

Nagoko

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This is how the story goes. There once were three children; a girl and her two brothers. The girl was called Nagoko and the boys were named Ghulubeda and Mesaga. They had the feeling that their sister was showing them up. Talking among themselves they muttered, 'Look at the way we've been made to look ridiculous by a mere girl. How can we give her a taste of her own medicine?'

Their father was a god, and he had divided up the earth. The girl went to one part of the earth to look after the calves. The boys, on the other hand, were hunters. Then one evening they came home and placed an iron in the fire until it was red hot. Then they branded their sister because she had taken away their honour in respect to the calves. One of the brothers told her, 'When this calf is born, what color will it be? Will it have a black hide?'

'No, no' she answered, 'It will have a red hide.' When it was born, what color do you think it had? Just as the girl had predicted. Another cow came, and the god's boy asked again, 'Will this one have a white calf? It's going to be what I say this time, not what a girl says.'

'No, no' she answered, 'it will be red.' And when it was born, what did it look like? Just as the girl had said. She was right every time. The boys grew angry. 'How is it that she is showing us up? We've got to do something about it. We've got to get rid of her.' So on that evening, they put the iron in the fire until it was burning hot.

They called her: 'Nagoko!'

'Yes'

'Come here. You sure have done us a bad turn.'

She said, 'Where are you taking me?'

'Nagoko come here, and bring us the calf so we can brand it.' But Nagoko continued with her own work. She was busy. But they called again, 'Nagoko come here, and bring us the calf for branding.' Then he swore an oath, '*beretu ba segeera!*'

Then she caught the calf and brought it to her brothers. Her brothers jumped out and grabbed her, one on each arm, to pin her down. They branded her face, one mark on each side. The girl escaped. She was wearing a leather cape. *Ghuu!* And she was gone. After she had gone, her father called her, 'Nagoko! Nagoko, where are you?' She cried out, 'I'm here on earth.'

He answered, 'But tomorrow you better not refuse me a place to brew honey beer. I am going to give you three children. The first will be a person with an iron staff. The second child will be fire. The third is a locust.' Did you hear that? She only had those three. As the saying goes, 'A father's debt disappears when there's no male child to carry on his responsibilities.' This is the debt the Germans incurred when they burned our gods. The Germans beat up our men.

The father called out, 'Leave me in peace! All I want is a quiet place to drink honey beer. And the only place left on earth is Kisangiro.' Do you hear that? It was Ghambageu who came to visit earth. He was told, 'You, my child, stay here at the entrance of Egawanja and you, my son, stay in the upper city.'