

## THE LAMBAS OF NORTHERN RHODESIA

over the children is reasserted. A nephew is usually very familiar with the wife of his *mwinshyo*.

The *tatankashi* (etc.) is held in respect. If her brother is dead, she will have part of the marriage pledge upon the marriage of her brother's daughter. She is treated by her brother's children as they would treat their father. The bond is close, for she is of their father's clan. Her children may marry her brother's children, for they are cross-cousins, and in this case no 'fear' of her is felt by her sons-in-law. The usual taboo of approach to or converse with a mother-in-law is very strong; this is dealt with in Chapter XIII.

Two men or two women who are cross-cousins, *awafyala*, would treat one another as brothers or sisters, because one is the child of the other's *mwinshyo* and the other the child of the *tatankashi* (etc.). There is no joking or teasing between them.

In a family the eldest-born child is called *umwéle* and the youngest *kawinda*, and the latter name is often assumed by the child as his own name for life.

The Lambas have no system of age grades such as obtains among the Kikuyus, but those who are born at approximately the same time are called *awali*, contemporaries. True *awali* are only recognized in the immediate neighbourhood of their birth-place. Nevertheless, all belonging to the same clan and of the same generation are generally considered 'brothers' and 'sisters,' and those of the same clan, but of the generation above, would be considered as 'mothers' (*wamama*, etc.), even though they were men.

### Orphans

Owing to the clan and kinship organization of the people, there is practically no problem when children are orphaned. An orphan, *umwana-wanshiwa* or *umushyala*, if he has been living with his parents in his father's home village, will be taken by his father's brother (*wawishi*) and handed over to the sister (the child's *wishinkashi*); failing that, the *wawishi* himself will look after him; failing that, the child's *inkashi* (sister); failing that, *umukulu wakwe* (an elder brother); and, failing that, word will be sent to the home village of the dead mother, that he may be sent for to reside with her relatives. Failing any such relatives to look after the child, an *ichimbela* (an old woman beyond the age of child-bearing) belonging to the same clan will be sought, to adopt and rear the child as her own. Failing anyone of the same

## IMIKOKA—THE CLAN SYSTEM

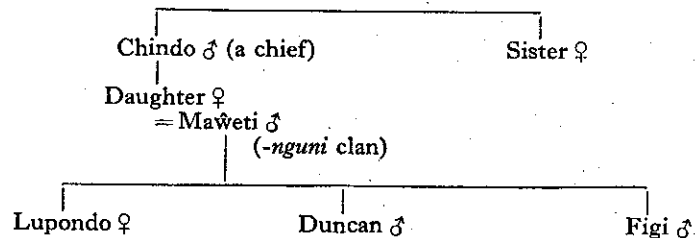
clan—an almost impossible supposition—the chief of the village would adopt the child.

There is thus no need for orphan houses in Ilamba. Instead of having to look for protection when orphaned, the child is immediately claimed, as a natural course, by the nearest relative responsible. Even if the mother and father should both die in the same day, as happened repeatedly during the influenza epidemic of 1918, the aunts and uncles, who regard him as their *umwana*, at once take him in and provide for him.

If the child has been living with his parents in his mother's home village, his *wanyinakulu* (maternal grandmother) will take him; failing her, his *nyina-mukulu* (mother's elder sister); failing her, his *nyina-mwanichye* (mother's younger sister); failing her, his *inkashi* (her *umukulu*, if the orphan is a girl); failing her, his *umukulu* (elder brother, *indume* of a girl orphan); and, failing any of these, some relative of the same clan, of whom there are likely to be many in the village.

Arrangements regarding the adoption or wardship of orphans are usually mutual, and no cases of quarrelling are known over this disposal. In many cases of orphans residing in the father's home village the wife's relatives, when they came to mourn, have taken the child back with them to their village, despite the fact that there were father's relatives to look after the child.

The following table of relationship illustrates a case in point:



On the death of the daughter of Chindo, wife of Maŵeti, the sister of Chindo tried to get the children, but Maŵeti refused to part with them, and brought them up himself.

### Inheritance of Property

(1) **On the Death of a Man who left Wife, Children, and Property.** The whole property will belong to the brothers of the deceased. The widow has no claim to anything, but the brothers may give certain articles to the children, and will see that they are

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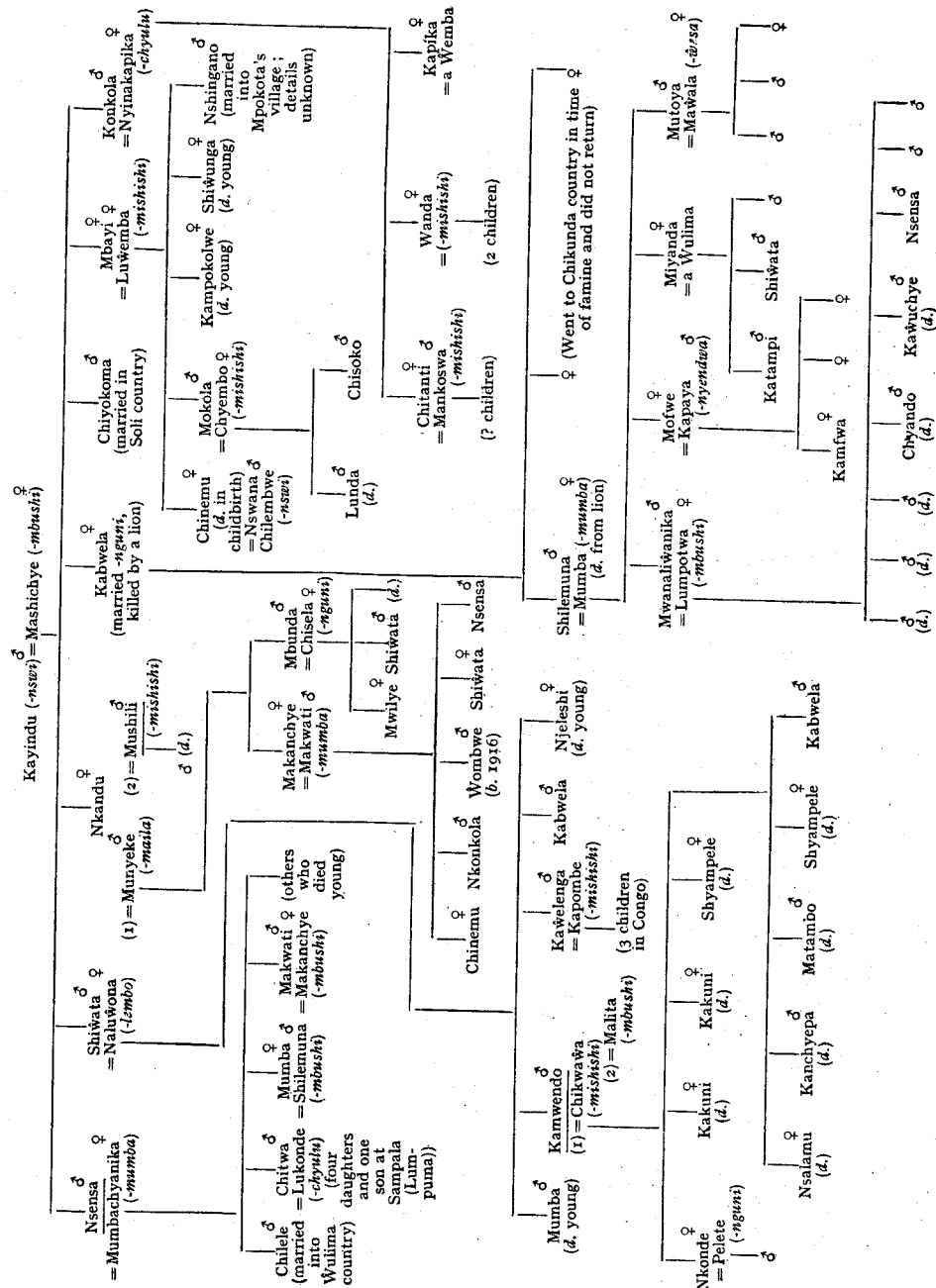
well provided for. The garden will belong to the widow, for it is her own property, the results of her labour. Should the deceased have left much property, his brothers might provide the widow with clothes until such time as she is able to redeem herself. The wives of 'wealthy' men have sometimes been able to put aside sufficient of their own to pay the death-due at once. Hoes, pots, mats, and baskets belong to the widow, but the brothers take axe, gun, spear, bow, tongs, money, calico, and any other valuables.

(2) **On the Death of a Wife.** *Awenaawuko* (i.e., the wife's relatives living in her home village) will take pots, baskets, mats, and hoes. Should the husband have put away in safety any money which he had given to his wife, he would hand it over to her relatives; he would fear the anger of the deceased should he hide and keep anything he had given to her. Sometimes husbands put aside money for their wives to pay the death-dues and avoid being kept in servitude. The wife's relatives—*awalamu* to the widower—may give some of this money to their deceased sister's children. Of fifty shillings they might give twenty. Again, when the widower pays his death-due and frees himself (*luwuka*) his *awalamu* may give the children something. If the children are grown up, and their father has not sufficient to pay their maternal uncle's demand, they might say, "Pay us what you have, and we shall see that our maternal uncle does not worry you." They will then bind white beads on his arm and throw the meal over him, *lululu-ing* and saying, *Fumeni-po mama, watata pano waluwuka, twalya-po!* "Go away, O Mother, Father has now redeemed himself. We have eaten of the death-due!" For the customs and reasons of the death-dues see Chapter XI.

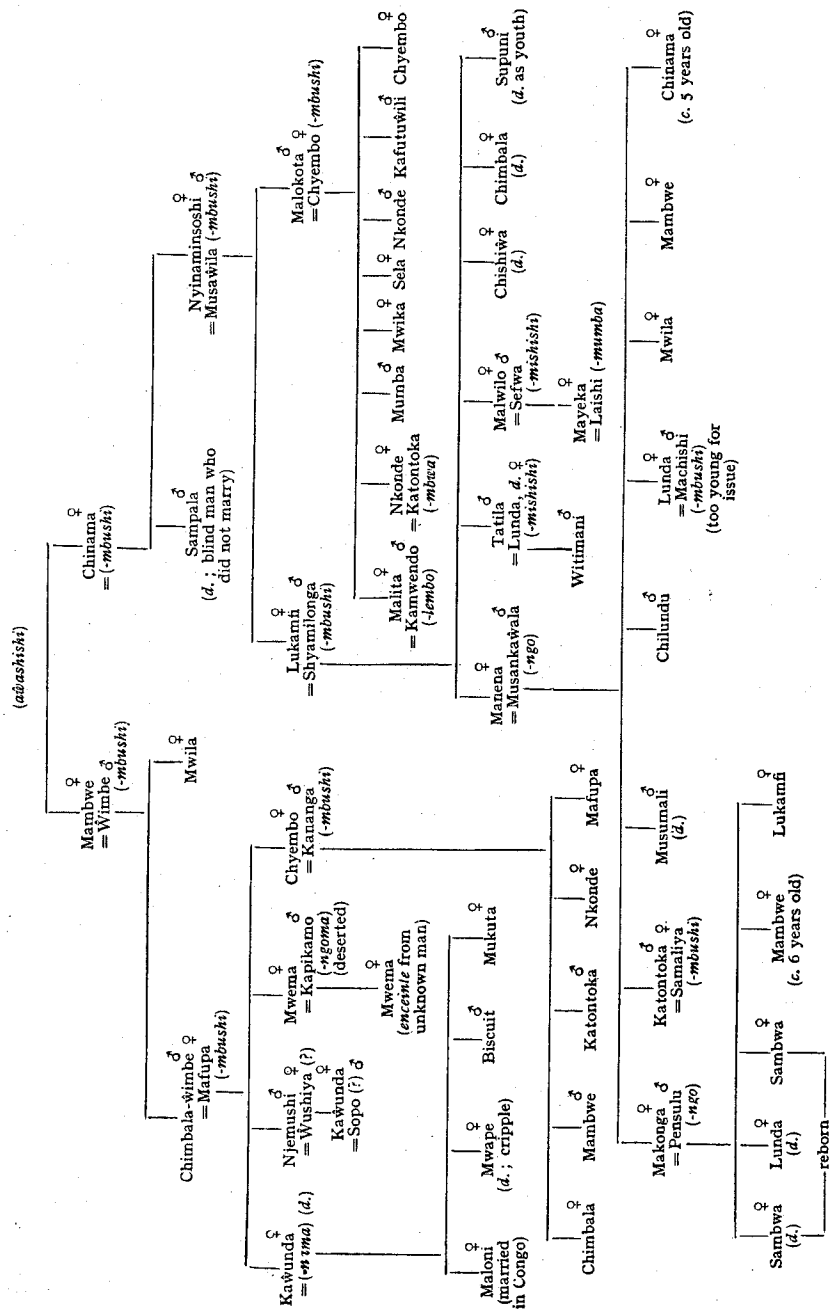
## Genealogical Tables

The first table, on p. 205, shows a family of the goat clan. The head of the family was Nsensa. His reincarnation is seen in the youngest child of Makanchye, daughter of his sister Nkandu, and his name is carried on by the child of Mwanalihanika, his great-nephew, who married a goat clan wife. Nkandu, the eldest woman of this family of the clan, first married Munyeye, an *umwinamaila*, but she was later taken by capture by the paramount chief Mushili, smeared with lion fat, and thus became his wife. Munyeye fled to Momboshi in the Lala country, and did not return, fearing Mushili. The children remained at Nsensa's village. Here Nkandu's daughter

GENEALOGICAL TABLE I



GENEALOGICAL TABLE II



## IMIKOKA—THE CLAN SYSTEM

Makanchye married, and in 1916, when visiting the village, I jokingly dubbed her latest baby *Wombwe* ("Frog"), a name which his mother at once adopted, and had confirmed by presents on both sides.

The high infant mortality is best seen by the list of Kamwendo's children. This is a complete list, given to me by Joshua Kamwendo himself. Most of the other families can be taken as having a similar history, but as unnamed babies and those dying very young are seldom mentioned by Lambas when recounting their children, details concerning them were unknown to Joshua Kamwendo. Mumba and Makwati, daughter and son of Nsensa, show instances of cross-cousin marriages. Makwati was also married elsewhere.

The second, on p. 206, shows a family of the *awashishi* clan, given to me by Malita, one of the members, and wife of Joshua Kamwendo. It is noticeable that a blind man or cripple girl would not get married. Tatila, whose wife died, has not yet redeemed himself from the death-dues. An interesting case of the rebirth of one child, who died as an infant, in another of the same family, born shortly afterward, is shown in that of the Sambwas.

CHAPTER XIII

TABOO AND BEHAVIOUR

Umuchinshi

THE Lambas have almost a recognized code of polite behaviour, which they call *umuchinshi*. The breaking of any of the rules of behaviour constitutes ill-breeding, rudeness, lack of manners, and is treated in much the same way as similar breaches would be in our own society. Ill-mannered children are cuffed or beaten, older people reprimanded or ostracized.

Little children are taught these rules from infancy. If they do not accept gifts in the proper way the gifts are taken away from them.

The following are some of the most important of these rules:

(1) When receiving a gift take it with both hands extended, in this way expressing gratitude. (This is equivalent to the English "Don't forget to say 'Thank you!'")

(2) When a child finds an elder sitting down he must sit down cross-legged, and when answering his greeting he must clap his hands. This will please the old man, who is sure to turn to his wife and say, *Munanyineni uyumwanichye, kukanwa kwaturwuluka*, "Make some *inshima* for this child; his mouth is whitened [with the dryness of hunger]."

(3) When a child overtakes his elders on the road, going in the same direction as he is, he should take their load, if they have one, and carry it. If this is done the journey will be a fortunate one.

(4) When eating *inshima* with one's elders; never get up to go until the elders have finished.

(5) When travelling at a time of food-shortage, give the village headman some assistance in his work if you desire him to provide you with a meal. The usual free hospitality cannot be expected in time of famine.

(6) If your mother sends you to fetch firewood, go without gainsaying her.

(7) If your father sends you on an errand, go silently, without a single question.

(8) When people come before the chief they sit before him

cross-legged and clap. He does not answer. Again they clap, and then the chief says, *Mitende mweŵame*, "Greeting, friends!" And they all reply, *Mitende kasuŵa*, "Greeting, O sun!" for do they not all come to him to warm themselves?

(9) When the elders are talking over cases the younger people leave them alone, and go to their own place of meeting at a distance.

(10) When a great chief comes to the village the young boys and girls hide themselves; only the elders meet and converse with the chief.

(11) When an *umulaye* (diviner) has been summoned to the village he expects to find a hut swept, bed arranged, water drawn, a pot of *ifisunga* (light beer) ready, a basket of meal, and a fowl. He will also find all the people in a state of nervous apprehension, due acknowledgment of the dread and fear which he inspires.

(12) When a *mukawami*, or spirit-medium, has been summoned, the same preparations are expected as for an *umulaye*, but there is no fear at his approach.

(13) When an *umupalu* (professional hunter) has been summoned to hunt by a chief he expects to find a hut prepared and *ifisunga* ready.

(14) Greeting used to be done by hand-clapping, but intimate friends would *sunsana*. This was done as follows: A. grips with right hand B.'s right wrist and shakes it; then B. does the same to A. This is no longer seen, but *ukupakana* has been introduced by the Ngoni. Right hands are gripped, and moved from side to side; then thumbs are gripped, and similarly moved; and when the hand grip is released each party claps, or strikes his palm on his breast.

(15) When the husband departs on a journey his wife claps her hands. In these days there is a modern innovation by which young people show their affection. After shaking hands in the ordinary way (*ukupakana*), the fingers are run up the companion's fore-arm, to tickle the upper arm. This is only done by persons who are very intimate.

(16) If you meet a great chief on the path when travelling, lie down on the left side and clap the hands.

(17) When you receive a gift from the chief, clap your hands, then take up a little dust (*ilowa*, earth) and rub it on the shoulders and chest, placing the arms crosswise. Some rub the dust on the forehead. This is called *ukulamba*.

(18) When making a request to the chief, clap.

(19) When a chief upbraids you, remain silent, answer not a word, and his anger will pass.

(20) When at a gathering for an *umulandu* (case) before the chief, if it is necessary to relieve yourself, leave quietly, but on returning to resume your place clap your hands.

(21) When a commoner is eating or drinking with the chief the chief is the first to wash his hands, the commoner following him, but the commoner is the first to partake of the food or drink. This applies whether the chief or the commoner is the host, and was evidently intended to guard the chief against poisoning.

(22) When sleeping in the bush the chief must be in the middle, with the *awachyete* (commoners) around him (this a protection from wild beasts), but when sleeping in the house the *umuchyete* must be near the fire, the chief well away from it (this to prevent his clothes from being burnt).

(23) On a journey the youngsters must precede their elders. There are several reasons for this. The children act as *awapupwishi*, dew-driers, shaking the heavy showers of water from the long grass, that their elders may pass in comparative comfort. They also save their elders from walking into wild beasts or an enemy ambush. In all this the value of the elder is in marked contrast to that of the child. A child is despised until he can win his position as a man.

(24) It is the husband's duty to open the door in the morning and to shut it at night.

(25) When sleeping, the wife sleeps behind her husband against the hut wall, while he lies facing the door. The Lambas say, *Tafipusa kuchiwvi*, "The enemy does not miss the door!"

(26) Should a child be witness to irregular proceedings between a man and the wife of another, he must say nothing. A witness in a charge involving a death is liable to be killed in revenge.

### Taboo

Apart, however, from the various prohibitions and commands which govern ordinary good social behaviour, the Lambas are hedged in by a strong and binding system of taboo. There are two terms used in Lamba to indicate different types of taboo, *ukutonda* and *umushiliko*. The first term is indicative of social prohibitions and other actions such as would bring risk, trouble, personal harm, ostracism, or even a law-case upon the breaker or others. The rules under *ukutonda* are much stronger than those which govern *umuchinshi*, etiquette. The second term, *umushiliko*, is perhaps the real equivalent of taboo. The breaking of *imishiliko* would make the offender a social outcast; punish-

ment is seldom inflicted by chief or people—it is the work of the *ichiwanda*, the attendant demon of the offended, to bring disaster, generally death, upon the offender. Alongside of the *imishiliko* are *imbiko*, omens of imminent disaster. The breaking of an *umushiliko* constitutes an evil omen, but, apart from this, the attendant *ichiwanda* helps his 'ward' by arranging for *imbiko* to appear in his way, and so dissuade him from a course which would lead to his death. The almost automatic working out of the results of broken taboo has by some<sup>1</sup> been attributed to the action of an impersonal dynamistic power. Among the Lambas, however, it is very clear that it is brought about directly by the action of the *ifwanda*. The Lamba belief in *ifwanda* is discussed in Chapter XV.

In order to make clear the differences between *ukutonda*, a breaking of which is punishable by people, and *imishiliko*, a breaking of which is avenged by demons, lists of the more generally recognized taboos under these headings are now given.

### Ukutonda

(a) Regarding Marriage and Family Relations. (1) The daughter-in-law must not use the name of her father-in-law in his presence or in the presence of his relatives. When she has borne two or more children she may use the name in speaking to her children. The daughter-in-law must not use the name of her mother-in-law in her presence. Should this taboo be broken, the woman would be considered *ichyungwa*, or *umupupa*, a lawless, irresponsible person, a hooligan. No such prohibition is placed on a man toward his parents-in-law. This is comparable to the Zulu-Xhosa custom of *ukuhlonipa*.

(2) The Lamba woman holds in awe (*ukutonda*) her father-in-law (*wawishifyala*), her husband's mother's brother (i.e., his *muwinshyo*), and her husband's male nephews of different clan (*awepwa awalalume*).

(3) The Lamba man holds in awe his mother-in-law (*wanyinafyala*), whether in the presence of others or not. He must not meet her or speak to her. The awe seems to be mutual. Should the woman see her son-in-law coming along the path, she would turn off into the bush and pass him at a distance. Should his mother-in-law be in his house, the man may not enter. The taboo is relaxed in so far as a man often converses with his mother-in-law if one of them is in the house and the other out of sight

<sup>1</sup> See Smith and Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia*, vol. ii, p. 79 et seq.

behind the house. It would be considered extremely unbecoming for a man to be seen eating by his mother-in-law or to see her eating. All this they explain by saying, "Is it not she who gave birth to the wife?"

The Lamba man also holds in awe his nieces of a different clan from himself (*awēpwa awānakashi*) when in the presence of others.

(4) The father must not sit on a child's bed, whether a son or daughter, and the mother is only permitted to sit on her unmarried daughter's bed.

(5) A grown son must not sit or lie on his mother's bed.

(6) The father's sister (*wishinkashi*) must not pat the buttocks of her nephew (*umwipwa*).

(7) The younger wife must not refuse to carry the load for the principal wife on a journey.

(b) Regarding Death and the Dead. (8) Don't sit and meditate on the likeness of a deceased relative. Arising from this, there is a natural dread among the Lambas of seeing the photograph of a person who has since died.

(9) Don't approach a burial-place. If an *umulyashi* is chanced upon when hunting, the hunter runs away as fast as possible. This is in marked contrast to the custom of the Lenjes, who have not this taboo, and bury their dead in the village.

(10) A polygynist must not die in the house of his younger wife, but in that of his principal wife.

(11) Don't step over a corpse.

(c) Regarding the Village and Village Activities. (12) Don't pound or cut firewood at night, lest a lion should be summoned.

(13) Don't mention a lion at night or it will appear. The Lambas say, *Anuke'nkalamu wisalishye!* "Mention a lion and shut tight the door!"

(14) Don't throw a tsetse-fly (*akasembe*) in the fire or it will call a lion.

(15) When women bathe, men must not go to see, lest it should lead to quarrelling at the village.

(16) Don't look into the pot in which cooking is being done. The cook and owner may of course look in.

(17) Don't step over another's outstretched legs, lest the latter's legs should become heavy.

(18) Don't go naked; it is sufficient to wear a loin-strip (*wiwukushi*).

(19) Don't send your elders ahead along the path, lest evil befall them. (See under "Umuchinshi.")

(20) If two companies, not mutually known, meet on the path, they must stand separated by a little distance while talking, and then pass on, lest treachery should be practised. Similarly, when meeting at a river where rest is desired, the companies must sit removed from one another by a little distance.

(21) When fish-traps have been set, the first fish caught must be eaten by the husband; the succeeding ones may be taken to his wife. Should the wife eat the first, the fish would *umfwe'nsoni* (feel shame) if eaten by a woman, and refuse to be caught.

(22) Don't go out naked in the village at night, lest you meet an *imfwiti* (witch or wizard) and be taken for one yourself. When an *imfwiti* is caught by the witch-doctor, he will mention your name, saying, "I met him naked."

(23) A stranger to a village must not carry his spear on his shoulder.

(24) A stranger must not hold the string of his bow upward in a village.

(25) Strangers must not approach the chief with their weapons; they must leave them at a distance and approach unarmed.

(26) A stranger approaching a house must sit beneath the eaves and clap to attract attention. Thereupon the owner will come out, and, after inquiries, give him all hospitality. A friend would come to the house, say *Naisa*, "I have come," and then enter. A relative would enter without a word.

(d) Miscellaneous. (27) Don't use obscene references—e.g., *Apo weŵo tofawite bwino pawukala!* "So you have not your penis properly clothed!" Such obscenity incurs the anger of the elders.

(28) Don't mock a cripple, blind, deaf, or dumb person, or an orphan. A fine of goods may be imposed for such an offence, and it is also feared that such an offender may himself be inflicted with lameness, blindness, etc. Two proverbs illustrate this: *Tawaseka-chilema, naweŵo ekwisa kulemana!* "Don't mock a cripple or you will become a cripple!" *Tawaseka-mwananshiwa, Lesa alikubwene, ekuŵona naweŵo wanoko wafwa nawawiso!* "Don't mock an orphan; God sees you, and behold, your mother and father also may die!"

(29) Don't insult your father, even if he is scolding you. Lambas often run off and leave the father scolding rather than run the risk of arguing.

(30) Don't lie on your back if it is raining. Lightning might strike you.

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(31) Don't kill frogs. You might skin (*ukuuwuluka*) like a snake, for the snake eats frogs.

(32) Don't kill a chameleon. For the Lambas say, *Lufunyembe alafwile'nsanso*, "The chameleon dies through a sieve"—*i.e.*, after his case has been sifted, and he has been proved guilty.

(33) Don't spit on anyone, even when fighting with him.

(34) Don't step on or over the shadow of a *mukamwami* (medium) or a paramount chief.

(35) The *umulaye* (doctor) forbids a cured leper to eat barbel (*umuta*), bush buck, zebra, or guinea-fowl, the last three because of their spots (or stripes), the first because when it is put on the fire its skin peels off easily as does that of a leper.

(36) Sufferers from goitre (*iwofu*) do not eat barbel, because it has a swelling in the neck.

### Imishiliko

(1) Menstruating women (*awaseesa*) are themselves taboo during the period of menstruation. They have *uwufungushi* (uncleanness) until they have bathed themselves. The various prohibitions applied to them are considered in Chapter IX. Should one, for instance, prepare food for her husband, he will have pains in his chest when he runs, "as though there is blood there."

(2) Fire must not be transferred from the old village to the new, or from the old house to the new. Fresh fire must be made with the fire-sticks. People who have had misfortune may have warmed themselves at the old fire.

(3) No work must be undertaken in the village while a burial is being carried out.

(4) One who has taken part in a burial must bathe before going to his wife, lest he transfer *ulufu* (the death) to his wife, and she die. Should this taboo be broken, a gift of goods, of value about three shillings, must be made to the woman to ward off the evil consequences.

(5) All hair must be picked up and buried, lest the *ikwikwi* (bird of ill-omen) should use it for nest-making, and the owner die.

(6) If a man is falsely reported at his home as dead, when he returns home he must not go straight into the village. Should people see him, they would prevent him from entering. A doctor must first be called. He will bring medicinal leaves and fire, and place them smoking between the man's feet as he sits; he will then switch the man with the zebra tail he carries, and cause the smoke to reach all parts of the man's body. When the leaves

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have finished burning the man and the doctor will go together to the village. The man will wait without until his father comes and throws meal (a sign of life) upon him and his mother sounds the shrill whistle (*ulumpundu*). Then may he enter the house. If these precautions are not taken the man will die.

(7) The hoofs of a zebra must not be brought into the village.

(8) If a hare (*akalulu*) is killed it must not be brought to the village intact with head. The head must be taken off and carried separately.

(9) The skull of an ant-bear, when killed, must be left in the bush; it is taboo to bring it to the village.

(10) When the husband is on a journey in order to seek wealth (*ukunonka*) his wife must not shave her head, for it is a sign of mourning, and he will die.

(11) Sexual intercourse is forbidden (a) the day before going to war, (b) if smallpox is near, (c) the day before going to the *ichintengwa* (smelting-house).

(12) If the husband is going to the war, and his wife catches him by the arm, he must not go.

(13) When you have cut down a branch of a tree, do not drag it through the village, lest a lion should catch a man and drag him off.

### Imbiko

As has already been noticed, *imbiko* and *imishiliko* are closely associated. *Imbiko* are omens of death, portents of coming disaster, or warnings to avoid disaster, always involving death. Although most *imbiko* are attributed to the *ichiwanda* (demon), some are said to be sent by the *umupashi* (departed spirit) which the person is bound to look after—*e.g.*, the spirit of an elder brother. This spirit will send *imbiko* to warn him not to go a certain way or not to do a certain thing. The man on returning to the village will inquire of an *umulaye* the reason for his receiving these omens, and after the divination the answer may be, "It is your spirit which is angry. You did not give him a parting offering before you began your journey." The man will make the necessary offering at the shrine, and then undertake his journey in safety.

The following are examples of *imbiko* :

(1) A millipede coming in summer-time.

(2) A chameleon climbing *down* a stick.

(3) A green roof-snake on the ground.

(4) An adder passing quickly.

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- (5) A python travelling quickly.
- (6) A hare, after running away, stopping to look at one.
- (7) Finding a dead hare with head intact.
- (8) A lurie flying westward.
- (9) A ground hornbill crying *Woh!* at one near by.
- (10) A genet crying while being killed.
- (11) An *ikwikwi* bird crying by day.
- (12) Long delay in the coming of rain (*ichyangama*). This is taken to be an omen of the death of a chief. Sometimes, however, when divination has been carried out, the doctor says, "No, it is the spirit of a certain chief, who is angry because you have not brewed beer in his honour."
- (13) Finding maggots on human excrement.
- (14) When on a journey seeing a tree or a great branch of a tree fall.
- (15) Seeing a stick-insect (*masombwe*) trembling on a stick.
- (16) Finding black mamba snakes (*ififitishi*) fighting.
- (17) Meeting a funeral. One must turn back.
- (18) A mud-wasp (*inununshi*) gathering clay and sprinkling it on to one when sitting.
- (19) A hyena coming along the path to the village in daytime.
- (20) A hyena excreting in the village.
- (21) A person whose parents are still living eating an *akatuutwa* (bird resembling a small dove).
- (22) A twitching (*ukuwimba*) of the lower eyelid.
- (23) Spasmodic twitching (*ukubwitaka*) of the thigh—an omen of the death of one's relatives-in-law (*awenawuko*).
- (24) A blindworm (*ichiwimbili* or *chilele*) jumping from tree-top to tree-top.
- (25) A jackal calling continually in the west, or in the village itself but once.
- (26) A cock crowing at night. He is killed and eaten immediately, but even then the death his crowing has heralded is awaited.
- (27) A strong house falling down.
- (28) The wall of a grave falling in. This is a very serious *imbiko*.
- (29) A pot of beer falling over by itself.
- (30) The moon looking red, with a red circle round it. This signifies a gathering plotting against a chief, and some chief is sure to die.
- (31) The sun with a red circle round it. The meaning is as for (30).

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- (32) A son throwing down his father. In addition to the severe punishment which this would merit, it is an ill-omen for the father.
- (33) Seeing a chameleon digging a hole like a grave (*indili*). Fear for the welfare of an absent relative would at once be felt.
- (34) A duiker coming from the east, crossing the path, and going westward.
- (35) Squeezing a maggot from one's own body.
- (36) Buzzing in the ears. It is thought to presage the death-wailing.
- (37) Seeing the shadow of a corpse. The Lambas say, *Uwafwa takwete chinshingwa*, "A corpse has no shadow!"

### Other Omens

All omens are not bad according to the Lamba conception. Good omens are called *ifyamushimu*, or in true Lamba *imipashi* (spirits). These—as are also the *imbiko*—are often revealed in dreams, a subject necessarily associated with that of omens by the Lambas. The *imipashi* may be divided into (a) *amalya*, signs of coming food, (b) *awensu*, signs of visitors coming, and (c) *uwuwoni*, signs of coming wealth.

- (a) **Amalya.** (1) Twitching of upper eyelid.
- (2) Fly entering the mouth.
- (3) Child eating cinders.
- (4) A twitching of the nerves of a double tooth.
- (5) A lurie flying ahead eastward.
- (6) A leopard eating meat on a tree-branch.
- (b) **Awensu.** (1) 'Pins and needles' in the feet.
- (2) A 'dryness' of the eyes.
- (3) Sleeplessness.
- (4) Soot falling from the roof (visitors will come that very day).
- (c) **Uwuwoni.** If you see an insect (*umuchyevu*) passing, and say, "I shall take a good look at it" (*nkachyevu chisya-po*).

### Imiloto—Dreams

The Lambas are firm believers in the significance of dreams. Generally the dream is taken to be a portent, good or evil, of what is taking place or about to take place. There are cases, however, of the dream 'going by opposites.' They believe that during sleep the spirit leaves the body, to wander about. What is dreamt is what the spirit undergoes. The spirit returns immediately the person wakes up. If a person is wakened up he



may say, "Why did you wake me so suddenly, instead of letting me finish dreaming where I went?"

Dreams are really all omens, and hence one finds the following divisions: (a) *imbiko*, (b) *imipashi*, whether merely *ukutemwa* (good fortune ahead) or *amalya* (coming food), and (c) those indicating witchcraft, *wufwiti*.

(a) *Imiloto yambiko*. (1) When a man on a journey dreams that there are many people gathered somewhere in a courtyard, he will say, on waking in the morning, "To-day I am going home. There is something wrong there. There is mourning." His companions will ask, "What did you dream about?" He will say, "I dreamt a crowd of people gathered in my courtyard, with fires made everywhere." His companions will say, "Indeed that augurs ill." The man goes home, and when approaching the village inquires of villagers the news, and hears, "So-and-so has died!" He then says, "I saw it where I went. I did not dream well."

(2) If a person dreams that a dog is biting him he will not undertake a journey on the morrow; but if he dreams that a lion is biting him he considers it a good omen, and will undertake his journey or his hunt without fear. It is considered lucky to dream that a spirit has changed into a lion to come and catch a person.

(3) If a person dreams that many people are chasing him, in the morning he will say, "Let us beware in this village, let us hide our possessions, for raiders are coming!" His advice is often followed.

(4) If a man, when away, dreams that his wife has grown very fat he knows that she must be ill and about to die, but if he dreams that she is very thin he knows that she is in good health—this by opposites.

(5) If a man dreams that he is digging holes, while others behind him are filling them in, it is an omen of a relative's death—they have been burying him.

(6) If a person dreams that guns are fired at him it is a sign of impending death, but if the guns misfire it is a sign of good fortune.

(7) If an accused man dreams that he is bound he will escape to a distant part of the country in the morning.

(8) It is unlucky to dream of talking every day with youngsters.

(9) If a man on a journey dreams that another is 'sporting' with his wife he will suspect adultery.

(10) If a person dreams that maggots are eating him some one is going to die.

(11) If people dream that they are eating honey the omen is bad.

(12) If people dream that they are anointing themselves with honey the omen is bad.

(13) If a man dreams that people are carrying sleeping mats (*amasasa*) between them it is a sign of an approaching funeral, but if it is a long white forked pole (*ulupanda*) they are carrying the omens are good.

(14) If a man on a distant journey dreams that he speaks to a relative who will not answer it is a sign that that relative is dead.

(15) If a person dreams of a house with a closed door and a white pole leaning against it, it is the house of some one recently dead.

(16) Dreaming of many people drinking beer indicates mourning ceremonies.

(17) Dreaming one is clothed in oil-softened bark cloth (*ingwido yamafuta*) is an ill-omen, but it is a good omen to dream one is wearing ordinary bark cloth.

(18) It is an ill-omen to dream one is wearing black, but the opposite to dream of wearing white.

(19) Dreaming of many vultures in the courtyard indicates that they are gathered to a corpse.

(20) Dreaming that a snake has bitten oneself or a relative is an ill-omen.

(21) Dreaming that you continually live with your wife means that she is going to divorce you, while dreaming that she has divorced you means that the marriage will not end early.

(22) To dream of one's mother is bad.

(23) To dream that a dead relative comes and scolds means that another relative is about to die.

(24) For many people to dream of a man recently dead is an indication that an *ichwanda* (demon) is at work.

(25) If you dream that the elders are calling you to accompany them, don't answer them, remain silent; it is witches trying to get you to accompany them in their nefarious work.

(26) If you go with your companion to the river, and he has leaves, don't ask him to give them to you to put in your water-pot (to prevent the water from spilling), lest when you sleep at night he should come and ask for them back. This would signify a death, and you would be considered an *imfwiti*.

(27) Dreaming of much food means going to bed hungry, but dreaming of hunger means food.

(28) If a man dreams that he has hurt himself he must not go to hoe the next day.

(29) Dreaming of a deceased relative is said to be caused by the spirit of the deceased visiting the sleeper. In order to ward off the evil consequences of this beer must be brewed in honour of the spirit who has been objecting to lack of attention.

(30) Dreaming that one is hoeing *imilala* (raised garden-beds) is indicative of a grave.

(31) Dreaming that he is having intercourse with his wife is to a man a sign that his wife is committing adultery.

(b) *Imiloto yamipashi*. In addition to those included in the previous section as contrasts, the following examples may be given:

(1) Dreaming that a man is dividing out (*ukwaŵa*) tobacco is a sign that a buck will be killed.

(2) For a hunter to dream that, in killing a man, he wounds him repeatedly, and he as often gets up again, is a sign that the hunter is going to be successful.

(3) Dreaming of *amawo* (millet) is a sign of long life, for the grains of the millet cannot be counted.

(4) Dreaming you are lying in dung is a sign of coming meat, the dung being a sign of the *uŵufulu*, the chyme or stomach contents of an animal killed.

(5) Dreaming of skinning a snake means that a buck is going to be killed.

(6) To dream that a companion who has gone far away is returning means that, though he will not come soon, he is well.

(7) Dreaming that he is always bathing in the river presages the possession of the man by an *ichinkuwaila* (goblin); he will become a *moŵa* (professional dancer).

(8) To dream that one's relative is dead means that he is well.

(9) If a man dreams that a doctor diagnoses his case and prescribes certain medicine he will procure that medicine, put it on his sores, and be recovered.

(10) If a man dreams that he is beaten he knows that when his law-case is settled he will not be beaten.

(11) If a man dreams that a friend gives him something he believes that he will get it.

(12) If a hunter dreams (a) of blood, (b) of committing incest, (c) of defecating, (d) of the birth of a baby, or (e) of tobacco he fully believes that his next day's hunting will be successful.

(c) *Imiloto yaŵufwiti*. (1) If you dream that your mother-in-law has come to talk in your house, know that *imfwiti* (witches) have come.

(2) If you dream that your house is burnt, it is because *imfwiti* have come to the house.

(3) If you dream continually that a naked man comes to your house, know that he is an *imfwiti*. This is a case for the witch-doctor.

Ukulota Kwaŵami—the Dreams of the Aŵami

All the dreams of the *ŵamukamwami* (spirit mediums)<sup>1</sup> are considered portents of pending evil. They are communicated to the people in order to induce them to bring gifts for the purpose of warding off the evil prophesied.

(1) If the *ŵamukamwami* dream of birds eating the corn, they call upon the people to *ŵomba*, bring gifts to ward off the birds threatening the crops. In doing this the people abase themselves before the *mukamwami*, sing, and make gifts of beads.

(2) Some days later a *mukamwami* will say, "I dreamt that all the people had sores." The people, fearing smallpox, will bring further gifts.

(3) Later on he may say, "I dreamt that all the people were violently coughing, for 'the chief' [*i.e.*, the *umwami* possessing the professor] brought the disease in an arrow-sheath and let it out in the village, for he is angry with you because you do not *ŵomba*." This too will bring more gifts.

(4) In order to get further gifts he will say, "I dreamt that 'the chief' came with locusts in a huge calabash, and wanted to open it in your gardens, for he says you do not obey."

(5) The *mukamwami* may further tell the people that he has dreamt that 'the chief' has shut up water in a calabash, which means that the rain will be withheld, though the people really believe that Lesa alone regulates the rain. The *ŵamukamwami*, however, deceive them by saying that the *aŵami* have access to Lesa.

(6) If he dreams that 'the chief' has set up a high pole all will believe that the rain will be satisfactory, and will only stop "when the pole sinks into the ground."

(7) If the *mukamwami* dreams of things itching over his body the people will expect an epidemic of *impele* (the itch), and bring offerings to ward it off.

Naturally the *ŵamukamwami* only make known such dreams as will bring them wealth.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XV.

forward at "land's end," and that slices are cut off against the sharp edge of the earth, collected by the little folk, dried in the sun like cassava, pounded in their mortars, and made into porridge.

In the Lamba story of *Wamwana-nkalamu na Wamwana-nyombe* we read<sup>1</sup>

And so it was that he [Cow-child] travelled that great distance, and arrived at where the clouds reach the earth, and they had put up a ladder. Then he climbed up and reached a small house, and saw the daughter of God.

The realm of Lesa is evidently above the dome of heaven, which is conceived as something solid.

### The Sun

The sun (*akasuwa*) travels across the dome of heaven until it reaches "land's end," and then it secretly travels back at night, very high up, behind a bank of clouds. The sun is a huge globe. On it are *awantu* (people), of a different creation from humans, who have daily duties. During its night journey, when it has cooled off, they polish it to make it shine brightly, and then they light the fires, so that great heat is given out. It begins to cool down as it gets to the west. There is another army of workers, who drag and push the sun on its daily journey; and yet another, who take it back at night. When the sun begins to rise the Lambas say, "The fire has only just been lighted." In the same way, when it sinks red in the west they say, "It is because the fire is beginning to go out." In winter-time (*pamwela*) the people on the sun do not make the fires up so strongly, "lest we should burn up the crops of our friends down below," and they sprinkle water on it to damp down the fires; the steam given off is seen in the overcast days. In summer-time they pour on no water, for they want to dry up the earth's *ifisombe*, tracts of long grass.

Regarding eclipses of the sun, the Lambas merely say, "They have covered the sun over," referring to the *awantu* on the sun.

The *insasamyenje*, or rays of the sun, often seen as he sinks in the west, are called by the Lambas *imimpe*, being likened to the branching tunnels made by the *imfumbe* mice.

### The Moon

The moon (*umwenshi*) does its work by night. It too has *awantu*, workers, who wash it clean. Every day they wash and rub it over. It is very big—"too big to be picked up!" It also

<sup>1</sup> See *Lamba Folk-lore*, by C. M. Doke, p. 19.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THEISM AND COSMOGONY

THE belief of the Lambas in the spiritual world is a very real and potent one, as will be observed later, but their conceptions regarding the universe in which they have their material existence are very vague and hazy, and they do not seem to give much time to pondering upon them. Their spiritual conceptions are bound up with a firm belief in the existence of disembodied spirits, a soul land, and a doctrine of demons, mingled with a belief in various types of spiritual possession. Their conception of the universe is as necessarily linked up with a belief in a supreme being. The Lambas are theists, and withal monotheists, but their theism, as will be seen, scarcely enters into their religious life at all.

### The Earth

The earth they call *pano posonde*, "here outside," for they say of themselves, *Tuli wantu wakwe Lesa aweshile pano posonde mukwandamina-po lukoso, tukabwelelo'ko kwesu!* "We are people of God who have come here outside just to sun ourselves; we shall return yonder to our home!" Where *uko kwesu* (our home yonder) is they are very vague; it is evidently not within the earth, but somewhere beyond the heavens.

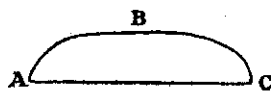


FIG. 70. DIAGRAM TO SHOW THE LAMBA CONCEPTION OF THE EARTH AND SKY  
AC, the flat earth; ABC, the dome of the sky.

They believe that the earth is flat, and that the dome of the sky comes down and meets the earth at its confines. At the ends of the earth the clouds come downward (*sesemuka*) to touch the earth; and the dwarf dwellers at "land's end," called *utulya-makumbi* (little cloud-eaters), cut off slices of the clouds, take them to their home, cook them, and eat them as their staple food. The Lambas say that these little people swarm out, men and women, with their baskets and knives, take the cloud slices to their villages, and cook them "as we do mushrooms." There is another version of this, which says that the clouds swing backward and

returns back to its starting-point every day, and in its journey at times it barely misses the sun. By some it is called *awepwa* (nephew, sister's son) of King Sun. The sun is therefore *wamwinshyo*,<sup>1</sup> maternal uncle to the moon.

The Lambas have a saying—they call it *ichityoneko lukoso*, merely a myth—that the sun and the moon are striving over the kingdom. The moon hurls his darts at the sun, and they are seen sticking into him; then the sun retaliates and throws mud at the moon, the dark patches being clearly visible on him.

The Lambas have the following folk-tale of the sun and the moon. While at a meal the two had an argument. Said the sun, "When I, sun, come out, all in the country, people and birds, begin to walk about." Said the moon, "When I too come out all the people walk about." So the moon first appeared, and the people came out and said, "Let us go to work." But when they reached their gardens they could not see how to work. When, however, the sun came out they all greeted him, saying, "The sun is the Great One," for the forest was white and the grass was visible. Then did the moon agree to be the nephew of the sun.

Full moon is called *umwenshi wvulungene*. When the moon is only half-full the Lambas say it is hidden in its house and is peeping out, only the *amasengo* (horns) appearing. Of the new moon they say, *Lelo mufiso mwanaka, umwenshi ulukwikala*, "To-day [our] legs are weakened, the moon is settling down." At new moon the position of the moon is watched. If it is standing upright, its horns pointing westward, they say, "Our fellows out west are unlucky; they are going to perish." If its two horns point eastward they say the same of their fellows out east. But if the moon lies evenly upon its back they look upon it as a good sign, and say, "The moon is standing well!"

### The Stars

The stars (*utuwangawanga*) are the favourite attendants (*awapanga*) of the moon, who is their chief. All are round (*utuwulungene*), and the twinkling of some is due to the making of fires on them. They all have *awantu* on them to make up the fires. In a fanciful way some Lambas speak of the starry sky as God's village, with the fires showing in the doorways, Venus being the hut of the principal wife. But others say this is but fancy, and it is not generally believed in. The Milky Way (*umulalafuti*) is merely looked upon as a sign of approaching dawn, for then it is

<sup>1</sup> Note the respectful plural used here.

at its brightest. *Iwuwshya-nama* (the rouser of the buck) is the first star to appear at early dawn, a sign to the animals to go and graze. It is followed by *intanda* (Venus), the real herald of dawn.

### Rain

Above the dome of the sky is a great lake of water, kept back by a bank or weir, *ichipanda chyakwe Lesa*. There are guardians of this lake, and it is their duty to guard the bank. It seems that Lesa does not desire to give much rain to the earth, for the Lambas say that sometimes he sends youngsters to guard the bank, who begin to play, and make holes through which the water pours down as rain (*imfula*). But when there is no rain they say that Lesa has now sent grown men to guard it, who respect the will of their master.

### Lightning

The Lambas always use the term Lesa in connexion with lightning (*akampeshimeshi*). *Lesa wapata*, "God is scolding," they say. The lightning is believed to be caused by the people guarding the weir. They swing round the *imyele yakwe Lesa*, the knives of God, and the flashes from these knives at times go very far. The Lambas say that the *imyele* do not fall themselves, but should they do so *ichyalo chingatoweka*, the country would be destroyed. When a flash appears there descends to the ground an animal like a goat, with beard and horns complete, but with feet and tail like a crocodile. It comes down on the end of a strong cobweb. Should the cobweb break, the animal, remaining, cries like a goat, and the people run together to kill and burn it. They fear that the animal might kill them, and those who destroy it must have *ubwanga bwayamba*, protective medicine. Usually the web does not break, and the animal returns into the sky.

People fear a tree struck by lightning, and will not use any such for firewood, for they think that 'power' has been left in it.

Thunder, *ukululuma*, is said to be a noise made by the guardians of the weir. They shake huge metal drums.

### Theistic Belief

The Lambas believe that there is a "high god." He is generally called Lesa, but there are various other names by which he is called. They give him the name Nyambi, used also by the Kaondes, and in oath-taking use Mulungu and Shyakapanga. He is often designated as Lyulu, which means in the first place "the heaven." This term is also used out of respect for

prominent chiefs. Then there is the name Luchyele, in all probability connected with the verb *ukuchya*, to dawn. The derivation of Lesa is not known. It seems likely that it is connected with the root *isa* (come), and some natives explain it by saying, *Pakuti alesa panshi*, "Because he comes down to earth!" *alesa* being the habitual tense. This is very doubtful. Another possible derivation connects it with the verb *lelesa*, which means to have tender compassion.

Lesa is believed to be the creator of all things, of the *awantu* who live in his realm, those working on the sun and the moon, those in charge of the abode of the dead, those guarding the animals under the name of *wakaaluwe*, and of the *awantunshi*, human beings, those on the earth, who are subject to *imikoka*, or clan distinctions. In addition to the material creation and that of the different types of *awantu*, he is said to have created the *ifwanda* (demons) and the *ifinkuwaila* (goblins) which play so large a part in the people's spiritistic beliefs. The creation of all things is attributed to Lesa. The Lambas say that he created the sun before he created the moon, and that the stars were created later still. Under the name of Luchyele, as we have noticed, he arranged the whole country, rivers in their places, mountains, anthills, grass, trees, and lakes. He came from the east, and went to the west, where he climbed up by a ladder into heaven. It is said that he left word with the communities of people whom he placed in the land that they were to remain and await his return, even if it were to be long delayed. He will come down again in the east, and then, as he passes, will take all the people with him.

It may be thought that this belief in the return of Luchyele is due to missionary influence, but when one takes into consideration the whole belief of the Lambas regarding *ichiyawafu* (the abode of the dead), the two conceptions are found to fit, and I cannot but feel that the natives are correct when they affirm that this is the belief which has been handed down to them from their fathers. They maintain that Luchyele will really come again, because he promised the people that he would send them the sun every day; he has done this, and so he will fulfil the other promise too. The dead, they say, are waiting in *ichiyawafu* for Lesa to take them out—otherwise of what value is *ichiyawafu*?

*Ichiyawafu* is conceived as being within the earth, but the abode of Lesa is *kwiulu*, in the heaven. When God descends to collect the people he will blot out all rivers and trees; the people he carries will have to be changed to conform to those who are in *ichiyawafu*, who have no sex or clan distinctions. The *imipashi*

(spirits) who were originally left by Lesa to help and care for the people are earthly beings and cannot leave this abode; they, together with the *ifwanda* and the *ifinkuwaila*, will be left behind when the people are taken.

Lesa is conceived as living in his great village, seated on a metal throne (*iteve lyachyela*). The 'village' is so great that the ends of it cannot be seen. There are many *awantu* there, but no gardens. Lesa is said to sit alone on his throne—he has no wife. This is in contradiction to the common talk of the stars being lights in the houses of the wives of Lesa; serious Lamba thinkers say "that is only conjecture." All the people in the village of Lesa eat food from the *ilonga*, or great eating-trough of the chief; and the food is so nice that if any drops on to the ground they pick it up and eat it, not minding the earth adhering to it!

In Lesa's country there is no river, nor is there any grass in the *uluwansa* or courtyard, which is smooth and made of metal. There is no water, only honey (*bwenko'wuchi*). Only at night does Lesa leave his throne to enter his house. There is no sleep there; sleep will end when Lesa takes the people from the earth. The Lambas say, however, that there are both day and night.

The part played by Lesa in present matters is said to be as follows:

(1) He sits on his throne judging the affairs of the people in his country—*awantu wakwiulu*. He has *impemba* (councillors) who assist him in these cases and *wamulonda* (watchmen) who carry messages to his *ifilolo* (headmen).

(2) He appoints *ifilolo* to the work of guarding the weir and the rainfall. They have to *alule'fiveshi fyakwe Lesa*, flash the knives of God, and thus send lightning when the rain falls. He gives and withholds rain.

(3) He sends *amanata* (leprosy), *akapokoshi* (Kafir pox), *ichingwali* (smallpox), and such epidemics as the influenza of 1918.

(4) When death occurs it is said, *Ni Leso'mwine wamutwala*, "It is God himself who has taken him."

There is no worship of Lesa, no *ukuwomba* (gift to avert disaster) as to the *awami* (spirit mediums), no *ukupupa* (ceremonial offering) as to the *imipashi* (spirits of departed), and no *ukupapatila* (prayer). People fear him too much, and consider him beyond their reach; they can but say, *Lesa mutofwe-ko*, "O God, help us!" Only one prayer to God has been identified. When going to *pupe'mipashi* and to throw meal on the ground in the *utupeshi* a person may pray, *Lesa, mutupele'mfula, fweawantu wenu!* "O God, give us rain, us, your people!" Otherwise

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they make offerings to the *awami*, for it is they who are able to speak to Lesa. They therefore say to them, *Mutupaapatile kuli Lesa mweawami, fweawantu twalowa!* "Pray for us to God, O spirits of the chiefs, for we people are done for!" And the *wamukamwami* will give them assurance that the rain will fall.

It is said that God is angered when people sin deeply, when they commit adultery, steal, or murder, and that he punishes by sending leprosy and smallpox. But there is no way of approaching him for a cessation of these judgments; the people have just to bear them.

Of thunder the Lambas say, *Ninyambi ulukululuma lelo!* "It is God who is thundering to-day!" In oath-taking they say, *Shyakapanga wopelo'yo andye lelo!* "Let the very God devour me to-day!" or *Kami nachite'chichyebo Mulungu wopelo'yu apone anjipaye!* "If I have done this of which I am accused, may God himself fall and kill me [by lightning]!"

There are two folk-tales, to be found throughout Bantu Africa, which give the native conception of the origin of death and its certainty. They are connected with the conception of the "high god." The following are the Lamba versions.

### HOW DEATH CAME INTO THE WORLD

Long ago the chief on earth used to travel from place to place, but eventually he desired to settle down; he therefore sent some of his people to God to fetch seeds, that he might sow them and have his own gardens. When his messengers reached God they were given some little bundles tied up, and instructed not to undo a certain one of the bundles, but to deliver them to their chief. "Of these bundles, don't undo this one," he said. The messengers had to sleep on the road, but their curiosity overcame them. One said, "Mates, let us see these parcels that the King has given us!" And they began to undo them. When, however, they undid the forbidden package—the package of death—death spread abroad. In fear and trembling they went to their chief, and confessed to him that one of their number had opened the little package and let death escape. And the chief was angry, and said, "Catch him, and let us kill him." And they killed him. And death entered the world.

### THE STORY OF THE CHAMELEON AND THE LIZARD

God sent the chameleon to the people with this message: "Tell the people that when they die they will return again."

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The chameleon set off on his journey, stepping slowly and deliberately, *kamu kamu kamu*, rolling his eyes around at every step. After some days God sent the lizard with another message: "Tell the people that when they die they will die for ever!" It was not long before the lizard overtook and passed the chameleon, reached the people, and delivered his message. Sadly late, the first messenger arrived with his message of life, but the people would not believe him. They hated him for his delay, and, taking nicotine (*ikondyo lyafwaka*), made him eat it, and so killed him. And that is why the chameleon is to this day held in hatred.

## CHAPTER XV

### SPIRITISM

#### The Spiritual Conception

To the Lamba the spiritual world is one which has daily contact with almost every phase of his life. In order to understand his conception of this spiritual world it is necessary to ascertain his beliefs concerning what happens after death; and it is amazing to find how clear and concise these are.

One man briefly stated the commonly accepted belief to me as follows:

"When a person dies his body is buried; he himself goes to *ichiyawafu* [the abode of the dead], and his *umupashi* [spirit] returns to the village to await reincarnation." Thus, then, we find that the Lambas believe definitely that the living person is made up of body, person, and spirit. These three entities are naturally bound up together and interdependent in life, but are separated completely by death. Much in the burial rites can only be understood and explained by a study of Lamba belief in the origin or destiny of the person and the spirit, which, together with the body, constitute the living being. As was noticed when dealing with the burial rites, the body faces east, to facilitate the return of the spirit in reincarnation, and also so that it may look for the return of Luchyele. Death means the end of the body. But why is it that witches and wizards are invariably burnt? It is because fire, when medicinally treated by the *umulaye* (doctor), is the one thing that can destroy the spirit as well as the body. Nothing can destroy the 'person.'

#### The Person

The body is the visible portion of the living being, but the 'person himself,' *umuntu umwine*—I hesitate to use the term 'soul' to indicate this, as the Lamba conception is so different—is only perceptible through his speaking, and that he has not left the body is indicated by his breathing. The Lambas use the term *umweo*, life, as synonymous with *umuntu umwine*, and when

### SPIRITISM

a person dies they commonly say, *Umuntu waleko'mweo*, "The person has let go his life." The *umweo* is that which lives in the heart and causes it to beat. They say, *Umweo eupema*, "It is the life which beats." It is further significant that *umweo* is practically synonymous with *umutima*, heart, a word derived from *tima*, which is equivalent to *pema*, to breathe.

#### Ichiyawafu

At death the person himself, *umweo* or *umuntu umwine*, freed from the body, *umuwili*, and also unlinked from the spirit, *umupashi*, goes away to the west, to *ichiyawafu*. This term means "the place where go the dead," being derived from the words *ya*, go, and *awafu*, dead people. The person, then, according to the Lamba conception, is rigorously differentiated from the spirit. No spirit, they say, ever reaches *ichiyawafu*. The charm of *ichiyawafu* to the Lamba is that it is the place of rest. An old Lamba may sometimes be heard to say, *Kamfwa bwangu nkatushye kutawanyanji*, "Let me die soon that I may rest with my companions"; and on hearing that some one has died he will say, *Lelo umuwyesu waya kutushya-po*, "To-day our friend has gone to take his rest." This thought is carried so far that in the past many have been known to commit suicide in order to reach this abode of rest more quickly.

*Ichiyawafu*, according to Lamba conception, is described as a large country, situated somewhere in the west—some say underground—ruled over by a king who is not and never has been a human being. This king must not be confused with the deity, *Lesa*; he is set over the realm of the departed by *Lesa*. He is assisted by numbers of officers, *ifilolo*, whose duty it is to introduce to him the visitors as they come, and to assign to them their various places in the midst of their relatives.

It is only the persons of departed human beings which go to *ichiyawafu*; no dogs or other animals are to be found there. It is only the human being which has a 'soul,' or person, and this belief is quite naturally found in the Lamba conception of the spiritual.

*Ichiyawafu* is the great place of levelling. The dead of all tribes and nations go there, and live in perfect harmony. There is but one tongue, which each person acquires immediately he is greeted by the king. In *ichiyawafu* there is no distinction of social status; no distinction is made between the persons of chiefs, commoners, or slaves. Even the persons of witches and

wizards go to *ichiyawafu*, for their witcheries have been left behind them. Entrance to *ichiyawafu* is not in any way dependent upon moral excellence, for any such attributes or lack of them are connected with the body and the spirit, and do not, according to Lamba ideas, affect the person himself. *Ichiyawafu* knows no clan distinction. As we shall see later, the clan is inseparably connected with the spirit, but has no connexion with the person. Sex is another distinction foreign to the self, and thus unknown in *ichiyawafu*. Sex is but a bodily distinction in Lamba belief, foreign to both spirit and person. The distinction of age is similarly unknown in the spiritual realm. The Lamba crudely expresses these various beliefs. Says he, "At death the person is immediately transported to *ichiyawafu*, where he takes on another body, different from that which was laid in the grave, for that was dissolved, but one in which the *ichiwa* [face or features] is the same, one which is recognizable and has a voice which is recognizable. This new body is material, but there is no possibility of disease or death coming to it, for is it not in order to rest that these bodies are given? All there are males; there is no female. When a woman dies she leaves her womanhood in the grave, and appears as a man in his prime. If a baby dies, when he goes over there he appears as a grown person, and can talk. A madman, when he dies, appears in *ichiyawafu* sane; and a very old man will appear there as one at the height of his manhood."

The Lambas have very hazy ideas as to what *ichiyawafu* is like, but they say that there are no houses, no trees, no grass, no dust, but everywhere it is clean and beautiful. There is no need to arrange a sleeping mat; all may lie comfortably on the soft ground. It is not thought that they sleep, but they rest and rest, and hold pleasant conversation one with the other. This period of rest in *ichiyawafu* is not to go on for ever; *Lesa* is to come and take out these departed when he comes again to gather the people.

#### Umupashi—the Spirit

The spirit, *umupashi*, as we have noticed, does not go to *ichiyawafu*. At death, when the body is buried, the spirit returns to the village to wait. It seems that the spirit haunts the body until the burial has been completed, and then hovers around the village where its previous activities have been centred, awaiting the opportunity for reincarnation. Meanwhile, it needs certain attention, and looks for the *ifwaya*, or drinking-gourds of beer

and gruel, and for the *imilenda*, or spirit huts, in which to dwell. If these necessities are not provided, and the spirit is left uncared-for and uncomfortable, its state will be reflected in sickness coming upon *awene wamupashi*, the 'owner' of the spirit, or upon some member of his family. The doctor will have to be called in, and his diagnosis will be, "It is your spirit which is causing this."

#### The Owner of the Spirit

The 'owner' of the spirit is some relative of the deceased, a child, maybe, or a younger brother, but of necessity not husband or wife. If the deceased were a male, the owner of the spirit, responsible for its welfare, would be decided in order of preference as follows: (1) *umwanichye wakwe*, his younger brother, (2) *umwana wakwe*, his son or his daughter, and (3) *umwipwa wakwe*, his sister's child. The owner of the spirit is then said to inherit the spirit of his elder brother or of his father; and a daughter may even inherit the spirit of her father. If the deceased were a female, the inheritance of the spirit would be decided in the following order of preference: (1) *umwanichye wakwe*, her younger sister, (2) *umwana wakwe umwanakashi*, her daughter, and (3) *umwinshikulu wakwe umwanakashi*, her granddaughter. Thus it is seen that no male can *pyano'mupashi wamwanakashi*, inherit the spirit of a female.

#### Umulenda

When some time has passed after the death of a man his mother will say to his younger brother, "Do you, his younger brother, build the *imilenda* for your elder brother; it is you who have inherited his spirit. Inherit, then, his name, and build for him the *imilenda*." The young man will then adopt his elder brother's name. This, however, does not mean that he has become possessed by the spirit of his brother; he is but the guardian, and that spirit is still at large, awaiting an opportunity of reincarnation.

After some days' further delay the heir, *impyani*, will have beer brewed, and summon his friends. Before the beer is touched there is the work of building the *umulenda*. A space is cleared *muchitumbo*, in the garden-clearing, a little distance from the hut which the deceased had occupied, and one hut is built. All the men gathered to the beer-drink assist in the building, bringing the sticks, grass, and bark rope. The *umulenda* is a very small hut, made of sticks and grass in the same way as is an *inkunka*, the temporary lean-to erected on a new village site. At times the



## SPIRITISM

*umulenda* is as much as 4 feet 6 inches in height. A small platform of sticks, *akapingwe*, is constructed within before the hut is finished. This platform consists of four *impanda*, forked sticks

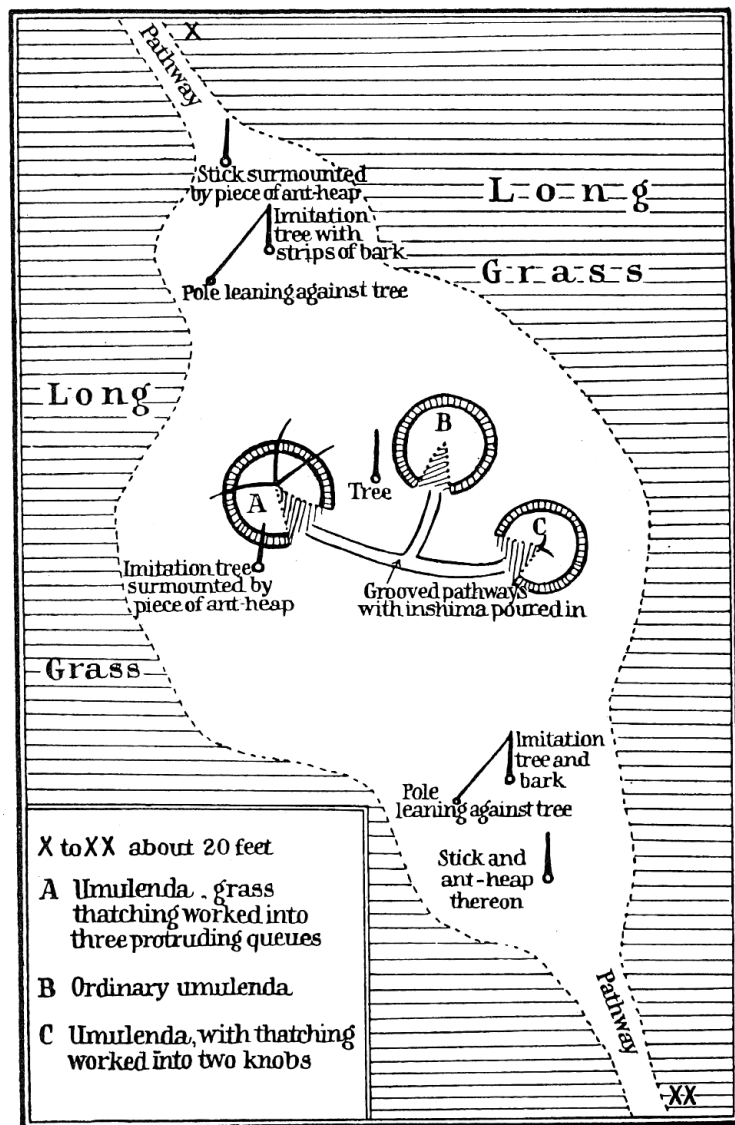


FIG. 71. IMILENDA



FIG. 72. UMULENDA OF A MOŴA, WITH AUTHOR

See p. 255.

Photo by the late Rev. J. J. Doko

planted in the floor, two *imitanti*, transverse sticks joining the pairs of forks, and a number of *ubwalangwe*, or sticks laid across the *imitanti*. This platform is erected to support the calabashes of beer; they are not placed on the ground for fear of the termites. Finally a small grass door is made to fit the doorway.

### Ichinsengwe

When the building is finished all who have helped sit down to drink the beer. After the beer-drink they begin to dance the

## THE LAMBAS OF NORTHERN RHODESIA

*ichinsengwe*. This dance, which is usually connected with hunting celebrations, is also carried out when honouring the *imipashi*. Men only build the *umulenda*, and men only drink the beer at first, though sometimes a few women participate later. The dancing is carried out by the men only, while the women *lishyo' lumpundu*, make the *lululu* sound with lip and hand. Both men and women join in the special songs composed by the

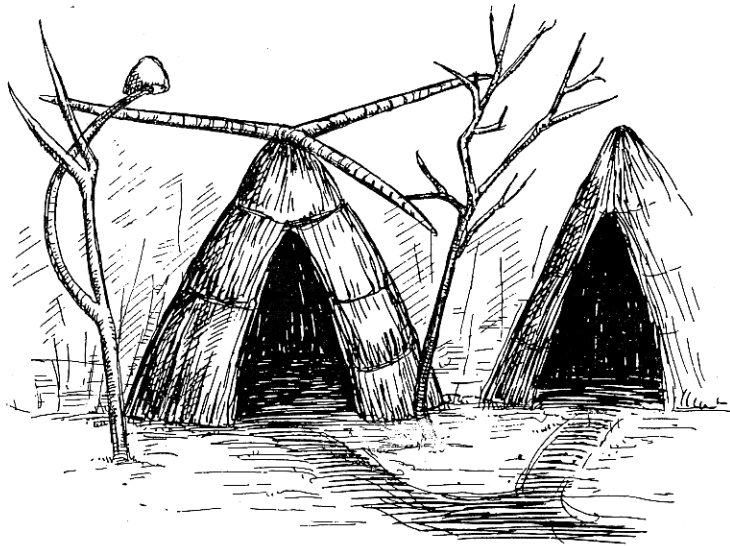


FIG. 73. SPIRIT HUTS

Erected in a pathway near a village, about seven miles west of Kafulafuta Mission. Height, 1 foot 10 inches. See Fig. 71, huts marked A and B.

*awayambo*, those professional dancers of whom more anon. I give but two examples of this type of song:

- (1) *Akana kali kamo, chyenjelo'kuleya'malambo !*  
*Kalalenge'nkaka, chyenjelo'kuleya'malambo !*  
*Pakukane'nshima, chyenjelo'kuleya'malambo !*

“The little child is one,  
 Mind you avoid the death-places !  
 It brings anxiety,  
 Mind you avoid the death-places !  
 When it refuses food,  
 Mind you avoid the death-places !”

- (2) *Mama, mbangule umunga,*  
*Ne chyende-ende ulitemenwe !*

“Mother, extract the thorn for me,  
 For me, the wanderer you love !”

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So the dancing and singing go on, and the owner of the spirit rewards those who have come to help him with payments of beads. The company does not break up till the late afternoon.

Meanwhile, while the beer-drink is still going on, the owner of the spirit brings some new drinking calabashes, *ifiwaya* or *inkombo*, two or three of which he has specially prepared, dips out some beer from the pot at which the assembled people are drinking, carries the *inkombo* to the *umulenda*, and places them on the *akapingwe* within.

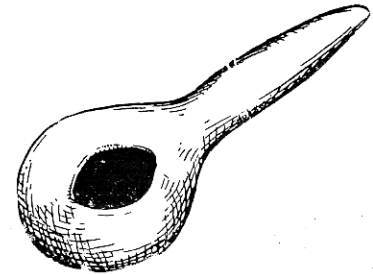


FIG. 74. ULUKOMBO, OR ICHIWAYA

When all the people who had gathered have dispersed the owner of the spirit utters these words: *Ubwalwo'wu namupeni, kanyenda nemakosa*, “This beer I have given to you. Let me travel with strength !” After that, while he is alone, he will drink up the beer he has placed in the *umulenda*, and restore the *inkombo* to their place on the platform. From time to time he will take beads and place them within the *umulenda*, saying, *Ubwalwa bwenu twanwa, twamuwichileni-mo wawulungu, twaula*, “Your beer we have drunk, we have put in beads for you, we have bought it.” These beads are left there indefinitely; they are *ukutonda*, forbidden things, because they belong to the spirit.

### Ukupupa

All this is called *ukupupe'mipashi*, or *ipupwe*, and is designed to give due and expected honour to the spirit of the departed. If this honour is not paid the spirit will vent his annoyance by causing illness in the family of his heir. One of the prime causes of the carrying out of this *ipupwe* is to prevent such illness, or to restore health to one so afflicted. From this point of view the *ipupwe* may be considered propitiatory. The translation of the term *ipupwe* by ‘worship’ thus hardly seems adequate.

The building of the *umulenda* is the only occasion on which *ubwalwa* (intoxicating beer) is brewed in honour of the departed spirits. When the firstfruits ripen, however, *ifisunga*, non-intoxicating beer, is brewed before the *umulenda*, where all gather to drink it; some is then placed in the *inkombo* which are within the hut.

## Spirit of a Chief

For the spirit of a paramount chief, after the funeral ceremonies (described in Chapter XI) have been completed, an *umulenda* is also constructed. The chief himself goes to *ichiyawafu*, and his spirit returns to his home village to await reincarnation, though some say that the *wamukumbe*, maneless lions, are reincarnations of departed ancestral chiefs. This is especially believed if the lions are met with at the *umulyashi*, burial-ground of the chief. This belief is extended to an ordinary lion if it is met when it is devouring a kill. Hunters will try to drive the lion off, and will flatter (*totaishya*) it by calling it by the names of various chiefs, begging it to give its people some meat. The chief's successor, *uwalye shina*, he who has 'eaten' his name, becomes the owner of that spirit. He it is who brews the beer, summons the people, and builds the *umulenda*, in the same way as has been described already in the case of a commoner. The new chief thus becomes the guardian of the *inkombo* (calabashes) of his predecessor.

When an ordinary *umulenda* rots the owner will take out the *inkombo* and place them under the eaves of the *insense*, veranda, of his house. He may later on build another *umulenda* and restore the *inkombo*, but often this is left until sickness comes to a member of his family. The doctor, when called in to diagnose, will say, "Build the spirit hut, for the spirit is angry at having to sleep outside!"

The *imilenda* are kept shut, except when the owner wishes to see whether the termites have been at work. Anyone else would fear death should he meddle with an *umulenda*.

## Umulenda of a Chief

The *umulenda* of the paramount chief at Kawalu's village is much larger than the ordinary spirit hut of the *inkombo*, and in it are stored the *amata*, weapons, of the deceased chief. This *umulenda* is immediately replaced by a new one when it becomes rotted. The *umwinumulenda*, Kawalu, calls together his friends, some of whom go for poles, others for grass. As they return to the village with their loads of poles and grass the men chant, *Kumulenda takupito'we'wele, walipinika-ko!* "None with a breast passes the spirit huts; one cuts it off!" This is believed to be but a refrain, and is never seriously carried out against any woman, though at such a time women are strictly forbidden to go near the building. If there is no beer ready *inshima* porridge is cooked and a white cock killed. The cock's feathers are pulled out and

stuck in all over the hut. The *inshima* is eaten, and with it the fowl *iyakochya*, grilled (literally, burnt), never *iyakwipika*, boiled. This procedure is similar to that followed by the undertakers in the death-hut.

*Imilenda* are not built to the spirits of children or youths, but in honour of those of elders only. It is said that a young man could not have a younger brother or a child old enough to carry out the duties required. Great care is taken to preserve the *imilenda* from grass fires, and I have not heard of any cases of their getting burnt.

## Help of the Umupashi

It is believed that the spirit will help the owner in various ways if honoured and housed comfortably. When a man is going on a journey he will take some meal and go and throw it into the *inkombo* in the *umulenda*, and say, *Ndukwimo'twendo, naisa kumulayeni*, "I am starting on a journey, and have come to bid you good-bye." This is done that the spirit might go before him and assist him on the way. Again, when a dead antelope is found the fortunate man will say, *Umupashi wanjji wampela*, "My spirit has given it to me"; and there is a common saying used to a person of sharp tongue: *Uhukula'wila koti mupashi utapa-nama*, "You speak like a spirit that does not give meat."

## Akapeshi

There is quite a different type of spirit hut, erected only in honour of chiefs and renowned village headmen. This is the *akapeshi*, erected for the purposes of bringing rain.

When the rain holds off and the prospects of a harvest are endangered, Kawalu, the guardian of the chief's *amata*, will call a young doctor, *umulaye uwamipini*, a doctor of axe-handles, one who divines to detect the interference of the spirits, but has not yet learnt to probe the world of demons or to exorcise *ifwanda*. He will say to the doctor, "Divine for us, that we may see what is holding back the rain." And the doctor's verdict will be, "It is the chief who is angry, because you have not built the *utumimba*." *Utumimba* is but another name for *utupeshi*, the small spirit huts of the crossroads.

When Kawalu is alone again he will go to his chief, and tell him that the (dead) chief is angry, because they have not built him any *utumimba*. Then early the next morning men will carry meal and go and erect two *utumimba*, sometimes even four, at the crossing of the ways where the undertakers had rested and set

down the bier when on the way to bury the remains of the chief. Men usually go in pairs to build these miniature huts at all the places where the corpse had rested. When the huts are completed meal is placed in lines on the ground before the *utupeshi*, and the men rub some of it on their faces. If one of the men, while on this work of building the *utupeshi*, finds something—e.g., honey or meat—he does not conceal it, but takes it to the *umwinamulenda*, saying, "This is what the chief has given us." All then partake of it, and say, "The chief has prepared us a meal today."

If it rains on the day on which they build the *utupeshi* no one will go to work in the gardens; all will stay at home in order to honour the chief for having given them rain on that day.

Afterward passers-by will place small offerings of meal, honey, meat, etc., in the doorway of an *akapeshi*, saying, *Fyamfumu*, "They belong to the chief." This is to prevent the chief from getting angry.

*Utupeshi* are similarly erected in many villages at the crossroads in honour of the spirits of the chiefs of those villages. All this is called *ukulombe'mfula kumfumu*, begging rain from the chief, and is considered a surety of abundant rains.

### Firstfruits

The *utupeshi* (spirit huts) also play their part in the recognition of the firstfruits. Before the people partake of the new season's food tiny pumpkins, cucumbers, and maize are carried by the village headman to an *akapeshi* in the pathway. Little furrows are made in the doorway, and the offerings are placed therein, with these words: *Ifyakulya mfi twaleta mukumusomweshyeni, pakuti nafweido tulukufwayo'kulya*, "Here is food, which we have brought that you may taste the firstfruits, for we too desire to eat." These offerings, which are by no means "of the best of the flock," are left there to rot or dry up. In the same way, when the *amasaka* corn ripens the headman of each village goes through a similar act, and thus all members of the village are free to partake of the new corn.

The *utupeshi* are not revered as highly as are the *imilenda*. They do not house the departed spirit, and when grass fires destroy them nothing is thought of it. The *akapeshi* is temporary in its use, while the *umulenda* serves its purpose as long as the spirit is awaiting reincarnation.

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### Reincarnation

The Lambas state that more than one spirit may be housed in one *umulenda*, provided that the spirits are all of one *umukoka*, or clan. The denoting of the clan is one of the most important functions of the *umupashi*. The Lambas say, *Ichikulu kumipashi mukoka*, "The great thing with the spirits is the clan." In this the spirit is most unlike the person. We see from this, too, how inseparably totemism, as far as it applies to the Lambas, is bound up with spiritism.

**Afflatus.** The spirit can only be reincarnated in a member of the same clan as the deceased; and when a baby is born it is usually the duty of the maternal grandmother to decide upon the child's name, which is that of the deceased whose spirit is believed to have entered the babe. As has already been said when dealing with the naming of the child, if the name decided upon by the grandmother is not the correct one the displeasure of the spirit is shown in the child's falling sick. Then follows the necessity of a doctor to divine, in order to ascertain what spirit it is that is reborn. All this goes to show that in addition to the reincarnation of the spirit there is the power of the spirit to hold himself aloof and show displeasure. It seems that it is not the entire spirit which is reincarnated at a birth, but a kind of afflatus from it. This view is borne out by the fact that the spirit of one ancestor may be born into more than one babe at the same time. This is further confirmed by the fact that the spirit is still honoured and propitiated after a child bearing the same name has been born. The child in whom the spirit of a chief is reborn is accorded a certain amount of respect, and may, on attaining manhood, eventually be chosen to the chieftainship.

### Imipishi

The Lambas' belief in the spiritual world goes very much deeper than an acceptance of the existence and potency of the *umupashi*, the spirit of the departed. They have a firm belief in the existence of apparitions and ghostly forms and visions, which they designate generally by the terms *imipishi*, *imichishi*, or *wamukupe*. These terms, which are synonymous, signify something evasive, which one has seen indistinctly, but which disappears entirely when one would investigate it closely. This general term of *imipishi* is of very wide significance, and is applied in the following instances:

(1) When one gets a glimpse of people at a distance, but on

arrival at the spot finds no trace of them, not even a footprint, they are believed to have been ghosts, the spirits of the departed.

(2) When one sights animals at a distance, but finds no trace whatever of their having been there, it is said that they were *inama yawakaaluwe*—that is, that they belonged to the guardian spirit of the herds. Lamba belief in this connexion is fully considered in Chapter XX, where the profession of *uwupalu*, hunting, is dealt with.

(3) The same term is applied to the ghostly visions seen by a person when 'sickening' for spirit-possession. The sick person about to become a *moŵa* is said to see visions of people travelling in the sky. The wise will say, *Koku, taŵali ŵantu, mipishi waŵona!* "No, they are not people, they are ghosts you have seen!" These are said to be the spirits of the long-departed dead.

(4) The mirage is put into the same category, and is believed to represent a river, swamp forest (*umushitu*), lake, or pool belonging to the long-departed dead.

(5) Mysterious evening heat is also termed *imipishi*. Natives say that sometimes when travelling at night they come upon a spot where there is heat as from a fire. One will call out, "What heat there is here!" His companion will quickly reprove him for speaking like that, and say, "Let us go. It is the fire of the dead. Let them warm themselves at it!"

(6) The *ifinkuwaila*, goblins, and the *ifiŵanda*, demons, are also included under the general term of *imipishi*, because of their invisibility. The beliefs of the Lambas concerning these two classes of beings are an integral part of their conception of the spiritual, and will be dealt with at some length.

The Lambas are diffident about talking of *imipishi*. Should some women, coming back from foraging in the bush, say, "We saw some people coming toward us, but when they were quite near we did not see where they went to," one of the villagers will reply with the proverb, *Taŵalaŵila-mipishi kumushi*, "One does not mention ghosts in the village."

#### Ifiŵanda—Demons

The *ifiŵanda* are not to be confused in any way with the *imipishi*, spirits of the departed. They constitute a separate creation. The term 'demon' is not an adequate translation of the term, for the *ichiŵanda* is able to act beneficially toward human beings at times. Nevertheless, the rôle of the *ichiŵanda*

in causing madness seems parallel to our conception of demon-possession.

The *ifiŵanda* are said to wander about in the forest, and old men are said to have seen them as ghosts moving at a distance. They are believed to have long red hair, which stands straight up on their heads, and their eyes are continually turned upward. They are otherwise like *aŵantu*, black people. They do not clothe themselves at all.

Another name for the *ichiŵanda* is *isongwe*, or *ichisongola*, while a praise-name used is *kayumba*, a name also applied to the wind because of its invisibility.

These beings favour the darkness, and for that reason, among others, the Lambas dread darkness. They say, *Wemwanichye taŵekala mumutando'mufitile*, "Youngster, one doesn't sit in a dark zareba," lest a demon coming in to get out of the rain should find one there. They also say, *Koshyeni-po umulilo, twikalukulya nefiŵande'nshima, ikashila bwangu!* "Stir up the fire [and brighten the hut], lest we should have demons to share the porridge with us in eating, and it should come to an end quickly!"

#### Evil Work of Ifiŵanda

*Ifiŵanda* are said to kill people by beating them. A person on reaching his village may say, "Something struck me while I was in the bush, and I did not see what it was that hit me." The village elders will say, "It was the *ifiŵanda* which struck you." The Lambas say that if an *ichiŵanda* desires to attack a man he comes to him invisibly. The man feels a blow, say, on his eye, and searches round to see whence it has come. He finds nothing. On his return to the village the *umulaye*, doctor, is summoned, and he brings *amaŵula aŵiŵanda*, leaves efficacious against demons. Burning some of the leaves, he smokes the patient. From others of the leaves he prepares medicine for the patient to drink; others again are soaked in water in a bowl of bark. This receptacle is called *isambwe*, and from it the patient is bathed, that the demon may leave his body. The bark bowl is then covered up, and the patient recovers.

It is said that others, when struck by *ifiŵanda*, are spoken to. They hear the voice only, and do not see anything. The demons say, "Don't say anything at the village! If you say anything, your blood be on your own head. You will die!" The frightened man keeps the matter to himself and says nothing. His life is saved, and he does not fall sick.

The evil work of *ifwanda* is revealed in several ways. When a man suffers from a great persistent ulcer which will not heal it is sometimes said that an *ichiwanda* has brought the ulcer and is dwelling in it. This is quite a different matter from ulcers caused by witchcraft. Similarly, leprosy, *amanata*, is often attributed to the action of *ifwanda*. But by far the most baneful thing attributed to the *ifwanda* is demon-possession, shown in madness. An *ishilu*, a madman, is called *umuntu uwawilwa ichiwanda*, a person possessed by a demon. There is also in Lamba belief a demon of lesser powers, called *umusako*, which may possess a person and cause morbid dumbness and mild idiocy. They say of an idiot, *Alnemisako*, "He has demons."

#### Demon-possession

The Lamba account of demon-possession is as follows: A man is ill; maybe it is an ulcer from which he is suffering. The various medicines applied have had no effect whatever; the man gets worse, and begins to speak incoherently. Some of the onlookers will say, "This person is already out of his mind; this is the work of *ifwanda*." Then one day he begins to rage, and rushes out of the hut. The people say, "Catch him, he has gone mad; these are demons which have taken possession of the man." When *ifwanda* thus take possession of a man they are said to 'eat' him or to 'kill' him, though the result is madness, not death.

#### Exorcism of a Demon

The *awalaye* (diviners) are credited at times with being able to *wuka'mashilu*, exorcize the demon from madmen. This is the Lamba account: When a man becomes mad the villagers hasten to fetch the doctor, who diagnoses the case as one of demon-possession. The mother and father of the afflicted man then desire the doctor to procure *umusamu* (medicine) for him. The doctor brings the necessary medicine, which is mixed with water in a calabash cup, *ichyeso*. A small circular hut without any opening, *akayanda kambulwulu*, is erected around the madman. Some one, holding the *ichyeso* of medicated water, then climbs to the top of the hut, immediately above the place where the madman is seated, and pours the water down upon him. Thereupon the madman shouts out, *Mwewakalume imfula lelo e!* "Oh, ye slaves, how it is raining to-day!" But the people give him no reply. In the evening they take him out, and he says, "Did you not see how it rained in my house?" Thereupon the doctor spits upon his

back other *umusamu* which he has been holding in his mouth, and goes on to deceive him by saying, "Wash your face—the rain has made you very wet." After this the patient is given gruel mixed with portions of a python. After drinking this concoction he vomits violently. Then succeeds a period of deep depression, during which he does not speak at all. He is restored to the village life, and in place of his madness a quietness comes over him. He will once more take his part in the work of the village, but will very seldom be heard to speak.

#### Attendant Ifwanda

According to Lamba belief, every one has his attendant *ichiwanda*, who looks after his interests, and is able to bring punishment upon anyone wronging his ward. This punishment is effected by sending sickness to the evildoer or some member of his family, or by exposing him to the wisdom of the *umulaye*, who is thus able to 'smell him out' as a wizard. The *ichiwanda* can further assist his ward by arranging for *imbiko*, omens of evil, to appear in his way, and so warn the man against going to his death or into disaster. This beneficent action of the guardian *ichiwanda* is also seen in the driving force behind the imposition of the death-dues which must be paid by a widow or a widower. When a person dies it is said that his *ichiwanda* returns to the forest, whence he has come, to resume his wanderings; no longer does the *ichiwanda* have any association with the *umupashi* (spirit) of his ward. When that *umupashi* is reincarnated it is another *ichiwanda* that comes to act as guardian over the child. If, however, there is a *mukamfwilwe*, widow or widower, left on the death of the ward, the *ichiwanda* delays his return to the forest, and remains to see that the rights of the deceased are observed, that the death-dues are paid, and that the redemption of the relict is completed. If a woman dies her attendant *ichiwanda* watches the husband to see what he does. Should he marry before the death-due is paid, the demon may cause his new wife to become ill. When the *umulaye* is called in he will tell the man that it is his own fault for not having redeemed himself, and that the *ichiwanda* of his late wife is bringing this trouble upon him. The man will humble himself, make a present of beads to the sick person, and beseech the demon, saying, *Nasasa, wechiwanda, tanje mbone uwuwoni, mbweleshye uko natulile!* "I repent, O demon. Let me first seek for the goods to restore whence I have come!" This is called *ukunwo'mufungo*, drinking bitter fruit.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "eat humble pie."

demon will hear his prayer, and the woman will recover. When the man has carried out his promise the demon will leave him. Death is believed to be the lot of anyone who is persistent in ignoring the claim of the *ichiwanda* for the payment of the necessary death-dues.

*Ifiwanda* are believed to protect their wards from wild beasts. If a person meets a lion out in the veld, and the lion merely stands and looks at him, despite the fact that he is quite close to it, he will say on his return to the village, "My *ichiwanda* saved me to-day; otherwise I should have been eaten by a lion!"

*Ifiwanda* are even said to take the part of *imfwiti*, witches or wizards. It is maintained that during the poison ordeal at a witch-trial, when the *umwafi* poison is being administered to a fowl, the guardian demon of the witch will at times sit in the mouth of the fowl, and take the poison himself, so that the fowl escapes death, the witch consequently being exonerated.

But the guardian *ifiwanda* do not always remain faithful to their wards. If the demon no longer wants a man whom it has been guarding it will prompt him to commit some foolish action, and then will not save him when he gets into danger. It may lead him to enter a brake after a wounded buffalo or leopard, or make him trust himself on a rotten branch.

#### Ifiwanda and Taboo

The *ichiwanda* is credited with playing a peculiar part when certain taboos have been broken. When a man has committed an anti-social crime, such as rape, incest, copulation outside a hut, soiling of an unredeemed widow, or secret murder, the *ifiwanda* see to it that the secret is revealed. If, for instance, a man and a woman have intercourse in the bush, not in a hut, it is said that the demons will follow them and catch them; they will fall ill, for they have broken a social taboo. The doctor, when called, will say to the man, "It is an *ichiwanda* which has caught you. Confess what you have done!" In fear the man will confess, and the doctor will say, "The *ichiwanda* came to reveal your crime." The sick man will beg of the demon to leave him alone, and his mother and father will come with hand-clapping, and address the demon with the words, *Pano fuma-mo wemukwasu, twakwishitwa*, "Now go away, our brother. We have recognized you!" And the demon must go, because the case is no longer a hidden one. If the sick man refuses to confess, or if the doctor is called too late, madness is the usual result. Others say that it

is the *ifiwanda* who prompt a man in the first place to commit one of these anti-social crimes.

If the *ichiwanda* has pursued his vengeance so far as to cause several deaths in the village the *umulaye* is sent for. He carries out the ceremony of *ukwawuka*, divining, exactly as in a case of witchcraft (Chapter XIX), using his *imisewe* (rattles) and pot of water. After this his verdict is, *Chiwanda echilukumwipayeni*, "It is a demon which is killing you!" He then says to all the relatives of those who have died, "You must be cleansed [*samba*]." The *umulaye* then goes in search of the necessary *umusamu* and a bark trough (*ichikwa*). In this he places a quantity of the medicine when he has set it down at a crossing of the paths (*kumashilampindwe*). Some people are sent to fetch water, which the *umulaye* pours into the trough. When night has fallen all the people gather to the spot. The *umulaye* now takes his zebra tail (*umuchila*) and dips it into the water, shaking it therein (*wunshya*); he then takes it out and sprinkles it toward the east, then toward the west, then toward the other two points (*muifwafu*). After this he sprinkles the assembled people wherever they are sitting. All then return to the village. The next day the ceremony is performed again in the evening; and it may even be done on the third day. When this is finished all have to sweep their houses, and take all the rubbish—broken pots, old mats, ashes, and even the ant-heap pot supports (*amafwasa*)—and deposit it in a heap at the *amashilampindwe*. The *umulaye* then makes fire for them with his fire-sticks (*ulushiko*). Each woman now comes to obtain fire, and starts her fire in her hut. Then the doctor goes from hut to hut, putting medicinal leaves upon each fire, the smoke from which cleanses the hut. The doctor is now paid for his services, and returns to his home. This whole ceremony is for the purpose of driving the *ichiwanda* and its polluting influence from the village.

There is a Lamba proverb which says, *Ichiwanda tachikata-ko*, "A demon does not hold tight"; this is equivalent to our saying, "Do not tempt Providence." A man must not bear his weight upon a hanging object; the *ichiwanda* which normally protects him may let it go. The *ichiwanda* is credited with being responsible for accidents due to carelessness. If a youngster points a gun at a friend the demon may cause him to pull the trigger; or if he poises a spear to make a feint with it at some one the demon may cause the spear to slip from his hand.

## Ifiwanda and Animals

*Ifiwanda* are said to possess wild beasts, especially if they approach human beings, as, for instance, lions, leopards, snakes, and buffalo. It is believed that if one shouts out, *Wechiwanda! wechiwanda!* "Thou demon! Thou demon!" the demon will see that it is recognized and make off. No native would throw his spear at one of these beasts without shouting out thus, and he would never shout, *Wenkalamu!* "Thou lion!" or *Wensoka!* "Thou snake!" Wild beasts seen normally are not believed to be thus possessed, and naturally would not attack people. It is the *ichiwanda* within to which an appeal must be made.

Dogs and lions have attendant *ifiwanda*. The Lambas say, *Ichiwanda chiyambwa tachilala*, "The dog's demon does not sleep." If a man kills a dog for no real reason its *ichiwanda* will pester him and kill his children or make them mad. Fowls may be killed without any such risks; so may dogs if they have been killing the village fowls.

During the year 1920, when word had gone out that all native dogs were to be taxed, I visited the village of Kawunda-Chiwele. Word came that the Native Commissioner was approaching, and many who could not afford to pay the tax or did not want to do it caught their dogs, took them out into the bush, and hanged them with bark rope. They did not do this, however, without first bidding them farewell with the words: *Wembwa wewo nshikwipaye lukoso, ndukukwipayilo'kusonka, nshikwete-ndalama!* "O dog, I am not killing you without cause. I am killing you on account of the tax, for I have no money!" And it was said that the *ifiwanda* of the dogs heard and understood.

## Ukushilike'chiwanda—Warding off Demons

If a man has recently died, and many people dream about him, they say, *Chiwanda*, "It is a demon." They believe that the *ichiwanda* (demon) has taken possession of his *umupashi* (spirit), and has come to the village to tell them all. They therefore send for a prominent *umulaye* (diviner). When he comes the *umulaye* divines, and asks, *Muno mumushi tamufwile-po umuntu?* "Has not some one died here in this village?" The people say, "Yes, So-and-so's slave has died." He will say, "That is he. You did not treat him properly!" Then the owner of the slave confesses to the harsh way in which he treated him. The *umulaye* then informs them that if they do not exhume (*shikula*) the body quickly he will cause deaths in the village. The people

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then beg the *umulaye* to do the exhuming, promising him a gun. In the morning the doctor will call the people who buried the man to show him the way to the grave. Of these one or more then accompany the *umulaye* and his attendants. The guide stops at some distance, points to a certain anthill, and says, "The grave is over there." He then returns to the village. The *umulaye*, carrying his *ulusengo* (horn) and *umuchila* (zebra tail), now advances silently and stealthily to the grave, sticks his horn upright on it, lays down his switch thereon, and says, *Naikata mwefiwanda*, "I have caught you, ye demons!" Then all his attendants come up and begin to dig open the grave with a hoe. The *umulaye* sits still while his men are digging. When the diggers have practically reached the corpse they come out from the grave, and the *umulaye* enters. One other then enters to assist the *umulaye* to take out the body. Some of the assistants now begin to cut up the body (*pampa*), while others collect firewood from *imiwanga*-trees. The pile of firewood is set alight, and when only glowing coals remain the lumps of flesh are thrown on, as in the case of the burning of a witch. When all is consumed the *umulaye* throws on to the embers a stick of the *umwandwalesa* shrub. This blazes up, and is considered potent in stopping (*shilika*) the *ichiwanda*. After this the attendants remain seated round the pyre while the *umulaye* goes ahead alone along the path back to the village. At a little distance he chooses a shrub, a branch of which he strikes with his axe so that it bends over, almost cut through. This is called *uluteeta*. He now seizes the branch, and calls to his companions to come forward without looking behind them. They approach and pass him. He then leaves the *uluteeta*, and follows on after them. When they reach the village they do not enter it, but erect a *zareba* (*umutanda*) on the outskirts, and sleep there. To this *umutanda* the villagers bring them their payment. On the morrow the *umulaye* returns to his home.

This belief in the action of the *ichiwanda* is behind the necessity for burning ceremonially each witch or wizard (*imfwiti*) that is killed.

Should the corpse have been buried already for a long time, so that it has disintegrated, and mice have taken up their abode in the grave, the *umulaye* will consider, if he catches a mouse (*imbewa*) when digging, that it contains the *ichiwanda* of the dead man who has been disturbing the villagers. He will burn the mouse right on the grave with the same ceremony as in the case of the corpse of the man, believing it to be a reincarnation.



## Birds of Ill-omen

In addition to being responsible for *imbiko* (ill-omens) in the ordinary way, *ifwanda* are said to be able to warn people by appearing in the *ikwikwi*, the hornless owl, and in another bird, called *lwitaŵila*.

The *ikwikwi* comes to the village if a person is ill, sits in the *uluŵansa*, or courtyard, at night, and calls, *Kwi kwi kwi, putu putu, whe whe whe* (whistling). The people who hear it will say that the sick man cannot recover, "for to-day the *ikwikwi* has cried." If no one is ill, and this bird comes repeatedly, it is believed to presage a death. The hornless owl is a bird of ill-omen.

The *lwitaŵila* lives in the bush, and does not come to the village. It calls *Wo! Wo!* at night in a deep voice, and is heard from afar. It is also regarded as *imbiko*. Little is known about it, but it is said to be a bird with a human voice. Sometimes it calls, *Uŵuta bwanji e . . . !* "Oh, my bow!", or *Nafwa e . . . , nafwa e . . . !* "Oh, I'm done for! Oh, I'm done for!" Some say it is like a big snake, and lives in the clefts of trees, emerging therefrom at night to climb the tree and call. No one has ever seen a *lwitaŵila*.

## Ifwanda in Folklore

*Ifwanda* (demons) have their place in Lamba folklore, but the Lambas are very careful to distinguish between what they actually believe regarding these beings and what they relegate to the purely fanciful in their folklore. In one story an *ichiwanda* is depicted as appearing in human form in a village and marrying a young woman who had refused every previous suitor. He would eat none of the food she prepared for him, and when eventually he was followed by the woman's father and mother into the forest it was found that he was in the habit of pulling off his arms and legs to attract the flies to the open flesh, and then gobbling up the flies which constituted his food. The story goes on at length to describe the plan which was necessary to make the *ichiwanda* leave the village.

A far more common story, however, is the one entitled *Ichishimichishyo chyamuntunshi nechiwanda*, "The Story of the Man and the Demon." In this story a man is depicted as digging a game-pit by himself. A demon came and offered to help him, on the understanding that each animal caught which pointed its head toward the demon's path should belong to him, the others to belong to the man. The man repeatedly tried to deceive the demon by turning the entrapped animals round, till at length the

demon warned him that he would "fear what he would see." The next morning the man's mother-in-law went out gathering sticks, and fell into the covered game-pit. Great was her son-in-law's consternation when he found this, and as he was trying to get the old woman out the demon appeared and claimed her heart as his prize. The protestations of the man were unavailing; the demon sprang in, tore out the old woman's heart, and made off.

But these are mere folk-tales, as all the Lambas recognize. Apart from these ideas, they have a very real conception of demonism, one in which they thoroughly believe.

## Ukuwilwa—Spirit-possession

We have already observed the Lamba belief that *ifwanda* may possess persons, and in doing so drive them mad; but among the Lambas there are three definite types of spirit-possession, *ukuwilwa*, which confer on those so afflicted a certain status in the tribe, one which generally leads to the acquisition of wealth. First there are the *wamowa*, who are said to be possessed by the spirits of *ifinkuwaila* (of which we shall treat immediately); then there are the *awayambo*, possessed by the spirits of Twa hunters; and lastly the most important, *wamukamwami*, possessed by the spirits of Lenje chiefs. All these are foreign spirits. They do not displace the original *impashi* of the persons possessed; and although they may be of different or of no *umukoka* (clan), they do not change the *imikoka* of the persons possessed. We shall now deal with each of these types of spirit-possession in turn.

## Ifinkuwaila

It is impossible to find an English word adequate to translate the Lamba *ichinkuwaila*, so I shall retain the Lamba word in all references to these beings so firmly believed in by the Lambas.

The *ifinkuwaila* are weird denizens of the forests and hills. They are said to resemble a man split down the centre, with one leg, one arm, one ear, one eye, one nostril, and so on. They are taller than human beings, and hop along on the one leg as they travel. Unclothed, they wander about the forests, hills, and *imishitu*, swamp forests, always carrying their *imisengelo*, reed sleeping mats, ready for use when night-time comes. They emerge from their hiding-places when they wish to catch *wamukamowa*, those whom they will possess. Their food is said to be *umufuwa*, meal mixed with a little water, but not cooked. *Ifinkuwaila* are believed to be male and female, old and young. The