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メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2009-04-28 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 小馬, 徹 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.15021/00003320

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...one day when the women were holding a kokwet council under a large sausage tree, one of its fruits, which was long, big and hard, fell and hit the advisory judge (Kip. kirwogindet) on the head. Because of the pain she started to run away in a frenzy until finally no one knew where she had gone. Ever since that time, the women have fallen into confusion until finally, they handed their political control of the tribe to the men.

(a Kipsigis folktale)

This paper describes and analyzes the introduction of the Women's Voluntary Self-help Association Movement (*Maendeleo ya Wanawake* Movement) and its development among the Kipsigis people of the Kericho District, Kenya, on the basis of the author's field research.

A variety of cooperative works popular among the Kipsigis are generally called *kipagenge*, in their language. In Kenya, the *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* Movement was formed in 1952 so that women might economically maintain themselves and raise their status in the communities. At first the movement seems to have been received by the Kipsigis as a variation of *kipagenge*. In other words, they tried to positively respond to it, modeling and developing it in the traditional paradigm of *kipagenge*. In the course of time, the Kipsigis word *kipagenge* has usually come to denote the Women's Self-help Association Movement itself.

There are roughly two types of *kipagenge* (*kipagengesiek*, pl.). One is a strong company-like association formed across traditional basic social organizations, like the *kokwet*, which is still the real base of the Kipsigis' everyday life. Since membership is based on individual participation, this type of *kipagenge* often lacks nuclear family groups and is independent of the traditional authorities. This type of group tends to appreciate new types of political leaders. The other type retains the major traits of the traditional *kipagenge* that attain and maintain the network of daily cooperative works and friendship among the members rather than the proper goal, i.e., women's self-help, that the movement's head office advocates. The members usually have strong familial ties with one another, and one or two nuclear family groups lead the association under the guidance of a family head, who is often of the traditional local authorities.

Consequently, *kipagenge* is rapidly becoming a new core of political alliance, in both an old fashion and an innovative manner, while providing the women with the possibility of access to politics, on both local and national levels which formerly even the men could barely aspire to.

INTRODUCTION

1) Purpose and Scope

In recent years, the Women's Self-help Association Movement (*Maendeleo ya Wanawake* Movement)¹⁾ has been vibrantly active in each area and tribe of Kenya, and is becoming one of the important nuclei of the cultural changes that have accompanied the formation of the peoples and nation of Kenya, and the introduction of a capitalistic economy. Nevertheless, as far as I know, little or no research concerning this movement has appeared.

Based on materials from my own field work,²⁾ the purpose of this paper is to discuss, from the perspective of the political alliances that appear in this movement, the types of social and cultural changes that are now being created by the introduction and evolution of the Women's Self-help Association Movement in patrilineal Kipsigis society, a Kalenjin speaking people, who has traditionally limited political participation strictly to men.

2) Area and Method

Fieldwork was conducted from July 1979 to March 1980, and from August 1981 to January 1982 in the West Chepalungu Location, Chepalungu Division, Kericho District, Rift Valley Province in Kenya. During the first period I did research mainly in the Chepkalwal *kokwet* (Kip.)³⁾ of the Cheplelwo Sub-location; the second was spent in the Mosonik *kokwet*⁴⁾ of the Ndanai Sub-location. Each time, I "home-stayed", renting a hut and living as a member of a family. I tried to be

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- 1) A literal translation of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* Movement, which combines Swahili and English, would be "The Women's Progressive Movement". However, to clarify even further the nature of this movement, I have used the translation "Women's Self-help Association Movement". Also, I will use the abbreviated form (Sw.) to indicate if a word in the text below is in Swahili, which is used rather extensively in East Africa and is the "national language" of Kenya.
 - 2) My fieldwork was the second (1979-80) and third (1981-82) link in Hitotsubashi University's "A Comprehensive Research According to Ethnohistorical Techniques on the Composite Societies in the Circum-Lake Victoria Area" — a project carried out under the Japanese Ministry of Education's Grant-in-aid for Scientific Research Overseas (research representative, Professor Nobuhiro Nagashima, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo). My research on the Kipsigis was conducted alone. Though I did another fieldwork in the same area between 1983-84, the data are omitted here.
 - 3) I will use the abbreviated form (Kip.) to indicate when a word within the text below is in the Kipsigis language.

present at major events in both the Ndanai and the Cheplelwo Sub-locations as frequently as I could, and to take notes.

As control areas I chose the Tabarit *kokwet* of the Chepalungu Division,⁵⁾ the Marinyn *kokwet* and the Lelaitich *kokwet* of the Sot Division, and the Chillchilla *kokwet* of the Belgut Division, where I undertook several intensive investigations each lasting several days. I traveled extensively in the Kipsigis habitat, and also visited areas of Rift Valley Province, Kalenjin habitat, for comparative purposes.

I carried out my research in English and Swalili, and when necessary bungled along in Kipsigis. As assistants I usually hired three or four youths of some twenty years of age who had completed Form 4 at the Secondary School.⁶⁾

3) The Kipsigis people

(1) HISTORY AND MODERN CONDITIONS

The Kipsigis people, are the southernmost tribe among the various tribes of Kalenjin-speaking peoples who belong to the Southern Para-Nilotes together with such Maa-speaking peoples as the Masai.⁷⁾

At present, they inhabit mainly the entire Kericho District of Rift Valley Province as well as the area around the northern border of the Narok District, where the Masai dwell, which adjoins the Kericho District on the south. A population of 471, 459 (1969) makes the Kipsigis the largest tribe among the various groups of Kalenjin-speaking peoples.⁸⁾

The area inhabited by the Kipsigis tribe is a gently rolling plateau about 1600–2000 m above sea level, practically all of which is included in the area bounded by long. 35° 20' E and by the Equator and lat. 1° 10' S. A rainy season occurs twice a

4) This Mosonik *kokwet* is on the ex-Reserve side. There is also a Mosonik *kokwet* of the same name in the Settlement Scheme belonging to the Cheplelwo Sub-location, on the opposite side of Mosonik Hill. In the text I differentiate the two when necessary by using "Mosonik *kokwet* in the ex-Reserve" or "Mosonik *kokwet* in the settled area".

5) Administratively, the Kericho District is divided into five Divisions: from the north they are Kipkelion, Belgut, Bureti, Sot, and Chepalungu. However, in everyday life, people think of the Kipsigis habitat as being divided into the five areas of Belgut, Bureti, Sot, Chepalungu and Masai, the northern border area of the Narok District, which adjoins the Kericho District on the south.

6) Among my assistants, Augustine arap Ng'eno, a resident of Kamugeno *kokwet*, and Philip arap Ruto of Takitech *kokwet*, who is the eldest son of Keya Kipruto arap Chepkwony and the husband of Selina nebo Ruto, who are referred below in detail, made superior contributions to this paper.

7) Centering on the late 1940's and the 1950's, a political movement sprung up among those who had been called "Nandi-speaking Peoples" by the British colonial government. Through the course of this movement, the word "Kalenjin" was coined and stuck as a symbol of their political alliance — [cf. KIPKORIR and WERBOURN 1973; KIPKORIR 1979]. Yet, for example, just as the Kipsigis once called the bulk of these tribes by the word "the Miot", it seems that the people who are called "Kalenjin" today — at least one part of them — have since olden times seen them as a cultural and social entity.

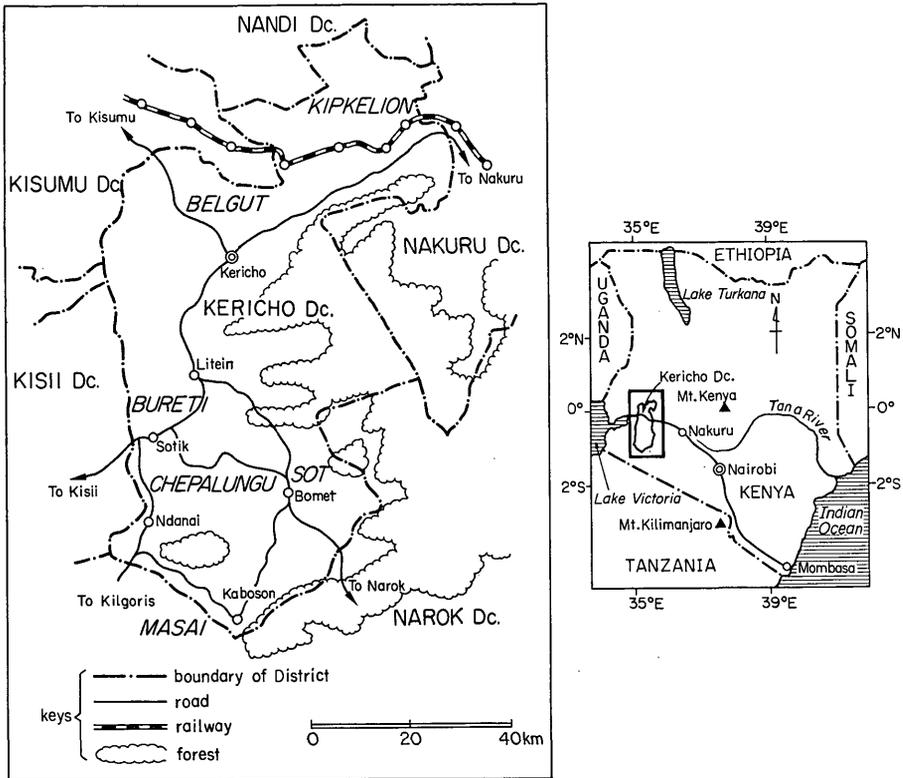


Fig. 1. A general map of the Kericho District.

year making this an area of Kenya blessed with an optimum precipitation. The yearly temperature fluctuation is negligible, yet since the diurnal fluctuation ranges from about 8° to 30°C ., this, rather, is a major weather factor.

The Kipsigis are a cattle raising people who traditionally carry out the extensive cultivation of eleusine and sorghum via the burned-field method of agriculture, and who systematically plundered the cattle of neighboring tribes. Historically, it is believed that they, along with various other Kalenjin-speaking peoples, came south as a small group from the vicinity of Lake Baringo, in the north, reaching the present habitat from the 17th to the 19th centuries. In due course, they drove away the

- 8) In the *Kenyan Population Census, 1979* the Kalenjin is treated as a single tribe and as the fifth largest tribe or ethnic group in Kenya, numbering 1,652,243. No "sub-tribe", which was treated as an independent tribe among the Kalenjin-speaking peoples up to the *Kenyan Population Census, 1969*, is named this time in the data. This may show that the Kalenjin phenomenon has been officially accepted. The Kalenjin in the Kericho District numbers 523,482 (1979). Nearly all of them are the Kipsigis. All-in-all, one can safely guess that the present population of the Kipsigis is not less than 600,000 although no authorized source is available.

Para-Nile-speaking Masai, the Bantu-speaking Gussii, and the Nile-speaking Luo peoples, and intermingling principally with the Gusii and the Ndorobo, a hunter-gatherer people who had dwelled there before, they continued to expand their power and formed the present-day Kipsigis tribe [HUNTINGFORD 1953], [LANG'AT 1969], [SUTTON 1973].

After that, mainly from about 1895 to 1905, they kept up small-scale resistance to the British colonial government but in the end were forced to submit. Over half their territory was taken as settlement areas for the whites.⁹⁾ Some who were loath to give in to the colonial government refused to pay taxes. They immigrated to pasturelands which they had shared with the Masai—this land today corresponds to the northernmost part of the Narok district¹⁰⁾—but many became squatters.

Owing to these kinds of changes in land-use conditions and in livelihood, and also, we may assume, because of the initial success of a maize-growing campaign begun by the British colonial government, the cultivation of maize rapidly gained popularity among the Kipsigis. Plowing was introduced around 1921; the enclosure of land commenced around 1930 and in the 1950's reached every corner of the territory, except for the Masai area.

After passing through these stages, the Kipsigis came to rely on the cultivation of maize and tea rather than on cattle raising for the main part of their livelihood.

An example of a cattle raising people who began to engage in sedentary agriculture, the Kipsigis were once called a model case of "modernization" in East Africa [MANNERS 1976].

Nevertheless, even today, with a cash economy rather deeply infiltrating everyday life, the Kipsigis regard themselves as a "cattle raising people". Cattle, as the core of linguistic, cultural, social and religious communication, are central to their values.¹¹⁾ Particularly in the realm of social exchange, cattle are an indispensable medium for building-up and maintaining important social relationships such as kinship, affinity,¹²⁾ friendship,¹³⁾ and the alliance relationships of one's descent group. And even today, the value that cattle possess goes beyond the mere value of exchange.

(2) SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Among the Kipsigis there are more than 200 exogamous clans as descent groups. Each of them divided into small scale sub-clans. But they do not form lineages,¹⁴⁾ and except for extremely exceptional cases, the sub-clans are not localized. Because

9) The Kipsigis people, among all the tribes of Kenya, had the greatest proportion of their land taken away by the white people [MANNERS 1976].

10) Thus, the Kipsigia popularly named the land they settled a "Masai" area.

11) Concerning the value of cattle in religious communication among the Kipsigis, see KOMMA, [KOMMA 1981: 106-107].

12) Today, the bridewealth is still paid mainly in cattle, along with several hundred to about three thousand Kenyan Shillings.

13) The cattle deposit system, called *kimanakta* (Kip.) or *kimanagan* (Kip.) is an important base for the formation, maintenance, and growth of friendships.

14) cf. EVANS-PRITCHARD, 1940, pp. 259-266.

clan members live scattered throughout the whole territory, it does not become a corporate group.¹⁵⁾ The clan is the unit which pays and receives the blood-price which accompanies a murder, but beyond this it has almost no legal function.

Traditionally, the Kipsigis, lacking a centralized power or authority such as a chief, were simply unified leniently on the basis of the political alliances of the 3 regions of Belgut, Bureti, and Sot.¹⁶⁾ However, through the course of colonial management, a consciousness of themselves as one tribe was fostered and at the present time, an administrative chief system is functioning effectively.

An age system compounded of 7 age-sets with fixed names, which are all in existence at the same time and work in a recurring cycle, and the 3 age-grades of elders, warriors, and boys has formed not only all across the Kipsigis territory but also occurs in common among almost all Kalenjin-speaking peoples. This age system is the foundation for political organizations and social etiquette in the Kipsigis tribe. Basically, four regiment-like groups (*Kip. boriet*) based on patrilineal descent were organized throughout the land independently of other social systems. However, nowadays they are almost totally devoid of military character and they content themselves with nothing more than a religious function in ceremonies.¹⁷⁾

(3) FAMILY AND *KOKWET*

Among the Kipsigis the conjugal locality is, as a rule, neolocal. Also, each wife of a polygynous family has an independent household separated by a considerable geographic distance. Even at present it is not uncommon to find each wife's house separated by dozens of kilometers. Nowadays, owing to land scarcity although there is a tendency for close paternal kin and a man's wives to live nearby in general neither kin nor family form a localized corporated group. For this reason, in everyday life mutual aid depends mainly on a neighborhood group, called the *kokwet*. In the Kipsigis tribe, when compared to the *kokwet*, neither clan nor kin, family or affines are politically important. Because it is extremely important as a basis for understanding

- 15) There is moderate localization in certain sub-clans of some small clans that dwell in the southern portion of Sot, and that trace their origin to the Gusii tribe.
- 16) At the beginning of colonial administration, the people of these three areas were often treated as separate tribes. A case in point is 1905, at the time of the final subjection of the Kipsigis people. The British colonial government asked the Belgut and the Bureti whether they recognized the Sot as Kipsigis and asked them to decide whether they would receive common chastisement. The story has been handed down that the Belgut and the Bureti convened and decided that they recognized the Sot as Kipsigis and would all submit to their punishment collectively.
- 17) Manners [MANNERS 1967: 248] predicts that there is likely to be an intensification in the near future of the historical conflict between both of the "moieties" that resulted from each of the pairs of former regiment-like groups, and also that beyond this seeming paradox, new leaders and groupings from the regiment-like group organization are likely to appear who will refine the political consciousness of the Kipsigis tribe and effectively cause the realization of participation in national politics. However, the reality is that by only one-sidedly reducing the significance of existence, the regiment-like groups had absolutely no relationship to the process of political re-organization.

the political structure of the Kipsigis tribe, and consequently for the development of this paper, I will discuss the *kokwet* in considerable detail.

The territory of the Kipsigis is characterized by considerable variety of climate, topography and flora. Settlement patterns are not necessarily definite yet everywhere a *kokwet* exists as a corporate entity relating equally to the entire spectrum of everyday human life from agricultural matters to the borrowing and lending of fire, water, food, and cash.

The *kokwet* has no direct relationship to the geographical unit (Kip. *koret*) which is demarcated by natural features such as rivers or mountain ridges. It is a social unit created by the ease of human communication. Until the idea of the individual ownership of land became wide-spread—at least until the 1930's—the common farming lands for each year were established where fenced through consultation within the *kokwet*. The *kokwet* managed as common property the pasture, watering places, salt-lick, and forests and fields from which were taken firewood and thatching grass respectively. Individual usufruct to farming lands also reverted to the *kokwet* if their cultivation was abandoned.

Houses with small vegetable gardens occur widely scattered within the district; they do not form nucleated settlement. Today, a *kokwet* in an area the size of one to several square kilometers may include ten to 100 households. In general, the area of a *kokwet* is large and the number of houses few in the Settlement area, where the area of land owned by one house is large, compared to the ex-Kipsigis Reserve.

Among the Kipsigis, the *kokwet* and not the clan has an important legal function. That is, there is within the *kokwet* a council, organized by adult males, that may meet whenever required, not only to arbitrate disputes but also to discuss all important matters such as measures to counter natural calamities, searches for the cause of a certain family's continuing misfortunes, or matters relating to the administration of the area. The *kokwet* council itself is also called *kokwet*.

There is an important office within the *kokwet*, called the "village elder" (Kip. *boiyotap kokwet*) or "village leader" (Kip. *kiptaiyatap kokwet*)¹⁸. The senior "village elder" is usually chosen from the eldest age-set, and his next-in-rank, the junior "village elder" form the second eldest one. Their positions are honorary and they are not paid. Before a dispute is appealed to the *kokwet* council, it is always brought before the "village elders" who take great pains to listen to the defense of both parties over a long period of time, and to mediate between them. Formerly, if a quarrel appealed difficult for the council to resolve an advisory judge (Kip. *kirwogindet*) was welcomed from outside the *kokwet*. When the "ruling" was handed down—or when a statement of public agreement was made—an ox, ram or he-goat provided by the defeated party would be feasted upon by the entire group at that time.

There were also occasions when the case was concluded not by a "ruling" but rather with an "oath-taking" (Kip. *mumek*) by both parties involved. When the communal feast or "oath-taking" is carried out and the affair completely settled,

18) Nowadays it is also called *komiti* (Kip.) from the English word "committee".

anybody who thereafter voices a complaint or an objection is considered akin to a witch, and receives a communal curse (Kip. *chubisiet*). Nowadays, the role of advisory judge is taken instead by an assistant chief appointed by the Kenyan Government,¹⁹⁾ and instead of the communal feast of traditional meats, factory-made beer is imbibed by all.

However, at present, when the judgement of the *kokwet* is prolonged, often a highly popular senior elder of village from another *kokwet* is invited to fulfil a role like the erstwhile advisory judge. In this case, the assistant chief entrusts the actual role of chairman of the hearing to the senior elder of the other *kokwet*.

Formerly, in order to be admitted to a certain *kokwet*, one had to stand before it and obtain its approval. But acceptance was routine, apart from persons with a very bad reputation. A *kokwet* is composed of members of various families, clans, sub-clans, regiment-like groups, age-sets, and from areas. It has a relatively high fluidity.

The special features of the Kipsigis tribe's judicial ruling to summarize are

1. That it is based on the individual; and
2. That it respects public opinion and compromise and therefore takes a long time to give a decision [SALTMAN 1977].

Nowadays, the *kokwet* council is incorporated effectively as an extremity of the national court system. At least for civil affairs if a suit does not pass through the *kokwet* council, the Magistrate Court will not take it up.

The *kokwet*, among various social organizations, is the most important structural factor of the social unity of the Kipsigis people, not only in an age in which the warriors grazed the cattle in distant pasture while they drove away the Masai, the Gusii or the Luo; not only an age in which the entire tribe was expanding its territory and population while ceaselessly migrating and dispersing, but also at the present with economic priorities shifting to permanent residence and agriculture production rather than cattle grazing.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE WOMEN'S SELF-HELP ASSOCIATION MOVEMENT

1) The Development of the Women's Self-help Association Movement in Kenya, and its introduction to the Kipsigis

In Kenya, the Women's Self-help Association Movement was formed in 1952 as an apolitical voluntary association with the objectives of improving the enlightenment, welfare, and social status of women and of promoting economic self-reliance, among other things. Cooperating with various agencies and liaisons of the Kenyan

19) Nowadays, the administrative assistant chief is called a "junior judge" (Kip. *kirwogindet neming'in*), and the chief is called a "senior judge" (Kip. *kirwogindet neo*). Peristiany mentions the advisory judge's Kipsigis name as *kiruogindet neo* (1939, pp. 179-183 *et al.*). Without any explanation, he seems to use *kiruogindet* synonymously however, as the title of the role at that time, *kirwogindet* is correct; *kirwogindet neo* is nothing more than a specially respectful title for the advisory judge.

Government, the association is active in many fields like offering guidance in adult-literacy campaign, handicrafts, housekeeping, farming, rearing of infants, or the establishment of nursery schools. It devotes a great deal of effort, in particular, to the instruction of women in rural areas. There is a branch in each Province and in each District an office has been set up. With the District chairwoman as the central figure, several housewives are voluntarily active guiding the association in outlying areas. According to the report of the main office, in Nairobi, at present, several thousand local associations have been organized and over 100,000 people are developing these activities as a grass-roots movement in nationwide. As an economic strategy, the members are amassing capital in each local association and at the same time are renting or buying land and collectively managing farms, poultry farms, apiaries, and other enterprises. Eventually they may set up a shop, flour mill, or bakery in the marketplace and while engaged in its management work toward urging the future self-sufficiency of each person.

In the Kericho District this movement was first accepted in the 1950's, in centrally situated Bureti, among the five administrative Divisions. Within the Kericho District, which is a center of tea cultivation, this area has land most suited for tea cultivation. It is also an area where whites settled the earliest and where Protestantism first spread. The Roman Catholic Church later appeared and flourished, yet even today, Protestantism is more firmly rooted here than anywhere else in the District. Incomes are relatively high per household, and the rate of school attendance is the highest within the District. The Women's Self-help Association Movement first took shape as a lifestyle improvement movement. It centered on housewives belonging to each Protestant sect including the AGC²⁰⁾, who were happy to have even one plastic or enamel dish or one metal pot.

At present, the Protestants are tending to organize a Women's Self-help Association Movement in each sect. Noticeable in markets everywhere today are signs proclaiming the "so-and-so Women's Self-help Association Store". Associations have also appeared to manage large-scale farms, conclude monopoly contracts to deliver farm products to a school or a hospital affiliated with a church, purchase tractors or provide a nonregular bus service.

The Chepalungu Division, where I did intensive fieldwork, is situated in the southwest corner of the Kericho District and adjoins Kisii District, Nyanza Province and Narok District, Rift Valley Province. Chepalungu is an area where thick woodlands have been rapidly cleared for agriculture and cattle grazing. Yet compared to Belgut in the north, Bureti in the center, and the northern section of Sot, the land is rather arid. Soils are also unsuitable for tea cultivation. Though people resettled here comparatively recently, this region, along with the so-called Masai area, retains a traditional lifestyle and is considered backward.²¹⁾

20) An abbreviation for the African Gospel Church, a league of Protestant missionary sects which came from the southern United States. It is also called AGM (African Gospel Mission).

The introduction of the Women's Self-help Association Movement was also quite late here compared to other areas of the Kericho District.²²⁾ It was introduced to the chepalungu area in 1976. The Koptige Women's Self-help Association was established soon after. This was the first local association in Chepalungu.²³⁾

2) Acceptance of the Women's Self-help Association Movement by the Kipsigis

Among the Kipsigis, the Women's Self-help Association Movement is rarely called by its Swahili name *Chama cha Wanawake*,²⁴⁾ or *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*.²⁵⁾ It is occasionally referred to as simply *Maendeleo* (Sw.),²⁶⁾ but is usually called *Kipagenge* in the Kipsigis tongue.²⁷⁾

Among the Kipsigis a network of many kinds of cooperative work and more than ten varieties of mutually assistant systems to raise money for living expenses and to exchange donation are formed along traditional lines. These systems differ from each other in their objectives, age and sex of the participants, geographical spread, and contents and method of paying a reward to the participants.

The Kipsigis word "*kipageng*" originally meant working together and helping each other in a spirit of unity, but recently it is almost always used to indicate the Women's Self-help Association and its goals or activities.²⁸⁾ It is noteworthy that, among the Kipsigis, the cultural and social side of the Women's Self-help Association—adult literacy campaign and adult education, improvements in cultural education and welfare—, has been almost completely discarded, and economic independence for women, instead, has come to be stressed exclusively. This tendency is particularly remarkable in the Chepalungu area. If we look at the background of the Women's Self-help Association Movement we can see that it was accepted widely and with

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- 21) The people of Kericho Township laugh and say, "You can tell someone is from Chepalungu by looking at his legs. He'll be barefooted and his legs splattered with black soil". In 1937, the Chepalungu area ceded from the Masai settlement lands and was attached to Kipsigis tribal lands. However, the white people moved in and drove the Kipsigis away very early in the 20th century. Before that, it had already been a Kipsigis zone.
- 22) Outside of Chepalungu the movement was introduced latest in Sot. In 1962 a deliberation of Women's Self-help Association (*Maendeleo ya Wanawake*) Movement was held at Location 4, in which was discussed the study tour of a group of housewives to other more progressive areas. 150 Kenyan shillings from the Location 4 General Fund were offered to meet their expenses for the trip [KORIR 1974: 171-172].
- 23) Private information from Martha nebo Maseti, chieftain of Kericho District, and Elizabeth nebo Koirotwet, who was one of the important founding members of the Koptige Association.
- 24) A literal translation would be "Women's Association".
- 25) Refer to footnote 1).
- 26) Lit. "Progress".
- 27) Lit. "Unity".
- 28) In the present, the use of the word *kipagenge* to point out the various kinds of traditional cooperative work and labor exchange that I will discuss later on, has almost disappeared.

comparative ease and has been actively developing among the Kipsigis. Perhaps, it has been so easy because when it was first introduced to the Kipsigis it was translated as *kipagenge* and was generally recognized as a new variation of the traditional concept of *kipagenge* that is mutual aid and cooperative work.

Actually, this is not a mere etymological hypothesis but historical fact. Around 1970, several pamphlets, written by a few male volunteers broadly explaining the importance of *kipagenge* as local cooperative work, were published in the Kipsigis language. The most famous among these is *Unity (Kipagenge) is Wealth*²⁹⁾ by late W.K. arap Laboso, one of the most beloved of the male folksingers who sang of various things in the Kipsigis language. In the pamphlet, W.K. arap Laboso mentions many proverbs, and inserting parables as Kipsigis intellectuals usually do, fervently recounts the following. In Kalenjin society since the beginning, people have always stood together no matter what happened. This was the usual practice and selfish, uncooperative people were always ejected from the local collective group. Despite this, at present, suspicion and jealousy have divided men's hearts, which is why the people of Africa, including the Kalenjin, have fallen way behind the world. Now, more than ever, rich and poor must unite in each locality and get on with the work of building society, rather just trying to make money.

At present, somehow it is generally believed that this kind of booklet of W.K. arap Laboso's was expounding the need for a Women's Self-help Association Movement. However, as a faithful reading of the original text will show, he, like the other writers of these pamphlets was not necessarily limiting the use of the word *kipagenge*—as it is generally used today—to the Women's Self-help Association Movement. An appropriate interpretation is that he was advocating not the need for a voluntary association which does not necessarily attach importance to locality, like the Women's Self-help Association Movement (*kipagenge*), but rather a need for cooperative work (*kipagenge*) based on the collective solidarity of one entire locality.

I think that W.K. arap Laboso, while aware that a flourishing and active Women's Self-help Association Movement was developing, was trying to rather abstractly explain from a political point of view, and as a kind of slogan, that not only women but the district as a whole should, based on the traditional paradigm of *kipagenge*, unite to build a society through the course of actual circumstances in post-independent Kenya, particularly the so-called "Kalenjin phenomenon" and that this unity would work in order to actualize the ideology of so-called African socialism. There is a need, he said, to re-appreciate the fact that the society and culture of not only the Kipsigis, but also of the Kalenjin-speaking peoples possess the perfect foundation and groundwork to achieve these ends, which is why the Kipsigis people should unite. Thus we see that the word *kipagenge* was used with limitless scope and flexibility as a key word of his political *écriture*.

From W.K. arap Laboso's writing itself and from a general appraisal of his work,

29) *Unity is Wealth* is my tentative English translation of the original title *Kipagenge ko Borotet*. I read not the printed pamphlet, but a handwritten copy by Samuel Kipkemboi arap Ruto, who lives in Cheplelwo Sub-location, West Chepalungu Location.

there is never a clear consciousness of objective grasp of the differences and similarities between *kipagenge* —as the Women's Self-help Association Movement, which confronting the rapid infiltration of a cash economy in local society works towards economic self-reliance for women and is organized as a voluntary association similar to a, shall we say, business enterprise— and the *kipagenge* which points to the various traditional forms of mutual aid and cooperative work in local society. We can surmise that although the Kipsigis people, through the process of accepting and developing the Women's Self-help Association Movement, grasped both rather vaguely and unclearly as *kipagenge* in word and concept, they are trying to cope with present societal changes through the model of the traditional ideology of *kipagenge* for the time being. It now remains for us to investigate how the traditional local systems of cooperative work and mutual aid overlap with the Women's Self-help Association Movement, as well as how they differ from each other.

2. THE VARIOUS FORMS OF LOCAL COOPERATIVE WORK AND MUTUAL AID

1) The various forms of labor exchange

The following types of labor exchange —cooperative work and mutual aid— are most in accordance with tradition.

(1) *MORIK* (Kip.)³⁰⁾

This is the smallest unit of labor exchange formed within a *kokwet*. There are several varieties and modes.

The most fundamental of these is formed by the housewives of from several to 20 or 30 households to perform a fixed amount of work, such as preparing the field, sowing, weeding, harvesting, or other farming tasks, in a set time. That is to say, the portion of land that each individual is to sow or weed is decided by a comparatively short rope of a standard length that has been prepared in advance, thus dividing the amount of labor equally.

The women's *morik* for farm work is basically formed and maintained as a constant unit of cooperative work in each of the small areas (Kip. *temetap kokwet*)³¹⁾ that are divided up mainly according to topography. However, as the population increased commonage disappeared and it reached the point where each family's land abutted against another's. The territory of each *kokwet* was narrowed until its members were face-to-face. Although it still depends to a certain extent on localness, there is a tendency for the *morik* to rearrange itself within the year, taking the cue from relationships with kin, affines, and friends, and actual circumstances of the personnel and labor available in each family.

As we will see later from the example of the Kamugeno *kokwet*, along the borders of the *kokwet*, there may be families who even participate in the *morik* of neighboring

30) *Morik* is the plural of *mortet*, i. e. a husk, a pod, a boll of grains and fruits. *Morik* also means the scorched part of *kimiyet*, an extremely stiff porridge.

31) Lit. "branch of *kokwet*".

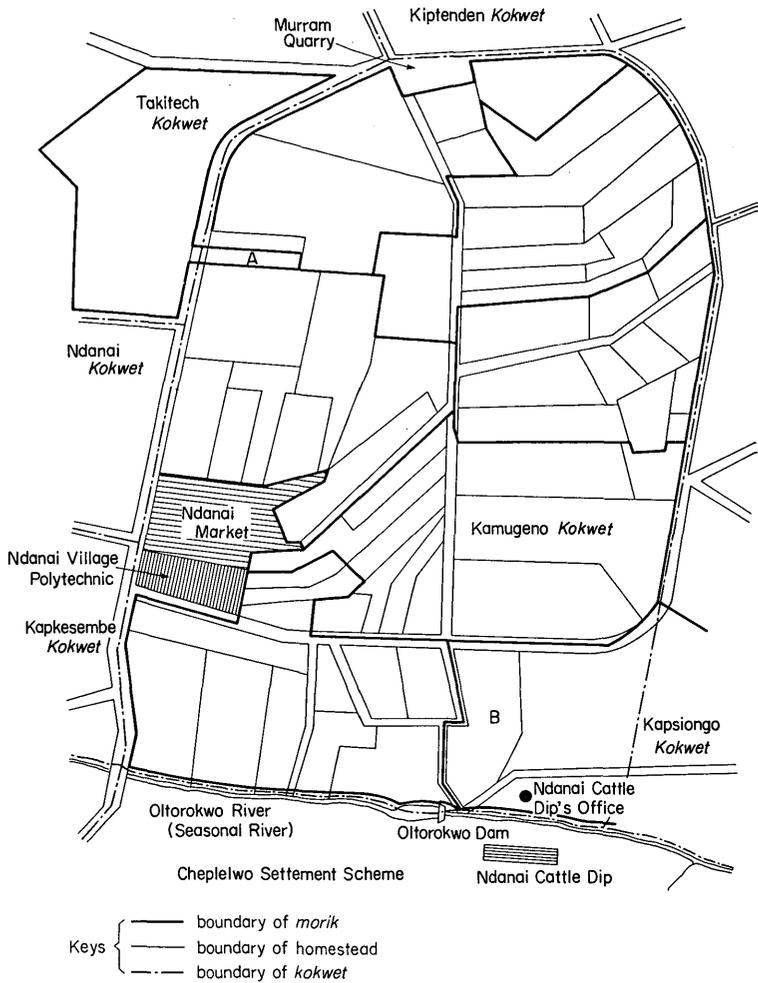


Fig. 2. Women's basic *morik* in Kamugeno *kokwet* (1981).

kokwet instead of their own *kokwet's morik*.

The women's *morik* for farm work is indispensable for accomplishing each family's farm tasks, however, besides this, the women have formed other kinds of *morik* with particular objectives. For example, among families where a son or daughter will undergo initiation ceremonies that year, a *morik* collectively to take care of a variety of preparations, including gathering the huge amounts of firewood

32) At present, by governmental order, the period of performing the sequence of initiation ceremonies, which used to last 2-3 years, has been shortened to about one and half a months. In recent years, the initiation ceremonies are carried out every year, which is innovative, but initiation ceremonies which include over half Christians, along with non-Christians, are still matters of serious concern in tribal life, and in every aspect of social life as before.

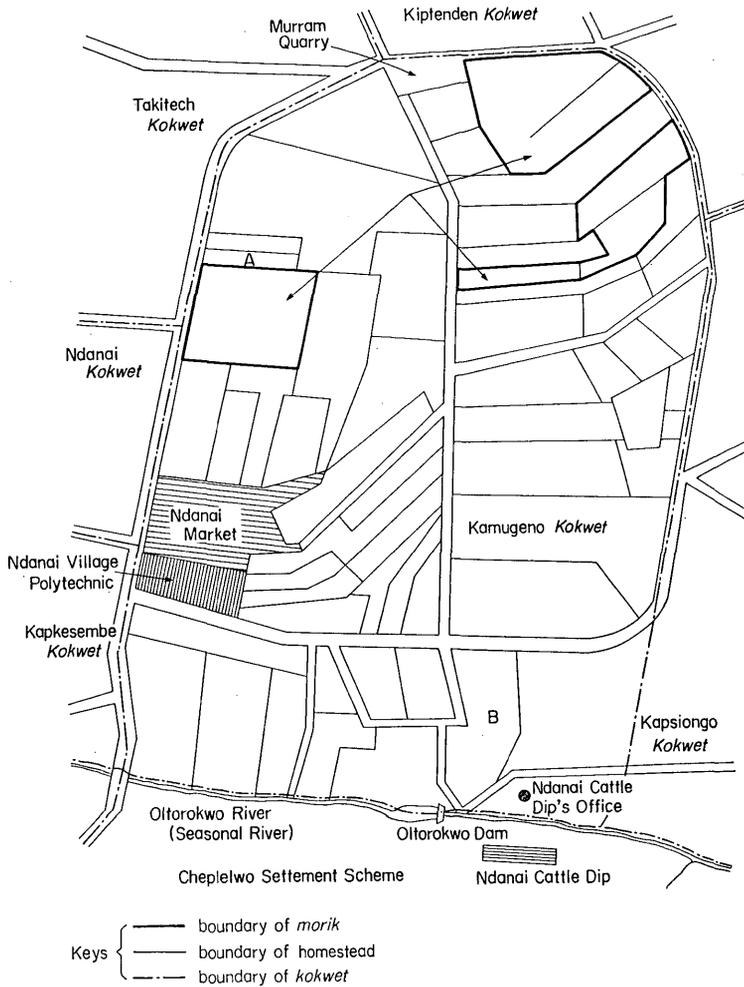


Fig. 3. Women's *morik* for the initiation ceremonies in Kamugeno *kokwet* (1981).

needed during the initiation period will be formed.³²⁾ There is also a *morik* which searches for honey. Children are an important part of the labor force not only in the Kipsigis tribe but also throughout East African tribal societies. Primary school students usually attend the school nearest their homes.³³⁾ The primary school pupils

33. In the Kenyan educational system, Standard 1-7 is primary school; however outside of several big cities, in general, the age for attending school is high and advancement slow because of a variety of circumstances. There are many who are in their late teens when they finish Standard 7. Secondary school is Form 1-4. Competition for admission has become keener year by year, in proportion to the dearth of schools and the relative fall in opportunities for employment. Schools accept students depending on their results in the nationwide examination for the CPK (Certificate of Primary Education) which is administered upon graduation from primary school. Swayed by the policies of these schools, the students usually leave their parental homes and live in dormitories or boarding houses.

within a single *kokwet* usually organize nearly the same number of *morik* as women's basic *morik* for farm work. The primary school pupils' *morik* also depends to a certain extent on localness, however since its scope changes from year to year, it does not always overlap the women's basic *morik*.³⁴⁾

If the family of a *morik* member gets by without having to ask for help from the *morik*, she (or he) may lend or sell the labor apportioned to her (his) own household to another member. The whole system acts like a check and balance on the number of each family's participants in a *morik* or the amount of labor allotted to the family by the *morik*. Plural *morik* are sometimes combined in to a group.³⁵⁾

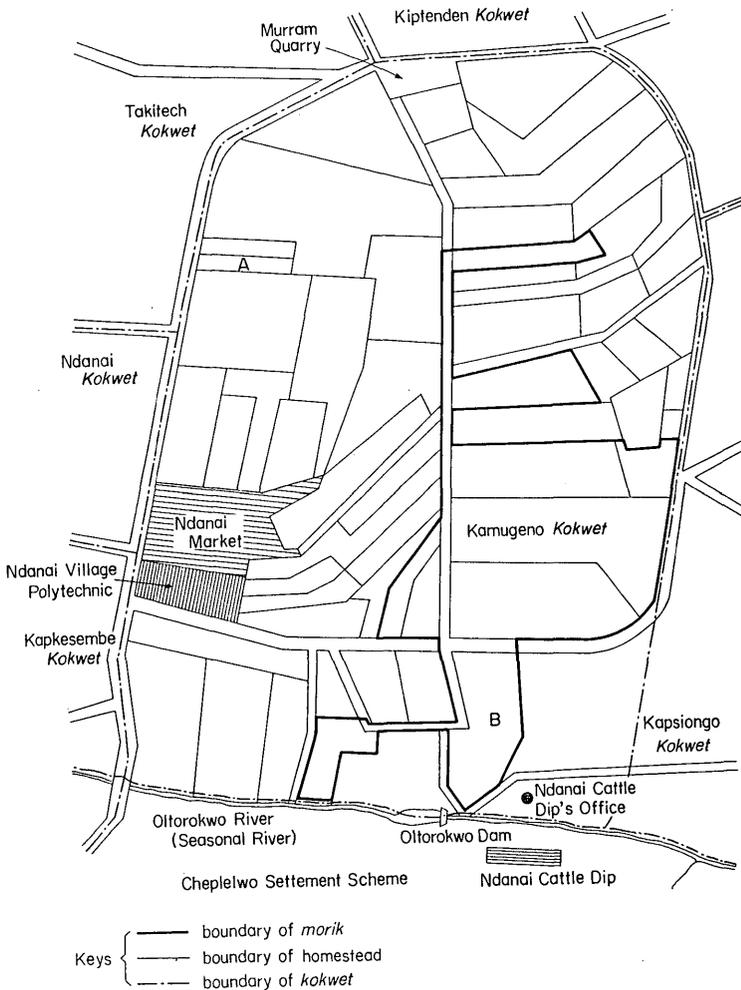


Fig. 4. Primary school pupils' *morik* in Kamugeno *kokwet* (1980).

34) In Kipsigis society, where age set is an important basis of social etiquette and political structure, children also have a world of their own which to a certain extent maintains itself apart from that of adults.

35) cf. *konobeiywek* (*bide infra*.)

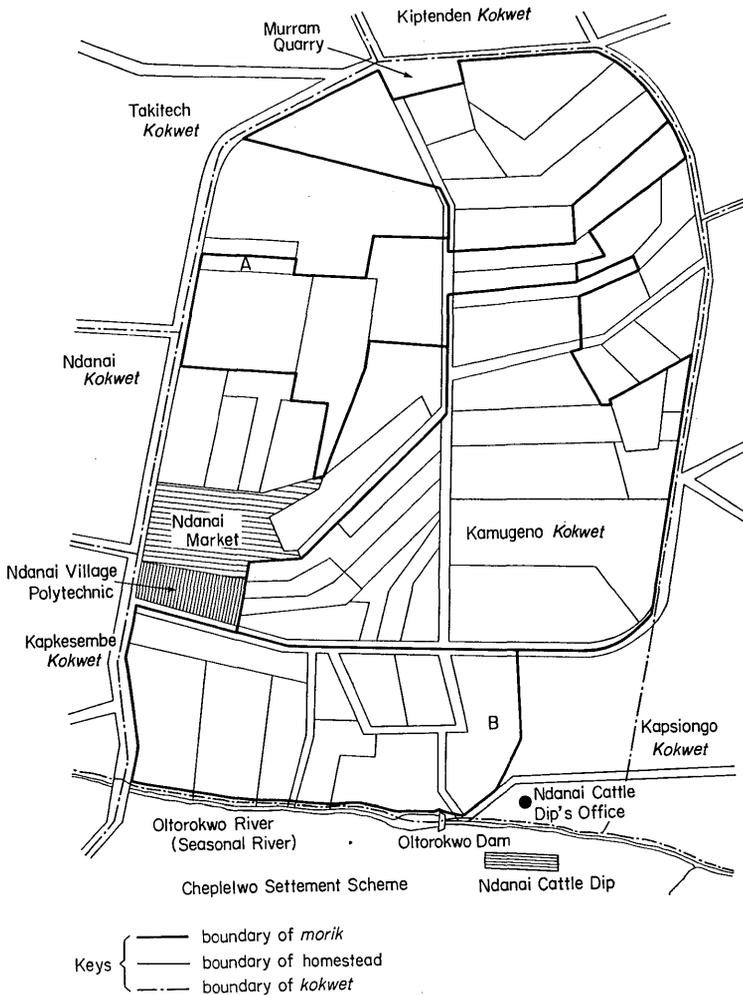


Fig. 5. Primary school pupils' morik in Kamugeno kokwet (1981).

Next, I will attempt to show with maps how the *morik* is actually organized in each area within the *kokwet* (Fig. 2-5). I take as an example Kamugeno *kokwet* in the Ndanai Sub-location of West Chepalungu Location.

In 1981 in Kamugeno *kokwet*, the housewives formed —besides the six basic *morik* for farm work— a *morik* for taking care of the initiation preparation. The primary school pupils founded only one *morik* in 1980, but in 1981 formed four which practically cover the entire location.

These diagrams illustrate two irregular cases. First of all, in 1981, Family A of the Kamugeno *kokwet* border belonged to the primary school pupils' *morik* of Kamugeno *kokwet*. However, the wife participated not in the housewives' basic *morik* of Kamugeno *kokwet* but in the *morik* of neighboring Takitech *kokwet*. Also, in Family B, although the children belonged to the primary school pupils' *morik*

of Kamugeno *kokwet* in 1980 and in 1981, the wife belonged to the housewives' basic *morik* in neighboring Kapsiongo *kokwet*.

(2) *KOKWET*

The type of cooperative work in which all families of a *kokwet*—i.e. the most fundamental and important social unit of Kipsigis society—partake is also called *kokwet*. A certain family within the *kokwet* asks the cooperation of all the member families whenever necessary, for a variety of matters, such as cultivating new land, constructing pond, building or repairing a house, or tilling—and mostly plowing field.³⁶⁾

The *kokwet* is basically thought of as a male domain,³⁷⁾ however, women take part in the some type of *kokwet* work like housebuilding, but they work in accordance with the traditional sexual division of labor. Unlike the *morik*, the amount of work is not fixed, and also, the compensation for the work is actualized through a rather lengthy process.

Uncooperative houses are punished by having the other households refuse to help them. Also, participation in the cooperative work *kokwet* is strictly limited to the *kokwet* members of the locality *kokwet*.³⁸⁾ Upon completion of the work, traditional beer is brewed to reward the participants.³⁹⁾ This beer is also called "*kokwet*".

(3) *KONOBEIYWEK* (Kip.)⁴⁰⁾

This is carried out by all households in a *kokwet* as a local unit. Only women participate. The work, as in the housewives' basic *morik*, covers the entire range of agricultural tasks. As in the *morik*, the amount each person must perform is decided by a rope prepared in advance. However, compared to the *morik*, the work load is

36) The *kokwet* is a unit which offers mutual aid in all areas of everyday life such as, nursing the sick, helping with child care, or lending and borrowing of food, water, or fire. However, any mutual aid which takes place personally between *kokwet* members is not termed *kokwet*.

37) The *kok* is the indefinite form of *kokwet*—which may indicate a neighborhood organization, a neighborhood organization's council of adult males, the type of the most fundamental cooperative work, or the local beer brewed as a reward for the cooperative work (i.e. *kokwet*)—also means "east side of the front garden of the main house within a homestead." The stem *kok* connotes a composite of the concepts of man, east, and cattle [KOMMA *op. cit.*].

38) During my fieldwork, the following incident took place. A certain family of Takitech *kokwet* requested the collective work of the *kokwet* in order to build a pond on their land. The men of neighboring Kamugeno *kokwet* who had not had the chance to drink beer in quite a while, heard about the request, and sit out to help, not taking seriously the fact that their cooperation could ever be rejected since digging a pond is such back-breaking labor. However, they were bluntly rebuffed and chased back to their own territory.

39) However, in Protestant homes, they are entertained with tea and a meal instead of beer.

40) Lit. "lift up". *Isasamet* is another name for it and means "grouping up (of *morik*)".

quite large. Whereas a *morik* finished in 2–3 hours, the *konobeiywek* often lasts the whole day. No reward is needed.

(4) *KIPKOLOIT* (Kip.)⁴¹⁾

Cooperative work requested in times of such poverty and distress that it is not possible to prepare the beer that must be offered to the participants as a reward or gift of appreciation immediately after the work is completed. Once again, the work is mainly agricultural. In the case of *kipkoloit*, participation is not restricted only to the *kokwet* members. Even volunteers from a neighboring *kokwet* may take part. The remunerative gift of beer is brewed later, even within 2–3 years. Only those who helped out need be invited and entertained.

If a person moves far away and is thus unable to partake of the beer reward after having participated in the cooperative work of the *morik*, *kokwet*, *konobeiywek*, or *kipkoloit*, his drinking rights may be transferred optionally to another person. It was once customary for the person taking over these rights to express his appreciation for this favor by fashioning and presenting as a gift, a straw made from the long stalk of a certain plant, with a very little basket at the tip to be used for sipping the beer. However, nowadays, usually a gift of several Kenyan shillings is presented instead.⁴²⁾

(5) *SAISET* (Kip.)

This is cooperative work requested from a nearby *kokwet* when a huge rainfall is predicted before the grain can be completely taken in; when a household member becomes ill and the grain can not be harvested on time; or when, for whatever reason, help can no longer be requested within the *kokwet*.⁴³⁾

In olden days, a single ostrich feather was plucked from a headdress used in battle and dispatched to the other *kokwet*. This action was an imitation of the stylized action taken when, defeated by the Masai tribe in battle, one pleaded for one's life, and is a symbol of surrender and an appeal for mercy.⁴⁴⁾

When the women initiated a request for *saiset* they would send a *legetiet*, the leather belt which is wrapped around the belly immediately after childbirth, to a nearby *kokwet*. Each time a woman gave birth, she cuts a notch in her belt to represent her newborn child. If her son sets out on a long journey because of a raiding or some other reason, she would wrap a small strip of leather over the notch that she cut for that child immediately after his birth. This action is one kind of prayer for

41) The significance of the word "*kipkoloit*" is unclear. *Kipkoloit* with the same spelling but a different tone means a groundsel (*sencio vulgaris*). Since the groundsel is a plant that commonly appears in wild fields or in fields where maize was recently harvested, perhaps it means "cooperative work requested when times are so bad that the thank-you beer can not be brewed right away and when the crop is so bad that the groundsels cover the fields". However, this is strictly nothing more than my own speculation.

42) At present, one Kenyan shilling equals almost 17–20 yen.

43) *Saiset* means peace-making, or "appeasement".

44) Besides this, other rules of sanctuary existed between the Kipsigis and the Masai. On the other hand, absolutely none of these kinds of rules existed between the Kipsigis and the Gusii or the Luo.

safety—that is, *saiset*. Purposely sending a *legetiet* belt to another *kokwet* symbolizes the sad plight of having no children to care for oneself—and consequently, no need to wrap a leather strip over a notch on the *legetiet* belt.

Receiving a plea for *saiset*, the traditional scene would be to form a procession of willing youth, being accompanied by boys and girls, in each *kokwet*, and to descend wildly onto the field of the clientel or the defeated blowing all the while on the battle horn of a greater kudu.⁴⁵⁾ All at once, they would whip through the harvesting work like a whirlwind, and leave as soon as it was finished. During all this, the people who had asked for the help, would always hide themselves.

Nowadays, instead of an ostrich feather plucked from a headdress or a *legetiet* belt, *saiset* is always requested by sending letter⁴⁶⁾ as a sign of “surrender”. There is no need for thank-you gifts or compensation for *saiset*. It is thought dishonorable to appeal for *saiset*.⁴⁷⁾

2) Fund-raising and donation exchange

Besides the cooperative work based on the kinds of labor exchanges mentioned above, the following kinds of fund-raising and donation exchanges are actively carried out in everyday life among the Kipsigis.

(1) TORETET (Kip.)

In general, the custom of holding a small beer party and receiving a small contribution from the guests to meet living expense is called *toretet*.⁴⁸⁾ Sometimes in a *toretet*, daily necessities offered by friends or acquaintances at cost price are sold at a reasonable price for a profit. There may also be a very low-priced lottery with prizes of such small goods as soap and cooking oil.

Traditionally, on occasions when beer is brewed and the assistance of people requested, including the aforementioned *kokwet*, *konobeiywek* and *kipkoloit*, it is the usual practice to report it to the *boiyotap kokwet* and to seek his approval. When the *boiyotap kokwet* receives the notice, he arranges the daily schedule of cooperative work and the beer party lest two cooperative works or two beer parties should coincide, and at the same time, in most cases, he is invited to the beer party as the

45) Reaching the edge of the field, a strongest young man tried to throw a club as far as possible. They then started harvesting the crop up to the point where the club was to be found.

46) It is necessary to send the letter even to illiterates. The contents merely inform about the date and time of the *saiset*; even the sentences stereotyped. Scrap paper is often used and it is delivered by hand.

47) The wife of one of my acquaintances who lives in Kiptenden *kokwet*, Ndanai Sub-location, was sick one year and reached the point where she could not ask for any more cooperative work for the harvest. Although rain was predicted, her husband harvested the entire eleusine crop from start to finish all by himself. Later on, he proudly started calling himself General *Malulbai*. *Malulbai* means “the one who did not allow the eleusine to rot”. We can notice here as well, an analogy between farm work and battle.

48) A translation of *toretet* would be “help”.

person in charge. He will sit just east of the entrance within the house chosen for the meeting and is in charge of keeping the meeting orderly and quiet. If the *boiyot ap kokwet* does not attend, the head of the household, or the head elder from the clan of the household becomes the person in charge, and aims at maintaining order at the beer party. The person in charge may order any drunkard or clearly disruptive person out of the room. Usually, one of the participants will advise the retirement of a noisy boisterous person or he who trifles with improper speech or conduct before the person in charge orders him out of the meeting place. When someone proposes the withdrawal of an offensive person, he first of all, donates a small sum of about 2–3 Kenyan shillings, states his reasons for the proposal, and asks for endorsement. If someone agrees with the proposal he will donate a little cash regardless of the sum and back the sponsor of the proposal. Those who disapprove of the proposal must speak out donating a sum of money that must exceed even only barely the amount donated by the sponsor of the proposal. That is to say, when he—aside from a secondary supporter— attempts to differ with the opinion stated before, he will not be entitled to speaking rights unless he donates a sum even if only slightly larger than that of the proponent. Getting “the hang of it”, the people stand one by one and clearly state their views. After all who so desire have had their say, the amounts of money that were thrown in for and against are totaled respectively, and a decision is handed down in favor of the side that has the most money. The money which is invested in this kind of “oratorical contest” is also added to the fund-raising money.

Nowadays, the *boiyotap kokwet* needs to get the approval of the Location chief as well, when a *toretet* is held, but since this is an extreme formality, approval is routinely granted. The function of the *boiyotap kokwet*, in the role of modulator, is retained today as it was in the past.

Toretet includes those function with specific names such as “Tea party for a child”⁴⁹⁾ to fund the care of a child, “Tea party of a school pupil”⁵⁰⁾ to fund tuition for a term, or “Opening a house”⁵¹⁾ to help the construction of a new domicile after marriage. Provisions for hospital expenses and medical treatment, procurement of funds to assist a widow or a divorced woman and other drives carried out for a variety of goals are also all known by the general term *toretet*.

At a *toretet* gathering, phonograph records are played and there is dancing within the narrow confines of the house. The men donate about 5–20 Kenyan shil-

49) The direct translation of *chaikap lakwet* (Kip.) is “tea of a child”. In olden days, it used to be called *maiwekap lakwet* (Kip. lit. beer of a child) but since the Kenyan Government has adopted a policy of strongly restraining the drinking of liquor—especially locally brewed beer—the expression “tea party for —” has come to be used even if it actually is a beer party. Incidentally, the Protestants actually do serve tea, which result in a comparatively small turnout at their *toretet*. *Kokotietap lakwet* (greeting a child) is another name for *chaikap lakwet*.

50) The original words *chaikap lakwetap sukul* (Kip.) would be literally translated as “tea of a school pupil”.

51) Literal translation of *yatetap kot* (Kip).

lings, and the women donate about 5 Kenyan shillings in cash and/or about 2–3 kg of maize flour or eleusine flour.⁵²⁾

The *toretet*, along with the *mchango* (Sw.) and *harambee* (Sw.), *vide infra*, resembles the modern *saiset* in that before the event a simple information letter is sent to those requested to attend.⁵³⁾

Ideologically, it is thought that kin and affines should be the first to help out in any matter, but actually, according to an analysis of a detailed record of participants and the amounts contributed at a great many gatherings, those participating are almost all from either the same *kokwet* or from one nearby.

Kin or affines who attend are limited to those who live nearby. It is not at all rare to find that an information letter may not even have been sent from the outset to relative living far way.⁵⁴⁾ In contrast, those who attend are mostly friends of the same age-set⁵⁵⁾ including those with whom one underwent the same initiation ceremonies.⁵⁶⁾ Today, with almost no major ceremonies being held besides the initiation ceremonies, which take place from the beginning of each December to January of the new year,⁵⁷⁾ the beer party and dance has become the most popular type of amusement.⁵⁸⁾ And so, no matter what it is called, people who want to make a little cash will make up all manner of excuses and often hold a *toretet*; however, if not too frequent, it will be well supported.

52) Only male adults may formally participate in a beer party. However, it is publicly approved that women drink beer in their spare time, or on the side when they are preparing it and the meal in a separate house.

53) Sometimes at a *harambee* auction, *vide infra*, a person dressed as a warrior is seen, blowing on a battle horn and dancing around. This also probably conveys some kind of analogy between *harambee* and *saiset*. cf. note 47.

54. For example, the trouble and transportation expense it takes to deliver the letters — which are almost all delivered by hand — hardly makes it worth inviting them compared to the amounts donated. Also, relatives from the Masai area often did not attend at all. When I asked why the frequent response was that since inhabitants of the Masai area were liable to behave rudely at a beer party, they are not invited from the outset. At any rate, even in the *toretet*, the actual contribution of relatives is lowered due to the special features of Kipsigis tribe locality in which relatives live widely scattered throughout the territory.

55) In Kipsigis polygynous society there is latent rivalry between father and his sons surrounding property and women. One's worst enemies are one's half brothers as the saying goes. In contrast to this, one's age-mate, especially a *botum* (*vide infra*) living nearby is one's best friend for life.

56) They are indicated by the specific terms *botum* (Kip.) —he who shared the same initiation ceremonies —for a male and *pamwai* (Kip.) —she who shared the same fat of the initiation ceremonies —for a female.

57) Wedding ceremonies usually take place from the last third of January to February, directly after the daughter's initiation ceremonies are over. Funerals are extremely simple family affairs.

58) However, the Kipsigis's folk conception of these kinds of gatherings is that they are also all *tumdo* (Kip.) —i.e. ceremonies.

(2) *MCHANGO* (Sw.)

This is a *toretet* held on a grand scale. The approval of the District Commissioner must be obtained through the medium of the *boiyotap kokwet*. A function on this scale is often held with the objective of obtaining fund for a child's study abroad.⁵⁹⁾ Following up all connections, invitation letters are sent out to every area and many participants are enlisted. If the target amount is not achieved by the fund raising, a second fund raising is usually held a few weeks later. A local politician—of various levels—becomes a person-in-charge or a guest of honor. A function on this scale is called a *mchango* and not a *toretet*.⁶⁰⁾

(3) *HARAMBEE* (Sw.)

In general, this is a funds drive carried out under the benefit of the guidance and assistance of administrative organs for the purpose of building public institutions such as dips for disinfecting cattle, or a local primary and secondary school. It is held on a very large scale and great pains are taken to invite, as the guest of honor, the most famous VIP available. Many many local school children and housewives from the Women's Self-help Association get together to perform new songs and dances incorporated into dramatic sketches to entertain the VIP. One by one the participants in the *harambee* hand over cash and/or goods to the important guest. Their amounts and the contents, along with the contributors' names, are announced each time over a loud speaker by the guest of honor. The goods collected in this way are auctioned, but their buyers are the politicians and local bigwigs including the guest of honor. This auction takes on the appearance of a kind of political "show". The *harambee* gets under way fervently, amid the enhanced feeling that each individual takes part directly in the building of their own nation, Kenya.

(4) "TEA PARTY FOR A NEW-BORN BABY"⁶¹⁾

One week after the birth of a baby, a group of willing housewives within the *kokwet* gather at the home of the woman in childbed to quietly celebrate the birth of the baby and the expiration of the period of confinement. At this occasion, each housewife presents a gift of about 5 Kenyan shillings to the mother along with words of blessing. However, gradually this ceremony is becoming postponed for a year in order to have kind of "Tea party for a child" — cf. p. 164 — on a somewhat larger scale.

Non-Christians and Catholics actually supply beer at the *toretet* they hold under the name "Tea party for—", however, even they use tea only when it concerns a "Tea party for a newborn baby".⁶²⁾

59) I did my fieldwork before it was decided to build Kenya's second university, at Eldoret. Students who were not able to get into Nairobi University (the only available university at that time and even now) because of a quota were extremely eager to raise money through a *mchango* for study in India, the U.S., Canada, among other places.

60) *Mchango* means fund raising in the Swahili language.

61) A translation of *chaikap chereret* (Kip.) Lit. "Tea of a newborn baby".

62) However, the "Tea party for a newborn baby" carried out one year later is not affected by this restriction.

(5) *WIRETAP MEZET* (Kip.)⁶³⁾

Formerly, among the Kipsigis, housewives were gradually admitted and incorporated into their husband's family and clan by undergoing a sequence of five types of marriage ceremonies. The word "wedding ceremony" (Kip. *katunisiet*), heretofore, was used to indicate the second marriage ceremony carried out after the bride-wealth had been fully paid and after the woman had given birth to two or three children. The third to fifth marriage ceremonies were performed in the latter half of life. At present, the first of the marriage ceremonies (Kip. *ratet*) which officially recognizes a couple living together as man and wife is regarded as the "wedding ceremony". Ceremonies two through five are no longer performed.⁶⁴⁾

A dance and beer party is held the day after the *ratet* ceremony is performed. At this time, each of the participants contributes 100–300 Kenyan shillings to help the living funds of the bride and groom. This is *wiretap mezet*. Formerly, it was usual for each person to present a large gourd full of milk, a calf, a goat, or a sheep. The family of the bride and groom as well as intimate friends of the *kokwet* of groom's father are invited to the *ratet*. Unmarried persons are strictly forbidden to participate in the *ratet*, but they may attend *wiretap mezet* and contribute a small sum of money. On this occasion it is thought that the kin of the bride and groom should be the first to give their assistance, however, when I kept records, the sums of money donated by friends of the *kokwet* were usually the larger.

(6) *ROTET* (Kip.)⁶⁵⁾

Immediately after the *rotinotet* ceremony, which is carried out at the beginning of the initiation ceremonies, the kin, affines, and friends of the young boy or girl, and people of the *kokwet*, while offering words of encouragement to go through with the circumcision and various initiation ceremonies that are to follow splendidly, thus bringing honor to their houses, will donate a gift of 5–20 Kenyan shillings to the novice as proof of their good will.

Formerly, they presented the same kinds of gifts, as mentioned above in connection with the *wiretap mezet*.

(7) *REIBETAP KIPKELELIK* (Kip.)/*RIBETAP CHEPKELELIK* (Kip.)⁶⁶⁾

Ribetap kipkelelik—*ribetap chepkelelik* for a girl—is the ceremony carried out at the very end of the initiation ceremonies. When the novice has completed the

63) Lit. "Putting something on top of the desk".

64) The highest generation of elders lament that young people nowadays go through the "tying" (*ratet*) but not the "marriage" (*katunisiet*). But actually, even in their time, because of huge expenses, not a few left out ceremonies two through five.

65) *Rotet* may also be translated as "to bring something". That is, it means bringing a present when one visits another person.

66) As a novice goes through the initiation ceremonies, his title changes successively. A male novice at the stage of release from the isolation of initiation is called a *kipkeliyot* (pl. *kipkelelik*), a female is called *chepkeliyot* (pl. *chepkelelik*). *Ribetap kipkelelik* (*ribetap chepkelelik*) means "Guard of the novices who have been released from the isolation of initiation".

initiation ceremonies without mishap, donations are made to celebrate the honor he/she has bestowed on his/her home. The ceremony and the donations are known by the same name. It is often held at the house of the ritual parents who have cared for the novice in all ways, including providing meals, during the initiation period. At this time as well, there is dancing and beer is brewed. The family of the novice, people of the *kokwet*, and friends mainly attend. There are not necessarily many kin or affines present. Each participant presents a gift of 5–10 Kenyan shillings to the novice.

(8) BLOOD-PRICE

If one member of a clan kills a member of another clan, the assailant's clan collectively bears the responsibility⁶⁷⁾ and must pay about 10 head of cattle or a sum of cash corresponding to the cost of the cattle.⁶⁸⁾ Within the clan the family head belonging to the same sub-clan as the assailant must donate one head of cattle and the family head belonging to a different sub-clan one goat or sheep. This is the usual practice. However, generally nowadays the former pays 100 Kenyan shillings whereas the latter pays 50 Kenyan shillings.⁶⁹⁾ The clan elders who are responsible go around collecting a suitable sum from each clan member. The simple particulars of the incident as well as the amounts donated by each person are recorded and put together into an "account book". This record is passed on to the descendants of the assailant's clan.

3. VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION

1) *Kampunit* or *kurupit*⁷⁰⁾

Besides the types of local cooperative work mentioned above, there are organizations today called *kampunit* or *kurupit*. The organizations were formed in response to needs that have arisen by the permeation of a cash economy. The most general pattern is to purchase a small 0.8–1.5 ton truck with the objective of transporting each morning the milk produced in each *kokwet* to the milk processing plant in each Division. One such organization is usually comprised of 30–40 males. While the truck is coming and going with the milk it doubles as a "motorcoach" or *matatu* (Sw.) and is an important means of transportation for people and goods.⁷¹⁾ If profits

67) If the blood-price is payed too frequently because of the same person or the same family every time, this sometimes gives rise to clan dissension which may results in the split of the clan.

68) If the victim is a woman or a child, the settlement amount may be discounted depending on the circumstances.

69) Regardless of the punishment decided by the magistrate court and regardless of the causes, motives, or methods behind the murder or accidental homicide, a fixed amount of blood-price is to be paid.

70) *Kampunit* and *kurupit* originate in the English "company" and "group", respectively.

71) Regarding the etymology of the word *matatu*, when this kind of motorcoach first started running in Tanzania, the fare was 30 cents for everyone regardless of the distance to be covered. A one penny coin equals 10 cents, therefore peopole called the bus *mapeni matatu* or three pennies. *Matatu* is the abbreviation of *mapeni matatu*.

accrue due to the operation of the *matatu*, the people add more vehicles, or buy a tractor or a shop in the marketplace. It is a definite policy of a *kampunit* that when accrued profits reach the amount initially set, the *kampunit* must be dissolved and divided into two or more separate *kampunit*. This is a noteworthy characteristic of the *kampunit* system.

Because volunteers from a *kokwet* make up the core of promoters and financiers, the *kampunit* comes close to being a *kipagenge*-like cooperative work group—with *kipagenge* being used here in the same wide sense as it was used by Kipsigis intellectuals, such as W.K. arap Laboso. And yet, we can probably also say that the *kampunit*, rather than being a local cooperative work organization, is remarkably like a voluntary association or private company, since, besides its tendency to sub-divide as it develops, it is never made up of a whole *kokwet* but open to the participation of people of other *kokwet* who freely invest their money in their individual capacities.

2) The Women's Self-help Association (*kipagenge*)

As we have seen before, the various types of collective work and mutual aid such as the *kokwet* and *morik* are based on the *kokwet* as a neighborhood organization, and its environs. In contrast to this, the Women's Self-help Association—even though it may be named “such-and-such *kokwet* Women's Self-help Association” after a *kokwet* from which originate a large number of its members—has a strong voluntary association character, in that some of its members live farther away. Also, their objective is to divide off as soon as possible. This subdivision is carried out at the stage of accomplishing their original goal of accumulating profits and saving money.

Thus, generally speaking, we can say that the Women's Self-help Association is an organization with a strong female-version *kampunit* character. Besides the obvious sexual distinction, there are the following two differences between the two:

- i) The *kampunit* raises the entire amount of its capital when founded, but the Women's Self-help Association gradually accumulates its capital over a considerable length of time. The latter also often tries to quicken the accomplishment of its initial goal by simultaneously going ahead with work such as collective farming, and
- ii) The Women's Self-help Association Movement has an a national network, whereas the *kampunit* is a completely individual venture: there are no bonds linking them.

3) The relationship between the Women's Self-help Association Movement and the traditional forms of cooperative work and donation exchange

Next, I would like to roughly put in order the relationship between the Women's Self-help Association Movement and the traditional forms of cooperative work and donation exchange, based on what I have said in the above. Traditional forms of cooperative work, such as *kokwet*, *morik*, *konobeiywek*, and *saiset*, are based on the *kokwet* as neighborhood organization, and its environs. Any one of these cooperative works develops in order to maintain a self-sufficient household economy.

We can think of the fund raising and donation systems as being more or less

divided into the following two groups. First, collective payments such as the *rotet*, *wiretap mezet*, *ribetap kipkelelik* (*ribetap chepkelelik*), and blood-price are based on traditional social relationships, such as kinship relationships, affinal relationships, friendships based on age set relationships and clan ties, etc. The payments retain these traditional relationships and permit them to evolve.

Secondly, *toretet*, *mchango*, and *harambee* respond on various levels to the needs brought about the changed appearance of social lifestyles owing to the permeation of a cash economy. Among these systems, the *toretet* responds to changes in the transitional household economy. The *toretet* is held frequently and plays an extremely important role in the everyday life of the people. It should be noted here that the *toretet* also is fundamentally based on the *kokwet*, as a neighborhood organization, and its surrounding locale.

The *toretet* may bring in a considerable income but this, generally speaking, becomes the income of the husband who is the head of the household.⁷²⁾ The women usually told me, "Men have a strong interest in and attachment to cattle and money. Women just pray that they will have many children who will be happy, lucky and prosperous".⁷³⁾ What women are really most keenly interested in is the education of children. The enthusiasm of mothers and children for education is intense, however, education fees—especially for the junior children—are always lacking and the payment of tuition tends to be overdue. On the other hand, many of the men are more eager to have the most number of wives and children rather than be interested in their sons' and daughters' education.⁷⁴⁾ Also, some of the men look for opportunities to drink, galavant around without even a backward glance at their households.⁷⁵⁾

For this reason, it is often clear that the conflict and dissension between a husband and wives surrounds the issue of school fees for the children. The rapid development of the Women's Self-help Association Movement—at least as far as can be observed in the Chepalungu Division—may be largely correlated to the conflict and antagonism between a husband and wives in the home, which has become apparent along with the rapid diffusion of education.

Moreover, in Kipsigis society there is a special structural characteristic which enables this latent conflict and antagonism between men and women or a husband and wives to magnify. These remarkable special features of the Kipsigis tribe locality are;

- (i) neolocality after marriage;
- (ii) kin and clan members living spread out over the entire territory; and

72) The fund raising of one *toretet* averages about 800–900 Kenyan shillings.

73) Incidentally, it is said that women use witchcraft on the children of other women and men use witchcraft on the cattle of other men. This outlook on witchcraft can be said to be a negative or paradoxical expression of the main interests and concerns of men and women in life.

74) Even in fervent Protestant sects such as the AGC, it is not exceptional that one takes a second wife when one can afford it and I have many Protestants who converted to sects, including Catholic, where multiple marriages are allowed.

- (iii) each co-wife having an independent house geographically very distant from the others'.

While the ideological ideal is for families and kin to help each other, the truth is that in everyday life, they turn mainly to the *kokwet* for mutual aid. A husband almost always spends his time at the house of his youngest wife. A husband need not treat his wives with sexual and/or economic equality. If a wife already has had children, he is not criticized by society if he neglects her sexually. Nor is this alone sufficient grounds for divorce.⁷⁶⁾ If a man has several wives he will, without bothering to get a divorce, hardly ever visit his old wives in his later years. Therefore the need arose for these older wives to be economically independent of their husband, at least, in part.⁷⁷⁾ The need for large cash expenditures has actualized in one stroke, a structural contradiction between a man and his wives, men and women in the Kipsigis tribe. Under these circumstances, women are pressing for a certain degree of economic self-reliance. The traditional forms of cooperative works cannot sufficiently respond to these kinds of women's needs. On the one hand, the Women's Self-help Association Movement saw a rapid popularization because it was well

75) Formerly, the drinking of liquor was a right granted mainly to those elders who had retired from the warrior grade and entered the elder grade. The Pax Britannica exerted a deep influence on the politico-economic structure of the Kipsigis, which is based on an age system and a sexual division of labor. The social role of the warrior grade was defending the *kokwet* from other tribes and wild animals, plundering the cattle and other domesticated beasts of other tribes, and keeping the cattle of the *kokwet* in a collective kraal some distance from the *kokwet*. In contrast to this, the women's work was farming which inevitably included the process of "cutting and killing" the grass, which is the food of cattle and also which forms a part of the cycle of communication between man and the ultra-human powers including God (Kip. *Asis*) [KOMMA *op. cit.*: 106-107].

Because of the Pax Britannica and the subsequent enclosure of the land of the Kipsigis, the essential function of the warrior grade was lost. Raiding was forbidden, wild animals were exterminated in the white settlement and the collective kraal disappeared because of enclosure. People at the mission school who did not see significant meaning in the traditional form of sexual division of labor and who carried around the idea of private ownership started the enclosure. And yet, because of the enclosure the raising of cattle was also gradually released to the women. Through this process of social change, the groundwork was being laid for women to advance into the political and economic territory that had heretofore been monopolized by men. On the other hand drinking rapidly spread among the warrior grade whose social function had almost been eliminated. Despite a governmental policy of suppression, the drinking age keeps becoming lower and lower. There exists a strong correlation between this tendency and the steady increase of young men, even of those with a secondary education, who are unable to find employment. There is no other recourse but to absorb these young men into the household economy despite the lack of significant roles for them to play at home. Until now in Kipsigisland this has not become a serious problem, but will likely become so in the not too distant future.

76) Nowadays, if a civil suit such as divorce is not dealt with at the *kokwet* first, it will not be taken up by the magistrate court. In a great many cases, the ruling of the *kokwet* council is upheld in the magistrate court as well—cf. SALTMAN, *op. cit.*

suiting to these social conditions in the Kipsigis people. On the other hand, owing to the same social conditions, the cultural and educational side of the Women's Self-help Association Movement was almost neglected among the Kipsigis, with the result that the emphasis is put almost solely on the side of economic self-help for women.⁷⁸⁾

4. THE TWO DIRECTIONS OBSERVED IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE WOMEN'S SELF-HELP ASSOCIATION (*Kipagenge*)

Through the guidance of the Kenyan Government, the number of members in a single Women's Self-help Association is limited to 40. In general, a single association is composed of thirty-odd women. In West Chepalungu Location, a meeting of the local Women's Self-help Associations is held each Monday, attended by the local supervisor. Each association unit must have its officers attend the meeting and must report on its management conditions. It is required that—however awkward she may be—each officer be able to read and write in Swahili in order to take notes at the meeting and receive instructions from the main office.

However, in spite of these kinds of routine instructions and efforts to organize, as mentioned before, each association actually manages and accepts the ideology of the Women's Self-help Association Movement in many different ways. This being the case, it is almost impossible and unreasonable to regard the Women's Self-help Association Movement among the Kipsigis as a well-regulated movement and to try to discover a single paradigm for it, although the Kipsigis call any form of Women's Self-help Association *kipagenge*, regardless of their actual patterns of

77) There are several categories of witchcraft known among the Kipsigis. These kinds of witchcraft are the so-called contagious magic classified by J. Frazer. Compared with the Luo and the Gusii who are both neighbors of the Kipsigis, it is not so common among the Kipsigis that the cause of a misfortune is to be referred to the witchcraft committed by a woman who is considered to be jealous of a certain co-wife. This type of witchcraft is called *ponisiet* in Kipsigis. On the other hand,—although there has been almost no research up until now—it is believed that a wife often practices witchcraft on her husband, with whom she has more daily contact than with her co-wives. There are a variety of ways that the wife can practice the witchcraft on her husband (Kip. *kwombisik*), however, they all aim to control him and monopolize his affections. Structural conflicts between a husband and his wives and among his wives within the Kipsigis household are expressed in the concept of *kwombisik*.

78) It was the very women who initially introduced the Women's Self-help Association Movement to the West Chepalungu Location that most positively tried to cope with the new economic situation caused by the rapid penetration of the cash economy. For example, Elezabeth nebo Koirotwet—the central figure among the original members of the Koptige Women's Self-help Association, the first *kipagenge* organization in the West Chepalungu Location—started the cultivation of several cash crops, including pineapple and kale, for the first time in the area. Nowadays some housewives grow these cash crops personally on a very small-scale, and they, as so-called market *mama* or target traders, sell them in market places only on market days.

management. Be that it may, if we put aside each association's subjective self-awareness and ideology, and objectively analyze their activity conditions, we can classify them into the following two main types.

(i) The first type has a strong cooperative work organization-like character. The central figures of an association, like the officials, are from a limited region, such as a *morik* or *kokwet*. Rather than actually accomplishing a rather lofty objective which is to be displayed as a "slogan", such as constructing a flour mill, they make much of their goal of solidarity itself through collective farming which is superficially treated to be only a means to the lofty objective.

(ii) The second type of associations places importance of a member's ability to invest capital rather than her localness. They do not attach great significance to the acquisition of funds through cooperative work like collective farming. In a short period of time, they demand sizeable contributions of capital from their members, and try to achieve their anticipated objective as quickly as possible. They aim at splitting up developmentally and have a remarkably company-like character, just as the aforementioned *kampunit*, although a female one.

The latter type has accurately accepted the ideas advocated by the main office of the Women's Self-help Association, and is a faithful embodiment of the association. The former type can probably be considered an association that depends on the old model pattern of *kipagenge*, in the sense of "cooperative work" or "solidarity", accordance with the traditions of the Kipsigis people.

5. CASE STUDIES

In the Ndanai Sub-location and the Cheplelwo Sub-location of the West Chepalungu Location where I concentrated my research,⁷⁹⁾ there are two types of associations described above. These associations overlap just as they straddle the boundary of the two locations. I would like to try to investigate their development in detail as one model.

Ndanai Sublocation belongs to the ex-Kipsigis Reserve. Cheplelwo Sub-location was formerly the white people's settlement area.⁸⁰⁾ As indicated in the sketch

79) Per the Kenyan Population Census of 1979, the population of the Ndanai Sub-location is 6,045 (male -2,984, female -3,061) and that of the Cheplelwo Sub-location is 1,681 (male -798, female -883).

80) The Kipsigis have divided their present kinds of land holdings into three categories which they called Reserve, Scheme and Society. Regarding the ex-white settlement lands which each tribe was allowed to re-settle (Settlement Scheme), the Kenyan Government sold lots to individuals from the beginning on a uniform scale. They adopted two kinds of systems: (1) granting a loan and letting the people manage the land or (2) letting people of a (comparatively) low income class collectively manage and supervise the land at the beginning; then allocate it to individual after the loan is repaid. The former is called "Scheme" by the Kipsigis, the latter "Society". "Reserve" refers to the ex-Kipsigis Reserve area.

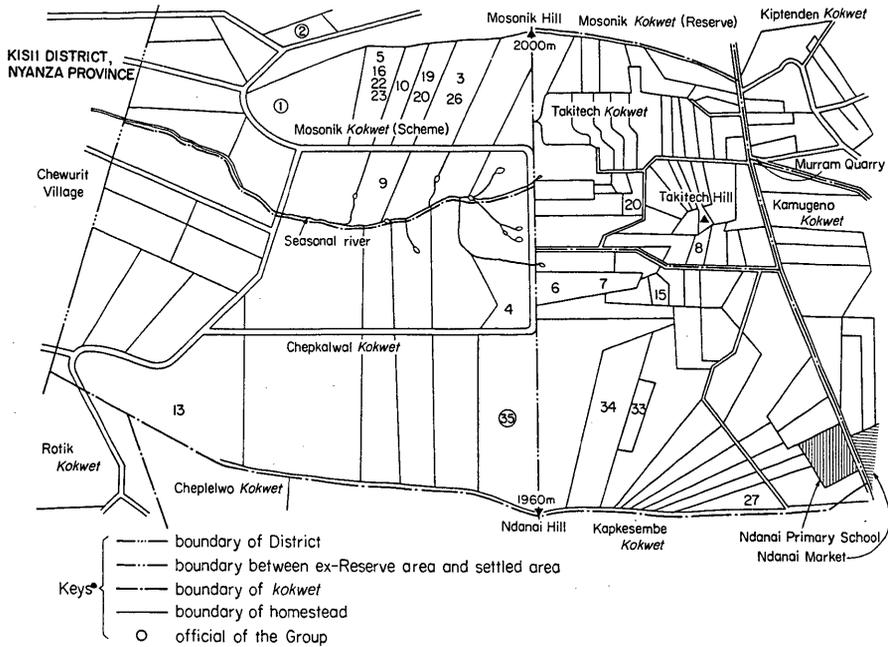


Fig. 6. Geographical distribution of the Cheplelwo Group's members.

map of this location (Fig. 6), their boundary is the straight line of mauritious thorn⁸¹⁾ that connects the two peaks of Ndanai Hill (1960 m above sea level) and Mosonik Hill (2000 m above sea level), a spectacular living fence. Cheplelwo Settlement Scheme and Cheplelwo Sub-location overlap. In 1963, when Kenya gained its independence, the government bought back the white people's settlement lands. Granting long-term loans, they let the Kipsigis the area a part of which is the Sotik Complex. The settlers retain one or two approximately 40-acre sections of land. In contrast to this, land possession area of each family in the Ndanai Sub-location is an average of several acres. Also, on the Ndanai Sub-location side, almost everyone is non-Christian or Catholic, yet on the Cheplelwo Sub-location side there are some Protestants.

1) The Cheplelwo Group

This local association was organized by 36 housewives. Its formal membership does not include men. They hope to build a flour mill in the very small center of the Rotik kokwet which has the Cheplelwo Settlement Scheme's office. This association was organized in July of 1980. To achieve their objective they need to save at least 100,000 Kenyan shillings. At present, each member is trying to save a target of

81) The white people introduced this from Madagascar, and it has become a special feature of the Kipsigis landscape. Afterwards, it spread in part to the other Kalenjin-speaking peoples and is customarily called *chepkomon* in the Kipsigis language.

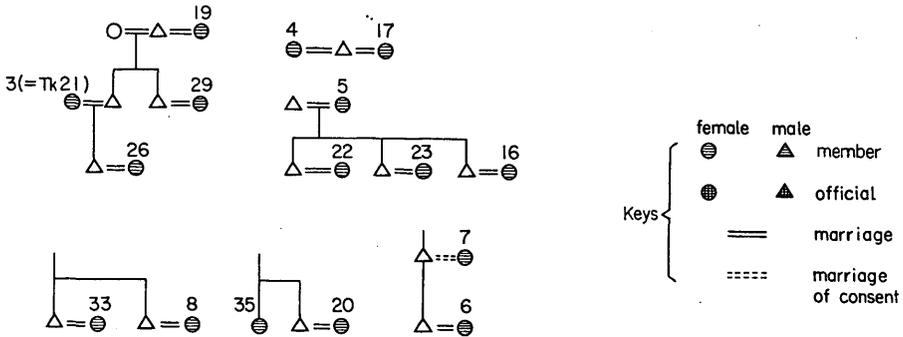


Fig. 7. Familial relationships among the Cheplelwo Group's members.

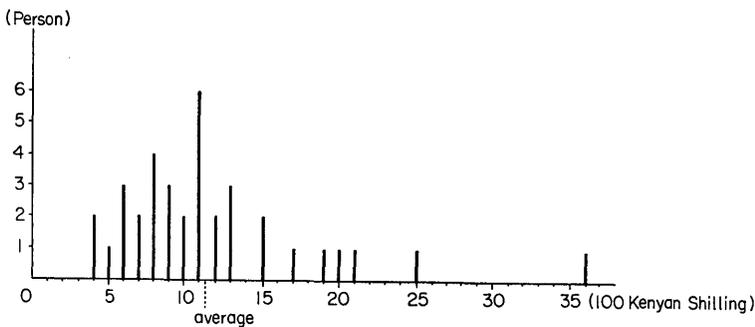


Fig. 8. Distribution of the amount of individual reserve fund among the Cheplelwo Group (as of July, 1981).

3000 Kenyan shillings. Looking at Fig. 7 which shows the family relationships and Fig. 6 which shows the members' geographical distribution⁸²⁾, the first thing noticed is that despite the tendency for considerable number of the members to settle in Mosonik *kokwet* in the settled area, generally the members are scattered over a wide area. Also, to start with, member 17 who appears in Fig. 7 lives in Kaitet area, 30 minutes away by car, and there are two other members who also live some distance away. Members 5, 16, 22, 23 and members 3, 19, 26, 29, respectively, are from the same family, however, no one from either group is an officer, and member 3 is at the same time a member of Takitech Group (member 21), discussed next. The chairwoman, secretary, and accountant of the Cheplelwo Group participate on their own; without a nuclear family or group. One-fourth of the members including the accountant are Protestants. Also, although he is not formally a member, the male consultant who attends the biweekly meetings is a Protestant.

This group is renting three plots of land for collective farming, but is actually only using a one-acre plot. Moreover, because of the geographic limitations of having members who are spread out over a wide area, not more than twelve persons

82) The sketch map is temporary; it does not correctly show the width of the area of each section. The settlement is reduced to about 1/5 of the ex-Reserve.

take part in the biweekly collective farming which is done in the weeks when there is no meeting. Recently, a proposal has been made stating that only these twelve should be given the profits that accrue from the collective farming. This has given rise to some internal discord. Most of the members feel that since it is actually quite a hardship for many of the members to participate in collective farming, they should place importance not on collective farming done by all the members, but rather on a routine saving of capital. Saving is the main objective of the biweekly meeting. In July, 1982 the sum was 44,360 Kenyan shillings saved. However, as seen in Fig. 8, there is a remarkable imbalance in the amount of achieved savings. One individual surpassed the tentatively set target amount of 3000 Kenyan shillings by achieving 3,785 Kenyan shillings, not necessarily an easy amount for a member to raise. Two persons managed only a minimum of 420 Kenyan shillings. The average was 1,232 Kenyan shillings but, less than one-third of the members, or not more than 11 persons, were able to top that amount.

The imbalance of amounts saved is already a rather serious problem for the management of the association. Some members have withdrawn from the group or changed groups. Because of the above state of affairs, human relationships among the members are not all that close. In particular, the Protestants, who basically forbid drinking, take a negative view of traditional culture including the traditional circumcision-initiation ceremonies, which are still the most important events throughout life and are also the core of identity for a Kipsigis who is not a Protestant. This greatly hinders a deepening of interchange between the Protestants and the rest of the members and clouds their consciousness of unity. Although meetings are held each time at the home of member 3, who is also a member of the Takitech Group mentioned below, for the simple reason that it is closest to the heart of the area in which the members are dispersed, absentees are not necessarily few. The business-like character of the group meeting is remarkable. For example, at the beginning tea was offered but it was soon abandoned as a waste of time and money and is served no longer.

2) The Takitech Group

This group is centered on the people of Takitech *kokwet* which has a rather high population pressure on the side of the ex-Reserve. They have the temporary objective of owing a shop in nearby Ndanai market. However, at this point, they have not concretely planned what sort of goods they will sell, or how they will manage the shop. When they organised, in April 1980, they collected 20 Kenyan shillings from each member in order to open an account at a Sotik bank.⁸³⁾ Besides this, they do not have the kind of collective saving of capital that is seen in the Cheplelwo Group. Their policy is to depend on the profits from the collective farming of crops like maize, for all their necessary expenditures. All of the founding members have been active in this manner up until now, and no one has left the group. At present, they

83) Sotik is a small town which is nearly twenty kilometers distant from the Ndanai and the Ceplelwo Sub-locations.

are renting land at three locations, a total of about 4.5 acres. This land is allotted to collective farming once a week but they are still seeking more land. In the 1981 year, they anticipate a profit of a least 6000–7000 Kenyan shillings. That is to say, achieving the target price is not necessarily a concrete reality. It cannot be fixed within a certain length of time in the near future.

A special feature of this group is that it functions as the parent group of mutual aid system that resembles the *kipkoloit*. That is, when member lacks funds, she can depend on the association to work in her own field, cheaply and on credit. In the *kipkoloit* the actors are men. It is a working group since no specific parent group exists for its implementation. On the other hand, in the Takitech Group the work is performed by women. Since it is a constant group, it should be noticed that its cooperative function supplements various forms of the previously established local cooperative work and mutual aid system and—we shall say, as a new variation makes their network denser and stronger. On the other hand we can also point out that the existence of this kind of mutually assistant secondary function, may end up delaying even more the achievement of the slogan-like objective of having a shop in the market.

Another special feature of the Takitech Group is that there are no Protestant members. Because of this, there is no discord concerning the initiation ceremonies, traditional weddings, beer parties, or dances and there is no conflict over their outlook on or valuation of these functions. Close interchange is observed among the mem-

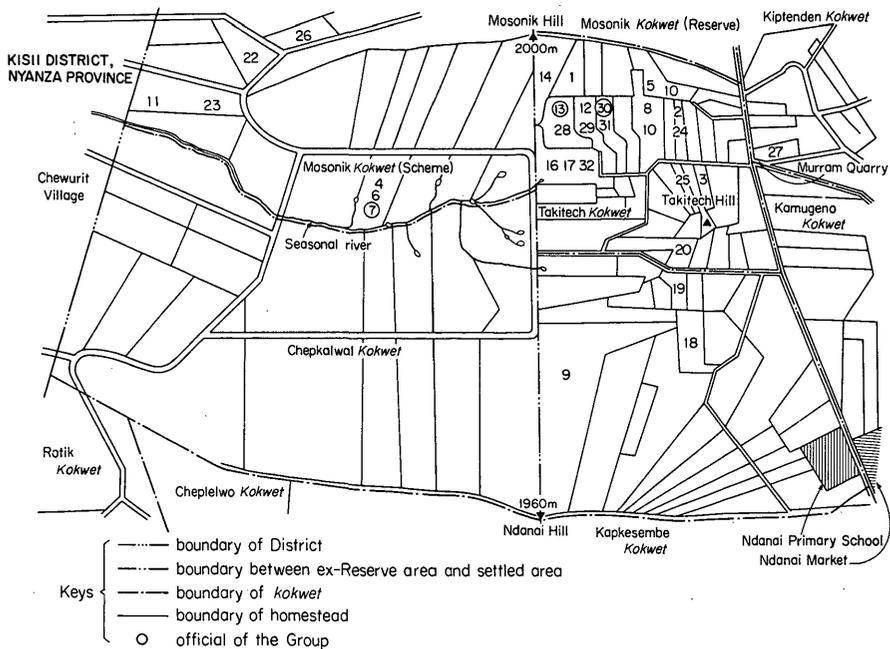


Fig. 9. Geographical distribution of the Takitech Group's members.

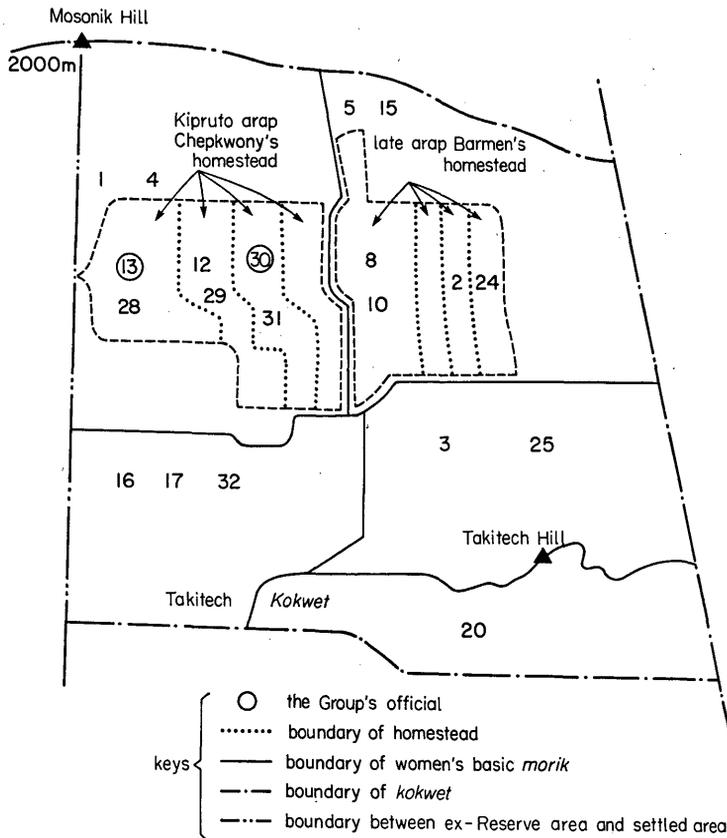


Fig. 10. Distribution of the Takitech Group's members and the locations of the former and the present *boiyotap kokwets'* homesteads in Takitech *kokwet*.

bers and those of their families. Through the human relationships formed by this interchange, the network of fund raising (*toretet* etc.) is expanding. Here, as well, the Takitech Group widely differs from the Cheplelwo Group.

Next, if we check the geographical distribution of the members (Fig. 9) and family relationships (Fig. 11), it becomes clear that the core of this group is the Takitech *kokwet*. In Takitech *kokwet*, there are five basic *morik* formed for farm work done by women. Unlike the example of Kamugeno *kokwet*, these are permanent, nor are they rearranged each year.

The upper left hand section of Fig. 10 is the territory of the *morik* to which belongs the wife of Kipruto arap Chepkwony, the present senior *boiyotap kokwet*. The section to the right of this is the territory of the *morik* to which belongs one of the wives of the late arap Barmen, the former senior *boiyotap kokwet*. Among the Kipsigis conjugal residence is neolocality. Moreover, considering that traditionally it is thought desirable to set up a new domicile some distance away from the groom's

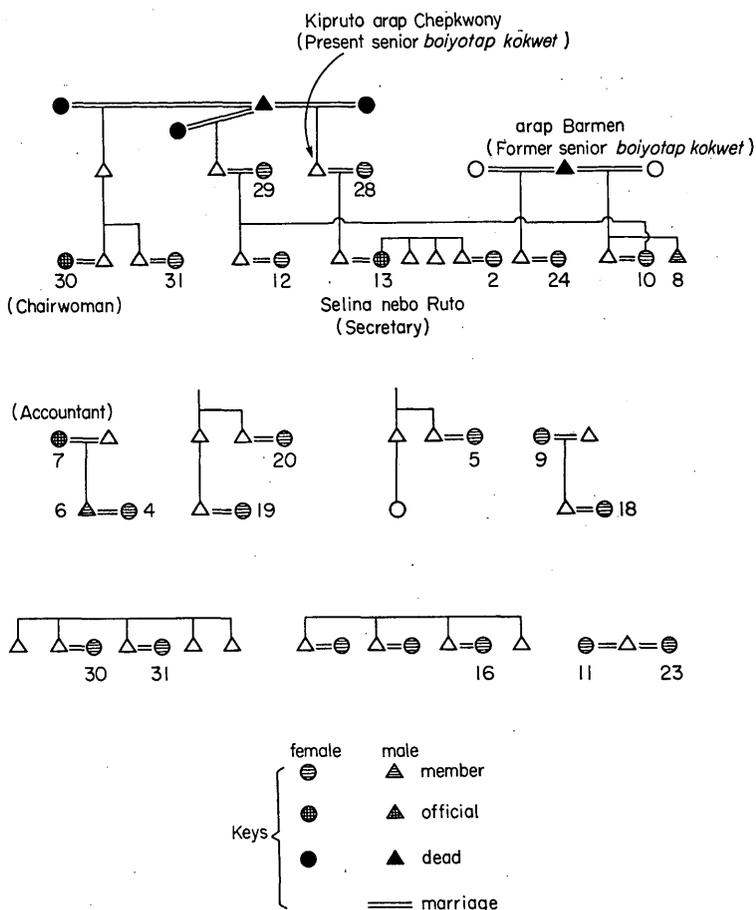


Fig. 11. Familial relationships among the Takitech Group's members.

father's residence, it is rather exceptional that the children of the late arap Barmen and of the late arap Kigen who is the father of arap Chepkwony, live on their ancestral lands, after negotiating its partition, although both of them were powerful figures in the Takitech *kokwet*. They say that it was because it was so difficult to procure land when their sons came of age because of the white settlements, and because both their lands were somehow barely wide enough to be divided and to accommodate their sons. At any rate, we should note especially that among the 32 members of the Takitech Group nearly two-thirds (20 people) from the entire Takitech *kokwet*, 17 people from arap Chepkwony's wife's *morik* and arap Barmen's wife's *morik* combined (over half), and about one-third (10 people) from the two powerful families, whose homesteads adjoin each other, are sent out as members.

The chairwoman (member 30) comes from the family of arap Chepkwony. Selina nebo Ruto (member 13), the wife of arap Chepkwony's eldest son,⁸⁴ and also the

youngest daughter of the late arap Barmen, holds the office of secretary. The Kipsigis people say that if a bride's natal family is too near, she will often depend on them and the good relationship between the two households will be easily damaged. There is a fairly strong tendency to dislike marriage with a nearby household. However, from Fig. 11 it can be understood that, besides Selina, member 10 went from arap Chepkwony's side to arap Barmen's side as a bride. Both Selina nebo Ruto and member 10 form a concrete bond between the two most powerful households in the Takitech *kokwet*.

Able to transfer the wide social experience he gained as a ex-member of the King's African Rifles,⁸⁵⁾ arap Chepkwony, now in his mid-fifties, had held since he was young the office of junior *boiyotap kokwet* under arap Barmen, the senior *boiyotap kokwet* who recently died at the ripe age of nearly 100, although it is an irregular case. He became the senior *boiyotap kokwet* after arap Barmen's death and arap Mitei, who was considerable older than even arap Chepkwony, became the junior *boiyotap kokwet*.⁸⁶⁾ In December of 1981, after arap Mitei died, until the end of 1983, arap Chepkwony has held the office of *boiyotap kokwet* by himself.

His fame is widely known not only within the Takitech *kokwet* but also in the several nearby *kokwotinwek* (Pl. of *kokwet*) on the side of the ex-Reserve. Sometimes his consultation is requested and he goes to the council of another *kokwet* in order to give advice. He is also one of the four members on the administrative committee at Ndanai Primary School.

Two males are included among the formal members. Member 8 is one of these. One or two males are to be joined to a Women's Self-help Association as formal members of consultants. It is said that in the course of the development of Kenya as a nation and a people, the women's social experience is still poor, and that they need the men's advice and suggestions so they ask them to participate, which the men are not always willing to do. Nevertheless, looking at it objectively, it is only too obvious that member 8 is in because the late arap Barmen's family actively supports the Takitech Group.

I must refer once more to Selina nebo Ruto, who assumes the important role of secretary. It was mentioned above that the officers of the Women's Self-help Association are required to have attained a certain degree of elementary proficiency in Swahili, the national tongue, to ensure administrative efficiency. But the truth is that although she is the secretary, Selina understands not a word of Swahili. To the best of my knowledge there are no other examples of any officer in the Women's Self-help Association being completely ignorant of Swahili. Granted, although she is only

84) i.e. Phillip arap Ruto, who was one of my assistants.

85) The abbreviation of King's African Rifles is KAR, but the accent of the Kenyans changed it to "Keya". Among the Kipsigis "Keya" also became a nickname for a person known to have been active as a member of KAR. Kipruto arap Chepkwony was known more by his nickname of "Keya" than by any other name.

86) It is also very irregular that a man works as the junior *boiyotap kokwet* under a senior *boiyotap kokwet* belonging to a relatively junior age-set.

20 years old or so, Selina is a very level-headed, calm and honest person. Also, she is quite capable of taking notes in her vernacular Kipsigis tongue. However, besides this there is no other reason why she should hold the important post of secretary. The truth is that being both the daughter of the late arap Barmen and the wife of the eldest son of arap Chepkwony, so that she is an important bond of the political alliance of these two powerful families.

Arap Chepkwony's wife is an ordinary member. The arap Chepkwony family is not situated in the center of the area in which members are distributed, since people living on the scheme side joined the membership. In spite of that, this group holds a meeting at his house once a week. Tea is always served and the atmosphere is one of a harmonious, enjoyable social gathering. Arap Chepkwony himself does not actively attempt to take any initiative at the meeting, but he attends as often as possible and offers his advice. This also shows the Takitech Group is practically under his influence.

There is a nuclear family on the scheme side as well. The accountant (member 7) sends out not only her son's wife (member 4) but also her son himself (member 6) as members. Of the 32 members of the Takitech Group, not more than six people participating independently of family. The remaining 26 members have some kind of familial relationship with the other members. This is in remarkable contrast to the Cheplelwo Group where two-thirds of the members are participating independently of family relations.

I would like to analyze the Takitech Group based on these circumstances. This group does not have a strong *kampunit*-like character. Their main objective is not necessarily women's self-help, and they do not always attempt to accomplish their original goal as fast as possible, finally building up their assets as individuals and becoming self-reliant, as a strongly company-like group would. I am bound to think that, rather, that is their secondary objective. They have a strongly cooperative work organizational character, in that collective farming and mutual assistance itself are the implicit main goals. The people of the scheme side, who are economically well off compared to others and who have a large area of land allotted to each family, participate in this group whose nucleus is clearly the Takitech *kokwet*, because they are trying to make up for flaws in their population and in the network of cooperative work and mutual aid.⁸⁷⁾

On the other hand, arap Chepkwony, the senior *boiyotap kokwet* of Takitech *kokwet*, acts as a mediator of relations with the Takitech Group. He seeks everyday contact with members of the scheme side, in attempting to expand his own power there, while at the same time fortifying his own politically influential powers in the ex-Reserve side including Takitech *kokwet*.⁸⁸⁾

87) There are several families in the Cheplelwo Scheme who hire people of ex-Reserve area, including Takitech *kokwet*, as wage laborers at 100–200 Kenyan shillings a month, if they do not have enough sons or male helpers.

88) There has not been any conflict or dissension between arap Chepkwony and the women until this point. (Incidentally, arap Chepkwony left this world in March of 1984).

Thus, we can say that the characters of the two Women's Self-help groups seen above differ considerably. We find three households participate simultaneously in both groups and that all of these are families from the scheme side. This may illustrate the difference of character between the two groups.

Attempting to summarize the characteristics of the two groups, we can say that the Cheplelwo Group has a strong tendency to accomplish its objectives. Guided by their superiors, they have one simple functional goal. Their economic logic is dominant.

On the other hand, the Takitech Group has a traditional cooperative and mutually assistant character, at least subsidiarily, and multiplex goals.⁸⁹⁾ Local political relationships play a part in this group.

CONCLUSION

When nuclear families exist within a group, such as in the Takitech Group, the influence of a traditional leader is often exerted on the activities of the Women's Self-help Association. On the one hand, nuclear families do not necessarily exist in groups like the Cheplelwo Group where localness is not that strong. Groups whose character is strongly company-like as in the Cheplelwo Group, exhibit a tendency to link up with a new type of political leader rather than rely on the authority of a traditional leader such as a *boiyotap kokwet*,⁹⁰⁾ and they do not make much of their cooperative aspects such as collective farming.

The Kamugeno Group is a good illustration of this. Anthony arap Kimeto was a primary school teacher but he became a member of the Kipsigis County Council. In the 1979 National Election he competed in Chepalungu Constituency, for a seat in national parliament and was as runner-up. His mother, Elizabeth nebo Koirotwet, is a founding member of Kamugeno Group; one of his two wives, who are both members, holds the post of chairwoman. The group acted as his support base; he was also helped by the Women's Self-help Association network.⁹¹⁾

Also, in the same year, 1979, in Belgut Constituency, Martha nebo Maseti, the chairwoman of Kericho district, contended valiantly with male candidates including the then incumbant member of the national parliament for second, only to him.

89) Also, because the Cheplelwo Group does not recognize men as formal members, the women are more clearly aware of their self-reliance as an objective.

90) Martha nebo Maseti, chairwoman of the Kericho District Women's Self-help Association Movement took my indication from a woman's point of view. She strongly warned that linking up with male politicians, or purchasing tractors or bus which only increase men's chances for employment would cause a self-negation and breakdown of the movement.

91) This association, compared to other nearby associations, has a lively interchange with the associations of each area. Incidentally, in June 1981, it aided a certain association in Bureti Division with a gift of 200 Kenyan shillings. Elizabeth nebo Koirotwet says that this kind of inter-association exchange and network effectively supported the election activities of her son Anthony arap Kimeto.

On the other hand, let us not forget that there is also a great possibility that groups like the Takitech Group, which have a traditional political structure and are under the influence of a traditional leader, will link up to a new type of political leader.

At any rate, in traditional Kipsigis tribal society, where women have had no direct relationship to politics, the Women's Self-help Association Movement, an apolitical organization, is growing as the nucleus of a new political alliance and is occupying an important position in the political structure of the Kipsigis people.⁹²⁾ Not only does this movement make it possible for women (like Martha nebo Maseti) to actually have access to national or local politics on various levels, but it is also making it possible for women to exercise their informal influential powers in the traditional autonomy of the *kokwet* (neighborhood organization) which has until now been completely closed to the participation of women.

Even the Kipsigis people, in the Chepalungu and Masai areas or even in the Takitech, where modernization has not sufficiently progressed and where, for example, women have not emerged from the traditional political consciousness which tells them that they must subordinate themselves politically to the authority and power of men, women in general have not yet awakened to an awareness of "Women's Liberation". However, from now on, the Women's Self-help Association Movement, as it develops, will clarify the structural contradiction and conflicts between men and women that lurk in Kipsigis society, and will most likely reform its own political consciousness as it goes along.⁹³⁾

Amid the rapid development of a capitalistic economy and the molding of Kenya as a nation and a people, the Women's Self-help Association Movement is intertwined in Kipsigis society. Not only is the movement facilitating a stratificational reorganization of the society's traditional farming and grazing economy but also it is deeply connected to a political re-organization as well.

In light of the Women's Self-help Association Movement's considerable socio-cultural impact among the Kipsigis, it should be valuable from now on to thoroughly study the development of the Women's Self-help Association Movement in other societies when we search for present day socio-cultural changes in the tribal societies of Kenya.

Firstly, what sort of structural relationship—i.e., attraction or repulsion—does the Women's Self-help Association Movement, a voluntary association, have with descent groups such as clan and/or lineage, with neighborhood organizations, with kin groups and with modern national administrative organizations in society. Moreover, how are these relationships intertwined with social relationships through the

92) In regards to this, as mentioned before, the *kampunit* or *kurpit* organized by the men has no mutually linking network and does not always form the nucleus of a big political alliance, in contrast to the Women's Self-help Association Movement.

93) If one believes the folktale mentioned in the epigram as historical transmission, the women are just trying to get back the political superiority that was snatched away by men in antiquity.

church, friendship relationships, age relationships, or social relationships through the school?

Secondly, what sort of mutual relationship is there between the Women's Self-help Association Movement and the changes in women's political consciousness?

Thirdly, assuming that the introduction and development of the activity of the Women's Self-help Association has been guided by the women's awareness of political consciousness, for what reasons and through what processes have women been participating in the economic and political areas which were once centered around the authority and power of men in a traditional patrilineal society?

If answers to these questions are made clear through field research which is based on the way things are in each society, then I think we will be able to clarify by comparing these studies not only the socio-historical role attained by the association in the development and formation of Kenya as a nation but also the important and non-important factors behind the modernization of a traditional farming and grazing society.

Acknowledgements

My heartfelt thanks go to the National Council of Science and Technology and the Office of the President of the Kenyan Government for granting me permission to do research and for their courteous assistance; also to Dr. B.E. Kipkorir, the director, and the other staffs of the Institute of African Studies, the University of Nairobi, not only for warmly accepting me as a research associate but also for the personal hospitality and kindness they showed me. I am deeply grateful to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, and Professor Nobuhiro Nagashima of Hitotsubashi University who gave me the opportunity to study the society of the Kipsigis people; to the successive residents of the Nairobi Branch of the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science; to the administrators at various level of the Kericho District; and to Mr. and Mrs. Kishida who live in Nairobi, all of whom devised ways to expedite the execution of my research; and to the University of Oita which granted me leave for my research.

This paper is a correction in part of the paper I first published in Japanese, in *Afrika-Kenkyu (Journal of African Studies)*, Japan Society for African studies, No. 22, 1982. At the time of its publication in that Journal, Professor Junichiro Itani of the University of Kyoto and Dr. Masao Yoshida of the Institute of Developing Economics, Tokyo, read the manuscript and made appropriate comments. Professor Shohei Wada, of the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, and Professor Nobuhiro Nakabayashi of the University of Kanazawa have given constructive criticism and comments on the present article. I would like to express my appreciation to them all.

Last but not least, to my assistants and very good friends who gave their loyal cooperation to my research, Augustine arap Ng'eno, Philip arap Ruto, John arap Soi, Ellix arap Rotich, Stephen arap Suge, Ruth chebo Towett, Francis arap Bii, Julius arap Rono, Joseph arap Lang'at, and Ezra arap Kerich. To Esther nebo Towett and Mochi arap Katam and their families, excellent informants, who rented me a pleasant place to live in and treated me as one of the family, to old Jonathan arap Mongek who has my everlasting esteem, to Martha nebo Maseti, chairwoman of the Kericho District Women's Self-help Association and to all the Kipsigis people whom I love, my unending gratefulness and deep thanks.

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