

## How the Baturi came to be

*Baturi Kulya Babokire*

Translated by CD

Told by Kasembeyyani

Tinaga

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We came from Masaba. We came from Masaba in the direction of Ngurume. We passed through Mageri, the one up north, and came to enter the area of Masaba. A man had a wife, and their boy. The man was killed by the people called *Mwana Ngho*. When he was killed, the wife and child remained. They met Ghambageu, and he brought them.

Now Ghambageu had disguised himself as a crow. He found the mother and child starving; all they had to eat were bones. They cooked bare bones. The bones were chewed bare and there wasn't a thing on them. They would cook a soup from the bones and then get up to drink water. They were given the leg of a wildebeest. Ghambageu said to them, 'Take this meat and cook it. When you're done with it, toss the bones ahead of you in the direction you're wandering.' When they had thrown the bone, the crow would fly ahead to the place and alight in a tree. When they threw it, it would fall ahead, and they got up to follow it. They carried a gourd of water. When they arrived at the place, they discovered that the bone was filled with meat again. They did this over and over. Each time they found meat. They travelled this way every day, in the evening reaching the places where they slept. They slept in the shade of the tree, and the crow slept above them in the branches. Each day it was the same, until they came to Tinaga.

It's our sister, Naguri. So Ghambageu said to her, 'Now then, come do this one thing. Stay here. I'm going back to the faraway place where I came from, but I will come again. Wait for that day.' So he got up, he went, and returned. When he returned to Tinaga, he met people there in Tinaga where water gushes up from the spring. When he came, a man met Ghambageu there. The man said to Ghambageu,

'Hey!'

'Yes'

'Have you come?'

'Yes'

'So what should we do?'

'Get up'

'Fine.'

'Call the elders' meeting. Tell the elders  
to come to the village meeting place.'

So that man called together the elders. And they followed him.

'Men'

'Yes'

'I've received a guest who needs to be taken care of, a man from far away. I've received a guest, but what is he going to eat? Let's count out an offering.'

The village elders, *the benamijye*, were surprised, '**W**e should take up an offering? Now then, we know Jila, but none of us knows the name Bughandalyari, not one of us.'

'Fine,' said the man, 'so none of you knows him?'

They all got up and left the man alone there. When he saw that he was alone, he went to talk to his visitor, 'Friend, the *benamijye* have refused.'            '*That's right.*'

'The elders have refused to look for some food.'            '*Yes*'

'So let's go to my home.' They went to his home and entered. The man called his son because he had no wife. 'We have been visited by your father from far away, but what will he eat?'

So they grabbed a large female goat to slaughter it for the visitor. All the man had left was one goat and its kid.

'Let's grab it and slaughter it.' Ghambageu said, 'Friend, don't slaughter the goat but slaughter the kid that resembles its mother.' As they were slaughtering the goat, it grew larger and larger. It grew so large that it was the size of a calf. Ghambageu told them, 'Now divide up the meat.' They did so. The man said to his son, 'Isn't there even any water?'

Ghambageu: 'There isn't any water?'

*'That's right.'*

'Not any to cook this meat in?'

*'That's right.'*

He said, 'Bring me a gourd right away.' So the boy went to get a gourd and brought it to his father. Ghambageu lifted up the middle pillar of the house, and water flowed out. The boy held the gourd into the water and filled it. Then he returned the pillar to its place, *SUBU!* The Batemi were astounded. The pillar stayed that way. Ghambageu said, 'Prepare a piece of the back and the liver. I have a sister who lives here.'

The boy was told, 'Get up and go this way and say, 'Mother.'

The boy, as he was coming back, said, 'Why doesn't she agree?'

He was told by Ghambageu, 'Get up and say 'Nadugana, Nadugana, Naguri!''

Nadugana: 'Well, what is it?'

The boy: 'Well, come here.'            '*Yes*'

'Come to our place, a visitor wants to see you.'

Nadugana: 'Go tell him this; I'm blind. I don't see anything.'

Ghambageu to the boy: 'Get up and take her arm until you've brought her here.'

So he went to bring her. He brought her to the door. When he brought her to the door,

Ghambageu said to her, 'Nagoko'

'Yes'

'Do you know who I am?'

'No'

'Will you know the person who saved you from the *Mwana Ngho*?' She ran to embrace him. She was swatted with a gnu-tail whisk across the eyes. *Kwee!* Her eyes saw. She got up and returned. She went to tell her child, 'Come and see our uncle who rescued us from the *Mwana Ngho*.' She got up and came and ran towards him to embrace him. Then Ghambageu said to Nadugana, 'I am the Ruler of Sologoi. Don't touch me with dirty hands.' They sat down. 'Take this, Nagoko. Take this piece of back and the liver. Take it home and eat it.' She brought home the meat from the back. He sat. They slept. They slept. Dawn came.

Ghambageu said, 'My friend.'

'*My friend*'

'I'm going to a foreign place.'

'Yes'

'But wait for me. I'll return.' He slept there twice. Then he returned to his sister Nadugana. He brought her until Eroghata. Ghambageu told her, 'Stay here. This is clay. Make clay cooking pots. The mica is found near Gheeri, but you should live here.'

He stayed, he stayed up there. He got up to go to Soyeta at the time he moved his sister. He went to live in Soyeta. He went to the dancing plaza among the trees. When he went, they were cooking for the *kilemela* celebration. A man appeared. He came from here in Tinaga and ran to Soyeta. He brought himself to a strange place. When he came here, he found them putting out the large beer gourds for *kilemela*. 'Hey, why is this so-and-so's beer gourd? Why is that so-and-so's beer gourd?' He recognized all the beer gourds and saw that they belonged to the men of Tinaga. He got up. He left them as they began to drink. He ran until he got to Tinaga. As soon as he got there he cried, 'Oh, oh, oh!' The people of Tinaga gathered. 'Men, come in and count your beer gourds.' They found all of them had sprouted.

'What, they have all sprouted?'

'Yes'

Even now you should know that the people long ago were rascals. The people of Tinaga left on that path over there, the one leading down the mountain. They went to cut sticks. They went to fight the men of Soyeta in the area called Kirugurune.

Now Ghambageu was leaning against a tree, sitting on his stool, drinking. They had brewed beer. A sound was heard; *Titisi!* He said, 'Men, come here. Look for a certain *mubanu* branch.' Didn't he know that they were rising up? Didn't he know that they were coming? 'Look for the branches. They're coming. Look!' They looked for the branches. 'Bring me the feathers of a guinea fowl.' They brought a knife. He made arrows and set them on fire. He set on fire the feathers of the guinea fowl. The people came from Mulomane by Mwegaro up north, in the area above Soyeta. 'Give me the bow.' *Tiriri!* He aimed for the mountains so the burning arrows fell there, at that mountain they fell.

'We have been pierced by death! We have been pierced by death!' cried the men who were trying to attack. They slept by the bridge of Ikoma. They passed through the country of Roryani. They slept there. The next morning they awoke. They passed Lejong'a. 'We have been pierced by death! Pierced by death!' They went by Mbalageka until they passed it. They went all the way

until they became the Waikoma. They went to change the way they talked until they spoke another language. They stayed there. They stayed there until the end.

Ghambageu got up. He said, 'Why does my sister live in Eroghata? She doesn't belong there, even though I gave her clay there. Bring her back to the central villages here.' He took us, the Baturi, from Eroghata and brought us to Mugholo.

'Take this, Nagoko, let the central villages here suffice for you, to be with the people of the Batemi.' She was satisfied with the central villages. She became like the Batemi completely. She came to Raghari, Eroghata, Kura, Soyeta, Ebwe, and Gheeri. The Muturi was beating iron; he prepared iron for them. She made pots for them just like these. The pots were made by them.

It's just yesterday that Ghambageu did this. Isn't it this way? He went to bring people, he went to show them his sister, whom he had brought here. Isn't that how it is? Weren't those the people who fled over there to become Waikoma? Now the Muturi weren't among those who fled. Wasn't the woman brought here by Ghambageu? They went to live there. There in Eroghata we were given the bellows to blow. You do it like this; with two hands, there and there. You blow like this. We bore a hole in a tree, like a walking stick. This tree has branches. (motioning how the bellows work) Here there's leather, there is leather. It's coated with clay so it doesn't burn. Here's the nozzle to blow into.

He was told by Ghambageu, 'Take this iron. Take this hammer. Take this stone as an anvil for pounding on, like this.' The scrap of metal caught fire. When it was burning, he was told, 'Hit it like this, then turn it like this.' He pounded it like this. 'Bring an arrow. Melt the blade.' It was melted so it looked like this. They made a knife out of it by putting on a handle. 'Take it and grind it sharp.' He sharpened it, he sharpened it on two sides. He sharpened it, he sharpened it until the cows of Ghara were pierced here. These were cows brought by the Maasai of Ghara in order to make peace between the Maasai and the Orumang'adi from far away. That cow was pierced here (he points to nape of his neck) and it died. 'Take this and sharpen it.' He went to sharpen it; the cow was slaughtered and it died.

'Take these',

'Yes'

He told the Batemi, 'Take this back and liver and give it to that sister of mine.' That's the back meat that the priest, the *ghorwane*, gives us. If they have a celebration they give us meat from the back. When the *ghorwane* build a house, this is the piece we're given until now. Do you understand? That is where our people came from. Truly the Baturi came from there. This is the story of where the Baturi came from. How they came here. How they were brought to Eroghata and how they were brought to the central villages. Do you understand? (to bystanders near Klaus) Does he understand? Does he understand everything?

We made iron. We beat it into knives. We beat it into arrowheads. We make large axes for cutting bee hive logs. We beat the long bush knives of the *batana*. Do you hear? There's nothing we can't make. We make pots to cook food in. But the Batemi are farmers. So they came to trick us; we were given millet. We were given all things to eat. Recently we realized that they were tricking us. We kept asking for farmland until we were given some. The people got smart; we asked for farmland and we worked the fields. Now we were there in Mugholo, we were given a division. We came here.

There are only a few of us left. Nowadays we're farming. There's no one left to make those things. There is only one man left who beats iron. The pots are made by one or two people. There's no one left to make those things. They're all farming. Why is it like this? We are rejected, but it's not bad, not even a little. The people have failed to carry on the craft of making pots. They have failed to beat iron. They have failed in strength. Arrowheads are made until today in Eroghata, they're made. Some other craftsmen have come to Eroghata to make arrowheads. In Kura they're made. In Raghari they're made. I don't know about Soyeta. Even here, people make them. A person makes his own and puts it in his quiver. Even we are farming. Now of those who are beating iron, there's none left. Of those who are left, there's only me who beats. Now I'm blind. How am I supposed to continue the work? The children have left these matters. You don't see the tools that are here. There's nothing missing of all the tools I used. They're there.

That son of mine said, 'No.' He doesn't even know how to make his own knife. He doesn't know how to make his own arrowheads. I made it for him. Now he has just begun to learn. So how can he know? He can't know. We, we were taught. Our fathers taught us. We sat with our fathers and they showed us how to make iron and beat it. Now will the younger ones agree to sit with their fathers and be taught? Why, why are my eyes blind? If I work will my eyes see? They're gone, there's nothing. And of all the girls, there's none to make pots. All those of my wife's age, the one in the house, they will know the craft. Those that still know how to make pots are four or five, no more than that.

**The way of the Baturi has been lost; it has completely died out.** Of all those who make knives for the Batemi there's none left. Am I not a Muturi? And I don't even have a knife to cut my meat with...