

Interview #4

Alexander Ogoche Ayo

With Zedekia Oloo Siso, Buturi, Ogoche's house, 25 July 2007

Folder A DS 400024.WMA audio

Video #4 and #5

Still photos of interview and man and his wife, wives afterwards

Alexander Ochoche son of Aayo, son of Obunge, son of Waligi, son of Tegwa, son of Kegina, son of Onyango, son of Otieno Ndiiti, son of Mlowa.

Mlowa had three, 4 children Miswa, Onyango, Ochieng, Otieno. Father of Mlowa was Ochieng. From Omolo.

Siso asks whether he, Ogoche, is the generation of his grandfather or his father. He is the son of your grandfather.

Life history – he went to Geita to work in the mines as a youth. Then other mines in Musoma. Then to WWII, 1939 fought the Italians and in India, Rangoon Burma fought the Japanese. Was there for three years. He was in company 29 brigade. Fighting for the wazungu was bad. Soldiers didn't get their share. Not paid their pension after.

Siso asks who was it that taught you history. Taught by father, who was taught by his father who was taught by his father. History taught to children. Then the schools and the padres came from Nyegina. They got Christian names. Our chief Odemba took the children to schools. Nyerere is in the same age set as Ogoche. But Nyerere went to school and he did not get the chance. So as a child learned about the old things, not in schools. This was my education when I couldn't go to school. Like Zedekia is doing now to learn about the past.

What does history do for you? It is our desturi, our inheritance. Do you use history to solve particular problems? This is our desturi to do this. Consult the wazee. What is an example? When there was a disease or an epidemic then they would come to ask the wazee what to do. Maybe small pox or polio or something else. Then they will be given advice to go find the medicines, the dawa to solve the problem. Dawa ya nchi.

There is only one person who has the medicine of the land, dawa ya nchi. That is the one who brought us here with medicines, Kagose. Must come from his line. Kagose gave the medicines to Odemba but who is it after that? Who has inherited it?

What is destroying the country is money – pesa. It has become like a dini. Even a church. Everyone wants money. Some of the sons of Odemba do medicine for money. So they don't stay here in Buturi but go to other places. Make dawa.

How will the things of the past help us today? The things of the past. Today things are mixed up. Don't respect old men now. The problem is kuzaa. Girls go without

bridewealth. But you will not get it these days (pregnant young girl in the kitchen laughs and chides him). Young men go out on their own and do not take care of elders.

Wars in the past. The white people kept people from fighting anymore, stopped it. Bwana Obelo stopped them. But they put in chiefs then religion came. Siso says but why did they fight? Before the wazungu came because when there was famine they would see that other people had millet and would go and steal it from them. If they had cattle and you didn't they would go and take it. They had shields and spears/. They went to steal cattle. No peacemaking.

Only a few people here at the time. The Zanaki were here first. They lost the wars and left. Also the Kuria, Simbiti and Irienyi lost. Boundaries were made and the wazungu put them in. then we threw out the ones who lost the wars and they left.

He then turns to me and asks me to call England and get their pensions for soldiers.

Siso takes him through a geneology of one side, Keginia, son of Mlowa. Is written on the paper notes. One leader of a clan was adopted in war, captive. Each one a few wives. The one who was adopted, Malasa became a large clan.

Leadership – chiefs were bad. People still believed in Kagose and his medicines. The wazungu came and they said that no more wars. Kagose put his son as chief, Ogo. He was not a good man, he did not follow his father. He hit people. He followed the tabia of the Germans. After him was Lanya as chief. He was a doctor but did not know Swahili. He did not hit the people but went back to the ways of his fathers. Example – he talked to people. Lanya was when the English were here. They taught people and we sat in the baraza to counsel.

Still tribal conflict? No so much less because there is law now. Other problems? Government does not give the soldiers their pension. Government does not carry through on their promises. Told they would be paid but have not been. TANU? Married and had 4 wives. Balozzi here for 20 years. Then Uhuru came. Was in the cheo of Usuluhishi. Then as Jadi ya Kimila. Go after thieves and those that break the law. 3 years in that. 3 years in next.

Black tail that he carries is to signify that he is an mzee. A big goat is slaughtered and the skin used to make a robe. A cow is killed for meat to feed all the neighbors. Lots of beer.

Buturi is made up of 1) Oliyo 2) Makongoro 3) Rabuor
Counselors from each section to work with Odemba. Advisors.

Don't know how to read so couldn't read the book of history. It would be good because everyone wants to learn it but don't do it. They say they will come but don't. Son made a tape of his words.

Luo and Bantu people? Only the serekali makes peaces between them.
Children learn in school, they marry each others. They are close them.
No wealth now. No bridewealth for the father. Daughters go freely.
He asks me about what I am going, helping Siso to do this work.
This book will have a big voice. Others know this information even more than I do. ...