

SONG TEXTS OF THE BASHI*

by

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THE Bashi tribe, sometimes known as the Baniabungu and with a population of about 275,000, occupies the Kabale territory of the eastern Belgian Congo; primarily agriculturalists, the people cluster along the western shores of Lake Kivu, raising staple food crops but also tending cattle. The Kivu area, one of the most attractive in Central Africa, has drawn a considerable white population, and thus the indigenous peoples have undergone rather intensive contact with the European; much of the present economy is based upon labour for cash payment on coffee and quinine plantations.

While visits were made to the Bashi over a six months' period, the research upon which this paper is based was carried out during the month of October, 1951. The problem of obtaining an interpreter in the area was difficult; the song texts were translated into Kingwana by a Mushi and re-translated into English. While the finer nuances of meaning must certainly have been lost through this cumbersome process, the basic themes and modes of self-expression of the Bashi remain intact.

One hundred and twenty-one songs were recorded with the Bashi; eighty-nine of the texts contained sufficiently clear ideas for analysis. These songs are perforce "social" songs, that is, songs sung on social occasions as opposed to those of specialised application; thus, for example, songs in which natural or supernatural forces are petitioned are not included here. Rather, those songs sung or played at beer drinks, feasts, marriage celebrations and like events form the basis for this study, for these are the texts in which comment is made upon subjects of general interest to the people who sing them.

Of the eighty-nine song texts, sixty-three are sung by men while twenty-five are sung by women; one song is sung by a mixed group. However, there seems to be no significant correlation between the sex of the singer or singers and the type of text sung. Men sing as readily of women and their activities as do the women themselves, while the women, in turn, sing freely on subjects which might be supposed to fall in the men's province. In a few cases, certain categories, such as songs about war, are sung by one group exclusively, in this case by the men; however, text groupings of this sort are too small to allow for definite interpretation along these lines.

The song texts fall into seven distinct categories, the largest of which (36 songs) concerns *marital relationships*. The general subject of *authority* is considered in 26 songs, while texts concerning *strife* and *methods of accomplishing something* are the basis of seven songs each. Two texts are concerned with *acts committed against society or social convention* while four deal with *social rejection of individuals*. Finally, seven songs are of a general nature comprising varied subjects not falling within the general categories noted above.

It is perhaps one of the latter which best indicates in general the flavour of the Bashi texts. This song (VII, 1)¹ tells of a man who is very weak, both physically and mentally; his fields are not properly cared for, he is impotent with his wife, and basically ineffectual in all he undertakes. The singer is contemptuous of him and sings of his

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¹ Song numbers refer to the original tape recordings. In this case, the reference is to Tape VII, Song 1.

weaknesses. It is songs of this general type which mark the Bashi text clearly; little patience is manifested with the social weakling, and indifference is displayed toward him as a person. But more important that this is the tendency toward social irresponsibility, perhaps leading to eventual social breakdown. Fighting, social rejection, acts against society, the abuse of authority, and all manner of similar situations occupy the major portion of the Bashi texts; not only is society apparently indifferent toward the individual, but the individual is equally indifferent to his society, placing emphasis on material rather than social considerations. Even in those texts in which authority, a political convention, is commented upon, the comments take the form of protest against the abuse of power, complaints against a job, boasts of powers held; in general, excesses of authority or power form the basic line of comment. It is significant also that rarely does the transgressor receive his just desert; rather, it is the "little man" who is constantly imposed upon either for no special reason or for some trifling indiscretion.

As has been noted, commentary upon marital relationships provides the largest single category of song texts among the Bashi; this may be divided into pre-marital and marital. Of the former, the single subject receiving the greatest attention is that of marriage and wealth; eleven songs fall into this category. A clearcut pattern here is the rejection of a suitor on the grounds that he is too poor; there are five songs of this type. Thus the song XIII, 1, a girl sings about a man who has come to ask her in marriage. She says:

"You want to marry me, but what can you give me? A nice field?"

"No, I have only a house."

"What? You have nothing but a house? How would we live? Go to Bukavu;² there you can earn plenty of money. You can buy food and other things."

"No, I won't go. I don't know the people there. I have always lived here, and I know the people and want to stay here."

"You are a stupid man. You want me to marry you but you have nothing. If you don't go to Bukavu and earn money to buy me things then I won't marry you."

Or, a second example. In this case (XIII, 3) the daughter of a chief is being asked in marriage. To her suitor she replies:

"Look. I am the daughter of a chief. What can you provide for me if we marry? My father is a big chief. He could buy me a phonograph if he wanted to, or clothes, or a motor car. What can you buy? Unless you can buy for me many things, my father will refuse to let me marry you."

While these songs provide the main theme, there are several variants. Song XIII, 11, for example, not only castigates the unlucky suitor for being poor, but asserts that he is ugly besides. In two songs (VII, 3 and XI, 2) the girl does not actually reject the suitor but reminds him that he must bring wealth to the marriage; in the former, for example, a clerk in the office of a white administrator is recounting what his fiancée has told him:

"Look, you are a clerk, a man making good money. You say you want to marry me, but if you do then you must bring to my father a cow, some goats, and plenty of food. This is because you have money."

A further variant is found in song XIV, 9, although the theme is the same. A girl walking along the road meets a man who says:

"You be my wife."

"What?"

"Yes, I want you. You'll make a good wife."

"Listen, do you think that I am the same as a dog that you can just want me and take me? I am a girl. You must go to see my father for his permission. He will ask you whether you have a cow or a goat to give. If you have and you give it, good. Then we can be married, but you can't take me like a dog."

² The present city of Costermansville, on the southern tip of Lake Kivu, is the former Bukavu. It is approximately 60 kilometres from the area in which the recordings were made.

Again, in song XIV, 8, the emphasis is placed upon wealth as a girl goes to the man, Kabangala, and says :

“Tell me where there is a man with plenty of money and other things so that I can marry him. If you will tell me a man like this I will give you some good money. While you are thinking about it, I will go to work at Bwana X’s.³ Then I will come back and you can tell me the man.”³⁵

Finally, in song X, 1, the possible results of the demands for wealth are indicated. The song tells the story of a chief who has a very good daughter. A man who has much money, as well as a good house and fields, wishes to marry the girl and asks the chief’s permission. The chief says :

“Good, but if you want to marry my daughter, you must buy me a nice ring like those the white man wears.”

Instead of buying it, however, the suitor steals it and is taken away to jail at Bukavu by the administrator, where he is forced to give up his good clothes and take off his shoes. He says to the administrator :

“Don’t take my clothes and shoes away. I will give you many francs if you don’t.”

But the administrator is not open to bribes, and the clothes and shoes are taken. The man then calls on all his friends and family telling them to bring him clothes and shoes and things to eat.

In one sense it may be argued that songs of this type illustrate the continuing strength of the social pattern of *lobola*, and this is, of course, true, at least to a certain extent. However, the basic pattern which emerges with striking clarity is rather the desire for wealth and the rejection of the suitor who cannot provide wealth in the form either of goods or cash.

Further variants of pre-marital strife are extensive. In two songs the suitor is rejected because “he is not a good man”. One of these songs (X, 6) indicates a pattern of social responsibility, a rare instance. In this song there is “a bad man, one who has killed many other men”, but who decides to settle down and becomes engaged to “a nice girl”. Her friends, however, warn her that he is a bad man and that he will get her into trouble because he is bad. She then takes their warning and leaves him. In another song (XII, 2) a girl refuses to believe the veracity of her fiancée. The man is suddenly taken ill “in his legs, his hands, face, eyes and all over”. But the girl will not believe that he is sick and refuses to go to see him ; she says that he is telling lies and that she won’t believe he is sick unless he comes to see her. In another song (IX, 6) a girl loses her two brothers and, broken by the loss, swears that she will never marry. Again, a man refuses a girl ; here, the general pattern of *lobola* is reversed, for in the song a girl sees a strong, good-looking man, and says to herself :

“I want that man to marry me.” So she goes to him and says :

“I like you ; marry me,” but he refuses, saying :

“Go back home to your father.”

The girl does go back, but returns bringing many good things with her and insisting that she wants to marry him, but still the man refuses (XI, 3).

On the other hand, song XIV, 13, tells of a girl who is unhappy working for her father, and wishes for a husband with whom she may co-operate in working to provide for themselves. Another song (XIV, 6) expresses the fears of young women that men may hear them singing and come to abduct them. And finally, in two songs (XI, 9 and XII, 7) girls take the initiative in finding mates by dancing for men.

While pre-marital relations seem somewhat strained according to the song texts, the situation is apparently little improved once marriage has been arranged. Four songs relate quarrels between man and wife ; in two instances the man accuses his wife of being lazy, and in one she is accused simply of being “a bad wife” ; in the fourth song no reason is given for the quarrel. Songs IX, 3 and 4, were sung by a group of boys ; called Gahusi and Bieka, the names of a man and woman, they tell of domestic strife.

³ The name given was that of a planter in the area.

"I will marry this woman because she is a good woman, big and strong. She can use the fork in the fields, and she can plant and raise food."

Then he gets married and finds that his wife doesn't know how to do any of these things; she lets the house get dirty, does not take proper care of the fields, etc. So he says:

"You are a bad wife," and enumerates all the things he thought she could do but now finds she cannot. But she replies:

"You're not so good either. You're lazy, and want me to do all the work. Besides, I thought you had good teeth, but half of them are gone. Your eyes are bad, too. You are a bad man."

In song XIV, 1, the wife complains that her husband doesn't make a nice bed, that he doesn't sleep properly, and that he makes noises when he sleeps. She says: "Make a good bed so that we can sleep properly. Then you won't make noises."

A further variation of the quarrelling theme appears in songs in which one partner leaves the other; there are two songs of this type, in one of which the man leaves the woman, and in the other in which the woman leaves the man. Again, a partner may leave without a specific quarrel; in song XIV, 5, a social dilemma is posed when a girl finds herself married to a man from outside her own (Bashi) tribe. She says:

"What have I done? He is a Bahavu and I am a Bashi. This is not good. What shall I do? The Bashi are strong; they work hard and look strong. But the Bahavu are weak and little; they don't want to work. They want to lie around and do nothing. It is best that I leave this man and go away."

This, of course, is an excellent illustration of the in-group feeling; the Bashi consider the Bahavu, their closest neighbouring tribe, weak and ineffectual.

In another case, material wealth, or rather lack of it, combined with jealousy, causes the split between marriage partners when one girl finds that her friend received a cow while she received only a goat from her husband. "Since this is bad, I will be bad, too. I will leave my man and will ask another man to marry me, one whose father will give me a cow."

Two songs are concerned with the subject of mistreatment of a wife; in neither case is a solution, other than wishful, given. In song XIII, 10, a girl is married to a man who beats her.

"Why does my husband beat me? That is not life. When I got married my father did not give me to be beaten. I wish that I could write a letter. If I could I would write to my father and tell him what is going on. Then he would take me back and you would have to give him another goat or cow to get me back again."

Polygamy enters into the song texts also; in one case a man treats his first wife well while mistreating his second and third wives, both of whom complain of the injustice; in the other song, it is the plural wives, rather than husband and wife, who quarrel. Childbirth appears in but one song, in which an expectant mother expresses her fears at having to go to the white man's hospital to have her child; social disease is also the subject of a single song, in which a husband catches a disease from his wife (who was "a very good girl" before marriage), calls in a doctor, and is cured along with his errant bride. And finally, in song XIV, 2, a girl expresses nostalgia for "the old days", saying that in those times a girl did not have to marry unless she so desired. She went to live with one man for four days, and then another and then another. "In those days it was good. We wore just a loin cloth and nothing more. Now the white man is here and he is all dressed up. Now we put cloths around our waists and cover our breasts, and we must live with just one man."

Thus pre-marital and marital arrangements are expressed in terms of relationships which seem for the most part to be unsatisfactory. Marriage for the young girl seems clearly a situation to be approached with great caution; the criterion of a successful marriage-to-be is based upon wealth, and the young woman is warned away from any less concrete terms in most instances. Marriage itself, as enunciated by the texts, is at

best a difficult and unstable affair, beset with continual problems ; it is almost as though young people were at present being warned away from entering into such a stormy pact as wedlock.

The stresses and strains of the problem of authority, as represented by chiefs, policemen, white men, government clerks, and others, are as clearly manifested in twenty-six of the songs as are the marital problems just discussed. A definite pre-occupation with the abuse of authority is expressed in no fewer than fourteen songs, in five of which various persons in authority abuse their powers in diverse ways ; certainly one of the most pathetic of the Bashi texts in which society again remains completely indifferent to the individual, falls into this group. This song (XV, 10) tells of a very poor man whose wife has just had a child. He has no food to give them and since they had little food before the birth of the child, his wife has no milk.

"Where shall I get food? My wife and baby will die if I don't get some. I'll take my machette, go to the forest, cut wood, and sell it for food."
 He goes and does so, but coming back he meets the chief's policeman.
 "What are you doing with that wood?"
 The man repeats the entire story, and the policeman says :
 "You are a bad man. I want that wood. I am the police and I will take it."
 And he does.

A recurring theme in the texts regarding authority is the struggle between the "big chief and the little chief", in which the former attacks the latter or imposes on him in one way or another. This reaches a peak in song XV, 8, which tells of a chief who has many, many men. He says :

"What big, strong men I have, and how many there are. With these I can declare war because no one can beat me. I will go to the small chiefs and take away all they have, food, furniture, everything."
 He calls his sub chiefs and they make a plan to go at eight o'clock that night, proposing a strategy which will allow them to take everything.

In one song, however, retribution is made when a big chief takes cows from a little chief and is put in jail for his action ; such retribution occurs infrequently in the texts.

Trouble with the white man is the basis for five of the texts ; this tends to take the form of property unfairly usurped by the white, or an unfair action taken by him against a Mushi. In song XIII, 3, for example, a chief has died ; soon after, his wife is visited by a white administrator who tells her that she must leave and go elsewhere.

"But this is not good. The white man comes to the Congo and he helps us with many things, but it is not good to make me move. Where can I go? I have lived here many years and I want to stay here, but he says that I must go."

One song (XV, 4) charges the white man with excessive brutality. The singer says :

"A long time ago a Mushi was taken by the administrator to town X,⁴ and the administrator was very angry with him and beat him. The Mushi said :
 "I am dying. It is better to dig a big hole and put me inside as I am nearly dead anyway."
 But the administrator went on beating him. The Mushi said :
 "You are beating me and beating me. You are not like a man. You are just like a leopard. Your arm is just like the paw of a leopard beating me. I cannot live through this. I shall die. Why does he do this to me?"

Other songs deal in a more general way with persons in authority : a clerk catches men in false excuses, a policeman complains about his job for the white man, a chief

⁴ A local administration post is named here.

boasts of his powers, an African asks the white man for soldiers to protect himself, a chief gives his last instructions on his deathbed, and another chief prays for his sons.

In marked contrast to these songs dealing with the problem of authority, and to the Bashi texts in general, is a group of six songs in which the person in authority fulfills his obligations to, and requests from his subjects. Thus in song XII, 8, a man goes to his chief and asks for "clothes, a cow, a goat and other things", because he has none. The chief is a good chief and gives the things asked of him. The man thanks the chief and says that he will pray to the gods to protect him and give him good fortune. In one case (X,5) even a white man is praised for his generosity when he gives an African some money on request. The man looks for a very nice goat, buys it, and takes it back to his village, where he shows the other men with much pride that the white man has given him money to buy the goat. While these six groups, however, indicate cordial relationships between the person in authority and those under his control, twenty of the twenty-six songs deal with much more difficult problems. As in the question of marital affairs, the texts emphasize the difficulties rather than the smooth working of a social or political institution.

Seven songs fall into the category of strife, of which three deal with war and four with conflict and fighting in general. Two of the "war" songs are calls to arms; the third is more complex. This song (XV, 3) deals with purported historical fact, and was supposedly sung by a man named Bohozozo about a war he had seen some fifteen years previous to the present date.

One man came running to say that many warriors were coming in boats.
 "I know they are coming here. I don't want to fight, but if I go away I know they will take my children. I have four children and it would not be right for me to lose them all. I would not mind so much if they took only two because then I would still have two left. I will ask Bohozozo to tell the warriors to take only two of my children."

General strife is represented in one song in which two men quarrel and fight over which is the better herder, and in two which are more specific in subject matter. Song VIII, 3, deals with the subject of revenge:

A big chief has an excellent hunting dog which is especially adept at catching *poli*.⁵ The chief, very proud of the dog, tells all his people what a good dog the animal is. One day they go hunting and the dog catches a *poli* and starts to eat the meat; suddenly the meat begins to talk like a man, saying:
 "You have a dog and you are very bad. You hunt us animals and you eat us. Because you are eating me, you will die and your dog will die too. That is justice."

The third song (XV, 9) is of particular interest in that it indicates an awareness of and contact with the peoples of Ruanda who are separated from the Bashi by the width of Lake Kivu. The story tells of a small chief who has little power. A man from Ruanda comes to live beside the Bashi, bringing his cows with him. The little chief says:

"You have come here to live. Look out! I shall take your cows."
 But the man will not acquiesce, saying:
 "You try to take my cows and I'll tell my brothers to come. They will fight you. They are not little men like you; they are big men. They wear trousers and shirts and they are not like you, all black. My brothers are almost like the white man, and some even carry guns on their shoulders and packs on their backs and look like the white man when he goes to war."

While political awareness is manifest here, the most striking aspect of the text is the feeling of inferiority demonstrated by the Bashi singer; not only does it seem clear that he feels inferior, but there is no move made towards self-assertion. Once the Munyarwanda has spoken, the matter is finished and the facts of inferiority apparently

⁵ The *poli* is a small member of the cat family, possibly a civet cat.

accepted. The final song of this general group (IX, 12) details a severe beating given one man by another.

Two songs are concerned with acts committed against society or social convention. In the first (VIII, 9) reference is made to the Bashi custom of giving the first male child a name signifying pleasure in the generosity of the husband's father-in-law. In this song, however, the father-in-law is "poor and sickly", and has "never given any food, or goats". Thus, rather than name the child according to tradition, the father simply refuses to name him at all. In song IV, 1, another rare instance of social responsibility, after an irresponsible act, is detailed. This song tells of a girl who goes to the house of a married woman and steals and eats some food. Afterward, she begins to think of what she has done.

"I have stolen food. It will be bad for me if that woman finds out who did it." So she goes to other girls and says :

"I have stolen food from this woman. Please don't tell, because then I will have a bad name and no one will have anything to do with me." The girls reply :

"No. You have been bad. It is right that we tell the woman, because if we don't, and she finds out, she will be angry. Then we will be bad, too, because we didn't tell her."

While responsibilities toward society are indicated here, it is well to point out that these responsibilities are seemingly engendered by fear of retribution rather than a social conscience.

Four songs deal with social rejection in one form or another. In song X, 10, a woman is discarded by her husband and then further humiliated by her rejection by all other men. Song XV, 2, tells of an old maid "of about forty", who seeks a husband on her own but is rejected by all the men she solicits ; song XII, 6, tells of a man rejected by his own brother. The fourth song (IX, 11) presents a variant of the theme in that fear of rejection by society is brought forward. In this case, the song tells of a man, Kabalabala, who eats and drinks so much that his stomach swells up to amazing proportions, so much so that he cannot walk. He crawls into his house and defecates on the floor ; then he starts to cry, saying :

"This is terrible. I have defecated on the floor of my own house. Now I am like a cow making this mess. I hope that no one sees me in this condition."

It is, in a sense, refreshing to find a group of seven songs which deal simply with ways in which certain things may be accomplished, or recount how others have accomplished things in the past. In song XI, 5, the story is recounted by the singer :

"There is an animal which eats food with its hands like a man and which carries children on its back. It kept coming to the fields and stealing all the food. The people planted again, and it was stolen again. This happened many times until finally the people put bells all round the sides of the fields. The Bigushu somehow got caught in the bells, and one fastened itself around his neck. Then when he came down to steal food he heard the bell around his own neck and thought that it was the Africans who came to chase him away. So he went back to the forest and told the other animals that whenever he went to the fields the people were always there.

"It is no good," he says, "we must leave this place."
And they did.

Another song tells how to avoid malaria (XI, 8). A man says :

"If, when you plant *malaki*⁶ you can plant seeds all of the same size, no one will get sick with malaria. But you must find seeds of exactly the same size. I can stop the malaria. Then you will all be strong and can work well ; but they must be seeds of the same size."

Still another song (XIII, 9) tells how a woman can acquire servants to work for her. In this case the singer is talking about a girl who has three servants working in her house "just like the white man". The singer goes to the chief's house and asks his wives :

⁶ *Malaki* are beans.

"How can she have three boys?⁷ Why? Why can't I have three boys also?" And the wives answer:

"You go to the market and buy clothes to wear and others to change into, so that you are always well dressed. Then the boys will see that you are rich. That is the way to get them to come to work for you."

Two songs give direct instructions for cattle herding, while two others tell how the white man's work is to be accomplished.

Finally, there remains a group of seven songs which do not fall into any definite category; one of these has been previously cited.⁸ The second deals with friendship, a rare subject in Bashi song texts. In the song (IX, 10), a man says to his good friend:

"My father has died; my mother has died; all my family are gone. Now there is no one to get food, no one to keep house for me, no one to do anything. I will go kill myself."

But the friend replies:

"If you kill yourself, then I will kill myself, too. I am your friend."

Thus, neither man kills himself.

The final five songs illustrate beautifully the licenses which may be taken in song. Songs XIII, 4-8, were sung by a group of girls who were working at the time on a coffee and quinine plantation in the Kivu area. The owner of the plantation was acting in the capacity of interpreter for the author, and thus could not fail to follow the song texts; due to advances in prices he had recently stopped giving the workers a ration of salt and, particularly, peanut or palm oil.

The first song of the series speaks of a girl who is working on a plantation; it is made clear that the plantation is Bwana X's.⁹ In the second song, a mother says to her daughter:

"Go work in my fields."

The daughter refuses, saying:

"No, I want to work for Bwana X. I want to work for the white man where I have a task, for when it is finished I can leave."¹⁰

The mother is angry, but the girl goes to work for X. One day while going to work, she comes to the edge of the Nyaberango river which is in flood stage.

"What shall I do? How can I cross the river and get to work? And if I cross and work all day then perhaps it will rain some more and I won't be able to get back again. But I will go, work quickly, finish soon, and come back before it has a chance to rain any more."

In the third song, the girl says:

"We don't work for Bwana Y. On that plantation, they just work taking out the bad coffee. They don't work with the fork. But here we work for Bwana X with the fork. Why do we come here to work when we found work for Bwana Y just picking out the bad coffee? It is because Bwana X is a good man. He gives us a task and we can do this task, and when we finish, we may go home. So we are good girls who are able to work like men."

In the fourth song, the point begins to emerge more clearly.

"We come to work for Bwana X. We finish our tasks and we do good work. When it is pay day, Bwana X gives francs to all of us. We say: 'Well, that is good, but Pedro¹¹ said that Bwana X said that if we worked well and finished our tasks, he would give us salt and oil.' Here we are, and we have the francs, but where is the salt? Where is the oil? We don't understand it because Pedro does not tell lies. But here it is. Why?"

And in the final song, the point is driven home.

"We have finished our work. Before, we used to get oil; now we don't get it. Why has Bwana stopped giving us oil? We don't understand. If he doesn't give us oil, we will all leave

⁷ The word "boy" in Congo signifies an African male servant.

⁸ See above, p. 44.

⁹ Throughout this group of songs, two planters of the area were named; their plantations are adjoining.

¹⁰ Bwana X assigns each worker a specific task, and when it is finished the worker may leave. Bwana Y, on the other hand, hires his workers on the basis of a straight nine hour day.

¹¹ Pedro is Bwana X's headman, in charge of supervising the labour on the plantation.

and go to work for the Catholic Fathers. There we can do little work and have plenty of oil. So we are waiting now to see whether Bwana X will give oil. Be careful! If we don't get oil, we won't work here."

The five songs, of course, represent a carefully organised plan to inform the plantation owner of the desires and intentions of the working girls. The discontent was unknown to the planter; while the girls were unwilling to express their doubts directly to him, they seized the opportunity which presented itself to inform him indirectly of the situation. The melodic lines of the songs were well established as Bashi melodies; the words were improvised on the spur of the moment, save for the last song which had been given the new text at the time X stopped giving oil to the girls. The series of song texts is a remarkably clear illustration of the uses to which song may be put among the Bashi.

In summary, the Bashi song texts seem to reflect a pre-occupation with what may perhaps be called the less attractive side of social behaviour. Not only deeds of violence, but social rejection, and the indifference of the society toward itself and its individual members ride high in the consciousness of the people. It is significant to note that very rarely is comment made upon the obvious injustices or distortions of perspective displayed by the individuals concerned; rather, the actions or thoughts are simply detailed, with little comment or resistance offered. The society seems almost completely passive to what goes on within its limits. These general attitudes stand in striking contrast to those evinced in the song texts of neighbouring people. The Bahutu of Ruanda, for example, express a high degree of self-confidence and pride in their songs. For example, song XVI, 7: "I am a brave man. I will not be shaken by anything. When we spend a day somewhere, the people are happy because we sing for them"; or, song XX, 7: "Because Kayijuka was a brave man, they gave him Kiganda. All other young people must be brave like him. Gafurafura was the one who shot best; because of that the Wwami (king) gave him a gift. So let us, all young people, be like him". Innumerable examples could be cited at random; the difference between the song texts of the two groups is striking.

It may perhaps be argued that the song texts, rather than indicating social disintegration, imply instead social criticism, that is, that the singers are highly sensitive to the range of social behaviour or "misbehaviour", and through the medium of song are attempting to bring erring members of the society back into channels of acceptable behaviour. The phenomenon of social control through songs of ridicule is, of course, well substantiated in West Africa and the New World. If we are to accept this view, however, we must also accept the fact that approximately eighty per cent. of the social songs of the Bashi are directed toward this end, and thus that the Bashi are almost exclusively concerned with admonition and direction to those members of the society who are not following the accepted patterns of social behaviour. The answer to this problem, of course, lies with the Bashi themselves; since direct questioning of the singers is impossible at this time, the question must be referred to future research.

It should be noted that white men of long experience in the general area occupied by the Buniabungu are at present concerned with what they consider to be the disintegration of the Bahavu people, nearest neighbours of the Bashi to the North. Population figures seem to show that the birth rate of the Bahavu is dropping rapidly, according to these sources, and employers in the area regard the Bahavu men as physically weak and indifferent, preferring not to hire them if men of other tribes are available. If we are to accept these speculations, it seems clear that we may point to the song texts of the Bashi as indicative of what is quite possibly to come. Surely a society almost completely indifferent to itself shows signs of the beginning of disintegration. The impingement of a new culture and the attendant stresses and strains of readjustment to new patterns have clearly been of deep effect on the social awareness of the Bashi.