

# The Couth and the Uncouth: Ethnic, Social, and Linguistic Divisions among the Sandawe of Central Tanzania

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The Sandawe of central Tanzania are a small tribe who live in comparative isolation; this isolation is geographical as well as cultural but by no means absolute. The majority of tribesmen live in a range of low, rocky hills which is surrounded by almost uninhabited bush, and their numbers are not large<sup>1</sup>. On the whole the Sandawe may be seen as an aboriginal pocket which survives from before the arrival of the modern Bantu and non-Bantu peoples in East Africa. Although similar types are also seen among their neighbours, the average Sandawe is noticeably different physically<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> According to the latest census, the one of 1957, there were 20,031 Sandawe within their tribal boundaries. The grand total, including emigrants to distant towns, was 28,309 (E. A. Statistical Dept., 1958).

<sup>2</sup> Physical similarities are particularly noticeable among the Rimi and the Iramba to the north-west. The physical characters of the Sandawe have been investigated by TREVOR in 1944 (TREVOR 1947), but some salient features will again be mentioned below because they show an interesting pattern of variation which has a bearing on our argument. The complexity of the ethnic situation within the tribal area is well matched by the situation outside the tribal boundaries. The immediate neighbours of the Sandawe are of many different origins and belong to several unrelated linguistic families: the