

IRUA

PREFACE

The Kikuyu rite of passage (Irua) dates back to time immemorial (generations of Ndemi na Matathi). With the advent of the European invasion in the early nineteenth century, some Kikuyu cultural aspects became taboo or were frowned upon – in the eyes of the colonizer. And so the Irua tradition somewhat faded away in Kikuyu land.

Circumstances and the reality of the nationhood brought to bear the conceptualization of a programme and ceremonies regarding the Irua ritual.

The elders who had firsthand experience and knowledge agreed to supervise the first (very special) Irua ceremony in December, 2002, in which my son was one of the eleven initiates. Their RIKA was aptly named NGARUKO – meaning Transition. As such there was going to be a change of political leadership in Kenya. It was the year when KANU lost the elections after 40 years of reign.

The origins of the rite of passage in Africa are not very clear although there exists biblical and religious connections – even Muslims take it seriously. In the present day, hygiene too is a reason, for circumcision to be undertaken. But, for an acknowledged Kikuyu Elder, Irua is a focal point to mentor and transform a boy into adulthood. It is a great reference point for a young man to start a fresh relationship with his parents, who must now, with a new

perspective, mould the young warrior into becoming an able and responsible citizen of Kenya. The enhanced discipline and behavioral change of the initiate leads the Elders (and parents) to expect that the Junior Warrior can now defend the society.

Of note is that most of the boys who have been circumcised under the tutelage of the Muruithiria Mucii and the Council of Elders (Irua Garden Estate), have exhibited leadership qualities in their respective schools/universities, thereafter.

Irua Garden Estate Ltd. has also gone out of its way to assist the boys of single mothers, many of who know little about the traditional rite of passage. The single mothers, in particular and parents in general, are provided with guidance and support, so that even though the boy will undergo the modern surgical operation, the prerequisites of the Kikuyu customs are yet upheld.

Other entities (e.g. the Church) have also taken up the responsibilities of steering boys through the rite of passage. Needless to say, the fulfillment and sense of belonging achieved at the Irua Garden Estate is unparalleled.

The following are the past RIIKAS:

2002 – Riika ria NGARUKO (11)

2004 – Riika ria NOBERO (Wangari Maathai) (14)

2005 – Riika ria **REBARANDA** (Referendum) (8)

2007	–Riika ria	KABENGURIA 6	The last inmate Achieng Oneko died that year) (12)
2008	–Riika ria	OBAMA (16)	
2009	–Riika ria	OCAMPO (16)	
2010	–Riika ria	KATIBA (18)	
2011	–Riika ria	OPARICONI LINDA NCHI (18)	
2012	–Riika ria	TWERO ITHATU (12.12.12)	
2013	–Riika ria	JUBILEE (30)	
2014	–Riika ria	MUTHAMAKI JAMBA (29) (HAGUE)	
2015	–Riika ria	GARISSA 147 (G 147) (29)	
2016	– Riika ria	TRUMP (21)	
2017	–Riika ria	MUGITHI (44)	
2018	–Riika ria	KAMARU (32)	
2019	–Riika ria	#1:59 Eliud Kipchoge (29)	
2020	- Riika ria	Korona (21)	
2021	- Riika ria	Mūhingo (Lockdown) (16)	
2022	- Riika ria	Marîkia (21)	

2023 - Riika ria **8-4-4 (23)**

2024 - Riika ria **Njen-Z (18)**

Let's give the boy child the appropriate opportunities he deserves.

Col. Ruhiru Ndirangu

RITE OF PASSAGE

REGULATIONS

Definitions

Kirui: – An initiate who is an uncircumcised boy of 12 years and above.

Ithe wa Mwana: – Biological father or nominated man.

Nyina wa Mwana: – Biological mother or nominated woman.

Mutiiri: – A young circumcised man who is a mentor to the Kirui.

Mutabania: – Convener/Director of Operations.

Muruithiria Mucii: – Elder empowered to have Initiation ceremonies centered at his homestead.

Mutonyi: – Senior Elder.

Mwarano: – Presentation of initiates to Mutonyi.

Marara Nja: – Song and dance on eve of circumcision.

Irua: – Circumcision.

Ithemba: – Graduation of Initiates.

Murangano: – Penalty payable to the C.O. E. by an initiate

Inducted/accepted late at the discretion of the C.O.E.

A) ENTRANCE

1. Each year, the Council of Elders (C.O.E) shall accept applicants to undergo the rite of passage pursuant to these rules. The boys are known as Irui before circumcision (Kirui- singular).
2. The Council of Elders shall fix the number of applicants to be accepted in each year of Irua.
3. The Chairman shall invite interested parents to an initial meeting on a date to be fixed by the Council of Elders, where these rules will be availed to attending parents.
4. Upon parents accepting the rules by appending their signature to the note of acceptance attached to the rules, they become bound by them.
5. Acceptance of the terms and conditions of these rules and regulations will simultaneously be followed by a non-refundable deposit of Kshs. 20,000/= or such other figure to be determined by the Council of Elders.
6. The total amount payable by or for each initiate shall be fixed exclusive by the Council of Elders - now in the sum of Kshs. 160,000/=. The Audit Committee shall prepare each year's budget for presentation to the Parents' Committee.

7. The Parents' Committee may agree to add to the total sum fixed by the Council of Elders but only with the consent of the Council of Elders.
8. The Council of Elders may allow parents to pay the total sum due in timelines (to be agreed) e.g. monthly instalments, with the final instalment being made on or before 31st October of each year.
9. Able parents may pay the full total amount at once or in larger instalments.
10. All payments will be deposited directly or via Mpesa to the bank account (details to be provided) and the parent(s) will only present a banking slip or Mpesa advice to their Treasurer.
11. Any dishonored cheque will attract a fine of Kshs. 3,000/=.
12. Any withdrawal of a candidate after 31st of October of the year will attract a forfeiture of 50% of the total amount payable to the Council of Elders. A request for such withdrawal must be formally made to the Council of Elders through the Chairman.

N.B. The C.O.E Audit Committee shall make their report after every monthly meeting.

B) PARENTS COMMITTEE AND THEIR DUTIES

The Hon. Treasurer shall be a Chairman, the Secretary and the Parents' Committee for each year.

2. The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Parents' Committee shall have audience with the Council of Elders on appointment.
3. The Ex.O shall obtain the e-mail addresses and phone numbers of all the parents to enable smooth communication.
4. The Executive Officer (Ex.O) shall within three (3) days dispatch the minutes of any meetings to the respective parents and the C.O.E.
5. The Secretary of the Parents' Committee shall arrange for a closed mailing list that must include the e-mails of all Council of Elders.
6. The Treasurer of the Parents' Committee shall consult with the Hon. Treasurer and will be answerable to the Audit Committee on matters of finance, accounting and disbursements.

8. The Treasurer of the Parents' Committee shall keep the records of all payments, receipts and expenditures and avail bank statements to the Hon. Treasurer/Council of Elders every thirty (30) days or as may be desired.
9. The Treasurer of the Parents' Committee shall inform each monthly meeting of the state of the accounts including naming parents who have defaulted and the consequences thereof.
10. There shall be a Women's Committee led by a Chairperson to be elected by the mothers. This committee will in liaison with the Women Representative to the C.O.E (if any), coordinate the catering for the boys in camp, on Marara Nja and on Graduation Day. They shall so organize the purchase of various gifts and attire for the initiates on graduation.

N.B. The Atiiris shall liaise with the caterer in the distribution of the goat meat and the muratina to their respective guest groups during the Marara Nja and the Ithemba.

C) AUDIT CHECKS

1. Any funds that must be paid other than as provided in (A) 10 above will be given to the Treasurer and in his/her absence, to the Ex.O. A receipt shall always be issued specifying the purpose of the payment, the parent(s) paying and the boy for whom it represents.
2. All monies received by the Treasurer or the Ex.O must be banked intact and no out of pocket payments should be made for whatever reason by the Treasurer or the Ex.O.
3. Payments to suppliers will be by cheque, mpesa or Internet banking withdrawn for that purpose, accompanied by a requisition form prepared and authorized by an Audit Committee member.
4. The Treasurer must open and maintain a 4 quire cash book where all receipts and payments must be posted.
5. The cash book, receipt books and all other relevant documents of financial transaction MUST be availed by the Treasurer to the Audit Committee for inspection at every parents' meeting.

6. The Treasurer will be called upon to explain any discrepancy to the Audit Committee.

D) ATTENDANCE

1. Parents should attend all monthly meetings which shall promptly begin at the appointed time and at the venue agreed. N.B. It is compulsory for parents to attend the following meetings:-
 - (i) The first parents meeting;
 - (ii) All counselling sessions;
 - (iii) Marara nja;
 - (iv)
 - (v) Irua (fathers only); and
 - (vi) Graduation (Ithemba).
2. Any parent arriving after twenty (20) minutes of the appointed time will be fined appropriately by the C.O.E.
3. Absence without good reason by any initiates' parents on any three occasions will lead to an automatic disqualification subject to regulation A (12) above. A disqualified parent may be granted leave to mitigate his/her case before the Council of Elders. For the avoidance of doubt the parents must endeavor to attend all meetings so as to be in good standing.

N.B. Parents residing out of Nairobi may second a representative as their proxies at the meetings.

4. Lunch for the parents meetings will be served at 1:30 p.m. where after the meeting proper shall begin at 2:30 p.m. N.B. Those wishing to take lunch MUST inform the caterer three day in advance for logistical purposes.
5. Lunch and drinks at each meeting will be on cash basis.
6. The C.O.E will outsource a caterer and arrange for a cash bar.

N.B. On the appointed day of Mwarano, the initiates shall be escorted by both parents and the Mutiiri. No apologies shall be accepted unless evidence is provided of a visa to travel abroad or an admission Letter to a hospital – No less than a HDU admission.

E) KNOWLEDGE AT CAMP

The Council of Elders will avail to the initiates at camp, resource persons who will deliberate with them on issues of adolescence, dating, personal hygiene, HIV, drugs, vernacular language etc. in addition to counselling of the boys.

F) FATHERS PARTICIPATION AT CAMP

1. The fathers of the boys are expected to visit the camp every evening where the knowledge of the Kikuyu traditional way of life is exchanged and reviewed.

2. It is mandatory that the father and Mutiiri of each boy be present at the earliest on the circumcision day. An absentee's conduct will be discussed by the Council of Elders and sanctions to be meted as they deem fit. All fathers and Atiiri must be present at 0600hrs on the circumcision day. No initiate will be circumcised in their absence.
3. Sometime in mid-November, the fathers must undergo counselling regarding the Irua process and its impact on the boys relationship with him and his family in general – dealing with the new man of the house.

G) MOTHERS PARTICIPATION

1. The mothers of the initiates will undergo counselling in mid-November regarding the Irua process and its impact on their relationship with their sons after circumcision.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, mothers and/or their female representatives are strictly NOT ALLOWED at the camp once the initiates are checked in with the exception of MARARA NJA and ITHEMBA.

N.B. On the day of Mwarano, there shall be a joint counseling session for both the fathers and mothers of all the initiates.

H) MOTIVATIONAL TALK TO BOYS

The parents of the boys must endeavor to learn about the Kikuyu ways of circumcision and try to explain the same to the boys within the year before entering the camp. The C.O.E. will talk to the boys and arrange for the requisite counselling and advice.

J) COUNSELLING OF ATIIRIS

There will be a compulsory counseling session for all Atiiri (whether alone or in a group) – to be conducted by the C.O.E member in charge

K) PARAMOUNT REQUIREMENTS

1. The Ithe wa Mwana MUST, before the circumcision of his boy, have undergone the rite of a Kikuyu junior Elder and officially declared Muthuri wa Mburi Imwe. This must be preceded by Mburi ya Hako.
2. The Irui MUST in consultation with their parents, nominate a Mutiiri who will participate throughout the course of the Irua. Upon acceptance to be a Mutiiri, attendance of the actual Irua

is compulsory. The C.O.E will vet the proposed Atiiri in order to weed out undesirables.

3. Each Kirui **MUST** seek the permission to get circumcised from the Eldest Maternal Uncle. Where such maternal uncle is not available, from such other person as may be approved by the Muruithiria Mucii.
4. It is incumbent upon the father to train/teach his son at the earliest, basic Kikuyu culture and language and avail to the boy details of where he comes from, his clan etc. This is in readiness of the boy being able to introduce himself to the congregation on Graduation Day – in Kikuyu or other language.

L) MEDICAL STATUS

Parents must provide to the Irua medical team a declaration by their own personal doctor (indemnity) regarding allergies or medical conditions their respective sons may have. Such declarations must be availed before the boys' entry into camp.

M) MBUZI AND FUNCTIONS

The C.O.E shall be responsible for sourcing all the GOATS required at the camp and shall also avail the menu and caterer to deal with the boys' meals and the eateries during other functions.

N) LEGACY

Each year's Irua must deliberate and resolve to leave a legacy at the camp. The C.O.E shall oversee the implementation of the agreed legacy and also administer the allocated funds.

P) RULES OF-THE CAMP/DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

- 1 The site of the camp will be at Col. Ruhiu Ndirangu's compound in Varsity Ville Estate, Ruiru.
- 2 Col. Ndirangu's main house is out of bounds to all (including parents) visiting on account of the rite of passage.
- 3 Women are strictly NOT allowed in the compound except on the day of presentation of the boys (Mwarano), the Marara nja and the Graduation Day (Ithemba).
- 4 Upon entry into camp, the initiates must have shaved of all their pubic/armpit hairs.
- 5 Fathers of the boys must make sure that the boys are well groomed i.e. no long toe or finger nails etc.

- 6 The boys will not wear any form of rings (ear, tongue, nose, navel, and toe etc.), chains, bangles or other metal objects.

- 7 Tight fitting jeans/pants are not to be worn.
- 8 Cigarettes and alcohol are PROHIBITED.
- 9 No mobile phones, computer games and other electronic devices are allowed.
- 10 Fathers, Atiiri and any other invited guest shall not avail food, fruits or snacks to an individual initiate but may provide for all boys as a group after consultation with the C.O.E
- 11 The following items are required of the boys to bring to the camp:–
 - (a) Towel and toiletries (soap, toothbrush/paste, Vaseline etc.);
 - (b) Torch;
 - (c) Casual clothes (T. shirts, jersey, loose fitting shorts etc.);
 - (d) Kikoy;
 - (e) Sneakers, running shoes and slippers;
 - (f) Board games, cards etc.;

(g) Balls (football, rugby etc.).

N.B. Mattresses available at the camp.

Q) DISCIPLINE

Every C.O.E member shall endeavor to keep the boys, fathers and mothers with the acceptable bounds/standards as set by the C.O.E. Any person deviating from the set rules and regulations or acts in a manner likely to bring the Irua into disrepute will be named and shamed accordingly and the C.O.E will be at liberty to take such steps against the offender as it may deem necessary.

NON COMPLIANCE WITH THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS WILL ATTRACT THE WRATH OF THE MURUITHIRIA MUCII AND THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS.

R) PARENTS FINAL COMMITTEE MEETING

1. There shall be a final parents committee meeting on or before the end of January of the ensuing year where the final accounts of the Irua will be tabled by the Council of Elders.
2. The Council of Elders will upon deliberations conclude the Irua and adjourn its business indefinitely (Sine die).

3. Parents are required to fill and sign the attached Note of Acceptance

S) PROFILE OF MUTIIRI IS AS FOLLOWS

1. A young circumcised man between 22 and 30 years old.
2. Known to the family of the candidate.
3. Upright in society so that he can be of positive influence to the candidate. A role model so to speak.
4. One that can understand the “teen” language and can easily relate with the candidate.
5. Mutiiri should not be a blood relative of the candidate i.e. not a brother cousin or uncle.
6. It is preferred that the Mutiiri is not married due to the rigor of early family settlement.
7. The Mutiiri needs to be ready to walk with the candidate for his lifetime.