

## **Uganda**

### **Political and Economic Organization**

Except for the **Hima**, all the kingdoms of this region practised a mixed strategy of agriculture and pastoralism. The **Hima** were predominantly pastoralist in Uganda and Rwanda. Except for **Rwanda** and **Burundi**, most of these kingdoms have had a system of patron/client ties where the norm has been that commoners from the same clans are tenants on the land of aristocratic kin. However, with colonialism there was a wider spread use of unrelated peoples in straightforward tenancy relationships. The **Banyarwanda** who moved to Uganda during the colonial period were often tenants to the peoples in Southern Uganda. Except in Rwanda, the kingships performed a largely ceremonial function, raised armies in times of warfare, and collected some tribute from associated clans. Land and economic power rested in the hands of clans and lineages, which were the effective political units in the everyday lives of the populations. Within Uganda there are some hunting-gathering peoples, such as the **Baamba** and the **Baswa**, who were never part of a kingdom, but who were incorporated into kingdoms by the English for administrative purposes.

## **Burundi**

Burundi forms an intermediate type in a continuum from kin-based hierarchies to highly centralised states. Burundi was a precolonial kingdom which occupied more or less the borders of the present day state. There were three ethnic groups which coexisted, **Tutsi**, **Hutu** and **Twa**. The **Twa**, a pygmy group, are seen as socially inferior, but the **Tutsi** and **Hutu** groups are made up of both commoners and aristocrats. They speak the same language, practice the same religions and live in the same areas. The **Tutsi** have held central power in Burundi throughout much of its precolonial, colonial and postcolonial history. In precolonial times and even under the Belgians, relations between Hutu and Tutsi were complex and often complimentary, however, in post colonial times power struggles between various factions of Tutsi have led to an enormous split between **Hutu** and **Tutsi**, as ethnicity has been a pawn in this power struggle. Economically, **Tutsi** and **Hutu** both farmed and kept livestock. The difference was in degree rather than in livelihood. Tutsi emphasised cattle, Hutu emphasised agriculture.

## **Rwanda**

The most centralized precolonial state in the region, Rwanda was the only state in which there was a virtually complete centralization of land, labour and power into the hands of a tiny elite. Originally resembling the Burundian state, the Rwandan state began a radical transformation in the mid 17th century. The period from the mid-seventeenth century until independence saw erosion of the power of the relatively autonomous corporate kin groups which had formed the centre of political and economic life. This was transformed into a system of vertical, dyadic clientage relationships which controlled access to land and power. It was the