

Akasela Dance

During the night following that day, and on the two succeeding nights, men and women dance the *akasela*. When the village headman or some responsible elders are not present—and these older folk seldom stay the night through at such a dance—the *akasela* degenerates into all types of immorality. Excited by the suggestiveness of the dancing, the men and women no longer dance apart, but, getting nearer and nearer, the men catch at the breasts of the women, until passions are inflamed. During the dance, or while 'sitting out' around the fires (*amashiko*), pairs arrange to go off to some vacated house and commit fornication. They will never go into the bush or the long grass for such a purpose, for that is deadly taboo (*umushiliko*). Often a woman will refuse the suggestion of her dancing partner, and afterward report him to her husband; the would-be seducer will have a heavy fine to pay.

On such an occasion as this *akasela* songs are sung, of which the following are examples:

- (1) *Muyaya-ngoma kanchiliwo,*
Inshiku shilalala,
Shyangalula wuchyakuukwa.

"For ever and ever I have been.
The days cause change.
They have made me an old man."

- (2) *Neddo kuwũko bwanji tawanjewa-po;*
Wawũlo'kukwewa, ulenda nawo?
Musalamba kainama!

"Me, at my wife's home they do not revile me;
Wouldn't they talk about you, do you live with them?
The talker bows in shame!"

Some of these dance songs are of very recent origin, as, for instance:

- (3) *Munshilo'mwila'makalichi,*
Nechyami chyaye'li chyambuka!

"In the path where the railway coaches go,
The grass too goes catching alight!"

- (4) *Chyawakatwũle wũlukwũlalaya*
Kuwũma wo! muwũla!

"It belongs to Katuwũle. They are summoning them
To the Boma, wo! It means a wailing!"

After this the people who gathered together scatter to their various homes.

Ukufundika

From this moment the *moye* has entered a period of seclusion. She is under the supervision of her *nyinachimbela*. There are many prohibitions she has to observe at this time. She may not drink *ubwalwa* (intoxicating beer). She may not see any man. She may not see the roofs of the huts, for she must forget the old life, she is entering upon an entirely new one. She may not speak but in a whisper, lest bad luck should come to her. Whenever she goes abroad it is beneath a pall!

Early in the morning she may be taken out of the hut. Completely covered over, she is carried on the back of one of the girls until she is some distance from the village, where she may throw off her pall and play openly with her playmates, all of whom, naturally, are girls. In the hut, too, she may sit uncovered, but no man or boy may enter. Women and girls may come in and see her, but it is significant that, apart from her *nyinachimbela*, no grey-headed woman may see her uncovered. Should such a one desire to see the girl, she would have to give some money to the *nyinachimbela*, who would then uncover the *moye* for her to see. If she finds her sitting carelessly the old woman will pinch the girl and say, *Tolukututiina fwewakulu?* "Don't you fear us old people?" This is just to warn her to behave in a seemly manner.

No work is given to the *moye*, except that she may accompany the other girls when they go to bail out fish and bring to her *nyinachimbela* the proceeds of her catch.

Ukufunda

But all during this period of seclusion and confinement the *nyinachimbela* instructs (*funda*) her initiate (*ichisungu chyakwe*). She will teach her some of the details of special cooking, as, for instance, how to cook the different kinds of relish. But her instruction is principally upon points of behaviour, which will have a bearing upon her future married life. Here are listed a number of the things which are taught.

(1) *Pakulala nemwalalume koti komusumuna, sombi kani waseesa akaswũa kakushile'milopa pakulala nemulume woũe liwũli tekumusumuna yo, ukawone'milandu.* "Quoties cum viro concubueris, penis tibi detergendus est: sin autem menstruaveris, et quo die sanguis effluere cessaverit, cum viro [marito] iterum concubueris, penis non est detergendus ne tibi obsit."

In the first case if the injunction is not obeyed it is considered

that the woman despises her husband, as though he were a dog, in the second case *amakowela muntivi* (severe pains in the chest) are feared when running. Disregard of these injunctions provides grounds for divorce and the payment of beads.

(2) *Kani waseesa tekwinjila umuli umulume munanda; kawili tekwikata kumuchele, tekwikata kumulilo; koti umulume katanga kafuma munanda eli ungenjila.* "If your periods are upon you, don't enter the hut in which your husband is; further, don't touch the salt and don't touch the fire; first let your husband come out of the hut, then you may enter." In practice, if a woman in that condition finds her husband already in the hut she will call out, *Fumeni, nyinjile*, "Come out, that I may enter!" He will come out; then she may enter, and he will re-enter after her. A woman in that condition is further instructed, *Tekwipika neli fyakulya koku*, "Cook no food at all!" If a husband and wife are on a journey the husband will do all the cooking while his wife is unwell.

(3) *Tekulukusoozola, kani wanoko wafuma-mo munanda, waku-shya-mo wenka.* "Don't take food from the pot on the fire if your mother has gone out of the hut and left you alone."

(4) *Kani wakutumo'mukulu umwanakashi tekukana; kani masaka komupelela; kani kunika koya.* "If an older woman sets you some duty, don't refuse; if it is corn, grind it for her; if it is to water, go."

(5) *Kani wasangano'muntu alukwiwa mweni, tekumuwepela, pakuti kani wakamwipaye, fika wa koti mulandu wo we; koti komuchyenjeshya lukoso.* "If you detect some one stealing at your home, don't report him, because if people kill him you will be to blame for his death; just warn him."

(6) *Umukulu kakukumanya nesa wi, komupela-po, tekumutana.* "If an elder meets you when you have fish, give some to her; don't refuse her."

(7) *Kani waupwo'mwalalume, kani wa wona mufila, tekwe wa ti mukane nkopwe naumbi, pakuti imilimo ya walalume yinji, alishi ukuchita naimbi.* "If you marry a husband and find that he is lazy, don't make up your mind to get a divorce and marry another, because men's work is of many kinds. He will be able to do some work well."

(8) *Kani waupwo'mwalalume, usangane alukulye'fyakuto wela munanda, tekuya ili ula wila ku wa wo we, koku.* "If you marry a husband and then find that he eats the relish in the house, don't go and talk about it to your companions."

(9) *Kani umulume a wuuko'wushiku, a fwaye'nshima, komutekela-*

po, tekuya ku wuula'wa wo we ati a walume wa la fwayo'kulye'nshimo'wushiku. "If your husband wakes up in the night and wants *inshima*, make it for him. Don't go and tell your companions that your husband wants to eat *inshima* in the middle of the night."

(10) *Wanokofyala tekukula wishya nawe wo ko wala wishya, koku, kawikele lukoso ichishinshi.* "If your mother-in-law reviles you, do not answer back; just keep silent."

(11) *Kani waumfwa'wantu walukula wishya wanoko, tekuya ku wa wuula'wanoko, koku.* "If you hear people reviling your mother, don't go and tell your mother."

(12) *Tekulukuchita wumenso-menso, pakuti wumenso-menso ta wa wona-po nepo wafwa.* "Don't practise harlotry, for the harlot knows not where she is going to die."

(13) *Kani waseesa tekulala nemwalalume ukufika kukushila kwakuseesa.* "When you menstruate, have no connexion with a man until your periods have finished." A woman who hides from her husband the occasion of her periods is looked upon as an *imbifi*, an immoral woman, and is driven away.

(14) *Kani umulume akutwala mumpanga, kawisa, kola wila, mulandu ukulu.* "If your husband takes you into the veld, come and report; it is a very grave charge." Copulation anywhere but in a hut is a deadly taboo.

(15) *Kani umulume akulya, kawisa, kola wila, nekumutwala kumfumu, imfumu kaimwipaye.* "Si vir te ederit [*i.e.*, inguen, ut canis, lamberit], veni et rem indica, et duc eum ad principem ut hic eum interficiat." This also is a deadly taboo.

During this *ichisungu* period of seclusion the *moye* will join the other girls at the *amansanishi* (play huts). Here her initiated companions teach her concerning marriage, and how to behave when a suitor comes to ask her to marry him. Here also she begins the daily operation of stretching her vagina with her fingers in order to ensure safe delivery at childbirth. During this period, too, *ichilewelewe* medicine is given to the girl to ensure her bearing a child. She is further instructed that, when she becomes pregnant, she must call her *nyinachimbela* to "imitate the expulsion of the head of a child" (*ukweshyo'mutwi wamuntu ukufuma*). The *nyinachimbela*, when called, inserts her hand into the vagina of the pregnant woman, closes the fist therein, and then pulls it out. This operation is repeated several times for two or three days, and the same is done again shortly before the woman is delivered. Its purpose is obvious.

Ukukunga

The initiate is kept *muchyumbo* (beneath the pall) for three or four months, the length of time being decided by her *nyinachimbela*; "if she commences at the time of the floods [*pamuwundo*], she will emerge when they have harvested the corn." Meanwhile her hair has been growing long, for it may not be cut during this period. When the time for release approaches the girl's father, or her suitor if there is a young man who has previously been giving her calico as his affianced wife, will bring beads to the *nyinachimbela*. Then a woman skilled in making the headdress of beads (*ukukunga*) is sent for to adorn the girl's head. This woman used to be paid in bark cloth for her services; if she were a friend the value of the cloth would be about two shillings, if a stranger, about five shillings. A piece of thin cloth is placed over the hair, and with a needle and bark thread a covering of beads is worked into this, sewn through and connected to the hair beneath. The result is a complete head-covering of beads attached to the hair.

Ichimbwasa

After this the girl's mother brews beer (*kumbo'bwalwa*), and there is a great gathering of men, women, and children. Then, while the girl is still within the hut, they hold the *ichimbwasa* dance. Sometimes they dance outside the father's house, sometimes outside that of the *nyinachimbela*. One woman—sometimes two or three—will dance, while the rest, men and women, sit round and sing. At times an old man of social standing will don the *insangwa* (rattles) and *uwuyombo* (dancing fringe) and dance a solo dance in the ring. This dance is kept up through the night. Here are some examples of *ichimbwasa* songs:

- (1) *Muyombo'fuweto'mulomo mwalwa nawani?*
Nalwa nawangabwe wampandawile'ngala!

"Ground-hornbill with closed mouth full, with
whom have you fought?
I have fought with Ngabwe, and he tore to bits
my feather headdress!"

- (2) *Lileele lileele, ndino lyamwela,*
Ngawakandasa'katemo,
Kampita kunuma kandele.

"'Tis withered, 'tis withered, here it is the winter
leaf.

Though he wound me with his axe,
I'll pass behind him and lie down."

ICHISUNGU—INITIATION

- (3) *Ndi katele kaluwumbe,*
Ifi mulukula'wila ndukumfwa!

"I'm a fragile calabash.
What you say, I hear."

- (4) *Awalamba kubwalo,*
Shyani walamba Chikwangala?
Nkalambe Chikwangala!
Kwa! Kwa! Chikwangala!

"Those who do obeisance at Court,
How do they do obeisance, O crow?
Let me do obeisance, O crow!
Caw! Caw! O crow!"

On the morrow the *ichimbwasa* is continued during the morning.

In the afternoon, at about 4 P.M., the *moye* is brought out from the hut of confinement with the calico over her head. A girl, called the *kanshya*, carries her on her back, and comes and kneels on a mat (*isasa*) put in the courtyard; the *moye* keeps her head buried in the back of the *kanshya*, and the *ichyumbo* is over them both. Then the *ichyumbo* is taken off by the *nyinachimbela*, but the *moye* keeps her eyes covered and her head buried in the other's back. As soon as the calico is removed the assembled people all bring gifts and place them on the *isasa*. These gifts consist of beads, bracelets (*iminkonka*), and cash. The *moye's* maternal uncle (*mwinshyo*) brings a fowl. The gifts which her father, her uncle, and her sisters bring belong to the girl herself, but all the other gifts are collected together and appropriated by the *nyinachimbela*.

The *kanshya* now takes up the *moye*, carries her to her father, and kneels with her on her back in the doorway of the father's hut. The *moye's* father makes her a present, maybe of calico, and again she is taken up, and this time carried to the hut of her maternal uncle. He too gives her some calico. She is then carried back to the hut of her *nyinachimbela*. The next morning the girl emerges as an ordinary villager, to take her part in village life, no longer the girl she was when she entered, but a woman, with all the responsibilities which that entails. It will be her father's duty now to pay the *nyinachimbela* an *ichilundo* (a four-yard strip) of calico for her services.

After her initiation the *moye* continues to share her grandmother's hut, unless she is immediately claimed in marriage.

Sometimes several initiates go through the ceremonies at the

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same time. They will all be housed in the one house, under the guidance of one *nyinachimbela*. With the Lambas there is no harsh treatment of initiates such as is found among the Lenjes. Before initiation a girl is not supposed to have any sexual dealings with a man, but after initiation she is immediately eligible.

CHAPTER X

MARRIAGE

Sexual Behaviour

EXAGGERATED statements have often been made concerning the looseness of the morals of the natives of Central Africa. Some of these statements may be true of certain tribes, when applied to persons outside the marriage bond, but even with those persons, in certain tribes, the statements are either entirely false or grossly exaggerated. There are certain contributory causes to a belief in these statements. The fact that the Lambas have no word for 'virgin' has been interpreted as meaning that there are no such things as virgins among them. It must be remembered, however, that their women marry early—at the age of fourteen often—and that, owing to the custom of polygyny, there are no unmarried adult women, unless they are diseased or temporarily divorced. In villages, among people of their own clan, are to be found many girls who remain virgins until their marriage after the *ichisungu* ceremony. There are, of course, in native society, as in more civilized communities, those who go astray or are led astray before this period. It must also be remembered that in these days the introduction of European customs and mode of life, with all the contacts which that means, has undermined tribal control, throwing the social fabric into the melting-pot. There are not now those restraints which were potent a few years ago, with the result that to-day there is certainly a tendency to moral looseness. But we cannot put this down to the Lamba social organization, which is definitely opposed to moral laxity. In this chapter we deal with the true Lamba conception of marriage and its obligations and with the relations of the sexes.

Imbuli

A girl before her initiation is called *imbuli*, and if a man violates an *imbuli* the act is regarded by the tribe as one of *uwuchyende*, adultery. In such a case there is no fine imposed, but the man is warned and severely spoken to (*lawishya*). But if a man has

chosen an *imbuli* to become his wife, as soon as she has gone through the *ichisungu* ceremonies he may have intercourse (*lalika*) with her as often as he pleases. The two may cohabit in the same house, the girl drawing water for him and performing other duties. People say, *Aliupile akawuli*, "He has married a little girl," but such marriages are not looked upon with great favour. When they take place, however, they are confirmed after the initiation of the girl. Naturally, during the initiation confinement the man is not permitted to see the girl. He will at this time give to the girl's mother an *insalamu* (ring) as a pledge that the girl is his wife.

Moye

If a man who is not her betrothed violate a *moye*, an initiated girl, there will be a serious lawsuit. A *moye* after her initiation is looked upon as *umuseesa*, a woman in her menstruation, until such a time as her chosen man "takes her *ichisungu*"—i.e., deflowers her. Should another take it, her glory is gone.

Selection of a Wife

It is the general rule that the parents, especially the mother, of the young man choose his bride when it is considered that the time has come for him to marry. When she has decided upon a likely girl, the first inquiry the mother makes is as to whether the girl is unmarried (*umushichye*). If the answer is in the affirmative, the mother visits the girl's mother and tells her that she wants her son to marry the latter's daughter. The answer will be, "I shall ask my daughter this evening." Some days afterward the mother of the youth comes for her answer. If the answer is satisfactory, she goes to her son and says, "We have found you a wife. You find the calico." This calico is for the *ichyupo*, the necessary bridal pledge. The young man now procures the calico (*inguwo*) and goes to see the girl. He gives it to her to take to her mother, and tells her that on the next day he will come to begin the building of a house in her village. When he has completed the building of the house he procures further calico to take to the woman, so that she will come to his new house as his wife.

In the old days the *ichyupo* given to the prospective mother-in-law by an ordinary commoner was *ichilundo chyamusompo uwakupashila*, a four-yard piece of bark cloth, sewn to make it double the width and half the length. The value varied from two to four shillings. More well-to-do persons would give four or five

shillings to the mother of the girl, to be taken to her brother (the girl's maternal uncle) for him to distribute. The value of a hoe was about two shillings. In these days more is generally given as *ichyupo*, the amount varying from ten to twenty shillings, according to the desire of the suitor; and cash, calico, or blanket may be the medium in which the payment is made. In the case of cross-cousin marriages, which will be discussed later, the *ichyupo* is not insisted upon, though it is customary to send a present of calico to the bride and something to the *mwinshyo* if he is in rags. The passing of *ichyupo* cannot be looked upon as purchase. In the first place, the value of a slave is always many times greater than any *ichyupo*, and a wife is reckoned as of far more value than a slave. Then the terms under which the *ichyupo* is returnable are such as cannot imply that the wife is in any way bought. The term 'dowry' cannot be used in this connexion, for a dowry is what the bride brings to a marriage, and the *ichyupo* is always provided by the husband or his relations. The *ichyupo* seems to be a marriage pledge deposited with the clan of the bride as a guarantee of satisfactory behaviour.

When a grown man of his own desire is seeking a wife he visits different villages until he sees a woman who attracts his fancy. He then inquires from some one whom he knows in the village as to whether the woman is married or not. If she is unmarried (*umushichye*, a term indicative of living out of wedlock, whether widowed, divorced, or not yet married) the next question asked is, *Mbamwinando?* "What is her clan?" For a man may not marry a woman of his or his father's clan. If all is satisfactory, the suitor will tell his friend that he wants to marry the woman, and will ask him to speak to her. The friend will speak to the woman, and persuade her to come and see her suitor and speak to him. Sometimes from bashfulness a woman will refuse to go and speak direct to a suitor, but sometimes she will go. The suitor will then make his proposal plain, *Ndukufwayo'kuupa wewo*, "I want to marry you!" If the woman is not impressed, she will answer, *Tachili chyewo chyanji; mwipushye watata nawamamo' luchyelo*, "It is not my business. Ask my father and mother in the morning!" Some are blunt enough to say right out, "No, I do not want you!" Others again, not desiring to offend, will say, "I cannot, for I am already betrothed," or "I am not one ever to marry!" Sometimes the girl, when sending to her father, will instruct him to refuse the suitor for her.

If the girl decides to accept her suitor's proposal she will sometimes sit silent and give him no answer. Then she will get up and

go to her house. The friend of the suitor will follow her to her house to get her definite answer, and she will say, "I consent. In the morning let him ask my father and mother."

In the morning the friend, who acts as go-between, visits the prospective father-in-law and says, "My friend who has come here desires your daughter!" The other asks, "Have you asked the girl?" On receiving the affirmative answer, he says, "All right. We agree if she is willing." The next day the suitor returns to his home to procure the necessary calico. He then brings to his prospective wife's village the *indalama shiwili ishyansalamo*, the two shillings for the ring. This goes to the girl's mother, who takes it to her brother, the *wamwinshyo* of the girl, and, showing it to him, says, "See what your son-in-law has brought. Are you pleased?" His answer is, *Chiweme, ifiwakumana kulya!* "All right, what is sufficient for the people [*i.e.*, all of us] is food!" meaning "Let him come and work and cultivate in the village and give us food!" Herein lies the man's greatest contribution to the marriage expenses, his practical enslavement for a considerable time. The man further brings the calico for his bride, and then is free to take her to wife. At the marriage the husband's maternal uncle (*wamwinshyo*) may give his niece by marriage (*umulokashi*) some four shillings for calico, or maybe only a fowl.

Cross-cousin Marriage

A common form of marriage among the Lambas is that of cousins of a certain relationship (*awafyala*). The *umufyala* of a man is the daughter of his father's sister or of his mother's brother—his cross-cousin. She is therefore of a different clan (*umukoka*) from the man. Polygyny is not so common among the Lambas as is generally considered, and though both wives of a polygynist may be *awalukoso*, persons in no way related to him, it is often the case that one of them is her husband's *umufyala*.

Betrothals are often arranged by the parents between a boy of about thirteen and his *umufyala* when she is maybe only five years of age. A Lamba girl matures early, and by the time she is thirteen or fourteen the marriage will be consummated. Meanwhile she will be regarded as her cousin's wife, and the boy's father will supply the calico for her clothing. Sometimes, if the girl is older, and she matures before the boy is sufficiently grown up for marriage, her mother will say to her brother, the boy's father, "Your son is still a child, and I want my daughter

to marry now." Permission will be given, and the girl will become the wife of some other man. The boy, when he grows up, will marry another woman in the usual way. As this is a matter which concerns relatives, there is no return of any clothing which may have been supplied. Parents are often keen on these marriages, since they ensure that their children do not go away to live at a distance.

From the point of view of the contracting parties, cross-cousin marriage has both its advantages and its disadvantages. The advantage is that if the wife dies the death-due payable to her mother's brother (often the man's own father) is naturally very small in comparison with that which would be payable on account of a wife from a non-related group. The same holds good if the husband dies, for the man's *wamwinshyo* regards the widow, if an *umufyala*, as *umwana wawo*, his own child. The disadvantage of cross-cousin marriage is that the man fears to quarrel with his wife! He dare not strike his *umufyala*, for his father is her *wamwinshyo*. His father will say, *Tekulukupama wiso, ulishi ati mukwasu, ali koti ninwo!* "Don't strike your father. You know that she is my relative, she is like myself." The women, on the other hand, welcome the possibility of the freedom of speech they might enjoy, but they fear the slighting they might experience from a husband who treats his wife as a child.

Marriage of Chiefs

Members of the chief's clan, *awenamishishi*, whether men or women, observed special customs in connexion with marriage. In the old days with them it was always 'marriage by capture.'¹ Not only did the chiefs capture their wives, but the chieftainesses also captured their husbands.

(1) **Women Chiefs.** Women of the chief's clan are especially protected from any interference from the time they are girls. A young man would fear a serious seduction charge if anything should happen to a girl of the chief's clan through his misbehaviour. When, however, the girl reaches maturity she herself chooses the man whom she wishes to marry, and then commissions the people in her village, or one of her male relatives, to catch (*irata*) the man whom she has chosen. The people take lion's fat and set off for the village where the man is living. If they do not find him in his hut they sit down under the eaves and wait for him. When their victim returns and enters his hut they

¹ Except in the case of cross-cousins.

follow him in, smear the lion's fat on his shoulders, and seize him. He is then dragged off to the village from which his captors came, struggling and wailing at the hardness of his fate. Sometimes his friends may come to the rescue, but they desist, and put down their weapons, when it is said, *Tekukomo'muntu wamfumu, mwikesa kwikatalwa nekupooswa kuwambundu*, "Don't injure a servant of the chief's, lest you all get seized and sold to the Mbundu slavers!" The man is then taken to his future wife. In the morning clothing is given to him, and sometimes a red blanket (*ichimbushi*) is given to the man's father. The marriage is then complete. The husband of a woman of chief's clan is called *lumbwe*, consort.

Men fear to marry women of the chief's clan because of the risk they run of lawsuits and of constant criticism and blame. If, for instance, a child is born, and then dies, which is by no means an uncommon occurrence, the *lumbwe* is charged with being the cause of death by means of his *ichiwanda*, or attendant demon. The members of the chief's clan, *awenamishishi*, pride themselves on the privilege they have of making such a charge: no commoner dare do so. Another of the *uwuleme* (glories) of the *awenamishishi* is the privilege of delayed burial, if they can afford to pay the necessary *awenamilenda* (undertakers). The *lumbwe* also fears being insulted for being but a commoner and the ridicule attendant upon his having been caught like a slave. Despite this, the husband has the right to order his wife about and to beat her for any misbehaviour.

Lamba men nowadays are by no means eager to marry *awenamishishi*, for though there is no capture, the members of the chief's clan still persist in their right to make vilifying accusations, because this is their *uwuleme*. This is why many women of chief's clan among the Lambas are married by Wemba men, who, being strangers, take no notice of the charges which might be made against them.

(2) **Male Chiefs.** Prominent chiefs, such as Mushili of old, had the power of taking a woman whom they desired, even if she was already married. Such an act might cause the outraged husband to turn *akapondo* (murderer), and kill people in the chief's village in attempting to get at the chief himself. Such *utupondo* are of course not regarded as *imfwiti* (wizards), but as *ifita* (fighters). A man thus deprived of his wife may become an *imfwiti* and attempt the life of the chief by witchcraft.

The Capture of Nkandu

The following description of a particular case of 'marriage by capture' was given by a nephew of the woman concerned. During the great famine consequent upon the locust visitation which took place about 1892 many Lambas went to the Lenje country, and when the people of Nsensa's village returned to their homes they went to live in brushwood shelters (*imitanda*). Shiwata, one of



FIG. 64. MUSHILI I AND HIS TWO WIVES, 1913
Nkandu is next to him.
Photo by C. M. Doke

the elders, went to pay his respects to Mushili, whose village was not far distant, and returned in the evening with corn which Mushili had given him. That evening Shiwata told his wife that Mushili had spoken of coming to Nsensa's village for a visit, and added, "What does he want here?" The wife suggested that it was just a friendly visit, but Shiwata said, "No. Mushili does not travel without a purpose." The next morning, when all the elders had returned from their hoeing, Mushili and his people arrived. All gathered to greet the chief. Mushili said, *Awene-tata wali kwisa?* "Where are the clansmen of my father?" Mushili's father was a member of the goat clan, and Mushili wanted the *awenambushi* (goat clan people) of Nsensa's village to reveal themselves. The headman, Nsensa, and Shiwata, his

brother, who were *awenambushi*, knew then his purpose, though the others did not. All the members of the goat clan then showed themselves, and when they had finished talking the visiting party returned to Mushili's village. When night came a raiding party (*ifita*), consisting of Mushili himself, Mwalo, the present Mushili, and others, arrived at the house of Nkandu, the sister of Nsensa and Shiwata and a member of the goat clan, and demanded that she open the door. Some immediately entered and said, *Waikatwa, uli musanu!* "You are arrested. You are a wife of the chief!" Nkandu began to scream, but they smeared her with lion's fat, a sign that she belonged to the chief, and Mushili called out, *Tekufuma tata, nemata muno mumushi; ninewo naisa mukwikato'musanu!* "Don't come out with your weapons here in the village. It is I who have come to capture my wife!" Nsensa and Shiwata now came out with loud complaint. "Why is it, Mushili, that it is always from this village that the choice is made? For your brother Nkana married here too!" But Mushili replied, "That is no matter, for we ourselves prefer it here!" And they took away Nkandu, crying, and she became Mushili's wife.

Lamba women used greatly to dread marrying chiefs, and even to-day they do not like it. In the old days on the death of a chief his wives were all caught, bound, and charged with having killed him by witchcraft. The chief's brothers charged them with having selfishly used everything the chief had, without having given them anything. Then, when the remains of the chief were taken away for burial, some of his wives were killed that they might accompany him. Of the remaining ones, some became slaves to his brothers, others were sold into slavery. Even to-day the widows of a chief suffer great indignity and persecution.

If the chief had, say, twenty wives, two would perhaps be killed to accompany him to the spirit world; his heir would then distribute some of the remainder to certain of his sub-chiefs, while reserving the fairest for himself, to add to the number of his wives. Care is, however, taken if one of the wives is *umufyala* to the chief; the new chief may marry her or give her to some other relative of the dead chief.

Chiefs marry within the Lamba tribe only. The *awenamishishi* of Mushili's district cannot get a wife except by compulsion, and they could not exert that upon a foreign woman without bringing about war. At a distance from Mushili's, at Katanga's, for instance, the *awenamishishi* are able to choose (*sahulula*) their

wives and marry as ordinary people. In these days Mushili's *awenamishishi* can only choose women in their immediate vicinity; women further off are still afraid of the consequences of marrying a chief.

If a chief marries his cross-cousin, *umufyala*, she is not taken by capture. She is chosen, and there is no smearing of lion fat in her case. This is because the *umufyala* is child of a chief; her father was smeared when he was caught.

The Marriage

Except in the case of initial marriages, especially those of *ifisungu* (initiated girls), there is no ceremony beyond that of passing the necessary *ichyupo*. When this is done, it is usual for the sister of the man's father (*wishinkashi*) to go and fetch the bride in the afternoon before sunset. She brings her into the man's house, and sets food before her. Sometimes this provision is made by the mother of the man. While the bridegroom is elsewhere, his sisters and other women of the village have conversation with the bride. When they have finished eating, some of the women go away; then the bridegroom comes, and when his sisters have gone each to her house he remains and closes the door.

When the marriage is thus consummated, the man begins to fell timber, prepare the *ifiteme*, and burn them. He then goes to his own home to fetch seed, and sows it. When the foodstuffs have come to fruition the man again returns to his own home, leaving his pumpkins and maize to his wife's relatives (*awenawuko*), who see to it that they use them all. When these crops are consumed the man returns again to his wife's village. This initial crop which is passed over to the wife's relatives is called *ichiluwulantumbe*, the redemption of the basket, a compensation for the baskets of food he has had from his wife's relatives.

The Marriage of Ichisungu

In the case of a newly initiated girl, *ichisungu*, the marriage ceremony takes on special features. Very often a young man has chosen for his wife an uninitiated girl, *imbuli*, and as soon as she has passed through the initiation he desires to marry her. First he obtains certain beads, which he puts aside. He then builds his house, and when that is ready he goes to the *nyinachimbela*, the old woman who has initiated the girl, and takes to her some of the beads, saying, "To-day I have come to beg for my wife, that you should bring her to me." The old woman replies that

she will bring her that night. After nightfall, while the young man is away with his companions, the old woman brings the girl to the hut prepared, and makes her lie upon the bed, and instructs her, *Kani akufilwe umulume uluchyelo winwa-po umufuwa*, "If your husband fails to deflower you, in the morning don't drink the meal and water!"

The old woman now goes to call the young man. When he comes he brings two strings of beads; one he hangs at the foot of the bed and the other at the head. He may now complete the marriage, but if he fears failure in an attempt to deflower the *ichisungu* he will fly from the house and go elsewhere to sleep. Early in the morning the *nyinachimbel*a will come and say, *Mfumine munyanda*, "Come out of the house for me!" There will be no answer. She will then enter and ask the girl where her husband is, and the girl will say, "He was afraid and ran away." The old woman will then say, "He is a worthless fellow; he has failed!" It is asserted that many men after such an experience have gone away and committed suicide, fearing the ridicule which would be heaped upon them. Many are said to fear, because their elders tell them that an untouched *moye* is 'hard,' and difficult to penetrate (*pushya-mo*), and that if he fails he will die. If a young man tries and fails the marriage is considered null and void, and another may espouse the girl.

If, however, all is successful, and the marriage is consummated, when the *nyinachimbel*a comes in the early morning and asks, *Tufumine munyanda*, "Come out of the house for us!" the young man answers, *Nimwanji muno!* "It is my place in here!" Then the *nyinachimbel*a stands outside the hut, and sounds the *ulumpundu*—that shrill whistling—in the early morning. She then enters the hut, gives the young couple *umufuwa* (meal and water) to drink, and takes for herself the beads which have been hung at the foot and at the head of the bed.

When it is fully daylight the young man's mother comes with a cock and a basket of meal, while the girl's mother brings a hen. Both the fowls are killed, and *inshima* porridge is made from the meal. A crowd of friends gather round as the elder sister of the bride stirs (*nanya*) the *inshima*. The fowls are roasted, and while this is being done the bride takes hold of her husband's arm; at the same time he takes salt with that hand and sprinkles it on to the fowls. Similarly, when the *inshima* begins to boil the man takes the stirring-stick, while his wife grips his arm. When the fowls are eaten no one gnaws the bones (*kokote'fupa*), all eat meat only; the bones are given to the bridegroom (*umwine*

wachisungu), who throws them away. After the marriage feast, *ichitenje chyaawufi*, the assemblage breaks up, each one going to his own hut. Of this it is said *Wawakapa*, "They have introduced them into a new state."

That same morning the bride and bridegroom leave their hut and go into the veld with certain of their companions, *ili watando'tuuluka*,¹ "chasing everything which flies." All day long the young people play about in the bush and on the plains, driving off anything they see that can fly, such as flies, gnats, tsetse, butterflies, etc. This is said to be *akeshiwilo kakutamfye'nsoni*, a token of driving off the bashfulness, for a young man when first married fears to go back to his companions because of the chaffing he will get. They will say to him, *Kamwikala'pa mwemfumu, mwe mwaupa*, "Sit here, O chief, thou who hast married!"

In the evening the young people return to the village, and the bridegroom goes straight to his companions, his bashfulness all gone.

The custom of *ukutando'tuuluka* (chasing away things that fly) is carried out in the case of every woman who has never married before and in the case of every man on his first marriage, even if he is marrying a divorced woman.

The *ichitenje* (feast) is carried out in the case of two hitherto unmarried persons, even if they should be of advanced years, but in such a case there would be no visit of a *nyinachimbel*a to the house.

The *moye* only on the first copulation is excepted from the rule to *sumuna*,² but she must on all subsequent occasions carry this out.

Observances of Married Life

The condition of marriage entails certain observances which are peculiar to the Lambas and some other Bantu peoples.

It used to be the duty of every wife to *nukulo'mulume amaso pachinena*, to pull out her husband's pubic hair. When this was done she would hold the hair in her two hands together and present it to her husband. He would receive the hair in one of his hands, whereupon his wife would clap her hands together. The husband would then take the hair and throw it away secretly. This action on the part of the wife used to be considered respectful to her husband. Nowadays shaving has taken the place of pulling out the hair, and the woman shaves both her husband and herself.

¹ This is a Lenje phrase used by Lambas in this connexion only.

² See Chapter IX, Rule (i).

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But even this practice is fast dying out, and most of the men shave themselves.

If a marriage is fruitless, and there is argument between husband and wife as to which of them is barren, they will agree each to take another partner. The marriage thus becomes null and void. If after this the woman gives birth, and the man fails to become a father, he usually feels such shame that he either leaves the territory or even commits suicide.

An old Lamba custom observed by many men was to allow no one to approach the house lest a stranger should see the wife. A visitor had to stand afar off and call, when the owner of the house would come out and talk with him. Such marks of jealousy, *uwukwa*, are looked upon with disapproval in these days, though the practice is persisted in by the present Mushili.

Marriage Matrilocal

Lamba marriage is matrilocal. The man always builds a house in his *uwuko*, the village of his wife and her mother, and usually lives there for at least two years. When this time is completed the husband's desire to go back to his old home will be conveyed by his wife to his mother-in-law, and she will in all probability make the suggestion to her son-in-law that the days of his servitude have been sufficient. He will then be free to take his wife and go back to live at his own village. There he may stay for good, or if his life there does not prove to be happy he may return once again to his *uwuko*, and settle down there altogether. Men say that they are respected and treated well at their wife's village, despite the fact that in many a proverb and many a folk-tale they bemoan their harsh treatment at the hands of the mother-in-law. There are instances of unfair advantage being taken of a son-in-law, but the bad treatment is more proverbial than real. It is when a man is son-in-law to an *umwinamishishi*, a woman of the chief's clan, that his lot is really unenviable. Being a commoner, he is at the beck and call of all of his brothers-in-law as well, and is expected to supply inordinate demands for calico and to help in providing their tax money. The lot of the ordinary married man in Lambaland is not so bad as it is sometimes painted. An unconscious tribute to the value of the *uwuko* is contained in the proverb *Umwau wansala nakuwuko walutelele*, "The yawn of hunger, and even in your wife's village they heard it!" The man knows where to go when hungry—there will always be some food prepared for

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him. Nevertheless, a man must behave himself discreetly in his *uwuko*. If there is a brawl or quarrel on in the village he will be wise to keep out of it, since, being a stranger, he will be liable to get the blame, as all the other participants will be brethren.

There seems to be no definite law concerning the place of residence of children. They are often left with their grandparents when the parents move, but the decision rests with the parents. If a marriageable girl is residing with her maternal grandparents it is they who have the disposal of the *ichyupo*, or marriage pledge.

Polygyny

Polygynists are comparatively few in Lambaland, on account of the difficult lives which such husbands have to live. There used to be a few who had as many as three wives at a time, but there are none known now. Many villages have not a single polygynist in them. The wives of polygynists are called *impali*. The old Mushili had five wives. When I met him in 1913 there were only two left; the others had gone home for good. The present Mushili has but two wives, and they are said to be continually at loggerheads. In Lambaland a wife never desires her husband to marry a second in order to lighten the amount of garden work, as is sometimes asserted. One man, a *Wulima*, by name Kashyonka, is regarded by most natives as singularly fortunate, because his two wives live so amicably together. Even Mushili's wives when they quarrel treat Mushili himself with contempt as though he were a commoner.

If a man is going to marry *impali* he first lives his term of two years at his first wife's village, and then gets permission to go back to his own village. On his taking a second wife he goes to live at her village for two months in order to fell timber for his new wife's relatives. He then brings his new wife home, and both wives live in the same village—naturally each with a hut of her own.

There is usually considerable domestic trouble with the first wife before a man is able to bring home a second one. The man will broach the subject to his first wife, saying, "Wife, I want to marry another wife, for you get too tired with the work, and at times when you are ill I feel the burden of having to do the cooking myself." The woman may answer, "You may marry, but I shall go home to-morrow!" Her husband will retort, "All right. And I shall come to get a gun in compensation for desertion."

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The woman is equal to it, and will say, "All right. My relatives will procure one and give it to you."

After such a quarrel the husband will take a ring to the woman whom he has chosen for his second wife. If she agrees, the first wife will hold back until the marriage is consummated. But as soon as this is done the first wife will go and fight with her rival. She will belabour both her husband and the new wife with a big stick, and the second wife will not dare to retaliate, for she fears the first wife, who is considered as *umwine wamulume*, the owner of the husband. In Lambaland domestic differences are not settled in private, and such an assault is carried out in public, and persists until the villagers come and take away the stick from the enraged woman, to prevent her from killing one of her victims. It is said that on such an occasion a chagrined husband has been known to go off and hang himself. After the assault the first wife usually goes away back to her mother's village. She may stay for some considerable time with her mother, until one day her husband arrives, and with violence upbraids his mother-in-law for harbouring his wife. In all probability the woman will quietly return with her husband, and settle down more or less amicably under the new conditions.

Sometimes the first wife refuses to come back to her husband. If he really desires to keep her he will send home the new wife and return to the *status quo*. If, however, he desires to keep the new wife, he can demand from the relatives of the wife who has deserted him the payment of a gun.

Sometimes, after such a definite separation has been effected, the man has found out that he cannot get on with the new wife, and even though his first wife may have married again he will send word that he wants her back. His elders will warn him—*Wemwana akabwelela kalalya*, "Son, what comes back, eats!" If he is persistent he will retort, *Ngakakandye nemwine*, "Well, let it eat me then!" They will say, *Ichyukaŵona chyŵŵe wenka*, "What will happen to you is your own doing!" It is believed that if a man returns to the wife whom he has once divorced his death will be hastened. The *ichiwanda*, attendant demon, of the woman will, they believe, kill him. Unless the woman were married to a stranger from a distance she would never consent to give up her new husband for the one who had divorced her.

In the family of a polygynist the children having the same father but different mothers are always called *awanaŵankashi*, brethren, though they belong to different *imikoka*, taking their clan from

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that of the mother. Naturally marriage between such persons is forbidden.

The first wife of a polygynist is the *umukashi-mukulu*, the 'great' wife, the principal wife, and her hut is referred to as the *iyande'kulu*, the 'great' house. The subsequently married wife is called *umukashi-mwanichye*, or child-wife, and her hut is referred to as *iyande'nini*, the 'small' house. The eldest child of the *iyande'kulu* will always be reckoned the eldest of the family, even if born after the eldest child of the *iyande'nini*. For instance, A. married two wives, B. in 1900 and C. in 1905. The first child of B. was not born until 1908, whereas the first child of C. was born in 1906; nevertheless, B.'s child was called *umwana umukulu-wantu*, the 'eldest' child, and C.'s child was termed *umwana umwanichye-wantu*. In this way the Lambas call Isaac the *umukulu*, elder brother, of Ishmael, who was not the son of Abraham's principal wife.

Divorce

The marriage tie among the Lambas appears to be considerably looser than among a cattle-keeping people, with whom a considerable pledge of cattle is necessary on marriage. This looseness has been increased in the country since the advent of goods and money and of foreign natives who can offer more attractions to the Lamba women than their husbands can. Many cases are to be found of men and women who have had four and more marriages. Nevertheless, it must be recorded that there are very many cases of real love between husband and wife, and of a lasting affection which holds them together throughout life.

In the Lamba social system there are definite grounds for divorce, with a definite recognition of liability with regard to restitution of the *ichyupo* (marriage pledge) or additional payment of compensation. The following are the commonest grounds for divorce:

(1) **Divorce of the Wife.** (a) If the parents-in-law continually harass the man he can claim restitution of the *ichyupo* and, if he has made a marked contribution to the village life, also of a gun as compensation.

(b) If the wife has committed adultery the husband can, should he divorce her, claim from her *wamwinshyo* money or a gun in addition to the restitution of the pledge. This will be additional to his having killed the co-respondent or obtained a gun as his redemption.

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(c) If the woman develops leprosy, syphilis, or yaws. There is no restitution of pledge in this case, and many men would continue to look after their wives.

(d) If the woman becomes a thief. This would mean restitution of the pledge, and sometimes payment of a gun.

(e) If the woman is nagging, disrespectful, and quarrelsome. Restitution as for (d).

(f) If the woman refuses to remain when her husband desires to marry another wife. Payment of a gun is demanded, as the woman has acted according to her own desires.

(2) **Divorce of the Husband.** (a) If he fails to clothe his wife. No restitution of pledge.

(b) If he fails to prepare a garden. No restitution of pledge.

(c) If he continually beats his wife. No restitution of pledge.

(d) If the man proves to be impotent (*shyamawawa*). No restitution, the man usually taking it upon himself to leave the district from very shame.

(e) If the woman ceases to care for her husband. This entails restitution of the pledge and payment of a gun, for the Lambas say, *Uwawipa awipa netwakwe*, "He who becomes bad, becomes bad with all his belongings too!" That is, "If you don't like me, you've no right to like what you have got from me."

(f) If the man develops leprosy, syphilis, or yaws. No restitution of pledge.

Divorce is so common among the Lambas that they say, *Wala-kokola pakwambishya, pakulekana tawakokola*, "They delay over their courting, but when getting divorce they do not delay." In all cases of divorce the children remain under the care of the mother, to whose clan they belong.

Marriage Restrictions

According to Lamba social law, a man may not marry a woman belonging to the same clan as himself, such marriage being regarded as incest. But the restrictions go even farther than this. A man may inquire of the woman whom he wants to marry as to her clan, but it is necessary to find out whether the clans of their fathers are different also. If they are the same the woman would call the man *indume*, brother, and should he marry her he would be said to have married his *umwana muwiyakwe*, his fellow-child, which is prohibited. Nevertheless, there are many *awapupa*, lawless persons, who overlook this prohibition in these days, and are merely ridiculed for their action. They quote a

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current proverb in excuse, *Akasawi ukulyo'mukwawo ekunona!* "The little fish that eats its mate is the one that gets fat!" In such a case, if it were found out that the fathers belonging to the same clan knew one another, a divorce would be insisted upon. If the mother of one party and the father of the other belong to the same clan there is no restriction, for this is the condition for the accepted cross-cousin marriage.

failure. His parents eventually laid a charge of witchcraft against his companion, one of the senior boys, who had persuaded him to stay with him at the mission instead of going home for his holidays.

Death and Burial

When a man is taken ill the *umulaye*, doctor, is sent for to diagnose, not his illness, but the cause of his illness, and to prescribe the necessary treatment for the removal of this cause. We shall consider the methods employed by the *awalaye* in a later chapter.

When, however, all the efforts of the doctor have proved unavailing, and it is seen that the illness has got such a hold upon the man that his recovery is despaired of, his relatives decide to move him to a little hut *mumpanga*, in the veld, a little distance from the village, because of the noises which go on in the village. They do this as a last resort to give the sick man a chance of recovery. This removal has been misinterpreted by many as a callous and selfish procedure, to prevent his dying in a good hut, but it is not so, for his hut, even if he has not died in it, will not be used again. If the weather is clement, an *umutanda*, a shelter of branches and leaves, will serve the purpose of sick-room, but in the rainy season an *inkunka*, or thatched lean-to, will be erected. Notice will be given to the villagers that they must not go there to worry the sick man with their presence.

When the dying man realizes that the end is near he calls his relatives—brothers if he has any—and commits to them the care of his children. They then know that he is dying. Men usually show concern for the future of their children, but few consider the wife who is left; nevertheless, there are some who will instruct their relatives to treat their wives with kindness, because they have been faithful and dutiful throughout their married life. If the man has any possessions, such as goats, for instance, he may instruct his relatives to give some to his children; the rest will naturally go to the relatives, as goods are inherited within the clan. He may further inform them that he leaves no debts, and tell them that, should demands be made upon his estate, they are to refuse to pay anything. He may even think of some little detail such as this: "So-and-so gave me some tobacco to smoke, and I promised him sixpence; if he comes for it, give it to him."

Relatives and friends now gather from all directions; some sit inside the house and others outside, where they light fires to await the death. As soon as it is known that life has left the body the relatives begin to wail. A brother now closes the eyes of the

CHAPTER XI

DEATH AND BURIAL CEREMONIES

Cause of Death

AMONG the Lambas it is very seldom that death is attributed to natural causes, though often in cases of newly born babes and very old persons no other cause of death is imputed. In warfare death is often accepted as the direct result of the fighting, because the men fighting are, as a rule, volunteers; they go to war of their own accord. Should a man have been compelled to go, the responsibility for his death would not rest upon the actual person who inflicted the wound, but on the person who insisted on his going to fight.

In certain cases death is attributed to the direct action of Lesa (the deity), especially when a man is struck by lightning or smitten down by smallpox. This latter affliction is believed to be the direct result of breaking certain taboos, and it is considered the deceased's own fault if he has incurred this punishment.

Death is also at times attributed to a person's being struck by an *ichiwanda* (demon) or an *ichinkuwaila* (goblin), that weird denizen of the forest which is believed to take possession of certain persons. The *awalaye* are believed to be able to treat persons affected by *ifwanda* and the *wamowa* those who have come into contact with *ifinkuwaila*, but they may be called too late, and the sick man may die.

Apart from such special cases, however, all death in Lambaland is put down to witchcraft. It matters not that a lion has devoured the unfortunate victim; it could not have been an ordinary lion, but one produced or induced by witchcraft. Even if a man commits suicide his action must have been induced by witchcraft.

During a holiday time at the mission school at Kafulafuta a few of the schoolboys remained at the mission to earn a little money by holiday work. In the late afternoons, with some of these boys, we missionaries were in the habit of going to the river to bathe. One day while bathing a lad named Chyola dived into the pool and disappeared. We could not recover his body until the next day, when it was evident that he had died of heart-

dead man, for a man must not die with his eyes open—*tekufwe' ntunami*. It is the women who do most of the wailing. At first they roll themselves in the dust as they wail. The men soon cease from wailing, and then stop the women's cries, saying, *Tanje tupopele'mfwa*, "First let us enshroud the dead!"

His relatives now bring beads and put them round his waist, and maybe two strings of beads around his neck and others on his arms above the wrists. These are looked upon as a sign of farewell. The body is now prepared for burial by being folded up (*ukupeta*). The knees are brought up to the chin, the arms also doubled up, with the hands upon the respective shoulders and the elbows brought to touch behind the knees, as in the accompanying illustration. The native puts no other interpretation upon this position than that it is to assist in the type of burial which they observe, a type employed on account of its economy in the size of the grave and the amount of digging necessary.



FIG. 65. METHOD OF FOLDING A CORPSE

The folding of the corpse is carried out with the corpse

lying on its side, it being immaterial upon which side it lies. The body is held in this position for a few minutes until rigidity sets in, when it remains in that position. If for any reason the folding has been delayed until the body is already rigid, force is used to bring it into position, but no binding of a corpse is ever resorted to. The next thing done is to enshroud the folded body in white calico (*imbafuta*) if it can be procured. A further covering of bark cloth (*umusompo*) is put over this, or a blanket if the deceased owned one. After this the body is laid upon a mat (*impasa*) placed on the floor against the wall of the hut; another *impasa* is placed as a screen in front. Were the deceased a wealthy man, a further strip of white calico would be placed over the screen. Several guns, loaded merely with powder, are now discharged, and the wailing breaks out afresh, with added intensity. The guns are said to be merely a sign to distant people to let them know that the death has taken place.

Meanwhile the widow of the deceased has been lying on the floor of the hut against the screen which separates her from the corpse. As she wails she rolls about on the ground.

In the morning the *awenamilenda*, undertakers, come forward for the work of conducting the funeral. These men may belong to any clan. They are usually elders (*awakulu*), and are paid for their work. Among the Lambas there are no people who regularly do undertaking work, but maybe, on hearing the guns, some men from a neighbouring village will come, enter the death hut, and sit down. If the deceased is not to be buried early they will sit there all day, and the people will thus know that they have elected to do the undertaking.

One of the deceased's relatives will now say, "Give the widow some water to drink, a pipe to smoke [*ukupeepeshya*], and some *ifisunga* [mild beer]," for neither a widow nor a widower may eat,

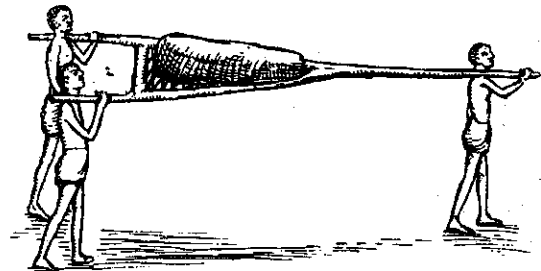


FIG. 66. IMISEEWA FOR THREE CARRIERS

drink, or smoke until helped to do so by relatives of the deceased. This is termed *ukukapa*, a rite of initiation into a new state, into that of widowhood.

When the time for burial has arrived the corpse is brought out into the *uluwansa* (court), bound with calico round the body and the head. The brothers and children of the dead man now come and throw meal (*uwunga*) upon the shrouded body, to bid him farewell (*mukumulaya*); it is considered that he is undertaking a journey, and he needs to carry the meal. The body is now set upon an *impasa*, and two men carry it.

If the corpse is heavy the *awenamilenda* prepare a bier (*imiseewa*), resembling a machila, and two carry it, being relieved at intervals. Another kind of bier is composed of a large pole forked and branched at the one end. Three carriers convey this, one taking the end of the pole in front and the two others the ends of the forking at the back. Bark rope between the forks gives the support for the body.

A machila (the usual hammock of conveyance) is not used, for the death bier is never brought back to the village.

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Maybe about ten men will go off with the body, five of these probably relatives, the other five paid *awenamilenda*. Directly the bier is taken up there is a great outburst of wailing. The bearers carefully avoid all paths when going to the burying-place (*umulyashi*). Each village has its own burying-place, and even if the village is moved to a considerable distance that same burial-ground is used. When a village is moved care is taken not to go close to a burial-place or to make the gardens too near one.

If the distance to the *umulyashi* is considerable, the bier is put down several times on the way.¹ When the spot is reached the bier is set down and the corpse laid on a mat (*impasa*). If it is during the rainy season a small shelter (*insama*) is erected, and the body placed beneath while the grave is being dug. Some of the relatives sit down and watch over the body, while the younger men begin to dig the grave. One hoe (*akalonde*, an old worn-down hoe) is used for the digging. It must not be restored to the village, hence economy prescribes but one hoe. The digging takes considerable time, and the men take turns with the hoe. First of all a stick is broken off and the size of the shrouded body measured. The length of the grave is measured accordingly. The hole is dug down until it is waist deep. When that depth is reached a shelf is hollowed out on the west side. This they call *injanda*, the house, in which the body is to be laid. When this is all hollowed out the mat (*impasa*) on which the body is lying, or another one brought from the village, is placed on the floor of the *injanda*.

Two men now take their positions in the grave, and two others hand down the body to them. One man now gets out, leaving room for the remaining one to place the body properly in the *injanda*. The body is laid on its left side, facing eastward; the head of the body is thus toward the north and the feet toward the south.

The reason for the facing eastward is explained by the natives as follows: "If the face is turned to the west the spirit cannot return to be reborn, but if a man faces the east his spirit will return. If a man is buried facing westward the *awenamilenda* [undertakers] would be considered *imfwiti* [wizards] for denying to the spirit the joy of return. In looking eastward he also looks for the return of Luchyele."² The Lambas have a saying,

¹ For burial from Katanga's village it is not put down at all, as the distance is short; from Nsensa's it is put down once. Generally an overgrown spot not likely to be visited by hunters is chosen.

² See Chapter XIV.

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Kumbonshi takuya ubwela, "To the west he does not go who would return again." A dead man thus buried would 'go for good.'

After the body is laid in position the bier is cut up and the pieces of wood used to form a screen between the *injanda* and the *ichilende* (the hole first dug). The axe used for this purpose may be restored to the village. Against the screen (*ichipembe*) is placed another mat, and then the filling-in operation begins. First, big clods of earth and stones are handed down to the man

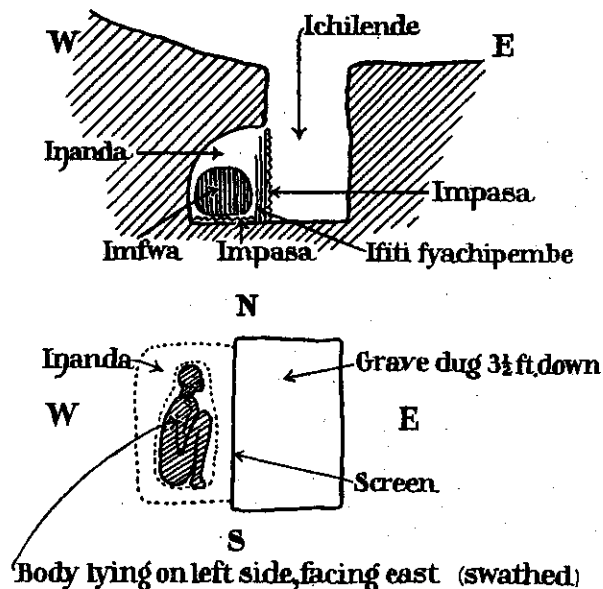


FIG. 67. PLAN OF A LAMBA GRAVE

in the grave; these he sets against the screen, which he holds in position and fixes firmly. When the screen is firm the man comes out from the grave. All the members of the burial party now assemble round the grave; they kneel down, and in concert push forward the earth with their elbows into the grave, chanting together *Yo!* "No!" After a time two of the men get into the grave and tread down the earth with their feet. The grave is then completely filled up; every bit of earth excavated is put on the mound, and any that has been carried some distance away is carefully swept on to the grave. A large mound is thus formed, and this is beaten and smoothed with the hands.

A plate belonging to the deceased is now brought; a hole is

driven through it, and it is placed on the mound—"as a sign to warn people that there is a person there." In the old days an *ichilukwa* basket was used for this purpose. The hoe-head is now knocked from the haft and thrown on to an anthill among the graves. Many such hoes are to be found in the *imilyashi*. Should the hoe be returned to the village, it would be considered equivalent to bringing back the dead body. Nowadays calico is torn and pierced, and set on a long pole at the grave as a flag to mark that it is a grave.

On returning from a funeral it is not permitted to shoot meat, pick fruit, dig roots, or cut out honey. This is an important taboo, and in the breaking of this is believed to have originated many of the Lamba clans.¹

After the funeral all who have taken part go to the river and bathe completely. Before this is done they are said to have the death (*ulufu*) still upon their bodies. Then they all go to the village. On their arrival there is a great outburst of wailing. The *awenamilenda* stand in a row near the house in which the death took place. Meanwhile in the house one of the village elders has been on watch with many other people, talking over the affairs of the deceased. This elder now comes out and lights a torch of dried grass, which he carries round the group of *awenamilenda*; when this is done they all enter the deceased's house. *Inshima* porridge is now prepared, and a grilled (*iyakochya*) fowl, which they eat. They then separate, to go to their own houses. It is now the duty of the heir of the deceased (*umwine waufwile*) to arrange the pay of the hired undertakers. The two who receive the body in the grave will be paid about five shillings each, the others about three shillings each. The relatives of the deceased now shave their heads as a sign of mourning, but this privilege is denied for the present to the relict.

Amalilo

In the evening the undertakers are called, the principals being paid first and then the juniors. Every one then sits down for the night of singing. Dancing by single dancers is indulged in at this stage, but there is no community dancing. The songs used at the *amalilo* (mourning rites) are generally chosen from the *ifinsengwe*² (hunting songs); others are those composed by the *awayambo*. The *awenamilenda* have rattles (*imiseŵe*) and calabash drums (*imbila*), which they sound in the hut, while the men and women sit about outside and assist in the singing. The following are examples of the songs used:

¹ See Chapter XII.

² See examples in Chapter XV.

- (1) *Chingalika umunamusanga mumilamba,*
Wapapa newana wakwe mumilamba!
"The male zebra, where I met him in the track,
Carried his children on his back, in the track."
- (2) *Shyakaiwa, Shyakaiwa, walila Mumba, Shyakaiwa.*
Walukoshi wakantwalila mwana,
*Kwenda kandila!*¹
"Shyakaiwa, Shyakaiwa, Mumba has cried, Shyakaiwa.
Mr Eagle has carried off my child.
I wail as I go!"
- (3) *Kawombwe, kawombwe, pamwala kalukulila:*
Kawule kalile, lelo amenda apwa, twapelelwa.
"Little frog, little frog, was croaking in the vlei.
Can it help croaking? To-day the water has dried
up.
We are bereft."
- (4) *Kako, kako, mwimbileni, kako,*
*Yaweyawe*² *mwimbileni!*
"That one, that one, sing ye to him, that one,
Yaweyawe, sing ye to him!"

Preparations for the Beer-drink

In the morning corn is set in soak for the beer-making. While they wait for the malt to set the people begin to dance the *ichinsengwe* dance. This dancing is done during the night only; there is no drumming, and only solo dancing. During the daytime the people sleep or go about their usual occupations. Maybe four days will pass before the *amamena* (malt) is dry. When this is ready the young people will say, "We too want to mourn with the drums. We do not know the *ichinsengwe*." So they begin to dance to the accompaniment of beaten drums, keeping this up each night until the beer is brewed. These young people dance various dances, such as the *akashimbo*, the *akasela*, the *ichipelu*, and the *umusakasa*.

On the night before the beer is brewed the *awenamilenda* come again, and again begin to sing *ichinsengwe* songs in the deceased's hut. Meanwhile the younger folk still dance the *akasela* outside. The women and the older men spread their sleeping mats outside

¹ The construction is Lenje; the song is said to have originated in the Lenje country from the crying of the *akatuutwa* bird when the eagle caught her young.

² *Yaweyawe* is a term applied to the dead man, and only used in this connexion. It is possibly derived from *ukuyawā*, to sing mourning songs. As this song is sung all stand, and then go round and round, following in a line the *umutatwishi* (song-leader)

and lie down watching the dancing. On this occasion the dancing is necessarily strictly moral. The dancers continue thus right through the night, and both *akasela* and *ichinsengwe* are kept up into the next day. The beer is now in the house with the *awenamilenda*. By midday the drum is stopped and the beer-drinking begins. When all are seated one pot of beer is given to the younger people who have been dancing the *akasela*, and the others are given to the older mourners. In the evening, when the beer-drinking is over, the hut of the deceased is closed and a white log of wood leant against the door. This house is never opened again, even if the deceased died in a shelter outside the village. In the house are left only the bed cross-poles on which his mat used to lie. The house is left to rot of its own accord. If the village is deserted and the houses burnt, this one will be left; *it must rot and fall by itself*. The white log against the door is a sign to everybody, from wherever he may come, that it is a house of the dead (*ichituuka*). In all, about ten days cover the time from the death to the shutting of the house.

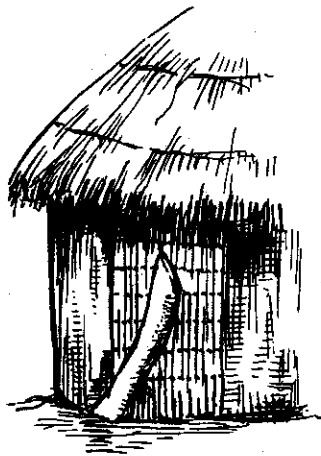


FIG. 68. ICHITUUKA

denied for so long in order that the relict may realize that she (or he) is not a free person until the death-dues are paid.

Burial of a Woman

In the case of the death of a woman the preparations for burial are carried out usually by the husband if she has one, or otherwise by one of the *awenamilenda* (undertakers), assisted by an old woman, *nyinachimbela*, who will put on the beads. There are no female undertakers, and a man always swathes the corpse. While the undertakers who convey the corpse for burial are all men, some female relatives may accompany them merely as witnesses.

When a pregnant woman dies the husband is forced to accompany the undertakers to the burial. If the husband is afraid he

will have to find a village elder as substitute, and pay him as much as a gun for his services. When they go they prepare a sharp stake of an *umutoŵo*-tree called *ichinsonta* to take with them. On reaching the place of burial the husband rips open the woman with the *ichinsonta*, stabs the unborn child through, and, holding it up in the air on the end of the stake, shouts, *Lesa walya ŵawŵili*, "God has eaten two!" He then throws it down and rushes away from the gruesome ordeal, returning alone to the village. Headman Kalimbata was forced to do this when his younger brother's wife died and her husband ran away. After this is done the mother is buried in the usual way by the *awenamilenda* and the child laid against her in front, the *ichinsonta* being withdrawn and used to prop up the screen.

If a substitute has gone in place of the husband, that very evening, when the people are gathered, the bereaved man takes a gun and in the presence of the people gives it to the village elder, saying, "You have helped me in a difficult task!"

Should the husband refuse to go, and should there be no substitute, he would be caught by the *awenamilenda*, taken along forcibly, and compelled to perform the deed, for the Lambas fear that if the woman is buried in child it will mean that other women of the same clan will die pregnant. There is thus a fear of the working of sympathetic magic. This is only done in cases of advanced pregnancy, known to everybody.

Burial of Children

When a baby dies two of the relatives take the little body, one of them carrying it on his shoulders, trussed and wrapped in calico. A small grave of the same pattern as an adult's is made. Wailing is indulged in only by the mother and her relatives, who remain in the house for one day. There is no dancing, nor is the house abandoned.

In the case of children from two to eight years of age four people may go to the burial, of whom two will be *awenamilenda*. There will be one night of *ichinsengwe* singing, but no beer-drinking or regular dancing.

Lepers

The Lambas never bury those who die of leprosy. They build a high platform and place the body on top to decay, so that it will not pollute the ground and cause fellow clan members to contract the disease. An *umushitu*, or swamp-forest, is generally chosen for this purpose.

Burial of a Chief

When an important chief becomes ill, and the people know that he is seriously ill, they send to the *awenamilenda*,¹ telling them not to go away, because the chief is seriously ill and may not recover. The chief's wives are watched, to prevent their escape. Directly the chief dies his relatives send to fetch the keepers of the spirit-huts, the *awenamilenda*, without letting the villagers know. Meanwhile the chief's relatives take all his wives and shut them up in a house, making the door fast. The younger members of the chief's clan guard the house, while the women of the clan and the daughters of the *awasanu* (chief's wives) take them food. The women of the clan act as wardresses when it is necessary for the imprisoned women to go into the bush to relieve nature. The wives are looked upon as witches who have killed the chief.

On the arrival of the *awenamilenda* the news is published abroad, that every one may know that the chief is dead. Then all the people gather together to mourn. The other members of the chief's clan arrange the payment of the *awenamilenda*, according to their station, and when a quantity of goods has been brought payment of the younger *awenamilenda* is made, the chief *umwinamulenda* only being left unpaid.

Wearing a huge headdress of guinea-fowl and *mukuta* feathers, the *awenamilenda* now take charcoal and pound it with red ochre (*ulushila*). On one side of the face they smear the red ochre, on the other charcoal, and in the middle of the forehead they smear flour. Then they set about catching fowls in the village. These fowls they bring back and eat. They are feared by everybody. They sleep in the house with the corpse, but no one will enter for fear of punishment should he spit on the floor.

The body of the chief is laid on an *umusengelo* (reed mat) on cross-poles very near to the ground; it is stretched out, not trussed up at all. A trench is dug encircling the bier, and earth is heaped up to touch the bier all round. The rotted remains and the water poured on will go into the trench.

When the body of the chief has begun to swell the *awenamilenda* heat water and keep sprinkling it on the body. When they eat they burn the feathers of the fowls they have killed in order to counteract the stench of the corpse. This pouring on of water is continued day by day, and the chief's slaves are kept hard at it drawing water and grinding flour for the *awenamilenda*. When

¹ In the case of Mushili the chief *umwinamulenda* was Chinguwe, Mukupe and others assisting him.

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decomposition is practically completed the undertakers inform the people that "the chief wants to take his journey" and that they must grind much flour. When they are ready to begin the long journey to the burial-place the *awenamilenda* again don their headdresses and decorate their faces with ochre, charcoal, and flour. The people prepare for them a fine house elsewhere in the village, and bring them baskets of meal and fowls.

Dancing and beer-drinking go on while the body is decomposing, and on the last night the people indulge in *akasela* dancing all night and into the next day.

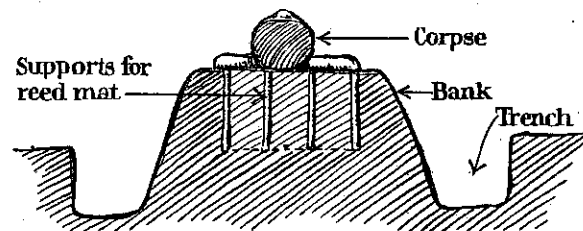
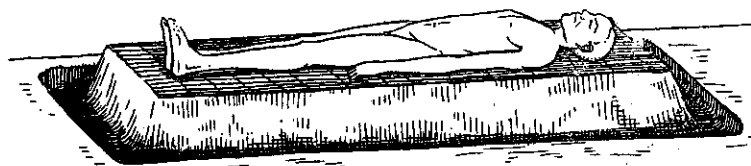


FIG. 69. HOW A LAMBA CHIEF IS PREPARED FOR BURIAL

Now in the *akawungo*, as the *ichituuka* or house of the dead chief is called, mere bones are resting on the stand. The *awenamilenda* take out the teeth and toe- and finger-nails of the chief, and hand them over to Lyala¹ from Mwema's district, who has arrived to take charge of them. If all the teeth are not there, Lyala, on counting them, will say, "The teeth are not all here!" And one will answer, "No. One he had taken out!" Lyala keeps the teeth and nails of each chief in a separate packet of cloth in a closed calabash, which is placed on a stand in a small lean-to hut (*inkunka*). People from Mushili's village will never sleep at Lyala's, as they consider it as though it were *kumulyashi*, at the burial-place, as part of the chief's remains are kept there. The presence of the teeth and nails is a sign that the chief is still in the village. Is there any significance in the fact that these are the only bony parts of the body visible during life?

¹ *Ilyala* means 'nail.'

After the removal of the teeth and nails the bones are bound up, as in the case of an ordinary death, the dry tendons still being there so that they do not come apart. They are then wound round with calico print. Beads have already been placed upon the waist, neck, and wrists.

At the end of two months the *awenamilenda* go and prepare an *ichikondo*, a bark canoe, and the *imiseewa*, a single long white pole. They make a fire, heat to redness an axe, and burn markings upon the pole. Great Lamba chiefs never cross a river in a bark canoe, because they know that they will one day 'sleep' in one. No commoner can be taken to burial in a bark canoe.

The remains are placed in the canoe, cloth is put over, and the canoe is secured beneath the long carrying-pole. As the procession starts off on its long journey to the resting-place of the chiefs many people accompany it, to see off the chief, sounding the shrill *impundu* cries, while the younger *awenamilenda* range through the bush on either side pretending to be hyenas. Four of the *awenamilenda* carry the bier. The two wives whom the chief loved best, tied round the waist with cords, are taken with them, weeping bitterly. One of the undertakers goes ahead, clanging an *ulusonsolo*, a heavy double bell, while those behind keep up a noisy shouting. When a village is reached the people fear the procession, but the principal *umwinamulenda* says, *Tamutaile'mfumu?* "Don't you make gifts to the chief?" Everybody comes and brings gifts of beads and metal armlets, while the village headman brings a length of cloth. Everywhere the people greet the *cortège* with shrill *impundu* whistling, while the men come and take their turn at carrying the *imiseewa*. At the village where they spend a night, if there is no drum they sleep without any singing or dancing. A good house in the midst of the village is swept for the 'chief' to sleep in, and fowls are brought to the *awenamilenda*.

On the day before they reach the *umulyashi* the 'hyenas' go on ahead to visit the spot, and then return to meet the chief. The principal *umwinamulenda* asks them, *Shyani ukomwaile?* "How is it where you went?" And they answer, *Yo, wawasumina!* "No. They accept him!" meaning that the chiefs buried there before are prepared to receive the recently deceased chief. Then they all go on to the burial-place.

The burial-place of the Lamba chiefs of Mushili's country is in an *umushitu* (rank forest) on the Kafinga river, near Kashise's village, in the Belgian Congo.

The *cortège* enters the *umulyashi*. This is a sacred *umushitu*;

there is no water here, not even in the rains. The principal *umwinamulenda* enters with a shout of triumph, *akasemo*, used only by a man who has killed his foe. *Wahe! wahe!* he shouts, and all make shrill response. The younger ones cry like hyenas, and the rattle bell is violently rung.

Now the two widows of the chief are killed with spears, and the chief is buried in the way in which ordinary persons are. When this has been done the slaughtered wives are cut up, their limbs and portions of their bodies being hung about on the trees throughout the *umushitu*. Numbers of vultures assemble to the feast as soon as the people leave the spot. Ntenke and Mushili were the first chiefs to be buried without this taking of life; when Nkana was buried women were slain, but it is not certain whether they were wives of his or not.

When the people return home they recount to the new chief everything that happened along the road. He then pays them for their services.

The hut in which the chief's body had rotted is shut up and left to fall to pieces by itself.

When the *awenamilenda* have departed there comes Kaŵalu, the guardian of the chief, to receive from the new chief the spears, axes, and bows and arrows which the old chief used to use himself. These he takes and cares for in his shrine, *umulenda*. Kaŵalu preserves these relics of all the chiefs, keeping them and their various ornaments in order. At Shichyuŵa, near Kombe, also bows, large spears, and "wonders of the past" are preserved. Here, too, an inventory of all these things is made at the end of each month.

Kaŵalu and Lyala are paid for the work they do. The new chief, the heir, takes charge of the *inkombo* (calabashes) of the deceased chief, and is responsible for their care.¹ Lyala is paid a gun at the reception of each chief. Kaŵalu is paid at first about ten shillings, but he has the privilege from time to time of getting money from the people by begging rain for them from the chief.¹ In the olden days also, at the new moon, Kaŵalu would go in the morning to his *umulenda*, take out a bow, wrap it completely in calico, and carry it, ringing his *ulusonsolo*, from village to village. At his arrival in a village all would utter the *impundu* cries, and shout, "The chief has come!" They would then catch fowls and make offerings, while the *ifilolo* (headmen) of the chief would present calico. In this way Kaŵalu regularly made a considerable sum. The *awenamilenda* who attended for the dissolution of the

¹ See "Spiritism," Chapter XV.

body were paid as follows: the principal a gun, and the younger men about £1 each.

Death-dues

In the case of an unmarried person, *umushichye*—that is, a person not living in wedlock, whether in English parlance a bachelor (or spinster), widower (or widow), or divorced person—the Lambas say, *Alafwa lukoso*, "He merely dies," meaning that his death involves no payment of death-dues by anyone. But the death of one partner in married life involves an *umulandu wamfwa*, a death responsibility, dischargeable only by payment of a death-due by the surviving partner. This payment has to be made to the relatives of the deceased. That this payment has nothing whatever to do with the *ichyupo*, or marriage pledge, is evident from the fact that it applies both to the widow of a deceased husband and to the widower of a deceased wife.

After the period of mourning has passed the relatives of the deceased approach the relict and say, "If you have means [*uwidoni*], bring them and redeem yourself [*luwuka*]." The usual price of redemption nowadays is a gun, of value about fifty shillings. If the relict can raise the amount necessary—maybe by borrowing from relatives—and it is accepted by the relatives of the deceased, they bring a string of white beads and tie them above his left wrist. They then bring meal (*widunga*), throw it all over his body, and utter the shrill *lulululu* cries, saying, *Pano wemukwasu fuma-po waluwuka koyo'kope!*¹ "Now, brother, go—you are redeemed; go and marry!" He is then once more a free agent (*umwana-wawene*), and may consider taking another wife; in the case of a woman, she may consider another husband. The throwing of the meal is always a sign of redemption, in this instance from the spirit of the departed, which is no longer in his charge, dependent upon him, but free to pass into the care of one of the relations and be represented by an *ulukombo*,² or calabash.

These death-dues originate in the Lamba belief in the guardian demon (*ichiwanda*) looking after the interests of each individual.² The payment is out of respect to the deceased, and it is believed that, if payment is not made and the relict marries again, the *ichiwanda* of the deceased will wreak vengeance on the defaulter. This *ichiwanda* is regarded as the *inkalamba yamukoka*, the messenger of the clan of the deceased.

There was the case of a man named Makaka, who became a Christian. His wife died, and he procured the necessary amount

¹ To a woman they would say *Koyo'kopwe*, "Go and be married."

² See Chapter XV.

to redeem himself, but refused to undergo the heathen rite of *ukuposwo'wunga*, having the meal thrown over him. At the time the matter was waived, and he married again. When, however, his second wife died there was a great outcry against him. The *ichiwanda* of the first wife, people said, was not appeased, as no meal had been thrown, and it had therefore caused the death of the second wife.

In the case of the death of a woman the gun would be handed to her *mwinshyo* (maternal uncle), or, failing him, to her brother. In the case of the death of a man the gun would go to his *mwinshyo*, or, if there was one living, to his elder brother. Should the *mwinshyo* already have a gun, he may give the gun of the death-due to the younger brother of the deceased. If money is paid it is usually divided out, and this division is carried out by the *mwinshyo*.

It is said that many *awongwa*, people of low moral and social standing according to Lamba standards, say that they do not want to marry again, and so refuse to pay the dues. They leave that particular district and marry again elsewhere. But if they are found out they will be driven away from their new home, lest they should act in the same way there.

When the man is in favour with his parents-in-law, and they do not want him to go and marry elsewhere on his wife's death, they will offer him his wife's younger sister. If he agrees he will marry her, but will still have to pay the due for his first wife's death. In this case he may marry before the redemption is completed. The younger sister is termed *impyani*, heir.

Similarly, when a man dies his younger brother may inherit the widow before she has redeemed herself. Many years may pass in this way, but the husband will fear that if she does not pay the amount due to him he will not have wherewith to pay the due to her relations should she predecease him; he will therefore press for payment. Should she die before paying, he will have to pass over a small amount, say £1, in order to free himself from the *ichiwanda chyamukwawo*, the demon of his brother. On the other hand, should the woman's second husband, her first husband's brother, die before her redemption, she would never be redeemed, but would become a slave to the relatives of her husbands.

An interesting point arose on the death of the chief Mushili in 1917. He left two wives, one of whom was Nkandu, whom he took by capture from Nsensa's village. The new chief, Mushili, first of all took Nkandu for his own wife, but on account of her age sent her back home to Nsensa. He then demanded payment,

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because she was of no more use to him. Mwendo, by the hand of Joshua Kamwendo, sent him a gun and thirty shillings. Mushili refused so small an amount. It was argued that Nkandu was now very old, and that she had served the old Mushili for many years. From that time Mushili has said nothing further concerning the matter, but the people of Nsensa expect that he will try to get something before Nkandu's death.

Ukulule'mfwa

In some cases the announcement of a death is made in an indirect way, for fear of assault. If a man has taken his wife to his own village (*ubwingo*), and she is taken ill there, and he does not notify her relatives immediately, he will fear for his personal safety if he goes and tells them of her death. He will send a substitute with a gift. When this man reaches the outskirts of the village he climbs an anthill, and shouts out, *Ichyamwachetekele nsansa nsansa*, "What you believed in is all scattered!" The villagers call out in reply, "What are you saying, you who shout in the veld?" And he calls again, "What you believed in is all scattered. So-and-so is dead!" They then tell him to approach, but he fears to do so, and does not trust their assurances until the village headman himself goes to the anthill to fetch him down, when he explains the whole affair. This procedure is called *ukulule'mfwa*, the announcement of death.

Imilao

Among the Lambas dying men sometimes give instructions, which are as a rule carefully carried out, for they say, *Tekupufyo'mulao*, "Dying men's instructions are not to be disregarded." He may say, "When I am dead, do not trouble my widow; if you do, you will see ill-omens; but let my younger brother inherit her, and care for these my children."

The Uncleaness of Death

Touching the dead produces a ceremonial uncleaness, and the *awenamilenda* are said to have *ulufu* (death) upon them until they have completed the ritual and bathed ceremonially. In the same way widows and widowers have *ulufu* upon their bodies until they have paid the death-dues and have had the meal thrown upon them as a sign of their release from the *ichiwanda* (guardian demon) of the deceased.

CHAPTER XII

IMIKOKA—THE CLAN SYSTEM

Imikoka

EVERY Lamba belongs to one or other of the thirty-two exogamic clans, which are called *imikoka*. The child derives his *umukoka* from his mother, and as property must remain within the clan this system ensures that inheritance is in the main matrilineal. While clan descent is purely matrilineal, its importance is reflected in the spiritual conceptions of the people. Children of a different clan may be named after a certain ancestral relation, but the spirit of that deceased relative, or the afflatus from his spirit, can only be reincarnated in a child belonging to the same clan.

The Lamba clans can no longer be regarded as totemistic, though they bear totem names, half of which are those of animals. It is possible that they have moved away from an original totemistic regard for the animals whose names they bear. As will presently be observed, the native tradition has it that many of the clan names originated from particular behaviour on the return from a funeral. To this day it is taboo for anyone to shoot game, pick fruit, cut out honey, or otherwise procure bush food on the return journey from a funeral, "lest," they say, "the very food procured be named as your *umukoka*." Nevertheless, this prohibition is so far lifted that the *awavalemba*, members of the bee clan, may cut out honey; the *awenachyova*, members of the mushroom clan, may pick mushrooms, and so on; but on no account may any animal, bird, or fish be killed on such an occasion, not even by members of the clan representing such an animal, bird, or fish.

In ordinary circumstances there is no totemistic ban on meat-eating; for instance, a member of the goat clan may eat goat flesh. Naturally the members of the chief's clan, the *awenamishishi*, have the highest honour, and it is conceded that the *awenambushi*, who were ousted from the chieftainship, have more honour than any of the other clans of commoners.

In the following pages is given a list of the thirty-two Lamba clans, with details as far as the Lambas know them.¹

¹ About several of the clans the Lambas can give no information further than the meanings of their names.

THE LAMBAS OF NORTHERN RHODESIA

(1) *Awenamishishi*, the clan of the hair of the head. The origin of this clan is traced back to the story of Chipimpi and Kawunda, when Kawunda bathed in the blood of a human being. The hair of the human head, *imishishi*, is considered by the Lambas to be their 'glory,' "for," they say, "if a man has no hair he is a bald-pate." They further maintain that the *imishishi* distinguish man from the beast. The importance of the hair is recognized on several occasions:

(a) Men, women, and children shave during mourning.

(b) During the *ichisungu* initiation of girls beads are woven in the girl's hair (*ukukunga*).

(c) The changing of the hair to grey and white heralds full age, and *awamfwi*, grey-headed persons, are greatly respected.

(d) On going to war *ubwanga bwankondo*, the war charm, is worn in the hair.

It is asserted by some that the term *imishishi* is a euphemism, and that the real totem is either *amaso* (pubic hair) or *amankulukwapa* (hair of the armpits), but this is vigorously denied by most Lambas, who look upon the assertion as libellous. This is the one 'non-commoner' clan of the Lambas, the clan of the *imfumu* or chiefs; all other Lamba clans are those of *awachyete* or commoners.

(2) *Awenambushi*, the goat clan. By tradition this was originally the chief's clan, before the chieftainship was assumed by the hair clan. Hence it is the most respected of the clans of the *awachyete*. Despite the evidence of the story of Chipimpi and Kawunda, many members of this clan maintain that their totem is not the goat, but the water-beetle, which bears the same name, *imbushi* or *imbushi yapamenda*. This species of water-beetle is held in considerable respect, because when a pool dries up it flies up and searches elsewhere at a distance for water, while goats are despised for their dirty eating.

(3) *Awenatembo*, the wasp clan. This is the clan of the Lenje chiefs, but with the Lambas it is a clan of commoners. The origin of the clan is traced to the following story. Some people returning from a funeral went into the bush to eat honey. As they were getting out the honey their faces were badly stung by bees. On their return to the village they were asked, "What has stung you?" Desiring to hide the fact that they had honey, they replied, "Wasps!" But a child had accompanied them, and when he was questioned he told what actually had happened. In derision the nickname of wasp, *itembo*, was applied to them.

(4) *Awenananga*, the clan of the 'doctor,' also called *awenansumbi*, the clan of the fowl. Here the term *inanga* refers, not to

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the ordinary doctor, but to a black and white bird called the *shiwakota*, or *inanga yakwe shiwakota*, a bird which is called "the doctor of all birds." Another name of this bird is *umukuta*. It catches fish, and in Lamba folklore was the master of the original fowls¹ (*insumbi*). These slaves of the *umukuta* were sent to the village to trade his fish, but, finding corn on the ash-heaps, they stayed there, and became domesticated. They now fear to go near the river lest the *umukuta* should catch them, and he still calls loudly for his fish.

(5) *Awenambewa*, the mouse clan. As they returned from a funeral some people found a large buck dead. They brought it secretly to the village, and while they were cooking some of it their friends asked them what meat it was. Their reply was, "Mice!" When their deception was found out, however, they were dubbed with the nickname, which has clung to them.

(6) *Awenanyendwa*, the needle clan, the clan of the Wulima and Lala chiefs. The term is derived from *inyenda*, a large needle used in basket and mat work.

(7) *Awenansofu*, the elephant clan. The origin of this is like that of the *awenambewa*. People eating freshly killed meat tried to deceive their companions by saying that they were eating a piece of elephant-hide!

(8) *Awenanyandu*, the crocodile clan.

(9) *Awenansoka*, the snake clan. It is sometimes said to members of this clan, "Why is it that your kinsmen the snakes bite you?" And they reply, "They do not realize that we are their relatives." This is said in sport, however, for there is no serious thought in the Lamba mind connecting the person with the clan animal.

(10) *Awenakawundi*, the galago clan. On the return from burying their brother certain men caught a galago in a tree-cleft. Their attempt to deceive their fellows at the village regarding this dainty earned for them the clan name.

(11) *Awenansanje*, the blue monkey clan. This was originally a Lala clan.

(12) *Awenambwa*, the dog clan, also called by the Lenje name of *awenankuwa*. Members of this clan indignantly deny any relationship with the dog when teasingly accused of it.

(13) *Awenankulimba*, or *awenakunda* (the Lala term), the pigeon clan.

(14) *Awenanguni*, the honey-guide clan. Members of this

¹ See *Lamba Folk-lore*, by C. M. Doke (American Folk-lore Society, 1927), p. 121.

clan are teased by being asked, "Since your brother the honey-guide lives in the bush, why don't you go to him and get him to lead you to honey?" And they reply, "He is not our brother; he is a chief of the country, and gives food to all alike."

(15) *Awenangulwê*, the river-hog clan, the clan of certain Aushi chiefs, also called *awenakaulwê*, the little river-hog, and *awenanama*, or *awanyama*, the animal or meat clan. It is said that people eating meat they had procured on returning from a funeral were dubbed *awanyama*. Members of this clan are teased by being told that "Your clan is not a nice one, because when we work and work at our gardens your brethren [the pigs] come and steal!"

(16) *Awenamaila*, the sorghum clan. *Amaila* is the Lenje term for the Lamba *amasaka*.

(17) *Awenachyowa*, the mushroom clan. The original members of the clan are said to have picked *uwowa*, mushrooms, when returning from a funeral.

(18) *Awenakani*, the grass clan, originally a Maswaka clan. This clan is praised, since grass, when thatched on the roof, is a protection from rain.

(19) *Awenachyulu*, the anthill clan.

(20) *Awenanswi*, the fish clan, also called *awalonga*, the running stream clan, the clan of Kaonde and Awenambonshi chiefs. This is held in respect because of the value of fish as relish. The origin is said to have been in the bringing of fish to the village by those returning from a funeral.

(21) *Awenaluwo*, the wind clan, from the Lenje term for wind, also regarded as the small elephant clan, as opposed to the *awenansofu*.

(22) *Awenamulilo*, the fire clan. This clan is held in considerable respect, on account of the value of fire.

(23) *Awenamfula*, the rain clan, also held in great esteem, on account of the value of rain for growing the crops and for quenching thirst. The members of this clan have no special power over rain.

(24) *Awenankalamu*, the lion clan, also called *awenango*, the scorpion clan, and *awenakasonga*, the scorpion sting clan. In jest the members of this clan are taunted with being *uwulwani*, wild beasts who eat people. Their reply is that that cannot be so, since lions kill them as well as other people.

(25) *Awenampumpi*, the wild dog clan, the clan of the North-west Lenje chiefs.

(26) *Awenakalôwa*, the earth (soil) clan.

(27) *Awenakalungu*, the bead clan, the clan of Wemba chiefs.

(28) *Awenamumba*, the clay clan. The originators of this clan are said to have broken taboo when returning from a funeral by bringing moulding clay to the village.

(29) *Awenawesa*, the plain clan.

(30) *Awenachyela*, or *awenambulo*, the metal clan.

(31) *Awenakashimu*, or *awalembo*, the bee clan, the clan of the Kaonde chiefs. It is held in esteem on account of the value of honey. The name is said to have originated through the cutting out of honey on the return from a funeral.

(32) *Awashishi*, or *awenamusamba*, the bark rope clan. The former word is derived from *ulushishi*, bark rope, and the latter from the *umusamba*-tree, which produces the best type of bark for rope. This clan is held in esteem because of the usefulness of *ulushishi*, and because this is used in making the *imiseewa*, or funeral bier.

With the Lambas the chieftainship is with the *awenamishishi*; all the other clans are composed of *awachyete*, or commoners. Nevertheless, certain of these *awachyete* clans are the clans of chiefs in neighbouring territories, but not in Ilamba proper. The clans of the immediately surrounding chiefs are as follows:

Lenje—*awenatembo*.

North-western Lenje¹—*awenampumpi*.

Wulima and Lala—*awenanyendwa*.

Aushi (first division)—*awenangulwê*.

Aushi (second division)—*awenambushi*.

Kaonde and Awenambonshi²—*awalembo*.

Wemba—*awenakalungu*.

The Lamba clans are paired off in opposites,³ which are called *awalongo*. Should an *umwinachyowa* be seen talking to an *umwinachyulu*, it is said, "He is talking to his *umulonga*." It is probable that originally some of these clans were violently opposed, though to-day the opposition is confined to jesting. The opposites are as follows:

Hair clan *v.* goat clan (on account of the chieftainship).

Wasp clan *v.* honey-guide clan (because the honey-guide eats the young bees and wasps).

Mouse clan *v.* snake clan and wild dog clan (for snakes and wild dogs eat mice).

¹ As in Mukubwe's territory, and such chiefs as Lupumpala.

² As Shiwuchinga.

³ Cf. Melland, *In Witch-bound Africa*, pp. 251-253.

- Elephant clan *v.* metal clan (for with metal the elephant is killed).
- River-hog clan *v.* lion clan and dog clan (for it is hunted by them).
- Crocodile clan *v.* fish clan.
- Galago clan *v.* bark rope clan (for bark is used to tie up the galagos).
- Mushroom clan *v.* anthill clan (for certain mushrooms grow on anthills).
- Grass clan *v.* (a) fire clan (for the fire burns the grass), (b) all other clans (for everybody is hidden by the grass when going *kuchisompe*, to relieve himself).
- Rain clan *v.* fire clan (for the rain puts out fire).
- Lion clan *v.* (a) river-hog clan, (b) all other clans (for every one fears the lion).
- Clay clan *v.* all others (for every one eats out of a clay pot).
- Bark rope clan *v.* (a) galago clan, (b) all other clans (for every one needs it on the bier when he dies).

Some Clan Customs

The most important feature of the Lamba clan system is that it is exogamous—that is, marriage between members of the same clan is regarded as incest; every man must marry a woman belonging to some other clan than his own. Chiefs, therefore, *must* marry wives belonging to the commoners' clans, and, similarly, women of chief's clan must take husbands who are *awachyete*. Obviously, since descent is matrilineal, the children of Lamba chiefs belong to the clan of their mother, a commoner, and cannot inherit a chieftainship. The children of chieftainesses, on the other hand, are of chief's rank, and are within the possibilities of inheritance.

There is a custom called *ukuwombola*, or *wuwuwomboshi*, by which a child can claim a gift from a grandparent, *wakapa*, of the same clan as the child's father or mother. The child on a rainy day may go and stand outside the grandparent's house, and say, *Nqisa kuwombola*, "I have come to crave!" It is customary to give the child a fowl, but should he enter the house he would get no gift.

When one sneezes it is customary to say *Kuliwatata*, "To my father," or to mention the clan of the father—e.g., *Kumbushi* ("To the goat"), *Kunguni* ("To the honey-guide"), as the case may be. An ordinary healthy sneeze is thus acknowledged as the gift of the father.

The Kinship System

Besides understanding the clan system, it is necessary to realize that the Lamba kinship system is radically distinct from that which obtains in European countries. The commonly accepted terms 'father,' 'mother,' 'brother,' 'sister,' 'cousin,' etc., have, in Bantu kinship systems, entirely different boundaries of significance from those to which Europeans are accustomed. The following is an analysis of the system obtaining among the Lambas.

(1) **Blood Relationship.** (a) **GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDCHILDREN.** There is one term, *kapa*, for grandparents on either side, irrespective of sex. The plural prefix, *wa-*, is used always as a sign of respect. There is but one reciprocal term, *umwinshikulu*, grandchild, used irrespective of sex. Other terms are used for maternal grandmother, indicating second and third person possession—viz., *nokokulu* (thy maternal grandmother), *nyinakulu* (his, her, maternal grandmother), *nyinakulufwe* (our maternal grandmother), *nyinakulumweni* (your maternal grandmother), and *nyinakuluwo* (their maternal grandmother). Similarly, the paternal grandparents are called *shikulu* (= sir, master, mistress); e.g., *washikulu wanyi* (my paternal grandfather), with possessive forms *wisokulu* (thy paternal grandfather), *wishikulu* (his, her, paternal grandfather), *wishikulufwe* (our paternal grandfather), *wishikulumweni* (your paternal grandfather), and *wishikuluwo* (their paternal grandfather).

(b) **PARENTS AND CHILDREN.** There is no general term to indicate 'father,' but varying terms are used containing the idea of the possessor; e.g., *tata* (my father), *wiso* (thy father), *wishi* (his, her, father), *wishifwe* (our father), *wishinwe* (your father), and *wishiwo* (their father). The terms for 'father' are used also for the father's brothers, and for anyone belonging to the father's clan, the term *umwana* being reciprocated. *Tata-mukulu*, *wiso-mukulu*, etc., are used for the father's elder brothers, and *tata-mwanichye*, etc., for the younger brothers.

Similarly, there is no general term for 'mother,' but possessor-including forms; e.g., *mama* (my mother), *noko* (thy mother), *nyina* (his, her, mother), *nyinefwe* (our mother), *nyinenwe* (your mother), and *nyinawo* (their mother). The terms for 'mother' are used also for the mother's sisters, and in a general way for members of one's own clan, provided they are elders (as one's mother) in grade. *Mama-mukulu*, *noko-mukulu*, *nyina-mukulu*, etc., are used for the mother's elder sisters, and *mama-mwanichye*, etc., for the younger sisters.

There is one reciprocal term, *umwana* (plural, *awana*), meaning child, which is used by all the persons called 'mother' or 'father.' A woman also calls her brother's children *awana*. When it is necessary to distinguish the sex of a child the words meaning male and female are added; e.g., *umwana umwalalume* (son) and *umwana umwanakashi* (daughter).

The father's sister is addressed as *tata* or *tatankashi*, the terms *wisonkashi* and *wishinkashi* indicating second and third person possession. The mother's brother is called *mwinshyo*, usually with the plural prefix, *wa-*, of respect.

The term for a brother's child, when a woman is speaking, is *umwipwa* (plural, *awepwa*), irrespective of sex. She may also call him *umwana*. The term for a sister's child, when a man is speaking, is *umwipwa*, irrespective of sex; in this case there is no alternate term which can be used.

(c) BROTHERS AND SISTERS. There is one term which means brother when a man is speaking and sister when a woman is speaking, and which may be used of any 'brother' by a man and of any 'sister' by a woman, irrespective of age; viz.,

- umukwasu* (my, our, brother—man speaking),
 (my, our, sister—woman speaking).
umukwanu (thy, your, brother—of man),
 (thy, your, sister—of woman).
umukwaŵo (his, their, brother),
 (her, their, sister).

There is another set of terms used by brothers in speaking of brothers, and by sisters of sisters, which stress age, one term being used by an older brother or sister of a younger and the other by a younger of an older; thus *umwanichye*, a younger brother of male or younger sister of female, and *umukulu*, an older brother of male or older sister of female—e.g., *umukulu wanyi*, my elder brother (man speaking) or my elder sister (woman speaking).

A sister calls her brother *indume*, and a brother calls his sister *inkashi*. These terms are used for older and younger alike.

These same sets of terms are used for the children of the father's 'brothers' or the mother's 'sisters,' the terms for older brothers and sisters being applied to the children of the older brothers of the father or sisters of the mother, and the terms for younger brothers and sisters being applied to the children of the younger brothers of the father or sisters of the mother. These terms are also used for members of one's own clan, provided they are of the same age grade.

(d) CROSS-COUSINS. While parallel cousins are addressed as own brothers or sisters, cross-cousins are addressed by quite a different term. Thus *umufyala* is used by both man and woman for the father's sister's child or the mother's brother's child, irrespective of sex. Cross-cousin marriage is a common form of marriage among the Lambas.

(2) Relatives by Marriage. (a) PARENTS-IN-LAW AND CHILDREN-IN-LAW. *Tatafyala* (with variations as for father) is the term used for father-in-law by both man and woman.

Mamafyala (with variations as for mother) is the term used for mother-in-law by both man and woman.

Umuko is the term used for son-in-law by both man and woman.

Umulokashi is the term used for daughter-in-law by both man and woman.

(b) HUSBAND AND WIFE. The husband is *umulume*, the wife *umukashi*, while *muka-* may be prefixed to a proper name to indicate "the spouse of"—e.g., *mukakatanga*, Katanga's wife, *mukachyakwe*, Chyalwe's husband. *Mukolo* is the term used for the 'great wife,' all of whose children are considered 'older' than any others, irrespective of their real age. Thus Isaac is considered to be *umukulu wakwe* Ishmael, for his mother, Sarah, was Abraham's *mukolo*. Any wife of a polygamist is called *umusanu*, while the second wife is called *mutepa*.

When two men have married sisters, the man calls his wife's sister's husband *umuufi-muŵyanji*, my companion in marriage. When two women have married brothers, the woman calls her husband's brother's wife *umuufi*. Wives of polygamists call one another by the term *umukashi-muŵyanji*, my fellow-wife.

(c) BROTHERS-IN-LAW AND SISTERS-IN-LAW. A woman terms her husband's brothers and sisters *umulamu* (plural, *awalamu*) or *wukwe* (plural, *ŵawukwe*), irrespective of age. *Umulamu* is used by a man of his wife's brothers and sisters, irrespective of age.

The *mwinshyo*, mother's brother, has considerable power over his sister's children; he to a great extent makes the decision regarding his nieces' marriages. It is the father's duty to clothe and feed his children, but the *mwinshyo* will often supply food. If a married nephew (*umwipwa*) dies, the *mwinshyo* has the disposal of the death-due payable by the widow; similarly, if a married niece dies, the widower's death-due is at his disposal. Generally a father is allowed full control over his children, and it would be very seldom that his wishes regarding their marriages were thwarted, but at his death the authority of his wife's brother