THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF KILUMI RITUALS, SONGS AND DANCES AMONG THE AKAMBA OF KITUI DISTRICT

BY

JOSEPHINE NDBANU MUSAU

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

MAY 1991
This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

JOSEPHINE NDANU MUSAU

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors.

DR. TED GROENEWEGEN
SENIOR LECTURER
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

DR. ANNE NASIMIYU
SENIOR LECTURER
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
This study is dedicated to my parents, Julius Mwinzila Musau and Damaris Kasyoka, without whose encouragement since my childhood, I would not have achieved my goals.

The study is also in memory of my late son, Charlie Kyalo.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the co-operation and assistance of so many people. In particular, I am highly indebted to my main supervisor Dr. Ted Groenewegen for the interest, dedication, encouragement and professional advice he gave me in writing this thesis.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to my second supervisor, Dr. Anne Nasimiyu for her very useful and constructive comments and suggestions which were of paramount importance.

My special thanks go to Dr. Kihara-Ndirangu of Kenyatta University who showed a continued interest in my study, studied the work carefully and gave many valuable suggestions.

I owe my gratitude to Dr. Muthiani, Dr. Kavyu, Mr. Katola and Mr. Esese for having gone through the first drafts of my study. Their advice and guidance were a source of improvement for the thesis.

My thanks also go to my oral informants for their rich and authentic data which was the backbone of my study. I also extend my gratitude to all my friends and relatives who gave valuable assistance and suggestions.
I owe a very great deal to Ms. Lucy Munge of the Department of Educational Foundations, Kenyatta University, who spent long hours typing this thesis.

JOSEPHINE NDANU MUSAU
ABSTRACT

This is a study of kilumi among the Akamba of Kitui District. It was undertaken because no in-depth study had been written on the Akamba religious dances and songs. The study investigates, analyzes and interprets kilumi, a type of religious dance never systematically analyzed before. By filling this gap in research literature, this study has provided scholars of religious songs and dances elsewhere with some useful insights.

This study explicates the factors contributing to the decline of the kilumi dances. However, it should be noted that kilumi as an established cultural dance remains very much alive to the Akamba, although its socio-religious occasions are on the decrease. Special attention is paid to kilumi song texts because through them, the Akamba express deep reverence for their ancestral spirits.

The researcher participated in kilumi dances, observed and subsequently analysed the religious significance of kilumi rituals, songs and dances - the main objective of the study. The respondents were sampled from the five divisions of Kitui District. The researcher constructed a flexible questionnaire which was used as a tool of procuring the necessary
information from both traditional and church elders. The interviews were tape recorded when possible and later transcribed. These raw data which constituted the main source were augmented by information from the libraries to provide the basis for analysis and interpretation. Data collected was classified into four categories suggested by the Akamba elders themselves. Accordingly, the kilumi rituals and dances fall into four main groups, namely:

1. Worship kilumi
2. Therapeutic kilumi
3. Cleansing kilumi
4. Initiation kilumi

The songs are categorised according to the various spirits which are believed to possess individuals in the kilumi dances.

One of the findings of this study is that formal education, urbanization, Western technology and Christianity are the major influences which have made the kilumi rituals and dance occasions to decrease. However, it was discovered that the medicine people and the strong beliefs of the Akamba have contributed to the survival of kilumi.
This thesis has been organized into five chapters. Chapter One gives the background for the whole study, both the cultural-religious background of the Akamba, and the basic research design. Chapter Two reviews the literature related to this study's topic in order to show the existing information. Chapter Three gives an analysis of the kilumi songs and their religious interpretations. In chapter Four, kilumi rituals and dances have been described and analysed. In this chapter, also, the factors affecting these phenomena have been explicated. The chapter shows that, despite the impact of cultural flux, these phenomena continue to be a reality. Chapter five summarises the whole thesis and gives the major findings and conclusive remarks of the study. In it, various suggestions are made, for example, it is suggested that a kind of dialogue should exist between the indigenous Akamba and Christians for the latter to become acceptable to the former.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Abbreviations</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background to the Study                      | 1    |
1.2 Statement of the Problem                         | 6    |
1.3 Geographical Setting of Ukambani                 | 8    |
1.4 Objectives of the Study                          | 9    |
1.5 Research Premises                                | 10   |
1.6 Significance of the Study                         | 10   |
1.7 Theoretical Framework                            | 12   |
1.8 Research Methodology                             | 16   |
1.9 Limitations of the Study                         | 24   |
1.10 Features of Akamba Economy                      | 25   |
1.11 Akamba Social System                            | 26   |
1.12 Akamba Religious Beliefs                        | 29   |
1.13 Definition of Terms                              | 35   |
1.14 Organization of the Rest of the Chapters        | 36   |
Notes                                                | 38   |
CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ... 39
Notes ............................................. 53

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF THE SONGS AND THEIR RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION

3.0 Introduction .................................. 54
3.1 Ancestral Akamba Spirits ...................... 59
3.2 Spirits Associated with Weather .............. 63
3.3 Foreign Spirits ................................ 78
3.4 Animal-like Spirits ............................ 81
3.5 Vehicle-like Spirits ............................ 86
3.6. Mythical Mountain Songs ..................... 92
3.7 Other Songs .................................. 98
Notes ............................................. 101

CHAPTER FOUR: KILUMI RITUALS, DANCES, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

4.0 Introduction .................................. 103
4.1 Redressive Kilumi Rituals ..................... 104
4.1.1 Worship Kilumi ............................. 105
4.1.2 Ithembo - Traditional Shrine .............. 115
4.1.2.1 The Origin of the Shrines .......... 117
4.2 Kilumi Dance as a Therapy .................... 120
4.2.1 Prescription of Kilumi Dance .............. 121
4.3 Cleansing Kilumi danced at the Isyuka ...... 124
4.3.1 Purification of Crops and Harvesting Ceremony ................................ 127
4.3.2 Kilumi Dance After Death or Birth ........ 131
## 4.4 Life Crisis or Initiation Kilumi

- 4.4.1 Initiation of a Songster
- 4.4.2 Initiation of a medicineperson

## 4.5 Kilumi Religious Beliefs and Experiences

- 4.5.1 Lala the Prophet
- 4.5.2 Kathambi the Prophetess

## 4.6 The Religious Significance of Kilumi Rituals, Songs and Dances

## 4.7 Factors Affecting Kilumi Rituals, Songs and Dances

- 4.7.1 Christianity
- 4.7.2 Education
- 4.7.3 Urbanization

## Notes

### CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Summary of the Study
- 5.2 Summary of the Findings
- 5.3 Concluding Remarks
- 5.4 Recommendations and Suggestions

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

### APPENDICES

- A - Glossary of Kikamba Words used in the Study
- B - List of Oral Informants
- C - Sample Questions for Traditional Elders
- D - Sample Questions for Church Elders
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Position of Kitui District in Kenya ........</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sampled Locations in Kitui District ..........</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed.</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td>For Example</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>et cetera (and so forth)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig.</td>
<td>Figure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.e</td>
<td>id est (that is)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.I</td>
<td>Oral Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl.</td>
<td>Plural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sing.</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transl.</td>
<td>Translated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vol.</td>
<td>Volume</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chap.</td>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The focus of this study is on Akamba traditional, kilumi rituals with specific attention to songs and dances. Kilumi is a form of a religious or sacred dance comprising of many rituals. Kilumi is performed during times of sorrow such as lack of rains, drought and famine; during social occasions or times of joy such as harvesting, planting and initiation of medicine people; and as a means of protection, especially after the death of a person or after the birth of an illegitimate child.

Nadel (1970) states that a ritual is any non-instinctive predictable action or a series of actions that cannot be justified by a 'rational' means-to-ends type of explanation. However, this study was concerned with religious ritual which is the prescribed form of uttered words, or actions which constitute an act of worship; and is extended to the supernatural world. That is, in religious rituals, people struggle to comprehend their relationship with the cosmic reality. Therefore, kilumi rituals are perceived as ways of
communicating something of religious significance through words, symbols and actions.

Frequently, songs and dances form an integral part of the human society for they fulfil socio-political and religious functions. In the traditional African setting, songs prove to be an authentic expression of the outlook of the people, as observed by Mbiti (1975). For example, when sung as the drummers beat the miase (kilumi drums) rhythmically, the songs literally express the Akamba hopes, fears, thoughts and beliefs.

Blacking (1973) contends that music is a form of communication and in a common cultural context, specific music can evoke feelings that are fearful, apprehensive, passionate, patriotic and religious, just but to mention a few. Seemingly, "music is deeply concerned with human feelings and experiences in society" (Blacking 1973:10).

In most cases, the indigenous Akamba religious rituals are accompanied by music, singing and dancing. For the Akamba, singing is part and parcel of dancing because their traditional expression for singing is kwina wathi, which literary means "to sing a dance",
(kwina kilumi, means to dance kilumi). In kilumi, the role of traditional songs and dances is very significant. Concurrently, Tracey (1962) states that dance action is an abiding passion with most Africans for it is a sincere act of devotion to the deity and it is an outward sign of worship. Therefore, dance becomes a medium of religious expression.

Through symbols and rituals each religious community tries to communicate to its members the meaning of people's attitude to ultimate reality and to their fellow human beings; and tries to impart the norm of social organization (Wach 1958:xxx1). Also, Eliade (1987) maintains that, ritual and symbol are perceived as intrinsic embodiments of the sacred essence. Thus, they bring the real presence of the religious depth dimension into the lives of its experients. In bodily gesture, the chant, dance, primordial presences are made actual again, time is renewed and the universe regenerated.

Kilumi is therefore, viewed as a religious dance whose distinguishing features are not forms or even content per se, but rather the motivation or intention of this dance. Its rituals and songs are of a religious significance to the adherents.
The term 'religious' may have different meanings to different people. For example, James (1960) feels that any feelings, acts and experiences so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine can be termed as being 'religious'. Ndeti (1967:340) had this to say:

The Akamba recognize acts as religious only if they are recounted in myth. These acts are the manifestations of the supreme impersonal order.

Finnegan (1970) views poetry as 'religious' in three ways, namely:

(a) If the content is about mystical actions of gods or direct religious instruction or invocation;

(b) If it is recited by those who are regarded as religious specialists;

(c) If it is performed on occasions which are generally agreed to be religious.

However, the limitation of the three criteria is that the three do not always coincide.

Nevertheless, Smart (1969) enumerates some standards we need to consider in order to judge a particular mode of life, or practice to be 'religious'.
He argues that a certain system of belief or mode of life may qualify as a religion only if it fulfils or contains the following six dimensions.

(i) Social dimension: A religious tradition consists of people organized institutionally, where the institutions are either specifically and separately devoted to the continuance and expression of the tradition or where they are not differentiated but form part of the total fabric of a society.

(ii) Ritual dimension: The activities of the people of a religious tradition will incorporate rituals.

(iii) Experiential dimension: Through rituals, people hope to have contact with and participate in the invisible world, that is, they have certain religious experiences.

(iv) Doctrinal dimension: This is an attempt to give system clarity and intellectual power to what is revealed through mythological and symbolic language of religious faith and ritual.

(v) Mythological dimension: This includes a collection of myths, images and stories through which the invisible world is symbolised.
(vi) Ethical dimension: It is constituted by the moral and social beliefs of a tradition.

(vii) Eschatological dimension: One may add this seventh dimension as stated by Mbiti (1986). It includes the reality of communion with the dead and responsibility to the yet unborn.

Accordingly, in this study, the above definitions are adopted and the term 'religious' is used as meaning "anything believed to be relating to the world beyond this visible world". Also, the term 'significance' is used in relation to what the kilumi rituals, dances and songs mean to the Akamba, both in the past and at the present time.

In summary, this study presents the details of the observances and ritual procedures connected with kilumi; with a view to revealing the role kilumi plays to enhance traditional beliefs and social cohesion among the Akamba. In other words, the study attempted to show to what extent kilumi confirms the religious beliefs and attitudes of the Akamba.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Generally, many studies on ethnomusicology have been done in Africa, but few have penetratively
considered the religious role of African traditional songs and dances. According to Siwela (1979), in the past, ethno-musicology has devoted itself primarily to the analysis of the sounds without reference to their cultural matrix and to what music is and does in human society. This limitation extends to the Akamba community in which little research and analysis of their songs and dances has been done to establish their religious significance. Therefore, in the context of a ritual, the purpose of this study was to investigate and illustrate specifically the religio-cultural significance of kilumi dances, rituals and songs among the Akamba of Kitui District.

It has been obvious that, in the past, there has been a denial of African cultural heritage which emanated from racial prejudice. Scholars like Ndeti (1972), Muthiani (1972), Darkwa (1979) and Nketia (1979) attribute this denial to colonial education, Christianity, urbanization and Western technology. For example, the missionaries who carried to Africa their religious and cultural values assumed that African traditional beliefs were paganistic and inferior to Christianity. And with this kind of attitude, some Africans who attended the early mission schools became new elites and were no longer able to identify completely with
their traditional heritage. Consequently, African culture has been misunderstood, misplaced, suppressed and misrepresented. These misgivings prompted the researcher to study kilumi rituals, songs and dances in order to explicate the religious significance of these phenomena.

1.3 GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF UKAMBANI

The Akamba are a bantu people of Eastern Province of Kenya. Administratively, they occupy two vast districts, namely Kitui and Masaku (see map 1). These district names are said to have originated from the white missionaries. Masaku was named after Chief Masaku which was later anglicised to Machakos, while Kitui was named after some German missionaries (Ndeti 1967:87). However, one of the oral informants emphasized that:

Kitui was named after a certain well (kithima) in Kalundu market, where people used to brew sugarcane beer. After the German missionaries arrived at this well, they erected a post (kitui) on that specific area and from then onwards the name Kitui emerged. Therefore, the name was derived from kutua uki - to brew beer (Nditi Mwanza, O.I., 24/9/1989).

This study was limited to Kitui District which borders Machakos to the West, Meru and Embu to the North,
Taita Taveta to the South and Tana River to the East. The district is divided into five administrative divisions. These are divided into locations and further subdivided into sub-locations (see map II). Central division is the largest in terms of land area and it is densely populated.

Nationwide, the Akamba are the fourth largest Kenyan ethnic group. About 85% still live in the predominant districts of Kitui and Machakos (Kenya Population Census, 1979). Others have moved to other districts for a livelihood. For example, some Akamba are in the Coast Province (Mariakani) and in parts of Tanzania. Traditionally, it is believed that the Akamba and Nyamwezi were once the same people. Infact, the Akamba referred to the Nyamwezi as mutani/atani, meaning "one of a family, or a relative". The Akamba from Kitui were called Athaisu and they referred to those from Machakos as Malela which literary means "floaters". According to Ivulila (1982), this name has more unfriendly connotations, it means vagabonds.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was set out with three objectives. First, to classify and describe the different categories of songs and dances of the Akamba. Second, to
identify and explain the religious beliefs and experiences of the Akamba as reflected in the kilumi rituals, songs and dances. And third, to investigate and establish the factors which have influenced the appreciation of kilumi beliefs, values, dance practices and songs.

1.5 RESEARCH PREMISES

The study was based on the premises that:

(i) The kilumi songs and dances of the Akamba reflect a variety of religious beliefs and experiences.

(ii) Even with the establishment of Christianity, Western education, urbanization and industrial technology, traditional kilumi dances and songs have continued to play a significant role among the Akamba.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Generally, African religion is the product of the thinking and experiences of our foreparents whose traditions are oral; in other words, written in their souls, languages and skills and not necessarily on pieces of paper or theological texts (Mbiti 1975).
Songs and dances were a significant form of artistic expressions among the Akamba, which had particular social functions. Among the many indigenous Akamba songs and dances, kilumi was the most important religious dance. As mentioned elsewhere in the study there is scarce information on kilumi as a ritual dance. Most of the available writings are concerned with Akamba socio-political life with only incidental references to kilumi. And what has been done avoids the analysis of kilumi songs. Therefore, this study systematically analysed kilumi rituals, dances and songs in order to show their religious role among the Akamba.

According to Zake (1986:11),

African music, dances and songs as embodied in the entire concept of African culture, were a cherished treasure and a source of pride for African peoples everywhere which could help to identify the African and champion his dignity. Our songs are most meaningful and they carry inspiring messages that convey the true picture and personality of the African ...

However, in some areas, indigenous rituals, songs and dances are fast disappearing. A need, therefore, arises to research, keep record and even understand our African songs and dances. For example, the formal gatherings and kilumi dances are becoming rare. Unless research
is done on this important phenomenon, its knowledge might disappear in the near future. Therefore, this study will partly be a useful contribution to the preservation, understanding and appreciating of our African religious heritage. It could also provide a basis for other researchers to compare it with other religious dances elsewhere. It could also, partly provide direction to those interested in African Inculturation Theology which is an attempt to give African expression to the Christian faith within a theological framework.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, a multi-disciplinary approach was used because the nature of the study which combined both religion and music could only best be approached using tools developed in different academic disciplines. Ray (1976:16) felt that:

Polymethodic approach ... adopted is demanded by the very nature of African religions. As numerous scholars have recognized, African religions are part and parcel of African cultural life. Religious phenomena are thus closely interwoven with social, psychological, and moral dimensions. For this reason, the study of African religions must be polymethodic and multidimensional.
It is also worth noting that in recent years there has been little consensus among scholars on an adequate theory or framework for explaining and describing ritual. In this study, kilumi dances and songs were studied in the context of a ritual and a social-functional approach was used. That means, the nature of ritual, together with its songs and dances were defined in terms of their functions in the Akamba society.

Most functional explanations of ritual attempt to explain the ritual behaviour in relation to the needs and maintenance of a society. Ritual is thus viewed as an adaptive and adjustive response to the social and physical environment.

Turner (1968:1-24) argues that the important function of ritual including religious ritual is that of storing and transmitting information. But there is more to ritual than this one function. As shown by Durkheim (1912), the function of ritual in the community is that of providing the proper rules for action in the realm of the sacred as well as supplying a bridge for passing into the realm of the profane. To him, ritual is the action component of religion. Ray (1976) emphasized that the ritual sphere is the sphere par excellence, where the world as lived and the world as
imaged become fused together, transformed into one reality. To him, almost every ritual is a salvation event in which human experience is re-created and rewed in the ritual. While van Gennep (1960) sees ritual as preserving the order of a society, Fischer (1963) has ritual as expressing emotion at the elements of social structure that might otherwise give rise to conflict in the mind of the individual or society. This means that in rituals, individuals are informed of their social structure or the workings of their own society. From the above, one can deduce that there are some scholars who lay emphasis on the socio-psychological function of ritual while others emphasize on the religious value of ritual as specific expression of transcendental reality.

Our study adopted both emphases because the concern was with the crucial values of a believing community whose ultimate reality resides in its orientation towards transcendental and invisible powers. In order to have a comprehensive work and more detailed descriptions of the kilumi rituals and songs, the study approached them from various levels.

(a) Symbolic Level:

A ritual is an aggregation of symbols. In connection with this, Shorter (1975:22) observed that:
Symbolic action, however, may become even more elaborate, involving a whole complex of actions, a cast of actors or officiants and a combination of material objects, gestures and words both spoken and sung.

Therefore, an inventory of kilumi ritual and songs symbols was made and their meaning stated. In the study, the procedural form of kilumi rituals which is segmented into phases, actions, emotions, and gestures were explicitly stated.

The re-construction of a symbol is the work of a ritual participant whose role is always a representative one (Turner 1968). The kilumi participants and their roles were examined because as Ong'onga (1987:29) stated:

All religions serve human purposes and it is human beings who keep them alive. But to keep religions alive, sincere and committed believers are needed who can give witness to their cause.

(b) Thematic level:

In some rituals, the series of stylized acts and gestures is accompanied by verbal behaviour such as solemnized prayers, words of consecration, blessings and warnings, and songs. The spoken elements of a ritual setting do often reveal the meaning of a ritual by reference to a belief system or mythology. Hence,
the analysis of the *kilumi* song texts was done in order to show whether the themes are the same or they vary depending on the situations. This analysis revealed whether the songs are functional or dys-functional in contemporary Akamba society.

Any type of ritual forms a system of great complexity. And with the present rapid tempo of changes and social mobility in Africa (and ukambani in particular), there was a need to look at the new changes and influences in the *kilumi* ritual. Such questions as whether Christianity has affected *kilumi* rituals, what happens if the Christian believers were still *kilumi* dancers, if the contemporary Akamba still dance the same *kilumi* as their counterparts did, were answered at this level. The overall aim was to fuse all these approaches to a coherent framework which was useful in the analysis of the *kilumi* dances, rituals and songs.

1.8 **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

(i) **Data Collection**

An open questionnaire was used for this research. Since most of the old traditionalists are not able to read in English, personal interviews were conducted orally in homes, places of traditional religious
activities or at other convenient places. A tape-recorder was used to tape some of the interviews although some of the informants were somehow uncomfortable with them. Some believed taping their voices would affect their souls or good voices so that they would cease to be eloquent songsters (ngui).

In most cases, open-ended questions were used and in cases where these proved unproductive, non-directive method was employed. This means the researcher had to digress from the questionnaire and the informant was allowed to talk on and on, and was only interrupted with questions where necessary. At times, some of the medicinepeople interviewed proved to be difficult and the researcher had to really press them for information probably because they were not ready to reveal their secrets.

As the researcher taped the interviews, she also took notes at the same time whenever it was convenient. After songs were sang, questions were asked by the researcher so that the informant clarified and expanded on some of the words in order to grasp the deeper meaning.

Most of the informants were interviewed individually. Only rarely were there group interviews. For example,
on some occasions when neighbours heard the sounds of miase as the informants demonstrated to the researcher, they gathered one by one in that particular home and participated in the discussions.

(ii) **Participant Observation**

The researcher partially participated in some of the kilumi dances. Most of these dances observed were connected with the medicinewomen. Participation gave the researcher direct experience and a chance to observe and appreciate these dances from a distance. Bearing in mind that kilumi is danced at night, after every dance, the researcher recorded her experience immediately upon reaching home.

During the general tour of the study area which guided the researcher in determining what to expect in the field, and the necessary amendments to be made, friends and relatives promised to help in contacting the respondents as well as informing the researcher immediately whenever a kilumi occasion was to occur. Through their efforts, the researcher was able to participate in these rare occasional dances.
(iii) Sampling

(a) Informants

The subjects and key informants were both female and male traditionalists (elders). These were either qualified Akamba nguĩ or atumia (elders) aged 60 years and above. They were knowledgeable on the Akamba cultural and religious practices, for they had gone through the Akamba traditional initiation rites. Also, they had participated in most of the religious dances. For this category, the respondents were selected at random and snow-ball. That means, after contacting one nguĩ, he/she was able to direct the researcher to another.

The second group of informants consisted of Christians. The respondents were selected from the prominent churches in Kitui, namely:

(i) African Inland Church (A.I.C.)

(ii) Catholic Church

(iii) African Brotherhood Church (A.B.C.)

During the research, it was discovered that A.I.C. which has the largest population of followers, is very rigid while the Catholic Church is open and welcomes the kilumi dancers. A.B.C. stresses on the indigenisation of their church songs and it
also accepts the kilumi dancers.

The third category consisted of kilumi dancers and any other knowledgeable person who were interviewed afterwards in order to avoid bias from the first two categories of informants.

(b) Locations (The Study Area)

Although the research included all the five divisions of Kitui District, 40 respondents were selected from certain Locations in which, the Akamba traditional beliefs and practices are prevalent (see Map II).

- Central Division - 6 locations X 4 interviewees = approximately 24 interviewees
- Other Divisions - 4 divisions X 4 interviewees = approximately 16 interviewees

The study revolved around Central division. This choice was made because some of the Akamba traditional beliefs and practices such as kilumi dances, beliefs in witchcraft, magic and belief in spirits are still considered significant in this area. To emphasize this, Middleton and Kershaw (1965) who were aware that spirits are not always localized, mentioned two sanctuaries where the concentration of spirits seemed to be high. These were Kyumbe (a mountain range near Kibwezi) and Nzambani
(in Kitui Central). Up-to-date, Nzambani is still believed to be inhabited by spirits.

Again, in the same division, there were serious reports of 'Majini spirit possession' among some primary school pupils of this area in 1985. It was at this time, when Tsuma Washe (popularly known as Kajiwe, the saviour of mankind against witchcraft) clashed with various A.I.C. leaders. They had stormed into his operational base at Kyangunga in Mulango Location (Kitui Central) in an effort to convert him and his huge family to Christianity (Sunday Nation, January 7, 1990, page 11). In fact, one informant told the researcher how two staunch A.I.C. pastors went to pray for Kajiwe. One of these pastors fell down after the diviner chanted a song and pointed a finger at him! The other took to his heels long before the song was over.

The researcher wondered why this should have happened yet the first missionary centre in Kitui was situated in this division. As early as 1915, the African Inland Mission opened a station there, and even today, this area is predominantly a protestant area as well as an arena of different Christian denominations. The area has a favourable climate and is the district's
administrative centre. It is also a centre of multi-
cultures and the expectations were that the Akamba 
living within this vicinity should have been influenced 
partly by other cultures. However, the observation is 
that these Akamba are still bound by their traditions 
and customs. All these reasons prompted the researcher 
to select this division to be the basis for this study.

It should be noted that, research was also carried 
out in the other divisions in order to generalise for 
the whole district.

(iv) Data Presentation

After the data were collected, the researcher went 
through all the tapes, transcribing them verbatim in 
Kikamba. Afterwards these data were translated into 
English. An attempt was made to group the answers sys-
tematically according to their content and the objecti-
ves of the study. This was done on index cards but 
these were raw data, not compared with the other exist-
ing literature.

(v) Data Analysis and interpretation

The oral data was incorporated and compared with 
relevant literature from the libraries, archives and
other written sources in order to provide the basis for analysis and interpretation. In analysing the data, this study utilised content analysis method. According to Travers (1958), content analysis is the analysis of the properties of verbal materials; although the same term is applied to the analysis of all forms of symbolic communication regardless of whether it is printed or not. After processing and analysing the data, the findings and conclusions were presented under five chapter headings relating to the objectives of the study.

**Song texts:**

Song texts were grouped according to context and given an introductory essay of explanations. Every text was accompanied by an English translation. Out of the 50 songs collected, thirty two were selected for analysis because they were representative of the entire collection. In other words, the selected songs display a better or powerful picture of the religious beliefs. However, this thesis does not analyse the musical aspects of **kilumi** songs.

**Problems:**

This study is not an exception from other researches. There were problems encountered during the field research. Some of the informants had no time to
spare for questions. Therefore, sometimes the researcher was forced to enquire about some issues and leave others. Some of them refused to part with information unless snuff or beer was bought for them. Others refused to sing because they believed kilumi songs and drums were sacred songs and instruments respectively. Hence, they were supposed to be sung and played at a specified particular time. They strongly believed that if they sung at odd times, the spirits could be annoyed and hence, possess (or inflict) some people there and then. Again, some informants had problems remembering the old kilumi songs. Memories of some had faded away and they could not remember the systematic procedures of how the kilumi rituals were performed.

Transcription and translation of these songs was not easy. Occasionally, the researcher had to go back to the field to obtain some enlightenment from one who was acquainted with the figurative expressions and sayings.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study did not cover the two Akamba districts. It was restricted to Kitui District due to limitation of time and financial constraints. The second limitation
was that the researcher did not participate in all the kilumi religious dances, neither did she visit as many respondents as desirable due to time allocation.

1.10 FEATURES OF AKAMBA ECONOMY

Early researches show that famine, early hunting and trade pushed the Akamba to the Coast (Krapf 1860, Beidelman 1961, Owako 1969). Traditionally, the Akamba were hunters. They hunted elephants for ivory and traded with the Arabs for ornaments, beads and cloth. They also grazed livestock (cattle, sheep and goats). To the Mukamba, cattle was a traditional symbol of honour and wealth since dowry and any clan transaction or societal affairs needed cattle (Muthiani 1972:116). On the religious sphere, livestock was very important because those were the animals offered as sacrifices.

Traditionally, the main crops planted by the Akamba were sorghum, millet, maize, varieties of peas, beans, yams, sweet potatoes and sugarcane among others. Today in the areas with sufficient rainfall, they plant coffee, tea, pyrethrum and hybrid maize as major cash crops. In other areas, vegetables, fruits, cotton as well as sisal are grown. In summary, today some still practise the traditional occupations such as pottery making,
weaving, hunting, beekeeping and wood carving.

Generally, the Akamba have two rainfall seasons, that is, October to December rains and March to May rains. The kilumi dance coincides with the beginning of these rains. Some parts of Kitui are hot and dry during most of the year, with only few seasonal rivers flowing. From oral interviews and recorded history of the Akamba of Kitui District, it is evident that they have experienced droughts and famines arising from acute water and food shortages. However, the government and voluntary organizations such as churches are trying to curb these problems by introducing boreholes and water catchments.

1.11 AKAMBA SOCIAL SYSTEM

Among the Akamba, the family is the basic social institution. Traditionally, it comprised of the living and the dead relatives. It was the duty of the living members to keep good relations with the dead through giving them sacrifices. Traditionally, a family lived in the same homestead but today members of the same family can live apart due to socio-economic factors. In the family, the smallest child is referred to as kana or kaukenge (young child or an angel). The child
is like an angel because of its innocence. The child has no specific duty in the household or society.

When the child grows up and is able to walk he/she becomes a kavisi or kelitu (small weaned boy or girl respectively). Traditionally, the boy could assist in looking after livestock, while the girl assisted in fetching water or firewood. A boy in his youth (10-18 years), while eligible for circumcision, was now a mwanake. He could assist in cultivation, looking after livestock and all other masculine jobs, such as making arrows and bows, clubs and swords, beehives and snuff bottles. He was allowed to participate in dances for the youth (wathi).

A girl eligible for clitoridectomy was called mwiitu and she could also participate in wathi. Her duties were to collect firewood, fetch water and assist in other kitchen duties. For example, it was the duty of women to grind corn, fetch wood, cultivate, plant, milk cows, plait bags and grind flour.

After a mwanake got married, he became a medium elder (nthele). He was not allowed to drink beer until he had given some goats to the elders. He assisted in the dances by ensuring that a peaceful atmosphere was
kept throughout in the dancing grounds. After this stage, one became a mutumia (singular) atumia (plural). Nzioki (1982) summarized that there were two categories of elders namely.

(i) Atumia ma kivalo (full elders)
(ii) Atumia ma kisuka (senior elders)

Generally, the elders were highly respected men who were looked upon as people full of wisdom. They were consulted in times of difficulties, and they were also the heads of their families. It was at this stage that some of them became atumia ma ithembo (ithembo elders).

Once married, a girl became a kiveti who was the mother and caretaker of her family. While nthele participated in the dances a kiveti no longer attended them. She could only participate in the kilumi dance but with permission from her husband. As the Akamba stressed, a good wife was clean, generous, industrious, sociable, hospitable and not a witch. At old age, a married woman could be selected to become kiveti kya ithembo (female ithembo elder).

It was the responsibility of the father to teach his sons the male duties while the mother taught her
daughters the female duties. Some of this teaching was done orally through songs, proverbs, riddles and stories. As Githige (1986) concluded, in the past, society's laws, customs, education and religion were orally imprinted in the minds of each African.

1.12 AKAMBA RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Dundas (1913) erroneously asserted that the Akamba used three words, namely, muungu, ngai, and mulungu to denote God. He further explained that muungu was a borrowed Kiswahili word, ngai was a Maasai word, while mulungu might have been a corruption of the first word. To him;

It is clear that the Mkamba had no word for God; neither do they know of such being but the various terms used are merely collective words meant to denote the plurality of the spiritual world (Dundas 1913:535).

From oral interviews conducted during our research and other earlier researches, it is evident that the Akamba knew of a supreme being. For example, Mbiti (1970:219) summarizes that:

To assert, however, that they (Africans) have "no faith" in God, would be absolute nonsense and there are no atheists in
traditional African societies. An Ashanti proverb seems to summarize the situation well; it says, 'No one shows a child the Supreme Being', because even the child knows of God almost automatically by instinct.

The Akamba worshipped the great God called Mulungu, who is Ngai Mumbi (the creator) as well as the sustainer and the end of life. Mulungu is a benevolent God who bestows good things upon the Akamba. However, if somebody commits any wrong act against this benevolent being, in spite of the kindness bestowed, he/she has to show penitence.

Mulungu was worshipped either at an individual's or community's breaking points namely, powerlessness, scarcity and deprivation. In other words, Ngai Mumbi was approached at times of catastrophes such as drought, famine, epidemics and other psychological, social needs. Mulungu was also approached in gratitude for good or abundant harvests. To the Mukamba, offering a sacrifice (be it animals without blemish or grains from the fields) occasionally insured a continuous contact with Mulungu, hence a peaceful existence.

The indigenous Akamba always knew Mulungu as the supreme being who was superior to and different from the other supernatural entities. For example, early
in the morning, when pouring a libation a Mukamba would utter the following:

**Mulungu** drink your share first. 
Then be followed by our ancestral spirits, the ones which guide us always; and last but not least, may the spirits which we cannot remember also have a share.¹
(Nditi Mwanza, O.I., 15/10/1989)

Apart from **Mulungu**, the Akamba recognized other spiritual forces. They believed in the **aimu** (spirits of the dead). Mbiti (1975) calls the **aimu**, the living dead who personalize the spirit world for men and are still in memories of the living people. Some of these spirits are believed to be benevolent, while others are malevolent. To Hobley (1971), the bad spirits are believed to be:

Disembodied relics of people who have killed their neighbours by the help of black magic and that the supreme being has banished these **aimu** to the woods where they wander about without anybody to care for them by sacrificing to them (Hobley 1971:89)

Berg-Schlosser (1984) viewed those spirits which have passed beyond the horizon of personal memory as possessing transhuman capabilities and often malicious.

In the traditional set up there was a very strong bond between the living and the dead. The **aimu** expected
constant attention from their living descendants and if they were displeased with them, it was believed that they could bring misfortunes. The living (individually or communally) tried to coerce them by means of sacrifice at the sacred places. The ancestral spirits took interest in the affairs of their families.

The spirits were believed to be more powerful than people and were seen as being closer to Mulungu than the living. Therefore, they were better placed for interceding to Mulungu on behalf of the living. They were believed to manifest themselves in many ways but normally they were invisible. They were also believed to have physical characteristics and up-to-date, the spirits are said to laugh, cry, talk and eat or drink in the kilumi dances.

Spirit possession among the Akamba validates their existence. The aimu are believed to 'possess' individuals and in these mediumistic trances they pass messages to the living through the possessed. Often, they give good advice, warnings or directions bearing explicitly on the moral order of the society.

Another belief was that the spirits had wives. Hobley (1911:86) explained the following:
If a young unmarried man is killed away from his village, his muimu or spirit will return there and speak to the people through the medium of an old woman in a dance, and say 'I am so and so speaking, and I want a wife ...'. A girl gets married to the brother of the deceased and if at anytime, the corporeal husband mistreats her, the spirit of the deceased will come and pester the village.

Mbiti (1970:266) also adds:

Some Akamba believe that each woman has a spirit husband who may possess her and who assists in her fertility functions.

The Akamba also believed in witchcraft and magic. The image of a witch is one of an inverted or reversed human being (antihuman being, an antisocial person). A witch or sorcerer could bewitch another person and cause harm to them. In such cases of witchcraft, a mundumue (medicine person) was approached to diagnose the disease and tried to offer solutions to the problem. It was a common belief that witchcraft could be 'bought', learnt from another witch but mostly it was inherited. As stressed, the witches could secretly pass their witchcraft to their daughters and in case one refused, in turn the mother could bewitch her. One wonders why the informants stressed that witches were mostly women as if there were no male witches. One could attribute this
to the fact that in traditional set up women were considered to be inferior to men and therefore all evil things were heaped on them. And once they are formed, Turner argues, witchcraft beliefs "feed back into the social process, generating tensions as often as reflecting them" (Turner 1967:114).

It was also believed that magic power could be sent to injure other people. These could be placed in the paths or gates of the magicians' enemies. For protective purposes, the Akamba could wear amulets or keep other powerful magical articles such as mbingu, ithitu, muthea.

All the mentioned beliefs and practices are still very much alive among the Akamba. In fact, there is a common saying among them that "Mukamba ndakusaa mana" (a Mukamba does not die without a reason or explanation). In other words, there is nothing like natural death among the Akamba. Either the deceased was bewitched or the death is connected with the spirits.
1.13 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Aimu: Spirits of deceased Akamba which live on as long as their memory is kept alive in stories, offerings and sacrifices.

2. Elder: A traditional elder is either a man or woman of substance and integrity, approximately he/she should be above 60 years and was expected to have gone through the stages of Akamba initiation rites. He/she was assumed to be conversant with the Akamba cultural beliefs. A church elder here means a Christian person of substance and integrity.

3. Ithembo: (Mathembo) — Akamba indigenous shrine(s), sacred groves.

4. Kilumi: An Akamba sacred or religious dance performed by very old women. It comprises of many rituals.

5. Mundumue: (1) Diviner (2) Medicineman/woman.

6. Ngui: Specialist(s) or leader(s) of a song (songster(s) or soloist(s)).
7. Religious: Anything believed to be relating to the world beyond this visible world.

8. Tradition: Any cultural or religious custom, belief or practice that has been handed down either orally or by practice from generation to generation.

9. Trance: Ecstasy, an unconscious or insensible condition. Spirit possession develops as an explanation or rationalization of pre-existing trance behaviour.

1.14 ORGANIZATION OF THE REST OF CHAPTERS

Chapter two contains a purposeful structure of literature review in order to show what has or has not been said in relation to our study. Scholars (foreign and local) who have been reviewed prove that such a study is of global and continental interest; of national importance and there is an academic gap which has been filled by this study.

Chapter three analyses the kilumi songs, and categorises them according to the numerous spirits which allegedly possess the participants. An attempt has also
been made to show the religious interpretation of these songs.

Chapter four discusses and interprets the kilumi rituals, dances, beliefs and practices. It also explicates the factors which have affected these phenomena.

Chapter five summarises the study together with its findings. It also makes conclusions and certain recommendations.
Notes

1. The Akamba Version of this Prayer is;


2. In this study, the word "traditional" will be used interchangeably with "indigenous". It will refer to the original beliefs and practices of a people before interaction with other cultures. Consequently, a traditional Mukamba is that one who conforms to the customs and beliefs of his/her ancestors.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, major works by both foreign and local authors relevant to the study and which are known to the researcher were reviewed in order to establish that this work covers an area of study insufficiently reported. The study fills some of the gaps left, builds on and fits into an existing body of knowledge by examining the religious role of kilumi rituals, songs and dances of the Akamba of Kitui District.

For a long time, music and worship have always been linked and this whole subject is of global interest which is a fascinating historical, geographical and religious study. Some scholars feel that the emotional power has always dictated the role of songs in a society. For example, Tillman (1978) showed that there is a link between the drums of African ethnic dancing and the Christian choirs. Both contexts attempt to hold out hope of escape from an imperfect world in order to create a harmonious integrated world. His study however, was much more generic and dealt with no particular ethnic dances and songs. This study aimed at a particularised study of kilumi rituals, dances and songs
in order to investigate their religious significance in Akamba society.

Mbiti (1969, 1970, 1975), has a major interest in African theology, comparative religion and philosophy. To him, many African songs deal with religious ideas and practices, and the religious rituals, ceremonies and festivals are sometimes accompanied by music, singing and dancing. Although he concludes that Africans are notoriously religious and that through the rituals, religious ideas are perpetuated and passed to the next generation, he does not devote any special chapter to the Akamba songs and dances, and particularly kilumi.

Mbunga (1973), asserts that in African art and music, there are beautiful songs with profound wisdom hidden therein, such as those of the rain-making ceremonies, harvesting dances, circumcision celebrations, marriage rites and dances for success in battle. This study specifically investigated the relevance of this categorisation to the Akamba songs and dances.

Kang'ethe (1981), suggests that a thorough study of traditional and modern African songs can yield a rich resource in understanding African value systems and
processes of social and cultural change. This is because songs express historical events, basic values, myths and legends. He concludes that "traditionally, the social education was imparted to the individual by imagery and ritual, the rhythm of the dance and the words of the ceremonial song" (Kang'ethe 1981:468).

However, he only deals with Karing'a movement political songs. In relation to this study, the significant role of kilumi dance and songs, were examined and the myths or legends involved were explicated.

Kihara (1986), trying to propose a new definition of African religious beliefs which he calls "Afro-Theism" examines that the beliefs and ritual functionaries in African societies include priests, elders, diviners and prophets. He does not develop them any further. The present study discussed the kilumi ritual functionaries in depth and showed their appropriate roles such as to mediate the sacred to the people.

One of the earliest works on Akamba people is by Lindblom (1920) who rightly stated that their religion was intimately connected with individual and social life. He further divided it into two: a developed worship of the spirits of their ancestors (which is based on the conception of continued life of the soul
after death); and a vague belief in a High Being - Mulungu. His conclusion was that:

The result of these beliefs is that the natives never know whether they have sacrificed enough, and so they live in a constant state of anxiety lest they shall incur the displeasure of the jealous and capricious spirits. (Lindblom 1920:214).

Reacting to this, Mbiti (1986) argued that all African people have a basic belief in a Supreme Being. Basing his argument on an Ashanti proverb in Ghana which says 'No one shows a child the supreme being', Mbiti asserts that:

Knowledge about God's reality is so fundamental that it is acquired at a very early stage of growing ... Furthermore, religious beliefs are corporately held - they are the property of the community, the individual automatically accepts them, assents to them, by virtue of being a member of the wide community (Mbiti 1986: 101).

In another work, Lindblom (1934) views the Akamba as a singing people and song occupies a prominent part in their lives. Generally, missionaries in Ukambani were faced in the early stages with the difficulties of a strange land, people, language, culture, customs and music. Most of them did not have the time or even patience to go into these matters sufficiently. Although
Lindblom spent sometime in Ukambani Kikamba language, he laments that:

Collecting Kamba songs is a of considerable difficulty ~ that it is only through sing that the natives could recit (Lindblom 1934:41).

Although he felt that the Akamba do not possess any traditional songs, Kavyu (this. To him, the Akamba have traditio have been repeated over and over again. Also, some of the kilumi songs of our old, and have been handed from one son

Kimilu (1962) has very precious Akamba people and life generally. He on marriage, division of labour, judic proverbs and sayings, witchcraft and so which provided insight to this study. due to the impact of social change, toda hardly many genuine Akamba (Akamba ma wzes a "true" Mukamba in the following:

Ni Mukamba Kivindyo,
Uwisi Ng'ondu yi mwana,
Na akamana undi...
Kimilu admits that his book is not related to religious aspects. He describes the youth dances but briefly mentions that kilumi could be danced at different places, for example, at the shrines, at the medicine people's homes and generally at different times or occasions. This study identified these occasions which Kimilu remained silent about and gave a more detailed description of kilumi dances and rituals.

One study which gave relevant and useful information on various aspects of Akamba life, their political and social systems was Ndeti (1967). The aim of his dissertation was to write an interpretive ethnology of the Akamba people. He gives details of Akamba dances which he says were designed to fit various age groups and cosmological time. Ndeti further observes that kilumi is a seasonal dance which is restricted to nthele and iveti sya muika (married people). In it, elderly people can participate, but the dance is usually for middle-aged adults. It should be noted that traditionally kilumi was an old women's dance. Middle aged adults and especially males were not supposed to participate in it. According to Ndeti, kilumi indicates people's satisfaction with the fruits of the season. It is also a therapy for those possessed by the spirits. Therefore, kilumi plays an important
role in the socialization of the adult population of the Akamba (Ndeti 1967:328). Again, Beresford-Stooke (1928) stressed that the only eligible participants of kilumi were women who had borne one or two children. Married women who had not given birth or unmarried women were not eligible to dance.

The primary objectives of the above two studies was not the religious significance of kilumi, our research topic. This study's area diverged fundamentally from these two studies for it discussed kilumi rituals and functionaries in depth.

Ogot (1968) has very unique information on kilumi as a channel of group action. He highlights that between 1911-1913, the Akamba movements led by Siotune and Kiamba presented radical programmes whose advocates preached complete rejection of everything European. They advocated for a return to the African way of life. During this time, a kilumi dance in Kitui and Machakos was used effectively as a channel for expressing opposition to the colonial government. Ogot's study is a historical one and he provides no religious details of a kilumi dance.
Kavyu (1977) is a well illustrated, valuable and unique work on the Akamba musicology. To him, kilumi is danced in the whole of Ukamba and it is one of the dances which have survived up to this day. As he states, among the Akamba, there existed two spiritual dance songs namely, ngoma and kilumi. However, about five decades ago ngoma died out, but kilumi is still being performed. He views kilumi as more religious than therapeutical. In this dance, kilumi songs follow no programme but in them, such names as Kathambi, Lala, matheo (clouds), mbua (rain) must be mentioned. Kavyu's analysis is purely musicological and he has devoted more time to initiation dances than on kilumi. More significant, this study provided and analysed the kilumi songs in relation to the second objective, an area not dealt with. The study also sought to find out what makes kilumi to be more religious than therapeutical because religion can be a therapy as well.

Huet (1978) speaking on African rituals generalised that in the regions where agriculture is the predominant source of wealth the fear of drought or even a delay in the arrival of the rainy season are a source of great distress. In order to ease distress the people have conceived an elaborate scheme of institutions and rites that preserve the relationship between people and earth,
the source of all life and survival. Similarly, Akong'a (1985) followed Malinowski (1954) and Radcliffe-Brown (1952) who held the view that there is no institution that can emerge in society that has no specific function. Akong'a feels that rainfall rituals emerged in arid and semi-arid areas as a means of coping with rainfall inadequacy and unreliability. He says:

... man attempts to adapt to conditions of rainfall inadequacy and unreliability by the manipulation of supernatural forces believed to be closely associated with weather conditions (Akong'a 1985:176).

The idea of manipulation of supernatural forces seems to be suggesting an art of magic. However, this study viewed kilumi from a non-magical religious approach whereby the rituals were seen as expressions of the participants' powerlessness and their eagerness to make room for Mulungu's intervention. Although Akong'a provided some useful information to our study, he was concerned with the assessment of the impact of persistent drought and famine conditions on the Akamba family.

One of the strongest religious beliefs surrounding the kilumi rituals and dances is the belief in spirits, which is commonly manifested in spirit possession. Dundas (1913) gives details on the social and economic life of the Akamba. He views the spirits as mostly
malignant and either out of revenge or malice, they plague the Akamba, particularly those of their own family. They constantly require attention and appeasing in order that their wrath should not be incurred. Dundas viewed the Akamba society to be permeated with these spirit beliefs so much that:

In fact, disease and spirit seem almost to be regarded as one and, therefore, possession by a spirit, disease and madness do not appear to be defined one from the other (Dundas 1913:530).

It is worth noting that there is a clear difference between spirit possession and madness. In the kilumi dance, the medium (the possessed) normally has a message from the spiritual world to give to the people. But in madness, one is possessed by malevolent spirits and does not necessarily have a message to pass over to the community. Although Dundas slightly mentions about the old women's and men's dance, whereby there was competition of the most grotesque wriggling and twisting, he remains silent on kilumi and the spirit possession issue.

Hobley (1967), carried out a systematic survey of the Akamba customs and beliefs whereby he mentions that the songs and dances which took place at the
gathering of the crops are called kilumi. However, Hobley (1971) has major interest in the influence which the belief in the ancestral spirits has upon the life of the Kikuyu and Kamba people. He divides the Akamba spirits into two groups.

1. Aimu - the (ordinary) spirits of the dead ancestors who haunt certain fig trees and it is to them that sacrifices are offered periodically at the shrines.

2. Aimu ma Kitombo - evil spirits which the Supreme Being has banished to the woods where they wander about without anybody to care for them. This is the vindictive crew which causes madness to their victims.

Hobley's two studies provided no analysis of kilumi songs. The present study also diverged from these two studies for it dealt partly with the issue of spirit possession by foreign spirits.

Berg-Schlosser (1984:79ff) in a comparative analysis of seven major ethnic groups of Kenya gives a detailed demography of Ukamba and its economy. He also deals with the Akamba spirits (ancestral and malign) of which he says that they can possess a person, for example during one of the very popular and at times quite ecstatic dances (kilumi). To him, this is the most important religious dance, followed by initiation dance. However, he does not discuss kilumi in depth.
The assumption of this study was that among the factors affecting the kilumi ritual were Christianity, education, urbanization and Western (modern) technology. Mbula (1974) views Christianity as a revolutionary agent which demands the change of the individual. She briefly mentioned that the unfriendly spirits attack women who become possessed and are appeased through a kilumi dance. Though she mentions that the people's attitudes towards traditional beliefs have changed, she did not treat the present topic. Her major interest was to show the changes which have occurred to the Akamba traditional family structure and stability with the penetration of Christianity.

Kovulo (1987) did a study on spirit beliefs among the Akamba. One of his main objectives was to examine whether the belief in spirits was affected by such factors as education, Christianity or involvement in modern style of life. One of his major findings was that neither education nor age influences belief in spirits and spirit activities in the areas studied. In his study, two types of spirits emerged. That is, the ordinary Akamba ancestral spirits and Majini (spirits believed to be of Arabian or Persian origin). Though his study was used as a secondary source for our study, he did not devote any chapter to kilumi practices and experiences.
Katola (1987) is a very recent unique and resourceful work which focuses on taboo as one of the constraints that controlled the behaviour of Akamba people. Katola comprehensively defines taboo as "a prohibition whose violation is hateful to the supernatural and whose punishment operates automatically and independently of any penalties imposed by human agencies but could be undone through ritual" (Katola 1987:59). In addition, he also felt that any apparently trivial observance, not to talk of weightier ones, had an underlying reason among the Akamba, that could be learnt if one had an access to the right teachers. Although his work touches on our research topic especially when dealing with the taboos related to the kilumi rituals, functionaries and shrines, it fundamentally diverges from ours. He investigated and provided the Akamba religious beliefs surrounding taboo.

Kieti (1988), focuses on mwali, a type of song that criticized society and was a popular and important part of Akamba literature. It was also both didactic and a source of entertainment. At the wathi, myali (plural) were sung during interludes between dances. They could be sung at weddings, after work or simply for leisure. They were composed and sung throughout the year, even when wathi was out of season. Although
our study benefited from Kieti's work, she did not touch on our present topic.

From this literature review, it has become evident that the available literature does not treat the phenomenon of the religious significance of kilumi sufficiently. However, these works were a necessary background both directly and indirectly, positively or negatively to the study.
Notes

1. The English translation is the following:

"I am a genuine/authentic Mukamba,
The one who knows that ng'ondu is 'life',
One who forsees danger,
and can sacrifice for rain".
3.0. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the song texts were examined thoroughly and given an interpretation in order to judge their religious significance.

In the kilumi dances, numerous spirits are believed to possess the participants. Each spirit has its own special song or music which depicts its character and which alone can summon its presence. In the dances, the possessed is expected to mime the character of the possessing spirit. During the dances, some of the possessed people dance in a strange fashion, while others become wild and uncontrollable. It is through the mouth of the possessed that the spirits reveal their names in order for the songster to sing their songs. Some make utterances which are received by the people as messages from the spiritual realm. However, it should be noted that in the kilumi dances, not all the participants are subject to possession.

In most of the kilumi songs, the soloist sings through the song and the dancers repeat the chorus. As Finnegan (1970:70) observed:
Songs in Africa are frequently in antiphonal form. There is a response of some kind between the soloist and chorus and the song depends on the alteration between the two parts. The role of the soloist is crucial. The chorus is more or less fixed. The soloist has complete scope to improvise his part of the verse.

In the *kilumi* dances, the songs follow no programme they are sung as the spirits request for them. Sometimes, they express dissatisfaction when particular songs are sung. The singing and dancing continues throughout the night.

All the songs express ideas of religious significance through symbols. Geertz (1966:5) asserted that:

Sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos - the tone character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood - and their world-view - the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order.

In some songs, some aspects of social and cultural change and of Western cultures are represented. They range from symbols like planes and ships to such abstract qualities as "Europeanness".

The main themes (in the selected songs) include:

(i) Rain (water) as from the ancestors who are the owners of Ukamba land and its produce.
The predominant characteristics of water are:
(a) It fertilizes (b) It purifies (c) It dissolves.
Its functions are fertilization or regeneration of
the material living world on the one hand, and the
purification or regeneration of the spiritual world
on the other. Specific examples are songs, 1, 2, 3,
4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11.

(ii) Cleansing and fertility - The power of herbal
medicine for cleansing and comfort of the people
even lasting beyond this life (as for the ances-
tors). Some examples are songs, 1, 2, 3, 5, 9,
27, 29 and 31.

(iii) Protection and good health as from the ancestors.
Examples are songs, 1, 14, 15, 17, 20, and 25.

(iv) Lala, the ancestor cleanser and the mystery of
her ways. Examples are songs, 4, 6, 9 and 10.
And the revelation as from the ancestors - from
the pools of water (e.g., songs, 6, 8, 9, and 11).

(v) Symbols and images - medicine and harvesting
basket (e.g., songs, 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 27, 29, 31).
- wind (e.g., song 5).
- death (e.g., song 5).
- life (water, lake, cloud) - all the songs
  except 2, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27,
  30, 31.
- crowd (e.g. songs, 1 and 3).
- books (songs, 10 and 16).
- general vehicle/carrier (songs, 10 and 13).
specific (Train - songs 21 and 25; ship -
songs 22 and 23; plane - song 24).
- heat (iron - song 12, rails - songs 13, 25).
- raid (songs 14 and 15).
- animal (snake - songs 18 and 19; bird -
song 20).
- cloth (song 26 and 27).
- mountain (songs 27, 28, 29 and 30).

In this chapter, the songs were transcribed
verbatim in Kikamba. The researcher translated the
songs freely, not literally, into English so that a
non-Mukamba would grasp their meaning without many
complications. Also, the translation of some words
was difficult and sometimes if they were to be trans-
lated literally, the original meaning could be distor-
ted. The original Kikamba text and translation, and
explanation in English are shown after each song.

For easier analysis of the songs, the researcher
grouped the spirits together with their songs. The
groups include ancestral, weather, foreign, animal
and object like spirits (see Table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>KIKAMBA NAME</th>
<th>IDENTIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ANCESTRAL</td>
<td>Mututu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. WEATHER</td>
<td>Lala</td>
<td>One-legged lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kathambi</td>
<td>Beautiful lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Katunge</td>
<td>Lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Syokitundumo</td>
<td>Thunder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Syokikungu</td>
<td>Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. FOREIGN (Ethnic groups)</td>
<td>Akavi</td>
<td>Maasai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asomba/Asiili</td>
<td>Swahili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andu ma ulu/Akilungu</td>
<td>Machakos Akamba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agiriama</td>
<td>Giriama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atiku</td>
<td>Digo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asungu</td>
<td>Europeans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ekuyu</td>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ANIMALS</td>
<td>Munyema</td>
<td>Cannibals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nzoka/Ngilita</td>
<td>Snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Munyambu</td>
<td>Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nzou</td>
<td>Elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kithangaiti</td>
<td>Porcupine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kasuni/Nzungululu</td>
<td>Bird/Sparrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mbusya</td>
<td>Rhinoceros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. VEHICLES</td>
<td>Ngali ya Mwaki</td>
<td>Train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meli ya Ukanga/ Ngalawa</td>
<td>Ship/Boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ndeke</td>
<td>Aeroplane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. PERSONALITIES</td>
<td>Asikali</td>
<td>Police/Soldiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ndia</td>
<td>Fool/Dumb person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1 ANCESTRAL AKAMBA SPIRITS

These are also known as Mututu spirits; the spirits of any deceased member of a Mukamba Lineage. The following are some examples of some songs sung for them.

Song I:

"Ai, eitu ithyonthe ui, 
Tewithakya Wali u wi miveke, 
Mue umbaniwe ni wanda na 
akekalilwa malovoto, 
Ai, eitu ithyonthe ui".  
(Nditi Mwanza, O.I. 16/9/89)

(Oh! all you daughters of wali, 
We praise the resplendent wali who possesses miveke, 2  
The mue surrounded by a huge 
crowd and is seated on drops of rain, 
Hail you all!).

Explanation

This song is in praise of the ancestral Akamba spirits which are believed to be peaceful and benevolent; to protect and take care of their living descendants by bringing riches and good harvests. As a practice, the first kilumi song must be dedicated to these spirits. This song is sung when the participants have gathered to seek for rain. In it, they make references to the spirits by using praise names such as wali in order to invoke the spirits and Mulungu to heed to their request. As expert medicine people (Mue (singular) Awe (plural), the spirits are surrounded by huge crowds of people eager to draw from the fountain (source) of life.
Again, herbs (miveke) is the praise word of some of the possession of the spirits. Normally, these herbs are possessed and used by special people, (e.g., medicine people). They are to be aspired to by a Mukamba because they are extra-ordinary. The phrase "wali who possesses miveke" brings in the idea of divination which symbolises the people's search for meaning in the events of life.

The singers are anticipating that the ritual will be successful, i.e., it is going to rain. Hence, miveke and drops of rain symbolise the cleansing aspect of the herbal medicine and fertility brought about by the rain.

Song 2:

"Mue walani1wa mii,
Na uikoma ta wi ndalani,
Mue walani1wa mii".
(Alice Museka, O.I. 27/11/89).

(Mue, you will be bedded on roots,
And then rest comfortably as if nested,
Mue, you will be bedded on roots).

Explanation

In this song, mue is a title of address, i.e., the cleanser, the leader of the occasion. The spirits are seen as the cleansers and they will be appeased through words until they become comfortable.
The idea of "resting or sleeping as if nested" reflects on the Akamba belief that in the underworld the spirits continue to behave like the deceased did while on this world. However, on a wider context and symbolically, it could refer to the mue's career. The cleanser's fulfilment or the ultimate end in life is to cleanse people with roots and make them comfortable.

This song is a model showing the people's strong acceptance that the spirits toil and tire and must rest. Therefore, they will be entertained with the dance until they are satisfied. Only then, will they heed to the people's request.

Song 3:

"Aa, wakya mue,
Mue wi mithumba; Mue nimwonie akithia?
Nikethya Ngemu na syomangala,
Mue wa mbeke na mwatu,
Mue ndyamwie nukathi uu kwi ndia,
Akwete mithumba na mioswe,
Ukai twolelye wanda". (Nditi Mwanza, O.I., 16/9/89).

(I greet you mue,
Mue with herbs; Did you find mue grinding?
Greetings both Ngemu and Syomangala,
The owners of grains and beehives,
I told you, mue will go to the pools,
Holding mithumba and mioswe,³
Come ye! Let us enthuse the crowd.

Explanation

In this song, the ancestors (who are grinders of herbs and owners of grains and honey), are sent
greetings. In it, the Akamba belief that the ancestral spirits (for example, Ngemu and Syomangala) were the first owners of the Ukamba land is highlighted. And in remembrance of the ancestors, before any tilling of the land was done, the living had to propitiate the spirits first.

The song also reflects their religious beliefs as well as their social customs or occupations. As indicated above, traditionally the women were the grinders of corn while men were the apiculturists. Therefore, the song controls the awareness of the social structure. There are four symbols used in this song. The first one is pools, an indication of plenty of water which symbolises life. The second and third are grains and beehive which refer to subsistence and continuation of fertility which the ritual is meant to secure. And the last is the crowd which points to multiplicity. That is, the ritual will revitalise the community. The idea of life gives the worshippers hope of living and strengthens their faith, hence the adherents keep on multiplying.

This song could be sang during the planting season when the adherents gather to ask for rain from the ancestral world. They sing with confidence that the harvest will be successful after the powerful
spirits intercede on their behalf. Grinding is the practice of a medicine person who mixes the herbs in order to save life. Therefore, like the medicine people, the spirits are seen as the protectors of their living kinspeople.

3.2 SPIRITS ASSOCIATED WITH WEATHER

There are numerous spirits associated with weather especially the rain. These include:-

(a) Lala and her daughters - Yoli, Kayoli, Muyoli.
(b) Kathambi (Muthamba, Nzambi popularly known as Eitu ma mutitu - ladies from Mutitu).
(c) Katunge.
(d) Syokitundumo (Syomikindo, Mukunga).
(e) Kiungu (Syokikungu).

3.2.1 Songs for Lala

During the period when Lala was believed to be passing (from her destination at Mutitu hills to Machakos), kilumi songs had to be sung in her praise. The following are some of them.

Song 4:

"Wi kivevelo uu wayawaya,
Twinzilile Lala avite x2
Wi kivevelo uu wayawaya
Twinzilile Lala avite x2"
Soloist: Mwiitu wa mutitu, wa muthambi nikililye kwisa,

Singers: Nzue ndia

Soloist: Twinzilile Lala,

Singers: Navite

Soloist: Mwiitu uu wa Lala -

Singers: Navite" (Kasina Mwengu, 0.1, 26/11/89)

(You are the strong-hold of Lala,
We have put up the flag for Lala to pass x2
You are the strong-hold of Lala,
We have put up the flag for Lala to pass x2

Soloist: I, the daughter from mutitu, the washer
I am about to begin,

Singers: To stir the pool

Soloist: We have put up the flag for Lala

Singers: Let her pass,

Soloist: The lady from mutitu

Singers: Let her pass)

Explanation

Lala is a kind of main heroic mythical person.

The soloist is personifying Lala because she is a
descendant of her lineage. Meanwhile the crowd is identi-
fying the soloist with Lala. The key symbol in this
song is the flag, (kivevelo), which points to the
diligence and unity of the worshippers who are united
under the same religious beliefs. The flag also deno-
tes a kind of imperious exaltation for Lala, or the
will to heighten her spiritual significance. 'Strong-
hold' refers to faithfulness of the worshippers who
are in complete harmony with ancestral unity.
The name Muthambi\(^4\) (the cleanser) symbolises cleansing. As stated in chapter four, the people are expected to be in ritual purity when Lala is passing by. Therefore, Lala is depicted as the cleanser, who is about to tilt the lake. In the song, the singer is ritually suggesting the coming of rain (after the lake is stirred, the results will be rain). In the song, the people are required to build or secure a residence for Lala so that she may hear their supplication.

It should be noted that when a person is supposedly possessed by Lala, she dances on one leg because Lala is believed to be a one-legged lady, also the dancers hold small pieces of cloth (white or red in colour) as their flags.

Song 5:

"Lala wisanasya na kyondo\(^5\) na kiungu, Syomathangu, Lala wikalaa va? Mwiitu uu wa Mulela wi kivungio, Lala wikalaa va? Avai uu wa Lala wi kivungio, Lala wikalaa va?"

(Syombua Kalungu, O.I, 25/11/89).

(Lala you travel in wind with both the Kamba basket and sheaves, Syomathangu, Lala where do you live? Mulela's daughter with kivungio, Lala where do you live? The lock where do you pass through, Lala where do you live?)
Explanation

In the above song, the basket could refer to medicinal and harvesting basket. And the sheaves could be of the harvest and the herbs. In the song, wind (kiungu) is a key symbol pointing to the active and violent aspects of air. In fact, it reminds people of the creative activities of Mulungu. Also, the spirits have the powers to create or destroy, hence, the idea of violence. The strong wind indicates that the rain is about to pour and that is why Lala is travelling with the harvesting basket.

The name Syomathangu is derived from mathangu (leaves). The spirit Lala is also called Syomathangu, a name which constantly reminds the people of the mysterious Mutitu pool which is said to be covered with dry leaves. It is in this pool, where people from the rain clan (mbaa mbua), are believed to sink unknowingly (Nditi Mwanza, O.I. 24/9/89). In the pool, dry leaves are floating on water - death on top of the symbol of life. Without water, there is no life for both people and their animals. Lala is also called Mulela, which is derived from kulela (to float). Lala, the floater has her dwelling place in the waters.
The above song is a constant reminder of the participants' belief system. Since the spirits are believed to live in mysterious elevated places, to be able to catch Lala one must have power over the rain. The supplicants who are perplexed by the mystery of Lala ways are therefore, in a spiritual need. They want to know the bridge which can link them with the spiritual realm. That is why the singers question where Lala lives for they are trying to reach her to give them rain.

Song 6:

"Ii ndumanitwe ni Yoli kuya matuni kwi ndia yake itathambawa, Isu ya Yoli ithambawa na malovoto, Muyoli thyuua ndia vai undu ninalea".

(Alice Museka, O.I, 27/11/89).

(I have been summoned by Yoli, who dwells in a heavenly lake, which is beyond the reach of all but Yoli, She who washes from downpour drops, Muyoli tilt the lake vigorously, Nothing is forbidden).

Explanation

Yoli is believed to be ancestress (one of Lala's daughters). In this song, the Akamba cosmological beliefs are highlighted. For example, the spirits are believed to be sacred beings, some living in the skies (matuni). The location is given to psych the adherents up. They feel that they have access to rain.
The song also impinges on taboos in relation to the sacred. There are boundaries between the profane and the sacred beings, objects and places. The tabooed Yoli's lake is beyond their reach. Furthermore, those who have access to the sacred world are those who have been washed from downpour drops, i.e., cleansed. Therefore, the singers are requesting Muyoli to cleanse them so that they may have a communion with her and also receive her revelation from the lake. In the song, "tilt the lake" means "let it rain plentifully". And the phrase "nothing is forbidden" brings in the idea of a creator - creation relationship. The people should supplicate themselves to be used by the creator. In other words, the singer is suggesting to Yoli that "use me any way you like in order to bring rain".

The sky expresses that which is infinite, transcendent. When sacralized, it becomes the revelation of the power of the divine activity. The song, therefore, refers to the general characteristics of the religious life, its secrecy, power and the dangers that lie in mishandling it.

Song 7:

"Ii nthauite Yoli, iya uu Yoli,
Mututa na itheo, Mwiva wendaa na kivevelo,
Muthamba na Yoli mathekaa muambani kwa maia,
Ndate kutelemya itheo,
Ii nthauite Yoli, iya uu Yoli
mututa na itheo". (Alice Museka,
O.I, 27/11/89).

(Yes I go to meet Yoli, welcome Yoli,
The cloud pillared one, Mwiva who
moves with a flag,
Muthamba and Yoli's burst of laughter
at lake pillars startles even the cloud,
Yes, I go to meet Yoli whose pillar is
a rainy cloud).

**Explanation**

Muthamba and Yoli are names of spirits. The cloud pillared one is the one who brings rain. The name Mwiva is derived from kwiva (to scoop and splash water) which symbolises rain. It is Yoli who gives rain or water which is life for the participants. Water symbolises the unending presence of Mulungu which stretches from one generation to another. Here, "burst of laughter" refers to the clouds which drop rain.

In this song, the singers are saying that they have a spiritual meeting with Yoli at the muamba tree (the spirits' abode). They have to meet with Yoli for revitalisation, which is one of the functions of a ritual. The idea of moving with a flag could symbolise the people's will to heighten the spiritual significance of victorious Yoli (Nditi Mwanza, O.I, 20/11/1989).
Song 8:

"Ndia ya Lala iya uu,
Ndia ya Kathambi numyene,
Kithyululu ndia ni ya awe!
Ndia ya Lala iya uu".
(Josephine Ndovoi, O.I, 27/11/89).

(Hail Lala's lake,
Do you see the round lake of
Kathambi,
The lake of the medicine people!
Hail Lala's lake).

Explanation

As mentioned in this song, Lala's lake is believed to be circular, it has neither the beginning nor the end. The image of the lake symbolises Lala's revelation which like a circle stretches throughout history (continuity). Lala's lake is the source of rain from which people draw water; a symbol of life and vitality which comes from Mulungu through the ancestors.

Lala's lake is also called the lake of the medicinepeople. Among the Akamba, the belief is that some medicinepeople get their powers from this revelation lake. It is to these waters where most medicinepeople believe they are transported to, in order to get their messages to the people. (Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/1989). In this same lake, the medicinepeople mediate between the people and the
spirits. Therefore, in the song, the role of spirit mediumship is emphasized. The strong image of the lake acts as an auto-suggestion to a religious feeling. The notion of spirit possession which is an important aspect of kilumi religious beliefs is visualised in the above explanation. The song is suggestive that the people very vividly expect the rain.

Song 9:

"Lala nutulikite na Kyondo kila ki miti yake,
Nukulika ililuni kati,
Ndia ikiluma ndimama,
Ui Syomuthembwa6 tata,
Ndia ikiluma ndimama".
(Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/89).

(Lala avenges us with her basket full of magic instruments/tools, She is in the middle of the lake, which trembles with fear, I have no sleep my dear, Yes Syomuthembwa, put more effort, When the lake trembles with fear, I have no sleep my dear).

Explanation

In this song, 'avenging' means that the people are suffering from drought. The spirits' powers and attributes are revealed and extolled. When Lala enters the lake (the source of Lala), the waters tremble with fear. Nobody can afford to sleep (relax) when the presence of the sacred is experienced.
In this religious experience, there is tension, a religious feeling of fear and awe brought about by the supernatural power.

Syomuthembwa (the sacrificer) is supposed to be present in the ritual. She is urged to sacrifice more and more, so that Lala stops avenging the people with her witchcraft paraphernalia (witchcraft is used in a positive way).

Lala is also visualised as diving in the midst of the lake. Diving here symbolises delving into the mystery or secret of life for a revelation, hence the mentioning of the divination basket.

From this song, one can deduce that in the first place, Lala saves from drought and is expected to do it with the magic means in her basket. Therefore, ritual becomes a salvation event as proposed by Ray (1976). Secondly, the idea of the lake trembling could be associated with roaring of Mutitu hill which indicates that the spirits are asking for a sacrifice. The last time it roared was in August 1973 (Kavyu 1973:3). This belief has persisted up to this day.

In the analysis of the kilumi songs, the researcher discovered that some of the words used in them
exhibit European influence. The conclusion was that, these songs might have been constructed recently. Some examples are the following:

Song 10:

"Ii nthae Katunge ii, Mwaka na mavuku kalalya, ta watiwa? Tawaselewa ii ni ngali yithi uvisi kwela ndia, wali uu uwetawa, Ii nthae Katunge ii, Mwaka na mavuku Kalalya, ta watiwa?" (Nditi Mwanza, 0.1, 24/9/89).

(Yes, let me hail Katunge, The possessor of books, have you been left? Are you late? Yes for the carrier heading to the deep unpassable waters! The prestigious wali, Let me meet Katunge, Yes, whose walls are paper erected, have you been left? Deny).

Explanation

In this song, the singers are inquiring whether the prestigious Wali (Katunge) has been left behind by the other spirits who have gone to beg for blessings (rain) on behalf of the living. The spirits are depicted as if they are in a vehicle/carrier on a mission to Mulungu's abode. The carrier symbolises the power of Mulungu.

The phrases "possessor of books" and "office in deep unpassable waters" are of foreign origin because
the indigenous Akamba did not possess books and even offices. This song might have been composed during early missionary times when school (formal education) meant civilization for the Africans. In this song, we see foreign cultural elements are already influencing the kilumi dances.

In the song, the singer is praising Katunge as the possessor of books. Books here could be suggesting the superior knowledge of Katunge which others do not have. She is supposed to be in the carrier together with others to make rain. But the singer is wondering whether Katunge is too busy with her secret knowledge (books) or more mysterious things. All they want is rain. Therefore, the song portrays the impatience of the crowd waiting for rain.

Song 11:

"Iyaa, niendete nangavika uu Nzambi Mue, Nikulya kivungo kya asungu wendaa wikalile mikindo? Iyaa, niendete nangavika uu Nzambi Mue uu". (Nditi Mwanza, O.I, 24/9/89).

(Me, Nzambi, the Mue, I have travelled and reached the destination, May I ask, you, the whites' conqueror, do you travel seated on mikindo? I, Nzambi, the Mue, I have travelled and reached the destination).
Explanation

Nzambi is the cleanser. The soloist of this song is animated by the spirit of Nzambi. She is suggesting she is Nzambi.

Another effect on kilumi songs is depicted in this song. The aim of the white missionaries was to evangelise and win the Akamba to Christianity. However, as implied in this song, there has always been a tug of war between the Akamba indigenous religion and Christianity. For the traditionalists, their religion is so deeply rooted that they address their spirit Nzambi as the conqueror of the whites' religion. Her revelation surpasses that of science (technological age), Nzambi sits on clouds and pours blessings on the living. The singers conclude that Nzambi is the one who holds their tradition firm from outside interference.

Song 12:

"Kitambaa vasi ukatonya?
Kya Nzambi wa Mwiva Syelilu,
Kitambaa vasi ukatonya?".
(Nditi Mwanza, O.I, 24/9/89).

(Will you manage to iron the cloth of Nzambi, daughter of Mwiva?
Will you manage?)
As a thanksgiving song, this song is sang after the heavy rains. The ideas of cloth and iron are new concepts to the indigenous Akamba. The cloth refers to Ukamba land and ironing refers to its drying up. Therefore, in the song, they are asking who is able to dry the land after Nzambi has blessed it with heavy showers. In this case, the iron signifies the heat that precedes the rain. Will it manage to dry up the land?

The phrase "Nzambi wa Mwiva Syelilu" means, Nzambi showers water from her pool, a symbol of rain. This song could also be sang when people have gone to the medicineperson to request for rain. When singing, the participants dance with small pieces of cloth, an outward indication of their inner faith (belief).

Song 13:

"Mekalila mitambo nimekulauna no mbola ii, Mundu wa mundu ii ndathambwa akathea, Syomikindo ndumanzie meli Ngunga, tuthambie ndia, Mekalila ndia mokie kuthambia".
(Nditi Mwanza, 0.1, 24/9/89).

(They are quite pre-occupied sitting on the rails, Nobody can forsake one's kinsperson, Allow Syomikindo to find floating vessel for our swimming in the lake, The swimmers came for the swim).
Explanation

In the kilumi songs, proverbs are useful communicators and perpetuators of the traditional understanding of the world and people's attitudes towards it. In this song, a proverb, "Blood is thicker than water" (mundu wa mundu ndathambwa akathea) is used. In other words, there is no way in which one can disassociate himself/herself with his/her own people. When they sit leisurely on the rails, the spirits are quite preoccupied to look here and there gently. They are seen as fully engaged, inspecting (prospecting) the situation because they cannot forsake their descendants.

The singers (swimmers) are asking Syomikindo to get them ships (floating vessels). In this case, a ship is taken to symbolise the idea of sailing or navigation. The swimmers as navigators are living in order to transcend their physical beings towards the supernatural realm. That is why they came for a swim. Therefore, they are requesting Syomikindo to help them to sail through.

Also, rails (mitambo) and ship (meli) bring in the idea of engines which symbolise warmth. In a wider context, the warmth points to the warm personality of the spirits which give rain to the people.
(Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/1989). This idea could be supported by the fact that, this song was sang during the droughts in order to beseech Syomikindo/Syokitundumo to bring them a thunderstorm. It was also sang around June, when people went to the medicineman to be given ng'ondu for spraying in their fields.

The song is a reminder to the spirits that the adherents are their kinspeople who constantly need some assistance from them.

3.3 FOREIGN SPIRITS

They are spirits of the neighbouring ethnic groups which are believed to have been imported to Ukambani during Akamba cultural contacts with the foreigners. The occasion for their songs is where a troubled person is diagnosed as possessed by foreign spirits e.g., Maasai, Europeans and Giriama. The songster and the crowd get clues from the way the possessed dances and behaves. Some examples of the songs are the following:

Song 14:

"Ii Mukavi nukuthusa mwa,
Ii ui, nukuthusa,
Mukavi akwete itumo atave ng'ombe mwa,
Ii ui, nukuthusa".
(Kasina Mwengu, O.I, 26/11/89).
(The Maasai goes raiding,  
Yes, he goes raiding,  
He holds the spear to raid the cattle,  
The Maasai goes raiding).

Explanation

The song could be a divination one. The singer is suggesting it is the Maasai spirit possessing the victim. The possessed dances holding a spear and other arms which are believed to satisfy the spirits' demands. In the dance, the possessed imitates a Maasai stealing herds and must be dressed like a Maasai.

One of the kilumi religious beliefs is that some foreign spirits are aggressive and very harassing. That is why the possessed goes raiding, which brings the idea of aggressiveness.

Song 15:

"Ula mutande matu ii ni Mukavi,  
Ula mutande matu ii ni Mukavi,  
Mukavi mutwa kathetu".  
(Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/89).

(Maasai have pierced ears,  
Maasai have pierced ears,  
Maasai, the raiders).

Explanation

The anthropomorphic ideas brought out in this song concern the supernatural (spirits).
Anthropomorphically, foreign spirits look like foreigners, and their behaviour resembles that of the people they represent. Therefore, in the above song, the Maasai spirits look like Maasai.

Song 16:

"Musungu ni mwathe manya ungunia kelele, Thakya Kavivi uka - Mwikalila mikindo, Osa mavuku maku usome - Mwikalila mikindo, Ndutandike mesa usome - Mwikalila mikindo, Wi kitanda na mesa ukyuka - Mwikalila mikindo" (Alice Museka, 0.1, 27/11/89).

(You are temperamental European, do not quarrel with me, Dance, Kavivi, dance - the one who sits on clouds, Take your books and read - the one who sits on clouds, Tidy the table and read - the one who sits on clouds, You came along with your technology - the one who sits on clouds).

Explanation

This song is sang to a person believed to be possessed by European spirits. It must have been composed recently after the coming of the white missionaries. The singer addresses the spirit (Kavivi), soothing and encouraging her to dance. She is called the European lady, the owner of books, tables and beds (civilization). The 'books' could represent secret of secrets, the superior knowledge of the spirit.
In the kilumi dance, the possessed speak in the language of their spirits' homeland and in this case, the possessed speaks in English. In support of these foreign spirits, Larby (1944) cites an epidemic in 1911 of religious hysteria amongst women which was attributed to possession by European spirits. Therefore, in the song, formal education and Western technology are explicated as the factors which influenced the traditional Akamba culture. For example, "the seater on clouds" could be suggesting "the one who came seated in an aircraft" bringing a foreign culture to the Akamba.

3.4 ANIMAL-LIKE SPIRITS

The following songs are kind of exorcism, to get rid of the animal spirits.

Song 17:

"Ii yanga yanga ii wa munyema, ii uu, Syoka netina wa Munyema, ii uu, Ndukile nesa wa Munyema, ii uu, Ngekala taku mwanake wa Munyema, ui". (Alice Museka, O.I, 27/11/89).

(I greet you son of Munyema, oh yes! Retreat animal spirit, oh yes! Skip properly animal spirit, oh yes! If only I could resemble you, animal spirit, oh yes!).
The Munyema spirits are also called Ngolokosi, Mang'ola. Ngolokosi are people of the Gold Coast, (West Africa). In the 2nd World War, they were feared as they were alleged of their tendency to cut off and eat women breasts. May be that is why these spirits are nicknamed Mazimamoto, (fire brigade) as a symbol of violence. The Munyema spirits are believed to be bad spirits. Once they possess an individual, they make her become violent. The possessed can go on fours, snarling, snapping, scratching and biting pieces of live fowls for blood. The victim can even cut herself with a knife. But as most of the informants stressed, surprisingly, no scars are seen after the possession is over.

In this song, the greetings have adaptive value in facilitating social relations. The singer greets the Munyema spirit so as to identify herself and enter into a relationship with the spirit. This kind of suggests to the troublesome spirit to keep calm, an advantage of ritual control of the spirit so that they dance to their satisfaction. Otherwise, they are believed to cause a lot of damage if they are not satisfied. The phrase "If only I could resemble you" is suggestive of "if only I could dance properly like
you, then we will have won the battle and controlled you".

According to Muviti Muveva (O.I, 2/12/89), the Munyema spirits have to be exorcised. Therefore, the participants look for a chick, puppet, kitten and some food for the spirits. The possessed accompanies them to the bush because leaving her behind means leaving the evil spirits. All along the way, they sing kilumi songs and dance. After reaching their destination, they slaughter the animals. The possessed drinks of their blood and the people bid farewell to these spirits which are then believed to be satisfied.

Song 18:

"Mwiitu uu wa Kathambi ta watwaiwe;
Nzoka utindae weka kithambioni?
Nangathamba na savuni ta nawaie;
Nzoka utindae weka kithambioni?"
(Syombua Kalungu, O.I, 25/11/89).

(Has the daughter of Kathambi got married;
Leaving Nzoka alone at the cleansing pool?
Like a patient washing off with soap;
You, Nzoka alone at the cleansing pool?).

Explanation

This song is sang when a person is supposedly possessed by snake (nzoka) spirits. It is worth noting that the pool is not merely a rain symbol, but also a
cleansing symbol. In the song, the singer inquires whether Kathambi got married, i.e., moved elsewhere. In other words, are the ancestral spirits not around leaving bad spirits alone in the cleansing pool? The possessed, like a patient needs a bath (purification) to get off bad things. She needs regeneration through the effect of the transitional powers. But, Nzoka seems to block the cleansing.

Therefore, the song is a kind of complaint that the people are without the ancestral spirits which are supposed to help in cleansing. It is designed to communicate certain religious grievances.

Song 19:

"Uuwi Ngilita!
Nyamu ni ivuthite, Ngilita,
Yenda ta tela, Ngilita,
Nthaue, nthaue Syomangala,
Aumite na kuu Mwitika,
Nthaue, nthaue, Syomangala".
(Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/89).

(Alas! you, Ngilita!  
The animal is wriggling, Ngilita,  
Oh hail, hail Syomangala, 
She hails from river Mwitika,  
Oh hail, hail Syomangala).

Explanation

The Ngilita spirits are also believed to be malevolent spirits which are said to make women barren.
Therefore, in this song they are hailed, in order to appease them. The living need protection from these bad spirits. When one is possessed by them, one dances wriggling down (kwilita) like a snake.

Song 20:

"Amba kwiyumba nzungululu, katheka maia, katheka va?
Kasuni kelu mbingilite,
Katheka utana mbingilite
Katheka maia, kathekaa va?".
(Nditi Mwanza, O.I, 20/11/89).

(Nzungululu, the lover of lakes, The spotted white bird! Rock and Roll, The beauty and singer of lakes, Rock and Roll, Oh, where are you?).

Explanation

This song is an important exception. It is diagnostic and in praise of the spirit. It is merely identifying the spirit. The spirit needs only attention.

Nzungululu are the swallow-tailed kites; and from the lakes they get dirt for building the nests. The birds symbolise spiritualization, the spirit of goodness and activity; the spirits' supernatural aid. They could also point to the creation myth where the first creation was beautiful. (Syombua Kalungu, O.I, 25/11/1989). The white colour could be a constant
reminder of purity, whereby the living are expected to be blameless before the spirits and Mulungu at large.

This song has a good lesson, that is, like the swallow-tailed kite, people should enjoy and be happy with whatever they are going through. They should be busy bettering the world for a harmonious living.

3.5 VEHICLES

The following songs are sang for victims believed to be possessed by vehicle-like spirits.

Song 21:

"Ngali ya mwaki, ngali, 
Asungu maumite Garissa, ngali, 
Mathi kukita ulaya, ukai ngali".  
(Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/89).

(Behold the train,  
The European warriors aboard it from Garissa,  
Going to fight in Europe,  
Behold the train).

Explanation

This song is sang for a person believed to be possessed by the 'train' spirits. The possessed whistles and clanks like a locomotive. Sometimes she picks and tries to put hot charcoal in the mouth, a sign of train spirits' power in them. When
interrogated by the soloist, the possessed normally replies "I am the train" (Ninyie kongoto ngali ya mwaki).

From the past Akamba experiences, the most aggressive warriors are the Maasai and Somali. Probably that is why they are mentioning Garissa in the song. Although the Europeans destabilized our culture, the indigenous Mukamba tries to fight or resist change. The train could symbolise the power of the spirits. In this glorious train, the two realms (spiritual and earthly), will meet, and in it the Mukamba is given power to keep his/her traditional religion.

Song 22:

"Meli ya ukanga, meli mwa,
Ningwalyula nduli, meli mwa,
Meli ya Ukasi, meli mwa,
Meli nikuluka, meli niyatukiwa".
(Syombua Kalungu, O.I, 25/11/89).

(Oh, the floating vessel, the ship,
I will change the dancing style, the ship,
The vessel from the coast, the ship,
The ship floats, the ship is late).

Explanation

This song is sang for the one who is believed to be possessed by the 'ship' spirits. She makes noises like the ship. The phrase "I will change the dancing

(Steer the ship that floats on waters, 
Steer the rail ship,10 
The water vessel, 
Steer the rail ship).

Explanation

This song was composed after a certain ship capsized in the Indian Ocean. From then, onwards, the spirits of the deceased were believed to possess people.
The mentioned ship (in the song) is that which comes along with foreign cultures. The singer is suggesting that the spirit is trying to penetrate to their (Akamba) culture with foreign influences. Through this therapeutic song, the ship has to be steered, i.e., the spirit must be exorcised. During the dance, the possessed drinks water and washes with it, an imitation of what is sang. This drinking could also symbolise the willingness (of the people) to share in the communal meal with the spirits (Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/1989).

Song 24:

"Kula ndeke ikuuluka na matuni,
Silanga nikwia, tuvange kitese,
Ii kingi, uu ndeke iwie".
(Nditi Mwanza, O.I, 23/9/89).

(Look! the plane flies up in the skies,
The dam alarms us to prepare the airport
Yes, the king, let the plane land).

Explanation

This song is sang when a person is believed to be possessed by the 'plane' spirits. It portrays a modern aspect in that, originally, the Akamba did not know of aeroplanes. In the course of the dance, the possessed becomes a whirling propeller. She must be given water, an indication of the water in the dam.
The plane symbolises the power of the spirits, (Nditi Mwanza, O.I, 24/9/1989). After the participants get an alarm, they start preparing for its landing through dancing and singing kilumi songs. When the plane lands, it indicates that the spirits are calm and have been won over. The possessed becomes alright. Therefore the spirits are tricked out of her.

Song 25:


(Oh, why are you weeping youthful Saina? Why weep, the youthful one? Board the train quickly before it leaves, You rail constructors!).

Explanation

The traditional story which circulates among the Kitui Akamba is that, the Saina spirits are of some deceased Akamba who died while constructing the Kenya-Uganda railway in the early 1900s. From then henceforth, their spirits are believed to possess people in kilumi dances. The belief is that, after they died in the bushes, they were not given a proper burial, therefore, they constantly ask for some recognition.
When dancing to this song, the dancers pick up charcoal in their hands. One could assume that it is an imitation of the past when for fuel, trains used coal shovelled onto the wagon by two men at a time. The train could not leave without enough coal.

In this song, the Saina spirits are weeping, i.e., they are troubled by some sadness. Although they were pleasant workers, they are never recognised and this makes them unhappy young people. The singer pleads with the spirits to "board the train quickly". 'Board' is taken as the means of leaving the possessed. Therefore, this song is the people's prayer for protection in their daily chores and a reflection of the people's past experiences. The spirits are tricked out of the possessed through the song.

Song 26:

"Ninia mbevo ii ikole wathi mwa,
Ui mbevo ngasya withi ku?
Nithi Malindi kuua ngua,
Ui mbevo ngasya withi ku?".
(Mutie Kithunu, 0.1, 29/11/89).

(I am cold, I need a dance,
Where are you going the cold one?
I am going to Malindi to buy clothes,
Where are you going the cold one?).
Explanation

This song reminds the people of their early trade when the Akamba travelled all the way to the Coast (Malindi) for trade. The Akamba believe that during this time of foreign cultural contact, they imported some foreign spirits into Ukamba land. And these spirits possess them during kilumi dances.

In this song 'cold' is a symbolic expression of not being happy with the present situation. The spirits are in a situation of solitude or loneliness for being far from home (Malindi). They long for exaltation, i.e., they need some attention by dancing or appeasing them through therapeutic songs. The spirits are unhappy of being cold bearing in mind that Malindi is warmer than Ukamba land. Therefore, the singer states that they will buy clothes to make them warm - a way of getting rid of the (cold) spirits. A conclusion which could be drawn from this song is that, some spirits dance in kilumi in order to please and satisfy themselves.

3.6 MYTHICAL MOUNTAIN SONGS

In these songs, the singers enumerate some of the sacred hills, the focal points for religious worship.
Song 27:

"Ntuyululuke Kayolaa uu ndundumilye,
Kwa mbaa Mwiva no kiio,
Kwa mbaa Mwiva no kiio,
Thathi mwana ngwanalilwa ngoi thome,
Mukunga nikoma va?
Ntuyululuke Kayolaa uu ndundumilye".
(Nditi Mwanza, 0.1, 24/9/89).

(Let me go around Kayolaa,
Let me go around Kayolaa,
The entire Mwiva's clan is weeping
Where do I rest to sleep when youthful,
Thathi's beddings are laid at the gate?
Let me go around Kayolaa).

Explanation

Kayolaa is another name for Mount Kilimanjaro. The above song suggests that when there is a shortage of rain, the Akamba remember their origins of Mount Kilimanjaro. Where else could they get blessings apart from their ancestral land? This idea resembles that of Elijah of the bible, (I Kings 18) who had to walk all the way to Mount Horeb (Northern Israel), where he got special revelation. Therefore, it is a religious thing to go back to one's ancestral land for religious experiences.

The phrase "the entire Mwiva's clan is weeping", is an expression to show the people's suffering due to lack of rain. This could be compared to the Israelites at the rivers of Babylon where they wept
when they remembered Zion (psalm 137). In imagery, the singers suggest that at Kayolaa, will they find rest. They are beseeching the spirits to hear their cries.

"Youthful Thathi's beddings are at the gate" means that the diviner is busy performing the divination art (kwausya) in order to know the causes of lack of rain. This art is like a sacrament for welcoming the rain which creates a framework of what the ancestors are supposed to do and which people must provide. For this rain ritual clan, it is a taboo not to perform the rain rituals. 'Youthful' may be a reference to the youth of the Akamba society (when the society was young).

The dancers dance round (in a circle) to recreate the place where they came from. Kilimanjaro is not dry, so the worshippers long for their origin. In this song, the theory that the Akamba came from Kilimanjaro (Unyamwezi as mentioned elsewhere) side is supported. And the mountain (the height) symbolises the spiritual sacredness of the spirits and Mulungu. The worshippers long to be in harmony with the sacred beings.
Song 28:

"Nthyululuke Kayolaa uu wa maia,
Ndinona ngai uu uwetawa,
Nthyululuke Kayolaa uu wa maia,
Ndinona ngai uu uwetawa".  
(Kasina Mwengu, O.I, 26/11/89).

(As I swim around Kayolaa,  
that mother of lakes,  
No traces of that god who is mentioned,  
Let me swim along Kayolaa,  
No traces of that god who is mentioned).

Explanation

The indigenous Akamba believe that some spirits live in the waters. In fact during the research of this study, most of the medicinepeople stressed on how, they are transported in their dreams to places where they see spirits walking on waters. And in this case, the participants are looking for the god in the lake.

In this song, the singers assume that Kilimanjaro is the mother of lakes (in that area, there is plenty of rain). They emphasize that they are in a long spiritual search until they meet Mulungu. The song is an expression of their impatience and frustration of not getting co-operation of the spirits. They are in a spiritual need, longing to meet that sacred Being. By dancing, they go round Kayolaa trying to trace that
god. They are looking for the bridge which will unite their world with the sacred one.

The mountain is taken to symbolise their rock of salvation. In other words, the people have reached the limit situation of powerlessness and scarcity. They have to hold firm on their rock until they are united with the spirits. In Kayolaa, the mountain of sacredness will they reach a reconciliation stage.

Song 29:

"Kondo ke nziani kati,
Ni ka mwanamue, aka mwosie,
Syana mwendela ku, ni matheo ii,
Kirinyaa nukutunduma,
Syana mwendela ku, ni matheo ii".
(Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/89).

(There is a small basket in between the path, It belongs to the son of Mue, but the women took it, Children, there is no way because of clouds, There is a thunderstorm at Kirinyaa, Children, there is no way because of clouds).

Explanation

Kirinyaa is another name for Mount Kenya. In this song, the basket of **Mue** being referred to is the rainmaking or magic means. But "the women took it", symbolically suggests that these means are effective, but the women somehow assumed them. The dark clouds are the symbolic precursors of an on-coming rain.
Therefore, the children (people) are asked where they will pass through because the rain is so dense that they cannot see. This song is sang when the women have gone to a medicine person to ask for rains. Indirectly, the singers have hope and are encouraging rain to pour. One could conclude that, they refer specifically not to Mount Kilimanjaro or Kenya, but tracing ones origins from the mythical heights. That is, being closer to the gods as mentioned in the Akamba creation myth. Again, a second theory that the Akamba came from Mount Kenya areas is also reflected in this song.

Song 30:

"Tulima twai twili,
Tula twitikasya aimu,
Tulima twai twili,
Sunga musungo uyongone
Tulima twai twili".
(Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/89).

(There were two hillocks,
These rained spirits,
There were two hillocks,
Dance to the step of the tempo,
There were two hillocks).

Explanation

In this song, the Akamba creation myth (mentioned elsewhere) is highlighted. They believe that the first human beings came from the two anthills of Nzaui which is sang when people are confused and uncertain.
is an essential component of their religious beliefs. In this ritual song, which evokes a religious feeling, the dancers are urged to dance to their satisfaction. By dancing, they express their inner faith or belief. Dancing is a way of recalling one's original mythical past. That is, dancing is a ritual way of going back to the past of the Akamba people. It is essentially religious and "the hillocks rained (poured) spirits", is a religious image used in the song. Such images are important as Geertz (1966) stressed.

3.7 OTHER SONGS

Song 31:

"Muthembe, natumiwe nzungi ii Muthambii, Muthembe, mwiitu wa Mutitu, Ukwitwa Yumbya, Na ndwatwawa na Kyondo". (Kasina Mwengu, O.I, 26/11/89).

(Oh! Muthembe, Let her be erranded the African harvesting basket, The lone daughter of Mutitu, Nicknamed as Yumbya, You were wedded without the usual African basket).

Explanation

This is an example of an initiation song which is sang when a person is being initiated into a
medicinewoman. It accompanies the ritual of her being given the basket (more details in chapter four).

Yumbya is derived from kumba - to mould or create. Muthembe is derived from kuthemba - to offer or sacrifice. Muthambii is derived from kuthamba - to wash. Accordingly, the two main duties (namely to divine and heal) of medicinepeople, are enumerated in this song. The medicineperson (Muthembe) divines and tells people when and what they should sacrifice. As Muthambii (cleanser/washer), he/she tells the Akamba when they are in a state of ritual impurity and need to be cleansed (washed). After the cleansing, they are moulded or created into new beings by Yumbya, the creator. Therefore, the initiate should be given the medicinal/herbal bag so that she starts performing her duties.

Song 32:

"Wa Lala witya ki we?
Kwata kwoko na uindavya,
Muthamba wenda ki we?
Muthambi ni vata nake iya uu waya waya".
(Musangi Muveva, O.I, 10/12/89).

(Daughter of Lala, what do you need?
Please shake my hand and tell me,
Muthamba, what do you need?
Muthambi, I adore you).
Explanation

This is an example of a song which is sang when the soloist is interrogating the spirits in order to hear their demands. It is the medium through which she diagnoses, to divine what the problem is. The singer is addressing directly the possessed, questioning her and she is expected to give answers. In this song, the person believed to be possessed by Lala spirits is being asked for her demands. Therefore, the function of such songs is to get something out of them.

In conclusion, it is evident that in the kilumi rituals and dances, the indigenous Akamba express their faith through the songs. These songs are of paramount importance because getting in and out of trance can be aided by them. For example, the mood of the worshippers could be affected through the content of the songs or even the singing style.
1. **Wali** - A praise name for a king (or influential person). In Kikamba, there is no distinction between the king and queen, hence *wali* is unisex.

2. **Miveke** - These are herbs used for treatment. They are ground and mixed with rain water as a protective medicine so that even if people drunk this water, they would not fall sick.

3. **Mithumba and Mioswe** - Traditional herbs for healing and cleansing.

4. **Muthambi** - The name is derived from *Kuthamba* which means to wash or clean. Therefore, *muthambi* is the one who washes or cleans.

5. **Kyondo** - A basket. This is the medicinal bag for medicinepeople (*Kyondo kya uwe*), in chapter four. It was a valuable possession.

6. **Syomuthembwa** - is derived from *Kuthemba*, to sacrifice. Therefore *syomuthembwa* is the official who sacrifices or
presents offerings at the shrines.

7. **Mikindo**  -  Chains or clouds of rain.

8. **Syomikindo**  -  Also called *Syokitundumo*, which is derived from *kutunduma* (to sound like thunder). This name shows clearly the Akamba religious belief that when there was thunder, it symbolised the sounds or voices of the spiritual beings especially *Mulungu*, the supreme Being. In fact, some believed thunder indicated *Mulungu's* omnipotence (they said *Mulungu* was stretching himself).

9. **Nzoka**  -  After a mother had several misfortunes, (for example, after she gave birth, her children died), she could call her next child, Nzoka. The people believed this was a bad name which would scare the spirits away so that they do not carry the child away.

10. **Rail Ship**  -  The Akamba were not sailors, that is why they connected the ship with the idea of rail.
KILUMI RITUALS, DANCES, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

4.0 INTRODUCTION

From the description of kilumi in the foregoing chapters, it is evident that this phenomenon is of very central significance to the indigenous Mukamba. The question arises as to what rituals and practices accompany the dance. In this connection, this chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of descriptive data on kilumi rituals, dances, beliefs and practices in order to show their religious overtones. The results of the analysis are then compared and linked to other existing works relevant to the study. The social settings of the kilumi activities and occasions on which they are performed are described. The formal features followed in these occasions make kilumi a ritual dance. Hence dancing is considered a ritual act.

All the respondents viewed most of the Akamba traditional songs as functional. These songs can be categorised into two types. There were songs which were not for dancing (myali) and those which were accompanied by a dance (mbathi sya kivalo). Dance songs could be further classified into:

1. Occasional ceremonial dance songs such as circumcision and wedding songs (mbovoi and maio respectively).

Theillé
2. Entertainment dance songs which include nzuma, mukanda and nduli.

3. Spiritual dance songs such as ngoma and kilumi.

The first two categories are not within the scope of this study which specifically deals with kilumi rituals, dances and songs.

In this study, four major types of kilumi have emerged from the informants' responses and in our discussion of the types, Turner's typology is deemed relevant in this situation. Ranger and Kimambo (1972) summarized Turner's types of rituals as:

1. Redressive ritual which exists to redress a calamity or an affliction which has brought about a crisis in the affairs of a social group.

2. Life crisis ritual which is less concerned with a society as a whole than with an individual entering a superior ritual and social status. Such ritual introduces the candidate into a specific community.

4.1 REDRESSIVE KILUMI RITUALS

These are discussed under the following sub-headings:
(i) Worship kilumi (kilumi kya ithembo)

(ii) Therapeutic kilumi (kilumi kya Aimu)

(iii) Cleansing kilumi - kilumi danced at the isyu~ka
     - New grains/harvest kilumi
     - Birth/death kilumi

4.1.1 Worship Kilumi

Generally, kilumi could be seasonal or it may be performed all year round. It is the most important indigenous religious dance among the Akamba, in the sense that it relates to the spiritual or after-death world. For example, kilumi is either danced at the medicineperson's home who deals with the spiritual world or at the home of a woman allegedly possessed by spirits which are of the 'other world' or at the sacred shrine, a place linked to the 'spiritual world'. It can also be performed during drought. Drought is considered as a sign of something wrong in the community as well as in the 'other world'.

The Akamba uphold certain myths in relation to creation. For example, they believe that:

In the beginning Mulungu created the spirits. He then created a man and his wife. He tossed the two from heaven until they landed on a stone on Nzau~i mound. Mulungu sent them many cows, goats and sheep. He also sent them plenty of rain. After the
rains, there were many anthills and two other people emerged from them. Afterwards, these two distinct families married and the population increased. These people sacrificed in each season. However, one year, they forgot to sacrifice to Mulungu, who was annoyed with them and as a result, a famine followed. In search of food, they were forced to wander from one place to another. And from then onwards they never forgot to sacrifice. (Ndeti, 1972:28).

It is discernible from the foregoing that lack of rain clearly meant that the beings in the spiritual world were annoyed with the living Akamba. Consequently, the people sought to find out the causes of such catastrophies from the mediums whom they believed were arbitrators between them and the spiritual realm.

Traditionally, kilumi for worshipping could be danced after the people had sacrificed to Mulungu in order to get rain. The coming of rain indicated the coming of life because people survived on what the soil had produced. Although famines were the principle contingencies and calamities that featured in the event calendars of the Akamba of Kitui, prolonged drought worried the people (Akonga 1985). During such times, the kilumi dance was performed to appease Mulungu. Thus, the dance was a means of getting into contact with the sacred realm.
Even now, in Kitui, when the rains delay in terms of a prolonged drought, the elderly women who normally perform the ritual dance usually gather at the medicine woman's homestead. They believe that she is a prophetess who occasionally informs the community about the adequacy or inadequacy of the expected rains. Unceasingly, she sleeps singing and communicating with the spirits through mythical incantations while other preparations for the sacrificial day are made. For example, the kilumi drum is ritually brought to the dancing ground; a sacrificial animal is procured; and four middle-aged women go round the village announcing the day people are to go to the shrine. As they wait for this day, the old women continue to dance the kilumi. This can take three, five or seven days, depending on the arrangements. Once the medicine woman receives the message from the spiritual realm, she immediately summons the people and for example, tells them "my people, I see your feet are full of dust. But as you go home, they will be wiped off, because I can assure you it will be drizzling". From the very beginning, such encouraging words prepare the adherents psychologically by giving them some hope that their professed aim would be achieved in the end.

According to the explanations (of the sacrificial day) given by Mutie Kithunu (0.I, 29/11/1989), the
village elders leave for the shrine early in the morning. The other people follow later in the afternoon. Each group has a significant role to play. The men bring sugarcane beer, snuff and the sacrifice which could be in a form of a chicken, a goat or a bull. The type of the sacrificial victim is made by the medicine woman and it has to be of a single colour and undeformed. From the field responses, white colour symbolises purity, in other words, a white animal is used as a symbol of cleansing people from wrong-doing whereas a black one is preferred as a supplication for rain. The black colour probably symbolises clouds.

The women bring porridge, ugali and milk for libation at the foot of the fig tree. In addition, they bring small quantities of every kind of produce such as, millet, bananas, beans, pumpkins, cassava and ghee.

The offering is done in an orderly manner. The men lead with their offerings. First, they pour the beer into a half-gourd (nzele), from which the leading official sips and then passes the half-gourd to the others to follow suit. This ritual act of sipping is called kuthambanya, meaning to cleanse or to wash one another in Kikamba. The officials have to cleanse
one another because they are supposed to be in a state of ritual purity in order to offer the sacrifices. The leader then holds the half-gourd and pours the remaining contents at the foot of the tree saying:

"Ngai, the almighty, show your power. The owners of this shrine 'Muviti, the owner of the shrine', we are seeking to know about the forthcoming rains, so that we stop getting worried. We are pouring some beer. Please drink".

(Nditi Mwanza, 0.1; 24/9/1989)

After this, they put some snuff in their palms, sniff a little and deposit the remainder at the same spot. During this performance, they state their needs, clearly and openly both in prayers and in relevant comments.

The female official leader puts porridge in the same half-gourd, sips and passes to her counterparts to do likewise. Then she pours the remainder, calling names of specific ancestral spirits and inviting them to the feast. The foodstuff and grains are also deposited at the foot of the tree with similar utterances which validate or give the ritual a meaning. Otherwise, as observed by Smart (1969:16), "if people go through the motions of a religious observance without accompanying it with the intentions and sentiments which give it human meaning, ritual is merely an empty shell".
In this particular kilumi ritual, role identification and division of labour are brought out clearly. They seem to corroborate Fischer's theory (1963) that in ritual, individuals are informed of their social structure and this preserves the order of that society. Precisely, in this ritual, the Akamba are reminded of the time of creation when Mulungu created everything orderly and the first people were living harmoniously with nature. But due to people's negligence, the natural order became, and continues to be chaotic. Therefore, they must seek to restore their harmony.

The most intense period is when the animal is sacrificed. It is sanctified, hanged and pierced through the throat. Meanwhile, the rest of the women would be busy dancing and singing kilumi songs at a reasonable distance from the shrine. These songs are instrumental in validating the religious rituals through recitation of myth. Also, Ray (1976) explains that the verbal component (prayer and song), acts as a device of influencing the spirits to intercede on people's behalf. As the blood gushes out of the pierced throat, some is collected in the half-gourd while the rest is left to pour and flow over the offerings, already enumerated. The gushing and flowing of the blood symbolises rain and hence life. The collected blood is poured down as people beseech
the spirits to bring rain as shown in this prayer.

"Now the spirits dwelling beneath (or in the underground), our guardians, the ancestral spirits, the forgotten spirits, we beseech you to bring us rain from above. We have slaughtered a goat in order to share it with you. In addition, there is some of the indigenous food (porridge, ugali and milk) which you left behind: Please bring us rain". (Nditi Mwanza, 0.1; 20/11/1989)

From the tone of this prayer, one would agree with Mbiti (1975) who viewed some spirits as living in the present (sasa) period while others belonged to the ancient (zamani) period. Also, it is implied that there are some spirits which are still living among the dead and others dead among the living. However, all of them are recognised by the traditional Akamba. Again, the Akamba are generous, not only to their kinspeople but also to the sacred beings.

After the libation, the carcass is skinned and small pieces of meat are cut from every internal organ and deposited at the foot of the sacrificial tree. All the informants stressed that the remaining sacrificial meat must be roasted and eaten by the men who are present. The women are allowed to drink the remaining porridge and milk. An explanation given as to why women were refused to eat the meat was that traditionally, the Akamba men were highly
respected. They were the ones entitled to eat animals' heads, tongues and the heart. It was believed that a man could keep secrets in his heart but a woman could get annoyed very fast and reveal all the secrets. Hence, they were denied these parts of the animals (Nditi Mwanza, O.I, 20/11/1989). Symbolically, by eating the head and the heart meant eating the organs where secrets were kept and, in turn, the consumer acquired some power to keep secrets. Eating the tongue means eating the organ through which secrets are revealed.

Two generalizations could be made from the above explanation. In the first place, the redressive kilumi ritual helps to perpetuate the Akamba tradition through role identification. Morals are instilled in the adherents, the family institution is kept alive, and the society strengthened. Secondly, the explanation appears sexist. It portrays some superiority complex whose roots could be traced in the past when women were regarded as inferior to men and were deprived of some essential things in their lives. But it should be noted that both men and women do keep secrets.

Akong'a (1985) talking of the sacrificial animal said that the head was carried away to the person who was supposed to contribute the next sacrificial animal.
However, there were other practices carried out. For example, Lindblom (1920) maintained that clay vessels containing goats that had been buried alive in them or killed by suffocation were found buried in the shrines. These vessels were moved when the place of sacrifice was changed. Similarly, Nzioki (1982) argued that the head was buried with the eyes facing West which signified that the sins of the community should end like a sunset. Mutie Kithunu (0.1, 29/11/1989) added that the Akamba believe that if everything is not eaten and the rest consumed completely with fire, some unfriendly people would use the remains to nullify the sacrifice with their charms. Apparently, it becomes evident that no sacrificial meat is carried away in this particular ritual. During the kilumi dance, a medium gets possessed and names the person who is to provide the next animal. The dance is continued even after the sacrifice.

All the informants stressed that the whole ritual is usually efficacious in that by the end of the whole exercise, rain falls. This coincides with what Kenyatta (1932:239), speaking of Agikuyu sacrifice had to say:

In the case of the ceremony in which I took part, I well remember that our prayers were quickly answered, for even before the sacred fires had ceased to burn, torrential rain came upon us.
Among the Akamba, as for the Agikuyu, it was important to sacrifice before the rains fell in order to ensure the spirits' benevolence.

In summary, the redressive kilumi ritual expressively monitors the morality for the Akamba society. According to Turner (1957:24),

> When a breach in social regularity is made by some natural misfortune such as famine or plague, and if the natural order is thought to be sensitively responsive to the moral condition of society, then the calamity allows a number of alternative interpretation. Ritual emerges as a result of the moral discomfort of the group, when confronted with a breach of natural order.

The kilumi for worshipping is a re-enactment or a re-living of the ancestors' deeds by the living Akamba. It also emerges to redress drought which is brought about by people's negligence and wrong-doings.

This then brings us to the discussion of the importance of shrines in the Akamba ritual activities. Central in these activities, especially for the case of rain is the shrine (ithembo), which is featured in our next topic of discussion.
4.1.2 *Ithembo* - Traditional Shrine

These shrines are found at the rocks in mountains, caves, or at huge wild fig trees such as *mukuyu* and *mumbu*; or *muamba* (baobab tree). They are constructed in such a way that, they resemble the indigenous Akamba huts. As a tabooed, venerated place, the shrine is approached in a solemnized manner. Traditionally, whenever people passed near it, they had to throw some snuff to it as a sign of acknowledging the powers that dwelt there. People were prohibited to cut or collect firewood from or around the sacred grove. Katola (1987:103) emphasized that:

> The area around (the grove) was left uncultivated for this was not an individual's land but the community's sacred property. It was a taboo to kill birds, snakes or any other animal at this area.

People were also prohibited to take away any offered food or grains from the shrine. The violation of the *ithembo* rules had its own consequences as shown in the following narration. In 1968, Paul Nzimbi, one of the earliest Christian evangelists in Kitui passed by a shrine at Tiva market and he decided to take some cents left there. He had heard of how the spirits could torment any one who dared to carry anything from their abode. But he believed that Christ had power over demoniac entities. For example, Christ
met the Legion man of the Bible and cast out the
demons into the swine (Luke 8:26:33), Nzimbi convinced
himself. As he walked along with the cents in his
pocket, he was mysteriously stoned and slapped. He
walked boldly for a distance until the situation
became unbearable. At long last, he decided to throw
the cents away (Musangi Muveva, O.I, 10/12/1989).

Two views emerge from this account. In the first
place, the fact that Nzimbi suffered the repercussions
immediately shows that in the Akamba society punish-
ment for the violation of some taboos was automatic
and immediate. Secondly, the Akamba taboos (such as
those surrounding the shrines) controlled people's
religious and social behaviour. The taboos also acted
as mediums for religious instructions. They taught
people how they should relate with the sacred beings,
or objects which were set apart by their transcenden-
tal powers.

Anyone who violated the shrine rules as Nzimbi
did was supposed to cleanse himself/herself either
by offering an animal to be sacrificed at that parti-
cular shrine, or by giving some other recognized
offering. For example, one could pick seven seeds
from a wild plant (ngondu) plus some snuff, then
place them at the grove. It was believed that much
later, the spirit took over the offering.
4.1.2.1 The Origin of the Shrines

Dundas (1913) said that he could not explain the origin of many shrines in Kitui. However, most of the informants of this study held two views about their origin. First, some shrines belong to some deceased Akamba medicinepeople, prophets and prophetesses who during their lifetime foretold about the future, rains and forthcoming disasters such as ethnic wars and famines. It was believed that these highly respected personalities were imbued with extra ordinary powers and that their spirits inhabited certain trees which later became shrines. Traditionally, it was believed that these spirits could manifest themselves in various ways such as through huge snakes found mostly at the shrines. The fear of the unusual powers surrounding the shrines made people believe that it was necessary to pour libations before setting off to the sacred groves. For example, before setting out to remove a beehive from a tree in the shrine area, one had to offer some snuff to the spirits so as to be protected from danger. Logically, one could assume that these prohibitions encouraged moral standards among the Akamba who learnt what was wrong and right. For that reason, the greedy people who could have aspired to steal the sacrificial food were barred from taking what was not theirs.
Secondly, among the Akamba, if a prominent person (medicine person, diviner, seer, songster) died in the bush, the body had to be brought home for a proper and decent burial. Through prophecy, the deceased specified the tree his/her spirit would like to inhabit. Once the relatives received the message, they assembled and proceeded to that particular spot (where he/she died) where they picked some soil and brought it to the foot of the specified tree. Then, the delegates built a small hut near the tree which from then onwards acquired sanctity. Anytime when the spirits of the deceased possessed a person, the kilumi dance had to be performed near that particular shrine. Anytime when people needed a message from the deceased, they had to assemble at the same shrine.

From the foregoing views, one can conclude that there were certain rites and beliefs associated with the shrines. For example, if a certain family migrated to another area, the spirits of their shrine gave directions of their new abode. The relatives then picked some soil from the old shrine, mixed it with sap from a mukomoa tree and deposited it at the new place (Mutie Kithunu, O.I, 29/11/1989). Lindblom (1920) adds that a bowl of grains, some cents and a green gourd were placed inside the newly built hut.
Also, some beer and snuff were poured as libation to welcome the spirits to their new home. By picking the soil from the bush, the people acknowledged the presence of the deceased. Although the Akamba did not believe in the resurrection of the body, they believed that after a person died, his/her spirits continued to exist.

Another belief associated with the shrines which has survived up-to-date in Kitui is that the ancestral spirits occasionally ask for sacrifices. Specifically, these requests come through the possessed women in kilumi dances. For instance, according to Musangi Muveva (0.1, 16/12/1989), if the owner (spirits) of the shrine asks to be covered with a goat's skin, the people purchase one and take it to the shrine singing kilumi songs. They pierce it and the oozing blood is collected in a half-gourd for libation. After skinning the goat, the hide is usually laid over the roof of that particular hut. Hence, they have covered the spirits with the skin.

Again, the traditional Akamba were very united. For example, if a person or a family could not afford to give the sacrificial animal for transferring the shrine, an economically able and willing person would provide it.
The importance of the shrine tree among the Akamba is comparable to that of the Kikuyu people summarized below:

Gikuyu attachments to such a tree are very intense. It is one of the key institutions of their culture. It marks at once their unity as a people, their family integrity (for their fathers sacrificed around it), their close contact with the soil, the rain and the rest of nature, and, to crown it all, their most vital communion with the High God of the tribe (Kenyatta, 1932:240).

Therefore, the shrines act as social centres pulling the Akamba together. The periodic ceremonies held at the shrines reinforce the social identity of the participants and the historic continuity of the dance with its sacred past; which is made present through spirit possession.

Also, foreign influences have penetrated into the Akamba indigenous ritual. For example, money which is a Western creation has already been introduced in such deep cultural-religious activities.

4.2 **KILUMI DANCE AS A THERAPY**

4.2.0 **Introduction**

Boas (1972) speaking of the function of dance in human society stressed that dance fulfils a vital
role in the lives of people. Dance could be a therapy for the mentally and emotionally ill. It is not only expressive but also creative. It has powers to cure and vitalize, to appease and aggravate, to satisfy and discover. Dance may promote dissociation (trance-induction) which is believed to be therapeutically effective. For example, dance may be viewed as a way of letting off steam in which behaviour not tolerated in everyday life may be permitted. Therefore, dance becomes a relief of anxiety which may be definitely therapeutic.

As Eliade (1987) explained, the power of dance in religious practice lies in its capacity to communicate. The efficacy of dance depends upon the beliefs of the participants particularly their faith in their ability to affect the world around them. Like the other people, the Akamba dance to effect change in an individual as shown in the next section.

4.2.1 Prescription of Kilumi Dance as a Therapy

In Ukamba, at times of sickness, a diviner may prescribe kilumi dance as a therapy for the patient. The dance precedes many rituals and a long process of divination whereby the diviner asks the patient as many questions as possible to obtain the necessary
information. Afterwards, a fee is determined which could range from a goat to a chicken or grains. The diviner then unwraps and sets down his/her apparatus which mainly consist of half-gourd, long narrow rattle containing seeds or marbles, a musical bow, mutaa (Bot. Vertiallatae) a plant with a strong aroma or smell) and small calabashes among others. He picks up the bow and starts communicating with the spirits through mysterious spiritual songs. Then he picks the rattle, shakes it and jerks out the marbles several times while uttering mythical incantations to the spirits. He counts and reads the oracle from the distribution of these marbles several times.

Thereafter, the diviner informs the relatives on the detected causes which mostly could be a breach of taboo; failure to observe some ritualized behaviour and hence the spirits get annoyed; or witchcraft. He prescribes the right medicine although in connection with this Dundas (1913:530) observed that:

Frequently, a sacrifice is offered and names of many deceased members are called until that particular spirit molesting is mentioned and the trouble will be abated. Frequently the medicineman recommends a dance to be performed, in which the drumming and singing are his duty.
As emphasized in this study, spirit possession means more of spirit mediumship. The spirits are seen as using the possessed as their vessel (medium with a spiritual message). Also, it should be noted that it is not always the duty of that particular medicineperson diagnosing, to sing and drum. There are other qualified songsters who carry out these duties.

For further elaboration, the following account could be representative of traditional kilumi practices carried out in Kitui whenever a patient is believed to be possessed by the spirits and a therapeutic kilumi is prescribed for her. After constant disturbances by the spirits for about three months, Syombua consulted Kakunu (a medicinewoman) who attributed the illness to the spirits of her grandmother. It was revealed to her that during her wedding, a goat from her natal home, which was to be sacrificed to the spirits was never delivered. Accompanied by her husband, Syombua went for this goat. On arriving, the songster applied some herbs on Syombua and covered her with spiritual costumes. While in her house, Syombua was to dance to the beat of the drums. After dancing for a while the diviner asked the spirits to reveal themselves and make their request. The spirit was Mumbi (Syombua's grandmother) who requested for a dance and some blood. The spirit was invited to dance and after dancing for
a while, Kakunu shook Syombua's hands. She was led outside where the other participants joined in the dance. Meanwhile, the goat was taken round the compound and then killed (Syombua Kalungu, O.I, 25/11/1989).

This example illustrates the way in which the ancestors control the social relationships in traditional Akamba society. Their role is to govern their jural relations which keep the social order together. The shaking of the hand symbolises peace, after this, the spirits are expected not to trouble the patient again. On the other hand, it serves as a sign of a friendship bond between the spirits and the society. Therefore, therapeutic kilumi is restorative. It is an attempt to re-integrate the patient into a state of harmony with his/her body and the community. And in the past, the medicinepeople not only cared for an individual (like Syombua) but also for the whole society as shown in the next section.

4.3. CLEANSING KILUMI

4.3.0 Kilumi Danced at the Isyuka

For the Akamba, the whole institution of a medicineperson catered for the welfare and harmony of the community. The medicineperson was responsible for certain public duties such as naming the day for
sacrificial ceremonies; and driving away epidemics amongst people and livestock by the proper ceremonies.

As soon as the rains started, there used to be a public ceremony called Kukilwa Isyuka (to pass through an erected Isyuka). Isyuka is derived from syuka (to revive, resurrect). Symbolically, life ceases when there is drought and the coming of rain means revival or recreation of life. In the same way, the traditional Akamba society had to symbolically go through the isyuka to be reborn after dying with the drought. The kilumi dance was performed during the preparations of the isyuka.

An isyuka was something made by erecting two poles vertically so that a space of about two and half feet was left between them. After the ceremony, all the families had to pass through it on their way home. It was the duty of the medicineperson to erect it, dig wild roots, crash and pound them and mix the powder with water to form herbal medicine (ng'ondu). Then, he sent for all the families, parents and children to gather at the isyuka for cleansing. By that time, a goat would already have been slaughtered, pieces of meat offered to the spirits and grains poured at the shrine by the elders.
The cleansing was done in an orderly manner to one family after another. The medicineperson stood near the entrance holding a gourd full of the herbal medicine on one hand and a whip on the other. As they passed by, he dipped it inside the gourd and patted people's chests and legs saying "may you never fall sick, just hear about these epidemics" (Iwaa uwau na kutu ndukaawone). This was a prayer for good health. The people believed that the herbal medicine wiped away any anticipated sickness and whoever dared eat the vegetables without going through the ceremony would fall sick. The ceremony, therefore, was to ensure good health so that as they ate the green vegetables, they felt safe.

Thereafter, the medicineperson tied some amulets round their wrists and necks as protective charms against any sickness. He also gave them herbal medicine to put into the pots which contained their drinking water. The purpose was to make sure that every member of the family drank of it. After passing through the isyuka, people were required to go home without looking behind or even using the same path they had used when coming to the ceremony. Failure to conform to the rule, would mean one was inviting the sickness back. However, in some parts of Kitui, (e.g., Northern division), before going home, the
participants led by the medicine person ran for about two kilometres. Such an exercise symbolised the chasing away of the anticipated sickness and escorting it for good.

Several conclusions could be inferred from this particular kilumi ritual. In the first place, the ritual was meant for the revitalization of the whole society. After passing through the isyuka, the adherents were strengthened and there was a rejuvenation of life. Secondly, the songs sang during this ceremony were also prayers for good health and strength. Lastly, this ritual could be a reflection or evidence that the institution was important among the Akamba. Although our foreparents were not exposed to the modern hygienic methods, they had their own hygienic practices and food conservation methods. By not eating the vegetables at their early stages, it helped them to conserve the food which in turn helped them to cope with starvation before the next rains. With these observations, the next section will give details of purification kilumi.

4.3.2 Purification of Crops and Harvesting Ceremony

The busiest time among the Akamba was during the weeding season. No dances were performed at this
time. Generally, it was believed that the land, its production and its utilization belonged to the Akamba ancestors. Therefore, no land was tilled before asking for ancestral blessings so that the crops may thrive. According to Muga (1975:68):

These dead ancestors were the owners and former tillers of the land which their living posterity have now inherited. If their blessing is not asked for, they may be angered and may cause poor harvests and the people may suffer.

It was after weeding and tending the crops that people ensured a good harvest by protecting the crops from insects. The men usually looked for a panther and after catching it, they brought it all the way singing and rebuking those who refused to join the search. For example, they could sing:

"Kilya ndelemye usyimi,
Mavisi amwe no ta aka ii iya,
Mwamba ndunaluma wilumila va ii?
Wituma utaluma ni twenda thome,
Iyaa uu ni wo". (Muimi Nzau, O.I, 2/1/90).

(Let me rebuke hunting,
Some men are like women,
There is no unity, where can it come from?
The disunity has been caused by home lovers, Yes it is true).

In this song, those who dissociate themselves from the rest are referred to as women, or cowards who enjoy staying at home like women instead of joining
the other men in the hunt. In it too, unity among the
participants is stressed. The lesson one learns from
it is that, for a religious group to survive or streng-
then its faith, unity is essential.

The panther (mentioned earlier) was taken to the
shrine, pierced and slaughtered by the medicineperson
who mixed its intestines with the droppings. He gave
the mixture to the people to sprinkle round their
gardens. In the evening, they danced kilumi and prayed
that army worms and all types of diseases would not
attack their crops. It is worth noting that in the
kilumi rituals, dance was part of worship; an outward
expression of their religious faith. Therefore, the
Akamba danced in these rituals unlike some of their
neighbouring tribes. Citing the kikuyu as an example,
Kenyatta(1932:246), stressed that "in all Gikuyu solemn
sacrifices, rituals and ceremonies dedicated to Mwene-
Nyaga, dancing was ruled out altogether".

In Central Kitui, there were numerous rituals for
ensuring a good harvest. As Kambua(O.I, 1/12/1989)
explained, whenever she saw army worms in her dreams,
she would send for a gathering. As people assembled
for a kilumi dance, a few women would go to search for
one army worm and bring it to her. She would kill it,
fry and mix it with herbs to form ng'ondu which would
be given to the people to apply on the crops as a protective device. And she stressed that this ritual was efficacious in that the plants would thrive.

Like all other Africans, religion was deeply rooted in the lives of the Akamba. Between March and April, the grains were ready for harvesting. Before they started consuming the new harvest, the women took all sorts of grains to the shrine as an offering to the generous Supreme Being. The people were also given some herbal medicine so that as they ate of the harvest, they were protected from any harm. During this time, the kilumi dance was performed in the evening.

It now becomes evident that the three great agricultural events (seedtime, fructification and harvest) were marked with the rites of approach to ancestral spirits. Anyone who dared plant or partake of the first fruits before the ceremonies were performed was fined a goat which was sacrificed at the shrine for atonement. In all these rituals, the Akamba were re-living the acts of their ancestors and they tried to restore the primordial form of things as illustrated in the next section.
4.3.3 Kilumi Dance After Death or Birth

Dundas (1919) viewed sickness among the Akamba as invariably denoting the anger of a spirit following upon some offense or neglect, and it was often the medicine person who could detect the cause and prescribe some cure. Sometimes, illness would result in death.

Hobley (1971) mentioned that there were songs and dances at a gathering upon the occasion of a death called kuia mundu (to mourn the deceased). All the informants firmly held that customarily, there was no jovial singing after death. In fact, Muviti Muveva (0.1, 5/1/1990), stressed that after death, no loud voices could be heard for about two months. Therefore, in Central Kitui, a kilumi dance was performed much later in order to appease the spirits so that they would not come for another soul. But even this dance took only a day probably because among the Akamba music was meant to be ceremonious or joyful. And since upon death it was a sorrowful occasion, the cleansing kilumi could not be prolonged.

For the traditional Mukamba, physical death acted like an initiatory door through which one passed from the world of living to the invisible world. Nevertheless, it was dreaded and unnatural. It created significant moral and social gaps. Therefore, this kilumi
was danced to symbolically re-establish order and harmony on the cosmic and social level. That is, the people reconstituted themselves through ritual and social adjustments if the deceased was to find a secure place in the afterlife and continue to remain in contact with the family left behind.

The cleansing kilumi was also danced after the birth of an illegitimate child. Hobley (1971) mentioned that the cleansing ceremony took place four days after the child was born. The Akamba believed that an illegitimate child had to be cleansed with herbal medicine (kuusya mwana na ng'ondu) which is a ritual of purification, lest it died. Specifically, if the mother refused to reveal the father of the child, a kilumi dance had to be performed so that the spirits bless it. During this cleansing dance, a medicineperson usually a woman tied a cord (as a protective amulet) round the child's loin which was not supposed to be removed until the child walked. It was also during the dance when a possessed woman could give a message concerning either the child, the mother or even the community at large.

The conclusions drawn from the death and birth cleansing kilumi are the following:
Firstly, this dance performed after death served as a kind of therapy especially to the bereaved members. After it, the living felt relieved because they believed that the spirits had welcomed the deceased to the other world. In it, they acknowledged the dead as a full ancestor. Secondly, the dance served as a kind of catharsis, a way of letting off steam. Thirdly, it was an attempt to explain the inexplicable and control the uncontrollable, i.e. undeserved death and illness. Thirdly, the second type of kilumi connected with an illegitimate child served as a device for controlling premarital sex. It had some moral lessons, for example, through it people learnt that illegitimate children were unacceptable in the Akamba society until they were cleansed.

4.4 LIFE CRISIS OR INITIATION KILUMI

4.4.0 Introduction

In all the kilumi rituals and dances, the medicine person features so much because she/he is always the first consultant, who acts as a traditional doctor as well as a diviner.

In order to become a fully recognized medicine person, one is either initiated through the musical bow; or through a kilumi dance. Traditionally, the
Akamba respected the medicinepeople because they believed that their calling and profession came from Mulunzu through the ancestral spirits. Currently, in Kitui, there are two types of medicinepeople, namely, true medicine people (andu awe ma aimu) and 'bogus' medicinepeople (andu awe ma mbesa). The latter are those who practice that art as a means of survival, i.e., they earn a living through treating and divining.

The call to become a medicineperson manifests itself through various ways such as long-term sickness, disturbances and spirit possession. For example, Muviti Muveva (0.I, 2/12/1989), narrated how his wife behaved strangely before she became a medicineperson. She would wake up at night, dash into the bush only to return with wild roots. The explanation given for these actions was that some spirits were and are believed to imbue their mediums with spiritual visions and sooth saying abilities, and provide guidance to rare medicinal herbs.

The initiation of a medicineperson involves a lengthy course of initiation in which several established medicinepeople participate. The initial stages start with somebody showing the enumerated signs of a call. Then she/he is taken to another expert (medicineperson) for diagnosis. Depending on the context, the sickness or disturbances could signify
two things. Either, a call or vocation to become a songster; or a call to heal and divine as a medicine-person. The expert reveals the type of the call and the relatives start looking for the containers and making other preparations for her initiation.

4.4.1 Initiation of a Ngui - Songster

It is worth noting that a man is initiated by a male initiator and a woman by a female one. Musangi Muveva (O.I, 19/12/1989) gave her personal experience which could serve as a typical initiation of a songster. Before she became a professional songster, Musangi used to wake up her parents at night and sing for them songs which she alleged to have been taught by the spirits in her dreams. This behaviour puzzled them a lot until they decided to consult a medicinewoman who revealed to them that it was the art of being a songster (ukui) which was disturbing her. But she was not initiated until she was married.

Before the initiation, a drum was made at her natal home and they went for it whereby a goat was slaughtered in a ritual called covering the drum with the hide (kuvwikya ngoma kalua). A strap was made out of the goat's skin and was tied round the drum. She had to spend the whole night beating that particular
drum. The following morning there was a simulated wedding ceremony between her and her husband. They walked in a procession singing all the way until they reached their gate where they paused for a while. At this juncture, she sung and beat the drum until some women became possessed. They proceeded into the house and she sung and drummed again until more people were possessed. The ceremony was over in the evening when she was officially given the drum. Now she is a qualified and recognized songster in Kitui.

This account has three messages. First, the intention of kuvwikya ngoma kalua is to invite and induce the spirits so that they give continuous assistance to the new songster. In other words, the spirits are said to give the songster power to sing and in turn through these songs the participants receive some kind of therapy. Through the songs, the spirits are exorcised. Therefore a new songster really needs some assistance from the spirits and needs to be taught kilumi songs for different contexts. Secondly, the wedding symbolises the spiritual bond between the spirits and the songster. Since the vocation is a call from the supernatural world from the time of initiation, a bond exists between the two parties which have significant roles to play. The two parties depend upon each other for their survival.
Similarly, Smart (1973:103) illustrates the following:

Given that a ritual itself realises the power of that towards which it is directed, it can be seen as enhancing that power. It also formalises the dependence of the performer and his group upon the god, so that it is as if there is a reciprocal recognition by the divinity of group ... man and the god form a co-operative system.

Lastly, in the ritualistic acts of initiation, the Akamba family ties are strengthened because initiation is a societal matter. It is a rite of passage which is witnessed by members of the society. The mentioned journey is a symbolic walk to new status of a professional kilumi soloist.

4.4.2 Initiation of a Mundumue - Medicineperson

This initiation is quite different from that of a songster. During the research, most of the medicinepeople explained that they were initiated after long-term misfortunes (such as continuous losses of their children through death). For example, Kambua was initiated to become a medicineperson after she was advised that her children's deaths were signs of a call to this vocation. For initiation purposes, an African basket and a goat were brought from her maternal side. Another basket and a goat came from her husband's side. In addition, beer, coins,
whitechalk and herbal roots were brought from both sides. The initiator mixed the beer in a half-gourd and poured down saying:

"Now we have come to initiate Syomwee so that she can start healing and divining like ourselves. Sip that beer and let her not be thin but healthy like the rest of us".

The maternal she-goat and the husband's he-goat were taken round the homestead for consecration. The coins were mixed and put in the medicinal bag. The expert removed a coin and herbs from her bag and put them in the new bag saying, "there you are with the herbs you were born with".

A hole was dug inside Kambua's hut and the new bag was hanged on the erected pole. The two goats were slaughtered and eaten. However, a strap from the he-goat's skin was tied round her wrist as a mark to show she was now a fully recognized medicine person (Kambua Kamuti, O.I, 1/12/1989).

Numerous things reported in this account are of significance. Firstly, the libation words were a prayer for good health. Secondly, the insertion of coins in the new basket symbolised the imparting of vital knowledge. That is, the initiator divulged some of her secrets and powers to the initiate for her new
vocation. Most of the traditional medicine people were not malicious, they were ready to welcome and share with their colleagues. Thirdly, the she-goat from the maternal side meant that the maternal ancestral spirits had to be involved in the whole ritual because the art could be an inheritance from them. Traditionally, after a child was born, the old women stretched its palms in search of marbles. The Akamba believed that a child who in the future was to become a medicine person could be born with marbles in either the palms or umbilical cord. Fourthly, the hole dug for the pole was not covered with soil but was always filled up with morsels of food offered every mealtime to the spirits. It was believed that as the spirits continued to eat from it, they would continuously bring dreams and visions to the new medicine person. Therefore, the hole symbolised the continuous providence of the spirits and Mulungu.

Lastly, the meat was eaten in an orderly manner. The initiator (as the leader) ate first, then followed by the rest of the men and lastly the women. This was a symbolic eating showing the willingness to share in the communal meal; a confirmation of fellowship and mutual social obligation; and an enactment of the society's social structure whereby, men were ranked higher than women.
During the research, it was discovered that not all medicine people learn their herbs through dreams. For some, it is a pre-requisite to learn about medicinal herbs before the official initiation. For instance, an old medicine person could take the initiate round the bushes showing him/her certain trees whose roots are medicinal. The journey would continue until the expert was satisfied that the initiate had collected enough herbs and had known what they cure. However, Kambua Kamuti (O.I, 1/12/1989), cautioned that it is a taboo for the initiator to dig the roots for the initiate. And in case it happens, the powers of the novice are automatically damaged and they would no longer have dreams or visions which are essential in their work.

After the initial procedures, *kilumi* dance is performed during which the initiate gets possessed. In this state, the spirits are asked whether they are contented with the paraphernalia in the new basket. If not, they are expected to name the missing item/items.

In summary, there are important conclusions to be drawn about the whole initiation ritual. Firstly, initiation (be it of a songster or medicine person), culminates in manifestations of spirit possession and mediumship by the novice. Secondly, as a rite of
passage, the initiate's acquisition of the new status is marked by being given a new name (such as Mukui (songster), Syomwee (medicine person) and by being presented with special objects (e.g., baskets and drums). Thirdly, the ritual has a didactic aspect. The initiate must receive detailed instructions on unfamiliar things and the initiate's obligations to and fellowship with his/her co-workers are strongly emphasized. Lastly, there are taboos connected with the ritual, e.g., it is a taboo to touch the divination apparatus and other objects which are connected with the medicineperson's magical powers. Misfortunes may befall any victim of these circumstances. In the past, the paraphernalia of a dead medicine person were never inherited. They were just kept until the spirits gave instructions concerning their disposal. Such beliefs entail our next topic.

4.5 KILUMI RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCES

In the past, and even now, there has been a debate on spirit possession phenomenon. Ray (1976:67) states that:

In Africa, as elsewhere, possession behaviour is culturally patterned and highly symbolic. It is an integral part of society and has a well-defined meaning within it. Such dramatic reversals of normal human behaviour are signs of sacred presence.
But Lewis (1966) sees spirit-possession as war between sexes and Gomm (1975) speaking of the Digo of Kenya views it as "bargaining from weakness". Akonga (1985) cites Glusser (1972) who carried a psychological and nutritional research among the Nguni bantu of South Africa. Glusser revealed that what the people diagnose culturally as spirit possession or ukuthwasa, the crying disease, could in fact be brought about by convergence of biological, environmental and cultural factors. This is because the disease is found mainly in women who by custom are not permitted to consume meat, poultry and fish, although they can consume curdled meat. According to Glusser, lack of niacin and thiamin in the body is known to cause anxiety states that border mental instability leading to such behavioural traits as wailing and wandering about. Consequently, two opinions emerge. Thus spirit possession is a religious phenomenon as well as a device through which the lowly and the deprived claim attention, respect and material favours.

One of the strongest ideas of kilumi dances is the belief in spirit possession. It is usually the women who are possessed, either by the ancestral Akamba spirits, or foreign spirits. Ray (1950) affirms that, spirit possession is startling, yet evidently accustomed alterations of behaviour with
trembling, speaking with strange voices, assumption of different identity, purporting to be a spirit not a human being, giving commands or foretelling of the future in a new authoritative way. Among the Akamba, spirit possession manifests itself in the above mentioned ways.

The activities undertaken during possession are attributed to the possessing spirit and the possessed can not be held responsible for the acts. In fact, when the researcher interviewed the possessed Akamba women at a later stage, they seemed to have no knowledge of what was happening at the time of possession.

Mbula (1974) speaking of the Akamba spirits summarized that the female spirits which possess the women can collectively be called Kathambi. And the male spirits which possess men are called Muviti. However, in Kitui, possession could be cross-sexual i.e., male spirits possess women and female spirits possess men although rarely do men get possessed. Whether spirit possession is 'war between the genders' or not, one tends to agree with Hobley (1971:89) who observed that in the Akamba society, every married woman is believed to be at the same time the wife of a living man and of some spirits of a departed ancestor. And in addition, Mbiti (1970:266) claims that "some
Akamba believe that each woman has a spirit husband who may possess her and who assists in her fertility functions". These views of the two authors could be used to explain why women are generally used as vehicles of expression by the spirits. The spirit who is spiritually wedded to any particular woman will often through the mouth of his corporeal wife state his name. Although Kavyu (1973) generalised Lala as the most common spirit which possesses the women, there are many more which possess them as mentioned elsewhere in this study.

Another kilumi belief is that every spirit has its own costumes which must be worn by the dancers. On the day of the dance, the possessed is brought near the drummers. As a tradition, the dance must be performed first inside the hut or house of the possessed. The Akamba believe that as the drums sound inside, they request the ancestral spirits to take the first priority in the whole ritual dance. It is only when they are recognised and satisfied do the sick get healed or the possessed pass messages.

The ceremonial place is pervaded by drums which fill the entire sacred area with tangible energy and evidence that a special situation has been created. The drums are taken out and placed near a huge fire. Nditi Mwanza (O.I, 16/9/1989) explained that the fire
is used symbolically and religiously as a channel of chasing the bad spirits away. None the less, from the fact that the drums are placed near the fire, one could add that it is also used for warming the skin (covering the drums) so that they sound louder. It also provides light for the participants and warmth for the old women who are the only ones allowed to sit by it.

The chief songster drums to give the rhythmic beat to the other drummers. As a rule, a mututu song is always the first to be sung. As time goes by, other songs are sung because more people get possessed by different spirits and every spirit has its own distinct song. Another strong practice is that as the songster sings, she occasionally pauses and holds the hands of the possessed saying "stop making her fall down, I have all types of songs. Tell me who you are so that I may sing for you and you dance". The spirit, through the possessed could reply, "I am Kathambi and I have come to dance". Immediately the soloist yields to the request by singing and drumming her songs.

The spirits are believed to make requests in the dances. They could ask for dancing costumes, (e.g. black clothes with red stripes (kaniki or kikoi), or even request for food, water and weapons among others. And in case these items are not available, the relatives
promise to meet the requests. If the costumes are available, medicinal herbs are applied on the possessed before dressing her in them. A strap is also tied on her wrist as a protective amulet for warding off any evil spirits. She continues to dance until the soloist gives her a handshake as a means of exorcism. The belief is that on the right hand are the ancestral Akamba spirits while on the left hand are the personal spirits. As the soloist criss crosses her hands, she neutralises any strange powers. She asks the spirits whether they are satisfied with the dance and if they respond positively she gives another handshake as a sign of good luck (so that bad omen ceases to follow the possessed), and the possession is over.

The other strong kilumi beliefs and practices are concerned with Lala and Kathambi, the ancestresses who popularly possess kilumi women especially in the rain bringing rituals.

4.5.1 Lala the Prophet

According to a tradition which exists in Eastern Kitui, Lala the son of Mutyakiveta was a heroic prophet who was a man of foresight. He could tell with precision when people were to expect adequate or inadequate rain (Kavyu 1973:4). He used to dive in
the River Matia as people awaited for him with a sacrificial bull. According to Kavyu, the bull's earlobes were cut and thrown into the river, while the bull was slaughtered at a fig tree shrine, roasted and eaten. Before and during his lifetime, the religious female dance - kilumi—was used in praise of the creator. After his death, songs have been sung in his praise (Kavyu 1973:5).

Another tradition exists about Mwiitulwa Lala (Lala's daughter) also known as Mwiitulwa Kuu Kumwe (one legged lady). She was a woman with prophetic powers who migrated from an unknown place. Her powers made people think that she should have got them from the hero (Kavyu 1973:4). When reference is made to Lala, it is because of the supernatural powers of his daughter and up-to-date, her spirits are believed to possess women in kilumi dances.

According to Nditi Mwanza (O.I, 16/10/1989), traditionally, around June, the one legged lady was believed to pass from Mutitu hills to Kivauni (in Machakos). She used to foretell her host in the dreams who would announce her passing publicly. At this particular period, there were some observances to be followed. For example, a curfew was imposed on females not to go to the fields or even loiter at
night until they had been authorized by a medicine-
person. No dances were allowed at this sacred period 
and the women were expected to remove all the dancing 
beads and decorations. They believed that if a person 
did the contrary, the lady would pick or pass with her 
(she would die in her sleep).

It was believed that the one legged lady travelled 
with a traditional or cultural flag and due to this, 
flags were found at the medicine people's compounds. 
The informants stressed that as much as the flag was 
a sign of a medicine person, the people believed that 
if the lady saw it, she would be pleased and would 
bring rain. The flag was washed clean and placed on 
a very tall tree to make it visible for her. Even 
today, these beliefs concerning this one legged lady 
have not ceased. The informants firmly held that if 
a person belonging to the clan of rainmakers - mbaa 
mbua-visits Mutitu, she/he would sink in the pool 
unknowingly.

Another traditional practice was whereby Lala 
had to be escorted home on the last day of a kilumi 
dance. If her spirit had possessed a victim, the 
participants took a red cock, white piece of cloth 
with red stripes and a flag. As the youth carried 
the flag, the women followed singing kilumi songs for
escorting the spirit. After walking for a distance, they hanged the flag in the bush. In fact in Mwingi (Northern Kitui), they would hang a piece of gourd, small bows and a flag on a tree and leave them there. In the evening when they returned home to perform a kilumi dance, they found a medicineperson with herbs waiting to cleanse them. They believed that if they were not cleansed, the evil spirit would cause harm especially to expectant women. From the responses of the informants, it would be concluded that there were mixed feelings concerning the one legged lady. Some respondents saw her as benevolent while others viewed her as a malevolent spirit who had to be escorted away.

4.5.2 Kathambi the Prophetess

The cult of Kathambi is popular in Northern Kitui. Kathambi is said to be a mythical woman, a prophetess who could prophecy about the rains. It is believed that after she died, her spirits have continued to possess women who prophesy about the rains, dangers and calamities.

According to Mbula (1974), Kathambi is derived from kuthamba (to take a bath, to wash or to clean). She is a tall, noble woman who visits her kind and mercilessly torments them. Once she has been appeased she leaves her women folk and disappears.
Kathambi, also known as Nzambi wa Mwene, Muthamba characteristically calls people to her service through strong apparently incurable illness. Akonga (1985) gave an example of a particular woman who had to look for a drum, bow, a gourd with rattles and the required paraphernalia in order to be initiated into her cult. This was, according to Akonga (1985:189), after "Nzambi wa ulu - the washer of eyes, sent a message through a cultist that the illness was an affliction from her. She wanted the sick woman to be her vessel".

Kathambi (although not an ancestral spirit), is believed to possess kilumi women who give certain revelations concerning the causes of drought. In the first place, they could be manifestations of spirits annoyance due to the people's negligence such as refusing to sacrifice at the shrines. Secondly, taboo breaking, and committing offenses or mistakes by the living (individually or communally) could cause drought. For example, if an uninitiated person climbed rocks or hills - the spirits' abodes, such an action was believed to cause drought. Also, the killing of snakes especially at the shrines was a taboo because the people believed spirits could take other forms such as of snakes. Therefore, such an act was bound to cause drought unless kilumi was performed. Thirdly, the destination where Lala was
left after the ritual escort could cause lack of rain until she was escorted elsewhere. Fourthly, it was believed that newly arrived strangers possessed some unknown, unfamiliar powers which could displease the ancestral spirits. If they resided among the people, it could not rain until they were discovered and chased away. Fifthly, if a witch confused or refused the witchcraft instructions given to her, wherever she left the witchcraft bag it would not rain until it was removed from that area. Lastly, if a hero or medicine-person died in the bush and was not given a proper burial ceremony, it would not rain until the gadgets were brought to the appropriate place for propitiation.

One conclusion which could be made is that, if Kathambi is a symbolic name of the cleansed one, it can be argued that maybe Lala had some abnormalities (one leg) and the Akamba decided to give her a better image of Nzambi (the beauty). It is evident that due to the people's powerlessness to explain such phenomena as drought, they tried to interpret them from their own experiences and beliefs.
4.6 THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF KILUMI RITUALS, SONGS AND DANCES

The kilumi rituals, songs and dances signify people's powerlessness and bargain from weakness. Thus, the dances and their rituals are not designed to be the real cause of practical effects. The Akamba expect their own performance (in these rituals) not to have effect from their own powers except from the supernatural beings. Kilumi rituals and dances in themselves are a recognition that the people are limited in power. That is why they invite the forces from the sacred world and encourage them to intervene by suggestions made to them through songs and speeches. These rituals are directed to and are expressive of the sacred reality through whose power, rain, food and health may well in turn come. Therefore, the kilumi rituals, actions, objects, songs and utterances are ways of ascribing worth to the supernatural beings. In them, the Akamba seek to express their awareness of a transcendent being outside themselves.

In fact, in kilumi rituals, there is a strong belief in dreams as an important communication channel between the sacred and the profane. Mwongeli Kasina (0.1, 26/11/1989), stressed that dreams reveal the sacred. For example, in August, she is always
transported in her dreams to a big fig tree where she sees traditional baskets, whisks and hats hanged on its branches. As she sits on a rock surrounded by water which bars her form reaching this tree, she sees spirits resting and walking around it. Her limitation is that she is not able to identify any of them because they cover their faces with black clothes. She adamantly insisted that after the dreams, her prophecy normally comes true. This account proves that the traditional Akamba are aware of the sacred beings.

The kilumi rituals, and dances signify people's attempt to order individual and societal life in terms of cultural perceived ultimate priorities. The people give an exemplar of the ideal order by creating some order in the rituals and dances. Therefore, kilumi is a pure affirmation of the ideal. It provides a focus and framework for living in the world. In it, people try to emulate, recall, renew and relive the primordial times and thus they are able to live in a meaningful world.

Kilumi rituals, songs and dances are signs of reverence to Mulungu for rain, fertility and health. As Ndeti (1972) observed, they signify people's satisfaction with the new harvest. However, one could add that they signify people's gratitude or reciprocation...
to the benevolent beings. They are also manifestations of communal fears and uncertainties. They are means of obtaining the assistance of superhuman beings and protection against their wrath. The beings are honoured so that they do not mar festivals. For example, in Kitui before a medicine person prescribes a kilumi dance for a patient, he/she calls upon the spirits to render some assistance. During the diagnosis, she/he ties wild roots (herbs) round the patient's body and draws a circle leaving a gate through which the patient must enter. These herbs serve as an insurance, i.e., protective charms against any spirits which might wish to attack the patient. The circle, a symbol of veneration ensures the diviner against the malevolence of the spirits invoked. Through the gate, the patient symbolically enters into the realm of spirits for treatment. It is also a means of acquiring some power in order to enter into the spiritual realm. Therefore, such a therapeutical ritual is meant to procure protection from any malicious spirits. Prior to the diagnosis, the spirits must be honoured.

In kilumi, spirit possession signifies the presence of the spirits enacting their particular roles in the lives of the people. It also signifies the intense yearning for the divine in the individuals. It is an attempt to make contact with or participate
in the invisible world. Therefore, kilumi becomes the bridge which unites the spiritual and profane worlds. Kilumi also signifies some tensions in the society. The possessed becomes a symbol of these hidden tensions. The rituals and dances reveal them and restore the status quo. Therefore, they become devices for individuals to transact social relationships more favourably.

In summary, the kilumi rituals, songs and dances are means of religious concentration as well as corporeal merging with the beyond.

4.7 FACTORS AFFECTING KILUMI RITUALS, SONGS AND DANCES

4.7.0 Introduction

Like any other people, the Akamba are going through what was termed by Githige (1986) as normal and inevitable changes. As a result, some elements of their culture have been abandoned. Among those in continuity are the kilumi rituals, songs and dances which have been adapted to the age in which participants live. As Bascom (1959:3) concludes, "there is no African culture which has not been affected in some way by European contact and there is none which has entirely given way before it". 
In the course of this research, most respondents expressed the understanding that changes in kilumi were/are brought about by school, modern technology and urbanization.

4.7.1 Christianity

Nketia (1979) held that all the political and Christian religious developments in the country were strengthened and encouraged by the active participation of the church which preached against African culture and usages. Thus, the church adopted how African music, especially to drumming which was associated with what seemed to Christians as "pagan practices". Moreover, the music was considered to be suitable for the form of Christian worship that Westerners were accustomed to. The church and because indigenous African music could not compete with Western music, the substitution of Western music was viewed as necessary. Kaufmann (1964), explained that the intention of the missionaries was to make the African educational system more Western in ways and improve their spiritual conditions. As long as the Africans were
Christianity, which was first brought by Krapf reached Kitui as early as 1851. The Akamba responded by embracing it. In fact by 1896, there were about 95 baptized Christians in Kitui (Mbula 1977:65). The rate of conversion has continued to increase. With the coming of Christianity, the new converts preached against "heathen practices" such as kilumi rituals. They called the dance a satanic spirit dance whose participants were looked upon as the fallen and doomed angels who will be burnt by the eternal fire. This is because:

Even though non-European (indigenous) dances often had themes and origins comparable to those of European folk dances, colonialists considered indigenous dances to be manifestation of savage heathenism and thus antagonistic to the "true faith", therefore, they frequently sought to eliminate them (Eliade 1987:285).

As a result of Christianity, today in Kitui there are three groups of people, namely the Christian believers, (etikili), African traditional believers (alei) and nominal Christians (elikya). During crisis, some Christian believers turn to traditional practices and often participate in them secretly. However, in some churches like the A.I.C., those adhering to these practices are excommunicated by the Church. The kilumi dancers are looked upon as 'evil' and they are not supposed to partake of the holy communion. Neither
are they given leadership in church activities.

As mentioned elsewhere, the shrines were focal religious places for indigenous worship and were central in kilumi rituals and dances. However, currently there are few shrines found in Kitui. The campaign to destroy all of them came from the church. Most of the respondents stressed how the Christians discouraged the Akamba from going to these 'weird' places. Instead of offering the first fruits of the new harvest to the spirits, the people were obliged to tithe as required by the Bible. Instead of going to the indigenous practitioners who prescribed kilumi dances for the sick, the Akamba Christians were now expected to go for faith healing prayer meetings. Soon the converts became the disciples of the Bible and they preached to their fellow people about Christ, the mighty Healer. Consequently, with these new Christian preachings most of the Akamba have been converted to Christianity and occurrences of kilumi dances have reduced.

The missions adopted a hostile attitude to African dancing because of its association with licentious or fertility cults and the possession of dancers by spirits (Parrinder 1974, Nketia 1979). In Kitui, in some churches, instruments like kilumi drums cannot be
used because of the aforementioned associations. During the interviews (of this study) some Akamba Christians were very reluctant on the possibility of incorporating some of these instruments in their services. For example, Damaris Kasyoka (0.1, 15/2/1990) wondered how new patches could be used to patch old garments: Thus how can these "heathen" instruments be used in a Christian service? The impression this researcher got was that there is no dialogue between the indigenous religionists and the Christians. And with this kind of mutual aloofness the indigenous Mukamba will remain authentic and divisions are bound to continue. For instance, the Christians felt that the indigenous Akamba sometimes hinder God's blessings on the people because of their "heathen practices". In turn, the traditionalists who believed that in the past they had control over rains (through rainfall rituals) blamed the Christians for the failure of rain. They believed that the Christians no longer sacrifice to the spirits and hence these annoyed spirits cause misfortunes. Such accusation (from the two groups) result into hatred which could lead to breach of peace.

One way of integrating the two realities and eliminating such a problem is by making the church worship more meaningful to the indigenous worshipper. As Hillman (1980) argued, the church should make herself
at home among each people in the same authentic way that Jesus was at home in Nazareth. Consequently, in the Kilumi rituals, the indigenous Akamba celebrate, dance and invoke Mulungu. There is nothing 'heathen' or wrong with it. Therefore, the church could adopt this ritual and Christianise it. And by doing so, every member would be involved directly and actively in the church activities.

One could conclude that among the Akamba, probably the experienced vacuum created by the new religions has contributed to the survival of Kilumi. Secondly, to some extent, these new religions pose some danger for the indigenous Akamba. That is, some of the advocates of these religions adopt a hostile attitude towards the traditional Mukamba and try to cut him or her from his/her heritage. Willoughby (1928) asserted that such an operation would probably involve the irreparable damage of cutting the nerve of reverence. Thirdly, the indigenous religion has not died out but might have been suppressed. And as Mbiti (1969:19) observed, "beneath the surface, there lie many Akamba beliefs, fears and concepts which have not been reached or seriously challenged". Consequently, there is a need to re-orientate the church worship such that the Akamba practices are incorporated. For example, if the Christians preach that the body is the temple
of the Living God (I Corinthians 2:16), then people should use it for praise and worship.

4.7.2 Education

In the past, education was indispensable for the perpetuation of religious work (Berman 1974). The school and the church could not be separated. For example, Darkwa (1979) emphasized that the missionaries in Ghana considered the school as an important foundation of the church because all who went to school became Christians and the development of the new Western musical culture was closely related to the spread of formal education.

Whenever the missionaries established mission stations, they started schools which slowly but steadily attracted Africans. Moreover, the Africans were eager to obtain the white people's magic of reading and writing (Kinoti 1976). For example, the first school in Kitui was built in Kitui town to train sons of headmen in arithmetic and literacy in Kiswahili with the view to using them as minor officials in administration (O'Leary 1984:36). And with this type of colonial education, new changes were inevitable such that:
The youth were no longer taught by the family-community, they were to go out to institutions known as schools and learn the little knowledge offered by the missionary cum teachers. The schools became a powerful tool to conquer the Akamba. Young people were uprooted from their cultural background and put into schools where they were first taught the evils of their customs and secondly how the new innovations would open new vistas for them (Mbula 1977:199).

Therefore, it is evident that it was in the schools where the Akamba were taught to regard their indigenous religion as superstition. The school attenders soon became the elite who could no longer identify with their Akamba religious heritage.

Traditionally, education was informal, practical, continuous, social and contextual. But along with colonial education came in the boarding schools. The young had no time to sit with the old people in order to be taught their traditional customs and practices. As explained by Julius Mwinzila (O.I, 15/2/1990), in these schools new western ways were taught and the students intermingled with other people from different cultures. As a result, some elite belittled the Akamba heritage. The school in itself is not bad because in it the people were taught new ways of preventing epidemics and how various diseases could be cured. Also, they learnt geography and were now enlightened on what causes heavy rainfall or drought. However, in these
schools, they also learnt new Christian songs and they started despising the indigenous ones. Therefore, argued Ngugi (1972:162), "becoming a Christian meant adopting European ways of living and severing oneself completely from one's indigenous culture". New attitudes developed and some Akamba wondered how an educated person could dance kilumi.

As elsewhere, modern education proved to be a very effective and revolutionary method in Kitui. With the new information from the schools, today the medicine people in Kitui are hardly visited in the open. However, as Kovulo (1987) concluded, neither education, nor Christianity has affected the beliefs in spirits; probably because some of their activities are a reality. Also, these beliefs are deeply rooted in the people and to change them would involve a gradual process.

4.7.3 Urbanization and Modern Technology

From the responses of the informants, urbanization has somehow affected the kilumi rituals and dances. Due to socio-economic pressures, some of the Akamba move to urban centres where other cultural (Western) musical patterns are accessible through the media. This rural-urban movement weakens traditional hold on
the people. The young are no longer taught orally, for example, through traditional songs, proverbs and stories. Instead, through the media (for example, radios and televisions), they learn all types of music. Through such influences, kilumi which used to be a very sacred dance tends to lose its meaning.

With the new technology, there are improved medical facilities in the urban centres. There are many hospitals or health centres all over Kitui District and as a result the practice of offering sacrifices to the spirits has diminished. Mbiti (1966) explained that the profession of the medicine people has been overshadowed by Western-trained doctors and nurses. However, these indigenous medical practitioners performed invaluable services for the people. He continued to argue that, their combined psychological and physical approach to the sick and suffering may well be a key to medical work in Africa.

Urbanization has also caused a generation gap between the young and the old. The youth have their own 'taste' of music and dance. In the towns, people dance for recreation or amusement but in the traditional set up people danced either to celebrate events or for religious purposes. Again, with the new revolution, kilumi has been affected in that another type of the
dance for entertainment has cropped up. This dance (mbeni) found in most of the towns is for commercial business and it lacks the formal features of the ritual dance described earlier.

It is also in the towns where sophisticated style of dressing is most valued. For some town dwellers, dressing in indigenous costumes (such as those for kilumi dances) is considered dirty, heathen and weird. Some of them have developed certain attitudes such that mixing with the indigenous Akamba is like letting themselves down. Therefore, our cultural image has been marred by mass media which results in lack of respect for elders by the youth.

Urbanization has affected the kilumi rituals a great deal in that people no longer perform some of the rituals. For example, through pornography and cinemas found in most towns the youth has caused extra-marital pregnancies. Once these pregnancies come to turn the girls give birth in hospitals and no kilumi cleansing rituals are performed as in the past.

As assumed earlier, it now becomes evident that Christianity, colonial education, urbanization and Western or modern technology have affected kilumi rituals, dances and songs. And although education,
hospitals and new religions give positive enlightenment, it will be long before there is a decline of some traditional beliefs and practices.
Notes

1. Those of the 'sasa' period were spirits of our ancestors who died five decades ago and were still surviving in the memories of the living. The 'zamani' period spirits were of those ancestors who died long ago and had faded away from the memories of their descendants.

2. These costumes include kaniki, katinya and veke.

3. This is called kunengane mukono wa muuo.

4. After the preachings of the missionaries, some Akamba abandoned their ways of life after which some felt there was a vacuum left. Having no substitute, some broke away from the main churches (Catholic, Anglican and African Inland Church), and formed the African Brotherhood Church where they felt united as brothers and sisters. Another reason for the break-away could be because, these independent churches use livelier forms of worship involving drumming, dancing and other signs of intensely emotional religious experience. Therefore, some Akamba were attracted to these churches.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to concisely merge the main points which came out in the preceding chapters in order to get an overall picture of what has been of benefit in this study. In it, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study are provided.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study was undertaken with two major objectives:

(a) To identify and explain the religious beliefs and experiences of the Akamba as reflected in the kilumi rituals, songs and dances.

(b) To investigate and establish the factors which have influenced the appreciation of kilumi beliefs values, dance practices and songs.

The kilumi rituals, dances and songs were examined in this study because there has been no in-depth study of these phenomena even though several works briefly mentioned them. In fact, by the time we embarked on this research, no work (which is known to the researche
had analysed the **kilumi** songs. In order to achieve the study's objectives, raw data were obtained through oral interviews. Supplementary to the actual field data, the present study utilized secondary library sources to form the basis for analysis and interpretation.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study revealed the following major findings:

1. Field interviews and songs studied revealed **kilumi** as a significant part of Akamba religious life. It is one of the traditional forms that have survived up to this day, therefore, it is a way of conserving culture. The songs also revealed the aspirations, hopes and fears of the Akamba.

2. The **kilumi** dances are mediums of religious expressions although they have an entertaining element.

3. This study has also found that **kilumi** rituals, dances and songs have been weakened by colonial education, western technology and Christianity. Nevertheless, they are still functional in the Akamba traditional society. Due to these influences, another type of **kilumi** which is accepted by both the educated and uneducated
which does not take into account the mentioned beliefs has cropped up. It is for competition and individuals come out to show their skills in singing and dancing.

4. This study has led to another finding that there is little dialogue between the indigenous Akamba and Christians. Such a dialogue should be encouraged for it will minimize blames which could be a basis for religious disunity among the Akamba.

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were inevitable.

1. For the Akamba, kilumi is overtly religious in that it is performed mainly in religious context and for specific religious purposes. Its performance is a sign of the activity of a religious group and it incorporates the living and the dead. Its rituals and songs seek to sacramentally repeat the first moment of creation often described in myth when primordial chaos became recognizable order.

2. The kilumi ritual activities confirm and enhance traditional beliefs and social cohesion among
the Akamba. They monitor the morality of the people and control awareness of social structure. The rituals are salvific events whereby the people are protected from malicious spirits, starvation and disease.

3. The kilumi songs give the most intense expression of the traditional worship for they give the assurance of continuous contact with the spiritual world. These songs are also a pre-requisite to spirit possession and they validate the rituals through recitation of myths and legends.

4. The kilumi dances are means of divine communication through which the spirits impart their essence or intentions to the adherents. The dances are therapeutic in that they have the ability of giving one confidence and a feeling of power. These dances induce a meditative and devotional frame of mind and even ecstasy.

5. The Akamba medicine people have contributed to the survival of kilumi.

6. Spirit possession phenomenon is the supreme form of religious expression. It reminds the Akamba of the presence and attributes of the spirits.
the Akamba. They monitor the morality of the people and control awareness of social structure. The rituals are salvific events whereby the people are protected from malicious spirits, starvation and disease.

3. The kilumi songs give the most intense expression of the traditional worship for they give the assurance of continuous contact with the spiritual world. These songs are also a pre-requisite to spirit possession and they validate the rituals through recitation of myths and legends.

4. The kilumi dances are means of divine communication through which the spirits impart their essence or intentions to the adherents. The dances are therapeutic in that they have the ability of giving one confidence and a feeling of power. These dances induce a meditative and devotional frame of mind and even ecstasy.

5. The Akamba medicine people have contributed to the survival of kilumi.

6. Spirit possession phenomenon is the supreme form of religious expression. It reminds the Akamba of the presence and attributes of the spirits.
7. The **kilumi** symbols reveal certain dimensions of religious life of the past that would otherwise elude our knowing. These symbols generate emotions of awe and gratitude directed towards *Mulungu*.

5.4 **RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following were suggested.

1. Further research on different and similar African indigenous dances and songs should be carried out especially in other ethnic groups. This is important for purposes of comparison and for the benefit of future generations.

2. Further investigation of **kilumi** is necessary by scholars from other academic disciplines to provide other insights about the indigenous Akamba.

3. There is a need to conduct researches on the relationship between rituals, dances and songs (music and religion).

4. The church should study, adopt and Christianise the **kilumi** ritual. By doing so, there would be some security experienced within the church.
That is, instead of some believers turning to traditional practices during crisis and participating in them secretly, there should be security in the church. And one way of offering such security is by the church existing indigenously.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Awolalu, O.J. (1979), Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites. Harlow: Longman.


Larby, N. (1944), The Kamba Peoples of Kenya. Series No.8, Nairobi: W. Boyd and Company Ltd.


——— (1976), "Politics, Culture and Music


Nairobi: Uzima Press Ltd.

London: Geoffrey Chapman.

Sifuna, D.N. (1990), Development of Education in 
Africa. The Kenyan Experience. Nairobi: Initiatives Ltd.

Siwela, E. (1979) "Ngoma dze Kunyunwa kwa Mashorana: 
Songs of Social Consciousness of the Shona of Zimbabwe". University of Nairobi: Seminar 

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Smart, N. (1973), The Science of Religion and the 
Sociology of Knowledge: Some Methodological 
Questions. New Jersey: Princeton University 
Press.


Tillman, J. (1978), "Music and Worship". Music Teacher, 
Vol. 57, No. 1.

Vol. 3.

Travers, M.W. (1958), An Introduction to Educational 

Turner, V. (1957), Schism and Continuity in an African 
Society. Manchester: Manchester University 
Press.

Turner, V. (1967), The Forest of Symbols; Aspects of 
Ndembu Ritual. Ithaca: Cornell University 
Press.

and Kegan Paul.

Turner, V. (1981), The Drums of Affliction: A Study of 
Religious Processes Among the Ndembu of Zambia. 
London: Mutchinson and Company Ltd.

Van Gennep, A. (1960), The Rites of Passage. 
Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Van Rijthoven, W.F. (1962), "African Culture and the 
Service of Religion". AFER, Vol. IV, 
No. 4.


## APPENDIX A

### GLOSSARY OF KIKAMBA WORDS USED IN THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aimu</td>
<td>Spirits of the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimu ma Kitombo</td>
<td>Evil spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athaisu</td>
<td>Akamba from Kitui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atumia</td>
<td>Elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atumia ma Ithembo</td>
<td>Shrine elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atumia ma Kisuka</td>
<td>Senior elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atumia ma Kivalo</td>
<td>Full elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isyuka</td>
<td>Something made by erecting two poles vertically for a cleansing ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ithembo</td>
<td>Traditional shrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ithitu</td>
<td>Magical articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kana (Kaukenge)</td>
<td>Young child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathambi</td>
<td>A spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavisi</td>
<td>Small weaned boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelitu</td>
<td>Small weaned girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilumi</td>
<td>A spirit dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kithima</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiveti (Pl.iveti)</td>
<td>Married woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiveti kya Ithembo</td>
<td>Female shrine elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivevelo</td>
<td>Flag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivungio</td>
<td>Lock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiungu</td>
<td>Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuia mundu</td>
<td>To mourn the deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulela</td>
<td>To float</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kumba - To mould, create
Kuthamba - To wash
Kuthambanya - Ritual act of cleansing one another
Kuthembha - To offer or sacrifice
Kutua uki - To brew beer
Kuvwikya ngoma kalua - Initiation ritual
Kuusya mwana na ng'ondu - A purification ritual performed for an illegitimate child
Kwausya - Divination art
Kwina wathi - (1) To sing (2) To dance
Kwiva - To scoop or splash water
Lala - One legged lady spirit
Maio - Wedding songs
Malela - Akamba from Machakos
Mathangu - Leaves
Matheo - Clouds
Matuni - Skies
Mbaa mbua - Clan of rainmakers
Mbuingu - Magical articles
Mbua - Rain
Mbovoi - Circumcision dance songs
Meli - Ship
Mikindo - Clouds
Mioswe - Herbs
Mitambo - Rails
Mithumba - Herbs
Miveke - Herbs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muamba</td>
<td>Baobab tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundumue</td>
<td>(1) Medicineperson (2) Diviner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukanda</td>
<td>Entertainment dance songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukomoa</td>
<td>A wild tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukuyu</td>
<td>Fig tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumbu</td>
<td>Fig tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutaa</td>
<td>A plant with a strong aromatic odour used in purification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthambii</td>
<td>Cleanser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthea</td>
<td>Magical article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muthembe</td>
<td>Diviner (sacrificer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mututu</td>
<td>Ancestral Akamba spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanake</td>
<td>A boy eligible for circumcision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwali (pl. Myali)</td>
<td>Songs which were not for dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwase (pl. Miase)</td>
<td>Kilumi drum(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwiitu</td>
<td>A girl eligible for clitodectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwiitu wa Lala</td>
<td>Lala's daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwiitu wa kuu kumwe</td>
<td>One legged lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nduli</td>
<td>Entertainment dance songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngai (Mulungu)</td>
<td>The creator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngoma</td>
<td>Spiritual dance songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngondu</td>
<td>Seeds from a wild plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ng'ondu</td>
<td>Herbal medicine, purifying medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gui</td>
<td>Songster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nthele</td>
<td>Medium elder (married Akamba man)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nzambi (Kathambi)</td>
<td>A spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nzoka</td>
<td>Snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nzele</td>
<td>Half-gourd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nzuma</td>
<td>Entertainment dance songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukui</td>
<td>Art of being a songster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wali</td>
<td>Praise name for any influential person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>AGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Alice Museka</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Damaris Kasyoka</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Isalu Musembi</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Joseph Kavali</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Joseph Mulonzya</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Julius Mwinzila</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Kakunu Mumbe</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kambua Kamutu</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Kasina Mwengu</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Kilonzo Ngunzi</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Kimwele Katumo</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Manzi Kitheka</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Muimi Nzau</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>AGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Mulewa Mukanda</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Mung'elu Wambui</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Munyalo Singi</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Munyao Mulwa</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Musangi Muneva</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Museka Masila</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Muthui Muteti</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Muthule Kathuvi</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Mutie Kithunu</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Mutua Mutia</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Muviti Muvева</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Mwando Munuve</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Mwanzia Nzimbi</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Mwikali Nzisa</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Ndengu Mwangangi</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Ndinda Mututo</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Nditi Mwanza</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ngau Mulu</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Syombua Kalungu</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. Syovata Kaindi</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE INDIGENOUS MUKAMBA

A. CATEGORIES OF SONGS

1. What is your name? Age? Occupation?

2. Do you like singing and dancing/
   b) If you are a soloist, who influenced you? or tell us something about your background

3. What is the meaning of a song (wathi) in your community? or what role does song play in your society?

4. Name the different songs and dances of the Akamba.

5. In what occasions were those sung or performed?

6. What were the most popular lessons in the traditional songs?

B. KILUMI

7. In what occasions were drums beaten? What did they signify?

8. When did you first hear of Kilumi songs and dances? What was the occasion?

9. Can you give me some other examples of different occasions of Kilumi?
   b) What reasons did the Akamba people give for these dances?

10. Could you tell us something about kilumi. Traditionally, where could it be danced? What about today?

11. Describe the types of kilumi you know of and the activities of all the kilumi days.
12. Can you sing for us one kilumi song? What is the message in your song?

13. What is the connection between the words (content) of your song and religion?

14. What beliefs and values were represented in the traditional kilumi songs and dances? What about today? How has the subject matter changed?

C. SPIRITS AND SPIRIT POSSESSION

15. Who are the aimu or what can you say about the spirits?

16. Do you believe that spirits exist? Why do you believe or do not believe in them?

17. Can the spirits be controlled? How? By Who?

18. In the kilumi dance, can you identify someone who is "spirit possessed? How?

19. Some people claim that women are more "spirit possessed" in kilumi dances. What is your comment?

20. Is there any legend connected with Lala or Kathambi? If the answer to this question is yes, can you narrate the legend to me?

21. What is an ithembo? Describe how it is constructed.

22. What methods were used to cleanse the people who violated the ithembo taboos?

D. FACTORS AFFECTING KILUMI DANCES/SONGS

23. What has affected our appreciation of kilumi songs and dances?

24. What has caused the decrease in the performance of our traditional dances and specifically the kilumi dances?
25. In your opinion, why do you think kilumi has survived up to this day?

FOR THE CHRISTIANS/CHURCH ELDERS

26(a) What is your name? How old are you?

(b) For how long have you been a Christian?

27. Did you ever dance kilumi? If yes, why did you opt to be a Christian?

28. What used to excite or attract you in those traditional songs and dances.

29. How are the kilumi songs and dances relevant in facing our daily crisis in our society?

30. In your opinion, should we still believe in spirits today and dance more like our foreparents did?

31. How are the Akamba traditional spirits similar to or different from the Christians' view of the holy spirit? Can you say there is a link between the two religions especially in the spirit possession phenomenon?

32. In your view, is there any need of dialogue between Akamba religion and Christianity?
Location Of District

- International Boundary
- Provincial Boundary
- District Boundary

- Towns
  1. TRANS Nzoia
  2. ELGEYO MARAKWET
  3. BUSIA
  4. KAKAMEGA
  5. UASIN GISU
  6. KISUMU
  7. NYERI
  8. KIRINYAGA
  9. KIAMBU
  10. NAIROBI
  11. MOMBASA