

African Proverb of The Month December, 2010



Kîrîma kî mîtî nî guoko kwa Ngai (kîara kîa Ngai). (Gikuyu)

Kilima kilicho na miti ni mkono au kidole cha Mungu. (Swahili)

Une montagne avec des arbres c'est la main ou le doigt de Dieu. (French)

A hill with trees is the hand or finger of God. (English)

Gikuyu ([Kenya](#)) Proverb

Background, Explanation, Meaning and Everyday Use

Versions of this African proverb are found in different Kenyan languages. This Gikuyu (or Kikuyu) version is known and used by the Gikuyu elders in Njoro, 11 kilometers from Nakuru, Kenya. In Gikuyu culture the work of the hand or arm implies life forever. A hill with trees is the work (creation) of the life power of God.

This Kenyan proverb relates deeply to the creation story. The Gikuyu people believe that God (*Ngai or Mwene Nyaga*) lived on Mount Kenya when he came down from the sky and that he gave a guarantee that the Gikuyu people would take care of the earth for the generations to come after their death. The Gikuyu knew very well that the earth was given to them by God for their children. The earth is more important to the Gikuyu than many other things.

Another Gikuyu proverb is: *Guoko kwa Ngai gutieraga (God's arm never wavers).*

Biblical Parallels

Genesis 1:9-13: "And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day."

It is interesting that God created the trees before human beings.

Contemporary Use and Religious Application

