

CENTRAL AFRICAN BROADCASTING STATION

(Lusaka)

BANTU TRIBESNo 6THE TANGANYIKA ANGONI

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The Bantu tribe known as the Tanganyika Angoni live in the Songea district of Tanganyika territory. The region they inhabit lies between Lake Nyasa, the Ruvuma river and the Ruhuhu river in the North. There is no definite Eastern boundary. It is a hilly country, rising about five thousand feet above sea-level. There are a number of rivers in the Ngoni country, the largest of them being the Ruvuma. The rain bearing winds are the South East Trade winds blowing from the Indian Ocean. Rain falls from November to May, amounting to about 30 or 40 inches per year. The cultivating season lasts for about three or four months. The soil, which is reddish and in some places sandy, does not contain much plant food except in the river valleys. This is partly due to the yearly burning of the bush. Cultivation is intense along the river valleys.

Proper Ngonis are not numerous, but they are a ruling class since they live among the tribes they conquered. As intermarriage has been greatly practised (for most of the Angoni were polygamous) the original characteristics are rare. The real Angoni are dark, tall, with slender legs, long heads and curly hair, oval faces and flat noses with thick lips. In the past the hair was cut, except for a small part in front of

of the head called "Mzumba." Their traditional dress was two pieces of cloth for the women and one large piece of cloth for the men called "Mgololi."

The main occupations of the Ngoni are cultivation. The old Ngonis are well known too as hunters. They used spears (mkukii) and clubs ("kibonga"). Other common tools are axes and choppers ("nvengo"). Ploughs are still unknown. Only the rich possess cattle. The chief products are maize, cassava, millet and beans. They eat as a rule porridge with beans ("mandondo"). Maize and millet are ground into flour from which porridge is prepared. Cassava and millet ("ulezi") are widely used for brewing beer. Their language ("Kingoni") is a mixture of original Swazi, Zulu, and Kisutu, the language of the conquered tribes. The language mostly used in public is Swahili. Their form of greeting is "Tukuongo!" The answer is "Yewo." (Zulu Ye6o). Here we give you some greetings of the Ngonis to all their friends:

"Twawaone - Yewo. Nihekelela bwina Kulongela na mawayangu hinu naha. Magono aga no mangono ga kupumulila ndawa fula yimaliki. Tete Wangoni tukuwaganila mwenga mwa wayitu mawandu watitu raha na kutama na wumi wa bwina pa mlimapa."
(*"I am very glad to have the opportunity to talk with you to day. This is a pleasing time and we shall soon be resting after the rainy season. We Ngonis wish you all our friends in Africa a peaceful life on this earth."*)

The Ngonis are the descendants of Zulu and Swazis who live in South Africa. Under Chaka's pressure they left their country at the beginning of the 19th century. By fighting tribes whose countries they passed they reached Nyasaland. After some time they went northwards along Lake Nyasa. There they divided into three groups. One of them under Mbonane and Zulu went eastwards. Meanwhile another Ngoni leader, called Mputa, had settled in the Songea District. As soon as he heard of the arrival of Zulu and Mbonane, he called them to live with

him in the Songea district. But Mputa killed Mbonane and many of the Ngoni leaders treacherously. After some years the Ngonis revenged themselves and killed Mputa and drove his people away. The Zulu section occupied the western and Southern lands. Their residence was at Maposeni, near a place called matomondo, where the road crosses the Ruvuma river. The Mbonane people whose centre was at Gumbiro ruled the northern and eastern regions of the district. From about 1874 until about 1880 Mkwawa, the leader of the Hehe tribe, attacked Ngonis from the North. Mbonane and Zulu were taken by surprise, but one of their chiefs, called Songea, (the district is called after him) rescued part of the people and the cattle. After years of fighting the Ngonis and the Hehes agreed to make peace until their children were adults. When the GERMANS BEGAN TO COLONIZE Tanganyika Territory, Mkwawa fought against them, but the Ngonis accepted their rule. In 1905, however, a great rebellion broke out under the influence of witch-doctors. They said the bullets of the European rifles would turn into water (maji!) and hence the rebellion is called "Majimaji." But the Ngonis soon found that they had been deceived by the witch doctors. They killed some Europeans but were soon defeated. Their leader, except Chabruma (who escaped to Portuguese East Africa) were hanged in 1906. After a terrible famine a period of peace followed. After the defeat of the Germans by the British in East Africa, the British introduced indirect rule in Ugoni. The native authorities were allowed to rule according to their traditional laws, but with limited power. Only original Ngonis are entitled to rule. The organization consists of a Paramount Chief (Nkosi) and sub Chiefs (Izinduna or sultans) aided by headmen (Jumbe.)

The Benedictine missionaries introduced the first schools in 1898. Since then a great number of primary village schools have been built. One Government school also exists and four Native Administration schools, the remainder being mission schools. At Peramiho they have also a Grade 2 Teacher Training

school, a Junior Secondary school and an industrial school. Lately a girls' school has been opened. At Songea there is a Welfare Centre.

A number of years ago tobacco and coffee were introduced as crops for export. The growers have formed a society, known as the Ngoni Matengo Cooperative Marketing Tobacco Company Ltd and it is under European Management. Another society of traders, called the Ngoni, Matengi and Nyasa Traders Society has recently been formed. One of their chief interests is to help the Africans.

The villages are usually small. They belong to members related by blood. They move from place to place in search of fertile plots of land. Their mud houses are small and rectangular in shape. Brick houses are seldom seen.

The clan system follows the father's side. The marriage process is much simplified now. A young lad wishing to marry chooses whom he likes; after the girl has given her consent, he informs his parents. After the parents have agreed a man called "Mtenga-mediator" is given the required dowry which consists of two or three cattle and a number of goats, but more after a fixed sum 150/-. The Mtenga has to bring this dowry to the parents of the girl. The marriage takes place in the church when the dowry has been paid. The marriage feasts are always celebrated with dances. The traditional dance is "Ligwamba" played by men and women. The women rhythmically clasp their hands, then men umping within a circle with a number of small bells fastened round their ankles.

There are other musical instruments as "Libangu" (a kind of guitar) "Mkangala" (a one stringed violin) and "Chinwenwene" (a kind of vilin with 5 strings.) These are all stringed instruments with resounding boxes attached to them. Nowadays many children have abandoned the old traditions and emigrate each year to the coast, to European plantations, or even to the mines in South Africa.

"Bawa koma zindawa zsiszisi" ("Good bye.")

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