this man was considered by British officials to be too young and of difficult personality. For these reasons, Sagilū's mother's sister's eldest son, Gunda (16), became the regent leader. Chief Gunda ruled until 1954 when he stepped down and Omari (20) took over. Omari has remained the male ritual leader to the present. Jumanne Ali (29) will succeed to office when Omari dies. He currently lives in the village of Matongo, has a wife and several children.

The information on female ritual leaders is based almost entirely on oral histories since, as has been suggested throughout this thesis, earlier British administrators were largely oblivious to these arrangements. Nkili (5) (commonly referred to as Nya Itūtī; or more rarely Nzītū), the oldest remembered female ritual leader to reign in Ihanzu, died, I am supposing, in the 1870s. This date I assign tentatively, on the basis of the fact that her successor, Nya Matalū (8), 'lived to a great age and outlived all of her daughters except this one [Nkili, 15]' (Adam 1963b: 17). So if it is true that Nya Matalū died around 1947 at a ripe old age, as my best informants seem to agree, and that she was, according to oral sources, the reigning female leader when the Germans first entered Ihanzu, then we may infer that it was perhaps in the 1870s when she took over from Nya Itūtī (5).

Since Nya Matalū (8) lived and reigned for so many years, by the time of her death she had managed to outlive two of her three daughters (11 and 14 died) and her only son, Sagilū (13) (Adam 1963b: 17). Her only living daughter, Nkili (15), filled the *Anyampanda* female ritual office.

Nkili died in 1987. Her eldest sister's eldest daughter, Mūlimū (18), took her place as the reigning female ritual leader. The office passed to Mūlimū's younger sister, Ng'welu (19), when she died in 1991. Ng'welu holds this position to date. When she passes on, Nya Zamile (21) will become the next female incumbent.

² Wyatt, n.d. (c. 1926-1927), p. 19, Mkalama District Book, SOAS.

Appendix B

Fieldwork in Ihanzu

I arrived in Tanzania for the first time on 19 June 1993, so the faint stamp in my passport reminds me. For nearly six weeks I remained in Dar es Salaam where I searched for a Land Rover and research clearances by day and learnt Swahili by night. After leaving Dar and after an abortive stay of a few weeks in Mbugwe, another small, Bantu-speaking agricultural community, I relocated to Ihanzu, a long day's drive to the west.

There, I was allotted a modest but comfortable government house in the sub-village of Kirumi. This became my base camp, home if you will, for the duration of my stay in Ihanzu.

For the first six months I parked the Land Rover and did not leave Ihanzu. To 'do anthropology,' so I thought, meant staying in one place and getting on with it. I also did all my fieldwork during this first period without the aid of a research assistant, though I did have a part-time language assistant who spoke good Swahili and from that helped me to begin learning the Ihanzu language. Only belatedly did I realise that even if I had arrived alone, fieldwork did not have to be a solo enterprise. In fact, as I was later to discover, it was infinitely more rewarding and productive when others were intimately involved, usually the more the better.

If my first months of wandering about alone speaking to elders, filling in kinship diagrams and drawing village maps produced little 'data' as such, it did, I see in retrospect, have the unwitting consequence of convincing anyone who might have needed convincing that I was for the most part harmless. When I later began seeking full-time assistants, they were not hard to find. I hired a research assistant, Shabani Maua, a man born and raised in Kirumi,

who attended Isanzu primary school in Tumbili and Isene for several years. He is a Muslim and is in his early 40s.

Shabani, from that point onward, was not only a constant companion but turned out to be the biggest asset to my project, and a close friend. In his head he carried at all times not only a complete index of all the perplexing and annoying questions which we continually mulled over on the trails as we walked or drove from one village to the next, but also what can only be described as an implausibly large mental directory of anthropological contacts. Rainmakers and preachers, witches and chiefs, diviners and drunkards, he seemed to know them all, and more importantly, where to find them. In addition to making my time in Ihanzu worthwhile, his contribution gave this project an impetus and appeal that it would otherwise have lacked entirely.

Others seeking employment were soon put to work in different capacities: one man wrote the first ever Swahili-Ihanzu dictionary. Several others, after we devised and agreed on an orthography, set out transcribing interviews and entrail divination, songs and sayings, among other things. All transcriptions were checked by Shabani and me before I did the final translations into English. I employed six others to help me conduct a random 194-household survey.¹ This we carried out in October 1994 in four villages (*vijiji*) (Matongo, Ibaga, Mwangeza, Ilongo), and within those, twenty-three sub-villages (*vitongoji*). My concern was to collect information on household composition and economy, clan affiliation of members, educational levels, agricultural practices (types of crops farmed, number of plots and their locations, etc.), livestock, and other topics that would provide helpful background information. Most of the statistics given in this thesis are based on this extensive survey. In Kirumi I conducted a census in 1995 of all seventy-one households which included in-depth information from each household on genealogies, land tenure and land inheritance.

Many of my informants were elderly men. This, I found, was the easiest category of people to work with as many of them felt they knew the sorts of things I was interested in, and were also willing to help. Many also expressed an interest that I 'tell it right,' thus spending the extra time with me to explain a point that they felt was particularly compelling. Elderly male informants with whom I spoke regularly total around thirty. Casual conversations outside of the interview format, or one time interviews, were so frequent as to be beyond enumeration.

I knew and regularly interviewed all localised members of the rain chief's family, men and women, about rainmaking; the chief's matrilineage members who lived outside central

¹ As a sampling frame I used funeral log books which are found in each and every village in Ihanzu. Villagers themselves keep these books for keeping track of funeral debts; as such, they contain the most comprehensive and up-to-date information on who is in the village, and who is not, at any given time. From these I made selections of households based on a random number table.

Ihanzu I interviewed much less frequently, with the exception of Chief Omari's classificatory sister (MZD), Itale, whom I met on many occasions to discuss rainmaking and other issues. I try to indicate throughout this thesis the sources of different information. Pseudonyms are used for most names except for my research assistant and those who are members of the royal rainmaking lineage who would be difficult to disguise in any case.

Living in the central village of Kirumi posed some limitations on my fieldwork. Given that petrol was very difficult to obtain, not to mention exorbitantly expensive, my fieldwork was often limited to those villages and peoples within reasonable walking distance of Kirumi. Villages on the periphery we visited occasionally, when something interesting was happening like a rain-witchcraft trial. To maximise research time away, Shabani and I tended to camp at outlying villages, where we would work for anywhere from three days to a few weeks. While this was not ideal, as I remained essentially a stranger in some of the outlying villages, it seemed preferable to moving continually, or to not moving at all. Nor did such measures hamper the research: of rain-witchcraft trials, for example, I managed to record and follow up over a hundred historical cases, as well as to sit through a few dozen cases in a number of villages (see chapter seven).

Living in Kirumi also afforded opportunities that would have otherwise been unavailable. I lived up the road from the male and female chiefs and habitually visited both. Since it is these two who are alleged to be the ultimate guardians of all rainmaking knowledge, access to them was crucial. Also, as people from outlying villages sometimes came to Kirumi to take part in certain rain rites, they quickly learnt—the chiefs made it clear to them—that it was all right for one decidedly odd white man to follow along to ancestral offerings and rain dances, to take photos, ask questions and record songs, much as his 'mother' (Virginia Adam) had done thirty years previously. From Kirumi, where all rainmaking rites take place, I saw rainmaking assistants regularly arrive from all parts of Ihanzu to visit the chiefs and to carry out rain rites at the rainshrine which stood not far from my house. Several got into the habit of stopping in to visit me on their way back to their villages; they were always guaranteed a cup of hot coffee with plenty of sugar, a plate of stiff porridge and plenty of nagging questions. I was also able to observe and participate in most rain rites.

Since at least some material in this thesis is of a confidential sort, I wish to be explicit rather than apologetic about the methods used in obtaining it. I have already mentioned that I conversed with both chiefs, their kin and their rainmaking assistants on a regular basis. Not initially, though certainly after my first year there, many were forthcoming about the intimate details of the 'secret' rites they carried out and, as far as I can judge, discussed them with me freely and honestly. Of the nineteen male rainmaking assistants, twelve proved to be regular informants. A much trickier issue was the women's rites for it is no secret here, nor was it there, that I am a man.

Women do not generally discuss their 'secrets' with men, nor, for that matter, do they discuss them even with uninitiated girls. Here my status as 'outsider' helped considerably as women were quick to realise that whatever stake I had in the game, it was rather different from their own, or from any other men they might know. Particularly useful in this context was my 'adoption' into the chiefly *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan-section, so that I became the male chief's sister's son. This began (and probably continues) as a joke, yet what my becoming a clan member did was to plant me firmly in the Ihanzu kinship web. Without this, any progress made would have been considerably less. I quickly acquired clan sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, grandchildren and so on. It was, in the end, my clan sisters who gave me the most useful, in-depth and often unnervingly candid information on female fertility and rain rituals. I was, at once, an outsider and an insider. Regular female informants, most of whom were my clan sisters, were relatively few in number—eighteen in total—though all those I knew were extremely helpful. Again with female informants, as with male ones, I had many more irregular, but nonetheless useful, conversations and one-off interviews.

Altogether I lived in Ihanzu for twenty-one months, which may be divided into two parts: from August 1993 to December 1994, and January 1995 to May 1995. In between I took a brief holiday for Christmas and left Tanzania. The 1993-94 and 1994-95 agricultural seasons were both exceptionally dry ones.² This made for bad farming, but good research. Had I lived there during well-watered years it is most unlikely this thesis would have been written in its current form.

The month of June 1995 I spent in the National Archives in Dar es Salaam, and since then I have spent countless hours reading other published and unpublished materials at Rhodes House (Oxford), the School of Oriental and African Studies, the British Library of Political and Economic Science and the Public Records Office (the latter three are in London).

² The 1993-1994 rainfall total was 21.79 inches. This was distributed as follows: November (0.6 in); December (1.19 in); January (8.88 in); February (5.18 in); March (3.89 in); April (2.05 in); May, June, July, August, September, October (0.0). (This data comes from Haydom Hospital on the eastern border of Ihanzu; since most storms pass from east to west, it may be seen as fairly indicative of the weather in Ihanzu). I do not have the 1994-1995 figures though the year was no better than the previous one.

Appendix C

Kinship Terminology

THE MATRILINEAL IHANZU use a kinship terminology that most resembles that known as Crow with its characteristic generational skewing; patrilateral cross-cousins ascend one generation (FZS=F; FZD=M) while matrilateral cross-cousins descend one (MBS=S; MBD=D). Also typical of this structure is the significant relationship between mother's brother and sister's son. Figures C1 and C2 (overleaf) give the labelling terms and terms of address, respectively, for most relationships in Ihanzu. Labelling or genealogical reckoning terms are, more often than not, used in conjunction with possessive pronouns. Thus *iya ane*, my mother, is more commonly heard than is *iya* alone; *isekūlū ane*, my grandfather, more common than simply *isekūlū*. These pronouns I have omitted from the figures since they are identical for all relationships: my (-ane), your (sing.) (-ako), your (plur.) (-anyu), his or her (-akwe), our (-itu), their (-ao).

PARENT-CHILDREN

A father is labelled *tata* (plur. *atata*) and his son and daughter are referred to when they are young as either *mūng' enya* (plur. *ang' enya*) or *ng' wana* (plur. *ana*). The reciprocal term of address for the father-son relationship is *alai* though this is used only with classificatory fathers and children; biological fathers and their brothers are addressed by ego simply as *tata*, whereas fathers, when addressing their own children, normally use their personal names. Mothers are known and addressed by their children as *iya* (sing. and plur.), as are classificatory mothers. Mothers normally address their own children by their personal names.

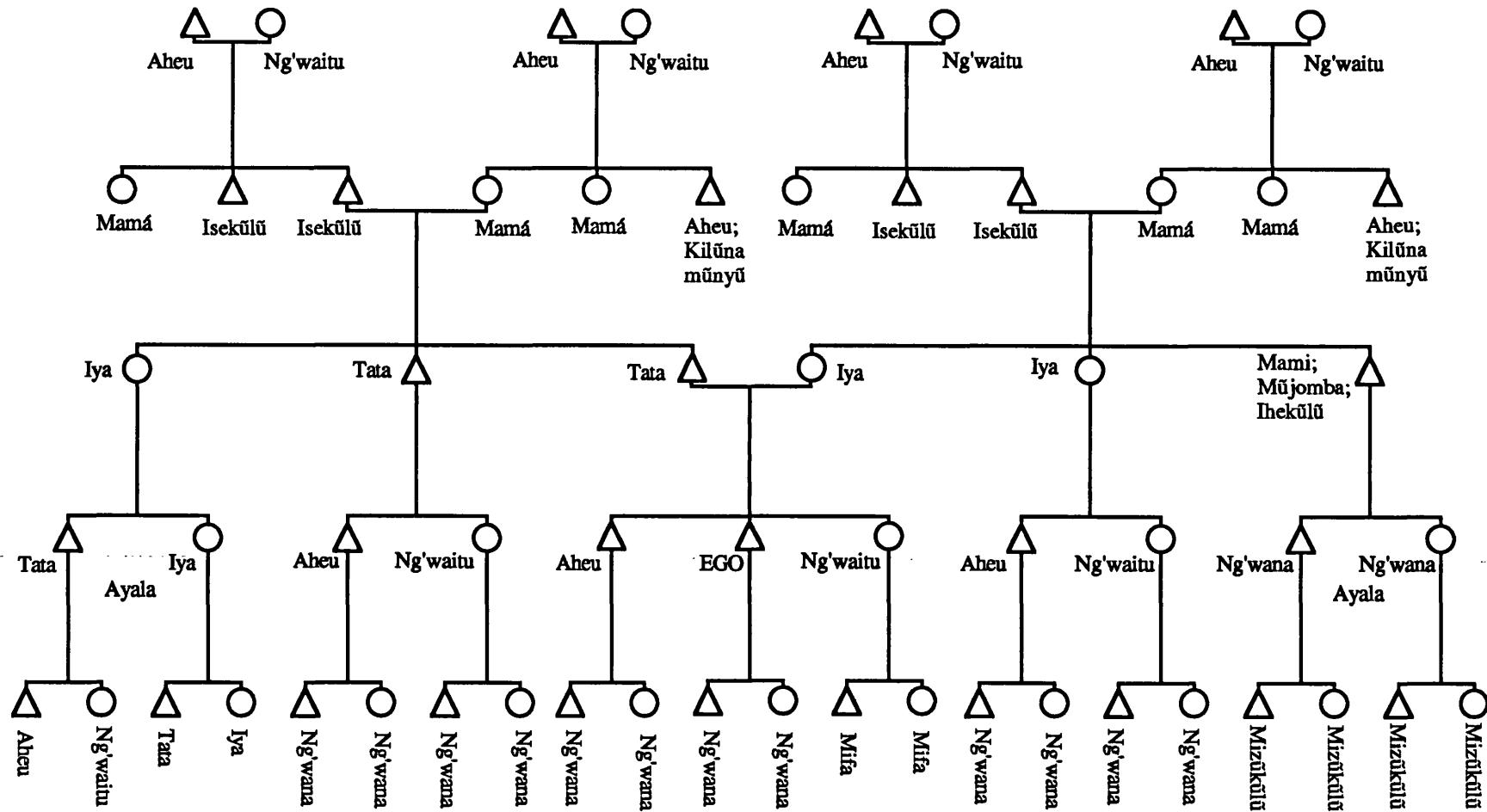


Figure C1. Genealogical Reckoning Terms

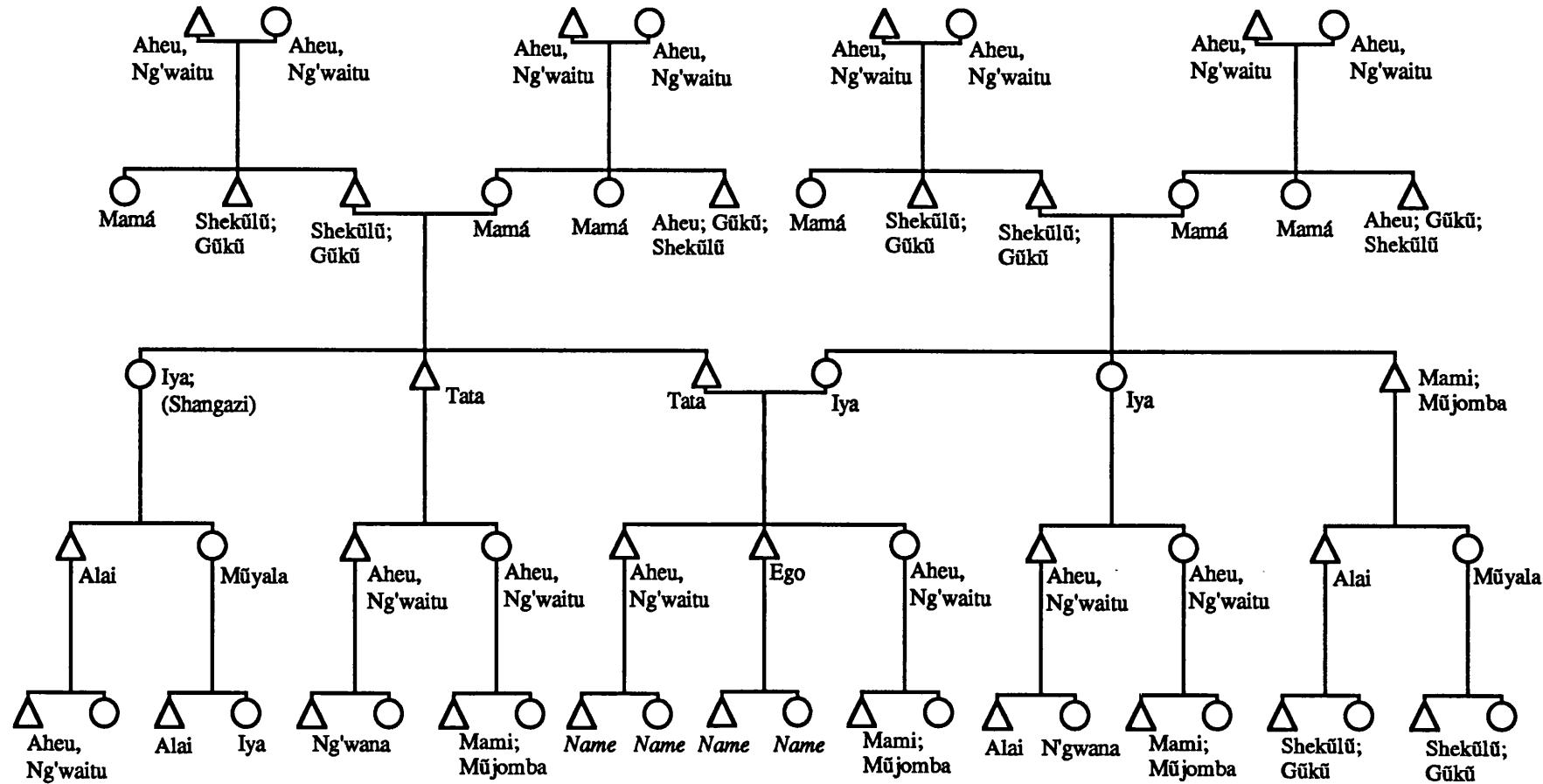


Figure C2. Kinship Address Terminology

SIBLINGS

Sisters are referred to as *ng'waitu* (sing. and plur.), brothers *aheu* (sing. and plur.). Although there are separate terms for male and female, it is normal for different sex siblings, when addressing each other reciprocally, to use just one. Even more interestingly, it is not uncommon for two of the same sex siblings to use the *opposite* sex referent, with no joking implied; thus a brother may call to his brother, ‘sister’ (*ng'waitu*) to which the reply would be the same. These terms also refer to parallel cousins on both the mother’s and father’s sides and several other relationships too (see figures C1 and C2 for further details).

CROSS-COUSINS

Patrilateral cross-cousins are referred to as *ayala* (sing. *mūyala*); this is the reckoning term. When addressing one another, a male ego and his male patrilateral cross-cousin use the reciprocal term, *alai*—father/son. A man will call his female patrilateral cross-cousin *iya*, or mother.

Mother’s brother’s children are referred to as *ang’anya* (sing. *mūng’anya*) or *ana* (sing. *ng’wana*), that is, children; they may also be labelled *ayala*, cousins (sing. *mūyala*). Ego and his male matrilateral cross-cousins address each other by the reciprocal term *alai*. Though ego addresses both his male patrilateral and matrilateral cross-cousins as *alai*, he does so for different reasons—on the father’s side because they are ‘father’ to ego, on the mother’s because they are his ‘sons.’ Female cross-cousins and ego often use the reciprocal Swahili term, *binamu*, when addressing one another.

MOTHER’S BROTHER-SISTER’S SON

Mother’s brother/sister’s son relations take on a special role in most, if not all, matrilineal systems as this relationship defines the axis along which property in the form of inheritance flows and, in the Ihanzu case, by which succession to ritual office is reckoned.

Mother’s brothers and sister’s sons are referred to by ego by one of several terms: *mami*, *ihekūlū* or *mūjomba*.¹ Of these three terms, only *mami* and *mūjomba* are used as reciprocal address terms.

¹ *Ihekūlū* is suspiciously close to the term for grandfather (*isekūlū*), and indeed Adam recorded that the term for mother’s brother is *isekulu* (1963c: 29). All I can say is that while a few of my informants said there was no difference, the majority claimed *ihekūlū* was quite a different matter from the term *isekūlū* or ‘grandfather.’

GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN

Grandmothers on both sides of ego are addressed and referred to by the same term, *mamá* (sing. and plur.), not be confused with the Swahili word for *mother*, *mama*. The only difference is the stress—the Ihanzu term has the accent on the final syllable. There is no reciprocal term of address between a grandmother and her granddaughter (*mizüküllü*; plur. *izüküllü*); the former refers to the latter as *mizüküllü* (grandchild) and the granddaughter calls grandmother *mamá*. Grandparents and grandchildren commonly refer to each other as brother (*aheu*) and sister (*ng'waitu*).

Grandfathers on both sides are referred to as *iseküllü* (plur. *aiseküllü*). Unlike with grandmother, there is with grandfathers and grandchildren a reciprocal term of address that is used regularly: *sheküllü* or less frequently, *gükü*. Grandchildren and grandparents frequently refer to each other as siblings (*aheu*; *ng'waitu*).

GREAT GRANDPARENTS-GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

The relationship between great grandparents and great grandchildren is the last in the genealogical hierarchy and causes the structure to turn back on, and consume, itself: ego's great grandparents, like his great grandchildren, are his brothers (*aheu*) and sisters (*ng'waitu*). All other relationships, up and down, reproduce themselves as already outlined.

Appendix D

Ancestral Offering Sites

IN THIS APPENDIX is further information about the various sacred ancestral offering sites around Ihanzu and in neighbouring areas. Each Ihanzu clan (or clan-section, as the case may be) has its own named ancestral site (or sites), a place at which clan ancestors are said to have either lived long ago or visited on their way to Ihanzu from Ukerewe. All the ancestral sites listed below are somehow tied into these original clan migrations. During ancestral offerings, these places are used as a doorway into the ancestral other-world; they also serve as a rallying point for clan identity. They may thus be considered ‘sacred clan focal points’ which are mapped onto the landscape itself.

It should be remarked that some of these sites are all but obsolete, at least if we are concerned only with the occurrence of actual offerings. By far the majority of ancestral offerings to take place in Ihanzu do so on people’s homesteads, not at clan sites; the former are less expensive (since they rarely require cattle sacrifices or copious quantities of beer) and less monumental to organise. During my time in Ihanzu I heard of offerings at homesteads, on average, of around one per week, whereas offerings at clan sites averaged fewer than one per month. In some instances I failed to find anyone who had ever attended certain of these sites. In spite of the near irrelevance of some sites, then, in practice, they nonetheless play an important ideological role for clan or clan-section members as an imagined source of shared identity. Even if, for example, someone from the *Anyang’walu* clan had never carried out an offering at the clan site, or even visited the site, he could still generally point in the correct direction, and would do so proudly proclaiming ‘Our home is Ng’walu.’

I met no one in Ihanzu who could relay all the information to be presented below; most could, with a bit of time, list all the clans (though not all the clan-sections). Many people did not know the ancestral offering sites outside their own clan. Some young people, though they always knew their clan, did not know from which clan-section they came and so would perhaps disagree with some of the distinctions I have made below. Most elders would not suffer from similar confusion.

All of the numerical figures given are based on a 194-household random survey conducted by myself and six assistants in October 1994. The survey covered four villages (Matongo, Mwangeza, Ibaga and Ilongo) and, within those, twenty-three sub-villages (*vitongoji*). I have more confidence in the percentages than I do in the total population figures (see footnote 32, p.26). I will begin with the largest clan, *Anyampanda*, and will work my way down to the smallest, *Anyikili*.

1. ANYAMPANDA

This is the largest clan in Ihanzu—nearly twice the size of the next largest—and is divided into eleven sections. *Anyampanda*, together, make up some 30.5 percent of the total Ihanzu population with about 9,150 members. While *Anyampanda* may be found in great numbers all over Ihanzu, the percentages are significantly higher in the central homeland area around what is today Matongo village, and on the river plains to the east. Both these areas are composed of about thirty-four percent *Anyampanda*. To the west and south, *Anyampanda* make up only twenty-three to twenty-six percent of the population. These demographics might be taken as circumstantial evidence in support of people's claims that *Anyampanda* clan members arrived to Ihanzu from the north.

1.1. *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* (royal clan-section): *Ng'waūngu* and *Singili*

The first offering site of this clan-section, Mount *Ng'waūngu*, is located in the sub-village of Kirumi (4° 04' 12" S, 34° 42' 47" E)¹ and is the location of all ancestral offerings concerning the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* (all those offerings that do not take place at individuals' homesteads that is). Since this is the royal clan-section, offerings at *Ng'waūngu* are carried out for two reasons: when the ancestors are angry and have stopped the rains, and when a person is afflicted by the spirits from this clan-section.

¹ All coordinates listed were recorded with the aid of a portable Global Positioning System and are supposedly accurate within a few hundred yards. As far as I can make out, they are.

There are two caves on this mountain about twenty yards apart: Mümbau and Nkonzele. In the first are some enormous drums.

In the second, Nkonzele, lives (allegedly) a giant python which people say is an ancestral spirit itself. Snakes are common in Ihanzu, most of them poisonous, but it is only the enormous, non-poisonous pythons which are said to be ancestral spirits and a blessing if you see them. They are exceptionally rare. Though this cave is the most often cited for having a snake/spirit resident—indeed *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* are sometimes referred to as *Anyanzoka*, ‘people of the snake’—ancestral snakes are thought to live in almost all ancestral caves around Ihanzu.

The second *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* ancestral site is Singili, located on the salt flats north of Ihanzu, near Lake Eyasi. This area is ‘owned’ by the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* and its ancestral spirits are sometimes said to reside there. Ng’waūngu is seen as a continuation of this space but a more convenient place for offerings; offerings made at Ng’waūngu invariably make reference to the salt flats in the north, the origin of this royal clan-section prior to their entry into Ihanzu. *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* no longer visit Singili to carry out offerings though they sometimes, when carrying out offerings at Ng’waūngu, leave a beer-filled gourd just north of Ng’waūngu at the junction of two paths, one of which leads to Singili. It will be recalled from chapter two that in the previous century the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* leaders had considerable control over the salt trade on these flats; even today children of this clan-section are referred to as *mūnyū*, salt.

1.2. *Anyampanda wa Kīnyakambī: Kīnyakambī*

Anyampanda wa Kīnyakambī are also known as *Anyampanda wa Mpilimaigūlū*, *Mūhaī* or *Iyīndī*. *Kīnyakambī* is located in the area of southern Isene called *Kīnyamakili* ($4^{\circ} 06' 22''$ S, $34^{\circ} 45' 22''$ E). There are large, ancient drums in this cave—four of them the day I visited—though locals tell me that these drums are notorious for moving about from one cave to another around Ihanzu and that they actually total five. These drums are about eight feet tall, and range in diameter from two to four feet and are far too heavy to be lifted, even by several people. Like all cave drums in Ihanzu, they are made of borassus palms which were formerly abundant in the area but are now virtually non-existent. Clan elders say that the ancestors lived here, in this cave, when they first entered Ihanzu.

In a small clearing just below the cave itself, ancestral sacrifices are carried out and entrails are read by the diviners during offerings.

1.3. *Anyampanda wa Anegá: Nkahamatako*

This clan-section is closely related to the *Anyampanda wa Kīnyakambī*, their offering sites being very close together. Their ancestral cave is called Nkahamatako (4° 06' 11" S, 34° 45' 25" E). One important feature of this site is a large boulder just outside the cave, about thirty feet high, with an enormous hole in the top. It holds water almost all year round. During offerings the grandchildren climb the boulder and, after cleaning out the hole in the rock, spray beer over it.

1.4. *Anyampanda wa Igomano: Igomano (Mbulu)*

This branch of *Anyampanda* is said to have come originally from Ukerewe, like all of the clans. Its two leaders, who eventually reached Igomano, were named Kilango and Magidingi. They reportedly crossed Sukumaland to the north and stopped at a place called Mūmba for some time. When they moved on, they left behind the *Anyambilu wa Mūmba*, and continued east into what is today Mbulu District. There the group left behind the *Anyambilu* who bear children named *Izima* and *Igīmbī* (this group later moved west and became *Anyambilu wa Gūdali*). Here, just below the Rift Valley wall, the *Anyampanda wa Igomano* made their temporary home before moving west into Ihanzu.

1.5. *Anyampanda wa Ikela: Ikela*

This cave is located on a small hill near the first Ihanzu Lutheran church at Kitaturu (4° 05' 16" S, 34° 45' 08" E), not far from another hill on which a large aluminium cross was erected by an enthusiastic American missionary in the pre-independence days. Ikela is the only offering site for this clan-section.

1.6. *Anyampanda wa Magemelu: Idebe*

This section is one of the smallest *Anyampanda* clan-sections. Its clan offering site is called Idebe and is in the sub-village of Isene (4° 06' 13" S; 34° 43' 53" E). It is a

spring on the floor of a small basin in which water remains almost all year round. At this site clan-section ancestors are said to have rested when they first entered the country.

1.7. *Anyampanda wa Itiili: Kipangelo*

Kipangelo is a cave located on Mt. Ng'wakisiweti in southern Kirumi ($4^{\circ} 04' 57''$ S, $34^{\circ} 43' 11''$ E); there is a large *mukūyu* tree (*Ficus sycamorus*) marking its entrance. This is the only sacred offering place for this clan-section. While almost everyone of this clan is aware of this sacred cave's existence, it is no longer used due to fears of being killed by the spirits. It is extremely unusual for ancestral spirits to kill people (this is normally the work of witches alone) but the spirits of this particular clan-section have become exceedingly fierce, due to years of neglect and one accident long ago.

People tell of an offering made many years ago in which blood was spilt in the cave during a brawl. This angered the spirits tremendously and they killed a man as a result, the grandchild of the offering. Following this incident, people say that if they returned to the cave, the ancestors killed someone immediately after the offering. For this reason, this clan-section no longer uses its clan space, though its powerful sacred status still clearly exists and is derived and perhaps strengthened, in part, from its non-use. All offerings by this clan-section are now made at peoples' homes. In 1994 a diviner read in the chicken oracle that a certain Kirumi man must make an offering at this cave in order for him to recover from his spirit-caused blindness. Clan members instead chose to carry out the offering at his homestead, out of fear that yet another clan member would die, and hoping that the ancestors would be content. Sadly, they were not appeased—he remained blind.

1.8. *Anyampanda wa Matongo: Mügalamo, Kīsīmiza and Münyeti*

The first cave—Mügalamo—is located on Mount Mügalamo ($4^{\circ} 04' 58''$ S, $34^{\circ} 43' 42''$ E), which separates the sub-villages of Kirumi from Matongo. There is nothing particularly notable about this cave: no snakes, drums nor paintings.

The second offering site for this clan-section, Kīsīmiza, is two enormous boulders on a mountain in Kirumi by the same name ($4^{\circ} 04' 37''$ S, $34^{\circ} 43' 09''$ E). The two boulders are stacked one on top of the other, forming a large, horizontal ancestral cave in-between them.

Mūnyeti, located in the village of Matongo, is the last of the three *Anyampanda wa Matongo* offering sites (4° 05' 13" S, 34° 43' 49" E); it is a cave formed by a large boulder overhanging a second one.

1.9. *Anyampanda wa Ikunguli: Ikunguli*

There is only one offering site for this clan-section, Ikunguli, which is located on a mountain by the same name in southern Kirumi (4° 05' 18" S, 34° 42' 48" E). Inside the cave are seven ancient drums similar to those found in other caves around Ihanzu and Central Tanzania. These drums range in diameter from two to three feet and in length and from four to six feet. Almost everyone knows of their existence yet they are, in and of themselves, insignificant. During offerings by this clan-section the drums are anointed with oil and ancestral addresses are made.

1.10. *Anyampanda wa Nyonyela: Kinyankila*

Kinyankila is the offering site of this clan-section and it is located near the former village of Nyonyela (this village was closed in 1975).

1.11. *Anyampanda wa Kīnyīngogo: Kīnyamīngī*

Their offering site is in eastern Kīnyangogo, in an area known as Mpūzūngū, a large cave called Kīnyamīngī.

2. ANYAMBILU

This clan is the second largest in Ihanzu (16.2 percent of the population) with five sections. *Anyambilu* number about 4,860. As with the *Anyampanda*, higher concentrations of *Anyambilu* are found in the central and eastern sections of Ihanzu. *Anyambilu* clan members may also be referred to as *Anyang'ombe*, 'people of the cattle' and are sometimes called *Anyilimū*. At almost all of their offerings milk is used to spray, along with beer, since this clan is said to have originally been exceptionally wealthy in cattle.

Of all the Ihanzu clans, this one, 'the people of cattle,' is the one most closely associated with the Tatog ethnic group. One story tells that the Tatog appear at the offering sites to make their offerings one day prior to the *Anyambilu* offerings. Elders say that in the past they found fires and skins left behind by the Tatog at their two sacred sites on the days of their offerings. Indeed the day I went to an offering at Sisida, a strip of cow skin was retrieved from high up in the sacred tree which many said was of Tatog origin.

As with all the Ihanzu clans, the *Anyambilu* are said to have come originally from Ukerewe. From there, Mzee Malosa of Matongo explains, the journey was long:

After the *Anyambilu* left Ukerewe and after crossing the salt flats, they went to Mūlūbīlu [Mang'ola]. The two leaders were Nya Kitoto and her husband, Mpanda, who was of the *Anyampanda*. *Anyambilu* moved a lot because they were cattle herders; they drank milk and ate a fruit called *mbilu*. That is how they got their name, you know. They were constantly in search of grazing lands.

From Mūlūbīlu they went to Mūmba where the two bore children named Mūmba and Mīlīsita; the children stayed behind. They carried on to Dīlīmī [in Mbulu] where they stayed for a while. They then moved to Sisida. The cattle grazed at Nkoma until there was no more water and they were forced to move on. They then went to Iyīndī. They bore and left behind children named Iyīndī and Īzima. While at Iyīndī they had a battle with the *Anyampanda* who were already there, *Anyampanda* wa Iyīndī, and lost. The *Anyambilu* left and went north to Gūdali where their cattle grazed. Here, too, they left behind children named Iyīndī and Īzima. They continued on north onto the salt flats and their cattle dug up the salt with their horns. They began to eat salt with their food.

After some time Ikomba and Kingwele arrived and the two clans began fighting over the salt flats. Ikomba and Kingwele were lost in the salt flats during the battle. [Ikomba and Kingwele are said to be the ancestors of the *Anyansuli* though they were, at the time, one with the *Anyampanda*]. The *Anyambilu* lost and remained indebted to the *Anyampanda*. They decided that instead of paying they would give them the salt, which they did, and they then returned to Mūmba. They later moved to Dīlīmī again and then to Mbugwe. At Mbugwe they bore children named Sungi (or Ilimū) and Igwīla. They then moved to Lambi and bore children named Mīanzi and Ipūza. From here the *Anyambilu* moved to Gumanga (Iramba). I heard this story from some very old men, a long time ago, but I never heard the end.

Another *Anyambilu* elder, Ali Gīmbi, told me the following story about their loss of the salt to the *Anyampanda*.

One day, when our clan was living on the salt flats, the *Anyambilu* wanted to marry into the *Anyampanda* clan so we found a suitable boy from our clan. We sent a go-between (*mūlongi*) to negotiate with the *Anyampanda*. The *Anyampanda* found a suitable girl and agreed.

The *Anyambilu* gave a cow, since we had many, as bridewealth; the *Anyampanda* had none. The *Anyampanda* girl was dressed in a traditional necklace (*ihūngī*) and her hair was done up nicely.

The *Anyampanda*, very cunning, then went to the house where the married couple were to stay and they put a dog in their room. A dog! When the groom entered the room he found only the dog, and no wife, and was very angry. The *Anyambilu* said ‘we gave a cow and you only gave a dog.’ With that, a war broke out between the two clans. We [the *Anyambilu*] were beaten severely by the *Anyampanda* and we were forced to leave. Not only did we leave in a rush, but we also left the salt, which formerly belonged to us. Now the *Anyampanda* are the owners of the salt.

Anyambilu ancestral beer brewing trenches (*malūngū*) are cut with a north-south orientation to mark this clan section’s association with the northern salt flats.

Although the elders I spoke with, like the ones above, claimed that this clan originated in Ukerewe, there is some evidence that they may have been a more recent splinter group of the Tatog, as other oral histories suggest (see above). In an entry by Wyatt in the Mkalama District Book that appears to have been written in the 1940s, it was recorded that ‘The Anyambui [*Anyambilu*] and Azigo...came from the East,...These two families claim an origin in the Wataturu [Tatog] Tribe’ (p. 6). (Confusingly, an entry made around 1926 in the Book states: ‘Tradition states unanimously that the tribe formerly inhabited Ukerewe Island, whence it migrated under stress of famine to the shores of Lake Eyassi’ (p. 18); this could, of course, be a ‘royal *Anyampanda* discourse’).

2.1. *Anyambilu wa Azigo: Kizigo* (Iramba)

Ancestral offerings for this clan-section are held at Kizigo, a group of tall trees in Gumanga, Iramba.

2.2. *Anyambilu wa Gūdali: Gūdali and Sisida*

They have two sacred offering sites, one in the village of Nkinto, called Sisida, and one in the village of Matongo, Gūdali. These sites are sometimes used by other *Anyambilu* clan-sections whose sacred sites are further away.

Sisida is actually two sites that are a few hundred yards apart, though when an offering is carried out at Sisida both of these are used and they are together called by that name. The first site (4° 08' 22" S, 34° 46' 09" E) is composed of a few trees and shrubs where the *Anyambilu* ancestors were said to have stopped and rested on their journey

into Ihanzu. During offerings people bring their animals here, tie them up and then sing and dance. There is a cave nearby that is sometimes sprayed with beer or milk as well.

The main site at Sisida is a few hundred yards to the south. Here, on a hill in the middle of the bush, there is a large *mūpongoolo* tree (*Caturanegan spinosa*) which is the focus of the offerings. It is on this site, people say, that generations ago the *Anyambilu* tossed down some twigs they were using as tooth brushes which then grew into this tree. Any animal slaughters or entrails readings at Sisida take place here.

The second *Anyambilu* site is Gūdali, in the village of Matongo. There is a clan cave at Gūdali and a large rock as well where offerings are made ($4^{\circ} 04' 59''$ S, $34^{\circ} 44' 28''$ E). Milk is normally sprayed inside the cave and ancestral songs are sung. In some cases both sites are used together, for one offering, though they are a several-hour walk apart.

2.3. *Anyambilu wa Mūmba: Mūmba and Mūkūsa*

Mūmba is a large boulder with a hole through the centre of it, located on the salt flats north of Ihanzu in what is today Mbulu District. *Anyambilu* from this section no longer make offerings at Mūmba, since it is far way, but instead carry them out at a closer site, Mūkūsa. This clan-section is sometimes referred to as *Anyalūkūko* which means ‘the people of the rake,’ a wooden rake used for clearing a plot before planting.

2.4. *Anyambilu wa Kinyankunī: Kīlīlī* (Iambi)

This section’s offering site, Kīlīlī, is a large cave on a mountain in Iambi, just south-east of Ihanzu.

2.5. *Anyambilu wa Kinyankūnde: Lake Manyara (Mbugwe)*

Anyambilu wa Kinyankūnde is perhaps the smallest of the *Anyambilu* sections and as far as I can ascertain, ancestral offerings are no longer carried out in Mbugwe, due to the great distance. Instead, people of this clan hold their offerings either at Sisida or Gūdali, the two sites of their much larger ‘brother’ clan-section, *Anyambilu wa Gūdali*.

3. ANYANKALI²

The *Anyankalī* clan, with its origins in Iramba, is the third largest clan in Ihanzu with about 3,990 clan members (13.3 percent of the population). This is the only Ihanzu clan originally from Iramba that has managed to move into Ihanzu and increase its numbers significantly. There are much higher concentrations of *Anyankalī* clan members to the south and west, bordering Iramba itself, than elsewhere in the country. Both of these clan-sections have their clan offerings just south and west of Ihanzu, in Iramba itself, marking the spots where their forefathers first stopped in Iramba.

Both of these *Anyankalī* clan-sections together form the sun. The sun itself is addressed during ancestral offerings as *Mūnyankalī* and is said to be a member of this clan.

3.1. Anyankalī wa Ipilinga: Ipilinga (Kidalu, Iramba)

There is a large cave at Ipilinga, east of Kiomboi just below the Rift Valley wall, where this clan-section's ancestral offerings are carried out.

3.2. Anyankalī wa Ilumba: Ilumba (near Mtamba, Iramba) and Iyanīko (Iramba)

The first offering site, located in Iramba, is a cave in Ilumba. The second site, Iyanīko, is also located in Iramba, near Ishai.

4. ANYANSULI

Anyansuli is a reasonably sized clan containing 8.4 percent of the population, about 2,520 people. There are many *Anyansuli* who formerly lived in Tumbili village, though during the 1970s Tanzanian villagisation programme (*ujamaa*) they were relocated to more accessible locations. Today *Anyansuli* are found in large concentrations in villages adjacent to Tumbili: Ilongo, Kirumi and Ikolo.

² Although I write this as *Anyankalī*, it is in fact always heard as *Anyang'kalī*. This is precisely the sort of pronunciation a linguist would expect, making it redundant to add the extra letters.

4.1. *Anyansuli wa Mūkīlampīlī: Mūkīlampīlī, Itimbwá and Ng'wamalaga*

Anyansuli wa Mūkīlampīlī make some of their offerings at Mūkīlampīlī where, in the clearing, there are two large trees to which the sacrificial animals are tied, sacrificed and divination sessions are carried out (4° 07' 00"S, 34° 44' 12"E). On the mountain itself, just east of the field, there are three caves, one of which has red rock paintings in it. They have been damaged by the rain, leaving only a few giraffes and some other unidentifiable animal parts. There is a second cave nearby that has a very heavy, bowling ball sized rock in it. During offerings, this rock is cleaned and anointed by clan members, then set atop special leaves. Clan members claim that this rock is connected with fertility in their clan-section and that proper care for it can reduce or eliminate clan infertility problems.

Itimbwá, the second sacred ancestral space of this clan-section, is located in the bottom of a steep river valley, where enormous boulders have fallen into the river forming numerous caves. These caves are easily accessible in the dry season though with the rains many of them fill with water. There is nothing notable in any of them, and almost any cave in this river will do for an ancestral offering. The day I attended an offering at Itimbwá, during the wet season, it was simply a matter of locating one that was dry enough to enter without swimming, to toss chyme around and sing.

The final sacred offering site of this clan-section is called Ng'wamalaga, a cave located in the former village of Tumbili.

Some of this clan section's founders, who are normally invoked in ancestral addresses, are: Sha Ntilwa, Mūtandi, Saigau, Wamogi and Iha Nsunza.

4.2. *Anyansuli wa Kingwele: Mūkoolo and Kingwele*

The *Anyansuli wa Kingwele* are also known as *Anyansuli wa Mūkoolo*. Ancestral offerings are carried out at these locations by members of this clan section, the choice of sites being determined by divination.

In 1994, when the rains were severely delayed, it was divined that an offering at Mūkoolo with a cow and sheep was necessary. Normally, it is the ancestral spirits of the royal *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* that withhold the rains, but this year it was divined that these spirits were jealous of an offering received by their *Anyampanda* counterparts. They withheld the rains until they received a cow, a sheep and plenty of beer. I have not been able to tease out accounts of any other clan's ancestral spirits ever

interfering with the rains. It was only possible in this case because, as is acknowledged by all, this *Anyansuli* clan-section used to be the owners of the rain, before it was acquired by the *Anyampanda*, as was explained in chapter four. The two legendary leaders of this clan section are Kingwele and Ikomba, the first two Ihanzu to own the rain.

This clan-section's second offering site is known as *Ihanzu la ng'wa Kingwele*, named after Kingwele, the first rainmaker to live in Ihanzu. *Ihanzu la ng'wa Kingwele* is a small, valley area surrounded by boulders with only one main passageway in and out. People say that when the Ihanzu first moved into Ihanzu from their Island homeland of Ukerewe in Lake Victoria, they lived here, closing off the entrance with a large, thick, thorn bush to keep out wild animals and hostile neighbours. One of these thorn bush doors is known as an *ihanzu* (plur. *mahanzu*) and the people, thus, acquired their name—‘Anyihanzu’—which might be translated as ‘the people of the cattle byre door.’

5. ANYAMBEŪ

Anyambeū number about 2,340 people (7.8 percent of the population). All *Anyambeū* offering sites are located in central Ihanzu, in or near Kirumi, and it is in this area where the highest concentrations of *Anyambeū* clan members are found, up to eleven percent in some sub-villages. Moving away from this village in all directions, the number of *Anyambeū* clan members drops radically; in the eastern village of Ng'wangeza they total only two percent of the population.

5.1. *Anyambeū: Ng'wa Kidalama*

This clan-section bears children named Ikīngu and Nzītu and carries out its offering at Ng'wa Kidalama, near the former village of Nyonyela.

5.2. *Anyambeū: Nkungūlū*

This clan-section (which bears children named *Ikīngu* and *Siu*) carries out its offerings at Nkungūlū, a small cave located in the sub-village of Kirumi on Mt. Mūgalamo. The entrance is marked by a sacred *mūgumo* tree (*Ficus glumosa*) (4° 04' 45" S; 34° 42' 45" E) under which the ancestors are said to have rested when they first arrived to Kirumi.

6. ANYANG'WALU

About 6.9 percent of Ihanzu are *Anyang'walu*, about 2,070 people. This clan has no clan-sections. *Anyang'walu* clan members seem to be spread rather evenly around Ihanzu with significantly lower concentrations in the Matongo area; this clan's origins are said to be to the south, in Iramba.

6a. *Anyang'walu: Ng'walu*

This clan's offering site, *Ng'walu* (sometimes called Mūntenga) is in Iramba, though it seems to be seldom, or perhaps never, used.

7. ANYAMBWÁ

There are about 1,350 *Anyambwá* clan members in Ihanzu (4.5 percent of the population). *Anyambwá* are evenly spread around Ihanzu with no noticeable concentrations in any particular section. Elders say that the two *Anyambwá* clan-sections came from Ukerewe, those who bear the children named Kīula and Mūgalu leading the way. The second clan section found the burnt ember from the first which had already passed, and named their children after them—Makala—which means 'charcoal' in the Ihanzu language.

7.1. *Anyambwá: Kisiriri (Iramba)*

This clan-section is said to have come from Ukerewe and arrived at Kisiriri, the traditional religious rainmaking capital of the Iramba. After supposedly leaving the Iramba rainmaking clan behind at Kisiriri—Iramba ritual leaders are of the *Anyambwá* clan and continue to make rain at Kisiriri to this day—this clan section entered Ihanzu. Though Kisiriri remains the sacred centre for this clan section, I met no one who had ever carried out an offering there.³

³ In spite of this myth and the fact that this *Anyambwá* clan-section associates itself with Kisiriri, there is no corroborating evidence that Iramba rainmaking traditions came about in this way. Some have reported that rainmaking rites and knowledge came from Sukumaland (Ntundu 1936; 1939) while most seem to agree it came from the south in Kimbu (Pender-Cudlip 1967a; Shorter 1972).

7.2. *Anyambwá: Kinyamulundi*

This clan-section's offering site is in the former Ihanza village of Tumbili, at a place called Kinyamulundi.

8. *ANYISUNGU*

Four percent of the Ihanza population is of this originally Iramba clan, about 1,200 people. These clan members are almost non-existent in central Ihanza though they are found in rather high concentrations (up to nine percent) in the far east and the far west, areas with significant numbers of Iramba. There are no *Anyisungu* clan-sections in Ihanza.

8a. *Anyisungu: Kinyampanda (Iramba)*

Their offering site is at the village of Kinyampanda, Iramba. Here, *Anyisungu* ancestors allegedly stopped on their way to Ihanza.

9. *ANYAMBALA*

There are roughly 690 *Anyambala* clan members forming about 2.3 percent of the Ihanza population. There are more *Anyambala* clan members in the village of Ilongo (for some reason) than in other parts of Ihanza. This clan is not divided into sections.

9a. *Anyambala: Kinyambala (Iramba)*

Their offering site is Kinyambala, Iramba.

10. *ASAMBÁ*

This clan has no sections and is one of the smaller ones in Ihanza; it contains only 2.3 percent of the population, about 690 people. As one moves south-east across Ihanza,

towards this clan's Iambi homeland, *Asambá* become more numerous. In the village of Ng'wangeza in the east, they account for about 4 percent of the population.

10a. *Asambá: Sasayi, Kisalita or Nkunguulu* (Iambi)

Asambá have their ancestral offerings in Iambi (Iramba), just south-east of Ihanzu, which clan elders say is their original homeland after they left Ukerewe. There is a cave high on Mt. Kang'uta (4° 21' 14" S, 34° 44' 38" E) where their offerings are carried out. I was given all three names mentioned above for this location. This clan, having its origins to the south in Iramba, is very small and I have not been able to find anyone who has attended an offering at their cave since independence.

11. *ANYAKUMI*

Two percent, about 600 people, of the total population are of the *Anyakumi* clan. There are no noticeable concentrations of *Anyakumi* in Ihanzu. This clan has its origins in Iramba. One old woman told me the following story about how *Anyakumi* clan members first entered Ihanzu.

There was an Iramba woman, a long time ago, named Igongolo; she lived in Kinyakumi [in Iramba] and was an *Anyakumi* [clan member]. She had a child who died one day, very young and unexpectedly. The child was buried, and after two days, the salt-fetching horn was blown. Many went from Iramba and Igongolo wanted to go too. She had never fetched salt before [on the salt flats north of Ihanzu] and they told her not to go because she was still full of grief for her dead child. But she insisted and in the end she went anyway. They all arrived safely and fetched salt.

On the return trip, when they arrived in the bush north of Iramba, Igongolo was at the end of the caravan of salt fetchers. She fell behind, left the others and entered the bush. She walked around aimlessly and after a long time climbed to the top of a tall tree. There she slept. A large rhinoceros came and slept at the base of the tree; in the morning, the animal left and she climbed down from the tree. She once again began wandering around aimlessly in the bush. As luck would have it, she came across some Ihanzu hunters. They asked her where she was going and she explained her story—her child had died, she had gone to fetch salt while grieving, got lost in the bush and did not know where she was.

The hunters took her directly to the Ihanzu chief, Mpungati. She began to live here in Kirumi, near the chief. She later married an Ihanzu man and then built here. Igongolo was the first *Anyakumi* clan member to enter and settle in Ihanzu from Iramba.

11a. *Anyakumi: Kisiga* (Iramba)

This clan's offerings are held at Kisiga, in Iramba, though I met no one who had ever been to this site.

12. ANYIKILI

This clan is not divided into sections and is the smallest in Ihanzu, accounting for only 1.5 percent of the population with around 450 members. *Anyikili* is originally of Iramba origin and they are many members strong in Iramba itself. There seem to be greater numbers of *Anyikili* clan members in the southern areas of Ihanzu, bordering Iramba, though the numbers from my survey are so insignificant that it is difficult to say with any certainty.

12a. *Anyikili: Kinyikili* (Iramba)

The sacred clan offering site is in the heart of Iramba country, a group of tall trees named *Kinyikili* near Kiomboi.

Appendix E

Ancestral Addresses

THE ANCESTRAL ADDRESSES to follow are nearly identical to those delivered at the rain offering described in chapter five, the one during which, unfortunately, the batteries in my tape recorder had gone flat. Though mention is always made in these addresses of the specific problem for which the offering was carried out (in this case, the opening of a cattle door), no royal address would be complete without also requesting lots of rain, sorghum, and fertility for humans and animals.

These addresses I recorded at a royal *Anyampanda* offering that took place at Chief Omari's homestead on 20 November 1993. This particular offering came about because Omari's cattle had begun to die inexplicably. It was divined that the royal spirits were angry with the chief, and that they wanted him to reorient the door of his cattle byre so that it faced north, towards the royal spirits, so they could watch the cattle as they passed through the door each day.

TOSSING MEAT TO THE SPIRITS (*kūtagangīla*)

This first set of addresses was made by two grandchildren, first the grandson, Mazengo (of the *Anyansuli* clan), then the granddaughter, Nya Maua (of the *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* royal lineage). Mazengo, standing in the middle of the chief's courtyard, tossed a piece of roasted meat to the east and began his address (all numbers correspond to the royal genealogy in Appendix A):

*Üe Mūnyankalī nūpūmie kū mūtala wako
nūkūlū n'ūinzū kū mūtala wako nūnino,
ūsese apa itī kūkete ipolyo.*

Üse kūipolya ipolyo kūlūgūe mūmpita.

Ing'ombe yītu ize tuga du mapaha.

*N'ūmūzee ūyū mūnū, ngīze wīzūkete
ndwala ndwala, mūmūlekele kabisa!*

*Mīhi apa itī sehemu ūyī apa itī ūamamā
mūlekelwe mīhi.*

Mūtuge nī amintūtī.

*N'īmbula nīnkūlū. N'ūse kūloilwe
kūpone mailo nī dū.*

You, Mūnyankalī, who come from your senior house and are going to your junior one, we here have an ancestral offering. [Shrill].

We are carrying out an ancestral offering to open a cattle door. [Shrill].

Let our cattle bear twins. [Shrill].

And this elder [the chief] inside [the doorway to the house], if he has an illness, leave him alone! [Shrill].

And all those here, the grandmothers [re: women of the Anyampanda clan], let them all be left alone. [Shrill].

Let them bear twins. [Shrill].

And [let there be] big rains. We want to get lots of sorghum and recover. [Shrill].

He then turned to the west, threw another morsel of meat, and continued:

Üewe Mūnyankalī ūtwale ilūmbi.

Ūnene nkete ipolyo.

*Twala kū ng'wanso endūgūmile mū
Nyanza.*

*Ūkūlekele lūkūlū! Ūsese kūnū ūmbula ūze,
ūze ūlelo yīyī.*

N'īana aze tuga ūkūtuga du.

*N'ūilei ilei shi kūloilwe lūkūlū.
Mūmatwale kūkō nī mabī kūkō
ūmagūmile.*

You, Mūnyankalī, take [with you on your journey] gratitude. [Shrill].

I have an ancestral offering. [Shrill].

Take [the bad] there and toss it into Lake Victoria. [Shrill].

Leave us alone! For us here, let the rains begin, let them begin today. [Shrill].

And allow the children to give birth. [Shrill].

And we really don't want quarrelsomeness. Take that evil and toss it out. [Shrill].

To the north he turned, threw some meat, and said the following:

Napika kū mbūga.

I have arrived at the steppe, to the north. [Shrill].

Napika kūng'wa Ikomba. Ünene nkete ipolyo. Nakūluguūliya ümūmpita waloma kūko lūkūlū.

I have arrived at Ikomba's. I have an ancestral offering. I have opened a cattle door for you which faces there [north]. [Shrill].

Nī aKitentemi naūlimīe kū ng'wanso kū mbūga ūleke lūkūlū īnkani izi. Ümūlango wako sūwū.

And Kitentemi [7], the one who was lost there on the steppe,¹ leave these words. This is your door. [Shrill].

Turning to the south and tossing his last piece of meat, Mazengo finished his address:

Kūnū kū takamá, ünene nkete ipolyo.

There in the south, I have an ancestral offering. [Shrill].

aSumbī nī aNya Itūtī.

Sumbi and Nya Itūtī [5]. [Shrill].

N'ūyū naūpandilwe ūmbogo nūkīzadaya lelo, nūalūmbe du n'ūng'wenso.

And the one who was run down by a buffalo, the one who was owed [an offering] today, let him be grateful. [Shrill].

Nī aMpungati nī aNya Matalū ūakombi nī aSagilū.

And Mpungati [9] and Nya Matalu [8] and the old women and Sagilu [13]. [Shrill].

N'ūNkili alove du.

And Nkili, rejoice! [Shrill].

Nī alkīngu ūa akombi nūalūmbe. Ünene nalugūla ümūmpita wao.

And Ikingu [20] and the old women be grateful. I have opened up their cattle door. [Shrill].

N'ūnene ūugwa ndowe. Kūtīgwa ūngūlīgūlī. N'ūe ūze kūa mūkombi ūngūlīgūlī.

And I am rejoicing. Ululate. And you, old woman, ululate.

Nya Maua, the granddaughter, then stepped into the centre of the courtyard. Facing east she threw a piece of meat and began her address.

Ünene kūtambūla nkehu da. (Mīlūnga ūlī gwa kūnū itī?) Üewe nūpūmie kū mūtala nūkūlū, ūsese kūkete ipolyo. Aza kūlūgūla mūmpita.

I will just say a few [words]. (What are you saying there?) You who come from [your] senior house, we have an ancestral offering. We were opening a cattle door. [Shrill].

¹ The grandson here confused the former chief Kitentemi (who was captured by the Germans) with Ikomba and/or Kingwele (who were allegedly lost on the salt flats or in Lake Eyasi), though no one seemed to mind. Since these addresses are composed on the spot, and are delivered at high speed, these sorts of mistakes are commonplace.

Üewe Kali n'üKitentemi n'üyü
naüpandilwe īmbogo m'ihaka.

Mūlowe mīhi.

Nī aSagilū ao mūlūmbe mīhi. Nī aNya
Matalū ao mūlūmbe mīhi.

You Kali [9] and Kitentemi [7], and that
one who was run down by a buffalo in
the bush. [Shrill].

All, rejoice. [Shrill].

And Sagilu [13] and the rest, all be
grateful. And Nya Matalu [8] and the
rest, [may] you all be grateful. [Shrill].

To the north she turned, tossed some meat and continued:

Nagoza kūnū kū mbūga naza mūtakile īa
kola.

Kamūlūgūlīya ūmūmpita wanyu.

Ünyenye Ikomba mīhi mūlowe kū
ng'wanso.

İmbula īkūwe nīnkūlū n'üilo ūze nūidū.
Kakatala kaga īnzala.

I am looking north towards the steppe,
[towards] those who were angered.
[Shrill].

We have opened up your cattle door for
you [Shrill].

All of you, Ikomba, all of you there
rejoice. [Shrill].

Let it pour rain and let there be heaps of
sorghum. We are tired of suffering from
hunger. [Shrill].

Then to the west:

N'üewe nūinzū kū mūtala nūnino, aya
nīmabī īhi endūgūmile mū lūzī. Atengwe
lūpīto nīkīza pūmia ūtikū.

Üse kūloilwe īmbula īkūe ūng'waka ūwū
kūpūle kūlūnde n'ükū matembe.

N'üewe nūhongile kūnū itī kūko.

And you who are going to [your] junior
house, toss all the evil into the place of
water [Lake Victoria]. May those
[witches] who send aphids [to eat
sorghum] be struck by lightning.
[Shrill].

We want the rains to fall this year so we
get lots of food to put on top of our
houses [to dry in the sun]. [Shrill].

And you, who are going there [Shrill].

To the south Nya Maua ended her offering by tossing her final piece of meat and
saying:

Ngīze anyatakamá nī, magū, Anyīlamba kūko n'ūnyenyē mūlūmbe mīhi.

And the people in the south—I don't know—Iramba there, all of you be grateful. [Shrill].

BEER FOR THE SPIRITS (*kūlonga shalo*)

The following set of addresses was recorded during the same offering later in the day. As is usual, these addresses were made by four individuals, one after the other—the grandson, granddaughter, 'father' and joker—always in this order. Meat is not thrown, as during the earlier ancestral addresses. Instead, the speaker holds a special whisk (*nsing'wanda*) in his or her right hand along with a bunch of ritually appropriate leaves. These they periodically dip into a beer and water-filled divining bowl (*ntua*). To begin each address, with the aid of the whisk, they splash some of the water and beer mixture to each cardinal point.

The first to begin was the grandson, Mazengo. Facing east he spoke theatrically and in a loud voice:

Alī gwa lelo, īmbula lelo īze īlelo yīyī.

All right already. [Let there be] rain today, let it come today.

*Ūnene nalūnga apa iīt kūkete ipolyo.
Ipolyo kipolya uza.*

I have said here we have an ancestral offering. We have carried out the offering well. [Shrill].

Then turning to the west, and after splashing the crowd with his whisk, he continued:

*N'ūnewe kūnū nūinzū, īsese kūkete ipolyo
iza du.*

And you there, who is going there [west], we have a good ancestral offering. [Shrill].

*Ūtwale ilūmbi du kū ng'wanso. Ūsese
kūkete ipolyo.*

Take [with you] gratitude there. We have an ancestral offering. [Shrill].

To the north the grandson then said this:

*N'ūnyenyē kū ng'wanso, Ikomba, kū
mbūga, ūmūlango wanyu wanona lelo.
Sūwū. N'īnkolo sīyo hapa n'imputa sizo.
Mūhangīle palūng'wī.*

You all there, Ikomba, to the north on the steppe: we have fixed your door today. This is it. And here is this sheep and these sheep-skin bracelets; work together. [Shrill].

Then turning to the south:

Nūnye kūnū kū takamá aNya Matalū nī aNya Itūtī: ilūmbi du imputa yanyu sizi hapa.

N'īnkolo nīndwalu yīyī naīmūmūdaiye.

You all there to the south, Nya Matalu [8] and Nya Ituti [5]: be grateful for your sheep-skin bracelets which are here. [Shrill].

And this black sheep which you were owed. [Shrill].

With this the grandson completed his address and stepped aside. The granddaughter moved to the centre of the courtyard and began:

Ali n'ūkū ng'wanso mūpole mīhi nimūkolī apa itī. Ūse kalūmba. Īmītugo īzelela īmapaha du. N'īmbula īkūe nīnkūlū.

All right, all of you [spirits] who are here, cool off. We are grateful. Just let the livestock bear twins. And allow the rains to pour down. [Shrill].

She then turned to the west, splashed the *nsing'wanda* and continued:

(N'īmbula nīkīza mīlūnga). N'ūko nūinzū kū ng'weli kū mūtala nūnino mūlūmbe n'ūkū ng'wanso mīhi.

Ūse kūloilwe ūng'waka ūwū kūpūle ūilo nūidū n'ūtikū mūlīmīlye.

(I will talk about rain). And there in the west where you are going to your junior house, all there be grateful. [Shrill].

We want to reap a large sorghum harvest this year and [we want] you to cause the aphids to go away. [Shrill].

And then to the north:

N'ūnye Ikomba kū ng'wanso naza mūlīte ūmūmpita wanyu. Ūse īmbula īze n'igana.

Īze kūa, īze segenselya ūtikū ga. Ihī ītonte.

You all, Ikomba, [for] those who were yearning for your cattle door. For us, allow the 'rains of 100' [allow it to pour].² [Shrill].

Allow it to rain, allow it to rain slowly, gently, all night long [so that] the land becomes saturated. [Shrill].

² *Igana* literally means 'one hundred' but *igana* is also a specific type of female rain, one which is slow and lasts a long time.

With this, the granddaughter's address came to an end and Ali Gunda stepped forward, a 'father' of the chief and the *Anyampanda* clan. To the east he began:

*Ūne nalīlya mūgombe. Kalūgūla
mūmpita. Kūmūlūgūtē ūng'wana wane.
Malīlya mūlūgūye mūmpita tai. N'ūnye
nūmūmolī kū ng'wanso nī m'ikomba nī
amamā īhi, aNya Matalū na nīangīza nī
aMpilolo ao mūmūlekele.*

*N'ūwai ngīze mūkīza mūmūkete
masemba, mūkūmūpīngā pīngā
mūkūlīlya mūmpita kūmbī ūtele. Mūleke.*

I am saying that you all should agree. We have opened a cattle door. We have opened my son's cattle door. You have said [in the meat] that it is true, we have opened the cattle door. And those [spirits] who are here, Ikomba and all the grandmothers, Nya Matalu [8] and others, and Mpilolo [13] and the rest, leave him alone. [Shrill].

And other illnesses, [witches] with evil who are obstructive and say [they are helping open] a cattle door, it is a lie. Don't do that. [Shrill].

The father now turns to the west and begins his address (he addresses both east and west).

*Ūse kūkete ipolyo. N'ūe nūpūmile kū
kīlya wīnzū kū mūtala wako nūnino
ūtwale sayū. Wendūgūmile imabī mūmo
mū lūzī. Ūse kūipolya ipolyo la ng'wana.
Kūlūgūe mūmpita.*

We have an ancestral offering. And you who come from the east and are going to your junior house, take greetings. Toss the evil into the place of water [Lake Victoria]. We are carrying out an ancestral offering for a child. We have opened the cattle door. [Shrill].

To the north he splashed his whisk and continued.

*N'ūnyenye kū ng'wanso Ikomba,
nūmendile si mūkūkīmbūke n'ūse.*

*Ūng'wana ūyū nīmalekile si leki
kūmūhūlyā wala leki kū mūbī pīlwi.
Sūkamūkengelya ūmūmpita kūko.
Maūona? Kamūpeza. Mūmūlekele. Ngīze
shanga mūmpita ūtele masemba mūleke.*

You all there, Ikomba, those who went there, remember us. [Shrill].

This child who you have left alone, don't give him any [more trouble] and don't bear any ill-feelings towards him. We have faced the cattle door there [north]. Do you see it? We have given it to you; leave him alone. If it is not a cattle door, if that was only a lie, stop [whatever other] evil [you might have]. [Shrill].

His final address the father of the *Anyampanda* made while facing south.

*Ūnene namala. Shanga kūlīya ang'wī
ndīlīye ūlī ang'wī ndīlīye ūlī. Ūse
kipolya ipolyo iza n'ūse kaona kīna
ilūmbi ngīze mūkūpihīe mūlanga mūleke.*

I have finished. I can say no more. We have carried out a good ancestral offering and we would be grateful, if you have hidden a stick [re: hidden the true meaning] from us, that you stop. [Shrill].

The final address of the day was made by a man who stood in joking relations to the *Anyampanda* clan. Beginning with a standard address, he subtly inserted a single word—*agwe*—which muddied the context and began the joking. The word normally indicates that the speaker him or herself has no belief or opinion on the matter, as when a small child is sent by an elder to deliver a message. It indicates repetition by rote without commitment. This insertion provoked a response from a man in the crowd, asking the joker why he speaks as if he does not believe what he is saying. He replies equivocally, ‘What might I do?’, to which laughter abounds.

He then turns to the south to complete his address, purposefully failing to address the true home of the royal spirits in the north. Here, he makes oblique but obvious reference to the spirits as witches by saying that the spirits have sent aphids when, in fact, it is generally acknowledged that only witches do this. This order he barked in a decidedly abusive tone—the term *mūtotomie* is normally used to order small children around in moments of anger, indicating that they leave and take their stupidity with them.

The joker snatched the whisk forcefully from the ‘father,’ faced east and showered the crowd in that direction with water:

*Alī Mūnyankalī kūnū nūpūmie kūnū itī kū
mūtala wako nūkūlū nūhongile kūnū kū
ng'weli, ūtwale mpola ninziza.*

All right Mūnyankalī, you who are coming from your senior house and are going to the west, take with you good greetings. [Shrill].

N'ūmbula ūtūngūke ūlelo yīyī.

And let the rain fall today. [Shrill].

Kūlūmbe n'ūilo ūze nūdū.

Let's be grateful so there will be lots of sorghum. [Shrill].

He then turned west:

*N'ūkūnū nūhongile kū ng'weli kū mūtala
wako nūnino, ūkendegèle sana ūng'waka
ūwū itī n'ūmūmpita sūwū wanoneligwa
naūkūlīlia.*

And there in the west where you are going to your junior house, be attentive this year. This cattle door has been fixed like you said. [Shrill].

Mbūlī yīke tuga mapaha yīhi agwe. And allow all the goats to bear twins.
[Shrill].

Agwe, shanga ūhūtē? [a man asks him] Don't you believe it [what you are
saying]? [a man asks him]

Ūne ntende ūlī? What might I do? [people laugh]

Then, turning to the south, ignoring the homeland of the royal spirits to the north, the joker completes his address:

N'ūkūnū kū takamá ūmūlīmo ūwū itī nīkatendesha. Apa itī mūkendegèle sana. And there to the south, we have done this
work. Be very attentive here. [Shrill].

Mūambe mīhi. Get it, understand it all [you spirits].
[Shrill].

Mūleke kūlekela. Don't forget [lit: don't come to leave this
matter]. [Shrill].

N'ūtikū wanyu ūwū itī mūtotomie ūko itī ūlelo. And get your aphids out of here today!
[Shrill].

Kūleke kūona ūse. Let's not see those [aphids] again.
[Shrill].

This address by the joker completed the ancestral offering at the homestead.

Rain and Women's Songs

THE PRIMARY AIM of this appendix is to give a slightly edited transcript (removing repetition only) of some of the women's songs I recorded along with commentary on those songs by women. These songs women sing at the female rain dances discussed in chapter six, during female fertility cult dances (*mīlīmū*), and at the celebrations following the birth of twins. Though the lyrics might lead us to believe otherwise, none of these songs is reserved for one occasion or the other. They are used interchangeably on these different occasions. Some of them—I will note them below—also feature on more public occasions like during ancestral beer brewing or ancestral offerings, where both men and women may sing along.

All the songs transcribed below were recorded; many of the commentaries on them were not, due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the issues discussed. Those quotes that were not recorded I wrote out in full immediately following the interviews.

All songs are comprised of two parts: a lead and a chorus. In most cases the two lyrics are identical. A lead begins a song, normally any woman who knows it, and when she is done singing the lead, the others echo her words in the chorus. Sometimes there are minor variations which will be noted below.

I have done my best with the translations and transcriptions, all of which were completed in the field, though there are a few complicating factors. The most obvious is that most songs are a mix of the Ihanzu and Iramba languages. This is no doubt because, so my informants agreed, many Iramba used to partake in many of the rites in which these songs were sung. To the best of my knowledge the Iramba have never conducted female rain dances, nor do they have any female fertility rites.

Another complicating factor is that the Iramba language that is mixed into these songs is not grammatically correct; far from it in some instances. This means that Iramba people themselves will, in some cases, fail to translate what is commonly claimed, by Ihanzu anyway, to be their own language. This given, women feel free to translate loosely, offering a wide variety of meanings, and only a few felt very certain their translation was correct.

1. THE KILLER PENIS

This first song I recorded from two of my clan sisters in Kirumi hidden away in the corner of one of their homes, late in the afternoon when the rest of the village was away at the drinking house. Women can be fined extraordinary amounts for singing these songs casually in a public context, especially in front of males. The same presumably holds true for anthropologists who rather perversely listen to, and record, such songs. Fortunately, I never got caught engaged in my slightly devious activities.

1 Lead	<i>Mpīmpa. Mpīmpa. ūMpīmpa wilūga ikūlū no wīzūmbūlagīle kīt? (x2)</i>	Mpimpa. Mpimpa. Mpimpa [you have an] enormous penis, might you kill me [with it]?
2 Chorus	<i>Mpīmpa. Mpīmpa. ūMpīmpa wilūga ikūlū no wīzūmbūlagīle kīt? (x2)</i>	Mpimpa. Mpimpa. Mpimpa [you have an] enormous penis, might you kill me [with it]?
3 Lead	<i>ūSilodi. ūSilodi. ūSilodi wilūga ikūlū kūzūmbūlagīle kīt? (x2)</i>	Silodi. Silodi. Silodi [you have a] large penis, might you kill me [with it]?
4 Chorus	<i>ūSilodi. ūSilodi. ūSilodi wilūga ikūlū kūzūmbūlagīle kīt? (x2)</i>	Silodi. Silodi. Silodi has a large penis, might you kill me [with it]?

The meaning of this song, both women perhaps rightly agreed, is apparent from the lyrics. The idea is that a woman is afraid of the size of her husband's penis and is in danger of dying if she has sexual intercourse with him. The two male names—Mpimpa and Silodi—are presumed to be any men at all, none in particular. I have never heard of anyone in the royal rainmaking lineage who sports either of these two names.

2. KISOOLA

This song I recorded in January 1994 during a female rain dance. The chorus, *kīsoola*, is repeated after each lead, though I have here written out only the leads and the one time where the chorus changed. As with the other songs, I have cut out most of the repetition of lyrics.

A *kīsoola* is a traditional female leather skirt usually made from goat or cow hides (see Plates 2.1 and 2.2). They were in former times, into the 1940s, worn by women all over Ihanzu. While there are still a few of these skins around that have been passed down through various lineages from mother to daughter, they are today worn only on ritual occasions that deal with the ancestral spirits like during rain dances and ancestral offerings.

All of the place names mentioned—Kirumi, Tumbili, Matongo, Igwe la Mbau—were former villages, some of which still exist today as sub-villages, others of which were ‘closed’ during Tanzania’s 1970s villagisation programme.

1	Lead	<i>Kū Kīlūmī kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is in Kirumi.
	Chorus	<i>Kīsoola</i>	<i>Kīsoola.</i>
	Lead	<i>Kīsoola tai kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is really here.
	Lead	<i>Mū Kīlūmī kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is inside Kirumi.
5	Lead	<i>Kū Tūmbilī kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is in Tumbili.
	Lead	<i>Kū Dindima kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is in Dindima.
	Lead	<i>Kū Matongo kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is in Matongo.
	Lead	<i>K'īgwe la mbaū kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is in Igwe la Mbau.
	Lead	<i>Adī mū akūlū kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is at the senior people’s.
10	Lead	<i>Huyi kaūlya mūsolī kītaga ntambala kīsoola.</i>	There is no one to pick up the <i>kīsoola</i> .
	Chorus	<i>Huyi kaūlya mūsolī kītaga ntambala kīsoola.</i>	There is no one to pick up the <i>kīsoola</i> .

Lead	<i>Kīsoola, tai-ne kīsoola kīmolī?</i>	Isn't it true that the <i>kīsoola</i> is here?
Chorus	<i>Kīsoola.</i>	<i>Kīsoola.</i>
Lead	<i>M'īgwe la mbaū kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is inside Igwe la mbaū.
15 Lead	<i>Kwa īshekūlū kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is at grandfather's.
Lead	<i>Mū īGunda kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is inside at Gunda's.
Lead	<i>Mwa Mīlimū kīsoola kīmolī.</i>	The <i>kīsoola</i> is inside at Mīlimū's.
Lead	<i>Kaūlya mūsolī; kīsoola kīmolī?</i>	There is no one to get it; is the <i>kīsoola</i> here?
Lead	<i>Huyi kaūlya mūsolī kītaga ntambala kīsoola.</i>	There is no one to pick up the <i>kīsoola</i> .
20 Chorus	<i>Huyi kaūlya mūsolī kītaga ntambala kīsoola.</i>	There is no one to pick up the <i>kīsoola</i> .

On this song I got a few slight variations of meanings and even managed to record some comments. One elderly woman from Matongo village explained it to me as follows:

You know what a *kīsoola* is, don't you? It is that small leather skirt that the women used to wear for clothes here in Ihanzu. Though I never wore one, my mother was raised in one; it was common in her time. There are still some around and women sometimes wear them to ancestral offerings and female fertility dances (*mīlimū*). Anyway, *kīsoola* are worn around women's waists, to cover their things [genitalia]. So in the song the women are singing that those who are fertile have *kīsoola*. To have *kīsoola*, really, is to be fertile (*kūkete kītundulu kipelepele*).

This woman clearly associates the ancestral leather skirt with fertility in general and the female area over which it hangs in specific. By asking if the *kīsoola* is at all the locations around the country—and confirming that indeed it is—the women are establishing that there is (a) some common link between themselves and the ancestors and through that, (b) that there is fertility about the country as well.

A Kirumi woman in her late thirties who has attended female rain and fertility cult dances on many occasions over about a ten year period made these remarks:

Kīsoola is just another way of saying vagina (*nio*), so that men won't know. A man is [in song] asking his wife if she has a vagina and she keeps repeating that she does, they are all over the place in the different villages. He asks her [in line

numbers 10 and 19] who will pick up her vagina, if it falls out. The women answer that they will pick it up themselves.

Though there is here no explicit mention of fertility, the connection is evident enough. She turns the song about slightly by claiming that the woman singing the lead is really a symbolic man, addressing his wife, rather than women alone exchanging words amongst themselves. The fact that this song may be interpreted in this way would seem to offer further support to the arguments made in chapter six.

3. THE DOG WAGS HIS TAIL

The following song my clan sisters sang.

1	Lead	<i>Mwana mbua, mwana mbua, mwana mbua, ūtikū pana wila nūpīlīpītya ūmūkīla.</i>	Puppy dog, puppy dog, puppy dog, when night falls he wags his tail.
2	Chorus	<i>Mwana mbua, mwana mbua, mwana mbua, ūtikū pana wila nūpīlīpītya ūmūkīla.</i>	Puppy dog, puppy dog, puppy dog, when night falls he wags his tail.
3	Lead	<i>Nūpīlīpītya ūmūkīla. (x3)</i>	He wags his tail.
4	Chorus	<i>Nūpīlīpītya ūmūkīla. (x3)</i>	He wags his tail.
5	Lead	<i>Ūmwana mbua, mwana mbua, mwana mbua, mwana mbua, mwana mbua kigona pa ūlungu. ūtikū pana wila nūpīlīpītya ūmūkīla.</i>	Puppy dog,... he sleeps under the bed. When night falls he wags his tail.
6	Chorus	<i>Ūmwana mbua, mwana mbua, mwana mbua, mwana mbua, mwana mbua kigona pa ūlungu. ūtikū pana wila nūpīlīpītya ūmūkīla.</i>	Puppy dog,... he sleeps under the bed. When night falls he wags his tail.
7	Chorus	<i>Nūpīlīpītya ūmūkīla. (x5)</i>	He wags his tail.
8	Lead	<i>Nūpīlīpītya ūmūkīla. (x5)</i>	He wags his tail.

A woman from Kirumi, a regular at female dances, explained this song:

The meaning of this song is simple: it says that when night comes, a man's penis starts wagging like a dog's tail. This song we sometimes sing while each girl dances obscenely around a vertical house post (*impandwa*).

She here emphasises the implicit (sometimes explicit, though only when men are out of earshot) connection stressed by some women between house posts and penises. It is always the men who, during house building parties, put these posts into place. Other women have told me that female cult initiates often dance around house posts naked, grasping them in front of them 'like large penises' and gyrating up and down as if having sexual intercourse with the post. Though this woman associates this particular song with the house-post dance, this is not invariably so and almost any song will seem to do.

4. RETURN MY WOMB!

This song was recorded from clan sisters. Some of the choruses do not, as is normally the case, echo the lead; when this occurs, I have written the replies out in full. Otherwise, the chorus is the same as the lead that precedes it.

1	Lead	<i>Üng'wana wang'wa iya wakule tai-ne?</i>	Has mother's child really died?
	Chorus	<i>Wakule tai. Akamīsononalya, akamīlampya lampya.</i>	She has really died. She left it there idle, she shook it about (lit. 'licked the ground').
	Lead	<i>Üng'wana wang'wa maū wakule tai-ne?</i>	Has mother's child really died?
	Chorus	<i>Wakule tai. Akamīlampya lampya, akamīkūa īmazī.</i>	She has really died. She shook it about, she tossed water on it.
5	Lead	<i>Akamīlampya lampya.</i>	She shook it about.
	Lead	<i>Akamīūmbya ūmbya.</i>	She rolled it about on the ground.
	Lead	<i>Akamīsononalya.</i>	She left it there idle.
	Lead	<i>Akamītambya kūnū.</i>	She turned it that way.
	Lead	<i>Akamīleta kūnū.</i>	She brought it here.

✓

10	Lead	<i>Akamīūja ūja.</i>	She shook it about to remove the filth.
	Lead	<i>Shokela lūgembe, shokela!</i> (x3)	Xiphoid ¹ come back, come back!
	Lead	<i>Ūng'wana wang'wa iya wakule tai-ne?</i>	Has mother's child really died?
	Chorus	<i>Wakule tai. Akamīlampya lampya.</i>	She has really died. She shook it about.
	Lead	<i>Ūng'wana wang'wa sengi wakule tai-ne?</i>	Has father's sister's child really died?
15	Chorus	<i>Wakule tai. Akamīlampya lampya.</i>	She has really died. She shook it about.
	Lead	<i>Akamīsūsha kūnū.</i>	She brought it back there.
	Lead	<i>Akamīūmbya ūmbya.</i>	She rolled it about on the ground.
	Lead	<i>Akamīnūlania.</i>	She lifted it up.
	Lead	<i>Akamīsononalya.</i>	She left it there idle.
20	Lead	<i>Akamīkenūlania.</i>	She spread her legs wide apart.
	Lead	<i>Akamīūmbya ūmazī.</i>	She force fed it water.
	Lead	<i>Akamīlampya lampya.</i>	She shook it about.
	Lead	<i>Akamīkūa ūmazī.</i>	She tossed water on it.
	Lead	<i>Shokela lūgembe, shokela!</i> (x2)	Xiphoid come back, come back!

The reference to the xiphoid (*lūgembe*) is an oblique reference to the clitoris (*isondo*), according to one woman though what they are really talking about is the womb (*itūngō*). They use the word normally used for the xiphoid so men do not know the true meaning if, though bad luck, they were to hear the song.

Two other women suggested that this song is about a woman giving birth. After giving birth, a child arrives and asks what the woman is doing.

My child, I have given birth and it hurts there, it hurts. My vagina (*nio*) really hurts and my clitoris (*isondo*) has run off, my clitoris has fallen out. I don't know what to do about my womb (*itūgo*); hasn't it fallen out? My womb has fallen out. What shall I do? It hurts. I don't know what to do. I have shaken it about. I have

¹ A xiphoid is a small bone that protrudes off the end of the sternum.

just left it there idle. I have put hot water on it so it will return. I went near a fire to take away the pain. The clitoris will not return. Now I don't know what to do.

In the end, the woman died due to her inability to return her reproductive organs to their proper anatomical location.

5. THE PENIS THAT STOPPED THE RAIN

Recorded at the 1994 Kirumi rain dance.

Lead	<i>Ilūga ikalamūku lagiiye ūmbula kūnia.</i>	The penis is dried up and worthless; it stops the rain from shitting [down]. (x 18)
Chorus	<i>Ilūga ikalamūku lagiiye ūmbula kūnia.</i>	The penis is dried up and worthless; it stops the rain from shitting [down]. (x18)

The women sang this song several times during both the 1994 and 1995 rain dances. A few female informants claimed that this song is directed against men of the royal clan only (*Anyampanda wa Kirumi*) since it is they, ultimately, who are responsible for bringing the rains; many more insisted that it was not directed against them, nor any other men in particular. There seems to be no consensus on this point.

One woman from Matongo tied this song directly to fertility and sex, as she did with all of her explanations of women's songs.

Nyimbo huu, maana yake, siyo ya mvua moja kwa moja. Maana haswa ni mboo ya mwanaume haina mbegu nzuri. Ile mvua wanaiimba siyo mvua. Ni maji ya mwanaume. Yaani hana. Kwa sababu ilūga ikalamūku inazoia mbegu zake zitoke; haiwezi kuzaa mtoto.

This song is not about rain, not directly anyway; it is really saying that a man's penis has no good seeds. The 'rain' about which they sing is not really rain but male waters. The point is he has none. The penis is dry and so it stops its own seeds from coming out and producing a child.

6. LET'S LOOK FOR A GRASSHOPPER

Recorded at 1995 female rain dance.

1	Lead	<i>Ihūgūya īkalūnga ūlī?</i>	What did the dik-dik say?
	Chorus	<i>Kūmīlūngūle īmpandi. Haa! Haa! Haha! (x8)</i>	Let's look for a grasshopper. Haa! Haa! Haha! (x8)
	Lead	<i>Ihūgūya īkakīna ūlī?</i>	How did the dik-dik jump?
	Chorus	<i>Kūmīlūngūle īmpandi, Haa! Haa! Haha! (x10).</i>	Let's look for a grasshopper. Haa! Haa! Haha! (x10)
5	Lead	<i>Ang'anya, ihūgūya yakīna ūlī?</i>	Children, how did the dik-dik jump?
	Lead	<i>Kwa akūlū Ihūgūya yalūnga ūlī?</i>	For the big ones, what did the dik-dik say?
	Lead	<i>Ihūgūya yagenda ūlī?</i>	How does the dik-dik walk?
	Chorus	<i>Kūmīlūngūle īmpandi. Haa! Haa! Haha! (x6)</i>	Let's look for a grasshopper. Haa! Haa! Haha! (x6)
	Lead	<i>Haa! Üyū sinkini. (x5)</i>	Haa! That owl.
10	Chorus	<i>Haa. Walīe īmīlangalī. (x5)</i>	S/he has eaten <i>mīlangalī</i> trees (<i>Euphorbia candelabrum</i>).

This song, undoubtedly one of the more cryptic of the collection, offers room for interpretation. One elderly woman from Matongo unnecessarily insisted that there was nothing straightforward here. The grasshopper, she said, is a penis while the dik-dik is a female. So, each time the dik-dik says, 'Let's look for a grasshopper' it is really about a woman desiring to have sex. The violent outbreaks of 'Haa! Haa! Haa!' that pepper the song, she claims, are the triumphal cries of both parties while they are engaged in sexual intercourse. She said that the owl to which they refer in line 9 is a male. Though she did not make the connection directly, it seems reasonable—on that grounds that in most contexts owls are inauspicious and associated with witchcraft—to suggest, if only tentatively, that this might be another oblique reference to the fact that males ruin the rains, this time though witchcraft (see chapter seven).

The last line (10) is not at all clear on precisely who has eaten the tree—the owl, the grasshopper, the dik-dik, a male or a female—though it may not much matter. This same woman claims that 'eating' is used here as a metaphor for having sex. At the risk of stretching my data just beyond the realm of the plausible (since it certainly goes beyond what anyone pointed out directly to me), it is interesting to note in

passing that if you slice a *mūlangalī* tree, it oozes a thick, white, sticky substance like semen. A cutting from this same tree is also normally placed atop a grave when a man or woman is buried; since no one ever gave me a reason for this, it is hard to know what to make of it, if anything.

Another woman from Kirumi who has been to the female dances only a few times said she knew little about the meaning of the songs. They are not explained openly. All the same, she was adamant about the fact that the *Haa! Haa! Haas!* that figure so prominently in this one are actually owl hoots, a logical suggestion since the owl is mentioned explicitly in the lyrics (line 9). She offered the suggestion that on this occasion the dancing women had *themselves* become somewhat like witches—powerful and evil. The significance of the grasshopper, and why anyone might wish to look for one in the first place, was lost on her altogether.

Finally, a long-time participant in the dances, also from Kirumi, had this to say:

This song is about witchcraft, those witches that come at night to ruin the women at the fertility cult dance (*mūlīmū*). The dik-dik is the same as saying ‘witches’ while grasshopper is the same as we women. The witches [dik-dik] say, ‘let’s go get the women [grasshopper]’ but they fail and are scared off when we women began singing, ‘Haa! Haa! Haha!’ This makes them see how many we are and they run away. The Haa! Haa! we sing is not that of an owl [re: witch]—they make a Hooo! Hooo! sound. The singer, in the end, says ‘Oh, that owl’ and she has sex with that bird. Later, she tells her mother she is pregnant by saying she has eaten some *mūlangalī* trees.

She then went on to say that this is the song that women often sing while they are dancing around house posts.

7. WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT

This song I recorded at the 1995 female rain dance (and I was later unjustly fined a goat as a result). Where there is no chorus listed, it is simply the same as the preceding lead.

1	Lead	<i>Anya mūnyū kalīla ūNandī.</i> <i>Wīkūlī. (x3)</i>	Those of the salt, we are crying for Nandi. He is far away.
	Lead	<i>Nkūle, nkūle, ntugale īkīlatū sha nkolo? (x2)</i>	When I grow up, when I grow up, might I wear a sheep’s shoe?
	Lead	<i>Kwa Mahūlā, ntugale īkīlatū sha nkolo? (x2)</i>	And Mahuila, will he wear the sheep’s shoe?

	Chorus	<i>Nkūle, nkūle ntugale īkīlatū sha nkolo? (x2)</i>	When I grow up, when I grow up, might I wear a sheep's shoe?
5	Lead	<i>Anya mūnyū kalīla ūNandī. Wīkūlī.</i>	Those of the salt, we are crying for Nandi. He is far away.
	Lead	<i>Haīyū saa, asūngū saa. (x2)</i>	We are different, women are different.
	Lead	<i>Haīyū saa, anya mūlīmū saa.</i>	We are different, the initiated women are different.
	Chorus	<i>Haīyū saa, asūngū saa.</i>	We are different, women are different.
	Lead	<i>Haīyū saa, asūngū saa.</i>	We are different, women are different.
10	Lead	<i>Sūlī, sūlī, sūlīla, mūgeni ūzile. (x3)</i>	Believe it, believe it, believe it, a/the guest will come.
	Lead	<i>Mūmpīndī [nī]nkūlū hūlīa mūgeni ūzile.</i>	Late afternoon believe a/the guest will come.
	Chorus	<i>Sūlī, sūlī, sūlīla mūgeni ūzile.</i>	Believe it, believe it, believe it, a/the guest will come.
	Lead	<i>Migīngū ka hūlīa ūmūgeni ūzile.</i>	In the middle of the night a/the guest will come.
	Chorus	<i>Sūlī, sūlī, sūlīla mūgeni ūzile.</i>	Believe it, believe it, believe it, a/the guest will come.
15	Lead	<i>Ka mūmpīndī sūlīla mūgeni ūzile.</i>	In the afternoon believe a/the guest will come.
	Chorus	<i>Sūlī, sūlī, sūlīla mūgeni ūzile.</i>	Believe it, believe it, believe it, a/the guest will come.
	Lead	<i>Īka daū sūlīla mūgeni ūzile.</i>	Very early in the morning a/the guest will come.
	Chorus	<i>Sūlī, sūlī, sūlīla mūgeni ūzile.</i>	Believe it, believe it, believe it, a/the guest will come.
	Lead	<i>Sūlī, sūlī, ka hūlīla mūgeni ūzile.</i>	Believe it, believe it, believe it, a/the guest will come.

This song required little work to translate though requires considerably more comment to understand ‘the meaning.’ One Kirumi woman explained at length her thoughts on the matter:

This song is sung only at night. The first line means: ‘when will those novices (*adamu*) at the *mūlīmū* finish? *Anya mūnyū* [lines 1 and 5] are not people who are really fetching salt on the flats, as you might think; they are not chiefs nor children of chiefs either. It is about people on a journey a long ways from home, like those who fetch salt. These are the novices who are on the journey and this is why they are asking when they will return. Wearing the ‘sheep shoe’ [lines 2-4] is really receiving a buffalo drum (*mbīlū*)—when I become a woman will I get a buffalo horn drum to play? [Being able to play an *mbīlū* drum is something only senior women may do].

When they sing ‘we are different’ they mean that we women are different: there are those [women] who have been to the *mūlīmū* before and those who haven’t; those who are novices (*adamu*), senior women (*adamu akūlū*) and those elderly women (*akombi*) who have participated many times. We women are different from each other. I am unsure about who the guest is in the end of the song [lines 10-19] though I would guess it is rain.

Another middle-aged woman had an entirely different explanation.

Nandi [lines 1 and 5] is the name of a father of twins. He is far away. The song is about his *mūlīmū*, they are singing for him; they are sad because he should be there for the preparation of the [twin] medicines. The [twin] children are asking [in lines 2 and 4] when they grow up, will they be given a shield [sheep’s shoe]? Some guests are coming; those guests are the women who will dance at his *mūlīmū*.

Another view from an elderly woman of Ilongo village put yet another twist on the story. The much awaited guest was, she thought, a baby that was being born—perhaps twins—though she gave no further elaboration.

Explaining lines six to nine—We are different, women are different—she said this meant that women *as a whole* were different from men, not that there were differences among and between women, as the one woman above suggested.

The suggestion that ‘women are different’ bears the same exact ambiguity in the Ihanzu language as it does in English and we have no way of knowing, without further information and qualification, whether it is women who are stressing differences amongst and between themselves, or between all females and males. If we are to take informants’ views at all seriously—surely the only reasonable starting point for any analysis—then we must conclude it may be both options at once, in spite of (or because of?) the apparent ambiguity.

8. WHO WILL LOOK AFTER TUNGU?

The name of a girl—Tungu—is the chorus that is echoed after each and every lead. I recorded this song from my clan sisters.

1	Lead	ũTūngū nyanyu ũkūmūlagūīlya?	Who will look after Tungu?
	Chorus	ũTūngū.	Tungu [herself].
	Lead	Mūgīla nūnina wanū ũkūmūlagūīlya?	She has no mother, who will look after her?
	Lead	Mūgīla nīshe wanū ũkūmūlagūīlya?	She has no father, who will look after her?
5	Lead	Mūgīla nūmūleli wanū ũkūmūlagūīlya?	She has no keeper, who will look after her?
	Lead	Wipi wane puna ūtange tange. Wanū ũkūmūlagūīlya?	Sister-in-law of mine, go out and fly about aimlessly. Who will look after her?
	Lead	Mūmpīndī ũTūngū ūlwalile.	In the evening Tungu has fallen ill.
	Lead	N'ūmūdaū ũTūngū ūlwalile.	And tomorrow Tungu has [will] fallen ill.
	Lead	N'izūlī ũTūngū ūlwalile.	And the day after tomorrow Tungu has [will] fallen ill.
10	Lead	Wipi wane puna ūkūte ūng'wano. Wanū ũkūmūlagūīlya?	Sister-in-law of mine, go out and cry for help. Who will look after her?
	Lead	Wanū ũkūmūlagūīlya?	Who will look after her?

Two women explained that this song was about a girl that had been fined for committing an unknown offence against the women and their dance. After pleas that she had no one to look after her—no mother, no father, no keeper; she was alone—the women decide to pardon her for her mistake without a fine.

9. THE VAGINA HEALS BODIES

This song, like others, loses much of its original colour and flavour by virtue of the fact that I have cut out all repetitive verses. Women often repeat a verse four or five times before moving on to another, only to later return to a previous verse.

This version I recorded at a rain dance in 1995. The chorus which is repeated here after each verse, written only once and not after each lead, is 'the clitoris heals bodies.'

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1	Lead	<i>Wa maū leka inzogopa.</i>	Don't fear me mother.
	Chorus	<i>Līkī isondo līkītunda mīlī.</i>	The clitoris heals bodies.
	Lead	<i>īlī lyani adī mūkūalaniya īlī</i>	What is this? You are hurting us. What is this?
	Lead	<i>Aīlī lyani amaū aīlī lyani?</i>	What is this, mother, what is this?
5	Lead	<i>Mūleki inzogopa agulī ane mūleki izogopa.</i>	Don't fear me my sisters, don't fear me.
	Lead	<i>Mūleki inzogopa amaū mūleki inzogopa.</i>	Don't fear me mother, don't fear me.
	Lead	<i>Aīlī lyani mūkola kūtunda aīlī lyani? (x2)</i>	What is this, creator, what is this?
	Lead	<i>Aīlī lyani aleli aīlī lyani?</i>	What is this, keeper, what is this?
	Lead	<i>Mūleki inzogopa a ūne mūleki inzogopa.</i>	Don't fear me, don't fear me.
10	Lead	<i>Mūleki inzogopa ana ane mūleki īnzogopa.</i>	Don't fear me my children, don't fear me.

The way this song was explained to me, a woman has given birth to a child and both she and other women are then afraid. The mother's reply 'Don't be afraid of me; the clitoris heals the body' is meant as a comfort to those who are amazed and scared by the birth. Her admonitions are punctuated by her own disbelief about the situation, asking 'What is this?' The word clitoris is here used, one woman suggested, not in a strict anatomical sense but to mean virtually anything from the vagina to the womb to female reproductive capabilities on a very broad level. In other words, there is something within women that gives them the ability to create life and also to regenerate themselves, for themselves.

There is one thing surely worth pointing out on line seven with the usage of *mūkola kūtunda* which I translate as creator. It is not entirely clear—and this is undoubtedly intentional—whether this should be a creator with a capital C or not as there are really two meanings implied here. The first, *Mūkola kūtunda*, might be God or the Creator of the world; the second meaning is a creator of life in another form, namely, the

female reproductive organs. Both meanings are clearly there with all the implied ambiguity. Women I spoke with agreed it could be either, or both meanings.

10. SEXY MONKEYS AT THE RIVER

This song I recorded from clan sisters.

1	Lead	<i>Malīlī īyī līlī malīlī. (x2)</i>	?
	Lead	<i>Naagana yūkitomba kū mongo.</i>	I came upon them having sex at the river.
	Lead	<i>Ntūmbīlī yūkitomba kū mongo. (x2)</i>	I came upon some monkeys having sex at the river.
	Lead	<i>Ntūmbīlī yūkitenda kū mongo.</i>	I came upon some monkeys doing it at the river.
5	Lead	<i>Naagana yūkiketa kū mongo. (x2)</i>	I came upon them “measuring up” at the river.
	Lead	<i>Ntūmbīlī yūkitomba kū mongo.</i>	I came upon some monkeys having sex at the river.

The singers suggested to me that this song is about an old man who happened to be walking by the river and saw two ‘monkeys’—who were actually a boy and a girl—having sex. He went home and explained to his wife that he saw two monkeys at the river having sex.

11. THE BOY WHO LOST HIS ‘CHISEL’

This song, too, was sung by my clan sisters.

1	Lead	<i>Impūma ya nsīmba nūndū, nsīmba wenze. (x2)</i>	A baboon [has] something deep, [it has] fur like a lion.
	Lead	<i>ūMūhaī aī mūlūgū; akaleka, akateng’wa nsīnzo.</i>	Muhai was an enemy; he lost his head and his chisel was cut off.
	Lead	<i>ūMūhaī aī mūlūgū; akaleka, akateng’wa ilūga.</i>	Muhai was an enemy; he lost his head and his penis was cut off.

Lead	<i>ūMūhai aī mūlūgū; akeleka, akaguma isondo.</i>	Muhai was an enemy; he lost his head and [his penis] was thrown away [into a] clitoris.
5 Chorus	<i>ūMūhai aī mūlūgū; akeleka, akaguma ilūga.</i>	Muhai was an enemy; he lost his head and his penis was thrown out.
Lead	<i>ūMūhai aī mūlūgū; akaleka, akaguma ipunde.</i>	Muhai was an enemy; he lost his head and his uncircumcised penis was thrown out.
Chorus	<i>ūMūhai aī mūlūgū; akaleka, akateng'wa nsīnzo.</i>	Muhai was an enemy; he lost his head and his chisel was cut off.

The singers explained that this song is about a young boy who tried to sneak into a girl's house at night and have sex with her. The boy was discovered by the girl's mother who promptly cut off his penis and left it there in the house.

Another woman claimed that the baboon mentioned in line one is the boy who had sex with the girl.

An elderly women claimed that the first line—a baboon has something deep with fur like a lion—quite obviously referred to female genitalia, making it the female who is the baboon. In any case, she too confirmed that the boy tried to have sex with the girl and, for his delinquent efforts, lost his penis.

12. WHAT SORT OF *MŪLIMŪ* HAS A PENIS?

This song is more complicated than some in that there are two choruses between which the women alternate, depending on what the lead sings: (1) 'Don't take the child off my back; what sort of *mūlīmū* has a penis?' and (2) 'Hey, *mūlīmū*, *mūlīmū*. What sort of *mūlīmū* has a penis?' The latter follows every time the lead mentions the word *mūlīmū* in her verse; the former follows all other lead verses, those that mention specific men for example. This song the women sang and I recorded in 1994 at a rain dance.

1 Lead	<i>ūSha ūGenge.</i>	Sha Genge.
Chorus	<i>Leki nsīmīlya ūmwana, adī ilūga mūlīmū kī?</i>	Don't take the child off my back; what sort of <i>mūlīmū</i> has a penis?
Lead	<i>A ūSha ūyo!</i>	That man!

	Lead	<i>Üyo Sha üyo.</i>	That one, that man.
5	Lead	<i>Üyo üSha Müza.</i>	That Sha Muza.
	Lead	<i>Adī a ümülīmū.</i>	Hey, <i>mülīmū</i> .
	Chorus	<i>Adī a ümülīmū, mülīmū. Adī ilūga mülīmū kū? (x3)</i>	Hey, <i>mülīmū, mülīmū</i> . What sort of <i>mülīmū</i> has a penis?
	Lead	<i>Adī Sha üyo.</i>	Hey, that man.
	Lead	<i>Naūka kū mūmbwazi.</i>	I am going to the house of the <i>mülīmū</i> .
10	Lead	<i>Adī īanī mülīmū.</i>	My fellow women, <i>mülīmū</i> .
	Lead	<i>Maū mülīmū.</i>	Mother, <i>mülīmū</i> .
	Lead	<i>Agūlī mülīmū.</i>	Sisters, <i>mülīmū</i> .
	Lead	<i>Mwana ane, mülīmū.</i>	My child, <i>mülīmū</i> .
	Lead	<i>Kūkolya ümülīmū.</i>	We are asking about the <i>mülīmū</i> .
15	Lead	<i>Kwa Maū</i>	For mother.
	Lead	<i>Kwa akūlū mülīmū.</i>	<i>Mülīmū</i> for the senior people.
	Lead	<i>Sha Mwani.</i>	Sha Mwani.
	Lead	<i>La ümülīmū.</i>	Look! <i>Mülīmū</i> .

One old woman explained to me that this songs is really about women's solidarity (*umoja wa wanawake*). Both choruses taken together would seem to emphasise this.

The theme of motherhood as well comes through here in one of the choruses where the women sing, 'don't take the child off my back,' where young children are normally wrapped and carried by their mothers until they are old enough to walk.

The word *Sha* is actually Iramba (the Ihanzu equivalent is *Iha*) and does not mean 'Mr.' but rather 'the man who bears children by the name of so-and-so.' Two out of the three 'Shas' here (lines 1 and 17) are quite general and seem to implicate almost any man by these names. The final *Sha* is *Sha Müza* (line 5) which, it will be recalled from chapter four, is a good deal more specific, and potentially meaningful—*Sha Müza* would be a man of the *Anyampanda* (and perhaps royal) clan.

13. RAINS, COME, COME!

The next few songs (nos. 13-15 and 18) are centrally about asking for rain and commonly appear in public forums like ancestral beer brewings and ancestral offerings, as well as at secret fertility dances and rain dances. Almost everyone mentioned in these songs is from the royal *Anyampanda wa Kirumi* clan-section, past or present; the numbers in brackets correspond to the royal genealogical positions on the chart found in Appendix A.

The chorus that is repeated in this song after each lead is *ĩnzū, ĩnzū* or *come, come*, to which they are of course referring to rain clouds.

Lead	<i>Adī kwa Omali nzū, ĩnzū kalūnde.</i>	Let the rain clouds of Omari come. (20)
Chorus	<i>ĩnzū, ĩnzū.</i>	Come, come.
Lead	<i>Kwa Sagilū nzū, ĩnzū kalūnde.</i>	Let the rain clouds of Sagilu come. (13)
Lead	<i>Kwa Nkili nzū, ĩnzū kalūnde.</i>	Let the rain clouds of Nkili come. (15, 5)
Lead	<i>Kwa Kali nzū, ĩnzū kalūnde.</i>	Let the rain clouds of Kali come. (9)
Lead	<i>Kwa Mülekwanyuma nzū, ĩnzū kalūnde.</i>	Let the rain clouds of Mülekwanyuma come. (7)
Lead	<i>Kwa Ng'welu nzū, ĩnzū kalūnde.</i>	Let the rain clouds of Ng'welu come. (19)
Lead	<i>Kwa Mīlimū nzū, ĩnzū kalūnde.</i>	Let the rain clouds of Milimu come. (18)
Lead	<i>Ükūletele.</i>	Bring it to us.
Chorus:	<i>ĩnkomba a ülolo. (x4)</i>	Bring us a big harvest. [lit.: let the porridge be thick like mud].

One old woman discovered in this song another meaning that was not immediately apparent to me, or any other women with whom I spoke.

This is a big secret and most women, those who have not been to *mūlīmū*, will not be able to tell you this; most do not know. This song is mostly about calling on former chiefs so the rain clouds will come to Ihanzu. Everyone knows that. But the secret is this: *īnkomba a ūlolo* (lit: let the porridge be thick like mud) has another meaning inside of it which is that the penis is limp. No matter what you do, it will not get up. This is why the rains have stopped.

Since no one else spontaneously confirmed this (though few denied that it *might* be possible and they just didn't know), it is hard to know what to make of this except perhaps that this woman has an amusingly vivid imagination and an uncanny sense of what anthropologists are most keen to hear.

Her idea is however not entirely out of context or insignificant if we recall, for example, song number five which posits a direct relationship between limp penises and failed rains. In a sense then, failed sexuality means failed procreation of the species and failed productivity of the land too. If too many penises go limp—a sign of lacking fertile qualities in humans—so, too, the rains diminish.

14. THE RAINS WILL COME

The chorus here is ‘it will come, and big’ and is repeated after each verse. This particular version of the song was recorded at a rain dance in 1994 though it might have been recorded at many other as well; it is clearly, due to its largely inoffensive character, an appropriate women’s song for almost any occasion.

As with the above song, it is by and large members of the *Anyampanda* rainmaking clan who are here praised in song. In spite of the seemingly respectful, inoffensive and decidedly dry nature of the lyrics, the contexts in which the song is sung can give other (sometimes hair raising) meanings. This became obvious when, upon returning to original cassettes to check my transcriptions, I found that this particular recording is punctuated by women screaming, somewhat incongruously, obscenities at and to each other—You cunt!; Have you tried out any massive penises recently? and so on.

1	Lead	<i>Izile ūdū. (x2)</i>	It will come, and big.
	Chorus	<i>Izile ūdū. (x2)</i>	It will come, and big.
	Lead	<i>īmbula ang'wa Malekela.</i>	The rain of Malekela. (6)
	Lead	<i>īmbula ang'wa Mpilolo.</i>	The rain of Mpilolo. (13)
5	Lead	<i>īmbula ang'wa Sagilū.</i>	The rain of Sagilu. (13)
	Lead	<i>īmbula [ang'wa] Mūlekwayuma.</i>	The rain of Mulekwayuma. (7; same as Kitentemi).

Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Nkili.</i>	The rain of Nkili (15, 5)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Kali.</i>	The rain of Kali (9)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Ikīngu. (x2)</i>	The rain of Ikingu (20, because son of Anyambeū clan)
10 Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Maū.</i>	The rain of Mau (4)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Mpanda. (x2)</i>	The rain of Mpanda (?)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Kūndi. (x2)</i>	The rain of Kundi (14)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Nzītu.</i>	The rain of Nzitu (8)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Kitentemi.</i>	The rain of Kitentemi (7)
15 Lead	<i>Izile īdū. (x6)</i>	It will come, and big.
Chorus	<i>Izile īdū. (x6)</i>	It will come, and big.
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Nya Matalū.</i>	The rain of Nya Matalu (8)
Lead	<i>Izile īdū. (x8)</i>	It will come, and big.
Chorus	<i>Izile īdū. (x8)</i>	It will come, and big.
20 Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Siali.</i>	The rain of Siali (4)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Omari.</i>	The rain of Omari (20)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Gunda.</i>	The rain of Gunda (16)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Ng'welu.</i>	The rain of Ng'welu (19)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Chūnyū.</i>	The rain of Chunyu (24)
25 Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Nya Zamile.</i>	The rain of Nya Zamile (21)
Lead	<i>İmbula ang'wa Malua.</i>	The rain of Malua (11)
Lead	<i>Izile īdū.</i>	It will come, and big.

This song is blatantly about asking for rain, and nothing more. Even my best elder female informant, the one who managed to find some deeper (and most often sexual) significance in everything having to do with women's songs and fertility rites, failed to find anything here. She said tersely, 'they are just asking for rain.' All other men and women I spoke with agreed.

15. BIG RAINS

This song I recorded at a 1994 rain dance though, as with the other songs that are blatantly about asking for rain from the ancestors, the women sang it often and I might have similarly recorded it on a dozen other occasions.

1	Lead	<i>Mbula nkūlū, mbula nkūlū.</i>	Big rains, big rains.
	Chorus	<i>Ūī, ūī, ūya mīlūmbī.</i>	Oh, oh, those slow rains of long duration.
	Lead	<i>Īmbula ang'wa Nkili.</i>	The rains of Nkili. (15, 5)
	Chorus	<i>Īkūtondoza na lelo ūya mīlūmbī.</i>	Those rains of long duration will begin today.
5	Lead	<i>Īmbula ang'wa Kūndi.</i>	The rains of Kundi. (14)
	Lead	<i>Īmbula ang'wa Malekela.</i>	The rains of Malekela.(6)
	Lead	<i>Īmbula ang'wa Kali.</i>	The rains of Kali. (9)
	Lead	<i>Īmbula ang'wa Mūlekwanyuma.</i>	The rains of Mulekwanyuma. (7)
	Lead	<i>Īmbula ang'wa Gunda.</i>	The rains of Gunda. (16)
10	Lead	<i>Adī sansa mbula.</i>	Let the big rains begin.
	Chorus	<i>Nkūlū ūbī.</i>	Very big.
	Lead	<i>Kamūna ntoma.</i>	?
	Chorus	<i>Kaaza.</i>	We have come.
	Lead	<i>Ipūmile k'iīndo, sansa mbula.</i>	The rains have come from the rainshrine, let them begin.
15	Lead	<i>Sansa mbula ūlī kamūna ntoma kaaza.</i>	Let the rains begin. We have come. (translation unclear)
	Chorus	<i>Sansa mbula ūlī kamūna ntoma kaaza.</i>	Let the rains begin. We have come. (translation unclear)
	Lead	<i>Mbula nkūlū, mbula nkūlū.</i>	Big rains, big rains.

The Ihanzu word *mīlūmbī* that appears in the chorus are rains that are steady, though not too heavy and last a long time, say all day or all night. They are invariably defined as female rains (*mbula a asūngū*), given their gentle and desirable characteristics.

The greater part of this song was easy to translate though a few lines have given me problems in the extreme, specifically, lines 12, 15 and 16. To be unabashedly honest, I have simply failed to understand their meaning, in spite of my best efforts on several occasions with various women. It is perhaps worth noting though that these same women, without exception, insisted the translation had to do with having sex. Since this song often comes up at joint male-female activities I tried to discuss the meaning of these lines with several males as well in the hope of getting a translation. They, like I myself, just expressed bewilderment and unhelpfully shrugged their shoulders.

16. 'SOMETHING' FROM BEHIND TURNED ME OVER

This song came from a 1994 rain dance.

1	Lead	<i>Üe pantamīla Shoga, pantamīla papo.</i>	You stay [here] Shoga, stay right here.
	Chorus	<i>Pantamīla Shoga, pantamīla pigwe.</i>	Stay [here] Shoga, stay on this rock.
	Lead	<i>Aza ngonile. Shanī sha nkeūla kū nyuma.</i>	I was sleeping [when] something from behind turned me over.
	Chorus	<i>Sha nkeūla, sha nkeūla, shanī sha nkeūla kū nyuma.</i>	It turned me over, it turned me over, something from behind turned me over.
5	Lead	<i>Sha nkeūla adī ilūga lankeūla kū nyuma.</i>	It turned me over, man, a penis behind [me] turned me over.
	Chorus:	<i>Lankeūla, lankeūla, ilūga lankeūla kū nyuma.</i>	It turned me over, it turned me over, a penis behind [me] turned me over.
	Lead:	<i>Adī lankeūla. Ilūga lankeūla kū nyuma.</i>	Hey, it turned me over. A penis behind [me] turned me over.
	Chorus:	<i>Lankeūla, lankeūla, ilūga lankeūla kū nyuma.</i>	It turned me over, it turned me over, a penis behind [me] turned me over.
	Lead:	<i>Adī līmū pīmpi ilūga, līmū pīmpi kū nyuma.</i>	Hey, a large penis, it is large, behind me.

10	Chorus:	<i>Līmū pīmpi, līmū pīmpi ilūga, līmū pīmpi kū nyuma.</i>	A large, large penis, it is large, behind me.
	Lead:	<i>Adī nkonyange, ūShoga nkonyage yakwe.</i>	A lot, Shoga, a lot that is hers.
	Chorus:	<i>Nkonyange, nkonyange ūShoga nkonyage yakwe.</i>	A lot, a lot Shoga, a lot that is hers.
	Lead:	<i>Malūndo ūShoga, lī malūndo makwe.</i>	A lot that is Shoga's, a lot that is hers.
	Chorus:	<i>Lī malūndo, lī malūndo, ūShoga lī malūndo makwe.</i>	A lot that is hers, a lot that is hers, Shoga, a lot that is hers.
15	Lead:	<i>Kamūsaīla ūShoga kamūsaīla papo.</i>	Shoga has been confined [covered up, surrounded], She has been confined here.
	Chorus:	<i>Kamūsaīla, kamūsaīla, ūShoga kamūsaīla papo.</i>	She has been confined [covered up, surrounded], She has been confined, Shoga has been confined here.

This song, several elderly women agreed, they commonly sing when a mother bears twins and they are preparing medicines for her. One middle-aged Kirumi woman explained it like this:

Shoga, a young woman who just bore twins, must remain where she is until her protective medicines are prepared by the [female] diviner. She must sit on that rock. Then, remembering back, she begins complaining about her husband's sexual advances. Then she bears twins and the other women council her that, for whatever bother, it was worth it: they are her children, two of them. In the end, Shoga is confined to her house since she has not been prepared [with twin medicines] yet.

A Matongo woman:

This song is about sex. They sing it sometimes when a twin-mother is giving birth though they don't have to. It is only if she wishes.

Shoga is not the name of a person, but another name for a penis. We just use the name *Shoga* so men won't understand what it's really about. So, a wife finds that her husband's penis is inside her and she says 'stay right there.' This is because he is lazy and doesn't want to have sex but she wants a child. 'Stay on this rock' really means 'stay in my vagina (*nio*).'. One night the woman was sleeping and she was startled by her husband's penis, poking her in the back. It was hard, but he was asleep! She was astonished that his penis was hard but he didn't tell her to turn over [to have sex]. Why didn't he? As the song says, 'Shoga [the penis] really knows his job. In the end the woman is happy: the penis, Shoga, entered the woman and made her pregnant.'

Finally, another woman from Kirumi:

Shoga is a name. This song is sung for twin mothers and fathers when twins are being born. They also cry as during a funeral. *Nkonyange* refers to twins.

17. IT'S PAINFUL AND IT WON'T COME OUT!

Recorded at a 1995 female rain dance.

1	Lead	<i>Kūine ūlī asūngū īane? Kūine ūlī? (x2)</i>	How shall we do this my fellow females? How shall we do this?
	Chorus	<i>Līmagegu, līmagegu īlintū īlī līmagegu. (x2)</i>	It is difficult for this to come out, this thing is difficult, it is difficult to come out.
	Lead	<i>Ntende mbi asūngū īane, ntende mbi?</i>	What shall I do, my fellow females, what shall I do?
	Lead	<i>Līkūawa, līkūawa līkūsanja.</i>	It hurts, it hurts, it really hurts.
5	Lead	<i>Līkūawa, līkūsanja nī mīgongo.</i>	It hurts, it really hurts [all the way to my] back.
	Lead	<i>Līkūawa, līkūawa, līkūpilima.</i>	It hurts, it hurts, it is rolling about [inside].

'This song is sung while a mother is giving birth to twins,' said one woman from Kirumi. She then elaborated.

A woman is asking another woman how she should do this, that is, give birth. She is giving birth to a child. The women answer that it is very difficult, it is difficult for the child to come out. She tells them that it is painful, really painful and the baby is moving about inside her. She can feel it all the way to her back. It hurts her a lot; the women advise her that it will just be difficult to bear the child.

A woman from Matongo village, who also claimed this song is sometimes sung when a woman gives birth to twins, had quite another reading of this song.

You must understand that this song is a riddle (*kihalītya*) and has a meaning inside the meaning. This is the real meaning. How shall we do it/play (*kūine*) is really about sex: how shall we, she and her husband, have sex, a woman is asking. She is saying, 'How shall we have sex, I just lie there like a corpse while my husband does all the work.' The old women answer that it is difficult for her husband's penis to come out—he is a fierce man and he won't pull out of her. He just wants sex all the time; that is why she lies there lifeless. The poor woman complains that she doesn't know what to do since her husband always wants sex, all the time. It is painful for the woman, this penis of her husband's. It hurts her so much that she can feel it all the way to her back. She can feel the penis rolling

around inside her and it won't stop. The women just advise her that it is difficult to remove the penis from inside her.

And a final interpretation:

During the singing the woman's sisters wail, because giving birth to twins is the same as bringing news of a death. I mean, it is very dangerous. If one child had got stuck, all would have died, the mother too. The thing that really hurts is the pain inside her, as she is giving birth.

18. LOOKING FOR STIFF PORRIDGE

Though men do not normally sing this song, they all know it, since it is a very public one: it is frequently sung at ancestral offerings as well as during ancestral beer brewing. There is nothing discernibly racy in the lyrics. The women also sing it during female rain dances and fertility dances. This version I recorded at the former in 1995.

The chorus, which presents no translation ambiguities, sings: 'We are looking for stiff porridge, the *kīlūngū* has been lost.' (A *kīlūngū* is a small, disc-shaped seashell that, once a hole is bored through its centre, is worn about the neck on a leather thong. Most diviners have their own *kīlūngū* but it is perhaps more significant that the rain chief has a *kīlūngū* which is his insignia of chiefly office). The lead then goes on to recite the names of former chiefs (male and female) and significant others of the past, most of whom are or were members of the *Anyampanda* rainmaking clan. As before, the numbers correspond to genealogical positions in Appendix A.

1	Lead: <i>Kūūlīngā ūgalī, kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	We are looking for stiff porridge, the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.
	Chorus: <i>Kūūlīngā ūgalī, kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	We are looking for stiff porridge, the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.
	Lead: <i>Mwa Sagilū ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Sagilu's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost. (13)
	Lead: <i>Kwa Nkili ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Nkili's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost. (15, 5)
5	Lead: <i>Mwa Nya Matalū ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Nya Matalu's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost. (8)
	Lead: <i>Kwa ūPamba ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Pamba's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost. (?)

Lead:	<i>Kwa M̄ilimū ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Milimu's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost. (18)
Lead:	<i>Kwa Mpungati ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Mpungati's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost. (9)
Lead:	<i>Kwa atemi ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At the chiefs', stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.
10 Lead:	<i>Kūūlīngā ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i> (x2)	We are looking for stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.
Lead:	<i>Kwa Manga ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At the seer's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.
Lead:	<i>Kwa akūlū ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At the leaders', stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.
Lead:	<i>Kwa Malua ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Malua's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost. (11)
Lead:	<i>Kwa Ikomba ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Ikomba's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.
15 Lead:	<i>Kwa Kingwele ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At Kingwele's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.
Lead:	<i>Kwa mūjomba ūgalī kīlūngū kalimīe.</i>	At mother's brother's, stiff porridge; the <i>kīlūngū</i> has been lost.

A middle-aged Kirumi woman explained that the stiff porridge they are singing about is just another way of saying 'big harvest' while the *kīlūngū* is a metaphor for rain. It thus becomes something like: we are asking for a big harvest; the rains have been lost. All others I spoke with agreed with this interpretation, male and female alike.

19. ROLL AROUND LIKE A DONKEY

This song, one of the simplest in its lyrical form (and also one of the more obscure in meaning) was recorded at the 1995 female rain dance, late at night.

Lead	<i>Galagala mūsūta wa ndogwe</i> (x10)	Roll around on the ground, load of an ass. (x10)
Chorus	<i>Galagala mūsūta wa ndogwe</i> (x10)	Roll around on the ground, load of an ass. (x10)
Lead	<i>Agulī ane mūsūta wa ndogwe</i> (x8)	My sisters, load of an ass. (x8)

Chorus	<i>Galagala mūsūta wa ndogwe</i> (x8)	Roll around on the ground, load of an ass. (x8)
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I got virtually no meaningful consensus on this brief song, except that several women stressed that while they sing this the initiates roll about naked on the ground like an ass. Beyond that, it was not even clear to any of my female informants whether this song is meant to imply that women are somehow equivalent to asses—both carrying a burden of some sort—or whether, as it might also be translated, the women are really being carried by asses. In any case, the lyrics alone failed to excite much enthusiasm in my informants.

So as to avoid confusion it is probably worth noting that the term *ass* in the Ihanzu language does not, as it does in English, carry a double meaning and refers here only to the animal, not to any specific anatomical locale.

20. DIG LIKE A WARTHOG

This song I recorded during the 1995 woman's rain dance.

Lead	<i>Nsīmbe kīt kūna ngīlī?</i>	Shall I dig like a warthog?
Chorus	<i>Nsīmbe kīt kūna ngīlī?</i>	Shall I dig like a warthog?

One woman claimed they sing this song when they are burying the cinders of the fire during rain dances, after preparing castor seed oil. The initiates crawl about on their hands and knees and, digging like a warthog, bury the fire.

Another woman said they do not sing this song while digging to cover fires but while grasping firmly and dancing lewdly about a house post at a twin-mother's house. From this song I received some positively cryptic explanations too. Before being given this explanation, she spontaneously, but rather mysteriously, offered that: 'This song is the same as a boy and a girl having sex.' Although I know this informant very well and I don't think she has anything in particular to hide, she could not elaborate.

A final view: 'This song means a male has lots of children.' Regrettably, this informant commented no further.

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Note: Full details of archival materials used are given in the footnotes.

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