

The Story Grandmother Did Not Want to Tell. A Short Story by Jane Nannonono, Uganda.

The last time that I visited grandmother, she asked me to read up about how the main three religions, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism, came to be established in Uganda. The whole week I'd been too busy with office work to find time to begin, let alone complete, grandmother's assignment. Knowing too well that I couldn't visit her again without some brief notes, however cursory, I woke up at 5am on the following Saturday and devoted a couple of hours to the task. It turned out to be an interesting read. First came the Arabs and Swahili traders who had arrived in the Buganda kingdom by the 1840's. They traded in ivory, cloth and slaves and later, guns. They taught the people at the Royal Court how to read and write Arabic and Swahili, and instructed them in Islam.

After receiving the British explorer Morton Stanley and being introduced to Christianity, King Muteesa the First wrote an official letter to Queen Victoria of Great Britain requesting that missionaries be sent to his kingdom. He wanted the missionaries to bring their civilization to his people and counsel them in the ways of Islam, which was the religion of his father. King Muteesa the First was a young monarch keen to modernize his kingdom and to gain the favor of the British. This famous, novel was published in the Daily Telegraph in November 1875. It had been received with enthusiasm by the British Establishment and public. The first missionaries arrived in 1877 to be followed by a second party in February 1879. The Catholic White Fathers missionaries from France arrived a week after this second party of the Christian Missionary Society of Britain. Hostility and rivalry developed between the British Protestant and the French Catholic missionaries as each group struggled to dominate the Royal Court. They knew that whoever controlled Mengo would win more converts in the Kingdom. The global struggle for converts between Catholicism and Protestantism was now playing out across Africa. However, King Muteesa the First maintained his inclination towards Islam. The rivalry between the missionaries exploded into the religious wars in the kingdom between 1888 and 1892. At one time, the Muslims and Protestant converts joined together and overthrew Muteesa the First's heir, Mwanga, and installed Kalema as King of Buganda. During his reign, Muslim influence increased; at one time the Muslims turned on the Christians, killing them and burning their churches. The Christians fled the Kingdom to

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