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Indigenous knowledge, belief and practice of wild plants among the Meru of Kenya : past and present human-plant relations in East Africa
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Propositions

Indigenous Knowledge, Belief and Practice of Wild Plants among the Meru of Kenya:

Past and Present Human-Plant Relations in East Africa - Mrs. A.K. Ibui, Leiden University, 14.11.2007

1 The focus on the analysis of the key role of the so-called 'invisible factors' interacting with human

patterns of behaviour of wild plant use among the Meru in Kenya increases our respect for the indigenous spiritual and moral aspects of Meru cultural heritage. (*this thesis*)

2 Policy planning and implementation to revitalise indigenous knowledge systems leads to sustained

biocultural diversity conservation at the community level. (*this thesis*)

3 Plants have evolved already long before humans, living on well without them, but humans cannot

survive without plants, rendering a radical reorientation towards the sustainable use, management and conservation of the planet's plant kingdom critical for development in harmony (*this thesis*)

4 Although drastic changes in vegetation environments in the distant past have played a major role in

triggering humans' spread from Africa into other habitable lands across the globe, they seem now to

threat their 'global village' with extinction in the near future. (*this thesis*)

5 As for many palaeo-anthropologists, *the past is the key to our future*, for ethnobotanists the present is

not only the key to our past, but also *an alarm clock for the future*. (*cf. Leakey & Lewin on 'Origins*

Reconsidered: In search of What Makes us Human' 1992: xv).

6 Since the 'Ethnographic Analogy' as a method for the reconstruction of past cultures is dependent on

often incomplete archaeological evidence, a multidisciplinary orientation is needed to strengthen the

diachronic orientation of the 'Ethnobotanical Knowledge Systems' (EKS) approach (*cf.*

Slikkerveer

on the development of the Ethnosystems Approach at Leiden University, 2004).

7 Although more than ever before, Western researchers are now appreciating the contribution of indigenous peoples' Traditional Ecological Knowledge' (TEK) to the theory of science of

biocultural

diversity conservation, the indigenous peoples, however, require more practical recognition of their

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) (*cf. Posey & Dutfield 1996*).

8 The linkage between global recognition of traditional medicine in Primary Health Care and local

efforts in Kenya to promote indigenous herbal medicine should pertain to the support of initiatives

such as the *Shaminda Medical Home Gardens in Rural Kenya* project for better rural health.

9 The standard question Africans are confronted with today at any meeting with the Dutch:

'*Are you a refugee?*', seems not only the expression of the proverbial compassion of the hospitable, but also a hint to the hidden concern of the timid hare.

10 If global warming would indeed prove inescapable in the future, the rising ocean levels should at least bring water to the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) of the African Continent