

ENCHANTING ISLAND

A visit to Zanzibar's Stone Town is like a trip hundreds of years back in time, writes **ELLY WAMARI**, who visited the island recently.

Seven years ago this month, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared Zanzibar's Stone Town a World Heritage site. It is easy to understand why, and one wonders why the town was not granted this status earlier.

Mji Mkongwe, as it is called in Kiswahili, might not really be visually impressive, but the moment you step onto its sands and narrow roads, a rich historical and cultural heritage stands right before you, bringing back memories of all you read about Zanzibar in history books.

One gets an indescribable feeling stepping inside the house notorious slave trade Tipu Tip occupied centuries ago, which still stands overlooking the waters on one side of this ancient town. The local people know it as the house where slave buyers "window shopped" for slaves.

Stone Town has a rich history, with seemingly ageless structures that are a mix of African, Arabian, Indian, and European architecture. The ancient buildings still stand firm, thanks to what must have been great architectural engineering. Notably, unlike the name suggests, the old palaces and forts that make up a good part of Stone Town are built of coral and soil.

Stone Town is one of Zanzibar's major tourist attractions, with a history that spans centuries. Walking around it gives one the feeling of connecting with events that transpired hundreds of years ago.

The other attraction that is the spice farms, where the spice farmers like Abeid Abdulla in Kizimbani village are more than willing to give a tip or two on identifying more than 26 varieties of spices and 31 types of fruits.

Abeid, whose family has traditionally grown and traded in spices, has wide knowledge of the uses of every spice on his farm. He's also a cook and gives visitors recipes of Zanzibari dishes.

The waters of Zanzibar Island have sections that are known worldwide as suitable for deep-sea diving, among other water sports. A deep section just off Matemwe beach near Mnemba Island to the north-east provides a rare opportunity to get into close contact with acrobatic dolphins in the wild.

And the Island is sparing to effort to improve tourism. "Our selection of tourism and hotel industry as a priority in our development strategy lies in the fact that in Zanzibar, we have some unique attractions, which if properly exploited, would be of great

economic benefits. The multitudes of historical, cultural, agricultural, environmental, natural and social attractions are enough incentives for any determined investor,” President Amani Abeid Karume said during the visit by EEIU Nabuur to Fairmont Zanzibar hotel in November 2007. It is the most recent investment on the island by the Canada based Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, which, after has also acquired a number of prime hotels in Kenya.

The children who accompanied me to this adventure agreed that the one hour trip from the airport in the south-west to the hotel in the north-east already gives one an experience of the general landscape of the Zanzibar.

We are at the process of receiving the Membership Survey Form, to get views on how we will be able to organize ourselves better for the interest of you, our esteemed members’.

DEMOCRACY, ETHICS AND THE PARANORMAL

By Ali Abdullahi

With the concept that elections have just elapsed and a president has been known, it will be true to say that Kenyans are now enjoying the fruits of enlightenment. That Kenyans are now committed to yield better living standards through betterment of their understanding. That Kenyans are now innovative, educated and politically corrected.

But not with certitude. Democracy as an activity remains a term to be manipulated by many. Kenyans still believe that someone has to be democratic on their behalf and that it doesn't matter if they don't take part in the democratization process. That, only results from the ballot would express in utmost faith, their interest at heart, through the person voted for in majority. This view is deluded, vague and full of ignorance. Democracy should not be seen as a representative act, but as participatory. The populace at any given time must be cultured to invest their livelihood in a manner that encourages free thought, self development and nation building. Not putting in spare, the checks of tribalism.

In this view, therefore, I would like to define democracy as the process of voluntarily understanding and participating in the making of policies that influence patriotic alignment to the state. Simply, the right and freedom to do whatever you please, however you want, whenever you fell and for whom you believes deserves the act. But all these, within the laws of the land.

Again it trickles down to nature of the world's eco-systems, where we have to erase all attitudes that might promote racist agenda. That we have to be international and with a common code of conduct, the human code. This becomes a major problem with everyone eager to be internationally outstanding, thereby, a result into anarchy of cultural systems.

Although we must agree, culture is what defines the people and cultural erosion is a root to so many ills, some of which are societal; while others, ultimately linked to natural

beings. This is what makes the concept of ethics a major task in all scholarly works. People seek to find mutual points of agreement and hence develop a unity of ethical concepts, whether for the ecology, society or even government systems. But what is ethics?

Mr. Boaz Adhengo (**ADHENGO 2004**) defines ethics as the highest hierarchical progress of the moral will. He continues to define morality as a self innovation, self definition and self analysis of what one recognizes as good. Thus morality becomes a relative concept, depending on who holds the view at any particular instance.

Ethics will be developed as an attempt to create a balance of undetermined actions, an attempt to regulate individual acts. Thus, we shall view it as a compromise of two or more moral stands.

In this regard, every organization has its moral code of action and when in partnership, collaboration or association with other organizations, it develops an ethical code. Thus ethics becomes the highest point of moral codes within a system of actors.

With two concepts already well explained, (culture and democracy) the meaning of ethics in this article will gain emphasis in our attempts to understand why we are how we are. That as you move away from your home area, people tend to be different and it is upon you to appreciate the difference at whatever level you believe fit for your mission at the instance of movement.

In 1964, the government of Kenya introduced the concept of Kenyanisation as opposed to Africanisation. It was believed that Kenya is a global village with all races represented in the economic and social spheres of livelihood. And if the concept of Africanisation would be upheld, only the African race would be dominant in the vital spheres of Kenyan life. This would be unhealthy practice of national relations.

With this well understood, defining who an African 'is' has been met with resistance. Mostly, South Africans who are dominantly white but still Africans. (Where African means being born and brought up in Africa) Others claim that Africanising the white race would promote cultural anarchy. Maybe. Maybe not. It all depends on what we view this anarchy to entail.

Some insist that the white race has no culture, they are only actors in a capacity to influence without borders. I don't really understand this. If this is true, I could be subject to my Italian wife. And the same could be true of Mr. Adhengo who has two wives harmonized in a joint relationship, all being white women from different continents.

As a Kenyan of Asian origin, my culture will be greatly Asiatic. Hence a new question of our belief systems arises. How do we develop taboos? What do we consider as natural?

Through the Institute for African Ecology and Philosophy, the Project Nabuur Initiatives has established the Committee for Public Understanding of Paranormal Sciences

(CPUPS). This group will attempt to bring to the fore; issues related to witchcraft, supernatural occurrences and the so called, dark-side beliefs.

It had been noted that the reluctance enjoyed by Kenyans opting out of participatory democracy was greatly influenced by their suspicion and fear of some paranormal beliefs. Some actions that are really necessary for development are ignored on the basis of being defined as unethical, against culture or taboos.

The coastal province in Kenya has been on the lime light with many skeptical minds disputing major reports of paranormal occurrences. Mainly, Kilifi district has been the crux of promoting the theory of “Jini” whereas Kwale district has been practical in providing occurrences. The people used are primary school pupils, who are mature girls approaching puberty or engaged in puberty. This province has primary school pupils who are almost twenty years of age, blaming poverty and the devil for this pace of education. It is this low literacy rate that makes the populace in Mombasa as a city to be backward and utmost, superstitious within incompatible cultures. I was even shocked when a girl confessed to the media that she felt as if someone was making love to her during the class time, that she experienced several orgasms without vivid explanation on their cause. And when this enjoyment exceeded her suspicions, she decided to seek assistance from the head teacher.

Another incidence was in Kilifi, about six girls were possessed with what they term “Jini”. And this JINI was demanding a goat’s blood. More so, it required that everyone within the compound to strip naked.

These incidences have prompted the media to double its coverage; the Nation Media Group and the Kenya Television Network have embarked on more provoking investigations. Just to prove that these occurrences are mental and if condoned, they will interfere with the public understanding of democracy.

However, as much as Kenya might be on the fore to investigate these issues, countries like Tanzania who are our immediate neighbours have paranormal occurrences as an accepted way of life. Every event is viewed with suspicion. This are what tourists love, but for Tanzania, it is a way of life that they have understood for decades and have found the issue undisputable.

Ms. Fauzia Makena has been visiting Dar – es –Salaam and has been aired on major talk shows. The most recent was by the East African Television (EATV) at a program hosted by Seki, “The City Sounds”. Here, much was discussed on how the wizards and witches use snakes, cats, rats, roaches as pets that link them with the spiritual world.

All in all, we must agree that democracy, ethics and the paranormal belief systems have much influence on our daily lives.

Endangered Nile Perch in Retreat

Pollution has made fish to move to deep areas of lake where pirates maraud
By Tim Querengesser

Even though it is dangerous, Mr Geoffrey Obure must sail his boat into deeper waters of Lake Victoria these days. Often, he finds himself across the borders, “And when you cross the border into Uganda, you’re likely to find terrorists,” he says, perched on his boat in the Kisumu harbour.

But Mr. Obure, a fisherman, has to brave all dangers because nowadays the coveted Nile Perch has become hard to come by. It is a tasty, quick growing and massive, making it an ideal staple species for a fishery. The fisherman says finding the massive Nile Perch – which can fetch more than Sh 100 per kilogramme, thanks to its popularity in Europe – it is becoming an increasingly perilous game with shrinking returns.

Pollution and falling water levels have pushed the fish into deeper, cleaner waters in the center of the Lake. And they estimate that its population has dropped by as much as 25 percent in the past few years.

“It is only the small ones you can get now,” says Mr. Charles Onyango after returning from night on the Lake. Though he has seen perch as big as 250 kilogrammes hauled to the shore, a bounty worth more than many Kenyans make in a year, the average size of catch nowadays is less than 30 kilogrammes, he says.

For these men who have little to keep them going when they don’t catch fish, finding perch is mostly dependent on wind and rain patterns. Mr. James Otieno, a fisherman from Bondo, says the perch has become seasonal. The effects of these changes are starting to be felt. Some of Mr. Obures friends have already gone out of business. Many are worried that the perch population is now in constant decline and still others are looking to other species to supplement their incomes.

And then there are men with guns. “The parties are there but it’s part of the risk we take,” Mr. Obure says. Though he has never had an encounter, his friends have been robbed and even forced to eat their bait at gun point, he says. While nobody has been killed, the dedication to the Nile Perch – it’s the most precious of all fish,” says Mr. Obure – hints that such misadventure could become more common.

The consensus among fishermen in Kisumu is that water pollution, which is exacerbated by lack of government regulation, has forced the perch to leave.

Run – off from the many rivers that feed into the lake is ferrying toxic substances into the water, and industrial and residential waste is increasing. Visual evidence is everywhere, as fertilizers used by farmers upstream have caused water hyacinth to flourish, pushing some species farther out or killing them altogether. The hills surrounding Kisumu are

barren, having been stripped of trees to make charcoal. Rivers once protected from direct sunlight are now exposed and drying up faster, leading to a shrinking lake. This has seen the perch – a hunter that needs a clean water to see its prey – move away from the shore.

“It likes being in a healthy environment and, at the moment, the water is very poor, so it goes farther to look for fresher environment to survive,” he says.

The Kenyan fishermen appear to be hit the hardest. Thanks to some questionable colonial border art, Kenya has only about six percent of the lake, meaning Ugandan and Tanzanian fishermen sharing the lake can fish in the deep waters safely within their borders while Kenyans cannot.

Some are now fitting their boats with motors to help them go deeper, farther and faster. Mr. Obure guesses the farthest people have gone from Kisumu is 100 kilometers. The irony is that all this trouble is for a fish that does not belong in Lake Victoria.

The British introduced the Nile Perch in 1954 in an attempt to revive the fishery. But after, its population exploded in the 1980’s and exports hit billions of shillings per year.

The impact of Perch’s introduction has been mostly negative on the Lake’s ecosystem, despite being a boon for the pocketbooks of fishermen. The World Conservation Union considers the Nile Perch one of the world’s 100 worst invasive species. Many native fish, including ngege (tilapia) and several species of cichlids have all disappeared.

Lake Victoria basin is a major source of income for an estimated 30 million people, 10% of them being fishermen. Mr. Obure estimates that 1.5 million people in Kenya draw an income directly from the lake’s fishery.

He and many others in Kisumu are not waiting for the day they cannot find perch. Instead, they’re fishing from the safety of the shore. Six ponds – four for tilapia and two for catfish – have recently been dug near the wharf where Mr. Obure keeps his boat.

“This is the future,” he says, proudly standing in one of the ponds that still await water and fish. “The ponds are being made because we want to create some security for our income. We’re just trying to survive,” he says.

FOUR QUESTIONS TO Mr. ADHENGO

By Ali Abdullahi

With the increasing interest of the members to have Mr. Adhengo as part of Eco – Ethics International Union, and with the incapacity of EEIU Nabuur to explain the situation at hand. We welcomed members to forward their sentiments, describing vividly in question, why they wanted Mr. Adhengo to be part of EEIU. We also requested for any extra questions that could help explain why Adhengo is where he is.

Of twenty three (23) questions mailed to me, only four were on target. And these are the questions that Ms. Nancy Wamboi took to Mr. Adhengo as an interview. The interview was carried out in front of a public audience at the EEIU Morogoro offices during the Launch of the Arusha Center in Tanzania.

1. What is your view on the recent federal agreement?

- E. Wanjala, Eldoret.

The promotion of unity amongst the Chapters and within their independent operations is a major element of productivity. The step taken by Morogoro and Nabuur is worth being emulated in any part of the EEIU fraternity as long as it supports the EEIU concepts.

2. What made you be dismissed as a Chapter Chair and what happened to the chapter membership you had?

- John Chege Maina, Naivasha

When I applied for a Chapter status to EEIU, my intentions were ripe and little did I know of the internal wrangles that was created by my members from being influenced by other chapter chairs who were afraid of a united approach to Eco – Ethics. Little did I know that I was acting against the constitution I promised to abide by. But all these is in the past, **EEIU/HEUK** as a Chapter had many projects, the members were stranded from confusion but thank you to EEIU Morogoro, they were able to be organized and feel motivated to coordinate through EEIU.

3. What are your sentiments about EEIU and don't you think some people would view your decision to link with EEIU as a betrayal?

- Samuel Memba, Nairobi.

From my experiences at EEIU, I think it is the best union for ecological enthusiasts that the world will ever see. And although the principles of democracy are highly honoured within the union, am sure that my naiveté would have been excused and not lead to a dismissal. As much as it could be to many others, a looser I am, not much of the spirit of Eco- Ethics could I resist from. I have been involved in various projects in support of ecology and has been in constant communication with various Chapter Chairs in India, Cameroon and even Kenya.

To ignore EEIU would have been to betray my own integrity and reputation in the eventuality of a flawed process. The outcome speaks for itself.

4. Do you support any projects at EEIU?

- John Kuria, Mombasa.

Of course, am still in contact with various Chapters within Kenya and Tanzania. We work together through the Institute for African Ecology and Philosophy.

FISHERMEN CAST NETS DEEPER AND WIDE, BUT FOR LESS

Illegal trawlers wreak havoc on Malindi's waters that were once resource-rich.

By KEN OPALA

Once Malindi Bay had plenty of fish, but now, local fisherman Athman Abud can only harvest a fifth of what he used to bring home 14 years ago.

Then, he didn't have to venture deep into the sea to realize 200 kilos. Malindi Bay, at the heart of Kenya's coastal fisheries, was a magnet to fishermen from as far as Zanzibar and Somalia. "It is a big problem; things have become so difficult that we don't know what to do," he says.

It is hardly that the number of fishermen has increased, strengthening competition. In fact, the number is down. It is that fish has become scarce.

Kenya's 640km long coastline is suffering from dwindling resources. Thus, an industry that should be a key income earner is steeped in problems. Only a tenth of the Sh 8.7 billion revenue from fish last year came from coastal marine, the rest was from Lake Victoria and other less water masses.

Fisherman Athman Abud's predicament is a microcosm of the plight of the 20,000 plus fishermen making a living along this coastline, from Kiunga, in the northern boundary with Somalia, to Vanga, at the tip of Kenya's southern boundary with Tanzania. The fishermen are losing their livelihood owing to the declining quantity of fish, due to multiplicity of reasons, but mainly illegal, unreported and unregulated (commonly known as IUU) fishing. A two day conference was organized in Kilifi town on 6-7 December 2007, to discuss the fishing industry in Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia.

Andre Standing of South Africa based Institute of Security Studies discussed a research report he produced, that detailed the decrease in fish resources due to IUU as well as mismanagement at the hands of authorities.

Investigations by Ms. Fauzia Makena confirmed the threat. Yet, it is not just the quantities that are reportedly under strain. A number of species (including the turtle and the yellow fin tuna), hitherto globally recognized as concentrated along the Kenyan coast, face extinction.

The consequence of IUU fishing (foreign pirates, small scale fisher-folk and unlicensed trawlers) is manifest in the incessant conflict between trawlers and the artisanal fisher-folk along the coast. At least 27 incidents involving the destruction of 205 nets, valued at Sh 4.8 million, have been reported in the last seven years, according to a report by the Institute for African Ecology and Philosophy, "Preliminary Spatial Analyses of the Prawn Trawl Fishery in Kenya and Consideration for its Future Management".

Research on the extent of IUU has been fleeting. Nonetheless, a report prepared for UK's Department for International Development (DID) shows that Kenya loss about \$5 million (about Sh 370 million) through IUU fishing, which, it says, has heavily impacted on the tuna population. Thus, a third of the revenue from coastal fisheries disappears into thin air, thanks to IUU fishing.

The report says the vessels involved in IUU are drawn from "distant water fishing nations, some of which may be registered with open register countries".

Illicit fishing is not new. But it peaked in 1997, fanned by the civil strife that helped expose Somalia to pirate fishing vessels, a number of them belonging to Kenyan business-people.

As Abud goes through the interview for this EEIU Nabuur report, an unlicensed trawler closes in on to Malindi Bay and inches towards the shores; very close, one would think, it's headed to the dock. After an hour of "idling" in the shallow waters, it sails away.

Illegal Trawling

"It is being done with impunity, you can see," Mr. Athman Seif, the Chairman of the Kenya Marine Fisheries Forum (KMF), says in an apparent reference to illegal trawling in Malindi.

KMF is an independent lobby of players in the fishing industry: fisher-folk, NGOs, researchers and the state departments. "We do nothing because the government is doing nothing," Observes Seif.

Not far away, two motorboats acquired last year by the Government to check illegal trawling in the near shores of Indian Ocean, are stuck in shallow waters, dysfunctional. "They have no fuel." A state official confirms that the boats are "fuel-guzzlers". They were operational only for two weeks after their acquisition, he says. The two engines are part of the 11 patrol boats acquired last year by the Government at a cost of Sh90 million. The surveillance boats were dysfunctional when an unlicensed trawler ventured into Lamu shallow waters on August 23, 2007 and left a trail of destruction in its wake. In just

four hours, it left hundreds of turtles dead. “It (vessel) was illegal, it was foreign from Somalia,” says Andrew Mwangura, the coordinator of Seafares Assistance Programme, a global network of volunteer who ensure safety in the seas.

The turtle is classified among endangered species and it is thus protected by global covenants. Kenya has been at the forefront in crusading for the protection of the turtle.

The problem with Kenya’s coastal fishery is that it is underdeveloped. Focus has been on mainly the fresh-water fisheries that contribute almost 90 percent of the Sh8.7 billion earned from the 159,776 metric tones of fish in 2005. “The coastal fishery viewed merely as an appendage of the fresh water fishery industry,” says Mr. Seif.

Yet, it has great potential. In fact, communities in Kipini, Vanga, Watamu, Malindi, Kiwayu, Kiunga and Lamu make their living out of fishing. Consequently, any threat to the coastal fisheries is devastating to the local economy as it is to the national economy.

It is for this reason that KMF, in a letter to the Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Development, Mr. Joseph Munyao, dated September 1, 2007, warned that thousands of livelihoods could be wiped out owing to decline in fish quantities as a result of illegal fishing by big vessels.

There is general feeling among industry players that the fish resources are plummeting as a result of human handiwork. “There is ...the challenging decline in species number and volume; and pollution of water bodies, coupled with the lack of appropriate infrastructure,” says the report titled: *Midterm Review of the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation*, by Ministry of Planning and National Development.

Dr. K Ruwa, the deputy director of the statutory Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute (KEMFRI), uses simple analogies to illustrate the decline in marine species, in this case, fish.

“When a fisherman takes a long time to catch the same amount of fish, then you know there is a problem. Most fishermen now spend too much time in the ocean, but come back with less catch. That means there is more effort being used to catch less.”

Not far from Dr Ruwa’s office is the Coral Reef Degradation in Indian Ocean East Africa (CORDIO EA) office, a manicured air-conditioned office of young researchers decked in casual attire but also volunteers at Project Nabuur Initiatives.

Innocent Wanyonyi, a programme officer has produced numerous reports that highlight the threat facing Kenya’s coastal fisheries. Over-harvesting and use of illegal gear and fishing methods have combined to deplete the shores off fish.

Some players in the fishery industry consider the increased fish prices an indication of the dearth in the commodity.

Salim Idd Mwasima has hawked fish for 20 years. Initially, he acquired his bounty from fishermen from as far as Msambweni and Uvanga in Kenya and Zanzibar in Tanzania respectively. “These days, people from Zanzibar don’t come any more,” he tells Ms. Fauzia Makena.