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Uganda Box VI

The Monkey Clan in Buganda

by Kamutegeya

The history of Buganda tells us that all the clans found in Buganda started during the reign of Kabaka Kintu. Kabaka Kintu was the first Kabaka who had a settled administration of Buganda. Kabaka Kintu came from the north of Uganda; it is said that he was accompanied by a group of people. On their way down to Buganda they came across a place where there was no food. Some people say that it was a drought in that particular place. Kabaka Kintu, as the leader of that group of people, suggested that each and everyone should look for something to eat; some hunted animals, some caught insects, and some brought different roots of things. In addition to his suggestion, he said that they all should try to eat that particular thing each had brought; and if one vomited or felt unwell after eating that particular thing, then it would become one's totem and automatically, of course, one's clan. The suggestion was carried out, and it is now the known origin of the totems and clans of the Baganda.

It is said that Kabaka Kintu came with a certain man called Bwoya, who is known as the first man to belong to the Monkey Clan in Buganda.

When Kabaka Kintu died, his son Chwa Nabaka succeeded him. After a time he got a son to his wife. The son was named Kalemera. Kabaka Chwa Nabaka, somehow or other, got fed up with his son; he, therefore, conspired with one of his chiefs called Walusimbi to send Kalemera to Kabaka Wunyi in Bunyoro. Kabaka Wunyi was Kabaka Kintu's brother. All the chiefs of Chwa Nabaka were notified of Kalemera's departure, and the cause of his sudden departure was also announced. The cause, which was known as the conspiracy, was that Walusimbi was to accuse Kalemera of having committed adultery with his wife. Kalemera was accused, and he was banished from Buganda. He left Buganda with a group of people given him by the chiefs, among whom was Mulegeya. When they got to Bunyoro they were warmly received by Kabaka Wunyi and Kalemera was given a hut to live in. It is said that he shared the hut with Kabaka Wunyi's wife called Wanyana because he was closely related to the Kabaka. After a couple of days Kalemera fell in love with Wanyana and eventually Wanyana became pregnant by Kalemera. Kalemera upon learning of the pregnancy of Wanyana got disturbed and he wanted to run away. He went to Mulegeya and told the whole story to him. Mulegeya naturally blamed him saying that they had left Buganda because of Kalemera's committing adultery with Walusimbi's wife and that again he had made the same mistake in Bunyoro. However, Mulegeya thought of means of saving him and because he was a friend of Kabaka Wunyi, he did not find it very difficult. At long last he arrived at a conclusion and the conclusion was that he had to pretend to be a medicine-man or a prophet. He then went to Kabaka Wunyi and told him that if he happened to be annoyed by any of his wives or if any of his wives was found pregnant, and not by him, that wife should not be killed, as it was always the case, but she should be sent out of the royal enclosure. And if she gave birth to a baby, that baby should be taken to the clay-pits and be left there ~~xxxxx~~ alive. Mulegeya assured the Kabaka that if he carried out what he had told him, he could live a long and prosperous life. The Kabaka became pleased with Mulegeya and promised to do everything Mulegeya had told him. Mulegeya went back to Kalemera and told him that everything was settled and if he wished to leave the country he could do so. Kalemera immediately went to the Kabaka to say good-bye to him; he wanted to come back to Buganda with Mulegeya but the Kabaka asked him to leave him behind as he wanted him to make him some pots. Then Kalemera left without Mulegeya's company and it is said that he died on the border of Buganda. Wanyana was soon found pregnant after a couple of months and she was sent out of the royal enclosure as Mulegeya prophesied. After a couple of months Wanyana gave birth to a son. Mulegeya was immediately notified of the birth according to the plan, and Mulegeya went to fetch the baby from the clay-pits.

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The baby was then taken to Mulegeya's home, and it was nursed by Mulegeya's wife. Wanyana secretly sent some cows to him so as to save him the trouble of looking for milk to feed the baby. The baby was given the name of Kimera. The people in Buganda heard of the whole story and when Kimera became of age they sent for him.

Kimera came to Buganda with Katumba, the son and heir of Mulegeya of the Monkey Clan who had by then died, and other people of various clans who had been in Bunyoro during that period. When Kimera arrived in Buganda he was amicably made the Kabaka of Buganda. After a time he bestowed upon Katumba the title of "Mugema", i.e. "Kabaka's father". He also told his subjects that every Kabaka of Buganda, from time to time, should honour Mugema Katumba because of what his father did to his dear mother. He declared that Mugema Katumba should not be killed under any circumstances. It is said that Kabaka Kimera looked upon Katumba as his brother. Katumba was the first holder of the leadership of the Monkey Clan.

The head of the Monkey Clan is still called Mugema. His duties to the Kabaka were many but now they are dying away. The most important duty occurs when there is a coronation; Mugema places the Kabaka on the royal stool, and then he places a barkcloth upon him. He then calls upon the people to be loyal to their Kabaka, and again he calls upon the Kabaka to be loyal to the constitution and to be just to his subjects.

The following are the branches of the Monkey Clan:

1. Kinyolo of Kisugu
2. Jumba of Bunjako
3. Mande of Kabembe
4. Kisambu of Busambu
5. Mwanga of Kyamuwoya
6. Semugala of Bugala
7. Sebukyu of Malangala.

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Uganda.



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