

The Wanga Sub-tribe

When the British arrived in Western Kenya in 1884, they found the Wanga Kingdom of the Abaluhya as the only organized state with a hereditary ruler (*Nabongo*) and a centralized monarch (*kingship*) in the whole of what later became to be known as Kenya. The ruling Nabongo at the time was Mumia (*son of Shiundu*) from which the name of the current Mumias town was derived. Mumia died in 1949 and was succeeded by his son Nabongo Shitawa. The current Nabongo is Peter Mumia II.

The Nabongoship (Obunabongo) of the Wanga

The Nabongo (Wanga) ancestors came from Egypt. Mutesa emigrated from Egypt with his three sons, Mwanga, Mukoya, and Kaminyi and settled in Kampala where he died. Mutesa was the ruler of his people in Egypt and after his death; he was succeeded by his son Mwanga who adopted the title of “*Kabaka*”. His other son Kaminyi migrated, due to the cruelty and inhumanity of Mwanga, to Tiriki area where he became the ruler of his people with the title of *Nabongo*. Kaminyi had 14 wives and six children including Mwanga. Mwanga had 8 sons: Wanga I, Murono, Khabiakala, Wanga II, Muniafu, Namakwa, Mbatsa, and Wabala.

The Wanga (Abawanga)

The Wanga are to be found in Mumias District (established in 2007). Their neighbors to the North are, Bukusu and Banyala; to the South, Marama; to the East, Batsotso; to the West Marachi and to the South-West, Luo. The Wanga kingdom dates from the time the settlement of the ancestors of five clans around Imanga Hill, which lies about seven kilometers South of Mumias Town across Lusumu river. Around 1598 – 1625, Imanga was settled by the founders of these clans: Abamuhima, Abatobe, Abanashieni, Abaleka and Abamulembwa. According to oral history and genealogy, Wamoyi (of the Abashitsetse clan) had two sons, Wanga and Khabiakala who lived in the current Tiriki area, having originally migrated from Uganda (Busoga) as descendants of Mwanga. Wamoyi was the Nabongo of the Abatirichi. One day, Wanga and Khabiakala disagreed and quarreled after latter's wife had stolen Wanga's bananas. Consequently, Wanga ran away in the night and migrated to Imanga where he met Muhima, the local ruler, who hired him as a stranger to look after his cattle.

Wanga wore on his hand *omukasa* (copper bracelet – connected by royalty and Nabongoship) which he concealed under his skin cloak to avoid being recognized. Bwino, the wife of Muhima kept suspecting the peculiar manner in which the stranger (Wanga) always hid his hand under the skin cloak until one day; she made a small hole in the wall of the hut where Wanga stayed. She took him some food and spied on him through the hole in the wall as he prepared to eat. To her amazement, she discovered, as he washed his hands to eat, that he wore *omukasa* on the hand which was always hidden under the skin cloak. She then disclosed to her husband, Muhima, that they were actually sheltering an important ruler. The immediate reaction of the elders was that Wanga

should be killed but Muhima refused saying that since the stranger had already been welcomed into the village, no harm should be done to him. Coincidentally, some of Wanga's relatives including his son called Muroko and maternal cousin Mukolwe, who had left Tiriki in search of him, arrived at Imanga on the same day as the above discovery and narrated the whole story about Wanga.

Abamuhima elders also gave an account of how Wanga had arrived at Imanga and asked Wanga whether he wanted to return to Tiriki with his relatives. Wanga however refused and, instead, requested Muhima for a place to build his village.

Wanga and his relatives went back to Tiriki to fetch their families and personal effects and returned to Imanga to settle at Muhima's. Wanga migrated with five sons: Muroko, Muniafu, Namakwa, Mutenje, and Wabala and brought the institution of kingship with him. As a result of this, the Abatirichi lost the institution of Nabongoship since only commoners were left there. However, the Wanga and Tiriki invite each other whenever there is an important ceremonial celebration.

Wanga was given a piece of land at Eshikulu near River Lusumu where he built his village and also got more land for his sons and cousin Mukolwe who were settled in different villages.

Abashitsetse Dynasty

Later, Wanga and Muhima fought and Muhima was defeated and became a subject of Wanga. This was the beginning of the Abashitsetse dynasty and Wanga gave his name to the area and the inhabitants became known as the **Wanga** or **Abawanga**. As the population increased, the state expanded to Musanda in the South and Elureko and Matungu in the North. After Wanga's death, Wabala (youngest son) became the Nabongo.

The Clans of Abawanga

The following are the clans of Abawanga with the reference to female given in brackets:
1. Abashitsetse (Bwibo); 2. Abakolwe (Nabakolwe); 3. Abaleka (Nabaleka); 4. Abachero (Njero); 5. Abashikawa (Nashikawa); 6. Abamuroko (Oronda); 7. Abashieni (Shieni); 8. Abamwima (Namwima); 9. Abamuniafu (Ngakhwa); 10. Abambatsa (Luleti); 11. Abashibe (Nashibe); 12. Ababere (Nebere); 13. Abamwende (Luchimbo); 14. Abakhami (Nabakhami); 15. Abakulubi (Akwanyi); 16. Abang'ale (Namang'ale); 17. Ababonwe (Nbonwe); 18. Abatsoye (Nabatsoye); 19. Abalibo (Namwasi); 20. Abang'ayo (Nang'ayo); 21. Ababule (Nabule), 22. Abamulembwa (Namulembwa);