

THE PEOPLES OF THE HAPPY VALLEY (EAST AFRICA)

THE ABORIGINAL RACES OF KONDOA IRANGI

PART II

THE KANGEJU

THE Kangeju, or Kindiga as they are usually called by their neighbours, inhabit a large area surrounding the semi-salt sheet of water shown on the maps of Tanganyika Territory as Lake Eyasi,¹ and including portions of the districts of Kondoa Irangi (Mkalama sub-district), Arusha (Mbulu sub-district), and Mwanza. Their country is an inhospitable wilderness, full of game but heavily infested with tsetse fly and very short of drinkable water, and, excepting for some nomad "Dorobo" to the north of the lake, they have it to themselves. Very little is known of this area. No roads pass through it and, though it affords good shooting, no food is obtainable in it excepting the meat of game. During the rains much of it is almost impassable black mud, and during the dry months, excepting for a few places, such as Jaida swamp, water is not only scarce but dangerous, for many of the springs and drinking-places appear to be impregnated with something which causes a severe and persistent diarrhoea.² The Kangeju dislike the presence of strangers and are most unwilling guides, but no one else has a knowledge of more than a fringe of their country, so they must be used. They are lazy and prone to desert and, if a large supply of meat becomes available, are quite capable of hiding until the departure of the traveller allows them to feast in peace upon the carcasses.

¹ This name is unknown to the local natives, most of whom call the lake Nyarasa.

² Many years ago a large number of Kisamjeng Tatoga, under Saigile, took refuge from the Masai on the borders of Eyasi. They died in hundreds of dysentery. More recently I had occasion to follow some Germans into the same region. We returned, prisoners and all, in a sorry plight from the same cause. The cause of the trouble, whatever it may be, does not affect me personally.

Two German expeditions passed through the Kangeju country and mapped it fairly accurately, though the names given to the hills and rivers are, to say the least of it, misleading. The Kangeju would have nothing to do with them, and the German explorers were forced to depend upon Isanzu honey-hunters as guides, who, fearing to admit ignorance when questioned, invented names which were duly written down and still appear upon the maps.¹ Since the departure of the Germans, with the exception of a few shooting parties to the Jaida plains, no one has travelled at all amongst the tribe but myself.

It is by no means easy to come into contact with the Kangeju. They wander about in small parties, and if they find themselves in the same vicinity as strangers, and particularly Europeans unknown to them, they hide until the coast is clear or leave the neighbourhood entirely before they have been noticed. Amongst all the surrounding tribes, however, and particularly amongst the Anisanzu of Mkalama, natives can be found who have established friendly relations with one or more Kangeju families. Such natives, if sent on several days ahead, can usually induce the presence of two or three Kangeju men, particularly if the visitor has a reputation as a successful hunter. It is much more difficult, however, to obtain a sight of the women and children of the tribe.

When I went to Mbulu in 1917 I made many unsuccessful attempts to establish contact with the Kangeju. A small party of Germans was at large to the north of Mkalama about whom I badly wanted information,² but the Kangeju had no intention of becoming involved in hostilities and my messengers obtained no results. Finally, I met them by chance. I came across tracks which could only be Kangeju, though I failed to find any. I turned homewards with all my party, and within a mile I killed a zebra, near which my gun-boy Dafi concealed himself. I camped at a neighbouring spring, and within half an hour Dafi arrived with a Kangeju youth

¹ I know these guides personally and have been over the same ground with them. This is their own explanation of the fact that they have quite forgotten all the names on the map.

² De Haas's party, including Siedentoff, the German farmer of Ngorongoro. They finally surrendered at Moshi after their leader had gone mad.

who had been tempted within reach of capture by the dead zebra. By good luck the captive knew a little of the Erok language, and Dafi could converse with him. It did not take long to induce our Kangeju to persuade two more to emerge from the bush in response to his shouts, and the trio remained with me for several days, during which we hunted vigorously and became the best of friends. They finally departed, laden with meat, and I have never had any difficulty in meeting the tribe since, though it was some time before I could induce them to introduce me to their families.

Having obtained contact with the Kangeju, the investigator's difficulties are only beginning, for naturally he desires to talk to and question them. I have never met a native of another tribe who could talk Kangeju, though many Kangeju can speak a little of the Isanzu and Tatoga languages, and a few know a smattering of Erok. A medium of communication established, the next difficulty is the mentality of the Kangeju himself. He is intensely stupid and naturally deceitful. He fears and dislikes strangers and does not understand why he should be "investigated." Not understanding, when questioned, it is more than probable that he will lie, just to be on the safe side.

I know of no tribe in East Africa which in any way resembles the Kangeju,¹ and I think that I am right in my surmise that they are a fast-dwindling remnant of a distinct race. There are not many of them, probably not more than five or six hundred, but there can be no doubt that at one time they were much more numerous and occupied a far larger area than now. In 1918, when travelling among the Wachaga,² I found a tradition that their forefathers were much troubled by the attacks and raids of a fierce race of "small men armed with large bows and arrows, speaking like monkeys, who lived entirely on game on the slopes of the mountain." Apparently these people were driven continually higher up towards the snow by the spread of the Wachaga, and they were finally exterminated.³

¹ I have already stated that I know nothing of the Batwa.

² A Bantu tribe living almost exclusively on the slopes of Kilimanjaro.

³ I have lost the notes I made at the time, but I remember discussing the tradition with several old men and also with a German missionary, I think the Rev. Raun, who had also heard it.

It is impossible to discover anything of the ancient history of the tribe. A Kangeju cannot understand why anyone wants to know about matters which are past and have no influence on the needs of the future, and it is most difficult to obtain reliable information. If tribal historical traditions exist, I have failed to extract them, but in view of Kangeju mentality I doubt if there are any. Sufficient for the day entirely satisfies the Kangeju, he worries but little about the future and not at all about the past.

The Kangeju are nomad hunters and are always found in small parties or "families" of two or three men with their women and children. If for any reason several families coalesce into anything like a large gathering, supplies soon run short and they are forced to separate.

The life of a Kangeju family is a struggle for food, the members scattering daily in search of what can be found, the men with bows and arrows, and the women and children with digging-sticks. If game be shot or food discovered which cannot be carried conveniently to camp, all move to the neighbourhood and eat until it is finished and necessity scatters them once more. Water seems to be a minor consideration with them. They often go for long periods without it and seldom carry it with them. They never camp near a good supply, partly for fear of driving away the game, and also to lessen the danger of unexpected visits by strangers. They know, and when possible carefully conceal, the exact position of every spot where water can be found, and have often shown me where to obtain it in the most unexpected places.

The mentality and disposition of the Kangeju are quite without parallel in Africa. Other tribes, including even the Bushmen of South Africa, have adopted at all events some of the conveniences of life which they have seen in use among their neighbours. Excepting that he makes his arrow-heads by grinding down old spears obtained from other tribes, and that he likes to adorn himself and his women with beads, the Kangeju is, and is content to be, exactly as he was a thousand years ago. He is a wild man, a creature of the bush, and as far as I can see he is incapable of becoming anything else. Certainly he does not desire to become anything else, for

nothing will tempt him to leave his wilderness or to abandon his mode of living.¹ He asks nothing from the rest of us but to be left alone. He interferes with no one and does his best to ensure that no one shall interfere with him. He needs but little from his neighbours; tobacco, old iron for his arrow-heads and a few beads are easily obtained in exchange for skins, honey and occasionally meat, from the surrounding tribes, and he wants nothing more. He has no use for money, his currency being arrow-heads. He is a hunter, and most of his time and energy is devoted to the search for game. If game fails him—as it often does—he falls back upon wild fruits, roots and even insects and reptiles. He is often hungry and sometimes starves, but he is happy and envies no man.

The Kangeju will eat, with the exception of the hyæna, everything that walks, crawls or swims. They are gruesome scavengers, and I have known them to gorge themselves, with evident relish and no apparent ill results, upon the carcass of a rhinoceros which was polluting the atmosphere for half a mile. Fish, snakes, lizards, the foulest of carrion birds, eggs, ants and other insects are common articles of diet. Much of their food is eaten raw, and to see a Kangeju family stuffing into their mouths the still-quivering liver and intestines of a freshly shot animal is a sight not easily forgotten. Cooking-pots are never used except for making beer, but meat, especially when very high, and when the first pangs of hunger have been satisfied, is toasted on skewers or thrown into the embers of the fire. Though great honey-hunters they do not make honey-beer. They thoroughly appreciate all intoxicants given to them, but the only drink they manufacture themselves is a mild beverage made from the seeds of the baobab tree. Though they appear to like cereal food, the Kangeju make no attempt to cultivate the soil or to grow any sort of crops whatever.

The tribe keep no domestic animals of any description, not even dogs or fowls. Once, according to tradition, some Kangeju killed an elephant and obtained a few goats from a native stranger in exchange for the ivory. Next morning the goats strayed into the bush and were lost, for all were eating

¹ I have repeatedly tried to "retain" Kangeju youths as game trackers, but always without success.

elephant meat and no one bothered to follow them. The feasting Kangeju were attacked by Tatoga, who declared that the goats had been stolen from them and many were killed. Their first experiment as pastoralists ended in disaster and they have never repeated it. At the end of one of my visits to them I found myself with a live ox, originally intended as bait for a troublesome lion, on my hands. The beast was certain to die, having been for days among the tsetse fly, and as we had meat in abundance I presented it to the Kangeju, who had never tasted beef. Although I was leaving them with more game meat than they could possibly consume, including the carcasses of two rhinoceros, they scouted my suggestion that they should keep the ox alive until they actually needed it, and as I started I saw them shooting it with arrows.

Fire is made in a few moments by twirling between the palms of the hand a stick of hard wood, the point of which rests upon tinder placed on a flat piece of baobab wood. No Kangeju is ever without the necessary apparatus, for he depends upon fire, not only to light his pipe but to protect him at night from carnivorous animals.

He is a confirmed smoker, using rank tobacco bartered from other tribes, which is, unfortunately, almost invariably mixed with a herb having the intoxicating principles of *Cannabis indica*. I have never been able to find out if this herb grows wild or if the Kangeju obtain it by barter. The old men, in particular, cannot or will not go, even when following game, for more than an hour without squatting down for a smoke. Their pipes resemble a fat cigar in size and shape. They are made sometimes of hard wood, but more usually of a kind of soft stone. The ends are hollowed out and the hollows are connected by a small passage. One end is stuffed with tobacco and the other passes from mouth to mouth, until all present are coughing and even reeling from the effects of the fumes. They say themselves that smoking makes them first very rash and subsequently very dull and stupid, and many hunters are killed whilst under its influence.

Continually on the move, they have no permanent residences and build no houses. If unable to obtain shelter amongst

rocks or under suitable bushes, they sometimes construct flimsy huts of twigs and grass, which are useless to keep off rain but afford some protection from the sun by day and the cold winds by night.

The wandering families live a life of complete independence untrammelled by any authority. They recognise no chief or headman of their own,¹ and though they understand the power of the Government, they are beyond its reach and they know it. They give no trouble to their neighbours, and never once has a Kangeju invoked the aid of the law against his fellow. I do not mean to infer that the Kangeju are entirely law-abiding, for I am well aware that numerous deaths have occurred as the result of feuds between individuals and families and between them and the Dorroggo. They pay no taxes, and it would be futile to ask them to. They cannot be expected to keep our laws for the protection of the game on which they live, and a bargain has been made—the Kangeju, I regret to say, do not always keep it—by which they leave alone elephants and giraffes, and we say nothing about the other animals. Naturally they are expert hunters, and I doubt if better trackers are to be found in the world than individual Kangeju of my acquaintance. They use only their silent bows and arrows and take every precaution against scaring the game. One of their favourite methods of hunting is to construct a hiding-place on the edge of a pool, which is left unused until the game has become accustomed to it. When the time is ripe, one or more bowmen lie concealed until opportunity offers, and arrows are discharged from close range at the drinking animals. No movement is made by the hunters, who lie waiting for further chances, until in the morning search is made by each man for his arrows. If he finds a shaft without its detachable point he knows that he has been successful, and he follows the tracks of the wounded animals without the least difficulty, until he finds it lying dead of the poison.

Though they kill a great many animals, the Kangeju are by

¹ In 1917 three old men, Orugu, Gisempi and Barabariko, appeared to exercise a little authority, but the two latter died during the influenza epidemic. The Germans tried to make a headman out of a half-breed Iramba who lived with the Kangeju, but he exercised no authority at all and apparently did not want to.

no means destructive hunters, and there is no need to fear that they, unaided, will wipe out the game. They do not respect sex or species, but they are very careful not to worry or disturb the herds, and they seldom or never lose a wounded animal. Moreover, they kill a great many lions and thus save the lives of a great many game animals. The lion is their only enemy, and they fear and hate him. By day they are a match for him, but when watching for game at night, silent and without fire, they are at his mercy, and many of the best hunters are dragged away and eaten.

The Kangeju never dig game pits or make nets. The only trap which they use is a running noose with which they catch guinea-fowl and other birds. I have also seen a fish-trap constructed of reeds, but it is not in common use.

Their method of carrying meat after a kill is peculiar. The hunter cuts the flesh from the bones in long narrow strips something like the biltong of South Africa, which he festoons round his neck and shoulders until he returns home apparently clad in a garment of raw flesh.

The weapons of the Kangeju are distinctive. Every man carries in his hand, in addition to his fire- and digging-sticks, an enormous bow and at least six long arrows. The string of the bow is made of sinew, usually from the back muscle of the rhinoceros, which, when properly treated, makes a cord of extraordinary strength. Of the arrows, two are of wood for bird shooting; one has a plain, iron, blade-like point, and is used as a knife for despatching wounded game, and all the others short, detachable iron tips, with one broad barb. These latter are poisoned and are kept wrapped in thin skins or membrane until actually required, when the covering can be readily ripped off. The poison used is, according to Dr. Braun, lately a member of the German Research Staff at Amani Institute, Strophanthin, an alkaloid obtained from a plant or tree of the genus *Strophanthus*. The Kangeju call it "panjupé," and say that it produces poison only when it grows on the top of a hill. The poison is made by boiling down the leaves, shoots and small roots of the plant until a thick, greasy residue remains with which the arrow-heads are heavily smeared. This poison when fresh is very deadly. I have seen a wilde-

beeste dash off with an arrow-head buried two or three inches in the rump. He fell three hundred and sixty paces further on and he was stone dead inside twenty minutes. This, however, is exceptional, and often a Kangeju who has planted an arrow-head into an animal is obliged to follow it for miles before it falls. The poison is fatal to all animals, even elephants and rhinoceros succumbing to it if the arrow can be driven through their thick hide. The Kangeju greatly fear their own poison, for which they have no antidote,¹ and they carefully excise the flesh immediately surrounding an arrow wound before eating the rest of the meat.

Bows and arrows are the only weapons of the tribe. Very occasionally a native-made knife is carried, but usually the blade-pointed arrow is sufficient. Only once have I seen a native axe in the possession of a Kangeju, who had recently picked it up. Spears and shields are never used.²

In stature the Kangeju are shorter than the average natives of East Africa, but they are by no means pygmies. As a rule both men and women are fairly thickset and well-developed. In colour they are distinctly black. Their faces are broad and flat and extremely unintelligent, receding foreheads and prognathous jaws being common. Their hair is crisp wool. I must admit that in appearance there is little to connect them with the South African Bushmen. But the physical characteristics of a race are the result of long-continued environment and circumstances, and Bushmen and Kangeju have been separated for many generations by thousands of miles.

Normally Kangeju men wear nothing but a skin belt round the waist, to which is attached a skin pouch for tobacco, tinder and spare arrow poison. In the presence of strangers, however, a man usually borrows a cat skin from a woman and fastens it to the front of his belt. The women wear small skins, just sufficient for decency, usually cat skins, hanging from the waist-belt. Both men and women are fond of orna-

¹ Many professional arrow poison makers, such as the Wakamba, manufacture and sell an antidote for their own poison, the secret of which is jealously guarded.

² The official handbook on Tanganyika published during the war is wrong on this point and upon several others.

ments, and string round their waists and limbs not only beads, but shells, pierced seeds, small ornaments of wood and, occasionally, brass and iron wire. They appear to have no tribal marks and do not extract any of the front teeth.

The Kangeju are invariably dirty and extremely odoriferous. They never wash by any chance; they are usually freely smeared with the blood of the latest kill. The neighbourhood of their camps speedily becomes pestiferous and swarms with flies.

The tribe keeps to itself as far as possible, but they are by no means hostile to strangers who succeed in meeting them. During the 1918-1920 famine hundreds of natives belonging to other tribes took refuge in their country and lived on game which the Kangeju assisted them to kill. Individuals, usually young men, visit the outskirts of neighbouring tribes to barter, but otherwise very few of them have left their country. Once I took three to Mbulu, where nothing would induce them to enter a house, and a few have visited Mkalama. The real travellers of the tribe, however, are three men who went with me to Kondoia Irangi. I had been to Mkalama on a short visit and had failed to connect with the Kangeju. Three men came in after I had started for home and, finding my gun-boy, whom they knew, they followed me in his company. They did not catch me up for some time, and finally I got them as far as my headquarters, where they spent a week of bewilderment. My gun-boy, I fear, regretted his share of the transaction, for they refused to go home unless escorted by me or by him.

The Kangeju, I think because he never lives in anything like community with his fellow-men, is "a law unto himself," and refuses to be bound by customs such as regulate the lives of most African tribes. He does not appear to be very superstitious, and I have never succeeded in discovering any trace of a tribal religion or worship. He makes no sacrifices and apparently acknowledges no god.¹ I have not come across anything approaching a tribal magician or witch doctor. He uses no medicines. If he falls sick or is injured he must recover or he must die. If too ill or feeble to follow his

¹ I do not think that any Christian missionary has ever seen a Kangeju.

family when they move, he is left behind for the hyænas. The dead are never buried, and there is a belief that great ill luck will follow the interment of a corpse.¹ I have already remarked that the hyæna is excluded from the tribal menu.

According to our standards the Kangeju cannot be considered moral. A man may "marry" as many wives as he likes. No ceremony is observed, the girl simply transferring herself from her father's tent to her husband's, following on the payment of from five to fifteen arrows by the latter. No restraint is put upon an unmarried woman at all, but a wife is not supposed to have intercourse with anyone but her husband and his married relations. Divorce is easy, an injured husband being invariably satisfied by the return of his arrows, though he will keep any children borne by the woman. A widow is forbidden to all but her deceased husband's brothers. If an unmarried girl becomes pregnant her lover marries her even if he happens to be a visitor from another tribe. In the latter case the girl remains with her father, but her husband's rights to her children are recognised. There are amongst the tribe a few foreign girls, mostly Anisanzu, who married Kangeju men during the famine.

Having nothing to leave, the Kangejus do not bother much about the laws of inheritance. If a man dies his brother takes over his family complete, together with their scanty property.

Boys and girls are circumcised when very young by the old men and women, but without the elaborate ritual observed in other tribes. I have never seen a circumcision ceremony. Apparently it takes place when the killing of a large animal makes an opportunity for a feast. The families in the neighbourhood come together and the uncircumcised children are operated upon. I think that the custom of circumcision has been adopted recently from other tribes.

The Kangeju have no musical instruments, not even drums. They dance, men, women and children shuffling about together, and sing, giving vent to a most horrid dirge, whenever they have plenty of meat in camp.

The Kangeju speak a "click" language entirely different

¹ Of the neighbouring tribes, the Hamitic Tatoga and Erokh do not bury their dead, but the Bantu Anisanzu do.

from that of the Sandawi (which also possesses clicks). According to my diary, my first impression was that "it consists entirely of clicks and whining sounds, so that in their ordinary conversation they always seem to be disagreeing." Being no philologist, I am perhaps rash in my statement that the Kangeju and Sandawi languages differ entirely, but, at all events, members of the two tribes confronted fail to understand each other in the least. The Kangeju themselves object to any outsiders understanding their language and deliberately obstruct attempts to do so. It is obvious, however, that theirs is a very primitive form of speech with an extremely limited vocabulary. They do not appear to be able to count more than five: articles more numerous become, confusedly, "many." As one old man expressed it, "We have no cattle: why should we want to count?" Not long ago I tried to write down a few words and sentences but, I regret to say, I gave it up when I found that my "informant" was wilfully misleading me. I wish that I had had more patience and I hope soon to make a further attempt. I think that intonation supplements their scanty vocabulary. They use the same clicks as the Sandawi, but I do not think that these clicks appear as much distinct syllables as they do in the Kangeju language. An accent on the last syllable is common, and I have noted a final "o" in many words which is barely heard. As an example of the paucity of vocabulary, the same word, "ati'i," is used for water in a bucket, rain, a river, a large lake and a cup of tea. I attach a list of Kangeju words, but I cannot guarantee their correctness.

Elsewhere in this article I have mentioned a people who live amongst the Kangeju to the north of Eyasi. In the official Handbook of Tanganyika, which is compiled principally from German sources and contains many errors, they are called "Dorobo," and I have retained that name for want of a better, though it is an absurd one.

Scattered over certain parts of Tanganyika and elsewhere in East Africa are found clans of nomad people about whom strangely little seems to be known. The Masai, from whom they used to steal cattle, called them Dorobo, or "Tsetse fly," and the name has come into general use. The Dorobo are the gipsies of Africa, lazy, uncivilisable parasites, living by

poaching and stealing, and hated and despised by all. Most of them, at all events in Tanganyika, live amongst the Masai, and during my tours amongst the latter tribe I made a few observations that may be of interest. I found that, in my district,¹ there were no less than four distinct "species" of Dorobo. The most numerous are called Balanga, and are merely impoverished Masai, who took to Dorobo methods when their cattle died of rinderpest generations ago, and who have never regained their original social status, though their right to do so at any time is recognised by their Masai kinsmen. The Balanga speak only Masai, and, as soon as they get together a few cattle, return to the bosom of the tribe. In addition to the Balanga, however, I found three other Dorobo tribes, calling themselves Elmosiro, Kisangaro and Laramanik. Each of these latter, though all speak Masai, has a distinct language of its own, and they differ, as far as I can ascertain, as regards their customs and their mode of life. I am not prepared to say much about these peoples, but I remark that in none of the languages could I trace the least resemblance to the "click" speech of either Kangeju or Sandawi. None of the tribes or clans mentioned can understand the language of another, and, moreover, they seem to dislike each other and to reside, as far as possible, in different parts of the country. There are certainly other tribes of Dorobo in addition to those which I have met,² and possibly most of them are of ancient Hamitic origin.³

I have never met any of the Dorobo living in the Kangeju country, and know nothing of them except the little that I have heard from the Kangeju. The latter call them "Masai" and detest them cordially. Apparently, like the Dorobo living in Masailand, they ape the appearance of the Masai, but they live on nature, after the manner of the Kangeju, and own no cattle or live-stock. The Masai who come as far west as Ngorongoro seem to know nothing of them excepting

¹ Owing to a rearrangement of district boundaries, no Masai are now included within Kondoia Irangi.

² A "fisherman" clan lives in the valley of the Ruvu river. I gather that they differ completely from the clans I have mentioned.

³ See note (1), page 31, Part I of this article.

that they are there in the useless tsetse country and sometimes steal cattle, which the Kangeju never do. The Kangeju themselves insist that they and their Dorobo neighbours are quite distinct and speak an entirely different language.

F. J. BAGSHAWE.

(To be continued.)