



A view of the skylines from the slopes of Kadama hills. PHOTO BY JOSEPH KATO

Kadama, more than just hills

HIDDEN GEM: Kadama hills are a source of herbs and concoctions that locals use to treat animal and human diseases, however it has potential to be a valuable tourism attraction.

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When you are in Nakapiripirit District, you can be forgiven for mistaking Kadama hills for mountain Moroto. The two have similar features. For instance, in Nakapiripirit, you see several steep hills like those found at Mt Moroto.

In the morning or late evening, the hills' sharp points are shielded by fog and one would mistake it for rain forming clouds.

However, when the fog fades, you appreciate the beauty of Kadama hills. The three sharp peaks close to each other resemble the three traditional fire stones locally known as *Ekyoto* loosely translated to fireplace in Buganda.

For a visitor to Nakapiripirit Town or Mourita Sub-county, your mind will be overtaken by the serenity around the hills. The all-green vegetation gives an impression of fertile soil.

But for the locals, Kadama hills are more than just hills. They regard them as center for blessings, a place where one can pick herbals for illnesses such as malaria, measles, human, and animal skin diseases.

It is about a kilometre or two from Nakapiripirit Town to reach Kadama hills that to locals like Evelyn Cheptai, say are a source of concoctions used to treat animal diseases. Cheptai has used herbs from the hills to treat herself and animals since 1970s.

"I use herbs from the hill to treat animal infections and pests like ticks. I also pick herbs that I use to smear animal skins when they fall sick,"

Cheptai says.

Stephen Angolere, a 14-year-old who has been climbing the hills since he was 11 years, says he climbs the hills to get blessings. His grandmother told him that the three peaks are a source of blessings and one can get what he asks even though he does not know who gives the blessings.

"I have been climbing these hills for two years now. My grandmother encouraged me to visit them for blessings. I was sickly but that has since changed. I climb the hills at least twice a year to ask for good health, protection and get blessings," Angolere stresses.

Other than going there for blessings, Angolere says he is always struck by the coldness at the hills and the clear view of Karamoja which he gets when he is on top of the hill. He also gets excited when he sees himself close to what he describes as clouds (fog).

Fertile soils

Magdalene Lomigin praises Kadama hills for having fertile soils. She says the soils around the area are fertile and favour growth of both food and cash crops.

"The crops grown on the slopes look healthy and the harvests are usually much better compared to other areas in the sub-county," she says.

Even though others praise Kadama hills, John Nangilo, the Nakapiripirit District chairperson has a different picture of the hills.

For instance, he says the district has not benefited from its natural resources because the residents have not realised their potential. The hills are free access and minerals are taken by outsiders which he says has hampered the district growth.

CRIME RATE

Criminality:

Because of the inaccessibility to the villages surrounding the hill, John Nangilo, the Nakapiripirit District chairperson says the hills add to the rate of crime because most of the criminals, especially defilers hide in the hills and it is not easy for police to trace them. "The hill is too big and has made it difficult for us to police communities around. The defilement cases in that area are never reported to us. I hilly and surrounded by water resource he says. He, however believes that if hills are given attention they have great potential to be a valuable tourism attraction in the region.

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