

# HAYA HERITAGE-MAKING: REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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Over the summer of 2018, I conducted nine weeks of preliminary dissertation research on Haya heritage-making in Kagera Region, NW Tanzania. My overall goal was to familiarize myself with ongoing heritage initiatives in the region and then use that experience to shape my dissertation research project. Between the sites I was able to visit, three became the focal point of my preliminary research: Katuruka village, Nyarubale Primary School, and Kanazi Palace.

At Katuruka, I familiarized myself with the village's heritage trail that includes exhibits on Haya kingship, Bacwezi gods, and ancient iron smelting. The NGO overseeing the site invited me to offer advice on the trail's heritage components, given my background in museums. This led to a report, *New Ideas for Ancient Katuruka*. The report, published in the Swahili language, proposes feasible investment strategies for making existing components along the trail more user-friendly and sustainable. Along with my analysis and report, I helped refurbish the trail's Buchwankwanzi house (a traditional Haya structure) that curates objects and techniques of iron smelting. This refurbishment included replacing interior walls and laying down a fresh layer of grass flooring.

My research at Nyarubale Primary School included working on design strategies for an exhibit on a German massacre of Haya men and women in the school's library, as well as remapping a trail that leads down to a waterfall, overlooking Lake Victoria, where victims of this massacre are interred. Remapping the waterfall site revealed that the bones of victims previously left *in situ* at an adjacent rock shelter had been removed. Furthermore, surrounding vegetation had suffered deforestation. Informing the school's headmaster who helps oversee the site, it was agreed that a management plan should be put in place to better protect the site. To bring

further attention to the site, I invited a local tour company, Kiroyera Tours, invested in heritage tourism to visit the site and meet with the headmaster. This visit led to informal discussions about the site's history, its importance for local education, and its potential as a regional heritage destination.

Built by the German colonial government for Haya kings of Kihanja kingdom, Kanazi Palace is a personal residence, historical site, museum, and shrine complex dedicated to Bacwezi gods and Hinda (royal clan) ancestors. Local plans to enhance the palace's heritage presentation allowed me the opportunity to assist in heritage-related activities. This included: documenting ninety objects owned by past Haya kings of Kihanja; inspecting and measuring unoccupied rooms for potential exhibit space; and securing hundreds of documents associated with Kanazi Palace that were poorly stored. This also included an invitation to visit a religious center in the village of Kaibanja that is considering a potential heritage partnership with the palace. At Kaibanja, I was introduced to the resident spirit

medium (*embandwa*) who guides the religious center and was informed about the religious center's historical relationship with Kanazi Palace. Permitted to photograph ritual and religious artifacts, shrines, and shrine houses associated with Bacwezi gods, I learned through this documentation aspects of traditional Haya religious practice. I also listened to discussions about a new heritage initiative between Kanazi Palace and Kaibanja's religious center that will focus on traditional Haya religious practice.

Many exciting things took place during my preliminary research. Productive and insightful, I was able to sharpen my dissertation research project and will be examining Kanazi Palace's heritage enhancement plan and the proposed heritage partnership between the palace and the religious center at Kaibanja.

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