

Climate Change, Remodelling of Oral Tales and the Changing Ways of Life: The Case of the Sangu of Tanzania

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Abstract

African oral literature is not static; it changes in accordance with and in relation to the changes occurring in the society it reflects. As a rich source of varying degrees of information, African oral literature depicts the changing human conditions and behaviour like climate and related environmental conditions, crime, political instability, disease amongst others; and provides requisite solutions to such piercing and compelling global challenges. This paper presents a textual analysis of four (4) Sangu oral tales to show how the Sangu of south-west Tanzania have been remodelling their tales in relation to the changing human life conditions. It scrutinises “iJungwa Sikhandi Vaanu” (lit. trans. ‘elephants were once human beings’), “Umutwa nu Mwehe Waakwe” (‘the chief and his wife’), “Umuhinja ni Nyula” (‘a girl and the frogs’), and “Kwashi iNwiga sina Singo Nali” (‘why giraffes have long necks’), which were part of the 20 tales collected during in-depth interviews held with Sangu storytellers. The selection of these four tales was based on their climate change theme and remodelling. The study found that oral stories display unique knowledge of a particular people pertaining to climate change and adaptation. Moreover, it emerged that sustainable solutions to the current environmental crisis are embedded in people’s environment-related oral narratives.

Keywords:

Climate change, remodelling of oral tales, Sangu people, Sangu oral tales
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Introduction

The Sangu are an ethnic group based in south-west Tanzania, who are administratively found in Mbarali district, Mbeya region. The district covers an area of 15,558 km² (Sirima 2010; Kalenge 2022).

They speak Ishisangu, a language is closely related to Bena, Hehe, Bungu, Kimbu, Safwa, and Vwanji. The resemblance of Ishisangu to the languages of these ethnic groups is primarily influenced by the the Sangu being geographically surrounded by these such groups (Kaajan 2012; Kalenge 2012).

The discussion of this article revolves around two major conceptions: the changing human conditions and the remodelling of oral tales. From a postcolonial ecocritical perspective, the article establishes an overlap between climate change, as a phenomenon, and the perceptual remodelling of the tales of the Sangu as an imagination. In this regard, climate change refers to alteration experienced in the physical environment that causes change in climatic and environmental conditions (Nwankwoala 2015, p. 224). The indicators of climate change, among many others, include temperature and rainfall variability, biodiversity change, and biodiversity loss. In the Usangu plains, since the 1990s, the inhabitants have been experiencing unusual temperature increases, decreasing rainfall and variability, shortened growing seasons, recurrent food insecurity, increased incidences of drought, outbreaks of human, livestock and plant diseases and the demise of human and non-human organisms including wild animals and plants (Kangalawe 2007).

Remodelling refers to modelling something over or making changes to make it appropriate for usage in a certain situation. As such, "Literature is a new way of texting the existing texts" (Taha 2016, pp. 441-42). In other words, literature works to modify the existing literary pieces. Remodelling oral tales, therefore, entails the twisting or remaking of an existing oral tale for it to fit the unfolding context. This remaking is largely a conscious effort of an artist, who applies his or her artistic prowess to create and re-create; innovate and modify the text and the associated performance to make fit the envisaged audience, prevailing sociocultural conditions, and purpose of a literary event. Okpewho (1992, p. 45) expounds:

It is in storytelling performances that we see the maximum use of innovation and manipulation. In most narrative traditions across the African continent, the storyteller simply has the bare outlines of the story and is expected to make the appropriate adjustments to the

details in accordance with the interests of the audience. But the storyteller often does more...

Such re-creations, modifications, innovations, and embellishments done to oral texts make a single text contain two or more forms, each of which looks different from other variable forms (Mulokozi, 1999). This is true for Sangu oral literature. Through close textual and contextual analyses, the current study used four tales (“iJungwa Sikhandi Vaanu” [Elephants were once human beings], “Umutwa nu Mwehe Waakwe” [The chief and his wife], “Umuhinja ni Nyula” [a girl and the frogs] and “Kwashi iNwiga sina Singo Nali” [why giraffes have long necks]) and their variable versions to examine the existing logical connection between climate change experienced in the Usangu plains and the remodelling of tales in the same setting. In other words, the study attempts to establish the existing simultaneity of climate change and the remaking of oral tales by comparing the environmental conditions prevalent in the study area and the portrayal of such conditions in the selected tales. The goal is to establish facts about the evolving awareness and environmental conservation knowledge of the Sangu as a way of addressing ongoing environmental mismanagement problems from the people’s perspectives.

This article mainly contends that, as part of the Sangu’s attempt to adapt to climate change, oral stories should be used as a benchmark for assessing environmental conditions and recognising their inherent environmental consciousness. The article’s examination of the relationship between the environmental issues that the Usangu plains and, to some extent, the world at large are currently facing and how those issues are perceived in the reimagined oral histories of the Sangu validates the ethnic group's sophisticated and endogenous environmental knowledge.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis of these four tales and their variable forms in relation to climate change and remodelling of oral tales is based on postcolonial eco-criticism. Postcolonial eco-criticism is an intersection of eco-critical studies and postcolonial cultural studies developed in the past seventeen years to stress on the need for postcolonial studies to include environmental factors in literary critiques (Caminero-Santangelo, 2014; Afzal, 2017). This is

materialising because, “For a colonized people the most essential value... is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and above all, dignity” (Fanon 2005, p. 9). Land encompasses the entire environment that surrounds human life, the environment and the culture of a people. In *Politics and Ideology in Tanzanian Prose Fiction in English* (2019), Mwaifuge speaks of land as the axis that brings the African people (the living, the dead and the unborn) together. Therefore, “One can say that African indigenous communities see land as their heritage, their ancestors, and the earth” (Afzal 2017, p. 15). It is an entity an African person safeguards because to him or her, the environment means life; the life that depends on the integration of culture and the natural environment. Thus, according to postcolonial eco-criticism a postcolonial study that does not examine environmental factors of literary texts it critiques amounts to a mess (Nixon 2011; Aghoghovwia 2014; Iheka 2015).

Usually, African literary scholarship tends to refute the position of mainstream eco-criticism that only addresses environmental discourses in a cosmopolitan way. The mainstream eco-critical studies developed in the West do not take considerations of regional variability and plurality of culture in dealing with environmental issues. Studies of this sort, according to Aghoghovwia (2014, p. 33), have and continue to overlook and fail to “understand the contexts of African environmentalism or the conditions which inform the African eco-imagination and critical epistemology”. In fact, land reclamation and evacuation of the local people living near the protected areas are necessitated by monetary or, rather, economic reasons, according to a Eurocentric perspective. Aghoghovwia (2014) further contends:

Much of these conditions are considered to be inflicted by foreign organisations and governmental agencies through practices that are geared towards profit-making ventures, such as capitalist resource exploitation... wildlife conservation of certain (exotic) corners of the world for the pleasure of the rich in the global North. Africa is conceived as a vast landscape of wildlife and not a place with human presence and cultures that are closely linked and bound to the natural environment. Rather, it is conceived as an exotic location of wildlife to be preserved and conserved for the

pastime of gaming and safari vacations for the metropolitan rich of the global North. (pp. 33-34)

In *Different Shades of Green: African Literature, Environmental Justice, and Political Ecology*, Byron Caminero-Santangelo (2014, p. 11) argues that the Eurocentric critics contend that environmental conservation is a continuation of imperial colonial activities designed to continue extracting the natural wealth of Africa. The propaganda against the human presence in wildlife and other protected areas as “efforts to preserve wilderness can still be based on a green imperial romance that historically enabled colonial dispossession through images of pure, untouched natural landscapes in need of protection and, in the process, reinforce new forms of imperialism” (Byron Caminero-Santangelo 2014, p. 11).

Moreover, this new imperialist interest in the name of environmental conservation continues to make Africa a source of raw material and a market for industrial development in the West. In *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*, Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley (2011) speak about the post-industrial and late capitalist system and how it works to ensure that the developed nations continue the exploitation of Africa’s natural endowment and that any outcry about environmental crisis is a propaganda designed to benefit the West’s industrial revolution and market economics.

The work of postcolonial eco-criticism, therefore, is twofold: to counteract these evil intentions of the imperialist nations meant to continue the domination of Africa’s sociocultural, political and economic life to render the continent a sustainable source of raw material and market for the industries in the developed world; and usher in a new and true perspective about the African cultural imaginations concerning environmental conservation. By the same token, the current study utilises the postcolonial eco-critical spirit and stance in negotiating the interface between climate change and the remodelled tales of the Sangu people. It takes cognizance that the environment and related factors cannot be separated from the culture of an African people.

As stated earlier, the environmental conditions in the Usangu plains are changing at an alarming pace. The rainfalls, the temperature rates and other climatic conditions have extremely changed and caused a number of environmental stresses like prolongation of drought, the disappearance of wildlife flora and fauna, and other related anomalies. Kangalawe *et al*, (2007: 29) explain one major indicator of climate change in the Plains and the resultant stress it causes:

One indicator of the environmental changes taking place in the Usangu Plains is the trends in crop yields... agricultural production has encountered several constraints in recent years more than they used to be in the past... The main reason as observed by many respondents was the shortage of irrigation water. This problem was most noted in Simike and Msangaji villages that are predominantly on arable agriculture. Conditions are much drier in Msangaji village, and therefore shortages of water for irrigation are aggravating an already existing problem...

Realising that the environment influences the culture of a people and that oral literature as part of culture and a dynamic force embeds endogenous environmental knowledge of such people including knowledge about climate change, this paper presents facts about climate change in the Usangu plains as reflected in the re-modified tales of the Sangu people with the view to contributing to the ongoing public debates about the environmental crisis.

Context and Methods

In spite of the influences from other ethnic groups that migrated into the Usangu plains (the Hehe, Bena, Sukuma, Maasai, Gogo, Kimbu, and Nyakyusa among others) from the 1950s onwards and Christianity and Islam that spread in the area, Kaajan (2012, p. 13) proffers:

A very large part of the Sangu population follows traditional religion in the interior as well as in larger towns. There are quite a few Muslims and some Christians in the area as well, but many of them practice their traditional religion alongside Islam or Christianity...

From this account, it is apparent that trying to separate the Sangu from their endogenous ways, is a futile attempt. They may profess Christianity or Islam or even embrace modernity but cannot entirely abandon their endogenous ways. This fact inspired the current study of the possibility of finding data (environment-related oral tales of the Sangu people) to fill in the existing gap of information regarding climate change.

This qualitative study was based on the worldviews of the Sangu as engrained in their oral tales. The primary data came from the field through in-depth interviews, which gave the informants time to tell and retell their stories and experiences without interruption and at a pace of their convenience without undue interactions, hence enabling a natural flow of the narrations. The researcher recorded these tales with prior obtained permission. Some probing and follow-up questions were necessary for clarity.

The study used both purposive and snowball sampling facilitated by the Sangu gatekeepers (that is, individuals with 'inside' information on their communities) in each of the twenty wards found in Mbarali district to determine the most suitable Sangu informants (that is, the griots). Two, one male and one female griots, were selected from each ward to participate in scheduled one-on-one interview. One oral tale out of many tales that were collected from each ward was screened for further etic analysis. However, after the tales were carefully transcribed, translated, close read and contextualised one-by-one, four tales were found fit for the current presentation.

Discussion

Of the four tales, "Ijungwa Sikhandi Vaanu" is the first to be scrutinized in this sub-section. In the first version of this tale, Sagwasinji, the main character, has two children. The mother of these children dies a few days before Sagwasinji travels away to long for food. The children live with their barren stepmother who does not give them food and so they decide to go to the farmlands to long for food. The two children eat *numbu* (Livingstone potato) and turn into elephants. When Sagwasinji returns from his travels

he goes to look for food and overhears the elephants trumpeting. He knows it is his two children who must have eaten *numbu* and turned into elephants. He sits under a tree at the centre of the farmland and then he calls the elephants, the elephants come close to him. He then gives them finger millet and tells the elephants, "My children, go wherever you like, I am also going my way." He goes back home and tells his wife, "From now on, you are no longer my wife. I am going away; you should also go away..." According to this version of the elephant story, this is how elephants came into being.

This version was probably enacted before colonialism when the Sangu perceived elephants and other organisms to relate to humans by blood and thus, lived in harmony with them and the other components of the environment. This perception is evident in that after Mr. Sagwasinji discovers the two elephants he sees in the field are his children who have turned into elephants after eating *numbu*, he calls them and gives them finger millet as food. The act of giving elephants food is an implication that human beings and elephants are closely related and that human beings are responsible for ensuring that the non-human part of nature is healthy.

Additionally, after Sagwasinji feeds the elephants, he announces publicly that elephants and human beings are related. He declares:

One vanangu; ukukhuma whangu! Mujendaje mumagunda
moona, mlijage amasoli na makhamba ga mapishi... Vaanu ni
jungwa tuli lukholo lumonga... Mwikhalaje apa!

English Translation

You are my children; you are from me! Roam around all the
farmlands, eat the grass and tree leaves... Human beings and
elephants are from one clan... Live here!

This same evidence is found at the end of the narration when the narrator puts the tale's final word as follows:

Lulwene mbakha ineng'ana, kuna jungwa panu pa Usango. Leelo, iJungwa vaanu vesu. Vaya, pina tivavone avana (iJungwa), tivasugaje wunofu ngaja vanesu, vinatisavile yuse.

English Translation

That is why till today, there are elephants in Usangu. Therefore, elephants are our children. Colleagues, when we see children (elephants), we should take a good care of them like our own children, born by ourselves.

From Sagwasinji's actions and statements and the narrator's final words, it is apparent that the elephant tale represents the reality about how well human beings co-existed with elephants and other organisms in the ecosystem. It shows that human beings had developed the awareness and respect for other organisms as their flesh and blood. This environmental wisdom prevailed in many traditional societies before colonialism. Many pre-colonial African societies had long-held wisdom in their culture that favoured and promoted the co-existence between human and non-human parts of nature. This wisdom and the accompanying repositories of knowledge were engrafted in their oral literature (Adugna, 2014). In this case, the tale is a true reflection of the African people's endogenous knowledge, experience and understanding for the promotion of environmental conservation.

This understanding contradicts the long-lived negative Eurocentric perception about human-nature relationship in Africa. Usually, the West tends to look at the African people as agents of environmental degradation because of the unproven claims that Africans lacked knowledge and any environmental sensibility. The perception that Africa was full of "...an irredeemable chaos of disease, violence, and poverty shaped not by history but by a savage spirit that makes any kind of progress impossible (Caminero-Santangelo 2014, p.17). Yet, the "Ijungwa Sikhandi Vaanu" tale invokes the reality that the African individual and his or her natural environment are related through their ancestry and that he or she always ensures the environment is healthy. Implicitly, the tale challenges the

imperial representations of Africa lacking history, development, and civilisation, which raises a question: “If the African people are sensible enough to protect their environment, why is it that the environment in the continent is highly degraded?” The continent generally experiences rapidly changing climatic and environmental conditions due to deforestation, overgrazing, biomass burning, increasing carbon pool in the atmosphere, increased methane emissions, use of agrochemicals, and much more. The second variable version of the elephant tale answers this conundrum.

In the second variant of the tale, two disturbing events remodel the first version. The first event portrays human beings staring at the ugly bodies of the ten elephants. The “ugly bodies” connote that the newly-introduced organisms in the setting are unpleasant. The portrayal of the bodies of elephants as being “ugly” shows that the organisms are unwished-for. They are unwished-for because they seem to be frightful, wretched, and therefore, vile. The introduction of this type of a visual imagination tells the audience that the new character is troublesome. It also creates an excitement about what is going to happen next. What happens next after the elephants are introduced in the scenery is that the vegetation shrinks and monkeys and baboons disappear. These two events implicate that the coming of the elephants into the setting poses a threat to other organisms.

The new elements introduced in this new version of the tale are meant to show that the relationship between humankind and the natural environment has changed. The portrayal of, for instance, the elephants having ugly bodies implies that the current generation of the Sangu people and the Africans in general, look at the elephants and the environment in general as something unpleasant and unimportant. This is quite different from the environmental inclination displayed in the first variant version of the elephant tale.

Also, the shrinking vegetation and the disappearance of monkeys and baboons imply that the harmonious existence of human and non-human beings. From the plot of the tale, the lack of harmoniousness is caused by the coming into the scenery of the ten elephants. The ten elephants also appear to signify the introduction of new people and culture into the Usangu plains that threaten the Sangu’s ways of life and eco-balance.

Furthermore, the ten elephants symbolise the introduction of colonialism through missionary activities. According to Gerhardt (2012), Christianity was introduced in Usangu by the Berlin Missionary Society between the 1880s and 1900s. In the first place, the missionaries built schools, medical centres, and churches. Through these institutions, some Sangu residents became converted to Christianity and abandoned their traditions and customs. This abandonment of traditions and customs is represented by the shrinking of vegetation and the disappearance of monkeys and baboons in the second variant version of the elephant tale.

Also, the ten elephants symbolise the immigration of ethnic groups that arrived in the Usangu plains for cultivation and livestock keeping. Sirima (2010) explains that by the 1950s, there were very few people in the Usangu plains, mainly the native Sangu. The Usangu plains were then covered with all sorts of natural vegetation and water bodies. The plains were suitable for crop cultivation and livestock keeping. This suitability attracted other people to immigrate into the area for permanent settlement.

The immigration of other ethnic groups into the study area had impliedly two levels of enculturation. The first level (positive) entails the influences of cultural practices such as singing and storytelling of the immigrant groups. Kaajan (2012) expounds that the immigrant groups came along with their traditions and customs and caused disappearance of some cultural practices of the Sangu. Kalenge (2012, p.54) shows how the immigrants altered the change and the disappearance of some Sangu songs and other cultural practices of the Sangu by diffusion:

... Usangu is full of people from different ethnic groups. These include the Hehe, Safwa, Nyiha, Sukuma, Maasai, and Kinga among many others. These got into Usangu longtime ago. Others went to Usangu for cultivation especially the cultivation of rice. The Maasai, Sukuma and Gogo went to Usangu because Usangu is endowed with beautiful gazing land... because Sangu are a few people and because they are proud and therefore do not often do their things openly, these immigrant ethnic groups continued living their traditional life uninfluenced by the Sangu. They did the drumming and singing of their traditional songs openly. This

had a gradual effect on the Sangu. Then the Sangu traditional practices including songs began to gradually change into something else...

The second enculturation level (negative) is based on the devastating effects of colonialism. The colonisation of Africa in the 1880s and its aftermath and the current technological development serve as globalising and neo-colonial agents that have eroded the African culture including their traditional environmental sensibility. As stated earlier, the introduction of Christianity in the Usangu plains, which was coupled with the building of schools, health centres and related institutions Christianised many of the Sangu, with Christianity often at odds with indigenous knowledge, particularly the inviolable link between the living and the dead as well as the land:

... The missionaries opened churches alongside with schools for Sangu to provide both Christian and secular education to enable them to convert their fellow Sangu... The church in Usangu employed some Sangu to work for the missionaries and stations that were opened. The employees were required to attend church services. This gradually made such indigenous people change their view about their traditional practices (Kalenge 2012, p. 57).

In an in-depth interview, one respondent, a former Christian preacher testified about the good that his Christian religion brought to the Usangu plains by claiming:

Ukristo ulitukuta tuna maisha ya kishetani. Wamishenari wakaona dhambi zetu, wakatuhubiri Injili na kututangazia msamaha wa dhambi zetu baada ya toba. Kwa upendo mkubwa, wakatujengea na shule ili tuondokane na mila na desturi za kishetani. Tukajifunza kusoma, kuandika na kuhesabu kwa Kiswahili. Tukawafundisha wamishenari lugha yetu. Baada ya kujifunza wamishenari wakaandika biblia ya Kisangu. Vile vile, wamishenari kwa kushirikiana na wazawa, wakatafsiri nyimbo za kanisa kwa Kisangu. Wakatujengea na hospitali pale Brandt ili tusitibiwe na mitishamba ya kishirikina. Haya ni maendeleo!

English Translation

Christianity found us living devilish lives. The missionaries saw our sins, they preached the Gospel and denounced our sins after repentance. With great love, they built us schools so that we can stop the devilish practices. We learnt reading, writing and simple arithmetic in Swahili. We taught the missionaries our language. After they had learnt the language, the missionaries wrote the Bible in Shisango. Likewise, the missionaries cooperated with the indigenous peoples in the writing of church hymns in Shisango. They built a hospital at Brandt so that we are not treated using witchery herbs. This is development!

This view overlooks other positive aspects that Christianity destabilised. However, as Kafumu (2017, p. 237) in *The History of Evangelization in Tanzania* further clarifies, this development was not unique to the Usangu plains but also affected other areas in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania:

From 1891 onwards the Berliner *Missionsgesellschaft* (Berlin Missionary Society) took responsibility for its mission field in the south of Tanzania among the Bena, Kinga, Hehe and Nyakyusa. The mission work commenced with difficulty. Political unrest and revolts were a threat. Yet after a time, parishes began to flourish, for example, in Manow, Kidugala, and Milow. Moreover, they did not forget the social action dimension of missionary work. They built schools and hospitals and opened printing press. In 1914 this missionary society consisted of 3,654 Christians.

In fact, when in the 1950s and 1960s the Bena, Kinga, Hehe and Nyakyusa were immigrating to the Usangu plains, their traditions and customs had already been altered into something else because of colonial influences in their homeland. This reignited the development and consolidation of Christianity and European culture into the Usangu plain. This fact is supported by the respondent's witness below:

Nisikilize kijana! Pamoja na kwamba Ukristo uliletwa na wamishenari hapa Usangu, kuenea kwake kulirahisishwa na ujio wa Wakristu wa

makabila ambayo yalishaacha mila na desturi na kuongokea Ukristo. Mfano, Wanyakyusa wakati wanahamia Usangu, walishakuwa wameongokea Ukristo na walipofika Usangu, wakaendeleza Ukristo wao. Kwa hiyo, Wasangu wengi waliujua Ukristo kupitia makabila ya wahamiaji kama vilewahehe, Wabena...

English Translation

Listen young man! Although Christianity was introduced by missionaries in Usangu, its spread was simplified by the immigration of ethnic groups that had already abandoned their traditions and customs in favour of Christianity. For example, when the Nyakyusa immigrated into Usangu, they had already been converted to Christianity and when they arrived in Usangu, they continued with Christianity. Therefore, many Sangu people knew Christianity through the immigrant ethnic groups like the Hehe, Bena...

At this point, the ten elephants symbolise the groups of people (already affected by missionary activities such as the Bena, Kinga, Hehe and Nyakyusa) who came into Usangu and disturbed the longstanding customs and traditions of the native Sangu. The shrinking of vegetation and the disappearance of monkeys and baboons after the ten Sagwasinji's children turn into elephants signals the change of cultural life of the Sangu people due to the diffusion of alien cultures brought to them by the immigrant groups (already affected by colonialism in their homelands).

The ten elephants further denote the advent of globalisation. According to Alli (2011), globalisation is the effort to converge all life systems in the world and increase human interactions to give rise to numerous new developments. Information and communication technology has enabled convergence, which has led to the expansion and advancement of western cultures, including languages and literature. The internet, telephones, and satellite televisions, among other things, have made it easier for individuals in Africa to widely embrace lifestyles that are foreign to them and originate in the West. The story's ending, in which Sagwasinji's offspring consume *numbu* and grow into elephants, is comparable to the present-day circumstances in the Usangu plains, where the Sangu have adopted non-native lifestyles. Kalenge (2012) also expounds how the current dearth of

research on the Sangu coupled with the absence of written Sangu dictionaries and storybooks in the face of globalization continue eroding the Sangu's endogenous knowledge and traditions. This loss privileges the diffusion of alien cultures into the Sangu people's lives.

Briefly, the shrinking of vegetation and disappearance of baboons and monkeys in the reformulated version of the elephant tale signals the ongoing climate change in the Usangu plains. The removal of soil cover leading to vast soil erosion; the use of artificial fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural wastes leading to water and air pollution amongst others are dominant in the study area. Kangalawe (2012) states categorically that there is a predominance of environmental insecurity and subsequent climatic changes in the Usangu plains, which leads to increased temperatures, decreased rainfall and rainfall variability since the 1990s. More significantly, both the first and second versions of the elephant tale show that the Sangu are cognisant of things occurring in and affecting their area. They have the knowledge of the changing state of the environment, the causes of such changes and their impacts. The insertion of human characters staring at the ugly bodies of elephants, the disappearing of monkeys and baboons, and the shrinking of vegetation all attest to how the Sangu are increasingly aware of how their environment is changing and, as a result, they remake their tales to reflect such a changing state and morphing reality.

The second version of the tale severally serve as a tool for responsive adjustment or adaptation to climate change experienced in the Usangu plain. John Matthews in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Change* (2014) states that human beings have the capability of adapting or adjusting and readjusting to changing environmental conditions. According to Matthews, the adaptation may take several forms including the change of behaviour. The change of behaviour also includes the remodelling of the tales. The remodelling or rather the twisting or remaking is meant to make the tales reflect the ongoing context of climate change.

The second tale "Umutwa nu Mwehe Waakwe" (The Chief and His Wife) is actually a remake of an older version, "Umutwa na Avatambule Vaakwe"

(The Chief and His Sub-chiefs). These two tales are produced in varying sociocultural contexts. The older “Umutwa na Avatambule Vaakwe” version was, probably, produced when the Usangu plains and other regions in Tanzania were headed by chiefs. The time in which the chief was respected as a sole leader of an ethnic group with all powers vested in him in the chieftainness. In the tale, the paramount chief decides to abdicate from his position and summons his sub-chiefs to inform them about his decision and the mechanism he will use to get his successor. After Mabikha fulfils the conditions given for one to be officiated as the chief, it is the chief that declares Mabikha his heir. This style of political organisation was common in many parts of Africa. In African societies, political leadership and power were vested in the hands of the chief or chieftainness. The chief was chosen from amongst the heads of the various lineages to serve as a political and religious leader of his or her people. As a political leader, he/she was responsible for maintaining peace and security and making decisions on matters affecting his or her ethnic group. As a religious leader, the chief was the representative of the living men and women to the ancestors and spirits. The chief was helped by sub-chiefs in the governance of the ethnic group (Palagashvili, 2018).

This ethnic model of social structure and leadership in Tanzania became defunct officially in 1963 with the amendment of the Local Government Ordinance, which repealed the *Native Authority Ordinance* (URT, 1963). With the official or legal dissolution of chieftaincies, all the longstanding traditions and state culture like myriad beliefs, rites of passages, and interconnectedness of the living to the dead were shunted aside, at least in theory. As such, the “Umutwa nu Mwehe Waakwe” tale had to be remade in line with the prevailing realities, particularly for reviving ritual activities of the Sangu. It contains all the procedures participants adorning ritualistic garments by participants, the sanctification of the participants at the entrance gate, the slaughtering of sacrificial animals, and the pouring of grains of finger-millet and, finally, the procession of spiritualists and other participants. All these ritual steps are fixed and must be followed without question.

With the present decline of interest of the people to follow endogenous religion in Africa (the religion that is friendly to the natural environment), this variant tale is meant to rejuvenate endogenous religion and the relationship between the Sangu people and their deity. According to Diawuo and Issifu (2015), traditional African societies had established complex belief systems that centralised all the powers and authority to the chiefs as both political and religious leaders and developed complicated values, norms, taboos, totems and closed seasons through oral expressions like myths in order to preserve, conserve and manage the physical environment to better the lives of the people. The use of tales is therefore important in revivifying endogenous environmental conservation practices.

Subsequently, the “Umutwa nu Mwehe Waakwe” tale morphed into the “Umutwa na Avatambule Vaakwe” variant version to first of all hint that the physical environment in the study area is changing. Secondly, it shows that the change experienced is caused by the disregarding of the long-established socio-political systems overseen by the chief. Natascha Zwaal (2003) in *Narratives for Nature: Storytelling as a Vehicle for Improving the Intercultural Dialogue on Environmental Conservation in Cameroon* explain that the abolishing of the socio-political systems by neo-postcolonial states in Africa in the name of consolidating their political hegemony brought about the decline of the environment-sensible culture while giving rise to embracing the Western environmental conservation ideas that are designed to benefit the development and sustenance of imperialism.

The third tale, “Umuhinja ni Nyula” (The Girl and the Frogs), is the first variant in which a beautiful young lady called Ngele strives to avoid drinking water from flog-infested sources. However, her parents caution her that finding a water body without frogs is mission impossible. The arrogant and beautiful girl insists that she cannot drink from such water sources. One day, Ngele feels thirsty and decides to roam around the village to find a water body not ‘polluted’ by frogs. Wherever she goes for water, she overhears flogs croaking. All the songs she hears are about the importance of water and that flogs are present in every water source and, thus, unavoidable. At some point in her longing, Ngele finds a girl fetching

water from the swamp. She despises and ridicules her because she fetches Ngele dismisses as 'dirty' water. Ngele spends the whole day without finding a water source without c r o a k i n g frogs. Because of arrogance, she dies from craving thirst.

In the second variant of the tale, Ngele, who is now a graduate avoids greeting the villagers and drinking from the village wells. She claims that villagers are dirty and sorcerous. She dislikes and avoids village water altogether because it is nasty and spreads diarrhoea and typhoid due to the frogs that dwell in these water sources. One day when she feels thirsty, she decides to roam around the village so she can find a water source without frogs. She does so the whole day. At every water source she visits, Ngele overhears frogs croaking the following lyrics:

*Ngele, tili mumalenga,
Ngele tili mumakhoga.
Ngele tili mumalamba,
Ngele tili mumasima.
Ngele tilipopona pala.
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee,
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee,
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee.*

English translation

Ngele we are in the water,
Ngele we are in the rivers.
Ngele we are in the swamps.
Ngele we are in the wells.
Ngele we are everywhere.
Ngele tilipopona pala.
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee,
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee,
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee.

Because of severe thirst, the girl finally drinks the village water to quench her thirst and avoid dying of it. The irony of this song is that the now educated girl is much of the cancer to the villagers than the frogs she dreads.

This second variant of the tale has been remodelled to capture the ongoing water pollution scourge in the Usangu plains. In this regard, Mwakalila (2011) reports that the Usangu plains have been experiencing water pollution in all water sources due to the ever-expanding irrigation agriculture, which heavily relies on industrial chemical fertilizers, and harmful pesticides that contaminate water with chemicals and diseases. Water pollution does not only affect human beings; it also affects other organisms in the plains, as Mwakalila (2011, pp. 879-880) further explicates:

...between 30% and 60% of the water abstracted for irrigated agriculture is returned to rivers. In many instances this water is polluted with salts, fertilisers and pesticides.

...Leaching of excess nutrients from farms into water sources... damages aquatic flora and fauna by producing algal blooms and depressing dissolved oxygen levels. Increased sediment loads in rivers arising from erosion of agricultural land have a negative impact on downstream aquatic ecosystems and also result in increased siltation in downstream channels, reservoirs and other hydraulic infrastructure.

The remake of the frogs' tale seeks to capture this essence shows the main character, Ngele, avoiding drinking from village water sources because she fears it is contaminated with waterborne diseases, typhoid and diarrhoea. She moves from one water source to another, but she does not find any water without frogs. Frogs in this specific case serve as stand-ins for water pollution resulting from agriculture that uses chemical fertilizers and pesticides which end up getting discharged into the water bodies and lead to the eruption of diseases, as Mwakalila explanation has aptly elaborated.

A sub-plot in this tale emerges when Ngele drinks the 'dirty' (contaminated) water, which signals that the people in the Usangu plains have no option, but to continue using the polluted water. Impliedly, the present generation of humankind (represented by Ngele) is failing to find a lasting solution—as an educated villager—and instead succumbs to the dictates of the ongoing environmental challenges. It means the present younger generation seems not to care about climate change and

conservation. What they care about is continuously utilising the environmental resources for individual interest. As a result, Ngele who is supposed to know better that the water is dirty and can cause ailments, drinks it all the same regardless of the inherent dangers.

There appears to be carelessness for the environment epitomised by Ngele's contempt for the villagers since she is a graduate. The narrator says, "When she came back from college, she looked at the village people and despised them because she said they were dirty and witchery." Ngele, as a university graduate, looks at everything African as barbaric, mischievous, useless, uncivilized and much worse, thanks to the colonial legacy and imperialist forays. In this regard, Anthony Nanson (2021) posits that imperialist civilisation is spread largely through classroom schooling where the teaching, learning and enculturation are designed to provide students, like Ngele, with national and globalised culture often divorced from traditional indigenous knowledge. By doing so, Africans lose their endogenous ecological knowledge.

Ngele may also be equated to Ocol in Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*. Ocol, who has embraced modernity after getting a formal Western education scorn his village wife for being too traditional and wayward, for living a primitive and uncouth life. Caminero-Santangelo (2014, p.39) further explicates:

The Western-educated Ocol parrots' colonial discourse and, in particular, continuously offers up the image of Africa as a savage wilderness with nothing of intrinsic value; he wants to utterly transform the continent by destroying African cultures, environments, and selves and replacing them with their "civilized" European equivalents. He has rejected Lawino, the voice of tradition, as the representative of all he has come to despise.

This disregard for traditions and customs appears to be the root-cause of the neglecting of the environment in Africa and forfeiture of the endogenous ecological knowledge.

The fourth tale "Kwashi Inwiga sina Singo Nali" (Why Giraffes Have Long Necks). In the first variant tale, the giraffes are portrayed as having usual-

short necks. One day, the giraffes' mother tells her calves not to eat the seeds of trees because if they do, their necks will elongate:

Vanangu, pinamwitakiilya musikhajelaga, kiilya amasesengo go gona gala mwihakha umo. Nda mulye insingo, sisivenali mwapuligha?

English Translation

My children when you go for grazing do not eat the seeds of trees. If you eat, your necks will elongate, do you understand?

However, on the following day the calves graze in the bush and find seeds of the trees to be more plentiful than tree leaves and grasses, so they ignore their mother's advice, and, as a result, their necks elongate, which explains why giraffes have such longnecks and avoid eating tree seeds for fear of their necks elongating even further.

In a modified version of the tale, Giraffe lives with other organisms in a single locale. Giraffe has a friend called Hare. One day Giraffe notices that the canopies of trees have toothsome and green leaves, so she asks Hare for advice on how she may reach the apex of trees to eat the leaves. Hare advises her to stretch her neck until she reaches the appetizing leaves. Giraffe heeds the advice and stretches until both her neck and legs elongate, and she reaches the apex and becomes comfortable. As years pass by, she realises that with an unusually long neck and long legs she cannot reach and eat the beautiful grass and leaves on the lower branches. She again decides to ask Hare to do her a favour by cutting the grass she cannot reach and leaves from the low branches and climb up with them to Giraffe's neck for her to eat the green foliage. Hare declines. She then asks other organisms including the tortoise for an exchange of the neck and legs but to no avail. Till today, no organism turns up for such help.

The first version of the tale was most, probably, produced in a distant past when oral literature was the only medium through which the Sangu stored, narrated, recited, sung and chanted societal wisdom, memories, understanding and skills for various occasions to edify especially young people on various matters relating to societal life including environmental protection and promotion in intergenerational communication. Nwakaego

(2016) explains that pre-colonial African societies made storytelling a complete formal classroom. This class was run by experienced persons meant to pass on ideas, values, norms, beliefs and culture in its entirety unto their family and community members (Merolla, 2016). The tales like “Kwashi Inwiga sina Singo Nali” and their pedagogical structures emphasised the need for young people (represented by the giraffe’s calves) to adhere to the words of the older individuals in the society (represented by giraffes’ mother) – received wisdom.

The second variant of the tale accommodates modifications and embellishments for didactic reasons too. It warns the people against the misuse of environmental resources like air, water and land, which causes climate change. Like giraffe (struggling to feed on higher foliage), humankind involves in the endless struggle to exploit opportunities brought by the presence of water, land and other environmental resources needed for survival. This struggle has led to the destruction of the environment leading to climate change. Such destruction affects humanity and other organisms in various ways like the eruption of diseases, the occurrences of floods and drought and the widespread of environmental-related deaths. This aspect is akin to what happens to Giraffe. When she stretches her neck and reaches the tree canopies, she is disgraced by the fact that she can no longer feed on lower vegetation. She regrets having elongated her neck and asks for an exchange of it. This is the present situation in the Usangu plains, where the environment is highly depleted, hence putting people’s lives at stake.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this study makes it abundantly evident that urgent action is needed to restore the deteriorated ecology of the Usangu plains and the world at large. The examination of the four stories and academic reports reveals that the Usangu plains’ sociocultural contexts have been undergoing periodic change, which has impacted the evolution and eradication of Sangu culture that was supportive of environmental preservation. The article's commentary suggests that to restore the environment, people's cultures must first be revived. In this case, this means reviving the storytelling tradition, which provides a meaningful basis for interactions between the environment and humanity. This study also

suggests that local people should be fully involved in nature protection, and that governments and other relevant stakeholders in environmental conservation should make sure of this. Governments and other stakeholders need to be well-versed in the oral literature and culture of the people to engage them. Furthermore, understanding how these indigenous people's literary forms speak, there is an increasing need for scientific studies and research on oral literature, which includes riddles, proverbs, songs, and dance.

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Appendices

This section of the article is meant to present the original versions of the four narratives and their variable forms as collected from the narrations given by the storytellers. The tales are presented in Shisango and in English as translated by the researcher.

Ijungwa Sikhandi Vaanu (First Variable Tale)

Pamwandi pala akhandi nu wikhalo umunu ishemeletwa Sagwasinji. Sagwasinji akhandi na vadala vavili. Umudala waakwe wa wuvele akhandi asisava, umudala waakwe uwawuvili akhandi na vaana vavili, umudimi yumo nu muhinja yumo. Umudala Vaakwe wa wuvili akhafwile na kuvalekha vana waakwe visungwa nu baba waakwe nu wa kulubali.

Umwakha gumonga, kikhuma infwa ya mudala waakwe wa wuvili. Pakhamila uwuchefu wa shakilya, Sagwasinji akhavajovele avanaakwe kija, "Nilutila kusakula ishakilya musikhalutaga kumagunda kisakula inumbu mwikho vanangu." Kukhuma apo wamujovela umudala waakwe, "Mudala wangu, nilomba valelela ava avana usikhavalkhaga vate kumagunda." Umudala wa Sagwasinji akhaitishile, "Nakuyelewa mugosi wangu."

Ulwamilau yenyikhafuatile Usagwasinji akhashulile, panawavesaga kuwatova avanishe na kuvafinya ishakilya, avanishe vakhalamile kita kumagunda. Penekhandi valikumagunda vakhapatile inimbu valya amadule gaakwe, vaganaga kiilya hela inumbu vakhapitwishe jungwa na kiyansa kiyiga mumagunda.

Sagwasinji penekhandi iwuya kukhaya kikhuma kulushulo lwaake, kweneakhandi atile kisakula ishakilya akhapulishe lyowo lya jungwa. Peneakhandi ihivikhaniya kwa mukhati akhamanyile kijija vakhandi vanaakwe vakhapitwishe kiva jungwa panyuma akhakhele pansu palipishi akhahumishe khatambikha na mutama kuvashemesha na kuvashemesa avana Vaakwe. Venevakhapitwishe na kiiva jungwa. Ijungwa sikhavejelile kuno silunduma. Penesikhavegelile, Sagwasinji akhavajovela:

*Omwe muvanaangu. Omwe mwakhuma kunyangu!
Gendaji mumagunda goona, lisaji amasoli na*

makhamba vanangu. Lutaji ko kona kula. Ino niiluta yune, niluta kutali. Musilute kutali manyi. Musitine apa. Avaanu ni jungwa vikhuma kulukholo lumo, khalaji apa.

Vaganaga kilogola ni jungwa, Sagwasinji akhatinile kukhaya wamujovela umudala waakwe:

Kuyansa isala isi na kiiluta uwe usili mudala vaangu, niluta kutali. Niluta kutali khansi mugane ukhaleshe avanaangu valye inumbu na kipitukha jungwa. Owe usili mudala vaangu. Sina wikhalo apa, niiluta yune, lutaga yuwe khansi.

Kikhuma apo, Sagwasinji akhawushile yumwene kwa kiiva avanishe vakhapitwishe jungwa.

Ndio nulwene ulo mbakha ineng'ana, kuna jungwa kuwusang, ijungwa vanesu, vakholo lwaangu ndatovaje avana tivayinatile ngajaga vaana vesu venetisavile.

English Translation

Long time ago, there lived a man by the name Sagwasinji. Sagwasinji had two wives. His first wife was barren. His second wife had two children, one boy and one girl. This second wife died and left her two children under the custodian of their father and step-mother.

The year after the death of Mr. Sagwasinji's second wife, there came a severe shortage of food. Mr. Sagwasinji told his children that, "I am going to long for food, do not go to the farmlands for numbu, it is taboo my children". Then he told his wife, "My wife, take good care of these children, do not let them go to the farmlands." Mr. Sagwasinji's wife responded, "It's okay my husband."

The next morning, Mr. Sagwasinji travelled. After his travel, his wife started beating the children and denying them food. The children then decided to go to the farmlands. In the farmlands, they found numbu and ate the tuber.

Immediately after eating numbu, they turned into elephants and started roaming in the farmlands.

When Mr. Sagwasinji was coming back from where he went to long for food, he heard the trumpeting of elephants. After a deep thought, he discovered that it was his children that had turned into elephants. He then sat under a tree, poured finger millet and then called his children that had turned into elephants. The elephants came while trumpeting. After they approached him, Mr. Sagwasinji told the elephants:

You are my children. You are from me! Roam around all farmlands. Eat grasses and leaves. My children, go wherever you like, I am also going my way. I am going away; you should also go away and come back here. Human beings and elephants are from one clan, one family. Live here!

After he had talked to the elephants, Mr. Sagwasinji went back home and told his wife:

From now on, you are no longer my wife. I am going away; you should also go away. Dear, you let my children eat numbu and turn into elephants. You are not my wife. I will not stay here, I am going my way, and you too should go your way.

Thereafter, Mr. Sagwasinji left the place because his children had turned into elephants.

That is why till today, there are elephants in Usangu. Therefore, elephants are our children. Colleagues, when we see children (elephants), we should take a good care of them like our own children, born by ourselves.

Ijungwa Sikhandi Vaanu (Second Variable Tale)

Pamwandi pala akhandi akhwali munu yumonga itambulwa Sagwasinji. Sagwasinji akhandi na vadala vavili na vana lishumi limo. Mudala Vaakwe wa wuwele akhandi mugumba, ino avana vala (avadimi vavili na vahinja mnana) vakhandi vana va mudala wavuwili. Ulukholo ulu vakhandi vakhele wunofu na vashendefu makha minshi. Kihuma apo gwahumile mwakha gumonga inonya satonyile nyinshi, yaletile uwushefu wukhome wa shakilya kwa kiva avanu vagombwele kilima amalenga gali minshi, ni njala yali khome na malava ni nfwu. Mudala wa wuwili wa Sagwasinji wafovile, avana Vaakwe yayansa kisungwa nu mudala vaakwe mukhome.

Ulusiku lumo Usagwasinji walamula kwila kutali kihemela ili kiponia uwumi wa lukholo lwaake. Pina ashanali kiwukha, wamujovela umudalala waakwe umuvaha avalele wunofu avanishe. Wavajovela khanshi avanishe vamwene vasikalisaga inumbu nda valyee vakhasetukha kiva jungwa. Bahene wawukha. Penekhandi kwasina umudala akhandi ikivafinya avanishe amasungo. Akhandi akivafinya avana ishakilya ishinang'ana shene khandi shikwali. Avana vakhahepelese nsiku sivili vaganaga kugobola valamula kihata kumagunda kisakhula shoshona shila shenambivwesa kilya. Kimagunda vasikhawene ishakilya ila inumbu. Avana valamulaga kilya inumbu valeshe kifwa vaganaga kilya. Vasetukhaga kiva jungwa ngaja uwihanave shenewavajovelaga.

Baheene, penekhandi vasetwikhe kiva jungwa, amasoli (liplelemehe, linyamaji and livimbili) na mapishi manofu goona (lipogolo and litamba) gayundaga wiita mboga. Ingisi yingilanga pamagunga na mapishi goona. Imwandunga soona sanyilaga. Avaanu vegelelaga khushangala ijungwa na mavili gakhwe; ni imwandunga sesinyila na masoli na mapishi gegiyunda.

Usagwasinji penekhandi iwuya kihuma kutali akhasajile ijungwa. Akhawene ululembo lwiwota waganaga kihiva luhavi ludodo, wamanyaga kija kiva jungwa vaganaga kiilya inumbu, bahene waaja:

Inyi iyi yikhandi yinojele. Silikwi imuma senesinyila? Lelela ilyowo ilivi lilya ijungwa. Ijungwa iso vanaangu! Umwe mlivanaangu mwakhumagha kunyangu. Pilimaji kumagunda

*kona lisaji amasoli na makhamba gamapishi. Nda
apole munu akavakhana mjovelaje kija mukhandi
vaanu, umunu ni jungwa valilukholo lumo kihuma
ineng'uni iyi khalaji apa.*

English Translation

Long time ago, there lived a man called Sagwasinji. Sagwasinji lived with his two wives and ten children. His first wife was barren, so the ten children (two boys and eight girls) were born by the second wife. This family lived very well and was happy for many years. Thereafter, came years of heavy rain. This led to severe shortage of food because people did not engage in cultivation due to flooding. This resulted into violent hunger, starvation and death. Due to this, Mr. Sagwasinji's second wife died. The children were then cared for by the first wife.

One day, Mr. Sagwasinji decided to travel far away to long for food in order to save the lives of his family members. Before he left, he told his wife to care for the children. He also told his children not to eat *numbu* (Livinstone potato) for if they ate, they could turn into elephants. Then, he left. However, when he was away, his wife denied the children the care they wanted. She refused to give the children the little food she had. They tolerated for two days before they decided to go to the farms to look for something to eat. In the farmlands, there was nothing eatable except *numbu*. The children decided that they eat *numbu* to avoid death. After they ate, they turned into elephants as told by their father.

Immediately after they turned into elephants, the farmlands beautified by shinning grasses like *lipelele*, *linyamaji* and *livimbili*; aromatic trees like *lipogolo* and *litamba* shrank; the shades of these trees, darkened. The monkeys and baboons that used these trees as dwelling places disappeared. There came in the scenery, human beings staring at the ugly bodies of the elephants. They wondered at the disappearance of monkeys and baboons and at the shrinking of the vegetation.

When Mr. Sagwasinji was coming back, from afar, he saw the elephants. He saw the vegetation shrinking. After a minute of thought and reflection, he remembered the taboo of *numbu*. He realized that it is his children that

had turned into elephants and caused the change of the scenery. Then he said:

This land was beautiful! Where are the flipping monkeys! See the elephants trumpeting their ugly sounds. The elephants are my children! You are my children. You are from me! Roam around all farmlands. Eat grasses and leaves. If anyone stops you, tell him that you were once humans. Human beings and elephants are from one clan. From now on, live here!

Umutwa nu Mwehe Waakwe (First Variable Tale)

Akhandi akwali Umutwa nu mwehe waakwe. Umutwa akhandi akhele wunofu na vaanu Vaakwe, asikhavapelele amalava avaanu Vaakwe. Isiku limonga akhamujovela umudala Vaakwe, "Mudala vaangu nilikholela kiifwa, ulujinji lwangu lusingasigala luganya mlongosi, sivashemese Avatambule vaangu kuvasenjela na kuvajesa penepasigele." Vaganaga kiyisa Avatambule Vaakwe wavapelaga, vajese akhavajovela:

Nivashemesise apa, ninaliswi. Ngosipe mandu nilikholela kiifwa. Inyi yangu yisihwanile kikhala yingaya mlongosi. Nisakula imwela nimanya omwe woona musakula penepalishishi ino penepalishishi pamo hela. Nikwoapela, nivajese yenekhambii kumela inumbula ya khawulu yeneakhele kushanya kumupishi kwa kitosa iling'anga na kumubuda bahobaho asive muhalano vaangu.

Avatambule Vaakwe vakhawuyile kunyanava na kuvasimila avaanu vanao injowo isi (Mbalino). Akhandi akwali umudimi yumo ilitawa akhandi ishemelwa Mabikha, akhavajovele avasafi vyaakwe vakhandi isakula penepalishishi. Pawutwa avasafi Vaakwe vakhandi lupuji na malamulo gaakwe viija kiija akhandi mwana mudodo

manji kitola imwasi iyo kumusimira alekhana ilyo ilihosa. Avatambule vamutwa vakhandi vayinatia bahene valutaga kumbalino.

Umabikha asikhavapulisise khabisa avasafi Vaakwe na akhalutile kutali kusakula ikhawulu yenekushanya kulipishi. Akhajendile ulujendo ulutali isikhayaajile ikhawulu sheneakhandi isakula Umutwa. Panyuma akhayiwene ikhawulu kushanya kulipishi. Akhatosise iling'anga limo na kuyibuda inkhawulu kulipishi. Kikhuma apo akhaholile inumbula yaakwe na kumutwalila Umutwa. Bahene Umutwa akhahumise inkolo kiija Umabikha mutwa wasalasi.

Ulusimo lukutufundisa tisikhabedalilaga avanang'ana kwa kiiva shila shinu shiwumbilwe nu Nguluwi.

English Translation

There was a chief and his wife. The chief lived well with his people. He did not oppress his people. One day he told his wife, "My wife, I am about to die, my land should not remain without a chief. I will summon all my sub-chiefs so I can try them for the position."

When the sub-chiefs came, he gave them a trial. He told them:

I have called you here, I have a word. I am of old age and about to die. My land shouldn't stay without a leader. I need an heir. I know you all need this position but there is just one vacant position. I am giving you a trial: whosoever finds for me the heart of a monitor lizard stationed on a tree by throwing a stone and killing it from there, he will be my predecessor.

All the sub-chiefs went back to their domicile and told their people of this tidings from Mbalino.

There was one young man by the name, Mabikha who told his parents that he wanted the chief's position. His parents were against his decision because they said he was still too young to take the chieftainship. They asked him to stop thinking about that. They said that the sub-chiefs were fit

for the position that is why they went to Mbalino.

Mabikha did not listen to her parents and went away to try and find a monitor lizard stationed on a tree. He went several miles without seeing a monitor lizard on a tree as required by the leader. Finally, he found a monitor lizard on a tree. He shot just one stone and killed the monitor lizard from there. He then took the heart and brought it to the chief. Then the chief announced Mabikha as the new chief.

The tale teaches us that we should despise the small ones because everything is created by God.

Umutwa na Avatambule Vaakwe (Second Variable Tale)

Pamwandi akhandi akwali Umutwa na Avatambule vaakwe avanang'ana. Umutwa uyo akhakhele na vaanu vaakwe wunofu. Asivapelile itabu ulo lukhamugahile. Kuwatawala luhavi lutali. Ilisiku limonga walamwoile kilakha insengo kumleshela munu yungi ave mutwa. Bahene washemesise isikhalo na vatwa avanang'ana ili avajovele ulujowo lwa kituya. Waatuma umwanandeje kuwatwa avadodo. Lwaholile insiku mashumi gana (40) kifisa umwanandeje kuwatwa avadodo wona.

Ulusiku lwanangano, Umutwa akhakhele pa shigoda sha wutwa, afwalile amenda manofu ga nkwembe ya senga nitu, mbalafu na kahawia, akhete ulukwegu lwa kitwa lwene lunose nu mupishi gwa mapelemehe, mashe ilangi ya danda ya senga ngoosi. Kivambalula awachemelwagwa likhambakho. Avatwa avadodo kihuma shila lujinji mukhati mwa mfalme vakhandi pa wulongolo. Avatwa vadodo vakhafwalile amenda ga nkwembe nitu sa mene, shila munu akhandi akhete ishidungulu ishinyamugoda gwa kuyiyosa gwishemelwa Kiihata. Kiihata guhumisiwa na valongosi va dini sa kifunya pa mulyango gwa kiyinjilila kwa mutwa umugoda gukhahumisiwe kwa wona kuvayosa na Makhosi ni sambu.

Asinayanse Umutwa kilogola, avatwa avadodo Umutwa wavalajisa avajajila va dini kiyinsa pene akwali na kuvalongosa avaanu venekhandi vakwali kiluta kwene akwali Umutwa kuhumya. Ililugu lya vanjajila vafwalile amenda amanose kwa makhamba ga mapishi, vamufwata Umutwa vijenda lilugu kuno viyimba inyimbo sa kugayinula amanguluvi kwa mutwa kwa kivi senga sakinjwaga uwutine nu

wulesi vakunulaga pansi, Umutwa na vaanu vaakwe vatinaga kunang'ano viyimba ulwimbo lya kishendeve. Luchemesewa (uwutwa) vala avatwa avanang'ana vahangana nu mutwa na vaanu vaakwe kiyimba. Uluwungo lwagana kisila pashamihe Umutwa wakhala pashitengo shakwe utwa na kihumiya iliswi.

Navachemesa panu nina lujowo. Isala iyi one nituya insengo gwafikha nalamula kileshela uwuvanda uwu. Nimanya omwe wona msakula uwutwa uwu. Ino lelo ndema kudalikhana. Nomwe vatufa vanang'ana namuhagula Umutwa pakhafi yenyu. Ndeno kigaha ndeno nalamula shinu nihumiya, nikho yoyona yenaambiva na gwa khawuru yene ambi itosa iling'anga kushanya kulipishi na kumugala ayishe yumwene pansi ya lipishi amubudaje uyo ambi iva munya kihara wangu. Nigomoshela ndema kidaling'a na nomwe.

Ikhola yaganaga kikhola ishikhalo na vatwa avadodo vawuyaga kukhaya sanave. Umudimi yumonga ishemelwa Mabikha akhapulisho amaswi aga, walamula kija ambigaha shemeambigiva ave mutwa avasehe vaakwe na vakhola waakwe vamukhona umabikha wakhona kilakha kusakula uwutwa, wataga kumugunda kwa mbuya waakwe akayifishile ikhawulu kushanya kulipishi lya mukhondo yikhanda khawulu ngosi. Umabikha wavalomba amasokha wapelwa uwutwa. Wayilomba yila ikhawulu yiyishe, umudimi yula wakhola ipanga wayiteha wamudumula insingo. Yila inkhawulu wamutwala kwa mutwa. Bahene Umutwa kumuyenesa umabikha kiva mutwa. Wavatumaga Avatambule kiiluta khona kuvajovela vaanu wona kija umabikha wava mutwa.

English Translation

There lived a chief and his sub-chiefs. The chief lived with his people very well. He did not disturb his people. This made him rule the people for a so long. However, one day he made his mind and decided to retire and let someone else rule the people. So, he called a meeting for the sub-chiefs in order to let them know his decision to leave office. He sent his messenger to all the sub-chiefs. It took 40 days for the messenger to convey the message of the meeting to all the sub-chiefs.

In the day of the meeting, the chief sat on his throne (the symbol of power and majesty), dressed up with a beautiful and unbleached cowhide with black, white and brown colours; holding a chief's stick made from a Lipelemehe tree and coloured by the blood of a sacrificial uncastrated adult male cow called Likambakho. His audiences were the sub-chiefs from all the suburbs of the land. The sub-chiefs were dressed in black leather made from the hides of goats; each one holding a gourd filled with a sanctification medicine called, Kiikhata. Kiikhata is provided by the spiritualist at the chief's entrance gate. The medicine was given to the participants in order that they get cleansed from curses, misfortunes and immoralities.

Before he delivered his speech, the chief ordered the spiritualists to come to the chief's compound and lead the congregants to a designated place within the chief's compound for a scheduled ritual activity. A special team of spiritualists with their garments made from makhamba (that is, tree leaves), followed the chief in a procession while singing songs of praise and adoration to God, spirits and ancestors and to the incumbent chief. The cows were then slaughtered; maize flour and the grains of finger millet were poured for sacrifice. Thereafter, the chief and his team of spiritualists came back to the meeting with the singing of a jubilation song called, "Uwutwa" meaning, the chieftainship. The sub-chiefs also joined the singing. After all the jubilations that lasted in the evening, the chief sat on his throne and pronounced his decision to retire:

I have called you here, I have an issue. My time to retire has come. I have made up my mind to step down from this noble position. I know you all need the position. However, I do not want to quarrel with you the sub-chiefs by appointing a successor. I do not want to look for someone who can rule this land after me. I have devised a mechanism for that. I have a condition, whosoever finds for me the heart of a monitor lizard, from a monitor lizard

stationed on a tree, the one who by a shot of a stone will make the lizard come down deliberately, then kill it, the person who may be able to do this, will be my heir. I repeat, I do not want you to quarrel with you!

After the proclamation, the meeting ended, and the sub-chiefs went to their places with the tidings that the chief's position is vacant. Upon hearing this news, one young man called Mabikha took the risk of finding the monitor lizard's heart. His parents and relatives discouraged the boy from taking the risk because he was still young. However, the boy was determined to take the risk for the position. He, therefore, went to his grandfather's farmlands and found on a baobab tree, a male monitor lizard. He prayed to God, spirits and the ancestors that he gets the favour to take the position. Finally, he asked the monitor lizard to descend from the tree and lie down. The monitor lizard slowly descended and lied down as asked. Then, the boy drew a machete and slowly cut the chest of a monitor lizard and took it to the chief. The chief then declared Mabikha as the new chief. The chief sent the messenger to all the suburbs to let all the people of the land know that Mabikha is the chief.

Umuhinja ni Nyula (First Variable Tale)

Walikwali Umuhinja yumo munofu akhandi ichemelwa Ngele. Ishiyoli shoona ungele akhandi ifwala inkofila kumutwe, malembo kunsingo ni gauni nofu ungaja nwiga. Ungele akhandi ijenda kitoga. Ilisiku limonga kumilimo milimo sakwe akhapolishe ulwimbo kwa Nyula. Ulwimbo lukhayimbile ndeni:

Amalenga ga wusangu, ndawuli!

Amalenga ga wusangu, manofu!

Amalenga ga Ihifu, ndawuli!

Amalenga ga Ihifu, manofu!

Amalenga ga Mkoji, ndawuli!

Amalenga ga Mkoji, manofu!

Amalenga ga Mpolo, ndawuli!

Amalenga ga Mpolo, manofu!

Amalenga ga Mambi, ndawuli!

Amalenga ga Mambi, manofu!

Penekhandi iwejela kholela khulilamba wamanyile kija pakhandi nu mudala inega amalenga kihuma mulilamba. Khwa mbedaji ni mate Akhamubedalile Umuhinja wajova kiija:

Owe muhinja munang'ana, usipulikha ilyowo la Nyula? Usipulikha uwinya? Usikhanegaga amalenga gene inyula sikhala mukhati yakwe. Amalenga ago mashafu mugane. Siwesa kitumila amalenga ngaja aga shiba nfwe. Isiku limonga khamwajile umayi wangu inega amalenga. Ngajago nikhamujovele, asikhamelage ishakilya shene ateleshele amalenga ago nsiwesa hata avasafi valifinofu ni ili, siwesa kitumila amalenga ngaja ago. Inyula inchafu sigona mumalenga ago, situndila na kifwila mumo, nchafu mandu.

Vaganaga injowo iso, inyula salakhaga kiyimba ulwimbo ulo na kiyansa ulwimbo ulunji lukhashemelilwe "Ngele" lukhandi lunachipata chakija lakha njese, mukhati mwa lwimbo ulo, inyula sikhamujovele Umuhinja kiija nda Nyula sinaukisibapa, hambu wiifwa kwa kiva inyula silipopoona pala pene pana malenga, ulwimbo ulo lwiymbwa ndeni:

Ngele, tili mumalenga,

Ngele tili mumakhoga.

Ngele tili mumalamba,

Ngele tili mumasima.

Ngele tilipopoona pala.

Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeeee,

Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeeee,

Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeeee.

Umuhinja uyo akhavabedalile inyula na kiluta ni ulushalo lwaake kisakula amalenga amanofu pene akhapilime kona yona asikhapatile uluhwano lolona lwa malenga gene khandi gagaya Nyula mukhsti yaakwe. akhalutile kukhaya ni khau yaakwe. akhandi achanali nuwuhonje, avasafi Vaakwe vakhamulapile ang'wele amalenga wakhanaga. Saganaga kiishila insiku sina Umuhinja akhafwoile kihumasa ni khau nu wuhonje.

English Translation

Once upon a time, there lived a beautiful young lady called, Ngele. Ngele always dressed up in a glamorous headband, necklace and a pretty gown. Like a giraffe, Ngele moved from place to place elegantly. One day in her movements, she overheard the singing of frogs in the swamp. The singing went like this:

The water of Usangu, hello!

The water of Usangu is good!

The water of Ihefu, hello!

The water of Ihefu is good!

The water of Mkoji River, hello!

The water of Mkoji River is good!

The water of Mpolo River, hello!

The water of Mpolo River is good!

The water of Mambi River, hello!

The water of Mambi River is good!

As she moved closer to the swamp, she realized that there was a girl fetching water from the swamp. With despise, she ridiculed the girl, spitted at her and said:

You young girl! Can't you hear the voices of the frogs? Don't you feel filthy? My dear, do not fetch water from which frogs dwell. That water is dirty my dear! I do not use water of this type; I better die. The other day I found my mother fetching this nasty water, I told her not to give me the food cooked by using this dirt. I can't! Even my parents are aware of this; I don't use water of this type. The frogs are dirty, they sleep in the water; they urinate, defecate in it and die in it. They are nasty!

Upon hearing this, the frogs stopped singing the song and tuned up for another song called, "Ngele" which means let me try. In the song, the frogs told the young lady that if it is the frogs that she avoided, she was could definitely die because, the frogs are in every water body. Here is the song:

Ngele we are in the water,
Ngele we are in the rivers.
Ngele we are in the swamps.
Ngele we are in the wells.
Ngele we are everywhere.
Ngele tilipopona pala.
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee,
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee,
Ngele Ngeleeeeeeeeeee.

The girl ignored the frogs and continued to long for clean water. In her longing she did not find even a single water body that had no frogs. She went home thirst but still arrogant. Her parents insisted that she drinks water, but she refused. After four days, the girl died from thirst and arrogance.

Umuhinja ni Nyula (Second Variable Tale)

Pamwandi pala pakhandi mu muhinja muwumbe finofu akhandi ishemelwa "Ngele". Ngele amalile ishuro. Waganaga kitina kikhuma kushuo, akhavaelelelele avanashijiji na kuvabedalila mandu, ijovo kiija vakhandi vashafu na vahavi. Akhavabedalile na vasafi Vaakwe. Khanshi akhakanile king'wela amalenga pa shijiji ajele kija mashafu na gadumiwile fidudu fya shipindupindu na uwutamu wa wutumu ija inyula khandi sikhala mumo kwa kiva pashijiji pakhandi pabaya fyombo fya kitunsisa amalenga amanofu na gagaya lumonga.

Ilisiku limonga akhavele ni khau khali akhanyile wapilima shijiji shona kisakula ishiyanso sha malenga ishigaya Nyula. Penekhandi ivejela pashiyanso sha malenga akhapulishe inyula siyimba:

Klooo-klooo!

Klooo-klooo!

Ngele, tili mumalenga.

Ngele, tili mumakhoga.

Klooo-klooo!

Klooo-klooo!

Ngele, tili mumalamba.

Ngele, tili mumasima.

Klooo-klooo!

Klooo-klooo!

Ngele, tilishila paanu.

Ino ungele walamwile king'wa amalenga ga pashijiji kwa kiva watilile kiifwa.

Ulusimo ulu lukutumanyisa kiija amalenga we wumi, tisiwesa kikhara ngaya malenga. Tigatunse na tigatumilaje wunofu.

English Translation

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful young land called Ngele. Ngele was a university graduate. When she came back from college, she looked at the village people and despised them because she said they were dirty and witchery. She even disdained her parents. She also avoided drinking village water because she said such water was dirty and contain diarrhoea and typhoid as it is dwelt by flogs. Because in the village there was no bottled water, one day after feeling craving thirst she decided to roam around the whole village in order to find a water source without flogs. As she approached each of the sources, she heard flogs sing:

Croak-croak!

Croak-croak!

Ngele, we are in the water.

Ngele, we are in the rivers.

Croak-croak! Croak-croak!

Ngele, we are in the swamps.

Ngele, tili mumasima.

Croak-croak!

Croak-croak!

Ngele, we are everywhere!

In the end, Ngele decided to drink the village water because she feared death.

The story teaches us that water is life and we cannot live without it. We should keep it and use it for our own good.

Kwashi Inwiga sina Singo Nali (First Variable Tale)

Pamwandi inwiga Sikhandi sina nsingo mfupi, gajaga inkhanu sinji. Ilisiku limonga unyina wa nwiga, wakheele na vaanakwe wayansiise kijovela kiija, "Vanaangu pina mwita kiilya musikhajelaga kiilya amasesengo gogoona gala mwihakha umo. Nda mulye insingo sisive nali, mwapulikha?" woona vaaja, "Twapulikha nyineesu." Pala vapalankhana shila muunu lwakwe.

Ilisiku limonga inyana nwiga sawushile sita kiilya, kiifikha kihakha sawona amasesengo minshi kiishila amasoli na makhamba ga mapishi kiva lukhali lujuva.

Baheene sila inyana nwiga sahiva saaja, "Lekha tiilye kwani tisigahe wuuli." Sayansa kiilya, pina salile, bahala sayansa kiikula isningo kiva nali, kiishila inkhanu soona.

Mbakha iminsiyano inwiga sisilisaga amasesengo, silya makhamba ga mapishi na masole, nda silye khanji siyonjelela insingo.

English Translation

Long time ago, giraffes had short necks. One day, the mother of giraffes told her children not to eat tree seeds because if they do their necks will elongate. She said, "My children, when you go for grazing do not eat the seeds of trees. If you eat, your necks will elongate, do you understand?"

The children answered, "Yes, we do!" However, one day when they went to the bush for grazing, they found that the grasses and tree leaves were scarce and tree seeds were plenty. They then decided to eat the tree seeds. When they did, their necks elongated. This is why till today; giraffes have long necks and legs and avoid eating tree seeds for the fear that their necks will stretch even more.

Kwashi Inwiga sina Singo Nali (Second Variable Tale)

Pamwandi pala inwiga seneusimanye isinya nsingo nali, sikhandi sina nsingo mfupi na magulu mafupi. Inwiga ni nyama isinji Sikhandi sikhala kunya ga kikusalama, amapishi na amalenga, kikhansikhana ni lehe inyamepo ni lifushe lya

kiyelanisa ilijuva khandi lya kijelania kwa kiva khandi lupwali urulembo na malenga. Kunyama soona, insungula yikhanda mumanyama mukhome wa nwigwa. Ilisiku limonga akhasiwene imbalavala sinyila nyila kunyuma yakwe na kitula kushanya ya mapishi vitima khanshi na kinunsanunsa amawua gene ging'ala. Inwiga yanaga kiva vene yikhaganile khanji kifishila pala pashanya khabisa pa mupishi. Akhate kiilya amakhamba lunonela lunofu na kinogela finofu.

Khanshi peneakhajesise kumojovela umumanyani wakwe insungula. Insungula akhamuponyise inumbula umumanyani wakwe akwele insingo yakwe mbakha agafishile amakhamba ga kushanya sheneakhandi isakula. Inwiga yakhagahile na kijovelwa ni insungula shinapeneakhandi kugavejela amakhamba gakwe genekhandi gakumugania amahomo ga mapishi gakhanda gipwepa kwa rufuo na amapishi amanang'ana gene galembile pansi palikhaha gakhayansise kugahakha amagulu gakwe amatali ni nsingo nali. Insala isi ingufu ya kugafishila amakhamba geneakhandi akugagana. Na ulu lulwene Kwashi inwiga sina nsingo nali neng'uni iyi.

Kwa kiva ndeno, peneyavesaga inwiga kiva ni nsingo nali na kiva ni ngufu ya kifishila amakhamba ga kushanya kumapishi, akhaywene asina khanshi ngufu ya kufishila amakhamba ni lisoli ilinofu lyapansi lyenali kumuganisa mandu akhayipulishe fivi. Ilisiku limonga akhahamwile kumulomba umumanyani wakwe, insungula akunganie amakhamba ni lisoli lya pansi, baheene atane nalyo nkolela ni nsingo yakwe baheene alyee finofu. Inwiga yikhamujovala insungula:

Muyaa Nsungula! Nisakula kiilya ilisoli linofu, ndetela pashanya apa. Tanaga mbakha nkolela ni nsingo yangu na umele ilisoli lyoona ndilile, nina njala mumanyani vangu. Nigani ilisoli ilyo lyapanykho, siwonekha nono sana. One nowe tilivamanyani va nkolela. Tinkakhele lumo nsiku soona na makha goona. Yiwukhaga kwenetahumaga, tilikwii sala isi.

Insungula akhakanile kilombwa nu mumanyani wakwe:

Nikhandi nifumilia shene upwali na kwingaha muvanda nsiku soona, ino nakatala. Nilomba uyiteshe mwone shene wuyitikha imwene kunyama sinji, yikwilile? Kiyansa minsi yano ose tivilivamanyani khanshi. Owe uli mubaya vangu kwa kiva ya usungu wakho!

Peneyikhapulishe ago, inwiga yikhasugumilwe na kiyansa kilomba kitangwa ni fiwumbwa finji akhalombile vagavane insingo na amagulu, akhajele:

Muyaa! Kumusakula yo yoona yenekhambii iva tayali ngavane nave amagulu gaangu ni nsingo yangu inali iyi. Yo yoona nilomba, nilitayali kubadilisaniya. Owe gobe mela insingo yakho na magulu. Nisakula king'wela amalenga kumalamba na kumakhoga. Nilemala mumanyani vangu. Insungula nyansu, nanjilisa. Kusina hata yumo yene wahuma kunanjilisa.

Inwiga yiyendelela kilomba umusaada gugo mbakha ineng'ana. Kusina hata shiwumbwa shimo yeneawahile kiwonensa kiva alitayali kumutanjilisa.

English Translation

Once upon a time, the giraffes that you know with long neck had short ones. They had short legs too. Giraffe and other animals lived in a place full of grasses, trees, water, a mixture of cold and hot air. The sun was moderate because of the presence of vegetation and water. Of all the animals, hare was giraffe's best friend. One day seeing the butterflies aviate on her back and ascend to the top of the canopies of trees and then come back smelling the sparkling flowers, Giraffe desired to be like one. She desired to also reach the canopies, eat the toothsome and greeny leaves and come back with the aroma. Then, she decided to share her desire with Mr. Hare. Mr. Hare encouraged her to stretch her neck until she reached the higher leaves. Giraffe did as advised by Hare. As she was trying now and then to snap up the appetizing leaves, the canopies were whispering mockery and the smaller vegetation growing underneath the forest canopy were laughing at the stretching legs. After several years of a tireless struggle, Giraffe had both her neck and legs elongated and was now able to reach the apex of the canopies. This is the reason why; giraffes have long necks today.

Nevertheless, after Giraffe had elongated neck and was able to reach the higher leaves, she found that she was unable to reach the beautiful and appetizing leaves and grasses that were lower. She felt disgraced. One day she decided to ask her friend, Mr. Hare to help collect lower leaves and

grasses and climb up to her neck so that she can eat with ease. Giraffe tells Mr. Hare:

Hello Hare! I need to eat the beautiful grasses, bring them up here. I will help you get these toothsome ones found up here. Climb up to my neck and give me all the grasses so I can eat, I am hungry my dear. I like the lower ones. They seem palatable. You and I are intimate; we lived together all days, and all years. Remember where we come from and where we are right now.

Mr. Hare denied the request. He said:

I have been tolerating your behaviour of turning me into a slave each day, now I am tired. Respect me like you do to other animals. It is enough! From today, we are no longer friends. You are my enemy because of your arrogance!

Upon hearing that, Giraffe distressfully turned for help from other organisms. She asked for an exchange of neck and legs. Here she said:

Hello! I am looking after anyone ready to exchange my feet and my long-neck with. Anyone please, I am ready for an exchange. You tortoise, give me your neck and feet, I want to drink water from swamps and rivers. I am suffering my friends. Hare is stupid, help me Mr. Monkey!

No organism turned for help. Giraffe asks for the same help until today but no organism has ever shown readiness to help.