

# Music from Petauke of Northern Rhodesia, Vol. 1



Recorded and Edited by  
John Blacking, University of Witwatersrand (South Africa) and Raymond Apthorpe, University of Ibadan (Nigeria)

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SIDE I

- Band 1: TWO LULLABIES
  - Band 2: TWO CHILDRENS COUNTING SONGS
  - Band 3: A STORY ABOUT THE CHILD OF A POLYGAMIST, WITH A SONG
  - Band 4: POUNDING SONG: two extracts
  - Band 5: POUNDING SONG
  - Band 6: POUNDING SONG, with chorus of bystanders
  - Band 7: SONG OF SORROW
  - Band 8: SONG OF SORROW
- (Bands 1 to 8 are sung by Nsenga people and are unaccompanied, except by the sounds of the pounding in Bands 4, 5, and 6.)

SIDE II

- Band 1: CIMTALI RHYTHMS FOR THREE DRUMS
  - Band 2: CIMTALI DANCE-SONG FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
  - Band 3: CIMTALI DANCE-SONG FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
- (Bands 1 to 3 are performed by Nsenga people, but some of Band 2 is in the Cewa language. Bands 2 and 3 are accompanied by three drums.)

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

- Band 4: NYAU DANCE RHYTHMS FOR FIVE DRUMS, with four players, and a masked dancer with leg rattles
  - Band 5: NYAU SONG
  - Band 6: NYAU SONG
  - Band 7: NYAU SONG
  - Band 8: TOPICAL SONG, accompanied by seven-note pangwe board zither
  - Band 9: A SONG ABOUT THE STEAMER ON LAKE NYASSA, accompanied by seven-note pangwe board zither.
- (Nyau music is derived from the Cewa, but bands 4 to 7 are performed by Nsenga people. Bands 5 to 7 are accompanied by five drums.)
- (Bands 8 and 9 are sung by a Cewa, who uses a variety of languages as well as his own.)

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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Recorded and Edited, and with Notes by

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and

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VOLUME I

I. The Ethnography of the Nsenga of Petauke,  
Eastern Province, Northern Rhodesia,

by Raymond Apthorpe \*

## Introduction

The landscape of Petauke is dominated by that light to dense woodland association which is monotonously widespread in the Rhodesias and parts of neighbouring Angola, Moçambique, Congo, and Nyasaland. Undulating plateau topography is the rule, but in the Luangwa tributary valleys in particular there are level, comparatively treeless tracts with short grass. On the plateau, the long grass may exceed twelve feet.

Elephant, lion and game beasts roam widely on the plateau in the wet season (November - March), but in the dry season they are concentrated nearer the Luangwa River. The agricultural economy of Petauke is now one of peasantry, no longer one of subsistence. The staples are maize, sorghum and ground nuts. Fishing, except among the valley Nsenga, is not important.

Graphic art and the arts for the Nsenga are essentially domestic, private and personal. The casual visitor or official in Petauke might pass his time there without discovering Nsenga art. For instance, the small decorated clay pot used by both spouses for their marital intimacies of shaving and washing should be kept hidden from the sight even of close friends and relatives of the wife; and the woman potter who makes this kind of pot does not display

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Top: Ulimba

Center: Jasi Njovu and Zangose Lungu play  
together at Cikundu

Bottom: Musicians at Dance, Nyahwayo



it along with the household kinds. In size it is small, about 2 1/2 inches high, with a slightly concave or convex lid, all made of fired clay glazed with graphite, and profusely decorated with beadwork and strings of beads. 'Decoration' in this context does not mean 'ornamentation' only: beads are honours, and have the ritual significance of seeds, germination and final causes. This small pot, the personal possession of women, symbolizes woman. The hut, plastered and cared for by women though basically constructed by men is symbolically a womb. On certain ritual occasions, ceremonial passage through the single doorway signifies rebirth.

Personal ornamentation among the Nsenga - bead strings, lip plugs, cicatrices and keloids for example - is of great diversity: women's ornamentation is more elaborate than men's, and it is chiefly for decoration rather than tribal identification. The figurines and designs made on the ground and on the hut walls during the girls' puberty celebration in Petauke, should be executed with artistic skill, and good results are admired in themselves for their beauty. The colours used are red, which represents blood and the feminine principle, white, which stands for semen and the male principle, and black, which seems to have two references - male-exercised authority, on the one hand, and emptiness, exhaustion or death on the other. These meanings are manifold, not single or absolute, and interpenetrate with each other. But they are, or rather some of them are, perfectly explicit in, for instance, the explanations of the designs and figurines given to the neophyte by the instructresses.

It is the commemoration of girls' puberty which calls for the greatest display of artistic, including musical, skills.

It is true that the arts among the Nsenga do not assume the far larger proportions they enjoy among the Lunda, for instance, or the Lozi. Nonetheless, girls' puberty celebration is a festival of the arts in itself. Unfortunately, objections by missionaries and others because of its 'sexual' element, have much modified its scale. But the factors accounting for the decline, especially of certain more public aspects, are by no means limited to that of simple disapproval by outsiders.

The Nsenga population of Petauke numbers now rather more than 80,000. The total African population of Northern Rhodesia is in the region of 3,000,000. So diverse do the people of that part of Central Africa regard themselves, however, that for all their relative modesty in numbers, the Nsenga may be counted as the fifth largest ethnic group in Northern Rhodesia - the big four being, respectively, the Plateau and Valley Tonga in the south, the Bemba in the north, the Ceŵa, and the Lunda in the north and north-west. There is a tendency for 'the Nsenga' to say that 'the Kunda' (20,000) and 'the Senga' (25,000) are practically identical to themselves in cultural respects, but not enough research has been carried out yet for this claim to be assessed. There are five principal language groups in North-

ern Rhodesia which are not mutually intelligible: Bemba, Nyanja, Lunda-Luvala, Tonga and Lozi. Oral testimony in Petauke has it that 'Nsenga' of the last century would appear to have been chiefly of the Bemba rather than the Nyanja group. But today the position may have been reversed. Ceŵa (of the Nyanja group) is now the official vernacular in most schools in Petauke. It is also the local language used in the various media of mass communication beamed on Petauke from Lusaka.

My own investigations amongst the Nsenga were carried out during ten months over the years 1958-1961. They were concerned primarily with matters of social and political structure, and ritual only incidentally. My friends and assistants who translated for Mr. Blacking and who helped in other ways were Messrs. H.D. Ng'wane, M.C. Mazala, G. Mlimba, Thayo Sufyia (my cook), and Miss Mary Sakala. The puberty ceremony, whose music takes up the whole of the third record in this series, was the sixth that I had witnessed.

### Culture History

Originally, and in belief rather than legend since there seems to be little mythology about it, the Nsenga derived from Uluwa, the Luba heartland in the present Congo Republic. The eastern neighbours of the Nsenga in Northern Rhodesia, the Ceŵa, whose music is represented chiefly on Record I, Side 2, Cuts 4-7, also claim to have come originally from Uluwa. This putative common origin, however, shared by some other people in Northern Rhodesia, does not provide for any merging of the Nsenga and Ceŵa identities. These are conceived - by the former, at least - as reciprocally hostile and contradictory. A characteristic, if trivial, exemplification of this occurred during the puberty ceremony (Record III), when a propos the pinching ordeals that novices must undergo, an instructress tried to persuade me that "the Nsenga do not pinch at all, only the Ceŵa do that. Do you call us Ceŵa?" It appeared as if nothing could have offended her more.

Probably the Nsenga and the Ceŵa arrived in their present lands at different times, and by different routes. The Ceŵa, according to their oral tradition, journeyed from the northern to southern reaches of Lake Nyasa, either across the lake by raft or else by a land route bordering it to the east. They entered Northern Rhodesia from what is now Mozambique. To judge from my own information on Nsenga oral history and such fragments as have been made available by administrators, missionaries and others, the Nsenga have no tradition of migration relating to Lake Nyasa. However, in historical as well as in social, political and cultural respects, 'the Nsenga' should be regarded as a composite, not unitary, people. Certainly some Nsenga groups claim to have migrated to Petauke from the east, and thus may be regarded as Ceŵa offshoots. But probably the majority of the present-day Nsenga-speaking inhabitants of Petauke would assert that they settled in their present lands independently of the Ceŵa, coming from the north or the west, or even from Shona country in the south.



In the village of Menyani where the puberty ceremony was recorded, musicians, instructresses and others denied that even in the distant past they might have been in any way associated with the Ceŵa. It must, however, be mentioned that the clan memberships of the leading participants (including the master-drummer) in the puberty ritual recorded do suggest past Ceŵahood rather than Nsengahood. In view of the considerable clues to Central African history afforded by clanship, this should be considered alongside the musicological suggestion of Mr. Blacking that, in comparison with the Ceŵa and other Nsenga performances he heard in Petauke, the puberty music on Record III is distinctively Nsenga.

One historical possibility is that the Ceŵa, under Chief Undi, established themselves in their present lands as early as the 17th century. Nsenga oral tradition, on the other hand, might be interpreted as indicating that Nsenga settlement in Petauke dates only from the beginning of the 19th century. The Ngoni crossed the Zambezi in 1835 on their northward march. Their second period of encounter with the Nsenga was half a century later, on their penetration southward from Tanganyika. It would, I think, generally be said among the people of Petauke that Nsenga cultural influence on the Ngoni has been greater than that of the Ngoni on the Nsenga, for example in matters of puberty ritual and of kinship terminology and allied subjects. However, no one has inquired specifically into the topic and record should be made of the fact that Ngoni terminology is used by the Nsenga in respect of cattle keeping, although Nsenga claim to have had cattle before the Ngoni came. Also, Ngoni (or Zulu) terms crop up in connection with the designs on beadwork aprons, as well as with the beads and aprons themselves, worn by Nsenga instructresses at puberty ceremonies.

The topic of Nsenga-Ngoni culture history is one of many in this field in Central Africa which has scarcely been raised, let alone considered or partly considered. Musicological research offers one avenue of inquiry into cultural history, and this may be particularly fruitful.

Two other culture contacts in Petauke remain to be mentioned for any musicological significance they may have. In the last third of the 19th century, Kunda condottieri established themselves in regions in the northern half of the Petauke district. Some recordings (Record I, Side 1) were made in villages in the area where Kunda influence has been felt in some social and political respects - but it would be outside the scope of the present note to discuss these. No musicological data in this respect is available.

Soon after the Kunda came British and Afrikaans traders, administrators, settlers, and missionaries, beginning in the late 1880's.

#### Matrilineal descent

The system of clanship and kinship among the Nsenga is dominantly matrilineal, although this does not mean of course that links through the patri-clan are unimportant. One context in which a patri-clan link is apparent is in the pattern of personal names. For instance, in the personal name 'John Mumbi Mwanza' the last component, Mwanza, the name of an Nsenga clan, is John's father's matri-clan, not his own. A person's own membership clan, which is the same as that of his mother from whom indeed he receives it, is not indicated in his personal name.



7-string zither, Sherodani Banda (Cewa), recording at Mulipa



Finishing Cilengo, Ngwena, Mulipa



NYAU Dance, Masked dancer, Mulipa



While matri-clans, which are exogamous, are not localised strictly speaking, there is nevertheless a close association in Nsenga ideas between particular clans and particular territories. A clan may be politically dominant (through the chieftainship and a large proportion of village headmanships) in a particular area. It is this ideational 'distribution' of Nsenga matri-clans which is shown in the map.

The master-drummer Menyani, the principal musician on Record III, has taught both his son and his nephew (sister's son) to drum for puberty ceremonies. Thus clearly in this context for one, the principle of importance to the Nsenga is not solely the matrilineal one. Menyani and his brother were taught by his father. At a puberty ceremony in a more northern village in Petauke, an instructress explained to me that in ideal Nsenga practice the mother of the master-drummer would herself be an instructress, and she and her son, in their different capacities, should attend always the same ceremonies sharing one ciselo. Ciselo in this context may be translated as 'ritual kit', though it also has the connotation of the ritual skill itself and the inherited right to possess it and use it. Drumming for puberty ritual is considered by the Nsenga to demand more musical skill than that required on any other occasion.

## II. The Music of the Nsenga, by John Blacking.\*

Two of the set of three long-playing records contain a representative sample of Nsenga music, as well as some items of music either borrowed from the Ceŵa or played by Ceŵa people living in Nsenga country. The third record consists solely of items from a puberty ritual of the Nsenga, which Dr. Apthorpe and I attended.

Not every possible item of Nsenga music is represented: for instance, I was unable to obtain any recordings of boys playing the three-holed transverse flute, tulilo, but understand that the music played on it is like flute music in other parts of southern Africa -- probably because of the similarity and physical limitations of the instruments. Nor have I examples of percussion instruments in the form of hoes being struck, called nsengwe, or maize being rattled on a plate. I never heard a dance of spirit possession (mpanda, nzamba, or mashaŵi), but was told that the melodies and rhythms are very similar to those of the puberty ritual (sides 5 and 6). Master-drummers use the same set of drums for both types of music.

There are moments when Nsenga music is as poignant (e.g. cuts 1a and 8, side 1), as exciting (e.g. cuts 9 and 10, side 3), or as quietly uplifting (e.g. cuts 7 and 8, side 4), as anything in the Western classical tradition. If the listener is not affected as I am by such music, it is because recordings cannot transmit the human situations which formed the background to the performances; and it is this common denominator of human experience which enables us to enjoy

music whose idiom and culture of origin, from which its techniques spring, are foreign to us. When I listen to this music again and again with the same intense enjoyment, it is hard to say how much of that enjoyment is purely musical, and how much the result of being reminded of the situation in which I first heard the sounds.

The texts of the songs reveal a range of topics and emotions which, especially in the case of the puberty songs, can only be properly appreciated in the context of Nsenga social life. Each style of music appeals primarily to those who are concerned with the social events which it embellishes: thus, for instance, mashaŵi music appeals principally to those who are members of the possession cult. Even those styles which are common to every section of the population, such as beer songs and pounding songs, seem to become individualized, so that the words sung in different districts interest a limited local audience which can appreciate the subtle allusions. Women may be overcome by weariness or sorrow as they pound grain, and so little by little, as the hours of work pass by, time is lost in music, and new words begin to take shape within the framework of an old tune. Sometimes even the tune itself may be modified. Ida's lovely song of sorrow (cut 8, side 1) and the pounding songs (cuts 4, 5, and 6, side 1) are examples of topical variations on familiar musical themes, and in the case of Ida's song I was told that it was virtually a new composition.

Self-pity is a common sentiment expressed in many songs; but it is a resigned, often optimistic, self-pity rather than a cloying preoccupation with misery. In the lullaby (cut 1a, side 1), the child's crying reminds the mother of her own troubles, but this does not mean that the mother then neglects the child in favour of herself: it is rather a symbolic affirmation of togetherness, especially relevant in a society where migrant labour and the instability of marriage, because of the matrilineal set-up, throw mothers and children together in a close, defensive relationship. (It should not be thought that because inheritance is matrilineal, women dominate in Nsenga society.)

The ideal instrument for personal meditation is the kalimba handpiano, whose music features in six cuts on side 3. Youths often play this as they walk alone, or with friends, repeating simple phrases over and over again, and sometimes adding a little 'hum'. The melodies are either 'transcriptions' of songs normally heard in other contexts, songs specially designed for the kalimba, or individual compositions of the performer. Men who play the instrument seem generally to be professional or semi-professional musicians, concerned with transmitting the more important of their reflections to a wider audience (e.g. Simoni Zulu on cuts 4 and 5a, side 3). I only met three such kalimba players, but I had the impression that they

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were expected to interlard their public performances with a considerable amount of clowning, whatever the nature of the themes.

This contrast between private meditation and public declamation is even more marked in the performances of a man like Sholodani Banda (cuts 8 and 9, side 2), though he never plays for laughs as Simoni Zulu does. Banda is more of a recluse and more of an astute social commentator than Zulu, but he is no less anxious to move his audience in his own quiet way.

Although the sounds of the dance music played by Pikilani Lungu (cuts 7 and 8, side 3) are almost vulgarly extrovert, the demeanour of Lungu himself was consistently introvert. Throughout the night and the following day he was all wrapped up in the music, as he wandered around through the dust and the swirling bodies of the dancers. Like Banda, he was shy and reserved, and I do not think that this was merely due to the effort of playing for a long time, because I met him, and formed an impression of his personality, about an hour before the dance began.

After all the introversion of individual performers, the strident, boisterous beer songs of the people of Kanyenye (cuts 9 and 10, side 3), with their ribald texts, come as a wonderful surprise. Their vitality is electric, and I became so absorbed by them and the riotous men and women who sang them, that the recordings I made were of poor quality!

'Nsenganess' is musically apparent, though not aggressively dominant, in pounding songs, in lullabies, and even in kalimba melodies: there are the long, finely balanced phrases, usually accompanied by at least one other part in organum, with halts on prolonged tones. But it is only in the singing of beer songs, and also in the music of the puberty ritual, that one becomes conscious of human, as well as musical, 'Nsenganess', of group feeling and a vague awareness of nationhood, in spite of the segmented character of the society. The transformation of a borrowed item of culture into something that is distinctly 'Nsenga', is aptly illustrated by the two cimtali dance songs (cuts 2 and 3, side 2). Cut 2 is like the music of Ceŵa, from whom the dance was borrowed; but in cut 3 a 'Nsenga'-type melody has been added to the Ceŵa rhythm, and the music has taken on a new character.

The music of the puberty ritual will be discussed in conjunction with the notes for Volume III. It contains some of the best, and also some of the worst, music I heard in the Petauke district. The work of the professional drummer, Menyani, was often magnificent, and rarely dull; but the dancing and singing of the aged instructresses was sometimes so disorganized as to be musically boring, and even unpleasant. The old ladies may be excused, however, since many of them had already reached the cackling stage, and in any case they were not so concerned with fine performances of the music as with meeting old friends, perhaps for the last time, and enjoying the occasion, which was essentially an expression of the solidarity of aged women. They were, however, very particular about performing the correct songs and rituals, and they

made and decorated the symbols (vilengo) with loving care, even though they were often slapdash about the performance of the songs and dances. Menyani the master-drummer, on the other hand, was very conscientious about his musical performance, and the tone and pitch of the drums; he did not seem to be particularly interested in the rituals and, like many a good professional musician, was anxious to get to his hut, and to the beer he had been given for his services, whenever there was an interval. He enjoyed discussing music as much as I enjoyed helping him with his beer; but even so sophisticated a musician was unable to discuss music beyond a certain level of abstraction. Generally speaking, he did not question what he had learnt of drumming from his father, who had also been a fine musician: he was concerned with the reproduction of certain patterns of sound and the invention of variations on those patterns, and he was not able to discuss the rationale of the organization of the sounds; he accepted them as they came to him, and knew what was right and what was wrong, but he could not always explain why, in terms of conscious aesthetics.

#### Recording the music.

The items on the records are selected from nearly two hundred recordings which were made in the Petauke district between July 25th and August 3rd, 1961. The project was sponsored and financed by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Lusaka, at the request of Dr. Raymond Apthorpe: I am most grateful to him for 'letting me loose' amongst friends with whom he had built up the most cordial contacts, and for allowing me to share some of his field experiences. I should also like to thank Mr. C. M. N. White, M. B. E., acting Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute; and the Council of the University of the Witwatersrand, whose Research Committee made a most generous grant to enable me to have a Nagra IIIC Portable Tape Recorder. This machine I generally used at a speed of 7 1/2 IPS, except in some of the longer sections of the puberty ritual, where the poor quality of the performance and the length of many songs made it impractical. Above all I am grateful to the Nsenga musicians, who introduced me to new and exciting realms of musical experience and acquainted me with fresh aspects of the joy and agony of the human spirit.

Such concentrated and effective research was only possible because of Dr. Apthorpe's knowledge of the Nsenga and my own experience of studying music in other parts of Africa. My early training in recording techniques, especially the use of a moving microphone to highlight the performance of different instruments, was received from Mr. Hugh Tracey, who has more field experience in Africa than any other musicologist: any defects in the recordings are due, therefore, to my own failings as a student of his. Dr. Apthorpe prepared an ethnographic note on Nsenga music, so that I was able to begin collecting and studying relevant material on my very first day in the field. The recordings were accompanied by adequate notes on instrumental techniques, and in addition the texts of all songs were noted, and have been translated with the help of Nsenga assistants.



#### Note:

People's affiliations and musical heritage are often, especially in the case of the Nsenga, more intelligible in terms of clan, rather than tribal, membership: thus the clan membership of performers is given in brackets after their names. In the translations of the song texts, words and phrases that are repeated in the original, are given only once, and meaningless syllables are omitted. Full Nsenga versions of the texts will be given in the musical transcriptions and analysis, which will be published separately. c, in the Nsenga orthography, should always be pronounced ch (as in chin). ng' is pronounced as ng in singer, whilst ng is n plus g, as in longer. w is a bilabial fricative, pronounced like w with the lips pursed.

#### The Recordings.

##### Volume I, Side 1.

##### Cut 1.

Two Lullabies (nzimbo zo sinsihila mwana, lit. songs for rocking a child), from Cimate village.

a). Sung by Alice Mwale (Nguluwe): all present agreed that this was a particularly good song.

1. Child, child!
2. My child has been crying all night; he has reminded me of my own troubles.
3. Child, child!

b). Sung by Josefina Lungu (Ng'oma).

1. The child is crying.
2. I will go around the mountain with him when he is quiet, Kaluwa.\*
3. I have been nursing him for a long time; I will let him cry.
4. When a child cries, there is hunger; when a child cries, there is sleep.

\*Kaluwa is a personal name.

##### Cut 2.

Two counting songs (nzimbo zo welengela), sung by two boys, Mutonta Phiri (Tembo) and Conala Daka (Ng'oma) at Cimate village.

There are several songs of this type, and they are often used in counting-out games. Children sit in a row, for instance, with their legs stretched out in front of them, and the singer counts the legs as he/she sings. At the end of each repeat of the song, the leg which is touched on the final count, is withdrawn. The child who is left at the end with a leg in, is called ciimbwi (hyena).

The words of these songs, as with European songs of the same type, are generally meaningless. Some have ten counts, to synchronize with the number of fingers, but others have more.

a). Kapusi, Kalikongo, Komboli, Kalama, Kalama, Cibwanji, tyola-tyola (break-break), Denesi (Dennis), Kuli, Malakwa.

b). Kapusi, Kawili (two), Nawelengela nawelengela (I count. I count), Mapila (millet), Mapila, wanga nikolokolo, nikolokolo, pali (divorce), gunda iyo (that drum: see cut 1, side 2)

##### Cut 3.

A story about polygamy (cisilili cacipali), told by Josefina Lungu (Ng'oma), who also sang 1b, accompanied by Mutonta Phiri (Tembo) and Conala Daka (Ng'oma), the boys who sang 2a and 2b, at Cimate village. There was a strong wind, which sometimes spoils the recording.

Most stories contain a song, in which the storyteller leads his/her audience. In this case the boys were not sure of the chorus of the song, and Josefina can be heard correcting them and prompting them.

It is perhaps an indication of the type of contact that exists between Europeans and Africans that the few English words which the story-teller uses are, 'Bloody fool, dammit! 'Then at the end, she claps her own performance and says, 'Good. Bloody good.' She cannot speak English.

She told the story at great speed, which did not give her audience a chance to say Kalungutu (we are following) after each phrase, as is normally the case. Everyone agreed that she was a good story-teller, although she muddled the sequence once or twice, and the liveliness of her delivery can be appreciated from the recording.

#### The story of Lozi and Cingala.

There was once a polygamist. His first wife was the mother of Lozi, and his second the mother of Cingala. Now the mother of Cingala used to quarrel with the mother of Lozi.

The mother of Lozi died; and the mother of Cingala ill-treated Lozi.

When Lozi went to gather firewood, they worried her. They said, "Child, where have you been?" And they beat her. Lozi said, "I have really been to gather firewood. Please don't beat me." But Cingala's mother said, "You are very foolish."

Then Lozi sang her song:-

Come Cilungu! Let us pound together.  
I do not want  
That woman as a mother.  
I pound and pound;  
I collect vegetables for our meals;  
I gather firewood.  
I cry for my father --  
I, his child,  
With two big eyes.



Lozi went down to the river to draw water. She found some vegetables and prepared a fire for cooking. Her people came and looked at her. They said, "You bloody fool! Damn you, you are foolish! You are very stupid. Psha! Why are you so stupid? Your mother is dead."

The girl then said that she knew that her own mother had died long ago, but she said to the mother of Cingala, "You are now my mother." The mother of Cingala did not listen to this, but said, "You bloody fool! Damn you, you are late preparing the vegetables! Your father is around. He has already come home from the bush."

Then that girl began to sing her song again.

(Here the song is repeated).

Sure enough, her father arrived from the Boma (District Office) with his dogs. Lozi began to be afraid. Then her father said, "Come here, so that I may hear how you are getting on." Lozi came to him, and he said, "What is the matter?" She replied, "This mother (of Cingala) took some water and put it on the fire to boil. Then she dug a pit and told me to get into it. But I ran away and started singing my song:"

(Here the song is repeated).

She ran as far as Cimate village, but they would not take her in, and so she went home to her 'mother', who said, "Give her nsenzi (a small animal)". They took a nsenzi and give it to Lozi, but Lozi said she did not want it.

"I want to tell you," she said to her father, "that I have been suffering a lot from these women".

"Did they trouble you, then?" he said. And she replied, "Yes."

"Did they beat you?" And she said, "Yes", and told him the whole story.

Then she sang her song:-

(Here the song is repeated).

#### Cuts 4 and 5.

Two pounding songs (nzimbo za muwende), sung by Annie Banda (Mumba), with Ida Sakala (Ng'oma) and Lekesina Banda (Mumba), the daughter of Annie's mother's sister, at Ciluku village. Annie pounded meal in a small mortar, and the other two worked together with a larger one.

#### Cut 4.

Extracts from the beginning and the end of the song are given. Not all the words in the recording are clear, but the text was checked with the performers



Manyani's drums for Mazyia, Mulipa

afterwards and is given here in full (i.e. including parts which do not appear in the two recorded extracts). Each 'line' of words is generally repeated three times, to form the complete musical phrase.

I am suffering,  
Because of loneliness.  
I only have God.  
I am suffering because I live alone.  
A husband is like a path: we only pass along it.  
Mother's brother, become famous in this world.  
Mother, I mourn because Ciluwa has gone.  
Husbands who have many wives are as rotten as  
carrion.  
They are like carrion.

#### Cut 5.

The recording is an extract from a complete song, but all the words of the original are given below.

Who has not heard of Lekesina's troubles?  
How did you tear off the patch for which I brewed  
beer? \*  
I will thank my mother-in-law, I will love my  
mother-in-law:  
I will always praise my mother-in-law, because  
she has produced a child, Canada. \*\*  
My own mother died long ago; Cigoli remained alone.

\*She brewed beer to sell, so that she could afford the material to patch her husband's trousers. Now some other person (and she suspects a woman) has torn them again.

\*\* It is common for an exceptional person or thing to be known by a foreign name: hence the child, Canada, is a very good child.

#### Cut 6.

Pounding song. Sung at Congololo by a group of women. A baby on the back of one of them objects strongly to being thrown around by the pounding action, and is heard crying. The recording was made in the evening, and so men are heard talking whilst their womenfolk work, and some lads whistle



and jive to the rhythm of the pestles in a style which they have learnt from town. Not all the words of the song are audible, and I had no opportunity to discuss them later with the performers.

There is a poor person (without clothes): come, my friend, and see him.

I have sworn that I will not be friendly with him: \*  
I have sworn that I will not marry him.

#### CHORUS:

Iyali iya, his bicycle. I went ahead, mama, wele-wele. His bicycle.

I have seen here, in this very place, an impotent man eating chicken, \*\* Tembo.

When the Kamangu \*\*\* drum begins to sound, I will talk intimately with his father-in-law.

I have started off. I will get married, as my uncle likes the dowry (cimalo).

\*The word in the text is - seka - lit. to laugh.  
The girl has a poor lover, but she does not want him and so invites another.

\*\*Eating chicken is the privilege of a potent man.  
The Nsenga distinguish three types of impotence.

\*\*\*Kamangu is a drum used at funerals.

Cuts 7 and 8. Two songs of sorrow (nzimbo za ulanda) from Ciluku village. Such songs may be sung when a person is sad; they are not specifically for funerals.

#### Cut 7.

Sung by Velenika Zulu (Lungu), an old woman.

Mother's brother, \* you also talked.  
You have already gossiped enough.  
You also talked because I have no child.

\*The mother's brother would, of course, be more concerned about the singer's lack of issue than the father, because of the system of matrilineal descent.



Instruments at Cikurion, Limba

#### Cut 8.

A particularly beautiful song composed by Ida Sakala (Ng'oma) and based on a traditional melody. Ida is accompanied by her friends, Annie Banda and Lekesina Banda (see also cuts 4 and 5). When Ida heard that I would be visiting her village, she composed the new song specially for recording.

Alas, alas! I begin to cry.

Alas, alas! The ground is hard too. \*

My mother, my father, I am poor. And you too, my friend,

Remember that this misfortune has dogged me since I was a child.

There is a misfortune in our house.

\*She sleeps on the floor because she has no man to buy her comfortable bedding.

A conversation follows between Ida and her friend, Annie: -

Annie:

Don't cry, Ida.

Ida:

I am full of sorrow, I who am your friend.

Annie:

You make me want to cry too.

Ida:

There's nothing that can be done: I have suffered, my friend.

Annie:

At least we have each other.

Ida:

I must go away.

(The song continues)

Alas! Misfortune at my age!

Alas! I am always crying.

(Third stanza sung twice).

A second conversation ensues: -

Ida:

I am very sad.

Annie:

Don't be upset.



Ida:

I only live to suffer.

Annie:

You mustn't worry.

Ida:

There is no safe place to go to.

Annie:

Why?

Ida:

My husband deserted me long ago. I have nothing else to say.

During a second performance of the song, Ida added some words: -

Alas, Alas! I shall be more careful another time.  
Alas, Alas! This comes of loving men from  
foreign parts.

The conversation continued: -

Ida:

Annie, I went off somewhere on a visit. I went to Fort Jameson.

Annie:

Was the visit good?

Ida:

I was treated as though I was an animal without a skin, my friend.

Annie:

Sure (sic, in English).

Ida:

Be careful of foreign men. I have suffered greatly. I have no child, and yet I am a grown woman. What shall I do? And how shall I do it? I have suffered, my friends.

Bring Maxwell to me  $\overline{I}$  one of the audience passes her a little boy  $\overline{I}$ . I must nurse someone else's child, as I have no child of my own. My husband ran away; he is in Bulawayo. His name is J---- M----, and he is having a nice time.

(The song continues)

Alas, alas! I married a traveller.  
Alas, alas! I married a fish.  
I have seen things; I have suffered.

A week after Ida had sung this song I learnt that she had gone to Lusaka to look for a new husband.

## Volume I, Side 2.

### Cut 1.

Cimtali drum rhythms, played at Cimate village by boys,

Conala Daka (Ng'oma) -- mbalule,  
Mutonta Phiri (Tembo) -- kelemu,  
Ailola Chirwa (Nguluwe) -- gunda.

The single-ended, conical-type drums, mbalule and kelemu, provide the basic rhythm, and are heard entering in that order. The double-sided drum, gunda, is beaten with two rubber-ended sticks, and it provides the variations. In many cases, this 'master-drum' part is played with the hands on a conical-type drum with a mirliton, larger than mbalule and kelemu.

Both the instruments and the music of cimtali are recognized as being borrowed from the neighbouring Ceŵa people (see introduction), and some say that the dance only reached the Nsenga between 1951 and 1953. The rhythms may be compared with those of nyau (cuts 4 - 7, side 2), which are also Ceŵa in origin.

Just after the beginning of the recording, the mbalule player changes the effect of the rhythm by altering the succession of muffled and unmuffled tones. Correct tone is as important as correct rhythm in good drumming.

### Cuts 2 and 3.

Two cimtali dance-songs for young people, sung at Cimate village by a girl, Tivwalenji Lungu (Nguluwe), with a chorus of girls and the boys who play the drums in cut 1.

Much of cut 2 is in Ceŵa, the language of the people from whom cimtali is derived, and the musical periods are shorter than those in cut 3, which is more typically Nsenga.

### Cut 2.

Oh Dai!  
I have no husband.  
One is a fool.  
You should wash yourself;  
You smell like a fish.

### Cut 3.

Today, Tilile, today!  
Dress nicely, Tilile is coming today!

(There are many meaningless syllables in both songs, like the 'fa-la-las' of English songs)



#### Cuts 4 to 7.

Nyau dance rhythms and songs, sung at night near Mulipa by some girls and women and a masked man, with drum accompaniment played by boys.

Professor M.G. Marwick, who did anthropological fieldwork amongst the Ceŵa of Northern Rhodesia, writes: -

'Nyau mimes, which are produced periodically by Ceŵa, Cipeta, and Zimba, are organized by local secret societies, which come under the jurisdiction of local territorial chiefs.

'Nyau has two functions. Firstly, it is produced as an appropriate means of celebrating the ritual shaving of either mourners for the death of an important elder or headman, or a girl coming to the end of the first phase of her puberty ceremony. Secondly, it serves as a boys' initiation lodge.

'It seems that in the past membership of nyau was selective, but now it is a *sine qua non* of Ceŵa manhood. In spite of a ban on nyau in the Fort Jameson district by a Native Authority order, virtually every male over the age of twelve had entered one of the local societies, either at one of its secret, illegal performances in the Reserve or at one on a tobacco farm outside the jurisdiction of the Native Authority.

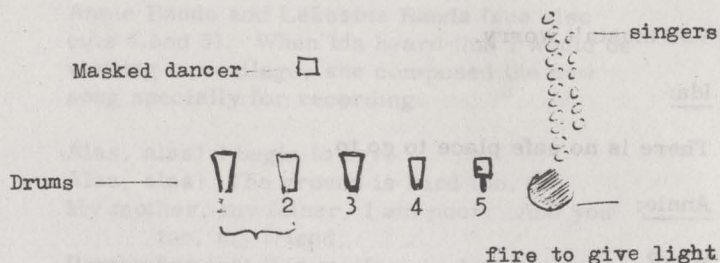
'Formerly, non-members of the society, mainly women and children, believed -- or are said to have believed -- that the nyau dancers were the spirits of the dead and that the animal representations (nyau zolemba) were real wild animals. The masks and 'animals' were usually made, and the dancers prepared for performance, at the local graveyard, and strict secrecy was observed. This is still the case amongst the Nyasaland Ceŵa, where nyau has never been officially suppressed, but most people agree that in Northern Rhodesia it is very degenerate, and women and children can come so close to the dancers that they realize that the characters of nyau are not spirits but people'.

(When I attended nyau amongst the Nsenga, there was no recognition by the dancers of my recording activities, and no attempt to contact me for a small present. The dancers disappeared into the bush both between items and at the end of the performance - J.B.)

'In the past, Cadzunda, one of the masked characters, used to dance so that he exposed his genitals. His wife in the dance is Malia, and there is a character on stilts, Makanja, as well as the life-like animal representations. A full list of the various characters and animals that may be included, is given by W.H.J. Rangeley, in "Nyau" in Kotakota District (Nyasaland)', *Nyasaland Journal*, 2, 1949, 35-49, and 3, 1950, 19-33. Some of the ones he lists, such as Simon Petero and Yosefe, as well as the better known Malia, lead one to believe that nyau has, in some measure at least, been influenced by Roman Catholic pageantry in Moçambique.'

#### Cut 4.

Nyau dance rhythms, for five drums and masked dancer (Cadzunda), who wears leg-rattles (*malaza*). The plan for performance was: -



Drums 1 and 2, called *gunda*, were pitched differently and played by one person. Nos 3, 4 and 5 were also pitched differently, played by three people, and called respectively *kerenge*, *gupagupa*, and *mbalule*. *Mbalule* is smaller and higher-pitched than the others, and it is the drum on which the variations are played. The rapport between the dancer's steps (emphasized by the leg-rattles) and the rhythms of *mbalule* can be heard clearly on the recording; the player of *mbalule* also precedes his variations by blowing a whistle.

Variations by *mbalule* are heard at the beginning of the recording, and then the drum rhythms are emphasized separately -- first *mbalule* (5), then Nos 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Then the leg-rattles of the dancer are given prominence, before the drums are once again heard as a group.

#### Cut 5.

Begins with a trill from the masked dancer, who must disguise his voice. He leads the song, and then the drums enter in the order 4, 2 and 1, 3, 5. Note the lengthening of the final note by the singers at the end of the performance.

The words of the chorus are: - A person who cries very often.

#### Cut 6.

Drum 3 is prominent at the very beginning of this song, then *mbalule* (5), then the singers, whose melody is wordless. If the masked dancer was trying to sing words, they were at least unintelligible to the audience.

#### Cut 7.

This short extract emphasises the strained voice of the dancer.

#### Cuts 8 and 9.

Two songs, accompanied on a seven-string board zither (*pangwe*). Sholodani Banda strums all the



strings with the forefinger of his right hand. He produces the different 'chords' by silencing different combinations of strings with the fingers of his left hand. Banda is a Ceŵa who lives amongst the Nsenga. He has an attractive personality and an ability to improvise topical words, which makes him a popular performer.

I first met him one evening sitting with friends round a fire, while there was a lull in the puberty ritual. He sang me a song melodically similar to this, in which he described the arrival of the anyapungu (the old ladies in charge of the puberty ritual), the seclusion of the initiates, our camp and my recording machine, as well as part of his own life history. After that he sang the song about the steamer on Lake Nyasa (cut 9). On the following afternoon, during another lull in the ritual, he came and sang three songs outside our tent, of which the following about his home was the most entertaining and charming. Many of his words are of English or Zulu origin, similar to the vocabulary of the lingua franca used in urban areas.

#### Cut 8.

I dreamt dreams.  
I saw my home, far away in Nyasaland.  
Sholodani! How, child! Ha, ha!

(Spoken recitative follows)

Brother, there was here a war of Chimkomola.  
Adesi Phiri, child of Nyama, the sister of  
Chimkomola, at the village of Mawilili.  
My home is far off in Nyasaland.

(Sings)

On the paths are snakes;  
In the bush are lions;  
In the water, crocodiles -- Sholodani, let's go home.

(Spoken)

Europeans are good; Europeans look after everything:



Finished Buffalo Cilengo, Mulipa

They shoot snakes these days,  
And lions too.  
They kill crocodiles.

(Sings)

Come here, you!  
I want only you --  
My country.

(Spoken recitative)

We sing about you.  
There at home, some things are bad:  
They find snakes, and some are dangerous.  
They find lions -- spirit-lions\*.  
Some are very dangerous indeed.  
There in the water,  
They find crocodiles:  
They bite people --  
All the little herdboys there at home.  
I only want my home.

(Sings)

Sholodani!  
There are crocodiles as we go on our way home.

(Spoken recitative)

They say Cimwezeni is my name on a few occasions.  
They say my name is Amini of Cikalumbi, in the  
Yao tongue.  
But today they say I am called Sholodani Banda.  
Europeans can tell this from my identification card.

(Sings)

Ah, mama!  
Sholodani!  
My home is far away in Nyasaland.

(Spoken recitative)

Europeans vary greatly:  
I have counted a few good Europeans.  
I like buying stamps,  
Twopenny stamps, and sometimes ticky (3d.) stamps.



Ulimba



I write letters to send to Nyasaland, my home.  
My family see them and write to me.  
They read the letters again to see my name.

\*This refers to the lion-familiar of a very  
powerful diviner.

Cut 9.

A 'tone-poem' about a journey on a steamer over  
Lake Nyasa. (Spoken introduction, accompanied  
by random chords)

We shall sing a song about 'Mpsa',  
A steamer which travels on water.  
Children should listen to this,  
And old people too -- all together.  
(The song begins, but he continues to speak)  
There's the steamer, 'Mpsa':  
We shall begin our journey.  
Now we are off, and standing on the deck.

(Sings)

At Nsangwila, my mother dirtied the deck\*.  
Goodbye! Drop me on the shore of Lake Nyasa,  
at Likoma Island; \*\*  
At Kagwelu, and Bulawayo. \*\*

(Speaks)

What is this place now, my friend? This is Balaka.  
We have now reached the quay.

(As he finishes the song, he says)

There now, we have arrived.

\*It is not unknown for elderly ladies to defecate in  
fright when travelling for the first time on modern  
European transport.

\*\*Likoma Island is the station of the Universities'  
Mission to Central Africa.

Kagwelu is the headquarters of a Dutch Reformed  
Church Mission. Bulawayo is, of course, not  
near Lake Nyasa.