RAIN MAKING RITES IN IHANZU.

by

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The subject of this paper is a ceremony which occurs once each year in Ihanzu. It takes place at the capital of the chiefdom. A series of acts is performed over a period of three days in the month of November or December, according to when the rains begin. People say that the purpose of the ceremony is to ensure plenty of rain during the coming year, and also that it marks the beginning of cultivation. It involves cooperation between many villages and groups which do not function in any other situations participate. Although the number of actual participants is small, the performance of the rites is of great importance to many.

I have seen the ceremony twice, once in the November of 1962, once in the November of 1961. This paper is written with reference to the 1962 ceremony, although I have made certain comparisons where relevant. Both the separate rites and the sequence in which they occurred were similar in the two years. Many of the acts were public. A few were private, some of them taking place at night. I did not see these, but have had a number of discussions with the principals involved. Thus while I have seen most of the rites, there are some which I have not, and when I describe these, I do so on the basis of what I have been told.

The ceremony consists of acts of sympathetic magic, an address to the chiefly ancestors, communal cultivation, and a communal meal. People emphasize the importance of all the rites. It would not be proper to omit any portion of the ceremony. The welfare of the country would not be ensure by the addresses to the ancestors alone, for example, without the preparation of rain medicines and communal cultivation. People apart from the principal actors rarely attribute any particular meaning to the separate acts; rain is brought by all of them. Later in the year, when rain falls, men say that the chief is doing his work. In this paper, I am not concerned so much with notions of casuality or the actual techniques as with the image of the chief which is projected at this time, theemergence of certain groups, and the moral ideas expressed in songs and invocations.

It is usual to relate ritual to social structure, and, with communal rituals, to analyse them in terms of the expression of relationships between groups and individuals, so as to gain a greater understanding of the political structure. But what does one do when the structure to which the ceremony relates functions in a different way, and the figures of authority possess additional powers, their roles supported by new sanctions ? Participation is organised on the basis of a two-tier political structure. The Administration introduced an intermediate level between chiefdom and village, and gave the chief greater powers, many years ago. In the ceremony, moral ideas are expressed and linked with supernatural sanctions, now reinforced by judicial ones. In my work, I can only see disputes resolved and decisions made within the three-tier structure, within the contemporary network of roles and relationships. Any attempt to outline a different structure is open to all the defects of reconstruction. Nevertheless, I do not feel that the ceremony is an anachronism, or that it is a worthless task to attempt to describe the idealised patterns of behaviour between the groups and individuals involved. Men continually express these ideals about their relationship to the chief, and the relationship of their village to other villages. This paper is mainly about this ideal system.

I shall begin by outlining some of the principles of social organisation in Ihanzu, and the area over which the authority of the rain shrine extends. I shall then introduce the principal actors and main groups which take part, and the scene where the action occurs. I shall describe the sequence of acts, together with the meaning, if any, given by the principals, and the other occasions on which similar acts occur. This will be followed by a brief account of the relevant myths, leading to a discussion of the chief's authority. Finally, I would like to link one of the more important rites to a type of kinship ritual, in order to emphasize the significance of this rite.

The chiefdom of Ihanzu is administered as part of Iramba District in the Central Province. The people are known as Wanyisanzu, the country as Isanzu, by Swahili speakers. They call themselves Anyihanzu, their country Ihanzu. There are two sub-chiefdoms, one consisting almost entirely of Anyihanzu, the other of both Anyihanzu and Anyilamba. They are a Bantu-speaking group with a mixed economy. Millet is the staple crop; groundnuts are grown for consumption and sold as the main cash crop. Sunflower and castor seeds are secondary cash crops. Some cattle are kept. There is a Roman Catholic Mission in one sub-chiefdom, an American Lutheran in the other. The percentage of Catholics and Muslims varies considerably from village to village.

Rainfall is very variable. It varies from year to year and place to place. There is always considerable uncertainty about the harvest. Even if rain is plentiful, the crop may be destroyed by insects or birds.

The country is about twenty miles wide from west to east, twenty from north to south. There is a marked movement away from the old centres of population to the plains in the north, west, and east.

The population of both sub-chiefdoms in 1957 was about 10,000. Descent and succession are matrilineal. There are about twelve clans, which vary considerably in size. The largest, the clan to which the chief belongs, is known as the Anyampanda, and has a number of branches based on locality. Men will thus call themselves Anyampanda of Kirumi, of Matongo, or of other places, Several other clans are also divided into branches. Clans or clan branches, where they exist, are exogamous. The founding members of the branches are not remembered, but some pioneers of some of the clans are known. Apart from these branches, clans have no internal structure. Certain clans have joking relationships with others. Most clans have rights over the allocation of certain areas of land, land cleared by the clan's earliest members. These rights are exercised by those members of the clans resident in the areas concerned. Certain clans are associated with such things as salt, cattle, seeds, or wild animals. Each clan or branch has personal names, which are given to members, but not always used.

There is no term for a kinship group smaller than the clan and larger than the family, and it is difficult to fix the limits of such a group. Marriage is initially uxorilocal. After a couple of years, men usually decide to settle either in their wife's village or in their parent's one. Extended or grand families tend to develop, although some members are absent. Through adjacent residence, men come into contact every day with some kin removed from themselves by one, two or three genealogical steps. They visit their own and their parents' siblings who live in other villages, and attend any beer or work parties sponsored by them. The amount of contact they have with more distant relatives depends largely on circumstance. Thus they may be called on to contribute to hospital

expenses or a fine incurred by a distant kinsman, particularly if they are wealthy. They may be involved in a bride-wealth dispute with a particular kinsman. Men are expected to attend the funerals of kin as far removed as descendants of grandparents' siblings, if the funeral is within reasonable distance. Attendance is recognition that kinship links exist, but no group of kin has any specific role to perform at a funeral. One cannot draw a circle around people related in certain ways to a man, and give those inside the circle a label and regard them as a group. Those whom a man regards as his kin are those with whom he has, or has had, much contact, contact either forced on them by circumstance or created by the people involved. While one regards people standing in a certain relationship as kin, another will not. This paper is mainly concerned with political structure, not kinship structure, but the two are of course closely linked, and later I will outline some rituals, which will throw light on this extension of kinship.

Villages usually consist of several grand-families related by ties of intermarriage and descent. Most co-operation on village scale takes place during the dry season, when villagers attend house-building parties and beer parties on several days each week. A few men from other villages may join in, and some villagers will be absent, but in these situations the village can be seen as an economic unit. During the wet season, each domestic family is responsible for the cultivation of their own fields. A few people may sponsor communal hoeing parties, but these are not very common. Villagers always attend the funeral of any villager, and a representative from each household should, if possible, sleep there for one or two nights after the death. Between five and fifteen men take it in turn to herd the cattle. Women assist friends and neighbours in the preparation of beer and feasts, and collect firewood and draw water in small groups. Disputes within the village are resolved by a body of elders, who may pass the case onto the headman or magistrate. There is an informal leader of this council, but he is in no sense a village headman. The post is not a particularly desirable one, and often men pass it on to others.

There is no indigenous unit between village and chiefdom. For administrative purposes villages are grouped into headman's areas, and there are four of these areas in the eastern sub-chiefdom, two in the western. Headmen hear cases, collect taxes, call meetings, and act as intermediaries between administration and the people.

There are no occasions when pairs or groups of villages co-operate in any activity apart from the rain ritual, although members of one village may attend functions in other villages. The number of homesteads in a village varies from ten to fifty. Larger villages are divided into sections. Some men clear land in the forest and build there, perhaps half a mile from their neighbours, but this is not common.

I will not discuss the authority of the chief, the relationship of chief to villager, and the linkage of villages here but hope these points will become clear during the course of the paper. I will now leave this outline of kinship and local organisation, and turn to the ceremony itself.

There are several distinct groups of actors, with different parts to play. Firstly, there is the chief himself, his mother, and other women of the royal clan. Secondly, there is a group of men drawn from a number of different villages. Thirdly, there is a similar group of women, and finally, a group of teenagers.

The chief's name is Omari, and he is supposed to see that everything is done correctly. He takes part in only one rite, and apart from this, could almost be better described as producer, rather than actor. His mother, who is known as Nkili, is in charge of all the catering arrangements. She sees that the beer is ready, and that water is drawn, firewood collected, and food prepared throughout the three days. She is helped by the group of elderly women known as atata . These are representatives of many villages in Isanzu. The local village women also help. The group of men are also known as atata and they are similarly drawn from a number of villages. Their role is to carry out the actual rainmaking rites. Within this group, there are some who have had many years of experience, and who play the major parts; others who are apprentices, new on the job; others who have learnt how to assist the leading actors. One man, whose name is Siali, is referred to as the "grandchild" of the shrine, and in many of the separate rites it is he who is the principal. Finally, there are bands of teenagers and children from villages all over the country. Their job is to hoe the chief's fields.

This year, there were about 15 men, 25 women and 50 children. Last year the numbers were considerably greater.

Apart from royalty and the groups of men and women, no adults participate, or even watch what happens. Nevertheless, they are intensely interested in the performance of the ritual, and, as the time for it approaches, continually speculate about the probable day when it will occur. Christians do not participate, although Muslims may.

All participants wear black cloths. It is forbidden to wear cloths of any other colour. Red is particularly dangerous. Blackness is associated with thunderclouds and rain in general.

The ceremony takes place in the chiefdom headquarters, the village of Kirumi. This was one of the earliest areas to be [illegible] settled, by the pioneers who came from the island of Ukerewe, in Lake Victoria. The chief himself, his true father, his mother's sisters, some sisters of his, and some of his other close relatives all live in the village. Much of the land in the village belongs to the royal clan, the Anyampanda, although three other clans have rights over small portions of land. These three other clans are generally regarded as having come from Ukerewe with the Anyampanda, or soon after them. The majority of residents are members of these four clans, only a few sons-in-law and wives belonging to the other eight clans of the chiefdom.

This village is not the geographical centre of the present chiefdom, but stands to the north and east of the centre. From the villages in the south eastern part of the country it is a three hour walk to the capital, most of it uphill; a man from the borders of Sukumaland could reach Kirumi in about two hours, and a man from the Iramba borderland in about three hours, although this is perhaps the roughest journey, across very steep and rocky terrain. Thus men from all corners of the chiefdom can reach the capital easily in a morning, and messages can be sent to the farthest flung villages in the plains in a matter of hours. This facilitates the organization of the ceremony and participation by men from all parts of the chiefdom.

The main acts of the ceremony take place in the chief's house and in the rain shrine, a small structure known as as the Mpilimo. This word is also used to refer to any small fenced off enclosure, inside or outside one's yard. At a distance, the rain shrine could easily be mistaken for a cattle enclosure, since all one sees is a fence of poles about 15 ft. high. As one draws nearer, it becomes obvious that the poles are much more tightly packed than in a normal fence. Since the fence is several layers thick, it is quite impossible to see inside. The shrine is square in plan, and the walls are about 15 ft. long. On the side opposite to the baraza, several yards from the wall, there is a small flat-roofed hut, similar to any normal hut. Between this hut and the wall are several long large logs, which are used as benches. When the rainmakers are present, the skins of goats or cattle are pinned to the ground beside this hut.

The entrance to the shrine is opposite to this hut, and consists of a number of loose poles supported by a horizontal bar, 8 ft. from the ground, which have to be laboriously removed every time anyone wishes to enter.

Inside the shrine, on one side is another, smaller hut, and on the other side two rows of pots and a large stone. These pots are not ornamented or decorated in any way. They are similar to the ordinary pots used for cooking "ugali", and are about one foot high. There are seven pots in each row, but at the end of one row is a much larger pot, similar to those used in beer brewing. At the opposite end of this row is an oval stone, standing on end in a hollow in the ground. Each pot has its own cover, a pot of similar size, and they are covered up whenever the rainmakers leave the shrine during the wet season. After the first ceremony of the year, the pots contain several jet black stones, several transluoent, clear ones, and a potion made from various roots, twigs and leaves. During the dry season, the pots are emptied and placed in the hut on the other side of the shrine. I was told that the stones came from the north, from Ukerewe.

Various ritual objects associated with rainmaking are kept in the hut inside the shrine. These include some bells, a wildebeeste horn, a wooden platter and stick for beating it, gourds containing roots used in the preparation of certain potions, a whisk and some broken pots which formerly held the rainstones.

Only the atata rainmakers may enter the hut. It is said that anyone else who entered would be given a heavy fine. I have never met anyone who is not a mutata who has entered, or even heard of anyone who knows a person who has done so. When a mutata goes in, he must of course wear black. The area around the shrine is sacrosanct.

The shrine stands about a hundred yards from the chief's house. In the intervening space are several houses belonging to the wives of the previous chief, with their daughters and sons-in-law, and to the chief's mother's sister's son. There are three flat roofed huts in the chief's compound. One belongs to his father, one has recently been taken over by his brother from his divorced sister, who has married elsewhere, and one is known as "the house of the hoes", (inyumba ya magembe). The ritual hoes used in the cultivation ceremonies are kept here, The male atata can enter at any time, the female atata and members of the royal family only during the cultivation ceremonies. The ritual objects are three hoes and a forked stick.

One hoe is used during the preliminary rite, which occurs at night, and this hoe is never seen by the common people. The other two hoes are used in the daytime, during the public part of the rituals. They are the traditional type of hoe, and have handles about 2 ft. long.

The chief's compound is a base for the royal women and the women atata during the three days of the rites. Those who come from outlying villages sleep, eat and gossip there when they are not participating in the rites or helping with the cooking. Neighbours and other women from the village bring their beer pots to the compound, and constantly bring water and firewood here. It is in the compound that all the cooking takes place. It is the centre of the women's activity throughout the three days, and on the second day the final acts of the public part of the ceremony are performed here.

The centre of the men's activity is the rain shrine itself, and it is there that they eat, sleep and relax when not participating.

The spatial setting of the ceremony is thus an area not more than a hundred yards from east to west, and perhaps fifty yards from north to south. No action takes place in any other place in the chiefdom, or outside this portion of land.

The rains group came together in mid November this year, but preparations for the new agricultural year's work began at the shrine in October, when the women from villages all over Isanzu began to bring bundles of firewood, and stack them against the outer wall of the shrine. The leading atata opened and prepared the shrine. It had been closed early this year, at the end of the wet season, and all the pots had been put away. The atata who live near the capital swept out the shrine, and set the pots in their proper places. The "grandchild" of the shrine, Siali, carried out the first rite at night, when he was completely alone. No other atata were present. He said that he took one of the ritual hoes from the House of Hoes in the chief's compound, went to the shrine, and cut the sod (kutema ilima). This was the first time that the earth's surface had been cut this year. He then replaced the hoe in the House, and the first rite was over.

The atata did not return again to the shrine until the main ceremony in November. The first heavy rains fell in the middle of October, and there were several spells of heavy rain interspersed with three or four days of hot, dry weather, before the middle of November. When the Queen Mother heard that Siali had cut the sod, she began preparations for the beer to be drunk at the ceremony. With the help of the chief's wives and local atata, she put the millet to soak in large beer pots. Later, when it had sprouted, it was taken out, dried, and ground by local atata, local women and the chief's wives. The atata who live near the capital went to the chief's house several times at the end of the month and beginning of November to discuss the actual day for the ceremony. The date is decided by consultation between atata and chief, taking into account the position of the moon and the state of the beer. The ceremony should take place just before or just after a full moon. This year, when the moon was nearly full, the beer was not ready. A rumour swept around that the ceremony would take place without beer; the beer would be drunk afterwards, but this rumour came to nothing. The delay in the beer brewing was the fault of one woman who had been put in charge of it, and she was subsequently fined.

Early in November, atata from neighbouring and outlying villages began to lead small processions of teenagers carrying millet from their villages to the capital. They handed over the millet at the chief's house, rested, waited while their mutata went to talk to the chief, and then returned home. They were not fed, and even those from the neighbouring chiefdom were not invited to sleep there. The chief told the mutata which day had been chosen for the ceremony. The atata are not supposed to tell villagers until the night before they day itself. Most people, however, know that it is likely to occur on one of several days, since the preparation of the beer cannot be kept secret. Between five and ten days usually elapse between first and second brewings, if the beer is to be strong, and two to four days between second and final brewing. Local atata, localwomenand the chief's wives help with the arduous work of bringing firewood and water. Nearly two dozen pots of beer were brewed, so that on the final day of brewing there was a steady stream of women going to and returning from the waterhole.

The chief's fields should be the first to be cultivated. Fines wereformerly imposed on anyone who began to cultivate before the chief. Men may clear away any millet stalks which remain on the fields, and spread manure, but should not cut into the earth until the rituals at the rain shrine have been carried out. This year no-one in the capital had begun to cultivate, but several peasants around the mission and in more distant villages had begun to till their fields. This year a number of men acquired ploughs, and began to train the cattle to pull logs and to walk in harness as early as the end of September. During the very day of the ceremony, the chief's brother harnessed cattle to the plough, and practised ploughing near to the chief's house.

The various acts of the ceremony were spread over three days. On the first day the atata, royalty, local women and teenagers from neighbouring villages were present; on the second day teenagers from villages all over Isanzu were there, and on the third day the atata and local women alone remained.

On the first day the principal actors began to assemble in the early hours of the morning, at the chief's house. Two atata from the neighbouring chiefdom of Iambi had arrived the previous night. Three of the chief's wives came from their new house at the other end of the village. Two of them were not present since they had to take a sick child to the dispensary. The chief's sisters from the capital and other villages arrived together. One of them was wearing a white cloth, and was severely reprimanded by the chief's mother. The sister said that she had torn her black one that morning. She tried to tear one from the chief's senior wife, who was wearing two cloths, and eventually was given one by the chief's father's wife. It was now nearly 9.00 a.m. and several groups of children, led by their respective atata, stood outside the chief's house and waited.

1st day: Preparation of ritual hoes.

Siali, the grandchild of the shrine, the four experts who live near the capital, and one or two other atata who had already arrived came into the courtyard from the mpilimo, and made their way to the House of Hoes. They were followed by the Queen Mother, royal women,and chief's wives. One of the atata sat at the door to guard the House. I did not see what happened in the house, but was afterwards told by Siali that he had rubbed the three ritual hoes with sheep's oil, and

addressed the ancestors. He had called on the rulers of the past, and told them to look on what their descendants were doing, and be pleased with it, and rejoice and make merry. As he finished his words, the women in the hut ululated, and those outside joined in. There was a strong smell of hot oil, and the women began toemerge with oil smeared over their throats and shoulders. Siali said that he rubbed oil onto the chief, and then took a gourd of beer, and spat it out at the chief. All the women in the hut rubbed themselves, and came out, just leaving the atata within. Siali himself finally came out, carrying the ritual hoe, preceded by another mutata carrying a stick with three prongs, the mace of office. He was joined by the chief's sister chosen to lead the cultivation, carrying the other ritual hoe, by the senior atata and by the other royal women.

Siali and other senior atata later said that the purpose of this performance in the House of Hoes was to ensure the blessing of the chiefly ancestors, and to make the work of cultivation light and quick.

Cutting the Sod.

The leading actors had lined up, and the small procession made its way across to the 'mpilimo'. The Queen Mother and some of the local atata who had already arrived followed behind, and stood at a distance from the shrine. The groups of children all wearing black cloths lined up outside the shrine, beside the chief's sister. There was a general air of expectancy. People from neighbouring houses came out to watch.

Siali, accompanied by another mutata, made his way to some trees in the distance, and picked a leafy branch from each tree (minguu, mumbilili, mulama). He returned to the shrine, put on his shoes, picked up his hoe, dug it into the ground, and ran as fast as he could to one of the trees, and then returned. As he returned, the small group of children, led by the chief's sister, raised their hoes in unison, and began to sing and to hoe. This marked the beginning of the new cultivation year. When Siali had returned, the onlookers returned to their homes, the women to the chief's house, leaving the children hoeing around the shrine, the atata preparing medicine there..

This ritual cutting of the sod (kutema ilima) is clearly one of the crucial acts of the ceremony. When people describe the ceremony, they never omit this part. Word that cultivation has begun spread quickly through the chiefdom. During the previous week, men from Kirumi who travelled to other parts of the chiefdom were continually asked, "Have they cut the sod yet at Kirumi?" Siali himself emphasizes the importance of this. He said that it was essential that he run as fast as he possibly could to the trees and back, so that the year's hoeing would be carried out as swiftly and lightly as his running. Despite his considerable age, he ran at great speed.

Hoeing of the Chief's field.

The children continued to hoe the fields around the shrine until about 2.00 p.m. There had been about fifteen of them to start with, and there were as many again by mid-morning. They were spurred on to greater efforts by one or other of the atata, who brandished a stick and sometimes led the singing. They hoed by sections. One of the children would mark out the boundaries of a patch of land, and then they would all line up and hoe until the section had been completed. It might take about twenty minutes, and afterwards some of them would rush to the waterhole and splash themselves with water, and drink thirstily. Some who

were tired would try to hide at the waterhole, and then the mutata would round them up with his stick, and drive them back to work, laughing and screaming.

The songs which they sang were songs of praise to the chief and prominent men, who would give them rain. The leader would intone,
"Great ruler, give us rain, give us rain," and all the children would respond,
"Give us rain, give us rain". Then the leader would call on great and memorable rulers of the past,
"Great Sagilu," "Great Kidosi," Great Kitentemi" and the children would answer "Give us rain" hoeing in time to their singing. The words of another song were, "Carry the news to the marshes, to Nyanza itself, to-day we have begun to cultivate in Isanzu", Nyanza referring to Lake Victoria. In a third, the crier cried "The rainclouds are gathering to the north". "The rainclouds are gathering to the east", and so on, and after each phrase the children would respond with the same words. Last year the clouds were in fact gathering, and the rain began to pour down as the children sang, which spurred them on to greater efforts. They became very excited, and although it thundered and poured, they lifted their hoes with frenzied excitement. This year they sang on this particular day without avail. Other songs were exhortations to work harder during the year, e.g. "The cock has crowed, let us rise and go out and plant millet, the Queen Mother tells us to do so".

Preparation of rain medicines.

While the children were hoeing vigorously, the atata were preparing medicines to put in the rain pots inside the shrine. Under the direction of the senior atata, two or three of them set out with a bell to search for roots and leaves. The bell is always rung when they collect medicinal plants. The junior atata were sent to fetch water from a natural spring about a mile away. The local waterhole is not used. Two others kindled a fire in the traditional way, by rubbing a slender stick against a thicker, flat one, placed on the ground. The millet stalks and branches on the fields were burnt on this fire. The roots and leaves which are put in the pots are not boiled; they are simply placed in water.

Attitude of general public.

While the children were hoeing and the men and women atata busy with their various jobs, the other men and women in the capital went on with their daily work. The women continued to grind, fetch water, cook, gossip, and look after the children. The men went on with building houses. Those people who attend the Adult Literacy Class went to read as usual. The messengers at the baraza, 100 yards away, watched without particular interest. Even those spectators who had watched the cutting of the sod returned to their homes. The chief himself spent most of the day sitting and talking in his house.

Preparation of beer in chief's compound.

In the evening, old women atata from villages all over Isanzu began to arrive at the chief's house. They were never all present at one time, so it was not possible to know exactly how many were present, but there must have been between 25 and 30 of them. Local women began to carry their large beer pots from their houses to the chief's. Those who had not already returned their millet which they had ground did so at this time, and also contributed a basin of their own millet. (When a woman is brewing beer at any time, it is customary for neighbours to take their own millet along, and then to return home with a gourd of the beer).

Some of the women tended the blazing fires on which the beer pots were placed, others fetched water, others stirred the bubbling water, ladled the yeast mixture, or stirred in the flour. The Queen Mother was in charge of everything, and ordered anyone standing around to get on with some work. She is a very large, arrogant woman, and most of the women obeyed her without question. From time to time she would get up and stir hot pots, testing the mixture, and telling women to add more wood, take off a certain pot, put another one on, or add more flour. This went on until late in the night, and all the women slept at the house.

Night address to ancestors.

At night, since it had not rained during the day, Siali and one of two other atata climbed an enormous rock, from which one which can see across to Lake Eyasi, and called on the chiefly ancestors. Two of the earliest Anyihanzu to arrive in the country died near Lake Eyasi. Siali said that he addressed them, and ordered them to come and help their descendants, and to bring plentiful rain.

Early in the morning on the following day, the women in the chief's compound rang out the beer through beer strainers, and tossed the piles of sodden millet on the ground. The local women returned home to rest, and the others stretched themselves out in the sun, and went to sleep.

On this second day of communal cultivation, the main events were more cultivation by the children, a procession from shrine to chief's house, a feast, and an address to the chiefly ancestors.

2nd day: Cultivation by children.

Children from more distant villages, in addition to those who live nearby, are supposed to come on the second day of the ceremony. This year there were only fifty altogether. Last year there had been about 250. The atata said that this was because of schools, and because children were busy herding and helping with house-building. However that particular day was a Saturday, so that no children were in school. The decrease in numbers may have been partly due to the retirement of several atata in villages in the northern and eastern plains. Their successors had not organised bands of children. Apparently the atata from the other sub-chiefdom were absent, so that no children came from the Mkalama area at all. The main reason, however, may have been that the harvest this year was plentiful, and that people were less worried than they had been last year. 1961 was a famine year. It is said that very few people had come to cultivate in the November of 1960, and the famine was attributed to the wrath of the chiefly ancestors at the neglect of their descendants. Last year the atata had therefore taken great pains to urge children from their villages to come. It is said that in the past hundreds of children came, but that these days, since many are taught Christianity in schools, they will not hoe the chief's fields.

The children began to cultivate at about 10.00 a.m. without any formal start. They had been waiting outside the shrine. One of the atata came and told them to get on with the work, so they began. They sang similar songs to those sung on the previous day.

Procession to chief's compound; millet fight.

They laid down their hoes at about 2.00 p.m. and formed into a band. They walked a little way, and then raced towards a certain tree (Musaningala) about 100 yards away. They stripped off the leaves, and decorated themselves with garlands. When everyone was suitably bedecked, they returned to the shrine, picked up their hoes, and made their way to the chief's house, singing and dancing as they went.

The women had been boiling whole millet and preparing castor oil in the compound, and hastily dragged the pots out of the way, as the singing procession swept into the yard. They went round and round in circles, dragging some of the older women along with them. Finally they all sat down in groups, with Siali and the chief's sister who had led the cultivation in the middle. The women brought out baskets of steaming millet, and set them in front of the groups. They all ate hungrily, and then, at a signal from the chief's sister, they began to hurl millet at each other and at the atata. The chief's sister threw some at the Queen Mother, who promptly retaliated in equal measure.

People also do this when the secret societies hoe the fields of a member. One is told that it is meant to make the ancestors laugh, so that they will bring rain for a harvest so plentiful that people can afford to throw the millet around.

Feast, Washing of hoers.

When everything had quietened down, and all the children were seated again, the women brought out more millet, and also beer. They finished everything up, and the Queen Mother set a platter of water by Siali and the chief's sister. They washed themselves thoroughly, and were rubbed with castor oil by the Nkili. Everyone else then began to wash themselves, and castor oil was dabbed on their throat and neck. This took some time, since they all had to use the one wooden platter. Siali said that they rubbed themselves with oil so that they all returned home clean and shining, instead of covered with dust from the fields.

Address to chiefly ancestors.

At this point it began to pour with rain, and the children huddled against the pole fence, the women crushing into the chief's house and the house of his sister. The mutata from Iambi took the chief's switch, dipped it in the water in the platter, and sprinkled the water over the chief, who was sitting near the threshold of his house. The threshold is the normal place to sit when one's ancestors are being addressed, and at ancestral rituals which take place in individual homesteads the person for whom the ritual is being held will sit just behind the threshold. He withdrew from the doorway into the courtyard, faced east, and addressed the Sun, saying,"O Sun of old, when you left your house in the east, you passed overhead until you reached the country of Mbugwe. In that place, you found that they too were cultivating today. You climbed into the sky, until you reached Mbulu, where you also found the people cultivating. You continued your journey until you reached this land, Isanzu, the land of Kingweli, Malekela and Kitentemi. You found that here we too have cut the sod, and are cultivating. This year, whoever speaks aggressive and quarrelsome words will break

his right hand.". He put the switch into the mutemi's hands, and said, "The furrow has been well cut this year". He crossed the courtyard, and repeated his final words to the people standing there". You must not be angray or quarrel this year. If you live in peace, you will ensure plentiful rain".He faced west, and addressed the Sun again. "Now you have passed overhead, and are going to rest. Tell the people in your house there that today you passed over the country of Isanzu, and found the people cultivating. They hoed with great power. Tell them to leave us much rain this year, as they did last year". His speech over, he sprinkled everyone in the courtyard with water, and withdrew.

Another mutata stood up, and said similar words. When he had finished, the public part of the ceremony was over, and all the children were told to go home, leaving their hoes behind. They were to come and fetch them the following day.

Last year the atata who made the final speeches were different men. They had used similar words, and had carried out the same actions with the whisk. When people are describing the ceremony, they always emphasize this rite, together with the cutting of the sod, and they know the gist of what the atata say, and intone it in a dramatic way. It is clearly one of the most significant and crucial acts of the ceremony, and one which has great meaning for them.

Night raid on an offender.

The public part of the ceremony was over, but the women atata remained, since they had their own rituals to perform on the following day. During the night, they raided the home of the woman who had been put in charge of beer making, but who had erred, and they stole a goat from her as a fine.

3rd day: Woman's dance.

On the following day, no group save the women atata under the Nkili had any work to do. Together with the chief's sisters, but not his wives, they danced from the chief's house into the hills and back, and then went into the compound of the chief's neighbour, removed their cloths, and danced naked. They had drunk vast quantities of the remaining beer that morning, and were all very excited. They were joined by a few of the older village women. I was later told that only women who have had two or more children are allowed to go into the hills, and then to join in the dance. When they were exhausted, they donned their clothes again, and danced back into the chief's house, where they extinguished the trench fires.

Extinction of cooking fires.

To do this, the chief's father's wife called two of the older atata, and they stood by the trench fire. Each took a mouth full of beer, and spat it out over the smouldering fire, saying, "See how we have cut the sod! Now give us plenty of rain. We have cut the sod well, and we want plenty of rain, like last year". They all repeated this a second time, and the other women began to fill the trenches with sand. The local women sat one behind the other, on the sand above the fires, with their knees bent up. Nkili stood at the head of the line, the women atata at the side. The sitting women moved backwards and forwards, leaning on their arms. Nkili herself organized the rhythm of the movement. They then knelt crosswise across the trench, and patted the sand with their hands. Thus the fire was extinguished.

Feast of goats taken as fines.

There were four goats tied to a stake, all of them fines or payments from people who had entered the House of Hoes for the first time. These were slaughtered, cooked and eaten on the spot by all the atata.

It was on this third day that there was a dispute between chief and atata. It was a Sunday, and the chief was eager to go to a beer party in the village. Apparently the men atata were supposed to have come over to the chief's house early in the morning, and they did not arrive until nearly noon. The women could not complete their work or slaughter the goats without the men atata. When they eventually arrived, the chief followed the leaders into the House of Hoes, and the sound of heavy blows and raised, angry voices emerged. The women immediately fell quiet, and turned away. The atata emerged, looking very shaken, and the goats were killed and eaten hastily and quietly. As soon as the rubbish had been cleared away, everyone went home.

Later on, I asked Siali and several other rainmakers several questions about the women's dance. They said that they knew nothing at all about it; it was an affair of women alone, and men did not see it, or even know that it took place.

Subsequent care of the rainshrine.

The chief's fields had been cultivated, the ancestors had been propitiated, and all the ritual preparations for a new agricultural year completed. After a period of one day when no work should be done, the people could begin to cultivate their own fields. But the rainmakers cannot leave the work of rainmaking here. It is their responsibility to ensure that rain continues to fall, and thus they must renew the medicine in the pots from time to time, and carry out certain measures if the rain fails. If rain is plentiful, and falls three of four days each week, their only work is to renew the potions in the pots from time to time. Thus the local atata will come to the shrine, collect leaves and roots, open the pots, and add them to the mixture. They sleep at the shrine and return home in the morning. If the rain has been slight, Siali goes to the tall rock (called Ikunganilwa) at night, and calls on the chiefly ancestors as he did on the first night of the ceremony.

If rain still does not fall, the leading atata go to a diviner, and go through the measures normally used in times of misfortune. They take a hen, and the diviner cuts it and sees whether the lack of rain is due to the witchcraft of the living or the desires of the dead. If it is due to the anger of the spirits, a cow or goats will be taken to the place prescribed by the diviner. Apparently certain caves in the Kirumi and Mkalama areas are connected with certain rulers of the past. Sometimes the animal is slaughtered at one cave, sometimes at another. The ritual performed is the same as that preformed at any individual crisis, and I will describe it shortly. If the misfortune is due to the malice of the living, the diviner will carry out normal anti-witchcraft medicines. Apparently once a witch placed certain roots in a tree, which prevented the rain from falling. The diviner sent out a person of weak mind to destroy the roots. The person ran around in the bush for several days, and in his journeyings he unconsciously destroyed the witch's medicines, so that the rain began to fall again. Last year the diviner was not consulted at all, owing to the plentiful rain, but in the previous year an animal was

slaughtered at one of the caves. After this rite, the rain began to fall again, but it was too late to bring a good harvest. The lack of rain that year was also attributed to the anger of the Queen Mother, who can withhold the rain despite the measures of the atata.

Those who watch over the rain during the rest of the wet season are mainly the elders and those living close to the capital. A mutata from further afield rarely attends, unless there has been bloodshed in his village, when he will bring a goat to be slaughtered and eaten at the shrine.

The mythology surrounding the rain rituals is inextricably linked with the body of mythology about the earliest clans, their origin, their wanderings before they reached Isanzu, and quarrels after arrival. I consulted a number of elderly men about the origins and movements of their own clans, and the early rulers of the chiefdom, and have found it very difficult to correlate the different versions. While there is general agreement on some points, the divergence on others is wide. I will describe the myth relevant to rainmaking in brief, and mention some of the areas of general agreement, and the main areas where the myths diverge.

There is no concept of a heroic age, or of heroes who brought cattle, crops or fire. There is no record of conquest by one group over another. The myths all begin with the exodus of certain clans and rulers from Ukerewe. This is the 1066 of Isanzu mythology, something which everyone knows about. It is said that they left because of a famine. These people wandered across Sukumaland, and had various encounters with the Taturu and other peoples who inhabited the plains. They eventually arrived at the Iramba Plateau, which was uninhabited. It is generally agreed that two prominent men in the band were called Ikomba and Kingwele, and that these two men were members of the Anyansuli clan. Some say that these men followed members of other clans into the country; some that they were the first clan to arrive. What is now the ruling clan may have been the first to arrive, may have come at the same time as the Anyansuli, or may have followed them. Cattle, crops, knowledge of fire, and the rainstones were brought from Ukerewe. Certain clans are known to have special relationships with millet and cattle, and the earliest members of these clans are said to have been responsible for bringing them to Isanzu. The different elders all gave the same picture of a band of men, none of whom had any supernatural power or did any miraculous act, arriving in an uninhabited country. The leaders of the Anyansuli clan were known by all the elders; prominent men of other clans were known after long pauses for thought, by members of the clans themselves. No-one was able to recall the names of the first Anyampanda, the ruling clan, to enter the country, and at this point in history they clearly were no different from any other clan.

The elders all knew where their own clans had first arrived, and their disputes with other clans, All of them also knew that somehow Ikomba and Kingwele left the country, and the Anyampanda gained control of the rain. Myths diverge considerably on the method by which the Anyampanda got the rain, and the reasons for the departure of Ikomba and Kingwele. In one myth a Munyampanda girl acted as nanny to the Anyansuli children. She was persuaded by her father to steal the rainstones. When the people found that the Anyansuli no longer had the stones, they drove them out, and the Anyampanda became the rulers. In another myth, Ikomba and Kingwele took a Munyampanda with them when they went to look for roots and leaves in the bush. They

feared to take their sister's son, since he would succeed as rainmaker, and once he possessed all the necessary knowledge, he might kill his mother's brother, and take command of the rain himself. This Munyampanda learnt everything, and somehow either got rid of the two Anyansuli or else took over from them on their death. Another elder said that Ikomba and Kingwele had a violent quarrel. Ikomba went off to Lake Eyasi, where he died in the quicksand. Kingwele followed him, and was killed on the journey. The rain was not stolen from them but from other Anyansuli, who also happened to know the secret. There are several other versions which I will not describe, but which consist of different stories of the loss of the power to control the rain by the Anyansuli.

The acquisition of control over the rain by this means seems to be the sole charter for the authority of the chiefs. There is nothing to explain why and how the Anyampanda should continue to hold this power. They are in no sense divine. There is no record of conquest over other clans. People refer to the chief as "owner of the land", (mukola ihi), but this claim is not justified in myth. Although they were one of the first clans to enter the country, they came with others. The body of knowledge connected with rainmaking, as we have seen, is not possessed by the chiefly family alone. Nor is it they who handle and prepare the ritual objects associated with the cult. The main actor in the ceremony is not a member of the Anyampanda clan at all, but a man whose grandfather was a member of the clan. A number of atata possess the knowledge of the plants used in the rituals, and it would be easy for anyone wishing to take the rainstones to do so. Why has their authority never been challenged ? I have not been able to draw out any accounts of attempts to take over from the Anyampanda, or even of disputes over succession within the clan itself. The fragmentary character of the myth may be connected with the apparent lack of opposition to the Anyampanda as the reigning clan.

Is the chief's authority purely ritual ? How different is he from other men ? What is the nature of his power ?

When one asks the common man why the Anyampanda reign, the invariable answer is that they control the rain. Ordinary men and women do not know the myth about the theft of the rainstones from the Anyansuli; it seems that tradition is a sufficient reason for them. The belief in his capacity to bring and withhold rain is still very strong, save among the educated minority. When the first showers of rain fell in October, before the atata had even prepared the stones and medicines, men said that the chief had begun his work. The horror which swept the country when it was heard that the chief was to be deposed by government was related to this belief. Men feared that he would no longer be a rainmaker. When it was later heard that he would still reign, but would no longer be a government servant, people were much relieved. Great respect is shown towards the chief at all times. He is not an ordinary man with special duties in certain situations, but someone to whom homage is due. He would always be given the finest seat in any house he entered, and offered beer.

This respect stems from his power as rainmaker, and the power seems to reside in the office rather than the man. A person acting as chief will be considered to have this power, although not the true successor. Thus on the death of Sagillu in about 1949, a regent was appointed, owing to the youth of the true heir, Omari. This regent, Gunda, was acknowledged to be the rainmaker during his tenure. He resigned when Omari came of age, and now lives about fifteen miles from the capital, but plays no part in the rituals. Similarly the brother and sisters' sons of the present chief have no role to play in the ceremonies. They are not respected in the same way as the chief, and are not considered to have any special power, although they are taught the chiefly duties from childhood.

The accession ceremonies are not elaborate. They differ in only a few respects from the procedure normally followed when an heir succeeds to property, wives and duties. They are not public, although after their occurrence, news is spread through the chiefdom. Some time after the death of the previous chief, the successor is brought to the chief's house in the evening. A goat is killed, and the heir, the chief wife, and Anyampanda elders eat the meat inside the house. The elders shut the heir and chief wife together inside the house; they sleep together, and the door is opened early in the morning. From that time, the new chief is recognized to be the successor to the old. Later on, he will be presented with the various insignia of office. These are two cut shells and a whisk made from the hairs of certain wild animals. One shell is strapped to the chief's forehead by a leather thong, the other to his wrist. They are known as "kilungu". I have never seen the present chief wearing these. The whisk is the one used in the ceremonies during the address to the ancestors.

Succession passes from brother to brother, and then to eldest sister's eldest son. Apparently there is little choice over the successor; men always know who the heir is. Elders have denied that character and physique are important; order of succession is fairly rigid. The present incumbent is exceptionally small, frail, and weak. The regent was also very small, but Sagillu was tall and large.

The person of the chief is not sacred, and illness or senility, as far as I can make out, does not affect the well-being of the country. There is no tradition of the murder of a senile chief, although apparently one was driven out because of successive famines.

Death ceremonies are similar to those of a commoner, but last longer and are more festive. At a commoner's funeral one cow and several cows may be killed, and the people will dance for about two days. At a chief's funeral, three or four cows may be killed, and people dance for four or five days. The whole chiefdom goes into mourning, and men should not do any work on these days, apart from what is essential.

Under the policy of Indirect Rule, chiefs were vested with certain administrative and judicial powers. Traditionally, the chief's sole judicial function was to give protection to a murderer, and prevent feuds from developing. An offender could flee to the chief, who would give him his clothes, and give him shelter for several days. On his return to his village, no man would dare to injure someone wearing the chief's clothes, and the injured party would have to accept compensation in cattle alone.

The chief had no judicial authority apart from this; disputes between his subjects were resolved at village level by the body of elders, and disputes between villages by agreement between the elders concerned. Villages seem to have been autonomous in many respects before the introduction of courts at the level of the headman's area and sub-chiefdom.

It is difficult to gain a true picture of the extent and nature of the chief's authority in pre-German times. Apparently one chief was a war leader in the frequent skirmishes against the Masai, but others remained at the capital and saw to the pereparation of medicine to bring success and ward off the enemy. He was clearly not purely a ritual leader with a role to play only in rainmaking, and yet his judicial and administrative functions were limited. A clue to the problem of the importance which people place on chiefship is the body of belief surrounding the chiefly ancestors, something which I will discuss later on.

The chief's sons and half-brothers hold no special position in the villages in which they live. They all live away from the capital, and none of them attended the ceremony. His one full brother recently returned from Moshi, where he worked on the coffee plantations. He is staying at the chief's house, and was therefore present during the rainmaking, but had no part to play. He did not enter the rainshrine, and spent most of the time teaching cattle to draw a plough, and talking with his father. He did not seem particularly interested in what was going on. The chief's father is a leading member of one of the clans which hold land rights in the capital, a clan whose members traditionally intermarry with the Anyampanda. He had no role to play in the ceremony, and was herding on the second day during the address to the ancestors and final procession and feast. The chief's sisters live either in the capital or in an adjacent village, and their husbands hold some of the few lucrative posts available in Isanzu. One is a headman, another a court messenger, and two others are dispensary attendants. All the sisters attended the ceremony, and helped with the cooking. They were rubbed with oil on the first day, when the hoes were ritually prepared, and one sister led the cultivation of fields around the shrine.

His wives were present in the house and courtyard for a large part of the time, but had no particular role to play. They are all fairly young, and were under the control of his mother, who told them to bring water or wood, and to look after the pots. Last year one of the wives took part in the hoeing, but this year none of them did.

The chief's mother, as we saw, was in command of all the cooking during the three days of the ceremony, and of the preparation of beer earlier in the month. She is a woman who is feared and respected throughout the kingdom. She is known as "Nkili".

She is the youngest sister of the chief's true mother, who died long ago. She succeeded her mother, a woman who lived to a great age and outlived all of her daughters except this one. Nkili is said to possess her own rainstone, which she wears all the time, strapped around her thighs. The previous incumbent was much more careful about the houses she entered, and kept to herself more than the present one. People say that when the present Nkili's mother went on a journey, she would never enter any house save that of the person she was visiting. On arrival, she would be feasted with goats and beer. Although the Queen Mother is greatly feared and respected to-day, people talk in disapproving tones about the way she spends all her time at beer parties.

During the dry season, she rarely returns home at night, she sleeps in the house where the party is held. Older people say that this is no way for a Queen Mother to behave; she should guard her rainstone more carefully, lest it be stolen. Despite this, people are afraid to thwart her wishes, and she wields great influence over the chief and all the royal family. She lives in a house of normal size on the opposite side of the shrine to the chief's house. Her husband is a member of one of the leading Kirumi grand-families, and is a member of the Anyambeiu clan, the same clan as the chief's father. She has two daughters, who have moved off elsewhere with their husbands, and a son, who lives with her. Her neighbour is the chief's eldest sister, who will eventually take over from her, and who assists her in all her work. She and her husband, like many members of the royal family, are Muslims, but rarely attend the mosque.

I have mentioned the role of the chief in ritual and judicial matters, and the position of the royal family. I would now like to discuss the relationship between chief and subject, and the role of the atata.

The chief is entitled to tribute in the form of millet from all his subjects, and it is the duty of the atata to organize the cultivation and collection of the millet within their villages. In most villages a small plot of land is set aside for the chief. It is hoed, planted and weeded by the villagers. Certain days are set aside for the work. It is not arduous, since the field is rarely more than an acre in size. At harvest time, children carry the millet to the capital. Later on in the year, after the first showers of rain have fallen, the mutata will take a small basin of millet from each house to the capital, to be used as seed, or for the beer of the planting ceremony. If there is no woman mutata in the village, the man will also be responsible for collecting firewood from each house, and seeing that it is taken to the capital.

The village mutata is also expected to take a goat to the rainshrine whenever blood is shed within his village. Bloodshed is an offence against the well being of the land, and the state of disorder must be resolved by a communal meal at the shrine. This only applies during the wet season, when the crops are growing. Although it is used as a threat these days, it is rarely carried out.

We saw that it was these men who organised the separate stages of the ceremony, and who were the main performers in the various rites. The principal actors are those who have spent many years in the work, and who therefore have most experience. When a man is appointed to the post of mutata, he does not undergo any elaborate initiation. When he first enters the shrine, he will pay a cow or several goats. This signifies that he is now a member of the group, and he will learn more about rainmaking as the years go by. At first his work will consist of drawing water and carrying messages; later he graudates to searching for certain roots, and finally he learns how to mix the potions. At present there are four old men who are generally reckoned to be the leading experts, and one of these is the ultimate authority on any matters connected with rainmaking. He has no formal title, but is consulted by the others, and organises the work at the shrine. There are no named stages in the hierarchy, all members except one are known as atata. The exception is the grandchild of the shrine, who blesses the hoes, cuts the sod, and addresses the ancestors, as we have seen.

For some, the cultivation ceremony is the only time when they enter the shrine, although they will bring tribute to the capital at other times of year. Others who live nearby and who are recognised as experts will go to the shrine a number of times each month. Most of the experienced members of the group live in the capital or in adjacent villages. The atata are not evenly distributed over the country. The concentration is highest around the capital. In the peripheral villages atata are fewer, and there are a number of villages which lack them altogether. There are no atata in the colonies of Isanzu living in the Eyasi Basin or near to Mbulu.

The authority of the shrine is not recognised by those in the chiefdom alone. Men from the neighbouring chiefdom of Iambi and from Turu come to it in times of drought, and ask the chief to send rain to their countries.

The total number of atata is difficult to ascertain, since not all of them were present at the ceremony. Participation is entirely voluntary for the majority who have no specific part to play, and no fines are imposed on those who were absent. About fifteen were present for part or all of the ceremony, and I doubt whether there are more than another ten or so. Succession to office is not rigid. In theory it passes from brother to brother to sister's son, but in practice it seems to depend largely on the personalities involved. While some of the rainmakers have succeeded brothers and mothers' brothers, others have taken over from their fathers and grandfathers. One man was troubled by the spirit of his grandfather, and was told by the diviner who was consulted that he was to assume the office of rainmaker, which his grandfather had held many years before. If a man is not interested in taking up this office, there is no great pressure on him to do so. If one wishes to resign, he can appoint a close kinsman or else a neighbour, if the kinsmen are not interested. In one village in Isanzu, the former mutata was an elderly man who had a large herd of cattle and goats. He had no young sons to herd his cattle for him, and found the long walk to the capital arduous. This year, after he had organized the collection of tribute, he handed over to a younger neighbour of his who was interested in the work. He said that he had become too old, and had too much work at home to take days off every month. The office carries some prestige and reward in terms of meat and beer, but it also involves the organisation of communal work on the chief's fields and the collection and transport of firewood and millet from the villages to the capital.

The work of a mutata is to organize the collection and transportation of millet and sometimes firewood from his village; to organize the village teenagers, and to collect fines after bloodshed. His role as mutata gives him no authority in any social situations save these. He has no authority to intervene in or arbitrate a dispute, unless he is also a member of the council of elders. Some atata are native doctors, some are the wealthiest members of their villages, some are members of the largest extended families, but a mutata is not necessarily in any of these positions.

For a child living in a village some way from the capital, a visit to Kirumi is an important experience. Normally, his territory would consist of his own and neighbouring villages, and those villages where relatives live. If he were to go to Kirumi, it is unlikely that he would visit the chief's house or draw near to the rainshrine. The time when children hoe the chief's fields is the only occasion when groups of children from separate villages co-operate in a common activity.

At the communal feast when the hoeing is finished, they all sit in village groups in the chief's compound. The children sit apart from the old men, old women, and royal clan. Middle-aged people remember clearly the time when they went to hoe the chief's fields, and sang rainsongs, and it is clearly a time when some common norms and values are inculcated. Throughout the ceremony, the values of good citizenship are stressed. Quarrels, bloodshed and strife must be avoided, and breach of these principles endangers the rain. In the address to the ancestors and in admonition by the atata, the children are urged to live in peace with their neighbours. Other songs which they sing stress the need to cultivate vigorously.

We saw that there was a parallel group of old women, whose work was to assist the Queen Mother in the preparation of beer and the communal meal. Some of these are daughters of her Mother's sisters, one or two are widows of the former chief, some are sisters or daughters of those who helped her mother, and others are just friends whom she herself has appointed. If a woman mutata dies and her sister or daughter are particularly friendly with the new Queen Mother, they may be invited to help with the work, but succession is not automatic. A new mutata will pay a goat the first time she enters the House of Hoes, and will then be regarded as a member of the group. As with the men atata, many live in the capital and surrounding villages, a few in the more distant areas. The atata organise the collection and transport of firewood from their respective villages to the rainshrine at the end of the dry season, and they may help with the collection of millet. Some happen to be wives of the men atata, but the majority are not. The role of mutata does not involve any work apart from this. Where there is no woman mutata, the older women of the village will be told to take the firewood to the shrine.

The one time in the year when these representatives from the villages meet together is during the cultivation ceremonies, the time when the unity of the separate villages in a single moral community is expressed. The men atata are in no sense clients of the chief, and are not dependent on him. Neither are they administrators of villages, to whom he has delegated authority. It seems best to regard them as intermediaries between chief and villages which have councils of elders to decide their own internal affairs. There is no body of officials at the capital to help the chief to administrate, and he has little control over what goes on in the villages. Although fairly independentin internal affairs, they send tribute and acknowledge their membership in the wider community of the chiefdom.

I have discussed the groups and individuals which took part in the ceremony, and have tried to give some idea of the nature of chieftainship and the links between chief and village. I would now like to turn to one of the rites, one of the more critical ones, and compare it with the similar rite which occurs at the domestic level. This comparison should throw light on the significance of the performance of the rite at the capital, and also illustrate some basic principles of kinship organisation.

The rite to which I refer is the address to the ancestors on the second day. When the hoers had finished their work, they proceeded with the atata to the chief's hut, and ate millet and drank beer. Then, the chief sitting near the threshold, a mutata

took the chiefly fly whisk, sprinkled water on the chief and people, and addressed the ancestral spirits. They were told that the act of cultivation had been performed to please them; they were therefore to reciprocate with plenty of rain. The chief himself played a passive role at this time, as throughout the other rites. The leading actor was the mutata known as the grandchild of the shrine, and in domestic rituals we find that it is the grandchildren who do most of the work. The person for whom the rituals are performed sits quietly near the door of the house.

These domestic rituals take place at times of sickness or misfortune At other times men do not make offerings. Although they are by no means an everyday occurrence, they still take place from time to time. In the past six months one was held in the capital, one in the village where I was working, two in neighbouring villages, and several in other areas. They are known as ipolyo (sing kipolyo), and usually involve the killing of a goat and the preparation of beer.

They take place on the advice of the diviner, who also reveals whether the kipolyo is to be a goat or cow alone, or if beer is also required, and where it should take place. The sickness may also be due to witchcraft. One diviner said that he could tell the cause by looking at the head of the chicken. If it was spotted, it was a sure sign that the ancestors wanted an offering. There is often a long delay between the first divination and the kipolyo, particularly if beer is to be prepared, or if the kipolyo is to be held far away. The sick person has often recovered before the kipolyo, but it is never omitted, lest he sicken again.

The main actors in a domestic ritual are a grandson and granddaughter, i.e. people whose grandfathers were members of the sick person's clan. Relatives who live nearby and a few neighbours may also participate. The mother's brother or some other senior relative should also be present, to help the diviner with names of the deceased. There is no obligation for all villagers to attend, as there is at funerals, but neither is it an entirely private and secret affair. Anyone passing by the house can drop in for a few minutes, before continuing on his way.

At a kipolyo of a goat at which I was present, the grandchildren arrived in the early morning, and killed the animal without ceremony. Although the spirits are later told that the animal has been killed to please them, it was slaughtered and cut up in the normal nonchalant way in which the men do the job. Various parts of its stomach were carefully taken out and handed to the diviner, who washed them thoroughly and then examined them. It is in the liver that he sees the actual ancestors who are causing the trouble. On this particular occasion, it was the mother's mother, mother's mother's brother, mother, and a distant male relative. The diviner would look hard, and then name some memorable fact about the deceased. One had been killed by the Masai in a raid, another was an expert in pottery, another had known many medicines for child-bearing. The potter and doctor were troubling this woman because they wanted her to take up their particular skills. The disposition of the spirits towards the offering was revealed in the heart, and on this occasion they were pleased with it. In the other parts of the goat the diviner can foretell the state of the harvest, the rain, any disasters which will befall the country. This year, we were told, millet will be plentiful.

When the diviner had finished, the grandchildren prepared fire in the customary way, by twirling sticks, and roasted the meat which covers the chest and neck. It was then cut into small pieces. The grandson picked up some of them, faced the east, and began his address, "O Sun, we have given you this meat, the meat of a fine white goat. We have made a kipolyo here, a kipolyo for Nya Magondi to --- (Here he names the troublesome ancestors). You, O Sun, have come from the east, and are going to the west. When you arrive, say that, as you passed over Isanzu, you saw us carrying out this kipolyo. To-morrow, let Nya Magondi recover, and go to fetch firewood as usual". He threw a piece of meat to the east. He then threw pieces in each direction, saying, "You on this side, take your meat, and note that we here are making an offering. Leave your child alone; let her recover." He gave several tiny pieces of meat to the doctor, relatives and the sick woman, who was indoors. The granddaughter then repeated the performance. She was unsure of the words, and of the names of the spirits, so that she was continually prompted, but no-one minded.

This was followed by the division of the bystanders into two groups, each group taking a portion of the meat a little way away before eating it. The grandchildren and close relatives of the sick woman remained at the house. The woman's classificatory father then took a bouquet of branches, dipped them in the water in the wooden platter, and sprinkled the woman at the door of the hut. He addressed the ancestors again, telling them to go away and leave her in peace. When the chief was sprinkled with water, it was not the grandchild who held the whisk, but another mutata. This was the end of the proceedings on that day. On the following day, very early in the morning, the remaining meat was cooked. A large bowl of porridge was prepared, and tiny pieces were tossed in various directions and a similar address made to the ancestors.

When a grandchild addresses the spirits, he does not do so with an attitude of worship, prayer or supplication. He does not plead with them. He announces that a certain thing has been done to please them, and that they are therefore to reciprocate by withdrawing the nuisance they have sent, and leaving their descendants alone. He does not speak in a humble tone, but in a threatening one. When the Anyihanzu describe the address, they commonly use the word "scold" of the way in which the speaker speaks. The main purpose of the rite is to sever the connection with the ancestors, to drive them out of worldly affairs.

Although, when one asks whom is being addressed, the answer is invariably "The ancestors", in fact it is always the Sun to whom the grandchild speaks. The Sun seems to be a visible and tangible symbol of a supernatural world about which nothing can be known. There is no concept of the Sun as a god, or of any active being above the spirits. At first I tried to postulate some kind of relationship between Sun and spirits, since in their addresses they imply that, as the Sun sets, it has some contact with the underworld. I met with no success. The usual answer to questions about the world in which the spirits live is "However should we know?"

Ancestral spirits who trouble a commoner are usually those of people removed two or three generations from him. Men are never troubled by the spirit of a person whose name they have taken, although I would hesitate to call such a spirit a guardian spirit. One sometimes finds that people do not know about the existence of certain relatives until troubled by them. A senior member of the family helps the diviner to identify them, and will then tell the sick person what he knows about them.

People never make offerings to their ancestors before new enterprises are undertaken; they only propitiate them in times of misfortune. It is only the ancestors of the chief who are addressed at the beginning of the new cultivation year. The welfare of the land and crops are in their hands. The failure of crops in a village will never be attributed to the malevolence of the ancestors of a family group in that village. If it were not attributed to the presence of a witch, men would say that it was a punishment for an offence against the rainshrine, or for direspect towards the chief. Propitiation rituals never take place for village disasters, but only for individual misfortunes. The belief that disrespect towards the chief may bring severe repercussions is thus a strong sanction for his authority.

It is perhaps worth mentioning here that at funerals the ancestors are never addressed, and no offerings are made to them.

As we have seen a person always approaches his ancestors through the intermediation of grandchildren. The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is important for the understanding of the kinship system. The term of address is reciprocal; a grandfather will address his grandson as "shekulu", and the grandson will reply by using the same word. Grandmothers and granddaughters address each other as "mama". The actual term for grandchild is mizukulu, (pl. isukulu).

Whenever a grandfather kills meat, any classificatory grandchild is entitled to take a large share of the kill. If he does so, he will be expected to reciprocate with one or two pots of beer in the beer-brewing season. When a man builds a new house, the grandson should help with the preparation of the bed, and the building of the cattle fence, work for which he will be rewarded with the skin of a cow or goat. Granddaughters are expected to help with the preparation of the new cooking stones, and the lighting of the first fire. Children are usually given the name of one of their grandparents.

They have no special duties at funerals. The relation between them in everyday life is one of affection and equality and the attitude of a grandchild to his grandparents is in no way similar to the attitude with which he approaches his grandparents' spirits in the kipolyo.

I have mentioned this grandparents-grandchild relationship, and the role of grandchildren in propitiation rituals to explain the role of the grandchild of the shrine in the communal ceremony. The person whose ancestors are being addressed, whether chief or commoner, plays a passive role. Thus the principal actor was Siali. Since the goodwill of the chiefly ancestors is a matter of general concern, representatives from many villages attended, in order to ensure this goodwill. For the chief, it is a ritual of kinship, but in the eyes of the common people, it is a ritual which affects them all.

I have not touched on the symbolism of many actions, on other rituals, or on other supernatural concepts, and do not intend to do so here. In this paper I began by describing the role of certain individuals, and co-operation between and within groups during the three-day ceremony. I then attempted to give a fuller picture of the network of relationships by discussing the role of the participants in other social situations. This description of the ceremony has been an attempt to throw light on the political structure as enshrined in ritual and idealised in the mind of the majority of people.
