

(Nigeria) in 1982, Evaristo Muyinda, grand old man of Kiganda music (Uganda), the Kachamba Brothers' Band (Malawi), Nana Danso-Abiam, Ghanaian *atenteben* flute player and musicologist, and John Collins, "The highlife specialist" and guitarist from Ghana, in 1983. Other items on his agenda have been exhibitions of South African, Zambian and Jamaican artists, a programme of 'African music on film', the publication of books and catalogues arising out of the exhibitions and performers' visits and of the recordings in the 'Archive of Modern African Music' at Iwalewa-Haus. The latter include 1. Traditional and modern music of Ethiopia, and 2. Islam-influenced music of the Yoruba in Nigeria and Benin. A cassette series has also been instituted, with recordings of the visiting musicians and others. Address: Iwalewa-Haus, Centre for Modern Art of Africa and the Third World, Münzgasse 9, Potsfach 3008, D-8580 Bayreuth, Fed. Rep. of Germany.

## REPORT ON CULTURAL FIELD RESEARCH IN MANGOCHI DISTRICT, MALAWI, July 15 to August 25, 1983

From Gerhard Kubik

Our current six-month research project on "Systems of traditional education in East and Central Africa" which we are carrying out in affiliation with the Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi, Zomba, (Director: Louis A.H. Msukwa) and with financial assistance from the Foundation for the Advancement of Scientific Research, Vienna (Project No. 4977) has had a very good start in Malawi and we have just completed a fruitful first period of field studies in Mangochi District. Our team comprises four members: besides myself they are Mr Moya Aliya with whom I have worked on previous research trips in Zambia (1979) and Brazil (1980), the Malawian musician-composer Donald Kachamba and Miss Lidiya Malamusi, all from Chileka. While the latter two members of our team were busy recording in Blantyre District in July and August — mostly Chicheŵa stories (*nthano*), riddles (*dzidapi*) and various activities of institutions such as the *nyau* masked association, Moya Aliya and I worked in the remote village of Chief Makanjila on the east side of Lake Malawi. Thanks to excellent letters of introduction from Mr Msukwa and Mr Patrick J. Nkosi, District Commissioner at Mangochi, we were able to resume our work at Makanjila within 48 hours of my arrival in Malawi.

We reached Makanjila village on the afternoon of July 15 and were hospitably received by Mfumu (Chief) Makanjila VIII waMdala. During the following weeks the Chief accommodated the two of us in his house and we gradually became something more than mere guests, rather members of the family. The Chief made useful contacts for us in this large Chiyao-speaking settlement by introducing us to knowledgeable elders in the area, including the neighbouring villages of Malamyā — where there is a beautiful Mosque — and Lukono, north of Makanjila on the Mozambique border. We had no problem in carrying out our main objective, namely the study of the organisation, structure and history of Yao institutions for the formal education of the young, especially the *jando* circumcision schools for boys. Since I had undergone a *jando*-type circumcision in another African country many years ago I was allowed by the elders to attend the circumcision ceremonies here, after a physical examination. Subsequently I was able to document on film, tape and by written notes the activities and major events in five *jando* schools which were opened in the area during our stay, with special reference to the teaching process taking place within this traditional educational system. Over a period of nearly four weeks, beginning with the operation (circumcision), followed by the ceremony of washing after the wound is healed until the public announcement that the initiates are well, upon which the women may approach the gate of the *jando* for the first time during the seclusion period, we documented

much of what was going on.

We have had no opportunity yet to document the *jando* coming-out ceremony, since this takes place by the end of September, when *jando* schools are dissolved so that the children can attend Primary School courses. The five *jando* on which I have extensive documentary material are: a) Jando wa CheMpangama, b) Jando waKalinga, c) Jando waMakanjila, d) Jando waAbiti Wadi, e) Jando wa Chapola (at Malamya village) — a *jando* always being named after its sponsor. In one case (d) the sponsor was a woman.

We were less successful in documenting the female side of the traditional educational system and could only obtain limited information on *nsondo* (girls' initiation school). The reason for this is obvious: it is very difficult for men to study the girls' institution and my suggestion would be to train a female scientist who is from the area, speaks Chiyao (possibly a student from the University of Malaŵi), and is educated in the cultural sciences, history, anthropology and/or psychology to carry out a thorough study of *nsondo* and *litiwo*.

One of the objectives of our studies was to reconstruct a bit of the history of these institutions in the wider context of Central and East African traditional schools, such as I had studied before in Angola and N. W. Province of Zambia, for example *mukanda* and *ekwenje*. This involved us in historical research in Makanjila into the oral tradition. Makanjila was an important station along a network of trade routes leading in the 19th century from the East African coast (Tanzania) inland to the great lakes and south to Lake Malaŵi. Under the government of the Yao Chief Makanjila III Bwanali waNkachelenga, who travelled in about 1830 to Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar (as we approximately reconstruct the dates from oral tradition), Kiswahili-speaking Arab merchants were invited in great numbers to Makanjila and Islam gained a permanent foothold in this area of Malaŵi. Makanjila grew enormously and by the middle of the 19th century it really became a town in the sense of the Swahili word *mji*. From long conversations with one of our best informants, Sheik Makonjeni Twalibu (tape A 188, stereo) we were able to outline a picture of those times and of where the old trade route ran. Makonjeni Twalibu was born ca. 1905 but he carries in his memory historical traditions which were told him reaching back to the beginning of the Makanjila Chieftainship with Makanjila I Akusobwe round about 1790. The old trade route branched off from Songea into Mozambique territory where the next station was Manyamba (where there was a Sultan), then further on to Lichinga (Vila Cabral), Meponda and then Lukono, Makanjila and up to Chilinda (a few miles south of Makanjila) which was and still is today the port for crossing the Lake.

Moya and I went north along the ancient trade route by foot as far as Lukono and there are still many visible traces of the past which we have documented on photographs. In fact, in contrast to some other accounts, the ancient trade route from Makanjila did not go eastward through northern Mozambique to reach the coast — the country east of Lichinga is too uninhabited and hostile — but it went *north*(!) from Lichinga until it joined the main Songea-Lindi trade route in southern Tanzania.

Before the reign of Chief Makanjila III Bwanali waNkachelenga there were no boys' circumcision schools named *jando* among the Ayao, but there were of course others. They were called *lupanda*, a name still current in other areas of Malaŵi. Circumcision schools for boys being an old Central African institution, however, much of their symbolism, their teaching methods and their structure continued to survive after the Islamic impact and after the introduction of the new word *jando* from the East African coast. Today, therefore, beneath the tinge of Islam visible in *jando* schools, i.e. in the prayers, in some songs and dances, etc. the Central African roots of this institution are clearly visible to anyone who has done a comparative study of such institutions in Central and East Africa.

At the present time, three *formal educational systems* for boys run in parallel in the Makanjila area: a) *Jando*. This is the official circumcision school, while *lupanda* is not practised by Chief Makanjila's people; b) Koran schools in the context of teaching male children in a

mosque (teacher = *mwalimu*) c) the (Western-type) primary schools. Since these three educational systems are based on different world views or ideologies and since they were introduced at different points in history, it is obvious that there must have been some conflict between them, and in a way there continues to be. Children of the few Christian families settled in Makanjila and those of families with a “progressive” Western-style world view are sent to the local hospital to be circumcised and not to *jando*. On the other hand the strict rules about *jando* and who may enter it are also an expression of cultural resistance to destructive forces. However, some accommodation has come about with time between these different institutions so that conflict could be reduced. The pre-Islamic circumcision school had to compromise with Islam by adopting a number of Islamic traits in order to make it acceptable. And today — since the early 1970s — another accommodation is taking place: while in the past, and even as late as 1967 when I visited Makanjila for the first time under Chief Makanjila VII Matola, boys’ circumcision was taking place early in June and the boys were kept in seclusion (outside the village) for several months, today some significant changes have come about:

1. The period of *jando* now coincides with the school holidays of the local primary school. So our first *jando* (of CheMpangama) started on Saturday July 31, just a day after the Primary School had closed, followed a week later by some of the other *jando*. By the time school holidays are finished all the *vaali* (initiates) in the *jando* have to be returned to the village to resume schooling.
2. As a consequence of the shortening of *jando* the teaching curriculum in *jando* has been reduced. This is obvious from comparing some of the results of my 1967 study (see: G. Kubik: “Boys’ circumcision school of the Yao — a cinematographic documentation at Chief Makanjila’s village in Malaŵi”, *Review of Ethnology*, Vol. 5, Nos. 11-14, 1978, including the 16 mm film D 1244) with the material obtained in 1983 which will be published in due course.
3. It seems that the age of the initiates (*vaali*) is gradually being reduced. Nowadays you can see some very small boys in *jando*. Although in my opinion and according to my research findings Central African boys’ circumcision schools have always been *pre*-puberty schools, it definitely has a different psychological impact on a boy of 10 - 12 years of age as compared with a boy of only 5 - 6 years, when he is circumcised and kept in seclusion for several weeks outside the village community. What the exact impact of these changes is or will be on Yao individuals and society of course we do not know yet, and it will require depth research, involving both socially and psychologically oriented studies to get a clearer picture.

Besides the study of formal education in the Makanjila area, we also conducted an extensive survey (on films, tapes, photographs, notes) of all forms of informal educational activities. This was mainly Mr Moya Aliya’s work and it included the documentation of:

- a) *Ndano* (story-telling). This was recorded strictly in context, i.e. Mr Aliya, or both of us, went to the compound where old people and children gathered on moon-lit nights for story-telling. It is planned to transcribe the stories literally (word by word) in Chiyao.
- b) *Ndavi* (riddling). Here again we recorded strictly in context, i.e. of the actual riddle game. We did not collect just riddle statements and (correct) answers (the usual way you find riddles published in the literature), but we recorded the session with all its competitive elements, correct answers, wrong answers, comments by the children, laughter etc.
- c) Childrens’ games of all sorts and adult games such as *libao*. Special attention was also given to childrens’ (boys’) “car factories” in which original materials are used, depending on the local ecology, such as banana stems, pawpaw material or melted plastics etc. This gives the childrens’ vehicles which abound in the streets of Makanjila a different style from the “wire cars” and mobile puppets of children in the Blantyre/Chileka area for example.
- d) Music and dance teaching. Besides a number of revealing teaching situations inside *jando* schools, especially the teaching of songs and the percussion beam (*ngwasala*) (see

Cinefilms and tapes A196 and 197) we have been able to put on record a number of teaching devices used in music and dance performances of the Āyao of Chief Makanjila's area outside the formal educational system. In the teaching of *chindimba* music, for example, which is a pre-Islamic musical tradition associated with beer parties (prohibited by Islam) the central instrument is the percussion beam (*ngwasala*), operated by two or three people. Yao music lies in the distribution area of the so called five-stroke twelve-pulse time line pattern, which was first notated by the Rev A.M. Jones in Zambia and which we nowadays write down as follows:

⑫ x.x.x.x.x. Among the Āyao it is struck on the percussion beam at enormous speed, sometimes left and right hand combined in the following manner:

⑫ x . x . x . . x . x . . R.H.  
x . . x . . x . . x . . L.H.

As among the Chinyanja/Chicheŵa speaking peoples of Malaŵi, the Yao also use a standard mnemonic formula for teaching it, this verbal pattern: *Wankwang'ali koswe* (my husband is a rat). This sentence with its humorous meaning communicates the accent structure of this time line pattern very well. The 5-stroke 12-pulse pattern is universal among the Yao and also appears on one occasion (cf. our tape A 184) in *mangolongondo* log xylophone music. In playing *mangolongondo*, which is mostly carried out in the fields to prevent birds and monkeys from eating the crops, a similar teaching method with mnemonics is used. *Mangolongondo* is very popular in Makanjila and to the north at Lukono there are two excellent groups. The outstanding performer, who lives at Lukono village and whom I could recommend at a national level together with his eight-year old student (who is a virtuoso on the xylophone), was Waisoni Msusa (Tape



*Chingundangunda*, the last in the line of symbolic models made for the night of the coming-out ceremony of the *lupanda* school. Near Nkhumbwe, Blantyre District, Malaŵi, 18 Sept. 1983.  
Photo: G. Kubik.

A 184). Another important musician/composer in the same area is Jonas Chapola who plays *mbwiza*, an accordeon style that probably originated in Mozambique at the beginning of this century, and is very different from present-day popular music in Malaŵi. He also has a crew of musicians who were all trained by him.

Looking at the first part of this year's project in material terms I am glad to report that Mr Aliya and myself were able to fill by August 25 about 19 ½ tapes (AGFA PE 360 m, mono, two track or stereo, one track) using two machines:

1. a *Stellavox* SP-8 professional recorder for stereo recordings, 2. an *UHER Report IC* for mono recordings. The recordings include *jando* and *nsondo* ceremonies, interviews with elders (such as Chief Makanjila, Sheik Makonjeni Twalibu), *ndano* (traditional Yao stories) *ndavi* (riddles), *nsonkhano* (meetings), songs and dances (*chindimba*, *sikiri*, *kung'anda* etc.), prayers in the mosque, teaching of the Koran, musical instruments such as *mangolongondo*, in short a comprehensive spectrum of the cultural life of the people in Chief Makanjila's area. In addition I have been able to shoot 35 Kodak-Daylight cine films so far (8 mm synch-sound), of activities in the *jando*, dances and playing of musical instruments, childrens' games etc. Mr Moya Aliya, an experienced photographer, has taken more than 700 black and white photographs still waiting to be evaluated. Our notes are also extensive and will form the basis of publications. Copies of our material will be stored in two places: a) the Centre for Social Research, University of Malaŵi, P.O. Box 278, Zomba, Malaŵi, b) the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Liebiggasse 5, A - 1010 Vienna, Austria.

Since our return from Mangochi District two weeks ago we have proceeded to a new area of study in order to solve a pressing problem: to assess the differences and possible historical relationships between *jando* and the other initiation school for boys found among the Yao: *lupanda*. From information given to us by a local *sing'anga* (traditional doctor) living near Chileka and whom Moya Aliya has known for a long time, we discovered that there was a *lupanda* going on just a few miles away from Chileka, in the rocky hills near Nkhumbé (on the Chileka-Blantyre road). In the meantime I have visited this *lupanda* whose *nakanga* (organizer) is Mr Richard Stark Kunjawa from Nkhumbé, a Myao, and spent one night in the *ndagala* (lodge). One surprise was that *lupanda* is not a circumcision school at all, but an initiation school where only an incision is made on the prepuce. The prepuce is not cut off, which is probably why Makonjeni Twalibu spoke of *lupanda* — supposed to be pre-Islamic among the Ayao — as an "incomplete circumcision". Accordingly, persons who have passed *jando* may go into *lupanda*, while those who have passed *lupanda* are not allowed to set foot in *jando*. I also understand now why I was examined so thoroughly at Makanjila before being allowed to attend the school. The elders had suspected that perhaps I had passed a *lupanda*-type initiation, not real circumcision, and wanted to be certain.

The second important step forward for our research was that I was able, jointly with Miss Lidiya Malamusi (who as a female may approach the place during the coming-out ceremony), to document the large and secret picture-models associated with *lupanda*. These are reliefs on the ground outside the village, modelled in earth and then sprinkled with maize flour in lines and dots over them to obtain the final appearance. Some of them are several metres long and are a fantastic sight on a moon-lit night. These ideographs may be compared with the "tusona" of Angola and they are meant to teach history and mythology to the initiates who are led past this picture gallery which is over 100 m long, in the early twilight of the coming out day. It is possible that we are the first research group in Malaŵi since G.M. Sanderson (*The Nyasaland Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1955 "Inyago, the picture-models of the Yao initiation ceremonies") to see them and study them again.

As a result of our work so far we are preparing a number of publications, some in Chicheŵa, some in English, some bi-lingual. We plan to publish most of the material in Malaŵi itself to achieve the necessary recycling to the culture concerned:

- a) An article on the topic: *Makanjila — culture and history of a Yao Chieftainship*, with full transcription of interviews conducted in Chiyao and/or Chicheŵa and their evaluation.
- b) An article on *jando* and *lupanda* boys' initiation schools from a historical perspective.
- c) A book in Chicheŵa and English (bi-lingual) on *nthano* (traditional stories with songs) with word by word transcriptions of the texts from the tape recordings.
- d) Transcriptions of our interviews in Chiyao and Chicheŵa with important musicians, especially players of *mangolongondo* log xylophone; with this we hope to reveal the musical concepts and theoretical notions of some of Malaŵi's outstanding musicians in their own words.

Mr. Moya Aliya and I have also received an invitation from the Ethnomusicological Department of the Museum für Völkerkunde (Museum of Ethnography), West Berlin to produce a double album on "*Musician/composers of Southern Malaŵi*" by the middle of 1984. This will be an opportunity to publish for the first time some of the large collection of 160 hours of Nagra III recordings which resulted from our nine-month Malaŵi tour in 1967. These recordings are safely archived in the institution mentioned above.

The records will feature some outstanding composers especially from the Lower Shire in Nsanje, Chikwawa and Blantyre Districts on instruments such as *ulimba* or *valimba* (gourd-resonated xylophone), *bangwe* (board zither), *nkhangala* (mouth bow), *zeze* (flat-bar zither) and imported instruments such as guitar, flute, accordeon etc. It is going to be a unique publication in the already well-established MC Series of the Museum. Each composer will be introduced in the accompanying notes with biography, description of style, instrument etc. followed by complete song texts in Chicheŵa, Chisena etc. wherever possible. Some of the composers to appear on this record have already died and their art will have to be appreciated posthumously as part of music history in Malaŵi. Dai Masitine, born around 1900, Dzingo Chiningamphale (both players of lamellophones), Limited Mfundo (*bangwe*), and Daniel Kachamba (guitar) with unknown early recordings will be among the artists who have contributed significantly to new trends and new inventions in the music of Malaŵi.