

Kikuyu Creation Myth

In the beginning Ngai, who is the God and the divider of the universe, called Gikuyu the father of the tribe. Ngai gave Gikuyu a share of his land with rivers, valleys, forests rich with fruits and animals of all types. Then Ngai went to stay on Kirinyaga.

Now Ngai used to go round inspecting and admiring the beautiful earth.

One day He took Gikuyu on top of Kirinyaga. It was on the highest point of the mountain. He showed Gikuyu a spot in the centre of the country where there were many mugumo (wild fig) trees. Gikuyu saw that the land was very beautiful. And Ngai said to Gikuyu, "Go. Build your homestead on that spot with mugumo trees," and he called the selected place where the mugumo trees grew Mukurwe wa Gathanga.

Then Ngai said to Gikuyu, "You will at times be in need of my help, when the time arises, slaughter a goat for sacrifice, then raise your hands towards Kirinyaga and Ngai will come to your help."

Gikuyu went to the chosen spot. Here he found a beautiful woman whom he took as wife. He named her Mumbi (Moulder or Creator). They had nine daughters - they did not have any sons. Now Gikuyu went to Ngai and said that he wanted sons to marry his daughters. Ngai said, "Go, take a lamb and a kid. Kill these under the big mugumo tree near the homestead and the blood and the fat pour them on the trunk of the tree. Let the family make a big fire under the tree. The meat will burn as a sacrifice to Ngai. When you take your wife and daughters home, go back alone to the mugumo tree. There you will find nine very handsome men who are willing to marry your daughters. Then your people will increase and multiply and fill all the land."

1. What words show that this is a story about creation?
2. What is the name of the tribe of which Gikuyu is the father?
3. What is Kirinyaga?
4. Why would Ngai show Gikuyu a spot where there were many mugumo trees?
5. How can Gikuyu summon Ngai?
6. Why did Gikuyu call his wife Mumbi?
7. What is a kid in the context of the story?
8. How many daughters did Gikuyu have?
9. How did Gikuyu find husbands for his daughters?
10. Why is Gikuyu written with a capital letter while tree is not?
11. Explain the word "homestead"
12. Write the last sentence of the story in the past tense.

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