THE AGIKUYU CUSTOMS AND RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF TIRI IN THE MAU MAU STRUGGLE

BY

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The Agikuyu customs and religious

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DECLARATION

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

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This Thesis has been submitted for Examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this work to my mother Mrs. Esther Nyatuga Wamue whose foresight, hardwork, and sacrifice, ensured my earlier education through untold suffering.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives of the Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Premises</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE AGIKUYU ORIGINS, LAND TENURE, UTILISATION AND RELIGIOUS RITUALS RELATED TO TIRI</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Agikuyu Origins</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Agikuyu System of Land Tenure</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Utilisation</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Rituals related to Tiri</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE
THE EUROPEAN INTERRUPTION ON BELIEFS AND
PRACTICES RELATED TO TIRI ... ... ... ... 74
Land alienation ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 81
Land utilisation ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 91
Interruption with the system of land
tenure ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 99
The European interference with beliefs
held about tiri ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 103

CHAPTER FOUR
THE SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE OF TIRI IN THE
MAU MAU ACTIVITIES
The Agikuyu oaths ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 123
Mau Mau oaths ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 128
Mau Mau prayers ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 135
Mau Mau songs ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 141

CHAPTER FIVE
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TIRI AMONG THE AGIKUYU
AFTER THE MAU MAU STRUGGLE ... ... ... ... 147
The changes in the system of land tenure ... 148
Changes in land utilisation ... ... ... ... 155
The changes in the religious rituals and beliefs related to tiri ... ... ... ... 158
CONCLUSION ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 164
List of Respondents ... ... ... ... ... ... 168
Glossary ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 170
Select Bibliography ... ... ... ... ... ... 177
ABSTRACT

This research attempts to analyse the Agikuyu beliefs, customs, and religious rituals related to tiri and their significance and role in the Mau Mau struggle. This has been done by obtaining information from oral interviews, written documents, and archival records. The study is divided into five chapters and a conclusion.

The first chapter introduces the work by identifying the problem of research. It has highlighted the Agikuyu relationship to their land and the beliefs attached to it. To the Agikiyu land was considered sacred and the concept of tiri has been derived from it. This chapter also gives the objectives of the study. These objectives highlights the major theme of the study, that is the religious significance of the concept of tiri among the Agikuyu. The chapter also shows how the concept of tiri influenced the Agikiyu during the Mau Mau struggle.

The chapter has also given the historical and geographical justification on the study area, Kiambu. It also gives the methodology used and concludes by analysing the literature review. This review covers
literature that ridicules Mau Mau in an attempt to degrade it. The review also covers the literature mainly from African writers who view Mau Mau positively.

Chapter two is a description of the Agikuyu people, their beliefs and practices prior to the coming of the Europeans, and the religious significance of their concept of tiri. The chapter analyses the myth of creation among the Agikuyu, the systems of land acquisition and land utilization. It is concluded with the religious rituals related to tiri as practised by the Agikuyu. All these beliefs and practices bring out the observation that there was a strong relationship between the Agikuyu and their land.

Chapter three has explored in details the coming of the Europeans in Kiambu district. It has analysed the interruption on the system of land tenure, land utilisation, as well as the changes in religious practices connected with tiri. It is a fact that the Europeans had some positive aspects to offer to the Agikuyu, but it has to be emphasised that, it was their interruption of the Agikuyu social, economical, and cultural system,
that caused and accelerated the Mau Mau struggle. The interruption of the beliefs and practices especially is seen as a major cause for revolt among the Agikuyu who had put so much religious value to their land.

In chapter four, the role of tiri in the Mau Mau struggle has been discussed. The religious significance of tiri in various Mau Mau activities such as songs, oaths, and prayers are examined. The chapter concludes by observing that tiri played a major role in all these aspects. Tiri acted as a central unifying factor among the people.

In the final chapter, the concept of tiri after the Mau Mau struggle is analysed. This has been done by summarising the changes that have occurred in the systems of land tenure, land utilisation, and religious beliefs held in relation to land. The chapter concludes by giving an analysis of these changes in relationship to the concept of tiri today. This concept which was a major principle before and during the Mau Mau struggle, is shown to have changed to one of a monetary economic value. This is indicated in the general conclusion.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to sincerely express my gratitude to Dr. R. M. Githige and Dr. Ndirangu-Kihara, my supervisors for their tireless guidance, comments, patience and encouragement from the start to the completion of this study. Deep thanks are also due to all the other colleagues, and friends who helped me with constructive ideas. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Francis Muchoki for proof-reading this work and making various comments.

I also extend sincere gratitude to the Agikuyu elders, and all other respondents for their generosity in answering my questions. I am deeply indebted to my family members especially my daughter, Gatugi, who kept me company constantly.

Kenyatta University should not be forgotten for their kind financial support without which this research would not have been possible. Last but not least, gratitude is expressed to Mr. G. K. Mbote for typing this work. To all mentioned above and others whose names have been unintentionally omitted, I extend sincere acknowledgement. It was their support in varying ways, that made this work a reality.
POSITION OF KIAMBU DISTRICT IN KENYA: [Fig. I]

(Viii)
CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The role of the Agikuyu in the Mau Mau struggle has been documented by Kenyatta (1968), Maina-wa-Kinyatti (1980), Ojwando (1972), Kariuki (1963), Githige (1978), Kanogo (1987), et.el. Kenyatta (1938, 21) says that, ... as agriculturists, the Gikuyu people depend entirely on the land. It supplies them with the material needs of life, through which spiritual and mental contentment is achieved.

These scholars feel that deprivation of Agikuyu land rights was the major cause of the Mau Mau struggle. Studies on the Agikuyu religion reveal that they had strong attachments to land. Their laws and customs stated that the land belonged to them. It was handed over to them from older generation hence it could not be acquired by conquest. If this however, occurred, the new occupier would be haunted by the spirits of the previous owner. This would make it impossible for the new occupants to carry out their agricultural activities with any hope of success, or with any hope of the blessings of Ngai. The Agikuyu could also not allow any intruders to occupy their land. They believed that they had all reasons to chase them away in defence of their land. They also believed that Ngai would come to their assistance at such times and help them.
The Agikuyu valued their land strongly and attached sacred meaning to it. They also attached sacred meaning to tiri, the basic concept in this study. Tiri acted as the tangible liaison of land. Land in itself was not very important. The Agikuyu viewed tiri as a gift from Ngai which was held as sacred. Tiri united the un-born, the living, the dead members of the community together. This sacred concept was reflected in almost all activities of the people's lives. They perceived tiri as physically, economically, socially, and spiritually important.

Tiri was also believed to be important because the ancestors were buried in it. They were approached through libations poured into the tiri. This action of pouring libations to the dead helped maintain social harmony in the community. This is because the ancestors were intermediaries between human beings and Ngai. It was therefore through tiri that a link between the living, the dead, and Ngai was maintained. Tiri therefore, acted as the medium of communication between the living and the dead. In the Agikuyu community, such a bond was very vital.

The entire ethnic group tried everything possible to maintain it. It was believed that interference with it would cause death. Kenyatta observed that,

Communion with the ancestral spirits is perpetuated through contact with the soil in which the ancestors of the tribe lie buried. ...but it is the soil that feeds the child through lifetime; and again after death it is the soil that nurses the spirits of the dead for eternity. (1938, 21).
The researcher has therefore gone into depths of finding out whether the concept of *tiri* influenced the Agikuyu in the Mau Mau struggle.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The study investigates the concept of, and function of *tiri* in the Mau Mau struggle. The major aim is to investigate whether the Agikuyu beliefs, customs, and religious rituals related to the concept of *tiri* had any religious significance and how strong this was during the Mau Mau struggle. The study has used the Kikuyu word *tiri* instead of the English word 'soil' because *tiri* to the Agikuyu meant more than soil. It was a concept held especially in the rituals and ceremonies. Unlike soil, a general geographical terminology, *tiri* was held as a sacred concept and considered as a unifying factor that bound the un-born, the living, and the dead, with *Ngai*.

There is a dearth of information on Agikuyu beliefs and customs especially in relation to the concept of *tiri* in the Mau Mau struggle. The study also highlights the concept of *tiri* among the Agikuyu people today. This is based on the assumption that the Agikuyu strong attachment to land still exists today. This is due to the fact that there is a strong attachment to land in Gikuyuland especially in Kiambu district.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to identify the role of tiri in the Mau Mau struggle. This will search into the religious significance of the concept of tiri among the Agikuyu and how much this influenced them in the Mau Mau struggle. It will also investigate whether the religious significance of tiri has remained among the Agikuyu to this day.

RESEARCH PREMISES

The study assumes that, there was a strong relationship between the concept of tiri in Gikuyuland and their religious attitudes. This concept influenced the Mau Mau struggle and finally; the Agikuyu concept of tiri has not changed to this day.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Linguistically the word tiri means soil. Soil refers to the ground or earth especially the upper layer in which plants grow. Earth refers to this world or the planet on which we live. It can also mean soil especially when it is used to fill a pit. Land is the solid part of the earth's surface ordinarily used for farming. It may also refer to a country and its people. In this study land refers to that part of Gikuyu country which belonged to the entire community. It includes the rivers, mountains, valleys, forests, and hills. The Agikuyu refer to it as bururi witu (our land). As has been pointed out, it also includes the cultivated parts or the entire Gikuyu country.
However, the manner in which land is utilised helps to bring out rituals and ceremonies that are attached to it. Both land and tiri are central concepts in Gikuyu customs and religious practices. They are referred to again and again in their discussion of traditional values.

Land in this study is perceived first in its geographical entity, and second, as a mythological ancestral property. This is why it governs the beliefs and practices of the Agikuyu people. However, the concept of tiri cannot be conceived without relating it to land. In this work, nevertheless, tiri is not used in its ordinary linguistic form but in a technical manner. It is understood to be that brown light friable part of the earth which the Agikuyu referred to as sacred. It is normally used in the administering of religious rituals and ceremonies. Thus, like land, tiri is conceived as a sacred phenomenon because it developed from the same mythological entity perceived as a sacred gift from Ngai. This is why tiri acts as a tangible liaison between land, the people, and Ngai. In their traditional concept, it is understood as their "mother" and so acts as a spiritual bond that binds the un-born, the living, and the dead with Ngai. While Kenyatta (1938) has used the term "soil" in its religious concept, the researcher adapts Kenyatta's definition and will use the two terms interchangeably whenever necessary.

Githaka refers to the extent of land in Gikuyu country which was under certain rights of tenure. This could either be under cultivation or uncleared reserved for firewood, hunting, building wood, and for grazing.
It also refers to an estate with well defined boundaries which was originally owned by one man and hence became the joint property of all his male descendants normally under a mbari (lineage) holding. **Mugunda** referred to that cultivated area, garden or plot on a given githaka which was normally given by the owner to his wife or wives. It had temporary boundaries which were referred to as **migunda** and were only used for food crops. A **muhoi** was a man who made application to and got permission from the ene a githaka (land owners) to cultivate a **mugunda** on their land. The **muhoi** had no land rights.

Elder in this study refers to either a man or a woman who has passed through all the Agikuyu initiation stages that is second birth, circumcision, marriage, and one who is knowledgeable or well informed in community affairs. The term **Agikuyu** refers to the entire Gikuyu ethnic society. **Kikuyu** refers to the people but mostly used by the foreigners. **Mugikuyu** refers to one individual. The researcher however uses Agikuyu to refer to the people.

**Mau Mau struggle** refers to the conflicts that arose from the Agikuyu against the British who had occupied Kenya from 1894 - 1963. This was a long underground guerrilla movement that climaxed in 1950 when the name Mau Mau was first heard in public. Other scholars have referred to it in different terminologies such as a war, a fight, a confrontation, or peasants revolt. However, the researcher refers to the term struggle because Mau Mau was a fight made under great efforts against difficulties to recapture alienated lands. It was a desperate response by a frustrated people.
The Agikuyu had experienced the trauma of fifty years of European incursion and colonial subjugation. The impact of modernization, as evidenced by the introduction of monetary economy, central government, taxation, and wage labour was deeply resented. Mau Mau was a struggle because the Agikuyu felt that they were losing their traditional way of life, their land, and freedom. The fighters were classified into two groups.

The first is the Kenya Land Freedom Army. This group consisted of the organised regiment engaged in the actual fighting. The regiment was mainly stationed in Mount Kenya and Aberdare forests. It engaged in guerrilla warfare such as arranging attacks to the British army, raiding ammunition and food, and causing harassment to their enemies who included the British and some Africans who had refused to join them. They were occasionally referred to as ihii cia mutitu, or ihii cia mbuci, itungati or mirani.

The second group comprised of the sympathetic masses to Mau Mau. There were people who supported the Mau Mau struggle by offering moral and material support to the freedom fighters. This included providing hiding places, food, cloth, shelter, and leaking information from the colonial forces.

At the outset, it must be stated that not all the Agikuyu people supported the Mau Mau struggle. There were groups of people who were extremely opposed to the Mau Mau struggle and were considered enemies of the country. Various names were used to describe them. These are: Thata cia bururi, traitors such as the home guards, Thaka - Africans who betrayed the freedom fighters and joined the enemy forces (that is the British forces).
Kamatimu - home guards and traitors, Gakunia - an agent of British colonial government hooded and masked. Tai-tai - traitors operating in Nairobi. They were so called because of wearing ties. Thuthi - a colonial government spy. All these were new names and concepts that came up with the Mau Mau struggle and were not known in Gikuyuland before.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The sacred concept of tiri among the Agikuyu regulated all their activities in relation to land. Tiri was the central theme in peoples' life since it was believed to unite the un-born, the living, the dead, with Ngai. The researcher decided to carry out such a study because very little has been written on land as a factor in Mau Mau struggle. Though so much has been documented on Mau Mau, little has been written on the religious significance of tiri as a factor in the Mau Mau struggle.

The study on the religious significance of tiri also helps to understand the strong attachment to land among the Agikuyu both before colonialism and after. There is very little known on other religious factors on Mau Mau struggle and so much of the religious aspects remains unveiled. The researcher chose on tiri as a variable for research because of a personal conviction that it had a vital role to play in influencing the Agikuyu to fight for their alienated lands.

There is also a current shortage of land especially in Kiambu district, the study area. Land in Kiambu is among the most valuable things. Everybody is aspiring to have a share. This has led to disputes and complicated land problems.
There is also a very strong feeling on the choice of burial sites, especially among the old people who still cling strongly to their customs. The researcher has tried to analyse the root for this strong attachment and into the strength it upholds today.

The researcher has a personal conviction that the religious significance of tiri played an important role in the development of Kenya nationalism during the Mau Mau struggle. The researcher felt the urgency of writing this work because the eye-witnesses are dying at a rapid rate. These are leaving various gaps to be filled. This study covers the pre-colonial, colonial, and post colonial period.

Kiambu district was chosen as a study area for various reasons. First, Kiambu was the area in which the interaction of moderates and militants was most intense. Kiambu has a history quite distinct from Murang'a and Nyeri. Of the three traditional Gikuyu districts, Kiambu was settled last, by lineages moving down from Murang'a in the 19th century. Most of the farmland in Kiambu was actually purchased through adoption ceremonies by the Agikuyu from the Ndurubu.

Secondly, as the nearest district to the railway, Kiambu suffered more from land alienation than the other two districts and land agitation started there. It was among the places of early settlement. As Soja (1968, 17) has observed,

The major centre of early settlement was the Nairobi area, especially Southern Kiambu. In 1902, when land settlement as a definite policy commenced, allotments were granted in Ngong, Kabete, Karura, Kiambu, and Ruiru, while plans were made for further alienation along the railway line north-west to Limuru and escarpment stations.
Thirdly, the missionaries also came first to Kiambu, and built more churches and schools there than elsewhere. Cloug (1963, 2) argues that, "not only were the Kiambu people more Christian but they were better educated earlier than Kikuyu elsewhere".

Fourthly, Kiambu is a place where the shortage of land is still a big problem. The population has risen very rapidly leading to intense fragmentation of land. Fifthly, Kiambu being near the capital city, Nairobi, has been connected by a network of roads which make movement in the district easy. It is situated in the Central Province of Kenya. (See maps, figures I & II on pages vii and viii).

Finally, the historical evolution of Kiambu justifies its choice as a study area. The first European settlement of the highlands began in the southern districts of the Kikuyu country. This started with the establishment of a Fort at Dagoretti, and later at Fort Smith in the centre of Kiambu district. This was around 1899, when the railway reached Nairobi and settlers arrived in increasing numbers. These headed inland and started alienating Agikuyu lands. The Agikuyu lands were taken and allocated to the European settlers for cash crop cultivation. Sorrenson (1968, 177) argues that,

In the discussions over African land tenure during the early years of the Protectorate it was assumed that Africans had no right to unoccupied and uncultivated land, that, there was a considerable, if undefined, area of such 'waste' land available for settlement and that settlers would be content to apply to the Protectorate authorities for it.

This action set the course of events that were to explode in the form of the Mau Mau struggle.

The settler occupation went hand in hand with the establishment of missionary stations. By 1898, the Church of Scotland Mission had already got land from the Munyua family in Kikuyu. The Agikuyu land tenure system was ignored by the new comers.
The Europeans did not understand the githaka system whereby each mbari, or lineage had a distinct form of ownership over a defined portion of land. The Europeans had denied that Africans possessed a title to land as such, and admitted merely temporary usage.

They justified their claims to African land in the 1902 Crown Lands Ordinance. Sorrenson says that, "in all dealings with Crown land regard shall be held to the rights and requirement of the natives, and in particular the commissioner shall not sell or lease any land in the actual occupation of the native." (1968, 179). This included only land occupied by the Africans and excluded land where African occupation had lapsed or land surrounding African villages.

By this time most of the agricultural lands in the fertile central highlands were confined to Europeans. According to Kenyatta (1968), around 1903 more than 60,000 acres of land in Kiambu - Limuru area was alienated, most of it in the years 1903 - 1905. The land was occupied by the Agikuyu who were evicted and taken to either Ndeiya, the drier part of Kiambu, or Lari forests beyond Limuru. The settlers were required to compensate the owners with money for each hut before being awarded a title to the whole area. Many of the settlers kept the Agikuyu on their land to provide cheap labour on the assumption that, the squatters had no right to the land.
Kiambu was hard hit by World War I and its aftermath. A good proportion of the young men were recruited into the carrier corps. The home population was weakened by the famine of 1918, and thousands died in the post-war influenza epidemic (Leakey 1953). These sufferings were accelerated by tax increases and wage cuts coinciding with the slump which followed the war. The government's soldier settlement scheme and a series of small alienations near Nairobi roused the latent land fears of the Kiambu people (Soja 1968). These developments provided the background for the origin of protest in the district.

The situation became exceedingly complicated with the increase in population (Sorrenson 1968). The colonial government had stubbornly refused to establish Kikuyu reserves. The government had taken it that the settlers were allowed to occupy the country and thus settle on land in the gaps between Kikuyu cultivations. Around 1915, the colonial government established a series of reserves thereby setting free the remainder of the land for European settlement. There was no effective legal protection for the reserves until 1915 when a new Crown Lands Ordinance was passed (Kenyatta 1968). This made Africans tenants at the will of the crown. It provided for the proclamation as reserves of any crown lands required for the use and support of the members of the Agikuyu in the land. Despite this, the injustices of the alienation were to prove a continuing source of friction between the government and the Agikuyu.
At a representative meeting at Kabete on July 27, 1922, resolutions were also passed calling for an end to the encroachments of European settlers on reserve lands, attacking the obligatory inoculation of Kikuyu cattle (believed to be responsible for a number of cattle deaths) and demanding access to salt-licks for Kikuyu herders.

By 1914, the first written complaints were lodged. This was from a former senior chief, late Mbiyu Koinange, appealing to the governor to return the land taken from his family for European settlement (Sorrenson 1968, 285 ff). The Agikuyu claims assumed greater significance especially after the First World War when they provided an important stimulus for political action. The problems were stimulated by congestion in the reserves owing to increased population which also led to excessive cultivation without the traditional methods of farming.

By 1924 (Sorrenson 1968) the Kikuyu Central Association was set. This group was concerned about the Kikuyu land rights. They held large public meetings. The insecurity of the Kikuyu lands remained the group's principal concern; unsatisfied with a simple registration of occupancy, the leaders continued to demand that the government issue individual title-deeds based on a survey of land-holdings in Kiambu (Clough (1975, 8) says that

At a representative meeting at Kabete on July 27, 1922, resolutions were also passed calling for an end to the encroachments of European settlers on reserve lands, attacking the obligatory inoculation of Kikuyu cattle (believed to be responsible for a number of cattle deaths) and demanding access to salt-licks for Kikuyu herders.
To a certain extent, the situation was relieved by a growing exodus of Africans to the European farms, the towns and other African reserves, but the Agikuyu migrants were unable to obtain titles to the land they occupied. They were invariably regarded as squatters and could be returned to their own reserves at any time. (Kanogo 1987). The Africans were also banned from growing cash crops like coffee by around 1923.

Between 1920 and 1930, various associations like the East African Association and Kikuyu Central Association were formed. These sent various memorandums to the colony. Their aim was to mobilise people on issues as land. Nganga (1977, 6) says that, "In 1928 the K.C.A. presented a comprehensive memorandum voicing the peoples' grievances in land." By the beginning of 1930 Kikuyu Nationalism was reaching climax. This was crowned by several events such as the 1932 Kenya Land Commission, 1933 Carter Land Commission which extended the 'Native' reserves into the forest areas. By 1940 (Nganga 1977) the K.C.A, was banned and the leaders detained.

From the history of Kiambu, the land question had been a long burning issue from the time of active resistance through organised political resistance to the Mau Mau active resistance. The settlers had already alienated 7.5 million acres (Nganga 1977). The reserves were now heavily populated by mid 1940s and soil erosion was a serious problem.
Soil conservation was going on but the Agikuyu saw the method of digging terraces as a punishment. The Europeans were using force. By 1946, the forced soil conservation method was stopped.

At the end of the decade there was organised resistance. This was stimulated by various reasons. Firstly, the K.C.A. detainees were released. Secondly the ex-soldiers from World War II had come back. Thirdly there emerged a group called the "40 group". In 1947 there was an open crisis. This active political resistance of 1940s continued into the 1950s. By 1951, there were organised riots until 1952 when a state of Emergency was declared in Kenya. The government henceforth used emergency powers to deal with the Mau Mau active resistance.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research was carried out between the months of November 1986, and December 1987. The researcher used the interview method where key questions were used as guidelines for research. Key informants were sampled from the entire district in order to have a wide and even representation. However, there was initially an intention to sample out equal numbers of respondents from the seven administrative divisions of Kiambu; but after going into the field, the researcher found out that some of these divisions were more populated than others.
On the other hand, some divisions like Juja, and Lari have migrants from the other populated divisions who have settled there on the schemes. The researcher therefore omitted all these regional disparities.

The researcher used archival records to check on people who had engaged in Mau Mau activities. The records were later clarified by the local administrative authorities in the various divisions. The researcher also used friends and relatives to get access to the various respondents. The respondents were met in free social places like markets, churches, and other social gatherings. Interview dates and venues were organised from there. The researcher sampled out key informants who in turn introduced her to other respondents and arranged venues. The respondents were classified into three categories namely; the group of elders, ex-freedom fighters, and then the contemporary people. The researcher had a total of forty respondents.

Tape recording was utilized in the process of the interviews. However, there were some elders who insisted against tape recording and hence such interviews were written on paper. Most of the work was done in the evenings because this was the time when most of the respondents were available. Majority of the people were interviewed individually but in minor occasions especially when the researcher wanted to record a song or prayer, a group interview was conducted.
After the data was collected, it was coded into index cards according to the proposed chapters and hence the writing of the thesis commenced.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Several problems were encountered in this study. First some respondents claimed to know what they actually did not know. Some of them even pretended to have been actual freedom fighters while they were not. Majority claimed that they fought while actually they did not and gave the information in a distorted manner. However, the researcher used archival records of freedom fighters to check on the people who really participated in the Mau Mau struggle. She also conducted group interviews. This was found to be really helping for the people who were not involved in the Mau Mau struggle were picked out by the others. This made them accept that they actually did not know what they were claiming to know. The researcher also counter-checked such discrepancies with other people.

Second, some respondents were too busy. They would post-pone appointments.
Other times they would request the researcher to accompany them to the fields where they were cultivating or grazing, or just sit next to their beds, in case they were sick. At times the researcher had to walk very long distances to trace respondents. This was really frustrating.

Third, some of the respondents demanded payment. This in itself was a real problem because the money allocated for this research could not cater for that. This limited the number of respondents.

Fourth, the researcher had the problem of time. It is felt that one year was not enough to cover this kind of work. The researcher would have wished to choose more variables in the religious activities of the Mau Mau struggle. So far only one religious aspect on oaths has been discussed (Githige 1978). The researcher would also have liked to carry out research in the whole Central Province where Agikuyu lived. However, owing to the shortage of time, the researcher omitted other districts like Murang'a, Nyeri, Nyandarua, and Kirinyaga. This would have offered a wide range of respondents and a big comparison. All these were limited by time and funds.
The fifth problem encountered by the researcher was meeting elders who talked in riddles and proverbs. Interrupting such people in seeking for meaning often caused annoyance. The researcher would have wished for more time to stay with such elders and learn them.

Finally, the literature in this work is inadequate owing to lack of detailed accounts on the concept of tiri, its role and function in the Mau Mau struggle. Very little has been written about this concept. However, despite all the limitations, the researcher has tried in one way or the other, to minimize the problems or to cope with them.
LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigates on the religious factor of *tiri* in the Mau Mau struggle. The literature review is sub-divided into two sections. The first section outlines the deficiency in the religious aspects of Mau Mau as analysed by various authors (Ladislaw (1970), Leakey (1954), Allen (1954), Bewes (1953), Stoneham (1953). These scholars viewed the Mau Mau struggle as an evil and 'heathen' rejection of Christianity and progress. They were fighting hard to eliminate it. Majority of these scholars were missionaries and Christians and what they wrote about the Mau Mau struggle never gave its real meaning and intentions. They analysed the Mau Mau struggle as a confused religious movement that would soon be replaced by Christianity and Western civilization.

The religious factor in the Mau Mau struggle was highly mis-understood. The only scholar so far who has highlighted the religious factor in the struggle is Githige (1978). However, he only takes one aspect of the Mau Mau struggle namely oaths. His study has opened an avenue to look into other religious aspects in the Mau Mau struggle. The other scholars point out the religious aspects in the Mau Mau struggle but they do not clarify the nature of this religion. They viewed Mau Mau as a mythical religion. It was associated with the Swahili word, *dini*.
As Githige (1978, 11) observes,

this group concentrated on the ceremonies, rituals, and other practices of the freedom fighters. The presence of these aspects in the movement led these writers to conclude that Mau Mau was mainly, though not solely, a religion.

Ladislav (1970) points out that Mau Mau was a religious cult. He argues that,

There exists a strong body of opinion that Mau Mau was not at first a political movement but a sort of "religious cult." Even the Governor of Kenya at that time, Sir Philip Mitchell, considered Mau Mau "only one of these cults, the Dinis" and maintained in 1952 that it brought about just one of the periodical outbreaks of violence" which had been quite frequent, though transient, earlier in Kenya, (1970, 7).

Ladislav did not realise the religious significance in the Mau Mau struggle. To him, Mau Mau was just a cult which was to be wiped out soon. However, he was not alone. Leakey (1954, 22) argues that "Mau Mau as religion was a strange blend of pseudo-Christianity and utter paganism". Leakey, found the religious aspect but he interpreted it as paganism. To most western scholars, the African religious heritage was paganism and outdated. To Leakey, the Africans were on a transitional stage to Christianity.
Like Ladislav, this religion was to be wiped out and replaced with other beliefs, mainly Christianity.

Stoneham (1953) also described Mau Mau struggle vaguely as a terrorist organization whose speciality was in intimidating witnesses. He found the religious aspect in Mau Mau but interpreted it as terrorism. He found Mau Mau to be connected with the early religion and traditions. Stoneham found this religion to have existed even before the coming of the Europeans. It is surprising that, despite the fact that the religion of the Africans existed for such a long period, the Europeans expected it to be wiped out soon by Christianity.

Mau Mau was also viewed as a secret religious society. Allen (1954) argues that,

> It is now generally known that the Mau Mau is a secret society, confined almost exclusively to the Kikuyu tribe. It has been allowed to grow without let or hindrance till it has become an almost invincible enemy. The aims of the society is to destroy Christianity and to murder or expel the Europeans. Based on sacred oaths, the society encourages treachery, the drinking of human blood at its ceremonies, and the slaughter of men, women and children (1954, 12ff).

Allen viewed Mau Mau as a threat to Christianity. It was a real enemy to the society of the Europeans. From her views it is very clear that she did not understand the nature of the religious aspect in Mau Mau.
To her, most of the activities such as oaths, were evil for they were associated with drinking human blood. She however points out the religious aspect in Mau Mau. This is important because it helps to outline the religious aspect of tiri in the Mau Mau struggle.

To Bewes (1953), Mau Mau struggle was a revival of the old pagan religion. He describes it as characterised by a lot of secrecy, murder, and hate, which was a characteristic of pagan religions. He considered the religion of the Agikuyu as animistic which needed quick elimination. This would be done through Christianity and the impact of western civilization. He however, expresses the shock that they were given by Mau Mau struggle when they realised that the 'pagan' religion was still very deep among the Agikuyu. They were also surprised that this religion could be adapted to political and nationalistic aims. Bewes, like the others, noted the religions factor in Mau Mau. His problem was that, he misinterpreted this religion as animistic which according to him was a characteristic of pagan religions. His lack of understanding of the nature of African religion is observed by the fact that he expected the African religion to be wiped quickly. He was rather shocked when this did not happen. The religious strength in Mau Mau was beyond his estimation.

These Christian scholars had under-estimated the strength of the Agikuyu religion.
They did not even seem to understand the nature of the Agikuyu religion that was reflected in so many aspects of the Mau Mau struggle. This was particularly observed in the concept of tiri. The missionaries were particularly opposed to it for they saw it as a threat to Christianity. Most of the religious aspects in the Mau Mau struggle were interpreted as savagery actions. This was however out of total ignorance. The Mau Mau struggle was kept very secret by the Agikuyu. This made it hard for the Europeans to understand its real nature. On the other hand, the Europeans had not understood the nature of African religion. The Christians had assumed that they had already converted the Africans. This however explains the reasons for their surprise when they realised that Mau Mau was stronger than they had expected.

The Christians saw no need for the Africans to go back to their 'pagan' ways of life. The important factor is that, the Christians saw in Mau Mau a religious cult. Despite their failure to understand it, it is of importance because it highlights the religious aspect in Mau Mau. This is of importance because it has helped the researcher to study the religious concept of tiri in the Mau Mau struggle. It should be noted that, the western scholars were not sure of the nature of African religion. Their studies shows total confusion and interpretation of it.
There are some scholars who even dispute the religious aspect of the Mau Mau struggle. For example, Corfield (1961) saw in it, a false cloak of a religion. Carothers (1955) like Corfield viewed Mau Mau as a multifarious world which had no basic principle for men to depend on. Like the others, these two failed to understand the nature of the Mau Mau struggle.

Other Scholars Padmore (1953), Furedi (1971), Bennett and Rosberg (1961) failed to see Mau Mau as an organised political struggle by the Africans fighting for their alienated lands. This was the basic principle for the Africans. The Europeans misinterpreted it in order to justify colonialism and land alienation. They failed to see the reasons behind the Africans' fighting for their lands. They regarded Mau Mau as a money making-racket associated with crime and evil.

Padmore (1953) saw Mau Mau struggle as a flight from reason and a rejection of modernization. He also saw it as an irrational behaviour of 'savages' who did not appreciate the Europeans' help. He observes that, Mau Mau is not an organised political movement with a regular membership, officers and constitution. It is a spontaneous revolt of a declassed section of the African rural population, uprooted from its tribal lands and driven into the urban slums.
... It is from among this lumpen-proletariat that "dead-end" gang leaders have recruited adherents to avenge themselves upon the white man whom they hold responsible for breaking up their tribal life and replacing it with nothing but slave labour on European farms. Like the slave revolters of ancient Rome, the supporters of Mau Mau are fighting for land, without which they prefer death. (1953, 365).

Padmore, like his colleagues, realised the frustrations that the Africans had, owing to their alienated lands. He however, judged this as irrational revolt against the Europeans who had done so much for the Africans. To him the Mau Mau struggle was a disorganised affair of a few confused Africans who were blaming the Europeans for their own failures.

Bennett and Rosberg (1961, 8) supports Padmore by observing that,

It had a background in secret societies among the Kikuyu and in strange sects and that it was developed as a means of action by violent and frustrated young Kikuyu.

These Europeans failed to see the nature of the Mau Mau struggle because they did not understand the Agikuyu system of land tenure. They failed to see the major reasons as to why the Africans were so much attached to their land. This however, was the major reason for the revolt, which the Europeans interpreted as a rejection of progress.
They regarded the claims raised about land, which activated the Mau Mau struggle as a rejection of civilization and progress. Most of their claims were intended to justify colonialism and land alienation in the Gikuyu country. Furedi (1971) argues that,

In their enthusiastic encouragement of European settlement, the colonial administration in Kenya paid little attention to the rights of Africans to their land. The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902, was drafted in the assumption that Africans had no title to waste on unoccupied and uncultivated land, and that, ... the crown could assume a title to such land and alienate it to immigrants. The Ordinance of 1902 even considered the occupation of land to be a temporary right for once occupation lapsed, the land could be alienated (1971, 1).

The Europeans then considered alienation as a very appropriate term. This contained the double meaning or connotation of transference of ownership and losing something which remained in existence over-against the previous occupant.

In general, Mau Mau was seen by the Europeans first as an implicit conviction that the colonial system was perfectly capable of responding to the legitimate social and political grievances of Africans. Second, Mau Mau was believed to be another manifestation of an earlier religious movement.
Third, there was a belief that in employing secret oaths and such associated rituals, the Agikuyu were rejecting modernity and reverting to 'primitive' behaviour patterns. Mau Mau was therefore viewed as a strong rejection of progress and a disgrace to the Agikuyu for they had really rejected what the Europeans had sacrificed for their sake. The 'sacrifice' included alienating their lands for better use.

Colonialism was largely a system for the exploitation and oppression of the colonized peoples. Colonialism in Gikuyuland was a gruesome and shattering experience. There was little or no attempt by the colonial government to plan the economic future of their colonies. The colonial masters had only concentrated their efforts on the export sector to the utter neglect of indigenous food production. This situation resulted in the creation of monoculture and open economies with all their attendant consequences. This is what the Europeans were referring to as modernization and progress.

In the colonial mind, as stated by Rosberg and Nottingham,

The Africans choice was simple. Either he chose the colonial system and its premises of modernization and rationality or he reverted to an inherently irrational and inward-looking tribal collectivity. The colonial system, it was argued, was fully capable of meeting those political, economic, and social demands of Africans which were legitimate (1966, 32).
The real problems of Kenya as it was argued were economic problems and economic activity could thus resolve them if only the Agikuyu were willing to understand and co-operate.

The second category on the review includes the African scholars. These view the Mau Mau struggle positively. According to Ndegwa (1977, iii) the freedom fighters were among the groups who viewed Mau Mau struggle "as a noble patriotic cause that required dedication and devotion to one's life of it." She continues to say that,

these viewed Mau Mau as a last resort to a long struggle against humiliation, oppression, and degradation of colonialism and seemed the only way to restore back, fast disappearing land, lost pride and dignity, and foreign domination (1977, iii).

Among the freedom fighters are the works of Itote (1975), who has to a great extent tried to record reasons for the revolt itself, life in the Mau Mau struggle including detention camps and imprisonment, to which he was a victim. His work has been of great help to the researcher because it describes the actual suffering and the bitterness the people had especially with regard to their alienated lands. It has also been of significance because of the way it touches on the issue of tiri in all the Mau Mau aspects.
The concept of tiri held governed all the principles of land. In this review, therefore, the researcher has used land to portray the concept of tiri held by these African scholars.

Barnett and Njama (1966) have given an important analysis as far as the question of land and tiri are concerned. The two authors, however, use, the English word 'soil' for the concept of tiri. The co-author Njama, like Itote, was a Mau Mau General in the Kenya Land Freedom Army at Nyeri. He analyses his feelings as a squatter's child and describes with a lot of bitterness how his father's land was alienated. He argues that,

It is not only the brute fact of landlessness, land hunger and insecurity of tenure which conditioned Kikuyu involvement in the nationalist movement and peasant revolt, it is also the fact that for a people who attach such sacred meaning to the land the areas alienated remained within their field of experience unattainable yet in considerable measure unused by its new owners. (1966, 34).

He refers to the land as Karari's Hill, land which was supposed to be his by birthright, a land which he had inherited from his grandfather whom he was named after, and yet, a land which he could not call his own. It was all alienated and turned into the European's use.
He did not even have a right to step on it. He laments that,

Hadn't land rightfully his, even named Karari's Hill after his own grandfather, been taken from him by the Europeans, and hadn't his own education been cut short, his freedom severely curtailed, his wages made miserably low and his pride and dignity as a man and as a Kikuyu tramped and degraded by the color-bar, by the selfish discriminatory policies and practices of the white man and the government he controlled? (1966, 73).

Such bitterness has acted as a base to motivate the researcher in carrying out this research for Karari shared the same feelings with many other Agikuyu people.

Kenyatta (1938) has been also of great help. Kenyatta is so far the most successful author in analysing the Agikuyu values, systems, beliefs, and practices. He has to a great extent analysed the system of land acquisition and land tenure, the economic life of the people, and the peoples' value for tiri. Kenyatta translates tiri as soil. He refers to the concept held by the people which regulated so many activities in relation to land. Having written his book after the 1932 Kenya Land Commission his main concern was to show the white man how much he had interfered with the customs, beliefs, and practices of the people especially in relation to land, and other Gikuyu customs and practices.
He states that,

... As agriculturists, the Gikuyu depend on the land. It supplies them with the material needs of life through which spiritual and mental contentment is achieved (1938, 21).

Kenyatta shows how much the concept of *tiri* regulated the spiritual and mental fulfilment of the Agikuyu. He shows that it was the interference with the beliefs and practices of the people towards their religious value for *tiri* that was the main reason for revolt. In the later part he says that, "for it is the soil that feeds the child through lifetime, and again after death it is the soil that nurses the spirits of the dead for eternity." (1938, 21). In this he portrays the importance of *tiri* physically and spiritually.

In his other work, Kenyatta (1968) portrays the bitterness held by the people owing to alienation of land. This was especially felt after the crown lands ordinance of 1915 which stated that, "all land previously occupied by native people becomes the property of the crown, and the Africans or natives living thereon became tenants at the will of the crown." (1968, 25). He cited this in his Kapenguria trial. The Africans could not cope with such treatment and they started feeling total dissatisfaction.
He describes their reaction to the Europeans by observing that,

If you woke up one morning and found that somebody had come to your house, and had declared that house belonged to him, you would like to know by what arrangement. Many Africans at that time found that, on land which had been in the possession of their ancestors from time immemorial, they were now working as squatters or labourers (1968, 25).

In conclusion of Kenyatta's works, there is enough evidence that there was a cause for people to react because of this bitterness. He finally observes that,

I would say that the question of land is the cause of the Mau Mau. I think that it is now time for the Government to try and employ positive measures. What is happening with Kikuyu is that they are suffering from land hunger. If that can be satisfied, I am sure the situation will be eased (1968, 29).

Maina-wa-Kinyatti (1980) has recorded songs which portray the people's bitterness on alienated lands. In a song of Waiyaki Maina records that,

We Kenyans must struggle even harder, So that we can get back our land. The land taken from us by the British. Because they never came to this country with land.

In another stanza he records that,

This struggle is the only way to inherit a portion of Kenyanland. That was robbed from us long time ago, when the British invaders deceived our elders (1980, 14).
Yet he records another song that,

Tell the elders to keep quiet,
they let our land be taken
Tell the young to rise up in arms,
So that this land may be returned to
us (1980, 19).

Watene (1973) shares the same feelings with these other political fighters. Like Kinyatti, Watene wrote after the end of the war and he analyses his bitterness by observing that,

This country is our divine heritage,
Our people beg each other for a patch of earth on which to build their sheds, while these visitors take themselves against God and against all reason, tracks of land, chasing and dispossessing those of our people who had lived there for generations. Are you then going to sit and let your own people suffer and toil in the estates? (1973, 12).

In a later paragraph, he narrates the peoples' lamentations by observing that,

We live like slaves in our own land.
We must join hands and fight off this evil, that has beset our land, so that we may win back our soil (1973, 12).

The evidence for the causes of the Mau Mau struggle can be viewed in Watene's report on the people's greetings during the times of the war. All those who had taken the oath for unity would use the words, 'our soil, our soil', for greetings.
Another African sharing the same bitterness with all the above is Ojwando (1972, 29). He argues that,

In addition to these shocking injustices, the African people had also by now started feeling the land hunger brought about by this ungrateful inhuman treatment previously unknown in their land, and had no cause but to revolt against the said government and the white settlers who had brought them all these evils.

He observed that the British had forced themselves into a peoples' land and established their foreign government on peoples' tiri. They therefore confiscated the Africans' lands and turned it to their personal property. He describes this alienation by quoting the amount of land grabbed as follows.

So after 30 years of such a bloody land grabbing by the colonialists, 164,000 of Kenya's 225,000 sq. miles was declared Crown land while 11,000 of the remaining area classified as 'WHITE HIGHLANDS' and sealed off exclusively for white settlers. The African share was the remaining 50,000 sq. miles, of which 2,000 was desert, thus Wananchi, who represented more than 90% of the population in Kenya were left with only less than one third of the mostly poor land among them (1972, 73).

The alienation of lands increased the bitterness of the people until they were restless. The result, according to Ojwando was violence.

A post-colonial author, Ngugi-wa-Thiongo (1967, 12) has recorded the same bitterness in his work.
He observes that, "He (whiteman) had already pulled down the grass-thatched hut and erected a more permanent building. Elders of the land protested." He also describes the process of land grabbing in symbolic language where he observes that,

We went to their Church, Mubia in white robes, opened the Bible. He said: Let us shut our eyes. We did. You know, his remained opened so that he could read the word. When we opened our eyes, our land was gone and the sword of flames stood on guard (1967, 15).

Ngugi used the above description and he concluded by observing a resolution the people had made, that, they would never rest without land.

Finally on the review is the work of Kariuki (1963, 14ff). He observes that,

In the succeeding decades, with an ever increasing population, the shortage of land became chronic and our landless young men found themselves working at miserable wages on enormous farms which their fathers had owned and which were now bringing huge houses and jaguar cars to European strangers.

Such feelings of bitterness expressed by all the above African authors motivated the researcher to carry out some research on the function of tiri and the role it played in the Mau Mau struggle.
CHAPTER TWO

THE AGIKUYU ORIGINS, LAND TENURE, UTILISATION,
AND RITUALS RELATED TO TIRI

This chapter analyses the relationship between the Agikuyu and their land. The Agikuyu lived in the highlands of Central Kenya. They were farmers. Today most of them have migrated to other parts of Kenya and have diversified their economic activities. However, the central highlands remain mostly inhabited by the Agikuyu. From them, oral traditions have been passed over from one generation to the other for centuries. Such stories are important for they are a basis of the relationship between the Agikuyu and their land which is a central theme in this study.

THE AGIKUYU ORIGINS

The Agikuyu have a myth of their origin. This has been recorded by various authors in different ways. Gatheru (1966, 3) has argued that,

According to our legends, Ngai took Kikuyu to the top of Mt. Kenya, among the shining snow-covered peaks, where no man's foot had ever left a print, and showed him the beautiful country for miles around. There were great forests of cedars, bamboos and olive trees, and, between them were vast open spaces where herds of antelopes and gazelles were peacefully grazing. Far, far away to the snow-capped peaks of what is now called Mt. Kilimanjaro.
To the west was the Mountain 'nyandarua' or 'Aberdare' and to the south, the big hill called Kirima-mbogo, the hill of the buffaloes. Ngai said to Kikuyu, "This is yours". Kikuyu lifted up his hands and looked Ngai in the face. In a low, singing voice he offered the prayer of thanks which has been recorded by the great African leader and anthropologist, Jomo Kenyatta.

The above description refers to the highlands of Central Kenya. It shows that the land was God's gift to the Agikuyu. According to this myth, the land was fertile with swift flowing rivers and thick forests. After Gikuyu was shown the beautiful country, he thanked Ngai who in turn appreciated his thanks. He was promised safety, peace, and prosperity in the land he was given. Gatheru continues to say that Ngai commanded Gikuyu to descend from the mountain and to build his homestead in a place surrounded by wild fig trees. Soon afterwards, Ngai gave to Gikuyu a wife, Mumbi, with whom he had nine daughters.

In Kenyatta's (1938, 3) version, the myth is recorded as follows:

According to the tribal legend, we are told that in the beginning of things, when mankind started to populate the earth, the man Gikuyu, the founder of the tribe, was called by the Mogai, (the Divider of the universe), and was given as his share the land with ravines, the rivers, and the forests, the game and all the gifts that the Lord of Nature (mogai) bestowed on mankind.
At the same time Mogai made a big mountain which he called Kere-nyaga; as his resting place. ... after the Mogai had shown the Gikuyu the panorama of the wonderful land, he had been given, he commanded him to descend and establish his homestead on the selected place which he named Mukurwe wa Gathanga.

Before Gikuyu parted with Ngai, he was told to turn to him at any time he was in need. He was told to be making a sacrifice and raise his hands towards Mount Kenya and the Lord of nature would come to his assistance. This was the beginning of religion among the Agikuyu people. They had to turn to Ngai at any time they were in problems, Ngai had to come to their assistance since it was his promise to Gikuyu, their forefather.

Evidence from the Agikuyu elders and several authors reveals that, being primarily an agricultural people, the Agikuyu had been deeply attached to their land, which to them was more than an economic asset. They depended entirely on the land for their livelihood. Gitau (0.1, 1986) repeated several times that, tiri niguo kihumo kia Agikuyu (that is, tiri is the Agikuyu's origin, life, and it meant everything to them). They had a belief that without tiri there would be no life and hence had such a strong attachment to land. Land was also a sign of wealth. A man without a small portion of it was poor and regarded as a muhdoi (one who had nothing).
Tiri was the core of the people's activities and a precious gift bestowed by Ngai. Every Mugikuyu had the duty therefore to protect this precious gift at all times. It was his duty to turn to Ngai when in need, like defending this gift, for Ngai had urged him to do so.

Land played not only a physical role of supporting the community but also a spiritual role of uniting them. Kenyatta says that,

The harmony and stability of the Africans mode of life, in political, social, religious, and economic organisations, was based on the land which was, and still is, the soul of the people. ... the land not only unites the living members of the tribe but also the dead ancestors and the unborn posterity. This fact is obvious, because it is in the ancestral lands that the ancestors lie buried, in the land which they once occupied. In this way the dead are able to keep direct communication with the living, and the sanctions which control behaviour in both the collective life of the tribe and the private lives of its individual members are the approval or disapproval of the ancestral spirits (1938, 213).

Tiri acted as a bond between the people and their ancestors. By pouring libations into it the Agikuyu appeased the ancestors. Tiri in this way acted as a link between the living and the dead members of the community. This link was maintained through communion with the ancestors who lay buried in the ancestral lands.
Social cohesion of the people depended on the smooth relationship between the people and the ancestors and in turn with Ngai. Kenyatta supports this fact by observing that,

Communion with the ancestral spirits is perpetuated through contact with the soil in which the ancestors of the tribe lie buried. The Gikuyu consider the earth as the 'mother' of the tribe, for the reason that the mother bears her burden for about eight or nine noons while the child is in her womb and then for a short period of suckling. But it is the soil that feeds the child through lifetime and again after death it is the soil that nurses the spirits of the dead for eternity. Thus the earth is the most sacred thing above all that dwell in or on it. (1938, 21).

The Agikuyu's survival and protection both physically and spiritually lay in tiri. The religious concept held was used to protect them from natural calamities and disasters which depended on the maintenance of the smooth harmony of the people. This harmony was through a link in tiri to the living and the dead. Tiri was sacred and was used in many rituals. It was not only a physical supporter of the people, but it also acted as a daily revelation of Ngai maintained through contact with tiri. Tiri was regarded as sacred and was used in many religious rituals.
THE AGIKUYU SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE

As tradition places the origin of the people at Mukurwe-wa-Gathanga in Muranga district, (Muriuki, 1973), it would then seem that first movements from that area were along the ridges eastwards towards the plains and westwards towards the Aberdare range. Owing to the fertile land, population increase was rapid and congestion intensified. People started expanding gradually towards the south. At first acquisition was through a gradual process of cutting down the forest, clearing the bush, and establishing new farms.

Land was an integral part of political, economical, social, and religious characteristics of the African society as a whole. The knowledge of land tenure is important as it involves all institutions and life of the community. According to Hornby (1942) tenure is the period, time, or condition of holding and using land. In the Agikuyu community the land was held and used under specific conditions in accordance with the laws of the society. Kenyatta observes that,

In studying the Gikuyu tribal organisation it is necessary to take into consideration land tenure as the most important factor in the social, political, religious and economic life of the tribe. (1938, 21).

To the Agikuyu, land was not just the economic asset of a group for it enshrined their very existence, but it had also religious significance.
Middleton and Kershaw (1972, 48) argue that,

The land is Kikuyu past since it is where the ancestors are and thus stands for the ancestors themselves. It is Kikuyu present because living people are these ancestors and it is Kikuyu future because in them the future (their grandchildren) is already there. Land is a mythological ancestral property. This governs the beliefs and practices of everything that is done for it has to be related.

It was these systems of beliefs that shed light in all that was done.

Traditionally, the rights to land belonged to the man or family which first cleared it. Each member of the family or clan had the right to live, work, and cultivate enough land to support himself. Owing to the importance of land, the boundaries were carefully laid down to indicate ownership or possession. Though the families owned the lands, all the members of the ethnic group referred to the entire land as theirs and had a duty to defend it. Each part of the land had an owner and no one could occupy or cultivate someone's garden without prior arrangements.

After a man acquired the first virgin land he started cultivating it as his family property. If he was not married, then his mother would have the rights of cultivation of the migunda (gardens) of that githaka (a unit of land).
When a man got married, the land became a joint property with his wife or wives in the case of polygamists. Each wife was given a small piece or pieces of gardens in that githaka. As the family increased and the sons of these wives married, the original githaka now became the property of so many people each with full cultivation rights. The family would grow on like this until the households boundaries became blurred by the growth of extended families. As sons continued marrying, they were given portions of their mothers' plots for their wives to cultivate. They set up distinct households of their own which were not far from their parents' homesteads.

Multiplication went on like this until a larger social grouping, the mbari, was formed which would occupy a whole ridge as they went on expanding their farming area. The mbari was based on an original male who acted as the first owner of a certain githaka. All members of any mbari would trace their descent through that original man and would all refer to themselves as members of that mbari. The lineage would be named after that person even after his death and members born thereafter would also associate with it. All these members would refer to their githaka as a joint property for it became a common property of all the descendants of their mbari. However, it should be noted that, despite the fact that they referred to the githaka as a common property belonging to all of them, they continued to cultivate it on an individual household basis.
Within the household the 'houses' of various wives were kept in a large measure distinct, each wife had her own garden, and the goats which she bought with their produce were settled on her 'house' and for her own support in case of widowhood. The gardens of a household were nearly always scattered, either because the householder liked to cultivate on different types of soil, or because his wives liked to have their gardens separate. The owner would also be the right-holder on more than one githaka. Several mbaris were formed through the above process and they owned and occupied different Ithaka. It was the right of every mbari to defend their githaka from invaders and to settle any disputes over the boundaries which were already fixed according to the claims of the mbari founders.

As the people increased on the mbari holding, congestion fragmentations also increased. This made the prosperous members of the mbari to go and acquire land in other places under the same process. This would happen in one of two ways, either a segment of the mbari would split off and move to new unclaimed land elsewhere, or members would acquire rights outside the githaka while still remaining members of the mbari.

All land-rights acquired from another mbari other than sale were seen in the light of four basic principles. These are described by Middleton and Kershaw that,

(a) The distinction between the land itself and the cultivated soil (mugunda) right are given to the latter only: the rights are of use of the land.
(b) Land as a loan-right of redemption is never lost by the males of the mbari (even wives have no more than user rights; although they are the media of inheritance, they do not own the land).

(c) The enjoyment of a tenancy is dependent on use: usually a landowner cannot evict a tenant who is using the loaned land, unless he needs it himself.

(d) The relationship of the Kikuyu and his tenant rests essentially on a basis of friendship, which is more than a mere pretence (1972, 50).

As more mbaris acquired more land, those who were less fortunate became tenants under certain contractual relationship either as ahoi, aguri, athami, aciarwa, or endia ruhiu. These acquired cultivation or building rights on the lands belonging to other members of their mbari. Several mbari units would form a bigger social grouping, the clan.

A muhoi was a man who acquired cultivation rights without payment. This was mainly under friendly basis. He would only plant temporary crops. He could leave when asked to do so or terminate the relationship by ceasing cultivation. The muhoi paid no rent apart from annual tribute of beer and first fruits of his produce to the owner.
A muguri was a person who received the use of land against a loan of livestock, on the condition that redemption could take place at any time. The transaction was initiated by the land-owner, who announced that he wished to borrow stock. A muguri could not lend the land to others. Middleton and Kershaw continue to say that,

The word muguri has come to mean an outright purchaser of land, who then has full and permanent rights over it. But the seller is still supposed to initiate the transaction (1972,50).

A muthami was the one who acquired building rights on another mbari's githaka. Most athami were ahoi or aguri who had also acquired these rights, although the relationships were quite distinct. A muciarwa was a man who had no rights in any githaka and was adopted by a wealthy man. He was given a wife and a piece of land. His children belonged to the adopted mbari and inherited from it. Finally, a mwenda - ruhiu which literally means the man who sells his sword was essentially that of the begetter of children who belonged to the mother's mbari or the mbari of a widow's husband. The land rights which were part of his status were used by the woman with whom he was living, and were not inheritable from him, since the children inherited from their mother's 'houses'.

The mbari land could not be sold without the family's consent especially that of the sons.
The original or senior man in the mbari was a muramati (a trustee, who acted as the guardian of the younger members of his family). His chief duty was to control the allocation and use of the land. He took care of it and settled any quarrels from its members over the boundaries. He therefore acted as the master but did not own extra land from the others. In most cases, the muramati was either the first son of the eldest wife, if alive, or if dead, the first son of the second wife.

The duties of a muramati as put by Middleton and Kershaw were,

The principles on which the allotment is made are those of need and of matri-segmentation: that is to say, the founders of the component families of the mbari inherited their plots of land from their mother 'houses' and any resulting maldistribution is corrected by the muramati when a family is short of land. Land allotted includes arable, grazing, forest and other 'reserved' land (1972, 48).

According to Peter Kariuki (0.1, 10/11/86), "this man also carried the wishes of his father after death." In case a muramati became corrupt, the kiama (village elders selected to settle disputes) would settle the problem. When the problem persisted, a new muramati was appointed.

However, the mbari unit increased very rapidly until all the members could not live together in a group where blood relations were observed.
In such cases the only bond left between a group was thus the muhiriga (clan). This knitted together all distant relatives in different mbari units and facilitated the feeling of rendering mutual support in all matters of interest and the welfare of the clan.

The Kiama (council of elders) had two main roles with regard to land. They rested the control of public land and utilities. They officiated when there was need for arbitration between mbari over land matters. It could also arbitrate in inter-mbari land disputes. They exchanged land with a public utility found on it for another piece, and acted as witnesses in the ceremony of marking the boundary at the sale of land and at other land transactions. The kiama could also intervene in the internal affairs of a mbari and acted as final sanction behind the decisions of the muramati.

A member of the mbari or a tenant who disobeyed an order of the muramati had to be arraigned before the kiama. The kiama also handled a large number of land cases especially dealing with such matters as inheritance, compensation and tenancies. Its judgement on such matters was final and nobody could disagree with them. The elders were selected from various age-groups mainly the most senior. They were highly respected and honoured.

As the mbari units increased in the ancestral district, movement increased in all directions. These were facilitated by various reasons,
Some of the members of the mbari units moved because there was no room for more people. They followed the valleys and the forests for more virgin lands. Others moved because they were highly prosperous and feared to be bewitched by their neighbours. They abandoned their original farms and moved to new ones where they felt free from witchcraft. However, other members just moved in order to explore the land.

All along, acquisition of the land was through clearing of the virgin lands where an individual could clear as much land as possible. Although the movements from the ancestral land were in all directions, the movement south of the Chania river, which is the area of our main concern, was a controversial issue during the Mau Mau struggle especially among the white settlers. However, it should be noted that, most of the arguments raised by the settlers were meant to justify colonialism and land alienation in Kiambu at that time. The Europeans held a claim that the Agikuyu of Kiambu had grabbed land from its former occupants, the Ndurubu, and therefore, they were also justified in grabbing it. Leakey (1903, 34) says that,

There is no record that the Ndurubu hunting tribe was ever in effective occupation of that part of the country, and the only previous inhabitants seem to have been a tribe called by the Kikuyu, Gumba, or maitho aciana.
This statement is reinforced by Muriuki (1973, 1) when he argues that,

There were no Ndurubu here: the nearest were on the Aberdares. The Gumba were Kikuyu and were early ancestors. It was the name of the earliest 49 year age grade. Our people were mainly cultivators but some used to hunt. Those who hunted were called Aathi, but were not a separate people.

According to Waruhiu (1972, 1) whose information has been collaborated by George Kahindi (0.1, 3-3-87) and James Ngugi (0.1, 13-2-87), the Ndurubu relations in Kiambu is an important aspect to be discussed. They all argued that the facts were distorted by Europeans who never recognised the nature of Agikuyu occupation of Kiambu. Majority of the settlers concluded that the Agikuyu had acquired their lands in Kiambu largely by force and chicanery. It was maintained that the Kikuyu were borrowing the concept of individual land ownership from the Europeans in order to secure their lands from alienation. Waruhiu (1972, 1) argues that "the Kikuyu of Kiambu claim to have been preceded into the region by Gumba, Aathi, and Ndurubu." While it is clear that the Gumba were a distinct ethnic group, the identity of the Aathi and the Ndurubu is not clear. To the Agikuyu, the two names were synonymous. The Agikuyu of Kiambu have claimed that they bought their lands from the Aathi and the Ndurubu who were their immediate predecessors (Ayub Kanja 0.1, 12-1-87),
Moreover, the elders interviewed claimed that the purchases were irredeemable sales to validate their claims to the land. Probably there were unfair land dealings between the Agikuyu and the original owners of Kiambu, but the researcher did not come across such claims. From Murang'a, the Agikuyu squeezed themselves into the fringes of the forests where they cleared them and began cultivating. The mode of land acquisition before the Agikuyu reached Kiambu was not by purchase but by first hunting rights or by clearing the land referred to as kuuna ithaka. In the movement towards Kiambu, this mode of land acquisition seems to have persisted as far as Gatundu where the Agikuyu began purchasing land. Waruhiu (1972, 10) clarifies this by observing that,

There was a period of dual economy in Gikuyuland, where some people were gatherers and hunters and agriculturists at the same time. They would engage in hunting then they would find that the soil was fertile and good for cultivating. They would then clear the bush and cultivate thus stopping their hunting mode of life.

Then it seems that whenever a Mugikuyu wanted land for cultivation he went to the Ndurubu and fulfilled certain rights. These included some goats and maaha offer. (items for compensation). He got in return a small piece of land to cultivate. Waruhiu, (1972, 18) continues to say that, "the generation of the individuals who migrated into Kabete was Maina around 1862 - 1897".
However, George Kahindi (0,1, 3-3-87) and James Ngugi (0,1, 13-2-87) observe that, "many of the individuals who migrated into Githunguri were of Njoroge, Wanyoike, and Muiruri initiation sets estimated to be around 1870". The most important factor is to understand the land transactions between the Agikuyu and the Ndurubu in Kiambu.

Before any Mugikuyu could acquire land from the Ndurubu, he had to fulfill certain demands. He had first to pay thirty goats which he would keep in his homestead and the Ndurubu would be coming for them any time he needed them. According to Ayub Kanja (0,1, 13-2-87), these goats were for food purposes to the Ndurubu. Kanja continued to say that the goats were followed by the maaha offer (items for compensation). These also acted as signs to show that the land had been transferred from the Ndurubu to the Mugikuyu.

The maaha included five items namely mwati wa Njegeni (one she-goat), Kihembe kia uuki (a rounded container for honey equivalent to a debe), ruhiu (one sword), ruoro (a branding iron), and ithanwa (an axe). Each item had its own significance.

When a Ndurubu was showing the Mugikuyu the boundaries of his githaka, he would often be obliged to walk through patches of a stinging plant (njegeni), and would be stung. He would therefore be given the she-goat for compensation for the pain he had to endure while pointing out the boundaries.
Since the Ndurubu were bee keepers, when they sold the land to the Agikuyu, they would no longer be able to hang their bee-hives on the trees that existed on that land. Owing to this loss, they were given a bag of honey for compensation. The boundaries of land bought by the Mugikuyu were marked by trees. The Ndurubu would make marks on the bark with a sword and for this purpose he would not use his own implements. The Mugikuyu had thus to give him a sword. He also gave him an iron brand for marking the bee-hives which belonged to him. No Ndurubu would hang his bee-hives on the trees which were not in his own githaka. When a Mugikuyu bought such land, he became the owner of the trees on it. The Mugikuyu had therefore to give the branding iron as a token for the Ndurubu’s lost bee-hives. Finally, the axe signified that in future, the Mugikuyu would be felling trees on the Ndurubu’s land and hence the Ndurubu would be obliged to go to another part of the forest to fell trees there. In addition to the maaha, the Mugikuyu gave the Ndurubu one fat ram (ngoima) for every ten goats paid for the land. After this process, the boundaries of the githaka were permanently marked out. The Mugikuyu gave another fat ram referred to as Ngoima ya matooka for marking the boundaries. The Ndurubu sprinkled some taatha (entrails) of the Ngoima ya matooka on all the boundaries and the whole process was over. The land was permanently transferred from the Ndurubu to the Mugikuyu.
There was another process of land acquisition whereby a Ndurubu gave land to a family in compensation for a member he had seriously injured or killed while hunting. Since the Ndurubu used land as their currency, they would exchange it for any offence to the Agikuyu or even for food-stuffs. They would also exchange it for bride-price but in most cases it was exchanged with goats for meat. All elders interviewed agreed that, the Agikuyu respected this process of land transactions and they never grabbed any land from the Ndurubu, as the Europeans claimed.

The sacred relationship between the Agikuyu and their land prevented the use of violence in getting it. They feared taking any land by force because shedding blood of clansmen would annoy the ancestors. They strongly held the belief that it was to Gikuyu and Mumbi that Ngai gave the land for all their children to use. Ngai had not only given the Agikuyu land to use but had also given everybody else his share. They found no reason for grabbing anybody else's land. However, movement into Kiambu was gradual for they were expanding and not migrating. All the land belonged to the clan and though unoccupied, it was all under ownership of either individuals or mbari. To the Agikuyu, land was like a 'mother' and they had never considered themselves free to abandon it. Fighting for land which was not theirs, or abandoning the one they were given by Ngai was strongly against the fundamental article of their ethnic faith.
Tiri was the most essential basic need of man for from it all life thrived. Owing to this, the Agikuyu system of land tenure was carefully set and the boundaries were laid down through a system of rituals. The Europeans had a claim that the Agikuyu of Kiambu did not own the lands they (Europeans) alienated. However, it has been observed that, the method of land acquisition in Kiambu was very distinct (Waruhiu 1972, 2). There were a series of rituals and ceremonies undertaken before any land could be transferred from a Ndurubu to a Mugikuyu. The Agikuyu never grabbed land from the Ndurubu as has been observed above.

On the contrary, the Europeans acquired the land in Gikuyu country through treachery and false acts. They tricked the chiefs and acquired large extents of lands. In other areas, they forcibly evicted the owners and occupied those lands. Therefore, the claim that the Agikuyu did not own the land alienated by the Europeans was false. The Agikuyu, unlike the Europeans, never took any land from the Ndurubu through any force.

LAND UTILISATION

Owing to the importance attached to tiri, the Agikuyu tried their best to utilise it. There were mainly two basic methods applied in utilisation. First there was the physical utilisation which included farming, building, blacksmithery, and pottery.
The second form of utility was spiritual where *tiri* was used as a form of medicine, a means of appeasing the dead, and a daily revelation of *Ngai* in rituals and oaths. The physical form of utilisation was also of two types. First there was the land that was under individual and secondly, there were the communal lands such as grazing fields, salt licks, and social grounds. Under the individual ownership, a variety of crops were grown for the welfare of everybody. Land was the foundation rock on which the Agikuyu economy stood.

It was the only effective mode of production that the people had and this made the Agikuyu desire to cultivate their gardens in the best way. A family group with land to cultivate was considered in the Agikuyu community as a self-supporting economic unit. The group worked harmoniously in a communal spirit to satisfy their immediate needs, and with a desire to accumulate wealth in the form of livestock. These could only be acquired through effective tillage of the *tiri*.

Muriuki (1974, 33) has classified the crops grown by the Agikuyu by observing that,

The main traditional food crops were bananas, sweet potatoes, yams, arum lily, various types of *mwere* (finger or bulrush millet), and *muhia* (sorghum), *Njahi*, (Dolichos lablab), and *Njugu* (cowpeas). Maize, which now constitutes the staple food, was introduced only probably towards the end of the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.
Some of these crops like Njahí were very important for they formed the main diet for the nursing mothers. There were certain wild plants which provided food regularly in the form of their green leaves. Lucy Wanjiku (0.1, 20-1-87) classified these by observing that,

All green leaves so used were called Nyeni. Such were terere, togotia, and thabai. Crops grown for economic purposes included mbariki (castor oil), mbaki (tobacco), nyeki ya kigutu (thatching grass), ruungu (ground plant), and muhukura (modia white).

Cattle were also kept under the individual land utilisation, but only by a few wealthy people. Goats and sheep were kept by almost all. Goats were the currency for the people and they played an important role in the community. They were slaughtered during ceremonies and sacrifices. They were also used for providing clothing and bedding in the form of skins as well as paying bride-price. The spirit the people held in cultivation and the good conditions provided by the virgin lands, all gave the people high yields and hence much encouragement in tilling the tiri.

Under the communal land utilisation, there were the common lands which were found along every ridge. These were set apart for the welfare of everybody. They included the grazing fields, salt licks, and forests.
In the grazing fields, livestock of all families grazed together where they were looked after communally by boys from all families who had the livestock. They would be taken here very early in the morning and would graze until the evenings. Sometimes they were looked after in turns. The owners of such lands would be compensated for with other lands. The livestock would at certain times be taken to the salt-licks which were far away from the grazing fields. Kenyatta has observed that,

Whenever a salt-lick or a mineral spring was found on any land, whether cultivated or uncultivated, the owner could not prevent other people in that ridge from sending their livestock to such places (1938, 36).

If the owner was a poor man, he would be compensated for, but if he was rich, he would just give it free. There were also the woodlands reserved for building materials and firewood. Building materials such as wood, thatching grass, and clay would be obtained from these common lands. In building the houses, tiri would be mixed with water to form clay and this would be used for the walls. The roofs were thatched with grass grown purposely for that. Tiri was also mixed with clay to mould pots which were burnt and left to dry. The Agikuyu did not have any other form of cooking pot. They used the riumba (clay) to make them.

The blacksmiths were also using tiri in their work. They would bake sand at a very high temperature.
This process was referred to by the Agikuyu as Kuhura muthanga (baking sand). The mixture obtained after baking was referred to as a gikama. They made knives, spears, and swords for both fighting and cultivating. The work of the blacksmiths was regarded with honour and respect for it was only found among some families. It was an inherited job. They were believed to be more powerful than the ordinary workers. Owing to this respect attached to them, they were well paid with goats because it was believed that they would cause misfortunes to those who refused to pay them.

The sacred grounds were also included in the communal lands. These were around the migumo trees where people gathered for sacrifices and offerings. All prayers, rituals, and other religious ceremonies were conducted under these trees. The owners of such grounds protected them from people who might cultivate or graze around them. They were highly taken care of and everybody was bound to respect them.

RELIGIOUS RITUALS RELATED TO TIRI

There were several rituals that were related to tiri among the Agikuyu. Some of these used it directly while others used it indirectly. The rituals that used tiri directly were at birth of a child, circumcision, marriage, death and during oath ceremonies. The ritual that used tiri indirectly was during harvesting time which will be discussed later.
The direct rituals related to *tiri* included the ceremonies that marked the rites of passage of an individual from the time of birth to death. The life of a child in the Agikuyu community was important and marked by a process of ceremonies. Mbiti (1969, 110) observes that, "in African societies, the birth of a child is a process which begins long before the child's arrival in this world and continues long thereafter." Since the continuity of life was very important, a child's life was very important. A child had to grow from childhood and enter adulthood physically, socially and spiritually.

At the birth of a child *tiri* played a double role. At first the mid-wife buried the placenta in the mother's garden. Peter Kariuki (0.1, 12-12-86) said that, this ritual signified that *tiri* a symbol of fertility, was going to help the mother's fertility to continue. By burying the placenta, the continuity of life would be ensured, which was important. Children were not only valued as an economic asset, for they helped their parents in the farms, but they were also a sign of prosperity and wealth.

The burying of the placenta was also believed to unite the child with the living-dead who lay covered by *tiri*. It signified that the child belonged to both physical and spiritual world. In this way, *tiri* acted as a spiritual bridge to link the physical and the spiritual world.
After five days a child was to undergo the ceremony referred to as *kumagaria mwana* (literally meaning to escort the child out). In this, as observed by Elija Mimi (0.1, 10-2-87), the midwife took the child and the mother to the garden. They got a sweet potato and laid the child on the tiri. Tiri was mixed with saliva and smeared on the child's palms, hands, feet, and lips. This signified the future work of that child, that is tilling the tiri. The child was also bound with the ancestors who lay buried under the tiri. The midwife or assistant of the mother during the times she was nursing the baby, (a period of two weeks), was restricted from having sex with her husband otherwise, the child would be affected. In case she did violate the regulation, some handful of tiri was taken from the entrance of her bed and mixed with ash. The mixture was dampened by saliva and she was made to step over them. Tiri, a symbol of life was used to restore life to the child. Without that ceremony the child's life was in danger.

During circumcision ceremonies, tiri also played a major role. The initiates were supposed to sit on the tiri when being circumcised. These were in the special grounds reserved for the purpose. Their blood was let to trickle down for the vital union with the ancestors, whose blessings were believed to hasten healing. Blood among the Kikuyu was used as a symbol of life. Goat's blood was used in many rituals. A goat was termed as a ritual animal and was used in most ceremonies. When the blood was trickling down and soaking the tiri, the candidate felt courage and relief as claimed by Ayub Kanja (0.1, 21-2-87).
He was united with the ancestors who had undergone the process long ago and he was sure of healing quickly. It was through tiri that the healing powers passed on from the ancestors to the initiates. It should also be pointed out that, the candidates needed a lot of food after circumcision which hastened healing. All this food was obtained from tiri. It was grown purposely for the occasion due to its richness in proteins. The most common food for that purpose was njugu. They were also given a lot of porridge and soup which all came indirectly from the tiri. The soup was obtained from the many goats that were slaughtered for the initiates.

The direct use of tiri during circumcision was in the ritual performed after eight days. This was referred to as kuhakwo ira (literally meaning to paint with a white chalk). It actually involved the ceremonial reception of the initiate to his father's home from the home where the initiates stayed communally after circumcision. Each initiate was awaited at home by his father and another elder referred to as mutonyi (this man had to be the closest friend of the initiate's father). The two men stood at the entrance of the homestead to welcome the initiate. They awaited him with a mixture of taatha, blood, and tiri, which were put on a dry banana leaf. They helped the initiate to step over it and they repeated it again at the entrance of his mother's hut.
This ceremony was meant to welcome the child back home from the githunu (communal house for initiates). It was believed that, in the githunu, somebody might have bewitched the initiate, and hence would not heal quickly. Owing to this, the contents of the mixture, tiri, taatha, (stomach contents of a goat), and blood, were believed to help rid the initiate off any danger. Tiri and blood were to restore the life of the initiate.

Tiri was also significant at marriage times. The newly wedded wife stayed indoors for eight days during which she was lamenting over her departure from friends and relatives, referred to as the kiriro period. This literally meant crying. After the period, she would be joined by her husband for another four days, and hence she would be ready for the ceremony. She was given an elderly woman who was to take her to the garden. She would pick a sweet potato which she would share with her husband and other elderly women. This ceremony was meant to make the bride a responsible woman who had to rely on the tiri for her family's livelihood. The introduction to tilling the land was made ceremonious in order to make the woman have a positive attitude towards work. She had to be ready to work hard for a good wife was judged by the produce of her garden. It was the farm produce that enabled her to establish her home and to acquire as many goats as possible for the family rituals.
During beer parties which were mainly at marriage times, *tiri* was used as an item to appease the ancestors with. Beer was present at all the Agikuyu rituals and it was brewed with care in case evil spirits interfered with it and spoilt the rituals. Evil spirits were believed to come from dead relatives who were annoyed by the living people. Everything possible was done to maintain the good relationship between the people and the members of the community.

When the beer was being made, a mixture of *tiri* and ash was sprinkled all over the cooking pot. A little amount of beer was poured around the fire-stones, three times starting from the right side of the house to the left. In doing this, the leader would say that, *Njohi ino ni yanyu, nyuai* (this beer is yours, drink it). The spirits of the dead were invited to have a share and to be the first to taste it before anyone else. Some beer was poured to the *tiri* everytime before a drinking ceremony. This was believed to be the share for the dead. It was done to ward off any danger which was believed to be caused by angry ancestors. In this act, *tiri* acted again as a link between the world of the living and that one of the dead. There was another ceremony where *tiri* was used referred to as *Koirugo* for laying out boundaries which will be discussed later under the section of oaths.
In all the above rituals, tiri was either used as a bond to unite the living world with the world of the dead, or as a symbol of life. There were other practices whereby tiri, a symbol of life was used as medicine as will be discussed in the following pages. Some of these diseases were believed to have been caused by evil or jealous people. These diseases were hondo, gita, and githemengu. Githemengu was a kind of disease that affected people with certain distinct personal qualities like beauty, masculinity, dancing traits, hunting, and others. If, for example, somebody had an admirable trait and happened to meet a person with such jealousy, he would affect him by uttering such words like, kai wi muthaka i. (Hi, you are beatiful) or by just keeping quiet and admiring the trait. The victim would either fall sick or meet a certain disaster. In case that happened, a handful of tiri was taken from the cross-roads. It was mixed with saliva and smeared on the victim's major joints of the body. This was to ensure healing.

Hondo, was less serious than githemengu. This could happen even when one had no distinct trait. A victim would be admired by a person reputable for it and hence be affected. However, hondo was neither very common nor very serious. In treating it, a handful of tiri was obtained from any place as long as it was clean and not necessarily at the cross-roads. It was mixed with the waste of a hedge-hog and then was smeared on the victim.
Gladys Njeri (0.1, 20-1-87) confessed that hondo was rare and has seen it only once. Gita too was believed to affect someone, when a relative especially an older one complained about somebody. This was mainly between the old parents and their children who were neglecting them at old age. The treatment was like that of hondo, but in this, tiri had to be blessed by the parents and got from their garden.

Likewise, tiri was used in the treatment of measles. This tiri was obtained from that special part of the earth which was brought to the surface by a mole. It was got and crushed together with managu and terere (edible leaves). Water was added to the mixture which was smeared on the child's body on a sunny day. The child was left in this condition overnight after which the smear dried and fell off. The child was washed and smeared with castor-oil or sheep's fat. In this, tiri was used to help and fasten recovery.

The Agikuyu oaths also utilised tiri directly. An oath is a solemn undertaking which is used to declare that something is true. It requires swearing to a solemn promise which gives one's loyalty and allegiance to something agreed upon. An oath was taken among the Agikuyu as a means of administering justice. This was mainly done when an agreement between two people or parties was needed. It was taken before a council of selected elders referred to as the Kiama. Every oath was meant to bind the parties together.
According to Dedan Njoroge (0.1, 24-11-86), "Oathing was the oldest form of administering justice among the people who had no records of written law." It was as old as the society and was reached when all other forms of settling differences failed. Details of such oaths have been given by Githige (1978). The Agikuyu took the oaths that utilised tiri very seriously as observed by Kinyatti (1980, 11) where he says that, "It is not unusual to see a Mugikuyu swearing with the soil as the most sacred and everlasting form of swearing." In collaboration to this, Kenyatta (1938, 21) observes that, "an everlasting oath is to swear with the soil" (Koirugo).

There were oaths for settling land disputes. These were performed when either two people or two clans had a dispute over a certain boundary. The disputants would select two goats which were killed by elders administering the oaths. Goats were mainly used in oaths because of their availability in Kikuyu land. They were ritual animals. Every type of oath utilised different kind of meat from the goat. The difference mainly depended on the nature and purpose of the oath. This will be clear in various types of oaths described in this study.

A handful of tiri was picked from each garden under dispute and mixed with blood of a slaughtered goat. Each disputant was made to sip the mixture and in doing this, he invoked a curse on himself. Various respondents retorted that this form of a curse was very dangerous and everything possible was done to avoid it.
The words used for swearing as Peter Karauni (0.1, 18-1-87) observed were that,

Angikorwo mugunda wakwa ndwakinyite haha, ndorio ni muuma uyu. Angikorwo baba na thoguo matiagayaniire mugunda uyu haha, ndorio ni muuma uyu. Elders: Mundu uria urahenania, arorio ni muuma uyu. Arorio ni tiri uyu. (That is, "If my land did not extend up to here, may this oath consume me. If my father and your father had not set the boundary here, may this oath consume me. The elders would also invoke a curse by saying that, "Whoever is telling lies may be consumed by this oath. May he be consumed by this tiri.")

Dedan Njoroge (0.1, 24-11-86) claimed that he witnessed such oaths rarely. They were very serious for they used to wipe out large families who were claiming non-existent boundaries. Kenyatta refers to this oath as Koirugo and claims that it was everlasting.

Swearing using tiri was very serious. It was on it that all form of life depended. James Ngugi (0.1, 13-2-87) and Ayub Kanja (01, 11-11-86) said that,

Most of the disasters in such situations either affected one's livestock which would all die, crops in the fields would wither, parts of the body would be affected and sometimes children would die frequently.

Such disasters were the worst any Mugikuyu could undergo. The oath affected especially those things directly related to tiri like livestock, crops, or the body parts used for cultivation. Somebody feared such a disaster because all these things were important in life.

In the ritual that used tiri indirectly, elders gathered when the crops were ready for harvest. They would offer a sacrifice for thanksgiving to Ngai. There was no one who would harvest anything from the farms before this ceremony. Doing so was a sign of ingratitude to Ngai who had granted the people the heavy harvest. The selected elders slaughtered a goat of one colour.
This time they necessarily need not be from the ethaga clan as in other ceremonies. The goat would be slaughtered and its stomach contents mixed with tiri and sprinkled to the gardens, granaries, and cooking pots. Prayers of thanksgiving were also offered.

There were various functions of this ceremony. The first reason was to express gratitude for the harvest. This ensured the people a peaceful enjoyment of the harvest. This was done by the elder who sprinkled the mixture by uttering words of blessings. Secondly the ritual was meant to protect the people from evil spirits. Evil spirits were feared to interfere with the people when harvesting. Finally the ritual was intended to give Ngai the best of the harvest. This was done to appease Ngai to ensure the people future harvests. In this ceremony, tiri symbolised fertility and in using it, the people beseeched Ngai to grant them more harvests. Everything came from tiri and it was only through tilling it that such a harvest would be obtained.

Tiri being a sacred gift from Ngai also symbolised his presence among the people. It acted as a daily manifestation of Ngai especially through the fact that, all life depended on it. It was through land that Ngai had revealed his might through the creation of huge rivers, large mountains, and forests. It was also through it that he proclaimed his annoyance through such calamities like droughts and famines.
Land also acted as a blanket for the departed ancestors for it was through **tiri** that they were honoured and respected and they could only be approached by libations on it.

Owing to all these, **tiri** was held with fear and honour. The Agikuyu feared swearing falsely using it. This made the early oath administrators to take **tiri** in the oaths as a significant thing. In such an oath, when one invoked a curse on himself through swearing using **tiri**, or the products obtained from the garden, then it became very serious and everlasting because the people could not do without it both physically and spiritually. Without **tiri**, the link that bound the unborn, living, dead was broken and this meant death. Ayub Kanja (0.1, 13-2-87) said that, "when **Ngai**, ancestors, food, water and goats, were against one, then death was obvious." All these items were seen and symbolised by **tiri**. Since the Agikuyu were aware of this, they avoided such violation as much as possible. All other means of settling disputes were first tried before an oath could be administered.

The role that **tiri** played among the Agikuyu and the significance they attached to land was very important. This chapter has revealed that the supreme issue of life to the African was his land which he valued greatly. It was his greatest asset. It was the heritage they had received from their fore-fathers and which was given to them by **Ngai**.
It was in land that their survival and salvation lay. *Tiri*, the tangible part of the land played an important role in the people's daily activities as has been analysed above. It was a part of one's life in all the activities that a person was associated with from birth to death. Kenyatta (1938, 21) collaborating this says that, "... it is the soil that feeds the child through lifetime; and again after death it is the soil that nurses the spirits of the dead for eternity." *Tiri* therefore, could not be separated from the people's lives.

The Agikuyu attached great importance to land and referred to *tiri* as sacred. The relationship between man and land was set by *Ngai* when he showed Gikuyu the land and gave it to him. The relationship was held by Agikuyu as sacred for it assured the Agikuyu a smooth running of the community and a continuity of life both physically and spiritually. To the Agikuyu, land acted as a daily revelation of *Ngai* in the rituals that the people performed using *tiri*.

The Europeans came into Gikuyuland and interfered with these beliefs held about *tiri*. They interfered with the customs, rituals, and practices that the people held towards *tiri*. It is assumed that such interruptions affected the people and led them to react violently against them. With the view that the Agikuyu held towards *tiri*, they had never considered themselves free to abandon such customs or their land.
Ngai had given them the land and the right to carry on all their daily practices on it, physically, socially, and most important spiritually. This will be discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

THE EUROPEAN INTERRUPTION ON BELIEFS

AND PRACTICES RELATED TO TIRI

Land had always been critically important to the well-being of the Agikuyu. They had maintained a great emotional and psychological investment in tiri because it represented their principal link with the ancestors as well as being the most important and tangible liaison of the ethnic group. It was the depth of this attachment that caused land to rival political independence as the prime focus of the African nationalism in Kenya. Land remained the Agikuyu's principal physical supporter for everybody obtained their livelihood directly or indirectly from it as has been observed in the previous chapter. It has also been observed that it was through tiri that the Agikuyu obtained spiritual satisfaction.

The coming of the Europeans in Gikuyuland interrupted the economical, physical, social, and spiritual set-up of the Agikuyu. The Europeans violated all the customs. The Agikuyu were the first ethnic group in Kenya to experience a major agricultural revolution propelling them into the modern cash-crops economy, just as they had the first and greatest exposure to European civilization. However, there were certain positive aspects of the new "civilization" brought by the Europeans. Some of the them were useful to the Agikuyu especially after independence.
Nevertheless this did not measure up the negative repercussions that resulted from the arrival of the Europeans. The most painful and common repercussion was the question of land along with all those customs and practices that have been part and parcel of the Agikuyu from time immemorial.

The coming of the Europeans in Gikuyuland was foreseen by a Gikuyu seer, Mugo wa Kibiru. In Kenyatta (1938, 42) it is recorded that,

In a low and sad voice he said that strangers would come to Gikuyuland from out of the big water, the colour of their body would resemble that of a small light-coloured frog (kiengere) which lives in water, their dress would resemble the wings of butterflies; that these strangers would carry magical sticks which would produce fire.

Mugo continued to warn the people and he spoke of the Kenya-Uganda railway, which he referred to in prophetic terms, as the iron snake with as many legs as a centipede that would precede the coming of the strangers. He also spoke of a great famine that would precede the strangers. However, the greatest warning he gave the people that later caused confusion among them was that, they should not take arms against the coming strangers. The result of such direct confrontation, he said, would be an annihilation of the people by the strangers. Mugo had foreseen that the Europeans would have guns that he referred to as 'magic sticks which spit deadly fire.' The guns would be so strong as compared to the bows and arrows the Agikuyu had.
Mugo therefore advised the Agikuyu that the best thing would be to establish friendly relations with the coming strangers because the warriors' attempt to fight the Europeans would be futile.

He warned the people to treat the Europeans with courtesy mixed with suspicion and that the Agikuyu should be careful not to bring the strangers so close to their own homesteads. Mugo described the strangers as people full of evil deeds who would not hesitate to covet the Gikuyu homeland and finally take it.

The Agikuyu believed in prophecy and this was a disturbing prediction to them. They did not know what to do. The most disturbing part was the warning that no one should take arms against the strangers. The warriors thought that the coming strangers would have been fought immediately with the bows and arrows they possessed. The prophet had foreseen how useless such a fight would have been for bows and arrows could not be equivalent to guns. The people were certain that the words of the seer would be fulfilled and they had no alternative other than sit down and wait for the coming disaster.

According to Leakey (1953), around 1980, the predicted danger had already began to manifest itself among the people. Four major disasters had already ravaged the country in this interval. These were the great small-pox epidemic, the rinderpest outbreak, an intense drought with consequent famine, and a devastating locust invasion. In a place where agriculture was the only mode of production, this was a serious disaster.
After this the first caravans had already started to pass through the southern district of Gikuyuland on their way to Uganda. Majority of them were surveying their future residential homes. At first, they were harmless for they seemed to be in a hurry passing to and fro East to West.

The Agikuyu were misled by the Europeans for they seemed not to settle. They held a belief that, *mugenini rui* (a visitor is like a flowing river) who would just come and go. This meant that any visitor would be treated nicely for he was just passing by. In the Gikuyu community a visitor was warmly welcomed for they believed that he brought blessings. He was first given food and a place to rest. The hospitality was even extended to giving a poor visitor a place to cultivate under certain rights of tenure as a *muhoi*, *muthami* or *muciarwa* which were discussed in the previous chapter. The Agikuyu also sympathised with the wandering strangers who seemed lonely and in need of friends. They held the belief that these wanderers would return to their lands owing to loneliness. The Agikuyu perceived one's motherland as an integral part of his life and so they did not imagine anybody abandoning it. They also held a belief that *Ngai*, when giving them their share of land, had also given everybody else land; which meant to him just as much as it meant to the Agikuyu. Owing to all these beliefs, they allowed the strangers to have temporary dwellings made of tents. They considered them as *ahoi*. 
According to the Agikuyu customs, a muhoi was a man who made application to and got permission from the Githaka owners to cultivate a piece of garden on their land. He had to meet some conditions which did not guarantee him any land rights. He only had cultivation rights. In ratification of such agreement a muhoi provided the owners with a beer drink or its equivalent. This was in no way considered as deposit or payment and was never refunded. The muhoi, by mutual consent, often made the beer drink an annual affair but this was not necessary to his rights of cultivation and was purely voluntary.

However, no muhoi could be evicted from his garden except under certain conditions. These conditions were all laid down by the muramati of the githaka with consent of the owners and the council of elders.

The Agikuyu had assumed that the Europeans had possessed their land under any of these rights of tenure and mostly under the ahoi system of acquisition. They therefore thought that, like all other ahoi, the Europeans would evacuate the land and return to their own lands. The Agikuyu also assumed that once they wanted back their lands, the Europeans would evacuate them and maybe claim only standing crops. The Europeans, on the other hand, had taken the advantage of the hospitality of the people. They had agreed on taking temporary lands meanwhile looking for more permanent dwellings.
They therefore started building stations and forts like Dagoretti and Fort Smith where they started tricking African chiefs with minor peanuts and false treaties.

The Europeans also took the advantage of the disasters that had ravaged the country before them. As Juvenilis Gitau (0.1, 1-11-86) observed, "they came and claimed that, they could relieve the Agikuyu from famine by teaching them how to grow better crops". Gikuyuland looked fertile and suitable for any crops. The Europeans had been attracted by the fertile good lands. They convinced the Agikuyu that they would be able to rear fewer number of goats and cows which would bring more and better yields. The Agikuyu were ignorant to any good methods of farming. The Europeans therefore assumed that they had the duty to introduce their good farming methods to save the poor African from perishing owing to overstocking, overcropping, famine, and poverty.

The Europeans considered the African peasant agriculture as a failure which could not cater for the increasing population. The African traditional forms of farming were considered poor despite the fact that by around 1890, the Africans were feeding the Europeans (Leakey 1952). If the Agikuyu agriculture was poor, then they would not have fed the caravans en route to Uganda. The Europeans concluded that the African system of land tenure was not offering them capital essential for improved agriculture.
Therefore, as the Electors Union (1952, iii) puts it,

> It was a fallacy that persisted among the Africans that it is every man's birthright to have a share in, or earn directly a living from the land a right no civilised state was able to grant.

The Europeans found the Africans as the entire cause of their own problems and not themselves. They reasoned out that they had a mission to accomplish, that of guiding and saving the poor African from perishing. They found the solution in the re-organisation of the African social structure, farming, and the system of land tenure. This was to include capital and co-operative methods which could not be applied on the African's farms. They had to be transformed. They concluded that as put by the Electors Union (1952, iii), "... an ignorant man and his wife with a hoe are a totally inadequate foundation for an enlightened state of society". The Europeans found the Africans' methods of farming very poor and so were ready to improve them. They therefore possessed the Agikuyu lands and started intensifying the agriculture. In all, they were trying to look for a reason of justifying their personal claims for alienating the Agikuyus' lands.
LAND ALIENATION

The Europeans had to justify their claims of land occupation in Kenya. According to them, if Africa was to be civilised, it had to be effected by commerce, which, once established would open the way for civilization. At first, the interior of Kenya was not known to them. It was a wilderness considered by the Europeans to be of little value except as a necessary route to Uganda. With the completion of the railway the centre of European government and commercial activity shifted from Mombasa to Nairobi. This opened the Kenya highlands where Gikuyuland is situated to a number of Indian traders and European settlers.

The central Kenya highlands had suddenly become a valuable place for the Europeans. They wanted money to pay for the railway and so they initiated the policy of white settlement. Settlement schemes were haphazardly encouraged by the foreign office with an aim to open way for economic development. Sorrenson (1968, 69) argues that,

In 1903 there were 117 European applications for land and in the following year, 380. Most applications were in agricultural land in the Kikuyu country, near Nairobi or for pastoral land in the Rift Valley: a few were for land as far afield as the Laikipia and Uasin Gishu plateaux.
As no land was surveyed for allotment when the settlers arrived, they went out to select their own. In doing this, they ignored the African rights to land.

According to the Europeans, Gikuyuland was untouched and sparsely inhabited. Most of the settlers were attracted by the railway for they could market their produce more easily. Some of the Europeans were missionaries. They were seen by the government as, "... living examples to the benighted Africans of the Christian life and Christian civilization (1968, 39). Other settlers came from South Africa. Sorrenson (1968, 65) says that,

The migration from South Africa was a minor repercussion of the Anglo-Boer war and the post-war depression caused by the withdrawal of troops, a shortage of labour in the mines and the slow recovery of the war-torn economics. To avoid surrendering to the British a party of Boer 'irreconcilables' trekked north through Rhodesia to German East Africa and in 1906 crossed the frontier into the East African Protectorate.

Others came from Australia and New Zealand. All these groups were looking for places to settle. When the Kenya-Uganda railway reached Nairobi in 1899; settlers began to arrive in increasing numbers.
They headed inland along the railway and began to settle in the Agikuyu lands. They assumed that the Agikuyu had no right to land that was not occupied and not cultivated. The Europeans perceived this as waste-land available for settlers' occupation. Unfortunately, to the Agikuyu, this was not waste-land. Kenyatta (1938, 38) argues that, "It is of these lands that the early European travellers reported that they had seen huge lands 'undeveloped' and 'unoccupied'". Although to the Europeans this land may have appeared as waste-land, Kenyatta (1938, 37) argues that, "to the Agikuyu every inch of their territory was useful in some way or another". However, as Ayub Kanja (0.1, 13-3-87) lamented, the settlers did not take the land that the Agikuyu had avoided which looked unoccupied because they were either left vacant owing to dryness or just because they were covered by bush. Some land was left vacant for grazing and other social purposes while the rest was left as forests for fire-wood and building wood. The Europeans realised that the Agikuyu had occupied the good fertile lands which the settlers also needed. They had therefore to push the Agikuyu to the dry areas like Ndeiya and Karai, and the more forested, wet, cold areas of Lari.

It seems that the Agikuyu were good ecologists. They cared for their environment and had some sense of conservation of the natural environment.
They reserved the forests and avoided the dry areas which prevented soil erosion. This helped the land to remain fertile and attractive. This was contrary to the Europeans' conclusion that the Africans were poor farmers with no direction and who needed to be shown how to farm. They had also referred to the Africans as ignorant but analysing their system of land utilisation, it is clear that the Africans were not a tabula rasa as the Europeans were justifying colonialism and land alienation. They were justifying their claims to African lands. They also ignored the African system of tenure especially the githaka system whereby each mbari had a distinct form of ownership over a given portion of land. They also confused the nature of the ahoi system of land tenure and with the peanuts they gave to the chiefs, they took the land as freehold which was not transferable. Once this happened, the Agikuyu lost all the claim to the lands and could be evicted at the will of the settlers. The colonial office started issuing title deeds to the land previously occupied by the Agikuyu.

Within a short period, there was intense land alienation in Kiambu district. Rosberg and Nottingham (1966, 74) observe that,

the densely populated Kiambu district partly surrounded Nairobi, and during the inter-war years became a dormitory area.
It was here that the policy of land alienation had its deepest political and economical effects. By mid 1904 large numbers of settlers had been allocated land in the area, and by 1905 some 11,000 Kiambu Kikuyu had lost 60,000 acres.

The remaining alternative was to take the Agikuyu as squatters to provide cheap labour for the settlers. Other families lost more land in Limuru, Chura, and Kikuyu areas. After the establishment of the settlers farms and the ranches, the Agikuyu lost much of their land, freedom, and even some of their well-established ways of life. They either became squatters in the farms or were restricted to the reserves.

The life of a squatter was not easy. Moses Ngugi (0.1, 12 l-87), a former squatter lamented that, squatters were permitted to farm on small plots or gardens where they grew only enough food to live on. They provided labour for the Europeans. In addition to the small plots allocated, they would be paid six to eight shillings per month. They had to work for long hours from seven in the morning to five in the evening.

It was not only uncertain but miserable. They were provided with neither medical nor recreational facilities of any kind. The most dehumanizing part for the entire life of the squatters which meant to humiliate them was that, the squatter's child was exposed to no facilities of advancement for the future.
There was no education for him and therefore, he was looking forward to becoming a squatter just as his father. According to James Ngugi (0.1, 23-4-87), even any crops grown by the squatters on their small plots were sold to the Europeans at a meagre price which they fixed. This information has been collaborated by Kanogo (1987). The squatters had to live with these set rules and conditions. At first they were allowed to keep livestock which was later wiped out and only allowed to keep a few.

The Agikuyu realised with bitterness in their hearts that the strangers they had given hospitality to, had planned to plunder and subjugate them by brute force. The prophecy of Mugo was fulfilled. The iron snake, that is the Kenya-Uganda railway was by now complete. The strangers, having their feet firm on the soil, had begun to claim the absolute right to rule the country and to have the ownership of the lands under the title of crown lands. The Agikuyu had now to live as tenants at the will of the Crown in their own lands.

The best lands were given freely to new settlers by the colonial office. The aim was to attract as many settlers as possible for economic development. By 1906, Kikuyu reserves were established owing to the pressure of land among the Agikuyu. These were meant to confine the Agikuyu together to create room in the remaining fertile land.
The reserves were no better and those living there were just as oppressed as the squatters in the European farms. Mary Wambui (0.1, 2-1-87) lamented that, "the reserve was like a prison or unfenced detention camp where there was neither freedom of movement nor of cultivation." They were meant to supply cheap labour to the European farmers.

These reserves became congested to excessive cultivation without practising traditional methods of furrowing and shift cultivation. They were exposed to extensive erosion. It is clear from this that the Europeans abused the Agikuyu ecological and environmental balance which protected soil erosion and nutrients exhaustion. The Agikuyu had maintained soil fertility through the traditional forms of farming methods. It was this interruption that resulted in the current problem of soil erosion which was not previously common in Gikuyuland. By 1930, there were already severe soil erosion problems.

The Agikuyu population distribution before the Europeans' invasion was even and balanced. They had left some land fallow, bush, and forests. They had avoided the steep slopes which were covered by trees and grass and they only grazed in the valleys. The settlers ignored all these and took most of the land resulting into the congestion of Agikuyu in the reserves. This also resulted to overcrowding, overcropping, and overgrazing.
The settlers tried to solve the problem by reducing the stock of residential labourers on the farms and on the reserves. The Agikuyu could not part with the "excess stock" and this resulted in overstocking and overcropping. This in turn aggravated soil erosion ending into a vicious circle. There was total poverty in a land which in less than a decade ago, was referred to as a granary.

The Agikuyu, who had assumed that the Europeans were ahoi, realised with bitterness that they were the ones regarded to as ahoi by the Europeans. They had sadly to accept the conception that they were the ahoi in their own lands which they had lived in since they were born. The land which initially belonged to their forefathers was now at the hands of the foreigners. Kenyatta (1938, 37) laments that,

The Agikuyu lost most of their lands through their magnanimity, for the Gikuyu country was never wholly conquered by force of arms, but the people were put under the ruthless domination of European imperialism through the insidious trickery of hypocritical treaties.

The Europeans Sojourners surely proved to be tricky thieves and hypocritical treaty makers. The Agikuyu were made to understand that might is right and that the Europeans had actually come to stay. They disrespected all the rights of land tenure held by the Agikuyu. They also introduced taxation as a means of enforcing the Agikuyu to work for them.
With the imposition of the tax, and the incursion of the low wages, the Agikuyu were left without a choice other than to work for the settlers.

Barnett and Njama (1966, 32) quoting a 1913 editorial in the settlers' newspaper (East African Standard, 4 Feb. 1913) says that,

We consider that taxation is the only possible method of compelling the native to leave his reserve for the purpose of seeking work. Only in this way can the cost of living be increased for the native,... and it is on this that the supply of labour depend. To raise the rate of wages would not increase but would diminish the supply of labour. A rise in the rate of wages would enable the hut and poll tax of a family, sub-tribe or tribe to be earned by fewer external workers.

This forced the majority of the Agikuyu to leave their reserves and join the European farms as squatters. The remaining entered the urban centres as unskilled labourers. Moses Ngugi (0.1, 12-3-87) an ex-squatter said that,

In return for a nominal wage of eight to ten shillings per thirty-day work ticket, and the right to pasture a few animals and cultivate a small garden, a squatter was also usually bound under a three year contract to work for seventy days a year for the owner.
He continued to argue that,

all unemployed male members of his family aged sixteen and above were equally bound while women and children were obliged to work whenever called upon.

The worker's freedom of movement was greatly impeded by the fact that written permission from the manager was normally required if one wished to leave the area to visit friends, relatives, or even to pay tax.

A significant proportion of these external workers were peasants whose families had previously lost land through alienation to the settlers. In most cases, labourers were employed on land held by Europeans which would, under other circumstances, have been theirs through inheritance. This bitterness affected the Agikuyu so much that they would sing songs to portray the state of affairs. Such a song was recited by Eunice Wanjiku (0.1), Elizabeth Wanjiru (0.1) and Mary Njeri (0.1), (3-2-87) that,

Njurie murimo uria kai kwoneka atia,
Aca no muthungu i uratunyana ngundu.
Muthungu bururi uyu urutite naku?
Ruraya ni ngundu i, na Kenya ni ngundu.
niahitwo i, niahitwo i, atanaruma kindu.
(What is happening across the ridge?
It is the European stealing our lands.
Europeans where did you get these lands from?
Europe is land, and Kenya is land.
Withhold him from grabbing anything.)
Their main aim was to enrich themselves for their betterment and their mother country. Alienation was extremely extensive and Barnett and Njama (1966, 32) clarify this by observing that, "By 1934, some 6,543,360 acres of land had been alienated for occupation by 2,027 settlers while an average of 2,534 acres were actually under cultivation". Alienation of land left most families in Gikuyuland landless and homeless. Barnett and Njama (1966, 34) concluded that,

Alienation then becomes a very appropriate term, for it contains the double meaning or connotation of transference of ownership and losing something which nevertheless remains in existence over-against one.

LAND UTILIZATION

The advent of European settlement in the years 1902 - 1907 was to prove a determining factor in the development of Kenya's peasant economies of Africa's indigenous agriculture. The Agikuyu were brought into an exchange economy of the various colonizing powers either through the cultivation and sale of cash-crops, or through the export of labour in the form of migrant wage and contract workers. Gikuyuland was appropriated for the exclusive use of immigrant white colonialists. This process of colonization started with a few European explorers, accompanied by some Africans and Arabs from the Coast.
Previously, these groups involved with ivory and slaves but with the opening of the hinterland through the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway, they changed their trade commodity from slaves to crops.

With the coming of the Europeans a complete new method of farming was introduced. The Europeans had at first tricked the Agikuyu that they had come to teach them new methods of farming and stock-keeping which was to eliminate poverty and famine. Unfortunately, the Agikuyu had not at first understood that the coming of the Europeans would reduce them to slaves in their own lands. These European settlers became the dominant voice in the establishment of the colonial government, making every rule in their favour. The missionaries and administrators gained more influence as the system extended into public affairs and social services. They all had the same mission. In justifying their claims to land they reasoned out that, the Agikuyu had to be saved from overstocking, overcropping, famine, and poverty. They had to be civilised. However, they realised that the Agikuyu population was rapidly rising owing to the banning of inter-ethnic wars and raids. They argued that, the continued African peasant agriculture had not only failed to cope with increasing population pressure, it was actually decreasing productivity.

They also realised that there was intense overcropping and overstocking among the Agikuyu.
The Europeans found the large herds of goats and cows among the Agikuyu as a menace not taking into consideration the population density at that time and the large extended grazing fields which they had come to grab. They argued that the Agikuyu system of land tenure was so poor that it denied the application of capital essential for improving agriculture. It was unstable and insecure. Gikuyuland was so fragmented for any European agriculture and improvement and so consolidation of farms was necessary. They considered the belief among the Agikuyu that it was a right of every one to own land, a mere fallacy. They therefore engaged themselves in re-organising the Agikuyu social structure, agriculture, and the system of land tenure. They were determined to apply capital and co-operative methods to achieve their ends, which in fact they did.

As Eunice Wanjiku (0.1, 12-1-87) could remember, the first Europeans started by growing potatoes. Everything that was grown flourished magnificently. Crops shot up with an astonishing vigour and nothing at first seemed to fail. They tried vegetables of all sorts, cotton aloes, beans, groundnuts, maize, fruits, castor oil, and rhea fibre. Coffee was introduced by the White Fathers’ Mission who obtained seeds from Arabia. According to the Church of Scotland Mission Report (1953) the first real plantation was started in 1896 at the St. Austin's Mission near Nairobi in 1900.
It did splendidly and the first settlers in Kikuyu obtained more seeds and planted more trees. A deep rich forest loam, ample rainfall, high temperature of dry air, and continual sun stimulated every exotic plant. The Europeans planted everything with a lot of enthusiasm for every plant seemed to do well. Tea and pyrethrum were tried later at the high areas of Limuru.

Elijah Mimi (0.1, 14-1-87) said that, this change in utilisation was like a dream to the Agikuyu. The assurance the Europeans had given the Agikuyu of showing them how to farm became chattered hopes. Despite their promise of abundance food supply, the results were congestion and famine. Bush fallow as well as crop rotation were ignored. A garden which used to be left fallow for a long period was now used intensively. The former Agikuyu gardens that used to yield so much now started to deteriorate in nutrients and production became very low. Manure and fertilizers were introduced in the settlers farms but the Agikuyu could not afford them. There was also the factor of women being left with the farming burden in the gardens while the men had to look for jobs as squatters or in the urban areas. The duty of feeding the children was now left with the women and it in turn became very hard especially in the poor congested reserves. The plight of men from the farms and the negative attitude towards them (farms) was hence created during this time; a thing that the Kenyans are fighting against to this day.
The plight left the women oppressed as beasts of burden back in the farms while the men went to stay in the towns. This also created another social-economic mode of living.

The climate also changed owing to deforestation. Forests which were initially abandoned to help bring rain were now cleared to create room for agriculture. The virgin soils that used to yield very highly with little inputs could now not yield anything without manure. The crops that were introduced into the reserves could not do well without insecticides. Land became infertile since the poor Africans could not afford any inputs. The little wages they were given for working in the farms was used in paying taxes. It should also be noted that, before the Europeans interruption, the people were used to matching their crops with the seasons. There were some plants that used to take longer months and thus needed more rains, while others flourished during the short rains. The Agikuyu were planting what was available and not what could do well. Since all the crops were previously indigenous, they used to grow very well before. Some respondents urged that even some of the insects like boll-weevils were limited by either crop-rotation or the cold climate, but now they were many. The Europeans were interfering with the indigenous agriculture.

However, on the settlers' farms, crops did very well. They were sprayed with different insecticides.
With capital, manure, and adequate labour supply, the crops did very well. The men were forced to work for the Europeans. This was done through the chiefs, whose positions as civil servants was endangered if they failed to induce the requisite number of workers needed in the plantations. The introduction of taxes forced the men to work. The country which the Agikuyu formerly lived in, with ravines, rivers, forests, and wild game, was now a bitter presence. Life was a big vicious circle of poverty and hunger.

According to Koinange (1955), the Agikuyu were not allowed to plant the European's crops. At first it was feared that if they planted the same crops as the Europeans, they would be stealing from their farms and in turn pretend that they had got the crops from their own farms. It was also assumed that if the Agikuyu planted the same crops as the Europeans, owing to ignorance and poverty, their crops would not be catered for, and so they would transmit diseases. On the other hand, they would have no time to cater for their crops and for the Europeans' crops. This was feared to diminish labour supply in the settlers' farms.

Finally, if allowed such privileges like planting tea or coffee, they would assume equality with the Europeans, a thing which the latter dreaded. These coffee pickers were left with total poverty, minimal social services, and very poor wages in the land that formerly belonged to them.
Land was used in the establishment of inequality among the Europeans and the Africans.

Barnett and Njama (1966, 32) argue that, Lord Delamere, a leading settler spokesman made this clear in his appeal to the labour commission of 1912. In order to force Africans into the centres of European enterprise, this renowned settler leader, urged that the land reserved for 'natives' be cut so as to prevent them from having enough for a self supporting level of production. How, he pleaded, could Africans be obliged to labor for Europeans if they had enough to successfully breed livestock and cultivate crops for sale.

The Europeans also banned the keeping of many livestock. Previously, the Agikuyu could keep as many goats and cows as possible. There were enough open fields for grazing. The larger the herd, the richer and the more famous a person was. These animals were very important for the peoples' daily needs. Goats, for example, played a major role in the social, physical, economical, and spiritual lifes of the people. The Agikuyu were not happy with the restriction of keeping large numbers of goats and cows. Many of their animals were wiped out by starvation owing to lack of grazing fields. The special places which were kept for communal grazing purposes were confiscated and were now under European occupation.
The milk and meat also became scanty and families had to do without them. Meat that used to be obtained from the frequent slaughtering of animals was now bought with money. The Europeans later forced the Agikuyu to limit their animals because they were causing soil erosion due to overgrazing.

Hunting was also prohibited. Eliud Gathaci (0.1, 11-11-86) claimed that, "we could not dream of touching the plentiful game which was once under own domain." This was completely prohibited for the forests were now under the colonial government and were highly restricted from the African's use. Gathaci continued to say that,

It we touched a stick for fuel in the forests which were at one time ours, we had to face it, pay the penalty in heavy rents and taxes. We remained in a state of captivity on a fraction of what was once our own land.

The Agikuyu therefore lost all the cultivation land which had been passed on from generation to generation. They had no choice. They were exposed to total poverty and hunger which influenced them to submit to a form of slavery. This was in the shape of labour which was designed to be excluded from the sophisticated definition of slavery or forced labour. This in fact meant nothing other than real slavery and colonial exploitation.
INTERRUPTION WITH THE SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE

The matter that continued to give the Agikuyu grave concern was the question of the security of their tenure in the areas which were referred to as reserves. With the deprivation of their lands, the Agikuyu became dispossessed wanderers who were dependent upon the Europeans. Before the Europeans' interference with the Agikuyu customs concerning land, the people had held and occupied these lands from time unknown to many living at that time. They had a system of tenure in which the land was held by families or individuals who originally acquired their rights by first cultivation. The boundaries of these were well laid out and known by all owners of the lands. The Europeans came and changed these boundaries. Peter Kariuki (0.1, 12-11-86) said that,

When the Europeans first came, they did not understand that they (Agikuyu) were to be deprived off any of their land, nor that the Europeans had really come to stay. A small piece of land here and there was sold to a few of the first pioneers and to missions by the chiefs in the time of the Imperial British East Africa Company.

In a memorandum that was submitted by the Kikuyu Association to the members of the East Africa Commission (Nov. 1924), it was recorded that,
From 1902, increasing numbers of whitemen arrived, and portions of our land began to be given out to them for farms, until large areas in Kiambu, Limuru, Kikuyu, Mbagathi about Nairobi, Ruiru, and beyond had been disposed of in this way. These lands were not bought from their Kikuyu owners, and any compensation they received was quite inadequate. The natives on them had either to become squatters (on what had been their land) or else move off.

This posed a serious threat to the Agikuyu system of land tenure. After the 1st World War, the Agikuyu had been promised great rewards. They realised with bitterness that the reward they got was the disruption of the Githaka system and the traditional family and individual holdings of land. At this time, the Agikuyu land tenure was based on the Githaka system, that was a unit of land controlled by a mbari or sub-clan. By 1921 all land in the native reserve was owned by the crown and no title deeds were issued. All the Agikuyu in the reserves became tenants at the will of the crown. This issue affected the Agikuyu totally until they started to plead with the colonial government.

Their special request among many was to be issued with title deeds for the whole Kikuyu reserve which would secure them and their families an undoubtedly possession of their lands.
They also insisted that a copy of these title deeds be supplied to the headmen of each location to be kept on behalf of the Githaka holders of that location. In the memorandum of East African Commission (Nov. 1924, 6) they requested that,

We be full informed of all areas within or on the borders of our reserve which have been earmanted in times past for alienation for purposes such as townships and that we and, in particular, the githaka holders and occupiers concerned be frankly told what the position is in regard to such areas.

It was a custom for elders to sub-divide any land in the githaka of any mbari and to notify the changes of boundaries at any sub-division. It was not the duty of foreigners as the Europeans had assumed. The Agikuyu also resisted the compulsory exchange of the githaka holdings of the very productive areas with the very infertile or forested ones. Some of the Agikuyu as claimed by Juvenilis Gitau (0.1, 1-11-86) believed that "it was a curse to abandon their mother lands." All land was the property of the Africans and if any part of it was lost, it was because the same had been taken away without the consent of the owners. Land was an integral part of the political, social, economical, and religious characteristics of the African society as a whole. The system of land tenure therefore involved all the institutions and lives of the entire community.
Land was viewed as the most important gift from God, which existed for the purpose of sustaining the life of all, provided that no one claimed to own it for sale or commercial speculation. Land had no fixed price as it was never conceived as a property for sale. According to the European concepts, land was a commercial thing which could be measured, mapped, plotted, sub-divided, demarcated, consolidated, and something that could be sold in a market.

It was a speculation of a monopolistic commercial ownership which was totally alien to the Agikuyu. Most important, land could not be sold to foreigners neither could they control it. They were not even supposed to make important decisions related to allocation and ownership. Foreigners could only be allowed to live on the land or use it if they were found qualified and acceptable to the community either as ahoi or athami.

The Europeans distorted all these customs in order to justify their actions. Title deeds were only for the Europeans and not for the Agikuyu. The latter had no form of written title deeds to the land. The European system of tenure which was capitalistic and monopolistic displaced the mbari holdings. It distributed them to the reserves, urban centres, and as squatters. A large number of families living in Tigoni was evicted and some pushed to the drier areas in Ndeiya while others moved to the thickly forested areas of Lari.
A new method of individual and private ownership of land was introduced into Gikuyuland. With the interference with the system of land tenure, the Agikuyu consciousness of the people they had welcomed so warmly began to grow.

THE EUROPEAN INTERFERENCE WITH BELIEFS HELD ABOUT TIRI

With the coming of the Europeans, several Agikuyu ways of life changed. These were physical, economical, social, and spiritual, all of which were affected by colonialism and land alienation. According to Barnett and Njama (1966, 34),

It is not only the brute fact of landlessness, land hunger, and insecurity of tenure which conditioned Agikuyu involvement in the nationalist movement and peasant revolt, it is also the fact that for a people who attach such sacred meaning to the land, the areas alienated remained within their field of experience, unattainable yet in considerable measure unused by its new owners.

The part that affected the Agikuyu most was the interruption of their beliefs especially those held about tiri. The establishment of European rule coincided with the rise of Christian missions, who were committed to conversion and strict measures to eradicate slavery, sickness, and what they referred to as ignorance.
The Europeans argued that the Agikuyu dwelt in the domains of Satan and needed conversion and salvation which were necessary for civilization and economic development. They were to abandon their pagan and heathen ways of life. The success in converting the Agikuyu lay in cutting all their links with traditional heritage. The settlers left this hard work to the missionaries. They had to take a long period of hard and patient work 'civilizing' and 'christenizing' the Africans. However, Githige (1982, 113) observes that, "the Kenya missionaries worked for collaboration rather than conflict with the settlers", and Kariuki Mwangi (0,1, 12-11-86) claimed that "during the colonial times, there was no muthungu na mubia (that is, there was no difference between the settlers and the missionaries).

The main aim of the missionaries was to penetrate deep into the Agikuyu and replace their beliefs with the Christian ones hence change them in order to win souls for Christ. They did this by challenging every belief that the Agikuyu held and by banning almost every practice. This was done mainly through evangelization. The missionaries took land just as well as the settlers. Although they at times disagreed on certain customs like the banning of female circumcision, they never disagreed on matters on land tenure. The missionaries had requested a complete ban on female circumcision from the government, but this could not work as suddenly as they wanted.
The very nature of the missionary work meant that missionaries were automatically involved in the land problems of the protectorate. The establishment of African reserves in the highlands left a considerable area of land for Europeans, but also limited their long-term prospects of expansion. This act made it possible for the Europeans to make an estimate of the land available for future settlement. The missionaries required land for mission stations and industrial activities. Sorrenson (1968, 257) says that,

the missionary occupation of the highlands coincided with that of the settlers. Missionaries took up land alongside settlers, under the same land regulations, and adopted the same methods of cultivation.

They also needed land for building hospitals and schools. They selected stations in the midst of populous districts in the hope of gathering harvests for the souls and sometimes engaged in highly commercialized farming to raise money for expansion.

The Scottish Mission was the first in the field. Rev. Thomas Watson bought a place at Thogoto in 1895. However, Peter Kariuki (0, 1, 12-12-86) observed that,

The church of the Scotland Mission took Chief Waiyaki's land at Thogoto after he had been killed. The rest of Waiyaki's family were left in the remaining land in a condition no better than that of the squatters.
As put by Sorrenson (1968), the missionaries were not only competing with one another for people but also for land. In 1899, the Bishop Allgeyer of the Holy Ghost Fathers obtained a site half-way between Nairobi and the Scottish Missions. In 1900, the Church Missionary Society established a station at Kabete. In 1901 the Africa Inland Mission established its main headquarters at Kijabe. In 1902, the Gospel Missionary Society, composed of Seventh-day Adventists established a mission at Kambui. The Catholics opened stations at Kiambu in 1902, at Limuru in 1903, and at Mangu in 1907. Sorrenson (1968, 257) continues to say that, "in five years, five societies had established stations within a radius of twenty-five miles from Nairobi". All these missions were established in the middle of the most populated areas where they were sure to get followers.

Like the settlers, the missionaries were convinced that Gikuyuland was fit and free for European settlement. Sorrenson (1968, 260) puts it that,

When the 1902 Crown Lands Ordinance came into force the missions obtained land on the same conditions as ordinary settlers. This opened the way for the acquisition of considerable mission estates at a time when the missionary scramble for territory in the Kikuyu country was at its peak. ... In the Kikuyu country, the Catholic Missions obtained 2,673 acres of freehold and 827 acres of leasehold land, in ten different lots.
Two of these were homestead grants in the names of two of the Catholic Fathers; the eight others were divided equally between the French and Italian Missions. D.C.R. Scott of the Church of Scotland Mission obtained an estate of 3,173 acres, which included 1,000 acres of freehold, at Kikuyu. The C.M.S., however, was content with small grants of thirty acres for the main stations and fifteen acres for the sub-stations.

Most of the missionary stations were established on free grants and leaseholds. The missionaries preached a gospel that insisted on keeping no treasures on earth. They would support their claims by quoting the Bible where Christ said that,

> So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. And he said unto his disciples, therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. (Luke 12: 21-22).

Unfortunately, the Agikuyu did not take this seriously. The missionaries advised them to look forward for the heavenly treasures which would only be attained after death. The earthly treasures of that time included land and livestock, the only valuable things to the Agikuyu at that time. The Agikuyu were told that it was more precious before God to possess and claim nothing material and have satisfaction with the heavenly rewards.
The Agikuyu did not agree to this for missionaries with their counterparts, the settlers, were accumulating earthly properties like land and livestock, as if they did not want the heavenly treasures. The Agikuyu insisted on some of these properties and conflicts hence arose.

They preached against certain rituals and ceremonies especially those related to tiri. Rituals like praying for rain in the times of drought were regarded as heathen. Many of the cultural-religious customs of the Agikuyu especially those related to tiri were disregarded. The Europeans considered the Agikuyu and their practices as 'savages' who were playing very immoral dances in some of these ceremonies. The prayers had to be performed in the churches with every part of it solemnized. The prayers of thanksgiving formerly performed before harvesting and all the rituals associated with it were changed. As declared by Eunice Wanjiku (0.1, 13-12-87), "God had to be given ten per cent of the harvest on a monthly basis, and weekly contributions on Sundays, which were all to be taken to the church." The Agikuyu saw this as oppression for previously Ngai was appeased during harvest times by everybody through a communal sacrifice and not by individuals. Moreover, the farms whereby the Agikuyu could gather the harvests for tithing were alienated by the same missionaries or their counterparts, the settlers.
They also changed the rites of passage of a child through which the beliefs and customs about tiri were revealed. They started with the birth of a child and all the associated rituals which were seen as evil and backward. It was dirty and had to be performed in hospitals where the after-birth, which formerly solemnized it, was thrown away as waste. The birth of a child was hence made to look very ordinary and all the meanings especially those of burying the after-birth were disrupted. There had to be no ceremonies or rituals apart from those which had to follow in the church. After the child was eight days, it had to be taken back to the church for thanksgiving replacing the ceremony referred to by the Agikuyu as *kumagaria mwana* (which literally means to escort the child). The ceremony was performed to relate the child with the world of the spirits and to show it its future dependency which was on *tiri*). Other church ceremonies like baptism were introduced whereby a new name had to be given to the child. The birth of a child was important in the community because the burying of the after-birth with the *tiri* marked fertility and signified a union between the living and the dead. With the coming of the missionaries, the dead were heathen and referred to as *Ngoma* (devil).

The Agikuyu were not forced to follow these new teaching.
They could still have continued with their rituals on their small farms but circumstances created by the colonial government and the missionaries left them without a choice. The churches were built and hence associated with civilization and westernization. New names which were western were termed as civilization and the Agikuyu started abandoning and hating their old names. They also wanted to look civilized.

The hospitals were also built. These were connected to the churches and new converts had to be treated there. Schools were also built by the missionaries which could only accept new converts. In these, western ways were taught in opposition to African ways which were seen as backward. The Agikuyu, especially the early converts had to follow the missionary teachings or else loose the chances for the school. Finally, with the new establishment of the farms, majority of the Agikuyu had to settle in them as squatters. This disrupted the social set-up of the community making it rather hard for the few left in the reserves to carry on their religious activities.

Perhaps there was no other ritual that disrupted the Europeans minds more than circumcision. This was revealed by the way they tried to fight against it. They led a big and difficult campaign against it mainly because of their paternalistic attitude and their ignorance of the Agikuyu culture and beliefs.
They fought against it especially female circumcision and mambura rituals (ceremonies associated with circumcision). Actual circumcision could not be performed without the mambura which took roughly eight days before the actual cutting (Ndemengo). The missionaries preached against this during church services by discouraging and forbidding church members from practising it. Those who never adhered to the teachings were disciplined by ex-communicating them from the churches and the schools. They advised them to stop female circumcision and to take their boys to hospitals to be circumcised there. In his works, Kamuyu-wa-Kangethe argues that,

... the missionaries appealed to the moral conscience of the few Agikuyu they had converted into Christianity to accept that female circumcision and the mambura rituals were evil. They nevertheless did this under the veil of paternalism and ignorance. (1987, 233ff).

Kibicho by quoting Horace argues that, "... both the girls and the boys' initiation rites were seen as giving free opportunities to the youth to live a life of license." (1972, 75). The Europeans saw total evil especially in the dances and songs performed during such rites like circumcision and marriage. To them it was one of the clearest marks of savagery.
They had very negative views to these social gatherings as observed by Kibicho (1972, 73) where he argues that, the low standard of the Kikuyu morality again showed itself very clearly for the missionaries in their dances and songs, all of which seemed to them as purposely designed to lead to sexual lust and immorality.

By quoting a Semi-Jubilee book of the Church of Scotland Mission (1923, 18) Kibicho (1972, 73) observes that, "the words of the songs accompanying some of the dances act as an incentive to immorality judged by civilized standards." The missionaries found the dances and the whole circumcision ritual so evil that they sought government intervention to help ban them.

Trying to stop circumcision was the same as cutting the link between the Agikuyu and Ngai. As discussed earlier, the usage of tiri in the circumcision ritual which was done in welcoming the initiate back home was a bond to unite the dead and the living. It was also done to get rid of evil spirits for tiri was believed to have some sacred powers. These rituals could not be performed without the whole circumcision ceremony. It was in this act of making the initiate jump over a set handful of tiri that the Agikuyu beliefs were revealed. Tiri in that ritual and many others united the living and the dead through whom social harmony was maintained.
The marriage ceremonies were also disrupted. The negotiations on paying dowry were regarded as heathen for the Europeans saw it as 'actual selling' which made the Gikuyu wife a slave. The beer that went along with the marriage ceremonies which was libated first to the ancestors through pouring it into the *tiri*, was regarded as an outdated thing. Conditions whereby the Agikuyu could not afford it were created. The land which they used to grow sugarcane to brew beer was alienated. Moreover, the Africans were viewed as extravagant through such ceremonies. The ancestors who received the libations and in turn gave blessings to the new couple were regarded as *Ngoma* (devils). Eunice Wanjiku (O.1, 13-2-87) lamented that, "everything African to the sight of the European was heathen, evil and backward."

The Agikuyu had also held the belief, through death (where the dead were covered with *tiri*), the union between the living and the dead was maintained. If this union was disrupted, as observed in the previous chapter, calamity and disaster occurred. This is why the dead, believed to be buried under the *tiri*, were constantly appeased through libations. With the coming of the missionaries the idea of death and burial was changed. A new belief that man came from dust (*tiri*) and to dust was he to return was preached. This however was a punishment from God as it came after the fall of man.
The Bible clarifies this by observing that,
And unto Adam he said, Because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground. For out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.
(Genesis 3, 17-19).

This was a negative attitude towards tiri for it even revealed death as a punishment from God, as well as tilling of tiri. Man had to work hard since he had wronged God and hence punished. In the Agikuyu beliefs, death was a continuation of life to the world of the spirits. One continued to exist even after, as long as he was remembered here on earth. This was done through naming children after the dead. As long as his 'name' continued 'living', then he continued to exist. On the other hand working for food was not a curse, it was a blessing from Ngai bestowed to the first man in the community. So the Europeans beliefs were contrary to what the Agikuyu believed.
Although the Europeans had a few positive attributes of Ngai as Kibicho (1972, 71ff) has observed, most of his qualities were changed. According to him, Ngai was seen as remote in the sense of irrelevance in the day-to-day life of the Kikuyu people. As far as the missionaries could observe, Kikuyu life, almost in its entity was regulated by their traditional code of law known as migiro (taboos).

The Europeans referred to Ngai as a very indefinite being and their idea of the afterlife as equally vague. All their aspects seemed to the European to be guarded by superstition with nothing as a holy God. Their customs, dances, sayings, everything including their religion were regarded as immoral and heathen.

They were also regarded as devil worshippers for the Europeans confused the practice of pouring libations to the dead with the worshipping of the devil. The European God could not fit into the 'pagan' ways of the Agikuyu, some of which were poor methods of farming and fragmented holdings. All these had to be abandoned. The missionary had the hard duty to preach the gospel of civilization and westernization which were viewed in line with Christianity. They had a tough mission as concluded by Kibicho (1972, 80) that,

The European administrator, settler, and missionary all worked in co-operation to bring about this tremendous change in Kikuyu humanity, and to raise it to higher levels in every aspect.
The missionary, according to Cagnolo, has the greatest share of this mission, as his assignment is to treat the soul. Through his teachings, preaching, and other related services, and through the example of his own life of dedication and self-denial, the missionary instils moral principles into the savages mind, lifts him from degradation up to the appreciation of uprightness and compliance with the laws.

The Europeans also built hospitals where they introduced western medicine. Those forms of healing especially where tiri was used were termed as dirty, evil, and witchcraft. Rubbing a child with a mixture of tiri and other herbs to cure measles was not only disgusting to the Europeans but it was also considered as out-dated. They saw these methods as an opposition to civilization and progress both economically and spiritually. The first converts had to fight a tough battle of abandoning their practices and adapting the new ones. The traditional medicine-men, oaths, taboos, and other such important rituals were all replaced with what was referred to as 'civilised' rituals and ceremonies. Some of the early converts were mixing the two practices but the missionaries became very strict.

However, the most damaging thing that started developing in the Agikuyu consciousness as Peter Karauni (0.1, 23-2-86) observed was that,

They discontinued the sacred bond that used to bind the unborn, the living,
the dead, and Ngai. This was comparable to the untimely breaking of the umbilical cord before the child was born. This bond was tiri for it was the 'mother', the source of life to everything. The result was death.

Likewise to the Agikuyu, once this bond was broken by the foreign beliefs, a spiritual death was caused among the majority of the people. They developed a spiritual hunger that could not be satisfied by foreign rituals performed in foreign shrines to a foreign God. God was now transferred from Kirinyaga to heaven with most of his attributes replaced with foreign ones. The Agikuyu became strangers in their own land. The tiri that used to act as a uniting bond was now also foreign. The people had no access to it because some of the shrines were alienated and lay out bounds to their use.

The Europeans had also interfered with the items that were used for libations and sacrifices such as beer and goats. The beer that was used so much in rituals was referred to as heathen. It was seen as hindering economic development for the Agikuyu were needed in the settler's farms to work. Njau-wa-Kayo (0.1, 21 3-87) observed that, "during the colonial times, to be drunk was an offence." Drinking was hindering Christianity and progress for Africans were seen as lazy people who only sat down and made merry in heathen social gatherings.
To become a good Christian, someone had to abandon drinking and even being in the company of the drunkards. 

*Tiri*, that formerly acted as a central theme in the physical, economical, social, and spiritual lives of the people, a daily revelation of *Ngai* was now under the Europeans' control. The Agikuyu found some of his new attributes contradicting for he was introduced as a living God and one who still punished people who were against others, yet he never punished those colonial oppressors. Owing to all these, the Agikuyu were left with no other alternative than revolt. The spiritual death caused by the introduction of Christianity caused political consciousness among the people. Majority of Agikuyu preferred the physical death as many respondents claimed, than the spiritual death which was already being felt. Eliud Gathaci (0.1, 2-11-86) lamented that, "It is better to die physically other than live as a hungry slave spiritually and economically, in one own's land". This hunger was felt in all ways of one's life, physically, socially, economically, and spiritually. It was no wonder that land and freedom (*Ithaka na Wiyathi*), became the slogan of the Mau Mau fighters, which will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE OF TIRI
IN THE MAU MAU ACTIVITIES

The researcher holds a personal conviction that tiri played a very significant role in helping the Agikuyu to gain the confidence and courage in an unequal struggle. It is referred to as unequal for the British troops were better armed as compared to the Agikuyu peasants who had very poor weapons. As has been observed previously, of all the problems of the British colonialism in Kenya, none had attracted such considerable attention as the question of land grievances and land-rights. The problem of land expropriation, the exploitation of African natural and human resources and the impoverishment of African agricultural economy and their consequences were all observed as the causes of the Mau Mau struggle.

This chapter will go into details of the various practices which used tiri as a symbol of the land the Agikuyu were fighting for. It has also been observed that, the Agikuyu had a sacred relationship with their land as was seen in the Mau Mau activities. This was reflected in the oaths they took, prayers, and songs. They held the belief that Ngai gave the land of the Agikuyu to them. They therefore were not ready to have anyone interfere with this gift. It was this gift that was grabbed and utilised by the Europeans while the entire Agikuyu community remained as ahoi.
The Europeans had failed to see the sacred relationship between the Agikuyu and their land. The Europeans had concluded that, the Africans were lunatic backward savages who were illiterate and could therefore win no struggle with bows and arrows.

The controversy aroused by the land question had more than any other problem in Kenya contributed significantly to the rise and development of the Mau Mau struggle. It actually helped in developing consciousness of the peasants of Kenya. The deep interrelationship between man and his land was closely associated with the protests against land-robbery and exploitation of the African peasants through taxation and forced labour as well as racial discrimination. All these were associated with the colonial policies of land expropriation hence the slogan by the freedom fighters became "land and freedom" throughout the Mau Mau struggle. The Africans had perceived independence as a return of alienated lands but they later found out that re-acquisition of land alone was not freedom. They needed political, social, economic, and spiritual freedom. They felt deep grievances over the land which had been taken from them, land without which they could neither have social nor religious security. The Agikuyu realised that, they had to fight for their lands which acted as a strong motivating factor of uniting the people in the cause of liberating it.
Gikuyuland as described previously, was a land with fertile soils, ample rainfall, abundant water from rivers and streams flowing parallel to each other from both the Aberdares and the Kirinyaga, as well as a springy and stimulating climate. This was the land given by Ngai to the Agikuyu and it was their duty to protect it. This land had to remain strictly for the purpose which Ngai had designed it. This purpose was feeding the entire community, where in turn Ngai would be worshipped and honoured through rituals.

The coming of the Europeans violated these rituals and the purpose for which Gikuyuland was assigned for was ignored. Land which previously acted as a daily revelation of Ngai, a bond that united the unborn, the living, and the dead was now under the hands of the foreigners. The Agikuyu valued land for it was from it that they obtained their food and other means of livelihood. It was also in the land that their ancestors were buried and preserved, hence communion with the ancestral spirits could not be possible without the land. The Europeans violated all existing rules that were held in relation to land tenure and utilisation. They had no respect for either the living, the dead, or even Ngai. The Europeans were thus considered as thieves and theft was among the serious crimes in Gikuyuland. It was punishable by either burning the victim, who would be tied with dry banana leaves, or rolling him downhill in a bee-hive.
It is therefore, conceivable that Agikuyu dealt ruthlessly with the European Imperialist invaders during the Mau Mau struggle. The foreigners had no respect for either the living, the dead or even Ngai. With this bitterness, the Agikuyu found no other solution rather than join hands and liberate their lands. Their major aim therefore, as claimed by Elijah Mimi (0.1, 14-2-87) was "to fight back, shed blood where necessary for Kenyatta had warned them that the freedom tree could only grow if watered by blood."

However, what was needed for such an action by a people who had few or no weapons was both physical and spiritual strength. The uniting factors were the oaths, songs and prayers. In these several slogans and paraphernalia were carefully selected to motivate the people for this unity. It should here be noted that, despite the fact that these engaged and involved other aspects, only those that reflected on tiri and land will be discussed below. It is important to touch these because most of the Agikuyu messages were passed in songs. The Agikuyu would pass word through certain selected songs for warning, ridicule traitors, and abuse foreigners. All the actual participants were initiated to the cause through a series of ceremonies. In all these, tiri was so much utilised as will be discussed below.
THE AGIKUYU OATHS

The researcher felt it best to start with the oaths because they acted as a more unifying factor than any other activity of the Mau Mau. The traditional beliefs on tiri were expressed in the oathing ceremonies more than any other activity of the Mau Mau struggle. The oaths concentrated on the fact that, N*ngai* bestowed Gikuyuland freely to them and not to greedy foreigners who were too selfish for they had assumed that the best blessings of nature, such as climate, soil, and natural resources were to be reserved for the entire white community. The Agikuyu were opposed to this and it caused conflicts.

Oathing as discussed earlier, was as old as the Agikuyu society and was administered when all other forms of settling differences failed. During the times of the Mau Mau struggle, the Agikuyu utilised these traditional methods of settling disputes. Before the actual Mau Mau oaths, there were the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) oaths which also used tiri in their administration. In them, the recipients held the bible on one hand and a handful of tiri on the other. The aim of administering this oath was mainly to show loyalty to the organisation of which one was already a member. This oath was mainly taken by the KCA leaders. They swore loyalty and obedience and never to betray the organisation.
One had also to swear never to sell land to a foreigner. These vows depended on the position that an individual held in the organisation. The leaders swore according to the facts related to leadership, but they all reflected on the same thing as put by Rosberg and Nottingham in their works that,

a person swore to remain loyal to KCA and also to Kikuyuland to serve the people faithfully, to contribute for the association and to look after peoples' money. (1966, 245ff).

The variables used for the swearing were the bible and a handful of tiri. The researcher did not go into details of the usage of the bible but majority of the former KCA members like Dedan Njoroge (0.1, 11-10-87) said that, "most members had already been converted to Christianity, were educated, and westernized and so had already been used to the bible. It symbolised modernity and Christianity that is kiriu and uthomi. However, Githige (1978, 125ff) argues that,

With the coming of Christianity and the christianisation of the Kikuyu people, the Bible was introduced as the symbol of swearing in lawcourts. It is a sacred book to the Christians, and swearing with it means swearing in God's name. Many of the early KCA members were people who had received some western education and were also people who belonged to the Christian churches.
Most of the leaders were baptised. To those blacks who were genuinely converted into the Christian faith, the bible was a highly sacred book.

This ceremony was a modern synthesis that incorporated various and often modified features of the traditional ceremonies. The bible used was an element of Christian symbolism. It is a sacred book for the Christians and swearing by it is swearing by God's name. Accordingly, to those Agikuyu who were already Christians, the bible had a religious significance. Nevertheless, the oath was based on beliefs, symbols, and rituals underlying the traditional system of taking oaths. This is why for the majority of the Agikuyu, the bible was not an effective object for swearing.

As Barnett and Njama (1966: 130) have observed:

the aims and objects presented by the society were so real and so essential to life that, when compared with Christianity faith, of which its preachers many times failed to practice what they preach, the latter becomes strongly out-weighed.

It is no wonder that the oaths that followed later dropped it for it did not make members loyal. *Tiri*, on the other hand symbolised land, a right which the Agikuyu held as a symbol of *Ngai*. The Agikuyu had a strong belief that telling lies using *tiri* was serious because punishment was direct from *Ngai* and one was bound to receive a supernatural penalty. *Tiri* was therefore viewed as an everlasting symbol of divine right.
In fact Githige (1978, 131) has observed that,

the traditional Kikuyu beliefs and
practices related to soil and other
symbols comprised one of the major
aspects of the religious factor in
the liberation movement.

The second KCA oath included food crops like sweet
potatoes, yams, arrow-roots, bananas, and meat. Among
the Agikuyu these types of foods were highly valued because
they were common and eased hunger to a large number of
people. The researcher concluded that, these farm products
may have represented tiri and preferably played its role
in the oath. They were crushed together and the contents
mixed with taatha. A candidate was made to sip it while
making vows. One had to invoke a curse on himself by saying
that, "ndirorio ni irio ici." (May this food consume me).
These were the major staple foods among the Agikuyu.

Gladys Njeri (0.1, 20-1-87) stated that,

no meal could be complete without either
one or two of these crops because even njahi,
or njugu could not be mashed without bananas.
Some of these foods were eaten in occasions
like weddings, circumcision, and after
giving birth.

Therefore, by invoking a curse on oneself, while mentioning
these types of food, one was making a serious vow just
similar to the one made when using tiri. The elders
interviewed gave no reason of changing from tiri in the
first oath, to garden products in the other. To take an
oath with either tiri or its products, the Agikuyu had a
belief that he would be affected for he would be swearing
with the most precious gift from Ngai.
By eating tiri in an oathing ceremony, somebody also ate some of the remnants of the living dead who lay buried in it. A person also swore not to tell lies. Peter Kariuki (0.1, 11-12-86) observed that, the living dead who lay buried in the tiri were believed to cause disaster among the people especially if annoyed. No one would thus swear falsely when eating or sipping any contents from tiri for the fear that the dead might rise against him. Disasters caused ranged from severe sickness, natural calamities to death. The Agikuyu used to give somebody a specific duration like seven months, years, before the disaster occurred. Such oaths were therefore much feared by the people who so much avoided the ancestor's wrath.

Swearing using tiri was also seen as equivalent to swearing using one's mother, which was feared by the Agikuyu. Since oaths were taken only by men, one would be made to understand that swearing with one's mother is wrong. Njau wa Kayo (0.1, 8-11-86) said that, "mundu kwihita na nyina ni uuru to kuuga ndokoma na maitu, kana ndothurwo ni maitu." (That is swearing with one's mother is bad like saying "may I make love to my mother or may my mother be against me"). When one's mother was against him, then this was a disaster for it was compared to an untimely breaking of the umbilical cord. The relationship between mother and child both before and after birth was not only special but sacred. The mother took care of the child from the time of conception to the time the child was big enough to feed himself. The breaking of such a relationship resulted to untimely death.

The Agikuyu thus took tiri as their 'mother' and valued much the warmth and joy it brought to the people. This was compared to the joy a mother brought to her children especially from the garden. Peter Karauni (0.1, 18-2-87) lamented that, "riria athungu matutunyire tiri witu twatigirwo ta ciana cia ngoriai" (when the Europeans invaded our land, we were left like orphans).
It was such a warmth and relationship that the Europeans deprived the Africans by alienating their lands. On the other hand the Agikuyu feared breaking any vows made when using tiri for to them it was a 'mother'. That meant that since tiri was equivalent to a 'mother' saying 'ndokoma na maitu' was the same as 'ndothurwo ni tiri', which in both, signified death. These were some of the facts that strengthened the oaths and made them more binding.

MAU MAU OATHS

Tiri was a significant symbol of honour and fear in administering oaths among the Agikuyu. All Mau Mau oaths used it for it incurred fear which made the oaths more binding and everlasting. The power behind such an oath was believed by most people to be Ngai, for he was the controller of justice and the best advocate for human rights. When the Agikuyu tried all other peaceful methods of recapturing their already lost lands and they failed, the only alternative left was to fight. This was rather hard because they had no weapons as compared to the British army which had strong weapons. They therefore decided to utilise oaths which acted as a weapon of unity.

They took the advantage of the traditional beliefs about tiri which were very clear among them. Several elders interviewed claimed that, there were only two major Mau Mau oaths.
Kariuki (1963) has also collaborated this idea by recording only two oaths. Githige (1978, 159) has clarified the same fact by observing that, "... it comes out as a fact that there were initially only two Mau Mau oaths". These were the oath of unity which was administered first, and then the second 'B Batuni Oath', which was mainly taken by the warriors and a few people in the reserves who were being used to help the warriors. There were some people who took more than two oaths. This depended on two things.

First, breaking the first oaths where one was forced to take another to strengthen him and second, oathing due to certain responsibilities acquired like a new rank in the struggle. The leaders had to take extra oaths for the extra responsibilities. However, other people claimed to have taken many oaths to seek sympathy from the colonialists after arrest.

Details of the oathing ceremony have been discussed by other scholars. The researcher's main interest was on the vows and the contents of the oaths in relation to tiri. According to Peter Karauni (0.1, 13-11-86) and George Kahindi (0.1, 18-2-87) in the first Mau Mau oath, "the eyes of the goat selected were removed together with the thorax and ngata (a bone that connects the head to the spine and contains seven holes). The number seven among the Agikuyu was termed as bad luck and was referred to as mugwanja muuru (bad seven).
It was rarely used and actions which correlated with it like travelling on the seventh day, having seven goats, or even a duration of time that contained seven were all avoided. Even in oaths somebody was given a duration of either seven days, weeks, moons, or years, for action to take place. The number seven was believed to be a sign of bad luck or misfortune. Anything concerning it was believed to bring ritual uncleanliness to the person concerned. The number was used during the oath ceremonies because it was believed that it would intensify the seriousness of the oath.

The eyes were stuck on either side of a fifteen inch long piece of banana stalk which was hollowed out lengthwise so that it could be used as a container. Clusters of kei apple trees from a particular thorn tree referred to as mugaa were used. A mixture of blood, tiri, crushed grains such as beans and sorghum were used. An arch which stood about five feet high was constructed and the top joined with intertwined banana stalks. There were some other plants like sugarcane, maize stalks, sweet potato vines which were added to the frame. Each initiate wore a ring of the twisted goatskin (ngwaro) around his neck throughout the ceremony. He also held a damp ball of tiri against his navel with his right hand.

The candidate had to pass through the arch seven times each time uttering a vow after the administrator of the oath. Some of the vows made as put by Peter Karauni (01, 14-12-86) were that,

In this land of ours, if I have ever been collaborating with those who are selling it, if I will ever see anybody grabbing our lands, I will fight with him, I will cling to this tiri or ours, until I die.
... If I will ever be told that I die for the sake of this tiri, I will prefer death, and if I will ever be sent to a very far place for the sake of this tiri, I will go, and if I refuse, may this tiri, may this oath, may all these garden products, be against me.

By uttering each vow, the candidate went through the arch seven times and sipped the contents of the oath. In most cases as observed by Barnett and Njama (1966, 58) "people vowed allegiance to the cause and portrayed their willingness to die when fighting for the soil." They had to swear that one would never turn back and above all, they would never reveal the secrets of the cause, nor fail it. At the end of each vow, one would utter these words as put by Peter Karauni (0.1, 12-11-86) that,

May this oath kill me.
May this tiri kill me.
May this meat kill me.
May this seven kill me.

The four words, oath, tiri, meat, and seven were all feared and would inflict a serious curse on somebody.

The second Mau Mau oath was more serious. It consisted of more serious vows and actions. The curses were also more serious than the first ones. Both sexes had to utter the same vows which included such words as analysed by Kariuki (1963, 29 ff) that,

I speak the truth and swear before God and before everyone else present here.
And by this Batuni Oath of our movement which is called the movement of fighting, that if I am called on to kill for our soil, if I am called on to shed blood for it, I shall obey and I shall never surrender. And if I fail, may this oath kill me, may this thenge kill me, may this seven kill me, may this meat kill me.

The elders like George Kahindi and Peter Karauni, who had taken this oath reckoned that it was very serious. By taking these oaths and swearing the recipients identified themselves with the sacred symbols and rituals of the Agikuyu society and with Ngai.

The vows which one uttered like, 'may these things kill me like oath, thenge, (he-goat), seven, meat, tiri, were curses to the self. The strong words ensured that the recipient of the oath remained loyal and committed to the cause. The activities and objects used in the oath were believed to bring disaster in the form of thahu. Njau-wa-Kayo (0.1, 18-11-86), argued that, "somebody with the thahu would be affected painfully and would eventually die." People used to recognise the painful withering and concluded that it was due to the oaths. Some of the items used and words uttered revealed the seriousness of the oaths. They used to fear them as analysed by Githige (1978, 108) where he argues that,

... the greater the thahu that some of these objects and actions can bring on
their own when they are used or performed, the more effective is the oath in which the vows and curses are uttered while using these objects and performing these activities.

The behaviour of the people and the beliefs they held about the oaths incalculated in them a sanction that went beyond their present into their past and future. It was important because from then onwards, their behaviour and their whole existence depended on their acceptance or refusal to obey the oaths. The tiri used in the oaths, was held as a symbol of the peoples' attachment to Ngai and therefore the basic symbol of controversy.

Barnett and Njama in their works describe the second oath in a more serious way. Njama the co-author says that, "In fact, one was ignorant of the movement until he took the 2nd oath" (1966, 130). He describes the action of this second oath by observing that,

Naked I stood facing Mt. Kenya, holding high a dampened ball of soil (dampened by milk, animal fat and blood, the most important daily products) in my right hand and the other ball against my navel by my left hand. I have today become a soldier of Gikuyu and Mumbi and I will from now onwards fight the real fight for the land and freedom of our country till we get it or till my last drop of blood.
Today I have set my first step
(stepping over the first line of
the goat's small intestine) as a
warrior and I will never retreat,
And if I ever retreat, may this soil
and all its products be a curse upon
me (1966, 131).

The Mau Mau oaths were very serious. Tiri played
an important role because by using it in swearing as
described above, one invoked an everlasting curse on
himself which resulted to suffering. Since in all
swearing somebody vowed before Ngai and before the
movement, Ngai was viewed as the witness. The Agikuyu
found the Mau Mau struggle justified because they were
not only fighting for what was theirs but for what Ngai
had given them. Such curses which were directed to the
self were very serious for punishment was believed to
come directly from Ngai. Swearing using tiri and the
daily products of the garden was an everlasting oath.
This belief made the oaths more binding and lasting and
thus succeeding in their purpose of uniting the people.
The people had to obey the regulations of the cause
strictly and strongly owing to the fear of the
consequences of breaking the oaths. These vows not
only helped to bring unity but also to maintain discipline
in the Mau Mau struggle.

Tiri was also used by somebody who was shot as
Kiarii-wa-Manuthia (0.1, 13-3-87) claimed that, "he would
grasp a ball of tiri with his hands as he died and the
gun on the other hand."
In doing this, he would utter a curse to his betrayers by saying that, "may the person who has betrayed me be consumed by this tiri that I die fighting for." At times, he would also bite tiri and die with it in his mouth. This was meant to prove that he was really dying for the sake of liberating the land which was alienated by the Europeans, to which tiri acted as a symbol. The curse a soldier invoked to his enemies was also as serious as the one he invoked on himself during the oath. Since tiri was used, the curse was both serious and everlasting.

MAU MAU PRAYERS

Prayers were held with esteem among other activities in the struggle especially by those in the forest. The ex-forest fighters reckoned that, before each activity, a quick prayer had to be addressed to Ngai in Kirinyaga. This was done by all the soldiers involved. The Agikuyu had a strong belief in prayers because Ngai in the creation myth had told them to call him whenever they were in need. It was therefore very common for the people to turn towards Ngai at any time when need arose. In the struggle, the prayers were scheduled as a daily routine. These prayers had a common theme despite the fact that they were for different occasions and situations.

All the prayers were directed to Ngai for it was believed that he was the one who gave the land to the people.
It was on land that all life thrived. In concluding each prayer, Peter Karauni (0.1, 14-12-86) said that, "Ngai twahotwo niwe wahotwo, na twahotana tutikeraha tondu niwe wahotana." (God if we are defeated, it is you who is defeated, and if we win, we shall not exalt ourselves, because it is your victory). This only shows the confidence they had in winning the struggle because to them, it was justified. Ngai had the duty of helping them to regain the lost lands so that they could be able to carry out their traditional ways of worshipping Ngai in peace.

Ex-freedom fighters like Kiarie-wa-Manuthia, (0.1, 14-4-87), Peter Karauni (0.1, 11-12-86) and John Gicheru (0.1, 16-3-87) claimed that, "prayers were offered to Ngai after each activity." While praying, the soldiers would stand up and hold a damp ball of tiri to the navel with the left hand, and a knife, a panga, or a home-made gun with the right hand side, then face Kirinyaga. The guns smuggled from the British were not lifted up high, and in case they were, (when a troop had no other guns), they would be raised upside-down. The reason for this was to show that the Agikuyu God was stronger than the British. Such guns were only raised up in very rare occasions like an emergency. On the other occasions when there was no dampened tiri, the freedom fighters would wet their palms with saliva, smear them on the ground to catch dust and then lift them high up to Ngai.
This was a common practice. Wamweya (1971, 92) says that,

... we too rose and spitting into the palms of our hands, we extended them toward heaven and prayed.

Thaai, thathaiya Ngai thaai.

In another occasion, Wamweya says that, "Before setting down, we entreated Mwenenyaga to bless that spot." (1971, 95). Prayers were a common daily practice of the freedom fighters.

Other prayers as recorded by ex-freedom fighter, Kiarii-wa-Manuthia (0.1, 14-4-87) reveals the significance of tiri in the Mau Mau struggle. All fighters gathered before a meeting and facing Kirinyaga say that,

Oh God of the black man, and the God of Kirinyaga. God who gave us this land, land which has been taken from us by the enemies,
Land that belonged to our ancestors who lie covered by it,
Bless all those who have come to attend this meeting.
We thank you, Oh God, the Greatest of all for our safe journey.
We pray to you Oh God of all black men, to guide and protect us during this meeting and to see us safely back to our homes and hideouts.
Oh be stronger than the god of the white man.
Defeat him and give us what our ancestors and our forefathers have demanded for so long, our land and freedom, O greatest of great gods, Our God of Kirinyaga, bless us, Lord if we will be defeated, we shall blame you.

And if we win, we shall exalt and praise you

Thaai thathaiya Ngai, thaai.

The fact that this land belonged to the Agikuyu was emphasized in the daily prayers. Such a daily prayer was recited by Peter Karauni (0.1, 11-12-86).

Oh God the strong one, the giver of all strength, Father of our greatest ancestors, Gikuyu and Mumbi.

Because our enemies are against us, And they have grabbed our land, The land you had blessed to our ancestors, Gikuyu and Mumbi,

We pray thee because we do not have enough strength to protect this our land. The land you gave us but has now been invaded by the enemies. You granted unto us this tiri and now the Europeans have turned it into theirs.

If we win, we shall not exalt ourselves, but we shall exalt you.

If we are defeated, we shall blame you.

Thaai, thathaiya, Ngai, thaai.

In uttering such a prayer, the freedom fighters stood holding a dampened ball of tiri, initially dampened by milk or blood if available, and in their absence, saliva was used.
They in turn attached it to the navel. The milk, blood, saliva, and tiri were significant in African religion. All these were symbols of life and in using them the prayers were strengthened. They were among the most precious items in the community and were used in sacrifices, worshipping, and in rituals. The navel or umbilical cord symbolised the mother for its important role in feeding an unborn child.

The usage of tiri and the other precious items symbolised the role played by the umbilical cord in feeding the child. It was tiri that fed the entire community. With the alienation of lands by the Europeans, the sacred bond was cut. The Agikuyu tried to symbolise the re-union of this bond by holding the dampened ball of tiri next to the navel. With the return of the lands, the bond would be linked. In the prayers, therefore, they tried to plead with Ngai to give them courage to bring back that broken bond that cut life. That was the reason for holding the dampened ball of tiri next to the navel. The idea of linking the broken bond gave them all the courage and confidence that they needed in the struggle. By alienating their lands, the Agikuyu were humiliated and they had no choice other than try and get them back. They could not feel free without the ancestral lands.

There was a prayer recited by Kiarii-wa-Manuthia (0.1, 14 4-87), a participant in the famous Naivasha raid.
He argued that, such prayers were conducted before any such a raid and it assured the people of victory. As usual, a dampened ball of *tipi* (dampened by blood, milk, or saliva), was held to the navel, and all soldiers, facing Kirinyaga, led by one leader prayed that

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Leader: Oh God of Gikuyu and Mumbi.
God who created this world,
And divided it up
You gave your children Gikuyu and Mumbi,
this land of Kirinyaga,
And you blessed it for them to live
there forever, and ever.
Today it has been grabbed by strangers,
And we are killed, persecuted, mistreated,
while we have neither stolen nor murdered.
Just because we are demanding our heritage;
Oh God, our father, you are our advocate,
and we shall blame you if we are defeated,
and we shall exalt you when we win.
We beseech you to bless this our journey.
Remove all valleys and blocks that may be raid ahead of us by our enemies.
Guide us with your power until we reach that place we want to go.
When we arrive, grant us with extra strength and victory so that what we will be able to smuggle will reach our soldiers those we left behind.
So that we may join hands together and liberate this land you gave us from slavery and oppression, Oh God have mercy upon us.
All: Thaai, thathaiya Ngai, thaai.
The freedom fighters who were involved in the Naivasha raid claimed that they had only two casualties and a tremendous victory. This reveals that prayers played a major role in regaining lost hope and strength to a people who at most times felt weak owing to lack of weapons. They believed that victory would only come to them through prayer and majority reckoned that they were really important. However, it should be noted that the words and the rituals performed in the prayers made them significant, and since tiri was so much used in both, then a conclusion can be made that tiri played a very important role in the Mau Mau prayers.

**MAU MAU SONGS**

Songs in a difficult situation help to reassure peoples' hopes. The Agikuyu held songs as important in many ways even before the coming of the Europeans. They were used in communication especially in warning people against odd behaviours. They were also used for encouraging and strengthening people during certain rituals like circumcision and marriage. They also encouraged warriors before an ethnic war or raid. The freedom fighters took this tradition and utilised songs in almost all ways. Before the state of emergency was declared in 1952, songs were used by leaders to mobilize the people by passing important facts of unification.

The people who were opposing the Mau Mau struggle were ridiculed as well as those opposing some African rites of passage like circumcision of girls.
Such a song was the **muthirigu** which almost became a national anthem of the Agikuyu around 1950. After victories of any kind, the songs were used to praise the heroes and thank **Ngai** for his assistance in the victories. The songs were also much used in praising dead heroes who had lost their lives during the fights.

The researcher was only interested in those songs that revealed the importance of **tiri** in the struggle. Many of the songs emphasized the fact that Gikuyu-land was a gift of the people from **Ngai**, and was handed over to their ancestors. They would show that the people had a right in defending it against any intruders. A guerrilla song recited by a former freedom fighter, Kiarii-wa-Manuthia (0.1, 14-4-87) was that,

> Ngai gave us this land,
> And he gave you yours in Britain,
> Why then did you come to our country?
> To steal our land.
> You are foreigners, you **Nyakeru** (Europeans) in this country.

Such a song was only sang to prove that Gikuyu-land belonged to them as a gift from **Ngai** and that the Europeans were foreigners. Another song recited by another ex-soldier, Moses Ngugi (0.1, 3-2-87), was that,

> This is our land,
> We the African people.
> **Ngai** blessed it for us.
> And said that we must never abandon it.
This stanza was recorded from a song referred to by many respondents as a song of Waiyaki. The songs then helped to strengthen the people who in turn considered it as a curse to either abandon their lands or to fail to fight for them. In another verse, the song was that,

My people, Waiyaki died
leaving us this curse,
Never sell or give up this land of ours,
And see how freely we have given it up.

The Agikuyu considered it a big curse from their dead ancestors like Waiyaki to give out any land to foreigners who not only took their lands but also violated their beliefs, customs, and practices that were upheld in relation to tiri. The failure therefore to fight for it was considered a curse which was not forgivable by either the ancestors or Ngai. Land had to serve the only duty that Ngai had assigned it for, that is feeding the Agikuyu and not the foreigners.

In another song recited by the ex-freedom fighters, Moses Gicheru and Peter Karauni (0.1, 14-12-86) they said that,

This land belonged to Gikuyu,
Ngai created and gave it to us.
We children of Gikuyu and Mumbi to live there.
We should not sell it, because of greed.
Our people why sell your country because of greed.
Knowing very well that the stomach will never be satisfied.
While your land is everlasting.
May the tiri you sell be against you.

These songs revealed the strong attachment of the people towards land. Gikuyuland was their only supply of daily needs. Land was very important to them. Every song therefore, reflected the value attached to the land and the reasons for fighting for the alienated land. The struggle was therefore a just one because they were fighting for land given to them by Ngai. When the fight became more severe and majority of them were either detained, killed, or imprisoned, the survivors continued to strengthen one another through songs. Some of the songs were even recited to reveal the cause of the harassments. An ex-detainee Eunice Wanjiku (0.1, 12-12-86) said they used to sing that,

We do not mind being arrested,
imprisonment, and detention, or even being taken to lonely islands. Because we shall never stop fighting for this tiri,
Until our country is free.

Freedom, freedom, freedom in this land of Kirinyaga,
Land of happiness with valleys and forests.
Kenya is a black man's country.
Such words made the people have hope in what they were fighting for. They believed that one day they would be free and regain their lands. Eunice Wanjiku (0.1 13-1-87) said that, "by the mentioning of such words like 'tiri witu' in detention camps, we were able to endure the harrassments in the struggle. These songs helped them to comfort one another and this strengthened their devotion to the cause. From the above, there is evidence that, most songs during the Mau Mau struggle and especially those which were related to tiri really helped in mobilizing the people. Some of these songs helped in developing the peoples' political consciousness. Maina-wa-Kinyatti (ed. 1980), has however recorded many songs, some of which reveal the role played by tiri in the struggle. A conclusion can then be drawn that, tiri played an important role in the songs which in turn were an important aspect of the movement. It also shows that the people had a strong attachment to tiri as was reflected in the songs and this was a leading factor in the struggle.

This chapter has revealed the role played by tiri in the many Mau Mau activities. Tiri was held as sacred by the people and in most cases it was the only item that could be exchanged for life. When one died holding it, trying to swallow it, or when one held it in a solemn prayer, it shows that it was the most precious item that the people possessed. They were in all ways ready to fight for it, and to exchange it with life.
All the freedom fighters were made to understand that the cause they were fighting for during the oath ceremonies was land and freedom (Ithaka na Wiyathi). This was portrayed in all activities as has been observed. This was so evident that even a young child at that time knew that the Agikuyu were fighting for a sacred gift that was alienated by greedy foreigners. These activities in the struggle only reveal that the Agikuyu beliefs and customs in relation to tiri led to the Mau Mau struggle.

However, the Agikuyu dreams were not fulfilled after the Mau Mau struggle. So much has changed. According to the majority, freedom after the Mau Mau struggle meant a return to the old traditional ways of life. They had perceived freedom as holding all that was interfered with especially in relation to land tenure, land utilisation, and the rituals related to land. Above all, they were aspiring for the githaka system of tenure under mbari holdings. This meant political, social, economical, and spiritual freedom. However, the land that was perceived as sacred entity changed. The spirit that was in the concept of it, that gave them unity and strength throughout the struggle, perished with it. This only remained among the old people. Land became a capitalistic speculation of a monopolistic commercial ownership as will be discussed in the following chapter.
Colonization in Gikuyuland played a major role in changing most of the customs, beliefs, and practices that were related to the concept of tiri. It should be noted that land in this context is based on the concept of tiri that was so strong among the Agikuyu before colonialism. It is this concept that is changing as tenure, utilisation, and beliefs change. It was the concept that regulated all practices and customs that were related to land.

This chapter is going to trace the changes that occurred in Gikuyuland in relation to land tenure, land utilisation, and religious beliefs that were related to tiri after the Mau Mau struggle. It is only through analysing the changes in the Agikuyu relationship to land practices that the concept of tiri can be viewed today. It has been observed that, the concept of tiri that was in the Agikuyu's minds regulated all the practices related to land. In fact, land alone to the Agikuyu was not important. It was this religious concept of tiri that made land sacred and all that was done in relation to it.
THE CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM OF LAND

TENURE

The end of the Mau Mau struggle accelerated the demarcation of land in Gikuyuland. The purpose for this was to consolidate all the holdings for proper utilisation and hence the issuing of title-deeds. The Agikuyu had no title-deeds before for they were only entitled to the reserves. The land was demarcated to facilitate the growing of cash-crops and to help in conserving the soil. Demarcation also helped the intensification of agriculture in the consolidated farms. The issuing of title-deeds made land a private property for sale. This made the communal land ownership under the githaka system null and void.

Demarcation also went with the laying out of boundaries. This shifted from the ceremonial marking of the boundaries by elders, to the present type. Traditionally, the Agikuyu marked out boundaries by utilising tiri as discussed previously. The laying out of boundaries today has no religious significance and tiri is not used as it was ceremoniously used. Previously, if anyone changed the itoka (lilies that marked out boundaries), he would contaminate thahu (ritual uncleanness). This was a taboo and Ayub Kanja (0.1 3-3-87) said that it was rare. Today, the laying out of the boundaries is done by the District Surveying Department.
These people are employed by the government to mark the boundaries and there are no ceremonies or religious rituals attached to it. The duties of the kiama have now been transferred to the government since land is no longer a religious unit but an economic asset to many people.

The Agikuyu viewed land as a mythological ancestral property. This mythological concept governed the beliefs and practices that were related to land. The system of beliefs sheds light in all that was done to land. Owing to the establishment of European rule, the concept of tiri that governed land tenure has changed from its sacred nature to an economic monetary system. This has resulted from a cash-crop economy that has developed with time. It has in turn made every aspect of tilling land economic. While land in Kiambu was transferred through a solemn adoption ceremony, today it is sold without any religious significance. The religious conditions of redemption are no longer there. The land may be disposed off by the purchaser on his own accord. In the current system, land is considered an economic asset, a system that was introduced by the colonialists through the buying and selling of it. Land today can either be sold or used as a surety to get a loan.

The Githaka system of land tenure previously discussed has also changed. Today, the term githaka may consist of entirely bush or forest land.
The researcher found the githaka concept to exist only among the elders. The young people have no idea of a githaka in the context of a land belonging to a certain mbari. The ownership of land has today shifted from the mbari to individuals. Land is no longer based on communal ownership.

Each plot of land today belongs to a certain individual with a clear title deed issued by the government. This is a new condition under which the land property is held which was non-existent among the Agikuyu before colonialism. The mbari unit that used to own land is non-existent because, as the researcher observed, many people are not even aware of their mbari. There is currently strong individualism that was created by the process of colonization. This has changed the githaka system from an inherited property for all, to a property for sale by certain individuals. Peter Kariuki (0.1, 12-1-87) claimed that,

The githaka which was passed to him from his father freely as an inherited property does not automatically have to be given to his sons. He asked for some money as a muramati of that githaka. For each acre, he demanded five thousand Kenya shillings.

Asked why he had to do this, and land was supposed to be passed freely to the sons, Kariuki continued to argue that,

well, the children of today have no respect for land and since they will
just sell it, I cannot let them have it freely since they have no respect for the muramati.

Kariuki is not alone in this process. It has become a common practice in Kiambu where fathers are selling plots to their sons instead of handing them over to them as inherited property.

The selling of land has led to disputes among relatives especially brothers. This has resulted from the new land tenure system of dividing inherited properties. It is not rare to find rich members of a family who have prospered and bought land elsewhere fighting and disputing over their father's small farms.

In the examples cited below, the characters chose to remain anonymous and so their real names are left out.

Njoroge is a rich man who has bought a coffee estate of 650 acres in Kiambaa division, near Kiambu town. He comes from Kikuyu division, where his late father, Njuguna, had an eight acre piece of land. His polygamous father had four wives with seven sons.

According to the old Agikuyu method of land acquisition, this land was to be divided up among the wives who would then give it to their sons. It would have been divided four times for each wife to have two acres. This was regardless of whether a wife had one or many sons. Njoroge's mother has three poor sons. Njoroge has a right to inherit his father's land but he can as well leave it to his brothers.
Njoroge's brothers expected him not to claim the small piece of land owing to the fact that, he owns such a big piece of land. However, Njoroge insists on it and says that, the brothers have to either give him the land, or pay for its equivalent. He needed 120,000/- Kenya shillings. The brothers could not raise the money, and so Njoroge sold it to someone else.

Mwaniki also comes from Kikuyu Division. He left for Embu in 1960 and became very prosperous. His father, Ngige, also polygamous, has eight sons and a four acre piece of land. When his father died, Mwaniki came back and insisted on owning an equal share of land with his poor brothers. It is true he had a right to the land, but as a prosperous member, he would have left the land to his poor brothers. However, he got the land and sold it to his younger brother at 35,000 Kenya shillings.

The above two examples reveal a new system of tenure among the Agikuyu where brothers dispute over land. This shows a new concept among the people from where all members of a certain mbari utilised the land for the welfare of everybody. This has changed. There is strong individualism in the system of land tenure. Land is no longer a sacred communal property for everybody's welfare. Land is now viewed as something that can be exchanged with money.
It is now held under a complete private form of ownership for the communal ownership is no longer there. The change has been initiated and stimulated by the modern cash-crop economy which makes every aspect of land utilisation geared towards fetching money.

Other examples revealed these changes and portrayed the fact that the majority of the people hold in relation to land. According to James Oduor (0.1, 14-9-87) "most of the problems they encounter in issuing title-deeds in the district are mainly due to people selling their pieces of land to more than one person." James is the Land Registrar's Officer. He said that an individual can sell his piece of land to another at a certain amount of money, and before the sale transfers are complete, he sells the same piece to another person. At such cases the government has to intervene.

The Resident Magistrate in Kiambu Law Courts also complained of similar cases. He cited an example of a prolonged land case where a man in Githunguri division had two wives. The children of the younger wife forged their father's signature and transferred all his property to themselves when he was in hospital. They claimed that their father had given them that land because they were taking care of him more than their step-brothers. The others did not deserve any property at all. These sons would have claimed to be aramati of the land, but even so, they had no right to take all their fathers's land.
The *muramati* traditionally only inherited a small extra piece and not in all cases.

While the less fortunate people in the indigenous Agikuyu community were granted land under certain conditions of tenure such as *ahoi*, *athami* or *aciarwa*, such rights are no longer held. No one can today allow anyone else to occupy his land under any of the above. Today there has arisen a new system of tenure that of buying and transferring of land. This is now the method where somebody can occupy another's property. This is a change that has occurred where land is exchanged with money. Asked why this is so, Mwaura (0.1, 13-4-87) replied that, "who would give land freely, when it is so expensive?" This has made the less fortunate people who cannot afford to buy land work as squatters especially in large coffee estates in Kiambu.

A major change has also occurred in the owning of land. In the traditional Agikuyu community, land was never owned by women. Women were only considered a media of inheritance but were never entitled to any *githaka*. They had only user rights of cultivation and passing it on to their sons. However, they had more rights than the *ahoi* for they were considered as members of that *githaka*. Today any member of the community who can afford land is entitled to it.

The above discussion has portrayed the various changes in the system of land tenure in Gikuyuland.
It has been observed that the concept of tiri has changed from being religious to economic. This has governed the system of land tenure. The religious concept of tiri is non-existent today and people view land as a property for earning money. However, the religious concept of tiri has persisted among a few old people who keep on insisting that they be buried on their father's land. This is for re-union with the dead who are believed to be buried in the ancestral land. The young do not have this view and can be buried anywhere. Tiri that used to link the unborn, the living, the dead, and with Ngai, is today viewed as a property that can be sold, loaned, or leased. This is a method that came with the Europeans.

**CHANGES IN LAND UTILISATION**

The concept of tiri among the Agikuyu not only governed land tenure but also utilisation. Land utilisation has therefore changed as the concept changes. Since land has become a private enterprise, utilisation has also become private. Every form of land utilisation today depends on how much money it fetches in the market for nothing is held communally. There however exists co-operative societies which own lands, but even in these, some money has to be contributed.

The indigenous crops mainly grown to prevent hunger have been replaced with other crops, mainly cash-crops. Eunice Wanjiku (0.1, 2-2-87) said that, "The Agikuyu of Kiambu have the market in mind when planting."
Most of their crops are for commercial purposes. The current main crops are coffee, tea, maize, pyrethrum, and various vegetables. Middleton and Kershaw (1972, 18) argue that,

The diet of the present day Kikuyu still contains most of the foods mentioned, maize, beans, sweet and European potatoes, bananas and vegetables. The modern additions, bread, tea, milk, (especially tea) and rice are of growing importance, as is meat. Individual diets vary with wealth, availability of land to grow food, and place of living.

The diet has also included fish and eggs. Mbugua (0.1, 14-4-87) reckoned that, "people eat what is available." The use of manure, fertilizers, and insecticides have increased both the productivity from the farms and the variety of crops. The growing of vegetables especially in Limuru, Kikuyu, and Kiambaa divisions has been stimulated by the access to the market.

The concept of tiri held has also affected the keeping of domestic animals. While the standard value of commodities was traditionally reckoned in goats, today their value has ceased. These were the currency for the Agikuyu and were mainly kept for social, economic, and religious purposes. The goats have now been replaced by cows, hens, and pigs.
These are very common in the highly populated divisions of Kiambu. Goats are only kept by a few individuals around Limuru. The people are now practising the modern method of keeping cattle and goats indoors, hence the zero grazing. The elimination of goats as the main form of saving has been stimulated by investing money in banks or in other valuable items like cars and farms.

Cattle were traditionally kept for prestige. Today they have replaced goats in economic value. A number of people rare them for commercial purposes. The average person in Kiambu has at least one cow for milk consumption. The Agikuyu traditionally were not used to cow's milk but were used to goat's milk. The rich people today have large herds especially in the former settled areas of Limuru. These cows are reared in a commercialised way where milk and meat are precious expensive products. People have also reared pigs and hens for meat and eggs respectively. These are mainly kept in Kikuyu and Kiambaa divisions.

On the other hand, the work of blacksmiths which utilised tiri has been replaced with modern iron work. The traditional cooking pots have also been replaced by sufurias which are made from iron. The pots were made from tiri but today there are no moulders in Kiambu. Owing to the economic system that is based on a cash-crop economy, land has become more valuable and this in turn has made its utilisation very commercialised.
The commercialised nature of land utilisation has increased the intensification. Every form of utilisation is based on the concept of *tiri* that is held by the Agikuyu today. The concept of *tiri* has changed from a sacred communal nature to a commercial private type of utilisation. This is based on a monetary system.

**THE CHANGES IN THE RELIGIOUS RITUALS AND BELIEFS RELATED TO TIRI**

The Agikuyu thought of life after death as organised on the same lines as life on earth. There was therefore a strong bond of relationship between the unborn, living, the dead, with Ngai. The dead were covered by the *tiri* and they were appeased through pouring libations. With the introduction of colonialism, many of these beliefs changed. A survey of the Agikuyu religious beliefs today portrays this change. This will be discussed in two dimensions, first in the changes that took place in the rituals that utilised *tiri* indirectly, and second in those that used *tiri* directly. The usage of *tiri* in all these reveals the concept and role that it played in the society.

In the rituals where *tiri* was used indirectly, much has changed. The introduction of scientific agriculture has altered all this. The harvests today have no religious significance. Christians associate heavy harvests with God's blessings and therefore offer prayers as thanksgiving.
Good harvests are a result of a combination of inputs in farms namely, manure, fertilizers, and insecticides, as well as ample rainfall. The traditional ceremony of giving Ngal the first crops has been replaced with the magetha (taking the first fruits to the church) in the Christian Churches.

However, since not all Christians are farmers, the magetha can be in any form, farm produce or money. Other farmers specialise in cash crops like tea and coffee which cannot be taken to the Church. In the traditional Agikuyu community there was nothing else other than crops that could be used in this ritual. The crops could never be plucked from the farms before the ritual of sprinkling the farms, the granaries and the paths with a mixture of tiri, taatha, and blood. Most of these changes have been stimulated by the current religions and denominations. In Gikuyuland, everybody belonged to the same religion. There were no sects and people could gather together for a common prayer. The many religious sects in the society cannot allow people to perform any ritual together.

The rituals that utilised tiri directly have also changed. To start with, tiri played a major role at the birth of a child. These rituals have ceased because majority of the births are performed in hospitals, where no rituals are performed. The after-birth that used to act as a symbol of fertility is today a disposal considered to be very dirty.
Such rituals were performed to ensure the continuity of life. Today they are guaranteed by modern clinic facilities and good diet. The death of children is today interpreted as caused by bad health and not because of lack of rituals.

The burying of the after-birth was also believed to unite the child with the living-dead who lay covered by tiri. In the current Agikuyu society, Christianity has rendered these as Ngoma (bad spirits) and is so much against anybody, who even mention them. A child cannot therefore be united with Ngoma. He has to be incorporated in the communion of saints through baptism and consencration. These two rituals have completely wiped out the rituals formerly performed at birth and the second birth, which does not exist today.

The circumcision ritual has also changed. The ceremony consisted of a number of rituals that used tiri as has been discussed previously. The Europeans tried so many ways of opposing the ritual during the colonial times. This opposition was taken over by the Christian Churches. These have banned female circumcision especially to members of the churches. Those who practice the ritual do it very secretely and if they are known, they are ex-communicated from the church ritual such as holy communion. The members of the churches are prohibited from carrying out the rituals. The church is not only against the actual cutting but also the rituals associated with the ceremony.
These include the dances. They are seen as evil and not true member of the church can participate in them.

On the other hand, the government is also against female circumcision and all the rituals associated with it. These are also found evil and the government has joined the church in banning them. However, people who opt the ritual are still existing and these do it very secretly. Wanjiru Mwaniki (0.1, 24-4-87) who comes from Limuru said that the ritual is still practised in her own village. She however clarified that it is very secret and performed by people who are not educated and Christians. The educated and the Christians do not associate themselves with it. Those who do it, perform it very secretly.

The male circumcision has also changed. In the ritual, only the physical part of it has persisted and it is performed in hospitals. The social and spiritual impact which were associated with the concept of tiri is no longer there. This was important for it was believed to bind the initiate with the ancestors. Circumcision hence no longer holds the significance it used to in the society. There are so many factors that have stimulated these such as western education, modern hospitals, western religions, urbanisation, and finally, mixed customs which have resulted from mixed marriages.
The marriage ceremony has also changed. There were a series of rituals performed during marriage times which revealed the concept of tiri. The marriage rituals are now performed in the churches, in the traditional way or at the Government Registrar's office. In all these, the rituals that used tiri are non-existent. The ceremonial taking of the woman to the gardens has also stopped. Today, owing to the modern social-economic mode of production, where majority of the people who wed in churches are working in offices, people do not associate themselves with the farms. On the other hand, traditional beer brewing and drinking has been stopped by the Government. Today beer for such ceremonies is bought and it does not have the same religious implication like before.

Finally, changes have also occurred in the rituals that utilised tiri as a symbol of life. Tiri in these rituals was held as a healing factor especially in diseases which were believed to be caused by jealous people. Owing to the modern education, there is an interpretation of almost every kind of disease. Most people go to hospitals for treatment. There are also ways of prevention of these diseases like measles. However, it should be noted that, certain beliefs have persisted among the old people who have not been influenced by the above factors.
In conclusion, it has been observed that, the indigenous Agikuyu attached great religious importance to land. This persisted during the colonial period despite the strong opposition to their beliefs by the Europeans. The Europeans interrupted these beliefs and interfered with the customs, rituals and practices that the people held towards tiri. The Agikuyu resisted against these western influence but some had already taken root. The mythical religious concept of tiri that had so much regulated land issues has changed. This was replaced by a modern cash-crop mode of production which controls the economy in Gikuyuland. Land was transferred from a mythological religious security to an economic monetary security as has been analysed in this chapter. It has also shown that the Agikuyu significance of tiri is no longer religious but economic.
CONCLUSION

The present study has sought to determine whether the Agikuyu customs, beliefs and practices in relation to tiri had any significance in the Mau Mau struggle. In order to achieve this, certain activities, rituals, and practices that utilized tiri have been analysed both before colonialism and after. The study has also analysed these in the Mau Mau struggle as well as the significance of tiri today. By analysing all these the researcher has arrived at several major findings and conclusions.

First, tiri was a sacred gift from Ngai to all. The Agikuyu utilised it and hence maintained land for everybody's welfare. This was portrayed in utilisation of land, tenure, and in the beliefs related to tiri. Tiri was important in all economical, political, physical, and spiritual activities. The study has emphasized the fact that, all that was done in relation to land was based on the concept of tiri. The manner in which these were organised and administered were so much in accordance with the concept of tiri held. Tiri, formed a major part of the peoples' lives for it was the core of their beliefs and activities. This conclusion was arrived at after careful analysis of the Agikuyu relations to land.
Secondly, the study has found out that there was a deep relationship between the unborn, the living, the dead, with Ngai. The dead acted as intermediaries between the living and Ngai. The dead lay covered in the tiri. The Agikuyu maintained the link between the living and the dead through pouring libations to the tiri. It was believed that such a bond helped the Agikuyu to maintain social harmony. This unity was reflected in social and religious functions where beer was always poured in the tiri inviting the dead to such activities. The study of such activities then revealed that, there was a strong relationship between the concept of tiri in Gikuyuland and the peoples' religious attitudes.

Thirdly, the researcher found that the interference with the Agikuyu beliefs and customs held about tiri set in motion feelings of antagonism and resistance to colonial rule. The Agikuyu reacted strongly against land grabbing, alienation, and interruption in rituals that utilised tiri.

It was this concept of tiri believed to be sacred, that governed all forms of land utilisation. This was clearly reflected in the Mau Mau activities such as songs, prayers, and oaths. The usage of tiri in all these was to re-affirm the Agikuyu faith in Ngai, for they were fighting for a land that was God-given, and then for a religion and culture that they had inherited from their ancestors.
The traditional concept of Ngai was observed in all activities as the giver of land.

The study has therefore clarified the fact that it was the interference of such beliefs that broke the sacred bond. With the establishment of colonial rule, there was an interruption in all activities related to land. This created an emptiness that in turn helped to unite the people in the Mau Mau struggle. It also helped in making the people more committed to the liberation struggle. The concept of tiri held by the Agikuyu made the land sacred for the belief that it was God-given. The Agikuyu had all the reason therefore to defend it owing to this strong attachment. They had all along considered the earth as their 'mother' for the fact that all life and all activities were centred on it. Tiri acted as a centre of all physical, economical, social, and spiritual activities. The Agikuyu had therefore valued tiri for the fact that it regulated their whole life.

Finally, the study has analysed the significance of tiri in Gikuyuland today. It has been found that the Agikuyu concept of tiri which was sacred, has changed. Land is now governed by a monetary system which is based on a cash-crop economy. The study has clarified this fact by analysing the changes in the current system of land tenure, utilisation, and beliefs that are related to tiri.
The researcher has found out that the Agikuyu religious concept of tiri today has changed from what it was before and during colonial times. Land is no longer considered a sacred gift from Ngai for the welfare of all. It is an economic asset limited to only a few people. Land was based on the concept of tiri that has changed with time. Land for its sake was not important and it was only significant in relation to the concept of tiri. Land as a sacred gift could not be owned by anybody. It belonged to the clan. Today, land has been transferred to a private ownership entity and hence it has no religious significance. This has made the Agikuyu concept of tiri to change.

In conclusion, the researcher has found that this study has helped to substantiate the basic values of the Agikuyu and their land. It has portrayed the religious values among the Agikuyu and has helped to show how far they were used in holding the culture and customs. It has also shown how these values were utilised in the liberation struggle which was geared to the upholding of culture, return of alienated lands, and a social, economic, political, and religious freedom. The researcher therefore calls for other scholars in the African Traditional Religion to carry out research in other Agikuyu religious values in the Mau Mau struggle. Such a study would help to show how the Agikuyu used their religious values and utilised them at a time of national crisis.
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GLOSSARY

Aathi - A race believed to have occupied Gikuyuland before the Agikuyu.

Batuni - Platoon on battallion

Bururi witu - Our country.

Ciana cia Ngoriai - Orphans

Dini - Swahili word for religion.

Gakunia - A hooded and masked agent of the British colonial government.

Gikama - Mixture obtained by blacksmiths after baking sand.

Gita - A kind of a disease that was believed to affect someone when an older relative complained about one.

Githaka/Ithaka - Land/lands

Githemengu - A disease that affected people with certain personal qualities. This happened when somebody with this type of quality was admired by someone who could pass the disease to him.

Githunu - A communal hut where initiates stayed after being circumcised.

Gumba - A race that occupied Gikuyuland before the Agikuyu people.
Hondo - A kind of disease that affected people with certain traits. This was less serious than Githemengu.

Ihii cia mbuci - Forest fighters.

Ihii cia mutitu - Forest fighters.

Ithanwa - An axe.

Itungati - A name that referred to the forest fighters during the Mau Mau struggle.

Kamatimu - Meant loyalists during the emergency period. It was used traditionally to mean junior elders.

Kiama - A Council of village elders that settled disputes.

Kiengere - A pinkish small frog.

Kihembe - A honey container.

Kiriro - Period of crying by a newly wedded wife.

Kiriu - Modernization.

Koirugo - A serious oath taken during land disputes.

Kuhakwo ira - A ceremony performed to welcome the initiates home from the circumcision communal home. It includes smearing the initiate with white chalk.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuhotwo</td>
<td>To be defeated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuhura muthanga</td>
<td>To bake sand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumagaria mwana</td>
<td>Literally meant to escort the child. A ceremony performed after eight days to take the child to the farms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunyua muuma</td>
<td>To take an oath or to swear in a ritual ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuuna Ithaka</td>
<td>To clear the forests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwihita</td>
<td>To swear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwiraha</td>
<td>To exalt oneself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maaha</td>
<td>Items for compensation during the Agikuyu-Ndurubu land transactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magetha</td>
<td>Harvests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitho aciana</td>
<td>A race of people believed to have occupied Kiambu before the Agikuyu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitu</td>
<td>Mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mambura</td>
<td>Circumcision rituals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managu</td>
<td>Edible green leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matooka/Itoka</td>
<td>Lilies/Lily for marking out boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbaki</td>
<td>Tobacco.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbari</td>
<td>Family grouping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbariki</td>
<td>Castor oil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirani</td>
<td>Young fighters in the forest during the Mau Mau struggle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mogai</td>
<td>Name of God meaning divider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mubia</td>
<td>Catholic priest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muciarwa/Aciarwa</td>
<td>A foreigner/foreigners adopted by a wealthy man and given cultivation rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugaa</td>
<td>A common shrub in oaths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugeni</td>
<td>Visitor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugere</td>
<td>A shrub used as a symbol in oaths and rituals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugikuyu</td>
<td>An individual in the ethnic community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agikuyu</td>
<td>All individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugunda/Migunda</td>
<td>Garden/Gardens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugumo/Migumo</td>
<td>Sycamore tree(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugiro</td>
<td>Taboo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muguri/Aguri</td>
<td>Buyer/Buyers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugwanja Muuru</td>
<td>Ominous seven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhia</td>
<td>A type of plant for making porridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhiriga</td>
<td>Clan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhoi/Ahoi</td>
<td>A tenant/tenants at will in the Agikuyu society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhu-kura</td>
<td>Modia - white.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukurwe wa Gathanga</td>
<td>Original home of the first ancestors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muramati</td>
<td>A trustee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthaka</td>
<td>Beautiful person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthami/Athami</td>
<td>A migrant/migrants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthirigu</td>
<td>A traditional dance performed by the Agikuyu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutonyi</td>
<td>An elder who welcomes initiate to his father's home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthungu</td>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwati</td>
<td>A young she-goat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwenda ruhiu/Endia ruhiu</td>
<td>(A man/men who sell the sword) - the genitor of children belonging to his mother's mbari.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwene</td>
<td>Owner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ene</td>
<td>Owners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndemengo</td>
<td>The cutting act in circumcision rituals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndoriyo ni irio ici</td>
<td>May these foods be against me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndorubu</td>
<td>A curse to the self during oaths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndothurwo ni irio ici</td>
<td>May these foods be against me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngai</td>
<td>The Agikuyu name of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngata</td>
<td>A bone that connects the head to the spine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngige</td>
<td>Locusts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngoima</td>
<td>A ritual goat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngoma</td>
<td>Spirits of the dead. Christians use it to mean devil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngungga</td>
<td>Army worms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngwaro</td>
<td>Strips of a goat's skin tied to the arms or legs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njahe</td>
<td>A type of black peas especially for nursing mothers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njegeni</td>
<td>A stinging plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njugu</td>
<td>Peas specially cooked for circumcised people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyakeru</td>
<td>A name for Europeans used during colonial times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyeki ya kigutu</td>
<td>Thatching grass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyina</td>
<td>Mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyeni</td>
<td>All edible green leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njohi</td>
<td>Traditional beer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyuai</td>
<td>Drink it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taatha</td>
<td>Stomach contents of a goat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai-tai</td>
<td>Traitors operating in Nairobi during emergency period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terere</td>
<td>Type of edible leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiri (Tiiri)</td>
<td>Brown light friable part of earth believed to be sacred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togotia</td>
<td>Type of edible leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thabai</td>
<td>A stinging plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thahu</td>
<td>Ritual uncleanness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai thathaiya</td>
<td>Words said after prayers to appease God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngai thai</td>
<td>Africans who betrayed the freedom fighters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thaka</td>
<td>Enemies of the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thata cia bururi</td>
<td>Enemies of the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thenge</td>
<td>He-goat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu cia bururi</td>
<td>Enemies of the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuthi</td>
<td>Word used to refer to traitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>during the Emergency period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruhiu</td>
<td>Sword.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruoro</td>
<td>Branding iron.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruungu</td>
<td>A creeping plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rui</td>
<td>River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruhonge</td>
<td>Part of a goat's meat used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in oaths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riumba</td>
<td>Clay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uthomi</td>
<td>Christianity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanyu</td>
<td>Yours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiyathi</td>
<td>Freedom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY


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