

Mitero women speak:

17 April, 1981

Mrs. Patricia
Assistant Professor of the Division
of Social Science

Dear Madam,

The Chairman and Members of the Gikindu Farming Group all welcome you. We can't forget you and Rebecca N. Chege for the time that you were here in 1974. We received your message from Rebecca that you will be coming from London to Kenya in March and after you arrive, you will come to visit us and we were glad and we prayed God to guide you on your journey. Also you told us that you might bring us a sewing machine as a gift from Canada.

Our Gikindu Farming Women's Group Projects are:

(1). Plot No. 14 at Mitero Market on which we built five rooms from stones, 80 x 20

feet. (2). We keep a business for Tailoring and Handcrafts and now we want to buy another plot called Ngenda/Mitero T160. (3). After buying this plot we want to build a poultry house and pigs house. (4). We have 6 company shares – the capital is KShs 60,000 (Can. \$8,600). That's all we have done.

Thank you Madam.

Yours Faithfully,
Mrs. Monica Wababi Gachuki
Chairman

'Lineage' is a descent group tracing back its kinship ties to a founding ancestor in the relatively recent past. Mutege lived in the mid-nineteenth century. A 'clan' is a wider descent group, tracing descent back to a distant, often mythical, ancestor.

²This paper was presented at the 1982 conference of the Canadian Association of

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Patricia Stamp is Assistant Professor of Social Science at York University, Toronto, where she teaches African Studies and Women's Studies courses. She has conducted extensive field research on Kenyan politics and society over a number of years.

Rebecca Njeri Chege has been involved in Kenyan local government for over twenty years, holding posts in social work and family welfare in the cities of Thika and Nairobi. She holds diplomas from the Machakos School of Social Work and the University of Swansea Program in Social Development and Administration.

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Kneading bread, I think of her breasts
Mottled brown, hanging, spent, flabby.
Looking then, I thought of bread,
Brown bread, midway in the kneading,
Not yet risen from the working of the yeast,
Waiting on time and warmth.

She waited for death,
Those old breasts hanging, or
Hitched up in sturdy cotton cups.
Foundation garments they were called.
What foundations? Those had gone.
My hands cup the dough, pressing, moulding,
Making bread. I use her recipe.
Old breasts, fresh bread: dust and yeast.

Judith Rutledge
Toronto, Ontario